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Students' identification of different English varieties

Summary

Today's technology allows quick and easy communication with speakers from a variety of language backgrounds, and the communication of online participants is predominantly in English. Although much is already known about the attitudes of Croatian students towards their own English pronunciation (e.g., Lütze-Miculinić, 2019; Josipović Smojver & Stanojević, 2013, 2016; Stanojević & Josipović Smojver, 2011) or about different English varieties (Drljača Margić & Širola, 2014), there has been no research regarding students' identification of different English varieties in Croatian context. Previous studies (Williams, Garrett, & Coupland, 1999) have shown that listeners can categorize unfamiliar speakers by dialect with about 30% accuracy. Apart from familiarity, an important role in variety recognition is played by regional closeness and exposure to the variety.

The present research is set out to study how accurately students can identify individual speakers of different regional and EFL varieties of English. The study was conducted on 68 first-year English students who completed an anonymous questionnaire. The items for the questionnaire were based on Alić (2021) and Paunović (2009). The study was based on a verbal-guise technique, where participants listened to 10 speakers reading out the same paragraph.

Croatian students showed poor results in variety recognition. They had the best identification results when listening to Croatian speaker speaking English (76.9% of correct identifications), which is of no surprise as he was the only EFL speaker and the students were familiar with this type of accent. They had the most problems identifying the speakers from South Africa (13.4%) and Northern Ireland (10.8%). The results show that students probably

still operate with very broad concepts, like "British" or "American" English, since they were unable to pinpoint the speakers from South England (32.8%) or California (19.7%), varieties that can often be heard in various settings. The Californian speaker was identified as a speaker from New York (19.7%), Southern USA (18.1%) and Canada (16.6%), which shows that subtle differences in regional identity are lost to the untrained ear, and that familiarity sometimes does not play an important role in variety identification.

Keywords: English varieties, identification, misidentifications, attitudes, Croglish

1. INTRODUCTION

In today's modern world, communication between people who come from a variety of different language backgrounds is predominantly in English. English is the third widespread language by the number of native speakers, however, when both native and non-native speakers are combined, English becomes the second most widely spoken language in the world, after Chinese (Buşu, 2021). Throughout the European Union English has become 'the *de facto* 'extraterritorial' lingua franca' (Seidlhofer, 2010: 355), occupying a significant role in the lives of its citizens as a result of political, business, academic, educational or private interactions. In recent times, and especially during and after the COVID-19 pandemic outbreak, communication has primarily shifted online. This kind of communication allows its interactants to easily connect with people not just from Europe, but from various locations around the world. When it comes to attitudes of Croatian students towards their own accent when communicating in English, previous research (Stanojević & Josipović Smojver, 2011) has shown that it greatly depends on the role they assume while speaking. They wish to sound native-like when they assume their role as learners (especially if they are training to become future EFL teachers), but when they perceive themselves as users, i.e., when they need to communicate in English for private everyday purposes, they do not mind having a Croglish accent. A study by Narančić Kovač and Cindrić (2007) confirms that students' needs are primarily user-oriented, and their need for English is first and foremost connected with the usage of the Internet. This need was ranked first, followed by film watching, giving information to foreigners, listening to music and usage of e-mail (ibid., 71–72). Therefore, on the one hand, a lot is known about Croatian students' needs and attitudes when it comes to their own pronunciation, the accent and pronunciation characteristics of Croatian learners, accent preference or even pronunciation teaching (Josipović Smojver & Stanojević, 2013, 2016; Vančura & Molnar, 2021). On the other hand, we have much less knowledge about their attitudes towards various English varieties and almost no insights into their knowledge of identification of these varieties.

2. ATTITUDES AND IDENTIFICATION OF DIFFERENT ENGLISH VARIETIES

With the global expansion of English in the 20th century, the attention shifted from the speakers of 'Inner-Circle' varieties, (L1 varieties, like the USA and the UK) to

'Outer' (ESL varieties) and 'Expanding' (EFL varieties) Circles (Kachru, 1990). When the term variety is used in the present study, it refers to the definition by Bauer (2002), who says:

we can use 'variety' to mean a language, a dialect, an idiolect or an accent; it is a term which encompasses all of these. The term 'variety' is an academic term used for any kind of language production, whether we are viewing it as being determined by region, by gender, by social class, by age or by our own inimitable individual characteristics (p. 4).

Numerous factors, including linguistic, pragmatic, cultural, socio-economic, ideological, (ibid.), emotive and/or conative ones (Dalton-Puffer, Kaltenboeck, & Smit, 1997) influence people's attitudes towards a certain variety. Still, it is worthwhile noting that American English, an Inner-Circle variety, is "one of two major 'reference accents' of global English" (Schneider, 2006: 58), with the other one being British English. These two varieties are also predominantly taught in Croatian schools and spoken by teachers (usually adopting a range of Received Pronunciation (RP) – type of accents or General American (GA)) who, ultimately, serve as models for pronunciation (Stanojević & Josipović Smojver, 2011). GA and RP / Southern English are not only dominant accents in educational contexts, but are present in the mainstream media, i.e., television programs (films and tv series are not dubbed in Croatia) and radio stations (music). Being aware that different authors use different labels to describe the concept of more or less the same variety or accent, previous studies (Coupland & Bishop, 2007; Dalton-Puffer et al., 1997; Drljača Margić & Širola, 2014; Ladegaard & Sachdev, 2006; Paunović, 2009; Pilus, 2013; Rashid, 2011) have shown that students consider Southern English / British English (BE) / Received Pronunciation (RP) / Standard English to be more prestigious than American English (AE) / General American. A study by Bayard, Weatherhall, Gallois, and Pittam (2001) disputes this, as the results showed that American accent equaled or even replaced RP as the prestige or preferred variety. Still, all these varieties are perceived as "reference accents" (Schneider, 2006: 58) and are connected with more positive attitudes, such as "correct", "standard" (Paunović, 2009: 538) or "proper" (Stanojević & Josipović Smojver, 2011), as opposed to other varieties of English.

Besides studying attitudes to investigate various language traits, research has been devoted to identification of the geographical origin of speaker/s and/or the variety spoken, based solely upon speech stimulus. Many studies have focused on the listeners'

ability to recognize native speakers of the language under consideration and have found out that participants are "generally able to accurately and consistently identify speakers' places of origin and/or varieties of a given language as regionally or socially localised forms, provided the regional identity of each individual speaker is not too fine-grained for the hearer" (McKenzie, 2015: 3). When it comes to speakers of one language identifying speakers of another, Stephan's (1997) findings showed that German listeners were most able to correctly identify US and UK varieties of English, with Australian, New Zealand and South African English speech being the least accurately identified. McKenzie (2008) showed that Japanese-born students best recognized heavily-accented Japanese English, followed by US English, Scottish and lastly moderately-accented speaker of Japanese English. A more recent study by McKenzie (2015) showed that UK-born students were best at accurately and consistently identifying the place of origin of Scottish and Tyneside speakers (as they were most regionally closest to them) and a speaker of Indian English, while they were unsuccessful in recognizing speakers from Thailand, China and Japan, which was explained with a low level of familiarity. Serbian students from Paunović's (2009) study showed poor results in variety recognition, the best recognized being the speaker from Southern USA (77%), followed by Southern English (52.6%), while the most incorrectly placed speakers were from Greece (EFL), South Africa and lastly Northern Ireland (8.8%). Generally, both the studies which focused on the listeners identifying the various speakers of their own language as well as those that focused on the listeners identifying different varieties of specific foreign language (usually English) have shown that listeners better rate and recognize speakers who they are familiar with, who they are regionally close to, or whose variety they are more exposed to.

The present study attempts to shed some light on Croatian students' perceptions of linguistic diversity through the investigation of how accurately they can identify speakers of different L1 and L2 English varieties. We hope that the results gained from not only their identifications but also misidentifications can contribute to further understanding of students' perceptual notions and ideological constructs connected with different variants.

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1. Participants

The sample was composed of 68 participants, all of whom were first-year BA students studying English for a month and a half in the English Department at Josip Juraj Strossmayer University of Osijek in Croatia. Their second major was German (N = 20), Croatian (N = 17), sociology (N = 3), Hungarian (N = 4), history (N = 5), pedagogy (N = 4), information sciences (N = 6), and philosophy (N = 9). The group consisted of 15 (24%) male, 47 (74%) female, and 1 (2%) non-binary students. The listeners were aged between 18–23 years (M = 19.13) and the average time of formal English learning was 12.41 years. At the time of the research their level of linguistic competence was B2 level. Prpić (2009: 287) claims that "students are expected to have achieved B2 level on completing general secondary education", due to the fact that the national exams and the state school leaving exam (cro. *matura*) take into consideration the CEFR guidelines. The Croatian National Center for External Evaluation of Education² (NCVVO, n.d.) confirms Prpić's claims, stating in their Examination catalogue for English language (p. 5) that Croatian high school students reach B2 level after the state school leaving exam. The students were exposed to both British and American English at the Department, but we could not estimate their exposure to different varieties outside the classroom. None of the 68 participants have ever lived in nor visited an English-speaking country. Because of the global COVID-19 pandemic happening at the time of the research, it was very difficult to simultaneously bring together a larger group of students due to the fact that most of the lectures were held online. The study aimed to encompass students from other years as well, but due to the restrictions at the time, first-year students were the only ones able to take part. The study was conducted in a classroom, where every student received a paper-based copy of the questionnaire. Because of the COVID-19 restrictions, only 15 students were questioned at a time. The authors and the students followed all the safety precautions while conducting the experiment.

3.2. Instrument and choice of varieties

The participants were given an anonymous questionnaire. The items for the questionnaire were adapted from and based on Alić (2021) and Paunović (2009). The

² Official Croatian name: Nacionalni centar za vanjsko vrednovanje obrazovanja (NCVVO).

study was based on the verbal-guise technique, where participants listened ten speakers reading out the same elicitation paragraph titled *Please, call Stella*. The speakers were from: Australia, Birmingham, California, Croatia, Ireland, Northern Ireland, Scotland, South Africa, South England, and Southern USA. The questionnaire consisted of one multiple-choice question for every speaker, where the participants were asked to determine the speaker's place of origin. The participants listened to the audio recordings of ten different speakers in order to determine the speaker's place of origin. To avoid random guesses the questionnaire listed fifteen places for participants to choose from (Canada, India, Jamaica, New Zealand, and New York were included). The last part of the questionnaire elicited biodata (gender, age, number of years learning English, and if they had ever lived in an English-speaking country).

To minimize gender or age as a potentially distracting factor, all of the speakers in the audio material were adult male speakers, between the ages of 24–38. Furthermore, the speakers did not change their place of residence to avoid various accent influences (Clopper & Pisoni, 2006). The recordings were downloaded from the Speech Accent Archive (George Mason University, 2021). The Croatian speaker was the only EFL speaker. Birmingham is the only city in the study among the countries or regions. In recent years the Birmingham accent has gotten a lot more popular in the mainstream media because of the TV series *Peaky Blinders* which is set in 1900s Birmingham, and the accent was included in this study.

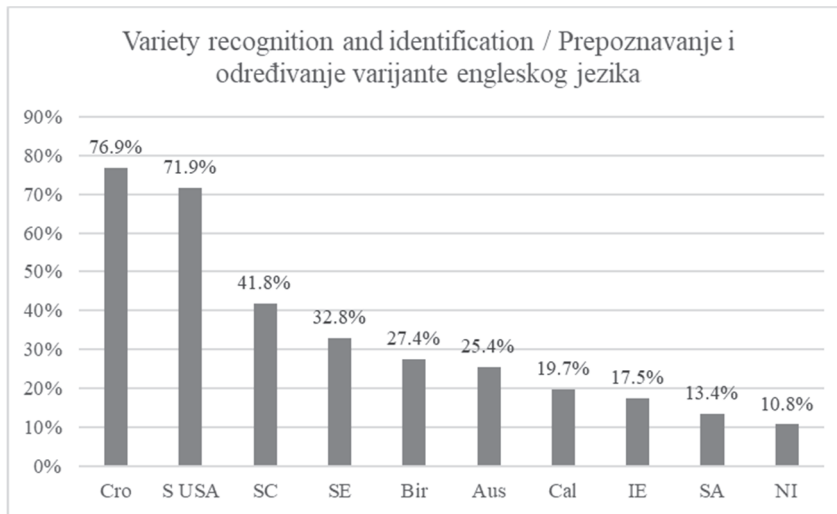
The results of the study were analyzed through the Microsoft Excel program.

3.3. Procedure

Before the start, every student received their copy of the questionnaire and was given instructions on how the study would be conducted. The instruction was to take their time and think about the speech properties of the speaker that might help them identify the speaker's place of origin, and finally to circle their answer. The study was conducted in a classroom at the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences in Osijek. The questionnaire took about 15 minutes to complete.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Variety recognition saw the participants showing poor results. The results vary from variety to variety, but there is an apparent distinction between those varieties the participants clearly recognized and the rest (see Figure 1).



Cro = Croatia; S USA = Southern USA; SC = Scotland; SE = Southern England; Bir = Birmingham; Aus = Australia; Cal = California; IE = Ireland; SA = South Africa; NI = Northern Ireland

Cro = Hrvatska; S USA = Jug SAD-a; SC = Škotska; SE = Južna Engleska; Bir = Birmingham; Aus = Australija; Cal = Kalifornija; IE = Irska; SA = Južna Afrika; NI = Sjeverna Irska

Figure 1. Variety recognition and identification

Slika 1. Prepoznavanje i identifikacija engleskih varijanti

The most recognized and precisely identified was the Croglish variety (76.9%), which comes as no surprise seeing that this was the only EFL speaker out of all the speakers in the present study, and the level of familiarity with this type of accent is high. This can be compared to McKenzie's (2008) study where Japanese-born university students best recognized heavily-accented speaker of Japanese English. Even though McKenzie's (ibid.) students only needed to recognize the speaker's country of origin, we can still connect his findings with our results as he further explains that "the native/non-native distinction is paramount for the informants in the identification process" (p. 148). We can apply this conclusion to our participants, as they probably used the same native/non-native dichotomy for successful identification of the Croglish speaker. The Southern USA was the second-best recognized variety (71.9%), which is similar to the results obtained by Paunović (2009). In her study, university students best identified the speaker of this variety (77% of successful identifications). Paunović (ibid.) offers no clarification as to why this is, but we can try and offer one. A tentative explanation could be found in the recognizable acoustic-

phonetic cues of this variety, i.e., a variety that is more easily discernible as opposed to other "American" varieties.

Our participants were poor at recognizing all the other varieties, with more than half or even more of our participants misidentifying them, which can signal a high level of unfamiliarity. Williams et al.'s (1999) research concluded that listeners can only categorize unfamiliar talkers by dialect with about 30% accuracy. Still, we believe, the recognition rate of some speakers in the study should have been higher, especially if we take into consideration the fact that a variety of South England speech is very much present in students' high school textbook materials. Further analysis shows that the third and fourth place, in terms of correct identifications, are reserved for the Scottish (with 41.8% of correct identification answers) and the South England (32.8%) speaker. The South England variety has been identified to be less frequent when compared to Paunović's study (2009), where it was the second-best recognized variety with 52.6% of correct identifications. Nonetheless, if we consider that in our study the Southern England speaker was most often mistaken for a speaker from Birmingham (by 21.8% of the participants), it can be said that our participants (with 54.8% of cases) then come very close to the results of Paunović's (ibid.) students. This shows that they "correctly identified the accent they construed as 'British English' " (Paunović, 2009: 541) and were not familiar with regional accent differences. Looking at the rest of the data, less than a third of the participants recognized the Birmingham accent (27.4%). Even though this is not a lot, it can still suggest that popular media did, indeed, have a slight influence on the students' familiarity with this variety. The speaker from Birmingham was misidentified for a Southern England speaker by 24.2% of our participants. Therefore, what was said about our participants and them operating with broad concepts of "British" or "American" can be applied to the Birmingham speaker as well. In Jarvella, Bang, Jakobsen, and Mees (2001) study, the speaker from Birmingham was less recognized than the speaker from another English city (Wigan), but the recognition rate was much higher (as the results were cumulative for both speakers and were only applied to recognition of the speaker's country of origin) than in this study. The rest of the varieties have mostly meagre recognition ratio, with one out of four participants identifying the Australian variety (25.4%) followed by the Californian speaker (19.7%), Irish English (IE) (17.5%), South African (13.4%), and the Northern Ireland variety (10.8%). Stephan's (1997) study showed that Australian and South African English speech were the least accurately identified, while Paunović's (2009) findings are similar to ours, where South African and Northern Irish were also the least recognized varieties.

Table 1. Variety identification – Rows: the varieties represented by samples; columns: how they were identified/misidentified by the participants (simple counts, frequencies)

Tablica 1. Prepoznavanje varijanti engleskoga jezika – redovi: ponuđene varijante; stupci: točno/netočno prepoznavanje (broj odgovora, frekvencija)

Variety identification / Prepoznavanje varijanti Speaker place of origin / Mjesto podrijetla govornika										
	Cro	S USA	SC	SE	Bir	Aus	Cal	IE	SA	NI
Speaker origin selected by listeners / Mjesto podrijetla govornika prema procjenama slušača										
Croatia	50	/	1	/	1	/	2	1	1	1
Southern USA	/	46	1	/	2	4	12	9	4	1
Scotland	/	1	28	1	3	3	2	2	2	13
South England	/	1	1	21	15	19	2	2	9	5
Birmingham	/	/	3	14	17	8	5	5	8	2
Australia	/	5	3	1	4	17	2	1	4	3
California	/	2	/	/	1	3	13	8	4	/
Ireland	/	/	20	3	6	3	2	11	1	16
South Africa	2	1	1	/	/	/	/	1	9	4
Northern Ireland	/	1	4	2	6	2	1	7	6	7
Canada	/	/	/	11	/	3	11	5	3	/
India	11	/	/	/	/	/	/	1	2	6
Jamaica	2	2	3	1	1	/	/	2	1	3
New Zealand	/	1	1	3	5	3	1	4	11	3
New York	/	4	1	7	1	2	13	4	2	1

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Table 1 portrays how well the students have identified the given varieties in the questionnaire, but it also shows what they have mistaken a particular variety for. The results were calculated independently for each variety, as some participants did not provide an answer for some of the speakers. The dark boxes present the correct identifications for each variety (the number of cases), and the columns show the misidentifications. The shaded areas (the rows in light grey) show the counts for five varieties that were not represented by any speaker in our study. This data also serves to some extent as an indicator of how the participants perceive the varieties, as Paunović (2009) explains that "misidentifications are more revealing than correct identifications" (p. 540).

The speaker of Croglish is the most recognized one, with fewest number of misidentifications. Most students had no problems in recognizing this speaker, but those who were unable to pinpoint (see Table 1) this speaker's place of origin almost exclusively chose the speaker to have the Indian accent (16.9%), which is very peculiar. No research has been done on Croatian English in terms of identification, so we have nothing to compare it to. Croatian and Hindi have almost no linguistic similarities, nor do their respective English varieties, yet those that misidentified it, predominantly opted for Indian English. It probably has to do with how the Croatian speaker was perceived by our participants, *viz.* with certain aspects of his pronunciation. In Croatian English or Croglish /r/ tends to be realized by a flap or a trill sound (Josipović Smojver, 2010), and this is often the case in Indian English as well. McKenzie (2008) concluded in his study that certain segmental features (in this case the non-retroflex pronunciation of the phoneme /r/), rather than morpho-syntactic or lexical features, were responsible for the listeners' identifications and misidentifications. Speakers from Ireland, South Africa and Northern Ireland were also misidentified with the Indian English speaker, but these are probably blind guesses, seeing that these three accents were the least recognized and misidentified with every single accent in the study.

Scottish English was the third most recognized accent in the study, but those who misidentified it mainly mistook it for Irish (29.8%). This is not surprising as both Scottish and Irish share a number of similarities. Both are rhotic accents, although some studies (Stuart-Smith, 2007, as cited in Docherty, 2010) point to a good deal of variability of realization of coda /r/ in speakers of Scottish English. Also, both have monophthongal realizations of /eɪ/ and /ɔɪ/ for the GOAT and FACE lexical sets (Watt, 2002, as cited in Docherty, 2010; King 2006).

In the present study the South England variety was recognized by a third (32.8%) of our participants, but at the same time it was often misidentified with either of two other varieties, namely, Birmingham (21.8% of wrong identifications) and Canadian (17.2% of wrong identifications) one. It is hard to explain why it was so often mistaken for the Canadian variety, but when it comes to the Birmingham and the Southern English variety, both varieties were mutually misidentified, indicating that the participants had a hard time telling them apart. When asked to identify the speaker from Birmingham, 27% of the participants identified it as the Birmingham variety. 24.2%, however, mistook it for the South England variety. Looking at it from a geographical standpoint, it does make sense why the two varieties seem to be mistaken for one another. The city of Birmingham is 200 km away from London and although this may seem far away, it is still geographically close when compared to other varieties that were observed in this study. For comparison, in his study, McKenzie (2015) asked his students recognize the country of six speakers using L1 and L2 varieties of English. Even though this is different from what we tested our participants in this study (they heard two accents spoken within the same country, i.e., Birmingham and South England), some implications can still be drawn. McKenzie's (ibid.) results showed that UK-born students incorrectly identified the geographical origin of the speakers of English from Japan, China and Thailand and simply placed them into a broad category of "East Asia". McKenzie (ibid.) attributed the confusion to participants' perceptual categories, which he believes "were not sufficiently robust to pinpoint the precise country" (p. 20), and the same can be applied to our case, i.e., place of origin.

The rest of the varieties were more often misidentified than correctly identified, starting with the fifth ranked, Australian variety. 25.4% of the students described it correctly as Australian, whereas 29% misidentified it as the South England variety. Considering Australia's British roots and the phonetic and phonological similarities between the two it is no wonder these two were misidentified. The Californian speaker was correctly identified by only 19.7% of our students and mistaken repeatedly for New York (19.7%), Southern USA (18.1%) and Canada (16.6%). Paunović (2009) describes a similar situation in her study, where the "participants operated with broad general constructs of 'British' and 'American' English, and were not familiar with regional accent differences" (p. 541). The participants in the present study recognized that it is, in fact, an "American" accent (rhoticity, avoidance of using central diphthongs), but they could not specify which region it was, and thus confirmed McKenzie's (2015) conclusion that the identification of a variety can be gravely

hindered due to the subtle difference in regional identity. When looking at the Irish speaker, it is clear that the majority of the participants were not sure how to identify him, with 82.5% of misidentification rate and the fact that this variety was mistaken for every single variety in the present study. This does fall in line with Jarvella et al.'s (2001) observation, with the Irish speaker being the "most difficult to place, being confused with each of the other three varieties at least this often" (p. 45). However, the findings in the present study contradict Jarvella et al. (2001) with respect to the "symmetric data" (p. 45) between the Scottish and the Irish speaker. In their study, the participants have regularly mistaken Irish for Scottish and vice versa, where in the present study only Scottish was mistaken for the Irish variety. Merely 2% of the students misidentified it as the Scottish variety, which is a small minority when compared to the other varieties it was misidentified as (Southern USA 14.2%, California 12.6%, Birmingham 7.9%, and Canada 7.9%). Why the Irish speaker was connected to the Northern Irish (11.1%) speaker is obvious. Misidentifications with Southern USA and Californian are probably due to rhoticity that is present in all of these accents. The Northern Irish variety was also mistaken for Irish (24.6%), even more often than it was correctly identified (10.7%). This suggests that the students have noticed the similarities between the two varieties, yet were not able to identify them as Irish/Northern Irish. The South African variety was also poorly recognized (13.4%) and the inconsistent misidentification implies that the students were mostly confused as to how to place it.

5. CONCLUSION

In general, the level of identification accuracy obtained by our participants was lower than found in some other studies (Jarvella et al., 2001; McKenzie, 2015), which is of no surprise, as our participants needed to do a more fine-grained categorization. The results were more or less in concordance with Ladegaard's (1998), Paunović's (2009), or Stephan's (1997) findings. Listeners showed some skill in distinguishing Croatian and Southern USA speakers, while the rest can be ascribed to random guesses. Although explanation for misidentifications of Northern Irish, South African, Irish, Birmingham, Scottish or even Australian can, on some level, be attributed to a possible unfamiliarity with these accents, it remains unclear why the participants misidentified the Southern English speaker, especially since students are exposed to this variety in the classroom setting. It seems that Stephan (1997) can offer a possible explanation

with his conclusion that differences in recognition rates were not always related to levels of previous exposure to those forms in an educational context.

A tentative explanation for the low level of identifications can be provided by comparing reading and spontaneous speech. Although the speakers in the research read the same text, which is great from a comparability standpoint, it seems that some linguistic clues (words or phrases typical for some dialect and usually found in spontaneous speech) were lacking, which could potentially help our participants to regionally pinpoint the variety. Stephan (1997) confirms that linguistic clues are more important than any features of accent. Preston's (1993) conclusion that naive listeners, and our first semester – first year students can still be categorized as such, do not necessarily categorize speakers accurately by dialect region, but are able to make reliable distinctions between dialect groups using broad perceptual categories, cannot be applied to all the varieties from this study. For example, the identification of the Californian speaker as a New York speaker or the Australian speaker as the one from South England confirms Preston's (ibid.) conclusions, but the misidentification of the South England speaker for a Canadian one disputes it.

There is much room for future research. For instance, participants in this study were given "forced-choice categorization tasks, i.e., involving the presentation of a closed-set of potential countries and/or language varieties for participants to choose from when listening to the speech stimulus" (McKenzie, 2015). A similar study where participants could use an unconstrained free classification task, provide their own labels and further explain their choices would shed additional light on listeners' categorizations and choices behind them. These answers would help in understanding which acoustic or linguistic cues are essential for in/accurate decoding of indexical properties of different English varieties. Finally, even though students were familiar with some varieties, i.e., had acoustic cues of these varieties almost on a daily basis in- and out-of-classroom, they weren't able to connect the speaker with his correct place of origin. What would potentially help in better discrimination of the speakers, could be the introduction of a new university course specifically aiming at phonetic and phonological features of different varieties, without disregarding morphosyntactic or linguistic peculiarities. The students would, therefore, expand their awareness of language varieties which could potentially lead to better and greater identification of different varieties of the English language.

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Hrvatska

Identifikacija različitih engleskih varijanti

Sažetak

Moderna tehnologija omogućuje brzu i jednostavnu *online* komunikaciju s govornicima različitih idioma, koja se uglavnom odvija na engleskome jeziku. O stavovima hrvatskih učenika prema vlastitome engleskome izgovoru govore brojna istraživanja (Josipović Smojver i Stanojević, 2013, 2016; Lütze-Miculinić, 2019; Stanojević i Josipović-Smojver, 2011) kao i o stavovima vezanima za različite engleske varijante (Drljača Margić i Širola, 2014), iako još nije provedeno istraživanje o prepoznavanju i identifikaciji različitih engleskih varijanti u Hrvatskoj. Prethodna istraživanja (Williams i sur., 1999) pokazala su da slušatelji mogu kategorizirati idiome nepoznatih govornika s točnošću od otprilike 30 %. Važnu ulogu u prepoznavanju varijanti, osim prepoznatljivosti, imaju i regionalna bliskost (živi li slušatelj blizu govornika) te izloženost određenoj govornoj varijanti.

Cilj istraživanja bio je otkriti s kolikom točnošću studenti mogu identificirati govornike koji govore različitim engleskim regionalnim varijantama te engleskim kao drugim jezikom. Istraživanje je provedeno na 68 studenata prve godine engleskoga jezika i književnosti. Studenti su ispunili anonimni upitnik koji se temelji na metodologiji istraživanja Alić (2021) i Paunović (2009) putem slušnoga prepoznavanja, u kojemu su sudionici slušali deset govornika koji su čitali isti odlomak teksta. Hrvatski studenti pokazali su loše rezultate u prepoznavanju varijanti. Očekivano, najbolje su prepoznali hrvatskoga govornika dok govori engleski (76,9 % točnih odgovora), jer je on jedini neizvorni govornik engleskoga jezika, a i studentima je ova varijanta engleskoga poznatija od ostalih. Studenti su najviše problema imali s prepoznavanjem govornika iz Južne Afrike (13,4 %) i Sjeverne Irske (10,7 %). Također, rezultati pokazuju da studenti vjerojatno raspoložu s vrlo općenitim pojmovima kada se radi o identifikaciji varijanti, kao što su npr. 'britanski' ili 'američki' engleski, jer ne prepoznaju varijante koje se često slušaju u različitim prigodama i ne identificiraju govornike iz južne Engleske (32,8 %) ili Kalifornije (19,7 %). Dok su slušali govornika iz Kalifornije, sudionici su u svojim odgovorima zaokružili da dolazi iz New Yorka (19,7 %), s Juga SAD-a (18,1 %) i iz Kanade (16,6 %). Rezultati ovoga

istraživanja ukazuju na to da neiskusni slušači teško prepoznaju fine razlike između dva govornika s bliskim regionalnim identitetom te da češća prisutnost neke govorne varijante u medijima ponekad ne igra važnu ulogu u uspješnome identificiranju porijekla govornika.

Ključne riječi: varijante engleskoga jezika, jezična prepoznatljivost, netočno prepoznavanje, stav prema jeziku, Croglish
