

THE IMPORTANCE OF ATTITUDE IN FOREIGN LANGUAGE LEARNING

Barbara PERIĆ, RIT Croatia, barbara.peric@croatia.rit.edu
Venesa RADIĆ, RIT Croatia, vxr1226@g.rit.edu

Abstract

This research study focuses on the importance of foreign languages to college students and their attitudes towards learning foreign languages. Participants in this study are 47 students at the main Rochester Institute of Technology campus and 46 students at its subsidiary in Croatia (RIT Croatia) who have already finished language learning process or are still in the process of acquiring a new language. The main focus of this paper is to discover how students feel about learning a foreign language. The purpose of this study is to find out what differences in attitudes towards learning foreign languages appear among the two groups of RIT students. The results of this research showed that both groups of RIT students had very similar attitudes toward language learning and just some of the differences appeared. Mostly, attitudes were positive and students have showed interest in language learning. All of the RIT students have recognized the importance of foreign languages in today's world.

Keywords: attitudes, college students, language, learning, foreign languages

1. Introduction

Language learning has many advantages. It enhances our cognitive and analytical abilities, improves personality, it can improve our employment prospect, it helps us better understand our own language and culture. It increases global understanding, develops life skills, and strengthens relations with all around us. The biggest benefit is improving overall communication skills. People who speak another language score higher on tests and think more creatively, have access to a wider variety of jobs, and can more fully enjoy and participate in other cultures or converse with people from diverse backgrounds (Bamford & Mizokawa, 1991; Armstrong & Rogers, 1997). According to Yasuo (1991), foreign language learning is a form of studying unknown language in one of the cultures and as outcome having a lot of opportunities which follow the learning process. Navarro-Villarroel (2011) stated that a person who knows many languages really plays the main role in society. Globalization had a big impact on the entire world. The effect of the globalization process and big trends in most of the languages led to the importance of early language learning (Lasagabaster, 2017). Language learning requires dynamic in it and a big involvement from a person. According to Tódor and Dégi (2016), learning a new language is a dynamic process. Term dynamic stands for the positivity in a person's attitude and the constant change involved in learning. Learning even one foreign language is a great chance for all students to discover new cultures, meet new people and be able to talk with them (Rashid & Jabbar, 2017). Of course, acquiring more than one foreign language leads to many benefits in

personal and business life. In the job world being able to speak more languages opens many doors and improves the employee's overall picture in the employer's eyes. But the main reason is to build up personal knowledge and be a better listener and learner. According to Lightbown and Spada (2006), person's attitudes are directly connected to language learning (as reported in Kachoub, 2010, p.8). This confirms theories about the relationship between attitude and language learning. If there is a strong desire and positive attitude towards learning, there will be great results after all. Motivation is essential to learning another language. Pupils' perception of the usefulness of the languages they learn can clearly contribute to increasing their motivation. In his book, "Educating Global Citizens in Colleges and Universities," historian Peter Stearns (2009) has written that Americans are "legendary" for being reluctant to learn another language. It may be due to fact that English is widely spoken and studied throughout the world. However, the fact remains that 75 percent of the world population does not speak English.

2. Language learning in the united states compared to that in Europe

The fact is that while the U.S. does not have a national requirement for students to learn a foreign language in school, the typical European pupil must study multiple languages in the classroom before becoming a teen. Data from the Pew Research Center (2015) highlights the discrepancy between language learning in the United States compared to that in Europe. An average of 92% of the European population is taught a foreign language at a young age, compared to only 20% in America. Studying a *second* foreign language for at least one year is compulsory in more than 20 European countries. In most European countries, students begin studying their first foreign language as a compulsory school subject between the ages of 6 and 9, according to a 2012 report from Eurostat. In the European Union, during the period between 2004/05 and 2009/10, the proportion of pupils enrolled in primary education (ISCED level 1) not learning a foreign language decreased by around 10 percentage points, from 32.5 % to 21.8 %. On average, in 2009/10, 60.8 % of students enrolled in lower secondary education in Europe were learning two or more foreign languages. This is an increase of 14.1 percentage points compared to 2004/05. In upper secondary education, in most countries, there is a significant difference between the percentage of students learning two or more foreign languages in general education (59.4 %) and in pre-vocational/vocational education (39.4 %). English is the most-studied foreign language across almost all European countries and at all education levels. As stated in the report, linguistic and cultural diversity of the European Union is one of its major assets, but also one of its main challenges. Throughout the last decade, European multilingualism policy has been guided by the objective set by the Barcelona Council of March 2002, which called for the improvement of mastery of basic skills, in particular, by teaching at least two foreign languages from a very early age. The improvement of quality and efficiency of language learning has become one of the key objectives of the Strategic Framework for Education and Training ('ET 2020'). The framework underlines the necessity to enable citizens to communicate in two languages in addition to their mother tongue, as well as the need to promote language teaching and provide migrants with opportunities to learn the language of the host country. Meanwhile, the U.S. does not have a nationwide foreign-language mandate at any level of education. Many states allow individual school districts to

set language requirements for high school graduation, and primary schools have very low rates of even offering foreign-language course work. Only 25% of American adults self-report speaking a language other than English, according to the 2006 General Social Survey. Of those who know a second language, 43% said they can speak that language “very well.” Within this subset of multilinguals who are well-versed in a non-English language, 89% acquired these skills in the childhood home, compared with 7% citing school as their main setting for language acquisition. There could be many reasons for this. Since English is the language of globalization, there is not as much pressure for American students to have to learn a foreign language if in many places English is regularly spoken. In a 2016 Pew Research Center report on the state of American jobs, only 36% of Americans reported that knowing a foreign language was an extremely or very important trait for workers to be successful in today’s economy, ranking it last out of eight skills for workers’ success. As it is already stated, no national standard for test-taking that incorporates the importance of foreign language acquisition exists in the U.S., and requirements are generally set at the state or district level. In Europe, students often begin studying their first foreign language in school between the ages of 6 and 9, in contrast to the United States where foreign language is typically not taught until at least Middle School or High School despite the fact that multiple studies have shown that language acquisition is overall easier the younger one is (Birdsong & Molis, 20011; Johnson & Newport, 1989). Furthermore, in 2016, researchers at the Modern Language Association found that colleges lost 651 foreign language programs from 2013 to 2016 – dramatically more than the one foreign language programs that higher education lost between 2009 and 2013, or, in other words, enrolment in college-level foreign-language courses dropped 9.2 percent from 2013 to 2016. Only 7.5 percent of students are enrolled in a foreign language course. And that percentage has been steadily declining in recent years. It could be due to the fact that more colleges have dropped foreign language requirements. Or students simply may not see the potential career benefits of studying a foreign language. This decline in language education could have devastating effects for next generations. With fewer options for learning a foreign language in school, a sharp decrease in interest is likely to follow. The association says these changes are most likely a direct result of the 2008 recession, which hit foreign-language degree programs harder than many other humanities programs. Many parents and teachers have been leading initiatives to provide foreign-language learning in public schools, and some universities have introduced innovative language programs. From pre-K to graduate studies, there is a move toward holistic language education, based on the notion that learning a language should be grounded in the real, everyday use of that language. Government must spend more on foreign-language education and the education of qualified foreign-language teachers and more states need to enforce language-education requirements. Colleges need to recognize the importance of their foreign-language education programs. Without this, the next generation of Americans cannot be active participants of a multilingual world.

3. Language learning in Croatia

In Croatia, as in the rest of Europe, all students start learning a foreign language as a compulsory subject from the age of 6. This obligation lasts until students reach 18. In

addition, all students between the ages of 9 and 18 may choose to learn an additional language as all schools have to offer one as a core curriculum option. At 14, students may choose educational pathways/types of school where they study two foreign languages as compulsory subjects until the end of secondary education. At college level, students can choose one or more languages as an additional course, but the level of education is not the same at every college. Everything depends on the number of people involved in the classroom, age differences, cultural differences, motivation of the students and their attitude, and of course professor who is there to teach students. According to Guo (2011), it is known that most students learn languages just in education systems, but do not use them outside of the learning context. This can result in bad communication among others as well as forgetting the language if it is not used.

4. Language learning at RIT

RIT is a well-known American college which provides higher education for students. RIT Croatia is a private college which was established back in 1997. RIT Croatia offers three undergraduate programs for students on two campuses. RIT Campuses offer a lot of languages as additional courses for students from 2nd to 4th year of college. There exist many differences among campuses as there are different demands from students. Some of the languages are available via Polycom sessions, which also can have an impact on student's attitudes towards specific language. Learning a foreign language via camera and not having a professor in person might discourage students and reduce the interest of students for a specific language. Croatia campus (both Zagreb and Dubrovnik Campus) offer consists of five languages: Spanish, Italian, German, French and Russian. On the other side of the world, Rochester Main Campus has adapted the offer according to demands of the students. As a part of Modern Language and Culture courses, RIT Main Campus offers Japanese, Spanish, Arabic, Chinese, Italian, French, German, Russian and Portuguese. There is some overlapping in the languages, so the main focus of this paper is to discover how students feel about learning a foreign language. The purpose of this study is to find out what differences appear in students' attitudes towards learning foreign languages based on campus location.

5. L2 versus L3

The additional language can be the student's second language (L2) or the third language (L3). In 2017, Perić and Mijić claimed that TLA has been considered as an alternative of SLA since historic times. Many studies have shown that L3 acquisition is much more complicated than L2 acquisition. According to Perić and Božinović (2015), TLA is a term used for learners who have decided to learn L3 after already being fluent in the other two languages. As stated in Perić and Božinović (2015), L3 learners have a mode of all languages which they had so far acquired and those really influence the performing in L3. L2 is already a new challenge, and yet to come is L3. It is not an easy task to learn L3 after acquiring L2. It is especially hard if those languages belong to the same language family. Cenoz, Hufeisen, and Jessner (2001) emphasized that there is a stronger connection between L3 and L2 than the relationship between first language and L3 (as cited in Perić and Mijić, 2017). Within Croatia, there is a

problem of 3rd language acquisition within the 2nd language acquisition. Students have found it hard to learn from the Croatian language, translate into the English language and then learn further. Frequently, students lose the track in all translations between languages and get into a trap. In the USA English language is considered to be the global language and as such has a big importance in the world. A lot of American students are aware of the English language significance and they do not think much about learning other foreign languages (Norris, 2011). Being an English native speaker has positive and negative sides. The positive side is the familiarity with the international business language and negative side is not taking into consideration any other foreign languages (Dlabay and Scott, 2001, as cited in Norris, 2011). Students must be open-minded towards learning foreign languages and should always seek for more than knowing just one foreign language.

6. Attitudes

In her research, Lennartsson (2018) proved that students believe it is vital to have a good attitude towards learning and that students with a good attitude will have better results. Many studies from the past have concluded that motivation and attitude have a big connection (Todor, 2016). Students tend to have positive attitudes, but they are not so motivated to learn. Someone should push them a little bit or route to the right path. As stated by Yagi Yasuo (1991) students' attitudes have a big impact on the overall foreign language learning. Attitudes which students develop throughout their lives are the crucial parts of process called learning languages. The word attitude comes from the old Latin word *actus* which in the English language means *to act* (Navarro- Villarroel, 2011). Language learning is driven by many factors, but the main one is the attitude. According to Oroujlou and Vahedi (2011), a very good starting point is to have a very positive attitude toward learning something new. If a person starts with a cheerful and exciting state of mind then the overall learning will be much easier and time will fly faster. According to Kachoub (2010), people who speak more languages can have different attitudes, not just a single one. As a reflection of attitudes, there must be a willingness and strong desire towards learning. Sonmez (1994) explained the term attitude properly: "Attitude is a product of all life experiences" (retrieved from İnal, Evin and Saracaloğlu, 2000, p.40). People are those who create attitudes themselves. Different people have different attitudes. Some people have very positive attitudes, while others have negative ones. That point of view can be changed over time and within specific situations, but are based on life experiences. Different opinions that we hear around us may affect our attitudes toward learning foreign languages. In the end, it can result in changing the overall view towards learning behavior of specific language. There is always a sense of success while learning as a result of having a positive attitude towards languages. By having a positive attitude people tend to think more creatively and have a wish to learn. Having a positive perspective will lead to more successful learning. Lennartsson (2008) stated that students, who have difficulties with expressing attitudes towards learning foreign languages, are much more engaged than other students who are aware of their attitudes. The orientation towards learning foreign languages might begin with a negative attitude and after a while change into positive. The crucial moment can be when the students see all the benefits that learning brings and he or she might consider it useful. According to research done by Norris (2011), USA university

students usually had positive orientations and motivation while learning foreign languages. According to Todor (2016), positive attitudes are the ones which lead to increased motivation towards learning and lead to better acquiring of the specific language. The focus should be on positive attitudes, not the negative ones because those affect the whole life and lead to loss of motivation. Tódor (2016) claims that student's attitude really has an effect on the whole learning procedure and, basically, it is the main factor which affects the learning success (Kovač and Zdilar, 2017). Many students struggle with the choice of taking an additional language on their college levels. Sometimes it is just to fill the gap of necessary course, but there are cases when it is all about the strong willingness to learn. During the education process there are opportunities to expand the knowledge. It is of great importance when students, at the college level, choose and enroll courses they are really interested in.

6.1. Factors affecting differences in attitudes

Social factors have a big influence on attitudes towards learning. From time to time, a family is the one who pushes the student to learn a specific language for family-related reasons. In that case, learning outcome may not be so efficient or productive. That can be a very bad situation for the student as he or she may not be actually interested in it and would rather learn another language or not to learn languages at all. According to Kovač and Zdilar (2017), decision of attitude and motivational level towards language is tied up with the other classes, language status which student owns and the level of extracurricular occupations. All these additional obligations might influence the overall learning process and throw it into the second plan. The significant factor can also be gender. Lennartsson (2008) stated that women are those who have a more positive attitude towards learning L2. Furthermore, culture greatly influences attitudes about language learning. Khasinah (2014) had listed seven main factors that have a big impact on acquiring a new language. First place is reserved for motivation as a willingness and desire to achieve more than people know now. Secondly, there is an attitude component in terms of expressing specific feelings towards languages. Thirdly, age is a crucial factor that influences learning languages. Mainly, because it was proven that children are the best learners and older learners are those who pay attention to the rules within languages. On the fourth place, there is intelligence as a factor which proves that people with higher IQ outcome get higher grades on language exams. On the fifth place there is aptitude as an ability to learn. There must be a strong ability within a person to discover all aspects that language covers such as grammar, vocabulary or phrases. Learning style is a sixth factor which influences overall learning. All these small aspects make the change while learning a specific language. Last but not least, there is a personality factor which influences learning as people must have own self-esteem and be a real person. All of these listed factors are part of the learning process for every person. In order to succeed all of those must work together. Whatever surrounds us may have an impact on the learning process even if we are not aware of it. The main aim is to reduce any differences that appear and improve the efficiency of college systems (Rashid & Jabbar, 2017).

7. Method

The main purpose of this research paper was to find out differences in the students' attitudes towards learning foreign languages based on campus location. The questionnaire as a research instrument represented the set of statements related with the attitudes towards learning foreign languages. Some of the statements needed to be adapted due to cultural differences. The questionnaire was a combination of three already existing questionnaires: The Relationship of Second Language Learning Attitudes to Foreign Language Learning Attitudes: a study of Moroccan University students (Kachoub, 2010), Attitudes and Motivations towards learning foreign languages (Norris, 2011) and an online version of the survey done by Rashid & Jabbar (2017). All questionnaires were adapted for the purpose of this study. The questionnaire's measurements were based on the Likert Scale model with two main levels: the level of agreement and the level of difficulty. The study utilized an electronic survey that was distributed to a convenient sample comprised of two groups of respondents, RIT Croatia and RIT Rochester campus students from freshmen, sophomore, junior and senior level of education, who were currently acquiring foreign languages or have finished acquisition and 93 responses obtained out of which 7 were excluded from the research. The sample was formed in such a way that respondents whose mother tongue was not Croatian were excluded from the Croatian sample (N = 4), and respondents whose mother tongue was not English were excluded from the American sample (N = 3). The final Croatian sample consisted of 46 respondents. The average age of the respondents in that group was 21 years (21.13 +/- 1.61), and ranged from 20 to 31 years. There were 10 men (21.7%) and 36 women (78.3%) in the group. 10 respondents were in the second year of study (21.7%), 29 of them in the third year of study (63%) and 7 (15.2%) in the third year of study. The final American sample for analysis consisted of a total of 47 subjects, of which 23 were male subjects (48.9%) and 24 were female (51.1%). Regarding the year of study attended by the respondents, 14 of them were in the first year of study (29.8%), 8 of them in the second year of study (17.0%), 16 of them in the third year of study (34%), and 9 in the fourth year (19.1%).

8. Results

The groups did not differ according to the age of the subjects ($t = 1.90$, $df = 89,100$, $p > .05$), which was tested by the t test for the case of unequal variances, since the Leven test previously established a difference in the variance of the groups ($F = 6.04$, $p < .01$). Table 1 shows the results of examining students' attitudes towards learning a foreign language by two groups: Croatian group and American group of students. As some statements are formed to reflect a positive attitude towards foreign language learning, and some statements so as to reflect a negative attitude towards foreign language learning, we will show the ranges of results separately for these two groups. For statements that reflect a positive attitude towards learning a foreign language (statements under numbers 1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 8, 10, 11, 14, 18, 19, 20) the average values for the Croatian group are from at least 4.04 for the statement "Learning a foreign language improves my personality" to a maximum of 4.80 for the statements "Learning a foreign language can provide me with good opportunities for professional development" and "Learning a foreign language helps me find a good job". For the American group, the average values on the statements that reflect a positive attitude towards learning a foreign language range from at least 3.38 (for the statement "Learning a

foreign language helps me in other subjects” to 4.79 for the statement “Learning a foreign language could expand my knowledge of the world.” In general, this indicates a high level of agreement with statements that reflect a positive attitude towards foreign language learning in both the Croatian and American samples. On the other hand, there is a predominant disagreement with statements that reflect a negative attitude towards number 3, 7, 9, 12, 13, 16, 17), as for the sample of Croatian students for which the average values range from 1.17 for the statement “Learning a foreign language is a waste of time for me” to 2.50 for the statement “ I do not feel satisfied with my results”, as well as for the sample of American students for whom the average values range from 1.15 for the statement “Learning a foreign language is a waste of time for me” to 3.57 for the statement “I do not feel satisfied with my results.” Two claims referred to the education system in Croatia and the United States, i.e. the perception of the value of a foreign language. Respondents strongly disagree with the statement “The education system in Croatia / America offers many opportunities”, which indicates that respondents in both samples believe that education systems in both countries do not provide many opportunities. The Croatian sample broadly agrees with the statement “Most Croats value foreign languages” while the majority of the American sample shows a neutral attitude or disagreement with the statement “Most Americans value foreign languages”, which indicates that respondents believe that foreign languages are mostly valued in Croatia while, on the other hand, in the USA, respondents feel that knowledge of a foreign language is not of greater value to most Americans. A comparison of a group of Croatian and American students showed the existence of some differences, i.e. differences were found in a total of seven statements out of twenty, i.e. in four positively formulated statements and in three negatively formulated statements. Croatian students are more convinced that learning a foreign language helps them in other subjects than American students ($\chi^2 = 18.65$, $p < .01$), they more agree with the statement that everyone should learn more than one language ($\chi^2 = 8.19$, $p < .05$), to a greater extent believe that people in Croatia value knowledge of foreign languages than American students believe that Americans in the USA value ($\chi^2 = 26.44$, $p < .001$), and agree more than American students with the claim that knowledge of a foreign language is as important as knowledge of the mother tongue ($\chi^2 = 11.55$, $p < .05$). Regarding claims that reflect a negative attitude towards foreign languages, Croatian students show greater disagreement than American students with the statement “I feel upset when I communicate in a foreign language with others” ($\chi^2 = 10.10$, $p < .05$), which indicates that they feel less upset than American students when they communicate in a foreign language with others. Also, they express greater disagreement than American students with the statement “I feel uncomfortable speaking a foreign language”, which indicates that they feel less discomfort in communicating in a foreign language than American students ($\chi^2 = 16.32$, $p < .01$), which both indicate that Croatian students to some extent feel less discomfort or anxiety when communicating in a foreign language. Accordingly, a larger number of American students compared to Croatian students agree with the statement “I do not feel satisfied with my results” ($\chi^2 = 21.00$, $p < .001$), which indicates that American students show a lower perceived level of competence in foreign language than Croatian students.

Table 1. Results of examining attitudes for a group of Croatian (N = 46) and American

students (N = 47) towards foreign language learning: presentation of frequencies, arithmetic means (M) and standard deviations (SD) and hi2 test

Statement	group	Strongly disagree N	Disagree N	Neither agree nor disagree N	Agree N	Strongly agree N	M (SD)	χ^2
1a. Učenje stranog jezika čini me vještim. 1b. Studying a foreign language makes me feel accomplished.	a b	1 0	0 0	1 3	9 14	35 30	4,67 (0,73) 4,57 (0,62)	3,46
2a. Učenje stranog jezika pomaže mi i u drugim predmetima. 2b. Learning a foreign language helps me with other subjects as well.	a b	0 1	2 11	4 13	17 13	23 9	4,33 (0,82) 3,38 (1,11)	18,65**
#3a. Osjećam se uznemireno kada komuniciram na stranom jeziku s drugima. 3b. I sometimes get upset when I communicate in a foreign language with others.	a b	13 15	20 10	6 16	5 6	2 0	2,20 (1,11) 2,28 (1,06)	10,10*
4a. Učenje stranog jezika moglo bi proširiti moje znanje o svijetu. 4b. Learning a foreign language could expand my knowledge of the world.	a b	0 0	0 0	3 1	11 8	32 38	4,63(0,61) 4,79 (0,46)	1,98
5a. Učenje stranog jezika kao i mog materinskog jezika je ugodno. 5b. Studying foreign languages is as enjoyable as studying my native language.	a b	0 1	1 4	11 6	14 10	20 25	4,15 (0,87) 4,17 (1,10)	5,49
6a. Učenje stranog jezika moglo bi mi pomoći da steknem nove prijatelje. 6b. Learning a foreign language could help me make new friends.	a b	0 0	0 0	3 2	11 16	32 29	4,63 (0,61) 4,57 (0,58)	1,26
#7a. Radije učim materinski jezik. 7b. I prefer studying my native language more than foreign languages.	a b	15 17	15 19	15 9	0 1	1 1	2,07 (0,93) 1,94 (0,92)	3,09
8a. Učenje stranog jezika poboljšava moju osobnost. 8b. Studying foreign language improves my personality	a b	1 1	2 5	11 18	12 12	20 11	4,04 (1,03) 3,57 (1,04)	5,58
#9a. Iskreno, učim strani jezik samo da prođem. 9b. Honestly, I study a foreign language just to pass or because it is easy for me.	a b	28 28	9 15	6 3	1 0	2 1	1,70 (1,07) 1,53 (0,80)	3,82

10a. Svatko bi trebao učiti više od jednog jezika.	a	0	0	2	8	36	4,74 (0,54)	8,19*
10b. Everybody should learn more than one language.	b	0	1	8	13	24	4,30 (0,84)	
11a. Većina Hrvata cijeni strane jezike.	a	4	4	10	17	11	3,59 (1,20)	26,44***
11b. Most Americans value foreign languages.	b	6	19	16	5	1	2,49 (0,93)	
#12a. Učenje stranog jezika za mene je gubitak vremena.	a	39	6	3	0	0	1,17 (0,44)	1,43
12b. Learning a foreign language is a waste of time for me.	b	42	3	2	0	0	1,15 (0,47)	
#13a. Osjećam se neugodno govoriti na stranom jeziku.	a	24	8	10	3	1	1,89 (1,10)	16,32**
13b. I sometimes feel embarrassed to speak in a foreign language.	b	9	9	11	9	9	3,00 (1,40)	
14a. Volio bih da mogu govoriti više od jednog stranog jezika.	a	1	0	2	9	34	4,63 (0,77)	3,25
14b. I wish I could speak more than one foreign language.	b	0	2	3	8	34	4,57 (0,80)	
15a. Obrazovni sustav u Hrvatskoj pruža mnogo mogućnosti.	a	9	8	16	7	6	2,85 (1,28)	4,35
15b. The education system in US provides good opportunities to learn foreign languages.	b	15	10	10	9	3	2,47 (1,30)	
#16a. Ne osjećam se zadovoljno svojim postignutim rezultatima.	a	9	14	15	7	1	2,50 (1,05)	21,00***
16b. I don't feel satisfied with my skill level in the foreign language I am studying now.	b	3	3	15	16	10	3,57 (1,10)	
#17a. Strani jezici nemaju utjecaja na mene.	a	28	11	5	2	0	1,59 (0,86)	2,80
17b. Foreign languages are not really relevant to my real life.	b	22	15	9	1	0	1,77 (0,84)	
18a. Poznavanje stranog jezika jednako je važno kao materinski jezik.	a	1	1	4	18	22	4,28 (0,89)	11,55*
18b. Knowing a foreign language is as important as my native language.	b	1	9	10	13	14	3,64 (1,17)	
19a. Učenje stranog jezika može mi pružiti dobre mogućnosti za profesionalni razvoj.	a	0	0	0	9	37	4,80 (0,40)	4,25
19b. Learning a foreign language could give me good opportunities for advance in my career.	b	0	1	2	13	31	4,57 (0,68)	
20a. Učenje stranog jezika pomaže mi u pronalasku dobrog posla.	a	0	0	0	9	37	4,80 (0,40)	4,22

20b. Learning a foreign language could help me get a good job.	b	0	1	1	15	30	4,57 (0,65)	
--	---	---	---	---	----	----	-------------	--

Legend: # - statements that reflect a negative attitude towards a foreign language; a - Croatian group; b - American group. *** $p < ,001$; ** $p < ,01$; * $p < ,05$.

9. Discussion

Due to many reasons previously mentioned (English as the language of globalization, decline in language education, no recognition of the potential career benefits of studying a foreign language), we expected American students to be less aware of the importance of studying foreign languages. But, the end results of the distributed questionnaire were unexpected. Some of the differences were recognized between the two groups of RIT students, but there were no significant discrepancies. The overall conclusion is that all RIT students who participated in this questionnaire value the importance of foreign languages and see the potential in learning new languages. Besides this, a valuable point is that students do not take language courses as their “just to pass” option, rather are willing to learn and acquire new knowledge which will expand their current know-how. All of the participated RIT students have recognized the benefits which language learning bring, and believe it will help them in their future jobs and careers. Surprisingly, some of the students did not personally choose which foreign language they wanted to learn. This led to a slightly negative attitude towards learning a foreign language and there must be a reason behind the specific decision. Still, this approach does not discourage RIT students to continue practicing foreign languages. Generally speaking, all of the RIT students had very positive thoughts about language learning and are aware of its power in today’s world. To be more precise, most of the RIT students appreciate the foreign language as their own native language and believe that a foreign language is of equal importance as their native language. We could conclude RIT students are all fully engaged in the language learning processes and are willing to expand their knowledge. Despite the fact that both groups of students do think that neither USA nor Croatia offer a lot of possibilities for improvement and language practices, students still take language courses. This is very praiseworthy and both of the RIT Campuses have a true privilege to have such good students who are able to recognize the potential in languages. The main purpose of this research was to find out differences among RIT students towards learning foreign languages. The data gathered brought to the conclusion that there are not many differences between two campuses. It can help RIT faculty, RIT staff and all current as well as potential students to see what their peers think about acquiring a new language. Many changes within RIT Croatia system can be implemented such as possibility of learning a foreign language from the first year, offering more languages to the students or improving the level of educating students and make it more fun. So far, students have shown a great interest and if there were more offers in RIT Croatia, students would be engaged even more. Finally, as research shows, motivation is a key factor in successful learning and high exposure to foreign languages facilitates the acquisition of language skills. Creating opportunities to improve student motivation and enable greater exposure to target languages can be challenging, but, on the other hand, of the great importance.

References

- Armstrong, P.W., & Rogers, J.D. (1997). Basic Skills Revisited: The Effects of Foreign Language Instruction on Reading, Math, and Language Arts. *Learning Languages*, 2, 20-31.
- Bamford, K. W., & Mizokawa, D. T. (1991). Additive-bilingual (immersion) education: Cognitive and language development. *Language Learning*, 41(3), 413-429.
- Birdsong, D., & Molis, M. (2001). On the evidence for maturational constraints in second-language acquisition. *Journal of Memory and Language*, 44(2), 235–249.
- Devlin, K. (2018). Most European students are learning a foreign language in school while Americans lag. *Pew Research Center*. Retrieved from: <https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2018/08/06/most-european-students-are-learning-a-foreign-language-in-school-while-americans-lag/>.
- Guo, S. (2011). Impact of an Out-of-class Activity on Students' English Awareness, Vocabulary, and Autonomy. *Language Education in Asia*, 2, 246-256.
- Inal, S., Evin, I., & Saraçoğlu, A. S. (2000). The relation between students' attitudes toward foreign language and foreign language achievement, *DilDergisi*, 130, 37-52.
- Johnson, J.S & Newport, E.L. (1989). Critical period effects in second language learning: The influence of maturational state on the acquisition of English as a second language. *Cognitive Psychology*, 21(1), 60–99.
- Kachoub, B. (2010). *The Relationship of L2 Attitudes to L3 Attitudes and Learning: A Study of Moroccan University Students*. (Electronic Thesis or Dissertation). Retrieved from <https://etd.ohiolink.edu/>
- Khasinah, S. (2014), Factors influencing second foreign acquisition, *Englisia, Journal of language, Education, and Humanities*, 1(2), 256-269, Universities Islam Negeri Ar- Raniry Banda Aceh: Center for Research and Publication UIN Ar-Raniry and Department of English Language Education UIN Ar-Raniry.
- Kovač, Mirjana M., & Zdilar, A. M. (2017). Students' Attitudes toward Foreign Languages, *Journal of Educational and Developmental Psychology*, 7(2), 124-133, Canadian Center of Science and Education.
- Lasagabaster, D. (2017). Language Learning Motivation and Language Attitudes in Multilingual Spain From an International Perspective, *The Modern Journal*, 101(3), 583-596, Boulder: Wiley-Blackwell.
- Lennartsson, F. (2008). Students' motivation and attitudes towards learning a second language: British and Swedish students' points of view. Retrieved from <http://urn.kb.se/resolve?urn=urn:nbn:se:vxu:diva-257>.
- Looney, D. & Lusin, N. (2019). Enrollments in Languages Other Than English in United States

Institutions of Higher Education, Summer 2016 and Fall 2016: Final Report. Modern Language Association of America. Retrieved from: <https://www.mla.org/content/download/110154/2406932/2016-Enrollments-Final-Report.pdf>.

Navarro-Villarroel, C. (2011). *Young students' attitudes toward languages*, Doctoral dissertation, Iowa State University, Ames: ProQuest Dissertations Publishing.

Norris, D. J. (2011) *Attitudes and motivations towards learning foreign languages: a survey of U.S. University students*, Southern Illinois University, Carbondale: ProQuest Dissertations Publishing.

Oroujlou, N. & Vahedi, M. (2011). Motivation, attitude and language learning, *Procedia-Social and Behavioral sciences*, 29, 994-1000, Elsevier Ltd.

Perić, B. & Božinović, N. (2015). Cross-linguistic influences in Spanish L3 acquisition by learners with Croatian L1 and English L2, In V. Polovina and S. Stanković (ed.) *Primenjena lingvistika*, 16, (pp. 175- 191), Proceedings of the 5th International Congress "Applied linguistics today" – New tendencies in theory and practice, Novi Sad: Faculty of philosophy.

Perić, B. & Novak Mijić, S. (2017). Cross-linguistic influences in third language acquisition (Spanish) and the relationship between language proficiency and types of lexical errors, *Croatian Journal of Education: Hrvatski časopis za odgoj i obrazovanje*, Vol. 19 no. Sp. Ed. 2, 91-107.

Rashid, K. T., & Jabbar, D.S. (2017). Analyzing student's attitude toward Foreign Language Learning, *International Journal of Social Sciences & Educational Studies*, 3(4), 185-196, Erbil: Ishik University.

Stearns, P.N. (2009), *Educating Global Citizens in Colleges and Universities: Challenges and Opportunities*, New York: Routledge

Tódor, E.M. & Dégi, Z. (2016). *Language attitudes, language learning experiences and individual strategies. What does school offer and what does it lack?* Acta Universitatis Sapientiae, Philologica, 8(2), 123-137, Miercurea Ciuc: De Gruyter Open.

Weatherford, H. Jarold (1986). Personal benefits of foreign language study. *ERIC Digest*. Retrieved from <https://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED276305>.

Yagi, Yasuo (1991). *Motivation and attitude toward foreign language learning among students in foreign language classes in an American university*, Doctoral dissertation, University of San Francisco, San Francisco: ProQuest Dissertations Publishing.

Official webpage of Rochester Institute of Technology, www.rit.edu

Official webpage of RIT Croatia, www.croatia.rit.edu.

Key Data on Teaching Languages at School in Europe. Retrieved from: <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/documents/3217494/5775673/EC-XA-12-001-EN.PDF/917d3746-886e-456a-8b01-1971013d1cef>.