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Learning English in Adulthood

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ABSTRACT

Nowadays, people are dedicating more time to studying English as a second language. There are a lot of reasons why people may choose to learn English because it has emerged as a universal language of communication around the globe, and it has become essential part of our life to learn it. Whether you are searching for a new job or you have plans to travel the world, studying English have a lot of benefits and can help you progress in life both personally and professionally.

There are a great number of advantages and benefits of being exposed to a second language, like cognitive advantages that can arise from achieving a particular level of proficiency in a second language. For centuries it has been acknowledged that learning about other people, other cultures and other languages it broadens the mind. As a result knowing more than one language provides improvement in cognitive and metalinguistic abilities.

This thesis is focused mainly on learning a second language by adults (English more specifically). It goes deeper in their learning style, what does influence them mostly to learn English in adulthood, how are they motivated to learn and by who are they motivated.

The academic importance of this thesis is the help it would be given as a facilitation to a lot of adults who try to learn English and teachers who teach adults in a way how to approach them correctly.

During this research there are used two methods mainly: descriptive and empirical methods, a questionnaire consisted of 10 questions, direct observation form and interviews. The participants in this study are Albanian native speakers learning English as a foreign language in two different English courses in Kosovo. The first group of participants with a number of 25 people came from the “The Cambridge School” in Ferizaj and Gjilan, Kosovo. The second group of participants also with 25 people was from Prishtina more specifically from the “ New Age School”, Kosovo.

The participants are selected from different groups because what we are mainly focused on is the age of the participants, not the level of study. And their ages are from 19-40 years old because the study is focused on learning a foreign language in adulthood. Also, for the observation part, the students are a group of women who work in the administration of the local government of Ferizaj and their average age was 25-35. To be more precise for the results, an interview was made with eight different candidates. The candidates are third year students of Psychology, Sociology, Business and Management departments, age 25 to 32 and one of the candidates is a second year student of fashion design school, age 20. They all have different backgrounds and different fields of study, that made the research more interesting.

In the end, I summarized all the findings for the highlighted points or hypothesis and bring up a conclusion for them and give some recommendations for the ones that are going to read my thesis.

Key words: learning, teaching, adulthood, learning style, motivation, etc...

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CHAPTER ONE

I. Introduction

Why learn English? It is evident that English language has become a very important language in each aspect nowadays, so people around the world are exposed to it in many ways. There are dozens of reasons that make it an important bridge of communication between people; business, travelling, internet, books, movies, job position, etc. But not all people can start or had the chance to start learning English from their childhood due to a lot of factors, or in a way, their interests to learn it has started later on their lives. English is an official language in more than 50 countries around the world, and it is expanding more and more as time passes by. So together with it, the interest of people to learn it increased even in adulthood, trying to find different ways to learn it, whereas the most common ways to learn English language turned out to be by attending private courses in individual or in group forms, from beginner level to advance and proficiency, it depended how far people wanted to go on acquiring knowledge about English as a second language. As part of the statistics from the KBRA (The Business Registration Agency), it turned out that the number of private courses for foreign languages in Kosovo has increased tremendously recently. In the last 10 years, there have been a huge interest from people of different ages of learning English language, and this happened due to a lot of factors that indicated the need for it. What was surprising it's that the interest of adults increased in this aspect even though in adulthood the learning process differs a lot from children and teenagers. Through this research I tried to find out what are some of the main reasons that pushed adults to start learning English and I tried to find out if the adults' learning process differs from that of children and what are the challenges and problems that adults may face while they are exposed to a different language from that of the mother tongue.

Most of the responsibilities in our everyday life are carried by adults. Even though there are stages when they cannot find an immediate solution, they have to try till they are done with those problems. Learning a language at their age is a challenge in a form, and if they are not motivated by others, they have to motivate themselves in any possible form just to fulfill their aims what they need the language for. Taking into account all those responsibilities above mentioned and

the time they have available to devote to learning a foreign language we can definitely say that this is a challenge in itself for them. Now, if a person envies the others for their position and knows that English language was one of the reasons they got that position, it can be kind of a push for them to learn much harder to be in the same level with them or even higher. There are a lot of other factors that adults have to take into account while learning English as a second language and they have to know how to manage them. Otherwise, if there is no trying, there is no success either. Frustration from failure should be avoided from the first beginning because even though sometimes adults can fail to learn English as they want to, they have to try again on other ways left till they reach their aims and are satisfied enough with themselves. However, all these factors need a very close investigation to see how the process goes on and how does the circle of getting knowledge for a language load, as it is a really big issue in itself and should necessarily be investigated from the general to the very detailed reasons in order to get as much exact results as possible. Complexions need to be simplified for any kind of trouble that comes their way and if sometimes it seems difficult to find a problem solving option, adults need to create such one because expectations from others to come in help can really disappoint them. So as it seems, there isn't only the concentration while reading a book or a dictionary to remind new words or watching a movie and download its English subtitles but all the other ways that lead to that concentration, how to make the focus in the learning process easier for the adults with all their problems by their side, what does the adults brain need to accept new language in its system and can adults change the theory that only young people can learn a language as they should to. It is not only a computer or a USB that need a formatting process but also people's brain in order to keep the very important things and get cleaned by the unnecessary ones, free more memory space to learn a language do a refresh of it whenever it seems to be required.

1.1 Aims and objectives of the research

The aim of the thesis is to examine second language learning in this case English at an adult age with special interest in learner strategies. The use of learner strategies is known to vary among learners in all age groups.

The key element that can be considered as the main point of this thesis is to find out more about the process of learning English as a second language by adult people in order to give an opportunity to some young teachers to have a good approach towards adults and maybe to bring some facilities for the adults how they can learn English as a second language easier by analyzing their own style of learning.

Moreover, this research will also try to give explanations why a child acquires a language easier than an adult and if the presence of one language is critical factor that may slow down the ability of the person to acquire other languages. This research pertains to general characterization of adults and description of the adults as English language learners.

Aim of the research are also the challenges that the adults face because it is a fact that learning a language at their age is a challenge in a form, and if they are not motivated by others, they have to motivate themselves in any possible form just to fulfill their aims what they need the language for. Taking into account all those responsibilities they have their memory system maybe gets tired too, but they need to refresh it in order to be able to learn the new words of the language they are interested in.

1.2 Research questions

1. How much does social background influence adults to learn English as a second language?
2. What are the main reasons pushing adults to learn English?
3. What is the common learning style of adults?
4. How are adults motivated to learn English?
5. What is the learning environment for adults?
6. Do teachers have the right approach while teaching English to adults?

1.3 Research Hypotheses

1. Adult learners' main motivation for studying English is the progress in their career.
2. Adult language learning ability seems to involve a type of talent, or set of talents.

1.4 Summary

One can hear English everywhere. According to Crystal English as an international language began its global career during the Middle Ages, when it moved from England up to Scotland and across the sea to Ireland (p 34). Thereupon, it crossed the Atlantic, and then the Indian Ocean and beyond as a political and military power. When the British Empire became a global reality, English was described as a „language on which the sun never sets“.

Today, English is still a world language, though the British Empire is something that belongs to the past. Three other kinds of power helped prolong its position. During the Industrial Revolution, English was seen as the power of knowledge since it became the main language of science and technology. During the 19th century, it was associated with economic power: „if money talks“, then the language it was chiefly talking about was that of the pound and dollar.

And during the 20th century, English was identified as the language of cultural power, used in everything from transport to advertising, from pop music to the Internet.

Internet also played a great role, including the social networking sites initially utilized primarily by the younger population, but which in time became increasingly more popular with the rest of the population as well.

These reasons were the main reasons that pushed adults to start learning English even in a period of time when they have another important stuff to take care about and how social background influence adults to learn English as a second language and what motivates them mostly to learn a foreign language?

So this research in the next chapters is going to go deeper into adults' efforts to learn English, their aims and achievements in that important step they take for English language acquisition for different purposes they need it.

CHAPTER TWO

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Learning foreign languages takes time and lots of effort, and the amount of time it takes depends on dozens numbers of factors. Some of these include the learning context, learning goals and the age of the learner. Of course, learning languages may pose challenges. The research presented here focuses both on the benefits and the challenges associated with learning English language in adulthood.

The main purpose of the current literature review is to investigate whether and how learning a second language affects adults as language learners. It mainly focuses on research in the following areas: motivation of the learners, different learning theories, personal life, society at large, economics and intercultural understanding. In addition, special attention is paid to the extent to which adults with exceptionalities and additional language learners are able to acquire additional languages.

2.1 Relevant motivation theories from the field of psychology

2.1.1 Self-determination theory

According to (Deci & Ryan, 1995, p.89) “An influential paradigm in mainstream motivation psychology, self-determination theory (SDT) is essentially based around the concepts of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation”. Motivation means engaging in an activity because that activity gives you satisfaction and is enjoyable to do. Intrinsic motivation is considered an essential ingredient for individuals to display self-determined behavior. On the other hand extrinsic motivation implies a utilitarian motive, a means to the avoidance of negative consequences. By being a two-dimensional construct, intrinsic and extrinsic motivation can be simultaneously presented in different degrees and guises in the same individual although one of the two is usually prevalent.

Kim Noels and her Canadian associates (e.g., Noels, 2001; Noels, Clément & Pelletier, 2001; Noels, Clément, Pelletier & Vallerand, 2000) have conducted empirical studies to investigate intrinsic and extrinsic motivation according to L2 learning and in particular in relation to integrativeness and instrumentality. (Noels et al, 2000, p.125) confirmed that “instrumental orientation – as conceptualized by the socio-psychological model – appeared to be closely linked to extrinsic motivation, but a correlation between integrativeness and intrinsic motivation was never convincingly established”.

2.1.2 Attribution theory

According to attribution theory (Weiner, 1985, 1986), “individuals tend to attribute successes and failures in their lives to a range of factors which generally fall into one or more of three categories” (p.88). Stability means whether the cause of an outcome overtime is considered changeable or permanent. The perceived degree of influence which individuals tend to believe they have over an outcome it is called control. For instance, it could be hypothesized that those who attribute a poor L2 learning history to lack of personal effort (internal cause) might be motivated to try again if they are prepared to work harder and if they believe that this is within their power.

Whilst attribution theories may seem useful at anticipating how the prior learning experiences of individuals can affect their L2 motivation, Williams and Burden, (1999) suggest that “attribution perspectives may be better suited at describing motivated and unmotivated behavior a posteriori, rather than at predicting how L2 motivation is hindered or fostered by specific attribution processes” (p.79).

2.1.3 Goal theories

Alongside SDT, goal theories have played a key role in the modern conceptualization of human motivation.

As part of goal-setting theory “argue that the higher the specificity and challenge of goals, the more effort individuals are going to put into achieving them” (Locke and Latham, 1990 p. 89). The easier and vaguer the goals are, the least effort and motivation is likely to go into pursuing those goals.

In order to achieve good grades and demonstrate personal ability, or impress others performance goals are pursued, On the other hand mastery goals are learning and task-orientated. They reflect an individual’s desire to learn and they tend to be driven by intrinsic interest and motivation. Propensity for achievement is what goal theories seem to have in common.

2.1.4 Adult Language Learners

Adult language learners usually are goal oriented which means that they direct their learning to fulfill different particular demands or needs: advancing in their studies, progressing up the career ladder, following up business opportunities, helping their children with homework, or simply being successful users of the language. They usually learn best when they are engaged in developing their own learning objectives. According to (Smith & Gregory Strong, 2009, p15) “These attributes, distinct from those of younger language learners, led to the creation of the term androgogy, a word popularized in the 1980s which distinguishes the field of pedagogy with that of adult learning”. Adults are more mature, competent, more experienced, multitalented individuals who live complex lives and fulfill a variety of different life roles. They can draw and include on their learning also their educational experiences from previous life and they may learn in very different ways. Knowles, Holton, & Swanson, 1998 said that “Some of adults prefer a more process-oriented approach with active experimental problem-solving tasks over memorization, whereas others may prefer learning styles developed during their school years” (p.92). Williams & Burden, 1997 mentions that “the early view of adult language learners as unique, complex individuals’ coincides with constructivist theory” (p 345). According to Smith & Gregory Strong, 2009 “As language learners, adults have multifaceted identities in their dynamic and changing lives” (p.34). Adults can usually communicate more confidently and in an effective way in their first language (L1) and may code and switch between several other languages.

They may be either immigrants or international students, professionals, workers, or refugees. Adults may have their own interpretations of their belief system and culture and as well as the ability to build and reflect on their cross-cultural experiences. Some may be highly literate in their L1, and others may be illiterate. Some of the adults may struggle, as many of us do, to go forward and move from beginners to capable and proficient users of the additional language. Most of them also want to develop their own identities as users of the language and realize that it isn't fair and realistic to measure their progress and be compared against a native speaker model. V. Cook (2002) accepts that people who learn foreign languages have multiple competencies compared to monolingual speakers because their languages create different interconnections in their minds. He mentions that learning a second language is not just the adding of rooms to your house but it is the rebuilding of all the internal walls.

Researches have also shown that adult learners have a greater linguistic, cognitive capabilities and conceptual complexity than younger learners although these capabilities may vary from learner to learner. In addition, adults are capable to discuss their learning strategies and styles in ways that children and adolescents are unable to (Cohen, 1998 p.67). A more positive picture of adult language learners has been developed recently, despite many conflicting research and debates that were in the past about the general claim accepted about the critical period hypothesis that adult learners cannot gain full mastery of an second language, especially native like pronunciation. Taking into the consideration the whole person as an entity, with sensitivity to feelings and emotions, it fits well with the concept of the adult language learner that can be found in the literature. Williams & Burden, 1997 suggest that "The importance of developing confidence and self-esteem is paramount, and a relaxed learning environment reduces anxiety, which in turn improves motivation and confidence" (p.98).

Adult language learners show many of the characteristics mentioned previously in different studies of lifelong adult learners and good language learners.

Terms and phrases such as critically reflective, active, self-confident, able to manage, self-determining, motivated, and responsible for learning are frequently found. (Benson, 2007, p.24) indicates that “language learners are more capable of autonomous action than teachers typically suppose and can determine both content and learning strategies”.

Skehan’s (1989, p.77) mentions that “influential work, adult language learner strategies and learning styles have been reconsidered alongside developments in educational psychology, cognitive, aptitude, motivation, and SLA”. Considering that learning styles and learning strategies are very problematic and complex concepts because there are many different typologies that overlap with each other and with personality. Personality factors, such as introversion and extroversion, further continue to influence and take part in learning because it is considered that extroverts tend to be more fluent in complex verbal tasks. However, adult language learners may include and employ different strategies to evaluate and monitor their own learning during a particular task. Cohen (1998) recognizes learners that apply strategies in different ways depending on their personalities the task, their individual preferences, and a great number of other factors (p.334).

As (Smith & GregoryStrong, 2009, p.87) stated “language aptitude is considered to be a combination of several cognitive factors, including working memory, phonological coding and decoding, and L1 learning and literacy skills”. Motivation is not only focused on a learner who is dedicated to today’s struggles but also to sustained effort over a period of time. According to (Dörnyei, 2006, p.55) “learners goals include a concept of an *ideal L2 self* and a more extrinsic *ought-to L2 self* and the learners move between the actual self and his/her ideal or ought-to L2 selves”.

Norton and Tohey (2001, p.67) stated that “adult language learners have multiple identities, wide-ranging potential, and a vision of future options, including the possibility of belonging to and participating in an imagined future community context”. The learning context both either inside or outside the classroom have significant influence.

Foreign language learners who become involved in different local social contexts have and gain more opportunities to interact while in the same time using language in real and relevant situations. In both situations whether in the community or in the classroom adult language learners need to be secure, need a supportive environment, need to be accepted by the others and an environment that engages them. That's why the teacher's aim must be to foster in students a willingness to cooperate and collaborate with each other. By being good listeners and listen in an active way, eliciting and asking questions, sharing different opinions, students cooperate, learn together and develop into a cohesive group. According to (Williams & Burden, 1997, p.345) "focus on social constructivism and the dynamic interaction between the learners, teacher, task, and learning context concentrates on young learners, its spotlight on the importance of a secure social context is also relevant for adult learners".

Therefore teachers are responsible to access or develop materials that in the best way try to meet the specific needs of the adult language learners in their particular contexts, whether workplace or academic EFL or ESL. By developing these materials the teacher and the learners are both involved in negotiating aspects of the syllabus and setting goals via self-evaluation processes and individualized learning plans. In addition, Jenkins (2006) advises teachers to take into the consideration pronunciation to be appropriate in their context. As (Jenkins, 2006, p.174) stated that "helping learners find out about Englishness, their similarities and differences, issues involved in intelligibility, their strong links between language and identity and so on". The ability to use language appropriately in situated transactional and interactional environments as well as knowing the rules is the main focus of communicative language teaching on using meaningful language in context. According to (Hedge, 2000, p.45) "CLT develops five interlinked competences: discourse, strategic, linguistic, fluency, and the highly contextualized pragmatic competence". He suggests that "most adult language learners can already utilize these skills in their L1" (p.243). Recently, the popularity of task-based instruction has led to task construction and the investigation of linguistic complexity.

Real-life tasks make people rich and provide them with comprehensive input and those tasks frequently involve adult language learners to interact in group projects and be part of different group projects.

R. Ellis, 2005b, (p.456) mentions that “Task types can be manipulated to develop fluency, complexity, accuracy, and confidence, integrating tasks with a focus”.

2.2 Learning environments and learning concepts

Learning opportunities for adults are found in a variety of settings, from formal institutions to one's home place of employment. Firstly, experiences and the prior knowledge of learners, wherever gained, are very important to the practice of adult learners. Then if there are more than just formal types of adult education visible, even those learners without formal schooling, may be better learners and able to recognize their abilities and skills as lifelong learners. There are three main types of opportunities or sites where learning occurs for adults: formal settings, non-formal settings, and informal or self-directed contexts. The fourth site is online learning, which spans formal, non-formal, and informal settings. The categorization of the learning opportunities and the language used within these categories helps people to think about learning in order to highlight what is more crucial if it is the recognition that learning opportunities come in many shapes, sizes, forms, and places. Recognizing the equal importance of the different types of adult learning and advocate that people use them in every situation or setting they may find themselves are the most critical actions that educators of adults can take.

In learning organizations, learning whether done by individuals, groups, or the organization as a whole is a center valued, and an integral part of organizational life. The core of the organization is the willingness of organizations to allow their employees and other stakeholders related to the organization to suspend and question the assumptions by which they operate, and then create and examine new ways of solving organizational problems and means of operation. This process requires that people at all levels of the organization be willing to think in a system framework, with emphasis on collective inquiry, dialogue, and action.

Creating learning organizations could allow educators of adults whether they are associated with formal or non-formal settings, to develop learning communities in which change is accepted as the norm and innovative practices are embraced. (Sharan B. Merriam, 2007, pp. 51-52).

2.3 Knowles's andragogy and models of adult learning by McClusky Illeris, and Jarvis

Although there was a great attention given to the way adult learning process goes on in the early decades of the twentieth century, it was not until the 1970s that adult educators themselves started to focus especially on some characteristics that distinguish adult learning as separate from the body from psychologists' and educational psychologists' investigations of learning in general. This shift in focus was made part of the hard efforts to try to differentiate itself from other areas of education. It also led to the research for an another theory of adult learning, the theory that would differentiate adults from children, a theory that would include all types of learning, and would be at once elegant and simple. There is no single theory that explains human learning in general just as there is no single theory of adult learning to make a unification of the field. Even though, there is a great number of models, theories, and frameworks, each of which tries to capture some aspect of adult learning one of the best-known theory of adult learning is Knowles's andragogy. Nevertheless, it is less a theory and more a set of assumption about adult learners that learners and educators alike can use to strengthen the learning transaction. Knowles, 1980, (p.43) said that "The assumptions regarding an adult's self-concept, experience, readiness to learn, problem-centered focus, and internal motivation all have some intuitive validity, making andragogy popular with practitioners in many fields". The theory of margin is more about the personal life situation of adults than learning. The theory of margin emphasizes both personal characteristics internal factors and situational characteristics external factors. The theory of margins has more to say about the timing of learning and the adult development though, than about the actual learning transaction.

Sharan B. Merriam, 2007, (p.99) stated that "Two other models do focus on the learning process itself, although neither claims to be about adult learning only".

According to Sharan B. Merriam (2007, p. 103) “The disjuncture between the person's biography and the experience leads to learning that involves emotion and action”.

2.4 Experience and Learning

Adult's experiences have always been viewed as a very critical and complex component of learning in adulthood. Various theoretical perspectives emphasize different aspects of experiential learning. According to the constructivist theory perspective reflection on the real and concrete experience and making meaning of it is highlighted. The situational approach focuses on involving a community of practice because in this learning learners view learning is intertwined with doing. The learner's need to get in touch with his or her unconscious desires and fears is emphasized by psychoanalytic lens. The critical approach is focused on the need to resist dominant social norms. Even though searching and exploring the role of experience in learning has a long history we still continue and try to discover more about the relationships and connections between learning and experience and how to assist adults in formal and non-formal settings to capture the benefits of learning from experience.

Reflective practices, one of the main ways in which educators have structured learning from experience, focuses on helping learners make judgments based on experience related to primarily complex and murky problems. Cognition acknowledges the high importance of the cultural and social context of learning. Integral to the learning process are also the physical and social experiences and situations in which learners may find themselves and also the tools they use. The authenticity is a very important part of the experience in which adults learn is stressed in the situated framework. Cognitive apprenticeships and anchored instruction are two ways that educators have put the concept of authentic experiences into formal practice. Last, there are several criticisms of experiential learning. For some example, some critics assert that the focus on cognitive reflection in the experiential learning literature is a limited perspective and that the learner is separated from the context of experience in experiential learning (Fenwick, 2008).

2.5 Traditional learning theories

The study of other languages is probably recent in terms of history of mankind. The acquisition of other languages using them for purposes of communication is, as old as language itself.

Learning, a process central to human behavior, has been interest for philosophers, psychologists, educators, and politicians for centuries. On the late nineteenth century, has been made a systematic investigation of the phenomenon and has resulted in many explanations of how people learn. The different orientations like the humanist, behaviorist, cognitivist, social cognitive, and constructivist were the ones that have been chosen for their insights and for their diversity into learning in adulthood. Each of them is based on different assumptions about the strategies and the nature of learning, the methods and strategies that one might use to enhance learning will depend on one's orientation. The definition of learning according to behaviorists is that learning is defined as a change in behavior. The main duty and role of the teacher is to organize and arrange the contingencies of reinforcement in the learning environment so that the aimed and desired behavior will occur. On the other side to behaviorism is the humanistic orientation to learning. The emphasis here goes on human potential, human nature, human emotions, and affect. Many theorists believe that learning involves not just cognitive processes and overt behavior but more than that. According to (Sharan B. Merriam, 2007, p. 293) “It is more like a function of motivation and it involves responsibility and choice, much of the adult learning theory, especially the concepts of andragogy and many of the models of self-directed are grounded in humanistic assumptions”.

2.6 Cognitive development in adulthood

Change in thinking patterns that occurs as a person grows older refers to the cognitive development. Piaget was one that primarily grounded and discussed the cognitive development in adulthood. One part of research has been focused on how Piaget's stages play out in adulthood. A fruitful research tradition in Piaget's work has been the conceptualization of adult stages of cognition beyond that of formal operations, such as the Arlin (1975).

There are also other researchers that have had entirely new schemes of adult cognitive development in adulthood.

Theories range from the those of traditional stage theories of development, like as the work of Perry (1970, 1999) and King and Kitchener (1994) to those new theories that bring in new voices (Goldberger Tarule, 1986; Goldberger Tarule, Clinchy & Belenk 1996) and different ways of framing cognitive development, presented by Baxter Magolda (1992, 2004) and Labouvie-Vief (1980,1990 Labouvie-Vief & Diehl, 2000). As a conclusion of the many theories of adult cognitive development there are two major themes that have become apparent: contextual factors which are critical in determining how we develop our thinking patterns as adults and dialectical thinking, as represented by the work of Riegel (1973) and Kegan (1994), enables to accept the alternative truths or the way people think about many contradictions and paradoxes that we face in everyday life. The ability to be engaged in dialectical thinking is viewed by some as the only way to navigate our modern world successfully. Social and cultural, economic, and political forces help shape both how we think and what kind of knowledge we value.

Although it has been discussed over the ages by the great philosophers and theologians, this area of study has received little attention in the liturgical cognitive development and learning in general. Representative concepts of wisdom, including those of Holliday and Chandler (1986), Sternberg (1996b, 2003b, 2005b), and Bassett (2005), were reviewed. Despite the different perspectives from which wisdom is viewed, scholars seem to agree that wisdom involves specific types of experience-based knowledge and is characterized by the ability to move away to reflect from absolute truth, and to be active by taking action for the common good, and make judgments related to everyday life. (Sharan B. Merriam, 2007, pp. 357-358).

2.7 Language learning by adults (the so-called "second language acquisition")

During the phase of childhood, language acquisition is more like a natural consequence of the prolonged exposure to a language. A spoken language doesn't need to be taught formally to a child in order to be learned. (On the other hand, written language must always be taught.) Any child is able to acquire native fluency in whatever language if it is exposed to it on a consistent basis in a social setting. A child will acquire native fluency naturally even in more than one language if it is exposed to more languages in consistent basis. In the majority of people, this natural ability to acquire spoken language without trying and effort begins to diminish and go away at about the age of puberty (12-14 years of age). Teenagers who are exposed to a new language after this age mentioned as the age of puberty, will acquire it but with definite interference from whatever language or languages they had been exposed to before puberty. Language acquisition by adults is totally different is more intellectual process that rarely, results in the total native fluency acquired so naturally by any small child, regardless of personal motivation or intellectual ability. The deficiency is more especially evident at the phonetic level, because adults who learn second languages usually speak them with non-native accent. In this context language acquisition by children and language learning by adults differs. Language learning by adults (post puberty individuals) is a process that is usually called second language acquisition. But the term is misleading. A lot of people believe that it is the presence of the first language that is the main problem and the one that causes the difficulty. Before the age of puberty, young children are able to acquire second and even third languages with equal ease and fluency. But also a child who never had the chance to acquire a first language will still have problems acquiring a language after puberty, this was a research made in the case of Genie, who was an abused child, he was found by social workers at about age 13 who had never been spoken to and had no first language at all). So according to this the presence of one language it didn't turned to be the critical factor that slows down a person's ability to acquire other languages. Instead of that, some of the crucial factors seem to be those related to the age and maturation of the individual. A person before the age of puberty has the ability to acquire language naturally, while the same person after puberty must learn the language with great effort that yields less than perfect results.

Why the link with puberty? Is it simply coincidence? We don't know whether the two phenomena of onset of adult sexual characteristics and diminution of child-like language acquisition skills are coincidental or interdependent. It was tried to come to conclusion because it was suspected that some change in the structure of the brain that occurs at puberty phase also may be the problem because these changes reduce language learning ability. Whatever the case, the diminution of language acquisition ability is probably the consequence of an evolutionary adaptation. The brain is an organ that uses a great amount of energy. It is considered that a larger portion of the brain's capacity in a child is structured in order to participate in the acquisition of language. By the age of puberty, the language function is localized in brain's specific areas. This course of maturation probably developed during the many tens of thousands of years that humans lived in small bands of hunter-gatherers--and adult language learning was not generally essential to the welfare and survival of the group. There is not any prove to this, of course, and no one has still isolated exactly what may be the neural changes in the brain that cause child language acquisition to be replaced by adult language learning. There is one hypothesis that tries to describe and reveal the mechanism which reduces language acquisition ability in the adolescent.

With the beginning of about age 2, language skills start to be localized in the left hemisphere of the brain. This process, known as lateralization, seems to be completed at about the time of puberty. This hypothesis based on evidence from studying adults who suffer brain damage that result in language loss, or aphasia. If the brain's damage is not serious, adults who suffer from such brain problem may regain their language facilities quickly, otherwise if there is a more serious damage, part or all of the language ability may be lost forever. In the small children, however, even severe aphasia is likely to be gradually reversed, with language becoming legalized in the right hemisphere of the brain. A recovery may be possible to those children where the entire left hemisphere is removed. But for most people that lose the left hemisphere probably this would mean that they lose language ability permanently.

2.7.1 Problems with the critical age hypothesis.

When we learn about the process of language acquisition, there are two approaches that are normally distinguished: The behavioural approach and the nativist approach. We will briefly explain the approaches that pay special attention to the Critical Period Hypothesis. – According to the Behaviouristic Approach children acquire the language through exposure to the environmental components: practice, learner imitation, feedback on progress and habit formation. On the other hand the Nativist Approach, raised by Noam Chomsky, says that children are biologically programmed for language, in the same way as they are for instance, figuring out how to walk. Their capacity allows them to become competent language users regardless of their learning environment.

Some neurological studies show that brain lateralization takes place long before the age of puberty. “Proponents of the critical age hypothesis argue that lateralization is not fully established until the age of puberty”. (ELT Journal, Volume 63, Issue 2, April 2009, Pa There is a known belief that children as language learners are ‘superior’ to adults (Scovel 2000), that is, the younger the learner the learning process is quicker and the better the results. (p. 170–172). The ‘critical period hypothesis’ is a claim that there is, indeed, an optimal period for language acquisition, that ends at puberty. All small children are equally excellent language learners and have great abilities when it comes to language acquisition. Kornei Chukovsky (1965), sees them as truly creative at this stage: “beginning with the age of two, every child becomes for a short period of time a linguistic virtuoso. Later, beginning with the age of five or six, this talent begins to fade.” It recedes drastically after the onset of puberty” (p.55).

In terms of language pedagogy, it can be concluded that there is not only a single magic age for L2 learning, both older and younger learners are able to achieve advanced levels of proficiency in an L2 if there is motivation combined with effort, and the specific and general characteristics of the learning environment are also likely to be of equal or greater importance to take into the consideration.

2.7.2 Differences in adult language aptitude

Every child, is equally gifted at acquiring language regardless of the intellectual level. Different studies shown that some adults can learn a second language close to native fluency and some others will retain a distinct foreign accent even after decades of practice. Does this mean that some adults possess or have a special aptitude for learning languages after the critical age? Maybe yes: although any adult can learn a second language, not all will do so with equal results (unlike the case with child language acquisition). According to some authors adult language learning ability seems to involve a set of talents, or a type of talent. But what are these talents that can mimic childlike facility with language? Differences in adult ability to master a second language it seems that are connected to individual general intelligence. Actually, adults who are seriously learning impaired have almost childlike abilities to master languages (a well-known translator named General Eisenhower was a man with extraordinary mental abilities who was fluent in 44 languages and acquired new ones very quickly.) But of course only a limited number of individuals are able retain and to acquire fluency in many languages. Adult language learning aptitude seems to be more linked with a separate ability, like artistic talent or musical one.

We may say that adult abilities to learn languages are even more apparent at the phonetic level, which means that some adults have a natural talent for imitating the voices of other persons; while the other adults do not possess this talent at all. We can conclude that the talent for phonetic mimicry in adults definitely doesn't depend on general intelligence because people with very limited intellectual abilities very often have amazing abilities to imitate people's voices.

There are also other individual factors that may come into the game and play a great role. The exceptional memory to some adults may be another factor that plays a great role in second language learning. The memory also takes part to an inborn as a separate talent from general intelligence. Most of the people who have a type of talent to learn several languages during their lifetime they forget all about the ones they use because the old languages become dormant as new ones are learned.

The librarian Guiseppe Mezzofanti, who lived at the Vatican from 1774-1849, it was said that he spoke fluently 50 languages and was able to translate several more. But still even these individuals that we can say that are more like gifted they learned languages by studying them deliberately, but they didn't really acquired them effortlessly as children do. They even had to teach themselves language--or to pay special attention when being taught by others. Although this serves to make clear that individual adults who want to learn a second language if you give to them enough opportunity, time, and the most importantly if they have enough desire, they can learn to communicate in any language. Even though the degree of fluency achieved may differ considerably from one individual to another individual, on the other hand the situation with child language acquisition differs because when it comes to children every child achieves perfect fluency if you give to them enough exposure).

Motivation is an important factor and key factor when it comes to a foreign language learning, and people that put a high emphasize to the idea of multilingualism say that if you increase the motivation level of the learners in the same time you increase the success of second language learning in general- Hungary is the case (since Hungarian is so unlike all of the European languages that surround it, a small country that has highly encouraged multilingualism.)

2.7.3 Language teaching

Language acquisition in adults is deliberately language learning, how a teacher on does go when it comes to teaching a second language to an adult? There are different philosophies regarding to the adult language teaching and learning. For sure there is not just one single philosophy or method is universally best for all teachers and learners. There are several approaches that have made positive contributions to language teaching. There are a wide variety of different approaches that teachers are introduced concerning first language and second language learning and acquisition.

Foreign languages teachers must develop an in-depth understanding of all these different theories in order to see how they will influence the outcome of the teaching.

During my research I found out that the behaviouristic approach brought an initial change when it comes towards the understanding of language learning and teaching. The behaviouristic approach uses the Audiolingual Method in second language settings.

According to contrastive hypothesis “the structure of the first language is viewed as a powerful linguistic helping device and becomes the main vehicle for the learning of a second language” (Ellis, 1997, pp. 78).

Contrastive analysis is usually involved by two languages and it is based on the hypothesis that languages have enough in common to be compared, as stated by James (1980, p. 3) “in the field of language teaching this method has been of great influence, through the Contrastive Analysis Hypothesis”. Fries points out that the most efficient materials are those that are based upon a scientific description of the languages to be learned, carefully compared with a parallel description of the native language of the learner (1945, p. 9)

Audio-lingual method (from the Behaviorist School) states “that language is stimulus and response and is best learned by rote”. According to Ellis they were of the opinion that “all learning can be understood as a habit formation through stimuli from the environment” (Ellis, 1997, pp.138). As a result, the Audio-lingual Method concerning target language teaching has become popular and can be characterized through the these activities of teaching: inflection, repetition, replacement, completion, expansion, etc.

2. Identity hypothesis- Identity theory is the relationship between the mind and the body that tries to minimize the difference between first and second language acquisition. Exposure to language will bring about good results--and immersion in the language will bring about the best results.

The identity hypothesis that originated by Wode (1974) according to this theory first and second language learning is basically one and the same process governed by the same laws.

The theory claims that the acquisition or availability of one language has little or no influence on the acquisition of another language.

Natural approach-- The natural approach is a method of language teaching developed by Stephen Krashen and Tracy Terrell in the late 1970s and early 1980s. The natural approach is focused on the understanding of messages in the foreign language, this approach places little or no importance on error correction, drilling or on conscious learning of grammar rules. It also emphasizes learning of a wide vocabulary base over learning new grammatical structures. The natural approach shares some many points with the direct method. In the natural approach, students are exposed to a large amount of language comprehensible language input which allows to emerge spontaneously and not forcing language output.

Summary of the Literature review

The present society is very complex and diverse as a result of different factors like historical evolution, the dynamics of political decisions, and the socio-economic context. All of these are important when analyzing the real motivations that drive adults to expand their knowledge. Therefore, in the literature review I discovered a lot of information when it comes to address which type of motivation characterizes adults and pushes them to be part of a process of English language learning.

I also learned about the importance of the use of learning strategies as important factors for the success of a good command of a foreign language (Blanco, Pino & Rodríguez, 2010). Although it may seem logical to think that motivation in language learning can be explained according to general theories, the truth is that its study has been an independent field of research.

According to different resources I tried to figure out if there is any difference between adults and kids in the way they learn and why adults struggle to pick up new languages.

I found out also that is of great importance for a foreign language teacher to have previous knowledge of different teaching approaches in order to apply them appropriately when needed according to the needs of their students and in this way to contribute to the success of their students in general and make learning take place.

CHAPTER THREE

III. METHODOLOGY

This chapter consists of:

- A description of the participants in the study
- A description of how the sample was selected
- Methods of research
- Instruments of measurement used to collect data for testing
- Ethics considerations and confidentiality
- Procedure of the research

The methodology of this study / research is based on the authentic approach which aims to observe closely and carefully what is like learning in adulthood along with the factors that influence the learning difficulties. Furthermore, this methodology is selected in accordance with the purpose of the study and uses research instruments such as: questionnaire, and observation.

3.1 Research methodology and data collection tools

This research, with the aim of giving clear answers to the hypothesis for the treated phenomena, will be mainly focused in two methods;

Descriptive method – Through this method there will be given different information from literature review during my researches.

Empirical method - By analyzing the answers of some adult students who are attending English courses. They will complete some questionnaires with certain questions related to my thesis and then giving statistics from their answers.

3.2 Participants

The participants in this study are Albanian native speakers learning English as a foreign language in two different English courses in Kosovo. The first group of participants with a number of 25 people came from the “The Cambridge School” in Ferizaj and Gjilan, Kosovo. The second group of participants also with 25 people was from Prishtina more specific from the “ New Age School”, Kosovo.

The participants were selected from different groups because what we were focus on was the age of the participants, not the level of study. And their ages were from 19-40 years old. This was because the study is focused on learning in adulthood. Also, for the observation part, the students were a group of women who work in the administration of the local government of Ferizaj and their average age was 25-35. To be more precise for the results, an interview was also done with two different candidates. The first candidate was a Psychology student, age 25 and the second candidate was a second year student of fashion design school, age 20. They both had different backgrounds and different fields of study, that made the research more interesting.

3.3 Research Instruments of the study

For this research three instruments were used to collect data: questionnaire, interview and observation. The questionnaire was formed in three different types of questions. Six questions were formed with three to five alternatives that participants could pick as an answer for the question made. Three other questions were open questions so the participants would answer the question in personal level, what they think about that specific question. And also part of the questionnaire were two statements where the participants would agree or disagree on them. The questions on the questionnaire were focus more on what adults think about English, What is hard for them and so on. The questionnaire was formulated in that way , for the study to have an idea what happens in the mind of an adult who is learning English as a second language. By knowing that specific, the second part that is observation is easier for me as a researcher to have a clear view on how adults learn a new language and also what are the challenges for them. With the data that was collected with the questionnaire, the research moved on with the second instrument used on this study, that was observation.

The focus was on all the research questions. My experience as a teacher made it easier to observe a few classes and to analyze the adults that were taking those English Courses. And the last part of the research was the interview, the interview was also based on the research questions and what the candidates think about these topics, reasons, and so on.

3.4 Procedure

The study started with two large English courses, that were picked for the research to happen in their classes. After that, a permission was granted from the principals and the teachers of the classes via a consent form. Then 25 students were selected from each course making it 50 all together. The students were ages from 19-40 years old, a questionnaire was handed to every student and had 11 questions formulated only for this study. After the students answered the questionnaire, the questionnaires were analyzed and the data that is shown in this study was gathered. After analyzing the data, the study moved on to the second part that was observation.

After that, the research was continued with the interview as the last part.

3.5 Direct observation form

The observation was made in Ferizaj on 26th March, 2018 in private English classes held by the American teacher Rachel Wirt who is also a peace corp volunteer in Kosovo. The students were a group of women who work in the administration of the local government of Ferizaj and their average age was 25-35. The purpose of attending those English classes was directly related to their job positions on learning basically how to write formal emails, how to do formal invitations mainly to officials. They were attending the elementary level, but some of the students have been in English courses even previously.

CHAPTER FOUR

IV. Results

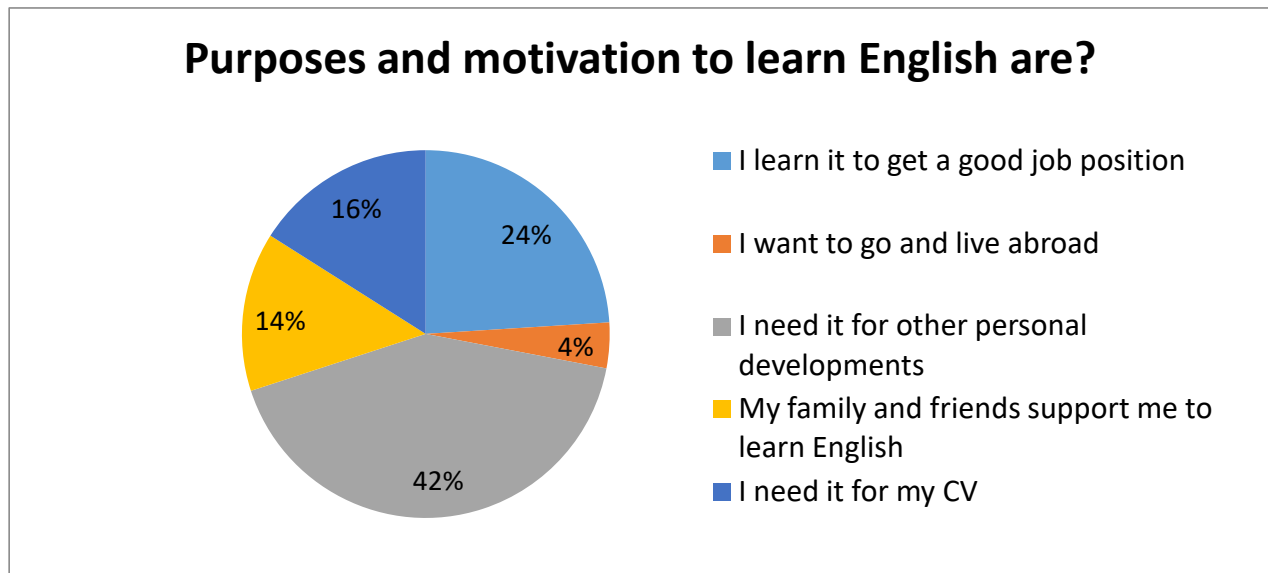
4.1 Discussion of findings

In this chapter, the results of this study are presented and discussed. The first discussion will focus on the questionnaire, all the questions are shown in the graphs and in the percentage how the students answered the questions. Under every graph there is short analysis on the questions. Second, the focus will be on the observation part by going on all the research questions one by one and comparing them with the data that was gathered while doing the observation in the classroom.

And third the focus was on the interviews and how they answered the research questions by giving their opinions on this topic and how they feel as adults learning a new language, what are the challenges and what makes it easier to learn a new language in their age.

4.2 The questionnaire

Graph1. Purposes and motivation to learn English are?

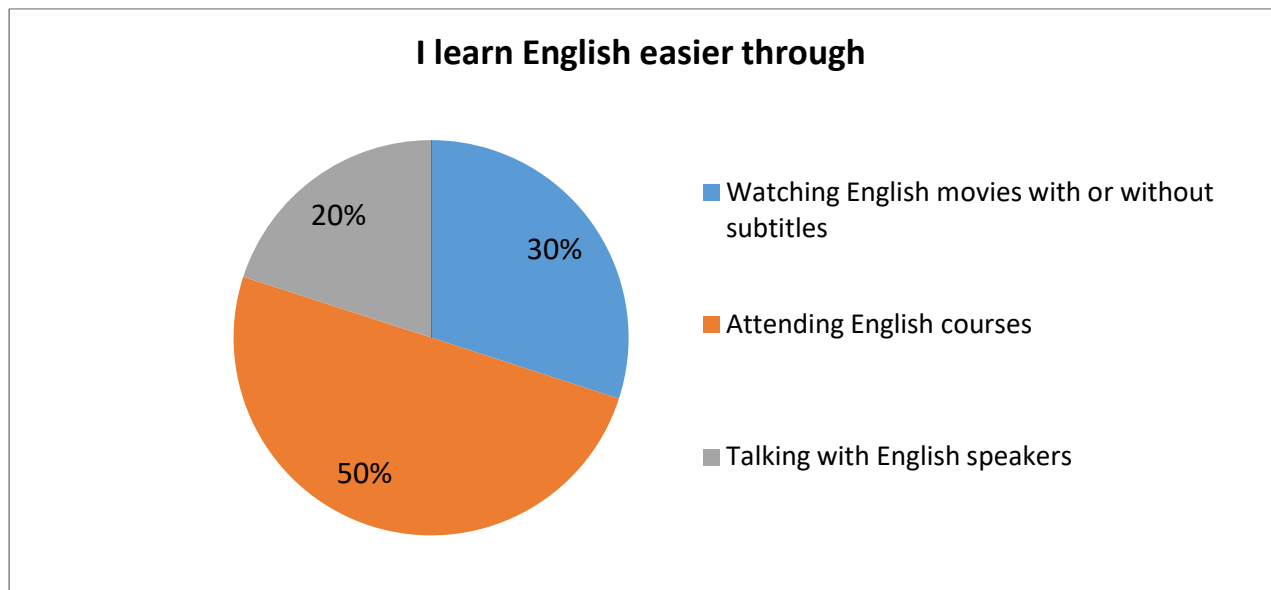


In the questionnaire the first question was about the purpose and motivation, with this question the research was focused on finding out what pushes people to learn English. The question had five options that were given as a purpose or motivation reason to learn English.

The first statement was: I learn English to get better job position, and 12 out of 50 participants said that they agree with this statement that they think that one of the purpose or a motivation reason to learn English is that. The second statement said that the purpose or a motivation reason to learn English is that I need it to go and live aboard and that's why I have to learn English only 2 out of 50 participants have picked that as a reason.

The purpose or the motivation reason to learn English, that the participants have picked the most is that: they learn English for personal development. To be more precise 21 out of 50 participants said that this is the reason to learn English. 7 participants think that the support of the family is the reason why they learn English, and 8 out of 50 think that they need to learn English to put it on their CV.

Graph 2. I learn English easier through

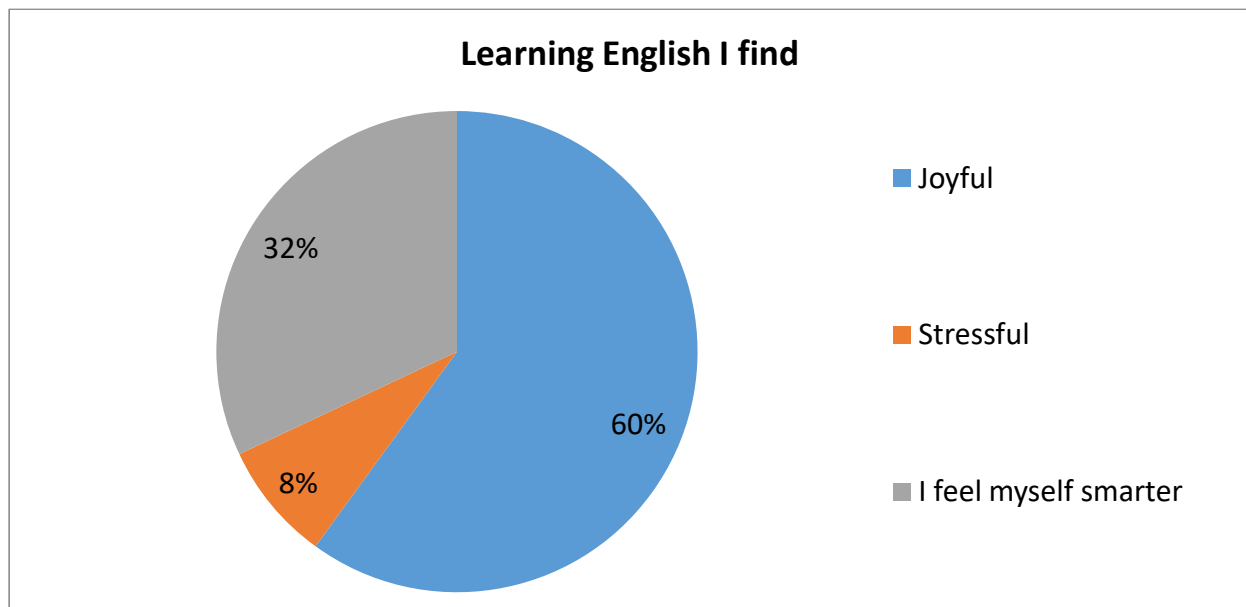


The second question was about what is the easiest way to learn English. In this question the participants had three options to pick which one they think is the easiest way to learn English for them.

The first option said that the easiest way to learn English is by watching English movies with or without subtitles and 15 out of 50 I think that, that's the easiest way to learn English. 25 out of 50 participants think that the second option is the best reason and that is attending English Courses. And 10 out of 50 think that talking with English speakers is the easiest way to learn English.

These results show that the focus of adults learning a new language is grammar, and without grammar they don't consider something that is as learning process, taking into account the importance of grammar use while speaking, writing or any other form for the language use. Within the answers for this question we can also understand that adults want to be independent while learning English, being thankful to the teachers only and not necessarily thank friends or other people for getting knowledge from them and this is mostly showed in the character of the Albanian people.

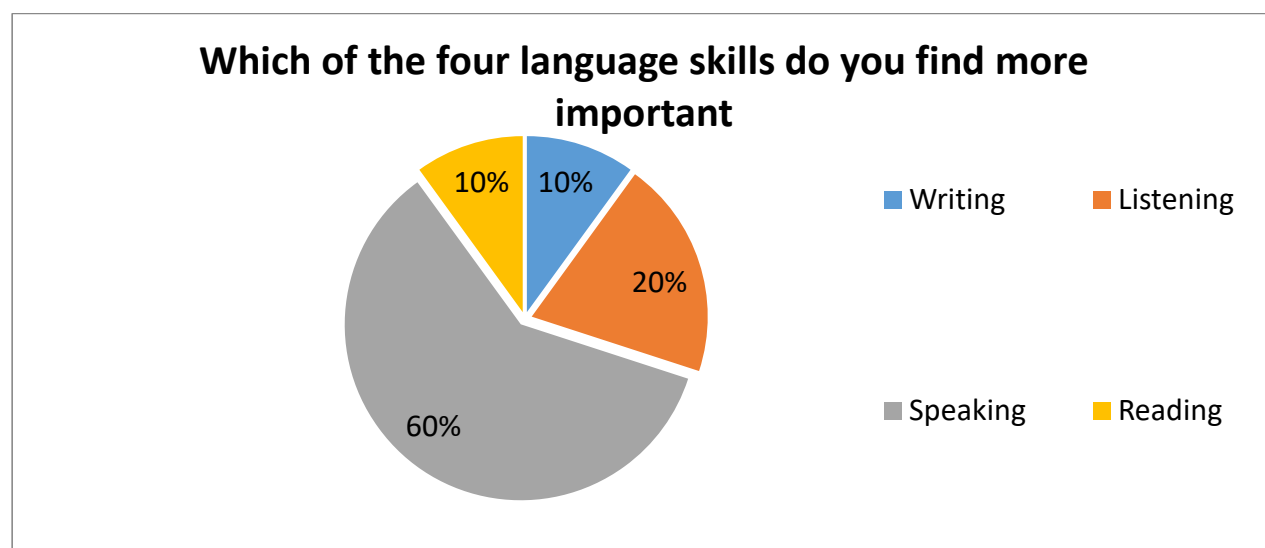
Graph.3 Learning English I find



Knowing how students feel about your subject is a step closer to a better teaching technique. This is why this research on the third question on its questionnaire was focused on how the participants find English. From three options that were given for this question, 50 participants have taken different options: 34 out of 50 think that English is joyful and only 4 think that English is stressful and 16 participants feel that they get smarter by knowing English. 34 people think that leaning English is joyful; it's because they take that time for themselves and focus on something that they find it interesting. They know that learning English gives them more chances to explore what they are interested in, not only on the internet but also for example by picking up an English book they wanted to read times ago but it didn't have an Albanian version or watching a new movie that Albanian movie websites haven't released Albanian subtitles yet, and a lot of other activities that require English as the only option to be performed. 4 people think that is stressful to learn English, the reason may be because they need to learn English as fast as possible for a job, or maybe for them to go and work abroad, or because they know that if they don't get things in the right way, they will be criticized by others when they hear them speaking English.

So when having all these things in mind, it can be really stressful, but of course while leveling up even this percentage can be changed according to the fact how they have approached the language. 16 participants think themselves smarter and that is really important for them also to feel motivated. As it is also an expression, as more you know as smarter you will be.

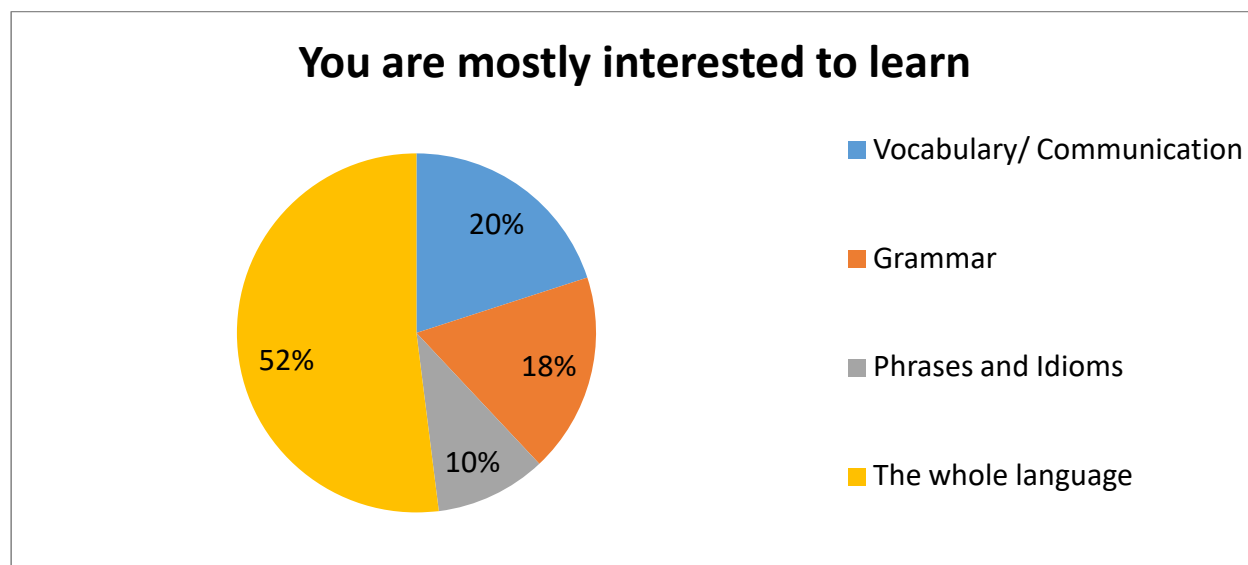
Graph .4 Which of the four language skills do you find more important



For the 4th question, the participants had to write down what they think. Which one out of four language skills is the most important? Is it speaking, writing, listening or reading? They also have to give a reason why they think that language skill is the most important one. 30 participants think that knowing how to speak is the most important language skill. They all gave different reasons why they think so. Some of them said that they think it is important because you need to speak to express yourself better and communicate better with others. And also because you need speaking for travelling and for a work place that is with international people in charge. 5 participants think that writing is the most important language skill because nowadays everything we do, we do it from the computers for example: we need it to know how to write a letter for our boss, we need to write down a CV or we need to communicate with our friends that are non-Albanian from different social accounts.

10 participants think that listening is the most important language skill, knowing what someone is saying it's really important to know what to say back and also what someone is asking you is the right way to know how to answer that question. 5 participants think that reading is the most important language skill because right now there are a lot of materials in English that are useful for different studies and for other things.

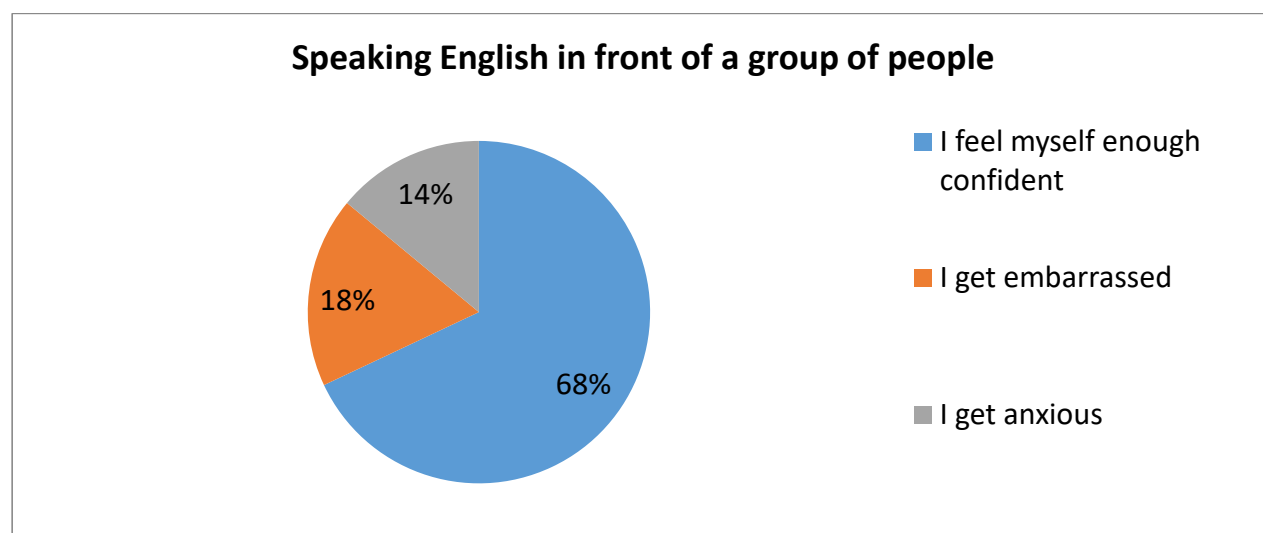
Graph.5. You are mostly interested to learn



In the seventh question of the questionnaire the research was focused on the interests of the participants. The participants could select one out of four options that they had for this question. As the first option was vocabulary and communication and 10 out of 50 participants picked that as something that they are interesting in, even though the participants had in consideration that communication includes all other parts of the language. It is obvious that people cannot communicate in any language without knowing its' grammar too. 9 participants are mostly interested in grammar. They don't want to use English inappropriately being aware that the beauty of a language is in its' right use. The least percentage was for phrases and idioms (5 to be more exact).

And with the most number of participants, 26 think that the whole language is something that they are interesting in, so in this form they can use English not only for one purpose but for whatever they want and in any situation they find themselves. They know what a language holds in itself and they feel capable enough to continue with the course till they speak English fluently and use it correctly.

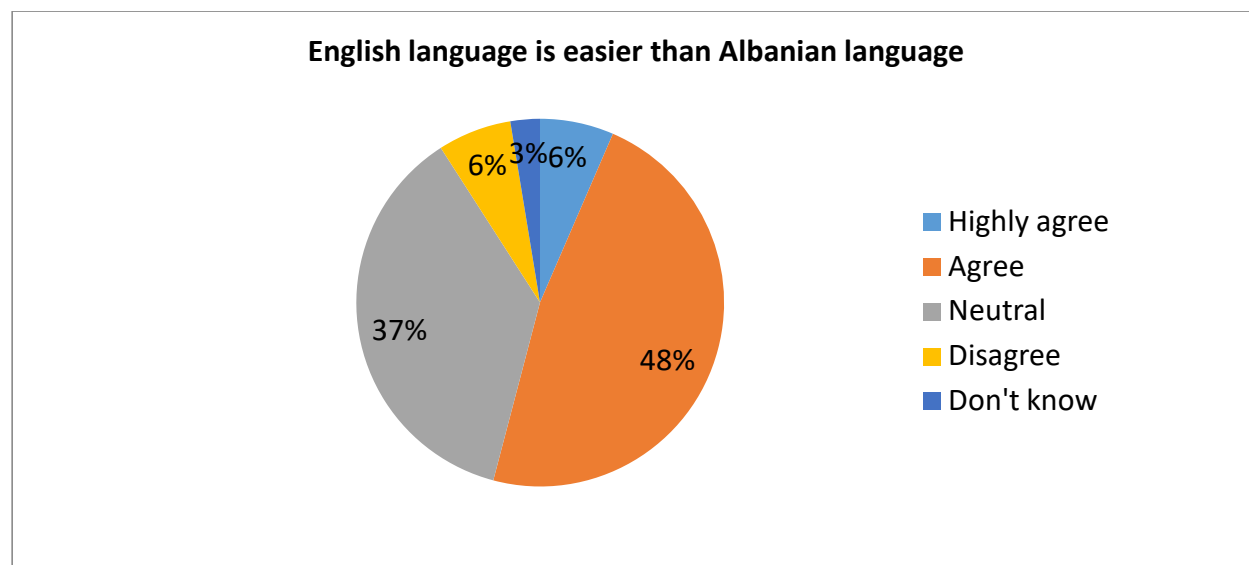
Graph 6. Speaking English in front of a group of people



Knowing what students feel is a good way to know how to approach to them. That's why the 8th question of this research was focused on how students feel while talking in front of a group of people. 34 said that they feel enough confident for that. Mistakes can be done even by linguists sometimes, so they say it is okay even if they can do mistakes while talking in front of people taking into account that if they get criticized by the audience, they can take the critics as a lesson too in order to correct the mistakes they have done during a speech and be ensure that next time to not repeat the same mistakes but use the words and the grammar correctly. 8 of participants get embarrassed while talking in front of people. It happens many times to know the answer for something but if you are not pretty sure within yourself, you better stay silent in order to avoid embarrassing situations you can find yourself in.

And lastly, 7 out of 50 get anxious being in such a situation, maybe they don't want to sound ridiculous in front of people especially when the audience are unknown people and you don't know how they will react for any mistake you can do while speaking in front of them.

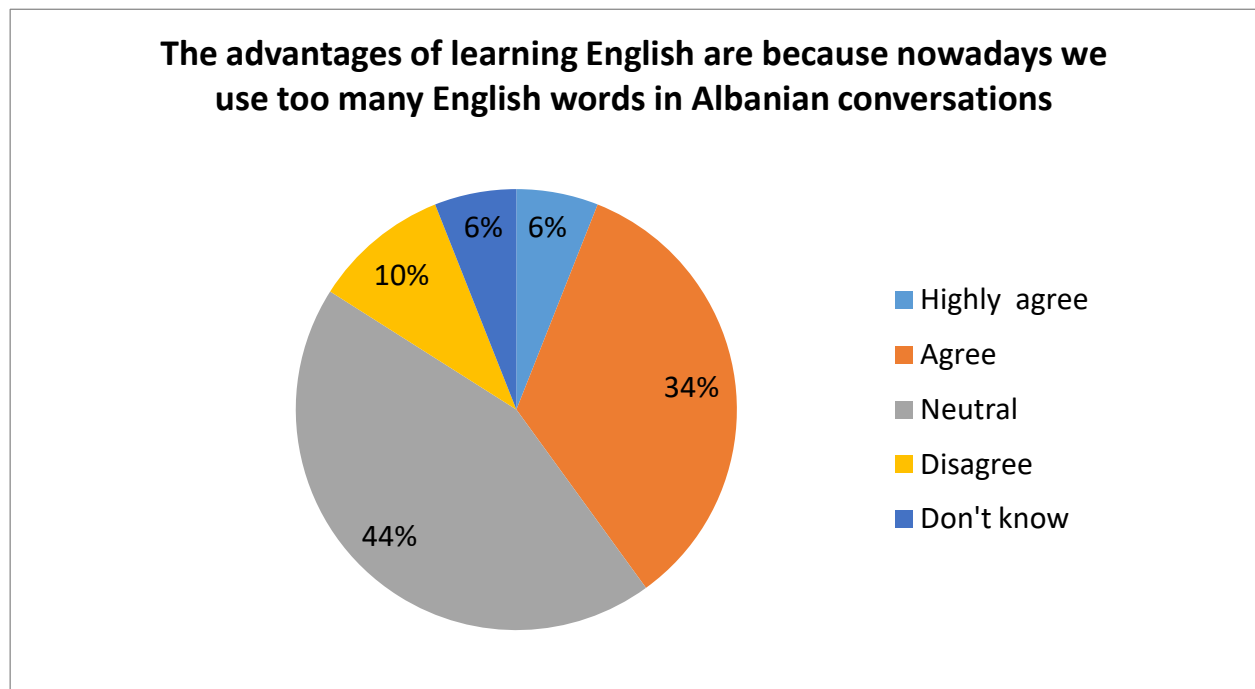
Graph 7. English language is easier than Albanian language



The 9th question in the questionnaire was a statement. In that participants had to highly agree, agree, be neutral, disagree or pick I don't know. The statement was: English language is easier than Albanian language.

3 participants highly agree with the statement, 22 agree, 15 were neutral and 5 pick I don't know. These results were expected knowing that Albanian language has a really hard grammar and also a lot of rules, so comparing to this fact English is much easier. These percentages were in this form because if the participants didn't study their own language first in higher levels, they just speak it naturally as their mother tongue and the rules of the Albanian language don't consider difficult but while learning English they will understand the differences and similarities between these two languages. The participants that picked the neutral option were more aware that such a statement cannot be well known because of the fact that most of them were attending the first and the third level of English. Such statements can only be considered as false or correct when the people know both languages well enough.

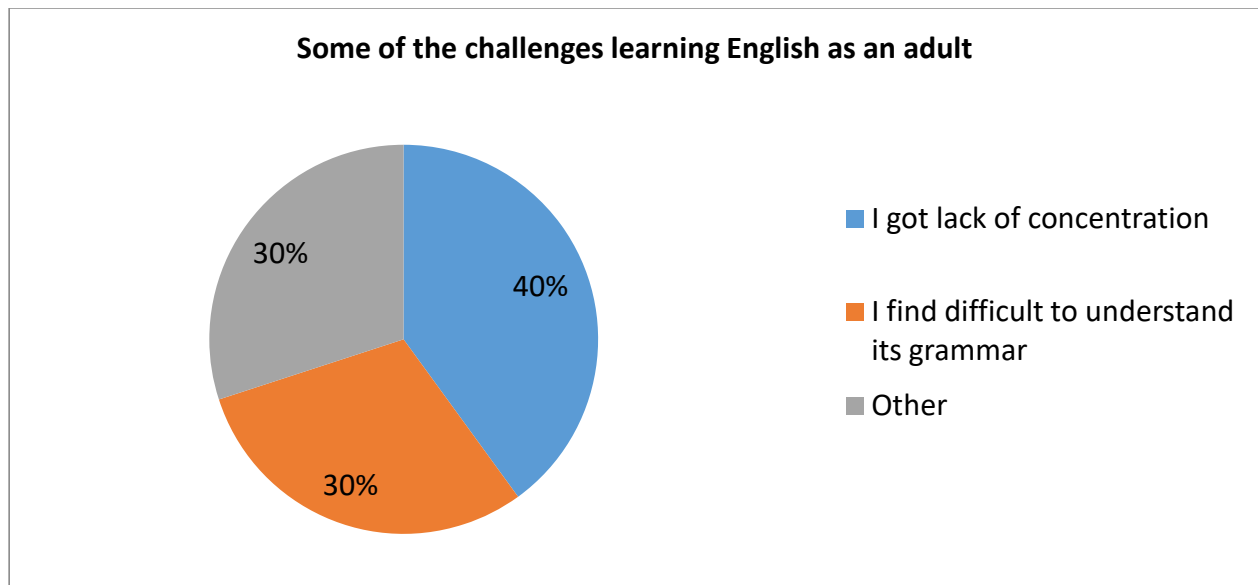
Graph 8. The advantages of learning English are because nowadays we use too many English words in Albanian conversations



For this statement three people highly agree, 17 agree, 22 are neutral, 5 people disagree and three of them don't know.

17 agree with the statement that the advantages of learning English are because nowadays we use too many English words in Albanian conversation, in the way they see it, it is easier to speak English if they are in contact with it all the time. A larger number of students were neutral; they don't think that it makes easier or harder not being in contact with English all the time. 5 people disagree to be more realistic it may be an advantage for English but that can be a huge disadvantage for the Albanian language. Accept this fact or not, it is too clear the big impact English has round the globe, and our country is influenced too. The people who picked neutral option can also relate this as a fact they don't want to accept, although they deeply know the reality. There are always needed new things in our lives and English is the undeniable one.

Graph 9. Some of the challenges learning English as an adult



The last question on the questionnaire was what the challenges of learning English as an adult are? For this question there were given three options. First one was that they've got lack of concentration and 20 out of 50 participants think that, that is the biggest challenge of learning English.

15 participants think that grammar is the hardest challenge of learning a new language. As the third option to participants was that they could write down what they think is the hardest challenge.

15 participants think that the biggest challenge is finding time to learn. This shows that the hardest concentration has a huge role of learning a new language; it is not because they cannot learn a new language but because as an adult you have a lot of things in your mind, parenting, working, etc. These things can make it way much harder to learn the new language. It is really important not to overthink when you start to learn a new language. 15 people think that the hardest part of learning a new language is grammar, and the reason why they think so is because that is the part they focus the most and as mentioned above in the literature review, one of the biggest problem of learning a new language is trying too hard. 15 other people say that their biggest challenge is time. With adulthood come a lot of responsibilities that need time and effort for things to work out.

4.3 Direct observation

For the observation part in this research, three research questions were on focus: How much does social background influence adults to learn English as a second language? What is the learning environment for adults? Do teachers have the right approach while teaching English to adults?

4.3.1 Social background has an influence at adults that learn English as a second language in Kosovo

The observation part of this question started way before the beginning of this thesis. Everyone who is familiar with the history of Albanians knows that Kosovar people had a really tough social background, so for adults especially it is really hard to start learning a new language.

Before the war, English wasn't as popular as it is nowadays, in that time another language was spoken. After the war ended, a lot of internationals came in Kosovo to work and live, so English started to become more and more important. Today, English has a really important role for adults, and in the classrooms you can tell the difficulty that they have just because of that background, a lot of adults could not finish their studies because of the war so their knowledge isn't that good even in their own language, that makes way much harder to learn a new language as it is English. Also another factor is that Kosovo used to be a really poor country and not everyone could continue their studies and travel to the schools. All this had left a lot of gaps at the adults' life that now it's harder to be filled. So, social background has an influence at adults that learn English as a second language.

4.3.2 The learning environment for adults

With the years passing; the learning environment for adults in Kosovo is getting better. Before there weren't as much English courses as are today. Now, we have different courses with different levels of studies that are fitting with what adults want. If an adult prefer to study alone or in groups nowadays he/she has the choice. The only problem could be time because a lot of adults are working and also parenting and that can be challenging sometimes.

4.3.3 Teacher has the right approach while teaching English to adults

What could be clearly seemed during my observation was that the teacher engaged all the students in the same way and their readiness for giving answers was present all the time. Although the teacher was younger than some of the students, her approach was great towards everyone. Two of the students were a little bit more hesitated or shy while answering because they weren't sure if they are going to answer correctly. After the first part of the class, the teacher made also an activity to not let the students get bored. The students said that learning English is really fun but it would be even better if they would have previous knowledge about English language because of its importance as an international and official language in many countries. What is really important while learning a language is also motivation, and that was present to each student.

4.4 Interview

To be more precise for the results, an interview was made with eight different candidates from different departments. They answered the research questions by giving their opinions on this topic and how they feel as adults learning a new language, what are the challenges and what makes it easier to learn a new language in their age.

- How much does social background influence adults to learn English as a second language?

A: I think it influences everything not just the learning process; social background is the most important part of a person that follows him or her in their entire life. Having a good social background can be a big help to learn English as a second language because maybe someone in your family used to live abroad and he or she influences your learning process. You may ask how it's easier?! Well, you listen to them while they talk maybe on the phone, maybe they do conversation with people that they know abroad and in that way you are in contact with a new language that is English that is one step closer to finding a new language more interesting.

Also another thing that is connected with the social background is the way you grow up. It depends on your parents how they treated you while growing up and how they put you in contact with the new language maybe when you were a child they put music that was in English or maybe you watched a movie together that was in English that is something that can really help when you to decide to fully learn a new language in adulthood.

B: I grew up in a family that was always traveling in the summer and that help me a lot to learn about English also to learn about new cultures. Also my father was working with International people and also had a lot of international friends so they usually came over to our house and we hanged out and that's how I started to improve my English and I know that the background is really important. These were just a few samples on how I think social background influences someone on the learning process. It helped me a lot and even when I see myself in a room full of people that don't speak Albanian but only speak English I find myself really comfortable because I'm used to that. What I also think to learn a new language is really important, is to know about that language background and everything that has to do with that language, not only your background matters but also it matters the background of the language that you're learning, so you get familiar with the language and then grammar and speaking and so on it all gets easier I think.

- What are the main reasons pushing adults to learn English?

A: Everyone has its own reason why they decide to learn a new language. But for me, the reason why I decided to learn English now in adulthood is because when I started with my studies in psychology I couldn't find a lot of materials that were in Albanian that I was interesting to read, all the materials that I found were in English and that was one of the reasons why I started to work more in improving my English. Also, in my new workplace, there are a lot of international people that are contributing to our country and that have a really important role in the office that I work right now. For that reason I wanted to be more socialized and I wanted to know English better to express myself better to them and to show how a hard-working person I am.

B: I think their career. I think this because that's the reason why I am studying English and why I put so much focus on learning English. I know that it will help me to get more contacts in the field that I'm working right now that is a fashion designer. Also being more communicative with the people I work with, it will help me to express my ideas to my workers that I plan to have in the future.

- What is the common learning style of adults?

A: I don't know much about the learning styles but I know that for me it only works if I learn and repeat and repeat and repeat.

B: I don't know if it is a learning style because I'm not familiar with that, but intensive learning I think it's really important. If you want to learn a new language it is really important to always be in contact with that language because I know that languages are sometimes really easy to forget and to not happen that, we have to be intensive in that language.

- How are adults motivated to learn English

A: My only motivation is that I want a brighter future for me and I know that today English has a really important role in that perspective. My motivation is that if I learn English now I will have a better job tomorrow or if I learn English now I am going to be able to read a lot of books that I am interested in and also to brighten my knowledge in things that I find interesting.

B: Motivation I think is something that goes in personal level, it depends on the person how that person motivates himself or herself to do something or to learn a new language. For me, my motivation is my career. I want to see myself in the top, to be the greatest fashion designer and that is my goal in life and goals are sometimes a really good motivation, I think.

- **What is the learning environment for adults?**

A: Environment depends on the students I think but for me the perfect environment to learn is a quiet place that I can be focused on. A place where I don't think about the things that are going on in my life and I just free my mind, start reading repeat the things that I need to repeat and learn the things that I need to learn.

B: Again it depends on the person and how that person sees things, for example I prefer loud place that has music because I don't know why music helps me to concentrate better in my language, of course it's a music that it's just a melody and doesn't have a text on it because if it does, then I'm more focused on the text of the music more than I'm focused in my studies so I think it depends.

Do teachers have the right approach while teaching English to adults?

A: I only have one teacher that I have in my English courses that I'm having in Think English here in Podujeva, we are doing private classes and for me she has the right approach because she covers everything what I asked her to teach me.

B: I don't know about that, it depends on the teacher. there are a few teachers that are really great that have a lot of knowledge about the things that they teach and have great methods that are really approachable towards the students but there are a few teachers that are still using old methods, old ways of teaching, techniques I think that are just not fitting with the time that we are living now and also maybe with my personality.

Summary of the answers

--- How much does social background influence adults to learn English as a second language?

All of the participant that have been part of the study agreed that Social variables such as economy, social status, educational background, ethnic and religious tend to influence learners' second language acquisition and that social context where learners grow up exercised a powerful influence in their language learning. For example some of the learners were from provinces and had difficulties to travel to the cities nearby and be exposed to the English courses had a lack of knowledge for English language.

Socioeconomic status was measured in function of students' attendance to public and private educative institutions. According to the interview, 82% of the participants attended to public educative institutions and 18% were educated in private institutions and of course that those who attended private institutions were better in foreign languages.

--- What are the main reasons pushing adults to learn English?

Most of the participants that were part of the interview mentioned almost the same reasons like; because English is one of the most widely spoken languages, English will open up opportunities for them, another reason is that learning English can help you meet new people and communicate easily, the participants of business and management department mentioned that English is one of the most important languages for business that's the main reason that pushes them to learn English one of the reasons was also that English gives you access to multiple cultures.

--- What is the common learning style of adults?

Different people differ also by the way they learn, and have different learning styles but the common learning answers were mostly that they learn more by verbal communication where they have the chance to use different words both in speech and writing. Some of the interviewers were more for visual they prefer using pictures, images, and spatial understanding. One participant mentioned that he was more to the Aural learning style because he preferred learning through (auditory-musical) using sound and music.

--- How are adults motivated to learn English

In difference to children that learn mostly because they are curious to observe the environment around them, adults have the stress and constraints of a job and all the other responsibilities that's why what really motivates adults differs a lot. Most of the reasons that participants mentioned are the same with the reasons that push adults to learn a foreign language like, being exposed to more job opportunities, get a promotion, study, do business and stuff like that.

--- Do teachers have the right approach while teaching English to adults?

Actually there is no right approach for all adults because every human being is different and adult learners have characteristics that distinguish them from each other. Teachers should try to choose suitable methods of teaching with deliberation taking into account adults' styles of learning because it's in the hands of the teacher and the right choice makes the teaching and learning process more effective. According to the answers of the interviewers teachers are very careful in this aspect and try to do their best, understand them and choose the most suitable methods in order the learning to take place.

--- What is the learning environment for adults?

Fulton (1991) says "that adults are more influenced than children by the physical environment, it can motivate adult learners, or create barriers." and according to all of the answers of this question it turned out to be true that the environment plays a great role in the learning process of the adults. All of them said that the classroom creates a formal learning environment that is less productive for them they suggest that informal structures are more useful and just putting the chairs in a circle, engage in group discussion, create a collegial atmosphere and make them more in mood for learning.

CHAPTER FIVE

V. Conclusion

It all started with questions and hypothesis of a big issue as the thesis is in itself. After a lot of researches done during these months, every hypothesis got an answer, viewed and analyzed by many perspectives. Learning a language is not easy, and learning it in the age of adulthood makes it even harder for many reasons. But can individuals facilitate the process of learning a language for themselves, of course they can when the reasons to learn it are too strong that push down all the difficulties showed up during the time they learn. From the literature review discussed by many well-known authors we got the conclusions that this very broad issue cannot be summarized in the same way for all individuals but the information are highlighted and showed only in generally, viewed by psychological and social aspects mostly, for the adults and their way they get knowledge about a language (English). Adults have a lot of responsibilities they cannot escape from, but they have to know how to confront with them and find a solution for everything to not feel their selves depended by younger people or useless in front of them. Learning a language as an adult means a lot. You should be prepared with everything that comes your way. What makes the process easier mostly is the adults' motivation and self-confidence to acquire knowledge and reach their dream job positions or other reasons they are learning the language for. But should be also mentioned their previous knowledge because they are really important to strengthen them and keep on the right track to learn new things. If we compare adult learners with children and teenagers they have greater cognitive capabilities on learning a new language although they do it in a more complex form maybe, by being critical towards a lot of definitions or any other discussion they can have with the teacher or their colleagues. But taking into account the future concepts and reasons to learn English become as an obligation then they can change their form of approaching the learning process just because of their personal interests. Andragogy gives us other explanations for the learning process adults go through, as a concept or academic approach more exactly.

Another important point mentioned and discussed about the process of learning for the adults is also the social image. Everybody wants to have a good attitude and good performance in front of the others. Nowadays the social zone you are more frequent with reflects on that what you really are. Can we find any environment where English language is not present, I could barely say yes because is almost impossible. According to a lot of English language learners who shared their feelings in different interviews, they feel much better speaking English fluently in front of their society. This is kind of a chain connection with other components while learning, if your performance is good then your motivation will increase to learn more and more, and if your motivation is high enough then the success to gain knowledge is pretty sure. Teachers also try their best to approach adult students, their attribution towards them is in a great level, first based on my own experience during my studies, secondly by the researches from different books, third by the observation form I did, fourth by the interview, and last from the answers given from the students in the questionnaire.

Find as worthy to mention is also the initial goal you start a course to learn English but then at the end it turns into an enjoyment and you really want to complete it in the best way possible. From the results of findings I got to a conclusion that adults go through a language and then expand it to learn also for the countries where the language is spoken, their culture, their way of living and a lot of other interesting things related to the language.

Related to the answers from the students given in the questionnaire, direct observation form and the interviews, I can conclude that most of the adults learn English for personal developments that can be a mostly related to their career, even though they have pointed out that there are other ways to learn English, most of them learn it through English private courses. For the next question how do they find learning English, the highest percentage was that they find it joyful and they do not get bored while learning. Even though the four language skills have their own importance, students picked up speaking skill as the most important. They don't want to learn just a part of the language as they were as options to the 5th question but they have as an aim and will to learn the whole language. Speaking in front of others doesn't show any kind of trouble for the most of the students as they feel enough confident for that.

While comparing the grammar and the other language components, most of them agreed that English is easier than Albanian language, although they were also some of them who picked the neutral option related to the statement mentioned. Based on the fact of the very frequent use of English language in our conversation with the Albanian people, the next statement was if there is an advantage for English language, maybe not getting clear enough the meaning of it, most of the students picked the neutral option but also many of them agreed to this fact, and from the interviewed people we got the conclusion that they also agree for this. Giving two options for the adults to show some of their challenges while learning English at their age, most of them suffer from the lack of concentration because they have to think also about their personal problems during all the time by finding impossible to forget about them even for a while, some of them got difficulties to understand the English grammar, and if they had any other challenge they were supposed to mention them but nobody specified any. Another question was if the teachers have the right approach towards adults while teaching them and most of them said yes, but from the interview one of the students said that there are still some teachers who use old methods and don't want to change them or don't know how to behave even the students need any other form of approaching. So as it is very clearly seemed, English language is not only a language, there are not only some spoken words, it is a way of modern life and adults can reach knowledge of it in the highest levels.

According to the results that adult learners' main motivation for studying English is the progress in their career turned out to be partly true. The quantitative data collected revealed that the highest percentage of the people that wanted to learn English was because they needed it for personal development and but there was a high number of them that wanted to learn English in order to advance in their job career too. In this way it confirmed hypothesis stated at the beginning of the research.

As for the second hypothesis that adult language learning ability seems to involve a type of talent, or set of talents the results showed that it was not confirmed, because most of the adults who took it seriously and had strong motivation and gave efforts for it, they succeeded.

These hypothesis were proven by quantitative and qualitative data.

CHAPTER SIX

VII. Recommendations

For everyone who reads this research from the finding and from the result here are some recommendations for you. Being an adult means that you have a lot of responsibilities and also a lot of work to do in your everyday life. Trying to find time to learn a new language is really challenging but when you find the right time and when you find the right place, where you can be focused on and work in peace everything is possible. In this research we found out that pressure is the biggest issue that adults have to deal with while learning a new language, once you work on your pressure even if that is time or work or maybe the pressure of not knowing anything about the new language, everything becomes easier. How can you let go of pressure? Simple, by planning your day and by putting what's important on the top of the line, in this case is learning a new language. Another thing that is really important when you are an adult and you want to learn a new language is that you have to know that you can do it. It doesn't matter if you feel you are too old for that if the reason to learn English is stronger than that way of thinking .You are only busy and that's why you are not able to learn as much as you learned when you were younger, it is not you cannot learn because you're an adult but it is the lack of time that makes it harder.

Putting your heart and your soul into what you really want it's something that can open every door that you are trying to open in your life to reach your goals.

Set up your priorities and motivate yourself in any possible form, find out the most appropriate learning styles for you and tell everyone that a strong will to reach something you want is also a mind refreshing to accept new things and learn them by hard.

Appendix;

The questionnaire form;

The following questions and statements are related to my master thesis "LEARNING ENGLISH IN ADULTHOOD". Please choose the right answers.

1. Purposes and motivation to learn English are?
 - a) I learn it to get a good job position
 - b) I want to go and live abroad
 - c) I need it for other personal developments
 - d) My family and friends support me to learn English
 - e) I need it for my CV
2. I learn English easier through:
 - a) Watching English movies with or without subtitles
 - b) Attending English courses
 - c) Talking with English speakers (Albanian and non-Albanian people)
3. Learning English I find:
 - a) Joyful
 - b) Stressful
 - c) I feel myself smarter
4. Which of the four language skills do you find more important, please write down also the reason why you think so?.....
.....
.....
5. Which English language level have you reached up to now?.....
.....
6. If you are attending an English course right now, does the teacher have the right approach toward you?.....
.....
7. You are mostly interested to learn:
 - Vocabulary/ Communication
 - Grammar
 - Phrases and Idioms
 - The whole language
8. Speaking English in front of a group of people:
 - a) I feel myself enough confident
 - b) I get embarrassed
 - c) I get anxious
9. English language is easier than Albanian language.

a) Highly agree b) Agree c) Neutral d) Disagree. e) Don't know

10. The advantages of learning English are because nowadays we use too many English words in Albanian conversations.

a) Highly agree b) Agree c) Neutral d) Disagree. e) Don't know

11. Some of the challenges learning English as an adult:

- a) I got lack of concentration
- b) I find difficult to understand its grammar
- c) Others? Please specify them?.....

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