

ATTITUDES OF COLLEGE STUDENTS
TOWARDS LEARNING FOREIGN LANGUAGES:

*Differences between Rochester Main Campus and Rochester
Croatia Campus*

SENIOR PROJECT 2019

Student: Venesa Radić

Mentor: Professor Barbara Perić

RIT Croatia

ABSTRACT

This research study was focused on the importance of foreign languages to college students. Participants of the questionnaire were Rochester Institute of Technology students, who have already finished language learning process or are still in the process of acquiring a new language. The research study has shown the effects of language learning and its importance as languages are the main communication tools. In addition, this paper elaborated the significance of second language acquisition (*SLA*) and third language acquisition (*TLA*) as two main ways of language learning and how those influence RIT students. Beside this, the study investigated differences in attitudes towards learning foreign languages among different groups of RIT students. After conducting questionnaire results, both groups of RIT students had very similar attitudes towards 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 an importance of foreign languages in today's world and strongly believe there is a bright future for languages.

KEYWORDS: *Attitudes, College Students, Language Learning Attitude, Foreign Languages, Second Language Acquisition, Third Language Acquisition*

INTRODUCTION

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

L2	Second Language
L3	Third Language
SLA	Second Language Acquisition
TLA	Third Language Acquisition
CLI	Cross Linguistic Influence

1. THE IMPORTANCE OF LEARNING FOREIGN LANGUAGES

Languages are the supporters of communication. If there are no languages world would not be the same. Language learning has many advantages, but the biggest one is improving overall communication skills. Nowadays English is known as *lingua franca* and in most of the cases is the basis for acquiring new languages. English is the language of instruction and by that fact serves as influencer while studying other languages. 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. Eight years ago it was confirmed that a person who knows many languages really plays the main role in society (Navarro-Villarroel, 2011). In the United States, language education had gone through many phases due to its political as well as social factors (Norris, 2008). As the country was growing fast and with a lot of people coming in, languages started to develop more. The United States of America as a country with a lot of small countries inside has recognized the diversity of languages and by that is very remarkable (Navarro-Villarroel, 2011). It is known as a bilingual place where students have many opportunities to learn more and boost up their language experiences. On the contrary, Croatia as a country does not have many opportunities for young students. There are possibilities to take a course for a certain period of time to learn or choose one language at college as an additional course. It all varies from college to college as well as 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. It is well 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's not used. Besides this, 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 Todor (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. For the start, a person is more communicative with the others and has an advantage of establishing deeper connections. 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. In 2006, Lightbown and Spada explained that person's attitudes are directly connected to language learning (as reported in Kachoub, 2010, pg.8). This confirms theories about the relationship between attitude and language learning. Furthermore, it is a very crucial and strong relationship which must work together in order to succeed. If there is a strong desire and positive attitude towards learning, there will be great results after all.

2. DEFINING ATTITUDES

What does the term attitude really mean? 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. Having a very positive attitude for learning something new is a very good starting point (Oroujlou and Vahedi, 2011). 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. In 2010, Kachoub expressed the theory by which people who speak more languages can have different attitudes, not just a single one. According to Daniel Norris (2008), negative attitudes are the most common ones in some areas of the USA. This proves that the educational system in the USA could be better and professors might take a step more in order to

teach languages better. Oroujlou and Vahedi (2011) stated that attitudes must be learned and cannot be unlearned after time. As a reflection of attitudes, there must be a willingness and strong desire towards learning. It is the same with the behavior of the person; we all learned it since the early stages of our lives. Sonmez (1994) explained the term attitude properly: “Attitude is a product of all life experiences” (retrieved from Evin and Saracaloglu, 2000, p.40). People are those who create attitudes themselves. Attitude serves as a common ground and on top of it come motivation as a result which appeared from the attitudes (Kovac and Zdilar, 2017).

Can attitudes be measured? Yes, it was proven in the 20th century by Thurstone. A few years later Likert has suggested a method of measuring the attitudes (retrieved from Navarro-Villarroel, 2011). The basis of the measuring attitudes for languages rely on the actual asking people specific statements about language learning. Typically measurement is done throughout point scale on which person should respond appropriately. In the end, there can appear a positive or negative result.

2.1 POSITIVE VERSUS NEGATIVE ATTITUDES

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. As a result of having positive attitudes towards languages, there appears a sense of success while learning (Bilash, 2009). 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. According to Bilash (2009) learning from stimulating instructional materials lead to a better outcome of the learners. It seems like it has a great effect on people especially if there are pictures and person is a visual learner. The people have their own techniques of learning and know what works best for them. 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. Norris (2008) has done research from

which he concluded that USA university students usually had positive orientations and motivation when they learn foreign languages. Perspectives of students in the USA were optimistic and it seems like Illinois University provides many opportunities for their students. 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.

2.2 STUDENTS' ATTITUDES TOWARDS LEARNING

All over the world students develop their own attitudes in the early stage. The first language is the ground for all other languages. If a person does not know the native language very well, then it can be a problem learning new languages on a hollow base. Todor (2016) claims that student's attitudes really have an effect on the whole learning procedure. 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. Then their attitudes are shaped based on the offer of languages and the levels of learning. The additional language can be the student's L2 or L3. The main factor which affects the learning success is the student's attitude towards learning (Kovac and Zdilar, 2017). In the example of RIT Croatia students might struggle with acquiring L3 as they learn in through L2. The Croatian language is the primary one for most of the students and on top of it, they learn all other languages. Frequently, students lose the track in all translations between languages and get into a trap. In the case of United States of America, attitudes towards learning foreign languages have been affected a lot. 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 don't think much about learning other foreign languages (Norris, 2008). Dlabay and Scott (2001) pointed out that 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 (retrieved from Norris, 2008). Students must be open-minded towards learning foreign languages and should always

seek for more than knowing just one foreign language. In the research of British and Swedish students, conducted by Lennartsson (2008), it was proved that students believe it is vital to have a good attitude towards learning. The better the attitude is, even better results will appear. Also, it was proved by the study on the Hungarian students that attitudes are shaped by their own experiences of students who use the language (Todor, 2016). 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.

2.3 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. As reported by Kovac 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 as being female is not the same as being male. It was proved by F. Lennartsson (2008) that women are those who have a more positive attitude towards learning L2. Furthermore, culture is a big factor that makes differences in attitudes toward learning. Croatia has a different college orientation and professors than the United States of America. It is not the same level of learning nor quizzes or oral exams. Culture difference might cause problems while learning and can influence student badly. It is of great significance to mention that back in 1988, Ms. Ely (1988) revealed that risk-taking and sociability factors have a positive influence on the attitudes towards learning foreign languages (Yasuo, 1991).

Seven specific influencers towards learning languages

Khaimah (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. Fifth place goes to 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. There are different kinds of learning languages such as audio learners, visual learners or kinesthetic learners. 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). After accomplishing desired aim there will be an easier learning process for all and students will achieve better knowledge. By discovering the attitudes towards learning foreign languages it will be easier to provide a better learning environment to students as well as professors.

3. LANGUAGE ACQUISITION

Language acquisition is an activity of acquiring languages. Primarily, communication is the universal key that unlocks lots of doors. As English is not a luxury language anymore, acquiring new languages nowadays has become very important. People value other people on the basis of language knowledge. Native language is the one we acquired first and we know the best. The first language is the mother tongue of a person and it varies from country to country (Juliet, 2000). We were born in the surrounding of specific language and by that, it became the first language that we all have already acquired. By implementing L2 and L3 in our lives, we build up personal skills. By increasing levels of proficiency in L2 and L3 languages, we boost up our

experiences and create attitudes towards learning other languages. Khasinah (2014) compared terms acquisition and learning, as two synonyms. It is a long term process of acquiring still unknown area for students. By acquiring foreign languages students have more opportunities and increase their own proficiency.

3.1 WHAT IS THE SECOND LANGUAGE ACQUISITION?

Second language acquisition is a form of acquiring a new language after establishing a native one. As L1 language is a basic one, there is always a need to discover new languages. In the L2 it is important to have a positive attitude, be sure why you are learning the language and have a desire towards it. Ellis (1997) claims that SLA has two main parts; description and explanation. The description identifies factors which affect learning while explanation stands for how language is being learned (retrieved from Lennartsson, 2008). Many private or personal reasons exist for learning L2. Some students have a specific requirement from work and must learn the second language in order to fit into work they wish to apply for. In Croatia, the official second language is English as it is taught in all elementary schools as the mandatory one. For acquiring L2 the attitude must be positive, grammar and vocabulary of first language proficient and motivation has to increase highly. SLA is a form of a study by which people acquire L2 for own purposes (Khasinah, 2014). The second language is harder than the first language and less hard than the third language. So, students have to have on mind the perspective from which they are acquiring new languages.

3.2 WHAT IS THE THIRD LANGUAGE ACQUISITION?

In the recent years third language acquisition (TLA) became a totally new field for researching. Simply, TLA is a form of acquiring more languages rather than just native and L2. It might be hard to learn an additional language if past one was not learned properly. Many aspects must be covered in language learning, from vocabulary all up to grammar. In 2007, Peric and Mijic 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. If a student has acquired L2, then there is a strong desire towards learning more. According to Peric and Bozinovic (2015), TLA is a term used for learners who have decided to learn L3 after already being fluent in the other two languages which they chose to learn. As stated in Peric and

Bozinovic (2015) L3 learners have a mode of all languages which they had so far acquired and those really influence the performing in L3. Students tend to take the third language just to replace another subject in which they are not interested so much. A lot of studies (Dornyei and Csizer, 2002; Henry and Apelgren, 2008) began using the term second foreign language as that stands for third language (retrieved from Kachoub, 2010). Different attitudes towards L2 or L3 accompany various kinds of relationships between languages. The most important is to have a good basis of the first language in order to acquire any new one. Acquiring a L2 is already a challenge and after it, L3 acquisition is not an easy task. If both languages belong to the same group, there might be a quicker and easier way of acquiring the same; in example of Spanish and Portuguese language. Cenoz, Huffesien, and Jessner (2001) emphasized there is a stronger connection between L3 and L2 than the relationship between first language and L3, especially if they belong to typologically similar languages (as cited in Peric and Mijic, 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.

Moreover, there is a big significance of cross linguistic influences (CLI) which appears between the native and non-native languages. CLI refers to the reciprocity between the first acquired language and the language which has been acquired later (Peric and Bozinovic, 2015). There is a big relationship between those two languages and one depend on the another. Also, CLI can affect the native language as well as the performance of L2 as people lose the contact with the original native community. It is just sometimes too much of exposure of L2, so there is less attention on the native language (Javadi- Safa, 2018). As proved in a study, cross linguistic influences of trilingual learners (Croatian as first language, English as L2, and Spanish as L3) have a big language activation present, so the transfer from a larger number of languages is possible at the same time (Peric and Bozinovic, 2015).

5. RIT OFFER OF LANGUAGES

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 language courses as additional ones for students on different years of college. There exist many differences among campuses as there are different demands from students. In the example of RIT Croatia (both Zagreb and Dubrovnik Campuses), they offer the same languages. 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. Many assumptions appear among students while choosing languages and how much are they really interested in learning a specific language. Croatia campus (both Zagreb and Dubrovnik Campus) offers five languages: Spanish, Italian, German French and Russian languages. RIT Main Campus offers much more programs for students. On the other side of the world, Rochester Main Campus has adapted the offer according to demands of the students. As there is a different culture, of course, more languages are offered to 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.

METHOD

The main purpose of this research paper was to find out differences in the students' attitudes towards learning foreign languages. The questionnaire as a research instrument represented the set of statements related to the attitudes towards learning foreign languages. The focused populations were the college students of RIT Main Campus and RIT Croatia Campus. The participants were the students from freshmen, sophomore, junior and senior level of education, who are currently acquiring foreign languages or have finished acquisition. The questionnaire was distributed in two ways. RIT Croatia Campus questionnaire was done in group-administered way. Students from RIT Croatia had a privilege of filling in the questionnaire in their native language or the English language. On the contrary side, RIT Main Campus had an online version of the questionnaire via Google Forms.

Additionally, the questionnaire had two versions in two languages; Croatian and English. Some of the statements needed to be adapted due to cultural differences. The questionnaire consisted of 3 parts; the first part had 7 basic questions related to demographics. A demographics section has covered a total of 65 female students and 35 male students. Besides this, the age range was from 18- 31 year old. Total of 50 students were English native speakers, 46 people were Croatian native speakers, only one student was German native speaker and the remaining two students have chosen other languages. The second part was based on 20 statements, which measured the attitudes towards learning foreign languages. There was an additional statement for the online version, so in total there were 21 statements for online questionnaire, as well. The third part consists of one main question which is reserved only for the students who are not English native speakers. The questionnaire was a combination of three already existing questionnaires, which were related to the topic of attitudes and language learning. The demographics part was adapted from Kachoub, B. (2010); *The Relationship of Second Language Learning Attitudes to Foreign Language Learning Attitudes: a study of Moroccan University students*. All statements are the mixture of the questionnaire done by D. Norris (2008); *Attitudes and Motivations towards learning foreign languages*; Southern Illinois University and another online version of survey-Rashid & Jabbar (2017); *International Journal of Societal Sciences & Educational Studies*, ISSN 2520-0968. 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.

RESULTS

This questionnaire was conducted in order to find out differences in students' attitudes towards learning foreign language between two RIT Campuses. The response rate was a total of 100 participants from all college levels. The first difference was in the starting year of acquiring a new language. RIT Main Campus offers foreign languages already during the freshmen year, while RIT Croatia offers from the sophomore year. Therefore, gathered data from RIT Main Campus counts 15 freshmen students, while RIT Croatia has none of the first year students. The obtained results from both campuses were a bit unexpected. It was expected that Croatian students would have less positive attitudes than American students, but it was proved wrong. The main reason for this sort of expectation was the difference in language learning settings as Croatians usually learn the third language in the second language.

Statements Analysis

The RIT Croatia questionnaire had a total of 21 statements, while RIT Main Campus had a total of 22 statements. Majority of the statements were based on the Likert's scale from 1-5 (where 1 stands for strongly disagree and 5 stands for strongly agree). In both versions, the last question in the questionnaire was measuring the level of difficulty (where 1 stands for very difficult and 5 stands for very easy). All of the statements were measuring the attitudes of college students and some of the statements were adapted due to the cultural differences in the citizens' name; Croatians or Americans. Total of 5 statements had an exact same total average for both campuses. RIT students share the same attitudes in the following statements:

- *Studying a foreign language makes me feel accomplished.*
- *I sometimes get upset when I communicate in a foreign language with others.*
- *Studying foreign languages is as enjoyable as my native language.*
- *I wish I could speak more than one foreign language.*
- *Learning a foreign language could help me get a good job.*

Furthermore, Croatian students had higher average results on 11 statements, which prove that RIT Croatia students have expressed more interest in language learning than American students. In addition, Croatian students have mostly agreed on the statement that learning really helps in other languages (*Figure 1*) as well as that acquiring a foreign language could help them make new friends. Also, RIT Croatia students strongly agree that a new foreign language improves their personality and that everyone should have on their mind the importance of acquiring few languages. As well, RIT Croatia students do not prefer learning a native language as the average result was 2.12 disagreements. RIT Croatia had a larger population of students who are not English native speakers, so they learn L3 in L2 acquisition. This process results in a mixture of different vocabulary and grammar aspects, which can lead to confusion and a harder way of acquiring a new language. Our main hypothesis was that RIT Croatia students' acquiring process of a foreign language would be harder than the American approach. Overall looking at the results of non-native English speakers (mostly all Croatians) proved that learning L3 through L2 is not too hard for RIT students. From the gathered data of non-native English speakers, slightly agreement was the answer on the hardness of L3-L2 relationship (*Figure 2*).

On the other side, RIT Main Campus students were leading in just 3 statements:

- *Learning a foreign language could expand my knowledge of the world.*
- *I don't feel satisfied with my skill level in the foreign language I am studying now.*
- *Foreign languages are not really relevant to me in real life.*

Additionally, for the statement: “*I sometimes feel embarrassed speaking in a foreign language*”, the Croatian students had a very low level of agreement, while American students had a total average of 3 (neutral). After deeply looking at the results, RIT Main Campus students had a variety of answers, from total strong disagreement up to a strong agreement. This was obviously a statement which represented the personal way of learning a foreign language and RIT students have different opinions. There was a very low average result for both groups in the measurement of learning a foreign language just to pass, as well. This proves that both groups of RIT students have a strong will to learn foreign languages and do not find it demanding. This result was expected as RIT offers a variety of languages and in the tourism sector it is very important to know a few foreign languages. Another statement got a pretty low level of agreement and was

based on looking at the process of language learning as a waste of time. Both groups of students have answered fewer than 1.5 averages which leads to conclusion they believe in learning languages and truly trust that language learning has benefits and is not just a waste of time. Moreover, the education systems in Croatia and USA do not offer a lot of possibilities and students of both RIT Campuses have recognized it. The responses were slightly negative and each country should implement more options, programs for college students as well as raise the awareness of the importance of foreign languages. In addition, there was a big difference in the question which measured if the process of learning foreign languages was a personal decision. RIT Croatia students have had only 3 negative responses, while RIT Main Campus students had a total of 7 negative responses. As explained in the introduction section, there are many factors which influence decisions about language learning. Apparently, American students are much more influenced in terms of choosing which language they want to learn. There is often a question if the picked language will be beneficial to them. This is mainly due to the cultural differences and many other factors already mentioned in the previous parts of the paper. Along with all other statements, RIT Main Campus students had an additional statement which measured the level of agreement of American students towards learning a foreign language. As English is the language of instruction, we measured if students believe that they do not need to learn additional languages. The response rate was below 2.0 averages, which explained that students disagree with the statement and they see potential in other languages. It is just not enough to know the English language and being able to communicate on a high level with a larger population. Foreign languages are more than needed in today's world, so students are right when they have strong and positive attitudes to learn more languages.

DISCUSSION

The end results of the distributed questionnaire were unforeseen. 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 of language learning process 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 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 and hopefully they will continue to the intermediate language level, since the beginning level is a mandatory.

Generally speaking, all of the RIT students have very positive thoughts about language learning and are aware of its power in today’s world. 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. From the responded questionnaires about student’s attitudes, it has been concluded that RIT students are all fully engaged in the language learning processes. Even though, 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 and are willing to know more languages. 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. Moreover, most of RIT Croatia students are Croatian native speakers, so they all learn a new language (L3) throughout the L2 which is English. On the contrary side, American students usually learn a new language on the basis of their native one. So, it has been concluded that L3 learners do not find it hard to acquire new language within L2 setting. There are also positive and negative transfers from L1 or L2. The example of negative transfer is the Spanish word *librería*, which is often wrongly translated as *library* instead of *bookstore*. If students use word *biblioteca* for Croatian word *biblioteka*, this transfer is known as positive from L1 (Croatian).

Obviously, this approach proposed that previously acquired language knowledge might have a big impact on understanding of a new foreign language. Does this mean that acquiring L2 in L1 setting is of the same weight as L3 in L2 setting for the RIT students? By this research the answer would be yes as there were significant discrepancies, so the level of weight is reasonably the same.

The main purpose of this research was to find out differences among RIT students towards learning foreign languages. The data gathered has brought to the conclusion that there are not too many differences between two campuses. Based on the study done by Martinovic and Poljakovic (2010), teachers as well as the actual course material influence the attitudes of students. For the future research, it would be encouraging to find out if those factors influence RIT students. Many changes within RIT systems can be implemented in order to improve language learning process. Some of the tips would include a possibility of learning a foreign language from the first year as well as on the last year and in that case the course material could be spread during 4 years in normal quantities. Better communicative approach towards learning is a big plus, because it makes learning process easier, quicker and more fun, as well. By implementing more interactive material on the college levels, students would be more encouraged to participate in class. In addition, the relationship between professor and students is very crucial one, as professor is a person who influences the student and plays a main role in raising awareness about learning foreign languages. Specifically, in America there are very small sections, while in Croatia sections are much bigger. All of this can impact students negatively, so their attitudes can change as well as they can lose motivation towards learning.

In a nutshell, this study 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. So far, students have shown a great interest and if there were some changes implemented, students would be engaged even more. For the near future it would be very interesting to research if RIT students care about the course material as well as professors. If proposed changes were implemented it would be interesting to research if students' attitudes and motivation have changed, as well.

REFERENCES

- Bilash, O. (2009). *Working with ELL students: Positive Attitude*, website article
- Javadi- Safa, Azim (2018). *An overview of Cross- linguistic influence in Language Learning*, Journal of Applied Linguistics and Language Research, Vol. 5, Issue 3, pp. 186-203, Payame Noor University, Iran
- Juliet (2009). *Attitudes and motivation towards learning Spanish as a third language in grade 11 learners*, University of Quebec
- Kachoub, B. (June 2010). *The Relationship of L2 Attitude and Learning: A Study of Moroccan University Students*, College of Arts and Sciences of Ohio University
- Khasinah, Siti.(2014), *Factors influencing second foreign acquisition*, Universities Islam Negeri Ar- Raniry Banda Aceh
- Kovac, Mirjana M., and Zdilar, Ana M. (2017). *Students' Attitudes toward Foreign Languages*, University of Split, Split, Croatia
- Lasagabaster, D. (2017). *Language Learning Motivation and Language Attitudes in Multilingual Spain From an International Perspective*, The Modern Journal, University of Basque Country
- Lennartsson, F. (August 27th, 2008). *Students' motivation and attitudes towards learning a second language*, School of Humanities, Vaxjo University
- Martinović, Ana; Poljaković, I. (2010). *Attitudes towards ESP among university students*, Sveučilište u Zadru, science article, Croatia
- Navarro-Villarreal, C. (2011). *Young students' attitudes toward languages*, Graduation Theses, and Dissertations, Iowa State University
- Norris J, Daniel (May, 2011) *Attitudes and motivations towards learning foreign languages: a survey of U.S. University students*, Southern Illinois University Carbondale
- Official webpage of Rochester Institute of Technology, www.rit.edu, 2019
- Official webpage of RIT Croatia, www.croatia.rit.edu, 2019
- 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. and Jabbar, D. (April 2nd, 2017). *Analyzing student's attitude toward Foreign Language Learning*, Department of Business and Administration, Ishik University, Erbil, Iraq
- Saracaloglu Seda, A. and Evin, I. (January 2000). *The relation between students' attitudes toward foreign language and foreign language achievement*, University Buca Faculty of Education
- Todor, E.M. (2016). *Language attitudes, language learning experiences and individual strategies. What does school offer and what does it lack?* Sapientia Hungarian University of Transylvania
- Vahedi, M. and Oroujlou, N. (2011). *Motivation, attitude and language learning*, English Department, Educational Department, I.R. of Iran
- Yagi, Yasou (1991). Motivation and attitude toward foreign language learning among students in foreign language classes in an American university, University of San Francisco

APPENDIX A

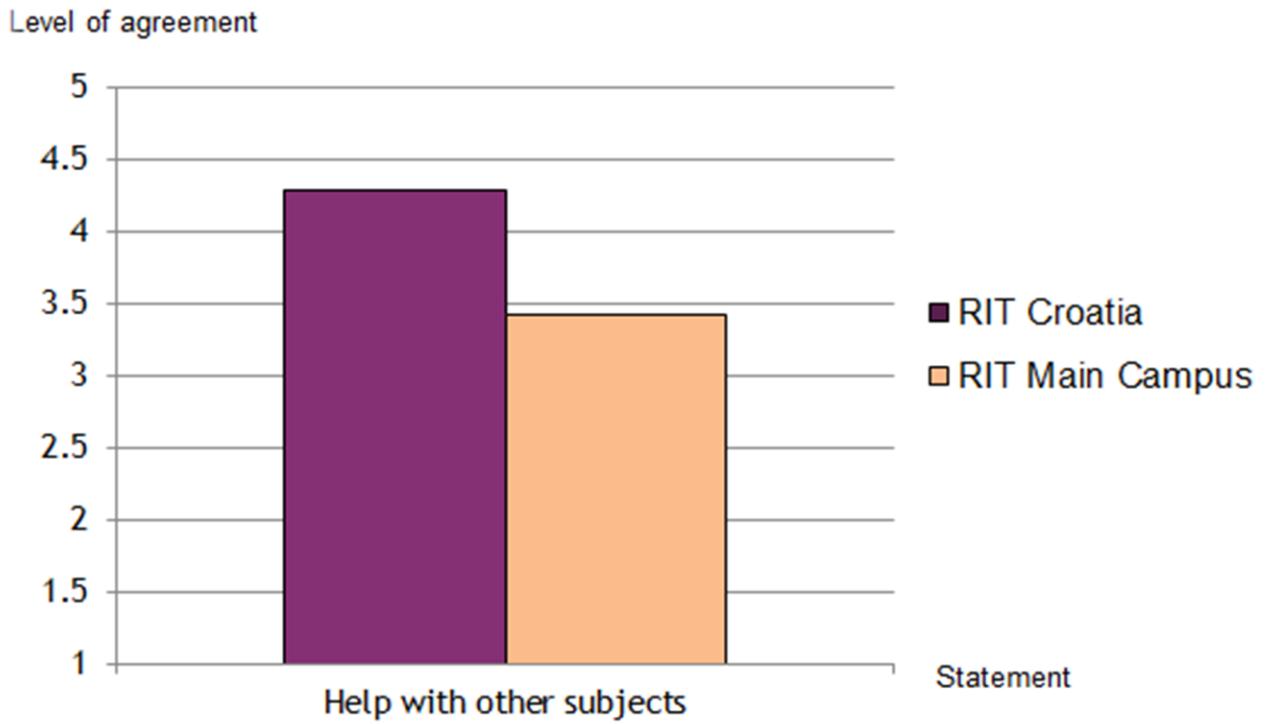


Figure 1

APPENDIX A

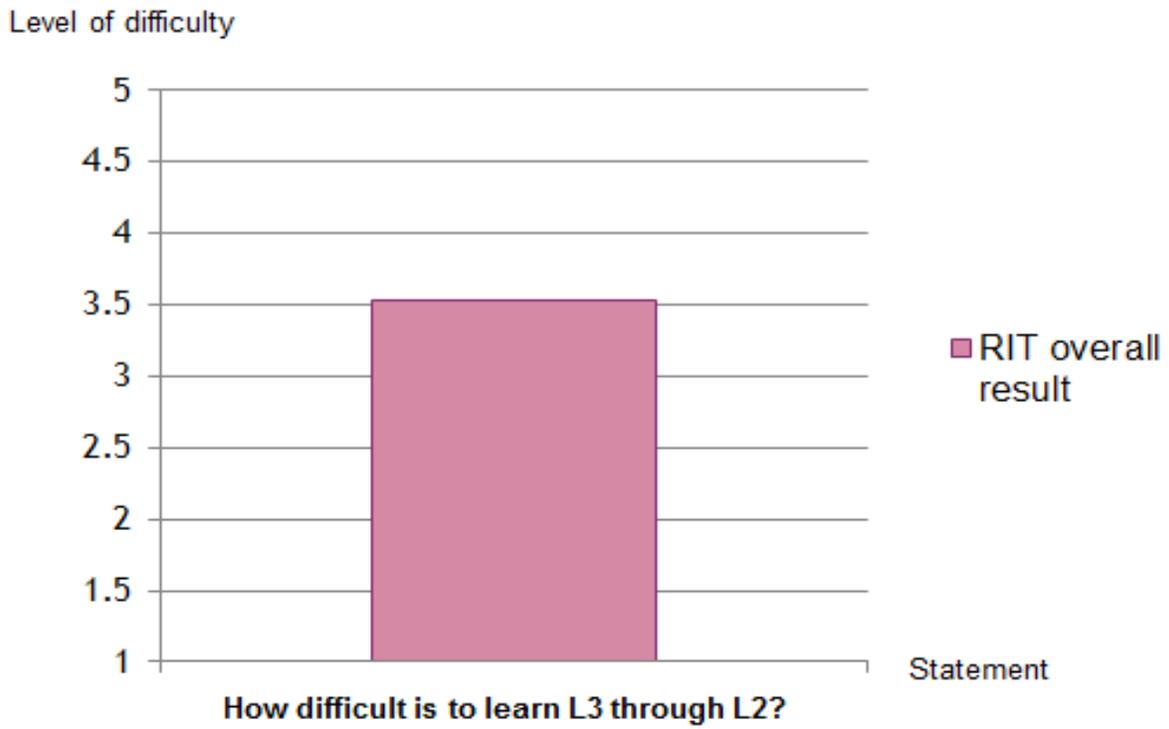


Figure 2

APPENDIX B

RIT Main Campus -English version of the questionnaire

Please note the following: “foreign language” refers to any other language than English.

PART I. DEMOGRAPHICS

Put X or circle the correct answer:

Gender: ___ Female ___ Male

Age: _____

Year of college: a) Freshmen b) Sophomore c) Junior d) Senior

Native language: a) Croatian b) English c) Other (please specify): _____

Other languages you speak:

- a) Croatian
- b) English
- c) Spanish
- d) German
- e) Other (please specify): _____

Learning a foreign language was a solely a personal decision: ___ T ___ F

Would you consider English as your native language? Yes / No

If not, please explain: _____

PART II. Attitudes towards Learning Foreign Languages**Directions: 1 - Strongly disagree 2- Disagree 3- Neutral 4-Agree 5- Strongly agree**

1. Studying a foreign language makes me feel accomplished.	1	2	3	4	5
2. Learning a foreign language helps me with other subjects as well.	1	2	3	4	5
3. I sometimes get upset when I communicate in a foreign language with others.	1	2	3	4	5
4. Learning a foreign language could expand my knowledge of the world.	1	2	3	4	5
5. Studying foreign languages is as enjoyable as studying my native language.	1	2	3	4	5
6. Learning a foreign language could help me make new friends.	1	2	3	4	5
7. I prefer studying my native language more than foreign languages.	1	2	3	4	5
8. Learning a foreign language improves my personality.	1	2	3	4	5
9. Honestly, I study a foreign language just to pass or because it is easy for me.	1	2	3	4	5
10. Everybody should learn more than one language.	1	2	3	4	5
11. Most Americans value foreign languages.	1	2	3	4	5
12. Learning a foreign language is a waste of time for me.	1	2	3	4	5
13. I sometimes feel embarrassed to speak in a foreign language.	1	2	3	4	5
14. Americans don't need to learn foreign languages because English is spoken everywhere.	1	2	3	4	5
15. I wish I could speak more than one foreign language.	1	2	3	4	5
16. The education system in US provides good opportunities to learn foreign languages.	1	2	3	4	5

17. I don't feel satisfied with my skill level in the foreign language I am studying now.	1	2	3	4	5
18. Foreign languages are not really relevant to my real life.	1	2	3	4	5
19. Knowing a foreign language is as important as my native language.	1	2	3	4	5
20. Learning a foreign language could help me get a good job.	1	2	3	4	5
21. Learning a foreign language could give me good opportunities for advance in my career.	1	2	3	4	5

PART III. - Additional statement

* Only for students who are not English native speakers!

Directions: 1- *Very difficult* 2- *Difficult* 3- *Neutral* 4- *Easy* 5- *Very easy*

How difficult is for you to learn L3 through L2?

1 2 3 4 5

APPENDIX B

RIT Croatia Campus- English language version

Please note the following: “foreign language”- refers to any other language than English

PART I. DEMOGRAPHICS

Put X or circle the correct answer:

Gender: ___ Female ___ Male

Age: ___

Year of college: a) Sophomore b) Junior c) Senior

Native language: a) Croatian b) English c) Other (please specify): _____

Other languages you speak:

- a) Croatian
- b) English
- c) Spanish
- d) German
- e) Other (please specify): _____

Learning a foreign language was a solely a personal decision: ___ T ___ F

Would you consider English as one of your native languages? Yes / No

If not, please explain: _____

PART II. Attitudes towards Learning Foreign Languages**Directions: 1 - Strongly disagree 2- Disagree 3- Neutral 4-Agree 5- Strongly agree**

1. Studying a foreign language makes me skillful.	1	2	3	4	5
2. Learning a foreign language helps me with other subjects as well.	1	2	3	4	5
3. I feel upset when I communicate in a foreign language with others.	1	2	3	4	5
4. Learning a foreign language could expand my knowledge of the world.	1	2	3	4	5
5. Studying foreign languages like my native language is enjoyable.	1	2	3	4	5
6. Learning a foreign language could help me make new friends.	1	2	3	4	5
7. I prefer studying my mother language more than foreign languages.	1	2	3	4	5
8. Learning a foreign language improves my personality.	1	2	3	4	5
9. Honestly, I study a foreign language just to pass.	1	2	3	4	5
10. Everybody should learn more than one language.	1	2	3	4	5
11. Most Croatians value foreign languages.	1	2	3	4	5
12. Learning a foreign language is a waste of time for me.	1	2	3	4	5
13. I feel embarrassed to speak in a foreign language.	1	2	3	4	5
14. I wish I could speak more than one foreign language.	1	2	3	4	5
15. The education system in Croatia provides good opportunities to learn foreign languages.	1	2	3	4	5
16. I don't feel satisfied with my performance in the foreign language.	1	2	3	4	5

17. Foreign languages do not have any impact on me.	1	2	3	4	5
18. Knowing a foreign language is as important as my native language.	1	2	3	4	5
19. Learning a foreign language could give me good opportunities for the professional development.	1	2	3	4	5
20. Learning a foreign language could help me get a good job.	1	2	3	4	5

PART III. - Additional statement

* Only for students who are not English native speakers!

Directions: *1- Very difficult 2- Difficult 3- Neutral 4- Easy 5- Very easy*

How difficult is for you to learn L3 through L2?

1 2 3 4 5

APPENDIX B

RIT Croatia Campus- Croatian language version

Molimo imajte na umu: “**strani jezik**” odnosi se na bilo koji drugi jezik osim engleskog.

1. DIO- DEMOGRAFIJA

Stavite X ili zaokružite točan odgovor:

Spol: ____ Ženski ____ Muški

Dob: ____

Godina stručnog studija: a) 2. godina b) 3. godina c) 4. godina

Materinski jezik: a) hrvatski b) engleski c) ostalo (molimo navedite): _____

Ostali jezici koje govorite:

a) hrvatski

b) engleski

c) španjolski

d) njemački

e) ostalo (molimo navedite) _____

Učenje stranog jezika bila je isključivo osobna odluka: ____ T ____ N

Smatrate li engleski jezik kao jedan od vaših materinskih jezika? DA / NE

Ako je odgovor NE, molimo objasnite: _____

2. DIO - Stavovi prema učenju stranih jezika

Upute: 1 – Uopće se ne slažem 2- Ne slažem se 3 –Niti se slažem, niti se ne slažem 4 - Slažem se 5-
Sasvim se slažem

1. Učenje stranog jezika čini me vještim.	1	2	3	4	5
2. Učenje stranog jezika pomaže mi i u drugim predmetima.	1	2	3	4	5
3. Osjećam se uznemireno kada komuniciram na stranom jeziku s drugima.	1	2	3	4	5
4. Učenje stranog jezika moglo bi proširiti moje znanje o svijetu.	1	2	3	4	5
5. Učenje stranog jezika kao i mog materinskog jezika je ugodno.	1	2	3	4	5
6. Učenje stranog jezika moglo bi mi pomoći da steknem nove prijatelje.	1	2	3	4	5
7. Radije učim materinski jezik nego strani jezik.	1	2	3	4	5
8. Učenje stranog jezika poboljšava moju osobnost.	1	2	3	4	5
9. Iskreno, učim strani jezik samo da prođem.	1	2	3	4	5
10. Svatko bi trebao učiti više od jednog jezika.	1	2	3	4	5
11. Većina Hrvata cijeni strane jezike.	1	2	3	4	5
12. Učenje stranog jezika za mene je gubitak vremena.	1	2	3	4	5
13. Osjećam se neugodno govoriti na stranom jeziku.	1	2	3	4	5
14. Volio bih da mogu govoriti više od jednog stranog jezika.	1	2	3	4	5
15. Obrazovni sustav u Hrvatskoj pruža mnogo mogućnosti za učenje stranih jezika.	1	2	3	4	5

16. Ne osjećam se zadovoljno svojim postignutim rezultatima na stranom jeziku.	1	2	3	4	5
17. Strani jezici nemaju nikakvog utjecaja na mene.	1	2	3	4	5
18. Poznavanje stranog jezika jednako je važno kao i moj materinski jezik.	1	2	3	4	5
19. Učenje stranog jezika moglo bi mi pružiti dobre mogućnosti za profesionalni razvoj.	1	2	3	4	5
20. Učenje stranog jezika pomaže mi u pronalasku dobrog posla.	1	2	3	4	5

3. DIO - Posebni dio

* Samo za studente kojima engleski jezik nije materinski!

Upute: 1- *Vrlo teško* 2-*Teško* 3- *Niti teško, niti jednostavno* 4- *Jednostavno* 5- *Vrlo jednostavno*

Koliko je teško učiti strani jezik na nematerinskom jeziku?

1 2 3 4 5