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The changeability of L2 language attitudes: Changing Hungarian EFL users' attitudes towards non-native-accented English and their own accent through teaching

Summary of PhD dissertation
(Tézisfüzet)

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1. Rationale and theoretical background

Language attitudes towards one's non-native language have been measured in several studies (e.g., Jenkins, 2007; Sung, 2016; Carrie, 2017; Lee and Lee, 2019), but the in-practice pedagogical application of the insights gained by these studies rarely follows the investigations.

With regard to making non-native accents acceptable for classroom use, teachers' willingness to use non-native audio samples in class has been tested, for example, by Litzenberg (2016 [2014]), but the materials in question remained part of a hypothetical curriculum, and were not implemented in practice.

The present dissertation aims to bridge the gap between theoretically motivated language attitude studies and language teaching pedagogy in the classroom by testing the changeability of Hungarian EFL learners' language attitudes towards their own and others' non-native accents through a teaching experiment, which was later augmented with an online survey with the participation of both EFL learners and teachers.

Jenkins (2007) argues that sounding native-like is important for her non-native participants because that is what they consider the 'real thing', the 'perfect' way of speaking English, while non-native accents are considered less valuable, and even 'horrible or 'deficient' varieties. The respondents seem to construe the native–non-native dichotomy as an 'accent hierarchy', where non-native accents are down at the bottom, while Received Pronunciation and General American are high up. (It is notable that other native varieties, such as New Zealand English, Scottish English, or the Texan accent, were not highly valued by the respondents.)

Sung's 2016 study mirrors Jenkins's 2007 results, and goes a step further in its explanation of the possible reasons for non-native speakers' marked preference for native accents. Sung asserts that having a native-like accent seems to be connected to the idea of having a competent L2 speaker identity, and even a positive self-image. Therefore, a native-like accent can signal status, prestige and proficiency, and thus its value for L2 speakers is symbolic. It is also associated with a sense of being appreciated and recognized by others for one's linguistic abilities.

In contrast, Cook (1999: 185) argues that "the prominence of the native speaker in language teaching has obscured the distinctive nature of the successful L2 user and created an unattainable goal for L2 learners", and highlights that non-native speakers should be considered as "multicompetent language users rather than as deficient native speakers" (Cook, 1999: 185). He calls for a perspective shift in language teaching, namely, that requiring L2 learners to become native-like through language learning is neither desirable nor feasible. "If students and teachers see L2 learning as a battle that they are fated never to win, little wonder they become

dispirited and give up. L2 learners' battle to become native speakers is lost before it has begun" (Cook, 1999: 204).

Although there is no unified theory of a critical period for L2 acquisition (cf. Johnson and Newport, 1989; Birdsong, 1992 and 2018; Flege, 1995; Piller, 2002; Paradis, 2004; Chiswick and Miller, 2008; and Singleton and Leśniewska, 2021), I suggest that a view emphasizing that with the increase of the age when learners are first exposed to their L2 reaching native-like proficiency is increasingly less likely might serve more important purposes than a continued search for the cut-off point of a hypothesized critical period, as it might help conquer the ideology that native-likeness is the (only) desirable outcome of language learning or acquisition. (Also, learning English in an EFL context most often entails learning the target language from other non-native users, which has an impact on the learners' pronunciation.)

Hall (2012: 127) conceptualizes battling native speakerism (i.e., the idealization of the native speaker as the 'proper' speaker of a language) as "[m]odeling a role other than being perceived as a superior source of knowledge" for L1 speakers, which needs to be done locally, keeping the specificities of the language learners' culture in mind. The influence of native-speakerism can be felt strongly among teachers of English, as well, who might face employment difficulties if categorized as a non-native speaker, according to Leonard (2019), who emphasizes "the power of 'native-speakerism', and endorses the need for scholars and teacher educators to continue to challenge its influences in order to establish equality and respect for teachers' contributions to the profession irrespective of their origin" (Leonard, 2019: 697).

Llurda (2009) suggests that non-native English-speaking teachers (NNESTs) might feel 'downgraded' as they teach a language of which they are not considered 'owners', which is a paradoxical situation that can be resolved if the teachers themselves experience multiple varieties of English and start focusing more on multilingualism and international communication.

Regarding the use of English as a lingua franca, Mauranen (2018: 10) states that "speakers who use ELF as their means of communication speak English that is a product of language contact between their other languages and English". Seidlhofer (2011: 7) defines ELF as follows:

> "*any use of English among speakers of different first languages for whom English is the communicative medium of choice, and often the only option.* Due to the numbers of speakers involved worldwide, this means that ENL [English as a native language] speakers will generally be in a minority, and their English will therefore be less and less likely

to constitute the linguistic reference norm" (Seidlhofer 2011: 7, italics in the original).

As Seidlhofer's 2011 definition shows, communication between non-native speakers is highlighted in the conceptualization of ELF, for which reason, L1 standards might not always apply to ELF speakers. She also argues that 'native' competence might be a reasonable expectation in some ESL (English as a second language) contexts, but in EFL (English as a foreign language) and ELF contexts native-like proficiency is not likely to be a relevant and achievable goal. ELF is for the transmission of meaning and effective communication between speakers of different (typically non-English) L1s, for which reason, there seems to be a large discrepancy between what is considered to be relevant in English language teaching and what is relevant for lingua franca communication (Seidlhofer 2011), which is in line with Jenkins and Leung's 2014 claims.

Matsuda and Friedrich (2012: 25) call for "a complete revision of the entire [English teaching] program, using one's understanding of the use of English in international contexts as a foundation that influences every single aspect of the curriculum", and a complete turn away from (not only some small additions to) the existing British- and American English-centered curriculum.

Although pre-service English teachers seemed willing to use non-native English recordings in their classes according to Litzenberg (2016 [2014]), their comments often indicated that error correction-focused analysis was the first thought that came to mind with regard to using high-intermediate non-native speech samples in class. Even when it came to using advanced samples in class, these were praised for containing 'few mistakes', which highlights the respondents' native-centered approach to teaching English (Litzenberg, 2016 [2014]).

Still, scholars are trying to challenge the hegemony of the native speaker model in English language teaching. Murphy (2014) encourages the incorporation of intelligible and comprehensible non-native speaker models into ESL/EFL classes. He argues that the two main advantages of such non-native models are that they are more realistic targets for ESL/EFL learners to approximate, and they are also more relevant for learners' pronunciation needs than native models. Murphy (2014) rejects the deficit model of non-native pronunciation, and foregrounds comprehensibility, that is, the meaningful exchange of ideas and the effective expression of one's thoughts. He does not regard having a non-native accent as a flaw but a natural characteristic of ESL/EFL speech, which does not render the speaker an ineffective user of the language.

Similarly, Lindemann et al. (2014) find accent reduction courses ineffective, and argue that making learners change their accent specifically in order to avoid prejudice is counterproductive. They emphasize that the problem itself, i.e., prejudice, should be targeted and not necessarily non-native accents. Language attitudes tend to be formative in the making of decisions about the present and future of pronunciation teaching, which Lindemann et al. (2014) consider unfortunate, as, this way, native-speaker privilege is further strengthened. They add that as non-native speakers of English are increasingly using English among each other rather than in conversations with native speakers; therefore, English language teaching has to accommodate these needs.

2. Research questions

The research questions of the present dissertation arise from the ideas outlined in Section 1, and are as follows:

1. What impact does familiarizing Hungarian EFL learners/users with multiple native and non-native accents of English through an indirect teaching method have on their 'language attitudes and motivation' and 'willingness to communicate' (and potentially 'perfectionism')?
2. How open are Hungarian EFL learners/users to such teaching?
3. What kind of relationship is observable between 'language attitudes and motivation', 'perfectionism', and 'willingness to communicate' in English as a foreign language among Hungarian learners/users?
4. What similarities and differences can be found between Hungarian EFL learners' and teachers' 'attitudes and motivation', 'perfectionism', and 'willingness to communicate', as well as their responses to indirect teaching targeting attitude change?

To answer these research questions, a three-step research project was carried out, comprising a preliminary exploratory phase, a classroom investigation and an online survey. Research Question 1 is answered with the help of the classroom investigation and the online survey, Research Question 2 pertains to the preliminary exploratory phase, the classroom investigation, and somewhat to the online survey, Research Question 3 is related to the classroom investigation and the online survey, and Research Question 4 is answered by the online survey. As some research questions are answered based on the classroom and the online

data in conjunction, the term *EFL learner/user* was selected when formulating the questions to include adult respondents (i.e., EFL teachers), too.

3. Methodology

	Preliminary exploratory phase	Classroom investigation	Online survey
Participants	25 university students (English majors)	12 high school students (experimental group), 10 high school students (control group), the EFL teacher of the experimental group	92 EFL teachers, 250 high school students
Time	Spring semester, 2021	Fall semester, 2022; delayed post-test in Spring 2023	January 2024 – March 2024
Method	Jamboard, open-ended questions and a text to read	Teaching experiment, pre-, post-, delayed post-test with rating scales and open-ended questions, class evaluation sheet, interview with the experimental group's EFL teacher	Online survey with rating scales and a text to read
Analysis	Quantitative (SPSS) and qualitative	Quantitative (SPSS) and qualitative	Quantitative (SPSS)
Aim	Pre-testing the rationale of the planned further steps, questionnaire design (rating scales from open-ended questions), **partially answering Research Question 2**	Testing the experimental teaching materials, questionnaire design for the online survey, gaining insight from the teacher's perspective, **answering Research Questions 1 and 3, as well as contributing to the answer to Research Question 2 (through the class evaluation sheet and the interview)**	Comparison of teachers' and students' responses on a larger sample, **answering Research Question 4 and contributing to the answer to Research Questions 1, 2, and 3**

Table 1. Summary of the methodology and aim of the three steps in the research project

In the present dissertation, method triangulation and data source triangulation were used (as defined by Carter et al., 2014), as quantitatively analyzed rating scale questionnaires were

paired with qualitatively analyzed open-ended questions and interview data. The open-ended questions of the preliminary exploratory phase served the purpose of narrowing down the research interest and designing rating scales for the classroom questionnaires. The rating scales of the classroom questionnaire were later used as a basis for the online survey. The open-ended questions in the classroom questionnaires facilitated deeper understanding of the participants' answers, and the open-ended questions of the class evaluation sheet gave pedagogical insight and ideas for further improving the study materials. This way, the participatory action research phase (i.e., the classroom investigation) was complemented with more traditional surveys (the preliminary exploratory phase and the online questionnaire), which is a form of method triangulation.

Data source triangulation was achieved by involving a smaller sample of high school students (12 in the experimental group and 10 in the control group) in the classroom investigation and a larger sample (250) of high school students in the online survey, as well as one EFL teacher in the interview followed by a larger sample (92) of EFL teachers in the online survey.

3.1. Preliminary exploratory phase

3.1.1. Participants

The study for the preliminary exploratory phase was carried out with the participation of 25 students of the University of Szeged, 22 female and 3 male respondents, ages 18–24, all of them first-year English Studies students. They had been learning English for 5–15 years at the time of the data collection, which was carried out in the spring semester of the 2020/2021 academic year, during the period of online education ordered by the government due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The researcher and the respondents were in a teacher–student relationship.

3.1.2. Instruments

The data collection was conducted in Hungarian, using Jamboard, an online platform where participants were able to share their thoughts anonymously on virtual 'sticky notes' on a 'notice board'. They were asked to use the 'sticky note' with the same number throughout the data collection to make sure that it is identifiable which answers were given by the same respondent.

After answering the first six questions related to their attitudes towards non-native-accented English in general and their own accent in particular on the virtual 'sticky notes',

respondents were asked to read a text (i.e., concise, preliminary 'study materials') created to pre-test their reactions to materials designed to change or form their attitudes towards their own accents and other non-native accents through the introduction of the diversity of the accents of English. For this reason, three open-ended questions followed the text, eliciting their reflections on the short text and their experiences with high school pronunciation teaching.

The questions of the preliminary exploratory questionnaire were designed in a way that the answers could be used for the identification of main difficulties, insecurities, and prevailing negative attitudes among the respondents, informing questionnaire design in the further stages of the research project.

3.1.3. Procedures

While sharing their thoughts on Jamboard, the respondents were keeping in touch with the researcher via Zoom in order for the researcher to be able to provide prompt technical help if necessary. All the 25 participants answered all the questions, and there were no incomprehensible or unrelated answers. Data collection happened in two groups anonymously, with the use of the numbers on the 'sticky notes' as codes, and it took approximately 25 minutes for the respondents to answer all the questions.

Originally, the study for the preliminary exploratory phase was designed for qualitative analysis only, as the respondents gave longer, written answers to each open-ended question. However, following technical consultations with my advisors, the written data were quantified in order to explore the possible correlations between the answers. This way, the qualitative analysis was augmented with correlation analyses (using SPSS version 26).

3.2. Classroom investigation
3.2.1. Participants

The preliminary exploratory phase revealed that several university students would have appreciated learning about the diversity of English accents in high school. Their responses also showed that they already tended to have rather fixed or strong attitudes towards non-native accented English. These results informed the selection of the participants for the subsequent phases, that is, choosing high school students instead of university students as the respondents.

Twelve tenth-grade EFL students from a high school in Szeged, Hungary, took part in the teaching experiment (ages 15–16, eight female and four male students), and another 10 tenth-grade EFL students from the same high school (ages 15–16, six female and four male students) formed the control group for the data collection.

The English teacher of the experimental group participated in a semi-structured interview after the teaching experiment was over. She is in her 50s and used to be a Latin and Russian teacher before receiving her qualifications as an English teacher. This also means that she started learning English as an adult. These conditions and circumstances undoubtedly have an impact on her experiences with and views on using L2 English. Therefore, her experiences and opinions are not to be understood as the representation of those of the majority of EFL teachers in Hungary.

3.2.2. Instruments

Based on Kemmis et al.'s 2014 categorization, the classroom investigation reported on in the present dissertation is a combination of classroom action research and critical participatory action research.

Action research is constituted of four main steps in a cycle, according to Burns (2009), who considers Kemmis and McTaggart's 1988 model as the most widely used one, involving a phase of plan development followed by the implementation of the plan, the observation of its potential impact, and finally a reflection on the achieved results. The spiral-like nature of action research is also highlighted by Kemmis et al. (2014), who emphasize the importance of re-planning after reflection, and starting another cycle of implementation and the observation of its potential effects.

The planning phase of the action research (i.e., the classroom investigation) first involved a detailed analysis of the preliminary exploratory phase, in which the written answers to the open-ended questions served the purpose of designing the questionnaire to be used as a pre-, post-, and delayed post-test for the investigation, by identifying main themes, difficulties, and prevalent negative attitudes. The text used for the preliminary exploratory phase served as a basis for the ideas to be introduced during the teaching experiment. The other three steps in the cycle of action research are discussed in section 3.2.3. below.

Before the experimental sessions in the teaching experiment carried out by myself, there were four introductory sessions, the aim of which was to familiarize the students with my teaching style and minimize the impact of the observer's paradox. No mention of accent was made in the initial four introductory sessions, and mainly topics recommended by the group's regular English teacher were discussed. After the introductory classes, as a pre-test, the students filled out an anonymous written questionnaire.

The first section in the questionnaire contained statements related to language attitudes and language learning motivation, the second section tested the participants' predisposition for

positive and negative perfectionism, and the third section investigated their willingness to communicate orally in English. The use of 5-point Likert scales seemed fitting for the school context, as it is similar to the Hungarian grading system, where 1 means the lowest and 5 the highest grade. This logic is presumed to be the most self-evident for Hungarian students.

The questions of the 'attitudes and motivation' part of the questionnaire were influenced by the motivation questionnaire used in the 1993–2004 Hungarian survey project carried out by Dörnyei and his colleagues (e.g., Dörnyei and Csizér, 2002; Dörnyei et al., 2006), and the results of the preliminary exploratory phase carried out by myself. However, in my questionnaire, no further subscales were used within the 'attitudes and motivation' section (unlike in Dörnyei and Csizér's 2002 work), as the three subsections of my questionnaire ('attitudes and motivation', 'perfectionism', and 'willingness to communicate') were the only subdivisions created. For the section on 'perfectionism', the Frost Multidimensional Perfectionism Scale (Frost and Marten, 1990) was used as a base. The first part of the 'willingness to communicate' section contained questions translated with occasional small modifications from the questionnaire in Khatib and Nourzadeh's 2015 study, with some additional questions included by me. The second part of the 'willingness to communicate' section, which describes specific situations in which EFL learners might need to use their L2, was entirely designed by myself.

The questionnaire contained six other questions beside the 84 rating scales: five open-ended questions and a related yes/no question. The first four open-ended questions were included at the end of the 'attitudes and motivation' section of the questionnaire, and the other two questions (a yes/no question and an open-ended question) were at the end of the 'perfectionism' section.

After the four introductory sessions, nine experimental sessions followed in the teaching experiment, the aim of which was to attempt to help students form more positive attitudes towards Hungarian-accented English in general and their own Hungarian-accented English in particular, by letting them encounter numerous native and non-native accents of English and encouraging them to recognize the immense variety of accents with which English is spoken around the world. The 13 classes took place between 22nd September and 8th December 2022, and involved 60-minute sessions once or twice a week.

The experimental sessions had an indirect approach to changing the participants' attitudes towards Hungarian-accented English. Rather than telling the learners what to think, allowing students to explore native and non-native, standard and non-standard, dominant and non-dominant varieties of English in class was used as a means of encouraging them to realize

that accents of English are various, and their own accent is just one of the many accents with which their target language is spoken by native and non-native language users. (The indirect nature of the teaching method also contributed to minimizing the observer's paradox, as the research agenda was never stated during the class sessions.) When encountering various accents in the experimental classes, understanding the content was also in focus, as it would have been unreasonable to attempt to help students form positive attitudes towards newly encountered varieties which they could not understand.

At the end of the last experimental session, students filled out the same questionnaire as for the pre-test, and an additional class evaluation sheet, in which they were encouraged to express their opinions about the sessions. (The second questionnaire will be referred to as the post-test.) The six open-ended questions of the class evaluation sheet inquired about the students' experiences with and reflections on the intervention period. The questions were in Hungarian, the students' L1, in order to allow them to express their views as clearly and precisely as possible.

The respondents then filled out the same questionnaire as they did for the pre- and the post-test for a third time, as a delayed post-test, three months after the end of the teaching experiment, in order for the researcher to be able to check how long-lasting potential changes are once the intervention is over. The control group filled out the same questionnaires (except for the class evaluation sheet) at the same pace, keeping the length of time between the questionnaires the same as in the case of the experimental group, but without receiving any experimental teaching. All the questionnaires were administered in a paper format. The experimental sessions were held as part of the students' compulsory school schedule, and not as extracurricular activities, which helped give 'academic' legitimacy to the newly encountered accents.

A semi-structured interview (in Hungarian) was conducted with the group's English teacher (female, in her 50s) on 13th December 2022, five days after the end of the intervention period. As she was not always present at the class sessions, most of the questions were not strictly related to the class sessions themselves. The interview questions mainly focused on the English teacher's language attitudes, expectations towards her students and herself in terms of accent attainment, and her openness to familiarizing her students with various native and non-native accents of English in class. The 22-minute-long interview was conducted in person in her office, and was recorded with her consent.

3.2.3. Procedures

The principal of the school and the English teacher of the experimental group gave permission for the teaching experiment to be carried out, and the parents of the students in the experimental group gave their signed consent to their children's taking part in the intervention.

The implementation of the teaching experiment followed the pre-planned pattern (i.e., new accent, pair or group work, summary/reflection) with occasional changes as required by the group's progress or their EFL teacher. The focus on not teaching ready-made ideas about accents to the students but letting them extract their own meanings from the materials was prioritized throughout the sessions.

The observation of the effects of the teaching experiment happened with the help of written reports after each session (the sessions were not recorded to help the students feel at ease), and through the analysis of the pre-, post-, and delayed post-test results. The reflection phase consisted of reflections from the students', the EFL teacher of the experimental group's and the researcher's perspective, which underscores the participatory nature of the research. The students' reflections were mainly elicited with the help of the class evaluation sheet, in which they were encouraged to indicate their opinions about the experimental classes. They also reflected on the newly encountered accents in each class session. The EFL teacher's reflections were elicited in the form of a semi-structured interview, in which she reflected on the experimental classes and her own practice. My reflection on the efficiency of each class session informed the development of the materials for the next session (which is in line with Kemmis et al.'s 2014 emphasis on re-planning after reflection) and my present reflection on the pre-, post-, and delayed post-test results can influence further investigations.

The reliability of the classroom questionnaire was assessed after the pre-test, and both respondent groups (the experimental and the control group, $N = 22$) were included in the analysis. The reliability of the three sections of the questionnaire was within a good range: *Cronbach's α* = .742 for the 50-item 'attitudes and motivation' section, α = .883 for the 18-item 'perfectionism' section, and α = .917 for the 13-item 'willingness to communicate' section.

For the statistical analysis of the results of the Likert-type rating scale questions in the classroom questionnaire, the answers of the paper-based questionnaires were entered into SPSS (version 26). Reverse coding was used for items with a negative meaning to ensure the comparability of all the scales. Correlation analyses and paired samples and independent samples *t*-tests were run. Three items were excluded from the analysis due to misunderstandings on the students' part or difficulty of categorization.

The answers to the open-ended questions were analyzed qualitatively, which involved identifying common themes in the answers and grouping them together based on these themes. In the analysis of the class evaluation sheet, the students' answers were also grouped based on categorizable themes in them. Then, the most relevant themes emerging from the interview with the students' English teacher were described, and her reflection on her own accent and her students' accents were compared.

3.3. Online survey
3.3.1. Participants

The online survey was open from January, 2024 to March 2024, and 250 high school (in Hungarian: *gimnázium* or *szakgimnázium*, depending on the type of high school) students and 92 Hungarian EFL teachers working at various institutions participated. Among the participating 250 students, there are 161 female and 89 male students, and their ages range from 14 to 19, with 4.8% of them 14 years old, 13.2% of them 15 years old, 23.6% of them 16 years old, 33.2% of them 17 years old, 18.8% of them 18 years old, and 6.4% of them 19 years old.

At the time of the data collection, they had been learning English as a foreign language for 1 year to 18 years, with the majority of them having between 4–12 years of experience with learning EFL. Among the students, 82 people have an English language certificate, and 168 people do not. The students come from various parts of Hungary, with the majority from Csongrád–Csanád county, where the researcher is located. More specifically, 76.8% of the students are from Csongrád–Csanád county, 9.6% from Békés county, 4.8% from Pest county (not including Budapest), 3.6% from Bács–Kiskun county, 2% from Baranya county, 1.2% from the capital city, Budapest, 1.2% from Vas county, and 0.8% from Tolna county.

The 92 teacher respondents' ages range from 25 to 67, among whom 8 respondents are male and 84 are female. Their length of EFL teaching experience ranges between 1 and 42 years, with the most frequent being 25 yeas (10 people). They teach at various institutions: *egyetem/főiskola* "university/college 3.3%, *gimnázium/szakgimnázium* "high school" 37%, *szakképző iskola/technikum* "vocational school" 7.6%, *általános iskola* "primary school" 43.5%, *egyéb* "other" (e.g., language school or private tutoring) 8.7%. Some of the teachers might work at multiple types of institutions, e.g., university and high school, but they were asked to indicate the institution where they teach more classes.

The teachers come from 16 different counties of Hungary and the capital: Pest county [not including Budapest] (16.3%), Budapest (14.1%), Békés county (14.1%), Csongrád–Csanád county (9.8%), Bács–Kiskun county (5.4%), Borsod–Abaúj–Zemplén county (5.4%), Fejér

county (5.4%), Baranya county (4.3%), Jász–Nagykun–Szolnok county (4.3%), Vas county (4.3%), Győr–Moson–Sopron county (3.3%), Szabolcs–Szatmár–Bereg county (3.3%), Veszprém county (3.3%), Hajdú–Bihar county (2.2%), Heves county (1.1%), Komárom–Esztergom county (1.1%), Somogy county (1.1%), Tolna county (1.1%).

3.3.2. Instruments

The online questionnaire is a shortened version of the classroom questionnaire, and was distributed to the respondents using Google Forms. (The classroom questionnaire itself, the reliability of which was within a good range, can be considered as both a separate main phase of the investigation and a pilot to the online survey.) Those questions were selected from the classroom questionnaire to be part of the online survey that correlated significantly with the total score of their respective sections ('attitude and motivation', 'perfectionism', and 'willingness to communicate') in the classroom study.

The initial 12-item shortened version of the 'attitudes and motivation' questionnaire for the online survey mostly included statements with a negative meaning (e.g., "My Hungarian-accented English bothers me.", etc.). In order to avoid negatively biased responses, seven additional questions were added, which were positive rewordings of the previously selected items. Therefore, the added questions measure the same concepts and also allow for cross-checking the consistency of the respondents' answers.

The validity of the online survey was within a good range: for the 19-item 'attitudes and motivation' section, Cronbach's $\alpha = .791$; for the 15-item 'perfectionism' section, Cronbach's $\alpha = .853$, and for the 13-item 'willingness to communicate' section, Cronbach's $\alpha = .919$.

After the three sections of the online questionnaire, the respondents read a text which was an improved version of the text used for the preliminary exploratory phase. Compared to the preliminary exploratory phase, the text for the online survey was less direct, allowing the respondents to infer the acceptability and legitimacy of their own accent from those of other accents and varieties.

After the text, five questions from the 'attitudes and motivation' section were repeated. Although considerable and long-lasting change cannot be expected even in the case of the five repeated question in a one-time online survey, those were selected from the 'attitudes and motivation' section which might show the most immediate change if the participants respond to the text favorably. After the five repeated questions, another five questions were included to inquire about the respondents' thoughts about and reactions to what they read in the short text.

As the online questionnaire was intended to be filled out by both EFL learners and EFL teachers, two versions were created. The teachers' version was based on the same items as the students' version, but in the case of some items in the 'perfectionism' and 'willingness to communicate' sections, one in the 'attitudes and motivation' section, and another among the text-related reflection questions the wording needed to be slightly modified to fit their life experiences as adults and educators.

3.3.3. Procedures

The link to the Google Forms questionnaire was shared with teachers and students all across Hungary using a combination of convenience and snowball sampling. The results of the online survey were analyzed with the help of SPSS (version 26). Similarly to the results of the classroom investigation, reverse coding was necessary for items with a negative meaning to make the results of the statistical analyses consistent.

4. Discussion
4.1. Answering the first research question

The answer to the first research question, i.e., "What impact does familiarizing Hungarian EFL learners/users with multiple native and non-native accents of English through an indirect teaching method have on their 'language attitudes and motivation', 'willingness to communicate' (and potentially 'perfectionism')?" is that such a teaching method can successfully improve Hungarian EFL learners' 'attitudes and motivation', as shown by the results of the classroom investigation. ('Willingness to communicate' and 'perfectionism' were not impacted by the teaching experiment.)

The participants achieved significantly higher 'attitudes and motivation' scores after the classroom intervention, as the mean total score of the 'attitudes and motivation' section of the post-test showed a significant increase ($M2 = 190.75$) compared to that of the pre-test ($M1 = 169.92$, $p = .001$), and the improvement stayed significant three months after the classroom investigation, as well, as the experimental group's scores for the 'attitudes and motivation' section of the delayed post-test still showed a significant increase ($M3 = 183.67$) in comparison with the pre-test ($M1 = 169.92$, $p = .012$), although to a lesser extent. No significant changes were observed in the control group.

It can also be seen that a significant decrease was found between the total scores of the 'attitudes and motivation' section of the post-test ($M2 = 190.75$) and the delayed post-test ($M3 = 183.6$, $p = .035$) in the experimental group. It is apparent that a relatively short intervention

might not be enough to maintain the positive impact of the experimental teaching materials. Incorporating the introduction of a larger variety of Englishes into the EFL curriculum might be more effective, since, that way, learning about the diversity of English would be an everyday practice, that is, a sustained, long-term alternative to the teaching experiment, which might be a good measure against the weakening of positive attitude change. This idea is in line with Matsuda and Friedrich's 2012 call for a complete curriculum change, in which the international use and lingua franca function of the English language are highlighted.

The answers to the open-ended questions in the classroom questionnaire indicate that fewer negative opinions about Hungarian-accented English were expressed in the post-test, which tendency was partially retained in the delayed post-test, as well.

The responses to the questions of the class evaluation sheet show that the majority of the students (11 out of 12) realized the diversity of the accents of English with the help of the teaching experiment, and there were students who emphasized the importance of intelligibility over native-likeness. The importance of improving one's comprehension skills (of multiple varieties) arose as an important consideration.

The interview with the students' EFL teacher underscores the rationale behind the study, as she argued that she became a more confident speaker of English in her classes when her students started to arrive in high school using various accents in class due to the influence of consuming global English-language media. Mirroring Mompeán-González's 2004 and Carrie's 2017 findings, the participating English teacher has experienced that British English tends to be seen as more professional, and, as a consequence, she had been strongly dissatisfied with her non-native, American-influenced English before her students started using multiple kinds of (not necessarily British-influenced) accents in class. This is in line with Llurda's 2009 assertion that, if non-native teachers feel 'downgraded' due to their status as L2 speakers of the language they are teaching, it can be helpful for their self-confidence to experience diverse varieties of English.

The idea of the potential role model status of non-native teachers, that is, successful non-native speakers in the EFL classroom (e.g., Medgyes, 1994 and 2001; Ayudhya, 2021) might be extended based on the classroom experiment to include the use of non-native speech samples in the classroom, as well, as students started to view Hungarian-accented English and their own accent less negatively after the intervention. Murphy (2014) evaluated Javier Bardem's speech as a good candidate for a non-native speech sample for language learners, as it is not only clearly understandable but also comes from a successful person who can be seen as a role model. The present investigation proves that the list of non-native speech samples for

EFL teaching purposes from popular and/or successful people can be considerably expanded; and it seems that these samples do provide beneficial input for EFL learners.

The results also indicate that Fang and Ren's 2018 proposal to familiarize learners with Global Englishes to enhance their critical thinking about native-centered ideologies might be a fruitful method to counter native speakerism in the classroom, especially considering Kung and Wang's 2019 assertion that accent preferences in L2 learners might be influenced by the teaching materials available.

Additionally, the online questionnaire shows that the experimental teaching materials might have an even greater positive impact on EFL teachers (who are successful, advanced language learners) than students, as the increase in scores in the repeated questions after reading the text is only nearing significance among students ($M1 = 4.03$, $M2 = 4.10$, $p = .058$) but among teachers, it is highly significant ($M1 = 4.26$, $M2 = 4.47$, $p < .001$).

4.2. Answering the second research question

The second research question, "How open are Hungarian EFL learners/users to such teaching?" yielded positive results in all three steps of the research project. In the preliminary exploratory phase, 72% of the participants found the provided text useful.

In the class evaluation sheet after the teaching experiment, 11 out of 12 students considered the potential incorporation of such teaching materials into the curriculum a valuable addition.

In the online survey, it was especially the teacher respondents who found the brief teaching material useful and beneficial for EFL learners. Teachers' answers indicate a significantly higher mean rating ($M_t = 4.40$) than those of the students ($M_s = 3.83$, $p < .001$) for the statement that they consider the content of the text useful. Additionally, the teachers' scores ($M_t = 4.05$) for the statement that EFL learners' willingness to communicate orally in English would be higher if such materials were introduced to them are also significantly higher than those of the students ($M_s = 3.34$, $p < .001$).

The teachers' openness to including non-native, non-dominant, and non-standard accents in English language teaching seems to be in contrast with Litzenberg's findings (2016 [2014]), as the pre-service English teachers in this particular study often indicated that error correction-focused analysis was the first thought that came to mind with regard to using high-intermediate non-native speech samples in class, and even advanced samples were mainly evaluated based on the idea of containing 'few mistakes'. The teacher respondents of my online survey seem to be more accepting of the idea of familiarizing students with various accents in

class (although they did not answer open-ended questions; and therefore, their more nuanced responses are not known). The difference between the present findings and Litzenberg's findings (2016 [2014]) might also be attributable to the fact that Litzenberg's respondents were pre-service teachers while the respondents of my online survey were in-service teachers. The more negative and native-centered approach of pre-service teachers seems to indicate that students taking part in teacher education might also benefit from being familiarized with various native and non-native varieties of English during their studies to avoid developing negative attitudes or a lack of openness towards these varieties.

The contrast between the experimental group's English teacher's expectations towards herself and towards her students in terms of accent attainment was especially striking. Her insecurity about her own non-native accent is not something she wants to transmit to her students, as intelligibility is her main requirement when her students speak English in class. She seems to realize the negative impact of the nativeness principle, as defined by Levis in 2005, and is open to transforming her classes in order to provide more encouragement to her students for them to be willing to use English for oral communication without the anxiety she has experienced, provided that the innovations are included in the curriculum and course books, in order to ensure that there is enough time to introduce them in class.

4.3. Answering the third research question

The third research question, "What kind of relationship is observable between 'language attitudes and motivation', 'perfectionism', and 'willingness to communicate' in English as a foreign language among Hungarian learners/users?" yielded similar results in the classroom and the online part of the investigation. The pre-test for the classroom investigation showed positive correlations between 'attitudes and motivation' and 'willingness to communicate' [$\rho(20) = .50$, $p = .018$], and between 'positive' and 'negative perfectionism' [$\rho(20) = .60$; $p = .003$], while negative correlations were observed between 'attitudes and motivation' and 'perfectionism' [$\rho(20) = -.52$; $p = .013$], and more specifically, it was 'negative perfectionism', not 'positive perfectionism' that had a significant negative relationship with 'attitudes and motivation' [$\rho(20) = -.47$; $p = .029$].

The classroom pre-test is the questionnaire which is comparable to the online survey, as the online respondents did not take part in a full teaching experiment. Among teachers, the results indicate a moderate positive correlation between the mean scores for 'attitudes and motivation' and 'willingness to communicate' [$\rho(90) = .37$, $p < .001$], and a weak negative correlation between the mean scores for 'attitudes and motivation' and 'perfectionism' [$\rho(90)$

= -.21, *p* = .041]. A weak negative correlation is found between 'negative perfectionism' and 'attitudes and motivation' [$\rho(90)$ = -.30, *p* = .004] and, in this group, the negative correlation between 'negative perfectionism' and 'willingness to communicate' is also significant [$\rho(90)$ = -.28, *p* = .007]. The significant positive correlation between 'positive' and 'negative' perfectionism among teachers is weaker [$\rho(90)$ = .27, *p* = .009] than among students.

Among the student respondents, there is a moderate positive correlation between the mean scores for 'attitudes and motivation' and 'willingness to communicate' [$\rho(248)$ = .51, *p* < .001], and a weak negative correlation between the mean scores for 'attitudes and motivation' and 'perfectionism' [$\rho(248)$ = -.18, *p* = .005]. Additionally, there is a weak negative correlation between 'negative perfectionism' and 'attitudes and motivation' [$\rho(248)$ = -.26, *p* < .001], and a moderate positive correlation between 'negative' and 'positive' perfectionism [$\rho(248)$ = .46, *p* < .001].

As the correlations between the sections of the larger-scale online survey are similar to the results of the classroom investigation, the classroom results are mostly supported by the data collected from a larger sample from across Hungary.

The results indicate that there is a negative correlation between 'attitudes and motivation' and 'perfectionism', or 'negative perfectionism' specifically, among the respondents, meaning that those respondents who have higher expectations towards themselves in general seem to be less satisfied with Hungarian-accented English and their own accent. For them, 'perfection' seems to be connected to 'native-likeness' (cf. Jenkins, 2007; Sung, 2016).

As the online survey has shown, it is 'negative perfectionism' that has a negative relationship with 'WTC' (among teacher respondents), which is in line with Stoeber et al.'s 2020 claim that negative perfectionism can be considerably more detrimental for people. The disadvantageous relationship between 'negative perfectionism' and 'WTC' is not surprising, as 'negative perfectionism' is conceptualized as perfectionism that is based on the fear of failure instead of on a desire to achieve well (cf. Hamachek, 1978; Terry-Short et al., 1995; and Chan, 2007.)

As alignment can be used to avoid communication breakdowns (Trofimovich, 2016), focusing on teaching strategies to students for interactive alignment instead of letting them believe that native-likeness is the only valuable outcome of language learning might help them develop their willingness to communicate. This is the reason why tasks such as asking for clarification and using humor to avoid communication breakdowns were included in the experimental class sessions. Asking for clarification is recommended to be taught to language

learners as a communicative strategy to help them overcome difficulties which might arise as a result of not yet fully developed linguistic skills (Matsuda and Friedrich, 2011).

4.4. Answering the fourth research question

The fourth research question, "What similarities and differences can be found between Hungarian EFL learners' and teachers' 'attitudes and motivation', 'perfectionism' and 'willingness to communicate', as well as their responses to indirect teaching targeting attitude change?" yielded the following main findings based on the online survey.

Teachers had significantly higher 'attitudes and motivation' (M_t = 4.12) scores than students (M_s = 3.71, p < .001), and a similar tendency is observed in the case of their 'willingness to communicate' scores, as well, with teachers (M_t = 4.39) scoring significantly higher than students (M_s = 3.35, p < .001), while there was no significant difference between their total 'perfectionism' scores.

When 'perfectionism' scores were divided into 'positive' vs. 'negative perfectionism', teachers' scores were significantly higher for the positive (M_t = 4.08, M_s = 3.57, p < .001) and significantly lower for the negative (M_t = 2.70, M_s = 3.14, p < .001) component.

The repeated questions after reading the text all showed significantly higher scores among teacher respondents than among students (cf. they were significantly higher than students' scores in the case of only two questions before the text).

 Within-group comparisons showed that there was one repeated question showing significant improvement in attitudes compared to its original counterpart found before the text in both groups, namely the idea that they would not be that bothered by another person's non-native accent after reading the brief study material. This highlights what was also found in the preliminary exploratory phase and the classroom investigation, and was also suggested by the experimental group's English teacher, namely, that the respondents seem to be more willing to accept a hypothetical person's non-native accent than their own.

Teachers found the text significantly more useful (M_t = 4.40) than the students (M_s = 3.83, p < .001), they also found it more likely to be positive reinforcement for language learners (M_t = 4.47, M_s = 4.00, p < .001), and more helpful for improving learners' willingness to communicate (M_t = 4.05, M_s = 3.34, p < .001).

On the other hand, teachers (M_t = 2.73) found the ideas in the text significantly less new than students (M_s = 3.58, p < .001), and agreed significantly less with the statement that the English language is more diverse than they had thought (M_t = 3.16, M_s = 3.53, p = .027), showing more prior knowledge of the introduced concepts.

Teachers' more in-depth knowledge of the English language might be the reason why they did not feel that the information in the text was completely new or that the diversity of English surprised them considerably. They might also have encountered ideas similar to Dimitroff et al.'s 2018 argument that English needs to be made relevant to learners (as course book varieties do not exist outside the classroom), and requiring the use of standard, native-like English from all EFL learners is not something that helps achieve this goal.

The answers to all the four research questions appear to point in the same direction, namely, that the familiarization of language learners with Global Englishes seems to have a positive impact on how they view non-native-accented English, and potentially also on how they evaluate their own accent. Therefore, it is argued that, for a sustained positive impact, the EFL curriculum in Hungary and EFL course books in general could help students accept the fact that their accent might never become native-like (cf. the discussion of the critical period in Section 1 above) by incorporating multiple accents of English in their compulsory schedule.

5. Conclusion

5.1. Pedagogical implications

The study has implications for EFL teaching in Hungary, namely, that the introduction of various native and non-native accents of English to EFL learners can have a positive impact on their attitudes towards non-native-accented English and their own non-native accent. For this to be successful and manageable, students' familiarization with multiple different accents should be part of the EFL curriculum and EFL course books.

Using materials from less mainstream course books with a stronger focus on Global Englishes, such as the Keynote series (which is not currently on the list of course book options for high school English teachers in Hungary, but if teachers can select only a few exercises and non-native audios from it for occasional use, it might already have a positive impact on students' attitudes), and providing a collection of pre-designed exercises involving various accent samples (e.g., from TEDx talks, Academy Award acceptance speeches, interviews, etc.) for EFL teachers to choose from when designing their classes would be a step towards more diversity in accents and varieties in Hungarian EFL education. As well-known non-native or non-standard speakers might easily become role models for the students, I suggest including accent samples from famous people.

As the interviewed EFL teacher showed clear signs of accent anxiety and negative attitudes towards her own accent, helping EFL teachers with negative attitudes to accept their own accent also seems to be an important task for the future. I strongly believe that if the

curriculum included more diverse accents of English it could have a positive impact on the teachers' perceptions as well as the students', as the teacher respondents reacted positively to the text in the online survey.

5.2. Limitations and suggestions for further research

This dissertation is not without limitations. The classroom investigation reported on in the present dissertation involved only 12 students in the experimental group, and the intervention was limited in time by the availability of the participants. Further studies would need to explore the reactions of a larger number of students to the study materials, from multiple age groups, for an extended period of time.

Additionally, the interview with the experimental group's English teacher represents the experiences of only one teacher, who started learning English as an adult. Interviewing more EFL teachers from various institutions would be a valuable addition to this project.

The statistical analyses reported on in this dissertation involved Spearman's correlations, independent samples and paired samples *t*-tests. As correlation does not mean causation, regression analyses could complement the analysis presented in this dissertation in order to explore cause-and-effect relationships, as well.

Using Dörnyei's (e.g., 2005, 2009) conceptualization of the Motivational Self System might help explain why wanting a native-like accent might have a negative impact on EFL learners' 'attitudes and motivation' scores, as it is plausible that students who are negative perfectionists might set an unreachable ideal self as the desired model to follow (i.e., a native-like accent), and they might evaluate the consequences of not being able to prevent having a Hungarian accent very negatively, which might mean that the unreachability of their ought-to self is demotivating for them. This idea would need further exploration.

Additionally, although the importance of accent anxiety is briefly discussed in the dissertation, anxiety is not included as a factor in the questionnaires, as it would have made the already complex three-step research project overly complicated. Further studies might benefit from the inclusion of anxiety-related questionnaire items, as well.

5.3. Significance

The present dissertation has focused on the practical implementation of the insights gained from language attitude studies for the purposes of improving the practice of EFL teaching and learning in a Hungarian context. While attitude studies involving non-native speakers of English and/or focusing on the respondents' evaluations of non-native English are

not scarce, and asking (pre-service) teachers' opinions about incorporating non-native recordings into their classes has also been part of research projects, the actual implementation of the idea in the classroom with pre-, post-, and delayed post-testing to assess potential attitude change has not been carried out before to my knowledge. Making attitude studies interdisciplinary by using them to improve the practice of EFL teaching and learning is an important new trajectory in my view, to which the present dissertation is a contribution.

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