

Character traits change upon language switch in Croatian speakers of English

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In this paper we tackle the feeling of a personality change users of more than one language reportedly experience when switching between their languages. We set to investigate if Croatian learners of English as a foreign language (EFL) experience a character trait change when switching between Croatian and English; which of the Big Five Inventory (BFI) personality dimensions change the most and which the least in Croatians using English, as well as whether there is a difference in this character trait change between different EFL proficiency groups. A total of 94 Croatian EFL speakers participated in the study. The sample was divided into a more proficient EFL speaker group (C1 level) and a less proficient EFL speaker group (B2 level). Each participant completed an EFL proficiency test and two sets of BFI questionnaires. One BFI set focused on the character traits the participants reported having while using Croatian; the second BFI set focused on the traits they reported having while using English. The results show that the participants experience a personality change when switching between their two languages and that different levels of language proficiency affect certain personality dimensions in EFL learners. In conclusion, we propose that the more proficient speakers may be bicultural and are experiencing cultural frame switching.

Key words: *Big Five character traits, Croatian L1, English L2.*

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Introduction***

Bilingualism is now commonly defined as »the use of two or more languages (or dialects) in everyday life«.¹ Knowing and using more than one language can have an effect on the individual's linguistic and psychological state. In some cases, bilinguals may experience a change in their personality traits when switching between their languages. This phenomenon is called *cultural frame switching* or *cross-cultural code-switching*. These slight personality trait changes can be expressed in different forms such as altered body language, facial expressions, voice intonation, etc.² Several studies conducted with bilinguals have confirmed that this phenomenon does occur in bicultural bilinguals. It is not clear, though, whether this also holds true for non-native speakers and foreign language users who have not been exposed to the culture of their second language directly.

To try and fill the identified research gap, we set to investigate whether Croatian speakers of English as a foreign language, of different language proficiency level backgrounds, experience changes in their character traits when switching between their two languages.

1. Language effect on emotions and personality

People's behaviour and ways of expressing emotions are associated with their different cultural backgrounds. Language of expression may also affect the way in which an individual expresses their emotions and behaves. This may, or may not be related to the connection between language and culture. In theory, this means that peoples' demeanour and ways of expressing their emotions may change when they switch between their languages. This curious phenomenon was described in the following way: »Language use guides people's perceptual focus toward different aspects of the self and the world, and influences the way they see, think, and act«.³ Languages may have a significant influence on how an individual expresses their emotions due to some emotional concepts

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¹ François GROSJEAN, Bilingualism: A Short Introduction, in: François GROSJEAN, Li PING (ed.), *The Psycholinguistics of Bilingualism*, West Sussex, Blackwell Publishing, 2013, 5-25, 5.

² Cf. Katarzyna OŻAŃSKA-PONIKWIA, What has personality and emotional intelligence to do with 'feeling different' while using a foreign language?, *International Journal of Bilingual Education and Bilingualism*, 15 (2011) 2, 217-234, 217-218.

³ Sylvia Xiaohua CHEN, Verónica BENET-MARTÍNEZ, Jacky C. NG, Does Language Affect Personality Perception? A Functional Approach to Testing the Whorfian Hypothesis, *Journal of Personality*, 82 (2013) 2, 1-14, 10.

which supply language speakers with certain labels of emotions that are used to identify, understand, and label what and how an individual feels during events.⁴ Moreover, emotional expressions, perceptions, and thoughts may be affected by continuous and constant use of languages. Frequent use of foreign languages helps individuals gain confidence in using those languages, it enables them to use the other languages to express emotions as they do in their first language, and lowers their levels of foreign language anxiety.⁵

Interestingly, some bicultural bilinguals may occasionally display changes in their verbal behaviour depending on the language they use at a particular moment.⁶ Some of these slight changes may be demonstrated through different responses to objective and projective questions, they may respond more emotionally in one language than in the other, or their ethnic identity may be stronger in one language.⁷ Sometimes bilinguals change their body language, facial expressions or intonation when switching between languages.⁸ These behavioural changes could be explained in different ways. According to one point of view bilinguals experience these changes due to their deep linguistic and cultural burrowing into another community.⁹ Each language is »linked to different linguistic repertoires, cultural scripts, frames of expectations; autobiographic memories, and levels of proficiency and emotionality« which contribute to feeling different when switching languages.¹⁰ Furthermore, when people learn a new language, they also learn words and verbal patterns which hold cultural values in that language and they make such associations.¹¹ The perception of languages may have an impact on the language users as »a language perceived to be more colourful, rich, poetic and emotional seems to make the pentilinguals feel more colourful, rich, poetic and emotional«.¹²

It is important to mention that personality traits may also affect the process of language acquisition and production, and cultural adaptation. Positive task orientation, ego-involvement, need for achievement, high level of aspiration, goal orientation, and perseverance may be crucial for successful language ac-

⁴ Cf. Ines MARTINOVIC, Jeanette ALTARRIBA, Bilingualism and Emotion: Implications for Mental Health, in: Tej BHATIA, William RITCHIE (ed.), *The Handbook of Bilingualism and Multilingualism*, West Sussex, Blackwell Publishing, 2013, 292-320, 294.

⁵ Cf. Jean-Marc DEWAELE, Multilingualism and Emotions, in: Carol A. CHAPELLE (ed.), *The Encyclopedia of Applied Linguistics*, Hoboken, Blackwell Publishing, 2013, 1-7, 3-4.

⁶ Cf. Aneta PAVLENKO, Bilingual Selves, in: Aneta PAVLENKO (ed.), *Bilingual Minds*, Clevedon, Multilingual Matters, 2006, 1-33, 27.

⁷ Cf. John EDWARDS, Bilingualism and Multilingualism: Some Central Concepts, in: Tej BHATIA, William RITCHIE (ed.), *The Handbook of Bilingualism and Multilingualism*, West Sussex, Blackwell Publishing, 2013, 5-25, 21.

⁸ Cf. Ożańska-Ponikwia, *What has personality...*, 217-218.

⁹ Cf. Edwards, *Bilingualism and Multilingualism...*, 21.

¹⁰ Cf. Pavlenko, *Bilingual Selves...*, 27.

¹¹ *Ibid*, 27.

¹² Cf. Jean-Marc DEWAELE, Seiji NAKANO, Multilinguals' perceptions of feeling different when switching languages, *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development*, (2012) 1-14, 11.

quisition.¹³ Openness, personality strength, and positivity have an impact on cross-cultural adaptation. Those who lack these character traits may have difficulties with transforming interculturally.¹⁴

2. Biculturalism and cultural frame switching

Some bilinguals who are affected by two mixing cultures due to their living environment may experience *biculturalism*. Biculturalism is defined as »the synthesis of cultural norms from two groups into one behavioural repertoire, or the ability to switch between cultural schemas, norms, and behaviours in response to cultural cues«. ¹⁵ Biculturalism influences bilinguals on their personal level, cognition, language knowledge, and language processing.¹⁶

Bicultural bilinguals who depict changes in their behaviour and attitudes when switching languages may experience cultural frame switching or cross-cultural code-switching, i.e. purposefully modify their behaviour to accommodate to the appropriate cultural norms.¹⁷ This switch occurs as bicultural bilinguals have separate distinct cognitive frameworks for each language and culture which may differ in their values, beliefs, and behaviour, and even in worldviews and identities.¹⁸ In order for a bicultural bilingual to perform a switch correctly they need to have the knowledge of the appropriate norms and behaviours in both cultures. In case the individual does the switch incorrectly they may face embarrassment and performance anxiety.

3. Previous research

To investigate and account for cultural frame switching in bilinguals, researchers have resorted to the application of the Big Five Inventory (BFI) personality test. The personality dimensions measured by the BFI are extraversion vs. introversion, agreeableness vs. antagonism, conscientiousness vs. lack

¹³ Cf. Hans Heinrich STERN, *Fundamental Concepts of Language Teaching*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1991, 380.

¹⁴ Cf. Young Yun KIM, *Becoming Intercultural*, Thousand Oaks, Sage Publications Inc., 2001, 84-104, 84-85.

¹⁵ Angela-MinhTu D. NGUYEN, Verónica BENET-MARTÍNEZ, Biculturalism Unpacked: Components, Measurement, Individual Differences, and Outcomes, *Social and Personality Psychology Compass*, 1 (2007) 1, 101-114, 102.

¹⁶ Cf. Grosjean, *Bilingualism...*, 21-22.

¹⁷ Cf. Andrew MOLINSKY, Cross-Cultural Code-Switching: The Psychological Challenges of Adapting Behaviour in Foreign Cultural Interactions, *Academy of Management Review*, 32 (2007) 2, 622-640, 623.

¹⁸ Cf. David LUNA, Torsten RINGBERG, Laura A. PERACCHIO, One Individual, Two Identities: Frame Switching among Biculturals, *Journal of Consumer Research*, 35 (2008) 279-293, 279.

of direction, neuroticism vs. emotional stability, and openness vs. closedness to experience.¹⁹ To show a change in character traits in bilingual speakers, Ramírez-Esparza et. al. and Roselli et. al. conducted studies with Spanish-English bilinguals.²⁰ They both used the Big Five Inventory (BFI) questionnaire to capture possible changes in the participants' behaviours when switching between languages. The results of the two studies were similar as the participants scored higher on Extraversion, Agreeableness, and Conscientiousness in English than in Spanish, and also higher on Neuroticism in Spanish than in English. The only difference between the two studies was that in Ramírez-Esparza's study the score for Openness was higher in Spanish than in English, whereas in Roselli's study it was higher in English.²¹

Chen and Bond conducted a study among Chinese-English bilinguals.²² Their BFI results showed that Chinese-English bilinguals perceived themselves higher on the Extraversion, Agreeableness and Openness to Experience dimensions of personality when using English. On the other hand, they reported self-perceived higher Neuroticism and Conscientiousness dimensions of personality when using Chinese. These changes were also depicted when the participants engaged in conversations with native speakers. They were more extraverted, open to experiences, assertive, helpful, and higher on application and intellect when interacting with Caucasian interviewers. They also showed similar behavioural patterns when conversing in English with Hong Kong Chinese interviewers. However, they seemed more reserved and restrained when communicating in English with Hong Kong interviewers than with Caucasians interviewers.²³

Veltkamp et. al. conducted a similar study with late German-Spanish bilinguals.²⁴ Their study confirmed that late bilinguals can also experience cultural frame switching as the BFI results showed some behavioural changes when switching languages. The participants scored higher on Extraversion and Neu-

¹⁹ Cf. Oliver Peter JOHN, Sanjay SRIVASTAVA, The Big-Five trait taxonomy: History, measurement, and theoretical perspectives, in: Lawrence A. PERVIN, Oliver Peter JOHN (ed.), *Handbook of personality: Theory and research*, New York, Guilford Press, 1999, 102-138.

²⁰ Cf. Nairán RAMÍREZ-ESPARZA et al., Do bilinguals have two personalities? A special case of cultural frame switching, *Journal of Research in Personality*, 40 (2006) 99-120; Mónica ROSELLI, Idaly VÉLEZ-URIBE, Alfreda ARDILA, Personality Traits in Bilinguals, in: Alfredo ARDILA et al. (ed.), *The Bilingual Mind and Brain Book Series. Psychology of Bilingualism: The Cognitive and Emotional World of Bilinguals*, Cham, Springer International Publishing, 2017, 259-268.

²¹ Cf. Ramírez-Esparza et al., *Do bilinguals have two personalities?...?*, 99; Roselli et al., *Personality Traits in Bilinguals...*, 259.

²² Cf. Sylvia Xiaohua CHEN, Michael Harris BOND, Two Languages, Two Personalities? Examining Language Effects on the Expression of Personality in a Bilingual Context, *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 36 (2010) 11, 1514-1528.

²³ Cf. *Ibid.*, 1515.

²⁴ Cf. Gladys Marina VELTKAMP et al., Is personality modulated by language, *International Journal of Bilingualism*, 17 (2013) 4, 496-504.

roticism in Spanish and scored higher on Agreeableness in German. There were no significant differences in the scores for Conscientiousness and Openness.²⁵

In Croatian context a study on personality change upon language switch was carried out among Croatian university students.²⁶ One participant group were students majoring in English, while the other group were students of Economics and Public Administration. The authors aimed to investigate whether bilingual or multilingual Croatian speakers of English as a foreign language experienced a personality change when they communicated in their two languages.²⁷ They asked their participants the following question: »Do you think that language and personality are connected, in the sense that an individual's personality, or parts of it, change when using different languages?«²⁸ The majority of the participants answered »No« (48%). 24% of the participants answered »Yes« and »There is only one personality, but language learning changes it«, and only 4% of them answered »It depends«. However, when analysing the participant groups separately 31% of group 1 answered »Yes«, whereas in group 2 only 17% of the participants answered affirmatively.

These studies seem to suggest that there may be a character trait change bilinguals experience when switching between their languages. However, no study has so far compared participants of different second language proficiency levels, and especially involving speakers of English as a lingua franca that is today a prevalent variety among speakers. This was the research gap we aimed to tackle in this paper.

4. Aim and research questions

We set to investigate if Croatian speakers of English reported having different character traits depending on their language usage. More specifically, we inquired if Croatian EFL learners experienced a character trait change when using English as opposed to Croatian; which of the BFI personality dimensions changed the most and which the least in Croatians using English; and whether there was a difference in this character trait change between different EFL proficiency groups.

²⁵ Cf. *Ibid*, 496.

²⁶ Cf. Marta MEDVED KRAJNOVIĆ, Ivana JURAGA, Perception of Influence of Foreign Language Learning on Personality, *Studia Romanica et Anglica Zagabiensia*, 53 (2008) 349-372, 358.

²⁷ *Ibid*, 358.

²⁸ *Ibid*, 360.

5. Methodology

5.1. Participants

94 L1 speakers of Croatian participated in the study. This sample was comprised of 50 students majoring in an English study programme (more proficient EFL speakers – C1; henceforth future English teachers) and 44 students enrolled in the study programme specializing in preschool education, and not focusing on English in their studies, but learning it as a higher education course (less proficient EFL speakers – B2; henceforth future preschool teachers or speakers of English as a lingua franca).

5.2. Instruments and procedure

The Big Five Inventory test (BFI) questionnaire and an English language proficiency test were used for the purposes of the study. The BFI was presented in Croatian, while the language proficiency test was administered in English.

In this study, the participants were given two sets of the same BFI test. However, in one BFI set they were required to answer the statements while reflecting on their acts, thoughts, and feelings when speaking in Croatian, whereas in the other one they were required to report on their acts, thoughts, and feelings when speaking in English.

To avoid generalizations about the participants' levels of language proficiency in English they were given an English language proficiency test. The questions were taken from the British Council English Score, a mobile application created by the British Council used for testing language proficiency. The test consisted of 11 multiple-choice questions. The first 10 questions assessed the participants' knowledge of grammar, vocabulary, and syntax. The last question was a reading comprehension task with a short text and 3 questions related to the given text. The English language proficiency test was used to confirm the two groups' proficiency levels.

6. Results and discussion

The results of the BFI test confirm that future English language teachers do experience a change in their character traits when using English as opposed to Croatian, i.e. when they switch between languages. They scored higher on Extraversion, Agreeableness, Conscientiousness, and Openness in English, and scored higher on Neuroticism in Croatian. The greatest mean difference can be

depicted for Neuroticism ($M=2.6$) and the smallest mean difference for Openness ($M=-0.2$). The results are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Descriptive analysis of Croatian and English BFI scores of future English teachers

	N	M	Mdn	SD	SE
Extraversion CRO USENG	50	28.0	29.0	6.42	0.91
Extraversion ENG USENG	50	29.7	30.0	5.80	0.82
Agreeableness CRO USENG	50	35.1	35.0	4.46	0.63
Agreeableness ENG USENG	50	36.4	37.0	4.46	0.63
Conscientiousness CRO USENG	50	31.0	31.0	7.24	1.02
Conscientiousness ENG USENG	50	32.8	34.0	5.86	0.83
Neuroticism CRO USENG	50	25.2	24.5	5.75	0.81
Neuroticism ENG USENG	50	22.6	21.5	6.05	0.86
Openness CRO USENG	50	37.4	37.5	6.52	0.92
Openness ENG USENG	50	37.6	38.0	6.74	0.95

A Paired Samples T-Test was used to compare the results between the Croatian and English BFI results (Tables 2 and 3). When referring to their experience when using English, future English teachers scored significantly higher on Extraversion ($t(49) = -2.834$, $p = 0.007$), Agreeableness ($t(49) = -3.052$, $p = 0.004$), and Conscientiousness ($t(49) = -3.126$, $p = 0.003$), and lower on Neuroticism ($t(49) = 4.596$, $p < 0.001$). No significant difference between the languages ($t(49) = -0.340$, $p = 0.735$) was found when comparing the scores for Openness.

Table 2. Paired Samples T-Test of Croatian and English BFI scores of future English teachers

			statistic	df	p	MD	SED
Extraversion CRO USENG	Extraversion ENG USENG	Students' t	-2.834	49.0	0.007	-1.78	0.63
Agreeableness CRO USENG	Agreeableness ENG USENG	Students' t	-3.052	49.0	0.004	-1.30	0.43
Conscientiousness CRO USENG	Conscientiousness ENG USENG	Students' t	-3.126	49.0	0.003	-1.78	0.57
Neuroticism CRO USENG	Neuroticism ENG USENG	Students' t	4.596	49.0	<.001	2.68	0.58
Openness CRO USENG	Openness ENG USENG	Students' t	-0.340	49.0	0.735	-0.18	0.53

Interestingly, this is in line with Ramírez-Esparza et. al. and Roselli et. al.'s results where they found increased self-reported neuroticism in their Spanish-English bilingual participants when they reported on their character traits as

they used their L1 Spanish.²⁹ One may suggest various interpretations of such results. First, when we learn a foreign language, we learn its standard variety that may be associated with the polite and more face-saving behaviour than the behaviour that we experience as speakers of our primary dialect, which would be the L1 language we probably have in mind when asked to self-report on our character traits while speaking it.³⁰ This could account for the higher score on Extraversion, Agreeableness, and Conscientiousness in English. One possibility is also that the speakers' language in which they experience their everyday life, including the obligations and problems they need to deal with is Croatian, rather than English. This is why they may experience their personality as more neurotic when using their first language.

Future preschool teachers also report a change in their character traits when switching between their languages; however, their scores are different from the future English teachers' scores. They scored lower on Extraversion, Conscientiousness, Neuroticism, and Openness, and higher on Agreeableness in English as opposed to their reported experience when using Croatian. The greatest mean difference can be depicted for Openness ($M=3.5$) and the smallest mean difference for Neuroticism ($M=0.1$).

Table 3. Descriptive analysis of Croatian and English BFI scores of future preschool teachers

	N	M	Mdn	SD	SE
Extraversion CRO RPOO	44	27.1	28.0	5.83	0.88
Extraversion ENG RPOO	44	24.3	23.5	7.29	1.00
Agreeableness CRO RPOO	44	35.0	35.0	4.18	0.63
Agreeableness ENG RPOO	44	36.0	36.0	3.43	0.52
Conscientiousness CRO RPOO	44	32.3	32.5	3.77	0.57
Conscientiousness ENG RPOO	44	30.5	31.0	5.39	0.81
Neuroticism CRO RPOO	44	25.3	24.5	4.97	0.75
Neuroticism ENG RPOO	44	25.1	25.0	5.84	0.88
Openness CRO RPOO	44	36.7	37.0	5.62	0.85
Openness ENG RPOO	44	33.2	34.0	7.43	1.12

The Paired Samples T-Test (Table 4) shows that future preschool teachers score lower on Extraversion ($t(43) = 3.208, p = 0.003$), Conscientiousness ($t(43) = 2.506, p = 0.016$), and Openness ($t(43) = 3.841, p < 0.001$). The score for Agreeableness and Neuroticism shows no significant difference between the languages ($t(43) = -1.990, p = 0.053$; $t(43) = 0.230, p = 0.819$).

²⁹ Cf. Ramírez-Esparza et al., *Do bilinguals have two personalities?...*, 99; Roselli et al., *Personality Traits in Bilinguals...*, 259.

³⁰ Many thanks to Martina Puškarić for her insightful comment on the matter.

Table 4. Paired Samples T-Test of Croatian and English BFI scores of future English teachers

			statistic	df	p	MD	SED
Extraversion CRO RPOO	Extraversion ENG RPOO	Students' t	3.208	43.0	0.003	2.82	0.88
Agreeableness CRO RPOO	Agreeableness ENG RPOO	Students' t	-1.990	43.0	0.053	-1.00	0.50
Conscientiousness CRO RPOO	Conscientiousness ENG RPOO	Students' t	2.506	43.0	0.016	1.70	0.72
Neuroticism CRO RPOO	Neuroticism ENG RPOO	Students' t	0.230	43.0	0.819	0.14	0.59
Openness CRO RPOO	Openness ENG RPOO	Students' t	3.841	43.0	<.001	3.48	0.91

To find out whether there was a difference in the English BFI results between the two participant groups as we set to investigate in our third research question, an Independent Samples T-Test was conducted to compare the between-group results on their self-reported character traits when using English. The results show that future English teachers scored significantly higher on Extraversion ($M = 29.7$) than future preschool teachers ($M = 24.3$), $t(92) = 4.028$, $p < 0.001$. They also scored somewhat higher on Openness ($M = 37.6$) than preschool teacher students ($M = 33.2$), $t(92) = 2.977$, $p = 0.004$. On the other hand, future preschool teachers scored slightly higher on Neuroticism in English ($M = 25.1$) than future English teachers ($M = 22.6$), $t(92) = 2.076$, $p = 0.041$. The results for Agreeableness and Conscientiousness show no significant score differences ($M = 36.4$, $M = 36.0$, $t(92) = 0.489$, $p = 0.626$; $M = 32.8$, $M = 30.5$, $t(92) = 1.917$, $p = 0.058$). The results are presented in Table 5.

Table 5. Independent samples T-test analysis of BFI scores of the English part of the questionnaire

		statistic	df	P	MD	SED
Extraversion ENG	Students' t	4.028	92.0	<0.001	5.45	1.35
Agreeableness ENG	Students' t	0.489	92.0	0.626	0.41	0.83
Conscientiousness ENG	Students' t	1.917	92.0	0.058	2.24	1.17
Neuroticism ENG	Students' t	-2.076	92.0	0.041	-2.55	1.23
Openness ENG	Students' t	2.977	92.0	0.004	4.35	1.46

One of the possible motives that may account for the difference between the BFI test scores is the level of language proficiency. Future English teachers hold a higher level of language proficiency than future preschool teachers as it was confirmed by the results of the language proficiency test (test score difference: $12.10 > 9.34$). Language proficiency is positively related to indicators

of psychological adjustment.³¹ It is very natural that a person will feel more at ease and thus more open while communicating in a language they are more proficient at. At the same time, they may be more nervous and less open when communicating in a language they do not know well.

Research on character trait change is still scarce in the case of speakers who use their L2 in the country in which that language is not used as the language of the environment. Yet, speakers of English as a lingua franca (reflected in our less proficient speaker group) are becoming globally prevalent and we believe that they present a new step in the modern history of the English language. Thus, we hope that we have opened a discussion on the character trait and cultural frame-switching in the speakers who use English as a lingua franca, as this is the category our participating future preschool teachers would fall into.

Moreover, when people learn a new language, they also learn to associate words and verbal patterns with concepts which hold cultural values in that language.³² So, a possible reason for more positive traits experienced in English as they were self-reported by the more proficient group of future English teachers is their everyday language learning environment and lesson content. Future English teachers learned English with a lot of exposure to the English-speaking countries' cultural content and context³³ such as the Anglo-Saxon history, policy, economy, religion, education system, ideologies, art, sciences, technologies, attitudes, beliefs, values, etc.³⁴ Due to such academic as well as experiential input that induces immersion into the L2 culture to a certain extent, they may well be on their way to become bicultural. In fact, a person may become bicultural if they are well-acquainted with the two languages and cultures.³⁵ The proficient English languages speakers who participated in this study fit into this profile. This may help them perform a cultural switch more easily which in turn may affect their personality traits. In conclusion, language proficiency and cultural knowledge of the target language enable language users to become bicultural and experience cultural frame switching affecting, so to say, their personality change.

Conclusion

The results of this study suggest that Croatian EFL students of different second language proficiency level backgrounds experience different changes in their character traits upon language switch.

³¹ Kim, *Becoming Intercultural...*, 102.

³² Cf. Aneta PAVLENKO, Bilingualism and emotions, *Multilingua*, 21 (2002) 45-78, 72.

³³ Luna, Ringberg, Peracchio, *One Individual...*, 280.

³⁴ Kim, *Becoming Intercultural...*, 104.

³⁵ Cf. François GROSJEAN, *Studying Bilinguals*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2008, 219.

Future English teachers scored higher on Extraversion, Agreeableness, and Conscientiousness when self-reporting on their personality while using English as opposed to Croatian, and scored higher on Neuroticism in Croatian than in English. As their results share similarities with the previous conducted studies and their language proficiency and cultural knowledge of the target language is rich, we suggest that these proficient speakers of a second language may be bicultural and are thus experiencing cultural frame switching.

On the other hand, preschool teacher students scored lower on Extraversion, Conscientiousness, and Openness in English than in Croatian. It is very possible, if not certain, that they experience uncomfortable feelings akin to foreign language learning anxiety that may reflect as lower extraversion and openness. One must wonder where the threshold on the second language proficiency continuum may be, such that would present the cut-off point that yields the perceived character trait change.

When comparing the BFI results between the two participant groups, future English teachers scored higher on Extraversion and Openness than future preschool teachers whereas future preschool teachers scored higher on Neuroticism than future English teachers. These differences may be attributed to the different levels of language proficiency between participant groups, their classroom environment, and lesson content as these are important factors which contribute to transforming EFL bilinguals into EFL biculturals, thus possibly affecting their character change.

An intriguing line of future research may focus on the difference in the character traits speakers of two languages experience depending on the second language culture. One may envisage that different cultures being characterized by certain attributes could yield similar self-perceived character traits in the speakers.

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Promjene u osobinama ličnosti pri promjeni jezika u hrvatskih govornika engleskog jezika

Sažetak

U ovom se radu bavimo osjećajem mijenjanja osobnosti kod govornika više od jednog jezika koji oni navodno doživljavaju kada se služe različitim jezicima. Naravno, pojava i opseg ove promjene ovise o razini znanja drugog jezika. Navedeni smo fenomen istražili pomoću testa Velikih pet karakternih osobina (*Big Five Inventory* – BFI) da bismo prikazali promjenu karakternih osobina pri uporabi jednog ili drugog jezika kod dvojezičnih govornika. Karakterne osobine koje mjeri BFI su ekstravertiranost nasuprot introvertnosti, ugodnost nasuprot antagonizmu, savjesnost nasuprot nedostatku smjera, neuroticizam nasuprot emocionalnoj stabilnosti i otvorenost prema iskustvu nasuprot zatvorenosti prema iskustvu. Odlučili smo istražiti zamjećuju li hrvatski govornici engleskog jezika razliku u svojim karakternim osobinama ovisno o upotrebi jezika. Konkretnije, istražili smo doživljavaju li izvorni govornici hrvatskoga jezika koji uče engleski kao strani jezik promjenu u svojim karakternim osobinama kada koriste engleski jezik umjesto hrvatskog; koje se velikih pet karakternih osobina najviše, a koje najmanje mijenjaju kod izvornih govornika hrvatskoga jezika kada koriste engleski jezik; i postoji li razlika u ovoj promjeni karakternih osobina između skupina s različitim razinama znanja engleskog jezika. U istraživanju su sudjelovala ukupno 94 hrvatska govornika engleskoga jezika. Uzorak se sastojao od 50 studenata koji pohađaju studijski program engleskog jezika (iskusniji govornici engleskog jezika – C1) i 44 studenta koji tijekom studija nisu usredotočeni na engleski jezik, već ga uče kao jedan od kolegija (manje vješti govornici engleskog jezika – B2). Svaki je sudionik ispunio engleski test znanja i dva seta BFI upitnika. Jedan BFI upitnik fokusirao se na karakterne osobine za koje su sudionici izjavili da ih imaju dok koriste hrvatski jezik; drugi BFI upitnik usredotočio se na osobine koje su izjavili da imaju dok koriste engleski jezik. Rezultati pokazuju da vještija skupina engleskih govornika doživljava promjenu osobnosti koja je najviše izražena u smanjenim rezultatima neuroticizma pri korištenju engleskog jezika. Skupina s nižim znanjem engleskog jezika postigla je niže rezultate u ekstravertnosti, savjesnosti i otvorenosti u engleskom nego u hrvatskom jeziku. Zaključujemo da različite razine znanja jezika utječu na neke karakterne osobine kod govornika engleskog jezika kao stranog jezika. Štoviše, smatramo da su vještiji govornici vjerojatno i bikulturalni.

Gljučne riječi: engleski kao drugi jezik, hrvatski kao prvi jezik, Velikih pet karakternih osobina.

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