

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

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

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

1. Introduction

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

2. Background

2.1. Stereotypes

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

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

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

2.2. Foreign language learning in Hungary

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

2.3. The overall research framework of the current study

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

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

3. Research questions

The research questions for this particular study are the following:

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

4. Methodology

4.1. Research tool development

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

4.2. Participants

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

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

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

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

5. Results and discussion

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

5.1. General results

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

Table 3. The most frequently selected character traits

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

5.2. Results by sex

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

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

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

5.3. Results by age

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

6. Summary

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

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

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

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