

# Communicative Competence in the Context of Communicative Language Teaching with Emphasis on English in Croatia

---

Skračić, Ivana

Undergraduate thesis / Završni rad

2016

Degree Grantor / Ustanova koja je dodijelila akademski / stručni stupanj: **University of Zadar / Sveučilište u Zadru**

Permanent link / Trajna poveznica: <https://um.nsk.hr/um:nbn:hr:162:668313>

Rights / Prava: [In copyright](#) / [Zaštićeno autorskim pravom.](#)

Download date / Datum preuzimanja: **2025-02-24**



Sveučilište u Zadru  
Universitas Studiorum  
Jadertina | 1396 | 2002 |

Repository / Repozitorij:

[University of Zadar Institutional Repository](#)



zir.nsk.hr



DIGITALNI AKADEMSKI ARHIVI I REPOZITORIJI

Sveučilište u Zadru

Odjel za anglistiku

Preddiplomski sveučilišni studij engleskog jezika i književnosti (dvopredmetni)

**Ivana Skračić**

Communicative Competence in the Context of Communicative  
Language Teaching with Emphasis on English in Croatia

**Završni rad**

Zadar, 2016.

Sveučilište u Zadru

Odjel za anglistiku

Preddiplomski sveučilišni studij engleskog jezika i književnosti (dvopredmetni)

Communicative Competence in the Context of Communicative  
Language Teaching with Emphasis on English in Croatia

Završni rad

Studentica:

Ivana Skračić

Mentor:

doc. dr. sc. Sanja Škifić

Zadar, 2016



## Izjava o akademskoj čestitosti

Ja, **Ivana Skračić**, ovime izjavljujem da je moj **završni** rad pod naslovom *Communicative Competence in the Context of Communicative Language Teaching with Emphasis on English in Croatia* rezultat mojega vlastitog rada, da se temelji na mojim istraživanjima te da se oslanja na izvore i radove navedene u bilješkama i popisu literature. Ni jedan dio mojega rada nije napisan na nedopušten način, odnosno nije prepisan iz necitiranih radova i ne krši bilo čija autorska prava.

Izjavljujem da ni jedan dio ovoga rada nije iskorišten u kojem drugom radu pri bilo kojoj drugoj visokoškolskoj, znanstvenoj, obrazovnoj ili inoj ustanovi.

Sadržaj mojega rada u potpunosti odgovara sadržaju obranjenoga i nakon obrane uređenoga rada.

Zadar, 29. rujan 2016.

## Table of Contents

1. INTRODUCTION	2
2. COMMUNICATIVE COMPETENCE: THEORY AND STRUCTURE	4
2.1. Structure of Communicative Competence	6
2.2. Model of Canale and Swain	7
3. DIFFERENT APPROACHES TO FOREIGN LANGUAGE TEACHING WITH EMPHASIS ON COMMUNICATIVE LANGUAGE TEACHING	9
3.1. Models of Learning	10
3.2. Communicative Language Teaching (CLT)	11
4. HISTORICAL OVERVIEW OF THE POSITION OF THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE IN THE CROATIAN EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM	15
4.1. The Position of the English language in the Croatian Educational System in the Past	15
4.2. English in Present-day Croatian Education System and its Future	16
5. THE POSITION OF THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE IN CROATIA AND THE ENGLISH TEACHING PROCESS EXPLAINED BY CROATIAN ENGLISH TEACHERS-A CASE STUDY	20
5.1. Methodology	20
5.2. The Results	21
6. CONCLUSION	3
Appendix A: Questions for the Interview	41
Works Cited	43

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Our ability to communicate allows us to connect with the world around us. Through the process of communication we establish and maintain relationships, connect with our language community and establish ourselves in society. Keeping all of this in mind, it is not surprising that the way we express ourselves affects the way others perceive us. The process of communication implies so much more than simple production of words. We must be aware of who we are communicating with, where the communication is taking place and what the social context of the situation is. In addition, our utterances must be sensible and understandable. Now imagine all of that, but in a context where a foreign language is used as a tool for mutual understanding. It is quite impressive when a person is able to, correctly and properly, use a language that is not his or her mother tongue.

The idea of a speaker/hearer competence is one that has captured the attention of many minds and has sparked many discussions. Noam Chomsky's definition of competence was met with certain reservations from applied linguists who found a more suitable definition of it in the notion of communicative competence put forward by Dell H. Hymes.

In the second chapter of this thesis Hymes' theory of communicative competence and its structure will be described. When he put forward his theory, Hymes caused a change in the field of language teaching, as well as in the field of foreign language teaching, in the sense that language began to be perceived differently than before. More attention was given to the communicational aspect of it and so communicative language teaching was created. In the third chapter of this paper a short description of the development of the field of foreign language teaching is given and the notion of communicative language teaching is described. The fourth chapter of this thesis deals with the presence of the English language in Croatian educational system and society. A description of how its position and importance has changed over the

years is given and the way it has influenced the Croatian language is explained. The fifth chapter presents results gained from interviews with eight Croatian teachers of English. The teachers were asked to give their opinion about the presence of English in Croatia and to explain the process of teaching it. And finally, in the sixth and final chapter, comment on the entire paper is given and final thoughts are presented.

## 2. COMMUNICATIVE COMPETENCE: THEORY AND STRUCTURE

In this chapter the theory of communicative competence put forward by Dell Hymes will be described. Also, the theory's structure will be explained.

Any form of language production, spoken or written, is a creative process. But, one must wonder, what is it that allows us to create meaningful language patterns, regardless of their form? According to Noam Chomsky, it is generative grammar, or, an unconsciously internalised set of rules that can be used by a speaker of a language in order to create meaningful language patterns (1972: 36). These internalised rules make up the language competence of a speaker/hearer, so, it can be defined as the knowledge a speaker/hearer possesses about his or her native language (ibid: 36). This abstract knowledge manifests itself through actual language use or, language performance (61). While exploring the notion of language competence, Chomsky placed a lot of attention on an ideal representative of a language community (61). This means that his main focus was placed on an abstract speaker/hearer who is a member of a homogenous language community, a person who possesses perfect knowledge of his or her language and is never distracted, caught off guard, at a loss for words, confused, or in any way susceptible to what is commonly known as slips of the tongue.

According to Vesna Bagarić Medve, there were two reasons why many proponents of applied linguistics expressed their concern and dissatisfaction with Chomsky's definition of competence. The first reason was an overidealised speaker and the second reason was his narrow view of competence as pure language, or, grammar knowledge (4). The largest problem with the idea of an ideal speaker is the fact that he or she simply does not exist in real communication processes. Also, viewing competence as pure grammar knowledge takes elements such as: the social context, cultural background, surroundings in which the communication is taking place, out of the focus while exploring communication. Dell H.



Hymes stated that, in order to understand the way members of a certain language community communicate, it is not enough to look at the grammar of their language patterns, but rather, one must look at a myriad of elements some of which are: social background, religion, culture, social structure of their community and so on (16). According to him, ethnography and communication are two elements that determine the position of language in society and culture. Taking all of this in consideration enabled Hymes to put forward an alternative definition of language competence, and he entitled it communicative competence.

Hymes envisioned his communicative competence as comprised of two parts: competence for grammar and competence for use (279). He equated competence for grammar with Chomsky's language competence and to it he added the competence for use which, in itself, implies the ability of a speaker of a language to use grammatically correct language patterns appropriate for each and every context in which communication can occur. He recognised that there are differences in knowledge that the members of a certain language community possess about their language (282). This implied that a language community cannot be homogenous, but rather, that the language community is heterogenous. Keeping this in mind, it is easy to conclude that the main focus of language study shifted from an abstract ideal speaker towards a real speaker. Furthermore, competence was no longer viewed as pure grammar knowledge, but rather, as a broader, more complex notion that included both grammar knowledge and the ability of a person to use language appropriately.

In its base, communicative competence contains four questions that must be answered in order to be able to explore and understand the actual language use (268), and they are:

1. Whether something is formally possible or if it is in accordance with the grammar rules of a language (284).
2. Whether something is feasible or, if it is sensible (285).

3. Whether something is appropriate or whether it fits into the context in which it is being used (286).
4. Whether something is done or whether a grammatically correct, frisable and appropriate language form is actually used (286).

A member of a language community possesses the knowledge necessary to answer all four questions and that knowledge allows him or her to take part in communication with the other members of the community, build and maintain relationships and establish him or herself in society. It is important to note that the communicative competence of a person is susceptible to change (286). It can either develop or deteriorate depending on the circumstances in which a person lives.

### **2.1. Structure of Communicative Competence**

The next logical step in the development of the theory of communicative competence was to define its structure. Bagarić Medve says that many applied linguists wanted to explore and explain the relationship between two components that make up communicative competence: knowledge and ability; their goal was to define the structure of this relationship and present the models that would serve as the relationship's base (ibid: 55). Among many different suggested models, hypothesis and theories one model stood out as the one most widely accepted.

, Bagarić and Mihaljević Djigunović state that there are three models of communicative competence mentioned as the base for the majority of the contemporary studies and they are: model of Canale and Swain, model of Bachman and Palmer and the description of components of communicative language competence in the Common European Framework (CEF) (2007: 97). Out of the three models mentioned, the model of Canale and Swain is the one that is most

used and most referred to by the communicative competence researches (ibid: 98). In the following text the mentioned model will be described.

#### **a. Model of Canale and Swain**

In the early eighties, Canale and Swain presented a model that contained three major components or “fields of knowledge and skills” and they are: grammatical, sociolinguistic and strategic competence (97). Grammatical competence is oriented towards acquiring and controlling verbal and non-verbal linguistic code “which includes vocabulary knowledge, as well as, knowledge of morphological, syntactic, semantic, phonetic and orthographic rules” (ibid: 97). Possession of this kind of knowledge would enable a person to produce and understand correct language patterns, and also to be able to recognise those which are not. Sociolinguistic competence, in this model, refers to the knowledge of a speaker that allows him or her to use language appropriately and understand the meaning of utterances depending on different social and sociolinguistic situations (ibid: 97). This implies that the knowledge a speaker has allows him or her to automatically know which language patterns are appropriate in different social situations. Also, if the same language pattern appears in more than one social surrounding, a speaker will always be able to understand its meaning. Strategic competence refers to the knowledge of a speaker that allows him or her to “compensate for breakdowns in communication due to insufficient competence in one or more components of communicative competence” (ibid: 97). To put it simply, even if a speaker is unable to express himself or herself correctly or appropriately, he or she will always be able to rely on one of the compensatory strategies to get the message across. According to Bagarić and Mihaljević Djigunović, these strategies are: “paraphrase, circumlocution, repetition, reluctance, avoidance of words, structures or themes, guessing, changes of register and style, modifications of messages...” (ibid: 98). Strategies of this kind allow a speaker to use the knowledge he or she does have, in an attempt to communicate to the best of his or her abilities. What makes this

competence differ from all the others is the fact it includes psychological factors such as confidence or willingness to take risks in communication (ibid: 98). In 1983 and 1984, Canale further developed this model by adding to it a fourth component which he called discourse competence (ibid: 97). This component includes rules that govern the process of combining forms and meanings in order to produce meaningful spoken or written text (ibid. 97). The knowledge comprised in this component implies two things: that, although grammatically correct language patterns, do not always make a meaningful whole when put together, and that a speaker is able to combine language patterns to create meaningful messages.

### **3. DIFFERENT APPROACHES TO FOREIGN LANGUAGE TEACHING WITH EMPHASIS ON COMMUNICATIVE LANGUAGE TEACHING**

This chapter is comprised of two parts. In the first part the field of foreign language teaching and different approaches to it are described. In the second part of the chapter the notion of communicative language teaching (CLT) is presented and described.

As Mihaljević Djigunović says, foreign language teaching, in its past, was governed by influences from many different disciplines; at the beginning of the field's development influence from the field of linguistics was the most felt, followed by the influences from psychology and, further up the timeline, sociology and interdisciplinary fields of sociolinguistics and psycholinguistics (2009: 51). What one could conclude when looking at how the fields that influenced foreign language teaching changed is that the experts realised there is more to language than knowing the rules that govern it and its vocabulary.

Keeping in mind that the perception of language itself and the ways it is learned, memorised and used were under constant debate, it is not surprising that several approaches and methods to language teaching were developed. The authors Richards and Rodgers define the approach as a collection of assumptions about language and the way it is learned; determined by the approach is the method of teaching (1986; 15). To put it in simpler terms, an approach defines the view in which language is perceived and, accordingly, prescribes the appropriate method for language teaching. The same authors mention three approaches as the most important ones and they will be described in the following text.

The first one is the *structural approach* that views language as a system comprised of units and its ultimate goal is for the learner to master all of them. The second approach is the *functional* and it sees language as a primary tool for communication and its goal is to teach a pupil how to communicate properly. And finally, the third approach is *interactional*. It views language as a means for creating, establishing and maintaining social relationships and its goal is to ensure that the learner obtains enough knowledge to be able to take part in social

interactions (ibid: 17). Even though it is evident that the ultimate goal of the approach in use determines whether the knowledge a pupil acquires will be oriented more towards the communicative dimension or the structure and rules that govern the language he or she has chosen to learn, their underlying goal is the same: to allow a pupil to learn. Learning is a process that occurs on more levels than just one and it has more kinds than one, when it comes to foreign language learning there are two models of learning and they will be presented in the next sub-chapter.

### **3.1. Models of Learning**

According to William Littlewood, a foreign language can be either learnt or acquired, the biggest difference being that learning is a conscious process while acquiring is subconscious (1984: 3). What this means is that a learner can acquire knowledge by consciously learning from a textbook, as well as, while he or she is watching TV, listening to music, reading books or exploring different content in the foreign language he or she has chosen. The same author distinguishes between two models of learning: second language learning as creative construction (ibid: 69) and foreign language learning as a form of skill learning (ibid: 74). The biggest difference between the two lies in the way obtained language knowledge is perceived. In the first model language knowledge is obtained when a learner is exposed to a language, he or she internalises the experience and creates mental representations of the language system, the rules that govern it, its vocabulary and so on (ibid: 69). The second model includes two aspects: in the cognitive aspect, based on the grammar rules, vocabulary and social conventions associated with a language, plans for communication are created internally, and reproduced, in the behavioral aspect, as a performance skill (ibid: 74). The first model emphasises creativity and the freedom to interpret, while in the second model, more emphasis is put on learning how to communicate appropriately, depending on the situation.

### **3.2. Communicative Language Teaching (CLT)**

According to Sandra J. Sauvignon, when modern languages began to be taught in schools, the way in which they were presented to pupils was heavily influenced by the model of teaching classical languages: Latin and Greek (2007: 208). What this means is that, on one hand, emphasis was put on translations, memorisation of vocabulary and verb conjugation and, on the other hand, very little attention was given to spoken language (ibid: 208). To put it simply, pupils were provided with grammar rules of a language, they were taught how to translate different materials and were expected to learn and be able to recite lists of words and phrases. Teaching them how to participate in communication by using the language they are learning was neglected. When modern languages began to be taught at universities, their programs were based on philology, so that was another reason why the communicational dimension of a language was neglected (ibid: 208). Although there were many discussions and attempts to modernise the field of foreign language teaching, during the 20<sup>th</sup> century it mostly remained unchanged (ibid: 208).

Today, in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, following a myriad of discussions, theories and suggestions put forward by many experts from different fields of science, the field of foreign language teaching is slowly beginning to change.

Rooted in the functional approach to foreign language teaching described in the previous text, communicative language teaching (CLT) can be seen as a departure from traditional approaches to foreign language teaching. According to Richards and Rodgers, in the theoretical basis of CLT language is viewed as: a means to express meaning, a tool that allows one to communicate and participate in society, communicative and functional uses of language can be used to define its structure and, finally, language is made up of more than just its grammatical and structural dimensions (ibid: 71). Looking at this theoretical base one can

easily see that language is no longer perceived as a set of rules or a list of words and phrases that must be learnt, but rather, as a more complex system that, along with grammar and rules that define its structure, contains a communicative and an interactional dimension.

David Nunan lists five features that describe the use of CLT in a foreign language teaching classroom, and they are as follows (1991; 279):

1. “An emphasis on learning to communicate through interaction in the target language.”
2. “The introduction of authentic texts in the learning situation.”
3. “The provision of opportunities for learners to focus not only on language, but also on the learning process.”
4. “An enhancement of the learner’s own personal experiences as important contributing elements to classroom learning.”
5. “An attempt to link classroom language learning with language activation outside the classroom.”

When looking at these five features one could conclude that the ultimate goal of using CLT in a foreign language teaching classroom is to create an environment that motivates and allows a pupil as well as a teacher to develop their communicative competence through expression in the language that is being learnt. Also, pupils are introduced not just to the language but the culture connected to it as well, and this allows them to better understand what it is they are actually learning. Furthermore, creating an atmosphere where a pupil is encouraged to explore, seek information, ask questions, debate and express opinions is crucial in ensuring that, after the teaching process is over, he or she will be able to communicate in the target language appropriately and with ease. To put it in the simplest possible words, the needs of the pupil are in the centre of attention.



Keeping the needs of pupils in mind, Savignon distinguishes between five components that make up a communicative curriculum (2003: 57-59), and they are:

1. *Language Arts* is the first component and it includes phonology, morphology and syntax. Formal English is its main concern and it includes many language exercises that can be found in the programs of native language teaching.
2. *Language for a Purpose* is the second component and it implies the need to use the language that is being taught. In a classroom where foreign language is being taught, learners should use it to interpret, express and negotiate meaning.
3. *My Language is Me: Personal English Language Use* is the third component and it emphasises that learners should be respected when they express themselves on a language that is not their native. Also, it should be accepted that there are many varieties of the English language and that there is more than one variety that can be used in communication.
4. *You Be... I'll Be... Theatre Arts* is the fourth component and it implies that a learner should be aware that not every form of expression is acceptable in every situation. He or she must learn to adopt and express him or herself depending on the social context. In this component the learner is seen as a metaphorical actor whose stage depends on the social context.
5. *Beyond the Classroom* is the final component that makes up a communicative curriculum and it implies the need to ensure that a learner is able to use the foreign language outside the classroom.

As mentioned in the description of the five CLT features and seen when looking closely at the five components of a communicative curriculum, CLT does not have a rigid methodology or a list of prescribed methods and techniques. It relies, or rather, depends on a teacher's ability and enthusiasm. Unfortunately, not all teachers will be able to handle the freedom CLT allows,

but rather, they will lose themselves in the ambiguity. Solid foundations, constant work on improving one's teaching abilities and never forgetting that to teach someone is a privilege, are elements that insure a good teacher.

#### **4. HISTORICAL OVERVIEW OF THE POSITION OF THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE IN THE CROATIAN EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM**

This chapter deals with the position English held in the Croatian educational system in its past and the position it holds today. Also, the chapter offers descriptions of the importance

and position the English language holds in Croatian society today and the way it influences the Croatian language, as well as, everyday communication.

#### **4.1. The Position of the English Language in the Croatian Educational System in the Past**

According to Mirjana Vilke, the position of English in Croatia at the end of the nineteenth century was highly influenced by the politics of the time (2007: 17). It could be said that it struggled to establish its importance. As the area that is Croatia today was under the rule of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, German and Hungarian, along with Latin, were present and spoken in all spheres of society (ibid: 17). After the decay of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, the German language preserved its importance, especially in the north of Croatia, while Hungarian lost all of its importance and remained spoken only among the Hungarian minority (ibid: 18).

In the 20<sup>th</sup> century, before 1945, English was rarely taught in schools across Croatia, Vilke points out two names as an example of visionary teachers who did teach it in their schools before it was widely popular and they are Natalija Wickerhauser who was employed at the Women's High School in Zagreb and Aleksandar Lochmer who worked at the Nautical School in Bakar (ibid: 18). After the end of World War II, for the first time, Croatian pupils were able to choose between several foreign languages: Russian, French, English or German and a lot of them choose English (ibid: 19). The growing popularity of English implied the need for professionals with great knowledge of the language able to transfer their knowledge to pupils. Rudolf Filipović was given the task of creating a national English course program (ibid: 19). Despite the communist government and the Iron Curtain, he managed to create a program based on Bloomfield's structuralism by collaborating with the Americans and young Croatian scholars of English (ibid: 19). This new program was developed alongside the traditional one

and caused it to change, the importance of learning how to communicate was equated with the importance of grammar and literature, this also influenced the teaching of other foreign languages and this atmosphere of foreign language teaching revolution continued from the fifties, through sixties, all the way up to the seventies (ibid: 19). If one takes into consideration the tense relationship between world's forces of the East and the West at the time, Filipović's success is considerable, he managed to navigate through the tension quite successfully in the name of education. The eighties and the nineties of the previous century were dedicated to and characterised by many research studies aimed to discover the processes that govern both foreign language teaching and learning (ibid: 20). All the research done in that period was done in the name of better understanding the process of foreign language teaching and learning as well, all in order to ensure that well trained experts provide the best possible foreign language education to the pupils.

#### **4.2.English in Present-day Croatian Education System and its Future**

Jelena Mihaljević Djigunović and Renata Geld state that, in Croatia, English is considered to be a foreign language that is slowly losing its foreignness (2003: 337). What this means is that English is becoming more and more present in the Croatian culture, knowing it is becoming almost a necessity and not being able to speak, or at least understand it, is considered a serious disadvantage.

The English language is an obligatory subject in Croatian schools and the pupils become acquainted with it in the first grade of primary school, some even earlier, on the kinder garden level. Exposure to the English language is even more enhanced by the media, different TV shows, movies, series, books, comic books and an abundance of Internet content that is easily accessible. By exploring different materials and content in English, children or pupils are able to expand their vocabulary, they can hear the spoken language and become acquainted

with different varieties of English. This is especially important if we consider the fact that words from the English language have made their way into almost every sphere of communication. They are present in business, economy, technology, tourism and not being able to understand them has a serious crippling effect. Their presence can even be seen in everyday communication, especially among younger generations who are more exposed to the media. Keeping in mind the position and importance of English in today's world, some welcome this trend and some take offence claiming that native languages are suffering and losing their importance to English; Croatian is no exception.

Language is a living thing therefore, transfer of words from one language to another is a common phenomenon. Nives Opačić takes issue not with Anglicism, which are “words of English origin that have been domesticated according to the rules of the Croatian language” (2012: 5), but with the use of words or entire phrases that are taken from English and used in communication in their original form (ibid: 5). This means that, in some instances, Croats use English words or phrases without considering their Croatian equivalents. These are some of the examples she used to illustrate this phenomenon.

1. *A room with a view*, in Croatian *soba s pogledom*, represents nothing more than a room with a pretty view, but according to Opačić, for some reason, Croatian phrase was not good enough for a journalist who wrote an article for a Croatian news paper and it is not good enough for the majority of the apartment owners on the coast of the Adriatic sea (ibid: 9-10).
2. *Beauty centar* represents a case in which one is presented with a combinations of an original English form (beauty) and an Anglicism that has been orthographically and morphologically adjusted (centar) (ibid: 37). If one was to keep in mind that there are Croatian expressions such as *kozmetički salon*, *centar za uljepšavanje ili*

*ljepotu*, all of which mean exactly the same as beauty center, it becomes clear that there is no need to import the word *beauty* (ibid: 37).

3. *Chat* and *hangout* are English words commonly used by Croatian youth, especially those active on the internet, equivalents for chat are: *brbljati*, *razgovarati*, *čavrljati* and the same for hangout is: *sastajalište*, *okupljalište* and it usually represents a place outside, away from the screen of a computer (ibid: 63).
4. *Fancy* is a word that, when used by Croats can have several meanings: firstly, it can represent something of quality and luxurious and secondly, it can represent someone stuck up, conceited, and as in the previous cases there are suitable Croatian words to replace it in both meanings and they are: *kvalitetan*, *luksuzan* and *umišljen*, *uobražen* (ibid: 94).
5. Life coach, business coach, story-telling coach, executive coach and a multitude of other coaches represent a group of people whose occupation, according to the majority of Croats, sounds better not translated to Croatian even though there is nothing wrong with the expressions such as: *savjetnik za životni stil*, *poslovni savjetnik*, *pripovjedač*, *glavni trener* (ibid: 109-110).

The reason why the above examples were mentioned is to show just how little thought Croats put into their expression and how quick they are to replace native, Croatian words and phrases with foreign ones. The titles and texts mentioned would lose nothing if, in place of English words and phrases, Croatian equivalents had been used. Quite the contrary, they would be much more easily understood by Croats who are not very proficient in English. It is safe to say that English has become very important in Croatia, especially in the culture and communication of the younger members of society whose first contact with English, as mentioned before, occurs as soon as they start primary school or, in some cases, even earlier. In order to find out what people whose job is to teach English to Croatian pupils, think about

the importance and the position of the language they teach in Croatian society and, in order to gain an insight in to how the process of teaching works, interviews were conducted with 8 Croatian English teachers. In the following chapter the process of conducting the interviews and the interpretation of the collected data is given.

## **5. THE POSITION OF THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE IN CROATIA AND THE ENGLISH TEACHING PROCESS EXPLAINED BY CROATIAN ENGLISH TEACHERS-A CASE STUDY**

The fifth chapter of this paper provides the results of a case study whose two main goals were, firstly, to explore the opinions of 8 Croatian English teachers regarding the importance

and position of the English language in the Croatian society and, secondly, to provide an insight into the English teaching process.

The English language has become omnipresent in Croatia. It means that its presence can be noticed in every segment of the Croatian society. The use of English words and phrases, instead of their Croatian equivalents, in everyday communication and the media has become a daily occurrence. The explanation of this ongoing process may be found in the assumption that English is gradually losing its foreignness and the fact that its influence over Croatian is undeniable. Croatian children are surrounded with English from the earliest stages of their lives via cartoons, children's songs, different TV programs and, as soon as they start school, English becomes one of their obligatory subjects. This is where the teachers of the English language come in, they have the task of teaching pupils how to use English properly, a language that is, despite everything, still a foreign one. The following pages will present opinions and views of 8 Croatian teachers of the English language regarding the position of English today and the very process of teaching that takes place in a classroom.

### **5.1. Methodology**

There are two main aims of this thesis. Firstly, to find out, through interviews, how Croatian teachers of English view the position and importance of the language they teach in the Croatian society, and, secondly, to identify the most important elements that the actual teaching process consists of. 8 interviews were conducted in order to get as detailed and as accurate presentation. The Croatian teachers of English were asked to answer eighteen questions five of which concerned the importance and position of English in Croatian society, while the remaining thirteen questions concerned the English teaching process. The list of questions can be seen in the appendix A on page 40.



Interviews were conducted with eight English teachers who are all employed in educational institutions in Šibensko-kninska county. The group consists of 1 male teacher and 7 female teachers. 5 of them are employed in primary schools, 2 in high schools and one at a vocational university. Out of 5 primary school teachers, 2 work in the Murterski Škoji Primary School in Murter, 1 teacher works in the Juraj Šižgorić Primary School in Šibenik, 1 teacher works in the Čista Velika Primary School in Čista Velika and the fifth primary school teacher was not willing to disclose the name of the school she is employed in, but simply said it is located in Šibenik. 2 high school teachers are employed in: Antun Vrančić Gymnasium and School of Tourism and Hospitality Šibenik, both schools are located in Šibenik. The eighth teacher is employed at the Vocational University of Šibenik. Among the eight, the most experienced teacher has 25 years of work experience, while the least experienced teacher has 5 years. The most mature teacher is 55 years of age, and the youngest is 29. All eight teachers were asked to answer a series of 18 questions mentioned before and in the further text they will be referred to as Interviewee, Interviewee 1 to 5 refer to the 5 primary school teachers, Interviewee 6 and 7 refer to the two high school teachers, and finally, Interviewee 8 refers to the vocational university teacher. It is important to add that the interviews have been translated from Croatian to English by the author of this thesis paper.

## **5.2. The Results**

After conducting all eight interviews, gathered answers were analysed and compared. The results of the analysis are presented in the following text.

When it comes to the importance and the position of English in Croatia, all eight teachers agree that English is very important and that it holds a distinguished position in the Croatian society. Its importance is especially notable in areas such as business, economy, tourism and so on. It is easy to conclude that all teachers recognise English as a global language

and an absolute necessity in today's world. Some of them expressed concern that such approach can lead to an overuse of English in everyday life, while, at the same time, the Croatian language becomes neglected.

- "English language in Croatia is undoubtedly very important, especially since we entered the European Union. Today, English is one of the crucial parts of education of a young person. Knowledge of English certainly allows him or her to advance more easily in his or her development." (Interviewee 1)
- "The English language has a highly prominent role and importance in Croatia. The openness of borders, encouragement of the multilingualism culture and the development and availability of modern technologies have led English to become the global language of today. In the last few years, this influence has become very present in Croatia so that knowledge of the English language has become a necessity." (Interviewee 3)

The ever-growing influence of English on the Croatian language is seen as both positive and a negative trend. Stressed as positive is the fact that omnipresence of English allows it to be learnt with ease, it makes terms connected with technology and computers understandable and it enables a person to take part in communication with members of different nations. On the other hand, there are negative effects such as: endangerment of the sovereignty of the standardized Croatian, loss of interest for the old Croatian language and its exploration, loss of traditional words, old Croatian literature becomes uninteresting and hard to read for the "modern" reader. These concerns can be found in the following quotes:

- "It is a negative trend. Languages affect each other and this is natural and normal, but, there should be some "sanctities" (public media, national TV) that should use the official language of their country. I am afraid that our standardized Croatian language

is crumbling and that anything and everything is mixing with its crumbs.” (Interviewee 2)

- “I believe it to be both a negative and a positive trend. Any language is a living thing and throughout history, words have been transferred from one language to another. Through foreign words one can learn about a part of another’s culture, expand one’s own knowledge and education, as well as build attitudes. What can be considered negative is: neglecting one’s native language and losing interest when it comes to learning about it and its history, works of literature in Croatian become uninteresting and obsolete.” (Interviewee 4)
- “This influence is more a negative than a positive trend because it impoverishes our native language. We often accept and use English words without thinking, we ignore completely appropriate Croatian equivalents.” (Interviewee 7)

Following the expressed concerns for the Croatian language, it was deemed that English words are too present in everyday communication of Croats. This is particularly obvious in the media and in the communication of young people.

- “English is definitely too present in everyday communication. Words such as *selebriti* (celebrity) or *stejd* (stage) are being used daily by different magazines and are present in TV programs. I believe this is completely unnecessary because Croatian has perfectly suitable alternatives to these terms. Also, all terms related to computers, music and similar phenomena are being used daily without even a thought for Croatian versions.” (Interviewee 4)
- “Yes, words and constructions are being unnecessarily translated so their use is sometimes grotesque.” (Interviewee 6)
- “In some aspects, yes. Especially among young people.” (Interviewee 8)

Through the process of learning English, the knowledge of Croatian can be affected in a mostly positive manner. Similarities and differences between the two languages are explored, connections and comparisons are made, Croatian words are used to explain or translate English ones and vice versa. In this kind of process, learning a foreign language has a positive effect on the knowledge of a native one but, as it can be seen in the quotes below, some negative effects are possible.

- “Communication is often a strange mix of Croatian and English words, especially among younger people. In this situation the native language (Croatian) is being ignored, the interlocutors do not even try to develop their Croatian vocabulary, they find it simpler and easier to express themselves by using English words. As mentioned before, this also affects classical literature works in Croatian. The language in which they are written has become outdated and hard to understand for the “modern” reader. Furthermore, in everyday communication the use of words such as: *konzekvenca* (consequence), *daunlodati* (to download), *lajkati* (to like) and so on, has become wide and more acceptable than the use of their Croatian equivalents.” (Interviewee 4)
- “Of course learning a foreign language affects the knowledge of a native language, but this depends on the circumstances in which a foreign language is being learnt. If it is learnt in school, it allows for a simultaneous growth of knowledge of both, a native and a foreign language, pupils are able to compare the two. However, if there is no correlation between the two or if more emphasis is put on learning a foreign language, there is a risk that the knowledge of a native language will be poor, or that it could even be forgotten.” (Interviewee 7)

There are many ways in which a person can learn a foreign language. Arguably, the most traditional one is in a classroom. All eight teachers agree that basics are learnt in the

classroom, but, if a pupil has a natural affinity towards foreign language learning, he or she will learn a lot of vocabulary outside the classroom. The teacher provides a frame that can be deepened and widened if a pupil shows enough interest.

- “Outside the classroom pupils are immersed in their own interests and accordingly acquire phrases, words and sentence constructions related to whatever area they are exploring. More often than not, this is slang, abbreviations or constructions such as: *ain't got, gonna* and similar. Classes are what helps pupils differentiate between a standardized language and the informal variety spoken on the street. So in conclusion, I believe that, despite everything, pupils still receive more knowledge about language, the people who speak it and the rules that govern it, in a classroom.“ (Interviewee 4)
- “This is a question that could potentially be turned into a full-scale scientific research because the answer depends on so many, many factors. It is without a doubt that, outside a classroom, students are surrounded with easily available contents in English that are interesting to them. And it is safe to say that they do learn a lot about their interests, whatever they may be, by browsing the Internet, listening to music, watching TV or reading books, magazines and so on. But during this process there is a real possibility that they might learn “bad” English, and this is where the school comes in in the role of a corrector. From my experience I could say that the content presented to students in class is not motivating enough but it does serve a purpose. Materials that are visually interesting and contain current and engaging information are sure to arouse a students’ interest and make his or her experience in the classroom memorable.“ (Interviewee 6)

This brings us to the process of teaching the English language.

In the interview conducted with one of the high school teachers (Interviewee 6), it was pointed out that there is no “typical” class of English, but when looking at the remaining answers, it can be concluded that every class of the English language has three parts: an introduction, a main part and a conclusion. In the introductory part teachers check homework and present a new topic or content. In the main part of the class, new content is processed and related exercises are solved. In the conclusion of the class, new content is recapitulated and, if there is time, games are played. At the university level the situation is similar, the biggest difference is: putting more emphasis on self-expression. Homework, assigned by the teacher, is considered to be an extremely important element of learning a foreign language. Evidence for this can be found in the following quotes.

- “I begin with checking the homework followed by presentation and explanation of new content after which I work with the pupils using the questions-answer method, workbooks, games and so on. I finish the class by assigning homework.”  
(Interviewee 2)
- “I usually begin the introductory part of a class with a short informal conversation with the pupils, followed by the checking of the homework. In order to present the theme of a class and to engage the pupils I use the association game or a similar guessing game. If we (pupils and I) are dealing with a new text usually, before listening to and reading it for the first time, we talk about what it could be about considering its title and the theme at hand. After the first listening or reading (in case there is no listening material) I check if the pupils have understood what they have just heard or read. I introduce new words and phrases by using flash cards or presentations. Alongside this, I use paraphrasing. New words are written on the blackboard and what I try to achieve with this is to motivate the pupils to come up with the meaning of the word or phrase by themselves using the context before I

translate it for them. What follows is reading and working on the text. While processing the text, considering the content, I use individual as well as pair or group work. Through conversation, answering the questions and written exercises new content and structures are being acquired and exercised. In the final part of the class, I assign the homework and repeat what we have learnt in that particular class. Depending on the time remaining, I conclude the class with short quizzes or different games.” (Interviewee 3)

- “When we (pupils and I) are processing new content, I prefer to start the class by using activities that engage them all, such as: brainstorming, short videos, different vocabulary games, memory games, quizzes and so on (depends which grade I am teaching). The continuation of the class brings explanation of new content. During explanation I try to properly dose the use of English keeping in mind the age of pupils I am teaching in that particular moment. To ensure everyone understands the content at hand I usually translate the explanation in Croatian, avoiding monologues I use questions to nudge pupils to reach a conclusion on their own. Activities at the end of a class depend on the time remaining, but they are always tasks that help me determine the extent to which students have understood the processed content. When it comes to recapitulation we often work in pairs or groups, older pupils (5-8 grade) have debates, projects that they subsequently present, different workshops. Younger pupils (1-4 grade) prefer games (quizzes, memory, guessing games, songs with a plot...) that allow them to have fun and learn with ease.” (Interviewee 5)
- “We process different content using texts, different videos, usually from Youtube, I find that this works great as a starting point for a discussion. Presentations are something I use rarely, but sometimes, I ask my students to make them.” (Interviewee 8)

Teaching pupils how to communicate by using the English language is the most important task a teacher has.

- “I find that developing confidence of a pupil is the most important, he or she should be encouraged to produce speech. Also, enabling them to develop basic language competence will allow them to participate in communication specific for a certain language and culture associated with that language.” (Interviewee 1)
- “To motivate and develop pupil’s ability for independent learning, as well as to enable a pupil to communicate properly in everyday situations.” (Interviewee 3)

In a class comprised of pupils with similar abilities this is relatively easy, but in a class comprised of pupils with prior knowledge and those without, satisfying level of communication is hard to achieve. At the primary level of education differences in prior knowledge are virtually nonexistent. If there are any, they are easily dealt with. In contrast, at the higher levels of education (high school and university), even in higher grades of the primary school, these differences in knowledge are much more obvious and harder to deal with. Even though the differences usually do not cause tension between students, a group that is supposed to be homogenous falls apart into several smaller groups comprised of students who are more motivated, learn faster and show more confidence when expressing themselves and those students who are less motivated, need more time to learn and are shy and reluctant to communicate. If more attention is given to one group, the members of the other one may feel neglected, ignored, become bored and lose motivation.

- “Going by the fact that I teach in a primary school, mostly first to fourth grade, pupils come to me with no prior knowledge. If the pupils do have some prior knowledge, it is usually on the kinder garden level, knowledge acquired through watching cartoons and playing games.” (Interviewee 1)



- “Yes, thanks to the daily exposure to the English language, some pupils come to school with an abundant vocabulary for their age group. Often, they are able to express themselves correctly using simple sentences with *do* or *don't*. When it comes to tension caused by the differences in knowledge, in younger groups of pupils (first to fourth grade) it can be disregarded, but in more mature groups of pupils (fifth to eighth grade) it becomes more apparent and it is not so easy to ignore.” (Interviewee 4)
- “Pupils come to me with different levels of prior knowledge. The differences rarely create tension between pupils, but they do create an inappropriate educational surrounding, the group becomes heterogeneous. Sometimes, because of adapting to one group's needs, the rest of the class becomes bored, not motivated, feels ignored and so on. This is why I believe that a standardized test should be given to all the pupils before they move on to high school, it would be a great tool to ensure the best continuation of their education.” (Interviewee 6)
- “Most of my students come with prior knowledge of English, although the differences in the level of knowledge can be significant. I also teach Italian and sometimes I find myself teaching a class comprised of students that are beginners and those that have prior knowledge, this type of difference causes tension and it is very hard to balance it out.” (Interviewee 8)

As determined before, teaching a student how to communicate is the most important goal of teaching English. In order to enable this, a learner's communicational skills (listening, writing, reading and speaking) must be developed. In the continuation of the text, methods interviewed teachers use to develop each and every communicational skill are listed. To develop the listening skill, they use: CDs, videos, oral presentations, listening tests. In order to develop the writing skill, the teachers use: copying words and sentences, dictations, connecting

flash cards with words, writing descriptions, reports, summaries, critiques, reviews, creative writing exercises. The reading skill is developed by: reading picture books, reading games, connecting words and images, comprehension reading. Finally, the speaking skill is developed by: conversations, role playing, oral description, reports, review, text, CD and video recording interpretation. In an ideal situation all four skills would develop equally and at the same pace. However, it was pointed out that their development is harmonious only at the beginning of learning English and, as the years go by, differences become very apparent. The biggest discrepancy is found when the skills of speaking and writing are compared. All the teachers have come across pupils who are great speakers but poor writers. This usually happens because gifted pupils believe it is enough to be able to speak and so they ignore the other aspects of the English language learning. It is important to note that, by the end of the education process, the communicational skills come to be in harmony again. This conclusion can be derived when looking at the following statements.

- “In the early stage of learning English majority of pupils equally adopts each one of the communicational skills. Cases such as: a pupil reading a text but not being able to understand what he or she has just read or a pupil whose speech is developed but spelling is a problem, are very rare. Please, do keep in mind that my pupils are 7 to 10 years old.“ (Interviewee 1)
- “Yes, often I encounter pupils who are great speakers but have problems with spelling and grammar. On one hand, these pupils are gifted for foreign language learning and they absorb vocabulary and accent very quickly but this causes them to ignore other segments of foreign language learning. On the other hand, there are pupils who put in a lot of effort and master grammar and spelling, but have problems when speaking, some because of fear, some just find it hard. Not everyone has the same abilities and not everyone is gifted in the same area, but with continuous work

they can develop their abilities and bring in balance all communicational skills that are included in the knowledge of a foreign language.” (Interviewee 5)

- “Yes, communicational skills are rarely harmonious and this is normal during the educational process. By the end of high school, the skills are noticeably balanced. The biggest discrepancy is visible in the first grade of high school where the skill of speaking is much more developed than the skill of writing. This is mostly caused by the media and personal interests of a pupil.” (Interviewee 6)
- “This is a very common case. Many of my students are great speakers but when it comes to grammar and spelling they fall short, they believe that being able to communicate is more important and enough.” (Interviewee 8)

Even though a lot of emphasis is placed on the importance of communication, during the processes of teaching and learning English, teachers encounter many difficulties when trying to engage the learners in communication. This is mostly caused by shyness, the fear of making mistakes or saying something wrong, as well as, differences in prior knowledge that leave a pupil feeling discouraged from speaking.

- “Yes, a familiar scenario. Majority of pupils are scared of oral communication and it takes a lot of practicing and different activities for them to let go of the fear.” (Interviewee 5)
- “Yes. Pupils that have a low level of prior knowledge are unwilling to communicate, usually they answer with yes or no. Furthermore, heterogeneity of a class or the differences in knowledge, hold back inexperienced speakers due to the lack of security and the sense of shame. In this sort of situations, the teacher does not hold the key role but his or her behaviour is very important in teaching pupils how to respect and tolerate the differences.” (Interviewee 6)

Along with teaching students how to communicate, the task of a teacher is to present the grammar of English. It is equally important to know and understand the grammar rules, as well as, to know how to use those same rules in everyday communication. Furthermore, teachers do allow their students to derive their own conclusions about language through classroom work. Sometimes they help by giving hints, other times they leave students to derive conclusions independently. Following up on the issue of grammar, all eight teachers agree that a message of a student is more important than its grammatical correctness. The effort that a student has put into constructing and expressing his or her message must be treated with respect, even if it is grammatically incorrect. The student should be commended for the effort and then his or her construction should be politely repeated in its correct form. However, it is important to note that, as a student progresses through the educational system, the importance of these two elements equalises.

- “Ideally, both the message and the grammar would be correctly constructed, but in practice, the situation is completely different. Cases in which a pupil has a rich fund of words and has no problem following the grammar rules are, unfortunately, very rare. In any case, I give priority to the message of a pupil because, for me, the purpose of foreign language learning is mutual understanding.” (Interviewee 1)
- “This depends on the level of knowledge of a pupil, whether he or she is on an initial, medium or advanced level of learning. It is very important what a pupil is trying to say, but on the higher levels, grammatical correctness should not be ignored.” (Interviewee 3)
- “Considering that pupils are often afraid to communicate in English, I value the message more than grammatical correctness. Mostly, I commend the pupil and repeat his or her sentence in the correct form.” (Interviewee 4)

- “The message. ”Never make fun of someone who speaks broken English, it means they already speak another language.”, H. Jackson Brown. This is one of my favourite quotes concerning language and perfectly describes my opinion on this matter.” (Interviewee 6)
- “The message, I appreciate the effort even if the message is clumsily constructed.” (Interviewee 8)

In order for a teacher to know if a student is actually progressing and developing, they must communicate. Considering the number of pupils they teach, most teachers find it difficult to catch an opportunity for “real” communication and claim it is possible sometimes, in rare occasions.

- “In a classroom with 28 pupils it is hard to achieve real communication. It is physically impossible to give enough attention to each and every pupil especially if we take into consideration the duration of the class. I am happy if there are 5 or 6 pupils who want to communicate with me, but this depends on the theme we are processing. There are some really fortunate situations when everyone wants to say something, but unfortunately they are rare.” (Interviewee 6)
- “Only if the group of students I am teaching is small enough, which is not always the case.” (Interviewee 8)

Considering that the language taught by these teachers is still a foreign one in Croatia, one might assume that they think of their job as hard, but they see it as any other job. Not hard, but rather, challenging. They are people who were trained to do it, and so, teaching English is their responsibility.

- “Even though I teach 2 foreign languages, I do not consider my job to be any easier or harder. We are educated for this calling, trained and equipped. We are people with abilities and responsibilities.” (Interviewee 1)
- “Personally, I find my job to be challenging, it is my task to motivate pupils, encourage them to start communicating in a foreign language and enable them for oral and written communication in a language they do not use every day.” (Interviewee 3)
- “When it comes to teaching itself, I do not find it harder than any other job. Every job has its specifics and I do not think it is possible to objectively assess this. What I find hard is the segment of preparation and of evaluation, especially when compared with some other subjects. Speaking and teaching a foreign language is a special kind of mental effort, and that is why I think that foreign language teachers should have fewer classes than they do today.” (Interviewee 6)
- “Language is language, so no, I do not think my job is harder due to the fact I teach a foreign one.” (Interviewee 8)

At the end of the interview the teachers were asked if they had a message or an advice for those who are yet to come. The essence of the messages is: love your job and your students, be patient, consistent and creative, listen to the needs of your students, do not become bitter, try to stay in touch with the time, stay current and, finally, never lose enthusiasm.

- “Love and human approach are the most important for any teacher. A person that spreads love cannot be a bad teacher.” (Interviewee 2)
- “Arm yourself with patience, never stop working on perfecting yourself, do not allow yourself to fall in a rut that will make you bitter, work on motivating, firstly, yourself, and, secondly, your pupils, because, after all, their knowledge and

progress depends on you. Be consistent, pupils want discipline and clarity, at first they might protest, but in later work it will be easier for them because they will know exactly what is expected from them and they will have developed work ethics. Be an authority, but do not scare them, it stops the absorption of content you are presenting to them, and no one likes doing anything out of fear. Convince your pupils that everything you are doing is for their own good and for their progress. Appreciate children for who they are, value their opinions and they will treat you the same, maybe not at first but surely with time. Once you become someone they trust and look up to, you can do anything. Never raise your voice, after awhile they will become immune to your screaming. Teach them the rules beforehand and without yelling and you will create an orderly, safe and calm environment for them to grow up in and develop their knowledge.” (Interviewee 5)

- “Try to include modern media in your classes and go with the times. The chalk and blackboard have become things of the past. Sometimes, let the pupils create a class, you will be surprised by their creativity and how liberating and encouraging that can be for them. Try to be their guide to learning and always insist on positive motivation.” (Interviewee 7)
- “Never lose enthusiasm.” (Interviewee 8)

In summation, the English language has become the tool for global communication and not being proficient in it presents quite a challenge for an individual, Croats are no exception. Croatian children are exposed to English from the earliest stages of their lives, and as soon as they start primary school it becomes one of their obligatory subjects. Learning Croatian and English simultaneously can have an enriching effect on the knowledge of both languages which means that a student will be able to create and maintain social relationships using both languages. Communication is the key to forming and maintaining any kind of relationship, and

teaching a student how to communicate properly falls on the shoulders of language teachers. If the teacher is calm, efficient and consistent, the student will thrive and develop his or her communicational skills and be able to participate in communication by using the foreign language he or she is learning. There is a myriad of methods that can be used to ensure this, and it depends on the teacher whether or not they will be used. No matter the approach or the method in use, the ultimate goal of any language teacher should be to ensure that his or her students are equipped with enough knowledge to be able to communicate by using the language that is being taught.

## **6. CONCLUSION**

In a world that can be thought of as a global village, the English language is the primary means of communication. Therefore, it is easy to see why the ability to understand and speak it has become a necessity. There are numerous possibilities when it comes to learning it: different courses, online classes, the media, reading books and many others. Arguably, the most traditional way of learning English is in a classroom with an English language teacher. A lot depends on this person, primarily, whether the learner will feel encouraged, motivated and engaged or bored and disinterested. No matter which approach the teacher uses while teaching,



his or her ultimate goal should be to equip the learners with enough knowledge so that they could participate in communication. If a learner leaves an English language classroom and is not able to speak, what is the point of the entire process?

In Croatia, the English language holds a very important position. Knowing it enables the members of the Croatian society to participate in communication with the members of different nationalities, it allows for easier understanding of technical, economic and business terms and it allows a person to understand a massive amount of Internet content, TV shows, series, films, video games and so forth. It is very easy to conclude that omnipresence of English affects the Croatian language and its speakers, and this influence is not always positive. The knowledge of Croatian may become poorer if a person chooses to express him or herself by using English words without thinking of Croatian equivalents, he or she might lose interest in the Croatian literature and become unable to understand traditional words. This phenomenon is not good for Croatian national language identity. Croats should be aware that Croatian is their native language.

The responsibility to teach students how to use and respect a language falls on the shoulders of language teachers. Croatian pupils become acquainted with English as soon as they start primary school, some even sooner. Their English teacher is tasked with: providing them with enough knowledge so that they may participate in communication, present the grammar system and rules that govern the English language, encourage them to speak and express themselves and engage them by using any and every method that will allow them to develop their communicational skills. It is quite a challenging task, but if a person truly loves his or her job and finds enthusiasm and inspiration in working with children, he or she is capable of producing incredible results.

## Summary

### COMMUNICATIVE COMPETENCE IN THE CONTEXT OF COMMUNICATIVE LANGUAGE TEACHING WITH EMPHASIS ON ENGLISH IN CROATIA

This final thesis paper is divided into six chapters. The first chapter provides an introduction and outlines the main topics of the paper and they are: communicative competence, communicative language teaching and position of the English language in the Croatian educational system and in everyday communication of the Croatian people. The second chapter deals with the communicative competence theory and provides a description of its structure. The main topics of the third chapter are: the field of foreign language, different approaches to foreign language teaching and, finally, communicative language teaching. The fourth chapter provides a historical overview of the position the English language held in the Croatian educational system. Also, the position and importance of English in present-day Croatian educational system is presented. In the fifth chapter the results of a case study whose main goals were, firstly, to explore the opinions of Croatian teachers of English concerning the importance and position of the English language in the Croatian society and, secondly, to provide an insight into the English teaching process. Finally, the sixth chapter provides a conclusion of the entire paper.

**Key words:** communicative competence, communicative language teaching, communication, language

## Sažetak

## KOMUNIKACIJSKA KOMPETENCIJA U KONTEKSTU KOMUNIKACIJSKOG PRISTUPA POUČAVANJU JEZIKA S NAGLASKOM NA ENGLISKI U HRVATSKOJ

Ovaj rad je podijeljen na šest poglavlja. Prvo poglavlje služi kao uvod i predstavlja glavne teme rada, a one su: komunikacijska kompetencija, komunikativna nastava jezika i pozicija engleskog jezika u hrvatskom obrazovnom sustavu kao i u svakodnevnoj komunikaciji Hrvata. U drugom poglavlju predstavljen je pojam, teorija i struktura komunikacijske kompetencije. Glavne teme obrađene u trećem poglavlju su: razvoj predavanja stranog jezika, različiti pristupi predavanju stranog jezika i, naposljetku, komunikativna nastava jezika. U četvrtom poglavlju predstavljena je pozicija koju je engleski jezik imao u prošlosti hrvatskog obrazovnog sustava. Također, opisane su pozicija i važnost engleskog jezika u današnjem hrvatskom obrazovnom sustavu. U petom poglavlju predstavljeni su rezultati istraživanja čiji su glavni ciljevi bili ispitati mišljenja hrvatskih nastavnika engleskog jezika o važnosti i poziciji engleskog u hrvatskom društvu, te dobiti uvid u process predavanja engleskog jezika. Naposljetku, šesto poglavlje služi kao zaključak čitavog rada.

Ključne riječi: komunikacijska kompetencija, komunikativna nastava jezika, komunikacija, jezik

## Appendix A: Questions for the Interview

## CONCERNING ENGLISH IN CROATIA

- 1.) What is your view on the position and importance of English in Croatia?
- 2.) Do you consider the ever-growing influence of the English language on Croatian to be a positive or a negative trend? Why? (please explain your answer)
- 3.) In your opinion, is English too present in everyday communication of Croats?
- 4.) Do you feel that learning and knowing a foreign language, in this case, English affects the knowledge of a native language, in this case, Croatian? In what way? (please explain your answer)
- 5.) In your opinion, when it comes to the English language, do children/pupils learn more language outside or inside a classroom?

## CONCERNING THE PROFESSION OF ENGLISH TEACHERS AND PROFESSORS

- 1.) How long have you been teaching the English language?
- 2.) Please describe one typical class of English language that you teach.
- 3.) What do you consider to be the most important in teaching a foreign or, in this case, the English language?
- 4.) Do students come to you with prior knowledge or do they become acquainted with the language in your classroom for the first time? Do differences in knowledge create tension between students?
- 5.) When it comes to the development of communicational skills (speaking, reading, writing and listening) in students what methods do you use?
- 6.) Do you find that communicational skills (speaking, reading, writing and listening) in pupils develop one in accordance with the others, or is their development unrelated?

For example, have you ever come across a student who is a great speaker but when it comes to spelling he or she has problems? Please, describe an example.

- 7.) Do you encounter difficulties when it comes to motivating students to communicate with you in English?
- 8.) Do you consider it to be more important to teach the students grammar rules of a language, or teach them how to use those rules in everyday communication?
- 9.) Do you permit students to derive their own conclusions about language through the work in the classroom?
- 10.) When you communicate with a student, do you consider that his or her message is more important than the grammatical correctness of what he or she is trying to say?
- 11.) Considering the number of students that you teach, do you have a chance for real communication?
- 12.) Do you consider your job easier or harder going by the fact you teach a foreign language? (please explain your answer)
- 13.) Do you have any advice or a message for those who are yet to come?

## Works Cited

Bagarić Medve, Vesna. *Komunikacijska kompetencija: Uvod u teorijske, empirijske i primijenjene aspekte komunikacijske kompetencije u stranom jeziku*. Osijek: Filozofski fakultet, 2012. Print.

Chomsky, Noam. *Gramatika i um*. Trans. Ranko Bugarski, Gordana B. Todorović. Beograd: Neolit, 1972. Print.

Hymes, Dell. *Etnografija komunikacije*. Trans. Miloš Radovanović. Beograd: Beogradski izdavačko-grafički zavod, 1980. Print.

Hymes, Dell. "On Communicative Competence." *Sociolinguistics: Selected Readings*. Ed. J. B. Pride and Janet Holmes. Harmondsworth, Penguin Books: 1972. 269-293. Print.

Littlewood, Michael. *Foreign and Second Language Learning*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1998. Print.

Opačić, Nives. *Hrvatski ni u zagradama*. Zagreb, Hrvatska sveučilišna naklada, 2012. Print.

Richards, Jack C. and Theodor S. Rodgers. *Approaches and Methods in Language Teaching*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press: 1986. Web.

## Web Publications

Bagarić, Vesna and Jelena Mihaljević Djigunović. "Defining Communicative Competence." *Metodika* Vol.8, Nr.14, May 2007: 94-103. Web. 08 September 2015.

<[http://hrcak.srce.hr/index.php?id\\_clanak\\_jezik=42651&show=clanak](http://hrcak.srce.hr/index.php?id_clanak_jezik=42651&show=clanak)>

Mihaljević Djigunović, Jelena. "Strani jezici u kurikulu: Europski model i hrvatske težnje." *Metodika* Vol. 10, No. 18, June 2009: 51-79. Web. 05 April 2016.

<<http://hrcak.srce.hr/40816?lang=en>>

Mihaljević Djigunović Jelena and Renata Geld. "English in Croatia Today: Opportunities for Incidental Vocabulary Acquisition." *Studai Romanica et Anglica Zagabiensia*, Vol 47-48, No. -, January 2004: 335-352. Web. 12 April 2016.

< [http://hrcak.srce.hr/index.php?show=clanak&id\\_clanak\\_jezik=33116&lang=en](http://hrcak.srce.hr/index.php?show=clanak&id_clanak_jezik=33116&lang=en) >

Nunan, David. "Communicative Tasks and the Language Curriculum." *TESOL Quarterly*, Vol. 25, No. 2, Summer 1991: 279-295. Web. 20.09.2016.

<<http://ontesolteacherscorner.com/CommunicativeTasksAndTheLanguageCurriculum.pdf>>

Sauvignon, Sandra. "Beyond Communicative Language Teaching: What's Ahead?." *Journal of Pragmatics* 39 (2007): 207-220. Web. 07 April 2016.

<[http://elearning.moodle2.unito.it/studium/pluginfile.php/12072/mod\\_resource/content/1/S.S\\_auvignon\\_Beyond%20communicative%20language%20teaching.pdf](http://elearning.moodle2.unito.it/studium/pluginfile.php/12072/mod_resource/content/1/S.S_auvignon_Beyond%20communicative%20language%20teaching.pdf)>

---. "Teaching English as Communication: a Global Perspective." *Wold Englishes*, Vol. 22, No. 1 (2003): 55-66. Web. 07 April 2016.

< <http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/1467-971X.00272/abstract> >

Vilke, Mirjana. "English in Croatia- A Glimpse into Past, Present and Future," *Metodika* Vol. 8, No. 14, May 2007: 17-24. Web. 10 April 2016.

< [http://hrcak.srce.hr/index.php?show=clanak&id\\_clanak\\_jezik=42645](http://hrcak.srce.hr/index.php?show=clanak&id_clanak_jezik=42645) >