

# Croatian modal particles and their equivalents in advanced language learners

---

**Tokić, Antonela**

**Undergraduate thesis / Završni rad**

**2023**

*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:162:164320>

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

*Download date / Datum preuzimanja:* **2025-02-01**



**Sveučilište u Zadru**  
Universitas Studiorum  
Jadertina | 1396 | 2002 |

*Repository / Repozitorij:*

[University of Zadar Institutional Repository](#)



Sveučilište u Zadru

Odjel za lingvistiku

Jezik i komunikacija u višejezičnom društvu (dvopredmetni)

**Antonela Tokić**

**Croatian modal particles and their equivalents in  
advanced language learners**

**Završni rad**

Zadar, 2023.

Sveučilište u Zadru

Odjel za lingvistiku

Jezik i komunikacija u višejezičnom društvu (dvopredmetni)

Croatian modal particles and their equivalents in advanced language  
learners

Završni rad

Student/ica:

Antonela Tokić

Mentor/ica:

Doc. dr. sc. Mia Batinić Angster

Zadar, 2023.





## Izjava o akademskoj čestitosti

Ja, **Antonela Tokić**, ovime izjavljujem da je moj **završni** rad pod naslovom **Croatian modal particles and their equivalents in advanced language learners** 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. rujna 2023.



## Summary

### CROATIAN MODAL PARTICLES AND THEIR EQUIVALENTS IN ADVANCED LANGUAGE LEARNERS

This study investigates modal particles (MP), that is words that are counted among the means of expressing modality. Karagjosova (2004, p. 1) defines them as “conventional utterance modifiers that indicate speaker’s beliefs with respect to the propositional content of their carrier utterance or the cognitive status of the propositional content”. The research will be conducted on the basis of three languages, namely German, Croatian and English. While in German and Croatian MPs exist as a word category, in English the function of German and Croatian particles is expressed by other means (cf. Kresić & Batinić, 2014; Batinić, Kresić & Pavić Pintarić, 2015; Kresić, Batinić Angster & Diewald, 2017). The focus of this study will be the realization of the following Croatian particles in Wh sentences: 1) MP *li*, its equivalent MP group *li+samo*, and 2) MP *ono*. According to a previously conducted corpus analysis (Kresić & Batinić, 2014) these Croatian particles in German correspond to the following pairs of synonymous MPs – *bloß* und *nur* (1), *gleich* and *doch* (2), respectively. On the other hand, English has some equivalent expressions – *on earth* (1), and *again* (2). For the present study – the research will be conducted among two groups of participants. The first group will consist of Croatian graduate students in German studies, and the second group will include graduate students in English studies. Croatian being their L1 is the source language, whereas German and English as their foreign languages are viewed as target languages. According to Gulan, Kresić & Pavić Pintarić (2017) it can be expected that these advanced language learners will use appropriate equivalents in the target languages. Participants will be given a questionnaire in which they will have to translate sentences containing a certain MP. These sentences will be preceded by a context, which is of great importance considering MPs are anaphorically dependent on the context (Kresić et al. 2017, p. 14). It is assumed that learners of German and English will translate the particles in accordance with the listed equivalents proposed by Kresić & Batinić (2014). The aim of this thesis is to verify if these German particles and English expressions match the function Croatian MPs express in context.

Keywords: *modal particles; Croatian; German; English*

## Sažetak

### HRVATSKE MODALNE ČESTICE I NJIHOVE ISTOVRIJEDNICE KOD NAPREDNIH UČENIKA

Ovo istraživanje proučava modalne čestice (MP prema engl. *modal particles*), odnosno riječi koje se ubrajaju u sredstva izražavanja modalnosti. Karagjosova (2004., str. 1) definira ih kao "konvencionalne modifikatore iskaza koji ukazuju na govornikova uvjerenja s obzirom na propozicioni sadržaj njihovog iskaza nositelja ili kognitivni status propozicionog sadržaja". Istraživanje će se provoditi na temelju triju jezika, a to su njemački, hrvatski i engleski. Dok u njemačkom i hrvatskom MP postoji kao kategorija riječi, u engleskom se funkcija njemačkih i hrvatskih čestica izražava drugim sredstvima (usp. Kresić i Batinić, 2014; Batinić, Kresić i Pavić Pintarić, 2015; Kresić, Batinić Angster i Diewald, 2017). Težište ovog istraživanja bit će realizacija sljedeće hrvatske čestice u upitnim rečenicama s upitnom riječju: 1) MP *li*, njezin ekvivalentni modalni čestični skup *li+samo* i 2) MP *ono*. Prema prethodno provedenoj korpusnoj analizi (Kresić & Batinić, 2014.) ovim hrvatskim česticama u njemačkom jeziku odgovaraju sljedeći parovi sinonimnih čestica: *bloß* i *nur* (1), *gleich* i *doch* (2). S druge strane, engleski ima neke ekvivalentne izraze – *on earth* (1), i *again* (2). Za potrebe ovog rada istraživanje će se provesti među dvije skupine sudionika. Prvu skupinu ispitanika činit će hrvatski studenti diplomskog studija germanistike, a drugu skupinu studenti diplomskog studija anglistike. Hrvatski im je materinski jezik J1, dok se njemački i engleski kao strani jezici smatraju ciljnim jezicima. Prema Gulan, Kresić & Pavić Pintarić (2017) može se očekivati da će oni kao napredni učenici koristiti odgovarajuće ekvivalente u ciljanim jezicima. Sudionici će dobiti upitnik u kojem će morati prevesti rečenice koje sadrže određenu modalnu česticu. Ispred ovih rečenica nalazit će se kontekst, što je od velike važnosti s obzirom na to da su čestice anaforički ovisne o kontekstu (Kresić i dr., 2017, str. 14). Pretpostavlja se da će učenici njemačkog i engleskog prevoditi čestice u skladu s navedenim ekvivalentima koje predlažu Kresić i Batinić (2014). Cilj je ovog rada provjeriti podudaraju li se te njemačke čestice i engleski izrazi s funkcijom koju hrvatske modalne čestice izražavaju u kontekstu.

Ključne riječi: *modalne čestice; hrvatski; njemački; engleski*



# Contents

1. Introduction .....	10
2. Aims and research questions .....	11
3. Modal particles and their equivalents.....	13
3.1. Context as an essential component of MPs .....	13
3.2. Modal particles in Croatian and German and their equivalents in English .....	16
3.3. The Croatian MPs <i>li</i> , <i>li+samo</i> and <i>ono</i> and their equivalents in German and English .....	19
4. Methodology .....	21
4.1. Participants .....	21
4.2. Instruments .....	23
5. Results .....	26
6. Discussion .....	30
7. Conclusion.....	34
References .....	36
Appendix 1 .....	38
Appendix 2 .....	42



## 1. Introduction

This study will focus on the phenomenon of modal particles, or more specifically, their role in the language use. To understand what modal particles are, it is needed to define the mere term particle as such. In his book Hansen (1998, p. 37) states that “the term ‘particles’ is traditionally used in the pretheoretical sense of ‘uninflected words’”. Furthermore, he observes that, if understood as such, “particles clearly constitute a highly heterogeneous category both functionally and distributionally”. Similarly to him, Möllering (2001, p. 130) points out that the term particle derives from “a structural approach to categorizing the various parts of speech into word classes based on the inflectional properties of words” and, as a result, the term “is often used to refer to ‘non-declinables’”.

One type of particle, and the one that will be dealt with in this paper, are modal particles (MP). MPs as defined by Dörre, Cypionka, Trotzki and Bayer (2018, p. 3) “are an entire part of speech that does not affect the truth-conditional meaning of utterances and rather organizes the discourse by conveying the epistemic states of both the speaker and the hearer”. They argue that the word-by-word translation of MP-s is very difficult because they do not add a descriptive meaning to the sentence, they are in (cf. Dörre et al., 2018). Morphological and syntactic criteria that define MPs according to Hansen (1998) are the following: they usually cannot carry stress, they cannot be coordinated, they cannot by themselves form a sentence, and their scope ranges over the entire sentence. Besides being identifiable on formal grounds alone, they are also clearly felt to be in some way semantically and pragmatically homogeneous, although their semantics and pragmatics seem to be particularly elusive and difficult to grasp.

The next chapter (chapter 2) defines the aims of this paper and the research questions, that are intended to be answered by conducting this research, will also be presented. The Chapter 3 deals with the modal particles and their equivalents. It is divided into three parts: in part 3.1. the context and its role in the description of MPs are discussed, in 3.2. Croatian and German MPs are mentioned together with the corresponding expressions in English, and finally in 3.3. the modal particles with which this thesis deals are introduced. Chapter 4 is concerned with the methodology. It is divided into chapter 4.1. and 4.2. Whereas in 4.1. the participants of the study are presented, in 4.2. the instruments used are described. In chapter 5 the results of the research

are presented using tables, and in chapter 6 these results are being discussed. Chapter 7 is dedicated to the findings and conclusions that have been reached.

## 2. Aims and research questions

In this paper the focus will be drawn on finding correct equivalents of the following Croatian modal particles: (1) MP *li*, its equivalent MP group *li+samo*, and (2) MP *ono*. In the previously conducted corpus analysis (Kresić & Batinić, 2014) there have been investigated the equivalents of these Croatian MPs in the German and English language. According to this study the mentioned Croatian MPs in German match the following pairs of synonymous MPs in wh sentences – *bloß* und *nur* (1), *gleich* and *doch* (2). In the corpus analysis, appropriate expressions were used for modal particles, since in English modal particles do not exist as a distinct word category (cf. Kresić & Batinić, 2014). For this reason, the following expressions were taken into account: *on earth* (1), and *again* (2)<sup>1</sup>. The aim of this study is to verify if these German particles and English expressions match the function Croatian MPs express in context.

It should be noted that Kresić and Batinić's research (2014) starts from the German language that is from a particular German MP, for which the equivalents in Croatian and, when possible, in English are suggested. This is relevant to mention because in this paper the reversed approach was used, i. e. in this research the starting point is the selected Croatian MP which corresponds to a larger number of German MPs that have a similar meaning in case they are found in the same sentence type of sentence.

Research questions that will be dealt with in this paper are:

1. Will fourth- and fifth-year graduate students in English and German be able to translate modal particles that are investigated in this paper (MP in question: *ono*, *li*, *li+samo*)?
2. Will their translation match/ correspond to the expected equivalents that are proposed in the previously conducted corpus analysis Kresić & Batinić (2014) and to what extent? Furthermore, will the results of the translation task into one of the target languages – German or English – be closer to the expected equivalents?

Regarding those research questions, we can lay the following hypothesis:

H1: The respondents will be able to translate the given particles considering the high level of language knowledge on their year of study which is obtained in the sample of respondents.

---

<sup>1</sup> According to Kresić & Batinić, M. (2014) these English expressions correspond to some other Croatian and German particles as well.

H2: Translations will match to a certain extent. A high degree of agreement is expected in the case of German, while deviations are expected in translations into English, considering that German has MPs as a separate category of words, while English does not.

### 3. Modal particles and their equivalents

As it has been acknowledged by scholars that investigate this particular word class (e.g. Karagjosova 2004; Kresić & Batinić, 2014; Kresić, Batinić Angster & Diewald, 2017), modal particles cannot be defined without taking the context into account. They depend on the context, modify utterances, and their meaning is influenced by the sentence (and thus by the speech act itself). In the next part of the thesis (3.1.) it will be discussed about the exact role that the context plays when talking about MPs and in what way it affects them. In the chapter 3.2. the focus will be on listing the MPs in the source language (Croatian) and their equivalents in the target languages – English and German. Finally, in the chapter 3.3. the Croatian MPs, with which it will be dealt with in this paper, will be presented.

#### 3.1. Context as an essential component of MPs

In a discussion about the properties of modal particles, it is of great importance to mention the aspect of the context as an essential component. MPs are synsemantic words that contribute context-dependent meaning to the sentence (cf. Karagjosova, 2004; Kresić & Batinić 2014). These meanings differ because MPs express the speaker's attitudes and in a certain context these attitudes fluctuate and with that the meaning of the particle changes.

Karagjosova (2004, p. 5) focused her investigation on the meaning of MPs and mentions that “each MP can be assigned a basic, contextually invariant meaning as a common denominator of all its contextual occurrences”. Furthermore, she claims: “The meaning of the MPs can be captured in terms of the speaker's beliefs towards the propositional content of the utterance (*auch*), or towards the cognitive status of the propositional content (*doch, ja, eben, halt*).” MPs can be seen as utterance modifiers because they show the beliefs of the speaker towards the content of the utterance. The sentence type and the discourse and dialogue structure also need to be taken into account because these elements contribute to the meaning of the MP as well (Karagjosova, 2004, p. 64).

Kresić & Batinić (2014, p. 41) define modal particles as “synsemantic and invariant words that express subjective and situational aspects of communicative interaction”. Particles therefore represent a lexical category that is very demanding to learn in a context of second/ third language acquisition process and even to translate into a specific language. Moreover, their

implementation in a specific language is a substantial obstacle because the process of finding the appropriate equivalent for a specific particle is immensely difficult, as Kresić & Batinić (2014) report.

According to Kresić, Batinić Angster & Diewald (2017), MPs have scope over the utterance in which they occur and are anaphorically<sup>2</sup> dependent on the context. They (2017, p. 14) also mention that “MPs have a sort of anaphoric function, and goes on to specify the element the MP is pointing to as the specific premises [...] about the argumentative and interactional context of the utterance”. Furthermore, the authors (2017, p. 16) state that “in both German and Croatian, the paradigmatically structured meaning of MPs consists in systematically relating the utterance in which they occur to the pragmatic context, with each particle displaying a specific meaning by which it forms oppositions to other members of the class”. The conditions and facts about the communicative event are connected with the utterance itself and thus modify the meaning of the MP in a specific context (Kresić, Batinić Angster & Diewald, 2017). According to the literature dealing with German particles, it seems that each German particle has one meaning that partially changes depending on the type of sentence in which it appears, and even on the speech act that is performed (Kresić & Batinić, 2014). The sentence type in which the MP is realized affects its meaning and some authors distinguish between more, and some enumerate less types of sentences.<sup>3</sup>

In order to better explore this phenomenon of the context-dependance, a couple of examples of the Croatian particle *ono* will be presented below. With the help of these examples, it will be shown how the particle *ono* gains different meanings in different types of sentences. In (1) a Wh-sentence is exemplified, and in (2) a realization of the same MP in a declarative sentence.

- (1) a. Croatian: *Pa trener Marseillea, kako se ono zove, sa 73?*<sup>4</sup>  
b. German: *Also der Trainer von Marseille, wie heißt er gleich, mit 73?*  
c. English: *So, the coach of Marseille, what's his name again, at 73?*
- (2) a. Croatian: *Pa da, ustvari, sve to nije izgledalo kako sam ja mislio da će izgledati, ono studentski život, mama i tata šalju pare, a ti se provodiš, studiraš i to.*<sup>5</sup>

---

<sup>2</sup> Mitkov (2014) states that „anaphora describes the language phenomenon of referring to a previously mentioned entity (also called object or event)“.

<sup>3</sup> For example, Karagjosova (2004, p.42) defines these following sentence types in her research: „declarative sentence, yes/no interrogative sentence, wh-interrogative sentence, imperative sentence, check-question, deliberative question, exclamative sentence (which can be wh-exclamative, *dass*-exclamative or sentence exclamative), wish-expressing sentence, rhetorical question.“

<sup>4</sup> The example is taken from Kresić & Batinić (2014, p. 126).

<sup>5</sup> The example is taken from Kresić & Batinić (2014, p. 128).

b. German: *Na ja, eigentlich sah alles nicht so aus, wie ich es mir vorgestellt hatte, halt das Studentenleben, Mama und Papa schicken Geld, und man hat auch Spaß am Lernen.*

c. English: *Well, actually, it all didn't look like I thought it would look like, simply that student life, mom and dad send money, and you have fun, study, too.*

In (1) the Croatian particle “*ono*” is a modal particle in an interrogative sentence with question word which portrays a directive way of speaking. The place of this particle in the sentence in the Croatian language can be: 1) after the question word, 2) before the main verb and 3) between the auxiliary verb and the main verb/ predicate noun. The context of this sentence is the following (Kresić & Batinić, 2014, p. 95): “the information is known to the speaker in principle, but he cannot remember it at the moment. In other words, according to the authors (ibid.) “the speaker is trying to remember the information which he supposedly knows”. Its basic meaning is reminiscent. The equivalents of the Croatian MP *ono* in German are *gleich* and its synonymous mp *doch* expressed in a wh-sentence. It should be stressed the following: “The context and the meaning of the particle stay the same as in Croatian, but particle has a midfield position” (Kresić & Batinić, 2014, p. 126). As already mentioned, in the English language there are no modal particles as a word category, and therefore, in the English language, an adverb is used to stimulate the recall of information that the speaker has forgotten. The adverb that can replace the particle *ono* in the English language is the above-mentioned adverb *again*. Following the reasoning of the authors (Kresić & Batinić, 2014, p. 95), the adverb *again* in this case “is used in a Wh-question to indicate that the speaker indeed knows the answer to the question but is not able to remember it in the distinct moment”. By translating and finding the appropriate equivalent of the MP “*ono*” and giving them the same context, the meaning of the particle remains the same in all three sentences.

In (2), the same Croatian particle *ono* is being used but the equivalents for this particle used in English and German are not the same as in the previous example. This occurs because not only the sentence type but more importantly the context has changed. The MP *ono* the modal particle is found in a declarative sentence, which dictates a representative way of speaking. The place where the modal particle is located also changes and the particle can be found in the following positions according to Kresić & Batinić (2014): 1) at the beginning, 2) before the main verb, 3) between the auxiliary verb and the main verb. The context is constative meaning that “the speaker assesses that the state of affairs should be accepted as such” (Kresić & Batinić, 2014,



p. 128). In other words, the state of the affairs can be depicted as unchangeable and, according to the speaker's view on it, the situation should be acceptable as such (cf. Kresić & Batinić, 2014, p. 128-129). In the German language, the equivalent of the modal particle *ono* in this particular context is *halt* (Kresić & Batinić, 2014, p. 128). The meaning of the particle stays the same as in the Croatian sentence. In the English language, the adverb is used to indicate the immutability of the state of affairs or the way in which something happens. In this case the adverb in mind is *simply* or even *just*. These two adverbs suggest that the current situation must be accepted even though it is not desirable (Kresić & Batinić, 2014, p. 128).

From these two examples it can be concluded how context is of great importance when it comes to establishing the meaning of a modal particle. In the examples it can be seen that the same Croatian MP *ono* is used, but that particle is not translated in the same way in both examples. As soon as the sentence type is changed, there is an alternation of the meaning of the particle, and therefore the equivalents of the MP used in English and German is also changed. It can also be noted that the sentence type also affects the meaning of the MP.

### 3.2. Modal particles in Croatian and German and their equivalents in English

Some languages have more modal particles than others, but the function of modal particles is not limited to certain languages. If one language in fact does not have modal particles or has fewer particles than another, there should be other means of expressing the same thing in that other language, as Kresić & Batinić (2014) suggest. In order to determine these other means, it is first necessary to establish the function of a specific particle (cf. Waltereit, 2001). That being said modal particles represent a word category all by oneself. MPs portray a characteristic word category in the German language, but they do not occur in some languages.

The words acknowledged in the literature as modal particles in German are the following: *aber, auch, bloß, denn, doch, eben, eigentlich, etwa, halt, ja, mal, nur, schon, vielleicht, wohl* (Helbig & Buscha 2002, p. 421ff.; Duden 2009, p. 598; Kresić, Batinić Angster & Diewald, 2017, p. 11).

The equivalents for the German word category of MP in Croatian are: *a, al, ala, ama, bar, barem, baš, čekaj, daj/dajte, deder, e, eto, hajde, i, inače, ipak, jednostavno, li, ma, malo, naprosto, nego, ono, opet, ovaj, pa, pobogu, prosto, samo, slobodno, stvarno, ta, uglavnom, uistinu, uopće, ustvari, valjda, vjerojatno, zaista, zapravo, zar* (cf. Uvanović, 2006, p. 66-76;

Kresić & Batinić, 2014). Kresić & Batinić (2014, p.) and Kresić, Batinić Angster & Diewald (2017, p. 19) argue that German MP can also be expressed in Croatian by different types of modal expressions such as: 1) MP groups consisting of two or more particles (*a eto, eto samo, ma slobodno*), 2) modal phrasemes, i.e. combinations of two or more words, at least one of them being an autosemantic word, with the overall meaning that cannot be concluded from the meanings of its single elements (e.g. *bez daljnjega, mirne duše*), 3) modal constructions, which are specific constructions consisting of (modal) particles, MP groups, modal phrasemes and further grammatical words, often with a firm grammatical form (e.g. *samo + dativus ethicus, kamo sreće da, pa daj/dajte da, daj/dajte da, hajde da*).

In English, on the other hand, MPs do not exist, and they are therefore substituted and expressed by other means (cf. Kresić & Batinić 2014, p. 23; cf. König & Gast 2009, p. 245-247; Batinić, Kresić & Pavić Pintarić, 2015, p. 4; cf. Kresić, Batinić Angster & Diewald, 2017, p. 19). In fact, Kresić, Batinić Angster and Diewald (2017, p. 19) state: “They are achieved by using adverbs (*ever, surely, anyway*), exclamations (*why*), interjections (*oh, boy*), discourse markers (*well*), adjective, adverb and prepositional phrases (*after all, for a minute*), interrogative expressions (*how come*), fixed expressions (*on earth, you know, but of course*), specific constructions (*do you mean to tell me, don't hesitate to, you're welcome to*), emphatic additions of the verb *do* or *go*, stress on the modal verb (*can, must*), and other means of non-segmental features, such as intonational patterns.”

Considering that MPs are highly dependent on the context, which will be explained more in detail in the last chapter of this thesis, MPs are immensely difficult to translate into another language. Because of the difficulty in determining the exact meaning of a specific MP and because the wide variety of different means for expressing a certain MP in other languages, they therefore represent a big problem for second and third language learners. According to some scholars that study modal particles in cross-linguistic perspective (cf. Kresić & Batinić, 2014; Gulan, Kresić & Pavić Pintarić, 2017, p. 27), there can be identified several causes of difficulty in learning modal particles: (1) MPs are used in an informal environment and do not appear in the foreign language classroom as much, (2) there are different variants of one modal particle in different word categories, (3) they are strongly related to the context, (4) there is not a clear description of their meaning in every language.

Precisely for this reason, it is believed among scholars, modal particles are not represented in foreign language classrooms as much, there is no detailed linguistic description of them in textbooks or in language learning materials in general (cf. Kresić Vukosav & Batinić Angster

(2019). In order to help second and third language learners, it is necessary to provide an appropriate explanation of the function and meaning of a certain particle so that the student can acquire it. Although even that might not be enough. Furthermore, it is also necessary to supply each particle with examples in a specific context, since meanings of MPs fluctuate depending on the specific context. This kind of learning materials was not available for a long time due to this lack. However, they are now accessible to learners of German and Croatian as L2 with exercises developed for individual German and Croatian MPs followed by accompanying exercises with the appropriate expressions in English (Kresić Vukosav & Batinić Angster 2019).

Modal particles, their functions, meanings, and their equivalents in other languages have not yet been sufficiently researched. Mollering (2001, p. 132) states: “Particle functions are acquired in an accumulative manner over a long period of time. The distinction between modal particles and their homonyms is therefore a major teaching objective.” The approach that Mollering (2001) is proposing for learning MP in German is not one where the learners are being exposed to a list of functions and examples of MP on the basis of sentences, but instead concordance procedures should be used and thus connections between certain patterns that appear would be established. Students would thus more easily acquire the material.

Another element that should be taken in consideration when it comes to learning modal particles is effective transfer. Effective transfer can be defined as “the competence to correctly apply the form and function of a particular linguistic element in the performance in another language on the basis of the learner’s interlingual identifications” (cf. Kresić & Gulan, 2012; Gulan, Kresić & Pavić Pintarić, 2017, p. 26). Potential effective transfer is an important component that can influence how the learner comprehends the meaning and function of the MP and then proceeds to use it in another language.

### 3.3. The Croatian MPs *li*, *li+samo* and *ono* and their equivalents in German and English

This thesis will exclusively deal with three Croatian modal particles and their equivalents, as already mentioned at the beginning of the thesis (see chapter 1): *li*, *li+samo* and *ono*.<sup>6</sup> The analysis presented here will be focused on their realization in a specific sentence type: Wh-sentence. While *li* and *li+samo* as modal particles are limited to interrogative sentence, *ono*, according to Kresić and Batinić (2014) can be expressed both in an interrogative and in a declarative sentence, but in the latter case its function corresponds to another German particle – *halt* (see the example in 3.1.).

In their study, Kresić and Batinić (2014, p. 70) categorized *li+samo* as a “modal particle set that appears in an interrogative sentence with a question word, called Wh sentence; that is, in a directive speech act”. It corresponds to the German MPs *bloß* and *nur* in a wh-interrogative type of sentence. The homonyms of *li* and *samo* are: *li* which represents an interrogative particle and “samo” an adverb or conjunction. The position of the MP *li* in the sentence is after the interrogative word and *samo*, it can have three positions, namely (1) after the particle *li*, (2) before the main verb, (3) between the auxiliary verb and the main verb/ predicate noun. The context of this modal particle set is that the speaker's interest is focused on the real and assumed state of affairs<sup>7</sup>, i.e., the speaker is wondering about that what he is asking about, so he is very interested in the answer to the question (Kresić & Batinić, 2014, p. 147).

*Li* is also used in an interrogative sentence with a question word<sup>8</sup>; in the directive speech act as well as *li+samo*. The type of word it belongs to is a modal particle and its position in the sentence is after the question word. As far as the context is concerned, it remains the same as with *li+samo*, i.e., “the speaker is interested and is wondering about that what he is asking about, therefore he is very interested in the answer to the question“ (Kresić & Batinić, 2014, p.

---

<sup>6</sup> Among these, in Croatian grammar written by Barić et al. (1997, p. 282) *li* is mentioned as question particle (e.g. *Je li vam hladno?*) while *samo* is listed among particles that express “impatience, desire, satisfactions etc. regarding what the following word means” (e.g. *Okupao sam se samo nekoliko puta.*)

<sup>7</sup> State of affairs is defined as indicating “the way in which the facts and conditions relevant for the communication are set up at some point in a given communicative context from the speaker’s point of view” (Kresić, Batinić Angster & Diewald, 2017). Furthermore, the authors explain that “by using an MP, the speaker relates the utterance to a certain state of affairs in the context of the communication”, which was previously noted by Diewald & Kresić (2010) and Kresić & Batinić (2014).

<sup>8</sup> As Kresić and Batinić (2014, p. 71) mention, *li* in a polar question is a question particle without any modal function corresponding to the function realized by one of the German.

70). The proposed equivalents of *li* and *li+samo* in the German language are *bloß* and *nur*;<sup>9</sup> and in English it is the fixed expression *on earth* (cf. Kresić & Batinić, 2014).

Unlike the MP *li* and *li samo*, *ono* has a different meaning and corresponds to the German *gleich* and *doch* which have different basic meanings, but are synonymous in one type of sentence, i.e. in wh-sentences. This shows how the type of sentence affects the meaning. Two particles can be synonymous in only one type of sentence, while in others there is no such synonymy.

*Ono* is also a modal particle whose homonym is a pronoun, and it is also used in an interrogative sentence with a question word and with a directive speech act. There are three possible places where this particle can be found in a sentence, namely (1) after the subject word, (2) before the main verb, (3) between the auxiliary verb and the main verb/predicate noun. Following Kresić and Batinić (2014), the context associated with this modal particle is that there is a possibility of an opposite view of the state of affairs, i.e. the speaker is trying to recall information that he should in principle know. According to Kresić and Batinić (2014) *on earth* is the English equivalent for the Croatian MPs *li* and *li+samo*; i.e., for the German MP *bloß* and *nur* in a Wh-sentence. “It is a fixed expression which is used for highlighting the astonishment of the speaker and their strong interest in the answer to the question” (Kresić & Batinić, 2014, p. 71).

On the other hand, *again* is the adequate equivalent for the Croatian MP *ono*, and for the German MPs *doch* and *gleich* (Kresić & Batinić, 2014, p. 95): “*Again* is an adverb that is used in Wh-question to mark that the speaker should know the answer to the question but cannot recall it at the moment.” It must be noted that in the available papers which deal with modal particles in these three languages, the German language is taken as a starting point, then Croatian is taken into account, and finally equivalents or corresponding expressions for those MPs in English are being researched. In this paper, on the contrary, as the starting point will be taken Croatian units that are realized in a wh-sentence.

---

<sup>9</sup> In fact, it is the other way around; the Croatian MP *li* and MP group *li samo* are proposed as equivalents for German *bloß* and *nur* in a wh-question.

## 4. Methodology

In this study the Croatian the following modal particles in a *wh*-sentence are being investigated in more detail: (1) *li*, its equivalent MP group *li+samo*, and (2) MP *ono*. These particles are ones of many that were investigated in an already conducted corpus analysis (Kresić & Batinić, 2014). In their analysis, Kresić and Batinić suggest possible equivalents of different MPs in German and English. For these particular MPs that are being studied in this paper they suggest these following pairs of synonymous MPs – *bloß* und *nur* (1), *gleich* and *doch* (2), in the German language and the equivalent expressions – *on earth* (1), and *again* (2), in English.

The investigated Croatian modal particles and the expected equivalents are laid out in Table 1.

Table 1. The investigated MPs and their equivalents

INVESTIGATED CROATIAN MPs	GERMAN EQUIVALENT MPs	ENGLISH EQUIVALENTS
<i>li</i>	<i>bloß, nur</i>	<i>on earth</i>
<i>li+samo</i>	<i>bloß, nur</i>	<i>on earth</i>
<i>ono</i>	<i>gleich, doch</i>	<i>again</i>

With the help of respondents in this research, this study attempts to determine whether these equivalents are the same ones that will be used by advanced students of German and English whose mother tongue is Croatian. This research was conducted in the period from May to the beginning of July 2023 and the questionnaire was filled out from May 19 to June 22 of the same year.

Some specific aspects of the methodology will be presented in the following sections. Namely in 4.1. the participants will be described in more detail, and in 4.2. the instruments that were used to conduct the research will be defined.

### 4.1. Participants

Two groups of university students who are on the MA (master) level participated in this study (N=37). The first group consists of university students of German language and literature (N=16) and the other group consists of university students of English language (N=21). Out of sixteen German students, there were four male participants and twelve female participants, and among the English language students there were six male and fifteen female participants. When

it comes to the participants who are German language learners, the majority of them attended the 4<sup>th</sup> year of graduate studies, that is 87,5% of the participants were 4<sup>th</sup> year students and 12,5% were 5<sup>th</sup> year. As for the respondents that are English language learners, most of them were also 4<sup>th</sup> year students, more precisely 14.3% of them attended the 5<sup>th</sup> year and the other 85.7% the 4<sup>th</sup> year.

All participants are Croatian native speakers and are learning German, i.e. English as their L2 or L3. The average length of learning English as L2 is 16 years and German 12 years. Most students study another language in addition to English or German and these are most often Spanish, French and Italian. Only students on higher years of study, i.e. students in the 4<sup>th</sup> or 5<sup>th</sup> year of study (1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> year of graduate studies), participated in the research. These students were taken in consideration because they have a higher language proficiency than those from lower years. It is very important that the respondents have a high language proficiency, because modal particles are a very difficult grammatical group of words to acquire (cf. Gulan, Kresić & Pavić Pintarić, 2017). Therefore, it is more likely that the results will be more efficient and more accurate if the person answering the questions has more knowledge of the language in question – English or German. Modal particles depend on the context and therefore it is difficult to comprehend their exact meaning and function. Only advanced language learners can successfully execute this task. The participants language proficiency presented a big, if not a key component, in this study because of the aspect of language learning that is present.

In this research, the proficiency level of each individual participant was not specifically looked into nor evaluated, for the reason that such additional testing would seem very tiring and demanding for the participants and would perhaps result in a possible withdrawal from the research entirely. Although their knowledge has not been evaluated, it can be concluded that they are at an advanced language level. In the 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> year of study, the student acquires a language level between B2 and C2. B2, C1 and C2 level represent a high level of knowledge of a particular language, and even a level of knowledge close to that of a native speaker. A person who has reached these language levels has the ability to express himself fluently and spontaneously without the need to search for appropriate words, to use the language flexibly and effectively in different social situations.

Although there was no examination of the participant's knowledge of the German and English language, the participants were asked to share their grade point average achieved in the last year of study and to assess their own knowledge of a certain language. This was done in order to get

at least a little insight into the level of their knowledge according to their own judgement and in order to obtain information about their achieved success so far.

The Table 2 shows the self-evaluation of their language knowledge.

Table 2. Self-evaluation and grade point average of the participants in the study

	<b>Self-evaluation</b>	<b>Grade point average</b>
<b>English language learners</b>	3,9	4,2
<b>German language learners</b>	3	3,8

English language students assessed their knowledge mostly with a grade of 4 or very good, and some of them with a grade of 3 or good, but the average of their grades is in fact 4,2 which is a slightly higher than how they graded themselves. The German language learners mostly gave themselves a grade of 3 or good, very few graded themselves with the grade 5 (excellent) or even 4 (very good). The average of their actual grade is 3,8, which is quite a bit more than what they themselves estimated.

## 4.2. Instruments

The instrument used to collect the necessary data for this research are two different questionnaires designed for two groups of participants. One questionnaire was intended for students of the German language and literature, and the other questionnaire for students of the English language and literature. The reason for two different questionnaires for each group of respondents is the different target language which the two groups needed to use to translate the sentences. To avoid confusion as to which language the participant should translate the series of sentences into, two questionnaires were prepared with the same questions, but in one the offered sentences were translated into English and in the other into German.<sup>10</sup> The questionnaire also collected information about gender, age, year of study, achieved success in the last academic year, and one part was dedicated to personal evaluation of one's knowledge of the language being studied.

After that short introduction, where the personal data of the participants were obtained and after the short linguistic biography of each respondent, the next part of the questionnaire followed,

---

<sup>10</sup> The questionnaire for German can be found in Appendix 1, and the questionnaire for English in Appendix 2.



which consists of 12 sentences in context, i.e., Wh questions in Croatian (the mother tongue of the respondents). The sentences that the participant had to translate were preceded by a short context that mostly consisted of one or two sentences. The sentence with the particle whose translation was requested was visually highlighted in bold letters. The instructions asked the participants only to translate the highlighted sentence so that it would not be too tiring. The context is of great importance here since, as mentioned in the previous chapters of this thesis (especially in 3.1) of this paper, modal particles are context-dependent and therefore this context strongly influences the translation that the participants will provide.

It was especially pointed out to the respondents that they have to translate only the highlighted sentence and not the preceding context. Each of these sentences can be translated without a modal particle, and those sentences will still have a compositional meaning, or they may even maintain a very similar or the same meaning as if they were translated with the particle because modal particles are functional elements which serve to offer additional pragmatically constructed/dependent meaning. What this means is that when translating a sentence without MP, the sentence will still have a similar meaning as it would have with MP, but a certain aspect will be less emphasized.

In the questionnaire there are four Wh sentences for each of the modal particles that are investigated in this paper, that is, for the particles *li*, *li samo* and *ono* and they were preceded by a context.

One example of a sentence that had to be translated is the following:

“Na jučerašnjoj Barbarinoj rođendanskoj zabavi jeli smo tortu koja je imala 5 katova. Njena majka je bez ičije pomoći napravila tu tortu. **Koliko li je ona vremena na to potrošila?**”

The highlighted Croatian sentence in the example, containing the modal particle, should have been translated, and what precedes that sentence is only the context. Respondents were not asked to translate the sentence/s from the context which preceded the one with the particle in order to prevent the translation task from being too demanding because of which the respondent may eventually give up participation in the research.

With the obtained translations of these sentences provided in the questionnaire, the goal is to get an answer to the question whether speakers of Croatian as a first language recognize the

selected Croatian particles as equivalent to German particles in actual use, as suggested by Kresić and Batinić (2014).

## 5. Results

The fact that the majority of the German language learners that participated attended the 4<sup>th</sup> year may indicate that their knowledge is at the level of B2/C1 according to the The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR). Therefore, they are not yet at the language level of a native speaker. It would be more favorable for the research if most of the participants were in the 5<sup>th</sup> year, which is also the highest year of study, because then they would have a higher language level and could use the language more easily and efficiently, and the results would be more reliable. Croatian is their mother tongue, and German and English are their L2. Students of the English language do not evaluate their knowledge in English with a grade of excellent, but overall, as shown in Table 2 students personally evaluate their knowledge with a grade of 4 ‘very good’, which on average almost overlaps with the grade they achieved in the last academic year. English language learners studied English for 16 years, or 17 for those who are in the 5<sup>th</sup> year of graduate studies. This indicates that they studied English throughout their whole schooling. In contrast, the majority of students of the German language only had the opportunity to learn German in the 4<sup>th</sup> grade of primary school, and therefore these students are significantly less exposed to the German language than English students. Some of the students of the German language stated that they learned German for 9 years, more precisely speaking 12,5% of them said that 31,3% said that they learned German for 8 years, 43,8% learned German for 13 years and 12,5% learned it for 14 years.

The respondents had only one task to complete in the questionnaire, and that was the task of sentence translation, that is, the translation of provided Wh-questions. The participants were presented with 12 sentences, 4 of which contained the particle *li*, 4 its equivalent MP group *li+samo*, and 4 the particle *ono*. These sentences, as already mentioned in 4.2, were preceded by a context that is of great importance. In that way respondents can better assess which modal particle is being spoken about and which modal particle they will use in the translation. In the questionnaires, English and German are considered as target languages, while Croatian (their mother tongue) is used as a source language since the sentences are originally in Croatian.

The students were asked to translate the offered sentences as accurately as possible. Students of the English language did not have the option of simply translating these Croatian MPs to English MPs, because in English modal particles do not exist as word category, but instead they were asked to translate these particles with corresponding expressions that overlap in function and meaning with the required MPs. Table 3 shows the average of the results of the two group

of respondents that participated in this study, that is, how the results differ between students of the English language learners and the German language learners. Here it is shown in percentages how "accurately" each group translated certain modal particles in the offered sentences. By accurately it was meant how exactly the modal particles or expressions they used for their translation correspond to the offered equivalents of the previously conducted corpus analysis (Kresić & Batinić, 2014). According to the assumption of Kresić and Batinić (2014), in the translation of MPs into German, the students should have used the particles *nur* and *bloß* for the particle *li* and the MP group *li+samo*, and *gleich* and *doch* as equivalents for the Croatian MP *ono*. The English language learners should have used the expression *on earth* for *li* and *li+samo* and for *ono* again.

Table 3. The average correspondingly obtained equivalents within two groups of participants

<b>Group of participants</b>	<b><i>li+samo</i></b>	<b><i>li</i></b>	<b><i>ono</i></b>
<b>English language learners</b>	0%	0%	57%
<b>German language learners</b>	51,6%	48,5%	21,9%

As can be seen in the Table 3, students of the English language did not use the proposed equivalent expression *on earth* at all for the particles *li* and *li+samo*, and for the particle *ono* 57% of cases has been used the expression *again*.

German students, on the other hand, were much more successful in translating MP *li* and *li+samo*, and from the Table 3 it can be read that in 51.6% of cases the proposed equivalent *nur* or *bloß* was used for the MP group *li+samo* and for the MP *li* in 48.5% of cases the same proposed equivalents were used.

The Table 4 that follows, shows the results of how students of the German language translated the corresponding Croatian MPs in the given sentences. Furthermore, in Table 5. below, the results of how English language students translated the same sentences that also contain the same MPs are presented.

Table 4. Results among German language learners based on translated sentences

	Sentence 1	Sentence 2	Sentence 3	Sentence 4	Translation success
<i>li+samo</i>	43,8%	43,8%	62,5%	56,3%	51,60%
<i>li</i>	75%	62,5%	37,5%	18,8%	48,45%
<i>ono</i>	12,5%	18,8%	31,3%	25%	21,90%

Table 5. Results among English language learners based on translated sentences

	Sentence 1	Sentence 2	Sentence 3	Sentence 4	Translation success
<i>li+samo</i>	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
<i>li</i>	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
<i>ono</i>	9,5%	100%	23,8%	95,2%	57,13%

The German language learners had an 51,6% success rate in the overall translation of the *li+samo* MP (see Table 3). This shows that the equivalent proposed for the Croatian MP particle *li+samo*, which are the particles *nur* and *bloß* in the German language, were used in half of the translations of all four sentences in which *li+samo* had to be translated. When it comes to the modal particle *li*, the students translated it as *nur* with a 48,45% success rate. This also shows that in half of the participants responses to the translation of the sentence with the particle *li* they translated that particle with the particle *nur*, which is proposed as its equivalent in German. As for the *li* particle, in the fourth sentence that the student was supposed to translate, the least of them used the required German MP equivalent *nur*. On the other hand, the particle *ono* was not so successfully translated, i.e. it was only translated in 21.9% of cases overall as the proposed equivalents *gleich* and *doch* in the German language. In the third and fourth sentences, more students used *gleich* and *doch* in their translations than they did in the first two sentences.

On some occasions, if they did not completely ignore the MP in the sentence, German language students used some other equivalents for the given MPs. For the MP *li*, some have used these substitutions on a couple of occasions: *nun*, *aber*, *doch*, *denn eigentlich*, *wohl*. For *li+samo* they used *doch*, *denn* and *aber*, and for the MP *ono* they often used *denn*, and occasionally even *nur*. Furthermore, when it came to the translations of the modal particles in the English language the

results differ enormously. The Croatian modal particle *li*, but also its equivalent MP group *li+samo* were not translated as their proposed equivalent English expression *on earth*, in any of the given sentences for translation. In a few cases, *even* or *already* were used by some participants in some of the translations of the sentences, but in almost all cases the students completely bypassed and omitted the modal particle *li* and the MP group *li+samo* in their translation. The English students, in most cases, translated all 8 sentences, in which these particles (*li* and *li+samo*) were found, without modal particles at all. It is probable, the students considered that by bypassing the translation and without using those modal particles, the translated sentences will still make sense, so they translated them in that way; not using any modal particles nor other word categories to replace the Croatian modal particles *li* and *li+samo*.

On the other hand, as far as the Croatian MP *ono* is concerned, the English language learners were much more successful in its translation than in the translation of the *li* and *li+samo* MPs. The respondents used in 57,13% cases the proposed equivalent *again*. In the second sentence, all the participants of this respondent group used the proposed equivalent *again* in their translations. As far as sentences are concerned, in the first and third sentences they used the expression *again* much less than they did in the second and fourth. But by comparing all four sentences that contained the Croatian MP *ono*, it can be concluded that in half of the cases overall the participants used the proposed equivalent *again* in English. English language students mostly omitted MPs in their translations of sentences, but on a few occasions they translated the particles *li* and *li+samo* as *even* or *exactly*. In some instances, they translated the MP *ono* as *exactly* or *actually* instead of *again*.

## 6. Discussion

In order to reach a conclusion about whether the recommended equivalents in German and expressions that replace modal particles in the English language have the same function and meaning as the Croatian particles *li*, *li+samo* and *ono*, the results of the questionnaire were analyzed in which the participants answered the offered 12 sentences. Establishing the meaning of the particle itself is a very tiring and demanding task, and the area of modal particles is very little researched, and there is very little literature and only few manuals for learning this material.

In the corpus analysis, Kresić & Batinić (2014) therefore provide the characteristics and context of modal particles and also of modal particles described in the lexicon which are dealt with in this paper. These features of MPs, which this paper deals with, have already been mentioned in one of the previous chapters (see 3.3.). In addition to the characteristics, the equivalents of those Croatian particles were also proposed, which by assumption should have been found in the translations of the sentences translated by the respondents in the assigned questionnaire.

According to the results of the questionnaire, it can be seen that the students had a lot of difficulties when translating modal particles. This was the case especially in the case of the modal particles *li* and *li+samo*, in the group of English graduate students. It happened that many students bypassed that particle in the sentence and completely omitted it in their translation. Often, in most translations, the students did not use any modal particle at all, but they also did not use any word or expression in order to replace the provided modal particle in the target language. What is especially surprising is that the equivalent of that modal particle *on earth* was not used at all.

Although the English language learners probably knew, at least implicitly and tacitly, what the modal particle means in the Croatian language, i.e. what function it achieves in the sentence it modifies, they obviously had difficulty in translating it. This conclusion can be drawn because they completely omitted the MP and looked at it as an unnecessary component in the translation of the meaning of the sentence into the target language, i.e. English

The potential reason why this happened is very likely because the students, even though they are already in graduate studies and have been exposed to a large amount of language learning

materials, have not been exposed to a sufficient amount of material about MPs specifically. Modal particles are, as already mentioned, a very complex component of the language to learn, and in addition, the lack of material makes their acquisition very difficult. That limited amount of exposure of foreign language learners to modal particles in the classroom prevents the learners to understand and comprehend the meaning of a certain MP. According to Mollering (2001) Modal particles appear mostly in spontaneous informal speech and are not used in the foreign language classroom as much.

The context represents a very important component in finding the meaning and determining the function of a certain MP. Modal particles in various contexts provide the opportunity for the student to devote their attention to understand the meaning depending on the given context. Precisely because of the context of the sentences in the questionnaire, that the participants filled out, the success of translating one and the same modal particle in different given sentences is not the same. Based on the sentence in which the modal particle is found, and with the help of the given context for each sentence, the students were able to determine the meaning of that modal particle and, based on their conclusions, translate it into the target language. Students' conclusions vary depending on the sentence in which the MP is and the context, thus the students of the English language used different equivalents for the particle *ono* in the first and third sentence, and in the second and fourth sentences they almost completely used the proposed English equivalent *again*. On the other hand, students of the German language translated the particle *li* in the third and fourth sentences with some other equivalents and not with the suggested *nur* and *bloß*, and in the first and second, they mainly tended to use the suggested equivalents. According to different translations of the same particle, but in different sentences, the students also translated the modal particle differently due to the context. This proves that they depended a lot on the very context of the modal particle for its translation.

MPs do not affect the basic meaning of the utterance, but they modify it conveying the attitudes of the speaker; they also do not add descriptive meaning to the sentence. This being said, this could be the reason why there was a frequent absence of the modal particle in the translation of the given sentences that the students translated. Some language learners did not think that the modal particle was necessary, and with the fact that they omitted it, the meaning of the sentence remained almost the same.

Although English has no MPs as a word category their function is not absent in that language. There are other means, linguistic forms and expressions that carry out the function that MP have. This has been studied on the basis of English expressions *on earth* and *again* as the



proposed equivalents for the Croatian MP *li* and the MP word group *li+samo*, and *ono*. An attempt was made to determine how well these particles match and to what extent do they agree with the function and meaning with modal particles in languages that have MPs as a word category; in this case they are Croatian and German.

In the results of the analysis, it is evident that the students did not think of the expression *on earth* as an equivalent for the Croatian particles *li* and *li+samo* at all. On the contrary, for the particle *ono* they had an idea of what to use, that is, in 57% of cases they used *again*, which was also the expected equivalent. This shows that even though there are no MPs in English, it is possible for language learners to understand the meanings of Croatian modal particles and use adequate equivalents for them in English, although it could be a bit more challenging to do so with some MPs.

In their study, Kresić and Gulan (2012) concluded that seniors use modal particles better and translate them into the language they are studying more easily than freshmen. It turned out that freshmen also do not start from scratch and supposedly have an intuitive knowledge that can be used as a base for further study of MPs. Although the results of seniors are better than the one of freshmen, they are not considerably better, which shows that an adequate learning plan has to be developed for the acquisition of modal particles. From their research results, it can be seen that students who have been learning the language for a longer time comprehend the concept of modal particles more successfully. For this reason, in this thesis 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> year students of graduate studies, were taken as participants in the research with the expectation from the hypothesis that these students will be able to translate MPs with a considering their high level of language knowledge. There is still little teaching material available for learning modal particles, which can be seen in the lack of knowledge of German and English students in the area of modal particles. Furthermore, a couple of participants in the group of German language students commented on the questionnaire that it was very difficult for them to incorporate modal particles into their translations of sentences and that they were not sure of the accuracy of their answers.

The results of this research show that German students are able to translate the obtained MP, considering their level of language knowledge. When it comes to the English language, this does not apply because the English language students completely failed to translate one of the given MPs. That being said, it can be concluded that the first hypothesis turned out to be wrong because the students of English language and literature failed to translate MPs even though they

have a high level of language knowledge, considering that they are in the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> year of graduate studies.

Students of the German language did indeed use the assumed equivalents significantly more than the students of the English language did. This was fully expected because, as mentioned, the English language does not have MPs as a word category. In conclusion, it turns out that the second hypothesis was correct and German language learners used MPs more easily than English language learners do.

## 7. Conclusion

MPs represent difficult material even for graduate students. In the German language, where modal particles are present as a word category, they are still difficult for students to understand because the students need an excellent knowledge of the language, or even the knowledge of a native speaker, in order for them to fully use modal particles with ease. In the graduate study of German and literature, MPs are mentioned, and the students use them, but it is very difficult for the foreign language learners to fully understand that teaching content, given that the material is mentioned or elaborated as much as it should in class. The results show that the students are able to use the appropriate particle in accordance with the context in which it is found, but in half the cases the students cannot figure out which particle to use and they even skip it in their translation and do not consider it in the given sentence. If professors devoted themselves to MP and had the necessary materials at their disposal, students would use MPs much better. Some students themselves emphasized that in some sentences it was simply not clear to them which MP to use, and they were not so sure of the accuracy of their answers. MPs do not affect the meaning of the sentence that much, so for this reason the students were not inclined to focus on this small component in the sentence.

Students of the English language had a more difficult task of translating modal particles than students of the German language, because in the English language modal particles do not exist but are replaced by expressions from other word categories that match in meaning and function. As can be seen from the results, regarding the overall success of the translation of the modal particles that this paper deals with, English students were much less successful than German language learners. In fact, they completely ignored the translations of some modal particles because they simply could not find adequate equivalents for them in the English language. Not once did they use the term *on earth* as an equivalent for MPs *li* and *li+samo*.

It can be concluded that the German particles *bloß* and *nur* correspond to the function of the Croatian MP *li* and its equivalent modal group *li+samo* in context. On the other hand, as the study shows, it could be that the English expression *on earth* does not express the function of these Croatian particles in context. Another explanation for this could be the fact that *on earth* has multiple functions, which is why the participants failed to recognize it as an equivalent of the particle *li* or *li samo*. As for the Croatian MP particle *ono*, it also coincides in function with the English expression *again* which is proposed as its equivalent in English and with the German MPs *gleich* and *doch*. It is important to emphasize that the context in which the

individual particle is found is of great importance. The majority of students used in some sentences the exact equivalent that was proposed, but in other sentences with that same Croatian MP they translated it differently. The fact that the students did not offer equivalents could be explained by the assumption that probably younger speakers, i.e. the group of respondents, do not recognize the function achieved by these Croatian particles, because perhaps it is not sufficiently represented in their spontaneous speech. Maybe they use some other strategies to express what is expressed by the particle (e.g. intonation or other means).

Future research can concentrate on two languages, whereby the respondents would be a group of bilingual participants, i.e. the speakers who acquired simultaneously both languages under investigation. Considering that such a group of people would have almost equal knowledge of both languages that are spoken, and thus implement the most accurate possible equivalents for certain MPs in different languages.

## References

- Barić, E., Lončarić, M., Malić, D., Pavešić, S., Peti, M., Zečević, V., & Znika, M. (1997). *Hrvatska gramatika* (2nd ed.). Školska knjiga.
- Batinić, M., Kresić, M., & Pavić Pintarić, A. (2015). *The intensifying function of modal particles and modal elements in a cross-linguistic perspective*. *Rasprave: Časopis Instituta za hrvatski jezik i jezikoslovlje*, 41(1), 1-27.
- Braber, N., & McLelland, N. (2010). Combining Modal Particles in German and Dutch. *Journal of Germanic Linguistics*, 22(04), 461–482. doi:10.1017/s1470542710000152.
- Council of Europe. 2001. *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, teaching, assessment*. Strasbourg: Council of Europe Publishing/Cambridge: Cambridge University Pres.
- Diewald, G., & Kresić, M. (2010). Ein übereinzelsprachliches kontrastives Beschreibungsmodell für Partikelbedeutungen. *Linguistik Online*, 44(4). <https://bop.unibe.ch/linguistik-online/article/view/400>.
- Dörre, L., Czypionka, A., Trotzke, A., & Bayer, J. (2018). *The processing of German modal particles and their counterparts*. *Linguistische Berichte*, (255), 58-91.
- Grammar Duden (2009) Duden 4: Die Grammatik: unentbehrlich für richtiges Deutsch. Mannheim. Dudenverlag
- Gulan, T., Kresić, M., & Pavić Pintarić, A. (2017). *Foreign language learners'potential effective transfer in the use of modal particles*. *Strani jezici: časopis za primijenjenu lingvistiku*, 46(1-2), 23-40.
- Hansen, M. B. M. (1998). *The function of discourse particles: A study with special reference to spoken standard French* (Vol. 53). John Benjamins Publishing.
- Helbig, G. & Buscha, J. (2002.) *Deutsche Grammatik. Ein Handbuch für den Ausländerunterricht*. Leipzig: Enzyklopädie.
- Karagjosova, E. (2004). *The meaning and function of German modal particles*. DFKI
- Kresić, M., Batinić Angster, M., & Diewald, G. (2017). *A format for the description of German modal particles and their functional equivalents in Croatian and English*. Fedriani, C.; Sanso,

A. Pragmatic markers, discourse markers, and modal particles: what do we know and where do we go from here, 229-254

König, E., & Gast, V. (2009). *Understanding English-German Contrasts*.

Kresić, M., & Batinić, M. (2014). *Modalpartikeln: Deutsch im Vergleich mit dem Kroatischen und Englischen/Modalne čestice: njemački jezik u usporedbi s hrvatskim i engleskim*. Sveučilište u Zadru.

Kresić Vukosav, M., & Batinić Angster, M. (2019) Mehrsprachiger Leitfaden zum Erlernen von Modalpartikeln: Deutsch, Kroatisch, Englisch. Sveučilište u Zadru.

Kresić, M., & Gulan, T. (2012). *Interlingual identifications and assessment of similarities between L1, L2, and L3: Croatian learners' use of modal particles and equivalent modal elements*. Cross-linguistic influences in multilingual language acquisition, 63-80.)

Mitkov, R. (2014). *Anaphora resolution*. Routledge.

Mollering, M. (2001). Teaching German modal particles: A corpus-based approach.

Uvanović, Ž. (2006). *Kroatische Konversationsmarker: Versuch einer Extraktion im translationalen Vergleich mit deutschen Modalpartikeln (dh Abtönungspartikeln) und deren englischen Entsprechungen*. Books on Demand.

Waltereit, R. (2001). *Modal particles and their functional equivalents: a speech-act-theoretic approach*. Journal of Pragmatics, 33(9), 1391–1417. doi:10.1016/s0378-2166(00)00057-6

Winters, M. (2009). *Modal particles explained: How modal particles creep into translations and reveal translators' styles*. Target. International Journal of Translation Studies, 21(1), 74-97.

## Appendix 1

### ANKETNI UPITNIK- EKVIVALENTI MODALNIH ČESTICA U UPOTREBI NAPREDNIH UČENIKA JEZIKA (NJEMAČKI)

Poštovani/e,

pred Vama se nalazi anketa koja se provodi u svrhu izrade završnog rada prijediplomskog studija Language and communication in a multilingual society na Odjelu za lingvistiku Sveučilišta u Zadru pod mentorstvom doc. dr. sc. Mije Batinić Angster.

Cilj ovog istraživanja jest provjeriti podudaraju li se njemačke čestice i istovrijedni engleski izrazi s funkcijom koju hrvatske modalne čestice izražavaju u određenom kontekstu.

Kako biste sudjelovali u ovom istraživanju, važno je da ste student/ica njemačkog jezika na 4. ili 5. godini diplomskog studija.

Vaš doprinos u ovom istraživanju ogleda se u što iskrenijem odgovoru na pitanja koja se pred Vama nalaze i u tome da pročitate rečenice te da prevedete na njemački jezik samo one od njih koje su istaknute **masnim slovima (bold)**.

Ne postoji fizički ili psihički rizik povezan s provođenjem ovog istraživanja. Rješavanje upitnika je u potpunosti anonimno te će se dobiveni podatci koristiti isključivo u istraživačke svrhe. Također, Vaše sudjelovanje u potpunosti je dobrovoljno te možete odustati od sudjelovanja u bilo kojem trenutku.

Kako biste ispunili upitnik, bit će vam potrebno oko 10 minuta.

Unaprijed zahvaljujem na sudjelovanju!

1.Pristanak na sudjelovanje u istraživanju

Pristajem da se moji odgovori koriste u istraživačke svrhe.

2.Spol

Muško

Žensko

Ostalo...

3.Dob (u godinama)

4. Godina studija

5. Koji vam je materinski jezik

6. Koliko dugo učite engleski jezik? (odgovor u godinama)

7. Zna li neke druge jezike osim hrvatskog i engleskog na naprednoj razini? (C1 i C2 razina)

Da

Ne

Ostalo...

8. Ako vam je odgovor na prethodno pitanje bio da, napišite o kojim se jezicima radi.

Zadatak

U nastavku ankete dobiti ćete nekoliko rečenica s odgovarajućim kontekstom. Od Vas se traži da prevedete samo one rečenice koje su napisane **masnim slovima**. Prevedite rečenice onako kako vi mislite da je to ispravno, te ukoliko se ne možete sjetiti točnog prijevoda neke riječi možete koristiti sinonim. Rečenice prevodite na njemački jezik.

Kad mi je baka jučer pokazivala album sa slikama jedna slika mi je bila vrlo poznata. **Gdje li sam samo već vidjela tu sliku?**

Prijevod:

Prekjučer sam bilo na jednoj zabavi i upoznao sam jednu vrlo simpatičnu curu. **Kako li se samo zove ta cura koju sam upoznao?**

Prijevod:

Profesorica je jučer zadala jedan pretežak zadatak za domaći rad. Nitko osim Filipa ga nije riješio. **Koliko li je samo proveo vremena rješavajući taj zadatak?**

Prijevod:

Anna je jučer oborila rekord za najduže kuhanje bez stanke. Kuhala je ukupno 100 sati. **Kako li je to samo uspjela?**

Prijevod:



Lana mi je pričala kako je u jednom danu uspjela napisati cijeli seminarski rad iz sociologije.  
**Kako li je ona to napravila?**

Prijevod:

Na jučerašnjoj Barbarinoj rođendanskoj zabavi jeli smo tortu koja je imala 5 katova. Njena majka je bez ičije pomoći napravila tu tortu. **Koliko li je ona vremena na to potrošila?**

Prijevod:

Moja kuća se nalazi izvan grada te svi uvijek do mene dolaze busom ili autom.

**Kako li je Luka uspio doći ovdje pješke?**

Prijevod:

Matea mi je pričala kako je vidjela Dominika s nekom curom na kavi. **S kim li je on bio na kavi?**

Prijevod:

Prošli put na satu matematike nisam pratila kad je profesorica zadavala domaći.

**Možeš li mi reći, koje ono zadatke imamo za domaću zadaću?**

Prijevod:

Prijateljica mi je pričala o nekoj prestrogoj profesorici na tvom odjelu.

**Kako se ono zove ta profesorica?**

Prijevod:

**Kada je ono Anamariji rođendan?** Da joj ne zaboravim čestitati.

Prijevod:

**Koliko ono katova ima zgrada u kojoj živiš?** Ja se sjećam da ih je bilo 5 ali Miro kaže da ih je 6.

Prijevod:

Hvala Vam na ispunjavanju upitnika. Ukoliko imate neke sugestije ili imate nešto za nadodati ovdje to možete napisati.

.

## Appendix 2

### ANKETNI UPITNIK- EKVIVALENTI MODALNIH ČESTICA U UPOTREBI NAPREDNIH UČENIKA JEZIKA (ENGLISKI)

Poštovani/e,

pred Vama se nalazi anketa koja se provodi u svrhu izrade završnog rada prijediplomskog studija Language and communication in a multilingual society na Odjelu za lingvistiku Sveučilišta u Zadru pod mentorstvom doc. dr. sc. Mije Batinić Angster.

Cilj ovog istraživanja jest provjeriti podudaraju li se njemačke čestice i istovrijedni engleski izrazi s funkcijom koju hrvatske modalne čestice izražavaju u određenom kontekstu.

Kako biste sudjelovali u ovom istraživanju, važno je da ste student/ica engleskog jezika na 4. ili 5. godini diplomskog studija.

Vaš doprinos u ovom istraživanju ogleda se u što iskrenijem odgovoru na pitanja koja se pred Vama nalaze i u tome da pročitate rečenice te da prevedete na engleski jezik samo one od njih koje su istaknute **masnim slovima (bold)**.

Ne postoji fizički ili psihički rizik povezan s provođenjem ovog istraživanja. Rješavanje upitnika je u potpunosti anonimno te će se dobiveni podatci koristiti isključivo u istraživačke svrhe. Također, Vaše sudjelovanje u potpunosti je dobrovoljno te možete odustati od sudjelovanja u bilo kojem trenutku.

Kako biste ispunili upitnik, bit će vam potrebno oko 10 minuta.

Unaprijed zahvaljujem na sudjelovanju!

1.Pristanak na sudjelovanje u istraživanju

Pristajem da se moji odgovori koriste u istraživačke svrhe.

2.Spol

Muško

Žensko

Ostalo...

3.Dob (u godinama)

4.Godina studija

5. Koji vam je materinski jezik

6. Koliko dugo učite engleski jezik? (odgovor u godinama)

7. Znete li neke druge jezike osim hrvatskog i engleskog na naprednoj razini? (C1 i C2 razina)

Da

Ne

Ostalo...

8. Ako vam je odgovor na prethodno pitanje bio da, napišite o kojim se jezicima radi.

Zadatak

U nastavku ankete dobiti ćete nekoliko rečenica s odgovarajućim kontekstom. Od Vas se traži da prevedete samo one rečenice koje su napisane **masnim slovima**. Prevedite rečenice onako kako vi mislite da je to ispravno, te ukoliko se ne možete sjetiti točnog prijevoda neke riječi možete koristiti sinonim. Rečenice prevodite na engleski jezik.

Kad mi je baka jučer pokazivala album sa slikama jedna slika mi je bila vrlo poznata. **Gdje li sam samo već vidjela tu sliku?**

Prijevod:

Prekjučer sam bilo na jednoj zabavi i upoznao sam jednu vrlo simpatičnu curu. **Kako li se samo zove ta cura koju sam upoznao?**

Prijevod:

Profesorica je jučer zadala jedan pretežak zadatak za domaći rad. Nitko osim Filipa ga nije riješio. **Koliko li je samo proveo vremena rješavajući taj zadatak?**

Prijevod:

Anna je jučer oborila rekord za najduže kuhanje bez stanke. Kuhala je ukupno 100 sati. **Kako li je to samo uspjela?**

Prijevod:

Lana mi je pričala kako je u jednom danu uspjela napisati cijeli seminarski rad iz sociologije.  
**Kako li je ona to napravila?**

Prijevod:

Na jučerašnjoj Barbarinoj rođendanskoj zabavi jeli smo tortu koja je imala 5 katova. Njena majka je bez ičije pomoći napravila tu tortu. **Koliko li je ona vremena na to potrošila?**

Prijevod:

Moja kuća se nalazi izvan grada te svi uvijek do mene dolaze busom ili autom.

**Kako li je Luka uspio doći ovdje pješke?**

Prijevod:

Matea mi je pričala kako je vidjela Dominika s nekom curom na kavi. **S kim li je on bio na kavi?**

Prijevod:

Prošli put na satu matematike nisam pratila kad je profesorica zadavala domaći.

**Možeš li mi reći, koje ono zadatke imamo za domaću zadaću?**

Prijevod:

Prijateljica mi je pričala o nekoj prestrognoj profesorici na tvom odjelu.

**Kako se ono zove ta profesorica?**

Prijevod:

**Kada je ono Anamariji rođendan?** Da joj ne zaboravim čestitati.

Prijevod:

**Koliko ono katova ima zgrada u kojoj živiš?** Ja se sjećam da ih je bilo 5 ali Miro kaže da ih je 6.

Prijevod:

Hvala Vam na ispunjavanju upitnika. Ukoliko imate neke sugestije ili imate nešto za nadodati ovdje to možete napisati.