

Mladi za napredek Maribora 2015

32. srečanje

Učenje angleščine v Evropi

Družboslovno področje - tuji jezik

Raziskovalna naloga

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Februar 2015, Maribor

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Summary

In this research paper I presented the English language as the first foreign language and its use. In the theoretical part of the research paper I presented levels of the English knowledge and exams to prove it and also why learning the first foreign language in Slovenia and compared it with other European countries. And I also presented the importance of the knowledge of the foreign language.

In the practical part of the research paper I presented a survey to come to information when and how children in some European countries first encounter the English language. I also tried to find out the use of the foreign language in everyday life.

I found out most people have heard for the first time about English language before they went to school. Most often in media, that means on TV, radio or computer. Younger people, aged between 12 and 20 use that foreign language often and they talk and use it every day, in school and on computer, to talk with children from other countries.

I also stated 2 hypothesis which I answered with a survey I posted online to get the answers.

Hypothesis:

- Most people come across English in the media.
- Most people use English in everyday life

Povzetek

V raziskovalni nalogi sem predstavil angleški jezik kot prvi tuji jezik in njegovo uporabo.

V teoretičnem delu raziskovalne naloge sem predstavil različne stopnje znanja angleškega tujega jezika, izpite za potrditev doseženega znanja in tudi zakaj se učiti prvega tujega jezika v Sloveniji in tudi v nekaterih evropskih državah. Prav tako sem predstavili pomembnost znanja tujega jezika.

V praktičnem delu raziskovalne naloge smo izvedli anketo, da bi prišli do podatka kdaj in kako se slovenski otroci prvič srečajo z angleškim jezikom. Prav tako sem poskušal priti do informacije o pogostosti vsakodnevne rabe tujega jezika.

Izvedel sem, da je večina vprašanih prvič slišala za tuji jezik pred vstopom v šolo. Najbolj pogosto je bilo njihovo prvo srečanje s tujim jezikom preko medijev, torej televizija, radio ali računalnik. Mladi ljudje, starosti med 12 in 20 letom, uporabljajo tuji jezik pogosto, vsak dan, v šoli, z računalnikom, za komunikacijo z otroci iz drugih držav.

Zastavil sem si tudi 2 hipotezi, ki sem ju potrdil z anketo, ki sem jo objavil na spletu in na katero so drugi ljudje odgovarjali nanjo.

Hipotezi:

- Most people come across English in the media
- Most people use English in everyday life

ZAHVALA

Zahvalil bi se mentorici in staršem za pomoč pri raziskovalni nalogi ter vsem anketirancem.

1. INTRODUCTION

The English language has a deceptive air of simplicity; so have some little frocks; but they are both not the kind of thing you can run up in half an hour with a machine.

–Dorothy L. Sayers

With this quote Dorothy compared learning English with frocks (frocks are dresses). And so she was trying to say that English is simple but it takes time and work to learn it because it is an extremely expanding language with many twists and complications. So she says that it takes time to learn it all.

1.1 Why learn English?

English is a language which has a great impact and influence; it is taught all over the world. English as a foreign language indicates the teaching of English in a non-English-speaking region.

One of the main reasons to learn English is that we can communicate with people across the world, for example, you go on vacation to a non-English speaking country and you find some interesting people who you might want to be friends with and, if you don't speak the same language it is great if you know the English language because most people know 2 languages, their first language and English. If you happen to go on a business trip and you need to communicate with other people there, what is better to do it then English?

Other reasons:

-More and more companies invest in language learning of their employees or they are looking for people with the knowledge of English. This knowledge opens up much more paths for work.

-The knowledge of a foreign language gives you confidence even when you are not speaking it.

-It also provides you with the possibility of getting to know the people of other cultures and see their perspective on the world and life. (www.gzs.si/slo/panoge)

With this paper work I wanted to find out more about learning English in other countries in Europe. The goal of my work is to find out how and when people first came across the English language and how often they use it. I made a survey and hoped to get the expected answers and to find out something new about English used as a foreign language in some other European countries.

Many successful people speak various languages. Not only does it help in their job, it also opens the door to understanding different cultures and enjoying other countries much deeper. And if that was not enough yet, studies have been showing that speaking several languages is one of the best exercises your brain can get. Even up to postponing the onset of Alzheimer's by 4 to 5 years.

2. LEVELS OF THE ENGLISH KNOWLEDGE

We can speak and understand English in a very limited way.

2.1 English A1-The survival level

This is the bare minimum where you did not really learn anything. You just got to know the basics:

- you know how to handle everyday situations, like talking and introducing yourself and others
- make simple sentences and reply to simple questions
- how to order food, describe places and people and their habits
- describe your previous events and know how to use different tenses and basic irregular verbs
- talk on the phone

This level is achieved in 180 school hours.

2.2 English A2 - Intermediate level

This is a small upgrade of the previous level and it consists of:

- know how to handle in different life situations
- describe your looks and emotions
- tell your life story and your wishes
- write private letters and notifications, write & understand simple written text and understand a wider range of grammar and vocabulary
- use all irregular verbs
- you can communicate in a range of everyday social and travel contexts

This level is achieved in 90 school hours.

2.3 English B1 –The barrier of communication

This level is the introduction to advance communication:

- communicating in most situations, where the person you are talking to also uses English fluently

-talk fluently about everyday things

-say your opinion and write short text messages and notifications, understand simple written texts

-join a conversation about everyday things

-make notes & understand most of the general meaning of lectures, meetings, TV programmes and extract basic information from a written document.

It takes 180 school hours to achieve this level.

2.4 English B2 – Higher education

-You are able to talk with minimum problems and you can use English effectively.

-You are able to join a conversation about many topics and are able to state your own statement.

- You are able to write & understand most texts, including a simple essay; understand most of the TV programmes, presentations or lectures, but not technical or theoretical information.

After completing this level you are able to take a FCE test.

It takes 180 school hours to achieve this.

2.5 English C1 – Teacher level

-You are able to communicate perfectly without any mistakes

- You can use English in a range of culturally appropriate ways

-You use the English language in a professional way and you are able to adjust your tone to your emotions.

- You can take part in lengthy conversations & discussions; write and understand most texts, including formal, academic and professional documents; easily understand the language on TV, plays, films, lectures and presentations.

After you complete this level you are able to take a CAE test

It takes 180 school hours to achieve this.

2.6 English C2 – You are the master

- You know how to speak fluently and accurately express finer shades of meaning
 - If you run into a problem, you are able to cancel it so that it is not visible anymore.
 - You increase your understanding of the nuances of the language and engage in independent reading to develop your vocabulary further.
- You are able to speak like it is your first language.

EXPLANATION:

A1, A2, B1, B2, C1 and C2 are the levels of knowledge of a foreign language according to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR). Six language levels (A1 to C2) represent the formal criterion of knowledge of foreign languages in the European Union.

3. EXAMS

3.1 Exam FCE and CAE

You can apply the exam in any language school or at The British Council. The cost of the exams is somewhere between 190 and 200 €.

The exam can be taken three times a year (in March, July and December). You need to apply for the exam two months before it is taken. It consists of 5 parts;

- reading
- writing
- listening
- talking
- English in use

Each part is worth 40 points and together you can get 200 points. It is ranked from A, B and C. A is the best grade and to accomplish the exam you need to collect 60 points.

The difference between FCE and CAE is the level it is required to take the exam and CAE is a lot harder to complete. To prepare for CAE it takes about 200 to 240 more hours of studying to prepare for it than FCE.

3.2 IELTS

IELTS (International English Language Testing System) is the most known exam for the English language. This year more than 2 million people took the exam.

With the completion of this exam, many options are open for you; The IELTS is approved as a job application by more than 9000 companies across the world. And it also helps by getting into lots of schools of higher education. The exam is four hours long and it tests listening, reading, writing and talking. The test is made in its most simple form possible where the student talks with the high educated person that has a level of education C2.

4. ENGLISH IN EUROPE

Two – thirds of Europeans now can speak English, a survey shows. More than 300 million use English as their foreign language and half of these regard themselves as fluent. Fewer than one in eight European adults can make themselves understood in it. The survey by Eurostat found that English is the first foreign language studied in primary schools in every country outside Britain, except Luxembourg, in secondary schools English is the first choice.

The percentage of all teenagers who speak English as a learned language, aged between 15–30, is quite different in some European countries.

In Austria, 52.3% of all teenagers speak English as a learned language, in Slovenia the percentage is lower; 46.7%. In Italy, only 18% of all teenagers speak English, in Hungary also only a small percentage of teenagers speak English; 23.8%. (povzeto na <http://languageknowledge.eu/>)

Only for Croatia I did not find the results.

English teaching in secondary education is now almost universal, reaching close to 100% in almost every country, also Slovenia, Italy, Austria and Croatia. Hungary, with 78.5% and some others, are the only notable exceptions. But problems occur; quite a lot of teenagers after the school ends do not use the foreign language and they forget it.

»Children are starting to learn foreign languages at an increasingly early age in Europe, with most pupils beginning when they are 6-9 years old, according to a report published by the European Commission. A majority of countries or regions have lowered the starting age for compulsory language learning in the past 15 years and some even offer it in pre-school. The *Key Data on Teaching Languages at School in Europe 2012* report confirms that English is by far the most taught foreign language in nearly all European countries« (Children in Europe start learning foreign languages at an increasingly early age, članek)

"In most Slovenian schools, kids learn English as the first foreign language that they start to learn. Some kids start learning English even before school." (Dagarin Fojkar, 2009, str.156)

4.1 Survey

1. Which country do you live in?

a) Austria b) Italy c) Hungary d) Croatia e) Slovenia

2. What age are you?

a) 12-15

b) 16-20

3. Where did you first come across the English language?

a) In school

b) In Kindergarten

c) Media

d) Other

4. Do you think learning English will help you in the future?

a) Yes

b) No

5. Do you use English anywhere else than school?

a) Yes

b) No

6. Have you ever learned English outside school?

a) Yes

b) No

4.2 The survey analyses

There were lots of people who responded from every country but to get better results I limited the surveys to 100 for each country to get clearer results.

After that I made a table to see all the results for every country:

Tabela 1: Slovenia

Question->	2	3	4	5	6
a	56	15	63	74	36
b	44	46	37	26	64
c		30			
d		9			

Tabela 2: Italy

Question->	2	3	4	5	6
a	37	28	54	33	43
b	63	24	46	67	57
c		45			
d		3			

Tabela 3: Austria

Question->	2	3	4	5	6
a	47	43	34	76	42
b	53	9	66	24	58
c		46			
d		2			

Tabela 4: Croatia

Question->	2	3	4	5	6
a	84	34	62	34	12
b	16	23	38	66	88
c		35			
d		10			

Tabela 5: Hungary

Question->	2	3	4	5	6
a	34	43	42	57	42
b	66	23	58	43	58
c		30			
d		4			

5. HYPOTHESIS

Most people come across English in the media.

The idea for this hypothesis is that I want to confirm if most people came across English for the first time in the media. So I stated a question in the survey:

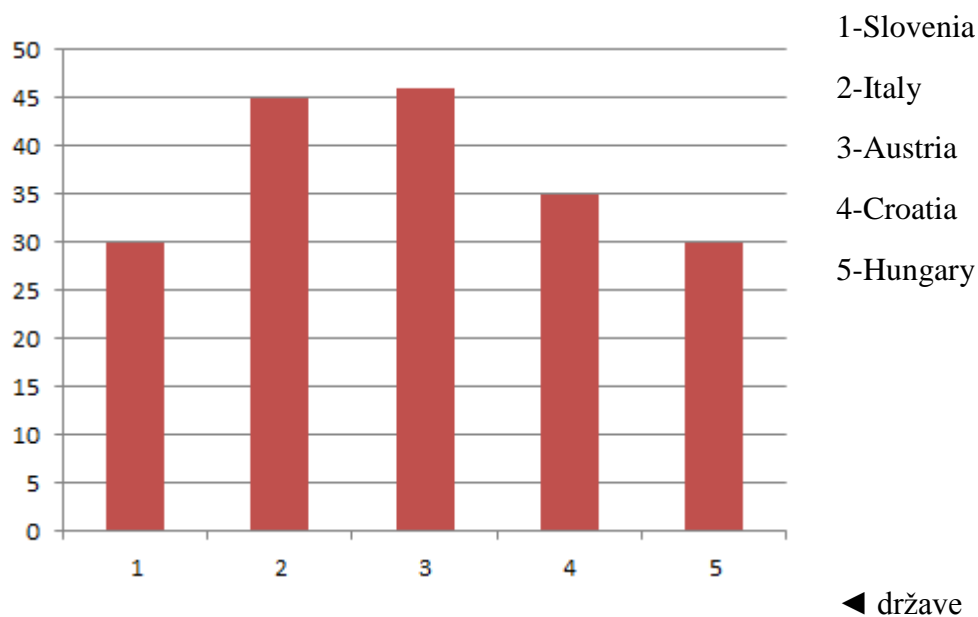
3. Where did you first come across the English language?

- a) In school
- b) In Kindergarten
- c) Media
- d) Other

The results in every country were quite different, so I made a graph for it.

Graf 1

▼ Št. odgovorov c



With this hypothesis I found out that the majority of people came across English in the media and the countries with the most amounts of answers were Italy and Austria. The answers were

quite accurate to my expectations. In this generation, aged between 12 and 20, a lot of teenagers are using computers and mobile phones and they need the knowledge of the English language while using it. If I used another age group of survey people, the results would be quite different.

Most people use English in everyday life

The fact that English is a global language and is known in almost every country as a second language I would expect that most people use it every day. The results were quite what I expected Croatia and Italy surprised me with the low amount of uses. I answered this hypothesis with a question in my survey:

5. Do you use English anywhere else then school?

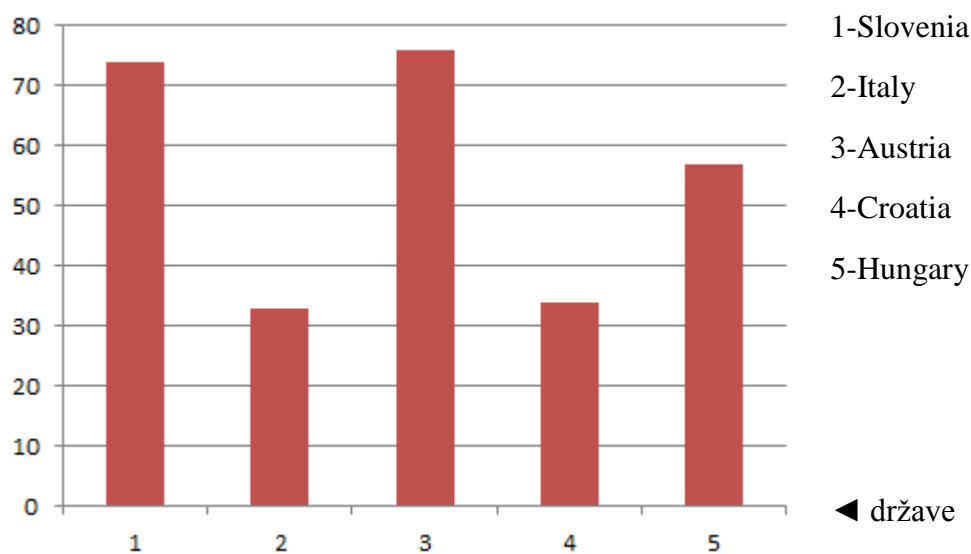
a) Yes

b) No

and presented the results in this graph:

Graf 2

▼ št. odgovorov yes



It seems that in Slovenia and Austria the amount of people that answered “yes” was very high, so, I suppose this generation uses it to talk to people from other countries or just use it on the computer or mobile phones.

For Italy I am not even surprised, because I visited it last year and did not notice a lot of English users other than the people working in parks or camps that we visited. Some adults do not even understand it. And the case with Croatia is similar to Italy.

6. CONCLUSIONS

The knowledge of a foreign language means an additional value in education, job employment and work done across the world. Learning a foreign language motivates their intellectual growth.

Judging from the answers of the survey where most people answered that they first came across the English language through media that simply means that there are programs on TV in English that kids like to watch and are easily accessible.

The answers of the survey show that 55% people, who responded to the survey, use English every day. But in specific countries the results are different. In Slovenia and Austria the results are similar; more than 70 % of surveyed people use English language in everyday life. But in Italy and Croatia, only 30% of surveyed people use English every day. In Hungary, half of surveyed people use English every day.

Now I know that the learning process of the English language is very important in Europe. But their thought of the meaning differs from each other, what was shown in the survey.

7. DRUŽBENA ODGOVORNOST

Izjavljam, da sem v projektu Mladi za napredek Maribora, pri nastajanju raziskovalne naloge upošteval in deloval v skladu z družbeno odgovornim ravnanjem in upošteval načela družbene odgovornosti.

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