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PERSONALITY AND L2 USE AMONG YOUNG BILINGUALS

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Abstract

Studies on the connection between language and personality have shown that many bilinguals and multilinguals feel different when using different languages (Dewaele & Nakano, 2012). This area of study has not received the attention it deserves if we look at the amount of research done, yet the findings that are available indicate that something does change in bilinguals' behavior and feelings when they use their respective languages. This study is an attempt to give more insight into this matter, using the responses of 50 young bilinguals.

The central problem of this study was to investigate whether young bilinguals feel a change in personality when using a foreign language. This study also further explores the issue of communicating emotions and whether young bilinguals find it easier to express certain emotions in a foreign language and for what reason. Research shows that although what students describe they feel when speaking a foreign language cannot exactly be classified as a change in personality, they do feel different and many students find it easier to express strong emotions in a foreign language rather than their mother tongue.

Key words: *personality, bilingualism, foreign language learning, communicating emotions*

1. Introduction

This chapter begins with different definitions of personality found in literature from various areas of study. After that I will go on to explaining the difference between second language acquisition and foreign language learning. A part of this chapter will be devoted to the connection of personality and language, as well as communication of emotions. I will also mention and describe the taxonomies that are important in current research of this field of study. This chapter will be concluded with reviews of the research done on the connection of language and personality.

1.1. Defining personality

Before considering personality from an educational or linguistic perspective, it would be good to start with the definition of the term in general. The Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary defines personality as (1) "the various aspects of a person's character that combine to make them different from other people" and (2) "the qualities of a person's character that make them interesting and attractive" (p. 943).However, the dictionary defines both character and identity in a very similar way. Character is defined as (1) "all the qualities and features that make a person, group of people, and places different from others" (p. 195/6), while identity is defined as (2) "the characteristics, feelings or beliefs that distinguish people from others" (p. 643). It is obvious that there is no clear boundary set between the definitions of three connected, but yet distinguishable terms, therefore we can conclude that the definitions listed above are too general.

There is a variety of definitions in the literature from the field of psychology; however, as Medved Krajnović and Juraga (2008) note in their article, there is an absence of a clear definition. For instance, Statt (2003) defines personality as the sum of all factors that make a person both individual and human, emphasizing three dimensions, thinking, feeling and

behaving, common features of all human beings, which are then manifested in different patterns and in that way they make each human being unique. Dörnyei (2005) starts his chapter on personality with a similar statement, saying that personality is the most individual characteristic of humans. He also suggests that the term character has with time been replaced by the more neutral term personality, which explains the similarity of definitions in the dictionary that I reviewed earlier. According to Medved Krajnović and Juraga (2008), most authors in the field of psychology merely list and describe personality traits, types and theories. Dörnyei (2005) points out that another issue is that different authors use the term personality in different ways and contexts, which then leads to different understanding of the basic term. For that reason he makes a useful distinction between temperament and mood on one side, and personality on the other, concluding that temperament refers to individual differences that are biological, heritable and relatively stable, which provide a biological basis for the development of personality, while mood is a highly volatile, yet not absolutely random state, which changes in response to life events. Although mood cannot be considered a personality trait, Dörnyei believes it has an important role in the foreign language learning context because mood can be seen as a response to different types of situations we are faced with. Also, mood can either interfere with or help an individual's performance.

1.2. Second language vs. foreign language

The existing research on language and personality, as Medved Krajnović and Juraga (2008) argue, has been carried out in the context of second language acquisition, not in the foreign language learning context. For that reason it is important to keep in mind the difference between second language acquisition and foreign language use, as potentially the two contexts could yield different findings as a result of presence or absence of factors which might affect the change of personality, other than the language itself (Medved Krajnović & Juraga, 2008).

Second language acquisition refers to learning a language in a community which speaks this language and it usually refers to minority groups learning the official language in a country they immigrated to (Medved Krajnović & Juraga, 2008). When considering second language acquisition context, it is important to bear in mind the interdependence of social and linguistic domains (Bongartz & Schneider, 2003). On the other hand, foreign language learning happens in a context where the community that speaks the target language is not present. Foreign language learning usually happens in a formal setting, a classroom. As indicated earlier, it is important to distinguish between these two contexts because in a second language acquisition context, there are more factors which can ultimately affect the change of personality, and it would be difficult to say whether these changes are connected to language or not. Koven (2001, as cited in Dewaele & Nakano, 2012) suggests that using different languages gives the speaker an opportunity to perform different cultural selves. Although this refers to the second language context, the change of personality has also been noticed in foreign language learners (Granger, 2004, as cited in Medved Krajnović & Juraga, 2008).

1.3. Personality and Language

Majority of multilinguals report feeling different when speaking different languages (Dewaele & Nakano, 2012). Observers have reported that the change can be both positive and negative, from individuals who are upset by their self-image as a speaker of the foreign language and refused to continue learning it, to those who see this new personality created by a new language as a source of opportunities (Dewaele & Nakano, 2012). It is understandable that, based on certain factors such as proficiency or frequency of use, speakers can have either a positive or a negative image of themselves as foreign language speakers.

The linguistic relativity hypothesis, proposed by Sapir and Whorf, establishes a connection between personality and language (Wilson, 2005; as cited in Medved Krajnović &

Juraga, 2008). This hypothesis proposes the idea that the language we speak influences our thought, i.e. our view of the world (Lucy, 1997). In other words, the way a speaker organizes his or her thought depends on the structure of their native language (Medved Krajnović & Juraga, 2008). Vygotsky's sociocultural theory also confirms that our thinking depends on the language we speak (Medved Krajnović & Juraga, 2008). Although the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis was never accepted in its entirety, it has nevertheless spiked a lot of controversy in the linguistic world (Lucy, 1997).

Lucy (1997) proposes the idea that the possible influences of language on thought can be classified in three types: semiotic, structural and functional. The first, semiotic level refers to how speaking a language can influence thinking in general. The second one, structural, refers to how speaking one or more languages can influence thought, i.e. "a structural relativity of thought with respect to speakers using a different language" (p. 292). Finally, the third one, functional, is about whether using language in a particular way may influence thinking. This is also called "discursive relativity" (Lucy, 1997) and it refers to, e.g. using or learning a language in a formal setting (classroom) and whether using a language this way affects the speaker's thought.

Although Sapir-Whorf hypothesis refers to the first language, the mother tongue, Wilson (as cited in Medved Krajnović & Juraga, 2008) proposes that this might mean that there are different connections between different languages and personality, in other words, we could say that different languages form different personalities. Others agree that using a second language will eventually affect a learner's view of the world (Kramsch, 2001; Lantolf, 2001, as cited in Medved Krajnović & Juraga, 2008). Besides the effect of language on personality, Dörnyei also suggests that personality affects the participation of learners in different learning tasks, from those performed in a formal context, i.e. the classroom, to those that happen in

communication outside the formal setting. In other words, the connection between personality and language goes both ways.

Another important finding is the one by Wilson, who after further analyzing the data of the Dewaele and Pavlenko's study (2001-2003), concluded that introverts are the ones who feel different when operating in a foreign language (Medved Krajnović & Juraga, 2008). She also found that respondents who started learning English at an early age were more likely to feel different than those who started at a later stage (Dewaele & Nakano, 2012). The extraversion-introversion dimension is one of the most researched personality dimensions in SLA (Dörnyei, 2005). Although it would seem logical that extroverts benefit in all areas of language learning, it seems that both personality types may have an advantage, depending on the type of task they are engaged in (Dörnyei, 2005).

1.4. Communicating emotions

The Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary defines emotion as "a strong feeling such as love, fear or anger; the part of a person's character that consists of feelings". This is a rather general definition, so for the purpose of this study, I will adopt the definition of the term emotion given by the American Psychological Association, where emotion is defined as "a complex pattern of changes, including physiological arousal, feelings, cognitive processes, and behavioral reactions, made in response to a situation perceived to be personally significant". This definition connects everything that the word emotion implies and includes, which is much more than just feelings.

As Markus and Kitayama (1991, as cited in Dewaele, 2008) suggest, different cultures express emotions in different ways. In other words, while it is normal for people in certain cultures to express emotions publicly, in some other this might be avoided. According to this, Markus and Kitayama distinguish between independent and interdependent selves. Emotional

expressions of those with independent selves literally bring out their inner feelings, while for those with interdependent selves expressions do not necessarily have to be related to inner feelings; therefore they avoid expressing them overtly (Markus and Kitayama, 1991). Dewaele (2005) argues that the concept of emotions is at the crossroads of several disciplines (e.g. sociopragmatics, cognitive linguistics, social psychology, etc.) and that there is an overlap between key concepts in these areas, reason being that researchers combine insights from different fields of study. Therefore, when looking into the issue of emotions in the context of a second language, this should be taken into consideration; however, this study will only investigate language preference when expressing certain emotions, so this issue of key concepts will be of more significance for some more detailed future study.

Expressing emotions in a foreign language is challenging, as Dewaele (2008) points out, because a lot is at risk, but also, it is much more demanding than doing the same in a native language. As Dewaele explains, there is a risk that the emotion will not be well expressed or that it will be misunderstood. Being in a situation of expressing strong feelings to someone is stressful enough, no matter if it is love or anger, and doing the same in a foreign language does not make it any easier. Beside the danger of being misunderstood, foreign language users might also find themselves unable to give a complete "conceptual representation of emotion words and scripts" (Dewaele, 2008, p. 1758). Moreover, their conceptual representation of metaphor and other figures of speech might also be incomplete (Dewaele, 2008), and all this might cause communication difficulties for foreign language users. Research in this area has also shown that emotion and emotion-laden words are different than abstract and concrete words in their representation and processing (Dewaele, 2008). In Altarriba and Santiago-Rivera's study (1994), respondents rated them as less concrete but also more easily pictured than abstract words. More about research in this area will be discussed in the review of research.

1.5. Taxonomies and personality models

In order to understand the concept of personality better, let us review the personality models and taxonomies which help experts in this field conduct research in a more precise and detailed way. There are certain models and taxonomies from the field of psychology which can be useful for research in this area, and in this chapter I will mention and describe the ones that are most widely used, known and accepted. I will briefly describe the two taxonomies which partially overlap because one was based on the other. These are Eysenck's three-component model and The 'Big Five' model. I will finish this chapter with a brief description of the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI), the widely used personality type inventory based on Carl Jung's theory.

One of the well known taxonomies of personality traits is Eysenck's three-component model (Eysenck & Eysenck, 1985). The model consists of three personality dimensions which are contrasted. These are extraversion-introversion, neuroticism/emotionality-emotional stability and psychoticism/ tough-mindedness with tender-mindedness (Dörnyei, 2005). The dichotomies used in this model give a good picture of main personality traits.

The 'Big Five' model, proposed by Goldberg, McCrae and Costa, is similar to Eysenck's, as it keeps the first two dimensions, replacing psychoticism with three dimensions: conscientiousness, agreeableness and openness to experience (Dornyei, 2005). This model has been especially popular in the past few years, Dörnyei's explanation for that is that it gives a pretty clear picture about personality traits; moreover, it is comprehensible even to those who are not specialists in the field. The five main components of the model can be summarized under the acronym OCEAN (openness to experience, conscientiousness, extraversion-introversion, agreeableness, neuroticism-emotional stability). Since these dimensions are rather broad, each of them comprises facets which describe them in more detail. They are

usually referred to as primary traits, while the main five dimensions can also be called supertraits (Dörnyei, 2005).

The Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI) is an inventory based on Carl Jung's analytical personality theory, constructed by Myers and Briggs in 1976. Jung's typology starts with the difference between extraversion and introversion. Extroverts are more oriented to the outer world of people, things and activities, while introverts are more prone to their inner world of thoughts, feelings and dreams (Hall & Lindsey, 1983). Although in the contemporary world extroverted people get more credit for their type of personality and what it represents, Jung considered introverts to be way more mature individuals. In the expansion of his personality theory, Jung (1987) talks about four ways of dealing with the world, he also calls them functions of the psyche, and he mentions them in two pairs of opposites: sensing-intuiting and thinking-feeling. The former dichotomy refers to the way people perceive the world and gather information, while the latter represents the way people come to conclusions and make decisions (Dörnyei, 2005).

These three pairs of opposites have served as a basis for the MBTI, but Myers and Briggs also added a fourth dichotomy to Jung's personality theory, and that is judging-perceiving, which refers to how people prefer to deal with the outer world, whether in a planned and organized way, which describes a judging type, or in a spontaneous and flexible way, which is a characteristic of a perceiving type (Dörnyei, 2005). Out of these dichotomies come the sixteen types which, as Ehrman (1996, as cited in Dörnyei, 2005) points out, can be very useful because they outline character types which are real and relatable. As Dörnyei (2005) states, the MBTI is "the most widely employed personality test in the world" (p. 19).

We can notice that all the models have one dimension or component in common – the extraversion-introversion. This dimension has an impact on the connection which is the center

of my research, the connection of personality and second language use; therefore I decided to list these taxonomies and models in this chapter, although I did not use any of them in my actual research. My standpoint on this issue, also based on my own experience, is that perhaps introverted learners will become more open and talkative in a language that is not their first, reason for that being that it helps them detach from the person they are in their first language, makes them feel like a more spontaneous and open person (Mihaljević Djigunović, 2002), and enables them to express themselves better in their second language.

1.6.Review of research

I believe all authors tapping into the subject of personality and second language agree on one thing: this topic is not given the attention it deserves. Furthermore, not enough research has been conducted on the significance of personality in SLA. Even the research that has been conducted on the connection of personality and learning has often been described as giving inconclusive results (Dörnyei, 2005). It is a very interesting, but also very complex matter, bringing together researchers from fields of linguistics and psychology. However, this is also a reason why this matter can be studied in different ways, using different approaches and focusing on different issues regarding the topic.

As mentioned earlier, most of the research conducted on the role of personality in language learning has been done in the context of second language acquisition. However, the research results from this context are necessary and significant for the context of foreign language learning as well, bearing in mind the explained difference between second language acquisition and foreign language learning. Another issue in this area of research, as Dewaele (2005) points out, is that research is usually done with one L2 and researchers automatically imply that their findings could apply to any foreign language; however we can reject that implication if we only consider the fact that, although there are languages which are similar, there are also languages which are very different from each other, e.g. English and Japanese

or Chinese. Therefore, the learning experience varies, and not to mention the difference in learning experience of different learners, who all bring different personalities into the process and hence experience it in different and unique ways.

Early research in this area was focused on the gifted or good language learners, in other words, whether the fact that some learners are more successful in learning a language than others is in any way related to personality traits (Dörnyei, 2005). The belief at that time was that a good language learner has a certain personality profile and possesses certain traits that make him more successful than those who do not possess those traits (Dörnyei, 2005). Teachers were convinced there is a certain set of personality traits a good language learner possesses (Lalonde, Lee and Gardner, 1987, as cited in Dörnyei, 2005), and so did parents (Swain and Burnaby, 1976, as cited in Dörnyei, 2005).

As Dörnyei (2005) explains, the most researched area of the connection between personality and language learning is definitely the extraversion-introversion dimension, the reason for that being that it is a trait relatively easy to measure and found to be in a meaningful relationship with language use (Furnham, 1990, as cited in Dörnyei, 2005). One of the reasons for that might also be the already mentioned fact that this dimension is a component of the main instruments and taxonomies to measure personality traits. Because of the whole environment and context of classroom learning, one might think that only extroverts would benefit from it, however, it is important to note, as Skehan (1989, as cited in Dörnyei, 2005) points out, that both extraversion and introversion may have a positive effect on learning, depending on the type of tasks learners are involved in. It has been proved in earlier studies that extroverts can benefit from tasks which involve speaking (Dörnyei, 2005), acting out, reading or what Skehan (1989) calls talking-to-learn, while introverts will probably benefit more from writing or listening tasks.

There are studies and literature dealing with the relationship between personality and academic achievement (e.g. Chamorro-Premuzic & Furnham, 2003a; Hart, Atkins, Fegley, Robins, Tracy, 2003; Farsides & Woodfield, 2003). In connection to the Big Five model, two of the dimensions have been proved to be in positive association with academic achievement, and these are openness to experience and conscientiousness (Dörnyei, 2005). Research was also conducted on the relationship between certain personality traits and language anxiety (Dewaele & Furnham, 2000, as cited in Robinson, 2002). That is, psychoticism, extraversion and neuroticism have been found to be directly related to the amount of language anxiety of a learner. Dörnyei (2005) points out that certain researchers have found an indirect connection of personality and language learning, through other personality related traits. One of those traits found to be in relation to language learning is willingness to communicate. Willingness to communicate is a personality trait representing "the person's general readiness to enter into discourse" (Robinson, 2002, p.145). In his study, Dörnyei found willingness to communicate to be in significant positive correlation with language variables (Robinson, 2002). However, the correlation was not significant in relation to speech size (number of words), which is understandable because WTC affects whether someone will initiate a conversation, rather than how much they talk.

In a study conducted by Koven (1998, as cited in Dewaele & Nakano, 2012), Portuguese-French bilinguals were asked to tell the same story in their two languages. Koven then analyzed the discursive forms of two female participants and concluded that they told the story in different ways when using the two languages. She reports that one of the participants sounded like an "angry suburbanite" in French, whereas in Portuguese she seemed frustrated, but well-mannered, as if not to draw attention to the fact that she is an immigrant (Koven, 1998).

Medved Krajnović and Juraga (2008) conducted a research among two groups of students, native speakers of Croatian, to find out whether they feel like their personality changes when they communicate in a foreign language. They found that the majority of the students do not feel that their personality changes. However, a large number of students believe that language learning doesn't necessarily change, but rather expand a learner's personality, or that they can express their personality better in a foreign language than their mother tongue (Medved Krajnović & Juraga, 2008). Although the majority of the respondents do not think their personality changes when they speak different languages, some reported that they feel more extroverted and open. The study I conducted will supposedly shed a new light on this same issue among young bilinguals and their feelings when they communicate in a foreign language.

Dewaele and Pavlenko (2001-2003, as cited in Dewaele & Nakano, 2012) conducted a similar research with their Bilingualism and Emotion Questionnaire (BEQ), however their question was more direct: 'Do you feel like a different person sometimes when you use your different languages?'. As a result, they found that the majority of participants do feel like a different person. I found it interesting that most participants who claim they feel like a different person say that the first language for them is "natural" and "real", whereas additional languages are "fake" and "artificial" (Pavlenko, 2006, as cited in Dewaele & Nakano, 2012). That is somewhat in line with results of the study which is the theme of this paper, but that will be described in the empirical part of this paper.

Studenska (2011) conducted a study on pedagogy and art students and one of the aims was to see which personality traits and parenting styles are the best predictors of foreign language self-regulation difficulty experienced by the students. The results showed that conscientiousness and openness to experience were the best predictors and both have a

positive effect on self-regulation, while neuroticism was found to have the opposite effect (Studentska, 2011).

Research has also been conducted on the topic of multilinguals' expression of emotions in different languages, such as anger (Dewaele, 2006), humor (Vaid, 2006) or love (Dewaele, 2008). All these emotions and ways of expressing them in different languages depend on a number of variables, for example which language is considered to be dominant by the speaker, proficiency in the L2 or even the speaker's cultural background (Dewaele, 2008). Some researchers suggest that emotions in the first language are more deeply represented and stored than their equivalents in the second language, which strengthens their semantic representation (e.g. Dewaele, 2006; Altarriba, 2003), and it is due to the difference in experience and frequency of use of first and second language (Dewaele, 2008). Studies have shown that multilinguals do in fact express emotions in different ways when using different languages (Dewaele, 2008).

2. A study on the influence of a foreign language on personality of young bilinguals

2.1. Aim

The central idea of this study was to investigate whether young bilinguals feel any kind of change in their personality or behavior when speaking a foreign language. The main purpose was to establish whether they can express themselves more easily when speaking English, as opposed to their native language, Croatian. Building on that notion, the aim was also to connect their potential change of personality with their positive or negative sentiment towards English as their second language. To design a questionnaire which will cater to the demands of this study, following research questions were put forward:

1. Do young bilinguals like learning English as their foreign language?
2. Do they feel any different when speaking English as opposed to their native language?
3. Do young bilinguals find it easier to express certain emotions in English?
4. Is the bilingual's change in personality related to their liking or disliking of the foreign language?

2.2. Method

2.2.1. Participants

A total of 50 young bilinguals attending a primary school in Hodošan participated in this study. Among the participants were 23 students in grade 5 (ages 10-11) and 27 students in grade 8 (ages 13-14). The term *young bilinguals* is used for the purpose of this study to refer to primary school students. The two groups, and the age difference between them was chosen so that the same questionnaire would be appropriate for both groups, yet there would be an age difference of at least two years between the groups. Although these groups of students are not a representative sample of young bilinguals, but rather a convenience sample, their

experiences are hypothesized to be similar to those of other students their age. Nevertheless, it must be taken into consideration that all the participants go to the same school and have the same English teacher, which might affect their feelings toward English. Moreover, this school is situated in a rural area, so it must be taken into account that a study conducted in an urban setting might yield different results.

Two students were a part of a pilot study and answered the questionnaire separately from their classroom colleagues. The main aim of the pilot study was to test out the questions, to see whether they are age appropriate and clear. It also served to show whether the questions are useful for the intended research. The results of the pilot study did not in any way stand out from the results of the actual study.

2.2.2. Instrument

The questionnaire used in this study was designed to answer research questions enumerated earlier. It consisted of two parts, the first part asking for personal information of participants (grade and gender only) and the second part, consisting of 6 questions. The first question required a yes/no answer only (Do you like learning English), with the second question requiring an explanation why students like or dislike learning English. The rest of the questions all had sub questions within them for students to elaborate on their answers. The third question was "How do you feel when you communicate in English?", and the fourth was "Do you find it easier to express certain emotions (e.g. joy, anger) in English?".

The fifth item was: Imagine you are a part of a play. Do you think you would play a certain character better in English or Croatian?". Finally, the last item was aimed directly at students' perception of change in personality: Would you say that you feel like a different person when speaking a foreign language?". The questionnaire was designed in Croatian, the

participants' native language, in order to ensure that their answers would be as elaborate as possible.

The first item in the questionnaire gives the answer to the first research question, while the second and the last item go under the second research question. Furthermore, the fourth and the fifth item fall under the third research question. The connection of the first and the last item gives an answer to the last research question.

2.2.3. Procedure

2.2.3.1. Pilot study

Prior to the actual study, a pilot study was conducted with one participant from each age group intended to be a part of the actual study (5th- and 8th- graders). The aim of the pilot study was to establish whether the questions were age-appropriate for both age groups. Moreover, the aim was to find out whether the questions are useful for the study and whether they make sense to the participants. The results of the pilot study showed that the questionnaire is age-appropriate for both age groups and the data collected from the two respondents in the pilot study were relevant for the study, so no major changes were made in the questionnaire before the study.

2.2.3.2. Main study

All the participants were given the questionnaire in class, and were given a detailed instruction prior to that. The participants were informed about the purpose of the study at the beginning of the questionnaire and were asked to give detailed and honest responses.

The data were collected in one week in January 2013, at the beginning of the second term. The participants were not given any time restrictions, and all students took no longer than fifteen minutes to fill out the questionnaire.

2.3.Results

2.3.1. Data analysis

The data were analyzed using both quantitative and qualitative methods, due to the nature of the study. Quantitative analysis was applied to those items where students were supposed to either give a yes or no answer or items where they were supposed to decide between the two languages, in other words, where numerical values could be applied. On the other hand, qualitative analysis was applied where students were supposed to give justifications for their answers or describe their feelings when speaking a foreign language. The qualitative analysis will be given in the discussion.

1. Do young bilinguals like learning English as their foreign language?

First, let us look at the answers given by the participants (see Table 1) to the first part of this research question.

TABLE 1 –Results of the first question for the entire sample

Do you like learning English?	Total (N=50)
Yes	40%
No	52%
Sometimes yes, sometimes no	8%

As we can see in Table 1, the majority of students (52%) do not like learning English. On the other hand, 40% of the participants like learning English, and a small portion of the participants (8%) sometimes do and sometimes do not like learning English. The justifications for their answers will be revealed and commented on in the discussion, but now it would be

interesting to look at these results for the two age groups separately. Also, what I found interesting were results by gender (Figure 1), so those results will also be displayed and discussed.

Let us now look at the comparison of answers (see Table 2) to the first question for the two groups of students, 5th graders and 8th graders. When we observe the two groups separately, we can see that among 5th graders, the predominant answer is Yes (52,17%), however among 8th graders the predominant answer is No (59,26%).

TABLE 2 – Comparison of the results of the first question for the two groups

Do you like learning English?	5th Graders (N=23)	8th Graders (N=27)
Yes	52.17%	29.63%
No	43.48%	59.26%
Sometimes yes, sometimes no	4.35%	11.11%

A smaller portion of students could not decide whether they like learning English or not among fifth graders (4.35%) than among eighth graders (11.11%).

Figure 1 shows the differences in the respondents' preference for learning English by gender.

Figure 1 – Respondents' preference for learning English by gender for the entire sample
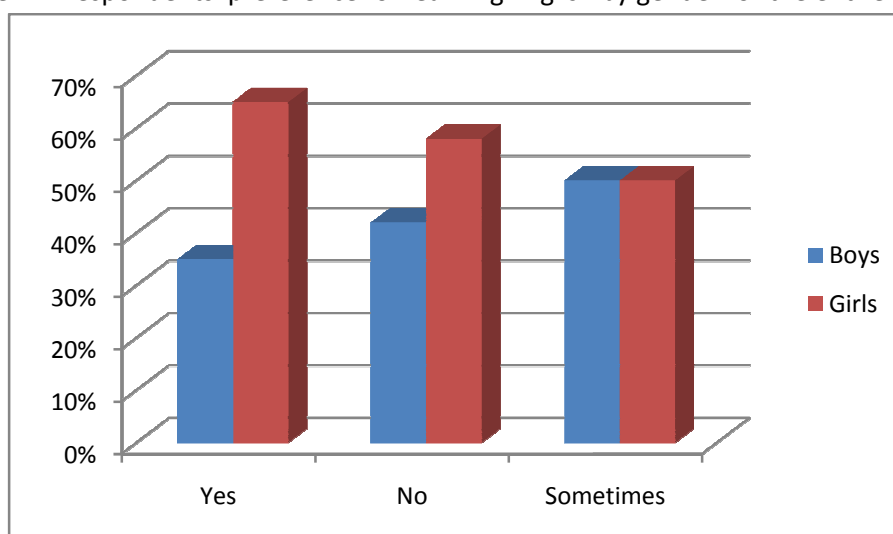
In this figure we must also pay attention to the fact that in the entire sample boys (40%) were outnumbered by girls (60%). Among students who claim that they like learning English, the majority of them were girls (65%, which is 43.33% of all girls in the sample), and the same is the situation among students who said they do not like learning English (57.69%, which is 50% of all girls in the sample). Students in the third category were equal in numbers in terms of gender. The ratio of boys who like learning English is 35%, which is also the ratio when looking at the whole male sample. However, if we were to look at the numbers by gender in the No column, the majority of all boys (55%) in the sample do not like learning English, and for girls this number is lower (50%).

2. *Do they feel any different when speaking English as opposed to their native language?*

Two questions from the questionnaire fall under this particular research question. Since the qualitative data, i.e. students' explanations and justifications for their answers will be discussed and commented on in the discussion; only results for the second out of two questions will be displayed in this section. When asked if they feel like a different person when they speak English (see Table 3), the majority of students (68%) reported that they do not feel different. A minority of students (24%) claim they do feel like a different person when they speak English. A small portion of respondents (4%) report that they sometimes feel like a different person (depending on the context and the type of situations they use English in), and another 4% of the students could not decide whether they feel different or not.

To see whether there is a statistical difference between the two age groups, a t-test was employed. The null-hypothesis was formed: the group of 5th graders is statistically the same as the group of 8th graders. The P-value shows that the probability that the null hypothesis is true is 0.37 (or 37%).Since this value is much greater than 0.05, we can conclude that there is no statistical difference between the two age groups, i.e. that our null hypothesis is true.

TABLE 3 – Change of personality, results for the entire sample

Do you feel like a different person when you speak in a foreign language?	Total (N=50)
Yes	24%
No	68%
Sometimes	4%
I do not know	4%

3. *Do young bilinguals find it easier to express certain emotions in English?*

To get the answer to this research question, there were two separate items in the questionnaire. The first item is direct and more or less the same as the research question, however another item falls under this research question, and that is the one about playing a character in a play. Let us first look at the respondents' answers (see Figure 2) to the first question.

FIGURE 2–Expressing emotions in English by gender
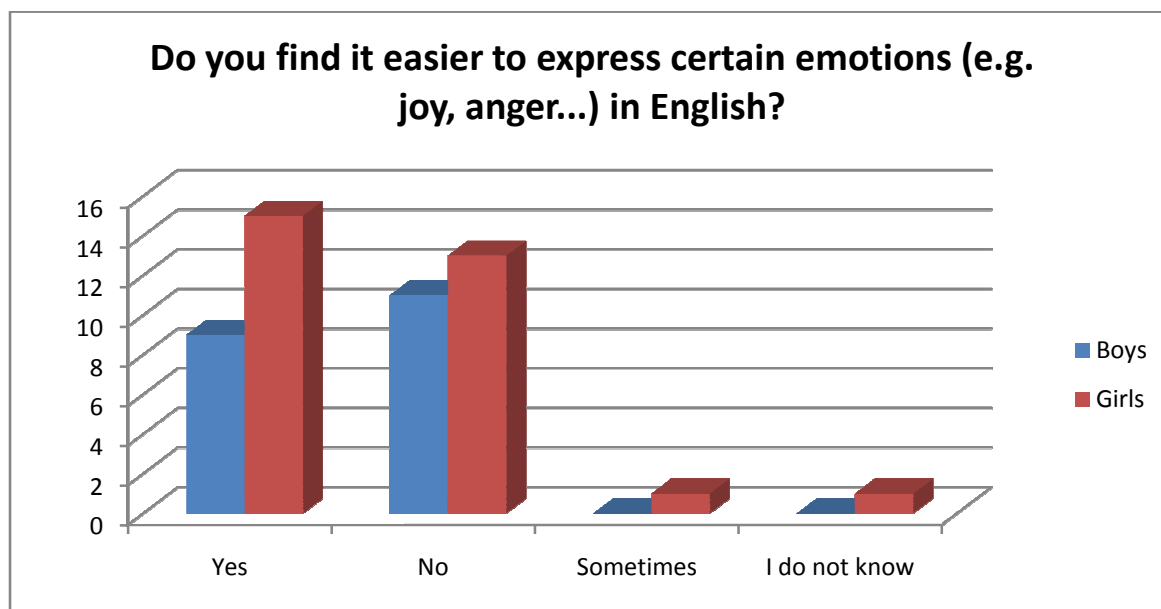
What we can read from Figure 2 is that the number of students who find it easier to express themselves in English and the number of those who do not is actually the same (48%). In both groups of students, the majority were girls (62.5% and 54.17%, respectively). If we

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look at these results separating the age groups (see Table 5), it will reveal a different picture

than the one in results for the entire sample.

Yes is the predominant answer among 5th graders (56.52%), however No is the

predominant answer among 8th graders (51.85%).

TABLE 5 – Comparison of results for the two age groups

Do you find it easier to express certain emotions in English?	5th Graders (N=23)	8th Graders (N=27)
Yes	56.52%	40.74%
No	43.48%	51.85%
Sometimes	0%	3.70%
I don't know	0%	3.70%

Let us now see the results for the second item (Figure 3). The majority of respondents

feel like they would be better at playing a character in their native language (80%). Only a

small portion of respondents from the entire sample stated that they would be better at it in

English. Only one respondent did not decide for any of the languages, but his justification did

not have anything to do with the choice of languages. A small number of respondents stated

that it could be both languages (4%), this will be discussed below.

FIGURE3 – Results for a preferred language for expressing emotions through acting for the entire sample
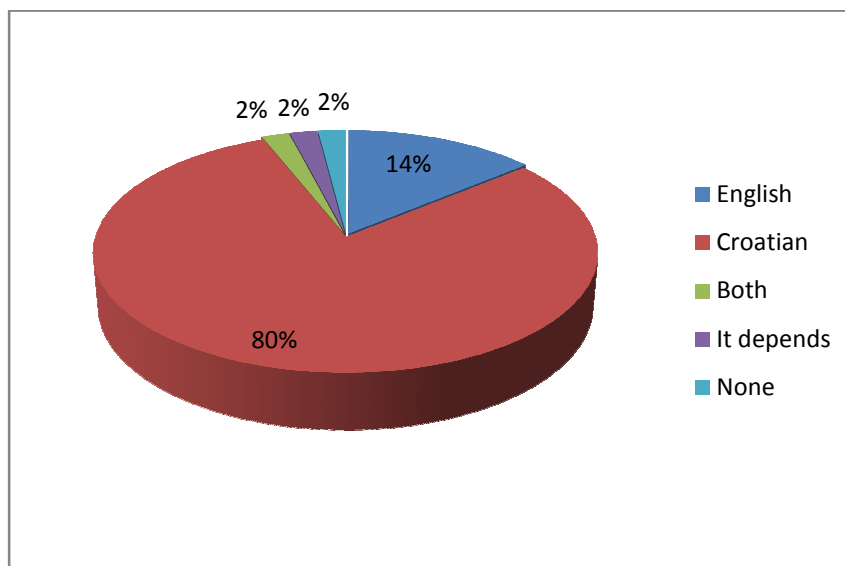
4. *Is the bilingual's change in personality related to their liking or disliking of the foreign language?*

With this research question, the idea was to take the group of students who claim they feel a change in personality when speaking a foreign language (24% of the entire sample) and the group of students who say they sometimes feel like a different person (4%), and see whether this feeling of change in personality is related to their liking or disliking of the foreign language. In other words, the idea was to see whether these are the students who like learning English as a foreign language. We can see the results in Table 6.

The majority of respondents (50%) who feel a change in personality when speaking in a foreign language actually do not like learning English. A small number of respondents (16.67%) claim that they sometimes like learning it. On the other hand, both students who claim they sometimes feel like a different person when speaking English do not like learning English as a foreign language.

TABLE 6 – The relation of bilinguals' perception of change in personality to their preference for learning English

Do you like learning English? Do you feel like a different person when you speak in a foreign language?	Yes	No	Sometimes
Yes (N=12)	33.33%	50%	16.67%
Sometimes (N=2)	0%	100%	0%

2.4. Discussion

One of the main purposes of this study was to see whether young bilinguals feel a change in their personality when they use a foreign language. The aim was also to connect the potential change with their preference of English as a foreign language. Another important part of this study was to analyze why respondents feel the way they feel, i.e. how they justify their answer in the first part of each question.

When asked whether they like learning English or not, the majority of students said No. As surprising as this finding is to me, certain criteria must be taken into consideration. One of the ways to interpret this can be that students find learning English difficult. The reason why I believe this might be so is that a great number of students who do not like learning English, justified their answer by saying either that it is a difficult language, that grammar is complicated or that there is a lot to learn. Moreover, some students said that they find pronounciation to be difficult and that they do not like learning English because a lot of words have multiple meanings. This might also be related to the fact that all respondents have the same English teacher. However, while one of the respondents said that she does not like the teacher, another student said just the opposite: "the teacher explains everything very well and that is why I like learning English". Students who stated that they like learning English

enumerated a lot of different reasons. Certain reasons seemed to be reoccurring throughout the sample, students saying that English is "fun", "interesting" and "useful". Moreover, they explain how English gives them the opportunity to talk to speakers of other languages. Some students stated that they like the language because they love the countries where it is spoken (UK and USA). A couple of respondents justified their positive answer by saying that they love learning foreign languages, new vocabulary in languages they already know and new ways to communicate. Respondents who answered with Sometimes mostly said that they like learning English, but that it is hard sometimes. They further explain it by saying that "there are a lot of texts to read and learn for the oral exam". One respondent also said that it depends on whether the lesson is interesting or difficult (in terms of grammar and new vocabulary).

When the results for this item were analyzed separately by age groups, it was actually found that among the younger group of students (5th grade), the majority of students like learning English. We could say that it is the older group of students that prevailed in this item, with the number of students who do not like learning English twice as big as the number of those who do. The reason for that could be that the older students have started learning certain complicated structures in English, the complexity of which discouraged them and made them feel like this.

The analysis for this item by gender is what should be discussed next, before we move on to the next item. Analysis has shown that girls are in the majority in both the group of students who like learning English and in the group of those who do not. However, when we calculate the ratio of girls and boys separately, but in respect to the total number of girls or boys in the sample, we get a different picture which is expected since, as already mentioned in the results section, in the total sample boys are outnumbered by girls. If we look at the Yes section, the number of girls in this section, in comparison to the total number of girls, is a minority. In other words, less than half of the girls from the entire sample like learning English, while a

solid half of all girls do not like learning English. Furthermore, more than half of the boys do not like learning English. Further research is needed to see whether this situation is common and to possibly explain why this is so.

When asked how they feel when they speak English, quite a few respondents described the feeling as weird. Some further explained that it is because they feel uncertain about what they are saying, or that they think they might be pronouncing the words wrongLY. Some respondents gave the same reason, but stated that this makes them feel funny or sometimes uncomfortable. Others justified that by saying that they do not have the habit of speaking in a foreign language. One of the respondents said that he feels "weird and scared", because he does not know the words that would enable him to express himself fully. Another big portion of students explained that they feel "stupid", because they do not know what they are saying. Some reported feeling anxious for the same reason. On the other hand, some explained that they just do not like learning English. Nevertheless, not all the respondents described their feelings as negative. On the contrary, quite a few respondents reported feeling "very good", "great", "pleasant", "cool" and even "smart". One of the respondents explained: "I feel happy because I can show what I know". A few respondents reported feeling like an Englishman/Englishwoman, or simply a foreigner. One respondent added: "I feel normal because I communicate in English a lot". Although this might be an isolated case in this sample, I have to admit I expected more answers like this one. With the rise of popularity of internet and social networks, children today are exposed to English every day, and even have a chance to make friends with their peers from other parts of the world, which then gives them a chance to use English on everyday basis.

Another respondent had an interesting point: "When I use English in front of my teacher, I feel insecure, but when I use it out of class I feel great". This could explain Dörnyei's claim that personality factors affect how people respond to their learning environment (2005). In the

classroom, students tend to find the atmosphere to be more formal, and even though the teacher will encourage them to speak, they might fear making a mistake and being corrected, therefore they feel insecure. However, once they are not in the formal setting, they might feel liberated and not think about making mistakes. Students should always be encouraged to speak in a foreign language class and making mistakes in class should be welcomed with an explanation that it is the best way to learn. After all, the aim of learning a language is communication, so we can conclude that as long as mistakes do not interfere with meaning, it is not crucial to correct them.

As it was already presented in the results section, the number of respondents who find it easier to express certain emotions in English was the same as of those who prefer Croatian. Let us first deal with the portion of students who prefer Croatian. As Dewaele (2006) states, researchers have found that multilinguals and bilinguals usually prefer their first language for the expression of strong emotions (e.g. anger). It makes sense since our vocabulary is the widest in the language we have known the longest. Dewaele (2006) also supports this argument with findings which prove that emotions and memories from first language feel much more intense to the bilingual than those in other languages, which then strengthens their semantic representation. He also adds: "Emotion words in a less frequently used language lack these connotations and are less deeply encoded" (p.119). Indeed, the respondents who said they do not find it easier to express these emotions in English mostly explained it by saying that Croatian is their mother tongue, and that it is easier for them to express themselves in Croatian. Some reported that they cannot find the right words to use in English. Expressing emotions is harder in a foreign language because, while in our first language words come naturally and we do not have to think about them, in a foreign language we have to think about language processing as well, which can diverge our attention from the content we are trying to communicate (Dewaele, 2008). Moreover, the fact that some students feel like it is

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easier to express these emotions in their first language because "everyone understands it", might also mean that they feel like they can get their point across better in their first language, without being misunderstood. Only one of the respondents reported that she does not really like to express emotions in front of others, which is why she cannot say that it is easier in either of the languages, and one other respondent said that it does not matter what language he uses, but did not explain why. It would be necessary to gather more detailed information about respondents who were a part of this study to better understand their answers.

One of the respondents explained that he does not find it easier to express these emotions in English, however he does in German. This is in line with what Dewaele (2006) explains based on his personal experience: when it comes to expressing emotions, multilinguals may have a preference for one of the languages they speak. We do not know what this respondent's reason for that might be, but Dewaele explained his as not having the "anger repertoire" (p. 119) in Spanish, but he was much more successful at expressing it in English.

There were a couple of respondents' whose answers to this question were sort of ambiguous. In other words, it was difficult to figure out whether their answer was yes or no, because they didn't state it clearly. However, their explanation was the following: "because not everyone knows English", or in the case of another respondent "because my family doesn't understand English". At first it seemed as though they meant that this is why they express themselves better in Croatian, however, the way the question was formed (Do you find it easier to express certain emotions (joy, anger…) in English? Why do you think that is?), their answer might mean that they do express themselves better in English. In other words, they find it easier to express their emotions in a language that other people might not understand. That is an interesting point to consider, since it brings up the following question: why do we express our emotions? The main purpose should of course be to let our environment know how we feel. However, sometimes it might be easier to express our

emotions in a language that not everyone around us understands, a potential reason for that being that perhaps we do not want to hurt other people's feelings. But that is a topic for a different kind of study.

Other respondents who said they express their emotions better in English gave an array of reasons for that, from those who say it is because "there are better expressions and words" or because they cannot remember certain words in Croatian, to those who reported it sounds "better and cooler" or that certain words can be used better than in Croatian. Another interesting point was raised by a respondent who said that it is easier to express emotions in English because that is what we see on television. As an example, she used the expression "I am sorry". Since the majority of those respondents who reported that they feel a change in personality when speaking a foreign language explained their answer by saying that they feel like somebody famous, "an actress" or "a famous football player", the point that the previously mentioned respondent raised might mean that she finds it easier to express the emotion of regret in English because she doesn't feel like herself when she says it. This is in line with Mihaljević Djigunović's (2002) theory that foreign language allows the speaker to feel like a different person, perhaps because the foreign language is more detached and distant than the speaker's native language (Dewaele, 2006).

One respondent explained her change in personality in an interesting way: "My voice changes and I can imagine myself being in another person's body". Despite the fact that she took the part of the question about feeling like a different person literally, she does make a point about her voice changing. This is a common occurrence, at least from what I observe in other people and myself. Some respondents reported that they feel the change in personality because they are not used to speaking English, or because it is "not their language". That is why they probably feel more insecure and afraid, e.g. that they will make a mistake or be misunderstood, therefore they feel like they change to suit this situation they do not feel

comfortable in. We cannot really say this is a change in personality, possibly a change in behavior as a response to a given situation would be a better term to use.

Acting is also a way of expressing emotions, which is why the language students prefer to act in could also tell us something about the connection between language and personality. As mentioned earlier, the vast majority of respondents would find it easier to act in Croatian. Again, their reasons for that were numerous, but most arguments in favor of Croatian were that they know the language better than English. One of the respondents said that she could improvise better in Croatian, if she were to forget her line. Some even said that they would feel less embarrassed when acting in Croatian, or that their stage fright would be much worse if they were doing it in English. The main argument against acting in English was that the respondents can express themselves more easily in Croatian, because it is their mother tongue and they have a richer vocabulary in Croatian. It is interesting to note that respondents who said they would find it easier to act in English mostly justified their answer by saying that they can express themselves better in English. Some stated that it would sound better in English because it is a more expressive language. One respondent even said that he knows English better than Croatian. All these are good arguments; still we have to keep in mind that a great majority of respondents chose Croatian over English which was expected, considering their age.

The finding that most respondents do not feel a change in personality when speaking a foreign language is in line with the findings of previous research done on the same subject, but with a different age group (e.g. Dewaele & Pavlenko, 2001-2003; Medved Krajnović & Juraga, 2008). It is more difficult to get answers which would explain why this is so from young bilinguals, than it is to obtain these same answers from adults. The reason for that is obvious, primary school children do not exactly understand all the processes that happen while they are learning or using a foreign language, while it is easier for adults to make them

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conscious. Moreover, young bilinguals do not exactly understand what a change in personality is, or what feeling like a different person means. The proof for that is one respondent's answer to this particular question, who said that he doesn't feel like a different person because he does not know how "another person feels". Even the respondents who reported that they feel different when speaking English, justified their answers in a way that does not imply the change in personality that this study was aiming at (e.g. "because nobody understands me").

2.5. Conclusion

The main aim of this study was to find out whether young bilinguals feel any kind of change in their personality or behavior when using a foreign language. The participants were 50 primary school students from one school in the north-west of Croatia, with students being divided into two age groups. Although further research is required to gain more insight into this interesting and complex topic, the findings outlined here indicate that young bilinguals do feel different when speaking a foreign language; however most of these feelings cannot be considered a change in personality. Students' love for learning English as a foreign language was not found to be in a significant connection with the change in personality; on the contrary, the majority of students who reported feeling a change in personality also stated that they do not like learning English. The current study also provides further evidence that communicating emotions for bilinguals and multilinguals is sometimes easier in a second or third language, earlier reported by Dewaele (2008). This might be the most significant of all the findings in this study, with almost half of the respondents choosing English as the language of choice for communicating certain emotions. This finding could be a great starting point for further research on this subject with young bilinguals. It should not be disregarded that the vast majority of respondents prefers their first language when expressing their

emotions through acting. Research findings also confirmed some previous claims about bilinguals considering a foreign language to be more detached than the first.

2.6. Limitations and suggestions for future research

Even though the findings of this study can be considered significant since there is not enough research on this topic and with these age groups, the limitations must be acknowledged and further research into this subject should reveal much more about the connection of foreign language and personality in young bilinguals.

The first limitation of this study was the sample. It was rather small and not a representative, but rather a convenience sample. As it was mentioned earlier, it must be taken into consideration that all the respondents go to the same school and the school is located in a rural area, which does not necessarily have to, but indeed might have affected the nature of findings. Moreover, all respondents have the same English teacher, which could have also affected the nature of findings. Since the respondents are young bilinguals, it was difficult to form questions which would be age appropriate and at the same time give significant results. The questionnaire was short and age appropriate, but perhaps certain ambiguous answers could have been avoided.

Another limitation of this study is that very little personal information was gathered about participants. It would be interesting to see whether Wilson's finding that introverts are the ones who feel the change in personality would be confirmed on this sample. Also, it would be interesting to connect the fact that majority of the students do not like learning English with their average grade in English.

This study was conducted among young learners, all sequential bilinguals who started learning English in first grade of primary school. It would be interesting to see the results of a similar research conducted on simultaneous young bilinguals to see their preference of

languages when communicating emotions or acting in a play. Moreover, it would be interesting to see whether they feel a change in personality when using their two languages.

Although a study done by employing a questionnaire did give some significant results, it would be interesting to see future research where results would be collected by observing students in two language environments. With a questionnaire we can only ask respondents whether they feel a change in personality, however not all people are always aware of how they behave in different situations, not even adults. As Koven (2001, as cited in Dewaele & Nakano, 2012) points out, operating in a foreign language can affect the behavior of an individual, however it is unclear whether they are aware of the changes themselves (Dewaele & Nakano, 2012). However, by observing how young learners behave when communicating in the two languages, experts could confirm the change in personality and therefore offer more insight and more concrete results.

Future research should definitely include a larger and more varied sample. Other methods should be employed and the expression of emotions in different languages should definitely be researched in a more detailed way. This topic should bring together applied linguists and psychologists and research methods from both fields to give a more relevant insight into this matter.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A

Draga učenice / Dragi učeniče,

Molila bih te da odgovoriš na ovaj upitnik koji provodim u sklopu studija engleskog jezika na Filozofskom fakultetu Sveučilišta u Zagrebu. Tvoji su mi odgovori jako bitni jer su mi potrebni za izradu diplomskoga rada. Molim te da se ne žuriš, da razmisliš o pitanjima i iskreno na njih odgovoriš. Nigdje ne trebaš napisati svoje ime, a tvoji odgovori će se koristiti isključivo u istraživačke svrhe. **Puno hvala na suradnji!**

Razred:

Spol: M   Ž

Voliš li učiti engleski jezik?

Zbog čega ga voliš ili ne voliš učiti?

Kako se osjećaš kada govoriš engleskim jezikom? Zašto?

Je li ti neke stvari (npr. veselje, ljutnju...) lakše izreći na engleskom jeziku? Zbog čega misliš da je to tako?

Zamisli da sudjeluješ u nekoj predstavi. Da li misliš da bi bolje glumio neki lik na engleskom ili hrvatskom jeziku? Zbog čega?

Da li bi mogla/mogao reći da se osjećaš kao neka druga osoba kad govoriš stranim jezikom? U kojem smislu?

Sadržaj

Istraživanja u području povezanosti jezika i osobnosti pokazala su da se mnogi govornici dva ili više jezika osjećaju drukčije kada koriste različite jezike (Dewaele & Nakano, 2012.) Ovo područje je relativno neistraženo i ne dobiva pažnju koju zaslužuje, no rezultati provedenih istraživanja pokazuju da se nešto mijenja u ponašanju i osjećajima dvojezičnih pojedinaca kada govore prvim, odnosno drugim jezikom. Svrha je ovog istraživanja dati uvid u ovu problematiku uz pomoć uzorka 50 osnovnoškolaca koji govore dva ili više jezika.

Središnji problem ovog istraživanja je istražiti osjećaju li se osnovnoškolci koji govore dva ili više jezika kao druge osobe kada govore strani jezik. Cilj je također i istražiti problematiku komuniciranja, odnosno izražavanja emocija, tj. je li učenicima lakše neke emocije izraziti na stranom jeziku i zašto. Istraživanje je pokazalo da iako se promjene koje učenici tvrde da osjećaju kada govore stranim jezikom ne mogu baš smatrati promjenom osobnosti, učenici se definitivno osjećaju drugačije i mnogo učenika može lakše izraziti osjećaje na stranom jeziku nego na materinjem.

Ključne riječi: *osobnost, dvojezičnost, učenje stranog jezika, izražavanje emocija*