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COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF A SPECIFIC TYPE OF LEXICAL COLLOCATION (LIGHT VERB + NOUN) IN CROATIAN, ITALIAN AND ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND ITS USE IN CLASSROOM TEACHING OF LEXIS

Abstract: The aim of this paper is to provide an overview and the analysis of collocations, one of the most significant aspects of idiomatic use of language. A special emphasis has been put on a comparative review of the most common Light Verb Constructions consisting of light verbs (cro. lagani glagoli, ital. verbi supporto) and nouns in Croatian, English and Italian language. The aforementioned construction is chosen since it is extremely common in the early stages of language acquisition. Moreover, the aim of the conducted contrastive analysis has been to determine overlaps in order to use the examples of positive transfer in teaching lexis (English/Italian – L2), as well as to prevent negative interference such as false analogies. The research is based on the assumption that the number of completely concordant collocations taught in the early stages of foreign language acquisition is limited. Thus, prompt detection and putting emphasis on their relevance is essential. Following the discussion of the results of the contrastive analysis, the relevance of teaching collocations, i.e. presenting the most common collocations simultaneously with new vocabulary will be stressed. In accordance with the above-mentioned, we believe that collocational approach is the most useful and effective in teaching languages.

Keywords: collocational approach, contrastive analysis, lexis, second language acquisition

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

In 1951 Firth (1951) defined collocations as co-occurring words. According to the author, a collocation is a "mode of meaning", whose lexical meaning is obtained through a mutually congruent series of levels, these levels being contexts of situation, syntax, phonology, phonetics, and collocation (Firth, 1957, p. 192). According to Miščin (2012), collocation is a lexicological universalia. Etymologically, the term goes back to Latin (*com* together + *locare* to place). The author stresses two criteria for defining collocations: combinability of words within a collocation and semantic transparency of words in a collocation. Lexicologists define collocation as the co-occurrence of lexical items that are in some way or other typically associated with one another, because they tend to occur in similar environments (e.g. Halliday et al. 1964; Ridout & Waldo-Clarke, 1970, Backlund, 1973, 1976; Seaton, 1982; Crystal, 1985; Cruse, 1986; Zhang, 1993; quoted in Miščin, 2012).

According to Stojić and Murica (2010, p. 113), the aspect of meaning is crucial when drawing a distinction between different types of lexical collocations: free combinations, restricted collocations, and idioms (both figurative and pure). They conclude that collocations are more restricted (some substitution is possible, but there are arbitrary limitations on substitution) than free combinations, while they are less limited than figurative or pure idioms. Thus, collocations are characterised by a restricted paradigmatic substitution of the elements of a word combination, and they are semantically and syntactically stable, while with free combinations the restriction on substitution can be specified on semantic grounds, i.e. the potential of combinations is limitless. On the other hand, collocations and idioms are specific for every language, they are adjacent co-occurrence of words at a certain distance, which occur more frequently than could be expected if words were combined randomly in a language (Borić, 2002, p. 107), or among which there is a certain predictability of appearance (Blagus Bartolec, 2008, p. 107). Thus, idiomaticity is taken to be characteristic of idioms, as well as a distinctive feature in relation to collocations, although partially transferred meaning can be found in metaphorical collocations as well.

In the American and British tradition collocations are also referred to as idioms, multi-word units/expressions, fixed/set phrases, formulaic language, word co-selection, phrasal lexemes, phrasemes and phraseological units (Omazić, 2003, p. 13). According to Miščin (2012), the phenomenon of this specific co-occurrence is a field of interest for many linguistic disciplines, from lexicology to numerous others, such as discourse analysis, corpus linguistics, foreign language acquisition, cognitive linguistics, psycholinguistics, sociolinguistics, semantics, rhetoric, stylistics, and finally lexicography as an independent discipline that operationalises all the resources obtained through research of the aforementioned disciplines and compiles dictionaries.

Regarding the terms for constituents of collocation, in 1984 Hausmann (in Stojić & Murica, 2010, p. 115) introduced the terms *node* and *collocate*, which are still in use. A node or a base is an unchangeable constituent bearing primary meaning, while collocate determines its meaning more closely. In Croatian linguistics, along with the term base/node, the following terms are also used: *osnova* (*base*; Petrović, 2007), *ključna riječ* (*key word*; Pritchard, 1998), *nosiva riječ*, *osnovna natuknica* (*word bearing the meaning, basic cue*; Mihaljević, 1991) and *ključni element* (*key element*, Borić, 2002). Taking Firth´s consideration that individual words fulfil their semantic potential only in collocation, Ivir (1992, 1993; quoted in Stojić & Murica, 2010, p. 116) for both constituents of a collocation uses the term "collocate" (cro. *kolokat)* which is not based on a binary division of constituents, providing them an equal status.

TYPES OF COLLOCATIONS

According to the research conducted by international linguists (such as Hausmann, 1985; Benson, 1985), there are two categories of collocations: grammatical and lexical. Thus, the structure of collocations can be determined corresponding to their grammatical structure or the word class the node belongs to. Relying on the former, Hausmann (1985, p. 119, quoted in Stojić & Murica, 2010, p. 116) distinguishes six basic structures. When applied to collocations in Croatian, these structures are the following:

1. verb + noun (node), e.g. cro. *tražiti pravdu, donijeti odluku (to seek justice, to make a decision)*
2. adjective + noun (node), e.g. cro. *crno vino, mladi krumpir (red wine, young potato)*
3. noun (node) + verb, e.g. cro. *telefon zvoni, pas laje (the phone rings, the dog barks)*
4. a noun + a noun (node), e.g. cro. *prstohvat soli, šalica kave (a pinch of salt, a cup of coffee)*
5. adverb + adjective (node), e.g. cro. *potpuno miran, smrtno ranjen (completely quiet, fatally/mortally wounded)*
6. adverb + verb (node), e.g. cro. *ispravno postupiti, oštro kritizirati (to act properly, to criticise sharply/fiercely/strongly).*

The above-mentioned collocations can be expanded by adding other elements which determine the meaning of the constituents. Lexical collocations are considered to be binary constructions, i.e. they consist of a node and a collocate which belong to open-class words. Words belonging to closed-class words, such as prepositions or pronouns, can also be constituents of collocations, while the basic constituents are still the node and the collocate (Stojić & Murica, 2010).

The following classification is provided by Benson (1985, p. 61). It is based on the word class that dominates the collocation. When applied to collocations in Croatian, we distinguish four basic structures:

1. nominal collocation, e.g. *oštra zima, trulo voće, prstohvat soli (bitter/harsh winter, a pinch of salt)*
2. verbal collocation, e.g. *srce kuca, pucketati prstima, biti u zvanju (the heart is beating, to click/snap fingers, to have tenure)*
3. adjectival collocation, e.g. *neizlječivo bolestan, smrtno ranjen (terminally ill, mortally wounded)*
4. adverbial collocation, npr. *potpuno nebitno, sasvim dovoljno (completely irrelevant, good enough)*.

Croatian linguists consider the collocations consisting of adjective and noun (*cornflower*; cro. *plavi različak*) to be prototypical (prototype collocations), while those consisting of noun and noun (*an act of despair*, a *guiding thought*; cro. *potez očajnika, misao vodilja*), as well as noun and prepositional case expression (*češalj za kosu*) (*hair comb*) to be non-prototypical (Blagus Bartolec, 2017, p. 287). Verbal collocations are much less described since they appear in specialized dictionaries. In accordance with Blagus Bartolec (2017, p. 289), we shall also consider verbal collocations to be those collocations whose first constituent is a verb followed by a noun or prepositional phrase, while the emphasis will be put on collocations with light verbs. Light[1] verbs are all those periphrastic, modal and phase verbs (Blagus Bartolec, 2017, p. 289) with little semantic content of their own. Thus, they need a noun to fulfil their semantic potential. Definitions such as the above-mentioned (especially the initial, Jaspersen`s[2]) suggest that light verbs are "semantically empty". However, the attitude towards light verbs has changed and light verbs are given relevance through collocations. (Peti-Stantić et al., 2016, p. 203).

AN INSIGHT INTO LEXICAL COLLOCATIONS (LIGHT VERB + NOUN) IN ITALIAN AND ENGLISH

In Italian there is a specific type of collocation consisting of a light verb and a noun. The meaning of the whole expression is determined by the base (a noun). Thus, the light verb has a highly general meaning and often determines only the tense (e.g. it. *prendere una decisione, dare spiegazioni, fare una telefonata, essere in dubbio, avere paura;* engl. *take a walk*, *give a groan*, *give a demonstration of the technique*, *make an offer*, *have a bite*, *do the ironing*). In English some of the light

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[1] Aside from this term, the following terms are used as well: cro. *tanki glagol, funkcijski glagol, potporni glagol* (thin verbs, delexical verbs, semantically weak verbs, empty verbs, explicator verbs) (Peti-Stantić, et al., 2016, p. 203).

[2] Jaspersen introduced the term "light verb", suggesting it was an „irrelevant verb in front of a significant constituent" (quoted in: Peti-Stantić et al., 2016, p. 204). Aside from Jaspersen´s term *light verbs*, the term *support verbs* coexists as well.

verbs are *have, do, take*, etc. Salkoff (1990, p. 244) cites the following examples of collocations:

Max alluded to the crime. ~ Max <u>*made an allusion*</u> *to the crime.; Max harmed the child. ~ Max* <u>*did harm*</u> *to the child.; Max walked along the street. ~ Max* <u>*took a walk*</u> *along the street.*

In Romance languages this specific type of collocations was analysed by Gross (1981) and Giry-Schneider (1978). Gross believed that the noun takes the predicative function (a predicative noun), "devoiding" the verb from meaning, making it a semantically bleached verb - a support verb (it. *visitare – fare* (verbo supporto, support verb) *visita* (a noun *visit* that is the nucleus of the predication)). In Italian linguistics, collocations were the area of interest of numerous lingvists, such as D`Agostino and Elia (1998) or Cicalese (1999), and in English linguistics authors such as Nesselhauf (2005) and Allerton (2002) researched them. Cicalese (1999) emphasises that light verbs (it. *verbi supporto*) in Italian can have a neutral value (it. *fare, dare, avere, essere, prendere*) or they can be verbs specific to certain nouns, i.e. heavier light verbs (verb adds to the semantic value of the construction): it. *avere l`influenza* vs. *covare l`influenza* / eng. *run a risk* vs. *take a risk*, it. *prendere un`infezione* (informal register) vs. *contrarre un`infezione* (formal register), *dare baci* vs. *mangiare baci* (emphasis on the quantity)). Heavier light verbs can be replaced with the neutral ones (it. *presentare le scuse – fare le scuse*).

In Italian the situation is the following (Jezek, 2004):
- there is no correspondent (*fare un goal – *golfare* (*verbo predicativo*))
- there is no heavier light verb /it. *verbo supporto*/ (*fare una telefonata*)
- there is no neutral light verb (*lanciare una sfida – *fare una sfida*).

The verb has no predicative function, whereas its operational value is transferred to the noun, nominal predicate (it. *nome operativo)* (Harris, 1976). The choice of the verb depends on the noun, i.e. the core of the information is the noun and it determines other constituents. Sometimes it can be replaced with an adjective (it. *essere imbarazzato – essere in imbarazzo*), and often a preposition is added (it. *venire a conoscenza di,* eng. *to take something into consideration*), as well as an article (eng. *to take action, to take a risk, to give the chance*).

Cantarini (1999, p. 63) enlists basic features of collocations (type: light verb + noun) in Italian:
1. a noun can not always be replaced by a pronoun
    Vittorio rivolge un saluto a Flavia. / Vittorio lo rivolge a Flavia./ Vittorio glielo rivolge.
2. the restrictions are tighter for predicate noun (it. *nome predicativo)* than for ital. *nome argomentale*
    Vittorio dà uno/ ?lo/ *il suo schiaffo a Flavia.
3. predicate noun is modified by adjectives, while adverbs modify verbal predicate

Il conducente fece una brusca frenata.
Il conducente frenò bruscamente.

4. question structure consisting of predicate noun is not acceptable in most cases
   Mi metti in imbarazzo!
   *- *In cosa ti metto?*

5. neutral light verbs can be omitted without the loss of meaning (it. *nominalizzazione* – fr. "*reduction du verbe support*")
   He loves it. (He has love for it.)

6. coordination of two noun constituents depending on the same verb is not possible if in one of them the noun functions as a predicate.
   **La madre ha rotto il bicchiere e il silenzio.*

RESEARCH: THE COMPARISON OF THE MOST COMMON COLLOCATIONS (TYPE: LIGHT VERB + NOUN) IN ITALIAN, ENGLISH AND CROATIAN LANGUAGES

The aim of the contrastive analysis was to compare a special type of lexical collocations (light verb + noun), starting from the examples of four light verbs in Italian (*fare, dare, prendere, avere*) and comparing them to their translation equivalents in English and Croatian. Since the above-mentioned verbs are taught at school at an early stage of foreign language acquisition (grade 4), the aim was to determine their concordance with collocations in English (taught from the first grade) and Croatian in order to facilitate their acquisition by contrasting them with collocations pupils are already familiar with. Initial hypothesis was that complete concordance is rare, taking into consideration only collocations taught at school at early stages of foreign language acquisition, rendering their detection even more significant.

Data have been collected from the dictionary Lo Zingarelli, *Vocabolario della lingua italiana* and collocations have been compared to their translation equivalents in the dictionary *Collins COBUILD advanced learner's English dictionary,* dictionary *Collocations and Idioms* and dictionary *Rječnik hrvatskoga jezika* , as well as Croatian Collocation Database (cro. *Kolokacijska baza hrvatskoga jezika*).

Thus, in the comparative review the starting point will be collocations in Italian, which will then subsequently be compared with their translation equivalents in English and Croatian in order to determine cases of complete concordance (the constituents of collocations of contrasted languages do not differ in semantics or in the way they are combined), incomplete concordance (one of the constituents is not concordant in contrasted constructions) and no concordance (not one

constituent of contrasted collocations concords). In case of a completely different verb in English or Croatian, the verb in question will be written in capital letters, and in cases when in English or Croatian the collocation (light verb + noun) is not used, the symbol Ø will be used.

CONTRASTIVE ANALYSIS: RESULTS

Table 1 shows 66 collocations (type: light verb + noun) consisting of the italian verb *fare* (eng. do). Comparative review shows 16 cases of incomplete structural concordance (collocation is used, but with a different light verb) with collocations in English, 9 cases of no concordance, and in almost 2/3 of the cases the concordance is complete. In comparison with collocations in Croatian, there are only 14 cases of complete concordance, as well as numerous examples of no concordance.

Table 1 *FARE* + noun (comparative review)

ital. FARE	eng. DO/MAKE	cro. ČINITI, RADITI…
una domanda	*make a question*	*POSTAVITI pitanje*
un esempio	*GIVE an example*	*DATI primjer*
	*make an example (punish)	
schifo	*make sick*	*Ø*
pena	*feel sorry for*	*Ø*
la conoscenza	*get acquainted*	*Ø*
impressione	*make an impression*	*OSTAVITI dojam*
una telefonata	*make a call, GIVE a ring*	*Ø*
rumore	*make noise*	*praviti buku*
un sonnellino	*TAKE a nap*	*Ø*
un passo	*make a step*	*napraviti korak*
finta	*Ø (pretend)*	*Ø[3]*
una grazia, un favore	*do a favour*	*učiniti uslugu*
una promessa	*make a promise*	*DATI obećanje*
il bagno	*Ø (bathe)*	*Ø*
la barba	*HAVE a shave*	*Ø*
un accordo, un patto	*Ø (agree)*	*Ø*
le smorfie/ il muso	*Ø (grin)*	*napraviti grimasu*
fuoco	*Ø (fire at, shoot at)*	*Ø*
un prezzo	*make a price, bid*	*PREDLOŽITI cijenu*
affari	*do business*	*OBAVITI posao*

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[3] A curiosity: In this case there is no equivalent collocation in Standard Croatian, while it exists in one of the dialects: *učinit fintu* (ital. *fare finta*).

ital. FARE	eng. DO/MAKE	cro. ČINITI, RADITI…
amicizia	make friends	Ø
ammenda	make amends	Ø
attenzione	PAY attention	OBRATITI pažnju
fare bella/ brutta figura	make a good/ bad impression	OSTAVITI dobar/ loš dojam
conversazione	make conversation	Ø
danno	do harm	učiniti nažao
fatica	HAVE difficulty	Ø
fortuna	make your fortune	Ø
fotografie	TAKE photographs	Ø
i bagagli	Ø (pack one`s bags)	Ø
i compiti	do homework	NAPISATI domaći rad
il buffone	PLAY the fool	praviti budalu od sebe
il letto	make your bed	napraviti krevet
il tifo	Ø (cheer)	Ø
indagini	make inquiry	Ø
l`amore	make love	VODITI ljubav
l`impossibile	do the impossible	napraviti nemoguće
la coda	Ø (queue)	Ø
la differenza	make a difference	činiti razliku
la doccia	HAVE a shower	Ø
la guerra	make war	Ø
la pace	make peace	Ø
colazione	HAVE breakfast	Ø
la spesa	do the shopping	IĆI u kupovinu
leggi	make laws	PISATI, ODREDITI zakone
lo sforzo	make the effort	Ø
miracoli	do/work wonders	činiti, raditi čuda
progressi	make progress	Ø
sesso	HAVE sex	Ø
spazio	make room	napraviti mjesta
un accenno	GIVE a hint	Ø
un annuncio	make an announcement	Ø
brindisi	Ø (toast)	Ø
un corso	TAKE a course	POHAĐATI tečaj
un discorso	make a speech, GIVE a talk	ODRŽATI govor
un elenco	make a list	napraviti popis
un errore	make a mistake	napraviti pogrešku

ital. FARE	eng. DO/MAKE	cro. ČINITI, RADITI…
un tentativo	make an attempt	Ø
una ipotesi	make a hypothesis	Ø
una pausa	TAKE a break	napraviti pauzu
una scelta	make a chioce	Ø
una visita	PAY a visit	Ø
casino	make a scene	napraviti scenu
un inchino	TAKE a bow	Ø
una passeggiata	HAVE/ TAKE a walk	IĆI u šetnju
una promessa	make a promise	Ø

Table 2 shows 24 collocations (type: *dare/give/dati* + noun). Contrary to the collocations consisting of light verbs *fare/do, make/činiti, raditi,* in this case a great resemblance between collocations in English and Croatian can be noted. Namely, in nearly half of the cases collocations from Italian are not translated in English nor Croatian using collocation.

Table 2 *DARE* + noun (comparative review)

ital. DARE	eng. GIVE	cro. DATI
aiuto	Ø (help)	Ø
consiglio	give advice	dati savjet
indicazioni	give directions	dati upute
uno schiaffo, un ceffone	Ø (slap)	dati pljusku
permesso	give permission	dati dozvolu
un bacio	give a kiss	dati poljubac
la colpa	Ø (blame)	Ø
spiegazione	give an explanation	dati, ponuditi objašnjenje
ammonimenti, un consiglio	give an advice	dati savjet
una risposta	give an answer	dati odgovor
l'impressione	give/ MAKE the impression	OSTAVITI dojam
un esempio	give an example	dati primjer
un grido	Ø (shout)	Ø
animo, corraggio	Ø (encourage)	Ø
un castigo/ una punzione	Ø (punish)	Ø
la vita	give life	dati život
inizio	Ø (start)	Ø
fondo	Ø (anchor)	Ø
la parola	give one`s word	dati riječ
speranza	give hope	dati nadu
un pugno	Ø (punch)	Ø
un`occhiata	HAVE a look at, glimpse	Ø
una mano	give a hand (help)	dati ruku (pomoći)
l`avvio	Ø (start)	Ø

Table 3 comparatively shows 23 collocations consisting of light verb *prendere/take/uzeti*. In comparison to collocations used in Italian, the node in Croatian is completely different or translation equivalent is not a collocation, whereas in English there are 9 cases of no concordance, 8 collocations consist of a different light verb, while in only 6 cases the concordance is complete.

Table 3 *PRENDERE* + noun (comparative review)

ital. PRENDERE	eng. TAKE	cro. UZETI
uno spavimento	GET a fright	Ø
sonno	GET sleep	Ø
una decisione	MAKE a decision	Ø
il treno/ il tassi...	a train/ a taxi...	uzeti taksi/ IĆI vlakom
la febbre	CATCH a fever	UHVATITI fibru
un pugno	a punch	DOBITI udarac
le armi	take up arms	Ø
il velo/ l`abito	BECOME a priest	POSTATI svećenik/ č.s.
l`avvio/ le mosse	Ø (get going, start)	Ø
albergo/ alloggio	Ø (find)	Ø
fiato	Ø (relax, get some air)	UHVATITI dah
il mare	GO into sea, GO sailing	Ø
il lutto	Ø (show your pain)	ISKAZIVATI bol
nota	take note	Ø
posizione	take position	ZAUZETI položaj
posto	Ø (take on, assume, replace)	ZAUZETI mjesto, Ø
pratica	HAVE experience	STEĆI iskustvo
atto	Ø (acknowledge,be aware of)	Ø
quota	Ø	Ø
il sole	Ø (sunbathe)	Ø
in giro	make fun of	„uhvatiti u đir"
una cotta	Ø (fall in love with)	Ø
una sbornia	GET drunk	Ø

Table 4 shows contrastive analysis of 22 collocations using the light verb *avere/ have/ imati*. The concordance is higher between Croatian and English than between each of them separately and Italian. Both Croatian and English use the light verb *to be* more often than the light verb *to have*.

Table 4 *AVERE* + noun (comparative review)

ital. AVERE	eng. HAVE	cro. IMATI
lo stomaco	the guts	imati želudac za
effetto	an effect	imati efekta
una speranza	hope	Ø
fame	BE hungry	BITI gladan
sete	BE thirsty	BITI žedan
freddo	BE cold	Ø
caldo	BE hot	Ø
l`impressione	an impression	imati dojam
senso	MAKE sense	ima smisla
sonno	BE sleepy	BITI pospan
paura	BE afraid of	BITI prestrašen
bisogno	Ø (need)	Ø
diritto	a right to	imati pravo
dubbi	doubts	Ø
esperienza	BE experienced	imati iskustva
fede	faith	Ø (imati vjere)
fiducia	confidence	imati povjerenja
fretta	BE in a hurry	BITI u žurbi
ragione	BE right	imati pravo
tatto	BE tactful	imati takta
torto	BE wrong	BITI u krivu
una sensazione	a feeling	imati osjećaj

USE OF COLLOCATIONS WITHIN FOREIGN LANGUAGE VOCABULARY LEARNING STRATEGIES: PREVIOUS EMPIRICAL RESEARCH AND CONTRASTIVE ANALYSIS IMPLICATIONS

On the basis of various studies that we have consulted, that provide an overview of students' foreign language vocabulary learning strategies, it can be noticed that they testify to their different effectiveness and presence (Schmitt, 1997; Nation, 2001). Whether it is about simple strategies such as repetition or about complex strategies such as word-part analysis, they often form an integral part of the activities organized by teacher him/herself in the classroom or are often suggested and provided by textbooks since the goal of teaching vocabulary should be also to promote strategies for its easier understanding and production (Bosiljevac, 1997).

Collocations as a complex lexical-semantic phenomenon have long been the subject of research for theoretical linguistics, but they have also recently occupied attention of applied linguists dealing with their acquisition in the process of learning foreign languages and their appearance in translation and lexicographic studies (Murica, 2010, according to Burić & Lasić, 2012, p. 234).

According to CEFRL, lexical competence can be defined as "knowledge and ability to use the vocabulary of a language" (ZEROJ, 2005, p. 13); it consists of lexical and grammatical elements. Lexical elements include fixed expressions (such as sentential formulae, phrasal idioms, fixed phrases and fixed collocations) and single word forms (which include members of the open word classes: noun, verb, adjective, adverb, though these may include closed lexical sets, e.g. days of the week, months of the year, etc), while the grammatical elements are the closed type words (e.g. pronouns, prepositions, conjunctions etc.) (Jelić, 2007, p. 27).

If we accept the claim that lexical knowledge refers to the knowledge of the following components: "form (spoken and written level), word structure (roots, affixes and inflections), syntactic properties, meaning (referential, affective, pragmatic), sense relations (synonymy, antonymy, hyponymy) and common collocations "(Laufer 1997 in Jelić 2007), we can notice the necessity of knowing the idiomatic use of a certain word. Thus, the knowledge of the basics of lexis of a language is based on the knowledge of collocations as well. One of the six aspects of lexical knowledge (Bogaards, 2000) refers to collocations and proper use of those words commonly used in combinations which seem natural to native speakers, whereas students acquiring a foreign language find them challenging. Hill (1999) suggested the creation of the term "collocation competence" emphasizing the importance of adopting not only the meaning of a word, but also its collocational range. Collocational competence as an important component of vocabulary acquisition has been recognized by many researchers who believe that it contributes to a better coping with all those difficulties that foreign language learners encounter, since the interference with the mother tongue can create obstacles for non-native speakers. Borić (2004, p. 63) supports collocation competence as an ideal to strive for when adopting a lexical system of a foreign language.

One of the tendencies of modern linguistics is that language should be predominantly studied as a mental phenomenon (Miščin, 2012). Analysis shows that linguistic communication has been increasingly using fixed structures, that get memorized as formulaic clips, that language is rich in its collocational layer, but that its limitations should be taken into account and that the formulaic level plays a central role in a child's language acquisition. As applied linguists have realized that vocabulary mastery skills involve much more than the ability to define words (Nation, 1990), a new approach to its adoption has been advocated – the one that introduces analysis of syntagmatic relationships between lexical units within collocations. Such a lexical approach, as Lewis calls it (1993), considers language

as a grammaticalized lexical system and puts collocation at the center of its theoretical perspective.

Yorio (1980, p. 438) and Nattinger together with De Carrico (1992), emphasize, as well, the importance of collocations in the development of student communication competence in foreign language learning. Furthermore, some authors (Marton 1977, Arabic 1979; in Miščin, 2012) believe that the largest percentage of all student errors consists in errors in the use of collocations. Good mastery of the collocational layer in language increases fluency in its usage (Hill 1999; Lewis 1997) and communication competencies in general. As Herbst (1996, p. 389) states, there is no satisfactory language competence without knowledge of collocations. Accordingly, previous empirical research (summarized by Miščin, 2012) has attempted to answer the following questions: should students learn collocations at all (Brown, 1974, Smith, 1983, Bahns, 1993), which collocations should be adopted (Brown, 1974, Cowie, 1992, Bahns 1993; Bahns and Eldaw 1993) and how to teach them practically in the language classroom (Channell 1981, Lewis 1997, Liu 1999, Chen 2002; Hill, 1999).

According to Burić & Lasić (2012), within the communication approach, the lexical approach is being increasingly used in language teaching. Such an approach is based on the premise that grammar and vocabulary in their written and spoken form are closely intertwined, so they should be approached that way also in teaching (cf. Lewis, 1997; Borić, 2004; Boers, 2006; Bergovec, 2007, according to Burić & Lasić (2012, p. 233). Speaking about the modern teaching of Croatian as a foreign language, the authors further emphasize that it is relevant to discover how to use the potential of collocations, and in order to achieve this it is important to select or create appropriate language materials in which lexemes and lexical structures are introduced into the text the way they are found in their natural context.

The lexical approach has always been present in foreign language teaching, from the initial stages of language learning. In foreign language textbooks, each unit usually starts with dialogues consisting of conventional expressions that are introduced into the teaching process indistinctly, i.e. without grammatical analysis and pointing to grammatical changes, and if repeated enough times, students easily adopt them. Such practice relies on the empirically proven fact that conventional expressions are easily mastered, recognized and understood more quickly if remembered as a whole. Communication competence should be developed at the lowest levels of language learning (Burić & Lasić, 2012; Bergovec, 2007) and in order to achieve this, teaching should insist on real-life texts (dialogues), on great exposure to language and on lexical materials that are in the spirit of the target language (Burić & Lasić, 2012, p. 240). When introducing new lexemes it is necessary not to take them out of their context, which means that lexemes should be introduced into the teaching process as part of the situation and context in which they otherwise appear (Lewis, 1993, according to Bergovec, 2007, p. 58).

Multi-member lexical units are not broken into components in the student's mental vocabulary and they are stored as if one word is in question. It is believed that by the division of language into unbroken collocation and sentence structures foreign language learners achieve natural text production (Bergovec, 2007, p. 59).

Collocations have mostly been studied within the context of teaching English as a foreign language (El-Dakhs, 2015; Jaén, 2007; Martyńska, 2004; Koya, 2003; Gitsaki, 1999; Bahns and Eldaw, 1993, according to Ordulj, 2017, p. 198), and by reviewing the results of the research Ordulj (2017) insists on the necessity of explicit addressing of collocations during language teaching. The author cites corpora and authentic materials as sources containing those examples of collocations that are in use in different texts and contexts, which are semantically transparent, and collocations with a limited possibility of combining lexical units.

The acquisition of collocation competence should certainly, as already pointed out, be based on texts and learning within a context (Butzkamm, 2002; Valentić, 2005; Siepmann, 2007, according to Košuta, 2012, p. 270). This process should be articulated through three phases – the discovery of collocation as a whole, the exercises with collocation and the application of collocation. According to Reder (2006b, according to Košuta, 2012, p. 270), such an explicit way of adopting collocations with the application of specific tasks and exercises could result in the development of specific autonomous learning strategies, which is highly desirable in today's concept of lifelong learning. The communicative approach regards student as an active participant, responsible of both the process of learning and acquired knowledge. Consequently, he/she should be motivated to use his/her pre-existing knowledge as the basis of understanding of new information, their memorisation and reuse (Jelić, 2007, p. 64).

This paper proposes a repertoire of tasks that can be used to teach and practice collocations as a part of the teaching of Italian as a second foreign language, emphasizing that, if possible, the use of authentic materials is of priority importance. According to the Croatian national curriculum in the fourth grade of primary school within the context of Italian language lessons (175 hours), in the area of vocabulary, students are expected to understand the figurative meaning of words (e.g. idioms and proverbs) in the most common cases.

1) Students are offered the task of multiple choice; the meaning of collocation and simultaneous comparison with the versions in the mother tongue and the first foreign language are considered:

Choose the correct answer.

(ital. *scegli la risposta giusta*)

 a) dare – to give – dati
 b) fare – to do – činiti, raditi
 c) avere – to have – imati

Solution:
1. __*dare*__ *un bacio/* ___*give*___ *a kiss/* __*dati*__ *poljubac*
2. ___*dare*___ *una risposta/* ___*give*____ *an answer/* ___*dati*__ *odgovor*

2) The completion task aims to show students that one of the foreign languages in the following collocations uses the translated version of the verb *to have* (*avere/to have*) and the other language the version of the verb *to be* (*essere/to be*)

Complete.
(ital. *completa*)

avere		to be	
	fame		*hungry*
	sete		*thirsty*
	freddo		*cold*
	caldo		*hot*
	sonno		*sleepy*

3) In this exercise students are asked to refer to their knowledge of English as their first foreign language and to connect collocations of the same meaning.

Use your knowledge of English and connect the expressions.
(ital. *collega*)
Solution:
make a question ------------fare una domanda
do homework --------------fare i compiti
take a taxi--------------------prendere il tassi
make friends ----------------fare amicizia

CONCLUSION

This paper is focused on the contrastive analysis of a specific type of lexical collocation (light verb + noun). Four light verbs (*fare, dare, prendere, avere*), constituents of collocations in Italian have been compared to their translation equivalents in English and Croatian. The results of the research show greater discrepancies between some of the translation equivalents. Namely, collocations consisting of light verb *fare* have their respective translation equivalents and the concordance is complete, whereas constructions using light verb *prendere* have almost no concordance with collocations in Croatian. While the above-mentioned confirms lexical diversity among the three languages, it also points to possible implementations of such diversity in foreign language teaching. Gaining collocational competence

is of an extreme relevance in order to prevent literal translation caused by negative transfer with one`s mother tounge.

The affinity between L1 and L2 is a double-edged sword: in the initial phase, it facilitates learning and communication in the FL. On the other hand, the similarity causes a lot of negative transfer from the L1 caused by simplification strategies. The awareness of the importance of teaching collocations from early stages of foreign language acquisition motivates teachers to change their approach towards teaching materials and methodological use of them, emphasising the pragmatic aspect of learning. Communication competence can be reached at early stages of learning if pupils are exposed to authentic material and if phraseology and collocations are addressed in a proper manner. Thus, the possible methodic implications for teaching refer to the necessity of conducting further research that will result in compilation of exercises and tasks aimed at gaining and developing collocational competence in foreign languages taught in Croatian schools.

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