

University of Zagreb
Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences
Department of English, TEFL Section
Department of Ethnology and Cultural Anthropology

**Motivation and Attitudes of Roma Pupils toward Learning
English as a Foreign Language**

Graduation Thesis

Student: Maja Bobić

Supervisors: Renata Geld, Ph. D.

Jadranka Grbić, Ph. D.

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Motivacija i stavovi romskih učenika prema učenju engleskog kao stranog jezika

Diplomski rad

Studentica: Maja Bobić

Mentorice: Renata Geld, dr. sc.

Jadranka Grbić, dr. sc.

Zagreb, kolovoz, 2018.

Examining committee:

Stela Letica Krevelj, Ph. D.

Renata Geld, Ph. D.

Jadranka Grbić, Ph D.

Izjavljujem pod punom moralnom odgovornošću da sam diplomski rad „Motivacija i stavovi romskih učenika prema učenju engleskog kao stranog jezika“ izradila potpuno samostalno uz stručno vodstvo mentorica dr. sc. Renate Geld i dr. sc. Jadranke Grbić. Svi podaci navedeni u radu su istiniti i prikupljeni u skladu s etičkim standardom struke. Rad je pisan u duhu dobre akademske prakse koja izričito podržava nepovredivost autorskog prava te ispravno citiranje i referenciranje radova drugih autora.

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Abstract

This graduation thesis focuses on various affective factors that influence Roma pupils' process of learning English as a foreign language. Special attention is given to attitudes toward English and Roma pupils' perception of English, as well as their influence on the pupils' motivation. The paper starts with presenting the theoretical framework of the study, namely Gardner's sociocultural model of acquiring a second language, which is followed by a review of some of the relevant research studies conducted in this area of science. The Roma socio-cultural context is addressed by describing the Roma people's status in Croatian society as well as the circumstances of Roma pupils' education within the Croatian education system. Description of the participants and methodology of this study is followed by results and discussion. Conclusion sums up main findings, which show that pupils perceive English primarily as a school subject, and their motivation to learn it stems from the school context. It is also concluded that a different approach to research of attitudes and motivation of children is needed, namely one that would take into consideration the children's culture and worldview.

Key words: sociocultural model, Roma pupils, English as a foreign language, affective factors

1. Introduction

In the globalized and globalizing world of today, foreign language learning has become a life necessity, with English positioning itself as *lingua franca*. Proficiency in English has in many cases become a prerequisite, not an advantage, for employment. It also plays a major role in social and spatial mobility. Research into language learning has long emphasized the role of affective factors, such as attitudes and motivation, and their interplay and influence on successful language learning. Affective factors are situated in and interact with the sociocultural context of language learning. This study aims to explore the mutual influences of affective factors and sociocultural context of Roma elementary school pupils and their non-Roma peers. Roma people have a special status in Croatian society that is unlike any other national minority status, due to their long-standing social and spatial segregation. Education is largely seen as the most important tool for their integration into the Croatian society. Sociocultural context in which Roma children grow up is very different from the context of the majority population, which most of Roma children encounter for the first time upon their enrolment in school. This is why it merits special attention in language learning research.

This paper starts with presenting the theoretical framework that has served as the basis for this research, and overview of some of the relevant studies that have been conducted and published up to now. This is followed by an elaboration of the Roma people's status in Croatia and its effects on Roma children's education. After that, attention will be turned to the study itself – the author will present aims, participants, sample, and methodology and procedure of the study. Lastly, results will be presented and discussed.

2. Theoretical framework

As important as learning foreign languages has become, it is no surprise that it has been the focus of many research studies for a long time now. One of the most popular models of language learning is Robert Gardner's socio-educational model of second language acquisition. Although Gardner (1988) sees as one of the greatest assets of his model its ability to be empirically tested, the reason for using it in this research is the placement of its variables within a sociocultural context. The classification and definitions that will be discussed in this part of the paper are all taken from Mihaljević Djigunović's book (1998b) which systematically and comprehensively presents the work of various authors in the fields of second and foreign language acquisition.

2.1. The socio-educational model of acquiring L2

According to the socio-educational model of L2 acquisition, there are several factors which influence language learning, and they are set within a sociocultural environment. Along with some pre-existing factors, language learning is also determined by individual differences of the learner, formal or informal learning context and learning results (Mihaljević Djigunović, 1998b). Mihaljević Djigunović states that the extent to which each of these factors will influence language learning is determined by the sociocultural environment, as it provides the learner with a specific belief system and within it a system of attitudes towards language learning in general and the specific language that is learned. It also provides a certain kind and amount of exposure to the language in question.

Mihaljević Djigunović (1998b) reports that pre-existing factors refer to biological ones, like age and sex, and experiential ones such as previous experiences in language learning. In case of Roma pupils, previous experiences in language learning refer to the experience of learning Croatian as a second language, an important factor which will be discussed in detail further on. Individual differences are further divided into cognitive and affective factors, with cognitive factors being intelligence, language aptitude, and learning strategies, all of which are independent of each other. Affective factors are attitudes, motivation, and foreign language anxiety, which are interdependent (1998b, p. 12). Foreign language anxiety and motivation influence each other in a way that one inhibits the other, while attitudes are believed to be the main drive for motivation, but also influence the development of foreign language anxiety (1998b, p. 13). These factors will influence language learning differently and at different times in different contexts. Namely, in an informal context motivation is crucial for making the decision to start learning a language, and once learning has started, all

other factors come into play just like in a formal context. Cognitive factors will then facilitate the learning of formal knowledge, while the affective ones will determine the reaction to the learning situation and will facilitate the influence of cognitive factors (1998b, p. 13,17).

When considering the variables that influence language learning, it is necessary to distinguish between second and foreign language learning. While second language is usually learned in an informal context – in communication with native speakers – it is not necessarily always so, nor is a foreign language necessarily learned in a formal context, i.e. the classroom; though, most often, this is the case. Second language is defined by its official status in the environment (country) in which it is learned, which means more natural input, more support, but also more pressure from the environment. On the other hand, a foreign language does not have this status, and the learner's environment does not provide them with the same quality or amount of input, support, and pressure. Given the different statuses of second and foreign language, it is logical that the relationship and the influence of the affective variables listed above are different; e.g., the relationship between attitudes and motivation is different in foreign language learning, certain attitudes yielding a weaker influence on motivation (Dörnyei, 1994). Although cognitive factors have a prominent role in foreign language learning in a formal context, affective factors are believed to be the ones that put the cognitive factors into motion and facilitate them (Schumann, 1976). However, since affective factors are interdependent and the network of their mutual influence is as intricate and obscure as it is hard to objectively measure, the importance of affective factors is rarely researched and often presupposed (Mihaljević Djigunović, 1998b, p. 17). Also, Stern (1983) warns that little attention is being given in research to the existence and the differences in influence of three types of affective factors: those existing previous to the language learning experience, those created by the language learning experience, and those which are the consequence of the experience and the result of language learning. It is also important to differentiate between motivation and orientation. Motivation is defined in second language learning by the effort made to learn the language, the wish to achieve that goal, and positive attitudes (Gardner, 1985). According to Gardner (1985), integrative and instrumental motivation in second language learning are commonly confused with integrative and instrumental orientation in foreign language learning, which are clusters of reasons for learning a foreign language that may point to a type of motivation for FLL, but cannot be equated with motivation.

2.2. Attitudes

Attitude is defined by Mihaljević Djigunović as “acquired and relatively permanent opinion, relationship and behaviour towards people and things encountered by a person”¹; as they are formed on the basis of information and experience, they may be changed by new information and experience over time (1998b, p.21). Attitudes are the basis for formation of motivation and change according to the sociocultural situation in which the learner lives. Rajecki (1990) discerns between three main components of an attitude. The affective component reflects the evaluation of a thing or a person as positive or negative, the behavioural component reveals the intention to act in accordance with the attitude, and the cognitive component is comprised of information and knowledge about something, and thus forms beliefs about it. Attitude can most easily be changed by influencing its cognitive component, which will then result in a change in the affective and hopefully behavioural component. Research of attitudes focuses mainly on behavioural component as it is the most easily observable one, but with the assumption that there is a consistent relationship and correlation between the three components.

Lambert and Gardner (1972) differentiate between three types of attitudes which shape the type of motivation for language learning. The first type are the attitudes towards the language speaking community, which yield greater influence on motivation in second language learning, as will be discussed further on. The second type are the attitudes towards learning-teaching process and situation, and the language teacher. The third type of attitudes is general and includes a general interest for foreign language learning or school, as well as some character features such as ethnocentrism or anomie.

2.3. Foreign language anxiety

Foreign language anxiety is defined by Mihaljević Djigunović as “fear felt in a situation which demands use of a language other than mother tongue which a person is not sufficiently proficient at”² (1998b, p. 52). This definition refers to foreign language anxiety as a permanent trait (trait anxiety), but foreign language anxiety can emerge in a certain type of situation (situation-specific anxiety), or as a response to a specific situation (state anxiety) (1998b, p. 52). What is more, it can even appear in a situation which demands speaking in a mother tongue, such as speaking in front of a large number of people. In a formal context, foreign language anxiety may stem from the fear of speaking in a foreign language, the fear of

¹ Translated from Croatian by the author of this paper.

² Translated from Croatian by the author of this paper.

incompetence in self-representation and consequently negative social evaluation, or the fear of testing (1998b, p. 52).

Since high level of foreign language anxiety is connected to low self-esteem and relatively negative self-image, it is not surprising that foreign language anxiety may appear in some learners if they begin to perceive themselves as less competent than their peers upon comparison. Therefore, the problem may disappear with the improvement of the learner's skills, and a consequent improvement of self-image, a link which depends on attribution styles (1998b, p. 53). Other possible reasons for emergence of foreign language anxiety include, but are not limited to, tests and learner-teacher relationship. As for the type of activity, it most commonly appears as a reaction to listening and speaking, since those are the linguistic skills used in spontaneous communication, which the formal classroom context lacks (1998b, p. 53).

2.4. Motivation

Even though everyone intuitively *knows* what motivation is, the concept itself is elusive and there is no comprehensive, unequivocal definition of it, of what constitutes and drives it. However, Mihaljević Djigunović (1998b) presents two general directions in psychology which try to explain it. The first one is popularly called hedonistic. According to Thorndike's explanation (1999) in line with this direction in psychology, motivation is driven by the pursuit of pleasant and the avoidance of unpleasant experiences. In the language learning process, perception of success would be a pleasant experience, while the perception of failure would be an unpleasant one, which means that classroom activities should be adapted to the learner's capabilities and competencies and that teacher's feedback should be frequent. However, Mihaljević Djigunović warns that if we take into account the individual differences between learners, it becomes obvious that this kind of teaching-learning process is possible only in individual classes (1998b, p. 23). The other approach towards motivation is focused on the person's self-perception and their level of aspiration, the latter being dependent on the first. According to this approach all motivation stems from the person's initial, general motivation and tendency towards self-improvement or at least maintenance of a positive self-image, i.e. using their perceived potential (1998b, p. 24). It is thus necessarily determined by an individual's perception of reality and of themselves in that reality. Perception of achieved success improves self-perception as a learner, which helps develop interest and enjoyment in the activity for the sake of the activity itself, i.e. intrinsic motivation. The level of aspiration refers to the learner's expected and desired outcome of an activity. It depends on previous

success or failure, as well as the image of oneself as a learner, on the difficulty and the nature of the activity, its perceived value, etc. (1998b, p. 24).

When discussing foreign language learning in a formal context, it is necessary to consider classroom motivation. Most of the linguistic input of a foreign language, as well as encounters with the culture, comes from the classroom, and it is evident that the classroom processes and activities can yield both positive and negative influence on motivation (1998b, p. 48). Situation-specific motivation stems from the nature of the classroom situation which may be cooperative, competitive or individualistic. In a cooperative situation the goal is achievable only by cooperation and group effort, in which each member can use their strengths and improve their weaknesses by learning from the other group members and getting feedback from them. This situation also requires the members to broaden the scope of their thought, since many different ideas are brought to the table, causing greater curiosity (1998b, p. 49). This way, the potential of each individual member is greater than in an individual situation, and the chances of success are higher. Especially motivating is the fact that the members share both success and failure, and may negotiate attribution of it. The goal in the competitive situation is achievable only if everyone else fails, which entices extrinsic motivation (1998b, p. 49). Success is expected only by those learners who perceive themselves more competent than the others, which means that those who do not have a very positive image of themselves as learners may not put in effort necessary to win - their effort means nothing if the others are in advantage due to their competence, intelligence or language aptitude. Individualistic situation is also connected to extrinsic motivation (1998b, p. 49). A positive perception of one's own capabilities as well as the difficulty of the task will determine whether the learner will expect success or failure. The scope of thought is not broadened by other learners' ideas as it is in cooperative situations. Additional downsides may be accumulation of negative feelings such as boredom and feeling of isolation, which will then negatively influence motivation (1998b, p. 49).

Motivation to do a certain task depends on the perceived balance between the effort that needs to be put in, the chance of success, and value of the task, which in turn greatly depends on attribution styles and previous experiences, along with general motivation (1998b). According to Csikszentmihalyi (1991), the learner has to have the ability and possibility to complete the task, a clear goal, control of their actions, and prompt feedback. Ideally, the task should occupy the learner enough for them to forget about the effort and the time they are putting in, so curiosity imposes itself as an important factor of task motivation. Tasks should

therefore be formed as relevant problems that learners can relate to. Activities that meet all these demands are games, which are a natural activity for children since they are a part of their culture, as well as a part of human nature in general (1998b, p. 50-51). The nature of games is realistic in that it is the closest to spontaneous communication, since it demands quick improvisation, while relieving the tension of formal learning environment. Moreover, although competitive situations have some disadvantages, as has been stated earlier, games can diffuse those disadvantages, since failure can in some cases be attributed to luck, all of which alleviates foreign language anxiety (1998b, p. 51). The nature of playing also reminds of the context of acquiring a mother tongue, as playing has been pinpointed as an important strategy in it (Ervin-Tripp, 1991).

2.5. Attribution

Attribution styles have been mentioned more than once in this paper, and now is the time to pay closer attention to their workings. According to Mihaljević Djigunović attributions are “causes with which an individual explains their success or failure to themselves and to others”³ (1998b, p.55); they determine the emotional reaction to success or failure. This way they influence both the learners’ self-perception (which they are also influenced by) as well as their motivation. Weiner (1972) pinpoints three dimensions of attributions: cause, stability and control. Cause of success or failure may be internal or external in relation to the learner, it may be changed or influenced (unstable) or not (stable), and in or out of one’s control. The most common causes are competence (internal stable cause out of learner’s control), effort (internal unstable cause in learner’s control), task difficulty (external, stable, out of learner’s control) and luck (external, unstable, out of control) (Mihaljević Djigunović, 1998b, p. 55). Language learners often tend to attribute their failure in learning a language to their lack of language aptitude, which is an internal stable cause out of their control, effectively meaning that success is out of their power and reach. It is logical to assume that in this case motivation for language learning will be very low, regardless of the interplay of multiple other factors. However, attributing failure to a lack of effort, an unstable internal cause which is in learner’s control, leaves space, although not necessary motivation, for improvement. Motivation in this case still depends on multiple factors, among which are the perceived value of the task and the goal, and the effort that has to be made to reach it. In other words, if the learner evaluates the goal not worth the effort, their motivation for reaching it will be low. As explained by Weiner (1972), the emotions of happiness or sadness the learner feels upon success or failure

³ Translated from Croatian by the author of this paper.

respectively do not depend on attribution mechanisms, but on the result itself. Only after the evaluation of the result as positive or negative does the learner employ these mechanisms to attribute e.g. success to luck, in which case they will feel surprise, or effort, when they will feel pride. The self-perception as a learner may be improved in both cases, which depends on how the person defines the identity of a learner – if a learner is defined only by good grades, or the effort they put in, or their innate abilities, and so on. Learners have been found to be consistent in their attribution styles, and thus can be divided into two groups – those motivated to succeed and those motivated to avoid failure. However, Covington (1984) warns that these categories should not be understood too rigidly, as attribution mechanisms can change, so these should be taken as two extremes on a continuum. According to the same author, learners motivated to succeed prefer realistic tasks that are neither too difficult nor too easy for them. Success is then attributed to internal stable causes (e.g. language aptitude or intelligence), and failure to external unstable causes (e.g. luck) or internal unstable causes (e.g. effort). These learners will consequently feel accumulate positive feelings, which build and protect a positive self-image, and they will not perceive failure as a threat to their self-image. If a learner has accumulated negative learning experiences, it can be assumed that they have poor self-image and low expectations of themselves, i.e. low level of aspiration, which makes them motivated to avoid failure. Since they have low expectations, they tend to prefer tasks that are either too easy or too difficult, i.e. success is either guaranteed or non-viable, which is a strategy aimed at protecting their self-image. According to the same authors, they most often attribute their failure to internal stable causes out of their control (e.g. lack of language aptitude, lack of talent), while success is attributed to external unstable causes out of their control, such as luck or an easy task. These attribution tendencies, which make them blame themselves for failure and not take the responsibility for their success, result in low motivation, further accumulation of negative feelings and rare positive ones, as well as negative self-image and consequent low level of aspiration. Failure is for them a threat to their self-image and self-worth, as it confirms their feeling of incompetence. The authors note that this extreme is often called learned helplessness.

The main feature of Croatian education system which is often taken for granted is its inherently competitive nature – the goal is getting high grades, but not everyone has the same starting position. Although there are major individual differences between pupils, they are not evaluated based on their individual progress, i.e. the effort they make, but based on the standards common for all. As a result, the highest grades are reserved for those who do not

necessarily put in the most effort, but are more talented, intelligent, competent, have the best learning conditions etc., which is bound to demotivate those who have to work much harder for the same grade and it is certain to harm their self-image.

2.6. Self-perception

According to Mihaljević Djigunović, self-perception is a collective answer to the questions such as “who the person is, what they believe in, what their virtues and flaws are, as well as what they can and cannot do”⁴ (1998b, p. 57). It is based both on the previous personal life experiences as well as previous reactions of the environment to them. Sinclair (1987) claims that self-perception has an academic and non-academic aspect. According to the same author, a learner’s academic self-perception may be further divided into different perceptions of themselves as learners of different school subjects, and a person’s perception of themselves as a language learner is very important for the language learning process. It is based on previous language learning experiences, feedback to and result of those experiences, achievement and attribution mechanisms, as well as personally acquired knowledge of themselves, and thus changes with time and in relation to all these variables. Mihaljević Djigunović (1998b) differentiates between self-respect and self-perception; self-respect is the evaluative aspect of self-perception as it reflects the positive or negative attitude towards self-image, and it depends on the feeling of belonging, being accepted and loved. It has already been mentioned that pupils who have a positive self-perception attribute their success to their competence or linguistic aptitude, but it is not a prerequisite for it – positive self-perception can be formed on the basis of attribution of success to other internal causes, such as the ability to affectively organize studying, self-discipline, diligence, etc. (1998b, p. 58). However, in order to attribute success to these features, learners first have to be able to distinguish them from general competence or intelligence. In any case, the most important is the belief that success is in one’s control. Feedback guides the formation of self-perception and attribution mechanisms, which is a matter of the teacher’s opinion or the grade itself only if the feedback is inadequate (1998b, p. 58). In other words, a very general feedback leaves for the learner to guess what their strengths and weaknesses are. A good feedback should specifically pinpoint what needs to be worked on, and more importantly what has been done well, the latter often being taken for granted and omitted. This way feedback entices the learner to realistically self-evaluate and to set realistic and achievable goals, thus raising their own motivation to reach them and experience language learning positively. Quality feedback discourse should

⁴ translated from Croatian by the author of this paper.

also diminish the negative effect of failure and protect learner's positive self-perception (1998b, p. 58).

3. Relevant studies

Mihaljević Djigunović (1998a) discusses the relationship between teenage learners' attitudes towards the native speakers of English and their achievement in English as a foreign language, arguing that in a foreign language learning context attitudes towards the native speakers of the foreign language being learned do not affect learners' motivation and achievement as much as it is the case in second language learning contexts. Although the learners do have some stereotypes about the American and the British, the stereotypes do not correlate with the learners' achievement. Mihaljević Djigunović attributes this to the fact that English in Croatian context is considered a language of international communication, and stresses that more important roles are played by attitudes towards foreign language learning, English as a foreign language, the self as a language learner, the teacher and the teaching strategies.

Similar conclusions have been made by Green (1975) who researched the attitudes and motivation of British pupils for learning German. Since they did not have any contact with the native speakers of German, only with the language, their motivation is not influenced by attitudes towards the German people and culture. Surprisingly, only a weak correlation has been found between achievement and attitudes towards the language, which brought Green to conclude that German is for these pupils only another school subject, and not an actively used language, which means they cannot be motivated with class materials that are focused on practical language use, German culture, or the possibility of friendship with a native speaker.

However, English has a different status than German in Croatia, which has to be taken into consideration when researching attitudes and motivation towards it. Tokić (2016) researched the connection between certain affective factors and achievement of English learners in the final grade of an elementary school in Osijek. She looked into the attitudes towards English as a foreign language as well as English culture, their awareness of similarities and differences between Croatian and the cultures of the English-speaking countries, and their knowledge of the aforementioned foreign culture. She concludes that there is a positive correlation between learners' achievement and their attitudes and cultural awareness, but cultural awareness is not statistically correlated to their knowledge of the foreign culture, about which, she mentions, they know little. The test on knowledge of the foreign culture was based on the subject matter that the pupils learned in school up to their point, so it is most likely that they learned about the culture of English speaking countries through the media and pop-culture (songs, television shows, Hollywood films, etc.).

Mihaljević Djigunović (1995) describes the process and the results of her study exploring the types of orientation and motivation that Croatian learners of English as a foreign language have, since English is considered and learned as an international language, learned not to communicate with native speakers, but other learners. In order to discover types of motivation specific to Croatian learners, 587 learners of different age groups and proficiencies were asked to write open-ended essays, which yielded 13 categories of orientation, 9 referring to motivation and 4 to lack of motivation. These findings were then used to develop questionnaires, the results of which indicate three types of motivation and two types of demotivation for EFL learning among Croatian learners. Pragmatic-communicative orientation stems from the reasons that refer to fulfilment of certain goals in the present or the future. It also includes elements of integration into the international community, since the target interlocutors of Croatian learners are not native speakers but other learners. Affectively motivated learners like the language and enjoy using it, while learners with integrative motivation wish to integrate into a group of native English speakers. Teaching setting demotivator refers to orientations that result from the teaching context: the teacher, teaching materials and methodology. Learning difficulties demotivator stems from the difficulties the learner experiences in learning.

The author uses these categories of motivation to further explore the complex relationship between them and various attitudes towards the English teacher and classes, towards the process of learning, and effort and achievement. She published her results and comments in “Learner Motivation as a Source of Variance in Attitudes, Effort and Achievement” in which the overall conclusion is that pragmatic-communicative motivation is the most desirable one in terms of achievement, while integrative motivation tends to be more frequent in less successful learners, but the author is careful enough not to draw any premature conclusions. The findings also show that the learners are very keen observers of the learning-teaching situation, as they are able to see the teaching setting and the teacher as two discrete elements of the learning-teaching process, they are able to see their teacher both as a professional and a human being, and do not automatically blame the teacher for their perceived failure.

Mihaljević Djigunović and Letica Krevelj (2009) presented the results of their three year long longitudinal study on the development of young learners’ attitudes towards English as a school subject, to teaching, to classroom activities, to using English, as well as their perception of English classes and their linguistic self-confidence, in which they used both qualitative and quantitative methods (questionnaires and interviews). Since the learners in

question were very young (up to 10 years of age), the attitudes they exhibited about the English speaking countries and people are picked up from their environment before the start of the learning process, and not formed by personal experience, so they are not likely to influence language learning. However, the attitudes that the learners are able to form themselves from their own experience are those about learning English in a formal context. They conclude that all the above mentioned affective factors of motivation are dynamic and change over time along with the learners' cognitive, linguistic and affective development. Although the learners seem to start out with positive attitude towards the language and the learning-teaching process, and seem to be very aware of what constitutes it, they may develop negative attitudes towards English classes due to the educational conditions in Croatia. Their perception of the self as a language learner is also dynamic, starting out as very positive, and modifying with time according to other learners' and their own achievements, as well as teachers' feedback.

Čagran, Jazbec and Lipavac Oštir (2012) presented the results of their research on the dominant language of communication with friends, language preference and school achievement in Slovene, English and German. Due to such focus, they did not take into consideration the social status, concept of acculturation or integration, or general educational concepts. This research was conducted on 585 Slovene and 435 Roma pupils (a third of all Roma pupils in Slovenia) from 46 comprehensive elementary schools in Slovenia. Although it has been shown by previous research that second (Slovene) and foreign language skills of Roma pupils were significantly lower compared to non-Roma pupils, the authors challenged the assumption that practical reasons of Roma being a 'travelling people' relying greatly on foreign language skills will positively impact Roma pupils' academic achievement in second and foreign languages. Furthermore, English and German are foreign languages for Roma and non-Roma pupils alike, so in theory, they would have an equal stand and better results in these school subjects, as opposed to the rest of them, for which official language competence is presupposed. They found that 34.5% of Roma pupils communicate with their friends in Slovene exclusively, which is not unusual in Slovenian context, in which it is stipulated by law that a maximum of 3 Roma children is allowed per class. In this context, the more unusual is the 9.9% of Roma pupils who communicate with their friends exclusively in Roma language, which is indicative of social distancing. However, none of the non-Roma pupils communicates with their friends exclusively in Roma language, and only 0.5% (3 pupils) of them communicate with their friends in Slovene and Roma language, which points to the fact

that the burden of multilingualism, and consequently communication, falls onto Roma pupils, and “whoever lacks the capacity to communicate is in danger of failing to incorporate their qualities into society in an appropriate manner, which could, in the worst cases, force such an individual into marginality, excluding them completely.” (2012, p. 659). Another finding that is concerning is the fact that none of the Roma pupils who participated in this study considered their mother tongue important in their lives, and neither did the Bosnian, Serbian, and Albanian minority children. The most important languages for Roma pupils were, according to this study, English (47.6%) and Slovene (22.3%), while for non-Roma pupils the most important was English (80.2%). The authors explained that the fact that Roma pupils considered Slovene important and non-Roma pupils (whose mother tongue is Slovene) did not is related to a different status of the mother tongue as opposed to the second or foreign languages. Since it is a language which was acquired in their earliest years, they did not perceive it as a language at all. Another important finding at which a closer look should be taken is that “the majority of Roma pupils (37.5%) chose Slovene as their most preferred language, with Romani ranked at number 2 (33.8%)”, while “the majority of non-Roma pupils named Slovene as the most preferred language (45.5%)” (2012, p. 668). While this finding may express “the depth as well as the intensity of the socialization processes taking place in educational institutions” (2012, p. 668), as the authors claim, it only may be a matter of not perceiving Roma language as a language at all, since it is not taught in school, which was the case with some of the participants in the study described in this paper. It also may reflect the fact that most of the socializing happened in a Slovene language context, but a closer look at the sociocultural background of Roma pupils in Slovenia is necessary to make any conclusions. As for the academic achievement in language subjects in school, the statistics show a big difference between the grades of Roma and non-Roma pupils; namely, Roma pupils predominantly had lower marks (either satisfactory or unsatisfactory), while non-Roma predominantly had higher marks. However, this does not mean that Roma pupils are less competent in language-learning, but points to the fact that the system disfavours them in this respect, too. The authors reported that foreign language teaching in Slovenia was “oriented toward monolingual group of learners” (2012, p. 662), i.e. foreign language teachers rely on Slovene when explaining and summarizing, as well as in metalinguistic discourse, which is also very often the case in Croatia. Furthermore, pupils cannot rely on their knowledge of Roma language, because they are often not sufficiently proficient in it, it is not standardized, it is not systematically taught in school, and teachers have no training in it either. Also,

studies show that teachers' often low expectations of Roma pupils, be they conscious of them or not, are an important influence on any, and especially Roma pupil's success or failure.

4. Roma socio-cultural context

The status of Roma people in Croatia is an immensely complex and poignant issue which does not receive the attention it merits. Understanding it is crucial for understanding internal and external forces that drive Roma pupils during their education. It is the sociocultural environment that shapes the learners' attitudes towards education, language learning and the language itself, as well as their self-image as people and learners, and the perception of experiences that forms it. In order to capture the full complexity of the issue, as well as to do justice to my young interlocutors, it is imperative that their predicament is described here in detail.

4.1. The status of Roma people in Croatian society

Although Roma people have lived in Croatia for six hundred years, their place and status in the Croatian community is still problematic, as is the case in other European countries they inhabit - they have resisted assimilation and integration for centuries due to their very different way of life, culture, and value system. Although they have a minority status as a single group, it is wrong to perceive them as such, since the Roma community is very fragmented, being comprised of many different ethnic groups, each of which speaks their own dialect not understood by the other Romani Chib (the Roma language) speakers. The subjects of this research belong to a dominant group of Roma in Međimurje County, Bayash Roma ethnic group, who do not speak a Romani Chib dialect, but an archaic Romanian dialect – *Ljimba d'bjash*; they migrated from Romania after the definite abolishment of slavery towards the end of nineteenth century and retained the language (Lapat & Šlezak, 2011, p. 81). Since then they have accumulated a plethora of negative attitudes towards the dominant culture and society not only through mistreatment in everyday life, but also in the times of war when they were prosecuted and killed on the basis of their ethnic identity. According to Lapat and Šlezak (2011) the reasons for almost non-existent integration of Roma people into Croatian society are twofold and form a vicious circle: the local communities' severe prejudice, stereotyping, and stigmatization of the Roma community, which in turn causes social alienation, as well as social and spatial segregation. The Roma peoples' reluctance to change is not only caused by the treatment of the local communities but it is complemented by the strong will to preserve their tradition and culture. Every attempt to integrate them into Croatian society can be seen as an attack on their identity, which is extremely fragmented due to animosities and conflicts among the Roma people. Because of this and their status in

society, their social power and possibility to change from the inside is virtually non-existent (Babić, 2004, p. 319-320).

Valuable insights into the feelings, experiences, and thoughts of Roma people on their integration and status in Croatian society have been given by Škiljan and Babić (2014), who conducted interviews with 23 Roma people from 14 Roma settlements in Međimurje and Podravina. Their interlocutors were considered official spokespersons of the settlements or representatives of educated people in the settlements, which is not to say they represent the opinions of each and every Roma person individually – as it was mentioned before, Roma are a very fragmented group. Only one woman participated in the study, due to the patriarchal values of the Roma people: the men forbade the researchers to talk to the women, and it seemed that the women were generally disinterested in the study. From the point of view of the Roma interlocutors, the neighbouring non-Roma⁵ population were not personally acquainted with and did not know their Roma neighbours, which is a result of a negative attitude towards the Roma and helps further perpetuate it. Škiljan and Babić explain that this negative attitude, the prejudice and stereotypes, is internalized in the primary and secondary process of socialization – in other words, the non-Roma community has a fixed collective image of Roma as “stealing, filthy, stinking, lying, aggressive people who do witchcraft”, which is carried from generation to generation (2014, p. 51). Although this image may be changed (repressed) during an individual’s life, the negative attitude is likely to resurface in times of crises (e.g. war or any kind of tension in everyday life). The stereotype of Roma people as lazy appeared after the Civil war and coincides with the statistics of educated and employed Roma people (2014, p. 51), which is the result of the aforementioned vicious circle – because of various problems which will be discussed in detail further on, Roma children do not have the same starting position in their education as their non-Roma peers, and rarely do they catch up with them. If they miraculously manage to get to a level of education sufficient to find a decent job, they are discriminated against in the employment process, leaving them educated with the same destiny as their uneducated Roma neighbours, and the prophecy of their chronic failure, laziness and marginal position fulfils itself, which again causes

⁵ The terminology that seems to be accepted in discerning Roma population from the rest of Croatian population reflects the existing dichotomy between Roma people and Croats, and their respective identities. In the school environment where the research was conducted and in a number of academic papers, they are referred to as “Roma” and “Croats”, implying that you cannot be Roma and Croatian at the same time. Since national and ethnic identity is a problem for the Roma population (a lot of who are afraid to state that they are Roma for fear that they will lose their Croatian citizenship (Škiljan & Babić, 2014, p. 155), and considerable effort is being made to integrate them into society, this terminology seems counterproductive.

reluctance on the Roma part to integrate at all (Škiljan & Babić, 2014). The authors have also found that both spatial segregation and the size of the Roma settlement affect the level of social segregation, and consequently prejudice and negative stereotypes – if the Roma people do not surpass the number of non-Roma people and if they live close, or even in the Croatian town, they are better socially integrated, and consequently less prejudiced and less discriminated against. However, most of the Roma settlements are large, up to a kilometre away from, and physically separated from the non-Roma population by a stream, river, railway, road, forest or some other natural or man-made barrier (2014, p. 152). This is confirmed by the participants of this study: they repeatedly reported that their sporadic reluctance to go to school is due to the long trip to school - every day they walk for a half an hour to school and back; moreover, as some elective classes are not scheduled into the regular school day, they sometimes need to make the same trip four times a day. Almost all Škiljan and Babić's interlocutors express the wish to dismantle the Roma settlements and to move into the Croatian part of town, but, apart from the poverty reasons which hinder the majority of Roma population, they feel unwelcome and afraid to do so because of the perceived resistance of the non-Roma population (2014). Racial discrimination is present on multiple levels. Although the Roma population is legally protected by their national minority rights, those laws are rarely respected in practice, especially in the case of larger Roma settlements. According to Roma people interviewed by Škiljan and Babić, they are discriminated in public places (schools, playgrounds, bars and restaurants...) and employment. Although Roma people have their representative in the Parliament, and various political organizations, they yield little power in Croatian politics (2014).

According to the same authors Roma people are likely to hide their ethnic identity for fear of persecution. What is more, because of the persistent negative perception of Roma people in the Croatian public, it seems that at least some of them internalized the negative attitudes, feeling that they could not be successful, or even a part of the Croatian society and culture as a Roma person. This is evident from the fact that many Roma who are educated, or financially stable, or wish to be a part of the larger community in another way, denounce their ethnic identity and refer to themselves only as Croatians, which leaves them belonging neither here nor there (2014). As there is a greater tendency to integrate where the spatial segregation is less pronounced, and where there is a fewer number of Roma people, there is also a greater tendency of Roma people there to identify as Croatian, and not Roma, all of which implies that for Roma people, integration and a better life means losing their Roma identity, equating

integration with assimilation. One of the Roma pupils in this study appeared to feel great pressure to succeed academically and put in a lot of effort in studying, as his brother was studying to be a doctor and his sister a lawyer. He reported to have no friends in his homogenous Roma class, and the reason seemed to be his attitude towards school and attribution style. He had repeatedly suggested to them that they should study more in order to get better grades, for which he was thought to be arrogant, to believe he is better than others. He was aware that a part of his school problems stemmed from his low proficiency in Croatian, so he tried to improve it by speaking it at home, but had no one to talk to in Croatian there. He also understood that the other part of a problem was having no friends to help him, but could not get any help from his Roma classmates, and said it would have been easier for him to have some Croatian classmates. It was unfortunate to later hear that he failed the grade. The question of identity was not in the focus of this study, but it is clear that he is exactly the example of a Roma person not fitting in the Roma or the non-Roma culture.

Tomišić and Bakić-Tomić (2015) researched the attitudes of Međimurje County population towards the Roma population. It is necessary to mention that the article seems to be ethnocentric, but the results of the questionnaire distributed online seem to be in accordance with the other research and reflect the non-Roma attitudes, and thus provide an important piece of this puzzle. Međimurje is a Croatian county where a third of Croatian Roma population resides, making 5% of population there, according to the 2011 Census (2015, p. 173), but various Roma organizations estimate this number to be a lot higher, due to hiding their ethnic identity. The authors tie the main grievances of non-Roma people of Međimurje County to school and welfare payments. The non-Roma population claim their children are at a disadvantage if they are put into heterogeneous classes with Roma children, as the latter have a lot of difficulty not only with the subject matter taught, but also almost every other aspect of school environment, which will be discussed in detail further on. Furthermore, according to these authors, the welfare benefits such as maternity and child benefits as well as welfare payments hinder the Roma integration, as welfare payments are higher than their salaries would be if they had jobs. High birth rate of Roma population is favoured by maternity and child benefits, which the parents stop receiving when the child reaches 15 years of age. At that point, the child is expected to enter the world of adults and earn their own salary, which is one of the reasons for frequent teen pregnancies and high crime rates among young Roma people. Welfare money is apparently mostly spent on alcohol and gambling, so the Centre for Social Welfare in Međimurje started providing aid in food and household

necessities instead of money (2015, p. 175). Non-Roma population seems to see the solution to these problems in revoking some or all the forms of welfare. Although these complaints can often be heard among non-Roma people of Međimurje and Croatia in general, the source used in this article is not cited. The questionnaire was posted on Facebook and completed by more than 500 people in 24 hours. The sample seems to be representative of the structure of Međimurje population, except in the aspect of higher levels of education – while 10% of people from Međimurje has a university degree, 30% of the sample had them, and 20% were attending college at the time (2015, p. 175). The results of the survey show that 39% of respondents resided in the neighbourhood with Roma people, and 33% had had no personal experience or contact, but were familiar with the Roma people through media and word of mouth, while the experiences of the rest of the respondents were related to school, work or other environment. However, “the dominant feelings felt by respondents in the Međimurje County during a close encounter with Roma were fear, unease, and uncertainty.” (2015, p. 176). To be precise 84.5% of the answers were negative. It is unclear whether the question was answered by all the participants or only by those who had contact with a Roma person before, but the authors do explicitly state that these answers are a result of a negative personal experience, and not bigotry (2015, p. 176). In any case, the percentage is very high. Furthermore, 90% of the participants felt that the Roma people have more rights than the majority of people, i.e. that they were positively discriminated, and that it does not help anyone. The authors’ attitude to the answers to the question of the participants’ reaction if their children were in the same class as “a few Roma children” is indicative of the negativity of non-Roma attitudes encountered in everyday life: “*Only* one fourth [24.5%] of them would react negatively, seeking transfer of their children into a different class where there were no Roma pupils. And one third [34.2%] expressed a positive attitude, not to respond at all. The rest [41.3%] are undecided.” (2015, p. 176-177, emphasis added). The percentage of the participants who would respond negatively in such event is in line with the estimate of a Roma interlocutor in Škiljan and Babić’s study: “If a school is attended by 500 Roma children and 700 Croatian children, 200 Croatians [28.5%] will enrol their children in a different school. They don’t want their child go to school with Roma.” (2014, p. 153). From the non-Roma perspective this seems little, while from the Roma perspective it is too much, and the 41.3% of undecided non-Roma people cannot be seen in a very positive light. The authors also exhibited a positive attitude towards *only* 13.9% of people who would transfer to another position or even look for another job in the event that a Roma person worked in their working environment and *only* 16.2% of people who would move if a Roma person moved into their

neighbourhood. Only 55.1% and 36.4% of participants (respectively) would not react. Moreover, a vast majority of respondents believe that

“Roma are not a marginalized group because of poverty, but because of not accepting the cultural and social norms of life in Croatia, [...] do not agree that Roma are trying to respect the culture and customs of the majority population, [...] do not agree that the Roma do not recognize the civil and political rights, but they have too few obligations in relation to the rights guaranteed to them”. (2015, p. 178)

Integration is a process in which a minority becomes a part of a majority society. The minority accepts the standards of the majority society, while retaining its culture and identity, and the majority accepts them as equals in their uniqueness. It is a two-way process which demands sacrifices, compromises, and a lot of effort on both sides, the result of which should be a multi-ethnic society in which a person can be Roma and Croatian at the same time. Assimilation is a similar process, with the difference of the minority losing its identity and culture, which we might say is happening with the aforementioned Roma people who denounced or hid their ethnic identity.

Both of these articles show that neither side understands neither theirs nor the other side's position and role in the process of integration. It is unfortunate that the Roma insight is gotten only from those who want change and are thus ready for a dialogue. However, they did provide important input into the life of the Roma slums and the behaviour that helps perpetuate negative attitudes of the non-Roma population, as well as the reasons that lie behind this behaviour. Perpetuating the status quo of the Roma community is seen as the only viable solution for some Roma people, as change and success on their terms seem to be out of reach. If there is no chance of change, of success as a Roma person, then there are two possible solutions for Roma people: those who are lucky and persistent enough to have a decent education and a job denounce or hide their Roma identity, stuck in the purgatory between two cultures, but living a better life, and those who accept the image of themselves as marginalized underdogs and embrace their Gypsy destiny, blaming the system for their failure and thus living as a parasite in it. Several teachers in Babić's study (2004) of Roma pupils in Kozari Bok said that some of their Roma pupils identified as and referred to themselves and other Roma people close to them as “cigani” or “cigići” – derogatory terms which they seemed to embrace as their identity. They also reported the attitudes of some Roma parents who had stated that they enjoyed rights without any obligation or commitment - they could do what they wanted and no one could touch them, which is exactly the problem that the non-Roma participants of Tomšić and Bakić-Tomić's study (2015) highlight. There is also a matter of

Croatian national identity, which has been formed in an atmosphere of ethnic tensions in the years leading up to the end of former Yugoslavian state, and is thus based on Croatian ethnic identity. It does not leave any space for Roma ethnic identity as a part of Croatian national identity.

On the other hand, the non-Roma population did not seem to understand their own role in the vicious circle of Roma destiny, although they seemed to be aware of the circle itself. Namely, they did not seem to think that their negative attitudes were in part a result of a collective image - i.e. that they were prejudice and stereotypes - but that they were solely based on personal experience, which is why the claim that “it’s not prejudice if it’s true”⁶ is heard very often. The criterion for determining prejudice or stereotype is not whether or not a belief is based on personal experience in part or in whole, but the fact that it predetermines a person before any contact has been made, thus depersonalizing them and making them only a type of person, a representative of a group in which all members are the same, consequently hindering the chance of a prejudice or a stereotype being broken (Babić, 2004; Škiljan & Babić, 2014). If there is no awareness of the existence of prejudice, there is no way to neutralize its effects. As it has already been mentioned, prejudice and stereotypes are formed during primary and secondary socialization and they cannot be completely rooted out once they have been acquired; being aware of them can only help so much as to make a conscious effort not to act on them. The best chance of changing a negative collective image is to stop the people (children) from acquiring them in the first place, and the only way a state can actively influence the upbringing of children, Roma and non-Roma alike, is through secondary socialization, i.e. educational system. However, the question remains: since Roma people are not a usual minority, and do not have enough social power to have a say in the matter, is it even possible to retain and protect their identity and culture in the process of integration? The answer seems to lie in the education itself – young, highly educated Roma people are in theory expected to facilitate the integration process from the inside not only by keeping their Roma identity, but redefining it. However, as has been hinted above and will be further discussed in detail, integration in education resembles more to assimilation, making highly educated Roma people invisible not only in the non-Roma society, but more importantly, in Roma society too.

⁶ Personal communication with friends, family, and coworkers.

4.2. Roma pupils in Croatian education system

One of the proposals for an educational model that might suit the needs of Roma pupils was suggested by Hrvatić (2000). However, there are some prerequisite social changes that need to be made in order to make the Roma educational system work – the approach to integration needs to be holistic, comprehensive, and systematic. The most important problems that Hrvatić detected in the year 2000 are unfortunately to a great extent current today, despite the effort put into the education of Roma children. Hrvatić reports that by the year 2000, European and Croatian government had not done enough in adapting the curriculum and teaching materials to Romani Chib or educating teachers and other personnel to work with Roma pupils, which was part of the reason why the Roma community sees education as a forced obligation instead of a means of cultural and national affirmation and of improvement of their social status (2000, p. 270). Furthermore, it has been shown that a larger number of Roma pupils in schools does not necessarily improve the adaptation of Roma students to the school environment, or the change in non-Roma perception of them (Hrvatić, 2000) (Babić, 2004). Another problem which was already discussed in this paper is the lack of a visible connection between education and a better life; moreover, if a child is sent to school and later on fails to find a job, they are a double failure as they have wasted the years of their life that they would otherwise spend on mastering a traditional Roma trade or craft. This way education can distort “the internal integrative group dynamics”⁷ (Hrvatić, 2000. p 270). The same author reports that with these and other problems in mind, social services, schools, employment agencies, and local governments directed their activities towards securing basic living conditions, Roma settlement urbanization, employment of Roma people, welfare, and individual and collective Roma cultural autonomy. The emphasis here is of course on including Roma people into the labour market in order to increase the visibility of the connection between education, work, and success and to enable young families to support themselves, which would make a great impact on the upbringing and education of Roma children.

Starting school is a tremendous change for Roma children, as they have little contact with Croatian culture and language up to that point. They are faced with a double pressure and expectations: that of their own and that of the dominant culture. “Roma children often find themselves at a crossroads between tradition and change, assimilation and disappearance.”⁸

⁷ Translated from Croatian by the author of this paper.

⁸ Translated from Croatian by the author of this paper.

(Šućur, 2004, p. 846). Moreover, Lapat and Šlezak report that they are “captured between obligatory school programmes with expected educational achievement and real possibilities and capabilities they possess.” (2011, p. 82). Apart from the inadequate working conditions at home, The same authors pinpoint the language barrier as the most obvious and the biggest problem – seeing that Roma settlements are mostly secluded from the non-Roma environment, children have no opportunity to learn Croatian growing up, and the compulsory one year preschool programme is not enough to reach the linguistic proficiency needed for the first grade. Moreover, they also lack competence in their own language, and seeing that they are faced with a new culture, they encounter new objects and phenomena, all of which means that not only do they have to learn new Croatian words, but also “concepts that lie behind these words” (2011, p. 82). The subjects of this study were sometimes asked to answer the interview questions in their mother tongue, Bayash, despite the fact that the interviewer did not speak the language. Interestingly, the pupils used Croatian words for “school” and “hard subject matter” while speaking Bayash, which indicates that Bayash words for these concepts are not used in their home environment in which they speak their mother tongue. One pupil also reported that they use Croatian sometimes because “some words are pronounced faster in Croatian”, i.e. they most likely have to describe the concept in Bayash. It is however unclear whether this is because of the lack of competence in their mother tongue or because the word for the concept does not exist in Bayash. 29,8% of the Roma 5th - to 8th-graders of Međimurje County that have been interviewed by Lapat and Šlezak reported that the hardest thing to them at school was understanding Croatian language (2011). Babić (2004) researched Roma pupils’ teachers’ view on stigmatization, integration and identity of Roma students in Kozari Bok, where a significant number of Roma people live. The Roma population in Kozari Bok consists of “native” Bosnian Roma and Albanian Roma, the “newcomers”, which the non-Roma population does not discern. However, the two groups do not communicate and there are strong animosities between them. Kozari Bok is settled in the industrial periphery of the capital of Croatia, Zagreb, and secluded by railway tracks, a channel, and an avenue. Teachers from Kozari Bok in Babić’s study reported that their Roma pupils are insufficiently proficient in Croatian language, which was one of the causes of their poor academic achievement. Working harder than most of the other students for a lower grade than most get, along with the fact that they are often older than their classmates due to failing grades and later enrolment causes demotivation and subsequent giving up, confirming the stereotype that Roma are stupid and lazy. What is more, they are sometimes taught under a special programme intended for pupils who lack the cognitive capacities to cope with the regular

methodology and subject matter (2004, p. 322), due to cognitive tests which are inadequate for Roma children for two reasons: they are in Croatian language and are not culturally neutral (Horvat, 2009, str. 456). Horvat gives an illustrative example of a wrong answer on such test: “when asked to draw a triangle, the Roma child drew three objects (which in their spatial relation ideally do form an *imagined* triangle!)” (2009, p. 467, emphasis in the original). Inadequate placement is also often response of the school to the incongruity between the expected achievement of their Roma pupils and the continuous failure in reaching it.

Babić (2004) concludes from the interviews with teachers that Roma children are not isolated, but are not sufficiently integrated into their classes either. Apart from being older than their peers, their primary socialization environment is different, yielding different norms, values, and communication and interaction patterns. Hygiene is also frequently mentioned as one of the biggest problems, as not much emphasis is put on healthy, hygienic habits of children up to 12 years of age in Roma communities (Horvat, 2009, p. 454), which is a frequent cause of non-Roma parents’ interventions. Horvat also reports such extreme parents’ intervention happening in 2002 when non-Roma parents kept a Držimurec school closed for two days, demanding segregation of seven heterogeneous classes into five homogeneous and two heterogeneous, which would be comprised of non-Roma children and a small number of Roma children of their choice. The Ministry of Education reacted by putting the class integration of Roma pupils in Međimurje schools on hold for a while (2009, p. 459). All in all, interaction between Roma and non-Roma pupils seems to be largely limited to school premises, meaning school is the only integrative factor in their lives (Babić, 2004).

Growing up in an environment riddled with problems described above, they are bound to be affected by the status quo mentality they are surrounded with. Communication between parents and teachers can always be challenging, since it is essentially parents and teacher questioning each others work, and it is especially problematic or even non-existent in the case of Roma parents. The primary socialization of Roma children is permeated by different cultural and social norms and a subversive value system (marked by caritative ethos as opposed to a productive one) in which work, obligations, commitment, knowledge, education, and Western idea of (financial) success are not dominant; they have a value system in which Western materialism is not deemed the highest value (Babić, 2004, p. 332). This kind of value system is the basis of the attitudes that are detrimental to Roma education, and only a slow and painful change of the Roma value system can change negative attitudes towards school.

Babić (2004) reports that Roma parents did not see any benefits of education, apart from the warm meals for children and attendance confirmations they need in order to get certain privileges; on the contrary, in their view, school prevented their children from participating in child labour, providing for their family and thus being a responsible member of the Roma society. Children adopted and manifested these attitudes as not performing their school duties, e.g. homework, studying, participating or even paying attention in class, attending classes etc. Teachers from Kozari Bok reported that some students came and went as they pleased and some left school as soon as they got a warm meal. However, they also reported that children liked getting good grades and being liked and accepted by their classmates (Babić, 2004), which indicates that their home environment is not the only force driving their attitudes and motivation, and that it does not completely overpower the influence of the school environment. Teacher experience and research has shown differences among parents who finished even one grade of elementary school and those with no education at all. Kozari Bok teachers reported greater cooperation and support from parents with some education (Babić, 2004), while Šučur's research (2004) of Roma parents has shown that parents with any kind of education show a significant change in the acceptance of certain dominant non-Roma norms and values. Namely, they are more likely to have fewer children, to support later marriage of their children and fewer children in those marriages, and are not likely to have a positive attitude towards physical punishment, all of which amounts to better child care.

Lapat and Šlezak (2011) researched the attitudes towards school and education of Roma pupils in Međimurje County – in rural areas as opposed to Kozari Bok as an urban one. The results of their research are ambiguous. They report that the majority of children like going to school for various reasons, and “in principle, all Roma children are aware of the importance of education” (2011, p. 83). However, this should be taken with a grain of salt, as having the attitude that school is important and motivation to meet school demands is not the same thing, which is confirmed by the fact that 35,6% of students from Lapat and Šlezak's study would not go to school were it not compulsory (2011, p. 84). The authors explain this as a “lack of empirical correlation between higher levels of education and a higher quality of life” (2011, p. 84) – the children do not encounter examples of successful (or even employed) educated Roma people in everyday life. What is more “people who live ‘better’ in Roma settlements do not have a ‘better’ life because of their education” (2011, p. 87), which is a powerful force that negatively affects their motivation. On the other hand, 87,5% of pupils believed that they would enjoy a higher living standard after finishing their education, and 98,5% of fifth-, sixth,

and seventh-graders believed that the knowledge acquired in school will be useful to them in their lives. A bit concerning is the fact that this percentage was much lower among the eighth-graders, who were at the end of their elementary school education, but it should also be noted that the sample of eighth-graders was rather small (12 pupils). Roma students identified reading, writing and comprehension, as well as elementary maths skills to be most beneficial to them later in life. 82,7% of Roma pupils believe that their future employment would be a source of sufficient income, while 6,6% of pupils expect that they would live off welfare once they finish school, having no faith in finding a job. The skills identified as important were very vague, showing that the children did not have a clear picture of what they wanted to do when they grew up and what it entailed, which is unrealistic to expect of them since they are so young. However, the percentage of pupils that believed they would support themselves with a job in general reflects a wish to adopt the way of life of the non-Roma majority. The ambiguity of the results gained in this study reflects the ambiguity of attitudes and influences that drives the motivation of Roma children to various extents – on the one hand, teachers at school and most of their parents assure them that education is important and valuable, but on the other hand, they do not see examples of this in their environment, nor is their whole environment supportive of their education as their teachers and parents might be. Although 95,2% of pupils in this study stated that their parents encourage them to study and go to school for whatever reason, the fact remains that Roma children are not raised only by their parents, but “the children are raised collectively as family space often overlaps with the space of the community”⁹ (Šućur, 2004, p. 847).

Having considered in short most of the problems surrounding the integration of Roma pupils into the school environment, the attention should be turned to the question of whether Roma pupils should attend school in heterogeneous or homogeneous classes. As it has been mentioned before, spatial segregation deepens social segregation and distancing, and the number of Roma pupils in a class plays a role too – teachers from this study, as well as from Babić’s study (2004) confirmed that the more Roma pupils there were in a class, the more they socially distanced themselves, and were socially distanced by the non-Roma, due to language, previous relationships and so on. Whether they live among the non-Roma population also plays a role, as those children seem to be better adapted to the school environment, and presumably better accepted, which shows that all children should adapt more easily if they are in heterogeneous classes with a good Roma-non-Roma balance. On the

⁹ Translated from Croatian by the author of this paper.

other hand, problems like Croatian language proficiency, the knowledge and skills they start school with, lack of compliance with social and hygienic norms, lack of discipline, etc. cause diminished productivity and efficiency in class, and consequently diminished quality of education, which puts the non-Roma pupils at a disadvantage. However, the Roma pupils are at a disadvantage either way, as long as the classes are not in the language they understand well enough to learn at the same pace as their non-Roma peers.

Hrvatić (2000) for all the above reasons claims that systematic education of Roma children should start in pre-school institutions. He states that pre-school education is obligatory for all future elementary school pupils in Croatia, and its programme consists of 150-170 classes in the school year before elementary school. However, it is necessary for Roma pupils to prolong it to at least two school years with double or at least more classes. Research has shown that Roma families do not completely fulfil their upbringing function due to poverty and poverty-related issues, disharmonious family dynamics, etc. The function of bilingual Roma preschool would thus be to learn both Roma and Croatian language, acquiring work ethics and cultural norms, raising awareness of the hygiene of the body and the environment (2000, p. 278-279). However, one or two years of learning a language is not enough to reach a productive level of bilingualism – the same author reports that only a part of Roma pupils reach the reproductive level of proficiency (independent thought in the language, utilizing a larger number of words and grammar rules, repeating complex sentences) at the end of the fourth grade, which is why the most important criterion for a special elementary school curriculum for Roma students should be their mother tongue, as is the case with the other ethnic and national minorities in Croatia, since the priority is the same level of quality of education for Roma and non-Roma children, as well as the preservation of their culture and heritage. This is why the three types of elementary schools proposed by Hrvatić are based on the models for other national minorities. Type A elementary school would work in accordance with the curriculum in Croatian, but in the mother tongue of Roma pupils, with additional compulsory classes in Roma language and literature, history, geography, art and music. This type of education demands development of materials in Roma language and education of teachers (be they Roma or not). Type B elementary school would take students that are proficient enough in Croatian and Roma language and would have some form of bilingual classes. Type C elementary school would work by the regular curriculum with additional elective subjects like the Roma language and literature, art, history, etc. which all the pupils could sign up for (2000, p. 280-282). Although there are very few Roma pupils enrolling into

secondary school, Hrvatić proposes two models: type 1 secondary school is essentially the same as type C elementary school, and Roma grammar school would be realized either bilingually in accordance with a specially prepared Roma curriculum or in Croatian in accordance with the Croatian curriculum with some obligatory specific Roma subjects included (200, p. 283). Despite the successful application of these programmes with the other national minorities in Croatia, none of these programmes has been implemented even experimentally with the Roma population, since they have not explicitly asked for it. An even bigger obstacle is the lack of educational professionals who speak a Roma language, as well as the lack of teaching and learning materials and dictionaries in Roma language (2000, p. 462-463). The reasons for the lack of highly educated Roma people are obvious from the above, and the only place to qualify for teaching Roma language and culture is The Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences in Zagreb, which offers a graduate programme in Roma language and literature.

5. The study

5.1. Aims

Some differences between learning a second and a foreign language as well as the special status of English as a foreign language have already been addressed and discussed above. Although English is taught as a foreign language in Croatia, its special status must not be overseen. English is *lingua franca*, it is omnipresent in everyday life in Croatia. As *lingua franca* it is the language of spatial mobility, since it is useful and needed regardless of the country to which one travels. As *lingua franca* it is also a major factor in social vertical mobility, as English language competence is not an advantage when finding employment, but a necessary requirement, not unlike any other school subject. However, there are some differences in learning English as a foreign language for Roma as opposed to non-Roma pupils due to their different previous experiences, as well as different sociocultural backgrounds. The most obvious difference is perhaps the Roma pupils' experience of learning Croatian as a second language, which may manifest itself both as an advantage or a disadvantage. Due to the problems previously discussed, Roma pupils are likely to accumulate negative experiences of second language learning, which makes them liable to develop foreign language anxiety, as well as a negative perception of themselves as learners in general and learners of foreign languages in particular. This, however, depends on their perception of their first, second and foreign languages they learn, as the process of learning as well as the status of each of those is different. On the other hand, if learners overcome their foreign language anxiety, and develop adequate attribution mechanisms which will keep their self-perception as a learner positive, this may play as an advantage to them in foreign language learning. However, as has been noted above, it is often the case that foreign language teaching in a formal context is directed to a monolingual group of pupils, where metalinguistic and the discourse of explaining is in Croatian, which again works as a disadvantage to Roma pupils. As for the sociocultural context, it consists of two levels. The first level is the pupils' home and community environment in which they develop attitudes towards English as a medium of communication as well as its speakers and countries, towards school in general and English as a school subject in particular, and most importantly, which provides certain quality and quantity of input. The second level is the school environment, in which Roma and non-Roma pupils are positioned differently. A lot of emphasis and tremendous effort is put in the Roma pupils being integrated on the academic and social level, which they are aware of.

Since the pupils researched were young, it was assumed that they did not have enough life experience to form an attitude towards English as a medium of communication. Instead, it was assumed that they perceived English as just another school subject, as most of the input they are exposed to comes from the English classes. If this proves to be the case, the next question concerns the type of motivation for learning English: is the motivation to learn English in Roma pupils related to their attitudes towards school in general and does their wish for academic and/or social integration into the school context (or a lack of it) play a role in their motivation to learn English in school?

5.2. Participants

The participants of this study were 28 Roma and 10 non-Roma pupils enrolled in 4th to 7th grade of an elementary school in Međimurje County, their age spanning from 10 to 14. Roma pupils that were interviewed reside in a Roma settlement mostly outside of the non-Roma town. The Roma settlement is, however, not separated by a physical entity, and is fairly close to the non-Roma town. There is no organized transport to school as they live in the town area where the school is located; transport is organized only for those pupils living in nearby villages. The participants attended one year of obligatory preschool programme. All of the pupils in the school learned German as the mandatory foreign language subject, and English was an elective foreign language subject taken from the 4th grade on, with two classes a week, usually scheduled as a double lesson at the end of a school day, or before it. The fact that they were enrolled in an English language programme, staying two classes after all their peers have gone home already, says a lot about their motivation. Their teacher stated that the most important factor deterring them from English was their home environment. Parents, families and other adults are of the opinion that English is hard and not useful enough to make such an effort to learn it. Although two of the classes were homogenous (all Roma pupils) due to a large number of Roma pupils in school, English groups were small and heterogeneous.

5.3. Methodology and procedure

Although questionnaires are a common method of research for affective factors, we opted for semi-structured interviews for this study for several reasons. First of all, since this is an exploratory study aiming at discovering the types of motivation and attitudes in a different context than the ones researched up to now, a semi-structured interview is expected to reveal any insights that would not be found in results of questionnaires based on existing language learning models, such as different types of motivation, as well as the interaction of attitudes and the specific sociocultural (school) context. Secondly, since the Roma pupils' adequate

proficiency in Croatian cannot be presupposed, either the questionnaires would have to be translated into Bayash dialect, or their teacher would have to help them if they do not understand something in Croatian. Constant help from the teacher they were likely to need might have made them lose interest and not answer truthfully, so interviews were seen as a better solution. Moreover, Roma pupils are sometimes not adequately proficient in their Roma language either, and teachers are not proficient in Bayash at all, so a questionnaire in Bayash also might have posed a problem. In face-to-face communication, meaning can be negotiated and misunderstandings avoided, as was later proven to be true. The final advantage of an interview was the participants were able to steer an interview to some extent in the direction important to them, with the interviewer steering away from non-pertinent topics. This way, the participants were given agency to point to what was important to them.

Although the initial idea was to conduct individual interviews, some of them were conducted with groups of two, four, and five pupils, due to lack of time. This was proved to have both advantages and disadvantages. Although some questions were sometimes more difficult to answer in a group, such as those about best friends and best pupils, the group atmosphere added to richness of answers because of the pupils brainstorming - the answers and topics that would not be brought up in individual interviews were brought up and discussed as a group, prompting more answers that were more diverse.

The pupils were explained the aim of the research and their role in it by the teacher beforehand, as well as by the interviewer at the beginning of the interview. They were given consent forms for their parents to sign and made sure to understand that the interviewer will keep their answers secret and that they had the liberty not to answer certain questions as well as to quit at any time.

The interview itself consisted of three categories of open- and closed-ended questions, taken from Mihaljević Djigunović and Letica Krevelj's research (2009) of attitudes development in young learners, but modified to fit the specific aims and questions of this study. The first part concerned their attitudes towards school, their classmates and friends, towards the languages they speak in general and English in particular, as well as the attitudes towards English as a school subject, their English teacher, and native speakers of English. The questions "Do you like going to school? Why (not)?" were posed to find out the pupils' general attitude towards and motivation for going to school, as well as to break the ice – when they realised they can answer negatively to this question and not get a negative reaction from

the interviewer, they felt more free to state their other opinions. The questions about who their friends and best students in class were, as well as what kind of children they were were aimed at the quality of their integration and social contact; namely if the wish of the Roma pupils to integrate was based on academic achievement or the wish to make friends and socialize, as well as their perception of belonging to the school's sociocultural context and the perception of what makes a good pupil/learner. The questions about the language they speak, as well as their favourite and most beautiful language were asked to see how they perceive and evaluate different languages, namely if there was a perception of a different status of languages learned at school and their mother tongue, or between the mother tongue, the second, and the foreign language in the case of Roma pupils. The questions "Do you like English? Why (not)?" were asked to reveal their attitudes towards the language, as well as their perception of English as medium of communication or a school subject. The questions about the native speakers of English and their qualities would further verify this perception, leading to answers that indicate either the tendency towards integrative motivation and the perception of English a medium of communication, or the perception of English as a school subject. Furthermore, questions about evaluation of their English classes at school and their teacher were aimed at their attitudes towards English as a school subject specifically.

The second group of questions was aimed at discovering their perception of themselves as English learners and speakers. Since the end of the school year was very close and the pupils were all well aware of their final grades, the original question "Which grade would you give yourself in English?" was anticipated to reflect the teacher's, not their own, evaluation of their success. What is more, English in the question formed that way is necessarily understood as a school subject. Since no assumptions were to be made beforehand, a more vague and general question was asked: "How good are you at English?" In the first couple of interviews, the pupils themselves imposed 1-10 scaling, so it was accepted by the interviewer. Some of the pupils used percentages for the estimate, but additional questions revealed they did not use them correctly. The pupils were also asked to compare themselves to other pupils in the class, which necessarily puts their skills in the school context.

The third group of questions concerned the pupils' motivation for learning English. The question whether they were glad to be learning English or not and why was asked to see if there was motivation for learning English and what type of motivation and orientation they exhibit. The next question, "If you yourself could choose, would you continue learning English next year or not?" was asked to further confirm or refute the existence of motivation.

The last question, “Do you think it is good to learn English? Why (not)?” was to show the pupils’ perception of the importance of learning English, or the lack of it, as well as wherein it lies.

5.4. Results and discussion

When asked if they liked going to school, most of the pupils responded positively, as can be seen in Table 1.

	Roma pupils		Non-Roma pupils		All pupils	
Yes	22	78.57%	6	60%	28	73.68%
No	4	14.29%	2	20%	6	15.79%
Sometimes	2	7.14%	2	20%	4	10.53%

Table 1 *Frequency of answers to the question “Do you like going to school?”*

Most pupils gave multiple answers as to why they liked or did not like going to school. The reasons for liking school are various but can be divided into two categories: academic and social. Reasons like learning new things, usefulness in the future, knowledge, fun activities and perceived success are subsumed under academic reasons, while friends are a social reason. As can be seen in Table 2, the most popular reason for going to school is socializing with friends (28.89% of all the answers given), followed closely by learning new things (24.45%) and acquiring knowledge (22.23%). It is interesting to note that non-Roma pupils’ answered either with “learning new things” and “friends”, while Roma pupils gave various different reasons for liking school. Although a larger sample would perhaps show a more balanced picture, these data also might be reflecting a different influence on children’s attitudes to school.

	Roma pupils		Non-Roma pupils		All pupils	
Learning new things	6	17.14%	5	50%	11	24.44%
Friends	8	22.86%	5	50%	13	28.89%
Useful in the future	4	11.43%	0	-	4	8.89%
Knowledge	10	28.57%	0	-	10	22.23%
Fun activities	3	8.57%	0	-	3	6.67%
Perceived success	1	2.86%	0	-	1	2.23%
Lesser of two evils	3	8.57%	0	-	3	6.67%

Table 2 *“Why do you like going to school?”*

‘Learning new things’ and ‘knowledge’ are divided into two discrete categories, as the first one seems to reflect the pupils’ curiosity and the second one seems to show a more utilitarian aspect of learning; all the answers subsumed under the category ‘learning new things’ were the same word for word – “learning new things”¹⁰, with the exception of two of the answers in this category which refer to some interesting things learned at school. Interestingly, most of the Roma pupils’ answers subsumed in the category ‘knowledge’ were also the same – “So I can learn something”. The answer in Croatian was: “Da se učim.” The reflexive pronoun “se” is not used with the verb “učiti” (to learn) in standard Croatian language, but only in some dialects. It denotes the utilitarian, practical value of knowledge. The category ‘useful in the future’ contains answers that specify how school might be useful - while three of the answers in this category were “finding employment”, one is “travelling”. We may assume that these two categories of answers (‘knowledge’ and ‘usefulness in the future’) reflect the attitudes of their home environment. Although the scope of this research did not include investigating the home environments of the Roma pupils, we may speculate that for those pupils who regularly attend school (such as our participants), the practical benefits of education are greatly emphasized in their home environment, due to the status of the Roma population in Croatia discussed previously. The category ‘lesser of two evils’ refers to the fact that some pupils go to school only because they are bored and have nothing to do at home, but they did not imply or say that anything about school is fun. These answers point to the attitude that there is a perceived choice for Roma pupils between going to school and staying at home, which was not implied by any of the non-Roma pupils, presumably because for them going to school is another fact of life taken for granted. The fact that the most of the Roma and non-Roma pupils’ answers in some categories were the same word for word or very similar (and the answers were given in individual interviews) may point to the fact that these answers were phrases they heard and memorized without a deeper understanding of what they mean for them. Thus, it is hard to conclude whether this is an attitude they developed and that drives their motivation to go to school, or whether it is merely a learned answer to the question why they need or like going to school. A more in-depth qualitative research of the participants’ home and school environment, as well as into the participants’ attitudes and behaviour is needed in order to establish the extent to which these attitudes are built into their personal worldview and influence their motivation and behaviour.

¹⁰ Translated by the author of this paper.

Table 3 shows the reasons the pupils gave for disliking school. Most of the answers are subsumed under the category ‘school context’ (56.52% of the answers), concerning the reasons why pupils think school is too hard, such as bad class scheduling, too many classes in a day, too much homework or writing, too many exams scheduled too close to each other, a long way to school, and so on.

	Roma pupils		Non-Roma pupils		All pupils	
School context	9	52.94%	4	66.67%	13	56.52%
Lack of will	2	11.76%	0	-	2	8.7%
Lack of interest	1	5.88%	0	-	1	4.35%
Teachers	1	5.88%	0	-	1	4.35%
Waste of time	0	-	2	33.33%	2	8.7%
Social isolation	2	11.76%	0	-	2	8.7%
Perception of failure	2	11.76%	0	-	2	8.7%

Table 3 *Frequency of answers to the question “Why do you not like school?”*

It is interesting to note that while two non-Roma pupils (who were interviewed together) felt that school is a waste of time, not seeing any benefit or advantage to it, none of the Roma pupils seemed to feel this way. This may suggest two things: either the Roma pupils realize the importance of school, or their environment is supportive enough of school to frown upon such a statement. Roma pupils were more inclined to say they were not interested or had no will to go to school. All of the pupils in this study seemed to have a social circle they can rely on for help, either in school or personally. However, two of the Roma pupils said they did not have a supportive circle, one stating he had only one friend and the other that he had no friends, in spite of being in a homogenous Roma class. Neither of them spared words while explaining why they did not like school, which reflected dissatisfaction and hopelessness. They were also the only two pupils that stated their failure despite the effort they make as one of the reasons for disliking school, although they are not the worst pupils, according to their teacher. They also seemed to be very keen on learning, one talking passionately about becoming a horror film director, while the other showing not passion, but pressure to succeed in life.

Unfortunately, the answers to the questions seeking to identify the pupils’ friends and best pupils in class were not sufficient to conclude the extent of social integration. According to their teacher, the Roma and non-Roma pupils did cooperate in class, and sometimes

socialized outside of classroom, but their social circles, the friends they socialize with the most, were homogeneous.

All of the pupils characterized their best friends from the social perspective, i.e. their qualities as people, showing they do not choose their closest friends based on their academic achievement, nor do they find success in school a valuable or important virtue in a person. Unfortunately, not all non-Roma pupils were comfortable talking about their friends probably due to the fact that they were in the same room.

	Roma		Non-Roma		All	
Kind to me	6	20%	0	-	6	15.38%
Good relationship	18	60%	5	83.33%	23	58.97%
Helpful	4	13.33%	1	16.67%	5	12.82%
Fun	5	16.67%	0	-	5	12.82%

Table 3 *Frequency of answers to the question "What is your best friend like?"*

Most of the pupils described their friends in terms of their relationship (Table 3), stating the activities they do together as well as their frequency, the long history of their relationship, absence of serious arguments, keeping secrets and so on. However, some Roma pupils described their friends in terms of how their friends treat them – “kind to me” was a most common answer in this category, but answers like “They don’t mock me” or “They don’t call me names like the others”¹¹ were also included in this category. Although these answers may be indicative of the Roma pupils’ sensitivity to how people treat them, the sample of non-Roma pupils’ answers is unfortunately too small for comparison and conclusions.

Table 4 show the frequency of categories of the answers given when the pupils were asked to characterize the best pupil in their class. Although information about the participants’ overall academic achievement was not collected, most of the participants who characterized the best pupil from the academic perspective had very high (68.75%) or high grades (12.5%) in English, while most of the participants (70%) who characterized the best pupil exclusively from the social perspective had a somewhat lower grade in English (3 out of 5, with 5 being the highest grade). Only three pupils gave mixed descriptions, and their grades vary in the upper part of the 1-5 scale. These numbers may be showing that pupils with higher grades

¹¹ The answers were translated from Croatian by the author of this paper.

show greater awareness of what it takes to be a successful learner, and may thus be more likely to compare themselves as learners to these pupils.

Table 4 shows that most of the answers concerned the best pupil's characteristics that made them good pupils (64.81% of all the answers), and half as much (33.33%) concerned the characteristics that made them good friends. Only one pupil characterized the best pupil physically, as tall. It may seem that the participants characterized the best pupil they chose as a friend because they actually were friends; however, this was not found to be the case.

	Roma pupils		Non-Roma pupils		All pupils	
Academic perspective	17	47.22%	16	100%	33	63.46%
Social perspective	18	50%	0	-	18	34.62%
Physical perspective	1	2.78%	0	-	1	1.9%

Table 4 *Frequency of answers to the question "What is the best pupil like?"*

The answers in the academic category may further be divided into those concerning grades, effort and competence, as can be seen in Table 5. The answers from the 'effort' subcategory were the most frequent (36.36% of the 'academic perspective' category), with equal number of Roma and non-Roma pupils' answers (6).

Academic aspect	Roma pupils		Non-Roma pupils		All pupils	
Effort	6	35.29%	6	37.5%	12	36.36%
Grades	3	17.65%	5	29.41%	8	24.24%
Competence	6	35.29%	0	-	6	18.18%
Other	2	6.9%	5	29.41%	7	21.21%

Table 5 *Subcategories of the academic aspect of best pupils' characterization*

The 'effort' subcategory consists of those answers that indicate attribution of effort to academic achievement by listing activities such as studying, being active in class, listening to the teacher, doing homework, being diligent etc., with studying being the most frequent answer. The second most frequent answers are those from the 'grades' subcategory (24.24% of all the answers from the academic category), which do not indicate any attribution style, but academic achievement in general, measured either in final grades, test grades, or grades in general. This kind of evaluation of success based solely on grades, a measurable and tangible proof of academic achievement, reflect the importance the participants give to grades. In other

words, these pupils adopted an attitude that the successfulness of a learner is not measured by the effort or progress they make, but only by the achievement of a goal common to all.

Approximately a fifth of the answers (18.18%) from the ‘academic perspective’ category are made up of adjectives indicating attribution of competence to academic success, and all of them are given by Roma pupils. None of the non-Roma pupils listed “smart”, or “wise”, or “doesn’t like to study”¹² as characteristics of the best pupil in class, which were the answers of Roma pupils. This may be the result of the lack of connection between effort and success, as Roma pupils most often need to put in a lot more effort in order to get the same grade as a non-Roma pupil. The answers in the last subcategory were very general, e.g. “good at school”, “knows everything the teacher asks” and “a good example to others”¹³. The latter one was given only by non-Roma pupils, all of which answered exclusively from the academic point of view, so this answer was seen in the same light.

As can be seen in Table 4, none of the non-Roma pupils characterized the best pupil from the perspective of a friend. One of the most common type of answers (40%) were those describing the treatment of the interviewee by the best pupil, such as “kind”, “naughty” (because the best pupil hits them a lot), and the most striking one: “They’re OK, [because] they socialize with Roma pupils.”¹⁴ These answers may again be indicative of the Roma pupils’ sensitiveness to how others treat them, although it was a small sample. The other most important characteristic (40%) seemed to be helpfulness, whether it was meant personally or in school, or in terms of borrowing necessary materials or giving advice. It seemed that Roma pupils are aware of the importance of the help and support their social circle provides.

As Table 6 shows, the pupils that participated in this research all believed to be multilingual. This question was meant to show if there was a different perception between the first, second, and foreign language. It may be important to note here that the participants had the chance to talk between the interviews about what might be the “correct” answer to the interview questions, and discuss how many languages they speak.

	Roma pupils		Non-Roma pupils		All pupils	
1	0	-	0	-	0	-
2	7	25%	0	-	7	18.42%

¹² Answeres were translated from Croatian by the author of this paper.

¹³ Answeres were translated from Croatian by the author of this paper.

¹⁴ Answeres were translated from Croatian by the author of this paper.

3	2	7.14%	8	80%	10	26.32%
4	19	67.86%	1	10%	20	52.63%
More than 4	0	-	1	10%	1	2.63%

Table 6 Frequency of answers to the question “How many languages do you speak?”

As can be seen in Table 7, the non-Roma pupils did not seem to distinguish between their mother tongue and the foreign languages they learned or spoke. However, as has been noted, they had time to talk to each other, especially because they were among the last ones to be interviewed and most of them were interviewed as a group.

	Roma pupils		Non-Roma pupils	
Croatian and Roma	3	10.71%	0	-
Croatian and English	1	3.57%	0	-
English and German	3	10.71%	0	-
Croatian, English and German	2	7.14%	8	80%
Roma, Croatian, English and German	19	67.86%	0	-
Croatian, English, German and Serbian	0	-	1	10%
Croatian, English, German and all Slavic languages	0	-	1	10%

Table 7 “Which languages do you speak?”

It should also be noted that the non-Roma pupil who claimed to speak Serbian said he had learned it by watching YouTube videos in Serbian, and did not think there is much difference between Croatian and Serbian. Similarly, another non-Roma pupil who was interviewed in another group claimed to speak “all Slavonic languages, because they are all the same”¹⁵. The dismissal of the differences between the languages may stem from the vast differences between the standard Croatian language and their dialect, which some struggled to repress while talking to the interviewer, and some did not try to hide or change at all¹⁶. The same non-Roma pupil who claimed to speak all Slavic languages had a Slovene grandfather with whom he spoke Slovene, which is very similar to the dialect in which he speaks. He also

¹⁵ Quote translated from Croatian by the author of this paper.

¹⁶ Although this is not the topic of this paper, it has been noticed that some Roma pupils speak in Croatian dialect of the area to a greater extent than others. Since standard Croatian language is formally used in school, and children likely speak to each other in dialect, the extent of Roma pupils' social integration in non-Roma community may perhaps be inferred from the extent to which they speak in dialect.

claimed that he spoke Croatian in general, but sometimes mixed it with other languages, giving examples of the said Croatian dialect. All of this indicates the blurred lines between languages and the relative perception of proficiency and what it means to speak a language in relation to sociolinguistic context the children grow up and learn in. The aimed level of proficiency is lower for foreign languages (Dörnyei, 1994), but if they perceive proficiency in a language only as the 'passive' skills, equating it with only understanding a language, they may perceive themselves very proficient in English, since the majority of the input they get is from their teacher in the classroom, in which they do not have the chance to communicate spontaneously. It may also be the case that there is a different perception of English in films, songs and as spoken by native speakers as opposed to English in the classroom – that is, that those are two different *Englishes*, as was implied by a Roma pupil who said that native speakers “speak English weird”¹⁷. This would be especially true if they perceive English (they speak) only in terms of the input and use of English in English classes. Self-perception as a language speaker is necessarily influenced by comparisons to other speakers. If the pupils of low proficiency were to compare themselves with native speakers or even with speakers significantly more proficient than them, they would be likely to develop a negative perception of themselves as language speakers and learners. In other words, perception of different *Englishes* and different proficiencies may be necessary for them to preserve their self-image and motivation for learning.

The data collected from the Roma pupils is somewhat more revealing in terms of their perception of languages. Although 67.86% of the pupils answered that they spoke four languages, most of them indicated somehow that they spoke Croatian only at school (or when role-playing school at home for fun), Romani only at home or when the teacher was not around¹⁸, and that they learned English and German at school. There was definitely a perceived difference between the languages formally and informally learned for the 21.42% of Roma pupils who chose English and German or Croatian and Roma as the languages they spoke. For 7.14% the perceived difference seemed to be greater between their mother tongue and the languages they learned later in life.

¹⁷ Quote translated from Croatian by the author of this paper.

¹⁸ It is interesting to note that some of them reported using Roma language when cheating on tests, meaning that their mother tongue in this case functions as a subversive mechanism against the system that is rigged against them.

While the Roma language and English are most liked by Roma pupils, Croatian and English are most liked by the non-Roma pupils, so it can be concluded that, along with their mother tongues, English is the pupils' favourite, as can be seen in Table 8.

	Roma pupils		Non-Roma pupils		All pupils	
English	10	35.71%	2	20%	12	31.58%
Croatian	3	10.71%	7	70%	10	26.32%
Roma	10	35.71%	0	-	10	26.32%
Croatian and Roma	2	7.14%	0	-	2	5.26%
English and German	1	3.57%	0	-	1	2.63%
Croatian and English	1	3.57%	0	-	1	2.63%
Doesn't know	1	3.57%	1	10%	2	5.26%

Table 8 "Which language is your favourite?"

Table 9 shows the reasons the participants gave for choosing the Croatian or Roma as their favourite language. The most common reason (54.17% of the answers for these two languages) was the ease of communication, in which they emphasized understanding – the pupils understood it best and everyone understood them. The fact that two Roma pupils chose Croatian as their favourite because of the ease of communication points to whom they talk to and socialize with most, as do some of the answers of the Roma pupils who chose Roma language as their favourite for the same reason – answers like “everyone knows it”, “I talk like that the most” or “all the time”¹⁹, which point to the low frequency of communication in Croatian, perhaps even to the low level of importance they give to communication in this language. There was one Roma pupil who stated that Croatian was his favourite language as it was the most important one for finding employment later in life. This pupil seemed generally pressured to succeed academically in order to find “serious work” all throughout the interview.

	Croatian language				Roma language				All	
	Roma		Non-Roma		Roma		Non-Roma			
Communication	2	40%	4	50%	7	63.64%	0	-	13	54.17%
Identity	0	-	3	37.5%	3	27.27%	0	-	6	25%
Affection	0	-	1	12.5%	1	9.1%	0	-	2	8.33%
Usefulness	1	20%	0	-	0	-	0	-	1	4.17%

¹⁹ Answers were translated from Croatian by the author of this paper.

Doesn't know	2	40%	0	-	0	-	0	-	2	8.33%
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Table 9 *Frequency of answers to the question "Why is Croatian/Roma your favourite language?"*

The category of identity consisted of answers like "Because I was born in Croatia", "It's my / our language", or "It's the language of my childhood"²⁰.

The reasons for preferring English above other languages given in Table 10 give an insight into the motivational orientation as well as the perception of English. Most of the reasons for choosing English as a favourite language are connected to the classroom context (59.09%); the pupils said they liked English because of the fun or interesting classes, because of the teacher, certain activities (such as games and cartoons), work atmosphere in the classroom, their perceived success, etc. Their answers indicate that the strongest motivator for learning English is the learning situation and that they did indeed perceive English as a school subject to a greater extent than as a medium of communication. Answers that reflected the huge number and diversity of people that speak English comprise the 'world language' category, while 'affective' category consists of answers that highlighted affection towards the language itself, such as beautiful words or sound, or the participants simply liked pronouncing English words.

	Roma		Non-Roma		All	
Classroom context	11	61.11%	2	50%	13	59.09%
World language	2	11.11%	0	-	2	9.1%
Affective	2	11.11%	2	50%	4	18.18%
Useful in the future	2	11.11%	0	-	2	9.1%
Pop-culture	1	5.56%	0	-	1	4.5%

Table 10 *Frequency of answers to the question "Why is English your favourite language?"*

Usefulness in the future is specified in the answers as usefulness for future employment or travelling to England and talking to people there. Some of the answers in the pop-culture category are the same as in Mihaljević Djigunović's (1998b) 'usefulness in the present' category, namely films, cartoons, songs etc. However, since the participants always reported that they could not really understand them, English was of no particular use to them. They seem to simply like recognizing something they are familiar with in popular culture. Popular

²⁰ Quotes translated from Croatian by the author of this paper.

culture is theoretically speaking commodity which both Roma and non-Roma pupils can consume, so it may be an area where they have equal standing. This is however dependent upon whether or not they have the same material conditions to consume it, their approximately equal proficiency in English, as well as the extent to which consummation of popular culture is a part of the children’s culture of their age group and area. In other words, sharing preference for some popular culture elements may be an element of social integration of Roma pupils.

The questions about the most beautiful language were aimed at discovering affective orientation towards language; however, it seems that most of the participants thought of it as the same question as the previous one about the favourite language. English was again the most popular language, with 47.37% of pupils naming it as the most beautiful one. It was followed by Croatian (26.32%) and Roma language (6.25%), as is shown in table 11.

	Roma pupils		Non-Roma pupils		All pupils	
English	13	46.42%	5	50%	18	47.37%
Croatian	7	10.71%	3	30%	10	26.32%
Roma	4	14.29%	1	10%	5	13.16%
German	2	7.14%	0	-	2	6.25%
Roma and Croatian	1	3.57%	0	-	1	3.13%
Doesn’t know	1	3.57%	1	10%	2	6.25%

Table 11 “Which language is the most beautiful?”

The reasons the pupils gave for choosing their mother tongues are largely the same as they were for choosing them as their favourite ones: the ease of communication and identity. Roma pupils who chose their second language (Croatian) as the most beautiful one did so mostly because of the necessity or the wish to communicate in Croatian, reasons which reflect the wish integrate into non-Roma society. Two of the pupils, however, emphasized the convenience of speaking a second language and the ability to better express themselves, saying that Croatian has “rich words”²¹ (meaning a rich vocabulary), and that sometimes it took longer to say something in Roma language than in Croatian and that they were more proficient in certain linguistic segments, like counting. The reason for this might be, as was previously mentioned, the lack of proficiency in their own mother tongue, i.e. the fact that

²¹ Answer translated from Croatian by the author of this paper.

their mother tongue is insufficient with respect to the school context and the concepts encountered in it.

The reasons for choosing English as the most beautiful language were also mostly the same as in the previous question, with the exception of the world language category, as can be seen in table 12. Eleven pupils chose English both as their favourite and the most beautiful language, but gave different answers, albeit mostly belonging to the same categories, each time they were asked why that is so.

	Roma		Non-Roma		All	
Classroom context	7	50%	2	28.57%	9	42.86%
Affective	5	35.71%	3	42.86%	8	38.1%
Useful in the future	0	-	2	28.57%	2	9.52%
Pop-culture	2	14.29%	0	-	2	9.52%

Table 12 “*Why is English the most beautiful language to you?*”

When asked if they liked English, 89.47% of pupils answered positively, while four Roma pupils said they did not like it, two of which stated that they liked English classes despite not liking English, which is shown in Table 13.

	Roma		Non-Roma		All	
Classroom context	28	65.12%	3	42.86%	31	62%
World language	1	2.33%	0	-	1	2%
Affective	8	18.6%	3	42.86%	11	22%
Useful in the future	3	6.98%	1	-	4	8%
Pop-culture	3	6.98%	0	14.29%	3	6%

Table 13 “*Why do you like English?*”

The reasons for the negative answers to this question are lack of interest, lack of learning strategies, and not understanding the language. Since the pupils who said they did not like English because they did not understand it still liked the classes because of the discipline and fun activities in English, it may be concluded that the part of the classes which is performed in the language they did understand was extensive enough for them to not be demotivated by not understanding the English language. It also may be that the nature of English used in the fun activities they mentioned is different from the English they do not understand and find threatening. What pupils usually define as English they do not understand was “when teacher

speaks”²², so these findings do not necessarily mean they still do not perceive English as a school subject. The reasons given for liking English were again the same as the reasons for it being a favourite or most beautiful language, as can be seen in Table 13.

English classes are generally liked by pupils (86.84% of the pupils like them), while, interestingly, the pupils who said they did not like English classes reported they liked English as a language due to beautiful words and popular songs in English. The reason for not liking English in school is too many classes, school subjects, and school obligations. One pupil said they sometimes like the classes, and one could not decide due to too frequent absence – the pupil attended English only two or three times during the school year because of disinterest.

Since the school context of learning English seems to be the most motivating factor, the children were also asked why that was so, i.e. what were the activities they most and least enjoyed in English classes. Although the data does not conclusively show which type of situation – collaborative, individual, or competitive – the pupils prefer, it does show that they prefer games far more than any other activity (35.9% of all the answers), which is in line with previously mentioned research. Other well liked activities were writing (15.38%), singing and cartoons (7.7% each). Interestingly, 7.7% pupils did not choose any specific activity but their teacher as the best part of English classes. Writing was also mentioned as the least liked activity (32.58%), followed by new or hard subject matter (19.35%), and exams (16.13%). Exams do not seem to be disliked due to poor performance in them, but the fact that they were often scheduled close to each other and thus demanded greater exertion of effort, as has been noted before.

When asked about their teacher, all the pupils exhibited a positive or very positive attitude. As Table 14 shows, the pupils’ descriptions of their teacher can be divided into three categories. The ‘professional’ category subsumes all the characteristics of the teacher as an educational professional, i.e. her competence as a teacher, such as being smart, in control of the class, good at explaining, etc. The ‘human/social’ category refers to the teacher’s traits that describe her more on a personal level, such as kind, funny, fair, friendly, lovable and so on. The ‘relationship’ category consists of those answers that described the teacher in terms of her relationship with the pupils and how she treated them. Some of those were not yelling at her pupils, listening and heeding to their wishes, not giving lots of homework, extending deadlines, and so on. One of the most common answers in this category was “When we are

²² Quote translated from Croatian by the author of this paper.

mean to her, she is mean to us, but when we behave, she is good to us, too”²³, which is most likely a strategy the teacher uses to explain her actions and the reasons behind them, and the pupils seemed to find this fair.

	Roma		Non-Roma		All	
Professional	7	17.95%	3	17.65%	10	17.86%
Human/social	15	38.46%	11	64.71%	16	28.57%
Relationship	17	43.59%	3	17.65%	20	35.71%

Table 14 “*What is your English teacher like?*”

The pupils mostly described their teacher as a person rather than an educational professional, as Table 14 shows. Some of the Roma pupils’ answers which describe their teacher in terms of their relationship may be explained by their lower proficiency in Croatian. However, the majority of those answers again point to the Roma pupils’ sensitivity to how they are treated by other people.

When asked the question “Who speaks English?” most of the pupils (65.79%) gave a “correct” answer, it being either Americans or the English, while 13 pupils (34.21%) gave a “wrong” answer or said they did not know. The question is ambiguous as it was meant to grasp different kinds of answers. Most of the pupils were thus confused by the question, so they were asked to brainstorm and say whatever comes to their minds. The answers show to which speakers they connect the English language.

	Roma		Non-Roma		All	
The English	11	37.93%	2	16.17%	13	32.5%
Americans	5	17.24%	2	16.17%	7	17.5%
Pupils	4	13.79%	4	33.33%	8	20%
Teacher	4	13.79%	2	16.17%	6	15%
Everyone	4	13.79%	1	8.33%	5	12.5%
Other native speakers	0	-	1	8.33%	1	2.5%

Table 15 *Frequency of answers to the question “Who speaks English?”*

Table 15 shows the frequency of all the answers given by the participants. It was expected that the pupils would be aware of the status of English as *lingua franca*, which was

²³ Quote translated from Croatian by the author of this paper.

indicated by previous research, but only 12.5% of the answers was that everyone speaks English. Pupils seemed largely unaware that English is spoken mostly as a foreign language. Although the English were the most common answer (32.5%), they were not followed by the Americans, which take the third place (17.5%). Surprisingly, the second most popular answer was “pupils” (20%), and equally surprising was the answer “teacher” (15%). These data show, just like the previous, that pupils connect English mostly to the school context. What is more, it reveals a different understanding of proficiency and what it means to speak a language.

When pupils were asked to characterize the native speakers, the most common answers evaluated them vaguely, in a positive light, giving answers such as “good”, “polite”, “funny” or “nice”. Approximately half of the pupils who characterized them this way had met the native speakers in real life; Roma pupils reported that some “English people from Florida”²⁴ came to the Roma settlement to proselyte and give out gifts to the needy. It is unclear how often this happened, but this kind of input is certainly not provided by the non-Roma pupils’ environment. All of the Roma pupils who met the Americans said they attempted to speak to them in English, and although they were not able to establish a meaningful conversation, they were happy to just understand and utter a word or two in English, and to interact non-verbally. The rest of the answers characterizing the native speakers the participants said were from word-of-mouth or television, but none of the participants mentioned school as the place where they heard (about) the native speakers, although they must have mentioned them in English classes, since learning about the culture and people is a part of the curriculum. Other most common answers were that the native speakers were rich, or that pupils did not know what they were like. A few pupils characterized them as stupid, thieves, and hillbillies. These answers are in line with the most common stereotypes about the Americans.

The pupils were asked to evaluate their competence in English on the scale 1 to 10 as well as in comparison to the other pupils in their group. If they compared themselves to others as significantly worse, they were asked how many pupils in their group were better or worse than them in order to get a better picture of where they position themselves in the class. These data were then compared to their grades and the teacher’s comments on each pupil to get a picture of the pupils’ perceptions of themselves as English learners.

²⁴ Quote translated from Croatian by the author of this paper. It is unclear who they were, but the participants were very clear they native English speakers.

	Roma pupils		Non-Roma pupils		All pupils	
Higher	3	10.71%	0	-	3	7.89%
Adequate	13	46.43%	8	80%	21	55.26%
Lower	8	28.57%	2	20%	10	26.32%
Doesn't know	4	14.29%	1	10%	5	13.16%

Table 16 *Pupils self-evaluation*

As Table 16 shows, more than half of all the pupils' self-perception seems to be in line with how the teacher evaluates them. Although the Roma pupils' answers implied on several occasions that they tend to compare themselves primarily with other Roma pupils, this does not seem to be reflected by the numbers in Table 16. However, their teacher mentioned on several occasions that she partially based the final grades on effort in case of those participants who might not have been as successful in learning the subject matter, but worked very hard and showed great effort. In other words, she gave them higher grades in order to reward their hard work and to motivate them to keep doing so. The incongruence between the teacher's evaluation and the pupils' self-evaluation might stem from the lack of connection between effort and success, and effort and the image of a good learner.

Most of the pupils (78.95%) said they were glad they learned English²⁵. However, a slightly smaller number of pupils reported that they would like to continue learning English next year; namely 71.05% explicitly stated they would continue learning English, while 15.79% stated they would rather not do so, and 10.53% expressed uncertainty. It should be noted that the last two categories of pupils were exclusively Roma pupils, and the reason they gave for their reluctance to continue learning English is the fact that school in general was too demanding and too stressful. They felt they would be able to do better in other subjects if they opted out of English the following year. One of the pupils added that they did not see any purpose in learning English, and one that they feel out of place as they were the only one in their group that did not understand the teacher.

The final question of the interview was about the instrumental aspect and the importance of learning English. Almost all the pupils felt that it was important to learn English, save for one who was absent from English classes most of the time and seemed somewhat reluctant to participate in the interview at moments, so they were not pushed too hard to answer questions.

²⁵ The majority of the pupils could not say why they are or are not glad, so these answers are omitted altogether.

The benefits of learning English the participants gave are presented in Table 17. The categories remain the same as before, with a shift towards the ‘usefulness in the future’ category, which is expected since the question was aimed to that kind of answers.

	Roma		Non-Roma		All	
Useful in the future	29	40.85%	12	85.71%	41	74.55%
Classroom context	5	12.2%	1	7.14%	6	10.91%
Affective motive	4	9.76%	0	-	4	7.27%
World language	1	2.44%	0	-	1	2.44%
Doesn't know	2	4.88%	1	7.14%	3	5.45%

Table 17 “*Why is it good to learn English?*”

A lot of the answers subsumed under this category refer to travelling (26.83% of the answers in this category). However, when asked where they would like to travel, the pupils were usually confused. Although they knew English is needed when travelling, they did not think about specifics of the concept, nor did they imagine themselves travelling to different countries and using English there. The second most frequent answer was simply communication; again, they found themselves unprepared for the questions about the specifics, answering they would talk to their friends or foreigners. Some pupils explicitly made a difference between their own personal attitudes and what their parents had told them. Other most common answers were related to employment or usefulness in general.

As has been mentioned before regarding the attitudes towards school, some of these answers are also the same word for word and it is very likely that they are merely learned phrases they heard before. Therefore, the extent to which they influence motivation for learning English is questionable. If they do not influence motivation, it should be reconsidered whether to call them an attitude or not. This is not to say that children do see school or English as unimportant, but merely that we need to dig deeper for the answer why they think so in order to find out what drives their motivation. Why some of the opinions the participants stated influence motivation and some do not may be perhaps best explained with the concepts of children as “beings” and “becomings” in childhood studies (Uprichard, 2008). Children as “becomings” are seen only in terms of their future selves, they are seen as incomplete, as adults in the making, who are lacking competencies and knowledge an adult has, while adults are complete beings, and by implication do not change. Children as “beings” on the other hand are “social actors in their own right” who actively construct their own childhoods and

have their own opinions and feelings about what it means to be a child (2008, p. 304). Although both of these concepts are incomplete, and although they may seem to be the complete opposites of each other, they complement each other – both children and adults are necessarily “beings” and “becomings”, at the same time existing in the present as they are and changing over time, with their perception of the past, the present, and the future and the perception of themselves in these times influencing what they are and how they will change. Thus, speaking to a child only as a “becoming” does not appeal to them. The idea of themselves in the future needs to speak to them in the present in order to be accepted. In other words, they are not *tabula rasa* in which attitudes are inscribed as they are; rather than that, children mould the attitudes from their environment and interpret them so that they fit into the world how they see it. E.g. a Roma pupil said that learning English is important for success in life because it helps you achieve something. However, when asked what exactly you can achieve the answer was “friendship”. The pupil took the general attitude of the importance of English from his environment and understood it in terms of what achievement meant to him. However, this does not necessarily always happen. Although Roma children are told that education leads to employment and a better life, it is hard for them to internalize such an image of a future self because they have no such Roma role model – the idea is incongruent with their experiential knowledge in the present. Similarly, if the children have no experience of travelling, be it personal or experience of a role model who will talk about it, the idea of their future self as travelling is more or less an empty signifier. In this light, the two of the non-Roma pupils’ attitude (and many others’, no doubt) that school is a “waste of time” makes a lot of sense – they do not seem to connect the subject matter with future employment, because they do not have an exact idea of employment in general and what it entails, let alone their future employment. In this case, their future employment is not a strong motivator because something vague cannot bear a lot of importance. Motivation for school in general thus stems from what is relevant in their immediate reality – friends, fun activities and satisfaction of their curiosity. Since these needs can also be satisfied outside of school to a certain extent, the aforementioned participants who find school a waste of time did not seem to find school important for these reasons. Motivation for learning English also stems from the experience of English classes, as that is the only meaningful input for them. They do not have enough contact with native speakers or experience in using English outside of classroom for it to influence their perception of English, their self-perception as speakers in the present and consequently the perception of their future selves. Therefore, when looking at the

sociocultural context of language learning and how it influences it, one more layer needs to be considered - children's culture, their value systems and social dynamics.

6. Conclusion

This study has attempted to explore various affective factors that influence foreign language learning in Roma as well as non-Roma pupils aged 10 to 14 who learn English as an elective foreign language subject in school. As all affective factors are to some extent influenced by the sociocultural environment in which the pupils live and learn, and this environment is considerably different from the environment of non-Roma children, a special attention has been given to it in order to obtain a better insight into its potential influence on the Roma pupils' attitudes, attribution styles, self-perception as learners, and other affective factors. Since this is an exploratory study, its aim was to point to areas which might need more attention in future research.

The attitudes of Roma pupils towards school seem to reflect the attitudes of their environment. Namely, due to the problematic status of Roma people in Croatia, a solution to which is thought to be the education of Roma children, Roma pupils seem to be pressured to succeed academically in order to achieve a higher life standard. They seem to be aware of the importance of social connections in achieving this goal, and are sensitive to how their environment perceives and treats them. Although it could not be concluded from the data obtained to which extent Roma pupils are socially and academically integrated and if that integration influences motivation to learn English, according to their teacher they seem to be socially distanced to some extent, which is also shown by some of the Roma pupils' attitudes towards their mother tongue; also, several Roma pupils' answers hinted at them avoiding comparisons with non-Roma pupils on an academic level. This topic should be further researched in detail, and on a much larger sample, as the pupils' social integration is crucial for their academic achievement. Successful pupils, both Roma and non-Roma, seem to have a clear image of what makes a successful learner. While some of the participants in both groups measured success of those pupils only based on grades, which is a reflection of how the education system works, some of them attributed success to effort, while only Roma pupils attributed success to competence. Although attribution of the success of others does not necessarily need to be in line with attribution of personal success, this it is important because self-perception as a learner is among other things based on comparisons with others and how they see them and their success. The pupils have only a vague idea of who the native speakers of English are and what they are like, which is based on the media and common stereotypes, and in some cases on limited personal contact. Answers about speakers of English show that

pupils do not see English as a *lingua franca*, but as a school subject, although a lot of them said that English was important for travelling.

Pupils generally perceive the languages they speak and learn at school differently, and with respect to this, they have different perceptions of what it means to speak a language. Namely, they stated they 'spoke' a foreign language learned at school if they are successful in that school subject and if they understand the teacher or a text, which may be a useful mechanism for them to preserve their self-image as a learner. Such perception of themselves as speakers of English stems from the perception of English they speak as a school subject, and from perceiving English encountered in the real world as somewhat separate and different. Popular culture phenomena and contact with native speakers will not be a meaningful influence on motivation until pupils start perceiving *Englishes* as more similar and themselves as more similar to native speakers, i.e. until they reach the level of proficiency sufficient for communication.

Some of the attitudes that the pupils talked about were personal, developed from their own experience, while others seemed like responses that tell us more about the attitudes of the environment than their own attitudes. This clearly shows not only in the pupils' wording, but also in their reactions and responses when asked about something more that might reflect their attitude. Namely, attitudes that English and school in general is useful rarely seem to be personal, as they are not based on experiential knowledge and are thus not in line with the pupils' self-perception in the present and the perception of themselves in the future. Therefore, the instrumental orientation that the pupils exhibited needs to be looked at more closely with special attention paid to children's culture and values, as only a superficial look at it does not reveal the extent to which it influences motivation, if it does at all. In other words, these pupils are not likely to be driven by instrumental motivation, as it is commonly understood.

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Sažetak

Ovaj diplomski rad bavi se afektivnim faktorima koji utječu na učenje engleskog kao stranog jezika kod romskih učenika. Posebna pažnja pridaje se stavovima prema engleskom jeziku i percepciji istoga kod romskih učenika, kao i utjecaj tih stavova na njihovu motivaciju. Rad počinje izlaganjem teorijskog okvira, Gardnerovog sociokulturnog modela usvajanja drugog jezika, za čime slijedi pregled sličnih istraživanja provedenih u ovom području znanosti. Sociokulturni kontekst Roma iznesen je razlaganjem statusa Roma u hrvatskom društvu i okolnosti obrazovanja romskih učenika u hrvatskom obrazovnom sustavu. Opise sudionika istraživanja i metodologije slijede prikaz rezultata i rasprava. Zaključak sažima najbitnije rezultate istraživanja, koji ukazuju da učenici doživljavaju engleski najviše kao školski predmet, a njihova motivacija proizlazi iz školskog konteksta. Također se zaključuje kako je potreban durgačiji pristup istraživanju motivacije i stavova djece prema engleskom; točnije, potreban je pristup koji će u obzir uzeti dječju kulturu i pogled na svijet.

Ključne riječi: *sociokulturni model, romski učenici, engleski kao strani jezik, motivacija, stavovi*

Appendix

Interview questions

1. Voliš li ići u školu? Zašto?
2. Imaš li puno prijatelja u razredu? Kako se zovu?
3. Kakav je tvoj najbolji prijatelj/prijateljica?
4. Koliko jezika govoriš?
5. Koji ti je najdraži? Zašto?
6. Koji ti je najljepši? Zašto?
7. Sviđa li ti se engleski? Zašto?
8. Sviđaju li ti se sati engleskoga? Zašto?
9. Što ti je najdraže a što najmanje drago na satima engleskog?
10. Kakva je tvoja učiteljica engleskog?
11. Tko govori engleski? Kakvi su oni?
12. Koliko dobro znaš engleski?
13. Znaš li engleski bolje ili lošije od ostalih učenika u svom razredu? Zašto to misliš?
14. Je li ti drago što učiš engleski? Zašto?
15. Da možeš sam/a birati, bi li učila engleski i iduće školske godine?
16. Misliš li da je dobro za tebe da učiš engleski? Zašto?