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USE OF PRESENT PERFECT IN UNIVERSITY STUDENTS' JOURNALS

English and Croatian differ on all linguistic levels, including the grammar system. Many structures existing in one language do not exist in the other and vice versa, occasionally resulting in inaccuracies in their use and confusion in translation. The paper presents the analysis conducted at the Faculty of Education, University of Osijek, on the journals written by Module C (English language module) class-teacher students, enrolled in 2015, years of study 1–3. The main aim was to examine the students' accurateness, and appropriateness of the use of Present Perfect since such a tense does not exist in Croatian and to attempt to find the reasons for such a situation. The instances of incorrect Present Perfect use from students' journals were extracted, and in line with the primary aim, emphasis was put on what type of errors the students made. The sentences were also compared to their Croatian translations. The results illuminate the relationships between English and Croatian past and present time concepts, as well as the interference of Croatian and English past and present verb tenses for these groups of native Croatian learners of English.

Keywords: Croatian, English, translation, Present Perfect, Past Simple, journals, uses

INTRODUCTION

English and Croatian languages differ on all linguistic levels (English is a Germanic language, and Croatian is a Slavic language). Numerous grammar structures exist and are commonly used in English, while they do not exist in Croatian at all and vice versa. This may result in the incorrect use of specific English structures by Croatian learners of English as a second language.

The English Present Perfect tense certainly stands out in this category and deserves considerable attention in English language learning and acquisition processes. This verb tense does not exist in Croatian, while it is commonplace and widely used in English. The authors' experience teaching Croatian learners suggests that Present Perfect is repeatedly confused with other verb forms since its meaning comprises specific characteristics of both present and past tenses in Croatian. The erroneous, lacking, or unconventional usage of Present Perfect was the motivation to investigate the reasons behind it.

The paper analyses the use of Present Perfect in university students' journals. The students attended Integrated undergraduate and graduate university Class teacher study at the Faculty of Education, University of Osijek. Apart from institutional English language instruction, there is informal exposure to the English language whereby many learners, including university students, acquire English words and phrases unknowingly. Subsequently, they use those language chunks in their written assignments, such as journals. This paper is meant to expand our understanding of the reasons for the misuse of Present Perfect.

A theoretical overview of theories of second language acquisition (SLA) and the research related to this topic is followed by the research analysis part encompassing examples of erroneous use of Present Perfect from journals. The results are presented in the Discussion section, along with the explanations for possible error causes, followed by the conclusion and recommendations for grammar teaching.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Short overview of SLA theories

Behaviourism is one of the oldest SLA theories, dating back to the 1950s. It advocates for the 'learning of habits', which starts with the first language (L1) and can interfere with the second language (L2). According to the theory, it needs to be overcome with the help of repetitive practice (drill). Structural linguistics is also easy to fit in with the behaviourism theory. These two parallel approaches observe L1 as interference on the path to learning L2.

Transfer occurs in the case of learners relying on L1 when producing L2. If L1 and L2 are similar, the transfer is positive, if not, it is negative (VanPatten, 2015; Trawiński, 2005).

Krashen introduced the Natural order hypothesis in 1982, claiming that the acquisition of grammar structures follows the predictable natural order (Lightbown and Spada, 2006). He claims that meaning is processed first if relevant to the learner, and grammar is acquired naturally in such a setting. Exposure to language, including grammar and input, is crucial for both L1 and L2 acquisition (Ortega, 2009).

Generative linguists adopted the term 'interlanguage' from Selinker (1974). In their view, both interlanguage and native speaker internal grammar consists of unconscious mental representations, taking into account the characteristics and influence of L1 and Universal Grammar constraints. Universal Grammar „includes invariant principles that are generally true across languages, as well as parameters which allow for variation from language to language“ (White, 2003: 2).

When it comes to SLA, the functional approach explores form-to-function and function-to-form mappings in interlanguage and observes its changes in development over time. There are both form- and meaning-oriented approaches within functionalism. The meaning-/concept-oriented approach starts with a function and works its way up to the forms expressing the function, which leads to the assumptions that adult L2 learners have at their disposal all the concepts gained by experience, and, contrary to children, there is no need for them to acquire these concepts. The order of form acquisition has different (sub)stages. For instance, in the case of Present Perfect and Past Perfect, both complex verb tenses, Present Perfect is acquired earlier in adults, even when both are taught simultaneously. The reason is the inexistence of the equivalent for Present Perfect in the mother tongue, whereas the function of Past Perfect can be expressed by Past Simple plus adverbial. In short, the range of expression is in the focus of the functionalist approach to grammar (VanPatten, 2015).

Usage-based approaches to SLA are based on two key factors: exposure to language (linguistic input) and inducing rules from the input (a general cognitive mechanism). Acquiring a wide range of skills results in fluent and spontaneous behaviour, in this case, the use of language. The gradual transformation from controlled to automatic via practice is achieved by observing skilled behaviour and knowledge transmission. Creating form-meaning connections play a crucial role, whereby SLA overcomes psycholinguistic strategies and preferences and employs the ones more appropriate for L2 (VanPatten, 2015; Ortega, 2009).

Processability theory is based on the existence of the language processor, where L2 forms that learners can produce and comprehend are in accordance with the development stage. This makes it more simple to predict the development path in L2 acquisition. Each stage is characterised by a set of grammatical forms/rules with common processing routes, where both inter-language and L1 transfer are limited by processability. Learners are generally not aware of grammatical structures they use, the structures are not planned, and learners possess temporary memory with grammatical information. This theory focuses on the process of grammar production rather than on the formation of grammar in learners' minds (VanPatten, 2015; Ortega, 2009).

A more recent approach to SLA is the competition model. Bates and MacWhinney (1981) described it as an explanation for language acquisition that considers both language forms and their meanings and uses. The competition model allows learners to rely on „cues“ that indicate a certain language function. The model states that L2 learners need to learn the relative importance of the different cues appropriate in the language they are learning (MacWhinney, 1997).

Contrastive analysis, error analysis, interlanguage and language transfer
The differences between L1 and L2 were held responsible for the difficulties in SLA in the mid-20th century. The School of Contrastive Analysis was inspired by research on learners who shared the same L1. Systematic L1–L2 comparisons were supposed to predict the occurrence of negative transfer and errors. Contrastive Analysis states that if L1 and L2 are of the same origin, it may be beneficial for the process of L2 acquisition (positive transfer). Otherwise, the effects are negative (negative transfer). Negative transfer is relevant to this research since it results in errors, such as underproduction, overproduction, and miscomprehension (Tahseldar, et al., 2018). Behaviourists considered language errors the main obstacle on the path to learning L2 since they could lead to the development of long-term bad habits. Consequently, Contrastive Analysis emerged, whose aim has been to analyse languages and discover potential causes of errors, focusing on their prevention (Trawiński, 2005).

According to the Contrastive Analysis Hypothesis (CAH), errors and mistakes occur due to transfer from learners' L1. In other words, learners tend to literally translate from L1 to L2 and thereby make errors. However, not all L2 errors can be blamed on L1–L2 transfer. Many errors can be explained in terms of learners' development of L2 knowledge. Dankić and Karadža (2011) found out that errors frequently happen when English negations (post-verbal) are translated into Croatian (pre-verbal negations) and vice versa. Croatian syntax allows multiple negatives, while English syntax does not allow more

than one negatives within a sentence. The research was conducted among 57 students, divided into three groups (according to the number of years of English instruction). They were assigned three tasks: an acceptability preference, an acceptability judgment task, and an elicited translation task. The results showed that the students heavily relied on the Croatian rules of double or more negatives, resulting from literal translation.

In the late 1970s, it was discovered that not all errors had their source in language differences and that CA used to predict multiple errors that never really occurred. It was then replaced by Error Analysis (EA). There are different error taxonomies within EA, e. g. surface strategy (omission, addition, misinformation, misordering), language competence (overt and covert errors), error systematicity (presystematic and systematic errors), error gravity (global and local errors) and error source taxonomy (interlingual and intralingual errors) (Trawiński, 2005).

Errors are an integral part of learning, despite what behaviourists claim. However, they need to be distinguished from mistakes. Mistakes are caused by different factors, such as fatigue, stress, hurry, etc., and they can be promptly corrected. Errors, on the other hand, are „systematic deviations in language production“, they cannot be corrected since the learner has not acquired the rules yet. The three primary functions of language errors are: to inform about the level of language knowledge (proficiency) and the process of language acquisition, to aid the learner discover language rules, and, most importantly, to test the learner's hypotheses about the language. Interlanguage is developed during these processes. This concept assumes that SLA is a process with predictable stages, each characterised by its own errors (Trawiński, 2005). Selinger (1978) described interlanguage as erroneous, systematic, dynamic, distinct from L1 and L2, and permeable. Monitoring and examining oral and written records of learners is one of the methods to learn more about SLA. This has inevitably been accompanied by the study of interlanguage, „mental grammar and the special variety of language that it generates when they speak or sign, interact, write, negotiate and express themselves in L2, based on the mental representation they forge of the new grammar (Ortega, 2009). Selinker (1972) gave the Interlanguage its name and described it as a separate linguistic system, independent of both L1 and L2. it is a part of L2 learning. It encompasses various dialects, grammar errors, and inaccuracies.

Teaching grammar

Ellis (2006) suggests that teachers or instructors should focus on learners' attention to the targeted form so that they understand it metalinguistically and process it to use and apply the same. However, different SLA theorists

have had different views on whether grammar should be taught at all. Krashen (1981) claimed that, in SLA, grammar teaching had no place, only comprehensible input was of relevance for learners. It could, in his opinion, slightly contribute to learning since *acquisition*, not learning, is the keyword in Krashen's theory. Several studies (Pica, 1983; Long, 1983; White, et al., 1991; Ellis, 2002) have shown no difference in the order of acquisition for instructed and naturalistic learners. Still, it has been demonstrated that instructed learners achieve higher levels of grammatical competence and progress more rapidly. Still, there is no guarantee that the targeted form would be acquired/learned (Ellis, 2006).

Other factors influence grammar acquisition, such as the complete knowledge of the first language, and as Ortega (2009) claims, occasionally also of another language. Vocabulary, discourse competence, and other aspects of language are more likely to be acquired spontaneously, whereas grammar requires more attention, work, and time.

Consequently, the dilemma about the right way to acquire SL grammar lingers between direct grammar instruction and the intense exposure to SL.

Grammar can be considered the backbone of language since other aspects of language (speaking, writing, and listening) could hardly be mastered without a certain level of grammar knowledge. Behaviourists, for instance, are in favour of avoiding language errors and creating incorrect difficult-to-fix habits. Also, there are diverse views on when to start grammar instruction. Those in favour of the early start claim that young learners need intense exposure to language to acquire foundations for grammar teaching (Skehan, 1998). This view is shared by Ellis (2005) and Lightbown (1991), who say that early teaching is the „basis for the real thing that follows (Ellis, 2005, p. 90). On the other hand, early grammar instruction does not make sense for those who have examined immersion programmes, where young learners can develop skills required for successful communication without formal instruction (Ellis, 2005).

PRESENT PERFECT TENSE

English sentences revolve around verbs, the active parts expressing actions, occurrences, or states of being. To functionally use English, one has to master verb forms that inflect for tense, voice and aspect. Given the non-equivalence of English and Croatian verb forms, it is not surprising that the expression of times setting is one of the most puzzling and problematic in SLA of English for Croatian learners. Not only them but non-native speakers, in general, are strongly influenced by the use of verb forms in their mother tongue when trying to master temporality in English (Liu, 2012, p. 12).

English recognises two aspects of a tense – perfective and progressive. They differentiate actions viewed as complete (perfective) and incomplete (progressive) (Quirk, et al., 1985). In the following text, the perfective aspect of Present Perfect will be referred to as Present Perfect Simple, while the progressive aspect will be Present Perfect Continuous.

Present Perfect bridges the timing between the past and the present in English. It is used in four different ways (Brdar, et al., 2001, p. 153):

1. Continuitive

(1) *Secondly, animals have been hunted for ages because people have needed to feed their families.*¹

Continuitive Present Perfect refers to an event, activity, or state of being that extends over a period of time, and it may also extend into the future. This function is usually marked with adverbials of duration such as *for a long time*, *since*, *so far*, etc.

2. Iterative

(2) *This is probably because kids from Croatia have been coming here for years and they have had problems with them.*

Iterative Present Perfect, also referred to as habitual (Quirk, et al., 1985), is used for events that repeatedly happened during the past and continue happening until the present and possibly into the future. Adverbials of frequency signal this use.

3. Resultative past

(3) *There has been a revolution in the technological world and its goal has been to connect people, but, unfortunately, it has had the opposite effect.*

„The Present Perfect is also used in reference to a past event to imply that the result of that event is still operative at present“ (Leech, 1971). A „hidden“ result is written next to a state we refer to.

4. Indefinite past

(4) *Have you ever wondered how some animals can live up to 200 years?*

This use refers to a moment that happened in the past but is not definite since we do not know when exactly in the past it occurred. It continues to the present moment and the future until the experience is changed. Adverbials that mark the indefinite past are, e.g. *ever*, *never*, *before*, etc.

¹ The examples were taken from the corpus (if found).

Present Perfect Simple

Quirk et al. (1985) list three different meanings of Present Perfect Simple:

1. State leading up to the present

(5) *This particular topic has been discussed quite a lot over the past 15 years, primarily because the world of video games has kept expanding.*

2. Indefinite event in a period leading up to the present

(6) *Yes, we have become selfish. Like never before.*

3. Habit in a period leading up to the present

(7) *And now, I wish I have stayed in touch with my old friends I did stupid things with.*

Another common use of Present Perfect Simple is while reporting news, i.e.:

(8) *There has been an earthquake in Zagreb.*²

(9) *There have been protests in the USA.*

Present Perfect Continuous

Present Perfect Continuous or Progressive indicates an event in progress at a given time. The meaning of Present Perfect Continuous can be categorised as follows:

1. „the happening has duration“,

2. „the happening has limited duration“,

3. „the happening is not necessarily complete“ (Quirk, et al., 1985, p. 198).

With event meanings, Present Perfect Continuous emphasises the duration of an event, meaning that the event has not yet come to an end (it is continuing to the present moment). For example:

(10) *So, Sebastian is shown as a jazz pianist who has been struggling for years, but is still very passionate about it.*

Habitual progressive with Present Perfect Continuous is used when an action is repeated over a period of time.

(11) *I have been playing handball since I was 8 years old, which means that I have played handball for over 12 years now.*

Present Perfect and Past Simple

Both tenses refer to the past, but Present Perfect differs from Past Simple on three accounts (Brdar, et al., 2001, p. 49):

² Authors' examples

1. Continuation up to the present time
 - (12) *It was my biggest wish and I was planning it since primary school.* (It is not my wish anymore.)
 - (13) *It has been my biggest wish and I was planning it since primary school.* (It is still my wish.)
2. Present result
 - (14) *It has become a problem with no solution in sight.* (There is still no solution.)
 - (15) *It became a problem with no solution in sight.* (It was probably resolved.)
3. Indefinite time
 - (16) *Studies have shown that a part of the brain responsible for processing communication is simply larger in women's brains.*
 - (17) *So I volunteered at the Veterinary Station in my town for five months last year.*

Present Perfect does not refer to and does not require a specific point in time, while Past Simple does. Such a reference point can be resolved by using adverbials required for either tense or by a preceding use of past or perfect tense.

Croatian does not operate with different tenses equivalent to these two in English, and that appears to be the cause of difficulty for Croatian EL learners.

Present Perfect in SLA

There are three central tenses in Croatian – past (*perfekt*³), present (*prezent*⁴) and future (*futur*). Each of them has its sub-tenses (*pluskvamperfekt*, *imperfekt*, *orist*, *futur I*, *futur II*). Present tense has only one form in Croatian, while in English, various forms express different present concepts: Present Simple, Present Continuous, Present Perfect Simple, and Continuous.

The obstacles appear when translating due to the inequivalence of forms in two languages:

- | | |
|---|-----------------------|
| (18) <i>I have been playing football.</i> | <i>Igram nogomet.</i> |
| (19) <i>I play football.</i> | <i>Igram nogomet.</i> |
| (20) <i>I am playing football.</i> | <i>Igram nogomet.</i> |

³ *Perfekt* is a verb form that expresses the past imperfect/indefinite and perfect/definite tense (Silić & Pranjković, 2007).

⁴ *Prezent* is a verb form that expresses the verb present (Silić & Pranjković, 2007).

Present Perfect and Past Simple are translated in the same way into Croatian since Croatian does not have a present tense concerning the past or tense that stretches to the past and has present results. More specific structures are not often translated to L2, and those unmarked in L1 or more universal are more commonly transferred from L1 to L2 (Ortega, 2009).

CORPUS AND METHODOLOGY

The corpus consists of 230 journals written by students of the Integrated undergraduate and graduate university Class teacher study at the Faculty of Education, University of Osijek, generation enrolled in 2015/2016. The journals were written during the first three years of study as part of English Language Practice courses. The study participants had been learning English as a foreign language for thirteen years previously, since the age of 6 or 7. They were assigned twice a semester. The study aimed to detect in what manner the students used Present Perfect, both simple and progressive. Following the quantitative and descriptive approach, the samples were collected, corrected and the data were analysed to demonstrate the usage of Present Perfect and the verb forms it was replaced by inaccurately. In line with the primary aim, the sentences were translated into Croatian to analyse the influence of their mother tongue and determine if that could be the reason for the instances of (in)accurate use of Present Perfect. The sentences were classified into three categories, years 1 to 3. The teacher usually suggests the topic, but also the students can select a topic of their own choice. The length of journals varies from 300 to 500 words each.

RESEARCH

Research questions

The implication of the Present Perfect issues lies in the production of inappropriate time references with the verbs used in students' written assignments (journals). Therefore, they might encounter difficulties in delivering their intended message clearly and accurately, and, occasionally it can be vital for communication and learning processes.

The authors aimed to describe the Present Perfect errors, consider their frequency, identify the points of difficulty for participants in the study, discuss their possible causes and determine the degree of disturbance caused by the errors.

The present study hypothesises that this knowledge gap originates in the interlanguage, and arises due to the differences between Croatian and English, and the influence of Croatian as the mother tongue on English as an SL. Also, one of the research questions was what were the interlanguage effects

on the use of Present Perfect by Croatian university undergraduate students of English were.

Year 1

In the first year of study, the students wrote 54 journals, the number being smaller since they enrolled in the English language module in the 2nd semester. Out of the total number of journals, 7 of them contained inappropriate use of Present Perfect. That comes up to 13% of journals containing Present Perfect errors. The sentences are in Table 1.

Table 1. Examples of the incorrect Present Perfect use (Year 1)

Original sentence	Corrected sentence	Croatian
(1) <i>Before that, she haven't known she has been sick and never thought about angels.</i>	<i>Before that, she didn't know she was sick and never thought about angels.</i>	<i>Prije toga, nije znala da je bolesna i nikada nije razmišljala o anđelima.</i>
(2) <i>*Not so long time ago I read a book which made a great impact on me – on my personality, way of thinking, my reality.</i>	<i>Not so long ago I read a book that has made a great impact on me – on my personality, way of thinking, my reality.</i>	<i>Ne tako davno pročitala sam knjigu koje je imala velik utjecaj na mene – na moju osobnost, način razmišljanja, moju stvarnost.</i>
(3) <i>*There were times when I haven't left my home for weeks because I had to study.</i>	<i>There were times when I didn't leave my home for weeks because I had to study.</i>	<i>Bilo je dana kada nisam napuštala dom tjednima jer sam morala učiti.</i>
(4) <i>*This is probably because kids from Croatia have been coming here for years and they had problems with them.</i>	<i>This is probably because kids from Croatia have been coming here for years and they have had problems with them.</i>	<i>To je vjerojatno zato što djeca iz Hrvatske ovamo dolaze godinama i s njima imaju problema.</i>
(5) <i>*This topic, in particular, was discussed quite a lot over the past 15 years, primarily because the world of video games keeps expanding.</i>	<i>This particular topic has been discussed quite a lot over the past 15 years, primarily because the world of video games has kept expanding.</i>	<i>O ovoj temi se posebno puno raspravlja zadnjih 15 godina, posebno jer se svijet video igara širi.</i>
(6) <i>*Yes, we became selfish. Like never before.</i>	<i>Yes, we have become selfish. Like never before.</i>	<i>Da, postajemo sebični. Kao nikada ranije.</i>
(7) <i>*Secondly, animals were hunted for ages because people needed to feed their families.</i>	<i>Secondly, animals have been hunted for ages because people have needed to feed their families.</i>	<i>Kao drugo, životinje se love godinama jer ljudi trebaju prehraniti obitelji.</i>

Year 2

In the second year, the students wrote 98 journals. Out of the total number of journals, 12 of them contained errors related to the use of Present Perfect. That makes 13% of errors in this year. The erroneous sentences are in Table 2.

Table 2. Examples of the incorrect Present Perfect use (Year 2)

Original sentence	Corrected sentence	Croatian
(21) <i>*Whether it is something like an ice cream I had not eaten or the different school I had not attended.</i>	<i>Whether it is something like an ice cream I have not eaten or a different school I have attended.</i>	<i>Bilo to nešto kao sladoled koji nisam pojela ili druga škola koju nisam pohađala.</i>
(22) <i>*And now, I wish I had stayed in touch with my old friends I did stupid things with.</i>	<i>And now, I wish I have stayed in touch with my old friends I did stupid things with.</i>	<i>A sada želim da sam barem ostala u kontaktu sa starim prijateljima s kojima sam činila glupe stvari.</i>
(23) <i>*It was my biggest wish and I've planned it since primary school</i>	<i>It has been my biggest wish, and I have been planning it since primary school.</i>	<i>To mi je najveća želja i planiram to od osnovne škole.</i>
(24) <i>*So I have been volunteering in Veterinary Station in my town for a year.</i>	<i>So I volunteered at the Veterinary Station in my town for a year.</i>	<i>Volontirala sam u veterinarskoj stanici u mom gradu godinu dana.</i>
(25) <i>*Harvey has said: „The whole point of the painting is the photograph. That photograph...”</i>	<i>Harvey said: „The whole point of the painting is the photograph. That photograph...”</i>	<i>Harvey je rekao: „Smisao slike je fotografija. Ta fotografija...”</i>
(26) <i>*So, Sebastian is shown as a jazz pianist who was struggling for years but still very passionate about it.</i>	<i>So, Sebastian is shown as a jazz pianist who has been struggling for years but is still very passionate about it.</i>	<i>Dakle, Sebastian je prikazan kao jazz pianist koje se bori godinama, ali je još uvijek strastven.</i>

Use of Present Perfect in University Students' Journals

(27) <i>*After going through a lesson on this topic a few weeks back I started paying more attention to the surroundings of my 2 teenage sisters and I've noticed some quirky things.</i>	<i>After going through a lesson on this topic a few weeks back, I have started paying more attention to the surroundings of my two teenage sisters, and I've noticed some quirky things.</i>	<i>Nakon što smo prošli lekciju o ovoj temi prije nekoliko tjedana počela sam pridavati više pažnje okolini mojih dviju sestara tinejdžerica i primjetila sam neke čudne stvari.</i>
(28) <i>*We were so annoyed on our 1st year when we waited for our turn to go to the oral exam; we waited for the entire day and it seemed like a year has passed.</i>	<i>We were so annoyed in our 1st year when we waited for our turn to go to the oral exam; we waited for the entire day, and it seemed like a year passed.</i>	<i>Bili smo toliko iziritirani na prvoj godini kada smo čekali na red za usmeni ispit; čekali smo cijeli dan a činilo se kao godina.</i>
(29) <i>*There was a revolution in the technological world and its goal has been to connect people, but, unfortunately, it had the opposite effect.</i>	<i>There has been a revolution in the technological world, and its goal has been to connect people, but, unfortunately, it has had the opposite effect.</i>	<i>Došlo je do revolucije u tehnološkom svijetu i njezin cilj je povezati ljude, ali, nažalost, ima suprotan učinak.</i>
(30) <i>*People usually post things on those social networks to show other people how great their lives are, how happy they are, but it became a competition and anyone who can't follow the trends feels unhappy.</i>	<i>People usually post things on those social networks to show other people how great their lives are, how happy they are, but it has become a competition, and anyone who can't follow trends feels unhappy.</i>	<i>Ljudi obično objavljuju takve stvari na društvenim mrežama kako bi pokazali drugim ljudima kako su krasni njihovi životi, koliko su sretni, ali to je postalo natjecanje i svatko tko ne može pratiti trendove se osjeća nesretno.</i>
(31) <i>*It became a problem with no solution on sight.</i>	<i>It has become a problem with no solution in sight.</i>	<i>To je postao problem bez rješenja na vidiku.</i>
(32) <i>*Studies has shown that a part of the brain responsible for processing communication is simply larger in women's brains.</i>	<i>Studies have shown that a part of the brain responsible for processing communication is simply larger in women's brains.</i>	<i>Istraživanja su pokazala da je dio mozga odgovoran za procesuiranje komunikacije jednostavno veći u ženskom mozgu.</i>

(33) <i>*To describe it in a certain way, I had started to participate in many fields related to the faculty; I was in a play, I have met other people (from other faculty) and it is a good experience which can fulfill you as a person.</i>	<i>To describe it in a certain way, I have started to participate in many fields related to the faculty; I was in a play, I have met other people (from other faculties), and it is a good experience which can fulfill you as a person.</i>	<i>Kako bismo to opisali na određen način, počela sam sudjelovati u mnogim poljima vezanim za fakultet; sudjelovala sam u predstavi, upoznala sam druge ljude (s drugih fakulteta) i to je dobro iskustvo koje te može ispuniti kao osobu.</i>
(34) <i>*Sometimes they are very much aware of how hard they had worked for the things they have.</i>	<i>Sometimes they are very much aware of how hard they have worked for the things they have.</i>	<i>Ponekad su uistinu svjesni kako naporno rade za stvari koje imaju.</i>
(35) <i>*If I have done that, I wouldn't have had so many troubles now.</i>	<i>If I had done that, I wouldn't have so many troubles now.</i>	<i>Da sam to učinila, ne bih sada imala toliko problema.</i>

Year 3

In the third year, the students wrote 78 journals. Out of the total of 78 journals, 14 included errors regarding Present Perfect, making 19% of errors in this year, and 41% of the total number of journals containing Present Perfect errors.

Table 3. Examples of the incorrect Present Perfect use (Year 3)

Original sentence	Corrected sentence	Croatian
(36) <i>*On the one hand, about 12 years ago, not every child had a mobile phone, and if they did, they've used it for emergency only.</i>	<i>On the one hand, about 12 years ago, not every child had a mobile phone, and if they did they used it for emergencies only.</i>	<i>S jedne strane, prije oko 12 godina, svako dijete nije imalo mobilni telefon, a ako i jesu, koristilo su ga samo za hitne situacije.</i>
(37) <i>*And that was about it – that was all the technology they've needed.</i>	<i>And that was about it – that was all the technology they needed.</i>	<i>I to je bilo to – to je bila sva tehnologija koju su trebali.</i>
(38) <i>*I'm playing handball since I was 8 years old, which means that I play handball over 12 years now.</i>	<i>I have been playing handball since I was 8 years old, which means that I have played handball for over 12 years now.</i>	<i>Igram rukomet od svoje osme godine, što znači da igram rukomet već više od 12 godina.</i>

Use of Present Perfect in University Students' Journals

(39) <i>*I've read the introduction which was useful because it helped me to understand the whole story.</i>	<i>I read the introduction which was useful because it helped me to understand the whole story.</i>	<i>Pročitala sam uvod koji je bio koristan jer mi je pomogao razumjeti cijelu priču.</i>
(40) <i>*For years people were speculating about Beyoncé and Jay Z's marriage not being as ideal as the image they've been representing.</i>	<i>For years people have been speculating about Beyoncé and Jay Z's marriage not being as ideal as the image they've been representing.</i>	<i>Ljudi godinama nagađaju o Beyoncé and Jay Z's braku koji nije idealan kao slika koju predstavljaju.</i>
(41) <i>*With growth of internet communities, the number of bullies online grew dramatically.</i>	<i>With the growth of the Internet communities, the number of bullies has grown dramatically.</i>	<i>S rastom internetskih zajednica, broj online zlostavljača je dramatično porastao.</i>
(42) <i>*To sum up, technology is actually a community that's been growing all the time and will keep doing so.</i>	<i>To sum up, technology is actually a community that has been growing all the time and will keep doing so.</i>	<i>Da sažmemo, tehnologija je zapravo zajednica koja cijelo vrijeme raste a tako će i nastaviti.</i>
(43) <i>*All of us have been teenagers and we all hated how everyone who is older than us looked down on us.</i>	<i>All of us were teenagers and we all hated how everyone who was older than us looked down on us.</i>	<i>Svi smo mi bili tinejdžeri i svi smo mrzili kako nas je svatko tko je stariji gledao s visine.</i>
(44) <i>*From the beginning people were trying to find a way to prolong their lives.</i>	<i>From the beginning, people have been trying to find a way to prolong their lives.</i>	<i>Od početka ljudi pokušavaju naći način kako produžiti život.</i>
(45) <i>*Did you ever wonder how come some animals can live up to 200 years?</i>	<i>Have you ever wondered how some animals can live up to 200 years?</i>	<i>Jesi li se ikada zapitala kako neke životinje mogu živjeti do 200 godina?</i>
(46) <i>*But, are there only good things new technology brought us?</i>	<i>But, are there only good things new technology has brought us?</i>	<i>Ali, postoje li samo dobre stvari koje nam donosi tehnologija?</i>
(47) <i>*Another negative effect is that we forgot to communicate in real life.</i>	<i>Another negative effect is that we have forgotten how to communicate in real life.</i>	<i>Drugi negativan učinak je da smo zaboravili kako komunicirati u stvarnom životu.</i>

<i>(48) *In addition to that, more and more people are becoming experts and making technology their priority, often neglecting the old-fashioned, „primitive“ technologies that has served the human kind for centuries.</i>	<i>In addition to that, more and more people are becoming experts and making technology their priority, often neglecting the old-fashioned „primitive“ technologies that have served the humankind for centuries.</i>	<i>Uz to, sve više ljudi postaju stručnjaci i tehnologija im postaje prioritet, često zapostavljajući staromodne „primitivne“ tehnologije koje služe čovječanstvu stoljećima.</i>
<i>(49) *Looking back as far as 100 years people advanced in medicine as same as in las few millenniums.</i>	<i>Looking back as far as 100 years, people have advanced in medicine in the same proportion as in the last few millenniums.</i>	<i>Ako gledamo samo 100 godina unazad, ljudi su napredovali u medicini u istom omjeru kao i u zadnjih nekoliko tisućljeća.</i>
<i>(50) *I didn't have any bad experience with the people yet.</i>	<i>I haven't had any bad experiences with the people yet.</i>	<i>Nisam još imala lošeg iskustva s ljudima.</i>
<i>(51) *We learned how to capture animals and every day there are more and more animals being caged in zoos.</i>	<i>We have learned how to capture animals and every day there are more and more animals being caged in zoos.</i>	<i>Naučili smo kako loviti životinje i svaki dan je sve više i više životinja zatvoreno u zooološkim vrtovima.</i>
<i>(52) *It was founded in 1506 and now, in this century, it became more modern and popular; especially with different sports program and Lipizzaner ball.</i>	<i>It was founded in 1506 and now, in this century, it has become more modern and popular; with different sports programs and Lipizzaner ball.</i>	<i>Osnovana je 1506., i sada, u ovom stoljeću, postala je modernija i popularnija, s raznim sportskim programima i Balom Lipicanaca.</i>

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The starting point of this analysis was to examine in what kind of erroneous ways the students of Module C of the Faculty of Education, in Osijek, Class teacher studies, use Present Perfect (both simple and progressive) in their journals. In line with the main aim, sentences containing errors regarding Present Perfect were extracted, corrected, and translated by the authors.

The research results show that the students had the smallest percentage of errors regarding the usage of Present Perfect in the first year of module C (21%). The most significant number of errors occurred in the third year (Table 4). This was unexpected due to the assumed improvement and progress in students' knowledge with each year of studies. In the first year, the students were

assigned two journals, while in the second and third years, they were assigned four journals per academic year, two per semester.

Table 4. Number/percentage of journals per year of study

Year of study	Number of journals	Number/percentage of journals with Present Perfect errors	Share of errors in the total number of journals
1	54	7/13%	21%
2	98	13/13%	38%
3	79	14/19%	41%

All the errors occurring are listed in Table 5, and the highest number of errors were in using Past Simple or Continuous instead of Present Perfect and vice versa. Also, a considerable number of errors were using Present Simple or Continuous instead of Present Perfect. Other mistakes in the usage of Present Perfect are represented in smaller percentages (errors/mistakes in form, confusing Present and Past Perfect).

Table 5. Types of errors, their numbers and percentages

Error	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Total
Past Simple/Continuous instead of Present Perfect	5 (71,4%)	5 (33,3%)	10 (55,5%)	20 (50%)
Present Perfect instead of Simple Past	-	3 (20%)	4 (22,2%)	7 (17,5%)
Present Simple/Continuous instead of Present Perfect	1 (14,3 %)	2 (13,3 %)	3 (16,6 %)	6 (15%)
Form	1 (14,3%)	2 (13,3%)	1 (5,5%)	4 (10%)
Past Perfect instead of Present Perfect	-	2 (13,3 %)	-	2 (5%)
Present Perfect instead of Past Perfect	-	1 (6,6%)	-	1 (2,5%)
Total	7	15	18	40 ⁵

The authors translated the erroneous sentences from the corpus into Croatian to see whether Croatian temporal concepts influence the choice of incorrect tense in English. Considering the translation of the erroneous sentences from the corpus (Tables 1, 2, and 3), the authors have found the following (Table 6.):

⁵ There are two errors in one sentence from the corpus.

Table 6. Translation of erroneous Present Perfect sentences.

Sentences in <i>perfekt</i> in Croatian	17
Sentences in <i>present</i> in Croatian	14
Total	31

According to the data, none of the Croatian tenses (*perfekt* – past tense and *present* – present tense) prevails significantly in translations in those sentences that should be in Present Perfect. It might be the case that this variability in translation possibly confuses the students and prevents them from the proper use of Present Perfect.

The results revealed that interlanguage is a possible reason behind students' inappropriate production of Present Perfect. Interlanguage can be described as sets of loose lexical networks gradually being systematised, but involving free variation during the process, which means that the newly acquired forms and communicative resources replace old ones. Learners may encounter difficulties in organizing items during the process that occasionally result in errors (Ellis, 1999). It seems as if they produce their own tense system, conceptually between English and Croatian. These errors, therefore, can be ascribed to the interference of the mother tongue due to the non-existence of a verb tense conceptually and semantically equivalent to Present Perfect. Since Present Perfect can be translated both with past and present tense into Croatian, it can be assumed that students mirror these Croatian forms in their journals.

In other words, the participants rely on Croatian (L1) when using English (L2). The corpus suggests that they have not acquired habits necessary for correct and accurate language production, as behaviourist state, and this interference is demonstrated by the translations (Table 6). The differences between the verb structures in the mother tongue and in L2 have led to systematic errors in this group of participants, in other words, the negative transfer occurs.

The study also demonstrated the problematic aspect in recognizing and determining the temporal notion of the verb in their sentences, or they might have recognized the temporal concept, but due to other factors, were unable to use the correct perfect tense. In such cases, where errors occur depending on the difference between the L1 and L2, Contrastive Analysis is used to predict the negative transfer and further progress of language acquisition.

If erroneous sentences from the corpus were categorised according to the uses of Present Perfect (continuative, iterative, resultative, indefinite), the results in Table 7 emerge. Furthermore, it was attempted to determine participants' awareness of the rules of Present Perfect usage.

Table 7. Percentages of participants' awareness of the usage rules.

Use	Number of erroneous sentences	% of participants' awareness of usage rules
Incorrect tense use ⁶	10	25,6%
Resultative past	13	33,3%
Continuative past	8	20,5%
Indefinite past	4	10,3%
Iterative past	4	10,3%
Total	39	100%

The students had the most issues with the resultative use of Present Perfect, and the number of sentences with completely incorrect use is also considerable (sentences where some other tense than Present Perfect should have been used). This result most possibly also originates in the fact that there is no such tense in Croatian (negative transfer), and the participants, similar to Croatian, uniformly use the past tense.

Table 8. Five stages experienced by SL learners proposed by Ellis (1999) and Towel et al. (1993)

No.	Stage	Characteristics
1.	non-linguistic	No form-meaning mapping
2.	acquisition	Overgeneralizing
3.	replacement	Alternate forms with free variation
4	interlanguage	Different forms with systematic variation (interlanguage rules)
5.	completion	Different forms (SL rules)

According to the stages, free variation only begins in the third/replacement stage, where learners tend to use two different forms without realising the differences in their use. Interlanguage appears in stage four, in other words, learners use different forms systematically within their interlanguage, partially avoiding SL rules. In the fourth stage, learners start to employ various forms following SL rules. Regarding Present Perfect, it is possible to explain this as follows: the 'replacement' stage is characterised by the use of both Present Perfect and Past Simple, where learners are not aware that Past Simple forms are deviant. In the 'interlanguage' stage, learners use both Past Simple and

⁶ Present Perfect should not have been used at all.

Present Perfect systematically, but not completely accurately. 'Completion' stage is when both tenses are used accurately according to English language rules (Lim, 2007). According to this categorisation and research results, our study participants are somewhere between the 'replacement' and 'interlanguage' phases. A more profound and more comprehensive study would be required to precisely determine each learner's acquisition stage. However, SL instructors have a better insight and overview of their learners' progress. It is essential for SL instructors to be aware of their learners' stages of learning/acquisition, since it can significantly affect the effectiveness of teaching, particularly grammar structures. Therefore, teachers should be acquainted with the acquisition sequence of different forms. Indeed, this depends on teaching and learning circumstances (number of learners, learning history, background, learning strategies, personality characteristics).

Several SLA theories consider exposure to the language as an essential factor of language acquisition, particularly Krashen's input theory and usage-based theory, as well as those in favour of early start approaches in grammar teaching. Exposure to English is hardly an issue for incomplete language acquisition of Present Perfect or any other grammar form. The participants had learned English from the age of 7, first grade of primary school, for 14 years. Apart from institutional/formal instruction, our participants and the majority of Croatian children and young people are continually exposed to spoken English through different media, particularly films and series, that have been available in English with either Croatian or English subtitles. That is, indeed, a good way to acquire language, hearing it, listening to it and simultaneously reading translation/transcription. It is possible, that some of the participants had learned another foreign language at school or had been less interested in media possibilities in English.

However, lack of experience may be the issue, since it is possible that the participants had not used English actively enough and intensely enough, they might be only passive users, just listening or reading. Usage-based SLA theorists are proponents of regular active use of language, which results in correct and accurate usage.

There are limitations to the study, since it cannot precisely be determined in which developmental and acquisition stage the learners are, they are not at the same level of acquisition and knowledge. Furthermore, other factors influence the occurrence of errors and mistakes, such as motivation, chronological age, learners' and teachers' psychological profiles, and teaching styles.

According to Error Analysis, some errors are an integral part of learning. From authors' experience, the errors in the use of Present Perfect that

Croatian learners of English as SL most certainly are. However, these errors are not always a liability, they improve the process of learning and acquisition.

CONCLUSION

Upon reading this study, the EFL teachers in Croatia will gain partial insight into one of the knowledge gaps, and it will hopefully shed some light on this issue, raise awareness and importance as well as develop new perspectives and approaches to the potential causes of the issues Croatian learners have with Present Perfect.

It would be extremely helpful to test erroneous production of Present Perfect on different proficiency levels in a longitudinal study, which would possibly lead to EFL instructors accepting errors and keeping a positive attitude in the processes of EFL acquisition and learning. Learners would also benefit from being informed of interlanguage processes, newly adapted teaching strategies and materials as well as from adequate corrective feedback.

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UPOTREBA PRESENT PERFECT NA UNIVERZITETSKIM STUDENTSKIM DNEVNICIMA

Engleski i hrvatski jezik razlikuju se na svim lingvističkim razinama, uključujući gramatički sustav. Mnoge strukture koje postoje u jednom jeziku ne postoje u drugom i obrnuto, što povremeno rezultira netočnostima u njihovoj uporabi i zbunjenošću pri prevođenju. Rad predstavlja analizu provedenu na Fakultetu za odgojne i obrazovne znanosti Sveučilišta J. J. Strossmayera u Osijeku, na pismenim uratcima studenata Modula C (Modul engleskog jezika) Učiteljskog studija, upisanih 2015. godine, na prvoj, drugoj i trećoj godini studija. Glavni cilj bio je ispitati studentsku točnost i prikladnost uporabe Present Perfecta, budući da takvo glagolsko vrijeme ne postoji u hrvatskom jeziku i pokušati naći razloge za takvu situaciju. Primjeri netočne uporabe Present Perfecta iz studentskih pismenih uradaka su izdvojeni, i u skladu s primarnim ciljem, naglasak je stavljen na vrstu pogrešaka koje su studenti činili. Rečenice su također uspoređene s odgovarajućim prijevodima na hrvatski. Rezultati rasvjetljavaju odnos engleskih i hrvatski pojmova sadašnjosti i prošlosti, kao i interferenciju hrvatskih i engleskih prošlih i sadašnjih glagolskih vremena za ove skupine izvornih govornika hrvatskog jezika.

Ključne riječi: *hrvatski, engleski, prijevod, Present Perfect, Past Simple, pismeni uraci, uporaba*