

Sara Brodarić Šegvić

Linguistics PhD student

Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, University of Split

## THE INFORMAL ACQUISITION OF ENGLISH VOCABULARY THROUGH MEDIA AS A KEY FACTOR OF SUCCESS IN FORMAL EFL LEARNING

**Abstract:** Croatian high school students are increasingly presented with opportunities for incidental out of school EFL learning through the Internet, subtitled TV programmes, music and video games with English language content. This paper statistically analyzes the data collected by means of a questionnaire, with the aim of comparing the EFL grades of 78 high school students with their approach to unfamiliar English vocabulary they encounter through media: how often they attempt to determine meaning through context or look it up. Research questions also address the relation between students' EFL grades and their opinions on the extent of various media influence on their English vocabulary acquisition. The results of Chi-square tests have shown that successful EFL students try to guess meaning from context as well as check for meaning significantly more frequently. Moreover, statistically they report acquiring a larger amount of vocabulary by listening to music and watching films than less successful EFL students. The purpose of this paper is to highlight the importance of Croatian adolescents' incidental English vocabulary acquisition through media and draw attention to the potential use of these findings within formal EFL teaching.

**Key words:** EFL Teaching, English Language and Media, Incidental Vocabulary Acquisition, Foreign Language Teaching, Vocabulary Acquisition Strategies

### INTRODUCTION

The informal acquisition of a language implies all the ways in which certain levels of language competence can be reached regardless of school institutions and formal education. This often takes place as an unconscious process, much like the acquisition of a mother tongue. When defining the process of mother tongue acquisition, Prebeg-Vilke (1991: 27) emphasizes the significance of the child's immediate surroundings, in addition to the importance of the role of parents.

As we cannot ignore the fact that nowadays the immediate surroundings of children and adolescents mostly consist of their contact with media, the language content of the media they take in is bound to considerably influence their language development. Apel and Masterson (2012, in Ćosić 2016: 9) point out: "children's exposure to media is exceptional - aside from sleeping, they spend most of their day in the presence of multiple media".

The language that prevails in media around the globe and consequently in the lives of Croatian high school students, is English. The availability and importance of the English language is constantly increasing as a consequence of the current process of globalization. Moreover, with the accelerated development of technology,

especially with the arrival of smart phones, all English-language content provided by the Internet can now be accessed directly, everywhere and at all times. Nowadays English-language exposure is even more intense due to the rise of social networks and online games which allow two-way communication in this language to take place out of the school environment, encouraging the use of not only receptive but also productive vocabulary knowledge.

Such conditions seem to contribute to the incidental acquisition of English vocabulary by Croatian high school students and often seem to help them to successfully master their English language lessons at school. Given the frequency of English language exposure, some students acquire this foreign language spontaneously; in much the same way they acquire their mother tongue, therefore, their language competences in the English foreign language (EFL) classroom differ significantly from those of students who do not make such use of the advantages that the omnipresence of the English language in the media can provide.

This study examines the attitudes of students regarding how much particular media (music, film, the Internet, video games) influence their lexical competences. It also seeks to identify which vocabulary acquisition strategies are used outside the classroom and it examines whether this is an important factor of students' EFL school success. The aim is to indicate that the numerous positive effects of long-term exposure to the English language can be the basis for potential changes to the English-language curriculum in comparison to other foreign-language curricula in Croatian schools, in order to improve EFL teaching and meet the contemporary needs of both teachers and students.

## LITERATURE REVIEW AND TEACHING EXPERIENCE

The acquisition of a foreign language with the help of media has been the topic of research for a long time, especially in terms of the efficacy of using music and/or audiovisual content as classroom material in formal language teaching. In addition, some linguists believe that “through reading practice students will absorb and retain vocabulary by osmosis, i.e., merely by reading words in context without any special training in either vocabulary learning or reading” (Oxford 1990), thus Krashen (1982, in Oxford 1990: 23) recommends that students do “massive amounts of reading for pleasure” so as to automatically expand their vocabulary.

In recent years, with the ever-increasing importance and pervasiveness of the media, more and more authors have started studying the influence and advantages of informal language acquisition. Čepon (2006) points out that nowadays the English language appears to be the main medium of Western cultural transmission, and that no other language can equal it in this respect.

Many studies have shown the positive effects that mere exposure to the English language in the media can have on the learners of this language. It has been proved that frequent exposure to English in the media positively influences the grades of Croatian high school students in their EFL classes (Brodarić 2015). Earlier research has also shown that the abundance of English-language content facilitates the unin-

tentional acquisition of English vocabulary, especially for younger, technology-literate generations (Mihaljević Djigunović, Cergol and Li 2006). More than a decade ago, Mihaljević Djigunović and Geld (2003) already started discussing the increasingly growing differences between English and all other foreign languages taught in Croatian schools. They also argue that the average exposure to the English language in Croatia is 3.9 hours per day through television programmes, radio, commercials, the Internet.

While describing the impacts of verbal-visual material on English vocabulary teaching, Hodzic Jejna (2016: 313) suggests that “consciously or not we acquire language” through electronic media as it “contains a huge amount of information presented as a mixture of text and images” (Sless 1981, in Hodzic Jejna 2016: 313). Furthermore, rather than dubbing, in Croatia subtitling is used as a means of translation for imported films, series, TV programmes and other audiovisual content. Many authors believe that subtitled audiovisual materials facilitate auditory processing due to the rich context they provide, and thus represent a powerful tool for language instruction (Baltova, 1994 in Danan 2004). Therefore, it is widely accepted that in European countries which use subtitling as opposed to dubbing, as is the case in Croatia, speakers are more likely to have a better pronunciation and comprehension of the English language (Koolstra et al. 2002). The ELLiE<sup>5</sup> study, which included seven European countries, found that Croatia, Sweden, and the Netherlands - countries with a long tradition of subtitling, are equally those where children are most exposed to the English language out of the school environment (Eurobarometer 2006, in Enever 2011: 118).

In addition to the English audiovisual content available to youngsters on television or at the cinema, today such content is even more accessible via downloading and streaming services on the Internet. It is therefore easier to download movies without Croatian subtitles, or with English captions. On this subject, Nagira (2011) shows that watching foreign-language audiovisual materials with same-language captions can improve incidental language acquisition.

It is important to point out the stimulating power that pop music can have in language acquisition through a phenomenon Murphey (1990) calls *song-stuck-in-the-head*. This phenomenon urges us to wonder about the meaning of foreign words that run continually through our minds along with the melody of a song we memorized.

The increasingly meaningful role of the Internet in the language development of children and adolescents cannot be denied. Crystal (2001) supports the idea that the Internet is no longer media that solely provides information, but one that also gives students the opportunity to modify the content of web pages with their own comments or discussions. What is more, today the Internet offers high school students the possibility to choose English as their global means of communication with users all around the world, be it through social networks, by posting comments on *YouTube* videos or articles on web pages, writing blogs, or through online gaming.

---

5 The European Commission project called ELLiE: Early language learning in Europe (2011).

Due to the ever-increasing exposure of adolescents to the English language, the differences among high school students in terms of language competences - the extent of use of the four language skills, grammar and vocabulary in their English language classes - are becoming increasingly more drastic. EFL teaching experience allows us to detect wide gaps in between the language competences of students who are often exposed to media that provide British or mostly American language content, and those students who, for a variety of reasons, are less exposed to this language in their free time. Many successful students often build up their word-stock with items that are not part of the regular content of the EFL school programme, while this is rarely the case with other foreign languages (Italian, German, French and Spanish). For instance, students are often familiar with the lexicon of weapons which they claim to have picked up by playing online games, or with the vocabulary of specific topics that are repeatedly found in popular television series (ex. *Big Bang Theory*), as well as idioms and various slang expressions commonly found in song lyrics often linked to rap and hip-hop subcultures.

On the other hand, regardless of the amount of extramural English-language content that is available to all, teaching experience shows that there is also a large number of students whose language competences are so limited that it is usually difficult for them to follow B1 and B2 level programmes taught in most high schools. The restricted size of their English vocabulary cannot be compared to that of other peers who convincingly express themselves at C1, and occasionally even C2 levels<sup>6</sup>. In student-teacher consultations, the weaker English language learners regularly acknowledge that they are rarely in touch with the English language outside the school institution. They mostly listen to Croatian music, do not watch television often and miss out on all the opportunities that social networking and the Internet in general have to offer in terms of the improvement of English-language competences. It is therefore likely that lower grades in their formal EFL education are closely related to the lower frequency of exposure to this language in a non-institutional context. Due to the omnipresence of English-language content in the everyday lives of Croatian youth, excellent EFL grades are no longer earned only by hardworking students eager to learn grammar structures and grasp the use of new vocabulary through classroom practice, but also by those students who spend a lot of time with English-language content media, sometimes at the expense of other school commitments.

With regard to the English language, it seems that today the competences of young, IT-literate generations in Croatia are gradually becoming less tied to the process of formal education and have now more to do with media. Graddol (2006) points out that English language teaching is changing at incredible speed under the influence of globalization. Moreover, he highlights the notion that the present-day English language is a new phenomenon and is by no means “English as we have known it, and have taught it in the past as a foreign language” (Graddol 2006: 11).

---

<sup>6</sup> Common language-competence reference levels (A1, A2, B1, B2, C1, C2) determined and described in the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages – CEFR (2005) as to ensure the application of equal criteria for the measurement of language development across Europe.

However, the importance of the educational process should not be neglected, but properly redesigned and redirected as to make it more functional at the present time when the changing status of the English language has become a permanent challenge for both teachers and students.

Sekelj (2011: 205) suggests that “the learning process should be seen as a sum of the implicit, mostly unconscious acquisition through language exposure and of the explicit, systematic learning in formal settings”. Accordingly, in a review of relevant literature and description of foreign-language acquisition studies, Lee et al. (2012) concluded that neither intentional nor unintentional vocabulary acquisition are more effective, that explicit and implicit acquisition methods should therefore both be incorporated in vocabulary teaching and learning.

According to the *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages - CEFR* (2005)<sup>7</sup>, any language teaching should include the acquisition of grammar and vocabulary as well as language skills (reading, writing, listening and speaking). Having observed the English vocabulary acquisition of early school-aged pupils, Sekelj (2011: 200) emphasizes “the importance of vocabulary in the process of EFL learning - primarily in early language learning - as the quality of foreign language learning at the beginning of school education significantly determines the course of the learning process that is to follow”. Udier’s (2009: 78) observation that “the more advanced the students are, the greater the individual differences in their vocabulary acquisition will be” is therefore not surprising. Vocabulary has often proved to be the element that makes a difference in language competence. Andraka and Jurković (2016) acknowledge the importance of vocabulary, they cite Allen (1983, Andraka and Jurković 2016: 30) by stating that “a limited vocabulary is a greater obstacle to communication than limited grammar knowledge” and quote Wilkinson’s claim (1973, in Andraka and Jurković 2016: 30) that “without grammar little can be conveyed, but without words nothing can be conveyed”. In their study, Pašalić and Sinovčić Trumbić (2014), report the views of university students in Split, who believe that foreign languages require a different learning approach from other subjects and believe that context plays an important role in vocabulary learning.

This paper starts from the premise that exposure to the English language in the media creates an important context, and that students often use the strategy of inferring meaning to a new word from context, i.e. according to Rebecca Oxford’s (1990) classification of vocabulary acquisition and learning strategies, they make use of *fully contextualizing techniques*<sup>8</sup>. The language context offered by the media delivers authentic communicative situations, more natural and more exhaustive than those presented to students in the EFL classroom. Sekelj (2011) remarks that spontaneous acquisition strategies make a significant contribution to the students’ vocabulary range considering the presence of the English language in the media, and that the learning process occurs

7 The year of publication of the Croatian document translation.

8 In Oxford (1990): Fully contextualizing techniques (embedding new words in a more or less normal communicative context), differ from Semi-contextualizing (word grouping, associations etc.) and Decontextualizing techniques (which include learning with the help of word lists or flashcards).

unconsciously when students are more motivated while doing something they enjoy. Therefore, it is more likely for the English language to be acquired outside the classroom where “available time, existing virtual communities and intrinsic motivation are already in place” (Sockett and Toffoli 2012: 215).

In the light of these considerations, this paper explores incidental English vocabulary acquisition in an out-of-school context and through media, as well as the extent to which it can be related to the EFL grades of Croatian adolescents in high schools. Taking into account that previous research (Brodarić 2015) concluded that music, film, the Internet and video games are the media that have the greatest impact on the English language competences of high school students, the present study specifically deals with their influence on vocabulary acquisition.

## **RESEARCH AIM AND METHODOLOGY**

### *AIM*

This paper seeks to explore the relationship between the students’ success in formal EFL education at school and the ways in which students acquire English vocabulary out of the school environment. The aim of the research is to determine the attitudes of the respondents towards the English-language content media which largely influence the incidental acquisition of the vocabulary of that language, in order to consider the relationship between the lexical competence of students in the EFL classroom and the settings in which English-language use occurs in an extramural environment.

In respect to the aim of the research, the questions addressed in this study are as follows:

1. In what ways do students deal with unknown English vocabulary items they encounter in the media?
  - How frequently do students attempt to guess word meaning from context?
  - How frequently do students check for word meaning?
  - Is there a relation between the above-mentioned approaches and students’ EFL school grades?
2. Which are the media (music, the Internet, films, video games) students consider most responsible for their English vocabulary acquisition?
3. Is there a relation between the influence of each media on English vocabulary acquisition and students’ EFL school grades?

### *SAMPLE*

The study sample involved 78 high school students attending a general-education secondary school in the city of Split, enrolled in second (N = 32) and third grade (N = 46) with the average age of 17. At this stage, students are taught B1 and B2 levels of EFL at school. The collected data shows that most respondents started EFL formal education at elementary school, while a number of students (N = 21) pointed out that their formal education

started at an even earlier age. More than half ( $N = 44$ ) the students claim to have attended supplementary or additional English language lessons at foreign language schools or at private lessons ( $N = 8$ ). At the time of questionnaire completion and throughout the preceding school year, all participants shared the same EFL teacher, in order to avoid the variations in the assessment criteria of different teachers that could occur in data analysis.

### *INSTRUMENT*

The instrument used to collect student attitudes was a three-part questionnaire composed of closed type questions. All the questions were provided in the Croatian language to ensure the full comprehension of all students (see *Appendix*). For the purpose of analysis, in the first part of the questionnaire relating to general information about the respondents, the following data was collected: gender, the number of years of formal English language learning, other formally organized types of English language lessons and their EFL grades in the first term of the current school year as well as last year's final grade (see *Appendix 1*). In the second part, pupils were asked to answer questions related to their habits when using the English language outside the school. In addition, the collected data includes information on vocabulary learning strategies that students turn to when they come across unfamiliar English words in the media: how frequently they attempt to guess their meaning from context or whether they check for meaning by using a dictionary, the *Google* search engine, or other sources of knowledge (see *Appendix 2*). Finally, in the third part of the questionnaire, the students expressed their views on which media they considered the most responsible for their incidental acquisition of English vocabulary. Their answers were given with statements ranging from 1 to 5 on a Likert scale (see *Appendix 3*).

### *PROCEDURE*

The administration of the questionnaire was preceded by a pilot study, which resulted in some items being discarded, taking into account respondents' feedback. The students completed the questionnaire during their regular EFL classes at school and were previously informed about the anonymity of the questionnaire. Following the participants consent to participate, the questionnaire administration itself lasted for an average of 20 minutes. All data was carefully coded in *Microsoft Office Excel 2007* spreadsheet program and later processed and analyzed using *SPSS*<sup>9</sup>.

### *DATA ANALYSIS*

For the purpose of research, the respondents were later separated into three groups, according to their average EFL school grade. The average grade for each student was calculated by taking into account the final grade of the previous school year and the average EFL grade in the first term of the current school year. The first group

9 Statistical Package for the Social Sciences v.19.0 (IBM Corp., Armonk, NY, USA)

(Group A) consists of excellent students (with an average score of 5.0), the second group includes respondents with an average score of 4.5 to 4.0 ( $> 3.5 \leq 4.5$ ), while the third group comprises students with the lowest average ( $\leq 3.5$ ).

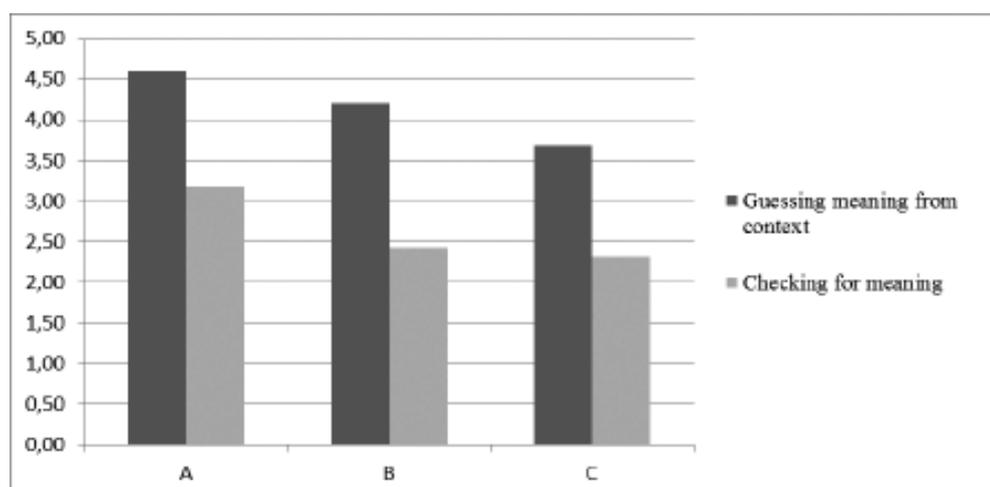
The obtained results are interpreted with the descriptive statistical analysis of closed type responses and attitude scales, as well as the observation of Chi-square tests performed as to check the statistical significance of the results.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In order to determine the ways in which students approach unknown English words that they encounter outside the classroom, mainly through media, the respondents' responses were analyzed by considering the two Likert scales they used to indicate how often they try to grasp the meaning of new words from context and how often they check for their meaning.

All the results pertaining to student habits in using these vocabulary learning strategies are then separately observed for each student group (Groups A, B, and C) as to analyze the relation between the students' approach towards unfamiliar vocabulary and their EFL school success.

The graphic representation of the results is presented in *Figure 1* below.



**Figure 1.** The average frequency of guessing word meaning from context and checking for meaning of unknown words with students from Groups A, B and C.

What is apparent in *Figure 1* is that pupils, as expected, attempt to guess the meaning more frequently than they deliberately choose to search for the meaning. Out of the total sample, 60% of students claim they very often try to infer the meaning of a new word from context, while a third (35%) admits never checking for the exact meaning. What is also evident from the chart is that the students with the best grades (Group A) engage in both of these options more frequently than the pupils in Group B, and that the students with the lowest grades (Group C) are the least likely to attempt guessing word meaning from context as well as searching for their meaning.

Namely, most Group A (91.4%) and Group B (86.2%) students claim that they frequently adopt the strategy of inferring meaning from context, while this is true for only half of the respondents in Group C (53.8%). Similarly, when answering about their habits of verifying word meaning, half of the Group A students (55.9%) claim to do so frequently, in Group B the greatest percentage of respondents (43.3%) check the meaning of unfamiliar words only sometimes or rarely, whereas almost half of Groups C members (46.2%) admit they have never reached for a dictionary nor Internet search engines to learn the meaning of an unknown word.

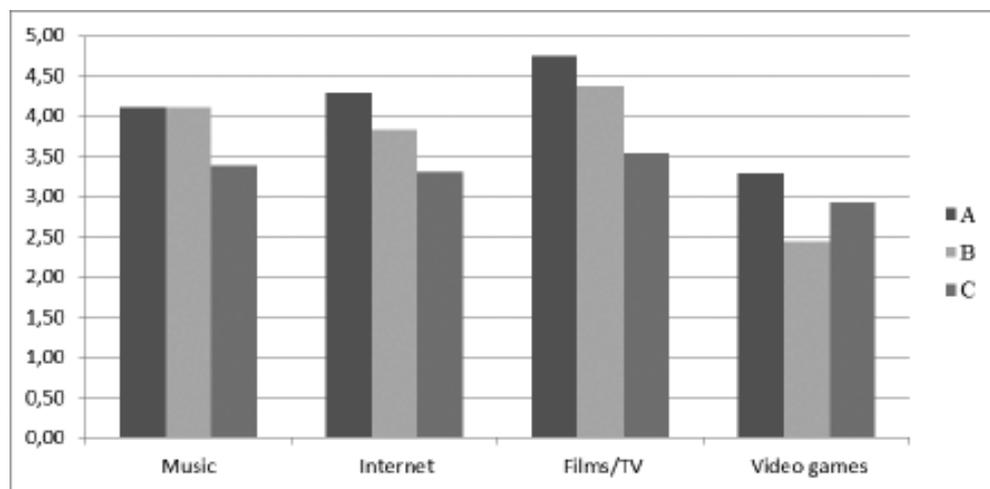
The performed Chi-square tests confirmed statistically significant differences among the A, B and C Groups of students with regard to how frequently they try to guess the meaning ( $\chi^2 = 16.1$ ,  $df = 4$ ,  $p = 0.003$ ) as well as how often they check for the meaning of unknown vocabulary items ( $\chi^2 = 11.8$ ,  $df = 4$ ,  $p = 0.019$ ).

Such a result was expected. Namely, we could assume that Group A students often grasp the meaning of words through context as they are already acquainted with an ample amount of words in that language, therefore a clear context allows them to understand the meaning of new lexical units more easily. Considering the aspects of new-vocabulary acquisition from context, Vodogaz and Jurišić (2010) point out that the level of language competence plays a major role with the strategy of inferring meaning and that “insufficient vocabulary can prevent students from creating a context large enough to infer the meaning of an unknown word.” Furthermore, the fact that excellent students are more likely to check the meaning than others can be interpreted as one of the reasons why they earn such high EFL grades – due to their interest in learning English and the additional competences they gain outside the school institution. Nevertheless, it could be argued that there are different levels of word recognition and genuine knowledge of a certain word’s meaning. In her description of vocabulary learning strategies, Oxford (1990) maintains that repeated exposure to a particular word in different contexts does not guarantee that students will recognize the word every time they encounter it, and that the recognition level “is definitely not tantamount to productive knowledge” (Oxford 1990: 23).

As to answer the second research question, the feedback given by students on four Likert scales, where they marked which media most influenced their unintentional out-of-school English vocabulary acquisition, was analysed. Out of the total number of respondents, as many as 60% claim they have learnt many words by watching and listening to English-language films and TV programmes with English-language content, and marked this activity with the highest value on the Likert scale. Almost one half of all respondents (44.2%) believe that the Internet has played a major role in their English vocabulary acquisition. However, the results related to the impact of the Internet are complex in nature, as will be discussed later.

More than a third of the students in the sample (39%) state that listening to songs with English lyrics is of great importance when acquiring vocabulary, while the influence of video games with English-language content ranked last, with almost one third of the students (29%) claiming video games had no influence on their English vocabulary acquisition by assigning them the lowest value on the scale. However,

the latter result may be due to the fact that the sample consists of a majority of female (N = 42) rather than male students (N = 36), and as previously discussed (Brodarić 2015), high school male students spend significantly more free time playing video games than female students. Therefore, we could conclude that most female respondents in this sample have rated the impact of this media as low.

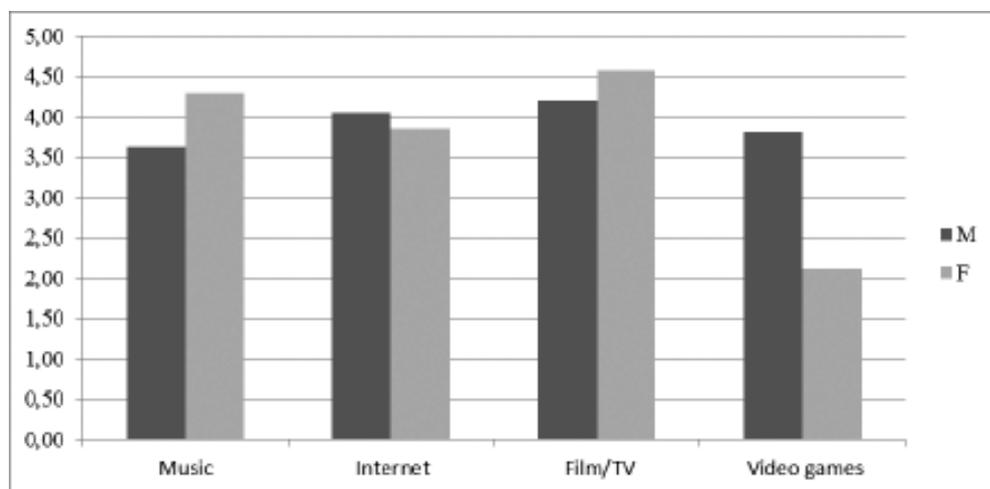


**Figure 2.** The influence of individual media on English vocabulary acquisition with student Groups A, B and C.

The third research question explores the possible link between the influence of individual media on vocabulary acquisition and students' EFL school grades. In *Figure 2*, we can observe similar trends in the results across all media except for those related to video game influence. Namely, most media has more influence on the English vocabulary competence of students with excellent EFL grades (Group A) than on members of Group B (with a slightly lower grade average) whose vocabulary is, on the other hand, more influenced by these media than that of students with the lowest grades (Group C). However, the performed Chi-square tests showed statistically significant differences among groups exclusively in relation to music ( $\chi^2 = 8.02$ ,  $df = 2$ ,  $p = 0.018$ ) and film/television ( $\chi^2 = 17.35$ ,  $df = 4$ ,  $p = 0.002$ ). The statistical results therefore confirm that the students with higher grades feel they have acquired a great amount of words just by listening to music and watching audiovisual content in English (movies, series and other television programs). This is not surprising given that many authors believe that music plays a major role in English language learning, as *additional sensory stimulation* (Wright et al., 2010, in Toffoli and Sockett 2014: 204), and that songs serve as cultural ambassadors that teach not only vocabulary and grammar, but also provide cultural insight for EFL learners (Brand 2007, in Li & Brand 2009). On the other hand, while discussing the impact of watching subtitled programmes on foreign language acquisition, Almeida and Costa (2013: 1236) emphasize how “television and cinema’s multisensory presentation of information may offer viewers with auditory, visual and written hints to derive the meaning of the

words that are used”. In addition, they point out that the use of subtitles promotes the essential cognitive competences needed in language learning: “guessing, inference, metacognitive questioning, and verification of meaning” (Almeida and Costa 2011: 1237).

The influence of the Internet on incidental English vocabulary acquisition did not prove to be statistically significant with regard to the differences in students’ EFL school achievements. This result is most likely a consequence of the fact that approximately 50% of the respondents believe that the Internet has had a profound impact on their vocabulary acquisition, regardless of their EFL school grades. The nature of such claims should be further examined. We could conclude that, given all the possibilities the Internet has to offer, this question proved to be too ambiguous. Namely, we assume all present-day high school students make use of the Internet to a certain extent. However, we have not examined which contents they search for and how. Consequently, when asked about the impact of the Internet on their English vocabulary acquisition, the questions were answered by both students who are capable of reading, for example, complex articles on politics on British news portals and/or who regularly leave comments in English under *YouTube* videos, as well as those students who come across the English language on the Internet almost exclusively by using social networks, where they mainly communicate in their mother tongue, but which, nevertheless, allow them to acquire a certain amount of English vocabulary (e.g. *accept friend request*). For these reasons, questions regarding the influence of the Internet should be more precisely defined in order to understand in what manner different students acquire vocabulary through this media. The opinions of students from different Groups (A, B and C) concerning the influence of video games on their English vocabulary acquisition are not clear from *Figure 2*. This influence can be more clearly defined by observing the following chart.



**Figure 3.** The influence of individual media on English vocabulary acquisition with male and female students.

As already stated, playing video games is an activity preferred by male students. It is therefore easy to understand why video games seem to have a greater influence on English-vocabulary competence with male (3.81) as opposed to female (2.12) respondents, while other media have an approximately equal amount of influence on vocabulary acquisition for both genders (*Figure 3*).

## CONCLUSION

This research allowed us to gain some insight into the incidental acquisition of English vocabulary by Croatian high school students. Specifically, it sought to determine which out-of-school English-vocabulary learning strategies affect the students' high school success in their English as a foreign language classes. In addition, the link between the students' EFL school grades and the influence of various media that students indicated as a key factor in their out-of-school English vocabulary acquisition was also interpreted. The study shows that better EFL grades are earned by those students who show more interest towards acquiring English vocabulary through media outside the school environment. Such students significantly differ from those who are less successful inasmuch as they use the strategy of inferring meaning from context more frequently, and in their will and need to voluntarily check the meaning of new words they come across.

On the basis of the obtained results we can also conclude that high school students who claim to have learned a significant amount of English words by listening to music and watching films achieve better success in their formal EFL school lessons. Therefore, the results point out the significance of watching films, television series, shows of British or American origin, as well as listening to music, songs with English lyrics and the influence it can have on vocabulary expansion and thereby on the development of language competence. That is precisely why the results are relevant to the teaching profession. The omnipresence of the English language and the contacts high school students have with the media should be guided and be made the most of in English language teaching.

The research was exclusively carried out on a sample of high school students who mostly had high EFL grades. The differences in the results of students with higher and those with lower grades show that similar research should be conducted on a wider sample. The research should be expanded to include vocational schools where students of the same age are taught lower levels of English, while exploring how frequent these differences are with younger students in primary schools might also prove to be useful. In addition, further research in this field should attempt to define more clearly the influence of the Internet on vocabulary acquisition, as its role in language acquisition is growing and becoming increasingly significant.

Furthermore, what needs to be pointed out is that individual differences in personality, motivation, learning styles, as well as cognitive and social differences among students can be crucial factors in determining the habit of using the English language outside the classroom and hence in the successful acquisition of language competences. The results of this research are based on students' opinions and self-report. As

to complement the results obtained on the basis of the administered questionnaire, further research could also focus on these very questions by conducting individual interviews with high school students so as to learn more on how and how efficiently children and adolescents acquire the English vocabulary through film and music. Interviews with teachers should also be carried out so as to collect more data on the various challenges that are currently present in formal EFL teaching.

The new findings of this study, as well as further research in this field, could be of use in the process of formal EFL teaching. In Croatia, the English language differs from other foreign languages due to a more frequent exposure to it. The formal teaching of this language should therefore also be approached in a different manner. This study aims to shed light on the possible changes to be made to current English foreign language teaching, and the need for adaptations to the teaching curriculum, teaching materials and pedagogical practices to suit the new status of the English language worldwide and accordingly, in Croatia. The aim of this study and those that will follow is the implementation of the obtained results within the programmes of English language learning in schools, i.e. to seek out potential methods of applying the influence of extramural, unintentional English vocabulary acquisition in formal teaching.

EFL teaching is undeniably being remodelled and tailored to suit new generations by making use of audio and video materials, developing contextual vocabulary learning strategies, stimulating communication situations that resemble natural communication and so on. An additional challenge lies in the proposal of changes and finding teaching methods which might reconcile the linguistic needs of those students who evidently acquire the English language out of school and use it increasingly as a means of global communication, with the needs of students to whom the English-language learning process is equal to the process of learning any other foreign language, regardless of the potential exposure to English, and who are therefore left behind both linguistically and culturally. For these reasons the very assessment of these two (or more) categories of English language students cannot be uniform.

Social influences will continue to alter the position of English language teaching, it is therefore necessary to further explore this field as to inform teachers as well as textbook authors of all the possible extramural influences that could be of use to students in their language development. The ultimate pedagogical implications of such research might provide help in finding methods for guiding the students to make use of these platforms autonomously in the most efficient way possible, while including all students in the process. The implications might also be of help in determining new, more appropriate assessment criteria for the knowledge formally gained in the EFL classroom on the one hand, and the English language acquired in an extramural context on the other hand.

## REFERENCES

1. Andracka, M., Jurković, A. (2016). Potiču li udžbenici za rano učenje stranog jezika razvoj strategija učenja vokabulara? *Strani jezici: časopis za primijenjenu lingvistiku*, 44 (1): 29-53.
2. Almeida, P. A., Costa, P. D. (2014). Foreign language acquisition: the role of subtitling. *Procedia-Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 141: 1234-1238. Accessed 10 December 2017. <<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S1877042814036362>>.
3. Brodarić, S. (2015). Can the English language in music, on TV and the Internet improve formal EFL results of secondary school students? In: K. Cergol Kovačević and S.L. Udier (ed.) *Multidisciplinary Approaches to Multilingualism*, (33-50). Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang GmbH Internationaler Verlag der Wissenschaften
4. Čepon, S. (2006), English Language Globalism. In: J. Granić, (ed.) *Jezik i mediji - jedan jezik: više svjetova*, (155-163). Zagreb-Split: Hrvatsko društvo za primijenjenu lingvistiku
5. Ćosić, V. (2016). Stavovi studenata o utjecaju animiranih filmova na jezični razvoj (Završni rad) Zagreb: Učiteljski fakultet. Odsjek u Petrinji, Rani i predškolski odgoj i obrazovanje. Accessed 28 April 2017. <<https://repozitorij.ufzg.unizg.hr/islandora/object/ufzg:256>>.
6. Danan, M. (2004). Captioning and Subtitling: Undervalued Language Learning Strategies. *Meta: journal des traducteurs / Meta: Translators' Journal*, 49 (1): 67-77. Accessed 10. December 2017. <<http://id.erudit.org/iderudit/009021ar>>.
7. Enever, J. (Ed.) (2011). *ELLiE: Early language learning in Europe*. London, UK: The British Council.
8. Graddol, D. (2006). *English Next: Why Global English May Mean the End of English as a Foreign Language*. London: British Council.
9. Hodžić Jejna, A.T. (2016). Stavovi nastavnika engleskog jezika o uticaju verbalno-vizuelnog materijala na usvajanje vokabulara, *Методички видици*, 7 (7): 311-328. Accessed 28 November 2017. <<http://metodickividici.ff.uns.ac.rs/index.php/MV/article/view/1837>>.
10. Koolstra, C. M., Peeters, A. L. and Spinhof, H. (2002). The Pros and Cons of Dubbing and Subtitling. *European Journal of Communication*, 17: 325-354. Accessed 11 December 2017. <<http://ejc.sagepub.com/cgi/content/abstract/17/3/325>>.
11. Lee C.B., Tan A.L.D. i Pandian A. (2012). Language learning approaches: A review of research on explicit and implicit learning in vocabulary acquisition. *Procedia-Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 55: 852-860. Accessed 28 November 2017. <<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S1877042812040347>>.
12. Li, X. & Brand, M. (2009). Effectiveness of Music on Vocabulary Acquisition, Language Usage, and Meaning for Mainland Chinese ESL learners. *Contributions to Music Education*, 36 (1): 73-84. Accessed 28 November 2017. <<http://krpb.pbworks.com/f/music-esl.pdf>>.
13. Mihaljević Djigunović J. i Geld R. (2003). English in Croatia Today: Opportunities for Incidental Vocabulary Acquisition, *Studia Romanica et Anglica Zagradiensia*, 47: 335-352. Accessed 28 November 2017. <[https://hrcaj.srce.hr/index.php?id\\_clanak\\_jezik=33116&show=clanak](https://hrcaj.srce.hr/index.php?id_clanak_jezik=33116&show=clanak)>.
14. Mihaljević Djigunović J., Cergol K. i Li Q. (2006). Utjecaj medija na nenamjerno usvajanje engleskog vokabulara. In: J. Granić (ed.) *Jezik i mediji – jedan jezik: više svjetova* (445-452). Zagreb – Split: Hrvatsko društvo za primijenjenu lingvistiku.

15. Murphey, T. (1990). The song stuck in my head phenomenon: A melodic din in the LAD? System, 18: 53-64. Accessed 3 February 2018. <[http://www.kuis.ac.jp/~murphey-t/Tim\\_Murphey/Articles\\_-\\_Music\\_and\\_Song\\_files/SongStuckIMHP.pdf](http://www.kuis.ac.jp/~murphey-t/Tim_Murphey/Articles_-_Music_and_Song_files/SongStuckIMHP.pdf)>.
16. Nagira, Y. (2011). Vocabulary learning through captions. International Conference on Languages, Literature and Linguistics, 26 (1): 95-99. Accessed 28 November 2017. <<http://www.ipedr.com/vol26/20-ICLLL%202011-L00049.pdf>>.
17. Oxford, R., i Crookall, D. (1990). Vocabulary learning: A critical analysis of techniques. TESL Canada Journal, 7 (2): 09-30. Accessed 25 February 2018. <<http://www.teslcanadajournal.ca/index.php/tesl/article/view/566>>.
18. Pašalić S. i Sinovčić Trumbić I. (2014). Vjerovanja studenata o učenju stranih jezika u hrvatskom kontekstu, Školski vjesnik-Časopis za pedagoški teoriju i praksu, 63 (1-2): 223-236.
19. Prebeg-Vilke, M. (1991). Vaše dijete i jezik – Materinski, drugi i strani jezik. Zagreb: Školska knjiga.
20. Sekelj, A. (2011). Usvajanje vokabulara engleskog jezika kao stranog jezika u ranoj školskoj dobi. Tabula: časopis Filozofskog fakulteta, Sveučilište Jurja Dobrile u Puli, 9: 200-211. Accessed 25 February 2018. <<https://hrcak.srce.hr/102935>>.
21. Sockett, G. i Toffoli, D. 2012. Beyond learner autonomy: A dynamic systems view of the informal learning of English in virtual online communities. ReCALL, 24 (2): 138-151. Accessed 26 February 2018. <<http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S1877042812003473>>.
22. Toffoli D. i Sockett G. (2014). English language music: Does it help with learning? Recherche et pratiques pédagogiques en langues de spécialité. Cahiers de l'Apliu, 33 (2): 192-209. Accessed 28 November 2017. <<https://journals.openedition.org/apliut/4450>>.
23. Udier, S. L. (2009). Pristup obradi leksičkih jedinica u nastavi hrvatskoga kao drugoga i stranoga jezika. Lahor: časopis za hrvatski kao materinski, drugi i strani jezik, 1 (7): 77-93. Accessed 28 November 2017. <[https://hrcak.srce.hr/index.php?show=clanak&id\\_clanak\\_jezik=70141](https://hrcak.srce.hr/index.php?show=clanak&id_clanak_jezik=70141)>.
24. Vodogaz, I. i Jurišić M. (2010). Usvajanje novog vokabulara iz konteksta. Školski vjesnik: časopis za pedagoški teoriju i praksu, 59 (2).
25. Vijeće Europe. (2005). Zajednički europski referentni okvir za jezike: učenje, poučavanje, vrednovanje. Zagreb: Školska knjiga