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ULOGA MEDIJA KOD SLIJEPIH UČENIKA ENGLESKOG JEZIKA

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Student: Tea Bikić

Mentor: dr. sc. Renata Geld, docent

Sumentor: dr.sc. Neven Hrvatić, prof.

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University of Zagreb

Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences

Department of English / TEFL Section

Department of Pedagogy

THE ROLE OF MEDIA IN LEARNING L2 IN BLIND LEARNERS OF

ENGLISH

Graduation Thesis

Student: Tea Bikić

Advisor: Assistant Professor, Renata Geld, Ph.D

Co-advisor: Professor Neven Hrvatić, Ph.D

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Examining Committee:

Marina Grubišić, Ph.D

Assistant Professor Renata Geld, Ph.D.

Professor Neven Hrvatić, Ph.D.

ABSTRACT

The aim of the study was to examine to what extent the blind use the media and how they can benefit from the presence of English in the media. The sample for the study consisted of 10 present and former learners of English, all with residual vision less than five percent. The instrument used in the study was a semi-structured interview in the Croatian language. Each participant was questioned individually and the study was conducted over the period of 6 months. The results showed that the participants use the Internet and radio in a much greater extent than print media and television, and that they were exposed to English primarily via the Internet. However, the participants were generally insecure about their language proficiency, which was shown to be one of the key reasons why they rejected the possibilities of acquiring English through the media. The results can be illustrated by the term *vicious circle*, i.e. the blind participants are turning down many opportunities to be exposed to English out of school because they are insecure about their English language knowledge, and this exposure through media would eventually help them enhance that knowledge. It seems that the solution for this problem can only come from school – blind learners need more exposure to English through their L2 classes to become more comfortable with using and listening to English in their everyday life.

Key words/phrases: *the blind, exposure to English, incidental vocabulary learning, the media and L2*

CONTENTS

1. INTRODUCTION

One of the most important sources of information in today's world are the four branches of the mass media – print media, radio, television and the Internet. Not only do they provide us with limitless amount of information for learning and entertaining, but they also shape the significance and meaning of the information obtained. Inside of these frames of mass communication, English has evolved as the dominant medium of communication around the world. As such, mass media provides learners of English with enormous amount of the language in its living form and numerous opportunities to practice reading, speaking, listening and writing skills inside or outside the classroom. Also, media keeps us informed about what is happening in the world, extends our knowledge and deepens our understanding, and in that way teaches us about the culture of the target language. Tanriverdi and Apak (2008) argue that students are generally exposed only to superficial cultural information in their English classes, which are simply not enough to teach them to understand, appreciate and respect the target culture. The media provides an excellent place for linguistic and cultural authenticity which makes the students culturally competent. In addition to helping to learn and understand the target culture, one of the great benefits of the mass media in learning a language is evident in the so-called *incidental vocabulary learning*, which will be further elaborated in section 2.4.

English in Croatia

The amount of the English language in our country is constantly on the rise. In their study "English in Croatia Today: Opportunities for Incidental Vocabulary Acquisition" (2003), Mihaljević Djigunović and Geld mention the penetration of English into the public domains of the media, popular entertainment, youth culture, advertising and people's private and public discourses in general. They express the concern about this extensive usage of English through loan words, calques and hybridization which leads to the loss of foreignness of the English language. This also leads to adverse attitudes about English because people can easily become irritated by such great amount of a foreign language in their mother tongue. However, Mihaljević Djigunović and Geld's pilot study from 2003 showed that the exposure to English in Croatia provides good opportunities for incidental learning of English vocabulary.

The westernization in Croatia has brought many English terms and expressions into everyday use, making English useful not only for academic or business purposes but also for common social communication. Although often criticized by language purists, this great amount of English on every corner is very welcomed by the teachers and learners of English since it enables exposure and acquisition of English without much effort. It would be ignorant not to exploit this opportunity since learners are mostly not even aware that they are learning and they are probably more motivated to know and use English.

2. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

2.1 THE BLIND

2.1.1 BLINDNESS IN CHILDREN

Definition of *legal blindness* by the American Foundation for the Blind specifies it as a level of vision loss with central vision acuity of 20/200 or less in the better eye, meaning that a person who is 20 feet from an eye chart sees what a person with unimpaired vision can see from 200 feet away. *Total blindness* refers to the complete lack of visual or light perception in either eye. Some people diagnosed with blindness still have some residual vision or light perception abilities. It is generally acknowledged that those whose residual vision is not more than five percent in both eyes are classified as legally blind.

The major reasons of blindness in children vary from region to region, but are largely determined by the socioeconomic development and the availability of primary health care and eye care services. According to the data by the World Health Organization, it is estimated that approximately three-quarters of the world's blind children live in the poorest regions of Asia and Africa. This is called the *avoidable blindness*, because, given the life conditions in these areas, it is reasonable to assume that the causes for vision loss in children can be prevented in most cases. Many blindness prevention programmes today work to bring the medical

advances from the modern world and to prevent growing number of blind children in third world countries.

Many common daily tasks are affected by vision loss, such as reading, moving about safely and independently, self-care, cooking, recreational activities, etc. Visual impairment in childhood affects the child's social and educational development, shapes the adult the child becomes and affects the employment and social prospects. Blind people are unable to perform regular daily activities with the same ease and comfort as sighted people and thus need appropriate adjustments and help from the society.

2.1.2 SPECIAL NEEDS IN CLASSROOM

School tasks are also partially dependent on vision and a child may experience difficulties if he or she cannot use his sight with ease and efficiency. Although they can virtually do all the activities and tasks that sighted children take for granted, blind children need to learn to do them in different ways or with different tools and materials. Without appropriate adjustments for the visually handicapped child, school success and social development cannot be fully realized. Lewis and Doorlag (1987) explain that the main educational goal for blind and visually impaired children is not much different from that for sighted children. The role of teachers and educational experts is to facilitate a child's learning process, and in case of children with a visual handicap this process mostly refers to teaching them to make use of remaining sensory abilities (especially touch and hearing) and to help them use other abilities to circumvent their losses. The teacher in the classroom with blind children needs to adapt teaching methods and classroom surroundings depending on each situation. Whether they are in a special school or a regular class, blind children will always be in a group of pupils with a range of visual competence and different limitations in their abilities. Sekulić Majurec (1988) states that it is generally accepted that there should not be more than one blind child or three visually impaired children in one classroom.

In her influential work from 1978, Chapman reflects on the special needs of visually handicapped children and young people and gives an overview of practical guidelines for teachers and other educational experts working with blind children. She mentions issues such as presentation of learning material, classroom organization, tactile activities, etc., all of which need to be adjusted according to the special needs of children with vision difficulties in

order to supplement or enrich their educational program. The adaptation process includes using different materials and presentation strategies to enable or enhance a blind child's learning process, giving more time to process assignments and providing additional explanations, enticing constant activity of the blind child, making sure the classroom furniture organization is suitable for the blind child and keeping it unchanged, etc. Zrilić (2011) puts special emphasis on the sensory of hearing and directing school teaching methods to hearing perception. Hearing helps children to learn about their environment, moving around in space and helps them participate in school activities with sighted children.

In addition to school success, the educational experts working with the blind need to consider the effect of visual handicap on children's personal development as well. Chapman (1978) states that the "lack of sight or defective sight is likely to be a source of additional stress and anxiety at this sensitive time" (p.114). It is crucial for a child with such difficulties to develop basic skills at an age that is reasonably approximate to that of his or her seeing peers. The assistance of parents, teachers and educational experts can be indispensable in that process. Mustać and Vicić (1996) claim that preparation in parents' home is crucial for the visually handicapped child's successful development in school. However, school, as a place of structured environment for directing child's social and educational development, plays the main role in preparing a blind child for the obstacles and difficulties he or she may encounter in life. For each child it is necessary to establish the areas where he or she is successful and where help is necessary to move forward, and this can only be done if parents and educational experts collaborate to create the best conditions for the blind child to learn and grow.

2.2 THE BLIND AND THE MEDIA

Contrary to popular belief, visually impaired and blind people use the same mass media as the sighted individuals as a source of information, news and entertainment. In 1997, the American Foundation for the Blind completed a study on the profile of the blind and visually impaired audience for television and video (Packer and Kirchner, 1997). A sample of 417 visually impaired and blind individuals responded to a survey about the use of the television. The final results showed that 97% of respondents owned a television at the time of the study and that 97% watched TV two or three times a week (Packer and Kirchner, 1997). Given that this study was conducted over 15 years ago, and that the technology is developing

every day to ease the access to information for individuals with vision disabilities, it is safe to assume that today they watch television in similar or even greater numbers and with similar frequency to the general population.

Packer and Kirchner (1997) also mention two common feelings that occur in blind individuals when watching TV. The first one is a certain *frustration* of not being able to experience something that is mostly based on visual imagery and being dependent on audio description. The second problem is the feeling of being *left out* because they miss information that sighted people easily acquire. They feel they need to work harder to obtain information that is readily available to others. Because of this, they are socially disadvantaged in discussions about popular topics such as current movies or TV series. It is important to note that, just like all of us differ in our abilities and interests, so does the population of the blind and visually impaired; they range from those who have no residual vision at all to those who only find difficulty in reading or can see blurry images of their surroundings. They also differ in their taste and preferences in choosing media content.

The problem of making television more accessible to the blind is now being solved with the so-called *audio description.* Audio description is an additional narration service that attempts to describe what the sighted person takes for granted. It appears to be available from the mid-1970s, but not until 2010 there was a law that forced broadcasters to provide accessible programming for visually impaired people (Packer and Kirchner, 1997). Not only does this help visually impaired and blind people to feel equal to sighted population, but it is also beneficial for media providers who reinforce the message they are committed to all of their viewers.

Another popular medium is the Internet, which can be of great value to the blind because it provides them a vast amount of entertainment and educational content. Not long ago, blind individuals were strictly dependent on the literature translated into Braille, and today they have access to numerous texts available on the Internet. With assistive technology that is available for the blind today - such as screen readers, refreshable Braille displays, Braille printers, and even special Smartphone apps for the blind - the information from the Internet is becoming increasingly available to the non-seeing population. However, the Internet accessibility depends not only on the user but also on the level of accessibility. In 1991, a special set of guidelines was specified to help web designers make accessible websites (Rogers, Sharp & Preece, 2011). Nevertheless, not all web designers are aware of others'

disabilities or simply choose to ignore them. The reason is likely that the target group of impaired users is considered too small to invest the time and effort to make necessary changes.

Traditionally, the primary focus when making information more accessible to the blind was on the print word. Hersh and Johnson (2008) made an overview of the development of assistive technology for visually impaired and the blind. In their work, they mention two major breakthroughs in the history of making print word more accessible to the blind. In 1880, the Braille letter was a major breakthrough because it reflected a concept where having no vision is not a barrier to accomplish commonplace tasks, such as reading. The second major breakthrough happened in 1930s when audible speech started to be used as a reading tool for the blind. These two advances in assistive technology gave blind people more opportunities to be independent, i.e. to reach wanted information without the help of others. Today, Braille and audible system uses expanded to such proportions that the barrier to print word is slowly coming down. However, print media is becoming less popular in the 21st century, not only for the blind but for sighted population as well. The Internet and mobile technology have pushed aside the print word and became number one source of news and entertainment.

Listening to the radio does not itself pose problem for the non-seeing population. However, they may encounter problems when operating the controls of the radio or they may feel limited with radio programmes, which are not as popular as television or Internet among the young population today.

As mentioned earlier, one of the most important sources of information today are the mass media. With the exception of the radio, the primary channel of acquiring information from the media is visual. Nevertheless, constant development of technology enables the blind to use the media almost as much as their sighted peers. Hence, it would be interesting to explore to what extent the blind use the media and how they can benefit from the presence of English in the media.

2.3 THE BLIND AND LANGUAGE ACQUISITION

2.3.1   FIRST LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT

It is without doubt that vision plays an important role in language development. Thus, it is reasonable to expect certain differences in how the blind process, develop and construct linguistic meaning (see Geld & Šimunić, 2009). The loss of vision is responsible for a specific conceptual development in blind children because it limits access to the normal range and variety of experiences. Vision, of course, is not the only window to the world, but it is without doubt that blind children at an early stage of their first language (L1) development lack an important source of perceptual information that their sighted peers are exposed to, or as Geld put it: "the blind's extraordinary experience of the world and unique reliance on other sensory modalities are bound to determine specific aspects of their domains of knowledge" (Geld, 2014).

Due to their lack of vision, blind children conceive the objects in their surroundings differently than their sighted peers. Perez-Pereira & Conti-Ramsden (1999) explain that an object such as a toy would not be described the same way by a blind child and a sighted child because blind children tend to focus on other qualities of the object rather than on its visual appearance (e.g. material, hardness, weight). Sighted children tend to classify objects according to *perceptual dimensions* (such as color, size and shape) at a younger age, after which they move to *conceptual classification*. In blind children, this transition from one type of classification to another is delayed because they rely on verbal descriptions in developing various concepts, unlike sighted children who rely on visual experience as well (Geld & Šimunić, 2009). Perez-Pereira and Conti-Ramsden (1999) explain this by stating that touch, perception of body movement and hearing, which blind use to compensate for vision loss, are less efficient than visual information when gathering and processing information. They also state that blind children pay more attention to linguistic input than sighted children do because it becomes a crucial tool for obtaining information on their external reality. However, Perez-

Pereira and Conti-Ramsden (1999) claim that, although concept formation is delayed in blind children, the initial disadvantages are lost after the age of 10. Geld and Čutić (2014) state that, generally speaking, most principles of cognitive information processing are similar in blind and sighted people and that differences seem to diminish as they move from specific to abstract mental structures and operations.

Up to the 1980s, the emphasis in research on blind children and language development was more on the differences between language processes in blind and sighted learners. Perez-Pereira & Conti-Ramsden (1999) mention "a clear link between a number of early studies of blind children, clearly influenced by psychoanalytic theory, and those of more recent scholars who are more cognitively oriented" (pp. 65). The proponents of the first view state that blind children's conceptualization of reality cannot be the same as of those of sighted children, based on their lack of vision. Consequently, their language development – which is based on their cognitive abilities – must contain specific features, different from those of the sighted children. This view dates back from the empiricists in the 17th and 18th centuries; Locke, Berkeley and Hume believed that the lack of vision affects the process of concept formation and thus the language acquisition in blind people must deviate from the normal path. In her doctoral thesis on teaching English as a foreign language to blind and visually impaired learners from 2002, Aikin Araluc mentions some of the researchers whose views go along with this theory: Fraiberg (1977) claimed a delay in language development of blind children due to their 'experiential poverty' which cannot be measured with the sighted child's rich 'picture bank'; Dunlea (1989) and Swallows (1976) agreed that the blind had greater difficulties in adapting to standard language use and that they lagged behind their sighted peers in language development process; Ochaita (1993) offered a slightly different opinion by claiming that the blind children lagged behind the sighted children only until the stage of formal thought when they were able to use alternative routes to cognitive development. Perez-Pereira & Conti-Ramsden (1999) also observed that blind children tend to refer more to their actions than to actions performed by others, making their speech more egocentric or self-centered than that of sighted children. In addition, they mention some authors who claimed that blind children's speech was less creative compared to that of sighted children (Andersen et al., 1984, 1993; Dunlea, 1989; Miecznikowski & Andersen, 1986). It has also been noted that blind children learn the meaning of "visual vocabulary" via the syntactic information they process, such as the position of the word in a sentence or words that are accompanied to it. This notion was first stated in 1966 by Dokecki (as cited in Geld, 2014) who stressed the

relationship of words to words, in addition to the obvious relationship of words to things. Two decades later, Landau & Gleitman (1985) published their influential work with a case study on a congenitally blind girl Kelli and demonstrated that blind children can learn the meaning of words such as *look* and *see* without direct sensory experience. They concluded that the meanings of words were not based on visual experience and could be acquired through knowledge of language itself. Aikin Arulac (2002) also mentions two interesting case studies on a pair of twins, one sighted and the other blind: in 1978, Sokolow found that the language acquisition process was faster in the blind twin, suggesting that her need to compensate for vision loss drove her to a greater reliance on language; in 1992, similar findings were shown in Perez-Pereira and Castro's study on a pair of twins again suggesting that the linguistic information was used by blind learners to a greater extent than sighted learners to compensate for their deficiency.

Unlike with the early studies, today the view seems to be more optimistic. The second and a more recent view is also based on a strong connection between cognition and language, but more importance is put on a direct mapping of cognitive achievements onto specific achievements in language acquisition (Perez-Pereira & Conti-Ramsden, 1999).

2.3.2   SECOND LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT

Similar to the first language development, second language development in blind children to some extent also depends on the experiences gained through the exposure and use of the target language. In their case study of a blind speaker of English as L2 (second language) from 2009, Geld & Šimunić state that "the blind and the sighted rely on different sensory modalities in perceiving the world around them" (p.404). In her work from 2000, Rogow stated that "word meanings are derived from both language usage and experience" (p.403). Landau and Gleitman describe it by saying that "blind children seem to approach the task of language learning deprived of many opportunities to observe the world that language is describing"(1985, p.13). According to Geld's model of second language acquisition/learning from 2006, "language is an experiential phenomenon and … its development arises from everyday experience, and is intimately related to other cognitive processes" (as citied in Geld & Šimunić, 2009, p.405). Geld & Šimunić (2009) continue by stating that cognitive processes activated in the process of L2 development are no different from those in the process of L1 development. Because of this apparent complexity and a

variety of interrelated factors (see section 2.5), the research on second language development in blind learners has been very scarce so far. In order to explore specific aspects of second language development, it is necessary to examine the experience and relevant factors involved in the first language development in the blind.

To the author's knowledge, the only known study in Croatia investigating second language development process in blind learners of English is a study published in 2014 by Geld and Čutić. The authors compared the second language development process in blind and sighted individuals to establish if the former employ similar cognitive strategies in the process of meaning construction of particle verbs as sighted users of English. The results showed that blind users of English more often attend to the spatial component of particle verbs to construct their meaning. Geld and Čutić found that the blind "more readily attend to the meaning of particles and their spatial semantic import than to the meanings of verbs" (2014, p.26)., showing that the blind's unique experience of the world creates specific mental representations and imagery and thus affects their meaning construal.

It is reasonable to assume that even if some problems appear in second language acquisition by the blind, they are able to develop languages in the same way as their sighted peers. This means that language learning process in schools needs to be adapted to blind individuals, i.e. language teachers working with blind children need to adapt their teaching strategies to the abilities and needs of the blind (see section 3.7).

2.4   EXPOSURE TO ENGLISH AS AN L2 OUT OF CLASSROOM

It is widely agreed that much second language vocabulary learning occurs incidentally while the learner is exposed to the target language. Nation (2001) states that incidental learning via guessing from context is "the most important of all sources of vocabulary learning"(p.232). English's omnipresent position in the media around the world accelerates the recycling process of acquiring new English vocabulary.

Wesche and Parkibakht (1999) defined incidental learning as what takes place when "learners are focused on comprehending meaning rather than on explicit goal of learning new words"(p.176). A great deal of attention in doing research on incidental learning was put on

the exposure through reading, and how it affects acquisition and retention of vocabulary. Nation (2001) mentions some of the most common reasons why developing language knowledge through *extensive reading* or reading for pleasure is attractive. Firstly, reading as an individual activity enables learners to learn at their own level and pace. Also, it allows them to follow their interests in choosing what to read, which also increases their motivation in the acquisition of language. Most importantly, extensive reading provides opportunities for learning to occur outside of the classroom. Hence, teachers should encourage their students to read and listen to English in their free time, especially since so much of their leisure activities require using English language, such as social networking, playing video games, watching movies, etc.

It is unrealistic to believe that the learner will acquire a new word just by reading it or listening to it, but this first encounter may draw learner's attention to it. Schmitt (2007) suggests that incremental nature of learning vocabulary leads to the implication that words must be met and used multiple times to be truly learned. The learner is unable to acquire a wide vocabulary through explicit learning alone. According to Schmitt (2007) every vocabulary program needs two strands: *an explicit strand*, where teachable word knowledge aspects are presented, and *an incidental learning strand*, where those words are consolidated and multitude of new words are met. Every subsequent encounter with the new word provides different contexts and opportunities to determine its semantic and syntactic information (Gass & Selinker, 2008). Although Schmitt (2007) states that one key to facilitating incidental learning is to maximize learners' exposure to English, he does not mention out-of-school activities that are likely to promote this type of learning. However, the following three studies showed that children can learn some aspects of language through their exposure to the media.

In 2000, Naigles & Mayeux investigated the role of television in learning first language in children under 5 years of age. They claimed that children are not always passive participants while watching TV - sometimes children engage in conversations about TV program and repeat parts of dialogues – and thus "children can acquire at least some aspects of language through their viewing of television" (p.136) . The final results of their study showed that the amount of television 60 children watched per week correlated negatively with children's scores on the grammatical morphemes in their final test. Hence, the authors concluded that it is unlikely that children can learn much about grammar specifically from television input. On the other hand, the research results showed positive correlation of the amount of television input and lexical development in children, showing that children can

extend, enhance or restrict the meanings of words they have already heard via the input of television.

The second study was a Mihaljević Djigunović and Geld's pilot study from 2003 which showed that the exposure to English in Croatia provides good opportunities for incidental learning of English vocabulary (see section 1).

The third study was conducted in 2006 by Mihaljević Djigunović & Cergol & Li who examined the impact of the media on incidental learning of the English vocabulary in Croatian speakers. The results were compared to a small-scale study of the impact of exposure to English on incidental vocabulary learning in China. The study provides an estimate of 15 hours a day of exposure to English language in Croatia through television, internet, radio and advertisement. The results showed correlation between the estimate of exposure and the incidental acquisition of the same language. In conclusion, this amount of English in Croatian media creates great conditions for incidental language learning and should be used by teachers and learners to enhance the acquisition process. If we look at the amount of the English language that occurs in popular media today, there is no reason why learners could not use their leisure activities for acquiring new vocabulary in both first and second language. Music, movies, video games and other media may play a crucial role in providing students with learning opportunities for acquiring new vocabulary.

2.5 PREVIOUS RESEARCH

In terms of examining the role of media on the second language development in blind children, the author is not familiar with any studies on this subject. As we could see in section 2.3.1, many studies explored the development of L1 in blind children, but the research on the second language development in the blind has been much scarcer. Aikin Araluc (2002) explains that this is probably due to the generalised assumption that the learners follow the same patterns of learning provided there is a reasonable competence in their mother tongues. Thus, researchers in the area of blindness and SLA mostly agree that the blind have the same or even greater ability to learn foreign languages, putting greater emphasis on the difficulties of material adaptation and poorer writing skills in their studies.

On the other hand, the media as a factor in learning a language has been mentioned in only three studies – first, by Naigles & Mayeux (2000) who explored the role of television in

L1 development in children under 5 years of age, the second one from 2003 by Mihaljević Djigunović & Geld exploring the exposure to English in Croatian media and the third study by Mihaljević Djigunović & Cergol & Li (2006) who investigated the role of media on incidental learning of the English vocabulary in Croatian speakers (see section 2.4). Again, none of the studies can be strictly related to the issue in this paper, as the first one deals with first language development and the latter two do not include blind learners of English. Before moving on to the research part of the paper, a general overview on the most common problems in studies on the blind and language is given to possibly "justify" why such study was never conducted before.

In general, the language research on blind population has always been limited with a few common problems. In their extensive overview on language development and social interaction in blind children, Perez-Pereira and Conti-Ramsden (1999) mention some of these problems. First, most of the studies with blind children have been carried out with very small number of subjects. The problem that occurs when performing a study on such a small number is the generalization issue; generalizing results from a smaller group to the whole population of the blind often leads to inaccurate results. Also, the blind population is very heterogeneous; many blind children have additional problems to their blindness, with different causes and symptoms. These additional problems affect the abilities of blind children and make the data difficult to generalize. The problem does not always depend on the blind population; researchers differ in their expectations about the blind's abilities and often underestimate them. Perez-Pereira and Conti-Ramsden (1999) mention studies such as Brown et al. (1997) and Dunlea (1989) where inappropriate techniques were used to assess the abilities of blind children leading the studies to dubious results. When it comes to the interpretation of results, sometimes generalizations are made without enough data to support them. An example offered by Perez-Pereira and Conti-Ramsden (1999) is a 1994 study by Moore and McConchie where results were based on 15 minutes speech samples of 16 children. Hence, choosing research methods that are not well suited for blind children fails to address the language problems unique to the blind child.

It is without doubt that due to the scarcity of available data and heterogeneity of the blind population many issues in regard to the blind and their language development process seemed difficult to explore. Nevertheless, if we consider the effect the popular media today have on the lives of children and the constant development of technology that enables the blind to use the media almost as much as their sighted peers, it would be interesting to explore

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to what extent the blind use the media and how they can benefit from the presence of English in the media.

3. THE STUDY

The lives of today's teenagers are heavily influenced by English terms that appear in popular movies, series, songs and, especially, on the Internet. Teenagers are not even aware that they are acquiring a foreign language or that they are actively using it in their everyday communication. If we just take Facebook for example, which according to the last estimates has more than one billion active users, many terms from this social network have come to popular use among the young today. Terms such as *share, like, friend request, link, event, inbox, and page* have almost completely replaced their equivalents in teenagers' mother tongue. This interesting phenomenon has been a study subject of several researchers, but very few have dealt with those teenagers who are unwillingly lacking this experience due to their vision deficiency.

3.1 MOTIVATION FOR THE RESEARCH

The motivation for this research came from learning more closely about the blind and their second language acquisition process during the college course by the same name. The idea was to investigate how similar or different blind learners of English are from their sighted peers in terms of using the popular media, and in which way this affects their capability to incidentally acquire the language.

Prior to the research, the assumption was that the blind use print media, TV and the Internet less often than their sighted peers and are thus, less exposed to English language outside of classroom. As for the radio, which they presumably use more often, it was yet to examine their motivation and exposure to English, especially through music.

3.2 AIM

The aim of the research was to investigate the exposure of Croatian blind teenagers to English language through the media (print media, television, radio and the Internet) for and to explore the effects this may or may not have on their acquisition of English as a second language.

To be more specific, the research analysed the use of media in blind learners of English including the types of media used, the amount of use, purposes of using different media, the adaptability and the possibilities to adapt these media to the blind and the problems they encounter while using them. In addition, participants were asked about their exposure to English through these media and in general through everyday life, and how this affected their learning process of English.

3.3 SAMPLE

The sample consisted of ten language learners aged from 15 to 27. The characteristics that all participants shared at the time of the study were the following:

- All of the participants were legally blind, i.e. none of them had more than five percent of residual vision

- All of them were blind from birth

- All of them had been learning English for at least six years

- All of the participants had been living in Zagreb at the time of the study

Four out of ten participants were attendants of Centre for Education and Rehabilitation "Vinko Bek" in Zagreb. The remaining six were members of the Zagreb Association for the Blind.

3.3.1 PARTICIPANTS

Participant no. 1

Participant no.1 is a 17-year old male attendant of Centre for Education and Rehabilitation "Vinko Bek". He has been blind from birth with 2% of residual vision. At the age of 8, the participant moved to Zagreb from a small village in Bosnia and Herzegovina. He has an older sister who is also blind (*Participant no.2*). Both of them are musically talented and have their own band, which consists of visually impaired and blind members. Although he is not very confident in his knowledge of English, he has great potential and motivation to develop his language knowledge.

Participant no.2

She is a 20-year old student of journalism and politics and a sister of *Participant no.1*. Unlike him, she is completely blind. She is very proficient in English and eager to further develop her knowledge.

Participant no.3

Participant no.3 is a 15-year old male attendant of "Vinko Bek" who moved to Zagreb from a smaller city a year before the study. Interestingly, he is the only participant who does not use computer or Internet at all. He is satisfied with his English knowledge, but it seems that he is not aware that he needs to be exposed to the language outside of school as well.

Participant no.4

The fourth participant in the study is a 16-year old female attendant of 2nd year of high school at "Vinko Bek". She has been blind from birth, with no residual vision but she is sometimes able to see colours. She is the only participant who had been learning other foreign

languages (German and Italian) prior to the study. She comes from a Croatian region where Italian is very common in use, so she is much more eager to listen Italian music and TV series than those in English or Croatian.

Participant no.5

He is a 17-year old attendant of "Vinko Bek". He comes from a small village in Dalmatia, but he had been living in Zagreb for 3 years at the time of the study. He has been blind from birth but he has a residual vision of 3 to 4 %. He enjoys playing video games, more than any other participant, and he claims that he has learned more English through playing video games than through language classes in school.

Participant no.6

Participant no.6 is a 26-year old male who graduated at the Faculty of Teacher Education. He was born highly visually impaired and completely lost his sight in high school. He is the only participant who has been taking extra classes of English in a school for foreign languages. He has been living in Zagreb his whole life, but was also abroad for 2 years in the Netherlands. He listens exclusively to English punk music and claims that the key to learning a language is putting more emphasis on vocabulary, instead of emphasising grammar rules like in school language classes.

Participant no.7

She is a 20-year old female who finished high school and was studying for Matura exam at the time of the study. She is somewhere between being visually impaired and being blind, which mostly depends on the amount of light. She is not much into languages and avoids English as much as possible.

Participant no.8

As a 27 year-old at the time of the study, he is the oldest participant. He had finished high school and during the study he was self-educating in informatics. He has been blind from birth with a minimum residual vision that enables him to move around without much difficulty. He spends so much time on the computer that he is more exposed to English than any other participant of the study.

Participant no.9

He is a 19-year old who had just finished high school at the time of the study. He used to have some residual vision but completely lost his sight in high school. He spends most of his leisure time on the Internet and claims that it is more important to be surrounded with language in daily life than to attend language classes.

Participant no.10

She is s 21-year old student at the Faculty of Educational and Rehabilitation Sciences in Zagreb. She has some residual vision which allows her to watch TV very close to the screen. Although she is aware that listening to English music or reading texts in English could enhance her knowledge, she feels more comfortable with Croatian content available on the Internet, radio or TV.

3.4 PROCEDURE

The instrument used in the study was a semi-structured interview. This type of instrument was used for two reasons:

a) It allowed more detailed answers to the research questions and created a wider image of the blind experience in using television, Internet, radio and print media.

b) The interview during which the researcher asks questions and writes down spoken answers was less expensive than the production of questionnaires in Braille.

The semi-structured interview consisted of three parts:

1. Questions about the use of the four types of media – television, radio, print media and the Internet.

2. Questions about the exposure to English through these media and the possibilities of acquiring the language.

3. Personal information and self-evaluation of proficiency in English.

For each question the interviewee was offered possible answers to ease the generalization of data, but any additional and more detailed answer was more than welcome.

Each question also contained several additional questions to guide the conversation. The interviews were conducted in the period from July to October, 2014.

3.5. RESULTS & DISCUSSION

The results were analyzed in the following way:

a) Comparison of all the given answers in the first part of the interview to establish the use of the four popular media (print media, radio, television and the Internet) in blind participants.

b) Comparison of all the given answers in the second part of the interview to establish the amount of exposure to English language through the above mentioned media in blind participants.

c) Interrelation between the answers in the first and second part of the interview to evaluate the possibilities of English language acquisition through popular media in the blind, to explore the problems they encounter and ways to deal with these problems, and to provide implications for practice.

Personal information section in the interview served only to keep track of the similarities between the participants.

3.5.1. USE OF THE MEDIA AMONG THE BLIND

To establish to what amount blind participants in the study used the four types of media, each of them was asked to give an estimation of how many hours a day they spent using one of the four media. Table 1 summarizes the answers given by the participants.

Table 1: *The use of media among the blind participants (hours per day)*

	TELEVISION	RADIO	PRINT MEDIA	INTERNET
Participant no.1	1-2 h	4-5 h	Ø	4-5 h
Participant no.2	1-2 h	1h or less	Ø	2-3 h
Participant no.3	2 h	1-2 h	Ø	Ø
Participant no.4	2-3 h	3-4 h	Ø	2-3 h
Participant no.5	1-2 h	1 h or less	Ø	3-4 h
Participant no.6	Less than 1 h	Less than 1 h	Ø	2-3 h
Participant no.7	Less than 1 h	2-3 h	Ø	2-3 h
Participant no.8	Less than 1h	Less than 1 h	Ø	5-6 h
Participant no.9	1 h	1 h	Ø	3-4 h
Participant no.10	1-2 h	5-6 h	Ø	3-4 h

3.5.1.1 *Print media*

The first and the most evident generalisation for the answers in the first part of the interview is related to the participants' overall rejection of *print media*. As it is evident from

Table 1, none of the participants used print media in their leisure time. Print media are without doubt the least appropriate media for the blind population, not only because of the scarcity of available texts on Braille, but also because of the exhausting and slow process of reading in Braille, especially given that the technology is providing easier ways for the blind to get access to texts today. With the exception of reading literary works for academic purposes, none of the participants read books, newspapers or magazines neither in Croatian nor in English. Hence, the possibility of acquiring L2 vocabulary through extensive reading is completely out of the question in this case.

This result was not surprising seeing that all of these are younger people who much more prefer using the Internet instead of reading books, regardless of their disabilities. Nevertheless, extensive reading outside of school is crucial for developing reading skills in L2 and considerably affects the overall proficiency, especially syntactic and semantic aspects of the language.

3.5.1.2 *Radio*

The second medium with not much surprising results in the study was *the radio*, the most appropriate medium for the blind seeing that it is based exclusively on the listening process. Based on the results from Table 1, 80 percent of participants in the study spend one hour or more daily listening to the radio. The primary purpose of listening to the radio is entertainment, i.e. listening to music. The questions in the interview were therefore focused on the type of music the participants prefer, with the emphasis on Croatian or English based music.

Table 2: *The purpose of listening to the radio*

	THE PURPOSE OF LISTENING TO THE RADIO
Participant no. 1	Listening to music, especially music radio shows, always in Croatian
Participant no. 2	Listening to music, exclusively Croatian radio stations but both Croatian and English music
Participant no. 3	Listening to music, exclusively Croatian folk and pop music
Participant no. 4	Listening to music, a Croatian radio station which features mostly

	Croatian pop music
Participant no. 5	Listening to music, exclusively English pop songs
Participant no. 6	Rarely listens to the radio, enjoys English punk music
Participant no. 7	Listening to music, mostly Croatian folk and pop music
Participant no. 8	Rarely listens to the radio, enjoys English rap music
Participant no. 9	Listening mostly to music radio programs, usually Croatian music
Participant no.10	Listens to both music (Croatian and English) and news in Croatian

The division between those participants who enjoy only Croatian music and those who listen to both Croatian and English based music was equal. Interestingly, as it could be seen from their elaborations during the interview, their preference between Croatian and English music did not strictly depend on the personal taste. It seemed that the proficiency in English also affected their music choices because, as one of them said, "It is not fun if you do not understand the words". Those who preferred or often listened to English music also encountered the problem of understanding lyrics but were much more open for possibilities of asking for help or using tools for translation. If we compare Table 2 with Table 3, where we can see the personal estimate of English language proficiency among the participants, we can see that the same five participants who claimed to listen English music seemed to be more confident in their L2 proficiency and were more motivated to acquire the language than the remaining five participants.

Table 3: *Self-evaluation of English language proficiency*

	SELF-EVAUALATION OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY
Participant no. 1	Medium proficiency, not very confident in his language knowledge
Participant no. 2	High proficiency, confident in her English knowledge
Participant no. 3	Low proficiency, not willing to learn English at all
Participant no. 4	Medium proficiency, very shy and unwilling to use English

Participant no. 5	Medium proficiency, very motivated to develop English knowledge
Participant no. 6	High proficiency, developed language while living abroad and taking extra classes in a foreign language school
Participant no. 7	Low proficiency, not a language type at all
Participant no. 8	High proficiency, exposed to English through Internet more than other participants
Participant no. 9	Low proficiency, not very motivated to learn English
Participant no.10	Medium proficiency, very motivated to develop her English knowledge

As we can see, those who evaluated their proficiency in English as medium or high were more inclined to listen to English music. Also, they claimed that much language can be learned this way and that they were often curious about the meaning of lyrics. As a result, this process of guessing from context or looking up unfamiliar words can expand their vocabulary in L2 and help them acquire the language with more ease. On the other hand, those who lacked confidence in their English language knowledge were more comfortable with listening to Croatian music. In this way, the possibility for incidental vocabulary learning through music could not even be created.

Another interesting fact is that all of the highlighted participants in Table 3, with the exception of Participant no. 5, were older participants, who were either studying at the time of the study or had just finished college. Among the other five participants, only Participant no. 9 was a college student while the remaining ones were still in high school. This showed that age is also a factor to be considered when examining the language confidence among the blind – the longer they learnt English the more confident they were about their knowledge.

3.5.1.3 *Television*

Unlike with the radio, the average time spent in front of a television set was significantly lower (as we can see in Table 1) because this medium is based mostly on the

sense of vision. Nonetheless, participants seemed to enjoy listening to TV shows, series or movies.

Similar to the radio, the focus in questions about the use of television was directed to the preference between Croatian and English TV programmes. Table 4 summarizes their answers in regard to television content preferences.

Table 4: *Preferences in watching TV content*

	PREFERENCES IN WATCHING TV CONTENT
Participant no. 1	Watches TV rarely, exclusively Croatian TV series, movies and shows; claims that TV is not well adjusted to the blind.
Participant no. 2	Enjoys both Croatian and English TV content
Participant no. 3	Watches only Croatian TV content; claims that he is unable to follow English in movies and series
Participant no. 4	Watches Croatian and Italian TV content; also claims she is unable to follow English movies and series
Participant no. 5	Does not watch TV much, but sometimes enjoys watching action movies in English
Participant no. 6	Watches TV very rarely
Participant no. 7	Watches TV rarely, avoids English movies and series because she is unable to follow the conversations
Participant no. 8	Watches TV very rarely

Participant no. 9	Occasionally watches some Croatian TV series
Participant no.10	Enjoys both Croatian and English TV content

Again, similar distribution among the participants was made as in the case with the radio – the same ones who preferred Croatian based music also preferred or followed exclusively Croatian TV content, while the ones who were open to listening English music were more inclined to watch English TV series and movies as well, with the exception of Participants no. 6 and 8 who almost never watched television. In the case of those who watched exclusively Croatian TV content, the reason why this is so is quite transparent. The content which is based on both sound and imagery is less intriguing if one of these aspects is lacking; and when one is lacking it is obvious that the users will go for the content which is more understandable and closer to their knowledge. These odds are not in favour of incidental English vocabulary learning via TV series, shows, commercials, news, etc.

3.5.1.4 *The Internet*

The internet seems to be the medium most commonly used among the teenagers today. Based on Table 1, 9 out of 10 participants spent at least two hours a day online. The only exception is Participant no. 3 who did not use computer at all. This participant had just started high school when the study was conducted and was still getting used to the computer, as he had not had the chance to use it prior in his life. Other participants used the Internet for social networking, entertainment and reading the news.

For the blind, the Internet would be hardly accessible without voice command programmes on the computer. There are two main voice command programmes that Croatian blind teenagers use today – Joe's and Zdenka, the former being more common. Joe's is an English based voice commander which uses English alphabet and words for reading punctuation symbols. This is an excellent way for the blind to acquire some of the explanatory words and phrases that the programme uses, which participants also confirmed by giving examples of words such as *bracket, dash, semicolon.* All of the participants (except Participant no.3) preferred Joe's over Zdenka because they claimed it was more understandable and easier to adjust to.

The primary purpose for using the Internet among all participants (except Participant no.3) was for social networking. All nine of them had Facebook accounts and one of them also had a Twitter account (Participant no. 8). As Facebook offers an option of choosing default language, one of the questions was which language they use on Facebook and why. However, it appeared that they did not seem to care which language was their default language and they often changed it. But, even if their Facebook account was in Croatian, they were all still familiar with the popular vocabulary of that network. Not only that, but words related to social networking were the most common examples of the English words acquired out of school offered by the participants, as it can be seen in Table 5:

Table 5: *Examples of English words participants are aware they have acquired out of school*

	EXAMPLES OF ENGLISH WORDS PARTICIPANTS ARE AWARE THEY HAVE ACQUIRED OUT OF SCHOOL
Participant no. 1	***Friend Request, Like, Notification, Search, Explore.***
Participant no. 2	***Notification, Share***
Participant no. 3	*Loading, Reading, Error* (video games)
Participant no. 4	*Read,* ***Inbox, Link***
Participant no. 5	*Loading, Wait here, Follow me* (video games), ***Search****, Contacts****, Add*** (FB and Skype)
Participant no. 6	*Gig, Buzz, Violence* (music)
Participant no. 7	*Good, Friendly, Nice*
Participant no. 8	*Trigger,* ***Tweet, Follower*** (video games and Twitter)
Participant no. 9	*Loading,* ***Link***
Participant no.10	Could not remember anything

Out of the four examined media, the Internet was unanimously voted to be the best medium for the blind. Although the radio seems to be the most suitable for them, as they explained, the Internet provides them with the largest amount of information and possibilities for entertainment. Participants were more or less satisfied with adjustability of the Internet for the blind, although there were still obstacles for them such as pop-up commercials. But, it seemed that they usually visited pages which were well adjusted and avoided those which caused them problems. This way they are again disadvantaged in comparison to the sighted teenagers who use the Internet without limits and are more exposed to its language.

3.5.1.5 *Video Games*

Participants who had some residual vision were inquired about the habit of playing video games, since almost all available video or computer games for Croatian teenagers today are in English. Video games are particularly interesting to those with poor sight because of the vivid graphics, as it was explained by one of the participants. Four male participants confirmed that they enjoyed playing video games – Participant no. 1, Participant no. 5, Participant no.8 and Participant no. 9. All four of them claimed that they have managed to acquire some English words through repeated use of the games. Some examples of words that often appear in video games are *loading, start, shoot, stand by,* and even phrases or whole sentences such as *I need a city drive.*

3.5.2 L2 ACQUISITION THROUGH MEDIA AMONG THE BLIND

3.5.2.1   *Attitude on English language*

Regarding possibilities of L2 acquisition through the media, participants were firstly questioned about their awareness of English in Croatian media and their attitude towards that

issue. The opinions were equally divided to those who consider English in Croatian language and media a positive thing and a good opportunity to acquire the language, and to those who reckon that there should be no English words in our language when there are obviously appropriate Croatian equivalents. However, both those with positive attitude and negative attitude on this issue were aware of the possibilities for acquiring new English vocabulary if it was constantly present around them. Table 6 shows the gist of each of the participants' answers on this issue:

Table 6: *Awareness and attitude on English as L2 in Croatian as L1*

	AWARENESS AND ATTITUDE ON ENGLISH AS L2 IN CROATIAN AS L1
Participant no. 1	Very aware; negative attitude because these English words and phrases could be easily translated into Croatian
Participant no. 2	Negative attitude; nevertheless the possibility of incidental English language learning, Croatian should not be put aside in such a way
Participant no. 3	Does not mind the amount of English in Croatian media and everyday communication
Participant no. 4	Not very aware of it; does not mind if there are foreign words in Croatian
Participant no. 5	Positive attitude; good opportunity to learn a language
Participant no. 6	Negative attitude but still considers it useful for learning some words
Participant no. 7	Not very aware of it; useful for learning the meaning of some words
Participant no. 8	Very aware and has a positive attitude; some phrases sound better in English

Participant no. 9	Too much English words make Croatian sound ridiculous
Participant no.10	Negative attitude; these words should be translated

The highlighted rows show those answers which express negative attitude toward the presence of English words and phrases in Croatian language. As with the previous tables, the results again seem to be equally divided.

Table 3 showed us results for self-evaluation of English language knowledge among the participants. In addition to self-evaluation, participants were asked to further elaborate on the easiness or difficulty of the English language and problems they encounter in the process of learning. The following table shows the answers of the participants on the question of difficulty of learning English language.

Table 7: *Do you think English is easy or difficult to learn?*

	DO YOU THINK ENGLISH IS EASY OR DIFFICULT TO LEARN?
Participant no. 1	Easy
Participant no. 2	Easy
Participant no. 3	Difficult
Participant no. 4	Difficult
Participant no. 5	Easy
Participant no. 6	Easy
Participant no. 7	Difficult
Participant no. 8	Easy
Participant no. 9	Difficult

Participant no.10	Easy

It is no surprise that the same participants who evaluated their English knowledge as medium or high answered that English is easy to learn, with the addition of Participant no.1. But, it is interesting to see that these are the same participants who were more inclined to listen to English music and watch English TV series and movies (see Tables 2 and 4). In the case of this issue, the Participant no. 1 is an addition to this group, but he claimed that his musical and TV content preferences are reflections of his personal taste.

When they were inquired about the most troublesome aspect of the English language for them, interestingly, all of the participants answered that vocabulary was the biggest issue. It can be presumed that the cause of having poorer vocabulary knowledge is that blind students are less exposed to English out of school than their sighted peers. Although they were aware that they should be more exposed to the language outside of school, their visual deficiency discouraged them to do so.

Another question where all of the participants unanimously agreed was on the importance of English in their future life and in general. Even though some of the participants were generally uninterested in languages (Participant no. 4 and Participant no. 7), all of them considered English to be crucial for the development in their social and work life.

3.5.2.2 *The role of media in L2 acquisition*

If we exclude print medium from the studied four media, it seems that television plays the least important role in acquiring L2 among the blind. Even those who did not watch English TV shows, series or movies, usually had trouble with catching up with all the spoken text, even when the subtitles were read to them by someone else. None of the participants was able to give an example of an English word or a phrase that they were sure they had acquired while watching television.

Radio also does not seem to play a significant role in acquiring L2 seeing that none of the participants listened to foreign radio stations. The only exposure to English via radio was through songs in English but, as the majority of participants explained (9 out of 10), they do not pay much attention to lyrics. The only exception here was Participant no. 6 who listened exclusively to punk music in English and music was one of his great passions in life. The

remaining nine participants admitted that they rarely looked up unfamiliar words in popular songs lyrics, even though all of them recognized the potential of learning English through listening to music.

As we could see from Table 1, the Internet was the most used medium among the blind participants of the study. Hence, it was expected that some significant change will be evident in comparison of the Internet to the other media in regard to the role in the acquisition of English as an L2. However, the answers of the participants showed no such change. The only two ways of acquiring English through the use of the Internet seemed to be social networking popular phrases and words from voice programme commands.

As for the voice programme, it was already stated that Joe's is the most popular voice command programme used among the blind teenagers in Croatia and that it can help the blind to acquire some explanatory words that the programme repeatedly uses.

On the other hand, Facebook was unanimously proclaimed to be number one web page they visited among those who used the Internet in their daily life. Facebook made words such as *like, share, inbox, request, link* an unavoidable part of every teenagers' language today. Even those who did not have a Facebook account were familiar with these terms and their meaning in the online world. Participant no.3, who did not use the Internet at all and was an exception to this group, was asked if he knows what the words *inbox, friend request* and *share* mean, and his answer clearly showed that these words are learned through social interaction, if not through the use of Facebook. Hence, it was no surprise that these words were offered by the participants when they were asked to give an example of English words acquired out of school. Since these words are so popular today, it is hard to make a generalisation about the possibility of learning English via Facebook for the blind.

3.6   CONCLUSION

The results can be summarized within the following conclusions:

a) Use of the media among the blind

The least appropriate and hence the least used medium among the blind is the print medium, which makes the possibility of acquiring L2 through extensive reading completely abandoned by the blind. On the other hand, the most appropriate medium used is the radio. The radio is used almost exclusively for entertainment purposes, i.e. listening to music. However, the possibilities of acquiring English as an L2 through song lyrics in English do not seem to be exploited by the blind, presumably because they feel insecure about their English language knowledge. Again, the possibility of incidental vocabulary acquisition through listening to music fails in the case of the blind. The similar generalisation applies for television, where the weak knowledge of the English language is even a bigger obstacle than with the radio. TV content depends on both imagery and sound and therefore, the users who cannot perceive images will go for the content which is more understandable to them. The Internet is the most commonly used medium among the blind because it offers the widest range of information and possibilities for entertainment. However, as with the other media,

the blind are discouraged to use less understandable content because of the slower process of reading in a foreign language.

b) L2 acquisition through media among the blind

As it was shown in the study, vocabulary is without doubt the biggest obstacle in acquiring English as an L2 for the blind population. The assumption is that this generalisation persists due to the fact that the blind are less exposed to English out of school because their visual deficiency discourages them to use available media content in English. Television plays the least important role in incidental vocabulary acquisition. The radio use also does not encourage L2 acquisition because the blind are more inclined to listen to Croatian radio stations and music in Croatian language. Video games offer a good opportunity to learn vocabulary because they are almost exclusively available in English and words and phrases are mostly repeated. The possibility of acquiring English as an L2 through the use of the Internet is limited to popular social networking slang used among all the teenagers today, and to commands and explanatory terms acquired via English-based voice program for reading.

3.7 IMPLICATIONS FOR PRACTICE

What can be concluded from this small study is that blind teenagers are generally discouraged to use non-Croatian media content because of the insecurity about their language knowledge. However, this seems to be *a vicious circle,* because their inability to use English outside of school is caused by their lack of proficiency in English, which is again caused by less exposure to English out of their three-hours-per-week language classes.

Teachers working with the blind should encourage more use of media inside of school and outside of school, by intriguing pupils with different series, songs, movie clips, etc. Although this is already a part of English workbooks and lesson plans, perhaps the blind need it more than others. What they also need is constant exposure to English while they are in English classes. They should be more encouraged to use English for communication with one another and with the teacher. With time, they will get used to the constant sound of English and will presumably be more inclined to listen to it outside of English classes as well.

There are many factors that teachers need to take into account, and all of this involves very careful and detailed planning. Conroy (2006) mentions the three most optimal teaching

strategies: using predictable routines, using the realia or concrete objects and using preview and review in teaching. In addition, it is important to provide blind learners with non-stressful settings where they can practice their interaction in English. When blind learners get used to listening and using English in language classes, they will likely gain more confidence to use it outside of classroom as well. Consequently, they will be more inclined to use English based media content and in this way increase their exposure to the target language.

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SAŽETAK

Cilj ovog istraživanja bio je istražiti učestalost korištenja medija kod slijepih osoba i način na koji mediji mogu utjecati na njihovo usvajanje engleskog jezika. Uzorak ispitanika obuhvaćao je 10 sadašnjih ili bivših učenika engleskog jezika, svi s ostatkom vida manjim od 5 posto. Instrument korišten u istraživanju bio je polustrukturirani intervjuu na hrvatskom jeziku. Svaki ispitanik je intervjuiran individualno, a istraživanje je provedeno u razdoblju od 6 mjeseci. Rezultati su pokazali da slijepi ispitanici više koriste internet i radio nego tiskane medije i televiziju, te da su najviše izloženi engleskom putem interneta. Svi ispitanici su pokazali nesigurnost u svoje znanje engleskog jezika, što je i jedan od glavnih uzroka njihovog odbijanja mogućnosti za usvajanje engleskog kroz medije. Rezultati su pokazali tzv.

„začarani krug"; slijepi ispitanici odbijaju mnoge prilike za izloženost engleskom jeziku izvan škole zbog svoje nesigurnosti u znanje jezika. S druge strane, ta izloženost engleskom kroz medije u slobodno vrijeme bi im pomogla da razviju svoje znanje jezika. Zaključak je da rješenje ovog kruga treba početi iz škole – slijepi učenici trebaju veću izloženost engleskom na jezičnoj nastavi kako bi razvili naviku slušanja engleskog i stekli veću sigurnost u korištenju engleskog izvan škole.

APPENDIX

SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW USED IN THE STUDY

ULOGA MEDIJA KOD SLIJEPIH UČENIKA ENGLESKOG JEZIKA

Intervju je podijeljen na dva dijela: prvi se dio odnosi na učestalost korištenja medija, a drugi dio na zastupljenost engleskog jezika u korištenim medijima i mogućnost usvajanja jezika.

Treći dio intervjua odnosi se na osobne informacije o ispitaniku, uključujući i samoprocjenu poznavanja engleskog jezika.

A. UČESTALOST KORIŠTENJA MEDIJA

Svrha je prvog dijela razgovora doznati više o uporabi medija kod slijepih osoba, koji se mediji najčešće koriste, koji su problemi na koje slijepe osobe nailaze u korištenju medija, i slično. Pod klasične medije ubrajamo televiziju, radio, tiskane medije (novine, časopisi) i internet.

GLAVNO PITANJE	MOGUĆI ODGOVORI	DODATNA PITANJA
Koju elektroničku opremu ti ili tvoja obitelj posjedujete i koristite?	TV Radio Osobno računalo Laptop Tablet Čitač e-knjiga PlayStation/Video igre Mobitel/Smartphone Drugo	Koje medije najčešće koristiš za informiranje? Koje medije najčešće koristiš za zabavu? Koji mediji su, po tvom mišljenju, najprilagođeniji za slijepe osobe? Koji mediji su, po tvom mišljenju, najmanje prilagođeni za slijepe osobe?/ Na koje probleme nailaziš prilikom uporabe tih medija? Kako bi ih se moglo olakšati za uporabu?

GLAVNO PITANJE	MOGUĆI ODGOVORI	DODATNA PITANJA
Možeš li procijeniti koliko dnevno vremena u prosjeku provodiš koristeći medij televizije?	Manje od 1 h Od 1 do 2 h Od 3 do 4 h Od 4 do 5 h Više od 5 h Nikad	Ako je odgovor nikad ili manje od 1 h, zašto? Koje televizijske programenajčešće pratiš (domaće ili strane)? Koje televizijske sadržaje najčešće pratiš (emisije, filmove, sport...)? Koristiš li televiziju više za obrazovne ili zabavne svrhe? Smatraš li da se televizijski sadržaji mogu više prilagoditi za slijepe osobe? Kako?

GLAVNO PITANJE	MOGUĆI ODGOVORI	DODATNA PITANJA
Možeš li procijeniti koliko dnevno vremena u prosjeku provodiš slušajući radio?	Manje od 1 h Od 1 do 2 h Od 3 do 4 h Od 4 do 5 h Više od 5 h	Ako je odgovor nikad ili manje od 1 h, zašto? Koje radio postaje najčešće slušaš? Slušašli ikad radio postaje na engleskom jeziku?

	Nikad	Koje? Koristiš li radio više za obrazovne ili zabavne svrhe? Koristiš li radio za slušanje glazbe? Koju glazbu najčešće slušaš (domaću ili stranu)?

GLAVNO PITANJE	MOGUĆI ODGOVORI	DODATNA PITANJA
Možeš li procijeniti koliko dnevno vremena u prosjeku koristiš tiskane medije, poput novina i časopisa?	Manje od 1 h Od 1 do 2 h Od 3 do 4 h Od 4 do 5 h Više od 5 h Nikad	Ako je odgovor nikad ili manje od 1 h, zašto? Koristiš li tiskane medije na Brailleovom pismu? Koje? Koristiš li tiskane medije više za obrazovne ili zabavne svrhe? Smatraš li da je u Hrvatskoj (ne)dovoljan broj tiskanih medija na brajici? Smatraš li da su dovoljno dostupni za slijepe osobe?

GLAVNO PITANJE	MOGUĆI ODGOVORI	DODATNA PITANJA
Možeš li procijeniti koliko dnevno vremena u prosjeku provodiš na internetu?	Manje od 1 h Od 1 do 2 h Od 3 do 4 h Od 4 do 5 h Više od 5 h Nikad	Koje web stranice najčešće posjećuješ? Koristiš li internet više za obrazovne ili zabavne svrhe? Koje sadržaje najčešće posjećuješ na internetu (domaće ili strane)? Provodiš li vrijeme na društvenimmrežama? Ako da, na kojima i za koje svrhe? Smatraš li da je internet dovoljno prilagođen za slijepu populaciju? Ako ne, kako bi se dodatno mogao prilagoditi? Na koje probleme najčešće nailaziš prilikom korištenja interneta?

B. IZLOŽENOST ENGLESKOM JEZIKU KROZ MEDIJE

Svrha drugog dijela intervjua je doznati više o mogućnostima usvajanja engleskog jezika putem medija.

GLAVNO PITANJE	MOGUĆI ODGOVORI	DODATNA PITANJA

Prema tvojoj procjeni, koliko si dnevno izložen(a) engleskom jeziku i kojim putem?	Manje od 1 h Od 1 do 2 h Od 3 do 4 h Od 4 do 5 h Više od 5 h Nikad Putem radija, TV-a, interneta, reklama, glazbe, tekstova…	Koji je tvoj stav prema engleskom jeziku? Smatraš li da ti je znanje engleskog jezika potrebno u budućnosti? Koliko često koristiš engleski jezik izvan škole (nikad – rijetko – ponekad – često – uvijek)? Smatraš li da možeš bolje naučiti jezik ako si mu češće izložen(a)? Jesi li svjestan/na da si neke engleske riječi usvojio/la isključivo putem medija i popularne kulture, a ne na nastavi engleskog jezika? Primjer? Smatraš li da si više engleskog jezika usvojio/la u školi ili kroz izloženost raznim medijima?
GLAVNO PITANJE	MOGUĆI ODGOVORI	DODATNA PITANJA
Koliko primjećuješ engleski jezik u hrvatskim medijima?	Uopće ne primjećujem Donekle primjećujem Niti primjećujem niti ne primjećujem Primjećujem Izrazito primjećujem	Što misliš o prisutnosti engleskog jezika u Hrvatskoj? Smatraš li da smo suviše „bombardirani“ engleskim jezikom ili je engleski kod nas jednako prisutan kao i u razvijenim zemljama? Možeš li navesti nekoliko primjera engleskih riječi koje često susrećeš u medijima i popularnoj kulturi? Koliko ti je prisutnost tih riječi u svakodnevnom životu olakšala njihovo usvajanje?

GLAVNO PITANJE	MOGUĆI ODGOVORI	DODATNA PITANJA
Koliko često slušaš glazbu na engleskom jeziku?	Gotovo nikad Rijetko Ponekad Često Uvijek	Ako je odgovor nikad ili rijetko, zašto? Koju glazbu najčešće slušaš na engleskom jeziku? Smatraš li da slušanje pjesama na engleskom jeziku doprinosi tvojem znanju engleskog? Koliko obraćaš pažnju na tekst pjesme, prevodiš ga u glavi ili razmišljaš o njegovom značenju? Razumiješ li većinu tekstova pjesama koje slušaš na

| | | engleskom? |
| | | Jesi li u stanju usvojiti neke nove riječi iz konteksta teksta pjesme? Možeš li se sjetiti nekog primjera? |

GLAVNO PITANJE	MOGUĆI ODGOVORI	DODATNA PITANJA
Koliko često čitaš na engleskom jeziku (knjige, članke, časopise, stripove)?	Gotovo nikad Rijetko Ponekad Često Uvijek	Ako je odgovor nikad ili rijetko, zašto? Što najčešće čitaš na engleskom jeziku? Jesi li u stanju usvojiti neke nove riječi samo iz konteksta teksta? Smatraš li da je (ne)dovoljno dostupne literature za slijepe osobe? Da li ikad odustaneš od čitanja teksta koji te zanima samo zato jer nije dostupan na hrvatskom, nego bi ga morao/la čitati na engleskom?

GLAVNO PITANJE	MOGUĆI ODGOVORI	DODATNA PITANJA
Koliko često koristiš engleski jezik prilikom korištenja interneta?	Gotovo nikad Rijetko Ponekad Često Uvijek	Kada si u potrazi za informacijama na internetu, koristiš li češće engleski ili hrvatski jezik za unos ključnih riječi? Za koje aktivnosti najčešće koristiš engleski jezik na internetu (e-mail, čitanje vijesti, potraga za informacijama, društvenemreže…)? Posjećuješ li web stranice na engleskom jeziku? Ako da, koje? Imaš li vlastiti FB profil? Ako da, na kojem jeziku ga koristiš? Ako je HRV/ENG, zašto? Možeš li navesti primjer engleskih izraza/riječi koje si siguran/na da si naučio/la putem interneta ili popularne kulture, a ne u školi?

GLAVNO PITANJE	MOGUĆI ODGOVORI	DODATNA PITANJA

| Igraš li video ili računalne igrice u kojima moraš koristiti engleski jezik? | Gotovo nikad
Rijetko
Ponekad
Često
Uvijek | Ako DA, koje igrice najčešće igraš?
Koliko si svjestan/na usvajanja engleskog jezika prilikom korištenja naredbi i uputa u takvim igrama?
Vjeruješ li da ti igranje video/računalnih igrica pomaže u učenju engleskog jezika?
Možeš li se sjetiti nekog primjera engleskog izraza/riječi za koje si siguran/na da si ih usvojio/la ovim putem, a ne u školi? |

GLAVNO PITANJE	MOGUĆI ODGOVORI	DODATNA PITANJA
Imaš li program za glasovno čitanje s kompjutera/laptopa/mobitela?	Da Ne	AKO DA: Koja vrsta programa? Na kojem sejeziku program temelji? Koje su prednosti/nedostaci tvog programa? AKO JE ENG PROGRAM: Koliko te ometa glasovno čitanje temeljeno na engleskom jeziku prilikom čitanja hrvatskog teksta? Da li ti je tvoj engleski glasovni program pomogao da usvojiš neke nove engleske riječi? Primjer? Da li preferiraš čitati engleske tekstove jer tvoj program ima engleski izgovor prilikom čitanja?

GLAVNO PITANJE	MOGUĆI ODGOVORI	DODATNA PITANJA
Koliko ti je znanje engleskog jezika prepreka ili prednost u korištenju medija?	Velika mi je prepreka Donekle mi je prepreka Nije mi ni prepreka ni prednost Donekle mi je prednost Velika mi je prednost	Smatraš li engleski jezik važnim za tvoje buduće obrazovanje i napredak u poslu? Smatraš li da je nastava u školi, tebi osobno, dovoljna za razvijanje znanja engleskog jezika? Što misliš o mogućnosti usvajanja engleskog jezika putem popularnih medija? Možeš li navesti najmanje tri primjera engleskih riječi/izraza koje si 'usput pokupio/la'?

		Možeš li se sjetiti gdje si ih čuo/la?

C. OSOBNE INFORMACIJE

a) PROCJENA POZNAVANJA ENGLESKOG JEZIKA

1. Koliko dugo učiš engleski jezik?

   _____

2. Jesi li učio/la neki drugi jezik?   DA   NE

   Koji? _____
   Koliko dugo? _____

3. Kako bi procijenio/la svoje poznavanje i korištenje engleskog jezika?

   (1 –slabo, 2- doneklo dobro, 3-dobro, 4-veoma dobro, 5-odlično)

   a. SLUŠANJE   1 2 3 4 5

   b. ČITANJE   1 2 3 4 5

   c. PISANJE   1 2 3 4 5

   d. GOVOR   1 2 3 4 5

   e. RAZUMIJEVANJE   1 2 3 4 5

4. Možeš li procijeniti koliko ti je osobno engleski jezik težak za učenje?

   a. Veoma težak

   b. Težak

   c. Niti težak niti jednostavan

   d. Jednostavan

   e. Veoma jednostavan

5. Možeš li procijeniti koliko si osobno motiviran/a za učenje engleskog jezika?

    a. Nisam motiviran/a

    b. Malo sam motiviran/a

    c. Umjereno sam motiviran/a

    d. Motiviran/a sam

    e. Veoma sam motiviran/a

6. Koja ti je najčešća ocjena u imeniku iz engleskog jezika? _____

7. Smatraš li da tvoja najčešća ocjena odražava tvoje stvarno znanje engleskog?   DA   NE

b) PODACI O ISPITANIKU

Spol   M   Ž

Dob   _____

Razred   _____

Škola _____

Vrsta sljepoće: Vid izgubljen pri rođenju/ Vid izgubljen ranije u životu / Vid izgubljen kasnije u životu

Potpuna sljepoća / Ostatak vida _____