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## Minority languages and the language policy in the rural area of Baranya (Croatia) - A case study

The paper explores the position of minority languages in Croatian primary schools in multilingual communities on the example of the village of Darda, situated in the Hungarian-Croatian border area. The research is based on a questionnaire developed by Professor Sture Ureland from the University Mannheim, Germany, within a broader research project on minority languages in Europe. The questionnaire, consisting of 43 questions, was conducted on the sample of 53 pupils taking part in the minority language education programme of the primary school of Darda, a multilingual community 10 km away from Osijek. The sample includes primary school children belonging mostly to three national minorities: the Serbian, the Hungarian and the Romany. In the first part of the paper the author describes the language policy of the Republic of Croatia with specific reference to minority languages. The main part is dedicated to the analysis of the results of the questionnaire concerning the usage of minority languages at school and in everyday communication by the respondents, as well as their attitudes towards their mother tongue on one hand and Croatian as the official language on the other. In the conclusion the author compares the results and, by using the example of multilingual community of the village of Darda, offers an overview of the position of minority languages in the Hungarian-Croatian border area. The results will also indicate how the minority language policy is applied in Croatian primary schools and how it reflected on the ethnolinguistic vitality of that specific multilingual community.

**Key words:** multilingualism; minority languages; Baranya Region; Hungarian; Romany; Serbian; Croatian.



## 1. Introduction

The aim of this paper is to present the current position of minority languages in the Croatian society on the example of a multilingual community of the village of Darda situated in the Baranya region to the north of Osijek, near the Hungarian and the Serbian border. The first part of the paper offers basic information about national minorities and minority languages spoken in Croatia and describes the language policy of the Republic of Croatia with special reference to minority languages. The research, which makes the central part of this paper, is based on a questionnaire exploring the intensity of usage of minority languages by primary school children in Darda in different domains of life: within their families, at school, at church, with their neighbours and friends, etc. In the conclusion the results will be analyzed and compared, especially the differences in answers between children of different nationalities concerning their attitudes about the status of a specific minority language and its future. In that way the research should determine ethnolinguistic vitality (ELV) of a small multilingual community of the village Darda as an example or a model of multilingual communities in Croatia with similar status, demographic structure and institutional support as three main factors of ethnolinguistic vitality in a given ethnolinguistic unit (Turner and Giles 1981: 229). According to Martin Ehala, ethnolinguistic vitality (ELV) is understood as “a function of discursive factors such as values, beliefs and attitudes in a particular linguistic community, which are partly influenced by objective vitality factors such as legal status, economic strength and the education system” (Ehala 2009: 124). In other words, objective ELV represents the actual vitality of specific ethnic group, whereas subjective ELV relates to a subjective perception of the objective ELV by the members of the group. Because of its specific nature, objective vitality can be presented by systematic descriptions of demographic or social factors determining a specific ethnolinguistic group, and subjective vitality is measured by questionnaires. Richard Bourhis developed the method for construction of a subjective vitality questionnaire (SVQ), and applied it successfully in several explorations of linguistic vitality, especially of ethnic groups in Canada (Bourhis, Giles and Rosenthal 1981; Bourhis and Sachdev 1984; Bourhis 2008). Dörnyei and Csisér (2005) developed instruments for the assessment of the objective and subjective vitality and came to precise and scientifically reliable data on L2 learning in Hungary based upon the research of attitudes of more than 8,000 respondents. In this paper, because of the small respondents’ body, objective vitality will be presented by description of a demographic structure of the Darda community, a legal status of minority languages and their position in the education system. Subjec-



tive vitality will be derived from the results of the questionnaire, especially the part dealing with attitudes of children as representatives of their ethnic groups. As official language policy represents a specific element of the objective ELV, it is important to present its application in the primary school of Darda and its impact on the ELV of ethnic groups inhabiting this multilingual speech community.

## 2. Minority languages in Croatia

### 2.1. *Language policy and minority languages*

There are 22 minorities in Croatia, sixteen of which are specifically listed in the Constitution of the Republic of Croatia. According to the population census of 2001, the Serbian minority makes 4.5 percent of all inhabitants of the Republic of Croatia. Other minorities represented by less than 1 percent are: Slovenes, Slovaks, Hungarians, Italians, Czechs, Jews, Germans, Austrians, Bosniaks, Albanians, Russians, Montenegrins, Macedonians, Bulgarians, Poles Romanies, Ukrainians, Ruthenians, Romanians, Turks and Vlachs (Constitution of the Republic of Croatia, purified version, 2010).

The rights of national minorities living in the Republic of Croatia are regulated by the Constitutional Law on the Protection of Human Rights and the Rights of Ethnic and National Communities and Minorities from 2000 and 2001,<sup>1</sup> as well as the Constitutional Law on National Minorities from 2002.<sup>2</sup> A special law regulating the rights concerning education in minority languages was passed in 2000: The Law on Education in Languages and Letters of National Minorities.<sup>3</sup> The law differs between two groups of minority languages: territorial languages, spoken by minorities living in specific local areas of the Republic of Croatia (like Serbian, Italian, Hungarian, Czech, Slovakian, Ruthenian and Ukrainian), and non-territorial languages, spoken by smaller ethnic groups dispersed over

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<sup>1</sup> Ustavni zakon o ljudskim pravima i pravima etničkih i nacionalnih zajednica ili manjina [Constitutional Law on Human Rights and Rights of Ethnic and National Communities or Minorities], NN, 51/00, 105/00, 36/01.

<sup>2</sup> Ustavni zakon o pravima nacionalnih manjina [Constitutional Law on National Minorities], NN, 155/02.

<sup>3</sup> Zakon o odgoju i obrazovanju na jeziku i pismu nacionalnih manjina [Law on Education in Language and Letters of National Minorities], Narodne novine 51/00 i 56/00.



different regions of Croatia (like Hebrew and the Romany language). This paper deals with implementation of the principles of the language policy with respect to minority languages in Croatian primary schools.

Language policy can be understood and determined in different ways. Spolsky and Shohamy (Spolsky and Shohamy 1999; Spolsky 2004) distinguish between the three components making the language policy of a speech community: 1) its language practices – the habitual pattern of selecting among the varieties that make up its linguistic repertoire, 2) its language beliefs or ideology – the beliefs about language and language use, and 3) any specific efforts to modify or influence that practice by any kind of language intervention, planning or management (Spolsky 2004: 5). In restricted sense, this paper deals with the actual practice of language use and the beliefs and values underlying its use in a specific community, which are in the focus of the research the paper is founded on. Nevertheless, as these aspects of language policy are examined in their specific correlation with the language management established by a state as a political authority, in this paper the term *language policy* will be primarily applied as defined by Christ (1980): the sum of all political initiatives by which one specific language or more languages are supported in their public validity, functioning and spreading. Official language policy concerning the languages of national minorities living in Croatia is determined by The Law on Education in Languages and Letters of National Minorities of 2000. This law, which regulates education in minority languages in concordance with the EU standards, was passed after the Republic of Croatia ratified the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages in 1999<sup>4</sup>. The ways and models of application of its provisions are further elaborated by *the National Framework Curriculum for General Compulsory Education in Pre-primary, Primary and Secondary Schools in 2008*.

## **2.2. Minority languages in the Croatian school system**

In Croatia there are three models of education programmes in minority languages. In model A, all the courses are held in the minority language. Model B offers bilingual courses in special minority language classes: science subjects

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<sup>4</sup> The Law on Ratification of the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages [Zakon o potvrđivanju Europske povelje o regionalnim ili manjinskim jezicima], Narodne novine (NN), International Bills, 18/97.



are taught in Croatian and humanities in the respective minority language. In model C all courses are taught in Croatian, and the minority language is offered as an elective course, including learning history and geography, music and arts of the national minority five hours a week. Altogether 10,260 students are included in education programmes for national minorities in Croatia.<sup>5</sup> The first model is the most common and includes about 9000 students. Minority education programmes are mostly implemented in the pre-school and the primary school system. According to the Report of the Government of the Republic of Croatia on the implementation of the Framework Convention on the Protection of National Minorities of 2004,<sup>6</sup> in Croatia there are thirty kindergartens educating children in Italian as the minority language; six kindergartens apply education programmes in Serbian; there are two kindergartens for the Czech and Hungarian minority each, whereas the Jewish, German and Austrian community have opened one kindergarten each. In addition, fifty primary schools and twenty secondary schools have courses organized according to one of the three basic models of minority language education.

### ***2.3. Ethnolinguistic structure of the village of Darda***

According to the population census of 2001, the municipality of Darda, including three smaller villages (Mece, Švajcarnica and Uglješ), was inhabited by 7,062 inhabitants (Darda itself was inhabited by 5,394 persons). It is a rural community, economically based on agriculture, its inhabitants being mostly employed in agriculture and in the meat factory “Belje”, with 1,182 persons registered as unemployed.<sup>7</sup> The national structure of the inhabitants is as follows: Croats are the majority with 51.87 percent; Serbs make the second largest population in Darda with 28.43 percent of all inhabitants; the Hungarians are third in

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<sup>5</sup> Izvješće o provođenju Ustavnog zakona o pravima nacionalnih manjina i utrošku sredstava osiguranih u državnom proračunu RH za 2008. godinu za potrebe nacionalnih manjina (2009). Zagreb: Vlada R. Hrvatske. [Report on implementation of the Constitutional Law on National Minorities and spending of the funds from the State Budget for the needs of national minorities for the year 2008. Zagreb: Government of the Republic of Croatia].

<sup>6</sup> Izvješće Republike Hrvatske o provođenju Okvirne konvencije za zaštitu nacionalnih manjina (2004). Zagreb: Vlada Republike Hrvatske [Report of the Republic of Croatia on the Implementation of the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities. Zagreb: Government of the Republic of Croatia].

<sup>7</sup> <http://www.radio-baranja.hr/vijesti/gospodarstvo/6096-nakon-10-godina-ponovo-6000-nezaposlenih.html>. 11.11. 2011.



the list (represented by 8.23 percent) and the Romany population is the fourth, represented by 2.97 percent, followed by the Romanian population, represented by 1.69 percent of all inhabitants of Darda. Other minorities are represented with less than 1 percent: Germans, Bosniaks, Montenegrins, Slovaks, Slovenians, Macedonians, Albanians, etc.<sup>8</sup> It should be noted that, generally speaking, the post-war ethnolinguistic structure of Croatia after 1991 was characterized by Croatian ethnic homogenization (Živić 2007). The most significant change in Darda relates to the Serbian national minority, which, according to the census of 1991, was represented in that village with 37.42 percent or 3239 inhabitants. Due to intensive emigrations after the war, the number of Serbian inhabitants in Darda reduced to 28.43 percent, whereas the number of Croatians increased from 3107 to 3663 (from 35.77 percent to 51.87 percent) (Turk and Jukić 2008: 199, 201). As for Hungarian nationality, its percentage slightly reduced from 8.88 to 8.23 percent,<sup>9</sup> whereas the number of Romany population slightly increased (at almost 3 percent).<sup>10</sup>

According to the Constitutional Law on the Rights of National Minorities and the Law on Education in Languages and Letters of National Minorities of the Republic of Croatia, local communities are entitled to choose the model of education in ML according to their needs and their teaching staff. Local authorities of the village Darda have chosen to apply the Model C as most appropriate for their multilingual community and the teaching staff of their school. According to the Model C of minority language education, the minority language is taught as an elective course. The decision to attend the respective minority language programme must be confirmed by parents. Once the agreement is signed, the child is obligated to attend the courses in minority language two to five hours a week during the entire primary school education. In the school year 2009/2010, 128 children attended the minority language programme in Darda: 105 children the Hungarian language programme and 23 children the Serbian minority language programme. Although there is a substantial number of pupils belonging to the Romany nationality in Darda, courses in Romany language are not held. The reason for that, according to the explanation given by the principal of the school, was the lack of interest by the Romany population for those programmes.

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<sup>8</sup> <http://hr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Darda>. Retrieved from: [http://www.dzs.hr/Hrv/censuses/Census2001/Popis/H01\\_02\\_02/H01\\_02\\_02\\_zup14.html](http://www.dzs.hr/Hrv/censuses/Census2001/Popis/H01_02_02/H01_02_02_zup14.html).

<sup>9</sup> <http://www.os-darda.skola.hr/skola/povijest>. 31.10.2011.

<sup>10</sup> <http://www.vlada.hr/nacionalniprogram/romi/content/view/14/27/lang.hrvatski>. 31.10.2011.





### 3. Research

#### 3.1. *Goals and the methodology of the research*

As multilingualism belongs to the most important competences necessary for construction of the future European integrations, the results of this specific research deserve to be presented to a wider scientific community. The main goal of the research is to present the current position of minority languages in the Croatian society on the example of minority languages spoken in the multilingual community of the village of Darda in the region of Baranya to the north of Osijek. The research is based on a questionnaire developed by Professor Sture Ureland from the University of Mannheim within a broader European project “The Penetration of Standard Languages in Multilingual Peripheral Areas of Europe”, dealing with promotion of multilingualism and minority languages spoken in the EU. The application of the questionnaire was completely approved of by Prof. Ureland, because the author of this paper was an active participant in his project, so the results of this questionnaire will be taken into consideration when the researches in other European countries are completed. The results of the research should show the (co)relation between the institutionally supported language policy and the intensity of usage of specific minority language (ML) at school and in everyday life of the young minority population in Croatia, as well as their attitudes about the respective ML. As expressed in the terminology of Spolsky: the results should determine the character of correlation between the language practices, language beliefs and language management (Spolsky 2004: 8) on the example of a multilingual community of Darda and determine the ethnolinguistic vitality (ETV) of the three dominating ethnolinguistic entities located in Darda: the Serbian, the Hungarian and the Romany.

#### 3.2. *Questionnaire*

The questionnaire was prepared in two versions to be applicable on two different groups of respondents: children and their parents. It includes eight chapters that cover all the aspects of usage of the minority language: 1) *Personal details*, 2) *Language competence*, 3) *Home and the family*, 5) *Neighbourhood, friends and workplace*, 6) *School*, 7) *Church and religion*, 8) *Media* and 9) *Language attitude and the future of the minority language*. The answers should not only indicate the intensity and quality of usage of the three minority languages (Serbian, Romany and Hungarian) in relation to Croatian in different aspects of the re-



spondents' lives, but should also show their personal attitudes about the respective language and its position in the Croatian society. The comparison of answers will indicate how the language competence and the attitudes about the minority language influence the frequency of its usage by the respondents. Moreover, the results will show to which extent the position and usage of the ML at school influence the attitudes of children about their mother tongue and its future and vice versa. This research should help to define the outcomes of the actual language policy concerning the promotion and protection of minority languages in Croatia and determine the ELV of the minorities living in Darda.

### ***3.3. The structure of the respondents***

The original questionnaire is issued in two versions, one for the children attending minority education programmes at school, and the other for their parents. The results of the complete research including both groups of respondents would be too extensive to be presented in one paper, because of the complexity of questions and their correlation on one hand, and the complex national structure of the respondents' body on the other hand. So in this paper I shall deal only with answers given by the children attending the 8<sup>th</sup> grade of the primary school of Darda. In this way the respondents' body is limited to 53 children belonging to the Serbian, Romany, Hungarian, Bosniak, Romanian, Albanian and German national minorities. As the Romanian minority is represented only by two respondents, and the Bosniak, Albanian and German minority by one respondent each, the results represented by some charts will, for practical reasons, relate to Serbian, Romany and Hungarian as the three languages dominantly represented in the sample, and for the sake of statistical reliability the data in those charts will not be expressed in percentages, but in number of respondents ("frequency").

## **4. Results of the survey and discussion**

### ***4.1. Personal details as parameters influencing the results***

In the introductory chapter, the respondents were asked to give their place and the year of birth, gender, place of residence and the minority they belong to. The respondent's body consists of 53 children aged 14 and 15 years, 36 of them be-





ing girls and 17 boys. Only eight children were born in Croatia and all the others in Sombor, a border town in Serbia, due to the fact that their birth coincided with the Homeland war, when the region of Baranya was occupied and annexed by force to the Serbian territory. As for their national minority as an important parameter of the research, 21 respondents declared themselves as Serbs, 20 as Romanians, 6 as Hungarians, 2 as Romanians. As already mentioned, the Bosniak, the Albanian and the German national minority were represented by one respondent each. Another parameter influencing the final results relates to the language the respondents learned at home and at school as their first language. Because of that, the data concerning this parameter, as well as the data on the mother tongue of respondents' parents will be presented in percentages, and the rest of the results, for the sake of statistical and scientific reliability (total number of respondents is less than 100), will be presented in numbers 1–53. As for the first language learned at home, 35 respondents (66.04 percent) reported it was Croatian, whereas 18 of them (altogether 33.96 percent) learned their mother tongue (the ML) at first. It is indicative that among children who reported to have learned Croatian as the first language at home, 13 belong to Serbian national minority and 15 to the Romany minority. Five out of six Hungarian children learned Croatian at home as their first language, too, whereas one Bosniak child and one child of German origin reported Croatian to be their first language learned at home. Expressed in percentage, Croatian was learned as the first language by 70 percent of Romany children, 57.15 percent of Serbian children and 83.3 percent of Hungarian children. In the sample of children who learned the ML at first at home, children belonging to the Serbian national minority prevail (9 out of 21 or 42.85 percent), followed by the Romany minority (6 out of 20 or 30 percent). One Hungarian child and two Romanian children learned the ML as first at home. It should be mentioned that one girl answered she was bilingual and had learned both her mother tongue (Serbian) and English simultaneously at home (most probably she was living in an English speaking country as a refugee during the wartime in Croatia).

As for the first language learned at school, 48 pupils (almost 90 percent) said it was Croatian. Only four pupils or 7.7 percent (three belonging to the Serbian and one to Hungarian nationality) learned their mother tongue as first at school, whereas in one case the first language learned at school was English (they probably joined the school in Darda in later grades). These data are in close correlation with the fact that Croatian is learned by 66 percent of children as their first language at home, which is probably caused by pragmatic reasoning and con-



formist behaviour of the parents, but also due to the fact that most children are born in nationally mixed marriages.

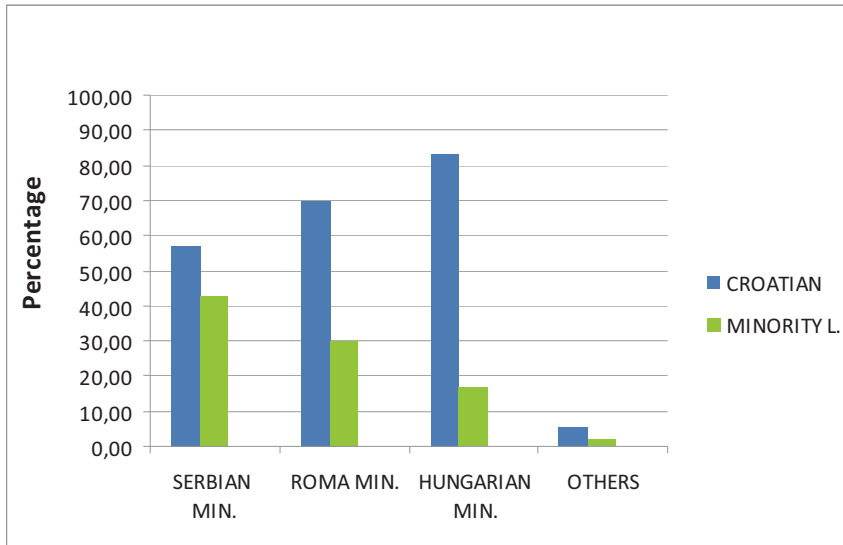


Chart 1. The first language learned at home (%).

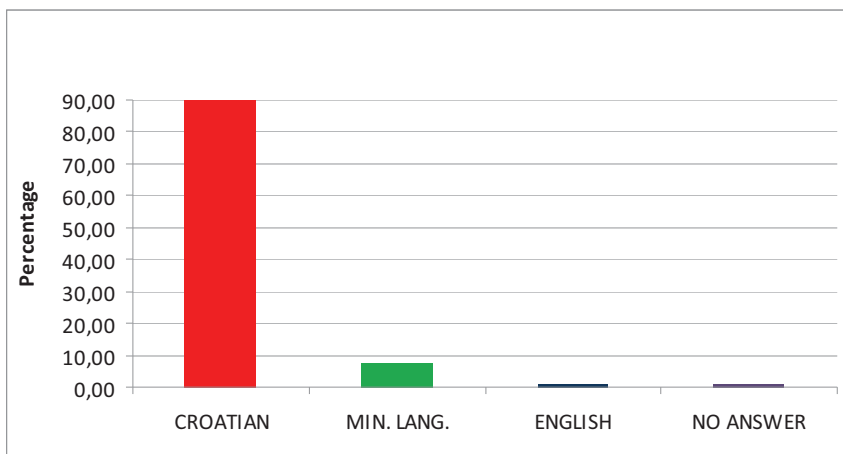


Chart 2. The first language learned at school (%).

The answers referring to the origin of respondents' parents and their mother tongue can be considered as general personal data that could influence the lan-



guage competence and the intensity of usage of the respective ML. Mothers of 32 respondents were born in Croatia; 5 were born in Bosnia, and 6 in Serbia. Ten respondents did not know the answer to this question. As for the mother tongue of their parents, 19 respondents answered that the mother tongue of their mothers was Croatian; whereas the mother tongue of 26 mothers was the ML (8 respondents did not answer this question). As for respondents' fathers, 36 of them come from Croatia, 8 from Serbia and 3 from Bosnia and Herzegovina, whereas 6 respondents didn't know the answer to this question. Eighteen respondents answered Croatian was the mother tongue of their fathers, whereas the respective ML was the mother tongue of 30 fathers (5 respondents did not know the answers to that question). Fourteen answers out of 30 relate to Serbian as ML, 9 to Romany as ML, 4 to Hungarian, 2 to Romanian and 1 to Albanian as ML. These answers could imply that most parents live with a spouse of different nationality (mixed Croatian-Serbian marriages). On the other hand, 19 mothers and 18 fathers finished their education in Croatian schools and that could be the reason why they consider Croatian as their first language. Concerning the data that mother tongue of 26 mothers was the ML, the analysis shows that the respective ML in 22 cases was Serbian, whereas the Bosniak, Albanian, German and Slovak languages were pointed out as the mother tongue of respondents' mothers in one case each. As 10 respondents out of 53 did not answer the question concerning the origin of their mothers and 8 respondents concerning the origin of their fathers, we cannot take these answers as statistically relevant, so they will not be graphically presented. Though, it is indicative that more than 60 percent of respondents' mothers and fathers were born in Croatia. The data on the mother tongue of respondents' parents are statistically more reliable and thus presented in Chart 3.

If we compare these data with the data about the language learned as first at home, we can see that they are not correlated: the mother tongue of more than 30 percent of respondents' fathers and mothers is Croatian, and 66 percent of their children learned Croatian as their L1 at home. This difference is obviously strongly influenced by the fact that Croatian is the first language learned at school. On the other hand, there is a close correlation between the parents' place of birth and the first language their children learned at home: most parents were born in Croatia and most children learned Croatian as the first language at home. Other reasons for these results are the fact that their parents belong to different nationalities, that most of them finished Croatian schools, but also the process of assimilation into the more homogeneous Croatian environment.

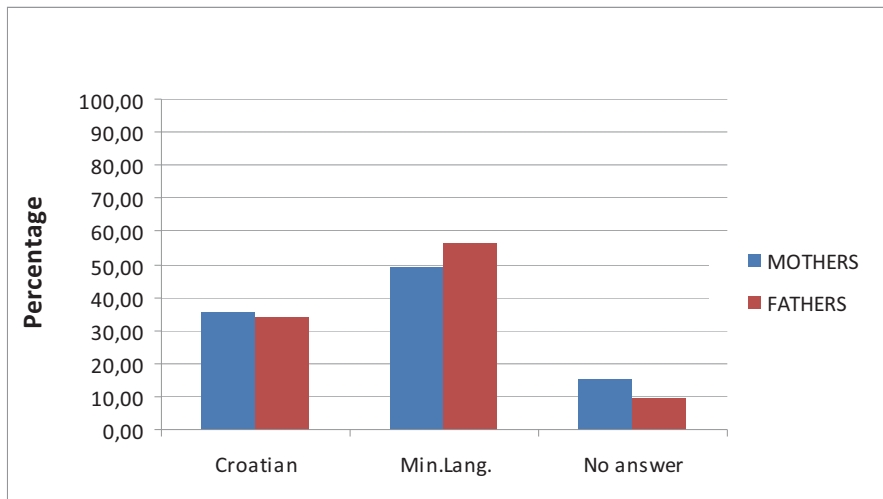


Chart 3. The mother tongue of respondents' parents (%)

In the analysis that will follow we shall see whether and to which extent these specific personal data influence the knowledge, the language competence and the intensity of usage of the ML by children. Finally, the discussion and the comparison of the results should show whether these data influenced the respondents' attitudes towards their specific ML, its position in the Croatian society and its future.

#### 4.2. *Language competence*

In the set of questions referring to knowledge of ML and the respondents' competence in specific language skills, it must be noted that here there are noticeable differences in answers between children belonging to different minorities. Generally speaking, most respondents can fluently speak, read and write in their mother tongue (23 out of 53), 20 respondents can speak their mother tongue fluently, but they are not good at writing and 10 understand their mother tongue well, but are not good at speaking it. If we analyze differences in answers with reference to specific ML and its speakers, we can see that Romany children mostly (9 in 20) can speak the ML well, but are not good at reading and writing, which could be expected considering the lack of books written in the Romany language. Hungarian children mostly understand their mother tongue well, but don't speak it fluently (4 out of 6), and Serbian children in most cases can speak, read and write their mother tongue fluently (16 out of 21). The best results in the



case of Serbian are caused by the intensity of usage of that language in the local community of Darda (almost 30 percent of Serbian inhabitants), as well as by the morpho-syntactic and lexical features of the language that are very close to Croatian as the official language.

As for specific language skills (speaking, reading and writing) in ML, all the respondents assessed their speaking skills on the scale 1–5 on average as very good (3.75); reading skills as good (3.0) and writing skills as rather poor (2.62). When we take specific ML into consideration, the answers are dispersed in different directions within the three minority groups: Serbian children assessed their speaking skill as the best of the 3 skills, average mark being almost excellent (4.47); reading skill was assessed with 4 and writing skill with 3.9. In Hungarian, the respondents assessed their language competence as equally good in all the three skills, average mark for all the skills being 3.1, (which is, generally speaking, one mark lower than that for the knowledge of Serbian). The answers show that the Hungarian children feel more confident in reading and writing than in speaking. As expected, the Romany children assessed the knowledge of their mother tongue on average as much poorer than the previous two groups of respondents did: speaking of Romany was marked on average with 3.5, reading with 2.25 and writing with 1.8. The low marks for reading and writing by the Romany children cannot be seriously taken into consideration, because there are no written teaching materials for those children, but their speaking skills seem to be better than those of Hungarian children (assessed with 3.5 in relation to 3.1).

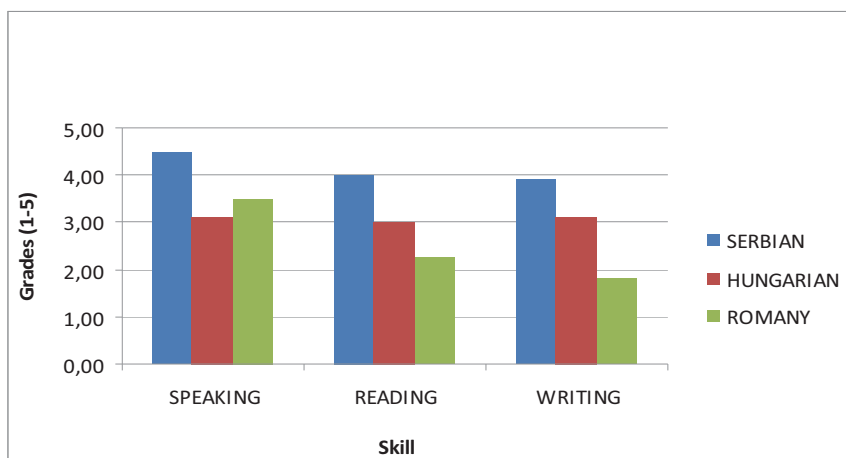


Chart 4. ML competence: Self-assessment of language skills (expressed in grades 1–5).



As expected, the data on the knowledge of respective ML and the competence in the three skills highly correspond with each other. The first language learned at home may be a relevant variable which influenced other results, because Serbian children learned their mother tongue as the first at home to a greater extent than the respondents belonging to the other two nationalities, so their knowledge of Serbian turned out to be at a higher level than that of the Romany language or Hungarian. Another reason for that may be its lexical and morpho-syntactic resemblance with Croatian and an intense exposure of the respondents to Serbian public media.

The answers concerning Croatian are more unified than those referring to ML: most of respondents claimed they could speak, read and write Croatian fluently. Only 6 out of 53 students (5 of them being Romany children) said they understood Croatian well, but couldn't speak it fluently. The dispersion of answers is more evident when they were asked to assess their competence in the three language skills: speaking, reading and writing. The competence in all the three skills in Croatian is relatively highly marked in relation to the ML: average mark for speaking skill in Croatian language takes 4.32, for reading 4.17 and for writing 4.30. If we compare these marks with the average marks for the same skills in minority languages (for speaking 3.75, for reading 3.0 and for writing 2.62), it is evident that competences in Croatian exceed those in minority languages, which is in close correlation with the first language learned at home and at school. The respondents marked their speaking skill on average as their best language competence both in Croatian and in their mother tongue. The respondents belonging to the Serbian and the Hungarian minority assessed their knowledge of Croatian as better than the Roma children did: the former marked the three skills in Croatian mostly as excellent and very good (only two respondents marked their competence as *good 3*), whereas the answers of the latter group cover a whole range of grades from 1 to 5.

### **4.3. Intensity of usage of Croatian and the ML**

When referring to the intensity of usage of Croatian, the respondents chose only the answers *often* and *constantly*. On the other hand, when referring to their mother tongue, they chose the answers *never* and *rarely*, too. Specifically, 15 respondents use Croatian *often* and 38 of them use it *constantly*. On the other hand, on average the ML is used *constantly* by six respondents, *often* by 21, *rarely* by 21, too, and *never* by five respondents.



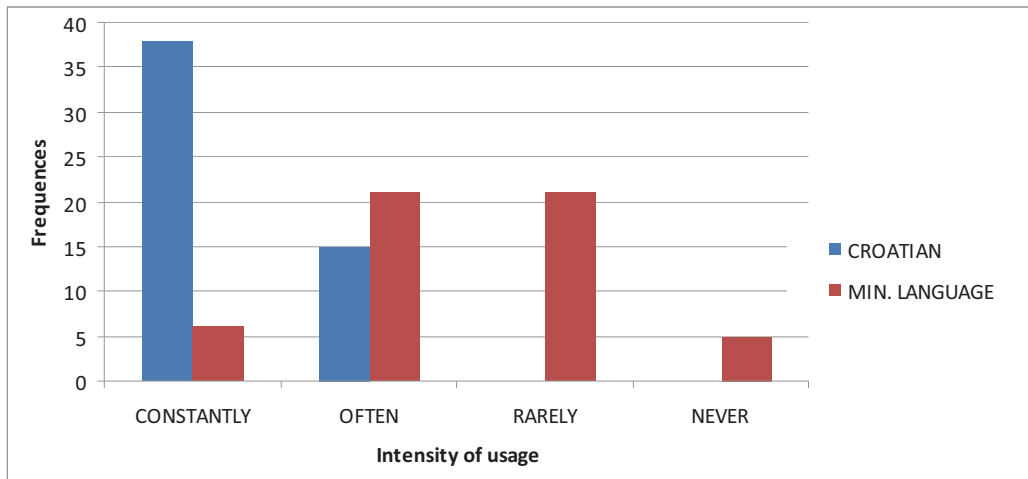


Chart 5. Intensity of usage of Croatian and the ML.

The intensity of usage of Croatian strongly prevails over the usage of the ML. The intensity of usage of the ML varies and we can see substantial differences between the answers, reflected in the fact that *rarely* and *often* are prevailing answers. Generally speaking, we can conclude that these answers are in correlation with the language mostly used at home (Croatian), as well as with the fact that the language of instruction at school is Croatian (model C).

#### 4.4. *Communication with family members*

This set of questions explores the language of respondents' communication with their mothers, fathers, elder sisters/brothers and younger sisters and/or brothers. Asked about the language of communication with their mothers at home, 24 respondents said it was Croatian; only four respondents reported it was the ML and most respondents (25) communicated both in Croatian and in their mother tongue. The data are similar concerning the communication with their fathers: 25 respondents speak Croatian with their fathers, 24 (45.28 percent) speak both Croatian and the ML and four of them use only the ML with their fathers. The results on the language of communication with brothers and sisters will not be presented, because these questions are answered by different number of respondents, depending on the fact how many brothers or (and) sisters they had. Generally speaking, the analysis shows that the respondents mostly communicate with their brothers and sisters in Croatian: 20 respondents communicate on-



ly in Croatian, ten speak both Croatian and the ML and two only the ML with their elder brothers. 16 respondents speak only Croatian with their younger brothers, eight speak both Croatian and the ML, and only one respondent speaks the respective ML with his/her younger brothers. Croatian prevails in communication with elder sisters, too (16 respondents), whereas 13 respondents use both Croatian and the ML and only two respondents use only the ML. 16 respondents communicate in Croatian with their younger sisters and six of them both in Croatian and the ML; there was only one respondent to communicate in the ML only.

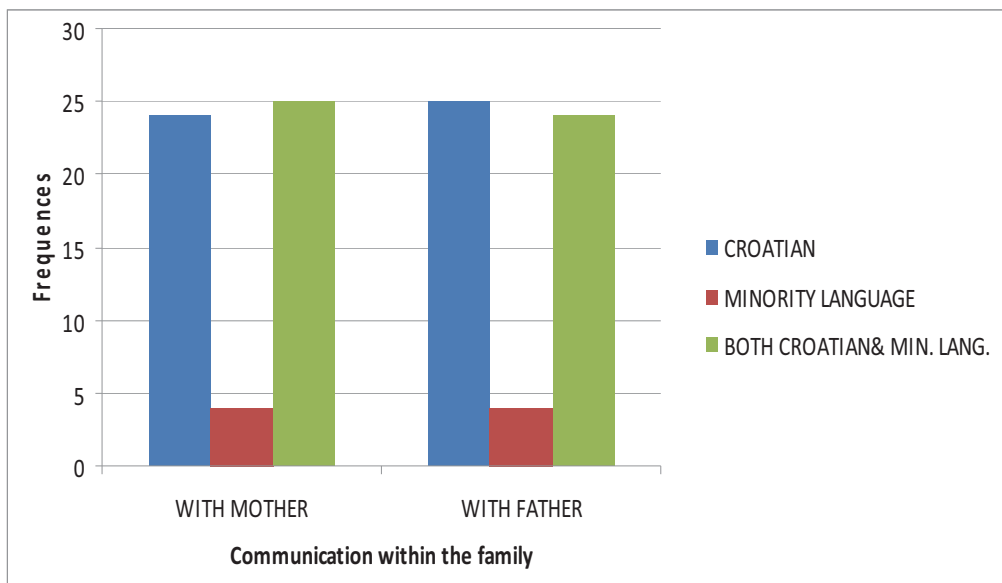


Chart 6. The language of communication with family members.

If these results are compared with those referring to the intensity of usage of the two languages, we can see that in private communication children are bilingual: they mostly use Croatian or a combination of Croatian and the ML within their families, depending on the language their parents speak (code-switching). As opposite to the bilingual communication with parents, in communication with each other children rather use Croatian than the ML. Observed from the aspect of the specific national minority, most positive answers concerning the intensity of usage of ML can be found in the group of Serbian children: two of them communicate only in ML with all the members of their families, and five reported to use the ML *constantly*. None of the children belonging to other nationalities chose the answer *constantly*, except for one Romany child. Children belong-



ing to the national minorities represented by one or two respondents use their ML only in communication with their father and mother, whereas in communication with their brothers and sisters they speak only Croatian. They also declared to speak Croatian *constantly* and their ML *never* or *rarely*.

#### 4.5. *Communication with neighbours and friends*

In communication with neighbours and friends the use of Croatian prevails over the ML: 45 respondents use only Croatian in communication with their neighbours and eight of them use both Croatian and the ML (code-switching depending on the participant in communication). Similarly, when speaking with their friends, 44 respondents use only Croatian and nine both Croatian and their mother tongue (one respondent added that she used additionally English in communication with her friends). There are no noticeable differences in answers between respondents coming from different minorities – the only thing that could be pointed out is that the children belonging to Hungarian, Romanian, Albanian, Bosnian, and German national minorities (making altogether eleven respondents) communicate with their neighbors and friends without exception in Croatian.

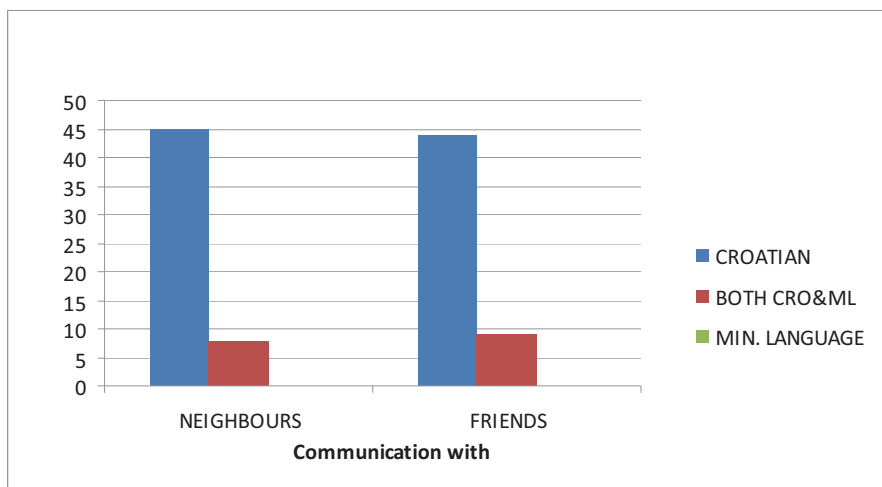


Chart 7. Language of communication with neighbors and friends.



#### 4.6. Languages used at school

When asked about the language of instruction at school, all but three (3) of the respondents answered it was Croatian. Three respondents answered it was both Croatian and the ML, which is the result of the fact that they learn their mother tongue as an elective course together with Croatian throughout the whole primary school. The next two questions related to the language of communication with teachers in the classroom and in informal situations at school, like during breaks or on school excursions. Both questions are answered in a similar way: all respondents said the language they spoke with their teachers in the classroom was Croatian; Croatian was the only language of communication with their teachers during the break and on excursions, too. As for communication with their classmates, Croatian is the dominating language again. Only four respondents speaking Serbian as their mother tongue, two respondents speaking the Romany language and one speaking Hungarian (7 out of 53 pupils) reported that they communicated with their classmates in informal situations both in Croatian and their mother tongue. The foreign language learned at school by all respondents is English.

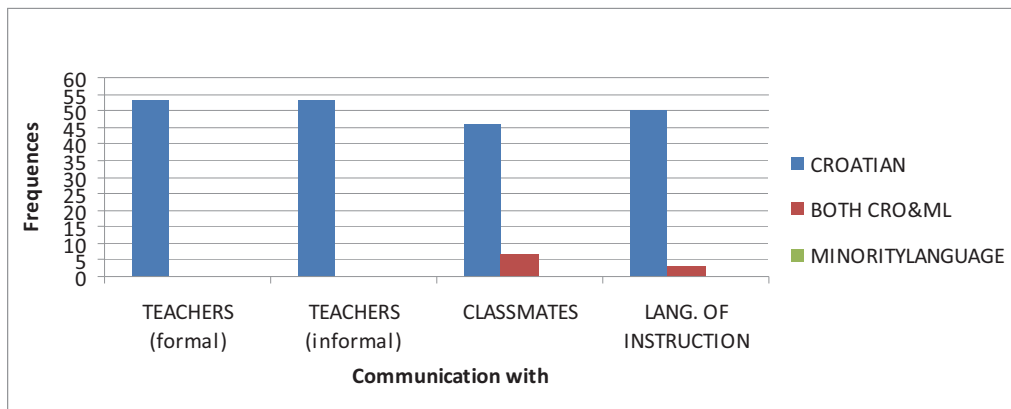


Chart 8. Language of communication at school.

#### 4.7. Language used in church and religious life

Twenty-two out of 53 respondents said the language of the religious service at church was Croatian (11 Romany children, 5 Hungarian children, 3 Serbian children, 2 Romanian children and 1 child belonging to German national minori-



ty). Twenty respondents, mostly of Serbian nationality, reported they attended services in the ML, referring to the Old Slavic as a language traditionally used in the Orthodox Serbian church. One respondent said he/she attended the services in the Arabic language (Moslem religion). Ten respondents did not answer this question. As for the language of communication with the priest, 26 respondents said it was Croatian, 14 communicated in their mother tongue with the priest and four said it was both in Croatian and the ML. Differences in the answers concerning the language of worship services at church and the language of communication with the priest probably arise from the fact that children coming from different religious communities communicate mostly with the Catholic priest who teaches religious education at school. Again, 11 out of 14 children speaking their mother tongue with the priest belong to the Serbian minority, two are Romany children (?), and one is of Hungarian origin. 9 children did not answer this question. As for the language of prayer, 24 children reported they pray in Croatian, 15 pray in their mother tongue (13 of them belonging to Serbian minority and two to Hungarian minority), two children pray both in Croatian and in their ML, one prays in Arabic and one in Latin (most probably referring to the Old Slavic language). Other respondents (10) did not answer that question.

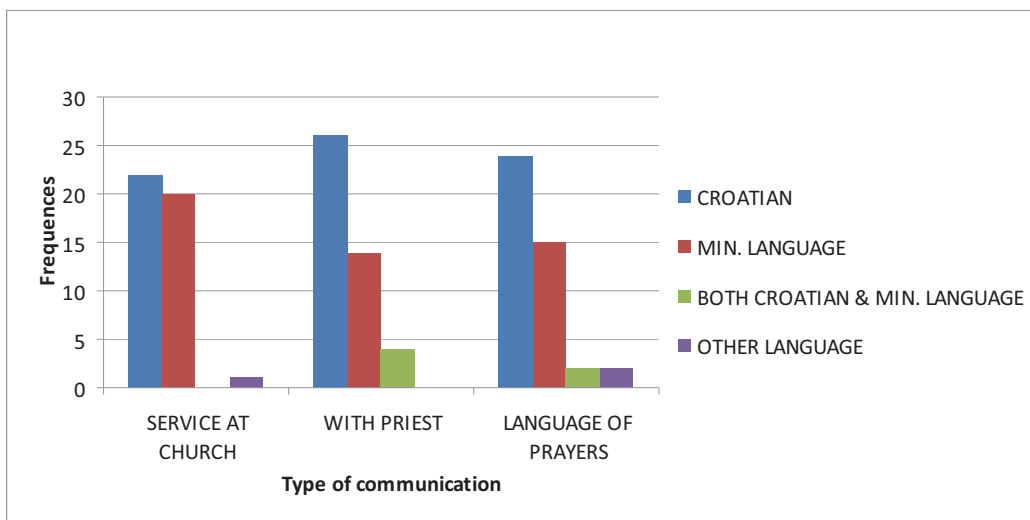


Chart 9. The language of religious life.

As expected, the answers relating to the language used in religious life vary because of the diverse national and religious structure of respondents, but also due to the fact that ten respondents did not answer these questions. Almost half of



other respondents reported to use Croatian in their religious life, most probably due to the fact that one of their parents belongs to Croatian nationality and to Catholic religion. Because ten children out of 53 refused to answer these questions, the answers can neither be statistically reliable nor seriously taken into consideration. They just indicate that the important feature of the Darda population is its linguistic, religious, national and cultural diversity, with the noticeable tendency of assimilation into a wider Croatian community. In more homogenous minority communities, like the village of Tenja near Osijek, inhabited by Croats and Serbs (30 percent), Serbian (including the *Old Slavic language*) is the dominating language of the religious life.<sup>11</sup>

#### 4.8. *Languages of the media*

In this set of questions the respondents were asked to report in which language the books and newspapers they read are, which is the language of the radio or TV programmes they choose and which language they mostly use when writing e-mails. All respondents read books in Croatian, except for the two of them who read books written both in Croatian and in their mother tongue. Forty-five respondents read the newspapers in Croatian, six both in Croatian and the ML and one additionally in English (one respondent did not answer). As for the radio and TV broadcast, 32 respondents listen to radio broadcasts in Croatian, 15 listen to the radio both in Croatian and in ML and four respondents (belonging to Serbian minority) listen only to the programmes in the ML. Accordingly, 38 respondents watch TV-programmes in Croatian and fifteen both in Croatian and the ML. The reasons why the radio is listened more in the ML than the other media may be the availability of radio-programmes in minority languages (broadcasts in Hungarian language on Radio Osijek and Radio Banska Kosa on a daily basis). In writing e-mails, Croatian is a dominant language, too (45). Eight respondents use both Croatian and their mother tongue for writing e-mails, and one of them additionally uses English.

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<sup>11</sup> The results of the research carried out among pupils of the primary school in the village of Tenja and their parents were presented at the International Symposium on Multilingualism and Minority Languages held in May 2011 in Božava in the paper titled “Serbian as a minority language in Croatia – Slavonian case study”.



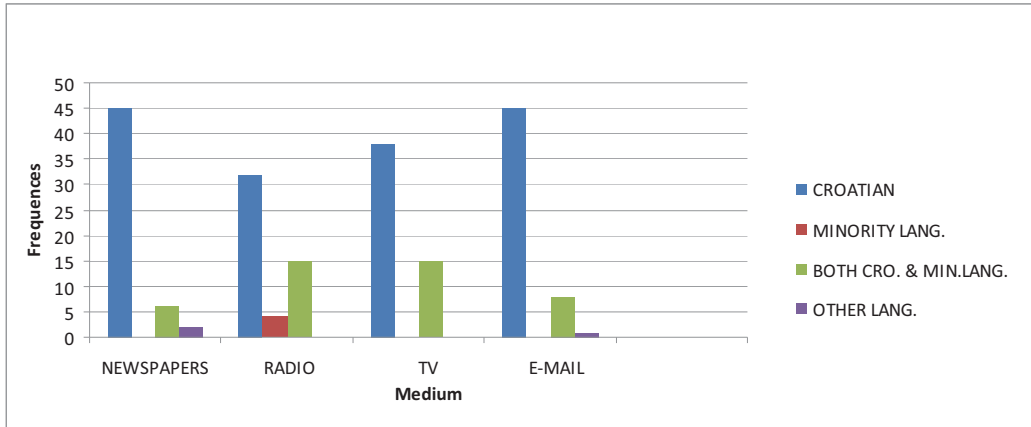


Chart 10. Language of the media.

#### 4.9. Attitudes towards the ML and Croatian

Asked to express their feelings about their mother tongue, most respondents answered they liked it (38 or 71.7 percent), fourteen respondents said they didn't like it, and one (1) answer was "sometimes I like it". As for Croatian, 50 respondents (94.34 percent) said they liked it and two of them didn't like it. One respondent did not answer this question. As we can see, attitudes towards both languages are positive, but Croatian slightly prevails over the ML. This can be explained by the fact that: a) most children learned Croatian as their first language at home and at school, b) that the language of instruction at school is Croatian, c) ML is not a compulsory but an elective course and d) Croatian is the dominating language of communication in the respondents' social surroundings.

As for the attitudes within specific national groups, the children with positive attitude towards their mother tongue mostly belong to the Romany nationality (17 out of 20 or 85 percent of Romany children), whereas more than a half of Serbian and Hungarian children like their mother tongue (14 out of 21 or 66.67 percent of Serbian children, respectively four out of six or 66.67 percent of Hungarian children). Children belonging to the Bosniak (1) and the Albanian nationality (1) also like their mother tongue. On the other hand, six Serbian children (28.57 percent of all the children speaking Serbian as their ML) and two Hungarian children (33.33 percent of the Hungarian children sample) don't like



speaking their mother tongue. Two Romanian children (out of 2) and one child belonging to German minority don't like speaking their mother tongue either.

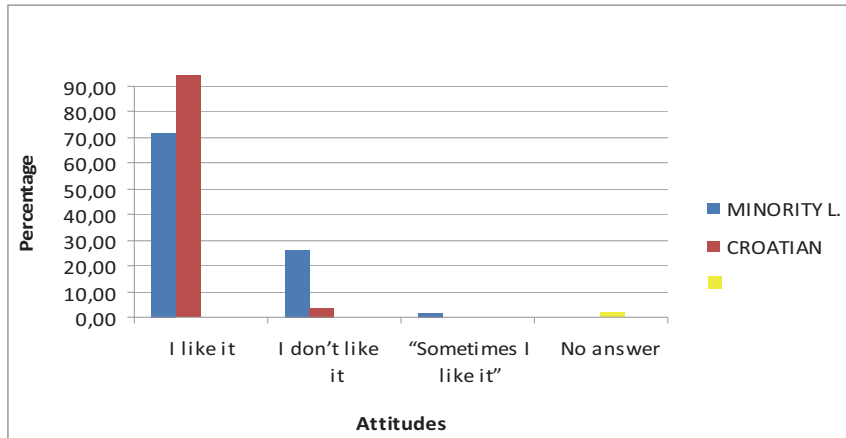


Chart 11 a. Attitudes towards the ML (%).

Asked whether their mother tongue should be used more in public media in Croatia, fifteen respondents (28.3 percent) answered “yes”, eight of them said “no” (15.09 percent) and 28 respondents (52.83 percent) answered “I don't know”. Two respondents did not answer this question. Accordingly, most respondents are not sure whether their mother tongue should be passed on to future generations (27 or 50.94 percent); 23 of them (43.39 percent) have a positive attitude towards that idea, and three respondents don't think their mother tongue should be passed on to future generations. We can conclude that the respondents have positive attitude both towards their mother tongue and Croatian, but they are indecisive whether their mother tongue should be more present in the media and whether it should be passed to future generations. It should be noted that children attending the education programme according to the Model A in the village of Tenja (where the ML is the language of instruction) have more positive attitudes towards their mother tongue: 75 percent of the children would like to be exposed more to their mother tongue in the media, and 92 percent think that it should be passed to future generations. This difference in answers between children attending different education programmes indicates that the status of the ML as a language of instruction more positively influences attitudes of children towards their mother tongue than its teaching as an elective subject. In other words, a supporting official language policy positively influences the attitudes towards the ML.

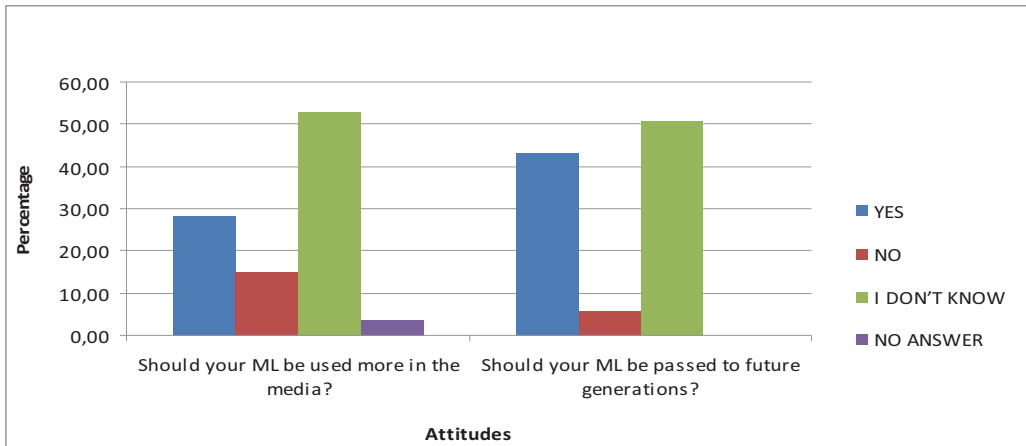


Chart 11 b. Attitudes towards the future of MLs in Croatia.

## 5. Discussion

By means of a survey consisting of 43 questions, the author of this paper explored the position of minority languages in Croatia and the attitudes of their speakers on the example of a multilingual community of the village of Darda situated in the Baranya Region near the town of Osijek. The research was carried out on the sample of 53 children belonging to Serbian, Romany, Hungarian, Bosniak, Romanian, Albanian and German national minority. The respondents are the 8<sup>th</sup> grade children who attend the minority language programme at the primary school of Darda according to the Model C (the language of instruction is Croatian, and the minority language is offered as an elective course five hours a week, along with the history, geography and the culture of the country of their ancestors as elective courses). The survey carried out among children attending that programme had shown the outcomes of this model regarding the knowledge of the respective ML and the attitudes of its speakers about their mother tongue and its future in Croatia.

The first set of answers referred to the origin of respondents' parents and their mother tongue and offered general personal data that could influence the language competence and the intensity of usage of the respective ML by their children as respondents. The answers relating to the intensity of usage of Croatian and the ML showed that Croatian is more intensely used than the respective ML. The comparison of these results with the data about respondents' parents indi-



cated that the place of birth of parents and the first language they learned at home are in close correlation with the intensity of usage of Croatian and the specific ML within the family and with neighbours and friends. Mother tongue of the parents, on the other hand, does not seem to influence these results: although the mother tongue of 30 fathers and 26 mothers was the ML, only 18 children out of 53 reported to have learned the ML at first at home, probably due to the fact that their parents belong to different nationalities, that most of them finished Croatian schools and that the mother tongue of more than 30 percent of respondents' fathers and mothers is Croatian. Though, it seems that the most significant factor is that Croatian is the language of instructions at school and the dominating language of communication in the local community, whereas ML is offered as an elective course. Croatian dominates in communication with the family members, neighbours and friends, which is the only domain in which bilingualism and code-switching are significantly present (on average 24 out of 53 respondents use both languages in communication with their family members, neighbours and friends). Only four respondents out of 53 use the ML in communication with their parents (two Serbian and two Romany children). The language of the media is mostly Croatian, too. Here availability of specific media plays an important role: the results indicate that one third of the respondents watch TV programmes and listen to radio broadcasts both in Croatian and in their mother tongue, and 4 out of 53 respondents listen only to the radio broadcasts in ML. The surprising fact is that almost half of the respondents use Croatian in their religious life, most probably due to the fact that one of their parents is of Croatian nationality and practices Catholic religion. It is possible that some children coming from interethnic marriages attend the Catholic religious education at school, because 26 children said they communicated with the priest in Croatian, and 24 prayed in that language. These data reflect the linguistic, religious, national and cultural diversity of the Darda population, as well as the tendency of its assimilation into a wider speech community.

As for the attitudes of respondents about their mother tongue and its future in Croatia, the answers lead to the conclusion that the feelings towards the ML and its future are mostly positive (72.78 percent), but there is a rather high percentage of children who don't like speaking their mother tongue, (20.63 percent). Asked whether it should be passed to future generations and whether it should be used more in the media, most respondents were indecisive (more than 51 percent answered "I don't know"). Almost all of them had positive attitudes towards Croatian (94.34 percent). Such attitudes can be explained by the fact that most children learned Croatian as their first language at home and at school, that



the language of instruction at school is Croatian and their mother tongue is not a compulsory but an elective course (Model C). Obviously, the political and social situation, including changes in ethnical structure of Darda in favour of Croatian population, as well as interethnic marriages, significantly influenced the results. The research of the same character, carried out in Tenja, the village situated on the outskirts of Osijek, showed quite different results.<sup>12</sup> Tenja is inhabited by 65 percent of Croats and 30 percent of Serbs (other nationalities make 5 percent). The attitudes of the Tenja children about the ML and its future are far more positive than those of the children in Darda: all the respondents said they liked speaking their mother tongue; 75 percent of them would like to be exposed to it more in the media and 92 percent think that it should be passed to future generations. Reasons for such evident differences are in the fact that this minority population is more homogenous than that of Darda (only Croats and Serbs live in Tenja, the Serbian minority making 30 percent of the population) and that all the subjects at the primary school of Tenja are instructed in Serbian, according to the Model A. Thus, the conclusions drawn from the research carried out in the multinational village of Darda can be indicative for less homogenous multilingual and multinational communities in Croatia, where the Model C of ML education is applied. These results maybe cannot be considered as scientifically reliable because of the small sample of the respondents, and because adult respondents were not included in the research. But we can say that they are indicative because they show that the Model C of ML education, applied in such a diverse speech community as that of Darda, is not sufficiently effective in the support of the minority language practice and its status in the local community.

We have seen that in all domains of life of Darda Croatian is a dominating language of communication. Bilingualism and code-switching are main features of communication with family members and with neighbours and friends. As for specific ethnic groups, Serbian ethnic group shows slightly better results concerning the intensity of usage and the communication competence in ML than the Hungarian and the Romany group, due to linguistic similarities of Serbian and Croatian language, to the demographic structure of the speech community (Serbian minority represented by 28.43 percent), better exposure to public media in Serbian language and the specific political situation after 1991, when Croatian ethnical homogenization resulted in stronger ethnical identification of Serbian population. These differences in communication competence between the three

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<sup>12</sup> The paper "Serbian as a minority language in Croatia – Slavonian case study", presented at the International Symposium on Multilingualism and Minority Languages held in May 2011 in Božava, Croatia.



minority groups could have been expected, because the Romany children are not included into the ML programme (except for the folklore group), and because the Hungarian population is represented only by six respondents, which is too small a sample to provide us with precise and scientifically reliable data. That is the reason why the precise assessment of the ELV was not undertaken in this paper, although recent socio-linguistic researches offered some assessment matrixes and formulas (Dörnyei and Csizer 2005; Ehala 2009). As stated by Ehala, the demographic and broad social factors characterizing the ethnolinguistic group and its usage of the ML are of idiosyncratic nature, so no exact measurement of ELV is possible. Accordingly, social settings can be very diverse and for various ethnic groups only rough comparison is possible. In our case, like in some other cases, complexity of social settings and the diversity of demographic structure “did not allow for the explanatory power of the model to be developed” (Ehala 2009: 125).

In order to confirm the results of this research indicating that the ELV of the Darda community is rather low, we shall roughly analyze eight indicators of ELV developed by Professor Lynn Landweer from the Essex University (Landweer 2004). The first (1) is defined as *Position of the speech community on the remote-urban continuum*, which explores if the respective speech community is located near an urban centre where its members have contact with speakers of other languages. In the case of Darda ethnic groups live side by side with other ML communities and have easy access to the nearest urban centre (Osijek), which implies that the vitality of minority languages in Darda is weak. The second indicator (2) *Domain in which the target language is used* asks whether the ML is sufficiently used in key areas of life. Here the answer is negative, because ML is used (by less than 50 percent of respondents) only in communication with parents and in religious life, and even there bilingualism is a prevailing communication feature. (3) *Frequency of type of code switching* covers a question whether there are consistent patterns of language choice, determined by a change of conversational participants, domains, or topics. We have seen that in communication with parents, neighbours, friends and classmates the code-switching is a permanent pattern, which means that bilingualism is mostly present in private communication and the code-switching depends on the participant in communication process. In other domains of life Croatian prevails. (4) Indicator *Population and group dynamics* investigates if there is a critical mass of community language speakers (marriage patterns, immigration and emigration) and how well they use the ML with reference to the community language. We have seen that some ethnic minority groups came to Darda by migrations





and some are domicile (Hungarians), and that the group dynamics changed under the influence of political and social changes. Our questionnaire showed that there are many mixed marriages in Darda and that the young members of the speech community use both Croatian and the minority languages almost equally well, but the competence in the community language – here Croatian – is on a higher level than that in ML. (5) *Distribution of speakers within their own social network* deals with the question whether there is a social network of activities supportive of the ML. As the Darda community is characterized by the ethnolinguistic diversity, and due to interethnic marriages, this factor of ethnolinguistic vitality does not seem to operate positively, except maybe for the Romany group, in which the social network and the density of family and neighbour relations is more stressed. Although there are ethnic folklore groups and two national associations (of Hungarians and that of Serbs), one cannot say that in this case there is a dense multiplex social network in Darda. (6) *Special outlook regarding and within the speech community* explores the internal and external identity of ethnolinguistic group. In this case, with regard to gatherings at church and practicing religious life, as well as activities of folklore groups and other ethnic associations functioning in Darda, the internal identity of the Hungarian and Serbian ethnic group, according to the data available to the author of this paper, seems to be sufficient, which cannot be claimed for the Romany group. “How well a group is perceived by outsiders and whether or not it is supported by outsiders (e.g. by government funding of development projects) also has an impact on the value associated with the group’s language. (...) the greater the positive internal identity, external status and cultural distinctions, the better is the support of the vernacular language” (Landweer 2008). We can see that the government supports learning ML and the culture of ethnic groups, but the local authorities of Darda have decided to apply the model C of primary school education, in which Serbian and Hungarian language are taught as elective courses. It does not seem to be sufficient (especially for the Roma children), because Croatian is used in most domains of life. 7) *Language prestige: is the status of ML nationally, regionally and locally recognized?* The answer is yes, because the protection and promotion of MLs is legally recognized at all the three administration levels. But from the perspective of some associations and political representatives of Serbian national minority, this is a step backwards, because in Ex-Yugoslavia Serbs enjoyed a status of a nation, which changed after 1991 into national minority and their language into a minority language. (8) *Access to a stable and acceptable economic base supporting the use of ML:* This question demands a more precise research, especially with regard to the Romany population, but generally speaking, difficult economic situation and a high unemployment



ment rate in the country reflected on the economic support of the use of ML in the community of Darda as well.

## 6. Conclusion

The results of the research impose the conclusion that Croatian is a prevailing language of communication in all domains of life in Darda and that the objective ELV of the ethnic groups living there is rather low. Attitudes of the respondents towards their mother tongue are mostly positive (more than 70 percent), but one cannot say that the subjective vitality is satisfactory, because 20.63 percent respondents said they did not like the respective ML, and 51 percent were indecisive whether it should be passed to future generations and whether it should be used more in the media. The main causes of this situation are: the choice of the education model in which ML is an elective course and not the language of instruction (with the Romany language excluded from the programme), the fact that Darda is characterized by a rich diversity of nationalities, languages and cultures, that its inhabitants live in rather poor social-economic circumstances, as well as that they are interwoven with and strongly influenced by Croatian speech community. Although some legal and educational fundamentals of the official support to minority languages are laid on the national, regional and local level, we could see that the outcomes of the ML policy in the community of Darda are not satisfactory. Due to ethnolinguistic diversity of the community, as well as the educational, economic and practical reasons, local authorities of Darda have chosen an education model which is not supportive enough to minority languages. The Model A, which showed good results in Tenja, would be more effective, but to enable its application in Darda, some social, educational and economic preconditions should be changed. As Bernard Spolsky stated: “Even where there is a formal, written language policy, its effect on language practices is neither guaranteed nor consistent” (Spolsky 2004: 11).

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## MANJINSKI JEZICI I JEZIČNA POLITIKA U RURALNOM PODRUČJU BARANJE (HRVATSKA) – ANALIZA SLUČAJA

Rad istražuje položaj manjinskih jezika u hrvatskim osnovnim školama u višejezičnim zajednicama na primjeru sela Darda, smještenog uz hrvatsko-mađarsku granicu. Istraživanje se temelji na upitniku koji je razvio prof. dr. Sture Ureland sa Sveučilišta u Mannheimu, Njemačka, u okviru širega znanstvenog projekta o manjinskim jezicima u Europi. Upitnik od ukupno 43 pitanja proveden je na uzorku od 53 učenika uključenih u manjinski obrazovni program Osnovne škole u Dardi, višejezičnoj zajednici udaljenoj 10 km od grada Osijeka. Uzorkom su obuhvaćena djeca osnovnoškolskog uzrasta koja uglavnom pripadaju trima nacionalnim manjinama: mađarskoj, srpskoj i romskoj. U prvom dijelu rada autorica opisuje je-



zičnu politiku Hrvatske s posebnim osvrtom na manjinske jezike. Glavni je dio rada posvećen analizi rezultata upitnika s obzirom na uporabu manjinskih jezika u školi i u svakodnevnoj komunikaciji, kao i na stavove ispitanika prema konkretnom manjinskom jeziku te prema hrvatskom kao službenom jeziku. U zaključku autorica uspoređuje dobivene rezultate te na primjeru višejezične zajednice u Dardi nudi prikaz položaja manjinskih jezika u pograničnom području s Mađarskom. Rezultati će također ukazati na specifičnosti primjene jezične politike u hrvatskim osnovnim školama te kako se takva jezična politika odražava na etnolingvističku vitalnost konkretne višejezične zajednice.

**Ključne riječi:** višejezičnost; manjinski jezici; Baranja; mađarski jezik; romski jezik; srpski jezik; hrvatski jezik.