



UNIVERSITETI I EVROPËS JUGLINDORE
УНИВЕРЗИТЕТ НА ЈУГОИСТОЧНА ЕВРОПА
SOUTH EAST EUROPEAN UNIVERSITY

Faculty of Languages, Cultures and Communication

MA in ELT Program

Master Thesis:

English Language Learning Difficulties: The Factors that Influence Individual Learners when English
is Taught as L2

Candidate:

ShehideRamadani-Gashi

Mentor:

Dr. Brikena Xhaferi

June, 2018

Abstract

This thesis deals with the English language learning difficulties and the factors that affect learners when English is taught as L2. Moreover, this thesis tends to examine these factors in order to prove their success or failure in learning English language as L2. Furthermore, the study case developed during this research, determines if factors such as age, motivation, aptitude, cognitive style or personality really may affect English language learning. In addition, not as much research has been done regarding individual factors. At least not at an undergraduate level. This research has to do with overlooking of individual factors that present obstacles in learning English as a second language and EFL, in the Department of Geography, respectively at the University of Prishtina. In addition, English as L2 is taught as an elective course in this department during the first year of the studies. In addition, three main instruments were used for supporting the assumptions. Questionnaires, educator's interviews and observation were the instruments during the research. Furthermore, thirty students participated in the study and their English language teacher. The research proved that certain factors, such as, motivation and personality can influence learners when learning English as L2. However, age and aptitude were difficult to be measured. In conclusion, the study might serve as a reference in the future in order to change the textbooks for the students aiming to study exact sciences at the University of Prishtina; identify the underlying issues and struggles students face with English as L2/EFL, apply English for Specific Purposes course instead of General English, try out new methods of teaching that involve students and different teaching techniques, motivate students by giving them assignments to work in groups or with their peers, design special lesson plans to suit students' needs.

Key words: English as L2, ESL/EFL, English language difficulties, motivation, personality, age, aptitude.

Acknowledgments

I would like to thank the students and the educator for their participation in this research.

I am grateful to my mentor Dr. Brikena Xhaferi for her positive attitude during the period of my studies and mentorship, and then for accepting nothing less than excellence from me.

In addition, I would also like to express my sincere gratitude to my husband Dr. Ferim Gashi for the support given throughout my entire period of studies. Of course, this work would not have been what it is without spiritual support of my father, mother, brother, sister, brother-in-law, sister-in-law, as well as my nephews and niece.

Nevertheless, I would like to thank my friend Lumnije Kurti for her cooperation, support and friendship.

List of Tables and Figures

Table 1. <i>Determinants of successful and unsuccessful learning according to Accommodation Theory</i>	12
Table 2. <i>General information of the students that took the questionnaire</i>	31
Table 3. <i>Observation Protocol</i>	47
Graph 1. <i>What level English courses did you complete before?</i>	33
Graph 2. <i>Do you think English is a difficult language to learn?</i>	34
Graph 3. <i>Do you like practicing spoken English with your peers?</i>	35
Graph 4. <i>What is the most difficult part of learning English?</i>	36
Graph 5. <i>What do you hope, learning English will help you with, in the future?</i>	37
Graph 6. <i>Would you like your course to be more structured?</i>	38
Graph 7. <i>Do you think the teacher should include more topics to learn new geography vocabulary?</i>	39
Graph 8. <i>How do you feel about learning General English in the Department of Geography?</i>	40
Graph 9. <i>Which of the below describe you best as English as L2 learner?</i>	41
Graph 10. <i>What are the activities that involve learning English as L2, that you enjoy the least in the classroom?</i>	42

Graph 11. What are you usually capable of doing in class during classes of ESL?.....	43
--	----

CONTENTS

Abstract	2
Acknowledgments.....	3
List of Tables and Figures	4
CHAPTER 1	1
1 Introduction.....	1
1.1. General Statement of the Problem	2
1.2. Aims and Objectives of the Research	3
1.3. Background and Purpose of the Research.....	4
1.4. Significance of the Research	5
CHAPTER 2	6
Literature Review	6
2.1. Introduction.....	6
2.2. The Importance of English Language.....	6
2.3. Individual Learner Differences.....	9
2.3.1 Age	10
2.3.2 Motivation	13
2.3.3 Aptitude.....	14
2.3.4. Cognitive Style and Personality	15
2.4 Theories of Second Language Acquisition	17
2.5. Second Language Acquisition. What Do Linguists Say?	20
2.6. The Importance of English Language as L2.....	23
CHAPTER 3	25
3.1 Research Methodology	25
3.2. Purpose of the Study	26
3.3. The Case Study	27

3.4. Research Questions	28
3.5. Research Hypotheses	29
3.6. Participants	29
3.7. Instruments	30
CHAPTER 4	32
Data Analysis	32
4.1. Introduction	32
4.2. Questionnaire Data	32
4.3. Teacher's Interview	45
4.4. Personal Observation	46
Chapter 5	48
Discussion, Findings and Analysis of the Results	48
5.1. Introduction	48
5.2. Analysis of the Results	48
5.3. Research Questions and Hypotheses	50
CHAPTER 6	53
Limitations and Recommendations	53
6.1. Limitations	53
6.2. Recommendations	54
CHAPTER 7	56
Conclusion	56
References	58
Appendices	60

CHAPTER 1

1 Introduction

Language is the most important tool of communication. To begin with, one's native tongue is learned while growing up and taking the first steps, then with education the learner continues to fossilize their knowledge of their language of origin. On the other hand, learning a second language, requires knowledge, motivation, desire to learn a new language, etc. Furthermore, one learns their L2, sometimes as a result of being forced from different external factors, thus resulting in less outcome than expected.

According to linguists, English is one of the most spread languages throughout the world. Its use has increased rapidly, especially with the age of globalization. Thus, its importance and influence have immensely become inseparable. The relevance of English language learning is especially significant due to the challenges its learners face. In addition, there are certain difficulties and a set of factors that influence learners' abilities of learning English as a Second Language.

There are certain factors that influence learners when learning second language or L2. Since the scope of my research is English language as L2, I would like to call attention on my work, which is going to be based on learning English as L2, rather than L1. The reason for this differentiation is, that one learns differently their native tongue and there is an entire "world of art" when learning and teaching L2. So, in order to prevail in learning English as L2, there are numerous teaching methods, which should be used by facilitators.

Teaching methods such as, Lecturing, Discussion, Role Plays, Grammar-Translation Method, the Direct Method and other methods are just many of the methods to be used when teaching English as a Second Language. However, this research is going to be based on students' individual factors that influence learning English as L2. Moreover, it is going to be based on individual needs, and how those needs can be fulfilled, so that students can go further with their academic progress in English used as L2.

Ellis (2003) in his book "Second Language Acquisition", lists *"the framework that posits a number of interrelated factors. These are:*

1. *Situational factors*
2. *Input*
3. *Learner differences*
4. *Learner processes*
5. *Linguistic output."* (p.16)

In this research I am going to focus on one of *the interrelated factors* which is learner differences. According to Ellis (2003), *"There is a whole range of learner factors that potentially influence the way in which an L2 is acquired. The key ones are age, aptitude and intelligence, motivation and needs, personality and cognitive styles."* (p.17)

In addition the above listed, are factors that affect learning of English as L2, including internal and external, which are going to be discussed in the following chapters.

Furthermore, I have decided to do this research as an attempt to explore, get acquainted and emerge concrete results on student's needs when English is learned as L2, in the Department of Geography, University of Prishtina. Equally important is, exploring individual obstacles that university students face with English as L2, in the department of Geography, University of Prishtina, which is a higher level of education.

1.1. General Statement of the Problem

This research has to do with overlooking of individual factors that present obstacles in learning English as a second language and EFL, in the Department of Geography, respectively at the University of Prishtina. In addition, English as L2 is taught as an elective course in this department during the first year of studies.

Furthermore, as the studies last three years, students have a limited opportunity to attend English language class as part of the university course. The Faculty of Natural-Mathematical

Sciences at the University of Prishtina offers English as L2 course only for the first-year students, which is also an elective course. Hence, the idea of conducting a research on the factors that influence learners of English as L2.

Various authors have indicated the difficulties in learning English as a second language and factors which were creating problems in learning English have been pointed out by different authors.

Furthermore, ESL/EFL learners face certain obstacles when they are introduced the language for the first time and especially throughout the entire process of learning. The obstacles may include L1 interference, age, motivation or the lack of it, pronunciation, background knowledge of English language, grammatical patterns, language acquisition, exposure, sociocultural, etc. Hence the above mentioned obstacles may be called factors that affect language learning. Thus, it is significant to elaborate individual learner differences and the reason of difficulties and factors that influence learning ESL/EFL.

In addition, Zoltan Dornyei's (2005) study found that:

"The study of language learner characteristics, or individual differences (IDs), has a long tradition in second language studies and nobody would question that, factors such as language aptitude, motivation, or learning styles are important contributors to success in mastering a foreign language." (p.12)

With that said each individual has his or her own characteristics and learning style when it comes to learning a language. Special learning styles are characteristics of a learner. Some factors depend solely on the reasons why one finds the motivation of learning English as L2.

1.2. Aims and Objectives of the Research

During this research, my focus was on the difficulties that students face with during the process of learning English Language in the department of geography, University of Prishtina.

The main purpose of this research is to identify factors that influence individual learners when English is taught as L2 in the department of geography, University of Prishtina. The other goal is

to prove the need of English as L2 during the entire length of studies in the department of geography.

Furthermore, another aim of the research is to understand if students are contented with what the department offers, in terms of English as L2 course. In addition, the other goal is to also find out the advantages and disadvantages of the teaching methodologies that are offered by ESL/EFL educators, and why they would be of a benefit to individual needs.

To be able to do the research, the researcher has formulated questionnaires for the students and interviews for the educator. The questionnaires have been formulated in a way, that will help the researcher understand the level of English the students have, then identify the factors with the help of the questionnaires. Equally important, is the partial observation of the classes done by the researcher. Also, the interview with the educators, which enabled the researcher have a clear understanding of the situation in the classroom where English was taught as L2.

1.3. Background and Purpose of the Research

The purpose of this thesis is to deepen this research on individual learner's needs when talking about ESL/EFL and its learning. The research will also shed some light on the difficulties students face with during the process of learning English Language as L2. Furthermore, it would be of a benefit to find easier ways of accommodating different student needs when learning English as L2.

English as L2, is being offered as General English course in the department of geography at the University of Prishtina.

1.4. Significance of the Research

The importance of this thesis is crucial due to the facts, findings and conclusions, to be treated during the research. It aims to offer an analysis and impact of the factors influencing students who face difficulties with learning English as L2. Its importance also lies on the ground of the influence of the topic itself, thus influencing on the change of point of views of many educators who teach English as L2 at the University of Prishtina.

Furthermore, the importance of the thesis is also based on the positive approach towards the topic itself. Students at university level, pick English language as an elective course rather than any other elective course offered by the Faculty. Other elective courses are French and Italian as a second choice. As such, it is worth treating topics that would be of a benefit to students who do not know what they need, to be better at English. Furthermore, most students choose English as L2, because they hope to apply at an international college for their graduate studies. Then, the other fact is that most of the literature is in English, and it is much easier to conduct research about a certain topic when one knows English language. Thus, the significance of English language lies in the fact above.

CHAPTER 2

Literature Review

2.1. Introduction

This master thesis relies on a broad variety of literature, comprehending of different international authors. Different books, articles and other sources will be reviewed, in order to present the results of the conducted research. Literature review will help understand and have a clear and in depth analysis of English language learned and taught as L2. In addition, literature review will be used to compare different authors' opinions on English used as L2 and the difficulties students face during its learning. Whereas focus will also be on teaching English as L2.

Literature review regarding language acquisition, teaching techniques, interdependence of first and second language (English language in this research) and current approaches to ESL/EFL, is going to be considered in this chapter, as well.

Furthermore, the part of literature review will also be based on the importance of English language itself, then what prominent authors say about different factors that influence language learning and the theories which support its learning.

2.2. The Importance of English Language

David Crystal (2003) in his book "English as a Global Language" asserts that "In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries English was the language of the leading colonial nation-Britain. In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries it was the language of the leader of the industrial revolution-also Britain."(p. 120). Additionally, Crystal (2003) also claims that "In the late nineteenth century and the early twentieth it was the language of the leading economic power-the USA."(p.120)

It seems like Crystal (2003) makes his point when asserting the importance of English dating from centuries ago. The impact that English plays now on many spheres of our life, is also connected to the influence of the powerful countries, such as the USA, Canada and Great Britain. Furthermore, Crystal (2003) affirms that “As a result, when new technologies brought new linguistic opportunities, English emerged as a first rank language in industries which affected all aspects of society-the press, advertising, broadcasting, motion pictures, sound recording, transport and communication.”(p. 120)

He attributes the importance of English today, to the world power countries such as the USA and Great Britain as well as new technologies. Crystal (2003) asserts that new technology has also changed the language and its direction. He bases his facts on the influence technology has had on all respect of society.

English as a global language has played a big part on education, as well. Hence, a lot of scientific books are written in English, nowadays or they are translated into English. For instance, conferences, publications, even education in non-English speaking countries have all become a crucial part of education. Crystal (2003) on his chapter “The cultural legacy of English” has given a lot of credit to education, and English language acting as a medium in many universities. Crystal (2003) has the following view on English as part of education “ When we investigate why so many nations have in recent years made English an official language or chosen it as their chief foreign language in schools, one of the most important reasons is always educational-in the broadest sense.”(p.110)

According to Graddol (1999) “English is currently the most widely studied foreign language in the European Union.” (p.44) English is the most taught foreign language at primary age which is now participating earlier in a child’s education. (Graddol, 1999, p.44). It is worth pointing out that since 2018 in Kosovo, compulsory English as a Foreign Language teaching is being phased in for students aged 6. Furthermore, Graddol (1999) places English as medium of higher education. He justifies the fact that there is need for science to be taught in English, due to the up-to-date books and research articles, which are much easier accessed and they are in English.

Moreover Graddol (1999) says that: *“English medium higher education is thus one of the drivers of language shift, from L2 to L1.”* (p.45)

How English language evolved in education was to be seen in the following years past 1980s. Of course, with the development of technology as previously stated, English has become an inseparable part of education and social life in general, be it used in science, mathematics, research, etc. On the other hand, it is the idea of teaching English as a medium of instruction, in countries where English is ESL/EFL. Regarding this question, a research done by Julie Dearden (2014) in non-Anglophone countries, proves that English has rapidly grown in a world education language. Thus, there are advantages and disadvantages of teaching in an environment where English is a medium of instruction.

The report called “English as a Medium of Instruction” conducted by Dearden (2014), states that “There appears to be a fast-moving worldwide shift, in non-Anglophone countries, from English being taught as a foreign language (EFL) to English being the medium of instruction (EMI) for academic subjects such as science, mathematics, geography and medicine.” (p.4)

Dearden (2014) carried out her research in three countries in Europe as a preliminary study, while her overview study was conducted in 55 countries around the world. The aim of her research was to search the questions; how English has revolutionized the educational system, how English is used as a medium of instruction in universities around the world, and if they are ready or not to grasp this rapid change. She sees English as an international language taking over the medium of instruction in a non-speaking English country.

On her report Dearden(2014) says that:

“The speed at which universities are internationalizing and English is being used as the academic lingua franca is accelerating. Ironically, EMI means that learning in English no longer means going to a UK or US university.”(p.29)

Dearden (2014) also sees English be as an international language, which prepares students to have access to the world. In her study, “English as a Medium of Instruction-a growing global phenomenon” Dearden (2014) points out that:

“One of the main aims of policy makers, teachers, parents and students in implementing EMI, is to internationalize the education on offer in their country, particularly in the higher education phase. The very notion of internationalization of universities is a contested one. Internationalizing a university can be conceived in the narrow sense of attracting and admitting foreign students. However internationalization can mean much more than this.”(p.29)

Different authors place English language history, its use and its influence that it presently has, to the British colonial expansion, not just technology, but culture, as well.

Thus, Dearden’s research in 2014, resulted in many answered questions of how important English language itself is. He implies that English language and its learning goes back to the colonial period. By his statement, my perception is that, Graddol has seen English language grow, soon to be a “language of needs and necessity”. Furthermore, Graddol (1999) says that “English has always been an evolving language and language contact has always been an important driver of change.” (p.6). His statement was based on the fact that English has borrowed from other languages. Furthermore, in his book *English as a Global Language*, David Crystal (2003) expresses his fascination with the fact why English has become a global language. Moreover, he explores the questions such as, being proud that English is spreading around the world. Then he says “...but your pride may be tinged with concern, when you realize that people in other countries may not want to use the language the same way that you do, and are changing to suit themselves.”(p. 2)

I think the great linguist Crystal was concerned by the way people use English all over the world. One may not be concerned with grammar and accuracy as much as fluency, depending what one learns English for.

2.3. Individual Learner Differences

Dörnyei (2005), defines IDs as “*characteristics or traits in respect of which individuals may be shown to differ from each other*” (p. 1) and he also points out that research has shown these

variables to consistently predict success at L2 learning. Rossi (1995) found that “an individual’s learning style preference influences the types of learning strategies that he or she will employ in acquiring a second language”. (p. 121). All these research findings appear to confirm the existence of a link between these ID factors and, therefore, led to their selection for classroom investigation.

According to Ellis (2003), “.....variability occurs due to the fact that individual differences in the way learners learn L2 and they use their L2 knowledge.” (p.10). Moreover, Ellis (2003) says: “SLA research has examined five general factors that contribute to individual learner differences.” (p.10). Furthermore, according to SLA research the factors that influence individuals in learning a second language are, age, motivation, aptitude, cognitive style and personality.

2.3.1 Age

It is already known that adults tend to fear the failure and embarrassment of learning L2. So, it is natural that many adult ESL/EF learners struggle with the fear of the social shame of speaking poorly and incorrectly (Peirce, 1995, as cited in Ellis, 1997). Regarding the popular belief that children are at an advantage to adults in second language or ESL study, there are both positive and negative viewpoints.

In addition, according to Lennenberg (1976), the critical period for language acquisition begins around the age two. Research published prior to the mid-1990s claimed that people learning a second language after puberty still retain a foreign accent, on the other hand the ones who acquired before puberty did not. (p. 97)

According to Janet Enever (2011), for example, “*as the learning task becomes harder, some children lose interest, become more anxious, or are influenced increasingly by peer and societal pressure to perceive foreign language learning as unimportant and not enjoyable.*” (p.149), on the other hand as students grow older they become more aware of the importance of the language as a future necessity.

James Flege (1987), *“adults might become more easily discouraged regarding their second language progress than children because the «tolerance region» for adults’ production of sounds is narrower than for children’s, because adults are more able than children to note their own divergences from second language phonetic norms, or both.”* (p.170)

Age, as a factor of influencing L2 learning on the other hand, is characterized with the maturity of a learner acquiring L2. It is believed that children are better learners of L2 than adults. In their book “Second Language Acquisition”, Gass and Selinger (2008), point out that

“An initially attractive measure is speed of learning. In most studies in which measurements have been made of the speed of learning some aspect of a second language by learners of different ages, importantly, no advantages were found for young children. In fact, the advantage typically is in the other direction. College-aged, young adults do quite well on most tests measuring language learning speed.” (p.406)

Furthermore, Gass and Selinker (2008) cite a study by Snow and Hoefnagle-Hohle from (1978) by saying that “Snow and Hoefnagle-Hohle (1978), in a study of naturalistic acquisition of Dutch by three groups of English speakers (children, adolescents, and adults), found that adults and adolescents outperformed children on tests given after three months of residence in the Netherlands, but after 10 months the children had caught up on most measures. This finding leaves many unanswered questions.” (p.406)

Ovando and Combs (2012) stated “A myth also exists that young children are the fastest learners of a second language.” (p132) Hence, Ovando and Combs (2012) say “Adults are fooled by the nativelike pronunciation that young children acquire quickly.....” (p.132) Ovando and Combs (2012) also call the nativelike pronunciation one of few advantages that young children have over older learners (p.132). With that being said, most of the adults does not matter how old they are, can achieve good results learning L2. Furthermore, Ovando and Combs (2012) say that: “.....older learners from approximately ages 9-25 who have built cognitive and academic proficiency in their first language are potentially the most efficient acquirers of most aspects of academic L2, except for pronunciation.”(p.132)

On the other hand, according to Lourdes Ortega (2013), “....children acquiring their first language complete the feat within a biological window of four to six years of age.” (p.12) She also believes that there are still many questions to understand the universal age effects on L2 acquisition, and that they still remain open and difficult to be interpreted (Ortega, 2013). Furthermore, regarding the question if children or adults better L2 learners, Ortega (2013) argues that everybody thinks that children pick up languages rapidly and without making any effort (p.16). However, in 1970s many SLA researchers suggested a study in which they compared children and adults’ L2 learning, of course in second language environments and the findings showed that adults of course were on advantage over children (Lourdes, 2013, p.16). The study was conducted in the Netherlands by Catherine Snow and Marian Hoefnagel-Hohle (1977, 1978) and the results showed that the adults and teenagers were better than children, with regard to what they were able to learn in a 25 minute instruction session up to one year of exposure to L2 Dutch (as cited in Lourdes, 2013, p.16). In addition, SLA has entered its forty years of existence and of course a lot of research has been done on how age influences L2 acquisition (Lourdes 2013, p.27). Additionally, Ortega (2013) asserts that: “In terms of L2 learning rate, adults and older children enjoy an initial advantage over young children that may last up to one year, sometimes up to three years.”(p.28)

When talking about age and language acquisition, Ortega (2013) also says that “Most learners who begin acquiring the L2 before a certain age, typically before puberty, will develop levels of morphosyntactic and phonological competence that are very close to native speakers of that language.” (p.29). With that being said, it is close what Gass and Salinker (2008) say that the sensitive period should be not passed without being exposed to more than one language if one wants a close native speaker level of the target language (p. 416). In conclusion, Long (as cited in Gass and Selinker, 2008) “.....propose a neurophysiological explanation: exposure to more than one language before the close of the sensitive period.” (p.416). As a final point, there is still much study and research to be done to prove, if adults are better learners of L2 than children, or not.

2.3.2 Motivation

Motivation is a critical factor in adult ESL learning. Dornyei (2002a, as cited in Moss and Ross-Feldman, 2003, also in Wold, 2006) identified motivation as “why people decide to do something, how long they are willing to sustain the activity and how hard they are going to pursue it.” (p. 75).

When talking about motivation in SLA, Ellis (2012) describes motivation as a state of attitude that influences the scale of effort that learners make to learn L2. In addition Ellis (1997), divides motivation in three types “*Instrumental, integrative, resultative and intrinsic motivation.*” (p. 75-76).

Furthermore, Ellis (1997) defines instrumental motivation as “*a major force determining success in L2 learning.*” (p.75). Ellis (1997) actually describes instrumental motivation as a tool which pushes learners to pass an exam, to find a better job in the future and to apply for a place at a certain university. On the other hand, Ellis (1997) puts integrative motivation as an inner force of learning a language as a desire of learning a language of certain people and culture. For instance, as part of immigration to another country with the aim of integration to the native language and group of people. Besides the two motivation types listed above, Ellis (1997) relates the resultative motivation to the cause of L2 performance or the “result of learning”. (p.75). Subsequently, Ellis (1997) connects intrinsic motivation to the “.....learners’ particular interests and the extent to which they feel personally involved in learning activities.” (p.76)

According to Gass and Selinker (2008):

“Effort consists of a numerous factors, including an inherent need to achieve, good study habits, and the desire to please teacher or parent.” (p.426) Furthermore, Gardner (as cited in Gass and Selinker, 2008), says about integrative motivation that: “...it is a complex of attitudes involving more than just the other language community. It is not simply a reason for studying a language.” (p.426)

Authors such as Gass and Selinker (2008), list anxiety as a factor that influence L2 learning. Gass and Selinker (2008), point out that: “*Anxiety seems to represent a trait that falls within the*

broader scheme of factors affecting learning, but what is not clear is whether is a matter of personality, an emotional reaction to a situation, or a combination.” (p.400). Dörnyei (as cited in Gass and Selinger, 2008), stresses the idea that;

“.....there are two dimensions in the literature that are relevant to understanding anxiety: beneficial/facilitating vs. inhibitory/debilitating anxiety and trait vs. state anxiety. The first dichotomy refers to whether or not anxiety can be a positive or a negative force in learning and the second refers to whether anxiety is part of an individual’s makeup across many situations or whether it is a reaction in a particular situation.” (p.401).so, more research has to be done regarding anxiety as a factor of influence in L2 learning.

2.3.3 Aptitude

Eventually, in addition to motivation and age, aptitude is the other factor that affects the learning of the second language. According to Ellis (1997), aptitude is part of general intelligence. Furthermore, Ellis (1997) gives credit to aptitude as part of predating the birth of SLA from 1950s and 1960s. So, linguists such as Carroll and Sapon (1959) cited in Ellis (2003) started a test that was used to measure aptitude, which is called “Modern Language Aptitude Test or MLAT.” (p.112)

1. According to Carroll and Sapon (2002 Ed.), “The Modern Language Aptitude Test” or MLAT is an instrument designed to measure aptitude for foreign language learning in high school, college and adult population.” (p.96) According to Carroll and Sapon (2002 ed.), “MLAT is recommended for use prior to the start of foreign language training, but for specific purposes, such as gathering more information about foreign language learning difficulties, it may also be useful after the start of training.” (p.98).
2. In addition, the test is divided into five parts. Each of the part has its own structured questions for diagnosing foreign language learning disabilities. On the other hand Ellis (2003) argues that: “Aptitude may be age-related. It may develop along with the general ability for abstract thinking.” (p.113). Furthermore Gass and Selinker (2008) say that “Aptitude, simply put, refers to one’s potential for learning new knowledge or new

skills. With regard to language aptitude, it refers to one's ability to learn another language....." (p.417)

The concept of language aptitude or the natural ability for learning L2 regarding to John Carroll (cited in Ellis, 1997, also in Wold 2006) the abilities below represent an aptitude for successful learning:

1. *Phonemic coding ability, i.e. the ability to identify the sounds of a foreign language so that they can be remembered later. This ability is also seen as related to the ability to handle-symbol relationships (for example, to identify the sound which "the" stands for).*
2. *Grammatical sensitivity, i.e. the ability to recognize the grammatical function of words in sentences (for example, the subject and object of a sentence).*
3. *Inductive language learning ability, i.e. the ability to identify patterns of correspondence and relations between form and meaning (for example, to recognize that in English "to" can denote relation and location).*
4. *Rote learning ability, i.e. the ability to form and remember associations between stimuli. This is believed to be important in vocabulary learning. (p.74)*

2.3.4. Cognitive Style and Personality

According to Ellis (1985) cognitive style is a term used to refer to the manner in which people perceive, conceptualize, and recall information (p.114).

With regards to personality, SLA researchers have different approach to this factor. For instance Ellis (2003) sees personality as a number of personal traits which in aggregate are said to constitute the personality of an individual. (p.118). Ellis (2003) puts "extroversion/introversion, social skills, inhibition" (p.120-12) as part of personality traits. While, Gass and Sellinker (2008) say that "learning style is used interchangeably with personality." (p.432) Furthermore, the authors Gass and Sellinker (2008), name the personality types such as: "Extroversion and introversion, Risk taking, Field independence/dependence, and Visual/auditory/kinesthetic." (p.

433-437). According to these authors extroverts learn easier and much faster than introverts, on the other hand it also depends what kind of personality one has.

For instance, according to Gass and Sellinker (2008), visual learners are the ones who take the information by seeing therefore they are suggested to read rather than listen (p.437). What Gass and Sellinker (2008) suggest, is also the use of Power Point presentations for lectures, and note taking while using color coding (p.437).

So, they suggest that visual learners must see in order to take information clearly, unlike auditory learners who learn from reading, and kinesthetic need to have real objects, such as manipulatives. Therefore, there is much to be done with regards to personality to define more this factor. In conclusion, different authors have given their facts on cognitive style. For instance, in their book “Bilingual and ESL Classrooms”, Ovando and Combs (2012) “.....refer to the cognitive process as to the aspects of language development that occur inside a student’s head.” (p.147). They also say that “....some cognitive processes can be mediated by the learner and influenced by the teacher and the instructional setting.” (p.147). Furthermore, they suggest that “.....cognitive strategies would include manipulating material to be learned mentally or physically.” (p.149).

Furthermore, Ellis (2003) refers to field dependence/independence as cognitive style, whereas Gass and Selinker (2008) refer to those as part of personality. According to Ovando and Combs (2012), “Cognitive processes refer to the aspects of language development that occur inside a student’s head.” (p.147). Thus, in contrast to the natural, subconscious linguistic process described above, some cognitive processes can be mediated by the learner and influenced by the teacher and the instructional setting (Ovando and Combs, 2012, p.147). Moreover, Wong Fillmore (1991a) considers some of the cognitive processes crucial to second language acquisition:

“What learners must do with linguistic data is discover the system of rules the speakers of the language are following, synthesize this knowledge into grammar, and make it their own by internalizing it.....Learners apply a host of cognitive strategies and skills to deal with the task at hand: They have to make use of associative skills, memory, social

knowledge and inferential skills in trying to figure out what people are talking about. They use whatever analytical skills they have to make use of memory, pattern recognition, induction, categorization, generalization, inference, and like to figure out the structural principles by which the forms of the language can be combined, and meanings modified by changes and deletions.” (p. 56-57)

Allport (cited in Ehrman, Leaver, & Oxford, 2003) proposed the term, cognitive style that meant ways of living and adapting modulated by personality. However, in the literature one may encounter the term on learning styles as, cognitive style, personality type, sensory preference or modality (Ehrman, Leaver, & Oxford, 2003, p.314). In addition, during the 1920s and 1930s the cognitive-style research used to address to perceptual speed and flexibility (Ehrman, Leaver, & Oxford, 2003, p.314).

Reiff 1992; Ehrman, 2001; Ehrman and Oxford, 1995 (in Ehrman, Leaver, & Oxford (2003) use learning style research with personality and cognitive styles in order to determine ability, predict performance and improve classroom teaching and learning (p.314).

According to Ehrman, Leaver, & Oxford (2003), “Learning styles and learning strategies are often seen as interrelated. Styles are made manifest by learning strategies.” (p. 315) Furthermore, Ehrman, Leaver, & Oxford (2003) also assert that “A given learning strategy is neither good nor bad; it is essentially neutral until it is considered in context.” (p.315). In addition, they say that for a strategy to be useful it has to fulfill certain conditions, such as, the strategy relating to the L2 task, the strategy that fits a particular student’s learning style and the use of the strategy effectively and linking it to other important strategies (Ehrman, Leaver, & Oxford 2003, p.315).

2.4 Theories of Second Language Acquisition

According to Ellis (2003) there are seven theories of the SLA, and they are:

1. The Acculturation Model

2. Accommodation Theory
3. Discourse Theory
4. The Monitor Model
5. The Variable Competence Model
6. The Universal Hypothesis
7. The Neurofunctional Theory. (p.248)

The first theory according to Ellis (2003) is The Acculturation Model. Acculturation Model was defined by Brown (1980a) cited in Ellis (2003) as “*the process of becoming adapted to a new culture*” (p.250).

Furthermore, according to Ellis (2003) The Acculturation Model is seen as a crucial part of the SLA, because language is connected to the culture. Moreover, when one speaks of acculturation, it is determined by the degree of social and psychological distance. According to Ellis (2003), “the degree of social and psychological distance between the learner and the target language culture.” (p.252).

Ellis (2003) defines the degree of social distance as “the result of a number of factors which affect the learner as a member of a social group in contact with the target language group.” (p.252), in addition he defines the degree of psychological distance as “the result of various affective factors which concern the learner as an individual” (p.252).

Initially, the Acculturation Model was built by Schumann, but Schumann does not consider the cognitive dimension which Andersen builds (Ellis, 2003, p.253). Additionally, according to Ellis (2003) Andersen labels the nativization and denativization as a result of two forces deriving from SLA (p.253). Andersen (cited by Ellis, 2003) describes these two forces like this: “The nativization consists of assimilation; the learner makes input conform to his own internalized view of what constitutes the L2 system and the denativization which involves accommodation; the learner adjusts his internalized system to make it fit the input” (p.253-254).

In addition, the Accomodation Theory according to Ellis (2003), “.....derives from the research of Giles and associates into the intergroup uses of language in multilingual communities such as Britain.” (p.255) Hence, Giles agrees with Gardener (1979) cited in Ellis (2003), “....that

motivation is the primary determinant of L2 proficiency” (p.256). Which is one of the factors that this research is based on. Giles cited by Ellis (2003), identifies key variables, determinants of successful and unsuccessful learning, according to the Accommodation Theory (p.257).

Table 1. Below shows the key variables of motivation defined by Giles (cited by Ellis, 2003). Certainly, high motivation has always better results than low motivation, and brings high level of proficiency in a second language or foreign language.

Key Variables	A	B
	High motivation High level of proficiency	Low motivation Low level of proficiency
1. Identification with group	Weak identification	Strong identification
2. Inter-ethnic comparison	Makes favorable or no comparison, i.e. intergroup not seen as inferior	Makes negative comparison, i.e. in group seen as inferior
3. Perception of ethno-linguistic vitality	Low perception	High perception
4. Perception of in group boundaries	Soft and open	Hard and closed
5. Identification with other social categories	Strong identification-satisfactory in-group status	Weak identification inadequate group status

Table 1. *Determinants of successful and unsuccessful learning according to Accommodation Theory. Giles (cited in Ellis, 2003, p.257)*

Discourse Theory on the other hand according to Ellis (2003) follows from a theory of language use, in which communication is treated as the matrix of linguistic knowledge, that language development should be considered in terms of how the learner discovers the meaning potential

of language by participating in communication. (p.259). Furthermore, Ellis (2003) addresses the Discourse Theory as “not addressing the nature of the learner strategies for SLA” (p.260).

Regarding the Monitor Model, it was developed by Krashen, which consists of five hypotheses. The Monitor Model refers to a number of factors that influence SLA.

The Variable Competence Model, relies on two distinctions. According to Ellis (2003) “one refers to the process of language use, and the other to the product.” (p.266). This Model claims that the way a language is learnt is a reflection of the way language is used” (Ellis, 2003, p.266).

According to Ellis (2003), “The Universal Hypothesis operates on the assumption that linguistic knowledge is homogenous, and therefore, ignores variability” (p.271). And the last theory, which is the Neurofunctional theory according to Lamendella (cited in Ellis), is; “A neurofunctional perspective on language attempts to characterize the neurolinguistics information processing systems responsible for the development and use of language” (p.271).

Accordingly, Ellis (2013), said that “the adult brain never entirely loses the plasticity of a newborn baby’s brain....” (p.271).

2.5. Second Language Acquisition. What Do Linguists Say?

In order to be able to understand the use of English globally and as L2 in particular, one must understand the second language acquisition-(Here and after SLA). SLA theories also help present and future teachers understand more difficulties of teaching and their students’ needs in English as L2. Different authors, scholars and linguists have dealt with SLA. For years they argue about factor that influence L2 and learning styles.

The authors list, motivation, age, aptitude and learning strategies and cognitive style, as main factors influencing learners when L2 is taught.

Ovando and Combs (2012) assert:

“While some children are raised bilingually from birth, many more are successive bilinguals who begin exposure to their L2 at a later age. The purposes of acquiring the L2 and

opportunity for exposure to that language have significant influence on the amount of proficiency developed.” (p.131)

Thus, Ovando and Combs (2012) divide three components crucial to the learning language process. They state firmly that all three components are necessary.

According to Ovando and Combs (2012) the three components are,

*“(1) **learners** who realize that they need to learn the target language and are motivated to do so; (2) **speakers of the target language** who know it well enough to provide the learners with access to the language and the help they need for learning it; and (3) **a social setting** that brings learners and target language speakers into frequent enough contact to make language learning possible.” (p.131)*

Hence, Ovando and Combs (2012) argue that if any of the three components is not functional during the language learning process, then it will be difficult for a new language to be learned or even impossible. So, they are somehow interconnected and they make language learning process possible. (p.131)

Regarding language acquisition, Ovando and Combs (2012) say that “Contrary to popular belief, second-language acquisition is difficult and complex for all ages, including children. Acquiring a first or second language takes a long time, and the process of second-language acquisition varies greatly with each individual learner.” (p.127)

In addition, to be able to learn a language, there are different stages a person undergoes. Thus, according to the famous American linguist, Krashen (1982) it is important to understand the process of SLA which differs from learning. Furthermore Krashen(1982) developed five hypotheses about SLA in order to prove his theory of SLA. According to Krashen (1982) his first hypothesis “The Acquisition-Learning Distinction” says “..... that adults have two distinct and independent ways of developing competence in a second language.” (p.10)

Furthermore, Krashen (1982) addresses to the language acquisition as a process resembling the way in which children develop the ability to speak in their mother tongue. Moreover, Krashen (1982) points out that: “Language acquisition is a subconscious process; language acquirers are

not usually aware of the fact that they are acquiring language, but are only aware of the fact that they are using the language for communication.” (p.10)

So, in one word Krashen (1982) compares acquisition to the unconscious process of learning a language, who on the other hand describes learning as conscious process of language learning. Krashen (1982) believes that learning is about knowing. Furthermore, Krashen (1982) states that “Some second language theorists have assumed that children acquire, while adults can only learn.” (p.10). Moreover, there are advantages and disadvantages of acquiring a language. For instance, according to Krashen (1982), “Error has little or no effect on subconscious acquisition, but it is thought to be useful in conscious learning.”(p.11).

When the purpose of L2 acquisition is for use in educational settings, then the complexity of language proficiency development expands greatly. (Ovando&Combs, 2012, p.131) Furthermore Collier & Thomas (as cited in Ovando& Combs, 2012) suggest that “We use the term academic language to refer to a “complex network of language and cognitive skills and knowledge required across all content areas for eventual successful academic performance at secondary and university levels of instruction.”(p.133)

According to the researcher’s perception, it is however, questionable whether error does not have any effect on subconscious acquisition. The argument lies solely on each individual person, I believe. I confess there are cases based on my teaching career, that error has had an effect on subconscious acquisition, due to the fact that if the learner is interested in learning a language in this case English as L2, they learn from errors.

Furthermore, Krashen’s (1982) second hypothesis on the “Natural Order” argues about grammatical structures that learners face earlier or later during the SLA. Krashen (1982) points out that “English is perhaps the most studied language as far as the natural order hypothesis is concerned, and of all structures of English, morphology is the most studied.” (p. 12)

Krashen (1982) sees this hypothesis as the one which deals with grammatical structure of the language in this case English. According to Brown(cited in Krashen1982), “.....*children acquiring English as their first language are more inclined to acquire particular grammatical morphemes or even function words earlier than others.*” (p.12). For instance, the gerund “ing” (as in “She is

knitting”) or the “s” for plural (three cats) would be among the first morphemes acquired, whereas “s” for the third person singular i.e. “He plays basketball” and the Saxon genitive “s” as in “Teacher’s hat” would have been acquired anywhere from six months to one year later (Krashen, 1982, p.12).

With that being said, the researcher would reflect her opinion, that adults too may acquire language chunks, such as idioms, certain expressions that seem to be easy to acquire. For instance, English phrases such as; “See you later!”, “Thanks a lot!”, “Have a safe trip!” etc., are much to be learned as a whole chunk than word by word.

What is more, Krashen’s (1982) third hypothesis, which is “The Monitor Hypothesis” implies that “....formal rules, or conscious learning, play only a limited role in second language performance.” (p.16).

The reason rules have a limited role on the performance of a second language performer could be due to the way and the memorization process. The process of memorizing certain rules, mostly grammatical, while acquiring a language could lead to different questions in the learners mind. Additionally, Krashen’s (1982) fourth hypothesis “The Input Hypothesis” argues about the fact that: “.....speaking fluency cannot be taught directly.” (p.22), by which I must agree.

It takes time to develop fluency, and of course there are plenty of reasons for not being fluent in a language. Moreover, teachers can give instructions and teach the language, but there could be certain factors for one to fluent. “The Affective Filter Hypothesis” according to Krashen (1982) which is his fifth hypothesis which “states how affective factors relate to the second language acquisition process.” (p.30). Krashen (1982) also mentions: “motivation, self-motivation and anxiety as attitudinal factors for SLA success” (p.31)

2.6. The Importance of English Language as L2

In their book “Bilingual and ESL Classrooms”, Carlos J. Ovando and Mary Carol Combs (2012) say that “*English as a second language (ESL) is a system of instruction that enables students who*

are not proficient in English-English language learners (ELLs)-to acquire academic proficiency in spoken and written English” . (p.10)

Thus, they imply that when one learns English as L2, English becomes just a “system of instruction”. However, I must say that it also depends on each individual. By that, I mean that when English is learned as L2, it also depends on individual needs. One probably does not just need English language for academic proficiency. In addition, one needs to reach the level of academic proficiency in order to enter a decent profession, study at a top level university, or achieve their best in life, which is not probably every English as L2 student’s goal.

On another note, Broughton, Brumfit, Flavell, Hill and Pincas (2003) state that “Of the 4,000 to 5,000 living languages, English is by far the most widely used.” (p.1) This statement proves one of the important facts why English is important to be learned. Furthermore, Broughton, Brumfit, Flavell, Hill and Pincas (2003) also assert that: “Half of the world’s scientific literature is written in English.” (p.3)

Hence, Broughton, Brumfit, Flavell, Hill and Pincas (2003) also describe English as: “.....the only available tool for twentieth-century learning.” (p.3). The statement correlates with what is happening presently with English language as L2. It has become an industry, an engine or a key to success. If you speak English you have access to easier education, an effortless search for information, technology, and a vast more opportunities than one who does not speak it.

CHAPTER 3

Research Methodology

3.1 Research Methodology

This research was mainly focused on difficulties that English language learners face with in the Department of Geography, University of Prishtina. The research was carried out by the researcher with 30 students and 1 educator in the Department of Geography. The objective of this research is to find, identify, determine, elaborate and discuss the individual factors that show the difficulties of learning English as L2 at the University of Prishtina, more precisely at the Faculty of Mathematical-Natural Sciences, Department of Geography. The students learn English as a Foreign Language and L2 at the university and to be able to answer the research questions and prove the hypotheses, as well as draw conclusions based on facts, certain research methodology has been used.

Additionally, the purpose of using the research questions, is to have a clear idea and an in depth understanding of the difficulties that learners face with English as L2. It is also worth pointing out that strengths and weaknesses of individual students have been examined by observing classes.

In conclusion, it also describes the instruments that were used and the manner in which the research was conducted.

This thesis is organized into seven chapters:

The first chapter generally describes the introduction to the problem, general statement of the problem, aims and objectives, background of the research and the significance of the research.

The second chapter describes the use of literature review, its significance and contribution to the problem, the importance of English language in general, Individual Learner Differences,

Theories of SLA which are interconnected to the factors that affect learners learning English as a Second Language. The second chapter also describes the importance of English language and what Linguists say about SLA.

The third chapter describes the methodology, purpose of the research, case study, research questions and research hypotheses and the instruments carried out by which the research was done.

The fourth chapter deals with data analysis and questionnaire data, a summary of the teacher's interview, personal observation and the observation protocol.

The fifth chapter describes findings and analysis of the results, as well as the research questions and hypotheses.

The sixth chapter deals with limitations and recommendations

The seventh chapter deals with the conclusion of the research.

3.2. Purpose of the Study

The main goal of the study, is to determine the factors that affect individual students who learn English as L2. The other purpose of the study is to try to find a solution to the problems that students face with. Moreover, the next aim is to gather more information and base the findings on facts, rather than assumptions. The researcher has investigated as well as gathered information about the factors, in order to prove their influence in English being taught as L2.

The reason for choosing to do this particular research is, that it may help many educators in the higher education develop new curricula, apply new methodologies in teaching, divert from traditional teaching and focus more on student-centeredness. The above are all important for the present and future generations, who will learn English as L2 in the Department of Geography, Faculty of Natural-Mathematic Sciences at the University of Prishtina.

3.3. The Case Study

This case study was conducted in the Department of Geography, Faculty of Mathematic-Natural Sciences at the University of Prishtina. It was done due to the need of identifying the main factors that influence learners when teaching English as L2.

The qualitative research method was used to gain data during this case study. According to Lichtman (2010) “The qualitative researcher normally tries to find more in-depth information. While quantitative research tends to test hypotheses and perform statistical analyses, qualitative research is formed to ask in-depth question, such as “why” and “how”, in order to generate meaning, understanding and description which is interpreted by the researcher.” (p.12). On another note, Lichtman (2010) also states that *“It is the researcher who interprets the situation before his or her eyes when observing, and is the one who analyses the data collected through questionnaires, observation and interviews.”* (p.16)

Furthermore, the research is based on the approach of the qualitative research, due to the fact that in-depth information was needed to base the findings on facts rather than assumptions.

In addition, quantitative method was used in this research, as well. Quantitative method helped with proving the hypotheses.

3.4. Research Questions

The below formulated questions have helped me to reflect on the questions as an educator myself. The questions below, will be answered during the research. The questions are as follows:

1. What are English language learning difficulties in the Department of Geography of the Faculty of Mathematical-Natural Sciences at the University of Prishtina?
2. What are the factors that influence individual learners when learning English as a Foreign Language in this department?
3. Who is going to benefit from this research?
4. Will the students accept more drilling and teaching techniques in order to overcome obstacles?

3.5. Research Hypotheses

To be able to understand the circumstances that students face with, the research was based on the below given hypotheses;

H1. There are certain difficulties when learning English as a Foreign Language.

H2. It depends on individual learner if learning English is challenging or not.

H3. By researching the obstacles that pose influence on individual learners' needs, I will be able to create proposals to the university to change its way of delivering EFL courses.

3.6. Participants

The participants were undergraduate students, first and second year students, and two English as a Second Language educators, namely two classes of 15 students who took English as a Second Language and their English teacher. These 30 ESL students were of both gender female and male, aged 19-22.

The research was done in the department of geography, because the researcher is a former student of geography. Thus, as a former student of geography, and having taken English as L2 classes, the researcher had also the opportunity to have an in depth understanding of the difficulties students faced with of when English was taught as L2; what was necessary to learn in English for geography students; what factors influenced each individual in learning English as L2 and why the geography students were not being as successful as they should have been.

The participants were asked to participate in the study as well as their teacher. The letter contained information about the aim of the study, helping the students and educators in the future with the results gathered from the case, and the process of the flow, as well. The participants were also informed, that they would fill out a questionnaire. In addition, the educator was also informed about the procedure and they were asked if the researcher could observe, too. Being anonymous is a crucial part of the case study. So, all the students in this case study were told that the case study would be conducted under strict anonymity. The questionnaires, interviews and observations were run at the University of Prishtina.

3.7. Instruments

The instruments that have been used in this study case are questionnaires, interviews and observations.

Questionnaires

Questionnaires consisted of open-ended and closed-ended questions. They were delivered to the students and ESL educators. The design of the questionnaires was constructed in a structured method. They were designed in a closed form, due to the rather uncomplicated way of analyzing them.

Teacher Interview

The interview was carried out with the educator, in order to find out what was difficult and challenging about teaching English as L2 in the department of Geography part of the University

of Prishtina. Also, one of the other aims was to get an in depth view from an ESL/EFL educator of the obstacles the students face with when learning English as L2.

The interview commenced with rather simple questions, i.e. the teacher's educational background, the years of experience in teaching English as L2, next the educator was also asked if the stated factors really influence the learners that she taught.

Personal Observation

Personal observation helped me understand what the obstacles were, and find out more if the factors influencing individual learning of English as L2 are curriculum, the delivery of the course, authentic material, the students themselves etc.

CHAPTER 4

Data Analysis

4.1. Introduction

This chapter describes the process of data collection as well as the results from the gathered data. In this chapter one will have the opportunity to see the instruments that were used during the research, being described in detail.

The results that were gathered during the study case, will prove or refute the relation with the difficulty of learning English as L2 and the factors that influence learners.

4.2. Questionnaire Data

The first instrument that was conducted was the student data. Thirty students completed the questionnaire. They were given the instructions and of course they were told about the purpose of the questionnaire. They were also assured that the questionnaires will be kept confidential and there will be not revealing of the identities. The questionnaire had 15 questions, and all of the questions were formulated in the way they would help gather information about the learner motives or lack of it, personality, age, cognitive style and aptitude of learning English as L2.

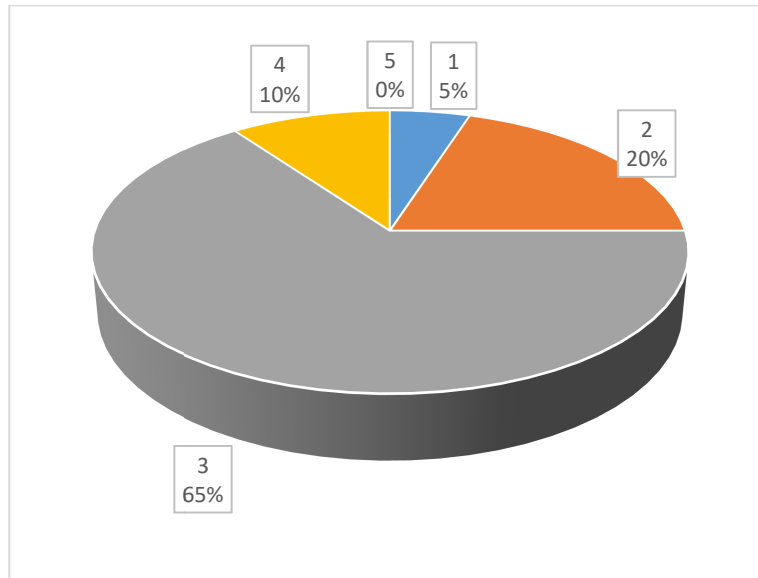
Students Level	Number of Students	Students Nationality	Language Used in the Classroom
Undergraduate Students	30 Students 22 Female 8 Male	Albanian	English and Albanian

Table 2: General information of the students who took the questionnaire

The table above shows how many students were male and female as well as the language spoken in the classroom, their level of studies and the nationality.

Before the questionnaire was handed out, the interviewer asked a question if every student had attended an English course before. As a result all of the students had taken an English course before. So, it was not their first time to be exposed to the language. The aim of the question was to understand if the questions will be needed to be translated into Albanian or be simplified.

Graph 1. Question 1. What level of English courses did you complete before?

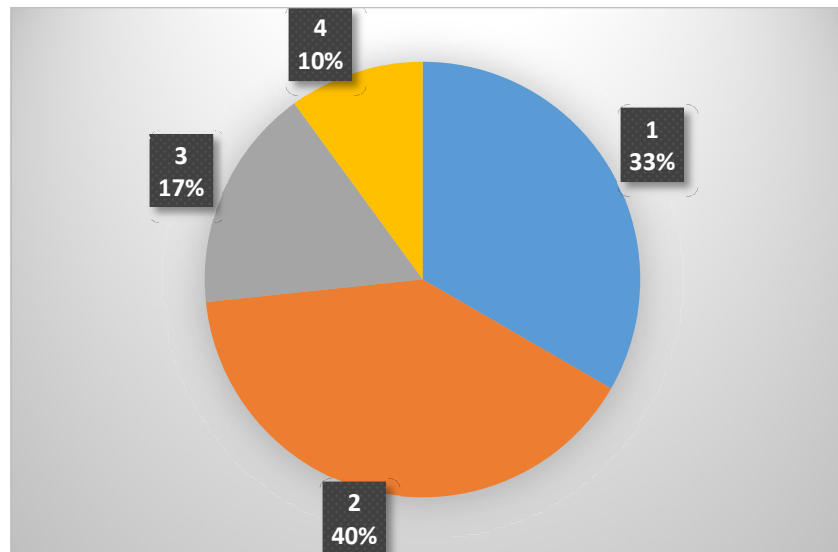


The first question was formulated with the purpose of finding out the level of students' language ability according to the level of The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages. The results from the pie chart above show, that the level that sixty-five percent of the students or thirteen out of thirty in one word the majority of the learners have completed the Intermediate level. Four students or twenty percent finished their Elementary level, two of them or ten percent finished the Advanced level, the Beginner course was attended by only one student or five percent, while luckily there were no students or zero percent of students, who had not attended an English course before.

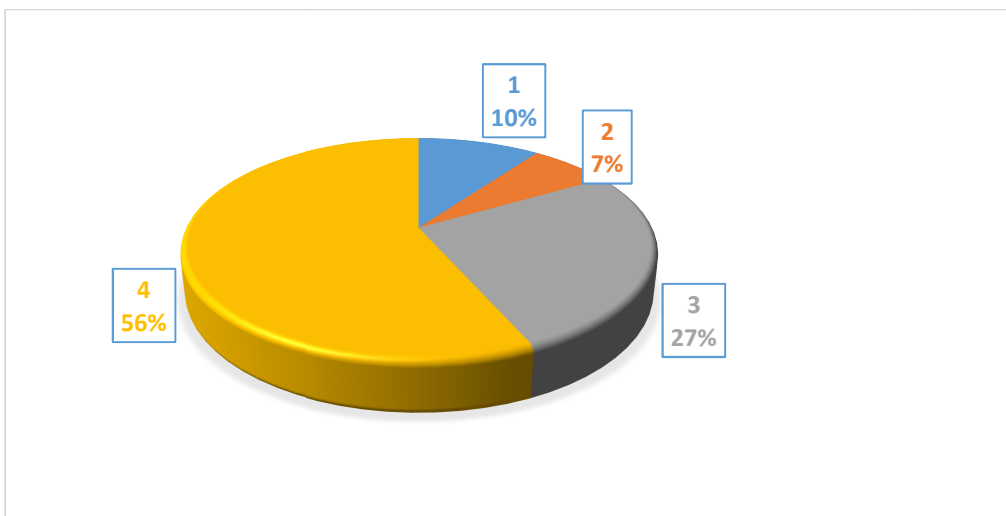
In addition, the next question was asked in order to elicit information on the difficulty of learning English as L2. Forty percent or twelve out of thirty answered negatively about the difficulty of English language. The bluish part of the pie chart shows the thirty-three percent or ten students who positively answered about the difficulty of English language. Seventeen percent or five out of thirty students' answers were to some extent, and only three students or

ten percent said that it all depends. It is worth pointing out, that the researcher was asked what she had meant with the “It all depends”. The answer was that, depending on the way of teaching, the course design, the methodology of teaching, would they think English is a difficult language to learn.

Graph 2. Question 2. *Do you think English is a difficult language to learn?*

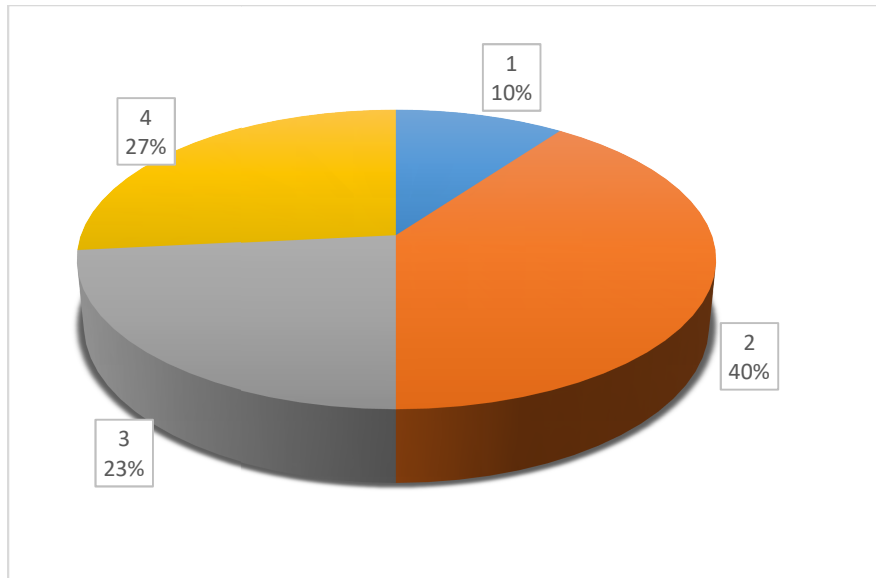


Graph 3. Question 3. *Do you like practicing spoken English with your peers?*



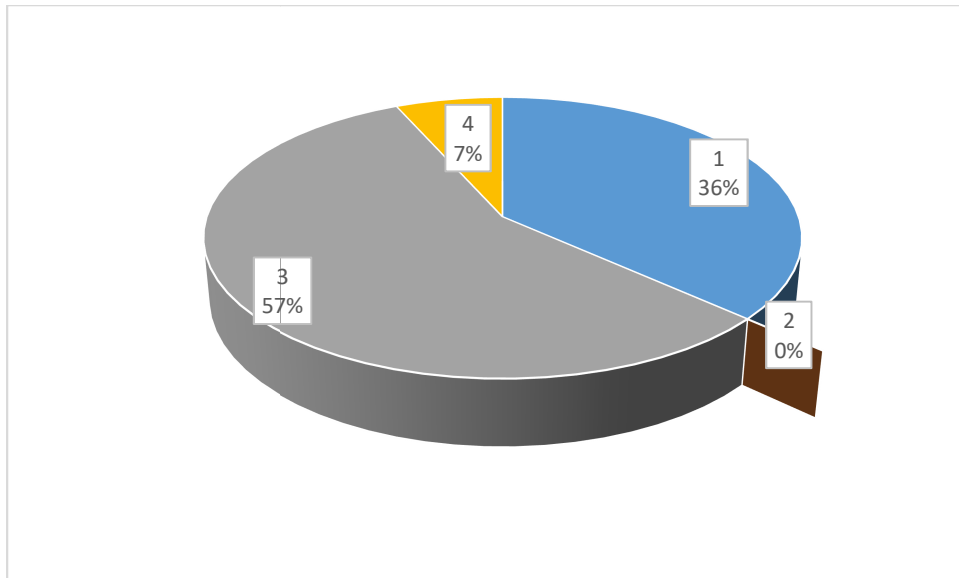
Furthermore, the pie chart above shows the fourth question, which is asked in order to find out about extroversion/introversion of the students. The questions were rather formulated in a tricky manner. In addition, seventeen students or fifty-six percent of the all the participants claimed, that they are rather reluctant on speaking English language. On the other hand the questionnaire revealed that twenty-seven or eight students only like practicing English with their siblings. Three students only answered with yes, which is ten percent, and only seven percent or two students out of thirty do not like practicing spoken English, at all.

Graph 4. Question 4. *What is the most difficult part of learning English?*



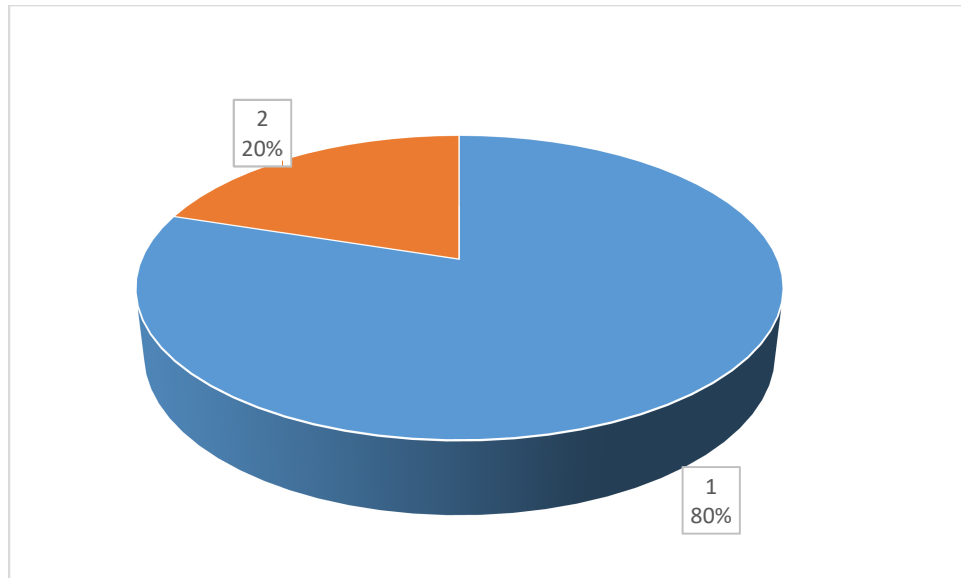
The above pie chart explains the question of what the most difficult part of learning English is. There are forty percent or twelve students, which find speaking to be the most difficult part of learning English. Then, eight students or twenty seven percent of the participants asserted that they find writing to be the most challenging part of learning English. Next, twenty-three percent or seven students found vocabulary to be difficult, and finally only three or ten percent of the students said that the found reading the most difficult part of learning English language.

Graph 5. Question 5. What do you hope, learning English will help you with, in the future?



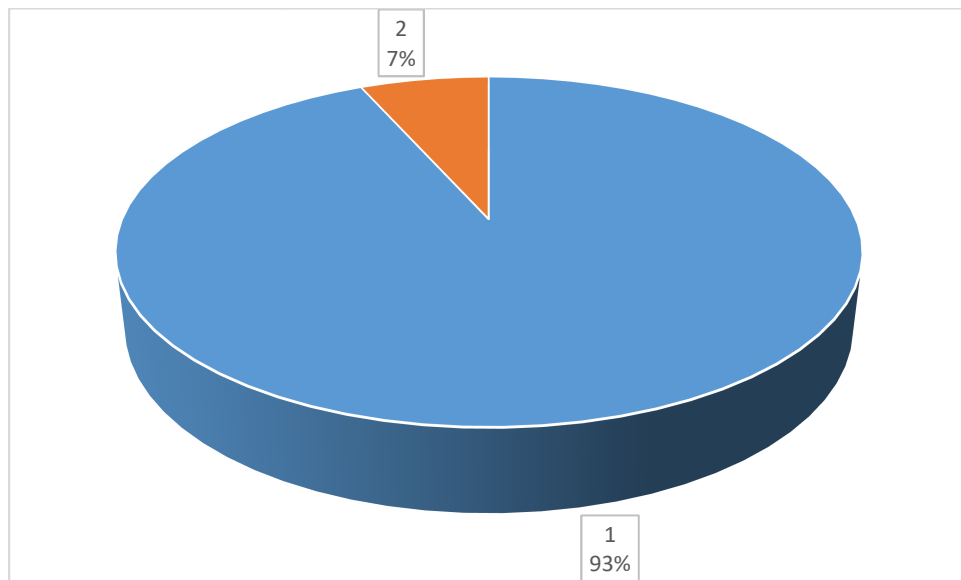
Question number six aims at asking them about their motive of learning English. In addition according to the data most of the students' motive is to apply to foreign colleges for a Master's Degree. Seventeen students or fifty-seven percent of the learners said learning English was crucial to them in order to apply to foreign colleges in order to continue their education. The motive of finding a better job follows with thirty-six percent or eleven students, and only two students or seven percent said that they hope English will help them to find literature about the field of geography. In the end none of the students or zero percent think that English will not help at all. It seems that they are all motivated, and there is a pushing force.

Graph 6. Question 6. *Would you like your course to be more structured?*



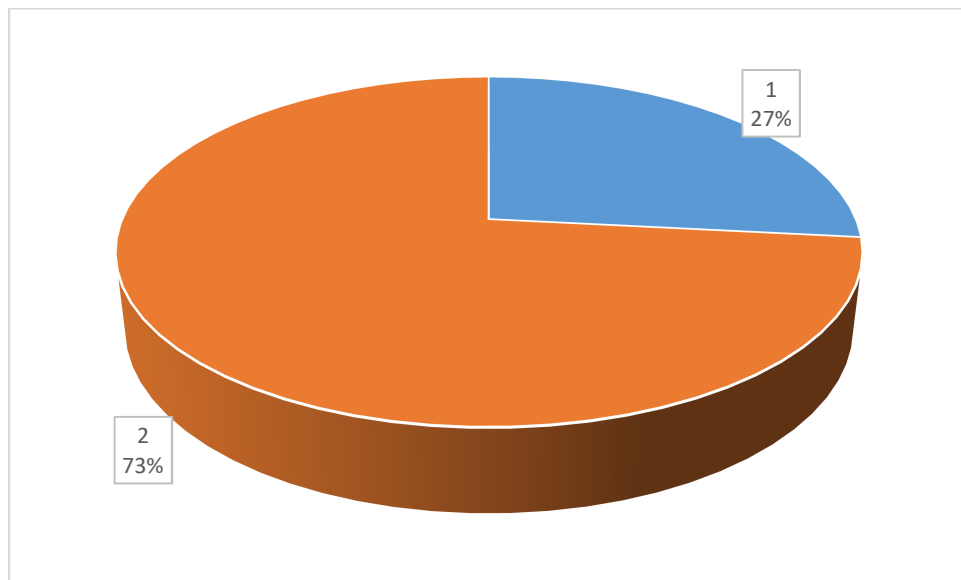
With the above question, the researcher aimed at gaining information about the willingness of the students for a change. The change that they preferred was for the course to be more structured. Twenty-four or eighty percent of students wanted their English course to be more structured, while only six students or twenty percent did not want their course to be structured, they liked it the way it was.

Graph 7. Question 7. Do you think the teacher should include more topics to learn new geography vocabulary?



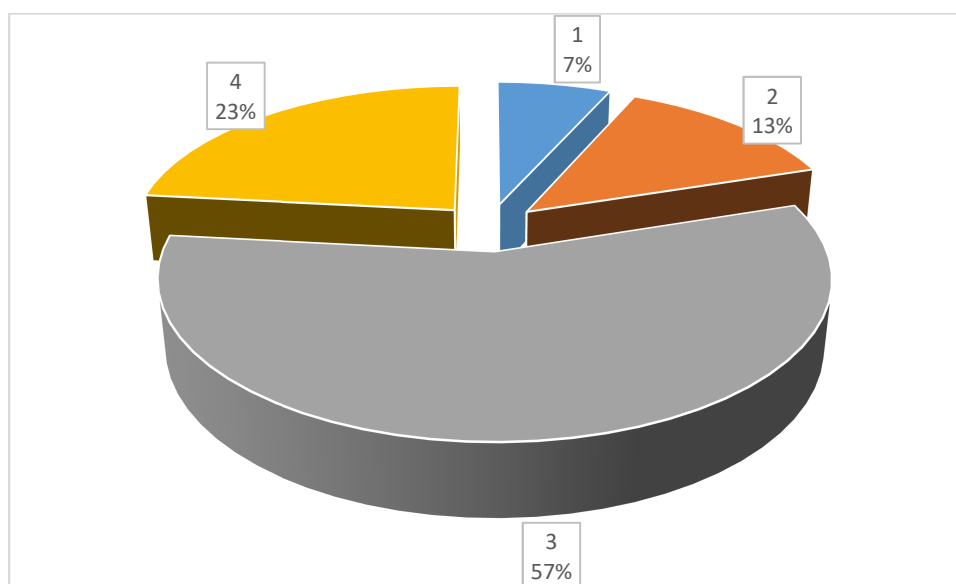
The above question aimed at having the students' opinion about the topics that the English course covered. The majority of the students or ninety-three percent or twenty-eight students would have liked their English course teacher to introduce more topics, in order for them to learn more geography vocabulary, while only two, or seven percent did not want more geography vocabulary topics included.

Graph 8. Question 8. How do you feel about learning General English in the Department of Geography?



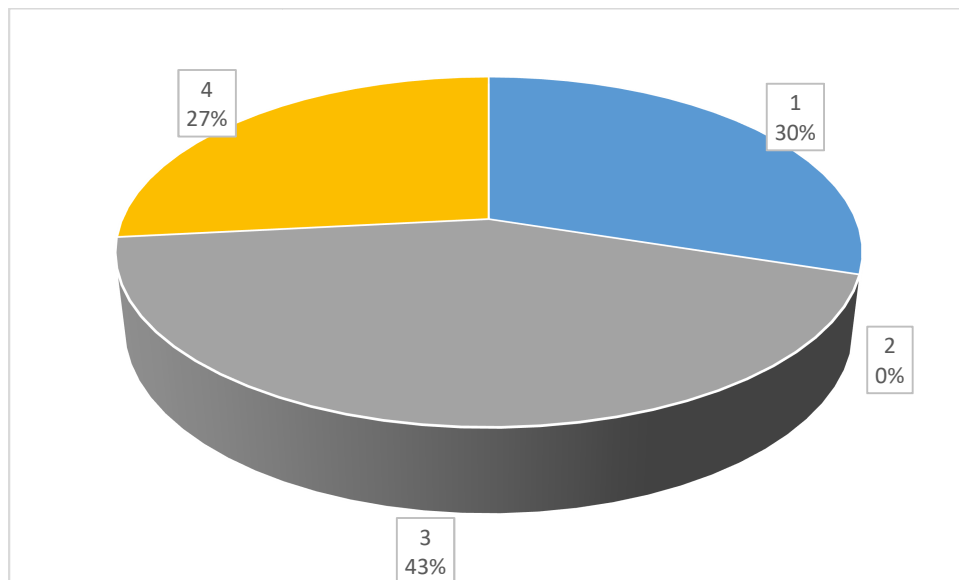
The question above was asked to find out more, what they feel about General English, and it connects to the previous one. Seventy-three percent or twenty-two students said they did not like learning General English and twenty seven or eight learners said that they liked it.

Graph 9. Question 9. Which of the below describe you best as English as L2 learner?



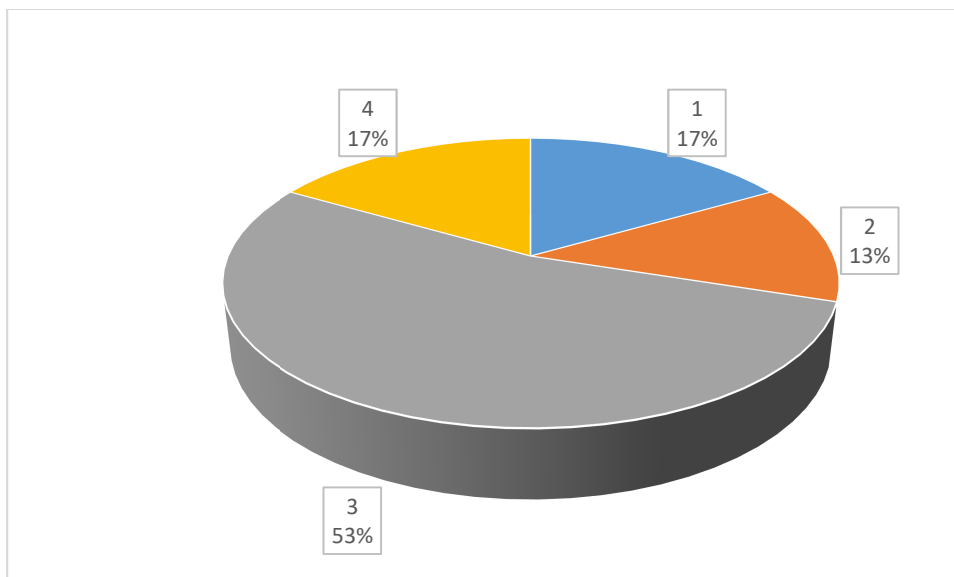
The above question aimed at finding out what kind of learners they were. Such interesting data, show that fifty-seven percent or seventeen students have the willingness to communicate in real-life situations. Twenty-three percent or seven students prefer organized games and group work. There are only four or thirteen percent of learners who follow textbooks, and only two or seven percent would be describing themselves as a solitary learner that avoids groups.

Graph 10. Question 10. What are the activities that involve learning English as L2, that you enjoy the least in the classroom?



The above question aims at finding out how many students and what they enjoy the least as part of their English language course. From the above question the results show that thirteen students or forty-three percent are introverts and do not like to be exposed. Nine out of thirty or thirty percent of students do not like reading aloud for fluency. The reason is that they feel it is a waste of time to read. Twenty-seven percent or eight of the students do not enjoy writing essays, or it is their less favourite activity. No one circled dictation as the least enjoyable activity or zero percent of the participants.

Graph 11. Question 11. *What are you usually capable of doing in class during classes of ESL?*



Question number fourteen was asked in order to get thorough information about the preferred way in which students process information or a task that are given. In particular, if the question aimed at finding out if the learners are more analytic or holistic and what category they fall. If they have a language aptitude. It resulted that only five students or seventeen percent have an inductive language ability, which means they are able to identify grammar patterns where it involves rules. The other answer of being able to code sounds and store the words in the brain was circled by four students or thirteen percent of students which is a sub-component of language aptitude. It also resulted that sixteen students or fifty-three percent have the ability to make connections between their mother tongue and English, which shows that they have an associative memory. Finally, only five students or seventeen percent (equal to the ones with are grammar sensitive, who are indeed able to understand the contribution that words represent in a sentence.

4.3. Teacher's Interview

The second instrument used for this study was done with the English professor. The professor was interviewed in order to gather information about the difficulties that the learners face with, and what the factors were according to her opinion. The interviewee has been the course instructor since the beginning of the academic year. In addition, the interview questions were formulated in order to get an in depth opinion of the factors that influence one's English language learning. In order for the identity to remain confidential, the educator will be addressed as professor during the interview. Furthermore, each question will be given a response regarding the educator's perspective of perception on factors that might influence the students' English language learning difficulties and factors that affect each individual.

The educator's highest degree is MA in English Language and the educator has been an ESL teacher for many years. The educator revealed that she is offered only a few teacher trainings, which are not suitable for English teachers. Usually she finances her own professional trainings. Furthermore, she admits to be willing to change the way of teaching with her classes. Moreover, she claimed that she had seen a lot of potential but lack of motive among students in the department where she teaches. According to her most of the difficulties that she had encountered among students while teaching the class were teaching grammar and tenses. Additionally, among the factors that affect learning English as L2, she sees lack of motivation.

When she was asked what she thought of L1 interference, she responded: *"Yes, of course. I absolutely think that Albanian language affects English language learning. Especially with the accent and intonation."*

The educator also thinks, that English should be offered as a compulsory course at university level, especially throughout departments where exact sciences are studied.

4.4. Personal Observation

Personal observation is the third instrument of this research. It helped the researcher understand what the obstacles were, and what factors influence this particular group of students.

Hence, based on my perception, first of all the delivery of the course itself, is insufficient for English language learning. If the students need to succeed they have to attend private language schools. Then there is lack of motivation on the professor's side. The professor has to follow a particular curriculum. In addition the students only have English classes once per week, which is difficult for them to even learn something new. In addition, the classes last only forty-five minutes which is delivered in lectures. Thus, according to me it is a big issue in the level of higher instances.

The students were motivated. However, only if we talk about external motivation. It was difficult to determine if the age had any particular factor that influences learning of English as L2. Regarding their personality and cognitive style, they all had different points of view, which is going to be discussed in the next chapter.

Observation Protocol for English Language Learning Difficulties

Date: 13-November-2017 through 01-February-2018

Time: 10:00-11:00

Place: Department of Geography, University of Prishtina

Length of activity one hour

Descriptive Notes	Reflective Notes
Thirty students and their teacher in a classroom.	The approach of the educator with students is good.
The teacher is explaining the Present Continuous	Drilling is not appropriate for their level.
The students can make sentences but cannot focus on the form.	Teacher should have used real life situation.
Many students cannot distinguish the difference between Present Simple and Present Continuous	Educator should explain the difference and do more practice.

Table 3. Observation Protocol

In the following chapter the research will analyze the data and discuss hypotheses and research questions.

Chapter 5

Discussion, Findings and Analysis of the Results

5.1. Introduction

This chapter will deal with discussion and findings during the research. Also, analysis of the students' answers and educator's responses will be given attention to. The research will also attempt for hypotheses to be supported by evidence. It will also address the questions asked in the research.

5.2. Analysis of the Results

As the research deals with the factors that affect learners when English is taught as L2, the first factor to be addressed during the questionnaire was motivation. In addition according to the data gathered from the questionnaire, what one can see is that *Instrumental motivation* was present at most of the students. As Ellis (1997) in his book *Second Language Acquisition* states:

"Learners make efforts to learn an L2 for some functional reason-to pass an examination, to get a better job, or to get a place at university. In some learning contexts, an instrumental motivation seems to be the major force determining success in L2 learning." (p.75)

So, based on the students' answers they are *instrumentally motivated*, since the majority of them would like to apply to a foreign university for continuing further education.

To get a better job was also among the most circled answers, which also has to do with instrumental motivation.

Furthermore, regarding the students' personality and how it affects their English learning, from the data gathered, one can see that most of the students are introverts. Ellis (2003) asserted that:

"It has been suggested that extroverted students will find it easier to make contact with other users of the L2 and therefore will obtain more input." (p. 120)

Hence, most of the students resulted being introverts, therefore it may be possible that they are not able to obtain more input and will acquire English slowly. However, during the other tricky question whether they have the willingness to communicate in real-life situation, the majority of the students' data shows that they are risk-taking.

Under the circumstances, the researcher could not gain any data on how age can be one of the factors to influence the undergraduate students of the department of geography. In order to be accurate with the data about how age can affect one's English language learning, the students had to be in their "Critical Period", and it should have been when they were within the age 0 to 10. As Penfield and Roberts (1959) cited by Ellis (2003) point out that "...the optimum age for language acquisition falls within the first ten years of life." (p.107). Furthermore, Penfield and Roberts (1959) cited by Ellis (2003) state "During this period the brain retains plasticity, but with the onset of puberty this plasticity begins to disappear." (p.107) which also proves the lack of pronunciation ability at this group of students where the research was done. In addition Penfield and Roberts (1959) cited by Ellis (2003) suggested that:

".....this was the result of the lateralization of the language function in the left hemisphere of the producing language.....The increased difficulty which older learners supposedly experience was seen as a direct result of the neurological change." (p.107).

Regarding the aptitude, there are certain tests that need to be run in order to measure aptitude, so it was rather difficult to conclude. According to Carroll and Sapon (2002 ed.),

"The Modern Language Aptitude Test" or MLAT is an instrument designed to measure aptitude for foreign language learning in high school, college and adult population." (p.96) According to Carroll and Sapon (2002 ed.), *"MLAT is recommended for use prior to the start of foreign language training, but for specific purposes, such as gathering more information about foreign language learning difficulties, it may also be useful after the start of training."* (p.98)

Regarding the cognitive style, according to the results, the students seem to be more concrete learners. They like the course book to be more structured as well as including real-life situations connected to their appropriate field of study.

5.3. Research Questions and Hypotheses

It can be concluded that there is enough information in order to answer the research questions of this study, after examining all instruments used in data gathering of this research. To determine the factors that influence individual learners when learning English as a Foreign Language in the Department of Geography of the Faculty of Mathematical-Natural Sciences at the University of Prishtina, three hypotheses are conducted as following:

Hypothesis 1. There are certain difficulties when learning English as a Foreign Language.

In order to prove this hypothesis, the research question 1 was conducted as following:

Question 1. *What are English language learning difficulties in the Department of Geography of the Faculty of Mathematical-Natural Sciences at the University of Prishtina?*

The English language learning difficulties may vary, they also depend on each individual learner. Learning difficulties may include, language learning disability in general, L1 interference, lack of appropriate curriculum and its design.

This hypothesis turns out to be true, even though the research question number 2 might put it into a dependable variable.

Question 2. *What are the factors that influence individual learners when learning English as a Foreign Language?*

The factors that influence individual learners when learning English as L2/EFL according to the research vary. The factors that could be identified during the research were motivation, personality and cognitive style. Regarding the aptitude and age, there were some limitations. I dare say, it is the time limit which played an important part in identifying the factor aptitude. Although, during the research aptitude could be seen, but not proved. *According to the questionnaires and observation as well as literature review, learners face with different language difficulties. Ellis (2003) states that:*

“The learner factors that can influence the course of development are potentially infinite and very difficult to classify in a reliable manner.” (p.10) Therefore he lists the major factors that contribute to individual learner. Ellis (2003) gives priority to: “age, aptitude, cognitive style, motivation and personality.” (p.10)

In addition, certain difficulties refers to the English vocabulary, which is one of the trickiest and has the vast number of words. Then spelling which is often difficult to guess how to spell an English word. Next, are idioms, slang and pronunciation, which many scholars find to be inconsistent. Furthermore, Tenses in English are learned differently when learning/teaching EFL/ESL. For example English has some tenses that do not correspond to other languages: Present Perfect does not convey the same meaning as Present Perfect in Albanian; Present Continuous, Will and Going to are Future forms, but it is hard to understand for and EFL/ESL student when to use them and how to distinguish them; noun clauses are often confused among EFL/ESL students. The other difficulties are for example: How to learn English when one’s first language is nonalphabetical? If an EFL/ESL had never been taught a sound/letter rules system of English. On the other hand, there are also other factors which pose difficulties in learning English as L2, which are anxiety, intonation of the English language, L1 interference, learning disabilities i.e. dyslexia, of course the factors that this research was based on, age, motivation, cognitive style and personality. These are certain difficulties that need to be taken into consideration when learning/teaching English as a Foreign Language.

Hypothesis 2. It depends on individual learner if learning English is challenging or not.

In order to prove this hypothesis, the research question number 4 was conducted as following:

Question 4. Will the students accept more drilling and teaching techniques in order to overcome obstacles?

Yes, they will. Actually, they were looking forward to different drilling during the classes and they were willing to accept their errors as well as improve their language ability. Regarding the teaching techniques, unfortunately there was no student-centeredness. The classes were more teacher centered. Which means the methodology of teaching should also improve. Some

learners do find learning English challenging. As it was stated, some of the difficulties that EFL/ESL students face with, we cannot say it refers to all of the learners. Some have the aptitude of learning a second language. It also depends on the exposure and how much it is retained. However, some do find the motivation of learning English. If motivation is intrinsic or extrinsic. These were discussed in chapter under Literature Review. Some learners, do not find English challenging due to the fact that they can make connections. Making connections is one of the crucial part of learning a language. Personality is another factor which can affect the aspect of learning English. Interaction is critical, as well. Some learners do find it difficult to interact with native English speakers. The excuse is that they are afraid they might make mistakes, which actually relates to personality. It depends on aptitude, motivation and cognitive style. Some students do find English challenging, especially grammar and tense formation.

Hypothesis 3. *By researching the obstacles that pose influence on individual learners' needs, I will be able to create proposals to the University of Prishtina to change its way of delivering EFL courses in the department of geography.*

In order to prove this hypotheses a research question was conducted as following:

Question 3. Who is going to benefit from this research?

The research could serve as a future reference. Also, if changes are made to the English programme, in the future this research may be taken into consideration. It may help others who would like to develop further the question of factors influencing learners of English as L2.

In addition, this hypothesis cannot be proved, yet. Higher instances should be involved in the process of proposals to the University of Prishtina. This hypothesis tends to be open to the future process.

CHAPTER 6

Limitations and Recommendations

6.1. Limitations

Limitations of this research were few. It would be extremely exciting to see if this study could be undertaken on a much wider scale and serve as a reference point for further study, so further research on individual learner difficulties could be done in the future.

The goals of the case study have been achieved. However, the insufficient resources, sometimes the lack of in depth study of the problems that adults face with when learning English as L2, made the writing of this thesis challenging. Moreover, there were some studies done about adults' English learning difficulties, but only few that dealt more with other than mentioned factors that affect learning English as L2.

The research was conducted in one mixed level class, which lasted for approximately once per week for thirteen weeks. Thirteen weeks is not enough for the researcher to observe all of the student's performance in their classes. It would be better if it was done in a longer time.

In this study case, 30 students took part in completion of the questionnaires. Nevertheless, there were students belonging to different levels of English, from beginner to intermediate.

Another limitation was the lack of use of realia in the classroom. The researcher bases her assumptions on her empirical study. The use of realia is crucial for a smooth running of a class. According to Doctor Nina Mk (2016)

"Realia in education means real-life facts and material used in teaching. Visual aids play a huge role at any age and level. When we show a picture of an object or phenomenon,

bring in a toy or a souvenir into class, share a fascinating news item with our students, it helps them remember the new vocabulary and the topic itself better.” (2016n.p)

The usefulness of using realia are as follows (Philips & Shettlesworth 1978; Clarke 1989; Peacock 1997; Richards, 2001 cited in Kilickaya, 2004):

- “1. They contribute to amplify learners’ motivation positively.*
- 2. Authentic objects that belong to the target language culture supply real cultural information.*
- 3. Students are exposed to language with these materials.*
- 4. They are likely to meet students’ learning needs.*
- 5. They bring an imaginative approach to teaching.” (p. 1-6)*

Other limitation includes, the lack of other teaching material in the classroom. I must mention that only books was and is still is the one and only resource used to teach and learn English.

In addition, other departments of the faculty were not part of this research in order to compare the factors affecting English language learning and teaching among the other students.

Under the circumstances, the researcher could not gain any data on how age can be one of the factors to influence the undergraduate students of the department of geography. Therefore, factor age remains still to be explored.

6.2. Recommendations

After analyzing the results, there are some recommendations that I would address. With all due respect to our educators and students, I would rather say that, different internal and external factors influence and hinder a student’s performance in general. As it is clearly seen from the questionnaire what motivates students for learning English is mostly to apply at a foreign

university. On the other hand the way the English course is being delivered, should be changed as per students' needs. Therefore, a complete structured course of English language delivery should be considered. The English Learners should be kept motivated by engaging them into different kinds of activities.

Students should also be asked to read more in English language to expand their vocabulary.

Also, the University of Prishtina should take some steps forward, into making English course, a compulsory course for the entire undergraduate period of studies. The students have English language class only once per week, and they are obliged to attend private courses. Next what the University of Prishtina should do, is to work on the curriculum and work on English for Specific Purpose specialized course. Furthermore, I recommend the educator to change some of the teaching methods. New methods should be applied, as result of not so satisfactory English language exams. The educator should also consider more cooperation between other departments of the University of Prishtina. Exchange of experience with other ESL/EFL educators, is highly recommended. It is equally important that students are told to do peer projects together, where they swap information and share their opinion on something. The educator should include some realia in her teaching and make a more pleasant environment for the students to learn English. Applying different activities during the classes would help the students get motivated. It is also crucial to have a language test in the beginning of the year, so it would help the educator to know what level groups there are, and prepare lessons better.

Teaching strategies that include asking questions and soliciting explanation i.e. Wh questions. Also what the students would benefit from, is brainstorming and use graphic organizers, structured group discussions. The availability of abridged books in English language for in class reading and out, would be of e benefit, as well.

Furthermore, designing lessons to motivate students to talk as well as asking questions by requiring simple answers, yes/no, How? Why? Which one? Where?

Also, grammatical errors should not be corrected very frequently, as the focus is on fluency rather than accuracy.

CHAPTER 7

Conclusion

This thesis is based on research onto factors that influence individual learners when English is taught as L2. The participants were first and second year undergraduate students, aged 19-22, although there were a few aged 22+. The research was conducted in the Department of Geography, Faculty of Mathematical-Natural Sciences at the University of Prishtina. The focus of this research was to examine more or less the factors that influence and affect learners, be it internal or external.

Various tools were used, for instance during teaching i.e. course books, excerpts, etc. Classroom activities included reading, lower level of English use discussion, lower level English of questions and replies, as well as written assignments. Written assignments were also given for homework, but students were reluctant in doing it.

The aims of the research and the thesis itself were to reflect more or less on; identifying learner difficulties; factors that influence learners in an ESL classroom; the need of English language curricula development for the Department of Geography; students' needs of English as L2 and benefits of the research for the students and educators in the future.

Furthermore, one of the main findings was, that the teacher played a crucial role in the classroom where English language was taught as L2.

From the data gathered during the research, it was shown that factors such as, personality, learning strategies, motivation and attitude have a great influence on each learner. According to the results the factor, which has shown to have the most influence on each individual learner was motivation. The students who came to lectures motivated, were the ones that brought in

results. While on the other hand, the factor that showed the least influence on each individual was the age. Although, there was not a very huge age difference among the learners, the research showed that age does not play an important part of learning English as L2.

I dare say that, one of the factors that may have influenced the low knowledge of the English language, is the structure of the classes. Correspondingly, it is also the lack of travelling to other English speaking countries, language acquisition and practice, especially with native English speakers, which has been hindering the knowledge of English. Equally important is, another issue that did not come up during this research, which may be one of the factors that could slow down the process of learning English language in the Department of Geography, at the University of Prishtina; the issue of language learning disability.

Gass and Selinker (2008) say *".....there is no evidence for any personality trait that predicts overall success in second language learning."* (p.437)

So, to sum up, there is still much work to be done in this direction. What needs to be explored, is the way of student's thinking i.e. cognitive and metacognitive style, different teaching methodologies, which would work for less capable students of grasping English as L2 or EFL. New research has to be done in the direction of factor age. There are still questions whether age influences or not the one's result of learning a language. In general, more research has been done in regards to the children than adolescents or adults. Last but not the least the main objective should always be improving while replacing old teaching methods to the new ones.

References

Primary Source

Students' Questionnaires, Educator's Interview, Observation

Secondary Source

Borg et al. (2003). Teacher Cognition in Grammar Teaching: A Literature Review.

Broughton, Brumfit, Flavell, Hill and Pincas (2003). Teaching English as a Foreign Language. Second Edition. New York, NY: Taylor and Francis e-library.

Carlos J. Ovando and Mary Carol Combs (2012). Bilingual and ESL Classrooms: Teaching in Multicultural Contexts. Fifth Edition. New York, NY: McGraw-Hill

Carroll, J. B., & Sapon, S. M. (1959). Modern language aptitude test. San Antonio, TX, US: Psychological Corporation.

Crystal, D. (2003). English as a Global Language. Second Edition. Published in the United States of America by Cambridge University Press, New York.

Dearden, J. (2014). English as a medium of instruction-a growing global phenomenon. British Council. Retrieved on 15-April-2018 from www.teachingenglish.org.uk

Dornyei, Z. (2005). The Psychology of the Language Learner: Individual Differences in Second Language Acquisition. New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Inc.

Eric H. Lenneberg, Biologische Grundlagen der Sprache, (Berlin: Suhrkamp Taschenbuch Verlag, 1996).

Gass, S., & Selinker, L. (2008). *Second Language Acquisition: An Introductory Course. Third Edition.* New York, NY and London: Routledge.

Graddol, D. (2000). The Future of English. Digital Edition by the English Company (UK) Ltd.

James Emil Flege, (1987). "A Critical Period for Learning Pronunciation?" Applied Linguistics.

Janet Enever, (2011) ELLE. Early Language Learning in Europe, London: British Council.

Journal of Psychoeducational Assessment 2005, 23, 96-104

Kilickaya, F. Authentic Materials and Cultural Content in EFL Classrooms Middle East Technical University (Ankara, Turkey). Retrieved on 15-March-2018 from <http://iteslj.org/Techniques/Kilickaya-AuthenticMaterial.html>

Krashen, S. (1982). Principles and Practice in Second Language Acquisition. First internet edition July 2000. Pergamon Press Inc.

Lichtman, M. (2010). Understanding and Evaluating Qualitative Educational Research. Second Edition. California: SAGE Publications.

Mk, N. (2016). Realia teaching. Retrieved on 25-April-2018 from <https://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/blogs/ninamk/realia-el-teaching>

Ortega, L. (2013). Understanding Second Language Acquisition. Second Edition. New York, NY. Routledge. Retrieved on 01-March-2018 from <http://www.education.leeds.ac.uk/assets/files/staff/papers/Borg-LA-12-2-2003.pdf>

Retrieved on 06-May-2018 from <http://journals.sagepub.com/doi/pdf/10.1177/073428290502300109>

Retrieved on 20-December-2017 from https://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/sites/teacheng/files/pub_learning-elt-future.pdf

Rod, E. (1997). Second Language Acquisition. First edition. Oxford University Press.

Rod, E. (2003). Understanding Second Language Acquisition. First Edition. Oxford University Press.

Wong, Fillmore, L. (1991a). Second Language Learning in Children: A model of language learning in social context. In E. Bialystok (Ed.), Language processing in bilingual children (p. 49-69).Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

Appendices

Appendix 1

Student Questionnaire

First Initials of your name and surname _____

Age _____

Gender _____

Level _____

This questionnaire is completely confidential! It will help the researcher gather data about factors influencing individual learners when English is taught as L2.

Please circle the applicable answer, after you have filled in the information above.

1. Have you attended an English course before?

a) Yes

b) No

2. What level English courses did you complete before?

- a) Beginner
- b) Elementary
- c) Intermediate
- d) Advanced
- e) None

3. *Do you think English is a difficult language to learn?*

- a) Yes
- b) No
- c) To some extent
- d) It depends

4. *Do you like practicing spoken English with your peers?*

- a) Yes
- b) No
- c) I like to practice it with my siblings
- d) I am reluctant on speaking English language

5. *What is the most difficult thing about learning English?*

- a) Reading
- b) Speaking
- c) Vocabulary
- d) Writing

6. *What do you hope learning English will help you with, in the future?*

- a) To find a better job

- b) Nothing
- c) It is crucial for applying to foreign colleges for Master Degree
- d) Finding literature about the field of Geography

7. *Would you like your course to be more structured?*

- a) Yes
- b) No

8. *Do you think the teacher should include more topics to learn new geography vocabulary?*

- a) Yes
- b) No

9. *How do you feel about learning General English in the Department of Geography?*

- a) I like it
- b) I do not like it

10. *Which of the below describe you best as an English as L2 learner?*

- a) As a solitary learner that avoids groups
- b) Following textbooks
- c) Willingness to communicate in real-life situations
- d) Prefers organized games and group work

11. *What are the activities that involve English as L2 learning that you enjoy the least in the classroom?*

- a) Reading aloud for fluency
- b) Dictation

c) Discuss and Debate

d) Writing essays

12. What are you usually capable of doing in class during classes of ESL?

a) I have particularly good memory abilities

b) I am able to code sounds and store the words in my brain

c) I have the ability to make connections between L1 and L2

d) I am able to understand the contribution that words represent in sentences

Appendix 2

Interview Questions for the Educator

Question 1

Interviewer: What is the highest degree of your education?

Question 2

Interviewer: Is this your first time teaching undergraduate students?

Question 3

Interviewer: Does the University of Prishtina offer any Professional Development to the English educators/professors who teach English as L2 to exact sciences students?

Question 4

Interviewer: Would you be willing to change your way of teaching? If yes, how?

Question 5

Interviewer: What do you think of your students' general English abilities?

Question 6

Interviewer: Until now, what English learning difficulties have you encountered at your students while teaching this class?

Question 7

Interviewer: I am doing this research on English language difficulties: Factors that affect individuals when learning English as L2. What do you think are the factors influencing the students' ESL/EFL learning?

Question 8

Interviewer: What do you think of the factor age and its influence on English language learning?

Question 9

Interviewer: Do you think L1 in this case Albanian language interferes English language learning?

Question 10

Interviewer: Do you think English should be a compulsory course at a university level in Kosovo?

Question 11

Interviewer: Professor, do you think one of the factors could be the delivery of the course? What I think is, the students need the course to be more specific, like including themes that deal with certain topics about the subject they are studying.

Question 12

Interviewer: Do you think you could use special tests to diagnose ESL learning difficulties in your department?

Question 13

Interviewer: Thank you professor, for your time and willingness to cooperate, as well as letting me be part of some of your classes.