

# English as a Lingua Franca Among Croatian Instagram Users

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Odjel za anglistiku

Diplomski sveučilišni studij anglistike, smjer: nastavnički (dvopredmetni)

**Ivana Čičmir**

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Zadar, 2020.



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Zadar, 19. svibnja 2020.

## Table of contents

1. Introduction .....	3
2. English as lingua franca .....	4
2.1. Defining ELF .....	4
2.2. Historical and cultural development of ELF .....	6
2.3. ELF and its current domains in the international context .....	8
2.4. Future of ELF .....	10
2.5. Influence of English as lingua franca on Croatian.....	12
2.5.1. Croatian-English code-switching.....	15
3. Social media .....	19
3.1. Role of social media in contemporary society .....	19
3.1.1. Instagram .....	20
3.2. Online communication .....	21
4. Analysis of the use of English among Croatian Instagram users .....	24
4.1. Methodology.....	24
4.2. Results .....	25
4.2.1. Deviations in grammar.....	25
4.2.2. Deviations in orthography .....	39
4.3. Discussion .....	45
5. Conclusion.....	47
6. References .....	49
7. English as a lingua franca among Croatian Instagram users: Summary and key words.....	53
8. Engleski kao lingua franca među hrvatskim korisnicima Instagrama: Sažetak i ključne riječi .....	54

## 1. Introduction

English is considered to be an international language in almost every aspect of contemporary society. It is commonly referred to by various authors such as Crystal (2003), Seidlhofer (2005) or Ostler (2010) as a leading global lingua franca. Undoubtedly, it plays a significant role in online communication and social media which is rapidly growing nowadays. Almost everyone today uses social networks like Facebook, Instagram, or Twitter for personal and/or business purposes. Although users communicate by using various languages in their online communication, the dominance of English is undeniable. Even the users whose mother tongue is not English, mainly use English when communicating online due to its status. Thus, Croatians are not an exception, i.e. English is widely used especially with regard to online communication. Taking this into consideration, the main focus of this thesis is to provide an insight into the Croatian Instagram scene and the use of English in posts published on Instagram by individuals whose profiles are public. The analysis will include the posts of public Croatian Instagram users<sup>1</sup> in English. A particular focus will be placed on the so-called deviations from the standard English norms frequently occurring among non-native English speakers. Owing to the fact that Instagram profiles whose posts were analysed in the research are mainly famous, publicly recognized people in the Republic Croatia and some even further, so-called “influencers” of Instagram and other national celebrity persons, they are followed by the vast majority of people. As a result, if habitually using distorted forms in English, such behaviour could unconsciously influence language acquisition of their non-native English followers who could possibly adopt such language use.

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<sup>1</sup> Public meaning that their posts are available to wider audiences, i.e. everyone online.

## 2. English as a lingua franca

This chapter consists of several subchapters which provide an insight into the development of English through its past, present and future moments. Also, it deals with the influence of English on Croatian and the relationship between the two languages.

### 2.1. Defining ELF

The concept of lingua franca has been defined by Thomason (2001), as “a language of wider communication between groups who do not speak each other’s languages, as well as between native speakers (if any) of the lingua franca of other groups” (p. 269). Thomason (2001) also specifies that areas, where lingua francas are used, have to be multilingual, i.e. characterized by the presence of different languages, otherwise the use of LF will not be needed. Throughout history, the world’s most prominent lingua francas were Greek, Latin, French, and, finally English in recent times. (Thomason, 2001, p. 24).

It has already been noted that any lingua franca exists exclusively in the surroundings with multiple different languages, so the users of different L1 can communicate properly using the language considered to be LF. Still, Thomason (2001) explains that LF can also be L1: “A lingua franca is by definition learned as a second language by at least some of its speakers. Some lingua francas are also learned as a first language by some speakers; the most obvious example is English, a (or the) worldwide modern lingua franca” (p. 269). Also, Seidlhofer (2011) discusses English as a lingua franca, in relation to “any use of English among speakers of different first languages for whom English is the communicative medium of choice, and often the only option.” (p. 7).

However, some linguists such as Firth (1996), define lingua franca solely as a “contact language between persons who share neither a common native tongue nor a common (national) culture, and for whom English is the chosen foreign language of communication” (p. 240). Hence, the concept of lingua franca only refers to speakers of different L1s. What is more, the environment fertile for

the usage of lingua franca has to be plurilingual, i.e. there are several different languages spoken in a particular area, which opens a possibility for lingua franca as an auxiliary language for communication. Metaphorically speaking, lingua franca can be perceived as a sort of bridge in communication among speakers who do not speak the same first language.

Thus, according to Hynninen (2016), "...most speakers of ELF (or any lingua franca) are plurilingual: the lingua franca is an additional language, or in some cases an L1, that forms one part of a speaker's linguistic repertoire" (p. 11).

Another important aspect, when it comes to ELF definitions would be its categorization. Accordingly, Cogo and Dewey (2012) have identified ELF concerning its possible setting and function. Also, mentioning ELF in terms of settings, it is fundamental to understand Kachru's (1990) theory of the three concentric circles, including the inner circle, the outer, and the expanding circle. The inner circle stands for English as a native language, and it mainly refers to countries such as the UK, the USA, Canada, Australia or New Zealand. Here, English is used as a mother tongue, and it is national language, i.e. *de facto* spoken by the most of its speakers. The outer circle, on the other hand, stands for English as a second language, and geographically refers to former English colonies like India, the Philippines or Singapore. Finally, the expanding circle stands for English as a foreign language which is a sort of language used in educational contexts. Those three circles contribute to the representation of the so-called global form of English.

Secondly, ELF identified through its function implies that English is perceived as a favourable choice among speakers of different mother tongues. This mainly refers to speakers of English as a foreign language. Thus, when it comes to lingua franca, undoubtedly the non-native speakers play a major role, and hence they construct their way of using lingua franca, in this particular case English. As a result, the emphasis of every research related to ELF is always on non-native speakers in order to discover their particular way of communicating. Furthermore, as Jenkins (2009) claims, native speakers are usually excluded from any sort of research within the framework



of lingua franca, since they are characterized by a possessive approach to the language and sometimes they feel like the “real owners” of the language perceived as lingua franca while non-native speakers’ varieties are regarded as minor and insignificant (p. 15).

## **2.2. Historical and cultural development of ELF**

Nowadays it is undeniable that English has reached a worldwide, global status. But, we need to ask certain questions about this outcome. Crystal (2003) raises three fundamental questions in relation to the development of English on a global scale; “what makes it a world language? why is English the leading candidate? and will it continue to hold this position?” (p. 15).

To start with, English is considered the most prominent world language today mainly because of the power of its speakers. As Crystal (2003) notes “especially their political and military power” (p. 9). Military power usually includes an economic one, since it is crucial for maintaining and expanding the language. The geographical-historical and socio-cultural reasons for English becoming the global language are mutually intertwined since the first one presents the way by which English accomplished such position on the global scale, while socio-cultural refers to particular reasons why that is so. (Crystal, 2003, pp. 29).

Historically speaking, the very first origins of the English language were in the fifth century, following the invasions from the north of Europe, and then spreading around the British Isles. In 1066 and Norman Conquest, many English noblemen deserted to Scotland and implemented the English language there. For the next 300 years, the language remained merely on the British Isles, and as it was estimated at that time, there were 5 to 7 million speakers whose mother tongue was English. The majority of them were residents of the British Isles (Crystal, 2003, pp. 30-31).

However, greater expansions started in the sixteenth century with the first expedition to the New World in 1584. Due to certain conflicts with the local residents, this expedition was doomed

to failure. Thus, Jamestown in the area of Virginia, established in 1607, is considered to be the first concrete community in the new land.

In the seventeenth century America faced an influx of Quakers (especially in Pennsylvania) from the Midlands and the north of England, while the immigrants from Northern Ireland came in the eighteenth century. But the highest peak of the so-called American immigration was certainly during the nineteenth century when Europe was especially hit by revolution, poverty, and hunger. Upon their arrival to America, most the immigrants were obliged to speak English, which resulted in massive spread of the use of English as a mother tongue. Thus, the USA today contains almost 70 per cent of native English speakers (Crystal, 2003, pp. 33-36).

Regarding Canada, John Cabot arrived in 1497, but the spread of English occurred a century later. Also, certain conflicts with French occurred on the territory, and, consequently, Canada today has two official languages- English and French. However, the French were vanquished in the wars of the eighteenth century which opened a clear path not only for settlers from New England but also for those from Europe- England, Scotland, Ireland. Other former British colonies were Australia and New Zealand, established in 1770 (Crystal, 2003, pp. 36-43).

In addition to colonial expansion, it should be mentioned that the Industrial Revolution took place in England in 1760. Consequently, new vocabulary related to science and technology was introduced. Also, the majority of the leading scientific names were from English-speaking areas, either native speakers, or operated professionally in the areas dominated by the English language.

Subsequently, Crystal (2003) mentions the growth of the international banking system which additionally reinforced the economic power and established a sort of economic imperialism with London and New York City as the major investment centres. Therefore, English is again a natural choice for communication, and this also shows how economic imperialism consequently created linguistic imperialism and the apparent predominance of one particular language.

Finally, Crystal (2003) concludes that “English had become the dominant language of global politics and economy, and all the signs were that it would remain so. Its status was not in question, and the role of the USA in its future was clear” (p. 85).

### **2.3. ELF and its current domains in the international context**

Indisputably, English is regarded as the leading lingua franca of every aspect of modern society from business and education to popular culture. This just reinforces the reasons why English is omnipresent and important on a global scale. In the previous subchapter, mainly historical reasons were discussed, while this one focuses primarily on ELF and its applications today. What also needs to be pointed out is that English is seen as a dominant lingua franca of international business (BELF). However, in this domain of use, the emphasis is on the content, rather than the form. According to Jenkins et al. (2011), “BELF communication is seen as content-oriented (rather than focusing on the form) and requiring domain specific knowledge” (p. 298). Furthermore, Ehrenreich concludes that “although native-like fluency is not crucial in oral communication, in writing it “is still seen as a matter of prestige” (as cited in Jenkins et al., 2011, p. 298). In other words, although the correctness in spoken communication is not pivotal, as opposed to the transfer of the message and the proper use of appropriate vocabulary related to the field (also known as English for specific purposes), it can be considered crucial for the establishment and maintenance of the social status.

Secondly, English is highly used in international affairs within international organizations such as the UN, or the EU in Europe. The League of Nations, an official predecessor of the actual UN, was substituted by the UN in 1945 and this act permanently affected the position of English as an international lingua franca. English is then used as the main language in leading international political meetings all around the world. Also, some organizations use two or more official languages, but English is always included in the combination with another language in use. For example, the Arab Air Carriers Association acknowledges both Arabic and English as their official

languages. However, there are certain organizations at the international level that accept the use of more than just several languages, i.e. their member states can communicate in their mother tongue while participating at the common meetings. Such a case is certainly the European Union, which currently counts 28 member countries in total, and recognizes 24 official languages. Each of the member countries has the right to utilize its official language. Thus, the EU provides translators and interpreters as their regular staff. However, English still has a crucial role due to the fact that it is commonly used as an intermediary language. For example, if there is no Croatian/Estonian translator, the announcement in Croatian will firstly be translated into English, and subsequently in Estonian. Again, English served as an essential language for effective communication (Crystal, 2003, pp. 86-90).

Also, English is the lingua franca of the press and the media, primarily because the leading papers nowadays are from English-speaking areas, i.e. the UK and the USA (Wallechinsky, Wallace and Wallace, 1977, p. 114).

Furthermore, as the international market expands, the role of English in the field of advertising is completely indisputable. As a matter of fact, the influence of English in advertising has become so powerful that it has affected even some other languages. Crystal (2003) presents an example of a verb adopted by Italian *cocacolonizzare* formed as a combination of *coca cola* and *colonize* (p. 95).

The influence and power of English cannot be denied even in popular culture. English is certainly the leading language in the film and music industries. With the dominance of Hollywood, it is not a surprise that English is the one spoken in its blockbusters while the Oscar system has always been inclined to English-speaking movies (Crystal, 2003, pp. 98-104).

Also, English is the significant lingua franca of international tourism. It is a well-known fact that all the signs at the airports are always provided in English. Another instance could be dual menus at the restaurants; one in the local language, other in English. (Crystal, pp. 104-106).

Furthermore, the importance of English within the field of education should be noted. For a non-native English speaker, learning English today is not just a benefit, it is a complete must if one wants to position himself properly on the current labour market. Therefore, speaking English for a non-native speaker is not a privilege, but an absolute necessity. This is justified by Ur (2010), who claims that students of English as a foreign language will certainly need the language in various contexts, i.e. in their home countries, and abroad. The teachers of English as a foreign language should primarily be aware of the status of English today in order to educate their students accordingly to be effective competitors in the intercultural environment (p. 85). Thus, most scientific works from various fields such as chemistry or medicine have been written in English, while the language itself is the standard medium of teaching in higher education institutions in numerous countries.

Finally, regarding the implications of English in contemporary contexts, English definitely plays a significant part in the modern ways of communication. Modern correspondence mainly refers to online communication performed on the Internet. This includes e-mails, various types of communication via social networks, and other Internet sources.

## **2.4. Future of ELF**

Although currently English is the most prominent lingua franca around the globe, we must ask ourselves about its future and possible course of events related to its status as a leading lingua franca. Hence, Crystal (2003) debates that the future of English should be addressed with caution, as any sort of future since it cannot be predicted with a hundred per cent certainty. He also draws attention to the possible “change in the balance of power” (p. 123), which could make English less appealing than other languages that could be regarded as potential lingua francas and consequently severely deteriorate the current position of English on a global scale (Crystal, 2003, p. 123).

Furthermore, Crystal (2003) quite seriously considers the fact that the English language could easily be rejected in the world, which would consequently result in the language disappearance as it happened with the most eminent *lingua franca* Latin. Also, economic reasons could contribute to support of some other, smaller *lingua francas* such as Spanish or Arabic in order to establish reinforced economies on the local level rather than on the global one. However, the USA undoubtedly possesses the leading political and economic leverage, which presumably manifests a linguistic power as well. What should also be noted is that there are scholars, such as Robert Phillipson (1992) who discuss the consequences of the so-called linguistic imperialism in relation to English.

The USA undoubtedly occupies the leading position when it comes to the global economy, and there is no visible indication that it will not remain so in the future. However, English is also widely spread which results in many different dialects, varieties, etc. The most prominent ones are certainly British and American English, but every regional area has own variety. Thus, Crystal (2003) indicates that English could serve as a foundation for other possible languages due to the fact that nowadays there are numerous varieties of English (p. 177).

Furthermore, such predictions were already expressed by the American lexicographer, Noah Webster stating that this turn of event cannot be avoided. Therefore, it “would result in a language in North America, as different from the future language of England, as the modern Dutch, Danish and Swedish are from the German or from one another” (as cited in Crystal, 2003, pp. 177-178).

However, this and similar predictions were rejected, and today as Crystal (2003) claims the diversity of the English language itself will certainly not cause further divisions which will abolish the dominance of English as the leading *lingua franca*. Namely, there is also a regionally neutral sort of language known as “World Standard Spoken English” (WSSE) which is frequently used in international contexts. Not surprisingly, WSSE is chiefly influenced by the US variety of English,

and what is more, even the current British usage reflects certain traces of US forms (Crystal, 2003, pp. 195-188).

Finally, Crystal (2003) concludes his observations with the speculation that the trend of spreading the English language as a lingua franca will merely increase, thus every child will be immediately introduced to English by default from the moment of their birth, and English “will find itself in the service of the world community forever” (p. 190).

This belief is additionally supported by Nicholas Ostler (2010) discussing that lingua francas, in general, are not stable, they are present in the world merely in order to fulfil their functions and serve particular purposes. Each lingua franca is definitely related to the power of the people who speak it, and lingua francas are changing as the power of their speakers change. Ostler (2010) quite assertively claims that English could be depicted as the ultimate language to serve the objectives commonly connected to the concept of lingua franca since “each community has its own language, as if by nature wider uniformity of language is, by contrast, hard-won and needs enforcement” (p. 286).

## **2.5. Influence of English as a lingua franca on Croatian**

Owing to the processes of globalization and breakthrough of modern technologies and social media, English has certainly been one of the major influencers on the Croatian language, especially during the 2nd half of the 20th century and nowadays. Therefore, Nikolić-Hoyt (2005) claims that the most prominent impact of English on Croatian started immediately after the WW II with the beginning of an academic investigation of anglicisms and their integration into Croatian. Today, English affects Croatian mainly form an oral type of communication rather than written one, and the recent anglicisms belong to specific fields such as pop-music or computer-mediated discourse (Nikolić-Hoyt, 2005, p. 179). According to Nikolić-Hoyt (2005), the presence of the English language among Croatian and other languages is drastically increasing “not only within the field of

specific terminologies (e.g. informatics, space exploring, or medicine) or jargon, but also in the sphere of public media, personal conversations in oral communication, particularly among the young people of urban centres” (p. 180). Then, as Pašalić and Marinov (2008) state, Croatian has been significantly influenced by English, especially among the young population. Also, English has been widely taught in various Croatian educational contexts such as kindergartens, primary and secondary schools, universities, different sorts of private schools, etc. Furthermore, globalization allowed an expansion of foreign trade and markets in Croatia; thus, Croatians were required to gain a certain level of fluency in English in order to establish a proper position on the market, and finally, obtain global recognition (Pašalić and Marinov, 2008, p. 255).

As a result, most of the loan-words recently have come from the English language. For instance, “bejzbol” (baseball), “meč” (match), “hit” (hit), “mobbing” (mobbing), “buling” (bullying), “hardver” (hardware), etc. Also, the English language has resulted in numerous calques like “banka podataka” (data bank), “kritična masa” (critical mass), “nogomet” (football), “neboder” (skyscraper), “ljudska prava” (human rights), “odljev mozgova” (brain drain), “održivi razvoj” (sustainable development), “sukob interesa” (conflict of interest) and several others (Turk & Opašić, 2008, p. 75-79).

Filipović (1990) claims that the theory of languages in contact regulates linguistic borrowing, which is perceived as a logical result of their mutual contact (p. 10).

First of all, the process of adaptation of the foreign word starts with the transfer of that particular word in the language receiver. Secondly, the transferred word ought to be adapted accordingly, on a phonological, orthographic, morphological, and semantic level. Finally, after the regular process of adaptation, the word can be called a borrowing (Filipović, 1990, pp. 9-10).

According to Turk and Opašić (2008), “linguistic contact and influence can be seen at all language levels, but most of all at the lexical level” (p. 73). Since Croatian and English do not belong to the same branch (English is known as Germanic, while Croatian is Slavic), during the



process of borrowing we could encounter numerous differences. Consequently, Filipović's analysis includes phonological, morphological and semantic one (Filipović, 1990, pp. 30-40). However, recent anglicisms often did not undergo any sort adaptation since they entered in Croatian directly quoted, *ad hoc*, i.e. they are completely the same in Croatian as they are in English (Nikolić-Hoyt, 2005, p. 180).

It is indisputable that "...the English vocabulary dominates the scientific, cultural and subcultural discourse of the contemporary world; thus, English is nowadays an international language of science and technology, diplomacy and commerce, sport, advertising, pop-culture, teen slang and the Internet" (Nikolić-Hoyt, 2005, p. 180). Therefore, Croatian linguists, in general, are inclined to substituting English expressions with the Croatian equivalents. This attitude toward Croatian language policy is predominantly regarded as puristic, and as such could easily provoke negative connotation. Kapović (2011) in his book *Čiji je jezik?* (*eng. Whose language is it?*) defines this linguistic phenomenon as "...a tendency to remove foreign elements, firstly foreign words (all or just some of them) form a standard language in order to preserve 'originality' and 'purity' of the language itself" (p. 81). Generally speaking, Kapović (2011) disapproves of the notion of linguistic purism stating that any "...violent imposition of purism in the language to its speakers should be condemned" (pp. 85-86). Furthermore, Kapović (2011) explains that although some people are not satisfied to hear expressions like "fancy", "random", or "party" instead of existing Croatian equivalents *otmjén*, *nasumičan*, and *zabava*, those are still unaware that some other words, normally used in the Croatian language today, are not exclusively Croatian. For example, Croats nowadays normally use words such as *jastuk* ("pillow"), *čarapa* ("sock"), or *bubreg* ("kidney"), which are, in fact, words of Turkic origin integrated into the Croatian language in the course of time. Kapović (2011) warns that similar could happen even with currently debatable anglicisms (p. 88).

### 2.5.1. Croatian-English code-switching

As discussed above, Croatian and English are two languages in mutual contact. Thomason (2001) gives a simple definition of language contact: “the use of more than one language in the same place at the same time” (p. 1).

Also, the surrounding of two or more existing languages in use, causes the phenomenon known as code-switching. Crystal (2003) sees it as “the process in which people rely simultaneously on two or more languages to communicate with each other”, and further explains that this process regularly occurs in the surroundings of two or more languages in contact (p. 164). According to Sebba (2012), the phenomenon of code-switching is sometimes referred to even as ‘code-mixing’, ‘code-shifting’, ‘language alternation’, and ‘language interaction’ (p. 1).

Furthermore, Crystal (2003) argues that English is easily mixed with other languages which resulted in the creation of different names such as “Franglais, Tex-Mex, Spanglish...” and similar. These names refer to a variety of language combined with English expressions and anglicised words (p. 165). Accordingly, Vilke and Medved Krajnović used the term Crenglish in their article “*Do Croatians speak Crenglish?*” introducing the equivalent term for the combination of Croatian and English.

Speaking of code-switching, Thomason (2001) provides a similar definition of the phenomenon describing it as “the use of material from two (or more) languages by a single speaker in the same conversation” (p. 132). Also, there are two distinct categories, code-switching, and code-mixing. Code-switching is understood as switch “at a sentence boundary”, while code-mixing implies the switch “within a single sentence” (p. 132).

Due to the strong influence of social networks and technology, the young population in Croatia is particularly exposed to the overgrowing influence of English. Hence, in the Republic of Croatia, with Croatian as the only official language defined by the Constitution of the Republic of Croatia,

one can easily hear a vast amount of English expressions combined in a regular, mainstream speech of Croatian teenagers, students, and young people in general. Pašalić and Marinov (2008) state that “words and expressions such as cool, whatever, sorry, anyway, by the way, have become a part of young people’s jargon in Croatia as in many other countries in Europe” (p. 255).

In the following, there is a recent example of typical Croatian-English code-mixing based on commenting on a recent blockbuster *Joker*:<sup>2</sup>

Speaker A: Koji je onda **comment** na film?

Speaker B: Film je vrlo **disturbing**. Jednostavno njegove **facial expressions** su imale totalno negativan **influence** na mene, ali i općenito **vibe** filma je **creepy**.

Speaker A: Daa, **way too much**. Veliki **hate** na film.

Speaker B: **A big one**.

Both of the speakers were female, 20-year-old Croatian students, studying and living in the Republic of Croatia, with an average level of English B2/C1 according to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR).

Although, such conversations, abundant in anglicisms and a regular code-switching/mixing between Croatian and English are presumably characteristic for younger Croatian population and their casual talks, similar conversations can be heard even in some more elevated and sophisticated contexts, and by mature and educated speakers, such as in the following case, politicians. Thus, during recent duels between two major candidates during the presidential elections of 2020 in Croatia, candidates chiefly used English expressions during their statements, constantly resorting to code-switching/mixing of the English language. For example, in only one of three duels in total,

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<sup>2</sup> This was witnessed by the author of this paper.

expressions like *by the way* (used as subordinate conjunction), *sorry* (used with reference to the host in order to apologize), *ok* (continuously used by one particular candidate instead of standard Croatian variant “*u redu*”, translated as “*all right*”), *life coach* (sometimes used even in the combination “*životni coach*”, which translates the first part of the phrase), *leader* (used many times, in various combinations by both candidates), *targertirano* (used by one candidate, immediately followed by Croatian variant “*ciljano*”), *idol* (used repeatedly, but pronounced as Croatian) *hotspotovi* (Croatian plural of “*hotspot*”, which would normally be “*hotspots*”), *Jesus Christ* (used as an exclamation of negation, deprecation), *I would humble* (firstly said in Croatian, then immediate switch to English variant), *exchange rate mechanism* (used when discussing certain economic issues), *gaming* (followed by the Croatian word “*industrija*” meaning “*industry*”), etc. were widely used.

This confirms even more that the English language is already deeply-rooted in the Croatian sociocultural context, and as such can be easily perceived as a certain threat to Croatian, which is, in this case, minor language compared to English, the leading lingua franca of the contemporary society. Thus, a Croatian linguist Stjepan Babić claimed even in 1983 that English could completely overshadow the Croatian language itself and that Croatian would not be comprehensible. Babić (2004) in his book *Hrvanja hrvatskoga* (eng. *Wrestling of the Croatian language*) goes even further calling Croatian a “second-hand language” (p. 251) due to enormous English predominance. Nevertheless, Opačić (2006) states that contemporary marketing generally favours the use of English over Croatian because the ultimate goal of the companies from this area is to move closer toward western societies (p. 176).

Even though Thomason (2001) lists some of the main code-switching functions, like using the foreign expression in order to fill a gap in another language, soften the meaning by adding a foreign word, etc. (p. 132) here we can assume that the use of English words and expressions in formal occasions, such as political debates, seriously violates comprehension by the general

audience. This implies that by using English expressions, politicians in Croatia have intentions to puzzle the public, create incomprehension, and finally perhaps sound superior to their voters which is contradictory to Thomason's statement that code-switching is used auxiliary in order to fill lexical gaps. Actually, in this case, it creates meaning gaps as well as provokes issues in general understanding and clarity of the message being transferred. In addition, Thomason (2001) states that there are numerous other code-switching/mixing functions, but they cannot be precisely identified, but filling the lexical gaps is certainly the most prominent (p. 132). However, some linguists who further investigated the above-discussed phenomena of code-switching/mixing have found additional solutions regarding the functions of code-switching/mixing. Thus, Grosjean (1982) identifies its functions as "marking group identity, emphasizing solidarity, excluding others from a conversation, raising the status of speaker and adding authority or expertise to a message" (p. 152). Furthermore, one of the chief investigators of code-switching/mixing John J. Gumperz (1982) identifies several different conversational functions of code-switching, such as: "quotations, addressee specification, interjections, reiteration, message qualification, and personalization versus objectivization" (pp. 75-80). Finally, code-switching/mixing was explained from the socio-psychological perspective introducing the markedness model by Myers-Scotton (1983). According to this model, speakers who live in multilingual societies, consciously resort to code-switching/mixing in order to establish new social codes called Rights and Obligations (RO) Sets. However, Auer (1998) discards such a model claiming that code-switching as such can be used even without "conversation-external knowledge about language use" that is usually included by the markedness model (p. 10).

### 3. Social media

Social media platforms represent a completely new dimension of communicating nowadays. Most of the people created online profiles and communicate with each other daily. This chapter explains social media in general, with a specific focus on Instagram as the main data source for this thesis, as well as online communication.

#### 3.1. Role of social media in contemporary society

English is undoubtedly the main language of the Internet. Specter (1996) explains that the construction of the most prestigious software and the Internet, in general, started on the US territory, which is why the use of English as the main medium of communication via the Internet was a logical choice. This is clearly supported by the fact that all the prominent names in technology and the Internet emerged from the USA (Bill Gates, Steve Jobs, Mark Zuckemberg).

Sergeant and Tagg (2014) explain that “Scholars such as Leppänen *et al.* define social media as including digital environment which involves interaction between participants” (as cited in Sergeant and Tagg, 2014, p. 4). The main purpose of social networks, in general, is to create content. Content is created in accordance with the platform being used. Thus, the most prominent ones currently used are the earlier mentioned Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, Snapchat, etc. Based on content, social networks connect people of similar preferences establishing an online interaction between them. Interaction is created by posting, commenting, sharing, or reacting to specific content, or simply messaging among users since the majority of social networks today always provide a certain type of “private inboxes”. For example, Facebook went even further so it enables Messenger, a distinct platform within the frame of Facebook, functioning primarily for the exchange of private messages. Furthermore, a great number of existing social networks are interlinked, hence the user can easily share wanted content simultaneously on more social platforms (Sergeant and Tagg, 2014, p. 4).

### 3.1.1. Instagram

As opposed to other social media platforms, Instagram is the one that specifically requires the use of a smartphone device due to the fact that it was designed as a photo-sharing platform. As stated on the official Instagram webpage, the platform was launched in October 2010, becoming instantly popular. Thus, only a year later, in 2011, it was announced to be App Store iPhone App of the year. The year 2012 was a crucial one for Instagram development. Namely, the platform was bought by Facebook on 9<sup>th</sup> April, then it became available also for Android devices and many new features such as *photo maps*, *Instagram badges*, new filters were introduced. Also, it became available in 25 different languages. By the year 2013, all Instagram operations could have been performed exclusively using smartphone, while in 2013 it became available on the web as well (although with reduced options compared to the phone app).

Furthermore, Instagram launched videos, so-called *photos of you* (enables one to tag a certain person on a photo), and *Instagram Direct* serving for message exchange among the users. Instagram was continually improving, introducing new features, constantly becoming easier to use. In 2015, *Explore* was introduced, a completely new way of searching for preferred content such as trendy *Tags* or *Places*. Finally, in 2016 Instagram presented *Stories*, i.e. photos or videos available merely temporarily for 24 hours as opposed to permanently available published posts. Another important option introduced the same year is saving preferred posts in a specially-themed map. In 2017 Instagram went even further with their creation of stories, so they introduced *Live Stories* which became available globally. IGTV was launched in 2018, a domain on Instagram similar to YouTube providing long-lasting videos. What is more, now users could shop via Instagram since various brands were presenting their products on the platform together with a price tag and direct link to their websites in order to complete the purchase. Instagram shopping continued its development in the successive years up to nowadays. Today, Instagram is one of the

most powerful and lucrative social media platforms with more than 1 billion monthly activities and beyond 500 million daily activities recorded as it is stated on Instagram official webpage.

### **3.2. Online communication**

To start with, an important notion regarding communication on the Internet, or online communication is that it is dominantly in written form. Of course, there are videos and voice records, but the majority is written. Therefore, the most prominent examples of communication conducted on the Internet include sending e-mails, instant messages, posting on social platforms, etc. Crystal (2006) claims that “The Internet world is an extremely fluid one, with users exploring its possibilities of expression, introducing a fresh combination of elements, and reacting to technological developments” (p. 16).

Crystal (2006) places special attention to one distinct fact characteristic for online communication, that there are no governing rules as opposed to communication on the paper. Online communication is executed instantly; thus, users resort to the fast-paced way of interacting, which includes abbreviated forms, omitting the unnecessary patterns and general reduction in writing. As a result, this can sometimes be the cause of “hazardous misperceptions” (Wallace, as cited in Crystal, 2006, p. 18).

Crystal (2006) defines language present on the Internet as “Netspeak”, alternatively called “cyberspeak”, “electronic discourse”, or “computer-mediated communication”. Presumably, this sort of communication is conducted via the Internet, but by no means exclusively. Namely, the communication present online influenced even oral communication (Crystal, 2006, p. 21).

Furthermore, this type of communication (based on English) influenced other languages, such as in this case Croatian. Consequently, some authors called the language present online as “written speech”, i.e. people write in accordance with their regular oral way of communicating, albeit such type of communication cannot be completely the same. Even though Internet



communication is fast, it is still not fast as face-to-face communication. Therefore, it is lacking non-verbal signs present during communication in person, and as such could provoke ambiguity. In addition, situation becomes even worse with more people involved in the same conversation online, hence misunderstandings occur even more frequently (Crystal, 2006, pp. 26-36).

Also, Internet communication is strongly characterized by the frequent use of entirely capitalized word standing for “shouting” or “screaming”, letter spacing in order to convey clearer message, excessive use of punctuation and spelling. This is known as the so-called paralanguage of the Internet, i.e. expressing emotions which are normally expressed through intonation, stress, speed, rhythm, and tone of voice in *vis-à-vis* communication (Crystal, 2006, p. 37).

Another distinct feature of online communication is the breakthrough of so-called emoticons, initially introduced as “combinations of keyboard characters designed to show an emotional facial expression” (Crystal, 2006, p. 39), but currently the evolution of emoticons has gone even beyond with specially designed keyboards available on a device, composed of various emoticons. Moreover, nowadays bitemoticons are frequently used, i.e. small avatars representing the user himself which can assume certain mood, e.g. happy, sad, grateful, angry, and many more. Subsequently, acronyms are also very common in Internet language. Acronyms are newly formed words composed of the initial letters of other words. Frequently used acronyms on the Internet are OFC (of course), PLS (please), THX (thanks), NP (no problem), IDK (I don’t know), JK (just kidding) (Crystal, 2006, pp. 86-92).

Also, in online written communication there is a strong inclination to omit capitals and punctuation, like in the following sentence: “ im taking the tube taxi is too expensive in Ldn”. Punctuation is usually completely omitted or significantly reduced, while sometimes even used excessively for the purpose of expressing certain emotions or pause (the most common example are classical “...” for pause in an online conversation).

Regarding spelling, Crystal (2006) states that US spelling is more frequent in relation to British, mainly due to historical reasons and the fact that the Internet was invented by Americans, and some practical, since American spelling favours shorter forms such as *favorite* instead of *favourite* (Crystal, 2006, p. 95).

Undoubtedly, online communication and the overall use of the Internet affects the process of English acquisition when it comes to non-native speakers. According to Saergeant and Tagg (2014), communication via the Internet is commonly executed in “a ludic state of mind”, which implies that social media content is frequently oriented toward fun (p. 24). This could be the reason why the Internet communication is deprived of many standard forms and rules, characterized by “tolerance of typographical errors, relaxation of the rules of spelling, punctuation, and capitalization” (Crystal, 2006, p. 270).

As a result, non-native learners exposed to such forms could easily adopt them without even realizing that the form is distorted.

This was justified by Crystal (2006):

The bending and breaking of rules, which is a hallmark of ludic linguistic behaviour, always presents a problem to those who have not yet developed a confident command of the rules *per se*. Ironically, learners can sometimes give the impression that they are more fluent than they actually are, in that their errors can superficially resemble the deviant forms flamboyantly manifested by chatgroup users. (p. 270)

## **4. Analysis of the use of English among Croatian Instagram users**

This chapter is the core of the thesis and it contains the analysis of Instagram posts themselves, explains the methodology of the research followed by the results, and lastly concluded with a discussion of the analysis performed.

### **4.1. Methodology**

The data is based on Instagram posts of public profiles in the Republic of Croatia and the analysis of their use of English in the descriptions below a published photo. A sample of 20 public Instagram users was included in this research and 25 posts were selected of each of them, hence the final number of the posts being analysed is 500 in total. Although all of the profiles are public and accessible to anyone, their names, or more correctly referred to as usernames or Instagram nicknames (a name that each Instagram user personally opts), were omitted for the purpose of this research. Each of their post was written either entirely in English or as a combination of Croatian-English code-switching/mixing. It has already been stated that the English language is the leading lingua franca of the Internet, but what is questionable is the actual level of English competence of Croatian users whose posts were part of this research. Therefore, the focus of the analysis is placed on the so-called language deviations from standard English forms, i.e. irregularities that frequently occur in the posts across the Croatian Instagram scene. This mainly refers to incorrect grammatical and orthographic structures. The data collected will be sorted in accordance with the deviation identified in a specific Instagram post – grammar or orthography. Some of the posts contain more than one deviation, but each of them is counted separately and included in the final number of the deviations detected.

One important notion is that Instagram has limits in its captions, i.e. descriptions below the posted photo. Thus, the limit is 2 200 characters and 30 hashtags, which is approximately a maximum of 300 words on average followed by a maximum of 30 hashtags. However, the majority

of users do not utilize the maximum capacity when writing a caption, in fact, most of the captions are rather short, and some of them contain merely one word or several hashtags. On that account, irregularities encountered in such words-deprived Instagram captions should be understood as an indicator of language misuse. Furthermore, the profiles analysed are followed by the vast majority of people; more specifically, from 13 thousand up to 18 million followers. Hence, there is a serious threat that those followers with insufficient knowledge of English could easily adopt the deviated form and use it normally thinking of it as the correct one. Consequently, this can lead to permanent fossilization of the irregular form.

Although the core of the research was the analysis of the above-mentioned issues that occur among Croatian users of Instagram while writing in English, even the correct captions written in English were included. The data was collected by a simple screenshot method. Finally, during the analysis, the frequency of each deviation is presented in the table, followed by the presentation of the most prominent examples.

## **4.2. Results**

Among 500 posts, 270 contained minimally one deviation and those were subsequently analysed further. During the analysis, they were classified in accordance with the deviation identified – grammar and orthography. Owing to the fact that some captions are longer than others, there will be presented only the parts containing a specific deviation as well as the parts relevant for the general understanding.

### **4.2.1. Deviations in grammar**

Grammatical deviations refer to distortions in grammar, i.e. the number (singular and plural forms), articles (definite, indefinite, no article), tenses (present, past, future), syntax (word order), and further grammatical features such as word classes, comparison of adjectives, voice (active, passive), word formation, and double negatives. Among the collected data, i.e. 270 deviant posts,

the majority (178) contain some sort of grammatical irregularity. The deviations are subdivided into 5 different categories based on the sort of deviation – singular/plural, articles, tenses, syntax, and the last subcategory is “other” including deviations in word classes, adjective comparison, verb forms, confusing *then/than*, and double negatives. Some of the most frequently occurring instances will be discussed in a further analysis below.

**Table 1**

*Frequency of Grammatical Deviations*

	<b>F</b>	<b>%</b>
<i><b>Singular/plural</b></i>	57	32%
<i><b>Articles</b></i>	45	25%
<i><b>Tenses</b></i>	25	14%
<i><b>Syntax</b></i>	3	2%
<i><b>Other</b></i>	48	27 %
<i><b>Total</b></i>	<b>178</b>	

Croatian Instagram users expressed a tendency toward incorrectly using singular and plural forms in writing in English. For example:

- “My #wce is the woman **i**’ve grown to become. She isn’t afraid to stand her ground and stand up for herself & other girls & **other woman**.”

The author uses singular instead of the plural form, which is in this particular case irregular, *women*.

Another thing that can be noticed is that the author omits the preposition ‘on’ after the verb *stand*

which adds a confusing aspect to this caption. Also, the author did not capitalize the personal pronoun ‘I’.

- “If you missed it, please check out my post from last week about Australia and all **informations** where and how to donate.”

In this example, we encounter a very common deviation of many non-native speakers of English and the misuse of the irregular plural form of the noun ‘information’. The noun ‘information’ has the same singular and plural forms in the English language.

- “Stay tuned **on** my Insta **Story-es** this night”

Here we have an apparent wrong application of the plural of the word ‘story’. This word is pluralized in English with the rule that ‘y’ becomes an ‘i’ and then the suffix ‘es’ is added, according to the rules for the construction of plural in English that y, when preceded by a consonant goes to ‘i’. Also, the phrase “*stay tuned*” is usually followed by the preposition ‘to’ instead of ‘on’.

- “Thanks to @porscheinterauto.hr I had **one of the most amazing weekend** I can remember”

When stating ‘one of something’, this by default implies the use of plural noun, i.e. “weekends” instead of a singular form used in the example.

- “This fall I’m bringing you new ultra modern vibes by @benetton. Check out my InstaStory for **this amazing pieces!**”

The author confuses singular and plural forms in English. He uses ‘this’, a determiner in singular that requires a noun in singular form, not plural as the author uses in this example. Plural of the determiner ‘this’ is ‘these’, so it should be replaced by the plural determiner. Or the noun should be used as singular.

- “In the past year I visited NYC, Salzburg, Madrid, Cuba (Havana, Trinidad & Cienfuegos), Brussels, Venice, Greece (Mykonos, Santorini, Naxos and Athens), Madrid again and Toledo. Some of **this places** I visited before, but most of them I visited for the first time.”

The author of the post uses singular determiner ‘this’ combined with plural noun. The right use would be ‘these places’.

- “Sometimes, in **a moments** like **this**, I just wish I cared what people think about me.”

Here, the author uses inappropriate singular and plural forms. He uses an indefinite article before a plural noun, followed by the determiner specified for singular ‘this’. The correct version would be either “in a moment like this”, which is a singular variant, or “in moments like these”, plural variant.

- “On **a days** like **this** I remind myself how grateful I’m to be able to travel around the World! Can’t wait for the next one!”

This is also a deviation in the number. Firstly, the author uses an indefinite article ‘a’ which implies singular form, followed by the plural form of the noun ‘day’ (days). Therefore, the correct example should contain a singular noun instead of the plural as used by the author.

- “Life is in color, but black and white **is** more realistic.”

In this example, we encounter the deviation of the singular and plural forms again. Thus, the author states “*black and white*” which logically implies two of them, and as such cannot be followed by the third person singular verb as the author used.

- “Those of you who have read the book **knows** about it.”

The subject here is “those of you who read the book”, which is the equivalent of the second person plural, i.e. you, and the correct form of the verb ‘to know’ in the present simple is ‘know’. The author unnecessarily adds –s.

- “**Perfect day** **don’t** need filter!”

According to Seidlhofer, non-native users of English are prone to omitting –s in the third person singular present tense (as cited in Jenkins et al., 2011, p. 289). This is a typical example which supports the foregoing. What is more, the verb ‘to do’ is irregular in the present simple, which means the author should have used ‘doesn’t’ instead of ‘don’t’.

- “I notice my **hair and skin** **has** improved”

The author uses present perfect tense for the third person singular instead of the third person plural since there are two subjects — hair and skin. Therefore, the correct form would be “I’ve noticed that my hair and skin have improved”.

- “**Every women needs** a little black dress”

In this example, a singular form of the word should be used, i.e. woman, firstly because of the determiner every, and then due to the singular form of the verb be. The correct version should be “Every woman needs a little black dress”.

- “when you can’t choose you just take **2 gelato** all day”

In the preceding example, the author uses number two (2) and singular form of the word gelato. Gelato, meaning ice-cream in English, is a foreign expression derived from Italian, but it is habitually used in English, especially in the communication executed online. The correct form would be “2 gelatos”.

- “I am happy to announce my upcoming **sunglass** collection line which is almost ready to launch”

The word ‘sunglass’ does not correspond to the context since it means lenses. On the other hand, ‘sunglasses’ is the word needed, and it always comes in plural form.

- “Your #smile is your best #**accessories**”

The issue with this caption is that the author is unfamiliar with differentiating plural and singular forms. Firstly, the use of the verb of the third person singular requires a singular form. Therefore, the correct version would be “Your smile is your best accessory.”

Also, Instagram users whose posts were analysed, as the non-native speakers, have problems with the correct use of definite and indefinite articles in English. According to Seidlhofer, the non-native speakers are inclined to “omitting definite and indefinite articles where they are obligatory in ENL, and inserting them where they do not occur in ENL” (as cited in Jenkins et al., 2011, p. 289). Here are several examples that illustrate this:



- “Thank God Lulu is not afraid since **first** day we knew her, BUT!!!!...”

The chief deviation is omitting the definite article ‘the’ before ordinal numbers.

- “Thank you @urbandecaycosmetics on such **an a** amazing day today! I had **a** opportunity to learn more about the whole “Born To Run” line...”

The author uses double indefinite articles as well as ‘a’ before the vowel.

- “Anyone for **a** ice skating?”

The author uses the wrong indefinite article. The noun begins with a vowel which requires the use of ‘an’ as opposed to ‘a’. However, the article is here redundant, so the correct form would be “Anyone for ice skating?”.

- “Oversized blazers were most popular item in the 80s, as well as black and white combos!”

As previously noted, Seidlhofer emphasizes the common misuse of articles among non-native speakers of English, i.e. omitting them or adding where they are not required. This is a typical example where the author fails to use the superlative form with the definite article ‘the’ which is by default used with superlative forms in English. Therefore, the correct form would be “Oversized blazers were the most popular item in the 80s”.

- “I’ve seen articles from **UK**, Germany, Russia, Poland, Bosnia, Serbia and many more.”

Although the English language does not require articles before the names of countries, with the names composed entirely or partially of common nouns (e.g. the UK, the USA), the use of the definite article ‘the’ is mandatory.<sup>3</sup>

- “Somewhere in Netherlands”

Also, the Netherlands is an exception in the use of definite articles with the names of countries. Therefore, the post lacks the definite article before the Netherlands.

- “One of favourite beaches on this trip! Thinking to write a blog post about my trip in a van across **the Portugal!** What do you think?”

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<sup>3</sup> See Eastwood’s (1994) Oxford guide to English grammar for more information on the use of definite articles.

English does not require the definite article before the nouns indicating countries, counties, or states, unless it is an exception such as the Netherlands, or it denotes republic, kingdom, or some sort of union like the UK, the USA, the Republic of Croatia, etc. Therefore, ‘Portugal’ does not demand the definite article and this one is, in this case, redundant.

- “So happy to see your feedback for the photos from **UAE!**”

This example is, in fact, opposite to the previous one. Here, we have a country, the UAE, an abbreviation standing for the United Arab Emirates, i.e. a union, and such construction requires the definite article. This post is deficient since it lacks the definite article.

Moreover, Croatian Instagram users frequently mixed tenses and time sequencing in English. Here are the most prominent examples to show this type of deviation:

- “You **always asking** me **do** I wear the same clothes twice.”

The author used the time adverbial ‘always’, which by default goes with the present simple forms, then put an –ing form of the verb ‘ask’, which leads us to think that the initial intention was present continuous. The present continuous is used with ‘always’ for a frequently repeated action, particularly when the frequency annoys the speaker or seems unreasonable to him.<sup>4</sup> However, the author did not list the auxiliary verb ‘to be’, which normally combines with the present participle. Finally, the second part of the sentence is also incorrect since the author wrote “do I wear...” instead of “whether I wear...”

- “One of the first **brends** ever **approach to** me only year after I started writing my blog and posting on Instagram.”

The first part of the caption requires the inversion, it should be ‘to ever approach me’. Also, the word ‘brends’ is misspelled probably due to inappropriate transfer from Croatian to English, since

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<sup>4</sup> See Eastwood’s (1994) Oxford guide to English grammar for more information on the use of ‘always’ with the present continuous.

the Croatian form of this Anglicism is 'brend'. Finally, the author fails to add the indefinite article, again a typical feature of non-native speakers of English. Therefore, the correct example would be "One of the first brands to ever approach me only a year after I started writing my blog and posting on Instagram."

- "Italian way of life! **Im** proud to announce that I **become** brand ambassador for @carpisaofficial #carpisaofficial Sponsored/Ad"

In this example, the author fails to add an apostrophe while using an abbreviated form of the present verb 'to be' which is 'I'm', standing for 'I am'. However, since this is a type of online communication, omitting punctuation occurs frequently, thus this can be regarded as a part of Internet jargon. The further deviation refers to the wrong sequencing of tenses since the author refers to the past, that he is now a 'brand ambassador'. Therefore, an action that started in the past and has resulted in the present requires the use of the present perfect.

- "First underwater photo shoot ever! How do you like it? **Did you ever dive before?** #bahamas #underwaterphotography #underwater"

The first deviation is omitting the definite article before the ordinal number in the first sentence. The second one is related to the irregular use of tenses. Namely, the author uses "ever" which is normally used with the present perfect tense. The form of present perfect simple involves the present auxiliary verb 'to have' and past participle.

- "Pure happiness! We already **started** celebrating this more **then** successful year and looking forward to a new one with excitement!"

As in the previous example, the author fails to use the proper tense. He uses 'already', which implies the action started in the past and still lasts, thus the use of present perfect tense is mandatory. Also, he uses the time adverbial 'then' instead of 'than' for comparison. Finally, orthographic deviation

is omitting hyphens in “more-than-successful year” since this whole expression acts as an adjective.<sup>5</sup>

- “The winter has not yet **began** calendar wise, but it has **weather wise**. Today the first snow fell in Munchen, and it starts to feel like Christmas!”

Firstly, the post contains grammatical deficit with the inappropriate form of the verb ‘to begin’. The author uses the construction of present perfect “has not yet...” and then adds ‘began’ which is past of begin instead of the past participle, i.e. begun. Secondly, orthographic deviation refers to the phrase ‘weather wise’ which is normally used with a hyphen or combined together (weather-wise or weatherwise).

- “Bye bye Cannes Boat can’t standing in port! Sailors life”

The author should have added ‘be’ before negative verb ‘to can’ and gerund, otherwise, the sentence is incomplete and, as such, unacceptable. Lastly, the author uses the construction “Sailors life” which also creates ambiguity to a certain extent. We could assume that he had intended to use the possessive genitive form which is habitually confused in the English language with plural since the only difference is orthographic, i.e. possessive genitive requires the use of an apostrophe. Thus, the correct caption would probably be “Bye, bye Cannes. The boat can’t be standing in port! Sailor’s life”.

- “Mother and daughter. **does** that **makes** me a grandma?”

What is evident here, is the inappropriate use of the present simple form. Namely, the author asks a question using the present simple in the third person singular. The form for questions for the third person singular present simple includes does and the verb now without a suffix-s since it is expressed within a form of ‘does’. However, the author of the post uses suffix-s twice, even with a question. The correct version would be “Does that make me a grandma?”

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<sup>5</sup> See [lexico.com](http://lexico.com) for more information on the use of hyphens in English.

- “Fish loves Bach! I play it, fish comes, my **father catch** it, and **than** my mum cooks it, a very good strategy”

This is an example presenting some basic, common deviations in English by a non-native user. Namely, the first one, chiefly grammatical, is dropping the suffix –s for the third person singular present tense (“my father catch it”, instead of catches it). Secondly, the author resorts to the use of conjunction for comparison ‘than’, instead of the time adverbial ‘then’.

- “And my angels comes and start playing chello”

Due to spelling and tense deviations, this sentence provokes various ambiguities. The correct form would probably be: “And my angles come and start playing cello”.

In addition, Instagram users whose posts were analysed resorted to incorrect word order, i.e. deviation in syntax. The following examples illustrate this:

- “I’m so proud of You! Your first goal for @olympiquedemarseille, show them what you know. **Show them what kind of player are you.**”

The author uses inversion, which is in this case redundant. Inversion in English is obligatory in the construction of interrogatives, however, in this example inversion is unnecessary since the sentence is affirmative. Also, the sentence lacks the indefinite article ‘a’ before the noun ‘player’.

- “Their target was I”

English (as opposed to some other languages) prescribes a strict word order S-V-O (subject-verb-object), which means that the correct form would be “I was their target” in the active.

Furthermore, Instagram users whose posts were analysed habitually used the possessive form of the third person singular neutral pronoun ‘its’ with ‘it’s’, i.e. abbreviated form of the third person singular present simple. Here are several examples that present this deviation:

- “Well, mamma still got it if you ask me!...Btw., NEVER stop **dating with** your husband, my personal advice to y’all. It’s such a MUST for a healthy relationship...and yes, red lipstick always does **it’s own** thing.”

Apart from confusing ‘its’ and ‘it’s’, the preposition ‘with’ used with the verb ‘date’ is redundant. Seidlhofer explains that “inserting redundant prepositions” is another typical feature of the use of English by the non-native speakers (as cited in Jenkins et al., 2011, p. 289). Generally, the whole caption is written using exclusively informal language typical of Internet communication, abundant with acronyms (“Btw”) and capitalization in order to emphasize certain words (NEVER, MUST).

- “In Vegas, if it rains on your wedding, **its** good luck...”

The author of this post uses the possessive pronoun of the third person singular instead of the third person singular present simple. An apostrophe is required for the correct form, i.e. ‘it’s’.

- “Found an airbnb in the middle of nowhere that has **it’s** own horses and goats and sheep.”

This example is the opposite to the previous one. Here, the author of the text should have used the possessive pronoun ‘its’, not the third person singular present simple as it was used in the example.

- “Good morning! **Its** coffee o’clock”

An apostrophe is required for the correct form, i.e. ‘it’s’

Speaking of different grammatical deviations, as noted earlier, many Instagram users whose posts were analysed confused the time adverbial ‘then’ and conjunction used for expressing comparison of adjectives ‘than’. Undoubtedly, this is one of the most frequently occurring on the Croatian Instagram scene. Here are several examples:

- “You can’t play better **then** this...Zenit-Loko 0-3 what a game in St. Petersburg.. well done boys...”
- “3 points are more important **then** head”
- “#summerinthecity #mojzagreb Is there a better styling this summer **then** legendary PB stripes?”

- “Watch more sunsets **then** Netflix”

This deviation could also be regarded as an orthographic issue. However, it is primarily grammatical since it affects the meaning of the sentence.

Finally, the analysis showed many other deviations in the users’ English posts on Instagram, such as double negative forms, deviations in word classes, adjective comparison, verb forms, misuse of the possessive genitive forms, incorrect use of prepositions, and pleonasm.

- “Happy Valentine’s day to the best followers in the World! This is my Valentine’s crew today and I **would’t** change it for **nothing**.”

There are two basic deviations present in this caption. The first one is a spelling issue, “*would’t*”, where we have the letter ‘n’ omitted, and another one is chiefly grammatical, the use of double negatives, which is the negative abbreviated form of ‘would’, and the negative pronoun ‘nothing’. In the Standard English language, double negatives are not recognized as correct.

- “My skin showed me in many situations how grateful ‘**she**’ is...”

The chief issue with this sentence is that the author replaces the noun ‘skin’ with an inappropriate personal pronoun. Namely, in the English language, the word ‘skin’ is of neutral gender since it is considered to be an inanimate noun, so it should be replaced by ‘it’.

- “First pic is January 2018 and second May 2019, which one you like more?”

This text lacks the verb ‘do’ used for interrogatives, as well as the definite article before ordinal numbers (first, second).

- “summer’s in the air, baby, **heavens’s** in your eyes”

This is an example of an expression that is very frequent in the English language. Normally, phrases like this one are very frequently present and therefore, it is very hard to make a mistake. The majority of such frequently occurring posts like this one were written correctly in the analysed data, but this one is an exception. The author fails to use properly an abbreviated form of the third person

singular present simple which is 'heaven's'. This expression is taken from one pop song and the lyrics go like this: "*Summer's in the air and, baby, heaven's in your eyes*".

- "My face when I driving a boat"

Present continuous is used in the caption, and it is known that the present continuous tense is formed of the present form of the auxiliary verb be followed by the present participle. Here, the auxiliary verb be is missing, thus the caption seems incomplete. The full version would be "My face when I am driving a boat".

- "Backstage **moment's** @supertalenthr, thank's to @matijavujica @markogrubnic..."

The first deviation is confusing the possessive genitive with plural form due to their similarities in English. In this post, the author needs plural, not the possessive genitive, which makes this apostrophe redundant. The English language does not recognize the form 'thank's', while informal expression for gratitude would be 'thanks' (without an apostrophe), and it is widely used even in non-Anglophone contexts.

- "**Feel's** like home"

This is a similar deviation as the previous one, however not completely identical. Namely, the author again resorts to the use of apostrophes which implies that he is using a possessive genitive form. However, what is required here is the use of the present simple which is without an apostrophe 'feels'.

- "It simply means a world in which A **Mothers's** heard leads all social institutions, corporations, and government."

An obvious distortion with this example is an inappropriate use of the possessive genitive form by adding the unnecessary -s before an apostrophe. The form of possessive genitive and plural are commonly misused among the Croatian Instagram scene and we have the opportunity to encounter many variations on that topic.

- "Day off.. night ride..it was dangerous,he **ist** not good driver"



This is not a typical deviation, but an interesting one to present interference of a Croatian native-speaker between German and English. The author of the post is a Croatian football player playing in Austrian club, and he commonly resorts to German in his other Instagram posts. In this post, he confuses the third person singular English verb be 'is' with the same German variant, 'ist'.

- “Rainy Sunday! How did you spend **your**?”

This is an example of the misuse of the possessive pronoun 'your'. Namely, 'yours' is a possessive pronoun; therefore, its main function is to replace a noun (in this example, the noun is Sunday). On the other hand, 'your' is a possessive adjective which is obligatory before the noun and as such cannot be standing alone. The author fails to utilize the proper possessor in this example, thus the correct version demands the possessive pronoun instead of the possessive adjective, i.e. “Rainy Sunday! How did you spend yours?”

- “Detroit show 1 was insane, let’s make it even **more crazy** tonight”

This is a deviation of the comparative form. Comparatives can be constructed in two distinct ways. One and two-syllable adjectives are added a comparative suffix -er, or if ending in -y, 'y' changes in 'i' followed by -er. Longer adjectives, i.e. those containing three or more syllables form the comparative with 'more' or 'less'. In this particular case, we have the adjective “crazy”, two-syllable adjective, therefore we should apply the comparative form with the suffix -er, or—ier due to an ending in -y.<sup>6</sup> Thus, the correct form is “let’s make it even crazier tonight”.

- “How many pumpkins do you see **on** this **photo**?”

The correct use of the prepositions with the nouns 'photo' and 'picture' is 'in' with regards to the English language. 'In the picture' is a common phrase indicating that someone or something is shown in the photo, while 'on the photo' implies the meaning that something is touching or affecting the photo physically.

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<sup>6</sup> See Eastwood's (1994) Oxford guide to English grammar for more information on the comparison of adjectives in English.

- “Too bad it’s **on Croatian language**”

In English, when referring to languages, the preposition ‘in’ is habitually used as opposed to Croatian in which the preposition ‘*na*’ (eng. ‘on’) is used when referring to languages. Thus, this is an example of a negative transfer from Croatian to English.

- “A city that leaves breathless!”

Although the sentence is seemingly correct, the object is missing in order to provide this construction clearer meaning and sense of completeness. Therefore, the correct version could be “A city that leaves you breathless!”/ “A city that leaves one breathless!”

- “First autumn look, comment **down below** what do you think about this makeup”

“Down below” are almost the same terms and using both of them creates pleonasm, i.e. using more identical words than necessary. However, according to Seidlhofer, non-native speakers of English commonly “overdo” explicitness, such as in this case (as cited in Jenkins et al., 2011, p. 290).

#### 4.2.2. Deviations in orthography

Deviations in orthography refer to spelling deviations (dropping, adding, or mixing letters), capitalization, and punctuation. Although the majority of the analysed deviations were of grammatical nature, the most frequently occurring deviations among the Croatian Instagram users were spelling ones. The total number of deviated orthographic posts is 143. Some of the most frequently occurring instances will be discussed and corrected in a further analysis below.

**Table 2***Frequency of Orthographic Deviations*

	<b>F</b>	<b>%</b>
<i><b>Spelling</b></i>	98	69%
<i><b>Capitalization</b></i>	15	10%
<i><b>Punctuation</b></i>	30	21%
<i><b>Total</b></i>	<b>143</b>	

- “From Nyc with love! Happy holidays everyone from the most **beutiful** city in the world!”  
(beautiful)
- “Definitely not a winter type. **Planing** new escapes” (planning)
- “Yaaay! Waking up to 9k got me so **exicted!** (excited)
- “Perfecting my seduction skills high up in the **montains**” (mountains)
- “Only an idiot like me can turn serious classical concert into a **stand up** comedy”

Although the expressions without hyphens are very frequent, even among the native English speakers, this can be considered as a deviation. ‘To stand up’ (written without a hyphen) indicates a verb, meaning to rise to a standing position, or to remain calm in a stressful situation. However, the author uses the expression “a stand up comedy”, which chiefly requires hyphen since it embodies a noun, thus “a stand-up comedy”.<sup>7</sup>

- “**Stoping** the traffic with some cello music” (stopping)
- “Well done boys, difficult game today but we are back in Champions league...big thanks to all the fans for your amazing support **trough out** the season...” (throughout)

<sup>7</sup> See [lexico.com](http://lexico.com) for more information on the use of hyphens in English.

- “I hope, my friend, that your career will inspire lots of kids **arround** the world.” (around)
- “I hope that everyone will have happy and **succesful** 2018. Happy new year!!!” (successful, New Year)
- “If I could live my life **under water**- I would sign right away!” (underwater)
- “**Wich** one is your favourite autumn outfit? #fall #autumn #autumnvibes #fallfashion #fallcolors #falloutfits” (which)
- “One of my good friends has a big dog and she is such a sweetheart, do you know how her New **Years** Eve looks like? ...for sure not in glitter and cheering with **champaigne**.” (New Year’s, champagne)
- “Met some of my favourite colleagues, drank some wine, **cheerd** for the winners...it’s **official**, the summer is over and everyone is back in the hood.”(cheered, official)
- “Every single time I have at **leat** 3-4 bags...” (at least)
- “FEELING EMPOWERED BECAUSE I USE MY POWER TO EMPOWER OTHER PEOPLE...& CHOOSE TO TALK ABOUT THINGS PEOPLE ARE **AFFRAID** OF and ASHAMED!!” (afraid)
- “Stay **gorgeus** and remember...” (gorgeous)
- “I grew on a personal and **profesional** level.” (professional)
- “Summer isn’t **t** over yet!” (t is redundant)
- “**Finaly**! I have posted on my blog!” (Finally)
- “For me, it was a **completly** new way of travelling. I’ve never been invited to stay in places that were mostly green. Photos turned out **the be** probably one of the best I’ve ever had on my blog and **i** totally fell in love with the notion of staying #inland. This is why on this #trip, we stayed away from beaches and sun, and decided to go the polar **opossite (litteraly)** **Im** sitting this morning in a village called #Winklern in the **#AustrianAlpes**. This place is only one and a half hour away from

#Ljubljana and around 3 hours away from #Zagreb **Accomodation** is around 40 to 80 euros per night for one room.” (completely, to be, I, opposite, literally, I’m, #AustrianAlps, accommodation)

- “This is literally how my parents **raised** me, upside down.” (raised)
- “Last day at #montegobay, going for #Portland **tommorow**! **Im** so excited! Portland is on the other side of Jamaica and it is **completly** different. #Jamaica is such a diverse Island, so much to explore, really looking forward to @goblinhill **tommorow**.” (tomorrow, I’m, completely)
- “New research **sais** that the mmore coffee you drink, the longer you live.”(says)
- “This is my favourite combination in clothing-orange and purple. **Well suited** by @benetton” (well-suited)
- “My “RunAway weekend” adventures are starting! **Spontaneous** day trip to Rastoke, which we will end in Rakovica.” (spontaneous)
- “Charles on the **otherhand** doesn’t eat red meat much, he prefers only chicken.” (on the other hand)
- “#rainyday #**coffetime** #instamood #instadaily “ (#coffeetime)
- “If you want to do something a little bit different in Rome- my **recomendation** is to go to Villa Borghese gardens. You can enjoy walking in the beautiful nature really close to the city **centar** or even rent a boat-which was amazing if you ask me” (recommendation, centre (British English)/center (American English))
- “**Happines** is balloons” (happiness)
- “Already feeling festive...is it **to** early?” (too)
- “**Anyways**, don’t’ get scared, this is just me but without the beard” (anyway)
- “It is working and maybe even the feeling could be close to **autnentic**...” (authentic)
- “Do you **aprove** of this combo and my view of this styling?” (approve)
- “New week, new animal Print. This time it’s python in greyish/**slivery** tones...” (silvery)
- “Totallook” (Total look)

- “Relx” (Relax)
- “#newyear #happy #my #**frends** #2020” (#friends)
- “Everyday is a fashion show and the world is your **runaway!**”(runway)
- “Vietnam **tunells**”(tunnels)
- “Handmade **jewellery** unique hand chain” (jewellery)
- “Uluru we are coming! Colonialists be **carfull**, diplomatic mission because we love Aborigines!”  
(careful)
- “VRIJEME JE ZA **TEDY**” (teddy)
- “#night #**coffe** #**coffetime** #fun #photography #rainyday #weekend #**busnies**andpleasure #love  
#life #mylife” (#coffee, #coffetime, #business)
- “GOODNIGHT”

Although Oxford English Dictionary has accepted both “goodnight” and “good night”, written separately good night seems like a more reasonable choice especially if taking into consideration that we usually write separately other greetings related to parts of the day, e.g. good morning, good afternoon, etc.

- “ŽURIM, **sory**...vidimo se kasnije” (sorry)
- “Ono kad izadjes ispred kuce da vidis kakvo je vrijeme ujutro... morning **coffe** in the middle of jungle” (coffee)
- “Black **friday**...”

Days of the week in English are by default written with the initial capital letter, i.e. Black Friday.

- “Thank you so much Montse, you are **wonderfull**, smart and honest breeder...” (wonderful)
- “Forever the coolest gift I have EVER **recived.**” (received)
- “Time **flyes**...” (flies)
- “Forever my **strenght**, forever my peace, forever my better tomorrow.” (strength)
- “Words cannot express my love & **pasion** for Saturdays” (passion)

- “it is so special to be here today and look at this free amazing beautiful city #freedom #peace #grad #dubrovnik #28years #thankful

For all who **faught** and #remembering all who lost their lives” (fought)

- “after 3 years and 11 months I caved **in to** twinning” (into)
- “**thirtyeight** and no photoshop” (thirty-eight)
- “First **kindergarden** run.” (kindergarten)
- “she is a strong **bussiness women** and i adore her bc of that and bc of her **estetic**.”(business, woman, I, aesthetic (British English)/esthetic (American English))
- “No **metter** how nice your pictures are or how real your quotes are...there are some people who will never hit the ‘like’ button just because it’s you!” (matter)
- “In such a small Country as Croatia, people are so **closed minded, unfortunately**.

They **judge**, they don’t accept, they laugh at things they don’t understand...it’s so freaking annoying, frustrating and childish. For the whole 3 years I tried to change things up here in Croatia & really, I don’t know what i’ve changed with my **apperience** on public scene. I hope I did something right deep down in hearts...Here in Croatia, you are not allowed to love your body the way it is-OH! Sorry! It’s ok only if you lose 80+kg in some ‘**wheight** loss’ tv show. You can’t love yourself, you can’t accept yourself, you can’t accept others and you can’t teach other in that kind of **envroinment**- it’s almost ‘**uselless**’” (closed-minded, unfortunately, judge, I, appearance, weight, TV, environment, useless)

- “Sundays are **prefect** for new plans. Anyone dreaming of Bali? (perfect)
- “We’re just gonna shake, shake, shake and **hatters** gonna hate, hate, hate” (haters)

### 4.3. Discussion

The primary purpose of this research was to investigate 20 different public Instagram accounts and 25 posts of each of them (500 posts in total). The posts were written entirely or partially in English. Subsequently, those posts that contained minimally one deviation were selected and classified in accordance with the deviation at hand in two major categories — grammar and orthography. Regardless of the fact that Croatians, in general, are very familiar with the use of English (according to EF English Proficiency Index's ranking for the year 2019, the Republic of Croatia is positioned as the 14<sup>th</sup> country among 100 countries and regions) , there is always a possibility of language misuse, especially considering online communication. Naturally, each Instagram user whose posts were analysed uses English to a certain extent when posting on Instagram. However, some of them write entirely in English, while others resort to the occasional use of English, or to the combination of Croatian and English. Also, it is essential to draw attention to the fact that the users were posting with different levels of intensity, i.e. some profiles contain more posts than others since their owners post more frequently.

A great number of users had a tendency to post expressions that are very frequent in the English language, such as *Sunday funday*, *Hello December*, *Think pink*, *Black is such a happy colour*, or *Hello Split*, and the majority of those expressions were written correctly. However, concerning posts in which the user expresses an individual idea, i.e. a thought which is not copied or taken from somewhere else, different types of deviations occur. Namely, there is a certain number of fossilized deviations, mainly regarding the use of singular and plural in English, as well as confusing the possessive genitive case and plural forms. Furthermore, numerous captions are followed by hashtags, i.e. sort of *tag* words preceded by an octothorpe symbol (#) for the purpose of easier search on social media. Some of the posts contain deformations even in the use of hashtags (e.g. dropping final “e” in “coffee”, different variations of the word “business”, etc.), although not



as frequently as in the posts due to the fact that Instagram often automatically offers certain hashtags.

Overall, Instagram users whose posts were analysed expressed a slight tendency to the use of American English, which confirms the previously stated thesis by Crystal (2006) about the general favouring of American English compared to British. However, some users expressed the inconsistency with regard to one distinct variant. What is more, they were (presumably unintentionally) utilizing two words of different variants in one post, such as the use of words *favourite* (American variant) and *autumn* (British variant). The same profile subsequently resorts to the use of the word *fall* (American variant for British autumn) in the following posts, which supports the preceding about the consistent unintentional shift from one variant to another.

Beyond any doubt, other common deviations presented by Croatians on Instagram are certainly misusing double negation, which is not unexpected due to the fact that the Croatian language recognizes double negations as acceptable in the standard use. Thus, examples of wrong use of double negations like “*I wouldn’t change it for nothing*”, are understandable to a certain extent from the Croatian point of view.

Finally, since the main concentration of this research was to detect and examine insufficiencies and language irregularities frequently occurring among Croatians on Instagram, the majority of the posts contain some deviant form of English, from a grammatical or orthographic point of view. Numerically speaking, grammatical deviations show a slight dominance (178 deviations detected or 55 per cent of the total amount) compared to orthography (143 deviations detected or 45 per cent of the total amount). However, spelling issues, within the orthographic category, had the highest level of frequency (98 deviations detected), which is not surprising considering the investigated content, i.e. online communication characterized by the vast amount of frequently occurring spelling issues.

## 5. Conclusion

Having taken everything into consideration, the current position of English on a global scale as the dominant lingua franca is certainly beyond shadow of doubt. English is present everywhere and almost everybody speaks it. Owing to the processes of vast globalization, contemporary internalization, and diminishing borders worldwide, the up-to-date world has become 'a global village'. The English language supports the above-mentioned trends, serving as a medium of communication and mutual comprehension emerging beyond many other languages due to favourable historical and economic reasons.

The most salient use of English as a global lingua franca is evident from its frequent use in online communication. Today, English is the main language of the Internet, used by speakers of different mother tongues. However, online communication is considerably different from standard English forms due to its fast-paced implementation, which usually includes the reduction of language constructions accompanied by numerous minor or major deviations, especially when used by the non-native speakers. Thus, the aim of the conducted research was to examine the public posts of the most famous Instagram users in the Republic of Croatia. After the investigation and corresponding analysis, various irregularities were detected. In general, the Croatian Instagram scene is abundant with posts written in English. While the majority of the analysed profiles used solely English in their posts, others resorted to the occasional Croatian-English code-switching/mixing. Considering the occurred deviations, the Croatian Instagram users usually had problems with grammar, confusing singular and plural forms, articles, tenses, word order and some further irregularities related to this field. The leading deviations appeared to be within the field of grammar, followed by orthographic problems in spelling, capitalization, and punctuation. Regardless of the fact that the highest overall frequency of occurrence belongs to grammatical deviations, spelling deviations as a subcategory within the orthographic category indicated a minor advantage in comparison to other subcategories. Therefore, the fact that the communication

executed online is characterized by its conciseness and general velocity even additionally attributes to such results. In general, despite a number of deviations in online communication, the meaning of the message itself is usually not affected. Thus, it can be concluded that the Croatian Instagram users are well-aware of the meaning conveyed when communicating in English, but they lack the knowledge of the rules prescribed about English grammar and orthography. This implies that Instagram users whose posts were analysed are more content-than form-oriented considering the aspects of online communication. Even though English is deeply integrated into Croatian society which uses English expressions on a daily basis, particularly in communication via the Internet, Croatian users of Instagram are prone to generate deviations typical of non-native English speakers. Generally speaking, such deviations mainly do not affect the meaning of the message being conveyed. However, their continuous use inevitably leads to permanent fossilization. Furthermore, since Instagram users whose posts were analysed are followed by a vast number of other individuals on Instagram regularly reading such posts filled with fossilized deviations, it is reasonable to assume that the non-native English speakers with insufficient knowledge of English might adopt those frequently occurring deviations and implement them in their further use.

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## **7. English as a lingua franca among Croatian Instagram users**

### **Summary**

This thesis provides an insight into the position of English as the dominant lingua franca from the perspective of Croatian public figures' use of English on Instagram. The main aim of the conducted research was to examine, detect and indicate the main problems of Croatians' use of English on social media, in this particular case, Instagram. The first part of the thesis is the theoretical background based on definitions of English as a lingua franca, explaining the reasons which contributed to it obtaining such a position, as well as the most prominent context in which it is used. What has also been dealt with is the influence that English has had on language use in the Croatian context. This part is concluded with a brief insight into the social media platforms in general, with a special emphasis on Instagram, and the characteristics of communication commonly performed on such platforms. The second part represents the analysis of the ways in which English is used by famous Croatian Instagram users. During the analysis, two basic types of deviations were identified, those related to grammar and orthography. The analysis of the use of English by Croatian Instagram users revealed a number of different grammatical and orthographic issues.

Key words: English as lingua franca, globalisation, social media, Instagram, language deviations, Croatian speakers of English



## 8. Engleski kao lingua franca među hrvatskim korisnicima Instagrama

### Sažetak

Ovaj rad pruža uvid u poziciju engleskog kao vodeće svjetske *lingue franca* iz perspektive uporabe engleskog na Instagramu od strane hrvatskih javnih osoba. Glavni cilj provedenog istraživanja bio je ispitati, otkriti i uputiti na glavne probleme korištenja engleskog među Hrvatima na društvenim mrežama, u ovom konkretnom slučaju, na Instagramu. U prvom se dijelu rada predstavlja teorijska podloga vezana uz definicije engleskog kao *lingue franca*, pri čemu se tumače razlozi koji su doprijenili tome da engleski ostvari takvu poziciju kao i najistaknutiji konteksti u kojima se rabi. U radu se također opisuje utjecaj kojeg engleski ima na jezičnu uporabu u hrvatskom kontekstu. Ovaj dio se zaključuje s kratkim pregledom društvenih mreža općenito, s posebnim naglaskom na Instagram, kao i na obilježja komunikacije koja se obično odvija na takvim mrežama. Drugi dio predstavlja analizu načina korištenja engleskog od strane poznatih hrvatskih korisnika Instagrama. Tijekom analize, uočene su dvije osnovne vrste pogrešaka, one vezane uz gramatiku i pravopis. Analiza uporabe engleskog od strane hrvatskih korisnika Instagrama ukazuje na različite vrste gramatičkih i pravopisnih poteškoća.

Ključne riječi: engleski kao lingua franca, globalizacija, društveni mediji, Instagram, jezična odstupanja, hrvatski govornici engleskog