

Mastering Croatian Standard Language in a Plurilingual School Environment

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Abstract

Multilingualism and multiculturalism are core factors underlying the language policy of the European Union. Even bilingual communication is considered as multilingualism since it contributes to the creation of a multilingual society. Hence, European speakers are expected to use at least two parallel language codes (mother tongue and one foreign language). However, most European educational documents (CEFRL, 2005) emphasize the triple multilingual formula according to which, in addition to the mother tongue, the knowledge of at least two other languages is recommended. Scientific research (Pavličević-Franić, 2011), confirms the fact that vertical correlation between two language codes within the same mother tongue most commonly occurs in Croatian primary school practice. Nevertheless, due to the introduction of a foreign language in the first grade of primary school, horizontal plurilingualism is increasingly being recognized, which leads to the creation of an interlanguage field. Such a communicational situation necessarily requires a new approach to the process of learning and teaching Croatian language because monolingual preschool children become plurilingual students. The aim of this research was to examine the influence of different language codes on the process of mastering the Croatian standard language, particularly on the development of communicative competence, as well as to determine the transfer of language elements within the interlanguage field. The statistical sample consists of students in junior grades of elementary school. The Test of communicative competence was conducted (Aladrović Slovaček, 2012). Results show that the existence of parallel language codes is not an obstacle, but an advantage in a plurilingual school environment and that such a situation will have a positive impact on the process of learning the Croatian standard language in the early language period.

Key words: *horizontal multilingualism; interlanguage field; plurilingual communication; teaching Croatian in primary school; vertical multilingualism.*

Introduction

There have been attempts to introduce necessary changes into the Croatian educational system for years, trying to harmonize Croatian educational policies with educational documents of the European Union. As it regards linguistic education, one should point out the core document of the European Council - *The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages* – CEFRL (2005), which encourages development of communicative competence (communication in the mother tongue and communication in the foreign language), development of four basic language skills (listening, speaking, reading, writing), multilingualism and multiculturalism. Multilingualism is considered to be an important factor of linguistic policies in the European Union since even bilingual communication contributes to the creation of a multilingual social community. Therefore, European speakers are expected to speak at least two languages (mother tongue and one foreign language), while many European educational documents emphasize the triple multilingual formula according to which, in addition to the mother tongue, the knowledge of at least two other languages is recommended. In the Republic of Croatia, education is implemented in accordance with two documents. More than ten years ago, after a short experimental period and evaluation, the Croatian National Educational Standard (CNES, 2005) was created. It identified the standards for the improvement of education quality as a foundation of an economy and society based on knowledge, with the aim to raise the quality of education at all levels, to unburden educational programmes (curricula), to change traditional methods of work, to modernize educational contents and introduce a new approach to learning and teaching. In accordance with the basic guidelines of CNES, The Curriculum for Primary School: Croatian Language (Ministry of Science, Education and Sport of the Republic of Croatia, 2006) was created. It was followed by creation of the National Framework Curriculum – NFC (Ministry of Science, Education and Sport of the Republic of Croatia, 2010), a document which represents the basic framework of the educational vertical in all countries, starting from the preschool through primary school to secondary school level. As for the Croatian language curriculum, successful mastering of the mother tongue is expected. The emphasis is on the competence approach (planning and programming educational process according to educational achievements and learning outcomes) and communicative approach (acquisition of basic linguistic knowledge and skills as well as stimulation of abilities necessary for the development of other key competences of students). Since the achieved level of communicative abilities of the student is one of the key parameters of success, not only for the mother tongue/foreign language teaching, but also for the educational process as a whole, development of linguistic competences will significantly help the students to master all other educational contents. A linguistically competent student will have less problems reading and understanding the written text, will more easily express themselves, both orally and in writing, and will be more successful in

verbalizing their thoughts and opinions. Unfortunately, our schools still pay more attention to memorization of facts and rules and less attention to useful knowledge and pragmatic implementation of the learnt content. The research (Aladrović Slovaček, 2012; Pavličević-Franić, 2005, 2013; Pavličević-Franić & Aladrović Slovaček, 2010, 2013) shows that junior grade students of primary school have better knowledge of language rules and definitions, which means that their linguistic competence is better developed than communicative competence, although it is more likely to expect that in this developmental period students are more competent on the language use level. However, theoretical knowledge does not necessarily mean better communicative ability and more successful practical handling of everyday situations. Although the mother tongue curriculum, which is a precondition for the development of multilingualism and multiculturalism, is attempted to be modernized and adjusted to the student's developmental abilities, interests and intended learning outcomes as well as the needs of contemporary manner of communication, the changes are happening slowly and unsystematically. The aim should be the possibility to practically use all that has been learnt since the students with a high level of language competence are better at making contacts, conveying messages, learning and acquiring new knowledge, socializing and communicating. Hence, it is important to develop language competences and encourage multilingualism and multiculturalism as a precondition for successful communication in multicultural and multilingual Europe.

Theoretical Research Framework

Communication in the mother tongue comprises a wide range of language means and rules, language standards and systems by which one person communicates with another. In case of the early language period, which includes preschool and junior grades of primary school, multilingual environment is realized. Communication is extended to non-mother tongue idioms and in this way, parallel language codes are used within one communication process. Starting from the criterion of mutual interaction and interrelation of language idioms in contact, the terms of *plurilingualism* (polilingualism) and *multilingualism* have to be distinguished. On the other side, there is *monolingualism*, which implies active use of only one language, and it is most commonly the mother tongue (CEFRL, 2005). According to the contemporary linguistic knowledge about the relations among different languages of the speakers using several idioms in their communication, the mentioned terms are not synonyms (Jelaska, 2003, p. 47). The term plurilingualism emphasizes interlanguage connection, i.e. interaction of different languages or language codes of one speaker. On the other hand, the term multilingualism means "coexistence of different languages within one community" (Jelaska, 2003, p. 47) and the possibility to learn languages in different multicultural environments, at school or faculty, whereas the languages do not necessarily have to interfere. The latter term is directly connected to the term of multiculturalism in multilinguistic communities (CEFRL, 2001, p. 4).

Intertwining of language codes in Croatian schools is observed at all levels of institutional language learning/acquisition, first of all within the system of the same mother tongue, while a special correlation is realized between the mother tongue and early foreign language acquisition. Therefore, in early language discourse of Croatian language it seems appropriate to use the term plurilingualism since precisely this kind of multilingualism i.e. multilingualism in contact is typical for early language acquisition. According to inclusion of the language in communication, we distinguish *vertical plurilingualism* and *horizontal plurilingualism* (Jelaska, 2003; Pavličević-Franić, 2005, 2011; Težak, 1998). Vertical plurilingualism implies multilingual discourse within which vertical transfer of language units is realized, i.e. diglossic relation between different individual organic idioms (L1) and Croatian standard language (L2), but within the system of the same mother tongue. Plurilingual speakers, therefore, use more language codes as original idioms. Horizontal plurilingualism implies multilingual discourse representing the relation between the mother tongue and different foreign language systems, e.g. Croatian and English/German/Italian, etc. It means that multilingual speakers speak several different languages which they have learnt during their education and which they use, more or less successfully, in their communication. In view of the above-mentioned facts, the initial system of multilingualism, and especially multiculturalism, should be developed as soon as possible in our schools. The theoreticians (Byram et al., 2001; Fantini, 1997) believe that multicultural competence is acquired mostly until adolescence since after this period it is much harder to change opinion and accept what is new and different. Linguistic and linguodidactic research also confirms that it is similar with language learning – the earlier the speaker starts to learn the language/languages, the more successful they will be at mastering the language and communicative competences at all levels (Asher, 1996; Bagić, 2015; Jelaska, 2003; Kuvač & Palmović, 2007; Pavličević-Franić, 2011; Prebeg-Vilke, 1991; Težak, 1998).

Mastering Croatian Standard Language in a Plurilingual Environment Are Croatian Students Unilingual Speakers?

Early foreign language learning has become an undeniable fact for the generations of children who will work and create in the 21st century. It is confirmed by the opinion of the European Council about learning at least two foreign languages in addition to the mother tongue, according to the so called multilingual formula (Gačić, 2010, p. 324). This standard should be especially prominent in educational systems such as Croatian, where the native language of the child is not one of the so-called world languages. Communicative practice in multicultural Europe confirms the fact that almost all speakers are at least bilingual and an increasing number of children is becoming even multilingual. This occurrence can be recognized in Croatian language speakers who, up to now, were considered mostly monoglots or unilingual speakers. However, scientific studies of early acquisition and learning of the mother tongue

(Aladrović Slovaček, 2012; Jelaska, 2003; Kovačević & Pavličević-Franić, 2003; Kuvač & Cvikić, 2005; Kuvač & Palmović, 2007) confirm that most students are plurilingual. Primarily, they are plurilingual speakers on a vertical level since there is a relation between different organic idioms and the standard idiom of the same mother tongue – Croatian. However, the horizontal level is also realized within the plurilingual system since other/foreign languages are also included in communication. Vertical plurilingualism is to be expected since Croatian language, in addition to the standard idiom, also has conversational idioms (sociolects and slang idioms) and regional idioms (three main dialects - Shtokavian, Kajkavian and Chakavian, 16 subdialects and numerous local idioms). Therefore, a unilaterally normative child of preschool age who speaks only their own organic/regional idiom will become a non-normative plurilingual speaker. Institutional learning of Croatian standard language begins when the child enters school. Up to that moment the majority of children, as already mentioned, are monolingual. They are unilingual speakers with developed organic idiom, i.e. the speech of the environment around them acquired in their family or social surroundings (L1). Children start learning Croatian standard language at school as a basic communicative language of educational practice (L2). Communicating with other children, students also acquire other subsystems of the Croatian language (L3), whereas learning a foreign language from the first grade of primary school enables them to start acquiring systems of the foreign language as well (L4, L5...) (Pavličević-Franić, 2011). Intertwining of codes and their correlation is obvious at all levels, while coexistence of vertical and horizontal plurilingualism points to the fact that Croatian students are definitely not monoglots since they are becoming plurilingual speakers.

Interlanguage and Creation of Interlanguage Field

The junior grade student of primary school starts mastering their mother tongue and other non-mother tongue idioms from the position of plurilingual communication which is, hence, most commonly expressed on four levels: individual language idiom or the first language system, standard Croatian language as the official language system of institutional environment, substandard subsystems of Croatian language preconditioned by the age and group affiliation of other speakers in the group or class, and the non-mother tongue/foreign language started to be learnt at school (often even at preschool age). In such linguistic and extralinguistic conditions, an *interlanguage field* is inevitably created, which is the field where the dominant language system and the parallel, not equally valid subsystems overlap.

It is the linguistic area where the so-called *interlanguage* is realized, which is expressed as an interaction and transfer of particular language elements from one system to another. The situation in the interlanguage field can be realized as: domination of one system (non balanced plurilingualism with one idiom prevailing); coordination in plurilingual discourse (harmonization of all language codes used); asymmetry in plurilingual system (one interlanguage satisfies all communication

needs); semilingualism in plurilingual discourse (insufficient mastering of all idioms) (Pavličević-Franić, 2011, p. 50). In such conditions the question is how the existence of parallel language codes will influence the language development of students? Will these transferring - interfering relations among interlanguage elements stimulate acquisition of the foreign language or will they, perhaps, have a negative effect on general development of communicative abilities? In contemporary linguodidactics the appearance of language interaction does not have exclusively negative connotations, although it can imply the change of structure of one language under the influence of another language, which is definitely a negative incident. However, in junior grades of primary school the language transfer is never so strong that it can endanger the structure of the mother tongue. It is more likely to be an individual speech appearance of a particular child identifying the similarities and differences of languages in contact and positively using them for faster and easier acquisition of a new language idiom. Certainly, it is possible under the condition that the transfer has not been incorrectly directed and does not disturb proper acquisition of the second (and each following) idiom in the plurilingual environment. An interlanguage field can be created in two ways: when there is an already developed system and overlapping is caused by introduction of a new system or when the systems are developed parallel to one another. At the moment when the second language is introduced (in this case it is Croatian standard language – L2), this system acts as an emerging system, while the system of the first language (most commonly the organic individual idiom – L1) can be described as an established system. In linguistic theory, one of these systems is most often the dominant one, while others are considered subordinate subsystems. In this paper, the interlanguage field will mean the language area within which certain language elements are transferred, but without negative consequences. This interlanguage field will be considered the field of potentials since each newly learnt language idiom cannot only be useful for the development of the existing system but also for the acquisition of each following one, which opens the path towards plurilingualism. The issue of receptive - reproductive intertwining of language elements, which is most common in the early phase of institutional language learning, will also be addressed, regardless of vertical or horizontal transfer. The communicative practice of early language period definitely confirms this situation. Although the subjects of standard Croatian language and foreign language/languages learning are idioms which are still formed and complemented, they are nevertheless language systems. Acquisition of L2, L3, L4... is also mastering a system, truly new and unknown, different from the one that the child already knows, but on the other hand also known since it is based on generalizations, logic and systematization of the language as the system in general (Silić, 2006). During the early language period, the child's organic idiom and spoken language of the environment, as expected, have the largest influence on the process of learning standard Croatian language on the

grammatical, lexical, orthoepic and orthographic level. Namely, morphological and syntactic knowledge is not automated until the child reaches the age of 11- 12, i.e. the end of the concrete operation stage (Piaget, 1947, 2001). Therefore, the purpose of Croatian language teaching in such a plurilingual school environment should be realization of a coordinated and harmonized plurilingualism within which all used language systems would be at the same level of importance and function in the communication process. At the end of their language education, students should be expected to successfully use all participating language systems in communication. Hence, this paper will address the issue of transferring – interfering relations of different language codes and their connection with the process of mastering standard Croatian language, especially in the development of communicative competence.

Research

Problems and Purpose of Research

The basic aim and purpose of this research is to examine the mastery of standard Croatian language at the theoretical level (linguistic competence) and usage level (communicative competence) in the multilingual environment of students in Croatian schools nowadays (exposure to dialect, organic idiom, slang, foreign language learning). In view of the research aim, the following research problems were set:

- P1 – Determine the level of linguistic and communicative competence in junior grade students of primary school.
- P2 – Examine the connection among different language codes and written expression of junior grade students of primary school and determine transferences of language elements within the interlanguage field.
- P3 – Examine the relationship between the research place and the dialect to which the students are exposed and the research results.

Starting Hypotheses

In accordance with the aim and research problems, the following hypotheses were set:

- H1 – The students are expected to have better developed linguistic than communicative competence.
- H2 – The language expression of students is expected to be connected with regional idiom, characteristics of conversational language and foreign language learning.
- H3 – Differences are expected regarding the variable of the place of research, especially with idioms whose grammatical and lexical characteristics considerably differ from standard Croatian language.

Research Participants and Research Instruments

The research included 71 subjects (N=71), 53.5% of whom were third grade students and 46.5% of whom were fourth grade students of primary school, while boys and

girls were represented fairly equally. The research was conducted in four primary schools - OŠ Bukovac, Zagreb (26.8%), OŠ Stjepana Basaričeka, Ivanić Grad (16.9%), OŠ Dragutina Domjanića, Sveti Ivan Zelina (28.2%) and OŠ Kaje Adžića, Pleternica (28.2%). As these schools are located in different places with different characteristics of the organic idiom, the place of research was also used as an independent variable. Namely, students in Zagreb mostly speak substandard Shtokavian with strong characteristics of Kajkavian. Students in Ivanić Grad speak one form of the local Kajkavian, while students in Sveti Ivan Zelina speak another form of local Kajkavian. Students in Pleternica speak a form of Slavonic Shtokavian with characteristics of the Požega local speech. Although students from Ivanić Grad, Sveti Ivan Zelina, and partly students from Zagreb speak the same Kajkavian dialect, their local idioms significantly differ by their lexical, grammar and orthoepic features, therefore, each place was taken as a separate variable in the statistical measurement. In the sample, 75% of students have learned English as the first foreign language from the first grade, while the remaining 25% of students have learned German as the first foreign language.

Two tests were used as instruments in this research: *Linguistic competence test* and *Communicative competence test* for the 3rd and 4th grades of primary school. The tests were made according to the Croatian language curriculum (2006), and piloted and calibrated on the sample of 3000 students (Aladrović Slovaček, 2012). The linguistic competence test for the third grade comprised eight questions of theoretical level related to grammar and orthography. The students' task was to independently write or complete definitions, explain certain language terms, enumerate examples and circle correct answers. The communicative competence test also comprised eight questions, but did not question the knowledge of definitions, rules and standards; students were expected to know how to use proper language forms instead – to complete sentences, correct mistakes in the text, find the odd-man-out in word series, orthographically accurately create a short written text (description of one school day as a page in a diary). In the fourth grade, the linguistic competence test comprised nine questions and the task was similar as in the third grade. In the communicative competence test for the fourth grade the same was expected from students as in the third grade, while the last task was to independently write a text (a letter to a loved one). Thus, in the communicative competence tests, it was expected that students show their knowledge of language in use, while in the linguistic competence tests the theoretical knowledge of language was expected. After entering the data, the Kolmogorov Z test ($p < 0.05$, $z = 2.31$) was conducted which showed a normal distribution of results, while for data processing the following tests of parametric statistics were used: t-test for testing the difference between two arithmetic means, variance analysis for testing the difference among several arithmetic means and Scheffe Post Hoc Test for determining the difference among variables after the conducted variance analysis. The results were processed by the SPSS statistics program.

Results

The first research problem was to determine the level of linguistic and communicative competence in junior grade students of primary school. The T-test ($p < 0.01$, $t = 3.14$) showed that there is a statistically significant difference between the test of linguistic and communicative competence – the students achieved significantly better results on the test of linguistic competence (theoretical knowledge) than on the test of communicative competence which tested their knowledge of language use (*Chart 1*).

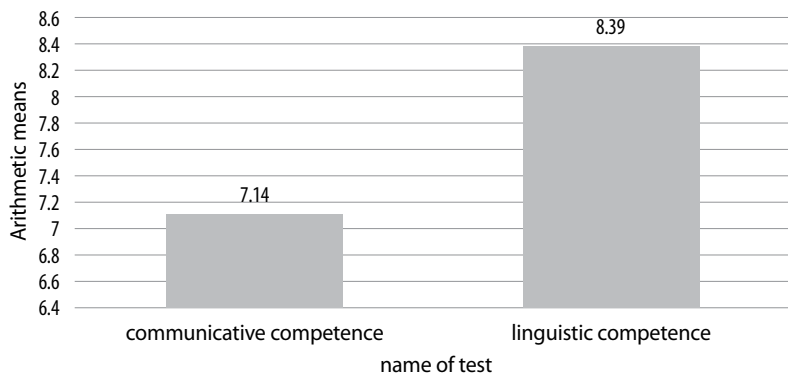


Figure 1. Average results achieved on the tests of linguistic and communicative competence

Similar results were achieved in the research by Pavličević-Franić and Aladrović Slovaček (2008) for 1st grade primary school students and Aladrović Slovaček (2012) for 3rd grade primary school students. The data confirm the first hypothesis, which assumes that the students have better developed linguistic than communicative competence. Although in this developmental stage, considering the age and the concrete operation stage (Piaget, 1947, 2001), it would be expected that the students have better communicative competence, i.e. that they are more successful in language use than knowledge of definitions and rules, that was not the case.

The second research problem was to examine the connection between different language codes and written expression of junior grade students of primary school, and determine the transferring and interfering language elements within the interlanguage field. The results showed that the transfer of language elements is mostly connected with the regional idiom and is mostly expressed at the grammar level (omitting the final vowel in infinitives, incorrect use of instrumental case, forming Present and Present Active Participle, placing enclitics in the first place in the sentence...). The transference is frequent at the lexical level, where one can identify the use of regional lexemes and, as expected, a large number of Anglicisms, more or less adapted to the Croatian system (*sejvati, tagati, frendica*), as well as the use of English abbreviations, e.g. OMG, RIP, BFF... (Table 1).

Table 1

Presentation of deviations at the orthographic, grammar and lexical levels in students' written work

ORTHOGRAPHIC DEVIATIONS	GRAMMAR DEVIATIONS	LEXICAL DEVIATIONS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>kući, obučem se, neću reći, vruć, kćer, ploča</i> • <i>ponjeli, poslije podne, čovijek, uvijek, Osjek</i> • <i>Jeli ideš? Jelda?</i> • punctuation – without comma after vocative; without comma in front of conjunctions <i>a</i> and <i>ali</i>; full stop at the end of a question (<i>Kako ti je u Kanadi.</i>) • <i>neznam, bijo, di</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>spavat, pjevat, pričat, išo, trčo, spaval, bil,</i> • <i>biti ću dobar, učiti ću</i> • <i>sa tatom, s olovkom</i> • <i>htjeo, svidjeo, živjeo</i> • <i>nemrem, skaka, ideju</i> • <i>ja bi... mi bi</i> • repetition of subjects, adverbs and objects • incorrect sentence structure (<i>Si došla?</i>) and word order 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TW, BFF, OMG, BTW • <i>Frendica/frenda, moron, lajkati</i> • NEDOBOG • <i>super, kul/cool, faca</i> • LOOL, FYI, BTB, WE • <i>tagati, spemati, fejsati</i> • <i>guba, fora,</i> • <i>Ok, great, good, full</i> • <i>Pozz, kiss, by</i> • <i>Bog, bok</i>

This confirmed the second hypothesis assuming that the expression of students will be connected with regional idiom, characteristics of conversational language and foreign language (especially English). In accordance with the expectations, the presented results show that language elements transfer from foreign language since foreign language learning influences students' language development. As today, English is the language of global communication, the students being exposed to it through the media, social networks, films, music... this transfer is large and expected, but cannot possibly endanger mastery of the mother tongue. The domination of the English language, similar as German or Hungarian in the past, is mostly expected, as the research results show, at the lexical level and will probably stay at this level, especially in oral expression, but also in some specific written texts. Since Croatian is a small language spoken by only about seven million people in the world, it is surely expected that it will be strongly influenced by large languages, especially English as the language of global communication, but will not become endangered, despite the predictions of some linguists (Comrie, Matthews, & Polinsky, 2003) that small languages such as Croatian will be close to extinction.

The third research problem referred to the investigation how the variable place of residence is connected to the received data. The results of the variance analysis show that there is a statistically significant difference considering the place of residence on the test of linguistic competence ($p < 0.01$, $F = 4.11$), while the Scheffe Post Hoc test showed that this difference was confirmed between students of Sveti Ivan Zelina primary school and students of the other three schools (Figure 2).

The difference considering the place of research was confirmed only between students of primary school Sveti Ivan Zelina and students from other schools since students from primary school Sveti Ivan Zelina achieved significantly better results on the Test of linguistic competences. Similar results were obtained in the previous research conducted by Aladrović Slovaček (2012). Namely, it was confirmed both times that students whose organic idiom (L1) significantly differs from standard Croatian language show better results on the test of language competences. The reason

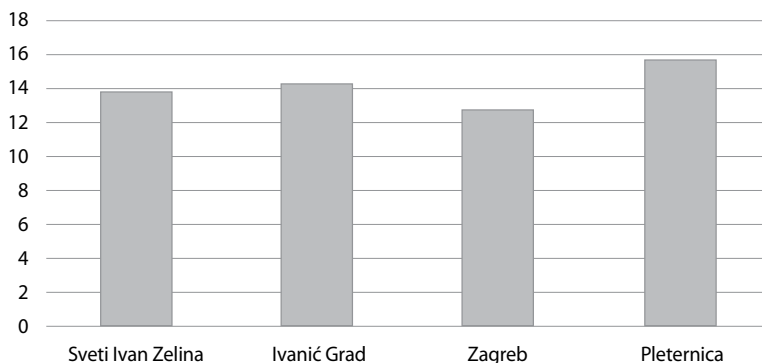


Figure 2. Presentation of average results on the test of linguistic competences with respect to place of research (residence)

is probably that precisely these students will sooner become aware of the fact that they have to learn the standard language (L2) since they have to spend more effort and time to master it. Other students, whose organic idiom does not significantly differ from the standard language, such as the students from Slavonia or Lika whose organic idiom is Shtokavian, on which the standard language is based, assume that they surely know the standard language and therefore spend less effort and time learning it. As a consequence, they obviously achieve worse results on the tests of language competences.

Conclusion

The research confirmed the presence of both types of plurilingualism among children of junior school age. Vertical plurilingualism is visible in the interrelation between the regional idioms and the standard language, while the horizontal appears between the Croatian language and the foreign language which is learned at school. As the research shows, Croatian primary school pupils make transfer from the regional dialect at the grammar level, while transfer at the lexical level is mostly made from foreign language (usually English). Students often use English lexemes and then adapt them to the Croatian system (e.g. present paradigm – *lajkam, guglam*..., noun formation – *frendica, smajlić*..., orthography – *pliz, sori, kul*...). Additionally, also according to the analogy from the English language, abbreviations of Croatian words are formed (*pozz, BTB, dns*...). Although the transferring – interfering relationship is definitely present in the plurilingual environment of Croatian primary schools, plurilingualism among children of junior school age is not a negative phenomenon. Therefore, it should be positively used for the acquisition of language knowledge and stimulation of language confidence, i.e. for the development not only of language, but also intercultural competence. The results show that it is necessary to work on the development of language competences, particularly on the development of communicative competence in order not only to achieve better results, but also to

raise the use of language on all language levels and in different kinds of written texts to a satisfactory degree. The primary school curriculum of Croatian language has significantly changed in the last ten years (HNOS, 2005; NiPP, 2006; NOK, 2010). However, up to now the research (Pavličević-Franić & Aladrović Slovaček, 2010, 2013, 2016) has confirmed that the changes were usually only declarative, while the practice of teaching the Croatian language has not significantly changed. Tests of language competences show that students achieve better results on theoretical than on practical/usage level, which has also been confirmed by the results of this research. As each language idiom which the child masters can help with mother tongue acquisition, plurilingualism will not disrupt teaching of the standard Croatian language. However, the creators of curricula, authors of textbooks and teachers have to be aware of the fact that plurilingualism is present among our students since they are not unilingual speakers and therefore the manner of learning and teaching has to be adapted to this fact. Use of communicative – functional, correlational – integrational teaching system proved to be the most efficient as it starts from the student's innate grammar and their organic idiom and is based on communicative grammar typical for the particular developmental age. The system which stimulates a creative approach and humanistic education in multilingual and multicultural environments greatly contributes to the development of language competences and facilitates acquisition/learning of the mother tongue.

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Povezanost ovladavanja hrvatskim standardnim jezikom i plurilingvalnoga školskog okruženja

Sažetak

Višejezičnost i višekulturalnost jezgrena su čimbenici jezične politike Europske unije. Već se i bilingvalna komunikacija smatra višejezičnošću jer pridonosi stvaranju multilingvalne društvene zajednice. Od europskih se govornika, dakle, očekuje uporaba barem dvaju jezika (materinski i jedan strani jezik). No, u većini europskih obrazovnih dokumenata (ZEROJ, 2005) ističe se trojna višejezična formula prema kojoj se, uz materinski, preporučuje poznavanje još dvaju jezika. Dosadašnja istraživanja (Pavličević-Franić, 2011) potvrđuju činjenicu da se u hrvatskoj osnovnoškolskoj praksi najčešće očituje vertikalni suodnos dvaju jezičnih kodova unutar istoga materinskoga jezika. No, uvođenjem stranoga jezika u 1. razred osnovne škole, sve češće se registrira horizontalna višejezičnost, što dovodi do stvaranja međujezičnoga polja. Takva komunikacijska situacija nužno zahtijeva nove pristupe u procesu učenja hrvatskoga jezika jer jednojezična djeca postaju višejezični učenici. Cilj je istraživanja, stoga, bio ispitati povezanost različitih jezičnih kodova i procesa ovladavanja hrvatskim standardnim jezikom, osobito u razvoju komunikacijske kompetencije, kao i utvrditi vrste jezičnih transferencija unutar međujezičnoga polja. Statistički uzorak čine učenici mlađih razreda osnovne škole među kojima je proveden Test lingvističke i komunikacijske kompetencije (Aladrović Slovaček, 2012). Rezultati pokazuju postojanje paralelnih jezičnih kodova koji nisu prepreka, nego prednost u višejezičnoj školskoj sredini i koji pozitivno utječu na proces učenja hrvatskoga standardnoga jezika u ranojezičnome razdoblju.

Ključne riječi: horizontalna višejezičnost; međujezično polje; nastava hrvatskoga jezika u osnovnoj školi; plurilingvalna komunikacija; vertikalna višejezičnost.