

THE INTERRELATEDNESS OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION AND FAMILY ANALYSED THROUGH KEY TERMINOLOGY EXTRACTED FROM THEOLOGICAL TEXTS

1. Introduction

Religious education promotes basic human and Christian values important for personal moral development, well-being and dialogue. It provides and expands both human and Christian religious experience and is an inexhaustible source of knowledge about the world. It fosters healthy spirituality that engenders individuals' virtues such as compassion, respect and concern for the others, truth, sense of justice, love, faith and hope. It contributes to a peaceful society, encounters between different people and mutual understanding losing not one's own identity. One should be proud of the Christian way of life, heritage and culture as many nations are founded on Christian principles and thousands of people have been discriminated, threatened, exiled, attacked, tortured or killed just because of their Christian faith. Why does religion matter? Why

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do people need God? *Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid*, John 14:27 (KJV). The faithful are deeply aware that they are part of God's plan in which they are gifted with their special roles and purpose, and even though they experience difficulties or suffer, their faith reassures them that they can rely on God's promises, love and presence, giving them a peaceful soul and confident hope. Having faith and being under God's control and guidance no one is ever alone or lost, and therefore need not to feel the burden of any doubt.

However, all the faithful, and particularly the family are responsible for the transmission of the faith, passing on the human and religious heritage, as Saint Augustine once said, "*Parents are called not only to bring children into the world but also to bring them to God, so that through baptism they can be reborn as children of God and receive the gift of faith*", Pope Francis, (LF, 43). The point of reference and comfort for every family is the Holy Family of Nazareth, the beacon of true love, communion and prayer. As stated in *Letter of Pope Francis to Families* "In your journey as a family, you share so many beautiful moments: meals, rest, housework, leisure, prayer, trips and pilgrimages, and times of mutual support. Nevertheless, if there is no love then there is no joy, and authentic love comes to us from Jesus. He offers us His word, which illuminates our path; He gives us the Bread of life which sustains us on our journey". This paper presents an interdisciplinary research on the relationship between the family and family faith formation. It includes corpus-based key terminology extraction which is used as a ground for further theological-pedagogical reflection and analysis.

2. A corpus-based approach to terminology: extraction and analysis

Electronic corpus is a collection of digital texts designed to represent a particular domain-specific or general-language lexicon. The corpus-based approach is a research method focused on the repository of language data used to support preliminary intuition or expectations of researcher. For the purpose of this research, the corpus-based approach implies a domain-specific corpus examination, identification and extraction of the most frequent linguistic patterns, aiming to reveal the *interrelatedness of religious education and family*. Term extraction is an operation which takes a document as an input and produces a list of term candidates as an output.¹ Text analysis provides insight into the frequency of specific language patterns or phrases and their various meanings embedded with-

¹ S. Seljan, A. Gašpar, *First Steps in Term and Collocation Extraction from English-Croatian Corpus*, Proceedings of the 8th International Conference on Terminology and Artificial Intelligence-TIA, Toulouse 2009, France.

in lexical choices. Key-terminology extraction aims to identify semantically related words or terms specific to family faith formation. Such analysis is used for theological reflection based on the most typical and important concepts encoded in computer-generated key terminologies.

2.1. Corpus design

The monolingual corpus consists of twenty Church documents² in support of family catechesis taken from the official Vatican web site (the Vatican corpus sample) and 32 abstracts in the English language taken from six Croatian theological journals (Theological journals sample)³. It counts 401, 771 tokens in total.

2.2. Tools

Two statistically-based tools for extracting words/keywords and term candidates from documents are employed:

- *WordSmith Tools*, V. 5.0., created by Scott (2010), consists of three programs: the *WordList* generating a list of all the words or word-clusters in a text and setting them out in alphabetical or frequency order; *KeyWords* providing the list of the key words in a text which is based on assumption that keywords occur significantly more often in a domain-specific corpus than one would predict or expect on the basis of their frequencies in a general language reference corpus such as the British National Corpus (BNC) and its keyword list. *Concord* offers a set of examples of a given word or phrase (concordance), showing the

² 1. *Catechesi Tradendae* (Catechesis in our Time); 2. *Gravissimum Educationis* (Declaration on Christian Education); 3. *Gaudium et Spes* (The Church in the Modern World); 4. *Lumen Gentium* (Dogmatic Constitution on the Church); 5. *General Directory for Catechesis*; 6. *Familiaris Consortio* (The Role of the Christian Family in the Modern World); 7. *Evangelii Nuntiandi* (Evangelization in the Modern World); 8. *Catechism of the Catholic Church*; 9. *Instrumentum Laboris* (2015); 10. Address of His Holiness Pope Francis to Participants in the International Colloquium on the Complementarity between Man and Woman Sponsored by the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith; 11. Letter of his Holiness Pope Francis for the 8th World Meeting of Families; 12. Letter of Pope Francis to Families; 13. Letter of His Holiness Pope Francis to the Christians in the Middle East; 14. *Laudato Si'*; 15. Holy Mass for the Opening of the XIV Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops, Homily Of His Holiness Pope Francis; 16. Apostolic Journey of His Holiness Pope Francis to Cuba, to the United States of America and Visit To The United Nations Headquarters, Closing Mass of the Eighth World Meeting of Families, Homily of His Holiness Pope Francis; 17. Holy Mass for the Family Day on the Occasion of the Year of Faith, Homily of Pope Francis; 18. Five Great Pope Francis Quotes about Marriage and the Family from World Youth Day: Address to Community of Varginha (Manguinhos); Angelus, Interview on Radio Cathedral, Address to the World Youth Day Volunteers, Address to the Bishops of Brazil; 19. Pontifical Council for the Family, Family, marriage and "de facto" unions; 20. *Evangelii Gaudium*, <http://w2.vatican.va/content/vatican/en.html> (30.06.2015).

³ Croatian Theological Journals: *Riječki teološki časopis*, *Diacovensia*, *Služba Božja*, *Obnovljeni život*, *Crkva u svijetu*, *Bogoslovska smotra*.

context. Using a concordance one can find out that in academic writing, a *paper can describe, claim, or show*, though it doesn't *believe or want* (*this paper wants to prove that ...)⁴.

- *SDL MultiTerm Extract*⁵ uses a statistical extraction method to determine the frequency of the appearance of candidate terms. The extracted terms are displayed on a term candidate list for review and validation. Valid terms can be exported to a MultiTerm termbase, XML or a tab-delimited format. A frequency threshold was set to ≥ 4 both for WordSmith and MultiTerm Extract.

2.3. Corpus-based key terminology extraction

Twenty top ranking words of the keyword list generated by WordSmith tool are as following: *life, Christ, family, faith, human, catechesis, Christian, love, world, spirit, Jesus, man, holy, Gospel, marriage, social, lord, community, person, word*. Figure 1 shows the top ranking keywords and their dispersion in the corpus.

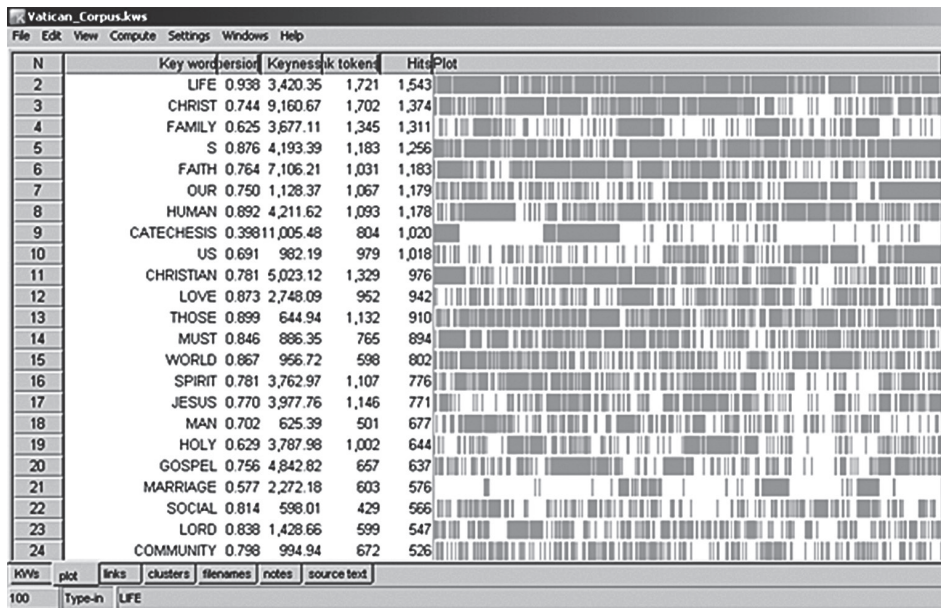


Figure 1: The top ranking keywords and their dispersion

Concordances of the word *family* computed from the Vatican corpus highlight a beneficial role of the family defined as: *the foundation of coexistence and a remedy against social fragmentation; the principal place in which we begin to “breathe” values and ideals, as we develop our full*

⁴ M. Scott, 2010 WordSmith Tools, Version 5.0., Manual.

⁵ SDL MultiTerm Extract Manual, 2009.

capacity for virtue and charity; the first school where we learn to appreciate our talents and those of others, and where we begin to acquire the art of living together; the salt of the earth and the light of the world, the leaven of society as a whole; the privileged place for transmitting the faith, the human and religious heritage; the essential cell of society and the Church; a "school of love," sanctuary of love and life; a "school of communion"; basic school of humanity; the "domestic Church"; an anthropological, a social and cultural fact; the heart of the culture of life; a fundamental and precious good for the whole society whose most solid fabric is built on the values that are developed in family relations and guaranteed by stable marriage. Instances of the word *family* also point out to: the family's importance for the evangelization of the new world, the survival of humanity and the cultural survival of the human race; marriage and the family as a social good of the first order; the Christian family continuously vivified by the Lord Jesus; the definition of the family's identity as a priority; an integral education received in the family; the role of parents in the catechesis on the family; dignity, stability, peace and prosperity of the family; social, economic and juridical protection of the family etc. Lacking God's love, the family loses its harmony and self-centredness prevail.

Challenges to the family detected through the concordances of the word *family* are the following: excessive demands of work resulting in a little opportunity for moments of peace and family togetherness; breakdown and alienation in relationships; mass communication and access to the Internet which replace real family relationships with virtual ones; a contraceptive mentality; sexual promiscuity and incest; increasing poverty, the family's struggle for subsistence; impact of migration/war on the fam-

recent legislative attempts to make the family and de facto unions equivalent, and a life of relationships within the family constitute the foundations for it can arrive at the rediscovery of the family. As a community based on and the Catholic Church, we can read: "The family is the original cell of social life. It to a public interest, damages the family based on marriage. In marriage a choice is a powerful sign of family love and an occasion to witness to and deep love is of great assistance; a love shown in tenderness and respect; the example of a faithful and deep love is of great assistance; a love also takes place in the act of conjugal love between a man and a woman, both family duties and the responsibilities of Christian life. In such cases their the need to forgive which is inherent in Christian love, and to be ready perhaps justice, to bring up their children in the Christian faith, to cultivate the spirit and the prototype and example for all Christian families. It was unique in the adolescents "do not receive adequate religious formation within the family" own proper emphases, often of great religious, social and pedagogical depth.

Through pro-divorce legislation, marriage often tends to lose its identity divorced and are thus an alternative to marriage. Through pro-divorce de facto union to make their rejection of marriage for ideological reasons known a lack of confidence in the institution of marriage should be pointed out which situation of marriage? The institution of marriage is experiencing a lesser crisis purification and elevation of the natural life. This supernatural life finds its living of the natural life. This supernatural life finds its living expression in the patience, the sense of the cross in daily life, detachment, openness to others, doctrine. For evangelization must touch life: the natural life to which it gives a must touch life: the natural life to which it gives a new meaning, God,[70] This is why St. Paul's axiom, "Faith comes from what is heard,"[71] extent that it expresses the profound faith of the sacred minister and is between their choice of life and the faith that they profess, and to try to do to bring up their children in the Christian faith, to cultivate the spirit and practice family a genuine witness to the Catholic faith and to Catholic life. Pastoral the relationship between the family and education; the relationship between the God, have the first responsibility for the education of their children and they are The Christian family is the first place of education in prayer. Daily family prayer married life, especially intended for the education and advancement of women.

Figure 2: Examples of the keywords in context

ily; legislative attempts to make the family and *de facto* unions equivalent; destruction of the concept of family, a human ecological crisis effected by the crisis of the family; the reduction in the number of family members; sexual exploitation of children and abandonment of the elderly; punishing the children for the invalidity of the marriage of parents; the price being paid by the family as a result of economic growth and development; the couple's crisis in marriage and the family gradually becomes a crisis in faith. Occurrences of the keywords in their immediate context are presented in Figure 2.

Twenty high ranking collocations automatically extracted from the Vatican corpus by MultiTerm Extract tool are the following: *de facto union, conjugal love, Christian life, Christian family, Christian community, children and young people, Catholic Church, Catechism of the Catholic Church, Christian faith, Christian message, dignity of the human person, celebration of the sacrament, children of God, catechetical activity, bear witness, action of the Holy Spirit, Body of Christ, Catholic School, Christian marriage, Blessed Virgin Mary.*

The most frequent words extracted from the abstracts of the Croatian theological journals are: *family, marriage, pastoral, religious, values, important, life, church, Christian, catechesis, children, parents, education, Croatia, parish, Eucharist, faith, society, community, school.* The underlined words correspond to the ones extracted from the Vatican corpus.

Corpus-based evidences on the interrelatedness of religious education and family are offered through the following claims: "In the family we first learn how to show love and respect for life; we are taught the proper use of things, order and cleanliness, respect for the local ecosystem and care for all creatures. In the family we receive an integral education, which enables us to grow harmoniously in personal maturity. In the family we learn to ask without demanding, to say "thank you" as an expression of genuine gratitude for what we have been given, to control our aggression and greed, and to ask forgiveness when we have caused harm. These simple gestures of heartfelt courtesy help to create a culture of shared life and respect for our surroundings".

"Recognizing that the transmission of the faith and Christian upbringing are inseparable from an authentic witness of life, provides a basis for understanding how difficult situations within the family complicate the educational process. In this sense, those families with children who may be particularly affected by the so-called "irregular" situation of their parents deserve greater pastoral attention in Christian education. In this regard, words and expressions need to be used which create a sense of belonging and not exclusion, ones that can better convey the warmth, love and the support of the Church, so as not to generate, especially in the children and young people involved, the idea of rejection or discrimination against their parents, fully aware that "irregular" is a word applied to situations, not persons".

2.4. Concordances of the word family extracted from the Holy Bible

Out of 205 instances of the word *family* in the Holy Bible⁶ only two collocations *high priest's family* and *whole family* are common for both Testaments. In the Old Testament the word *family* is mostly pre/post-modified with male-dominated families' *names, lines, heads, property or possessions* but also with the nouns such as *destruction, breaking, misfortune* and *division*, in 184 examples. In the New Testament the word *family* collocates with the words *devout, God-fearing, believers, divided, save, manage*, in 21 examples. These collocations suggest that a family's reputation was affected by its social status, and that its functioning and integrity have ever been hard to maintain due to a famine, wars, diseases, natural disasters, etc. In both Testaments a well-run family is considered the foundation of society. The family integrity of today is challenged by the disease of materialism, moral relativism, the value system disorder, technological progress, loss of faith, etc. Therefore, integration of faith and ordinary family life is required so that parents as primary faith educators always provide setting for the family's growth in faith.

3. Family faith formation in the Croatian theological journals

In the past twenty years, the issue of *family faith formation* in Croatia was discussed in forty articles. Despite this relatively small number, the articles implicitly offer very valuable and clear guidelines for family faith formation which is approached in different ways. Some articles highlight the context of the present-day family living which greatly affects family in its faith-building efforts, while others deal with documents on family pastoral work with families or evangelization through families, and others are focused on the content and type of family faith formation.

The articles published from 1994 to 2004 focused on 37 topics out of which 17 of them deal with family faith formation while other topics were elaborated in the next decade (2004-2014). Journals such as *Riječki teološki časopis, Diakovensia, Služba Božja* and *Crkva u svijetu* published fewer articles on family faith formation than *Obnovljeni život* and *Bogoslovska smotra*. The articles published in the first decade refer to a precondition of marriage and family life, family communication problems, core values for a successful marriage, family religiosity, (in)effective Christian upbringing in a family, a father's role in creation of the image of God, Eucharistic catechesis, church documents on the evangelizing role of the family.

⁶ Holy Bible, New International Version®, NIV® Copyright ©1973, 1978, 1984, 2011 by Biblica, Inc.® https://www.biblegateway.com/quicksearch/?qs_version=NIV&quicksearch=human&startnumber=101&begin=1&end=46 (5.10.2015).

The articles published in the second decade (2004-2014) refer to the following topics: (un) feasibility of a traditional family, facing a new language of faith, little prayer as a form of family prayer life, the family as the privileged place for transmitting the faith, prayer in the family, the Eucharist and family in the light of catechesis, the "Rijeka model" of the marriage and pastoral work with families, the evangelizing mission of the family, marriage and the family based on *Gaudium et Spes*, a school for marriage, the detrimental effect of the virtual world on children, the New Evangelization and Catechesis of marriage and the family, evaluating current models of pastoral work with family and launching of the new models.

Croatian theological journals focus on the theological foundations of the family which are in line with the Vatican Council's principle and confirm the importance of the family and the Church's profound interest in the family. However, there are almost no theological works on postmodern challenges faced by the contemporary family such as current media technology, in contrast to the education for values, children's wasting time in front of screens, the cult of shopping centres, relying on fragile truth and stories, anaesthetisation of life, the focus on comfort, the phenomenon of the overworked mother, the uncertainty of high employment and other everyday experiences. Positive suggestions and guidelines expressed in theological journals are manifold: the Church with all its resources should support and encourage families in their spiritual and social needs; it should offer programs to meet the needs of a family's free time; it should express the real presence of Jesus Christ and the Church of today, and help families to swim upstream⁷.

Family faith formation⁸ is a very important and complex process involving a whole range of issues and thus seems almost unreal. What does family faith formation imply, that is, what are the key components of family faith formation?

3.1. Family faith formation: Struggling with the freedom and limitations

Through identification, extraction and comparison of key terminology generated from the corpus of the Church documents and Croatian theological journals' abstracts in the past twenty years, a significant content and terminological data have been found out indicating to: the family-related key terminology, the specific relations associated with the concept of family, particularly the Christian family. Corpus-based evidences suggest that the word *family* is not only high ranking but that it is highly

⁷ J. Garmaz, *Odgoj vjere u obitelji prema Hrvatskoj teološkoj periodici*, "Bogoslovska smotra" 85 (2015) 3, p. 841–853, 1994.- 2014.

⁸ On the challenges concerning contemporary family faith formation: M. Šimunović, *Odgoj vjere u situaciji etičkog relativizma i pedagoškog pesimizma. Suočerje vjeroučitelja s post-modernom svijesti i potreba trajnog usavršavanja*, "Crkva u svijetu" 38 (2003), br. 2, p. 179-207.

associated with the words such as *life, Christ, faith, human* and *education/formation* thus, constituting a six-part core and focus of the investigated sources.

The concept of family implies a multiplicity of relationships and value systems, since it can be defined as the basis of common coexistence and community that keeps society from social fragmentation, the privileged place for the development of values and ideals, a place for the development of virtue and charity, the first school to develop one's identity and competence of living together, the privileged place for the transmission of faith, human and religious heritage, the fundamental cell of society and the Church, a school of basic humanity, a school of love and communication.

However, this paper aims to explore some of the most significant relations, such as the role of family in the transmission of faith i.e. family faith formation; family as the privileged place for the development of values and virtues; family as the school of love and communication. In doing so, we try to find out whether, to what extent and in which way the family faith formation is reflected in the corpus? What is the significance and perspective of the religious education in the family?

3.2. The family is the privileged place for the development of values and virtues

In their letter to families, Pope John Paul II, as well as Popes Benedict and Francis confirmed the primacy of families in the nurturing of virtues upbringing⁹... The family is the place where authentic values such as love, truth, justice, peace and reconciliation are experienced. If it is the place of authentic religious experience, the Christian family is indispensable for the human encounter with the sacred and divine to which a man is directed ontically by his very essence¹⁰.

The personalist approach to the upbringing for the values in Christianity involves the Christian ethos, that is, living personal and social dimensions of Christian values. Feelings and values transmitted through Christian religious experience and the experience of family life, become our own values and virtues. According to V. Kovačević¹¹ there are three

⁹ Unlike values, the most accepted virtues imply the universal meaning and are deeply immersed in human consciousness making up the essence of his human integrity and showing a strong internal moral conscience. Therefore we can say that the values affected by socialization, individual experience, cultural and social factors are attributes of virtues which significantly influence the attitudes and behaviour of an individual. V. Kovačević, *Odgoj za osobne i društvene dimenzije kršćanskih vrednota*, "Školski vjesnik" 63, 1-2 (2014), p. 91-106.

¹⁰ A renewal of the authentic religious experience and the experience of authentic virtues is required in order to return to the essence of man's encounter with the divine and sacred, virtues to which the man is ontically directed (Jukić, 1973: 245).

¹¹ V. Kovačević, *Odgoj za osobne i društvene dimenzije kršćanskih vrednota*, p. 91-106. The concept of ethos originally meant: residence and land possession. Over time, these two

aspects of the personal and social dimensions of Christian values. The first aspect is related to reliving the authentic religious experience; the second is related to the return to *the faith of our ancestors* and beliefs, nourished by people who offer models of Christian forgiveness and a resentment-free life aiming at an openness to encounter and dialogue with the other who is different. The third aspect is related to and manifested through the religious experience as a central phenomenon and a source of upbringing for Christian values.

According to the researched documents and post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation '*Amoris Laetitia*', the family is the place not only of the authentic religious experience but also of moral development of children, their wills, good habits, efforts, aspirations, attitudes and moral judgements¹².

The emotional and ethical development of the human being requires the basic experience: the belief that parents are worthy of their children's trust. Therefore, it is important to develop in children a feeling of confidence in their parents who are in return expected to respect them and show interest in their lives. Children easily accept parental advice and are ready to follow their good examples if they feel parents' trust, love and care. Developing children's values and virtues through dialogue and inductive reasoning allow children to discover the meaning of certain values, basic attitudes and rules. "A good ethical education includes showing a person that it is in his own interest to do what is right. Even childhood habits can help to translate important interiorized values into sound and steady ways of acting. A person may be sociable and open to others, but if over a long period of time he has not been trained by his elders to say "Please", "Thank you", and "Sorry", his good interior disposition will not easily come to the fore. The strengthening of the will and the repetition of specific actions are the building blocks of moral conduct; without the conscious, free and valued repetition of certain patterns of good behaviour, moral education does not take place. Mere desire, or an attraction to a certain value, is not enough to instil a virtue in the absence of those properly motivated acts"¹³.

Pope Francis¹⁴ emphasises that "moral education has to do with cultivating freedom through ideas, incentives, practical applications, stimuli, rewards, examples, models, symbols, reflections, encouragement, dialogue and a constant rethinking of our way of doing things; all these can

meanings assumed significance of homeland and maintenance - and thus identified with land possession, or getting used to it, being a land owner. The feelings and values are related to something internal leading us to a reality beyond ourselves - to something that transcends immediate experience of these feelings and values i.e. authentic human experience (Ferguson, 2006, 85-86).

¹² Pope Francis, Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation, *Amoris Laetitia*, no. 261.

¹³ AL 266.

¹⁴ AL 267.

help develop those stable interior principles that lead us spontaneously to do good. Virtue is a conviction that has become a steadfast inner principle of operation. The virtuous life thus builds, strengthens and shapes freedom, lest we become slaves of dehumanizing and antisocial inclinations”.

In this context, “correction” is also an incentive whenever children’s efforts are appreciated and acknowledged, and they sense their parents’ constant, patient trust. Children who are lovingly corrected feel cared for. In today’s world of strong individualism and egocentrism children need be educated for empathy and solidarity. They need to be encouraged to put themselves in other people’s shoes and to acknowledge the hurt they have caused. It is important to train children firmly to ask forgiveness and to repair the harm done to others¹⁵.

3.3. Family as the school of love and communication that teaches us to live together

The family is the first school of love and trust, the school of friendship¹⁶, mercy and forgiveness. In matrimony and in the family a complex of interpersonal relationships is woven-married life, fatherhood and motherhood, filiation and fraternity-through which each human person is introduced into the “human family”¹⁷.

This claim is confirmed by the extracted key terminology consisting of the word *family* as the most frequent one and in correlation with the words such as *life*, *Christ*, *humane*, *religion* and *faith formation*. Corpus-based approach to key terminology extraction and analysis provides linguistic and statistical evidences suggesting that family creates and protects life as is *the essential cell of society and the Church*; and as it *continuously vivified by the Lord Jesus* and is the source of *an integral education*, we can say that both the official Church documents and Croatian theological journals support the claim on the institution and role of the family in contemporary society¹⁸ because it builds community as it is *the first school of love and communion*¹⁹ and therefore *the foundation of coexistence and a remedy against social fragmentation*.

The experience of family life provides a fertile ground for one’s life and confirms humanly inevitable involvement in the interwoven family rela-

¹⁵ AL 279.

¹⁶ “It seems that the friendship between husband and wife is intrinsic by its very nature; namely, individual human beings combined in pairs because they were more inclined to the household than to the state as the household was prior to them ...”. Aristotel, *Nikomahova etika*, VIII, 1162 a, 17, Zagreb 1988, Globus.

¹⁷ Pope John Paul II, *Familiaris consortio*, Zagreb, KS, 1981. br. 15, 21.

¹⁸ Aristotle claimed that it is natural for humans to live in community: “everyone naturally has the impulse for such a community, since no one is self-sufficient and the city-state makes human beings just and virtuous and lifts them from the savagery and bestiality”. Aristotel, *Politika*, I, 1253a, 29.

¹⁹ The role of family as *the first school of love* is mostly highlighted.

tionships. Having in mind Buber's philosophy we can say that this relationship is based on dialogue and love which is the principle of unity and diversity, the foundation of the family, the way of the realization of human existence. A person should always be open to the other in order to be fully realized. Thus, the experience of the other "Thou" and the experience of relationship and dialogue are relevant for man as a dialogical being and are open to the mystery of religion: relationship, communication and dialogue with God²⁰.

Since a teaching process is always grounded in experience and dialogue through a reasonable and holistic approach, it can be said that the family is the most perfect school for teaching communication and love, that is, teaching to live mutual relation.

A comparative analysis of the Croatian theological journals provides insight into the most highlighted categories such as "communion", "relationship" and "communication", those that are learned in families presenting preconditions for family faith formation. They are important from theological but also religious-pedagogical view since the relationship with one's neighbour is indivisible from the relationship with God.

As pointed out by Pope Benedict XVI, the family is the privileged place to develop "the *capacity for listening and for dialogue*: the family must be a milieu in which we learn to be together, to settle disagreements in conversation with each other, which consists in listening and speaking, in mutual understanding and love, so as to be a sign for each other of God's merciful love"²¹.

3.4. Family as a privileged place for the transmission of faith and faith formation

Most of the documents confirming the indispensable role of the family in the upbringing and the transmission of faith. As a great catechist and a teacher of religion, Pope Benedict XVI emphasized the catechetical task of the family which is supported by the following claims: "The family is the first school for communicating the faith to the new genera-

²⁰ A. Akrap, *Osoba i odnosi: ključ razumijevanja obitelji kroz forme i figure filozofije dijaloga Martina Bubera*, "Crkva u svijetu" 50 (2015), br. 4, p. 555-579, 578: "For Buber, relationship between people and encounter have a metaphysical character. A man meets another man, his world, and right here in the inner encounter one finds transcendence, since every sphere of *I-You* touches the edge of the eternal *You*. Being with someone, living with someone is not coincidence, but grace, because every true life is a meeting and the real and true sense of that meeting is only given by God. As we live in a time of "crisis of truth and personal identity," Buber advocated for the dignity and value of an individual and the family. Individualism and egoism that lead men to loneliness and isolation present the biggest obstacle to it".

²¹ Catechesis of Pope Benedict XVI, General Audience, 28 November 2012, https://w2.vatican.va/content/benedict-xvi/en/audiences/2012/documents/hf_ben-xvi_aud_20121128.html.

tions, is a privileged place in which to talk about God. The Second Vatican Council speaks of parents as the first messengers of God²². Parents are called to rediscover their mission, assuming responsibility in educating, in opening the consciences of their little ones to the love of God as a fundamental service to their life, and in being the first catechists and teachers of the faith for their children. And in this task, watchfulness is of the utmost importance. It means being able to take favourable opportunities to introduce the topic of faith in the family and to develop a critical reflection with regard to the many forms of conditioning to which children are subjected”²³.

Furthermore, in the same general audience, Pope clarified the concept of Christian family faith formation and argued that the communication of faith and education in the faith should be a joyful event. Indeed, through the communication of faith we transmit the Gospel - that is by its very structure joyful, liberating or good news that teaches us to stay on the paths of the just and righteous:

“The communication of faith must always have joyful tones. It is the Easter joy that does not stay silent or conceal the realities of pain, of suffering, of effort, of difficulty, of incomprehension and of death itself, but that can offer criteria for interpreting all things in the perspective of Christian hope. The good life of the Gospel is precisely this new perception, this capacity to see God with one’s own eyes in every situation. It is important to help all the members of the family understand that faith is not a burden but a source of profound joy, that it is perceiving God’s action, recognizing the presence of goodness that does not make a sound; and it offers precious guidance for living life well”²⁴.

4. Conclusion

This paper presented an interdisciplinary research on the relationship between the family and faith formation. A Corpus-based approach to the key terminology identification, extraction and analysis was applied. The corpus is compiled of abstracts of the selected Croatian theological journals published from 1994 to 2014 and the Church documents in support of family catechesis. Linguistic and statistical data are used as a ground for further religious but also theological-pedagogical reflections and premises.

²² Cf. Dogmatic Constitution, Decree *Lumen Gentium*, n. 11; *Apostolicam Actuositatem*, n. 11.

²³ Catechesis of Pope Benedict XVI, General Audience, 28 November 2012, https://w2.vatican.va/content/benedict-xvi/en/audiences/2012/documents/hf_ben-xvi_aud_20121128.html.

²⁴ Catechesis of Pope Benedict XVI, General Audience, 28 November 2012, https://w2.vatican.va/content/benedict-xvi/en/audiences/2012/documents/hf_ben-xvi_aud_20121128.htm.

The aim of this article was to highlight the main thoughts on the family's irreplaceable catechetical role expressed in theological texts and to present the challenges of a mutually beneficial relationship between religious education and family. The research revealed that faith formation in the family is a relevant topic for Croatian theological thought. However, it still requires further research.

Corpus-based research provided the following definitions of the family: the basis of common coexistence and community that keeps society from social fragmentation, the privileged place for the development of values and ideals, a place for the development of virtue and charity, the first school to develop one's identity and competence of living together, the privileged place for the transmission of faith, human and religious heritage, the fundamental cell of society and the Church, a school of basic humanity, a school of love and communication.

Much more similarities than discrepancies between key terminologies have been detected thus, supporting preliminary assumption that the issue of family faith formation is consistently reflected throughout the Church documents and selected Croatian theological journals. This paper aims to contribute to the researches in the area of family faith formation but also to the development of corpus linguistics and domain-specific terminology.

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