

**Students of English vs. Students of Economics: Attitudes towards
English Accents and the Motivations behind them**

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Abstract

RP is used as a teaching standard in most secondary schools in the Netherlands (Van der Haagen, 1998, Trudgill and Hannah, 2008). This contrasts with the English accents heard on Dutch television, which are mainly American. Information on motivations of students to learn English and their preferences in accents is highly important to keep the subject of the English language in secondary school education up to date. Attitudes to varieties of English have been researched to a great extent, yet no previous study has investigated differences in attitudes towards varieties of English between students of different disciplines. This study investigates attitudes of students enrolled in the Bachelor's degree in Economics and Business Economics, and the Bachelor's degree in English Language and culture. Data for this study were collected using a questionnaire. The results suggest a difference in attitudes when comparing the two groups both at closed and open questions. This difference is important as information on attitudes to English and preferences for accents can help to improve the educational system in terms of the subject of English, as these attitudes influence students' motivation to learn English.

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1. Introduction

Ninety per cent of the Dutch population claim they are able to have a conversation in English (Eurobarometer, 2012). According to Kachru's (2009) concentric circles model of World Englishes, English is in the expanding circle in the Netherlands. This means "those areas where English is an 'international language' and which are traditionally regarded as societies learning English as a Foreign Language (EFL)" (Kachru, 2009). As attitudes to languages and varieties are subject to change, research is necessary to keep up to date with these changes in attitudes, which are important to meet the needs of English learners in a second language (L2) context. Lasagabaster & Huguet (2007) argue that "language attitudes are learnt and, therefore, educators play a paramount role in their formation, to such an extent that attitudes formed under educator influence may be extremely difficult to change" (p. 1). However, it is also the other way around, as a study by Ledin (2013) concludes that attitudes towards languages and varieties have an impact on students' motivation for language learning, as a result of which studies in this field have an influence on education.

Alford and Strother (1990) showed that non-native speakers, for instance speakers from the expanding circle, also have attitudes towards different varieties of English, and the differences in present-day attitudes towards British and American varieties among Dutch people are interesting for the English as a second language (ESL) situation in the Netherlands. This is because in the Netherlands, RP is used as a teaching standard in most secondary schools (Van der Haagen, 1998, Trudgill & Hannah, 2008); however, the English accents heard on Dutch television are mainly American (Gerritsen et al., 1999). Attitudes to varieties of English in ESL countries have been researched to a great extent. Several studies have focused on secondary school pupils or students attending higher education, yet no previous study has investigated differences in attitudes towards varieties of English between students of two different disciplines. An investigation of two disciplines that are very different might have a clear diversity in language attitudes among students as a result. The disciplines investigated in this study are the Bachelor's degree in English Language and Culture, and the Bachelor's degree in Economics and Business Economics, as they are very different subjects, that both closely connect with the English language. For English Language and Culture this is obvious, and for Economics and Business Economics, this is because the degree is fully taught in English and presumably these students will have an international outlook. Based on previous studies (Van der Haagen, 1998) the expectation is to notice a preference for British English; however, as Van der Haagen (1998) focused on secondary school pupils, results

might be different when two disciplines are investigated separately and new information regarding students' motivations to learn English might be found. For instance, the nature of these motivations of students of the two degrees might differ, as those of students of English Language and Culture could be more integrative, whilst the motivations of Economics and Business Economics students could be more instrumental. They mainly use the English language for practical reasons, unlike the students of English, who chose to engage with the English language in for instance literature classes and linguistics. Some overlap in motivations is to be expected; however, it is possible that the results will show clear differences. The research question can be formulated as follows:

What attitudes do Dutch students of the Bachelor's degree in English Language and Culture and Dutch students of the Bachelor's degree in Economics and Business Economics have towards different accents of English?

2. Theoretical Framework

2.1 Language Attitudes

The importance of language attitudes is made clear by Garrett (2010) who states that “our competence, intelligence, friendliness, trustworthiness, social status, group memberships and so on are often judged from the way we communicate” and that “even the speed at which we speak can evoke reactions” (p. 2). He also describes the importance of attitudes in the standardisation of language, for instance in secondary school education. He mentions that nowadays a great emphasis is placed on correctness: “the notion of correctness is reinforced by authority. Standard languages are codified in dictionaries and grammar books, for example, and spread through educational systems” (p. 7). Attitudes to languages and varieties could cause them to standardise, but also to disappear, and this makes them a highly important topic of discussion. Edwards (1999) describes a close link between language attitudes and social psychology: “because language is one of the traditionally important social markers, it is not surprising that the study of attitudes has a central position in the social psychology of language” (pp. 101-102). Alford and Strother (1990) have shown that non-native speakers of English have attitudes towards its different varieties. Moreover, Milroy and McClenaghan (1977) report that when listeners are familiar with a certain accent, they immediately form a stereotypical judgement about the speaker. This means attitudes towards varieties of English are connected to attitudes towards cultures, and it is hard to form an opinion regarding a variety without the culture playing a role.

2.2 Attitudes towards Varieties and Accents of English

Trudgill and Hannah (2008) state that in most Dutch secondary schools, British English is adhered to. Attitudes to varieties of English and preferences of learners of English have been investigated significantly. Rashid (2011) found that in many countries, such as Nigeria, Greece, and Iraq, RP was thought of as the standard, when compared to GA. These attitudes have much to do with prestige. In 1997, Dalton and Puffer conducted a study of attitudes towards RP and GA in Austria. The results showed a more positive attitude towards RP, and this again was the result of the high prestige that was associated with this variety of English. Ladegaard and Sachdev (2006) conducted a similar study in Denmark, and again the results showed a preference for RP. Van der Haagen (1998) studied the attitudes of Dutch EFL learners towards RP and GA using a matched-guise technique. The results showed that among

Dutch learners, RP was considered the norm. However, the Dutch learners expressed they found GA more dynamic and attractive.

Throughout the Dutch media, American English is the most frequently heard variety (Gerritsen et. al., 1999), and this is due to American global cultural hegemony (Crystal, 2003; Pennycook, 1994). There are several researchers who claim that this is causing standard American English to replace the dominance that was held by British English, such as Bayard, Gallois, Weatherall and Pittam (2001), and they have suggested conducting a study of the effect of American spoken media in second language (L2) contexts. The study by van der Haagen (1998), which investigated attitudes to English of Dutch secondary school pupils, found that pupils in higher levels in secondary schools mainly preferred a British accent, while pupils in lower levels in secondary schools preferred an American accent.

Rindal (2010) also investigated attitudes to varieties and accents of English. She examined the L2 situation in Norway among secondary school pupils, and the results showed that the pupils associated British English with status and prestige, while American English was associated with informality. An interesting finding was that more than two-thirds of the pupils had an American-like pronunciation, while 11 pupils out of 23 said they aimed for a British accent, and only eight pupils aimed for an American accent. Rindal combined a matched-guise technique with a questionnaire, in which she included Norwegian English. However, none of the pupils chose Norwegian English as the accent they aimed for. Another study by Rindal (2013) investigating more or less the same topic concluded the following: “the results of this study suggest that the Norwegian participants to a certain degree abandon traditional variety restrictions and native speaker privilege by aiming for a ‘neutral’ variety of English and avoiding the formal school-associated British English accent” (p. 224). She argues that Norwegian learners’ L2 strategies are taking on a hybrid form. Language attitudes and media influences even influence speakers who are aiming towards a native accent of English. Another study in this field is Mollin’s (2006). She investigated a possible independent European variety of English, which could even become an alternative to the standardised RP and GA in secondary school education. However, her study rejected the hypothesis that such a variety would exist, as “the analysis of responses demonstrated that the respondents largely cling to native-speaker standards, both openly in the attitude statements as well as indirectly in the acceptability tests” (pp. 195-196). Her study focused on researchers and university lecturers, and researching this topic further, Forche (2012) explored the same hypothesis, yet focusing on Erasmus students. He found that “a younger generation, because of their interest in English, might accelerate the development of a potential Euro-English

more than Mollin's test group of academics" (p. 473). These results indicate that students might be open to other options than standard varieties of English.

As the language situation in Norway concerning English is similar to that of the Netherlands, it is interesting to see if Rindal's (2010) results are different among Dutch students, in particular the students' attitudes towards non-native varieties of English, or if this is a Norwegian phenomenon only. In addition, Rindal has not investigated the vested interest the pupils have for choosing a target accent. As no studies have investigated attitudes towards varieties or accents comparing two disciplines, this study will not focus on the L2 situation among all students, but instead on the comparison of students of English Language and Culture, and Economics and Business Economics, investigating attitudes towards accents and the motivations behind them. The studies previously mentioned all focus on students as one group, and comparing two different disciplines might give more insight to attitudes of students, for instance investigating if Forche's (2012) findings are true for all students, or if one group shows a more positive attitude towards native speaker norms.

2.3 Integrativeness versus Instrumentality

Although Rindal investigated learner's motivations for their preferred accent to an extent, she does not go into detail when discussing their motivations. She notes aesthetic reasons, prestige, and formality, and briefly comments that these terms were used to explain attitudes towards American and British English. However, different participants used these terms to form both positive and negative opinions of a variety of English.

Rindal does not differentiate between two main dimensions of motivation: integrative reasons and instrumental reasons. Dörnyei (2010) explains that "the former refers to the desire to learn an L2 of a valued community so that one can communicate with members of the community and sometimes even to become like them" (p. 74). Instrumentality, he notes, "is related to the concrete benefits that language proficiency might bring about (e.g. career opportunities, increased salary)" (p. 74). Previous studies have looked at integrative and instrumental reasons to learn English, such as Smit and Dalton (2000), who investigated motivations for pronunciation learning among EFL learners at the University of Vienna. Their results revealed a fairly high amount of integrativeness as to aiming for an accent. So far, however, no studies have compared groups to find differences in integrativeness and instrumentality when looking at motivation for target accents.

3. Method

To be able to compare attitudes between students in two disciplines, the subject pool will consist of students attending university, and not, as in Rindal's study, pupils in secondary schools. To maintain the link with Rindal's study, part of the questions in the questionnaire will be of the same structure, namely asking a yes / no question, followed by an open question asking about motivations. Other questions will ask to choose between five different accents of English, and ask about additional motivations for this choice, thus providing information regarding attitudes to accents.

The questionnaire will adopt the terms British and American English instead of RP and GA in order to include all British and American accents. Because this study focuses on preferences in pronunciation, accents are the subject. Students will most likely think of RP and GA when filling in the questionnaire; however, the terms British and American English allow the participants to opt for all accents. Furthermore, the terms British English and American English are in accordance with Rindal's methodology. Rindal (2010) herself states: "The terms American English (AmE) and British English (BrE) will not only refer to the standard L1 accents that the participants are exposed to, but also acquired variants and varieties" (p. 246). A brief explanation of these two varieties was given at the start of the questionnaire. In addition, Rindal's definition of Neutral English was given, to employ one definition of this topic. As Rindal's questionnaire was in English the one in this study is in English as well.

The following questionnaire was conducted, with the text in italics being an introduction to the questionnaire:

The subject of this study is pronunciation in English. Questions are asked about varieties of English, including American English and British English. You can think of any accent within these two varieties; for instance you can think of General American, and Standard Southern British English. These are general accents of The [sic] United States and The [sic] United Kingdom respectively, and are heard on public broadcasting channel programmes such as the news. Neutral English is defined as "not aiming towards any recognisable English accent" (Rindal 2013).

1. What is your nationality?
2. What degree are you currently enrolled in?
3. I am male / female

4. I would like my teachers to speak American English / British English / Dutch English / Neutral English / Other
5. The accent I have taken a more positive attitude to (in general) is American English / British English / Dutch English / Neutral English / Other
6. The accent I aim for when speaking English is American English / British English / Dutch English / Neutral English / Other
7. I aim for this accent because:
8. I aim for this accent because I think it will benefit my professional goals. Yes / No
9. I aim for this accent because I would like to be associated with native speakers of American or British English. Yes / No
10. I do not aim for the other accents because:
11. Do you think some accents are easier to speak than others? If so, why?
12. I think it is important (in general, not in a particular situation) to aim for an accent. Yes / No
13. I think this is (not) important because:

Question 1 was included to ensure the participants were from the Netherlands. Questionnaires filled in by students from outside the Netherlands were not used. Questions 4 to 6 were included to have students choose between accents. Questions 7 to 10 regarded the motivations behind this choice, for instance trying to distinguish between instrumental and integrative motivations. Questions 11 to 13 were included to find additional motivations for the students' choice of accent, and were put last to keep the previous questions objectively.

The students enrolled in the BA in Economics and Business Economics were all attending Utrecht University, and of the students of English Language and Culture, 61 were attending Leiden University, and 33 were attending Utrecht University. Students of two different universities were included because it could be the case that in the classes at one university there is a particular view on the situation, as the subject of the questionnaire is one that is discussed in classes that form part of the degree in English Language and Culture.

A professor teaching a course in English Language and Culture and a professor teaching a course in Economics and Business Economics were emailed and asked if the questionnaire could be handed out during breaks in classes. More professors teaching tutorials were emailed and they approved the request. At Leiden University, questionnaires were filled in by 61 students during one lecture, of which 9 were male and 52 were female. At Utrecht University, a total of 33 students of English filled in the questionnaire during two tutorials; 6

were male, and 27 were female. A total of 53 students of Economics filled in the questionnaire, during four different tutorials. 35 of them were male and 18 were female. The imbalance in these numbers is discussed further in the Limitations Section. The researcher personally came to class and waited while the students filled in the questionnaire.

The answers to the closed questions were counted and a two-sided Chi-Square Test and a two-sided Fisher's exact test were used to determine whether or not there was a significant difference between the two groups of students. The answers to the four open questions were coded into several categories, to facilitate quantitative processing of the results. These answers to the open questions provided additional information, and relevant quotes were used to highlight results, to help determine whether or not there were differences between the groups of students.

4. Results

Questions 1 to 3 were in the questionnaire to gather information regarding the students' nationality, degree, and gender. Questions 4 to 6 asked the students to choose between five accents, to find out their attitudes towards American English, British English, Dutch English, and Neutral English. There was also a fifth option; "other". As a few students filled in more than one answer at these three questions, these answers were not counted and therefore the total number of students is lower at these three questions. A two-sided Fisher's exact test was carried out for these three questions. Question 4 was "I would like my teachers to speak American English / British English / Dutch English / Neutral English / Other" The results showed that there was no significant difference between the two groups of students ($p = 0.191$). The students' answers to this question are presented in Table 1.

	English students	Economics students	Total
American English	11	10	21
British English	52	22	74
Dutch English	0	0	0
Neutral English	15	12	27
Other	1	2	3
Total	79	46	125

Table 1: Answers to Question 4

Question 5 was "The accent I have taken a more positive attitude to (in general) is American English / British English / Dutch English / Neutral English / Other", and the results of the Fisher's exact test showed a significant difference between the two groups of students; $p = 0.016$. The answers to this question are in Table 2.

	English students	Economics students	Total
American English	18	13	31
British English	54	20	74
Dutch English	2	6	8
Neutral English	4	6	10
Other	1	1	2
Total	79	46	125

Table 2: Answers to Question 5

As is shown in Table 2, English students answered British English the most by far, with 68% of the total amount of the group. American English, the second most frequent answer, was chosen by 23% of the students. The Economics students also answered British English most frequently; however, it was answered by only 43% of the students. The second most frequently answered option was also American English; however, 28% of the Economics students opted for this answer.

The answers to Question 6, “The accent I aim for when speaking English is American English / British English / Dutch English / Neutral English / Other”, also showed a significant difference; $p = 0.001$. The results are shown in Table 3.

	English students	Economics students	Total
American English	15	12	27
British English	62	16	78
Dutch English	0	0	0
Neutral English	1	18	19
Other	1	0	1
Total	79	46	125

Table 3: Answers to Question 6

As is shown in Table 3, the English students most frequently opted for British English, with 78%. American English was the second most frequently filled in answer, with 19%. In the Economics students group, Neutral English was chosen most often, with 39% of the students. The second most frequent answer, British English, was chosen by 35% of the Economics students.

Motivations behind the choice of accents were explained by the answers to Questions 7 and 10. Question 7 was “I aim for this accent because:”, and the answers showed many different reasons both in the group of students of Economics and in the group of students of English. The answers to Question 7 were put into categories, which are shown in Table 4.

Category	
1. Aesthetics	35
2. Associations	18
3. It feels natural	15
4. Other reasons	12
5. Intelligibility	3
6. Prestige	3
7. Not aiming at all	0
Total	86 (of 94)

Table 4: Answers to Question 6 (English students)

To elucidate on Table 4, the categories and answers will be described in more detail. In the group of English students, 8 wrote down an unclear answer or none at all. As for the categories, reasons to do with aesthetics were most frequently heard by far; 35 out of 94 of the students wrote down answers such as “It sounds beautiful” and “I think it sounds more pleasant than American English or Dutch English”. The second most frequently heard answer was because of associations attached to an accent, with 18 out of 94 students writing down such answers. This category consisted of students aiming for an accent because they thought it would make them come across as for instance professional, sophisticated, polite, or formal. Answers were for instance “In my opinion British English sounds more formal so for my academic career I chose to aim for a British accent” and “It sounds smart”. Students also wrote down answers to do with associations that made them not opt for an accent, such as “British sounds too ‘classy’”. One sixth of the students, 15 out of 94, wrote down that they felt choosing the accent was a matter of instinct; that it came naturally to them. These answers did not differ greatly; nearly all of them were similar to “It comes naturally” or “It feels natural”. Twelve out of 94 students wrote down they opted for an accent due to circumstances, which makes it the fourth most frequently heard answer. This category consisted of all students who said they aimed for an accent not because of a matter of choice, such as “I went to an American high school so I picked it up” or “I already bought the books

for British [English] before we got to choose”. Finally, only three students out of the total of 94 wrote down reasons to do with intelligibility, with answers such as “Many people understand this accent”. The same number wrote down reasons to do with prestige, such as “British English had more prestige”.

In the group of students of Economics and Business Economics, the distribution of the answers into categories was quite different, as is shown in Table 5.

Category	
1. Associations	13
2. Aesthetics	12
3. Other reasons	8
4. Intelligibility	5
5. It feels natural	3
6. Not aiming at all	3
7. Prestige	2
Total	46 (of 53)

Table 5: Answers to Question 6 (Economics Students)

Again, a few students, seven in this case, wrote down an answer that could not be interpreted. The most repeatedly quoted reason, with 13 out of 53 students, was because of associations attached to the answer. Although there were a number of different associations, it was noticeable that many of them referred to instrumental reasons, such as coming across as professional, educated, or polite, and being accepted globally. Answers heard often were similar to “I want to sound professional” and “It is globally accepted”. The second largest category was aesthetics; 12 out of 53 wrote this down as a reason. The answers were similar to those of the English students, albeit that as opposed to the other group, in this group there were a few negative answers, such as “For me it sounds the least annoying” and “It doesn’t sound fake or forced”. The students who wrote down they aimed for an accent because of reasons beyond their choice were the third largest group, with eight out of 53. Similarly to the English students group, their answers were for instance “My father is from America, we talk English at home, and can’t speak differently” and “I grew up speaking British English”. Five students aimed for an accent because of reasons to do with intelligibility, with answers such as “It’s neutral, more chance people will understand”. Three people out of the total of 50 students wrote down they aimed because of reasons to do with instinct, such as “It sounds

most natural to me". The same number wrote down they did not aim for an accent at all, an answer not heard in the English students group. Two students wrote "I don't aim for an accent", and one stated he was "unable to pick either an American or a British accent". The smallest category in this group was prestige. Only two students aimed for an accent because of reasons to do with prestige, one student claiming "It is the original language and most other accents ruin it".

Question 10, "I do not aim for the other accents because:", was put in the questionnaire to find extra information regarding motivation, which proved useful, as a few students did not write down a clear answer to Question 7, but they did to Question 10. In both groups, answers such as "Because I like the other accent more" were heard most often, which is as expected. A few, however, wrote down answers that gave information as to why accents would be unfavourable to aim for. The students' answers were similar to those to Question 7, which is why the categories are not mentioned again; only a few stood out that added new information. For example, in the group of English students, a number of students wrote down answers explaining to find it important to sound native-like, such as: "I want a good RP like accent", "I want to sound native-like", and "I seem to sound more native when I speak in AmE". No such answers were heard among the Economics students. In addition, a few students gave answers that showed they connect their accent to their identity, for instance "I don't want to be associated with America(n English speakers)", "I feel less genuine while I speak these", and "I don't sound like myself. It's like my voice changes too much for British English". Again, in the Economics group no such answers were heard. Moreover, the English students were quite fierce in some of their answers. Answers such as "My heart and mind are set on British" and "Dutch English sounds ugly, Neutral is without identity, and American sounds negative" showed they think this is important.

In the group of Economics students the answers were also similar to those to Question 7. Again, a few answers added information that was not included in the answers to Question 7. As mentioned, a few of the students again answered to that question that they did not aim for an accent at all. One said "I think one shouldn't aim for an accent" and another "One must not aim for too much". Clearly a few of the students in this group find aiming for an accent overachieving. Furthermore, whereas the English students care about their reasons, the Economics students are quite indifferent to an extent, which also became clear among the answers to Question 7. The following answer shows an indifferent attitude: "I don't want to be associated with Dutch English (In Holland mostly interpreted as 'she can't speak proper

English’) I’m rather indifferent between the others”. Apart from being more indifferent than the English students, the Economics students were also very negative in their answers. A few negative answers were heard among the English students as well, yet not to the same extent, relatively, by far. A few examples of these negative and occasionally harsh answers were “British is too posh and really American sounds horrible”, “Feels fake, need to think too much about it” and lastly, “They are shit”.

Questions 8 and 9, “I aim for this accent because I think it will benefit my professional goals. Yes / No”, and “I aim for this accent because I would like to be associated with native speakers of American or British English. Yes / No”, regarded the integrative reasons versus the instrumental reasons for choice of accent. For both questions, a chi-square test with Yates’ correction was performed to examine the difference between the two groups of students and the amount of integrative or instrumental motivation.

The answers to Question 8 are shown in Table 6.

	Yes	No	Total
English	60	33	93 (of 94)
Economics	27	25	52 (of 53)
Total	87	58	145 (of 147)

Table 6: Answers to Question 8

For this question, which dealt with instrumentality, the difference was not significant, $\chi^2(1, 145) = 1.710$, $p = 0.1909$. The answers to Question 9, which dealt with integrativeness, were put in Table 7.

	Yes	No	Total
English	60	34	94 (of 94)
Economics	16	37	53 (of 53)
Total	76	71	147 (of 147)

Table 7: Answers to Question 9

The difference between the groups was significant, $\chi^2(1, 150) = 13.239$, $p = 0.0003$. In the group of English students, 76% answered the question positively. In the group of Economics students this was only 17%. This shows that students of English Language and Culture have

significantly more integrative motivation to aim for an accent than the students of Economics and Business Economics. A chi-square test with Yates' correction was also performed on the number of both groups' positive outcomes of Questions 8 and 9 combined, to see whether or not one of the groups of students showed more motivation to aim for an accent in general. The difference between the groups of students was not significant, $\chi^2(1, 164) = 1.244$, $p = 0.2647$, which means students of English Language and Culture did not show significantly more motivation overall to aim for an accent than the students of Economics and Business Economics.

Question 11, "Do you think some accents are easier to speak than others? If so, why?", was an open question. Nevertheless, the answers that included a yes or no were counted and a chi-square analysis with Yates' correction revealed that there was no significant difference between the groups of students in the number of positive and negative answers; $\chi^2(1, 135) = 0.101$, $p = 0.7504$. The answers are shown in Table 8.

	Yes	No	Total
English	70	21	91 (of 94)
Economics	32	12	44 (of 53)
Total	102	33	135 (of 147)

Table 8: Answers to Question 11

The additional answers to this question showed a trend; many of the students that answered positively wrote down an answer that was associated with the extent to which a person is exposed to an accent. A few wrote down that British English was easier to speak and gave as a reason the model of British English in secondary schools. Many of the students who wrote down that American English was easier to speak attributed this to the amount of American English on Dutch television. Another comment written down often was that a few accents have sounds that the students find hard to pronounce. However, in addition to the lack of a significant difference between the yes and no answers, there was no clear difference between the two groups with regards to the comments they wrote after their positive or negative answer. The English students wrote down a larger variety of answers; however, this could be attributed to the fact that this group was nearly twice the size of the other. The following different kinds of answers were heard in the English students group:

- “Yes, I think American English is easier because of all the series I watch. Also I feel more comfortable when using an American accent when talking to American speakers because I don’t want to come over as posh / formal”.

This answer included the reason that American English seems easier due to influence from Dutch Television. Also, the respondent stated a reason to do with associations attached to an accent; being found posh or formal because of a British accent.

- “I think AE might be a bit easier because it’s a little more “lazy” with /d/-sounds for /t/-spelling, no aspiration there is easier for Dutch speakers”.

This respondent referred to speech sounds of American English that are close to Dutch as the reason, which is an answer that was heard more often.

- “Yes definitely. I think Scottish and Kiwi is easier than Irish and Ozzy”.

This respondent, referring to Australian English as Ozzy, and to New Zealand English as Kiwi, did not state a reason, yet he or she claimed some accents that are not included in the questionnaire were easier than others. It shows that he or she took more accents into account than most respondents did.

- “Yes, some have intonation etc. which are hard to mimic”
- “Not particularly, I think all accents can be difficult in their own way”
- “I believe some accents come to you more naturally”
- “Yes, because some accents are more ‘laidback’”
- “I think it is, because a GA accent can be a better accent for a person than RP. The accent has to fit the person”
- “Yes, because some accents don’t have as many rules attached to them (as RP)”
- “Yes, for some accents you really have to think about how you say something but with Neutral English you don’t really”
- “It depends on your own ability of speaking and understanding the accent”
- “Yes, because it is easier to pronounce the words in the way they are written and some accents don’t require pretentiousness”

This gives an overview of what the students of English answered to this question, and the large variety of reasons given, as all these quotes differ from each other.

Question 12 regarded the overall importance of aiming for an accent: “I think it is important (in general, not in a particular situation) to aim for an accent. Yes / No”. The answers are shown in Table 9.

	Yes	No	Total
English	60	32	92 (of 94)
Economics	16	35	51 (of 53)
Total	76	67	143 (of 147)

Table 9: Answers to Question 12

A chi-square test with Yates’ correction was performed to examine the difference between the two groups and the numbers of positive answers. The difference between the groups was significant, $\chi^2(1, 143) = 13.765$, $p = 0.0002$. In the English students group, 65% answered this question positively, and in the Economics students group this was only 31%. This shows that students of English find it significantly more important to aim for an accent than the students of Economics.

Question 13, “I think this is (not) important because:” was an open question and showed motivations behind the answers to Question 12. The answers were put into categories, which are shown in Table 10 for both groups.

Category	English	Economics
1. Intelligibility	25	20
2. Associations	13	5
3. Consistency	13	0
4. Having a standard	6	0
5. Proficiency	5	9
6. Identity	5	0
7. Professionalism	1	4
Total	68 (of 94)	38 (of 53)

Table 10: Answers to Question 13

The answers of the English students were a little different from the answers of the students of Economics, along with there being more positive answers in the English students group and more negative answers in the Economics students group. Answers to do with intelligibility were mostly heard in both groups; 20 out of 53 of the Economics students wrote down such an answer, and 25 out of 94 of the English students. In the group of English students answers to do with the importance of consistency or with associations attached to the accent were both written down by 13 out of 94 students. Six English students thought having a standard to adhere to was important, five students wrote down answers to do with the importance of proficiency, and also five wrote down reasons to do with their own identity. One student wrote down an answer to do with professionalism. In the group of Economics students, after the most frequently heard answer of intelligibility, nine out of 53 students opted for proficiency as the most important reason. The third most frequently heard answer was the importance of associations attached to the accent, namely with five out of 53 students, and four students wrote down an answer to do with professionalism; which is much more than in the English students group. Also noticeable was the fact that none of the Economics students wrote down answers to do with consistency, identity, or having a standard to adhere to, unlike the English students.

5. Discussion

Rindal's (2010) study investigated, among other things, how many Norwegian pupils out of 21 preferred a particular accent spoken by a teacher and which accent they aimed for themselves. As the English language more or less has the same role in Norway as it does in the Netherlands, the results can be compared. Rindal's findings showed 12 out of 21 participants preferring their teachers to speak British English. Seven opted for American English and British English, and only two for American English. As could be seen in Table 1, among the Dutch students, in both groups of students the majority preferred their teachers to speak British English, which is in line with Rindal's findings. Van der Haagen's findings showed that in 1998, Dutch pupils in higher levels in secondary schools preferred British English for their teachers, which means this has not changed. There was no significant difference between the group of Economics students and the group of English students, which means no conclusion can be drawn regarding the accent they would like their teacher to have.

Questions 5 and 6 aimed to find the students' attitudes towards accents, Question 5 regarding to which accent the students had a more positive attitude, and Question 6 aiming to investigate which accent they were aiming for. As these two questions were similar, it was not surprising that the answers were alike as well. Overall, few students opted for Dutch English, which is in accordance with the Norwegian pupils not opting for Norwegian English. In total, a majority of the students answered British English to both Questions 5 and 6, which again is in line with Rindal's findings which showed 11 Norwegian pupils aiming for a British English accent, as opposed to 8 who aimed for an American accent. It is also in accordance with Van der Haagen's study, who found that among the pupils in higher levels of secondary school education, the majority aimed for British English. This means the dominance of the British English model is still intact in the Netherlands. However, the answers of the groups of English students and Economics student were compared, and significant differences were found for both Questions 5 and 6. To Question 6, a majority of the Economics students even answered they aimed for Neutral English instead of British English. Rindal's (2013) more recent study found that "the Norwegian participants to a certain degree abandon traditional variety restrictions and native speaker privilege by aiming towards a 'neutral' variety of English and avoiding the formal school-associated British English accent" (p. 224). This could also be the case in the Netherlands; however, it is only visible in the group of Economics students. This shows that these groups of students have significantly different attitudes towards accents of

English, which also becomes clear in the answers to the open Questions 7 and 10, which were “I aim for this accent because” and “I do not aim for the other accents because”. The answers to these two questions showed that the English students had different motivations to aim for an accent than the students of Economics. The English students’ most frequently quoted answer concerned aesthetic reasons, whereas the Economics students’ most common answers had to do with associations attached to an accent, such as coming across as professional. In addition, many of the English students wrote down that an accent came naturally to them, and in the Economics group a fairly large number attached greater importance to being understood when aiming for an accent. A few of them even commented they did not aim for an accent at all, which was not seen among the answers of the English students group. It also became clear that the English students group were trying to sound native-like, while Economics students showed indifference in a few instances. The latter were quite negative over all, unlike the English students. These answers regarding motivations in the open questions and the answers regarding preferences in the closed questions together show a difference between the groups. This means not all students share similar motivations regarding L2 accents, and this information could be used to improve education. Students in higher education are highly likely to have these kinds of motivations already earlier on, in secondary schools. More attention could be paid to the motivations of students to learn English, which would help to motivate them, as attitudes to languages and accents have an effect on second language learning in general. As students of two different disciplines such as these show different motivations, some students could for instance benefit from more attention to the different accents and varieties of English in secondary school education. Also, more attention could be paid to the instrumental reasons to learn English, and the associations attached to different accents.

Questions 8 and 9 addressed instrumentality and integrativeness respectively, and the results of the chi-square test with Yates’ correction showed no significant difference regarding instrumental motivation, but a significant difference regarding integrative motivation. The students of Economics thus did not aim for an accent for instrumental reasons more than the students of English, which was expected because the students of Economics use the English language mostly for practical reasons within their discipline. However, neither did they aim for an accent for integrative reasons more than the English students; on the contrary, the results of the chi-square test with Yates’ correction showed a significant difference, and nearly two thirds of the English students aimed for an accent for integrative reasons. More

than two thirds of students of Economics answered the question regarding integrativeness negatively. This indicates that when aiming for an accent, students of English do this for integrative reasons significantly more so than students of Economics. This high amount of integrativeness is in line with the findings of Smit and Dalton (2000), who found that the amount for integrativeness among EFL learners at the University of Vienna was fairly high as well. It is also in consistence with Dörnyei (2010), who explained that integrativeness “refers to the desire to learn an L2 of a valued community so that one can communicate with members of the community and sometimes even become like them” (2010). As the students of English all chose to actively engage with the language and cultures of the native speakers, it was to be expected that they would show more integrative motivation than the students of Economics. The lower degree of motivation of the Economics students overall is in accordance with the answers to the open Questions 7 and 10, which showed more indifference and negativity than the answers of the English students. These results could be used to improve education in secondary schools in the Netherlands, as there is a significant difference in the amount of integrative motivation between the two groups of students, with two thirds of the English students aiming for an accent because they would like to be associated with native speakers, in comparison to two thirds of the Economics students not sharing that motivation. More attention could be paid to this in secondary schools, for instance by options for pupils who would like to see more attention to accents and varieties in general, and options for pupils who already show integrative reasons to learn English, and furthermore for instance allowing the pupils to opt for more attention to other aspects of the English Language and Culture. On this matter it is good to know of the difference in students’ motivations, as this could help to motivate learners in general.

As explained, Question 11, which asked if some accents are easier to speak than others, was an open question. Still, the answers that included a yes or no were counted; however, a chi-square test with Yates’ correction pointed out that there was no significant difference between the two groups. The explanatory answers to this question were more important than the number of positive and negative answers, and many different explanations were heard, albeit that there was no significant difference between the answers of the two different groups of students. In both groups students wrote down that “of course Dutch English is very easy”. Also in both groups, American English was more often said to be easier than British English, and the main reason they mentioned most often was because of the influence of television and other media. Answers that indicate this were for example “For me, American English is

easier, since most movies, series and people around me speak American English”, “American is easier, because of media influence”, and “Yes, American. It’s what we’re most exposed to”. This is in accordance with views of Crystal (2003) and Pennycook (1994) that there is a strong American global cultural hegemony, and that this might still cause American English to replace British English as the dominant model in the Netherlands today, despite the present study showing that among Dutch students British English is still dominant. It becomes clear that though both groups of students think American is easier to speak than British, in many cases the students of English Culture and Language and also, to a lesser extent, the students of Economics and Business Economics have a more positive attitude towards British English than towards American English. An answer written down by one student illustrates this: “American is easier for me, but I prefer British”. This is similar to Rindal’s (2010) findings that showed that more students aimed for a British English accent than for an American one, yet that “the Norwegian learners pronounced more than two thirds of the analysed tokens with an American-like pronunciation” (p. 247). Also, as mentioned during the discussion of the results of Question 11, more different kinds of answers were heard among the students of English than among the students of Economics, and that there is a chance that this could be attributed to the fact that there were more students in the former group. However, it could also be the case that as English students more actively engage with the subject of the English language and culture, they have a larger variety of reasons in their answers. Whether or not this is due to the large number of respondents in this group it becomes clear that the students have put some thought into this, more so than shows from the answers of the group of students of Economics and Business Economics. All these results can be taken into account in the discussion of secondary school education. Attention could be paid to the difficulties of the different accents, to give pupils a better view of what to expect when aiming for an accent. In addition, to keep up to date with the dominant model of English in the Netherlands, it needs to be taken into account that American English might still replace British English and that research is necessary to continue to be aware of the current state of affairs.

For Question 12, which addressed the overall importance to aim for an accent, the chi-square test with Yates’ correction showed a significant difference. Nearly two thirds of the students of English Language and Culture expressed a positive opinion on this matter, and roughly only one third of the students of Economics and Business Economics thought it was of importance to aim for an accent. Rindal did not use a similar question in her questionnaire; however, it is in accordance with the outcomes of Questions 8 and 9 of this questionnaire,

which showed that the students of Economics thought integrativeness was not very important, and at the same time not expressing more interest in instrumentality than the students of English. This indicates that it might not be particularly necessary to draw attention to different accents or varieties of English in the degree of Economics and Business Economics, as many of the students think it is not important. The answers to Question 13 shed light on why they think this is not important. The most frequently quoted answer to Question 13 was that it is important to be understood when speaking English. Students put this both in a positive and a negative way, claiming it was more important than aiming for an accent, or that aiming for an accent contributes to being intelligible. Intelligibility reasons were written down by some of the students of English, yet not as often as by students of Economics. After reasons of intelligibility, proficiency reasons were written down often, in particular by the students of Economics. An example of such an answer was: "Not important. Just have to speak at a sufficient English level". There were more answers similar to these, such as: "As long as you speak correct English in any accent it won't make a difference". This indicates that the students with these kinds of answers do not count accents as part of proficiency. These kinds of answers were not written down often in the English students group. The answers to do with associations attached to an accent were heard in both groups, for example: "Don't want to sound pretentious", and "You will sound more educated". There was no particular difference between the groups in the kind of associations. Among the data gathered with this question, the most remarkable result was the fact that none of the students of Economics wrote down answers to do with consistency, identity, or having a standard to adhere to. The lack of answers regarding identity might be expected, as the English students chose to actively participate in courses in which cultures of varieties of English are addressed. Answers among the English students regarding identity were for example: "To show your personality", "It defines you" and "Having your own accent and way of speaking is a huge part of your personality (embrace it)". The lack of answers in the group of Economics students regarding consistency and having a standard to adhere to might be explained by the fact that, as the English students have classes of which the subject is the English language, they know more regarding the importance of being consistent, and the helpfulness of a standard to adhere to when learning English, and therefore come up with more diversity in their answers. The difference in the number of positive and negative answers to Question 12 is also clearly visible in the answers to Question 13. The answers of the students of Economics were overall quite indifferent, such as "As long as you can understand each other, it's all good" and "Shouldn't matter, if you speak reasonable English people should be able to understand".

Unlike the students of Economics, the students of English were quite explicit in their answers, for instance “You don’t want to sound dumb. You need people to understand you”, “Otherwise English would fall apart and it might be hard to understand each other” and “Complete neutrality is bland and tiresome”. When examining the answers of the two groups of students, overall it becomes clear that their answers vary to an extent, and that the students of the two different disciplines have different priorities and motivations whilst learning English. The implications this could have are similar to the ones stated in the discussion of Questions 8 and 9.

6. Conclusion

To keep the subject of the English language in secondary school education up to date, information on motivations of students to learn English and their preferences in accents is highly important. In this study, several aspects of language attitudes were looked at, using a questionnaire with 13 questions that was partly based on a study by Rindal (2010) that investigated the same topic among Norwegian secondary school pupils. The first three relevant questions gave the students five options to choose from, with questions that asked about their attitudes to different English accents. As to the accent teachers use, there was no significant difference between the two groups of students, and British English was preferred by most students. The results also showed that among all students combined, British English is still the most often chosen accent at all three questions. However, when comparing the two groups, to both the question that asked towards which accent the students had a more positive attitude, and the question as to which accent they aimed for themselves, the answers showed a significant difference. At the latter question the students of Economics even opted for Neutral English more often than for British English.

The open questions that aimed to find out motivations behind their choices at the three questions regarding accents also showed differences between the two groups of students. The students of Economics often wrote down answers to do with instrumental reasons, whereas the students of English mostly provided answers related to aesthetics. The answers to the two questions regarding instrumental versus integrative reasons to aim for an accent showed a significant difference as well. The students of English showed significantly more integrative motivation than the students of Economics. However, the Economics students did not show significantly more instrumental motivation, as the amount of students answering the question regarding instrumentality with “yes” did not differ much. This means that overall the students of English show more motivation to aim for an accent than the students of Economics. This result also becomes clear at the answers to the questions that looked at whether one of the groups thought it was more important to aim for an accent in general. The results of the groups showed a significant difference, as two thirds of the students of English thought it was important and two thirds of the Economics students thought it was not important. In addition, the answers written down to the questions asking about the motivation behind this importance showed different kinds of reasons in the two groups. Lastly, the question regarding the students’ thoughts on some accents being easier to speak than others showed no significant

differences between the two groups, albeit that among all students American was often said to be easier, due to the influence of American accents on Dutch television and other media.

Both the analyses carried out in SPSS and the answers to the open questions show a difference between the two groups of students regarding attitudes towards different accents of English. All these differences are useful information as the fact that students have different priorities and attitudes has an effect on their motivation to learn English, and this can help to improve the educational system in terms of the subject of English. These findings and their implications should be considered to improve secondary school education.

7. Suggestions for Further Research

The most interesting aspect that could be studied in more detail is the fact that among the students of Economics, one third said they thought aiming for an accent is important. The answers to the open questions did not explain their positive answers at the previous question satisfactorily, and it would be very interesting to find out more regarding the reasons of students of Economics and Business Economics to aim for an accent. As they will use the language in their professional life a great deal, it is important to find out more regarding this subject, and the results could be used to improve English teaching in the Bachelor's degree by considering the underlying motivations of the Economics students.

Also, to provide extra information regarding attitudes of students towards accents of English a questionnaire similar to this one could be circulated among pupils in secondary schools, which is what Van der Haagen did as well. Her research dates from 1998 and it would be interesting to see if the results have changed over the years.

8. Limitations

A limitation to this study was that in order to successfully carry out the analysis of the Fisher's exact test of the answers to the questions with five optional answers, Questions 4 to 6, a few answers could not be counted, as multiple answers were filled in by a few students. The analysis could not include multiple answers to a question, which is why these questionnaires had to be excluded. The other option, including all answers filled in on these excluded questionnaires, was statistically not desirable. 15 filled in questionnaires were not counted in the English students group, and 7 were not counted in the Economics group. In the future, this could be avoided by announcing to the students to choose one answer only.

Another limitation was that the number of respondents varied between the two groups. There were 94 students of English Language and Culture, and 53 students of Economics and Business Economics. This difference became apparent in the answers to Question 11: if one accent was easier to speak than another. The answers showed a variety of reasons, and in the group of English students, more different reasons were given. It is hard to determine whether this has to do with the fact that there were more students in this group, or if the students have more reasons for this in general. A suggestion for studies such as these in the future is to establish groups of more or less the same number of students. In addition to the number of respondents that differed, the relative number of male and female respondents also did. There were fewer men than women in both groups of respondents, and this factor could be considered a possible confound. In the future this can be avoided by regrouping and running the statistics again, or by including the same number of male and female respondents filling in the questionnaire.

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Appendix 1: Questionnaire Answers Questions 7, 10, 11, and 13.

For all quotes, the original spelling of the respondents was used.

Question 7

English Language and Culture:

- A1: It doesn't matter, as long as it sounds relatively native and intelligible
- A2: I study to become a teacher and want to be able to speak both accents so I can properly guide student who want to speak G.A. / RP
- A3: We had to choose between either AE or BE and since there was no AE teacher and BE seems to have a little more prestige, so I chose that one
- A4: I already bought the books for British before we got to choose
- A5: I was taught this accent ever since I started studying English in Secondary School, so it is the easiest and most natural for me
- A6: I like the sound of it, and British English has more prestige
- A7: In my opinion British English sounds more formal so for my academic career I chose to aim for a British accent
- A8: I think it sounds way more natural than British English. Other accents are fun to listen to, but not useful everywhere
- A9: I like Britain more than the United States
- A10: It comes more natural to me
- A11: Everyone can speak English, not everyone can do the accent. It is interesting to learn
- A12: It comes more naturally to me
- A13: I think it sound professional, at least more than American English
- A14: I like it better than British and I'm better in it
- A15: British English sounds more formal
- A16: It sounds better and feels more natural
- A17: It sounds sophisticated
- A18: I think it sounds beautiful and it's easier to blend in in the UK
- A19: I lived in America and it comes naturally to me
- A20: It feels the most comfortable to me
- A21: I would go for profound British English, but I sound more like myself if I speak Neutral English
- A22: It sounds fancy
- A23: I like it best
- A24: I think it sounds more pleasant than Am. E. or Dutch English
- A25: I think it sounds better & more professional
- A26: I have to...
- A27: It comes more natural to me than RP does
- A28: It comes more natural to me
- A29: I think it's the most beautiful accent of English, and I plan to study in England for a while
- A30: I was raised with AmE
- A31: Sounds better ☺
- A32: Formal setting RP, casual setting: neutral
- A33: I grew up speaking English with this accent. If I lose this accent I feel as if my identity will be lost
- A34: It's prestige and friendly / polite (professional) tone

- A35: I like the way it sounds
- A36: It sounds nice
- A37: I like the way it sounds more than the other varieties
- A38: It sounds good to me
- A39: It comes naturally
- A40: It is more neutral
- A41: I don't want to sounds Dutch or American
- A42: British English sounds more sophisticated and beautiful. It also has a history
- A43: I went to an American High School so I picked it up. British English is too hard for me
- A44: It's what I know
- A45: British English is def. the most beautiful way of speaking English / sounds educated
- A46: I have to in order to pass my Language Acquisition class
- A47: I like this accent
- A48: It sounds proper and cool
- A49: I think it's the way to speak English
- A50: It's easier for me to pronounce it, British sounds too 'classy'
- A51: I prefer it over American
- A52: No particular reason, I like the sound
- A53: We're expected to do this
- A54: I enjoy it
- A55: I like this accent
- A56: It has a friendlier ring to it, don't you agree? (read this in British English please)
- A57: I love the British accent
- A58: I like it most
- A59: It sounds more pleasant than American English
- A60: It is regarded as the most 'high standing' one
- A61: I like it better than other accents
- A62: English comes from England, should sound like English people
- A63: It's closest to my natural accent
- A64: Academic
- A65: I think I benefit more from this accent and I love the accent
- A66: I like the accent
- A67: See question 5. BE sounds appealing
- A68: It is the most pleasant sounding one, and it sounded most like my natural way of speaking English
- A69: I've been trying to learn it ever since I had English in school
- A70: It sounded more natural to me than General American accent
- A71: It sounds beautiful
- A72: It seems most natural to me / closest to my current accent
- A73: I like the way it sounds, and many people understand this accent
- A74: It sounds to me like an academic way of speaking
- A75: It's what I'm taught
- A76: It comes naturally, I just got it along the way
- A77: I like the accent and I became used to it when I went on exchange to Canada / holiday trips to Canada and the US
- A78: I would not like to be associated with American English or Americans
- A79: I love the way it is pronounced
- A80: I have more with the USA which makes it easier to go for than British

- A81: Mostly because I have a class on accents, and British sounds fancier than American
- A82: My main concern is that I'm understandable, not what I sound like
- A83: It sounds fancy
- A84: I have family in America
- A85: I am a huge Anglophile
- A86: It's fun!
- A87: It's the purest / conventional form
- A88: It sounds nice
- A89: It sounds nice
- A90: It's more international than British English (or other accents)
- A91: It sounds very pleasant to me
- A92: It sounds smart
- A93: It sounds the best compared to the other accents
- A94: I just really like the sound of it, and I find it fun to speak that way
- A95: I find it to be more broad, general and well known

Economics and Business Economics:

- A1: I used to live in the U.S.A.
- A2: British is too hard
- A3: It doesn't sound fake or forced
- A4: It has great flow, sounds good, and is faster than British English
- A5: It's neutral
- A6: This is mostly subconscious. I would prefer to speak British English though
- A7: I want to sound professional
- A8: It is globally accepted
- A9: I grew up speaking British English
- A10: I don't aim for an accent
- A11: I like the sound of this accent
- A12: Since, I'm not from America or British
- A13: For me it sounds the least annoying
- A14: It sounds most natural to me
- A15: I think it sounds best of all accents
- A16: My father is from America, we talk English at home, and can't speak differently
- A17: I think it is more professional, and some people perceive this as better
- A18: I can understand it better without having to ask the speaker to repeat him/herself
- A19: I guess neutral English is easiest for everybody
- A20: I don't have a preference
- A21: Everyone can understand me
- A22: It feels natural
- A23: It seems really hard to learn to get an accent, it feels kind of fake to me when I speak this way
- A24: I like it
- A25: I think this the most useful
- A26: I try to speak without an accent because I think it sounds better and I'm not British nor American so I aim for a neutral accent
- A27: It is easier & sounds more professional than for example Dutch English
- A28: This is what we've learned in high school and in my opinion it sounds better
- A29: Not aim for an accent

- A30: I've been taught that in high school
- A31: It's a polite language
- A32: It's way nicer
- A33: It is a polite language!
- A34: It's neutral, more chance people will understand. Especially on an international study
- A35: Sounds better
- A36: I don't really aim for it, but I guess American English comes more naturally
- A37: I am unable to pick either an American or a British accent
- A38: My accents are terrible
- A39: I was taught to do so
- A40: It's most global
- A41: Move to America
- A42: It sounds better and in my opinion more professional
- A43: Global
- A44: Because it's proper English and in America they use a lot of slang, etc. I want to sound professional, not lazy
- A45: Sounds more professional
- A46: Everybody can understand it well
- A48: Sounds better
- A49: I'm used to it (media)
- A50: It is the original language and most other accents ruin it

Question 10

English Language and Culture:

- A1: It came along with my interest in all things British
- A3: It was a binary choice between AE and BE. (I actually already do a lot of accents myself)
- A4: I like speaking British English
- A5: I started with this accent a long time ago and am still content
- A6: British English has more prestige and is regarded as more sophisticated / educated
- A7: I want to sound native-like
- A8: British sounds unnatural and I don't want to insult anyone with other accents
- A9: I like this one best
- A10: I would have to force it
- A11: It is difficult to learn more at once, most teachers speak NRP
- A12: I was not exposed to them growing up in the Caribbean
- A13: I think those accents are not as pretty as the British one
- A14: American English just suits me better
- A15: You can only aim for one
- A16: This is what I was taught in high school, which makes this one easier
- A17: So many others have that accent already
- A18: I really like British English. Dutch English will make clear that you're a Dutch person
- A19: British English is too different
- A20: I feel less genuine while speaking these
- A21: Because of 7. I don't sound like myself. It's like my voice changes too much for British English
- A22: I want to be consistent and only aim for RP

- A23: American English sounds very whiny
- A24: I don't want to be associated with America(n English speakers)
- A25: They sound less pleasant to me & feel less natural to speak
- A26: I was taught RP
- A27: I seem to sound more native when I speak in AmE
- A28: They are less appealing to me
- A29: I don't like them as much as British
- A30: AmE sounds natural for me
- A31: American English sounds terrible
- A32: Natural affinity / proximity to English people
- A33: They don't interest me
- A34: No particular reason
- A35: I don't like them
- A36: They are more difficult for me to speak
- A37: I like the way British English sounds more
- A38: I prefer British English
- A39: I don't want to sounds posh
- A40: I want a good RP like accent
- A41: I don't want to have a Dutch accent
- A42: American English sounds dull. And other accent are just not what I'm aiming for
- A43: It does not sound natural when I try to speak it
- A44: No particular reason
- A45: They sound to broad and haven't got the large variety of 'sounds' English has
- A46: It is not required for my LA class
- A47: They don't really fit me
- A48: I do not like those
- A49: American English tends to sound very colloquial
- A50: American sounds more natural
- A51: I don't like the sound of it
- A52: American seems viable too, the rest seems too 'unofficial'
- A53: The Dutch one sounds dumb
- A54: I think it will make me sound fancier
- A55: I like British English the best
- A56: Having one is just fine
- A57: I like British more
- A58: They sound too informal
- A59: The other accents sound rather uneducated
- A60: BE is regarded as the most prestigious one and that could help with future professional goals
- A61: British English sounds more prestigious
- A62: Dutch English sounds ugly, Neutral is without identity and American sounds negative
- A63: For no real reasons, except that American is closer to my natural accent
- A64: Internationally less well understood / less academic
- A65: They sound less professional to me
- A66: I like them less
- A67: They are less appealing to me
- A68: It is better to just aim for one accent and I like British English
- A69: It's not that I am not interested in other accents, but I prefer to learn British English first, since I study 'English', not American culture

- A70: It is better to speak one accent good, than several accent badly
- A71: I simply prefer RP
- A72: I simply prefer RP
- A73: I like British English the most
- A74: I like British English best
- A75: I will be tested on my British English
- A76: It doesn't feel right, but I love playing with accents, but these are not my natural one
- A77: It's impossible to speak more than one accent at the same time and I want my accent to sound consistently
- A78: Actually, I would like to learn all the common accents
- A79: My heart and mind are set on British
- A80: I feel like I'm faking an accent then
- A81: I'm afraid it sounds inappropriate in certain contexts
- A82: American sounds uncultured (just a bit)
- A83: They sound just not right
- A84: I just really like British English
- A85: It will confuse me
- A86: They are not the standard accent at my university
- A87: American isn't my thing
- A88: They sound wrong
- A89: I am already used to the accent that I have now, which is American English
- A90: I barely get in contact with other accents
- A92: It would be difficult to speak more accents at the same time
- A93: They are overall less socially-> professionally accepted
- A94: I have chosen British and I don't want to ruin that
- A95: I find British sounds posh and annoying

Economics and Business Economics:

- A1: I don't know how to speak with those accents
- A3: I think one shouldn't aim for an accent
- A4: Why would I want different accents? I prefer American English
- A5: I can't
- A6: I don't want to be associated with Dutch English (In Holland mostly interpreted as: 'she can't speak proper English') I'm rather indifferent between the others
- A7: Not interested
- A8: One must not aim for too much
- A9: I grew up speaking British English
- A10: I'm not American or British
- A11: I don't like the sound of the others
- A12: Those are less common
- A13: I aim for a particular group. Not for those who want me to speak a specific accent
- A14: They sound not, except British English, natural
- A15: American English sounds better to me
- A16: Easier to understand American English
- A17: For me it maybe doesn't seem credible when I try such an accent
- A18: I sound weird if I try to sound differently
- A19: I don't care for them

- A20: I think I am better off speaking neutral than trying an accent
- A21: I can't talk like that
- A22: Feels fake, need to think too much about it
- A24: They are shit
- A25: I don't want one
- A26: I like the neutral best
- A27: It doesn't sound well to me
- A28: Don't have a reason for this
- A30: I do have a Dutch accent
- A33: They are not as polite as British English
- A35: Sound worse
- A36: I think it sounds more naturally, and not try-hard to be a fluent speaker
- A37: British is too posh and really American sounds horrible
- A38: I do not wish to learn them
- A39: I was taught to do so
- A40: No specified reason
- A41: No interest
- A42: I think British sounds best
- A43: No reason
- A44: I do not like the way they sound
- A45: You only need one
- A46: I don't like the sound of some of the accents like Australian
- A47: There's no point speaking in a different accent
- A48: British sounds better than others
- A49: One can only speak in one accent at a time

Question 11

English Language and Culture:

- A1: I don't exclude any accents
- A2: RP you encounter it a lot in formal situations, esp. in high school; it also sounds very clear when spoken so you can pick it up easily
- A3: I think AE might be a bit easier because it's a little more "lazy" with /d/-sounds for /t/-spelling, no aspiration there is easier for Dutch speakers
- A4: Yes, some accents share features with Dutch and are thus easier to remember
- A5: Not in general, but I think if an accent has similarities to your mother language, it will be easier
- A6: Dutch English would be easier for Dutch speakers as the phonetic features of Dutch are implemented in this variety
- A7: Yes, I think American English is easier because of all the series I watch. Also I feel more comfortable when using an American accent when talking to American speakers because I don't want to come over as posh / formal
- A8: Yes, definitely. I think Scottish and Kiwi is easier than Irish and Ozzy
- A9: Yes, some involve sounds I cannot pronounce
- A10: No, I think it differs per person
- A11: No idea, I think it depends on several factors -> What other people speak etc.
- A12: No, they all have equal challenges
- A13: I think all accents are as hard as others, because each accent has its own manner
- A14: Yes, some are more like Dutch than others
- A15: No, but you hear American English on TV

- A16: No, not really
- A17: Not really, it depends on the input you receive
- A18: American is easier for me, but I prefer British
- A19: Yes, American. It's what we're most exposed to
- A20: Yes – rhotic accents tend to have a greater correspondence with spelling, which makes them easier for new learners
- A21: I think that depends on what you grew up hearing the most. I watched a lot of BBC so British is easier
- A22: GA is easier than RP because you hear more GA and GA is rhotic like Dutch
- A23: No
- A24: For Dutch speakers, Am. E. might be easier because it's rhotic
- A25: Yes, some have intonation etc which are hard to mimic
- A26: American, probably
- A27: It depends on your own ability of speaking and understanding the accent
- A28: Yes but I think that depends on the individual
- A29: No, I think all accents have their difficult aspects
- A30: No
- A31: No
- A32: No, exposure matters: key term Jamaican we crazy
- A33: Yes, because it is easier to pronounce the words in the way they are written and some accents don't require pretentiousness
- A34: Yes, I reckon the American accent suits me better due to “easier” nuances in for instance vowel sounds
- A35: I don't know
- A36: Yes, American English is closer to Dutch-English and you can adapt it easily from tv
- A37: Some features may be harder to learn
- A38: Yes, if something is closer to your native language / accent it would be easier
- A39: No
- A40: No, just that some accents are harder to learn
- A41: Not particularly, I think all accents can be difficult in their own way
- A42: Yes, American is more relaxed than British, etc.
- A43: Yes, it depends on what you grow up hearing
- A44: Yes, less difference in, for example, vowels
- A45: Dutch accent is easier, because it is my natural accent
- A46: American English, because most music and movies that surround us are from the US
- A47: Yes, because some accents are more “laidback”
- A48: I don't think so, because it really depends on what you're used to
- A49: Yes, American is easier than, for example, Australian
- A50: Yes, because some accents are more similar to the accent you usually have
- A51: I believe some accents come to you more naturally
- A52: Yea some come more natural
- A53: No I don't
- A54: No, not really
- A55: Yes, if you are not a native, one accent can resemble your mother tongue more closely
- A56: American might be easier, because I think it's generally heard more on television, so people will speak that more easily
- A57: Yes, because of the media

- A58: Yes, some accents require less effort in terms of transition from your native language
- A59: Yes, for some accents you really have to think about how you say something but with Neutral English you don't really
- A60: Yes, for some accents you have to try harder to get the right pronunciation
- A61: American is easier, because of media influence
- A62: Yes, because some accents are spoken a lot on tv, causing you to hear them more and become more familiar with them
- A63: Yes, American, because that's what you hear on TV
- A64: Yes, because it depends on your natural accent
- A65: Yes. Some accents you hear more often than other and I think that makes it easier to imitate
- A66: I think so because certain accents might be closer to your native accent
- A67: Some accents come more natural, I think that is different for everyone
- A68: Some are more like the Dutch pronunciation, like the American /r/, which is not often pronounced in British English
- A69: I think it is, because a GA accent can be a better accent for a person than RP. The accent has to fit the person
- A70: Yes, some are more natural to speak
- A71: Yes, because some are more natural than other
- A72: AE is easier, More American English influence on television
- A73: Yes, because some accents don't have as many rules attached to them (as RP)
- A74: Dutch accent is probably easier for people whose first language is Dutch
- A75: Yes, because of the sounds in relation to native languages
- A76: No, it depends on the person whether an accent is easier to speak
- A77: Yes, depending on the differences between target accent and your current one
- A78: I think GA is easier to speak than RP (British) because you hear GA a lot more than British
- A79: Not necessarily, it's personal preference
- A80: No, although it all depends on what you're used to. American would've been easier for me because I used to pronounce my "R"s
- A81: I think American English is easier because it has fewer stops and flaps and flows better
- A82: British is rather tricky, yes
- A83: Yes, because they have the same sounds as Dutch
- A84: Yes, some accents are closer in pronunciation to Dutch
- A85: No
- A86: Yes, GenAm -> closer to Dutch, + I hear it more frequently on television
- A87: Yes because they're more similar to Dutch / native language
- A88: Yes, less rules or more different ways to do it correctly
- A89: Yes, some have less rules than others
- A90: Depends on what you prefer
- A92: Yes, some accents are closer to Dutch than others
- A93: It depends on what you hear more
- A94: I think they're all equally difficult, because it's all a bit unnatural for a non-native speaker
- A95: Not really, but an accent with speech sounds closer to your native language would be easier to adapt

Economics and Business Economics:

- A1: No
- A2: Yes
- A3: Yes, some accent come more natural as they are more like your native language / accent
- A4: Yes, depends on movements your tongue and mouth have to make
- A5: All take time to learn
- A6: For me, American English is easier, since most movies, series and people around me speak American English. (And of course Dutch English is very easy)
- A7: American English because you hear it all the time (Movies / TV)
- A8: Yes, if you are not a native speaker every accent takes effort
- A9: No?!
- A10: American is easier, Dutch is very easy of course
- A11: Don't know
- A12: Some pronunciations are easy others are not
- A13: Yes, you are more confronted with American English
- A14: I think accents you hear often, on TV for example, are easier
- A15: Yes
- A16: Yes, it is what you are raised with, but Irish is hard
- A17: No, but it depends if you maybe have a positive attitude towards it
- A18: Yes, pronunciation makes it harder
- A19: Depends where you live, you obviously adapt to it
- A20: No I don't think so
- A21: Yes, because sometimes words are easier to pronounce
- A22: No
- A23: Yes American I think is easier
- A24: Yeah because they are easier
- A25: Nope
- A26: I think the American accent is easier than the British one, it's harder to speak
- A27: Depends on your nationality and the language you're used to speak
- A28: No, it's just what you've learned
- A29: Really don't know
- A31: No
- A32: British, easy to do
- A33: No, I don't think so
- A34: Yes, depends where you're from and, for instance, what TV shows you watch
- A35: American / Dutch are easier, hear it more often
- A36: British English is harder to try then American English for Dutchies I think
- A37: I think British is harder than American because there are more words that have to be pronounced a certain way
- A38: American is easier than British, not sure why. Dutch English is just awful
- A39: I think it just depends on which accent you are used to
- A40: Yes, neutral and Dutch English are easier
- A42: Yes, the American accent is easier because that is what you hear most on TV
- A43: No
- A44: Yes, Dutch English is easier because I'm Dutch, American English is also easier
- A45: I wouldn't know
- A46: Yes, the pronunciation of some accents is more difficult
- A47: No
- A48: Dutch English. Sounds more like native language

- A49: For me, American English because I'm more exposed to it
- A50: No I do not think so

Question 13

English Language and Culture:

- A1: It's your own decision, but when you strive for an international job, it works in your favour if you do have a native-like accent
- A2: English is spoken worldwide, so it only makes sense to standardize it up to a certain point
- A3: I think that it is important to be able to identify yourself as a speaker of a certain English accent
- A4: When aiming for an accent, you can look to people who already master this accent for guidance
- A5: You are judged on it in the professional world, even though this might not be a good thing
- A6: Intelligibility
- A7: To be native like. However, I sometimes want to switch over to GA because I feel like it comes more natural
- A8: Otherwise you're just stuck in accent limbo
- A9: As long as you're intelligible and consistent, and the accent is not distracting
- A10: You're aiming to speak a foreign language that is often associated with a nation
- A13: Your English will sound better if you have only one particular accent
- A15: If you're not studying English, it doesn't really matter
- A16: Neutral English sounds quite professional, an accent is not really needed
- A17: If you just want to be able to communicate in English, your goal is achieved when natives understand you
- A18: You will sound less foreign, more like an actual native speaker of whichever accent
- A19: It defines you, and makes it less obvious you're Dutch. -> More professional / educated
- A20: Speaking well is important, but specific accent training is generally not needed to improve someone's quality of English
- A22: If you are an English student your English should sound professional
- A23: It will help you better abroad
- A25: It will make your speech sound more professional
- A26: It makes you easier to understand
- A27: It will give you more confidence when speaking English
- A28: I don't quite like mixed accents
- A31: Gives you a goal
- A32: As long as the message can be distinguished accents should allow for idiosyncrasies
- A33: Proficiency, and fluency are much more important
- A34: To learn an accent, or to learn (a variety of the) English by relating it to native accents is better or in a way more reliable than going at it without any means of comparison
- A35: I don't know
- A36: It is part of the impression you make
- A37: You should adopt the accent that feels most natural to you
- A38: It is more important that people understand what you want to say
- A39: You can be identified

- A40: A strong Dutch accent sounds slightly dumb to me, mostly because they mispronounce words (especially with 'th')
- A41: Some people can't really teach themselves a certain accent so they might sound amiable in their own way of speaking
- A42: It makes you sound more professional
- A43: You have to speak the accent that you like and suits you, not because you have to
- A44: It can help others to understand you
- A45: It's a way to understanding each other
- A46: Otherwise you'll be in between it. You're learning English, practising your accent is part of that
- A47: To show your personality
- A48: Everyone has an accent, not necessarily a fixed one. It shouldn't matter in general as long as people can understand you
- A49: You don't want to sound dumb. You need people to understand you
- A50: I think it is not necessary to rule out all the other possible accents or to get rid of your Dutch accent completely
- A51: One should do whatever one finds appropriate
- A52: Everyone should have their own accent and not try to force themselves to speak in a certain accent that makes it unnatural, I think
- A52: I think you should speak however you like
- A53: Complete neutrality is bland and tiresome
- A54: Otherwise English would fall apart and it might be hard to understand each other
- A55: It shows that you put effort in it
- A56: Don't want to sound pretentious
- A57: Well, it is only important when studying English or learning it. When other people speak it, it is not that important. I think it is important, because it could also teach you features of the language
- A58: You need a certain standard, otherwise it's not natural
- A59: You will sound more educated, and it is easier than just mixing all sorts of accents
- A60: It makes you sound educated
- A61: Consistency in your speech
- A62: It makes you more understandable in the end
- A63: So people take you more seriously, and not see you as a foreigner
- A64: It makes you come across as self-confident
- A65: To make yourself easier to understand by native speakers
- A66: To have at least an aim at a certain accent is important and maybe afterwards combining it with personal speech characteristics is possible, but at least you should aim for one only, so that your speech is understandable
- A67: Being understandable is important, having a (nice) accent is a plus
- A68: Proficiency is more important; however, it is important to be consistent
- A69: In the sense that it's important to stick to one accent + it makes your accent more understandable if you have one clear accent
- A70: Some accents have negative connotations
- A71: Most people will understand you regardless of how you speak English
- A72: You should whatever feels natural and not pretend
- A73: In general speech, anyone who speaks English will know what you're saying
- A74: It matters more what you say than how you say it
- A75: Being understandable is most important

- A76: Neutral opens the world
- A77: It is not necessary, of course, but it can make it easier for native speakers to understand you
- A78: You might confuse listeners if you mix accents
- A79: You just have your own; as long as people understand you, it's fine
- A80: You have a goal set to accomplish
- A81: It doesn't really matter that much
- A82: If you can understand each other, I don't really think it matters what kind of accent you have
- A83: You have to be consistent or it will be hard for people to understand you
- A84: As long as you make yourself understandable, it's ok
- A85: Otherwise your accent will be a hot mess
- A86: Because that way you have a standard model you can look to, you're not just doing something
- A87: Having your own accent and way of speaking is a huge part of your personality (embrace it)

Economics and Business Economics:

- A1: You just need to be able to be understood
- A2: It's about getting the message across
- A3: It doesn't sound fake or forced
- A4: It gives off a certain professionalism
- A5: It doesn't matter
- A6: Apart from speaking Dutch English, I do not think an American / British / Neutral accent will have a really big influence
- A9: An accent doesn't define a person. As long as they are understandable, it's fine
- A10: As long as you understand each other, it's all good
- A11: I don't really know why it would be important
- A12: Since, I'm not from America or British
- A13: Could be annoying
- A14: As long as you don't sound like a retard, it is fine
- A15: It will help to improve your English
- A16: Whenever you are understandable and it is not distracting it is fine
- A17: Just because we develop our own way of speaking, which is better and more suitable and credible
- A18: You should be able to understand any English accent, regardless of your preferences
- A19: Unless you're in politics, it's about the message, not how it was delivered
- A20: I think grammar and vocabulary are more important to focus on than an accent
- A21: If your vocabulary / grammar is alright, accent doesn't matter
- A22: Shouldn't matter, if you speak reasonable English people should be able to understand
- A23: If you are understandable that is the most important
- A25: I don't see any advantage as a foreigner to get a foreign accent
- A26: It improves your English and I think that it's good if people don't immediately hear from which country you are
- A27: You'll master the language better and you will be able to communicate better
- A28: Everybody knows where you come from and maybe judge you on the way of speaking

- A29: Not important. Just have to speak at a sufficient English level
- A30: Accents are natural, you do not need to force it
- A32: Sounds more professional
- A33: It prove that you are able to able to speak a certain type of English
- A34: People have to respect your effort. If they understand you, it's good
- A35: As long as people understand it's good
- A36: You want to sound as best as you can in certain situations
- A37: Most accents are acquired by living in that country and are hard to get rid off. As long as someone knows what you're saying it doesn't matter
- A38: Accents shouldn't matter. All that matters is being able to say what one is trying to say
- A39: It sounds more professional than if you speak 'Dutch English'
- A40: You can make yourself understandable without an accent too
- A42: It is important that people can understand you, and you are able to communicate. It doesn't matter which accent you speak
- A43: It will sound fake if you try too hard
- A44: You want to sound professional, not like a farmer when speaking Dutch English
- A45: It's about the content of a message not the way it's delivered
- A46: People will understand you anyway
- A47: Your accent does not really matter
- A48: You want to be taken seriously
- A49: The goal of speaking is to convey information
- A50: As long as you speak correct English in any accent it won't make a difference