



Faculty of Languages, Cultures and Communication

Department of English Language

POST GRADUATE STUDIES-SECOND CYCLE

THESIS:

**‘DIFFICULTIES AND CHALLENGES IN THE APPLICATION OF
DIFFERENT ASSESSMENT STRATEGIES IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE
TEACHING’**

(A CASE STUDY GYMNASIUM "XHAVIT AHMETI", GJILAN, KOSOVË)

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Dedication

I dedicate this to all my family but with special emphasize to my parents-the reason of what I become today, my shadow who gave unconditional love to me, educated and supported me in every step I took. Thanks for your great support and care. No words can ever be founded to express the gratitude to my parents for their unconditional love.

and my greatest god's blessings;

I dedicate this to my parents for learning and raising me to believe that any dream is possible and to my husband for making and helping me make everything possible.

My husband, who is always there for me, supporting my work and dreams and believing on me, and always tries to support me in what I want in life, who is truly an inspiration for me.

My beautiful daughter Ema, who has been a blessing from the start and has brightened my life, being beautiful and kind-hearted person makes me the luckiest mother

and to my little son Tian, who is so loving, cheerful, a heart of gold and makes me feel very proud, being a part of me, always my baby even when he grows old.

Abstract

This paper intended to explain and test assessment of students learning English language at the school Gymnasium "Xhavit Ahmeti", Gjilan. It was conducted during the COVID-19 pandemic. Both a theoretical and empirical research has been carried out. The sample constituted around 400 students, who answered an online-drafted and distributed questionnaire with 12 questions within. Despite students, also 6 EL teachers of the same school were involved, who answered 14 questions of an interview, and beyond, 6 classes were observed in a EL class hour per class. The questionnaire tested our four-hypothesis drafted related to assessment strategies used and continuous usage in the educational system. The interviews provided answers to our four research questions. Observations were to determine students' preferences expressed, somehow, indirectly. It was accomplished by doing a contrastive analysis between the Kosovo curriculum required assessment methodology, challenges, difficulties and the ongoing assessment process. This thesis' results revealed that students are very satisfied with the way teachers assess them. Students mentioned also a lot of assessment methods and strategies that teachers employ when assessing them. Similarly, teachers expressed that they do indeed employ various strategies when teaching English language. However, they also expressed their concerns, and difficulties and challenges they face every-day in this regard. Anyhow, this thesis was a great success indicating that teachers do a tireless work to know their students and to understand how they learn best.

Key words: *Assessment, teaching, learning, curriculum, students, teachers.*

Parathënja

Ky studim ka për qëllim të shpjegojë dhe testojë nivelin e vlerësimit të nxënësve që mësojnë gjuhën angleze në gjimnazin "Xhavit Ahmeti", Gjilan. Ky studim teorik dhe empirik njëkohësisht është kryer gjatë pandemisë COVID-19. Mostra e përdorur këtu përbëhet nga rreth 400 nxënës, të cilët iu përgjigjën një pyetësori të hartuar në internet dhe të shpërndarë përmes internetit, ky pyetësor ngërtheu 12 pyetje përbrenda. Përveç nxënësve, 6 mësues të së njëjtës shkollë ishin pjesë e kësaj mostre, të cilët u përgjigjën në 14 pyetje, dhe më tej, 6 klasë u vëzhguan me nga një orë mësimore të gjuhës angleze. Pyetësori testoi katër hipotezat tona të hartuara në lidhje me strategjitë e vlerësimit të përdorura dhe që përdoren vazhdimisht në sistemin tonë arsimor. Intervistat dhanë përgjigje për katër pyetjet tona kërkimore. Vëzhgimet ishin për të përcaktuar preferencat e nxënësve të shprehura, disi, indirekt. E tërë kjo është realizuar duke u bërë një studim krahasimor në mes të metodologjisë së vlerësimit të paraparë në Kurikulën e Kosovës, sfidat, vështirësitë me procesin aktual. Rezultatet e kësaj teze zbuluan se nxënësit janë shumë të kënaqur me mënyrën e vlerësimit të profesorëve. Nxënësit përmendën gjithashtu shumë metoda dhe strategji vlerësimi që mësuesit përdorin gjatë vlerësimit të tyre. Në mënyrë të ngjashme, mësuesit u shprehën se ata me të vërtetë përdorin strategji të ndryshme kur u mësojnë gjuhën angleze nxënësve. Sidoqoftë, ata gjithashtu shprehën shqetësimet e tyre, dhe vështirësitë dhe sfidat me të cilat përballen çdo ditë në këtë drejtim. Sidoqoftë, kjo tezë ishte një sukses i madh që tregon se profesorët bëjnë një punë të palodhur për të njohur nxënësit e tyre dhe për të kuptuar se si mësojnë ata më mirë.

***Fjalët kyçe:** Vlerësimi, mësimdhënja, mësimnxënja, kurrikula, nxënësit, arsimtarët.*

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List of abbreviations

EHEA	European Higher Education Area
EFL	English as a Foreign Language
ESL	English as a Second Language
EL	English Language
MESTI	Ministry of Education, Science, Technology and Innovation
AI	Administrative Instruction
FA	Formative Assessment
SA	Summative Assessment

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CHAPTER I

1. INTRODUCTION

As known, English as the language of business, tourism, science, media, movies, music, technology, and more, in other words as the nearly-globally recognized language, is not just a merely curriculum subject, but it is much greater. Its melodic pronunciation, somehow, generates satisfaction for students who love learning English language. This applies also to learners of other desired languages.

Education in general is a holistic process. Its wide-open branches are full of knowledge and advancements, whether personal or professional. Sometimes the term “Education” is understood only as something learned in schools or courses, but in fact it incorporates everything our brain receives as new information and decides to memorize that particular information. In other words, we start our educational journey from the moment we enter this world to the moment we are deceased.

As the advancement of technology is increasingly upgrading and as its original language is English, the English teachers are ought to be kept in step with these advancements, so that they would make education more lasting and more attractive. Today’s teenagers are highly attracted to the world of films, music, and media in general, thus, getting them to make use of the latest, might indeed yield positive results in this respect. The use of technology is a phenomenon that in the world of today has become almost as necessary as food and clothing. It is true that English language is playing an outstanding role in society’s empowerment. Teachers, in particular English language teachers, upon fulfilling their duty which is to teach, educate, assess, evaluate and also sometime entertain students, they may create new effective teaching, assessment and evaluation methods.

In Kosovo, there is a legal framework defining the evaluation of students’ performance, to which teachers, education institutions/facilities must adhere. As known, the educational system and the assessment and everything related to it, are derived from the Core Curriculum of Kosovo. Moreover, the Core Curriculum of Kosovo obliges teachers/instructors to develop student-centred classroom, there is also the *Administrative Instruction*(MESTI, 2016, p. 7)*No. 08/2016 on Pupils*

*Assessment under the Curriculum Framework for Pre-University Education of the Republic of Kosovo*¹, entered into force on 26.05.2016, which describes also the assessment process according to which our educational system functions. According to this Administrative Instruction, “there are certain types of assessment, inter alia, continuous assessment, final assessment, formative assessment, summative assessment and other as well. All of these are carried out throughout the year and recorded in the personal register of the teacher, except for the final assessment which is graded based on arithmetic average of marks during the certain periods. Since in Kosovo, the assessment process is mainly directed to SA, there are two types of SA used to assess students. First, SA1 is conducted through various instruments (explained in the Table 1) in order to assess pupils/students with a grade in the classroom book. SA2 is conducted through an assessing instrument adapted to the specifications of field/subject so that there could be performed an objective assessment of pupils/students’ achievements”. This is explained briefly in the following table:

¹ Administrative Instruction (MESTI) No. 08/2016 on Pupils Assessment under the Curriculum Framework for Pre-University Education of the Republic of Kosovo.

Assessment for a learning period is composed of two grades: SA1 + SA2 = 60% + 40% = 100% of the period															
N a n e a n d s u r n a n e	Grade 1 – SA1 = 60%									Grade 2 – SA2 – 40%				Gr ad e	
	Homework	Oral assessment	Short essays	Test for short period of times (5-10 min)	Files	Project	Group work	Activity in class	Quizzes	Grade 1 – SA1	Summative test	Essay	Written exam	Grade 2 – SA2	Summative grade

Table 1: Assessment methods in Kosovo

Besides evaluation of students’ performance, there is also the evaluation of the performance of education institutions. This is further described by the *Administrative Instruction No. 4/2017 for Evaluation of the Educational Institutions Performance in Pre-University Education*, entered into force in 2017. This *Administrative Instruction determines procedures for evaluation of the educational institution’s performance and role of main bearers of this process*². As per this AI,

² Administrative Instruction No. 4/2017 for Evaluation of the Educational Institutions Performance in Pre-University Education

participation, transparency, objectivity, accuracy are the main principles of the performance evaluation of the educational institution.

Furthermore, the *Law No. 04/L-032 on Pre-University Education in the Republic of Kosovo* defines assessment as the process (including examinations and tests) used to gather, interpret and evaluate evidence of an individual's learning achievements³. According to this law, the Kosovo Curriculum, Standards and Assessment Agency is the one to develop the Kosovo Curriculum Framework, whereby, "recommending the evaluation and standardized assessment of pupils' achievements at defined intervals, and also the criteria for pupils' progression, in line with the requirements of the National Qualifications Framework" (MESTI, 2011, p.19).

According to (Lorna, 2003, p.1) "there are many conceptualizations regarding the linkage between assessment and learning producing three notions of assessment: assessment of learning, assessment for learning, and assessment as learning, where it can be a complex process concerning assessing and getting the goals in class". These three notions play a vital role in supporting students' learning process. Therefore, assessment of learning pertains the notion of level reached to learn, whilst assessment for learning provides students with achievement targets prior to assessments, communicates assessment results with students by means of descriptive feedback, and guides teachers' future lesson planning, meanwhile assessment as learning equips students with abilities to set personal learning goals, monitor their own learning process, and conduct self-assessment in the course of learning. These three notions are applied within an English language classroom, sometimes even unconsciously by the part of the teacher. The overall process of learning contains underneath an infinite path to acquire knowledge. It requires hard work, which sadly sometimes is unseen to our groups, because students might feel bored and frustrated hence, they can lose interest in the current lesson. This can be derived owing to the unchanged flow of evaluation and assessment over the years, and students might not feel the urge to work hard or even cooperate on account of knowing that they won't be evaluated properly!

"Teaching per se is *art*". A great teacher gets involved wholeheartedly in his/her job to perform his/her duties the best way possible. Traditionally, the perception of a great teacher originates from the background of high grades and great performance during studies in the respective field (Ang, How to be a good teacher?, May, 2011 p.p. 1118-1123). Indeed, the term "Great Teacher", besides

³ Law No. 04/L-032 on Pre-University Education in the Republic of Kosovo

covering high-level knowledge and skills, it covers also attitude towards students, the respect for the subject/field and the commitment to work, alongside with the ability to create a challenging and nurturing environment for students, i.e., he/she is ought to be open, approachable, caring, and above all, a motivation to students. An epithet most probably reached through the right form of assessment. Teachers as the chairs of knowledge and culture have both an exciting and challenging job, it is a noble profession, but except the qualification that a teacher should have, being a good teacher, he/she has to have communication as well as listening skills, finding the way of including in class activities all level of students, not communicating and doing exercises only with good students, being correct in students' evaluation. The best thing about teaching is that every teacher is different from the other, each of the teachers have their way of teaching, doing class activities, involving students in class, and sometimes that's the best thing because each of the students can learn in different forms, can learn different forms of communicating, giving their opinions, presenting their projects, etc. They play a crucial role in shaping the lives of young generation, i.e., their students. This can be achieved through motivating and encouraging new learners and through guiding them in having a positive impact in their universe. Among other things, a teacher's obligation is to meet the needs of each individual learner/student. This includes a safe and sound environment. As Brad Henry stated in a quote "*a good teacher can inspire hope, ignite the imagination and instil a love of learning*" (www.Pinterest.com)

Special importance has been paid to the assessment system and grading practices, stimulating the implementation of different techniques for assessing academic performance, thusly drawing high attention on the importance of frequent and ongoing assessment during and after teaching and learning process.

Students will face many difficulties whilst learning a second/foreign language and based on this ground, teachers must know how to bring out the best in their students. Hence, teachers are ought to do so by imparting knowledge to students and supporting them on this educational sphere. Hereto, English teachers must not rely exclusively on one assessment method in order to be fully aware of the level of achievements and knowledge of their students. This because there is not an assessment method that suits all students (due to their diverse nature) and that measures their capacity level to possess the four language skills (reading, writing, speaking and listening) and the language system per se at the same time.

According to my personal experience, teaching English language in the country I'm living in – Kosovo, became much easier over time, taking into account the widespread scope of listening and speaking opportunities and of course self-motivation of students to learn the aforementioned nearly-globally recognized language that is English language. However, the following question stems: Is the teaching process, as a whole, easy and fun for teachers? In my opinion, no, it is not. This because, in particular, with a class attended by a relatively large number of students and with far different level of their English-related knowledge and with heterogeneous background, is so hard to focus, pay attention closely, understand and meet the needs of students, and so on. Since in Kosovo there is a lack of training sessions for teachers regarding assessment of students' performance, most of teachers can judge personally not professionally, which derives from having a large number of students in a classroom with overwhelming diversity.

As we speak of assessment of students' learning process, it is worth mentioning that it can be a real satisfaction, contentment and pride but despite those, it can be also an absolute disappointment for teachers. As said above, a teacher has the main role in the personal and professional development of a student, hence, a feedback provided to the student on his/her learning process can increase and decrease the level of success as well as encourage and discourage willingness towards continuous learning. According to (Green & Emerson, A new framework for grading, 2007, p. 495-511)“Grading is one of the least liked, least understood and least considered aspects of teaching”.

1.1. Assessment

There is a question popping out as to what is assessment and what do we benefit from it? This question has been being asked throughout the world by students/pupils, and even by teachers themselves. Immediately when the term “assessment” is made or heard, the first thing we think about is way of evaluation, it can refer to much wider varieties of methods that we can use in class during evaluation, no matter if it is a modern or traditional way of assessing the students it is a very important part of teaching and learning process. According to Halpern, “the three following concepts assessment, teaching, and learning” are inextricably connected since each informs the other” (Halpern, Adolescents and Young Adults, 1979, p. 518-523). As many researchers and scholars have struggled in finding an adequate definition of Assessment, they defined Assessment

as the process of documenting, in measurable terms, the knowledge, skills, attitudes, and beliefs of the learner. A definition that many teachers and educational facilities rely upon.

Assessment is at the heart of education: Teachers and parents use test scores to gauge a student's academic strengths and weaknesses, communities rely on these scores to judge the quality of their educational system, and state and federal lawmakers use these same metrics to determine whether public schools are up to scratch as pointed out by (Edutopia).

According to (Kadriu, Metodati e Vleresimit, 2011), in Kosovo certain assessment methods/instruments are currently being applied, such as:

- **Individual tasks** – This instrument is applied in order to deepen the understanding of the (unit) teaching topic, to apply the knowledge gained or already possessed, to solve problems, to reasoning, to come to conclusions, to connect to real life and to develop the teaching and learning skills. Characteristic of this method/instrument is the analysis of additional requirements in the student's book, various documentaries and in the creation of the concept map.
- **Individual projects** – This method of assessment involves the selection and use of evidence to identify, describe, analyse, and draw conclusions about a particular issue or problem. Students should be involved very often in a range of activities for a considerable amount of time in order to work individually. The teacher is required to plan the strategy of focusing on teaching skills.
- **Group projects** – This method/instrument helps in developing the individual responsibility, social interdependence and personal skills. Herewith, the form of organizing activities, identifying the roles of group members, and the manner of writing the product are determined.

- **Surveys** – They verify the acquisition of a unit or several teaching units, an interview is conducted and/or the documents are reviewed. Questionnaires or data tables are used to gather information.
- **Observation activities** – It is realized through the interview with each student or group, while the control list is based on the comments collected. Characteristic is the compilation and recording of comments on a separate page for each student.
- **Shows and exhibitions** – For the dissemination of information, it is best to organize and broadcast it. Feedback or even remarks should guide to reflection. For this, questionnaires for feedback are prepared.
- **Field visit** – Through this method, the evaluation is carried out as: outlining the project in the field, observing, drafting the orienting map, concept map is prepared, literature is used and studied, discussion is done after the visit and the visit report is prepared.
- **Verbal presentation** - Through this method/instrument, students present oral reports in front of the audience such as drama that has a good forum and has great opportunities for debate and discussion.
- **Listening** – Questions (requests) need to be carefully prepared; this develops a wide range of skills (communication, attitudes and values, and the ability to concentrate and listen), group collaboration, short summaries.
- **Open book** – It is very carefully planned and used to find the unit or topic, not the answer to the questions in the book.
- **Practical work** – Necessary instructions and remarks are given in order to develop certain competencies. Equipment recognition level and conclusions drawn from measurements.
- **Creational activities** - A number of exercises need to be done to measure understanding of concepts, the level of competencies is displayed and individual and group work is done.

- **Tests and essays** – They are very motivating for some students and especially those who want to write, quickly and reliably evaluate the achievements of students, are easy to organize and difficult to correct. Great opportunity to involve students in reorganizing arguments facts and ideas to improve learning effectiveness. It is characterized by individual and group tests, with limited duration, as well as essays assessing a number of students' skills but with limited time and resource-based essays.

There are a variety of issues that must be taken into consideration when planning an assessment strategy. It is important to start by “understanding that assessment per se is a form of communication” as pointed out by (Siegler, Strategy Diversity and Cognitive Assessment, 1989, p. 15-20).

There are many forms of assessment, however in Kosovo the most used and well-recognized forms are Formative Assessment and Summative Assessment. Van de Walle (2006, pp. 13-14), who quoted *“If summative assessment can be described as a digital snapshot, formative assessment is like a streaming video. One is a picture of what a student knows that is captured in a single moment of time, and the other is a moving picture that demonstrates active student thinking and reasoning”*. Besides having their different instruments employed, they also have common instruments which can be used in assessment, presented as follows:

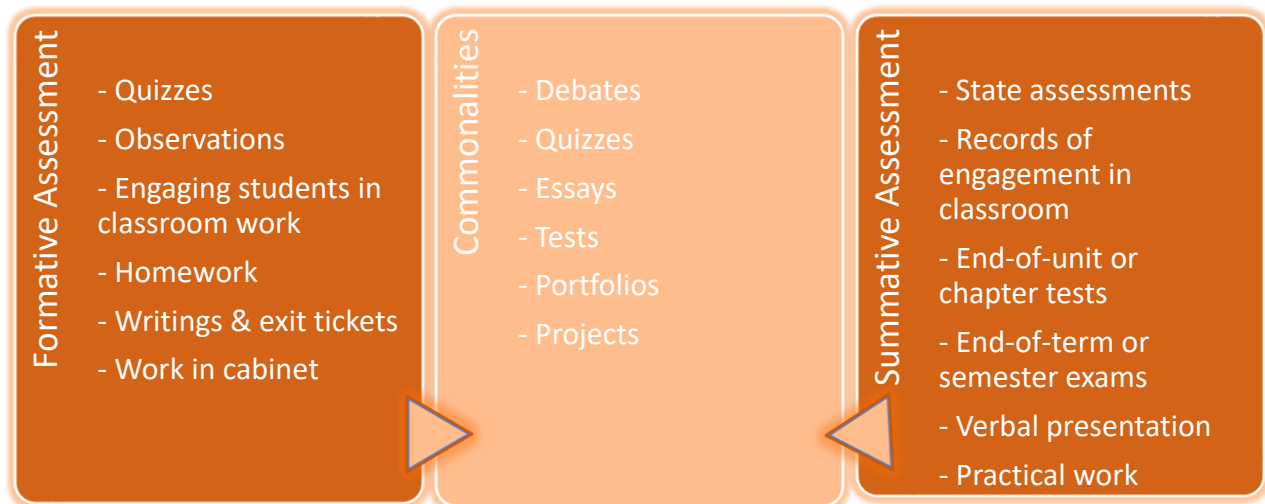


Figure 1: Commonalities and differences between FA and SA

It is really of interest mentioning that assessment tools themselves are not summative or formative but the purpose we use them determines how assessments are classified.

1.1.1. Formative Assessment

In a nutshell, this form of assessment includes tests and exams that evaluate how one is learning the material during the respective course. Assessment for learning is best described as “a process used by teachers to adjust their teaching strategies, and by students to adjust their learning strategies” as pointed out by (Hanley, 1994, p. 222-229). Formative assessment is more based on ongoing process of learning by the students in class, everyday activities are measured by this type of assessment.

1.1.2. Summative Assessment

In a nutshell, this form of assessment is tests and exams that evaluate how much one has learned the material during the respective course. Education related ministries, departments, sectors, organizations, and institutions can use this form of assessment as a method to hold public schools accountable for providing quality education. Increasingly, “international SA methods, including the OECD’s Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA), have been of great significance regarding the comparison of national education systems to actual developments in other countries” as it is mentioned by (Hopfenbeck, The use and abuse of assessment, 2019, p. 637-642). Anyhow, besides being helpful to students, this can be helpful to teachers as well, because it is a useful form of assessing, and its general purpose is based on the test or the exam that the students do at the end of the term.

1.2. Background of the study

Kosovo is the youngest country in Europe, located in South East Europe which has been “associated with historical and political instability since the post-war period” as it is mentioned by (Wikipedia, Kosovo and its history). For more than 40 years a number of neighbouring countries including Kosovo experienced a state of hostility and conflict and these crises of 1990s had an extremely serious impact on all aspects of the people’s lives in Kosovo. In the context of teaching and learning, several studies recognize that the “previous political conflicts created a climate of instability and chaos” in our country as pointed out by (Nicoalari, Education Innovation and Reform during and after the Conflict, 2009, p. 15). Even though Kosovo has become familiar only in the post-war period with Internet, and networking, leading to getting acquainted with English language as well, their influence spread very fast through all the generations. Since then, we get closer and closer to the desire of knowing English language. Even though Kosovo only recently has started using the technology and the internet, but there is a Revolution on this field, because there are great programmers in our country, no matter the age there are lots of internet users and being able to search for the information on the internet, to read the news, to get more information about favourite actor, singer or a football player, using the internet to be provided with different information that students need for their project presentations in class, there are lots of teenagers that have found different school programs through the internet and got full scholarship, there are lots of people that work from home for a company in USA or any other foreign country. So, when we consider the revolution that happened in Kosovo after the war, we could easily be compared with other countries round the world that are much more developed.

1.3. Aims of the study

This study shall provide a wider yet complicated viewpoint on the assessment strategies used to assess the performance of students at educational facilities. It will take place in the Gymnasium “Xhavit Ahmeti” in Gjilan, where I’ve been employed as an English teacher for almost 17 years. The aim of this thesis is as follows:

- reveal the importance of implementing every assessment strategy,
- identify factors influencing the complication of assessment process, and
- attempt to find any solution to overcoming those complications/difficulties.

1.4. Objectives of the study

Actually, assessment does not always mean assessing students' knowledge as it is most probably assumed as soon as we hear the term. There are a variety of issues that must be taken into consideration when planning assessment strategy. It is important to start with the understanding that assessment is a form of communication. This communication can be to a variety of sources, "to the students (feedback on their learning), to the lecturer (feedback on their teaching), to the curriculum designer (feedback on the curriculum)" according to (McAlpine, 2002, p. 883-891). The approach to which we do the assessment defines its role. It is worth mentioning that none of the above-mentioned roles is less or more important than the other since all together create a strong mainstay of a genuine educational system. There are lots of opinions towards the assessing process especially when it comes to children assessment, because they say that a lot of stress and panic can happen on children and it could cause a fear panic, but on the other hand the teacher, the parents and the children themselves could be able to know the learning progress, could know like what subject need more practice, and could be proud of themselves when they get good marks. Even for high school students could be useful for the same reasons, because even though they are grown enough still they like the idea of knowing their result, their lesson progress and it could be like a mirror of their learning process during the period or term.

One can hear a lot of speculations about a degrading educational system in Kosovo, and a lot of people blaming different hierarchical levels of the educational system in Kosovo. Questionnaires with students, classroom observations and interviews with teachers will be conducted in order to help enlighten at least a few of the problematic obstacles of the current educational system that might belong to teaching, learning and assessing nature.

Therefore, the major objectives of this study are:

- To present theoretically the issues on different assessment strategies,
- To identify factors that complicate the assessment procedure,

- To see whether assessment is being carried out in line with the Kosovo Curriculum,
- To find out whether all assessment instruments are included while teaching,
- To see whether all the language skills are assessed properly.

1.5. Research questions/Hypothesis

This study, as many studies, will rely upon research questions and hypothesis so that its topic could yield results usable by students and also teachers for the exclusive purpose they are going to be shaped in the inception.

Research questions are:

1. What are the challenges and factors that complicate the assessment process within EL classroom at the Gymnasium ‘Xhavit Ahmeti’?
2. What are the practical solutions to overcome the above-mentioned difficulties and challenges?
3. Is assessment in this school done according to Kosovo Curriculum?
4. Are non-achievement factors included in students’ learning assessment?

Hypothesis are:

1. Most of the assessment instruments are included in teaching.
2. All language skills are assessed.
3. The large number of students in the classrooms complicates the assessment process, as well as teaching and learning process
4. Lack of teacher training for assessment is the key problem

CHAPTER II: LITERATURE REVIEW

2. Language skills

We were focused on the strategies more, but the language skills are of another level of importance and as such they are not an isolated process. The language skills we are referring to are: listening, reading, speaking and writing. These “language skills should be applied in a teaching hour, although they change from level to level, depending on the subject and objectives of the lecture” according to (Sadiku, *The Importance of Four Skills Reading, Speaking, Writing, Listening in a Lesson Hour*, 2015, p. 29-31). Teachers must set adequate standards for an ESL/EFL classroom. They should be committed to create adequate conditions for students so that they would reach to learn effectively and therefore achieve the desired outcome. Another very important fact considering the importance of language skills is that no matter if you are a student or a professional, everything we do we need the four language skills. If you are in class or if you are at work like writing a presentation or listening to your co-workers, reading any instructions and discuss about them. All of us are active listeners or active speakers in our everyday life, active readers or active writers, that’s the reason why these four language skills are very important, even being in a shop or a bus, we need to read, listen, speak and write.

2.1.1. Listening

This skill is the first skill used in order to master a language pronunciation. Due to physiology, one cannot pronounce a word without listening it first. Hence, teachers as ourselves should bear in mind the significance of the language input (listening) over the language output (speaking). This is the masterpiece behind the words “good listeners often speak more exactly and more creatively than poor listeners; they have more words at their command” as it is mentioned by (Smith, *Creative teaching of the language arts in the elementary school*, 1975, p.200-260). Furthermore, from our everyday life, we have experienced many situations where one can respond accurately only after listening precisely. “If opportunities for students to learn English language are vanishing little by little due to lack of listening, teachers must include radios and videos and also must speak in English all the time” (Mendelsohn, 1994, pp. 304-324). Having into consideration always that a foreign language is learned much easier when the students not just read, but also are active

listeners, and based on my experience as a teacher, my students learn new words and expand their vocabulary according to films they watch and music they listen, that's the reason why I think that except that we have to talk all the time in English language in class, we should also bring different materials by using the radio or projector, we can watch any documentary, or listen to a real story, etc. Listening skill is very important, even though lots of people misunderstood hearing and listening, still they are very different, you can hear somebody just like pretending you understood what the other person just say, but if you listen to the person then you also understood what the person just say and at the same time register those words in your brain, so you can listen and then communicate or make questions about the particular topic.

2.1.2. Speaking

This is a skill which is also very important. We can listen to a word but if we do not speak that word, or at least, attempt to speak it, we may never get the fluency of that particular word. A very important activity in classes are also discussions, where everyone can discuss about things they like or are interested about, they can choose a topic and give their pros and cons, they can have conversation with each-other about the text that they read in the book, it is very important because this way they become fluent in English language. Speaking can help you in many areas, like for example having a presentation in class by both teacher or a student, having a job interview or talking in front of the mass, it can help you articulate your opinion more professionally and express your ideas more successfully, and when you are good in speaking you overcome the fear of speaking in public. "Pronunciation of words can be distorted due to lack of courage to pronounce something incorrectly, and due to social pressure, thusly teachers shall work in that direction, they shall commit themselves to encourage students to speak no matter the outcome, as we can learn more by being wrong" as it is mentioned by (Gordon, Teaching Young Children a Second Language, 2007, p.195-208). People speak by communicating when they want to say something, and "want" implies the desire to speak, to convey a message. Another reason is that people simply do not want to keep silent, and therefore they communicate/speak, even the first thing that comes to their mind.

2.1.3. Reading

Reading enables learners to access information from many sources, to expand the sphere of knowledge, etc. Through reading, one's imagination "gets wider, and life colours gets lighter, reading develops the brain in so many different levels" according to (Cattinelli, Borghese, Galluci, & Paulesu, Reading the reading brain: A new meta-analysis of functional imaging data on reading, 2013, p. 214-238). Reading is a very important part of the class, because students can read, imagine the characters, getting new information through situations we read in class, improve their pronunciation while reading, etc. By reading people can understand what does the author meant to say, it's much easier to understand something when you read with your eyes than just listen to somebody tell you about that situation. Among many studies carried out over time, the study of Armstrong (1983, p. 339-348) has elaborated "the reading comprehension in its best terms". This study took place with students with disabilities. Boys with learning disabilities were given a one-page story that was easy to be read, and another group of them were given another page that was not that easy to be read. The levels we are talking about were already determined for each student individually, based on the words they could have read per minute.

2.1.4. Writing

This skill is rarely used from children to write what they say or listen. This is a very complex skill. Herein, a study by (Jenkins, Heliotis, Stein, & Haynes, Improving Reading Comprehension by Using Paragraph Restatements, 1987, p. 54-59) performed on students of three-six grades, who were taught to reformulate their "own words by using writing comprehension". The authors of the study carried out the assessment by pairing 32 students on the basis of pre-test scores and grades and they assigned those pairs randomly to a control condition. Anyhow, students were explicitly guided to use the restatement procedure. The 32 pairs of students were assigned to the intervention and to a control condition. The group intervention-group could write more story information than the control-group. Writing is an activity where students relieve themselves, expressing their feeling much easier than discussing about them, using their imagination to describe their feelings or their version toward a topic, in my classes we found it as very important part of English classes.

There are also some forms of activities we can do with our students in class in order to include all of these four language skills in one activity. First, we read the instructions, like what we have to

do, then write about the idea of the project and present it in front of the class mates and the teacher, the other students listen to the presentation and at the end they can speak (discuss) about the project topic with each-other in class. Overall, I think that all of these speaking skills that we have discussed so far could be considered as not completed if we do not possess writing ability, if you don't know how to express and illustrate your ideas on words, to structure them, to give precision to your idea, even if you are in class or at work, you need to be punctual and clear while you write your reports. However, building and possessing all the four language skills can help you in every field of life, can help you have success and progress in your studies or career, can help you be more punctual in your thoughts and clearer in your thoughts no matter you are at home, school, working place or in the street. Being good in speech is something that you could always have impact on the others and always make the mass listen to you.

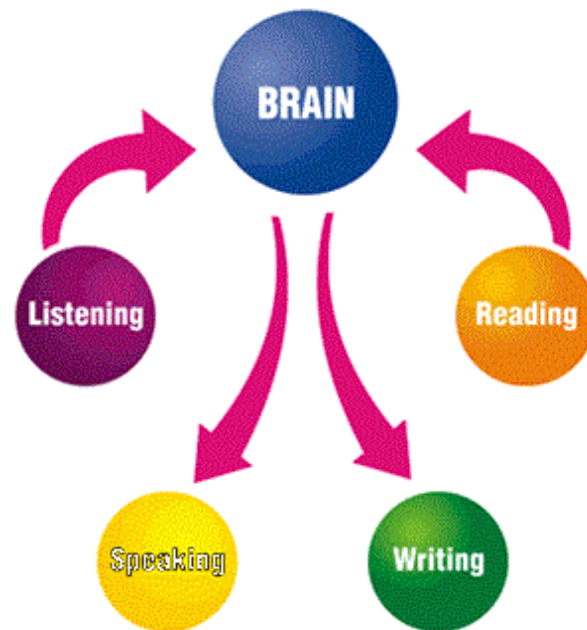


Figure 2. Complete Communicator

2.2. Related studies

As assessment has a great importance for students' achievements and their preparation for labour market, there are many studies conducted in this regard. Anyhow, despite the many efforts made, it was even almost impossible to find a related research conducted in Kosovo. Many countries are applying the aforementioned assessment methods, for example, in Vermont, researchers have conducted a study to know the extent students benefit from the assessment. A corporation named "RAND" took the responsibility of carrying out such a study, which concluded that the effect of assessment for lessons learned was substantial and positive. RAND surveyed half the teachers, who reported an enhancement of learning process when students worked in pairs or small groups. Around three-fourths of the principals were interviewed, who stated that the assessment program yielded positive changes in teaching at their schools. Another study has been conducted with third, sixth and eighth grade classrooms in Chicago, which revealed that when students were given writing and language assignments, whereby, calling for more authentic work, they performed better on tests used to judge their basic skills. These skills "pertain the creating of sentences, solving problems, organizing their knowledge and experience, testing their ideas with other students, and expressing themselves both orally and in writing" as it is mentioned by (Furger, Roberta, 2002 p. 5-9).

As many researchers have studied the grading system as a form of assessment and how it would infuse the events occurring in a classroom, as such, it needs to be acknowledged and managed when the teachers begin to plan a class. "Scholars have defined the term "assessment" as "the systematic collection of information about the process of learning, or programs of learning", which is used to build capacities regarding the learning process captured by students (Walvoord & Anderson, 2009, pp. 1-16)

In 1987, according to (Willing, Learning styles in adult migrant education, 1993, p. 50-146) who "has assessed the styles of learning by involving 517 adult ESL learners in Australia". Based on their responses to a questionnaire with 30 questions, he attempted to identify how differences in cognitive learning styles affected the preferences of learners in six different areas:

1. specific classroom activities;
2. special behaviour of teachers;

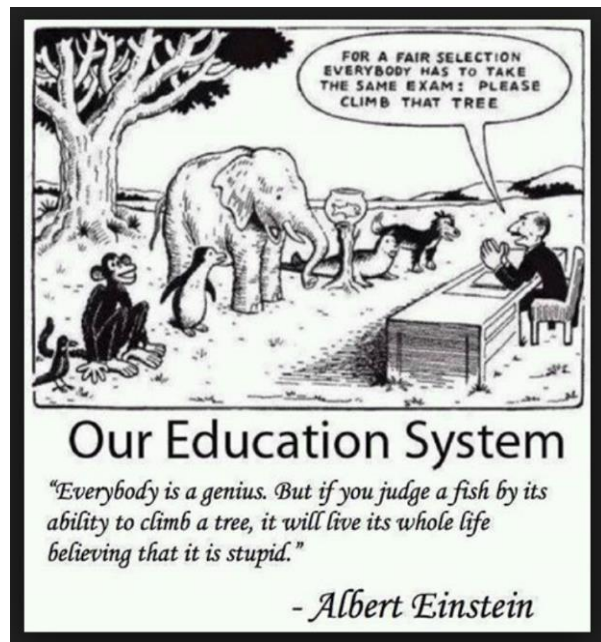
3. particular grouping agreements;
4. certain aspects of language that needs a kind of emphasis;
5. some sensory modes, such as visual, auditory, or tactile learning; and
6. particular modes of learning outside the classroom.

This study has also found out that differences in cognitive styles affect the preferences of learners for learning styles. For instance, in the classroom many learners choose to learn by games, by working in pairs, to study grammar more, to receive a feedback by the teacher emphasizing one's mistakes, etc. Another study conducted (Reid, The learning style preferences of ESL students, 1987, pp. 87-111) emphasized four learning styles:

1. visual learning (reading and studying figures);
2. auditory learning (listening the lecture or audio tapes);
3. kinaesthetic learning (physical responses); and
4. tactile learning (hands-on learning).

According to the abovementioned studies, the process of assessment gets increasingly facilitated if followed upon. This brings us back to the section where the pre-assessment or diagnostic assessment form has been mentioned. Knowing students will ease the work for a teacher, complying with their learning preferences will make path to the use of best assessment strategies that suit adequately the students.

Nevertheless, assessment strategies can also create a path for students to cheat during a written exam/test. This is truthfulness, therefore, teachers and people in general admit that everybody lies at one time or another, and cheating in an exam is a common action in the education system. Bushweller (2000, p. 24-30) has conducted a research in this regard, and concluded that “70% of American high school seniors admit to cheating on at least one test, and 95% of the students have admitted that they have cheated but never caught doing so”. According to Cizek (1999, p. 180-280), he has also reported that cheating during an exam/test marked a significant increase in the second half of the twentieth century, and upon technology advancement, cheating has gone far forward over the last decade. These studies have indicated that, many times, “traditional assessment strategies may turn into boring routine and thusly students are obliged from within themselves to overcome the "exam/test" obstacle to move forward with their lives”, pointed out by (Heberling, Maintaining academic integrity in on-line education, 2002, p. 3). A funny thing is that in my school facility, when a student cheats in a test and/or other assessment forms, peers and/or other people, sometime, state that the concerned student is very capable that’s why he/she could indeed cheat.



The following image describes wealthy the idea of assessment, and how easily teachers/instructors could be mistaken. Nevertheless, assessment and teaching walk altogether in a student-centred classroom. Teachers/instructors need to use a variety of “different strategies to assess students' willingness for a particular unit of study and to plan their instruction/lesson around the students' needs”. Ongoing assessment of student learning is an important part of the planning process (Regier, 2012, pp. 1-20).

2.3. Challenges and difficulties in the application of different assessment strategies in English language teaching

Assessment is considered as one of the most difficult and most critical part during teaching and learning process, you have to be careful and punctual while giving the feedback to your student, you have to correct and at the same time motivate the students to continue further, still it is very important to assess the performance because through the process of assessment we can provide feedback and come to the conclusion and find out to what extent the students are meeting the course objectives. Lately, have been encountered different forms of assessment and significant changes in assessing English language, “an emphasis that has been noticed and has been required is in measuring the quality of academic feature to the students” in order to have success in their academic studies. (L.Bailey & Wolf, pp. 1-9)

As one of the difficulties that a teacher in Kosovo might find through the assessment process is also the lack of teachers’ training for language assessment, since there is not enough or perhaps any training about the assessment for a specific field of education, it is also important to mention the economic and social situation of the students. There are lots of challenges that not even students but also teachers face during the process of assessment, where the assessment has a great impact on effective educational assessment in classroom and for better learning outcome, and to achieve these goals it is very important for students and teachers to be aware that nothing has to be hidden during the feedback process, so that students face their real problems and can correct them easier and on time

There are different forms of taking notes and assessing our students, but recently one of the most usable form is considered Portfolio, where we can take notes about our students during the whole semester on different activities in class or as homework, and on the other hand the student will have the opportunity to know the results of every activity. Even though, Portfolio has lots of advantages, it could be considered as time consuming in our country, since in our school every class has more than 30 students and one teacher teaches in 10 classes, and as a result it is much more difficult to work continuously on it. Assessment challenge would also be considered based on how teachers teach and how students learn, thus assessment practises are difficult to be changed, still if they remain unchanged emergent learning culture are in danger, because in order to succeed in class we as teachers should find the best way to evaluate our students, we must know how do

we have to assess our students, how much, based on what, etc. Assessment should be formative, should determine planning, should serve teaching, should serve learning, should be curriculum-driven, should be interactive, should be student-centred, should be diagnostic, should be exposed to learners, should be non-judgemental, should develop a mutual understanding, should involve reflective teaching.

“Assessment is not stressful only about the students, as it is considered as one of the most difficult and challenging part of the teachers’ job, there are lots of difficulties that the teachers face with while they prepare and implement the performance tasks”, that’s why we should be focused also in the questions, like these mentioned by (Metin, 2013, p. 1664-1673)

1. “What are teachers’ difficulties in preparation of performance tasks?”
2. “What are teachers’ difficulties in implementation of performance tasks?”

According to Educational Sciences: Theory and Practice by (Metin, Teachers' difficulties in preparation and implementation of performance task, 2013, p. 1664-1673) it is presented that “most of the teachers have difficulties while preparing the performance tasks on choosing the right level of their questions, in determining appropriate subject for the students’ level of knowledge, to determine about the appropriate assessment criteria for the specific subject or the way should the subject be evaluated on”, a big number of students in classes has a great impact on these difficulties, or because teachers have to prepare a performance task, while having students of different knowledge level, also the reason that there are not many of assessment training about teachers has a great part on difficulties that teachers have to deal with their everyday duties in school.

Despite the fact that in Kosovo there is a lack of teachers’ training, still there are lots of other reasons when we consider talking about challenges and difficulties in class. One of the main reasons that have to be considered is also a very big number of students in a class, in this case a teacher has to assess approximately 300 students, and obviously that this fact in a way disables the process of learning-teaching-assessing, the large number of students makes it sometimes impossible for even well-trained professors to apply various methods of formative assessment, and it is known that formative assessment even though has great opportunities and benefits, still it is very time consuming. Perhaps this is the reason why lots of teachers do not apply all of these formative assessment techniques (even though they found them effective), and in most of the cases

at the end of every period they try to apply some of the summative assessment instruments to assess their students and also to argument their assessment.

Another challenge would also be not classifying students into classes on the basis of their knowledge, according to their English level knowledge, having students from Beginner to Advanced level in the same class, could be difficult for a teacher to find the best way on compiling the test, setting the criteria of assessing methods and instruments, using the proper methods of evaluating students orally or in written form, even choosing the best method while explaining the lessons in class or choosing an activity to work in groups. In our country the classes are with 30 to 35 students, and this is a big number to consider the learning hours we have per a week, where there are only two English classes in Gymnasium where I teach, and for two classes a week and having more than 30 students for a class is not that teachers have the possibility to assess the students in a proper way, like have not enough time during test, not enough time for a student to give their opinion in class because of a big number of students in class not everybody has the chance to express their opinion or to have the possibility to be asked for the second time, if he/she is not satisfied with the mark.

During this study it was also mentioned the economical and sociological aspects that can influence and make it more difficult for the teacher to apply methods and criteria in the adequate way in class. Even borrowing books from each other or from other classes seems like a challenge or difficulty to me as a teacher, because in most of the cases the books are completed by other students from other classes, and in this case, I find it very difficult to apply formative assessment during the classes. There are lots of students that do not have their personal books because of their family economic status, or they don't have laptops in order to finish the project. Being in bad economic status it also affects in their social and psychological status, in their mood of learning in class, in their concentration during class lectures or sometimes even have misunderstanding during discussions in class with their classmates.

Sometimes we have difficulties also in terms of social and psychological aspects, since there is no psychologist in school, there are cases when we as teachers have to face with the students' problems and try to help them. There are also challenges concerning the students' mentality, as not all the students come from the same level of educated parents or from the same mentality in their families. Teachers from the rural places have much more difficulties in this aspect because

psychological and social experts do not go and visit them, their parents are more close-minded, students with special needs do not have the possibility to learn in special classes, or sometimes teachers have to face even with situations when parents do not admit that their children have disabilities or have special needs, and expect from the teachers to assess them with high grades.

Recently, due to our Municipality Pandemic Task Force decision, we are facing a great difficulty and challenge in terms of applying formative methods, since learning and teaching is being held online, and there are lots of difficulties that teachers face with every day during their work.

2.4 . Testing in English Language instruction

As mentioned by Saragih (Saragih, 2016, p.75), “testing continues to be the most used tool by teachers to assess their students in English Language. Testing is a method of measuring students' abilities, knowledge or performance in a given domain. Test questions should be structured and explicit. The test format commonly used by teachers is:

1. Tests with multiple choice questions
2. A writing prompt with a scoring rubric
3. An oral testing based on a question script and a checklist of expected responses to be given by the student”.

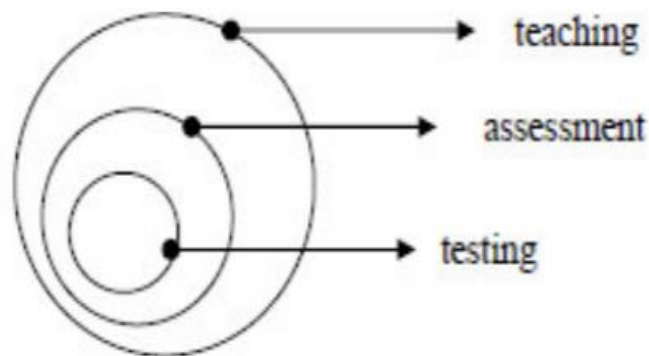


Figure 3. Testing and assessment as subsets of teaching

CHAPTER III

3. METHODOLOGY

This study was born in mind due to many difficulties, as an EFL teacher, encountered many years in this regard. First, the concept was thought, the idea was discussed and the theory was searched. The technology advancement nowadays makes it easier to access every information needed, to learn everything we want to learn and to be everywhere we want to be. To this end, there were no difficulties finding several desk and field researches conducted by various theoreticians and various authors. Fortunately, its SP was not an obstacle accessing these researches although as we already know, many world libraries do require a password or a membership code. This topic, as seen, is of great concern yet very pleasurable to deep into. This because many EFL teachers are concerned on this matter and this demonstrates, the effort, the great commitment, and the confidence teachers have in perfectly doing their jobs.

In order to succeed in accomplishing the objectives of the study and also give answers to the research questions that were presented above, a field-based research was a **must**. The present study aims to explore the use of assessment strategies, difficulties and challenges in EFL classrooms and their benefits to pupils and students.

The study was planned to be carried out by actually having to interact in person with its target group. It was planned to involve at least 35 students who would have been selected from a respective class of one teacher, so in total 6 teachers, 6 classes and 200 students in total were planned to take part in this study. This study was planned and carried out through the following qualitative and quantitative instruments: questionnaires, interviews and observation. Considering the fact that the classes were divided in two groups, where only one group attends the lessons at a time while the other group is present the following week, it was thought that it would be more practical to use the online questionnaire (Google form) (see APPENDIX 1). So, the questionnaires were distributed only to students' groups that up to them were used for online teaching/learning due to Pandemic circumstances. This doubled the initial planned number of students. Anyhow, the target group of participants never changed, i.e., the students of 10th, 11th and 12th grade of the up Gymnasium "Xhavit Ahmeti", and 6 teachers therein. This questionnaire was not mandatory; thus, its fulfilment was completely on volunteer basis and for ethical issues names were not required

thus would assure that their confidentiality and anonymity were protected. The first assumption was that the questionnaire might fail due to the lack of responses, but in fact it bloomed into a huge success, since around 400 students volunteered to answer the questions, fortunately. The second instrument used in this study was interview (see APPENDIX 2), which was conducted in order to better understand the role and assessment strategies, and was conducted with 6 teachers, who were interviewed in this regard, and this interview was also voluntarily performed. The results of this study depended entirely on these answers. Besides these two instruments, it was also conducted an observation with 6 class hours at each participating teacher. There were applied different assessments in order to ease the ability in noticing different students' skills and defining students' perceptions toward those methods, especially new methods. However, taking into account the advantages and disadvantages of both quantitative and qualitative data research methods of data collection, and also considering the fact that shortcomings of one method can be covered by the other and vice-versa, this study covered instruments of both methods to collect and obtain needed data for this research topic. The period during which this research took place covered the month of June.

Anyhow, despite questionnaires there were also interviews conducted with 6 EL teachers at the same school facility, and also 6 observations in different classrooms. Both of these instruments were used to help yield better results to the favour of this thesis; however, observations and interviews were conducted during the same period, the beginning of June.

Afterwards, from the collected data the most appropriate and relevant assessment methods were derived upon. Consequently, we were able to answer our research questions/hypothesis. The final step of the research was to collect the data from the questionnaires, interviews and observations and to present them in tabular and graphical forms. Questionnaires were registered in the SPSS software, thereafter the results were presented and the hypotheses were tested. Interviews were written and observation results were written as well. In addition, the data collected did help us to obtain practical suggestions from the EFL teachers regarding students' preferences, to gain knowledge of teachers' preferences as well as to get suggestions from teachers in improving the quality of teaching the English language.

3.1. Participants

This section shall describe in detail the answers of every question of the questionnaire. First, we would like to prescribe that the questionnaire had an intent to provide answers regarding the difficulties and challenges in the application of different assessment strategies during English classes, the level of comfort students feel towards these methods and also the difficulties and challenges that the students have during English classes.

Participants of this questionnaire were students of 10th, 11th and 12th grade attending the Gymnasium “Xhavit Ahmeti”, Gjilan. The participation was completely voluntarily. The total number of participants amounted to 406, out of which 145 were on the 10th grade, 131 were on 11th grade and 130 were on 12th grade. This number could have been easily equal but due to the online distribution it was highly difficult to bring number equality. In other words, it was difficult to control its distribution.

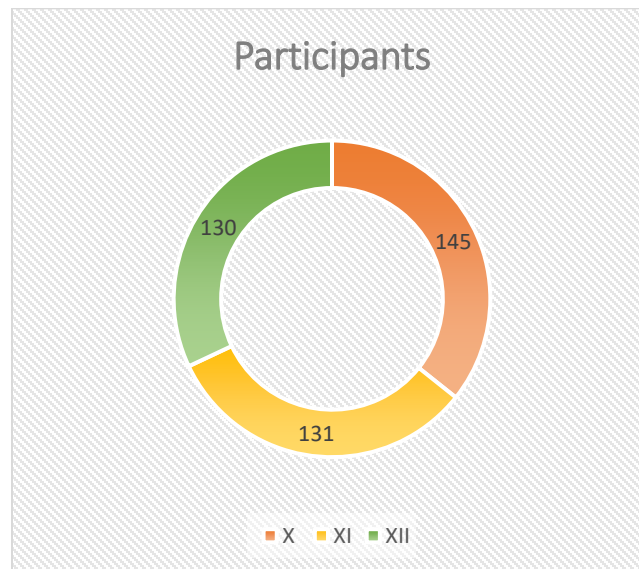


Figure 4: Number of participants in this study

As mentioned, this questionnaire was composed of 12 questions. Valid questionnaires fulfilled were 406 in total, there was no questionnaire missing, this can be a strength of distributing questionnaires online.

3.2. Shortcomings

Due to the pandemic situation caused by the COVID-19 virus, which covered the entire world,(USAID, 2020) where classes were divided in two groups, which means that the students didn't attend classes regularly, but were divided in two groups, where the first group attended one week and then the other group the following week, and teaching hours were reduced to 30 minutes from 45 minutes (as it used to be in normal circumstances). Therefore, this research may not be as credible as it would have been in different circumstances. Even after the pandemic-related measures started being reduced by the people in power, the population in general got depressed, or at least acted as such. Besides this, the lack of financial support by the competent authorities is a major obstacle in expanding this study from which the EFL teaching system would upgrade and become more beneficial to pupils, students, teachers, and everyone related. Another fact to be mentioned as a possibility to make as come to conclusion that there might be some obstacles that could have had effect to their research-credibility is also the result that was achieved during the observation period, where I came to conclusion that due to Pandemic rules (distance keeping), teachers could not be able to perform a lot of assessment strategies they would have used in different circumstances (such as group works, working in pairs, peer assessment, etc). However, since the interviews were taken in person without any time-restrictions, where teachers could ask for further information given in details by me, the interview was deemed a success, fortunately. Regardless of the aforementioned obstacles, we should not forget to mention the lack of funds to extend this very-beneficial research and involve other schools and other cities as well.....If this would be possible on account of support by authorities, this topic could be very beneficial to teachers, but most of all, to younger generations. Many students would advance their learning process. This could also result in a new rule to reduce the number of students per class, and to open more schools, an action through which many academics would be employed in their respective fields, and also students would maybe learn better every subject served to them. As we know, inclusion generates, not always but mostly, critical thinking, and this is a crucial aspect to teach students as they will face many difficulties growing up and entering the labour market.

CHAPTER IV: FINDINGS

4.1. Result from the Questionnaires

This study was concluded with a sample of around 400 students who answered the questionnaire provided to them. The questionnaire contained 12 questions in total (see APPENDIX 1). Initially was planned to deliver questions in person to students, but as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, this questionnaire was created online and was also delivered online. The pandemic changed our lives in both personal and professional aspects. In this regard, if it were to deliver questionnaires in person, the sample was planned to be around 200, but this number increased twice as much as the questionnaires were distributed online. This is not necessarily attributed to COVID-19, but the idea to form an online questionnaire was definitely because of the pandemic students couldn't attend lessons regularly. The results were emerged using the SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) software, testing also our hypothesis drafted related to the topic.

4.2. Descriptive Analysis

The overall statistics regarding this questionnaire and the mean and standard deviation are presented briefly in the table below:

	N	Min.	Max.	Mean	Std. Deviation
The assessment process is the main key to our motivation and commitment	406	1	6	5.09	1.019

Which of these assessment forms does your teacher apply?	406	1	6	5.30	1.065
My teacher informs me about the assessment methods applied in this course at the beginning of the term?	406	0	1	.90	.305
About how many graded assignments does your teacher give you per period?	406	0	2	1.66	.602
Which of the following methods does your teacher use to grade you? Circle more than one of used.	406	1	6	5.00	1.129
Does it happen that your teacher tends to overvalue any of the following to the point where it affects students' grades (positively/negatively)?	406	0	1	.25	.436
My teacher tries a great number of assessment methods that he/she thinks will work to support my learning	406	1	6	5.14	1.055
While teaching/assessing English language, my teacher's primary focus is on the:	406	0	1	.93	.258
Do you receive feedback from your teacher on regular basis?	406	0	1	.83	.372
Valid	406				

Table 2: Descriptive analysis

As per the table above, we can see that our thesis tested significant mostly. The Standard Deviation was always below 2, indicating the just-said statement. This means also that all of our hypothesis tested positive, which will be explained in detail below in this section.

4.3. Questionnaire outcomes

The idea to having drafted this hypothesis as per this question was grounded on the strong interconnection between the learning and teaching process. Hence, simultaneously, if students are satisfied with the assessment process their learning can be motivated and they can reach to having better outcomes in general. In order to learn something new, motivation should be boosted. This is measured by asking students whether they think that the assessment process is the main key to their motivation and commitment. Once again, the highest percentage of positive answers falls in the *completely agree* field. Briefly explaining this, 169 students completely agreed to this question, 160 students agreed, and 54 students somewhat agreed, 14 students disagreed, 5 students somewhat disagreed, and 4 students completely disagreed. They have to work really hard on overcoming all the difficulties and challenges during the assessment process in order to reach our main goal “boosting their motivation”. This is explained in detail in the table below:

The assessment process is the main key to our motivation and commitment					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Completely disagree	4	1.0	1.0	1.0
	Disagree	14	3.4	3.4	4.4
	Somewhat disagree	5	1.2	1.2	5.7
	Somewhat agree	54	13.3	13.3	19.0
	Agree	160	39.4	39.4	100.0
	Completely agree	169	41.6	41.6	60.6
	Total	406	100.0	100.0	

Table 3: Motivation and commitment as the main key during the assessment process

The second question of the questionnaire was about which assessment forms does your teacher apply, where students had to choose between two options: a) Norm referenced assessment; and b) Criteria referenced assessment; The above question prescribes the reference used by the teachers and the way students see it. As we can see most of them (216) think that their teachers apply more

criteria referenced assessment, while the rest of them (150) think that their teachers apply norm referenced assessment. This helps us answer the 3rd research question which is about the KC and whether assessment in this school is done according to KC, where according to the results it was concluded that teachers of this school follow the KC requirements of using the criteria referenced assessment instead of norm referenced assessment.

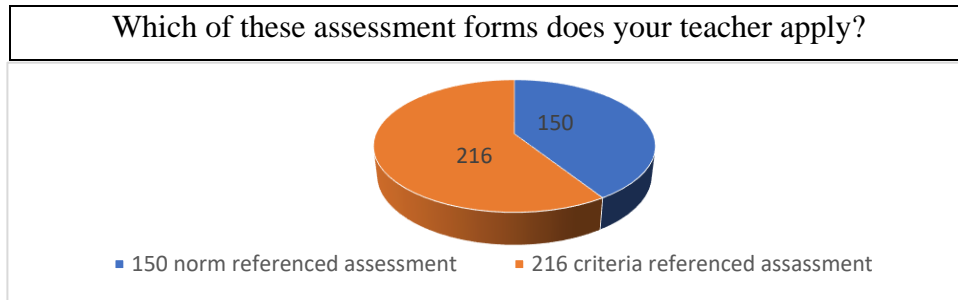


Figure 5: Providing information regarding criteria or norm referenced assessment

Next question of the questionnaire was whether the teacher informs the students regarding the assessment methods applied in this course (at the beginning of the term). This question is related to the aforementioned requirements of the KC. This question had only two answers yes or no. The difference between these two answers was very big, indicating that teachers do inform students regarding the assessment methods, this because 89.7% answered positive, whereas the other 10.3% of students answered negative in this regard. This concludes that the teachers of this school do indeed adhere to the *transparency* principle of KC. The following table indicates the frequency, percentage, valid percentage and cumulative percentage of answers:

My teacher informs me about the assessment methods applied in this course at the beginning of the term					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	No	42	10.3	10.3	10.3
	Yes	364	89.7	89.7	100.0
	Total	406	100.0	100.0	

Table 4: Providing information regarding assessment methods

As we have understood, assignment is followed by a grading mark. Therefore, we have asked students regarding how many assignments does the teacher assign per period in order to grade them. There were three answers to be chosen: a) none, b) one, c) more than two. Regarding this question, there was one questionnaire missing or declared invalid, resulting to only 405 answers. Out of this number, 297 students stated that the teacher gives more than two assignments to be graded per period, 80 students stated that teachers give one assignment of this kind, and 28 students stated that teachers give no assignments to be graded.

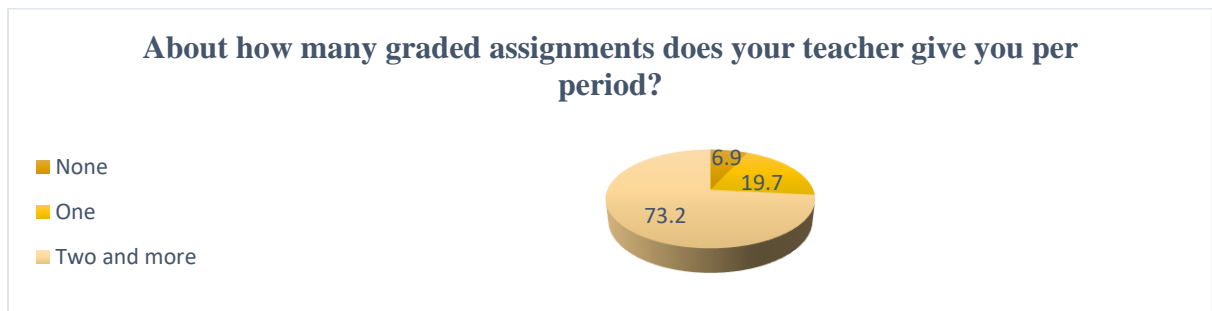


Figure 6: Number of graded assignments given by teachers to students

The results of this question lead us to the answer of the third Research Question where according to Kosovo Curriculum, teachers are required to use different forms of assessment as they really do and it also helps us testify the 1st hypothesis, concluding that teachers use most of the assessment methods.

This questionnaire contained also an open-ended question so that we would know which assessment methods attract students' attention most. The results were astonishing! Students do notice many assessment methods, and even can have new ideas in this regard. The question to be answered was: *"If your teacher does not use assignments, how does your teacher grade you?"* Without further ado, 105 students stated that the teacher asks questions verbally to a particular volunteer or non-volunteer student so that the teacher could grade him/her. Another group of 87 students answered that they were assessed by various activities initiated by the teacher. An approximate number of students (86) stated that they were assessed by the level of engagement during the class hour. It was also mentioned that teachers assessed students through various projects (40 answers), and through homework (16 answers). As we know, writing, as a language skill, is not possible to be developed without having to discharge writing skills. In this regard, 16 students noted that this form of assessment is the one used by the English teacher. 24 students stated that the teacher assesses them through language skills, namely reading, through translation and grammar. 19 students stated that the teacher assesses through evaluating speaking and listening skills by developing a random conversation. Another assessment method student mentioned was the recap from the last class hour, i.e., 13 of them stated that this is the form of assessment their teacher uses. This question tested the second hypothesis, our language-skills-related as positive. Although the number of students answered positively herein, yet it is an indication to pave new paths in the future towards increasing the frequency of using various methods to assess language skills.

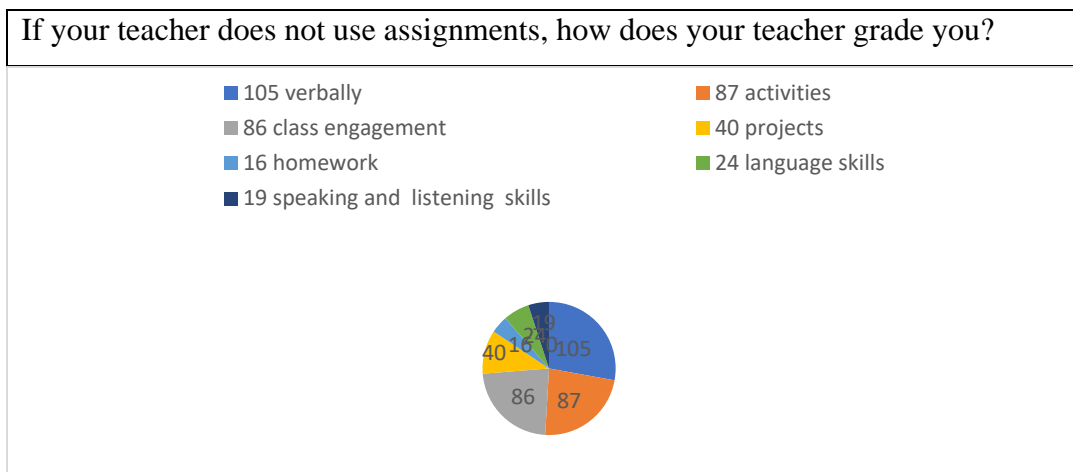


Figure 7: Providing information regarding grading methods

We shall proceed with another similar question compiled with multiple choice answers. The answers included every assessment method referred to in the upper sections of this thesis, such as language skills (each), grammar, presentation and so on. Hereon, we are not to mention the number of students, as they were allowed to choose as many answers as they thought were adequate to be chosen, but we are to mention how many times a respective answer has been selected. Thus, 166 times was circled the answer *grammar test*, followed by 160 times that the answer *class participation* was circled, then 140 times was circled the answer *speaking*, 127 times was circled the answer *reading comprehension test*, 120 times *writing (essay)*, 112 times *individual/oral assessment*, 96 times was circled the answer *vocabulary test*, 95 times *projects*, 75 times *presentation*, 41 times *listening comprehension*, 16 times *self-assessment*, 5 times *peer-assessment*, and least circled was the answer *student portfolio* with only 3 times. This is illustrated best in the figure below.

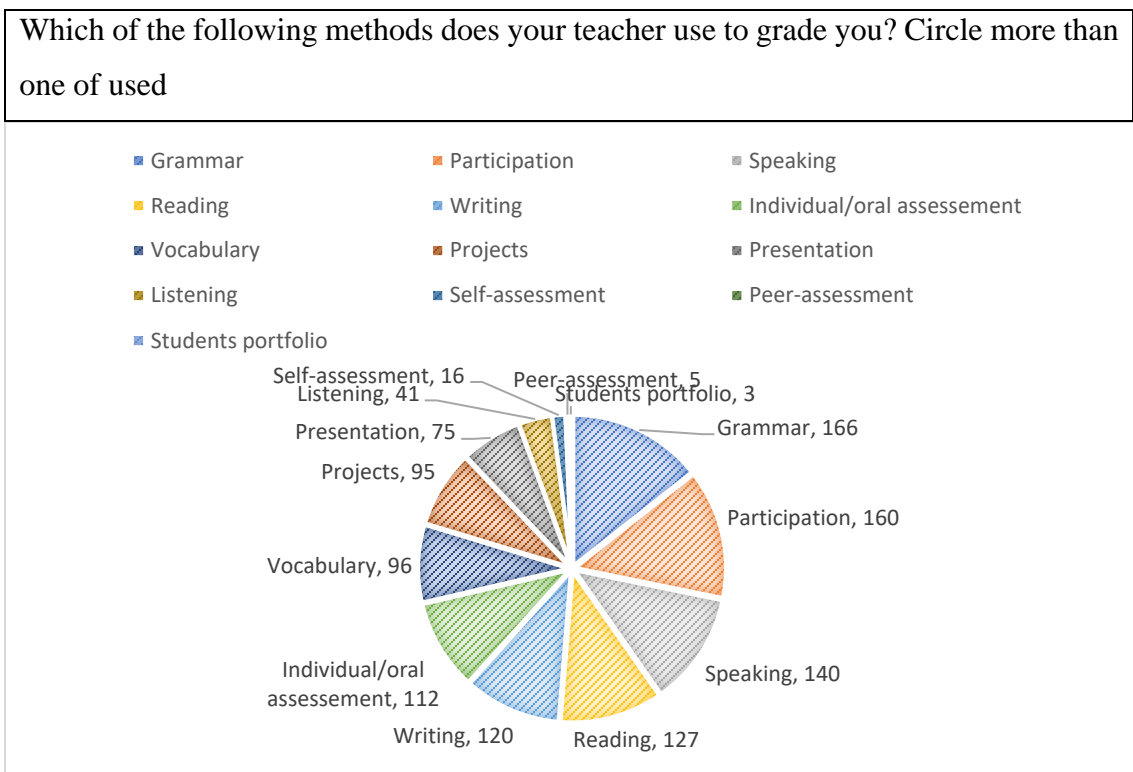


Figure 8: Information towards grading methods that teachers use

Taking into account two of the abovementioned students answers in our previous question: being assessed by the level of the engagement during the class hours as an important factor while assessing (86 answers) and through homework (16 answers and concerning participation) we can be aware of the fact that teachers of this school may include non-achievement factors in students' learning assessment process. These results are stated to the 4th research question together with the following question.

Besides the two above-mentioned questions of great importance to this study, there is another similar-significance question compiled regarding the tendency by the part of the teacher to overvalue certain aspects that positively or negatively affect the grade of the student. This was also a multiple-choice question, whereby students could click as many options as they thought would be adequate. Anyhow, one of the options of the answer was *active class participation* which directed students to think of the times when active participation did indeed affect their grade whether positively or negatively. Consequently, 279 times was clicked this option, followed by the option of *homework* clicked 276 times, *behaviour* 192 times, *attendance* 105 times, *effort* 79

times, *overall success* 54 times and least clicked was the option *cross-curriculum issues* with only 24 times. Hereby the answer to our third Research Question regarding the inclusion of the non-achievement factors in students' learning assessment is *Yes*. The figure below illustrates best this explanation.

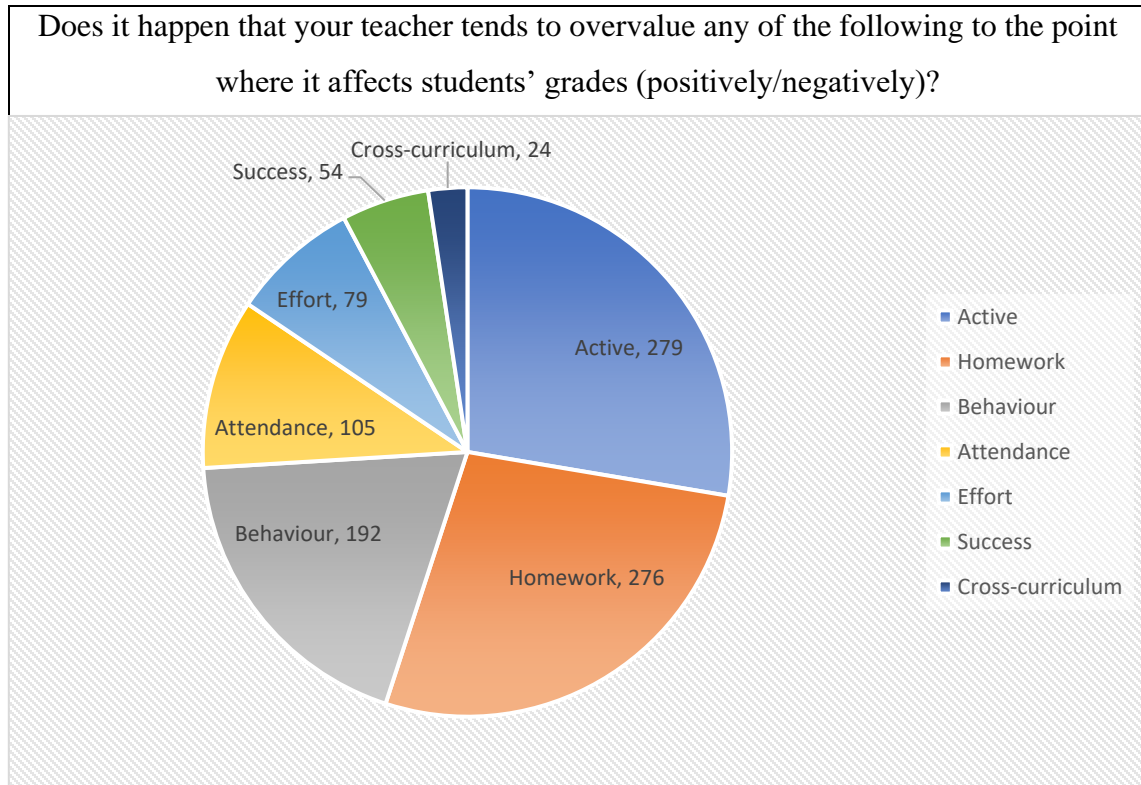


Figure 9: Overvalue affects students' grades

Results of the questionnaire provided us a very positive perspective regarding the assessment methods and/or strategies. However, this does not indicate that the overall level of satisfaction of students in this regard is high. In order to conclude this, another study involving at least more than two school facilities must be conducted.

As we've seen so far, there are a number of assessment methods theoretically, but sometimes neither a few of them are applied, let alone all of them. It is difficult due to many obstacles such as short class hour, large student number, and so on. We did compile a question within this questionnaire to find out whether students think that teachers apply a great number of assessment methods in order to improve students' learning process. Nevertheless, 181 (44.6) completely agreed that teachers apply many assessment methods for this purpose, 150 (36.9%) agreed, 47

(11.6%) somewhat agreed, 14 (3.4%) of the students somewhat disagreed, 7 (1.7%) students disagreed and 7 (1.7%) students completely disagreed. This is explained in detailed in the table below:

My teacher tries a great number of assessment methods that he/she thinks will work to support my learning				
	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Completely disagree	7	1.7	1.7	1.7
Disagree	7	1.7	1.7	3.4
Somewhat disagree	14	3.4	3.4	6.9
Somewhat agree	47	11.6	11.6	18.5
Agree	150	36.9	36.9	55.4
Completely agree	181	44.6	44.6	100.0
Total	406	100.0	100.0	

Table 5: Employment of great number of assessment methods during a class hour

Concerning the question that while teaching/assessing English language, my teachers' primary focus is based on what there were some options that the students could choose more than one option, so during the analyse we could see that mostly of our students chose the options a) rules of grammar and c) language skills, where from 406 students, 259 students chose these two options, then 85 of them chose vocabulary, 55 of students chose the option of d) class participation and only 7 of them chose all the above mentioned option.

While teaching/assessing English language, my teacher's primary focus is on the:

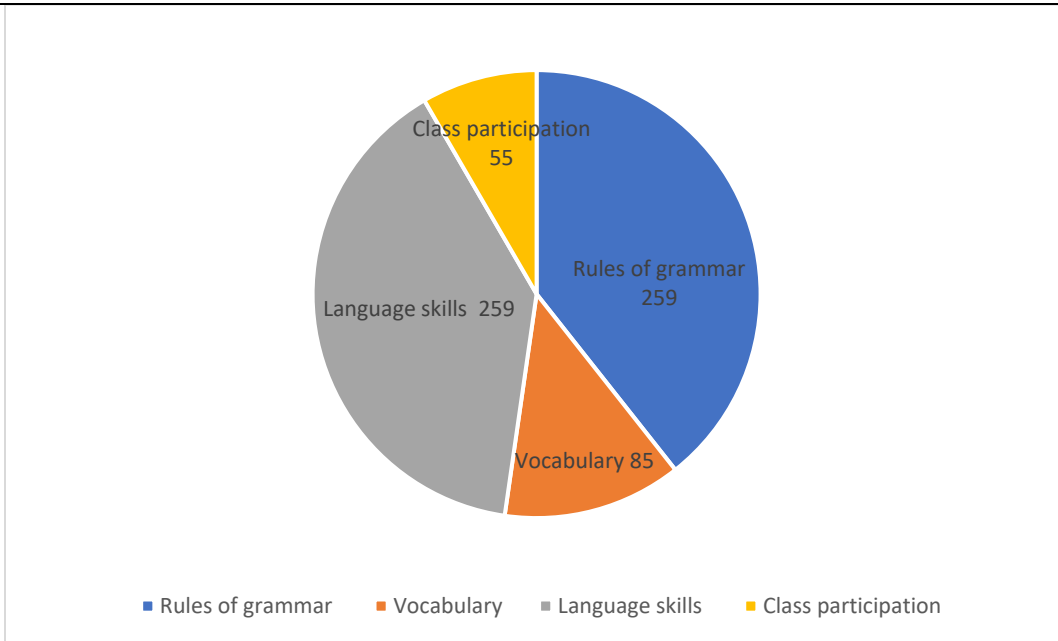


Figure 10: Information towards teachers' primary focus while teaching/assessing English language

Knowing the importance of feedback as the main factor to boost students' motivation or contrary demotivation, and having into consideration that teachers try really hard to adopt students' preferences toward assessment, result can be taken into account testifying our first hypothesis "Most of the assessment instruments are included in teaching". It was more than necessary to ask the students whether teachers provide students with feedback to improve their learning process. Consequently, 339, or 83.5%, students answered yes, stating that teachers do provide feedback to students, whereas only 67, or 16.5%, students answered with no.

Do you receive feedback from your teacher on regular basis?					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	No	67	16.5	16.5	16.5
	Yes	339	83.5	83.5	100.0
	Total	406	100.0	100.0	

Table 6: Teachers provide feedback to students (yes or no)

The assessment methods were previously mentioned, and also their use in our educational system was emphasized. At the *Formative Assessment* section, we mentioned Feedback as one of the key methods of this strategy. Feedback is a positive and/or negative comment of a supervisor (teacher) towards the supervisee (students). From the literature review we did see that feedback has a positive impact if used correctly, regardless whether the comment is positive or negative. To this end, it was added a feedback-related question.

Anyhow, a related question was part of the questionnaire, asking students of challenges that they have encountered while being assessed, in order to see their viewpoints towards challenges and factors, which at same time, answers our first research question as well. The answers were of multiple choices, students could click more than one answer. In this regard, the times students clicked the answer, where 98 times was clicked the answer lack of teachers' experience, 75 times was clicked the answer students' knowledge discrepancy, and 214 times was clicked the answer great number of students in classroom, and 140 times students have clicked the answer reduced number of English classes per week from three classes per week to two classes per week; This is illustrated in the figure below:

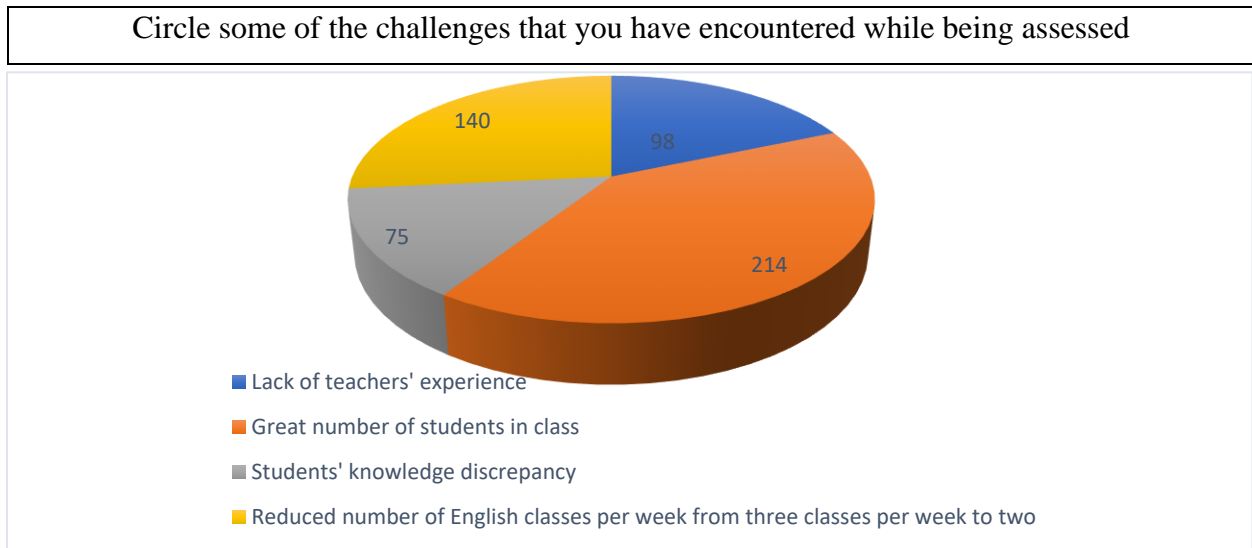


Figure 11: Students' viewpoint according to challenges encountered in assessment process

4.4. Interview

Interviews were another instrument of this study, and they were conducted with 6 EL teachers employed at the Gymnasium “Xhavit Ahmeti”, Gjilan. The participants were interviewed and observed at their own convenient times, where they were able to express their opinions and views as experiences and as a form of reflection. A 14 question semi-structured interview (see APPENDIX 2) has been employed to gather first hand necessary data in order to get a clear picture about assessment practices, tools and strategies used by teachers of this school, as well as difficulties and challenges they encounter each day. Besides giving rise to above mentioned reasons of this interview, highlighting the flaws and difficulties during assessment process was another issue of great importance to be considered. A relative high number of questions, i.e., 14, were asked to teachers to gain the aimed accuracy and credibility of the interview thus facilitating and enabling provision of answers regarding our 4 questions/hypothesis. The results of the interview can be considered reasonably valid since the participants were quite open and they answered each question.

In order to test our 4 hypotheses, teachers were asked whether they took an entire course on language assessment as part of their teacher preparation program. It resulted that only two out of six teachers attended courses regarding assessment. Further, one of these two teachers stated that attended two courses regarding assessment; ‘Summative assessment and test design as an important part of this kind of Assessment’ (Grade1-9) and “Formative assessment”. The other teacher attended a course about ‘Integrative testing’. Other 4 teachers that did not attend any course gave a great range of topics that they think should be covered if they were about to take an entire course in EFL assessment. They declared that they need assessment training on: “Test designing and construction”, “Language skills assessment; reading, speaking, writing and listening”, “Formative and summative assessment” and even “Computer based testing/assessing”. Computer based testing/assessing may have resulted as a necessity due to unexpected corona virus outbreak where teaching/learning occurred through different distant/online platforms and distant/online assessment is considered to have had challenges on account of lack of this field training and experience, according to these answers it can be concluded that the lack of teachers’ training for assessment is the key problem due to the fact that if teachers would be well trained, it would be

much easier to overcome the challenges and difficulties that they normally encounter while assessing.

Proceeding further to another interview question where 6 teachers were also asked whether they include most of the assessment (the designed KC and English language teaching itself) tools while teaching. The reaction to this question was quite unexpected since it took minutes for 3 of them to recall what assessment tools required to be used according to KC. However, they mentioned a lot of assessment tools and methods. 5 out of six said to have continuously used grammar test, 4 out of six stated that they use small group projects, writing assignments and oral presentations. 3 mentioned class engagement to have considered to their assessment method and only one teacher mentioned interviews, debates, summarizing, and role playing.

As mentioned previously in this section, this thesis drafted four research questions, one of which has been responded by the following question of the interview, whereby teachers were asked whether they think that assessment strategies are clearly stated in the Kosovo Curriculum. Out of 6 teachers, 3 of them thought that Kosovo Curriculum clearly defines assessment strategies, yet they stated that teachers still need to be trained to use them appropriately. The other 2 teachers thought that the assessment strategies were actually not clearly stated in the Kosovo Curriculum, since, according to them, there are many other things to be included, and one teacher did refuse to answer since he/she avowed he/she is not well informed with Kosovo Curriculum contentment. According to these results, our research question has been answered mostly positively, i.e., resulting that the assessment process takes places under the KC requirements. When asked whether they use different strategies while evaluating and/or assessing students, they indeed confirmed that they do use various methods such as quizzes, debates, open discussions, written assignments, self-assessment, peer-assessment and also other strategies. Related to this they also thought that using diverse assessment methods is a very good practice to achieve learning objectives, adding that in case certain students do not get the expected assessment they usually try harder to achieve their expectations. They indeed stated that language skills are best assessed through various methods of assessment. Since we're speaking of various methods, we shall rate the high importance of boosting students' motivation and commitment in the class room and beyond. Some teachers stated that feedback serves as a well-used tool in this regard. Some of them stated that only by braving them, their motivation increases, but also there are cases when there is a poor choice of words and the motivation can be easily decreased! Other teachers stated that using creative activities such as

essays, grammar, and others can motivate students' commitment and motivation to learn. Another teacher stated that it is of high importance to know the students so that the lesson be tailored to their needs and capacities.

As we know, the evaluation of language skills is a must. Most of the teachers provided answers in this regard stating that they indeed do evaluate language skills. However, one teacher did state that not every language skill is assessed, in fact, only reading and speaking are assessed. Similar to this one, another teacher answered that it depends on the lesson. The two very well-used assessment methods, as elaborated in this thesis, are formative and summative assessment. Teachers provided various opinions regarding the employment of such methods in the assessing language skills. Some of them saw a necessity to use and they actually use the SA form, and some others stated that both are used in this regard. One teacher stated that listening is not assessed (especially for summative purposes) due to the difficulty to monitor on account of copying and so on. One teacher even specified that reading and writing are assessed through summative assessment. Speaking of assessment methods, teachers declared that even norm-referenced and criteria referenced assessment are used when assessing students in EL classroom. Some other teachers stated that the norm-referenced is not recognized by students. Another teacher stated that the more used form is the criteria referenced assessment form.

Hereby, the third research question of this thesis was answered by the tenth question of the interview, which required teachers to state challenges and factors complicating the assessment process. Consequently, they provided various answers in this regard, such as great number of students in a classroom resulting in creating opportunities for students to cheat in tests by copying from one another, diversity among students preferences and knowledge, lack of technology in order to use the computer-based testing that nowadays as per the advancement of technology it is being increasingly a necessity in this regard, and teachers also stated that only individual/oral assessment and writing (through tests, essays) assessment is possible in such conditions. Teachers stated that they also use proper methods to tailor assessment to students. Teachers were also asked where do they focus more while teaching/assessing, where three of them answered with rules of grammar and language skills (writing, reading, listening and speaking), two of them answered with vocabulary and class participation, and just one of them with all the above-mentioned. However, some of them agreed some of them disagreed. This indicates that besides the diversity of students,

teachers are diverse as well. Speaking of differences, the subsection below explains certain commonalities between students and teachers provided in both questionnaires and interviews.

4.4.1. Comparison with students' answers

In order to get a clearer picture of whether feedback is provided to students, we also asked teachers in this regard. All of the 6 teachers stated that they do provide feedback to students as much as possible. This is similar to the over 300 students who provided the same answer in the questionnaire (see Table 6 above). To this end, we also compiled a same question asked to students and also teachers to see the difference in answers. The question is about assessment forms used to grade students. Most of the students answered (see Figure 7) that teachers use active participation to grade them, a few less students answered that teachers also use homework to grade them. However, we also asked teachers in this regard, and all of them included every form such as homework, active participation, attendance, behaviour, efforts, overall success and cross-curriculum. The latter two were least mentioned by both teachers and students. No differences were also noted when asked both students and teachers regarding the stimulation of motivation and commitment of students' assessment process. Most of the students agreed (see Table 3) that the assessment process is indeed the main key that stimulates their motivation and commitment, same did the teachers as well. However, students agreed that the focus of teachers is mostly on grammar and teachers. This outcome yields the result that the answers of students were true and credible.

4.2. Observation in classes

Class observation took place in six different classrooms (two classes of 10th grade classes, two classes of 11th grade classes and two classes of 12th grade classes) of the six different teachers. They were realized during the 1st and the very beginning of the 2nd week of June. Most of the classes were not chosen randomly but by teachers' preferences. Notes were taken in a special diary and are added to this research paper as APPENDIX 3.

The first observation took place on 03.06.2021, with the 11th class with the Lesson Content "Project Presentation". The teacher divided the students into small groups of 4 to 6 students per

group, two weeks ago. Presentation topics were mainly chosen by the students but discussed with the teacher so that he/she would approve it. Students were told they would be graded by this assignment. Since it was a project, we were all obliged to go to the CIT room since due to the lack of school facilities essential for a video presentation. The topic of the project presentation was “The invention of cars”. Students’ responsibility and devotion was not significant since one of them was absent without permission and no previous informing and none of them agreed to take his place voluntarily even after they were asked by the teacher. They even stated that they don’t really know anything about the content their peer was about to present. This makes visible the fact that there was a lack of cooperation among the group which actually is a great flaw of a group work to be mentioned. Students’ English level was not very good, they were mainly reading and surprisingly skipping the columns without noticing. It was very short, a 5-minute presentation for 5 students. Despite all of these, there were also some video sequences that were to be admired and the content was easily comprehended by most of the students. After the presentation, the audience (other students) were allowed to make questions. Above all these, it is really important to mention that the teacher did not take notes or make any comment. He/she didn’t make any immediate feedback as a powerful way to improve student achievement. Yet, his/her creativity was of a high level. Since even though the presentation was planned to be longer, he/she created an interesting dialogue related to the topic and almost every student got involved.

The students showed interest about their grades but the teacher told them that grades would be announced after 2 weeks when all the presentations would be finished, recalling the facts that no notes were taken during this class. Hereby, based on this, we could conclude that norm referenced assessment is practiced by this teacher of this school.

The second observation took place on 04.06.2021 with the 10th grade and the Lesson Content “Listening and speaking – The name’s Bond, James Bond”. In introductory part students were asked to write down 3 things that they knew about James Bond and then they shared their ideas with the class and talked about different James Bond films. Following, the teacher asked three students to read aloud (role-play) an extract from one of James Bond’s films from the tape script part at the end of the book, while others were about to listen with closed books. After reading was finished, other students had to answer some questions related to the text they listened. Since the text was not really completed, students then were asked to try to guess what happened next. They told very interesting stories before they listened to the correct version. As a closing part, teacher

asked students to look at the pictures in the book, and try to retell the story by putting those pictures into the right sequence (the story they listened previously). They had 5 minutes to sequence the pictures and summarize the story. One student, voluntarily, started retelling. Soon after the student finished retelling the story teacher took his action by saying; “Altin, I really appreciate your zeal while precisely retelling the story. The sequencing is correct and your text summarizing was easily comprehensible. But you have to pay more attention to the use of past simple tense, specifically irregular verbs”. This feedback can be considered to be quite supportive, since teacher’s tone and attitude were quite positive and it resulted with positive outcomes because the student himself smiled and admitted he noticed the same problem. Therefore, we can conclude that providing feedback does indeed help students’ learning process, if provided adequately, neither too positive nor too negative.

The third observation was conducted on 07.06.2021 with the 12th grade students with the lesson content ‘Essay results. Students wrote essays during their previous lessons. They could choose from three topics written on the blackboard. Instead of writing their names on their paper work they were asked by the teacher to sign some codes. On this day teacher draw on the black board a sample of Rubrics as a useful strategy to check written assignments. Surprisingly, he/she didn’t check these essays themselves. He/she distributed them to other students, so that they would try to grade those essays based on the rubrics drawn on the black board where they had to grade: content, grammar, punctuation, vocabulary and spelling from 1 to 5. Except that they had to write these into the rubrics columns they also had to name the kind of mistake their peers did by using symbols; Gr for Grammar, P-Punctuation, WW-wrong word, SP- Spelling and so on. It was quite impressive to see students’ willingness to get involved in their peers’ assessment. They wrote their names on the essays they corrected to that the teacher would check them at home and use these different strategies to entertain students as well as double the credibility of results. As teacher himself/herself stated it was time efficient and much accurate grade.

The fourth observation was conducted on 08.06.2021 with 11th grade classroom. Its Lesson Content was ‘Revision’. This was quite a traditional class since it began by a recap of the last lesson learned, question and examples related to previous lesson. Teacher then asked whether there was any ‘volunteer’- anyone who voluntarily wants to get assessed in order to be graded. A student came to the front and the teacher started with his direct oral assessment method. He/she mainly asked grammar questions i.e. the form and use of different verb tenses, passive active

transformation etc. At last teacher graded the student with a 5 and mentioned that student as a great example to be followed by others. Before we went out, the teacher asked the students to revise as per their homework because the second period was soon to be finished so they all were about to be assessed. According to me, this was time consuming and not practical at all. Above all the teacher mostly assessed only grammar knowledge capacity.

The two last observations took place on 09.06.2021 in a 10th and 12th grade classroom, with the Lesson Content “Test”. Observation 5 and 6 took place in different circumstances since the teachers planned to have a test during that week. The 10th grade teacher chose to have a reading comprehension test combined with some writing. So as to achieve test reliability and validity, test was administered into 4 groups so cheating was almost impossible. As per grammar and vocabulary test with the 12th grade students maybe it can be said that it was less practical since it contained a lot of pages and material in just 40 min time. Students expressed a suggestion by stating that that particular test could have been more practical and could have had included less elements of one-type-based questions, i.e., shorter and more practical. Therefore, it was concluded that students do not feel very comfortable with such a test compilation. The last but not least important observation took place on the same date but with a different lesson content “Reading and speaking. A world guide to good manners – how not to behave badly abroad”. Students were asked to read the article silently and write down at least one interesting thing about each nationality mentioned in the article and then they shared what they have written with their friends. This activity was followed by reading comprehension part that was used over here for formative purpose. The teacher asked students to try to describe a typical Albanian person/entity/place in order to achieve better goals, he/she used think-pair-share strategy. At the beginning students had time to think about a traditional Albanian; rules of greeting in our country, manners to be considered impolite, insulting or treasured as a great respect. They shared different compelling and amusing ideas. For homework; the teacher asked the students to try to find a saying in our language that has the meaning of “When in Rome do as Romans do” and try to give even some examples where this saying may be applied. Students were thrilled to do such an activity as it involved the everyday life expressions. This teaches us that students can be very active in case their life gets, somehow, included. This brings us to the principle of knowing your student, but we shall stick with the difficulties in this are due to the large number of students, short class-hour, and others already explained herein.

CHAPTER V: CONCLUSIONS

Communication is a key concept to be learning and practicing throughout life. People have many different ways to discharge this function. Some of them communicate by gestures, eyes, words, using letters, and even silence is a form of communication. However, this thesis concerns people who can communicate using words. Therefore, English language is a key word and concept used in this thesis. Nevertheless, it also elaborated the use of English in various forms other than just communication. As known, people learn the basics from the elementary education, then they go higher to the secondary education and so on. Teachers of foreign languages have been struggling with finding best suitable methods to teach a new language to students, having their accent be very proximate to the natives of that concerned language. Since grading, assessment, and evaluation are the ground basis for motivation and capacity building of students, it was a very great need to conduct a thesis pertaining only the assessment methods/strategies to boost students' motivation and interest in learning a foreign language, in this case, English language. Thusly, this research was conducted to evaluate the assessment strategies of great significance to the education system, in particular in terms of EFL teaching. It tended to measure the preferences for and actual assessment methods/strategies used by teachers, and how effective were they in evaluating students' learning process and their achievements in this regard. Measuring many methods including the participation-based and attendance-based assessment followed with grading, whether low or high marks. Even though not proceeded as planned, it turned out to be a huge success, with many more participants compared to the number planned initially.

The literature on students' assessment methods/strategies in secondary education is progressing, yet very variable in type and quality and also scattered and fragmentary in nature. Many reports are case studies from subject specialists. Studies of higher methodological quality are very varied in the type and organization of assessment methodologies researches that a best evidence synthesis is still in the future. However, the current research does identify pertinent commonalities and differences to encourage further advancement of assessment methods/strategies to the benefit of both teachers and students simultaneously. Hence, many studies have shown various assessment strategies and methods useful in this regard, however there are also many obstacles to assessing students fairly and adequately! This is best described by our thesis. Positive viewpoints of students

did indeed connect to one another, however there were also negative viewpoints provided in the questionnaire, but the positive ones weighted more.

1.1. Research questions

In order to get a full overview of the topic, there were four research questions drafted. These questions were answered by the overall results driven from the interviews conducted herein. It is very difficult to evaluate something/someone whatsoever. That's why the assessment process at school facilities can be very difficult to be performed properly. Our question was: *What are the challenges and factors that complicate the assessment process within EL classroom at the Gymnasium 'Xhavit Ahmeti'?* The answer to this pertains the interviews conducted with EL teachers at this particular school. Teachers stated that, inter alia, the large number of students in a classroom is one of the challenges of fair assessment. Besides teachers, students as well have mentioned the flaws considered in the assessment process, such as discrepancy of students' knowledge, large number of students in a class, etc. The key factor helping us coming to such conclusion were the students' opinions. Above all, teachers were asked whether they were trained in this regard, and even if they stated that they were trained the concerned training courses were not for the particular subject, i.e., English language. This is also a difficulty and challenge faced by teachers because there are no subject-separate training courses delivered regarding assessment. Thus, this should be brought more to the attention of the authorities since it can be a great help, indicating that if one can be trained the other emerging challenges can be easily overcome.

In order to answer the second research question during the interview teachers were asked about the practical solutions (they stated previously) to overcome difficulties and challenges that complicate the assessment process, almost all of them agreed that reducing number of students in class, increasing teaching hours from two to three classes per week, during English classes to divide students according to their English level of knowledge. They also stated that teachers need more training sessions in the assessment field in order to improve the assessment process.

The legislative framework is a system which enables or attempts to enable fair functioning in all life areas of people. This includes also assessment procedure. The third question pertained the adherence to the Kosovo Curriculum when assessment process takes place: *Is assessment in this school done according to Kosovo Curriculum?* As far as we know, and could conclude according

to the results we've reached to have, the Kosovo Curriculum is very much respected in this regard, despite the difficulties and challenges faced by teachers and students as well. Although teachers make their best efforts to respect the KC by using a lot of assessment instruments referred therein and also using various assessment methods tailored to students i.e. respecting the principle of student-centred classroom, yet due to the fact that teachers also include non-achievement factors and norm-referenced assessment, we are to conclude that the assessment, as a whole, is not conducted as per KC, as the later does not introduce the norm-reference assessment and also does not consider non-achievement assessment. As per the fourth research question "*are non-achievement factors included in students' learning assessment?*" (see figure 7), both students and teachers have answered that teachers do include non-achievement factors as instruments while performing assessment, such as: behaviour, attendance, active class participation, overall success, effort, etc.

1.2. Hypothesis

Our research covered 4 hypotheses. Each one of them was tested in our results. The first hypothesis was about the inclusion of most of the assessment instruments when teaching. Both students and teachers stated that many assessment strategies are used when teaching. However, the difficulties and challenges were emphasized, especially regarding language skills assessment. This is a positive aspect in this regard, given the diversity of students. It is worth noting that most of the students have stated that teachers use mostly active class participation to grade them, using this type of formative assessment for summative purposes. Such an answer was provided also by the teachers themselves.

The second hypothesis relates to the language skills and whether they are assessed. As seen so far, according to students' answers in the questionnaire, all language skills are mainly assessed but when conducting interviews, it was concluded that the assessment at this school facility takes place more for summative purposes and less for formative purposes. Moreover, students and teachers stated that it is well-noted that grammar-based assessment is mostly used and focused on by the teachers. They stated that teachers use oral/verbal communication to grade students, written essays, listening and also reading skills.

The third hypothesis “The large number of students in the classroom complicates the assessment process, as well as teaching and learning process” pertained the impact that the large numbers of students have during the assessment process as well as teaching/learning process. This question was compiled in order to see their viewpoints towards the challenges and factors they (both teachers’ and students’), have encountered while being assessed and performing the assessment. The answers in students’ questionnaire were of multiple choices, students could click more than one answer. In this regard the option lack of teachers’ experience was clicked 98 times, knowledge discrepancy was clicked 75 times, great number of students 151 times and the option “reduced number of English classes per week, from three classes per week to two classes per week was clicked 110 times.

Hereby, this hypothesis was also tested by the 10th question of the teachers’ interview, which required teachers to state challenges and factors complicating the assessment process. Consequently, they provided various answers in this regard, such as great number of students in a classroom resulting in creating opportunities for students to cheat in tests by copying from one another and decrease the opportunity to use all the assessment strategies as it would be time consuming. Another answer was also diversity among students’ preferences and knowledge, lack of technology in order to use the computer-based testing that nowadays as per the advancement of technology it is being increasingly a necessity in this regard, and teachers also stated that only individual/oral assessment and writing (through tests, essays) assessment is possible in such conditions. Another factor that is worth mentioning is that 5 out of 6 teachers stated the large number of students as one of the main factors that complicate the assessment process. According to teachers’ answers “knowledge discrepancy” is also key element that complicates the assessment process due to the fact that students of the same class have different level of knowledge in English language, from the Beginner level to Advanced level of English knowledge.

The fourth hypothesis was also about the lack of teachers’ training in the assessment field as the key problem during the assessment process. This hypothesis was tested by the second question of the interview conducted by the teachers “Have you ever taken an entire course on language assessment as part of your teacher preparation program?” Where only a few of them claimed that they had the opportunity to attend courses regarding assessment, but it’s worth being mentioned that even those attended trainings weren’t exactly adequate due to the fact that they were taken for all the school subjects in general instead of trainings for the assessment process in English

language as it should have been, and they were not adequate for the 10th to 12th grades of Gymnasium, but for the 1-9 grade classes.

1.3. Future improvements

Regardless of our results, future improvements shall take place. Competent authorities need to divide the number of students and form a classroom with very much less number than the actual number. In addition, the classrooms should not be divided by the index but by the level of knowledge in English language. This study was conducted in only one school facility, in order to be much more reliable in this regard, a similar study must be conducted involving many schools in the territory of the Republic of Kosovo. This could help us, as teachers, and students in finding a better solution to teach/learn effectively and efficiently and also to motivate and be motivated by proper and fair grades or, if grading process ceases to exist, proper and fair assessment whatsoever. There is room for improvements in all life areas, including personal and professional spheres. The life sphere is filled with many challenges. From birth to death, we never stop learning and changing, implying since little kids we start receiving information of every kind, and creating ideas in that respect. Hence, the human personality starts being formed and having many changes especially at the stage of puberty where, indeed one creates a scheme for himself/herself and his/her role. Teachers therefore play an extremely important role in this regard. Thus, other studies need to be conducted to produce results regarding the improvement of assessment and regarding the capacity building of students for much effective learning at an early age, especially when it comes to learning a new language.

Besides reducing the number of students in a classroom, it is also necessary to extend a class hour, from 40 minutes as it is now, to longer minutes such as 60 minutes in order for the teaching hour to be as effective as possible. Our educational system has many limitations in this regard. Moreover, there is a lack of sufficient training sessions delivered to teachers regarding to the assessment methods/strategies. It should be worked more in this regard. Our cadre is very skilled despite the lack of the aforementioned actions; however, they need to be more advanced to the benefit of both parties, i.e., students and teacher themselves.

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APPENDIX 1: QUESTIONNAIRE

Pyetësor

Të dashur nxënës,

Ky pyetësor synon ta eksplorojë temën “Vështirësitë dhe sfidat në zbatimin e strategjive të ndryshme të vlerësimit në mësimin e gjuhës angleze - rast studimi Gjinnazi ‘Xhavit Ahmeti’, Gjilan, Kosovë”, një temë për studimin e tezës sime të Masterit. Ky pyetësor nuk kërkon informacion tuaj personal dhe të dhënat do të mbesin shumë konfidenciale. Pyetësori do t’ju marrë vetëm rreth 10 minuta nga koha juaj. Kështu që, unë do të isha shumë e kënaqur nëse do t’ju përgjigjeshit pyetjeve në mënyrën më të përshtatshme për ju!

- 1) Në cilën klasë jeni?
 - a) X (dhjetë)
 - b) XI (njëmbëdhjetë)
 - c) XII (dymbëdhjetë)

- 2) Procesi i vlerësimit është çelësi kryesor i motivimit dhe angazhimit tonë.
 - a) Pajtohem plotësisht; b) Pajtohem; c) Pajtohem pjesërisht;
 - d) Nuk pajtohem pjesërisht; d) Nuk pajtohem; e) Nuk pajtohem aspak;

- 3) Cilën nga këto forma vlerësimi i zbaton profesor-i/esha juaj?
 - a. Vlerësim bazuar në normë
 - b. Vlerësim bazuar në kritere

- 4) Profesor-i/esha më informon për metodat e vlerësimit të zbatuara në këtë lëndë në fillim të gjysmëvjetorit.
 - a) Po
 - b) Jo

- 5) Rreth sa detyra për notim ju jep profesor-i/esha juaj për çdo gjysmëvjetor?
 - a. Asnjë;
 - b. Një;
 - c. Më shumë se dy;

6) Nëse profesor-i/esha juaj nuk përdor detyra, si ju vlerëson profesor-i/esha juaj?

7) Cilat nga metodat e mëposhtme i përdor profesor-i/esha juaj për t'ju vlerësuar me notë?
Rretho më shumë se një metodë të përdorur.

- a. Test gramatike
- b. Test i fjalorit
- c. Test i të kuptuarit të leximit
- d. Test i të kuptuarit të dëgjimit
- e. Me shkrim (ese)
- f. Me të folur
- g. Projekte
- h. Prezantim
- i. Pjesëmarrje në orë mësimore
- j. Portofolio e nxënësit
- k. Vlerësim nga shokët/shoqet e klasës
- l. Vetëvlerësim
- m. Vlerësim individual/me të folur
- n. Tjetër_____

8) A ndodh që profesor-i/esha juaj të ketë tendencë ta mbivlerësojë ndonjë nga metodat e mëposhtme deri në atë pikë sa të ndikojë në notat e nxënësve (pozitivisht/negativisht)?

- a) Detyra shtëpie
- b) Pjesëmarrje në klasë
- c) Sjellje
- d) Pjesëmarrje aktive në klasë
- e) Çështje ndërkurrikulare
- f) Suksesi i përgjithshëm
- g) Angazhimi
- h) Tjetër_____

9) Profesor-i/esha provon një numër të madh të metodave të vlerësimit që ai/ajo mendon se do të funksionojnë për të mbështetur të mësuarit tim.

- a) Pajtohem plotësisht;
- b) Pajtohem;
- c) Pajtohem pjesërisht;
- d) Nuk pajtohem pjesërisht;
- e) Nuk pajtohem;
- f) Nuk pajtohem aspak;

10) Gjatë mësimdhënies/vlerësimit të gjuhës angleze, profesor-i/esha e ka fokusin kryesor tek:

- a. Rregullat e gramatikës;
- b. Fjalor shprehjesh;
- c. Aftësitë gjuhësore (shkrim, lexim, dëgjim dhe të folur)
- d. Pjesëmarrja në klasë;
- e. Të gjitha të lartpërmendurat.

11) A merrni nga profesor-i/eshainformatë kthyesë në baza të rregullta?

- a) Po
- b) Jo

12) Rrethoni disa nga sfidat që i keni pasur gjatë vlerësimit.

- a. Dallimi mes dijes së nxënësve;
- b. Numri i madh i nxënësve në klasë;
- c. Numri i zvogëluar i orëve të Gjuhës Angleze brenda javës nga tri klasë në javë në dy klasë në javë;
- d. Mungesa e përvojës e profesor-it/eshës.

Questionnaire

Dear students,

This Questionnaire aims to explore 'Difficulties and challenges in the application of different assessment strategies in English language teaching- a case study Gymnasium "Xhavit Ahmeti", Gjilan, Kosovë'a Topic for my Master Thesis Research. This Questionnaire does not require your personal information and the data will remain very confidential. The Questionnaire will take you only about 10 minutes of your time. So, I would be very pleased if you willing to answer the questions in the most appropriate way for you!

1) Which grade do you attend?

- d) X (ten)
- e) XI (eleven)
- f) XII (twelve)

2) The assessment process is the main key to our motivation and commitment.

b) Completely agree; b) agree; c) somewhat agree; d) disagree; e) completely disagree;

3) Which of these assessment forms does your teacher apply?

- e. Norm referenced assessment
- f. Criteria referenced assessment

4) My teacher informs me about the assessment methods applied in this course at the beginning of the term.

- c) Yes
- d) No

5) About how many graded assignments does your teacher give you per period?

- g. None;
- h. One;
- i. More than two;

6) If your teacher does not use assignments, how does your teacher grade you?

7) Which of the following methods does your teacher use to grade you? Circle more than one of used.

- a) Grammar test
- b) Vocabulary test
- c) Reading comprehension test
- d) Listening comprehension test
- e) Writing (essay)
- f) Speaking
- g) Projects
- h) Presentation
- i) Class participation
- j) Student portfolio
- k) Peer-assessment
- l) Self-assessment
- m) Individual/oral assessment
- n) Other _____

8) Does it happen that your teacher tends to overvalue any of the following to the point where it affects students' grades (positively/negatively)?

- i) Homework
- j) Attendance
- k) Behavior
- l) Active class participation
- m) Cross-curriculum issues
- n) Overall success
- o) Effort
- p) Other _____

9) My teacher tries a great number of assessment methods that he/she thinks will work to support my learning.

- b) Completely agree; b) Agree; c) Somewhat agree; d) Disagree; e) Completely disagree

10) While teaching/assessing English language, my teacher's primary focus is on the:

- j. Rules of grammar;
- k. Vocabulary;
- l. Language skills (writing, reading, listening and speaking)
- m. Class participation;
- n. All the above mentioned;

11) Do you receive feedback from your teacher on regular basis?

- b) Yes b) No

12) Circle some of the challenges that you have encountered while being assessed.

a) Students' knowledge discrepancy;

b) Great number of students in class;

c) Reduced number of English classes per week from three classes per week to two classes per week;

d) Lack of teachers' experience;

APPENDIX 2: INTERVIEW

Interview:

Dear teachers,

This interview aims to explore 'Difficulties and challenges in the application of different assessment strategies in English language teaching- a case study Gymnasium "Xhavit Ahmeti", Gjilan, Kosovë' a Topic for my Master Thesis Research. The Interview does not require your personal information and the data will remain very confidential. The Interview will take only about 10-15 minutes of your time. So, I would be very pleased if you willing to answer the questions in the most appropriate way for you!

1) What is your level of education?

a) Bachelor degree; b) Master degree; c) PHD;

2) Have you ever taken an entire course on language assessment as part of your teacher preparation program?

a. If yes, which parts of your course were most relevant to your teaching?

b. If not, if you were to take a course in EFL assessment what topic do you consider should be covered?

3) According to you; are assessment strategies clearly stated in Kosovo Curriculum?

4) Do you include most of the assessment the designed KC and English language teaching itself tools while teaching? If yes, please name some/ If no, why not?

5) Do you use appropriate strategies designed to accommodate varied talents and skills of your students?

6) Do you believe that using diverse assessment methods is a good practice to achieve learning objectives? If yes, how?

7) Are all language skills assessed in your classroom? If yes, how?

8) Do you give feedback to your students on regular basis?

9) Do you consider your assessment to be norm-references or criteria referenced assessment?

10) What are the challenges and factors that complicate the assessment process within English Language classroom in Gymnasium “Xhavit Ahmeti”?

11) Do you think that the assessment process stimulates students’ motivation and commitment?

12) While teaching/assessing my primary focus is on the:

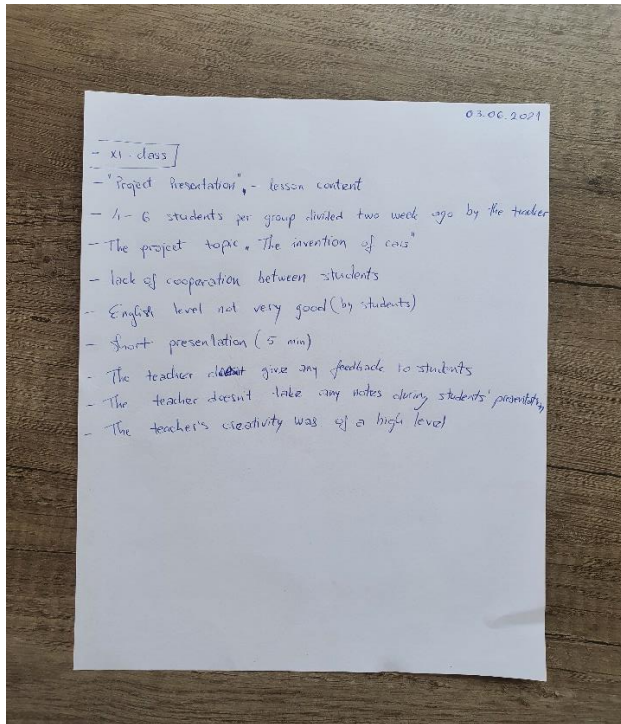
- a. Rules of grammar
- b. Vocabulary
- c. Language skills (writing, reading, listening and speaking)
- d. Class participation
- e. All the abovementioned

13) What are the practical steps to overcome the actual difficulties and challenges you encounter during the assessment process?

14) Do you tend to consider any of the following non-achievement factors while assessing?

- a) Homework
- b) Attendance
- c) Behaviour
- d) Active class participation
- e) Cross-curriculum issues
- f) Overall success
- g) Effort
- h) Other_____

APPENDIX 3: CLASS MONITORING SAMPLES



04.06.2021

- X-class

- Lesson content "Listening and speaking - The name's Bond"
 - a story about a movie actor, James Bond
- Introductory part of class: - 3 things you know about James Bond
 - share ideas with classmates
- Teacher asks students to read the text and the others listen to their friends and after the reading is finished, the students have to answer some questions about the text and also guess what is going to happen next in the story
- look at the pictures (5 min)
- retell the story
- Teacher gives feedback to students (being positive)