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## **TITLE OF THE THESIS**

“The Impact of Intercultural Competence in English Language Teaching and Learning. Case study of Gymnasium “Zenel Hajdini” Gjilan, Kosovo.

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## **ABSTRACT:**

The meaning of intercultural competence can be defined as a range of behavioral skills that lead people to communicate in a same way with the same aim. The influence of culture in teaching and learning English firstly; award humans with an experience (diverse), secondly; consign better opportunities for teaching and learning English as a second language, thirdly; provides career development. In other words, being social with various cultures makes humans independent to collaborate freely and creatively in an educational environment by establishing the confluence of diversity innovation.

The methodology chosen for this study is quantitative. Since this study is intended to be a case report, initially the researcher has selected a school in which the study will be conducted. The school selected for this study is the High-school “Zenel Hajdini”, who is a gymnasium for classes from 10-12 and the age of the students who attend it is 15-19 years old. In total the school has 60 teachers and a number of students about 2500. The number of foreign language teachers is 6 in total. *The target group* of the study is composed of English teachers, 30 randomly selected students and 20 randomly selected parents.

Half of the teachers surveyed were totally convinced that cultural background influenced the way students learned English, and the other half did not have a well-defined opinion about the influence of cultural background. Out of the total number of 6 teachers interviewed, 5 of them answered that they often used ICC in their classroom and only 1 did not include ICC in the lessons.

3 of the teachers are selected as the best strategy to provide culturally learning materials. 3 of the teachers are selected to apply the role play as socio-cultural approach. And 2 of them are selected as a strategy the use of technology to help students gain cultural information. The most selected activity by teachers was the inclusion of multimedia tools, such as websites, blogs, TV shows and movies. The teachers referred that with the involvement of the ICC in the teaching of English in recent years, the way of perception and learning of the secondary language is quite efficient and this results in the significant improvement made by the students of the high schools of the gymnasium of taken into study.

**KEY WORDS:** intercultural competence, culture, second language, english teaching and learning

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# 1. INTRODUCTION

Nowadays, intercultural communication plays an important role in ELT partly because English plays a very important role in learning an international language such as English which is currently spoken by millions of people, thus crossing all geographical boundaries. The culture of all English-speaking countries currently has different cultures from English culture (Alptekin, 2002, p. 17). As English continues to spread rapidly, the number of individuals who speak it as a second language is increasing. While teaching and learning English as a foreign or a second language it is not only concerned with grammar rules or patterns of linguistic, but the attention goes to the cultural environment in order to teach / learn the language effectively since, a language is the system of communication.

This research is done in the field of education. This study is intended to shed some light on intercultural competence in English language teaching and learning. In a country like Kosovo, where English language learning begins in primary school, continues in highschools and universities, with no doubt, the objective of English language teaching as an international language has much in common with intercultural communication. Thus, English language teaching should be oriented towards the promotion of intercultural competency education through English. The primary function of language is for communication and interaction (Richard and Rodgers, 1986). English teachers need to talk to others fluently, involving both students and foreigners. For this reason, it is very important that English language teaching be placed at the forefront of improving students' intercultural communication skills. In this study, the ability of intercultural communication in teaching in Kosovo is explored, and in the last sections the researcher will give some useful suggestions, in order to achieve the primary objective of English language teaching.

## ● Aims of the research

This research aims to assess the role of the ICC in English teaching and learning at different levels of teaching English as a second language. This study will also analyze ICC and Cultural Awareness in ELT teaching methods by teachers in Kosovo schools in the last 10 years.

### a. Evidence and efficiency of ICC in ETL

**Why do we study ICC in the teaching of ETL as a second language in countries outside geographical borders where English is the first language? What is its role in integrating individuals into a new population?**

The meaning of intercultural competence can be defined as a range of behavioral skills that lead people to communicate in a same way with the same aim. Admittedly, the role in development level of teaching and learning English as a foreign language has been important as a key for recognizing a culture dimension. Thus, to learn a second language it is not assign by learning a language in linguistically way but the fundamental point is the ability of being engaged in flexible aspects that are representatives of foreign cultures.

**b. Analysis of ICC and Cultural Awareness in ETL teaching methods in Kosovo in the last 10 years**

**What are the teaching methods and tools used to integrate ICC and Cultural Awareness in Kosovo?**

Intercultural awareness in language learning is often argued as a 'fifth skill' in addition to reading, writing, listening and speaking. First, teachers must have a wide variety of different cultural background knowledge with the differences between cultures around the world (Karimboyevna, 2020). In practice there are several methods that can be used in the classroom by the teacher to achieve developing students 'intercultural competence. The most effective method is seen to be role-play, were students encouraged to use language imaginatively and creatively. On the other hand, "Learner-centeredness" is important in raising intercultural competence (Byram, M. & Flemming, M. (Eds.) 1998). Other active methods are also the use of media, encyclopedias and the Internet, which help analyze information and increase the student's ability to select which material is most valuable to use as cultural topics.

## ● Hypotheses

The hypotheses are set in full logical flow with the main purpose of this thesis, which is to highlight the role of the ICC and the methods used by a good teacher to include the ICC throughout the teaching process as the fifth skill in the daily routine. Hypotheses also try to give general research questions of this study.

1. ICC help students to use English for practical reasons for both others subjects and life in general.
2. Some applied tools (activities and methods) are fostering the development of the ICC.
3. Overseas experience develops better qualified teachers in intercultural communication.
4. Teachers can help students to understand and manage ever-changing linguistic and cultural information they are faced with, and thus, prepare them for the future unknown cultural situations.

The research questions have been raised since the beginning of this thesis to highlight the role and effectiveness of the use of ICC inclusion methods in ETL by English language teachers.

### ● *What is the role of the ICC and the effectiveness of using fifth skills in ETL?*

In recent years one of the changes that has taken place in the teaching of foreign languages is the inclusion of culture as a key component. For this reason, even foreign language teachers no longer attach importance only to learning the fourth skills on a regular basis, but are increasingly teaching their students to be able to interact flexibly when confronted. With actions, attitudes and expectations of representatives of foreign cultures. Nowadays, the teacher should not only learn a foreign language, but definitely learn at the same time the culture of that language. This change in objectives of the foreign language teaching leads to a change towards the learner-centered constructivist approaches for teaching ICC (Bennett, 2017; Mahendra et al., 2005). Teachers are now expected to shift from the traditional aspects of language concentrated on rule-governed grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation to the meaningful use of the language and communicative needs (Broughton et al., 2003).

● ***What are the methods and activities that a foreign language teacher should include to teach students culture and ICC?***

As teaching is becoming more and more effective by centralizing the role of the learner, the foreign language teacher should interact with him / her in different ways, but not losing the main role he / she has for the complete transmission of materials. To meet this goal there are methods and activities that can be incorporated to create a new atmosphere between classical teaching and ICC involvement in teaching.

Some of these activities could be:

1. Division into groups and role play
2. Decorating classrooms with cultural images
3. Movies and documentaries
4. Presentations in MS PowerPoint, posters, leaflets, etc.
5. Team work and case study
6. Trips and excursions

● ***Is any cultural awareness in Kosovo and how can be developed?***

As an ESL / EFL teacher, should give some thought to cultural awareness to ensure that we are delivering language instruction without bias, discrimination or prejudice.

Cultural awareness always begins with the development of a sensitivity and understanding of students' beliefs, attitudes, behaviors and values. It is now accepted among researchers and teachers that diversity plays a very important role in cultural awareness. Each culture is different and the taboo topics of a culture should be evaluated first, such as religion, politics, money, wars, etc. Teachers should take enough time to get to know their students better, this way they will not leave them passive and reserved when it comes time to interact with other people in a foreign language. It is also very important that when explaining a new language and culture, in no way should the native culture of the class where we are teaching be overlooked, this way students will not feel prejudiced and will explore more and more. Share each other's culture and heritage. Students should create cultural awareness through flags, flags, descriptions or participation in food, music festivals.

## ● Importance of the thesis

The importance of this thesis is evidenced in two different directions. First, the literature provides a lot of data for the ICC in the world, but for the state of Kosovo there is little or no published data for this thesis. In this way, being an English teacher myself, I saw with special interest the drafting of a study for the ICC in the ETL at present, in the territory of Kosovo.

Based on the information provided in Byram's Model of Intercultural Communicative Competence (1997), foreign language teachers must reconsider methods for teaching language and culture in the classroom if the goal is to create true intercultural competent speakers of the language.

As an English teacher, but also in the role of researcher of this thesis, I strongly believe that the use of intercultural competence and cultural awareness in the daily life of learning English in the state of Kosovo, as a second language is very effective to prepare these students in a way to speak fluently and communicate freely in the future, whether they encounter new cultures or become part of English-speaking port groups of different cultures.

## ● Structure of the thesis

### 1. Introduction

The introduction will be a general description of the ICC background and the inclusion of culture and culture awareness in ETL. Also at the end of the entry will be included thesis statement.

### 2. Literature review

To build a clear theoretical background and to be in coherence with what other scholars have discovered before me, I will do a literature review including books, studies, worlds of articles in newspapers, magazines, etc. Also similar studies from the point of view of teachers and linguists will be selected for consideration.

### 3. Theory

My theory is that ICC and cultural awareness development are important and integral parts of English teaching and learning. Fifth skills is exactly the connecting point between the student and his future involvement in the inter-cultural group. This is exactly the view I want to reach through my study. I will construct hypotheses and try to defend my theory.

### 4. Methods

The methodology used in this study is qualitative, as it has been seen with special interest the subjective thoughts and experiences of Kosovo teachers on the current use of ICC and methods included during the lesson. Also the opinions of students are quite valuable to measure in a way the effectiveness of these methods, their coping with different cultures and the fluency of speaking a second language in intercultural groups.

## 5. Results

All data for this study will be collected by me after selecting a population, sample and target group. The data will be used only for this study, and after the data analysis process the immediate hypothesis will be confirmed or rejected. In this way this study will also provide the validity and reliability of the data.

## 6. Conclusion

After analyzing the data, and presenting them in the relevant chapter, the conclusions of the study will be drafted. Then in a separate section I will discuss comparatively with previous studies, and finally I will give my recommendations and based on the study data on the methodology of ICC involvement in ETL.

## 7. Bibliography

All references, citations and secondary data will be referenced in the text and bibliography section

## **2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

### **2.1 Definitions and key concepts**

Culture is a term with many definitions and different opinions given by people who define this concept with their own aspects. What it means to be part of a culture but living inside another culture, it is an experience that includes all branches of life, thus, only by living in those branches we can find all answers related to a culture. Indeed, the paradox of culture is that; we have grown up learning our beliefs and values related to our own culture and as a group of people unconsciously, we learn how to deny other people which are part of another culture. The key of understanding a culture is by being humankind in all the features of a society, including; lifestyles, traditions, beliefs, the system of values and all in all that has a culture different from another one. The sum of assumptions that are shared by groups are usually the focus of attention for cultures that have no existence to some people. Clearly, the statement Culture is a daily confrontation to all the people who are working with foreigners, traveling abroad and also to students that is in their plans for studying abroad.

The differences between cultures are and always will be huge for the reason that, there are many communities who do not agree with the values of another. Due to this, culture defines also peoples' interests starting by the importance of using technology that has been increased. Nowadays, the use of technology helps the youth to learn and see through the pictures the other part of the world by using social medias. Similarity, using technology people now can search information for everything they need; they can find a job, a scholarship for studying abroad and creating different friendships by communicating with people that are from different countries of the world. While, using English language or a language that can be communicated in both sides, they can be well-informed for everything they want to know. At the meantime, the use of technology has helped lots of students to be informed about the education system that is offered abroad. Thus, the education system is a process of learning within the four language skills (writing, reading, listening and speaking).

Thereafter, understanding one's culture has a significant role nowadays especially if it is a country with non-English speakers because, the impact of culture in teaching and learning has an important role for developing the education system, since never is late to learn more about places

or cultures that we haven't known before. Initially, spreading information about what values, beliefs and traditions are around the world, it raises learners' motivation for learning English language as their second language, increasing their vocabulary by using English or learning the particular language of the country they want to go.

According to Richard Brislin & Tomoko Yoshida: *Culture consists of concepts, values, and assumptions about life that guide behavior and are widely shared by people.... [These] are transmitted generation to generation, rarely with explicit instructions, by parents...and other respected elders.*

Nowadays, the meaning of culture is narrated by the experience of people to another culture that have been aware of values, beliefs according to diversification to the group of peoples' intentions. Thus, the term of culture is a complex concept with different substantial opinions and features that are presented in various ways. Additionally, culture means also the presumption of describing one culture within the way how people behave. It is a broadcast between those who have spent their time by exploring themselves in another culture. The importance of culture, is being adopted in a society, being arrayed with the enlightenment and accomplishment toward a specific culture. Diversity of intercultural competence has a significant skill by increasing the aptitude of education between domestically and abroad the company policy as a way of preparation through the chrysalis of intercultural competence. Being aware and respecting the other culture is a considerable act for having great communication between unfamiliar people.

Jokikokko (2005) defines intercultural competence as "an ethical orientation in which certain morally right ways of being, thinking and acting are emphasized" (p. 79). Byram (1997) included components of linguistic competence, sociolinguistic competence, discourse competence, and intercultural competence in his definition of ICC, describing it as "the ability to communicate and interact across cultural boundaries" (p. 7).

Kramsch and McConnell-Ginet (1992) further claim that the primary focus of teaching based on the intercultural approach is on the target cultures, yet, it also includes comparisons between the learner's own country and target country, thereby helping learners to develop a reflective attitude to the culture and civilization of their own countries. The foreign language learner is viewed as

an “intercultural speaker”, someone who “crosses frontiers, and who is to some extent a specialist in the transit of cultural property and symbolic values ” (Byram & Zarate 1997, p. 11). In the specific context of foreign language education, Byram (1997) constructed his ICC framework as including cognitive, pragmatic, social and intercultural sub-competencies. The intercultural competence in Byram’s framework is an independent component of ICC, focusing on the cultural rather than the linguistic abilities to interact with people of other cultures. Intercultural competence consists of the components such as attitudes, knowledge, and skills, integrated by the values they hold and have due to their significant contributions to society.

The model proposed by IC Fantini (2000) incorporates consciousness, attitudes, skills, and knowledge, and this model is in principle consistent with the intercultural elements of Byram (1997). Although this model leaves out the language element in the IC model, Fantini argued that the ability of the native language plays a very important role in improving the IC of students. In another aspect, Fantini (2000) explains that awareness which refers to self-awareness and reflection leads “deeper cognition, skills, and attitudes just as it is also enhanced by their development” (p. 29). Furthermore, he stressed that IC is an ongoing process in time and eternal, as long as man is never fully inter-culturally capable. He emphasizes that although one may develop and expand one’s competencies, new challenges always appear, and a good condition for one to develop one’s IC is the contact and experience with people of other languages and cultures in a positive setting.

## 2.2 Intercultural competence and its dimension in teaching and learning English

The meaning of intercultural competence can be defined as a range of behavioral skills that lead people to communicate in a same way with the same aim. Admittedly, the role in development level of teaching and learning English as a foreign language has been important as a key for recognizing a culture dimension. Thus, to learn a second language it is not assign by learning a language in a linguistically way but, the fundamental point is the ability of being engaged in flexible aspects that are representatives of foreign cultures. According to Byram's model of intercultural communicative competence: " *there are five different factors involved: Knowledge, Attitudes, Skills of interpreting and relating, Skills of discovery and interaction and Political education including critical cultural awareness (1997)*".



Figure No. 1: Graphic representation of the five factors involved in the ICC

To be part of different social groups makes people to be aware of other cultures and also increase the curiosity to be open-minded as well as others. The ability of identifying the concepts of a culture mean to prospect the concerns toward a foreign culture by accepting the beliefs, values

and behaviors that are within that culture. Thus, without obtaining all in all a culture, people will never learn to classify pros and cons as an important role in a relationship between outsider or newcomer. Being relevant from a cultural viewpoint in different situations that can be part of working, traveling or studies, is a set of skills that gives an important role to humans by having an appropriate behavior and an effective communication as well as being in a high level of cultural awareness so, in this way individuals realize the impact of culture on behaviors, beliefs and values. *“Intercultural competence are the abilities to perform effectively and appropriately when interacting with others who are linguistically and culturally different from oneself. (Fantini& Tirmizi 2006)”*. Being cooperative with others by getting involved to one or more cultural systems is a unitary opportunity to be aware about other attitudes, traditions and the lifeline that belong to various civilizations among the world. The goal at immunity of people from their own cultural dimension is being involved and collaborating with profits or benefits that are shared among all sorts of a culture. Due to this, intercultural competence can be developed by facilitating different relationships amid people including acceptance and valuation of foreigners. The intercultural dimension for teaching and learning English as a foreign language has become a very important concern for teachers and learners. Having a variety of cultures in all over the world nowadays, people are aware that culture is a set of different concerns shared by members of a culture that make them distinct from other cultures such as: speaking a particular language, eating their traditional foods, being part of a different religion and so on.

On the other hand, intercultural competence describes the level of communication between two or more different cultural groups that interact one another in various forms. Thus, includes components such as: cognitive knowledge, application of knowledge, behavior and ethical components. Except these, according to Leeds Harwitz 1989: *“Intercultural competence includes also other components that have dimension on: observation, listening, evaluating, analyzing, interpreting, relating, adaptability, the ability to be non- judgmental, stress management, meta communication and creative problem resolution”*. Though, *“Wiseman &Koster, 1993”* have provided in their studies of intercultural communication that: *“The intercultural dimension in foreign languages emphasizes effective cross-cultural communication based on the acquisition of a key set of competences”*.

In both studies, the target of intercultural dimension is communication, which means sharing & receiving information about something that people have no clue about it or just having a casual discussion by exchanging opinions and feelings enlarging the process of commonality by transmitting the behavior of human in all over the world.

Culture-related practices in foreign language classrooms have not yet achieved desired outcomes (Chau & Truong, 2019; Larzen-Ostermark, 2008; Sercu, 2006). Studies on teaching for ICC by Jumpakate and Hieu (2019) and Sercu (2002) revealed that teachers are aware of the significance of culture in their EFL lessons; however, they lack the knowledge of how to focus on intercultural dimensions and skills, as well as how to integrate ICC in their language teaching. In a study conducted by Lazar (2006) the results showed that practices related to the incorporation of culture are not systematically included in English language teaching classes and that the programs used and methodological to develop ICC are relatively weak. A large-scale study developed by Sercu et al. (2005) focused on 424 teachers from seven European countries, with the aim of investigating teachers' perceptions and attitudes regarding the cultural dimension and the teaching of intercultural competence in foreign language education. The results revealed the existence of two teacher profiles:

- Favorable teachers who believe in the importance of integrating intercultural skills into foreign language teaching,
- Teachers who are not in favor of integrating culture into teaching and see it as an impossible practice.

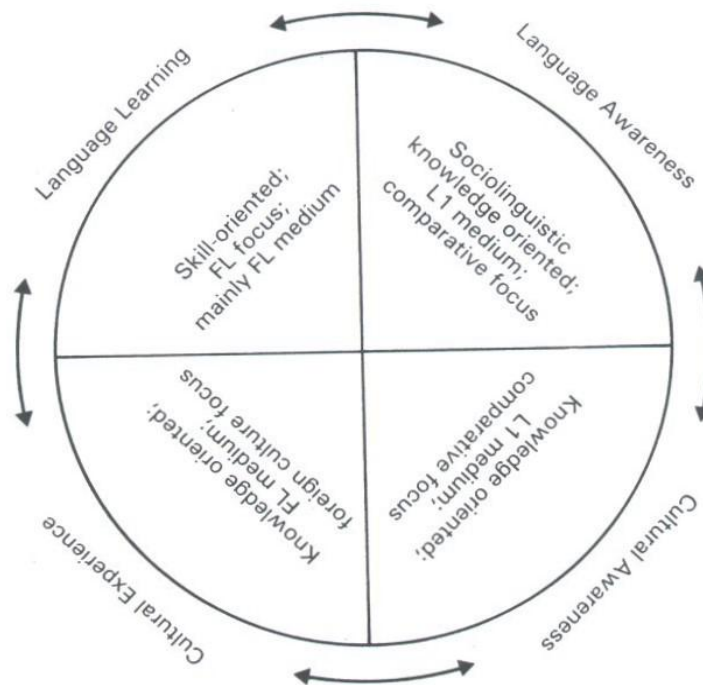
However, by analyzing all the studies that provide data on this topic, it can be concluded that generally supporting the integration of the ICC dimension into foreign language classes, this support does not necessarily imply the existence of broad culture teaching. Thus, teachers' knowledge of the ICC concept and its importance is essential in teaching English by understanding how teachers view the willingness to integrate intercultural competence and what factors support current practices.

### 2.3 Language as a social practice

Many languages have adjusted vocabulary items to describe aspects of relationships between individuals or groups that are part of different cultures. Using a language to communicate implies terms how a human should treat another one, especially a foreigner. By creating a relationship, a second language can be used as a social practice by sharing communities, supporting and respecting each other. Thus, would bring people to the key of identifying concepts of an intercultural language, using the components of intercultural competence by developing the language as a social practice to accept other values, beliefs and attitudes, while being kind and pleasant with another culture.

According to Corbett, 2007: *“It is the assertion, negotiation, construction and maintenance of individual and group identities-that has led to the development of an intercultural approach to language education”*. Which means not only using a language as second language for culture information but means also the development of methodologies of using a foreign language as a tool for communication. Due to this, the importance of a language as a social practice has a deep impact in the manner of learning & using a language that implies the knowledge of being able to communicate appropriately and expanding their acknowledgment more than the basic grammar rules in order to achieve communicative competence.

Hence, Byram (1989a, 1991, 1997a) presented a model for learning a culture in a foreign language that included four elements in the field of education: Language learning, Language awareness, Cultural awareness, Cultural experience. These elements are presented in a circle with arrows that shows buttress and association of each quarter.



*Figure No. 2: Graphic presentation of four elements in the field of education: Language learning, Language awareness, Cultural awareness, Cultural experience*

1. **Language learning-** refers to the process of how a language capability can be established in a human in both; verbal and nonverbal communication.
2. **Language awareness-** gives learners the opportunity to figure out the relationship between using a language and facing a situation coming from another civilization by utilizing the skills of a language, learners can have huge development of understanding a foreign language in many aspects.
3. **Cultural awareness-** focuses on “the question of change from mono-cultural to intercultural competence (Byram, 1991, p.24).” Thus, shows the comprehension between the countries or other backgrounds that promote diversity.
4. **Cultural experience-** this point refers more to the experiences that a foreign language deals with a target culture by including various aims within.

## 2.4 Attitude to human being in a foreign language and the cultural diversity

While learning a language often, students face difficulties of being confused and insecure to the new culture of using the second or third language that they're learning. Learners' have to understand and feel comfortable by accepting the values that are within a foreign culture. Starting from the point that; students should identify and corporate with the surrounding cultures. For instance, being abroad at work, the culture will be presented in various ways, a part of religion that some countries can be affected by presenting less of their culture including their superstitions, the way of expressing and the types listening and reading.

Generally, traveling to different countries people will be aware of different cultures around the world, along with can figure out the ways of thinking, communicating and evaluating the lifestyle related to that culture. Thus, the collaboration between two or more cultures it is important about giving a particular attention in common concerns rather than incongruity.

Both cultures feel more confident greeting people of their own culture by using their L1 rather than using L2, for the reason that, they still have their insecurity of not speaking well in the international language. Thus, a high percentage were thinking that; if someone wants to study or live in Kosovo or Turkey, they first have to learn the language of that country and accept its culture, but a small group were neutral since, for them, it is important only exchanging thoughts and learning more for the other culture, even though not speaking well English but communicating only with terms they already know. At the meantime, students appreciate the chance of having lectures with foreigners and try to welcome everybody in their best way. On the other hand, a group of students feels worthless by finding hard communicating with somebody that is part of a different culture.

According to students; if professors provide feedback to their assessment, I found it out that, this point is missing, since, students agreed that teachers rarely provide feedback, neither for praise nor for criticism. Further, this part for a foreigner is a little difficult to cope as it affects the motivation to keep learning as well as discovering more about the country, its culture, beliefs and thoughts of people.

The growing awareness among various cultures has constituted a very important resource for being open-minded in a civil society. Due to this, cultural diversity has become a constant feature in all the manners which individuals and communities communicate. The change of being mix in other origins has a meaningful remark for the reason that, creates self-cultural awareness. By being involved into another culture a human, extend and enrich the intellectual resources by learning from another diversity.

Cultural diversity also serves the valuation of intercultural dialogues that can be combined with skills, abilities and knowledge to cope with the other culture, namely, the result would be the capacity of embracing diversity. A cultural challenge that is involved in multi-societies is to pacify the recognition of other cultures by respecting and valuing the differences shared within two or more distinct cultures. Thus, affirming the differences between multi-cultures first, a nation should understand the social cohesion which assimilate the diversity into the cultural components.

Indeed, the key to have a successful conceptual of cultural diversity include, the concept of dialogues in acknowledgment of to equate participants to understand the intercultural competences in the sets of cultural identity and cultural diversity. Hence, “*Cultural Identity refers to those aspects of identity shared by members of a culture that, taken as a set mark them as a distinct from members of other cultures*”. Similarly, “*Cultural Diversity, refers to the existence of a wide variety of cultures in the world today*”. Further, both definitions show that culture is a term that serves as a resource for being in contact with other cultures, learning valuables, having results of social-cultural that are combined with global aspects and specific attitudes for being among people in various origins to embrace the diversity.

According to Nicholas Kotsiras “*the role of civil society in preserving culture and heritage, sometimes represent an obstacle, and you have to have the support of civil society to ensure the benefits of cultural diversity*”.

Presenting a culture and not having the support from the society is like having no real culture in any aspect, because a human cannot reveal by him/herself the culture in the wide world by sharing values, beliefs and all the traditions that should be presented in order to be accepted by a

distinct mentality. All communities are different and there are lots of way to show the benefits of a cultural diversity.

Moreover, *Kotsiras* also asserted three things that civil society need to do:

- The first is to make sure that the community they represent are maintaining their culture and traditions, especially language.
- The second thing was to make the community aware of the government policies and programs available to them, as this is often better received at a grassroots level such as through the local church, school or sporting club.
- The last is through uniting people of different faiths and cultures.

Arranging relationships with outsider and proceeding orderly the behavior in social life, stimulate humans to preserve the impact of cultural diversity inner distinctive detach origins.

### 3. LITERATURE REVIEW

#### 3.1 Cultural diversity in ETL

The lack of diversity it is indicated from teachers and learners by having interest on a language to develop culture competence. While teaching and learning English as a foreign or a second language it is not only concerned with grammar rules or patterns of linguistic but, the attention goes to the cultural environment in order to teach / learn the language effectively since, a language is the system of communication. Byram and Morgan (1994) claims that; ‘‘ *knowledge of grammatical system of a language has to be complemented by the understanding of culture specific meanings*’’. Besides this, a language cannot be learned / taught only through some rules but, also it needs practice to master; vocabulary, grammar and pronunciation, in order to achieve a higher level of the target language. So, if you do not understand a culture, you cannot teach or learn specific meaning the language of that culture.

According to the article; ‘‘ *Linguistics across Cultures: The Impact of Culture on Second Language Learning*’’ there are six recommendations as instructional strategies for teaching SL within a cultural framework.

1. **Provide Culturally Learning Materials-** using appropriate resources for having various materials that are proficiency to the students’ level, makes learners more engaged in lesson and raises their motivation of learning something for the target culture and also, enhance their second language.
2. **Using Common Proverbs as Transferred Tool-** the use of proverbs guide students to explore similarities and dissimilarities of a culture by having a clear comprehension to the comparison of transferring proverbs into their mother tongues.
3. **Apply the Role Play as Socio-cultural Approach-** It is a useful approach applied in teaching a second language. According to Savignon (1997), sociocultural strategies can be seen as one of the most efficient ways for learners to achieve sociocultural competence within second language communicative competence and Tomalin and Stempleski (1993)

claims; that role-play activities can examine cultural behavior and patterns of communication.

4. **Encourage Students Search and Present through the Culture Capsules-** this strategy encourages students to find information by their own; investigating research in order that their learning style to be more effective by developing their skills about cultural relevance. Thus means, learners can make a comparison of cultures using their own skills to examine a survey related to the apparently issues.
5. **View Students as Cultural Resources-** teaching by utilizing online resources to present students' different cultures sometimes is not enough for having a clear information by learning from the same approach. Thus, having in a classroom exchange student, international students, immigrant students or someone that is not from the native culture, it is an opportunity to improve students' skills by learning the diversity of cultures and at the same time having direct contact with people/students of another culture.
6. **Use Computer Technology to Help Student Gain Cultural Information-** nowadays, students are very interested and engaged in technology. The use of technology is a modern teaching technique which creates an amazing environment in the education system by making teaching and learning more effective. As George Evans argued: every student can learn, just not in the same day or the same way, the use of technology encourages students to be involved in various activities shared online which facilitate their learning style.

### 3.2 The importance and the efficiency of ICC in English teaching and learning

Kramsch (2009: 190) argues that *the relation of a foreign language teaching, has fundamental implications: the goals of traditional language teaching have been found wanting in this new era of globalization. Its main tenets (monolingual native speakers, homogeneous national cultures, pure standard national languages, instrumental goals of education, functional criteria of success) have all become problematic in a world that is increasingly multilingual and multicultural.* Seidlhofer 2005; Jenkins 2007, claims that, *the use of English globally as a contact language has been addressed extensively, and at times controversially, in the field of ELF (English as a lingua franca) research.* Further, Allison & Rehm, 2007 suggested four strategies that teachers should apply in multicultural/multilingual classroom. These strategies have a huge impact on how students preserve information to be engaged with a lesson. The following strategies are:

1. **Visual Aids-** for students who are learning English as a second language are very beneficial resource since, the use of pictures, posters and story boards assign learners to improve the level of vocabulary and raise students' motivation of comprehending in the correct way.
2. **Peer tutoring-** enhances the development of self-confidence. By being able to show the skills of communication and sharing backgrounds engages students to work in pairs by practicing speaking in authentic and sharing ideas in normal conversations. Also, peer tutoring has been proved that has many benefits for young learners especially in multicultural classroom with English learners.
3. **Cooperative learning-** the use of cooperative learning by making different groups from various cultures and giving instructions how to collaborate and cooperate with each other, it has emerged that in this way we have a development of cross-understanding, a teamwork and upgrading language acquisition among diverse learners (Crandall, 1999; Crandall, Jaramillo, Olsen, & Peyton, 2001; Saravia-Shore & Garcia, 1995; Slavin, 1990; Snowman & Biehler, 2003).

4. **Alternative modes of assessment-** The use of multiple modes of assessment is important to present information to diverse students because, young learners demonstrate their strengths and weakness through the performance given. According to Kline,1995, portfolio is an important tool for assessment in a diverse classroom.

Thus, the importance of a culture in English teaching and learning has a significant role for using different approaches of teaching but at the meantime, helping students to have the appropriate comprehension regarding English as a foreign language. Moreover, there are various definitions related to the term of a culture and many rules of how humans should learn a second language. On the whole, teaching and learning always should go together for the reason that, if a teacher doesn't have the proper education for using methods of teaching there is no feedback from learning.

If a comparison was to be made between teachers who support four skills-based teaching and teachers who support ICC-based teaching, teachers would be divided into two groups where most teachers would think that ICC is more important than grammar and the rest, while others would believe it is just as important. Explaining why ICC is more important than traditional teaching is related to the fact that English is now an international curriculum and that students should be helped to avoid misunderstandings by enabling them to communicate more effectively and with more intercultural competence rather than being focused on teaching grammar and vocabulary. Many teachers have suggested that the ICC should definitely be incorporated into teaching thus forming new structures and a more comprehensive vocabulary in the curriculum thus fulfilling both goals at the same time. Teachers have already suggested that the ICC be referred to as the fifth skill.

### 3.3 The influence of cultural in teaching English as second language

The spread of English nowadays is the key to communicate with those who aren't able to speak our L1. The aim of teaching English to the learners should be provided in various ways in order to give students an intercultural perspective of English. Rahim Uddin Choudhury claims that; *cultural influence in teaching English as SL has an important role to the components of skills in learning and teaching a language, such as: Vocabulary, Listening, Speaking, Reading and Translating*. Stephen Krashen (1985:155) claims that: *Vocabulary is basic for communication. If acquirers do not recognize the meaning of the keywords used by those who address them, they will be unable to participate in the conversation. If they wish to express some idea or ask for information, they must be able to produce lexical items to convey their meaning*. Similarly, Taylor (1990: 1) point out that, *in order to live in the world, we must name it. Names are essential for the construction of reality for without a name it is difficult to accept the existence of an object, an even a feeling*.

Thus, having nobody of words or expressions of a particular language there is no path of proceeding communication. Additionally, listening, speaking and reading are the skills to produce/improve a language, while translating words from a language into another is the process of getting involved of apprehension to sympathy the other language.

According to Wei (2005, p. 56), *'language possesses a dual character: one as a means of communication and the other as a transferor of culture. Language without culture is impossible, human culture without language is too. A specific language is a mirror image of a particular culture'*. Brown (1994, p. 165) points out that: *'A language is a part of a culture and a culture is a part of a language; the two are complicatedly intertwined, so one cannot separate the two without losing the importance of either language or culture'*. As a matter of fact, the system of communication is the transmitter of a culture toward humans in order to maintain the concerns of using a language within another culture that differ a part of society embracing values and norms of living. At the meantime, culture and language are unseparated since, without a language you cannot figure out a culture and without a culture the language will lose its importance and predecessor of background.

Regard to teaching and learning English Gao (2006, p. 59) states it'' *the interdependence of language learning and cultural learning is so vivid that one can infer that language learning is culture learning and accordingly, language teaching is cultural teaching*'' . Therefore, learning about a culture is the same pathway of getting know about other languages. So, language is the approach of communication in each form of expressions. Whereas, culture is a component that is influenced / created by society. Before antiquity people were conceived to live and establish relationships with each other within social groupings. The culture of a certain people has some elements that represent it but also the people who preserve and display that culture on a daily basis. Elements and cultures are values, beliefs, names, breach experiments, symbols and languages. While the language that unites between them a culture and a common society is generally valued as a symbolic system that helps the individual and a society to decide to transmit their culture but also to interact with each other. Generally societies of c category to the same language, or the same linguistic elements. It is very important when learning English that the student knows how to distinguish between "soda" and "pop" or "soft drink". As a result of globalization, different societies with different cultures are making words borrowed from English such as "downloading" or "texting".

The Sapir-Whorf hypothesis is based on the idea that people experience their world through their language, and that for this reason they understand their world through the culture embedded in their language. The language of a society can be spoken or written, but the written language always has a very special importance for the preservation and transmission of language. Thus, learning and teaching a language there is no special rule of following only the education guidelines but, includes also discovering the way of where that language belongs and what kind of beliefs, values and customs are involved within that culture.

Moreover, the challenge of living abroad can have some advantages and disadvantages on educational path regarding learner's adaption toward another culture, which can cause some obstacles in teaching and learning English. For instance; the beginning every culture can be tough to a foreigner because of dissimilarities among each other. It will be hard to understand all in all a culture that is district from yours and this can make a human lonely, apathetic and indifferent to value the system of intellectualism inwardly align a culture.

However, the influence of culture in teaching and learning English firstly; award humans with an experience (diverse), secondly; consign better opportunities for teaching and learning English as a second language, thirdly; provides career development. In other words, being social with various cultures makes humans independent to collaborate freely and creatively in an educational environment by establishing the confluence of diversity innovation. Further, Horwitz (1988, p. 283) claims that: *“knowing the students’ beliefs about a particular language can help teachers to better understand their students’ expectations of, commitment to, success in and satisfaction with their classes”*. This is so, because the teachers, after gaining insight into the student’s attitudes towards a particular language, may eventually undertake the necessary steps to alter the negative attitudes.

### 3.4 Teaching language strategies and materials

In practice today in foreign language teaching classes around the world, there are activities described in the literature to increase intercultural competence. Powerful student-centered teaching strategies exist today and provide a rich foundation for the development of intercultural skills among students. Some studies are consistent in their disregard or low prioritization of any form of linguistic or cultural reflection or comparison in teacher abilities. Hoare and Kong's (1994) model of six basic attributes required by immersion teachers places cultural involvement as a last and low priority. Their list mentions bilingual proficiency, immersion teaching strategies aimed at integrating language and content across the curriculum, knowledge of target language, understanding of theories of second language learning and immersion education, commitment to immersion education, and knowledge of the target culture.

Curtain and Dahlberg (2004, p. 289) note, however, among other characteristics used by best practice immersion teachers, three particular behaviors which become important of intercultural language learning:

1. The use of contextual clues, such as gestures, facial expressions, use of visual props to facilitate comprehension and meaning.
2. The provision of purposeful hands-on learning experiences for students.
3. The use of linguistic modification, in spoken interaction, to make the target language more comprehensible for students (Moloney, 2007).

The most popular and effective technique is also role-play. In a role-play students take on a certain role to process, learn and then interpret in front of a certain audience which may be other students, their teachers or even an external audience. This is considered to be the most popular method of using language for communication, where students are encouraged by teachers to use language in imaginary and creative situations on various topics. Since the situations raised during the role-play are based on real life, it is necessary to use authentic and integrative materials from English-speaking countries during the game, which can be: tickets, menus, shopping lists and to advertise for participants. The goal of a well-organized group work is to achieve student concentration, as a very important factor in increasing ICC. This

principle ensures that the student's own culture is not treated as a concept abstract, but the focus is on the student's involvement. So in the end, students reflect on their culture based on their experiences. The fact that the inclusion of students' culture and experiences takes place in the English classroom, makes this subject completely different from teaching memory for other subjects (Byram, M. & Flemming, M. (Eds.) 1998). Although students have a general knowledge of culture, they should increase their search based on information in encyclopedias and the Internet and analyze this data, presenting at the end only the most appropriate material for their cultural topic.

Another technique is self-exploration. The result of this technique is expected to promote cultural awareness of the diversity of one's own culture as well as individual family concepts (Tomalin & Stempleski, 1993). The best method to develop cultural awareness is to use different vocabulary and figures from different cultures. This task encourages the mothers, in addition to group work, to compile the family tree or diagrams related to the word family or various topics of daily life such as breakfast, etc. During this method students are taught to compare different cultures between family and daily activities as well as to avoid misunderstandings they may have with different connotations of English culture.

Another technique is to create an authentic environment or as Hughes (1986) called the "Island of Culture". Creating an authentic environment can be achieved by decorating the classroom with images of English culture such as posters, food photos, photos of the transport system. This technique aims to attract students' attention, stimulate questions and comments while students can actively participate in this process by bringing authentic materials about the habit of eating, drinking, etc. and sharing this information with the whole class.

In today's classrooms the use of additional teaching materials with the help of multimedia tools has been followed by various scholars as stimuli and rewards for both students and EFL teachers. Authentic materials include websites, blogs, TV shows, movies and anything useful to use in class to develop intercultural skills. The use of authentic materials is seen to be easily accessible and relatively easy and reliable as a real situation. For example, shows that show the way of setting the table, eating, drinking tea aim to encourage foreigners to adapt to English culture and to behave in the future in society like them. Only by learning the culture of a state do students become aware that their cultural background influences their behavior

and develops tolerance for patterns of behavior that are different from their behavior and culture (Tomalin & Stempleski, 1993, p. 82).

Citizenship and cultural exploration through discovery can be done by students in the form of interviews with English-speaking individuals outside physical classes located in schools. In this way students interpret and construct their model of learning culture through exploration. The teacher should encourage the student at the end of the visit and the interview to present an oral report to understand what the learner has gained in relation to the English-speaking culture from this interview.

It is much more important that special attention be paid to dealing with cultural stereotypes. Students can engage in various tasks of recognizing and exploring the cultural stereotypes that exist in the world. For example, students can present their ideas about English speakers through posters / photos.

Case studies increase students' ability in written and oral communication, while also collaborating as a group work. "Case studies force students into real life situations," training them in managerial skills such as "holding a meeting, negotiating a contract, giving a presentation, etc." (Daly, 2002). Good case studies focus on one issue or problem, and have a clear statement of the problem. As a good case study, we can take the following case as an example (DUET, 2009).

### 3.5 Communication and learners' need

Various scholars in the field but also English language teachers have long been trying to answer the question: "what competencies does a language learner need to have?" and the answers gained from this question have greatly influenced the formation and direction of pedagogical approaches, methods, materials, and actions undertaken by classroom teachers. Throughout this experience, foreign language teaching and the competencies involved include the latest methods of pedagogy conceived, systematized and implemented.

It is often argued that learning in a culture along with the language it represents is necessary, but there is also no denying the fact that cultural awareness would facilitate interpersonal communication, and the first component worth mentioning is the socio-linguistic competence to form the cultural dimension of foreign language classroom teaching. The main drawback of this model is that it fails to take into account the situation and the need for authentic communication in a broad intercultural environment of globalization, where English is a means of communication of different people with cultural and linguistic backgrounds completely different from each other. This critique emphasizes that English culture is being forced to be taught alongside the language in the classroom when in fact an average student may never meet in his life a man valued by English culture. This critique has influenced the redefinition of the competencies that students learning a foreign language should display.

Penbek et al (2009) reported that being interculturally competent as a communicator requires psychological adjustment, the ability to execute effectively, and appropriate communicative behavior to highlight the desired response in a specific setting. Chen (1990) also mentioned in the literature personal attributes such as showing respect, interactive behaviors, knowledge orientation, sensitivity, management and tolerance of uncertainty (Ruben, 1976).

In order to achieve the goals, the teaching materials must occupy an important place, emphasizing the culture, the target culture and the international culture. McKay (2010) argued that materials should be used in order to create an intercultural sphere between the culture of local students and the culture of the foreign language.

All of these considerations suggest that English language classes should promote awareness of the cultural values that stand among the most fundamental stones for teachers to encourage their students to become observers, good analysts, and discover territory. The role of teachers in this process is to provide a map and students to complete it, which shows that teachers and their continuous education is an important factor for better ICC's research.

### 3.6 Training of English language teachers to improve ICC involvement in teaching

According to a study conducted in 2015 by researchers Demircioglu and Cakur in Turkish schools for ICC English language teachers, it turned out that out of a total of 60 foreign language teachers, only 18 of them had completed at least one treatment for ICC and most of them was in the countries of America, while Europe was in very small numbers in this regard.

*“The teacher from New Zealand said that in the training, she learned about the differences in cultures and world views, explored similarities between cultures and learned about how culture is embedded in language. The Spanish teacher explained that she attended a course that was followed by written examinations, school visits and pilot teaching. The intercultural communication trainings of the teachers from the USA were typical university level intercultural courses, a course called Multi-Cultural Education or a multiculturalism in education course. In these courses, they studied the cultural biases and lenses through which people see the world, doing a lot of reading, watching documentaries and doing some simulations.”*

There are several methods that teachers can follow to involve the ICC in teaching a second foreign language. Among them are methods such as: youth projects, training projects or short courses, communicating with native English language teachers, courses for ethnic studies or specific courses for Academic Instruction in English. Communication with others is essential as the teacher benefits from other people both transmitting grammatical structures and cultural messages. Researchers have estimated that teachers who have received training or have had the experience of cultural exchange with people from other countries or nations result in greater awareness of cultural diversity and are more willing to share these diversities with their students. Teachers have estimated that interactions with people from different cultures have enabled you to gain new perspectives, broaden your vision, gain broad perspectives and transfer this knowledge to students through classroom activities. It is also worth noting that these activities make the teacher more open-minded, tolerant, flexible and willing to take new risks.

Such experiences help the teacher to adjust and review once again the content and purpose of teaching by being more interested in the culture and more confident in what they convey. Most teachers agree that there are different types of teaching according to different cultures. Example:

students in the Balkans tend to learn better just by passing exams, while students in Asia tend to learn more in terms of perfecting a foreign language to interact in everyday life.

On a general level, teachers write that these experiences have made them more patient and empathetic and have expanded their learning in the best way.

## 4. METHODOLOGY

The methodology chosen for this study is quantitative. For empirical studies there are two methods of data collection and analysis. One of the methods is the quantitative one, where numerical data are analyzed and the presentation of results is done with graphs and tables. The other method is the qualitative method, where the data is taken from the opinions, experiences and subjective judgments of the interviewees. This study is a quantitative study, but at the end of the data analysis will be devoted a section to the personal and subjective opinion of the participants on the topic.

Secondary data are initially collected through desk research. Secondary data are data that are generated through different books, or by collecting data from previous studies on the same topic, or similar topics. Primary data are those data that are collected directly for this study, and have not been used for other reasons before or after. Primary data are taken from the semi-structured to be disseminated.

Since this study is intended to be a case report, initially the researcher has selected a school in which the study will be conducted. The school selected for this study is the High-school “Zenel Hajdini”, who is a gymnasium for classes from 10-12 and the age of the students who attend it is 15-19 years old.

*The study population* in this case is the total number of parents, teachers, parents who have at least 1 child in this school as students and administrative staff of the school. In total the school has 60 teachers and a number of students about 2500. The number of foreign language teachers is 6 in total. *The target group* of the study is composed of English teachers, 30 randomly selected students and 20 randomly selected parents.

Before starting the interview process I have done some observations about the classes, the presentation of additional materials and the environment created within the school in relation to the ICC.

The instrument used in this study is a semi-structured interview. 3 different interviews are designed for each category, for teachers, students and parents. The construction of the interviews are in clear line to answer the research questions and to support our hypotheses. The

main purpose of designing the interview is to guide participants towards asking questions to achieve the purpose of this research topic which is basically the evaluation of the role of the ICC in teaching English in high-school.

The interviews are designed and piloted in a group of 6 individuals, 1 teacher, 3 students and 2 parents. Piloting itself as a process will help me refine the questions but also add some questions if necessary. For the administration of the interview, a permit was initially requested from the school directorate and then a calendar of interviews was drafted. It is thought that an interview takes 10-20 minutes to complete. The whole interview process are last for a period of 2 weeks in May 2021. The interview process is taken place on the school premises, in one of the English language teaching classes. During the interview, calm it was maintained, and the researcher have not interfered in the process so as not to distract the participants. At the end of the interview, some qualitative data are collected, where participants were asked about their personal experiences and have recommended their ideas to the ICC.

The data from the interviews will be mainly numerical and after their collection they will be analyzed with statistical programs Excel or SPSS. Data analysis will also be reflected in the relevant graphs and tables.

## **5. ETHICS**

Throughout the study, in both phases of the interview and data analysis, the ethos of questioning, respect for human rights to information, and ensuring the rights of individuals who become an active part of a study were maintained. Before the start of the interview, the participants were introduced to their rights and the way the interview would take place, receiving their approval uninfluenced by external factors. Interview data are encrypted and 100% anonymity of participants is maintained.

## 6. RESULTS

### 6.1 Interviews with teachers

In the introductory questions of the interview with the teachers, they were asked some introductory demographic questions and you were given a short presentation on the topic and the main questions of the interview.

Of all the teachers surveyed, 4 of them were female, 1 was male and 1 individual did not prefer to be identified for his gender. Other personal data of teachers are not collected and the data is encrypted only with initials, thus preserving the complete privacy of teachers.

Considering that ICC is a relatively new concept introduced in education in Kosovo only in the last 10 years, a very important fact is the age group to which teachers belong. 2 of the teachers were in the age group of 20-30 years, 2 teachers were in the age group of 31-40 years and 2 teachers were in the age group of 41-50 years.

- *Do you think that teaching including culture and cultural awareness in English language teaching is more effective than classical teaching?*

Following the collection of teachers' demographic data, a focused interview was conducted on the concepts of Culture, Cultural Awareness and Intercultural Competence. All the teachers surveyed stated at the beginning of the interview that the use of Culture and Cultural Awareness in English and foreign language curricula would be more effective than classical text-based teaching and reading instruction, and completing homework.

- *Intercultural competence has recently emerged as the fifth skills in the literature, which one do you see as the most important?*

In order for students to learn English in a fluent way and to be able to communicate freely with native English speakers, they must have optimally learned all the skills that are valued by teachers as important. 3 of the teachers in the study were of the opinion that the most important skill to be acquired by students is "Speaking".

2 of the teachers evaluated as very important skill "Intercultural Competence" and learning English language based on the culture, traditions, customs, way of eating of a country and of

course giving value to the learning of phraseological expressions and expressions of the language of spoken in everyday life.

1 of the teachers evaluated as the most important skill "Listening", which could be practiced through various movies, listening to English songs, serials and documentaries.

- *Can cultural background effects students learning English?*

Half of the teachers surveyed were totally convinced that cultural background influenced the way students learned English, and the other half did not have a well-defined opinion about the influence of cultural background. The way the cultural background was influenced is in the student's ability to make a comparison between the cultural elements of his country and those of English-speaking countries.

- *What do you consider to be the most important role of teachers in recognizing Intercultural competence in teaching English?*

As the main role was evaluated to teach students to express themselves correctly in different occasions. 2 of the teachers answered that they must have a wide variety of different cultural background knowledge. Teachers are also responsible for transforming clear information related to cultures.

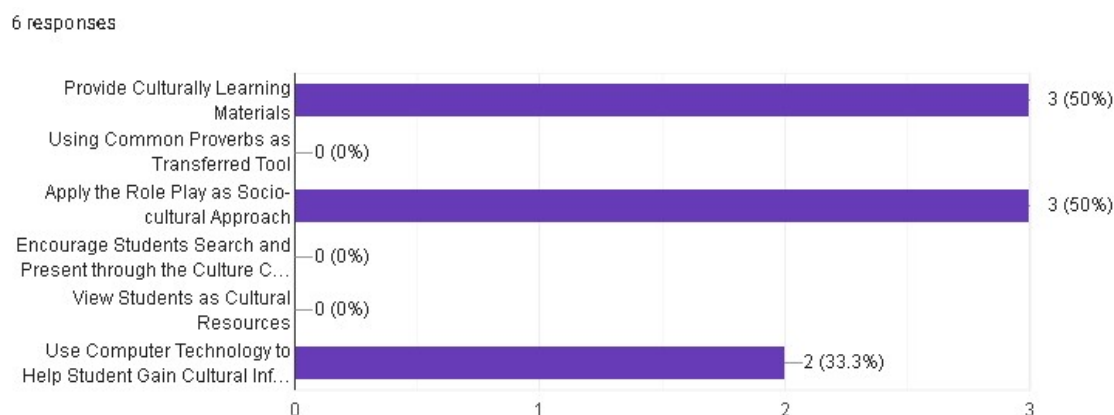
- *Do you use intercultural competence during your class?*

Out of the total number of 6 teachers interviewed, 5 of them answered that they often used ICC in their classroom and only 1 did not include ICC in the lessons.

- *There are five recommendations as instructional strategies for teaching English within a cultural framework, which one would you choose to develop in your classroom?*

In this question, teachers could choose more than one strategy from what the literature on ICC inclusion in the curriculum recommends.

3 of the teachers are selected as the best strategy to provide culturally learning materials. 3 of the teachers are selected to apply the role play as socio-cultural approach. And 2 of them are selected as a strategy the use of technology to help students gain cultural information.



*Figure No. 3: There are five recommendations as instructional strategies for teaching English within a cultural framework, which one would you choose to develop in your classroom?*

- *To increase the efficiency of using the ICC would you use :*

After evidencing the efficiency of using the ICC for teaching English, teachers but also various authors have evaluated several methods on how this efficiency can be increased during practice. Three of the teachers reported that they often used Cooperative Learning in order to increase the efficiency of using the ICC during the lesson.

Other teachers also select methods such as peer tutoring, visual aids and alternative assessment modes.

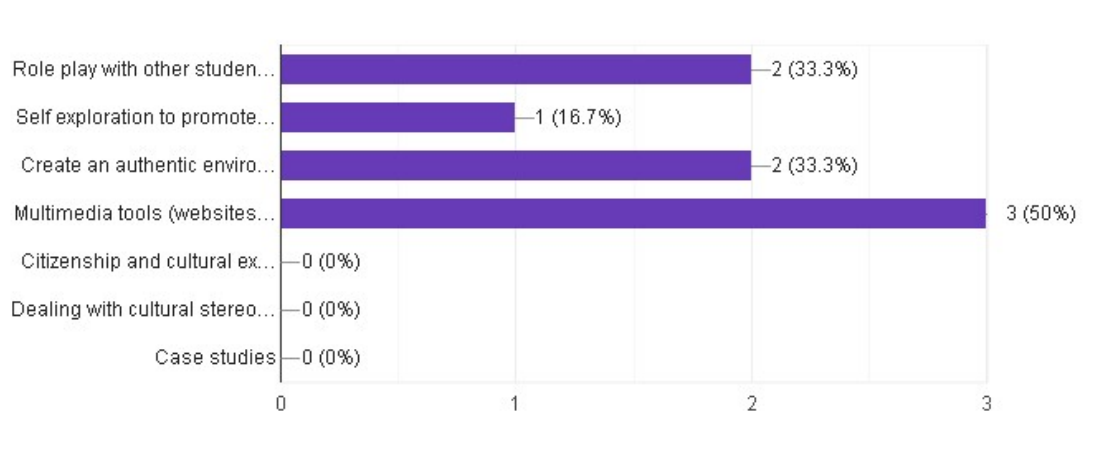
- *There are some extra activities than can be added to the lessons or, arranging the available time for improving the foreign language in a school environment. Which would you choose?*

Practicing a foreign language requires activities and the organization of free hours for students to become familiar with the second language and to be able to speak as much as possible, to make it possible to communicate with foreigners in the future, or to better prepare them for education and employment in countries that speak English as their official language. Even in this question teachers could choose more than one alternative, as it is thought that these activities can be alternated with each other to make teaching as attractive as possible. Even in this question, teachers could list some extra activities that could be included in the English language lesson.

The most selected activity by teachers was the inclusion of multimedia tools, such as websites, blogs, TV shows and movies.

2 of the teachers are selected as role play activities among the students and the creation of an authentic environment or "Island of Culture" (posters, food photos, photos of the transport system).

Self exploration to promote cultural awareness of the diversity of one's own culture as well as individual family concepts, was selected as an activity only by one teacher.



*Figure No. 4: There are some extra activities than can be added to the lessons or, arranging the available time for improving the foreign language in a school environment.*

*Which would you choose?*

- *At the end of the lesson, think that your students are better able to:*

All teachers surveyed, at this point came together under the same opinion, that at the end of the high school cycle students will be able to interact with individuals of different cultures, conversing with them through English.

- *After using the methods and activities that enhance ICC think your students :*

Even for this question, the teachers referred that with the involvement of the ICC in the teaching of English in recent years, the way of perception and learning of the secondary language is quite efficient and this results in the significant improvement made by the students of the high schools of the gymnasium of taken into study.

- *Do you think that including the ICC, the management of the lesson is done :*

Teachers often use different methods, activities and strategies for managing the lesson in their classroom. The use of ICC has had its own impact in recent years on the management of the classroom and the established teacher-student relationship. As the use of ICC has given its results in learning efficiency, in the organization of the lesson, even the management of the lesson has become easier according to 2 of the English language teachers. For one of them classroom management has become more difficult after the involvement of the ICC, and for three of them there is no change in the management of the lesson.

- *As a teacher, have you ever completed training for ICC inclusion in the curriculum?*

Two of the teachers surveyed reported having done postgraduate training for ICC inclusion in the English language curriculum, and 4 of them had never done postgraduate training.

- *What recommendations can you give for the inclusion of ICC in Kosovo schools?*

*“To involve students more in the path of ICC, a teacher needs to prepare activities for raising awareness to learn the right key of facts that are related with different cultures. Using modern techniques, students create different mentality and will accept easily the other cultures.”*

*Involving more cultural topics may help students to be aware of other cultures and not to prejudice others for not having information about their culture.*

*Making friends from different countries may help them to improve their awareness of different cultures*

- *In your opinion, which are your needs as a teacher for wider ICC involvement in the classroom?*

*“Being aware of other cultures and engaging yourself in a path which is different from what you are used, it raise the curiosity to discover and facing the dimension of ICC around the world. The need to get known or learn something that you haven’t known before will always be present. A short travel, reading articles online and watching films that are related to the current topic, in my opinion, these are the needs for understanding ICC.”*

*“Using online materials and communication with those whose L1 is not Albanian , students would be more open minded and will not be friendly only with some specific groups but their awareness would be raised by improving their second language (English) with those who have a diverse culture.”*

*“As a teacher, I strongly recommend the ICC involvement in the classroom. Teachers & Students, should have access in the information, in order to deal and to put in practice ICC.”*

## 4.2 Student and parent questionnaire as student companions

This questionnaire was used as an additional tool to complete the full framework of the analysis of this study, to collect data from students in the class, and parents as their companions. The tool used for students is a short questionnaire with closed questions, developed in both Albanian and English. Also at the end the students were asked about the recommendations that they thought were necessary changes and requirements that arose during the development of English language learning.

- *How long have been learning English?*

In the first question the students were asked how long they had been learning English. This question is important for the study because in Kosovo there are still 9-year schools that do not have English language teaching in their curriculum. From the results of the questionnaires about 92% of the students had more than 3 years of learning English and only 8% of them had less than 3 years.



Figure No. 5: How long have been learning English?

- *Have ever culture been included during your English classes?*

According to the students' experience, 77.8% of them had participated in English language classes that included culture during the lessons, 22.2% of them had not developed lessons about the elements of English culture.

Have ever culture been included during your English classes? (A është përfshirë ndonjëherë kultura gjatë orëve tuaja te gjuhes

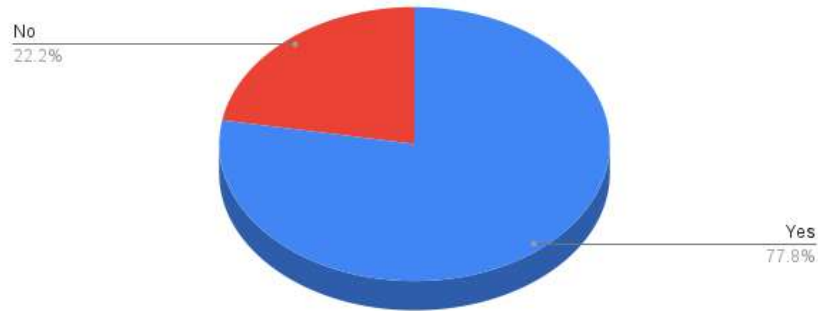


Figure No. 6: Have ever culture been included during your English classes?

- Has the inclusion of culture influenced the way you have learned English?

According to the subjective perception of students, the inclusion of culture in the lessons has influenced the way they learn English in 66.7% of cases. The impact of culture on the process can be assessed by changing the methods students use to learn new words, to write, speak and practice listening.

Has the inclusion of culture influenced the way you have learned English? (A ka ndikuar përfshirja e kulturës në mënyrën se si

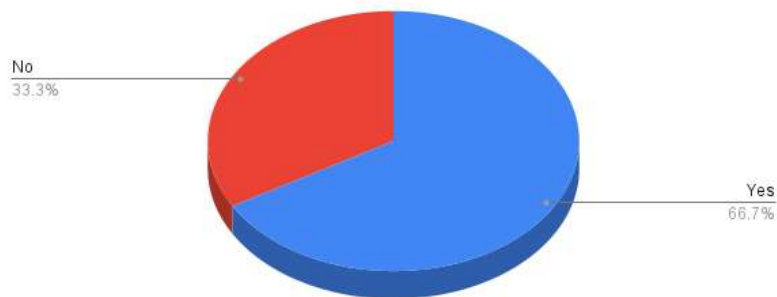
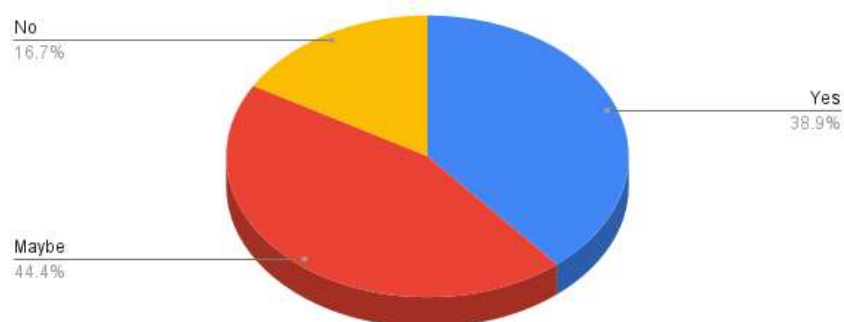


Figure No. 7: Has the inclusion of culture influenced the way you have learned English?

- *Do you think that learning more about English language culture will help you to learn English better?*

About 38% of students thought that learning English culture would help them learn or improve their English. On the contrary 44% of them were not convinced about the influence of culture and about 17% of them thought that learning culture would not help them to learn English.

Do you think that learning more about English language culture will help you to learn English better? (A mendoni se të mësuarit



*Figure No. 8: Do you think that learning more about English language culture will help you to learn English better?*

- *Have you ever traveled abroad, mainly to English speaking countries?*

At a time when the trends of globalization are always closer to each other, the students of the state of Kosovo seem to have moved more and more freely in recent years towards English-speaking countries. Generally at a time when English is one of the most widely spoken languages in the world, when traveling for tourism or other reasons, it is necessary for the person to have knowledge of English in order to communicate freely with the locals. 52.8% of students surveyed have traveled at least once to English speaking countries, otherwise 47.2% of students have never traveled to these countries.

Have you ever traveled abroad, mainly to English speaking countries? (A kenë udhëtuar ndonjëherë jashtë vendit, kryesisht)

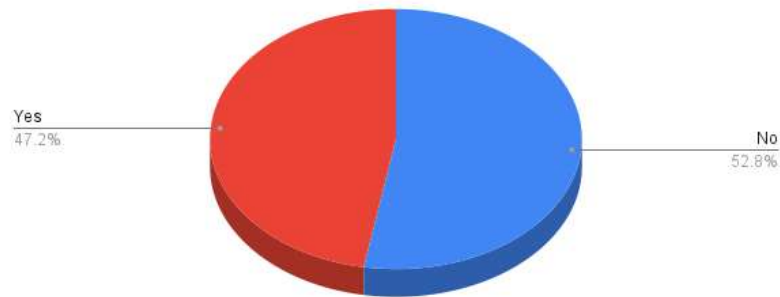


Figure No. 9: Have you ever traveled abroad, mainly to English speaking countries?

- Have you managed to communicate optimally with the locals during your trip?

During the trips, but also in other situations when the students had to communicate with the locals, about 55% of them managed to communicate freely with them, while the rest encountered difficulties to speak freely.

Have you managed to communicate optimally with the locals during your trip? (A kenë arritur të komunikoni në mënyrë)

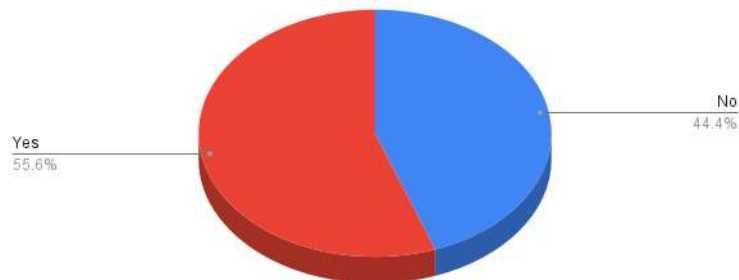
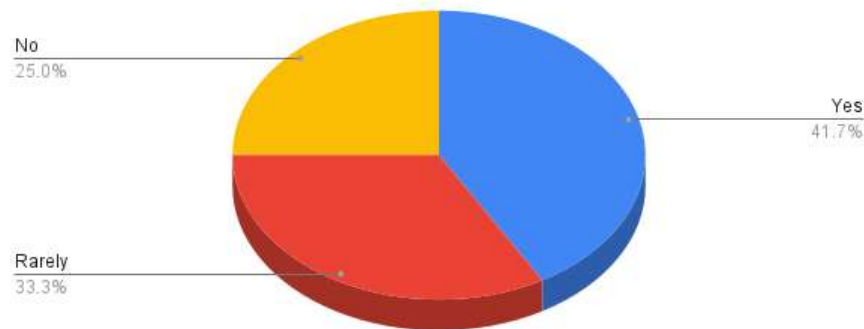


Figure No. 10: Have you managed to communicate optimally with the locals during your trip?

- What about your classmates, do you often speak English? Do you organize group discussions or free hours?

Various scholars have often pointed out that one of the best tools for improving the German language is communication between the same age groups. But in the school surveyed only 42% of students reported that they often organized free hours to discuss in English.

What about your classmates, do you often speak English? Do you organize group discussions or free hours? (Po me shokët e

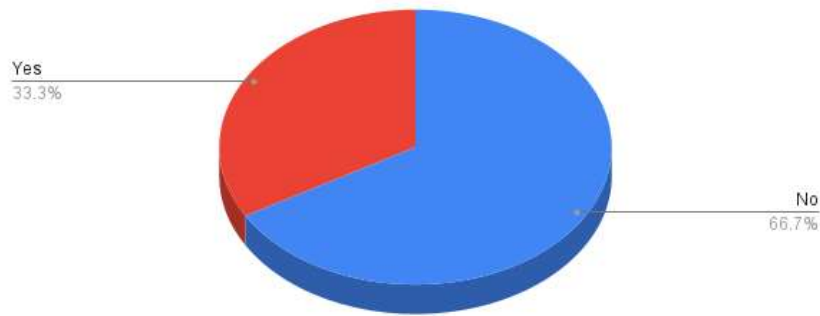


*Figure No. 11: What about your classmates, do you often speak English? Do you organize group discussions or free hours?*

- *Do you often talk to parents in English?*

The role of parents in involvement in the whole learning process has been proven to be among the main pillars of learning. The duties of parents are to participate in the learning process, to be aware of the progress and improvement of students, to establish healthy relationships with teachers and to spend a few minutes or hours a day learning with their children. But even for parents in Kosovo, English is still a new concept, introduced only in recent years in Kosovo. So they themselves often have difficulty communicating, thus becoming a difficulty in the opportunity to communicate with their children, or to follow them in improving their English. Even in the questionnaire developed students reported that only 33.3% of them often communicated in English with their parents.

Do you often talk to parents in English? (A flisni shpesh me prindërit në anglisht?)

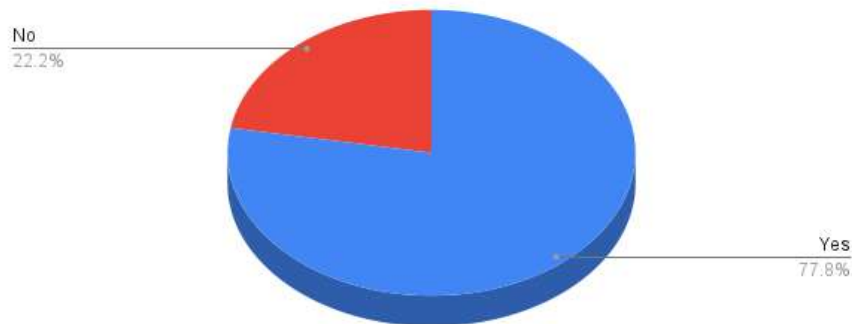


*Figure No. 12: Do you often talk to parents in English?*

- *Have you recently seen movies or documentaries about English culture?*

Watching movies and documentaries in English has a variety of benefits in the process of learning English. They help improve listening and speaking skills. Involving culture in films or documentaries also helps students learn more about how a country is dressed, fed, transported, tourist destinations, economy and politics. In this way the student finds it easier to get involved in the ideology of that people, but at the same time to practice the foreign language. About 78% of the students surveyed said they had recently seen movies and documentaries in English.

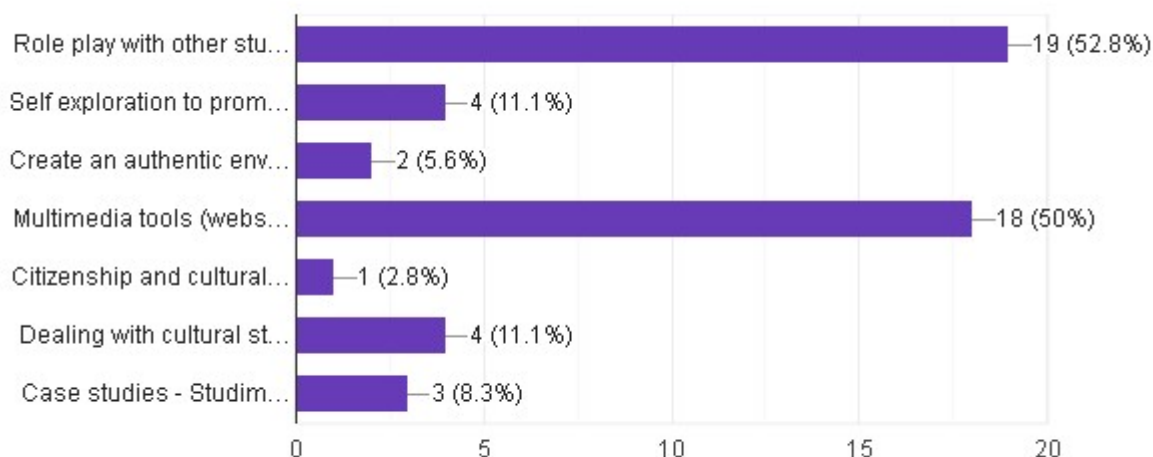
Have you recently seen movies or documentaries about English culture? (A keni parë kohët e fundit filma ose dokumentarë në



*Figure No. 13: Have you recently seen movies or documentaries about English culture?*

- *Which of the following English language improvement activities have helped you the most?*

A complete list of activities that can be done in the classroom to improve the English language is also presented in the chart below. What stands out is that the students helped with 2 main activities, such as role play and multimedia tools.



*Figure No. 14: Which of the following English language improvement activities have helped you the most?*

- *What additional materials have been used during English classes in your school?*

As additional materials most used in English language classes students referred to the use of posters with different themes. In second place as the most used materials were listed online stories, which students selected by conducting research on the Internet and then introduced and discussed among themselves in class. Also common were various games and group work in the form of group talks or workgroups.

With the inclusion of technology in the teaching process, teachers often organize free hours including movies, videos, music, etc.

- *In your opinion, after finishing high school you will be better able to :*

After graduating from high school, in relation to English, students thought that subjectively 57.1% of them would be able to interact with individuals of different cultures. The rest, 42.9% of them think they will be able to take an exam to defend their English language level.

In your opinion, after finishing high school you will be better able to : (Sipas mendimit tuaj, pas mbarimit të shkollës së mesme do

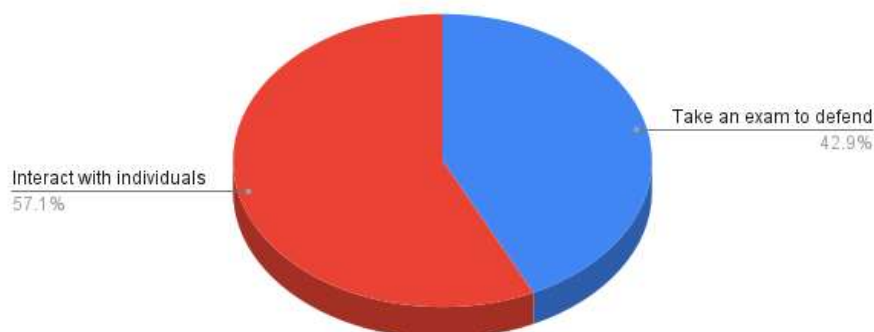


Figure No. 15: In your opinion, after finishing high school you will be better able to :

- *After using the methods and activities that enhance ICC do you think that you:*

Regarding the effectiveness of the use of ICC methods, 94% of students reported that after using the methods and activities that include ICC in the classroom, they had a significant improvement in the foreign language, in contrast 6% of students reported that had not undergone any change in English language learning.

After using the methods and activities that enhance ICC do you think that: you: (Pas përdorimit të metodave dhe aktiviteteve që

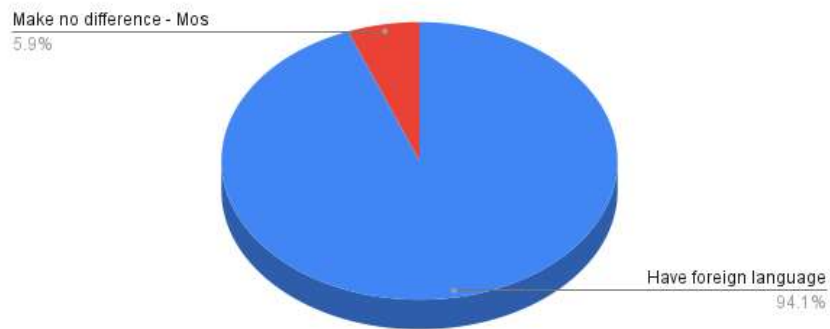


Figure No. 16: After using the methods and activities that enhance ICC do you think that you:

- Do you feel difficulties learning about other cultures in English lessons?

With the inclusion of the ICC in the English language curriculum across high schools, most students are facing for the first time learning the cultural elements of English-speaking countries. Sometimes learning a new culture, different from the culture of the local people is relatively difficult. But 64% of students reported that they had no difficulty in learning other cultures, and only 36% of them encountered difficulties.

Do you feel difficulties learning about other cultures in English lessons? (A ndjeni vështirësi të mesoni rreth kulturave të tjera

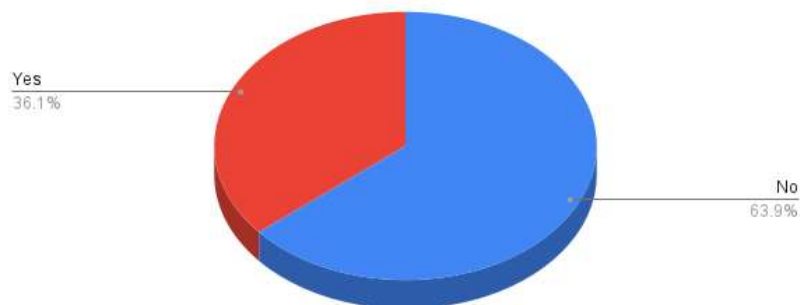


Figure No. 17: Do you feel difficulties learning about other cultures in English lessons?

- *What are some of the difficulties you encounter most?*

Some of the difficulties associated with ICC involvement in ETL are expressing in English, speaking fluently and fluently, adapting grammar to everyday speech and pronunciation.

- *Regarding the inclusion of culture, what would you like to change in the English language lessons?*

Almost all students who agreed to give their recommendations for wider ICC involvement to increase the effectiveness of the English language classroom in the gymnasium, the recommendations were to increase the total number of internships and to increase communication with teachers or native English language students.

- More activities in class,
- More speaking activities,
- Practice the british accent,
- Group activities,
- Watch movies together in class,
- More interaction opportunities with foreign students living abroad through video camera, in order to practice the language,
- Focusing more on the culture of the language than just the grammar and rules,
- More interaction opportunities with foreign students living abroad through video camera, in order to practice the language,
- I would like our school to have a student exchange program for schools abroad.

### 4.3 Discussions

The results obtained from the observation and analysis of the data made in the above chapter have provided very important data on the importance of using the ICC in teaching English, with a special focus on improving the speech of second language learners and in increasing everyday language skills, thus increasing the interactivity between students and native English speakers.

All the teachers surveyed stated at the beginning of the interview that the use of Culture and Cultural Awareness in English and foreign language curricula would be more effective than classical text-based teaching and reading instruction, and completing homework. It is very important in practice for the ICC to be involved as a fifth skill, and to integrate all of these together throughout the lesson. Out of the total number of 6 teachers interviewed, 5 of them answered that they often used ICC in their classroom and only 1 did not include ICC in the lessons.

Strategies for ICC inclusion in the English language class are numerous, but some of them are selected as the most preferred and efficient teachers. The two most preferred strategies of teachers are to provide culturally learning materials and apply the role play of socio-cultural approach. Among the methods that can be used for the use of ICC during the lesson, the teachers of Kosovo are selected three of the main methods that can be used in the classroom as an example: multimedia tools, role play and create an authentic environment.

But what is the role of the teacher in the whole process of ICC involvement throughout the lesson, other than the classic role of explaining the lesson? All teachers surveyed, at this point came together under the same opinion, that at the end of the high school cycle students will be able to interact with individuals of different cultures, conversing with them through English.

Regarding the effectiveness of the use of ICC methods, 94% of students reported that after using the methods and activities that include ICC in the classroom, they had a significant improvement in the foreign language and 36% of them encountered difficulties during ICC inclusion. in the teaching hour.

According to the subjective perception of students, the inclusion of culture in the lessons has influenced the way they learn English in 66.7% of cases. A good portion of these students who

have been part of the classes where ICC has become part of the English language curriculum have best demonstrated that using ICC increases the chances of improving their English. 52.8% of surveyed students have traveled at least once to English speaking countries, and 55% of students have managed at least once to better manage communication with a native English speaker.

The role of parents is very important in the learning process of being a child or adolescent. The role of parents is always related to the physical-social-economic condition of parents. Also in relation to learning English, only 33.3% of students communicate with parents in English, caused by the political transition and the late opening of the borders that Kosovo has experienced as a state.

#### 4.4 Recommendations

The first recommendation of this thesis goes to the topic about the tools used during the class that would help to implement the ICC more easily in the classroom. When we mention tools, we mention technology as a computer or projector, posters and visual presentation boards and additional tools. Modern textbooks are faced with a wide range of criticism with regard to their content and the underlying methodological-didactic theories, which is why calls for the abolition of textbook-based teaching, or at least the revision of basic conceptualizations, are expressed. The material basis of modern foreign language teaching can only be improved on the basis of scientifically sound research into textbooks. In the following, the function and status of the textbook in the textbook network will be presented and its role in conveying culture-related content will be analyzed. The foundation of a textbook criticism and analysis is then carried out, providing an overview of the relevant research results and pointing out future research desiderata, before finally methodical conceptions of scientific textbook analysis are presented.

The recommendation for which all teachers felt an urgent need were also the lack of postgraduate training for teachers and the inclusion of the ICC in the classroom. Pedagogy, psychology, cultural and organizational sciences as well as some subject didactics deal with the topic of “intercultural competence” in different ways. This has resulted in a variety of definitions and empirical approaches that do not always seem to be taken note of by each other. From an international perspective, too, one has the impression that the discourse is more local. The dynamic concept of culture is in line with developments in intercultural pedagogy. The learning objectives are critical reflection on external images and one's own cultural self-evident, the ability to empathize and take on perspectives, and the ability to deal with conflict.

Practical recommendations are directed towards the integration of new strategies and methods for the involvement of the ICC, not forgetting even the cultural background of the first language student. The better we know our culture, the better we are able to accept a second language culture. During the ethnocentric stages, the worldview restricted to one's own culture remains central to the construction of reality. Cultural ignorance ("denial") is followed by rejection ("defense"). Towards the end of the ethnocentric levels (“minimization”), cultural differences are negated with a universalistic or transcendental justification. In the ethno relative stages, the construction of reality takes place on the basis of cultural interrelationships. Behavior is

interpreted against the background of the cultural context (“acceptance”). With growing sensitivity, cultural differences are experienced more dynamically. The person increasingly perceives himself as a product and constructor of his or her culture (“adaptation”). The development of intercultural sensitivity is ultimately the development of a new awareness and thus a new access to the interpretation of cultural differences ("integration").

The next recommendation is the academic and curricular one, where teachers should program more hours to deal with cultural elements and should find the right way to combine classical teaching with ICC. In their entirety, the curricula reflect the identified dimensions of intercultural competence. Not everyone refers to all of the dimensions mentioned in their curricula. In particular, empathy, insight into affectivity and metacognitive processes play no or only a subordinate role in some curricula.

## 4.5 Conclusions

In regard to teachers questionnaire, the following conclude the results:

- ☐ 3 of the teachers in the study were of the opinion that the most important skill to be acquired by students is “Speaking”.
- ☐ 2 of the teachers evaluated as very important skill &quot;Intercultural Competence&quot; and learning English language based on the culture, traditions, customs, way of eating of a country and of course giving value to the learning of phraseological expressions and expressions of the language of spoken in everyday life.
- ☐ Half of the teachers surveyed were totally convinced that cultural background influenced the way students learned English, and the other half did not have a well-defined opinion about the influence of cultural background.
- ☐ 2 of the teachers answered that they must have a wide variety of different cultural background knowledge. Teachers are also responsible for transforming clear information related to cultures.
- ☐ Out of the total number of 6 teachers interviewed, 5 of them answered that they often used ICC in their classroom and only 1 did not include ICC in the lessons.
- ☐ 3 of the teachers are selected to apply the role play as socio-cultural approach. And 2 of them are selected as a strategy the use of technology to help students gain cultural information.
- ☐ Three of the teachers reported that they often used Cooperative Learning in order to increase the efficiency of using the ICC during the lesson.
- ☐ 2 of the teachers are selected as role play activities among the students and the creation of an authentic environment or &quot;Island of Culture&quot; (posters, food photos, photos of the transport system.
- ☐ All teachers surveyed said that at the end of the high school cycle students will be able to interact with individuals of different cultures, conversing with them through English.
- ☐ As the use of ICC has given its results in learning efficiency, in the organization of the

lesson, even the management of the lesson has become easier according to 2 of the English language teachers. For one of them classroom management has become more

difficult after the involvement of the ICC, and for three of them there is no change in the management of the lesson.

□ Two of the teachers surveyed reported having done postgraduate training for ICC inclusion in the English language curriculum, and 4 of them had never done postgraduate training.

Meanwhile, the following conclusions derive from students' questionnaire:

--> From the results of the questionnaires about 92% of the students had more than 3 years of learning English and only 8% of them had less than 3 years.

--> 77.8% of the students had participated in English language classes that included culture during the lessons, 22.2% of them had not developed lessons about the elements of English culture.

--> According to the subjective perception of students, the inclusion of culture in the lessons has influenced the way they learn English in 66.7% of cases.

--> About 38% of students thought that learning English culture would help them learn or improve their English.

--> 52.8% of students surveyed have traveled at least once to English speaking countries, otherwise 47.2% of students have never traveled to these countries.

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--> During the trips, but also in other situations when the students had to communicate with the locals, about 55% of them managed to communicate freely with them, while the rest encountered difficulties to speak freely.

--> In the school surveyed only 42% of students reported that they often organized free hours to discuss in English.

--> Students reported that only 33.3% of them often communicated in English with their parents.

--> About 78% of the students surveyed said they had recently seen movies and documentaries in English.

-->After graduating from high school, in relation to English, students thought that subjectively 57.1% of them would be able to interact with individuals of different cultures. The rest, 42.9% of them think they will be able to take an exam to defend their English language level.

--> 94% of students reported that after using the methods and activities that include ICC in the classroom, they had a significant improvement in the foreign language.

--> 64% of students reported that they had no difficulty in learning other cultures, and only 36% of them encountered difficulties.

At the end of this study thesis it was concluded that the involvement of the ICC in the teaching of English as a second language in Kosovo is quite effective in improving speaking during the lesson. ICC helps students be better prepared for their travels to English-speaking countries. In the classes that ICC includes during the lesson, students have higher academic results at the end of the school year.

#### **4.6 Limitations**

This study, like any other study has some limitations that result during the period of data collection and analysis.

The main limitation is the small number of participants in the study, not statistically representing the entire state of Kosovo. Also, in the state of limitations from the Covid-19 pandemic, meetings with teachers were difficult to achieve optimally.

It is recommended that this study be extended to other schools and cities.

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