



## POSTGRADUATE STUDIES – SECOND CYCLE

### THESIS:

Development of the communication and expression skills of pupils through English teaching programs in the primary schools in Kosovo- Comparative study of English language programs of grades seven and eight

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## **THESIS:**

**“Development of the communication and expression skills of pupils through English teaching programs in the primary schools in Kosovo- Comparative study of English language programs of grades seven and eight”**

## **Тема:**

**“Zhvillimi i kompetencës së komunikimit dhe të shprehurit te nxënësit përmes programeve të gjuhës angleze në shkollat fillore në Kosovë- Studim krahasues i programeve të gjuhës angleze të klasave shtatë dhe tetë ”**

## **Теза:**

**"Развој на комуникациските способности на учениците по англиски јазик – споредба на старата и новата наставна програма на Косово во седмо и осмо одделение"**

## **Abstract**

The research aims to reveal the development of effective communicative competency via English language programs regarding students in lower secondary education in Kosovo (grades 7 and 8). This thesis intends to reveal the level of development of the students' competence of communication and expression by using new English language programs, which are based on the competences curriculum, that is applied in the seventh grade of lower secondary level of education in Kosovo, and based on the objectives curriculum, that is still being applied in the eighth grade, by evaluating advantages and weak points of one another. In addition to the analysis of core curriculum and other curricula documents, we have carried out research with teachers who work with both curricula of the level including grades 6 to 9, with students and curriculum experts. The research will be mixed, quantitative and qualitative. The method of documentation analysis, the method of the statistical analysis and the comparative method have been used during the research process, whereas questionnaires and tests were used as research instruments. The sample consists of 30 teachers and 160 students from 8 lower secondary schools in the municipalities of the Prishtina region in Kosovo (from villages and cities), as well as two curriculum experts from the field of languages and communication. The research unfolds the comparison analysis of teaching programs for grades 7 and 8 with the results of communication and expression competence for curriculum levels and English teachers' evaluation of the structure and content of the new teaching programs, learning results, arranged based on curriculum with competences - more precisely, the development of students' communication competence in English - by comparing them with the structure, the content and the learning objective of the old curriculum. Research results show that the English language programs that are based on competencies curriculum ensure a greater development of the competence of communication and expression to make an effective communicator, in comparison with the English language programs that are based on content and learning objectives. The programs that have been designed based on the new curriculum are more advanced than those that have been designed based on the old curriculum. The new programs are also more incentive to make students learn, more advanced, and students have shown better results in communication and expression when using programs based on the new curriculum. Conclusions and recommendations may be used by teachers to improve the development of communication competence in English.

**Keywords:** school, teacher, student, curriculum, competence, communication and expression.

## **Abstrakti**

Hulumtimi ka për qëllim të kuptojë zhvillimin e kompetencës së komunikimit dhe të shprehurit përmes programeve të gjuhës angleze te nxënësit në arsimin e mesëm të ulët në Kosovë (klasat 7 dhe 8). Përmes këtij punimi kemi synuar të mësojmë sa është arritur të zhvillohet kompetenca e komunikimit dhe të shprehurit te nxënësit nëpërmjet programeve të reja të gjuhës angleze, të cilat bazohen në kurrikulën me kompetenca, e cila aplikohet në klasën e 7-të të arsimit të mesëm të ulët në Kosovë, dhe kurrikulës së bazuar në objektiva, që aplikohet akoma në klasën e 8-të, duke parë përparësitë dhe dobësitë e njëra-tjetrës. Përveç analizës së dokumentacionit – kurrikulave bërthamë, planeve e programeve dhe dokumenteve tjera, kemi bërë një hulumtim me mësimdhënës që punojnë me të dyja kurrikulat, të nivelit 6- 9, me nxënës dhe ekspertë të hartimit të kurrikulave. Hulumtimi është i tipit të përzier, sasior dhe cilësor. Për realizimin e hulumtimit, kemi përdorur metodën e analizës së dokumentacionit, metodën e analizës statistikore dhe metodën krahasimtare, ndërsa instrumentet e përdorura në hulumtim ishin pyetësorët dhe testet. Mostrën e përbëjnë 30 mësimdhënës dhe 160 nxënës të 8 shkollave të mesme të ulëta, në komnatat e Regjionit të Prishtinës në Kosovë (nga fshatrat dhe qytetet) si dhe dy ekspertë të kurrikulave, të fushës Gjuhët dhe komunikimi. Punimi shpalos analizën krahasuese të programeve mësimore të klasave 7 dhe 8 me rezultatet e kompetencës së komunikimit dhe të shprehurit për shkallë kurrikulare dhe vlerësimet e mësimdhënësve të gjuhës angleze për strukturën dhe përmbajtjen e programeve të reja mësimore, rezultatet e të nxënësve, të hartuara në bazë të kurrikulës së bazuar në kompetenca – konkretisht zhvillimit të kompetencës komunikative në gjuhën angleze te nxënësit, duke i krahasuar me strukturën, përmbajtjen dhe objektivat mësimore të kurrikulës së vjetër. Rezultatet e hulumtimit tregojnë se programet e gjuhës angleze të bazuara në kurrikulën me kompetenca i paraprijnë më mirë zhvillimit të kompetencës së komunikimit dhe të shprehurit – komunikues efektiv, krahasuar me programet e gjuhës angleze që bazohen në përmbajtje dhe objektiva mësimorë. Programet e hartuara me kurrikulë të re janë më të avancuara se ato me kurrikulën e vjetër, janë më nxitëse për të mësuar, më të avancuara dhe me to nxënësit kanë treguar rezultate më të mira në komunikim dhe të shprehur. Përfundimet dhe rekomandimet mund t’u shërbejnë mësimdhënësve të përmirësojnë zhvillimin e kompetencës komunikuese në gjuhën angleze.

**Fjalët çelës: shkollë, mësimdhënës, nxënës, kurrikulë, kompetencë, komunikimi dhe të shprehurit.**

## List of Figures

<b>Figure 3.1</b> Result from the 1st item of questionnaire.....	22
<b>Figure 3.2</b> Result from the 2nd item of questionnaire.....	23
<b>Figure 3.3</b> Result from the 3rd item of questionnaire .....	23
<b>Figure 3.4</b> Result from the 4th item of questionnaire.....	24
<b>Figure 3.5</b> Result from the 5th item of questionnaire.....	24
<b>Figure 3.6</b> Result from the 6th item of questionnaire.....	25
<b>Figure 3.7</b> Result from the 7th item of questionnaire .....	26
<b>Figure 3.8</b> Result from the 8th item of questionnaire.....	27
<b>Figure 3.9</b> Result from the 9th item of questionnaire .....	30
<b>Figure 3.10</b> Result from the 10th item of questionnaire .....	32
<b>Figure 3.11</b> Result from the 11th item of questionnaire .....	36
<b>Figure 3.12</b> Result from the 12th item of questionnaire .....	37
<b>Figure 3.13</b> Result from the 13th item of questionnaire .....	38
<b>Figure 3.14</b> Result from the 14th item of questionnaire .....	39
<b>Figure 3.15</b> Result from the 15th item of questionnaire .....	40
<b>Figure 3.16</b> Result from the 16th item of questionnaire .....	41
<b>Figure 3.17</b> Result from the 17th item of questionnaire .....	42
<b>Figure 3.18</b> Result from the 1st item of test.....	47
<b>Figure 3.19</b> Result from the 2nd item of test.....	47
<b>Figure 3.20</b> Result from the 3rd item of test.....	48

## Table of Contents

<b>Chapter One</b> .....	<b>1</b>
1. Introduction .....	1
1.2 Theoretical context .....	2
1.3 Main challenges on implementing the curriculum.....	6
1.4 Traditional assessment and competency-based assessment .....	11
1.5 Differences between the old curriculum and the new curriculum regarding the methodological aspect - methods that are used.....	13
<b>Chapter Two</b> .....	<b>15</b>
METHODOLOGY .....	15
2.1 Research design.....	15
2.2 The purpose of the research .....	15
2.3 Research questionnaire .....	15
2.4 Hypotheses:.....	16
2.5 Population and sample.....	16
2.6 Methods and Instruments.....	17
2.7 The procedure of collecting information .....	17
2.8 The procedure of data analysis .....	18
2.9 RESULTS .....	18
<b>Chapter Three</b> .....	<b>20</b>
<b>Data Analysis</b> .....	<b>20</b>
3.1 Teachers' view of teaching programs .....	20
3.2 The results of the questionnaire with teachers .....	21
3.4 Responses of subject curricula experts.....	44

3.5 Results of the students' test .....	46
<b>Chapter Four.....</b>	<b>50</b>
4.1 Conclusion .....	50
4.2 Recommendations .....	52
<b>REFERENCES.....</b>	<b>55</b>
<b>APPENDICES.....</b>	<b>57</b>
APPENDIX A .....	57
APPENDIX B .....	63

# Chapter One

## 1. Introduction

Ministry of Education, Science, and Technology of Kosovo in the Curricula framework 2011 and the basic Curricula 2012 has defined the approach of the new curricula based on the competence, results of the pupils on competence skills, representation, extension, organization and results of learning for curricular subjects. Among challenges that Kosovo schools face in the primary schools is the development of competencies and better results in learning. The latest reform of the educational system is oriented in improving quality and this means substantial changes and challenges in the implementation of school curricula, based on competence.

Starting from the school year 2016/2017, a new phase of the curricular reform started and that was the phase of implementing subject curricula and new teaching programs, that were designed according to the curriculum that is based on the achievement of competences. This curriculum helps teachers to plan and successfully carry out the work with students by learning activities in the classroom and out of it, towards the achievement of competences and skills while facing the 21st century challenges and the creation of new competitive knowledge in an active way for the global labor market. Kosovo Curriculum Framework (KKK) is focused on learning, with the main target: the students, on competence, integrated learning, flexibility, and transparency.

The Curriculum foresees different solutions that take into consideration the needs of pupils and it also offers equal access to qualitative education for everyone.

The framework of the Curriculum is based on achieving basic competence and encourages learning through the entire life; it changes the approach toward active learning; individual, comprehensive and toward educating pupils as active members of society, who are compatible with demands of modern technology development. This approach has an important effect when it comes to the organization of learning experiences at school, the integration of inter-curricular issues, skills for life; integrated learning; interactive teaching and learning; formative evaluation and the evaluation of students' progress.

The research has been carried out to understand the interconnection between the subject-related programs of English for classes with the results of the communication and expression competence



for curricular levels, in order to understand the practices of implementation of the subject-related programs of English, which are designed in accordance with the curriculum that is based on competences and the subject-related programs of English, which are based on content and learning objectives, with the purpose of developing student's communication and expression competence - precisely the competence of an effective communicator, as well as the purpose to understand the challenges of teachers who use both curricula during their work. Research results show whether the teachers have been trained for the implementation of the curriculum to develop students' communication and expression competence and to achieve learning results, as curricular programs require. The results also show the achievements in this respect.

The topic is quite a current issue, it has an educational and methodological character, therefore the results may help teachers towards an easier development of student's communication competence in English.

## **1.2 Theoretical context**

The importance that is dedicated to learning foreign languages in the context of Kosovo, especially English learning, is not only a natural result of tradition, but also a natural result of the new reality that has been created in Kosovo. However, before the creation of the new reality, there was a string of continuous processes of integration in the European level and the global level. Undoubtedly, these processes could not be achieved without communication, interactivity and mutual understanding among people of various linguistic, ethnic and cultural groups.

Consequently, people's interest to learn foreign languages is continuously growing. This is in full compliance with global trends, taking into account the globalism and the need for communication among cultures. (Basic Education Program, a group of authors, 2012)

The development or review of the curriculum is a process that is linked to amendments in the education process and its goal is to accommodate challenges that society faces or to adapt to developments in society, achievements in science, technology, and achievements of the vision that society defines for the future.

The development of the curriculum based on competence and its implementation is a very current issue, which has a huge significance in the latest research works in Kosovo. Although the reform

of the educational curriculum in the Kosovar pre-university system has started a few years ago, it has not been the case of full implementation and it has not been spread as it should in all grades.

Review of the bibliography refers to the curriculum documents reviewed in 2016 (Curricular Framework and Three Basic Curricula), reports of the studies for the trends of development of new curriculum and the reports of studies: Assessment of pilot projects in the Schools for the process of implementation of the new curriculum (Mehmeti, 2015, p.11-13)

Kosovo Curricular Framework comprises 7 curricular fields: Languages and Communication, Arts, Maths, Natural Sciences, Society and Environment, Physical Education, Sports and Health, Life and Work. On this Curricular Framework, six main competencies are set: Competence of Communication and Expression; of Thinking; of learning; for life; work and environment; personal and civic.

On the Basic Curriculum, compiled for three formal levels of pre-university education in Kosovo, besides general aspect, correlated to the curriculum for its adequate level, orientation is given for the autonomy of the schools for exploiting an innovative and flexible manner how to spend time in teaching and learning as support for compilation of the teaching programs in the School. (MASHT /KB level II - 2012, p. 89), But this should be done within defined requests within the Curricular Framework.

Ministry of Education, during 2016, has reviewed the Curricular Framework and the Basic Curricula for general education and it has prepared and presented teaching programs for the preparative grades 1-6 and 10 which have started to be implemented in the school year 2016/17 in 72 schools of general education. In the introduction of the document of the Curricular Framework for pre-university education in Kosovo, it is emphasized that development of the new curriculum is done with the aim of facing challenges such as the need for shaping up a society of knowledge, integration in the digital era, an increase of mobility and movement, learning of living together, sustainable development and Diaspora. (Reviewed Curricular Framework, 2016)

During the process of piloting, what took place was the identification of needs to define minimal learning time for each learning class, in respective grades; explaining results in learning of the specific subject, the spread of the learning topics and its organization in learning programs for each class, with additional guidance for implementing practices of classes and the needs for supporting schools during the implementation of new teaching programs have been identified.

The curriculum is a key aspect of education. If we admit that schooling is already in a crisis (Pinar, 2004), then it is very important that teachers reflect deeply about the curriculum that has been planned and implemented. The postmodernist curriculum can deal with the issues that exist as a result of insecurity, challenges of change, differences and diversity (Marash J. Colin, 2009, p.278).

The Department for Curricula in the Ministry of Education, Science, and Technology has designed the teaching programs for preparatory grade and grades 1, 6, and 10. The new programs are designed in accordance with the new curriculum and based on new teaching programs. Teachers from 72 schools that have implemented the new curriculum have prepared teaching plans, starting from the annual plan to class planning. The training of teachers who started to use these teaching programs was carried out after the start of the school year 2016/2017.

The finalization of the learning programs for these classes from the Ministry of Education was planned to be done in December 2016, respectively in January 2017, whilst the new curricula were aimed to be implemented in all schools, by 2017/18, starting with preparatory classes of grades 1-6 and 10. This extension was applied in all schools of Kosovo until the school year 2018/2019. The extension of new curriculum implementation includes preparatory class, classes 1 and 2 of elementary level, classes 6 and 7 of lower secondary level and classes 10 and 11 of higher secondary level - gymnasiums.

The new curriculum enables schools, more precisely its professional organs, to design teaching plans and programs for subjects and classes as part of a particular level of curriculum, based on descriptions for each curricular field, learning results per curricular fields, learning results per curricular levels and the learning time available for a curricular level. It also enables the use of alternative teaching sources during the process of teaching and learning. However, the current learning textbooks still remain the main source of teaching and learning (Hamza, 2011, p.14).

For piloting process of the curricula in Kosovo, no new textbooks have been compiled, but it was suggested to use existing textbooks and other alternative resources, that ensure achievements in learning. As a crucial part of it, teachers should carefully study every result of learning for the specified level of curricula. These predefined results for competencies guide us on what should be done to prepare a pupil for life. (Potera 2017, p. 5).

The curriculum, designed for the aforementioned classes, has the same structure, with the following content: Teaching topic entry, goal, topics and results, methodological guidelines, cross-

curricular implementation guidelines, guidelines for guidance and guidance for materials and teaching resources.

For the substantial aspects of these programs, Ministry of Education decided to receive assessments and suggestions from teachers working with these programs, who, based on their experience in teaching and in direct student work, can provide many arguments, such as on the substantive side of teaching programs, as well as in various methodological aspects. They can make concrete and very important proposals for its eventual difficulties presented and those that need to be changed (Devetaku –Gojani 2011, p.159).

The curriculum structure of curriculum Languages and communication (subject: Albanian, English, German and French), general grades (low, medium, high) and average of the estimates for each indicator / aspect of the curriculum structure reflect a relatively high assessment by teachers of all curriculum subjects related to their clarity and understanding.

The Curriculum Framework for Pre-University Education in Kosovo serves as a benchmark of a competency-based approach through which the focus is shifted from the pressure on achieving the content defined by the curricula and textbooks in the development of key competences disaggregated through learning outcomes. The development of competences defined within the curriculum is aimed at through curriculum areas, elective courses/modules, projects, cross-curricular and extra-curricular activities and other innovative forms led by schools.

In curricular documents, there are three types of learning results: learning results for competence (level), learning results for the curricular field, and learning results for the subject. Learning results of the curricular fields have been designed based on general concepts of learning contents and learning topics for subjects and based on learning results for subjects. These results are interconnected with one another and reflect what students should achieve while accomplishing competences.

Integration of subjects within curriculum areas and the requirement to offer integrated teaching approaches make a major difference in the implementation of the new curriculum. Efforts to include cross-curricular integrated curricula can have considerable merit but could not provide a solid foundation (Marsh 2009, p. 44).

On the other hand, school autonomy in determining learning outcomes and course content for subjects and classrooms, based on the core curriculum, is another challenge that, without being properly understood, can be a significant difference between schools regarding what and how they

support the students in the development of key competences. This challenge was largely reflected in the schools involved in piloting and curriculum in Kosovo, which required the Ministry of Education to lead the process of drafting plans and programs for the classroom (Mehmeti, S. 2015, p. 29).

### **1.3 Main challenges on implementing the curriculum**

The curriculum reform is actually about the changes regarding the content and organization of the materials that are taught within limitations of economic, social and political contexts. The content and the organization of the curriculum have a basic importance, but if the reform is not in compliance with the values of the society in general, then there is little chance for it to succeed. Glatthorn and Jailall (2000) think that the curricular reform not only includes the content and the organization, but it is also designed mainly for students and teachers.

Certainly, the curricular reform consists of many aspects and may include analyses of teaching staff, students, content and school structures. It is quite a significant fact that some of the permanent challenges and difficulties regarding curricular reforms have existed continuously. However, on the other hand, there were promising developments. Despite the enthusiasm that may be created by the new reforms, it is important not to forget that providing proposals on reforms is only a part of the process and that there are many problems that come out during the implementation of those reforms (Marash J. Colin, 2009, p.162-170).

These are the main challenges that teachers have faced to this stage: The curriculum has started to be implemented without having gone through proper training and without written curricula; preparation of the planned program without proper training, without specific guidance for subjects related to the logical order of laying topics of the curricula; a discrepancy of textbooks which are in use with new teaching programs; lack of material and other teaching issues; assessment of pupils based on new programs as defined by the new curriculum; poor conditions within schools; a high number of pupils in the classes.

The identified challenges by teachers during implementation of curricula start at the first phase of annual planning and other plans in the level of a specific period, which is related to the printed programs (Schools have received programs only in CD). Teachers have not been engaged properly and in time with training for the implementation of the new programs. Then, teachers have a lack

of experience in defining the logical order of laying topics and results of topics during the annual teaching year. (Mehmeti, Buleshkaj, 2017, p. 34).

Teaching programs, in general, have fulfilled expectations of teachers; they have a substantial structure, which in general is known and it can easily be understood for the vast majority of teachers. The biggest discrepancy can be noticed in the structure and organization of teaching programs in the field of Languages and Communication.

It reveals that it is a necessity for the schools to be equipped with labs; to ensure didactic materials, teaching textbooks based on the curricula, organization of training, workshops for teachers, headmasters; employing professional staff, especially for the second foreign language. (Shala 2017, p. 17).

Despite that there are positive assessments for the clarity and understanding of the structure of the content of teaching programs by the vast majority of teachers, general assessment of teachers show that finalization of the teaching programs for every subject should be done by adding some additional lessons and with results for understanding topics; be that with additional results in the field of curricula, or with methodological guidance. (Mehmeti, Buleshkaj, 2017, p.36).

The process of the implementation of the new curriculum and the development of main learning competences cannot be successful if they are not followed by the training and development of teachers' capacity for an effective implementation of the competency-based approach. CASE Network Report (No.87, 2009) “deals with five aspects of teachers' trainings, including teachers' qualification systems, teachers' competence evaluation, the development of teachers' specific competencies, the leadership capacity, and the central role of teachers regarding the implementation of the competency-based approach” (Boshtrakaj, L., 2016, p.43).

The new curriculum requires a new methodological approach, whose aim is to develop student's competences. It also requires teachers to avoid teaching methods that used to produce memorized, fragmented and abstract learning, by using practices that are based on competences' development, results, and practices that are integrated and interrelated to daily life. Competence-based teaching focuses on what students will know and on what students will be capable of doing by the end of a certain period of time or by the end of a curricular field.

Teaching methodology has a major role in realizing the program's contents because the teacher should take into account the most effective strategies, which enable effective learning during the

teaching and learning process. Teachers may use all the sources, tools and materials that help to achieve subject results for a certain class as well as competences. A teacher should be a model to the students regarding the use of linguistic skills and his or her attention should be focused on some basic principles.

Teachers are obliged to reflect on expectations of the new curriculum by arranging necessary plans in coordination with other teachers. These steps ensure target results and are in accordance with students' interests, experiences, and diversity. In order to implement this new methodological approach, teachers should continuously follow the new trends in their field or subject. They should also use various teaching strategies and techniques by respecting capabilities, different learning styles, diversity and other (social and psychological) circumstances.

Teaching methods are organizational ways that are used by teachers to try to realize a desired level of learning and results. In practice, teachers have faced a number of difficulties during the use of curricular frameworks. In many cases, complex education terms that the authors of the framework have used are not easily understood by the teachers. Similarly, teachers are now given so many options that they find it difficult to decide which content and teaching strategies to use.

The traditional method represents a behavior of low and simple levels of cognitive, emotional and psychomotor fields. This method requires a combination of facts and rules about the cognitive level and the level of understanding by implementing some actions that can be adopted by observation, memorization by heart and exercises (Musai. B. 2003).

In traditional teaching, there is a high level of control by the teacher in the classroom. This control is focused on the content of the subject because it ensures teaching, learning rhythm, correction and assessment of students' answers. (Simo. P. 2004)

Teachers should encourage students' critical thinking and other skills. They should use the information technology effectively as well as encourage cooperation among students by creating a positive atmosphere of teaching and learning in the classroom and out of it. Teachers face the demands of accountability, which often cause extraordinary stress to them (Marash J. Colin, 2009, p.40).

Students affect the curricula by being their mediators. They come to the classroom as representatives of various personal, cultural, family circumstances etc. and as a result of this, they transform the teaching curriculum to multiple methods (Schubert, 1986). Students may bring

vision and may be constructive participants in curriculum planning, if teachers and administrators create space to make students feel confident and supported (Connect, 2007).

Evaluation is very important. Its main role is to improve learning. The information obtained from evaluation helps teachers understand weak points and strong points of students during the implementation of program objectives per each class and offers them a chance to improve the teaching process and give proposals regarding programs' improvement. The competency-based evaluation is a process that ensures indicators about the implementation of student's knowledge, capabilities, skills, aptitudes, habits, stances, and values which they gain at school and which are considered as an integral part of learning.

“Investing in teachers' professional development, evaluating teachers' performance in the classroom and ensuring interactive communication between teachers and students are interlinked processes and affect student's test results”. (Qehaja, L. & Aliu, J., 2018, p.3)

Competency-based teaching and learning should start from learning results, which serve as orientation regarding what a student should know, do, understand, evaluate and how to create a stance about the successful completion of a curriculum level. Competency-based teaching and learning requires teachers to use various tools and methods during their work with students.

When it comes to accomplishing competence results, each curriculum field or each subject consists of its characteristics regarding the organization of the teaching process. Regardless of these specifications, the whole teaching process in various subjects contains some common characteristics in the methodological aspect. Teachers should choose the best strategies, methods and techniques and should ensure that they have the necessary teaching and learning materials, which help students during the development of competences. Teachers should update their knowledge on teaching methods, techniques, and strategies on a daily basis in order to encourage students' wish for knowledge, human virtues, ambitions for being successful and active in everyday life.

Subject programs are the basis of the organization of the teaching process as part of the subject for any education level and for any curriculum level. Subject programs consist of a link between the teaching plan and the teaching program that is prepared for teachers. It is obvious that planning and development are important, but these do not ensure anything, if teachers are not aware of the product and if they lack capabilities to implement plans and programs in their classes.



The subject program should be realized during a school year and during this time students should accomplish the subject's learning goals for learning topics and should have the competences. Furthermore, students should be encouraged to work together, because working together and sharing experiences with each other make it easier for them to accomplish the competence of communication and expression.

An important reason for creating a new curriculum is providing better learning opportunities to students, such as higher levels of achievement regarding understanding, skills and values. Nevertheless, it is rarely possible to ensure such measurements regarding students' achievements that make it possible to say for sure that a certain curriculum is better than the previous one in a particular respect. There are so many complex variables or indicators that affect student's results. There is a very low chance for a single test to be convenient for usage and to provide valuable and credible comparative data between the new curriculum and the previous one (Marash J. Colin, 2009, p.98).

The wide use of English in Kosovo and in the world represents an exemplary communication medium for everybody. Consequently, the development of the skill of communication in English constitutes the first objective of learning. However, just like any other language, learning English enables learning about an unlimited number of topics and thus helps develop other skills of young people and not only language skills.

In the context of English learning, there is an important role for learning and development of skills for using information and communication technology. Communicative approaches, learning through tasks, and learning through projects provide multiple opportunities for encouraging students' curiosity and motivation, for engaging students in classroom activities and for facilitating further development of skills, abilities, and capacities, such as finding an address by using the map, measuring the dimensions of an object, building a toy plane and so on.

Taking into account the wide range of benefits, research and practice show that the internet technology can provide a great contribution to learning through experience, motivation, and better students' results, if it is implemented properly. (Basic Education Program, a group of authors, 2012).

Teachers should know students' character, advantages and weak points very well and they should realize the linguistic system through linguistic skills (listening and speaking, reading, writing).

Grammar should not be taught as an objective on its own, but as a manner of communication, whereas students should be in the center of the learning process.

To fulfill the tasks assigned to an individual, he/she should be equipped with a range of competencies that include knowledge skills and skills that enable effective communication between people; in other words, he/she must be capable of being an effective communicator. The questions that arise regarding communication competencies are: 'What is effective communication?', 'What does it involve?', 'What should I know for a person to communicate with others?' Answers seem simple: successful communication will say 'know how, when, and why you have to say something to someone'. ( Basic Education Program 2012, p.g 58).

#### **1.4 Traditional assessment and competency-based assessment**

Competence-based learning is more diverse and richer. As a rule, learning activities that are more diverse and richer result in more attractive learning experiences and in more sustainable learning of not only facts and information, but also skills, stances and other values, as well as deeper learning. As a consequence of such learning, there is a need for reformation in the field of student assessment.

Assessment consists of a number of methods that are used for measurement of students' performance and accomplishments, including testing, exams, assessment of practical work, oral assessment, assessment based on teacher-led schools, and so on. (Gipps, 1994) In the first place, assessment is used by teachers to ascertain the current situation of students, which direction should they follow and which is the best way to accomplish the target goals (Formative assessment BEP/Ministry of Education, Science, and Technology 2013) or to achieve the learning results that are set in the curriculum. The purpose of assessment is to improve learning, to inform the teaching process, to help students in achieving the highest standards within their potential.

In the past, the process of assessment in Kosovo has often been planned and implemented only after the end of the learning phase. Furthermore, the assessment based on written tests has mainly resulted in a superficial assessment of students' skills about memorizing facts and information, without being able to assess all the skills of students.

Unlike these approaches, competence-based assessment or assessment based on learning results is more complex and multidimensional. Teachers can use a wider range of tools to assess students'

competencies - their skills, stances, and values, and not only their knowledge about facts. Competence-based assessment is also more comprehensive and goes beyond an one-storeyed process.

The new curriculum sets the assessment per each level, whose aim is to assess students before the start of a particular level in order to support them. Since the philosophy of the new curriculum supports students' learning and progress, setting the final grade is also based on evidence regarding students' progress from a particular level to another, along with the grades for particular learning periods. However, the achievement of learning results, which are set for certain learning periods, must be evidenced by student's work/portfolio.

Competency-based assessment is better integrated into the teaching and learning process and helps the improvement of teaching practices. By implementing this approach, teachers are able to continuously assess the scale and the value of learning as demonstrated by students.

If a student is unsatisfied with his or her grade and wants to be assessed again in a certain learning period (for example, in the first period or in other periods), the teacher enables the opportunity of a final assessment to the students and the result that is gained during this assessment is then reported as a final grade for that school year regarding that particular subject. (Administrative Guidance no.08/2016 on students' assessment, page 16)

The implementation of assessment in a competency-based curriculum consists of serious challenges for teachers. Kosovo teachers already face many challenges during the implementation of new teaching strategies and technologies. This can be typical for every education system that undergoes the transition that is taking place in Kosovo's education system. However, “changes in the field of education based on global trends, including the competence-based approach, the principle of inclusion, the student-centered learning, the integrated learning; the global warming; the cultural diversity and technology-based learning, require a reformation of current approaches and traditional approaches towards a more modern approach. Teachers design supplementary learning activities/programs for students who have not achieved a sufficient/desired level of learning results for the subject field and competences”. (Administrative Guidance 08/2016, p.17)

### **1.5 Differences between the old curriculum and the new curriculum regarding the methodological aspect - methods that are used**

The old curriculum:

1. It focuses on inputs;
2. It focuses on teachers and academic subjects;
3. It is divided and guided based on subjects;
4. It is solid in structure and in time division;
5. It is exclusively instructive and centralized;
6. It focuses on school needs;
7. It gives attention to exact memorization and reproduction of prefabricated knowledge;
8. Students reproduce information mechanically, carry out certain exercises or experiments;
9. Students are slightly motivated for maximal encouragement of their work;
10. Students do not duly unfold their individuality.

The new curriculum:

1. It focuses on outputs and teaching and learning results;
2. It focuses on students;
3. It is set through the wide range of learning and cross-curricular methodology;
4. It is flexible in structure and in time division;
5. It allows flexibility, based on various levels and types of local autonomy as part of some qualitative principles and standards;
6. It is open towards community and lifelong learning;
7. It gives attention to intellectual skills of a high level and encourages and promotes social, emotional and spiritual skills;
8. It focuses on generalized assessments;
9. It gives priority to the methodology that is used out of a particular field;
10. It gives priority to the theoretical perspective;
11. It gives priority to conformist methodology;

12. It gives priority to the technological, practical, motoric and artistic uniformity;
13. It focuses on the assessment of the format of content and progress;
14. It gives priority to the methodology of participants and to interaction;
15. It gives priority to the complex methodology that connects theory, practice, implementation and problem solution;
16. It gives attention to creativity and shapes it;
17. It gives attention to the individualization of learning;
18. The students are engaged and act, ask questions and expect answers, discuss, justify and argue;
19. The students are actively included in the learning process and have the right to take action by using interactive methods;
20. The teachers orientate, guide, help and encourage students to ask questions;
21. The teachers stimulate students' critical thinking;
22. The teachers manage, organize, supervise and support the learning process. They are partners during communication and interaction in the classroom;
23. The teachers prepare students for independent assessment of achievements in their activities.

We cannot pretend that there is an absolute division between traditional and contemporary approaches. Each strategy, method or technique, be it contemporary or traditional, is ineffective and failed, if it does not provide the predicted expectations.

None of the methods exclude one another, but they are interconnected with each other because the teaching process itself consists of many dynamics.

## **Chapter Two**

### **METHODOLOGY**

#### **2.1 Research design**

This research is a mixed one; containing quality and quantity evaluation. This approach was used based on the research questionnaire and the model of comparative and explanatory study. Through this researching approach, it aims to find the differences and possibilities that learning programs of the grades 7 and 8 offer for the development of the competence of effective communication of pupils in lower secondary schools in Kosovo.

At the same time, through this studying model, it is the target to analyze, compare and prescribe opinions of teachers and experts of curricula for the opportunities that the programs of English Language offer the development and achieving results in effective communication of pupils in lower secondary schools (grades 7-8)

#### **2.2 The purpose of the research**

This research aimed to analyze and prescribe the opportunities that programs of English language provide for the development of the competence in communication and expression- competence of effective communication, for the pupils of lower secondary schools (Grades 7-8) based on the comparative analysis of programs in the English Language which are compiled based on the curriculum for competence (grade 7) and program based on content and teaching objectives (grade 8) and also based on the opinions of teachers that work in the classes where new English Language programs are being applied (grade 7) and the classes where old programs are still applied (grade 8).

#### **2.3 Research questionnaire**

The issues correlated to this research have to do with the development of competence of communication in the English language by pupils, by comparing the programs of the new and old curricula in Kosovo (Grades 7-8). Therefore the questions will be:

- Has it been achieved to develop the competence of effective communication in the English Language by pupils through the programs of the new curriculum?
- Do the new curriculum satisfactorily address the needs for the development of competence of effective communication in the English Language for the pupils?
- Which are the advantages and challenges of the new curriculum (based on competence) compared to the old one (based on the expected results) for achieving the competence of effective communication in the English language?
- Which are the suggestions of teachers to change or improve any aspect of importance in teaching programs?

## **2.4 Hypotheses:**

### **Hypothesis 1**

The English programs that are based on the new curriculum (competency-based curriculum) better precede the development of the competence of communication and expression - effective communicator, in comparison with the programs of the old curriculum, that are based on content and learning objectives.

### **Hypothesis**

**2**

Pupils in the classes working with English language programs of new curricula based on curriculum with competence have better outcomes of communicative and effective communicative competence versus students in the classroom working with English language programs with old curricula based on content and objectives.

## **2.5 Population and sample**

The population consists of all English teachers of Prishtina Region in Kosovo and learners of public lower secondary schools, as well as curriculum experts of the field of languages and

communication. Within this population, the sample for research has been selected in 8 schools (including towns and villages) in 4 different municipalities of Prishtina Region.

The sample consists of 30 English teachers who work with both curricula with 7th and 8th-grade students in 8 schools in the region of Prishtina. The selection of teachers' gender, age, qualification and their teaching experience has been casual. 160 lower secondary students (including male and female students) as well as two curriculum experts from the field of languages and communication.

## **2.6 Methods and Instruments**

Collection of data has been done through these methods and instruments of research:

Method of analysis of documentation- the curriculum, plans and other programs, laws, administrative orders, strategies, regulations, reports of the research and other publishings were analyzed through this method.

Method of prescriptive analyses- which was used to analyze and prescribe the opinions of teachers.

Statistical method- which was used to process results that would emerge from the quantity research, with adequate tables and percentages.

Comparative method- which was used to compare the results of learning through new and old curricula.

**Instruments:** Questionnaires for teachers and interviews with curriculum experts of the curricular field have been used as instruments. After the piloting process, unclear questions have been reworded or have been removed and substituted with other questions. The questionnaires are not standardized, but they have been arranged for the research needs, more precisely the collection of necessary information. The standardized test for students, the test for levels, including both classes (class 7, with the new curriculum, and class 8, with the old curriculum), have also been used.

## **2.7 The procedure of collecting information**

During the first phase, the cabinet research has been carried out, curricula, plans and programs, laws, administrative orders, strategies and previous research have been analyzed. During the



second phase, terrain research has been carried out and the information has been collected by English teachers and curricula experts.

After obtaining the list of lower secondary schools of Prishtina Region, the schools have been selected for the realization of the research, including filling the questionnaire and testing students after the approval of schools' principals. The collected information has been administered by the author of the research, whereas the time and the place for filling the questionnaires have been set in cooperation with schools' principals during the communication regarding setting the date and time.

## **2.8 The procedure of data analysis**

The processing of research data has been carried out through statistical and descriptive analysis, using the Excel program. The obtained results have been presented via frequency, percentage and graphs. The data that have been obtained through open questions have been processed via inductive analysis, by collecting results based on issues, whereas conclusions were drawn regarding the issues that have been raised in this research.

## **2.9 RESULTS**

Teaching programs are documents that have been designed based on the Core Curriculum, respectively based on curricular fields for a particular curriculum level, that consist of descriptions of learning results and learning content - the learning topics, the relevant teaching and assessment methodology as well as learning materials and sources for a particular subject.

The data that have been obtained from English teachers, 7th and 8th grade students, and curriculum experts, have been carefully processed and analyzed. During the data analysis, the perceptions of teachers who work with both curricular programs and the opinion of experts of curriculum, teaching plans and programs have been obtained. Furthermore, in addition to cabinet data and the data that have been obtained through the questionnaire, the results that have been obtained through students' test for a particular level have also been analyzed in order to depict the differences and advantages of accomplishing the competence of communication and expression through new curricular programs in comparison with old curricular programs.

The results show to what extent the English programs address the requirements for developing students' competence of effective communication in lower secondary education in Kosovo. They also show to what extent the students' competence of effective communication has been developed by using English programs that are based on competences and English programs that are based on content and learning objectives.

Furthermore, the research results highlight advantages and challenges of the programs that have been designed based on the new curriculum (competence-based curriculum) in comparison with the programs that have been designed based on the old curriculum (that is based on expected results) for accomplishing students' competence of effective communication in English. At the same time, in addition to advantages and challenges that have been identified by analyzing the research data, teachers' opinions or suggestions have been taken into consideration regarding the change or improvement of any important aspect of teaching programs in order to improve them or to implement them easier in the future.

Based on the general analysis, we have understood the level of attention and the importance of using technology and assessment for developing students' competence of effective communication in English so that students can better develop this competence.

## Chapter Three

### Data Analysis

#### 3.1 Teachers' view of teaching programs

This section depicts the results of teachers who have been involved in quantitative research. These teachers have given their answers to open questions included in the questionnaire.

The analysis of results shows that teachers have started to work in accordance with new teaching programs. It also shows that teachers have also started to support teaching plannings within the new teaching programs. The analysis shows that training courses for the use and implementation of subject programs have started to help teachers to prepare themselves at the proper level to implement these programs.

However, the data show that the implementation of programs faces some challenges and problems. One of the problems is the lack of support from school leaders and the school coordinator for curricula. Another problem is the lack of a clear plan for the successful implementation of the new teaching programs.

Nevertheless, the research results also show challenges when it comes to lead a process for curriculum implementation, challenges regarding the acceptance of the new curriculum by schools and teachers, practical implementation of the new approach that is provided by the competence-based curriculum as well as challenges regarding the consolidation of practices of continuous support for schools and teachers as for the implementation of the curriculum.

Teachers believe that students lack room for communication and they consider it as challenging. This is because the English language is considered as a foreign language to students while they live in a country where English is not used. Students do not have any other opportunity to communicate and express themselves. The only opportunity they have is the school or the English classes. Furthermore, students are reluctant to answer open questions that encourage communication in groups or in pairs.

English language classes have been reduced by the new curriculum. Based on the old curriculum, there were three English classes a week, whereas based on the new curriculum, there are two English classes a week. Teachers have shown their dissatisfaction with this change, taking into account the fact that English is a language that opens the paths toward further development and education and two classes a week are insufficient. Teachers have considered this issue as

challenging when it comes to accomplishing expected results based on the new programs that include a lot of expected results, but there are fewer classes.

Accomplishing the competence of communication, the case when the students are competent to communicate and express themselves, is hard to be achieved without students being able to be directly exposed to English, without having the chance to visit countries where English is an official language. They asked for schools to be at least equipped with projectors, English cabinets, televisions and DVD.

In order to implement the new programs, they have to obtain the topics that are included in the plans and programs by using textbooks of other grades and this represents a problem to teachers and students, because they still lack adequate materials for a particular level and for a particular class. Furthermore, teachers have said that they lack the necessary tools for the realization of classes based on the new teaching programs, that are based on competences.

### **3.2 The results of the questionnaire with teachers**

The purpose of using a questionnaire was to obtain teachers' opinions regarding the development of the communicative competence of 7th and 8th-grade students through English language programs with the new curriculum and the old curriculum. Furthermore, through teachers' answers, we have identified the differences between the old programs and the new programs, we have understood to what extent teachers are satisfied with the results that have been accomplished so far and whether the new programs duly fulfill the requirements for achieving students' competences, especially the competence of effective communication.

At the same time, through the questions of the questionnaire, we have aimed to understand what kind of support has been offered to teachers regarding the implementation of the new curriculum, their acceptance and trust about the new programs, that are based on competences, and the previous programs, that have been based on objectives. The questionnaire results also reveal the type of techniques that teachers have used for the implementation of these programs, that are interlinked with the development of students' competences.

The results of the questionnaire that was filled by teachers who work with new curricular programs show that teachers are not that satisfied yet regarding the development of students' communicative competence through the English language program. They have said that they have faced obvious changes, including methodology, approach, and especially assessment, but they did not see major differences in comparison with the programs of the old curriculum, that was based on learning



results. Moreover, most of the teachers have said that they still have dilemmas as for the realization of the teaching process based on the new programs and one of the reasons for that is the lack of materials for concretization and didactic materials.

As for the training, teachers that were involved in the research have declared that a five-day training has been insufficient to immediately start the implementation of the new curriculum in schools. Another disadvantage was that the old textbooks have been used at the beginning of the process, although the programs were new and this represented a problem to teachers and students.

The teachers take the topics from the basic program, but these topics are not in compliance with the old textbooks that are used by students. This fact weighs on them because most of the time they have to take materials from other sources, such as the internet. It represents a challenge because schools lack tools and it is impossible to ensure enough copies of materials for all the students. When students do not have their source, it becomes difficult to achieve the expected results.




The questionnaire was given to 30 teachers in total. They work with both curricula with 7th and 8th-grade students in 8 schools in the region of Prishtina, including 4 municipalities: Prishtina, Fushe Kosova, Obiliq, and Drenas. Two schools, including rural and urban areas, have been selected per each municipality.

**Fig 1: Schools involvement based on locations (urban and rural)**

1. Schools' location				
			Percentage	Number of teachers
1	Urban		53.33%	16
2	Rural		46.67%	14
			Total:	30




The selection of teachers' gender and age has been casual. The questionnaire has been filled by 20 female teachers and 9 male teachers. When it comes to English teachers in lower secondary schools, female teachers dominate.

**Fig 2: Teachers' percentage based on gender**

<b>2. GENDER</b>				
			<b>Percentage</b>	<b>Number of teachers</b>
1	Male		30.00%	9
2	Female		66.67%	20
3	Other/Not specified		3.33%	1
			<b>Total:</b>	<b>30</b>




As for the age of the teachers, all the teachers that have been involved in the research were 50 years old or younger.

**Fig 3: Teachers' age**

<b>3. AGE:</b>				
			<b>Percentage</b>	<b>Number of teachers</b>
1	21-30		36.67%	11
2	31-40		23.33%	7
3	41-50		40.00%	12
4	Over 51		0.00%	0
			<b>Total:</b>	<b>30</b>






The data obtained from the questionnaire show that teachers are prepared well for teaching. More than half of them have a master degree and only a few of them have a 3-year bachelor degree.

**Fig 4: Teachers' qualification**

4. Qualifications:				
			Percentage	Number of teachers
1	Bachelor		16.67%	5
2	4-year Bachelor		30.00%	9
3	Master		53.33%	16
4	Doctor		0.00%	0
			Total:	30

As for the years of experience in teaching, 80% of teachers have more than 3 years of teaching experience and they have worked with both curricular programs. Look at the table below.

**Fig 5: Experience period in teaching**



5. Experience period in teaching:				
			Percentage	Number of teachers
1	1-2 years		20.00%	6
2	3-7 years		33.33%	10
3	8-15 years		26.67%	8
4	16-25 years		16.67%	5
5	More than 26 years		3.33%	1
			Total:	30

## Teachers' training for curriculum

The teachers who were involved in the research were asked about the curriculum training they have finished in order to reveal the number of those who have finished the training for the implementation of new programs that are part of the competence-based curriculum, to understand whether the training has been sufficient, to what extent the training has been encouraging to them, and to what extent they are satisfied with training results. Another question that was raised was the training content and to what extent it has been substantial.

Based on results derived from the questionnaire, it is concluded that the majority of teachers have finished the training for the implementation of the new curriculum. A small number of them have not finished any training regarding work with the programs of the new curriculum.





**Fig 6:** Trained and untrained teachers

6. Have you taken part in the training program for the implementation of the new curriculum?				
			Percentage	Number of teachers
1	Yes		86.67%	26
2	No		13.33%	4
			Total:	30

The results show that teachers are not satisfied with the duration of training. Most of them have said that they have only finished training that has lasted five to six days and they consider it insufficient.



**Fig 7: Training duration**

<b>7. IF YES, how many days has this training program lasted?</b>				
			<b>Percentage</b>	<b>Number of teachers</b>
1	5-6 days		74.07%	20
2	7-8 days		14.81%	4
3	9-10 days		3.70%	1
4	More than 11 days		7.41%	2
			answered	27
			skipped	3

**Support for the implementation of the new curriculum**

Teachers have given various stances regarding the support they have received to facilitate the teaching process for them in order to enable the students to accomplish the communicative competence easier through the English language programs. As for the question whether the support during training for curriculum has been sufficient, most of them have said that they have faced dilemmas and felt unsure, whereas the rest of the teachers have said that the support has been insufficient and they were not satisfied with the support given to them during the training for curriculum.

Regarding the satisfaction with the results, 50% of the teachers involved in the research have dilemmas and 35% of them are sufficiently satisfied, whereas the rest are not satisfied at all as for the support during the training.

Asked whether the training was practical or whether it was boring and a waste of time, over 50% of the teachers have said that the training was not so practical, some of them have had dilemmas,

and some others think that it was a waste of time. Around 64.3% of the teachers were really interested to attend the training, although they somehow had dilemmas regarding the support during the training and more than half of them have said that the training has not been boring. Look at the table below.

**Fig 8:** Support for teachers during the training

<b>8. Given below are some assessments regarding the support that the teachers have received during the training for the new curriculum.</b>					
	<b>Not true</b>	<b>I have dilemmas/ somehow true</b>	<b>True</b>	<b>Completely true</b>	<b>Number of teachers</b>
Sufficient	3.7% (1)	55.6% (15)	33.3% (9)	7.4% (2)	27
Satisfactory	14.3% (4)	50.0% (14)	35.7% (10)	0.0% (0)	28
Practical	3.6% (1)	53.6% (15)	39.3% (11)	3.6% (1)	28
Waste of time	64.3% (18)	17.9% (5)	17.9% (5)	0.0% (0)	28
Boring	57.1% (16)	17.9% (5)	21.4% (6)	3.6% (1)	28
				answered	28
				skipped	2

### **Acceptance and trust in the programs of the new curriculum**

Regarding the question to what extent the English language programs address the requirements for the development of student's competence in effective communication, the teachers had different

stances. Almost half of them agreed that the programs of the new curriculum are more advanced than the programs of the old curriculum.

A number of teachers had dilemmas, some of them do not agree, whereas some others totally agree that the programs of the new curriculum are more advanced in comparison with the programs of the old curriculum. Asked whether the programs of the new curriculum are more understandable and clearer for the students to be able to develop the competence of effective communication in English, the teachers who work with both curricula agreed on this claim to some extent, but also were in a quandary regarding these programs.

As for which of the programs are easier to be implemented, most of the teachers agreed that that the programs of the new curriculum are easier, although a considerable percentage of teachers somehow disagreed, saying that they have faced difficulties during the implementation of the programs of the new curriculum, especially during the work for accomplishing students' communicative competence.

Teachers should lead the learning process regarding the learning method for gaining linguistic skills. Their attention should be focused on achieving learning results for a particular class, on the development of competences and on the continuous assessment of students' level of communicative competence in English.

Half of the teachers agree that there are differences between the old curricular programs and the new curricular programs and this is proof that the two groups of programs have substantial differences.

A considerable number of teachers declared that a change in the work approach is required because the new programs include high expectations, but, in their opinion, it does not mean that those expectations are unachievable. According to the teachers who were interviewed, the new programs are more flexible and more creative for teachers and students, because they require engagement in extracurricular activities, projects, use of technology in classes and so on.

A number of teachers have said that when using the new programs, the students' engagement in practical work, various projects and activities is greater and these programs make the teaching process more creative, whereas students become more motivated and encouraged to learn and to freely express their opinions. Communication is also encouraged and it is easier to accomplish the competence of effective communication. In comparison with the old programs, the new curricular

programs are easier to be understood and implemented in practice, although they are more challenging to teachers than the programs of the old curriculum. However, their load is reasonable.

*Based on my experience with both curricula, I have noticed that the new curricular programs require a change of teaching approach, a change of working methodology, a change of harmonization and adjustment of techniques and methods, and a change in encouraging communication in the classroom, in order to accomplish the competence of students' effective communication. (A teacher)*

As for the question of whether there is any change regarding the requirements of the programs that are based on competences, the teachers have provided various answers. A number of teachers have made considerable changes, whereas some others have said that changes are not easy and need more time.

**Fig 9: Teachers' answers ( assess language programs) .**

<b>9. Based on your experience with the new curriculum and based on your information, how would you assess language programs? Do they sufficiently address the demands for the development of the competence of an effective communicator when it comes to students?</b>						
	<b>I totally disagree</b>	<b>I disagree</b>	<b>I have dilemmas/ I somehow agree</b>	<b>I agree</b>	<b>I totally agree</b>	<b>Total number of respondents</b>
The programs are more advanced in comparison with the previous curriculum	0.0% (0)	10.3% (3)	34.5% (10)	41.4% (12)	13.8% (4)	29
The programs are clearer and more understandable	0.0% (0)	10.3% (3)	41.4% (12)	41.4% (12)	6.9% (2)	29
The programs are easier to implement	0.0% (0)	21.4% (6)	32.1% (9)	42.9% (12)	3.6% (1)	28
The programs are substantially/ very different in comparison with the previous curriculum	0.0% (0)	24.1% (7)	31.0% (9)	44.8% (13)	0.0% (0)	29
The programs require a different teaching approach	0.0% (0)	10.3% (3)	31.0% (9)	48.3% (14)	10.3% (3)	29
The programs consists of very high expectations	0.0% (0)	10.0% (3)	23.3% (7)	53.3% (16)	13.3% (4)	30
The programs contain unreachable demands	3.3% (1)	43.3% (13)	36.7% (11)	6.7% (2)	10.0% (3)	30

The programs are flexible	3.4% (1)	10.3% (3)	37.9% (11)	41.4% (12)	6.9% (2)	29
The programs are creative to teachers and students	0.0% (0)	3.3% (1)	36.7% (11)	50.0% (15)	10.0% (3)	30
The programs are stimulating for studying	0.0% (0)	10.0% (3)	20.0% (6)	63.3% (19)	6.7% (2)	30
The programs are complicated and impractical	6.7% (2)	33.3% (10)	36.7% (11)	20.0% (6)	3.3% (1)	30
The programs are hard to understand	6.7% (2)	53.3% (16)	23.3% (7)	13.3% (4)	3.3% (1)	30
The programs are hard to implement	3.4% (1)	24.1% (7)	44.8% (13)	24.1% (7)	3.4% (1)	29
The programs are extremely challenging	3.4% (1)	24.1% (7)	37.9% (11)	34.5% (10)	0.0% (0)	29
The programs consist of unreasonable workload	0.0% (0)	48.3% (14)	37.9% (11)	10.3% (3)	3.4% (1)	29
					answered	30
					skipped	0

Based on teachers' responses, it is more than justifiable that any innovation requires a change of approach. Therefore, the new curricular programs of English require the same thing. The teachers have said that there were changes, but not many. Big changes have been made in some aspects, whereas small and modest changes have been made in other aspects. So, the teachers have made changes that have suited them in cases where they have considered changes more reasonable. They have made these changes based on conditions and opportunities offered by their schools.

## **Changes brought by the new programs regarding the accomplishment of the communicative competence**

According to the teachers, the changes have started from the organization of work in professional committees, plans and planning methods, extension of topics and their decomposition into teaching units, approach towards the reference of curricular documents as well as purposes and principles.

Furthermore, there are changes regarding the integrated approach of planning, the planning of classes and the process of reflection, the pedagogical approach / the activities that are carried out during teaching and learning. There are changes regarding the use of other teaching sources, the use of the technology of information and communication, the selection of tools for learners' assessment, students' role in the classrooms, and the rational use of time.

The teachers have also given their opinions regarding the changes in addressing the requirements of the new programs in order to accomplish the results of the communicative competence. Some teachers have said that the measures for changing the work methodology and teaching practices are difficult to be implemented in practice, whereas some other teachers have declared that it is easy to make these changes, but time and commitment are needed to modify teaching practices and to apply various forms of communication and expression while working with students.

The new curricular programs require that students are supported to independently use tools and opportunities for communication in English so that they can develop the communicative competence more easily.

**Fig 10:** Teachers' responses ( changes to address the demands of new programs).

<b>10. Have you made changes in order to address the demands of the new programs, regarding:</b>							
	<b>I believe the changes are unnecessary</b>	<b>The changes are necessary but we decided to avoid them</b>	<b>We are considering changes</b>	<b>We have made small changes</b>	<b>We have made moderate changes</b>	<b>We have made crucial changes</b>	<b>Response Total</b>

Working methods of the professional teachers' group	10.0% (3)	6.7% (2)	23.3% (7)	43.3% (13)	16.7% (5)	0.0% (0)	30
Approaches towards teachers' teaching about the new curriculum	6.7% (2)	0.0% (0)	33.3% (10)	43.3% (13)	13.3% (4)	3.3% (1)	30
Methods of teaching planning-annual plans and other plans	6.7% (2)	3.3% (1)	33.3% (10)	36.7% (11)	13.3% (4)	6.7% (2)	30
Extension of teaching program topics and their dispersion into teaching units	6.9% (2)	3.4% (1)	37.9% (11)	24.1% (7)	24.1% (7)	3.4% (1)	29
Approach towards curriculum documents as for objectives and principles	10.0% (3)	10.0% (3)	30.0% (9)	13.3% (4)	26.7% (8)	10.0% (3)	30
Integrated approach regarding	6.7% (2)	3.3% (1)	33.3% (10)	13.3% (4)	36.7% (11)	6.7% (2)	30



planning and teaching							
Practice of class planning and reflection	6.7% (2)	6.7% (2)	20.0% (6)	16.7% (5)	36.7% (11)	13.3% (4)	30
Pedagogical approach using activities during teaching and learning	10.3% (3)	3.4% (1)	20.7% (6)	6.9% (2)	44.8% (13)	13.8% (4)	29
Approach regarding the use of books and other learning sources	13.3% (4)	0.0% (0)	23.3% (7)	20.0% (6)	26.7% (8)	16.7% (5)	30
Approach and instrument of students' assessment	13.3% (4)	3.3% (1)	26.7% (8)	16.7% (5)	26.7% (8)	13.3% (4)	30
Approach towards the use of Information Technology	10.0% (3)	6.7% (2)	13.3% (4)	23.3% (7)	30.0% (9)	16.7% (5)	30
The role of the students in the classroom	6.7% (2)	0.0% (0)	16.7% (5)	26.7% (8)	33.3% (10)	16.7% (5)	30
Approach towards the use of time for	10.0% (3)	0.0% (0)	26.7% (8)	13.3% (4)	40.0% (12)	10.0% (3)	30

implementatio n of the new curriculum								
Other (please specify)	4.5% (1)	0.0% (0)	45.5% (10)	22.7% (5)	13.6% (3)	13.6% (3)	22	
							Answered	30
							skipped	0

### **Teaching practices for the development of students' competences**

Teaching practices are interconnected with the development of students' competences, especially with the communicative competence, that plays a major role in English since its main purpose is to prepare students for becoming effective communicators.

The old curricular programs make teachers focus more on solving grammatical problems, long readings of texts and translation methods and the teacher is in the center of the process. Based on the new curricular programs, teachers and students focus more on communication and expression. The grammar is learned through communication, textbooks, conversations, dialogue, activities, and games.

There are not many long readings, but there are lessons that are related to everyday situations and various cultures, that are expressed during the writing process. The use of translation or the use of the native language during the class is not recommended. The use of photographs, CDs, DVDs and projectors is recommended, so that the students have the chance to listen to spoken language, to practice through photographs, images, to watch videos, dialogues, events and to spontaneously understand and memorize new words.

As for the question to what extent the following aspects are apparent in the teaching practice, teachers have given similar opinions. More than half of the teachers have said that modifications of the teaching practices, with the aim that students practice various methods of communication and expression, are evident, whereas a smaller number of teachers have declared that the modifications of the teaching practices are very important and they will make them continuously.

**Fig 11: Teachers' responses ( modify the teaching practices).**

11. I modify the teaching practices in order to make the students practice various methods of communication and expression			Response Percent	Response Total
1	It is not evident. I do not consider it as an important aspect of my practice		3.3%	1
2	It is evident at times, but I do not feel like doing it always		6.7%	2
3	It is very evident. It is important to me to do this often		66.7%	20
4	It is very clear and evident. It is really important to me to do this continuously		23.3%	7
			answered	30





As for the question to what extent they engage students to express themselves freely through language, symbols, signs, texts or other methods of expression, the teachers have given similar responses. According to the teachers who were involved in this research, the new teaching practices are evident and they are going to continuously apply activities that enable the development of students' communicative competence.

### **Supporting students for the development of the communicative competence**

According to the teachers who were involved in the research, in order to enable students to develop the communicative competence easier, it is very important to engage them in communication and expression, finding various convenient methods and techniques that motivate them to be effective communicators, by making them forget the grammar and the feeling of making an error in word pronunciation. In their opinion, students' engagement in communication can be carried out in various ways, including groups, pairs, dialogues, and teachers encourage the students to do so, if

they go to the classroom with well-planned topics. This is the only way that will make students create communication habits, boost self-confidence and learn from the mistakes of one another.

**Fig 12: The change of teachers' practices**

<b>12. I engage the students to express their thoughts adequately using language, symbols, signs, texts and other forms of expression.</b>		<b>Response Percent</b>	<b>Response Total</b>
1	It is not evident. I do not consider it as an important aspect of my practice 	3.3%	1
2	It is evident at times, but I do not feel like doing it always 	3.3%	1
3	It is very evident. It is important to me to do this often 	53.3%	16
4	It is very clear and evident. It is really important to me to do this continuously 	40.0%	12
		answered	30

Students' engagement in independent work in a critical and creative manner plays an important role in the process of effective teaching and learning, especially when it comes to the accomplishment of better results regarding the communicative competence.

Teachers should be supportive. They should support and motivate the students for using the tools that enable communication and expression. Teachers should also encourage topics, debates on real-life situations, situations from their everyday life, and the use of various cases as examples. The selected topics should always suit students' age and their level of language skills.

As for the question whether the teachers support the students to use the tools and opportunities independently, critically, and creatively (the tools and the opportunities that enable communication and expression), the data derived from the questionnaire suggest that the teachers often support the students and they are going to do it continuously. The table below shows further details.

**Fig 13: Teachers' opinions**

<b>13. I support my students to use the tools and opportunities of communication and expression independently, critically and creatively</b>		<b>Response Percent</b>	<b>Response Total</b>
1	It is not evident. I do not consider it as an important aspect of my practice	0.0%	0
2	It is evident at times, but I do not feel like doing it always	6.7%	2
3	It is very evident. It is important to me to do this often	50.0%	15
4	It is very clear and evident. It is really important to me to do this continuously	43.3%	13
		answered	30

Supporting students for the development of their capacities in the informative approach and other sources in a creative, critical and interactive way, is indispensable, encourages students' interest for communication and expression.

Children nowadays are growing up in a period of technological development and almost all of them have access to it and can use it, be it through games or social networks. The teachers should be supportive and should instruct the students on how to use these tools for educational purposes.

According to the teachers, the students can accomplish the communicative competence easier by using educational websites and links that provide information about certain topics, watching various videos and so on. Furthermore, the students should use the projector in order to encourage motivation and communication with one another.




The teachers have declared that they support their students for the development of capacities so that they can approach these sources critically and creatively. Out of 30 teachers who have participated in the questionnaire, more than half of them have declared that the support for students is much needed and that they are going to often use various strategies and tools to develop students' communicative approach.

**Fig 14: Teachers' opinions in percentage**

<b>14. I support my students towards the development of capacities for approaching data and sources critically, creatively and interactively</b>		<b>Response Percent</b>	<b>Response Total</b>
1	It is not evident. I do not consider it as an important aspect of my practice	0.0%	0
2	It is evident at times, but I do not feel like doing it always	23.3%	7
3	It is very evident. It is important to me to do this often	53.3%	16
4	It is very clear and evident. It is really important to me to do this continuously	23.3%	7
		answered	30

The systematic collection of data and their analysis regarding students' progress is done in order to identify their needs, to continuously support them in the learning process and to accomplish the communicative competence easier.

**Fig 15: Teachers' responses**

15. Students are engaged and do practical things based on contextual knowledge and real life situation			Response Percent	Response Total
1	It is not evident. I do not consider it as an important aspect of my practice		0.0%	0
2	It is evident at times, but I do not feel like doing it always		33.3%	10
3	It is very evident. It is important to me to do this often		43.3%	13
4	It is very clear and evident. It is really important to me to do this continuously		23.3%	7
			answered	30

As for this question, the teachers have given almost similar responses. This proves that they are always engaged and interested to collect data about students' progress by supporting their learning.

More than half of the teachers have declared that the systematic collection of data about students' progress is clear and very important, therefore they are going to do it continuously. Around 30% of those who participated in the questionnaire have said that the systematic collection of data is sometimes evident, but they do not consider it as a very important aspect in their teaching practice.

According to the teachers, the students are encouraged to be open and self-confident during the process of communication. Surely, the students gain more assurance and confidence to express themselves if there is more communication with one another in the classroom. The encouragement of communication and the creation of self-confidence can be accomplished by encouraging various

debates and topics from real-life situations and by encouraging curiosity to ask and answer questions, to comment, to describe photographs and so forth.

**Fig 16: Teachers' support**

16. Students are encouraged to be open and to have self-confidence during communication			Response Percent	Response Total
1	It is not evident. I do not consider it as an important aspect of my practice		6.9%	2
2	It is evident at times, but I do not feel like doing it always		13.8%	4
3	It is very evident. It is important to me to do this often		24.1%	7
4	It is very clear and evident. It is really important to me to do this continuously		55.2%	16
			answered	29

There is a great need for colleagues' support and cooperation with each other, therefore the changes in the teaching process through programs are indispensable. The more the cooperation grows, the better we are going to be informed about the new changes in education. As for the question to what extent the teachers rely on colleagues' experience to make necessary changes in the teaching practice, the responses are found in the analysis section of the questionnaire that was filled by the teachers of Prishtina region schools.

The data show that it is not so evident that the teachers rely on their colleagues' help to develop students' communicative competence, be it help from the colleagues from the same school or colleagues from other schools. Less than half of the teachers have said that the support from colleagues is very important and that they rely on it continuously. A smaller number of them have







said that this help is important, whereas some of them have a different opinion because they think that they do not consider it necessary to often rely on colleagues' experience since they do not consider it to be important in their teaching practice.

The teachers have declared that the engagement in fulfilling the needs of the students in learning and supporting their maximal development in communication and expression is very important for their teaching practice and they do it continuously.

Out of the teachers who have participated in the questionnaire, about half of them have declared that their engagement in fulfilling the needs for the development of the communicative competence is very important and they do it continuously, whereas a smaller number of the teachers have declared that their engagement in fulfilling the needs and demands of the students in learning is permanent and they do it often, whereas only a small number of teachers have said that they do not do it always.

**Fig 17: Teachers' support for students**

<b>17. I engage myself with students' learning needs and act in accordance with my responsibilities to support the maximal development of students' expression abilities.</b>			<b>Response Percent</b>	<b>Response Total</b>
1	It is not evident. I do not consider it as an important aspect of my practice.		3.4%	1
2	It is evident at times, but I do not feel like doing it always.		10.3%	3
3	It is very evident. It is important to me to do this often.		41.4%	12
4	It is very clear and evident. It is really important to me to do this continuously.		44.8%	13
			answered	29

Based on the results' analysis, the following descriptions about the organizational changes in schools, changes in lesson planning, and classroom changes have been derived.

The questionnaire has been intentionally given to the teachers who work with classes where the new curriculum is implemented and to the teachers who work with classes where the old curriculum is applied in order to identify the differences in the practices of teaching and learning and the development of students' communicative competence in grade 7 and grade 8. The focus was to highlight the differences in the practices of teaching and learning regarding the development of competence by the students.

### **3.3.1. Teachers' responses to open questions**

Besides closed questions (questions with alternatives), the questionnaire also consisted of some open questions that enabled the teachers to express their opinion more widely regarding the implementation of programs in their schools: To what extent the students' results duly address the requirements for the development of students' communicative competence in English, the differences between the programs of the new curriculum and the programs of the old curriculum, the support provided to the teachers, the impact of the programs for the improvement of communication, the challenges the teachers face and so forth.

Based on the results' analysis, descriptions about the changes in the practices of teaching and learning have been derived by referring to the development of students' communicative competence and the difficulties during the implementation of the new programs.

As for the implementation of the new curricular programs in schools, the results show that the majority of the teachers try to implement them from the time when they have started to work with the new curriculum. However, some of the teachers are pessimistic when it comes to the development of students' communicative competence. Initially, the teachers have been reluctant to work with the new programs, but now they have adapted to the new programs and have started to achieve results.

The new teaching programs address the requirements for students' communicative competence better, but there is a need for greater commitment by the teachers and better knowledge.

The challenges the teachers face during the implementation of the new learning programs are the lack of textbooks, the big number of students in a classroom, the lack of learning tools and cabinets,

the lack of cooperation between the colleagues of the same curricular field, the lack of cooperation between schools and so forth. In order to be able to work with the new programs, the teachers have to take some topics from the textbooks of other classes and this remains a problem for the teachers and the students. Teachers have also declared that there is a lack of necessary tools for the realization of a class based on the new learning programs, that are based on competences.

In their opinion, the assessment of students with the new programs is more convenient because there are three assessment periods and there is a chance for the students to improve their grades.

Furthermore, there are more activities and it is easier for the students to learn. Nevertheless, some of the teachers have declared that the program is overloaded and the aspect of assessment needs to be revised, because they agree to have three assessment periods with equal importance.

### **3.4 Responses of subject curricula experts**

Two curriculum experts, trainers of the field of languages and communication, have also been involved in this research. They have given their opinions on the differences between the programs of the new curriculum and the programs of the old curriculum. The experts have been asked about the teaching practices for the development of students' communicative competence through the programs of English, required changes, the process of training as well as the advantages and challenges of the programs that have been designed based on the new curriculum.

According to the curriculum experts, the teachers should be given continuous support and explanations about the curricular programs in order to support the students for the development of the competence of communication and expression in English. The practices of teaching and learning, that serve for the development of students' competences, should be changed as they are set in the programs designed based on the new curriculum.

It is important to make changes in order to support the students and to develop the competence of communication and expression, regardless of the fact that it is initially difficult for the teachers to apply the teaching practice based on competences.

The new teaching programs provide more opportunities for the students to use the gained knowledge in practice, make the learning process more functional and better fulfill the needs and demands of the students. The course of the results with the programs of the new curriculum is clear to the teachers during their work and the students are more active and more creative and therefore

their capacities should be raised so that the curriculum can be successfully implemented in practice.

As for the methodological aspects of teachers' work, it cannot be said that big differences are evident, but there is a bigger cooperation between the teachers of the same schools for the improvement of quality, overcoming the challenges, and for the development of students' competence for communication and expression.

The programs of the new curriculum, that is based on competences, promote the solution of problems and not learning by heart, memorizing, and repetition of acquired knowledge. The programs of the old curriculum focus on teaching that is based on content and objectives, although they include expected results.

The new curriculum cannot be implemented if the main difference of the new programs is not clear to the teachers and if they do not understand and do not welcome the new programs and if they do not consider them as necessary to develop students' communicative competence.

The general opinion of the experts of education who were involved in this research is that there are teachers who have accepted the new curriculum in a very good manner and they work with a commitment to implement it, but some teachers have not welcomed the new curriculum.

If teachers keep facing difficulties in the teaching practice to fulfill the demands that are related to the approach based on competences and if they do not receive professional support, there is a risk that they are going to return to the traditional teaching practice.

Generally, changes in planning are noticed, but there is not any substantial difference regarding the approach to teaching and learning. No big changes are noticed regarding the methodological aspects of teachers' work, regardless of various training courses about teaching methodology that teachers have attended. The training courses have not been sufficient and encouraging. They have not been sufficiently practical and have not provided satisfactory results.

The quality of learning plans, based on the curriculum demands, has been widely challenged because some teachers consider the process of planning as administrative work and therefore it is necessary to change the culture of work during the planning. The process of planning requires good recognition of curricular documents, creativity, professional experience, recognition of the context of the school, classes, students and so forth, in order for students to express themselves properly in English.

### **3.5 Results of the students' test**

In order to understand the development and achievement of results regarding students' competence for communication and expression through the English programs in lower secondary education in Kosovo, a test has been given to the 7th-grade students, who undergo the learning process based on the new curriculum that is based on competences.

In order to understand the differences of students' knowledge regarding success in the subject of English, the same test has been given to the 8th-grade students, who undergo the learning process based on the old curriculum that is based on expected results. The test has been standardized and it was a test that is taken at the end of the curricular level by the students who have learned based on the new curriculum that is based on competences.

The test has been taken by 160 students in total (80 7th grade students and 80 8th grade students) from eight schools in four municipalities of the region of Prishtina. The schools are located in rural and urban areas. Twenty students from two different grades have been selected by chance in each school. The test consisted of 20 questions and each question consisted of one point.

The same test for both grades, 7 and 8, has been done in order to obtain data that are as accurate as possible about the development of students' communicative competence through English programs. Although students of these grades take classes based on different curricular programs, including old and new programs, school materials and textbooks have been initially the same for both grades.

The research results, that were obtained from the test taken by the students of the schools that were part of the research, show that the 7th-grade students, who have taken classes based on the new curriculum for two years, have achieved better results in comparison with the students who have taken classes based on the old curriculum.

#### **The comparison of students' results**

After having found the percentage of correct answers per each student of 7th and 8th grades, the results of different grades and schools have been compared.

The table below shows the average of points for the schools that have used the new teaching programs, based on the curriculum with competences, as well as the differences between them.

**Fig 18: Grade 7 - Schools in rural and urban areas**

<b>Rural schools</b>	"Abedin Bujupi"	"Arif Shala"	"Daut Bugujevci"	"Migjeni"	Total
<b>Points and average percentage</b>	212 points in total Average percentage per grade: 53%,	213 points in total Average percentage per grade: 53.25%	245 points in total Average percentage per grade: 61.25	187 points in total Average percentage per grade: 46.75	857 points Average percentage: 53.56%
<b>Urban schools</b>	"Hasan Prishtina"	"Xhemajl Mustafa"	"Mihajl Grameno"	"Ibrahim Rugova"	Total
<b>Points and average percentage</b>	248 points in total Average percentage per grade: 62%	277 points in total Average percentage per grade: 69.25%	261 points in total Average percentage per grade: 65.25%	201 points in total Average percentage per grade: 50.25%	987 points Average percentage: 61.6%

The table below shows the average of points for all the schools that have been involved in the research, whose students have taken classes based on the programs of the old curriculum, as well as the differences between them.

**Fig 19: Grade 8 - Schools in rural and urban areas**

<b>Rural schools</b>	"Abedin Bujupi"	"Arif Shala"	"Daut Bugujevci"	"Migjeni"	Total
<b>Points and average percentage</b>	205 points in total Average percentage per grade: 51.25%	197 points in total Average percentage per grade: 49.25%	230 points in total Average percentage per grade: 57.5%	174 points in total Average percentage per grade: 43.5%	806 points Average percentage: 50.37%
<b>Urban schools</b>	"Hasan Prishtina"	"Xhemajl Mustafa"	"Mihajl Grameno"	"Ibrahim Rugova"	Total

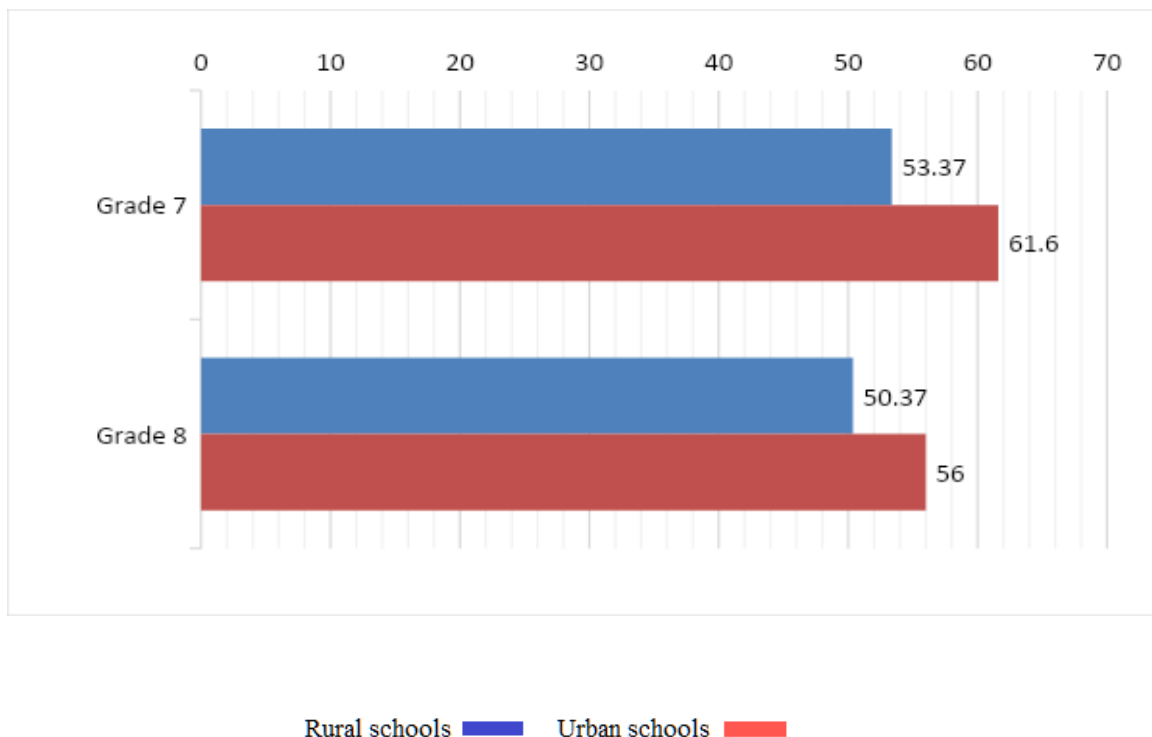
<b>Points and average percentage</b>	222 points in total Average percentage per grade: 55.5%	259 points in total Average percentage per grade: 64.75%	235 points in total Average percentage per grade: 58.75%	180 points in total Average percentage per grade: 45%	896 points Average percentage: 56 %
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Based on the data analysis, it may be concluded that the 7th-grade students, who have taken classes based on the new curriculum, have achieved better results regarding the competence for effective communication in comparison with the 8th-grade students, who have not taken classes based on the programs of the new curriculum.

The test results show that there is not a big difference in percentages for grades and students between the rural schools and the urban schools that were involved in the research. The students of the urban schools have achieved better results than the students of the rural schools, but the difference is not very big.

The graph below shows the differences between grades and the differences between rural and urban schools.

**Fig. 20** The results are shown in percentages.



The 7th-grade students have achieved better results in **part one and part two** of the test, which were about alternative answers regarding **vocabulary and reading a text and answering the questions**, whereas they were not very successful in **part three**, that was about **grammar**. This probably happened because the new curricular programs are more focused on solving grammar problems through reading and expression.

In the new programs, students' focus is on reading and answering in a critical way, because more priority is given to critical thinking about certain topics, expressions and communication in an independent and critical way.

**The first part** of the test consisted of five questions/tasks with alternative answers: "**Choose the right words for the blanks. Then mark the letter of the correct answer**".

The students of both grades (seven and eight) showed almost similar results in their answers regarding the questions of this part of the test. There were no big differences regarding word memorization and their correct usage. There were differences within the same classroom, because the selection of students was carried out by chance and it is normal that not all the students have the same learning results in learning English.

As for the task of the second part of the test, "**Read the text and answer the questions that follow**", the 8th-grade students were not very successful in their answers. The 7th-grade students achieved better results. This probably happened because of the fact that the 8th-grade students did not have a program that included reading and answering in a critical way, as it is required by the new curricular programs. Although the results of the two different grades differ for around 5%, this result is almost the same in the schools of rural and urban areas.

Most of the students of urban schools learn English by taking private courses, besides learning at school. However, only a small number of students in rural schools take private English courses. Additional courses could have helped these students to achieve better results in the test.

The teachers' professional qualifications, experience, and methodology can also affect the students' results in these schools. Over 50% of teachers who were involved in the research had a Master degrees, 30% of them had a four-year Bachelor degree, whereas the rest of them had a three-year Bachelor degree.



## **Chapter Four**

### **4.1 Conclusion**

The results obtained from the research prove the hypotheses that the English programs that are based on the curriculum with competences provide better development of the competence for communication and expression in comparison with the English programs that are based on content and learning objectives.

Furthermore, the results also prove the auxiliary hypothesis that the students who have taken classes with English programs that are based on the curriculum with competences have achieved better results in communication and expression.

The programs of the new curriculum are more advanced than the programs of the new curriculum. The new programs are also more encouraging, but they require a change of the work approach by the teachers and have very high expectations and are more difficult to be understood because the development of competences requires creative engagement in planning.

The main difference of the programs of the new curriculum is the transition from the teaching based on content and objectives to the teaching based on competences in order to develop competences and achieve learning results.

The program of the new curriculum has a clearer methodology with a wider content. Furthermore, this program helps the teachers more to reflect on teaching practices and to coordinate their work towards fulfilling students' needs so that they can achieve the competence of communication and expression in English easier. The new learning programs provide more opportunities for the students to put their knowledge in practice and to use it in everyday life.

Most of the teachers have given positive assessments for the structure and content of the programs. Their assessment shows that the finalization of the learning programs should be done with some additions in learning topics and learning results for learning topics, be it by interconnecting them with the results of curricular fields or by revising methodological guidance materials that set the direction of the teachers' work with students in order to develop the competences, or by revising guidance materials for students' assessment, that include the assessment of competences.

The implementation of the competence-based approach can hardly be achieved, if certain competences are not properly addressed in the systems of assessment. Teachers' participation in

training courses has greatly amplified the information about the learning programs and has mobilized the teachers for the implementation of subject programs. However, a number of teachers still think that the process of assessment of students' level for mastery of competences is complicated and challenging.

The challenges during the implementation of the learning programs are about preparing annual panning in the level of learning periods, the lack of preparation for teachers during training courses regarding the implementation of the new programs, the lack of teachers' experience, the lack of learning textbooks that suit the new programs and the lack of the learning materials for the implementation of the competence-based programs.

For successful implementation of the new programs, it is required to make changes in the classrooms and spaces where the process of learning takes place, including the changes of teachers' pedagogical approach, the changes of students' role in the learning process, the role they take in the classroom, the activities that are used during the teaching process, the approaches and instruments for students' assessment, the use of information technology, textbooks, and other learning sources as well as the teaching and learning practices regarding the development of students' communicative competence.

The new programs have changed the method of students' assessment because there are three periods of assessment with percentages, whereas the assessment with the old programs has usually been carried out based on two semi-annual periods.

The change of students' assessment method from a traditional approach of assessment, that is based on information about the content that has been learned and based on a limited number of instruments for assessing students' ability to learn the facts and information by heart, to a competence-based assessment, where the focus is on the students, their skills, stances and values and not only on their knowledge, represents the biggest change in the system of students' assessment in Kosovo.

There is a need for various teaching strategies and clear learning programs so that the students can learn and apply linguistic knowledge in an effective way, to master the competence of listening to various texts, the competence of speaking, the competence of reading texts, and the competence of writing for personal and functional purposes.

During the process of educational organization, the teachers should plan in that way that the students continuously achieve the competences set in the curriculum by being aware that students learn in various ways: individually, in groups, led by the teacher, and in an independent way.

## **4.2 Recommendations**

Based on the results that were obtained through the research with teachers, students and curricula experts, recommendations for schools and other relevant institutions for the implementation of the curricular reform in Kosovo (Ministry of Education, Science, and Technology; Faculty of Education, and Municipal Departments of Education) are as presented below:

There should be a general evaluation of the implementation of the new curricular programs, with particular focus on the quality of teachers' preparedness (the quality of training), regarding the demands of the competence-based curriculum.

The Ministry of Education, Science, and Technology should consolidate supervisory and supporting mechanisms that support the implementation of subject curricula, by providing guidance and necessary information to teachers in order to fulfill the demands of teaching programs easier based on the new curriculum.

Teachers should be continuously monitored and professionally supported through training and other methods of professional development. There should be additional training for all the teachers in order to implement the new curricular programs in all the schools and to develop students' communicative competence successfully.

The faculties that prepare teachers should education professionals who master the competencies that are included in the new curriculum in order to facilitate the process of achieving the competences by students. In other words, they should master the methods and practices that help the implementation of the curriculum.

There should be an adjustment of programs that qualify new teachers with the new demands of the curricular reform in order to support the implementation of the new curricular programs at schools.

Municipal Departments of Education should provide continuous professional support and materials to schools in order to overcome challenges by supplying the teachers with teaching tools for concretization: laptops, projectors, photocopy machines, etc.

Schools should provide the necessary support to teachers regarding the planning and realization of the teaching process in accordance with the new demands of curriculum implementation, including the process of evaluation for curricular levels.

There should be an empowerment of mechanisms that ensure the implementation of the curriculum at the school level, such as coordinators for the implementation of the curriculum and professional boards, with the purpose of mastering the competence of communication and expression by students.

The teachers' approach of work should be changed because the new programs have greater expectations, they are more flexible, more creative for teachers and students, and require engagement in extracurricular activities, projects, use of technology in classes, etc.

During the process of organizing lessons, teachers should plan the lesson in that way that students continuously achieve the competencies set in the curriculum, by being aware that students learn through various methods: individually, in groups, led by teachers, and independently.

There should be a shift from traditional teaching to (competence-based) modern teaching. The teachers should avoid the methods that produce abstract and memorized learning. They should use methods that are based on the development of competences, integrated contents that are interrelated to everyday life.

Teachers should know the curricular documents well. They should possess creativity, professional experience, they should know the context of the school and they should use various methods and instruments to evaluate students' competences: their skills, habits, stances, and values. The focus should be on achieving the learning results for grades and the students' communicative competence in English should be continuously evaluated.

The number of English classes per week should not be reduced to two classes, but it should remain as it has been based on the old curriculum (three classes per week), taking into account the fact that there are many expected results, whereas the number of classes is insufficient to achieve the results.

The teaching process should be more creative. The teachers should support and motivate the students to use the tools that enable communication and expression. The students should be encouraged to work together, by sharing experiences with one another, and to use educational websites that help the development of the competence of communication and expression.

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## APPENDICES

### APPENDIX A

Dear Sir/Madam,

We kindly ask you to share a part of your precious time to answer the questions of this questionnaire. All the information is going to be used only for the purpose of this study, that is a master thesis. All the information given below by you is going to be kept confidential. Therefore, we ask you to answer the questions independently and sincerely in order to contribute towards reaching the purpose of this study.

The purpose of this study is to describe and analyze teachers' experiences regarding the development of students' communication and expression competences using English language programs as well as the understanding of advantages and challenges of the new curriculum (based on competences) in comparison with the old curriculum (based on expected outcomes) towards reaching the competence of an effective communicator.

If you face possible uncertainties or in case you are interested to know more about this study, please do not hesitate to contact us via e-mail: amazona24@hotmail.com. : [amazona24@hotmail.com](mailto:amazona24@hotmail.com)

#### DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

**Municipality:** \_\_\_\_\_ **School's location:**     1) Urban     2) Rural

**Sex:**     1) Female     2) Male

**Age:**    1) 21-30,     2) 31-40,     3) 41-50,     4) Over 51.

**Qualifications:** 1) College 2) Bachelor 3) 4-year Bachelor Degree 4) Master 5) Doctor

**Experience period in teaching:** 1) 1-2 years 2) 3 -7 years 3) 8 - 12 4) 13-17, 5) More than 18 years

**Which is the school year when your school started implementing new teaching plans and programs, arranged based on the new curriculum?**    2016/2017     2017/2018



**SUPPORT REGARDING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE NEW CURRICULUM/NEW TEACHING PROGRAMS**

Have you taken part in the training program for the implementation of the new curriculum?

- 1) YES                      2) NO

If YES, how many days has this training program lasted?

- 1) 5 -6 days      2) 7-8 days      3) 9-10 days      4) More than 11 days

	below are some assessments regarding the support you have received during the training for the new curriculum.	Give your assessment with a √ sign by choosing one of the scales <i>(for each assessment/demand)</i>				
		Not true (1)	Not very true (2)	I have dilemmas/ somehow true (3)	True (4)	Completely true (5)
	Sufficient					
	Satisfactory					
	Stimulating					
	Practical					
	Waste of time					
	Useless					
	Boring					
	Wrong					
	Other (please specify): _____					

**YOUR ACCEPTANCE AND TRUST REGARDING PROGRAMS OF THE NEW CURRICULUM, BASED ON COMPETENCES**

No.	Based on your experience with the new curriculum and based on your information, how would you assess language programs? Do they sufficiently address the demands for the development of the competence of an effective communicator when it comes to students?	Give your assessment with a √ sign by choosing one of the options <i>(for each assessment/demand)</i>				
		I totally disagree	I disagree	I have dilemmas / I somehow agree	I agree	I totally agree
1	The programs are more advanced in comparison with the previous curriculum					
2	The programs are clearer and more understandable					
3	The programs are easier to implement					

4	The programs are substantially/very different in comparison with the previous curriculum					
5	The programs require a different teaching approach					
6	The programs consists of very high expectations					
7	The programs contain unreachable demands					
8	The programs are flexible					
9	The programs are creative to teachers and students					
10	The programs are stimulating for studying					
11	The programs are complicated and impractical					
12	The programs are hard to understand					
13	The programs are hard to implement					
14	The programs are extremely challenging					
15	grams consist of unreasonable workload					

### THE PRACTICE OF PROGRAMS' IMPLEMENTATION

No.	THE CHANGE OF APPROACH	Give your assessment with a √ sign by choosing one of the options regarding the scale of changes to the school level <i>(for each assessment/demand regarding the changes that have taken place for the implementation of the new curriculum)</i>					
	Have you made changes in order to address the demands of the new programs, regarding:	I believe the changes are unnecessary	The changes are necessary, but we decided to avoid them	We are considering changes	We have made small changes	We have made moderate changes	We have made crucial changes
1	Working methods of the professional teachers' group						
2	Approaches towards teachers' teaching about the new curriculum						
3	Methods of teaching planning - annual plans and other plans						
4	Extension of teaching program topics and their dispersion into teaching units						
5	Approach towards curriculum documents as for objectives and principles						
6	Integrated approach regarding planning and teaching						

7	Practice of class planning and reflection						
8	Pedagogical approach / using activities during teaching and learning						
9	Approach regarding the use of books and other learning sources						
10	Approach and instruments of students' assessment						
11	Approach towards the use of Information Technology						
12	The role of the students in the classroom						
13	Approach towards the use of time for implementation of the new curriculum						
14	Other (please specify):						

### TEACHING PRACTICES IN RELATION TO STUDENTS' COMPETENCES DEVELOPMENT

There are 10 given conclusions regarding teaching practices. You need to provide two answers or assessments per each conclusion. Firstly, you should give your opinion on your practice by choosing one of the four options regarding the question: *To what extent the aspects given below are evident during your practice?* and in the second question, you have to answer about the same conclusions, but by choosing one of the options regarding the question: *How difficult is it to implement this in practice?*

No.	To what extent the aspects given below are evident during your practice?	Your opinion regarding your practice				How difficult is it to implement this in practice?			
		It is not evident. I do not consider it as an important aspect of my practice	It is evident at times, but I do not feel like doing it always.	It is very evident. It is important to me to do this often.	It is very clear and evident. It is really important to me to do this continuously.	Very difficult	Difficult	Easy	Very easy
1	I modify the teaching practices in order to make the students practice various methods of communication and expression.								
2	I engage the students to express their thoughts adequately using language, symbols, signs, texts and other forms of expression.								

<b>3</b>	I support my students to use the tools and opportunities of communication and expression independently, critically and creatively.								
<b>4</b>	I support my students towards the development of capacities for approaching data and sources critically, creatively and interactively.								
<b>5</b>	Students are engaged and do practical things based on contextual knowledge and real life situations.								
<b>6</b>	I systematically collect data about students' progress and I analyze them to understand and support the students during the learning process.								
<b>7</b>	Students are encouraged to be open and to have self-confidence during communication.								
<b>8</b>	I rely on my colleagues' experience to be informed about possible changes in my teaching practice.								
<b>9</b>	I engage myself with students' learning needs and act in accordance with my responsibilities to support the maximal development of students' expression abilities.								
<b>10</b>	I use the work with projects in order to assess the students based on more than one competence.								

**THE OPPORTUNITIES FOR EFFECTIVE IMPLEMENTATION OF PROGRAMS AND THE  
NEED FOR CONTINUOUS SUPPORT**

1. Do the learning outcomes sufficiently address the demands about the development of the competence of an effective communicator to the students?

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2. Which are the main differences between the old curriculum and the new curriculum when it comes to learning outcomes as part of the communicative competence of students?

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3. What are the methodological challenges regarding the implementation of learning outcomes when it comes to reaching the competence of an effective communicator?

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4. What is the impact of the new curriculum in the development of the competence of an effective communicator and in the improvement of students' learning outcomes?

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5. If there is something that was not mentioned above in this questionnaire and you believe it is important to be part of English language programs and their implementation in practice, please specify it below:

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**Thank you for collaboration!**

## APPENDIX B

### Test for students

#### Part One

Directions: In this part of the test, you will see sentences with blanks. Choose the words that belong in the blanks. Then mark the letter of the correct answer.

**1. Choose the word that belongs in the blank.**

Those dishes are made of glass and will break very \_\_\_\_\_.

- a) easy    b) easier    c) easiest    **d) easily**    1p

**2. Choose the word that belongs in the blank.**

Our trip to the park was \_\_\_\_\_ because the weather was nice.    1p

- a) prepare    **b) pleasant**    c) handsome    d) intelligent

**3. Choose the word that belongs in the blank.**

Yesterday the weather was bright and \_\_\_\_\_.

- a) sun    b) sunned    **c) sunny**    d) sunning    1p

**4. Choose the word that belongs in the blank.**

Many animals go to sleep when the temperature \_\_\_\_\_ below zero degrees.

- a) falling    b) fallen    **c) falls**    d) fall    1p

**5. Choose the word that belongs in the blank.**

It is \_\_\_\_\_ to finish this work by tomorrow morning.

- a) dispossible    **b) impossible**    c) mispossible    d) impossible    1p

## Part Two

Directions: In this part of the test you will read some paragraphs and notes. The paragraph or notes are followed by some questions. Choose the correct answer for each question. Then mark the letter of the correct answer.

**Read the sentences below and answer the question that follows (question 6).**

**6. Choose the word that best begins sentence (2).**

(1) Some animals travel long distances to warmer climates before the winter.

(2) \_\_\_\_\_ animals spend the winter sleeping.

a) Another   b) Either   **c) Other**   d) Neither 1p

**Read the paragraph below and answer the question that follows (question 7).**

When I go to the beach, I love looking at the ocean. The light from the sun makes the water sparkle brightly. When the waves come up on the sand, I can smell the salt from the water. Sea shells of different sizes and colours sit on the sand. I can also see small fish swimming close to the shore. \_\_\_\_\_.

**7. Which sentence best ends the paragraph?**

a) The water is warm and lovely to swim in.

b) I would really like to see some birds today.

**c) There are many interesting things at the beach.** 1p

d) The water moves deeper onto the shore as the waves come in.

**Read the paragraph below and answer the questions that follow.**

(1) All around the world, people enjoy looking up at the night sky. (2) Studying the stars and planets is a very popular hobby. (3) \_\_\_\_\_, it has become more difficult to see the stars at night in recent years. (4) Some people say that humans cause "light pollution" with our brightly lit buildings, airports, and roadways. (5) An orange glow appears over most cities. (6) The orange glow hides the light from the stars. Nowadays, someone who wants to see the stars of the night sky must travel to an unpopulated place like a desert.

8. Which is the best way to begin sentence (3)?

- a) At once    b) In other words    **c) Unfortunately**    d) Immediately    1p

9. Which is the best way to join sentence (5) and sentence (6) together?

- a) An orange glow appears over most cities because it hides the light from the stars.  
**b) An orange glow appears over most cities, hiding the light from the stars.**    1p  
c) An orange glow appears hidden in the light of the stars over most cities.  
d) An orange glow appears, but it hides the light of most cities over the stars.

## READING

Read the text below and answer the questions that follow.

Dear Students,

Our school staff has decided to organize an event as a reward for your hard work and success. The program will include two days of both outdoor and indoor activities. It will be fun!

### Indoors Activities:

Explore shared interests with your friends!

- 1- Drama Center:** This center gives you the opportunity to design a play, including writing the scripts and dressing in the costumes! Then, you can present it to your friends.
- 2- Art Center:** Use paints, coloured pencils, markers, and paper to create your own picture and display it in the school art gallery.

### Outdoors Activities:

- 1- Nature walk:** Experience nature and learn how to take care of the environment. We will walk through the Mountain Forest and study the many animals and plants that live there.
- 2- Boating Trip:** We will take a boat ride and explore the lake near the city. Each student will get the opportunity to drive the boat!

It would be a good idea to take pictures with your friends and of the beautiful area. For more information, please call Mr. Michael Moore at 844222. We hope to see everyone there!

Best Wishes,  
Mr. Ben Johnson  
Activities Advisor



**10. Why was this program arranged for the students?**

- a) because the students have worked very hard** 1p
- b) because the students wanted to surprise their teachers
- c) because the students voted on different activities they could do
- d) because the students did better than students at other schools

**11. What does the school hope that students will learn from their nature walk?**

- a) how to live in the forest
- b) how to play in the water
- c) how to take pictures of the plants
- d) how to take care of the environment** 1p

**12. How are the activities organized in the program?**

- a) the program lists the most interesting activities first
- b) by whether the activity will be outdoors or indoors** 1p
- c) the program lists the most difficult activities first
- d) by order of the time the activity will take place

**Read the text below and answer the questions that follow.**

Ron's Ambulance Ride

The score was tied one to one in the last football game of the year when Ron saw the chance to score a goal. As he watched the ball slide into the goal, he slipped and fell. As he fell, Ron twisted his knee. After a moment, Ron sat up on the field, but he was in too much pain to stand.

Ron's coach, Mr. Jones, called an ambulance, and it arrived in just a few minutes. A worker wearing a blue uniform rushed out of the ambulance and sat down beside Ron.

"Hi, Ron. I'm Tony," said the worker. "I am here to help you feel better."

"Tony looked at Ron's knee. It was red and swollen. "I think you sprained your knee. You need to go to the hospital," he said.

Tony helped Ron into the ambulance and got in the back. As the ambulance started to move, Tony put a cold bag of ice on Ron's knee.

"This should make your knee feel better," said Tony.

Ron looked around the ambulance. It was filled with different equipment and medicines. He asked Tony how he knew what medicine and equipment to use. Tony explained that he took classes to learn how to take care of sick people.

Ron felt the ambulance slow down. They were at the hospital. Ron realised that he already felt better. His knee was not as red and swollen. Tony helped Ron inside. The doctor in the hospital examined Ron's knee.

"Well, Ron," said the doctor, "you have sprained your knee, but thanks to Tony, you'll be okay!"

**13. Based on the text, which of these is true?**

a) Ron's team lost the football game.

b) Ron is the best player on his team.

c) Ron's team is one of the best teams.

**d) Ron scored a goal during the football game.** 1p

**14. Based on the text Ron has injured his:**

a) neck

**b) knee**

1p

## GRAMMAR

**Choose the best answer for present simple tense:**

**15. He ..... to work by bus.**

a) go

**b) goes**

c) went

d) going

1p

16. We .....the puppy on bread and warm milk.

a) **feed**            b) feeds            c) is fed            d) has feeding            1p

17. The children always..... to be hungry.

a) **seem**    b) seems            c) will seem    d) have seem            1p

**Quantifiers- Countable and uncountable nouns**

**Underline the correct word:**

18. How many *eggs / butter / do* you need?            1p

19. We don't have much *biscuits / cheese* left.            1p

20. I'm hungry. I'd like a *sandwich /*