

ROLE OF EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM IN MINORITY LANGUAGE MAINTENANCE – AN EXAMPLE OF THE ALBANIAN LANGUAGE IN CROATIA

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Abstract

According to the last Census (2011) in the Republic of Croatia, 8.58% of Croatian inhabitants belong to one of the 22 national minorities and 4.4% of the population speaks a language other than Croatian as their mother tongue. All national minorities have the Constitutional right to be educated in their mother tongue, choosing among 3 different education models – Model A, B or C. In education model A all school subjects are taught in a minority language and pupils have a mandatory course of the Croatian language. Education model B is a bilingual model (one half of school subjects are taught in a minority language and another half in Croatian). Education model C is education in the Croatian language, but pupils are offered a course of a minority language and culture. Different minorities choose different education models. For example, the Serbian minority has all 3 models of education, the education for Italian minority is organized in 2 models (Model A and C), while some minorities have their education organized only by one model - model C. The Albanian minority belongs to the last mentioned group and education model C is organized for them in 7 primary schools. Even though Albanian language speakers are the third largest group of minority language speakers in Croatia (Census 2011), they have not been extensively studied. The aim of this paper is to investigate the beliefs and attitudes of Albanian language teachers about the role of the educational system in language maintenance. For that purpose a research instrument in a form of a questionnaire was designed. The questionnaire was distributed to all schools that offer Albanian as minority language. The collected data will be quantitatively and qualitatively analyzed. In the paper special emphasis will be given to teachers' reflections on the specificities of their work.

Keywords: *albanian as minority language, croatian schools, teachers of albanian*