

# Uncritical Acceptance of the English-Language Influence on Croatian Web Portals as a Problem of Media Literacy

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## SUMMARY

*This paper analyses the ever increasing uncritical acceptance of the English-language influence in the language of Croatian web portals as a consequence of the acceptance of the global language of the Internet and tying to it the models of communicational prestige. The goal of the research is to list and describe the ways in which the language of Croatian web portals as part of the heterogeneous journalistic style opens up to the influence of the English language, with emphasis on daily news portals. This influence in the Croatian language as the receiving language is analysed on several linguistic levels, especially on the lexical and orthographic level, with the consequences of the non-adjustment of the loaned elements to the norms of the standard Croatian language being pointed out. Due to the fact that the language of web portals is located within a public communication of a wide user reach (especially among younger users) and due to the openness of the journalistic style to other functional styles of the Croatian language as well as the dialectic with the standard language, it is especially important to cultivate norms of the Croatian standard language in its informative genres. However, the analysis conducted shows that in the language of Croatian web portals, by “ready-made” loaning from the English language, the norms of the Croatian linguistic standard are often so broken down that a question arises whether these disruptions are becoming characteristic of web journalism, and a silently accepted way of a part of public communication? Therefore the conclusion stresses the importance of raising awareness in the authors of media content and in the users of that content about nurturing*

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*linguistic independence and taking a critical stand towards unnecessary foreign-language influences. This is where media literacy can have an important, decisive role.*

Keywords: Croatian standard language, web portals, loanwords, English language, strategy for preserving linguistic identity

## **Introduction – Croatian web portals and the language of public communication under the influence of a global language**

The spreading of the influence of the English language as *lingua franca* of the modern world (technology, science, economy, sport, popular culture, advertising industry and the language of young people) is leaving its trace, to different degrees, on other languages, including Croatian. Depending on the type of linguistic loaning, active or passive, one can speak of the simultaneous process of enriching and impoverishing the domestic language system. Due to the fact that loaning from the English language comes partly out of inner-linguistic reasons, because of the need to name new objects or terms, by using formation possibilities of the Croatian linguistic system within the last two decades of flourishing new technologies a new Croatian computer terminology was created (Mihaljević, 2003) which, as an active type of the relation towards a foreign-language influence, testifies to the fact how the domestic linguistic system is being enriched and exalted within globalisation points of contact. Choosing a loanword or a domestic one, for example “e-mail” or *elektronička pošta* or *elektronička poruka*, “attachment” or *privitak*, *fajl* or *datoteka* depends on the type of functional-stylistic context (Opačić, 2007b: 23), and in public communication the choice should be based on giving advantage to the domestic word.

Lately loaning from the English language has become more common due to outer-linguistic reasons – in the name of the prestige of international language of the Anglo-American areal.<sup>1</sup> In the process, a large number of words is loaned that are not adjusted to the system of the Croatian language, so they are not referred to as English loanwords (that term implies a certain level of adjustment – Filipović, 1990: 16-17), but as “ad hoc loanwords” (Nikolić-Hoyt, 2005b: 180). They are not adjusted to the norms of the Croatian standard language, they retain their original spelling, and cause a series of orthographical difficulties, which is evident in different spelling of those words, even triple spelling solutions of the same English lexeme in the articles of the same web portal. It is not rare for the English words to first be used in a single meaning, and then be transferred to other semantic fields

they have in the English language, causing difficulties in the Croatian linguistic system because they push out words whose meanings are precisely determined by tradition, are fused into the domestic system and make up lexical treasure of the native language. The influence of the English language on Croatian is increasingly more evident in its syntax, especially in the names of international festivals hosted in Croatia (Babić, 2004: 217-221) in which we most often find, instead of a relative adjective, an indeclinable form, and in other juxtapositional formations that are contrary to the Croatian language. Conscious speakers and responsible journalists resist those changes, while those of a more conformist attitude give in to them quickly, which leads to a lack of uniformity and irresponsibility towards the language in public use, and to a need to focus on that problem within media literacy which is closely tied to courses on native language and literature.

“Ready-made” loaning from the English language are fastest in the web area which is the intersection of the speed of information flow, availability of media content written in English and a receivers’ circle educated in a system in which the English language is given an important place. That is why Croatian linguists are right when they warn that additional attention should be given to the language of public communication on the World Wide Web as a pulsating channel of quick linguistic changes from which native language is not sufficiently protected. Besides the obvious presence of the English lexical influence, in the language of Croatian web portals there is also linguistic recoding so that entire article titles are formed using English syntagms or syntactic constructions, thus stratifying recipients in an intergenerational divide. With this kind of rapidly changing language new generations of media content users are being raised that are of different linguistic competence, they reach more often for the English language while speaking colloquially, and they are more closely tied to it in the educational system. To be “cool”, “stylish” and “funny” and go to a “party” with a “new look” are signs of belonging to trends and appealing beacons of connecting younger users to the content of web portals, not only specialized ones dealing with entertainment, but also news portals, which sends a certain message of a part of the electronic media about the paradigm of linguistic prestige in public communication. On the other hand, frequent loaning from the English language out of fashionable reasons leads to an increasing incomprehensibility of the media language to those native speakers who spot “ready-made” loaning and take an engaged stand about it, often feeling repulsed by the media precisely because of their linguistic superficiality and pandering to the foreign. The language of certain web portals clearly testifies that trying to achieve linguistic exclusivity of a foreign system can have an undesirable effect so that those portals whose sections brim with unnecessary English lexis are often perceived by some users of

media content as untrustworthy, not serious, sensationalistic. Part of the users of web portals is indifferent to the spreading of English-language influence so that in that context of recipients' stratification one can apply the titular syntactical construction "from delight to fear to indifference" (Opačić, 2007a). Children as media users are especially exposed to accepting redundant foreign-language influences, if they are denied experiences that would make them competent and conscious users of public discourse. It is therefore necessary to encourage their active role as nurturers and co-creators of the native language, to plan a linguistic policy and carefully edit the language of electronic media as the fastest catalysts of linguistic changes and consequences of linguistic points of contact. Media literacy should encourage a creative relation towards the native language in a journalistic functional style (in all its sub styles, especially on web portals) and develop a critical relation towards hasty linguistic loaning. We would thus use a chance we have in the age of web connections: to enrich linguistic independence through contacts with others within the globalisation process.

### **Purist attempts and the language of the media**

The language of non-specialized web portals should take great care not only about the content of the delivered media messages, but also about their shaping in accordance with orthographical, grammatical (morphological and syntactical), lexical, phonological and stylistic norms of the Croatian standard language. By respecting these norms the language of the portals would assert itself as a responsible medium that is aware of its importance in cultivating linguistic culture in the web area, especially since part of the news portals came into being as a consequence of "the reaction of traditional media to new technologies" (Zgrabljić Rotar, 2011: 40), that is, as "the continuance of their printed, radio or television edition" (Benković & Balabanić, 2010: 44) and has, in embracing the web media, inherited the responsibility of the informational genre towards the norms of the standard language in public communication. However, since web portals convey information immediately and their "visuality" has a decisive role in their reception, that is, choosing to read them or browse them, one gets the impression that the lightly taken English-language influence on the lexical level, especially in the titles and subtitles is, on the one hand, just a spontaneous reaction of the web media on the context of linguistic prestige in the socio-linguistical reality and, on the other hand, a lack of responsibility that exploits the lack of linguistic regulation of the media language. With this in mind, a question arises whether web portals, even without legal regulation, are responsible enough towards the native language, and to what degree they influence the transfer

of acquired knowledge about the propulsive language of the web towards foreign influences on public communication as a whole.

Linguistic contacts are without a doubt a necessity and a desirability of the social reality. The influence of the English language in the digital age can be seen in many different languages, and in many different ways, depending on the linguistic strategies of certain communities towards accepting foreign-language elements, or insisting on protecting the native system from uncritical loaning of foreign-language elements, accepting the necessary ones and creating native replacements or calques for the unnecessary ones. According to Turk (1996: 65-68), some European linguistic communities have developed a rigid purism, a liberal contextualism, or are not interested in the consequences of loaning in the native system. Depending on the level of care towards linguistic culture and purity, the language of public communication, including the language of web portals, integrates within itself a lesser or greater influence of the English language respecting the principles given by linguistic policy and recommendations of advisory bodies. By doing so, some linguistic communities (for instance France, Hungary and Turkey) have greatly protected their own linguistic tradition, in Hungary, for instance, a lot of internationalisms of Anglo-American origin have been prevented by creating their own linguistic solutions. Croatia has a long tradition of purism that takes the middle road between rigidity and complete openness, supporting the idea of putting a native word ahead of the foreign one, if dealing with the same scope of meaning, that is, to limit the foreign influence purposefully and functionally: "The Croatian language is not xenophobic, but it has in historical circumstances developed an active relation towards foreign-language and native-language facts. It is a care for the linguistic regularity that does not take each element passively, arbitrarily and without judgement, but accepts it if the language needs it" (Turk, 1996: 76). Although even in systematically planned linguistic efforts, the influence of the English language becomes a part, in one way or another, of the journalistic style, and by accepting those elements whose use is justified it develops a care for one's own linguistic identity since by taking in foreign influences, native linguistic system is enriched, not impoverished. Based on our own long purist tradition, but learning from the experiences of other linguistic communities that came into contact with the English language, in the context of media literacy we need to improve the knowledge about the consequences of "ready-made" loaning with which the native system is not given the chance to respond to the new needs of communication technologies. We need to better define the strategy for protecting the polyfunctionality of the standard in public communication and give attention to developing that problem within the framework of media literacy and media culture: "Globalisation can seem like a

process that will result in the loss of national identities. It will, however, especially on a linguistic level, take its toll with the speed and intensity that we allow it to have” (Opačić, 2007b: 27).

Informational web portals achieve their content in public communication by using the standard language. The standard language is “a system governed by an explicit (deliberate, planned) norm, i.e. rules (orthography and grammar), and a list (normative vocabulary)” (Frančić, Hudeček & Mihaljević, 2005: 19). Norms refer to rules tied to linguistic levels and so one can talk about achieving a standard language by cultivating norms in orthography, orthoepy, grammar, lexis and stylistics. As the most obvious influence of the English language on the Croatian language on web portals is done in lexis, one can say that that is precisely where the lexical norm of the Croatian standard language is being torn apart the most, since English loanwords that have a Croatian substitute of equivalent meaning are being lightly imported into public communication of the web space. This is contrary to Croatian purist tradition that is characterised by the care to preserve linguistic identity: “The aspiration for purity is the permanent characteristic of the Croatian language. With it in mind, the Croatian language first tries to test its own abilities, and only when they are exhausted, reaches for foreign ones” (Frančić, Hudeček & Mihaljević, 2005: 191). Purist rules develop, among other things, the relation between the loanword and the native word, i.e. the question of purposeful linguistic loaning and its own system. According to Samardžija (1995: 58-59), the relation between purist efforts in developing one’s own system and linguistic loaning can be summed up in a couple of points:

- loanwords are necessary in the standard language if there are no substitutes for them, or those substitutes are stylistically determined;
- if there is a Croatian substitute, then one should take care about the relation of their semantic fields. If it is identical, advantage in the standard language should be given to the Croatian lexeme;
- if their scope does not intersect, then the loanword is used only in that area where there is no interference of meaning, i.e. in that part of the meaning that can not be expressed with the Croatian word;
- if we are dealing with two expressions of loanwords, then the advantage should be given to the expression more adapted to the norms of the Croatian standard language.

Considering the fact that purist efforts do not deal with exotisms, eponyms, loanwords that have become standard, and partly with internationalisms, and have a clear attitude towards redundant foreign words, purism is sometimes given a nega-

tive connotation of resisting anything foreign in a part of the public. Purism, however, as a care about one's own linguistic culture, advocates above all else an active relation towards the native system, its enriching and a creative relation towards its expressive potential. Purist principles point to a chance for enriching the standard language with its own formations within linguistic contacts, while accepting the necessary foreign influences. Any language is a living system, and its speakers are not just passive users, but are in a way its co-creators, with their creative relation towards the language. In that context, the age of web connectivity and the spreading of the English language through Croatian web portals can be an opportunity, and not a challenge, for preserving linguistic identity. Web space, its reach among the recipients and the speed of communication, can be used to encourage developing a consciousness among the speakers about the creative relation towards their native language. The speed with which web portals influence the linguistic culture of their users with respect to other mass media has its own receptive characteristic: users of many portals are co-creators of media space, they comment directly (and among themselves) on the content of the portal and its language and have an opportunity to actively nurture the polyfunctionality of the standard language, among other things they can point out the mistakes contained in the texts on the portal that administrators can use to polish the published content. Such strength of the users' reach, coupled with raising awareness with the public and the efforts of the entire linguistic community, could be used to promote our own linguistic expressive values or even to encourage readers to propose new words and replace redundant ones. But for now, we can say that kind of active relation of users of the media content on the researched Croatian portals was not made possible and that the questions concerning linguistic culture on portals were marginalised, along with the acceptance of the English language as the prestige of web communication. The speed of delivering new content by often reaching for English-language portals (especially in reporting results of pseudoscientific research and reporting about world trends in popular culture), given the background of social atmosphere of pointing out the power of communication technologies and their prestige language, results in an increasing loaning of redundant elements that are accompanied by an increasing lack of interest for their functional limitations in the creators of portal content. Consequences of irresponsible behaviour towards one's native language are evident in what we call hybrid or so-called *hrenaljeski* (Vilke & Medved Krajnović, 2006) or the "pidginisation of the Croatian language" (Opačić, 2007a: 240). In that context we should ask ourselves whether we have ceased being the subjects of web communication with "ready-made" linguistic loaning? How can we use web contents to encourage nurturing the culture of our native language?

## **Goals and methods of the research**

The main goal of the research was to determine ways in which the influence of the English language is accepted in the language of Croatian web portals because of non-linguistic reasons and explain the functionality of that loaning within the paradigm of linguistic prestige, then to suggest guidelines for a strategy to nurture linguistic culture on web portals within media literacy. Analysis was mostly done on news portals, most of them web forms of daily newspapers (Jutarnji.hr, Novolist.hr, Večernji.hr, 24sata.hr), while a smaller number of them are strictly in electronic form (Index.hr, Net.hr, Tportal.hr).

Singling out and analysing the loaning from the English language on Croatian web portals encompassed a period of fifteen days, from June 1st to June 18th, 2014. The examples were singled out on several linguistic levels (lexical, formational, syntactical, semantic and orthographical). Emphasis was put on the most obvious linguistic level where there is English-language influence – lexical, so we analysed section titles of web portals as strong places of intense stylistic creation. The titular lexis was listed with the goal of analysing its frequency in relation to native titular lexis, then the relation of English words within their place in the titles and subtitles of portal articles with respect to native words in the text of the article. Where there was loaning from the English original, we listed that original as well. We commented on noticed ways of “ready-made” loaning from the English language according to the places in the text on the portal where they were found and explained the reasons for their use from the functional-stylistic and prestigious point of view, then we problematised their use, especially since foreign-language elements were not adapted to native-language system, while not only being treated as of equal value to native words, but as being their superiors.



Analysis of section titles of Croatian web portals shows that they contain a large number of redundant words loaned from the English language, which have pushed out native words which could not only stand in their place with an equal value (*zabava* instead of “fun”, *vijesti* instead of “news”, *životni stil* instead of “lifestyle”, *tehnologija* instead of “tech”), but more purposefully since they are implemented in the native linguistic system that is used, as a communicational means, to create Croatian web portals. By giving advantage to a foreign word which is not adapted in the section titles, one sends a direct message about the linguistic prestige of the English language over Croatian and about linguistic conformity – taking over ready-made formulations that the English language offers in web space. Section titles loan English elements on the orthographical level as well, so that sections of several portals have an integrated sign & (“and”) that does not exist in Croatian orthography, and yet it is used in the researched body of texts to join two components, Croatian and foreign (*Igre & Fun*) and English lexeme “show”, which has already been phonetized in the Croatian linguistic system (as *šou*), is used etymologically in some section titles. This neglects the fact that the loaned English word “show” has been adapted into the Croatian linguistic system (*šou*) and has been phonetized.

Reaching for the colloquial style and jargon in section titles of web portals is one of the ways to take over the English-language influence, especially in shortening words. Titles resemble advertisements (they have the same function of drawing attention): they seek closeness to the recipient by choosing linguistic means that are close to him, that belong to his relaxed, unofficial communication. In some section titles we find the influence of jargon, e.g. *gadgeterija*. These is newly coined word comprised of an unadapted English word as the root to which a Croatian suffix is added that suggests a certain functional-stylistic layering. In relation to the native titular lexis, one news portal have a majority of English lexemes<sup>2</sup>. By putting unadapted English words into section titles as entry positions for the content, it is evident that the language of the analysed Croatian web portals uses them as appealing signals whose purpose is to encourage the user to choose those sections to read. English components are used as strong means of effectiveness with the task of attracting the attention of web portals users, especially younger ones: “It seems that for men and women all around the world – especially young ones – British and American English embody the feeling of hope, material wealth, scientific and empirical procedures. The notion that the world has about mass spending, international trade, popular art, clash of generations, technocracy is mediated through American English and English quotes and speaking habits” (Filipović, 1990: 20).

Section titles are the most obvious linguistic layer of web portals where a foreign-language influence is reflected, and where it can be observed as a representational

tissue of the relation of some electronic media towards native and foreign linguistic system. That relation speaks about the insufficiently developed strategy to protect one's own linguistic standard in public communication. Journalistic functional style in some of its sub styles is characterised by a looser relation towards standard-language norms, for instance in feuilletons, columns and blogs. While the functional fitting of loanwords and foreign words there, depending on the author's style, can be seen as a characteristic of his stylistic signature, in daily news portals, especially in section titles as the most obvious lexical layer, according to purist principles, advantage should be given to native words. This would avoid the difficulties caused by a lack of adaptation of instantly loaned foreign words within the Croatian-language system.

Table 2. Examples of placing an English word in the title and the Croatian "substitute" in the text of the article

Tablica 2. Primjeri smještanja engleske riječi u naslovu i hrvatske "zamjene" u tijelu članka

Article title	"Darovi dolaze: njezin rođendanski party oduševio je sve fanove <i>Igre prijestolja</i> " Index.hr (June 10th, 2014)	"Amerikanci odabrali najomraženiji fast food lanac, iznenađenja nema" Index.hr (June 18th, 2014)
Text of the article	"Fotografije rođendanske zabave jednogodišnje Emme oduševile su sve nerdove i fanove hit serije <i>Igra prijestolja</i> ."	"Štoviše, upravo je McDonald's posljednji na ljestvici najomiljenijih lanaca restorana brze hrane, prema novom izvješću American Customer Service Indexa, organizacije koja mjeri zadovoljstvo potrošača u raznim industrijama, piše Huffington Post."

This table shows two examples which demonstrate how the process of titling articles on a portal is directly linked to the model of the prestige of the global language when it comes to transferring content of the Anglo-American cultural provenience. In the titles of the two articles foreign English words have been used ("party" and "fast food") that are not adapted to the Croatian-language system, and one of them, "party", is contextually linked to the closeness of words of English origin, partly English adapted words of the colloquial style. They are not written in italics in the titles, and although orthographically unadapted, exists as equal facts to the text in Croatian. However, it is not only equal to the Croatian lexis, but superior to it. The fact that Croatian lexemes *zabava* and *brza hrana* are only present in the text and not in the title confirms the thesis that the English language is accepted on web portals as the prestige language to which the native linguistic system is subjected cou-

sing neglect of orthographical norms of the Croatian language: "Foreign words do not belong to the Croatian language although they can be found in it due to stylistic or terminological reasons. If they are found in a Croatian text, they should be written in italics to point out their foreign origin" (*Hrvatski pravopis*, 2013: 67). The reason for going around the orthographical distinction of English words as foreign words lies in the prestige status of the English language whose elements show a weak, if any, level of adaptation to other languages and retain the characteristics of the model language (Nikolić-Hoyt, 2005a: 357).

The influence of the English language can be seen in sponsored articles which represent services or products tied with the Anglo-American culture. For instance, in a sponsored article with the title "Kvaliteta se uvijek isplati!" of the global fast-food chain McDonald's (Net.hr, June 9th, 2014) there is a syntagm written in capital letters MCDONALD'S BEEF, while in the text an adjective is used derived from the Croatian word *govedina* (*goveđe meso*, *goveđi odresci*). In comparison, in the same sponsored article published on the portal Večernji.hr (June 11th, 2014) the English word "beef" is dropped with the name of the company. Sponsored articles are tied with multinational companies and their propaganda and similar examples can be found in the analysed body of texts. One of the sources of accepting unadapted English words is pseudoscientific research from which even those lexemes that have undergone adaptation to the Croatian-language system are being taken in their original English form. Contemporary Croatian dictionaries have the word *viski* in its phonetised form, but in the portal articles with titles such as "Tajna dugovječnosti? Čašica whiskeya nakon doručka" on the portal Novolist.hr (June 4th, 2014) the original spelling of that word is used, before it was adapted into the Croatian language.

Table 3. Examples of placing an English word in the article supertitle and subtitle and the Croatian "substitute" in the text of the article

Tablica 3. Primjeri smještanja engleske riječi u nadnaslovu i podnaslovu te hrvatske "zamjene" u tijelu članka

Article supertitle/ subtitle	"Užas u shopping centru" Jutarnji.hr (June 9th, 2014)	"Leona Paraminski i Marko Lušić primili su se kuhače te flambirali steakove kako bi otkrili sve tajne vrhunskog steaka u Fort Apacheu..." Večernji.hr (June 12th, 2014)
Text of the article	"...ubili su dvojicu policajaca dok su ručali u restoranu u sklopu trgovačkog centra u Las Vegasu."	"Dok je glumica otkrila sve tajne odreska Apache chef, junećeg mesa koje je sredina bifteka, Marko je otkrio sve tajne filea jelena."

As in the case of an English word in the title and the Croatian equivalent in the text of the article, the same principle is applied for the supertitle and subtitle and the text itself. English unadapted words (“shopping” and “steak”) are a part of the introduction to the article, with the task of giving relevant information which would prompt users to read the article, linking itself to the prestige language. Another example of a lack of uniformity in the analysed body of texts are the economy sections on some portals. For example, on the portal Večernji.hr (June 9th, 2014) in the section titled Biznis within the special Greenvest a supertitle Business was added, along with the article titled “Ostvarite svoje zelene ideje: Uključite se u projekt ECOFUNDING”, where in the same place we find the phonetised form *biznis*, and the etymological “business”. During the intense negotiations between the government and unions about outsourcing at the time of the analysis, the English word was often a part of the titles and subtitles of many portals included in this research, while the text contained the Croatian word *izdvajanje*. With this, the portals heavily influenced the spreading of the English word into the colloquial language, while contributing to pushing out the Croatian word.

Table 4. Examples of breaking orthographical norms of the standard language  
*Tablica 4. Primjeri kršenja pravopisnih normi standardnoga jezika*

Article title/ subtitle	"Lana Jurčević i Gidra iz Connecta ljetno započinju na ekskluzivnom Pool Partyju!" Index.hr. (June 10th, 2014)	"Opremljen wingsuitom" Jutarnji.hr (June 9th, 2014)
Text of the article	"Više informacija možete pronaći na web stranici i Facebook eventu, te slike s prošlih party-a na Instagramu."	"Njegov slobodni pad trajao je pet minuta. Opremljen 'wingsuitom' Remo Laeng je zatim otvorio svoj padobran te je letio još pet minuta prije prizemljenja."

In the above examples it is evident that loaning redundant English lexemes that are unadapted to the norms of the Croatian standard language causes a series of difficulties. In the first example we are dealing with declension difficulties, while in the second example adding quotation marks to the foreign-language element in the text itself, but not in the article supertitle, confirms that titles and supertitles in portal articles are places where the elements of the prestige language show a weak, if any, level of integration.

Table 5. Passive loaning of English words according to English original texts  
*Tablica 5. Pasivna preuzimanja engleskih riječi prema izvornicima na engleskome jeziku*

Croatian article title	"Psiću lualici ekstremni 'makeover' spasio život" Večernji.hr (June 6th, 2014)	"Lijepa i na paklenim vrućinama: Neobični beauty trikovi koje bi svaka cura trebala znati" Index.hr (June 13th, 2014)
English article title	"Charlie The Homeless Dog Got A Second Chance At Life After An Incredible Makeover" (huffingtonpost.com/2014/06/05/)	"Crazy (But Effective) Hot Weather Beauty Hacks Every Girl Needs to Know" BeautyHigh.com (June 12th, 2014)

In these two examples, from the entertainment section, there is a literal translation of the English original coupled with loaning unadapted English words. In the first example the English word is marked as a foreign word, however, it loses this mark in the text of the article: "Ponekad je makeover znak taštine, no psić Charlie itekako zna kako promjena izgleda može značiti razliku između života i smrti." (Večernji.hr, June 6th, 2014). One can honestly say that the language of the web portals, by not putting foreign elements in italics, and by lexically obtaining a lot of redundant elements, is destroying the norms of the standard. These destructions can not be seen as a harmless consequence of technological development and fast exchange of information in web space. Media literacy can contribute a lot in that context: it can support the nurturing of the standard language in its polyfunctionality, spoken and written discourse of public communication, and can put the prestige of the native system ahead of the foreign one, especially in the language of the Internet, where "ready-made" loaning like that shown above occurs.

## Discussion and conclusion

With this paper we have tried, on the example of the analysis of the language of web portals, to point out the necessity for a more defined difference in linguistic prestige in the colloquial style (especially jargon) and journalistic functional style, that is, in private and public communication. Media literacy, usually dependant on native language and literature courses, should incorporate a more precise strategy of nurturing the native language in public communication and ensure that in the media practice linguistic prestige is linked with the native system, not the foreign one, which is generally the case, as the analysis has shown, with the language of

the web portals. Language of the web portals in contextualised with the possibility of a fast and direct transfer of information to its users and in the space of virtual accessibility there is often literal translation of English portal articles which, coupled with the need for a faster availability of content and by going around Croatian-language editors, leads to an ever-increasing loaning of those English unadapted words that, separated from the vital elastic norms of the Croatian standard language as the recipient language, cause within it a series of difficulties, especially semantic, morphological and orthographical ones. The results of the research of the titular lexis show that the majority of the web-portal space is flooded with English influence, up to the point where most of the sections on some of the analysed portals are named using lexical units loaned from the English language. Loaned elements from the English language lead to many difficulties, on the semantic level they generate incomprehension and imprecision, and on the spelling level a lack of uniformity, which confirms that they are redundant within the system of Croatian language, and that they unnecessarily burden public communication.

Although no language can completely shield itself from foreign influences, nor it should do that, because linguistic contacts are a socio-linguistic necessity and desirability of the social reality, spreading of the English language has prompted many linguistic communities to give a great deal of attention to planning linguistic policies while defining the necessity of the language of the media in nurturing its own cultural values and national identity. Considering the influence of the journalistic style on the colloquial, but also the standard language, language of the electronic media, especially news portals, should take great care when dealing with the norms of the standard language and confirming them, thus nurturing the linguistic culture of the polyfunctionality of the standard language. Media literacy, while trying to develop critical autonomy of the recipients from the earliest age, can have an active role in pointing out that social prestige in public communication is linked with the Croatian standard language, and not other idioms, however widespread they might be. Analysis of the language of web portals shows a tendency of strengthening the English paradigm as the prestige language in prominent places in portal articles, titles, supertitles and subtitles. One can honestly say that the language of the web portals, by not putting foreign elements in italics, and by lexically obtaining a lot of redundant elements, is destroying the norms of the standard. These destructions can not be seen as a harmless consequence of a fast exchange of information in web space and the prevailing influence of *lingua franca* of contemporary age, but as a passive relation towards the native linguistic system. Media literacy can contribute a lot in that context: it can support the nurturing of the standard language in its polyfunctionality, spoken and written discourse of public communication, and can put

the prestige of the native system ahead of the foreign one, especially in the language of the Internet, where “ready-made” loaning from the English language occurs. Considering that an important role of the media is to educate and nurture one’s own cultural values and national identity, after the obtained results of the research, we warn about the need to take a more clear stand towards uncritical loaning of foreign words and to more clearly define a strategy of linguistic identity in the media space of the contemporary age. Since the role of the media in realising public-service values is an extremely important one, media literacy should encompass sensitising media competence in a linguistic sense as well, and to do this we need to synchronise the educational system, linguistic-policy guidelines and the creation of media content. Therefore we recommend paying this problem greater attention on the level of national linguistic policy and on the educational level in Croatian-language courses within media literacy and media culture.

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## ENDNOTES

- <sup>1</sup> When speaking about the recent spreading of English-language influence, especially in the area of new technologies, popular culture, media and colloquial style and jargon, one usually means the American English, from which a part of loaned lexemes has internationalised in many languages, including Croatian.
  - <sup>2</sup> According to Gemius results for May 2014, most frequently visited Croatian portals are as follows: 24sata.hr, Jutarnji.hr, Večernji.hr, Njuškalo.hr, Dnevnik.hr, Tportal.hr, Net.hr, Dnevno.hr, Coolinarika.com i Slobodnadalmacija.hr. The results are available here: <http://www.audience.com.hr/>
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# **Nekritičko prihvaćanje engleskoga jezičnog utjecaja na hrvatskim mrežnim portalima kao problem medijske pismenosti**

**Ljubica Josić**

## **SAŽETAK**

U radu se analizira sve ubrzanije nekritično preuzimanje engleskoga jezičnog utjecaja u jeziku hrvatskih mrežnih portala kao posljedice prihvaćenosti globalnoga jezika mreže i vezivanja uza nj modela komunikacijske prestižnosti. Cilj je istraživanja popisati i opisati načine na koje se jezik hrvatskih portala kao dio heterogenoga publicističkog stila otvara utjecaju engleskoga jezika, s naglaskom na dnevne informativne portale. Taj se utjecaj u hrvatskome jeziku kao jeziku primatelju analizira na nekoliko jezičnih razina, posebice na leksičkoj i pravopisnoj, te se ističu posljedice neprilagođenosti preuzetih elemenata normama hrvatskoga standardnog jezika. Zbog činjenice da se jezik mrežnih portala ostvaruje u javnoj komunikaciji širokoga korisničkog doseg (posebice među korisnicima mlađe dobi) i zbog otvorenosti publicističkoga stila ostalim funkcionalnim stilovima hrvatskoga jezika te dijalektike sa standardnim jezikom, osobito je važno u njegovim informativnim žanrovima njegovati norme hrvatskoga standardnoga jezika. Međutim, provedena analiza pokazuje da se u jeziku hrvatskih mrežnih portala »gotovim« preuzimanjima iz engleskoga norme domaćeg jezičnog standarda često razaraju do te mjere da se može postaviti pitanje postaju li takva narušavanja osebujnost mrežnog novinarstva, a time i prešutno prihvatljiv način dijela javne komunikacije? Stoga se u zaključku ističe važnost osvježavanja tvoraca medijskih sadržaja i korisnika tih sadržaja o njegovanju jezičnih vlastitosti i zauzimanju kritičkoga stava prema nepotrebnim stranim jezičnim utjecajima. U tim nastojanjima medijska pismenost može imati važnu, odlučujuću ulogu.

**Ključne riječi:** hrvatski standardni jezik, mrežni portali, tuđice, engleski jezik, strategija očuvanja jezičnog identiteta