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Faculty of Arts

Department of English

MASTER'S THESIS

**FACTORS THAT INFLUENCE THE PROCESS OF LEARNING
FOREIGN LANGUAGES AND SOME POTENTIAL EFFECTS OF
MULTILINGUALISM**

AMRA KUREŠEPI

Mentor: red. prof. dr. Janez Skela

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ABSTRACT

Amra Kurešepi

Factors that Influence the Process of Learning Foreign Languages and Some Potential Effects of Multilingualism

This MA dissertation looks into the factors that mostly influence the process of foreign language learning/acquisition, and into some effects of multilingual practice. It reveals how certain cognitive factors, such as age, personality characteristics, intelligence and aptitude, facilitate or hinder language learning processes, what the role of motivation and attitude during foreign language learning is, and in what ways formal and informal approaches can contribute to becoming fluent and/or accurate user of a particular foreign language. It also points out some benefits of multilingual practice together with its potential drawbacks which may occur at some points when simultaneously operating more than two foreign languages. The background and the motive for the topic of this dissertation is my own experience with learning foreign languages, which is further analyzed together with the experiences of six other multilingual speakers through long semi-structured interviews. The analyses of the interviews show that high expectations and low exposure to a target foreign language as well as time pressure mostly cause anxiety and discomforts in the process of its acquisition. Strong motivation, both instrumental and integrative, can serve as the tool for overcoming potential difficulties especially in cases when a person lacks some language learning aptitude.

Keywords: multilingualism, foreign language learning/acquisition, factors of language learning/acquisition, effects of multilingualism

IZVLEČEK

Amra Kurešepi

Dejavniki, ki vplivajo na proces učenja tujih jezikov in nekaj morebitnih učinkov večjezičnosti

Magistrsko delo se osredotoča na dejavnike, ki vplivajo na proces učenja/usvajanja tujih jezikov, in na nekatere učinke večjezične prakse. Razkriva, kako določeni kognitivni dejavniki, kot so starost, osebnostne lastnosti, inteligenca in sposobnost usvajanja tujega jezika, olajšujejo ali zavirajo procese učenja, kakšna je vloga motivacije in odnosa do učenja tujega jezika med samim učenjem, ter na kakšen način lahko formalni in neformalni pristopi prispevajo k tekočnosti in pravilnosti pri rabi določenega tujega jezika. Magistrsko delo prav tako opozarja na nekatere prednosti večjezične prakse in njene morebitne pomanjkljivosti, ki se lahko pojavijo ob sočasni rabi več kot dveh tujih jezikov. Ozadje in motivacija za tematiko pričujočega magistrskega dela izvira iz moje osebne izkušnje z učenjem tujih jezikov, ki je v nadaljevanju nadgrajena in analizirana ob pomoči daljših polstrukturiranih intervjujev. Analiza intervjujev kaže, da lahko velika pričakovanja, nizka izpostavljenost jeziku in časovni pristisk povzročijo tesnobo in nelagodje v postopku usvajanja tujega jezika. Navkljub temu pa lahko močna motivacija, tako instrumentalna kot integrativna, služi kot orodje za premagovanje morebitnih težav, zlasti v primerih, ko posamezniku primanjkuje sposobnosti/dojemljivosti/nadarjenosti za usvajanja tujega jezika.

Ključne besede: večjezičnost, učenje/usvajanje tujih jezikov, dejavniki učenja/usvajanja tujih jezikov, učinki večjezičnosti

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1. INTRODUCTION

Having diverse experiences with learning foreign languages at different ages and in various circumstances has made me think deeply and analyze those processes by comparing them with each other – for example, comparing the process of learning English and Slovenian, and by comparing them with the experiences of other people who have also been learning two and more languages in various ways and at different stages of their lives.

Therefore, the topic under discussion and analysis in this master thesis is related to the factors that mainly impact foreign language learning processes and afterwards to the outcomes of the aforementioned language learning processes. That is, how the particular language learning process has influenced the degree of proficiency and accuracy of that language, and what are the benefits or drawbacks regarding the practical purposes (work, everyday communication) and regarding the more personal or cognitive issues (metalinguistic awareness, communicative sensitivity) when regularly operating more than two foreign languages.

The thesis is divided into theoretical and empirical parts, both of which critically try to find answers to the questions like: what can facilitate or hinder the acquisition/learning of a particular language and how can the knowledge of multiple languages impact one's everyday life. In the theoretical part, I have examined and reviewed the literature on the issues related to multilingualism, whereas in the empirical part I have analyzed the practical experiences of some multilingual people.

By highlighting some useful elements, this research may be helpful to the people who are currently faced with learning foreign languages for whichever purposes. Pointing out the obstacles which are common in the process of learning foreign languages as well as hinting at some solutions, may help learners become more successful. Also, the exposition of some crucial advantages concerning multilingual practice may motivate them to persist and therefore facilitate their language learning processes.

2. THE THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

2.1. Defining multilingualism

The most common definition of the term *multilingualism* is being able to use three or more languages (Kemp 2009: 11). But then questions arise about how languages can be counted, are there any criteria that an individual should fulfil in order to be considered as the speaker of a particular language (*ibid.*: 18). Kemp in her research points out that researchers need to opt for the criteria as the degree of proficiency and functional capability of a particular language (*ibid.*). But the proficiency in each language that a person uses may be different and vary occasionally (Herdina and Jessner 2002, quoted in Kemp 2009: 12), which further means that this criterion can't be taken for granted because it is not consistent and there is not a specific unit of measurement that everyone agrees about. Also if taking into consideration *functional capability* as a criterion, it could be noticed that a person may use different languages for different roles and functions and no matter whether s/he speaks three or more languages s/he is still considered as multilingual (Kemp 2009: 12). This is why it is difficult to come up with a more specific definition of multilingualism. Recent researches from scientists who follow educational or psycholinguistic traditions have a tendency to agree on defining multilingualism as the ability to operate with three or more languages to some extent no matter for which purposes and in which area (*ibid.*: 16). But the distinctions between multilinguals in terms of language use are as notable as the ones between monolinguals and bilinguals (*ibid.*: 23). Therefore, some researchers differentiate multilinguals based on how many languages they speak and use Latin or Greek prefixes to indicate the number of languages (*ibid.*). For example by using Latin prefixes it would be: *unilingual*, *bilingual*, *trilingual*, *quadrilingual*, *quinquelingual*, *sextilingual*, *septilingual*, *octilingual*, *nonilingual*, and *decilingual* (*ibid.*). These are precise terms for classifying multilingual speakers although it is still easier just to state how many languages an individual knows (*ibid.*).

2.2. The process of becoming multilingual

Acquiring several languages is a complex and dynamic process (Cenoz and Jessner 2009: 124). There are two possible ways of acquiring different languages: simultaneous (learning different languages at the same time) and consecutive (learning languages one after another) (*ibid.*). In the process of becoming bilingual there are only two options: simultaneous

learning of two languages in early ages and second language acquisition when two languages are learned one after another (*ibid.*). In the process of becoming multilingual, however, there could be many more possibilities involved; the more languages an individual operates with the more possibilities are involved (*ibid.*). For example, in third language acquisition there are four options described in Cenoz (2000):

- a) simultaneous acquisition of L1/L2/L3,
- b) consecutive acquisition of L1, L2 and L3,
- c) simultaneous acquisition of L2/L3 after learning the L1,
- d) simultaneous acquisition of L1/L2 before learning the L3 (Cenoz 2000, quoted in Cenoz and Jessner 2009: 125).

Therewithal, on the way of becoming multilingual there are a lot of factors that may facilitate or hinder its process and some of the most common will be discussed below.

2.3. Factors that facilitate and/or hinder the process of learning foreign languages

2.3.1. Cognitive factors that mostly influence the process of learning foreign languages

A) Age

Cognitive maturity plays a big role when it comes to learning a foreign language. This role differentiate with young and old second language learners for the reason that young learners still don't have general knowledge about the world and are less metalinguistically aware than the older ones who have already gained some real world experience (Lightbown and Spada 2006: 31). This point of view is kind of in favour to older or more experienced second language learners because they are already able to think critically and talk about a particular foreign language, which further leads them to fruitful language discussions (*ibid.*). However, when taking into consideration that after childhood there is a critical period for language acquisition, it can be suggested that older second language learners tend to make the most out of these language discussions (*ibid.*). They do it because at their age they already lack the innate language acquisition ability, which younger learners still have and which they draw on not only when acquiring their mother tongue but also in case they acquire two foreign languages simultaneously (*ibid.*). This is why learners' age is considered as one of the

cognitive factors that mostly affects the process of simultaneous learning of two foreign languages. Nevertheless, this does not necessarily mean that young learners are more successful at learning two foreign languages simultaneously than the older ones or vice versa because there are other interrelated cognitive factors as well, such as personality and intelligence, which will be further discussed.

B) Personality characteristics

Personality characteristics together with other cognitive, motivational, and social factors have a crucial contribution to successful or unsuccessful second language learning and to the learning of two foreign languages at once (Lightbown and Spada 2006: 60). When analyzing learners' personalities, researchers and educators usually examine features related to extroversion and introversion, assuming that extroverted learners have greater results at learning foreign languages than the introverted ones (*ibid.*: 61). Extroverts are more assertive and adventurous which boosts willingness to risk-taking and consequently ensures them more speaking practice, whereas introverts are more inhibited learners who use to be silent and hesitate to take risks (*ibid.*). This confirms the empirical assumption that risk-taking personalities are in a way predisposed to be more successful language learners, especially when it comes to assessing learners' pronunciation, which needs a lot of space and talking time in order to be mastered (*ibid.*).

The level of anxiety is another issue worthy of being discussed as a personal characteristic of a foreign language learner, although, it is usually not permanent and it is determined by particular conditions (*ibid.*). Learners may bring anger and nervousness due to personal reasons into the language learning environment and therefore hinder the learning process, but it may also occur, for example, due to the upcoming oral presentation (*ibid.*). The latest one is short-term nervousness and it can have both positive and negative impact to the current situation, as Alla' Hussain Oda (2011: 3) defines it: "anxiety is a state which can have both negative and positive effects, and which motivates and facilitates as well as disrupting and inhibiting cognitive actions such as learning." As a result, MacIntyre (1995, quoted in Alla' Hussain Oda 2011: 3) presents two kinds of anxiety: facilitating and debilitating anxiety. Moreover, anxiety can also occur in the long run when learning two foreign languages at the same time but in this case it mainly depends on motivation and language aptitude whether it will turn into facilitating or debilitating anxiety (MacIntyre and Gardner 1991, quoted in Alla' Hussain Oda 2011: 3). This further means that learning outcome may vary with particular

languages. If it turns into facilitating anxiety when learning one foreign language its outcome may be successful, if not, when learning another foreign language, its outcome may be unsuccessful (see figure 1).

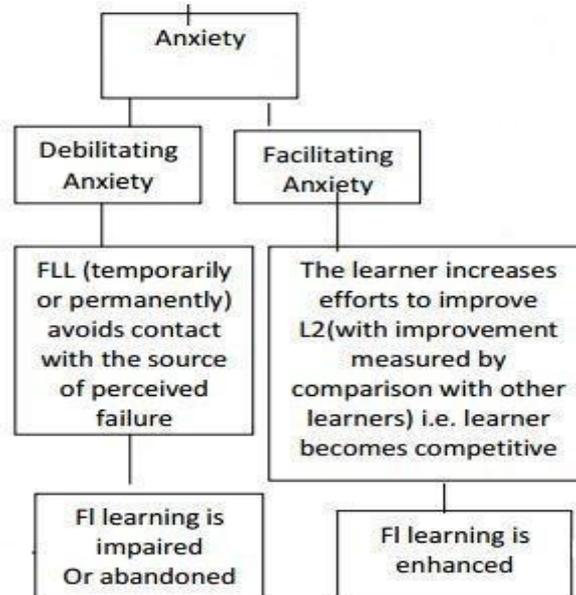


Figure 1: The Types of Learner’s Anxiety (Bailey 1983; quoted in Alla’ Hussain Oda 2011: 4)

C) Intelligence and aptitude

Other tightly interrelated cognitive factors that add value to successful foreign languages learning are intelligence and aptitude. Intelligent learners are the ones who usually reach high scores at various intelligence tests, have high grades at school and are most probably prosperous language learners as well (Lightbown and Spada 2006: 57). However, when it comes to learning foreign languages, the above mentioned definition applies more to language analyses and rule learning than to communication skills, because a number of reasearches conducted in this area have shown that a lot of weak students become fluent in new languages if learning conditions are suitable for them (*ibid.*). This can be related to the existance of different types of intelligence as described in Gardener’s Theory of Multiple Intelligences: visual-spatial intelligence, linguistic-verbal intelligence, logical-mathematical intelligence, bodily-kinesthetic intelligence, musical intelligence, interpersonal intelligence, intrapersonal intelligence and naturalistic inteligence (Cherry 2019). So those ‘weak’ students may have high linguistic-verbal intelligence and opt for the right opportunities to use their potentials and improve their skills in the area of foreign languages.

Furthermore, another common feature of multilingual students is language learning aptitude which Carroll (1991, quoted in Lightbown and Spada 2006: 57) puts into words as "the ability to learn (languages) quickly". There are several aptitude tests among which the most well known are the Modern Language Aptitude Test (MLAT) and the Pimsleur Language Aptitude Battery (PLAB) (Pimsleur 1996, quoted in Lightbown and Spada 2006: 58). But, to make it simpler, Lightbown and Spada (2006: 58) have summarized four constituents that build up almost all aptitude tests: "the ability to (1) identify and memorize new sounds, (2) understand the function of particular words in sentences, (3) figure out grammatical rules from language samples, and (4) remember new words." However, the opinions of researchers and the results of findings are divided (*ibid.*). Some teachers, who used to practise communicative approach to teaching foreign languages, came up to the conclusion that learners should not necessarily possess any of the above mentioned aptitude components in order to succeed at learning foreign languages, whereas others proved that bright language learners possess at least one of the above mentioned aptitude components, as for example being good at analyzing languages grammar (*ibid.*). This further suggests that being gifted language learner does not guarantee success at becoming a fluent speaker of a particular language, which also confirms the case study on a correlation between intelligence, language aptitude and achievement in foreign language acquisition, conducted by Andrew (n.d.) whose participants were twenty-five third-grade Gymnasium students in Leborg. He also found out that low intelligence can neither hinder nor help the students to become fluent foreign language users but that possessing the skill of language learning aptitude can help the students more than intelligence alone in the process of becoming bi or multilingual (Andrew n.d.). It is interesting that motivation as a mover, which will be touched upon in the next chapter, can outweigh the intellectual drawbacks of an individual and help them reach language learning targets (*ibid.*).

2.3.2. The role of motivation and attitude in foreign language learning

While language aptitude is mostly connected to deliberate foreign language learning, language attitude is particularly connected to subconscious acquisition of foreign languages Krashen (1981: 19). Attitudinal factors are the ones that boost foreign language absorption by making people want to interact with speakers of the language they want to learn, typically with the ones with whom they feel secure and opened to acquisition, and in that way ensure necessary language intake through communication (*ibid.*: 21). Pratkanis (1989: 75, quoted in

Al-Musand 2018: 163) states that positive attitudes influence positive actions while negative attitudes do the opposite. Therefore, having a positive attitude towards the target language is important because it directly influences positive views and behaviours in second language acquisition and motivates potential learners to master it.

When it comes to simultaneous learning of two foreign languages, attitudes as well as motivation towards particular languages may differ in terms of learners' needs and wants. If learners' goal to master a particular foreign language is only for practical purposes it may mean that language acquisition can die away once they acquire enough for fulfilling their needs (Krashen 1981: 22). Such foreign language learners are said to be instrumentally motivated and Krashen (1981: 22) defines this type of motivation as "the desire to achieve proficiency in a language for utilitarian or practical reasons". This type of motivation can result in successful foreign language acquisition if high proficiency and continual verbal foreign language interaction is required for professional reasons (*ibid.*: 23). On the other hand, integrative motivation, defined by Krashen (1981: 22) as "the desire to be like valued members of the community that speak the second language", is the type of motivation where language learning is mainly directed towards self improvement and cultural enlightening (Lightbown and Spada 2006: 64). This further implies that high foreign language proficiency lasts as long as learners are exposed to and have desire to communicate at least with some of the speakers of a target language. Also, positive attitude towards the culture of a target language and experiences with foreign language intake amount, largely contribute to the dose of instrumental motivation and consequently to language proficiency. Other issues related to significant approaches in the process of becoming multilingual will be discussed in the following section.

2.3.3. Common approaches of becoming fluent and accurate user of a particular foreign language

Becoming the user of one, two, three or more foreign languages is a process that requires a lot of dedication, time and effort. However, adequate learning conditions considering learning environment and language learning approaches, where conscious learning and subconscious acquisition can smoothly supplement each other, are vital for fruitful outcomes of foreign language learning procedure. In classroom settings, where a formal approach to language learning prevails, expectations to become an accurate and fluent user of a target foreign

language are high presumably because of the effort invested from both teacher and student side. Also, the formal foreign language approach is characterized by formal structure of time, place and progress notes, which usually keeps students focused and disciplined but if language learning process becomes very rigid, there are chances that students may turn out to be discouraged (Nield 2014). Unlike formal approach, informal approach has to do with subconscious learning of new words and language structures where teachers or speakers of a particular foreign language have more relaxed and less formal attitudes towards potential learners of that language (*ibid.*). Typical example for this kind of approach would be total immersion method, also called as the sink or swim way of learning a language (Melissa n.d.). This is a simple method where learners receive the target language input and are expected to automatically convey their messages into that language, which at first sounds impossible because learners are practically not able to communicate, but by being exposed to high language input they gradually absorb it – they ‘swim’, or, if there is an influence of other factors such as negative attitude and low motivation, they abandon it – they ‘sink’ (*ibid.*). One multilingual English and Spanish teacher who challenged herself to learn Italian by moving to an Italian host family and used to spend all days communicating in Italian, which she previously had studied only for a few weeks, shared her experience:

I still vividly remember the frustration of not being able to communicate my needs or socialise in a normal way for the first few days. I would collapse exhausted into my bed each night, with new words and phrases swirling round my head. But after a couple of days, things already began to get easier. I started discerning words from the hopeless jumble of speech around me. And no sooner was I learning it than I was using it myself in a new context. I picked up the phrases and intonation real people use, not the irrelevant or over-formal material you often learn in traditional language classes.

(Melissa n.d.)

From her experience it can be noted that her exposure to real language was high as well as need to convey messages, but expectations to be fluent and accurate were low since she had just moved and, as Krashen (1981: 22) points out, there was not a risk of feeling competitive and insecure which further contributes to becoming more inclined to offhand acquisition rather than vigilant learning. However, in order to be prepared for some more formal communication and accurate writing, structured teaching and learning is inevitable. As can be seen, multilingual speakers of different ages experience different ways and approaches of learning foreign languages, the more languages they speak and more experiences they go

through, different shapes as persons they get. Some of the outcomes of multilingualism on a personal level will be discussed in the next chapter.

2.4. Effect of multilingualism

2.4.1. Advantages of multilingualism in terms of cognitive and sociopragmatic development

Nowadays being multilingual is considered as an advantage not only in terms of being able to express oneself in more than two languages but also in terms of cognitive and sociopragmatic development (Cenoz and Jessner 2009: 126). Thus speakers of more than two languages are considered to have an amplified level of metalinguistic and metacognitive awareness, are creative thinkers while problem solving, are sensitive in communication and have an advantage over monolinguals at further language learning (*ibid.*). Kleeck (1982: 239) describes metalinguistic awareness as ‘the object of thought’ as an alternative to ‘the object’ for transmitting the thought into discourse. Put simply, being metalinguistically aware means having the skill to think and discuss about the language (Euch and Huot 2015: 2). On the other hand, metacognitive awareness or consciousness is a broader notion than metalinguistic awareness because it refers to all cognitive processes including meta-memory, meta-learning, metalinguistics, meta-attention and meta-social cognition, that allow people to monitor and think through the way they learn (*ibid.*). By activating metacognitive skills people activate their production and presentation skills in divergent occasions, which further implies that those who have higher metacognitive abilities perform better in any situation that involve cognitive actions (*ibid.*). Some of the best known metacognitive skills are: self-regulation, planning and self-management, which are considered as advantageous characteristics for potential employees especially for teachers because besides applying them in teaching contexts they further equip future generations with those skills (Euch and Huot 2015: 4). It is also important that language teachers develop and promote metalinguistic awareness because it facilitates learners to communicate more eloquently and confidently in any context (*ibid.*).

Moreover, concerning communicative sensitivity as an advantage to the speakers of several languages, Sun and Sallahuddin (2016: 4) point out that multilingual children usually show higher willingness to speak, have stronger self-confidence than their peers and become less

frustrated when making mistakes because they have control over their language output. Consequently, multilinguals are more receptive to details in communication (May, Hill and Tiakiwai 2004, quoted in Sun and Sallahuddin 2016: 4), have more influential social communication competences, broadened visions and perspectives (Sun and Sallahuddin 2016: 4). Likewise, as multilingual people have to combine and sort out information of multiple languages, Kormi-Nouri, Moniri and Nilson (2003, quoted in Sun and Sallahuddin 2016: 3) argue that it further contributes to episodic and semantic memory enhancement, and the researchers of Belgian University in Ghent, while conducting a study related to how multilinguals benefit in terms of memory enhancement and its mental health issues, established that it can also prevent and postpone some neurodegenerative diseases like Alzheimer's and dementia (Sun and Sallahuddin 2016: 3).

As far as advantages over monolinguals at further language learning are concerned, several studies of third language acquisition showed that bilingualism positively influences third language acquisition because of the so called 'bilingual awareness' (McCarthy 1994, quoted in Cenoz and Jessner 2009: 126), which is considered as precondition for the successful acquisition of more foreign languages (Cenoz and Jessner 2009: 126). Cenoz and Jessner (2009: 126) also pointed out that metalinguistic and metacognitive awareness, as well as the experience of multilingual students in language learning processes mentioned by McLaughlin (1990, quoted in Cenoz and Jessner 2009: 127), contribute in the development of the advantageous language learning strategies at further language learning. Kemp (2001, quoted in Cenoz and Jessner 2009: 127) also confirmed that multilinguals use diverse strategies for learning foreign language grammar and that's why they acquire it more rapidly. She concluded in her study that the enhancement of strategy utilization considerably increases while acquiring third foreign language (Kemp 2007, quoted in Cenoz and Jessner 2009: 127).

2.4.2. Some debates about the cognitive consequences of active multilinguals

Active multilinguals are those who on a daily basis use more foreign languages for whichever purposes, at home, work or just for socializing. Besides many advantages mentioned above, there are also some consequences which occur at the cost of speaking several languages. Taking into account the fact that speaking several languages was firstly considered to be disruptive for persons' cognitive and emotional development and that people perceived it as a menace to their personal and cultural identity it is logical that some less pleasant experiences

were taking place in the background of multilingualism (Wilton 2009: 47). Dunabeitia (2017: 75) states that multilingual people usually experience the state called *emotional diglossia*. Miller (2018) further explains that people mostly learn about the life by means of the language and they are generally immersed in their native language during the greatest part of their lives so from the very beginning they acquire native feeling on how to behave in various circumstances. This means that our brains have been moulded by different experiences that came across while using our mother tongue, as for example when using it for talking about taboo issues the emotional response is heightened, so the activation of the previously experienced emotions becomes habitual in our mother tongue and thus we become emotionally attached mostly to our mother tongue (*ibid.*). While people acquire native languages within a family foreign language learning and acquisition is usually standardized in more formal contexts where methods and materials are pre-planned in accordance with the needs of learning groups, which may lead to the lack of spontaneity and authentic everyday communication (Dunabeitia 2017: 75). Because of it learners may perceive a foreign language as emotionally distant to them and "develop a certain level of emotional detachment to the language" as well as "an affective detachment in the use of a language that is foreign and not present in one's usual environment", which further contributes to making people relate differently to their foreign language environment and themselves (*ibid.*). For example, adults often use one or two foreign languages at work and native one at home and therefore they experience slight lack of emotional harmony in terms of the language use during the day. Aforementioned lack of harmony is called emotional diglossia that has an impact on human behaviour by influencing fundamental mental decision-making processes (*ibid.*).

2.4.3. The impact of multilingualism on decision-making process

The view of the fact that emotions are directly connected with the decision-making process and that speaking different languages influences our emotional system, further implies that multilingualism influences decision-making process as well (Miller 2018). The basic everyday decisions of people usually stem from implicit, habitual and emotional reactions because the part of the brain that is responsible for decision-making process is faster in reacting than other parts of the cortex (*ibid.*). Considering the difference of emotional attachment to native and foreign language it can be stated that the decisions of people may vary in the context of the foreign language and their mother tongue (Dunabeitia 2017: 75). Dunabeitia (2017: 75) argues about an instance on how recent researches observed the

decisional behaviour of a native Spanish speaker with an average knowledge of English acquired mainly in classroom circumstances and stated that it would be differently adapted in contexts of native Spanish speaking environment and foreign English speaking environment. He further adds that self-perception as well as the perception of the world largely depends on whether an individual is in his native or foreign language context because "this multilingual individual would take more deliberate decisions and suffer a reduced impact of intuition and of certain heuristics when confronted with a foreign-language scenario than when immersed in a native-language processing context" (Dunabeitia 2017: 75). This emotional distance from foreign language is "responsible for using a more rational system and less guided by affective-emotional impulses" and therefore for making more rational and less intuitional decisions in foreign language contexts, which can be in favour to people in some situations that require suchlike decisions (*ibid.*). But in other situations, that require intuitional response, these excessively rational decisions may be misleading and non-authentic. Given these points, a question arises on how the emotional distance that foreign languages evoke could be alleviated (Dunabeitia 2017: 76). Dunabeitia (2017: 76) suggests the way of working on the development of actions that promote emotional content in foreign language contexts and thus try to develop the emotional attachment to the foreign language, similar to the one developed to the mother tongue. Various international laboratories are also exploring this issue but that is out of scope of this master thesis.

3. THE EMPIRICAL STUDY

3.1. Methodology

3.1.1. Interview (Description)

For the purposes of this study, and to acquire more authentic answers from the participants, the semi-structured interview has been chosen as the most appropriate method. The interview is composed of the introduction and two additional parts. The introduction part contains basic information about the participants (i.e. the subjects' ethnographic data) and their language learning backgrounds and is formulated equally for all participants. The first part is comprised of the questions regarding the foreign language learning experiences of the

participants, and the second part contains more individual questions regarding the fact that multilingualism influences some personal issues in one's everyday life.

The more general questions were prepared in advance, but they were further adapted with respect to the fulfilled introduction section since the background of each participant is different, and according to the answers given during the first and the second part of the interview. The introduction part was sent to the participants in advance and once I got back the fulfilled version of it, I was ready to start the interview. With some participants some questions were left out due to their time limitations, and with some other participants extra sub-questions were added in order to gather more precise information. The interview lasted approximately ninety minutes with each participant and it was in the form of online chat.

3.1.2. Sample

The sample consists of six different subjects, one of them being bilingual – speaking two foreign languages on a daily basis, another participant actively speaks two foreign languages and uses two other foreign languages on A2 level for some basic communication and shopping, and four of them are active trilinguals and have some knowledge of a fourth foreign language (between A2 and B1 level) as well. They vary in terms of their cultural background, place of birth, place of living and mother tongue. They are also people from different walks of life in terms of their education, and aged between twenty-four and thirty-one years.

The first participant is a twenty-four-year-old female student of Biochemistry from Croatia who came to Ljubljana one year ago to continue her master studies. Her mother tongue is Croatian, she started learning English as a child, and a year ago she was immersed in the Slovenian speaking environment and started acquiring Slovenian at great speed. She uses English mostly for academic purposes whereas she uses Slovenian both for academic purposes and in day-to-day communication while living in Slovenia. She usually goes back home to Croatia for weekends and there she mainly uses her mother tongue.

The second participant is a twenty-six-year-old female teacher of English and Spanish from Ljubljana. Her mother tongue is Slovenian and she also actively uses English and Spanish at work, whereas she uses Italian mainly for shopping in Italy and Croatian for communication

when going on summer holidays to Croatia. She started learning English and Spanish as school subjects in grade Five of primary school, continued to learn them throughout primary and secondary school, and then went on to study them in the Double-Subject Study Programme of English and Spanish at the university, where she eventually obtained her master degree in English and Spanish. She has lived with Spanish native speakers for one year in Ljubljana but didn't have a lot of informal touch with English, whereas the use of Italian and Croatian was merely coincidental and informal.

The third participant is a twenty-nine-year-old manager from Kosovo who moved to Ljubljana eleven years ago and continued the fourth year of high school in Ljubljana. He then took the matriculation examination in Ljubljana and obtained his bachelor's as well as master's degree of International Business at the Faculty of Economics in Ljubljana. His mother tongue is Bosnian which he uses at home as well as for job purposes. While working, he daily uses English, Slovenian and Albanian since he works in a multicultural company. Besides work, he also uses Slovenian and Albanian for communicating with friends and some relatives whereas he uses English for informal communication with his colleagues. He started learning English and Albanian as a child, and Slovenian when he moved to Slovenia. He also has some basic knowledge of German.

The fourth participant is a thirty-one-year-old female from Macedonia who moved to Slovenia when she was ten years old. Her mother tongue is Macedonian and she started learning Slovenian in the fifth grade of primary school in Ljubljana, English when she was eight years old by attending a private language course, and then in the elementary school as a school subject. She also started learning Serbian when she moved to Slovenia mostly by watching TV, reading magazines and speaking with her friends, as well as Spanish by watching serials and then attending a Spanish language course when she was twenty years old. Besides her mother tongue, she daily uses English, Slovenian and Serbian for both formal job purposes and informal private purposes. She obtained a master's degree in Organizational Sciences and works as a stock manager in a multicultural company.

The fifth participant is a Bosnian citizen who moved to Germany three years ago and currently works as a software engineer in Munich. His mother tongue is Bosnian and the most recent language he started to learn by attending private language courses and by acquiring it from his colleagues is German. He also speaks English, Albanian and Turkish from his

childhood, was learning English and Albanian mostly in school settings while acquiring Turkish in an informal way by watching Turkish TV programmes and then communicating with people in Turkish speaking environment since he was a child. Today, he rarely uses Albanian but he regularly uses English and German for job purposes and Turkish for socializing.

The sixth participant is a twenty-seven-year-old female English teacher from Kosovo who moved to Ljubljana four years ago. Her mother tongue is Bosnian and since she comes from a multinational city of Kosovo she speaks Albanian and Turkish to some extent, which are official languages in Kosovo. She started learning English and Albanian in primary school as school subjects, attended private English courses and acquired more of Albanian during her studies because of being in informal touch with Albanian people. She started acquiring Slovenian when she moved to Ljubljana and has been attending Slovene language courses for one year. On a daily basis, she is mostly in touch with English due to some formal purposes, with Albanian and Slovenian due to both formal and informal purposes.

3.2. Research aims and design

The main purpose of this study was to observe and show what may lead to multilingual competence or lack of proficiency, how individuals' knowledge of one foreign language is different from his or her knowledge of another foreign language because of variations during the learning process, and whether people can cognitively benefit or experience some inconveniences as a result of multilingual practice. The variables under the study, which generally influence the level of each foreign language competence and reveal how multilingualism cognitively impacts one's everyday life, are:

A)

1. extroversion and introversion in the language learning process,
2. formal and informal way of learning languages,
3. anxiety present during the language learning process,
4. aptitude for learning foreign languages,
5. the impact of general intelligence and academic success on foreign language acquisition,

B)

6. emotional attachment to or detachment from a certain foreign language,

7. multilingualism and metalinguistic awareness,
8. multilingualism and the decision-making process,
9. inconveniences which can occur on the account of multilingual practice.

The above mentioned issues under A will be taken into account when observing why some of the participants are successful and fully competent users of a particular foreign language and why some others are not that competent in particular languages or language skills. Moreover, the aspects under B will be taken into consideration when analysing some impacts of multilingualism on a more personal level. Checking up of all variables was mainly through the participants' self-evaluation since I considered that all of them are old and mature enough to give objective and sincere answers. The variables may vary throughout the learning process and the answers of the participants may be in a complete opposite when asked the same question for two different languages. This does not hold true for the variable under five and seven because the impact of general intelligence and academic success usually impacts the learning of whichever foreign language, and if multilingual awareness increases it increases due to the acquisition of whichever foreign language or languages. After gathering the information about the aforementioned variables, the participants were asked to compare the fluency and accuracy of each particular language, with the exception of the languages about whose fluency and accuracy I could infer/deduce from the context of the previously given answers.

3.3. Research questions

I have formed the research questions below based on the theory examined about multilingual practice and I have tried to answer them based on the interviewees' answers in the following research. The research questions, which will be further discussed and answered, are:

1. Are extroverts more successful language learners than introverts?
2. Which way of learning foreign languages is more fruitful, formal or informal?
3. In which cases is anxiety usually present during foreign language learning and why?
4. To what extent do aptitude, general intelligence and academic success impact foreign language acquisition?
5. Do people make more rational and less intuitive decisions in the use of the language to which they are not emotionally attached?

6. Is there any connection between multilingualism and metalinguistic awareness?
7. Why do some inconveniences occur on the account of multilingual practice?

3.4. The interview questions

The questions which I used while carrying out the semi-structured interview with the participants of this study are divided into two parts. The questions in the first part of the interview look into the process of learning foreign languages whereas the questions in the second part examine some potential effects of multilingualism.

Part 1

1. Do you consider yourself to be an extroverted or an introverted learner of foreign languages?
2. Did you experience any anxiety during the learning process of whichever foreign language?
3. Do you consider yourself as talented for learning foreign languages? Why do you think so?
4. What about the grades from other school subjects during your education? For example, were you brilliant at Maths or anything else?
5. What is and what was your attitude like towards each of the foreign languages that you speak?
6. Do you think that you are a more fluent or a more accurate user of each foreign language separately?

Part 2

7. Do you think that you have more control over your language use (considering your mother tongue) since you have become multilingual?
8. Did you maybe notice that the knowledge of multiple languages has any influence on your planning, problem-solving and self-regulation strategies?
9. What about your communicative sensitivity? Do you subconsciously notice details in communication?
10. Beside your mother tongue, are you emotionally attached to any other language? If yes, to which one and why?

11. Do you consider any of the foreign languages that you speak as emotionally distant to you and why?
12. Do you think that you make more reasonable and rational decisions in the foreign language context than in the native language context? (Give an example, if any)
13. Do you feel that your intuition plays a larger part in the decision-making process while using and being surrounded with your native language? (Give an example, if any)
14. Did you experience any inconvenience or discomfort concerning your multilingual practice?

The additional explanations and examples were provided for most of the questions above and elicitation was applied when needed, in cases when the answers were too short, off topic or some useful information was noticed under the surface.

3.5. Analysis of data

3.5.1. Interpretation of the variables of the study

Further interpretation of the variables under the study refers to:

- Whether the interviewed participants were more extroverted or introverted learners of foreign languages, in which situations they were more extroverted, and in which more introverted learners or speakers.
- What kind of experiences they reported related to the formal ways, and what kind of experiences to informal ways of learning languages, along with the comparison of their competence in those languages.
- In which cases the learners experienced anxiety during the process of learning languages, and why they experienced it.
- Did the talented foreign language learners acquire foreign languages faster and more qualitatively in comparison to the other participants who consider themselves to be less talented in foreign language learning.
- How they have been learning the foreign languages, which language they are more emotionally attached to, in which circumstances they use them the most, and do they

make more intuitive decisions in the surroundings where the language to which they are more emotionally attached is spoken.

- In which points their metalinguistic awareness is reflected and its examples related to multilingual practice.
- Which inconveniences and discomforts may be experienced on the account of the foreign language learning procedure and daily practice.

3.5.2. Presentation and analysis of participants' responses

Participant 1

Part 1

- The woman is an extroverted learner of both foreign languages that she speaks.
- She was learning English mainly in formal settings.
- She was learning Slovene by being immersed in Slovene speaking circumstances.
- She becomes a little bit frustrated while using English in real life situations in cases when she cannot remember the most appropriate word at the given moment.
- She is sometimes not confident about expressing herself in Slovene because of the lack of proper lessons.
- She experiences some anxiety when speaking Slovene with her colleagues, but not with her professors because they know that she has started learning it recently.
- She seems talented for learning foreign languages since she considered English as her favourite subject and acquired a lot of Slovenian in a relatively short period of time.
- She seems quite intelligent and successful since she was an excellent student during the primary and secondary school.
- She has always had a positive attitude towards English and shows willingness to improve it further.
- She describes herself to be a more fluent than an accurate user of English because she is not always sure whether she used the most appropriate past tense or pronounced the word correctly.
- She is more fluent in the Slovene language as well.

- She also points out that she is more confident when speaking English but since she has been speaking Slovenian for almost a year without many opportunities for speaking English, she feels that it became easier for her to speak Slovenian but write in English.

Part 2

Regarding the control of language use, the woman reported that she mixed up her languages in the beginning when she started learning Slovene, but after some time she gained more control and became more eloquent when speaking her native language as well. She also points out that it became much easier for her to understand people and circumstances, express and organize herself more skilfully and that she shows more confidence in communication because she easily organizes her speech. She considers herself to be emotionally attached to English because she has been using it for a long period of time and because of English music, books and movies. She is not so emotionally attached to Slovene and thus she considers that her decisions are more reasonable in Slovene speaking environment because she feels less secure than in her native surroundings. As far as inconveniences and discomforts are concerned with multilingual practice, the woman reported that she sometimes feels exhausted when she spends too much time speaking Slovenian because the brain makes more effort than when speaking her native language, and thus she feels relief when going home to Croatia, which of course becomes easier with time. She also feels more gentle and vulnerable when speaking Slovenian and more powerful when speaking English.

Participant 2

Part 1

- This woman reports that she used to be an extroverted speaker of English outside the classroom and to some extent introverted in the classroom.
- When speaking Spanish she used to be extroverted both in formal and informal settings. She is an extrovert in Croatian and Italian as well.
- She was experiencing some anxiety while speaking English in the classroom because she was afraid of not being as fluent and accurate as her colleagues.
- She has never experienced anxiety when using Spanish, Italian and Croatian.

- She considers herself talented for learning foreign languages because she quickly grasps grammar and syntax of foreign languages and used to spend little time for studying them.
- She was a quite successful student with other school subjects as well, except with science and math where she had to put more time and effort to pass tests.
- She has and always had positive attitudes towards the aforementioned languages because she loves to learn new languages and new things about foreign cultures and compare them with her own language and culture.
- She considers herself to be more accurate than fluent speakers of English, more fluent than accurate in Spanish, Italian and Croatian.

Part 2

The woman thinks that she has more control over her language use in general since she became multilingual, has felt more confident and powerful since speaking with a greater number of speakers from other countries or places. Besides her mother tongue, she is mostly emotionally attached to the Spanish language because she loves Spanish culture and lifestyle and has lived with Spanish native speakers for a year in Ljubljana. She feels that she is slightly emotionally distant to English because of the lack of proper experience abroad that would make her more emotionally attached to the language and its culture. She also points out that she can use her intuition better with her mother tongue where she is more aware of the subtle use of communication and strategies, which she still lacks in foreign language contexts. She did not experience any inconvenience or discomfort due to the multilingual practice beside the classroom context, where she sometimes struggled to communicate in English because she was afraid that she would sound strange or say something improper.

Participant 3

Part 1

- This man reported that he has always been an extroverted learner of foreign languages and has never been worried about making mistakes, only when he had to use foreign languages in some public appearances before which he had done a lot of preparation.

- He experienced a lot of anxiety when he started learning Slovene because of the pressure that the matriculation examination awaits him at the end of the year (after one year of learning Slovene) and that he may fail if he does not master Slovene.
- He is also sometimes frustrated when using English due to some business purposes and public appearances because he is afraid of not finding the right vocabulary at the right time. This happens only at the beginning of the speech, he experiences a lack of confidence, but once it starts, it goes well.
- When speaking Albanian, he does not feel frustrated, he is aware that he sometimes makes mistakes, but he warns his interlocutors of his mistakes and afterwards he freely communicates, does not feel the pressure anymore.
- He reports that the main difference in the process of learning English and Albanian is that he had more qualitative formal instructions in English but that he acquired Albanian more from his friends.
- He is sure that he is talented for acquiring foreign languages and loves acquiring them. His next goal is to improve German and learn Arabic.
- He was a strong student during primary and secondary school as well. He had the highest grades.
- At first, he had a neutral attitude towards English, Albanian and Slovenian, but after some time he developed a completely positive attitude towards all of them and started to enjoy using them.
- He is both fluent and accurate user of Slovene, and more fluent than accurate user of English and Albanian.

Part 2

This participant also reports that he can easily adjust his communication in whichever foreign language he operates in, and that the knowledge of foreign languages helped him explore the specifics of the cultures of those foreign languages, which facilitate his problem-solving process and planning with the different approaches. He also says that he is quite sensitive in communication and after noticing some changes in other persons' feelings and behaviour he starts paying more attention to his communication style, vocabulary and non-verbal communication. He considers Slovenian as his 'second-native' language and points out that he is emotionally quite attached to English as well which he relates to his success in professional and personal life. He makes more reasonable decisions in English speaking

surroundings whereas more intuitive ones in Slovene speaking surroundings, but the most intuitive decisions he usually makes in his native surroundings. He gave an interesting example related to his decisions in Albanian speaking context. By being responsible for the stock management of two Albanian speaking countries in his company, he noticed that he usually gives one hundred and ten percent of his efforts for these countries' demands in comparison to other countries' demands. However, he is not sure whether that is due to his emotional connection to Albanian language, his homesickness or due to the mix of both. As far as discomfort due to the multilingual practice is concerned, he says that he sometimes used to experience discomfort while he was still learning Slovenian and suddenly added some Bosnian words in communication without noticing it, people sometimes laughed at it. Also when explaining something from his professional field by using his native language, he cannot remember the right word in his native language and adds a Slovene or English word instead, which is the reason why some of his friends make fun of it.

Participant 4

Part 1

- This woman is sure that she was an extroverted student of all foreign languages, saying that she was aware of making mistakes but considered them as part of the learning process.
- She mostly experienced anxiety when she started learning Slovene due to her moving from Macedonia to Slovenia in the fifth grade of primary school, but then afterwards the anxiety gradually disappeared. She says that she is still learning Slovene and is making mistakes even today, after twenty years, but those who know her have accepted her mistakes as part of her.
- She also says that she is definitely not talented for learning foreign languages even though she somehow loves to learn them. She would be prepared to learn German but in a more enjoyable way – by watching television shows with German subtitles, listening to German songs, reading magazines or baby books in German.
- She is a more fluent than accurate user of all three foreign languages that she usually operates with.

Part 2

This participant points out that she sometimes has a feeling that she does not have control over her language use at all and that she easily mixes the languages. Especially when she goes to Macedonia, she needs several days to get used to speaking only Macedonian, and then the same happens when she needs to switch to Slovenian again. She also reported that her multilingual practice has some impact on her problem-solving strategy because when explaining something, she uses word meaning from other languages as well and thus the explaining becomes easier. Regarding self-confidence in communication and communicative sensitivity, she says that she became more relaxed while communicating and that she subconsciously observes the responses of other people on their faces while communicating. She is mostly emotionally connected to Slovenian and English. Slovenian because she considers it as her second mother tongue and English because she uses it on a daily basis along with Slovenian. As far as decision making is concerned in foreign language contexts, she reports that she needs to think twice before saying or doing something, whereas in her native surroundings, that is more spontaneous and intuitive. She does not experience any inconvenience or discomfort regarding the use of foreign languages because she habitually adapts her language use.

Participant 5

Part 1

- This man was an extroverted learner of all foreign languages.
- He experiences anxiety while learning German because he finds the language itself quite difficult, and since he lives in Germany he needs to acquire native like proficiency.
- He started to learn English earlier than German and has been learning it gradually, was using it more intensively during college and for work afterwards, whereas he started learning German three years ago in a formal way by going to language courses and formally participating in the classroom, which he considers unnatural.
- He does not consider himself as talented for learning foreign languages; he just learned the languages which he had to learn.
- He has a mostly positive attitude towards all foreign languages that he operates with.

- He reports that he is both fluent and accurate user of English, but more accurate than fluent user of German.

Part 2

He further argues that he started to better understand some words and their origins due to his multilingual practice, started to better understand people and their cultures which has also broadened his perspective. He is mostly emotionally attached to the Turkish language after his mother tongue, probably because it is the first foreign language that he had acquired. He has also reported that he has been acquiring Turkish informally during his childhood and that he considers Turkish an easy language for learning. As far as decision making process is concerned, he says that he usually thinks and makes decisions in his native language because he feels the most secure and thus considers that his decisions are the most appropriate. He has never felt any inconvenience or discomfort concerning his use of multiple languages.

Participant 6

Part 1

- This woman was a completely extroverted learner of foreign languages during the primary and secondary school, but during her bachelor studies she became an introvert in English and remained extroverted in Albanian.
- She experienced anxiety when first exposed to Albanian in primary school because of subconscious pressure, as well as during her English studies when she noticed that she is becoming more fluent in Albanian than English. The reason was a low exposure to authentic English. However, she has always been a more skilful writer of English.
- She does not have an idea whether she is talented for learning foreign languages, but is convinced that a qualitative opportunity for learning and the effort involved have the highest impact on how successfully you learn foreign languages.
- She has a positive attitude to each foreign language mainly because of the positive memories with the native speakers of those foreign languages.
- She is a more fluent user of Albanian, more accuracy oriented when speaking English in formal contexts and more fluency oriented when speaking with friends and acquaintances. She is not sure about Slovenian because it still varies since she started to acquire it frequently.

Part 2

This participant thinks that she has more control over her mother tongue due to multilingual practice but that she is not that skilful with foreign languages. Foreign language practice has contributed to her being able to think from many different perspectives, which further influences her ideas and her actions. She has also become more skilful at planning, problem solving and self-regulation. She thinks that she is oversensitive in communication. Beside her mother tongue, she is mostly emotionally attached to Albanian and Slovenian because of living in Albanian and Slovene speaking countries. She further points out that she is quick in making decisions and that her intuition is always fully present in both native and foreign contexts. The influence of many Albanian friends has sometimes had an impact on her decisions as well. She experienced discomfort regarding her multilingual practice once she started learning Slovenian and it was mainly due to its similarity to her mother tongue Bosnian. She was a little bit confused until she made some clear distinctions in her head.

3.5.3. Analyzing and discussing the variables of the study based on the participants' responses

In this section an analysis of the variables examined during the study has been made. Considering the extroversion and introversion, all of the participants of all foreign languages are extroverted in informal contexts – in communication outside the classroom with friends, relatives and for whichever informal purposes. Participant 2 reported that she used to be introverted in English classes due to the fear of not being as proficient as her classmates and therefore thought she sounded ridiculous, and because she did not have a lot of informal communicative touch with authentic English, which would ensure her some speaking practice. That is why she lacks some confidence in formal English speaking circumstances as well. Participant 6 also reports that she used to be an extrovert in foreign language classes during the primary and secondary school but then became an introvert in the classroom while studying English language. This has happened mostly because of high expectations and low exposure to authentic English while being excessively exposed to authentic Albanian, which she has acquired quite successfully.

Moreover, while checking the reasons why learners usually experience anxiety and become frustrated when they are about to learn a foreign language or during the process of learning,

many participants reported that the cause of anxiety was some sort of pressure of time or/and circumstance. Participant 1 pointed out that she experiences anxiety when speaking English if she cannot remember the most appropriate word at a given moment, and participant 6 also shared that he experiences anxiety because of the fear that he may not find the right English vocabulary at the right time when some public appearance is going on concerning his job. Another sort of anxiety was experienced by those participants who had permanently moved to a foreign country. Participant 3 had moved to Slovenia in the fourth year of high school so he had to learn Slovene on a quite high level in one year in order to pass his matriculation examination. Participant 4 had moved to Slovenia with her family in the fifth grade of primary school and as a child had to intensively learn Slovene due to the pressure of circumstances. Participant 5 had moved to Germany three years ago by his own choice and reported that he is experiencing anxiety because he finds German language difficult for learning and because the expectations are high, since he had permanently moved to Germany. The difference between these three aforementioned participants is that Participant 3 and Participant 4 were younger than Participant 5 and had moved from their countries mostly because of their parents' decisions, so they had no other choice. However, their anxiety became facilitating, and they grew to be quite proficient users of Slovene. They both consider it as their 'second' native tongue.

Regarding the aptitude for foreign language acquisition, three participants pointed out that they consider themselves as talented for learning foreign languages and they already have targeted other foreign languages which they would like to learn or improve further. Two of them speak four foreign languages and one operates with two foreign languages quite successfully. However, Participant 1 experiences a lack of confidence when speaking Slovene due to the lack of proper formal lessons, since she has been acquiring it only informally for one year now. Participant 3 makes some mistakes mostly when speaking Albanian in formal settings due to the lack of proper formal lessons as well, even though he has been learning it for some time now. Furthermore, Participants 4 and 5 think that they are not talented for learning foreign languages at all but they have learned them because they had to. Participant 4 further reported that she would love to learn German but in a more enjoyable way for her. Participant 5 reported that he finds conventional ways of learning German by attending language courses, formally participating in the classroom, etc. as unnatural. On the other hand, Participant 5 has been acquiring Turkish language by watching Turkish TV programmes and by communicating with friends since he was a child, and therefore feels that

beside his mother tongue, he is emotionally most attached to Turkish. Thus, it can be concluded that talented learners do not only need high exposure to foreign languages but also proper foreign language instruction, and that those who do not have an aptitude for foreign language acquisition, need, in addition to proper instruction and high exposure, some additional sort of motivation in order to prompt them and to cultivate their efforts, which talented learners have as an asset in advance.

As far as variables regarding the outcomes of multilingualism are concerned, most participants reported that they are emotionally mostly attached to the foreign languages in whose surroundings they have been living for the longest periods of time. Participant 1 also reported that she is emotionally attached to English and Participant 2 to Spanish because they love their cultures, music, books. Participant 3 relates his emotional attachment to English with the success in his career. Moreover, almost all participants seem to have quite a high metalinguistic awareness and reported that operating with several languages on a daily basis made them better understand people and circumstances and thus express, plan and organize themselves more skilfully, which further facilitates their problem-solving and self-regulation strategies.

Also, the responses of the participants have confirmed that emotional connection to native and foreign languages is tightly related with the decision making processes. People usually feel more secure in the contexts of the languages to which they are emotionally connected and thus their intuition plays a bigger role when making decisions in those contexts. Participant 4 says that she needs to think twice before saying or doing something in foreign language surroundings, whereas she is more spontaneous and intuitive in her native surroundings. Participant 1 reported that she noticed that her decisions are more rational and reasonable in Slovene speaking surroundings, especially when handling money, and that she still feels a kind of an emotional detachment from the Slovene language, since she had moved there quite recently - a year ago.

And the last issue is related to inconvenience and discomfort as a result of multilingual practice. Participant 1 says that she sometimes feels exhausted when she spends too much time speaking Slovenian because the brain makes more effort than when speaking her native language and thus she feels relief when going home in Croatia, which becomes easier with time. She also feels more vulnerable when speaking Slovenian, probably due to the lack of

accuracy and self-confidence, and more powerful when speaking English. Participant 3 says that he sometimes used to experience discomfort while he was still learning Slovenian and suddenly added some Bosnian words in communication without noticing it, and Participant 6 experienced the same situation due to the similarity of their native Bosnian and Slovenian. She needed some time until she got used to Slovenian and made clear distinctions in her head. Participant 4 does not experience any inconveniences or discomforts regarding the use of foreign languages and says that she habitually adapts her language use.

4. CONCLUSION

After analyzing the learning experiences of the users of multiple languages, it can be summed up that extroverted learners compared to the introverted ones benefit more from language learning process in the way that they tend to make the most of the offered foreign language instructions and speaking practice. However, in a classroom setting, learners are usually introverted due to the lack of the appropriate speaking practice and thus, the lack of self-confidence. Besides the lack of authentic speaking practice, learners usually experience the lack of self-confidence attributable to their fear of being inaccurate, which is proof that formal lessons, where teaching grammar and vocabulary is gradually and accordingly organized, are quite valuable for consistent learning of grammar and vocabulary, and are helping the learner become 'better equipped' and therefore more confident. The combination of the exposure to the authentic foreign language communication and qualitative formal lessons is a winning combination, which may lead to high foreign language proficiency as well as multilingual competence. Likewise, individuals' foreign languages experiences vary with regard to the way of foreign language acquisition. In cases when components like proper learning and comfortable acquisition do not go together, or the effort, devotion and positive attitude are missing, learners experience frustration and discomfort, which means that they still lack proficiency and need some improvement in their weak points. High motivation and more effort invested may make up for the lack of language learning aptitude.

People also experience cognitive benefits in terms of multilingual practice. The more languages they speak, the broader their perspectives and insights become. This helps them to plan skilfully, solve problems quickly, efficiently, and thus become generally more relaxed. What is more, the more various and numerous the group of speakers individuals are in

contact with is, the more communicatively sensitive they become, and thus gain more power, self-confidence and eloquence - first in their native language and afterwards in their predominant foreign languages. They experience some inconvenience and discomfort as well, especially at the beginning of the learning process usually because they make mistakes when speaking and organizing their foreign languages, but in time, they start habitually organizing their multilingual practice.

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Declaration of authorship

I hereby confirm that I am the sole author of this Master's thesis and that all sources used are listed in the bibliography and identified as references. No other person's work has been used without due acknowledgement in this thesis.

Ljubljana, 28. 10. 2019

Amra Kurešepi

Izjava o avtorstvu

Izjavljam, da je magistrsko delo v celoti moje avtorsko delo ter da so uporabljeni viri in literatura navedeni v skladu s strokovnimi standardi in veljavno zakonodajo.

Ljubljana, 28. 10. 2019

Amra Kurešepi