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Language Learning Strategies in Multilinguals: Do Career Choices Make a Difference?

Graduation Thesis

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Zagreb, September 2017

Sveučilište u Zagrebu

Filozofski fakultet

Odsjek za anglistiku

Katedra za metodiku

Strategije učenja višejezičnih osoba: kakav utjecaj ima odabir profesije?

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Zagreb, rujan 2017.

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Abstract

People in Croatia seem to choose learning foreign languages, besides their obligatory ones throughout their education, even when they do not choose a career in languages. This study investigated the use of language learning strategies of multilinguals who majored in languages (the L group) and those who did not (the NL group). There were eight participants, four in each group, who spoke at least two foreign languages. The study was conducted using the form of an interview which consisted of two parts. The first part focused on examining the levels of metalinguistic awareness, and approach and attitudes towards language learning, whereas in the second part the focus was on more specific information about language learning strategies. Findings show that both groups form their attitudes to language learning based on their personal experiences and use their L1 to help them with a foreign language. They both make connections between languages they speak and notice similarities and differences in them. However, it seems that the L group is more metalinguistically aware than the NL group. This was shown in the inconsistency of some answers given by the NL group. Learning vocabulary seems to differ on the individual level, but it can generally be concluded that the L group approaches it by paying attention to many factors that are proven to have a positive effect on language learning, as opposed to the NL group. Another difference was found in the way students plan their learning. It seems that the L group does not plan their learning as much as the NL group does, when it comes to language. Moreover, the L group seems to have a better understanding of some features of English grammar that do not exist in Croatian. The NL group, on the other hand, uses popular culture to improve their language learning and emphasizes it more than the L group does. It was concluded that the career choice possibly affected language learning strategies which shaped language learning differently for both groups, but did not affect success in acquiring those languages.

Keywords: multilingualism, language learning strategies, career choice

1. Introduction

Multilingualism is a notion that is becoming increasingly important in the contemporary society. People become more and more aware of all the benefits that come with being multilingual. Michał B. Paradowski listed numerous benefits of multilingualism in his article called “The Benefits of Multilingualism” (2010). The author states that being multilingual enables the person to communicate with people he or she would otherwise not have the chance to communicate with, and that it also increases job opportunities in many careers. He also states that multilingual people have a better understanding of foreign culture, leading to a greater respect towards them and developing intercultural competence. He then quotes Curtain and Dahlberg (2004) who say that when cultural information is experienced through foreign language, the positive impact of that information is enhanced. Paradowski lists many other reasons such as improving critical thinking abilities, being better at problem solving, developing better verbal and spatial abilities etc.

Croatia is a country where languages play a substantial role. Because of its history, Croatia has always been a multilingual country. Throughout its history, Croatia was a part of multiethnic countries, last of which was The Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, where there were mainly three languages spoken – Croato-Serbian/Serbo-Croatian, Slovenian and Macedonian, as well as the languages of national minorities – Hungarian, Albanian, Turkish, Romanian and Italian. It was a country where many different languages coexisted, which is why multilingualism was not a strange idea in the mind of its inhabitants. Today Croatia is an independent country with its own language. In the recent years, however, the English language has gained more popularity due to many factors, one of which is popular culture that has a great influence on Croatian society. One of the facts that prove that language learning is important in Croatia is the fact that English, and somewhere even German, French or Italian are being taught as foreign languages in schools from very early on.

When it comes to language learning one has to think of language learning strategies as one of the factors that influence a learner’s success and process of learning. Language learning strategies are supposed to help the process of language learning, to structure it and organize the knowledge. The notion of language learning strategies is closely related to the notion of individual differences between learners, but there are some taxonomies that organize these strategies on a more general level. The purpose of this paper, however, is to make a connection between multilingualism and language learning strategies with respect to one other thing: career choices.

From very early on, pupils are able to tell if they are good at languages or at Math or Biology for example. Learners are able to define their fondness for certain subjects, which often drives them to choose a certain career. If they recognize their competence in a certain field, they are more likely to pursue their career in that given field. However, it is a fact that one subject of interest does not have to exclude other fields. In other words, one can be very good at Chemistry and choose to pursue their career in laboratory experimenting, but they can also be good at languages and choose to learn two or more foreign languages. Others can recognize their passion for languages and choose to stay in that field career-wise and completely focus on that. In this paper, we will try to show some differences between multilingual people who chose career in languages and those who did not, when it comes to language learning strategies.

The first part of the thesis will give a short overview of theoretical framework, where some important features that define multilingualism will be mentioned. It will then continue to explain what language learning strategies are and mention some important taxonomies. The second part of the thesis will present the study that has been conducted in order to see whether there are any differences between the two groups of multilinguals when it comes to language learning strategies.

2. Theoretical framework

In this part, we will briefly cover some points from the theoretical framework that have to do with multilingualism and language learning strategies. Before presenting the study and the analysis, it is necessary to see what meaning multilingualism has in the contemporary world as opposed to previous thoughts and beliefs related to it. Moreover, it is necessary to present previous writing on language learning strategies. This will enable us to relate the two notions and provide a solid ground for our study.

2.1. Multilingualism

Multilingualism is a phenomenon that is very difficult to define. The simplest way is to say that a multilingual person is a person who speaks more than two languages. However, it is not that easy to say what it means to speak a language. Does it mean to speak a language similarly to a native speaker? Does it mean to graduate in a language? Does it mean to have some sort of confirmation or certificate for a certain level in a language? Can a person who does not have any formal certificate, but can communicate in more than two languages, say that they are multilingual? These are just some of the many questions that arise when one tries to define the notion of multilingualism. Skuttnab-Kangas (1984) gives four types of definitions for multilingualism: definitions by origin (multilingualism is a developmental criterion), competence (linguistic competence is a criterion), functional definitions (a criterion are the functions that the language use serves for the individual or the community), social, psychological and sociological definitions (a criterion is found in the attitudes towards or identification with two or more languages) (p. 81, as cited in Jessner (2006, p. 10)). None of these definitions mentions any kind of formal confirmation that would be necessary for claiming that a person is multilingual. It can be seen that all the criteria are somewhat abstract and have to do with the individual in question and even social context. Moreover, it is a fact that one can learn a language using the Internet, without ever learning it in school, and become able to speak it fluently. If they succeed in doing that with more than two languages, they can say that they are multilingual.

Jessner (2006) states that there are three main reasons for multilingual settings. The first is “increasing mobility resulting in migratory movements” followed by “the role of English as a lingua franca” and finally “the presence of former colonial forces” (p. 1). These are more general reasons that lead to multilingual settings. If we see multilingualism as a personal choice, there are also many reasons for becoming a multilingual person. Cook (2002) states that these reasons can be set by learners themselves or by their education systems. She goes on to give

examples of both and says that some L2 learners become multilingual as soon as they leave the classroom, because they choose to acquire foreign languages in foreign countries. “Others use the second language to talk to their friends with different first languages inside the classroom: for example, a Swedish student talking to a French student in English at a summer school in Dublin” (p. 3). She goes on to say that “the goal of using the second language is only one of the reasons for studying it; the UK National Criteria for GCSE in Modern Languages, for instance, stress the insight into other cultures and the promotion of general learning skills, not just the ability to use the language for communication” (DES, 1990 as cited in Cook, 2006, p. 3).

People can nowadays use the Internet and other modern technological advancements to easily interact with other people from all over the world. Multilingualism has therefore become a natural phenomenon and people are more exposed to different languages than ever before. However, this has not always been so. Multilingualism has not always been considered a positive phenomenon and speaking more languages used to have more negative connotations. In her article called *Multilingualism and Multicompetence: A Conceptual View* (2011), Rita Franceschini says that, due to “a period romanticizing the nation state, with origins in the 17th and 18th centuries, during which the unity of the people under one language was the prevailing way of thinking,” multilingualism was considered to be a “nearly nonexistent or a disturbing factor” (p. 345). People used to think that speaking foreign languages had a negative influence on preserving one’s mother tongue. As the society advanced, multilingualism was recognized as something extremely positive and desirable and there is much emphasis nowadays on nurturing multilingualism. Speaking more than two foreign languages is considered to be very favorable in job applications, not to mention that multilingualism simplifies many other things like traveling, for example. These two examples describe two different, but common/almost everyday situations that almost all people in the contemporary society can relate to, which causes them to realize that multilingualism opens many doors for them in this respect.

Franceschini (2011) says further that the fundamental human ability to communicate in many languages is the base of multilingualism and that “it describes a phenomenon embedded in cultural developments”, which is why, according to Franceschini, multilingualism is marked by high cultural sensitivity (p. 346). Jessner (2006) describes how bilingualism was perceived through history, saying that there were three stages in its development. In the first phase, bilinguals were considered “cognitively handicapped” and semilingual. In the second phase she says that Vygotsky’s book *Thought and Language* was important because in it the author related “the positive cognitive effect of learning a foreign language in children to the

development of metalinguistic abilities". In the third phase multilingualism became something very positive and bilinguals and multilinguals showed that they differed from monolinguals in some social and cognitive aspects (p. 37). Jessner goes on to state that multilinguals develop "a higher degree of certain social skills such as communicative sensitivity and metapragmatic skills" (p. 39). Therefore, it can be said that, in the third phase, more emphasis was put on the benefits of multilingualism and people who were bi- or multilingual were not considered handicapped anymore, but, among other things, having a higher level of metalinguistic awareness.

2.2. Language learning strategies

The most important names when it comes to language learning strategies are J. Michael O'Malley, Anna Uhl Chamot and Rebecca Oxford. O'Malley and Chamot (1990) present three categories of language learning strategies: metacognitive, cognitive and social/affective strategies. According to them, metacognitive strategies refer to "thinking about the learning process, planning for learning, monitoring of comprehension or production while it is taking place, and self-evaluation after the learning activity has been completed", cognitive strategies are those which "are more directly related to individual learning tasks". Social/affective strategies have to do with "the influence of social and affective processes of learning". Examples for the latter are cooperative learning and asking questions for clarification (p. 8). Scarella and Oxford state that learning strategies are defined as "specifications, behaviors, steps, or techniques -- such as seeking out conversation partners, or giving oneself encouragement to tackle a difficult language task -- used by students to enhance their own learning" (Scarella and Oxford, 1992. p. 63 as cited in Oxford, 1990, p. 2). She also adds that these strategies are often used consciously and gives a more elaborate taxonomy. She presents six categories of language learning strategies: cognitive, mnemonic, metacognitive, compensatory, affective and social strategies. Language learning strategies are believed to help the learner acquire the content in question better and faster. They also enable learners to become conscious of the help they get from the successful use of language learning strategies. Learning a language cannot be studied without respect to one's L1. In her book titled *Linguistic Awareness in Multilinguals*, Jessner (2006) writes about prejudice about the notion of multilinguals. Among others, she says that there was a belief that a multilingual person is the one who "does not mix his or her languages" (p. 10).

When it comes to multilingualism, language learning strategies are important because many of them have been discussed in terms of second and third language acquisition. Learning

a language is a long process that can be simplified to a certain extent with implementing proper strategies. There have been many studies on this topic and many of them covered very specific strategies in the process of second language acquisition. Another notion related to this is the notion of independent learning. In the book *Language Learning Strategies in Independent Settings*, White (2008) says that

strategies offer a set of options from which learners consciously select in real time, taking into account changes occurring in the environment, in order to optimise their chances of success in achieving their goals in learning and using the TL. As such, the term strategy characterises the relationship between intention and action, and is based on a view of learners as responsible agents who are aware of their needs, preferences, goals and problems (p. 9).

We can say that language learning is a process in which learners have their L1 as the starting point and L2 as the target. Many factors influence that process, such as the awareness of one's goal, their intentions and actions. White (2008) characterizes the learner as the responsible agent, but it can also be said that strategies are the learner's vehicle necessary for this journey from the starting point to the goal or the target. This relationship between the agent and the vehicle is very important, especially if we deal with multilinguals, whose process of language learning resembles a network that has many targets on different ends. Such learners need strong vehicles of great quality in order to be able to constantly have all these targets in mind and all their systems under control.

Brown (1987) gives an interesting comparison between mice and men related to behavior, methods of training and dealing with a task. He presents a situation where a mouse is to be trained to walk backward in a circle in an open space, without barriers or guiding markers. He says that this task is very overwhelming and complex and that there are some important questions that have to be dealt with in order for this process of training to be successful. First, he mentions the specification of entry behavior or simply said – defining what the mouse already knows. Next are the goals of the task, methods of training, evaluation procedure and finally, the question of maintaining of the learned. The author emphasizes the fact that this process with these steps is complex by itself, and the subject in question is a mouse. It is, naturally, even more complex and demanding when it comes to people with their complex cognitive systems. However, it has to be noted that these questions that Brown pointed out as important truly are present in the process of human learning as well (p. 60). The most interesting

part here are the ‘methods of training’ that can be related to strategies in language teaching and learning. Both teachers and students have their strategies in the process of language learning. Brown states that these methods are defined based on the entry behavior and goals of the task (p. 62). This can also apply to language learning. People choose their strategies based on what they already know about a language and based on what they want to achieve with the acquisition of the given language. For example, if a learner is very proficient in Croatian and starts learning Polish, they will probably choose a learning strategy that will compare similar constructions between the languages and use them to simplify the process. If their goal is to be able to communicate in Polish, with no special regard to the written aspect of the language, they will direct their learning towards the communicative function of the language.

In her research on language learning strategies of multilingual adults learning additional languages, Violetta Dmitrenko (2017) revealed that her interviewees use the following strategies: they translate not only to their L1 but to any language learned prior to the new language they are acquiring. They compare languages and use code-switching to other languages in case of difficulties. She also identified a number of new strategies which were added to the taxonomy of Cognitive, Metacognitive and Social/Affective strategies. Those which were added to the group of Cognitive strategies were cross-linguistic grouping for memorizing, transferring across all the learner’s languages, formulating new hypothesis about new languages and interconnecting different languages. According to Oxford’s (1990) taxonomy, these are direct strategies. The group of direct strategies is followed by the group of indirect strategies. This group was enriched by some metacognitive strategies which included setting goals for each language, evaluating one’s own progress, skills, learning experience and teaching/learning methods, as well as practicing. Affective strategies which the author recognized with her interviewees were “affective transfer, coping with negative feelings about poor outcomes at the initial stages of learning a new TL; changing one’s attitude to errors and learning from them; reflecting on one’s own feelings about learning different languages at different stages,” (Dmitrenko, 2017, p. 16).

Charlotte Kemp (2010) posed a question if multilinguals use more strategies than monolinguals and bilinguals. Her three hypotheses were: (1) the more languages learners know, the greater the number of grammar learning strategies they will use, (2) the more languages learners know, the more frequently they will use grammar learning strategies, and (3) the more languages learners know, the greater the number who will use idiosyncratic grammar learning strategies (p. 244). The results confirmed all three hypotheses. She also revealed one more

interesting result – that multilingualism seems to have a threshold effect, meaning that “the relatively inexperienced bilinguals use fewer strategies than the multilinguals taken as a group” (p. 255).

Vorstman, De Swart, Ceginkas and Van Den Bergh (2009) conducted an interesting research study where they wanted to see if learning a language in a formal context improves the learner’s metacognitive awareness. They observed preschoolers aged four and a half to six and a half with special attention paid to how the children treated the reception of information in situations where they were exposed to foreign language interlocutors. Their results showed that a formal learning context improves metacognitive awareness.

We will mention the role of mixing languages, using L1 to help with difficulties in L2, using a number of different strategies, learning in formal and informal context and metalinguistic awareness. What has not been a popular topic in studies or research conducted so far, at least to our knowledge, is the difference between language learning strategies used by language learners who are majors in one or more languages, and therefore the ones for whom languages are part of their profession, and those who are majors in some other field of study.

3. The Study

3.1. Aim

The question that will be discussed in this part of the paper is whether people who study a language are more aware of their language learning strategies and whether they use that awareness to make their learning even more successful. Having not found any research dealing with this topic, we wanted to see if there are some prominent differences between two groups of multilinguals in terms of language learning strategies and independence in learning. At the beginning of this study it was assumed that the participants who (have) studied a language as their university major would have a higher level of metalinguistic awareness and that there would be some differences between the groups when it comes to language learning strategies. The aim of this study was to examine whether different career choices influence the way languages are learned or approached. In order to do that, we asked the participants two sets of questions. In the first set we wanted to get a general impression concerning the participants' attitudes towards language learning, the strategies they use with foreign languages and their metalinguistic awareness. In the second set of questions we gave the participants examples from a foreign language they speak to see how they would deal with potential problems. We chose English because it was L2 of all the participants. We wanted to see how the participants would learn vocabulary, tenses and prepositions in English. In addition to that, we asked them about the relationships between the languages they speak and about language learning motivation.

3.2. The context of the study

The notion of culture is very important for multilingualism. Croatia is a country that has just recently entered the European Union, but whose inhabitants have been multilingual in general for many years. This is so because Croatia used to be a part of a bigger country, Yugoslavia, where multilingualism was not a strange notion. Croats were exposed to several different languages in Yugoslavia and they continued to maintain the multilingual aspect as an important part of their culture even after gaining independence. In Croatian primary schools children learn at least one or two foreign languages. In secondary schools they add at least one or two more. Therefore, from very early on, multilingualism is something that enters everyday life of Croatian children.

Mihaljević Djigunović (2013) wrote about attitudes to multilingualism in Croatia. Her study showed that Croatian learners and users of foreign languages “consider knowledge of

foreign languages a great asset in life," emphasizing that Croats have generally positive attitudes to foreign languages (p. 178). She related this to a long tradition in foreign language learning and in starting relatively early as well as the presence of foreign languages in everyday life through the media, and the usefulness of languages in private and professional life. In relation to that, it is important to mention that popular culture has a great influence on maintaining the role of multilingualism in Croatian culture. Foreign movies, series or TV shows are not dubbed; all of them contain Croatian subtitles, which prompt the exposure to foreign languages even more. Foreign music is also very popular among Croats, even some young Croatian bands choose to start their careers writing and singing in English. This is all culturally very specific, because Croatian is a language spoken by a relatively small community. In order for Croats to keep in touch with the rest of the world, they have to adapt to it. Multilingualism is very helpful to them in this respect. This is the reason why English is widely spoken in Croatia, followed by German and even French, which are the languages learned in most schools. Italian is also spoken in some parts of Croatia which are very close to Italy. Therefore, one can say that in Croatia multilingualism has an important role and is considered an asset not only on individual, but on national level as well.

3.3. Participants

We divided the participants into two groups – the L group and the NL group. There were eight participants in total. It was decided to divide the participants into two groups based on the field they were majoring or had majored in. Therefore, the L group consisted of people whose carrier choice was in their language profession, whereas the participants from the NL group were majoring or had majored in different fields: Economics, Chemistry, Nutrition and Biological Engineering. The groups also differed in the way they were learning languages. The L group learned English, for example, as a part of their formal education, through primary and secondary school and in college. The NL group had English as a subject in their schools but they learned it in private courses as well after they chose a career in some other field but wanted to continue learning English. All participants were aged 23-27. All participants had Croatian as their L1 and fluently spoke English. Other languages that they spoke were Swedish, Polish, German, Italian, Spanish, French.

3.4. Procedure

The study took form of an interview where three groups of questions, apart from general questions about the participants, were asked. The questions asked in this part of the study are shown in Appendix 1. We decided to start with general questions about the participants. They were asked about their age, languages they spoke, when they started learning foreign languages and if they would describe themselves as multilingual. These answers were supposed to give our participants a notion of what they were going to talk about and the question about whether they felt they were multilingual or not was supposed to make them think about it and explain their answer. Questions about age and languages they spoke were necessary because it was important to have multilingual participants who do not differ in age much.

The participants were then asked about their attitudes towards language learning. These questions were important because the answers were supposed to show if the participants preferred a naturalistic or a classroom environment and if they relied more on teachers or materials when they were learning a language. We wanted to see if there was a connection between those answers and the way the participants were learning, again in relation to their career choice. To find out more about their attitudes to language learning, we asked for their opinion on what the hardest part of learning a language was and which benefits multilingualism could have in their everyday lives. In the part where the participants were asked about their language learning strategies, they answered questions related to coping with difficulties in a language, ways of learning grammar and vocabulary, learning through rules or usage and relying on their L1. This was the part which we found the most interesting and which was also the reason for coming up with the second set of questions. With questions about language learning strategies we wanted to tap into potential differences between the two groups of our participants which would show if they approached language learning differently. Moreover, we wanted their answers to show if multilingualism is a bigger factor than their career choice when it comes to success in learning languages.

Finally, the last part of the first set of questions was supposed to show if the participants were aware that they were multilingual. This was interesting because a similar question was asked at the beginning of the questionnaire, so we wanted to ask more specific questions about the participants' L1 and L2, if they made connections between the languages, how much they thought about mistakes, or what they thought about their process of learning and using the language in general.

As it was said before, after reading the answers of the first set of questions, we found that the most interesting part was the language learning strategies part, so we decided to ask another set of questions which would offer us a more detailed insight into the participants' language learning strategies. The second set of questions is shown in Appendix 2. It consisted of five questions which were more direct and more practical than the first set of questions. We wanted the participants to use what they had said in their first interview and see their language learning strategies in practice. That is why we decided to ask them directly about how they would learn certain words or explain some rules or grammatical notions. The choice of the examples was also not random. We wanted to see how much they relied on their L1 when we asked about words that are similar in English and Croatian. We chose asking them to define Present Perfect Tense in particular because in Croatian there is no equivalent to the tense and we wanted to see to which extent they were able to think in English. We also asked them about how they would learn prepositions, because we believe that prepositions are something that can be learned in different ways, so we wanted to see if the groups differed in that respect. Finally, we asked about how much attention they paid to similarities and differences between the languages they speak in order to see how they connect the languages in their mind. Asking both sets of questions enabled us to see what these multilinguals thought about the process of language learning they had gone through and then how they acted and what they did when they were given specific examples that they had to cope with. We chose the form of interviews because we believed that through interviewing people we would get the kind of answers that we would be able to look into and explore in detail. Throughout the interview, we maintained a relaxed atmosphere in which the participants shared their experiences openly and without worrying about right or wrong answers.

3.5. Results and Discussion

3.5.1. Perception of selves as multilinguals

First of all, it is important to mention that most people from the NL group did not consider themselves multilingual. They said that being multilingual meant being fluent and proficient in more than two languages and they did not feel they were proficient in all the languages they spoke. When it was explained to them that multilingualism does not mean being proficient in all the languages one speaks, they said that they did feel multilingual and gave reasons such as "*I can communicate in more languages*", "*I speak two languages very well and often use borrowed words and know how to communicate in three more languages*", "*I have a 'ground' for learning even more languages*". The L group mostly answered that they do feel

multilingual, because being multilingual means to use two or more languages and being familiar with them. The most obvious difference between the answers of participants in the two groups in this respect was that the L group did not need further explanation on the notion of multilingualism, because they were familiar with it.

3.5.2. Attitudes towards language learning

It was interesting to see that the participants from the L group put more emphasis on the teachers when asked about the role of teachers and materials in learning a language. All participants in the L group thought that teachers had a more important role in one's language learning process and that materials could be as important only when the teacher was good. However, the participants from the NL group said that both teachers and materials were equally important. This was an interesting point because it showed that clearly the two groups differed in the way they relied on things when learning languages. The fact that the L group put more emphasis on teachers may suggest that they were familiar with different approaches to teaching throughout their education. It seems that different learning contexts may have played a role here. It is a fact that in college education, when it comes to the L group, all the importance was simply put on the second language in question and the teachers who taught the courses were all language majors as well. This could mean that the L group put more emphasis on teachers because they had more experience with teachers who had also gone through college education for language teaching. That is why it could be possible that the L group felt the difference between the approach to teaching between college and secondary education.

On the other hand, the NL group faced another interesting situation, which is learning languages in private courses, apart from primary and secondary schools. When faced with learning a language in a private school, one is expected to invest in that learning because the assumption is that the intrinsic motivation is very important. Although there are some very good extrinsic reasons for learning a foreign language, such as better job opportunities or being more comfortable when traveling, the intrinsic motivation is something one needs to succeed in learning a language in a private school. Pupils usually find motivation in grades. In private courses, there are no grades and the motivation comes mostly from the students themselves and their wish to succeed. Apart from that fact, people usually pay for those classes and their tutors expect them to invest in their learning, they provide them with different types of materials that are usually significantly different from those used in primary and secondary schools. They are more interactive, usually there is more team work and exposure to the foreign language spoken by native speakers and students do not feel as much pressure as they do in schools. Based on

their experience about language learning in different environments, it is possible that both groups related their personal experiences to their attitudes. When asked about the importance of teachers and materials in the language learning process, the participants started sharing their experience and tried to support their answers by giving examples from what they had experienced in schools. It was not surprising that they would do so. What was a little bit surprising, however, was that the NL group would find materials as important as teachers in language learning process.

The biggest difference between the groups was noted in the answers the participants gave on their preferences about the learning environment. All the participants from the NL group said that they preferred a naturalistic environment, while the participants from the L group said that they preferred the combination of a formal and a naturalistic environment. We will return to this finding later as it will be discussed in terms of the language strategies that the participants reported using in this study.

When it comes to the reasons for learning a foreign language, there were no prominent differences. Almost all participants said that they started learning foreign languages because they were obligatory subjects in schools, but the participants from the L group used phrases such as "*I was good at it*", "*I was keen to learn it*", "*I loved languages*", while the participants from the NL group more often said that learning a language seemed "*useful*". This points to the fact that different types of motivation were involved in the process of learning of the two groups – extrinsic (the NL group) and intrinsic (the L group). Students who are motivated by curiosity and interest serve as examples of intrinsic motivation, whereas students motivated by the approval of a teacher or a parent or by good grades serve as examples of extrinsic motivation. In our case, the L group was motivated by their inner feeling that they are good at languages, whereas the NL group recognized the benefits that speaking more languages would bring them. Some authors, like J. D. Williams and Scott D. Alden (1983) argue that the structure of the classroom is also important when it comes to motivation. Our study may be a proof of this. We believe that sometimes language classrooms are an important factor when it comes to motivation. Although intrinsic motivation is not that debilitated, because new forms of teaching allow its development by not putting grades in the focus as much as it was the case before, it can still be felt that students in private schools do not feel as much pressure as they do in classrooms where they have to worry about the grades. However, we feel that there is one factor that is more important than the classrooms when it comes to motivation. Two different types of motivation between the groups appear due to their preferences when it comes to languages or

some other subjects. It can be said that the main difference between the groups when it comes to this is that the L group finds personal satisfaction in language learning because they are passionate about it. The NL group has something else they are passionate about, which is why they chose the career they chose, and learning languages comes as an additional ability in their professional or personal lives.

Finally, when asked about the advantages of multilingualism, all the participants in both groups said that multilingualism did affect their everyday life and were able to list many advantages that came with it, such as being more qualified for many jobs, having a better experience when traveling, being able to keep in touch with the rest of the world etc. There were no differences between the groups in the answers.

3.5.3. Language learning strategies

When asked about how they dealt with something difficult they could not cope with when learning a language, the participants from the NL group answered mostly that their first move would be to ask somebody who was an expert in the field or who knew the matter better than them (teachers or peers). This is a clear example of the social/affective group of strategies. They all said that after asking they would try other things, such as simplify the task like they do in math, practice or search for more materials that could help them understand the problem they were facing. On the other hand, it was interesting to note that the participants from the L group all answered that they would first try to deal with the difficulty by themselves, whether that meant checking online, writing things down, making their own rules, forming their own associations, or using knowledge of similar languages. Therefore, they mostly used cognitive strategies. Only if they failed to solve the problem using these solutions, they would ask for help, which is a completely opposite strategy than the one used by the NL group.

When it comes to strategies the participants used for learning vocabulary or grammar, the interviews showed that the NL group was slightly more creative, which we found somewhat surprising. They mentioned extensive reading materials, different contexts and examples, drawings, cards and highlighters for both vocabulary and grammar learning enhancement. The L group mentioned reading out loud, repeating, making lists, explaining mistakes, using dictionaries and only one participant said that sometimes she made up her own songs. The L group seemed to have less creative strategies with no cards, drawings, colors for grammar points and when it comes to vocabulary, all they mentioned was lists of words, without emphasizing reading. What must be mentioned here is the notion of awareness of using these strategies. It is

possible that the L group takes some of the strategies for granted, meaning that they stopped being aware of them. This may be why they omitted mentioning them in the interview.

In the part where they were asked if they used their L1 when they needed to recall something from their L2, the NL group answered that they did so only with languages they were less proficient in, which was similar to the answers given by the L group. There were no important differences between the groups regarding this question. In relation to this, the next question asked the participants if their L1 or L2 was helpful with learning another language. The participants from the NL group all but one answered that their L1 was not helpful with other languages. The one who answered that it was helpful emphasized the importance of knowing how one's L1 grammar functions in order to be able to understand and learn L2 grammar. On the other hand, the participants from the L group all but one answered that their L1 was helpful with learning other foreign languages. The one who answered that L1 was not helpful said that "*it is not helpful, but it is amusing*", by which she meant that the mistakes she made in her L2 came from L1 and that analyzing them amused her. The fact that the majority from the NL group said that their L1 was not helpful when learning another foreign language could be explained in relation to the way of perceiving languages. People who majored in a language are more used to perceiving all languages as systems that share some general principles and ways of functioning. Therefore, it is easier for them to use another language as a helpful tool when learning a new one. Those who have majored in another field may have a different vision of languages, separating them as different subjects and concentrating on only one at a time. Therefore, we think that mixing languages proves that a person is aware of various linguistic systems that are present in their mind, which enables them to use the elements and components of these systems when the need for their use appears. The answers given here motivated us to explore language learning strategies more thoroughly, because it did not feel that the NL group did not use their L1 while learning languages. The fact that they said they used their L1 when they needed to recall something from their L2 was puzzling, so we decided to ask more questions about this in the second part of the interview.

Finally, the most interesting part from this set of questions had to do with the participants' answers about learning a language through rules or through use. From the first set of questions we learned that the NL group preferred naturalistic environments for learning a language, whereas the L group said that they preferred a combination of naturalistic and classroom environments. However, all but one from the NL group answered that they preferred learning through rules over learning through use, which showed inconsistency with their attitudes

towards learning a language. They emphasized the importance of learning the structures in a language. On the other hand, the L group mostly stayed consistent and answered that they preferred learning a language using the combination of rules and use. Only one participant stated that rules were boring and that she preferred learning a language through use only. It is important to mention, however, that the learning environment and usage-based or rule-based learning are not entirely opposite. Even in the formal environment there can be rule- and usage-based approaches. Maybe the participants from the L group were more aware of that, which was why they emphasized the combination of the two. The NL participants emphasized rules and structure as their preferred way of learning a language, because they were mostly faced with that type of learning throughout their education and it was hard for them to imagine learning a language without having some kind of structure behind it. Later they switched the emphasis to the use, probably because they felt more comfortable learning a language in some more relaxed situations, through popular culture and communication with native speakers. We assume that they did not relate that to the classroom environment, because they never had similar experience.

3.5.4. Metalinguistic awareness

When asked if they felt they could learn a foreign language easily, the participants from the NL group answered positively, but they could not give an explanation for it. They used explanations such as "*I have the ability to imitate*", "*I don't know how to describe it*", "*Honestly, I don't know why*" and "*I don't know why. I really don't.*" The L group also answered positively, except for one participant who said that she thought it did not take her long to learn a foreign language, but she felt she was slow compared to the others. Unlike the NL group, the L group participants were able to give some more specific reasons for it, for example: "...*because I started early and because of the level of education I have*", "*I feel I have enough (language learning) experience*", "*I can learn the basics easily, the rest depends on motivation.*" These answers show that the L group is more aware of their metalinguistic abilities than the NL group because they mentioned some important factors such as age, previous learning experience and motivation. These factors were emphasized in college-level education as important factors that affect language learning process and achievement.

There were no prominent differences in the part where the participants were asked about how much they worried about making mistakes. Most of them answered that the more proficient they were in a language, the less they worried. The participants from the NL group answered that they did not worry about making mistakes in the foreign language they felt to be most

proficient in, but for other languages, they did worry. The same was with the L group. The interesting part is, though, that the L group answered that they found the communicative function of language the most important and that, if the message was successfully conveyed, making mistakes was not important at all. Moreover, three of them mentioned that it depended on the situation (classroom environment, formal occasions, the interlocutor...), but that they were generally relaxed when it came to speaking. This also serves to prove that their metalinguistic awareness is on a higher level, because they did not put as much emphasis on making mistakes, being aware of different functions a language has and that the communicative function is one of the most important ones. It can be said that they do not consider language to be a set of rules, but a powerful tool for communication which can change depending on different environments. This can mean that they understand that there is more behind speaking a language, which is why we think they are more metalinguistically aware.

All participants from both groups said that they make connections between different languages they speak. There were no important differences in the answers, except that the NL group gave examples to clarify this, while the participants from the L mostly showed it as a strategy for learning a language easier. The examples that the NL group gave were some of the following: *“Some structures in Spanish really reminded me of French and it was easier for me to learn them. The same is with the vocabulary. When I learned Latin it was easier for me to learn cases because I was familiar with the cases in Croatian.”*, *“I sometimes compare the languages, for example the level of complexity in Chinese and other languages.”*, *“I remembered that ‘dick’ in German is ‘fat’ although we all know what it means in English. I usually remember these things with vocabulary.”*, *“For example, in Italian, ‘volontieri’ means ‘gladly’ and I couldn’t remember it so I related that to ‘volja’, ‘volonterizam’ and I remembered it easily.”* The L group answered like this: *“Yes, always. It is more fun.”*, *“Yes, especially when only starting to learn a new language. It is easier to learn things, especially basic grammar, when you can compare it to the grammar of another language that you know.”*, *“I often find similarities between languages in vocabulary or syntax. I also make connections with languages I never learned, but was exposed to in some way.”*, *“Yes, I find this very entertaining.”*, and *“Yes, I try to make as many connections as I can because I think that helps me learn languages more quickly.”*

When it comes to the factors that make a language easy or difficult to learn, the participants from the NL group mostly mentioned grammar. Some of them emphasized specific aspects, like phonology (meaning languages that have a different phonemic system than their L1, such

as Chinese or Russian), spelling and pronunciation, whereas others just said “grammar” or “complexity”. The participants from the L group also mentioned grammar and the complexity of the language they were learning, but it was interesting that they focused more on the individual factors that influence language learning. Most of them emphasized “*the will to learn a language*,” the “*predisposition for language learning*” and “*motivation*” as factors that make a language difficult or easy to learn. Two of them also mentioned the closeness of a language in question to the learner’s L1, by which they meant the level to which two languages are related or close to one another.

Finally, there were no differences in the answers given by both groups to the question about the language they felt most confident with. All of them answered that, in addition to their L1, they felt most confident using the foreign language they were most proficient in, which did not surprise us. There was only one exception, a participant from the NL group who said that she felt more confident in English than in Croatian explained that she liked the English culture more and that she felt “*more free*” using English. She supported this answer by saying that she was funnier in English and that it was easier for her to express her feelings in English.

3.5.5. Language learning strategies: comparison between the groups

After the first set of questions there was a clearer insight in the differences between the L and NL group when it comes to different aspects of language learning. Some answers were similar and there were no important differences. However, we were able to conclude that career choice did have an influence on the metalinguistic awareness and language learning strategies of the participants. What seemed to be the most interesting part to us was the part with language learning strategies. We noticed that the answers given by the participants were interesting and we wanted to see if there were any prominent differences in the way the two groups learned specific parts of grammar or vocabulary. Therefore, we decided to ask an additional set of questions in order to see if there were important differences between the L and NL group when it comes to language learning strategies. These additional questions are provided in Appendix 2.

- a) ‘Television’, ‘to give up’ and ‘amazing’

The first question aimed at examining the use of strategies when learning vocabulary. We asked the participants to explain how they would learn particular words. We chose three words: ‘*television*’, ‘*to give up*’, and ‘*amazing*’. The word ‘*television*’ was chosen because it is similar in many languages and we wanted to know if both groups would use the same strategies to learn

it. Then we decided to go with a phrasal verb because the meaning with phrasal verbs does not arise from the words they consist of, but from the phrasal verb as a whole. Finally, we chose the adjective '*amazing*' because it is rather abstract and we wanted to see how the groups would deal with grasping its meaning. The L group showed that in this task they used their L1 a lot. When explaining how they would learn the word '*television*', all participants said that they would use Croatian words in order to make the meaning closer to them. They said that they would compare the word to the Croatian word for '*television*' (*televizija*) because it was practically the same word. When asked for another way of learning it, two participants said that they would divide the word into two parts: *tele-* and *vision*. The Croatian word '*tele*' means '*calf*' in English, and they explained that they would memorize the word as '*seeing a vision of a calf on TV*'.

When asked about the phrasal verb, the participants emphasized the role of context. They said that they would look for different contexts in which the word appeared and learn it through reading a lot of examples. One of the participants said that '*to give up*' means '*dići ruke od nečega*', which is a Croatian idiom with the same meaning. What is interesting here is the fact that this participant related the particle '*up*' with the Croatian verb '*dići*' and found the connection between them. This also proves a high level of relying on L1 when learning vocabulary.

Finally, the word '*amazing*', as it was supposed, presented the most problems to the participants. They did not know exactly how they would explain the strategies they used. Two of them said that they would explore all the contexts and words that the word usually appeared with and relate the meaning to some other words that were familiar to them. Other two had an interesting strategy. Both of them said that they would again divide the words into three parts: *a – maze – ing* and then remember it by *a* (the first letter of the alphabet), *maze* (English word for Croatian '*labyrinth*') and *–ing* (characteristic ending of verbs in Continuous Tenses). Although this is an interesting way of remembering a word and, according to these participants, it usually works, it has to be noticed that it is rather circular and complicated. If one does not know what a '*maze*' is, then this strategy is not helpful at all. It does not give the real explanation of how the meaning is learned, but it seems to provide an association that would trigger the situation in which the definition of the word is learned. It would be hard to imagine trying to learn more than ten words using this strategy. When asked about the meaning, these two again emphasized the importance of context, use and collocations. Overall, when asked about when

they felt they knew a particular word, the participants said that they usually felt they knew a word when they could understand it and use it in all contexts and in different ways.

When it comes to the NL group, they relied on their L1, which supports their claims about using L1 when they need to grasp the meaning of something in their L2. They mentioned dictionaries and definitions as the first option for defining the meaning of a word. After looking a word up, they mentioned using it in the context. Three out of four participants from the NL group emphasized watching movies or listening to music as a strategy for learning vocabulary. They said that it was the best way for them to memorize how a word is used, and therefore the best way for them to learn a word. Except that, there were no prominent differences between the two groups. The associations they made were more or less the same. ‘*Television*’ was related to Croatian, phrasal verb they said they would learn from the context and ‘*amazing*’ was also the most difficult word for them. They said they would try to learn its meaning using dictionaries or with the help of context. All the participants from the NL group answered that they felt they knew a word when they could use it without thinking about it too much and when they did not need too much time to think of a word. Generally, it could be said that the participants felt they had mastered a word only when they could use it naturally in their speech.

This part showed us that learning vocabulary differs, if at all, on the individual level. The L group was more specific in their answers and showed consistency when it comes to relating their L1 with their L2. The NL group showed that they still relied more on dictionaries and languages they spoke. This may be so because the L group is more comfortable with different language systems that exist in their minds, being aware that they are separate but related systems. The NL group is probably not so aware of it, because maybe they did not approach languages the same way as the L group did. Moreover, the L group seems to be more aware of different factors that affect the language learning process and because they approached language learning with more rigor throughout their college-level education, they are able to use that more linguistically aware approach in their language learning process. We do not know if the NL group is able to do the same, since they may have lacked this thorough, analytic approach to language learning.

b) Present Perfect Tense

We asked the question about the Present Perfect Tense because we wanted to see how the participants dealt with something that did not exist in their L1. We asked them how they

understood the Present Perfect Tense, how often they used it and how they knew when it needed to be used. As it was supposed, this question revealed some traces of traditional learning since the participants mostly gave standard definitions for the Present Perfect Tense. This means that most of the participants explained the Present Perfect Tense as it is usually explained by teachers in primary schools. This way of explaining is often concise and simplified, aimed at easier understanding of the concept. What is traditional in that way of explaining is that teachers usually encourage students to recognize the use of the Present Perfect Tense in connection with some adverbs of time that appear in the sentence. Both groups generally said that the Present Perfect Tense is used for an action that connects the past with the present in a way that something that has started in the past has consequences or is relevant in the present. We think that this is a traditional way of defining Present Perfect. However, none of the participants explained this tense with an emphasis on the speaker, saying that the doer of the action is in fact in the middle of that action, when using Present Perfect. None of them mentioned achievements, result, or even the difference between the Present Perfect and Past Simple Tense. Interestingly, two out of four participants from the NL group did not know what Present Perfect was. When it was explained to them and when they were given an example, they said that they used it on a daily basis, although they did not know its definition. The participants from the L group also said they used the Present Perfect Tense on a daily basis and that they recognized the situations that required the use of Present Perfect. These situations would be the ones in which the time in which the action happened was not relevant, or when a speaker talked about their experience. Moreover, they mentioned some key words that serve as triggers for the Present Perfect Tense, such as *since*, *for*, *ever*, and *never*. The NL group did not mention any trigger words and had more difficulties defining the situations in which the Present Perfect Tense was used. They said that they relied on their “*feeling*” about using it and that they did not know the rules that required the use of Present Perfect Tense. When asked to clarify the “*feeling*”, they said that they relied on things they heard in songs or movies.

These answers show that, although both groups are proficient in English, language majors have a better understanding of the Present Perfect Tense and its complexity. First of all, they have a richer grammar understanding, which is shown by the fact that they were able to give definitions for the tense and name situations in which it is used. The fact that the NL group relies on their L1 is related to the fact that they have problems defining the Present Perfect Tense, maybe because it is difficult to define it using analogies with Croatian. TV shows, movies and songs again seem to be more helpful to them. The definition of the Present Perfect

Tense was problematic, but the use was not, according to them. The tense itself was not unknown, but the deeper understanding of it was. Here it can be said that career choice does make a difference, since the NL group would probably never need the definition for this tense, as opposed to the participants from the L group, who cannot allow not to understand this tense deeply, because many things depend on it, be their profession related to teaching, translating or research. Although both groups have the declarative knowledge of the structure and use of the Present Perfect Tense, the L group was more familiar with it and we think that the career choice was a factor here.

c) Prepositions

In order to tap further into language learning strategies, we decided to ask one more specific question, so we asked the participants how they would learn prepositions in English. We also asked what advice they would give to someone who had problems or difficulties learning or using prepositions in English. All the participants from the L group emphasized reading and they said that the only way to be comfortable with using prepositions was to read and listen. Through reading and listening one can notice collocations and see with which words certain prepositions usually appear. One participant said that it would be helpful to visualize prepositions and use drawings for some of them like *over*, *under*, *at*, *in*, *on*... The NL group emphasized context as well, but they mentioned TV shows, movies and songs. When asked how they would cope with difficulties with prepositions, they said that they would try to make up their own sentences because it was easier to relate L2 to L1 in that way or they would find the prepositions in question used in songs, which they found very helpful. The difference between the groups when it comes to this question was not very big. However, it is interesting to point out how big of an influence popular culture seems to have on the NL group. They are not surrounded by language so much in their professional settings as the L group is, but they create a setting for them to think of a language and they do so in their free time. While listening to music or watching TV they seem to think about grammar and vocabulary and learn them in that way. This is something that the L group did not mention, because they were more used to enhancing their language knowledge through books or in classroom settings and even through work, while teaching or translating.

d) Similarities and differences between the languages

From the previous answers, it could be seen that the NL group definitely did make connections between the languages they spoke. However, the L group also said that they did

make connections between the languages and that they noticed similarities and differences between them. All the participants from both groups said that sometimes these similarities and differences between the languages they spoke helped them while learning a new language and that sometimes they did not. They mentioned false pairs as examples of when similarities between the languages were not helpful. Generally, however, both groups said that they liked making connections between the languages and noticing similarities and differences in them. There were no important differences between the groups regarding this question.

e) Plans and motivation

The results showed that L group generally did not plan their learning anymore. This seems to be so because they did not feel that languages they spoke and had studied needed to be learned like school subjects. This was especially the case with English, which had reached the same level as their L1 in certain aspects, as they used it on a daily basis as a part of their profession. They read a lot, listen to it a lot and speak it a lot. Having all that in mind, a notion of taking language strategies for granted appeared as a factor here. It is possible that learning languages became so natural to the L group that they did not need to plan their learning anymore. However, when asked to think of how they did their planning before, when some things needed to be learned (like grammar or vocabulary for certain courses), they said that they would divide the materials in sections and learn the sections one by one. When it comes to motivation, they said that they found motivation in awarding themselves, for example taking a break after each covered unit or treating themselves with something they liked after finishing the work.

The participants from the NL group said that they did plan their learning. Some of them emphasized the importance of homework. One of the participants from the NL group said that he planned his learning by making up sentences and finding the most useful phrases that would help him memorize the vocabulary. Here it was obvious that the NL group did not take language learning strategies for granted, they still used them and were aware of them, but they did rely on the teacher and tasks they were given by somebody else.

These answers are interesting and could be explained by the fact that language majors already saw themselves as a certain authority. After all, language has become their profession and they feel competent in that respect. They did not rely on others as much as the participants from the NL group, who maybe did not feel as competent and still needed some guidance when it came to learning and practicing. After all, motivation is a matter of individual differences and

we cannot say that career choice influences it. Some found their lost motivation in taking a break for learning, others in finding interesting examples to keep the subject interesting. Basically, every participant had their own way of coping with the lack of motivation, which was not surprising here.

4. Conclusion

The participants in this study were students whose L1 is Croatian. Croatia has an interesting multilingual history and people mostly have positive attitudes to language learning because they find foreign languages to be assets in their personal and professional development. The fact that multilingualism exists for decades in this country proves that Croats do not find other languages to be endangering their mother tongue. Multilingualism is nowadays something natural to them and also necessary for personal success. More than one language is taught in Croatian schools from the first grade. In the majority of schools, English is first taught as L2, followed by German, Italian or French. Language learning is something children face as soon as they face the education system. Therefore, language learning strategies are something they use as soon as they enter that system. Naturally, there has to be some connection between multilingualism and language learning strategies. Language learning is an ongoing process and it is interesting to look into strategies that students apply during that process. For us, it was interesting to focus on multilinguals and the two groups we interviewed because of the importance and roles that multilingualism has in the contemporary society. For that reason we examined the role of career choice to see if it affects the way multilinguals learn. In other words, the question we wanted to answer is whether a career choice makes a difference when it comes to language learning strategies in multilinguals, and here is what we found.

The role of multilingualism, or multiple language learning experience, is more important than the role of career choice when it comes to the success in language learning, which is why the differences between the groups regarding this issue were not prominent.

Both groups formed their attitudes towards language learning based on their personal experience. The L group found teachers very important in that process whereas the NL group emphasized both teachers and materials. We concluded that this has to do with the environment in which they underwent the process of language learning, the L group being more exposed to the formal classroom environment, and the NL group having more experience with private language courses.

The NL group preferred a naturalistic environment and the L group the combination of classroom and naturalistic environment of learning. In relation to this, we recognized factors of intrinsic motivation with the L group and extrinsic motivation with the NL group, as expected. Both groups pointed out that multilingualism affected their everyday life and considered it to be something very worthy.

The NL group lacked explanations for their ability to learn languages easily, whereas the L group gave specific explanations where they related language learning with motivation and experience. We concluded that the L group has a higher level of metalinguistic awareness. Both groups answered that they worried about mistakes in languages they are less proficient in, but the L group emphasized the importance of communication and successful message conveyance. We concluded that this is another proof of higher metalinguistic awareness with the L group. We believe this is so because the L group is aware that language is a very powerful tool for communication, rather than merely a set of rules that need to be followed.

Both group make connections between languages they speak and all of them, not surprisingly, felt the most confident in the language they were most proficient in. Both groups also think that grammar is what makes a language difficult or easy to learn, but the L group added individual differences such as age, motivation and aptitude as factors to this notion as well.

When it comes to language learning strategies, we concluded that the L group was more independent and that the participants from that group dealt with difficulties in a language by themselves, as opposed to the participants from the NL group, who tried to find solutions with the help of experts in the field. We find it possible that the L group takes their language learning strategies for granted and that the participants from that group are sometimes unaware that things they use qualify as strategies. The NL group seemed to be slightly more creative when it comes to language learning in the sense that they used colorful materials, cards or songs when they needed to memorize something. Both groups used their L1 for help, but the NL group found their L1 not so helpful with other languages they speak, as opposed to the L group. We explain this with the assumption that the NL group does not perceive languages as systems that share some general principles and maybe separate them in their mind, whereas the L group is more prone to viewing them as separate, but connected systems.

The NL group prefers learning using rules, whereas the L group prefers the combination of rule-based learning and learning through use. We conclude that the NL group is inconsistent when it comes to this, having in mind their claim that they preferred naturalistic environment. However, we think that this is again related to their experience and metalinguistic awareness and the conclusion is that the L group is more aware of the fact that rules and use do not exclude one another, just like classroom and naturalistic environments do not entail exclusively explicit

and implicit learning. We found that all the participants coped with the lack of motivation in different ways, which is why we concluded that this was an individual matter, as expected.

The following are the instances in which we believe that the career choices might have had an effect on language learning. The L group used their L1 a lot with learning new vocabulary and they often made interesting connections between Croatian and English. They also put a lot of emphasis on the importance of context, use and collocations when it comes to learning and defining new vocabulary. The NL group also relied on their L1, but they emphasized listening to music and watching movies as a strategy for learning new vocabulary. We conclude that the biggest difference between the groups here is the influence of popular culture which seems to be very important to the NL group, as opposed to the L group who do not mention it a lot.

The L group does not plan their learning, whereas the NL group does. We conclude this is so because the L group finds language learning natural as they use their L2 every day and in different situations, both in professional and private matters.

The L group was able to define the Present Perfect Tense using rules and definitions, as opposed to the NL group who struggled with this. We conclude that the L group has a better understanding of the Present Perfect Tense and that the NL group does not have problems using it, but does when it comes to defining it. We think that career choice has a great influence here, because the L group spends more time looking into languages and deals with defining complex matters that do not exist in their L1. The NL group relies on popular culture and communication because they learn languages mostly in their free time and in different environment than the L group. Therefore, their use of complex grammatical notions such as the Present Perfect Tense that do not exist in their L1 are not a problem, since they hear it a lot. However, defining it is a problem, since they cannot make analogies to their L1 and lack declarative knowledge.

All this being said, we can conclude that career choice may be related to language learning strategies in some ways. It affects the way multilinguals deal with difficulties in languages they speak and the way they implement their language learning strategies. However, a non-language career choice does not prevent multilinguals from learning foreign languages. The answers provided concerning language learning did not seem to be affected by career choice and the experience of learning multiple languages may be a much more important factor for language learning. We think that our study shows some interesting differences between the L and NL group. It also confirms our expectation that the L group will have a higher level of metalinguistic awareness than the NL group and that language learning strategies will in some

ways be different between the groups. We believe we have shown that multilingualism plays an important role when it comes to language learning, since multilinguals seem to keep learning languages even if they choose their careers in different fields. Career choice does affect the way languages are perceived, but it does not condition proficiency or success in languages. We are aware that there may be some different explanations of our results and believe that this is a field that can be further studied. However, this is certainly an interesting insight into the role of career choice when it comes to language learning strategies with multilingual people.

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6. Appendices

Appendix 1 – The First set of questions

General information about the participants:

- 1) How old are you?
- 2) What languages do you speak?
- 3) When did you start learning the languages you speak?
- 4) Do you consider yourself multilingual?

a) attitudes towards language learning:

1. What role did language learning have in your formal education? How important was the teacher? How important were the materials used in your learning process?
2. Have you learned languages only in classroom environment? If not, what do you prefer – classroom or naturalistic environment?
3. Why did you decide to learn foreign languages?
4. Does multilingualism affect your everyday life and if so, how?
5. What is the hardest part about learning a language?

b) language learning strategies:

1. How did you cope with difficulties in learning a foreign language?
2. Did you use any special methods for learning the vocabulary and grammar?
3. Do you think about what you want to say in your L1 or L2?
4. How helpful (if at all) is your L1 or your L2 when learning another foreign language?
5. Do you prefer learning using rules or acquiring a language through its use?

c) meta linguistic awareness:

1. Do you feel that you can learn foreign languages easily? Why?
2. When speaking L2, how much do you think about making mistakes?
3. Do you make connections between different languages you speak?
4. What makes a language difficult or easy to learn?
5. Using which language do you feel most confident? Why?

Appendix 2 – The second set of questions

1. When do you feel you know a particular word? How would you learn these words:

- a television
- to give up
- amazing?

2. Do you plan your learning when you learn a foreign language? How?

How do you motivate yourself to learn when you feel tired or lose motivation?

3. How do you understand Present Perfect Tense?

How often do you use it?

How do you know when to use Present Perfect Tense?

4. What advice would you give to someone who has difficulties, for example, with prepositions in English? According to you, what is the best way to learn this?

5. Does your knowledge of other languages influence your learning of a new foreign language? Do you notice similarities and differences between the languages? Do they help you when you learn?