

# Domestic Encouragement for Young Foreign Language Learners in Slovenia

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## Abstract

*The main aim of the present research was to determine the kinds of encouragement for foreign language (FL) learning that young learners receive at home from their parents, and to highlight any differences between the domestic environment and foreign language learning in terms of the socio-economic status of the family. Furthermore, the study offers some general recommendations to parents and primary school authorities to encourage FL learning in the domestic environment, thereby avoiding socio-economic differences.*

*The study was conducted on a sample of ninth-grade pupils (14 years of age) attending Slovene primary schools (N=600). A questionnaire with the closed-type questions was designed in accordance with the measurement characteristics (validity, reliability, objectivity). The data were analysed by using descriptive and inferential statistics. The results show that in general, parents almost never or rarely encourage their children in foreign language learning. A detailed analysis of the results, however, shows that there are statistically significant differences in the support given to foreign language learning in terms of the socio-economic status of the family (e.g., through books, literature, DVDs, songs in foreign languages, homework, language courses abroad, travelling). Parents with a higher level of education support their children in learning foreign languages more than parents with a lower level of education.*

**Key words:** *foreign language learning; parental involvement; primary school; socio-economic environment.*

## Introduction

In our global society the knowledge of only one additional or foreign language is not enough. Different documents (e.g., *Promoting Language Learning and Linguistic Diversity: An Action Plan 2004 – 2006* (2003); *The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment* (2001); *The Nuffield Languages Inquiry* (2000) recommend the learning of multiple languages. Slovenia has followed the guidelines and objectives of the Council of Europe and offers nine-year primary school pupils compulsory foreign language learning (English or German), plus a second foreign language (Official Gazette of RS, No. 47/2008).

There are many different factors that influence a child when learning a foreign language (e.g. motivation, learning abilities, didactic approaches and the environment). There are also other important factors, such as a country's language policy, the curriculum, the atmosphere in the classroom, the teacher, the interest of pupils (Gardner, 2007). Besides a child's personality (e.g. being extroverted or introverted) the major influence on foreign language learning is the home environment (Carr & Pauwels, 2006, p. 93; Figueiredo & Silva, 2008, p. 16; Mattheoudakis & Alexiou, 2009, p. 229; Žakelj & Ivanuš Grmek, 2013, p. 442). Despite the efforts of various governments in numerous countries, many children are excluded for reasons connected with poverty. It is quite difficult to eliminate this social discrimination, which is deeply rooted in society and culture (Madrid, 2011).

The aims of this article are to present forms of encouragement that Slovenian parents can offer in their child's foreign language (FL) education, highlight any differences between the domestic environment and foreign language learning in terms of the socio-economic status of the family, and to provide recommendations for FL teachers and parents on how to improve the FL education to avoid socio-economic differences. Different studies (Carr & Pauwels, 2006, p. 93; Gayton, 2010, p. 18; Mattheoudakis & Alexiou, 2009, p. 229; Sirin, 2005, p. 418) confirm a connection between the socio-economic status of a family and a child's school achievements. Children who come from families with a higher socio-economic status are more likely to be motivated to learn foreign languages and are also more successful in learning them (Carr & Pauwels, 2006, p. 139). Parents with a higher socio-economic status also travel abroad more often and children from such families are therefore more motivated to learn foreign languages.

This paper will first present the Slovenian formal FL education at the primary level.

## Slovenian Educational Context

In Slovenia, education starts in preschool but preschool education is not obligatory. Children from the age of 1 to 6 (when they enter the compulsory primary school) are enrolled in preschool institutions. Preschool education is offered mostly by public preschool institutions, funded by local communities and by parents' contributions. It is divided into two age groups (toddlers aged 1-3, and children from 3 to school-age).

The number of children enrolled in programmes from 1 to 3 years of age is increasing due to an increasing level of employment amongst women. The National Curriculum for Preschool (1999) caters for the developmental characteristics of preschool children, provides comprehensive education and care, and includes general guidelines for various activities (movement, language, art, nature, society, and mathematics).

Pedagogical and educational work in preschool institutions is conducted in Slovene. A second language is taught on the basis of the specific preschool education programmes in the two nationally mixed regions of Slovenia: Italian in the area of Slovene Istria (children learn the second language used in their environment: either Italian or Slovene); and Hungarian (bilingually) in the area of Prekmurje.

Foreign languages in preschool are optional (English, German, French), offered as additional activities of interest, and paid for either by parents or local communities. These additional activities are performed after 3 p.m. (when the official part of the programme has already finished), and by external experts. However, some preschool institutions participate in the Network Innovative Project (Brumen, 2011) under the guidance of the National Institute of Education and the Faculty of Education, with the aim to integrate contents from other areas (movement, language, art, nature, society, and mathematics) and language learning, while focusing on the development of the whole child.

The Slovenian primary school is compulsory, free of charge, and is divided into three-year cycles. The first cycle involves children from the age of 6 to 8 (grades 1 – 3), in the second cycle are pupils aged 9 to 11 (grades 4 – 6), and in the third cycle are children from 12 to 14 years of age (grades 7 – 9). The compulsory Curriculum consists of compulsory subjects, electives, home room periods and activity days (culture, science, sports, technology). It includes educational assistance for children with special needs, after-school care, additional classes, and other forms of care for pupils, interest activities and out-of-school classes (Elementary Education Act, 2006).

Slovene is the native language for about 88% of Slovenia's population; it is a linguistically homogenous country. However, Slovenian primary schools have a special concern for pupils from other linguistic and cultural backgrounds (*Programme for Children and Youth 2006-2016; The National Strategy of Inclusion of the Immigrant Children and Youth into Education (2007); Guidelines for the Integration of Immigrant Children in Pre-schools and Primary Schools, 2012*) and consequently provide opportunities for an interest in other cultures and languages, as well as for tolerance and diversity. Culture and language are very closely related, and learning a foreign language also means learning about other cultures, customs, values and different ways of thinking, (Byram, 2008; Curtain & Dahlberg, 2004).

Foreign language learning (mostly English or German) starts formally at the age of 9 (year 4 of the primary school) and continues for all students until the age of 15 (year 9). In year 7 (age 12), an elective second foreign language is introduced (German, Italian, Hungarian, Croatian, French or English). However, foreign language education

informally starts in preschool (3 to 6 years of age) (e.g. language courses funded by the local community or by the parents' fees), mostly due to the pressure from parents and society to start learning foreign languages at an early age (Brumen, 2011). Therefore, the Ministry of Education has gradually introduced the first foreign language as a compulsory subject in grade 2 (7 years of age) and as a non-compulsory subject (in grade 1), in 15 % of Slovenian primary schools (school year 2014/15). In the 2015/16 school year, another 30 % of primary schools became involved in teaching the first foreign language (English or German) as a compulsory subject in grade 2. In the 2016/17 school year, all Slovenian young learners will start learning a compulsory first foreign language in grade 2, at the age of 7, two hours per week (Official Gazette of the RS, No. 15/2014).

Žakelj and Ivanuš Grmek (2013) have found in their study a relationship between the socio-economic status of families in different Slovenian regions and the students' achievements at the National Assessment of Knowledge. The study shows that social background significantly influences pupils' learning performance. Taking this into account, the main research question in this study was to investigate which organisational specificities of support or encouragement of Slovenian ninth-grade pupils (14 years of age) in primary school, are offered by their parents regarding FL education in order to enhance their FL learning achievements and outcomes, and to avoid the long-term negative consequences of failing FL classes.

## **The Connection between Parental Involvement and Foreign Language Learning**

The learning of foreign languages is present everywhere: in the family, at work, at school (Gao, 2006). The involvement of parents in their children's education is also important in foreign language learning, and parental support has a major role in learning a foreign language (Jones, 2009).

Not much research has been done that deals with the involvement of parents and their support for their children in learning foreign languages at the primary level of schooling. The cause of this may be attributed to the fact that most of the research that deals with learning foreign languages has mainly been based on the cognitive theory (Mitchell & Myles, 1998; Thorne, 2005; Watson-Gegeo, 2004; Zungler & Miller, 2006). Many of these researchers attributed the pupils' success levels in foreign language to the abilities of the foreign language teacher (Dagarin Fojkar & Pižorn, 2015; Wenden, 2002) even though parental encouragement and involvement had a considerable impact on the success of the children (Gao, 2006; Norton & Toohey, 2001; Palfreyman, 2003; Zuengler & Miller, 2006).

Some studies (Burstall, 1980, p. 88; Carr & Pauwels, 2006, p. 93; Sirin, 2005, p. 418; Zou, Zhang, Shi, & Chen, 2007, pp. 5, 13) confirm that the socio-economic status (SES) of a family has an influence on a child's school achievements in learning a foreign language, as well as their motivation to learn a foreign language (Bratož, 2015). The

pupils coming from a higher socio-economic status achieved better results and were more successful in learning a foreign language. Parents of a higher socio-economic status also travel abroad more often and children from such families are more motivated to learn foreign languages (Gayton, 2010). A recent study (Mattheoudakis & Alexiou, 2009) in Greece shows that children who come from families with a higher SES are quite privileged in learning foreign languages. Because of their wealth, their parents can provide them with additional hours of learning foreign languages. Duncan & Seymour (2000, p. 202) found that primary school pupils who come from families of lower SES were rather behind in reading and writing in a foreign language (Baumert, Artelt, Klieme, Neubrand, Prenzel, Schiefele, Schneider, Schümer, Stanat, Tillmann, & Weiss, 2002, p. 51; Bos, Lankes, Prenzel, Schwippert, Valentin, & Walther, 2004, p. 23). Lower literacy scores in a foreign language may also result from a non-stimulating environment (Gligorovic & Buha, 2013, p. 901; Stanovich, 2000, p. 412) and a lack of cooperation between schools and home (Sirin, 2005). Pupils who come from families with higher SES have a richer vocabulary in a foreign language and more developed cognitive abilities (Baumwell, Tamis-LeMonda, & Bornstein, 1997; Hoff & Naigles, 2002). There are also significant differences among pupils between the ages of five and eleven in understanding a foreign language. Children who come from families with a higher SES communicate in a foreign language much better than their peers who come from families of a lower SES (Lloyd, Mann, & Peers, 1998).

Jones (2009) also found that of the secondary school learners who learned a foreign language or even several foreign languages, more came from wealthier families or from families with a higher SES than those who grew up in a less stimulating environment. Since the majority of parents with lower SES believe that knowledge of a foreign language is not important and are generally unable to help their children with learning a foreign language (e.g., doing homework), it is not surprising that these children learn fewer foreign languages and achieve poorer academic results (Jones, 2009). Despite the fact that these parents do not have adequate foreign language knowledge, it is important that they maintain an interest in their child's foreign language learning, discuss the contents of their foreign language classes with them and encourage them and cooperate with their school and their foreign language teachers (Cotton & Wiklund, 2007).

Bartram (2006) carried out a survey on 411 European pupils who were learning English and either German or French as a foreign language. He was mainly interested in the influence parents had on learning foreign languages. The results of his research show that the attitudes of parents towards foreign languages and their encouragement of learning foreign languages have a significant impact on a child's learning of foreign languages. If parents believe that learning a foreign language is important, then the children will have a positive attitude towards learning foreign languages (Bartram, 2006). Curdt-Christiansen (2009) also found that young learners are more motivated to learn a foreign language if their parents have relatively high but realistic expectations and a positive attitude towards foreign language learning.

The above mentioned research studies show the importance the socio-economic environment has on foreign language learning among older pupils. The present study shows the role of the socio-economic environment of families (domestic background) in the teaching and learning of foreign languages and a child's success in learning a foreign language in primary school (with young foreign language learners). Furthermore, not many studies offer solutions as to how parents of young learners should encourage foreign language learning at home. Therefore, our study encourages parents and primary school authorities to support foreign language education in the domestic environment; they should motivate their children by giving them positive examples of learning foreign languages effectively and successfully (Gao, 2006; Zuengler & Miller, 2006). This would provide all children with equal opportunities to learn foreign languages (at the primary school level).

## **Research Aims**

The main purpose of this research is to identify the connection between the socio-economic environment of families and learning foreign languages in the primary school. We focused on the forms of encouragement parents offer to their children at home for learning foreign languages, such as providing foreign language literature and magazines, travelling, enrolling their children in foreign language courses, helping them with homework for foreign language classes and paying for additional professional help to improve their grades in foreign language classes.

Within the context of these research questions, we were interested in determining the role that the socio-economic status of a family has on learning a foreign language in the primary school context.

## **Methodology**

The study included 600 ninth grade pupils who attended primary schools in four statistical regions in Slovenia from both urban and rural areas. The research is based on a non-random (purposive) sample of ninth grade pupils in primary school (13-14 years old; 57.5% girls and 42.5% boys). For the purpose of collecting the data, a questionnaire was prepared for the pupils. It consisted of closed and open-type questions. The questionnaire was designed in accordance with the following characteristics (Fraenkel, Wallen, & Hyun, 2014): validity (conducted on the basis of scientific literature), including a pilot study; reliability (exact instructions and clear, specific questions; the Cronbach coefficient  $\alpha=0.73$  confirmed the reliability of the rating scale); and objectivity (closed-type questions prevail). The closed-type questions were given with scaled and verbal answers. The frequency of the encouragement pupils receive at home to learn foreign languages was assessed using the four categories (regularly -1, often -2, rarely -3, never -4).

Data was analysed using the statistical analysis software package SPSS (20) for Windows. We used basic descriptive statistics to show the statements of the pupils on

the encouragement they receive in learning foreign languages at home and in general. To identify the differences in the pupils' statements regarding the socio-economic status of their family, we used the non-parametric Kruskal-Wallis test.

The pupils' socio-economic status was determined on the basis of the following variables. We combined their answers about their parents' level of education (education of their mother or father was divided into three categories (incomplete or completed primary school, vocational school - one category; completed high school - another category; higher vocational school, university education, master's or doctorate - the last category), workplace (un)employment of the mother/father); their answers about their study/work conditions at home (for example: I have my own room; computer and access to the internet; books, magazines, dictionaries; electronic devices (such as DVD or video players, digital cameras or video cameras, their own MP4 or iPods); each category received 1 point, a total of 4 points).

Points were assigned according to the answers they gave. According to the number of points, we classified the answers into three categories: lower socio-economic status (1-8 points), middle socio-economic status (9-16 points) and higher socio-economic status (17-24 points). Most of the pupils involved in the study came from families with a lower socio-economic status (40.2%), fewer pupils came from families with a middle socio-economic status (36.5%), and the least number of pupils came from families with a higher socio-economic status (23.3%).

## **Results and Discussion**

In the following subsection, results are presented according to the encouragement that young learners (YL) receive at home from their parents for foreign language (FL) learning.

Table 1 shows the results according to the arithmetic mean ( $\bar{x}$ ) and percentage (f%) of the encouragements for foreign language (FL) learning that pupils receive from their parents.

Clearly, the less frequent encouragement pupils receive at home is attending a foreign language course abroad during holidays ( $\bar{x}=3.71$ ; 81.8%), offering additional help in learning a foreign language ( $\bar{x}=3.69$ ; 79.5%), parents translating the contents for the children into their native language (L1) when watching television or reading texts in a foreign language ( $\bar{x}=3.66$ ; 76.2%), or helping them at home with homework in a foreign language ( $\bar{x}=3.45$ ; 58.7%); reading books in foreign languages to children during their early childhood ( $\bar{x}=3.43$ ; 57.8%); or playing word games in a foreign language with children during their early childhood ( $\bar{x}=3.43$ ; 57%).

The most frequent encouragement parents offer to their children is to watch movies or programmes in a foreign language ( $\bar{x}=2.43$ ; 25%).

The results suggest that parents generally do not encourage their children to learn foreign languages at home (very) frequently. The primary school pupils involved in our survey replied that they rarely or never received such encouragement in early



childhood (for example: reading books and singing songs in a foreign language, using CDs and foreign language literature, attending foreign language courses abroad, receiving help from parents when doing homework in a foreign language). Most of the parents encourage their children to watch movies or programmes in a foreign language, (possibly because this does not have any financial restrictions or require any effort?).

Table 1

*Number (f) and structural percentage (f %) of pupils according to the amount of encouragement they receive at home to learn foreign languages and the arithmetic mean ( $\bar{x}$ ) of the categories of the answers.*

Statements	No. and %	Answers				Total	$\bar{x}$
		Regularly	Often	Rarely	Never		
Parents read books in foreign languages to children during their early childhood.	f f %	19 3.2	51 8.5	183 30.5	347 57.8	600 100	3.43
Parents sang songs in foreign languages to children during their early childhood.	f f %	24 4.0	88 14.7	231 38.5	257 42.8	600 100	3.20
Parents played word games in a foreign language with children during their early childhood.	f f %	14 2.3	57 9.5	187 31.2	342 57.0	600 100	3.43
Parents buy CDs for learning foreign languages.	f f %	22 3.7	87 14.5	189 31.5	302 50.3	600 100	3.29
Parents buy books and magazines in foreign languages.	f f %	34 5.7	112 18.7	211 35.2	243 40.5	600 100	3.11
Parents encourage children to watch movies or programmes in a foreign language.	f f %	150 25.0	173 28.8	148 24.7	129 21.5	600 100	2.43
When watching television or reading texts in a foreign language, parents translate the contents for children into their native language (L1).	f f %	13 2.2	36 6.0	94 17.7	457 76.2	600 100	3.66
During holidays, children attended a foreign language course abroad.	f f %	10 1.7	42 7.0	57 9.5	491 81.8	600 100	3.71
Parents help children at home with homework in a foreign language.	f f %	14 2.3	53 8.8	181 30.2	352 58.7	600 100	3.45
Parents help children at home with learning a foreign language.	f f %	18 3.0	74 12.3	182 30.3	326 54.3	600 100	3.36
Children receive additional help in learning a foreign language.	f f %	15 2.5	30 5.0	78 13.0	477 79.5	600 100	3.69

Therefore, it is important to raise parents' (and FL teachers') awareness that children who do not get support in foreign language education in the domestic environment learn fewer foreign languages and achieve poorer academic results (Jones, 2009). Bartram (2006) also claims that the interest and positive attitudes of parents toward foreign languages, and their encouragement and discussions with their children about the contents of their foreign language classes, have a significant impact on a child's achievements in foreign language learning.



Table 2 presents the differences in encouragement for foreign language learning at home according to the socio-economic status of the family.

Table 2

Results of the Kruskal-Wallis (K-W) test for determining differences in encouragement for foreign language learning at home according to the socio-economic status of the family.

Statements	socio-economic status	$\bar{R}$	Result of K-W test	
			$\chi^2$	P
Parents read books in foreign languages to children during their early childhood.	Low	333.46	32.377	0.001
	Middle	302.20		
	High	241.10		
Parents sang songs in foreign languages to children during their early childhood.	Low	339.50	38.382	0.001
	Middle	300.35		
	High	233.60		
Parents played word games in a foreign language with children during their early childhood.	Low	332.00	31.043	0.001
	Middle	303.65		
	High	241.35		
Parents buy CDs for learning foreign languages.	Low	330.60	20.971	0.001
	Middle	297.35		
	High	253.62		
Parents buy books and magazines in foreign languages.	Low	352.46	63.643	0.001
	Middle	298.35		
	High	214.42		
Parents encourage children to watch movies or programmes in a foreign language.	Low	331.25	25.256	0.001
	Middle	304.06		
	High	241.99		
When watching television or reading texts in a foreign language, parents translate the contents for the children into their native language (L1).	Low	321.42	15.605	0.001
	Middle	298.65		
	High	267.38		
During holidays, children attended a foreign language course abroad.	Low	330.41	38.006	0.001
	Middle	297.00		
	High	254.48		
Parents help children at home with homework in a foreign language.	Low	330.41	18.509	0.001
	Middle	291.42		
	High	263.22		
Parents help children at home with learning a foreign language.	Low	336.84	28.769	0.001
	Middle	293.42		
	High	249.03		
Children receive additional help in learning a foreign language.	Low	308.30	1.682	0.431
	Middle	296.19		
	High	293.80		

As can be seen from Table 2, there is a statistically significant difference in the amount of encouragement that children get for learning foreign languages at home according to the socio-economic status of the family. This difference exists in all the statements except for the last one. A statistically significant difference exists in the first statement: that parents read books to their children in a foreign language ( $p < 0.001$ ). Mostly parents with a higher socio-economic status carried out this activity, while parents with a lower socio-economic status did it the least. Parents with a higher socio-economic status sing songs in a foreign language to their children, while parents with a lower socio-economic status do this infrequently or not at all. A statistically significant difference also exists for this statement ( $p < 0.001$ ). A statistically significant difference ( $p < 0.001$ ) also exists for the third statement. Most of the parents with a higher socio-economic status played word games in a foreign language with their children in their early childhood, while parents with a lower socio-economic status did this rarely or almost never. Parents with a higher socio-economic status buy foreign language learning CDs for their children, while parents with a lower socio-economic status rarely or almost never buy these types of CDs. A statistically significant difference ( $p < 0.001$ ) also exists for this statement. A statistically significant difference ( $p < 0.001$ ) also exists in the statement that parents buy their children foreign language literature and magazines. Again, parents with a higher socio-economic status do this most often, slightly fewer parents with a middle socio-economic status do this often, and parents with a lower socio-economic status do this the least.

Parents with a higher socio-economic status encourage their children to watch movies or programmes in a foreign language most often, while parents with a lower socio-economic status do this the least often. There also exists a statistically significant difference ( $p < 0.001$ ) in this statement. When reading texts or watching television in a foreign language, parents with a higher socio-economic status often translate the contents for their children, while parents with a lower socio-economic status ( $p < 0.001$ ) do this considerably less often. Most of the children who have parents with a lower socio-economic status did not attend foreign language courses abroad during their holidays, while children who come from families with a higher socio-economic status attended language courses occasionally or frequently. There is also a statistically significant difference ( $P < 0.001$ ) for this statement. Parents with a higher socio-economic status often help their children with homework in a foreign language, while parents with middle to higher socio-economic statuses help their children somewhat less, and children who have parents with a lower socio-economic status receive help from their parents the least. As shown in Table 2, there is also a significant difference for this statement ( $p < 0.001$ ). A statistically significant difference ( $p < 0.001$ ) also exists in the penultimate statement. Parents with a lower socio-economic status rarely or never help their children in learning a foreign language at home; parents with a middle socio-economic status help them slightly more, and parents with a higher socio-economic status help their children often.

Our study confirmed that there is a connection between the socio-economic status of a pupil's family (Burstall, 1980; Carr & Pauwels, 2006; Gayton, 2010) and the amount of encouragement they receive for learning a foreign language at home. Our research shows that children who come from families with a higher socio-economic status receive greater encouragement for learning a foreign language at home. Children who come from families with a middle socio-economic status are encouraged a little less, while children who come from families with a lower socio-economic status receive the least amount of encouragement. There was only one statement that did not have a statistically significant difference: that the children receive additional help in learning a foreign language. The results of the Kruskal – Wallis (KW) tests for determining differences in the amount of encouragement that children receive for learning a foreign language at home, according to the socio-economic statuses of their families, are not surprising. Parents with a higher socio-economic status are more highly educated and better situated financially (Bakken, 2003; Bradley & Corwyn, 2002; Croll, 2004), which is important for encouraging the learning of foreign languages at home. This is because they have the necessary material conditions (the ability to purchase CDs, literature in foreign languages, language courses abroad), and also the knowledge necessary to help their children (with homework, translating material into the native language, reading foreign literature). Children who come from families with a higher socio-economic status receive more motivation for learning foreign languages and are, therefore, more successful (Carr & Pauwels, 2006). Their parents can offer them the ability to travel abroad (Gayton, 2010) where they can come into direct contact with a foreign language, and are therefore able to learn the rich linguistic structures of a foreign language and develop better cognitive skills (Hoff & Naigles, 2002). The financial stability of a family, access to various services, the education of parents, the interaction between parents and children, the activities in which parents encourage their children, and parents' beliefs, values, views and goals that they have instilled in their children all have a significant role in children's FL development and learning achievements (Duncan & Magnusson, 2002; Hoff & Naigles, 2002; Žakelj & Ivanuš Grmek, 2013). The money that parents spend on their child (for example: purchasing foreign language resources, like CDs, DVDs, courses abroad), and the time spent in sharing activities (for example reading books) are two important investments that have an impact on children's cognitive and language development (Gershoff et al., 2007). The financial situation of parents plays an important role on the amount of encouragement they can give their children for learning foreign languages. Children who come from families with a higher socio-economic status are privileged because they have better material conditions, as well as being brought up in a way that leads to higher levels of educational achievement.

## **Conclusion**

The domestic involvement and encouragement for FL learning are vital for the interaction between parents, their children and teachers to foster successful FL learning in our global world.

Taking this into account there is a need to provide recommendations to the (Slovenian) school, national and local community on how to improve FL education and avoid socio-economic differences. It is important to implement a uniform national policy regarding the teaching and learning of foreign languages (for example, learning two compulsory foreign languages in all primary schools), provide funds for continuous FL teacher training and exchange, and offer some general recommendations to parents to increase their children's interest in FL learning. Local communities can (financially) support additional FL learning possibilities, for example, summer language programmes, afternoon courses, executed by retired or unemployed FL teachers or non-governmental organizations, establishing language centres with computers, FL dictionaries, FL self-assessment resources, inclusion of adults (e.g., parents) in upgrading their FL knowledge, funding FL learning in preschool.

Schools can help to bridge socio-economic differences by providing a positive learning environment, educating parents about the benefits of FL learning (e.g., organizing joint parents' meetings, lectures, workshops, observations in classes), organizing different after-school activities or projects (e.g., additional and supplementary FL lessons, language clubs, FL reading, writing e-mails to peers abroad, drama, puppet shows in foreign languages, cooperation with partner schools abroad), enabling the use of modern technology (e.g., FL resources in Moodle, Web 2.0 Applications, virtual FL learning, mobile applications in FL education; poems, fairy tales, stories on websites, watching TV programmes in foreign languages (not synchronized), organizing peer tutoring (e.g., voluntary peer tutoring from secondary pupils or students of foreign languages), and fostering a parent-friendly relationship with their pupils' families. It is also important that parents, even if they do not have adequate foreign language skills, show interest in their children's language learning: to talk with them about the contents of their FL classes, to encourage their children and cooperate with their school and their FL teachers. Puklek Levpušček and Zupančič (2009) stress that for pupils to succeed, it is undoubtedly important that parents pay attention to their education, know their children's achievements and are aware and proud of their achievements. In this way, parents can indirectly influence their learning achievements. They can provide more motivation for their children to learn foreign languages and increase their learning aspirations in general, which can strengthen the idea of learning self-efficiency and avoid the long-term negative consequences of failing at school.

We acknowledge that the sample of our research was not representative and hence it is not possible to provide generalizations, only hints. Thus, further research could involve enlarging our sample and including the parents' viewpoints and attitudes towards learning foreign languages which will reflect the amount of involvement and encouragement they provide at home. In spite of these limitations, we believe that the outcomes obtained here are a relevant contribution to support foreign language education in the domestic environment, and could provide solutions so that all children have equal opportunities to learn foreign languages (at the primary school level).

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# Domaće poticanje mladih učenika stranog jezika u Sloveniji

## Sažetak

Glavni je cilj ovog istraživanja bio utvrditi vrste poticaja koje mladi učenici koji uče strani jezik (SJ) primaju kod kuće, a koje im pružaju njihovi roditelji, te naglasiti razlike između domaćeg okruženja i učenja stranog jezika u smislu socijalno-ekonomskog statusa obitelji. Nadalje, istraživanje nudi neke opće preporuke roditeljima i autoritetima u osnovnoj školi da potaknu učenje stranog jezika u domaćem okruženju te izbjegnu socijalno-ekonomske razlike.

Istraživanje je provedeno na uzorku učenika devetih razreda (starost 14 godina) koji pohađaju slovenske osnovne škole (N=600). Upitnik s pitanjima zatvorenog tipa osmišljen je u skladu s mjernim karakteristikama (valjanost, pouzdanost, objektivnost). Podaci su analizirani upotrebom deskriptivne i inferencijalne statistike. Rezultati pokazuju kako roditelji gotovo nikad ne potiču ili vrlo rijetko potiču svoju djecu na učenje stranog jezika. Međutim, detaljna analiza rezultata pokazala je kako postoje statistički značajne razlike u potpori učenja stranog jezika povezane sa socijalno-ekonomskim statusom obitelji (npr. knjige, literatura, DVD, pjesme na stranim jezicima, domaća zadaća, tečajevi stranih jezika u inozemstvu, putovanje). Visokoobrazovni roditelji potiču svoju djecu na učenje stranih jezika više od roditelja nižeg stupnja obrazovanja.

**Ključne riječi:** osnovna škola; socijalno-ekonomsko okruženje; učenje stranog jezika; uključenost roditelja.

## Uvod

U našem globalnom društvu znanje samo jednog (dodatnog ili stranog) jezika nije dovoljno. Različiti dokumenti (npr. *Promoting Language Learning and Linguistic Diversity: An Action Plan 2004 – 2006* (2003); *The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment* (2001); *The Nuffield Languages Inquiry* (2000) preporučuju učenje više jezika. Slovenija također slijedi smjernice i ciljeve Vijeća Europe i učenicima nudi devetogodišnje osnovnoškolsko obavezno učenje stranog jezika (engleski ili njemački) i drugog stranog jezika (Narodne novine RS, br. 47/2008).

Postoje mnogi različiti čimbenici koji utječu na dijete kad uči strani jezik (npr. motivacija, sposobnosti učenja, didaktički pristupi i okolina). Isto tako postoje i

drugi značajni čimbenici kao što su jezik politike svake zemlje, kurikulum, atmosfera u učionici, učitelj, interes učenika (Gardner, 2007). Osim djetetove osobnosti (npr. ekstrovert ili introvert) glavni utjecaj na učenje stranog jezika ima domaće okruženje (Carr i Pauwels, 2006, str. 93; Figueiredo i Silva, 2008, str. 16; Mattheoudakis i Alexiou, 2009, str. 229; Žakelj i Ivanuš Grmek, 2013, str. 442). Unatoč naporima raznih vlasti i brojnih zemalja, mnoga su djeca isključena iz razloga povezanih sa siromaštvom. Vrlo je teško eliminirati socijalnu diskriminaciju koja je duboko ukorijenjena i u društvu i u kulturi (Madrid, 2011).

Cilj je ovog članka predstaviti elemente poticaja koje slovenski roditelji nude svojoj djeci u obrazovanju stranog jezika (SJ), razlike između domaćeg okruženja i učenja stranog jezika u uvjetima socijalno-ekonomskog statusa obitelji te osigurati preporuke nastavnika SJ i roditelja o tome kako poboljšati obrazovanje SJ kako bi se izbjegle socijalno-ekonomske razlike. Različite studije (Carr i Pauwels, 2006, str. 93; Gayton, 2010, str. 18; Mattheoudakis i Alexiou, 2009, str. 229; Sirin, 2005, str. 418) potvrđuju vezu između socijalno-ekonomskog statusa obitelji i školskog uspjeha djeteta. Djeca koja dolaze iz obitelji višeg socijalno-ekonomskog statusa motiviranija su za učenje stranog jezika i uspješnija u učenju stranih jezika (Carr i Pauwels 2006, str. 139). Roditelji višeg socijalno-ekonomskog statusa također više putuju u inozemstvo pa su zato djeca iz takvih obitelji motiviranija za učenje stranih jezika.

Pogledajmo najprije slovensko formalno obrazovanje SJ na osnovnoškolskoj razini.

## **Slovenski obrazovni kontekst**

U Sloveniji obrazovanje počinje u predškolskoj ustanovi, ali predškolsko obrazovanje nije obavezno. Djeca starosti od 1 do 6 godina (kada uđu u obveznu osnovnu školu) upisana su u predškolske ustanove. Predškolski odgoj uglavnom nude javne predškolske institucije, financirane od lokalne zajednice i roditeljskog doprinosa. Ona je podijeljena u dvije dobne skupine (djeca u dobi od jedne do tri godine, djeca od treće godine starosti do školske dobi). Broj djece upisan u programe od 1. do 3. godine starosti raste zbog sve većeg povećanja razine zaposlenosti među ženama. Nacionalni kurikulum za predškolski odgoj (1999) pruža usluge za razvojne karakteristike djece predškolske dobi, sveobuhvatnu edukaciju i brigu te uključuje opće smjernice za različite aktivnosti (kretanje, jezik, umjetnost, priroda, društvo i matematika).

Pedagoški i obrazovni rad u predškolskim ustanovama provodi se na slovenskom jeziku. Drugi jezik uči se na temelju posebnih programa predškolskog odgoja na dva nacionalno mješovita područja Slovenije: talijanski na području slovenske Istre (djeca uče drugi jezik koji se govori u njihovoj okolini: ili talijanski ili slovenski); i mađarski (dvojezično) na području Prekomurja.

Strani jezici u predškolama su opcionalni (engleski, njemački, francuski), nude se kao dodatne interesne aktivnosti, a plaćaju ih roditelji ili lokalna zajednica. Te dodatne aktivnosti obavljaju se nakon 15:00 sati (kada je službeni dio programa završen) i izvode ih vanjski stručnjaci. Međutim, neke predškolske ustanove sudjeluju

u Network Innovative Project (Brumen, 2011) pod vodstvom Nacionalnog instituta za obrazovanje i Učiteljskog fakulteta, s ciljem integriranja sadržaja iz drugih područja (kretanje, jezik, umjetnost, priroda, društvo i matematika) i učenja jezika, s naglaskom na cjelokupni razvoj djeteta.

Slovenska je osnovna škola obvezna, besplatna i podijeljena u trogodišnji ciklus. Prvi ciklus uključuje djecu u dobi od 6. do 8. godine (razredi 1. – 3.), u drugom ciklusu su učenici u dobi od 9. do 11. godine (razredi 4. – 6.), a treći ciklus je za djecu od 12. do 14. godine starosti (razredi 7. – 9.). Obavezni kurikulum sastoji se od obveznih predmeta, izbornih predmeta, razdoblja dnevnog boravka i dnevnih aktivnosti (kultura, znanost, sport, tehnologija). Također uključuje obrazovnu pomoć za djecu s posebnim potrebama, skrb nakon nastave, dodatnu nastavu i druge oblike skrbi za djecu, interesne aktivnosti i izvannastavnu nastavu (Zakon o osnovnom obrazovanju, 2006).

Slovenski je materinski jezik za oko 88% slovenskog stanovništva; to je jezično homogena zemlja. Međutim, slovenske osnovne škole posebnu brigu posvećuju učenicima iz drugih jezičnih i kulturnih sredina (*Program za djecu i mlade 2006. – 2016.; Nacionalna strategija za uključivanje imigrantske djece i mladeži u obrazovanje (2007); Smjernice za integraciju iseljeničke djece u predškolske ustanove i osnovne škole, 2012*) i time pružaju mogućnosti za interes u drugim kulturama i jeziku, kao i za toleranciju i različitosti. Kultura i jezik vrlo su itjesno povezani, a učenje stranog jezika također znači učiti o drugim kulturama, običajima, vrijednostima i različitim načinima razmišljanja (Byram, 2008; Curtain i Dahlberg, 2004).

Učenje stranog jezika (uglavnom engleskog ili njemačkog) službeno počinje u dobi od 9 godina (četvrti razred osnovne škole) i nastavlja se za sve učenike do dobi od 15 godina (9. razred). U sedmom razredu (12 godina) uvodi se izborni drugi strani jezik (njemački, talijanski, mađarski, hrvatski, francuski ili engleski). Međutim, obrazovanje stranog jezika informativno počinje i u predškoli (3 do 6 godina starosti) i u prvom osnovnoškolskom ciklusu (npr. jezični (izborni) tečajevi koje financiraju lokalna zajednica ili roditelji), uglavnom zbog pritiska od roditelja i društva za početak učenja stranih jezika u ranoj dobi (Brumen, 2011). Zato Ministarstvo obrazovanja predstavlja postupno uvođenje prvog stranog jezika kao obveznog predmeta u drugi razred (7 godina) i kao neobavezni predmet (u prvi razred) u 15% slovenskih osnovnih škola (školska godina 2014./15.). U školskoj godini 2015./16. još 30% osnovnih škola uključeno je u učenje prvog stranog jezika (engleski ili njemački) kao obveznog predmeta u drugom razredu. U školskoj godini 2016./17. svi slovenski mladi učenici počeli će učiti obavezni prvi strani jezik u drugom razredu, u dobi od 7 godina, dva sata tjedno (Narodne novine RS, br. 15/2014).

Žakelj i Ivanuš Grmek (2013) u svojoj studiji otkrile su vezu između socijalno-ekonomskog statusa obitelji u različitim slovenskim regijama i postignuća učenika u Nacionalnoj provjeri znanja. Studija pokazuje da socijalna pozadina znatno utječe na uspješnost učenja učenika. Uzimajući to u obzir, glavno istraživačko pitanje u ovom

istraživanju bilo je istražiti koje su organizacijske specifičnosti podrške ili poticaja slovenskim učenicima devetog razreda (14 godina) osnovnih škola ponuđene od roditelja u učenju stranog jezika kako bi se poboljšala razina učenja SJ djece i rezultati, te kako bi se izbjegle dugoročne negativne posljedice propusta nastave SJ.

## **Veza između roditeljske uključenosti i učenja stranog jezika**

Učenje stranih jezika prisutno je svugdje: u obitelji, na poslu, u školi (Gao, 2006). Uključenost roditelja u obrazovanje njihove djece također je važno u učenju stranog jezika, a roditeljska podrška ima glavnu ulogu u učenju stranog jezika (Jones, 2009).

Nije provedeno mnogo istraživanja koja se bave uključivanjem roditelja i njihove potpore svojoj djeci u učenju stranih jezika na osnovnoškolskoj razini školovanja. Uzrok tome može se pripisati činjenici da se većina istraživanja koje je provedeno bavi učenjem stranih jezika te se uglavnom temelji na kognitivnoj teoriji (Mitchell i Myles, 1998; Thorne, 2005; Watson-Gegeo 2004; Zungler i Miller, 2006). Mnogi od tih istraživača pripisuju učenikovu 'razinu uspjeha u stranom jeziku sposobnostima učitelja stranog jezika (Dagarin Fojkar i Pižorn, 2015; Wenden, 2002), iako su roditeljsko poticanje i uključivanje imali značajan utjecaj na uspjeh djece (Gao, 2006; Norton i Toohey, 2001; Palfreyman, 2003; Zuengler i Miller, 2006).

Neke studije (Burstall, 1980, str. 88; Carr i Pauwels, 2006, str. 93; Sirin, 2005, str. 418; Zou, Zhang, Shi, i Chen. S., 2007, str. 5, 13) potvrđuju da socijalno-ekonomski status (SES) obitelji ima utjecaj na školska postignuća djeteta u učenju stranog jezika, kao i njihova motivacija za učenje stranog jezika (Bratož, 2015). Učenici roditelja višeg socijalno-ekonomskog statusa ostvarili su bolje rezultate te su bili uspješniji u učenju stranog jezika. Roditelji višeg socijalno-ekonomskog statusa također češće putuju u inozemstvo i djeca iz takvih obitelji motiviranija su za učenje stranih jezika (Gayton, 2010). Nedavna studija (Mattheoudakis i Alexiou, 2009) u Grčkoj pokazuje da djeca koja dolaze iz obitelji višeg socijalno-ekonomskog statusa privilegirani su u učenju stranih jezika. Zbog svog bogatstva njihovi im roditelji mogu omogućiti dodatne sate učenja stranih jezika. Duncan i Seymour (2000, str. 202) utvrdili su kako su osnovnoškolski učenici koji dolaze iz obitelji nižeg socijalno-ekonomskog statusa zaostajali u čitanju i pisanju na stranom jeziku (Baumert, Artelt, Klieme, Neubrand, Prenzel, Schiefele, Schneider, Schümer, Stanat, Tillmann, i Weiss, 2002, str. 51; Bos, Lankes, Prenzel, Schwippert, Valentin, i Walther, 2004, str. 23). Niži rezultati pismenosti na stranom jeziku također mogu biti rezultat nestimulirajućeg okruženja (Gligorovic i Buha, 2013, str. 901; Stanovich, 2000, str. 412) i nedostatka suradnje između škole i doma (Sirin, 2005). Učenici koji dolaze iz obitelji višeg socijalno-ekonomskog statusa imaju bogatiji vokabular na stranom jeziku i razvijenije kognitivne sposobnosti (Baumwell, Tamis-LeMonda, i Bornstein, 1997; Hoff i Naigles, 2002). Postoje i značajne razlike između učenika u dobi između pet i jedanaest godina i razumijevanja stranog

jezika. Djeca koja dolaze iz obitelji višeg socijalno-ekonomskog statusa mnogo bolje komuniciraju na stranom jeziku od svojih vršnjaka koji dolaze iz obitelji nižeg socijalno-ekonomskog statusa (Lloyd Mann i Peers, 1998).

Jones (2009) je također otkrio kako je od srednjoškolskih učenika koji su naučili strani jezik, ili čak nekoliko njih, više onih iz bogatijih obitelji ili iz obitelji višeg socijalno-ekonomskog statusa, a manje onih koji su odrasli u manje poticajnom okruženju. Budući da većina roditelja nižeg socijalno-ekonomskog statusa vjeruje da poznavanje stranog jezika nije važno i općenito ne mogu pomoći svojoj djeci u učenju stranog jezika (npr. domaće zadaće), ne iznenađuje da ta djeca uče manje stranih jezika i postižu lošije akademske rezultate (Jones, 2009). Unatoč činjenici da ti roditelji nemaju adekvatno znanje stranih jezika, važno je da oni održavaju interes svoje djece u učenju stranih jezika, raspravljaju o sadržaju njihove nastave stranog jezika te ih potiču i surađuju s njihovom školom i njihovim učiteljima stranog jezika (Cotton i Wiklund, 2007).

Bartram (2006) je proveo istraživanje na 411 europskih učenika koji su učili engleski i/ili njemački ili francuski kao strani jezik. Uglavnom ga je zanimalo koji utjecaj imaju roditelji na učenje stranog jezika. Rezultati njegovog istraživanja pokazuju da odnos roditelja prema stranim jezicima i njihovo poticanje na učenje stranih jezika imaju značajan utjecaj na djetetovo učenje stranih jezika. Ako roditelji vjeruju da je učenje stranog jezika važno, onda će i djeca imati pozitivan stav prema učenju stranih jezika (Bartram 2006). Curdt-Christiansen (2009) je također otkrio da su mladi učenici motiviraniji za učenje stranog jezika ako njihovi roditelji imaju relativno visoka, ali realna očekivanja i pozitivan stav prema učenju stranih jezika.

Navedena istraživanja pokazuju koju važnost socijalno-ekonomsko okruženje ima na učenje stranih jezika kod starijih učenika. Ovo istraživanje pokazuje ulogu u socijalno-ekonomskom okruženju obitelji (domaća pozadina) u podučavanju i učenju stranih jezika i djetetov uspjeh u učenju stranog jezika u osnovnoj školi (s mladim učenicima stranog jezika). Nadalje, ne postoji mnogo istraživanja koja nude rješenja kako bi roditelji mladih učenika trebali poticati učenje stranog jezika kod kuće. Naša studija, dakle, potiče roditelje i osnovnoškolske autoritete na poticanje edukacije stranog jezika u domaćem okruženju; oni bi morali motivirati svoju djecu dajući im pozitivne primjere učenja stranih jezika učinkovito i uspješno (Gao, 2006; Zuengler i Miller, 2006). To bi djeci omogućilo jednake mogućnosti za učenje stranih jezika (na osnovnoškolskoj razini).

## **Ciljevi istraživanja**

Glavna je svrha ovog istraživanja potvrditi vezu između socijalno-ekonomskog okruženja obitelji i učenja stranih jezika u osnovnoj školi. Usredotočili smo se na poticanje roditelja da svojoj djeci kod kuće nude učenje stranih jezika, kao što je npr. osiguravanje literature i časopisa na stranom jeziku, putovanja, upisivanja djece

na tečajeve stranih jezika, pomoć u zadaćama iz stranih jezika i plaćanja dodatne profesionalne pomoći kako bi poboljšali ocjene svoje djece iz nastave stranog jezika.

U kontekstu ovih istraživačkih pitanja zanimalo nas je i određivanje uloge koju socijalno-ekonomski status obitelji ima na učenje stranog jezika u osnovnoškolskom kontekstu.

## **Metodologija**

U istraživanju je sudjelovalo 600 učenika devetih razreda osnovnih škola u četiri statističke regije u Sloveniji, iz urbanih i ruralnih područja. Istraživanje se temelji na neslučajnom (svrsihodnom) uzroku učenika devetih razreda osnovne škole (13 – 14 godina starosti; 57,5% djevojčica i 42,5% dječaka). S ciljem prikupljanja podataka pripremljen je upitnik za učenike. Sastoji od pitanja zatvorenog i otvorenog tipa. Upitnik je dizajniran u skladu sa sljedećim karakteristikama (Fraenkel, Wallen, i Hyun, 2014): valjanost (provodi se na temelju znanstvene literature), uključujući pilot istraživanje; pouzdanost (točne upute i jasna, specifična pitanja; Cronbachov  $\alpha$  koeficijent = 0,73 potvrđuje pouzdanost na ljestvici); i objektivnost (prevladavaju pitanja zatvorenog tipa). Pitanja zatvorenog tipa dana su uz stupnjevine i verbalne odgovore. Učestalost poticaja koje učenici dobiju kod kuće za učenje stranih jezika procijenjena je upotrebom četiri kategorije (redovito – 1, često – 2, rijetko – 3, nikada – 4).

Podaci su analizirani statističkom analizom programskog paketa SPSS (20) za Windowse. Koristili smo se osnovnim deskriptivnim statistikama kako bismo prikazali izjave učenika o poticajima koje oni primaju prilikom učenja stranih jezika kod kuće i općenito. Kako bismo potvrdili razlike u izjavama učenika koje se odnose na socijalno-ekonomski status njihovih obitelji, koristili smo se neparametarskim Kruskal-Wallisovim testom.

Socijalno-ekonomski status učenika utvrđen je na temelju sljedećih varijabli. Kombinirali smo njihove odgovore o razini obrazovanja njihovih roditelja (obrazovanje majke ili oca podijelili smo u tri kategorije (nezavršena ili završena osnovna škola, strukovne škole – jedna kategorija; završena srednja škola – druga kategorija; više obrazovanje, sveučilišno obrazovanje, fakultet, doktorat – posljednja kategorija), radno mjesto (ne)zaposlen majka/otac; njihovi odgovori o njihovim uvjetima za učenje/rad kod kuće (npr.: Imam svoju sobu; računalo i pristup internetu; knjige, časopisi, rječnici; elektronički uređaji (npr. DVD ili videouređaj, digitalna kamera ili videokamera, vlastiti MP4 ili I-pod); svaka kategorija dobiva 1 bod, ukupno 4 boda).

Bodovi su dodijeljeni prema odgovorima koje su dali. Prema broju bodova podijelili smo odgovore u tri kategorije: niži socijalno-ekonomski status (1 – 8 bodova), srednji socijalno-ekonomski status (9 – 16 bodova) i viši socijalno-ekonomski status (17 – 24 boda). Većina učenika koji su uključeni u studiju dolazi iz obitelji nižeg socijalno-ekonomskog statusa (40,2%), nešto manji broj učenika dolazi iz obitelji srednjeg socijalno-ekonomskog statusa (36,5%), a najmanji broj učenika dolazi iz obitelji višeg socijalno-ekonomskog statusa (23,3%).



## Rezultati i rasprava

Prateći subsekciju, rezultati se prikazuju u skladu s poticajima koje mladi učenici (MU) dobivaju kod kuće od roditelja za učenje stranog jezika (SJ).

Tablica 1 prikazuje rezultate prema aritmetičkoj sredini ( $\bar{x}$ ) i postotku ( $f\%$ ) poticaja za učenje stranog jezika (SJ) koje učenici dobivaju od svojih roditelja.

Tablica 1

Očito je da je najrjeđi poticaj koji učenici dobivaju kod kuće pohađanje tečajeva stranog jezika u inozemstvu tijekom praznika ( $\bar{x}=3,71$ ; 81,8%), ponuda dodatne pomoći u učenju stranog jezika ( $\bar{x}=3,69$ ; 79,5%), roditelji koji prevode sadržaj djeci na njihov materinski jezik (J1) kada gledaju televiziju ili čitaju tekstove na stranom jeziku ( $\bar{x}=3,66$ ; 76,2%) ili im pomažu kod kuće prilikom pisanja domaće zadaće na stranom jeziku ( $\bar{x}=3,45$ ; 58,7%); čitanje knjiga na stranim jezicima za djecu tijekom ranog djetinjstva ( $\bar{x}=3,43$ ; 57,8%); ili igranje igre riječi na stranom jeziku s djecom tijekom ranog djetinjstva ( $\bar{x}=3,43$ ; 57%).

Najčešće poticaje roditelji daju djeci tako da ih potiču na gledanje filmova ili programa na stranom jeziku ( $\bar{x}=02,43$ ; 25%).

Rezultati pokazuju da roditelji uglavnom ne potiču svoju djecu na učenje stranog jezika kod kuće (vrlo) često. Osnovnoškolski učenici uključeni u našu anketu odgovorili su da su rijetko ili nikad dobili takav poticaj u ranom djetinjstvu (na primjer: čitanje knjiga i pjevanje pjesama na stranom jeziku, uz upotrebu CD-a i literature na stranom jeziku, pohađanje tečajeva stranih jezika u inozemstvu, dobivanje pomoći od roditelja kada pišu domaću zadaću na stranom jeziku). Većina roditelja potiče djecu na gledanje filmova ili programa na stranom jeziku (možda zato što to nema nikakvih financijskih ograničenja ili ne zahtijeva dodatni trud?).

Stoga je važno podići svijest roditeljima '(i nastavnicima SJ)' da djeca koja ne dobivaju podršku za obrazovanje na stranom jeziku i u domaćem okruženju uče manje stranih jezika i postižu lošije akademske rezultate (Jones, 2009). Bartram (2006) također tvrdi da interes i pozitivni stavovi roditelja prema stranim jezicima, njihovo ohrabrenje i rasprave s djecom o sadržaju nastave stranog jezika imaju značajan utjecaj na djetetova postignuća u učenju stranog jezika.

Tablica 2 prikazuje razlike i poticaj za učenje stranog jezika kod kuće u skladu sa socijalno-ekonomskim statusom obitelji.

Tablica 2

Kao što se je vidljivo iz tablice 2, postoji statistički značajna razlika u količini poticaja koji djeca dobiju za učenje stranih jezika kod kuće prema socijalno-ekonomskom statusu obitelji. Ta razlika postoji u svim izjavama osim u posljednjoj. Statistički značajna razlika postoji u prvoj izjavi: da roditelji djeci čitaju knjige na stranom jeziku ( $P<0,001$ ). Uglavnom, roditelji višeg socijalno-ekonomskog statusa provode tu aktivnost, a roditelji nižeg socijalno-ekonomskog statusa manje. Roditelji višeg

socijalno-ekonomskog statusa djeci pjevaju pjesme na stranom jeziku, a roditelji nižeg socijalno-ekonomskog statusa to čine rijetko ili nikada. Statistički značajna razlika postoji i za tu tvrdnju ( $P < 0,001$ ). Statistički značajna razlika ( $P < 0,001$ ) također postoji za treću tvrdnju. Većina roditelja višeg socijalno-ekonomskog statusa s djecom je igrala igre riječi na stranom jeziku u njihovu ranom djetinjstvu, a roditelji nižeg socijalno-ekonomskog statusa to su činili rijetko ili gotovo nikada. Roditelji višeg socijalno-ekonomskog statusa kupuju djeci CDe za učenje stranih jezika, a roditelji nižeg socijalno-ekonomskog statusa rijetko ili gotovo nikada ne kupuju CD-e te vrste. Statistički značajna razlika ( $P < 0,001$ ) također postoji za tu tvrdnju. Statistički značajna razlika ( $P < 0,001$ ) također postoji i za izjavu da roditelji djeci kupuju literaturu i časopise na stranom jeziku. Ponovno, roditelji višeg socijalno-ekonomskog statusa to čine najčešće, neznatan broj roditelja srednjeg socijalno-ekonomskog statusa čini to često, a roditelji nižeg socijalno-ekonomskog statusa to čine najmanje.

Roditelji višeg socijalno-ekonomskog statusa potiču djecu na gledanje filmova ili programa na stranom jeziku vrlo često, a roditelji nižeg socijalno-ekonomskog statusa to čine vrlo rijetko. Također postoji statistički značajna razlika ( $P < 0,001$ ) u toj izjavi. Čitajući tekstove ili gledajući televiziju na stranom jeziku, roditelji višeg socijalno-ekonomskog statusa češće prevode sadržaj svojoj djeci, a roditelji nižeg socijalno-ekonomskog statusa ( $P < 0,001$ ) to čine mnogo rjeđe. Većina djece čiji su roditelji nižeg socijalno-ekonomskog statusa nije pohađala tečajeve stranih jezika u inozemstvu za vrijeme praznika, a djeca koja dolaze iz obitelji višeg socijalno-ekonomskog statusa pohađaju tečajeve jezika povremeno ili često. Također postoji statistički značajna razlika ( $P < 0,001$ ) za tu tvrdnju. Roditelji višeg socijalno-ekonomskog statusa često pomažu svojoj djeci s domaćim zadaćama na stranom jeziku, roditelji srednjeg do višeg socijalno-ekonomskog statusa pomažu svojoj djeci nešto manje, a djeca roditelja nižeg socijalno-ekonomskog statusa dobivaju najmanje pomoći od roditelja. Kao što je vidljivo iz tablice, postoji i značajna razlika u toj izjavi ( $P < 0,001$ ). Statistički značajna razlika ( $P < 0,001$ ) također postoji i u pretposljednjoj izjavi. Roditelji nižeg socijalno-ekonomskog statusa rijetko ili nikada ne pomažu djeci u učenju stranog jezika kod kuće; roditelji srednjeg socijalno-ekonomskog statusa pomažu im nešto češće, a roditelji višeg socijalno-ekonomskog statusa svojoj djeci pomažu često.

Naša je studija potvrdila da postoji veza između socijalno-ekonomskog statusa učenikove obitelji (Burstall, 1980; Carr i Pauwels 2006; Gayton, 2010) i količine poticaja koje primaju za učenje stranog jezika kod kuće. Naše istraživanje pokazuje da djeca koja dolaze iz obitelji višeg socijalno-ekonomskog statusa primaju veći poticaj za učenje stranog jezika kod kuće. Djecu koja dolaze iz obitelji srednjeg socijalno-ekonomskog statusa potiče se nešto manje, a djeca koja dolaze iz obitelji nižeg socijalno-ekonomskog statusa dobivaju najmanje poticaja. Postojala je samo jedna izjava koja nije imala statistički značajnu razliku: da djeca dobivaju dodatnu pomoć u učenju stranog jezika. Rezultati Kruskal - Wallisovih (KW) testova za određivanje razlike u količini poticaja koje djeca dobivaju za učenje stranog jezika kod kuće, prema

socijalno-ekonomskim statusima njihovih obitelji, nisu iznenađujući. Roditelji višeg socijalno-ekonomskog statusa su obrazovaniji i financijski bolje situirani (Bakken, 2003; Bradley i Corwyn, 2002; Croll, 2004), što je važno za poticanje učenja stranih jezika kod kuće. To je zato što oni imaju potrebne materijalne uvjete (mogućnost kupnje CD-a, literature na stranom jeziku, plaćanja tečajeva jezika u inozemstvu), kao i potrebno znanje kako bi pomogli djeci (u pisanju zadaće, prevođenju materijala na materinski jezik, čitanju strane literature). Djeca koja dolaze iz obitelji višeg socijalno-ekonomskog statusa dobivaju više motivacije za učenje stranih jezika pa su zato i uspješnija (Carr i Pauwels, 2006). Njihovi im roditelji mogu priuštiti mogućnost putovanja u inozemstvo (Gayton, 2010), gdje mogu doći u neposredan kontakt sa stranim jezikom zbog čega imaju mogućnost učiti bogate jezične strukture stranog jezika i razvijati bolje kognitivne sposobnosti (Hoff i Naigles, 2002). Financijska stabilnost obitelji, pristup brojnim uslugama, obrazovanje roditelja, interakcije između roditelja i djece, aktivnosti u kojima roditelji potiču svoju djecu, uvjerenja roditelja, vrijednosti, stavovi i ciljevi koje su usadili svojoj djeci, svi imaju važnu ulogu u razvoju, učenju i postignućima djece u SJ (Duncan i Magnusson, 2002; Hoff i Naigles 2002; Žakelj i Ivanuš Grmek, 2013). Novac koji roditelji potroše na svoje dijete (na primjer: na kupnju materijala na stranom jeziku, kao npr. CD-a, DVD-a, tečajeva u inozemstvu) i vrijeme provedeno u dijeljenju aktivnosti (npr. čitanje knjige) dvije su važne investicije koje imaju utjecaj na dječji kognitivni i jezični razvoj (Gershoff i sur., 2007). Financijsko stanje roditelja ima važnu ulogu u količini poticaja koje mogu dati djeci za učenje stranih jezika. Djeca koja dolaze iz obitelji višeg socijalno-ekonomskog statusa privilegirani su jer imaju bolje materijalne uvjete, ali i zbog toga što su odgajana na način koji vodi do više razine obrazovnih postignuća.

## **Zaključak**

Domaće uključivanje i ohrabrenja za učenje SJ bitni su za interakciju između roditelja, njihove djece i nastavnika za poticanje uspješnog učenja SJ u našem globalnom svijetu.

Uzimajući to u obzir, postoji potreba da se daju preporuke (slovenskoj) školi, nacionalnoj i lokalnoj zajednici o tome kako poboljšati obrazovanje SJ i izbjeći socijalno-ekonomske razlike. Važno je implementirati jedinstvenu nacionalnu politiku koja se odnosi na poučavanje i učenje stranih jezika (na primjer: učenje dva obvezna strana jezika u svim osnovnim školama), osigurati sredstva za kontinuiranu obuku i razmjenu nastavnika SJ te ponuditi neke opće preporuke roditeljima kako bi povećali interes svoje djece za učenje SJ. Lokalne zajednice mogu (financijski) podržati mogućnosti dodatnog učenja stranog jezika, na primjer ljetne jezične programe, poslijepodnevne tečajeve koje bi vodili umirovljeni ili nezaposleni učitelji SJ ili nevladine organizacije, organiziranje jezičnih centara s računalima, nabavu rječnika SJ, osiguravanjem samoprocjene SJ, uključivanjem odraslih (npr. roditelja), nadogradnjom vlastitog znanja SJ, financiranjem učenja stranih jezika u predškoli.

Škole mogu pomoći u tome da se premoste socijalno-ekonomske razlike osiguravajući pozitivno radno okruženje, edukaciju roditelja o prednostima učenja SJ (npr. organiziranje zajedničkih roditeljskih sastanaka, predavanja, radionica, zapažanja u razredu), organiziranjem različitih izvannastavnih aktivnosti i projekata (npr. dodatne i dopunske lekcija SJ, jezični klubovi, čitanje na SJ, dopisivanje putem e-maila s vršnjacima u inozemstvu, dramske grupe, lutkarske predstave na stranim jezicima, suradnja s partnerskim školama u inozemstvu), omogućavanjem upotrebe moderne tehnologije (npr. resursi SJ u Moodle, Web 2.0 aplikacijama, virtualno učenje SJ, mobilne aplikacije u učenju SJ; pjesme, bajke, priče na internetskim stranicama, gledanje TV programa na stranim jezicima (nesinkronizirano), organiziranje vršnjačkih instrukcija (npr. volontiranje srednjoškolskih učenika ili studenata stranih jezika) i poticanje prijateljskih odnosa s obiteljima učenika. Također je važno da roditelji, čak i ako nemaju adekvatne vještine iz stranog jezika, pokažu interes za učenje jezika svoje djece: razgovarati s njima o sadržaju nastave stranog jezika, poticati djecu i surađivati sa školom i učiteljima stranog jezika. Puklek Levpušček i Zupančič (2009) naglašavaju da je za uspjeh učenika nesumnjivo važno da njihovi roditelji obrate pozornost na njihovo obrazovanje, znaju postignuća svoje djece i da su svjesni i ponosni na njihova postignuća. Na taj način roditelji indirektno utječu na njihova jezična postignuća. Oni mogu pružiti više motivacije svojoj djeci u učenju stranih jezika te povećati njihove težnje u učenju općenito, a što može ojačati ideju samostalne učinkovitosti učenja te izbjeći dugoročne negativne posljedice lošeg uspjeha u školi.

Svjesni smo da uzorak našeg istraživanja nije bio reprezentativan i zbog toga nije moguće osigurati generalizacije, već samo savjete. Daljnja istraživanja mogu uključivati povećavanje naših uzoraka, uključujući roditeljska stajališta i stavove prema učenju stranih jezika, a koji će odražavati količinu uključenosti i poticanja koje oni pružaju kod kuće. Unatoč navedenim ograničenjima, vjerujemo da su rezultati koje smo dobili važan doprinos u potpori obrazovanja stranog jezika u domaćem okruženju i da mogu proizvesti rješenja kako bi sva djeca imala jednake mogućnosti učenja stranog jezika (na osnovnoškolskoj razini).