How Do Finns Regard Different Englishes? A Study of Finnish Students’ Perceptions of Seven Varieties of English

Teija Rautio
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Faculty of Humanities
University of Oulu
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1 Introduction

The growing influence of English on people all over the world is undeniable. In different corners of the world people with different nationalities, languages and dialects are in contact with English on a daily basis. Moreover, people with different mother tongues use English as an instrument for their mutual discourse; English is used as lingua franca, a medium of communication between people who do not share a mother tongue or any other language (Ranta, 2010). As the lingua franca role of English gets increasingly more common, it can be expected that English is becoming a salient part of non-native English speakers’ world in consequence. The language competence of the non-native speakers who regularly use English (or are in some contact with it) is improving rapidly, and with that, their awareness of the different varieties of English is developing, as well. Linguist Edgar W. Schneider claims that in a way all proficient speakers of English are sociolinguists, as people constantly evaluate what they hear – both the meaning of the message and the way it is encoded: “And the details of this encoding (one’s “accent”, for instance) actually sign quite a lot to us: who our interlocutor is in terms of background, status, age, etc., how friendly he or she wishes to be, what the situation is like, or what the hidden message is between the lines” (Schneider, 2011: 5).

However, for a long period of time the assessment of language was reserved for linguists only; the non-linguists’, i.e. the “ordinary people’s” awareness and perception of language is an area which until quite recently was considered not worth studying, as it is based on intuition, not theory. Thus the study of the non-linguists’ perceptions of language, perceptual dialectology, is a rather new branch of science, dating back to the early 20th century. Even after the first few decades of study in perceptual dialectology its linguistic nature was questioned, and it was not until the 1980s’ when perceptual dialectology slowly started gaining ground in the linguistic field. (Preston, 1989.)

A significant contributor in the gradual acceptance of perceptual dialectology as part of sociolinguistics and linguistics in general has been linguist Dennis R. Preston, whose works Perceptual Dialectology (1989) and Handbook of Perceptual Dialectology, Volume 1 (1999) Ronald R. Butters calls “two of the most important landmarks” in the process of raising scientific interest
in perceptual dialectology (Preston & Long, 2002: XVI). However, even though allegedly “too much work in perceptual dialectology has gone on for us to justify its existence here” (Preston & Long, 2002: XIX), in the increasingly globalized world there should be no question as to whether the non-linguists’ attitudes towards different varieties of English should be studied. The perceptions of language reveal underlying stereotypical attitudes and ideas about the communities in which the language is spoken, and “impressions, classifications, and caricatures of language and language use - - are part of the information needed to understand the status of and regard for language use in speech communities” (Preston, 1989: XI).

To my knowledge, no study has been conducted in Finland to date that examines the Finns’ perceptions of different English varieties. However, Finnish students’ and teachers’ attitudes towards native and non-native English in general have been studied, with the viewpoint of comparing the students’ and teachers’ opinions of “standard English”, “lingua franca English” and English that is taught at school in Finland (Ranta, 2010). The results of this study are interesting in terms of the discovered “liberal” views of Finns when compared to their European peers: whereas many European teachers and students find the pursuit of native-speaker competence in English worthwhile, in Finland both students and teachers are more open-minded to a shift away from a native speaker model. Some variation naturally occurs, the most prominent contradiction in the opinions of the teachers being found between the older and the younger generation teachers. (Ranta, 2010.) However, while the examination of the Finns’ attitudes towards the general distinction between native vs. non-native English is certainly interesting, I would argue that going further by looking into the different native varieties of English from the point of view of a Finnish speaker will prove fruitful in terms of discovering which varieties Finns know best, which ones they prefer and, hopefully, why that is.

The motives for conducting a study of this nature lay in my own interest in the area, but the choice of this particular research subject can easily be further advocated. Generally speaking, studies of this nature are an important means of discovering how the non-native language competence evolves, as what is seen as standard is usually pursued: “A great deal of money and energy is spent trying to bring about effective, standard language use in both non-native and nonstandard
speakers” (Preston, 1989: XI). It is essential to study non-native English speakers’ perceptions of and attitudes towards English varieties in order to better understand their effect on the shape of English as a global language, “as attitudes are known to be a powerful influence on the usage and perceptions of language varieties” (Evans & Imai, 2011: 315). This is realized through the choices a non-native speaker of English makes: what features of English are adopted and what are left out, what pronunciations or spellings are chosen, and so on. These decisions can be based on the speaker’s personal perceptions of and attitudes towards the varieties of English and their ranking in terms of pleasantness, correctness, ease of understanding and a myriad of other features that can be associated with the varieties. The goal of this study is to discover what associations Finnish university students have for a selection of English varieties.

In the next section, an insight will be given into earlier studies of similar nature, and perceptual dialectology as a branch of science will be more closely examined in order to provide a sufficient theoretical background for the study. After that, the methods and the data used in the study will be illustrated. The data will be analyzed in section 4, followed by discussion and conclusions, in which the implementation of the study is reviewed and some possible applications for the results are presented.
2 Theoretical Background

In this section, an insight is given into language variation in general and more specifically into the field of perceptual dialectology and language attitude studies. As this study concerns Finns, some information of English in Finland is also included in this section in order to illuminate the status of the English language and the level of familiarity with it in Finland.

2.1 Language Variation

Linguists nowadays underline that the variation of languages is systematic and correlates with “sociolinguistic parameters” such as a speaker’s gender, age, regional origin, status or the situational context. The neutral term for these group-specific language forms is usually considered to be a variety, which is defined as “any set of language habits that is shared by a certain group of speakers for use in certain contexts”. (Schneider, 2011: 16.) The term dialect, on the other hand, is also used for a language form that is associated with a certain group of people, but it is usually associated with a certain region (a regional dialect) or a social class or group (a social dialect), as well. As for accent, it refers to mere pronunciation and leaves out other variables that differentiate a variety from another. Otherwise it follows quite closely the definition of dialect: for instance, we can speak of both, the Indian accent or the Indian dialect. (Schneider, 2011.)

Linguists have categorized different English varieties (“World Englishes”) in many ways, composing their categorization on the basis of whether English is spoken as the national language (hereafter referred to as ENL), the second language (hereafter ESL) or a foreign language (hereafter EFL).
The most well-known of these categorizations is Braj Kachru’s *Three Circles* model (Figure 1) which Kachru developed in the 1980s. In Kachru’s framework, “varieties of English (or countries in which it is used) are typically represented as three overlapping or concentric circles” (Schneider, 2011: 31). ENL countries appear in *Inner Circle*, ESL countries are presented in the *Outer Circle* and EFL countries are conceptualized as the *Expanding Circle*. (Schneider, 2011.) For instance, according to this model the US belongs to the Inner Circle, India to the Outer Circle and Finland to the Expanding Circle.

However, this model has been challenged in recent years: as the number of English speakers increases, their classification into these groups is seen as undergoing a shift. Taavitsainen and Pahta (2003) claim that ESL speakers are “drawn towards the ‘inner circle’ of first-language speakers”, e.g. bilingual families that have English as their second language are starting to use it as their home language. What is more, EFL speakers are considered to be shifting to “the ‘outer circle’ of second-language speakers”: for instance, in many Nordic countries the use of English in some domains (e.g. high education) is increasing to the extent of it being an indication of these countries’ shift from EFL towards ESL status. (Taavitsainen & Pahta, 2003: 4.) That is, it can be claimed that Finland no longer actually belongs to the Expanding Circle of Englishes (EFL status), but is slowly moving towards the Outer Circle where English is spoken as the second official language.

### 2.2 English in Finland

A brief look into the status of English in Finland is essential in terms of better understanding the Finnish students’ level of familiarity with English and knowledge of it as well as their ability to evaluate the English language varieties in the present study. As mentioned above, Finland is
traditionally considered to belong to the Expanding Circle of English, but especially the younger generations of Finns are nowadays seen as having “fairly good skills in English” (Ranta, 2010: 159). The Finnish-speaking majority of the population of Finland is often perceived as more competent in English than in Swedish in spite of the official national language status of Swedish in Finland. This has been explained by the prevalence of English in the Finnish media: English-language films, TV shows and news clips, for instance, are never dubbed but are shown with their original soundtrack and subtitles. (Leppänen & Nikula 2012.) However, this daily exposure to English through media is not the only factor that influences the Finns’ competence in English: “many large Finnish companies have chosen English as their official language of business, and, for example, Maiworm and Wächter (2002) found that, among the non-English speaking European countries, Finland had the greatest proportion (compared to total population) of higher-education degrees taught in English”. (Ranta, 2010: 159.)

In addition to the contributions of media, business and advertisements for Finns’ familiarity with English, the teaching of English in schools is naturally of essence in forming English competence in Finland. In 2010, 90.5% of all Finnish third-year students in primary education chose English as their first language, the figure having long remained around 90% (Finnish National Board of Education, 2012). Since the 1970s’ English has been a compulsory subject in primary and secondary education in Finland, which means that even if some other language is chosen for a pupil’s first foreign language, the pupil is still obliged to learn English, as well (Ranta, 2010). These facts indicate that especially the younger generations of Finnish students are well equipped with English language skills, which is yet another reason for the study of their perceptions of different English varieties to be conducted.

However, Ranta (2010) found in her study that even though the Finnish curricula have for decades promoted the studying of English, they have focused strongly on the native-speaker ideal, UK English having been the most prominent language variety promoted by the curricula. American English was given an equal status to UK English in 1985, but other than that, little has been done to acquaint students with other varieties: the introduction of native varieties of English was first mentioned in the curriculum of 1977, but only for the upper secondary school (the Finnish
equivalent for *Am. high school* or *Br. sixth form*). (Ranta 2010.) Confirming the doubts of other varieties’ sufficient presence in teaching are the results of Ranta’s study, which state that 60% of student respondents thought that “teaching did not provide enough information on other varieties of English than British and American” (Ranta, 2010: 166). 76% of the teachers, on the other hand, replied that “native varieties other than BrE and AmE came up in the class ‘Occasionally’” (Ranta, 2010: 171). This contradiction is yet to be solved, but it also has to be noted that Ranta 2010 was a small-scale study with only 34 teacher respondents and 108 student respondents. However, the results can still be seen as a cautious indicator of the lack of prevalence of varieties other than UK and US English in the English teaching in Finland.

### 2.3 Perceptual Dialectology and Language Attitude Studies

As mentioned in the introduction, the validity and scientific function of non-linguists’ perceptions of language has been questioned for a long period time in the recent past. Additionally, even though the field of perceptual dialectology has more recently been quite extensively studied – especially after Preston’s contributions from 1989 onward – the focus has mainly been on regional dialect differences and similarities. The majority of the study has focused on the quantitative aspects of language variation by examining perceived dialect boundaries and producing maps of perceived dialect areas which in turn have been compared with actual production boundaries, discovering little (or no) systematic correspondence. Studies of this nature were the starting point of perceptual dialectology, and, first conducted in the Netherlands and in Japan, the method spread to several countries around the world. (Preston, 1989.) It is worth noticing that these traditional studies were always local: the respondents were usually NORMs – non-mobile, older, rural, male (Chambers & Trudgill, 1980) – and their perceptions of the local dialects and dialect areas were surveyed (Preston, 1989). Traditionally, thus, the respondents in perceptual dialectology were always native speakers of the language they were asked to evaluate.

All in all, relatively few studies have been conducted where non-native speakers’ perceptions of a language are studied. However, the aforementioned lingua franca role of English at present is slowly impacting linguistics in that the study of non-native speakers’ perceptions of English is
gaining ground within perceptual dialectology. Several studies that have to do with non-native speakers’ perceptions of English and attitudes towards it have been conducted in Japan: since the 1990s, the researchers have shown a growing interest in the Japanese English learners’ perceptions of English (e.g. Chiba, Matsuura, & Yamamoto, 1995; Evans & Imai, 2011; Matsuura, Chiba, & Yamamoto, 1994; McKenzie, 2008a; McKenzie, 2008b). Several studies have focused on non-native speakers’ perceptions of “standard English”: i.e. which variety of English is seen as “the most correct”. These studies have received somewhat contradictory results: most have discovered that UK English is perceived as the standard (e.g. Evans, 2010; Ladegaard & Sachdev, 2006; Marr, 2005), whereas some have found that the standard status is associated with US English (e.g. Bayard, Weatherall, Gallois, & Pittam, 2001, Evans & Imai 2011).

Indeed, the correctness of varieties of a language is one of the most thoroughly studied areas in perceptual dialectology along with the examination of its “counterpoint”, pleasantness or the like. That is, usually the traits that are present in a study can be divided into two groups on the basis of whether they relate to correctness and prestige (“standard” or “normal” language) or pleasantness, solidarity and attractiveness: “Previous research shows that language attitudes are organized by evaluations along at least two distinct dimensions: status (e.g., intelligent, successful) and solidarity (e.g., friendly, nice).” (Dragojevic & Giles, 2014: 92.) Therefore, the division between these two categories is usually, in some form, present in most studies that examine non-linguists’ perceptions of varieties (e.g. Hiraga, 2005; Preston, 1989; Preston & Long, 2002). However, in the newest of the Japanese studies referred to in this study, Evans & Imai (2011), the division has been made into three categories: superiority, attractiveness and dynamism. That is, one more category (dynamism) has been added to describe characteristics such as ‘confidence’, ‘aggressiveness’ and ‘enthusiasm’. However, as the present study focuses on the two “traditional” dimensions of language attitude research, the “dynamism” category is not discussed here in more detail.

Evans and Imai conclude that the attitudes of Japanese university students seem to point to a somewhat surprising direction: the attractiveness dimension (traits relating to solidarity and social attractiveness, such as “beautiful”, “courteous” and “gentle”) was more frequently associated with UK English, while the superiority dimension (aspects of status and education, i.e. traits such
as “most correct” and “standard”) was most often associated with US English. This is remarkable in that in previous studies UK English has always been reported to be perceived as the most “correct” or standard variety, which in turn excludes the predominance of the attractiveness dimension, as usually only one of the dimensions is strongly associated with one variety. The researchers explain these somewhat surprising results with the close relationship between the US and Japan and the political power of the US, adding that the strong influence of the US is also present in the Japanese language policy which has undergone a shift from UK to US English as a model. (Evans & Imai, 2011.)

Here, it should be emphasized that a myriad of other factors than merely the variety that is heard indeed do influence the hearer’s perception of it. Studies in perceptual dialectology have shown that people tend to perceive dialect boundaries on the grounds of other factors than the actual dialect areas: e.g. political boundaries, district boundaries (e.g. schools), or religious boundaries (Preston, 1989) may influence the hearer’s perception of language. Moreover, other variables such as the content of the texts that are heard and the voice quality or personality of speakers can have an impact on the hearer’s perception of the variety (Hiraga, 2005).

For the purpose of eliminating many of the above-mentioned variables, the so-called matched-guise technique has been most frequently used in language attitude studies. This technique requires that all the passages are read by the same speaker “who can, in theory, pronounce all varieties involved correctly” (Hiraga, 2005: 291.) In spite of the use of matched-guise technique having been the “standard” for a long period of time, it has two major drawbacks: first, naturally, the difficulty of finding a speaker who is competent in all of the varieties involved and can therefore “give convincing renderings of all - - accents without falling into the trap of projecting a stereotype rather than the genuine article” (Evaluating English Accents WorldWide.: Methods). The second problem with the matched-guise technique relates to the distinction between accent, dialect and variety, which was introduced in section 2.1. When using the matched-guise technique, the same passage is read for all the varieties involved, and this passage is written in “standard language”. This means that no features from the variety are present other than the pronunciation, which of course is not the only variable that differentiates one variety from
another. Thus, the other features that are typical for the variety, such as lexicon and certain grammatical structures, are left out of the examination.
3 Data and Methodology

In this section the methods used in the study are illuminated, as well as the collection and use of the data that was gathered.

3.1 Methodology

The data for this study was collected through a structured questionnaire, in which the respondents were asked to evaluate seven spoken varieties of English after listening to seven speech samples from the International Dialects of English Archive (hereafter referred to as IDEA). In addition to the questionnaire, data was collected by recording conversations between the respondents. In total, 14 respondents answered the questionnaire and participated in the interviews which were conducted in pairs. The interviews were recorded after each sample and the duration of the interviews was approximately 5 minutes per sample, resulting in approximately 4 hours’ worth of recordings. Before gathering the data, a pilot study was conducted with two respondents, resulting in some changes concerning the speech samples. Based on the pilot study, it was considered necessary to substitute two of the speech samples for other samples in order to minimize the effect of variables such as background noise and speaker’s voice quality on the respondents’ perceptions of the variety. The selected speech samples will be more closely examined in section 3.3.

The pilot study resulted in some minor changes in the design of the questionnaire and the order in which the different tasks were performed in it, as well. The study finally consisted of two sections; first, the subjects were played the speech sample once. After this they filled in the first section of the questionnaire, in which the speaker’s manner of speech was evaluated in terms of five traits (pleasant, attractive, powerful, strong, educated). The second section of the study was formulated in a slightly atypical manner in relation to the majority of studies conducted within perceptual dialectology and language attitude studies. In order to more easily collect material for the qualitative research method employed in the study, an unstructured interview was conducted simultaneously with the filling of the second section of the questionnaire. After hearing the speech samples for the second time, the subjects were asked to evaluate their impressions of the
speakers in terms of 13 traits (reliable, ambitious, humorous, authoritative, competent, cheerful, friendly, dominant, intelligent, assertive, controlling, warm and hardworking) relating to the two dimensions frequently present in language attitude studies: status and solidarity. After filling in this section of the questionnaire, the respondents were asked to discuss their impressions and attempt to explain why they selected a certain figure for a certain trait; i.e. what factors formulated their impressions of the speakers. These conversations were recorded and later converted into written scripts of the conversations.

3.2 The Questionnaire

The questionnaire is an adapted version from the project “Evaluating English Accents WorldWide” (hereafter referred to as EEAWW). The project is “the first extensive project to investigate current attitudes and evaluations of the various "standard" accents of English over a wide area of the world” (http://www.otago.ac.nz.html). Its roots are in Bayard’s (1990) study on New Zealanders’ attitudes towards New Zealand English and other varieties, which was carried out in the 1980s and 1990s. Weatherall, Gallois, and Pittam (1998) continued in the field by conducting a study on whether New Zealanders and Australians were able to tell their own accents apart. These two studies led to joint research, the scope of which would be widened to include other nations than Australia-Oceania. The number of the researchers involved grew even further, and the project’s aim became “to see how English-speaking and non-English speaking nations evaluate the four accents, and to investigate the possible influence of the broadcast media on these evaluations”. On a more detailed scale, the research subjects vary a great deal. The personnel involved in the project can freely use the data for their own research interests, and as they come from a wide range of backgrounds (social psychology, anthropology, linguistics, languages and communication), it is obvious that the research interests vary widely. (http://www.otago.ac.nz.html.)

The original questionnaire from EEAWW was modified for the purposes and the scale of this study in that only the first two sections were adopted. In these sections the traits that characterize the speaker and their manner of speech are presented along with a scale on 1-6, 1 depicting “not at
all” and 6 “very”. Other questions were left out in order to narrow down the research subject; in the original project the research subjects range from ease of comprehension of different accents to detecting age from voice qualities, and so on. For the purpose of analyzing the Finnish respondents’ answers as accurately as possible, the background information questions were modified, as well. In the original questionnaire these questions, apart from the basic questions on age, gender and ethnicity have to do with TV and specifically English language TV. However, in this paper the hypothesis is that Finnish students are, to a great extent, exposed to English-language media regardless of their own input or special interest in English language movies or the like. Therefore the questions regarding English language TV were left out and replaced with four other questions. (http://www.otago.ac.nz/anthropology/Linguistic/Questionnaire/Questionnaire.html.)

The first three questions were formed so as to receive information on the respondent’s conscious attitudes towards varieties of English, i.e. what varieties they think they like and dislike. The questions were following: 1) In which countries do you know English is spoken as an official language? 2) In which of the countries you mentioned do you think people speak “the best” English? Why? 3) What about the “worst”? Why? The first question was designed to give the researcher an overlook on the respondent’s overall awareness of the English-speaking world, whereas the two following questions would be of interest when analyzing the respondent’s answers: are the conscious attitudes consistent with the unconscious ones? The final assignment was for the respondents to evaluate their own English skills on the scale of excellent, fluent, good, satisfactory and weak. A space was given for additional information, where the respondent could refer to their matriculation examination, other grades or experiences on communicating in English, for example. Although self-evaluation as a method is by no means foolproof, it was thought necessary for the analysis of the material to acquire some approximate information on the respondent’s acquaintance with the English language. See appendix 1 for the final questionnaire and appendix 2 for its English translation.

The study was conducted in Finnish, which, naturally, required translating the original questionnaire into Finnish. As translating always poses challenges, and mistakes in translation often result in misapprehensions of a word or a phrase, a great deal of effort was put into the
translation of the 18 traits in the questionnaire. In many cases the choice of the Finnish counterpart was easy as the word in question only has one valid equivalent in Finnish: e.g. *reliable* – *luotettava*, *educated* – *koulutettu*. However, some traits required a great deal more thought; what does a native English speaker perceive as the difference between *dominant* and *controlling*, and how to convey this difference to a native Finnish speaker? All of the 18 traits were carefully examined with the help of a native English speaker in order to avoid mistakes that could result in big misunderstandings. However, as translating almost always results in some alterations in the tone, meaning or implications of a word, there is no guarantee of an English speaker’s perception of the traits being exactly the same as the Finnish respondents’. This said, the issue must be taken into account and appreciated as one of the variables in this study that cannot be avoided.

3.3 Speech Samples

As related in section 2.3, the matched-guise technique is most often used for studies of this nature, as even with its drawbacks it remains the only method that to good effect eliminates the effects of certain variables on the listener. However, in the present study the benefits of using the matched-guise technique were questioned from the point of view of authenticity, and therefore another method was chosen. The speech samples used in the study are from IDEA, the International Dialects of English Archive. IDEA was created in 1997 and it is “the first online archive of primary-source recordings of English dialects and accents as heard around the world” ([http://www.dialectsarchive.com/](http://www.dialectsarchive.com/)). The reasons for choosing IDEA as the source of speech samples were mostly those of convenience and reliability; by using IDEA, it was possible to discover all needed recordings in the same place, and as IDEA is considered a reliable academic source, there was no need to actively confirm the authenticity of the accents. What is more, it was possible to find recordings on each variety in which the same passage was read, thus minimizing the effect of the content on the respondents’ perceptions.

However, it must be noted here that as the matched-guise technique is not applied, the variables typical of language attitude studies (in which recordings are used) cannot be excluded. For instance, the age, gender and voice qualities of the speakers may influence the listener’s
perception of the speakers. These variables must be taken into account while analyzing the data, the hypothesis being that the respondents’ perceptions do not form solely on the basis of the variety in question, but are shaped by many variables that the researcher and the reader should be aware of. Therefore a brief introduction to the speakers and the recordings that are used in the study is in order.

The two “standard” varieties, General American and RP, are represented in IDEA by trained speech teachers who teach some variety of the so-called standard, non-regional varieties of language. These are also the only cases in which the speakers are listed with their actual names instead of numbers. General American is represented by Joe Goldes, who was born and has lived most of his life on the east coast of the US, in the state of California. He has also lived eight years in New York. His manner of speech is typical of the general American variety, leaving his origin difficult to be deduced from his speech. No notable special features can be detected in his voice quality, either. The RP speaker, Helen Ashton, teaches speech and dialect at Drama Centre London and Birmingham School of Acting. She has designed and taught courses for softening accents, and no regional features are present in her own speech. Her speech has a great deal of intonation, however, which might render the respondents’ perceptions in some way. Both the General American and RP speakers were chosen from a number of speakers because they were considered to represent the varieties in question to a best possible degree.

Choosing speech samples for the four national varieties and one regional variety included in this study was somewhat more challenging. This is the result of the large number of speech samples in IDEA; for instance, 64 speech samples from 9 regions were presented for Canada. Obviously, there is a great deal of variation between the speakers from different regions and in different age groups. However, after careful consideration the samples that were regarded as the most representative were chosen. The Scottish English speaker, “Scotland 3”, is female and was 20 years old at the time of the recording. She had been residing in the US and going to a college there for a few months, but nevertheless, her accent is relatively strong. The intention with the Scottish variety, as well as the others, was not to soften the accent too much, nor choose the most prominent accent which might create a caricature of sort. The Australian English speaker,
“Australia 23”, was chosen by the same criteria. The speaker is male, and was 26 years old at the time of the recording. His accent is clearly detectable and easily traced to Australia, but on the commonly used scale of broad, general and cultivated (Cox & Palethorpe, 2007), it would most likely be regarded as general or even cultivated. This is supported by the fact that the speaker has a university degree; accents in Australia have traditionally been thought to reflect social class and education of the speaker in a somewhat similar manner to the UK.

Selecting the Indian English sample was impeded by the fact that only 13 samples exist in IDEA, majority of which were not representative of Indian English as it is generally perceived. The most common problem was that English was clearly not the mother tongue of approximately half of the speakers of the archive; the speech was constantly disrupted by breaks, corrections and the like. On the other hand, a few of the speakers had clearly been residing in the UK or the US, as their accent was considerably too softened to count as representative. Finally, a female speaker, “India 2”, was chosen for the pilot study. Her accents, however, is somewhat soft and, regardless of her being 24 years old at the time of the recording, her voice sounds quite young – these two factors became apparent in the pilot study and led to the sample being replaced by “India 3”, a 23-year-old male speaker. His speech is very characteristic of the Indian variety but it is occasionally disrupted by breaks and corrections, which may also affect the listener’s perception.

The Canadian English sample posed an even bigger challenge; finding a speaker whose accent was strong enough for the non-linguists to be able to distinguish it from the American variety, while not producing a stereotype of the variety, was found very challenging. A sample in which the most prominent phonetic feature of Canadian English, “Canadian raising” would be as clearly detectable as possible, was sought for. Therefore a female speaker, “Ontario 15”, was selected. However, in this recording there is some background noise which clearly disrupted the respondents of the pilot study, as did the fast speed of the speaker. Therefore the sample was replaced by “Ontario 32” for the actual study. The speaker is a 43-year-old female whose speech reflects the Canadian variety quite well, but whose rapid speech can affect the respondents’ perceptions. She is also remarkably older than the other speakers, which has to be taken into account, as well.
There is no specific classification of Southern American varieties in IDEA, wherefore some of the Southern states were looked through when looking for a sample that is representative for Southern American English. Again the selection was made with the same principles; the accent was not to be too soft, nor provide a stereotype. A male speaker from Texas, “Texas 18” was selected as it met both of the requirements. However, the speaker’s age was 46 at the time of the recording, which may affect the respondent’s opinions and therefore the results of the research.

The reasons for selecting the aforementioned seven varieties lay in my own interest in these varieties and in my previously acquired knowledge in some of them. It was also thought that these varieties are well-known enough for the Finnish respondents to have had some acquaintance with them. This acquaintance is an important factor when examining not only the respondent’s first impressions on the speakers, but also the motives and reasons underlying their perceptions. Another extremely interesting possibility would have been comparing the rural, urban and “standard” varieties of national varieties as in Hiraga 2005, but again, it was thought unlikely that many Finnish university students would be able to recognize these varieties or even distinguish them for one another. While identifying the varieties is neither the main aim in the study, nor a requirement of any sort, it was considered an advantage to select varieties that would not be entirely unfamiliar to EFL speakers. Finally, the order in which the samples were presented to the listeners was randomly picked and same in every interview. The order was following: 1) US English 2) Scottish English 3) Australian English 4) RP 5) Indian English 6) Canadian English and 7) Southern American English.
4 Analysis

The analysis of the study is divided into two main categories, one of which examines the overall results of the questionnaire filled by the respondents alone while the other focuses on the content of the respondents’ discussions. Subsection 4.1 is included in the first category, examining the Manner of Speech and Speaker Personality parts of the questionnaire both individually and as a whole. In subsection 4.2 only the Speaker Personality category is further examined with the aid of the recordings, and a profile for each variety is introduced.

4.1 Questionnaire: analysis

The general analysis of the questionnaires was carried out by calculating mean scores in order to pinpoint some trends in the ranking of the varieties. The traits were studied from different angles: they were examined both individually and in relation to the status and solidarity dimensions. The traits were divided into the solidarity and status dimensions in the following way: pleasant, attractive, reliable, humorous, cheerful, friendly, warm and hardworking represent the Solidarity Dimension, whereas powerful, strong, educated, ambitious, authoritative, competent, dominant, intelligent, assertive and controlling represent the Status Dimension. The analysis is conducted separately for both sections of the questionnaire, manner of speech and speaker personality (see appendix 1 for the questionnaire). In this section, some findings will be briefly portrayed.

As a starting point for the analysis, a mean score of the 14 answers was calculated for each trait and each variety in order to be able to compare the respondents’ perceptions on the varieties in relation to the traits. Here it must be taken into account that the figures are, indeed, mean scores, and do not provide any unanimous view on the varieties; on the contrary, quite big differences of opinion occur within nearly all traits. Additionally, the sampling consisting of only 14 respondents, no generalizations can be made of the data in any case. However, some patterns can be detected from the mean score ratings, and while the aim of this thesis is not to speculate, the examination of these consistencies can regardless prove fruitful in terms of future studies.
4.1.1 Manner of Speech

In the first section of the questionnaire the subjects were asked to evaluate the speaker’s manner of speech in relation to five traits: *pleasant, attractive, powerful, strong* and *educated*. Figure 2 illustrates the mean scores of the traits in relation to the varieties, and some basic conclusions can be deducted from the results. First, it seems that when studied within the Status and Solidarity Dimensions, the two solidarity-related traits (*pleasant* and *attractive*) are more evenly evaluated between the different varieties; the mean scores for all the varieties are in the range of 2,14 and 4,43. However, when the status-related traits (*powerful, strong* and *educated*) are concerned, more dispersion occurs: the figures range from 1,93 to 5,43. Indeed, both the lowest and the highest ratings occur within the status dimension; the lowest rating is given to the Indian accent in relation to “powerful”, whereas the highest rating goes to RP in “educated”.

![Figure 2. Mean scores: Manner of speech. Comparison of traits.](image)
It is also fruitful to examine the varieties as their own units, for which figure 3 provides a straightforward approach. The relations between the traits within a variety can be seen in the figure above. It can be noted that General American has the largest remainder between the lowest and the highest ratings (1,43). On the other hand, it is easy to notice that the figures seem to be rather even for the Australian variety, where the remainder between the highest and the lowest ratings is only 0,72. Noteworthy is also the fact that the trait “Educated” is rated as the highest trait in three varieties: General American, RP and Canadian English, which are often perceived as the “standard” varieties of English in EFL speakers’ mind, or at least the most commonly heard ones.
A similar pattern can be seen when examining the mean scores of the Status and Solidarity Dimensions in figure 4 above: for General American, RP and Canadian English the Status Dimension clearly surpasses the Solidarity Dimension. However, while the solidarity ratings for these varieties are lower than their status ratings, it is noteworthy that the Solidarity Dimensions for these varieties are still considerably high, especially for the RP and General American varieties. As for the lowest ratings, it seems that Indian English is rated lowest both in relation to solidarity and status, closely followed by the Scottish variety.

4.1.2 Speaker Personality

In the second section of the questionnaire the subjects were asked to assess the speakers’ personalities based on the samples they heard for the second time. The speakers were evaluated in relation to the 13 traits listed in section 3.1, six of which represented the Solidarity Dimension, seven the Status Dimension. Figure 5 below represents the mean scores calculated from the respondents’ ratings of the varieties.
The figure above holds an almost endless amount of material for analysis; however, only a few points will be examined here. It is notable that out of the 13 traits present in the study, RP stands out as the highest rated variety in nine traits. This is a remarkable finding, both in itself, but also in relation to the earlier study in perceptual dialectology. The distinction between Status and Solidarity Dimensions seems to apply in that RP, the variety that in most studies has been perceived as having the most prestige, is rated highest in all of the status-related traits (ambitious, authoritative, competent, dominant, intelligent, assertive and controlling). However, the present study shows that the Finnish respondents regard RP as the highest variety in relation to two of the solidarity-related traits, reliable and hard-working, as well. This is not consistent with the majority of earlier studies presented in this paper, and it hints at the effect of RP’s position in the Finnish
school curriculum; many of the respondents made notions of RP sounding “the most familiar” or “the ‘normal’ way of speaking English”. The high ratings of RP in reliable and hard-working might therefore stem from the feeling of familiarity with the variety.

However, in the rest of the solidarity-related traits, humorous, cheerful, friendly and warm, RP was not ranked very high; this is highly consistent with the earlier studies in the field. These four traits, on the other hand, seem to be dominated by two varieties, Australian English and Southern American English. What is also notable in figure 5 is the low ratings of Canadian English in humorous, cheerful, friendly and warm – in other words, four solidarity-related traits out of six. Therefore the relatively high ratings of Canadian English in reliable and hardworking can be considered somewhat surprising. Another interesting feature is that the majority of the lowest ratings seem to focus on three varieties: Indian English (six lowest rankings), Canadian English (four lowest rankings) and Scottish English (two lowest rankings). Additionally, General American is rated lowest in one trait: hardworking. It would be tempting to connect this finding with the widely spread stereotype of the “lazy Americans”, but with 14 respondents it is only possible to speculate.
In figure 6 the ratings for each variety can be seen. The highest-rated trait for General American seems to be assertive followed closely by competent and reliable, whereas humorous is rated lowest. For Scottish English, friendly has gotten highest ratings (followed closely by all other solidarity dimension traits except for reliable), while ambitious clearly receives the lowest markings. Australian English seems to receive remarkably similar evaluations than Scottish English in that the same solidarity-related traits (friendly, cheerful, humorous, warm and hardworking) are ranked highest; the only difference is that for Australian English the ratings are notably higher. RP seems to receive significantly high ratings (in relation to other varieties) in all traits except for warm, controlling and, most of all, humorous, which is clearly rated lowest.
Indian English appears to be given the lowest ratings of all the seven varieties; the only traits where figures higher than 3 are reached are the same solidarity traits rated highly with Scottish and Australian English: friendly, warm, cheerful, hardworking and humorous. Indian English also receives the lowest rating of all with the mean score of 1.57 for authoritative. Canadian English receives its highest ratings in reliable and hardworking followed closely by intelligent, competent and authoritative, whereas humorous is ranked lowest. Finally, Southern American English appears to be given high ratings in all solidarity traits and, additionally, in assertive, while controlling receives the lowest figures.

Figure 7. Mean scores: Speaker personality. Solidarity and Status Dimension.

When Status and Solidarity Dimensions are examined, a similar pattern to the Manner of Speech ratings can be found: the Status Dimension is higher than the Solidarity Dimension in General American, RP and Canadian English, i.e. the three “standard” varieties of English. In all other varieties the Solidarity Dimension receives significantly higher ratings. This suggests that while the “standard” varieties are seen as having the most prestige, the speakers of the regional varieties are seen as more approachable, friendly and warm - a finding that correlates with the earlier studies in perceptual dialectology, as well.
4.2 Varieties: Speaker Personality Profiles

In this section an insight is given into the varieties individually. Each variety is examined through an inspection of the Speaker Personality traits of the study, along with the recordings made during the filling of the Speaker Personality scale in the study. 13 traits were presented to the respondents, six of which belonging to the Solidarity dimension and seven to the Status dimension. Solidarity-related traits include reliable, humorous, cheerful, friendly, warm and hardworking and status-related traits ambitious, authoritative, competent, dominant, intelligent, assertive and controlling. In the following sections these traits are examined as their own units and some interesting points are raised for conversation.

The respondents were also asked to discuss their ratings of the traits with a partner, focusing on their impressions of the speakers and possibly elaborating what they stemmed from. The discussions were recorded and some interesting points are examined in this section alongside the respondents’ ratings of the varieties on paper. As for the examples illustrated in the text, both the original sentence and its English translation are included. However, it must be noted that as the conversations were informal, the language used by the respondents is also very colloquial and dialectal. This, in addition to the exaggerations and word plays frequently used by the respondents, poses a challenge to the translations’ accuracy. Therefore, it is good to notice that the translations are not absolute by any means but approximate and suggestive.

4.2.1 General American

General American seems to be one of the varieties very well known to the Finnish respondents; eleven respondents out of fourteen identified it correctly as a US variety. The general impression was that the speaker sounded reasonably pleasant but slightly more educated and prestigious. The variety was characterized several times as “basic English”, the type that is heard commonly in school and other everyday contexts.
The mean score of all the traits in the **Solidarity Dimension** category is **3.56**, which suggests that General American is seen, as a whole, as a rather pleasant variety.

It seems that the grounds for evaluating the variety reasonably high in terms of solidarity lie in the speaker’s overall composition, which is seen as quite matter-of-fact, maybe even somewhat business-like, but still nice enough to create a feeling of solidarity. These tendencies are illustrated in Example 1, which is an extract of a conversation regarding the variety’s overall “sound” between two respondents.

**Example 1.** *Basic English, clear, the guy’s no newsreader but seems like a matter-of-fact fella.*

Perus englantia, selkeä, ei ihan uutistenlukija mutta asiallisen olonen kaveri.

*A kind man.*

Lempeä mies.

Two traits of the Solidarity Dimension category, reliable and friendly, were evaluated considerably higher than the other ones. **Reliable**, with the mean score of 4.64, received the highest points of the solidarity-related traits, respondents basing their judgement on the speaker’s pleasantness, “basic” English pronunciation and the lack of hesitation in his speech. However, some reservations were still present in the evaluations, as well (Example 2). The speaker’s **friendliness** received a mean score of 4.21, high evaluations being explained by the speaker’s perceived pleasantness, matter-of-factness and calmness. The respondents agreed that the speaker is not forbidding in any way, but some still stated that he did not raise a specific feeling of friendliness due to his “monotone” voice.

**Example 2.** *It was pretty much a basic voice so that nothing jumps on your face like with some accents. He wasn’t unreliable but it didn’t especially stir reliability either.*

Tuo oli tommonen perus ääni aikalailla, että mikään ei hyppiny kasvoille niinku joissain aksenteissa. Ei ollu epäluotettava mutta ei erityisesti luotettavuuttaan herättäny.

With the mean score of 3.71, the speaker was also perceived as quite **warm** (Example 3). The sense of warmth was thought to stem from the speaker’s pleasantness, fluent-sounding English and “nice” and “soft” voice. However, some respondents raised opposing views as well, basing
their low ratings on the speaker’s “mechanical” way of speaking. **Hardworking** (3.36) received quite contradictory results; being the only trait of General American variety with both extremes of the scale present, it seems that the respondents had very differing views on the speaker’s diligence. The lack of energy and briskness in the speech were listed as reasons for low evaluations, whereas reasons for a higher figure were harder for the respondents to describe. Most merely stated that supposedly the speaker is hardworking “in some way”.

**Example 3.** *Quite warm. Not, like, a real storyteller, but quite warm anyhow.*

*Ihan. Ei mikkään semmonen satusetä täysin, mutta ihan lämmin kuitenki.*

Two traits of the Solidarity Dimension received remarkably lower grading than the others. **Humorous** was evaluated lowest all the traits of the General American variety with the mean score of 2.64. The reasons seem to stem from the perceived matter-of-factness of the speaker; respondents described the speech as quite humorless and the tone as rather official (Example 4). **Cheerful** (2.79) also received low ratings, for which most of the respondents were not able to give a specific reason. Some respondents were, on the other hand, of the opinion that the speaker is “not too neutral” either but should be placed somewhere on “the plus side” of the scale.

**Example 4.** *If he kept shooting jokes I think I’d be laughing, but he’s no big ‘wag’ though.*

*Jos latelis vitsejä menemään niin naurattais, mut ei nyt mikkään paras vitsiniekka.*

As for the **Status Dimension**, the traits were generally evaluated quite high: four traits out of seven received a mean score of over 4.0. The mean score of all seven traits, **3.86**, is also higher than that of the solidarity dimension (3.56), which suggests that General American is perceived as a more “correct” or “standard” variety rather than as a “pleasant” one.

The highest mean score of the General American variety (including both dimensions) was given to **assertive**: 4.93. The respondents were quite unanimous in their assessment, basing it on the speaker sounding intelligent, skillful, confident, calm, even and believable. **Competent** received the second highest mean score (4.71), and again the respondents were quite unanimous in their
opinion. The speaker’s perceived authority and capability to get the listener’s attention at once were listed as reasons for the evaluation. The speaker’s intelligence was evaluated as somewhat above average with the mean score of 4.21: the speaker was described as “not top school material” but “not dumb” either, and these impressions were explained by the speaker sounding confident and competent.

As for the speaker’s authority, the results were somewhat contradictory. Authoritative received a mean score of 4.14, some respondents finding him very authoritative because of his perceived confidence, quick pace of speech and official tone. However, others described him as being “bossed around by his kids” and not being believable giving orders. An interesting point was also raised when a respondent contemplated his impression of the speaker as a “stereotypical white male” and the effect of this association on the speaker’s perceived authority when compared to people of different ethnic backgrounds (Example 5).

Example 5. I associate him with a stereotypical white male who does have some authority if you compare him to for example someone who speaks in so-called ‘black style’ and that you could stereotypically perceive as some kind of gangster. This is the other extremity, the speaker’s middle-aged, he has family, job...

Mulla tulee itellä mieleen tuosta stereotyyppinen valkoihoinen mies, jolla on sinänsä auktoriteettia jos vertaa johonki vaikka semmoseen joka puhuu semmosella mustalla tyyllä niinsanotusti että stereotyyppisesti voi ajatella että se on ehkä jonkulainen gangsta. Niin tuo on sitä toista päätä että keski-ikäinen, sillä on perhe, työpaikka...

The speaker’s ambition was estimated as quite high with the mean score of 3.43. Interestingly enough, most respondents still verbally evaluated him as somewhat below average, concluding that his “lazy, dreary sound” and “modesty” excluded ambition. One respondent also compared the speech sample to Obama’s speeches, which she perceived as a good example of ambitious speech (Example 6).

Example 6. I would connect ambitiousness to, like, Obama’s speeches, to being bombastic. This one lacks that.

Mää liitän kunnianhimoisen siihen niinku Obamalla on puheita, niinku mahtipontisuuteen. Tuosta puuttu se.

The two traits of the status dimension that are perhaps most easily associated with negative characteristics received the lowest points in the study. Controlling, with the mean score of 2.71,
was rated lowest of the status dimension traits. Verbally, the speaker was generally not perceived as controlling at all: it was stated that he spoke calmly, “did not want to affect the hearer”, and did not feel “intrusive in any way”, as seen in Example 7:

Example 7.  *He wouldn’t manage to provoke populace with that.*

Ei sillä kansanjoukkoja kiihotettais.

The speaker was not perceived as *dominant* either, but the mean score is slightly higher than that of controlling, 2.86. The speaker was described as “pretty neutral” in terms of dominance, the reasons including his neutral tone and lack of much emphasis on words. However, some respondents did find the speaker somewhat dominant or at least trying to be; this was based on his high perceived authority and well outlined speech.

4.2.2 Scottish English

Scottish English seems not to be a very familiar variety to the respondents of the study: only two recognized the variety as Scottish, six mistook it for British and four as Irish, while two placed it somewhere in America (Southern US, South America). The variety stirred very differing images among the respondents: on one hand, the speaker was considered a “young, whining, platinum-blond woman who doesn’t succeed at school”, on the other, she was imagined as “a Brittish gypsy”, referring to a reality TV-show that illustrates grand gypsy weddings in Britain.

In relation to the *Solidarity Dimension*, Scottish English was rated reasonably high: all traits but one got a mean score above 3 and the mean score of all the traits rose to 3.38. The highest points were given to *friendly* (3.71), with reasons such as the speaker sounding straightforward, friendly and “not calculating”. Her voice was described as “gentle”, and it was stated that she gave an expression of babbling with a friend (Example 8). The speaker’s perceived origin, British, was also listed as a reason for high points, as British people were considered friendly in general. Lower points, on the other hand, were explained by the perception of the speaker sounding as if she was reading straight from the paper.
Warm, with the mean score of 3.57, was rated second highest, but with reasons not very well specified. Again, being British was listed as a reason for high points in warmth, other explanations included that the speaker seemed “humane” and “homey” (kotoisa?). She was also perceived as reasonably hardworking (3.5). Reasons for high points had to do with the relatively fast pace of speech: the speaker was seen as an energetic/bustling (touhukas?) person who fusses around and is a “good employee” (Example 9). She was also described as sounding “almost adhd”: the image was that she has a lot of energy, but not necessarily a very wide attention span. However, the speaker was also considered neutral or even lazy by some respondents (Example 10).

Example 9. Well this one sounded hardworking. She could be, like, a jack-of-all-trades kind of person.

No tää kuulosti ahkeralta. Semmonen jokapaikanhöylä vois olla tää tyyppi.

Example 10. Not hardworking. Shirks as much as she can.

Ahkera ei. Lintsaa minkä ehtii.

Cheerful received a mean score of 3.43. Those who rated the speaker’s cheerfulness highly explained it by her sounding funny and as if she enjoyed speaking. Explanations for lower ratings, on the other hand, were not very numerous: it was merely stated that the speaker sounded irritable and not cheerful. The same mean score, 3.43, was given to humorous, as well. The high perceived humor was explained by the cheerful and optimistic sound of the speech. The speaker was characterized as a “funny scatterbrain” (hauska höppänä?) and it was stated that she doesn’t seem to take things too seriously (Example 11). Reasons for lower points included the speaker’s nasal voice, lack of emphasis on words and “phlegmatic repeating” of what she was supposed to say.

Example 11. She’s the type to shoot some brisk humor for sure.

Varmasti hurttia huumoria heittää
Reliable was evaluated quite radically lower than the other traits with the mean score 2.64. This low rating was based on the speaker’s rush in the speech as well as her “monotone” voice, “boorish” (junttimainen?) accent and “sloppy” and “bouncy” way of speaking (Example 12). It was stated that the way of speaking created a restless feeling among the listener. The speaker was also perceived as unsecure, and the difficulty of understanding her speech lowered the points even further.

Example 12. She’s panicky, telling tales there.

Laskettellee lööperiä hädissään siinä.

The traits of the Status Dimension, on the other hand, were evaluated quite low; the mean score of all the traits was 2.44, no trait reaching a mean score of 3.0.

Intelligent was evaluated highest with the mean score of 2.79. The most popular choice was 2; this relatively low figure was based on the speaker’s perceived insecurity, sloppiness and casual sound. The heavy dialectal sound was stated to create an image of the speaker as a “peasant”. The rolling ‘R’ was mentioned as a possible factor in creating a somewhat unintelligent image. On the other hand, three respondents chose 4, describing the speaker as a “white female who has finished school” and might have some “hidden talents”. Perhaps somewhat surprisingly, dominant received the second highest mean score of 2.71. Compared to the General American variety (mean score 2.86), this result is perhaps somewhat unexpected. The relatively high perceived dominance of the speaker cannot be explained very well with the aid of the respondents’ conversations, as nearly every respondent verbally evaluated the speaker as not dominant. Therefore, it is possible that the contradiction is merely a result of marking the trait somewhat higher by mistake.

Competent (2.57) was verbally evaluated quite low in nearly all conversations, as well. The reasons included the “young” vibe of the speech and the difficulty of following what was said, as well as the lack of authority and ambition in the speech. It was stated that there is no way that one could speak like this in a job interview, and that even if the speaker is competent, it did not come up in the speech. The speaker was also rated quite low in terms of authority. With the mean score of 2.5, most respondents evaluated the speaker’s authority quite low (Example 13), but
some higher evaluations were presented as well. Many of these stressed that the speaker probably has authority in her own ‘circles’, but not very likely in other contexts.

Example 13.  It was, like, “I’m gonna read it through” and then there’s some gibberish here and there...

Se oli semmosta että lukasempa läpi ja välillä vähä mongertaa siellä...

This isn’t how you’d speak in some politic rally.

Tuo ei oo sitä miten puhuttais jossain poliittisessa rallyssa.

**Assertive** received a mean score of 2.5, as well. The low ratings were based on many things, one of which was the difficulty of understanding the speaker, which according to the respondents made it impossible for her to be very assertive. The speaker was considered uncertain and her speech too fast: it was stated that it almost made the hearer out of breath to listen to her. The speaker was also associated with some kind of “street vendor trying to sell something”, which did not convince the respondent of her assertiveness. With the mean score of 2.29, **controlling** received an even lower rating. It was stated that the speaker sounded monotone and gave the impression of an “everything goes” type of person with no power or effort in the speech. However, one respondent did find the speaker very controlling, basing it on the nasal sound of her voice.

The lowest points of the Scottish English variety were given to **ambitious** with the mean score of 1.71. The speaker was described as the average man on the street or “somewhat ethnic even”, but not ambitious by any standards; it was stated that the low perceived ambition was realized through the speaker’s hurried speech (Example 14).

Example 14.  Seemed hasty. Wastrel, like, let’s just read it through so I can go home.

Hätä oli. Huithapeli että kuhan nyt lukasen tämän tästä ette pääsee kotia.

The variety was also perceived as extremely boorish, as seen in Example 15:

Example 15.  Well, there’s probably an association to some British Skins etc. where all the kids talk like this. I mean, this is like so irritating, so disgusting, this accent. It actually hurts my ears to hear someone talk so boorishly.
It can be seen in the example that the variety stirred some quite strong negative associations to certain groups of people who talk in a similar manner; this particular respondents associated the variety strongly with the TV-show *Skins* and the characters who have a similar accent.

### 4.2.3 Australian English

Australian English seems to be one of the varieties not very well known among the Finnish respondents: four out of fourteen identified the variety as Australian English, seven mistook it for some British regional variety, and three respondents associated it with a Southern American variety, mentioning Texas or cowboys. Interestingly, a notion of the speaker sounding as if a bit tipsy came up several times; it was perceived to lessen the speaker’s reliability and competence but to add to his cheerfulness and humor (Example 17 below).

The Solidarity Dimension was generally evaluated very high with the Australian English variety; the mean score of all the solidarity-related traits was 4.28, only one trait receiving a mean score below 4.

**Friendly** received the highest rating of the variety with the mean score of 4.5. The respondents were very unanimous in regard to the speaker’s friendliness: half of the respondents chose 4 and the other half 5. The speaker was described as “everybody’s pal” and the speech very lively and animated. The speaker was thought to be “companionable” (toverillinen?), “casual” and “neutral but pleasant-sounding” (Example 16).

**Example 16.** You’d think he’s telling the story to a friend.

Vois kuvitella et se kaverille kertoo tätä tarinaa.
Cheerful received the second highest mean score of 4.43. Reasons for high points included the speaker’s perceived briskness and good sense of humor, as well as the tempo of the speech and the fact that the speaker sounded as if talking to a friend (Example 17). He was also considered quite humorous (4.36); it was stated that he sounded “convivial” and his speech had a “vigorous” feel to it (Example 18), which was associated with a good sense of humor.

Example 17. Quite the cheerful fellow – maybe a bit tipsy.

Aika iloinen veikkonen – ehkä pikkupienissä.

Example 18. Speaking like that, you sound funnier, and if you shoot a joke, it’s not like some British auntie speaking with a dry English accent. Certain words sound much funnier as well.

Tuon tyylisellä puhetyylillä kuulostaa hauskemmalta ja jos nakkaa jonku vitsin ei oo sellasta niinku brittitäityylinen että sanoo kuivalla enkulla. Kuulostaa joku sanaki paljo hauskemmalta.

Hardworking received the reasonably high mean score of 4.21. The speaker was considered hardworking because of the briskness in his reading, the sense of him having “a backbone” and the “blue-collar” vibe he gave (Example 19). However, there were some reservations, as well: it was stated that he is not too eager, either, and that he probably does not do laundry at home even if he is somewhat hardworking otherwise. The speaker’s warmth was evaluated as 4.14, with reasons such as the positive sound of the speech and the speaker sounding ”responsive”. However, it was stated that even with the friendly and “chatty” vibe, he did not sound very sweet, per se (Example 20).

Example 19. He reminds me of a cowboy, so that he is hardworking.

Tulee semmonen cowboy mieleen että työeliäs kuitenkin.

Example 20. This was more friendly than warm. Warm is some Moominmamma, you know, someone gentle. This wasn’t like that but rather nice and funny.

Tää oli enemmän ystävällinen ku lämmin. Lämmin on semmonen muumimamma, semmonen lempeä. Tää ei ollu semmonen lempeä vaan oli mukava ja hauska.

Reliable received a clearly lower rating than the other traits in the Solidarity Dimension, 3.79. Even so, some respondents had a reliable impression of the speaker, stating that he sounds “like a valedictorian” and seems nice and down-to-earth. The speaker was described by them as casual
but exuding reliability and competence. However, to some respondents his “panicky” and “bouncing” speech and the difficulty to understand him gave the impression that the speaker might not be that reliable; it was even stated that he sounds as if a bit drunk. The respondents had very differing impression about the speaker even in the same conversation (Example 21).

Example 21. - He was, like, slim, about 175-180cm tall guy who wears a suit and lives in London, who maybe works in banking...
- No! He’s pimple-faced. Definitely not in banking. He’s not that educated yet. Barely even at a university yet.
- Se oli semmonen hoikka, 175-180 pitkä semmonen puku päällä Lontoossa asuva mies jossain pankkialalla ehkä..

As for the **Status Dimension**, Australian English was evaluated clearly lower than in terms of solidarity: the mean score of all the Status Dimension traits was 3.04.

**Competent** (3.5) was one of the two traits that received highest points in the category; interestingly, however, most respondents verbally only took notion of things that gave a negative feeling about the speaker’s competence. He was described as “not the newsreader type” due to the strong dialect instead of standard language (Example 22). It was also stated that that kind of “emergency call speech” did not create a competent image. With the same mean score, 3.5, **assertive** received a somewhat similar evaluation from the respondents: the brisk and confident way of speaking earned the speaker some reasonably high points, but most respondents found the rushed, hasty speaking unconvincing (Example 23). It was stated that a speaker like him might exaggerate or tell fishing stories.

Example 22. *It might sound incompetent to our ears because it’s not some “book English”, but that speaker himself might think that that’s how he’s supposed to speak.*

Meiän korviin saattaa kuulostaa epäpätevältä ku ei oo sellasta kirjaenglantia mutta sitte tuolle itelle se voi olla silleet että näin se pittääki puhua.

Example 23. *Quite colorful speech. I think he’d get you convinced but I’m not sure if he’d tell the truth. It might not be true what he’s assuring.*

Aika paljo väriä puheessa. Kyllä se sais niinku vakuutetuki mutta ei se välttämättä puhus totta. Se ei välttämättä oo totta mitä se vakuuttaa.
Ambitious received the second highest rating of the Status Dimension, 3.29. The reasons for high points included the speaker’s matter-of-factness, eagerness and his “elevated” way of speaking, which were seen to indicate that “he knows where he’s going”. The lower points were explained by the speaker’s “street accent”; he was described as more of an “everyman” than e.g. a politician with high ambitions. The speaker’s intelligence was evaluated as 3.14, on the basis of him sounding pleasant and “quick-witted” and as if he knows what he is talking about. However, it was stated that he does not appear dry or “bookish”, nor highly educated (Example 24).

Example 24. Quick-witted but no intellectual. Intelligent is someone drier. This wasn’t like that. There wasn’t anything negative about it, he was just more quick-witted than intelligent.

Supliikki mutta ei mikkään älykkö. Älykkästä tulle enemmän semmonen kuivempi mieleen. Ei tää ollu semmonen. Ei mittään negatiivista vaan se on niinkö enemmän supliikki.

Nearly all respondents stated that there was no clear sense of authority in the speech, which resulted in authoritative receiving the quite low mean score of 2.71. The majority of the respondents did not express any concrete reasons for the perceived lack of authority, but merely stated that the speaker did not appear authoritative (Example 25). The same applied to dominant (2.64): most respondents did not specify what their impressions stemmed from. It was merely stated that it seemed like a conversation in which someone else could have also had their turn. One respondent disagreed with the others, rating it as 5 and explaining it by him “proceeding rapidly” in the text.

Example 25. Authoritative is someone strict. He didn’t seem like that.

Auktoriteetista tulee mieleen semmonen tiukka tyyppi. Ei tuo kyllä semmoselta vaikuttanu.

The lowest mean score was given to controlling (2.5). It was stated that he did not seem aggressive or intrusive, and the speech appeared to the respondents as interactive and equal in that one could have easily participated in the conversation. The way of speaking was considered light and cheerful, and the word controlling itself a negative trait, unfit to describe the speaker. However, one respondent evaluated him as quite controlling, explaining it by him ending the sentences quite sharply and concisely.
RP seemed to be the best-known variety for the respondents; 11 out of 14 located the variety somewhere in Britain, many adding comments about it being a “fancy” or “snobbish” variety. RP roused numerous associations in the respondents: the variety was called “Oxford English”, “Matriculation Examination English”, “Downton Abbey English” and “school English”. It was also stated that the speaker sounded like an English teacher, an upper-class woman or even a London metro announcer. The association to school, exams and especially Matriculation Examination was mentioned several times, which suggests that the variety is very well represented in Finnish schools.

The speaker was estimated quite high in terms of the **Solidarity Dimension**; the mean score of all the solidarity-related traits was **4.0**.

Two traits were given ratings considerably higher than the others: reliable (5.0) and hardworking (4.64). The speaker’s **reliability** was rated very high on the basis of the association to a school environment and a teacher’s profession, as well as the “intelligent and educated” impression that she gave. The speech was also considered very clear and easy to follow, and it was described as “typical” English, which was seen to bring reliability to the speaker. The speaker was also considered very **hardworking**; it was stated that she sounded very energetic and her speech had a good tempo and variation, which gave the impression that the speaker is not lazy. On the other hand, some reservations were made: it was stated that she did not come off as someone who does physical labor and that she might delegate the work to others (Example 26).

**Example 26.**  
- She probably has a job but there’s no “I’ve been working on a field all day” kind of vibe.  
- But she’s not the “I’m just lazing around here in my place, not doing anything” type either.

- Varmaan töissäkäyvä mutta ei tuu semmosta että ”olen ollut pellolla kaiket päivät”.  
- Mut ei semmonenkaan että ”lorvin tällä vaan kämpässäni enkä tee mittään”.

**Friendly** received a mean score of 4.14. The speaker’s friendliness was described as “civilized/educated friendliness” and the speaker “teacher friendly”: it was stated that she knows how to be friendly because she has to be in her profession. The speaker was seen as a “matter-of-fact reporter of facts” (asiallinen tiedottaja?) without much “personal touch”, but interestingly
enough, the points given were still quite good all the way, half the respondents choosing 5 to represent the speaker’s friendliness. Some respondents did state receiving a warm and very friendly impression of the speaker, some even adding that they would like to get to know the person.

**Cheerful** (4.0) received somewhat similar results: the speaker was not generally seen as very cheerful but more matter-of-fact and neutral, but the points given were still quite high. The cheerfulness was described “civilized/educated” in comparison to a “kindergarten teacher” style of speaking. However, there was considered to be some variation and empathy as well as a sense of smile in the speech. **Warm** (3.64) roused quite varying opinions: on one hand the speaker was described as having “motherly” and “teacher-like” warmth, but on the other hand an “announcer-like distance” and neutrality was seen to be present in her speech (Example 27). It was even stated that the speaker would probably not be very warm even toward her own family.

Example 27.  *Doesn’t create a feeling of embrace.*

Ei mitään embrace-meininkiä kuitenkaan.

**Humorous** received a considerably lower mean score than the other traits, 2.64. The speaker was not perceived very humorous on account of her “fancier” pronunciation and official sound. These led the respondents to think that the speaker is “matter-of-fact and competent” and “quite cheerful but not very humorous”. She was described either as neutral in terms of humor or even as a “dry teacher-lady” (Example 28). However, some respondents found the intonation and the pitch variation in her speech to indicate that the speaker is, after all, somewhat humorous.

Example 28.  *She was just like, a business talker, a dry law-person.*

Tää oli just semmonen asian puhuja, kuiva laki-ihminen.

In terms of the **Status Dimension**, on the other hand, RP was evaluated highest of all the varieties of the study. The mean score of all the traits of the Status Dimension category, **4.61**, is the highest mean score given to any variety in either category in the study. This suggests that the prominent
position of RP in the Finnish school system has a strong effect on the Finns’ perception of the variety as the most prestigious one.

**Competent**, with the highest mean score of the whole study, 5.21, was very unanimously evaluated: eleven respondents out of fourteen chose 5 and the remaining three 6. The reasons for the very high perceived competence of the speaker were her official and educated sound and the fact that the variety represented the “typical” English the respondents were used to hearing. The variety was associated strongly with school environment, which added to the perceived competence of the speaker. The school-association was strongly present with **authoritative** (5.14) as well: the respondents reported that they felt the need to concentrate immediately, as if in matriculation examination or in class with a strict teacher. The speaker was described as confident, strong and powerful in terms of authority (Example 29).

**Example 29.**  
Yeah, she was. With this style of speaking you do get people’s attention.

Kyllä oli. Tää oli semmonen puhetyyli että tällä saa kyllä huomion.

Intelligent and assertive both received the mean score of 5.07. They were both also very evenly (and nearly similarly) evaluated: they were mostly evaluated as 5 with a few estimates at 4 and 6. High ratings for **intelligence** were mostly explained by the speaker sounding very educated civilized, and confident. It was stated that she sounds as if she has read a lot, meaning that her intelligence is mostly considered to be book learning. The speaker’s **assertiveness** was estimated as 5.07, as well, reasons being mostly similar to those of her high perceived competence and intelligence. It was stated that her speech seemed standard and fluent, and it did not have “dialectal qualities”, which was seen to add to the assertiveness. However, the pitch variations were considered to reduce the speaker’s assertiveness by some respondents; it was stated that she sounded even theatrical at some points.

The speaker’s **ambition** (4.29) was considered to be somewhat above average, with only a few explanations (Example 30). The speaker was seen as quite ambitious based on her “school English” pronunciation and her confidence, but reverse opinion were stated, as well: her voice was
considered quite “even” and she was therefore not seen as very ambitious. The speaker was considered quite dominant (4.14) based on her determined sound and the sense that she has everything under control (Example 31). It was stated that in a conversation she would probably be quite dominant, not making it as easy to interrupt as the previous speakers. However, some respondents thought that she had a kind voice and the tone was more advising or informing than dominant per se.

Example 30.  *The speaking style of someone moving upward.*

Ylöspäin suuntaavan ihmisen puhetyyli.

Example 31.  *It felt as if she can handle it.*

Tuntu et oli aika ohjaksissa.

The lowest points of the Status Dimension were given to controlling, which received the mean score of 3.36. The trait stirred quite varying opinions: almost even distribution of figures 5-2 was chosen by the respondents. The association to school and strict teachers was present again: the “teacher style” of speaking was seen to cause the feeling of the speaker being controlling, as seen in Example 32:

Example 32.  *She could be somewhere ordering people around with that style.*

Se vois olla jossain käskyttämässä ihmisiä tuolla tyyllä.

It was stated that the speaker could almost be characterized as the traditional “old-school” teacher with whom one mustn’t argue. However, not all respondents got the highly controlling impression of the speaker: she was again described as having a more advising or instructive tone rather than a domineering one.

4.2.5 Indian English

Indian English was identified quite well among the respondents; eight out of fourteen identified the variety correctly as Indian, while the rest placed it somewhere in Africa, Wales or in the Middle
East. The Indian English variety was, as expected based on earlier study in the field, ranked considerably lower in terms of prestige and status than the previous variety, RP. However, even the Solidarity Dimension was in places evaluated quite moderately. Mostly the variety was perceived as the non-standard varieties tend to be: the solidarity quite high and prestige very low, which is clearly visible in one respondent’s conclusion of the variety (Example 33):

Example 33.  \textit{I thought he sounded like he’s friendly and warm but not, like, educated or authoritative.}

Minusta se kuulosti semmoselta ystävälliseltä ja lämpimältä mutta ei miltään koulutetulta kyllä eikä auktoriteettilä omaavalta.

Stereotypes were also very prominent with the Indian variety: “Kalakutta-English”, “pizza-taxi” and “doctor Bombay” were mentioned as associations, and one of the respondents was immediately reminded of his Pakistani roommate, which followed him through the whole evaluation of the variety. The strong presence of /d/ that is typical of the Indian pronunciation also drew the respondents’ attention, as it was mentioned several times.

The **Solidarity Dimension** was quite positively ranked in general, but some lower evaluations reduced the mean score to 3.6.

The highest points of the Solidarity Dimension and the Indian English variety in general were given to friendly (4.36). The respondents were quite unanimous in the speaker’s friendliness, giving him mostly evaluations in the range of 4-6. He was perceived as very friendly on account of his “lively and sprightly” (reipas) sound and nice, “mid-level” voice that was considered not too low or too high. The speaker was claimed to sound much more cheerful than the previous speaker (RP), and even those who stated that they did not find the variety very charming or nice to listen to mostly found the speaker very friendly nonetheless. The association to a street vendor was expressed several times, mostly raising the evaluations as they were in most cases seen as very friendly and cheerful people. There was only one exception where the respondents thought that the speaker “just wanted to sell the sandals and go about his business”. The origin of the speaker also affected the perceived friendliness of the speaker: several respondents reported giving high evaluations because of the perception that Indian people are very cheerful, polite and friendly in general.
**Warm** (4.0) received few explanations as to why the speaker was perceived warm or not. Most respondents merely stated that he does sound quite warm, but did not specify further why so. The association to Indian people and their friendliness was brought up again, and some stereotypes were presented here as well (Example 35). The speaker was generally evaluated as “average” in regard to **cheerfulness** which received the mean score of 3.86. The speaker was by some respondents perceived as “not cheerful but not sad either”, while some stated that he seemed very cheerful, associating him e.g. to the TV show *Big Bang Theory* or the taxi drivers in India.

**Example 35.**  
*Could be quite warm. I can see him offering that rice and everyone groping it with their dirty hands.*  
Aika lämmin vois olla. Vois tarjota sitä riisiä ja kaikki voi lääppiä sitä sitte likasilla kourilla.

**Hardworking** (3.5) received quite varying opinions: some respondents perceived the speaker very hardworking, basing it on Indian people generally working very hard, while some thought that he seemed “lazy-ish” and like “his mom still does his laundry”. The explanations as to why so were scarce; the opinions seemed to mostly lean on the respondents’ stereotypes of Indian people (Examples 36 and 37). **Humorous** received a mean score of 3.43, with, again, quite varying opinions; a good part of the respondents thought that the speaker sounded very funny and explained it with their associations to movies and TV shows (e.g. *Big Bang Theory*) with Indian taxi drivers and other characters, while others merely stated that Indian people do not generally have a very good sense of humor.

**Example 37.**  
*Hardworking... Yeah. They cook a lot.*  
Ahkera... Joo. Paljo kokkaavat.

**Example 36.**  
*Eager to do all kinds of doctor-stuff.*  
Kova tekemään kaikkia lääkärihommia.

**Reliable** received a considerably lower mean score than the other traits of the Solidarity Dimension (2.43). The reasons for low evaluations included “sloppy” speech and lack of confidence, and the association to some respondents was “like going to Turkey to buy fake clothes” where the street vendor is “trying to con you”. Some of the respondents stated that they
felt like they’re very prejudiced as they just somehow could not find the speaker reliable (Example 38).

**Example 38.** *His accent is not reliable, but the way that he speaks is quite reliable as it’s even and so on. But the accent chips away at the reliability. I feel a bit racist now, it feels terrible to say this...*

Hänen aksenttinsa ei oo luotettava, mutta se tapa miten hän puhuu sitä tekstiä on ihan luotettava kun on tasanen ja näin. Mut se aksentti söi sitä luotettavuutta. Tunnen itteni vähä rasistiksi, kauheelta tuntuu sanoa näin...

As for the **Status Dimension**, Indian English received a very low evaluation: the mean score was the lowest of any variety in the study, **2.18**. This indicates that the Finnish respondents do not perceive the Indian variety as prestigious at all.

Highest points of the category were given to **intelligent** (3.0). The respondents who chose low points explained it by the speaker sounding as if he has common sense but isn’t exactly educated, and it was also stated that it sounds as if he doesn’t know the language very well. However, some respondents did perceive the speaker as highly educated: he was pictured as someone who’s gone to school in India and managed to move to Britain because of his education. It was also stated that as he doesn’t sound like a native speaker of English (but most likely Hindi), he has to be somewhat intelligent to be able to express himself in English that well. An association to Indian or a Pakistani postgraduate students here in Finland was also mentioned.

The speaker’s **ambition** was evaluated as 2.43. The low points were explained by the speaker’s lack of focus and knowledge of the language, and it was stated that there was no “drive” in the speech nor a desire to express himself clearly. Some respondents, however, did find some qualities in the speaker that were perceived to indicate some ambition: his speech was described as natural and understandable (Example 39). The question of the speaker’s mother tongue was raised, as some respondents pondered whether he would sound more ambitious in his mother tongue (that was thought to be Hindi).

**Example 39.** *This is a two-sided question. I think that his voice isn’t ambitious, it’s more ethnic. But then I think about some of those Indian and Pakistani people who educate themselves really highly and they’re, like, pretty ambitious and it’s all about performing well.*
Kakspiipunen juttu. Minun mielestä hänen ääni ei oo kunnianhimoinen että tää on enemmän etnoääni. Mutta sitte tulee mieleen semmoset intialaiset tai pakistanilaiset jotka kouluttaa ittensä hirveen pitkälle ja silleen ne on aika kunnianhimoisia suorittajia.

**Competent** received the mean score of 2.21, the respondents concluding that the speaker probably wouldn’t make a good impression e.g. at a job interview with his accent. It was stated that he cannot be taken very seriously and that he doesn’t seem very informed or competent. He was mostly associated with professions that do not require a high education (Example 40, Example 41) and some respondents seemed to be quite aware of the stereotypical nature of their opinions (Example 42).

**Example 40.** *Maybe [he’s competent] to manufacture some pencils.*

No ehkä valmistamaan jotain lyijykyniä.

**Example 41.** *I think he’s competent enough to serve papadums.*

Musta oli ihan pätevä tarjoilemaan pappadumeja.

**Example 42.**

- *All the immigrant stereotypes are kind of realized through this one speaker.*
- *Yeah, shame on us...*

- Vähä nyt kaikki maahanmuuttajastereotypiat sitoutuu tähän ääneen.
- *Joo, hävettää...*

**Dominant,** with the mean score of 2.07, was given low evaluations because the speaker was perceived as too insecure and “phlegmatic” to be dominant. It was also stated that he is calm and “convivial” (leppoisa?) and not dominant by any means. **Assertive** received the same mean score of 2.07, the respondents stating that the speaker lacks confidence and doesn’t seem to get out what he wants to say. It was stated that if he told some personal story, it might be somewhat more assertive as he would be able to just “let it out”. Some stereotypes were also presented (Example 40).

**Example 40.** *He wasn’t very assertive. I just keep thinking that he lives with his mother like all Indian men.*

Ei se ollu hirveen vakuuttava. Siis mää vaan aattelen että se asuu sielä äitinsä luona niinku kaikki intialaiset miehet.
With the mean score of 1.93, the speaker was not seen as **controlling**. Not many reasons were listed, it was merely stated that he seems nice and kind, and that the respondents could not see him controlling anyone on anything. The same applied for **authoritative** (1.57) which is the trait with the lowest mean score. It received an almost even distribution of 1 and 2, and almost no specifications as to why. The lack of authority was seen to be caused by the speaker’s “immigrant voice” which was associated to certain situations and environments, as seen in Example 41:

**Example 41.**  *This is exactly the kind of immigrant voice that I don’t think has authority. This is a bit stereotypical but you expect to hear this kind of speech on a kiosk somewhere rather than at Parliament’s assembly.*

Tää on vähä just semmonen maahanmuuttajäääni että minusta ei silleen oo auktoriteettia. Tää on vähä stereotypia mutta tämmöstä ääntä odottaa enemmän kuulevansa jossain kiskalla enemmän ku tuolla eduskunnan kokoontumisessa vaikka.

It can be seen in the example that the respondent leaned strongly on a stereotype of the accent not being heard in contexts that one might associate with authority.

**4.2.6 Canadian English**

Canadian English was not identified correctly by any of the respondents, but mistaken as a US variety by 13 respondents and British by one. Nonetheless, it created quite many images among the respondents; the speaker was characterized as “mumsy”, “teacherish”, educated and “kind of cold”, which was explained by her “rushed”, “absent-sounding” speech. Her speech was described as “not quite British but pretty much what we (Finns) are used to”, and it was associated to politicians or otherwise “official” speech and even nature programs. Other associations were a countess in the series *The Real Housewives of New York* and “a forty-something middle-class working mother who lives in a suburb somewhere in America”. The Status Dimension was evaluated higher than the Solidarity Dimension, with the remainder of 0.49.

In relation to the **Solidarity Dimension**, there was quite a lot of variation in the evaluation of the traits: some received mean scores above 4.0, while others barely reached the mean score of 2.0. The mean score of the whole Solidarity Dimension category is therefore **3.13**.
Reliable and hardworking received the highest mean scores of the category, 4.21. Reliable was given high points on account of the speaker sounding sincere and kind. It was stated that she spoke “basic English” that was seen as “common” and therefore “safe”, and her “low-pitched” voice was considered to bring reliability as well. On the other hand, some respondents found the speaker less reliable, stating that she sounded rushed and “panicked”, one even describing her as a “grim hag”. However, on account of the sense of rush and business she was seen as quite hardworking. Other reasons for high evaluations were her perceived competence and high education. Two respondents stated that the speaker is probably not very hardworking as it seemed like she was doing the reading involuntarily and lazily.

Friendly (3.0) received quite differing evaluations from the respondents; figures 1-5 were chosen quite evenly. Those who found the speaker very friendly described her as extremely kind, stating that she is too nice to say no to anything, while others considered her “absent and distant” and the reading forced and “straight from the paper”. The perceived “mumsiness” of the speaker was realized through a stereotyped picture concerning her friends and social circles (Example 42). Mostly negative images were expressed regarding the warmth (2.86) of the speaker: she was characterized as distant, monotone and tired. However, some very positive associations occurred as well, on account of the “mumsiness” of the speaker that created a “warm, fuzzy and soft” image of her. As for her cheerfulness (2.5), the respondents mostly characterized her as neutral or somewhat on the negative side: she was described as “not bubbly but not apathetic either”, somewhat serious, monotonous and tired, which had to do with one respondent’s image of her family life (Example 43).

Example 42.  
*She could be, like, a person with a wheezy laugh. She’s in a hurry to socialize with other mumsies.*

Vois olla semmonen hinkunauraja kyllä. Sillä oli kiire sosiaaliseen elämään elämään muitten tätien kans.

Example 43.  
*Like, she’s working 6 hours a day and then when she goes home she has to pick up the kids from school and make dinner. The tasks just never stop.*

Just että tekee 6 tuntia töitä, menee kotiin niin täytyy hakea lapset koulusta ja tehä ruokaa. Että ne työt ei vaan lopu.
Humorous received the lowest mean score of the Solidarity Dimension, 2.0. The respondents were mostly unanimous in their opinion of the speaker as not humorous; she was characterized as “a bit dry”, serious, tired and grim (Example 44). The image that she was reading straight from the paper was seen to reduce the humor, as well. However, some “educated humor” was seen to be present in her speech in places.

Example 44.  This was nowhere near humorous.

Huumorintaju oli kyllä kaukana.

The traits of Status Dimension, on the other hand, received a total mean score of 3.62.

Intelligent was evaluated highest with a mean score of 4.07, which is somewhat surprising as the respondents seemed to have a difficult time deciding where to put the speaker in terms of intelligence. It was stated that she sounds like “a basic Yank” who has “common sense” and works at an office but who is not especially intelligent (Example 45). The rush that was sensed in her speech on one hand raised an idea that she might be “someone important”, but on the other hand made her sound “panicked”.

Example 45.  She’s not, like, dumb, but no genius either. Basic, average person.

Ei niinku tyhymä mut ei mikään nerokaan. Perus tavallinen ihminen.

The speaker’s authority and competence were both estimated as 4.0. Her fluent, well-spoken speech and perceived “coldness” were seen to indicate that she is quite authoritative. Her concise and “to the point” delivery and the image of her as a “working mom” also added to her perceived authority. However, some respondents found her too rushed and unfocused on her task (i.e. reading) to be very authoritative. The speaker’s competence (4.0) received somewhat contradicted opinions from the respondents: some characterized her as very educated and sharp, while others imagined her with a “basic job”, making more than the minimum wage but not in a very important position (Example 46).

Example 46.  She’s not necessarily any expert, lecturing at Harvard, but she knows how to do her job and does more than file her nails as a secretary. She’s in an office or customer service.
Ambitious received the mean score of 3.57. Again, quite contradicting images of the speaker were expressed. She was described as “no career woman” by some respondents, stating that she is not very educated or concentrated on her career but rather works to provide for the family. Other respondents, however, pictured her with a rather prestigious position (Example 47). Another trait with very differing responses was assertive (3.43) which received a quite even division of figures 1-5. Those who did not consider the speaker assertive stated that she seemed absent and phlegmatic and the rhythm of the speech indicated her lack of assertiveness. Respondents with higher figures stated that she managed to make her point and was “mostly believable”.

Example 47. - Yeah she is [ambitious]. She has a suitcase, by the way.
- Yes she does! She's a vet.
- Joo on [kunnianhimoinen]. Sillä on muuten salkku.
- Niin onki! Se on eläinlääkäri.

Controlling received the mean score of 3.21, with around half of the respondents stating that the speaker seems at least somewhat controlling. The reasons included her “grim” and “very academic” appearance, which gave the impression of her being a “control freak” and having the need to have everything under control. The other half of the respondents did not feel as if she was trying to “run the show” or “steer the listener” into any direction. The lowest mean score, 3.07, was given to dominant on account of the speaker sounding somewhat monotonous and giving the impression that the situation is controlling her rather than the other way around. Some of the respondents did, however, find her somewhat dominant, as seen in Example 48:

Example 48. Yeah she was. Everyone turns to look when she arrives.

Oli. Kaikki kääntyy kahtoon ku se tullee.

There, it can be seen that the speaker’s perceived dominance was caused by her competence, briskness and well-spoken language.
4.2.7 Southern American

The Southern American variety seemed to be quite well-known to the Finnish respondents: 13 respondents out of 14 placed it in the US, four mentioning the Southern states and two countryside. The variety created several very strong images among the respondents; the stereotypes were numerous and varied somewhat. The speaker was characterized as a “retired actor” or some bohemian character in the lines Robert de Niro. Moreover, images of an older policeman or a neighborhood storyteller with a wide-brimmed hat were listed by the respondents. Quite strong stereotypes were also expressed: the speaker was imagined as a “Texas-Kansas person with a cowboy hat on his head and a grass in his mouth” and a “middle-aged republican man, maybe a truck driver, with a beer belly and a shotgun in one hand, Budweiser in other.” Some of the respondents found it difficult to decide whether he was “a redneck or a gentleman”, stating that at places he sounded as if he could even be president.

The speaker’s speech was considered very pleasant, even with the strong accent: it was stated that he does not sound very educated but he seems very sympathetic and pleasant. There were also some stereotypes present that probably have to do with western movies or the like, as they presented the people from the South quite simple and even violent (Example 49, Example 50).

**Example 49.** Really simple and easy life. If someone pisses you off, you go and shoot him.

Tosi yksinkertaista ja helppoa elämää. Jos toinen suututtaa niin käy ampumassa sen.

**Example 50.** These are trustworthy folks, they don’t go around shooting each other for fun.

Nämä on luotettavaa sakkia, ei ne turhaan ammuskele toisiaan huvikseen.

The **Solidarity Dimension** was evaluated reasonably high with the mean score of 4.22. Mostly high points (4-6) were given to the speaker concerning nearly all traits, but a couple of discordant notes were heard in each one, choosing figures 1-2.
Friendly received the highest mean score of the Solidarity Dimension, 4.36 No specific reasons were given as to why the speaker was perceived very friendly – it was merely stated that the people speaking in that manner usually are (Example 51). However, some respondents felt that the speaker kept a certain distance or did not seem particularly friendly or happy. The speaker was also perceived as quite hardworking (4.29), mostly on account of associations to farmer-life. The speaker was imagined as having a pickup-truck and not just sitting in an office but doing “real work” (Example 52), several respondents underlining that he’s probably hardworking in what he’s interested in but otherwise not particularly.

Example 51.  I have a strong faith in these people’s friendliness.
Kova luotto näitten ystävällisyyteen.

Example 52.  I think he’s hardworking, doing honest manual labor.
Ahkera tää minusta on, tekee rehellistä ruumiillista työtä.

The speaker’s humor was rated quite high with the mean score of 4.29, as well. He was described as an easy-going story-teller who, according to some respondents, clearly seemed funniest of all the varieties heard in the study. The “redneck”-stereotype was a strong influence here, as well; it was stated that “these people” usually have a good, if somewhat unorthodox sense of humor (Example 53). The speaker was perceived as quite warm (4.21), as well, basing it on him being a very convivial (leppoisa) “easygoing worker” with “Southern State/Confederate warmth” (Etelävaltioiden lämpö). However, he was seen to keep some distance by some respondents, as well.

Example 53.  I connect that style of speaking with sense of humor. Like, he’s cracking jokes in a way that you’re not sure if he’s actually joking or not.
Itte yhistän tuohon puhetyylliin huumorintajun. Et se heittää semmosta läppää että siitä ei tiä että vitsaileeko se nyt vai ei.

Reliable and cheerful received the lowest mean score of the category, 4.07, which is still very high compared to other varieties. The speaker’s reliability seemed to stem from the image of a farmer with a backbone who “tells how things are and you can’t really disagree” (Example 54). It was
stated that he seemed somehow very genuine and trustworthy, but some reservations were made by some respondents: he was also described as a “basic redneck” that probably is not entirely reliable. The speakers' cheerfulness was explained by the perception of him as a lively, “a twinkle in his eye” – sort of “cheerful chap”. It was stated that he has a “jovial view of life” and that he doesn’t worry about things to come.

Example 54.  
I trust his word because he was a farmer. Just playing the banjo there.

Luotan hänensä sanaansa, koska se oli semmonen maatalon isänä. Siellä banjoa soittelee.

As for the Status Dimension, the mean score of the traits was 3.29, i.e. significantly lower than that of the Solidarity Dimension.

The traits were very evenly evaluated, as five traits out of seven received a mean score in the rage of 3.07-3.43. The only two traits that break the pattern are assertive and controlling. Assertive received a considerably higher mean score than any of the status-related traits (4.36). Even respondents who marked nearly all other traits with low figures found the speaker quite assertive, 3 being the lowest figure given to it. His assertiveness was based on him sounding like he knows what he’s talking about and being a man of principle: it was stated that he does not open his mouth for nothing and that he stand behind his opinions and principles.

The speaker’s authority (3.43) received quite varying results: the speaker was generally perceived as rather neutral but with some triggers that might cause his authority to increase instantly (Example 55). It was stated that his voice does not sound particularly authoritative, but that in real life he might be a “house-sized fella”, maybe a sheriff or the like. Several respondents stated that they would listen to what he has to say and probably also believe him. He was also described as having his own, claimed position, a high self-esteem and “national pride”, all these factors building up to a “Yankee authority” that he was considered to have. The speaker was mostly considered quite competent (3.43) as well, with the emphasis that he is probably very competent in his own line of work, i.e. farming and the like. It was stated that he could probably be the world’s best repairer of tractors but perhaps wouldn’t make it in the city very well. He was perceived as not very educated but having experience of life that brings competence. However, some respondents
did not find him very competent, referring to him as a “redneck who brags but doesn’t necessarily know what he’s talking about”.

Example 55.  
Not necessarily [authoritative], because he was such a rascal. Except when someone crosses his land without permission, then he takes his rifle and hunts him down.

Ei välttämättä, se oli niin vekkuli. Paitsi sitte jos joku tulee sen maille luvatta, niin se ottaa kiväärin ja lähtee metsästämään.

Dominant (3.29) awoke two types of opinions. Some respondents did not find the speaker dominant on account of his conversational tendencies; it was stated that as he gives room for others to take part in the discussion, he is not very dominant. On the other hand, several respondents expressed that they would listen to him carefully, stating that “he’s probably the one that others come to for advice”. He was considered in control of his own business and controlling the situation rather than letting it control him. This was taken even further by some respondents who stated that this is a man who does what he wants without anyone interrupting (Example 56).

Example 56.  
- This guy doesn’t do house chores, he watches TV and drinks beer.
- And votes for Bush in every election.
- Even in those where he’s not a candidate.

- Tää jätkä ei tee kotitöitä, se kattoo telkkaria ja juo kaljaa.
- Ja äänestää bushia joka vaaleissa.
- Jopa niissä joissa se ei oo ehdolla.

Intelligent received a mean score of 3.14. The speaker was characterized as not book-learned but sensible and rational; he was considered an “intelligent worker” (Example 57). His confidence led some respondents to think that he is good at what he does and some even stated that he might have some “hidden talents”. However, the stereotype of “a Yankee who’s a bit slow” and “lives in the middle of woods, doesn’t pay taxes and has strong opinions about everything” was expressed as well.

Example 57.  
He’s not so redneck that he’d be slow, but he just went to elementary school and then to work at construction or drive a truck or something. He didn’t necessarily want to go to a college or then he couldn’t afford it.

Ei oo niin punaniska et ois hidasälynen, mut se on käny sen peruskoulun ja sitte menny johonki raksalle tai rekкамieheksi töihin. Ei oo välttämättä mihinkään collegeen halunnukkaan tai ei ehkä oo ollu varaa.
**Ambitious** received the second-lowest mean score of the Status Dimension, 3.07. The speaker was considered matter-of-fact and brisk but not very ambitious, as there was no “pathos” in his speech but it was mostly “declaratory” (toteavaa). This was seen to represent that “he has his place in life and he’s fine with it”. However, some respondents did find him somewhat ambitious on account of his speech being colorful and him seeming to be interested in what he was talking about. The lowest mean score was given to **controlling** (2.29). Respondents mostly found the speaker relaxed and not aggressive by any means, as seen in example 58:

**Example 58.**  *He doesn’t mind small issues.*

Tätä ei pikkujutut haittaa.

However, even though the speaker was perceived as very laid-back and not easily annoyed as the example shows, the association to a policeman or a sheriff raised ratings for a few of the respondents.
5 Discussion

In this section the findings of the analysis are compared to the earlier studies of the field to see if consistencies or discrepancies can be found. The findings will be discussed in relation to the Status and Solidarity Dimensions, as the “major conclusion” of the early studies of perceptual dialectology and language attitude studies has been that “one language, the majority or standard language, is associated with power and status traits, and the minority or non-standard variety with solidarity and local affiliation” (Mugler 2002: 2). This conclusion has been challenged in some of the recent studies that have found tendencies to rank some varieties high in both dimensions; in the following sections, these matters will be discussed on the basis of the findings of this study.

5.1 Solidarity Dimension

The variety that was rated highest in terms of solidarity was Australian English, the mean score of the solidarity-related traits being 4.28. Southern American, with the mean score of 4.22, follows right behind, which is to be expected on the basis of the earlier studies: the non-standard varieties are usually seen as more attractive than the standard ones (Mugler 2002). How the Australian variety fits into this presumption, however, can be debated upon: in the earlier studies the results concerning the placement of the Australian variety along the Solidarity-Status Dimensions have been somewhat varying.

Mugler (2002) found in her Pacific study that the male Australian English speaker was rated high in terms of status, while the female Australian English speaker ranked low in status. However, it is worth noticing that the respondents in the study were from Pacific origins, so even though they weren’t native speakers of English, they were probably quite familiar with the Australian English variety, which might affect the results. Respondents with a lower degree of familiarization with the variety, on the other hand, seem to be inclined to rank the Australian variety high in solidarity and low in status: Evans & Imai (2011), Ladegaard & Sachdev (2006) and Chien (2014) found this tendency with nearly all of their respondents from Japan, Denmark and Taiwan, respectively.
Therefore, a correspondence to these findings can be seen in the Finns’ high evaluation of the Australian variety in terms of the Solidarity Dimension.

What does not coincide with the majority of the earlier studies is the high ranking of RP in solidarity: with the mean score of 4.0, the variety is ranked third highest. As mentioned in section 2.3, most studies in the field of perceptual dialectology have traditionally found that UK English is upgraded on prestige and status and downgraded on solidarity and attractiveness. However, the Finnish respondents’ evaluation is not in line with this, as they rank RP high in terms of both dimensions – the Status Dimension somewhat higher than the Solidarity Dimension, however. Several respondents reported strong associations to “school English”, which would explain the high ranking in status and possibly to some extent in solidarity, as well. Many of the respondents stated that the speaker reminded them of a teacher, which might explain the high evaluations of solidarity to some degree, if the associations to the respondents’ own teachers are positive. However, at places the high ranking of the solidarity-related traits does seem quite contradictory, as several respondents verbally evaluated the speaker as “dry” or even described her as an “old hag” but still upgraded her on solidarity.

Indian English was ranked somewhat above average in terms of solidarity, receiving a mean score of 3.6. Not many studies could be found in which the Indian English variety has been included, but it can be assumed that as a non-standard Outer Circle variety, Indian English follows the pattern of being ranked high in terms of solidarity and low in terms of status. This hypothesis is correct in that the ranking of the status-related traits is considerably lower than the solidarity-related traits, but the latter is not particularly high, either. In a study conducted in Taiwan (Chien 2014), Indian English was ranked second highest (of seven varieties) in terms of solidarity and third highest in terms of status, the latter perhaps seeming somewhat surprising – however, the other varieties included mostly non-standard varieties such as Japanese, Spanish and Taiwanese English, which probably explains the relatively high ranking in terms of status. Therefore, it can be said that the results of this study are mostly consistent with the earlier studies in that the Indian variety was ranked clearly higher in solidarity than in status.
General American, as a standard variety, was not assumed to be ranked very high in terms of solidarity. However, with the mean score of 3.56, it was ranked above average – it can be speculated if this is yet another factor indicating the prevalence of the standard varieties in the Finnish school system. The Status Dimension was ranked slightly higher, but only by 0.30 – General American is, therefore, the variety with the dimensions evaluated closest to each other. A number of studies (Chien 2014, Evans & Imai 2011, Ladegaard & Sachdev 2006, Bayard & Green 2005) have had similar results in that the General American variety has been ranked relatively high in both dimensions – this is seen to indicate that the prevalence of UK English is diminishing and US English is slowly replacing it as the ascendant variety (Bayard & Green 2005).

The second lowest mean score of the solidarity-related traits, 3.38, was given to the Scottish English variety. This is somewhat surprising in the light of earlier studies, as they have usually shown tendencies to rank Scottish English in the typical non-standard variety manner: high in terms of solidarity, low in terms of status. In a study conducted by Ladegaard & Sachdev (2006), Scottish English was ranked especially high, somewhat surprisingly in both dimensions. Therefore, the second lowest ranking of the Scottish English variety is inconsistent with the earlier studies in the field.

Canadian English received the lowest mean score of solidarity-related traits, 3.13. Of special interest is the fact that the respondents of the study did not identify the variety as Canadian but mistook it for a US variety; indeed, the US and Canadian varieties are “indistinguishable to most outsiders” (Mugler 2002: 74). Therefore, a question is raised: out of two varieties that are perceived to be from the US, why is one ranked higher than the other? The answer lies most likely in the phonetic features of the Canadian speaker: nearly all of the respondents commented on her being in a rush and sounding tired. Therefore, it can be assumed that at least partly the low ranking of the variety is due to the phonetic variables. It is difficult to say whether the results have any consistencies with earlier studies, as not many studies could be found in which Canadian English is included, perhaps due to the difficulty of distinguishing between the US and Canadian varieties. However, Evans & Imai (2011) found that Canadian English was perceived as a more socially attractive variety than a prestigious one, which is not in line with the findings of this study.
5.2 Status Dimension

With the Status Dimension, the presumption, based on earlier studies, was that the standard varieties would be ranked high and the non-standard varieties considerably lower. This hypothesis was substantiated, as the three standard varieties, RP, General American and Canadian English received significantly higher mean scores of the status-related traits than the non-standard varieties.

The variety ranked highest was, as expected, RP: it received the highest mean score of the whole study, 4.61. This finding is in line with the majority of the earlier studies: traditionally, RP has been commonly perceived as the prestige variety (Mugler 2002). However, in more recent studies a tendency to upgrade the American variety increasingly on the Status Dimension – occasionally even over RP – has been noted in the last few decades (Mugler 2002, Bayard & Green 2005, Evans & Imai 2011). In the present study, however, it seems that the Finnish respondents still rank the varieties in the traditional manner. The Northern American varieties do get reasonably high evaluations in terms of status, as well, but there is a clear consensus among the respondents that RP is “the standard” variety: it is “the most familiar” and “common” kind of English, connected with school, education and being “fancy”.

The variety that was ranked second highest in terms of status is General American. With the mean score of 3.86, it does not challenge RP as the most prestigious variety – this is in line with the “traditional” findings in the field which have usually pointed towards RP as the standard variety. However, as mentioned earlier, more recent studies has shown signs of the focus shifting towards American-accented English as the standard English variety. This tendency could be seen to some extent in the present study, as well: several respondents made remarks about the General American variety as “basic English”, describing it very clear and “inconspicuous” in that it does not invoke any strong opinions in the hearer.
Canadian English follows General American with a mean score of 3.62. It was to be expected that the two varieties would be ranked closely, as Canadian English was taken for a US variety by all respondents but one — therefore, if consistent, the respondents were presumed to evaluate the status-related traits of the varieties in a similar manner. This hypotheses was not verified in the verbal evaluation, as the speaker was called “cold”, “mumsy” and “uninterested”, which clearly differs from the mostly positive verbal evaluations given to the General American variety. However, judging by the mean scores of the status-related traits, the varieties are ranked quite close to each other.

The two varieties ranked highest in solidarity, Southern American and Australian English, were placed considerably more modestly in terms of status, which is in line with the earlier studies of the field. However, both received a mean score above 3.0 (Southern American 3.29, Australian English 3.04) and also got some positive verbal evaluations in relation to the status-related traits, which could be thought to cautiously indicate that the traditional understanding of a variety being ranked high in one of the dimensions and low in the other might not be definite anymore. Signs of this shift have been expressed in recent studies and discussed in the cases of UK and US English in this study, and the reasonably high ranking of the Southern American and Australian English varieties seem to further support the impression that the varieties are not associated strictly with only one of the Status/Solidarity dimensions anymore.

The lowest mean scores in terms of the Status Dimension, 2.44 and 2.18, were given to Scottish and Indian English, respectively. The low ranking of these varieties is in line with the earlier studies — being non-standard minority varieties, they have rarely been perceived as prestigious (with the exceptions of the studies mentioned in 5.1: Chien 2014 and Ladegaard & Sachdev 2006). However, as discussed in section 5.1, neither Scottish nor Indian English were ranked especially high in terms of solidarity, either – the Indian variety came in the fourth place, the Scottish one second last. Therefore the results of this study cannot be said to effectively support the conclusion of the division into varieties upgraded on status or solidarity. Yes, the Indian and Scottish varieties were upgraded more on the Solidarity than Status Dimension, but as several standard varieties outranked them in both, it could be concluded that the standard varieties were simply liked better.
by the Finnish respondents than Indian and especially Scottish English. This finding, however, does not coincide with the findings of Ranta 2010, which concluded that Finnish students did not clearly prefer native-speaker English but appreciated accented Expanding Circle English, as well.
6 Conclusion

The focus of this study was to examine the perceptions and attitudes of Finnish university students toward seven varieties of English: General American, Scottish English, Australian English, RP, Indian English, Canadian English and Southern American English. The varieties were chosen on account of my own interest in them, as was the subject of the study itself. However, there are several other reasons for conducting a study of this nature. First, no study has been conducted where the Finns’ perceptions of English varieties are examined even though it is commonly known that the perceptions of language have an effect on language use. Therefore, it is essential to know what features of a language are appreciated, preferred or disliked in order to be able to predict how language use will be modified in future; which features of a language will be adopted and which will be left out. As English is spreading and gaining more and more ground among non-native speakers of English, it is interesting as well as important to examine how these non-natives actually perceive the different varieties of the language that is becoming a salient part of their lives.

The study was conducted with 14 respondents and seven speech samples that were considered representative of the varieties included. The study was carried out in two sections: the first part of the questionnaire, where the speakers’ manner of speech was evaluated, was filled by the respondents after hearing the speech sample for the first time. After hearing the sample again, the respondents were to fill in the second part of the questionnaire evaluating the personality of the speaker while discussing with a partner the reasons for choosing the particular figures to describe the speaker. In other words, the focus of the second part of the study was to make the respondents contemplate their own perceptions of the varieties and, consequently, to be able to explain why the varieties are perceived in a certain manner.

A goal was also to compare the results of the study with those of the earlier studies of the field, especially in relation to the Solidarity/Status division. The traditional conclusion of the studies of perceptual dialectology has been that usually standard varieties (standard UK and US English) are upgraded on traits of prestige, education and status and downgraded on those that have to do
with the accessibility, humor and solidarity of the speaker – and for non-standard (regional) varieties, the other way around. However, some of the recent studies have challenged this assumption in the past couple of decades. Indeed, a tendency to upgrade both dimensions on the standard varieties was visible in the study, whereas some non-standard varieties received quite modest evaluations on both dimensions.

Thus, the results of the study seem to indicate that generally speaking, the standard varieties are seen as the most correct and prestigious varieties but reasonably attractive and pleasant, as well. Therefore, the findings of Ranta 2010 could be questioned in terms of the Finns’ liberal views on accented varieties of English; the results of the present study seem to suggest that Finns do, after all, appreciate the standard varieties quite significantly more than the non-standard ones, not only upgrading them on status but on solidarity, as well. However, the downgrading of the non-standard varieties is not thorough or systematic: two of the non-standard varieties, Australian English and Southern American English, are evaluated highest in terms of solidarity and also receive ratings somewhat higher than average in terms of status. Nonetheless, the two varieties with the heaviest accents, Indian English and Scottish English, are nearly unanimously downgraded on both dimensions. In future studies this phenomenon could be further examined: why are some non-standard varieties evaluated significantly lower than others in terms of both dimensions?

The findings also demonstrate that Finns evaluate the two standard varieties, UK and US English, in the traditional manner in terms of prestige: UK English is clearly perceived as the most prestigious variety, indicating that the predicted shift from UK English to US English as the ascendant variety has not yet taken place in Finland. It would be interesting to see what the Finns’ perceptions of UK and US English in terms of the Status Dimension will be in a few years: is US English replacing UK English as the most prestigious variety, as expected by linguists? It would also be of interest to examine the timeframe in which the shift is happening in Finland, as compared to other Expanding Circle countries.

While looking at the findings of this study, however, it must be taken into account that the study was very low-scale with only 14 respondents, and therefore the findings are merely suggestive at
best. The tendencies found in the study should be further validated with a larger sample in order to provide reliable conclusions on the Finns’ perceptions of the varieties of English, which is why large-scale studies of the subject ought to be conducted. The results of these studies could be used in several branches of social sciences and linguistics, but also in developing the curriculum and the English teaching in Finland. By providing information on students’ level on knowledge of different English varieties and their attitudes toward them, the studies could point to targets of development in the English teaching in Finland.
References


Appendix 1: The questionnaire in Finnish

Teija Rautio
Pro Gradu -tutkielma
Englannin varieteettien tutkimus 2014
Oulun yliopisto

Tässä tutkimuksessa kiinnostuksenkohteena on se, millaisia vaikutelmia erilaiset puhujat herättävät kuulijoissa. Usein saamme pelkästä puhujan äänestä tietoa siitä, millainen puhuja on kyseessä, esimerkiksi kuullessamme tuntemattoman puhujan radiossa tai puhuressamme vieraan ihmisen kanssa puhelimessa.

Soitan teille seitsemän eri puhujan puhumaa englanninkielistä nauhoitusta. Puhujat lukevat noin minuutin mittaisen kaunokirjallisen tekstin. Tekstin sisällöstä ei ole tutkimuksen kannalta merkitystä, joten koettakaa kiinnittää huomiota puheen sisältöä enemmän puhujan puhetapaan.

Kun kuulette nauhoituksen, käyttäkää pieni hetki puhujan luonnehtimiseen mielessänne, ja sen jälkeen täytä se kyselyn ensimmäinen osa itsenäisesti.


Lopuksi vastatkaa viimeiseen kysymykseen itsenäisesti.

Pyydän teitä aluksi vastaamaan muutamaan kysymykseen, jotka auttavat aineiston analysoinnissa. Pyrkikää vastaamaan kaikkiin kysymyksiin. Kiitos osallistumisestanne.

Sukupuoli: mies nainen

Ikä: ____________

Pääaine: ________________________________________

Sivuaine(ett): _____________________________________

Synnyinpaikka: ____________________________________
Kansallisuus: suomi muu, mikä? __________________________
Oletteko asuneet ulkomailla? ei kyllä: missä? ________________________

_____________________________
kuinka kauan? ________________________

_____________________________

Missä maissa tiedätte englantia puhuttavan virallisena kielenä? __________________________


__
_____________________________

_____________________________

Missä em. maista mielestänne puhutaan ”parasta” englantia? Miksi? __________________________


__
_____________________________

_____________________________

Entä ”huonointa”? Miksi? __________________________


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Lopuksi arvioikaa omaa englannin osaamistanne. Lisätiedot-osiossa voitte viitata arvosanoihinne (tuoreimmat), ylioppilastutkintoon tai kokemuksianne englanninkielisestä kommunikoinnista matkustellessa tai muissa tilanteissa.

Englannin osaamisen on:
erinomainen sujuva hyvä
tyydyttävä heikko

Lisätiedot: ____________________________________________


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67
Puhuja 1.

Osa 1. Henkilön puhetapa oli...

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Osa 2. Puhujasta saamani vaikutelman perusteella puhuja on...

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Osa 3. Mistä puhuja oli mielestäsi kotoisin? ____________________________________________
Muuta.

Haluatko lisätä kommentteja tutkimusaiheeseen tai tutkimukseen liittyen?

________________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________________

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Kiitos osallistumisestanne!
Appendix 2: The questionnaire translated into English

Teija Rautio  
Master’s Thesis  
The Study of the Varieties of English 2014  
University of Oulu

The subject of this study is to discover what kind of impressions different speakers create in a hearer. Often, we gain a sense of what a speaker is like from the person’s voice alone, for example when we hear an stranger on the radio or talk to a stranger on the telephone.

I will play recordings of seven speakers for you. The recordings will be in English, and the speakers will read approximately a minute-long piece of literary text. The content of the text is not of the essence for the study, so you should try to pay attention to the way the person sounds rather than to the content of the speech.

When you hear the recording, please take a moment to think about the person while we pause the tape, then fill in the first part of the questionnaire independently.

This section of the study will be recorded. The material recorded will not be published; it is designed merely for the benefit of the researcher in the process of analyzing the material.

Once you have heard all seven speakers, I will play the recordings a second time. This time, please fill in the second part of the questionnaire by DISCUSSING WITH YOUR PARTNER. In this section your impressions of the speakers are enquired. Please discuss your first impressions and contemplate together where, in relation to the adjective, you would situate the speaker in the scale of 1-6 (1 denoting not at all, 6 denoting very). Please try to explain WHY you got this impression; what features in the speech influenced your decision. Do the final choice of situating the speaker independently. There are no right and wrong answers.

Finally, please answer to the final question independently.

Before you begin, I hope you will take time to answer a few questions in order to help analyzing the material. Please try to answer all of the questions. Thank you for your participation.

Sex: Male Female

Age: _____________

Major subject: __________________________________________

Minor subject(s): _________________________________________________________

Place of birth: __________________________________________________________

Nationality: Finnish Other, what? __________________________
Have you resided abroad? No

Yes, where? __________________________

____________________________________

For how long? ________________________

____________________________________

In which countries do you know English is spoken as an official language? __________________

________________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________________

____________________________________

_________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________________

In which of the countries you mentioned, do you think people speak “the best” English? Why?

________________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________________

What about “the worst” English? Why? ________________________________

________________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________________

Finally, please evaluate your English skills and knowledge. In the Further information -section you
can refer to your grades (most recent), your Matriculation Examination, or your experiences of
communication in English while travelling or other situations, for instance.

Your English skills are: excellent fluent good

satisfactory weak

Further information: ______________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________________
Speaker 1.

Section 1. The person's speech was:

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Section 2. The speaker gave the impression of being...

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Section 3. Where do you think the speaker was from? ________________________________
Do you wish to add comments relating to the subject of the study?

________________________________________________________________________________
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Thank you for your participation in the study!