

CHARLES UNIVERSITY IN PRAGUE

FACULTY OF EDUCATION

Department of English Language and Literature

**TEACHING NORTHERN IRISH
ACCENTS**

DIPLOMA THESIS

PRAGUE 2013

Author: Bc. Markéta Julišová

Supervisor: Mgr. Kristýna Poesová, Ph.D.

Declaration

I hereby declare that I worked on this diploma thesis independently and that the information I used has been fully acknowledged in the text and included in the reference list.

I agree that the diploma thesis will be stored in the library of the Faculty of Education at Charles University and used for other academic purposes.

Prague 2013 Markéta Julišová

Acknowledgements

I would like to express my profound gratitude to my supervisor Mgr. Kristýna Poesová, Ph.D. for her valuable advice, friendly approach and substantial help and support.

A special thank goes to Rosemarie and all my friends and volunteers who agreed to participate in my recordings. Without them, my research would have been impossible.

Finally, I wish to thank my family, especially my sister and my husband, for their undivided support, inspiration and encouragement.

Abstract

The diploma thesis deals with the major accents of English used by Northern Irish speakers and their application in teaching English as a foreign language. In the theoretical part of the text, the fundamental information concerning the language development in the given area is put forward. Furthermore, it concentrates on the division of particular accents and attempts for their characterisation in comparison to Received Pronunciation. In the following practical part, the text concentrates on the application of the theoretical findings in lessons for English language students at a Czech grammar school. It describes the preparation of the teaching materials and of the lesson plan, and their subsequent application in sample lessons. The evaluation of the activities is based on the student feedback which is discussed in the final chapter.

Key words

Northern Irish accents, pronunciation teaching, accent teaching, rhoticity, intonation.

Abstrakt

Tato diplomová práce se zaměřuje na popis hlavních znaků akcentů anglického jazyka používaných mluvčími v Severním Irsku a na využití těchto akcentů ve školní výuce anglického jazyka. V teoretické části text předkládá informace o vývoji anglického jazyka v dané lokalitě. Udává dělení akcentů a jejich podrobnější charakteristiku v porovnání s britským standardem. Následující praktická část je pak zaměřena na aplikaci těchto teoretických poznatků a jejich využití ve výuce anglického jazyka v prostředí českého gymnázia. Popisuje proces přípravy výukových materiálů a plánu hodiny a jejich následnou aplikaci v ukázkových hodinách. Hodnocení zahrnutých aktivit je založeno na zpětné vazbě studentů, o které pojednává poslední kapitola.

Klíčová slova

Severoirské akcenty, výuka výslovnosti, výuka akcentů, rhoticita, intonace.

List of abbreviations

EFL	English as a Foreign Language
IPA	International Phonetic Alphabet
NIr	Northern Ireland
NIrE	Northern Irish English
RP	Received Pronunciation
S	student
SS	students
T	teacher
TEFL	Teaching English as a Foreign Language
UlsE	Ulster English
UlsS	Ulster Scots

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1. Introduction

English is the third largest language by the number of native speakers. Together with more than 400 million non-native speakers, it probably even outstrips Mandarin Chinese and Spanish and thus ranks as the number one world language (Crystal 68). With such a vast number of speakers, it is no surprise that an immense number of distinct regional and social varieties can be found in this particular language. Nevertheless, this diversity is often not reflected in TEFL.

Although none of the many existing accents is officially regarded as superior to the others, foreign learners of English language are still predominantly taught and exposed to Received Pronunciation (RP)¹. The actual number of RP speakers, however, is not very large. Peter Trudgill, for example, calls RP a “minority accent” and estimates that only 3% of the British really do use it (171). Thus, when for example Czech learners of English visit the British Isles, they may soon encounter a problem understanding the local varieties. Hence, even a perfect ability to produce the target language might be at a loss when there are difficulties with its perception.

With regard to this diversity of the English language, there is a common belief that students should be exposed to various forms of it. Nevertheless, it is often the case that the information about the variability of English dialects² is still missing in TEFL in the Czech Republic. Pronunciation in general can be “an overlooked area of language teaching, partially because teachers themselves may feel more uncertain about it than about grammar and lexis” (Scrivener 284). The issue of different English accent is even a more neglected

¹ Received Pronunciation is a pronunciation variety of Standard English originating in the south-eastern parts of England. In the minds of many native speakers, it is still connected with higher social status and education. “Queen’s English” or “BBC English” are terms often used as synonyms for RP (Scrivener 285, Kelly 14).

² As stated in the title, this work deals primarily with *accents* and thus it will be concerned exclusively with varieties in terms of pronunciation. Although the term *dialect* is used by some linguists (Trudgill and Hughes 2) to refer only to differences of vocabulary and grammar, this diploma thesis will continue to use *dialect* as an umbrella term for all three aspects of a language variety: grammar, lexis and pronunciation.

one. Although, there are already some textbooks which provide audio recordings of native speakers from various regions³, the manner in which they are presented appears to be insufficient. Students usually receive no information about the accent they can hear from the recordings during their lessons and so they cannot associate it with a certain region or a social group. Subsequently, they may be more liable to forget they have ever heard such an accent.

The author of the thesis believes that lecturing on accents in EFL classes can be beneficial in many ways. Apart from the salient fact that thanks to their awareness of the existence of various accents students could understand a wider range of native speakers, there are at least three other positive aspects. Firstly, during a lesson on English accents, a teacher may address certain pronunciation issues and allow students to practice their own production. Secondly, it is important for EFL students to learn about the origins of the individual accents as a part of building their cultural awareness. Such lessons offer a valuable opportunity to include information about the historical and cultural development of English speaking countries. They help students understand the world in global context, develop their tolerance and teach them to understand “the culture and customs of different people and respect them” (Jeřábek 13, as translated by Markéta Julišová). Thus, they are in concord with the aims set by the national curriculum for foreign language teaching in the Czech Republic (Rámcový vzdělávací program). Finally, this topic could bring interesting ideas and fresh air into the classrooms. Appropriately chosen activities can lighten the atmosphere. Therefore, for example, imitating certain English accents may have a comical effect and help even shy students to participate actively in the lesson.

Having taken all this into consideration, the author decided to introduce the language varieties used in Northern Ireland (NIr) to her students. The rationale behind this choice

³ From the books that the author is familiar with, these are, for example, *Maturita Solutions* and *Success*. Both of them offer audio materials recorded by speakers of various accents. The latter offers information about the speaker’s origin in the teacher’s notes. However, there is no such information for the students.

was the fact that she had spent some time during her studies in Ireland and has family connections in the North. We may argue that the majority of English teachers in the Czech Republic were not given such opportunity to live abroad and get in closer contact with language varieties. Nevertheless, they should not be discouraged by this handicap. In this age of media, we are constantly encountering diverse English accents in films, series, music etc. Even though the first-hand knowledge of the language is always a great advantage, more or less any English teacher is capable of obtaining the materials needed thanks to the Internet.

The aim of this work is to suggest how such inclusion of accent teaching could be done by a Czech teacher. The author intends to offer a comprehensible illustration of how to prepare and conduct an accent-oriented lesson. Kelly remarks that what is needed for pronunciation teaching is “a good grounding in theoretical knowledge... [and] ...access to good ideas for classroom activities” (13). To meet these requirements and achieve its aim, the thesis is divided into two main sections.

The first one, *Language in Ulster*, provides the theoretical information about the accents under scrutiny. No lecturing on accents could be successfully done without a sufficient linguistic and historical background and so the theoretical part of the thesis opens up with a chapter dedicated to the historical development of the English language in the particular region. This aims to bring the reader’s awareness to the linguistic changes over time. Subsequently, the focus turns to the current state of the language in Northern Ireland. Chapters 2.2 and 2.3 offer a concise classification of the local accents based on the regional and social factors. Finally, the phonological and phonetic analysis of the NIr accents is discussed in chapter 2.4., which also lists and briefly discusses the most prominent differences of the NIr accents in comparison with RP.

The specific varieties of English have already been thoroughly described in a number of specialist publications and Northern Irish accents are no exception to that. It is therefore not the aim of this diploma thesis to carry out the linguistic research of language varieties.

What it attempts to do is to bring a general overview of these accents for the purposes of TEFL. It hopes to provide a theoretical background needed for presenting and using the acquired information in teaching pronunciation. Thus, the theoretical part serves as a stepping stone for the following practice-oriented chapter.

The second part is called *The use of Northern Irish accents in TEFL* and deals with the application of the given language varieties in English lessons. It contains several ideas for teaching and the description of their implementation in TEFL explained in the enclosed lesson plan. The reader will learn about the aims (3.1.1), the materials used (3.1.2) and the individual stages of the planned lesson (3.1.3). In other words, these passages suggest activities for classroom and provide teaching material with instructions. The reader also finds out how the teaching material and activities were being prepared and selected. Finally, there is a subchapter describing the sample lessons conducted by the author in her four student groups at Gymnázium Jaroslava Heyrovského in early May 2013. Along with a characterization of the student groups (3.2.1) and their responses to the activities as perceived by the author (3.2.2.), this section also presents the results of students' feedback (3.2.3) obtained for the purposes of evaluation of the lesson outcomes.

Together, both sections of the thesis intend to define which theoretical knowledge and practical teaching activities are advisable for teaching accents. It suggests the ways how ordinary English lessons could be enriched by specific lectures focused on pronunciation and English accents in particular "in order to help students appreciate [their] relevance and importance for successful communication" (Harmer vi).

2. Language in Ulster

When examining the individual accents of a language, we may approach it either synchronically, i.e. studying the given varieties at a certain point in time, or diachronically by studying their historical development⁴. The following chapters offer a brief overview of the Northern Irish accents from both the perspectives. Starting with the diachronic approach (2.1) and continuing with the synchronic view of the current situation based on the regional and social aspects (2.2 and 2.3), this chapter aims to provide the reader with essential information about the language in Northern Ireland.

2.1 Historical development

Northern Ireland is frequently referred to as Ulster according to the historical name of the region. The former province of Ulster consisted of nine counties. Nevertheless, after the establishment of the Irish Free State in 1922, only six of those counties remained a part of the British Empire and thus of Northern Ireland. The remaining three – Donegal, Cavan and Monaghan were assigned to the new independent state, the Republic of Ireland. This division, however controversial, was a result of a long and complicated historical development of the island and has had its ethnical, cultural and also linguistic reasons. A general outline of the historical development and the patterns of immigration is, therefore, necessary to understand the demographic and linguistic composition of the northern parts of the island.

Like many other languages, the one used in Ireland was shaped by the inhabitants of the island and its conquerors. The current state of the English language in Northern Ireland is a

⁴ The two terms, synchronic and diachronic axis/approach in linguistics, were introduced by Ferdinand de Saussure and later published in *Course in General Linguistics*.

result of three main sources of influence⁵; the English language itself, the indigenous Irish language and the variety of English language used in Scotland also called the Scots dialect (Wells, *Accents* 417).

Irish or Irish Gaelic is a sub-branch of Celtic Indo-European languages. It was the predominant language of the inhabitants of the island for centuries and thanks to their early Catholic missions it spread to Scotland and to the Isle of Man. Thus it laid grounds for Scottish Gaelic and Manx.

Before the English language was introduced to Ireland, local settlers encountered another Germanic language closely related to English – Old Norse. Some traces of the language spoken by the Viking invaders and merchants can still be found for example in place names of areas once under their control, especially in the south-east⁶. Apart from this, only very little influence of the Viking speech can be found in the current language.

Yet, another wave of invasion has changed the linguistic landscape of Ireland significantly. The Old English language in the form in which it was spoken by the Anglo-Normans started to spread around the island hand in hand with their gradual conquest since 1170. They held mainly the eastern and south-eastern coast with towns such as Dublin, Limerick, Cork, Waterford or Wexford. In the north, they held two significant castles – Dunluce and Carrickfergus. However, the invaders integrated into the indigenous society and started using the local Irish language. Before 1500's, the English language had nearly vanished from the island as a whole and retreated only to a small area around Dublin called the Pale (Macafee ix).

Finally, the successful attempts to take control over the island came after the Elizabethan and during the Cromwellian period. Under the reign of James I, or more precisely between

⁵ Or „formative stocks“, as Hale would call it (Hale 81).

⁶ Those were usually names containing “wick” or “ford” for Viking and fjord, like Wicklow or Waterford (Todd 21).

the years 1610-1625, all of the land belonging to the Irish Catholic landowners was confiscated⁷ and large numbers of English and Scottish⁸ Protestant settlers were invited to move to Ireland to ensure its loyalty to the Crown and to the Church of England.

This phenomenon, generally referred to as the Plantation, was a significant turnabout in the island's linguistic development. The south of Ireland was settled mostly by the "planters" from West Midlands whereas the north received thousands of newcomers from the north of England and Scotland. Though the Irish population was still prevailing, it is estimated that in 1641 Ulster had about 100,000 Scots and 20,000 English inhabitants (Braidwood 6). This wave of immigration altered the linguistic landscape significantly and its consequences are still evident in the English language of Ireland today (Macafee x).

It is interesting to note here, that the current Irish English, or Hiberno-English⁹ is much closer to the language of Elizabethan era than the one spoken on the mainland nowadays¹⁰. The reason for this might be a relative isolation of the island and also the importance of language for maintaining social identity. In Ireland, language was and still is a great social marker indicating not only the speaker's position in the society, but also their religious background.

⁷ The native lords of Ireland were defeated in 1607 and left the country. Their departure is also known as Flight of the Earls (Hickey 109).

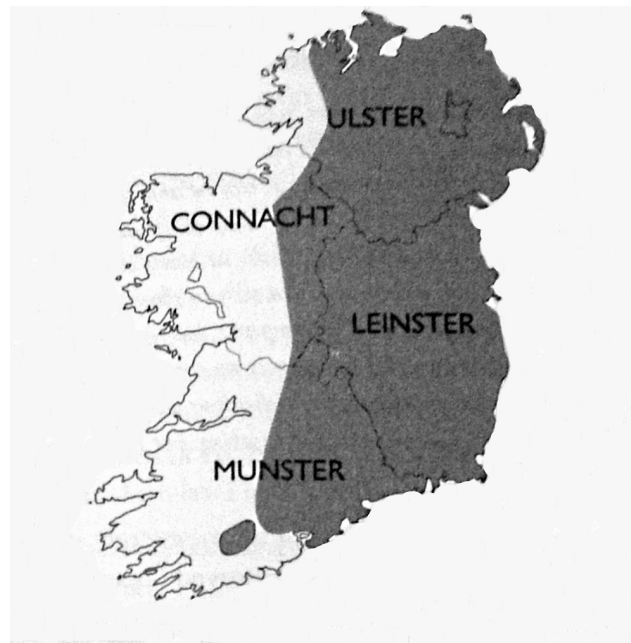
⁸ The choice of the new settlers is not at all surprising given the fact that James I. was of Scottish origin.

⁹ The name, Hiberno-English, comes from the historical Latin name for the island, Hibernia. This term can stand for the English language of the island as a whole or, more precisely, of the dialect prevailing in the Republic of Ireland.

¹⁰ One of the many examples are constructions with object before past participle. This structure was lost in standard dialects after the sixteenth century but retained in some non-standard ones including Hiberno-English (Burchfield 257). More details may be found in John Harris' article *The Hiberno-English "I've it Eaten" Construction: What is it and where does it come from?* (in Ó Baoioll 1985). Another example given by Burchfield is "yous" as a form for second person plural used in present-day Irish and Scots dialects analogical to fifteenth-century development (Burchfield 114).

After the Plantation, English spread quickly owing to the considerable help of Penal Laws¹¹. The Irish people who refused to give up their native language and the Catholic religion were gradually moved to less hospitable regions. In Ulster's case, such regions were in the south and west of the county. This created an unusual language and social border which led to a separate linguistic development in Ulster. As a result, the accents in Northern Ireland are less homogenous and they appear to be very different from the rest of the island. Due to these demographical changes, there can be found no Gaeltacht¹² areas in Northern Ireland such as there are in the Republic of Ireland (Hickey 92).

[1] The spread of English in the seventeenth century (Todd 53).



¹¹ The so-called Penal Laws were numerous anti-Catholic rules and restrictions introduced in Ireland throughout the 17th and 18th century. Catholics were for example excluded from most public offices, barred from membership in parliament and holding armed forces. There were numbers of restrictions on their ability to hold or buy land or even gain higher education. Also intermarriage with Protestants was not allowed (Hickey 110).

¹² Gaeltacht is an Irish Gealic expression for Irish-speaking regions. Such areas receive governmental subsidies and can be found mostly in the western parts of the Island, like Donegal, Mayo, Galway, Kerry or the Aran Islands.

As the map above illustrates, nearly half of the Ireland's population was speaking English as their first language by 1700 (Macafee x). This number had not changed much for the following century. What is more, there were even successful attempts upon the revival of the indigenous language from the end of the 18th century¹³. It is estimated, that in 1812 there were still over one and a half million people unable to speak or understand English (Hickey 112). However, the position of Irish Gaelic was irretrievably lost when the Great Famine struck upon Ireland for several times between 1845 and 1852. Thus the land lost approximately two and a half million of mostly Irish-speaking inhabitants by death and emigration. It was the whole third of the then population of Ireland (Todd 75)¹⁴.

Due to this course of events, Ireland was by then fully anglicised and remained as such to this day. Irish Gaelic was almost entirely obliterated. Still, the language situation was far from being homogenous. This was especially the case in the north where, owing to the differing proportion of Irish, Scottish and English inhabitants in the individual regions, several different accents and dialects arose. Owing to its ethnic diversity, the north of Ireland became much more disintegrated in terms of dialect than the rest of the island.

Taking everything into account, it is not surprising that numerous features of both Irish and Scottish influence can be traced in the current English language in Ulster. Often, they are very remote from what an EFL learner expects from the English language. Hence, some specific examples will be discussed in the following sections.

¹³ This was done as a part of the so-called Celtic Revival later supported by e.g. W. B. Yeats or Douglas Hyde, the future first president of the Irish Free State.

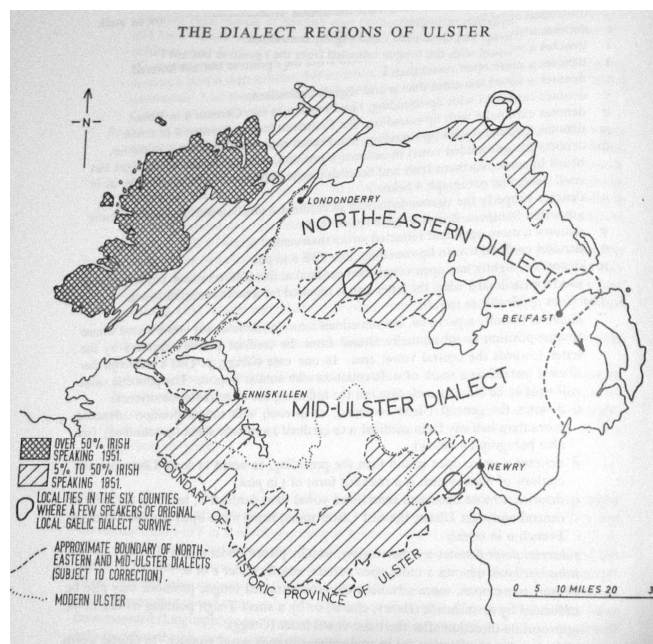
¹⁴ Price gives a much smaller number: 20-25% of the whole population. However, he does not give the total number of inhabitants (10).

2.2 Regional varieties

Generally speaking, when we listen to a native speaker, we may assess where they come from judging solely from their speech. According to Wells, accents are very “powerful indicators of geographical identity” (*Accents* 8). All regional varieties contain a vast array of distinctive features in pronunciation. Some of them are well known and associated with specific regions. Nevertheless, this division is never that simple and, although taking up a relatively small area, Northern Ireland appears to be geographically very heterogeneous in terms of pronunciation.

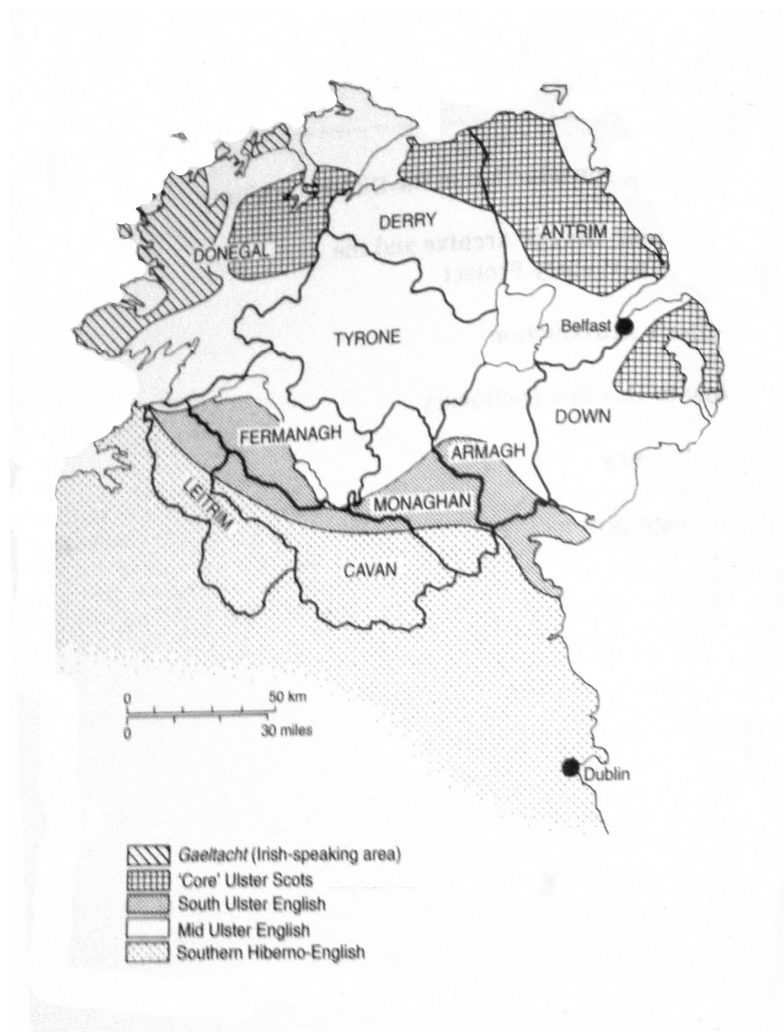
Ulster apparently owes a lot to its tangled historical development for the current diverse linguistic environment. The individual features of pronunciation differ significantly throughout the region. Consequently, the linguistic classification of the Northern Irish accents varies in individual specialist publications. As the map below illustrates, in the mid-sixties, Adams identified only two distinct dialects - the North-Eastern and the Mid-Ulster one (*Ulster* 1).

[2] The former classification of Ulster Dialects (Adams, *Ulster* 1).



In the present day, three major dialect areas are generally distinguished in Northern Ireland: Ulster Scots, Mid-Ulster English and South-Ulster English (Macafee viii). The following map illustrates their approximate regional distribution.

[3] The current distribution of accents in Ulster (Macafee viii).



Nevertheless, this division is not final and universally accepted. Douglas-Cowie, for example, mentions only Ulster Scots and Mid-Ulster English as separate varieties, leaving South-Ulster English aside as a minor and very vague accent blending in Hiberno-English (Douglas-Cowie, *Sociolinguistic* 533).

To offer a full overview of the NIr accents, all the three varieties listed by Macafee will be mentioned in the following chapters (2.2.1 – 2.2.3). However, as the South-Ulster accent is spoken by a very limited number of speakers, it will not be reflected in the following parts of the work. Hence, to simplify the terminology, the term Ulster English will be used as a hyperonym for both Mid-Ulster English and South-Ulster English. Thus, further in the text, we will inspect only the two varieties of Northern Irish English (NIrE), Ulster Scots (UlsS) and Ulster English (UlsE).

It is also important to note that although this classification is based on certain characteristic features common to the regions, there are still numerous differences within each one of them and that the geographical borders are never clear-cut.

2.2.1 Ulster Scots

This variety, sometimes also called Scotch-Irish, can be heard mostly in northern parts of counties Down and Londonderry and central Antrim. There is also a large Ulster Scots-speaking area in Donegal, right behind the Northern Irish borders¹⁵. These are the areas which received more waves of Scottish immigrants even after the Plantation period (Hale 88). Consequently, the local language was greatly influenced by the Scottish settlers and is sometimes classified as a variant of Scots dialect (Hale 82). As such, it has been given much attention from linguists. Furthermore, it also has its own written form which is often very different from the English spelling.

The impact of Scots on the NIr accents is visible mainly in the vowel system which is very different from the one of Hiberno-English. It is typical for longer vowel sounds (often even diphthongs becoming longer monophthongs) and frequent cases of elision, i.e. omission of certain consonants, especially in the final position (Adams, *Ulster* 1). These two and numerous other features and examples are discussed in section 2.4.

¹⁵ The Ulster Scots areas can also be sub-classified separately as North-Eastern Ulster Scots and Donegal Ulster Scots (Hale 81).

2.2.2 Mid-Ulster English

Mid-Ulster English, also known as Ulster Anglo-Irish¹⁶ covers the largest area of Northern Ireland. The dialect is largely based on English, or more precisely on North West England and West Midlands speech¹⁷, yet there is a considerable Scottish influence. For this reason, it is not as linguistically homogenous as the previously mentioned dialect (Braidwood 8).

Apart from its diverse roots, it is remarkable for its ability to retain numerous archaic English forms¹⁸. According to Braidwood, the main reason why the archaisms survived in the local language is that there has always been a rather high proportion of people living in the country to those inhabiting urban areas (9)¹⁹. Thus, it was much more difficult for the modern tendencies in the language to spread.

As Mid-Ulster English is the most widely used dialect in the region, it is often considered the standard Northern Irish dialect. As such, it is frequently referred to simply as Ulster English (Hale 80). For this reason, it has been given the most attention in linguistic research and will be also the key source for both the theoretical and practical part of this work.

2.2.3 South-Ulster English

Unlike the Mid-Ulster English, this variety is spoken by the smallest number of people. The South-Ulster English is very close to Hiberno-English which prevails in the Republic of Ireland. From the three Ulster accents, it is the one with the strongest influence of the

¹⁶ Wells, *Accents* 437.

¹⁷ We can see elements from Lancashire, Derbyshire, Gloucestershire, but even Somerset or Devon (Adams, *Ulster 2*).

¹⁸ Some examples of archaisms which remained in NIrE were mentioned in chapter 2.1. Furthermore, *light* can be pronounced like *late*, *meat* like *mate*, *beard* like *bared* etc (Macaffee xi). For more information see Braidwood.

¹⁹ Braidwood gives some 47% of people living in rural areas in 1964 and states that the number has fallen from 57% in 1911 (9).

indigenous Gaelic language (Macafee xi). It can be heard mainly in the southern parts of Fermanagh, Armagh and Monaghan (the last one is already a part of the Republic of Ireland).

There are certain Irish Gaelic-based features specific for this particular accent. This is, for example, the lengthening of consonants between two vowels or, very interestingly, the development of an additional vowel between /r/ and /m/, thus [farəm] for *farm* (Adams, *Ulster 3*)²⁰.

2.3 Social varieties

The distinction of accents according to regions only is not the only one. There are several social accent types stretching through Northern Ireland. Hence, the language in Ulster differs not only regionally but also depending on the speaker's social background and on the context of situation. The following four major categories are generally identified.

The farthest from RP is the *local vernacular* which has numerous variations depending on the particular region and is used mainly by working-class speakers. The *careful vernacular* is used by the speakers of the same social background as the previous type, yet it serves for more formal situations (Douglas-Cowie, *Sociolinguistic* 533).

Localized standard is the variety that is perceived as the most correct and the most desirable in formal conversations. As mentioned above, Mid-Ulster English, the variety spoken by the middle and upper-middle class in central Ulster is viewed as the most appropriate one for Northern Ireland²¹.

²⁰ Moreover, Adams mentions that the accent also has a distinct intonation pattern (Adams, *Ulster 3*). Nevertheless, this information has not been further specified in his work or repeated in other resources.

²¹ For further details see Adams, *Ulster* and Milroy.

The last type, *RP-influenced speech*, is believed to provoke mixed or even negative feelings to the listeners in Northern Ireland (Douglas-Cowie, *Sociolinguistic* 542). To support this, Douglas-Cowie mentions a study conducted on Protestant and Catholic children (*Sociolinguistic* 542-543). In general, it revealed that the Protestant pupils have a better ability to understand RP than those of a Catholic background. Protestant families consider RP necessary to attain higher social status whereas the Catholics may view it as imposed and false.

The Catholic versus Protestant issue is still very much alive here and is reflected in the language. According to the author's personal experience, the local people are able or at least attempt to identify the religious belief of other people from the language they use. Discussing and guessing one's roots and background based on their accent is also a frequent conversation topic. According to Douglas-Cowie, the differing social accents "encompass quite a lot of linguistic variation on different levels which, to the native listener, contains interesting social innuendos not immediately obvious to the outsider" (*Sociolinguistic* 535).

It is also worth mentioning that the phenomenon of code-switching is quite common in Northern Ireland²². Speakers are usually able to use more than one social accent depending on the circumstances they are in or the people they are interacting with. However, the varieties used may change rapidly even within one conversation or sentence (Douglas-Cowie, *Sociolinguistic* 537).

²² For further details see Douglas-Cowie, *Linguistic code-switching*.

2.4 Phonological and phonetic analysis of Northern Irish accents

This section focuses on the most prominent dissimilarities between RP and NIrE moving gradually from segmental to suprasegmental features. As for the segmental features, such as vowels and consonants, attention is predominantly paid to the variations in phonetic realization, i.e. the differences in realization of a given phoneme (Wells, *Accents* 73). In NIr accents, this is generally the case with vowels and diphthongs especially, as discussed in 2.4.1, and consonants, such as the occurrence of the dark vs. clear /l/ (see 2.4.2.1).

Another common approach to a variety comparison is the phonotactic distribution. This is “the set of phonetic contexts in which [a phoneme] may occur” (Wells, *Accents* 75). As a characteristic example, the incidence of the consonant /r/ in all environments in NIrE, unlike in RP, is discussed in 2.4.2.2.

Tone, stress and intonation are generally classified among suprasegmental features. From the areas mentioned, only the question of intonation will be addressed here, namely in section 2.4.3, as this is also one of the most characteristic and very prominent features of the NIr accents.

2.4.1 Vowel system

The vowel system is generally believed to be the most characteristic feature of the Ulster accents (Wells, *Accents* 438). To understand the individual peculiarities and allow them to stand out, it is felicitous to compare them with RP. In this respect, we can draw on the following charts based on Wells’ research.

If we analyse the first two tables, we may notice immediately that the range of vowel sounds is significantly narrower in NIrE [5] if compared to RP [4]²³. Certain phonemes have a rather different quality in Ulster, e.g. /e/ as /ɛ/ or /ʊ/ as /u/, while others are missing

²³ For further information about this typology, see Wells, *Accents* 168-178.

entirely. This is the case especially with the centring diphthongs such as /ɪə, eə, ʊə/. The reason for this loss of diphthongs is given mainly by a phenomenon called rhoticity. Hence, it is addressed into greater detail in the corresponding subchapter.

[4] Vowel system of RP (Wells, *Accents* 119).

ɪ	ʊ	i:		u:	ɪə	ʊə
e		eɪ	ɔɪ	əʊ	eə	ɜ:
	ʌ					ɔ:
æ	ɒ	aɪ		aʊ		ɑ:

[5] Vowel system of NIrE (Wells, *Accents* 438).

ɪ		i			u
ɛ	ʌ	e			o
	(ɒ)	aɪ	ɔɪ	a	ɔ
				a	ɔ
				au	

For a more practical comparison of the two accents, we may use table [6] which illustrates the vowel incidence in standard lexical sets as introduced by Wells (*Accents* xviii-xix). A closer look reveals considerable changes in terms of vowel quality (or timbre) and vowel quantity (length). However, as the varieties in Ulster are very diverse, numerous differing realizations may occur throughout the region. Some of the examples given in [6] are therefore mere generalizations. Such cases were marked by the author with an asterisk and will be discussed more closely in the immediately following subchapter.

[6] Lexical incidence of vowels in RP and NIrE (based on Wells, *Accents* 120 and 438).

	RP	NIrE		RP	NIrE		RP	NIrE
KIT	ɪ	ɪ	FLEECE	i:	i	NEAR	ɪə	ɪr
DRESS	e	ɛ	FACE	eɪ	e*	SQUARE	eə	ɛr
TRAP	æ	a	PALM	ɑ:	a	START	ɑ:	ar
LOT	ɒ	ɒ, ɔ	THOUGHT	ɔ:	ɔ	NORTH	ɔ:	ɔr
STRUT	ʌ	ʌ	GOAT	əʊ	o	FORCE	ɔ:	or
FOOT	ʊ	u	GOOSE	u:	u	CURE	ʊə	ur
BATH	ɑ:	a	PRICE	aɪ	aɪ*	HAPPY	ɪ	e, ɪ
CLOTH	ɒ	ɔ	CHOICE	ɔɪ	ɔɪ	LETTER	ə	ər
NURSE	ɜ:	ʌr	MOUTH	aʊ	au*	COMMA	ə	ə

2.4.1.1 Vowel quality

It goes without saying that the quality of a vowel depends on the position of the tongue and lips. As we can see in the table above, the phonetic realization of certain sounds is rather different in NIrE than in RP. Namely, this is the case of /e/ which is realised with a more open vertical position of the tongue thus producing [ɛ]. The same can be said about /æ/. Although Wells records only the open front realization of this phoneme, [a], Trudgill and Hughes claim that its pronunciation differs throughout the region and may be realized as [æ], [a] or [ɑ] (29). Nevertheless, based on the recordings acquired for the purposes of this work, we may agree that [a] represents the most common realization for /æ/. Also the situation of /ɒ/ is more complicated. This generally open back vowel may be pronounced as a more close [ɔ] or even [o]. Finally, /ɪ/ can be realized with lips more spread as [i], whereas /ʊ/ becomes slightly more rounded [u].

Nevertheless, monophthongs are not the only vowels which undergo changes in timbre. We have already mentioned the loss of centring diphthongs. Yet, some of the remaining

diphthongs may have very unusual allophonic variations depending on the region and social class of the speaker.

Firstly, /eɪ/ is often realized as [ɛ:] in the final position. Thus, it would be [dɛ:] and [wɛ:] for *day* and *way* (Wells, *Accents* 440). The plural forms of these words would also keep this realisation (Trudgill and Hughes 77). Pre-consonantly /eɪ/ is ranging between [ɛə] and [iə]. Hence, *pain* could be pronounced as [piən] or *gate* as [giət] (Trudgill and Hannah 90). Such pronunciation can be clearly heard on the enclosed audio recordings.

Secondly, further different realizations can be found for /aɪ/. Expressions like *price*, *mine*, *riot* or *lie* would be pronounced with [əi] in UlS areas and [æɪ] in other parts of NI (Wells, *Accents* 443 based on Gregg 173). In Belfast, this diphthong is slightly modified and closer to [ɛɪ] (Trudgill and Hughes 78).

Finally, one of the most specific features of the NI accents is the realization of the /aʊ/ diphthong. Unlike the two preceding examples, this one is often very different even from the Scots varieties²⁴. It varies greatly throughout the region and, apparently, it is also an “extremely sensitive social marker” (Wells, *Accents* 443). While a speaker of working-class origin may pronounce it as [ɛʊ], [æʊ] or [ɑə], a middle-class speaker would prefer [ɔʊ] or even [ɔi] (Trudgill and Hannah 90). As this diphthong is present in very frequent words such as *now*, *how*, *house*, *down* etc., it can make the speech of the Northerners sound a bit ridiculous to a non-native speaker’s ear.

2.4.1.2 Vowel length

Another significant anomaly that may be noticed while listening to a speaker from Northern Ireland is the length of vowel sounds. Without any doubt, the difference in vowel length before a final voiced or voiceless consonant is a significant feature in English. As

²⁴ Scottish accents maintained /ʊ/ for words like *house*, which was common to all varieties of English before the Great Vowel Shift in the medieval era (Trudgill and Hughes 71).

Roach puts it, “it has become the most important factor in distinguishing between the final /p, t, k/ and /b, d, g/” (34). Hence, numerous accents of English language would pronounce the same phoneme /ɪ/ slightly longer in *kid* than in *kit*. However, in the case of the NIr accents, the contrast in vowel length is nearly lost.

In other words, UlsS and UlsE generally make no difference between short and long vowels and use their half long allophonic variants instead. As we can see in [6], there are the same vowel sounds in pairs such as *foot* and *goose*, *trap* and *palm* or *lot* and *thought*. Similarly, as Wells points out, words like *stock* and *stalk* or *cot* and *caught* may sound as homophones in some NIr and Scottish accents “because the vowel system of these accents contains only a single phoneme in the open back area” (*Accents* 77).

However, NIrE has not lost its long vowels entirely. A very specific development appears there for vowels /ɛ, a, ɔ/ if they are used word-finally or before any other consonant than /p, t, ʃ, k/. In such environment, the longer allophones of the three vowels are used. This phenomenon is also known as Ulster Lengthening (Wells, *Accents* 439). Thus, for example, *bed* is pronounced as [bɛ:d] or *pod* as [pɔ:d]. To a more limited extent, Ulster Lengthening applies also for /i, u, o/. Such vowels are lengthened before /v, ð, z, r/ or at the end of the word (Wells, *Accents* 439). Nevertheless, this lengthening rule is applicable mainly in monosyllabic words. In polysyllabic ones, there exist certain exceptions. Depending on a specific region, expressions consisting of more than one syllable may keep the short realization. Therefore, a speaker from Belfast may pronounce *mess* as [mɛ:s] but *message* as [mɛsɪdʒ] (Wells, *Accents* 440).

The vowel length is probably one of the features that came to Ireland through the Scots dialect. The Scots retained longer /a/, /ɛ/ and /u/ which were very common in Old English. Back then, pronouncing *two* as [twa:] was perfectly normal and it still is in the north of Ireland (Adams, *Ulster* 1).

2.4.2 Consonant system

The consonant systems of various accents usually do not differ as much as the vowel systems do in general. According to Wells, if any differences exist, they “relate principally to /θ, ð/, /ŋ/, and /h/” (*Accents* 178). This, however, is not the case with the Ulster varieties. Unlike in the Republic of Ireland, or more precisely, in areas where Hiberno-English is spoken, NIrE retains the two dental fricatives /θ/ and /ð/. Contrary to this, Hiberno-English speakers tend to replace them simply with alveolar plosives /t/ and /d/, like many EFL speakers do. In this respect, NIrE is in concord with RP.

Nevertheless, other very significant departures from the standard accent can be found in Ulster. These are primarily the lack of dark /l/ (see 2.4.2.1) and, most importantly, the realisation of /r/ in all environments, generally referred to as rhoticity (see 2.4.2.2). Finally, glottalization and elision, phenomena present in some English accents including RP, are also worth mentioning (see 2.4.2.3).

2.4.2.1 *Dark versus clear /l/*

The so-called clear and dark /l/ are both allophones of the same alveolar lateral approximant. The dark allophonic variant is commonly transcribed as [ɫ]. In RP and some other English accents, it usually appears before consonants or word-finally. In such cases it sounds relatively different from the usual clear variant. Roach describes it as “rather similar to an [u] vowel, with the back of the tongue raised” (59). Thus, for example, *cold* is pronounced as [kəʊɫd] and *pull* as [pʊɫ].

Nevertheless, in Ireland and in Ulster in particular, “/l/ is typically clear in all environments” (Wells, *Accents* 446). The only exception is Belfast where the dark [ɫ] frequently appears “in final positions after central vowels” (Wells, *Accents* 446).

2.4.2.2 Rhoticity

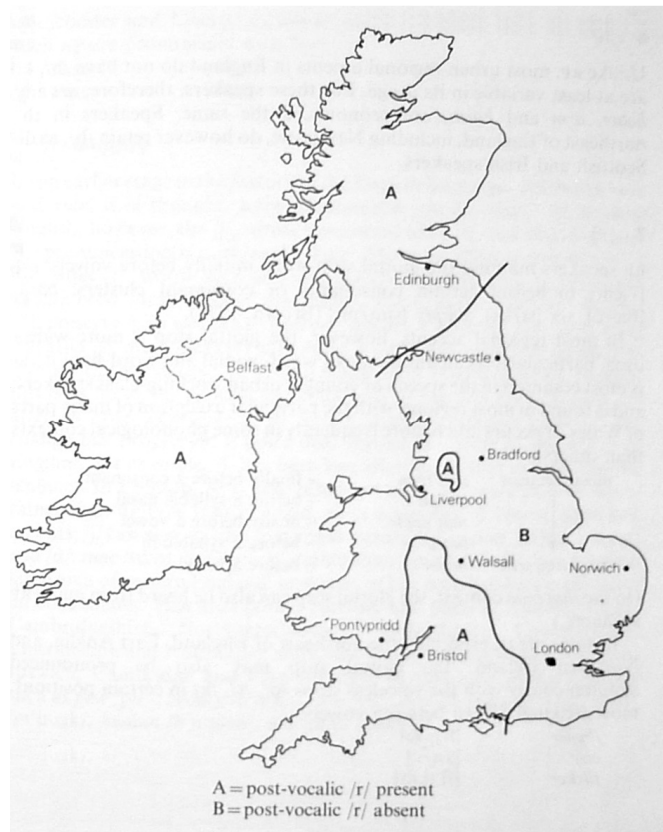
Another approximant, post-alveolar /r/, brings us to a very significant feature of the NIr accents. Substantial differences can be found in the articulation and distribution of this consonant among the individual accents of English. RP, as a key linguistic reference for EFL learners, is a typical representative of what is called a non-rhotic accent. In such accents, /r/ is usually present only in the pre-vocalic position. Thus in words like *car*, *ever*, *hard* or *verse*, /r/ is not pronounced²⁵.

Irish accents, on the other hand, are generally classified as rhotic. However, Ireland is not an exception in this respect. From map [7], it is clear that rhotic accents encompass a significant area of the British Isles. Furthermore, they are widely used throughout North America (Roach 60; Trudgill and Hughes 31). In such varieties, /r/ does not occur only in the pre-vocalic position but also word-finally and before consonants. Hence, it is generally referred to as the post-vocalic /r/. For RP and other non-rhotic accents, this would be possible only in the case of the so-called “linking r” or “intrusive r”²⁶. Contrary to this, Scottish and Irish accents do not use intrusive /r/ at all (Trudgill and Hughes 32).

²⁵ Thus pronounced as /kɑ:/, /evə/, /hɑ:d/, /vɜ:s/. For further reference and more examples see Roach 60.

²⁶ Linking /r/ occurs usually in connected speech in cases where there is a word ending with /r/ followed by a word starting with a vowel sound, e.g. *car engine* /kɑ:r'endʒɪn/. Intrusive /r/ appears in some phrases although there is no r in spelling, such as *draw up* /drɔ:r ʌp/. Although the intrusive /r/ used to be perceived as incorrect in the past, nowadays it is quite normal and frequent even in non-rhotic accents (Trudgill and Hughes 31-32).

[7] The distribution of rhotic (A) and non-rhotic (B) accents on the British Isles
(Trudgill and Hughes 33).



According to Hughes and Trudgill the loss of post-vocalic /r/ lead to the development of /ɪə/ and /ɜ:/ during the history of the English language (34). As there is no need to use these vowels in rhotic accents, it only adds up to the aforementioned narrower range of vowels used in the Nlr accents. Subsequently, this phenomenon has caused the absence of centring diphthongs in NlrE and also the differences in realization of certain phonemes, as presented in Wells' classification of the standard lexical sets illustrated by [6]. Thus *near*, *square* and *cure* become [nɪr], [skwɛr] and [kjur]²⁷. At the same time, syllabic /r/²⁸ is quite

²⁷ Instead of /nɪə/, /skwɛə/ and /kjʊə/.

²⁸ Further in the text it is symbolized as [r] (see the list of symbols in Wells, *Accents* xx, or Roach vii).

common in rhotic accents. This means that although the RP pronunciation of *particular* is /pətɪkjələ/, speakers of a rhotic accent would be more likely to use [pɹɪtkjəlɹ̩] (Roach 81).

Finally, except for the distribution of /r/, there is also a slight difference in its realisation. In rhotic accents, /r/ is pronounced as “a retroflex, frictionless continuant” (Trudgill and Hughes 76). It is close to the RP word-initial /r/, yet the tip of the tongue is pulled more backwards.

2.4.2.3 *Elision and glottalisation*

In this subchapter, we are going to address two features which occur both in NIrE and RP, and are usually used in rapid colloquial speech. Although it can be said that students should not learn how to use the means of colloquial speech in a foreign language at school, Roach argues that it is highly desirable for them to be at least aware of such phenomena (53 and 127). Otherwise, if glottalisation or elision appears in a native-speaker’s speech, it may conceal or alter the meaning of the words.

The disappearance of a sound is generally referred to as elision. In other words, Daniel Jones simply defines elision as “dropping of a sound which once existed or which still exists in precise speech” (*Outline* 133). In NIrE, it is usually /ð/ that can be omitted in rapid speech in initial or medial position in unstressed syllables. In such cases as these, the neighbouring vowel is lengthened to compensate the missing consonant. Thus, we may encounter *mother* pronounced as [ma:ə] or even [mɔ:ə] (Wells, *Accents* 447). In initial position it may disappear in cases as [‘əm ’ɛr] for *them there* (Wells, *Accents* 447). Furthermore, /d/ can be lost completely in the final position after /n/ or /l/, for example in *hand* or *old*. This is a typical “mark of Scottish ancestry” (Adams, *Ulster* 1). UlsS speakers also tend to drop /l/ in the final position, e.g. in *call* or *full* (Todd 60).

Glottalisation (or glottalling), on the other hand, affects primarily voiceless consonants. It appears when a glottal stop [ʔ] is inserted right before or fully replaces an unstressed

consonant. This sound is produced when a consonant is pronounced with a “completely closed glottis” (Roach 53). According to Roach, such articulation is quite common for “younger speakers of RP” (53). It is also especially characteristic for the UlsS accent. In NlrE in general, this is mainly the case of /t/.

The aforementioned consonant usually undergoes such transformation when placed between two vowels or word-finally in expressions like *water*, *butter* or *got* (Todd 60). Apart from intervocalic and word-final glottalling, /t/ may turn into [ʔt] or even [ʔ] also before syllabic /l/ and /n/²⁹, thus [bʌʔŋ] *button* or [bʌʔl] *bottle*. Wells informs that this is generally the case in County Antrim (*Accents* 446). In Belfast and County Londonderry, we may also find glottalisation of intervocalic /p/ like [peʔpr] for *pepper* (Wells, *Accents* 445-446).

2.4.3 Intonation

This field encompasses probably the most striking difference from both RP and Hiberno-English. Contrary to these two, in terms of intonation, NlrE uses something called “high rising terminal” (HRT), “upspeak” or “uptalk” (Wells, *English* 37).

Intonation is formed by the alteration of pitch during one’s speech. This means that “in connected speech the voice-pitch is continually rising and falling” (Jones, *Outline* 149). For most of the English accents the general type of intonation used for complete statements, commands and WH-questions is the falling intonation. However, a speaker from Northern Ireland would usually employ the rising tone in such cases.

People from Ulster tend to end their statements as if they were “asking a question, [or] checking whether something is the case or not, rather than giving information” (Wells, *English* 37). Generally speaking, rising intonation usually appears “in sense groups which are not final, i.e. when a continuation of some sort is expressed or implied” (Jones, *Outline*

²⁹ In text they may be symbolized as [l̥] and [n̥] (see the list of symbols in Wells, *Accents* xx, or Roach vii).

154). Therefore, a non-native speaker who is not familiar with HRT might be confused when in interaction with a NIrE speaker. If the falling tone is used in NIrE, it is frequently for exclamations or echo questions. There is also no complete fall in Ulster speech as there is in RP, but the “falling tone moves only to mid level” (Wells, *Accents* 447).

Nowadays, rising intonation is not restricted to parts of Northern Ireland only. This phenomenon has spread quite recently especially among young generations in other parts of the English speaking world³⁰. New Zealand is believed to be the original source of this intonation variance. Wells adds that there are other possible sources, such as Australia, California or “British regional accents” (*English* 37). Northern Irish accent is probably one of them. Here, the rising intonation is not only the matter of young generations but it is systematically used throughout the whole society.

As we have seen above, there are numerous ways in which NIr accents differ from RP. For the purposes of teaching accents to EFL learners, it is certainly beneficial for a teacher to have a comprehensible synopsis at their disposal. Hence, chart [8] offers a brief overview summarizing the most prominent variations appearing in UlsS and UlsE.

[8] Characteristic differences between RP and NIrE.

	RP	NIrE
Vowel quality	/e/	[ɛ]
	/æ/	[a] or [ɑ]
	/ɒ/	[ɔ] or [o]
	/ʊ/	[u]
	/eɪ/	[ɛ:], [ɛə] or [iə]

³⁰ Wells claims that it has not been sooner than in 1980's (*English* 37).

	/aɪ/	[əi], [aɛ] or [ɛɪ]
	/aʊ/	[ɛʊ] ~ [ɑə], or [ɔʊ] ~ [ɔi]
Vowel length	Difference in vowel length before voiced and voiceless consonants	No difference in vowel length before voiced and voiceless consonants
		Ulster Lengthening: /ɛ, a, ɔ/ before any consonant except for /p, t, tʃ, k/ and /i, u, o/ before /v, ð, z, r/ and word-finally lengthened
Consonants	Dark /l/ before consonants and word-finally	Clear /l/ in all environments
	Non-rhotic accent: post-vocalic /r/ absent	Rhotic accent: post-vocalic /r/ present
	Glottalisation and elision present in rapid speech	Glottalisation and elision present in rapid speech
Intonation	Falling intonation in statements, commands and WH questions	Rising intonation in statements, commands and WH questions

3. The use of Northern Irish accents in TEFL

In the present day, there is a general tendency to shift more focus on the development of speaking and listening skills in TEFL. Nevertheless, some experts claim that, although we may find more listening and speaking exercises in English language classrooms, pronunciation still does not receive sufficient attention (Kelly 13). Generally speaking, if pronunciation is covered in English lessons, students are usually provided with one standard variety (this being predominantly RP or General American) to model their own speech on. Very little attention, if any, is paid to other English accents.

The idea of using different accents in TEFL is certainly not new. Since English is a global language with a large number of native speakers, it is understandable that it has developed numerous regional or social varieties which are often markedly different from one another. Thus, there has been an ongoing discussion among linguists and language teachers whether other varieties should be also included in TEFL³¹. Harmer agrees that for students at the beginner and elementary level a “prestigious variety of language should be used as a model” (24). Gradually, as they gain confidence and become more fluent in speech production, they can be “for the purpose of widening [their] receptive competence gradually exposed to other important regional types” (Gimson 301).

There is no doubt that once a student becomes more confident in English, he or she should be aware of the different language varieties and allowed to “absorb” them (Harmer 24). It is good for the students to have a stable reference norm. Still, they also need to learn “not a variety of English, but about Englishes, their similarities and differences, issues involved in intelligibility [and] the strong links between language and identity” (Jenkins 173 in Harmer 21). Hence, through providing various regional and social accents, teachers can raise the awareness of their students about the remarkable variability of the English language. Nevertheless, at the same time, Harmer warns that the teacher should make sure

³¹ Compare Gimson 301 and Harmer 24.

that the students “are not swamped by diversity, but rather guided gently into an appreciation of the global phenomenon that is English” (Harmer 22).

Based on these arguments, a lesson focused on Northern Irish accents was prepared for intermediate to upper-intermediate students of a Czech grammar school. As shown in sections 2.2 and 2.3, the individual accents in the given region are very diverse. Hence, even though the students were informed about the individual different varieties during the lesson, they were exposed only to audio recordings representing speech close to the most prestigious accent in the area, the Mid-Ulster English (see 3.1.2.1). Initially, examples of Ulster Scots were gathered for the purposes of this work as well. However, following the aforementioned Harmer’s advice, the author decided not to include them in the sample lessons.

Once decided which variety of English to employ, it is important to choose which techniques and activities a teacher can apply. When teaching pronunciation in general, it is necessary to cover both the key sides – reception and production. Nevertheless, since the NIr accents are not widely used, there is no need for the students to incorporate the individual features of pronunciation in their active verbal performance. For this reason, activities focused on receptive skills outnumber those dealing with production in this case.

There are several ways how to approach listening activities. Nowadays, the top-down approach is considered to be the most effective one, as it appears to be the closest one to the way we listen in real life. This means that the activities prepared for the lesson move gradually from listening for general information to focusing on specific linguistic detail. Furthermore, it is important to decide whether to bring the attention of the students to the issues of pronunciation prior to the listening activity itself or let them notice and discuss it afterwards. Kelly argues that “putting the listening exercise first might ... make the pronunciation elements of the lesson more of an issue with regard to comprehension, and more likely to be noticed by the students” (21). Hence, throughout the lesson on NIr accents students are exposed to the recordings and left to spot the differences in

pronunciation by themselves. Afterwards, they are asked to draw their own rules and conclusions through generalizing from examples. In other words, the teacher decided to employ the inductive approach to transmit the new linguistic information to her students. Through their own observations and playing with the language, the students may be more likely to understand and memorize the knowledge (Kelly 22). Consequently, noticing activities dominate the exercises focused on the development of receptive skills. In addition to this, minimal pairs are used by the teacher as examples in her presentation as they are suitable for illustrating differences in individual phonemes.

For practicing productive skills, Scrivener proposes modelling as the key strategy (284). Even though adopting the features of NIRE is not among the objectives of the lesson, it may be beneficial for the students to be allowed to play with the language. Imitating the accent can have a certain comical effect and help build positive atmosphere in the classroom. Additionally, shadow reading, i.e. reading aloud while a recording is played, can be used for modelling intonation as this feature of NIr speech is quite difficult to imitate independently (Harmer 250). Another activity suitable for intonation practice is reading dialogues which was also incorporated into the lesson plan (Scrivener 285).

Apart from intonation, the teacher selected several other specific features of NIr accents to be exposed to her students. These are the differences in vowel sounds (vowel length and quality) and rhoticity. It is understandable that this selection was not done randomly. The aforementioned features are the most prominent ones in NIRE. What is more, Kelly recommends teachers to pay attention to vowel differences between individual accents when working on receptive skills (15). Rhotic accents are suitable to highlight the contrasting pronunciation of /r/ in RP (MacCarthy 59). Similarly, accents using rising intonation are useful in comparison with other intonation patterns (Kelly 15)³².

³² As an example of such accent Kelly mentions the Australian one (15).

3.1 Lesson plan

This subchapter describes the preparation process done by the author prior to introducing the Nlr accents to her students. The actual plan that was used by the teacher in the sample lessons is available at the end of the thesis (see Appendix II). This is a fundamental document which contains essential information about the individual stages of the lesson, brief teacher's instructions and notes, tapescripts to the recordings with transcribed stretches of speech, and a key to the exercises in the student handout.

In addition to this, the following paragraphs develop and add comments to the aforementioned document. Section 3.1.1 defines the objectives of the sample lessons. Subsequently, section 3.1.2 deals with the teaching materials, the process of their acquisition, their preparation and proposed application in the classroom. Finally, section 3.1.3 concentrates on the description of the individual stages of the lesson and attempts to analyse certain possible unwanted scenarios and perils.

3.1.1 Aims

The overall objective of the lesson is to improve the students' ability to understand the Nlr accents. Although the most attention is paid to reception, the lesson should also offer the students an opportunity to practice some of the features of NlrE in contrast to RP. At the same time, it is desired to have the students think about the differences between the Nlr accents and RP.

Furthermore, the lesson should raise the students' awareness of the existence of numerous different accents of English and provide concise information about the historical and linguistic development in Ireland. Thus, it should also fulfil the requirement of inter-

subject links given by the curriculum and help build cultural awareness and understanding the world in global context³³.

As a result, at the end of the lesson, the students should be more able to realize and appreciate the great diversity of the English language. Moreover, they should improve their ability to recognize certain specific features when listening to NIr speakers and learn to expect these variations to appear in speech, thus make their listening and understanding skills better.

3.1.2 Teaching materials

There is no doubt that when teaching aspects of language connected to pronunciation, and accents in particular, the main attention will be paid to audio materials. Nevertheless, the author had decided to employ more tools to maximize the students' educational experience. This decision was largely motivated by the fact that she wanted to meet the student needs and address learners of different learning styles based on the theories of the VARK model³⁴.

Hence, during the sample lesson, the teacher tried to offer as diverse stimuli as possible. Visual learners are provided with visual aids through the PowerPoint presentation (3.1.2). Auditory learners gain information from the teacher's oral presentation and the recordings of the speech of the native speakers (3.1.1). Students with reading-writing preference may find help especially in the student handout (3.1.3). Finally, kinaesthetic learners who tend to learn through experience may appreciate the exercises aimed at language production, which are available both in the handout and the PowerPoint presentation.

³³ This objective has already been briefly discussed in the introduction. For more detail about the aims set by the national curriculum for foreign language teaching in the Czech Republic (Rámcový vzdělávací program) see Jeřábek 11-13.

³⁴ The VARK or VAK model is a broadly used classification of different learning styles introduced by Neil Fleming. Based on his findings, he identified the following four groups: visual, auditory, reading-writing and kinaesthetic learners.

3.1.2.1 Recordings

As the lesson is focused on a real-life accent, the teacher decided to employ predominantly authentic audio material. Therefore, most of the recordings selected to appear in the sample lesson represent spontaneous speech. This choice was also motivated by the fact that during unscripted communication, the speakers generally tend to reduce their attention to their own performance. This allows the individual features of their accent to stand out.

On the other hand, it may be argued that although authentic materials are certainly valuable, they might be rather “impractical for teachers to use” (Kelly 21). This is especially true if a teacher wants to compare some very specific features of two different accents. Therefore, several methods were employed to gather the audio material.

The volunteers were provided with a document, a recording template, containing two short instructions (see Appendix VI). Firstly, they were asked to introduce themselves briefly in their own words. In this self-introduction, they were advised to mention their origin, education, current occupation and hobbies. Afterwards, they read a short extract from a text selected by the author to contain expressions where the accent variations can appear³⁵. Furthermore, some stretches of spontaneous speech and dialogues were recorded. Thus examples of both unscripted and scripted speech were attained.

Altogether, eight native speakers participated in the aforementioned recordings. Their voices were recorded in March and May 2012 on a private Olympus digital recorder in no scientific conditions. Although the amount of material thus attained was great, its quality was frequently insufficient. Therefore, the author decided to include also secondary resources. At the same time, this was partially done to show that plenty of various recordings are available for the teachers who do not have the opportunity to record the native speakers by themselves. Hence, the voice used in exercises 6 and 7 was taken from

³⁵ For this purpose an extract from an Irish folktale containing numerous incidence of /r/ and /aʊ/ sounds was chosen (see Rolleston 106).

the International Dialects of English Archive internet database and edited by the author to suit the needs of the lesson³⁶.

Having gathered all the required material, the teacher processed it using the Audacity audio programme. She tried to include the sections which could stand as the relevant examples of the typical features of the Mid-Ulster speech, the vowel system, rhoticity and rising intonation. This way she created ten separate recordings numbered according to the exercises in which they were intended to be used. The recordings are available on the attached CD. In the text they are referred to by numbers they were given on the CD as *ex1* – *ex7*³⁷.

Although the lesson is focused on the NIr accents, in the first exercise, we may hear speakers of different origins. The first speaker, for example, is a female university student in her early twenties. She is from Colorado and represents an American accent. Then, chronologically, speaker number three is a young Englishman in his mid-twenties. He was born and raised in Gloucestershire in a well situated family and has been given very good university education. Hence, he was chosen as a representative of an accent close to RP. Finally, the last speaker in this exercise is a 23-years-old female student from Cavan, currently living and studying at a university in Dublin. As her place of birth is very close to the Northern Irish border, we can hear certain traces of a NIr accent in her speech as well³⁸. However, there are also features of the Dublin accent to be heard in her speech³⁹.

³⁶ Apart from the International Dialects of English Archive, also the BBC Voices offer a large database of English accents. Both the websites are a great and reliable source of primary audio material valuable for TEFL and were included in the list of references.

³⁷ “*ex*” meaning exercise and the corresponding number.

³⁸ Rising intonation, pronunciation of *town* as [təʊn].

³⁹ *Studying* pronounced as [stʊdɪŋ], *but* as [bʊtʃ] both of which are examples of Dublin realization of /ʌ/ (Wells, *Accents* 422). The latter also represents the case of /t/ being affricated to /tʃ/ (Wells, *Accents* 434).

As for the NIr speakers, the reason for choosing solely the representatives of the localized standard in the area, the Mid-Ulster accent, has already been briefly discussed in the introduction to chapter 3. The teacher thought it counterproductive and confusing to play several different NIr accents to the students. Thus, the students are allowed to encounter basically just one variety of the language which may sound unusual to them but is still perceived as correct and desirable by the native-speakers. At the same time, it does not fail to represent all the peculiarities of the language used in Ulster.

To meet the characterization of the Mid-Ulster English, the NIr speakers who appear on the recordings were chosen not only according to their origin but also based on their social background. Thus it can be said that all of them come from the middle class and have university education. Their age ranges from twenty to over fifty years. They also come from various parts of Counties Londonderry and Antrim, where Mid-Ulster English is usually spoken.

3.1.2.2 *PowerPoint presentation*

There are two main functions the PowerPoint presentation should serve. Firstly, it supports the teacher's lecture by providing basic notes and structure. Secondly, it is also the key visual aid. As such, it provides maps and definitions of specific new terms to help students absorb the new information effectively. Apart from the maps and the linguistic information, the presentation also contains one exercise created to practice the production of the accent (slide 7).

Altogether, the presentation consists of ten slides from which the first five deal with the historical and linguistic development whereas the second half concentrates on the individual distinctive features of the NIr accents. Like the recordings, the PowerPoint presentation is to be found on the attached CD.

3.1.2.3 Student handout

The key material that the students work with during the lesson is the handout. This two-page document was created by the teacher to allow the students to practice their listening skills. The handout itself is attached to this work (see Appendix III). Its intended use is described in the following chapter (sections 3.1.3.1 – 3.1.3.3) in greater detail.

In the seven exercises provided by this material, the students complete several reception oriented tasks. There are various types of activities including chart completion (exercises 1 and 2), sorting (exercise 3), noticing tasks (exercises 4 and 5) or predicting and listening for specific features together with answering detailed questions (in exercises 6 and 7). With additional teacher instructions, these exercises can also be used for practicing production. Hence through reading the examples in the handout, the students practice pronunciation by the means of imitating or shadow reading.

3.1.3 Stages

When planning the lesson, the teacher had in mind the structure of language learning process offered by Jim Scrivener. In his book, Scrivener identifies the following six stages of student progress in the processing of a new piece of linguistic information (111). In the first stage, the stage of ignorance, the students have no knowledge about the topic. During the following exposure stage, the learners encounter the new item, yet they do not necessarily have to notice or identify it. It is only after the third stage, when they start to realise that there is something new about the language, something difficult to grasp. A curious student will then try to identify some rules and examine the item. This is what is called the stage of understanding. After the students understand the matter, the first practicing may follow. The learners will attempt to use the newly acquired knowledge in their own performance. Finally, through sufficient practice, they will fully incorporate the information in their speech.

Hence, throughout the lesson, the students are exposed to recordings and gradually reveal the individual distinctive features of the accent. It is then up to the learners to draw the particular rules, therefore, we may say, that the leading strategy employed in the organization of this syllabus was the analytic one. However, in case of time shortage, the teacher may occasionally present some of the rules to speed up the process.

Originally, all the selected activities were intended to be used in one 45-minutes lesson in three groups of students of intermediate to upper-intermediate level. As it usually is, the reality was rather different. After the first sample lesson, it was clear, that not just one but two teaching units are needed for a sufficient presentation of the matter. Hence the lesson plan was modified accordingly. Further departures from the original lesson plan will be discussed in the next section.

The following paragraphs briefly describe the intended stages of the lesson. For a better orientation in the text, the chapter was structured into three subsections. The introduction (3.1.3.1) describes the first part of the lesson where the teacher sets the topic and the students receive the basic information about the diversity of English around the world and in Northern Ireland in particular. Section 3.1.3.2 illustrates the individual steps and techniques employed to present the specific features of the NIr accent. Finally, section 3.1.3.3 describes the activities designed to practice the newly gained information.

Apart from introduction, presentation and practice, evaluation is generally included as the fourth stage of a lesson. For the purposes of the diploma thesis, the teacher used a questionnaire to obtain evaluation from the students. Nevertheless, this stage cannot be planned prior to the lesson and is strongly dependent on the results. Therefore it is discussed after the individual sample lessons in section 3.2.3.

3.1.3.1 Introduction

Right from the beginning of the lesson, it is highly important to get the students involved and interested in the topic. Therefore, the teacher may open the lesson by, for example, writing “The Accents of English” on the whiteboard. Subsequently, she may ask them to guess how many accents of English there are in the world. It is expected that the students will offer just small numbers. Hence, the teacher should accept all the possible answers and invite the students to name some of the accents they know. They are likely to list British, American, Australian accents etc.

Finally, the teacher concludes that there is actually no correct answer to this question, as the number of the individual accent is so large. To attract the attention of the students she can mention that there are said to be more than 30 accents only in England. This surprising statement can be used as what Harmer would call a “starting-off point” (367).

At this point, the teacher distributes the handouts and introduces the first exercise. Depending on the level of proficiency of the students, the teacher either allows them to work independently or instructs them to form pairs. The teacher has to make it clear that the task is very demanding. Therefore, it does not matter whether the students give the correct answers. It is more important to focus on the language of the individual speakers and realize the differences between the accents in general.

When the objective of the first exercise is set, the teacher plays the first recording (*ex1.1*). In this audio, all the information about the origin of the speakers is hidden behind a “beep” sound. Therefore the students need to base their answers only on their knowledge of accents. They are expected to have very limited experience in this field, therefore they will be merely guessing. After the listening is finished, the teacher asks the students to give some reasons for their decisions⁴⁰. To check their answers, the students are played the

⁴⁰As for the American speaker (1), the typical features appearing can be e.g. the use of the word *movies* instead of *films* or the different pronunciation of the word *hobbies* especially if compared to how the same

second version of the same recording (*ex1.2*) where the information about the speakers' origin is audible. During this listening, the teacher advises the students to concentrate more on the individual features of the accents. She also invites them to decide which accent was the most difficult to understand or sounded odd to them.

By this time, the learners should be able to notice the diversity of English. The teacher summarizes this idea and concludes that in the given lesson, the class is going to focus on one of the many varieties of the English language. Nevertheless, it is important to make it clear that the teacher does not want the students to start using this accent from that point on. It does not mean that the NIr accents are in any way better than the others and should be used more. At the same time, although there are not many speakers of this accent, some of the features appear in other accents as well. Therefore, the students may encounter this or similar language anywhere in the world or in the media.

Having said that, the teacher starts the PowerPoint presentation using the interactive whiteboard. She goes briefly through the first five slides giving the basic information about the historical and linguistic development in the North of Ireland. This part of the lesson sets the topic into the historical and geographical context. At the same time, the maps provide valuable visual stimuli.

The map of the individual major accents in Ulster shows how varied the language is even on such a small area. Describing this map, the teacher points out that during the lesson, the students will hear only Mid-Ulster English as it is perceived as the most correct variety in the given region. Then it is time to move on to a more practical example and thus to the next stage.

word is pronounced by the British speaker (3). This is a typical example of the correspondence between /ɒ/ in RP and /ɑ/ in General American (see Wells, *Accents* 122).

3.1.3.2 *Presentation*

According to the lesson aims, the teacher should raise the students' awareness of the sound system of the NIr accents during the course. Hence, the students learn to understand the accents and realize their distinctive features. To achieve this, the teacher decided to use primarily listening activities.

Throughout the lesson, the students are exposed to several audio recordings. They are asked to complete the related tasks provided by the student handout. These are mostly discovery activities allowing the students to draw their own conclusions and reveal some rules or patterns on their own. In addition to this, the PowerPoint presentation is used to support the teacher's lecture and summarize the rules. Thus, following the analytic structure of the lesson, the learners listen to a recording first and then deduce some rules. Subsequently, the teacher summarizes those rules using the notes in the PowerPoint presentation.

In each exercise, the students focus on a different feature of the NIr accents. It has already been mentioned above that for the purposes of the lesson, three key features of the NIr accents were chosen to be presented to the students. These are the vowel length and vowel quality, rhoticity and intonation. Apart from these, elision and glottalisation can be briefly mentioned⁴¹. However, none of the exercises focused on it.

Exercise 2

The first one of the reception activities partially returns back to the recording used in the introductory section. In recording *ex2*, the students can hear the voices of the same two Northern Irish speakers as in the first exercise. It is advised to play the whole recording twice. During the first listening, the students are asked to complete the chart in their

⁴¹ For example in exercise 3 where *mountain* is pronounced with a glottal stop as [mʌmʔən]. An example of elision can be found in the same exercise in the word *forest* which is realized by the NIr speaker as [fɔːrɪs].

handout. Subsequently, while the recording is being played for the second time, they should focus on the individual differences of the accent and try to identify them. This is where, using Scrivener's terminology, the learners are shifting from the "exposure" stage to the "noticing" one (Scrivener 112). In other words, we are using the top-down approach to listening where the attention of the learners is gradually driven from general information to the more specific details.

It is expected that the students will notice mainly the changes in vowel sounds, especially in words such as *now* [nəʊ] or *about* [ə'baʊt], *eight* [iət] and *job* [dʒɔ:b]. Nevertheless, if the students are not able to identify any such features, the teacher may help them by suggesting words that they should pay more attention to during the listening. In case that the students notice differences in rhoticity or intonation, the teacher appreciates their observations and informs them that the class is going to address this matter gradually later in the lesson.

After the students have given a sufficient amount of examples the teacher sums up the rules. A short lecture supported by the PowerPoint presentation (slide 6) offers a simplified overview of this matter. Even during this activity which is focused primarily on understanding, it is desirable that the teacher asks the students to pronounce the examples given in the presentation.

Exercise 3

In this activity, the students are asked to sort the words into three columns according to the changes in pronunciation drawing on their recently gained knowledge. More advanced learners can work individually, the others in pairs. A whole-class discussion follows. The teacher then plays the recording (*ex3*). This audio offers both the NIr and RP realizations of the expressions given in the exercise to allow the students to compare and check their answers.

Exercise 4

Unlike the preceding exercise, this is again a discovery activity. First, the students are instructed to underline all the words containing the letter “r”. Before the teacher plays the first recording (*ex4.1*) for this exercise, she asks her students to listen carefully to the first speaker and circle all the letters “r” that he actually pronounces. The same is done with the second speaker while recording *ex4.2* is being played, yet the students are advised to take a different colour pen.

Through this noticing activity, the learners should realize that the RP speaker pronounces only some of the /r/ sounds, while the NIr one articulates it in all environments. To make this point even more clear, the teacher plays recording *ex4.3*, which compares the individual examples from the text first pronounced by the RP speaker and then by the NIr one.

The teacher then asks the students to derive the rules as to which /r/ sounds are dropped in RP. Once again, these rules are later summarized by the teacher using slide number 8 in the PowerPoint presentation.

Exercise 5

The last remaining distinctive feature of the NIr accents to be introduced to the students is intonation. The learners should be aware of the differences between the rising and falling intonation and its use at this stage. This matter is usually addressed in their student books. To revise their knowledge, the teacher asks them to read the conversation aloud in pairs and think about the type of intonation that is employed.

When the pair work is finished, the conversation between the two NIr speakers is played to the whole class. While listening to the recording (*ex5*), the students draw rising or falling arrows above the underlined words depending on which type of intonation is applied by the speakers. The teacher then checks the answers and asks the group to draw a general rule

for using intonation in NlrE. Their answers should be close to stating that the Nlr speakers employ rising intonation nearly in all environments. Subsequently, the teacher adds more information about the rising intonation using slide number 9 in her presentation.

3.1.3.3 Practice

The usual ordering of the practice stage after the presentation one is not applied thoroughly in the lesson. Due to the specificity of the topic, the teacher decided to use a rather different arrangement. As stated above, it is not desirable for the students to adopt the accent and to be able to produce it. Therefore, only a little verbal practice is employed throughout the lesson. On the other hand, such activities may help keep the students interested and can have certain entertaining and comical effect. Hence, the teacher thought it good to distribute at least some production activities dealing with the individual features of the Nlr accents after certain presentation parts.

The first verbal practice is applied in exercise 3. After the students listen to the recording and check their answers, they are asked to attempt to repeat the given words using the Nlr accent. Furthermore, the teacher moves on in her PowerPoint presentation to slide number 7, where four sentences containing certain specific words are listed for the students to read. The teacher asks the students to try to read those sentences imitating the accent of the Northern Irish speakers.

In exercise 4, it is useful for the students to repeat the words after the two speakers in recording *ex4.3*. Thus they can practice the pronunciation of /r/. Finally, some oral practice can be applied also in exercise 5. The teacher can ask the students to repeat the sentences with underlined words to practice using both the normal and the rising intonation. Shadow reading in particular appears to be the suitable technique to be employed at this point.

Apart from these minor production-oriented activities, the two main practice exercises are to be found at the end of the handout. These two (6 and 7) are focused on developing

receptive skills. Here, the teacher checks whether the students understood the differences between RP and NlE and are able to identify them in continuous speech. At the same time, the students should be able to understand the speakers using such an accent.

To practice these skills, the students listen to a short story narrated by a native Nl speaker. The first half of the story is written down in their handouts. To make the perception easier and more effective, in the pre-listening stage the teacher asks the students to read the text and identify the expressions which may undergo certain changes as discussed in the previous exercises. Predicting the accent differences can help their understanding during the listening stage. The individual examples are later discussed with the whole class. At the same time, the teacher can pre-teach vocabulary if needed⁴². After the discussion, the group listen to the recording (*ex6*) and check their answers. Another debate about the characteristic features may follow. Once again, the students can, for example, imitate the speaker's intonation or his pronunciation of certain words.

Prior to listening to the second part of the story (*ex7*), the teacher asks the students to give their alternative endings. Predicting the content of the recording can make it easier for the students to understand it. Later, while listening to the speaker, they answer the questions given in exercise 7. The last question is expected to be the most difficult one, because the answer contains the word *safe*, which is pronounced with a vowel change as [siəf].

⁴² The vocabulary used in the story is not difficult, however, depending on the level of the students, words such as *shots*, *legless*, *staggering*, *windy* or *dimly* might need some explanation.

3.2 Sample lessons

Having prepared all the materials and plans for the lesson, the teacher was ready to introduce the NĪr accents to her students. The sample lessons were carried out in May 2013 in four groups of students (closer described in 3.2.1) at the Grammar School of Jaroslav Heyrovský in Prague. The supervisor was present during the first sample lesson. The following three were overseen either by the vice-headmaster or by the school head of the English department.

3.2.1 Student groups

The students participating in the experiment were of different age groups and language levels. The basic information and characterisation of the particular groups is given below in chart [9] and in the immediately following paragraphs. With respect to the privacy of the participants, the groups are referred to only in numbers. The numbering was done according to the order of their participation in the sample lessons. No names or personal information are included.

All four groups were familiar with the IPA symbols and some other linguistic concepts. Depending on their level, the teacher had included some aspects of connected speech, word stress or intonation in their preceding lessons. Therefore, the students entered the lessons with elemental knowledge of the matter.

[9] Overview of the student groups.

	Number of students (male/female)	Grade	Age	Level of English
Group 1	13 (7/6) ⁴³	6 th (sexta)	16-17	intermediate
Group 2	13 (6/7)	7 th (septima)	17-18	upper-intermediate
Group 3	16 (7/9)	5 th (kvinta)	15-16	intermediate
Group 4	16 (9/7)	2 nd (sekunda)	11-12	elementary

Group 1

As for their level of English language proficiency this group was relatively homogenous. Only two students showed skills slightly above the group average, while other two remained behind, rather on the lower-intermediate level. The group usually shows low interest in learning English and studying in general. In the past years, there have been some issues in this class especially in terms of bullying and other transgressions of the school rules. Nevertheless, last year's departure of two students led to a significant improvement. Still, this class was noticeably harder to get involved compared to the other groups.

Group 2

All the members of this group had reached the upper-intermediate level and some of them could even be classified as advanced. One of the students was the winner of the district round of the last year's English language Olympiad, ending fourth in the Prague round. Except for two students, the group took a considerable interest in learning about pronunciation and accents of English. As they had already mastered the English grammar quite well, they were more attracted to modern and practical aspects of the language. They were usually very active and easy to work with. This was true especially for the girls, all of

⁴³ From this, only eleven students were present for the sample lesson.

which were exceptionally eager learners. Although the boys were not particularly the studious types, they were used to watching various films and series in English and therefore their knowledge of English was naturally very good.

Group 3

This group was considered to be the most advanced in their year. Although generally labelled as intermediate, three students had already gained the Cambridge First Certificate the year before and, according to their teacher, at least three more students possessed the required knowledge as well. On the other hand, the group was very large and therefore quite diverse. Two of the students were falling significantly behind in their language knowledge. On the whole, the members of this group were remarkably energetic and cooperative. Yet, they were able to be rather critical and passive if something they did not like appeared. The group opinion was strongly influenced by the opinion or behaviour of its two male members. Therefore, it was always important to attract their attention first.

Group 4

Like Group 3, these students were also considered to be the best in their year at the given school. One of the students was of British ancestry and other two were born in the United Kingdom although their parents were Czech. This fact appeared to have a considerable motivational effect on the whole group. The students were very mature for their age and interested in learning English.

Their enthusiasm was demonstrated by their participation in the sample lessons alone. Originally, the teacher did not intend to include this group in the research. However, the students heard rumours about the study being pursued and they expressed their wish to take part in it. Hence, although the teaching material was designed for intermediate to advanced students, with slight modifications, it was also used in this group.

3.2.2 The lessons

The following paragraphs represent a brief recount of the development of the individual sample lessons as perceived by the teacher. Although the lecturer mostly managed to follow the original lesson plan, it is understandable that numerous changes occurred in reality. Adjusting the activities according to the given situation and student response is vital to avoid “closing off the avenues of possible evolution and development” (Harmer 364). Therefore, at this point, it is important to define which activities worked well for the students and which, on the other hand, did not meet the teacher’s expectations.

Probably the most serious problem appeared right before the first sample lesson. While preparing the audio materials, the teacher found out, that the speakers of the interactive whiteboard were not working properly. Having already had some negative experience with the school electronic appliances, she had brought her own pair of speakers in advance. Nevertheless, the speakers were relatively small and insufficient with respect to the acoustics of the classroom. It is understandable that this had a significant worsening effect on the listening activities.

Especially the members of the first group were frequently complaining about the audio quality during the lesson and thus interrupting the process of learning. To avoid this complication, for the following two lessons (groups 3 and 4), the teacher prepared a CD and played the recordings from a CD player. She also informed and apologised to the students for the quality of the recordings in advance to avoid further interruptions.

Another important adjustment that proved inevitable after the first sample lesson was the overall time spent on the exercises. Originally, the teacher planned the lesson for just one teaching unit. Contrary to expectations, group 1 managed to finish only the first four exercises in those 45 minutes. Therefore, the teacher decided to split the lesson into two teaching units. The problem was that the first two sample lessons (in groups 1 and 2) were

conducted on a Friday and so the following teaching unit had to be postponed until Monday. For groups 3 and 4, the teacher managed to organize a 90-minute teaching block.

Exercise 1

As this activity was designed merely to raise the interest in the topic, it was vital that the students were not put off by the difficulty of the task or even got bored at the very beginning of the lesson. In Group 1 the students had been played both recordings *ex1.1* and *ex1.2* as suggested by the lesson plan. However, listening to the second recording proved to be unnecessary and even with a slightly demotivating effect. The students appeared to be without any further interest in the exercise because they had already found all the necessary answers during the first listening and the class discussion that followed.

Based on this experience, the teacher decided to play only the first recording (*ex1.1*) in the remaining groups. To make sure, that the students were able to identify some specific features of the different accents based on just one listening, she broadened the pre-listening discussion.

All four student groups were familiar with the essential differences between British and American English especially in terms of vocabulary and, to some extent, of grammar and pronunciation⁴⁴. With this in mind, the teacher asked the students in groups 2, 3 and 4 to name some distinctive features of the two accents in the introductory part of the lesson. This brief revision appeared to be a useful help for exercise 1. All of the groups were able to identify the first speaker as American thanks to the word *movie*. Some members of group 2 could even identify the Irish speaker according to her pronunciation of the word *but* as [bʊɪ]⁴⁵.

⁴⁴ It is a part of the Curriculum and also one of the final examination topic, English as the Lingua Franca.

⁴⁵ The possible explanation for this is the fact that the teacher had already discussed some distinctive features of Dublin accent when the group was learning about Irish writers in one of their earlier English lessons.

Exercise 2

In this exercise, the students were expected to identify some specific features of the accent. To certain extent, they were usually able to do so. However, it appeared difficult for them to remember the differences after the listening was over. Hence, in the last two groups the teacher advised the students to make notes and write down the expressions they noticed as “strange”. To avoid this deficiency, we may suggest adding some extra space in the handout or an additional row in the chart as an improvement.

There were also cases when the students did not detect the intended examples. Therefore, the teacher invented additional questions to give the students a hint. Hence, there appeared conversations such as:

T: “How many siblings does the first speaker have?”

SS: “Eight.”

T: “Does the speaker really say [eit]?”

S: “No, she said [iət].”

The [ɔɪ] sound appeared to be the easiest one to single out. All of the groups noticed *now* and *about* as the examples of this variation. Nevertheless, when the teacher asked about the origin of the first speaker, it came out that the students did not understand what [kɔɪntɪ] meant. Even the upper-intermediate learners were unable to identify it as *county*, an expression they were naturally familiar with. This fact only proves how a minor accent difference can affect intelligibility for a non-native speaker. A learner who is unaware of the individual accent patterns can decode the language in some cases but stay confused in others.

Apart from the vowel change, group 2 also identified the frequent occurrence of /r/ sounds. This was probably because the teacher mentioned this feature some time before while discussing differences between British and American English in this group. On the other

hand, none of the participants noticed any significant differences in terms of intonation. This was not a complication as the teacher did not expect them to realize this aspect. However, what the teacher did not expect was that it proved difficult for the students to notice the vowel lengthening. None of the four groups were able to identify it without a substantial help from the teacher.

What came as a big surprise was the fact that the youngest learners, group 4, listed the largest number of examples of differing features in NIrE. On one hand, the reason for this can be the fact that they already belonged among the groups that were instructed to take notes. On the other hand, it could be interesting to investigate whether it was their age that played some role in their better ability to identify the individual sounds in a foreign language. However, the data obtained in this thesis are wholly insufficient to support such a statement.

Exercise 3

The teacher dares to say that this activity seemed to be particularly entertaining for the students, especially when they were asked to repeat the expressions in the NIr accent. Together with the similar exercise in the PowerPoint presentation, where they attempted to pronounce the sentences as if they were from Northern Ireland, exercise 3 certainly helped to bring positive atmosphere into the classroom. Of course, there were some students who refused to participate (mostly in group 1 and two members of group 2) as they probably perceived such oral practice as awkward or embarrassing. Nevertheless, after the first shy attempts, the vast majority of the students voluntarily tried to produce the accent and laughed at their own mistakes. Generally speaking, many of their attempts were very successful.

Exercise 4

In the following activity, the production part was the most successful one as well. This time the students did not hesitate to repeat the words after the two speakers.

Contrary to the case of the vowel changes, the students had no special difficulties with drawing the rules for the rhotic and non-rhotic accents. The teacher was also pleased to find out that the students in group 4 asked additional questions and tried to find more examples as they were particularly captivated by this variation. Unlike the three other groups, the youngest learners had never encountered such a difference before.

It needs to be pointed out that after the first sample lesson, the teacher made a slight adjustment to this activity as well. She decided to pause the recording at several places to make it easier for the students to notice the pronunciation and circle the appropriate words. Thanks to the 90-minute lessons there was now more time available to be spent on this exercise.

Exercise 5

This pause-play approach was subsequently applied in the activity focused on intonation as well. At first, the students listened to the complete dialogue without stopping and during the second listening, the teacher paused the recording after every underlined expression. It was easier for the students to notice the intonation pattern this way.

There were no significant complications with this exercise. The students derived the rules quite easily in general. It was also relatively simple for them to imitate both the kinds of intonation. Therefore, the shadow reading activity worked really well.

Exercises 6 and 7

These were the only two exercises that were not included in the sample lesson conducted in group 4 because the language and the tasks themselves would be too difficult for their

level. In the remaining classes, this activity was introduced to revise and practice all the newly acquired information.

According to the lesson plan, the students were supposed to read the text and mark the expressions in which they expected some departures from the standard accent in the pre-listening stage. This revision proved itself to be very useful especially in the first two groups in which the lesson was divided into two days. In all three groups, the students predicted the occurrence of the change in vowel quality in words like *down*, *town*, and *great* in the first place. They also expected rhotic pronunciation of *more* and *bars*.

The only group that identified certain examples of the rising intonation without the teacher's asking for it was group 2. In the two remaining groups, the teacher had to help the students through asking additional questions. This strategy was successful in this case, however, none of the students were able to find any expressions liable to vowel lengthening. Therefore, they were asked to pay more attention to it during the listening. Only then they noticed lengthening in *holiday* and *legless*.

In the story predicting activity prior to the listening to the second part of the story, the majority of the students expected the narrator to be attacked or robbed. Some students in group 3 came up with more creative ideas like aliens landing in the park or narrator's discovery of a secret road leading to Hell.

The listening activity worked rather well in general. All groups were able to answer the questions either independently or with some minor help from the teacher. The only complication was the word *bruises* which, except for two students, was unknown to the learners in group 1. Therefore, it was difficult for them to answer the second question precisely. Also, in accord with the teacher's expectations (mentioned in 3.1.3.3), the pronunciation of *safe* has really proven itself to be difficult to decode. Only one student in group 3 and two in group 2 were able to answer the question containing this word.

All things considered, the teacher was fairly content with the course of the sample lessons. Although the first teaching unit in group 1 was rather challenging, it revealed significant deficiencies in the teaching materials and in the lesson plan. Thus, the teacher had the opportunity to make necessary improvements and gain more confidence during the individual lessons. Nevertheless, although the teacher's own reflexion is important, we must pay special attention to the way how the students perceived the lesson in this case.

3.2.3 Student evaluation

At the very end of the lesson, the students were asked to give their feedback. The teacher distributed a short questionnaire and instructed the participants how to fill them in. Understandably, the students were informed, that their answers are entirely anonymous.

The questionnaire (see Appendix IV) was designed to provide relevant information about the students' opinion of the lesson. The teacher intended to gather data that would be easy to analyse. For this reason, the students were asked predominantly closed questions. More precisely, in the questionnaire, there were four statements written and the students were asked to grade them according to their amount of agreement. Thus, grade 1 stands for the strongest agreement while grade 5 expresses their strongest disagreement.

The individual statements were formulated as affirmatives expressing the result most desired by the teacher. Hence, the smaller number a statement received in the grading, the more successful could the teacher feel about meeting her target. Judging from these mathematical results, the author may draw more objective conclusions whether the students enjoyed the lesson (Statement 1), would like to learn more about other accents (Statement 2), thought that knowing different accents is useful in practice (Statement 3) and found the NIr accents easier to understand after the lesson (Statement 4)⁴⁶.

⁴⁶ For the full wording of the statements see Appendix IV.

Table [10] below offers the results based on the average counted for each group separately and also for all the groups together (Overall Average). The full overview including the answers of each individual student is available in Appendix V.

[10] Results of the student feedback.

	Statement 1	Statement 2	Statement 3	Statement 4
Group 1	2,09	2,82	2,27	3
Group 2	1,46	2,23	1,62	2,46
Group 3	1,69	1,92	1,54	2,15
Group 4	2	2,5	2,21	2,86
Overall Average	1,81	2,37	1,91	2,62

Based on the numeric results of the questionnaire, we may assert that the students did enjoy the sample lesson as a whole giving in the best overall result 1,81. This number, if put into words used in the Student feedback, would mean “I agree” with a slight tilt to “I absolutely agree”. Inspecting the groups individually, the one that enjoyed the lesson the most was Group 2, with a very encouraging group average 1,46.

On the other hand, the statement that attained the worst overall grade was the fourth one: The Northern Irish accent was easier for me to understand after the lesson. Even though the students generally did not disagree with this statement, their response is close to saying “I do not know”. Especially groups 1 and 4 were unable to identify whether the lesson meant any significant improvement to their accent understanding. Without a doubt, it is difficult for the students to tell any difference after the brief course, especially for such young students as there were in group 4. At the same time, the lesson of the first group was split into two parts, one on Friday and one on the following Monday, therefore it might have been harder for them to remember their first encounter with the accent. The remaining two groups, however, claimed to have noticed slight improvement in understanding the variety.

Nevertheless, their better understanding of the accent was not an objective of the lesson. It was primarily intended to introduce the students to the variety.

Apart from the aforementioned statements, the students were also asked one open question in the feedback. They were to identify which part of the lesson they liked or disliked the most. Not all of the students answered this question. However, if they did, they usually mentioned what they liked about the lesson.

What the students appreciated the most were activities where they were could imitate the Nlr accents. Hence, “trying the accent on our own” (in various different forms) was mentioned by 9 students in total. This activity was included in the PowerPoint presentation and also connected to exercise 3. This particular exercise was mentioned in the feedback by two respondents.

Furthermore, the students also frequently mentioned exercises 1 and 4. The former appeared in the questionnaire for five, the latter for three times. Together the two exercises could be labelled as “comparison of different accents”, which was mentioned as the best activity by two respondents. There were also some votes for the listening activities in general (3 students) and for working with the story in exercises 6 and 7 (1 student). Two students from the youngest group particularly liked the information about the historical and linguistic development in Ireland.

On the other hand, one of the students disliked the aforementioned story and another one mentioned listening activities as the least beneficial ones. Nevertheless, the highest number of negative votes (2) went to exercise number 3.

Finally, the students were also invited to add their own comments. What they criticized the most was the aforementioned quality of the recordings. Apart from this, only two more negative comments appeared in the feedback. These two remarks were as follows:

“I’m not going to Ireland. I don’t need it.”

“Why are you teaching us incorrect English? It’s like learning how to sound like a Moravian in our Czech lessons.”

Although these could have been meant as funny provocative comments, such observations should not be taken lightly. The lesson aim was to raise the awareness of the diversity in English language giving one of the many minor varieties as an example. By no means did the teacher intend to teach the students how to use this accent. Nor did she mean to imply that this accent is better than any other. At the same time, the students should realize that they may encounter different accents anywhere in the world or even in the media. Therefore, they do not need to go to Ireland to hear a Northern Irish speaker. The teacher was very careful to point out these facts during the sample lessons. However, the two above mentioned remarks highlight that it might have been better to make the purpose of the lesson even more apparent.

Apart from this, the majority of the comments were very positive. There were several cases of evaluating the lesson as “awesome”, “perfect” or “really interesting”. Three of the students appreciated it because they learned something new. The following two statements are also worth mentioning:

“I enjoyed the lesson because other teachers would never be able to do such thing.”

“I liked it because it was interesting. Something that most teachers would not do. It was useful, because it is more important to understand the language than to learn vocabulary and grammar from a book all the time.”

These two student opinions are surprisingly in line with what Kelly mentions in his work claiming that “many experienced teachers would admit to a lack of knowledge of the theory of pronunciation. Language learners, on the other hand, often show considerable enthusiasm for pronunciation. They feel it is something that would help them to communicate better” (13). In other words, teachers should pay more attention to

pronunciation and real-life language in their classrooms. It is what many students expect yet lack in their English lessons.

Furthermore, there appeared several cases of the students mentioning that they would like to learn more about the different regional accents. Mostly, they suggested American and Australian English compared to British English. During the following lessons, some of the students from groups 2 and 3 expressed their interest in English accents once again. Hence, the teacher asked them to prepare their own presentations on these varieties. The students managed to put up with this challenging task incredibly well and presented their works in June 2013. Moreover, in October 2013 a student from group 2 attempted to give his presentation about Scotland in a Scottish accent. His amusing performance led to a general tendency in that particular class to incorporate some examples of regional varieties into their presentations about the English speaking countries. This way, they were making their preparation for the maturita examination more interesting and probably even more memorable.

4. Conclusion

At the very beginning of this diploma thesis, the author expressed her interest in the inclusion of accent teaching into TEFL in the Czech Republic. She focused her work on gathering the important information about the Northern Irish accents and preparing relevant teaching materials and activities which were later applied in her lessons. Through this, she intended to develop her students' abilities to understand everyday situations or when visiting an English speaking country and raise their awareness of accent diversity.

Based on the development of the sample lessons and on the student feedback, it has been established that such an enterprise is not only possible but also favourable from the didactic point of view. The courses offered space for the development of the receptive and productive skills and provided practical information that could be applied in real-life situations. At the same time, both the teacher and the students found the activities enjoyable.

Even though such lessons require detailed knowledge and may consume a considerable amount of time spent on preparation, the teacher can certainly be rewarded for his or her hard work. Therefore, teachers should not be discouraged by the seeming difficulty of such a task and the lack of suitable materials. There are students who appreciate such approach to language teaching and are happy to participate actively in it, as we have seen above. Thus, one specifically aimed lesson can spark the interest of the students and lead to further systematic work in this field.

The thesis has shown that there is no need to neglect pronunciation or accent teaching in particular. It does not have to be reduced to a brief exercise at the end of every tenth lesson. There are ways how to turn pronunciation into the focal point of a lesson and how to make such lessons warmly welcomed by the students themselves. Hence, the author can only recommend using various English accents in TEFL in other schools in the Czech Republic.

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6. Appendices

Appendix I

List of IPA symbols⁴⁷

Vowels

Monophthongs		Diphthongs			
ɪ	pit, sick, milk	ə	about, upper	eɪ	face, cake, steak
e	pet, dress, neck	i:	key, speak	aɪ	buy, price, try
æ	trap, back, hand	ɑ:	car, start, farm	ɔɪ	boy, choice, noise
ʌ	cup, blood, pulse	ɔ:	north, war, short	əʊ	goat, home, know
ɒ	pot, stop, sock	u:	goose, mute, huge	aʊ	mouth, cow, house
ʊ	put, full, good	ɜ:	nurse, hurt, term	ɪə	near, beer, peer
				eə	pear, care, square
				ʊə	poor, cure, tourist

Consonants

p	pea	b	bee	ʃ	ship	ʒ	measure
t	toe	d	dot	tʃ	chin	dʒ	jeans
k	cap	g	gap	h	hat	l	let
f	fat	v	vet	m	map	r	red
θ	thing	ð	this	n	nap	j	yet
s	sip	z	zip	ŋ	hang	w	wet

Other symbols

ʔ	glottal stop	↗	rising intonation	↘	falling intonation
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⁴⁷ Based on Roach vi-vii and Wells, *Accents* xviii-xix.

Appendix II

Lesson plan

Group	Grammar school students
Level	Intermediate – Upper-intermediate
Aims	Students are aware of the existence of the diversity of accents in English. Students can understand Nlr accents. Students can identify major characteristic features of pronunciation which distinguish the Nlr accent from RP.
Materials	CD: Audio recordings, PowerPoint presentation (PP) Student Handout – one copy per student (in intermediate groups one per pair) Student Feedback
STAGES	
Introduction 5 min	T sets the topic (writes “Accents of English” on the board). T opens a class discussion: How many accents of English are there in the world? T accepts all answers and asks SS to give examples of some accents they know (and their characteristic features).
Exercise 1 10 min	SS listen to recording <i>ex1.1</i> and complete the chart in their handout. <div style="background-color: #e0e0e0; padding: 5px;"> <p>Answers: England 3, USA 1, Republic of Ireland 5, Northern Ireland 2+4</p> </div> SS compare their answers as a whole class and give reasons for their decisions. Then they check their answers in recording <i>ex1.2</i> and listen for specific accent features. <div style="background-color: #e0e0e0; padding: 5px;"> <p>Answers: England – non-rhotic <i>doctor</i> [dɒktə], <i>hobbies</i> [hɒbɪz] x USA see below USA - rhotic <i>year</i> [jɪr] x RP [jɪə], <i>hobbies</i> [həbɪz], <i>movies</i> x UK <i>films</i> Rep.of Ireland – <i>studying</i> [stʊdɪŋ], <i>but</i> [bʊtʃ] Northern Ireland – see exercise 2</p> </div> <u>Optional questions:</u> Which accent was the most difficult? / sounded odd? T checks the answers and closes the exercise stating that from now on the main focus will be on the Nlr accents.

Tapescript for recordings ex1.1 - ex2	<p>1: My name is Paige, I'm from Colorado which is in the United States of America. I'm going to the University of Northern Colorado and studying elementary education. I plan to teach second or third grade in a couple of years. My hobbies include painting, drawing, being outside, watching movies and hanging out with my friends and family. Yeah, that's about it.</p>
	<p>2: I live in Coleraine [kɒlə'reɪən]↗, County [kɔɪntɪ] Londonderry↗ in Northern Ireland↗. I originate [ə'ɹɪdʒɪ,niət] from South [saʊθ] Derry [dɛrɪ]↗ in Northern Ireland↗ in a village called Swatragh↗. I come from a large [lɑ:dʒ] family [fɑmlɪ] of eight [iət] children↗. Five girls [gɜ:rlz] and three boys↗. I studied in my former years [fɔ:mər'jɪz] in St. Patrick's High School in Maghera↗ and then [ðe:n] I went to Coleraine in 1982 [ˌnɑ:n'ti:n 'i:ətɪ 'tu] to train as a nurse [nɜ:s]↗. I've been working as a nurse [nɜ:s] for just over 30 years [jɪz]↗ and I now [nɔɪ] specialize in urology nurse [nɜ:s]↗, so a urology specialist [spe:ʃlɪs]↗.</p>
	<p>3: I'm Max and I live in Manchester in the UK and I've been asked to quickly recall something and tell you about my life here in England. I live with two people, called Franco and Sarah. I work as a doctor in a hospital in Manchester. I've been doing really very good. I'm gonna quit doing that one day. That's probably my main aspiration right now. Another aspiration is to come to the Czech Republic. Tereza played me an interesting documentary about the country. It's made me really wanna visit to see the country and native people. And my hobbies are... I like to juggle, I like to go kiting on a beach... That's about it.</p>
	<p>4: I was born in Derry [dɛrɪ]↗, Derry city↗, and that already tells [tɛl] you an awful lot about [ə'bɔɪt] me↗. That is if you know anything about [ə'bɔɪt] Northern Ireland↗, because had I said I came [kɛəm] from Londonderry↗, then you'd know I was a Protestant↗, but because I said I came [kɛəm] from Derry [dɛrɪ]↗, that means I'm a Catholic [kəθlɪk]↗, and because I was a Catholic [kəθlɪk] it meant that I had a Catholic education [ˌɛdʒʊ'ki:ʃən]↗, went to a Catholic [kəθlɪk] school↗ and I moved into a Catholic [kəθlɪk] job [dʒɔ:b]↗. Which was, of course, restricted by the then historical, social, and political situation in the north of Ireland↗. I left [lɛft] the north of Ireland when I was 18 [iə'ti:n]↗. That's probably about [ə'bɔɪt] 15 years [jɪz] ago↗. Many years ago, anyway↗, and then I worked in London↗ and I have been in England for ... was in England for, good grief, probably about [ə'bɔɪt] 30 years [jɪz]↗.</p>
	<p>5: So I'm from Cavan. It's in the northern part of Ireland but it's not in Northern Ireland itself, it's a part of Ulster right on the border of Northern Ireland. I live right beside the town but not too far into the country either, but I much prefer living in Dublin because I love the city. At the moment I'm studying primary school teaching in St. Pat's College. I'm also studying French as part of the degree and I hope to go abroad next year to improve my French, and then I'll come and I'll finish my degree next year. I don't have a part time job at the moment but during the summer I often work in summer schools, I also do summer camps as well, so it's kind of the same thing for younger children. I love sports, especially kick-boxing and swimming and football... Not soccer but Gaelic football.</p>

PP slides 1-5 5 min	<p>T gives brief information about the NIr accents: describes the historical development of the language and its current regional distribution.</p> <p>T points out that the aim is not to learn how to produce this accent but just to understand it. SS can also encounter this and similar accents in many other places than in Ireland.</p>															
Exercise 2 10 min	<p>SS listen to recording <i>ex2</i> and complete the chart in their handout.</p> <p>Answers:</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="384 647 1402 1005"> <thead> <tr> <th></th> <th>1</th> <th>2</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Born in</td> <td>Swatragh, co. Londonderry</td> <td>Derry</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Now lives in</td> <td>Coleraine, co. Londonderry</td> <td>London</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Studies and Occupation</td> <td>St. Patrick's College Maghera Urology nurse</td> <td>Catholic</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Interesting facts</td> <td>From a family of 8 (5 girls + 3 boys)</td> <td>Living in London for 30 years</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>SS compare their answers as a whole class.</p> <p>T asks whether they have noticed some specific/different features in the language of the speakers. If not, T tells the SS to listen for them during the second listening and write down the examples.</p> <p>Answers:</p> <p>Vowel quality – <i>south</i> /saʊθ/ x [sɔɪθ], <i>now</i> /naʊ/ x [nɔɪ], <i>about</i> /ə'baʊt/ x [ə'bɔɪt], <i>county</i> /kaʊntɪ/ x [kɔɪntɪ], <i>eight</i> /eɪt/ x [iət], <i>education</i> /,edʒʊ'keɪʃən / x [,edʒə'kiəʃən]</p> <p>Vowel length – <i>then</i> /ðen/ x [ðɛ:n], <i>job</i> /dʒɒb/ x [dʒɔ:b],</p> <p>Rhoticity – <i>large</i> /lɑ:dʒ/ x [lɑrdʒ], <i>girls</i> /gɜ:lz/ x [gərlz], <i>former years</i> /fɔ:mə'jɪəz/ x [fɔrmə'r'jɪrɜz], <i>nurse</i> /nɜ:s/ x [nɪs]</p> <p>Intonation – marked in the transcript <i>ex1.1-2</i></p>		1	2	Born in	Swatragh, co. Londonderry	Derry	Now lives in	Coleraine, co. Londonderry	London	Studies and Occupation	St. Patrick's College Maghera Urology nurse	Catholic	Interesting facts	From a family of 8 (5 girls + 3 boys)	Living in London for 30 years
	1	2														
Born in	Swatragh, co. Londonderry	Derry														
Now lives in	Coleraine, co. Londonderry	London														
Studies and Occupation	St. Patrick's College Maghera Urology nurse	Catholic														
Interesting facts	From a family of 8 (5 girls + 3 boys)	Living in London for 30 years														
PP slide 6 5 min	<p>T summarizes the distinctive features of NIr accents based on the rules given by SS in exercise 2.</p> <p>SS pronounce the examples given in the presentation and add more if possible.</p>															

<p>Exercise 3 5 min</p>	<p>SS work in pairs and complete the chart in their handout, then compare their answers as a whole class. To check their answers, SS listen to recording <i>ex3</i>.</p> <p>Answers: /eɪ/ -> [iə] or [ɛ:]: place /pleɪs/ x [pliəs], lakes /leɪks/ x [lɛ:ks], great /greɪt/ x [griət], made /meɪd/ x [miəd], drained /dreɪnd/ x [driənd] /aʊ/ -> [ɛʊ] ~ [ɔɪ]: house /haʊs/ x [hɔɪs], down /daʊn/ x [dɔɪn], ground /graʊnd/ x [grɔɪnd], without /wɪ'ðaʊt/ x [wɪ'ðɔɪt], mountain /maʊntɪn/ x [mɔɪnʔən]^{glottalisation} vowel lengthening: forest /fɒrɪst/ x [fɔ:ɪs]^{elision}, dog /dɒg/ x [dɔ:g], gone /gɒn/ x [gɔ:n], then /ðen/ x [ðɛn]</p> <p><u>Optional activity:</u> SS pronounce the expressions in recording <i>ex3</i> and on PP slide 7 both in RP and NIrE.</p> <p>Answers: We just came [kiəm] down [dɔɪn] to the town [tɔɪn] to see the clown [klɔɪn]. Turn left [lɛ:ft] on the next roundabout [,rɔɪndə'baɪt]. I bought a house [hɔɪs] in a wonderful place [pliəs] with forests [fɔ:ɪsts], mountains [mɔɪnʔəns] and lakes [lɛ:ks]. I made [miəd] a cake [ke:k] without [wɪ'ðɔɪt] eggs [ɛ:gz].</p>
<p>Exercise 4 10 min</p>	<p>SS work in pairs and underline words according to the instructions in their handout. T advises them to use different-coloured pens at the different stages. T gradually plays recordings <i>ex4.1</i> and <i>ex4.2</i>. After checking their answers as a whole class, SS listen to <i>ex4.3</i> to compare the individual examples.</p> <p>SS derive rules for using /r/ in RP and NIrE.</p> <p>Answers: <u>/r/ pronounced by NIrE speaker</u> <u>/r/ pronounced by both speakers</u></p> <p>In <u>Ireland</u> long ago, <u>centuries</u> <u>before</u> the English <u>appeared</u> in that <u>country</u>, <u>there</u> <u>were</u> kings and chiefs, <u>lawyers</u> and <u>merchants</u>, men of the <u>sword</u> and men of the book, men who tilled <u>their</u>^{linking /r/} own <u>ground</u> and men who tilled the <u>ground</u> of <u>others</u>, just as <u>there</u>^{linking /r/} <u>are</u> now. <u>There</u> <u>were</u> mighty <u>hunters</u> and <u>warriors</u> and though they had <u>great</u> possessions in land, and <u>rich</u> <u>robes</u> and gold <u>ornaments</u>, they lived mostly a <u>free</u> out-door life.</p> <p><u>Optional activity:</u> SS repeat the expressions in recording <i>ex4.3</i>.</p>

PP slide 8 5 min	T explains the concept of rhoticity and summarizes the rules derived by SS in exercise 4.
Exercise 5 10 min	<p>SS read the short conversation in pairs paying attention to their intonation. SS listen to recording <i>ex5</i> (during the second listening T pauses the recording after each sentence) and draw arrows above the underlined words in their handout depending on the intonation of the speakers.</p> <p>Answers:</p> <p>Rosemarie: So how's <u>things</u>?</p> <p>Helen: <u>Good</u>! Just... as they <u>say</u>... you <u>know</u>.</p> <p>R: Yeah, uh hmm.</p> <p>H: Thinking about taking another year <u>out</u>.</p> <p>R: Are you?</p> <p>H: Yeah, <u>maybe</u>. You see... I finished the <u>course</u>.</p> <p>R: You're finished?</p> <p>H: Yeah, I finished <u>it</u>. Passed and <u>everything</u>.</p> <p>R (to Marketa): Helen took a year out of her <u>job</u>. Helen's a lecturer in <u>nursing</u>... at the <u>university</u>. She took her year out to...</p> <p>H: ...Retrain about school <u>teaching</u>.</p> <p>M: I see.</p> <p><u>Optional activity</u>: SS read the conversation aloud in RP and NIrE to check their answers.</p> <p>SS derive rules for intonation differences between RP and NIrE.</p>
PP slide 9 5 min	T explains the concept of intonation and summarizes the rules derived by SS in exercise 5.

<p>Exercise 6 10 min</p>	<p>SS work in pairs, read the text and try to identify/predict some of the distinctive features of NIr accent. A whole class discussion follows to check their answers.</p> <p>T elicits examples of all the features covered in the lesson. T pre-teaches vocabulary in necessary: <i>shots, legless, staggering, windy, dimly.</i></p> <p>SS listen to recording <i>ex6</i> and mark more examples if possible. Another class discussion follows.</p> <p>Answers: Vowel quality – <i>down</i> /daʊn/ x [dɔɪn], <i>town</i> /taʊn/ x [tɔɪn], <i>without</i> /wɪ'ðaʊt/ x [wɪ'ðɔɪt], <i>great</i> /greɪt/ x [grɪət], <i>place</i> /pleɪs/ x [plɪəs], Vowel length – <i>holiday</i> /hɒlɪdɪ / x [hɔ:lɪdɪ], <i>hell</i> /hel/ x [hɛ:l], <i>offering</i> /ɒfərɪŋ/ x [ɔ:fərɪŋ], <i>shots</i> /ʃɒts / x [ʃɔ:ts], <i>legless</i> /leɪlɪs/ x [lɛ:gləs], <i>hotel</i> /həʊ'tel/ x [ho'tel] Rhoticity – <i>apartment</i> /ə'pɑ:tmənt/ x [ə'pɑrtmənt], <i>first</i> /fɜ:st/ x [fɜrst], <i>bars</i> /bɑ:s/ x [bars], <i>worse</i> /wɜ:s/ x [wɜrs] Intonation – see Tapescript <i>ex6</i></p>
<p>Tapescript <i>ex6</i></p>	<p>Once upon a time, I went on a holiday [hɔ:lɪdɪ] from hell [hɛ:l] in Gran Canaria, and went with my best friend from school and his family, and we stayed in these apartment [ə'pɑrtmənt] complexes and the first [fɜrst] night went down [dɔɪn] to the town [tɔɪn], you know, first [fɜrst] time away, on holiday [hɔ:lɪdɪ], without [wɪ'ðɔɪt] my parents. My friend and I had our own apartment [ə'pɑrtmənt] so, like free from their parents as well. Went down [dɔɪn] to the town [tɔɪn] had a great [grɪət] time. There was like people in the streets offering [ɔ:fərɪŋ] uh, you know, “come to our place [plɪəs], free tequila shots [ʃɔ:ts]”. It was great [grɪət], so it was [wɔ:z]. So we went out [ɔɪt] to like loads of bars [bars], just got loads of free shots [ʃɔ:ts] everywhere, and as the night wore on [ɔ:n], you know, it got more and more happy and more and more legless [lɛ:gləs] and it was just... Yeah, my friend was even worse [wɜrs], so I had to carry him around [ə'rɔɪnd] all the bars [bars] and stuff, but then [ðɛn], on the way home, it was about 3 o' clock, had a great [grɪət] night, so we had, and we're just staggering back to the hotel [ho'tel], and we could have taken one route, which went along the road, windy road up the hill, to our hotel [ho'tel], but we chose to go through the park [pɑ:k] in the middle of the town [tɔɪn], the very dimly lit park [pɑ:k] in the middle of the town [tɔɪn], it was a shortcut [ʃɔrt'kɑt] to get to our hotel [ho'tel].</p>

<p>Exercise 7 5 min</p>	<p>SS predict the ending of the story. T accepts all answers. SS listen to recording <i>ex7</i> and answer the questions in their handout.</p> <p>Answers: 1 – No, he ran away. 2 – No, he had just some bruises on the side. 3 – Money. 4 – Because the safe in their apartment was broken.</p>
<p>Tapescript <i>ex7</i></p>	<p>So we're walking along, so we are, and then all of a sudden we hear this running from behind and we look around, and this guy runs from the group of four, and hits my friend in the back of the head and kicks him to the ground. Before, my friend didn't have a chance, couldn't react in time. So then my friend was on the ground and then the guy who kicked him came for me. I managed ... I had more time to react, so I blocked him and I hit him back and then ran, you know, being the good friend that I am. I mean I hoped that my friend was up and running with me, but looked back and he was still lying feebly on the ground. And then the guy I hit, had run after me part of the way and I ran back and said: "Leave him alone, leave him alone!" And then the friend says, "No your money first," you know, in this horrible sneezy, Spanish accent. Yeah, so I tried to give him a few notes, and then he just grabbed the whole wallet and took it all, so I just dropped the wallet and ran off. I went back to my friend and like, he was OK, he was just like, had some bruises on the side where he fell over. Like it didn't harm him at all really. They'd taken his money as well, so we staggered back to the hotel. That was the first night we were there, and because the safe in our room was broken and it wasn't going to get fixed the next day, we had all our money on us, and we got all of it stolen, so we had to rely on the generosity of my friend's parents.</p>
<p>Evaluation 5 min</p>	<p>T repeats the basic information, closes the lesson and asks SS for feedback. T distributes the Student Feedback sheets and asks SS to complete the questionnaire or add more comments.</p> <p>T collects the questionnaires and thanks SS for their participation.</p>

Appendix III

Student handout

1. Listen to the five speakers. Try to guess where they come from. Write numbers 1-5 in the table below.

England	USA	Republic of Ireland	Northern Ireland (2x)

2. Listen again to the two Northern Irish speakers and complete the table.

	1.	2.
Born in		
Now lives in		
Studies and Occupation		
Interesting facts		

3. Place the following words into the appropriate column according to the change of vowel sounds in the Northern Irish accents. Then listen and check your answers.

house dog	place lakes	forest without	great gone	made mountain	down drained	ground then
/eɪ/ -> [iə] or [ɛ:]		/aʊ/ -> [ɛʊ] ~ [ɔɪ]		vowel lengthening		

4. Read the extract and underline every word with the letter “r” in it. Listen to the extract in an English accent and circle all the letters “r” that are pronounced. Then listen to it in the Northern Irish accent and do the same (use different colours).

In Ireland long ago, centuries before the English appeared in that country, there were kings and chiefs, lawyers and merchants, men of the sword and men of the book, men who tilled their own ground and men who tilled the ground of others, just as there are now. There were mighty hunters and warriors and though they had great possessions in land, and rich robes and gold ornaments, they lived mostly a free out-door life.

5. Listen to the conversation and mark the intonation of the underlined words (↗ for rising or ↘ for falling intonation).

Rosemarie: So how's things?

Helen: Good! Just... as they say... you know.

R: Yeah, uh hmm.

H: Thinking about taking another year out.

R: Are you?

H: Yeah, maybe. You see... I finished the course.

R: You're finished?

H: Yeah, I finished it. Passed and everything.

R (to Marketa): Helen took a year out of her job. Helen's a lecturer in nursing... at the university. She took her year out to...

H: ...Retrain about school teaching.

M: I see.

6. Read the first part of the story and try to mark some specific features of pronunciation that may occur in the Northern Irish accent (vowel sounds, rhoticity, intonation etc.). Then listen to the story and check your answers.

A Holiday from Hell

Once upon a time, I went on a holiday from hell in Gran Canaria, and went with my best friend from school and his family, and we stayed in these apartment complexes and the first night went down to the town, you know, first time away, on holiday, without my parents. My friend and I had our own apartment so, like free from their parents as well. Went down to the town had a great time. There was like people in the streets offering uh, you know, "come to our place, free tequila shots". It was great, so it was. So we went out to like loads of bars, just got loads of free shots everywhere, and as the night wore on, you know, it got more and more happy and more and more legless and it was just... Yeah, my friend was even worse, so I had to carry him around all the bars and stuff, but then, on the way home, it was about 3 o' clock, had a great night, so I had, and we're just staggering back to the hotel, and we could have taken one route, which went along the road, windy road up the hill, to our hotel, but we chose to go through the park in the middle of the town, the very dimly lit park in the middle of the town. It was a shortcut to get to our hotel.

7. How does the story end? Discuss the possible ending with your partner. Then listen and answer the questions.

1. Did the narrator help his friend?

2. Was his friend wounded?

3. What did the Spanish guy want?

4. Why did they have all their money on them?

Appendix IV

Student feedback

Please, grade the following statements:

1 – I fully agree; 2 – I agree; 3 – I don't know; 4 – I disagree; 5 – I absolutely disagree.

1. I enjoyed the lesson on accents. 1 2 3 4 5

Why? Which part did you like/dislike the most?

2. I would like to learn more about other accents. 1 2 3 4 5

3. I think that knowing different accents is useful in practice. 1 2 3 4 5

4. The Northern Irish accent was easier to understand after the lesson. 1 2 3 4 5

If you wish, add more comments here

Thank you!

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Appendix V

Student evaluation chart

	Respondent	Statement 1	Statement 2	Statement 3	Statement 4
Group 1	1	3	2	2	3
	2	2	4	3	4
	3	2	3	3	2
	4	1	1	1	2
	5	3	4	3	4
	6	2	3	3	3
	7	2	3	2	3
	8	1	2	2	2
	9	4	5	3	5
	10	2	2	2	3
	11	1	2	1	2
GROUP AVERAGE		2,09	2,82	2,27	3,00
Group 2	1	1	1	1	3
	2	2	2	1	3
	3	3	2	1	3
	4	1	1	1	2
	5	2	5	3	1
	6	1	5	3	1
	7	2	2	2	3
	8	1	2	3	2
	9	1	1	1	2
	10	1	1	1	3
	11	2	4	1	4
	12	1	1	1	2
	13	1	2	2	3
GROUP AVERAGE		1,46	2,23	1,62	2,46

Group 3	1	2	1	1	2
	2	1	2	2	2
	3	2	3	3	2
	4	2	3	1	2
	5	2	2	1	3
	6	1	2	1	3
	7	1	1	1	2
	8	2	2	1	2
	9	2	1	1	2
	10	2	2	1	3
	11	2	2	3	3
	12	1	1	1	1
	13	2	3	3	1
GROUP AVERAGE		1,69	1,92	1,54	2,15
Group 4	1	2	2	2	3
	2	1	2	1	2
	3	2	1	3	3
	4	2	4	2	3
	5	1	3	1	2
	6	2	3	5	5
	7	2	3	1	3
	8	3	3	1	3
	9	2	1	2	3
	10	2	4	2	4
	11	2	2	3	3
	12	3	2	4	1
	13	2	3	1	2
	14	2	2	3	3
GROUP AVERAGE		2,00	2,50	2,21	2,86
OVERALL AVERAGE		1,81	2,37	1,91	2,62

Appendix VI

Recording template

1. Unscripted speech.

Please, use your own words to talk about your **origin, studies, occupation** or **hobbies** and factors which you think influence **your accent**. (1-2 minutes)

2. Scripted speech.

Read the following extract:

THE BOYHOOD OF FINN MAC COOL

In Ireland long ago, centuries before the English appeared in that country, there were kings and chiefs, lawyers and merchants, men of the sword and men of the book, men who tilled their own ground and men who tilled the ground of others, just as there are now. But there was also, as ancient poets and historians tell us, a great company or brotherhood of men who were bound to no fixed calling, unless it was to fight for the High King of Ireland whenever foes threatened him from within the kingdom or without it. This company was called the Fianna of Erin.

They were mighty hunters and warriors, and though they had great possessions in land, and rich robes, and gold ornaments, and weapons wrought with beautiful chasing and with coloured enamels, they lived mostly a free out-door life in the light hunting-booths which they made in the woods where the deer and the wolf ranged. There were then vast forests in Ireland, which are all gone now, and there were also, as there still are, many great and beautiful lakes and rivers, swarming with fish and water-fowl. In the forests and on the mountain sides roamed the wild boar and the wolf, and great herds of deer, some of giant size, whose enormous antlers are sometimes found when bogs are being drained.

Thank you!