

The attitudes of Slovenian and Croatian students of primary education towards spoken performance in the pedagogical process

Tomaz Petek – Marinko Lazzarich

DOI: 10.18355/XL.2019.12.01.01

Abstract

Communicating in one's mother tongue is one of the key competencies for lifelong learning. Speech culture implies knowledge of the laws governing voice, grammatical and lexical organization of literary language, proper speech, and stylistics. For the teaching profession, this competence is very important. Communication between teachers and students in teaching must be effective. In this paper, we have studied the attitudes of students at the faculties of teaching in Slovenia and Croatia regarding the importance of speech performance and oral expression of teachers in teaching. A questionnaire was used on a sample of 369 respondents. The aims of the research were to compare the attitudes of Slovenian and Croatian respondents towards their own speaking abilities and the importance of this competence in the profession they will perform, improving their knowledge of that ability, ways of developing spoken skills and possibilities for improving their own expression. We also wanted to see if there were any statistically significant differences between Slovenian and Croatian students regarding their attitudes towards spoken language. The results obtained show that both Slovenian and Croatian respondents are aware of the importance of effective oral expression within the teaching profession. Croatian students evaluate their verbal competencies to be at a higher level than their Slovenian counterparts. By contrast, Slovenian respondents evaluate their knowledge of the criteria and strategies for successful speech performance as better than Croatian students. A difference in attitudes is noticed in the domain of preparation for speech performance and in knowing the rules which have to be respected during public appearances. Since all respondents are aware of the importance of quality oral communication in the classroom, lifelong learning is seen as a fundamental aspect of the profession (teacher).

Key words: class teacher, oral expression, communication, speech competence, lifelong learning

1 Introduction

A teacher¹ in the 21st century has to master efficient communication in the pedagogical process, which represents one of the basic competencies in which the vocal expression in the class plays an important role. The adopted competence "communication in mother tongue", which is mentioned as one of the key competencies for lifelong learning by the *European reference framework* (2007), is understood to be the foundation on which the teacher's ability to speak effectively is constructed² (cf. Petek, 2018).

Teacher's communication in the classroom needs to be efficient. In order for the teachers to be successful, they must follow the principles of public speaking, whereby they must pay attention to the findings of rhetoric and linguistics³. The

¹ The terms in the male grammar gender are used as unlabelled and apply to both genders.

² Spoken word performance is meant as the creation of one-voice spoken texts intended for the general public or a specific public.

³ For more on these principles, see Petek (2014). The Teacher as a Public Speaker in the Classroom. *Studies in Literature and Language*, 9 (1), 136–145.

pedagogical speech with which the teacher organizes and directs the learning process in the classroom is complex. According to its dominant purpose, it consists of a cognitive speech with which the teacher provides teaching content and the related speech with which they educate. The defined situation directly points to the importance of the teacher's speech performance in class (Petek, 2014a: 143).

In the article in which we used the analytical-descriptive and analytical-interpretative method and the causal-non-experimental method of pedagogical research (Sagadin, 1993; Mužić, 1994), we examined the views of Slovenian and Croatian students of primary education teaching in regards to verbal performance in the pedagogical process. In the paper, we proceed from the assumption that the class teacher is (also) a speech model for pupils at the primary level because, besides the kindergarten teacher, he is the first to enter the educational system in the public school system. In Slovenia, all pupils are taught all subjects by the same teacher from the 1st to the 5th grade (9-year elementary school), and in Croatia from the 1st to the 4th grade (8-year elementary school).

2 Class teacher – (also) a speech model for pupils at the elementary school level

Since class teachers are an authority for pupils, because they learn from them and imitate them, teachers must also serve as an example in the field of speech, so the teacher's ability to speak efficiently is particularly important.

Teacher's speech abilities are most pronounced in the teaching of the mother tongue since oral interpretation is of crucial importance in the very initial stage of literary education. Visinko (2010) lists the basic reasons why a teacher should poetically pronounce as many texts as possible. The teacher is a child's role model, so it is very important that this segment is governed by expressive speech technique. If they are successful, the students will enjoy the verbal interpretation of the text and will experience the teacher's speech as a gift which will be an incentive to try themselves in the poetic speech of verses or passages of favorite texts.

In the territory of the Republic of Slovenia, teachers of elementary school are educated by three institutions, namely: the Faculty of Education at the University of Ljubljana (PEF UL), the Faculty of Education at the University of Maribor (PEF UM) and the Faculty of Education at the University of Primorska (PEF UP) (cf. Bešter Turk 2009: 65). The Bologna study programmes of class teaching at all three Slovenian universities are formed according to the so-called parallel model (the parallel study of the fields of teaching and education topics) as one-subject. Studies are divided into two levels, i.e., 1st (4 years) and 2nd (1 year). The system 4 + 1 has been established. The first level title obtained at all three universities is that of class teaching professor; It is also possible to leave after the 1st level but without the possibility of independent teaching. After completing the second stage, graduates are officially qualified for independent classroom teaching; at the University of Ljubljana, they are awarded the title Master of Teaching at class level, at the University of Maribor and the University of Primorska, the title is Master Class Teacher (www.pef.uni-lj.si (2018)), www.pef.um.si (2018); www.pef.upr.si (2018).

There are several institutions in the Republic of Croatia where studies for teacher education are conducted: three Faculties of Teacher Education (Zagreb, Rijeka, Pula), the Faculty of Educational Sciences (Osijek), the University Department (Zadar) and one Faculty Section (the Philosophical Faculty of Split). All of these institutions belong to the same scientific field of social sciences, and all these institutions have been created as a result of the process of adaptation of high school teachers. Bearing in mind the complexity of the teaching profession, the view was taken on the need to harmonize the system of teacher education with the tendencies

and standards of the European Union countries and their transformation from professional to university studies at the time of the Bologna process.

All of the teaching studies in Croatia are organized as an integrated undergraduate and graduate university study (5 + 0 system) for a total duration of 5 years or 10 semesters with 300 ECTS credits. The study is of a highly multidisciplinary nature as it has many subjects in the field of social, human and natural sciences and art. Upon graduation, the academic title acquired is *Master of Primary Education*. A person who completes a university teaching program acquires the competence to teach in primary education, which, according to the current Law on Primary Education in the Republic of Croatia, includes pupils from the first to fourth grade of elementary school.⁴

For a teacher in a modern public school to be successful and efficient, they must have developed a complex communicative ability, which is also a good basis for effective speaking in the classroom. M. Bešter Turk (2011) defines it as 1) the ability to critically accept (i.e. understand, experience, evaluate and use) texts of various types and to form effective, relevant, understandable and linguistically correct texts of various types; 2) the ability to effectively engage in two-way communication (i.e. as a partner and correspondent) and in one-way communication (i.e. as a speaker, writer, listener and reader). As part of the communication capability, she also mentions its components or building blocks: 1) motivation for messaging/receiving; 2) the real/encyclopedic knowledge of the communicator/recipient; 3) the linguistic ability of the communicator/ recipient, i.e., a) naming/vocabulary/dictionary, b) command/syntax/grammar, c) spelling, d) pronunciation; 4) the stylistic/pragmatic ability of the communicator/ recipient; 5) the communicator/recipient's ability to communicate non-verbally; 6) the meta-language ability of the communicator/recipient.

The teacher's speech performance in the sense that is the subject of this debate is mostly related to so-called cognitive speech.

3 Cognitive pedagogical speech

Cognitive speech is part of pedagogical speech, with which the teacher presents the knowledge of his profession (explaining, illustrating and asking cognitive questions, etc.) and through which the students obtain new knowledge. The teacher uses it in the class to direct or lead a cognitive process (Vogel, 2008: 118, cf. Kunst Gnamus, 1992; Petek, 2014a).

While everyday communication is guided by the law of desire and effect, the principle of comfort, the principle of cost or benefit, the maxim of pragmatic significance, resulting in a discrepancy between literal and communicated meaning, the speech of science is committed to the creation of knowledge and the justification that ensures the truth of any claims. In a scientific speech, the optional expression is replaced by semantically defined terminology and the truth value of any claims is not assumed, but rather the effect of logical proof and probability generalization (Kunst Gnamus, 1992: 43).

⁴ A Master of Primary Education is able to independently perform the teaching of all subjects and areas represented in the curriculum of elementary school education in all forms of work in which they are implemented (regular, elective, supplementary, additional class, extracurricular, cultural and public activities). Access to the profession of teacher is provided through traineeship. Individuals who, in addition to the acquired qualifications, have an independent internship in accordance with regulations governing elementary education and have passed the professional exam.

M. Ivsek (2008: 278) mentions, in conjunction with cognitive speech, that the teacher, with the proper use of the language of instruction, including the spoken word performance, forms the concept of the scientific discipline of their teaching subject and, at the same time, the concept of teaching and learning this discipline. Vollmer (2006, with Ivsek, 2008) associates the use of the cognitive language of pedagogical speech with language learning, and this with professional language. A teacher's cognitive (professional) speech differs from the speech of everyday practical communication; therefore, in their speech, they must take this into account and follow the laws of so-called verbal performance criteria.⁵

4 Verbal performance criteria for the teacher's spoken word performance

For the proper application of all the principles already presented and prescribed by cognitive pedagogical speech, the teacher must also master the skills of spoken word performance in which the verbal performance criteria must be fulfilled. In our opinion, effective spoken word performance must be learned. The basis of the research, presented below, was a didactic model for developing the ability for spoken word performance developed by the author Petek (2014b); this allows for subsequent critical monitoring of the teacher's own progress and awareness of their own ability in this field. It consists of the criteria for evaluating speech performance and the resulting recommendations for successful and effective public speaking (ibid.).

5 Methodology

5.1 Purpose and objectives of the research

The purpose of the research was to study the attitudes of Slovenian and Croatian students of primary education towards spoken performance in the pedagogical process. The aims of the research are: to compare the views of Slovenian and Croatian respondents to (own) spoken word performance and the importance of this competence in the profession they will perform; to determine their awareness (knowledge) of this ability and the ways to develop/improve their own speaking ability, which knowledge they would still need to become the best possible speakers, and how to improve their own spoken word performance capability. We also wonder whether there are any significant differences statistically between Slovenian and Croatian students regarding their views on spoken word performance.

5.2. Research methods and research sample

We used the descriptive and causal-non-experimental method of pedagogical research (Sagadin, 1993; Muzic, 1994). For this purpose, we used a questionnaire in physical form which asked the Slovenian and Croatian respondents 13 closed-type questions (questions with multiple possible answers, questions using the 5-level Likert scale and dichotomous questions) that are consistent with the presented purpose and research objectives. The comprehensibility of the questionnaire was verified and confirmed by ten Slovenian and Croatian students chosen at random.

The sample of the study (N = 369) was casual. We distributed the questionnaires to 207 students in Slovenia (Faculty of Education, University of Ljubljana) and 162 students of class education in Croatia (Faculty of Teacher Education, University of Rijeka). The questionnaire was completed by students from Slovenia and Croatia as part of regular study obligations, so the response was 100%.

5.3. Processing and displaying data

An analysis of the acquired data was carried out using SPSS 23.0. In addition to the basic descriptive statistics, we used the following data to process the

⁵ More about teacher's pedagogical speech, see. the source mentioned in subheading no. 3.

collected data: 1) the Mann-Whitney test for determining the typical differences between countries on questions using the standard measuring scale; 2) The chi-square test of independence for determining the distinctive differences between countries on issues with a nominal scale. We presented the results in tabular and textual form.

6 Results with interpretation

First of all, we were interested in how important Slovenian and Croatian students considered well-prepared and presented spoken word performance to be. They expressed their opinion on the basis of the 5-level Likert scale, where 1 meant *unimportant*, and 5 *very important*. Their answers can be seen in Table 1.

Rating	1	2	3	4	5
SLOVENIA (%)	0	0	2.9	33.39	63.71
CROATIA (%)	0	0	1.24	15.43	83.33

Table 1: The importance of well-prepared and presented spoken word performances

We were interested in the average rank of importance of well-prepared and presented spoken word performances among Slovenian and Croatian students. We were also interested in whether the differences between students are statistically significant. The results are presented in Table 2.

	N	Average rank	Total of ranks	Mann-Whitney U-test	
				U	p
SLOVENIA	207	169.12	35,008.50	13,480.500	<0.001
CROATIA	162	205.29	33,256.50		

Table 2: Average rank of importance of well-prepared and presented spoken word performances

As can be seen from Table 2, the average ranking of the importance of well-prepared and presented spoken word performances among Slovenian students is 169.12, while for Croatian students it is 205.29. The difference between the average ranks was also confirmed by the Mann-Whitney U-test score, which is statistically significant ($U = 13,480.500$; $p < 0,001$). We can conclude that Croatian students attributed higher importance to well-prepared and presented spoken word performances than Slovenian students.

We also asked Slovenian and Croatian students to assess their ability to perform. They expressed their opinion on the basis of the 5-level Likert scale, where 1 meant *very poor*, and 5 meant *excellent*. Their answers can be seen in Table 3.

Rating	1	2	3	4	5
SLOVENIA (%)	0.48	9.77	66.28	21.09	2.38
CROATIA (%)	0	5.56	47.53	39.50	7.41

Table 3: Assessment of their own spoken word performance ability

We were interested in the average ranking of the assessment regarding the ability to speak undertaken by Slovenian and Croatian students. We were also interested in finding out whether the differences between students are statistically significant. The results are presented in Table 4.

	N	Average rank	Total of ranks	Mann-Whitney U-test	
				U	p
SLOVENIA	207	164.72	34,097.50	12,569.500	<0.001
CROATIA	162	210.91	34,167.50		

Table 4: The average ranking of the assessment of speaking abilities

As can be seen from Table 4, the average ranking for the assessment of the spoken word performance ability of Slovenian students is 164.72, while for Croatian students it is 210.91. The difference between the average ranks was also confirmed by the Mann-Whitney U-test score, which is statistically significant ($U = 12,569.500$; $p < 0,001$). We can conclude that Croatian students assess their ability in public speaking to be higher than Slovenian students do.

In the continuation, we were interested in how Slovenian and Croatian students were acquainted with the criteria/strategies for successful spoken word performance. Their answers can be seen in Table 5.

Rating	1	2	3	4	5
SLOVENIA (%)	0.97	15.18	35.96	33.10	14.79
CROATIA (%)	3.70	20.37	46.91	27.78	1.23

Table 5: Familiarity with the criteria/strategies for successful spoken word performance

We verified the average rankings of familiarity with the criteria and strategies for successful speaking amongst Slovenian and Croatian students and found out the difference between them. The results are presented in Table 6.

	N	Average rank	Total of ranks	Mann-Whitney U-test	
				U	p
SLOVENIA	207	204.87	42,408.00	12,654.000	<0.001
CROATIA	162	159.61	25,857.00		

Table 6: Average ranking of familiarity with criteria and strategies for successful spoken word performance

As can be seen from Table 6, the average ranking in the assessment of familiarity with criteria and strategies for successful public speaking amongst Slovenian students is 204.87, while for Croatian students it is 159.61. The difference between the average ranks was also confirmed by the Mann-Whitney U-test score, which is statistically significant ($U = 12,654.000$; $p < 0,001$). We can conclude that Slovenian students consider their knowledge of criteria and strategies for successful public speaking performance to be better than Croatian students.

We also asked Slovenian and Croatian students whether, in their opinion, the pedagogical profession requires special spoken word training. We tested the statistical significance with the chi-square test. The results are presented in Table 7.

Answer	YES	NO	Chi-square test	
			χ^2	p
SLOVENIA (%)	91.8	8.2	11.298	0.001
CROATIA (%)	99.38	0.62		

Table 7: Opinion on whether the pedagogical profession requires special spoken word training

As shown in Table 7, 91.8 percent of Slovenian students agree that the pedagogical profession requires special spoken word training, and 8.2 percent disagree. On the other hand, 99.38 percent of Croatian students agree that the pedagogical profession requires special spoken word training and 0.62 percent disagree. The difference between the two countries was also confirmed by the result of the chi-square test which is statistically significant ($\chi^2 = 11.298$; $p = 0.001$). We can conclude that more Croatian students share the same opinion that the pedagogical profession requires special spoken word training than the Slovenian students.

Slovenian and Croatian students also assessed how much attention was paid to developing speech performance during the study process. They were given three options: A) too much in view of the importance of this competence for the teaching profession; B) sufficient attention in respect of the importance of this competence for the teaching profession; C) insufficient attention in respect of the importance of this competence for the teaching profession. Their answers are presented in Table 8.

Rating	A	B	C	Chi-square test	
				χ^2	p
SLOVENIA (%)	0	50.56	49.44	8.731	0.003
CROATIA (%)	0	66.05	33.95		

Table 8: The amount of dedication to the development of spoken word performance during the study process

As can be seen from Table 8, 50.56 percent of Slovenian students consider that they devote enough attention to the development of public speaking during the study process, given the importance of this capacity for the teaching profession, and 49.44 percent consider that they pay insufficient attention to this. On the other hand, 66.05 percent of Croatian students, consider that they devote enough attention to the

development of public speaking during the study process, given the importance of this capacity for the teaching profession, and 33.95 percent consider that they are devoting insufficient attention. The difference between the two countries was also confirmed by the result of the chi-square test, which is statistically significant ($\chi^2 = 8.731$; $p = 0.003$). We can conclude that the opinion of Croatian students about the amount of attention devoted to developing public speaking during the study process is higher than that of Slovenian students.

Slovenian and Croatian students also assessed whether the knowledge of preparation for spoken word performance and its implementation is important for effective spoken word performance. They could select from the following options - for effective spoken word performance: A) only the possibility of exercising or training is important or as many spoken word performances as possible; B) it is important, above all, to have as many spoken word performances as possible; only if we have problems with them and also a need to acquire this knowledge; C) knowledge is equally important in the preparation and implementation of spoken word performances as well as practical performance as often as possible; D) knowledge in the preparation and implementation is more important, but some practice is also needed; E) it is necessary above all to know the phases of preparation for spoken word performance and what we must pay attention to in its implementation. Their answers are presented in Table 9.

Rating	A	B	C	D	E	Chi-square test	
						χ^2	p
SLOVENIA (%)	2.42	7.23	79.31	10.08	0.96	19.687	0.001
CROATIA (%)	3.09	12.96	58.64	21.60	3.71		

Table 9: The importance of knowledge in preparation for speech performance and its implementation

As can be seen from Table 9, a large majority (79.31%) of Slovenian students believe that, for effective public speaking, knowledge in the preparation and implementation of spoken word performance is equally important to the possibility of spoken word performances as frequently as possible. A little more relevance to knowledge is attributed by 10.08 percent, and a bit more importance to the frequent performance is attributed by 7.23 percent. Only 2.42 percent of Slovenian students believe that only effective participation is important for effective public speaking, and even fewer (0.96 percent) believe that only knowledge is important. On the other hand, over half of the Croatian students (58.64%) consider that knowledge in the preparation and implementation of speech, as well as the ability to speak as often as possible, are equally important. A little more importance is attributed to knowledge by 21.60 percent, and a bit more importance to a frequent performance by 12.96 percent. Only 3.71% of Croatian students believe that only knowledge is important for effective public speaking, while a little fewer (3.09%) think that only frequent performance is important. The difference between the two countries was also confirmed by the result of the chi-square test, which is statistically significant ($\chi^2 = 19.687$; $p = 0.001$). We can conclude that Slovenian students are more aware of what is the most important aspect of effective speaking.

We also examined their theoretical knowledge of spoken word performance. We were interested in how the anticipated phases of preparation for spoken word performance follow each other. Students could choose from the following options: A) the stage of invention; the stage of arrangement or disposition; the stage of putting into text or elocution and preparation for speech; B) preparation for speech; putting into text or elocution; phase of invention; phase of arrangement or disposition; C) the

phase of putting into text or elocution; preparation for speaking; phase of invention; the arrangement or disposition phase, whereby the correct answer is A). Their answers are presented in Table 10.

Rating	A	B	C	Chi-square test	
				χ^2	p
SLOVENIA (%)	93.77	4.80	1.43	129.420	<0.001
CROATIA (%)	40.74	13.58	45.68		

Table 10: Knowledge of the predicted phases of preparation for speech performance

From Table 10 it can be seen that 93.77 percent of Slovenian students consider that the stages of preparation for a public speaking speech are followed in sequence *phase of the invention; the phase of arrangement or disposition; putting into words or elocution; preparation for speaking* is, while only 40.74 percent of Croatian students thought so. 4.80 percent of Slovenian students believe that the phases of preparing for public speaking are in the sequence *preparation for speaking; putting into word or elocution; the phase of the invention; the phase of arrangement or disposition*, while only 13.58 percent of Croatian students believe so. Those who believe that the phases of preparing for public speaking are in the sequence *putting into words or elocution; preparation for speaking; the phase of the invention; the phase of editing or disposition*, is only 1.43 percent among Slovenian students, while among Croatian students it amounts to 45.38 percent. The difference between the two countries was also confirmed by the result of the chi-square test, which is statistically significant ($\chi^2 = 129.420$; $p < 0.001$). We can conclude that Slovenian students are better informed about the phases of preparation for speaking.

We also checked the knowledge of students with the question regarding which rules or principles must be taken into account in spoken word performance. They had several options available, but they had to select all the correct answers. The options offered were the following: A) the characteristics of the selected text type; B) fluent, clear and distinct free speaking; C) fluent and clear reading of the written template; D) creating meaningful, comprehensible and rounded text; E) standard literary language; F) conversational standard language; G) selecting the appropriate wording according to the text type; H) the choice of style-neutral words regardless of the word type; I) grammatical correctness; J) proper pronunciation rules; K) spelling rules; L) appropriate use of non-verbal language (audible non-verbal companions to speaking, visible non-verbal companions to speaking). Table 11 presents their answers, on the basis of which we calculated whether the differences between them are statistically significant.

Answer	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	
SLOVENIA (%)	69.18	99.51	5.88	93.17	74.09	53.73	63.99	27.99	76.58	87.79	16.33	97.53	
CROATIA (%)	41.36	95.06	41.36	80.86	66.67	47.53	50.62	10.49	69.75	74.69	46.91	71.60	
Chi-square test	χ^2	28.485	7.580	68.302	12.992	2.305	1.350	6.452	17.236	2.337	10.833	40.373	51.497
	p	<0.001	0.006	<0.001	<0.001	0.129	0.245	0.011	<0.001	0.126	0.001	<0.001	<0.001

Table 11: Important rules or principles in spoken word performance

From Table 11 it can be seen that the difference between the two countries at A, which is professionally appropriate, was also confirmed by the result of the chi-squared test, which is statistically significant ($\chi^2 = 28.485$; $p < 0.001$). We found that Slovenian students are more in agreement that in public speaking, the characteristics of the selected text type should be taken into consideration, than Croatian students.

Also, item B, which is professionally relevant, shows a difference between the two countries which was confirmed by the result of the chi-square test, which is statistically significant ($\chi^2 = 7.580$; $p = 0.006$). We found that Slovenian students are more likely to agree to the need of taking into account fluent, clear and distinct free speech in public speaking than Croatian students.

With item C, which is professionally inadequate, the difference between the two countries was also confirmed by the result of the chi-square test, which is statistically significant ($\chi^2 = 68.302$; $p < 0.001$). Croatian students are more inclined to take into account, in public speaking, a clear and fluent reading of a written template than Slovenian students, which means they have a poorer awareness of spoken word performance.

For item D, which is professionally appropriate, the difference between the two countries was also confirmed by the result of the chi-square test, which is statistically significant ($\chi^2 = 12.992$; $p < 0.001$). We found that Slovenian students are more in agreement that public speaking should take into account the creation of meaningful, understandable and rounded texts than Croatian students.

For item E, which is otherwise professionally relevant, the difference between the two countries was not confirmed by the result of the chi-square test, because it is not statistically significant ($\chi^2 = 2.305$; $p = 0.129$). We cannot claim that there are differences between Slovenian and Croatian students regarding the agreement that standard literary language should be taken into account in public speaking.

For item F, which is professionally inadequate, the difference between the two countries was not confirmed by the result of the chi-square test, since it is not statistically significant ($\chi^2 = 1.350$; $p = 0.245$). We cannot claim that there are differences between Slovenian and Croatian students regarding the agreement that a standard conversational language should be taken into account in public speaking.

Also, item G, which is professionally appropriate, shows a difference between the two countries which was confirmed by the result of the chi-square test, which is statistically significant ($\chi^2 = 6.452$; $p = 0.011$). Slovenian students are more likely to agree that choosing the appropriate vocabulary in terms of a text type should be taken into account in spoken word performances than Croatian students.

For item H, which is professionally appropriate, the difference between the two countries was also confirmed by the result of the chi-square test, which is statistically significant ($\chi^2 = 17.236$; $p < 0.001$). We can conclude that Slovenian students are more in agreement that, in spoken word performance, the selection of stylistically natural words must be taken into account, than the Croatian students.

For the item I, which is otherwise professionally relevant, the difference between the two countries was not confirmed by the result of the chi-square test, because it is not statistically significant ($\chi^2 = 2.337$; $p = 0.126$). We cannot claim that there are differences between Slovenian and Croatian students regarding the agreement that the correct grammar should be taken into account in public speaking.

For item H, which is professionally appropriate, the difference between the two countries was also confirmed by the result of the chi-square test, which is statistically significant ($\chi^2 = 10.833$; $p < 0.001$). We found that Slovenian students are more in agreement that public speaking should take into account the rules of pronunciation than the Croatian students.

For item K, which is professionally inadequate, the difference between the two countries was also confirmed by the result of the chi-square test, which is

statistically significant ($\chi^2 = 40.373$; $p < 0.001$). It can be seen that Croatian students agree more strongly than Slovenian students that public speaking should take into account spelling rules, which points to ignorance of this field. Spelling rules are taken into account in written, not spoken texts.

For item L, which is professionally appropriate, the difference between the two countries was also confirmed by the result of the chi-square test, which is statistically significant ($\chi^2 = 51.497$; $p < 0.001$). We found that Slovenian students are more in agreement that public speaking should take into account the rules of pronunciation than the Croatian students.

The students also had to evaluate which of the non-verbal audible companions are very important in spoken word performance. They were selected from three options: A) intonation, emphasis, and expression intensity, speed, pauses, register, color; B) facial expressions and eye contact; hand gestures, movement; C) intonation, emphasis and intensity, speed, pauses, register, color; facial expressions and eye contact; hand gestures, movement. The results are presented in Table 12.

Rating	A	B	C	Chi-square test	
				χ^2	p
SLOVENIA (%)	96.15	1.43	2.42	16.265	<0.001
CROATIA (%)	83.95	7.41	8.64		

Table 12: Knowledge of audible non-verbal companions of spoken word performance

From Table 12 it can be seen that those who believe that non-verbal spoken word companions are *intonation, emphasis, and intensity of expression, speed, pauses, register, color*, among Slovene students amount to as much as 96.15 percent, while among Croatian students it is 83.95 percent. Those who consider that non-verbal spoken word companions are *facial expressions and eye contact; hand gestures, movement*, amount to only 1.43 percent among Slovenian students, while among Croatian students it is 7.41 percent. Those who consider that that non-verbal spoken word companions are "*intonation, emphasis, and intensity of expression, speed, pauses, register, color; facial expressions and eye contact; hand gestures, movement*," is only 2.42 percent among Slovenian students, while among Croatian students the number is 8.64 percent. The difference between the two countries was also confirmed by the result of the chi-square test, which is statistically significant ($\chi^2 = 16.265$; $p < 0.001$). From this, we can conclude that Croatian students are less aware of the knowledge regarding non-verbal companions of spoken word performance.

In addition to knowledge regarding auditory non-verbal companions, we also checked the knowledge of visible non-verbal spoken word companions among Slovenian and Croatian students. They could select from three options: A) facial expressions and eye contact; hand gestures, movement; B) facial expressions and eye contact; hand gestures, movement; intonation, emphasis, and intensity of expression, speed; C) facial expressions. The results are presented in Table 13.

Rating	A	B	C	Chi-square test	
				χ^2	p
SLOVENIA (%)	99.04	0	0.96	7.062	0.029
CROATIA (%)	95.06	3.09	1.85		

Table 13: Knowledge of visible non-verbal companions in spoken word performance

From Table 13 it can be seen that those who consider that the visible non-verbal companions of *facial expressions and eye contact; hand gestures, movement*, number 99.04 percent among Slovenian students, while among Croatian students it is 95.06 percent. Those who believe that visible non-verbal companions in speech are *facial expressions and eye contact; hand gestures, movement; intonation, focus and intensity expression, speed*, amount to zero among Slovenian students, while among Croatian students the figure is 3.09 percent. Those who believe that visible non-verbal companions of the spoken word are only *facial expressions* amount to 0.96 percent among Slovenian students, while for Croatian students the number is 1.85 percent. The difference between the two countries was also confirmed by the result of the chi-square test, which is statistically significant ($\chi^2 = 7.062$; $p = 0.029$). We find that Slovenian students are theoretically better acquainted with visible non-verbal companions of speech.

We also asked students what is the principal characteristic of effective speech performance. They could select from five options but had to choose only one that they felt was completely correct. The options were as follows: A) the speaker uses standard literary language following the rules of proper pronunciation, and speaks fluently and freely, and, according to the selected type of text, uses a series of auditory and visible companions of text; the texts are flawless in terms of language; B) the speaker uses standard literary language following the rules of proper pronunciation, speaks fluently as he is reading from a written template, whereby, regardless of text, chooses neutral, and always equal, audible companions to speech (e.g. equal emphasis and use of pauses); the texts are flawless in terms of language; C) the speaker uses standard conversational language following the rules of proper pronunciation, speaks less fluently and entirely freely and, in regards to chosen text type, uses audible and visible companions to speech sensibly; the texts are flawless in terms of language; D) the speaker uses standard conversational language and does not follow the proper pronunciation rules, but speaks fluently and freely and, in regards to the chosen type of text, uses audible and visible companions to speech sensibly; the texts are correct in terms of language; E) the speaker uses their dialect and follows the rules of proper pronunciation, speaks fluently and freely and, in regards to the chosen text type, uses audible and visible speech companions sensibly; texts are not entirely correct in terms of language. The results are presented in Table 14.

Rating	A	B	C	D	E	Chi-square test	
						χ^2	p
SLOVENIA (%)	78.98	2.93	10.77	6.34	0.98	14.097	0.007
CROATIA (%)	86.42	4.32	6.79	0	2.47		

Table 14: Characteristics of effective speech performances

From Table 14 it can be seen that those who consider the correct claim to be *the speaker using standard literary language following the rules of proper pronunciation, and speaking fluently and freely, and, according to the selected type of text, uses a series of auditory and visible companions of text; the texts are flawless in terms of language*; among Slovenian students is 78.98 percent, while among Croatian students it is 86.42 percent. Those who believe that the correct claim to be *the speaker using the standard literary language following the rules of proper pronunciation, speaking fluently as he is reading from a written template, whereby, regardless of text, chooses neutral, and always equal, audible companions to speech (e.g. even*

emphasis and use of pauses); the texts are flawless in terms of language; amount to 2.93 percent among Slovenian students, while among Croatian students the number is 4.32 percent. Those who believe that the correct claim to be *the speaker using standard conversational language following the rules of proper pronunciation, speaking less fluently and entirely freely and, in regards to chosen text type, uses audible and visible companions to speech sensibly*; the texts are flawless in terms of language, is 10.77 percent among Slovenian students, while among Croatian students the number is 6.79 percent. Those who believe that the correct claim is *the speaker uses standard conversational language and does not follow the proper pronunciation rules, but speaks fluently and freely and, in regards to the chosen type of text, uses audible and visible companions to speech sensibly*; the texts are correct in terms of language, is 6.34 percent among Slovenian students, while zero percent was recorded for the Croatian students. Those who are of the opinion that the correct statement is *the speaker speaks in their dialect and follows rules of proper pronunciation, speaks fluently and freely and, in regards to the chosen text type, uses audible and visible speech companions sensibly*; texts are not entirely correct in terms of language, numbered 0, 98 percent among Slovenian students while 2.47 percent among Croatian students. The difference between the two countries was also confirmed by the result of the chi-square test, which is statistically significant ($\chi^2 = 14.097$; $p = 0.007$).

The students also had to assess which type of knowledge in spoken word performance they would also need themselves or should acquire a deeper understanding of, to become (even more) efficient speakers. They had to circle the letter in front of two options at the most. These were: A) knowledge of text types; B) knowledge of the means to develop a topic; C) knowledge of the phases of text creation; D) knowledge of spelling rules; E) knowledge of pronunciation rules; F) knowledge of the criteria for evaluating public speaking, G) knowledge of the prosodic elements of the text; H) Knowledge of non-verbal companions of speech (hearing and visual). The results are presented in Table 15.

Answer	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	
SLOVENIA (%)	11.99	27.45	10.15	19.27	32.69	30.22	11.62	19.33	
CROATIA (%)	20.37	32.10	20.37	9.26	34.57	19.75	30.25	30.86	
Chi-square test	χ^2	4.718	0.909	7.606	7.258	0.120	5.424	19.924	6.563
	p	0.030	0.340	0.006	0.007	0.729	0.020	<0.001	0.010

Table 15 Assessment of the need for knowledge of spoken language performance

As shown in Table 15, 11.99 percent of Slovenian students believe that they should deepen their knowledge of textual types, while 20.37 percent of Croatian students share this opinion. The difference between the two countries was also confirmed by the result of the chi-square test, which is statistically significant ($\chi^2 = 4.718$; $p = 0.030$). We can conclude that Croatian students consider to a greater extent that they should deepen their knowledge of textual types, compared to Slovenian students.

27.45 percent of Slovenian students believe they should deepen their knowledge regarding the ways in which to develop a topic, while 32.10 percent of Croatian students considered this important. The difference between the two countries was not confirmed by the result of the chi-square test, as it is not statistically significant ($\chi^2 = 0.909$; $p = 0.340$). We cannot claim that there are differences between

Slovenian and Croatian students in the opinion that they should deepen their knowledge of how to develop a topic.

Among Slovenian students, 10.15 percent consider that they should deepen their knowledge of the phases of the creation of the text, while 20.37 percent Croatian students believe this. The difference between the two countries was also confirmed by the result of the chi-square test, which is statistically significant ($\chi^2 = 7.606$; $p = 0.006$). We find that more Croatian than Slovenian students consider that they should deepen their knowledge of the phases of text production.

19.27 percent of Slovenian students, consider that they should deepen their knowledge of spelling rules, while 9.26 percent Croatian students believed so. The difference between the two countries was also confirmed by the result of the chi-square test, which is statistically significant ($\chi^2 = 7.258$; $p = 0.007$). We find that Slovenian students consider that they should deepen their knowledge of spelling rules in larger numbers than Croatian students, but it should be emphasized that spelling rules are not relevant for speaking.

32.69 percent of Slovenian students, consider that they should deepen their knowledge of pronunciation rules, while 34.57 percent Croatian students believed this. The difference between the two countries was not confirmed by the result of the chi-square test, as it is not statistically significant ($\chi^2 = 0.120$; $p = 0.729$). We cannot claim that there are differences between Slovene and Croatian students in the opinion that they should deepen their knowledge of pronunciation rules.

30.22 percent of Slovenian students believe that they should deepen their knowledge of the criteria for evaluating public speaking, while 19.75 percent Croatian students considered this true. The difference between the two countries was also confirmed by the result of the chi-square test, which is statistically significant ($\chi^2 = 5.424$; $p = 0.020$). We find that more Slovenian than Croatian students consider that they should deepen their knowledge of the criteria for the evaluation of public speaking.

11.62 percent of Slovenian students believe that they should deepen their knowledge of prosodic elements of the text, while 30.25 percent of Croatian students agree with them. The difference between the two countries was also confirmed by the result of the chi-square test, which is statistically significant ($\chi^2 = 19.924$; $p = 0.001$). We find that more Croatian than Slovenian students consider that they should deepen their knowledge of the prosodic elements of the text.

19.33 percent of Slovenian students believe that they should deepen their knowledge of non-verbal companions, while 30.86 percent Croatian students believed this. The difference between the two countries was also confirmed by the result of the chi-square test, which is statistically significant ($\chi^2 = 6.563$; $p = 0.010$). We can conclude that Croatian students consider that they should deepen their knowledge of non-verbal supporters in greater numbers than Slovenian students.

Slovenian and Croatian students also had to present ways of how to improve their own spoken word competence (ways of improvement) at the end of the questionnaire. They could select from the following options: A) public speaking more often and gaining as much experience as possible; B) reduce the likelihood of the conditions that cause stage fright; C) adopt the phases of successful communication and use them in spoken language performance intentionally; D) take the principles of successful communication into account more in their own spoken word performance; E) record their own speech with a camera and analyze it and evaluate it descriptively; F) pay more attention and practice time to the harmonization of the verbal and non-verbal languages; G) pay more attention and practice time to develop fluent, natural and free speech; H) pay more attention and practice time to the use of standard literary language and reduce the influence of dialects. The results are presented in Table 16.

Answer	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	
SLOVENIA (%)	62.39	31.85	9.23	8.28	20.23	8.62	30.49	18.38	
CROATIA (%)	75.31	20.37	19.75	8.02	20.37	9.88	25.93	17.90	
Chi-square test	χ^2	7.050	6.137	8.531	0.004	0.000	0.151	0.908	0.013
	p	0.008	0.013	0.003	0.948	0.985	0.697	0.341	0.910

Table 16: Suggestions for improving your own spoken word performance competence

As can be seen from Table 16, 62.39 percent of Slovenian students believe that they would improve their own speaking ability by more frequent public speaking and gaining as much experience as possible, while among the Croatian students that number is 75.31 percent. The difference between the two countries was also confirmed by the result of the chi-square test, which is statistically significant ($\chi^2 = 7.050$; $p = 0.008$). We find that Croatian students are more likely to think that they would improve their own spoken word performance capacity by more frequent public speaking and gaining as much experience as possible than the Slovene students.

Among Slovenian students, 31.85 percent are of the opinion that their own spoken word competence will be improved by reducing the possibility of the occurrence of conditions that cause stage fright, while among Croatian students this is 20.37 percent. The difference between the two countries was also confirmed by the result of the chi-square test, which is statistically significant ($\chi^2 = 6.137$; $p = 0.013$). We find that Slovenian students are more likely to believe that they'll improve their own spoken word capability by reducing the possibility of the conditions that cause stage fright, than Croatian students.

Among Slovenian students, 9.23 percent believe that their own speech ability will be improved by adopting the phases of successful communication and their planned use in the spoken word performance, while among Croatian students this number is 19.75 percent. The difference between the two countries was also confirmed by the result of the chi-square test, which is statistically significant ($\chi^2 = 8.531$; $p = 0.003$). We can conclude that Croatian students are more inclined to believe that their own speech capacity will be improved by adopting the phases of successful communication and their planned use in the implementation of speech than Slovenian students.

Among Slovenian students, 8.28% believe that they would improve their own spoken word ability by taking more account of the principles of successful communication in their own speech, while this number is 8.02% among Croatian students. The difference between the two countries was not confirmed by the result of the chi-square test, as it is not statistically significant ($\chi^2 = 0.004$; $p = 0.948$). We cannot claim that there are differences in the opinion of Slovenian and Croatian students in respect of the statement that they would improve their own spoken word performance by taking greater account of the principles of successful communication in their own speech.

Among Slovene students, 20.23 percent think that their own speech ability will be improved by analyzing and making a descriptive evaluation of their own speech, while the figure is 20.37 percent among Croatian students. The difference between the two countries was not confirmed by the result of the chi-square test, as it is not statistically significant ($\chi^2 = 0.000$; $p = 0.985$). We cannot claim that there are differences between Slovenian and Croatian students in the opinion that they would

improve their own spoken word competence by analyzing and making a descriptive evaluation of a recording of their own speech.

Of the Slovenian students, 8.62 percent believe that their own speech capacity will be improved by paying more attention and spending time on the harmonization of verbal and non-verbal languages, while among the Croatian students the number is 9.88 percent. The difference between the two countries was not confirmed by the result of the chi-square test, as it is not statistically significant ($\chi^2 = 0.151$; $p = 0.697$). We cannot claim that there are differences in the opinion of Slovenian and Croatian students regarding the statement that they would improve their own spoken word competence by paying more attention and spending time on harmonizing verbal and non-verbal languages.

Among Slovenian students, 30.49 percent believe that their own speech competence will be improved by paying more attention and spending time on fluent natural and free speech, while the figure amongst Croatian students is 25.93 percent. The difference between the two countries was not confirmed by the result of the chi-square test, as it is not statistically significant ($\chi^2 = 0.908$; $p = 0.341$). We cannot claim that there are differences in the opinion of Slovenian and Croatian students regarding the statement that they would improve their own voice capacity by devoting more attention and practice on fluent, natural and free speech.

Among Slovene students, 18.38 percent believe that they would improve their own speaking ability by devoting more attention and exercise time on using standard literary language and reducing the influence of dialects, while among Croatian students this is 17.90 percent. The difference between the two countries was not confirmed by the result of the chi-square test, as it is not statistically significant ($\chi^2 = 0.013$; $p = 0.910$). We cannot claim that there are differences in the opinion of Slovenian and Croatian students regarding the statement that they would improve their own spoken word competence by devoting more attention and exercise time on the use of standard literary language and reducing the influence of dialects.

7 Conclusion

A teacher's oral expression in the classroom is important for the student's speech development as this is primarily taught by example. The classroom is like a theatre scene, and the teacher often feels like an actor on stage. Although young generations are accustomed to the rapid discovery of new means of communication, in interpersonal "face to face" interactions, apart from messages, many meanings are exchanged between teachers and pupils, making it more intense and emotional (Lazarich, 2017).

In this paper, we have studied the attitudes of students at the faculties of teaching in Slovenia and Croatia regarding the importance of speech performance and oral expression of teachers in teaching. Looking at the results of the research, we can conclude that Slovenian and Croatian respondents are well aware of the importance of effective oral expression within the teaching profession. With minor deviations in thinking, there are many views in which they are unified: everyone agrees that a vocational education requires special vocational education. Half of the Slovenian respondents (50.56%) consider that during their study program they pay great attention to the development of language skills, given their importance in the professional sense, while in the Croatian respondents this average is higher - with 66.05% of students holding the view that exercise of public presentations was fairly represented during their studies. We can observe that Croatian students attach greater importance to the preparation of speech performance.

When it comes to assessing verbal competences, it is noticeable that Croatian students estimate their ability greater in speaking at a higher level than their Slovenian counterparts. By contrast, Slovenian respondents consider their knowledge of the criteria and strategies for successful speech performance as being better than Croatian students. This is in line with their knowledge of the sequence of preparatory stages for public performance.

The difference in attitudes is noticed primarily in the domain of preparation for speech performance. While most Slovenian students (79.31%) believe that, for effective public performance, it is essential to have skills in the preparation and execution of spoken performance, this opinion is only supported by 58.64% of Croatian respondents. When it comes to knowing the rules to be respected during a public performance, a greater number of Slovenians agree that the characteristics of the chosen text type and the proper use of the non-verbal language should be taken into account. Croatian students have emphasized the ability of fluid and comprehensible reading of the written template, which testifies to the partial ignorance of the problem mentioned.

Regarding the self-assessment of their own speaking competences, Croatian students would like to improve their knowledge of textual types, about the stages of making statements, and the knowledge of non-verbal signs of speech to a greater extent than their Slovenian counterparts. In addition, the vast majority of Croatian respondents believe that they will gain more experience with more frequent public performances (75.31%) as opposed to 62.39% of Slovenian respondents. While 31.85% of Slovenian respondents believe that they will improve their interpretation if they remove the opportunities that create stage fright, this is shared by only 20.37% of their Croatian counterparts. Croatian students emphasize the need for more public speaking to gain as much experience as possible in work.

The fact that all respondents are aware of the importance of quality oral communication in the classroom, and therefore lifelong learning is seen as the foundation on the development of a contemporary teacher, is encouraging. Although today's generations are accustomed to the swift exchange of information, dynamic implementation of different activities, young teachers and trainees should not be worried. As in every quality contact, relationships and the learning process too is mutual - students learn from the teacher, but teachers can learn a lot from the new generation of their students, which means both profits from the situation, becoming emotionally and socially richer.

Bibliographic references

- BESTER TURK, M. 2009. 'Studij razrednega pouka na slovenskih pedagoskih fakultetah od stud. I. 2009/10 dalje'. In: *Infrastruktura slovenscine in slovenistke*. Obdobja, vol. 28, pp. 65–74.
- BESTER TURK, M. 2011. 'Sporazumevalna zmožnost – eden izmed temeljnih ciljev pouka slovensčine'. In *JiS*, vol. 56, n. 3–4, pp. 111–130.
- BEZEN, A. 2008. *Metodika, znanost o poučavanju nastavnoga predmeta*. Profil.
- IVSEK, M. 2008. *Kompetence – da ali ne*. In: *Ivsek, M. (ur.): AASE, Laila. Jeziki v izobrazovanju*. Institute of the RS for Education, pp. 273–282.
- Ključne kompetence za vseživljensko učenje. European reference framework. 2007. Office for Official Publications of the European Communities.*
- KUNST GNAMUS, O. 1992. *Sporazumevanje in spoznavanje jezika*. DZS.
- MUZIC, V. 1994. *Atributi kvalitativne in kvantitativne paradigme pedagoskega raziskovanja*. In: *Sodobna pedagogika*, vol. 1/2, pp. 39–51.
- LAZZARICH, M. 2017. *Metodika Hrvatskoga jezika u razrednoj nastavi*. Učiteljski fakultet Sveucilista u Rijeci.

- PETEK, T. 2014a. 'The Teacher as a Public Speaker in the Classroom'. In: Studies in Literature and Language vol. 9, n. 1, pp. 136–145.
- PETEK, T. 2014b. 'Didaktični model razvijanja zmožnosti javnega govornega nastopanja'. In: Jezikoslovni zapiski: zbornik Inštituta za slovenski jezik Frana Ramovsa, vol. 20, n. 2, pp. 143–161.
- PETEK, T. 2018. 'Govorno nastopanje visokosolskih učiteljev'. In: Pedagoška obzorja: casopis za didaktiko in metodiko, vol. 33, n. 2, pp. 131–143.
- SAGADIN, J. 1993. Poglavlja iz metodologije pedagoškega raziskovanja. Institute of the Republic of Slovenia for Education.
Available online: Website PEF UP: www.pef.upr.si (2018).
Available online: Website PEF UL: www.pef.uni-lj.si (2018).
Available online: Website PEF UM: www.pef.um.si (2018).
- VISINKO, K. 2010. Jezicno izražavanje u nastavi Hrvatskog jezika; Pisanje. Školska knjiga.
- VIZEK VIDOVIC, V. – RIJAVEC, M. – VLAHOVIC - STETIC, V. – MILJKOVIC, D. 2014. Psihologija obrazovanja. IEP-Vern.
- VOGEL, J. 2008. Slovenscina kot učni jezik in učni predmet v solah s slovenskim učnim jezikom v RS. In: Ivsek, M. (ur.): AASE, Laila. Jeziki v izobraževanju. Institute of the RS for Education, pp. 117–128.
- VOLLMER, J. H. 2006. Towards a Common European Instrument for Language(s) of Education. Intergovernmental Conference.
- VULETIC, B. 2007. Lingvistika govora. FF-press.

Words: 9166

Characters: 59 014 (32,78 standard pages)

Tomaž Petek, PhD.
Department of Preschool Education
Department of Primary Teacher Education
Faculty of Education
Kardeljeva ploščad 16
1000 Ljubljana
Slovenia
Tomaz.Petek@pef.uni-lj.si

Marinko Lazzarich, PhD.
Department of Teaching Methods in the Field of Arts and Humanities
Faculty of Teacher Education Rijeka
Sveučilišna avenija 6
51000 Rijeka
Croatia
Marinko.Lazzarich@ufri.uniri.hr