

**“THE FINNISH ACCENT IS NATURAL, ANYTHING ELSE
WOULD BE PRETENDING”: FINNISH EFL SPEAKERS’
ACCENTS AS STYLISTIC CHOICES**

Matti Kovanen
Master’s Thesis
English
Department of Language and
Communication Studies
University of Jyväskylä
Spring 2024

JYVÄSKYLÄN YLIOPISTO

Tiedekunta Humanistis-yhteiskuntatieteellinen	Laitos Kieli- ja viestintätieteiden laitos
Tekijä Matti Kovanen	
Työn nimi "The Finnish accent is natural, anything else would be pretending": Finnish EFL speakers' accents as stylistic choices	
Oppiaine Englanti	Työn laji Maisterintutkielma
Aika 06/2024	Sivumäärä 45
<p>Tiivistelmä</p> <p>Suomalaisten englanninpuhujien aksenttivalinnoista on hyvin rajallisesti tutkimustietoa. Tutkimus on perinteisesti keskittynyt siihen, miten suullista kielitaitoa opetetaan kouluissa ja miten ymmärrettävää suomalaisten englanti on muille suomalaisille tai englantia äidinkielenään puhuville. Siksi tämä tutkimus keskittyy muihin englannin oppimisen ja puhumisen konteksteihin.</p> <p>Tutkimusta varten laadittiin 21 kohdan sähköinen kyselylomake, joka julkaistiin muun muassa Reddit-keskustelupalvelussa. Kyselyyn vastasi 1134 täysi-ikäistä suomea äidinkielenään puhuvaa henkilöä. Vastaukset analysoitiin narratiivisen sisällönanalyysin ja ankkuroidun teorian avulla. Osallistujilla oli monenlaisia yhteyksiä englannin kieleen esimerkiksi työn, perhesiteiden tai ulkomailla asumisen kautta. Enemmistö kertoi puhuvansa yleensä amerikan- tai brittienglantia, mutta 21% koki puhuvansa suomalaisella aksentilla. Kysyttäessä, millä aksentilla osallistujat halusivat mieluiten puhua, brittienglanti oli suosituin vaihtoehto mutta 8% valitsi suomalaisen aksentin.</p> <p>Monet osallistujat kertoivat vaihtelevansa aksenttien välillä: kaksi kolmesta käytti ainakin toisinaan suomalaista aksenttia tai "rallienglantia" tarkoituksella erilaisissa tilanteissa. Ankkuroidun teorian avulla syyt oli luokiteltavissa kolmeen ryhmään: huumori, ymmärrettävyys ja palautuminen. Tulosten perusteella voidaan arvioida, että suomalaisella aksentilla on vakiintunut asemansa myös niiden englanninpuhujien keskuudessa, jotka yleensä puhuvat natiivinkaltaisemmin.</p> <p>Tutkimustulokset viittaavat siihen, että vaikka suurin osa suomalaisista tavoittelee natiivinkaltaisia aksentteja, osa pitää suomalaista aksenttia legitimiinä tapana puhua englantia ja kokee natiivinkaltaisten aksenttien opetteluun turhana ja vaivalloisena. Tulevaisuudessa olisi syytä tutkia, lisäisikö muiden englannin kielen varieteettien käyttö opetuksessa oppilaiden motivaatiota tai puheen sujuvuutta.</p>	
Asiasanat Aksentti, aksenttivalinnat, englanti, kansanlingvistiikka, rallienglanti, suomi	
Säilytyspaikka Jyväskylän yliopisto	
Muita tietoja	

UNIVERSITY OF JYVÄSKYLÄ

Faculty Humanities and Social Sciences	Department Language and Communications Studies
Author Matti Kovanen	
Title “The Finnish accent is natural, anything else would be pretending”: Finnish EFL speakers’ accents as stylistic choices	
Subject English	Level Master’s thesis
Month and year 06/2024	Number of pages 45
<p>Abstract</p> <p>There is a very limited amount of research about Finnish EFL speakers’ accent choices. Research has traditionally focused on how oral skills are taught in EFL tuition or how comprehensible the English spoken by Finns is to other Finns or native English speakers. This is why the present study focused on other contexts of learning and speaking English.</p> <p>For the purpose of this study, a 21-question online survey was created and published on the Reddit forum site among other platforms. 1134 adult native Finnish-speakers answered the survey. The answers were analysed with the help of narrative content analysis and grounded theory. The participants had a variety of connections to the English language, such as through work, family ties, or living abroad. The majority of the participants stated that they usually speak American or British English, but 21% used a Finnish accent. When asked what accent the participants would prefer to speak in, British English was the most popular option but 8% selected the Finnish accent.</p> <p>Many participants reported switching between accents: two out of three used the Finnish accent or “Rally English” at least occasionally in different types of situations. With the help of grounded theory, it was possible to divide the reasons in three categories: humour, comprehensibility, and reversion. Based on the results it can be estimated that the Finnish accent has its established role among even those English-speakers who usually use a more nativelike variety.</p> <p>The results of the study indicate that even though the majority of Finns aim to speak nativelike accents, some of them consider the Finnish accent a legitimate way of speaking English and deem the learning of nativelike varieties unnecessary and cumbersome. In the future, there may be reason to study whether the use of other English varieties in EFL tuition increase the motivation of learners or the fluency of speech.</p>	
Keywords: Accent, accent choices, English, EFL, folk linguistics, Finnish, Rally English	
Depository: University of Jyväskylä	
Additional information	

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. Introduction.....	3
2. Background.....	4
2.1 What is an accent.....	4
2.2 English as a Foreign Language in Finland	6
2.3 Finnish accent.....	8
2.4 Attitudes towards non-native accents	11
2.5 Accent choices of Finnish EFL speakers.....	12
3. Present study	14
3.1 Aims and research questions	14
3.2 Data gathering.....	14
3.3 Methodology and ethics.....	18
4. Findings	20
4.1 Data and analysis	21
4.2 Criticism	43
4.3 Discussion and potential implications	44
5. Conclusion	47
6. Bibliography	49

APPENDICES: Extract originals

TABLES:

Table 1: Popularity of English compared to other foreign languages in matriculation examinations 1997 and 2023.8

FIGURES:

Figure 1: Question 1.....21
Figure 2: Question 2.....22
Figure 3: Question 3.....23
Figure 4: Question 4.....23
Figure 5: Question 9.....26
Figure 6: Question 12.....29
Figure 7: Question 14.....31
Figure 8: Question 15.....32
Figure 9: Question 17.....34
Figure 10: Question 19.....37
Figure 11: Question 20 (author’s interpretation of open-field answers).....40
Figure 12: Question 21.....42

1. Introduction

Very little if any research exists about Finnish EFL speakers' accent choices. There have been studies about the accents of the auditory input Finnish speakers experience and how it impacts the way they pronounce English (e.g. Kopperoinen, 2011; Mäkinen, 2021; Tergujeff, 2013,), but their conscious choices of accent are still unclear. While the goal of EFL tuition has traditionally been a nativelike proficiency and pronunciation, it has in recent years been questioned if these targets are unrealistic and unnecessary (e.g. Mäkinen, 2021: 16). As English has come to be regarded as a lingua franca without distinct ownership, regional varieties have started to gain a level of prestige (e.g. Crystal, 2003: 174; Tergujeff, 2012: 33). At the same time, Finnish accent has become more acceptable, even as a conscious stylistic choice. Certain public figures of the modern age have embraced the accent and started using it in their advantage, such as YouTubers like Lauri Vuohensilta and stand-up comedians like Ismo Leikola (Cord, 2016; Sveriges Radio, 2023). This study aims to expand our understanding of the decisions that Finnish speakers make in regard to which variety of English they speak. More precisely, this study asks whether native Finnish speakers intentionally use a specific accent when speaking English, for what reasons native Finnish speakers use a Finnish accent, and whether there are situations where it is intentional.

The English use of Finns was studied comprehensively in a survey carried out in 2007 (Leppänen, Pitkänen-Huhta, Nikula, Kytölä, Törmäkangas, Nissinen, Kääntä, Räisänen, Laitinen, Koskela, Lähdesmäki, & Jousmäki, 2011, published in Finnish 2009). Among other things, it investigated the accent preferences of Finns, finding that British English was deemed the most attractive, followed by American English and, far behind the other two, Finnish English. However, it did not ask which accents the participants spoke or would like to speak, and 17 years have already passed since the survey. In a more recent survey, conducted in 2020, many English majors in Finland mainly spoke American English but stated that they would like to speak British English (Peterson, 2022: 278), which may or may not reflect the habits and preferences of the general populace. The present author argues that the question needed to be revisited with a slightly different approach.

Due to the lack of existing research on this particular topic in Finland, the background chapter will focus instead on discussing terminology and adjacent fields of study. In the present study chapter, two research questions will be defined and the survey designed to answer them will be explained. In addition, ethics and methodology will be discussed before moving on to presenting and analysing the data. The results of multiple-choice questions will be visualised

with bar graphs, while answers to open-field questions will be interpreted with the help of narrative content analysis and grounded theory, and examples of the quotes will be included. In the discussion chapter, it is revealed whether the data answered the research questions, what else was discovered, and what could have been done differently. Finally, potential topics for future studies are considered.

2. Background

In this section, the relevant literature will be discussed. The first section introduces the terminology relevant to the present study. After that, the history and the current status of English as a foreign language in Finland will be summarised. The third section will discuss the Finnish accent, a common component of Finns' EFL speech. The attitudes towards different English accents will be explored to help explain what reasons Finns might have for choosing the Finnish accent. Finally, the existing research – or the lack thereof – about the accent choices of Finnish EFL speakers will also be presented to make a case for why the present study is needed.

2.1 What is an accent

To begin discussing accent, it must first be defined how we separate accent from adjacent concepts, such as variety, dialect, and register. A variety is an encompassing term used for the common standards of pronunciation, grammar, and vocabulary used by particular social groups (e.g. Jackson, 2007: 91). Typically, these standards are shared, or thought to be shared, by a nation. The most common examples of varieties include British English (BrE) and American English (AmE), which can be seen as standard varieties of their respective nations. In their daily lives, Brits and Americans employ a vast array of different dialects and accents, but the standard varieties are used as means of public communication and education and are also taught to EFL students all over the world. In addition to pronunciation, varieties have their own writing standards: for example, the spellings of many words such as “colour” and “realise” differ in BrE and AmE, which essentially makes it necessary for EFL learners to choose one variety or another when writing those words. While members of the Commonwealth of Nations, such as Canada and Australia, have their own varieties of English, they typically adhere to the British spelling, even though exceptions exist.

Dialects and registers are, in a way, sub-varieties: they are used to classify features of a language much like varieties, but usually on a smaller scale. According to Halliday (1978), dialect is defined by reference to the speaker, while register is defined by reference to the social context. Similarly, Irvine (2001: 27) states: “The definitional difference between dialect and register is functional, rather than formal: which dialect you use indexes your social affiliation with a group of users, which register you use indexes properties of your present situation and social activity.” In other words, a speaker typically only uses one dialect but may change their register to suit their role in different social contexts. It is important to note that the concept of a dialect is typically reserved for localised groups of native speakers – occasionally very localised, such as in the case of Cockney: a dialect traditionally spoken only by those born within hearing distance of the bells of St Mary-le-Bow church in East London (McArthur & McArthur, 1998). Agha (2005: 40) defines registers as social formations with a particular social range, that is to say, they are recognizable to a certain range of people. According to this definition, a dialect can be considered a register of a range of people, usually inhabiting a certain defined geographical area, while the term ‘register’ is more commonly associated with sociolects or certain contexts. Agha (2003: 234-235) calls Received Pronunciation (RP) both an accent and a phonolexical register: phonological rules of the accent operate over the delimited lexical domains. As the name of the register might suggest, Received Pronunciation has particular pronunciation rules, but it also entails codes of suitability of lexical items. Similarly, a Finnish register might include not only phonetic features but also a way of using vocabulary or grammar that is particular to Finnish EFL speakers. However, no such register has been defined, and instead the word “accent” is typically used of Finnish EFL speech.

Accent is defined by Moyer (2013: 11) as “a set of dynamic segmental and suprasegmental habits that convey linguistic meaning along with social and situational affiliation.” These habits might include e.g. rhoticity or stress. Jackson (2007: 81) specifies that an accent can be associated either with a geographical area or a social group. It is first and foremost a feature of spoken language, used to classify segmental and suprasegmental features of pronunciation (Moyer, 2013: 10), while register, dialect, and variety can be used to describe aspects of both spoken and written language. Accent can thus be considered a part of each of the other three concepts; for example, the American accent is a part of the variety we call American English. However, with the term “Finnish variety” being absent in literature and existing research about Finnish EFL speakers mainly focusing on accent (e.g. Leppänen et al., 2011; Tergujeff, 2021; Toivonen, 2019), it can be justified to choose accent as the focal point of this study as well.

Style is a closely adjacent term but focuses on the changes made in a person's speech. Bell (2001: 139) summarises the sociolinguist's core points of interest regarding style into one question:

Why did this speaker say it this way on this occasion?

The question *why* highlights the search for reasons and explanations, *this way* suggests there is an alternative style that could have been used, and *this occasion* refers to the significance of the situation in which the choice is made. The occasions could differ in several ways, with each context producing unique reasons for style-shifting. Bell (2001: 142) also describes style as “a social thing”, with each style being associated with a particular social group or situation. Labov (2001: 88) sorts the contexts of style-shifting into two categories: those that include a shift in audience design and those that involve a shift in the topic and genre of the conversation. In the context of Finnish speakers' EFL, stylization has been studied in written communication (e.g. Kytölä & Westinen, 2015), but more research about spoken English is needed.

2.2 English as a Foreign Language in Finland

Kachru (1985) describes the differences in World Englishes as three concentric circles: Inner Circle countries, where English is the primary language; Outer Circle countries, where English has become institutionalised for historical reasons; and Expanding Circle countries, where English is an important international language. Valpa (2020) compares this with the traditional classification of English speakers into native speakers (ENL), second-language speakers (ESL), and those who speak English as a foreign language (EFL) (Valpa, 2020; Mollin, 2006). Lacking a long history of English language influence, Finland is classified as an Expanding Circle country, together with nearly all other member states of the European Union. Thus, English is taught in Finland explicitly as a foreign language.

Today in Finland, English is without doubt the most important foreign language, but this was not always the case. The linguistic landscape in 19th century and early 20th century Finland is well demonstrated by the fact that the first ever professor of English in a Finnish university wrote his dissertation not in English but in German (Pahta, 2008: 7-8). In the decades following the Second World War, English was seen first and foremost as a tool for communicating with foreigners (Leppänen et al., 2011: 15). However, already during that time, the language was increasing in popularity – partly thanks to the British council (Peterson, 2022: 275), partly due to American popular culture influence – even overtaking German as the most studied foreign

language in the 1960s (Leppänen et al., 2011: 18). In the 21st century, English has solidified its importance to everyday communication within Finnish society to the extent that it is informally referred to as a “third national language” (Pahta, 2008: 4).

Considering the status and prestige enjoyed by English in Finland, it is no surprise that Finns are generally regarded as good English users. The 2022 English Proficiency Index by Education First ranked Finland in eighth place out of 111 countries (EF, 2022: 6). When comparing individual cities, Helsinki was in joint fifth place together with Oslo (EF, 2022: 8). However, in 2023, Finland fell to 14th place, being downgraded from “Very high proficiency” to “High proficiency” and Helsinki fell to 10th place, behind Tallinn, in the city rankings (EF, 2023: 6-8). The reasons for the decrease in proficiency are outside the scope of this discussion and deserve a separate study, but despite this drop, Finland still ranks above many developed countries. One contributing factor may be the way Finns consume their entertainment: while in many larger countries, films and TV shows produced in English are dubbed into the local language, in Finland, they are broadcasted in the original English (Leppänen et al., 2011: 20). This has the potential to greatly increase oral skills in particular, as many Finns receive plenty of auditory input of English pronunciation on a daily or near-daily basis.

In the Finnish primary school system, “A1 language” refers to the first non-native language a pupil starts studying. Usually, it is a foreign language, but it can also be one of the two official languages of Finland: Finnish or Swedish. Since January 2020, it has been mandatory for Finnish primary school pupils to begin studying an A1 language already in first grade (Mård-Miettinen, Huhta, Reini, & Stylman, 2021: 8) – that is to say, at the age of seven. Of the 47,196 first-grade pupils who started a foreign language in 2022, 96% studied English (OPH, 2022), highlighting the importance of English in the Finnish education system today. The reform has been received positively by teachers and pupils alike (Mård-Miettinen et al., 2021: 29, 42), but its long-term effects for the proficiency and accent choices of Finns are yet to be seen.

Matriculation examination statistics provided by the Examination Board (YTL, n.d.) also reveal the uncontested dominance of English as the number one foreign language in Finland. It had secured this position already in the 1990s: in 1997, 42,896 participated in the examinations in the advanced syllabus and 863 in the basic syllabus in English, a total of 43,759 students. Other foreign languages trailed far behind, as demonstrated in Table 1. This dominance has only grown stronger over the years. In 2023, the matriculation examination in English was taken by 44,328 students, a similar figure to that in 1997. However, the number

of exams in other languages has plummeted. For example, the number of students participating in a German exam fell by 87% in the mentioned time period.

	1997	2023	Change (%)
English	43,759	44,328	+ 1.3%
German	12,946	1,723	- 86.7%
French	4,723	945	- 80.0%
Russian	931	971	+ 4.3%
Spanish	608	942	+ 54.9%
Italian	252	91	- 63.9%
Portuguese	25	17	- 28%

Table 1: Popularity of English compared to other foreign languages in matriculation examinations 1997 and 2023.

2.3 Finnish accent

Finnish accent is a term used to describe the various types of transfer from Finnish to English, often specifically phonological transfer. As an Expanding Circle variety of English, it is not used as an educational target. It may, however, be deliberately used by EFL speakers for reasons that have not been thoroughly studied. As stated previously, context-bound accent selection, be it conscious or subconscious, has been observed among EFL learners (e.g. Rindal, 2010). Traces of conscious accent selection were also recorded in the author's bachelor's thesis, which studied Finnish 7th-graders' pronunciation of English (Kovanen, 2023: 15). One participant in the study began reading a text passage using a normative, Inner Circle variety of English, but switched to a Finnish accent in the second sentence. The author deemed this to be caused by the presence of peers: it is possible that among certain groups of teenagers, the Finnish accent enjoys a higher level of prestige than Inner Circle varieties and is therefore a preferable choice in the school environment.

While Finnish only has 11 consonant phonemes – 17 when including consonants that only appear in dialects and loan words – English has 24 of them (Horslund & Van Nostrand, 2022). This is a major factor in the formation of the Finnish accent, as certain English phonemes are replaced by substitutes from a fairly narrow pool of candidates. Another feature of the Finnish language that sets it apart from English is the shallow orthography (Soodla, Torppa, Kikas, Lerkkanen, & Nurmi, 2019: 3). In other words, Finnish has a consistent, almost one-to-one, grapheme-phoneme-correspondence with little to no silent letters, while in English and other

languages with a deeper orthography, one letter may represent a variety of sounds in different words (Miller, Kargin, & Guldenoglu, 2014: 1-2). This may lead to some Finnish EFL speakers applying the rules of the Finnish writing system to English words: for example, in the author's BA thesis study, one pupil pronounced the word "Television" as /television/ instead of the more nativelike /teləvɪʒən/, essentially reading it as if it was a Finnish word (Kovanen, 2023: 12). This difference in orthography may also influence the Finnish accent, especially among less advanced learners.

As stated previously, Finns generally have a high proficiency in English. It is therefore interesting that when discussing the English spoken by Finns, certain negative stereotypes arise. A term that often comes up is "Rally English": a mocking reference to Finnish rally drivers' historical tendency to speak in a heavy accent when being interviewed by the foreign press (YLE, 2022). According to Suutari (2023: 2), this can be compared to "steenkolen Engels" or "coal English", a term for the Dutch accent originating in the early 20th century when Dutch port workers unloaded coal from British ships (Adebola, 2015). Indeed, the two contexts have certain similarities: the idea of a whole nation is shaped by the accent of people who may have very little formal EFL education.

Despite the negative stereotypes, the Dutch consistently excel at the international English proficiency rankings, significantly more so than Finns. In the Education First English Proficiency Index, Netherlands currently holds the number one spot in the ranking of countries and the Dutch capital Amsterdam peaks the ranking of individual cities (EF, 2023: 6-8). Due to the significance of English within the Netherlands, some researchers have put forth the notion that it has become or is becoming an Outer Circle country in the Kachruvian model, according to Gerritsen, Van Meurs, Planken, and Korzilius (2016). This would put the Dutch on par with countries like India and Singapore. However, Gerritsen et al. (2016) dispute this, stating that while English is in the process of ceasing to be a foreign language (EFL) and becoming a second language (ESL) in the Netherlands, the country still better matches the criteria of the Expanding Circle. Future studies may reveal whether Finland will follow in the footsteps of the Netherlands or perhaps even surpass them to become an Outer Circle country.

It should be noted that the Kachruvian model is not universally accepted. Sharifian (2009: 3) discusses the difficulty of placing all world Englishes on the three circles, as they exist in a state of flux in an ever-globalising world. He also provides an example of a world English that has developed in an Inner Circle country but is not considered an Inner Circle variety:

Aboriginal English. Another example could be the African American Vernacular English (AAVE), which is used primarily by native English speakers but does not enjoy the level of prestige typically associated with Inner Circle Englishes and is thus not commonly used as a norm for EFL learned in the Expanding Circle countries, even though its use in EFL tuition has been studied (e.g. Sterrett, 2014).

Rally English as a term used for the Finnish accent in general is fairly new. An older, equally derisive term for the Finnish accent is “Tankero English” (Campbell, 2015: 3). The term is derived from an anecdote about Ahti Karjalainen who served as Finland’s minister of foreign affairs between 1961 and 1975. Supposedly, he visited a zoo in Kenya¹, read a sign saying “All animals are dangerous”, and wondered what animal a “Tankero” was (YLE, 2022). As humorous as the anecdote is, it reveals the negative stereotypes Finns have about their own accent. The word “tankero” also demonstrates some of the cornerstones of a Finnish accent: many of the plosives and affricates that are voiced in Inner Circle varieties are voiceless due to transfer from Finnish, for example /d/ becomes /t/; and the letter “a”, which would be pronounced as a diphthong /ei/ by most native English speakers in this word, is pronounced instead as /a/ due to the shallow orthography of Finnish.

A 2013 small-scale study of Finnish secondary-school EFL learners noted that the students did “not seem to have great ambitions towards achieving a native-like pronunciation, and no strong preferences for a specific accent” (Tergujeff, 2013: 88). Despite having a sample of just ten learners, the study observed a wide variety of attitudes. One of the participants stated that it made no difference whether they spoke British or American English, as long as it’s comprehensible. The same student also stressed the importance of pronunciation and hoped for more emphasis on it in the EFL tuition. Another wished not to speak in a native accent but to emphasise their Finnishness in their speech. In other words, there is precedent of EFL learners stating that they have a preference for the Finnish accent.

Not all transfer from Finnish is necessarily realised in a Finnish accent, however. According to Moyer’s (2013: 11) definition of accent, the term only covers spoken language. Thus, if a Finnish speaker used the word “truck” to refer to a forklift (“trukki” in Finnish), this would usually be considered erroneous L1 interference. Nation (2000) discusses this type of transfer in the context of L2 tuition, stating that words related to each other in this way are particularly prone to interference, and provides tools for limiting its harmful effects on vocabulary learning

¹ According to Kytölä (2024: 200), the zoo visit took place in New York.

in the classroom. The word pair could also be considered an aspect of a Finnish register; however, no such register has been standardised.

2.4 Attitudes towards non-native accents

As the Finnish accent has now been introduced, it may be useful to examine how it and other non-native varieties of English are viewed in the 21st century. Crystal (2003: 174) states that non-native varieties are gaining prestige and becoming increasingly accepted. While in the past it was common to condemn the usage of Expanding Circle features, and even today there are people who sneer at diversity, this has become increasingly difficult as speakers of these varieties have emerged as social equals (*ibid.*). In a 2023 article in Helsingin Sanomat, senior university lecturer Elina Tergujeff praises Finland's Eurovision representative, rap artist Käärijä for his English (Kallionpää, 2023). Käärijä earned a reputation as a speaker of "Rally English", an accent heavily marked by transfer from Finnish. While the accent is typically perceived negatively or even ridiculed, Tergujeff sees the rap artist's courage in using it as an inspiration for other Finnish speakers not to be paralysed by language shame (*ibid.*). Galmiche (2017: 37) describes language shame experienced by foreign language students as a "profoundly inhibitory and debilitating emotion". While studying the phenomenon among native French speakers, he failed to observe any positive impact of shame – the phenomenon was only damaging and traumatising.

Paakki (2020) discusses the detrimental effects of normativity on the confidence of EFL speakers in Finland and Japan. The stigmatization of certain accents that are not seen as natively like can discourage learners from using the accent they are comfortable speaking. According to Paakki (2020: 29-30), the prestige enjoyed by normative English in the classroom causes students to avoid the form of English that is more familiar to them but which they see as deviant, limiting the experience they have with speaking the language and thus negatively impacting their oral skills. Unfortunately, no study could be found on whether and how it would affect the students' fluency if they were encouraged to speak in a Finnish accent.

In addition, it is important to note that the stigma associated with a certain accent is not necessarily caused by the inability to understand it. Neither does the stigma always originate from outside the speaker or the speaker group. Toivonen (2019) found that negative stereotypes relating to the Finnish accent were common among Finnish participants, but native English speakers displayed a mostly neutral attitude. This seems to indicate that Finns largely create

the stigma themselves and that “Rally English” does not significantly bother others. In a study by Henderson, Frost, Tergujeff, Kautzsch, Murphy, Kirkova-Naskova, Waniek-Klimczak, Levey, Cunningham, and Curnick (2012: 18), students displayed high motivation to learn English, but did not aspire to pronounce the language like native speakers. A quote from the study reflects their motivations: *“Formula One drivers have proved to Finnish students it’s not necessary to pronounce English perfectly to become rich and famous”*. While the quote associates the Finnish accent with Formula One instead of Rallying, it may be seen as an example of the thoughts behind modern communicative language learning.

There are examples of people using a Finnish accent to their advantage. In a blog post published in the Washington Post, Lauri Vuohensilta, creator of the Hydraulic Press Channel on YouTube, “attributes much of his success to his Finnish brogue” (Sensenig, 2016). Based on the popularity of the channel, which has over four million subscribers on YouTube, the accent does not seem to hinder comprehensibility or have an otherwise negative impact on the viewer experience: instead, it has been described as “fluent” and “endearing” (Cord, 2016). Similarly, Ismo Leikola, a stand-up comedian who was proclaimed “Funniest person in the world” in 2014, uses his Finnish accent as his trademark (Sveriges Radio, 2023).

In conclusion, the shame that some Finns experience about their accent can hardly be justified; indeed, it seems to only do harm.

2.5 Accent choices of Finnish EFL speakers

Now that the concepts of accent in general, Finnish accent in particular, attitudes towards non-native accents, and EFL tuition in Finland have been introduced, it is possible to move on to examine the accents that Finns use when they speak English. According to Henderson et al (2012: 21), the varieties most commonly taught in Finnish EFL classrooms are British English (BrE) and American English (AmE), with Australian English and non-specific International Englishes also being used in auditory input. Irish, Scottish, Canadian, and other Inner Circle accents get less attention. All of these accents have further internal variation, but they are used as encompassing terms for the various types of Englishes within them. BrE has traditionally been synonymous with Received Pronunciation (RP), which is also how it is typically referred to in EFL tuition in Finland. However, the accuracy of this equivalency may be questioned. While RP is understood and valued in Britain, it is not a dialect typically used in everyday conversations but rather an old-fashioned register of the upper class and certain professions

(Agha, 2003). Tévar (2014) observed that RP enjoys a high degree of prestige among Spanish EFL learners, and of the four varieties studied, it is the one they would most like their teacher to speak. However, Lindsey (2019: 5) states that “RP can be referred to in the past tense”, as it has been surpassed by the more modern and more middle-class accent Standard Southern British (SSB) in England. On the other hand, according to Tévar (2014: 48-49), it is the Estuary English that is currently in the process of becoming the standard variety in England. Either way, the assumption that BrE and RP are the same has long been outdated, if it ever was correct.

In modern EFL tuition in Finland, American English has gained a stronger foothold. AmE is typically synonymous with General American English (GA), although it can draw features from various vernaculars. It appears to be popular among Finnish students: according to Henderson et al. (2012: 22), 87% of EFL teachers experienced that some of their students would prefer to do receptive or productive tasks in GA, compared to 66% who said the same about RP. However, only 76% of teachers chose GA for some receptive or productive tasks (ibid.). In addition to being popular among students, GA represents the speakers in the U.S.A. better than the standard British varieties represent Britain: Lindsey (2019: 4) mentions that there is no “General British” pronunciation, as the diversity of accents in Britain is so much greater.

Leppänen et al.’s (2011: 71) survey of 1,495 respondents conducted in 2007 found that 39,6% of participants deemed British English the most appealing, followed closely by American English which was favoured by 35,9%. However, the prevalence of AmE on the internet, the use of which has increased significantly since 2007, may have had an impact on the preferences. In a 2014 small-scale survey of 27 upper secondary school seniors, Leppänen (2015: 16) found that British and American English were equally desirable, with 44% of participants wishing to speak each of the varieties. According to a more recent poll with a sample of 97 university students conducted by Peterson in 2020 (2022: 278), English majors in Finland mostly speak in an American accent but deem a British accent more desirable. This would seem to indicate that even Finns with a very high English proficiency do not choose their accent themselves but use the one they are accustomed to. Peterson (2022: 277) states that the targets of English teaching in Finland are set according to a native pronunciation, especially American English, which many students encounter in their informal learning, and British English, which is often associated with formal learning.

The desirability of British English has been observed among EFL learners in other countries as well. In Rindal (2010), students in Norway rated RP as a superior variant of English and reported it as their target pronunciation. In the same study, similar attitudes towards the two main variants were noted as in Peterson (2022), namely that BrE is associated with intelligence, formality, and seriousness, while AmE is associated with unintelligence, informality, and relaxedness. Reflecting these attitudes, the Norwegian students tended to use BrE when reading words from a list and AmE when discussing with their peers (Rindal, 2010). The study thus revealed the students' ability to make stylistic choices about accent modification.

In conclusion, while research shows that EFL speakers do make choices about their accents, the reasons for accent modification have not been studied in Finland.

3. Present study

3.1 Aims and research questions

In this study, the accent choices of Finnish speakers will be studied for possibly the first time at this scale. The research questions will be as follows:

1. Do native Finnish speakers intentionally use a specific accent when speaking English?
2. For what reasons do native Finnish speakers use a Finnish accent? Are there situations where it is intentional?

To answer these questions, data pertaining to the choices of accents and their backgrounds was gathered.

3.2 Data gathering

For the purpose of data gathering, the author compiled a questionnaire on the online survey platform Webropol, which is commonly used by the University of Jyväskylä under licence. The questions are partly inspired and informed by the 2007 survey by Leppänen et al. (2011).

The following questions were included:

1. How long have you studied English?
2. How would you rate your own level of English?

3. Have you lived abroad?
4. Did the time you spent abroad affect your accent?
5. How does the time you spent abroad manifest in your English today?
6. Are you currently in professional life?
7. Do you use English in your work?
8. Does the English you speak at work differ from the English you speak in your spare time?
9. Do you have other personal connections to English?
10. Have these personal connections affected your accent?
11. How do your personal connections manifest in your English today?
12. Which accent do you feel you mainly use when speaking English?
13. Why do you use this accent in particular?
14. Do you ever switch between accents?
15. Which other accents do you use when you speak English?
16. In what sorts of situations do you change the accent you use?
17. Which accent would you like to use the most?
18. Why would you choose this accent in particular?
19. Do you ever intentionally use a Finnish accent?
20. In what sorts of situations do you remember intentionally using a Finnish accent?
21. For which of these reasons could you imagine momentarily using a Finnish accent?

The exact order in which these questions were presented was a matter of consideration. Already at the beginning of the process, the background questions about how long the participants have studied English and what level they perceive themselves on were placed at the beginning of the survey: as suggested by McGrath, Palmgren, and Liljedahl (2019), easy questions at the start of the interview have an important function of making the interviewee feel more comfortable. Questions 1, 3, 6, 7, and 9 also largely concern factual information about the participants and do not require reflection or self-evaluation. Thus, they should also be less vulnerable to the potential unreliability of self-reporting. In addition, studying popular beliefs about language and the views of non-experts is at the core of folk linguistics, as described by Niedzielski and Preston (2000), and as such, even inaccurate self-reported data may reveal legitimate information about the way English is seen by Finns. For the convenience of participants, the survey was in Finnish. While it would have been more inclusive to provide it in English as well, the research questions of the present study focus on native Finnish speakers,

and thus it was deemed unnecessary to include translations of the questions. In addition, having the same survey in both Finnish and English might have decreased the consistency of the responses, as different languages might spark different connotations among the respondents.

Question 1 aimed to measure how long the respondent has had academic tuition of English. The options in question 1 were the most common amounts of English studies Finns probably have had: 12 years if they studied from first year of primary school to last year of upper secondary school, 9 years if they started English in third grade, and so on. In question 2, the author found it sensible to arrange the self-reported level of English according to the CEFR levels. It was deemed possible that many participants would not be familiar with the classification, so the author included a brief summary of the C2 level as described in North (2014: 21) as well as popular verbalizations as typically used in many Finnish CVs. Together, the first two questions were designed help indicate at what level it becomes feasible for Finnish speakers to begin making conscious choices about their accent. It may be expected that those with a higher proficiency are more capable of accent modification.

Question 3 and its subquestions 4 and 5 began to chart the origins of the different accents Finns use to discover whether living abroad has impacted the way some participants use English. The survey platform Webropol allows for customisation of the form according to each answer, making it possible to hide the questions regarding the effects of living abroad from those who have never lived abroad. Similarly, questions 6, 7, and 8 investigated if other personal connections, such as family ties or tertiary studies, have had an impact on accents. These considerations are important, as accent is formed by various factors of a speaker's background and reflects their experiences and interactions with other speakers (Moyer, 2013: 12). Question 9 asked whether the participants are currently in working life, and its subquestions 10 and 11 inquired about the use of English and different accents at the workplace and in spare time. This was designed to slowly ease the participant into thinking about how they change their way of speaking English in different contexts.

Question 12 about how the respondents experience their own accent was heavily reliant on self-reporting, but it was estimated to provide a folk-linguistic point of view into the spectrum of English varieties employed by Finns. Three accents were provided as choices – British, American, and Finnish, as these were the most appealing accents in the survey conducted in 2007 (Leppänen et al., 2011: 71) – from which the participants could pick their accent. The perceived reasons for speaking this particular accent were charted in question 13. Question 14

asked whether the participants ever change between different accents. These potential accent changes and the contexts in which these are undertaken were discussed in questions 15 and 16. Accent modification among native English speakers has been studied by Baratta (2016), but in the context of Finnish EFL speakers it is still an uncharted field. Questions 17 and 18 aimed to find out which accents the participants deem the most desirable. The hypothesis was that, as with Leppänen et al. (2011) and Peterson (2022), a majority would prefer to speak British English but, for one reason or another, do not speak it. Together, questions 12-18 aimed to answer the first research question: what kinds of choices do Finnish EFL speakers make regarding their accent?

Survey question 19 began to answer the second research question of the present study: are there situations where native Finnish speakers deliberately choose a Finnish accent when speaking English? Those that answered positively could explain these situations by typing them in the open-form question 20. Finally, in the 21st and last question, the participants were asked whether they would be willing to use the Finnish accent in certain contexts. At the end of the questionnaire, there was a link to a separate form – to preserve anonymity – where respondents who would like to participate in a short follow-up interview could leave their contact details.

A pilot study was carried out in October 2023 with a small group of four English majors. Following the pilot study, minor changes to the questionnaire form were made.

Many of the studies regarding EFL speakers focus on young learners. However, as conscious accent choices may require a high level of proficiency, the study was aimed at adults who are likely to be more experienced EFL speakers. They may use the language daily, either professionally or in relation to their recreational activities. The questionnaire data was gathered online, which allowed for the collection of a large number of responses from various geographical locations. First, it was decided to recruit participants from businesses where many of the employees are Finnish but the main language of the workplace is English. It was estimated that this can give rise to interactions where accent variation could be found. People who use English daily in their professional lives can be presumed to have a proficiency high enough to make these sorts of stylistic choices in their speech, providing insightful data even if the employees would perhaps not represent the populace as a whole. The author selected the companies that were contacted on the basis that they had a branch office in the Kärki building next to Jyväskylä university. The international companies were Airbus Finland, Fujitsu Finland, and Digitalist Group, none of which contacted the author to confirm or refuse

participation. It is therefore unknown whether the respondents include employees of these companies.

The second method of participant recruitment was to contact English groups in community colleges. Finland has 175 community colleges with more than 500,000 people signing up to courses yearly (kansalaisopistot.fi, n.d.). The groups may have older participants with differing proficiencies and backgrounds, so it was estimated that the data gathered from this source could provide a glimpse into the views of the aged population as well. Among recipients were language teachers or language co-ordinators of seven community colleges: Jyväskylä, Pieksämäki, Mikkeli, Savonlinna, Etelä-Karjala, Lahti, and Hyvinkää. One recipient responded saying they would pass the message on to seven other teachers, teaching a total of 350 students.

Finding companies or educational institutions with Finns who were both willing to participate in the questionnaire and representative of the overall population proved challenging. Thus, it could be justified to also recruit participants on a major online platform where the matrix language of the conversation was Finnish. The social network site reddit.com was chosen for this purpose. The link to the survey was posted on the Finnish forum r/Suomi on Reddit, where the post attracted a surprising amount of attention: according to the analytics on the post, it received 170 upvotes, 100 comments, 33 shares, and a total of 58,400 views, as of 04.06.2024.

In summary, the survey was sent to seven community colleges, three international companies, and one social network site. It was estimated that a combination of all three sources of participants might provide the widest scope of Finnish EFL speakers. All those who wanted could answer the survey, so the method could be called voluntary response sampling. Bobbitt (2021) mentions that this method likely produces a sample where the participants have stronger opinions about the topic than the populace on average. This must be taken into account in the analysis.

3.3 Methodology and ethics

The data gathering concluded at the end of November 2023. During that time, 1134 participants filled in the survey form. The data was then analysed, which took several months, as the author needed to interpret a vast number of answers to the open-field questions and experienced scheduling issues. The data analysis followed the principles of grounded theory as presented by Walker and Myrick (2006), where the analyst formulates theoretical ideas based on codified data. Walker and Myrick (2006: 549) praise the method's ability "to create rich descriptions

and understandings of social life”, which is the goal of the present study. By first examining the results of the questionnaire and comparing incident to incident, it was possible to create categories and assign them properties. This helped in identifying factors that impact the accent choices that native Finnish speakers make while speaking English.

In addition, narrative content analysis was used to interpret the open-text answers. According to Drisko and Maschi (2016: 2), the method allows the researcher “to identify and document the attitudes, views, and interests of individuals”, which is precisely what the present study aims to achieve. In basic content analysis, it is common to use statistical analyses to support the narrative analyses, but in the case of numerical data proving insufficient, interpretive or qualitative content analysis methods may be employed instead (*ibid.*). Interpretive content analysis has to consider the sampling issues, which in the case of the present study may include a sample that does not adequately represent the Finnish populace, compared with the larger sample in the study of Leppänen et al. (2011). In addition, sampling methods had to be considered, as with such a vast amount of data, not all respondent submissions could be practically analysed in depth. Therefore, the quotes presented in this thesis do not reflect the prevalence of similar answers but attempt to highlight some of the trends relevant to the research questions.

The third framework that inspired the analysis was folk linguistics, which is suitable for the qualitative analysis of how language is discussed by non-linguists or laypeople, for the lack of a better word. The method is comprehensively discussed by Niedzielski and Preston (2000), who state it has been a controversial topic, as folk beliefs about language have not been well received by academia. In folk linguistics, it is important to consider the level of awareness the subjects have of the fact that their views are being studied. In the case of the present study, this awareness could not be monitored or prevented, so it is possible that the participants filling out the survey were trying to appear more knowledgeable about the topic than they are in reality. In an interview setting, this could potentially have been averted.

There are certain aspects that may decrease the reliability of the study. There is effectively no way of knowing if the survey participants truly use the accent they claim to use in certain situations. According to Crystal (2003: 39), not even native speakers can reliably identify accents: “Many British people identify a Canadian accent as American; many Americans identify it as British.” As the study relies on self-reporting, it may fall victim to both intentionally false information and unintentional misunderstandings. This is why it was

originally the intention of the author to include an interview for 3-5 volunteers, making it possible to gather evidence of accent use and confirm whether the subjects are consistent in describing their speech. Unfortunately, this plan had to be cancelled due to time constraints. However, the surprisingly large number of participants that was recruited should alleviate the problems of self-reporting.

As the study focuses on a behavioural model deeply influenced by personal preferences and experiences, creating a questionnaire that completely prevents the recognition of individual respondents from the data was deemed impractical, as it would have severely limited the informational value of the results. To fully answer the research questions, it was necessary to collect some information about the participants' background, such as whether they had lived abroad. As such, it was vital that the participants were informed beforehand of the nature of the study and of the eventual thesis it will produce. Information was provided in the form of two cover letters attached to the survey form, one giving general information about the study's aims and methods, and one detailing how the participants' data will be handled, as required by the Human Sciences Ethics Committee of the University of Jyväskylä. All participants gave their valid informed consent by filling in the form, ensuring that quotes from the data may be presented in the thesis to support quantitative reporting either as direct quotes or quotes edited to preserve participant anonymity. Quotes were deemed necessary, as they have come to be expected in qualitative studies and considered the "gold standard" in such texts (Eldh, Årestedt, & Berterö, 2020). Parts of certain quotes were still redacted, as it was deemed that including them in full would reveal too much personal information about the participant, such as the nationality of their spouse.

4. Findings

In this section, the results of the survey questionnaire are presented question by question. The answers to multiple choice questions will be presented using graphs, while free-form responses will be summarised using examples selected from the data. The questions and examples of the responses will be translated into English for the convenience of the reader, but original versions of the questions are included in Appendix 1 and quotes in Appendix 2 for the verifiability of the analysis. The author will then contemplate on the successes and shortcomings of the study and what could have been done differently.

4.1 Data and analysis

The data revealed several somewhat surprising trends. Firstly, in Q1, 39% (n=444) of the subjects responded they had studied English for 12 years or more. Such a high number seemed unlikely due to the fact that Finnish comprehensive and secondary school usually take 12 years to complete, and until recently, English tuition typically started in third grade. This would make the 10-year option most probable (Kopperoinen, 2011: 74). For example, in Leppänen et al.'s study (2011: 93), only 29% of the participants had studied English for more than 10 years. It is possible that many participants have not read the specification under the question and included their English studies in tertiary education. Still, as shown in Figure 1, the 10-year option was the one selected by most participants: 53% (n=599). None of the participants stated that they had not studied English at all, compared to 14,7% in Leppänen et al. (ibid.); this is likely a result of online recruiting which produced a sample of younger participants. In Leppänen et al.'s (2011: 41) study, 12% of the participants were over the age of 65 at the time of data gathering in 2007, i.e. born in 1942 or earlier. This would mean they completed their education before English had fully become the dominant foreign language in Finland, explaining the lack of any formal English tuition. In the present study, it is likely that none of the participants have been born before 1942, as they would already have been more than 80 years of age at the time of data gathering.

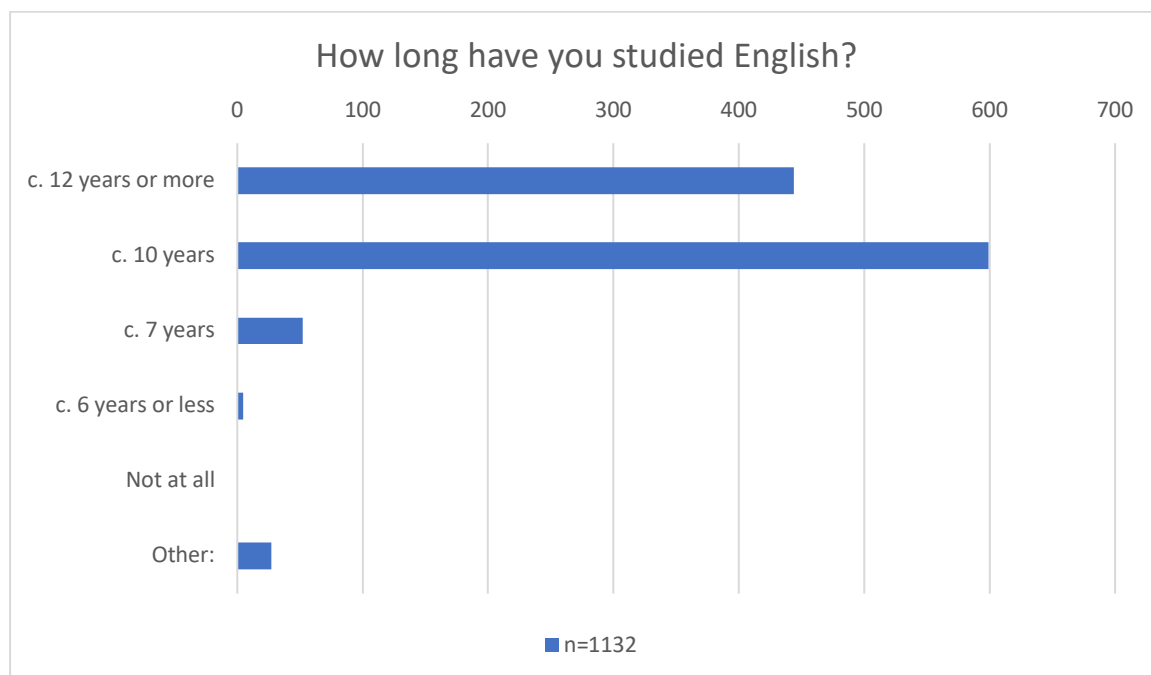


Figure 1: Question 1

A similar potential error arose in Q2, where 61% (n=686) of respondents reported having C2 skill level in English. As few EFL learners reach this level, it is likely that many participants were not familiar with the CEFR framework, did not read the description included in the form, and chose their response based on the verbal expression “erinomainen”. The word is traditionally used as an equivalent to the best grade in Finnish schools and could be translated as ‘excellent’. Alternatively, they may have read the C2 description but overestimated their own proficiency. The results are visualised in figure 2.

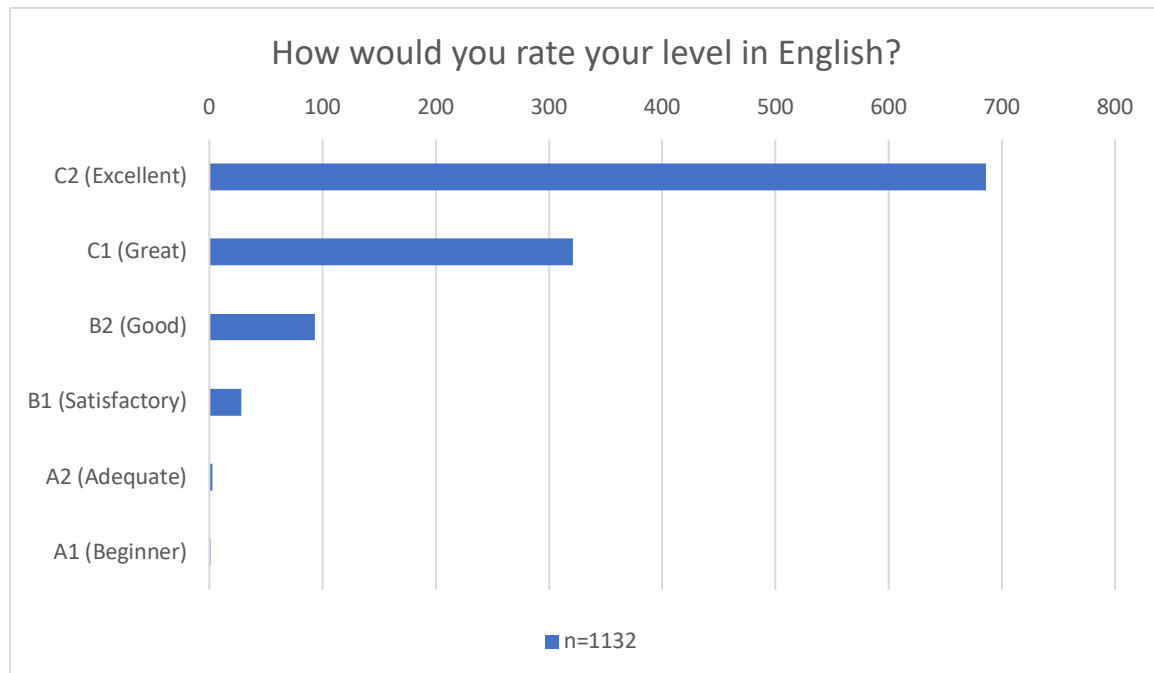


Figure 2: Question 2

This 61% changed to a staggering 81% (n=150) when only including the respondents who had lived abroad for more than a year. This was not particularly surprising, as it can be explained both ways: people who have a high language proficiency can be more willing to live abroad, and living abroad can, in turn, improve language skills. One in three participants had lived abroad for some length of time. The sample seems relatively cosmopolitan compared to Leppänen et al.’s (2011: 51) survey, conducted in 2007, where only one fifth of the participants had lived abroad. It remains unclear whether difference is due to sampling or definition, or if Finns have become more international over the past 16 years. In the present study, 16,5% (n=187) stated having lived abroad for more than a year and, seemingly by coincidence, also 16,5% (n=186) for less than a year. This is shown in graph 3.

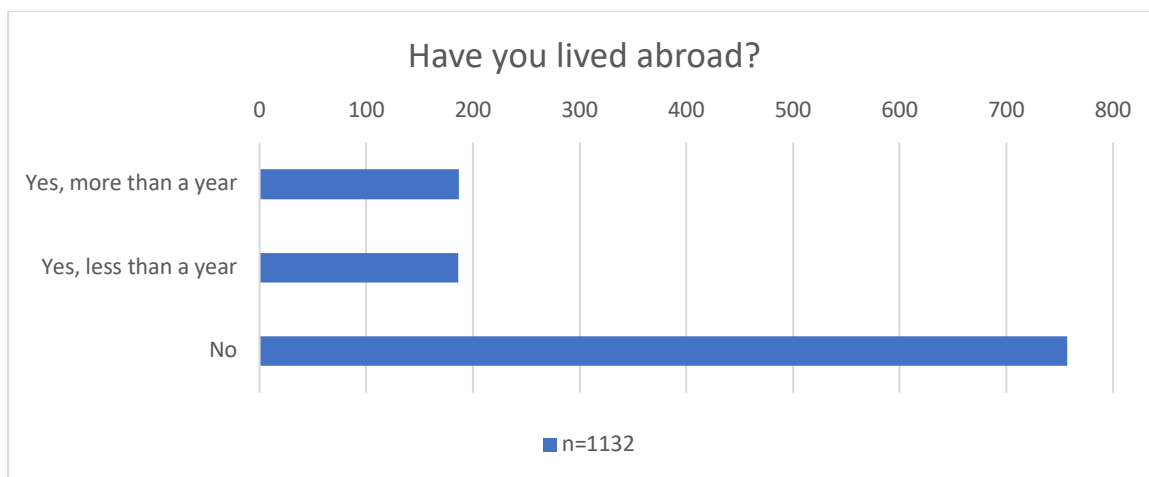


Figure 3: Question 3

Of those who had lived abroad, 46% (n=170) stated that the time there had had an impact on their accent, as shown in Figure 4. This percentage increased to 50% (n=136) when only including those who reported to have a C2 proficiency in English and to 60% (n=113) when only including those who had lived abroad for more than a year. The former could be explained by higher self-awareness of one's own English usage with improved language competence. In the latter case, it seems natural that a longer exposure to another accent would be more likely to leave its mark. However, 40% (n=74) of those who had spent more than a year abroad did not report any sort of change to their accent: perhaps they used little to no English while abroad or their accent had already become so permanent prior to that that it remained unaffected.

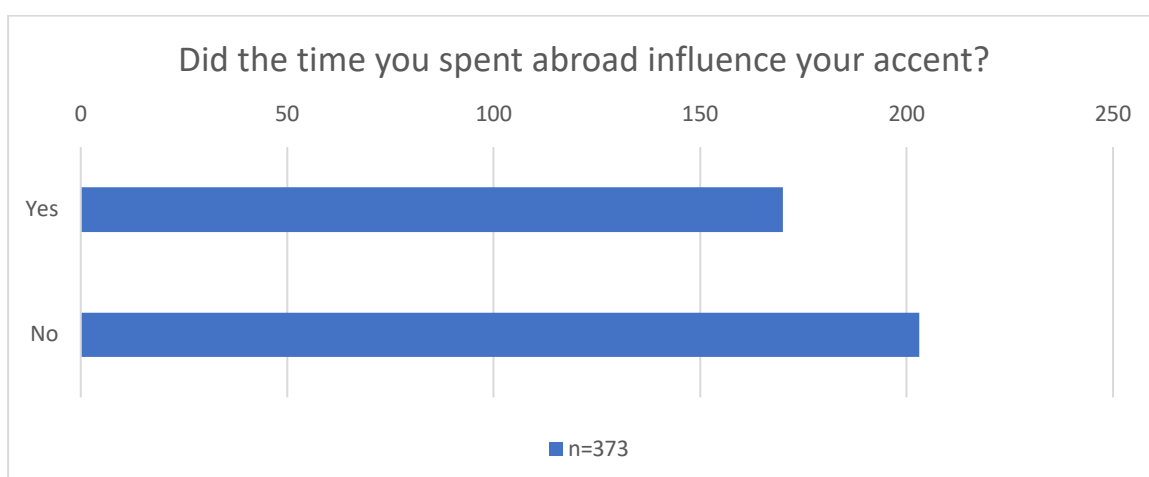


Figure 4: Question 4

148 of those who had noticed a change in their accent submitted an answer in Q5, which was the first open text question in the survey. The answers were strikingly diverse. Some described the change from the point of view of the Finnish accent:

After that, my accent was a bit less Rally English than before, because due to using [English] and practicing, I had the “courage” to speak more bravely.

One participant reported they had lived in Ireland and while they do not always notice the accent themselves, their teachers have paid attention to it. Another had noticed themselves adapting to the accent:

When working a lot with British people, at the end of the week I started listening to myself and marvel at my own language...

These are enlightening examples of unconscious accent modification due to temporary exposure to a different accent. Bell (2001: 143) calls this *convergence*: shifting one’s style to more closely match that of the audience.

Questions 6 and 7 pertained to employment and English use at work. 64% of the participants were currently in working life (n=721), which is lower than the national rate: at the time of data collection in November 2023, the employment rate of adults was 76,9% (Statistics Finland, 2023). One possible explanation might be that young adults who are still studying full-time are overrepresented in the sample of participants recruited from Reddit. In addition, a portion of the participants recruited from community colleges might already be retired. This should be taken into account in the analysis. Of those who work, 88% used English at least to some extent in their work (n=636). A small but notable sample, 6% (n=46) reported that in their work, they only use English, giving them plenty of experience with the language and thus making them potentially highly valuable informants for the present study.

When question 8 asked the participants how the English they spoke at work and in spare time differed, very few participants mentioned accent. Instead, vocabulary seemed to be the key difference: in the data of 544 responses, vocabulary was mentioned 217 times. For many, comprehensibility seemed to be an important factor in the choice of accent: one person mentioned having to use “simple English, as in simpler sentence structures and common words” when communicating with colleagues whose first language is not English. This use of English as a Lingua Franca appeared elsewhere in the data as well, often in the context of speaking with EFL speakers with weaker proficiency. In the following comment, the opposite was true:

it's rawer, I use Rally English to handle things so that Indians and Brits understand what I'm pronouncing. Mixing Amörikan [sic] accent in everything without being American sounds childish to my ear.

The spelling of the word "Amörikan" in this quote is unlikely to be a typo: on a Finnish keyboard, e and ö are nowhere near each other. Instead, it seems to reflect the personal attitudes described by the participant. The mention of using a strong Finnish accent to make English easier for British audiences to understand is rather interesting, and the reason why it is seen as more comprehensible is left unclear. This was not the only mention of Rally English or the Finnish accent in Q8, but most participants stated avoiding in the professional context. However, the purposeful use of the accent – one of the main themes of the study – which is not queried on the survey form until Q18, was already brought up in a response to Q8:

"In my spare time, I may express some things to my friends and loved ones with intentional Rally English."

This quote is of particular interest to the 2nd research question of the study, as it indicates that the intentional use of a Finnish accent is something that at least some Finnish speakers have paid attention to. The phenomenon will be discussed in more depth later, but it should be noted that here, the mention was unprompted.

Another participant stated they mainly used written English at work and spoken English in spare time, which would naturally prevent the observation of differences in accent between the two. 20 participants stated that there is no difference between the English they use in these two environments.

Question 9 pertained to other personal connections to the English language. 16% of the participants (n=183) stated that they had a partner, spouse, or family member with whom they used English. According to Statistics Finland (2024), 10% of the population of Finland are native speakers of a foreign language, so the 16% result here seems high. However, it should be noted that the sample includes Finns living abroad, and due to online recruiting, it is possible that the participants are younger and more internationally oriented than the population on average. In addition, using English with a family member may make people more inclined to answer a survey about English accents: the attractiveness of a survey to those who have strong opinions on the matter is an issue of voluntary sampling as suggested by Bobbitt (2021) and must be considered in the analysis. 50% of the participants (n=556) stated that they have close friends or relatives with whom they speak English. This may be seen as a very high number,

but it is difficult to determine how the respondents have interpreted the term “close friend”. An even higher number, 55% (n=612), was recorded in the statement “I have a hobby in which I use English.” It was not in the scope of this study to specify what these hobbies are, but it can be speculated that video games and other online interactions play an important part, as many participants were recruited via an online platform. Also, “using English” was not defined in any way, so it is possible that some participants counted watching films or TV shows as their hobby in which they “use” English.

Only 8% of the participants (n=92) had studied English as their major or minor at university, so it can be deemed that the answers are mostly folk-linguistic data that has not been influenced by academic analysis of each participant’s own English. 21% (n=238) had studied in some other English-speaking school or tertiary education. This may refer for example to International Baccalaureate schools or, in higher education, bachelor’s or master’s degree programmes taught in English. Only 17% of the respondents (n=192) reported having none of the aforementioned connections to the English language. Responses to question 9 are visualised in Figure 5.

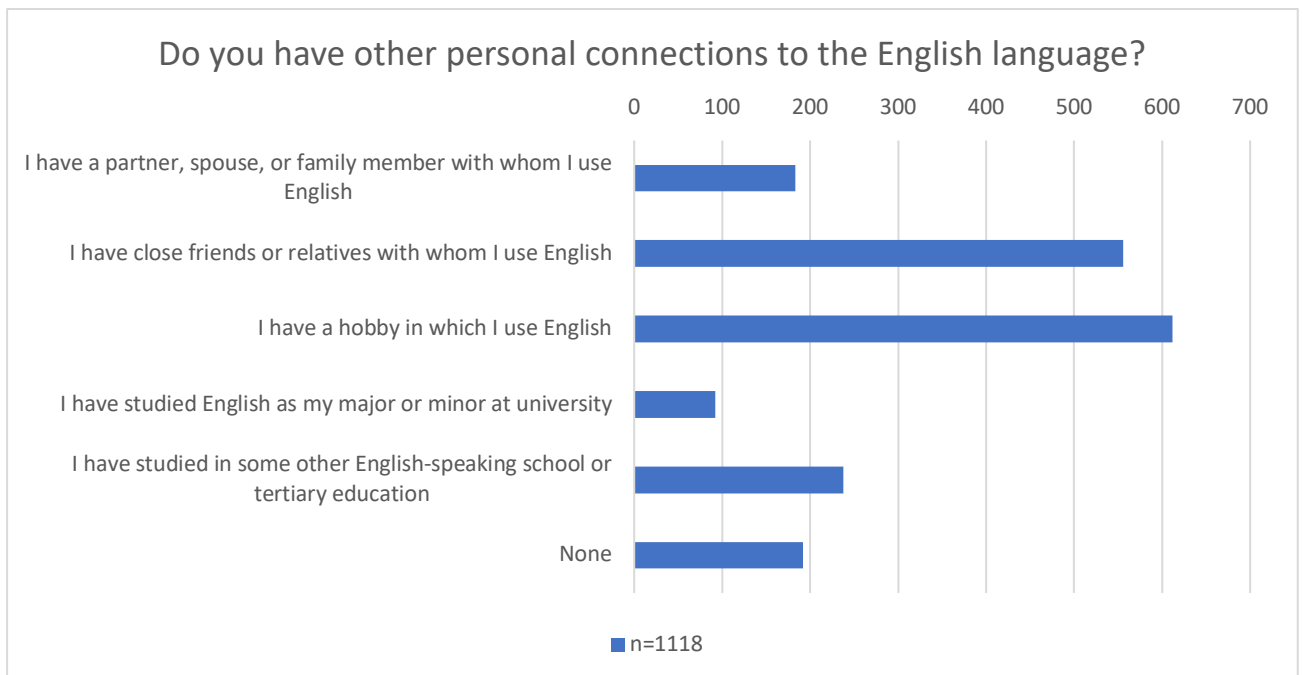


Figure 5: Question 9

40% (n=371) of the participants reported that these personal connections have had an effect on their accent. This percentage increases to 47% when only counting those with close friends or relatives with whom they use English, to 50% for those who had studied in an English-speaking school or tertiary education, to 53% when filtering by those who have studied English as their

major or minor at university, and to 54% when only including participants who had a partner, spouse, or family member with whom they use English. The last-mentioned was thus the factor that most impacted an EFL speaker's accent, narrowly surpassing studying English at university.

In Q11, the participants were asked how the aforementioned personal connections manifest in their English today. 298 of the participants answered this question. While some gave very simple answers, such as "I try to avoid the American dialect" and "Gaming friends from a certain area", others provided much more detailed analysis of the effects. Four of the participants mentioned Received Pronunciation, including this extremely thorough report which was slightly too long to be included here in its entirety:

I often notice myself copying my accent from the accent of who I'm discussing with. So if I'm discussing with a friend who uses a more British English style accent, my own accent starts slowly to resemble a British accent. [--] From both IB and my current university studies I have also learned how to consciously change my accent based on the situation. If I'm in a very informal situation, I often speak in a more Southern Yankee² style accent, in which I utilise internet slang and dialectal words such as "y'all". On the other hand, in more official situations (or with strangers) I aspire to imitate the RP (received pronunciation) style. Naturally, my accent follows (according to the feedback I have got) the mid-Atlantic style.

This answer summarises the conscious and unconscious accent modification in different contexts, which is something that was mentioned by many other participants mentioned as well and will be discussed more thoroughly later. One comment stated: "nowadays I speak [--] in a Finnish accent, and I don't mean any Rally English." It is interesting that the person felt the need to make the distinction between the two, seemingly to avoid the negative connotations associated with the latter. Another wrote: "I use so called Rally English with my Finnish friends [--] and we sort of laugh at our bad pronunciation together." Clearly, the accent is seen by many in a negative light, but the description of "bad pronunciation" does not reveal whether the accent is seen as less comprehensible than one perceived as more nativelike or Inner Circle.

² In Finnish, the word "jenkki" (Yankee) can be used to refer to all people from the United States and is not usually considered an insult in any way. The phrase "Southern Yankee" may sound like an oxymoron, but in this context, it simply means someone from the Southern part of the United States.

However, one participant reported: “I pay more attention to the correct pronunciation and the melody of the language, so that it would be comprehensible to as many as possible, and not only to those who understand the Finnish accent.” In this instance, the comprehensibility of the Finnish accent in communication with international audiences is questioned, and the “correct” English – presumably one of the Inner Circle varieties – is seen as more beneficial for communication.

There will be a question about personal preferences later, but one participant reflected on their attitudes already in Q11:

I hate Rally English, so in my own pronunciation, I focus more on general American accent and pronunciation. I follow a lot of American content creators and now and then I even talk to them. Now and then I hear questions like “from which part of America are you from?” and they are astonished when they hear I’m Finnish.

Clearly, if the speaker has managed to convince native speakers that they are an American and not an EFL speaker, they have acquired the accent well and have a very high degree of oral proficiency. It is unclear how significant the dislike for Rally English is, but it is hinted that this may have impacted the speaker’s motivation to learn the language extremely well.

Already by this point, many participants have shared features and background of their spoken English and described their accent, and in the next section, the accent choices are quantified. Question 12, which was mandatory for all participants, asks: “Which accent do you feel you use the most when you speak English?” 42% (n=472) of the participants reported that they mostly use an American accent, as shown in figure 6. This number is unsurprising, as many of the replies to previous questions included mentions of American media and entertainment, which has undoubtedly had an impact on the accent of many Finnish EFL speakers. The second most used accent was the Finnish accent, which was spoken by 21% (n=241) of the participants. The third accent was British English: 20% (n=226) of the participants stated that they use this accent the most. It is notable that, when only including answers from participants who, in Q2, rated their English proficiency as C2, the share of speakers of American and British accents increase to 46% (n=317) and 23% (n=158) respectively and the percentage of reported Finnish accent users drops to 13% (n=90). This would seem to indicate that, among the participants, there may be a link between high proficiency and nativelike accents. When filtering the answers

by those who, in Q3, reported never having lived abroad (n=757), the percentage of those who mainly use a Finnish accent increases to 25% (n=189).

In addition to the options provided, 9,1% (n=103) of the participants reported using some other accent the most and typed in their answer. This option was originally included with those in mind who, for one reason or another, speak in an Inner or Expanding Circle variety not taught in Finnish schools, such as Irish, Australian, or Indian accents. Several answers did exactly this, mentioning Australia (n=6), Ireland (n=4), Canada (n=3), Scotland (n=2), South Africa (n=1), India (n=1), and New Zealand (n=1). However, most of the participants who selected “other” wished to describe their accent more specifically, stating that it is e.g. “a mix of British and American”, “something between these”, or “a mix of Rally English and Schwarzenegger”. One answer mentioned the “Euro” accent, which is not a common term in literature but is probably related to Euro English that has been studied by Mollin (2006) among others. 8% (n=92) selected “hard to say”, and this percentage only went down to 7% (n=49) when filtering by C2 proficiency, indicating that a portion of even those with very high proficiency could not or did not want to define their accent.

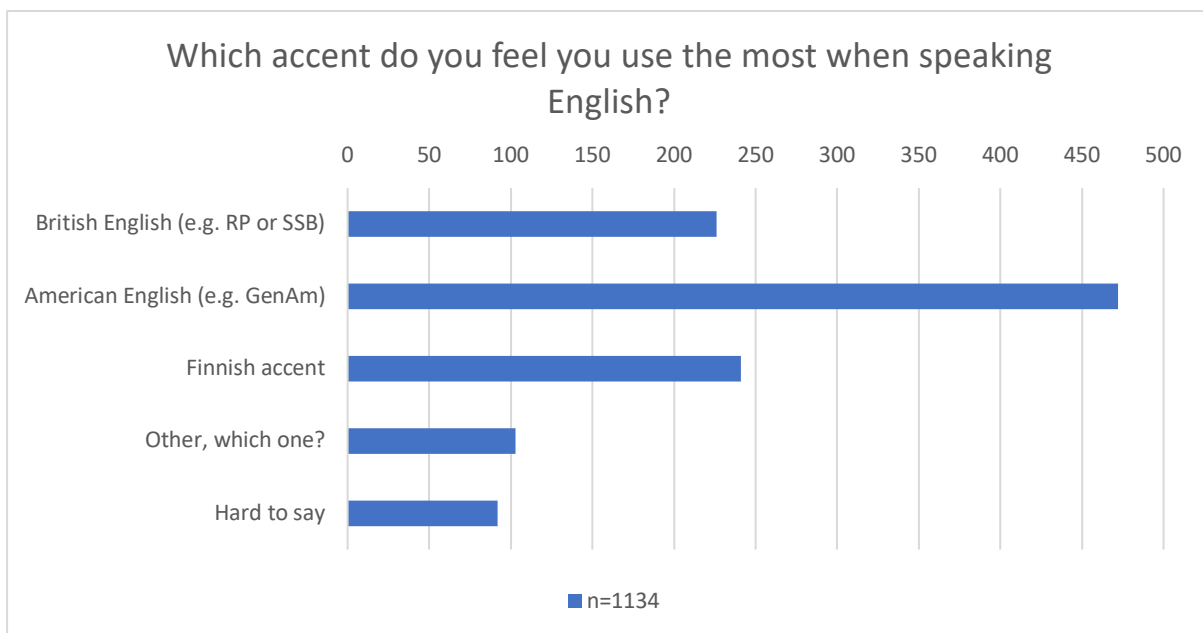


Figure 6: Question 12

Question 13, “Why do you speak in this particular accent?”, got the largest number of typed-in answers of the whole survey: 907 total. Most of the answers to this question were fairly simple, such as “I don’t know any others”, “TV shows and movies”, and “It’s the one that was taught at school.” The attitudes towards different accents can also be caused by their place of origin. One respondent commented: “America is a much better place than some UK where

there isn't anything amazing", expressing a negative attitude towards Britain and, by extension, the British accent. Similarly, another wrote: "British English is too -posh-", probably referring to RP which is stereotypically an accent of the upper classes. On the other hand, one participant stated: "I don't want anyone to mistake me for an American", possibly reflecting the negative stereotypes associated with Americans in Europe.

Of those who selected the Finnish accent as the one they use the most, 208 gave their explanation why they speak it. Several participants commented that the Finnish accent comes naturally to them, allowing for better fluency, with some even taking a stronger stance:

The Finnish accent is natural, anything else would be pretending.

This is an interesting view, seeing as Inner Circle accents have been the pronunciation model and goal of EFL tuition in Finland since it began. It is unfortunate that the comment is so short and does not go further into the writer's views, leaving it unclear whether the meaning is that the participant in question would be pretending if they affected an Inner Circle accent consciously or if they consider it pretending when any Finn acquires an Inner Circle accent, for example while living abroad like the two examples in Q5. According to this view, more than half of the survey participants would be "pretending" most of the time when they speak English. Perhaps the writer considers Finnish English its own variety that should be spoken by Finns, or perhaps the comment is purposefully provocative. A somewhat similar statement, contradicting with many of the responses, was this one:

Nobody decides what accent they speak in, unless they're an actor etc.

This is another interesting claim and seems to go against the results of the next question.

Question 14 begins to quantify accent modification among the participants, asking: "Do you ever switch between accents?" To this, 60% (n=667) of the respondents stated that they do, as shown in Figure 7. Interestingly, the percentage remains virtually unchanged when only including participants with C2 proficiency, only increasing to 61% (n=415). This may be explained by two factors: while on the one hand, EFL speakers with a higher proficiency may have more knowledge about different accents and the skills to imitate them, on the other hand, they may be accustomed to one particular accent and prefer to stick to that one. Alternatively, this may reflect the findings of Peterson (2022: 278), who found that many English majors in Finland found a British accent more desirable but spoke in an American accent themselves, possibly hinting that even among advanced EFL speakers, accent is not necessarily chosen but

acquired. However, the percentage does drop to 47% (n=56) when filtering out those with C2 and C1 proficiencies, but the number of participants who had estimated their proficiency as lower than this was so small that this drop should not be taken at face value.

The percentage drops to 55% (n=102) when filtering by those who have lived abroad for more than a year, indicating that some of them have perhaps acquired a particular accent while living abroad and are less willing to modify it. In either case, the majority of the participants in this study engaged in accent modification at least occasionally. Even among those who rated their English proficiency as B2 or weaker, nearly half stated that they switch between accents, seemingly contradicting with some of the statements made in Q13.

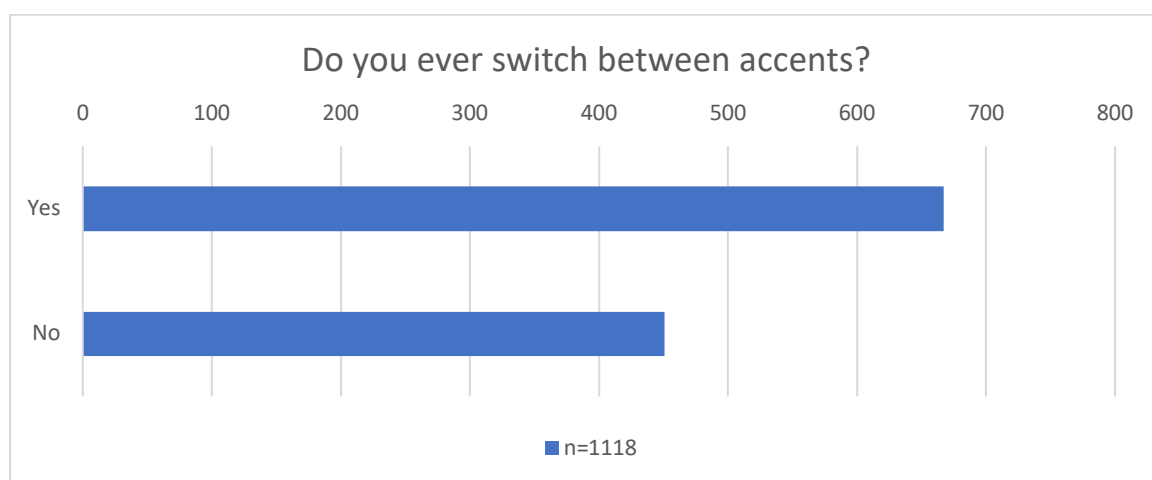


Figure 7: Question 14

Question 15, visualised by Figure 8, asks the participants what accents other than their main accent they use when speaking English. A total of 1077 people answered this question. In this question, there were a total of four options, but the option each participant selected in Q12 was hidden, so for example those who previously stated that they mainly speak in a Finnish accent were asked if they also use a British, an American, or some other accent. Of the 854 respondents who had the option “Finnish accent” available, only 21% (n=173) stated that they never use a Finnish accent. This percentage increases slightly to 26% (n=141) when filtering by those who estimated their English proficiency as C2. The difference is small, but it would seem to indicate that those with a higher proficiency may be slightly less likely to use a Finnish accent as a stylistic choice. This may be explained by several reasons: as discussed previously, those with a high proficiency were also less likely to choose Finnish as their main accent and were overall less prone to accent modification. While they might have the skills to do it, it is possible that

they use English professionally in circumstances where stylistic accent choices would be out of place.

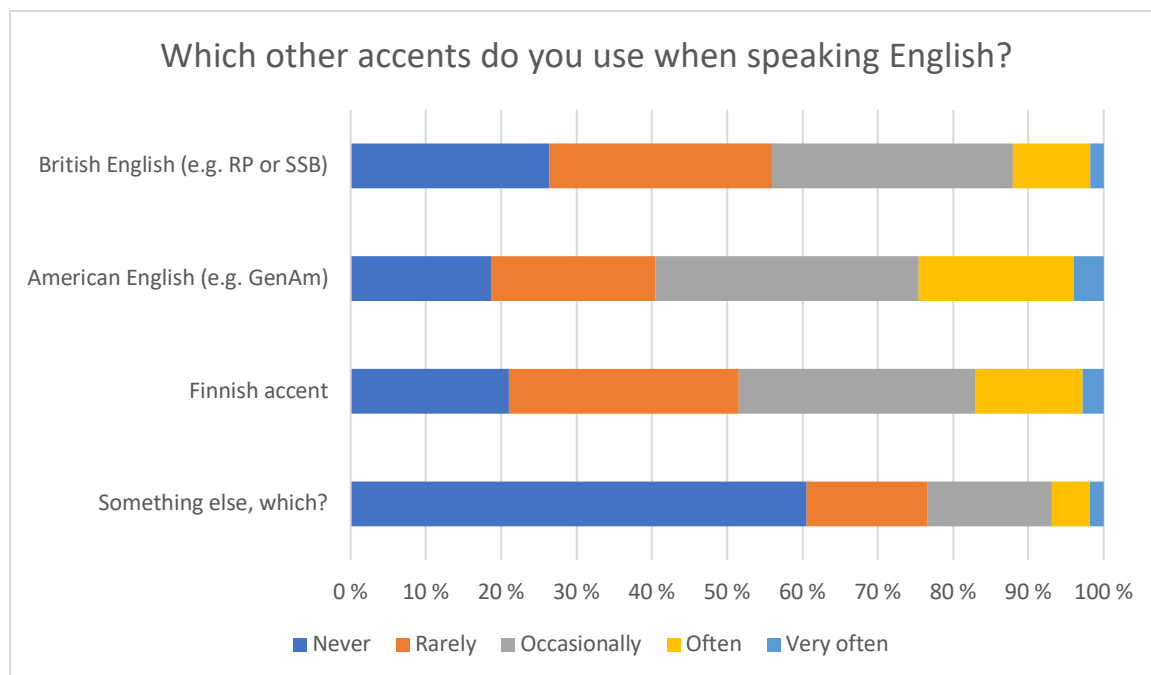


Figure 8: Question 15

The majority of the participants who did not state American as their main accent reported using it very often (4,0%), often (20,6%), or at least now and then (34,9%). Of the participants whose main accent was not British, 1,8% still used the accent very often, 10,3% often, and 31,9% now and then. Participants who had previously, in Q3, stated that they had lived abroad for more than a year, were more prone to speaking an accent not listed in the options. 5,3% of them stated they used some other accent very often, 6,6% often, and 17,1% occasionally, while the equivalent percentages were 3,6%, 3,6%, and 14,4% for those who had never lived abroad.

Again, as in Q12, participants could type in if they occasionally use some other accent not provided in the options. These open-field answers vary wildly. A stunning 41 participants mentioned using – or “attempting to imitate” – an Australian accent at least rarely. Unfortunately, the survey did not ask where these participants had learned an Australian accent from, as this might have provided a valuable insight about the ways in which Finnish EFL learners find authentic sources of input of their own volition that could be useful in the development of EFL tuition. Other answers included Scotland (n=22), India (n=13), Ireland (n=11), Russia (n=9), Sweden (n=7), Germany (n=5), Eastern Europe (n=5), New Zealand (n=2), and Italy (n=2). South Africa, Nigeria, Jamaica, China, Israel, and Turkey were all mentioned once, as well as Manchester. This indicates that Finns have a much greater diversity

of accents than could be expected, and that much of the English they know is learned outside the EFL classroom. One participant mentioned using the accent spoken by the dwarves in the online game World of Warcraft, which in its own is an enlightening example of informal English acquisition. In addition, one participant questioned the entire concept of using different accents as a stylistic choice:

“I don’t CONSCIOUSLY use another accent, because I don’t really think that it’s possible.”

Question 16 looks into the contexts where accent modification occurs, asking: “In what kinds of situations do you change the accent you use?” 561 participants answered this question, providing a vast amount of data. Many seemed to be aware that they engage in accent modification but stated that they do it involuntarily:

I don’t consciously change it. The American accent comes “from the backbone”, but some words and expressions feel more natural in an English accent. Mostly I think it goes in a Finnish Rally English.

The above quote demonstrates a fluid relationship with the three main accents discussed in this study. Indeed, many of the answers seemed not to have strong feelings about any accent, and using a particular one in a particular context is mainly a question of pragmatics, not personal preference. The background of the audience was an important factor for many.

I change my accent according to who I’m discussing with. If I’m discussing with my American friend, my accent is much more American.

This particular comment does not reveal whether the choice is made in order to sound more comprehensible or pleasant. Either way, the accent modification in this situation can be seen as a convergence to the listener. In the following comment, however, there appears to be a degree of personal preference:

When I’m tired, I can’t be bothered to pay attention to my accent, so I notice I slip into something a bit like Rally English. At work I try to practice a British English style accent, because I deem it official and neutral, and to some extent more beautiful than Yankee English.

This comment reflects wonderfully the findings of Rindal (2010: 249), namely that the British accent is considered more formal, polite, and aesthetic. Many others gave similar answers,

stating that they use British English in official situations and American English in more relaxed circumstances. The commenter above also engages in both conscious and unconscious accent modification, the latter due to a decreased alertness level. For many, it seems that the Finnish accent is the one they revert to when in doubt or when unwilling to make an effort. One participant stated:

If I've never used a word before, just e.g. read it in a text, I may pronounce it wrong the Finnish way.

It can be debated whether a single mispronounced word in speech constitutes an accent modification, but to this participant, it was notable enough to be included in their answer. There will be a question regarding the reasons for using a Finnish accent later on, but already here, many of the respondents mentioned humour as their main reason for using it, particularly for imitating uneducated characters or public figures.

Question 17 asked which accent the participants would like to speak in. Here, the answers differed significantly from those in Q12, indicating that for many of the participants, their current main accent is not the one they would prefer. 35% (n=392) of the participants would like to speak in a British accent, while only 20% had stated that it is the accent they use the most. Conversely, American English was chosen by 30% (n=337) as their desired accent, but 42% reported it as their main accent. Answers to Q17 are presented in Graph 9.

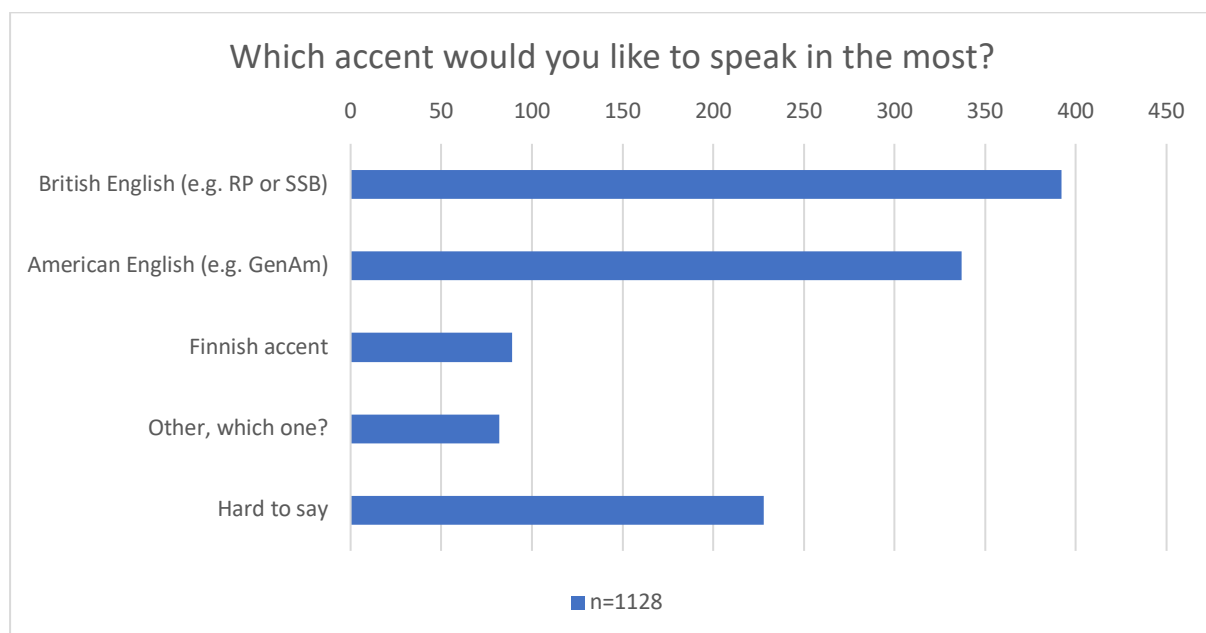


Figure 9: Question 17

The answers were fairly similar to those of Leppänen et al. (2011: 71), who found that British English was favoured by 39,6% of Finnish EFL speakers and American English by 35,9%. Even though that study asked the participants which variety they found the most appealing, not which accent they would like to speak in, the preferences seem to match: British English is slightly more preferable than American English. Also, Finnish Accent was deemed the most appealing by 7% of participants in Leppänen et al.'s (2011: 71) study, conducted in 2007, and 7,9% (n=89) in the present study. It would appear that in the 16 years that have passed, the accent preferences of Finnish EFL speakers have not shifted significantly.

Compared with Peterson's (2022: 285) small-scale survey of English majors in 2020, the results are also similar. Of the 97 participants, 18 spoke in a British accent and 37 spoke in an American accent, while 43 would like to speak British English and 36 would prefer American English. However, none of the English majors stated that they would like to speak Finnish English, a notable contrast to the present study.

Question 18 asked: "Why would you like to speak in this particular accent?" The question was answered by 738 participants, giving plenty of insight about the personal attitudes towards the mentioned accents despite the brevity of almost all the answers. Typical answers included "It sounds good and clear", "It sounds sophisticated", and "It feels universal." British accent was described as sounding "beautiful", "wise", "widely understood", and "original" but, according to one participant, it also "sounds like overtrying". One participant who already spoke in a British accent wrote:

I don't speak RP or SSB – and I wouldn't want to. Posh southern bastards. To locals, I sound more like a nondescript English Northerner, but I also used to speak a passable East Central Scots. At work, I speak in a more Southern England style, because it's seen as more correct/better/clearer, so to say

Despite the participant's overt dislike of the prestigious accents of Southern England, they affect a similar way of speaking in a professional context. It is left unclear whether the workplace encourages employees to use a more standard variety of English or if the participant has made the choice independently; in either case, the comment displays an extremely high degree of linguistic competence and accent modification capability.

American accent was deemed "the most spoken", "more natural", "more relaxed" and "easy", but also "annoying". "American accent brings to mind stereotypical Americans", stated one respondent. Had there been a question about the participants' ages, it would have been possible

to see if there is a generational difference between the different opinions, but in this study it is left unclear.

There was also a large amount of support for the Finnish accent in the answers.

I think it's quite sad how Finns especially don't appreciate their own accent when speaking English. Of course I can understand the desire to sound native, but the way people widely belittle this accent of their own makes me personally want to use it more.

This comment and several others displayed a sense of pride in the Finnish accent. Being from Finland and being a native Finnish speaker are things that many participants want to show in their English, not conceal by adopting the accent of another country. While the term "Rally English" has traditionally been a humorous stereotype, for many participants it was a source of pride:

It is good for Finns to stop e.g. being ashamed of Rally English and rather be proud of it for the sake of their identity

This comment suggests that Finns should not succumb to language shame, echoing the sentiment of senior lecturer Tergujeff (Kallionpää, 2023). Similar reasonings combined with an argument for comprehensibility were given by this respondent:

I'm proud of my Finnishness, I also feel that the Finnish accent is widely comprehensible internationally

However, most comments mentioning comprehensibility did so in relation to American English. This was explained with the popularity of the language and the cultural hegemony of U.S. media and entertainment globally. Overall, the desirability of different accents was explained with both personal preferences and perceived comprehensibility.

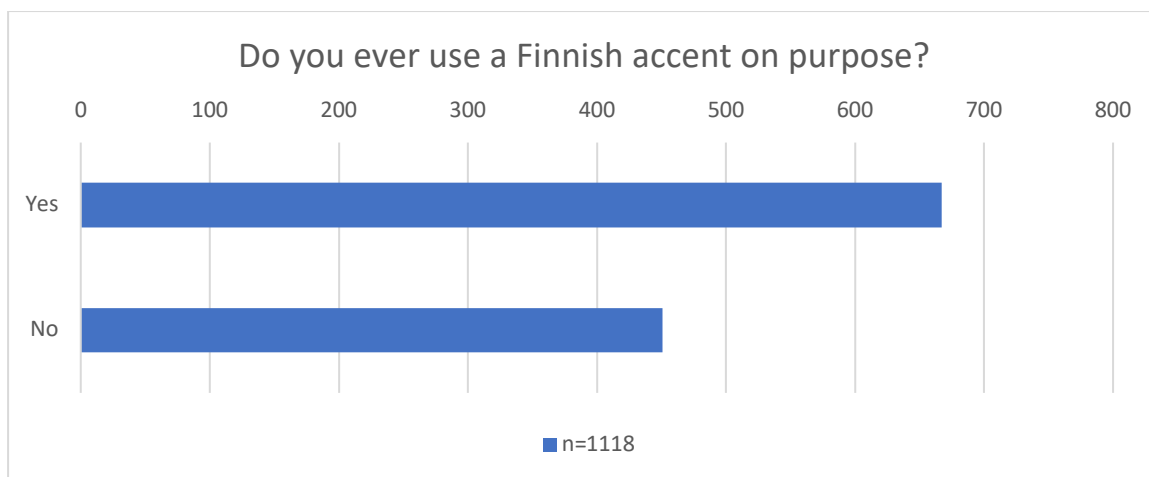


Figure 10: Question 19

Question 19 asked whether the participants ever use a Finnish accent on purpose. 65% of them (n=733) said yes while 35% (n=401) reported never doing it, as seen in Figure 10. Those that answered positively were then asked question 20: “In what kinds of situations do you remember using a Finnish accent on purpose?” 733 participants typed in their answer. This was not a multiple choice-question, but as it directly answers the second research question of this study, the author deemed it important enough to quantify the situations mentioned in the study. In accordance with the grounded theory method presented by Walker and Myrick (2006), each comment was coded and categorised into a group. Groups were not decided in advance but formed over the course of the analysis using constant comparison.

The first group that appeared was humour. This ended up as the overwhelmingly largest group with a total of 359 entries assigned to it. “Joke” or “joking” were mentioned 169 times, “humour” was mentioned 98 times, “funny” occurred 32 times, “irony” appeared 10 times, “amusement” 8 times, and the remaining 42 entries described the humorous aspect in other ways. For example, the answer that only contained the phrase “Up in the ass of Timo” was counted as a humour entry due to the quote’s frequent usage in internet memes. The word “*huvikseen*” was not counted as humour: it may be translated as “for fun”, but it is also used colloquially to mean “for no particular reason”.

The second category that emerged from the data was usage with Finns. In situations with other native Finnish speakers present, many felt it was more natural to use a Finnish accent, and affecting a native accent could be seen as pretentious or awkward. The Finnish accent could either be chosen when the audience included both Finns and non-Finns, or it could be limited to situations where English is spoken in the presence of just Finnish people.

When I speak with Finns (and only Finns). It feels like Finns can understand me better when I pronounce things the so-called Finnish way.

Communication with Finnish people was ultimately the second-largest category with 161 entries. It could happen, for example, in the context of study groups, reading out a text, or between Finnish colleagues when English is mandated by the workplace.

The next reason was labelled by the author as “reversion”. It did not relate to any particular context but became an umbrella term for all the situations where the ease of speaking in a Finnish accent was useful: when the speaker was tired, inebriated, in a hurry, did not know the “correct” pronunciation of the word, or did not feel like making an effort at that moment. A total of 88 entries were counted as including some form of this phenomenon.

When I’m tired and don’t have the energy, Rally English is more comprehensible than a badly pronounced foreign accent.

The entry above also mentions comprehensibility: many participants felt that the Finnish accent functions better as a lingua franca than an affected Inner Circle variety. Especially in communication with non-native English speakers, it was deemed useful. However, opposite opinions were also voiced: “I feel like foreigners don’t necessarily understand a strong Finnish accent”, stated one participant. As this question only asked what situations participants do use the accent in, it is understandable that this was the only comment questioning the comprehensibility of the accent. Some participants specified situations where it may be particularly useful for intelligibility:

If I want to be understood in a space with bad audibility. Usually, the strong consonants of the Finnish accent help when communicating in the noise

The comprehensibility of the Finnish accent has mainly been studied with Finnish listeners (e.g. Obeda, 2020) and listeners who were native English speakers (e.g. Tergujeff, 2021). The latter suggested that segmental inaccuracy, unusual rhythm, dysfluent pausing, and slow speech rate may be among the factors that made the speech of Finnish EFL speakers harder to understand and seem more accented. However, few if any studies have researched the usefulness of Finnish English as a lingua franca: perhaps in communication with other EFL or ESL speakers, comprehensibility may indeed be better as suggested by several participants in the present study.

Communicating with foreigners, for example in online gaming, was mentioned in the answers 82 times and comprehensibility was referred to in 81 responses. Close behind comes the next category: 76 participants mentioned imitation or demonstration. These were lumped into the same category, as they were often mentioned together and, in some cases, it was difficult to decide which purpose was the primary one in each comment. For example, the following answer clearly contains both:

When I've demonstrated for foreigners what a typical Finnish accent sounds like, when I want to imitate some Finnish person speaking English, or otherwise joking. Once I've also spoken English in a purposefully strong Finnish manner so I'd seem really touristy and avoid a fine on a train, when my ticket was actually for a wrong train.

The above quote also contains a rarer category: pretending to be less proficient in English than one truly is. This was mentioned 12 times in the data, mostly to avoid fines like described above or to get away from face-to-face fundraisers or awkward situations. While an uncommon usage of the accent, it clearly has its place in navigating social situations and demonstrates Finns' ability to modify their accents when need be.

Discussing with less competent English speakers was mentioned 39 times, often in conjunction with comprehensibility. It was deemed by some that Inner Circle accents are too complicated for those that do not speak English well, and thus switching to a Finnish accent might make the discussion easier.

When discussing with someone who speaks English extremely poorly, I probably sound particularly Finnish.

By some, this was associated with the shallow orthography of Finnish and some other languages, which was also why nine people mentioned using the Finnish accent when clarifying the spelling of a word to someone. Similarly, 53 people mentioned that when using an English word, such as a brand name, in the middle of a sentence in Finnish, they say it in a Finnish accent. It may be questioned whether pronouncing a single English word as if it was Finnish constitutes an example of Finnish accent, but for many, this was the only example of a deliberate use of the Finnish accent they could think of or wanted to mention, so it should not be dismissed entirely.

Another noticeable category was Finnishness: 39 participants made references to using a Finnish accent to stress their nationality. One participant, who lives in America, mentioned it as a sign of their identity and roots. Another combined it with a seemingly humorous sample:

When I want to highlight the Finnish identity, culture, and manners when discussing them. "Jees bat it is veri simppel for a Finnis person".

The comment contains an interesting contrast: seemingly serious topics are followed with a transcription of what is usually considered a comically exaggerated Finnish accent. This would seem to be an example of the flexibility of the Finnish accent: while it reflects Finnish people’s affection for their country and their native language, it can still be seen as funny at the same time. As demonstrated by the graph below, the reasons for accent modification and the contexts where it occurs vary, but humour is still the most popular reason.

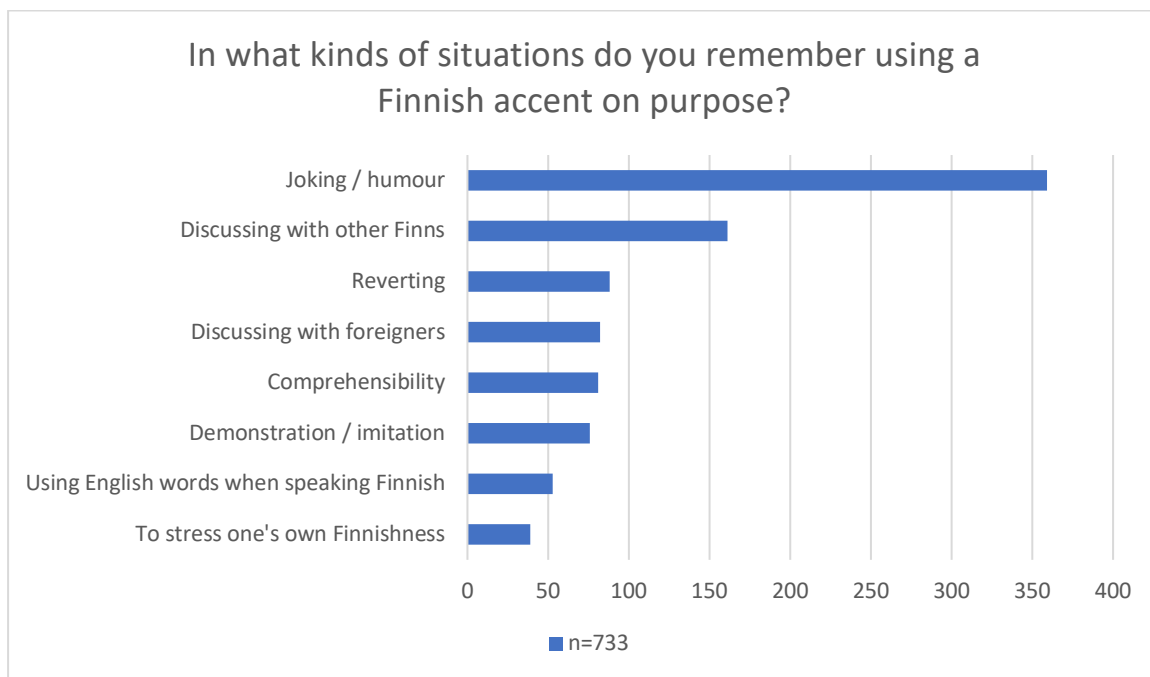


Figure 11: Question 20 (author’s interpretation of open-field answers)

Figure 11 shows the main categories that emerged from the data. Some less common reasons and contexts were not presented in this graph for the sake of legibility. These included fitting in (n=10), for example in a group where everybody else speaks in the accent; mentioning Finnish words when speaking English (n=5), including names, places, or the word “sauna”; and using the Finnish accent when playing characters (n=4), for example in role-playing games. While they represent only a small portion of the data, they are still valid reasons for using the accent and should not be overlooked.

Thus, the data from the question has been coded and categorised. The final part of grounded theory analysis, as described by Walker and Myrick (2006: 556), is the theorising. They suggest that the researcher should “select a core category and then relate all other categories to the core”. In this case, as demonstrated by the above figure, humour had such a large majority over the other groups that it had to be selected as the core category. Demonstration and imitation fill a somewhat similar niche: in these situations, the purpose of accented speech is not the communication of a message but the quality of the speech itself. On the other hand, in contexts where the Finnish accent is used for discussion with other Finns and/or to increase comprehensibility, the focus is on communication. In contrast with both of these phenomena, the third largest category – reversion – handles situations where it can be debated whether the accent is a choice at all: if the speaker is too tired to speak in an Inner Circle variety, reverting to a Finnish accent is hardly a purposeful decision. However, if a speaker does not know the Inner Circle pronunciation of a word and opts to say it as if it was a Finnish word, this can be seen as a conscious low-effort way of dealing with a challenging situation. As a stylistic device, the Finnish accent is usually chosen by the participants either because it is funny or because it is comprehensible.

The 21st and final question of the survey was: “For which of these reasons could you imagine momentarily using a Finnish accent?” While the previous question related to instances where the participants have actually used the accent, this question discusses hypothetical scenarios. As it was mandatory for all participants, all 1134 answered it, but everyone could select as many answers as they wished. A total of 2076 answers were submitted, so on average, every participant selected 1,8 reasons for potentially choosing a Finnish accent.

As with the situations described in the free-form questions, humour was the primary potential reason: 76% (n=863) deemed it possible that they might use a Finnish accent to sound funnier. Both discussing with other Finns (n=366) and highlighting one’s own Finnishness (n=364) were selected by 32% of the respondents. While the former was also popular in the open-form question, the latter was only mentioned in 5,3% of the typed-in answers, which would indicate that it is something that many participants have not done or do not remember doing but perhaps would be willing to do if a suitable situation should arise. The answers are shown in Figure 12.

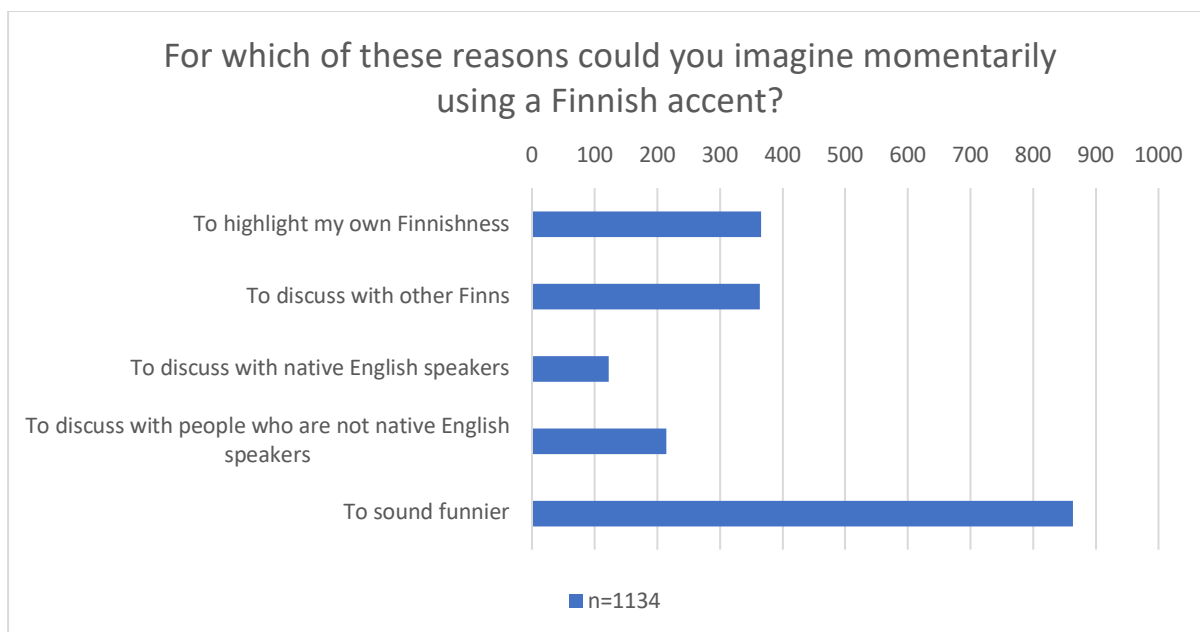


Figure 12: Question 21

Despite several of the open-form answers discussing the Finnish accent’s usefulness as a lingua franca, only 19% of the participants would be willing to speak it when discussing it with foreigners who are not native English speakers. The context in which the participants were the least willing to speak in a Finnish accent was a discussion with a native English speaker. Only 11% would use the accent in this situation.

As a sidenote, the data contained several references to motorsports. One participant described their accent in question 8:

I don’t make the effort for perfect pronunciation, but I also don’t speak Rally English. One could describe it as that everyone would recognise me as Finnish by my speech, but no one has mistaken me for Markus Grönholm

And one participant’s response to question 20 was enlightening enough to be included here in its entirety:

“Vell, huu dos not like tal-king ralli englis everi nov ant ten? It dos saund pretti funni, toes it not? Veri över te top, in ö self-derisive manner. Pliis pronounse bouth "derisive" and "manner" like ö Finn vud, ant not like ö inglish spiiker vud. Up in the ass of Timo.”

These two quotes mention the rally driver Markus Grönholm and his co-driver Timo Rautiainen, who famously spoke in a strong Finnish accent as they were interviewed in Turkey

2004 (Parviainen, 2023). In this context, the accent is assigned significant comedy value, as implied in the quote above. If this folk-linguistic transcription of Finnish English can be interpreted to follow the orthography rules of Finnish, it also demonstrates some of the inconsistencies of the accent: in the first occurrence of the word “English”, it has been written as “englis”, turning /ɪ/ into /e/ and /ʃ/ into /s/, but later it appears as “inglish”, keeping the pronunciation much closer to how it would be in Inner Circle varieties. Similarly, in the second phrase, the word “does” has been written as both “dos” and “toes”, with the latter demonstrating the Finnish accent’s tendency to turn voiced consonants into their voiceless counterparts.

In short, the data shows that many Finns use a variety of different accents in different situations and are aware of their accent modification. Many appreciate the comedic value of the Finnish accent, while for others, it is a tool for communicating with foreigners, improving comprehensibility, and displaying national pride.

4.2 Criticism

The number of participants that answered the survey was a complete surprise to the author, 1134 instead of the few dozen that was anticipated. While the large amount of data was useful for detecting overall trends in English usage, the survey had been prepared for a smaller sample size and designed to preserve participant anonymity as well as possible. Thus, no information about the respondents’ age, sex, occupation, or similar variables was collected. These data points would have been useful for detecting differences in EFL usage between different groups. Similarly, the answers from all participant recruitment sources were pooled into the same survey form to ensure that no participant could be recognised from the data based on how they accessed the form, but with such a large data, this likely would not have been possible anyway. Thus, the original emphasis on anonymity ultimately proved to be largely superfluous.

In the comment section of the Reddit post, one commenter pointed out that a person’s English proficiency can be on different levels of the CEFR scale in different language skills. When creating the survey, the author did not take this into account, and thus the question regarding proficiency represents each participant’s own overall estimate of their English proficiency. In future studies, it might be useful to split this into different questions or specify that in this context, it is the speaking proficiency in particular that is of interest to the researcher. In the open-field answers, at least one participant seemed frustrated that they had to write essentially

the same answer in every question. This was not noticed in the pilot stage, but a person who only ever uses a Finnish accent indeed was forced to write this several times. However, very few participants belonged to this demographic. Similarly, one participant reported their frustration that the questions seemed to criticise the use of a Finnish accent. Obviously, this was not the intention, which could have been mentioned somewhere on the survey form to alleviate this misunderstanding.

In the multiple-choice questions regarding accent choice, it would have been possible to include other Inner Circle varieties in addition to British and American English. For example, Leppänen et al. (2011: 71) included Irish, Australian, Canadian, and Indian in their study. However, from the participants' point of view, there can be seen value in keeping the options brief and easily navigable, and in this survey, it was possible to type in options that were not provided. Q21 was mandatory for all participants but did not include an option for those who would never use the Finnish accent in any context. This was a regrettable oversight on the author's part. One participant mentioned the role of accents in singing; however, as the research questions focus on speaking, other forms of language use were unfortunately outside the scope of this study, as interesting as they might be.

As discussed in the methodology section, it was not possible to verify if the statements that participants made about their accents were accurate. It was the intention of the author to collect speech data to support the survey answers, but ultimately the amount of data collected with the survey itself was large enough that occasional inaccuracies in the self-reporting should not pose significant problems. Statistical significances in the quantitative questions have not been calculated, as quantitative analysis was not a focus of the study but existed mainly to support and explain the narrative content analysis of the qualitative questions.

4.3 Discussion and potential implications

This study found numerous examples of accent modification among Finnish EFL speakers that have not been studied before. The majority of the participants stated that they switch between accents at least occasionally. Several answers were found to Bell's (2001: 139) core question: *why* did this speaker say it *this way* on *this occasion*. The reasons for accent modification varied widely, including alertness level, formality of the situation, and the wish to be perceived in a particular way. Humour was also an important reason to use a different accent than normally. This reflects the findings of Kytölä (2024), who has studied “deliberately bad” English,

including references to the aforementioned minister Ahti Karjalainen's strong "Tankero" accent, as a tool of humour and stylization, albeit in written English. Kytölä (2024: 191) suggests that a certain amount of common ground between the speaker and the audience is needed for this type of humour to work, and indeed according to the participants, these jokes were mainly made when in the company of other Finnish speakers. Bell's (2001: 143) statement that "style shift occurs primarily in response to a change in the speaker's audience" was found to apply in the present study. Accent variation as a stylistic choice, especially the use of Finnish English, occurred primarily in casual interactions with the speakers' close social circle, while the reported use of a different accent when using English with foreigners depended on the nationality and proficiency of the audience, with many using Finnish English as a *lingua franca*.

Both of Labov's (2001: 88) style-shifting categories were observed: shift in audience design and shift in the topic of the conversation. However, these were occasionally difficult to tell apart, as the topics of conversation were typically linked to the audiences, e.g. formal work matters were linked to colleagues or customers. For the purpose of this study, the three main categories that emerged in the grounded theory analysis – humour, comprehensibility, and reversion – seemed more relevant and distinct, as there was little overlap between these groups. The two former ones were roughly the same size, and it can be questioned whether the third one should be considered style-shifting at all, as it is primarily an involuntary process caused by decreased alertness.

The hypothesis about increased variation with higher levels of proficiency could not be proved. When inspecting the percentage of participants who reported engaging in accent modification, there was no difference between C2 and C1 proficiencies. While the percentage was smaller in the proficiencies below that, there were an inadequate number of participants from them to say with any degree of certainty that they switch between accents less than those with a higher proficiency. In addition, due to the number of participants rating their English proficiency as C2, the self-reported CEFR levels were deemed unreliable, making it impossible to truly compare accent modification rates between different proficiencies.

Of the 1134 participants, only 15% (n=173) stated that they never use a Finnish accent. A majority of even those with a very high proficiency in English switched to a Finnish accent in some situations, even if it was only for the sake of humour. In this study, it was not possible to chart differences in what is perceived as a "Finnish accent": a general definition of "speaking English using phonemes or features typical for the Finnish language, for example the Finnish

/r/-sound” was included on the survey form, but the extent to which this transfer is audible in speech may vary greatly from one person to another and, therefore, impact comprehensibility. Indeed, Obeda (2020: 36-37) found significant differences between the accentedness and comprehensibility of two Finnish EFL speakers as rated by other Finns. While one of the Finnish speakers was almost as easy to comprehend as American reference speakers, the other was significantly more difficult to comprehend and more on par with Russian speakers. On the other hand, Tergujeff’s (2021) findings suggest that the Finnish accent is less comprehensible to native English speakers than the accent of Finland-Swedish EFL speakers with a similar proficiency. A potentially interesting topic of future research might be how comprehensible different degrees of Finnish English are to listeners who are not native speakers of either language. This could shed light on the argument posed by many in the present study that Finnish English is a convenient *lingua franca*.

The statement that “the Finnish accent is natural, anything else would be pretending” is interesting, as it seems to present Finnish English as its own variety. This is not a view shared by many in the academia, as to be considered a variety, an accent typically needs to be codified and distinct, not simply a collection of transfer from the speakers’ L1 (Mollin, 2006: 37). Also, varieties are formed in native or bilingual interaction, and whether Finns who have learned English as a foreign language at school can be considered bilingual is a matter of discussion. However, judging by the large number of participants who selected Finnish English as their preferred accent, the same sentiment seems to be shared by many other participants as well. As Niedzielski and Preston (2000) write, folk-linguistic data should not be ignored, as it may provide interesting perspectives on language variation and change. If, in the coming years, an oral skills test is included in the matriculation examination or future studies discover that the sentiment of this participant begins to be shared by a significant portion of the Finnish population, it can be questioned whether “pretending” to speak in Inner Circle varieties needs to be the standard required for good grades. On the other hand, two thirds of the participants stated that they would prefer to speak British or American English, so it can be considered vital to support the educational goals of this demographic as well.

The several references to motorsports revealed some of the connotations that Finns themselves have about the Finnish accent. Taavitsainen and Pahta (2003: 10) discuss the Finnish rally drivers’ accent and the humorous parodies inspired by them, mentioning that the drivers demonstrate for Finnish audiences that English does not need to be spoken perfectly. In this sense, a more approving stance towards the accent could help alleviate the language shame

described by Tergujeff (Kallionpää, 2023). However, Taavitsainen and Pahta (2003: 10) also refer to the negative attitudes the accent has faced abroad. This may also need to be considered when designing future EFL tuition: while accented speech may be comprehensible, it may still subject the speaker to stereotyping, as was the concern of some participants in the present study.

The expressions of personal preferences and opinions in Q12 and Q13 are valuable data and understanding them may help in the development of EFL tuition. If many students have negative attitudes towards Inner Circle countries, for example due to stereotypes of Brits sounding too posh or Americans sounding unintelligent (e.g. Rindal, 2010: 251), it may be difficult to motivate the learners to follow the model input provided in class. Future studies could be conducted about the use of Expanding Circle varieties or perhaps Euro-English in the EFL classroom and its impact on the learners' motivation. In addition, the large number of participants who stated at least occasionally using the Finnish accent to increase comprehensibility when speaking English as a lingua franca should not be ignored. The implications of this study may help teachers and other language professionals in Finland to be more tolerant of accent variation.

5. Conclusion

The study was conducted to answer two research questions. The first one was: do native Finnish speakers intentionally use a specific accent when speaking English? The short answer is: some do, many do not. While some participants have chosen a specific accent due to personal preference, it was more common to speak the accent they had become accustomed to or the one that feels most natural to them. The second question was: for what reasons do native Finnish speakers use a Finnish accent? The short answer is: for a variety of reasons. Those that primarily use a Finnish accent do so because it comes naturally to them, and those that sometimes switch to it do so mainly for humour or comprehensibility.

The reasons for speaking in a particular accent differed greatly between each speaker's main accent and the ones they used occasionally. The main accent was typically a combination of features acquired in EFL tuition and from spare time exposure to the language, such as entertainment or interactions with native speakers. It was also fairly common to have selected an accent due to personal preference, for example one that is deemed the most "correct" or "sounds beautiful". A majority of participants also stated occasionally using some other accent in addition to their main one, either deliberately in situations where they deemed it more

appropriate or comprehensible, or involuntarily when adapting to the accent of the audience. Purposeful use of a Finnish accent was reported primarily in three contexts: as a device of humour when joking with friends or online, as a comprehensible tool when communicating with Finns or foreigners, and as a low-effort way of speaking when other varieties feel too cumbersome. In any case, the claim made by one participant stating that “no one decides the accent that they speak in” seems to be an inaccurate generalisation, as both conscious and unconscious accent modification were reported by the participants.

The stark contrast between the answers that stressed the comedic value of the Finnish accent and those that describe it as a tool for communicating with foreigners, improving comprehensibility, and displaying national pride, is telling. It seems that for many of the participants, the accent is more than a result of simple transfer from Finnish: it forms a legitimate variety of English. This view and its potential implications as an enhancer of motivation for EFL learners should be investigated in future studies.

6. Bibliography

- Adebola, T. (2015). *Steenkolen Engels*. Unravel. Retrieved 04.06.2024, from <https://unravellingmag.com/articles/steenkolen-engels/>
- Agha, A. (2003). The social life of cultural value. *Language & communication*, 23(3), 231–273. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0271-5309\(03\)00012-0](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0271-5309(03)00012-0)
- Agha, A. (2005). Voice, footing, enregisterment. *Journal of Linguistic Anthropology*, 15(1), 38-59. <https://doi.org/10.1525/jlin.2005.15.1.38>
- Baratta, A. (2016). Keeping it real or selling out: The effects of accent modification on personal identity. *Pragmatics and Society*, 7(2), 291-319. <https://doi.org/10.1075/ps.7.2.06bar>
- Bell, A. (2001). Back in style: Reworking audience design. In Eckert, P. & Rickford, J.R. (Eds.), *Style and Sociolinguistic Variation* (pp. 139-169). Cambridge University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511613258.010>
- Bobbitt, Z. (2021). *What is a Voluntary Response Sample?* Retrieved 29.05.2024, from <https://www.statology.org/voluntary-response-sample/>
- Campbell, L. (2015). *Entertaining linguists can be dangerous: language trivia*. University of Hawai‘i Mānoa.
- Cord, D. J. (2016). *(Don't) Stop the Press!* Finland Promotion Board. Retrieved 05.06.2024, from <https://finland.fi/life-society/dont-stop-the-press/>
- Crystal, D. (2003). *English as a global language*. Cambridge university press.
- Drisko, J. W. & Maschi, T. (2016). *Content analysis*. Oxford University Press.
- EF (2022). *EF EPI: EF English Proficiency Index. A Ranking of 111 Countries and Regions by English Skills*. Education First. <https://www.ef.com/assetscdn/WIBIwq6RdJvcD9bc8RMd/cefcom-epi-site/reports/2022/ef-epi-2022-english.pdf>
- EF (2023). *EF EPI: EF English Proficiency Index. A Ranking of 113 Countries and Regions by English Skills*. Education First. <https://www.ef.com/assetscdn/WIBIwq6RdJvcD9bc8RMd/cefcom-epi-site/reports/2023/ef-epi-2023-english.pdf>
- Eldh, A. C., Årestedt, L., & Berterö, C. (2020). Quotations in Qualitative Studies: Reflections on Constituents, Custom, and Purpose. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 19. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1609406920969268>
- Galmiche, D. (2017). Shame and SLA. *Apples - Journal of Applied Language Studies*, 11(2), 25-53. <https://doi.org/10.17011/apples/urn.201708233538>
- Gerritsen, M., Van Meurs, F., Planken, B., & Korzilius, H. (2016). A reconsideration of the status of English in the Netherlands within the Kachruvian Three Circles model. *World Englishes*, 2016 0883–2919. <https://doi.org/10.1111/weng.12206>

- Halliday, M. A. K. (1978). *Language as social semiotic: The social interpretation of language and meaning*. Arnold.
- Henderson, A., Frost, D., Tergujeff, E., Kautzsch, A., Murphy, D., Kirkova-Naskova, A., Waniek-Klimczak, E., Levey, D., Cunningham, U., & Curnick, L. (2012). The English Pronunciation Teaching in Europe Survey: Selected Results. *Research in Language*, 10(1), 5–27. <https://doi.org/10.2478/v10015-011-0047-4>
- Horslund, C. S. & Van Nostrand, P. F. (2022). Segmental error patterns in Finnish-accented English. *European journal of applied linguistics*, 10(1), 109-141. <https://doi.org/10.1515/eujal-2020-0019>
- Irvine, J. (2001). “Style” as distinctiveness: the culture and ideology of linguistic differentiation. In Eckert, P. & Rickford, J.R. (Eds.), *Style and Sociolinguistic Variation* (pp. 21-43). Cambridge University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511613258.002>
- Jackson, H. (2007). *Key terms in linguistics*. A&C Black.
- Kachru, B. (1985). Standards, codification and sociolinguistic realism. In Quirk, R. & Widdowson, H.G. (Eds.), *English in the world: Teaching and learning the language and literatures* (p.11-36). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Kallionpää, K. (2023). Kansallinen kielihäpeä. *Helsingin Sanomat*. Retrieved 04.06.2024, from <https://www.hs.fi/hyvinvointi/art-2000009570868.html>
- Kansalaisopistot.fi (n.d.). *Kansalaisopistot pähkinänkuoressa*. Retrieved 07.06.2024, from <https://kansalaisopistot.fi/kansalaisopistot-pahkinankuoressa/>
- Kopperoinen, A. (2011). Accents of English as a lingua franca: a study of Finnish textbooks. *International Journal of Applied Linguistics*, 21(1), 71-93. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1473-4192.2010.00263.x>
- Kovanen, M. (2023). *Transfer in Finnish EFL learners' pronunciation of alveolar and post-alveolar fricatives and affricates*. BA thesis, University of Jyväskylä. <https://jyx.jyu.fi/handle/123456789/90000>
- Kytölä, S. (2024). Metapragmatics of “bad” English in Finnish social media. In Peterson, E. & Fägersten, K.B. (Eds.), *English in the Nordic Countries* (pp.185-203). Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003272687-12>
- Kytölä, S., & Westinen, E. (2015). “I be da reel gansta”—A Finnish footballer’s Twitter writing and metapragmatic evaluations of authenticity. *Discourse, Context and Media*, 8, 6-19. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.dcm.2015.05.001>
- Labov, W. (2001). The anatomy of style-shifting. In Eckert, P., & Rickford, J. R. (Eds.), *Style and Sociolinguistic Variation* (pp. 85-108). Cambridge University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511613258>
- Leppänen, M. (2015). *Finnish upper secondary school students and varieties of English : identification and evaluation*. BA thesis, University of Jyväskylä. <https://jyx.jyu.fi/handle/123456789/45189>

- Leppänen, S., Pitkänen-Huhta, A., Nikula, T., Kytölä, S., Törmäkangas, T., Kari Nissinen, K., Kääntä, L., Virkkula, T., Laitinen, M., Pahta, P., Koskela, H., Lähdesmäki, S., & Jousmäki, H. (2009). Kansallinen kyselytutkimus englannin kielestä Suomessa: Käyttö, merkitys ja asenteet. *Jyväskylä Studies in Humanities* 132. <https://jyx.jyu.fi/handle/123456789/22892>
- Leppänen, S., Pitkänen-Huhta, A., Nikula, T., Kytölä, S., Törmäkangas, T., Kari Nissinen, K., Kääntä, L., Räisänen, T., Laitinen, M., Pahta, P., Koskela, H., Lähdesmäki, S., & Jousmäki, H. (2011). *National Survey on the English Language in Finland: Uses, meanings and attitudes*. *Studies in Variation, Contacts and Change in English* 5. <https://varieng.helsinki.fi/series/volumes/05/index.html>
- Lindsey, G. (2019). *English after RP: Standard British pronunciation today*. Springer.
- Mäkinen, L. (2021). *The role of pronunciation in Finnish EFL textbooks and EFL teaching*. MA thesis, University of Jyväskylä. <https://jyx.jyu.fi/handle/123456789/77007>
- Mård-Miettinen, K., Huhta, A., Reini, A., & Stylman, A. (2021). *A1-englanti suomenkielisen perusopetuksen vuosiluokilla 1–6*. Opetushallitus. https://www.oph.fi/sites/default/files/documents/A1-englanti_suomenkielisen_perusopetuksen_vuosiluokilla_1%E2%80%936_1.pdf
- McArthur, T. & McArthur, R. (1998). *Concise Oxford companion to the English language*. Oxford University Press.
- McGrath, C., Palmgren, P. J., & Liljedahl, M. (2018). Twelve tips for conducting qualitative research interviews. *Medical teacher*, 41(9), 1002-1006. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0142159X.2018.1497149>
- Miller, P., Kargin, T., & Guldenoglu, B. (2014). Differences in the reading of shallow and deep orthography: Developmental evidence from Hebrew and Turkish readers. *Journal of research in Reading*, 37(4), 409-432.
- Mollin, S. (2006). *Euro-English: assessing variety status* (Vol. 33). Gunter Narr Verlag.
- Moyer, A. (2013). The scope and relevance of accent. In *Foreign Accent: The Phenomenon of Non-native Speech* (pp. 9-20). Cambridge University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511794407.002>
- Nation, P. (2000). Learning vocabulary in lexical sets: dangers and guidelines. *TESOL Journal*, 9: 6-10. <https://doi.org/10.1002/j.1949-3533.2000.tb00239.x>
- Niedzielski, N. A. & Preston, D. R. (2000). *Folk Linguistics*. De Gruyter.
- North, B. (2014). *The CEFR in practice* (Vol. 4). Cambridge University Press.
- Obeda, L. (2020). *Finnish listeners' perceptions of other non-native English speakers' accents*. MA thesis, University of Jyväskylä. <https://jyx.jyu.fi/handle/123456789/73012>

- OPH (2022). *Perusopetuksen kielivalinnat*. Opetushallinnon tilastopalvelu. Retrieved 13.10.2023, from https://vipunen.fi/fi-fi/_layouts/15/xlviewer.aspx?id=/fi-fi/Raportit/Perusopetus%20-%20ainevalinnat%20-%20kielet.xlsb
- Paakki, H. (2020). Normativity in English oral production in Finland and Japan. *Apples: Journal of Applied Language Studies*, 14(2). <https://doi.org/10.47862/apples.99132>
- Pahta, P. (2008). The History of English Studies in Finland (pre-print). In Haas, R. & Engler, B. (Eds.), *European English Studies: Contributions towards the History of a Discipline II* (pp. 15-41). The European Society for the Study of English.
- Parviainen, V. (2023). ”Penetraatiota ei tapahtunut” – Timo Rautiainen kertoo, mitä kävi. *Iltalehti*. Retrieved 13.04.2024, from <https://www.iltalehti.fi/ralli/a/df76c52b-54ab-4323-9001-ef1d1d564f77>
- Peterson, E. (2022). The English Language in Finland: Tool of Modernity or Tool of Coloniality? In Hoegaerts, J., Liimatainen, T., Hekanaho, L., & Peterson, E. (Eds.), *Finnishness, Whiteness and Coloniality* (pp. 267–289). Helsinki: Helsinki University Press. <https://doi.org/10.33134/HUP-17-11>
- Rindal, U. (2010). Constructing identity with L2: Pronunciation and attitudes among Norwegian learners of English1. *Journal of Sociolinguistics*, 14: 240-261. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9841.2010.00442.x>
- Sensenig, K. (2016). Welcome to the 'Hydraulic Press' YouTube channel, a truly crushing experience: On his "Hydraulic Press Channel" on YouTube, Lauri Vuohensilta crushes objects to smithereens, among them a bowling pin, a hockey puck and a cable box. Thousands watch. *Washington Post – Blogs*. Retrieved 27.03.2023, from <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/morning-mix/wp/2016/04/19/the-man-who-loves-to-crush-things-and-his-growing-audience-of-people-who-love-to-watch/>
- Sharifian, F. (2009). *English as an international language: Perspectives and pedagogical issues*. Bristol: Multilingual Matters.
- Soodla, P., Torppa, M., Kikas, E., Lerkkanen, M.-K., & Nurmi, J.-E. (2019). Reading comprehension from grade 1 to 6 in two shallow orthographies : comparison of Estonian and Finnish students. *Compare: A Journal of Comparative and International Education*, 49(5), 681-699. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03057925.2018.1445963>
- Suutari, S. (2023). *Finnish 9th graders' views on English pronunciation and Rally English*. MA thesis, University of Jyväskylä. <https://jyx.jyu.fi/handle/123456789/86134>
- Statistics Finland (2023). *Employment weakened and unemployment grew in November 2023 compared to one year ago*. <https://stat.fi/en/publication/cl89xplrstmes0avyn7w0nmwz>
- Statistics Finland (2024). *Population growth biggest in nearly 70 years*. Retrieved 04.06.2024, from <https://stat.fi/en/publication/cln1i2dtgwknt0cut9yem67se>
- Sterrett, R. (2014). *Incorporating African-American Vernacular English into EFL Classrooms*. Monterey Institute of International Studies.

- Sveriges Radio (2023). *Ismo Leikola – suomiaksentilla maailmankartalle*. Retrieved 04.06.2024, from <https://sverigesradio.se/avsnitt/ismo-leikola-suomiaksentilla-maailmankartalle>
- Taavitsainen, I. & Pahta, P. (2003). English in Finland: Globalisation, language awareness and questions of identity. *English Today*, 19(4), 3-15. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0266078403004024>
- Tergujeff, E. (2012). The English Pronunciation Teaching in Europe Survey: Finland. *Apples – Journal of Applied Language Studies* Vol. 6, 1, p. 29-45. <https://jyx.jyu.fi/handle/123456789/40607>
- Tergujeff, E. (2013). Learner perspective on English pronunciation teaching in an EFL Context. *Research in language*, 11(1), 81-95. <https://doi.org/10.2478/v10015-012-0010-z>
- Tergujeff, E. (2021). Second language comprehensibility and accentedness across oral proficiency levels : A comparison of two L1s. *System*, 100, Article 102567. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.system.2021.102567>
- Tévar, J. M. (2014). ‘A Native Accent Is Always Attractive’: Perception of British English Varieties by EFL Spanish Students. *Lenguas Modernas*, 43, 45-77.
- Toivonen, L. (2019) *Domestic and foreign attitudes towards Finnish English accents*. MA thesis, University of Tampere. <https://urn.fi/URN:NBN:fi:tuni-201905171746>
- Valpa, A. (2020). Kachru Model “The Three Circles of English”. *Medium*.
- Walker, D. & Myrick, F. (2006). Grounded theory: An exploration of process and procedure. *Qualitative health research*, 16(4), 547-559. doi.org/10.1177/1049732305285972
- Yle (2022). *Researcher: Finns should be proud of speaking 'Rally English'*. Retrieved 04.06.2024, from <https://yle.fi/a/3-12665728>
- YTL (n.d.). *Tilastot*. Retrieved 13.10.2023, from <https://www.ylioppilastutkinto.fi/fi/tietopalvelut/tilastot>

Appendix 1: Original versions of the survey questions

The questions on the original survey form were in Finnish and have been translated by the author to English in this thesis. As is always the case, especially when translating from a non-Indo-European language to English, it is possible that some emphasis is lost in translation. In this attachment, the questions and options are preserved in their original form, so that future researchers can verify the original message intended by the author and the participants.

Accent variation of Finnish EFL speakers

Pakolliset kysymykset merkitty tähdellä (*)

Tämä kysely on laadittu Pro Gradu -tutkielmaani varten. Kyselyn tarkoitus on selvittää, millaiset tekijät vaikuttavat suomea äidinkielenään puhuvien henkilöiden aksenttivalintoihin. Tutkimukseen osallistuminen edellyttää 18 vuoden ikää. Kyselyyn vastaaminen kestää noin 10 minuuttia.

[Tiedote tutkimuksesta](#) (tiedote sisältää tärkeää informaatiota tutkittavalle)

[Tietosuojailmoitus](#) (ilmoitus sisältää tärkeää informaatiota kyselyvastausten käsittelyä koskien)

1. Kauanko olet opiskellut englantia?

Tässä kohdassa opiskeluksi lasketaan peruskoulun ja toinen asteen englanninopinnot. Korkeakouluopinnoista seuraa kysymys myöhemmin.

- n. 12 vuotta tai enemmän (esim. 1. luokalta lukion loppuun)
- n. 10 vuotta (esim. 3. luokalta lukion loppuun)
- n. 7 vuotta (esim. 3. luokalta 9. luokalle)
- n. 6 vuotta tai vähemmän
- En lainkaan
- Muu vastaus: _____

2. Millaisena pidät omaa englannin kielen osaamistasi?

Vastausvaihtoehdot on järjestetty CEFR-asteikon mukaan. CEFR-asteikossa (Common European Framework of Reference) arvolla C2 kuvataan itsenäistä kielenkäyttäjää, joka ymmärtää monimutkaisiakin tekstejä ja pystyy lukemaan rivien välistä, ilmaisemaan itseään vaivattomasti sekä keskustelemaan sujuvasti muodollisissa ja epämuodollisissa tilanteissa.

Mikäli CEFR-asteikko ei ole sinulle tuttu, voit vastata suluissa annetun summittaisen sanallistuksen mukaisesti.

- C2 (Erinomainen)
- C1 (Kiitettävä)
- B2 (Hyvä)
-

- B1 (Tyydyttävä)
- A2 (Välttävä)
- A1 (Alkeet)

3. Oletko asunut ulkomailla?

- Kyllä, yli vuoden
- Kyllä, alle vuoden
- En

4. Vaikuttiko ulkomailla viettämäsi aika käyttämäsi aksenttiin?

Aksentilla eli korostuksella viitataan tässä tutkimuksessa nimenomaan alueellisiin eroihin englannin kielen ääntämyksessä. Jos ryhdyit ulkomailla asuessasi ääntämään joitakin sanoja eri tavalla tai käyttämään erilaista intonaatiota tai äänenpainoja, vastaa "Kyllä". Uusien sanojen tai kieliopin oppimista ei tässä lasketa aksentiksi.

- Kyllä
- Ei

5. Miten ulkomailla viettämäsi aika ilmenee puhumastasi englannista nykyään?

Voit vapaasti kertoa pienistäkin asioista, mitkä tulevat mieleesi: nekin ovat tärkeitä tutkimuksen kannalta.

6. Oletko tällä hetkellä työelämässä?

- Kyllä
- En

7. Käytätkö työssäsi englantia?

- Käytän pelkästään englantia
- Käytän paljon englantia
- Käytän jonkin verran englantia
- En käytä lainkaan englantia

8. Miten töissä käyttämäsi englanti eroaa vapaa-ajalla puhumastasi englannista?

9. Onko sinulla muita henkilökohtaisia yhteyksiä englannin kieleen?

Valitse kaikki vaihtoehdot, jotka pitävät paikkansa nyt tai ovat aiemmin pitäneet paikkansa.

- Minulla on kumppani, puoliso tai perheenjäsen, jonka kanssa käytän englantia
- Minulla on läheisiä ystäviä tai sukulaisia, joiden kanssa käytän englantia
- Minulla on harrastus, jossa käytän englantia
- Olen opiskellut englantia pää- tai sivuaineena yliopistossa
- Olen opiskellut muussa englanninkielisessä koulussa tai korkeakoulun tutkinto-ohjelmassa.
- Ei

10. Ovatko nämä henkilökohtaiset yhteytesi vaikuttaneet käyttämäsi aksenttiin?

- Kyllä
- Ei

11. Miten nämä henkilökohtaiset yhteytesi ilmenevät puhumastasi englannista nykyään?

Voit vapaasti kertoa pienistäkin asioista, mitkä tulevat mieleesi: nekin ovat tärkeitä tutkimuksen kannalta.

12. Mitä aksenttia koet käyttäväsi eniten, kun puhut englantia?

- Brittienglanti (esim. RP tai SSB)
- Amerikanenglanti (esim. GenAm)
- Suomalainen aksentti
- Joku muu, mikä?
- En osaa sanoa

13. Miksi puhut juuri tällä aksentilla?

14. Vaihteletko koskaan aksenttien välillä?

- Kyllä
- En

15. Mitä muita aksentteja käytät, kun puhut englantia?

	En koskaan	Harvoin	Toisinaan	Usein	Hyvin usein
Brittienglanti (esim. RP tai SSB)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Amerikanenglanti (esim. GenAm)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Suomalainen aksentti	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Joku muu, mikä?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

16. Millaisissa tilanteissa vaihdat käyttämäsi aksenttia?

Voit vapaasti kertoa pienistäkin asioista, mitkä tulevat mieleesi: nekin ovat tärkeitä tutkimuksen kannalta.

17. Millä aksentilla haluaisit mieluiten puhua?

- Brittienglanti (esim. RP tai SSB)
- Amerikanenglanti (esim. GenAm)
- Suomalainen aksentti
- Joku muu, mikä?
- En osaa sanoa

18. Miksi haluaisit puhua juuri tällä aksentilla?

19. Käytätkö koskaan tarkoituksella suomalaista aksenttia? *

Suomalaisella aksentilla tarkoitetaan tässä englannin puhumista käyttäen suomen kielelle ominaisia äänneitä tai piirteitä, esimerkiksi suomalaista /r/-äännettä.

- Kyllä
- En koskaan

20. Millaisissa tilanteissa muistat käyttäneesi tarkoituksella suomalaista aksenttia? *

Tuleeko mieleesi mitään tilannetta, jossa olisit puhunut englantia tahallasi korostetun suomalaisittain?

21. Mistä näistä syistä voisit kuvitella hetkellisesti käyttäväsi suomalaista aksenttia? *

- Korostaakseni omaa suomalaisuuttani
- Keskustellakseni muiden suomalaisten kanssa
- Keskustellakseni ihmisten kanssa, jotka puhuvat englantia äidinkielenään
- Keskustellakseni ihmisten kanssa, jotka eivät puhu suomea tai englantia äidinkielenään
- Kuulostaakseni hauskemmalta
- Jostakin muusta syystä:
-

Appendix 2: Original versions of the quotes

The responses to open-ended questions included in this thesis have been originally written by participants in Finnish and translated by the author to English for the purpose of this thesis. As is always the case, especially when translating from a non-Indo-European language to English, it is possible that some emphasis is lost in translation. In this attachment, the responses are preserved in their original form, so that future researchers can verify the original message intended by the participants. Exceptions are made in quotes which reveal personal information; there, parts may have been redacted.

Q5: Miten ulkomailla viettämäsi aika ilmenee puhumastasi englannista nykyään?

Sen jälkeen aksenttini oli hieman vähemmän rallienglantia kuin ennen, sillä käyttämisen ja harjoittelun myötä "uskalsin" puhua rohkeammin.

Aloin käyttämään enemmän brittipuhetta brittien kanssa jutellessa ja amerikkalaista tai jopa australialaista aksenttia heidän kanssa puhuessaan. Eli ns. mukauduin puhujan aksenttiin. Brittien kanssa paljon toimiessani aloin loppuviikosta kuuntelemaan itseäni ja ihmettelemään omaa kieltäni...

Q8: Miten töissä käyttämäsi englantia eroaa vapaa-ajalla puhumastasi englannista?

se on raaempaa, käytän rallienglantia ajaakseni asioita siten että intialaiset ja britit ymmärtävät mitä lausun. Amörikan aksentin sekoittaminen kaikkeen, ilman että on amerikkalainen kuulostaa omaan korvaan lapselliselta.

Töissä jos puhun ulkomaalaiselle, puhun täydellistä englantia suurimmilta osin brittien sanavarastoa (ja lausumista) käyttäen. Vapaa-ajalla saatan suomalaisille kavereille ja läheisille ilmaista jotkin asiat tahallisella ralli enkulla.

Q11: Miten nämä henkilökohtaiset yhteytesi ilmenevät puhumastasi englannista nykyään?

Koitan välttää Amerikan murretta.

Pelikaverit tietyltä alueelta

Huomaan usein jossain määrin kopioivani aksenttini keskustelukumppanini aksentista. Eli jos keskustelen ystäväni kanssa, joka käyttää enemmän brittienglannin kaltaista aksenttia, omakin aksenttini alkaa pikkuhiljaa muistuttaa brittiaksenttia. Olen opiskellut IB diploma programme -

tutkinnon, jota kautta kohtasin monenlaisia englannin puhujia ympäri maailmaa. Koulussa käytettiin pääkielenä englantia. Oma englantini muodostui osittain tämän ympäristön avulla eräänlaiseksi hybridiksi, jossa pyrin selkeään (ja kansainvälisesti ymmärrettävään) lausuntaan enkä niinkään tiettyyn aksenttiin. Sekä IB että nykyisten yliopisto-opintojeni kautta olen oppinut myös tietoisesti vaihtelevaan aksenttiani tilanteesta riippuen. Jos olen hyvin epävirallisessa tilanteessa, puhun usein enemmän eteläisellä jenkkityyllisellä aksentilla, jossa hyödynnän internetslangia ja murre sanoja kuten "y'all". Toisaalta virallisemmissä (tai vieraiden ihmisten kanssa olevissa) tilanteissa pyrin mukailemaan RP (received pronunciation) tyyliä. Luontaisesti aksenttini on (saamani palautteen mukaan) mid-Atlantic tyyliä noudattelevaa.

Ennen n.11-14 vuotiaana puhuin englantia paljon netissä vahvalla brittiaksentilla. nykyään puhun ystäväieni kanssa huviksi englantia mutta enemmän suomalaisella aksentilla, enkä tarkoita siis mitään rallienglantia.

Käytän ns rallienglantia suomalaisten ystäväieni kanssa, sillä silloin ymmärrämme toisiamme parhaiten ja ikään kuin nauramme huonolle lausumisellemme yhdessä. Kun emme yritä kuulostaa natiivipuhujilta, myös englannin kielen käyttö helpottuu, eikä paineita onnistumiseen ole. [--] Harrastuksista esim videopeleissä käytän kenties kaikkein korrekteinta englantia ja yritän ylläpitää kielitaitoani aktiivisesti.

[--] Olen omaksunut saksankielisiä ilmaisuja englanniksi käännettynä. Joudun tietoisesti muistuttamaan itseäni englannin kielen kieliopista, kun puhun englantia pääsääntöisesti muiden ei-natiivien kanssa. Yritän välttää kierrettä, jossa vahvistamme kieliopillisesti väärää englantia muiden puhujien kanssa. Kiinnitän enemmän huomiota oikeaoppiseen lausumiseen ja kielen melodiaan, jotta se olisi ymmärrettävää mahdollisimman monelle, eikä vain suomalaista aksenttia ymmärtäville.

Inhoan rallienglantia, joten olen omassa ääntämisessäni panostanut enemmänkin yleisamerikkalaiseen aksenttiin ja lausumiseen. Seuraan paljon amerikkalaisia sisällöntuottajia ja välillä juttelenkin heille. Välillä kuulen kysymyksiä kuten "mistä päin Amerikkaa olet?" ja he hämmästyvät kuullessaan olevani suomalainen. Jotkut sanat vielä tuottavat lausumiseen ongelmia, esim. psychology sanan hiljainen "p"

Q12: Mitä aksenttia koet käyttäväsi eniten, kun puhut englantia?

sekoitus BrE ja AmE

Jotain näiden väliltä

Sekoitus rallienglantia ja Schwarzeneggeriä

"Euro"aksentti

Q13: Miksi puhut juuri tällä aksentilla?

No siis en nyt mitään rallienglantia mutta brittienkku on liian -posh- ja American enkku on tosi stereotypistä Euroopassa ainakin.

Amerikka on paljon parempi paikka kun Joku UK jossa ei ole mitään ihmeellistä

Koulussa opetettiin ensisijaisesti brittiaksenttia. Se kuulostaa minusta mielekkäämmältä. Asuin Briteissä monta vuotta, joten pyrin siellä parhaani mukaan käyttämään paikallista ääntämystä. En halua että kukaan luulee minua amerikkalaiseksi.

Kukaan ei päättä mitä aksenttia puhuu, ellei ole näyttelijä etc.

Q15: Mitä muita aksentteja käytät, kun puhut englantia?

En TIETOISESTI käytä muuta aksenttia, koska en oikein usko että se on mahdollista.

Q16: Millaisissa tilanteissa vaihdat käyttämäsi aksenttia?

En vaihda tietoisesti. Amerikan aksentti tulee "selkärangasta", mutta jotkut sanat ja ilmaisut luontuvat paremmin Englannin aksentilla. Enimmäkseen taitaa mennä suomalaisella rallienglannilla.

Muutan aksenttiani keskustelukumppanin mukaan. Jos keskustelen amerikkalaisen ystäväni kanssa on aksenttini paljon amerikkalaisempi.

En jaksa väsyneenä kiinnittää huomiota aksenttiin, jolloin huomaan valuvani vähän sellaiseen rallienglantiin. Työssäni yritän harjoittaa brittienglannin tyylistä aksenttia koska koen sen viralliseksi ja neutraaliksi, sekä jossain määrin jopa kauniimmaksi kuin jenkienglannin.

Jos en ole ikinä käyttänyt sanaa ennen, vain esim. luenut tekstissä, saatan lausua sen väärin suomalaisittain. Osan sanoista jotka olen kuullut amerikkaiselta puhujalta, lausun itse amerikkalaisesti, ja vastaavasti brittien kanssa.

Q18: Miksi haluaisit puhua juuri tällä aksentilla?

En puhu RP:tä enkä SSB:tä - enkä haluaisikaan. Posh southern bastards. Paikallisille kuulostan enemmänkin epämääräiseltä pohjois-englantilaiselta, mutta ennen osasin myös puhua mukiinmenevää East Central Scotsia. Työssä puhun enemmän etelä-englantilaisittain, koska se koetaan ns. oikeammaksi/paremmaksi/selkeämmäksi

Minusta on aika surullista miten suomalaiset varsinkin eivät arvosta omia aksenttejaan englannin puhuessa. Toki voin ymmärtää natiivilta kullostamisen halun, mutta se miten ihmiset vähättelevät tätä omaa aksenttiaan laajasti saa minut henkilökohtaisesti haluamaan käyttää sitä enemmän.

Olen ylpeä suomalaisuudestani, koen myös, että suomalainen aksentti on laajalti helposti ymmärrettävää kansainvälisesti

Suomalaisten on ylipäättään hyvä lopettaa esim rallienglannin häpeäminen ja ennemmin olla siitä identiteettinsä kannalta ylpeitä

Q20: Millaisissa tilanteissa muistat käyttäneesi tarkoituksella suomalaista aksenttia?

Kun puhun suomalaisten (ja vain suomalaisten) kanssa. Tuntuu, että suomalaiset saa paremmin selvää kun lausun asiani ns suomalaisittain.

Kun väsyttää eikä jaksa niin rallienglanti on ymmärrettävämpää kuin huonosti äännetty ulkomaanaksentti.

Yleensä vitsillä humoristisista tilanteista kavereiden kesken jotka ymmärtää mitä sanon, koen ettei ulkomaalaiset välttämättä ymmärrä vahvaa suomiaksenttia

Jos haluan tulla ymmärretyksi tilassa missä kuuluvuus on huono. Yleensä suomalaisen aksentin vahvat konsonantit auttavat melussa kommunikointia

Kun olen esittänyt ulkomaalaisille miltä tyypillinen suomalainen aksentti kuulostaa, kun haluan imitoida jotain suomalaista puhumassa englantia tai muuten vitsaillessa. Olen joskus myös puhunut englantia tahallisen korostetusti suomalaisittain jotta vaikuttaisin todella turistilta ja välttyisin sakoilta junassa, kun matkalippuni olikin väärään junaan.

Amerikassa asuessani se on osoitus identiteetistäni ja juuristani. Joskus tulee myös puheeksi millä tavalla ihmiset puhuvat eri maissa ja demonstroin suomalaista puhetta

Kun haluan korostaa suomalaista identiteettiä, kulttuuria ja käytöstapoja niistä keskustellessa. "Jees bat it is veri simpel for a Finnis person".

Vell, huu dos not like tal-king ralli englis everi nov ant ten? It dos saund pretti funni, toes it not? Veri över te top, in ö self-derisive manner. Pliis pronounse bouth "derisive" and "manner" like ö Finn vud, ant not like ö inglish spiiker vud. Up in the ass of Timo.