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Original scientific article  
Received April 3, 2019

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## **CROATIAN SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS' ERRORS IN FORMING SYNTACTIC NEGATION IN ENGLISH**

### **Abstract**

The acquisition of negation in the second language has been investigated in numerous studies (Cancino et al., 1975; Meisel, 1997; Fuentes, 2008), however, there are no systematic studies of the acquisition of the English negation by speakers of the Croatian language. The aim of this paper is to gain a better insight into the types and frequency of errors in a relatively free production of negation in English as a second language. The analysis is based on the hypotheses that errors in sentences where the so called dummy *do* has to be inserted in the negative sentence, omissions of auxiliary verbs, and double marking errors are expected. The analysis is based on a questionnaire consisting of one task of positive to negative sentence transformations. The answers were grouped according to the error type. Errors classified as "other" were the most frequent (37 %), followed by double marking and congruency errors (14 %), omissions (12 %), and additions (9 %). The results corroborate the frequency hypothesis of errors in sentences where the so called dummy *do* had to be inserted in the negative sentence, which may be attributed to negative interference from Croatian as the first language.

*Keywords:* syntactic negation; errors; Croatian; English