South East European University

Faculty of Languages, Cultures and Communications

Master thesis

Challenges of Online Teaching and Learning in Kosova during the Corona Pandemic

Mentor:

Prof. Dr. Agim Poshka

Candidate:

Arditë Demiri

Tetovë, Republika e Maqedonisë, 2020

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Table of Contents

Table of Figures

Acknowledgement

Firstly, I express my gratitude to God, for giving me the chance and potency to achieve the defense of this MA thesis. Also, special thanks to my family for their trust and their unstoppable support. Without their support, I may not have been able to remain committed to this Master thesis and see the day of its completion.

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With the help of the above people, today the efforts have been made worthwhile.

Abstract

The aim of this master's thesis is to provide further information about the challenges of online teaching and learning in Kosova during the corona pandemic. Quantitative experimental research was conducted with sixty Primary school pupils and ten English teachers as participants. The results indicated that the teachers and the pupils face a lot of challenges during the process of teaching and learning during the corona pandemic. While the pupils claim that they feel overloaded and lack the necessary utilizes such as a personal computer or a study room. On the other hand the teacher feel overwhelmed with the huge number of pupils that they have, the preparation of the lessons and above all the continuous administrative paper work that they had to do.

However, both parts agree that they have managed this entire process very well and that the pupils, teachers, parents and school stuff worked closely together. The government has as well provided with the necessary help and assistance for all the teachers and pupils in Kosova. This process might have a great of challenges and everybody has struggled in a different manner, yet it had also a lot of benefits in various aspects, such as the use of technology, management under different circumstances and others.

Key words: *challenge, online, teaching, learning, corona pandemic, English.*

Abstrakti

Qëllimi i kësaj teze masteri është të sigurojë informacione të mëtejshme rreth sfidave të mësimdhënies dhe mësimit online në Kosovë gjatë pandemisë korona. Hulumtimi u krye me gjashtëdhjetë nxënës të shkollës fillore dhe dhjetë mësues të gjuhës angleze. Rezultatet treguan se mësuesit dhe nxënësit u përballen me shumë sfida gjatë procesit të mësimdhënies dhe mësimnxëniës gjatë pandemisë korona. Perderisa nxënësit pohojnë se ndjehen të mbingarkuar dhe u mungojnë kushtet e nevojshme siç janë kompjuteri personal ose dhoma e studimit. Në anën tjetër mësimdhënësitë ndihen të mbingarkuar me numrin e madh të nxënësve që ata kanë, përgatitjen e mësimeve dhe mbi të gjitha punën e vazhdueshme administrative që duhej të bënin.

Sidoqoftë, të dyja palët pajtohen që ata e kanë menaxhuar shumë mirë këtë proces dhe se nxënësit, mësuesit, prindërit dhe shkollat kanë punuar ngushtë së bashku. Qeveria ka siguruar gjithashtu ndihmën e nevojshme për të gjithë mësimdhënësitë dhe nxënësit në Kosovë. Ky proces mund të ketë një sfidë e madhe dhe të gjithë janë përshtatur një mënyrë tjetër, megjithatë kjo fazë kishte gjithashtu shumë përfitime të ndryshme në aspekte të ndryshme, siç është përdorimi i teknologjisë, menaxhimi në rrethana të ndryshme dhe të tjera.

Fjalët kyçe: *sfidë, online, mësimdhënie, mësim, pandemia korona, anglisht.*

I. Introduction

The outbreak of the corona pandemics has affected every aspect of our lives. It has had a great impact on the economy, politics and the entire world security and health. In specific this entire process has also a huge and significant role on the system of educations. As schools were closed and pupils and teachers were forced to stay home and safe. However, despite the circumstances the process of learning and teaching had to continue.

Therefore, various methods and techniques were used and invented to make the distance learning and teaching an enjoyable and worthy process. The teachers and pupils in Kosova faced all these changes as well, moreover, they still are facing various challenges in the process of online teaching and learning during these days of Corona pandemics. While the government and in specific the Ministry of Education in Kosova has tried to do their best in offering all the teachers and pupils the best environment possible there are still challenges that they all have to overcome.

Teacher, pupils, parents and the school stuff is directly involved in this situation, while the different methods and platforms that pupils and teachers are applying in learning certain subjects, learning is conceived as an integral part of them. Therefore, this paper presents an overview of distance teaching and learning process and the obstacles that presented themselves during this process.

Online learning is a great method of entering study courses or attending school classes even though the learners and their teachers may be in dissimilar physical locations. Until recently reading and writing were traditionally considered as the main skills, in today's world online education is becoming more and more essential for the exchange of knowledge and the transfer of basic skills to learners. Nowadays the Internet offers countless and unimaginable services, and has become the main cause that teachers and learners to carry out distance learning through technological devices such as computers, laptops or phones.

Online learning involves a combination of traditional and modern teaching methods, the merging of technology and almost all the classroom used teaching strategies. However, the main focus and rather discussion here is whether the educational system and curriculum of Kosova is prepared to start this form of learning and teaching and in specific during this corona pandemic.

The purpose of this paper is to give detailed information on the distance learning and teaching process in Kosova. Moreover, through a case study it investigates the attitudes of teachers and learners the use of information technology in primary schools, its compliance with plans and new curricula, the suitability of their teachers choice of online teaching platforms, as well as the process of developing communication skills through them, highlighting here the shortcomings that teachers may encounter.

1.1. Research aims

Teachers and pupils in Kosova during these days of Corona pandemics are confronted with various challenges in the process of online teaching and learning. On the other hand the state is trying to offer programs, online platforms for preparing students, continuing education where they left. Teacher, pupils, parents and the school stuff is directly involved in this situation, while the different methods and platforms that pupils and teachers are applying in learning certain subjects, learning is conceived as an integral part of them. Taking into account everything we already know about the school system in Kosova and also the many factors that affect learning and teaching, we can conclude with these assumptions:

1. Firstly, teachers and pupils may lack knowledge regarding the usage of technology. Therefore, suitable trainings on technology usage are needed.

2. Secondly, teachers might face difficulties in preparing the adequate materials and have uncertainties regarding the evaluation process.

3. Finally, knowing the fact the teaching online is never the same as teaching in a classroom a lot of challenges might present themselves in this process.

These assumptions are rather hypothetically and based on the personal experience while teaching online during the Corona pandemics in Kosova for some months now. In fact, this topic is relatively new and no studies have been carried out so far, apart from some short research from different Professors form private Universities in Prishtina. Therefore, the research study will be another contribution in this field and will either refute or support the assumptions set.

1.2. Research hypothesis and questions

This thesis focuses on the challenges that teachers and pupils are facing in the process of online teaching and learning in Kosova during the Corona pandemics.

Research question 1: *What are the main challenges that the teachers and pupils are facing in the process of teaching and learning online during the Corona pandemics?*

Research question 2: *What are the main teaching methods used and how will the pupils be evaluated for their performance?*

Research question 3: *Are teachers being trained on how to teach, evaluate and assign homework online?*

Research question 4: *What has the state in general and the Ministry of Education of Kosova in specific done in regards to online teaching so far?*

Main hypothesis: Online teaching and learning during the Corona pandemics is challenging for teachers and pupils.

Auxiliary hypothesis 1: Both the teachers and pupils are struggling with the online lessons.

Auxiliary hypothesis 2: The majority of pupils are coping very well with online-learning while those lacking on technological devices or knowledge still face difficulties.

Auxiliary hypothesis 3: The teachers lack regarding the adequate trainings on online teaching, especially evaluating.

Auxiliary hypothesis 4: Teachers and pupils are overloaded with teaching/learning, homework/administrative reports and others.

Auxiliary hypothesis 5: The state has acted rather fast and adequately in regards to the situation.

1.3. Research design and methodology

In order to carry out this study, and to analyze the collected data, as objectively and accurately as possible, both quantitative and qualitative research approaches are applied. Participants in this research are going to be pupils and teachers involved in the learning/teaching process of English language.

The sample of the participants is purposively chosen because of the participants' awareness of the issue and the direct involvement of the participants in the process. The sample consists of 2 subsamples for the case study sixty pupils of an Elementary School in Prishtina and also ten English language teachers of the same school.

The methods that were most suitable and useful to conduct this study are the descriptive-analytical, and comparative method; while the techniques used are the survey, interview, content analyses and case study. The survey examines the opinions and the attitudes of students and teachers regarding the process of online learning and teaching during

the corona pandemic. The technique of the interview examines the opinions, the attitudes, and the personal experience of teachers regarding this issue.

Survey will be used to examine the opinions and the attitudes of the pupils regarding their difficulties in online learning during the Corona pandemics. Interview will be used to examine the opinions, the attitudes, the personal experience and the challenges of the English teachers while being involved in the process of online teaching during the Corona pandemics.

The Survey Sheet will provide firstly some main data regarding the pupils and then questions related to the process of online learning during this current situation of the Corona pandemics. The survey will include a variety of questions, open, closed and combined questions that will relate to their opinion and attitudes regarding online learning.

The Interview Protocol will provide data from the teachers on their experience with online teaching. As everything will be online, the interview will be online too, the teachers will either be contacted via Zoom or other similar online platforms. The interview will be primarily focus on the teachers' struggles on online teaching, their experiences so far in general. Finally, the data gathered by the survey and the interview is analyzed qualitatively, in several phases, introduction of data, details of the data with percentages, tables, charts and graphs.

1.4. The outline of the thesis

This Master thesis follows a structured scheme: the **Introduction** chapter of the Master thesis will focus on general information of the educational situation currently in Kosova during the Corona Pandemics. It will be an overview of what the readers will expect in this thesis.

In the second chapter, **Literature Review**, more specific information will be provided related to online learning in general. Being aware that the topic chosen for this master thesis is relatively new and not many researches have been done related to it, other relevant researches will be consulted. Moreover, this chapter will provide information related to the terminology of online teaching and learning, the different ways of online teaching and learning and other details related to online teaching and learning in general.

In the **Research Methodology** detailed explanations are given related to the study conducted with the pupils and teachers. The survey includes about sixty pupils and approximately ten English teachers related to the topic. The pupils are given questionnaires, while the teachers are interviewed. The **Presentation of Data Analysis** presents graphically the results of the study conducted with the pupils and the interviews of the teachers.

The **Discussions** sections focuses mostly on the outcomes and the results related to the research questions set at the beginning of the research. In the **conclusion**, I aim to focus on the struggles that both the teachers and the pupils are facing in this current situation and possibility the things that they do to overcome their difficulties and make the best out of the process.

II. Literature Review

Due to the situation we all find ourselves in these weeks this topic was necessary to be studied and researched. First of all, being personally involved in the online teaching process during this corona pandemic time enabled me to create my own perspective and point of view related to online teaching. Taking into account that this situation in the educational system of Kosova is rather fresh, the state of Kosova in general and the Ministry of Education have tried to create a temporary solution for the teachers and pupils during this time.

However, teaching and learning online has its difficulties and limitations which then directly affect the quality of teaching and learning. Nevertheless, "only in the year 2016 MEST had a budget of 35,545,415 €" a great amount of money that can be used now more than never (Morina & Farnsworth, 2017, p. 14).

Furthermore, the attempt of the Department of Education in Prishtina (DEP) to quickly start online trainings for the teachers and the great effort put into their online platform (among others E-shkollori) have all affected the already overloaded teachers. However, "Teacher Professional Development is a specific component of Teacher Licensing System. According to this system, all TPD program providers should have their programs accredited by MEST, so that they are recognized in the licensing system. Activities of professional development developed at school level, based on their needs, are the only exception; they are approved and recognized by school within the percentage defined for school-based TPD" (*Teacher Professional Development in Kosovo* (2019) Kosovo Education and Employment Network, 2019, p. 41).

Then, the research shows what the present situation in a chosen school in Prishtina is regarding the online learning progress and the teachers' approach towards this situation. Finally, this paper will try to interpret the teachers and pupils' main struggles in this process while including the proved opinions.

In this study I elaborate on the most relevant issues to the topic, yet other details will be left open for further studies or researches. I hope that this study and its findings will have a significant role in the understanding of the online teaching and learning during the Corona pandemics in Kosova.

2.1. Online learning

Online or distance learning has its origin in the mid-nineteenth century in Europe and the United States. The creators and first implementers of distance learning used the best technology of the time their own postal system to create opportunities for people who wanted to learn but lacked the conditions to attend vocational schools.

Online learning is a form of education, which is realized through modern technologies communication, in order to teach students. Online learning programs enable participants and teachers to interact with each other through tools computer, internet, artificial satellites, telephones, radios, televisions and technologies others (Bakia M. et al., 2012.

Many countries in the world have used different forms of distance learning in the system their education. Kosovo as well has created a plan of operation including the academic years 2018 until 2020, and despite the fact that no one even foresaw a situation like this happening the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MEST) included online learning in their plan of strategy.

"School Me" and other online learning platforms. MED (Municipal Education Department) organizes a process for assessment and identification of the best online and offline learning platforms. MED decides to pilot more than one such platform to obtain best information on their effectiveness in the process of teaching and learning. Based on the pilot results, MED decides to roll out application of the best platform to 10 schools. Before using any platform the students and parents are informed and teaching staff in schools is trained for its best utilization. Depending

on results of the use of various platforms in the ten schools, they are rolled out to all schools in the municipality also in cooperation with partners, donors, parents, MEST and others. (Education Development Plan of the Municipality of Pristina 2018-2022, 2017, p. 20).

The teaching method has proved valuable, especially in developed countries as well as indicators of importance and distance learning values is also the awarding of master's and doctor from universities where such a program is implemented. Moreover, the great technical development and wide spread of the two basic fields of electronics, radio and television, in the years 1920-1940 mark two important events in the life of mankind, and teachers used these new technologies to distribute educational programs millions of interested parties, increasing the opportunities for distance learning despite the obstacles of traditional school institutions. Online learning uses a combination of different communication technologies for adults the skills of teachers and students to communicate with each other.

Generally, according to Jethro, O et al. (2012) online learning has become popular because of its possible for providing more flexible access to content and instruction at any time, to content and instruction at any time:

a) Increasing the availability of learning experiences for learners who cannot or choose not to attend traditional face-to-face offerings;

b) Assembling and disseminating instructional content more cost-efficiently;

c) Enabling instructors to handle more students while maintaining learning outcome quality that is equivalent to that of comparable face-to-face instruction (Jethro, O et al., 2012, p. 205).

Online education is expanding at a faster pace, thus limiting national boundaries and regional. With the advent and spread of information and communication technology, distance education has entered a path of cooperation, networking and globalization. The quality and accreditation

of distance learning programs and experiences have become enormous significant in the information and communication technology enabled education system.

Moreover, online education is defined as education based on formal institutions where the learning group is segregated and where the interactive telecommunication system is used to connect students, resources and instructors.

The main definitions of distance learning are:

First is the concept that distance education is institutionalized. This is what distinguishes distance education from the study itself.

The **second** competent definition of distance education is the concept of separation teachers and students, most often the division is thought of in geographical terms, where teachers are in one location and students in another. Yet, "in some definitions e-Learning encompasses more than just the offering of wholly on-line courses" (Arkorful and Abaidoo, 2014, p. 399).

Interactive telecommunications is the **third** component of distance education definition. Interaction can be synchronous or asynchronous at the same time or in periods of different.

Furthermore, online education opportunities are growing rapidly through the use of communications computer-mediated, tens of thousands of networks are connected to millions of people that use the Internet all over the world, while distance education means that instruction is provided and the student approaches it at specific times, or at any time that is convenient to him.

2.1. Benefits of online learning and teaching

The corona pandemic has affected all countries worldwide and also it resulted in the closure of schools and universities. Therefore, education has changed intensely over the last two months and more, with a significant increase of online learning, whereby teaching is performed remotely and on various online and digital platforms.

Moreover, according to Kisanjara and Tossy (2017) "this form of learning currently depends on networks and computers but will likely evolve into systems consisting of a variety of channels and technologies as they are developed and adopted (Kisanjara S. and Tossy T., 2017, p. 110).

During this time, a great number of learners are attached to their computers and smartphone screens as teachers and learners both enter a new world of virtual lectures, tutorials, and assessments. Although online learning poses a challenge to both learners and teachers over technology and access, it is keeping everyone busy with lectures, worksheets, assignments and reports.

Nonetheless, even before the corona outbreak, online learning and teaching was growing at an extraordinary speed. Yet, it will be fascinating to experience if these changes that the corona pandemic has caused in the education system will last forever.

The process of learning and teaching online has been used even in the past, through various combinations as will be mentioned below according to Galy, E. et al. (2011):

• **Traditional** – Course without online technology used; therefore, 0% of content is delivered online,

• **Web Facilitated** – Courses that use web-based technology to facilitate what is essentially a face-to-face course and may use a Learning Management System or web pages to post syllabus and assignments. Less than 30% of the content is delivered online,

• **Blended/Hybrid** – Substantial proportion of content is delivered online, typically uses online discussions and has a reduced number of face-to-face meetings. 30-79% of the content is delivered online,

• **Online** – More than 80% of the content is delivered online. Typically there are no face-to-face meetings (Galy, E. et al., 2011, p. 210).

In this section some of the benefits of online learning are explored. One of the main benefits is that online learning competency-based learning helps learners to accomplish handy skills and abilities (Arkorful and Abaidoo, 2014).

In this form teaching is focused only on the learners and not any other outer factors. Moreover, the most important issue here is the each learner has already developed a unique learning style and as such some learners even hesitate in working together with the teacher because of rivalry or dominant pupils in the class.

Therefore, online classes have the advantages of offering flexibility and the skill to motivate the learning of proficiency. So, the main emphasis is on skills, knowledge, and/or behavior, knotted with intentional aims.

Additional, online learning helps in creating high profile learning pathways for the future primarily because skill progress and improvement is vital to career development in competitive periods we live in. A lot of online education platforms have made it stress-free and easier for learners to improve new skills. The process of familiarizing to an online learning atmosphere will make learners familiar with the forthcoming of labor and essential proficiencies.

Another important benefit of online classes is that both learners and teachers do not need to travel long distances for classes, they can attend their classes anywhere and anytime.

Tracking the progress of the learners is a great profit of this process of online learning, the performance and learning ability is easy track able in online classes. Many of the platforms used by the teachers provide detailed reports about every learner's performance and progress. In this form online learning helps the teachers to create online classes in accordance to the learning patterns of the learners.

The materials in online classes are visually inspiring, brief and collaborative joint with structures like surveys, associations, quizzes, etc. so these can increase the learners' engagement. It is also known that the classes with interactive program contented are simply available on any scheme and give control to learners over how they engage and absorb the material (Arkorful and Abaidoo, 2014).

Online learning can expand access to education and training for both the population and general as well as for businesses, as its flexible planning structure reduces effects of many time constraints imposed by personal responsibilities and commitments.

Communication nowadays online allows students to connect with schools and programs accredited around the world who are out of the opportunity to learn personally. Having this

opportunity to be involved in global institutions through distance education, a diverse set of thoughts is presented to students through communication with their peers in class. It also enables people to extend their education time by a limited number school years, thus enabling lifelong learning.

Also, online learning changes the relationship between power and authority, between professors and students.

Therefore, to generally conclude this section the advantages of online learning are:

o The best visualization of the teaching content can be done through multimedia;

o Better communication between teachers and students;

o Automated testing, easier administration and more can be done through fast computers.

There is equality and open communication between students and professors, which is not the case traditional education and what is very important students increase their chances for known different cultures and educational experiences.

According to Bakia et. al. (2014) the following debate and samples demonstrate five ways that online learning could upturn educational efficiency by refining learning opportunities:

1) Broadening access to resources and experiences;

2) Engaging students in active learning;

3) Individualizing and differentiating instruction;

4) Personalizing learning; and

5) Maximizing teacher and student time (Bakia et. al. 2014, p. 19).

Online learning can also provide a final opportunity for teens who are no longer allowed in the general education population due to behavioral disorders. Instead of these students not having

other academic opportunities, they can continue educate them from their homes and earn their degree, offering them a chance another to be an integral part of society.

2.2. Limitations of online learning and teaching

We already know that teaching in a classrooms is probably the best possible form of teaching as the process of explaining concepts, answering questions, and defending positions are excellent for learning and thinking critically and many other benefits, however, there are some disadvantages regarding teaching and learning online as well. These limitations of online learning and teaching are discussed in this separate section.

First of all, basically online learning requires technological devices and internet connection, regarding the technological devices based on the plan of the MEST of Kosovo, school in general are fully equipped with technological tools. Based on the Education Development Plan of the Municipality of Pristina 2018-2022, they outcomes were that:

➢ Schools are supplied with ICT equipment;

➢ Schools are supplied with and apply educational technology and online/digital resources;

All schools, including vocational schools, are supplied with workshops / laboratories and expendable materials for practical work;

➢ All schools are supplied with laboratories/workshops and with expendable materials;

➢ Capacity is developed for use and maintenance of educational technology;

A significant funds have been secured by donors, businesses, and community and more budget is available for educational technology and ICT in schools (Education Development Plan of the Municipality of Pristina 2018-2022, 2017, p. 20).

Furthermore, it is true that online learning is convenient and also very flexible but at the same time it is a 'solo' act. As mentioned previously each learner has their own learning style and therefore it might be difficult for all of the learners to feel comfortable when participating in an online class discussion and arguing about specific topics.

Moreover, feedback cannot be given properly though and online class as time is always limited. Some topics can be discussed better and thoroughly when in a classroom environment while also a lot of questions might be neglected due to the high demand of questions and time limit.

The traditional form of teaching in a classroom is a form of art that requires also a connection with the learners, while online classes do not enable this concept and are rather impersonal. As Bicaj (2013) states "the need for changes found the education system in Kosovo (as a country in transition) in need of radical reform to enable it to reach accepted international standards" (Bicaj, 2013, p. 200). Despite the commitment of the teachers, nonetheless, there will be never the relationship that is created in the classroom between the teachers and the learners. Learning online chiefly depends on the proper maneuver of tools and a high-speed internet connection, so, practically without these, effective lessons are impossible.

Also, teachers need to understand the online platform that they intend to use first and make sure they can operate with it.

Another very important fact to address here is also the amount of time one spends in front of their laptop or computer screens when they attend online classes. So, being constantly online can be the cause of poor vision, strain injuries, and other physical harms.

"Today's modern classroom, whether online or campus-based, uses e-learning tools and Learning Management Systems that capture student cognition and engages them in the learning process via technology, while increasing their need for self-

directedness. In view of this, the present study also considers the students' ability
to work independently" (Galy, E. et al., 2011, p. 210).

Therefore, the teachers have to be very attentive in these cases and along with the details of their online class they should send the learners any form of guidelines about right sitting posture, desk height, etc. as these might be very useful to the learners' health.
While in traditional learning has the benefit of tracking the learners' progress the online learning process lacks in this aspect and as such the issue of self-discipline is a disadvantage of this form of learning. Those learners who lack self-discipline are most likely those who will fail to motivate themselves for self-study.

Finally, regardless the fact of how well an online lesson is planned and how detailed and perfect the materials are prepared for the learners, there is no guarantee that they will go through them effectively. So, there is always this chance and possible risk that the learners just go through the material without paying attention to them.
Creating effective online learning classes requires a lot of skills: knowledge, time, experience, talent, commitment, great communication skills, and a true passion for learning.

III. Research Methodology

3.1. Aims and objectives of the study

This paper aims at finding more details on the process of online learning and reaching during the corona pandemic, and the teachers and the students' opinions and attitudes regarding it. Taking into account the previous studies and researches done in the past regarding the issue of online teaching and learning in general it is expected that the group of pupils chosen for the study part will react in the same manner as the previously researches claimed. Moreover, the learners just as well as teachers can all agree that learning online can be very useful method in times like this.

This research attempts on finding the challenges that teachers and pupils face and obstacles they have to overcome while learning and teaching online during this worldwide corona pandemic. Concerning the data gathered and analyzed from the students' questionnaire this study aims to show the significant effects of the process.

As a result, the English language teachers need to develop an awareness of alternative online teaching methods and strategies. And also they have to remind the learners on the mindful need to develop an independent and structured approach to language learning.

This chapter offers specific information on the research participants and the research instruments and methods. The main methodology used to convey this study is both the quantitative and qualitative research approaches, as through them I aim to gather and analyze the data and present them justly and accurately.

The participants in this research are going to be the teachers and pupils of a primary school in Prishtina. This group of teachers and pupils has been chosen merely because they are directly involved in the process.

Details of the method and the motivation of its use in the study are also debated. The chapter includes the following points: research participants and research instruments and methods.

3.2. Research participants

The participants of this survey are both teachers and pupils, as the aim here is to know, understand and analyze the perspectives and attitudes of the teachers and the pupils. Therefore the survey is divided into two separate sub-survey, initially the survey with the pupil-participants was conducted.

This survey includes 60 pupils, these pupils were chosen randomly from two classes of a primary school of Prishtina; moroever, the gender of the participants is relevant to the study.

The class includes 32 six-graders and the second one 28 nine-graders, there is no specific criteria of this selection, they were chosen primarily because the sixth grade belongs to the third curriculum level. Regarding to this, "the education strategy 2017- 2021 focuses on the implementation of new curricula, textbooks and ICT implementation in education. Numerous alternatives have been analyzed for all of these areas (Aliu, 2019, p. 25).

While on the other hand the ninth grade belongs to the last curriculum level of the Primary school education according to the regulations of the Ministry of Education in Kosova. Therefore, they would present a rather more dynamic difference and also a better understanding of the learning process among the learners.
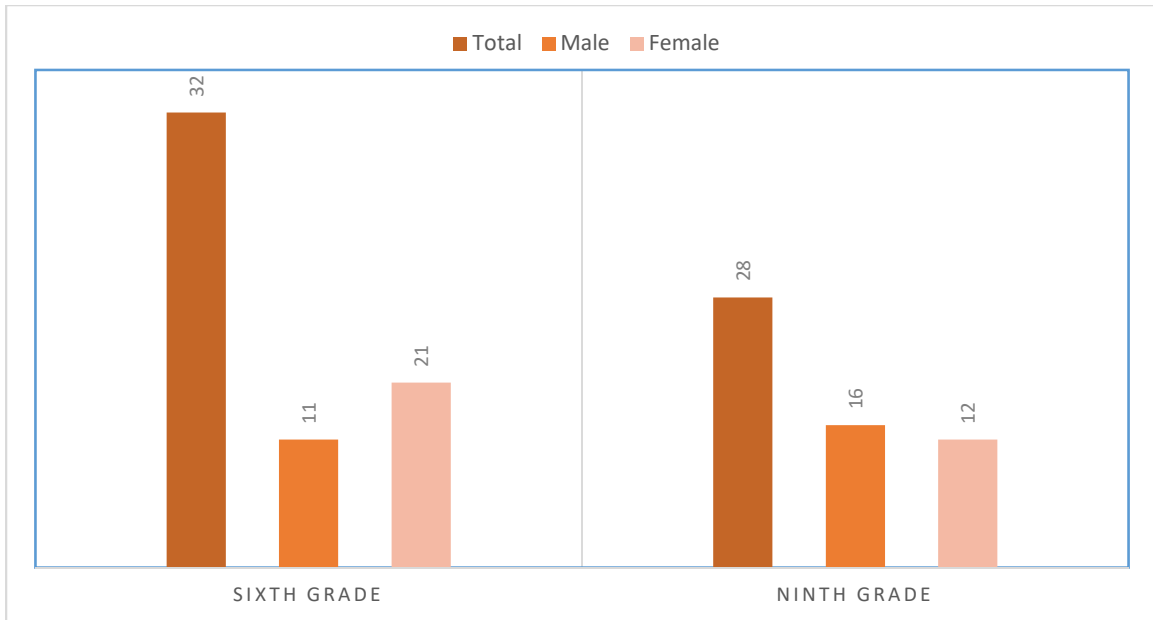
Figure 1. Demographic information of the pupils.

Additionally, the participants of the survey are ten teachers of the same primary school, the teachers chosen were directly involved in the teaching process during the corona pandemics.

Figure 2. Demographics on the teacher-participants.

Similar to the pupil-participants here as well the gender of the teacher-participants was irrelevant to the study. Therefore those teachers available were approached to participate in the survey through an interview and the several questions prepared for them (for further

details see appendix B). So, a number of total ten teachers were part of the survey, four male teachers and six female teachers.
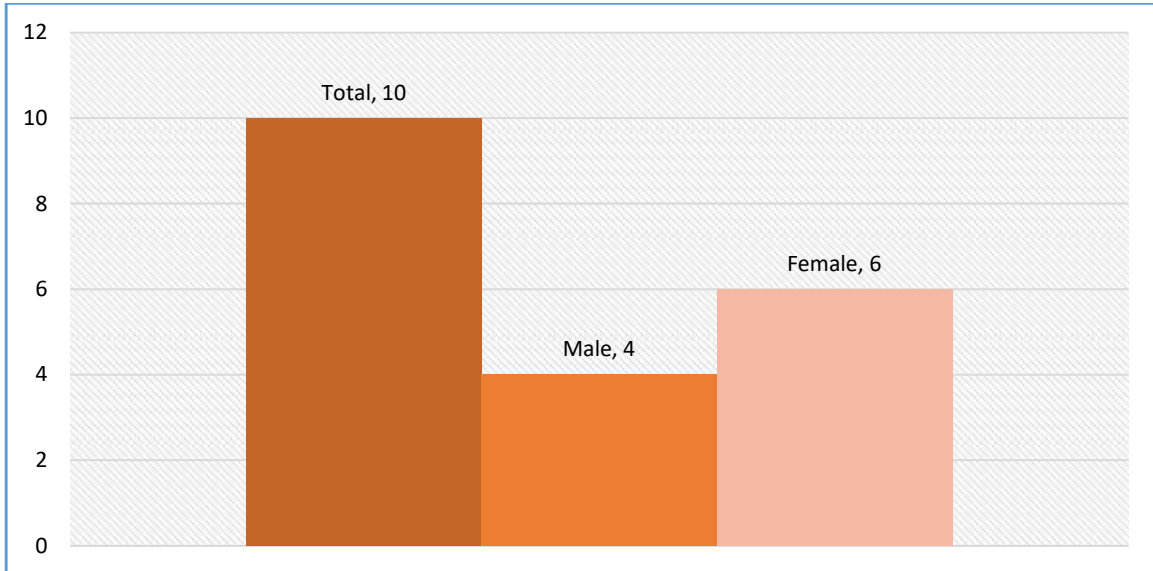
The pupils and the teachers were a huge and very important help for this paper, as their honest opinions, attitudes and points of view gave a great contribution to the study of the challenges in teaching and learning through the corona pandemic.

3.3. Research questions

The main research question on this study are:

Research question 1: *What are the main challenges that the teachers and pupils are facing in the process of teaching and learning online during the Corona pandemics?*

Research question 2: *What are the main teaching methods used and how will the pupils be evaluated for their performance?*

Research question 3: *Are teachers being trained on how to teach, evaluate and assign homework online?*

Research question 4: *What has the state in general and the Ministry of Education of Kosova in specific done in regards to online teaching so far?*

These will then in the conclusion section be addresses once more and discusses in correlation with the study's results.

3.4. Research instruments and methods

The main methods used in this research are the descriptive, analytical, explicative, and comparative method. The survey examines the opinions and the attitudes of the pupils regarding their difficulties in online learning during the Corona pandemics.

The part of the interview with the teacher examines the opinions, the attitudes, the personal experience and the challenges of the English teachers while being involved in the process of online teaching during the Corona pandemics.

Mainly, the data collection instrument used in the study was questionnaires, the questionnaires were used as they stimulate reliable data and save time and they have the ability to reach a number of respondents. However, quantitative method which describes occurrences in numbers and measures instead of words was applied to analyze the data.

Moreover, interviews were also used as a follow up to obtain information from primary school English teachers. Brief, open interviews were conducted with a small sample of 10 primary school teachers.

Moreover, the survey sheet provides firstly some main data regarding the pupils and then questions related to the process of online learning during this current situation of the Corona pandemics. The survey will include a variety of questions, open, closed and combined questions that will relate to their opinion and attitudes regarding online learning.

Furthermore, the interview protocol offers data from the teachers on their experience with online teaching. As everything is online, the interview is online too, the teachers are contacted via Zoom or other similar online platforms. The interview primarily focuses on the teachers' struggles on online teaching, their experiences so far in general.

Finally, the data gathered by the survey and the interview will be analyzed qualitatively, in several phases: introduction of data, details of the data with percentages, tables, charts and graphs.

IV. Presentation of Data Analysis

In the process of learning a language fluency and accurateness are crucial for the students. Hence, a teacher should teach the learners by using a method that can be used to reach this objective. These skills are essential by the learners and as such these cannot be separated from each other, since one method completes another.

Accordingly, it is very important that teachers use teaching methods that can complete both communicative and grammar skills. However, everything becomes more complicated when the teaching process is done online while at the same time facing a worldwide pandemic, in this case the corona virus.

During this time a lot of educational institutions, school, universities and colleges, among others, had to close their doors in order to keep their students safe. However, the process of learning and teaching did not end here. Teachers turned they attention towards technology and

tried to make the best use of it. Nonetheless, challenges were part of this entire process, while some of the obstacles could be overcome easily while others were a barrier through the whole online teaching and learning process.

Therefore, this master thesis apart from the theoretic framework also delivers exact and significant evidence on the challenges of online teaching and learning during the corona pandemics. The aim of this study is to examine the challenges that the teachers and pupils are facing during the Corona pandemics.

Therefore, this chapter presents the data analysis of the study conducted with the pupils and the teachers of a primary school of Prishtina regarding the challenges of teaching and learning during the corona pandemic. The study is conducted with a group of sixty primary school students and ten English language.

4.1. Presentation and analyzes of the questionnaires

The sixty pupil-participants responded to a number of questions prepared in the form of a survey questionnaire. The survey included two parts, the first one aiming to ask the pupils rather demographic and background questions, while the second which is the main part focuses in specific about the process of distance or online learning, the pupils' challenges, opinions and attitudes. The questions were of different forms, varying from open-ended questions, closed questions, multiply choice or statement-form of questions.

The pupils were very helpful and responded to all the given questions as asked, although some of them neglected parts of questions which asked the pupils to give further details. As previously mentioned the participants of this survey were chosen randomly, two classes are part of this study. One six grade and the other one is a nine grade, the main reason why these two were chosen is simply they belong to two totally different levels of curriculum

and also because the pupils' level of English proficiency is higher than possibly the lower classes.

Once the learning and teaching process was interrupted the Ministry of Education reacted quickly by creating some online lessons which were transmitted on the national television of Kosova, respectively on Rtk 4. These lesson were known under the name 'E-mesimi' (i.e. E-lessons) and included lessons from the first to the ninth grade initially, later they added also lessons for the kindergarten pupils. These lessons included only the main subjects such as Albanian language, Mathematics, Biology, History, Geography, Cultural Education and Human and Nature.

As a consequence other subjects were prepared and taught by teachers through different forms. English language teachers, for instance, had to teach once a week through a platform or form of their choice. Therefore, initially the pupils were asked about the frequency of their English classes during the online learning. As also mentioned the pupils all, sixty, claimed that they had once or twice English classes; this then is confirmed by the teachers during the interview.
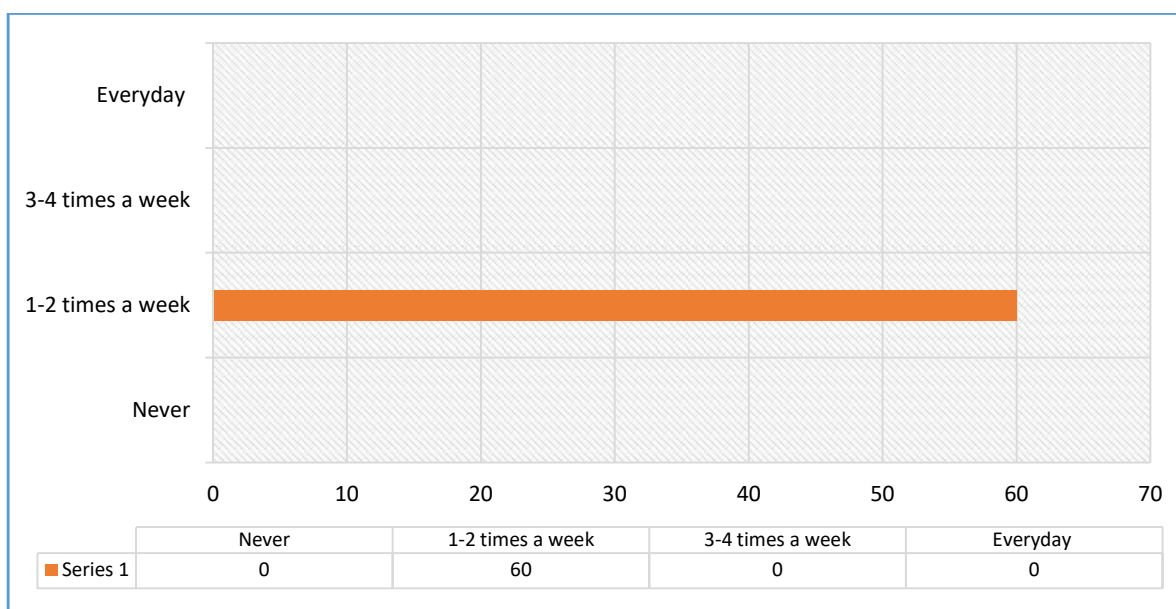

	Never	1-2 times a week	3-4 times a week	Everyday
Series 1	0	60	0	0

Figure 3. Frequency of English language classes.

Apart from their English language lessons the pupils were also engaged in almost every subject that is taught at school, i.e. mathematics, Albanian language, English language, German language, Geography, History, Biology, Art, Sports and others. They were then asked about the amount of time that they spent on completing the assignments given by their teachers.

Among the pupils 22 said that they finished all their tasks within one or two hours, 21 pupils said that they spend about three to four hours on the assignments given. Then, a smaller group of twelve pupils said that they spend about four to five hours per day working on the assignments,

Finally five out of the 60 pupil-participants said that they needed more than everyone else, claiming they spend more than five hours of a day on the assignments given by the teachers.

	1-2 hours	3-4 hours	4-5 hours	More than 5 hours
Series 1	22	21	12	5
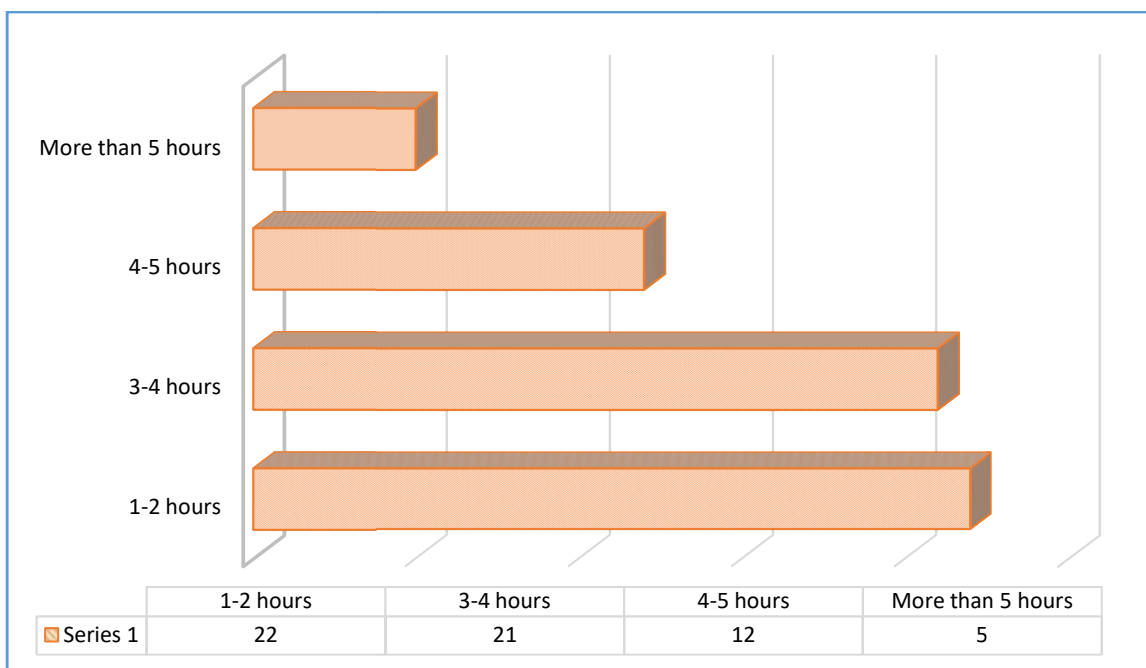
Figure 4. The amount of time spent on the assignments given.

As shown from the results in general the pupils spend a lot of time working on the assignments given to them, adding here the amount of time they spend on attending the lessons on Rtk 4 and other platforms in different subjects.

Furthermore, the survey focused in specific on the process of online teaching in specific as the pupils were asked to read the following statement "My school was prepared to begin online/virtual teaching before the pandemic" and write down if they consider it to be true or

false. The majority of the pupils, 39 pupils in total said that this statement is false while 17 claimed that it is true.

From the pupil-participants four of them stated that they neither agree nor disagree with this statement, they chose the option 'others (specify)' and claimed:

1) 'this is 50/50 true';

2) 'this is partly true';

3) 'in some subjects we were ready in some not'; and

4) 'I really don't know what to say about this'.

In similar circumstances was asked about the pupils' opinion on the second statement, here it claimed that "I personally felt prepared to begin online/virtual teaching before the pandemic".
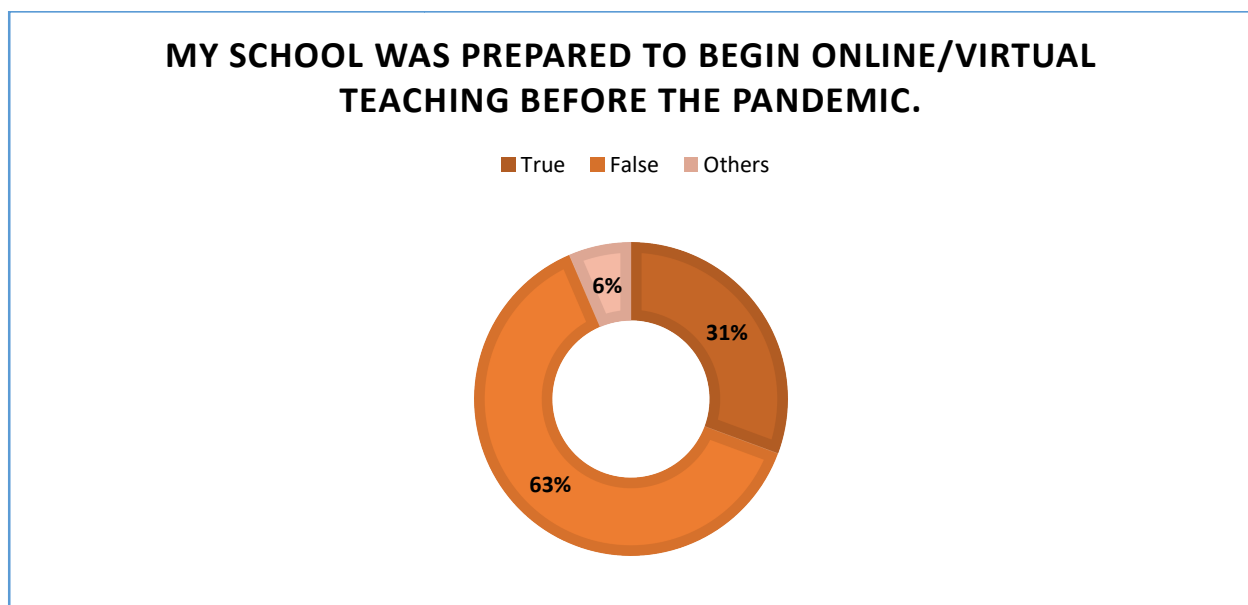

Figure 5.The pupils responses on statement 1.

Surprisingly the pupils gave similar responses to the previous statement, while the number of pupils who used the option 'others (specify)' was greater and the reasons stated were also diverse.
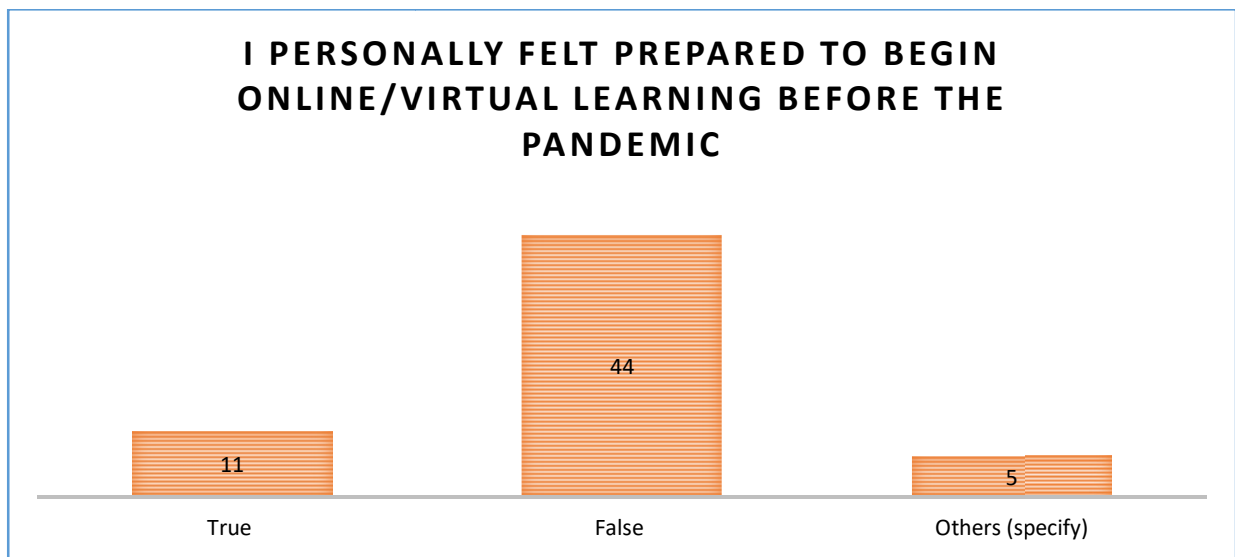
I PERSONALLY FELT PREPARED TO BEGIN ONLINE/VIRTUAL LEARNING BEFORE THE PANDEMIC

| True | False | Others (specify) |
| 11 | 44 | 5 |

Figure 6. The pupils' responses on statement 2.

As shown in the graphics above 44 pupils consider this statement as false indicating that they were not ready to begin online/virtual learning before the pandemic. 11 of the pupils claimed that they personally felt ready as they said that this statement is true.

On the other hand five (5) pupils mentioned other reasons, most of the learners said they could not prepare themselves as this is the first time that they have experienced something like this and that they lack some important tools such as a laptop to have been prepared beforehand.

The pupils were then asked about their learning experience during the pandemics and the details regarding it. 24 pupils considered this learning experience as an enjoyable process while the rest, 36 pupils, do not share the same opinion as they do not consider it enjoyable.

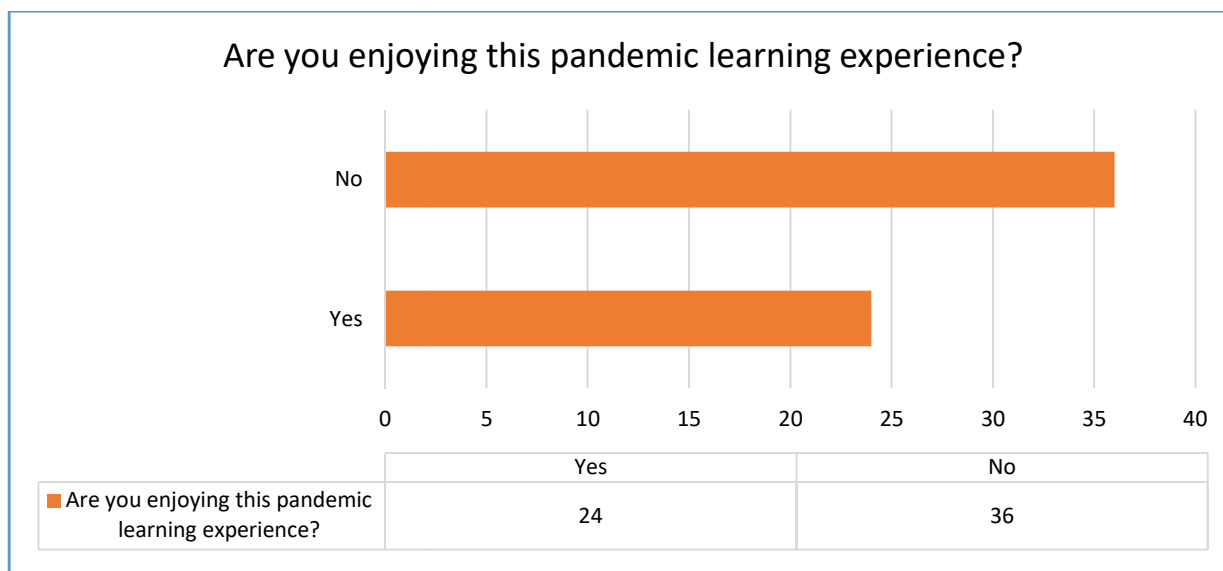*Figure 7. The pupils' learning experience during the pandemics.*

Apart from answering the question about their experience of learning during the Corona pandemics the pupils were asked as well to write the reasons behind their choice. This has, however, not been done by all the pupils, yet some of the reasons mentioned will be presented below.
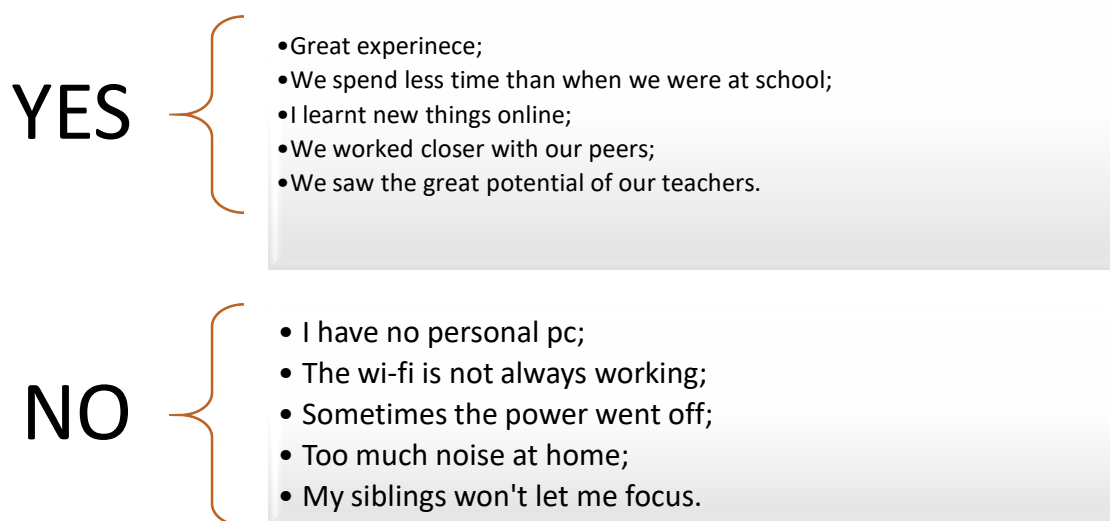

Figure 8. Some of the reasons why/why not the learning is enjoyable.

Over the course of this experience the teachers have used different method and techniques, teachers had to be very careful, selective, and creative because as mentioned English language was not included in the E-lessons from the Ministry of Education.

The pupils were asked about the different technique that their English teachers used in teaching during this corona pandemics. The pupils were offered some options to choose from, yet they also included some other interesting techniques and tasks used by their teachers.

Techniques and methods used	Students' book/Work book
	Projects on various topics
	Virtual classes and discussions
	Group work assignments
	Totally different tasks from school
	Others (specify)

Figure 9. The methods and technique used by the teachers.

In the option 'others (specify)' the pupils wrote a list of other tasks and assignments such as writing essays, making video or voice tasks, observing people, or keeping a diary for a week, among others.

The pupils were also asked about their confidence during the entire process, in this questions the pupils' responses were rather similar, because 26 pupils claimed they are becoming more confident as virtual learners, while the rest of 34 pupils said they are not becoming more confident in the process of being virtual learners.

The pupils were as well asked to write down their opinions and attitudes on other issues regarding learning during the Corona pandemic. It is true that this process has its benefits but also a lot of challenges. Therefore, in the next questions the pupils were asked about the most difficult part of pandemic learning. The pupils here were rather concise in their answers and simply wrote only bullet points, as will be presented below.
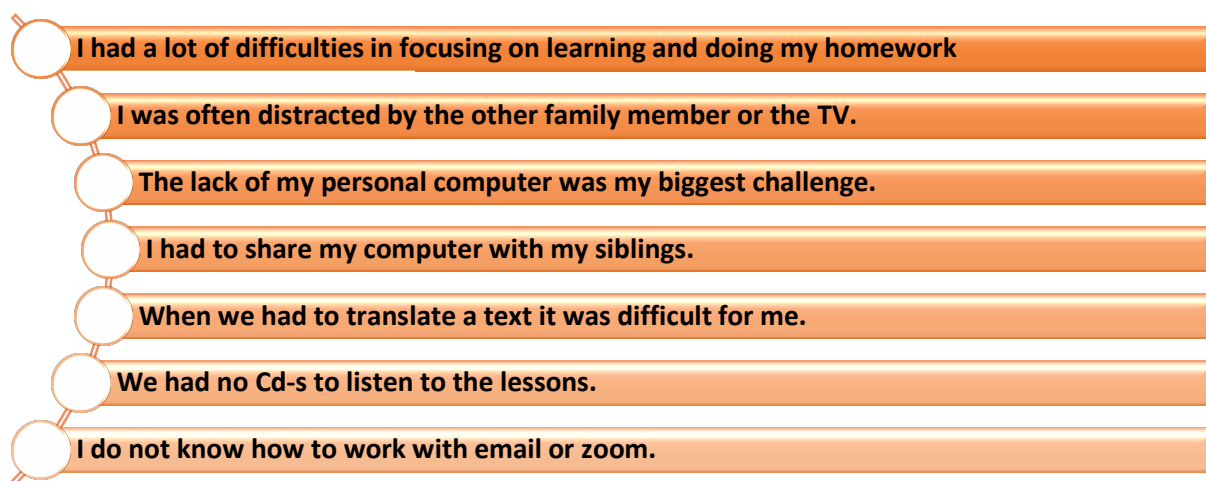
Figure 10. Some of the difficulties of the pupils.

- I had a lot of difficulties in focusing on learning and doing my homework
- I was often distracted by the other family member or the TV.
- The lack of my personal computer was my biggest challenge.
- I had to share my computer with my siblings.
- When we had to translate a text it was difficult for me.
- We had no Cd-s to listen to the lessons.
- I do not know how to work with email or zoom.

The pupils mentioned in general these reasons, number one was their lack of knowledge of the technological devices and applications, such as emails or the zoom application. One of the pupils claimed that a teacher helped her an email account. Others lacked a personal laptop or computer as they admitted that they had to share one among their sibling.

Moreover, the pupils had also difficulties in translation certain texts or the listening parts in their students' books because they had no cd-s at home. The pupils had also troubles focusing and being distracted by other family member or the TV as a lack of a personal or separate study room.

On the other hand the pupils were also asked about the rewards and benefits of the online learning during the pandemic. Again, the pupils' answers were rather similar, as presented.
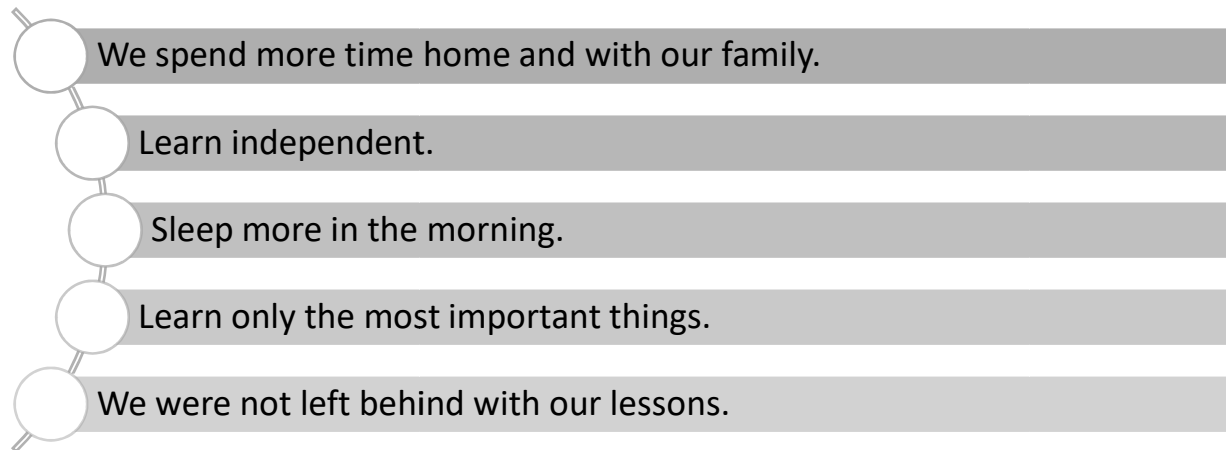
We spend more time home and with our family.

Learn independent.

Sleep more in the morning.

Learn only the most important things.

We were not left behind with our lessons.

Figure 11. The reward of learning online.

As shown from the presentation the most important reward is that they were not left behind with their lessons and also they were involved only in the most important lessons. This entire process enabled the pupils also to be independent learners, they also claimed that they had the chance to spend more time with their family members, and some of the pupils mentioned that they were happy not to wake up so early and go to school but could sleep till late.

Pandemics as this one can never find us prepared, therefore the pupils were in specific asked the question if they knew then, when they were still at school, that they would be going to start virtual learning, what would they have done differently.

Based on the pupils' answers they had never really thought about this idea as a lot of the pupils replied with 'I don't know'. However, other pupils mentioned ideas such as: 'cherish more my teachers'; 'I would have got higher grades as now it's impossible', 'I regret that I left some of my school at my class closet', 'I left my pant at school, but my teacher took it'.

This question found the pupils rather surprised and therefore their answers were not the ones a teacher would honestly want to hear. However, as shown from the answers of some of the pupils they seem to regret the fact that they did not value and appreciate enough the effort of their teachers and also as important is some of the pupils' attitude towards the grade that they got while being at school.

The teachers used different platforms of teaching during these past months, some of the learning platforms were official platforms, while others had to be put into practice in order to

include all of the pupils. The pupils were asked about the learning platforms that they used, the pupils listed the followings:

- o E-mesimi on Rtk 4
- o Zoom
- o Emails
- o Google classroom
- o Viber/What's up
- o Facebook
- o E-shkollori
- o Google meet

This makes it apparent that the teachers used every possible platform to include, if possible, all the pupils into the learning process. However, in the last question the pupils were asked whether all their peers in their class were engaged in the online process. Almost the majority said yes and that they are in contact with each other through their Viber or Facebook groups. Nonetheless, 12 pupils claimed that not all their peer were involved in the learning process, when asked the question of why they listed reasons such as: my friend has no computer; somebody in their family died; they went to their village and there is no internet connection; or that they friends were simply 'lazy' as the pupils said themselves.

Despite of all these claims on the pupils part the teachers, school staff and even the Department of Education of Prishtina has done everything to involve all the pupils, providing for them even technological devices and more.

4.2. Presentation and analyzes of the interview

This study includes as well the opinions and the experience of the English teachers teaching during the corona pandemic. The teacher-participants' were crucial for this study as they both supported yet also refuted some of the hypothesis set at the beginning of the research. The teachers in many occasions provided me also with evidence of their work, they claimed that they had to report and therefore made a lot of photos to keep evidence of their work.

Moreover, these data were compared with the outcomes of the pupil-participants' results. As already mentioned ten teachers were participants of this study, although the Ministry of Education did not include English language lessons in the schedule of the official platform E-mesimi, teachers were obligated to have at least once a week English language lessons with their pupils.

Question 1: How often did you have classes with your pupils?

At the beginning of the interview the teachers were asked about the amount of English language classes they have within one week, all of the teachers said that they have one to two times English language classes per week.

Moreover, they said that they always gave the pupils explanations and homework through their chosen platforms and also at least once in two weeks or sometimes even often they had virtual online meetings, usually through the platform Zoom.

Question 2: In what platforms were they engaged?

In the second question the teachers were asked in specific about the teaching platforms that they used, all of the teacher said that they tried to find the best and most suitable platforms for their pupils. As one of the teachers rightly pointed out "I didn't want to penalize anyone who had no technological tools, it's not their fault". The teachers claimed that they used the following online platforms:

- o Zoom
- o Google classroom
- o Viber/What's up
- o Facebook
- o E-shkollori

- Google meet

- Emails (Gmail and Hotmail)

- Pearson

Apart from E-mesimi these are the same platforms that the pupils mentioned, additionally here the teachers mentioned the platform Pearson which the pupils did not. Asked in specific about this platform one of the teachers said that she used this platform and the option screen share through Zoom so the pupils were unaware about the existence and usage of this platform. Through this platform the teachers shared the books and the audio exercises with the pupils. [1]
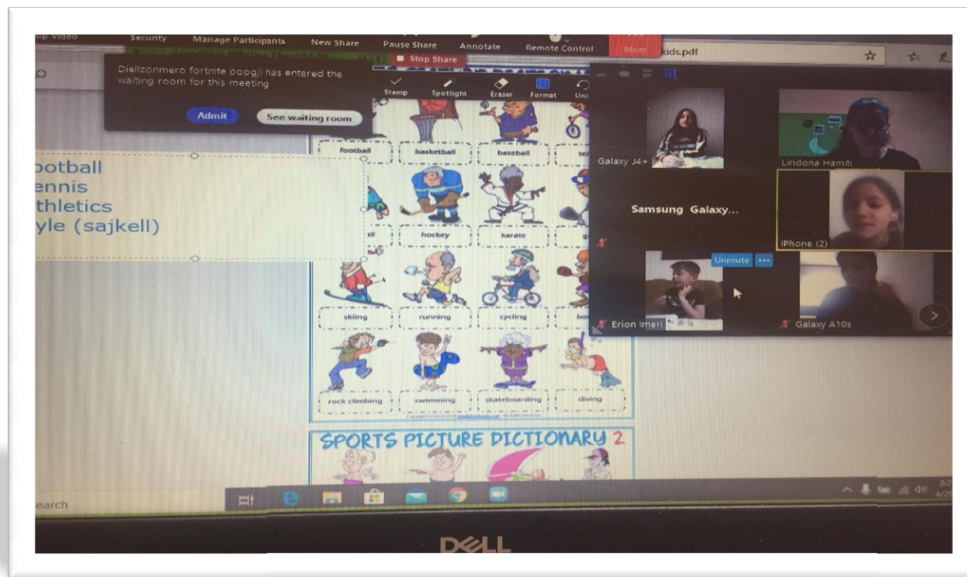
Question 3: What assignments were given to them?

The teachers were then asked about the assignments assigns to the pupils, they claimed that this was in particular a huge problem, as they could not follow up their school plan, they had to find new ways of teaching only the most important parts. Especially difficult here was the fact that the pupils lacked the cd of their pupils' book and often could not complete certain tasks

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[1] *This photo is provided by one of the teacher-participants demonstrating the usage of Pearson and Zoom simultaneously through screen share.*

without the help of their teachers. Among the main tasks given to their pupils the teachers listed:

- o Write and translate the lesson from the Students' book;
- o Work on certain pages of their Activity book;
- o Do a project;
- o Write an essay;
- o Work on the tasks in their Students' book;
- o Speaking and reading through Zoom;

One of the teachers who were participants of the survey was so kind as to share a photo of the Google classroom for the six graders which in specific shows the homework assigned to the pupils.
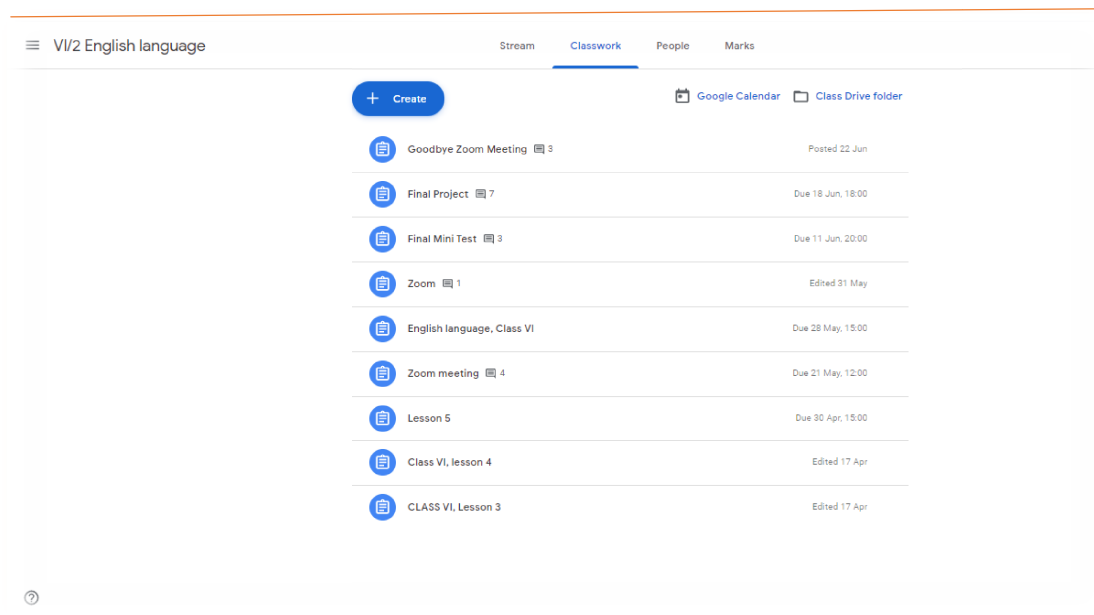
Another of the teachers who was only a substitute teacher for about six weeks with the nine graders chose a different approach. The teacher said "the pupils had already learnt what they should and could, so I used this time to only bring into light their language skills and also practice for their Achievement Test".
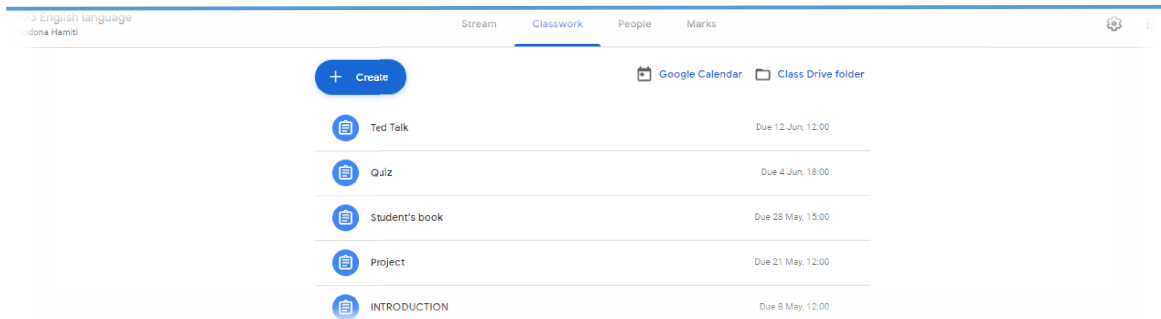
Furthermore, the teacher provided a screenshot of their class' Google classroom account, which indeed proves that the teacher focused more on general language skills such as writing. As the example shows the pupils worked on a Ted Talk, a quiz, on the Students' book, a project and an essay.[2]

Question 4: What is the most difficult/rewarding part of pandemic teaching?

Moreover, the entire process of teaching during this corona pandemics has its challenges but also some advantages or benefits. The teachers were asked about both about the most difficult and the most rewarding part of pandemic teaching. The teachers who were participants of the survey all claimed that this experience has its benefits but also disadvantages.

Teacher 1: "*Personally I struggled with planning of the lessons, especially with the first grades, they are always so curious and of course they depend on their parents for everything. A zoom meeting here was out of the question, so you tube played a huge role. I picked videos from you tube and assigned the pupils to write down the same words, such as fruits, vegetables, etc. In fact I lectured much more than according to the old plan, so that I consider a benefit for them*".

Teacher 2: "*Apart from being an English teacher I was also a head teacher of a seventh grade, this entire period was so stressful and tiring. I had to deal with the pupils, theirs and y colleagues. A lot of school staff meeting, some trainings and a lot of reports. So, the parents had*

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[2] *An example of the nine grade assignments given through Google classroom.*

the chance to actually see how much of an effort it takes to be a teacher and especially a head teacher."

Teacher 3: *"I am a mother and a teacher, doing both was like an impossible mission. I had to take care of my two daughters and meanwhile also prepare and check homework. At the beginning it was stressful but then I managed to make a personal schedule of consultations with the pupils and the time which I spend with my own children. It was as difficult as rewarding, I might be less involved in the learning process of my pupils but then I was more involved in the process of learning for my own children."*

Teacher 4: "*I am not as young as my colleagues, so I had a lot of difficulties in understanding all these platforms and also to use the internet in general. I belong to the time when things are written on papers not type on in front of a computer for several hours. Plus I have a poor sight so during all this time I was a burden to my adult son, he helped me with the use of technology and the reports"*.

Teacher 5: "*I cannot say that it was easy, no not at all, in fact to be honest I struggled a lot at the beginning, but once I got into the rhythm of online teaching I have been enjoying it. I could teach from my home without having to commute to work. I know a lot of teachers who have had difficulties, but personally, I enjoyed it more rather than struggles. Well, all apart from the numerous reports, those were tiring and time consuming."*

In general the teachers had the same concerns such as difficulties in lesson planning, a lot of homework and assignments to check, a lot of paperwork for the school, numerous staff meeting via zoom and meanwhile also trainings. While all the teachers considered that the most rewarding part of online teaching is that the parents were more involved with their children's process of learning and so were able to understand more our profession and our struggles. Moreover, some of the pupils went also beyond and above with their effort, commitment and creativity.

Question 5: What are the main teaching methods?

The teachers were as well asked about the teaching techniques used while online teaching. All of the teacher admitted that teaching online and teaching in a classroom is totally different, adding here the fact that for these teachers it was the first time that they are teaching online. Based on the teacher-participants answers, the following were the main teaching techniques used:

1) Flipping classroom

Most of the teacher assigned the pupils homework prior to their virtual meeting, for example the pupils were told to prepare the reading of a certain lesson and then in their zoom meeting they read and talked about the lesson's topic.

2) Mind mapping

The pupils were also given projects and those who wanted could also present them in front of their peers through zoom, or to give their idea on a certain topic. For example one of the teachers said that the sixth graders had a debate class about school uniforms.

3) Self-learning

The teacher-participants said that for some pupils it was great that they had the change to self-learn. During these weeks they had the opportunity to be more independent. One of the teacher said that her pupils were expected to keep a diary for one week and write down what is happening in their household. The pupils then had to investigate more and learn how to keep and write on a diary.

4) Instructional design

This is very important in online learning, however in the case of our teachers it was not a difficult task to complete because the teacher already knew their pupils as they have been teaching them for years now. However, different it was for one of the teachers who claimed to have been a substitute teacher for about six weeks for the nine graders. The teacher used the idea of writing a personal and rather descriptive essay in order to learn more about the new pupils and as such create a better learning environment for them.

5) Adaptive learning/teaching

This technique involves additional means of technology into the online classes, all the teachers said that while using the platform of Pearson their pupils had the change to listen to the lessons and exercises, also watch videos of grammatical parts and even listen to music while in their online zoom meeting.

Question 6: Are the teachers getting the adequate training on online teaching?

Furthermore in a separate question the teachers were asked on specific whether the teachers getting the adequate training on online teaching. As the teachers were all from the same school, there was no difference in their answers, they said that they did not have any trainings on specific on 'how to teach online' but they attended different training. One of the teacher-participants listed a number of 4 training that this attended from May until June.

Teacher 1: "*It may be unbelievable to some, but I have attended 4 trainings during this period of time, first I attended a training on E-shkollori this was for two days, then with SBASHK on 'Language teaching" which was for four days, the third one was a two-day training on the usage of the platform Pearson, and finally another online training organized by the Department of Education of Prishtina regarding a school project our school won. Then if you want to ask me if they were useful, I can say '(unfortunately) not all of these'*".

Teacher 2: "*I personally did not attend any training during this time about 'online teaching', some of my colleagues attended some trainings organized by SBASHK, although they had nothing to do with online teaching this pandemic time*".

Teacher 3: *"Yes, I attended one training with SBASHK but it was about "Medial Education" which is not related to the topic of online teaching. It was four days long and we will be getting a certificate soon, they promised."*

Teacher 4: *"I think as most of my colleagues I attended one training which was organized from SBASHK on the topic "Social Dialogue", it was rather a general and to some extend an irrelevant training during this time of the pandemics. Additionally, it added to us being already overloaded with our online classes and reports."*

Question 7: What is something you are doing during this pandemic teaching experience that you will keep doing when you are with students in a classroom?

Furthermore, the teachers were asked about something that they are doing during this pandemic teaching experience that you will keep doing when they are with students in a classroom. All of the teachers said that despite the challenges online teaching during the corona pandemic has actually had its benefits and some of these they will continue to use.

First of all they will continue to involve more technology usage in their classes especially through the platform of Pierson.

Secondly, most of the teachers said that they will involve the parents more in the teaching/learning process and these have proved that they can be involved if they want to, some of the teachers said that this period has shown that one can have fun and learn, be creative and give the pupils the chance to express themselves.

One of the teachers pointed out that it is also very crucial to give the pupils a time off from homework, be it even at least once in a month.

Question 8: Has you school administrator provided you with the tools need to be successful?

The teachers among others were then asked about the school administration and if they have provided them with the tools needed to be successful. The teachers all said that they school managements did all they could to make this process a successful one. The school staff informed with regularly about all the information needed, they had once a week zoom meetings. The senior teachers were supported by the younger ones, while none of the teachers in their school lacked on technological tools.

Question 9: How could your school administrator better help you in this experience?

Nonetheless, there were some minor issues that could have been done better especially regarding the reporting of the process. All the teachers complained about the many reports they had to write the following reports:
  – Daily report;
  – Weekly report;
  – Two-week report;
  – Monthly report, and
  – Final report with evidences.

The teachers clearly understand that the school administrators have to follow up with the rules set by someone who manages them as well, yet they felt pressured and stressed with amount of the reports they had to write.

Question 10: The following is the percentage of students who engage in my virtual classroom?

(95 - 100%; 80 - 94%; 70 - 79%; 60 - 69%; 50%; Less than 50%)

This entire teaching and learning process during the corona pandemics has affected the lives of everyone, yet both teachers and the pupils did the best they could to be involved as much as they could. However, 100% involvement is hard to achieve even during the normal (classroom) teaching and learning process. Therefore, in the following question the teachers were asked about their pupils' engagement in the online lessons and virtual classrooms.

The teachers were given options to choose from, i.e. 95 - 100%; 80 - 94%; 70 - 79%; 60 - 69%; 50%; less than 50%. Based on their answers it can be concluded that about 70% to 94% of the pupils were active learners. Some of the pupils claimed that in certain classes the pupils were to 100% involved while in other classes there were cases were none of the pupils submitted the task assigned.

Teacher 1: *"In the first grade, especially, all of the pupils in the class were active, that was a great feeling, when from 27 pupils all of them send their homework".*

Teacher 2: *"I had one case where among the nine graders one class did not send their homework and I ended writing on the report 0 from 19 pupils participated. I was hurt and even disappointed because I had put effort into preparing the lesson and none of them bothered to complete it, but I cannot change this fact now."*

Teacher 3: *"At the beginning the pupils were rather reluctant about the entire process, but once they were old that it will affect their grading then they got actively involved in the process."*

Teacher 4: "*Initially the number was really low of the pupils who participated, and it was also expected as they were still adopting to this new life and learning. Then after two weeks the difference was drastic as up to 90% of the pupils were actively part in the online classes, in zoom and through assignments.*"

Question 11: What are the reasons why the pupils may not engage with me are one or more of the following (please check all that apply). Lack of access (i.e. tablet, internet connection, etc.); Parents are not supportive; I did not have a positive relationship with the student; They are not finding their schoolwork engaging; Other (please specify).

Although the percentage of the pupils involvement is really high according to the pupils yet according to this claims not all the pupils involved. Therefore, the pupils were asked about the reasons about why some of the pupils were not involved in the learning process during the corona pandemic.

Here teachers were also given options to choose from:

- o Lack of access (i.e. tablet, internet connection, etc.);
- o Parents are not supportive;
- o I did not have a positive relationship with the student;
- o They are not finding their schoolwork engaging;
- o Other (please specify).

The teachers mentioned that at the beginning some of the pupils were not actively involved because they lacked technological devices but later these were provided by the Education Department of Prishtina, some of the teachers said that the same pupils that were 'lazy' and did

not engage in the learning process while at school were the same that neglected the online lessons.

All the teachers said that the Administrative Guide (UA – udhëzuesi administrativ) became a burden to them, as will talked about further in the last question.

Question 12: Finally, what about the evaluation part, how will that be done?

Finally, we talk about the evaluation part and how it will be done. This part continues to be one of the most difficult part for the teachers and the most sensitive one for the pupils. The teachers who were participants of this study were especially excited to talk about this part.

They said that the Ministry of Education of Kosova, came out with a general Administrative Guide which clearly stated that the final grade should not be lower than the one before the 11th of March.

Therefore, especially with the classes where the teaching is done based on the new curriculum the teachers had to skip the second period and evaluate the pupils only in the third period and then the final grade (noten përfundimtare – NP).

Teacher 1*: "I simply do not understand who came up with this idea and it makes me so angry because it means that all this teaching goes in vain, all those reports for what? Nothing! I have to give pupils grades they do not deserve."*

Teacher 2: *"The process of putting the grades into E-shkollori was so frustrating, I had to write a couple of 'fives' for pupils who not once sent homework or joined our Zoom meetings. This makes no sense, then why have we kept track of our pupils' participation and why all these reports, plus they are asking for evidences. I can only say that the people who wrote this Administrative Guide have never worked a day in a school!"*

Teacher 3: *"I do not agree with this Administrative Guide it is unfair towards the hardworking pupils and supports the ones who had an excellent grade before the schools were closed."*

Teacher 4: *"All these weeks and months of hard work are equal to zero when I think that I have to mark some pupils with excellent grades when they never showed up in any of my classes. This is ridiculous and unfair."*

The teachers said that they do not agree with this decision of the Ministry of Education, they do understand that the pupils should be rewarded and stimulated but they all had cases when one specific pupil never engaged in the learning process but they had to give them an excellent grade because they had it before the 11th of March.

V. Conclusions and Recommendations

Countries around the world are at different points in their Covid-19 infection rates, and therefore a number of more than one billion pupils are affected by the closures of schools due to this worldwide pandemic. Kosovo is one of this countries that has closed the doors of all educational institutions in the entire country. All primary schools, high schools, colleges and universities are closed since the 11th of March. So, with this unexpected modification from the classroom in many parts of the world, some are doubting if the implementation of online learning will continue even after the pandemic, and also raises the question of how such an alteration would influence the international schooling market.

On the other hand, a group of people believe that this swift change from the classroom into online teaching without any adequate training and almost no preparation will only result in a poor experience that that cannot grow, yet others believe that this new mixture model of education will develop, with important profits.

5.1. Conclusions

This Master paper focuses on the challenges of online teaching and learning during the corona pandemics, and in specific the case study with the elementary school pupils and teachers. At the very beginning of the study four main research questions were set round which also the case study revolved.

The four main research questions aimed to focus on the main challenges that the teachers and the pupils are facing in the process of teaching and learning during the Corona pandemics; about the main teaching methods used and the form of evaluating the pupils; the trainings that the teachers are getting alongside of teaching; and finally what has the state already done regarding this issue.

Therefore, this section focuses only on these main points and comments with regards the outcomes of the case study with the pupils and the interview with the teachers.

Online teaching and learning during the Corona pandemics is challenging for teachers and pupils. The process of online learning and teaching has both its benefits and disadvantages, the teachers and pupils of the survey claimed that there are some challenges that might be overcome and the process of cooperation can ease these challenges. On one hand online lessons offer great flexibility that the process of learning and teaching in a classroom usually does not. This is primarily so because this form of learning enables the learners to study at their convenience and equilibrium work and private commitments especially by planning their learning times around the rest of their day schedule.

Teaching online gives one the opportunity to plan a class the most proficiently, so both the learners and teachers can agree adaptably on the precise teaching times and then also meet online through their chosen platforms.

However, this form of meeting online might not be the ideal choice for some pupils as some learners prefer face-to-face lessons and feel more convenient when there is a teacher standing in front of the. These pupils may also feel uncomfortable talking though the various means of technical devices instead of talking privately.

Teaching online is a great opportunity for teachers to use a variety of multimedia, such as videos, news articles and podcasts to create an efficient and interactive lesson. However, learning a language online basically depends on the proper process of tools and a high-speed internet connection, as without these, effective lessons are impossible.

Another challenge and obstacle for the teachers and learners can be the previous knowledge of the platforms used. Here, both teachers and learners need to understand the online platform first and work with it.

In general the pupils who were participants of this survey claim that there are challenges such as the fact that they lacked the ownership of a personal PC, although the pupils mentioned that the Department of Education in Prishtina offered some computers for those pupils who did not have the privilege to have a computer at all.

Another struggle for the pupil was also the poor internet connection which sometimes did not work and even troubles with the power. The pupils mentioned that studying at home was a great experience but also caused trouble as often in their online classes the background noise

could be heard, or they lacked concentration because of the other family members especially their younger siblings.

The entire process of teaching during this corona pandemics has its challenges but also some advantages or benefits. The teachers who were participants of the survey all claimed that this experience has its benefits but also disadvantages. Among the main struggles were the lesson planning, the usage of the technology, internet connection, time consuming reports, trainings that are irrelevant to online teaching, and others.

Teacher 1: "*Personally I struggled with planning of the lessons*".

Teacher 2: "A lot of school staff meeting, some trainings and a lot of reports."

Teacher 3: *"At the beginning it was stressful but then I managed to make a personal schedule of consultations with the pupils and the time which I spend with my own children."*

Teacher 4: "*I have a poor sight so during all this time I was a burden to my adult son, he helped me with the use of technology and the reports*".

Teacher 5: "*honest I struggled a lot at the beginning, but once I got into the rhythm of online teaching I have been enjoying it. I could teach from my home without having to commute to work.*"

In general the teachers had the same concerns such as difficulties in lesson planning, a lot of homework and assignments to check, a lot of paperwork for the school, numerous staff meeting via zoom and meanwhile also trainings.

While all the teachers considered that the most rewarding part of online teaching is that the parents were more involved with their children's process of learning and so were able to understand more our profession and our struggles. Moreover, some of the pupils went also beyond and above with their effort, commitment and creativity.

The teachers lack regarding the adequate trainings on online teaching, especially evaluating. Also, the teachers and pupils are overloaded with teaching/learning, homework/administrative reports and others.

A very important discussion in the interview with the teachers was also talked about the teaching methods and also the methods of evaluation. All of the teachers who were participants admitted that teaching online and teaching in a classroom is totally different, adding here the fact that for these teachers it was the first time that they are teaching online. These teachers had to make various alterations into their routinely teaching methods to adapt with this new teaching trend.

Based on the teacher-participants answers, the following were the main teaching techniques used:

− Assigning homework prior to the online meeting, for instance reading a lesson on their own and then discus about it online.

− The pupils were also given projects with the possibility of presenting them virtually.

− The pupils were given the opportunity for self-learning, and become more independent through various tasks.

− The teachers used various tasks in order to get to know the pupils' situation during the corona pandemics and so create a better learning environment for them.

− The teachers used various means of technology to create the best learning and teaching environment.

On the other hand, the pupils that were engaged in the learning process during the corona pandemics had as well to be evaluated at the end of the school years. The teachers admitted that this part continues to be one of the most difficult parts for the teachers and the most sensitive one for the pupils. The teachers said that the Ministry of Education of Kosova, came out with a general Administrative Guide which clearly stated that the final grade should not be lower than the one before the 11th of March.

Therefore, especially with the classes where the teaching is done based on the new curriculum the teachers had to skip the second period and evaluate the pupils only in the third period and then the final grade (noten përfundimtare – NP).

The teachers said that they do not agree with this decision of the Ministry of Education, they do understand that the pupils should be rewarded and stimulated but they all had cases when one specific pupil never engaged in the learning process but they had to give them an excellent grade because they had it before the 11th of March.

Both the teachers and pupils are struggling with the online lessons. The teacher-participants of this study said that they use a great variety of online platforms, such as: Zoom, Google classroom, Viber/What's up, Facebook, E-shkollori, Google meet, Emails (Gmail and Hotmail), Pearson.

Through these platforms the teachers assigned various tasks and assignments, here among the main tasks given to their pupils the teachers listed:

- o Write and translate the lesson from the Students' book;
- o Work on certain pages of their Activity book;
- o Do a project; or Write an essay;
- o Work on the tasks in their Students' book;
- o Speaking and reading through Zoom.

Despite the fact that the teachers were very active with tasks and assignments through the various platforms. However, all the teachers said that they did not have any trainings on specific on 'how to teach online' but they attended different training. Yet, they attended various trainings such as for 'E-shkollori', Pearson and various trainings from SBASHK.

Teacher 1: *"I have attended 4 trainings during this period of time"*.

Teacher 2: *"I personally did not attend any training during this time about 'online teaching'"*.

Teacher 3: *"Yes, I attended one training with SBASHK but it was about Medial Education"*.

Teacher 4: *"I think as most of my colleagues I attended one training which was organized from SBASHK on the topic Social Dialogue"*.

These were some of the teacher-participants' opinions regarding the trainings that they have attended during this time online.

The majority of pupils are coping very well with online-learning while those lacking on technological devices or knowledge still face difficulties. However, the state has acted rather fast and adequately in regards to the situation.

The teachers all said that they school managements did all they could to make this process a successful one. The school staff informed with regularly about all the information needed, they had once a week zoom meetings. The senior teachers were supported by the younger ones, while none of the teachers in their school lacked on technological tools.

Once the learning and teaching process was interrupted the Ministry of Education reacted quickly by creating some online lessons which were transmitted on the national television of Kosova, respectively on Rtk 4. These lesson were known under the name 'E-mesimi' (i.e. E-lessons) and included lessons from the first to the ninth grade initially, later they added also lessons for the kindergarten pupils. These lessons included only the main subjects such as Albanian language, Mathematics, Biology, History, Geography, Cultural Education and Human and Nature

Nonetheless, there were some minor issues that could have been done better especially regarding the reporting of the process. All the teachers complained about the many reports they had to write the following reports:

- Daily report;
- Weekly report;
- Two-week report;
- Monthly report, and
- Final report with evidences.

The teachers clearly understand that the school administrators have to follow up with the rules set by someone who manages them as well, yet they felt pressured and stressed with amount of the reports they had to write.

The educational system of Kosova is rather fresh the state of Kosova in general and the Ministry of Education have tried to create a temporary solution for the teachers and pupils during this time.

However, teaching and learning online has its difficulties and limitations which then directly affect the quality of teaching and learning. Furthermore, the attempt of the Department of Education in Prishtina (DEP) to quickly start online trainings for the teachers and the great effort put into their online platform (E-shkollori) have all affected the already overloaded teachers.

Finally, online learning and teaching is a rather complicated process as it has both benefits yet its own limits. However, teaching online during a worldwide pandemic crisis is something that I personally have never experienced before and never thought or even imagined to experience it.

Therefore, the main aim of this study and research is to shed light on the teachers' and pupils' perspective on the process of online teaching and learning. This paper presents their challenges, struggles, advantages, disadvantages and the lessons learnt out of this entire process.

The Government of Kosovo, in general, and the Ministry of Education in specific have played a crucial role in this entire process. They have done a great job in implementing online teaching and learning platforms, such as E-mësimi and Eshkollori. Each of these platforms has been a challenge on its own form for the teachers and the pupils, yet they have enabled to make the process as comfortable, easy and enjoyable as possible.

As presented in the sections above teachers, pupils and even the parents have been a constant help and support for each other, despite this fact challenges and struggles presented themselves on the way. Reachers, as shown from the results, claimed to have difficulties in certain areas the main being that they lacked the adequate knowledge regarding technology or even technological devices; then they also were not trained enough on how to teach online, especially the beginning of the online teaching seemed to be a great challenge; the teacher as well noted that they were being overloaded with administrative work while at the same time they were already overloaded with their role as a teacher; the teachers were overwhelmed by

the evaluation system; and also online class management and lesson planning seemed to be among their struggles. Nonetheless, the teachers made it all work out perfectly well for them and their pupils.

The pupils on the other hand seemed to somehow share the same challenges and difficulties as their teachers. At the beginning the pupils were both excited yet new to this entire process, they lacked technological devices or knowledge on the platforms used by their teachers, however they enjoyed this online learning experience a lot. The pupils had the opportunity to take more responsibility of their own learning and also explore more the online teaching platforms, some of the pupils were to some extend disappointed by the final evaluation process. However all in all it was an extraordinary school year with extraordinary outcomes for both pupils and teacher, but also for all educational institutions.

5.2. Recommendations

This paper sets out to deliver a methodical analysis of recent studies addressing online teaching and learning during the corona pandemics. Although previous studies carried out contribute to the understanding of the impact of online teaching and learning on both the students and the teacher in general further research of this impact during the corona pandemics is necessary.

In general the teachers and pupils showed that they were satisfied with all the outcomes of the entire process, however there are specific actions that could have been done better, for instance:

- The school administration should have worked closer with the teachers, engaging them in less online staff meetings and writing less reports;
- The school should have had already the details of their pupils, such as their social and economic situation (i.e. lack of technological tools, etc.).
- The Ministry of Education and in specific the Department of Education in Pristina should have included more subjects in their E-mësimi lessons through television.
- The teachers who lack knowledge on technological devices should have been substituted by other teachers on time.
- The final evaluation process should have been done different, for example no grades at all, the pupils should only have passed the subjects without being graded.
- Finally, the pupils should have been taught more about the importance and their responsibilities of engagement in the online lessons.

Nonetheless, this experimental study conducted is also a personal contribution to the department firstly but also the field of English language too, although the role of online teaching and learning certainly deserves further investigation.

5.3. Limitations

During the research and study of the topic of the challenges of online teaching and learning during the corona pandemic limitations presented themselves.

- Initially, a more specific study should be carried out in order to allow for the investigation of the effects and the influence of specific backgrounds on the process of online teaching and learning during the corona pandemics.

- Secondly a more complete study to check the effects of long exposure to a specific background. The pupil-participants of the study conducted are aware of the benefits but also limitations of the process of learning online especially during this specific time in their English language classes and come to the realization that their teachers' choices and organization have a great role in their classes.

- Consequently, it is hoped that further basic and applied research on the online teaching and learning process can be done to also encourage teachers to start using advanced technologies in order to improve the pupils' language learning inspiration and skills in general, and listening and speaking ability in specific. And in this form they can be

prepared in emergency cases like this and also the pupils are already used to the concept of online learning.

Future study of matters related to the online teaching and learning methods might help enlighten learners on the ways that help the process of second language acquisition. So, looking at their limitations more thoroughly may also benefit learners to find solutions to enhance the instructional use of technology exploiting generally learning chances.

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APPENDIX A

Teacher Interview

This questionnaire is part of my Master thesis and its aim is to investigate opinions of primary school pupils on process of teaching and learning during the Corona pandemic. Your responses will be kept confidential and will be used for the research purpose only. Your corporation in answering this questionnaire is highly appreciated.

1. How often did you have classes with your pupils?
2. In what platforms were they engaged?
3. What assignments were given to them?
4. What is the most difficult/rewarding part of pandemic teaching?
5. What are the main teaching methods?
6. Are the teachers getting the adequate training on online teaching?
7. What is something you are doing during this pandemic teaching experience that you will keep doing when you are with students in a classroom?
8. Has you school administrator provided you with the tools need to be successful?
9. How could your school administrator better help you in this experience?
10. The following is the percentage of students who engage in my virtual classroom?
1.   (95 - 100%; 80 - 94%; 70 - 79%; 60 - 69%; 50%; Less than 50%)
11. The reasons my students may not engage with me are one or more of the following (please check all that apply). Lack of access (i.e. tablet, internet connection, etc.); Parents are not supportive; I did not have a positive relationship with the student; They are not finding their schoolwork engaging; Other (please specify).
12. Finally, what about the evaluation part, how will that be done?

APPENDIX B

Pupils' Survey

This questionnaire is part of my Master thesis and its aim is to investigate opinions of primary school pupils on process of teaching and learning during the Corona pandemic. Your responses will be kept confidential and will be used for the research purpose only. Your corporation in answering this questionnaire is highly appreciated.

Background information:

1. Gender: □ Male   □ Female

2. Class: _____

3. How often did you have online English classes during the online learning?

□ Never   □ 1-2 times a week

□ 3-4 times a week   □ Everyday

4. How many hours per day do you spend on your assignments given by the teachers?

□ 1 – 2   □ 3– 4

□ 4-5   □ More than 5

General questions

1. My school was prepared to begin online/virtual teaching before the pandemic.

□ True

□ False

□ Others (specify)

2. I personally felt prepared to begin online/virtual teaching before the pandemic.

□ True

□ False

□ Others (specify)

3. Are you enjoying this pandemic learning experience? Why or why not?

 □ Yes, because_____

□ No, because_____

4. Over the course of this experience the teachers have offered the following to students. Please check all that apply.

□ Students' book/Work book

□ Projects on various topics

□ Virtual classes and discussions

□ Group work assignments

□ Totally different tasks from school

□ Others, specify: _____

5. I am gaining confidence as a virtual learner.

□ True

□ False

□ Others (specify)

6. The most difficult part of pandemic learning is

_____

_____

7. The most rewarding part of my pandemic learning is

_____

_____

8. If you knew then (when you were in a classroom) that you would be going to virtual learning, what would you have done differently?

_____

_____

9. Which learning platforms have your teachers used during the online learning?

_____

_____

10. Were all your class friends engaged in the online learning process? Why? Why not?

_____

_____

-Thank you very much!-