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Euro–English and Croatian national identity: are Croatian university students ready for English as a lingua franca?

The present research establishes the impact of globalisation and the possible emergence of a Euro–English on the attitude of Croats towards their foreign accent. As one's foreign accent gives away one's national identity, the extent to which one strives to approach native-like pronunciation or preserve and display features of one's national identity varies considerably and depends on a number of factors. We look at how gender, proficiency in English, the sociolinguistic status of the subject's regional dialect of Croatian, regional pride, and perfectionism determine the way in which the subjects view their own production, teaching models and non-native speakers. It is shown that there is a clear divide between 'liberal' and 'traditional' students with regard to ELF, which is connected primarily with student profiles and self-assessed pronunciation proficiency. Gender, regional provenance and self-assessed perfectionism also play a role, but to a smaller extent. All these issues seem to be connected with the construction of identity in various societal roles.

1. Introduction

This paper presents the results of a research which aimed at establishing the attitude of Croats towards expressing their national identity when they speak English.¹ The research was originally inspired by the currently hot

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sociolinguistic debate known as the “Kachru-Quirk controversy”, or the controversy between “liberational” vs. “deficit” linguistics, the derogatory way in which the proponents of the two opposed sides refer to each other’s views. The controversy concerns the desirable model of English taught as a second language at schools in post-colonial countries. According to Kachru, this should be the regional variety, such as Singaporean or Sri Lankan English, for example, with its specific social and ethnic features (cf. Kachru 1991, 1996, 1997). According to the most prominent representative of the opposed view, Quirk (1985, 1990), the regional varieties of English are overvalued in this context, and the leading role in English teaching should be reserved for the variety of English as spoken in the metropolis. Some currently prominent linguists dealing with this topic, such as Mesthrie and Bhatt (2008) try to reach a compromise by objectively acknowledging the arguments of each of the two sides and believe that the controversy will pragmatically resolve itself in practice, “outside the Ebony Tower”.

Even though the present research deals with English as a foreign, rather than a second language, issues concerning the role of native models and the status of local, national, non-native features in English pronunciation remain crucial. In particular, our research is set within the theoretical framework of the study of ELF (English as a Lingua Franca). A number of prominent world’s linguists have recently studied and described a variety of English which has emerged as a result of English becoming a global language. Although it is sometimes still referred to in the literature by the older term *International English* (cf. Görlach 1995), it seems that authors have recently preferred to speak in terms of *Global English* (cf. Görlach 2002, Crystal 2003) or *World Englishes* (Jenkins 2003, Kirkpatrick 2007). The linguist who was probably instrumental in establishing the term ‘Global English’ is Crystal, who explicitly stresses the status of English as the only truly global language (cf. Crystal 2003). In any case, the fastest-growing population of speakers of this internationally-used non-native English by far outnumber the native speakers, so it is often argued that it is unjust to compare learners to an idealized, “omniscient” native speaker (cf. Ranta 2009). When stressing that the English are not the owners of the English language, one of the favourite quotes in the ELF literature is Widdowson’s famous observation that “... how English develops internationally is no business of native speakers of English” (Widdowson 1994). Accordingly, in her seminal work on ELF, Jenkins (2000) describes the phonology of English as an International Language, establishing the Lingua Franca Core, including a set of key features necessary to guarantee international intelligibility and characterising ELF. In the context of Europe and European integration, some linguists speak of Euro-English, as a newly emerging ELF subvariety (cf. Mollin 2007). As observed by Cogo (2009), compared to native varieties, ELF can even be seen as a variety enriched by the

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“flavour of the multilingual and multicultural repertoire” of its speakers (Cogo 2009: 270). Studies on ELF as a well established variety of English in its own right sometimes focus on particular registers, such as BELF, Business English as a Lingua Franca, to use a term originally coined by Louhiala-Salminen (2002) and later used in studies on this particular subvariety, such as Pullin Stark (2009). Other “objective” ELF features which have been studied include pragmatics (House 1999; Cogo 2009), morphosyntax (Seidlhofer 2004) and syntax (Ranta 2009). Additionally, there seems to be some psychological reality to ELF processes, which are unique to ELF and different from native-speaker communication (Pickering 2006).

There has not been much research in Croatia concerning English as a Lingua Franca. However, Croatia has a rich tradition of Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL) and research into TEFL (for an overview see Vilke 2007). Some recent TEFL research in Croatia may be used to provide data as to the possible status of ELF. Recent studies of learner attitudes in Croatia have shown that secondary school learners are generally satisfied with their English language classes, with points of dissatisfaction being connected with using more traditional instructivist approaches to teaching (Mihaljević Djigunović 2007: 124–125). This may indicate that secondary school learners of EFL in Croatia are indeed ready to be independent users of ELF. This is further corroborated by the research of motivation of Croatian learners of English – Croatian learners want to learn English in order to be able to communicate with other people – not necessarily native speakers (Mihaljević Djigunović 1991: 195). Moreover, English language needs of Croatian students seem to be primarily needs of students as users rather than students as learners. Thus, a recent study showed that “user-centred” activities prevail among top ten ranks (such as using the Internet, watching films, giving information to foreigners, and using email), and only two items among the top ten are explicitly connected with instruction (writing seminar papers and communicating with teachers, ranks 7 and 10, respectively; Narančić Kovač and Cindrić 2007: 71–72). However, the attitude of “relaxed pragmatism” (Ehrenreich 2009) does not apply to MA and BA students majoring in English – future teachers of English in Croatia. Regardless of whether they had training in Global English, they were unwilling to accept non-native varieties as equal to native ones in their own production and teaching (Drljača Margić and Širola 2009).

Thus, in addition to more “objective” linguistic features of ELF, ELF research has also focused on teachers’ and learners’ attitudes towards ELF (Sifakis and Sougari 2005; Jenkins 2005; Jenkins 2006; Jenkins 2007; Moussu and Llurda 2008). In other words, the focus is on the extent to which learners of English feel to be and indeed are users of ELF, willing to accept their English as part of World Englishes rather than a “foreign language”. Two issues seem crucial here. Firstly, can English, uncoupled from its native speakers (Seidlhofer 2001: 151) survive, and how? Secondly, should the user of ELF mark his/her identity and to what extent? We believe that both of these issues revolve around dynamic construction of identity in different contexts. Uncoupling English from native speakers means coupling it to non-native speakers, and what

is at issue, then, is how they construct their identities when using ELF. For instance, one study has shown that not marking one's identity in pronunciation may bring the reward of being efficient (i.e. intelligible to others), but at the cost of not showing one's ethnic affiliation (Gatbonton, Trofimovich, and Magid 2005). In such a context, English as a Lingua Franca is the ownership of its speakers.² Indeed, this may be the missing link in defining ELF as a variety rather than "learner language". Thus, in addition to "objective" features including expansion in function, nativization of form and institutionalization of a new standard (Mollina 2007), the features of construction of identity need to be taken into consideration when deciding on variety status. A variety is not a variety only because of these "objective" issues (core features, expansion in function, nativization, institutionalization), but also because its speakers believe it to be a variety. This brings us to the issue of stratification – do different attitudes to ELF, which may be a result of various social and other factors – lead to a stratified ELF model?

In this context the objective of the present research was to establish how globalisation and the possible emergence of Euro-English (EE) influence the idea of a target model of English pronunciation of university students in Croatia. We looked at how five factors (student profile, gender, self-assessed proficiency, sociolinguistic status of the subjects' regional Croatian dialect, the subjects' self-assessed perfectionism) determine the extent to which the university student population throughout Croatia consciously strive to approach native-like pronunciation, or possibly, to preserve and display features revealing their national identity. Based on existing studies of learner attitudes, we expect to see a polarisation between what one may call a "liberal" vs. "traditional" attitude to displaying regional and national features in one's pronunciation – "liberals" being (potential) users of ELF and "traditionalists" believing in a native model. Because of a relatively homogenous sample (all university students, of the same age, most studying at the University of Zagreb) we expect this polarisation to be primarily reflected in their student profile (i.e. choice of major), with English majors primarily being "traditionalists" and other majors being more liberal. Similarly, we expect self-assessed proficiency and gender to play a role in liberalism (more proficient speakers and women being less liberal). We also hypothesize that speakers from the rural areas will be more traditional in their attitudes to recognizability of national traits. Finally, we expect self-assessed perfectionists to be more traditional.

The present research is ultimately aimed at challenging the present way of teaching English in Croatia. The approach to English teaching which is being

2 This, of course, also implies the ownership of ELF by its teachers. The shift from learners of English as a Foreign Language to users who take ownership of their own English as Lingua Franca is necessarily connected with a change in curriculum (Jenkins 1998; for an overview of issues in teaching World Englishes see Jenkins 2006). Moreover, it is also linked with the shift in second language learning, from teachers as instructors to teachers as facilitators. In order for learners to become users, their teachers have to be willing to relinquishing their role as sole owners of knowledge to be transmitted.

challenged has traditionally been based on one of the two major native varieties of English pronunciation, Received Pronunciation and, less commonly, General American, as exclusive models of English pronunciation, whilst any regionally or nationally recognisable features have been largely ignored and sometimes even stigmatised. Finding a clear tendency towards “liberalism” will indicate that Croatian students are indeed ready to be users of ELF, which should be acknowledged in their instruction. Moreover, the hypothesized differences between various groups of subjects may indicate the way in which a possible programme of introducing ELF into Croatian classrooms and teaching practice should be done. On a more theoretical note, finding a potential divide in our sample between “traditionalists” and “liberals” may point to the factors which may be related or indeed the cause of these attitudes, possibly initiating refinements in the existing ELF model.

The following section gives an overview of the research methods. Section 3 presents and discusses the results of the study on the five parameters in question. Section 4 is the overall discussion, shedding light on the larger issues of ELF in Croatia, and suggesting guidelines for further research, followed by a conclusion.

2. Research methodology

2.1 Sample

The research was carried out on a sample of 1461 university students (median age 20.4) of different profiles from the University of Zagreb, the Juraj Dobrila University in Pula, Zagreb School of Economics and Management and the Josip Juraj Strossmayer University in Osijek. In choosing the sample three criteria were used. The elimination criterion was whether the participant was a learner of English as a foreign language. The two remaining criteria were including a variety of regions and enlisting a variety of student profiles. The sample includes three of the seven Croatian universities, thus including three major regions – the Zagreb region, the east of Croatia and northern part of the Croatian coast. With regard to the student profile, it was our aim to contrast English majors with other student profiles, ultimately including a variety of profiles offered at Croatian universities.³ In this paper we will present the results for six profiles: business majors, English majors, kindergarten teacher majors, elementary school teacher majors, humanities and social sciences majors and mechanical engineering majors. The characteristics of the sample are presented in Table 1.

3 Ultimately, we plan to include students from the four remaining universities – the University of Split, the University of Zadar, the University of Dubrovnik and the University of Rijeka to get a sample of all Croatian students. Moreover, we plan to include a greater variety of student profiles.

Table 1 Descriptive statistics for the sample

Universities	University of Zagreb	66.9%
	The Juraj Dobrila University in Pula	16.8%
	The Josip Juraj Strossmayer University in Osijek	10.0%
	Zagreb School of Economics and Management	6.3%
Student profiles	business majors	40.8%
	English majors	21.1%
	kindergarten teacher majors	12.9%
	elementary school teacher majors	12.8%
	humanities and social sciences majors	8.6%
	engineering majors	3.8%
Gender	F	73.0%
	M	27.0%
length of learning	9 years and longer	65.6%
	5-8 years	25.8%
	2-4 years	7.4%
	less than 2 years	1.2%
provenance (urban/rural)	city (population over 50,000)	58.9%
	town (population between 10,000 and 50,000)	29.1%
	village (population less than 10,000)	12.0%

Table 1 shows that the majority of the participants attend the University of Zagreb (the largest university in Croatia). Most participants were business majors (from the universities of Zagreb and Pula and Zagreb School of Economics and Management), and the second largest group are participants majoring in English (from the Osijek and Zagreb universities). The population was not balanced in terms of gender, with a predominance of female participants, which may be a result of the fact that most participants belonged to various humanities and social sciences majors, traditionally attended by women in Croatia. Most participants learned English for nine years or longer, and most of them lived most of their lives in the city.

2.2 Instrument and procedure

The participants were given an anonymous questionnaire written in Croatian, which consisted of thirty one items.⁴ In sixteen of these items they expressed their attitude by agreement or disagreement with given statements on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree; 5 = strongly agree) and in

⁴ The English translation of the questionnaire is attached in the Appendix.

the remaining items they selected one of several options. The first four questions were statements about their attitude to one's regional accent of Croatian, the next seventeen concerned their attitude to English pronunciation, and the remaining ten elicited general information about the subject, such as gender, age, regional provenance and the like. It took about ten minutes to complete and was done on a voluntary basis during regular university classes.

2.3 Data analysis

The responses were analysed by means of the Software Package for Social Sciences for Windows (SPSS) 11.0.1. The following statistical procedures were used: descriptive statistics, independent samples t-test, analysis of variance and correlation.

3. Results and discussion

The findings can be generally classified into three subsections. In 3.1. we establish the difference between participants with more liberal vs. more traditional attitudes to national and regional traits in pronunciation. Subsections 3.2., 3.3. and 3.4. examine the role of the five parameters under consideration (student profile, gender, self-assessed proficiency, sociolinguistic status of the subjects' regional Croatian dialect and the subjects' self-assessed perfectionism) in the subjects' attitude to displaying one's own accent, teaching models and collocutors.

3.1 Liberal vs. traditional attitudes: the divide

Eleven items in the questionnaire relate to attitudes to displaying one accent (see questions 6, 7 and 9 a-h in the Appendix). In order to establish a divide in our sample, we will focus on items 6, 7 and 9.

Most participants (68.4%) say that they would want to learn English pronunciation so as to be taken for a native speaker, regardless of the time and effort it would take. However, when asked about whether they would mind having a foreign accent when talking to native and non-native speakers of English, most answered they would not mind a strong or slight accent (74.9% when talking to native speakers and 81.2% when talking to non-native speakers).

Furthermore, participants who said they would not want to learn English pronunciation so as to be taken for native speakers scored significantly lower on questions concerning their foreign accent when talking to native ($t=-5.764$; $p<.01$) and non-native speakers of English ($t=-4.786$; $p<.01$) (see Table 2).

Table 2. Attitudes to accent when speaking English broken down by attitude to learning English pronunciation

	Would you want to learn English pronunciation to be taken for a native	N	M	SD	t	p
Accent when talking to native	no	457	1.92	.649	-5.764	<.01
	yes	991	2.13	.655		
Accent when talking to non-native	no	456	1.78	.653	-4.786	<.01
	yes	988	1.96	.685		

This is further corroborated by the participants' attitudes to regional recognizability of their own Croatian accent (see question 1 in the Appendix) – significant correlation has been found between acceptance of one's own regional accent in Croatian and acceptance of a distinct Croatian accent in English pronunciation (see Table 3).

Table 3. Correlations between regional recognizability of Croatian and acceptability of a foreign accent when talking to native and non-native speakers of English

		Accent when talking to native	Accent when talking to non-native
Regional recognizability	Pearson r	-.120*	-.132*
	N	1450	1455

* $p < 0.01$

In other words, the participants' attitude to regional recognizability of their own accent in Croatian is significantly correlated with whether they mind having a foreign accent when speaking English – the more the participants accept regional recognizability of their own Croatian accent, the less they mind a strong foreign accent when speaking English. Moreover, analysis of variance confirms that there are significant differences between groups on the regional recognizability of Croatian (see question 1 in the Appendix) with regard to the acceptance of a foreign accent when talking to native and non-native speakers of English (see Tables 4 and 5).

Table 4. Differences between groups in accepting regional recognizability of their own Croatian pronunciation with regard to accepting a foreign accent when speaking English to native speakers

Accent when talking to native	N	Arithmetic means across homogenous tests - Scheffe (Alpha = .05)		F	p
no foreign accent	364	2.90		10.751	<.01
slight accent OK	813		3.15		
strong accent OK	273		3.35		

Scheffe's post hoc test showed that participants who would not want to have a foreign accent when speaking English rate acceptability of a regional accent in their own Croatian speech significantly differently from the other two groups (who believe a slight accent or a strong accent is acceptable when speaking English). This is tendency is even more pronounced when speaking to non-native speakers (Table 5).

Table 5. Differences between groups in accepting regional recognizability of their own Croatian pronunciation with regard to accepting a foreign accent when speaking English to non-native speakers

Accent when talking to native	N	Arithmetic means across homogenous tests - Scheffe (Alpha = .05)		F	p
no foreign accent	272	2.88		12.896	<.01
slight accent OK	763		3.09		
strong accent OK	410			3.36	

Table 5 shows that all three groups of participants (with regard to foreign accent when speaking English) rate acceptability of a regional accent in their own Croatian speech significantly differently from each other.

Overall, we believe that the data presented thus far are a clear indication of the polarisation between the "liberal" and "traditional" attitude to displaying regional and national features in one's English pronunciation. A typically liberal subject would in principle want his or her pronunciation to be regionally recognizable, would find it acceptable if Croatian public figures exhibited some regional features in their pronunciation and would not expect "proper" Croatian to be regionally neutral. When it comes to English pronunciation, a "liberal" subject would not be bothered with any kind of perfectionism and would have an attitude which Ehrenreich (2009) refers to as "relaxed pragmatism". On the other hand, ideal "traditionalists" would not like their speech or the speech of others to be regionally or nationally recognizable.

In the remaining three subsections we will examine whether there are any differences between "liberals" and "traditionalists" in their attitudes to displaying one's accent when speaking English, their attitudes to teaching models and collocutors, with relation to five parameters: student profile, gender, self-assessed proficiency, socio-linguistic status of the subjects' regional Croatian dialect, and the subjects' self-assessed perfectionism.

3.2 Attitudes to displaying one's accent when speaking English

Let us first look at the role of the student profile, i.e. the choice of the major subject of study in this sense. This turns out to be the main predictor of being liberal or traditional, in that it significantly determines three variables. As shown in Tables 6, 7, 8 and 9 these are: willingness to work on English pronunciation so as to speak like a native speaker, the acceptance of a foreign accent in English pronunciation when talking to native speakers and when talking to non-native speakers.

Table 6. Differences between groups in willingness to work on their own pronunciation in order to sound like native speakers

student profile	N	Arithmetic means across homogenous tests - Scheffe (Alpha = .05)		F	p
social sc/hum.	126	,51		4.938	< .01
engineer	56	,63	,63		
kindergarten	188	,66	,66		
primary school	225	,68	,68		
business	586		,71		
English	270		,74		

Table 6 shows that there is a significant difference between groups on whether they are willing to put an effort into learning to pronounce like native speakers. Scheffe's post hoc test showed that English majors have the highest score on this question (i.e. are most willing to do it), and are significantly different from social science and humanities majors in this respect.

Table 7. Differences between groups in accepting a foreign accent when talking to native speakers with regard to student profiles

student profile	N	Arithmetic means across homogenous tests - Scheffe (Alpha = .05)		F	p
kindergarten	188	1.88		26.296	<.01
engineer	56	1.89			
business	589	1.95	1.95		
social sc/hum.	124	2.00	2.00		
primary school	224		2.18	2.18	
English	271		2.41		

Table 8. Differences between groups in accepting a foreign accent when talking to non-native speakers with regard to student profiles

student profile	N	Arithmetic means across homogenous tests – Scheffe (Alpha = .05)		F	p
kindergarten	188	1.70		19.728	<.01
engineer	56	1.80	1.80		
social sc/hum	124	1.81	1.81		
business.	586	1.83	1.83		
primary school	225		1.96		
English	269			2.23	

Tables 7 and 8 show that there is a significant difference between groups on how willing they are to accept a foreign accent when talking to native and non-native speakers of English. Moreover, in both cases Scheffe's post hoc test showed that English majors are significantly different from most or all other student profiles (with highest scores, i.e. least accepting of a foreign accent). Kindergarten teachers and mechanical engineers are on the other end of the scale, being most accepting of a foreign accent when speaking English. This again can be explained with reference to Ehrenreich's (2009) distinction between content-focused and language-focused speakers of ELF and the "relaxed pragmatism" of the former.

Interestingly, the attitude to foreign accent in English corresponds to a difference in the attitude of different student profiles to regional accent in Croatian. Table 9 shows that there is a significant difference between groups on whether they are willing to accept regional recognizability of accent in their own Croatian speech. Scheffe's post hoc test showed that English majors and primary school teacher majors (with lowest scores on accepting their own regional accent) were significantly different from kindergarten teacher majors (who were most willing to accept their own regional accent).

Table 9. Differences between groups in accepting regional recognizability of Croatian with regard to student profiles

student profile	N	Arithmetic means across homogenous tests – Scheffe (Alpha = .05)		F	p
English	271	2.87		7.905	<.01
primary school	225	2.90			
business	590	3.17	3.17		
engineer	56	3.23	3.23		
social sc/hum.	126		3.30		
kindergarten	188		3.49		

Note that the English majors are again the most “traditional”, whereas kindergarten teachers are the most liberal. A possible explanation of this result will be offered in the general discussion (section 4).

As for gender, as sociolinguistic research generally suggests, it is expected that women should have a different attitude to “correctness” in pronunciation than men. Indeed, the present findings confirm this expectation. As indicated in Table 10, women are more willing to work on their pronunciation so as to sound like native speakers (the difference is significant). Women are also significantly more concerned about their foreign accent when talking to native speakers of English; however, there is no difference between men and women on this issue when talking to non-native speakers of English.

Table 10. Attitudes to foreign accent when speaking English broken down by gender

	Gender	N	M	SD	t	p
Would you want to speak like a native	female	1058	.73	.445	5.784	<.01
	male	389	.56	.497		
Accent when talking to native	female	1057	2.09	.648	2.773	<.01
	male	391	1.98	.687		
Accent when talking to non-native	female	1055	1.92	.675	1.805	=.072
	male	388	1.85	.692		

Furthermore, women express a similar attitude in their approach to regional recognizability in Croatian – women score significantly lower than men on the question concerning regional recognizability of their accent when they speak Croatian ($t=-2.200$; $p<.05$).

In short, compared to men, when it comes to expressing regional or national identity through accent, women have a different attitude than men – they are significantly more concerned about being judged by others, especially speakers whom they perceive as speaking English better than they do.

The next parameter we look at is proficiency of pronunciation in English. It must be stressed once again that we did not have any objective indicators of the subjects’ proficiency, so it was just their subjective, self-assessed level of proficiency, graded on a scale from 1 to 5, i.e. ranging from very poor to excellent. It turns out that speakers who assess themselves as “excellent” in this sense exhibit a less liberal attitude to accent.

More specifically, there is a significant difference between groups of speakers (assessing their English pronunciation proficiency) on how willing they are to accept speaking with a foreign accent when talking to native ($F(4, 1442)=30.703$; $p<.01$) and non-native ($F(4, 1437)=29.108$; $p<.01$) speakers of English. Moreover, in both cases Scheffe’s post hoc test showed that speakers who rate themselves as excellent are significantly different from students who assess themselves as very good and good as well as those who assess themselves as poor or very poor, i.e. excellent pronouncers are least willing to exhibit a foreign accent when speaking to native and non-native speakers of English.

This may be accounted for by the fact that the category of speakers who assess themselves as excellent pronouncers mainly comprises English majors. In order to test for this possibility, we tested the same variables excluding English majors. The results were the same as previously – there were significant differences between groups according to self-assessed proficiency on how willing they are to accept speaking with a foreign accent when talking to native ($F(4, 1173)=15.195; p<.05$) and non-native ($F(4, 1170)=13.895; p<.05$) speakers of English. Scheffe’s post hoc test showed that excellent and very good pronouncers were significantly different from those who assess themselves as poor and very poor on both questions. Although the figures are lower than with English majors included, it seems that proficiency is an independent factor contributing to the acceptability of a foreign accent when speaking to both native and non-native speakers of English.

The regional sociolinguistic status of the subjects’ accent turned out to be non-significant in this respect. In other words, participants from rural areas, small towns and larger cities do not differ significantly on their responses to any of the tested items (6, 7 and 9 in the questionnaire). There are no significant differences for regionally recognizable accents in Croatian either. Although one might expect differences with regard to regional recognizability, the fact that all participants are university students may have obliterated this expected difference.

Finally, it turns out that the degree of self-assessed perfectionism shows a significant correlation with the subjects’ traditional attitude to expressing one’s national identity in pronunciation.

Table 11. Correlations between self-assessed perfectionism and acceptability of a foreign accent when talking to native and non-native speakers of English.

		Accent when talking to native	Accent when talking to non-native
Self-assessed perfectionism	Pearson r	.180*	.168*
	N	914	914

* $p<.01$

Table 11 shows that self-assessed perfectionism is significantly correlated with whether the participants mind a foreign accent when speaking English – the more participants assess themselves as perfectionists, the more they mind a strong foreign accent when speaking English to native and non-native speakers. In other words, perfectionists want to achieve what they believe to be the “proper” standard of pronunciation, i.e. no foreign accent.

The results in this section showed that university students in Croatia show two distinct attitudes to displaying their own national identity when speaking English as a foreign language – a liberal attitude (wanting their pronunciation to be regionally recognizable) and a more traditional attitude, not accepting regional or national recognizability of their own pronunciation. This is in line

with the two groups posited in section 3.1. The “liberality” and “traditionalism” were significantly different primarily with respect to student profile, with English majors being traditionalists, and all other student profiles being more liberal. With regard to the factor of self-assessed proficiency, there was a significant difference between students who assessed themselves as excellent and all other students. This was shown to be unrelated to the student profile factor. As expected, gender and self-assessed perfectionism also accounted for differences between groups of participants, whereas the regional status of the speakers (whether they came from urban or rural backgrounds) did not. This may perhaps be related to the sample of university students.

3.3 Attitudes to English teaching models

So far we have looked at how the five parameters under consideration are related to the subjects’ attitudes to their own accent. Now we turn to their correlation with attitudes to teaching models. Once again, it turns out that the pragmatically-minded mechanical engineering majors have the lowest score on the preference for native-speaker teachers to teach them pronunciation, as opposed to the language-focused English majors who score the highest in this respect. This is illustrated in Table 12.

Table 12. Differences between groups in preferring native-speaker teachers with regard to student profiles

student profile	N	Arithmetic means across homogenous tests - Scheffe (Alpha = .05)		F	p
engineer	55	2.75		5.221	< .01
business	571	3.03	3.03		
social sc/hum.	125	3.10	3.10		
primary school	224	3.21	3.21		
kindergarten	186	3.22	3.22		
English	268		3.42		

As shown in Table 12 there is a significant difference between groups on how much they agree with the statement that native speakers are better teachers of pronunciation than non-native speakers. Scheffe’s post hoc test showed that English majors were significantly different from mechanical engineers in this respect – whereas English majors believe they will learn pronunciation better from native speakers, mechanical engineers do not necessarily believe this to be true. It is worth noting, however, that the overall mean score on this question is 3.15, i.e. that our participants are not prejudiced against non-native teachers.

Another interesting finding is that women prefer to learn English pronunciation from native speakers, and the t-test shows that the difference between men and women is significant ($t=2.360$; $p<.05$). To be certain that it is not the student profile that contributes to this factor, we tested for this question with the exclusion of all English majors, and obtained similar results ($t=2.287$;

$p < .05$). Thus, it seems that it is indeed gender that contributes to this difference, which may be connected with our result from the previous section, which showed that women are less liberal than men. Perhaps this has to do with the belief that it is native speakers who are privy to “correct” or “proper” knowledge on English pronunciation.

The next finding shows that there is a significant correlation between self-assessed pronunciation proficiency and preference for native teachers teaching pronunciation ($r = .126$; $p < .05$). In order to eliminate that this is due to English majors (who possibly assess themselves higher than other student profiles), we tested for the same correlation with the exclusion of English majors and obtained similar results ($r = .102$; $p < .01$). This shows that self-assessed proficiency plays a role in our sample in the preference for native teachers – more proficient pronouncers prefer native teachers to teach them pronunciation.

As concerns the role of the regional sociolinguistic status of the subjects, the population from the city are somewhat different than the rural population of participants in preferring native speaker teachers teaching pronunciation. The *t*-test shows that the rural population scores lower on this question, and the difference is significant ($t = 2.182$; $p < .05$). This is an expected finding, on the one hand, because one would expect the rural population to be more closely connected to their regional accent and national identity. On the other, this is at odds with our findings in the previous section, where there was no significant difference between the populations depending on where they came from. It is possible that university students of rural provenance, who have come to large urban centres to study and count as fairly educated population, might not be truly representative of regional accents of Croatian. In any case, it would be interesting to see if the same holds true of high-school population of rural provenance, which is the focus of interest in another research currently under way.

Interestingly enough, the degree of self-assessed perfectionism also turns out not to be significant in the present research ($F(4,896) = 2.267$; $p > .05$). A possible explanation is that, according to some independent evidence, among present-day Croatian-speaking university students the term “perfectionist” may have somewhat negative connotations, suggesting what is covered by the informal expressions of “swot” in British English and “eager beaver” in American English. This might be the reason why subjects are generally unwilling to admit that their perfectionism is the main motivation for their desire to work hard on their English pronunciation and so few subjects gave this response.

3.4 Attitudes to collocutors

Let us now look at how the five parameters under consideration are related to the attitudes to collocutors. We are focusing here on question 10 in the questionnaire (see Appendix), asking the participants whether they agree that it is easier to understand the pronunciation of other non-native speakers of English than the pronunciation of native speakers. The mean score on this question is 2.89 ($SD = 1.185$), which shows that the participants do not agree or disagree with this statement.

With regard to our student profile, analysis of variance again shows that there is a significant difference between groups on how much they agree with this statement ($F(5,1429)=7.529$; $p<.01$). Scheffe's post hoc test showed that English majors were significantly different from all other student profiles (except for social sciences/humanities majors). This again confirms the language focus of the English majors, and the pragmatism of all other student profiles, especially mechanical engineers who are on the opposite part of the scale. The results are presented in Table 13.

Table 13. Differences between groups on easier understanding of the pronunciation of non-native speakers with regard to student profile

student profile	N	Arithmetic means across homogenous tests - Scheffe (Alpha = .05)			F	p
English	269	2.52			7.529	<.01
social sc/hum.	125	2.78	2.78			
primary school	224	2.96	2.96			
kindergarten	188		2.99			
business	573		3.00			
engineer	55		3.11			

We expected the same to be true for self-assessed pronunciation proficiency. Indeed, our results show that there is a significant difference between groups on self-assessed proficiency with relation to easier understanding of non-native speakers ($F(4,1425)=18.391$; $p<.01$). Scheffe's post hoc test shows that each of the groups is different from three other groups, except for the next lower group (Table 14). Similar results are obtained when English majors are excluded from the sample ($F(4,1177)=12.381$; $p<.01$), confirming that self-assessed proficiency is independent from student profile.

Table 14. Differences between groups on easier understanding of the pronunciation of non-native speakers with regard to self-assessed pronunciation proficiency

student profile	N	Arithmetic means across homogenous tests - Scheffe (Alpha = .05)				F	p
excellent	130	2.39				18.391	<.01
very good	537	2.73	2.73				
good	606		2.99	2.99			
poor	132			3.41	3.41		
very poor	24				3.58		

Overall, the results on self-assessed proficiency and understanding of non-native speakers may be explained by participants expecting higher accommodation skills from non-native speakers.

As for gender, the t-test shows that there are no significant differences between men and women on understanding non-native speakers ($t=-.882$; $p=.378$). It seems that the issue of “correctness” suggested earlier is simply not an issue here.

Analysis of variance shows that there are no differences between different groups with regard to this question based on perfectionism ($F(4,897)=1.208$; $p=.306$). This item is related to assessing one’s own performance, rather than the performance of others, so no difference was to be expected.

ANOVA shows that there is a significant difference between participants depending on whether they are the urban or the rural population ($F(2,1333)=3.113$; $p<.05$). Specifically, participants who lived most of their life in a large city score lower on this point (they disagree with the statement that it is easier to understand the pronunciation of non-native speakers), and Scheffe’s post hoc test showed that they are different from the rural population (but not from the population of smaller towns). This finding reinforces the difference between the rural and urban population from the previous section.

The results in this section show that the student population differs significantly on whether they find it easier to understand the pronunciation of native or non-native speakers. English majors and better pronouncers do not find non-native speakers easier to understand, which may be a result of what they are taught and their achievement on programmes which primarily focus on various native English varieties. As opposed to that, other majors and speakers who assess themselves as worse pronouncers do find non-native speakers easier to understand, which may signify the fact that they expect higher accommodation skills from non-native speakers, and the fact that they do not expect to be judged by them. Finally, the rural population believe that non-native speakers of English are easier to understand.

4. Overall discussion

Let us now look into some of the overall implications of our results. The divide between “liberal” and “traditional” attitudes to accent, based on the attitudes to displaying one’s own accent, attitudes to teaching models and attitudes to collocutors, depends on the following factors: student profile, self-assessed proficiency, and to a lesser extent gender, coming from an urban or a rural background and self-assessed perfectionism.

Students majoring in English are most traditional in their views concerning the displaying of national features in English. They are language-focused, and we should add inner-circle-focused – studying English in Croatia means studying native English varieties (in the traditional, colonial sense) and the corresponding cultures. Their view of English seems to be prescriptive, in the sense that only the inner circle varieties are taken as proper. This suggestion is corroborated by the evidence from the study by Drljača Margić and Širola (2009), which suggests that English majors in Croatia are unwilling to accept

non-native, expanding circle English varieties as equivalent to native inner-circle ones.⁵ This leads to a paradox. Whereas other student profiles in Croatia are more pragmatic and “liberal” in their views, and already see themselves as users or ELF, English majors, who will be future teachers of English in Croatia, are unwilling to take that view. Moreover, English majors are also traditional in their views regarding Croatian – they do not want their Croatian to be regionally recognizable, as opposed to some other student profiles, which do. Therefore, it seems that choosing to study English in Croatia entails a traditional attitude to regional and national identity, and further perpetuates this attitude. This is an attitude according to which English is taught to communicate with native speakers, thus leading to accepting language standards of native varieties rather than non-native varieties. With regard to Croatian, this is an attitude according to which regional identity should not be evident when speaking Croatian. This may mean that in order to be “eligible” to become a student of English, one has to succeed in adopting standards of correctness perpetuated by English teachers – native standards of “proper English” of the inner circle.

A similar difference in attitudes is also evident with regard to self-assessed proficiency. Students who assess themselves as less proficient are more willing to accept a Croatian accent in their pronunciation, are more willing to have non-native teachers and speak more willingly to non-native collocutors. This, however, does not necessarily mean that they are willing to be users of EFL. Self-assessment has been shown to be correlated in EFL contexts with language use anxiety on a sample of university students from the University of Zagreb (Mihaljević Djigunović 2004). Thus, this result may simply show that students who assess themselves as less proficient are less anxious when faced with a non-native “assessor”, who is not perceived as privy to the “proper” standard.

Gender, self-assessed perfectionism and the urban/rural division seem to be related with assessing oneself vs. assessing others. Women want to learn what they believe to be the “proper” model of English, which is why they are significantly more concerned about being judged by others, especially speakers whom they perceive as speaking English better than they do. This is also why they want to be taught by native speakers, who may be seen as being privy to the “proper” inner-circle variety. This is also the reason why they do not report understanding native speakers better – they do not judge the “correctness” of others, but they simply want to achieve a proper standard themselves. Note that the “proper” standard is set by societal norms, rather than the participants’ feeling. Self-assessed perfectionism, on the other hand, does not seem to be related to achieving a “proper” standard, but any stand-

5 This may suggest that their motivation is different than the motivation of the rest of the sample – whereas English majors may have affective motivation (they like “the sound of English”), the rest of the sample may have other types of motivation (as defined by Mihaljević Djigunović 1991).

ard set for oneself. This is why “perfectionists” are “traditionalists” when talking to others, but do not mind non-native teachers or collocutors. Thus, their own perfectionism sets a performance benchmark they aspire to reach. As opposed to self-assessment evident in gender and perfectionism differences, the urban vs. rural division seems to relate to assessing others according to “proper” norms. This would account for the fact that there are no differences between participants when they assess their own pronunciation, but that there are differences with regard to teaching models and collocutors. The fact that the urban population prefers native models and collocutors may suggest being more in touch with what they believe is proper.

The present research shows that the population of Croatian university students largely accept non-native target model of English pronunciation and as such count as likely speakers of what has been identified as ELF, or possibly even the hypothetical Euro-English in their future professional work and life. It should be noted that the emphasis here is on the word “target”, because, as stressed throughout ELF literature, this should by no means be confused with the imitation or teaching model. As explained by Jenkins (2009: 14), for the speakers of this International English, referred to here as ELF, the target model of English is some “lingua franca core” of English (LFC), and the model is “... the bilingual teacher who has the core and the local features in his/her repertoire...”. In addition to teaching students this LFC, the teacher is then responsible for developing the necessary accommodation skills in the students, in order for them to be capable of communicating with ELF speakers from other backgrounds (cf. Jenkins 2009: 14).

In order for this to be achieved, however, English majors in Croatia, future teachers of the lingua franca core, need to be more in touch with the needs of their future students; i.e. just like in the case of the second-language teacher (Derwing and Murray 2005), pronunciation teaching in Croatia should be research based. A way needs to be found to overcome the paradox of the English language teacher in Croatia: in order to become a teacher, s/he needs to be proficient in inner-circle standards, but his/her pragmatically-minded students expect him/her to teach them to communicate with the outer circle. A step in the right direction is certainly to include Global English classes in university programmes. More crucially, however, such a shift requires large-scale policy changes with regard to entire curricula, available teaching materials and, perhaps most importantly, standards of performance. These standards would have to be changed from being native-based to being based on the “lingua franca core”.

The present results also provide guidelines for further work on ELF. The features of such ELF speakers should be systematically described, along the li-

6 Cf. VOICE: Vienna-Oxford International Corpus of English, available at: <http://www.univie.ac.at/voice/>; ELFA: A corpus of English as a Lingua Franca in Academic Settings, available at: <http://www.eng.helsinki.fi/elfa/elfacorporus.htm>; and MICASE corpus, available at: <http://lw.lsa.umich.edu/eli/micase/index.htm>.

nes of the descriptions in the existing ELF corpora (VOICE, ELFA, MICASE).⁶ Such descriptions must take into consideration both the general ELF features, as described by Jenkins (2000, 2002, 2009) and the specific Croglish features, as identified by Josipović Smojver (2010), which are also bound to be present to a smaller or greater extent.

The larger theoretical issue that remains to be taken into account in ELF is the way in which the attitudes to ELF, the needs of ELF users and EFL learners are all intertwined with the more “objective” linguistic features of the “lingua-franca core”. To what extent will this core remain unchangeable with more and more EFL speakers becoming “owners” of Global English? Should we, perhaps, change the core metaphor into family resemblances (in the Wittgensteinian sense)? This would mean the disintegration of the core into a group of circles, which may intersect with one another, but also have some unique features. Such a metaphor would seem more realistic, because it more closely resembles the stratification of natural language into dialects, sociolects, idiolects, etc. Indeed, “elfolects” such as Spanglish or Croglish support the need for such a stratified view of ELF.

Of course, in addition to being reflected in “objective” (linguistic) features, this stratification is also necessarily a result of constructing one’s identity when speaking a foreign language. Our results have shown that different identity constructions (based on student profiles, gender etc.) may bring about different attitudes to ELF, thus corroborating the stratified ELF model. What remains to be seen is what other factors within Croatia may contribute to this stratification. Therefore, we are currently extending the scope of the present research to the population of high-school students who, belonging to a still younger generation, might prove to be even more liberal to non-native target models.

5. Conclusion

The aim of this paper was to establish how globalisation and the possible emergence of Euro-English influence the idea of a target model of English pronunciation among Croatian university students. More specifically, we set out to see whether there was a polarisation between what one may call a “liberal” vs. “traditional” attitude to displaying regional and national features in one’s pronunciation, and if so, whether any of the five factors (student profile, gender, self-assessed proficiency, sociolinguistic status of the subjects’ regional Croatian dialect, the subjects’ self-assessed perfectionism) determine the way in which our participants view their own production, teaching models and non-native speakers. Our sample consisted of 1461 university students of different profiles from the University of Zagreb, the University of Pula, Zagreb School of Economics and Management and the University of Osijek, who filled in a questionnaire with 31 items.

Our results show that there is a clear divide between “liberal” and “traditional” students with regard to ELF. This divide is connected with student profiles (English majors being most traditional) and self-assessed pronunciation proficiency (better pronouncers being more traditional). Gender, coming from an urban or a rural background and self-assessed perfectionism also play a role, but to a smaller extent. We attribute these results to various causes. We believe that English majors and more proficient students are more traditional as a result of what is “required” or defined as desirable in English students and in “better students” – a “proper” (i.e. native-like) production, which is perpetuated throughout their schooling (and perpetuated through motivation in the case of self-assessed proficiency). We claim that differences observable in gender, self-assessed perfectionism and the urban/rural division are related to assessing oneself vs. assessing others with regard to what is proper. Thus, women focus on achieving what society defines as proper, perfectionists work on what they believe is proper, and participants from urban areas assess others as to what they believe is proper. All these issues seem to be connected with the construction of identity in various societal roles. Therefore, based on these results, we propose that attitudes to ELF be seen through a stratified model, which would take such differences into consideration. Research into how such a view might materialize in a high-school population is currently under way.

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Euroengleski i hrvatski nacionalni identitet: Jesu li hrvatski sveučilišni studenti spremni za engleski kao lingua franca?

Istraživanje koje se prikazuje imalo je za cilj utvrditi utjecaj globalizacije i hipotetskog nastanka tzv. euroengleskoga na stav Hrvata prema stranom akcentu. Budući da strani akcent odaje nacionalni identitet govornika, stupanj do kojeg se netko svjesno nastoji približiti izvornom izgovoru, odnosno sačuvati i pokazati vlastiti nacionalni identitet uvelike varira i ovisi o više faktora. Ovdje se promatra kako parametri kao što su spol, stupanj znanja engleskoga, sociolingvistički status govornikova regionalnog hrvatskog dijalekta, regionalni ponos te sklonost perfekcionizmu utječu na odnos ispitanika prema vlastitom izgovoru, nastavnicima engleskoga i neizvornim govornicima. Istraživanje je provedeno u obliku anonimnog desetominutnog upitnika provedenog na dobrovoljnoj osnovi za vrijeme redovite sveučilišne nastave. Obuhvatilo je 1461 studenta različitih sveučilišnih studija, a odgovori su analizirani pomoću softverskog paketa SPSS.

Uočava se polarizacija između 'liberalnog' i 'tradicionalnog' pristupa akcentu, tj. govornika kojima ne smeta regionalna i nacionalna prepoznatljivost u izgovoru i onih koji takva obilježja nastoje prikriti. Pokazuje se da to najviše ovisi o izboru studija, tj. buduće struke kao i samoprocijenjenoga stupnja kvalitete vlastitoga engleskoga izgovora, dok spol, regionalno podrijetlo ispitanika i stupanj perfekcionizma igraju nešto manju ulogu. Ti rezultati pripisuju se različitim uzrocima. Tvrdi se da su studenti engleskoga i općenito studenti koji su na višoj razini znanja engleskoga u tom smislu tradicionalniji zbog pristupa u njihovu poučavanju engleskomu u Hrvatskoj, kojim se propisuje što je 'pravi' engleski. Također se pokazuje da su spol, samoprocijenjeni perfekcionizam i regionalna pripadnost povezani sa sklonošću da se procjenjuje sebe ili drugoga u odnosu na ono što je 'ispravno'. Tako žene nastoje postići ono što društvo definira ispravnim, perfekcionista ono što sami vjeruju da je ispravno, a ispitanici iz urbanih sredina prosuđuju druge prema onome što urbana populacija smatra da je ispravno. Budući i da se pokazuje jasna veza između uočenih stavova i doživljaja vlastitoga identiteta u raznim društvenim ulogama, na osnovi ovih rezultata zagovara se pristup ELF u okviru stratificiranoga modela, koji uzima u obzir sve navedene razlike.

Key words: national identity, Croatian language, English pronunciation, English as a Lingua Franca, speakers of Croatian, Euro-English

Ključne riječi: nacionalni identitet, hrvatski jezik, engleski izgovor, engleski kao lingua franca, govornici hrvatskog jezika, euroengleski jezik

Appendix

Questionnaire about the pronunciation of Croatian and English

Please fill in this anonymous questionnaire, which examines the attitudes concerning the pronunciation of Croatian and English. The questionnaire consists of two parts: 4 statements about Croatian and 7 statements about English. Please circle the answer which best corresponds to your opinion. When you are asked to assess a statement on a 5-point scale, please use the following values:

strongly disagree	partially disagree	neither agree nor disagree	partially agree	strongly agree
1	2	3	4	5

Part 1: attitudes to Croatian pronunciation

1. I would like my pronunciation of Croatian to be regionally recognizable (e.g. as coming from the Zagreb area, as Kajkavian, Slavonian, Dalmatian...).

1	2	3	4	5
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2. When public figures (e.g. singers, politicians, actors, etc.) speak on the radio and TV:

- a. I find it acceptable when I can tell by their Croatian pronunciation (accent) where they are from, whatever accent they have
- b. I find it acceptable when I can tell by their Croatian pronunciation (accent) where they are from, but only for some Croatian accents, and not for others
- c. When public figures speak, any regional pronunciation (accent) bothers me.

3. When news readers speak on the radio and TV:

- a. I find it acceptable when I can tell by their Croatian pronunciation (accent) where they are from, whatever accent they have
- b. I find it acceptable when I can tell by their Croatian pronunciation (accent) where they are from, but only for some Croatian accents, and not for others
- c. When news readers speak, any regional pronunciation (accent) bothers me

4. I believe that ideal Croatian pronunciation should be regionally neutral and regionally unmarked.

1	2	3	4	5
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Part 2: attitudes to English pronunciation

5. When I speak English, I believe that it is important:

- | | | | | | |
|-------------------------------------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| a. that I am fluent | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| b. that my pronunciation is correct | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

- c. that my grammar is correct **1** **2** **3** **4** **5**
6. When I speak English with native speakers (e.g. the English or Americans):
- a. I do not mind having a strong Croatian accent
- b. I do not mind having a slight Croatian accent
- c. I do not want to speak with a foreign accent.
7. When I speak English with non-native speakers (e.g. the French, Italians, Germans):
- a. I do not mind having a strong Croatian accent
- b. I do not mind having a slight Croatian accent
- c. I do not want to speak with a foreign accent.
8. I prefer speaking English with other non-native speakers of English (e.g. Germans, Italians, the French) than with native speakers of English (e.g. the English, Americans) because when I speak with non-native speakers, I am not worried about them judging my pronunciation.

- | | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|--|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| 9. If I could perfect my English pronunciation so as to pass for a native speaker, I would do it regardless of the time and effort it would take. | YES | NO | | | |
| 9. A. If you answered YES to question 9: Why would you perfect your English pronunciation? | | | | | |
| a. because it significantly improves the general impression of me and my knowledge of English | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| b. because I like to impress my collocutors | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| c. because it is important for my job | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| d. because I am generally a perfectionist, and that includes my pronunciation | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 9. B. If you answered NO to question 9: Why would you not perfect your English pronunciation? | | | | | |
| e. because native speakers dislike foreigners who try too hard to sound like them | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| f. because I want to preserve my national identity when I speak a foreign language | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| g. because learning the proper pronunciation is a waste of time which can be better spent on other goals such as learning grammar and vocabulary | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| h. because people will think that I am putting on airs | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 10. I find it easier to understand the pronunciation of non-native speakers of English (e.g. Germans, Italians, the French) if they are fluent and if their grammar is correct than the pronunciation of native speakers of English. | | | | | |

1 **2** **3** **4** **5**

11. I believe I will learn to pronounce English better if I am taught by an English teacher who is a native speaker than by an English teacher who is Croatian, and who speaks English as a foreign language.

1 2 3 4 5

Participant data

12. Gender: F M

13. Age:

14. Schooling: secondary school junior college university

15. Where did you spend most of your life (which village, town)?

16. How long have you been learning English?

less than 2 years 2-4 years 5-8 years 9 years and longer

17. Assess your knowledge of English:

a) very poor b) poor c) good d) very good
e) excellent

18. Assess your pronunciation of English:

a) very poor b) poor c) good d) very good
e) excellent

19. How often do you speak English?

a) hardly ever b) several times a year c) once a month
d) every week

20. Have you ever spent more than 6 months in an English speaking country? YES NO

If so, where? _____