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TANULMÁNYOK
STUDIES

The use of intonational cues marking new information in non-native speech

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Recent research on the use of English in L2 and English as an International Language contexts reflects a shift from the nativeness principle towards focus on intelligibility and establishing which aspects of non-native pronunciation promote intelligibility and communicative success (Levis, 2005). Discourse competence and discourse intonation have been foregrounded as core components of communicative competence (Chun, 2002). The present study focuses on the use of intonation in marking information structure and the realization of such prominence through nuclear pitch accent by native and non-native speakers. 10 conversations among 10 native and 10 non-native speakers from the Wildcat Corpus of Native- and Foreign-Accented English (Van Engen et al., 2010) were analyzed in order to map differences between native and non-native speakers in the use of f0 and intensity to mark new information. The data suggest that native speakers use f0 as the main cue, whereas non-native speakers do not rely exclusively on f0 but exploit the joint effect of an increased f0 and intensity.

Key words: non-native English, intonation, information structure, acoustic cue, spontaneous speech

1. Introduction

Research on non-native speech has provided ample support on differences in both speech production and perception. Non-native prosodic features such as intonational patterns, stress placement and prominence have been extensively studied (Bradlow & Bfent, 2003; Bradlow & Pisoni, 1999; Chun, 2002; Derwing & Munro, 2008; Trouvain J. & Gut, 2007; Wang, Hirschberg, & Hill, 1990; Wennerstrom, 1994) alongside with the perception and intelligibility of non-native speech (Bamgbose, 1998; Berns, 2008; Levis, 2005; Nelson, 2008; Pickering, 2006; Rajadurai, 2007; Smith & Nelson, 1985). Native speakers have been found to rely extensively on prosodic cues in speech perception, for example Akker and Cutler (2003) maintained that prominence enables faster detection (Akker & Cutler, 2003). Unfortunately, cross-linguistic differences may lead to difficulties in perception or comprehension. According to Cutler (2009) non-native word recognition can be hindered in cases when non-native listeners use their native speech processing strategies for prosodic cue identification (Cutler, 2009, pp. 3524–5). Non-native English may display lower f0 values compared to native English (Wennerstrom, 1994, pp. 415-6) and different lexical stress patterns (Nagy, 2009). Moreover, non-native speakers have been found to use intonational patterns differently compared to native speakers. Ramirez Verdugo (2005) provided empirical evidence to the claim that non-native speakers did not use the same intonational range and variety of contours and as a result did not express the same communicative functions and signal pragmatic meanings as accurately as native speakers did (Ramírez Verdugo, 2005). However, Computer Assisted Pronunciation Training (CAPT) has been reported to be

an effective tool in raising metalinguistic awareness regarding suprasegmental features (Chun, 1998; Hardison, 2004; Nagy, 2014b).

According to Levis (2005) deviations from native norms in non-native speech have been approached along two key conceptualizations as either learner errors which need to be corrected by pronunciation instruction or one of the evident results of the changing status of English as an International Language. Levis (2005) proposed two underlying principles governing research on non-native speech production and perception. The *nativeness principle* reflects the dominant status of the native speaker and posits native-like pronunciation as a goal for language learners. In this approach deviations from an ideal and homogeneous native norm are undesirable and considered errors. The *intelligibility principle*, on the other hand, focuses on communicative success. Features of language use which promote communicative success are emphasized in the process of learning, while deviations from the target language norm are deemed acceptable on the condition that they do not hinder successful communication (Levis, 2005, pp. 370-1).

The transition from the dominance of the nativeness principle towards focus on intelligibility is parallel with changes in ESL and EFL teaching and the extension of the notion of discourse competence. The originally proposed model consisting of grammatical, strategic and sociolinguistic competence (Canale & Swain, 1980) has been extended to include discourse competence which ultimately received a central position in the model as an intersection of top-down and bottom-up communicative and linguistic processes (Celce-Murcia, 2007, p. 46). The increasing significance of discourse competence brought about an increased interest in discourse intonation, its role in conveying meaning and its contribution to successful communication. Focus has shifted from segmental accuracy to the role of suprasegmental features in structuring and highlighting discourse and information structure. Consequently, accentedness has become more acceptable with intelligibility taking on a more central role (Morley, 1991, p. 499; cf. Jenkins, 2000).

2. Non-native intonation and information structure

Although considerable emphasis was previously placed on eliminating pronunciation errors, there is also ample support to the fact that native-like pronunciation is not a prerequisite of communicative success. In fact, features of non-native speech may even promote intelligibility (Deterding & Kirkpatrick, 2006). Munro and Derwing's (1999) findings lend empirical support to the claim that speakers' perceptions of accentedness and actual comprehension are not as closely related as listeners might generally consider. Results of this study revealed that actual comprehension was more closely related to perceived comprehensibility than accentedness ratings. In fact, in some cases participants were able to correctly transcribe utterances which were perceived as markedly accented. In addition, accentedness showed a significant correlation with

phonetic and phonemic errors, and intonational ratings. However, these measures were less connected to perceived comprehensibility and even less to intelligibility. Judgments of accentedness were assumed to have been made based on features of native-like pronunciation and were not accurate predictors of intelligibility (Munro & Derwing, 1999, pp. 303-4). Finally, perceived comprehensibility and actual comprehension of non-native English were found to be negatively correlated among L3 learners of English (Nagy, 2014a).

Some of the problems that non-native speakers face may not stem from incorrect realizations of phonetic features. Mennen (2004) puts forward the claim that some of the intonational errors identified in previous research were based on an incorrect identification of the source of the error. For example, a perceived incorrect stress placement may not be actually misplaced, only realized differently due to a misalignment of intonational patterns or different use of acoustic cues stemming from the L1 of the speakers. In other words, the error may be a phonetic error and not a phonological one (Mennen, 2004, pp. 58-9). Similarly, Hwang et al. (2007) found no significant difference between native and non-native discrimination of syntactic structures based on prosodic structure and concluded that differences in the use of intonational phrases are likely to be due to differences in establishing the relationship between prosody and syntactical structure (Hwang, Schafer, & Anderson, 2007, p. 713).

There is general consensus on the two main discourse functions of intonation, namely signaling prominence and structuring discourse (Chun, 2002; Grice & Baumann, 2007; Venditti & Hirschberg, 2003). The present study focuses on the issue of prominence associated with new information accomplished marked with (nuclear) pitch accent, which can be measured through its main acoustic cue, fundamental frequency (f_0). Additional acoustic cues include, among others, increased intensity and duration (Grice and Baumann 2007, p. 27). Similarly, Ward and Birner (2001) discuss focus and information structure in relation to the discourse functions of intonation and claim that focused elements are marked with prosodic prominence, mostly nuclear pitch accent (Ward & Birner, 2001, p. 120).

Further research has proposed three subcomponents of signaling information status: salience, focus of attention and given/new information (Venditti and Hirschberg 2003; Grice and Baumann, 2007). Chun (2002) draws attention to the previously reported difference between signaling given vs. new information and emphasis or contrast. The former is characterized by high pitch, whereas the latter displays an accentual pattern that diverges from normal focus patterns with the aim of contrasting or emphasizing certain elements of the utterance (Chun, 2002, pp. 58-9). Along similar lines Chafe (2001) maintains that the information flow in spontaneous speech is continuously managed in interaction by the management of focus and periphery. Focus is coupled with “distinctive terminal intonation contour, an initial resetting of the pitch baseline, the presence of silence before and after, a change of tempo at the beginning or end, and boundary changes in voice quality such as whispering or creaky voice” and is a

prevalent feature of natural speech (Chafe, 2001, p. 675). In a study of non-native focus acquisition, Baker (2010) identified several differences in non-native speech such as higher f_0 maxima, larger f_0 ranges, greater RMS amplitudes and stronger pitch accent cues (Baker, 2010, p. 212). In addition, further research in this area revealed additional distinctions in information status. Prince (1992) categorized information structure into two main sets of information statuses, Hearer-old/Hearer-new and Discourse-old/Discourse-new, which are somewhat independent of each other. For example, Discourse-new information may be new or old information for the Hearer, but Discourse-old information is inevitably Hearer-old as well. The third additional category is that of Inferrables, which are new to both the Hearer and the discourse, but may be activated by certain Discourse-old triggers (Prince, 1992, p. 309).

The aim of this study is to address the issue of prominence and information status in native and non-native speech. The first research question focuses on the use of the acoustic cues of fundamental frequency and intensity to signal prominence of lexical items carrying new information that is both Discourse and Hearer-new. The underlying assumption is that both groups use these acoustic cues to a certain degree to mark prominence, but differences exist. Some researchers propose that non-native speech displays a greater variation in pitch level and range due to the potential transfer of language-specific features from the varied linguistic background of speakers (Mennen, 2004, p. 64). However, there are conflicting views on the actual differences, as non-native speech has been found to display both higher and lower f_0 values as compared to native speakers (Baker, 2010; Wennerstrom, 1994). The second question concerns the relationship between the use of f_0 and intensity to signal prominence among native and non-native speakers. The initial hypothesis is that native speakers rely on f_0 as the main acoustic cue, whereas non-native speakers employ f_0 to a lesser amount to signal prominence. Intensity is studied as an additional acoustic cue contributing to marking prominence. The final question is aimed at revealing differences between native and non-native speakers in the use of f_0 and intensity to mark new information.

3. Research methods

This study analyzes data from the Wildcat Corpus of Native- and Foreign-Accented English (Van Engen et al., 2010). The corpus contains scripted and spontaneous recordings of native (NS) and non-native speakers (NNS) of varied linguistic background involving 85 speakers from 13 native language backgrounds, in both native and non-native pairings. Non-native spontaneous speech was recorded in 42 conversations using the Diapix elicitation technique. Native and non-native speakers participated in a spot-the-difference task. In order to complete the task, the two speakers had to cooperatively identify the differences in the two pictures they had been presented with. Each speaker underwent a familiarization task before the recording. Recordings were carried out in a sound-treated booth in the Northwestern University Phonetics

Laboratory. The conversations were recorded in stereo using a Marantz PMD 670 flash recorder and participants wore AKG C420 headset microphones (Van Engen et al., 2010, p. 517).

For the purposes of the current study I selected 10 conversations involving 10 native and 10 non-native speakers. In order to reduce the effect of speech accommodation, conversations with NS-NS and NNS-NNS pairs were included. Both native and non-native participants were previously evaluated by native speakers of American English for accentedness on a scale of 1 (no foreign accent) to 9 (very strong foreign accent). A clear-cut difference was measured, as the average NS rating was 1.27 (range: 1.04 to 1.67), whereas the average NNS accentedness rating was 6.35 (range: 3.10 to 8.31) (Van Engen et al. 2010, pp. 518-9).

The diverse linguistic background of non-native speakers raises the issue the effect of L1 transfer. Although the cross-linguistic influences receive some consideration, the central aim is to identify the common features of non-native speech production and establish a set of factors which may be linked with speech perception, and ultimately perceived and actual comprehension. The present study does not address the effects of the various native languages or the accommodation processes which might have taken place during the completion of the task. The overarching aim is to identify the differences occurring in the speech production of native and non-native speakers as regards the acoustic cues of intonation in the wide sense.

Measurements were carried out using Praat version 5.3.61 (Boersma & Weenink, 2014). In the first stage of carrying out measurements, maximum f_0 and maximum intensity were measured in Hz on monosyllabic words carrying new information, which are coupled with pitch accent. Measurements were carried out according to the word boundaries established in the corpus transcription, produced by hand corrected automatic alignment of orthographic transcription. ("Wildcat Corpus of Native- and Foreign-Accented English," n.d.) However, as peak height is not the main acoustic cue of prominence, further measurements were included. Perceived prominence is mostly based on the size of pitch excursion (Gussenhoven, 2004, p. 85). In order to measure pitch excursion and enable comparison between speakers of different pitch registers, f_0 and intensity peak values were divided by the speaker's average f_0 and intensity measured across the entire discussion. F_0 and intensity was measured using the maximum and average pitch and intensity commands in Praat. Average values for each speaker were measured separately on each channel of the stereo sound files. The resulting variables were labelled *FOProm* and *IntProm* and used in each statistical test in the study. Having considered these factors, it must still be noted that these variables represent prominence solely from the perspective of speech production and are not intended to reflect what speakers actually perceive as prominent. Additional issues stem from the segmental effects influencing f_0 values, most of which should be viewed as inherent features of naturally occurring speech (Pierrehumbert, 1975, p. 14). In an attempt to control some of these factors, in the final stage of the analysis, prominence

values were measured on 4 words containing the same vowel, thus having the same intrinsic f_0 (*cheese, sheep, beef, green*). However, the immediate and wider phonetic and phonological context included several variables which need to be considered in further research. The statistical analysis of the measurements is presented in the following section.

4. Discussion of results

4.1. F_0 and intensity as acoustic cues of prominence

Prominence was measured on 7 items in 10 Diapix interactions with 10 native and 10 non-native speakers yielding a sample of 140 items. One item was excluded due to the fact that the speaker used a different word, resulting in a final sample of 139 items. The excursion from the average f_0 and intensity (labelled F_0Prom and $IntProm$) was calculated by dividing f_0 and intensity maxima values measured on words carrying new information and thus receiving pitch accent with average f_0 and intensity values of each speaker respectively. Both average prominence values $M_{F_0Prom}=1.39$ and the excursion from the average $Min_{F_0Prom}=0.65$, $Max_{F_0Prom}=4.92$ ($N=139$, $SD=0.68$) was greater in the case of f_0 prominence (Fig. 1), than in the case of intensity prominence ($M_{IntProm}=1.07$, $Min_{IntProm}=0.78$, $Max_{IntProm}=1.24$, $N=139$, $SD=0.08$) throughout the entire sample (Fig. 2).

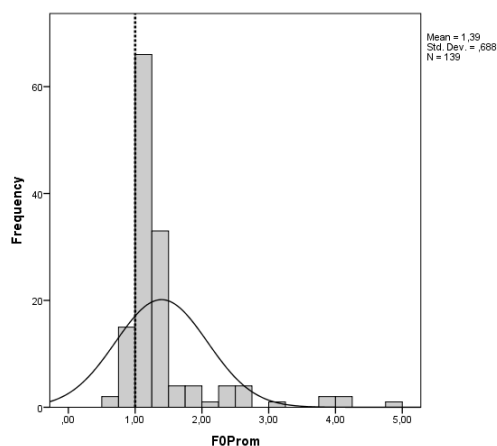


Figure 1 NS and NNS f_0 prominence values

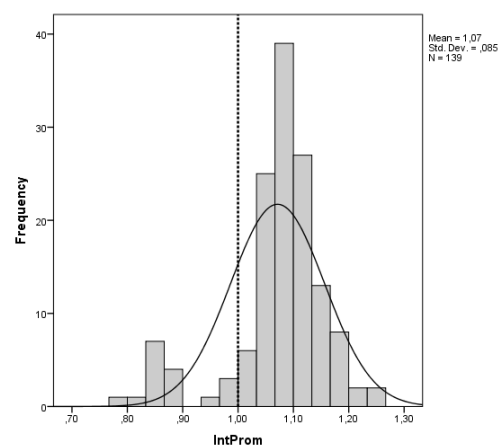


Figure 2 NS and NNS intensity prominence values

In addition, f_0 prominence values were lower than 1 in 13% of words carrying new information, that is absolute f_0 values were lower than the speaker's average f_0 . In other words, speakers did not place emphasis on new information using f_0 compared to their average f_0 . Similarly, 12% of new information received lower intensity than the average intensity of the entire conversation per speaker. One possible explanation is that the speaker did not use either fundamental frequency or intensity to highlight new

information. However, instead of a general lack of prominence marking, a closer look at the data points at systematic differences between native and non-native speakers. While new information occurring without f0 prominence appears in the same proportion among non-native and native speakers (NNS 14%, NS 13%), a lack of intensity prominence was measured among a higher proportion of native speakers (22%). Conversely, only 3% of non-native speakers refrain from using intensity to mark prominence. Nonetheless, it must be noted that the average f0 and intensity of the given sentence, the immediate context of the word and the use of other acoustic features require a closer examination for such an assumption to be made. These initial results indicate a clear-cut difference in the use of these acoustic cues by native and non-native speakers which will be examined in more detail in the following sections.

4.2. The relationship between f0 and intensity

The second research question was concerned with the relationship between fundamental frequency and intensity in the speech of native and non-native speakers. After examining the correlation between the variables *FOProm* and *IntProm*, we can see a clear-cut difference between NS and NNS measurements. While there is no significant correlation between *FOProm* and *IntProm* among native speakers (Fig. 4), non-native speakers appear to use these two cues in a different manner (Fig. 3). The results of a Spearman correlation reveal a statistically significant weak positive relationship between *FOProm* and *IntProm* ($\rho=.297$ $p<.05$, $N=70$) among non-native speakers. The scatterplots in Figure 3 and 4 below report the results of the Spearman correlation. Non-native speakers appear to use both f0 and intensity to place emphasis on new information, compared to native speakers who rely mainly on f0 as the main acoustic cue of pitch accent.

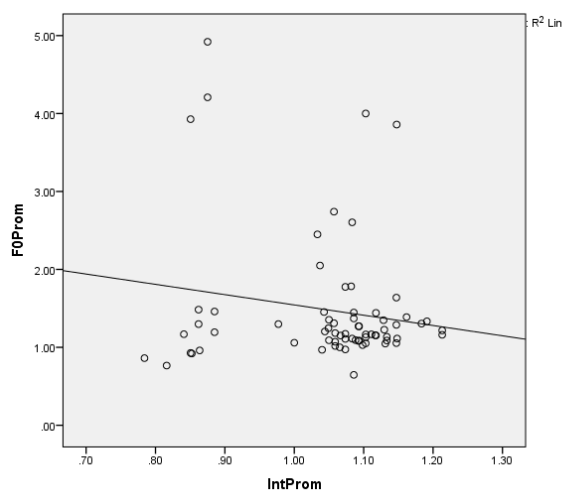


Figure 3 Relationship between native f0 and intensity prominence

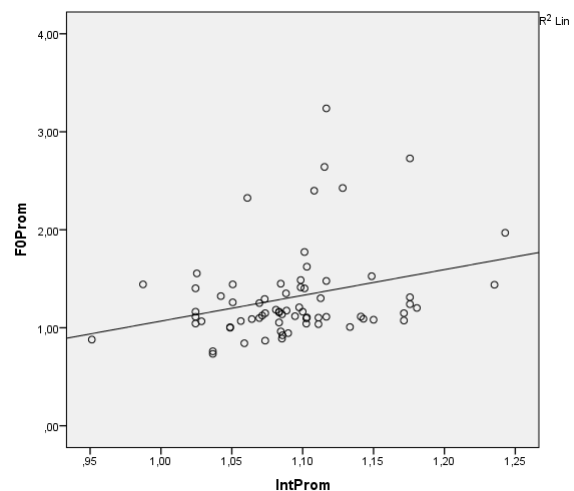


Figure 4 Relationship between non-native f0 and intensity prominence

4.3. *F0 and intensity as prominence cues among native and non-native speakers*

An independent-samples t-test was conducted to examine whether native speakers and non-native speakers differed in the use of f0 and intensity prominence. An examination of the data indicated that the data are not normally distributed; some data contained outliers, and variances were unequal for the groups (Levene's test $p < .05$). These results correspond to the intrinsic nature of the data, namely that native and non-native speakers are expected to display notable differences in measurements of their phonetic and phonological features, which are perceivable even to the untrained ears as a marked foreign accent. Overall, the data contradicts the prior expectation that non-native speakers produce more heterogeneous results due to their diverse linguistic background. It was in fact the NNS sample which was more homogeneous, while native speaker measurements varied to a greater extent in the degree of prominence and the use of acoustic cues to mark prominence. In the case of native speakers, f0 prominence values are slightly higher and the range of values is also wider ($N=69$, $M_{F0Prom}=1.47$, $Min_{F0Prom}=0.65$, $Max_{F0Prom}=4.92$, $SD=0.85$) than for non-native speakers ($N=70$, $M_{F0Prom}=1.31$, $Min_{F0Prom}=0.73$, $Max_{F0Prom}=3.24$, $SD=0.47$). In other words, in terms of speech production, native speakers exploited f0 to a greater degree than non-native speakers did. This may contribute to the facilitation of speech perception and processing stemming from more marked speech segmentation and increased intelligibility due to a more easily interpretable information structure. However, native and non-native speakers appear not to diverge in their use of the second acoustic cue, since the differences are less conspicuous in the case of intensity prominence, both in terms of average values and minimum and maximum values (native speakers: $M_{IntProm}=1.04$, $Min_{IntProm}=0.78$, $Max_{IntProm}=1.21$, $SD=0.10$; non-native speakers: $M_{IntProm}=1.09$, $Min_{IntProm}=0.95$, $Max_{IntProm}=1.24$, $SD=0.05$). As the lack of normal distribution calls for the use of non-parametric tests, the Mann-Whitney test was used to look into differences in the use of prominence cues between native and non-native speakers. The following section presents the results of the Mann-Whitney test for f0 and intensity prominence.

Firstly, the comparison of f0 prominence values for native and non-native speakers revealed that NNSs generally use lower f0 values and they use them more consistently (Fig. 4), as it is also demonstrated by the differences in standard deviation between the two groups ($M_{NNS}=1.31$, $SD=0.47$, $N=70$; $M_{NS}=1.47$, $SD=0.85$, $N=69$). However, the Mann-Whitney test revealed no statistically significant difference between the f0 prominence values of native and non-native speakers.

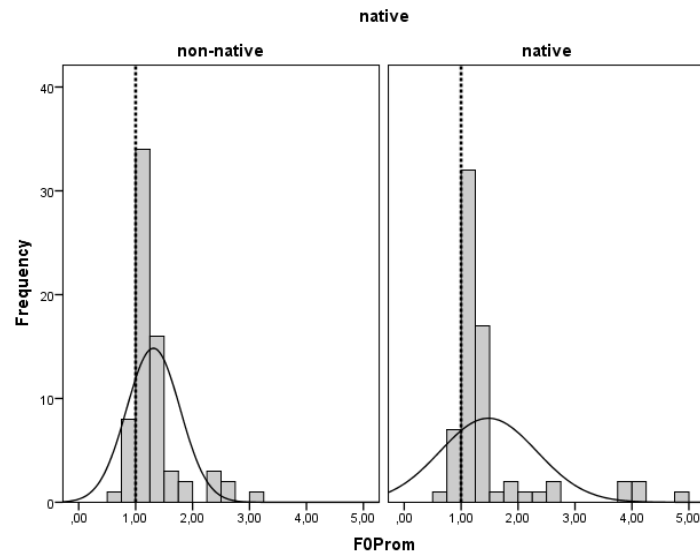


Figure 5. NS and NNS f0 prominence values

Secondly, the comparison of the use of intensity to achieve prominence revealed only a slight difference in the means of the two groups. However, examining the data in more detail, again we can see that non-native speakers are more consistent also in their use of the acoustic cue of intonation. In addition, it is used by almost each non-native speaker to make new information more prominent. On the other hand, lower than average intensity occurs more frequently in non-native items, which corresponds to the general assumption that intensity is not a key acoustic cue of prominence in focused words ($M_{NNS}=1.09$, $SD_{NNS}=0.05$, $N=70$; $M_{NS}=1.04$, $SD_{NS}=0.10$, $N=69$). These differences in intensity prominence are presented in Figure 6. As noted in section 4.1., lack of intensity prominence appears to be more frequent among non-native speakers. This claim is also supported by the results of the Mann-Whitney test. While the two-tailed Mann-Whitney test showed no statistically significant difference between the two groups, the one-tailed test revealed a significant difference between native and non-native speakers ($p=.05$). In other words, the test revealed that the difference between the two groups occurs in only one direction (Fig. 5).

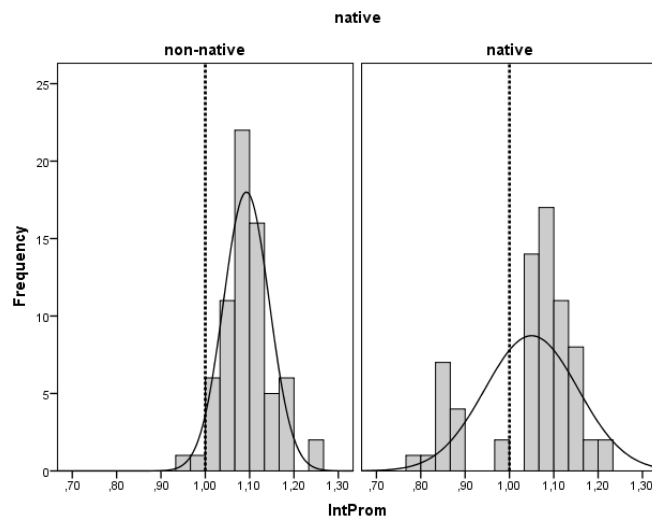


Figure 6. NNS and NS intensity prominence values

In the final stage of analysis, the focus was on a smaller segment of the sample, namely monosyllabic words containing the same vowel. The comparison of f0 and intonation prominence yet again revealed a difference in the prominence patterns of NS and NNS language use. Figure 7 presents the mean prominence values measured in NNS and NS utterances focusing on items in which the measured values surpassed the speaker's average f0 and intensity values ($M_{F0Prom}=1.50$, $Min_{F0Prom}=0.84$, $Max_{F0Prom}=3.93$, $SD_{F0Prom}=0.76$; $M_{IntProm}=1.09$, $Min_{IntProm}=0.85$, $Max_{IntProm}=1.24$, $SD_{IntProm}=0.09$, $N=30$).

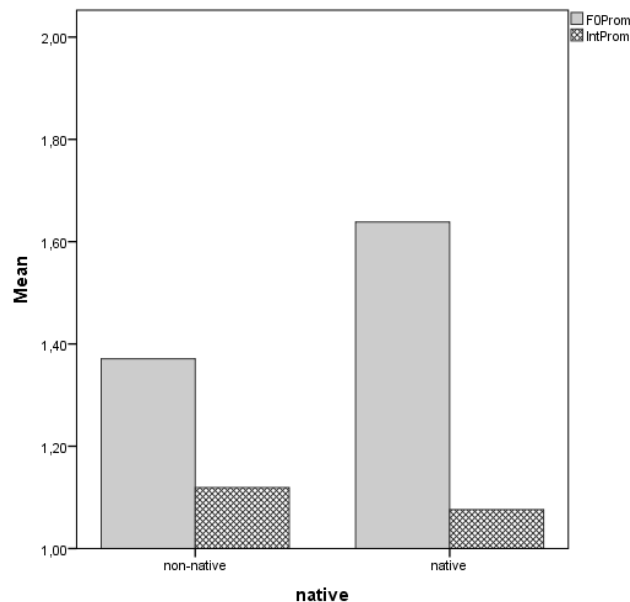


Figure 7. F0 and intensity prominence on monosyllabic words containing [i:]

5. Conclusions

The study revealed systematic differences in the use of acoustic cues of prominence between native and non-native speakers. Non-native speakers displayed a lower pitch range as also revealed by previous research (Baker 2010), but relied on other acoustic cues, in this case intensity. The present study measured the use of intensity and found statistically significant differences in its use compared to native speaker speech. The data suggest that native speakers use fundamental frequency as the main cue, whereas non-native speakers do not rely exclusively on fundamental frequency, but exploit the joint effect of an increased fundamental frequency and intensity.

In order to increase the accuracy of acoustic measurements, the immediate context of the word carrying new information should be examined in more detail, including the use of intonational patterns, pitch alignment and range, duration and pauses. Spontaneous speech phenomena and the grammatical structure of utterances, in this case existential *there* sentences, also require more attention. The information structure of interactions could be mapped in more detail by applying Prince's multidimensional model, including the incorporation of the third additional category of Inferrables, which are new to both the Hearer and the discourse, but may be activated by certain Discourse-old triggers. (Prince 1992, p. 309).

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”Everybody likes beer” – Hungarian secondary school students' stereotypes associated with different English accent variety speakers

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The general aim of the paper is to show Hungarian secondary school English language learners' stereotypical images of speakers of five different non-native English accent varieties. The participants of the study (N=402) completed a trait attribution task, i.e. they had to select characteristic features they associated with the speaker from a given set of features. The study shows what stereotypical images Hungarian secondary school students assign to a male speaker who speaks with different English accent varieties with reference to the speaker's age, height, hair length and color, marital status, preferences in food or drinks, and the clothes he is wearing. Overall, the results display that Hungarian secondary school students associate different stereotypes with the different English accent variety speakers. Furthermore, in some cases, there are also differences in the stereotypes associated with the speakers based on two variables, namely the participants' sex and age.

Key words: stereotypes, foreign English accents, Hungarian students, age, sex

1. Introduction

Different English dialect or accent varieties evoke different stereotypical or prejudiced associations about the speakers' regional, social or ethnic characteristics in the listeners (Wolfram, 2013, p. 30). The stereotypes that native speakers hold about the members of their culture are called auto-stereotypes (McCrae, Terracciano, De Fruyt, De Bolle, Gelfand, & Costa, 2010, p. 817). Nevertheless, stereotyping does not only appear in native English classes, but also in classrooms where English is taught as a foreign language to speakers of other languages. In English as a foreign language (EFL) classrooms, language learners might have such experiences in manifold ways, i.e. they can develop prejudices toward their peers in the same class who could have learnt the pronunciation of the target language differently from their own target language pronunciation. Moreover, they can associate different stereotypes with other non-native English speakers whose native language is different from theirs. Also, various stereotypical images can be triggered by different native English variety speakers who represent the diversity of the English language. These latter two stereotypes that a certain group or community holds about the members of a different culture are called hetero-stereotypes (McCrae et al., 2010, p. 817). The present paper aims to investigate such hetero-stereotypes, in particular, the stereotypical images that Hungarian English language learners of one particular Hungarian secondary school associate with the speaker of five different non-native English varieties.

2. Background

2.1. Stereotypes

Children, from a very early age, are surrounded by stereotypical images of accented speakers of English. First of all, adults including parents and teachers label the different varieties of English as “correct” or “incorrect”; furthermore, different television programs, films or books also provide children with positive or negative characters who speak different English accent varieties, i.e. a more standard or a less standard variety, respectively (Barrett & Oppenheimer, 2011, p. 7; Wolfram, 2013, p. 30).

In fact, children at the age of ten or eleven can already associate various stereotypes with different national groups in terms of the group members' typical physical appearance, the clothes they wear, the characteristic traits and the habits they have (Barrett & Oppenheimer, 2011, p. 7). However, the further development of these stereotypical images shows no clear-cut patterns; namely, these images might become positive as well as negative at a later age (Barrett & Oppenheimer, 2011, p. 8).

Beyond the main goal, i.e. investigating the stereotypes Hungarian secondary school students associate with the speaker of different English varieties, the study also aims to investigate whether the stereotypes of the Hungarian students differ as a result of their age and sex. With reference to the age variable, previous research shows that adolescents start to be aware of what social stereotypes are or can be associated with their own language varieties between the ages of 12 and 18 (Ball, 1983; Williams, Garrett, & Coupland, 1999). Nevertheless, these studies do not focus on what stereotypes other language varieties evoke in adolescents. A Hungarian study by Nikolov (2003) attempts to investigate the age variable in a similar field, however, her study mainly concerns students' attitudes and motivation, and not their stereotypes. Along the same line, when Dörnyei, Csizér and Németh (2006) examine Hungarian students' attitudes and motivation, their results display statistically significant sex differences in the target language evaluations. Although the latter two studies do not investigate stereotypes, still, the fact that there are differences in terms of age and sex of the respondents in a particular research area entitles me to examine these two variables with reference to stereotypes as well.

2.2. Foreign language learning in Hungary

Foreign language learning is regulated by the Hungarian National Core Curriculum (Nemzeti Alaptanterv, 2012), according to which language learners have to start learning their first foreign language no later than the fourth grade of primary school, when pupils are about nine or ten years old (Nemzeti Alaptanterv, 2012, p. 10649). In schools where qualified teachers are available and have the capacity to do so, foreign language education can begin in the first three grades as well (from the ages of 6 to 9).

The Hungarian National Core Curriculum claims that the first foreign languages can be English or German; however, there are primary schools that offer either French or Italian as the first foreign language in primary schools. In addition, in primary schools a second foreign language can also be taught starting from grade seven (students aged about 12 or 13).

When students start the 9th grade in secondary school at the age of 14 or 15, the number of foreign languages they have to learn depends on the type of the secondary school they attend. According to the Hungarian National Core Curriculum (Nemzeti Alaptanterv, 2012, p. 10680), in secondary grammar schools it is obligatory for students to learn two foreign languages. The second foreign language can be any language that the school can offer and for which there are qualified teachers. In other types of secondary schools, students have to learn only one foreign language, but it is strongly recommended that they learn another foreign language as well. In vocational secondary schools, only one foreign language is compulsory. Also, secondary schools have to provide the opportunity for students to continue with the same foreign language they have been learning at primary school. Also, they have to offer language courses that are appropriate to the students' current language proficiency level, possibly not at a beginner but a pre-intermediate or intermediate level.

Overall, as it can be seen in Table 1 below (Magyar Statisztikai Évkönyv, 2013, p. 155), the most frequently taught foreign language is English both in primary and secondary schools. The second most frequently taught foreign language is German, which is followed by French, Italian, Spanish, Latin and other languages, for example, Russian. The table does not represent the total number of students, but the total number of times a language is taught. In other words, if a student learns two or three different languages, they are taken into account twice or three times, respectively.

Table 1. Students learning foreign languages in Hungary (2012/2013 school year) (Magyar Statisztikai Évkönyv, 2013, p. 155)

	English	German	French	Italian	Spanish	Latin	Other
Primary school	403053	144717	2468	564	486	57	3687
Secondary grammar school	198178	115744	19587	14121	9983	8123	4946
Other secondary school types	167468	68762	2261	1335	880	725	1199
Secondary vocational schools	56751	42654	585	56	-	46	754

The present study was conducted in a secondary grammar school where students can continue learning either English, or German, or French as their first foreign language that they started at primary school. In addition, it is obligatory for them to select another foreign language which they generally start at the beginner level. The second foreign languages they can choose in this school are English, German, French, Italian, Spanish, Latin and Russian. For example, if they had a foreign language different from English at

primary school, they can choose English as the second foreign language at secondary school, or they can choose any other foreign language that is offered for them as a second foreign language. There are some students every year at this particular school who do not select English as a foreign language at all. The reasons behind not opting for English can be, for example, that they use the opportunity to learn two languages different from English at secondary school, probably because they have the opportunity to learn English outside school (with the help of the parents, with private teachers, at language schools or by going abroad as exchange students).

2.3. The overall research framework of the current study

The overall framework for this study in which the data was collected is provided by my Ph.D. dissertation research. The dissertation investigates how Hungarian secondary school students, who learn English as a foreign language at school, label, evaluate and comment on different English accent varieties and the speaker(s) of these varieties (Balogh, 2014). Several studies have been conducted in Hungary with similar objectives (Dörnyei & Csizér, 2002; Csizér, Dörnyei, & Németh, 2004; Dörnyei, Csizér, & Németh, 2006; Kormos & Csizér, 2008; Kormos, Csizér, Menyhárt, & Török, 2008; Csizér & Lukács, 2010), i.e. with the goal of investigating secondary school language learners' attitudes and motivation towards the target language(s) they learn at school. Here, I would like to briefly summarize the results of two studies that are the most relevant for purposes of the current study due to their findings related to the respondents' age and sex differences. First, Dörnyei and his colleagues (Dörnyei et al., 2006) collected data with questionnaires in three surveys in 1993, 1999 and 2004 in Hungary. These surveys investigated 13- and 14-year-old school children's attitudes and motivation towards five foreign languages, i.e. English, German, French, Italian and Russian, taught in Hungarian schools. The results of the three surveys show that, on the whole, there are differences in Hungarian school children's attitudes based on the sex of the participants. In other words, girls' evaluation scores tend to be almost always higher than boys' evaluation scores, i.e. girls tend to evaluate these foreign languages generally more positively than boys. Second, Nikolov (2003) examined 6th, 8th and 10th graders' attitudes and motivation towards English and German. The findings of the study display differences in students' evaluations based on the grade they are in. Overall, 8th graders tend to evaluate English more negatively than both 6th and 10th graders. With reference to German, 6th graders evaluate it more positively than 8th and 10th graders do. These studies show that, at least as far as motivation and attitudes are concerned, there are differences in the results of a Hungarian language learner population based on the age and sex variables of the respondents. In many respects similar studies outside Hungary have recently been conducted, for example, by Abu-Ghazaleh and Hajizi (2011); Bauman (2013); Evans and Imai (2011); Jenkins (2010); and Sung (2013).

Even though the main scope of the underlying Ph.D. research was not stereotyping and stereotypes but attitudes, a large number of data was collected concerning respondents' stereotypical images of the different English accent variety speaker(s). For the purposes of the present paper, I have reviewed and reanalyzed all the data with reference to stereotypes further in more detail.

3. Research questions

The research questions for this particular study are the following:

1. What stereotypes do Hungarian language learners of a particular secondary school associate with the speaker(s) of five non-native English accent varieties?
2. Do these stereotypes differ based on the age of the participants?
3. Do these stereotypes differ based on the sex of the participants?

4. Methodology

4.1. Research tool development

As far as stereotypical images are concerned, children at the age of five or six seem to possess the ability to stereotype people (Quadflieg & Macrae, 2011, p. 217). They usually categorize them on the basis of salient categories, many of which, for example, sex, race, age, or body weight, are visible appearance features; nevertheless, categorizations can also occur based on non-visual cues. That is, stereotypes might be triggered by various other techniques, for example, by presenting respondents with category labels (Quadflieg & Macrae, 2011, p. 221).

With reference to language or accent varieties, participants might be provided with the labels of the different dialect or accent varieties and then they can be asked to categorize the varieties and their speakers on the basis of the given labels. Also, respondents might be asked to listen to acoustic speech stimuli and make their categorizations of the variety and its speakers based on these speech samples (Preston, 1999, p. xxxviii). The main aim of the present study was the latter, i.e. stereotypes were elicited with the help of short acoustic stimuli of five different non-native English accent varieties.

Prior to the actual research, several pilot studies were conducted in order to select the speech samples and to pilot the first and the subsequent versions of the questionnaires and the tasks connected. With reference to the speech samples, originally, eleven different non-native English accent variety imitations were chosen by a speaker in a video on YouTube (Rehany, 2010). The first part of the selection procedure aimed to deselect the accent varieties which were considered inauthentic or offensive by video viewers. In the second part of the selection procedure, varieties that

secondary school respondents in one of the pilot studies could not identify at all were also eliminated from the research. Finally, five of the eleven samples, i.e. the (non-native) American, French, German, Russian and English accent varieties were chosen for the purposes of the research.

In addition, during the pilot studies, students provided several comments and remarks about the speaker(s) of the different English varieties as answers to an open-end question. The comments and remarks of the first pilot study were grouped into categories that described the speaker in different but very detailed ways, such as, reflections on the speaker's hair (*grey, blond, dark, short, and long*), height (*short, medium-height, and tall*), age (*young, middle-aged, and old*), as well as to what he was wearing (*glasses, sunglasses, a moustache, a beard, scruffy clothes, a suit, a white shirt, a vest, or a leather jacket*), his preferences for food and drinks (whether *he liked chocolate, beer, pizza, sushi or cheese*) and references to his marital status and family (whether *he had no family, if he was married or divorced, if he was an orphan, and whether he had children or grandchildren*). This pilot study was administered in three subsequent sessions with a varying number of participants from 30 to 32.

Furthermore, from the categories a task was prepared for the respondents where they were provided with pre-selected items in each category and they were asked to select any number of items from each category that they felt described the speaker they listened to. Some respondents reacted unfavorably to the number of the items in each category; therefore, for the final study, the number of features in each category was limited to a maximum of five items. This concerned two categories, i.e. the category of what the speaker was wearing, where the items that remained included *glasses, a moustache, a beard, scruffy clothes* and *elegant clothes*, and the category referring to the speaker's family status, which category included the items *being married, divorced, an orphan* or *having children* in the final study. This pilot study was administered in two sessions with 37 participants.

Overall, participants responded very positively to this task, many commented aloud on the actual task itself during data collection, especially when they read the options of *beer* and *chocolate* in the category of the speaker's preferences for food or drink. During task completion, they expressed the idea that it seems illogical to include these two choices in the category as "everybody likes beer" and "everybody likes chocolate". This general assumption, however, has not been proved by the respondents' total ratings as in two cases *cheese* and *sushi* were considered to be the speaker's most preferred food.

4.2. Participants

The number of students in the particular secondary school where the study was conducted is about 600. However, not all of the students participated in the final study. Students were excluded (a) who were not learning English in the school at the time of

the data collection; (b) who were learning in my English classes and who participated in the pilot studies; (c) whose parents did not grant permission for their participation in the study; and (d) whose parents did grant permission, however, they did not want to take part in the study. Thus, the total number of students who participated in the final study was 402. In Table 2 below the number of the participants can be seen by their age and sex.

Table 2. Number of respondents by year of birth and sex (the study was conducted in January 2013)

Year of birth	Age of respondents at the time of the data collection	Number of girls	Number of boys	Total number of respondents
1993	20	1	0	1
1994	19	24	19	43
1995	18	60	51	111
1996	17	55	55	110
1997	16	49	60	109
1998	15	17	11	28
		206	196	402

5. Results and discussion

Overall, there are three points I would like to make concerning the results of the data analysis. First of all, the general findings show that not “everybody likes beer” the most, as, for example, respondents choose cheese and sushi as the most preferred food for the French and the Indian English accent variety speaker, respectively. Moreover, in some cases, the most frequently selected categories for the different speakers differ on the basis of the sex of the participants. Finally, a general tendency seems to emerge concerning the age of the respondents, namely, the younger the participants are, the more they seem to deviate from the items in each category that were chosen by the highest number of participants on average.

5.1. General results

The most frequently selected features can be seen in Table 3 below. The overall results show what stereotypical images students of a particular Hungarian secondary school form of different non-native English accent speakers.

Table 3. The most frequently selected character traits

	American	French	German	Russian	Indian
Hair	short (N=269)	short (N=212)	blond (N=255)	dark (N=185)	short (N=237)
Height	medium (N=277)	short (N=209)	medium (N=155)	medium (N=206)	short (N=252)
Age	middle (N=275)	middle (N=219)	young (N=236)	middle (N=200)	middle (N=195)
Appearance	elegant (N=191)	moustache (N=176)	glasses (N=158)	moustache (N=165)	glasses (N=171)
Likes	beer (N=255)	cheese (N=177)	beer (N=271)	beer (N=186)	sushi (N=211)
Family	has children (N=262)	divorced (N=175)	married (N=169)	married (N=172)	married (N=191)

In particular, first of all, German and the Russian English accent variety speakers stand out due to their hair color, i.e. the German English speaker is regarded as *blond*, the Russian English speaker is considered to have *dark* hair, while the most frequently selected hair characteristics of every other speaker is the adjective *short*. In addition, concerning the height of the speaker, the French and the Indian English speakers are described as *short*, while the other three speakers are labeled as of *medium-height*. With reference to the age of the speaker, all the speakers are regarded as *middle-aged*, except for the German English speaker who is commented on as *young*. Moreover, there are no clear-cut differences or similarities among the speakers concerning what they are wearing; however, their preferences for food display stereotypes again. Namely, the French English speaker is considered to like *cheese* the most, while the Indian English speaker is described to prefer *sushi* the most. Finally, as far as the family status of the speaker is concerned, the American English speaker is considered to *have children*, the French English speaker is thought to be *divorced*, while the other speakers are regarded as *married*.

In fact, the data shows somewhat different stereotypical images when, beside the most frequently selected characteristics, the second most frequent descriptors are also taken into consideration. First, concerning the hair of the speaker (see Table 4 below), the second most frequently opted adjective is *dark* in the case of the American, French and Indian English accent speakers, while it is *short* both in the case of the German and the Russian speakers. All in all, on the basis of the two most frequently selected features, the only difference regarding hair color or style among the speakers is that the German English variety speaker is considered to have *blond* hair while the other English accent variety speakers are described as having *dark* hair.

Table 4. The first and second most frequently selected adjectives concerning the hair of the speaker

	American	French	German	Russian	Indian
Hair	short (N=269)	short (N=212)	blond (N=255)	dark (N=185)	short (N=237)
	dark (N=197)	dark (N=187)	short (N=231)	short (N=180)	dark (N=223)

Second, regarding the age of the speakers (see Table 5 below), when all character traits are taken into account, the description of two speakers seem to differ from the others. Namely, while the American, the French and the Russian English speakers are characterized as *middle-aged* in the first place, as *old* in the second place and as *young* only in the third place, the German and the Indian English accent variety speakers are characterized as the least *old* among the speakers. The difference between these two speakers is that while the German English speaker is generally regarded as *young*, the Indian English speaker is still considered to be *middle-aged* the most frequently even though a lot of participants (N=115) judged him to be *young*, too.

Table 5. The age characteristics of the different English accent variety speakers

Age	American	French	German	Russian	India
	middle (N=275)	middle (N=219)	young (N=236)	middle (N=200)	middle (N=195)
	old (N=119)	old (N=141)	middle (N=135)	old (N=182)	young (N=115)
	young (N=9)	young (N=42)	old (N=35)	young (N=21)	old (N=90)

Third, regarding the height of the speakers (Table 6 below), when all the descriptors are taken into account, no differences can be found compared to the overall descriptions, i.e. the French and the Indian English speakers are considered to be *short*, while the other speakers are regarded as of *medium-height*.

Table 6. The height of the different English accent variety speakers

Height	American	French	German	Russian	Indian
	medium (N=277)	short (N=209)	medium (N=155)	medium (N=206)	short (N=252)
	tall (N=103)	medium (N=113)	tall (N=141)	tall (N=104)	medium (N=110)
	short (N=21)	tall (N=79)	short (N=109)	short (N=89)	tall (N=39)

Fourth, the greatest variation appears in the participants' answers with reference to what the speaker is wearing (see Table 7 below). Even when the further descriptors, apart from the most frequent ones, are taken into account, no pattern emerges here, that is, no clear-cut differences can be seen among the different English accent variety speakers based on what they are considered to be wearing. Concerning the American speaker, respondents claim that he is *elegant* in the first place. The second, third and fourth most frequent descriptors applied in his case are that he is wearing *glasses*, a *moustache*, and a *beard*, respectively. The less frequent feature that is assigned to him is that he is wearing *scruffy* clothes. *Moustache* is associated the most frequently with both the French and the Russian speakers. Nevertheless, there are differences between them concerning the further descriptors. That is, the French speaker is considered as *elegant* the second most frequently, and as someone who is wearing *glasses*, *scruffy* clothes and a *beard* the third, fourth and fifth most frequently, respectively. At the same time, the Russian speaker is described as wearing a *beard*, being *elegant*, wearing *glasses* and *scruffy* clothes with decreasing frequency in this order. Moreover, both the German and the Indian speakers are assessed most frequently as wearing *glasses*. By comparison, the only further difference between these two speakers is that regarding the German speaker, the second most frequent feature assigned to him is that he is *elegant*, and the third most frequent feature is a *moustache*, while, with reference to the Indian speaker these two features are assigned in a reverse order.

Table 7. The appearance of the different English accent variety speakers

Appearance	American	French	German	Russian	Indian
	elegant (N=191)	moustache (N=176)	glasses (N=158)	moustache (N=165)	glasses (N=171)
	glasses (N=170) moustache (N=101) beard (N=94) scruffy (N=42)	elegant (N=137) glasses (N=114) scruffy (N=111) beard (N=104)	elegant (N=146) moustache (N=102) scruffy (N=54) beard (N=37)	beard (N=148) elegant (N=132) glasses (N=113) scruffy (N=82)	moustache (N=135) elegant (N=101) scruffy (N=80) beard (N=75)

Fifth, the second or third most frequent choices of the participants regarding the food or drink preferences of the speakers (Table 8 below) also indicate more stereotypes connected to the eating and drinking habits of the particular nationalities the varieties supposedly originate from. In other words, whereas *beer* is considered to be a very popular drink in the United States and Germany, French cuisine is more likely to be associated with *cheese*, and *sushi* can be categorized as Asian food. Also, *beer* appears in the second place even in the case of the French and Indian English speakers, for whom other food or drink preferences are selected in the first place. The table also

shows the frequency of the further preferences that were assigned to the speaker in a decreasing order.

Table 8. The food or drink preferences of the different English accent variety speakers

Likes	American	French	German	Russian	Indian
	beer (N=255)	cheese (N=177)	beer (N=271)	beer (N=186)	sushi (N=211)
	cheese (N=148)	beer (N=167)	chocolate (N=133)	cheese (N=124)	beer (N=116)
	chocolate (N=89)	sushi (N=82)	pizza (N=108)	pizza (N=94)	pizza (N=103)
	pizza (N=78)	chocolate (N=81)	cheese (N=83)	chocolate (N=89)	chocolate (N=99)
	sushi (N=28)	pizza (N=77)	sushi (N=59)	sushi (N=54)	cheese (N=95)

Finally, as far as the family status of the speakers is concerned (Table 9 below), while the German, the Russian and the Indian English speakers are regarded as *married*, the French English speaker is judged as being *divorced*, and the American speaker is characterized as *having children*. As a matter of fact, the German and Indian English speakers are also considered as *having children* in addition to being *married*.

Table 9. The family status of the different English accent variety speakers

Family	American	French	German	Russian	Indian
	has children (N=262)	divorced (N=175)	married (N=169)	married (N=172)	married (N=191)
	married (N=135)	married (N=111)	has children (N=105)	divorced (N=144)	has children (N=167)
	divorced (N=65)	has children (N=71)	orphan (N=63)	has children (N=140)	divorced (N=64)
	orphan (N=6)	orphan (N=70)	divorced (N=59)	orphan (N=34)	orphan (N=41)

Overall, in comparison with other research, the findings of the present study show that in some cases the Hungarian secondary school respondents display similar stereotypical images of the non-native English accent variety speakers as participants in other studies do. For instance, in a study by Hottola (2012), the stereotype of an American English speaker is that he is *tall*, he has *short, brown* hair, and he wears *jeans*. Indeed, the American English speaker in the present study is described similarly, i.e. as having *short, dark* hair, but considered to be of rather *medium-height*. In addition, regarding his clothes, while in Hottola's study (2012), a typical American wears jeans, in the present study the American English speaker is assigned *elegant* clothes the most frequently. Moreover, a study by Shiyong (2012) shows that when Asian speakers are described, among the nine most frequently used keywords *short* and *family* also appear. With

reference to height, the results of the current study also show that Hungarian secondary school students have a similar stereotypical image of Asian speakers, that is, they judge the Indian English speaker as being *short*, too. Although the keyword *family* is not described thoroughly in Shiyong's study (2012), therefore, it cannot really be compared to the present study, it can be seen that Hungarian secondary school students consider *family* and *having children* to be important characteristics of an Asian, in particular, of an Indian English accent variety speaker.

5.2. Results by sex

Although there are no statistically significant differences between the results based on the sex variable, there are some differences between the boys' and the girls' evaluations that are presented in Table 10 below. The two most interesting differences that might be pointed out are, first, a tendency according to which girls always assign *chocolate* rather than *pizza* to the speaker as a more preferred food with reference to all the different English accent variety speakers except for the German English one. At the same time, boys seem to assign these *pizza* and *chocolate* in the reverse order all the time, that is, they assign *pizza* more frequently to the speakers rather than *chocolate*. Second, boys tend to assign the characteristics *orphan* more frequently to the various speakers in general than girls do.

Table 10. Differences in stereotypes on the basis of the sex variable

	Girls	Boys
American		
Likes	chocolate (N=53) pizza (N=30)	pizza (N=48) chocolate (N=36)
French		
Likes	chocolate (N=39) pizza (N=33)	pizza (N=44) chocolate (N=42)
Family	has children (N=37) orphan (N=28)	orphan (N=42) has children (N=34)
German		
Appearance	glasses (N=92) elegant (N=76)	elegant (N=70) glasses (N=66)
Family	married (N=86) has children (N=50)	has children (N=55) married (N=43)
Russian		
Hair	blond (N=25) long (N=19)	long (N=45) blond (N=22)
Height	tall (N=62) short (N=46)	short (N=43) tall (N=42)
Appearance	glasses (N=59) elegant (N=58)	elegant (N=74) glasses (N=54)
Likes	chocolate (N=42) pizza (N=42)	pizza (N=52) chocolate (N=47)
Family	married (N=98) has children (N=68) divorced (N=66)	divorced (N=78) married (N=74) has children (N=72)
Indian		
Hair	dark (N=131) short (N=126)	short (N=111) dark (N=92)
Likes	chocolate (N=50) pizza (N=48)	pizza (N=55) chocolate (N=49)
Family	divorced (N=42) orphan (N=18)	orphan (N=23) divorced (N=22)

5.3. Results by age

Respondents from six different age groups participated in the study (see Table 2 above). Three of these age groups consisted of fewer than 50 participants, while the remaining three age groups consisted of more than 100 respondents. Therefore, in the first analysis of the results based on the age of the participants, only the latter three groups were taken into account.

In the analysis of the data, the overall most frequently selected characteristic traits are compared to the most frequently selected descriptors of each age group, i.e. of participants born in 1995, 1996 and 1997. The results are shown in Table 11 below. Differences emerge in ten cases which are listed on the left side of the table. On the right, the most frequently selected adjectives can be seen, and any differences that occur in the findings compared to them are highlighted in bold in the middle part of the table.

Table 11. Differences in stereotypes on the basis of the age variable of three groups (respondents born in 1995, 1996 and 1997)

	1995 (N=111)	1996 (N=110)	1997 (N=109)	Most frequent
American / Appearance	elegant (glasses)	elegant (glasses)	glasses (elegant)	elegant
French / Likes	cheese (beer)	beer (cheese)	beer (cheese)	cheese
German / Hair	blond (short)	blond (short)	short (blond)	blond
German / Height	medium (tall)	tall (short)	tall (medium)	medium
German / Appearance	glasses (elegant)	glasses (elegant)	elegant (glasses)	glasses
Russian / Hair	dark (grey)	dark (short)	short (dark)	dark
Russian / Age	middle (old)	old (middle)	middle (old)	middle
Russian / Appearance	moustache (beard)	moustache (elegant)	beard (moustache)	moustache
Indian / Appearance	glasses (moustache)	glasses (elegant)	moustache (glasses)	glasses
Indian / Family	married (has children)	married (has children)	has children (married)	married

Overall, a tendency can be observed according to which the deviations from the average, i.e. most frequent descriptors, emerge among younger participants. In other words, while the characteristics provided by the participants born in 1995 completely overlap the most frequently selected adjectives, some deviation from the average can be seen in the characteristic traits provided by the participants born in 1996. For example, while respondents generally consider the Russian English accent speaker as *middle-aged*, the most frequently applied descriptor of the respondents born in 1996 is *old* referring to the same speaker. The deviation from the overall descriptors is even more notable when the respondents born in 1997 are taken into account. In all except one category their most frequently selected traits differ from the ones provided by the majority of the respondents in the study. Therefore, a tendency seems to emerge

according to which the younger the participants are, in the more cases they deviate from the general or average description of the speaker.

To investigate this issue further, the most frequently used characteristic traits of respondents born in 1998 are also compared to the above presented results (see Table 12 below). Overall, participants born in 1998 – even though the results are provided by only 28 students – also show more deviations from the general descriptors than respondents born in 1995 or 1996. These deviations seems to confirm the findings in Table 11 as well that show that the younger respondents of the study display more deviations from the generalized pictures of the individual English accent variety speakers than the older respondents. That is, the younger respondents display less stable and less consistent stereotypical images of the different English accent speakers than the older respondents of the study.

Table 12. Differences in stereotypes on the basis of the age variable of four groups (including respondents born in 1998)

	1995 (N=111)	1996 (N=110)	1997 (N=109)	Most frequent	1998 (N=28)
American / Appearance	elegant (glasses)	elegant (glasses)	glasses (elegant)	elegant	moustache
French / Likes	cheese (beer)	beer (cheese)	beer (cheese)	cheese	chocolate
German / Hair	blond (short)	blond (short)	short (blond)	blond	blond
German / Height	medium (tall)	tall (short)	tall (medium)	medium	tall
German / Appearance	glasses (elegant)	glasses (elegant)	elegant (glasses)	glasses	elegant
Russian / Hair	dark (grey)	dark (short)	short (dark)	dark	short
Russian / Age	middle (old)	old (middle)	middle (old)	middle	old
Russian / Appearance	moustache (beard)	moustache (elegant)	beard (moustache)	moustache	elegant
Indian / Appearance	glasses (moustache)	glasses (elegant)	moustache (glasses)	glasses	glasses
Indian / Family	married (has children)	married (has children)	has children (married)	married	married

6. Summary

The present study shows that when Hungarian language learners from a particular Hungarian secondary school hear somebody speaking with an American, a French, a German, a Russian or an Indian English accent, they associate different stereotypical or

generalized images with the speaker. Furthermore, the sex and the age of the participants play a role in the emergence of some of the differences between these stereotypical images. That is, on the basis of the respondents' sex, the differences display a tendency that is shown best in the food or drink items that boys and girls assign to the speaker. Concerning the respondents' age, the results show that younger respondents possess less consistent images of the different speakers than older respondents do.

Previous research with Hungarian students has provided similar results in terms of the sex variable (see, for example, Dörnyei, Csizér and Németh, 2006), however, an area for further research in studying stereotypes could be the investigation of what role the age variable plays in assigning stereotypical images to different English accent variety speakers. What is more, longitudinal studies with the same participants over a period of time might provide additional data that would enable us to observe when and how stereotypes emerge, develop, change and stabilize throughout adolescence.

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Intercultural bilingual education in multilingual societies of Latin America: Challenges and perspectives

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The purpose of the article is to analyze the Latin American example of an intercultural approach to education in a bilingual/multilingual indigenous context. As a result of the political processes of the last decades, the continent, which used to be considered in a certain sense as a culturally homogeneous region, started elaborating new approaches towards identity, including language. This was reflected in new modalities introduced in education, aimed first at including indigenous children in the alphabetization/education process mainly through teaching them the dominant language, and later the focus changed towards multilingualism and interculturality. The process went in parallel with the global struggle for the rights of autochthonous peoples, as well as the recognition of the values of multilingualism and preservation of linguistic diversity.

Key words: education, multilingual, intercultural, Latin America, indigenous

1. Introduction

In the new history of language policies several types of regulations can be distinguished, from prohibition and oppression to recognition and protection (Múñoz Cruz, 2009, p. 225), but we can see a clear tendency towards the acceptance of the values of linguistic diversity. This phenomenon in the past decades led to the recognition of the importance of mother tongue in education, combating language endangerment and prevention of extinction of languages. International organizations having a mandate in the field are also extensively dealing with this topic¹. In developing countries with a large number of indigenous populations, the question of multilingualism and its manifestations in everyday life goes well beyond cultural, linguistic and educational features, and constitutes a comprehensive socio-political phenomenon.

The purpose of this article is to analyze the development of the Latin American example of multilingual approach to education. I will argue that the question of multilingualism in education and literacy has a strong right-based component and goes beyond merely pedagogical aspects. The impact of this approach on the promotion of rights of indigenous people is tangible both on national and international level. The Latin American experience has considerably contributed to the development of the perception of diversity as a democratic, pluralistic value.

As a result of the political processes of the last decades the continent – which used to be considered in a certain sense as a culturally homogeneous region, with

¹ See e.g. 37 C/4 UNESCO Medium-Term Strategy, 2014-2021

monoculturalism as a model to follow and diversity as a ‘problem’ – started elaborating new approaches towards identity, including language (López, 2009, p.4). The above-mentioned tendencies are applicable both to internal action (introducing vernacular languages in the education process; protection of indigenous identities and the strengthening of cultural and political representation of autochthonous population) as well as to international participation (e.g. adoption of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples).

Aspirations towards safeguarding indigenous languages and cultures have created a number of variations of educational policies throughout the continent. Intercultural Bilingual Education (IBE) is an eloquent example of a multifaceted approach that is aimed at embracing not only educational, but more complex political and human rights aspects.

2. The sociolinguistic landscape of Latin America

A society is considered bilingual when two languages are spoken in a given territory. According to Patten, “bilingual societies [...] must decide whether or not to adopt some form of institutional bilingualism” (Patten, 2003, p. 296), education being one of its crucial elements. Most of Latin American countries are multilingual, however IBE started as a bilingual concept of educating indigenous population in a vernacular and a dominant language simultaneously.

Statistics related to the number of living languages in Latin America may considerably vary; the background paper commissioned to assist in drafting the 2010 Education for All Global Monitoring Report estimates it as 557 (López, 2009, p. 3), but according to the recent edition of *Ethnologue* more than 800 languages are currently spoken in the region (Lewis, Simons & Fennig 2015). Constitutions of about a dozen countries recognize the multiethnic, multicultural and multilingual nature of their society (López & Sichra, 2004, p.128). Political status of indigenous languages also follows a different pattern: they are recognized as languages of education in 7 countries, co-official with Spanish in 4 countries, of official regional use in 3 countries, and without a specific status in 5 countries (López, 2009, p. 3). In addition to indigenous languages we can count numerous creole dialects, as well as other languages of Asian and European origin.

Evidently, we are talking about very different ethnic and societal patterns in the continent, since in some countries indigenous communities constitute only 5% of total population (Colombia, Venezuela, Paraguay), while in others – such as Bolivia or Guatemala – this percentage exceeds 50%. Linguistic diversity is also very variable, i.e. Colombia and Mexico counts up to 60-80 spoken languages, while Ecuador has only 12 of them. Regional distribution at first glance seems less complicated, since indigenous population traditionally lives in rural areas, however, in some cases, the growth of urban indigenous communities is remarkable, e.g. 75% of the Mapuche population in Chile

lives in towns and cities. As for the total number of speakers, relatively few vernacular peoples – Aymara, Quiché, Quechua – count one million or more representatives (López & Sichra, 2004, p. 125). Over 80% of the total indigenous population of the region is concentrated in Bolivia, Guatemala, Mexico and Peru, historically considered as the “most indigenous” countries (López, 2009, p. 4).

Ethnic belonging obviously does not always correspond to linguistic identity: in a number of cases representatives of the indigenous population are not able to preserve their mother tongue; however, the different modalities of preservation of autochthonous languages together with the use of Spanish have created a truly differentiated picture of linguistic diversity. At the same time the chances of successful language preservation and language use in everyday life do not necessarily depend on the number of speakers (López & Sichra, 2004, p. 126), and the actual will of the given community to maintain their tongue is crucial in this respect.

3. The origins and development of IBE

Bilingual education with an intercultural component means a participation of two languages and two cultures in the process of learning, and it includes preservation, development and teaching of languages, and also the development and the rapprochement of the given cultures, in order to guarantee the practice of interculturality (Lozano Vallejo, 2000, p.12).

In Latin America there does not exist a dominant concept related to education and interculturalism (Williamson, 2004, p. 24.), however the best definition seems to be given by López, as it reflects best what IBE is about: “[i]nterculturalism in education refers to learning that is rooted in one’s own culture, language, values, worldview and system of knowledge but that is, at the same time, receptive, open to and appreciative of other knowledges, values, cultures and languages. The final aim of intercultural education is learning to live together” (López, 2009, p. 9).

IBE is one of the varieties of bilingual education, aimed at finding answers not only to the problem of illiteracy, but also to such issues as social integration of indigenous communities together with preservation of their cultural and linguistic diversity. Its roots go back to the first decades of the 20th century (López, 2009, p. 7), when indigenous teachers took the initiative to introduce local languages into literacy programs both for children and adults, sometimes starting from designing alphabets for some of those languages, since many of them did not have script. The 1930-40s were characterized by the aspiration to ‘enlighten’ the indigenous, with a paternalistic aim to preserv nation states (López & Küper, 1999.) Until the 1970s the concept of multiculturalism was mostly ignored, and the so-called transitional bilingual education – which was popular at the time – demonstrated strong assimilationist features.

While the decade of the 1990s was still mainly characterized by monolingual alphabetization in indigenous education (López & Küper, 1999), in the recent years this

trend has undergone considerable changes. Transformations in the language use tendencies of the continent have led to the consequence that with some exceptions, vernacular monolingualism is not typical any more, every community being at least bilingual (López, 2009, p. 4).

However, despite these changes on the ideological level and on the level of everyday use of languages, the notion of social integration in practice still continues to be identified with ‘Hispanization’, with an active participation of the members of the indigenous communities themselves who do not see opportunities for self-realization in their mother tongue and prefer to continue their secondary studies in Spanish (Lozano Vallejo, 2000, p. 134). This practically means a shift from one (indigenous) monolingualism to another (hegemonic) one, or – given the relative rarity of cases nowadays when a person or a community speaks only an indigenous variety – from multilingualism to monolingualism in the dominant/national language. In order to avoid this as well as to overcome still existing inequalities, further work on diversification of curriculum content shall be conducted and further decentralization of the education system is needed.

As pointed out by Levy, it is more complicated to be literate in a language than to speak a language (Levy, 2003, p. 231); however, alphabetization does not have to be aimed at educating in one language, and the Latin-American example shows that promoting literacy does not necessarily mean moving towards monolingualism. Indeed, the process started as a homogenizing one, but the recent two decades have replaced the focus from monolingualism as an ideal to multicultural values. Levy argues that the spread of mass literacy leads to consolidating nationalism – most likely to be interpreted here in the sense of nation-building process – and democracy, which has monolingual tendencies as a consequence at local level (Levy, 2003, p. 233). However, as it can be seen below, the alphabetization in Latin America, especially when it came to the phase of literacy in a vernacular language, was inextricably linked to the democratization movement in the continent. It also worth to be mentioned that the Latin American case is different from that of other regions of the world due to the fact that the struggle for recognition is not aimed at creating independent states, but to promote participation in political processes and decision-making, and guarantee economic inclusion within their own country (López & Sichra, 2004, p. 130) through education, among others.

Due to the large variety of ethnic and linguistic patterns, a uniform approach cannot be applied. In order to meet the needs of every community, instead of nation-wide statistics, policy-makers shall use figures applicable to a given region. For example, rural indigenous areas as the most vulnerable ones need special attention to the habits and socio-cultural specificities of language users (Zúñiga, 2000, p. 128), however the context of urban areas do not necessarily mean that language rights in education are guaranteed.

In many cases young children at the time of starting school speak up to four of five local languages, and already during primary school, they face the obligation to

learn subjects in the dominant local or national language they might not speak at all. As pointed out by Levy, the “pre-literate linguistic equilibrium” (Levy, 2003, p. 231) may include several languages a person speaks in their smaller environment; however, when it comes to literacy which often means the acquisition of another language, it becomes complicated and people start giving up their vernacular variety, moving to another area or simply remaining illiterate. Therefore, the goal of the IBE is precisely the preservation of the highest possible way of multilingualism even after achieving literacy.

As mentioned above, multilingual literacy is a significantly more complicated issue than a monolingual one; therefore, it requires more efforts, financial contribution and well-organized strategies. Direct indigenous involvement has also proved its efficiency, and as such it could be of key importance, therefore, for achieving sustainable results, it is crucial to ensure the participation of indigenous communities at every stage of the process (López, 2009, p. 49; Williamson, 2004, p. 25).

Language competences are crucial for any kind of social interaction, and without a functioning competence in the language spoken around, one will face a number of difficulties in everyday life as well as the fulfillment of his or her rights. Patten (2003, p. 307) referring to Kymlicka names this a “context of choice” that constitutes a range of opportunities in different kinds of human interactions. This can be demonstrated in two ways, either “a sufficiently healthy context of choice operating in her own native language” is provided, or a person “can achieve sufficient competence in a second language in which there is an adequate context of choice available.” In the context of Latin America that means that a Quechua- or Mapuche-speaking person should either have a wide set of options operating in his or her mother-tongue, or speak good Spanish in order to have access to opportunities of self-realization. Intercultural bilingual education is designed in a way to correspond to both of these possibilities.

It is remarkable to note what aspects of bilingual education were taken up by the government sector and what were promoted by the civil society, including the representatives of indigenous organizations. Government models generally focus on the technical features of intercultural bilingualism, embracing practices related to curricula development or pedagogical processes (Williamson, 2004, p. 25), while the civil sector still puts an emphasis on education and language related political rights (López, 2009, p. 2). The scope of this article does not permit to analyze the different experiences of some countries where IBE started either as a governmental policy or as a civil initiative, but it is still important to underline that the civil sector continues to attribute an utmost importance to the rights-based approach to this question.

4. International implications

The concept which started as a movement for the preservation of languages and culture of indigenous peoples has ended up having a considerable impact on international

developments related to the recognition of the rights of indigenous peoples. Or, more precisely, these two processes were developing in parallel, influencing each other. Education systems of the countries of the Latin American region started a comprehensive use of bilingual education in the 1980s, when the continent did not only face the appearance of isolated initiatives, but the issue also became an important element of the political struggle for the rights of indigenous population and the preservation of their identity with a large and systematic involvement of indigenous experts and educators (Williamson, 2004, p. 25).

This movement was also reflected on a global scale. In 1982 the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) established a Working Group on Indigenous Populations (WGIP), which started the elaboration of the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples in 1985. The Document was adopted by the UN General Assembly only in 2007, and it explicitly recognizes “the right to establish and control their educational systems and institutions providing education in their own languages, in a manner appropriate to their cultural methods of teaching and learning”, which should be guaranteed by the state “in conjunction with indigenous peoples” (United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, Art. 14).

Other important international forums were also dealing with the indigenous question. In 1989 the International Labor Organization adopted the Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Convention (C169) in 1989, and its Article 28 specifically mentioned that “children belonging to the peoples concerned shall, wherever practicable, be taught to read and write in their own indigenous language or in the language most commonly used by the group to which they belong” as well as it should be aimed that they achieved fluency in national language as well (C169, Art. 28).

The debate related to indigenous rights has been going on since then. On the occasion of the International Year of Languages (2008) UNESCO organized a large thematic debate related to indigenous and endangered languages and the role of languages in Education for All. During the discussion the rights-based approach to the question was emphasised also from UNESCO perspective, namely, the importance of equal treatment of languages by decision-makers, taking into account basic democratic principles, such as diversity meaning pluralism, „the equal dignity of cultures, of human rights, of non-discrimination and of equality of opportunity” (UNESCO 180 EX/INF.24, 2008).

Current discussion within United Nations and its specialized agencies regularly take up the issue of indigenous identity and rights, which started as a cultural debate, and by now has become a broad human rights issue. Among recent developments the adoption of the Outcome Document of the high-level plenary meeting of the General Assembly – known as the World Conference on Indigenous Peoples – can be

mentioned. The resolution unanimously approved in September 2014 explicitly refers to linguistic rights in education.²

5. Conclusion

IBE has proved to be successful in some areas, especially from the perspective of the evolution of values from dominant language acquisition to multilingualism and the importance of education in mother tongue as the key for self-realization. It certainly contributed to the protection of political rights of autochthonous peoples and international awareness raising about the needs of indigenous population, especially in developing countries; it has played a crucial role in promoting indigenous identity and slowing down the endangerment of languages. All these questions rank high in the contemporary international agenda. Domestic legislative framework – from Constitutional guarantees to regulations in the field of education – in most cases can be considered as satisfactory, even if implementation takes time. However, bringing up the issue of the role of mother tongue to international level had a considerable implication on worldwide processes related to rights of autochthonous peoples.

The fact that some countries – such as Uruguay – which until recently has not reported about indigenous population living in its territory, have recognized the presence of autochthonous peoples means that identity politics appear as a new factor in contemporary political thought which also needs to be taken into account while forming educational strategies (López, 2009, p. 4). This tendency may also be considered in many aspects as the merit of the IBE.

Insufficiencies of the IBE lay mostly in the field of implementation and practicalities. Even if successfully applied, in many cases bilingual education stops at the level of primary school, however, ideally, the presence and use of the indigenous languages should continue at least at the level of secondary school, or even further, which would mean a “societal sustainable bilingualism” (López, 2009, p. 10) with long-term positive implications on social and economic opportunities of the representatives of indigenous communities. The still remaining inadequacy between the question of identity and self-realization in one’s vernacular language may lead to considerable tensions.

² See A/RES/69/2:“§ 14. We commit ourselves to promoting the right of every indigenous child, in community with members of his or her group, to enjoy his or her own culture, [...] or to use his or her own language; §15. We commit ourselves to developing, in consultation with indigenous peoples, policies, programmes and resources, where relevant, that target the well-being of indigenous youth, in particular in the areas of health, education, employment and the transmission of traditional knowledge, languages and practices“.

The United Nation Millennium Development Goals Report 2015 shows that Goal 2 (achievement of universal primary education) has not had any significant progress in Latin America from 2000 to 2015; the enrollment rates remained at about the same level of 94% (MDG Report, 2015). However the changes compared to the 87% measured in 1990 show a progress by 2000, and that may also result from the success of IBE that has moved its focus towards an extensive use of autochthonous languages at school.

Referring to the doubts expressed by Levy relating literacy in mother tongue, it can be mentioned that the United Nations Education for All Global Monitoring Report underlines (EFA GMR Report, 2015, p. 148) that despite the ambivalence of the attitudes towards the feasibility of multilingual approaches, these latter proved to be much more credible today than at the start of the EFA period³, even taking into account the slowness of achieving tangible results.

Literacy of bilingual people should not only mean learning as such, but also transferring capacities into the other language spoken by the person (López & Hanemann, 2009, p. 244), and as such being functional and transmittable to other members of the society as well as for future generations. Evidently, more emphasis should be put on adult literacy (EFA GMR 2015, p. 148), especially in the still existing setting of vernacular monolingualism.

Bilingual education should in any case be considered in a wider context, which takes into account cultural, political and other aspects of the issue. Multicultural education which includes bilingualism or multilingualism has by nowadays achieved a broader meaning, which embraces the promotion of indigenous rights and – ideally – is supposed to go well beyond the learning of the hegemonic language of the given society, or managing reading and writing skills in either of the languages the given community speaks.

To sum up, despite the success of the human rights aspect of Intercultural Bilingual Education a considerable further work related to pedagogical side is needed, aimed at reaching the whole marginalized population and overcoming considerable gaps still remaining in the quality of teaching.

Following the right-based approach towards languages, the use of mother tongue in education is the main and the most concrete demand among linguistic rights, starting from the claim of the right to use mother tongue at schools – at least for basic understanding purposes, – till the opportunity of partly teaching in indigenous languages and finally, a system of bilingual education itself. The expansion of this notion has led to the implementation of bicultural-intercultural concept which includes the majority language as a second language (Iturralde Guerrero, 2004, p. 112).

These aspects – which go beyond mere technicalities – have to be placed properly in the national educational policy debate of the countries of the region. The issue

³ The Education for All (EFA) is global initiative started in 1990 and includes a set of targets to provide quality basic education for all children, youth and adults by 2015. See more at <http://www.unesco.org/new/en/education/themes/leading-the-international-agenda/education-for-all/>

transcends the frame of educational or language policies and involves questions of wider social transformation; since most countries of the continent still face the early phase of the “intercultural pluralist reorganization”, all attributes of a multicultural society shall be adjusted to this trend, according to the different needs of the very diverse Latin American communities (Múñoz Cruz, 2009, p. 222). And, precisely that way, the region will be progressively moving from inclusion of indigenous communities through intercultural bilingual education to an “intercultural education for all” (López 2009, p. 9.), which would be a sustainable outcome of the process started several decades ago.

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Have changes brought about changes? Findings of a longitudinal study conducted among first-year students of English

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The constant changes affecting the Hungarian higher education system make both students and instructors face newer and newer challenges. The introduction of the Bologna system and the abolition of the entrance exams brought on the change that students gain admission into university programmes based on their school leaving exam results, and thus they are not screened for the programmes. In the case of language major BA and the new undivided one-tier language teacher training programmes the core problem may be the insufficient knowledge of the target language(s) which brings on vastly heterogeneous student groups in the individual seminars. In our paper we present an overview of the results of language proficiency and vocabulary tests taken by first-year English and American BA students and from 2013 also the teacher trainees. In addition to the placement tests a further questionnaire was administered, in which students evaluate their level of English on a 3-point, a 6-point and a 9-point Likert scale. Our results indicate that there is a lack of correlation between the scores necessary for admission and students' language proficiency level. The answers given in the questionnaires show how the students evaluate their own language proficiency at the beginning of their university studies.

1. Introduction

Due to the constant changes in the Hungarian higher education in recent years there has been an increase in the heterogeneity of the language proficiency and study goals of our incoming students at the Institute of English and American Studies at the University of Szeged. Since 2006, the introduction of the Bologna system in the Hungarian higher education, there have been no entrance exams to screen the applicants prior to their university studies, and thus the instructors of BA programmes have no opportunity to survey the incoming students' previously acquired subject specific knowledge and their solid – minimally B2 – English language proficiency. Therefore, in order for the instructors of the programme and the students themselves to have a clear picture of their level of English, placement tests, that is, a B2-level language proficiency and a vocabulary test, are administered in the first week of each academic year (see more: Doró, 2011c). The present paper analyses the results of these English language proficiency and vocabulary tests written by English or American Studies BA students and English language teacher trainees in the new undivided one-tier programme.

In an academic setting in higher education students, apart from having a solid language proficiency level, are expected to have clearly defined learning goals. In order to formulate their own goals, they must have an objective view of their own skills and capabilities as well as an accurate understanding of their current language knowledge.

As Doró (2011a, p. 82) also maintains “clear goals, good skills and good learning strategies are essential for academic achievement”. This has led us to the conclusion that the students’ evaluations of their own language proficiency can also be considerably informative. In order to assess the students’ self-evaluation, a questionnaire was administered, in which they evaluate their level of English on a 3-point, a 6-point and a 9-point Likert scale.

2. Background

As mentioned above, the introduction of the Bologna-type three-cycle structures (Bachelor, Master and Doctorate) into the Hungarian higher education system in 2006 brought about significant changes. The earlier dual system was relatively inflexible because arts faculty students were expected to decide at the point of leaving high school whether they opted to become elementary-school or high-school teachers, or graduate as philologists. Thus students were required to have rather specific plans regarding their future position in the labour market at the very start of their higher education studies. The Bologna system, on the contrary, makes it possible for students to reconsider their plans after having earned their bachelor degrees and continue their studies in master programmes that are not integrally related to their previous studies. Beyond the professions mentioned above, several other study directions (e.g. economy or social sciences) are available for BA graduates in English and other foreign languages. Furthermore, the introduction of the credit system has resulted in the recognition of credits earned in different institutions, or even abroad (see, e.g., Ministry of Education, 2006). The credit system gives students some degree of flexibility to make decisions about what courses to take and how to time them. This, however, inherently, carries the danger that in the case of non-completed courses students need to retake them several times, and, thus, prolong the time they spend completing a programme.

Cancelling the entrance exams for the BA-programmes, which deprives Hungarian institutions of the right to screen – or at least have the chance to meet – their prospective students was another major change in 2006. Basically, the same practice is applied for the new teacher training programmes. Although applicants take part in a short motivational interview, their language proficiency and subject specific knowledge are not assessed. One major negative consequence of this system is the arising heterogeneity in students’ language knowledge.

The authors of the present article are instructors in the English language study programmes of the Department of English Language Teacher Education and Applied Linguistics of the Institute of English and American Studies at the University of Szeged, and as such, we encounter the problems listed above in our everyday practice. The mere fact that a student has been accepted at our institute provides no information about their English language proficiency. The instructors only gain access to the names of the admitted students, but their prior results, including the scores achieved at the advanced

level school leaving exam in English, are not available. In a previous article, we (Bajnóczi & T. Balla, 2015) concluded that the scores students gain in the admission process would not be informative enough regarding the language knowledge of the prospective students because this score comprises many different elements and only one of them is the result of the advanced level school leaving examination in English.

We are of the opinion that it is extremely important to have a clear picture of our incoming students' English language knowledge since this information makes it possible for us to provide them with professional guidance, and thus facilitate their studies and help them cope with the challenges they encounter during their studies. When introducing a language placement test to the first-year students some years ago, our assumption was that if the students had the chance to get to know each other's results, they would be able to position themselves among their peers and would know whether they belong to the stronger or weaker students. These data would help the effective work with our students and could also contribute to the decrease in the number of unaccomplished courses and drop-outs (see, e.g., Doró, 2011b).

As summarised above, the introduction of the Bologna system into the instruction of arts students means that there is a minimal screening of the applicants, and almost anyone who has passed the advanced level school leaving exam in a foreign language can become a language major student (Doró, 2010, p. 581). The fact of having been accepted into the programme reinforces the, in many cases false, belief that their English knowledge is satisfactory for pursuing their studies in the higher education system. And, even if their language proficiency meets the expectations, they still might have "vague ideas concerning the academic content of the chosen field" (Édes, 2009 in Doró, 2011a, p. 83). As also observed by Doró (2011a) as well as by Doró and Szabó Gilinger (2015), students, at the beginning of their studies, are surprised to experience the differences between secondary and tertiary education, such as expectations, workload and student life (see also Prescott, 2010). It is frequently the case that many first-year students only recognise in their first classes that their content knowledge and language skills will not be sufficient to complete their courses in the first semester.

Beyond the problems relating to the students' language knowledge detailed above, the lack of entrance examinations has further negative effects. Without having the chance to meet the prospective students, the instructors have no information on the motivation, interests or future plans of students. This, again is a major shortcoming, since – as opposed to the former practice of the dual system, in which students, whilst preparing for the entrance examinations, familiarised themselves with the structure and contents of the programme and, thus, were well aware of what to expect from their classes – the students both in the Bologna and the new one-tier system do not have a clear, very often not even a vague, idea of what subject areas their studies entail.

Based on the recognition that the instructors in such programmes receive data neither about our enrolled students' language knowledge nor about their motivation, our

department endeavours to make up for this by asking our incoming students to take placement and vocabulary tests and fill in questionnaires.⁴

3. Methods

The participants of the present study are full-time and correspondence first-year English Studies BA major and minor students as well as the students in the new undivided one-tier teacher training programme launched in 2013. Our present results are based on data obtained using two different types of data collection instruments: language placement tests on language use and vocabulary and a questionnaire on students' linguistic biographies and self-assessment. All of our subjects took part in a testing session at the beginning of their first academic year and were asked to take two language tests in altogether 60 minutes. One test was aimed at surveying the students' language use (100 multiple-choice items), while the other measured their vocabulary knowledge (150 items). The tests were written in the first academic week, since, we believe, the sooner the results are available, the more effective guidance and support can be provided to them in and outside their classes. The data were recorded between the academic years 2008–2009 and 2015–2016. The scores were made available both to instructors and to students. The questionnaire is a more recent element that was introduced at our department in 2013 in order to gain a deeper insight into our subjects' language learning backgrounds and the estimation of their own language level.

4. Results and discussion

In the following two sections we present the results of our students' placement tests and questionnaire data to illustrate our propositions outlined above.

4.1 Placement test results

In a former study (Bajnóczi & T. Balla, 2015) we analysed the placement test results administered in the academic years between 2008–2009 and 2013–2014 and found that in the course of these six years the results (N=between 151 and 208) of the placement tests on language and language use varied between 63.19 % and 73 %, while the results of the vocabulary tests varied between 70 % and 76 %, with similar standard deviation figures in the different years. The new data from the academic years of 2014–2015 and 2015–2016 fall within the same ranges, see Table 1. Thus we can maintain that the means are not informative enough regarding the student populations' knowledge of English in the individual academic years. A more detailed analysis involving minimum

⁴ We are deeply indebted to our colleagues at the Department of English Language Teacher Education and Applied Linguistics at the University of Szeged for their help in invigilating these testing sessions and taking part in the assessment of the placement tests.

and maximum scores (e.g. 29–88 in year 2008 on the language use test and 29–100 in years 2008 and 2011 on the vocabulary test) as well as the number of students below, above and around an optimal level is more indicative of how successfully the students are likely to progress with their studies. The minimum and maximum scores of both tests are also presented in Table 1. Comparing the ranges in the different years, we found that there were major differences which reflect the heterogeneity we also experience in the course of instruction.

Table 1. Results of the placement tests (2008–2015)

	2008		2009		2010		2011	
	Lg	Voc	Lg	Voc	Lg	Voc	Lg	Voc
N	182		164		168		181	
Mean %	63.19	72	70.43	70	72.09	75	65.2	73.78
SD	11.54	14.71	11.57	16	9.86	13.95	11.58	15.69
Range	29-88	29-100	37-96	29-99	49-98	31-99	31-94	29-100

	2012		2013		2014		2015	
	Lg	Voc	Lg	Voc	Lg	Voc	Lg	Voc
N	157		208		225		156	
Mean %	73	73.24	71.21	76	66.13	75.78	72.41	75.73
SD	14.61	9.06	11.44	11.52	9.46	12.59	10.43	12.86
Range	41-99	51-95	36-95	31-99	40-91	34-98	45-98	42-99

Past experience has shown that the results of the two placement tests serve as approximate indicators of the students' success in their studies, for example, the results of the complex language exam administered at the end of the first academic year of the English Studies Programme show that students have a good chance to pass if their incoming placement test results are not below 70%, which roughly corresponds to level B2 on the CEFR. Students with results of 50% or below in the majority of the cases do not even manage to complete the prerequisites for this exam. In Table 2 we present the percentage of students below the 50% level and above the 70% 'optimal' level in the grammar placement tests. The results suggest that in years 2008, 2011 and 2014 a great number of students with poor English knowledge started their studies at our institute and, indeed, these student populations proved to be the weakest in language seminars, while in years 2010, 2012 and 2015⁵ we experienced that students started their tertiary studies with a more solid knowledge. Table 3 reveals that years 2008 and 2009 yielded the poorest and years 2013 and 2014 the strongest results on the vocabulary placement test.

As we have pointed out above, students starting their studies in 2008 performed poorly in the language use and in the vocabulary placement tests. These results

⁵ When publishing the present paper only data from the fall semester of the 2015–2016 academic year are available.

coincided with the observations of the instructors teaching language classes for these students. Our colleagues confirmed that there were, indeed, many low-achievers among their students in that year. As opposed to these results, our students starting their studies in 2013 performed best on both tests: 60.09 and 72 % of the students achieved results higher than 70 percent. These students were more proficient than students in other years, and this was reflected in the work in the language seminars.

Table 2. Percentage of students achieving below 50% and above 69% (2008 – 2015) in the language use placement test

	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
N	182	164	168	181	157	208	225	156
max. 50% (%)	14.83	4.9	1	8.2	0	2.4	2.36	1.92
min. 70% (%)	30.76	45.73	55.36	35.35	61.15	60.09	36	60.26

Table 3. Percentage of students achieving below 50% and above 69% (2008 – 2015) in the vocabulary test

	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
N	182	164	168	181	157	208	225	156
max. 50% (%)	8.79	11.58	2.38	8.29	4.46	2.4	4.88	2.56
min. 70% (%)	52.74	53.04	64.88	65.19	61.78	75	72	66.02

As the data presented in the above tables highlight, the incoming student populations are not only heterogeneous within the same year of study, but there are vast differences between the students starting their studies in the different years as well.

4.2 Questionnaire data

In the previous section we presented the results of placement tests assessing the incoming students' performance at the beginning of their academic career. In order to find out how students perceive their own language proficiency, we used an instrument designed to help us assess our subjects' self-evaluation of their language knowledge with the help of three different scales. The students were requested to assess their level of English on a 3-point, a 6-point and a 9-point Likert scale, on which 0 means no knowledge of the language, and 3, 6 and 9 mean a native-like level, respectively. The answers are summarised in Table 4.

Table 4. First-year full-time students' self-evaluation of their language proficiency 2013-2015

	2013			2014			2015		
N	140			182			133		
	3-point Likert scale	6-point Likert scale	9-point Likert scale	3-point Likert scale	6-point Likert scale	9-point Likert scale	3-point Likert scale	6-point Likert scale	9-point Likert scale
Mean on scale	2.36	4.04	6.19	2.26	3.98	5.97	2.28	4.14	6.09
Percentage	78.66	67.33	68.87	75.33	66.33	66.33	76	69	67.66

(100%=native-like proficiency)

As Table 4 reveals, the subjects think that their knowledge of English exceeds 66.33 percent on all the three scales in each year between 2013 and 2015, that is, they evaluate their language knowledge to be relatively close to the native-like end of the scale. In view of the placement test results presented in Table 1 above, this estimated knowledge reflects a highly optimistic picture on the students' part.

It is also interesting to note that although there are differences in each year's means as regards the language use and vocabulary placement tests results (see Table 1), there seems to be a more moderate change in the means of the students' self-evaluation regarding their language proficiency. Whereas the placement tests show that the average achievement of the students starting their studies in 2013 was 71.21% on the B2-level language use component and 76% on the vocabulary component, students ranked their language proficiency much higher: between 67.33 and 78.66 on a scale between zero and native-like proficiency. Similarly, in 2014, the placement tests results were 66.13 and 75.78 on the B2-level scale, with students ranking their own proficiency between 66.33 and 75.33, and in 2015 the B2 results were 72.41 and 75.73, while the students ranked themselves between 67.66 and 76 (see Tables 1 and 4).

Our students enter into the BA programme with a language knowledge that they believe to be a high proficiency level that is sufficient for completing their course requirements while the instructors are of the opinion that there is a need for an intensive and complex language development. Since in our view our students' initial expectations towards their tertiary studies do not appear to be completely realistic, there is a controversy which needs to be settled. In compliance with the above and as Doró (2011a, p. 81) also observes, many students seem to struggle with the demands of their university studies and fail to successfully fulfil even the first-year requirements while at the same time they "believe that their language skills are adequate for carrying out undergraduate studies" (Doró, 2011a, p. 90). Colleagues at other Hungarian universities have also problematized incoming students' language knowledge and have also pointed out the mismatch between the expected language proficiency, the study demands and the performance of students of English, e.g. Lehmann (2006) discusses how advanced learners' vocabulary is tested in a proficiency exam.

Summarising the above, the instructors at the Institute of English and American Studies face a dual challenge. On the one hand, there is a great need for a systematic and extensive language development, while, on the other hand, the students need to understand that what they conceive to be appropriate and sufficient language proficiency may not be satisfactory to successfully complete their studies. That is the reason why in the past few years not only the number of compulsory language classes has been raised, but the department has also been trying to find ways in which instructors can both raise consciousness and deal with the students' needs as much as possible. When there was an opportunity to launch new courses, a 'remedial' intensive language course for the weakest students was offered. This course, unfortunately, due to reasons that would exceed the limits of the present paper, did not yield the expected results; however, the experience played an important role in developing the contents for our Academic Study Skills course, which aims at helping the students make the huge step that connects the way they studied at high school with what is expected of them during their English studies at the university (see also Doró, 2015). Our department's new endeavour for trying to enhance our incoming students' success in their studies is to form study groups where first-year students are assisted by teacher trainees in their final years.

5. Conclusion

In our present paper we aimed at summarising the findings of our different data collection instruments. The results reveal that many of the challenges we face as instructors in our everyday practice of language teaching derive from the fact that our first-year students' English language proficiency reflected in the placement tests and the level the students believe to have differ to a great extent. This discrepancy between the results has twofold implications. First, it implies that it might be difficult for students to commit themselves to improving their overall language skills, and second, it is highly challenging for instructors to make first-year students realise that their lack of the appropriate language proficiency level prevents them from having a successful academic career (see also Doró, 2011a). Although there are several steps the instructors of the institute have taken in order to help our students, there is a constant need for monitoring the incoming student populations. Instructors should increasingly be prepared to find ways to motivate students to deeply engage in their studies.

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SZEMLE
REVIEWS AND REPORTS

**Report on the 5th International Conference on Foreign
Language Teaching and Applied Linguistics and the
International Forum on Slavic Studies – FLTAL,
Burch University, Sarajevo, May 7–9, 2015**

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The international conference hosted by the International Burch University in Sarajevo celebrated a jubilee of sorts in 2015 – this private university has hosted an academic event for the fifth year in a row, which, if not the biggest linguistic event in Bosnia and Herzegovina and the region, is surely among the biggest.

The Fifth International Conference on Foreign Language Teaching and Applied Linguistics and the International Forum on Slavic Studies were held from May 7–9 on the campus of the International Burch University in Sarajevo, which, besides its organisational strengths, regularly displays its capacities in accommodating such a large conference (over 300 presenters and numerous visitors and guests in the field of linguistics and language teaching). The plenary speakers also attracted a large number of academics this year, mainly professors of linguistics and English language teachers. The main sessions were reserved for: Adele Goldberg, Professor of Linguistics at Princeton University; Kathleen Bardovi-Harlig, Professor of Linguistics at the University of Indiana; Lourdes Ortega, Professor of Second Language Acquisition at Georgetown University; Lydia White, Professor of Linguistics at McGill University in Canada; Michael Ullman, Professor of Neuroscience at Georgetown University; Nina Spada, Professor of Second Language Education at the University of Toronto; and Paul Kei Matsuda, Professor of Second Language Writing at Arizona State University. Unfortunately, a visit and lecture by Professor George Lakoff from the University of California at Berkeley that was announced for the second time were not realised for the same reason as last year (illness); however, during a conversation with Professor Azamat Akbarov, I learned that Burch University still has a strong desire to bring Professor Lakoff to Bosnia and Herzegovina and that this visit will likely happen – if not at one of the conferences, then as part of a special seminar on cognitive linguistics to be arranged with the professor.

The conference was officially opened by the Conference Chairman, Professor Akbarov, the Rector of Burch University, Professor Mehmed Uzunoğlu, ministers, presidents of associations for applied linguistics, rectors of other universities in Bosnia and Herzegovina, and the ambassadors of Serbia, Slovenia, the United Kingdom and the United States to Bosnia and Herzegovina. The first plenary lecture was held by Professor Lourdes Ortega on the topic of “Second Language Acquisition as Late

Bilingualism/Multilingualism”, in which she presented the necessity of reconceptualising second language acquisition, which is traditionally compared to child first language acquisition (a subordinating comparison). Recent research has shown that we cannot in any way equate the early acquisition of L1 with the late acquisition of L2 because age and language experience are no longer a valid factor in the research. The human mind is “prepared” to acquire two languages, just as it is possible for it to acquire one. Ortega also describes bilingualism as the “Galápagos Islands of Language Acquisition” and calls for a redefining of the topic and goals of research and SLA as late bilingualism.

Professor Adele Goldberg talked about the acquisition of rules of expression, and in particular the right formulation of expressions, and she explained that learners of one language categorise their input into patterns, that they also expect certain formulations in language, and that children usually overgeneralise at the beginning stages of language acquisition, after which they “recover” by making constructions more clear in usage.

The topics of the sessions (60 in total) were organised by the narrow field of research and by the language of the presentations, in accordance with this year's theme of the International Forum on Slavic Studies. These include: Linguistics, Applied Linguistics, Language Acquisition and Learning, and Language Teaching Methodology. Edin Dupanović from the University of Bihać presented his research on a semantic comparison of English and Bosnian consanguineal kinship terminologies, which showed a different approach in the degrees of kinship distance (*uncle* has more distinct terms in Bosnian as opposed to just one in English), and he suggested certain changes in the near future in the Bosnian language (disappearance of specific terms, which is a tendency noticed in the last century). In his view, these changes might be somewhat positive for Bosnian speakers' acquisition of English. Jovan Eranović from the University of Sarajevo spoke about verbal markers in African-American English, while Nadira Aljović from the University of Zenica presented the topic of “Aspects of English Unaccusative Verbs”, where she spoke of verbs of this kind that appear to be intransitive but that share certain qualities with transitive verbs. Nizama Muhamedagić talked about conceptual metaphors in the American Declaration of Independence, and Nurbanu Korkmaz and Tuba Aydinoğlu from the University of Hacettepe and Mustafa Kemal in Turkey presented their analysis of the perception of anger metaphors in Turkish through comics, touching upon, among other issues, research conducted by Professor Forceville on the same topic. One interesting aspect of this research is that the presenters focused on cultural differences in viewing these visual products, but they did not discuss the metaphoric domain (visual metaphors), which would also have produced significant conclusions for linguistics. Simone dalla Chiesa from the University of Milan spoke about the case marker *de* in Japanese and the problem of type of case in expressions with the copula. Many presentations offered a highly applicable insight into language teaching and second language acquisition, a consideration which was reflected in the choice of the plenary talks as well.

The main plenary sessions were concluded by Professor Ullman, who presented a talk on language, memory and the brain, and the role of brain systems for learning and memorisation in the first and second languages. Applied linguists and teachers present who might not have been overly proficient in the field of neurology were introduced to the concepts of declarative and procedural memory, that is, the arbitrary pieces of information and their mutual relations as opposed to possible motor functions. The dysfunction of one system can increase the functionality of another, and the speaker presented numerous research results (some of which he had reached himself in collaboration with other scholars), which showed a close relationship between type of memory and growth and development in human beings.

As was the case in previous years, Burch University of Sarajevo will provide an opportunity to review the numerous papers given at the sessions later in the form of a volume of selected conference presentations to be published in winter (the presenters received session information on the spot in the conference programme and collected abstracts); indeed, the organiser has also established itself as a valuable academic institution when it comes to representing Bosnia and Herzegovina and the region as a significant linguistic area. Last year, Professor Azamat Akbarov initiated the creation of the Association of Applied Linguistics in Bosnia and Herzegovina – AALBiH, which is the first and so far the only umbrella organisation in a country which has been divided for decades in a political, economic, and even linguistic sense and which therefore has been unable to give expression to a unique linguistic, educational, and academic landscape. Besides this accomplishment, after intense lobbying for months and the effort of the professors involved, the Association, which is also a member of the *Association Internationale de Linguistique Appliquée* – AILA, has successfully fought for the host role of the World Congress for Applied Linguistics, which will be held in 2020 in Sarajevo as the representative of Europe. These are all important steps in regaining the former glory of linguistics and language teaching once enjoyed by Sarajevo and Bosnia and Herzegovina. We now aim to make the sort of progress we once achieved in sport, progress that culminated in global recognition for the entire country after the Winter Olympic Games in Sarajevo in 1984.

The conference was closed with an award ceremony for plenary speakers and distinguished presenters as well as a concert given by young musicians and choirs from Sarajevo. International visitors who represented countries ranging from Japan to Ireland at this year's FLTAL had the opportunity to spend the following day on a special trip to Počitelj and Mostar, discovering the natural beauty and sights of Herzegovina, which for many made the unique experience of their academic visit to the capital of Bosnia and Herzegovina complete.

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