Language policy
of the University of Split

Inclusive approach

The language policy of the University of Split plays an important role in the Croatian national language policy, particularly in the context of the European Union language policy that encourages linguistic and cultural diversity and pluralism of official EU member states' identities, including regional and minority languages, devoid of any prejudices toward the Other. Such a human rights-based approach to inclusive education is also promoted by the University of Split.

Since European language policy advocates learning all languages of the European Union (and not exclusively a select few), one of which is Croatian, the University of Split has designed special programs for learning English as a global language and a language of science, alongside programs for learning other languages, including Croatian as a foreign/second language. Language acquisition stimulates the development of various competences (linguistic, communicative and pragmatic). Considering that, compared to other languages, the communicational reach of the Croatian in the European and global context is very small, it is of particular importance to extend it to make Croatian culture recognizable and familiar to foreigners, especially to foreign students at the University of

Split. All philological study programs are delivered by the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences.

The proclaimed model of the European language policy (M+2, M 'mother tongue') advocates multilingualism and acquisition of lesser-used languages (based on the number of speakers), and not just larger or the most spoken languages, hence learning Croatian as a second/foreign language intertwined with the knowledge of Croatian culture, enables competence acquisition in the Croatian language as well. Language is one of the constitutive elements of Croatian identity and thus the University as a scientific and educational institution, along with other social and cultural institutions, needs to ensure a recognized place on the European linguistic map.

Croatian language as an official language and a language of education

The Croatian language is more than an official language in Croatia. It is also the language of education from the lowest to the highest level, even though it is not the only one in all Croatian regions (in addition to certain minority languages, and all in accordance with ratified documents such as the *European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages* and the *Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities*).

The program Croatian Language and Culture for Foreigners (*Hrvatski jezik i kultura za strance – HKJS*) enables all participants to acquire competences from the A1 level to the C2 level (according to the *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages*) and familiarize themselves with the Croatian culture.The lectures are held at the Centre for Croatian Studies Abroad at the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences. Since numerous study programs abroad are compatible with Croatian, students can also participate in the Erasmus+ or CEEPUS program at the University of Split for one semester or the entire academic year.

As a part of the SEA-EU project, since 2021, several online courses in Croatian language and culture have been organized for all interested students and staff members from the

SEA-EU countries.

It is important to note that as of 2018 all study programs in the English language at the constituents of the University of Split include the course Croatian Language and Culture (*Hrvatski jezik i kultura*) aimed at promoting Croatian and facilitating integration of foreign students. Thanks to the University's academic policy, the University successfully promotes incoming and outgoing international mobility of students and staff as a part of various academic mobility programs, which additionally reinforces the need to introduce and deliver the foreign Croatian language and culture program, all of this being in line with the European educational policies.

The Centre for Croatian Studies Abroad conducts assessments of the Croatian language and Latin alphabet (at all levels) for various purposes: education, work permits, citizenship, etc. Each year in July, a traditional Summer School of Croatian Language and Culture is organized in the form of an intensive three-week program. It is designed to encourage language acquisition while strengthening competencies in Croatian as a second, foreign or inherited language.

Croatian Sign Language

Acknowledging the importance of teaching in Croatian Sign Language at higher education institutions (HEIs), where hearing impaired students cannot in any way be deprived of curricular or extracurricular content, the University of Split organizes classes in Croatian Sign Language (HZJ) for all interested students and teachers, thereby contributing to the inclusion of the students with hearing impairments.

English as a global language and a language of science and education

At the University of Split, some study programs are delivered in English primarily due to the presence of students from foreign countries, but also because English has become a

universal language – *lingua franca*, omnipresent in all domains and discourses, not just in scientific discourse or discourse in education and administration. This means that high and the highest levels of competence in the English language should be acquired by teachers, scientists, students, and administrative staff to be able to communicate effectively and, moreover, to engage in all other types of cooperation with peers from foreign universities. This has undoubtedly been facilitated through the courses in English and elective courses in English as a technical language, which is a significant asset in acquiring specific technical terminology.

Learning foreign languages

Apart from offering English as the first foreign language, higher education institutions (HEIs) promote multilingualism as evidenced by study programs with mandatory or elective courses in foreign languages, while in other cases, special courses are organized. At the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, in addition to foreign philologies (Anglistics, Italianistics, Germanistics), students can learn French, Russian, Chinese and Korean, while many more courses in other languages are offered at the Centre for Foreign Languages.

At the university level, within the framework of SEA-EU, besides online courses in English, there are also online courses in Spanish, French, German and Polish. In any case, learning foreign languages, other than English, promotes inclusivity, and the acquisition of new linguistic and cultural identities that will improve communication and enable better understanding of the Other, and this is exactly the additional value of multilingualism and multiculturalism that, along with interculturalism and intercultural competences, are what Europe has advocated from the beginning.

Unity in diversity

One of the basic aims of the Council of Europe is to protect the richness and diversity of

European cultural heritage. In addition to official languages, regional and minority languages are also a part of that heritage, that will be preserved only if their usage has its place in the educational discourse as well.

An explicit language policy implies which language, i.e., languages we will use, when and for what purpose. All these parameters are very important for the definition and implementation of language policy. In that sense, legal provisions help to protect both language and culture while supporting the use of different languages as symbols of “unity in diversity” and the creation of a complex supranational European identity. The University of Split strongly embraces precisely those values as shown in the language policy itself.