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BIOGRAPHY

I was born on 11th of April 1967 in Zadar.

In 1990 I graduated in English language and literature and Russian language and literature at the Faculty of Philosophy in Zadar where I have been working as a lecturer at the Department of the Russian language and literature since 1993.

In 2000 I got my M.A. degree at the Faculty of Philosophy in Zagreb. In 1998 I participated with my paper in the HDPL congress in Opatija.

I have published 4 papers.

I'd like to participate at your conference with my paper *Internet in foreign language teaching (Russian language)*.

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ABSTRACT

INTERNET IN FOREIGN LANGUAGE TEACHING (RUSSIAN LANGUAGE)

Students of the Russian language and literature in Croatia have many problems finding adequate literature. There are not nearly enough grammars, textbooks and dictionaries.

For that reason in my work with students I use the Internet as much as possible. The Net has proven to be an open window to Russia – the information is available here and now and is always new (contrarily to our 20 year old textbooks).

In my paper I show in what way we use the Net. The most important site is *gramota.ru*. It is the portal financed by the Ministry of the press, radio/TV and communication of the Russian Federation because the Russian language is the official language of the multinational Russian Federation.

It is organized in six parts, the most important are *literacy* (with the news, journal, reading room with text from 11-20 centuries, internet olympics in Russian, etc. ; *online dictionaries* (more than 60 different dictionaries); and *enquiry office* (with 14389 questions and answers about the grammar- even we from Zadar asked some of them).

INTERNET IN FOREIGN LANGUAGE TEACHING
(RUSSIAN LANGUAGE)

0. Although when we speak about languages and the Internet we primarily think about English language, thanks to the fact that Internet is a big world's encyclopaedia of knowledge, necessary and unnecessary information in various languages, the Internet can be extremely useful in foreign language teaching, not only English but other languages as well.

1. English language, as the first world language (at least concerning the number of students learning it) is accompanied with a real industry – textbooks, tapes, methods, tests etc. In short, learning English is understood as a business. A big number of students learn English in Croatia, and therefore the market is big enough, import of such books pays off, and it is easy to find, buy, and work with the world's contemporary literature. Although it is possible to use the exceptional possibilities of the Internet in English language teaching/learning the usage of the Internet is even of much more importance when we teach/learn languages such as, for example, Russian. Today in Croatia Russian language can be studied only at two departments (Faculty of Philosophy in Zagreb and Faculty of Philosophy in Zadar), and the market is too small for a bigger investment in domestic authors, or import from abroad. Ordering through the Internet in the future will provide much more opportunities, but so far we haven't received any of the books we ordered that way. On-line bookshops (<http://www.ozon.ru/> - for example) – are themselves very interesting sites that give us the insight in Russian bookshops, but also video and DVD editions (quite useful if you want to find out the Russian translation of the title of the newest Hollywood movie, or a bestseller, for example). We hope that we'll be able to establish the connection and start receiving the ordered books.

This situation results in the fact that the books we use are more than 10 years old. Of course, the problem is not that books have no quality, but the vocabulary is mostly out of date with socialist terminology, and we know that today Russia is again a capitalistic society that embraces economy, technology, fashion, (etc.) of the 21st century, together with the related vocabulary. If we decide not to use those books we have to make our own materials. The biggest problem is that since only recently we

have Croatian-Russian dictionary . It is a great question how contemporary it will prove to be and how often we'll get the new editions. The changes in lexis in the world today are so rapid that dictionaries are no longer «once in a life time» investments.

Also for more than 10 years there are no scholarships for our teachers and students because of no intergovernmental agreements. Russian films and music are very rare on our radio and TV, all that resulting in a feeling that we are cut off from the subject of our interest.

3. In such circumstances Internet can have an important role. We'll talk about some roles of the Net, methods of work on/with the Net, and some problems and dangers of work with the Net. In our work we use several Russian servers, mostly yandex.ru and troika.ru.

4. We have already explained the situation with textbooks and other Russian language related material. Internet can fill a void and bring us closer to geographically distant places. It enables the contact with:

1. the recent works from various fields in Russian and about Russian. On the Internet, even now, we have more works available than we have in our libraries - especially about topics that are almost not represented at all in our written resources: gender studies, Russian film, Russian science fiction, Russian fantasy etc. For example: online archive of the Russian Department of the Faculty of Philology in St. Petersburg.
2. the contact with dictionaries and various types of encyclopaedia. For example <http://www.slovari.ru/> , <http://www.slovari.ru/lang/ru/ivoc/push/index.html> Dictionary of the greatest Russian writer/poet Puskin edited by the Russian Academy of Science, or at <http://www.paco.net/~odessa-mag/slovar/dictionary> of the slang of the young.
3. the contact with the enormous numbers of literary works that are available on the Net (often for free) – from literature of the middle ages to Viktor Pelevin, one of the most popular Russian contemporary writers (only recently translated to Croatian) at <http://pelevin.nov.ru/rass/pe-ixt/1.html>. At <http://rusword.com.ua/biblia/index.html> you can read Russian translation of the Bible.
4. the contact with all forms of Russian culture. At <http://otblesk.com/vysotsky/> you can find Vladimir Vysocki's (Russian poet, writer, actor and composer-

singer) poems, music and chords. At <http://blat.dp.ua/>, for example, you can find a special form of Russian «hooligan» poetry.

5. the contact with Russian electronic daily newspapers, journals, magazines etc. from yellow papers to religious editions – which gives the insight on contemporary language and life in Russia.
6. the contact with native speakers in various chat rooms. Although there are various topics discussed in this forums, for us the most interesting is forum about Russian language at <http://rusword.com.ua/rus/forum.php?n=70&id=&se=>.
7. the contact with experts in various fields which can result in developing cooperation through various projects, congresses (etc.), not only in Russia but throughout the world. For example, Toronto Slavic Quarterly, is Academic Electronic Journal in Slavic Studies <http://www.utoronto.ca/slavic/tsq/links.html> edited by The Department of Slavic Languages and Literatures. In the journal prose and poetry is published, and there are several interesting links: Canadian Slavonic Papers, Tolstoy Studies Journal, Institute of European and Russian Studies at Carleton University, Association for Women in Slavic Studies (AWSS), Textology.Ru. Also, others, interested in Zamjatin's work can contribute with their papers, at the site about Evgenij Zamjatin edited by Marija Misonzchnikova (Мария Мисонжникова) who writes a dissertation about his publicist writing. At http://www.owl.ru/win/books/dbras_who_is_who/10years.htm - all those interested in gender studies can find a book of reference «Who is who» in gender studies in Russia and Ukraine.
8. the contact with web publishers for teachers and those advanced and talented students who wish to publish some of their work. Already mentioned Toronto Slavic Quarterly invites Slavists for cooperation.
9. Information about congresses that will be held (for those who want to participate), or about those that were held already (for those who could not participate, but in that way they can benefit also).

The journey from Zadar to Moscow with train lasts two days and is a beautiful experience, but the journey via Internet lasts only few minutes. The feeling of closeness is no less beautiful.

5. Methods of work with the Internet:

We can divide two main types of work: work in the classroom and individual students' work.

a) work in the classroom we divide in two ways: lesson in virtual space and using Internet material in printed form.

- a lesson in the virtual space – today it is difficult to do because of technical limitations (ie. not nearly enough computers...), and the methodology of such lessons is yet to be explored and developed. Also the number of sites offering such lessons is limited. Such form of work we usually limit to using on-line dictionaries, tests, and information search. At <http://rusword.com.ua/rus/prover.php?tem=10> students can test themselves (their spelling, grammar).
- using Internet materials in printed form:
 - as primary literature (not only literature and publicistic but for example, search of lexis at various sites: banks, estate agents, hotels etc. They all provide an important source of lexis and endless possibilities for work in the classroom (written and oral excersises). Each of these pages can be a basis for a small glossary.
 - as secondary literature (as we have already stated there is a growing number of works, papers, articles available on the Net covering almost every aspect about Russian language and literature.)

b) independent students' work (seminar papers, graduation thesis: they can use or evaluate material found on the Net.)

6. Are there any dangers? We know that there are problems, we already stated the problem with lack of computers and other related technology. Also we have to add that our students still mostly don't have their own computers and usually have little knowledge about working with computers, searching the Net, using Windows etc. Our curriculum is interested only in Russian language or literature and we pay very little attention to whether students will be computer literate. . . Students are rarely encouraged to use computers or the Internet, but it should be an obligatory course of lectures, and student should include their computer knowledge in their work with seminar papers and graduation thesis. But, are there any dangers? However easier, working with computers is also time absorbing because of the number of sites, pages etc. A person can be lost in virtual

space using real time and finding himself with a bundle of very interesting, but often unnecessary, material. So in today's world overloaded with information it is very important not to lose perspective and to be able to exclude unnecessary and include only necessary information. Also we should learn to be very critical about the quality of texts that we find on the Net. Many of them are very good, but it would be wise to make sure that we can trust it.

7. One of our former students who have been working teaching Italian language had to translate a letter of invitation to an international congress about foreign language teaching. Being a little bit confused, because she lost contact with Russian, and having no dictionary, she asked for help. (At that time Croatian-Russian Dictionary was still not out of print.) I brought the letter to my fourth year students, together with some printed letters of invitation to some other congresses and some reports about already held congresses that could be found on the web pages of MAPRYAL (World's Association of Russian Language Teachers) at http://mapryal.org/main_ru/itogi/itogi.html. Students had to read the texts, translate them, underline the phrases that are usually used in such letters (especially the beginning and the end of these letters). After discussing the texts they had to translate the letter on their own and after that we analyzed their translations and discussed some problems (how to translate «veleučilište» to Russian, for example). Ideally students should type the letter and print it.

8. One of the best web sites for our purposes is the site *gramota.ru*. It is the portal financed by the Ministry of the press, radio/TV and communication of the Russian Federation, because Russian language is the official language of the multinational Russian Federation.

It is organized in six parts, the most important are *literacy* (with the news, journal, reading room with text from 11th to 20th century, internet olympics in Russian, etc. *Interactive dictation* is also very good for students who wish to practice more, and it is possible to check their results. There is an option of checking the words – words are checked in eight dictionaries – the place of the stress and the meanings are explained. Dictionaries are, of course, one of the most important aspect of this site, one of many reasons is that literature of the 20th century is much less orientated on the standard language and therefore dictionaries that we have available are not enough. Dictionaries of slang, dialects, and certain writers can help not only students but teachers as well. There are 8

online dictionaries (and more than 60 definitions of different type of dictionaries). Enquiry office is a great help, because it provides answers for all the questions concerning grammar, style, etc. There are more than 14389 questions and answers and even we from Zadar asked some of them).

9. Beside learning the language for me it is very important that students learn how to **solve problems**, how to use the Net **in real life situations**, because it is not possible to include all different areas of life and vocabulary connected with it while teaching/learning a foreign language. Students should understand that our course gives them only very good fundamentals on which they can build their further knowledge, and in the age of the Net they are not alone any more. They can turn to this vast source of information, and there are even quite a few organizations that provide help for those who seek it.

10. There is a whole new field for methodologists to develop and explore. There are teachers who use the Net in their work but it is still an individual impuls. The Net is not only a great recourse of information but also a great interactive tool, and the possibilities of it are far away from being fully exploited and used.

Besides buying even more computers we as a society should validate inputs on the Internet - for example teachers' work at the Net (web pages, test etc.) should be evaluated as professional papers or even original scientific papers and they should be subjected to reviews.