

# Intercultural Communicative Competence and Pragmatic Comprehension of High School EFL Learners

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J.J. Strossmayer University of Osijek

Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences

Study Programme: Double Major MA Study Programme in English Language  
and Literature – Teaching English as a Foreign Language

Petra Lang

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Supervisor: Dr. Višnja Pavičić Takač, Full Professor

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## Summary

With the changing objectives of foreign language teaching towards the successful communication and appropriate language use in multicultural environment in mind, this research explores the relationship between intercultural communicative competence and pragmatic comprehension – two concepts that assure successful communication in different intercultural contexts. The paper consists of theoretical and analytical part.

The theoretical part of the paper presents the notion of communicative competence through different models with reference to the pragmatic competence and sociocultural aspect, explores the concept of pragmatic comprehension with regard to the conversational implicatures and speech acts, and introduces the intercultural dimension of communicative competence through different models of intercultural communicative competence. The notions of pragmatic comprehension and intercultural communicative competence are, finally, discussed in the Croatian context of foreign language teaching.

In the analytical part, the research topic and research questions, together with the demographic data of the participants, instruments and results are presented. Results are then interpreted in the Croatian context, followed by the conclusions about relationship between intercultural communicative competence and pragmatic comprehension in foreign language teaching.

The results of this research provide a valuable insight into the intercultural communicative competence and pragmatic comprehension of Croatian EFL learners, which are proven to be at the basic level of competence. Therefore, more systematic development and assessment of pragmatic comprehension and intercultural communicative competence in Croatian foreign language classrooms and their integration in the curriculum are fields worth exploring in future studies.

**Key words:** communicative competence, pragmatic comprehension, TEFL, intercultural communicative competence, INCA

## Sažetak

Uzimajući u obzor promjene ciljeva učenja stranog jezika u smjeru odgovarajuće uporabe jezika u različitim sociokulturnim kontekstima, ovaj rad istražuje odnos međukulturne komunikacijske kompetencije i pragmatičkog razumijevanja - dva koncepta koja osiguravaju uspješnu komunikaciju u različitim međukulturnim kontekstima.

Teorijski dio rada predstavlja pojam komunikacijske kompetencije u pogledu pragmatičke kompetencije i sociokulturnog aspekta u različitim modelima komunikacijske kompetencije, istražuje pojam pragmatičnog razumijevanja u odnosu na govorne činove i konverzacijske implikature te uvodi međukulturnu dimenziju komunikacijske kompetencije predstavljajući različite modele međukulturne komunikacijske kompetencije. Konačno, pojmovi pragmatičkog razumijevanja i međukulturne komunikacijske kompetencije predstavljaju se u hrvatskom kontekstu poučavanja stranog jezika.

U praktičnome su dijelu predstavljeni tema rada i istraživačka pitanja, s demografskim podacima ispitanika, mjernim instrumentima te rezultatima istraživanja. Rezultati su potom interpretirani u kontekstu hrvatskog školskog sustava, a vode do zaključaka o odnosu međukulturne komunikacijske kompetencije na nastavi engleskog kao stranog jezika.

Rezultati istraživanja daju vrijedan uvid u razinu međukulturne komunikacijske kompetencije i pragmatičkog razumijevanja kod učenika engleskog kao stranog jezika u srednjoj školi. S obzirom na to da su učenici na osnovnoj razini kompetencija, pokazuje se potreba za sustavnijim razvijanjem, praćenjem i vrednovanjem pragmatičnog razumijevanja i međukulturne komunikacijske kompetencije na nastavi engleskoga kao stranoga jezika te njihova integracija u nastavni plan i program. Ujedno, to su područja vrijedna budućih istraživanja.

**Ključne riječi:** komunikacijska kompetencija, pragmatičko razumijevanje, poučavanje engleskog kao stranog jezika, međukulturna komunikacijska kompetencija, INCA

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## 1. Introduction

By facing major social, economic, political and cultural changes in the recent years, the connections between the European and the Transocean countries are gaining momentum through different (inter) national projects and exchange programmes. These changes affect not only the perception of one's own cultural identity but also the emerging necessity for adaptation to different intercultural contexts and the common language of communication. Therefore, the idea of English as *lingua franca* – a communication between a native and a non-native speaker – changes its concept to the communication of two or more non-native speakers (Hülmbauer et al., 2008). Having this in mind, the framework of foreign language teaching gains a new role – preparing EFL learners for successful communication in different intercultural situations with people of different cultural backgrounds.

The aim of this research is to explore the relationship between intercultural communicative competence and pragmatic comprehension – two concepts that assure the successful communication in different intercultural situations.

The paper consists of two parts: theoretical and analytical part. In the theoretical part of the paper, a framework for the analytical part will be set. First, the concept of communicative competence will be presented through the models of communicative competence, in which the place of pragmatic competence, i.e. sociocultural aspect in the models of communicative competence will be examined. Second, within the framework of pragmatic competence, the pragmatic comprehension will be introduced with reference to the conversational implicatures and speech acts. Third, the notion of intercultural communicative competence will be analysed. Finally, the notions of pragmatic comprehension and intercultural communicative competence will be discussed in the Croatian context of the foreign language teaching. The analytical part of the paper starts with the methodology, in which the research topic, together with the research questions will be presented, the demographic data of the participants provided, a detailed presentation of the instruments given, the procedure explained and the results demonstrated. The research report will be followed by the discussion and interpretation of the research results in the Croatian context, leading to the conclusions about the relationship between intercultural communicative competence and pragmatic comprehension in foreign language teaching as two concepts that assure successful communication in different intercultural situations.

## 2. Theoretical Background

Together with the fast-changing society, the role of education and foreign language teaching has been adapting accordingly in order to answer to the new-emerging national, international and intra-national social contexts (Byram, 1977). Communicative competence has become the leading concept of teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL) in the recent years. However, the framework of communication is further developed from the need *only* to consider people's ability to use language appropriately to the more complex concept of cross-cultural communication (Bennett, 1993) related to social interactions and contexts (Hymes, Canale, M. Swain, cited in Pavičić Takač & Bagarić Medve, 2013). The concept is nowadays familiar as intercultural communicative competence (ICC), i.e. "the ability to communicate effectively and appropriately in intercultural situations based on one's intercultural knowledge, skills, and attitudes" (Deardoff, 2006:41-242).

In addition to *intercultural* (knowledge, skills and attitudes towards different cultures), *communicative competence* includes another important aspect, namely, the pragmatic comprehension of the foreign language. Pragmatic comprehension enables learners to know what they want to say, how, in which situations, to whom and with the right purpose (Pavičić Takač & Bagarić Medve, 2013). Moreover, development of pragmatic comprehension in EFL classroom prevents forming the so-called *fluent fools* (Bennett, 1993), i.e. the fluent English language speakers who lack a sociocultural component of the foreign language.

### 2.1 Pragmatic and socio-linguistic competence components in communicative competence models

By being defined as a competence to communicate, communicative competence in language education, especially foreign language teaching, means communication with the help of the target language. It is a construct that consists of different parameters, which are deeply intertwined in any language use and cannot be isolated from each other. In the last couple of decades, researchers described these parameters with the help of different theoretical models, each of them directly or indirectly including sociocultural and/or pragmatic competence as equal parts of communication to the *language competence* – which was not only for a long period of time believed to be crucial for second language acquisition but also still tends to be emphasized in the foreign language classrooms. In this part of the paper, different models of communicative competence will be discussed with regard to pragmatic and/or sociocultural

competence, their place and roles within these theories and importance for the foreign language teaching.

### 2.1.1 *Canale and Swain's model of communicative competence*

Following Widdowson (1983) and his reflections on the relationship between competence and performance, Canale and Swain (1980) and Canale (1983) describe communicative competence as an intertwined system of knowledge and skill needed for communication (Bagarić & Djigunović, 2007:96). In their model of communicative competence, knowledge is seen as conscious and unconscious knowledge of an individual about language and different aspects of language in use and skill is referred to how an individual can use the knowledge in actual communication (Bagarić & Djigunović, 2007).

Aside from knowledge of grammatical principles, Canale and Swain also include knowledge of how to use language in social context in order to fulfil communicative functions and knowledge of how to combine utterances and social functions with respect to discourse principles in their model (Bagarić & Djigunović, 2007). By consisting of *four* fields of knowledge and skills, namely grammatical, sociolinguistic, strategic and discourse competence, their model emphasizes the importance of sociocultural aspect for language teaching and how the forms and meanings are combined in a meaningful unity of spoken and written texts in sociolinguistic and sociocultural contexts (Bagarić & Djigunović, 2007). Factors which determine sociolinguistic context include social role and status of the interlocutor in interaction, the purpose of interaction and situational context (Pavičić Takač & Bagarić Medve, 2013).

Canal and Swain's model goes in line with Hymes' belief about the importance of language in use and sociolinguistic aspect of the language learning. Moreover, it contributes to the development of communicative language teaching approach by diverging from the traditional principles and practices and by bringing up the sociocultural and pragmatic aspect to the picture. Canal and Swain's work provides the main theoretical framework for communicative language teaching and testing, therefore it is merely descriptive and does not show how its various components interact with each other and with the context in which language use happens (Celce-Muricia, 1995). This problem is, however, addressed in other models of communicative competence discussed below.

### *2.1.2 Bachman and Palmer's model of language ability*

The model of communicative competence proposed by Bachman (1990) and Bachman and Palmer (1996) comprises grammatical, sociolinguistic and discourse competence under one broader area - language knowledge. It also adds strategic knowledge as a separate category. Language knowledge is further divided into two broader categories, namely organizational and pragmatic knowledge, implying that language knowledge does not only mean mastering grammatical knowledge but also textual knowledge, knowledge of pragmatic conventions and knowledge of sociolinguistic conventions (Bagarić & Djigunović, 2007).

Bachman and Palmer's model shows not only the complexity of communicative competence but also the strong connection between its components and the important role of sociolinguistic and pragmatic conventions, which happen to create a superordinate category (pragmatic knowledge) within the language knowledge. In comparison to the grammatical knowledge, which often tends to be stressed in the foreign language classrooms, this model brings to the fore the ability for creating and interpreting discourse by stressing the importance of expressing the acceptable language functions for interpreting illocutionary power of utterances and the creation of these utterances appropriate in a particular context of the language use (Bagarić & Djigunović, 2007).

### *2.1.3 Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR)*

In addition to the Bachman and Palmer's Model of Language Ability, Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) sheds light on the importance of language learning directed towards enabling learners to act in real-life situations, expressing themselves and accomplishing tasks of different natures (CEFR, 2001). Therefore, the CEFR model includes three basic components of communicative competence, namely, linguistic competence, sociolinguistic competence and pragmatic competence - two of which are oriented towards the language in use, which again shows the important role of cultural aspects and social appropriateness in today's language learning, teaching and assessment.

The sociolinguistic component of the model affects all language communication between representatives of different cultures through its sensitivity to social conventions, while the pragmatic competence is concerned with the functional use of linguistic resources, the mastery

of discourse, cohesion and coherence, the identification of text types and forms, irony, and parody and interactional exchanges (CEFR, 2001).

This model of communicative competence sees learners as social agents, language learners and plurilingual and pluricultural beings and, therefore, implies the extensive use of the target language in the classroom and social context (CEFR, 2001). With this approach, learners are encouraged to see the similarities and regularities as well as differences between languages and cultures, which sheds the light on the importance of easy-accessed and high-quality teaching and learning materials as well as their pedagogical application in real-life classrooms.

#### *2.1.4 Celce-Murcia's Pedagogical Model*

Celce-Murcia's pedagogical model of communicative competence provides a comprehensive view of linguistic and cultural issues by focusing on the pedagogical application in the real-life classroom. Additionally, the model suggests that some components can be employed more effectively in the classroom situations (according to the communicative needs of the specific learner group) than others. It encourages more interaction between the context of language tests and the learners' communicative needs. The socio-cultural competence in this model represents the speaker/listener's background knowledge of the target community (e.g., understanding communications, beliefs, values, conventions, and taboos of the target community), which makes informed comprehension and communication possible (Celce-Murcia et al., 1995).

In their model, Celce-Murcia et.al (1995) emphasize that even though language functions are an important part of communicative competence, they should not dominate the foreign language teaching because the purely functional approach to language and language use cannot prepare learners for real-life (intercultural) communication and its complexity – whatever it might be. Furthermore, Celce-Murcia et.al (1995) argue that coursebooks and teachers place different emphases on various social and cultural factors when it comes to the “real-life-communication” and with a lack of a pragmatic and/or sociolinguistic model to refer to, the approaches to raising the learners' sociocultural awareness are diverse and assessment, therefore, unsystematic.

## 2.2 Pragmatic competence

All the above-mentioned models recognize, albeit under different names, the importance of pragmatic/ sociolinguistic/ (inter)actional/ interlocutional/ functional/ intercultural/ discourse competence, sociolinguistic/ sociocultural/ pragmatic knowledge (Pavičić Takač & Bagarić Medve, 2013). Furthermore, they show that successful communication cannot be accomplished merely by applying lexical and grammatical elements out of the context, which emphasizes the importance of a component that will include the language users and their ability to know when to say, how, in which situation, to whom and why in a given sociocultural context (Pavičić Takač & Bagarić Medve, 2013). This part of the paper will define the component of pragmatics, i.e. focus on the pragmatic comprehension, conversational implicatures, speech acts and their teachability in a contemporary foreign language classroom.

### 2.2.1 Defining pragmatics

Pragmatics is described as the ability to use language appropriately according to the communicative situation and the social context (Çetinaçci, 2017), which puts an emphasis on a language *user* and the language *in use*. Therefore, pragmatics is also “the study of language from the point of view of users, especially of choices they make, the constraints they encounter in using language in social interaction and the effects their use of language has on other participants in the act of communication” (Crystal, 1985:379).

According to Alcatraz 1990 (cited in Garcia 2004), the chief characteristics of pragmatics refer to: using language as means of communication, focusing on functions rather than forms, studying the processes that take place in communication, using language authentically and in the appropriate context, and applying linguistic theories based on the concept of communicative competence. Moreover, by taking into consideration the globalised environment in which English is often used as *lingua franca*, socially appropriate language use becomes central to the foreign language teaching and learning. Learning foreign language should assure learners’ understanding of speakers’ intentions, their interpretation of speakers’ feelings and attitudes, evaluation of the intensity of speaker’s meaning, recognition of sarcasm, joking and other facetious behaviour and their appropriate response (Garcia 2004).

### 2.2.2 *Pragmatic comprehension*

Recent findings on components and dimension of pragmatic competence, i.e. competence of a foreign language user to use the language appropriate to the sociocultural context, point to two directions: the first direction deals with the acquisition of specific pragmatic structures and speech acts and the second one directs towards specific verbal and non-verbal behaviours and sociocultural conventions and norms directing them (Pavičić Takač & Bagarić Medve, 2013). In the scope of the present study, pragmatic comprehension will be characterized through the comprehension of speech acts and conversational implicatures.

In addition, pragmatic comprehension encompasses two meanings in each utterance, namely the sentence meaning and the speaker meaning (Garcia, 2004) both of which are required for a speaker to generate a communicative act. In speech acts, the speaker is trying to do something or trying to get the interlocutor to do something (Austin 1962, Searle, 1969) and in order to comprehend the speech act of the speaker, the interlocutor must be able to understand the illocutionary force and respond to it accordingly. The Speech Act Theory, developed in the 1960s by Austin (1962) and Searle (1969), showed that there are dimensions of learners' language that go beyond traditional grammatical knowledge, which include language functions such as apologizing, complaining, giving advice, requesting, refusing, etc. and depend on dynamic contextual factors, cultural and social conventions, and speaker perspective and personality (Birjandi & Rezaei, 2010) and, therefore, should be a part of foreign language teaching.

Within the notion of pragmatic comprehension, implied meanings (implicatures) add up to another essential constituent of pragmatics used frequently in daily conversations and, therefore, worth exploring. The notion of implicature introduced by Grice (1975) denotes cases in which what is meant is distinct from what is uttered – which, although usual in everyday conversation, could be very demanding for non-native speakers to notice and interpret. Bouton (1994) divides implicature into idiosyncratic and formulaic – the first being based on a shared perception of the context and the second on a formula, which could be semantic, pragmatic and crucial to one's interpretation.

Finally, if the main purpose of learning a foreign language is to communicate, then it is important that foreign language learners systematically develop their communicative competence by learning how to understand a speaker's intentions, interpret a speaker's feelings



and attitudes, differentiate speech act meaning, evaluate the intensity of a speaker's meaning, such as the difference between a suggestion and a warning, recognize sarcasm, joking, and other facetious behaviour, and be able to respond appropriately (Corsetti, 2010). Additionally, it is necessary to stress the impact of interactions and cultural environments in which such abilities are constructed, which means that learners should not only be able to use the target language with their peers in the familiar social context of their home country and with the native speakers in a target language country but also with the language learners from other cultures in which the target language is used. This leads to the development of a better pragmatic comprehension and adds an intercultural dimension to the construct of communicative competence.

### **2.3 Intercultural communicative competence**

By emphasizing that the objective of language teaching/learning should also be defined in terms of communication with the language learners from other cultures in which the target language is used, the communication in such a context may not be sufficient unless it is accompanied by multidimensional cultural awareness which is supposed to lead to a relationship of acceptance where interlocutors are trying to negotiate a cultural platform satisfactory to all parties involved (Çetinavcı, 2017). Such ideas encouraged the concept of intercultural communicative competence, i.e. the focus on developing learners' knowledge, motivation and skills to interact effectively and appropriately with members of different cultures (Çetinavcı, 2017).

#### *2.3.1 Defining Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC)*

Moeller and Nugent's (2014) review of the research on ICC concludes that a precise definition of intercultural communicative competence does not exist in the literature. However, by analysing different models of communicative competence and postulating that communicative competence with all its sub-competences would remain incomplete without intercultural dimension on the one side, and by following recent teaching guidelines towards learner-centered communicative language teaching and the language in use on the other, it makes sense to define an outcome of ICC in terms of "developing learners who are competent to engage and collaborate in a global society" (Wilberschied, 2015:3). Additionally, their development emerges from discovering appropriate ways to communicate and interact with people from other cultures, which means they need to be able to manage various interactions of a different complexity based on their foreign language proficiency, self-awareness and the analysis of

one's own and the target language culture. The process of developing ICC, according to Wilberschild (2015) includes the learners who would investigate similarities and differences between their own national and cultural identity and the target culture and construct associations, i.e. build connections with people from different cultural/ language backgrounds.

For foreign language teachers, this means their learners need to establish and strengthen skills in interpreting and connecting with the multicultural interlocutors in the foreign language used as *lingua franca*. Therefore, a continual cycle of recognizing ethnocentric perspectives and misunderstandings as they arise should be incorporated in foreign language teaching in order to develop learners' ability to understand and explain the origins of conflict and mediate situations appropriately in order to avoid further misinterpretation, i.e. to develop their intercultural communicative competence (Byram, 1997). Ultimately, students would demonstrate the appreciation of differences and become the intercultural speakers themselves.

### 2.3.2 *The Intercultural Speaker*

Nowadays, learners of a foreign language need to be aware of the multicultural context they are in, as well as their own place in it. Therefore, language speakers are not limited to contact with the speakers of the target language and the country where it is spoken but are more often involved in multilingual and multicultural situations in which they have to interpret the world from different points of view. This means that a native speaker's competence as a model should be replaced with the intercultural speaker as a model.

The notion of intercultural communicative competence suggests a step forward from Hymes' and van Ek's proposed theory of communicative competence directed towards the analysis of social interaction and communication within a monolingual (and probably monocultural group) into multicultural approach and brings the intercultural speaker as a model and reference point for a foreign language learner, as has been proposed by Byram and Zarate (Coperías Aguilar, 2002).

By having a native speaker as a role model, foreign language learners are indirectly invited to dismiss one's own cultural and language background in order to be considered as a "native". In long terms, this creates linguistically schizophrenic language learners who are predetermined to fail (Byram, 1997:11:12). The idea behind the intercultural speaker is that foreign language

learners are individuals who bring with them their sociocultural identity as members of their native culture. The intercultural speakers, would, thus, be mediators between two cultures, which include the aspects of both, linguistic and cultural. In addition, “by communicating in a foreign language, the learners would become a dual-culture people who successfully communicate in a foreign language and multicultural environments with their native culture always as a part of their own identity” (Coperías Aguilar, 2002). In this way, learners are placed at the centre of the teaching and learning process.

The approach towards the intercultural speaker, however, requires broader comprehension of all the different competences, which contribute to the developmental process of language speakers to the intercultural speakers, because intercultural language learners do not only need to develop a communicative competence with all its different components in order to communicate effectively but also competences regarding their attitudes, understanding and acceptance of themselves, their own culture, as well as foreign culture with its similarities and differences.

To sum up, the success of intercultural interaction cannot be judged only in terms of an effective exchange of information. The capacity for establishing and maintaining human relationships is as important as communication itself, and that capacity depends on “attitudinal factors” as well (Byram, 1997: 32-33). Therefore, a positive attitude, as well as the knowledge of the speaker’s own culture and that of the other, are preconditions for efficient intercultural interaction. According to Byram, these factors are acquired through real-life experience and self-reflection, however, are also inevitably cultivated in the foreign language classrooms. Therefore, they should be systematically developed, evaluated and assessed, which is only possible by integrating the intercultural communicative competence into the curriculum.

### *2.3.3 Byram’s Model of Intercultural Communicative Competence*

Byram’s model of Intercultural Communicative Competence is one of the most familiar and most widely cited models of ICC. It is specifically designed for foreign language teaching and serves as a basis for other models of intercultural communicative competence. The model consists of four competences – three of them following Canale and Swain’s model of Communicative competence, i.e. van Ek’s model of communicative ability, namely linguistic, sociolinguistic, discourse competence and the fourth one, added by Byram – intercultural

competence. By following the context of rising international environment and the need for developing learners competent to engage and collaborate in global society, Byram amended the previous models of communicative competence by introducing the component of the intercultural speaker instead of native speaker as a role model.

Byram's intercultural competence consists of five components, namely: *attitudes* of openness and curiosity; *knowledge* about social groups in one's own country and the interlocutor's country and of the processes of interaction at individual and societal level; *skills of interpreting and relating* documents or events based on one's knowledge of own and interlocutor's culture; *skill of discovery and interaction* – skills of acquiring knowledge and understanding of cultural elements present in documents or interactions in case of lack or incomplete knowledge and the skills on knowledge, attitude, interpretation and relation operated in real time; *critical cultural awareness* of one's own and interlocutor's practices and products (Szuba, 2016:12).

Therefore, when it comes to the acquisition of intercultural communicative competence, Byram sees the foreign language classroom, fieldwork and independent learning based on tools acquired in the classroom as lucrative settings for teaching it, mainly because such learning is supposed to be inevitable in foreign language teaching. According to Byram (1997), the classroom is the place where knowledge, skills of interpreting and relating, and critical cultural awareness can be taught. Fieldwork presents experiences with pedagogical structures and education objectives outside the classroom, such as school excursions or participation on exchange programmes, where the skill of interaction as well as attitudes can be developed and independent learning comes as stimulus based on the tools already acquired. In addition, as language embodies culture, it is impossible that cultural elements are not present in the foreign language classroom, so the remaining question according to Byram (1997) is not whether, but how to approach the teaching and assessment of culture in the classroom.

#### 2.3.4 *The Intercultural Competence Assessment Project (INCA)*

Following the work of Byram (1997), as well as Torsten Köhlmann (1996) and Bernd Müller-Jacquier (2000), *The Intercultural Competence Assessment* (INCA) has been developed to provide a framework for training as the assessment of intercultural communicative competence in professional settings. INCA approaches intercultural communicative competence by identifying six characteristics of an interculturally competent person, namely: tolerance of

ambiguity, behavioural flexibility, communicative awareness, knowledge discovery, respect for otherness and empathy (INCA Assessor Manual, 2004:5-7):

- *Tolerance of ambiguity* - is understood as the ability to accept lack of clarity and ambiguity and to be able to deal with it constructively. In other words, learners find in the unexpected and unfamiliar an enjoyable challenge and want to help resolve possible problems in ways that appeal to as many other group members as possible.
- *Behavioural flexibility* - is the ability to adapt one's own behaviour to different requirements and situations, which means learners tend to adopt other people's customs where this is likely to be appreciated, accept less familiar working procedures where this will raise the level of goodwill, etc.
- *Communicative awareness* – is the ability to establish relationships between linguistic expressions and cultural contents in intercultural communication, and to modify correspondingly one's own linguistic forms of expression. In other words, learners are alert to the many ways in which misunderstanding might arise through differences in speech, gestures and body language and they are prepared to adopt less familiar conventions, seek clarification and ask other members of the group to agree on how they will use certain expressions.
- *Knowledge discovery* – is the ability to acquire new knowledge of a culture and cultural practices and the ability to act using that knowledge, those attitudes and those skills under the constraints of real-time communication and interaction. In other words, learners are willing both to research in advance and to learn from intercultural encounters, they take the trouble to find out about the likely values, customs and practices of those they are going to encounter.
- *Respect for otherness* – refers to the curiosity and openness, readiness to suspend disbelief about other cultures and belief about one's own. Learners are ready to regard other people's values, customs and practices as worthwhile in their own right and not merely as different from the norm. While they may not share these values, customs and practices, they feel strongly that others are entitled to them and should not lose respect

on account of them. They are able to adopt a firm but diplomatic attitude over points of principle on which they disagree.

- *Empathy* – is the ability to intuitively understand what other people think and how they feel in concrete situations. Empathic persons are able to deal appropriately with the feelings, wishes and ways of thinking of other persons. In other words, learners are able to get inside other people's thoughts and feelings and see and feel a situation through their eyes. While this competence often draws on knowledge of how learners would expect others to feel, it goes beyond awareness of facts. It often shows itself in a concern not to hurt others' feelings or infringe their system of values.

In addition, within each of these characteristics, the desired motivation, skills or knowledge and behaviour are outlined (see the Appendix 1), based on which three levels of intercultural communicative competence (basic, intermediate and full) are created.

- *Basic competence* - means that learners are willing to interact successfully with people from other cultures. However, they tend to pick things up and learn from them as they go along, instead of working out a system to deal with intercultural situations in general. They respond rather than plan, they are reasonably tolerant of other values, customs and practices although they may find them weird, surprising and approve or disapprove.
- *Intermediate competence* – means that learners begin to view more coherently some of the aspects of intercultural encounters they used to deal with in a 'one-off' way. They have a mental 'map' or 'checklists' of the sort of situations they are likely to need to deal with and are developing their skills to cope with them. This means that learners are more prepared for the need to respond and adapt to the demands of unfamiliar situations. They are quicker to see patterns in the various experiences they have and they are beginning to draw conclusions without having to seek advice. They find it easier to respond in a neutral way to a difference, rather than approving or disapproving.
- *Full competence* – means that many of the competences learners have already developed consciously have become intuitive. They are constantly ready for situations and encounters in which they will exercise their knowledge, judgement and skills and have a large repertoire of strategies for dealing with differences in values, customs and

practices among members of the intercultural group. They do not only accept that people can see things from widely varying perspectives and are entitled to do so but are also able to put themselves in their place. They are able to intercede when difficulties arise and tactfully support other members of the group in understanding each other. They are confident enough of their position to take a polite stand over issues, despite their respect for the viewpoint of others.

*The Intercultural Competence Assessment (INCA)* framework enables language learners and teacher to observe, evaluate and assess different stages of development of ICC and it is used as a basis for assessing the level of intercultural communicative competence of Croatian EFL language learners in the scope of this research.

## **2.4 Pragmatic Comprehension and Intercultural Communicative Competence in Croatian context**

After discussing the terms and concepts crucial for understanding the pragmatic comprehension and intercultural communicative competence, as well as their role in the models of communicative competence and contemporary foreign language teaching, it is important to shift towards the Croatian context of foreign language teaching in order to set the ground for the upcoming analytical part of the paper. As previously stated, with the changing objectives of foreign language teaching towards the appropriate language use in sociocultural contexts, i.e. successful communication in terms of knowledge, motivation and skills, it is necessary to introduce the communicative, i.e. pragmatic competence and intercultural communicative competence into the curricular documents at the national level. In the Croatian context, the relevant curricular document for high schools is (still) the Croatian National Curriculum (*Cro. Nacionalni okvirni kurikulum – NOK*, <https://mzo.hr/hr/rubrike/nacionalni-kurikulum>) which will be further discussed below in reference to the role of pragmatic comprehension and intercultural communicative competence and their place within it.

By analysing the outcomes of foreign language learning in Croatian National Curriculum, the *intercultural action (Cro. međukulturno djelovanje)*, makes the fifth desired outcome of foreign language learning and teaching, along with reading and listening comprehension and speaking and writing. Croatian National Curriculum divides these outcomes into four cycles according

to the years of learners' high school education - as learners are progressing into to higher grades of high school, the outcomes of intercultural action gradually develop.

Intercultural action, in general, encompasses three main fields: preparation for intercultural action, application of strategies appropriate for intercultural action and application of knowledge, skills and attitudes relevant for successful intercultural action.

Preparation for intercultural action includes raising awareness towards similarities between the Croatian culture and foreign language culture and everyday language structures, as well as tolerance and empathy in multicultural encounters and curiosity towards the target language and culture. Application of strategies appropriate for intercultural action refers to asking for clarification for culturally conditioned contents. Application of knowledge, skills and attitudes relevant for successful intercultural action refers to recognizing information about each own and the target culture, connecting them to the previous experiences and the new contexts, applying appropriate patterns of behaviour in known situations and trying to respond openly, curiously and emphatically on the foreign and the unknown contents, behaviours and situations.

Such outcomes go in hand with Byram's model of intercultural communicative competence and *Intercultural Competence Assessment* framework, which means that pragmatic comprehension and intercultural communicative competence have a basis to be introduced and developed in Croatian foreign language classroom, thus interesting to examine.



### **3. Methodology**

Following the notions of Bachman and Palmers' model of communicative competence (1996, 2010), which defines the pragmatic comprehension as one of the crucial components of communicative competence, and the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR), which includes the intercultural communicative competence in a foreign language as one of the key competences in general, this study attempts at describing the current state of these competences in Croatia and shedding light on their importance in contemporary EFL classroom.

#### **3.1 Aim**

The aim of this research is to explore the current state of intercultural communicative competence and pragmatic comprehension in Croatian schools and the relationship between them. Based on the aim, the following research questions were formed:

1. What is the level of ICC of high school EFL learners?
2. What is the level of PC of high school EFL learners?
3. Is there a correlation between learners' ICC and PC?
4. Is there any difference in ICC level and PC between grammar and vocational school learners?
5. Does time spent abroad play a role in ICC and PC level?

Based on the aims, the following hypothesis are developed:

1. EFL high school learners are at the basic level of ICC.
2. EFL high school learners are at the sufficient level of PC.
3. There is a correlation between learners' ICC and PC.
4. Learners from grammar school will have higher scores of ICC and PC than those from vocational schools.
5. Learners who spent more time abroad will have higher scores of ICC and PC than those who spent less time abroad.

### **3.2 Sample**

Participants of this research are Croatian students in their finishing years of secondary education in Osijek. A total of 161 participants from secondary grammar and vocational schools from Osijek participated in the research. 44.4% are students from 2nd Grammar School Osijek and 55.6% are students from Catering and Tourism School and Economic-administrative High School Osijek. All the participants attend higher grades of high school, either the third or fourth grade and are between 16 and 19 years old.

Their demographic data show that they have been learning English 11.32 years on average (SD=1.65) and that approximately 81% of them have been learning another foreign language besides English, which is German in most of the cases.

When it comes to their intercultural encounters, 61.3% of them reported coming in contact with people from foreign countries several time per year, while 30% of the participants come in contact with people from foreign countries on monthly or weekly basis. When it comes to the travelling to foreign countries, only 8% of the participants have not been abroad so far, around 20% of the participants have been abroad from 1 to 3 times, 30% of them have been abroad 4 to 6 times, and 32% more than ten times, which shows a relatively regular contact between participants and foreign cultures. As for students' travelling abroad as part of school excursions, 22% of students, state they have never been abroad at school excursion, 22% of them state they have only been once abroad with school, 19% of them have been abroad twice with school and 18% of them have been abroad three times at school excursion. Finally, when it comes to the time spent abroad, 10% of students have been abroad only for 1 to 2 days, 42% of them have been abroad between 2 days and a week, and 40% of them have spent between 2 weeks and a month. These data point to participants' rather frequent and moderately long multicultural encounters.

### **3.3 Instruments**

The instruments used in this research were an adapted version of the INCA "Intercultural Encounters" questionnaire for measuring the intercultural communicative competence and adapted versions of three different Pragmatic Comprehension tests, namely those by Chen-Rau (2013), Çetinavci (2017) and Öztürk -Alagözlü (2013), combined into one.

### 3.3.1 *The adapted INCA questionnaire*

The adapted INCA questionnaire (see Appendix 2) consists of three parts: intercultural scenarios, demographic data and intercultural profile that measure five INCA competences described in the previous chapter (see 2.3.4.): *Knowledge Discovery, Respect for Otherness, Empathy, Tolerance for Ambiguity, Communicative Awareness, Behavioural Flexibility*. In the first part of the questionnaire, participants are asked to offer a solution to five task-based scenarios by imagining that they are in the described situation and then to answer the questions related to the scenario. The purpose of the second part of the questionnaire is to gather demographic data on learners' intercultural encounters, time spent abroad and foreign language learning. The final part of the questionnaire consists of statements referring to different competences followed by the three-point Likert scale (1 – not applicable, 2 - maybe, 3 – fully applicable).

Each part of the questionnaire incorporates all five competences, however, only the intercultural encounters are assessed, while the demographic data and the intercultural profile provide background information about the participants, their attitudes and self-perception. The assessment process consists of evaluating the level of each competence based on the answers in intercultural encounters according to the descriptors provided by INCA framework (see Appendix 3). There are three levels of competence: basic, intermediate and full level accompanied by descriptors explaining the desired outcomes for each competence on each level. Every questionnaire is carefully examined according to the answers participants provided. The answers were matched with the expected competences of ICC according to INCA, namely *Knowledge Discovery, Respect for Otherness, Empathy, Tolerance for Ambiguity, Communicative Awareness, Behavioural Flexibility*. The correspondence between the descriptors and the responses on the participants' paper was marked on the separate assessment sheet (see Appendix 4) with the numbers 1-3 (1- the basic level of this competence, 2- the intermediate level, 3- full level of competence) in accordance to the descriptors provided by INCA (Appendix 3).

The content of the questionnaire has been adapted to the age and interests of the participants so that the high school learners can relate to the situations described in the test. The instrument gathers both, qualitative and quantitative data.

### 3.3.2 *Test of Pragmatic comprehension*

The test of pragmatic comprehension is a pen-and-paper test consisting of 24 questions divided into three parts (see Appendix 5). In each part, participants have to solve multiple-choice discourse completion tasks (MDCT) by choosing the most suitable of the four response alternatives to different real-life situations.

The first part of the test consists of five questions testing learners' knowledge of social appropriateness. The test items are adapted from Chen & Rau's (2013) Multiple-choice discourse completion test aimed at assessing L2 pragmatic competence. The tasks consist of two parts: the situational context described in form of a dialogue and the socially appropriate response alternatives. The task formation includes greetings, apologies, requests, complaints and refusals.

The second part of the instrument consists of eight questions testing learners' recognition of intended illocutionary force of speech acts and conversational implicatures. The test items are adapted from Alagözlü's (2013) research aimed at recognition of illocutionary force of speech acts and conversational implicatures by L2 English learners. The test items contain indirect speech acts based on everyday English dialogues between friends, family members, student and professor, etc. and learners are then asked to select among four speech act choices (e.g. complaining, making a statement, kidding, warning, convincing, requesting, etc.) according to their own understanding of the dialogue.

The third part consists of eleven questions testing the learners' recognition of formulaic implied meaning in English. The questions are adapted from Çetinaçci's (2017) Multiple-choice discourse completion test and they test different implied meaning types to add to the understanding of pragmatic comprehension in a target language, namely Pope questions, indirect criticism, topic change, indirect advice, verbal irony and indirect refusals (for more details see Çetinaçci, 2017). The important role on the choice of questions played the fact that all the questions used in research are ones that have already been reported as formulaic, thus teachable.

The situations in all three parts of the test are adapted to the age and interests of the participants and they are *all* based on everyday dialogue scenarios, such as a conversation between friends, family members, classmates, etc.

When it comes to the assessment criteria, there are 24 questions in the Test of Pragmatic comprehension and each question can be awarded one point, which means there are 24 points in total. Each test was carefully examined. All correct answers were added up, transcribed into points and the final score of each participant was calculated. The final score of the participants is presented in a form of achieved points out of the total number of points and extracted into the separate table (see Appendix 6). On the basis of the results participants are divided into two groups: the successful ones are those who score at least 50% of the test and the unsuccessful ones are those who score below 12 points, i.e. below 50%.

### 3.4 Procedure

All the data for the research were collected between December 2017 and April 2018 in all three high schools in Osijek. At the beginning of each encounter with the participants, the purpose of the research and the expectation from the participants were explained. The participants were encouraged to ask questions throughout the process if something was unclear. After all the data was collected, it was entered in statistical program SPSS. Frequencies, descriptive statistics, One-way ANOVA, and Pearson correlation were used in the analysis of the results.

### 3.5 Results

The results of the research will be presented as answers to the previously formulated research questions. They will be further discussed in the next chapter.

#### 1. What is the level of ICC of all the participants?

Table 1 shows that most of the participants, 62.7% of them, are at the basic level of ICC, 36% of them are at the intermediate level of competence and only 1.2% of them are at the full level of competence.

*Table 1 – Percentage of students at different ICC levels*

|              | Frequency | Percent |
|--------------|-----------|---------|
| Basic        | 101       | 62.7%   |
| Intermediate | 58        | 36%     |
| Full         | 2         | 1.2%    |
| Total        | 161       | 100%    |

Further analysis shows that overall ICC score of the participants is 1.39, with a standard deviation of .51 (see Table 2). Such results leave room for progress of the participants towards the next level of competence.

*Table 2 – Overall score of ICC (N = 161)*

|           | Minimum | Maximum | Mean   | Std. Deviation |
|-----------|---------|---------|--------|----------------|
| ICC Level | 1.00    | 3.00    | 1.3851 | .51310         |

## **2. What is the score of PC of all the participants?**

Table 3 shows that the overall score of pragmatic comprehension of the participants is 15.03, which is 64% of the total score with a standard deviation of 4.00. Although this result was expected, SD shows a rather big discrepancy among the results.

This will be further addressed by examining other parameters - such as the difference between types of school.

*Table 3 – Overall score of PC*

|              | N   | Minimum | Maximum | Mean  | Std. Deviation |
|--------------|-----|---------|---------|-------|----------------|
| Test Results | 161 | 3       | 22      | 15.03 | 4.00           |

In addition, it can be seen that the minimum score accomplished in the test is 3 and the maximum 22, which shows that the participants have neither scored zero nor the maximal amount of points. Therefore, the test is appropriate to the participants' level of knowledge.

## **3. What is the correlation between learners' ICC and PC?**

The relationship between PC and ICC is investigated by using Pearson correlation. The results in Table 4 show small, positive statistically significant correlation ( $r = .174$ ,  $\text{sig.} = 0.28$ ) between PC and ICC. However, by calculating the coefficient of determination, it can be seen that

pragmatic comprehension and intercultural communicative competence share only 3% of their variance, which indicates a rather small overlapping.

This means that the value of ICC *could* be determined by knowing the value of pragmatic comprehension and vice versa, nonetheless, with this sample, there is a probability that it will not always be the case.

*Table 4 – Correlation of students' ICC and PC*

|                     | ICC Score | Test Score |
|---------------------|-----------|------------|
| Pearson Correlation | 1         | .174       |
| Sig. (2-tailed)     |           | .028       |
| N                   | 161       | 161        |

#### **4. Is there any difference in ICC level and PC for grammar and vocational schools?**

When it comes to comparison of the overall test score of pragmatic comprehension with different schools, Table 5 shows that grammar school students have overall better results in pragmatic comprehension with the mean score of 17.33 (SD= 2.55) than students from both Catering and Tourism School Osijek (M = 13.95, SD = 4.05) and Economic-administrative High School Osijek (M = 12.82, SD = 4.09).

*Table 5 – Level of PC in grammar and vocational schools*

|  | N   | Mean  | Min   | Max   | SD   |
|--|-----|-------|-------|-------|------|
| Economic-administrative High School Osijek | 35  | 12.82 | 3.00  | 21.00 | 4.09 |
| Catering and Tourism School Osijek         | 63  | 13.95 | 4.00  | 21.00 | 4.05 |
| II. Grammar School Osijek                  | 63  | 17.33 | 11.00 | 22.00 | 2.55 |
| Total                                      | 161 | 15.03 | 3.00  | 22.00 | 4.00 |

In addition, the One-way ANOVA test is conducted to explore the difference between grammar and vocational schools on intercultural communicative competence and pragmatic comprehension measured by INCA framework and Test of Pragmatic comprehension. Participants are divided in three groups according to their schools – 1<sup>st</sup> Group being 2<sup>nd</sup> Grammar school, 2<sup>nd</sup> Group Economic-administrative school Osijek and 3<sup>rd</sup> Group Catering and Tourism School Osijek.

The results in Table 6 show statistically significant difference (sig.=.000) in the mean scores on the pragmatic comprehension across the grammar and vocational schools, which corresponds with the high F-value (F=22.93) and shows that the observed differences between group's means reflect a real-life situation in foreign language classrooms.

*Table 6 – One-way ANOVA: Comparison of PC between grammar and vocational schools*

|                | Sum of Squares | df  | Mean Square | F     | Sig. |
|----------------|----------------|-----|-------------|-------|------|
| Between Groups | 577.02         | 2   | 288.51      | 22.93 | .000 |
| Within Groups  | 1987.83        | 158 | 12.58       |       |      |
| Total          | 2564.845       | 160 |             |       |      |

In order to determine where the difference between groups lie, the Post Hoc (Tukey HSD) test has been conducted. The results show that the 1<sup>st</sup> Group is statistically significantly different from the 2<sup>nd</sup> and the 3<sup>rd</sup> Group (sig.=000). That is, the grammar school students' PC is statistically significantly higher than vocational schools' PC, as presented in Table 7.



Table 7 – Post Hoc: Comparison of PC and different schools

| (I) School                                 | (J) School                                 | Mean Difference | Std. Error | Sig. |
|--|--|-----------------|------------|------|
| II. Grammar School Osijek                  | Economic-administrative High School Osijek | <u>4.50*</u>    | .75        | .000 |
|  | Catering and Tourism School Osijek         | <u>3.38*</u>    | .63        | .000 |
| Economic-administrative High School Osijek | Catering and Tourism School Osijek         | -1.12           | .75        | .292 |
|  | II. Grammar School Osijek                  | <u>-4.50*</u>   | .75        | .000 |
| Catering and Tourism School Osijek         | Economic-administrative High School Osijek | 1,12            | .75        | .292 |
|  | II. Grammar School Osijek                  | <u>-3.38*</u>   | .63        | .000 |

Furthermore, by looking at the mean score of all the schools presented in Table 5 a rather big difference can be seen between the 2<sup>nd</sup> Grammar School (M=17.33) and both vocational schools (M=12.82 and M= 13.95), which is also shown in the results of Post Hoc test (Table 7).

With comparison of the mean difference presented in Table 7, it is seen that Catering and Tourism School Osijek has lower mean difference than Economic-administrative School Osijek. This vocational school, therefore, shows better results on the PC test than Economic-administrative School Osijek. However, the difference in sample size should be taken into consideration here because only 35 participants are from Economic-administrative High School Osijek, whereas 63 of them are from Catering and Tourism School Osijek.

In contrast to the PC, the results in Table 8 show that there is no statistically significant difference between ICC and grammar and vocational schools (sig=.342).

*Table 8 – One-way ANOVA: Comparison of ICC and different schools*

|                       | Sum of Squares | df  | Mean Square | F    | Sig. |
|-----------------------|----------------|-----|-------------|------|------|
| <i>Between Groups</i> | .569           | 2   | .284        | 1.08 | .342 |
| <i>Within Groups</i>  | 41.56          | 158 | .263        |      |      |
| Total                 | 42.12          | 160 |             |      |      |

Moreover, by comparing the mean squares between groups (MS=.284) and within groups (MS=.263) it can be seen that there is a small difference between them, which corresponds to the rather low F-value (F = 1.08) and indicates small variance between grammar and vocational schools when it comes to ICC.

##### **5. Is there any difference in ICC level and PC when it comes to the time spent abroad?**

To answer whether there is difference in ICC and PC when it comes to the time spent abroad, One-way ANOVA test has been conducted.

Participants are divided in five groups according to the number of times they have been abroad: 1<sup>st</sup> Group – 0 times, 2<sup>nd</sup> Group - 1-3 times, 3<sup>rd</sup> Group – 4-6 times, 4<sup>th</sup> Group – 7-10 times and 5<sup>th</sup> Group – 10+ times. However, the results in Table 8 and 9 show that there is no statistically significant difference between time spent abroad and PC (sig= .76) and time spent abroad and ICC (sig= .415) between groups.

*Table 8 – One-way ANOVA: Comparison of ICC and time spent abroad*

|                | Sum of Squares | Df  | Mean Square | F    | Sig. |
|----------------|----------------|-----|-------------|------|------|
| Between Groups | .501           | 4   | .125        | 0.47 | .76  |
| Within Groups  | 41.62          | 156 | .267        |      |      |
| Total          | 41.12          | 160 |             |      |      |

*Table 9- One-way ANOVA: Comparison of PC and time spent abroad*

|                | Sum of Squares | Df  | Mean Square | F    | Sig. |
|----------------|----------------|-----|-------------|------|------|
| Between Groups | 63.49          | 4   | 15.87       | .990 | .415 |
| Within Groups  | 2501.36        | 156 | 16.03       |      |      |
| Total          | 2564.85        | 160 |             |      |      |

## 4. Discussion

In this part of the paper, the results of the research will be interpreted according to the previously formulated research questions.

The first research question aimed at discovering participants' general ICC level. Results have shown that participants are at the basic level of ICC, which means they are willing to interact successfully with people from other cultures, but they lack some real-life experience to help them deal with intercultural encounters in general. In addition, participants' responses are often improvised rather than planned and adapted to the certain difficulty, which enables them to avoid short-term difficulties and deal positively with the situation.

In general, participants seem to be reasonably tolerant to other customs, values and beliefs, but they often find them odd, surprising and tend to be judgmental towards them (see Appendix 3). This outcome was predictable due to participants' age and their lack of coping strategies, which life experience can bring. However, the results show a discrepancy with the demographic data of the participants, which indicate a rather rich real-life experience when it comes to the intercultural encounters and the time spent abroad (see Chapter 3.2.). Therefore, their lack of coping strategies could also be due to the unsystematic development of intercultural communicative competence in their high schools.

The second research question aimed at discovering participants' general PC score. The results have shown that participants scored 69% on average - minimal score was 3 points out of 24 (12.5%) and maximal 22 points out of 24 (92%). The prediction that learners would be at least at the sufficient level of PC (which mean they would score more than 50% on the test) was based on their expected proficiency level in the finishing grades of high school and the constant exposure to the English language through different media.

However, the fact that learners, in general, did not score above the grade D (according to NAEP - <https://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/hsts/howgpa.aspx>) when it comes to pragmatic comprehension, stresses the necessity for learners (and teacher) to develop their pragmatic comprehension.

In order to support the improvement of learners' pragmatic comprehension, the appropriate changes in the curriculum of English in Croatian high schools become a necessity. According

to the results, teaching English in Croatian classrooms still seems to be very traditionally oriented towards the linguistic/grammatical component of communicative competence and lacks in the systematic development and assessment of other components of communicative competence, such as pragmatic comprehension.

The third research question is aimed at discovering what the correlation between learners' ICC and PC is. The results have shown that there is a correlation between the pragmatic comprehension and the intercultural communicative competence. This was expected since intercultural communicative competence can be seen as the successor of communicative competence and, therefore, includes pragmatic comprehension.

Moreover, pragmatic aspect of language is closely connected to the language in context and the language in use, the same as the intercultural aspect of language. Therefore, pragmatic comprehension and intercultural communicative competence are closely connected and expected to be developed systematically.

However, a rather small coefficient of determination shows that even though the value of ICC *could* be determined by knowing the value of pragmatic comprehension and vice versa, there is a probability that, at least in this sample, it would not always be the case. This could be due to the two complex construct and their components, as well as their unsystematic development in the foreign language classrooms. Therefore, observing different aspects of pragmatic comprehension and intercultural communicative competence developed in foreign language classrooms would shed more light on understanding the cause of such a small coefficient of determination in this sample.

The fourth research question aimed at discovering the difference between ICC level and PC when it comes to grammar and vocational schools. The results have shown that grammar school students scored higher on the PC test than vocational high schools' students. In addition, a big discrepancy between the mean score and the standard deviation can be seen in both vocational schools in comparison to the grammar school, which shows that grammar school students have more consistent and homogeneous results. This outcome was predictable due to the more extensive foreign language syllabi that grammar schools, in general, tend to have in comparison to vocational schools.

However, when it comes to the comparison of mean difference between the two vocational schools, i.e. Economic-Administrative high school and Catering and Tourism school, it can be seen that students from Catering and Tourism school have a lower mean difference in comparison to the 2<sup>nd</sup> grammar school that students from Economic-Administrative high school. Therefore, they seem to show higher level of pragmatic comprehension.

This result is not a surprise because it reflects the nature of students' future professions, i.e. students from Catering and Tourism School are expected to interact more with different types of customers and the school, therefore, probably incorporates a development of pragmatic comprehension in their curriculum more than Economic-Administrative high school. However, a difference in sample size between these two vocational schools should be taken into consideration when interpreting the data.

When it comes to the difference between ICC among students of different schools, the results have indicated some differences, but these were not statistically significant. This can be explained by the fact that intercultural component of communicative competence is not yet properly incorporated in curricular documents and, consequently, has not been systematically developed and assessed - which is also reflected in overall ICC scores of the participants.

The fifth research question aimed at discovering the difference in ICC level and PC among students who spent different amounts of time abroad. The results have shown that time spent abroad does not play a role in ICC and PC levels. This outcome was not expected since the real-time experience of multicultural surroundings could contribute to better understanding of English language in context, i.e. pragmatic comprehension and the development of intercultural communicative competence (Pavičić Takač & Bagarić Medve, 2013:242-243).

However, due to the trend of emigration abroad, some learners might have visited their family and friends abroad, which means they probably stayed within their culture's bubble, i.e. used their own language, customs and traditions most of the time abroad. Therefore, they actually did not have an opportunity for interactions with different cultures, i.e. "real intercultural experience".

Moreover, when it comes to extracurricular activities such as school trips and excursions, according to students' answers in the INCA questionnaire, most of the learners report too often

feel insecure or scared of the unknown and rather remain with their close group of friends where they do not have cultural or language barrier. Again, by staying in their comfort zone, learners are not able to interact with people from other countries and develop their intercultural communicative competence, which corroborates previous research (for a review cf. Pavičić Takač & Bagarić Medve, 2013). Therefore, even though demographic data show that a majority of learners participate in such trips and excursions rather regularly (see Chapter 3.2.), their level of intercultural communicative competence indicates that the trips do not seem to be pedagogically planned to develop different aspects of ICC pre-, while- and post-excursion.

Finally, the results put a great emphasis on the need for a systematic development and assessment of ICC and PC in foreign language teaching environment – curricular and extracurricular.

## 5. Conclusion

The aim of this paper was to explore the current state of intercultural communicative competence and pragmatic comprehension in Croatian schools and the relationship between them. Findings of the study point to the following conclusions about the relationship between intercultural communicative competence and pragmatic comprehension in foreign language teaching:

1. Participants are at the basic level of ICC, which shows a need for a more systematic development of this competence.
2. Participants scored 69% on the test of pragmatic comprehension, which means they are at the sufficient level of PC. Therefore, a more methodical approach in this field is needed.
3. The results have shown that there is a correlation between the pragmatic comprehension and the intercultural communicative competence, however with a rather small coefficient of determination which invites for a more detailed observation of their components developed in foreign language classrooms.
4. The results have shown that grammar school students, in general, have better results on pragmatic comprehension test than vocational school students. However, there is no statistically significant difference in ICC level between vocational and grammar school students, which implies that the four key competences connected to the linguistic aspect of pragmatic comprehension are systematically developed, but other components of communicative competence, such as the intercultural competence, are not.
5. The results have shown that there is no statistically significant difference in ICC and PC and among groups of students who spent different periods of time abroad, which invites for a pedagogical approach in organizing extracurricular activities pre-, while- and post-excursion, aimed at real-live experience abroad and intercultural encounters.

The results of this research put a great emphasis on the more systematic development and assessment of pragmatic comprehension and intercultural communicative competence in Croatian ELT. By looking into the results of the research questions separately, it becomes clear that participants *are* motivated young people willing to interact with people from other cultures, but they lack the knowledge and systematic development of strategies and attitude, which would



make them more successful and bring them towards the intermediate level of intercultural communicative competence. When it comes to pragmatic comprehension, current researchers have shown that pragmatic mistakes are taken more severely as the grammatical ones because they can lead to the social inappropriateness and, therefore, should be avoided. In addition, specific parts of pragmatic comprehension are said to be formulaic and teachable, which should also be taken into consideration during the assessment in foreign language classrooms.

Moreover, basic ICC score and satisfactory PC score indicate that Croatian EFL high school language learners should be more exposed to the real-life settings in the classrooms that, according to Byram, are inevitable for development of intercultural communicative competence. Learners should, therefore, be exposed to field work in which their experience of the target language and its usage for communicative purposes is systematically planned, implemented and analysed during the stay and upon learners' return home.

In order to accomplish this, Byram (1997) suggests incorporating the development of pragmatic comprehension and intercultural communicative competence into the national curriculum - applicable for both, primary and secondary, schools. Being competences that develop gradually, their development requires a longitudinal and systematic approach, starting from the primary school level and continuing throughout all educational levels. However, to incorporate these aspects in the foreign language classrooms, some prerequisites should be made. The first step is the appropriate support to the foreign language teachers in the form of resources, systematic training activities and platforms for exchanging ideas and good practices. The second is the effective communication between the school personnel, local authorities and the civil society. They are invited not only to collaborate in creating the opportunities for English language in use and for communicative purposes in multicultural surroundings but also to induce the changes needed within the field themselves.

Finally, the two concepts that assure the successful communication in different *intercultural* situations, intercultural communicative competence and pragmatic comprehension warrant their systematic development in the foreign language classrooms. Therefore, their integration in the curriculum, as well as, their assessment and development in the foreign language classrooms are fields worth exploring in future studies.

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## Appendices

### Appendix 1 – INCA Theory – an overview

|                                | <b>Motivation</b>   | <b>Skill/Knowledge</b>  | <b>Behaviour</b>  |
|--------------------------------|---|---|---|
| <b>Tolerance for ambiguity</b> | Readiness to embrace and work with  | Ability to handle stress consequent on ambiguity  | Managing ambiguous situations   |
| <b>Behavioural flexibility</b> | Readiness to apply and augment the full range of one's existing repertoire of behaviour             | Having a broad repertoire and the knowledge of one's repertoire   | Adapting one's behaviour to the specific situation  |
| <b>Communicative awareness</b> | Willingness to modify existing communicative conventions  | Ability to identify different communicative conventions, levels of foreign language competencies and their impact on intercultural communication                | Negotiating appropriate communicative conventions for intercultural communication and coping with different foreign language skills |
| <b>Knowledge discovery</b>     | Curiosity about other cultures in themselves and in order to be able to interact better with people | Skills of the ethnographic discovery of situation-relevant cultural knowledge (including technical knowledge) before, during and after intercultural encounters | Seeking information to discover culture-related knowledge   |
| <b>Respect for otherness</b>   | Willingness to respect the diversity and coherence of behaviour, value and belief systems           | Critical knowledge of such systems (including one's own when making judgements)   | Treating equally different behaviour, value and convention systems experienced in intercultural encounters                          |
| <b>Empathy</b>                 | Willingness to take the other's perspectives  | Skills of role-taking de-centring; awareness of different perspectives  | Making explicit and relating culture-specific perspectives to each other  |

## Appendix 2 – Adapted version of INCA Questionnaire

### ISPITIVANJE RAZINE INTERKULTURALNE KOMUNIKACIJSKE KOMPETENCIJE

**IDENTIFIKACIJSKI KOD:**

Dragi učenice/draga učenice,

hvala ti što sudjeluješ u upitniku o ispitivanju razine interkulturalne komunikacijske kompetencije kod učenika srednje škole koji se provodi u okviru izrade diplomskog rada na Filozofskom fakultetu u Osijeku.

Upitnik se sastoji o tri dijela: *Demografski podaci*, *Interkulturalni profil te Interkulturalni susreti* u kojima ćeš napisati svoje mišljenje o određenim situacijama koje bi se mogle dogoditi prilikom susreta s osobama različitih kultura. Molim te da u svakom zadatku potpuno slobodno napišeš svoje mišljenje i odgovaraš što je iskrenije moguće.

Upitnik je u potpunosti anonimn. Podaci koje trebaš napisati u demografskom dijelu upitnika služe isključivo za lakše kategoriziranje učenika u određene skupine. Nitko, osim istraživača, neće imati uvid u podatke.

U slučaju bilo kakvih nejasnoća, slobodno se obrati osobi koja provodi upitnik.

#### **PRVI DIO: INTERKULTURALNI SUSRETI**

*Pred tobom je prvi dio upitnika. U ovom dijelu upitnika trebaš napisati svoje mišljenje o 5 različitih situacija koje se mogu dogoditi prilikom interkulturalnih susreta.*

---

#### **SITUACIJA 1**

Kao predstavnik/ica svoje škole izabran/a si za sudjelovanje u međunarodnom projektu u suradnji s jednom europskom partnerskom školom. Tvoje sudjelovanje uključuje boravak u stranoj zemlji koju dosad nisi posjetio/la i koji će trajati 3 – 4 mjeseca.

**Molim te da na sljedeća pitanja odgovoriš što potpunije punim rečenicama.**

1. Detaljno opiši koje informacije trebaš prije polaska:
2. Detaljno opiši kako ćeš doći do tih informacija:
3. Detaljno opiši kako ćeš prikupiti nove informacije o partnerskoj školi:
4. Detaljno opiši kako ćeš tijekom slobodnog vremena saznati nešto više o zemlji u kojoj boraviš:

## SITUACIJA 2

S obzirom da je jedna od prednosti sudjelovanja u ovakvom programu mogućnost upoznavanja strane zemlje i načina života u njoj, izaberi jednu od sljedećih mogućnosti za smještaj.

**Ovdje nema točnoga i netočnog odgovora jer svaka opcija ima svoje prednosti i mane. Poredaj opcije od 1 do 3 onako kako bi ih ti izabrao/la, a zatim obrazloži izbor svoje PRVE opcije.**

| Opcije smještaja  | Tvoja rang lista (1 -3) |
|---|-------------------------|
| a) smještaj u hostelu mladih zajedno s nekoliko svojih sunarodnjaka |                         |
| b) smještaj u lokalnoj obitelji s polupansionom                     |                         |
| c) smještaj u malenom stanu u kojem ćeš se brinuti sam/a za sebe    |                         |

**Razlozi izbora tvoje PRVE opcije:**

## SITUACIJA 3

Mlada osoba iz inozemstva dolazi na razmjenu u tvoju školu na 6 mjeseci. Svjestan/a si činjenice da je ta osoba prilično izolirana pa razmišljaš o tome da ga/ju pozoveš na druženje s tobom i tvojim prijateljima. Problem je u tome što je tvoja grupa prijatelja prilično zatvorena i svi se jako dugo poznajete pa bi strancu moglo biti prilično teško uklopiti se.

**Napiši nekoliko rečenica o tome što misliš da bi ti učinio/la u ovoj situaciji i zašto:**

## SITUACIJA 4

Tvoja profesorica te zamolila da se u slobodno vrijeme podružiš s novim učenicom/icom na razmjeni. Istih ste godina, spola i on/ona vrlo dobro govori tvoj jezik.

**Molim te da na sljedeća pitanja odgovoriš što detaljnije i potpunije.**

- A. Koje teme za razgovor bi izabrao/la?
  
- B. Koje aktivnosti bi pripremio/la i zašto?

## SITUACIJA 5

Već 6 mjeseci sudjeluješ u programu razmjene učenika u nekoj stranoj zemlji i sada već govoriš jezik vrlo dobro za svakodnevne potrebe. Kada se radi o nekim kompliciranijim stvarima, sve ti se ipak objašnjava na tvom jeziku, tako da ni tu nemaš problema. Međutim, užasno ti je teško razumjeti tvoje razredne kolege kada govore jedni s drugima jer govore prebrzo o situacijama koje ne razumiješ. Također ti je teško razumjeti njihove šale i fore kada govore lokalnim dijalektom. Zbog toga si često zbunjen/a i ne osjećaš se baš ugodno.

**Molim te da na sljedeća pitanja odgovoriš što detaljnije i potpunije.**

- A. Bi li ti ovakve situacije jako smetale i zašto?
- B. Što bi mogao/la učiniti u ovakvim situacijama kako bi se osjećao/la ugodnije?



## DRUGI DIO: DEMOGRAFSKI PODACI

Pred tobom je drugi dio upitnika koji se sastoji od 9 pitanja povezanih s tvojim interkulturalnim iskustvima.  
Molim te da na pitanja odgovoriš pažljivo i iskreno.

DOB: \_\_\_\_\_

SPOL: M    Ž

RAZRED: \_\_\_\_\_

GODINA UČENJA ENGLLESKOG JEZIKA: \_\_\_\_\_

GODINA UČENJA NJEMAČKOG JEZIKA: \_\_\_\_\_

| 1. Koliko prijatelja imaš u inozemstvu?   | a) 0<br>b) 1-3<br>c) 4-6<br>d) 7-10<br>e) Više od 10   |           |                     |           |                     |                                  |  |   |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|---|--|-----------|---------------------|-----------|---------------------|----------------------------------|--|---|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|
| 2. Govoriš li ili učiš, osim engleskog, još neki strani jezik?  | a) da<br>b) ne   |           |                     |           |                     |                                  |  |   |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 3. Ako je odgovor na prethodno pitanje bio DA, upiši koji si jezik učio/la te označi način na koji si ga učio/la. | <table border="1"><thead><tr><th>jezik</th><th>u školi</th><th>na tečaju</th><th>ostalo (napiši što)</th></tr></thead><tbody><tr><td><i>npr.</i><br/><i>španjolski</i></td><td></td><td>x</td><td></td></tr><tr><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td></tr><tr><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td></tr></tbody></table> | jezik     | u školi             | na tečaju | ostalo (napiši što) | <i>npr.</i><br><i>španjolski</i> |  | x |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| jezik   | u školi  | na tečaju | ostalo (napiši što) |           |                     |                                  |  |   |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| <i>npr.</i><br><i>španjolski</i>  |  | x         |                     |           |                     |                                  |  |   |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|   |  |           |                     |           |                     |                                  |  |   |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|   |  |           |                     |           |                     |                                  |  |   |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 4. Koliko često dolaziš u kontakt sa ljudima iz drugih država?  | a) nikada<br>b) nekoliko puta godišnje<br>c) nekoliko puta mjesečno<br>d) nekoliko puta tjedno   |           |                     |           |                     |                                  |  |   |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 5. Koliko često čitaš knjige na stranom jeziku?   | a) nikada<br>b) nekoliko puta godišnje<br>c) nekoliko puta mjesečno<br>d) nekoliko puta tjedno   |           |                     |           |                     |                                  |  |   |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 6. Koliko si puta bio/la u inozemstvu?  | a) 0<br>b) 1-3<br>c) 4-6<br>d) 7-10<br>e) Više od 10   |           |                     |           |                     |                                  |  |   |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 7. Koliko je od tih posjeta bilo u sklopu škole?  |  |           |                     |           |                     |                                  |  |   |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 8. U kojim si zemljama bio/la?  |  |           |                     |           |                     |                                  |  |   |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 9. Koliko si vremena najdulje boravio/la u inozemstvu? (tijekom jednog putovanja)                                 | a) 1 ili 2 dana<br>b) 2 dana – 1 tjedan<br>c) 2 tjedna – 1 mjesec<br>d) 2 mjeseca – 5 mjeseci<br>e) Više od 5 mjeseci  |           |                     |           |                     |                                  |  |   |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |

### TREĆI DIO: TVOJ INTERKULTURALNI PROFIL

*Pred tobom je treći i zadnji dio upitnika koji se sastoji od 10 pitanja. Prije rješavanja ovog dijela zamisli da si u okruženju stranaca i odgovori na sljedeća pitanja zaokruživanjem broja 1, 2 ili 3. Ukoliko se tvrdnja u potpunosti odnosi na tebe – zaokruži 3 | Ukoliko se tvrdnja ne odnosi na tebe – zaokruži 1.*

|  | <i>Ne odnosi se na mene</i> | <i>Možda se odnosi na mene</i> | <i>U potpunosti se odnosi na mene</i> |
|--|-----------------------------|--------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| 1. U restoranima volim kušati jela s nepoznatim sastojcima   | 1                           | 2                              | 3                                     |
| 2. Često koristim priliku doći u kontakt s drugim ljudima kako bih naučio/la što više o njihovoj kulturi.                      | 1                           | 2                              | 3                                     |
| 3. Primijetim kada se drugi ljudi ne osjećaju ugodno u mom prisustvu.  | 1                           | 2                              | 3                                     |
| 4. Teško se prilagođavam strancima.  | 1                           | 2                              | 3                                     |
| 5. Kada se drugi ponašaju na meni nerazumljiv način, pitam ih za objašnjenje tog ponašanja.                                    | 1                           | 2                              | 3                                     |
| 6. Kada čujem da se u drugoj državi dogodila nesreća ili katastrofa, razmišljam o ljudima koji tamo žive i njihovim sudbinama. | 1                           | 2                              | 3                                     |
| 7. Kada sam pridošlica u grupi stranaca, promatram ponašanja drugih.   | 1                           | 2                              | 3                                     |
| 8. Kada se moj sugovornik koristi gestama i izrazima koji su mi nepoznati, ignoriram ih.                                       | 1                           | 2                              | 3                                     |
| 9. Kada razgovaram s drugim ljudima promatram njihov govor tijela.   | 1                           | 2                              | 3                                     |
| 10. Prilikom razgovora sa strancima trudim se koristiti što jasnije i jednostavnije riječi.                                    | 1                           | 2                              | 3                                     |

**KRAJ UPITNIKA!**

### Appendix 3 – INCA Framework (assessor version)

| Level Competence             | 1 'Basic'   | 2 'Intermediate'  | 3 'Full'   |
|------------------------------|---|---|--|
| General profile              | The candidate at this level is on the ladder of progression. They will be disposed to deal positively with the situation. Their responses to it will be piecemeal and improvised rather than principled, even though mostly successful in avoiding short-term difficulties. These will be based on fragmentary information. | The candidate at this level has begun to induce simple principles to apply to the situation, rather than improvise reactively in response to isolated features of it. There will be evidence of a basic strategy and some coherent knowledge for dealing with situations. | The candidate at this level will combine a strategic and principled approach to a situation to take the role of a mediator seeking to bring about the most favourable outcome.<br><br>Knowledge of their own culture and that of others, including work parameters, will be both coherent and sophisticated. |
| i) Tolerance of ambiguity    | Deals with ambiguity on a one-off basis, responding to items as they arise. May be overwhelmed by ambiguous situations which imply high involvement.  | Has begun to acquire a repertoire of approaches to cope with ambiguities in low involvement situations. Begins to accept ambiguity as a challenge.  | Is constantly aware of the possibility of ambiguity. When it occurs, he/she tolerates and manages it.  |
| ii) Behavioural flexibility  | Adopts a reactive/defensive approach to situations. Learns from isolated experiences in a rather unsystematic way.  | Previous experience of required behaviour begins to influence behaviour in everyday parallel situations. Sometimes takes the initiative in adopting/conforming to other cultures' behaviour patterns.   | Is ready and able to adopt appropriate behaviour in job-specific situations from a broad and well-understood repertoire  |
| iii) Communicative awareness | Attempts to relate problems of intercultural interaction to different communicative conventions, but lacks the necessary knowledge for identifying differences; tends to hold on to his own conventions and expects adaptation from others; is aware of difficulties in interaction with                                    | Begins to relate problems of intercultural interaction to conflicting communicative conventions and attempts to clarify his own or to adapt to the conventions of others.<br><br>Uses a limited repertoire of strategies (metacommunication, clarification,               | Is able to relate problems of intercultural interaction to conflicting communicative conventions and is aware of their effects on the communication process; is able to identify and ready to adapt to different communicative conventions, or to negotiate new discourse rules in                           |

|                          |   |   |  |
|--------------------------|---|---|--|
|                          | non-native-speakers, but has not yet evolved principles to guide the choice of (metacommunication, clarification or simplification) strategies.   | simplification) to solve and prevent problems when interacting with a non-native-speaker.   | order to prevent or clarify misunderstandings; uses a variety of strategies (metacommunication, clarification, simplification) to prevent, to solve, and to mediate problems when interacting with a non-native-speaker.                                     |
| iv) Knowledge discovery  | Draws on random general knowledge and minimal factual research about other cultures. Learns by discovery and is willing to modify perceptions but not yet systematic.   | Has recourse to some information sources in anticipation of everyday encounters with the other cultures, and modifies and builds on information so acquired, in the light of actual experience. Is motivated by curiosity to develop his knowledge of his own culture as perceived by others. | Has a deep knowledge of other cultures. Develops his knowledge through systematic research-like activities and direct questioning and can, where this is sought, offer advice and support to others in work situations.                                      |
| v) Respect for otherness | Is not always aware of the difference and, when it is recognised, may not be able to defer evaluative judgement as good or bad. Where it is fully appreciated, adopts a tolerant stance and tries to adapt to low-involving demands of the foreign culture. | Accepts the other's values, norms and behaviours in everyday situations as neither good nor bad provided that basic assumptions of his own culture have not been violated. Is motivated to put others at ease and avoid giving offence.   | Out of respect for diversity in value systems, applies critical knowledge of such systems to ensure equal treatment of people in the workplace. Is able to cope tactfully with the ethical problems raised by personally unacceptable features of otherness. |
| vi) Empathy              | Tends to see the cultural foreigner's differences as curious, and remains confused about the seemingly strange behaviours and their antecedents.<br><br>Nonetheless tries to 'make allowances'.   | Has the beginnings of a mental checklist of how others may perceive, feel and respond differently to, a range of routine circumstances. Tends increasingly to see things intuitively from the other's point of view.  | Accepts the other as a coherent individual. Enlists role-taking and decentring skills and awareness of different perspectives in optimising job-related communication/ interaction with the cultural foreigner.  |

**Appendix 4 – Table sample for ICC results**

SCHOOL \_\_\_\_\_

CLASS \_\_\_\_\_

| <b>Sample</b> | <b>Ambiguity Tolerance</b> | <b>Respect for Otherness</b> | <b>Behavioral Flexibility</b> | <b>Communicative Awareness</b> | <b>Empathy</b> | <b>Knowledge Discovery</b> |
|---------------|----------------------------|------------------------------|-------------------------------|--------------------------------|----------------|----------------------------|
|               |                            |                              |                               |                                |                |                            |
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**Appendix 5 - Adapted version of Test of Pragmatic Comprehension (Chen-Rau, Çetinavci- Öztürk, Alagözlü)**

**ISTRAŽIVANJE O PRAGMATIČKOM RAZUMIJEVANJU ENGLESKOG JEZIKA**

**IDENTIFIKACIJSKI KOD:**

*(visina, mjesec rođenja, broj cipele, npr. 174-4-38)*

Dragi učeniče/draga učenice,

hvala ti što sudjeluješ u istraživanju pragmatičkog razumijevanja engleskog jezika kod učenika srednjih škola koje se provodi za potrebe kolegija „Istraživanje u nastavi engleskog jezika“ na Filozofskom fakultetu u Osijeku.

Test se sastoji od 24 pitanja višestrukog izbora. Imaj na umu da je samo jedan od ponuđenih odgovora točan. Molim te da dobro pročitaš svako pitanje i zaokružiš ono što ti misliš da je najispravnije.

Test je u potpunosti anoniman i ne ocjenjuje se. Za rješavanje testa na raspolaganju imaš 30 minuta. U slučaju bilo kakvih nejasnoća, slobodno se obrati osobi koja provodi test.

**TEST OF PRAGMATIC COMPREHENSION**

*Welcome to the pragmatic comprehension test! The test consists of three parts and 20 tasks. Please read each task carefully and circle the correct answer. There is only ONE correct answer in each task. You have 25 minutes to complete the test.*

*Good luck!*

**PART ONE**

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*Read the context of the situation and decide how the conversation should go by circling the correct answer (a, b, c or d).*

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1. Oscar and his mum see an acquaintance, Bill, from a neighbouring apartment as he is leaving his apartment building for work. If Oscar's mum does not have time to stop and chat, what would be her most likely choice of greetings as she passes the neighbour?

- a) Hey, Bill! How are you doing? What's going on in your life? We should catch up!
- b) Hey, Bill! How are you this fine morning? Did you sleep well?

- c) Mornin', Bill, how's it goin'?
- d) Good morning, Bill! What's on the agenda for the day?
2. *Maya has returned home 3 hours later than she was allowed...again. Angered and concerned, her parents give her a good talking to by saying, "I told you to be home! When I tell you something I expect you to follow it! How dare you disobey me!" Her response is most likely to be:*
- a) I'm sorry, You're right. It won't happen again. I promise.
- b) I know, I know. But, like, it wasn't my fault! And I tried to leave but like, Stacy was talking to Blake and I was like, "Yo! Stacy, we gotta go dude!" and she was like, "Geez just chill ok? Just like 5 secs." And then...
- c) I formally want to extend my apology to you as I realize the ill I have committed against you and can only hope for your forgiveness in return.
3. *Mary's hairdryer is not working, and she has already washed hair. She wants to borrow her neighbour's hairdryer because she needs to go to school in a half an hour. She and her neighbour, Anna, are acquaintances but not close friends. She calls Anna on the phone and asks,*
- a) Would it be OK if I borrowed your hairdryer? Mine is broken down and I have already washed my hair...
- b) Can you lend me your hairdryer? Mine is broken down and...
- c) I'd really like to dry my hair. My hairdryer is broken down and...
- d) I'd like to borrow your hairdryer. Mine is broken down and...
4. *Teacher asks one of her students, Andrew, to collect the workbooks from other students. Teacher leaves the classroom to go take care of the materials she forgot in her office and returns after 10 minutes. When she returns he sees that Andrew did not do what she asked him to do. She approaches Andrew and says...*
- a) Why haven't you collect the workbooks yet? I thought you would be done by now.
- b) I'll finish up that task for you.
- c) Why are you so slow at doing your tasks?
- d) Were you planning on finishing this task next week?
5. *It is your mother's birthday celebration tonight but he tells you that you must get this project done before you head for home. You respond:*
- a) Oh, I am sorry. If I had only known earlier about this deadline. You see, my mother is celebrating her birthday tonight and we have a lot of guests invited and I am in charge of food. Is there another way we can handle this so that I can get the project done for you?
- b) Oh man, you can't be serious! I only work until 5 PM and you know that.
- c) Oh, I would really like to help. You know I take my work very seriously and I want to be responsible for getting everything done. I have this conflict though; do you remember meeting my mom? (continues to explain about the party, but does not give a clear "yes or no" response)
- d) You know I have a conflict with a personal commitment I have tonight. What possibility would there be that I come in tomorrow or put in extra time on Monday?

## PART TWO

Read the dialogues carefully and answer the question below each dialogue by circling the correct answer (a, b, c or d)

---

### HONESTY

**Kate:** How are things going with you and your roommate?

**Bill:** Not very well. We're supposed to share the groceries, but I end up feeding him three meals a day. My grocery bill is huge, you know. I really can't afford it any longer.

**Kate:** I know how you feel. I used to have a roommate like that. He never offered to reimburse me for anything.

**Bill:** I'm really fed up with his freeloading, but I just don't know how to tell him that he should come up with half the grocery bill, because sometimes he treats me to a meal in a restaurant.

**Kate:** Well, honesty is the best policy. Maybe you just want to have a heart-to-heart, friend-to-friend talk with him. If he refuses to mend his ways, then ask him to move out. You can't let him wear out his welcome.

6. **Bill says "I really can't afford it any longer." He is ...**

- a) complaining
- b) explaining
- c) making a statement
- d) making a promise

7. **Kate says "Maybe you just want to have a heart-to-heart, friend-to-friend talk with him. If he refuses to mend his ways, then ask him to move out". She is...**

- a) convincing
- b) advising
- c) warning
- d) requesting

### HEALTH

**John:** I think I'm running a temperature. My head is spinning, my mouth feels like cotton, and I have a scratchy throat.

**Jane:** Let me see. Hmm, you'd better stay at home today. And don't work on the computer! Staying up late with that thing has obviously played havoc with your health.

**John:** I can't help it. I guess I'm addicted to the Internet. **Jane:** If you want to keep yourself in good shape, you'd better quit surfing the Net deep into the night. I don't want you kicking the bucket!

8. **Jane says "Staying up late with that thing has obviously played havoc with your health." This is...**

- a) warning
- b) convincing
- c) advising
- d) requesting

### SHOPPING

**Gregory:** Hi, can I help you?



**Nicole:** No, thanks. I'm just looking.

**Gregory:** All right. If you need any help, just let me know. My name is Greg.

**Nicole:** Sure. I'll let you know if I need anything. (A king-size mattress attracts Karen.) Hm, this mattress is very firm. Jack will probably like it.

**Gregory:** Did you find something you like? **Nicole:** Yes, this mattress is very good. It's pretty firm. The mattress I'm now sleeping on is saggy.

**Gregory:** You're right. This is a very good brand. It doesn't sag easily. And we offer a lifetime warranty, so you don't have to worry about its quality.

**Nicole:** Does it come with a frame?

**Gregory:** Unfortunately, it doesn't. However, we can give you a ten percent discount on the frame. We also offer a very good financing plan. There's no payment, no interest until next June.

**Nicole:** That's an attractive plan. I'll think about it.

**Gregory:** Well, you've got to hurry. This mattress sells pretty well. This promotion ends tomorrow.

9. **Gregory says "Well, you've got to hurry. This mattress sells pretty well. This promotion ends tomorrow". He is...**

- a) convincing
- b) requesting
- c) warning
- d) offering

## **BREAKING UP**

**Tim:** Hi, Mike. Haven't seen you for a while? How is Cathy?

**Michael:** We're not seeing each other anymore.

**Tim:** What happened? Did you break up?

**Michael:** Yeah. I got sick and tired of her nagging all the time.

**Tim:** Oh, I'm sorry. Maybe, you were just emotional at that moment. Do you think you guys can get back together?

**Michael:** I don't know. There's plenty of fish out there in the sea.

**Tim:** Oh, you're such a dog!

10. **Tim says "you're such a dog! He is..."**

- a) complaining
- b) kidding
- c) insulting
- d) warning

## **EXTRA 1**

A. "I don't know. I just feel like I've got to get away. This place is too small for me. I feel like there's so much of the world I haven't seen."

B. "But you've been travelling all your life. Aren't you tired of it yet?"

A. "No, not at all. I've always had itchy feet. And once you give in to the urge, the desire to move just gets worse and worse. I can't stay in one place for more than two years before I'm off again."

B. "Aren't you ever going to settle?"

- A. "Who knows. Perhaps if I find a place I really like. But you know, the grass is always greener on the other side. I'll think one place is wonderful and want to stay there, but before long I'm thinking about somewhere else and the place I'm in just seems dull. So I move."

11. At the end of the dialogue, "I've always had itchy feet". S/he is...

- a) stating she is that sort of person
- b) criticizing
- c) complaining
- d) requesting

### EXTRA 2

- A. "What happened to you last night? We waited but you didn't show up."  
B. "The police took my family's dog because I didn't have a license for it. I had to spend the whole night looking for a new dog that looked to the same as the old one."  
A. "Really? That's crazy."  
B. "Look, could you keep this on the down-low? My parents loved the old dog. I don't want them to hear I bought a new one."

12. At the end of the dialogue, one speaker says "could you keep this on the down-low? He is...

- a) suggesting
- b) offering
- c) complaining
- d) requesting

### EXTRA 3

- A. "This whole situation is completely messed up; I don't know how to deal with it at all."  
B. "Don't worry. Worrying only makes things worse."  
A. "But what am I going to do?"  
B. "Deal with it."  
A. "You're a lot of help. What kind of advice is "deal with it?"

13. At the end of the dialogue, one of the speakers says "You're a lot of help." She is...

- a) kidding
- b) offering
- c) complaining
- d) disagreeing

### PART THREE

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Welcome to the part three and the last part of the test! In this part, first read the context of the situation carefully. Then read short dialogues and, finally, answer the question below by circling the correct answer (a, b, c or d).

---

Jose and Tanya are professors at a college. They are talking about a student, Derek.

**Jose:** "How did you like Derek's essay?"

**Tanya:** "Well ... I thought it was well-typed."

14. What does Tanya probably mean?

- a) She did not like Derek's essay.
- b) She does not really remember Derek's essay.
- c) She thought the topic Derek had chosen was interesting.

- d) She liked Derek's essay quite a lot.

Jack sees his classmate Jane in the faculty hallway.

**Jack:** "Oh, Jane. I'm so glad I ran into you. I need your help!"

**Jane:** "What's up?"

**Jack:** "I have a paper due tomorrow, but I'm working tonight in the cafe. Can you type my paper?"

**Jane:** "Shoot! I have to study for my finals tonight."

**15. What does Jane probably mean?**

- a) She will type the paper.
- b) She will think about it.
- c) She cannot type the paper for tomorrow.
- d) She can type it when she is done with everything.

Mike is trying to find an apartment in New York City. He just looked at a place and is telling his friend Jane about it.

**Jane:** "So, is the rent high?"

**Mike:** "Is the Pope Catholic?"

**16. What does Mike probably mean?**

- a) He does not want to talk about the rent.
- b) The rent is high.
- c) He did not understand Jane's question.
- d) The rent is not very high.

**Toby and Ally are trying a new buffet restaurant in town. Toby is eating something, but Ally cannot decide what to have next.**

**Ally:** "How do you like what you're eating?"

**Toby:** "Well, let's just say it's ... colorful."

**17. What does Toby probably mean?**

- a) He thinks it is important for food to look good.
- b) He likes the food.
- c) He wants Ally to try something colorful.
- d) He does not like the food much.

**Peter promises his friend Mary to help her move to a new apartment. That day, he moves the clock on the wall while Mary moves the heavy boxes.**

**Mary:** "Thanks, you've been terribly helpful."

**18. What does Mary probably mean?**

- a) Peter helped her a lot.
- b) Moving the clock was really important as it needed special care.
- c) Peter is weak.
- d) Peter was not helpful at all.

**Hillary sees that her boyfriend Bruce has forgotten to leave a tip while leaving the restaurant they had dinner in.**

**Hillary:** 'You know, leaving a tip is important.'

**19. What does Hillary probably mean?**

- a) She advises him to leave a tip.
- b) She indirectly asks Bruce if they should leave a tip or not.
- c) It is OK now but Bruce should not forget the tip next time.
- d) She wants to leave quickly without tipping.

Ken bought a new car and he showed it to his co-worker, Tina. She drove it around for a couple of times and they are talking at lunchtime the next day.

**Ken:** *'So what do you think of this new car?'*

**Tina:** *'Well, the color's fine.'*

**20. What does Tina probably mean?**

- a) What she liked most about the car is its color.
- b) She thinks the color of a car is very important.
- c) She does not know much about cars.
- d) She did not like the car very much.

**Hilda is looking for a new job. She is having lunch with her friend John.**

**John:** *"So how's the job search coming along?"*

**Hilda:** *"Um, this curry's really good, don't you think?"*

**21. What does Hilda probably mean?**

- a) She did not understand John's question.
- b) She is not looking for a job anymore.
- c) She wants to talk about nothing but food.
- d) Her job search is not going very well.

**Michael is planning not to come to today's class. His housemate Angela knows one absence loses five points in the end.**

**Angela:** *'Well, you know, one absence loses five points from the final marks.'*

**22. What does Angela probably mean?**

- a) Michael has already lost 5 points.
- b) She advises Michael to come to the class.
- c) She will remind the teacher to take off five points.
- d) She recommends that he should do as he wishes.

**Brenda and Sally, friends, have lunch every Tuesday. As they meet on this particular day, Brenda stops and twirls like a fashion model, smiling.**

**Brenda:** *'I just got a new dress. How do you like it?'*

**Sally:** *'Well . . . it's certainly a popular style'*

**23. What does Sally probably mean?**

- a) Brenda should have bought it earlier.
- b) She really likes it.
- c) Every dress is the same for her.
- d) She does not like it much.

**Rob is telling his friend Sheila about a card game he played last night. He lost money and decides not to play with those guys again.**

*Sheila: "They were good, huh?"*

*Rob: "Good? Let's say awfully lucky".*

*Sheila: "Lucky? What's the matter? Don't you trust them?"*

*Rob: "Is the sky green?"*

**24. What does Rob probably mean?**

- a) He thinks they are OK.
- b) He does not want to talk about the card game anymore.
- c) He suddenly saw something in the sky.
- d) He does not trust them at all.

**END OF TEST!**

