

**FINNISH UPPER SECONDARY  
SCHOOL STUDENTS AND VARIETIES  
OF ENGLISH:**

**Identification and Evaluation**

**Bachelor's Thesis  
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Tiivistelmä – Abstract  <p>Englannin kieltä puhutaan lukemattomina erilaisina variantteina ympäri maailmaa. Kuitenkin suomalaisessa kouluissa englannin opetuksen mallina käytetään lähinnä vain kahta variaatiota: britti- ja amerikanenglantia. Tästä johtuen suomalaiset nuoret eivät kouluaikanaan välttämättä opi ymmärtämään tai edes tunnistamaan muita kuin edellä mainittuja englannin kielen variaatioita. Tämän tutkimuksen tavoitteena oli selvittää: 1) Miten hyvin suomalaiset lukiolaiset tunnistavat englannin kielen eri variaatioita; 2) millaisia asenteita heillä on näitä eri variaatioita kohtaan ja 3) mistä he saavat mallin omalle englannin kielen ääntämiselleen ja mitkä asiat vaikuttavat oman malliaksentin valintaan.</p> <p>Tutkimus toteutettiin kielistudiossa eräässä suomalaisessa lukiossa. 27:lle osallistujalle soitettiin viisi erilaista englannin kielen varianttia ja heidän tuli tunnistaa ne ja arvioida kyselylomakkeella niiden miellyttävyyttä ja ymmärrettävyyttä viisiportaisella asteikolla sekä kuvailla niitä omin sanoin. Lisäksi osallistujia pyydettiin nimeämään oma mallinsa englannin kielen ääntämiselle ja perustelevaan valintansa. Analyysivaiheessa vertailtiin poikien ja tyttöjen asenne-eroavaisuuksia eri variantteja kohtaan sekä korrelaatiota viimeisimmän englannin kielen todistusnumeron ja varianttien tunnistuskyvyn välillä.</p> <p>Tulokset osoittavat, että britti- sekä amerikanenglanti ovat suosituimpia malleja oppilaiden oman englannin kielen ääntämiselle ja myös arvioitu kaikista miellyttävimmiksi aksenteiksi. Sen sijaan asenteet vieraampia aksentteja kohtaan olivat huomattavasti negatiivisimmat. Erityisesti asenteet syntyperältään suomalaista englannin kielen puhujaa kohtaan olivat huomattavan kielteiset. Britti- ja amerikanenglanti myös tunnistettiin kaikkein parhaiten äänitysten perusteella.</p> <p>Tutkimuksen tulosten perusteella on selvää, että vaikka erilaisia englannin kielen variantteja esiintyy jonkin verransuomalaisissa englannin kielen oppikirjoissa, asenteet tiettyjä variaatioita kohtaan ovat juurtuneet syväälle. Ääntämisen opetuksen lisääminen ja erilaisiin englannin kielen variantteihin syvemmin tutustuminen kouluissa voisi vaikuttaa tähän ongelmaan huomattavasti. Lisätutkimusta voisi myös kaivata se, mistä suomalaisten opiskelijoiden huomattavan negatiiviset asenteet omaa aksenttiaan kohtaan ovat peräisin.</p>	
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## 1 INTRODUCTION

The English language is spoken all over the world both as a native language and as a second/foreign language. Hence, the language has developed into multiple varieties that differ from each other in terms of pronunciation, syntax and lexis. The term *variety* is used to describe any kind of language production, whether determined by region, gender, social class, or other factors and is therefore a more accurate term than *dialect* (Bauer 2002: 4). The most noticeable difference between the different varieties is often pronunciation; in most cases, native English speakers are able to tell where other speakers of English are from by the speaker's accent only. Furthermore, as Morris-Wilson (1992:19) emphasizes, native speakers of English often associate certain features of personality with a person's accent. For people who speak English as a second or foreign language, the identification of different accents is often more difficult, but non-native English speakers can still have strong attitudes towards different accents of English. Acknowledging one's own attitudes towards different accents is highly important in order to be successful in a communicative situation with native or non-native English-speakers.

Received Pronunciation, the upper class variety of British English, and General American English (GA) have traditionally been used in Finnish schools as the only models for correct English pronunciation. This is despite the fact that, in Finland, the National Core Curriculum for Basic Education (2004) states that, at the end of their basic education, students should be able to identify the most common varieties of English spoken around the world.

Additionally, the Finnish National Core Curriculum for General Upper Secondary Education (2003) states that upper secondary school students should be able to understand also unfamiliar speakers and language forms. Not many studies have yet been carried out in order to find out whether or not these objectives mentioned in the National Core Curriculums are actually met.

Thus, the aim of the present study is, firstly, to find out how well Finnish upper secondary students' are able to identify some of the most common varieties of English only by listening to them being read aloud by native and non-native speakers and, secondly, how intelligible these varieties are for the students. The third aim of the present study was to find out what

kinds of attitudes Finnish upper secondary school students have towards different varieties of English.

The theoretical framework of the present study is introduced in chapter 2: Firstly I shall briefly introduce the different varieties of English included in the present study, focusing on their pronunciation. Secondly, there will be a short discussion on language attitudes and how they affect pronunciation learning in EFL situation. The research questions, aims and data will be presented in chapter 3. In chapters 4 and 5 I shall discuss the results and limitations of the present study and present some recommendations for further studies.

## **2 VARIETIES OF ENGLISH AND LEARNER ATTITUDES TOWARDS THEM**

400 million people worldwide speak English as their mother tongue and further 500 million people speak it as a second or foreign language (Crystal 2002: 1-2). Due to this wide spread, the language has evolved into a range of different standard and non-standard varieties. In this section I will introduce the varieties included in the present study, focusing on their pronunciation. Additionally, learner attitudes and their effect on language learning will be discussed.

### **2.1 Received Pronunciation and General American English**

The variety of English spoken in England is nearly impossible to describe in a few phrases, since England as a linguistic area is particularly diverse. For the purposes of the present study I will focus on the characteristics of Standard English English/received pronunciation (RP). As Roach (2004:239) points out, RP is traditionally considered to be a prestigious variety of spoken English and the speakers of this particular accent of English are often of well-educated middle-class or upper class origin. According to Morris-Wilson (1992: 16), it is also the only accent of British English which is not associated with any particular geographical region. Tergujeff's (2012:40) survey on pronunciation teaching in Finland reveals that most Finnish teachers of English use RP or General American English (GA) in their own teaching and, hence, it often becomes the model for students' own English

pronunciation. Furthermore, another study by Tergujeff (2009) reveals that even though various accents of English are briefly introduced in EFL textbooks in Finland, in their own language production students tend to prefer one of the two varieties due to their familiarity: Received Pronunciation or General American accent.

General American English is familiar to Finns due to television, movies and other media. For example, in Tergujeff's (2012:31) survey Finnish teachers of English estimated that 95.8% of their students are frequently exposed to English through television, which affects their English pronunciation. In the USA, there are many regional varieties, but for the purposes of the present study I shall focus on the General American accent. GA, which is the idealized version of the most widespread American accent (Bauer 2002: 69), differs significantly from RP in terms of pronunciation. According to Baugh and Cable (1978:238), one of the most noticeable differences is in the vowel sound in words like *fast*, *can't* and *half*, where the vowel is realized as different allophones, /ɑ:/ in RP and in /æ/ in GA. Another very prominent feature of GA is the treatment of the *r*, which is pronounced in all positions, whereas in RP this sound is not pronounced except directly before vowels. There are also several individual words that are pronounced in a different way in GA and RP, for example *leisure*, which in RP is pronounced /'leɪʒə/ and in GA /'li:ʒr/, *lieutenant*, which is pronounced /lef'tenənt/ in RP and /lu:'tenənt/ in GA. Similarly, common verb forms, such as *ate* can be pronounced in different ways: /et/ in RP and /et/ in GA.

## 2.2 Irish English and Australian English

English spoken in the Republic of Ireland does not differ from other varieties of English only in terms of pronunciation, but also in the lexicon and grammar. As Bauer (2002:26) points out, the Irish Gaelic language had a considerable effect on how English spoken in Ireland developed and its influence is still clearly noticeable today. Some of the salient features of the pronunciation of Irish English are: /r/ is pronounced in all positions; /t, d/ often replace the fricatives (as in *think*, *thirty*); the vowels in words such as *coat* and *cane* are monophthongs i.e. pronounced /ko:t/, and /ke:n/ (Melchers and Shaw 2011:75-77). However, it is to be noted that since there are many regional varieties of Irish English, a codified norms defining a standard Irish English accent cannot be defined (Cheshire 1991:39).

English has been spoken in Australia for more than 200 years. Even though Australia has no official languages, the English language has a very dominant position as the country's national language (Cheshire 1991:213). The founding population of Anglo-Australia spoke many different varieties of English and the variety currently spoken in Australia has also been influenced by the native Australian languages. Crystal (2002:258) mentions that there is little regional variation in pronunciation, which is perhaps surprising considering the vast distances between the centres of population in Australia. According to Melchers and Shaw (201:104-105), the vowel system is a particularly salient feature of the Australian accent; there is a general fronting tendency of the vowels, like in words *goose* /u:/ and *start* /a:/ and , also, a tendency for centring diphthongs, like in words *beard* and *hear* /ɪə/ . Similarly to RP, Australian English is firmly nonrhotic. Additionally, intonation is a salient feature of the Australian accent: the pitch often rises at the end of a sentence even when the speaker is not asking a question.

### **2.3 The Finnish accent of English**

The Finnish language differs greatly from English in terms of its sound system. Like most non-native speakers of English, Finnish speakers often unconsciously transfer features of their native language into their English language productions. Problems can arise in learning individual sounds that do not exist in the Finnish language, for example dental fricatives /ð / (as in demonstrative pronouns *this* and *those*) and /θ/ (as in the word *thin*). According to Sajavaara and Dufva (2001:246), another common problem is that Finns often fail to make a difference between different phonemes, for example /v/ (as in *veal*) and /w/ (as in *water*) because in Finnish they are allophones [v] and [w]. However, according to Morris-Wilson (1992:190-191), perhaps the biggest factors to affect the intelligibility of a native Finnish speaker's production of English are intonation, stress and rhythm, which differ significantly between the two languages; in Finnish, intonation has no systematic grammatical function (Sajavaara and Dufva 2001:251). Due to the lack of rhythm and correct stress, the English spoken by native Finnish speakers often ends up sounding unnatural.

## **2.4 Learner attitudes towards varieties of English**

The role of attitudes in language learning have been studied a fair amount. Gardner (1985:9) defined attitude as “an evaluative reaction to some referent or attitude object, inferred on the basis of the individual's beliefs or opinions about the referent”. Baker (1992: 44) points out that there is considerable amount of evidence supporting the idea that the learner’s attitude towards the target language has a major effect on the learning process. Hence, it is evident that EFL learners attitudes towards different varieties of English can have an impact on the variety they choose to speak themselves. Haapea (1999:102) found that Finnish learners of English have most positive attitudes towards American English. Speakers who speak in an American accent were seen as “smart, friendly and self-confident”. Furthermore, the American accent was considered easily-understood. In contrast, British accent was found sophisticated, but fairly difficult to understand.

Haapea (1999:93) found that Finnish EFL students often have negative attitudes towards non-native varieties of English, including their own. Furthermore, Pihko (1997:235) found that EFL learners tend to prefer varieties that are familiar to them and that these varieties are also the most easily understood by EFL learners. In Finland, the most familiar varieties are RP and GA. In a recent study about learner attitudes towards varieties of English, Tergujeff (2013:92) found that Finnish secondary school students’ goal in their English pronunciation is not native-like production of the language, but rather fluency and intelligibility.

Furthermore, the students stated that native-like pronunciation would only be “wishful thinking” and not an attainable goal. The result of this study reveals a slow shift from the old attitudes: most EFL learners do not feel the pressure to sound native-like when speaking English, but their goal is to be understood in a communicative situation and to get their message across.



### **3 THE PRESENT STUDY**

#### **3.1 Research aims and questions**

When talking to someone for the first time, the person's accent is often one of the first things we pay attention to; it often tells where the other person is from and can even reveal his/her socio-economical status. Furthermore, the speaker's accent can have a positive or negative effect on his/her credibility or intelligibility in a communicative situation. In order to communicate effectively with native English speakers, non-native speakers should be aware of the different varieties of English and recognize some of the salient features of these varieties. The aim of the present study is, firstly, to find out whether or not Finnish upper secondary school students are able to identify some of the most common varieties of English relying only on auditory input and, secondly, what kinds of attitudes they have towards the different varieties. The varieties I chose to use in the study are Received Pronunciation, General American, Irish, Australian and Finnish. The varieties included in the study are among the most common varieties of English represented in EFL classrooms in Finland. The Finnish accent was included in the study because it is presumably the variety that the students are the most familiar with and also the one that they, often unconsciously, use themselves when speaking English.

My research questions are as follows:

1. Which varieties of English are the easiest and the most difficult for Finnish upper secondary school students to identify?
2. Which of the varieties are considered the most and the least intelligible and which are considered the most and least pleasant?
3. Which variety would the students like to speak themselves and why? Where do they get the model for their own pronunciation?

### 3.2 Data

Data was collected in a language laboratory in a Finnish upper secondary school in October 2014. There were 27 participants (18 female and 9 male), all seniors in upper secondary school. The data collection method chosen for the present study was a modified version of the *matched-guise technique*, first introduced by Lambert et al. (1960). The match-guise technique is a commonly used tool for determining attitudes towards speakers of different accents. The participants got a form to fill in as they were listening to five different speakers of English on their headphones. The recordings included four native English speakers and one native Finnish speaker reading a short passage of text aloud. Each of the recordings the participants heard was approximately one minute long. The participants were advised to listen to the short passages first and after listening answer the questions regarding each of them.

The method of data collection for this study was chosen for two reasons: Firstly, the matched-guise technique is designed to reveal attitudes towards different accents without telling the participants in advance where the speaker is from. This means that the participants rely only on auditory information in their evaluations of each speaker. Secondly, it was important that the recordings included native productions of English and did not consist of only individual words, but longer passages of text. This was to ensure that the recordings were as natural as possible and that the participants would have enough time to evaluate each of the accents. Secondly, it was important to keep the data collection form quite brief and to avoid using many open ended questions. The question form was chosen to be written in Finnish so that all participants, no matter what their level of English is, would be able to answer the questions as truthfully and as in much detail as they could.

The pilot study was conducted in a secondary school on six 9<sup>th</sup>-grade students (4 female and 2 male). When analyzing the data of the pilot study it became clear that some changes needed to be made for the actual data collection. Firstly, the participants' level of English needed to be higher; the 9<sup>th</sup>-grade students' answers seemed to be quite random and it was evident that they were not very familiar with the different varieties of English. Secondly, I learned that there was a major flaw in the question form: The evaluation scale *Täysin vieras - - Erittäin tuttu* was both unnecessary and also confusing for the participants. The familiarity of the varieties could be seen in the participants' ability to recognize the varieties and no

evaluation scale would be needed for that. Therefore, this scale was removed from the final version of the question form. In addition, a question about where the participants get the model for their pronunciation was added into the questionnaire, as it would give further information about the participants' attitudes towards different varieties of English.

The questionnaire, which is available in the appendix, is divided into three parts. In the first part participants were asked to give some background information on themselves: gender and the latest grade in English. This information was asked in order to determine if male and female students have different attitudes towards different varieties of English. In addition, by asking the participants' latest grade in English, I was able to see if there is any correlation between the students' general proficiency in English and their ability to identify the varieties.

In the second part of the questionnaire the participants were asked to name the varieties they heard and evaluate them on a semantic differential scale from one to five in two categories: Attractiveness (Erittäin miellyttävä --- Erittäin epämiellyttävä) and intelligibility (Helposti ymmärrettävä --- Vaikeasti ymmärrettävä). The participants were also asked to describe the varieties they heard in their own words. In the third part of the questionnaire the participants were asked some open ended questions regarding their own preferences in varieties of English and also where they get the model for their own pronunciation.

### **3.3 Methods of analysis**

According to Tuomi and Sarajärvi (2009:92), content analysis begins with deciding what is relevant information for the study and omitting information that is not relevant, however interesting it may be. In the present study, data analysis began with counting how many participants out of the 27 had recognized each of the varieties and figuring out a percentage to facilitate comparison between varieties. When analyzing the 5-point semantic differential scales considering attractiveness and intelligibility, I gave each point a score from -2 to 2 to figure out an average for each variety. This allowed me to compare the participants' attitudes towards the varieties. I also compared the boys' and girls' ability to identify the varieties and their attitudes towards them. Additionally, I compared the participants' latest grades in English to see if it has an effect on their ability to identify the varieties.

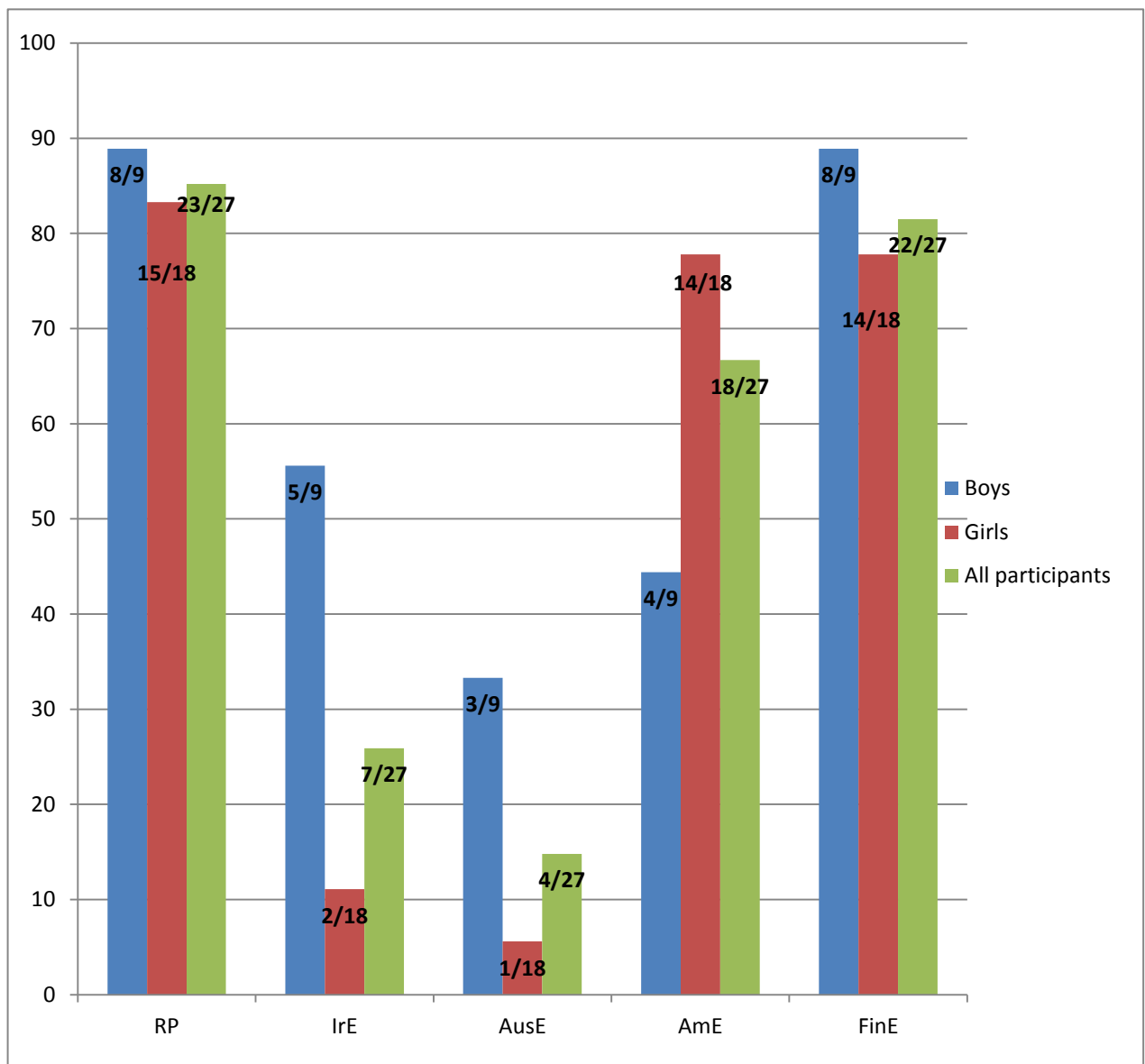
According to Tuomi and Sarajärvi (2009: 120-122), it is sometimes useful in a qualitative study to quantify some of the data, even though the purpose of a qualitative study is usually not to draw general conclusions. In the present study, the participants had a chance to describe each variety in their own words. I looked for common words the participants used in their descriptions in order to find out what kinds of attitudes they have towards the different varieties. When analyzing the last question, I calculated a percentage for each of the different options the students named as their model for English pronunciation. Additionally, I looked for the most common reasons for choosing a particular accent.

## 4 ENGLISH VARIETIES ACCORDING TO EFL LEARNERS

### 4.1 Ability to identify varieties

The following diagram illustrates what percentage of the participants was able to identify each of the varieties. As well as presenting the overall percentages and absolute numbers, the diagram also displays the percentages and absolute numbers for male and female participants separately.

%



**Figure 1: Participants' ability to identify varieties of English**

As can be seen in the diagram, Received Pronunciation (RP) was the easiest variety for the participants to recognize with 85.2 % of all the participants being able to successfully identify it. However, it is to be noted that there were several answers that I accepted as a correct answer considering this variety: along with RP, other acceptable answers were English and British. For this variety, there was no major difference between the male and female participants' ability to identify it. This particular group of participants' English teacher uses RP in her own teaching, which might have contributed to the success in identifying this variety.

The Finnish accent of English was nearly as easy for the participants to recognize as RP with 85.1% of all participants being able to correctly name where the speaker is from. American English was the third most recognized variety with 66.7% percent of participants being able to identify it. However, there was a considerable difference between male and female participants' ability to recognize the American accent: 77.8% of girls successfully identified it, whereas only 44.4% of boys were able to do so. Interestingly, the American accent was the only variety that was easier for the girls to recognize than it was for the boys. In fact, more boys were able to identify the Irish accent than the American accent. Possible reasons for this can be found in the comments that some of the boys made about the American accent; many of them mentioned that the accent sounded American, but was too nasal to actually be it. This shows that many Finnish upper secondary students have a limited perception of different accents and they fail to recognize variations within a particular accent.

As expected, the two most difficult varieties to identify were the Irish and the Australian accents: 25.9% of all participants identified the Irish accent and only 14.8% recognized the Australian variety. However, big differences between the genders can be noticed. The boys were able to identify these two varieties clearly more successfully than the girls.

Interestingly, 20 % of the participants who did not identify the Irish accent mistook it for the Indian accent. A possible reason for this could be the consonant /d/ which participants mentioned in their comments to be "Indian sounding".

Against expectations, the participants' grade in English and their success in the identification task did not have notable correlation; even participants whose latest grade in English was a 9 or a 10 had problems identifying some of the accents and, in contrast, some of the students

whose grade was significantly lower succeeded in this task very well. This might reveal that many students' written, oral and listening skills in foreign languages can be on different proficiency levels.

#### **4.2 Attitudes towards varieties and intelligibility**

Received Pronunciation was rated by the participants to be the most pleasant variety. It was described in most answers to be beautiful, clear and sophisticated. Another common description was that this particular accent is very familiar to the participants from school, which made it easy to understand. RP was also described by many participants as “basic English”; a standard variety with “no accent”. This variety got hardly any negative comments. The results concerning RP were expected and similar to Haapea's (1999) study. The only negative comments had to do with the quality of the recording, which made the speech more difficult for some of the participants to understand; some participants mentioned that the speaker often hesitated or had long pauses in his speech.

The American accent was rated as the second most pleasant variety. Like the English accent, it was described as “a basic variety of English” that is clear and easy to understand. The participants also mentioned that this variety is very familiar to them from television, movies and other contexts. However, five of the participants mentioned that this variety was very nasal, which makes it slightly annoying to listen to. When analyzing this data, it seems quite obvious that GA and RP are the two varieties that the participants consider to be the basic forms of English and, interestingly, the two varieties that are regarded as non-accented.

Australian English was rated as the third most pleasant variety even though only 14.8% of the participants were able to successfully identify it. It was described as *strange* and *unfamiliar* but still easy to understand. Some of the participants thought the speaker to be a non-native English speaker because some of the words were pronounced in a way that was unfamiliar to them. One participant even mentioned that “the speaker is probably a foreigner who has studied English very well” – “but the pronunciation was not always correct”.

Similar comments were made about the Irish accent, which was rated as the fourth most pleasant variety. The participants mentioned that the Irish accent sounded unfamiliar and strange. The comments were similar in most of the answers regardless of the participant's

ability to identify the accent. Interestingly, some of the participants described the consonants they heard as “Indian sounding”, which also made them guess that the speaker was from India. The attitude towards the Irish and the Australian accents reveals that even though English is the mother tongue of the speakers, the accents are not considered particularly pleasant or even recognized as native English accents, because their pronunciation is so unfamiliar to the participants.

The Finnish accent was clearly rated as the least pleasant variety. In fact, the comments about the Finnish accent were, without exception, negative. The accent was described as clumsy, stiff, boring and unpleasant. Some of the participants mentioned that this variety is familiar to them and fairly easy to understand, but not nice to listen to. A comment from a participant reveals the very negative attitude that Finns often have towards non-native varieties of English, even their own: *Aivan hirveää, ei näin puhuta englantia. Ei ihme, että ulkomaalaiset ei ymmärrä.* (Absolutely horrible, this is not the way to speak English. It doesn't amaze me that foreigners can't understand this). The participants noticed problems in the pronunciation of individual words and also in intonation and word stress. This result is very interesting, since most of the participants presumably speak in a Finnish accent themselves. This shows that the model for ideal English pronunciation still exists and it is not a non-native English accent.

The participants rated the American accent of English as the most intelligible. This also became clear when reading the participants' comments about the American accent. Most participants described it with words such as *clear* and *easy to understand*. The Irish accent was rated as the second most intelligible, followed by the English accent. This might be due to the fact that the recording of the English accent had some hesitation pauses in it and the quality of the sound was not as good as in the other recordings. Without the flaws in the recording the RP accent could have possibly been rated higher in terms of intelligibility.

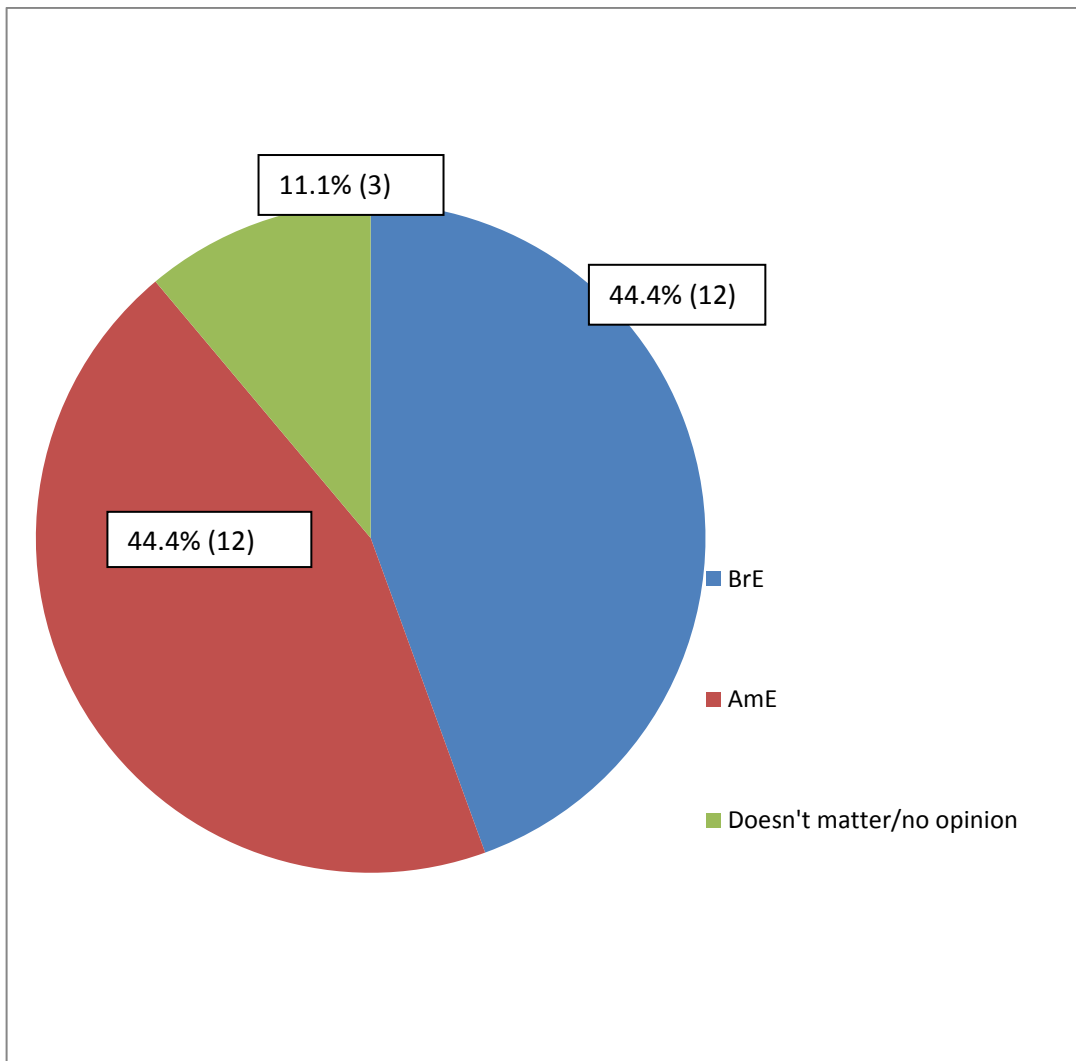
The Finnish accent of English was rated as the least intelligible variety. This is perhaps unexpected, since this is the variety the participants hear the most and most likely speak themselves. Hence, this result could tell more about the attitude the participants have towards the Finnish accent than the intelligibility of this accent. In fact, some of the participants even wrote down that the Finnish accent was easy to understand, but not pleasant to listen to. Overall, there seems to be a strong correlation between the familiarity of



a particular accent and its intelligibility. In other words, the more we hear a particular accent, the easier it is for us to understand.

### 4.3 Model for pronunciation

The following graph illustrates which varieties the participants use as a model for their own English pronunciation.



**Figure 2: Varieties the participants would like to speak**

The British/English accent and the American accent were the only varieties of English the participants mentioned as their model for English pronunciation. These two varieties were

mentioned equally many times, both mentioned by 44.4% of the participants. Only 11.1% of the participants stated that they have no preference in their own pronunciation model and/or that it does not matter to them. This result is somewhat different to Tergujeff's (2013:84) findings, where the students said that they have no particular model for English pronunciation and they do not aim to sound like native-English speakers but their main goal is to sound fluent and be understood when speaking English.

The most common reason for choosing a particular variety that the participants mentioned in the present study was the clarity and the intelligibility of that variety. Most participants also mentioned that the variety they chose sound nice/beautiful/pleasant. Another popular reason for choosing an accent was that it is commonly heard and familiar to them.

The participants get the model for their English pronunciation most commonly from television and movies with 77.8% of the participants mentioning it. The second most common model for pronunciation comes from the teacher. Especially the participants who stated that they want to speak in a British English accent chose the teacher as their model for their pronunciation. This is most likely due to the fact that their English teacher uses RP in her own teaching.

Only four participants said that they get their pronunciation model from friends. However, this was no one's only choice, but they had chosen some other model as well. Other models that the participants mentioned were the Internet/YouTube (4), music (1), speaking with foreigners (1) and recordings of English text book texts (1).

## **5 CONCLUSION**

Currently, different varieties of English are briefly introduced in the English text books in Finnish upper secondary schools. However, the short overviews of different varieties are not adequate enough to familiarize students with many different varieties of English. As a result, many Finnish upper secondary school students develop positive attitudes towards certain varieties of English, particularly RP and GA, and negative attitudes towards more unfamiliar varieties and non-native productions of English. These attitudes became evident also in the current study. The participants both preferred the abovementioned varieties of English and also understood these varieties the best. The result was both expected and understandable,

but nevertheless worrying, since after finishing school the students will most likely encounter English speakers from many different native and non-native English speaking countries. Keeping in mind that many people encounter situations where one or more speakers use English as a second or a foreign language, it would be important to introduce different varieties of English in school in more depth than they are now introduced. Furthermore, learning more about the English pronunciation and different allophones could help students to understand that many English words can be pronounced in more ways than one.

The problem with the current study was that the participants only heard one speaker for each variety; if there were more speakers, the participants would not have to base their evaluation of a certain variety only on one speaker. Furthermore, it might be useful to include more natural utterances in the recordings, instead of passages read straight from books. This would allow the speakers to use vocabulary, syntax and intonation typical for their varieties, which might make the identification of the varieties easier. In addition, there could be a possibility to study this topic further: for example the reasons behind the negative attitudes towards certain varieties, especially the Finnish accent.

Identifying different accents of English requires extensive knowledge of the English pronunciation and good listening comprehension skills. These skills are practiced in school, but attitudes towards different varieties might be more difficult to change. Therefore, conscious effort to change attitudes is needed from English teachers. After all, in today's world, there is no more only one proper way of speaking English; rather, several different varieties and accents can be used as a model for English pronunciation. For Finnish learners of English, RP and GA still seem to be the most prestigious varieties, which is understandable because they are the most frequently heard accents in class rooms and in the Finnish media. However, a broader knowledge of the English language would help students both learn English more efficiently and also be useful later on in life.

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Minna Leppänen

Jyväskylän yliopisto 2014

Rastita oikea vaihtoehto:

Olen                              tyttö ( )                              poika ( )

Viimeisimmän todistuksen englannin kielen arvosana: \_\_\_\_\_

Kuulet viisi erilaista englannin kielen variaatiota. Jokaisen variaation kohdalla vastaa sitä koskeviin kysymyksiin.

Vastaukset käsitellään luottamuksellisesti ja nimettöminä.

1. Mistä maasta kuulemasi puhuja on kotoisin? \_\_\_\_\_

**Arvioi kuulemaasi variaatiota (ympyröi):**

Erittäin epämiellyttävä			Erittäin miellyttävä		
1	2	3	4	5	

Vaikeasti ymmärrettävä			Helposti ymmärrettävä		
1	2	3	4	5	

Kuvaile kuulemaasi variaatiota omin sanoin:

2. Mistä maasta kuulemasi puhuja on kotoisin? \_\_\_\_\_

**Arvioi kuulemaasi variaatiota (ympyröi):**

Erittäin epämiellyttävä			Erittäin miellyttävä		
1	2	3	4	5	

Vaikeasti ymmärrettävä			Helposti ymmärrettävä		
1	2	3	4	5	

Kuvaile kuulemaasi variaatiota omin sanoin:

3. Mistä maasta kuulemasi puhuja on kotoisin? \_\_\_\_\_

**Arvioi kuulemaasi variaatiota (ympyröi):**

Erittäin epämiellyttävä			Erittäin miellyttävä		
1	2	3	4	5	

Vaikeasti ymmärrettävä			Helposti ymmärrettävä		
1	2	3	4	5	

Kuvaile kuulemaasi variaatiota omin sanoin:

4. Mistä maasta kuulemasi puhuja on kotoisin? \_\_\_\_\_

**Arvioi kuulemaasi variaatiota (ympyröi):**

Erittäin epämiellyttävä			Erittäin miellyttävä		
1	2	3	4	5	

Vaikeasti ymmärrettävä			Helposti ymmärrettävä		
1	2	3	4	5	

Kuvaile kuulemaasi variaatiota omin sanoin:

5. Mistä maasta kuulemasi puhuja on kotoisin? \_\_\_\_\_

**Arvioi kuulemaasi variaatiota (ympyröi):**

Erittäin epämiellyttävä			Erittäin miellyttävä		
1	2	3	4	5	

Vaikeasti ymmärrettävä			Helposti ymmärrettävä		
1	2	3	4	5	

Kuvaile kuulemaasi variaatiota omin sanoin:





Millaista Englannin kielen variaatiota haluaisit itse puhua?

Miksi?

Mistä saat mallin englannin kielen ääntämisellesi? Ympyröi oikea vaihtoehto:

Opettajalta

Televisiosta/elokuvista

Kavereilta

Muu. Mikä? \_\_\_\_\_

Kiitos osallistumisesta! ☺