Scotland and Ireland Through Stereotypes

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Abstract. The paper investigates stereotypes concerning two of the most well-known English-speaking cultures — Scotland and Ireland — and to what extent these stereotypes are known and felt to be real among Hungarian students of English. The essay includes a short introduction about the definition of stereotypes and clichés, their significance in intercultural communication, and then makes an attempt at drawing up a list of the commonest stereotypes of the two countries and nations, a list of 20 stereotypes altogether. This list was sent to a large number of Hungarian students in a questionnaire, whose replies clearly indicate which the best and least known stereotypes are among Hungarians about these English-speaking cultures. The conclusion offers an analysis of the results and an interesting summary of how the respondents commented on the different stereotypes mentioned in the questionnaire.

Key Words. Scotland, Ireland, culture, stereotypes, survey

Introduction

Whatever discourse we happen to be part of, it is easy to discover two things. The first is that stereotypes are very popular and are frequently used, the second is that the notion itself is quite impossible to define well. The Cambridge Dictionary defines a stereotype as “a set idea that people have about what someone or something is like, especially an idea that is wrong”. It also offers a more general definition: “an idea that is used to describe a particular type of person or thing, or a person or thing thought to represent such an idea” (Cambridge Dictionary). The common ideas seem to be “types” (these can be ethnicities, geographical regions, occupations) and “thought to” or “wrong”. Both definitions imply — but do not state — that stereotypes are not based on actual experience but any kind of knowledge from any source, and that they refer to groups, not individuals. If the problem is considered in this light, there are no truths in the world, only stereotypes, as it is impossible to get first-hand
information about groups without generalisations. The Merriam-Webster Dictionary defines “stereotype” both as a verb and a noun. As a verb, it means “to make a stereotype from”; “to repeat without variation: make hackneyed”; and “to develop a mental stereotype about”. As a noun, the definitions are the following: “a plate cast from a printing surface”; or “something conforming to a fixed or general pattern especially: a standardized mental picture that is held in common by members of a group and that represents an oversimplified opinion, prejudiced attitude, or uncritical judgment” (Merriam-Webster Dictionary: Stereotype). This definition is more detailed and explicitly speaks about simplification, prejudice, or judgment (the idea of group is not mentioned here, either). A synonymous word is cliché, defined in the Merriam-Webster Dictionary in this way: “Cliché is today overwhelmingly encountered in reference to something hackneyed, such as an overly familiar or commonplace phrase, theme, or expression. Stereotype is most frequently now employed to refer to an often unfair and untrue belief that many people have about all people or things with a particular characteristic” (Merriam-Webster Dictionary: Cliché).

In general discourse, in everyday life, people do not always think that stereotypes are wrong, or, going further, upsetting or offensive. Stereotypes have their role in everyday communication and — as the title of this paper suggests — intercultural exchange. Stereotypes help us express ourselves when we do not know much about the topic of the discourse (e.g., in our case, a given country), they give us at least something to rely on, and it is better to know stereotypes about a country and nation than nothing. If the general maxims of politeness are observed and the speaker is careful to speak descriptively, not evaluatively, no stereotype will lead to real conflicts. The same idea is endorsed by Michael Gates, who writes:

to talk or write about culture one has to generalise about the cultural characteristics of the nationalities discussed. It is not possible to do otherwise, as we are discussing the behaviour and values of groups of people, not individuals — passed on at a collective level from generation to generation. The study of cultures is a social science, and — as Aristotle points out three times in the introduction to his Ethics — in the social sciences, accuracy is not the same as in the physical sciences. One has to use phrases such as ‘in general…’, or ‘this tends to be the case…’ (Gates 2017).

Accuracy is important still, but we must be prepared to modify our approach quickly if our counterpart does not correspond individually to the generalisation. Pushed too far, any generalisation becomes absurd, but it can still be a good starting-point. People sometimes avoid generalising because they believe it may upset others. Others object to generalisations because they question the wisdom of applying general characteristics to a particular individual. People must possess an open mind, but, as Gates puts it, everybody has to be “prepared to suspend disbelief in order to benefit from the usefulness of non-judgemental cultural generalisations” (Gates 2017).

As it has been said above, stereotypes are important and necessary — we simply cannot know all the truths in the whole world, so it is convenient to say e.g., “Scottish people respect their traditions” — as most of them do — instead of not uttering anything about Scotland or digging into data (if they are available) to say 96.28% of Scottish people respect their traditions. The case might be more difficult, of course, when something more negative is stated. If we say “Hungarians like eating”, the statement is, in general, true of about 98% of the population of Hungary (lacking statistics, this is only a rough personal estimate), but there would always be food conscious people who would say “most of them do, but I don’t,” or “most of them do, and I do too, but without their excesses”, and this leads us further on to
modify the stereotype and say “most Hungarians like eating too much”, or, even, being more objective, “most Hungarians tend to eat too much”. This is how stereotypes get refined and more exact. Using stereotypes needs a lot of flexibility and openness.

In a world of cancel culture, when anybody can uphold the right to feel upset, annoyed, or offended about any statement he or she finds untrue, stereotypes and clichés help us by providing efficient bits of safe communication, and flexibility and politeness help us clarify questions and maintain communication. Once, when the author of this paper stayed in Belgium, he was talking about Belgian culture in French to a native. At one point, he inadvertently said “so you are basically French”. The Belgian partner froze for a minute, contemplating whether to be rude or not, finally, he decided to be polite, and said, “Oh no, I’m Belgian”. (Here, we might remember Hercule Poirot’s constant protestations that he’s Belgian, not French). It is really hard to say whether mine was a negative or positive statement, it was not meant to offend. It relied on the common stereotype “people who speak French are French”. But the author of this paper was given a chance to think about how stereotypes work.

Stereotypes can also be a rich hunting ground for journalists / bloggers to explain new findings or truths about them and get more readers. Many publications and even videos give readers invaluable information by debunking myths and throwing light on the truth behind common stereotypes (see, e.g., https://www.thetravel.com/scotland-stereotypes-not-true/). One such stereotype is that Scottish people are stingy. Nobody really knows how and why this belief was formed, and why it is so well-known in the world. Instead of accepting it as a fact, it is important to understand why the Scottish are said to be stingy, and to find information which is less influenced by false assumptions. Here, two examples from the internet are going to be used (with slight modifications), both of which shed light on the background of this stereotype.

1) Scotland, compared to England, was nowhere nearly as wealthy as England as it didn’t have the maritime trading conditions England did. So Scots made do with what they’d got. Which wasn’t much, but they coped, and it led to a very practical turn of mind which came in handy during the age of the great inventions. Because they did a lot with very little (comparatively) money, they gained a reputation for being a bit miserly. The reputation is probably undeserved. (Lang)

2) Scotland developed the frugal mentality in the 1700s due to its financial crisis which bankrupted the nation. This was due to the foolishness of the Scottish nobility trying to emulate the Dutch, English, French, Spanish and Portuguese successful colonial exploits through a colonial outpost in Panama. Unfortunately it didn’t work out and left the landowners in extreme financial difficulty. The only way out was through a union with England, who were prepared to prop up Scotland in return. I think this had a long term consequence in influencing the Scots to be more prudent with their money. During this period the Scottish enlightenment took place where the Scots made some of the greatest innovation in finances which had long term impact in the western world and which still has an impact today. (Arnold)

Both stories sound convincing, and both go back to the same idea: Scotland used to be poorer than England, so the English started repeating how poor and stingy Scots are. And this is what was spread all over the world, as the English language became a global lingua franca.
Technical background and procedure

The idea to study a significant number of stereotypes came from previous research conducted by the author of this paper on intercultural knowledge, communication, and civilisation (Szele 2019 & 2020). This research had shown the importance of cultural information in speaking a foreign language and investigated the extent to which English and American cultural items are known in Hungary.

The survey behind the present paper included two main parts: in the first part, respondents were asked to write down all the stereotypes that came to their minds about eight English-speaking countries, namely England, Scotland, Ireland, the USA, Australia, New Zealand, Canada, and Jamaica. This was done so that their input was not influenced by any a priori information. The instructions were written in Hungarian so that no language barriers would hinder the respondents, but answers in English were also welcome. This part was designed to elicit all the active stereotypes the respondent had in mind. The instructions were the following:

Please write down briefly what stereotypes come to your mind concerning the countries mentioned. Stereotypes are true or not-so-true beliefs, general ideas about a nation or country, e.g. “Hungarians like to eat” or “Hungary is a pessimistic country”. You might answer in Hungarian or English.

In the second part of the questionnaire, a list of 85 stereotypes, previously gathered from many different sources, was provided, grouped by country, where respondents had to choose between “heard about it” or “never heard about it”. This part was aimed at providing a list to respondents to see which stereotypes they were familiar with. Space to add any individual comments was provided. The instructions were the following:

In this part, common stereotypes are listed. Please have a look and indicate whether you have heard about them. If you have your own experience, opinion, or remark, please write it down. You may answer in Hungarian or English.

The survey was conducted online in early 2021 using Google Forms. The form was sent to 440 students of English and Translation Studies, but the recipients were free to forward the questionnaire to anyone, so the exact number is somewhat over 440. The number of responses returned was 95.

Scotland: Free answers

Stereotypes concerning Scotland circle around a few main topics. During the research stage, 11 stereotypes were found from various sources (see Appendix). But as it has been said earlier, the first part of the survey asked respondents to provide their own answers. The original question was “Milyen sztereotípiákat ismer a skótokkal / Skóciával kapcsolatosan?” [What stereotypes do you know concerning Scottish people / Scotland?]. A quick analysis of the responses suggests drawing up the following categories:

a) bodily appearance
b) inner characteristic features
c) tangible heritage (whisky, kilt, bagpipe, haggis etc.)
d) the country and its natural beauties
e) stinginess
Table 1 shows how many times elements of each category were mentioned by respondents. Below the table, a detailed analysis of the responses follows, together with explanations.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Number of mentions</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a) bodily appearance</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b) inner characteristic features</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c) tangible heritage (whisky, kilt, bagpipe, haggis)</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>37%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d) the country and its natural beauties</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e) stinginess</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>58%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f) alcohol</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>g) hate the English</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Within the category of bodily appearance, eight respondents out of 95 said “Scottish people have red hair”.

Within the category of inner characteristic features, the 27 responses can be broken down as follows: “Scottish people speak bad English”1 (7), “they swear a lot” (5), “they are patriotic” (3), “they are sturdy / stubborn” (3). Other responses mention further ideas, such as Scottish people (or the country) are “mystical” (2), are “friendly and hospitable” (2), are “proud” (2), they “like fighting” (2), are “unfriendly” (1) and “Scottish people are cheerful” (1).

Within the category of tangible heritage, four cultural items came up in several forms. The most frequently mentioned cultural item is the kilt, which in Hungary is known as “skót szoknya” [Scottish skirt]. There were 19 mentions of the “kilt” altogether, out of which 14 instances were in Hungarian. The next is the “bagpipe” with 10 instances, and “whisky” with 9 instances. There was one mention of “haggis”, and another general hint to Scottish food saying there are “some not very appetizing dishes” in Scotland.

Within the category of the country and its natural beauties there were four mentions of “rain” or “bad weather”, three mentions of “Nessie, the monster”, three mentions of “(haunted) castles”, one mention of “the Highlands”, and one general statement referring to Scotland simply as a “beautiful country”.

The last three categories consist of stereotypes that are mentioned frequently but do not fit into any other group: stinginess, alcohol consumption, and hate of the English. Out of 61 respondents who addressed the stinginess of Scottish people, 16 referred to it as a positive phenomenon (saying “economical” or “sparing” or any of its Hungarian equivalents). The rest used more negative words such as “stingy”, “cheap”, “greedy”, or “penny-pincher” or any of their Hungarian equivalents. 12 respondents stated that Scottish people “like drinking”, “like alcohol”, or “drink a lot”. And, finally, 9 respondents said the Scottish “hate the English” or feel superior to them.

From these data, the following conclusions can be made on the basis of respondents’ ideas about Scotland. Scottish people are stingy, they are proud of their heritage, the most

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1 Authorial note: throughout the paper, results of a questionnaire are quoted, which do not reflect the author’s ideas when they speak about ‘bad English’ or ‘terrible accent’. The author, as a linguist, does not share the view that any dialect is ‘terrible’, i.e. worse than Standard English.

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interesting item of which is the kilt, followed by the bagpipe and whisky. Scottish people speak bad English and swear a lot. They like drinking alcohol. They live in a beautiful country, where the weather is unfriendly. Many Scottish people hate the English and have red hair.

To get a glimpse of what an actual response looked like, some instances have been singled out and, if necessary, translated into English. One response, which reveals a sound knowledge of the country, says “Nagyon nyugodtak, sokat isznak, minden jeles alkalommal ott van a duda, a férfiak hordják a jellegzetes ‘szoknyájukat’, nagyon szép az ország” [Scottish people are very calm, they drink a lot, they play the bagpipe at special occasions, men wear their typical “Scottish skirt”, the country is beautiful]. Another response gives a list of features: “Spórolós nép; Szoknyás férfiak; Skótduda; Szellemjárta kastélyok; Érthetetlen kiejtés; Mindenkit Mc-valakinek hívnak” [An economical nation; men in skirts; bagpipe; haunted castles; incomprehensible dialect; all the family names go McSomebody]. Another response was more general (and ironic): “Fukar nép, sok whiskyt isznak és minden férfi kockás szoknyát viselve dudázik” [A stingy nation, they drink a lot of whisky, and all the men play the bagpipe wearing a tartan skirt]. Two more responses are quoted without any change as they were written in English: “Everyone likes haggis, drinks whiskey, wears kilts and plays the bagpipes”.


Scotland: Standard stereotypes

During the research period before the administration of the survey, a lot of sources (see Appendix) were analysed, and, from the stereotypes available, a pool was set up. This pool consisted of the most frequently mentioned 11 stereotypes. These were the following, all related to Scottish people or to Scotland:

1. they hate the English
2. they are very patriotic
3. they have a picturesque country
4. they have a terrible accent
5. they eat haggis (and it is awful)
6. they drink a lot
7. they listen to bagpipe music
8. they are obsessed with clans
9. they have red hair
10. they are stingy
11. men wear kilts

Graph 1 shows the results of the dual choice survey.
In the dual choice part of the survey, respondents had to indicate whether they had heard about the stereotypes mentioned or had not. It is interesting to see the correspondences with the free-answer survey. Here, the most prominent features are the kilt, the beauty of the country, and the supposedly terrible accent. These are followed by the bagpipe, stinginess, drinking, red hair, patriotism, and hating the English. The two least “heard-about” features were eating Haggis and Scottish people’s obsession with clans. This latter had never been mentioned in the free response part of the survey.

Some respondents commented on the list, adding valuable insights for the researcher. One respondent pointed out the truth concerning all stereotypes: “Most of these are actually not true”. A respondent confirmed that “some are facts: picturesque countryside, horrible pronunciation.” Another added: “I met many of these stereotypes, but I didn’t take them seriously. I saw stinginess as fiction upheld by Hungarian jokes. I know about the kilt and the bagpipe as traditional elements of Scottish culture. I do not see these as stereotypes.” Many of these remarks are true. Many cultural items are globally associated with Scottish culture, so they may not be defined as stereotypes at all.

**Ireland: Free answers**

Stereotypes concerning Ireland centre around a few main topics, similarly to Scotland. During the research stage, 9 stereotypes were extracted from various sources (see Appendix). The first part of the survey asked respondents to provide their own answers. The original question was “Milyen sztereótipiákat ismer az írekkel / Írországgal kapcsolatosan?” [What stereotypes do you know concerning Irish people / Ireland?]. A quick analysis of the responses suggests drawing up the following categories, surprisingly similar to the ones about Scotland:

a) bodily appearance
b) inner characteristic features
c) tangible heritage (whisky, pubs, music, dances, St Patrick, fairies etc.)
d) the country and its natural beauties
e) Catholicism
f) alcohol
g) hating the English
h) food (potato)

Table 2 shows how many times elements of each category were mentioned by respondents.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Number of mentions</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a) bodily appearance</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b) inner characteristic features</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c) tangible heritage (St Patrick,</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>music, dance, pubs, fairies, whiskey,</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guinness, shamrock, green colour)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d) the country and its natural</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>beauties</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e) Catholicism</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f) alcohol</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>63%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>g) hate the English</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>h) food</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Within the category of bodily appearance, 14 respondents out of 95 said “Irish people have red hair” (and freckles).

Within the category of inner characteristic features, the 33 responses can be broken down as follows: “Irish people are aggressive / love fighting” (10), “they are friendly and cheerful” (10), “they are patriotic” (4), “they speak bad English” (3), “they have a propensity for extremities” (3), and, finally, they are “lazy”, they “respect their traditions”, and they are “family-loving” (1 mention each).

Within the category of tangible heritage, nine cultural items came up in several forms. St Patrick has the most mentions (6), then Irish music (5), belief in fairies (4), whiskey (4), the green colour (3), and, finally, pubs, the shamrock, and tap dancing all have two (2). Compared to Scotland, a greater variety of cultural items is known by the population surveyed.

Within the category of the country and its natural beauties, there were four mentions of “Emerald Island” and two mentions of “rain” or “bad weather”.

The last four categories consist of stereotypes that are mentioned very frequently: religion (Catholicism), alcohol consumption, hate of the English, and love of potatoes. 13 respondents mentioned “religion” or “Catholicism” as important. 66 respondents stated that Irish people “like drinking”, “like alcohol”, or “drink a lot”. 8 respondents said the Irish “hate the English” and two added they want to “break away” from England. And, finally, 11 respondents mentioned food in some way: eight of them wrote the Irish love potatoes, and three mentioned sheep / lamb in some way.

From this data, the following conclusions can be made on the basis of respondents’ ideas about Ireland. *Irish people drink a lot of alcohol, they love fighting and are friendly at the same time, they are proud of their heritage, the most interesting item of which is St Patrick, followed by Irish music, fairies, and whisky. Irish people are very religious. Irish
people are patriotic, live in a beautiful country, many of them hate the English, love potatoes, and many have red hair.

To get a glimpse of what an actual response looked like, some instances have been singled out and, if necessary, translated into English. One respondent wrote “Szélsőségesen vallásosak (katolikusok), iszákosok” [extremely religious (catholic), drunkards]. Somebody described the Irish as “agresszív függetlenségi harcosok” [aggressive independence fighters]. Another respondent listed positive items: “Irish music — Whiskey — Emerald Island — Cliffs of Mohair”. Most of the comments have a certain duality in them, stressing both negative and positive characteristics. One respondent wrote “sokat isznak, erőszakosak, gyakran verekednek a férfiak, sokszor hivatkoznak a katolikus gyökereikre, szegények, a történelem jobban sújtotta űket, mint más népeket a térségben” [they drink a lot, they are aggressive, men often fight, they often refer to their catholic roots, they are poor, they had more historical traumas than other countries in the region]. A respondent who has some knowledge of the country wrote: “1. They are alcoholic 2. Very dark humour 3. Never EVER happy 4. Hate the English 5. But are generally cool dudes to hang with”. Another knowledgeable respondent summarised the following: “Ír népzene, az ír whiskey és a Guinness hazája. Vörös haj, szeplő, család szerető nép, sok gyerek a családban. Szeretnek mulatni, szórakozni. Szent Patrik napjának ünnepe. Sokan kivándoroltak (pl. USA-ba). Írország: gyönyörű zöld fű (samaradsgzetnek is nevezik)” [the land of Irish music, whiskey and Guinness. Red hair, freckles, family-loving nation, with lots of children in families. They like going out and having fun. St Patrick’s day. Many emigrated (e.g., to the USA), Ireland: beautiful green grass (it is also called Emerald Island)]. A similar response: “Büszkék öseikre és az ősi nyelvükre, szintén szeretik a whiskey. Jó zenéik vannak és hangulatos kocsmai, sokan vörös hajúak és szakállasak” [they are proud of their ancestors and ancient language, they like whiskey. They have good music and attractive pubs, many of them have red hair and beards].

Ireland: Standard stereotypes

During the research period before the administration of the survey, a lot of sources (see Appendix) were analysed, and, from the stereotypes available, a pool was set up. This pool consisted of the most frequently mentioned 9 stereotypes. These were the following, all related to Irish people or to Ireland:

1. they are very friendly
2. they talk a lot
3. they love to fight
4. they love potatoes
5. every woman is called Mary and every man Patrick
6. they all lie
7. they are extremely religious
8. they have red face / hair
9. they are always drunk

Graph 2 shows the results of the dual choice survey.
In the dual choice part of the survey, respondents had to indicate whether they had heard about the stereotypes mentioned or had not. It is interesting to see the correspondences with the free-answer survey. Here, the most prominent stereotypes were red face and hair (with an amazing 88 HEARD answers) and drunkenness (81 HEARD answers). Religion and friendliness are two other prominent stereotypes. All the others were much less frequently marked by the population surveyed, namely “the Irish love potatoes”, they “love to fight”, “Mary and Patrick are very popular names”, and “the Irish talk a lot”. The last item in the list is “Irish people lie”. This stereotype is less known, so it is worth summarising its story. Telling fibs or lies has always been part of Irish culture. This was pronounced officially when former British prime minister Margaret Thatcher told a Labour minister for Northern Ireland that ‘you can’t trust the Irish, they are all liars’. A variation on the idea is that they have the ‘gift for the gab’, so some think the Irish are more inclined than the people of other nations to tell tall tales (Phelan 2017).

Some respondents commented on the list, adding valuable insight for the researcher. Many respondents felt it important to stress that the Irish are a friendly and nice nation. One respondent wrote about the Irish: “outstanding sense of humour, very heartfelt people”. One respondent mentioned a peculiar duality of Irish culture: “besides religion, there is a lively world of tales and superstitions”. Three respondents had a deeper knowledge of the country and were kind enough to share their ideas with the researcher. “Although I lived in Ireland, I did not meet these stereotypes, nor did I experience them.” Another respondent wrote “I didn’t spend time long enough in Ireland to be able to form an opinion. During the one night I spent in a pub, they were friendly with us. Love of potato coming from the potato blight and their freedom fight disguised in a religious cloak might account for these two stereotypes.” Finally, the last remark: “they do love talking, they are friendly, they like drinking — potato is, in fact, a thing of the past now.”

**Conclusion**

No matter what group we belong to — teachers, drummers, police officers, husbands, wives, or shopkeepers — we are always surrounded by stereotypes. They are even more frequently present when intercultural exchanges happen, and it is always true that encountering another culture and respecting rather than denying its differences from our own culture can be an
enriching learning experience. Stereotypes are good points to start from, but it is not all the same whether they mislead us or help us.

The two cultures under scrutiny in the paper, Scottish and Irish, have a lot in common, and this is easy to discover in the stereotypes that came into play during the research. The population surveyed — mainly students of English or people speaking English — knew a lot about both cultures, and — interestingly — by collecting nothing more but all available stereotypes, the characteristic features of both cultures were quite adequately defined.

Both Scotland and Ireland have Celtic origins, but both are English-speaking countries now. Both nations have retained their distinctive features, culture, and traditions, despite all the turmoil of history. The way other peoples see them is present in a number of generalisations, stereotypes, which formed the main subject matter of this paper. The results are by no means surprising, they are mostly what would generally be expected: both nations are seen as cheerful and outgoing, results suggest that both the Scots and the Irish like drinking alcohol, they speak a strange dialect of English, and they both have feelings against the English. That many people have red hair is also a common belief. The differences are also clear: for Scotland, identity is best represented by the kilt and the bagpipe, and for Ireland, by St Patrick and Irish dance, and while Scots are seen as stingy, the Irish are seen as religious. However, no mention of the clans was made in the case of Scotland, and similarly, not many respondents knew about the Irish being “liars”.

Learning about other cultures is always a mind-broadening experience. Doing research on the topic is very illustrative, and the results can be used in everyday language teaching and university level education too. Bringing cultures closer together is what all educators should do. It would be interesting to extend the survey to a large population of Hungarians, not just university students, and see what average people know about English-speaking countries.

Works Cited


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Appendix

Sources of stereotypes about Scotland:
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https://www.thetravel.com/scotland-stereotypes-not-true/
https://www.travelswithakilt.com/scottish-stereotypes/

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https://www.irelandbeforeyoudie.com/10-irish-stereotypes-that-are-actually-true/
https://thebolditalic.com/an-illustrated-guide-to-irish-slurs-186b1caecacd

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