

Finding One's Place in a Host Space: A Small-Scale Study of Cultural Integration and Language Maintenance Among Croatian Immigrants in Canada

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This paper focuses on sociocultural and language-related issues among Croatian immigrants in Canada. It presents the results of the study conducted from November 2018 to February 2019 among Croatian immigrants of different generations in Ontario and British Columbia. Questions included in the questionnaire refer to different aspects of participants' identity and their (families') immigration, as well as issues related to their attitudes towards the homeland and engagement in Croatian associations in Canada. Participants were asked to provide feedback on their language acquisition, competence and use, as well as evaluations of the importance of the Croatian language for their identity. The questionnaire also contained questions related to participants' language use from emotional and cognitive perspectives. Conclusions drawn on the basis of the collected data provide an insight into Croatian immigrants' language use, the extent of cultural integration and language maintenance, and their attitudes towards the relationship between identity and language.

Keywords: cultural integration, language maintenance, language shift, language attitudes, Croatian immigrants, Canada.

Encontrando su sitio en otro país: un estudio a pequeña escala de la integración cultural y el mantenimiento de la lengua entre los inmigrantes croatas en Canadá. Este trabajo se centra en temas socioculturales y lingüísticos entre los inmigrantes croatas en Canadá. Se presentan los resultados del estudio realizado entre noviembre de 2018 y febrero de 2019 entre inmigrantes croatas de diferentes generaciones en Ontario y la Colombia Británica. Las preguntas incluidas en el cuestionario se refieren a diferentes aspectos de la identidad de los participantes y su inmigración (familiar), así como a cuestio-

nes relacionadas con sus actitudes hacia la patria y su participación en las asociaciones croatas en Canadá. Se pidió a los participantes que proporcionaran comentarios sobre la adquisición, competencia y uso de las lenguas que manejan, así como evaluaciones de la importancia de la lengua croata para su identidad. El cuestionario también contiene preguntas relacionadas con el uso del lenguaje de los participantes, desde perspectivas emocionales y cognitivas. Las conclusiones extraídas sobre la base de los datos recopilados proporcionan una idea de la lengua que utilizan los inmigrantes croatas, el grado de integración cultural, el mantenimiento de la lengua nativa (el croata) y sus actitudes sobre la relación entre la identidad y el idioma.

Palabras claves: actitudes lingüísticas, Canadá, inmigrantes croatas, integración cultural, mantenimiento de la lengua, sustitución lingüística.

1. Introduction

Scholarly interest in issues related to bilingualism and multilingualism has risen substantially in recent decades. One of the reasons for such an increase lies in the heightened awareness of the necessity to take on a multidisciplinary approach in the analysis of different aspects of bilingual and multilingual contexts. Thus, besides the broader sociolinguistic approach that addresses such issues from the point of view of language policy and language planning, there has been a growing demand for studies that would place more focus on bilingual and multilingual speakers' language attitudes, as well as their attitudes towards different sociocultural factors which are inextricably connected to both their language use and attitudes. In other words, what is also taken into consideration in interdisciplinary approaches to bilingualism and multilingualism are cognitive and emotional dimensions. Awareness and necessity of taking on a multidisciplinary approach is perhaps nowhere more evident than in highly multilingual contexts, such as Canada, where an individual's ability to use more than one language is much more frequently a matter of necessity rather than a matter of choice. It is in such highly multilingual contexts embedded in complex migration patterns and histories that the aforementioned sociocultural and individual factors come most clearly to the fore.

Experiences of immigrants who settle in different countries are quite diverse. In that sense, multicultural and multilingual host countries, as one of the places of immigrants' settlement, reveal an especially intricate array of issues that one comes across in research of different aspects of their experiences. Regardless of what the investigated immigrant group

is, reasons for leaving the homeland are frequently found in their search for a better life, and the search may be regarded a matter of necessity to different degrees. The necessity may be of economic, political, religious, or similar nature. In turn, their overall integration in the host country depends to a large extent on their proficiency in the official or dominant language or, if they come with minimum knowledge of the language, how quickly and how well they manage to learn and use it in different contexts and for different purposes. This is why research on aspects of immigrants' cultural integration and language maintenance in a specific country should include reference to both immigration and language policies of the country.

Besides reference to immigration and language policies, a relevant factor that should be taken into consideration in the investigation of the nature and extent of immigrants' cultural integration and language maintenance refers to language attitudes. In immigrant contexts, such attitudes are primarily related to correlations that individuals make between the necessity of maintaining their mother tongue and the importance of the mother tongue for both national and individual identities. Furthermore, Montrul (2016: 10) notes the impact that the status of a language has on attitudes towards the language, but also the impact that such attitudes have on the actual use of the language. Thus, the factor of language attitudes is especially important in evaluating the degree of language maintenance and language shift, but also in examining bilinguals' use of languages in specific contexts and for specific purposes, such as expressing emotions or in cognitive processes.

Analyses of bilinguals' language choices in expressing emotions have become especially prominent in the first decades of the twenty-first century (see, e.g. Dewaele 2008; 2011; 2016; 2017) and Pavlenko (2005; 2006)). As is the case with language attitudes, an investigation of bilinguals' language choice in expressing emotions among immigrant communities allows for the possibility to take into consideration other relevant factors that in other bilingual contexts might not be as prominent, such as homeland nostalgia and family ties.

Besides a significant presence of discussions regarding the relationship between English and French in Canada, there has been an increase in studies that include analyses of heritage language maintenance among different immigrant groups. For example, the case of German is discussed by Noels (2013), and the case of Chinese by Duff and Li (2013). Studies on language maintenance and use in Canada also include Indigenous communities (see, e.g., Patrick 2019).

Issues related to Croatian immigration to Canada and Croats' cultural integration in the Canadian society have been documented by different authors (see, e.g. Rasporich 1999 and Winland 2005; 2006; 2007),

and there has recently been a growing interest in aspects of Croatian language maintenance in Canada (see, e.g., Petrović 2017), as well as an interest in different aspects of English-Croatian language contact in Canada (see, e.g., Starčević 2014).

This paper addresses culture- and language-related issues among the Croatian community in Canada and places focus on identity, cultural practices, language attitudes, and language use. The main hypothesis of the paper is that the extent of language maintenance among Croats in Canada is dependent primarily on immigrant generation, but also on the extent of their engagement in activities and organizations in the Croatian community in Canada, their willingness to permanently return to the home country, as well as their visits to the home country.

2. Croats' immigration to Canada and their integration¹ in the Canadian society

Diachronic analyses of waves of migration of different communities frequently exhibit certain similarities. On one hand, the similarities have to do with reasons for migration, and these may be traced to social, economic, political or religious difficulties or turmoil in the home country. On the other hand, such similarities might be analyzed from the point of view of changes in the socioeconomic status and educational level of incoming migrants. This has been the case with Croats' immigration to Canada as well. Thus, a noticeable change in the profile of Croatian immigrants to Canada occurred in the period following the Second World War. Namely, "(...), many post-World War II arrivals came from urban areas and had professional training" (Winland 2005: 82). The situation seems to have been unfavourable for Croatians in terms of how they were perceived by the host community in the preceding decades. Ružić (2002: 388) attests that, due to changes in Canadian immigration policy after First World War, Croats were in that period, among other nationalities from specific parts of Europe, classified as "undesirable" in Canada. Naturally, the shift in views of Croatian immigrants that occurred in the second half of the twentieth century coincided with the shifts in views of immigrants of other ethnicities and nationalities, and it had to do with changes in Canadian immigration policy, which are, in turn, connected to the introduction of new legal framework related to immigration and naturalization (*Canadian Citizenship Act* of 1946 and *Citizenship Act* of 1976). The overlap of changes in Canadian immigration policy and a more prominent emphasis on multiculturalism on one hand, and changes of attitudes

towards immigrants on the other, that occurred in the 1970s, is attested by Winland (2007: 39) as well, who refers to it as the period in which the Canadian host community started abandoning the view of Croats “as members of – inferior – Eastern European stock”.² It should also be mentioned that diachronic studies of waves of migration of other European communities to Canada reveal the complexity of political and economic factors that have influenced the treatment of different groups of immigrants in Canada at different periods. For example, this is revealed in the studies of the Polish experience (see, e.g., Wiczorek 2018) and the German experience (see, e.g., Wagner 2006).

Croatian diaspora in different multilingual and multicultural parts of the world has its own characteristics that set it apart from other diasporas. However, a closer inspection of the Croatian diaspora in a specific multilingual and multicultural context might reveal differences within the context itself which largely depend, among other factors, on the region that Croatian immigrants came from. This is also true for the Croatian diaspora in Canada. Winland (2007: 20) notes the importance of regional provenance of Croats in Toronto in their organization and participation in social and cultural spheres, and she also places emphasis on class. However, regional and class differences aside, one thing that Canadian Croats³ seem to have been united about refers to their attitudes towards and concerns for the welfare of the Croats in Croatia during the 1990s turmoil.

2.1. Immigration and homeland nostalgia among Canadian Croats

Much has been said about the ways in which Croatian immigrants in Canada perceived and participated in the Croatian War of Independence that occurred in the 1990s. In that period, provision of financial and political aid, as well as a willingness to go to Croatia to help where help was needed were provided by Croatian immigrants in Canada, especially in Toronto (Granatstein 2008: 83). Winland (2007: 5, 21) has also noted similar activities by Toronto Croats, including outcries in public places such as Toronto City Hall and at universities, and, generally, a strong emotional attachment and empathy of Toronto Croats for their relatives in Croatia who were caught in the War.

Analyses of the extent of immigrants’ integration or assimilation in different host communities frequently contain reference to issues related to the concept of homeland nostalgia. Naturally, both the exact nature and the strength of such correlations are highly dependent not only on what the immigrants leave behind in the homeland, but also on

the extent to which they feel accepted in the new surroundings. Furthermore, what should also be kept in mind in the analyses of the relationship between different homelands and diasporas is the distinction between the so-called “old” and “new” diasporas as each category bears its own distinguishing features (Weingrod and Levy 2005: 4). Nostalgia itself is a rather complex concept that becomes even more intricate when analyzed in relation to the concept of the homeland as the emotionality that it is laden with becomes intertwined both with the individual and the collective. In that sense, in her analysis of the concept of nostalgia, Sutherland (2017: 34) notes that “it [nostalgia] can help make sense of the displaced self, but it can also entrench national divisions when directed towards a particular homeland”.

What should also be investigated in this context is the correlation between feelings of homeland nostalgia and the actual plans or attempts to return to the home country. How strongly immigrants feel about returning to the homeland depends on a number of factors, and these factors primarily include the generation to which the immigrants belong and, perhaps even more importantly, the socioeconomic status of individuals (which may, in turn, again be correlated with the different generations).

In her analysis of Croatian immigrants who went to Canada in the period between the two World Wars, Ružić (2002) presents the hardship that many Croatian immigrants felt in search of a better life while working in camps. Homeland nostalgia that these immigrants must have felt was most likely extremely overwhelming at times. On the other hand, on the basis of her experience with Toronto Croats, Winland (2007: 9) notes the following for a significant majority of Croats residing in this Canadian city: “For them, ‘home’ and ‘homeland’ are conceptual or discursive spaces of identification, nostalgia, and imagination, with no concomitant requirement to actually move to the homeland to live”. Similar impressions might be encountered in many other host countries in which Croats established new homes and founded their families. Such insights are extremely relevant for language-related analyses as well. Specifically, they may be used to establish correlations between the emotional attachment with the homeland, willingness and/or plans to move back, and the extent of language shift and language maintenance.

3. Canadian language policy and Croatian immigrants’ language maintenance

Diachronic analyses of the changes that have occurred in Canadian language policy and patterns of immigration to Canada throughout the

twentieth century reveal that these are directly related to political and economic changes that the country has gone through. Even the analyses of contemporary language requirements that applicants for Canadian citizenship have to meet and the substantial help in learning the official languages that the applicants have at their disposal reveal the amount of effort that Canada has made so as to ensure immigrants' successful integration (Škifić 2013: 15-18). *Canadian Multiculturalism Act* was passed in 1988. The document contains the framework for the future development of Canada's multicultural richness. However, that does not mean that, prior to this document, substantial steps in supporting the maintenance of minorities' cultural and linguistic heritage,⁴ including the Croatian one, have not been taken.

The steps taken in that direction in the 1970s led to "the establishment of 'heritage language' programs and of Croatian music and folklore groups" (Winland 2005: 82). Maintenance of the Croatian language among Croatian immigrants in Canada is noticeable much earlier than that, since the 1930s, via the printed word. Considering the fact that the publication of newspapers such as *Hrvatski Glas (The Croatian Voice)* and *Borba (Struggle)* was related to the political scene of the time (Rasporich 1999: 595), it could be argued that the primary purpose of such newspapers was to maintain a connection with social and political events in the homeland.⁵ However, different factors that led to the publication of such newspapers and their contents aside, it is relevant to emphasize from the linguistic point of view that these and other publications circulated among Croatian immigrants, and this significantly contributed to the maintenance of the language itself.

The previously mentioned emotional and financial investment of Canadian Croats, especially those in Toronto, in the events surrounding the Croatian War of Independence is not the only evidence of the strength of attachment of Canadian Croats to their homeland. Activities aimed at maintenance and promotion of homeland heritage and identity were present in cultural and language-related fields as well. In that context, Winland (2007: 62) emphasizes the creation of "Chair in Croatian Studies at both York University and the University of Waterloo, in Ontario, course offerings in Croatian language and history at two universities in Toronto, and academic conferences and special sessions devoted to Croatian history and culture".

Language of immigrants can be analyzed either from the purely linguistic point of view, i.e., by focusing on the linguistic characteristics of their language production which arise from language contact between the language they bring to the host country and the language(s) they are expected to use once they arrive there. It can also be analyzed from the

sociolinguistic point of view, where the focus is placed primarily on language shift, language maintenance, and the factors that contribute to the creation and development of each of these processes. This is attested by investigating the differences in approaches taken by scholars in their research on different immigrant language-related issues. For example, Zubčić (2010: 150-151) analyzed existing publications on the speech of Croatian emigrants in overseas countries and countries of Western Europe, and one of the criteria used in her categorization and description of the publications was precisely the method of analysis, i.e., whether the authors of analyzed publications focused more on linguistic or sociolinguistic aspects. In this paper we will not focus on linguistic features of Croatian immigrants' language use in Canada, but primarily on sociolinguistic issues, as identified above.

Within the analysis of the Canadian context, Boberg (2010: 98) claims that “the large European groups who came in the post-war years have begun to experience considerable heritage language erosion”. In recent decades Canada has placed significant focus on emphasizing its multicultural and multilingual richness, and this has been supported by different programs encouraging the maintenance of minority or heritage languages. However, “considerable heritage language erosion” that Boberg (2010: 98) speaks of begs the question of how efficient any program for minority language maintenance can be if language shift has already started taking place. It seems that the last refuge of a minority language is the community and the family circle.

Although not focusing specifically on immigrant language issues, but on threatened languages, Fishman (1991: 6) acknowledges the crucial importance of supporting “small-scale community life” in attempts to reverse the processes of language shift. In highly multilingual contexts and in relation to immigrant minority languages, such support may be provided by the host country or by community members themselves (in association with members of the community in the homeland). However, nurturing ‘small-scale community life’ is indeed of great importance for slowing down the process of language shift in immigrant contexts. Again, placing focus on threatened languages and language shift, Fishman (2001: 3) states the following: “Specific languages are related to specific cultures and to their attendant cultural identities at the level of doing, at the level of knowing and at the level of being”. The inextricable bond between cultural and linguistic identities is here clearly specified in terms of the levels on which it resides. Thus, “doing” a culture means being engaged in activities that promote the characteristics of that culture and keep it alive, including the use of language. By “doing” it, members of the community become aware of what and why they are doing it. This is the cognitive level or “the level

of knowing”. Finally, by both engaging in cultural activities via language and by bringing to consciousness what it is that we are doing exactly, we become it. We become a part of it, and it becomes a part of us. This is true in all cases, regardless of whether one is interested in languages whose use is diminishing in places where the languages are considered native, or whether focus is placed on languages whose use is diminishing in multilingual contexts where a language is identified as a minority immigrant language.

In his doctoral thesis dealing with different aspects of language contact between English and Croatian, Starčević (2014) conducted an in-depth study among members of a Croatian immigrant family in Canada. Among other relevant issues, the thesis includes a discussion on attitudes towards language shift and ethnic identity, i.e., on the different perceptions of the relationship between knowing the Croatian language and being a Croat, and a discussion on issues related to language shift and ways of reversing it (Starčević 2014: 195-201).

Naturally, communities’ efforts to maintain a language necessarily include collective efforts of minority groups in the host country via activities organized in places of religious worship, sports activities, but also through different forms of media. However, even these activities start from the family. Pauwels (2016: 118) identifies an important factor that needs to be taken into consideration in the analysis of the extent of language maintenance, and that is “the ethnolinguistic make-up of the family, i.e., whether the parents belong to the same or a different ethnolinguistic group”.⁶ It makes sense that the child whose parents are members of the same ethnic minority and share the language would more likely be exposed to the minority language to a greater extent. It also seems not to be just a matter of exposure, but also a matter of the amount of ‘pressure’ on the part of the parents for the child to acquire their mother tongue, and this, in turn, has to do with parents having a single mind about how important their language is for the maintenance of their ancestors’ cultural and linguistic heritage.

For the purpose of this study, it is also important to take into consideration the concept of language attitudes, as the extent of language maintenance is to a certain extent determined by subjective factors, and one of the most important ones refers to language attitudes. Although language purism is not the focus of this study, it might be useful to note that puristic tendencies in different sociocultural contexts illustrate quite clearly how language attitudes affect the perception and use of different languages. Puristic tendencies in relation to “other” languages usually include reference to languages from which different linguistic items are borrowed and used in, what is usually termed in such discussions, “national” or “official” languages. In such contexts “other” lan-

guages frequently do not constitute a minority language, but a global language. For example, this is the case with certain Croatian puristic attitudes against different borrowings from the English language. However, in analyses of language attitudes in highly multicultural and multilingual immigrant contexts, especially English-dominant ones, “other” languages actually are minority/community/heritage languages, and this is why such analyses reveal certain features characteristic of such contexts. Furthermore, the reason why research on such language attitudes is of particular importance, not only from the linguistic, but also from the social and cultural points of view, lies in the effects that such attitudes have for the evaluation of the community itself. Garrett (2010: 16) notes the following: “It is generally difficult to distinguish attitudes to language varieties from attitudes to the perceived groups and community members who use them”. In part, language attitudes may be influenced by the individual’s perception of prestige of majority language and a possible lack of prestige of minority language(s), but it seems that the primary factor in the creation of such perceptions refers to the extent to which a native-like competence in the majority language contributes to one’s social and economic welfare. Consequently, covert or overt pressures to fully master the majority language may be felt by immigrants and may frequently include native-like proficiency on all language levels. Within discussions on language as one of “barriers to minority success” in Canada, Adu-Febiri and Ofori (2009: 21) note some Canadian immigrants’ self-consciousness with regard to their accent, who, consequently, resorted to “accent reduction courses” or “language tapes to ‘improve’ their accents”.

Naturally, both minority language maintenance and the creation of positive attitudes towards such languages in highly multilingual contexts are also dependent on different bilingual schools and programs which are offered to members of different generations of immigrants. In that respect, Ramirez (1985: 127) mentions that such opportunities in the educational context may have a positive impact of reducing minorities’ unfavourable attitudes towards their language. In the Canadian context, the impact of language programs is perhaps best illustrated by the evaluations of the importance of immersion programs that have significantly marked the Canadian educational context since the second half of the twentieth century. Issues related to immersion programs will not be analyzed in further detail in this paper since the primary focus is placed on issues of Canadian Croats’ cultural integration and language maintenance, together with their language use and attitudes. However, exposure of Croatian immigrants’ children to Croatian language and culture in form of organized classes represents a factor taken into con-

sideration in evaluating the extent of language shift and maintenance among Canadian Croats. Experiences with such classes have been taken into consideration in most recent studies, e.g., by Starčević (2014: 113-115). In her study of Croatian language maintenance among Toronto Croats of the first and second generation, Petrović (2017: 24) concluded, among other things, that “the first generation mostly uses Croatian, and the second generation mostly uses English”, with Croatian mostly used by the second generation “to communicate with parents, older family members, and friends from the Croatian community, and they use it at workplace very rarely”.⁷ In her concluding remarks she identifies the factors that have a positive influence on the maintenance of the Croatian language, and these are:

existence of schools of the Croatian language, activities of the Catholic church, intensive socializing with people from the Croatian community and establishment of different societies and associations, desire to return to the homeland, constant influx of first-generation emigrants, relatively high concentration of the population of Croatian descent in a given geographical area, and a strong connection between the Croatian language and Croatian identity (Petrović 2017: 30).⁸

Most of these factors will be taken into consideration in the study conducted for the purpose of this paper, which will be presented later on.

4. Expressing emotions in majority or minority language

Research in the area of bilinguals’ and multilinguals’ cognitive processing and specific uses of different languages has become increasingly pronounced, especially in the first two decades of the twenty-first century. As was already noted, the primary aim of this paper is to provide an insight into Canadian Croats’ cultural integration and language maintenance, as well as their general language use and attitudes. However, in the last part of the conducted research reference will also be made to the ways in which the informants use the languages for specific purposes, including the use of languages to express emotions.

Linguistic choices made by bilinguals on an everyday basis depend on numerous factors. Since the primary aim of using language is to communicate, i.e., to get a message across, it might be argued that the addressee’s competence in either of the languages is one of the most important factor in bilinguals’ choices between the two languages. The importance of this factor is especially evident in highly multilingual

contexts and among immigrants who learn the majority language in the host country primarily for the purpose of communicating with members of the community who do not share the immigrants' minority language as their day-to-day life is to a great degree dependent on the ability to use the majority language rather than just their minority language.

Addressee's (lack of) proficiency in either of the languages has been attested as a relevant factor in extensive research conducted with the aim of explaining the ways in which bilinguals linguistically express their emotions. By describing her own personal experience, Pavlenko (2005: 22-23) confirms that the addressee's proficiency in a language is a major factor in the bilinguals' language choice when expressing emotions, but she also poses a set of questions that need to be taken into consideration when the addressee is bilingual as well. As was noted previously, the complexity of factors which should be taken into consideration in the analyses of bilinguals' linguistic choices is perhaps best illustrated by the investigation of the choices between the majority and the minority languages that specifically immigrant bilinguals make, but also by the complexity of the questions that scholars put forward in such analyses. One of the questions proposed by Pavlenko (2006: 1) is the following: "Do bi- and multilinguals sometimes feel like different people when speaking different languages?". Clearly, such questions are imbedded in social, cultural, and psychological issues, which is why it is also possible to analyze the differences in bilinguals' conceptualization in relation to words and expressions in one language and their equivalents in the other, both emotion and non-emotion words. Analyses of bilinguals' conceptualization of emotion-related words in the two languages are especially interesting, and Besemeres (2006: 39) discusses the so-called "translatability of emotion concepts".

In her presentation of the factors that have a role in language emotionality in multilingual speakers, Pavlenko (2005: 185) lists the following:

(a) age of acquisition; (b) context of acquisition; (c) personal history of trauma, stress, and violence; (d) language dominance; and (e) word types. In addition, we also need to consider (f) language proficiency, a factor that impacts the speaker's performance of affect and thus its perception by interlocutors.⁹

What Dewaele's study (2011: 47) revealed was that, even in contexts in which individuals report equal proficiency in L1 and L2 and regular use of both, L2 is considered "more useful", and L1 "more colorful, rich, and emotional". Furthermore, in the same study (Dewaele 2011: 47) it was concluded that "the difference was even stronger in the perception

of the emotional strength of swear words, with L1 swear words reported to have a much stronger emotional resonance than L2 swear words”.¹⁰ Here we may hypothesize that in contexts in which there is a noticeable difference between participants’ competence in their L1 and L2, such as is the case among different generations of immigrants, these differences might be even greater than in cases in which the competence in both languages and frequency of use are relatively equal. Furthermore, in a study related to the emotional weight of ‘I love you’ among multilinguals, Dewaele (2008) notes, among other things, that the increase in the emotional weight of this phrase may be related to increased interaction in a language, self-perceived language dominance and proficiency.

5. Language use, language maintenance, and attitudes among Canadian Croats

5.1. Methodology and sample

As was already noted, the present study focuses on analyzing different aspects of Canadian Croats’ language use, the extent of their cultural integration and language maintenance, as well as their attitudes towards the relationship between identity and minority language. The study was conducted in the period from November 2018 to February 2019 among twenty-eight Canadian Croats. Participants were contacted through friends and acquaintances, but also with the help of contacts via different Facebook pages associated with Canadian Croats.¹¹ Two out of twenty-eight questionnaires were not taken into consideration in data analysis as they were filled out by persons who did not identify Canada but Croatia as their place of residence.

Twenty-three out of twenty-six participants (whose responses were taken into consideration) resided in Ontario, a Canadian province with the highest number of population of Croatian descent (Canadian census 2011, as cited in Petrović 2017: 14). As far as metropolitan areas are concerned, the greatest number of population of Croatian descent is found in Toronto (Canadian census 2011, as cited in Petrović 2017: 16). Other similar sociolinguistic studies have been conducted among Croats in Toronto,¹² which is why the sample was not restricted to this area. Thus, only some of the participants (seven of them) had Toronto as their place of residence. Seven participants named Hamilton as their place of residence, identified in the Canadian census 2011 as the third metropolitan area with the greatest number of population of Croatian descent (as cited in Petrović 2017: 16). Four participants identified Stoney Creek,¹³

and one Ancaster¹⁴ as place of residence. Two participants identified Oakville, one Georgetown, and one Burlington as their place of residence. Three participants' places of residence (New Westminster, Burnaby, and Coquitlam) are located in the Canadian province that follows Ontario according to the highest number of population of Croatian descent, and that is British Columbia (Canadian census 2011, as cited in Petrović 2017: 14).

The questionnaires for the first and the second generation¹⁵ were drafted in English and Croatian, and the participants were offered both. They were informed that the questionnaire for the first generation should be filled out by persons who were born in Croatia and moved to Canada, and the questionnaire for the second generation by those who were born in Canada to parents who are first generation of Croatian immigrants. If not born in Canada, but moved there in pre-teens, the participants were asked to fill out both questionnaires. Four persons (P9, P14, P17, and P18)¹⁶ filled out both questionnaires. All participants with whom communication was carried out via email except two filled out the questionnaire in English. One participant (P10) who filled out the questionnaire via email in Croatian filled out the questionnaire for the first generation, and the other (P26) filled out the one for the second generation. Only one participant (P1) who did not use email was asked the questions in Croatian in person during his stay in Croatia. This participant provided feedback on questions included in the questionnaire for the first generation.¹⁷

5.2. Data analysis

The collected data were first transcribed and then subjected to thematic analysis,¹⁸ based on the clusters of questions presented in different parts of the questionnaire and elaborated in the continuation of the paper. The main hypothesis of the research was presented in the introduction – that the extent of language maintenance among Croats in Canada is dependent primarily on immigrant generation, but also on the extent of their engagement in activities and organizations in the Croatian community, their willingness to permanently return to the home country, as well as their visits to the home country. In other words, we hypothesized that the maintenance of the Croatian language will be most prominent among first-generation immigrants, among those who are actively engaged in different activities and organizations in the Croatian community, among those who express willingness to return to the home country, as well as among those who frequently visit the home country. Besides these factors, if applicable, reference will be made to aspects of

participants' profiles that may be used to interpret differences in specific sets of data.¹⁹

5.2.1. Participants' profiles

The questionnaire consisted of four parts. In the first part the participants were asked to state their gender, age, occupation, place of birth, place of residence, information regarding their (or their parents') emigration to Canada, as well as the descent of their spouse (if married). Nineteen out of twenty-six participants were female. Most participants were in their thirties, forties, fifties, or sixties. The oldest participants were seventy-four (P1) and seventy-two (P8), and the youngest (P14 and P22) were twenty-three years old. The two participants who filled out only the questionnaire for the first generation (P1 and P10) moved to Canada in the second half of the 1960s and early 1970s respectively.²⁰ Two participants who filled out both questionnaires (P9 and P14) moved to Canada in the second half of the 1970s and in the second half of the 1990s respectively, and two of them (P17 and P18) moved in the 1960s.²¹ Other participants, who filled out the questionnaire for the second generation, stated that their parents moved to Canada in periods ranging from 1930s to 1980s.²² Among these, two participants had one parent born in Canada, while the other parent was a first-generation Croatian immigrant.²³ Sixteen out of twenty-six participants' spouses/partners were of Croatian descent.

5.2.2. Identity, homeland, and the Croatian community in Canada

In the second part of the questionnaire the participants were first asked whether they felt more like a Canadian or a Croat. In our oral communication, (P1), who moved to Canada when he was twenty-four, stated that he felt completely like a Croat and not as a Canadian. He said that his body was in Canada, but his heart in Croatia. The other first-generation immigrant who moved to Canada when she was fifteen years old made a different claim:

Although I can rarely hold back my tears when I talk to my relatives in Croatia, I feel more like a Canadian although I was young (fifteen) when I came here. I received my education here, got employed, married, and formed a family. From that side, I am more a Canadian; however, my heart is always in Croatia.²⁴ (P10)

Two 1.5 generation immigrants claimed to feel more Croatian, and the other two more Canadian. For example:

I feel more Croatian. I spent almost every summer in Croatia from a young age, so I feel that I have grown up almost equally in Croatian and Canadian cultures. As with many other Canadians, I feel that my foreign identity is much stronger than my Canadian identity. I suppose this is the result of Canada's multicultural society, which not only tolerates, but *supports* and *encourages* the celebration of foreign cultures. Consequently, there is not a lot of Canadian patriotism – rather, Canadians tend to celebrate the cultures that they originated from. If I were to describe Canadian culture in one word, it would probably be 'mosaic'. (P14)

I am proud to be Croatian, but am Canadian. (P9)

Seven second-generation immigrants claimed to feel more like Croats, three placed more emphasis on their Canadian identity, while most others claimed to feel both as a Canadian and a Croat. Here are some of their responses:

More like a *prava Hrvatica*!²⁵ Was born in a very Croatian household (e.g., Croatian church, folklore + *tambura*, Croatian school, Croatian parties (e.g., *župni banquet*,²⁶ *Ličko Prelo*,²⁷ Croatian Canadian Folklore Festival), Croatian Fraternal Union (CFU) scholarships. (P22)

Within Canada I definitely feel more Croat but when I visit Croatia I tend to feel more Canadian. Hard to explain but having been raised by Croatian parents, I feel very different from those around me that aren't Croatian. By the same token, I have also grown up with a more Canadian way of thinking, being exposed to other cultures and other ways of thinking. There are times I visited Croatia where I have at times felt misunderstood by others in Croatia who do not know how difficult it is to grow up Croatian in the diaspora. I have even met family members there that didn't show a genuine interest in getting to know one another better. A few people in the past also ridiculed me or tried to make me feel ashamed for not speaking more fluent Croatian. I even had someone ask my opinion if it was possible for someone who didn't speak Croatian to be considered Croatian. Listening to their answer made me feel less Croatian in their eyes. In Croatia I feel more Croatian when I can connect with others who see beyond the things I don't possess and instead focus on what binds us - our common ethnicity and love for our culture and history. (P6)

Here is a part of P23's response:

I have ALWAYS felt more like a Croatian. It is in my blood. My parents have made sure that we stay connected with our Croatian roots. We go to Croatian Church, listen to Croatian music, I try to speak with my children in Croatian. My parents spoke Croatian with us (me and my siblings). We visit often. Even my children feel more Croatian than Canadian.

One participant stated the following:

I don't feel that I fit in either group. Growing up, I was not accepted as a true «Canadian» often having someone comment on my last name. I also felt that I had different values and that the way that I was being raised was different. However, when I visited family in Croatia, I didn't feel that I belonged there either. Despite everything, I am very proud of my Croatian background and very sad as I feel that with time, I will end up losing my ties completely. (P7)

One 2.5 generation immigrant claimed to feel more Croatian, while the other stated the following:

It depends on the context. In terms of citizenship, I definitely feel more connected to Canada. It's the place of my birth, where I was educated and raised. My parents instilled a pride in this country since birth. When I travel outside of Canada, I feel a connection to other Canadians that I meet. In terms of culture, I feel a strong connection to Croatia. It's where I have many family relatives, I have visited often. I live in a community in which the third most common language is Croatian (English, Italian, Croatian) so I have daily contacts with people with the same ethnic origin. I feel a connection with Croatian people just because they are Croatian. I am part of a very active Croatian community and have been active in it since birth. I read Croatian newspapers online, listen to Croatian programs (both from Canada and from Croatia), listen to new Croatian songs on youtube and other resources. I feel part of the history and culture of both countries and I feel as equally comfortable in a Canadian or Croatian milieu. (P4)

The Croatian identity was primarily associated with the ties to Croatian tradition and values that are practised through different activities in the Croatian community and instilled to the participants by their parents. Participants' Canadian identity was emphasized primarily in terms of Canada being identified as the place where participants were educated and employed, where they formed their families, but also in terms of appreciation of Canadian multicultural values. Collectively speaking, a slightly stronger emphasis on the Croatian identity (rather than on the Canadian one or equally on both) was identified among participants whose spouses/partners were of Croatian descent.

In the continuation the participants were asked about their visits to Croatia. First-generation immigrants claimed to have been to Croatia a number of times since moving to Canada (P1 over twenty times and P10 five or six times). P1 mostly remembered working around the house and swimming. P10 stated the following:

Going back to the homeland is always joyful and dear; indescribably dear; (...); however, we always compare Croatia to Canada and get lost there

because those are materially two completely different worlds; our people seem carefree, happy, and we in Canada are not like that; we are too, too serious; always worried; you cannot live without work because if you do not work, you cannot pay your bills; however, in Croatia our people somehow manage to get by although the same thing is starting to happen there as well.²⁸

1.5 generation immigrants also claimed to have been to Croatia on a number of occasions, and they remembered it with fondness, especially childhood memories, swimming, food, and friends. Only one second-generation immigrant claimed not to have been to Croatia. Other second- and 2.5 generation immigrants claimed to have been to Croatia different numbers of times. Most of them described positive experiences, having primarily to do with spending time with family and friends, but also with experiencing the country's beauty, food, culture, music, nightlife, soccer games, etc. There was mention of differences in Canadian and Croatian lifestyles, as well as improvements noticed in areas such as freedom of speech, selection of goods and customer service in Croatia. There was also mention of reconstruction after the war, and a more positive experience related to Croatia's accession to the EU. On the other hand, there were two comments about not having felt welcome, and two unfavourable comments about politics. P23, who claimed to have been to Croatia six times, stated the following about the experience:

I remember visiting my family. The beauty of each region of Croatia. The churches...The experience is always one of my highlights in life.

Participants were next asked whether they wanted to stay in Croatia while they were there, whether they planned to move back (first generation)/wished to live in Croatia (second generation), and whether their parents planned to move back to Croatia (second generation). P1 stated that he always wished he could stay and expressed a wish to be buried there as he never felt Canada to be his home. P10, on the other hand, did not express a wish or plan to move back to Croatia, due to having become accustomed to life in Canada. Most 1.5 generation immigrants wanted to stay in Croatia while they were there, but most would not move there permanently, and most said that their parents did not plan to do so either. Three second- and one 2.5 generation immigrants explicitly stated that they wanted to stay while they were there and that they wished to live there. Many other second-generation immigrants wanted to stay in Croatia during their visit, but most of them expressed no wish to live there or, like the other 2.5 generation immigrant, had mixed feel-

ings about it or were unsure. Mixed feelings were explained primarily by being settled in Canada and having family ties there (their spouses and children), but also by economic reasons. In rare cases, unpleasant previous experience was mentioned. Some mentioned plans to spend more time in Croatia after retirement, similarly to what their parents were doing, many of whom allegedly did not plan on moving back permanently either. P7 stated the following:

I would love the opportunity to spend a few months there each year just so that I could learn more about my family and where my parents have come from but I do not think that I would live there. (P7)

In the continuation of the second part of the questionnaire the participants were asked about their (and their parents' if members of second generation) participation in activities organized by the Croatian community and ways of socializing with other Croats in place of residence. Most participants said that both they and their parents socialized with other Croats through activities organized by the Croatian community. Such activities were primarily associated with Croatian church, folklore, music (playing *tambura*²⁹), and sports. Activities connected to church mostly included attending mass, with one participant also being an active member of the functioning of the church. Besides church, folklore was most frequently identified as the activity that most participants and second-generation participants' parents engaged in or had been engaged in when younger. Some second-generation immigrants claimed that their children did the same. Playing *tambura* was also mentioned by several participants as an activity that they were or had been engaged in. For example, P4 mentioned his membership in the adult *tambura* group *Hrvatsko Srce*³⁰. This tradition was also passed on to some of their children. Participants mentioned sporting activities, such as soccer, basketball, and bowling, which, in the case of some participants, included their parents' and children's participation as well. Attending Croatian school was also mentioned as a meeting place for some (of their children). Other places of socializing mentioned by the participants included the following: Croatian Hall, Croatian Cultural Centre, Canadian Croatian Choral Society, Croatian Sports and Community Centre of Hamilton, Croatian Pensioners group, the Canadian Croatian Chamber of Commerce, Croatian Canadian Library, political parties, etc. They also mentioned meeting with other Croats at Croatian Park, Croatian bar, and socializing with them at each other's homes, making Croatian food, playing cards, singing, and watching Croatian soccer games. Other mentioned contexts of gathering included the following: banquets, concerts, wed-

dings, funerals, birthdays, baby showers, picnics, holidays, fundraising groups, etc.

Participants were asked whether they (first generation) and their parents (second generation) followed the political and cultural news from Croatia and, if yes, through which media. Most participants responded affirmatively. Among first-generation immigrants, P1 mentioned listening to the radio program *Zvuci Hrvatske*³¹ and following Canada's national multicultural TV channel. He also mentioned reading Croatian newspapers (*Večernji list*, *Jutarnji list*, *Slobodna Dalmacija*) and not using the Internet that much. P10 claimed not to follow the news from Croatia, except for what she would see via Toronto CROATICA TV program. Most second- and 2.5 generation immigrants claimed to follow the political and cultural news from Croatia, and most of them stated the same about their parents. They claimed to follow the news primarily via the Internet (e.g., social media, blogs, etc.), and to a lesser degree via TV, radio, periodicals, literature. They said that their parents followed the news via newsprint, radio, TV, and the Internet (e.g., by reading news articles online and by listening to HRT³² online).

When asked about whether they had noticed any regional differences in habits and use of Croatian when socializing with other Croats in place of residence, most participants responded affirmatively. Regional differences in habits were mostly associated with folklore, diet/cuisine/food preference, music, and dance. P11 responded negatively and stated, among other things, the following:

In Canada we only see ourselves as Croats and regionality does not matter.

Regional differences in language were primarily associated with different dialects, vocabulary (e.g., terms for food), accent, figures of speech, and slang. There was also mention of language differences that have to do more with competence, not region.

5.2.3. Language acquisition, language use, language classes, and identity

In the third part of the questionnaire the participants were asked to identify the languages they spoke, order of acquisition, their mother tongue, proficiency in Croatian, and contexts of language use. They were also asked to discuss attendance of classes in Croatian and to evaluate the importance of the Croatian language for the preservation of Canadian Croats' identity.

Eleven out of twenty-six participants stated that they spoke English and Croatian, and others included (up to three) more languages, most frequently French. With regard to order of acquisition, twenty-two participants identified Croatian as the first acquired language, and four identified English. One of them stated the following about the first acquired language:

English. Spoke English in the home since my father wanted to speak English fluently and not be embarrassed. Croatian was spoken by *Baba*³³ and *Dida*³⁴ all the time, parents when they wanted to keep something secret from us, their children. French in elementary and secondary school, Spanish in university. (P5)

On the other hand, twenty-one participants claimed to actively use English and Croatian, two of them claimed to actively use only English, two identified English, Croatian, and French, and one Croatian, English, French, and Spanish.

With regard to identifying their mother tongue, all participants except four identified Croatian as their mother tongue. One 1.5 generation participant identified both Croatian and English as her mother tongue, and the same was done by one 2.5 generation immigrant. Two second-generation immigrants identified English as their mother tongue.

Understandably, first-generation immigrants claimed to have no problems with competence in Croatian, and so did the members of 1.5 generation. Among the second generation, P12 claimed fluency in all skills, and P13 perfect competence in Croatian. Overall, second-generation immigrants seemed to have least problems with receptive skills, i.e., with understanding. Not all second-generation participants commented on different language skills, but for those who did, the most problematic skill seemed to be writing, except for P16 and P24. Participants who mentioned having problems with speaking explained it mostly by limited vocabulary (P7 and P8). When vocabulary was identified as unproblematic, there was mention of problems with grammar (P5). For 2.5 generation immigrants receptive skills, i.e., understanding, seemed to be strongest as well.

With regard to contexts of use of each language, first-generation immigrants provided different answers. P1 said that he always spoke Croatian with Croats, and he did so at workplace as well, since most colleagues were Croats. He said that he used English only with those who did not speak Croatian. P10 said that Croatian was mixed with English at home, and that English was used at home early on in order to improve it and, thus, get ahead at work. She added that Croatian was used at workplace only when dealing with Croatian customers who

needed explanation in Croatian. She also said that she did not use much Croatian when socializing with other Croats as most of her friends have been in Canada for as long as she has. As for members of the 1.5 generation, Croatian was said to be used primarily with family members and Croatian friends. Most members of the second and 2.5 generation said that they used Croatian at home (with parents and/or siblings, and/or spouse, in-laws, and with children to a lesser degree) and/or when socializing with other Croats. It appears to be used rarely at workplace. With regard to the workplace context, here is a part of P6's answer:

Speaking another foreign language in front of others can sometimes be looked down upon by non-Croats (especially when these people know that we also speak English).

Choice of Croatian over English was dependent primarily on the interlocutor (addressee's competence in Croatian (which, in some cases, includes the factor of having a spouse/partner who is of Croatian descent), whether the participant was first addressed in Croatian or asked to be spoken to in Croatian, and age (if the addressee was an older Croat not born in Canada)) and context (Croatian was used when in Croatia). There was also mention of using Croatian in order to show respect³⁵, and this can be correlated with the previously mentioned variable of addressee's age. Croatian was also said to be frequently used when the participant and the interlocutor did not wish to be understood by others who were present. It was also said to be used when reading Croatian media, making comments on Croatian social media sites, and following cooking recipes. With regard to contexts of use of each language, P3 stated the following:

Both languages with family/relatives/older adult friends here; when don't wish others in public to understand then Croatian; when singing both languages; otherwise everyday activities and at home English. (P3)

When P1 arrived in Canada he and his wife were provided institutional help with English, and it was very helpful. He has always insisted on his children speaking Croatian at home and they know it well, but he also said that grandchildren were more difficult to influence. His children attended classes of Croatian at school, and he said that it was a positive experience. Special institutional help in English was not necessary for P10 as she arrived to Canada when she was fifteen so she enrolled in regular school. Learning English was slightly difficult, but she managed to "pick it up" quickly. Her children were taught Croatian, but she did not insist on them using it exclusively at home. They attended classes in Croatian, but did not like it. She thought they did not learn much, but later realized

they did. For one 1.5 generation immigrant coming into contact with English in Kindergarten was a shock, and for another it was slightly confusing in day care. For some 1.5 generation immigrants their parents insisting on them speaking Croatian was not a matter of choice but necessity because some parents did not speak English, so knowing Croatian was necessary. The classes in Croatian were generally a positive social experience, but some participants described them as insufficiently engaging. When P14 was asked whether her children or grandchildren attended classes in Croatian, she stated the following:

I do not have children. From personal experiences, formal Croatian language classes in Canada are not taken seriously enough to be educational – most of the students who attend are forced to attend by their parents. However, because I had a strong knowledge of Croatian from my summers in Croatia, formal Croatian school was mildly useful in refining and practising writing in Croatian – particularly *padeži*.³⁶

Many second-generation immigrants' parents insisted on them learning and speaking Croatian.

Of course! I went to kindergarten not knowing how to speak English and I went to Croatian Saturday school from Grade 1 – Grade 12. They prefer me to speak Croatian in the house. (P22)

Some of them claimed that the reason for their parents insisting on them learning and speaking Croatian was (one of) the parents not knowing or not being proficient in English. On the other hand, P5's parents did not insist on it because it was important for them to speak better English in order to be accepted better. One of them stated the following:

Yes, they always insisted, yet ironically, they spoke English at home with their children and would only speak Croatian amongst themselves and their friends. (P21)

One 2.5 generation immigrant's parents also insisted on him learning and speaking Croatian, but the other's parents did not early on as they feared learning disabilities. Many second- and both 2.5 generation participants took some type of classes in Croatian, which was described as a positive experience by some, but there was also mention of difficulties with grammar (cases). P5 attended Croatian school as a child and explained the experience in the following way:

Went to Croatian school as a child. Different dialect of the teacher and confusing so we stopped. Often proper Croatian was at the discretion of the

instructor and they only knew their dialect. Croatian teachers were volunteers with no formal Croatian education in language instruction. (P5)

Some stated that most of their Croatian was learnt at home. This is a part of P6's answer to the question:

Class is a waste of time. The language has to be spoken from grassroots and emphasized by both parents and children. Parents too quickly allow children to drift to the second language.

When asked about the importance of the Croatian language for the preservation of Canadian Croats' identity, most participants said that it was important, very/extremely/100% important, or critical.³⁷ One of them stated the following:

It is extremely....and to be able to pass it on to the next generation so that [it] is not lost is even more crucial; language and culture is what make up our Canadian Croatian identity. (P3)

However, here is a part of another participant's response:

People will likely answer very important but then they will likely not be keeping up the language with their kids like they say they want to. (P4)

Here are two further responses:

For a Canadian-Croat's identity, Croatian language is moderately important. It is beneficial to know, but not deleterious if you do not speak Croatian well. However, from the perspective of a Canadian-Croat trying to re-integrate or immerse themselves in true Croatian culture *in* Croatia, language is hugely important. (P14)

I believe the preservation of the language is very important for the preservation of the Canadian Croats' identity but not crucial. There are many people who don't really speak it but are active in the community through sports, the church and folklore. They are no less proud than those who can speak it. (P18)

5.2.4. Language, emotions, thought, and identity

In the fourth part of the questionnaire participants were first asked about the language they (and their parents) used to express emotions (love, anger, frustration, etc.) and tell someone that they love them.³⁸ Among first-generation immigrants, P1 claimed to use Croatian for both expressing different emotions and for telling someone that he loves

them. P10 claimed to use English for both. As for the 1.5 generation, most of them claimed to use both, depending primarily on the situation and/or the interlocutor. Most second-generation immigrants said their parents expressed emotions in Croatian. As for themselves, most second-generation immigrants stated that they used both languages, primarily depending on the situation and/or the interlocutor. On the other hand, there were more of those who would say ‘I love you’ in English than in both languages. In the latter case it would primarily depend on the addressee. Only two participants among the second generation would opt for Croatian.

Here is one response:

English to my wife and kids. Croatian to my parents and other old family members. (P6)

One 2.5 generation participant (P4) said that both he and his parents used English for expressing emotions. However, he added that his Croatian-born parent would sometimes use Croatian when talking to relatives on the phone and when emotions would come up. P19 claimed to use both for expressing emotions, but would say ‘I love you’ in English. He stated that his Canadian-born parent used English for expressing emotions, and that his Croatian-born parent used both. Some participants provided other reasons for why they would choose English over Croatian for saying ‘I love you’, and for them it was a matter of what is felt to be more natural or how the actual words feel:

English; it comes more naturally to me. (P9)

English, because I speak predominantly English with my boyfriend. For some reason that I cannot explain, saying “I love you” to someone seems more impactful/meaningful to me than saying “*volim te*,”³⁹ but I do not know why.” (P14)

Probably English regardless of whom I’m speaking to. Again, I just believe the English ‘love’ language sounds better and more affectionate. (P22)

On the other hand, besides using Croatian for the purpose, P21 interjects phrases from other languages that are, like Croatian ones, perceived to be “more melodic”:

Interestingly I use Croatian words of love and comfort with my children. Croatian emotive phrases are just more melodic and descriptive than English (*Lipa mamina lutkica*).⁴⁰ (...). English phrases such as I LOVE YOU are simply more harsh and less appealing.

When asked about the language they (and their parents) would use to discuss traumatic past events or experiences⁴¹, P1 stated that he would use Croatian, and P10 English. 1.5 generation participants would primarily use English for the purpose, and their parents talked about it in Croatian. Most second-generation participants claimed that their parents' language choice to discuss traumatic events in was Croatian. Some of them stated that the parents would use either both languages or English. As for the second-generation immigrants themselves, most said that they would discuss such events in English or that it would depend on the situation and/or interlocutor. P21 stated the following: "Ah, many times it will depend on where the trauma took place".

Croatian would be used by some only if the interlocutor(s) would not understand. None of them would use exclusively Croatian. Both 2.5 generation immigrants would use English, and, according to their feedback, their parents did not seem inclined to using Croatian for the purpose either. P4 added that his Croatian-born parent sometimes used Croatian if the context was difficult to translate in English.

Participants were next asked about the language they (and their parents) would use to swear.⁴² P1 would primarily use Croatian, but sometimes English when watching a match. P10 would use English. Most 1.5 generation immigrants would use both languages, and it would depend on situation, interlocutor or type of swear word. Croatian would sometimes be used for the purpose of not being understood by others. Most of their parents would use Croatian. Collectively speaking, most second-generation immigrants stated that they would use either English or both, and some were more inclined towards Croatian. The use of Croatian was for P23 associated with not wanting to be understood. Most stated that their parents would swear in Croatian, and some claimed their parents would do so in both languages. For example, P3's parents would use both when swearing, but Croatian for being "more descriptive". P11 stated the following about both his parents and himself:

My parents didn't swear and the odd time maybe a '*Sranje*'⁴³ here and there. It's odd, but I usually swear more in Croatian.

One 2.5 generation immigrant (P19) and his parents would use both, and P4 would use English, and Croatian only when mad or for the purpose of not being understood by the interlocutor. His Canadian-born parent would use English, and the other parent mostly English and only some Croatian.

When asked about language and thinking, among the first-generation immigrants, P1 claimed to think in Croatian, and P10 in English. For P10 “it does not depend on anything, but what is normal, simpler, easier”⁴⁴. As for the 1.5 generation, P9 claimed to think in English, and for P14 it depended on which language she was using at a particular period. She mentioned a tendency to think in Croatian when alone for longer periods of time and not speaking either language. P17 said that she usually thought in English (sometimes in Croatian), and that she prayed almost exclusively in Croatian. P18 claimed to think and dream in both. Collectively speaking, there were more second-generation immigrants who claimed to think in English. The rest of them mentioned Croatian as well. For example, P3 said that she usually thought in English and in Croatian to a lesser extent, but that she prayed in Croatian. For P11 “it depends on the topic, environment and who’s involved, but it really goes both ways”. P12 claimed to think in both languages, “depending on the scenario”. P25 claimed to usually think in English first, but she did so in Croatian first after returning from Croatia. P13 stated the following:

I think more in English but then sometime will in Croatian at difficult times.

2.5 generation immigrants claimed to think in English. Additionally, P4 noted that he tried to think in other languages when he spoke them.

Finally, participants were asked whether they felt like another person when using another language.⁴⁵ First-generation immigrants stated that they did not feel like another person when using another language, and P1 added it was because he used English only when necessary. Two 1.5 generation immigrants claimed not to feel like another person when using another language. One of them stated the following:

No, I feel like myself – the Croatian one. (P17)

The other two stated the following:

When I speak Croatian to individuals that have newly arrived to Canada, it feels very unnatural. Otherwise, I am pretty comfortable speaking Croatian. (P9)

Yes, however that might be a product of my upbringing. Whenever I was in Croatia speaking Croatian to people, it was summer, we were on the beach, there was no school, and every day was an adventure. I always feel free-spirited and happy when I speak Croatian. In contrast, I use English in my day-to-day life in Canada, where it is often winter, I am in school, and I have much less fun. So, when I speak English, I feel factual, intelligent, and boring. (P14)

Most second-generation immigrants claimed not to feel like another person when using another language. P15 claimed to feel like that at times, and P7 related it to being self-conscious about her competence in Croatian. As a response to this question, P3 wrote:

When at home here just expressing myself therefore the language does not seem [to] matter. But oddly enough when abroad travelling and when in Croatia and speaking Croatian feel more Croatian.

However, for some participants changing the physical and cultural surroundings did not seem to be relevant in this aspect:

I didn't before, but I've been told that my mannerisms change when I use another language. (P16)

I never did until multiple people pointed out that I 'sound like a different person.' I love being able to speak Croatian and I know it is something that I definitely want my children to know as well. (P22)

Here is a part of P21's response:

Yes!! It is a wondrous thing, my thought patterns, mannerisms and mood all adjust to the spoken language, it is truly like you are a different person.

2.5 generation immigrants claimed not to feel like another person when using another language.

5.3. Discussion

The focus of this paper is placed on the nature and extent of cultural integration and language maintenance among different generations of Croatian immigrants in Canada. Although more input from first-generation immigrants would have been preferable, the feedback provided by the second generation about themselves and their parents is used to draw conclusions and comparisons. Most participants, especially the second generation, have embraced both their Croatian and Canadian identities, although a slightly more pronounced emphasis on the Croatian identity was found among participants whose spouse/partner was of Croatian descent. They keep visiting their (parents') homeland, which, besides the different factors identified in Petrović (2017) and analyzed in this paper, also seems to have an effect on how they relate to Croatian cultural heritage and the Croatian language. Mixed feelings or unwillingness to move (back) permanently were explained primarily by family ties and socio-economic concerns for both the second generation and their parents.

Participation in different activities organized by the Croatian community and socializing with other Canadian Croats was especially prominent among all generational groups. A further aspect that was examined in relation to cultural ties with the homeland had to do with following the news from Croatia. It was confirmed that this was also an important way of maintaining the cultural ties with the homeland.

Croatian was identified as the mother tongue of most participants. Most claimed to use it actively and to have relatively good competence in the language, depending on the type of skill. The use of Croatian was primarily associated with communication with family members and friends, and the choice of the language depended on interlocutor's language competence (which, in certain cases, may be related to the descent of participants' spouses/partners), preference, age, as well as on the context. The use of Croatian was also mentioned as a means of not being understood by those who did not speak the language. Many second-generation participants' parents insisted on them speaking Croatian (for some it was a matter of necessity), and many took classes in Croatian. It seems that the classes were primarily a positive social experience, and that most of acquired Croatian was acquired at home.

Most second generation participants claimed to use both languages to express different emotions, but some seemed more inclined to saying 'I love you' in English. Their parents primarily used Croatian for expressing emotions. In the case of the 2.5 generation, one said that both he and his parents used English for expressing emotions, with the Croatian-born parent sometimes using Croatian with relatives. The second 2.5. generation participant said that he used both for expressing emotions and that his Croatian-born parent did so as well. He said that he would use English for saying 'I love you' and that his Canadian-born parent used it for expressing emotions. It seems that the choice of languages for expressing emotions can be related primarily to immigrant generation. A slightly greater inclination towards English for saying 'I love you' among second generation immigrants may be compared to findings in Dewaele (2008) where the increase in the emotional weight of this phrase was related to increased interaction in a language, self-perceived language dominance and proficiency. Although almost all participants in our study claimed that they socialized with other Croats and that they used Croatian with family members and friends, we might hypothesize that second-generation immigrants interact with such individuals to a lesser degree and socialize more with non-Croats in different contexts (including the workplace) than their parents and that, therefore, for them English is more dominant than Croatian. Second generation participants would use either English or both (depending on situation and/or interlocutor) to discuss traumatic events, while most of their parents would use Croatian for the purpose.

2.5 generation immigrants and their parents seemed more inclined towards using English in this case. In the case of swearing, most second-generation immigrants would use either English or both, while their parents would mostly use Croatian. The use of Croatian was again mentioned as a means of not being understood by others. Most claimed to think in English, and, if in both languages, it primarily depended on topic and/or environment. Most participants also said that they did not feel like a different person when using another language, although some of them have received comments about seeming different when using another language.

Based primarily on second-generation participants' feedback regarding their and their parents' language use, it can be noted that their parents (first-generation immigrants) were more inclined to using Croatian for certain purposes. Since most participants were actively engaged in activities and organizations in the Croatian community, we were not able to evaluate whether not participating in such activities and organizations would produce different results with regard to heritage language maintenance. Similarly, since most participants regularly visited Croatia, but most of them did not wish to move (back) permanently, the correlation between these two factors and the extent of language maintenance could not be established either. Among aspects of participants' profiles, the only one that was identified as relevant in relation to participants' feedback to two separate issues was the descent of the spouse/partner.

There are several points that should be made with regard to the implications of this study. Firstly, there seems to be evidence that the factor of having a spouse/partner of the same descent may have an influence in evaluating certain aspects of cultural integration and language maintenance. Secondly, among the different uses of the heritage language, the use by means of which one avoids being understood by others who do not speak the language was noted, as well as the use of the language for the purpose of showing respect. These findings suggest the possibility of examining the different pragmatic functions of the heritage language in future research. Thirdly, the finding that some of the participants have received comments about seeming different when using another language (although they claimed not to feel like another person) also allows for the possibility to investigate the matter further in terms of the ways in which they seem different to others.

6. Conclusion

Sociolinguistic analyses of various aspects of immigrants' experiences in host countries have become increasingly prominent. Different immigrant groups are unique in terms of what they bring with them from the

homeland, but also in terms of how motivated and successful they are in maintaining their cultural and linguistic heritage in the host context. Besides such questions, the focus of many studies has been placed on evaluating the nature and extent of immigrants' assimilation or integration into a particular host community. Adapting to an entirely different sociocultural and linguistic context is never easy, especially for first-generation immigrants, and especially if they are made to feel "undesirable" or "invisible". Homeland nostalgia is usually more prominent for first-generation immigrants and in cases in which they might feel unwelcome. It becomes even more visible if immigrants' competence in the dominant language of the host society is poor, which might affect their socioeconomic status. Homeland nostalgia might be further exacerbated if members of an immigrant group are not well connected and do not socialize among themselves in the host community. Canada is one of English-dominant countries that seem to have made noticeable effort to not only help immigrants integrate, but also to celebrate and preserve the country's multicultural and multilingual richness.

The close relationship between attachment to heritage and host culture and heritage language and host language frequency of use, including emotion expression, has been attested by Panicacci (2019). The study conducted for the purpose of this paper also points to an inextricable bond between culture and language. The analysis of the data suggests that Croatian immigrants in Canada are mostly well integrated in the Canadian society, and have managed to maintain their Croatian heritage and tradition. The appreciation of that tradition and heritage is evident in their active engagement in activities organized by the Croatian community, but also in their willingness and attempts to keep using the Croatian language. However, since Croatian language use is mainly restricted to uses in family and Croatian social gatherings, what remains to be seen is whether this will successfully be passed on to subsequent generations.

Hopefully, the results of the study conducted for the purpose of this paper present a further step towards revealing different sociocultural and language-related issues of Croatian immigrants and their families, and will serve as an incentive for future similar research.

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Notes

- ¹ See Harles (1997) for a discussion on placing the notion of integration before the notion of assimilation in the Canadian context. For a presentation of different scholars' views on what the terms 'integration' and 'assimilation' refer to, and which of the two might be more appropriate for discussing immigrants' experience in the Canadian context, see Wong and Tézli (2013: 13-14).
- ² Cf. Winland (2006: 268).
- ³ The expression 'Canadian Croats' is here used interchangeably with the expression 'Croatian immigrants in Canada' (cf., e.g. Winland (2007)). Participants' responses to the question of whether they felt more like a Croat or a Canadian are presented in data analysis.
- ⁴ See, e.g., Burnet and Driedger (2014) for an overview of multiculturalism in the Canadian society.
- ⁵ See also Starčević (2014: 138-139) about exposure to and content of Croatian immigrant publications and radio as perceived and discussed by members of a Croatian immigrant family in Canada.
- ⁶ Cf. De Houwer (2007), as cited in Petrović (2017: 25).
- ⁷ Translated from Croatian to English by the authors of this paper.
- ⁸ Translated from Croatian to English by the authors of this paper.
- ⁹ In the continuation Pavlenko (2005) discusses these factors by making reference to a number of studies that have been conducted in relation to each of them. Since the focus of this paper is not placed solely on bilinguals' expression of emotions, previous relevant studies that have been conducted in this context will not be referenced in this paper. Such references can be found in Pavlenko (2005: 185-187).
- ¹⁰ Jean-Marc Dewaele (2016) conducted an extensive study into understanding, perception and self-reported use of negative emotion-laden words among native English speakers and speakers for whom English is a foreign language. The study suggests, among other things, that, with regard to LX users, "more contact and exposure to English seems linked to a better understanding of the meaning of the words, and a better calibration of offensiveness and frequency of use" (Dewaele 2016: 125). Among other analyzed research questions, Dewaele's study (2017: 12) confirmed a significantly greater extent of self-reported swearing in English among L1 speakers in comparison to LX speakers.
- ¹¹ We would like to thank the participants for taking the time to fill out the questionnaires, but also the individuals who have helped us contact the participants.
- ¹² See the relevant studies cited in this paper.
- ¹³ According to Gayler (2015), Stoney Creek "makes up the eastern part of the city of Hamilton".
- ¹⁴ According to Welch and Payne (2015), Ancaster is "Urban Community within the city of Hamilton", and it "was incorporated as a town in 1974, but in 2001 it was merged into the new city of Hamilton".
- ¹⁵ The questionnaires can be found in the appendices of this paper.
- ¹⁶ P stands for participant and the number next to it stands for the number randomly assigned to each participant in the process of data analysis and for the purpose of ensuring their anonymity in the dissemination of collected data.
- ¹⁷ First-generation immigrants seem more inclined to providing feedback in Croatian, and second-generation participants typically opt for English for the purpose (cf. Petrović 2017: 9).
- ¹⁸ See Roulston (2010) regarding thematic analysis as one approach to analyzing qualitative data.
- ¹⁹ See Roulston (2010) regarding the differences between inductive, deductive, and abductive reasoning in data analysis.
- ²⁰ In the continuation of the paper these participants will be referred to by the term 'first-generation immigrants/participants'.

- ²¹ In the continuation of the paper these participants will be referred to by the term ‘1.5 generation immigrants/participants’. P14 initially filled out only the questionnaire for the first generation, but was asked to fill out the questionnaire for the second generation as well since all four of them moved to Canada as very young children (under five).
- ²² In the continuation of the paper these participants will be referred to by the term ‘second-generation immigrants/participants’.
- ²³ These participants (P4 and P19) will be referred to by the term ‘2.5 generation immigrants/participants’. See, e.g., Ramakrishnan (2004) about reasons why members of the 2.5 generation (having one foreign-born parent) should be treated as distinct from those born in the United States to two native-born parents.
- ²⁴ Translated from Croatian to English by the authors of this paper.
- ²⁵ More like a true Croat woman!
- ²⁶ Parish banquet.
- ²⁷ Custom of social gathering in Lika.
- ²⁸ Translated from Croatian to English by the authors of this paper.
- ²⁹ Traditional folk long-necked string instrument.
- ³⁰ Croatian Heart.
- ³¹ The Sounds of Croatia.
- ³² Croatian Radio Television.
- ³³ Grandma.
- ³⁴ Grandpa.
- ³⁵ Cf. Petrović (2017: 26).
- ³⁶ Grammatical cases.
- ³⁷ Cf. Petrović (2017: 23).
- ³⁸ See Pavlenko (2005) on bilinguals’ language choice for expressing emotions, including affection and saying ‘I love you’.
- ³⁹ I love you.
- ⁴⁰ Mommy’s pretty little baby doll.
- ⁴¹ See Pavlenko (2005: 185-186) regarding speaker’s ‘personal history of trauma, stress, and violence’ as one of the factors that have a role in language emotionality in multilingual speakers.
- ⁴² See, e.g., Dewaele’s (2017) study cited previously in the paper.
- ⁴³ *Shit.
- ⁴⁴ Translated from Croatian to English by the authors of this paper.
- ⁴⁵ See previously cited Pavlenko (2006: 1).

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Appendix 1

1st generation

The purpose of this questionnaire is to collect and analyze culture and language-related information among Croatian immigrants in Canada. Your participation is completely voluntary, and, if you are willing to participate in the research, your anonymity in the dissemination of collected data is guaranteed. Please, do not fill in the questionnaire if you are not over 18 years of age. Thank you.

Part I

Gender: M F (please, underline or circle)

Age:

Occupation (if retired, name your previous occupation):

Place of birth (town and country):

Place of residence (town and country):

When did you move to Canada?

Did you move alone or with other members of your family?

If you are married, is your spouse also a Croat? If not, of which nationality is he/she?

Part II

Do you feel more like a Canadian or a Croat? Please, explain.

Have you been to Croatia since you moved to Canada? If yes, how many times?

What was the experience like and what do you remember?

Did you want to stay in Croatia while you were there?

Do you ever plan to move back to Croatia? If yes, why? If no, why not?

Do you participate in activities organized by the Croatian community in your place of residence (church, folklore, sports, etc.)? If yes, please explain in what ways.

Do you follow the political and cultural news from Croatia? If yes, through which media (newspapers, radio, TV, the Internet)? Please, explain.

Do you socialize with other Croats (in your place of residence) and, if yes, in what ways?

If you socialize with other Croats (in your place of residence), have you noticed any regional differences in habits depending on the region of Croatia they come from?

If you socialize with other Croats (in your place of residence), have you noticed any regional differences in their use of Croatian depending on the region of Croatia they come from?

Part III

How many languages do you speak? Name them.

In which order did you acquire them?

What is your mother tongue?

How many languages do you use actively? Name them.

How well can you understand/speak/read/write Croatian?

In which contexts/situations do you use each language?

Do you use Croatian at home? If yes, with which members of the family?

Do/did you use Croatian at workplace with your colleagues?

Do you use Croatian when socializing with other Croats and in which situations?

Are there any other contexts in which you use Croatian? What does it depend on?

If you have children and/or grandchildren, have you insisted on them learning and speaking Croatian? Please, explain.

If you have children and/or grandchildren, have they attended any classes (formal or informal) in Croatian? If yes, please, explain. Was it a positive experience? Was it difficult? Did they learn much?

How important is the Croatian language for the preservation of Canadian Croats' identity?

Did you have difficulties in learning English when you came to Canada? Did you have any (institutional) help in learning it?

Part IV

Which language do you use to express emotions (love, anger, frustration, etc.) and why? Does it depend on the interlocutor, situation, etc.?

If you would want to tell someone sincerely that you loved them, which language would you choose and why? Does it depend on the interlocutor, situation, etc.?

If you needed to talk about some traumatic past events or experiences, which language would you use? Does it depend on the interlocutor, situation, etc.?

If you ever use swear words, which language do you use? Does it depend on the interlocutor, situation, etc.?

Which language do you think in? What does it depend on? If you think in more than one language, please, explain.

Do you feel like another person when you use another language?

Appendix 2

2nd generation

The purpose of this questionnaire is to collect and analyze culture and language-related information among Canadians whose parents (one or both) are Croatian immigrants to Canada. Your participation is completely voluntary, and, if you

are willing to participate in the research, your anonymity in the dissemination of collected data is guaranteed. Please, do not fill in the questionnaire if you are not over 18 years old. Thank you.

Part I

Gender: M F (please, underline or circle)

Age:

Occupation (if retired, name your previous occupation):

Place of birth (town and country):

Place of residence (town and country):

Are both your parents Croatian immigrants?

Which town did your parent(s) emigrate from to Canada?

When did your parent(s) move from Croatia to Canada?

Did they move to Canada alone or with other family members?

If you are married, is your spouse also of Croatian descent? If not, of which descent is he/she?

Part II

Do you feel more like a Canadian or a Croat? Please, explain.

Have you ever been to Croatia? If yes, how many times?

What was the experience like and what do you remember?

Did you want to stay in Croatia while you were there?

Do you wish to live in Croatia?

Do your parents plan to move back to Croatia (do they ever talk about it)? If yes, why? If no, why not?

Do your parents participate in activities organized by the Croatian community in your place of residence (church, folklore, sports, etc.)? If yes, please explain in what ways.

Do you participate in activities organized by the Croatian community in your place of residence (church, folklore, sports, etc.)? If yes, please explain in what ways.

Do your parents follow the political and cultural news from Croatia? If yes, through which media (newspapers, radio, TV, the Internet)? Please, explain.

Do you follow the political and cultural news from Croatia? If yes, through which media (newspapers, radio, TV, the Internet)? Please, explain.

Do your parents socialize with other Croats (in your place of residence) and, if yes, in what ways?

Do you socialize with other Croats (in your place of residence) and, if yes, in what ways?

If you socialize with other Croats, have you noticed any regional differences in habits depending on the region of Croatia their family comes from?

If you socialize with other Croats (in your place of residence), have you noticed any regional differences in their use of Croatian depending on the region of Croatia their family comes from?

Part III

How many languages do you speak? Name them.

In which order did you acquire them?

What is your mother tongue?

How many languages do you use actively? Name them.

How well can you understand/speak/read/write Croatian?

In which contexts/situations do you use each language?

Do you use Croatian at home? If yes, with which members of the family?

Do/did you use Croatian at workplace with your colleagues?

Do you use Croatian when socializing with other Croats and in which situations?

Are there any other contexts in which you use Croatian? What does it depend on?

Have your parents insisted on you learning and speaking Croatian? Please, explain.

Have you ever attended any classes (formal or informal) in Croatian? If yes, please, explain. Was it a positive experience? Was it difficult? Did you learn much?

How important is the Croatian language for the preservation of Canadian Croats' identity?

Part IV

Which language do your parents use to express emotions (love, anger, frustration, etc.)? Does it depend on the interlocutor, situation, etc.?

Which language do you use to express emotions (love, anger, frustration, etc.) and why? Does it depend on the interlocutor, situation, etc.?

If you would want to tell someone sincerely that you loved them, which language would you choose and why? Does it depend on the interlocutor, situation, etc.?

If your parents have ever talked about some traumatic past events or experiences, which language did they use?

If you needed to talk about some traumatic past events or experiences, which language would you use? Does it depend on the interlocutor, situation, etc.?

If you have ever heard your parents use swear words, which language did they use?

If you use swear words, which language do you use? Does it depend on the interlocutor, situation, etc.?

Which language do you think in? What does it depend on? If you think in more than one language, please, explain.

Do you feel like another person when you use another language?