

# THESIS

*Volume 7  
Number 2  
Autumn*

ISSN 1848-4298  
eISSN 2623-8381



**Kolegji AAB**

International Research Journal

# Thesis

International Research Journal

## PUBLISHER

MST PLUS d.o.o. - Nova Cesta 52, 10000 Zagreb,  
Croatia, in cooperation with  
AAB PPOHE, Prishtinë, Kosovë

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and the December edition. The journal uses double-blind  
peer review, which means that the reviewer does not know  
the author's identity and neither the author knows who the  
evaluator of his article is.

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Zona Industriale Prishtinë-Fushë Kosovë  
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url. [www.thesis-journal.net](http://www.thesis-journal.net)  
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Printed by:

# Thesis

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*Thesis*  
*International Research Review*  
Vol. 7, No. 2, 2018

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# *Acquisition of Albanian as a first language from the perspective of natural order hypothesis*

*Khavit Rexhaj<sup>1</sup>, Prof. Asst. Dr.*

*AAB College, Pristina, Kosovo*

*Email: khavit.rexhaj@aab-edu.net*

## **Abstract**

This study deals with the natural order hypothesis in language acquisition, which posits that there is an order in which grammatical morphemes are acquired in the first, but also second language acquisition. There have been numerous studies addressing the order of acquisition of grammatical morphemes for major international languages, but there have been no such studies for Albanian language. A study of the natural order could serve to improve acquisition of Albanian as mother tongue, to enhance language curricula in schools, and to facilitate learning of Albanian as a second language. This research involved over 100 junior researchers in a cross-sectional research observing more than 200 children in the age of 0 to 11 years, organised in four age-groups, over a period of two weeks. The observation collected naturalist non-experimental data to find out whether there is a natural order of acquisition of grammatical morphemes and structures in Albanian as a first language. The existence of an order of acquisition of grammatical morphemes by difficulty level was

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<sup>1</sup> and co-authors, students Blerinda Hajdari, Leonora Ilazi, Bekim Jashari, Leotrim Ibrahim, Rita Bekqeli, Marigona Zejnullahu, Arbana Mazreku, Diellza Hyseni, Flaka Balidemaj, Agnesa Pllana, Albina Gllavica.

Article received on the 19th October, 2018.

Article accepted on the 11th December, 2018.

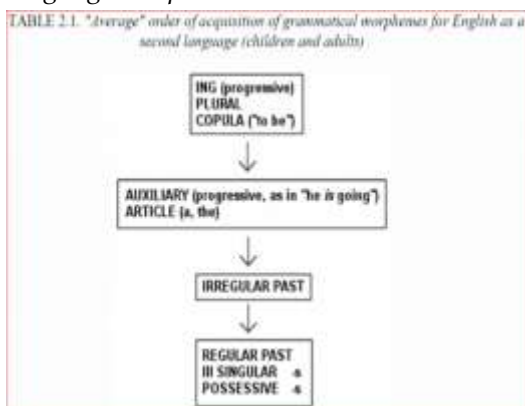
Conflict of Interest: The author declares no conflict of interests.

clearly established. An unplanned finding of the study was the significant role of dialect and vernacular in the process of acquisition of Albanian as a first language. At the same time, it was difficult to clearly ascertain the role of school and environment in acquiring standard Albanian.

**Keywords:** *Natural order, language acquisition, grammatical morphemes, dialect.*

The natural order hypothesis was initially formulated by Brown (1973), who reported that three children observed during a nine-year longitudinal study, acquiring English language as their mother tongue, acquired some grammatical morphemes or function words earlier than others. For instance, the present continuous/*ing*/ morpheme (as in "he is playing baseball") and the plural marker/*s*/ (as in "*two dogs*") were among the first acquired morphemes, unlike the singular marker /*s*/ (as in "*He lives in New York*") and the/*s*/ marker for possession (as in "*John's hat*") that were acquired between six months to one year later (Krashen, 2009). A number of studies that will be discussed in the theory section below have resulted in a general chronological ranking of grammatical morphemes and functions corresponding to an order of acquisition respective to the learner's age.

*Table 1: Krashen's list on order of acquisition of English as a second language morphemes.*



The current study is based on the literature available on the natural order hypothesis and on an empirical research carried out by AAB bachelor students. There have been numerous studies on natural order of language acquisition on the main world languages, whereas the current study is the first of its kind on Albanian as mother tongue.

Compared to scope of research refereed in the literature review section, this study has a more comprehensive and more thematically varied scope since it looks into the evolution of forming questions, negations, sentences, the use and acquisition of verb tenses, and other parts of speech (adjectives, adverbs, pronouns) and so on. During the research process it became apparent that there is a need to also address the relations between the standard Albanian and dialects/various regional speeches in Kosovo, since they proved to be a critical element in the process of acquisition of Albanian as mother tongue.

Age of the observed children served as independent variables (the first column in the table below), with dependent variables taking the form of various grammatical morphemes, questions, negations, making of sentences, use of adjectives,

adverbs, and so on (the upper row), as well as various dimensions such as learning by imitation, generalization, and transitional forms, presented in the bottom row in the table below.

*Table 2: The variables used during the empirical research*

Aspect Age	Questions	Negations	Tenses	Sentences	Other forms	Dialect/speech
1-2 years						
3-4 years						
5-7 years						
8-11 year						
Dependent variables	First occurrence	Transitional forms	Imitation generalisation	Individual differences Cognitive development		

This research has its limitations, as it is the first of its kind in Kosovo, implemented by a team with limited qualifications in applied linguistics, and the empirical research carried out by junior students. These limitations can be overcome in future studies by applying standardised instruments for observing and measuring the level of language acquisition, involving a larger number of respondents and, in particular, by ensuring more focused observation of age-groups.

The main goal of this research was to look into the order of acquisition of various grammatical morphemes, structures and functions of Albanian as a mother tongue among children, as manifested in their everyday communication and interaction with their environment and, whenever feasible, to compare this



order of acquisition with the respective order in English as a first language.

**Objectives:** The goal was achieved by identifying the first occurrences of the selected linguistic forms and functions. The research also looked into the various learning processes (imitation – generalization), the extent to which cognitive development is reflected in the language used by children (for example understanding of the concept of time and its reflection in the tenses used); assessment of the influence of dialect and regional speeches in language acquisition; finally, the influence of individual learner characteristics on the order of acquisitions was also tackled.

**Research questions:** The research on natural order of acquisition of Albanian as a first language was built on the following guiding questions:

What is the order of acquisition of grammatical and syntactical forms and functions during the acquisition of Albanian as a first language?

What is the timeline and dynamics of acquisition of identical morphemes in Albanian and English languages?

What is the role of dialect/regional speeches and their relation with the standard Albanian language in the process of acquisition of Albanian as a first language in Kosovo?

What is the role of school towards the application of dialect during the acquisition of Albanian as a first language?

**Hypothesis:** The basic premise was the null hypothesis that there is not a set order of acquisition of various linguistic forms and functions of Albanian as a first language.

**Relevance:**

- Through this study, Albanian joins the group of languages that have been studied regarding the presence of a natural order of acquisition of the first language.

- The identified order of acquisition of Albanian language can inform curriculum developers and authors of school text-books about a natural modality of acquisition of grammatical morphemes (forms, functions and structures);
- The collected data may serve as a primary source to other scholars who will engage in studying this important field.

Outline: This paper outlines basic theories and concepts that served as a theoretical frame for data collection and analysis on the selected topic. Next, the research methodology is presented, followed by the findings from the empirical research. The article closes with a brief outline of the conclusions and suggestions for further research that could also include Albania and regions in Macedonia where Albanian is spoken.

### *The theoretical framework*

Natural order hypothesis: After Brown, who was briefly discussed in the introduction of this article, it was de Villiers and de Villiers (1978) who confirmed findings of Brown's longitudinal research after they presented results of their cross-sectional research on acquisition of English as a first language. There "They confirmed Brown's longitudinal results cross-sectionally, showing that items that Brown found to be acquired earliest in time were also the ones that children tended to get right more often. In other words, for those morphemes studied, the difficulty order was similar to the acquisition order" (Krashen, 2009, p. 12).

Consequently, it is logical to expect that there is an order according to which children acquire structures, morphemes and linguistic functions in their mother tongue. At the same time, a

number of scholars (Krashen, 2009; Dulay and Burt, 1974, 1975; Kessler, 1977) have studied the order of acquisition of English as a second language, finding numerous similarities in the order of acquisition between the first language, which is the object addressed by this article, and the second language.

They claim that notwithstanding dissimilarities in the process of acquisition, it is still possible to discern a natural order of acquisition with the second languages, too. Other scholars have expressed reservations regarding the natural order hypothesis for second languages, pointing out to the glitches of comparing first and second language acquisition processes, most notably since the second language normally follows the first language significantly later – with the exception of bilingual children. Among critiques to Krashen's natural order theory Fry states that "Larsen - Freeman and Long in their criticism add that there is no explanation offered of the morpheme orders." (Fry, 2018). In general, key criticism against the natural order hypothesis is based on the fact that morphemes refer to language production, whereas Krashen's theories are mainly connected to language competence and acquisition. Nevertheless, there seems to be agreement across the board among scholars on the existence of a natural order when referring to acquisition of first languages, and can therefore serve as a theoretical basis for our study.

**Learning difficulty:** Closely related to the natural order hypothesis of languages is the concept of learning difficulty. DeKeyser (2003) distinguishes between objective and subjective difficulties. He states that objective difficulty deals with the difficulties inherent with a number of grammatical forms." Based on different grammatical theories, some grammatical forms will be easier to acquire, whereas others will be more difficult. For illustration, it is to be expected that complex tenses containing auxiliary verbs will be more difficult to learn than

simple tenses. On the other hand, subjective difficulty has to do with actual difficulties that are experienced by language learners. For the purpose of this study, the concept of objective difficulty is more relevant since it appears to be closer to the concept of natural order hypothesis.

The processability theory is a relevant theory which, according to Pienemann (2005) “presupposes that means of processability will be acquired according to an order of actualisation in the process of reproduction” (p 13). Even though the processability theory is primarily a theory of linguistic production and not of language acquisition, it still finds application in better understanding and explaining also the processes language acquisition. Consequently, the gradual acquisition of languages according to a set order is applied also in our case of acquisition of Albanian as a first language: from simple and easier forms towards more complex forms or from words (through phrases and simple sentences) to compound and complex sentences. On this, Pienemann (2008) states that: “original version of PT is that language development is constrained by processability. This affects first and second language development (albeit in different ways). It also affects interlanguage variation and L1 transfer.” (p. 13). Put in other words, gradual processability, or acquisition of structures according to a hierarchic order (read natural order), also applies in cases of acquisition of first languages. This means that failing to acquire a lower order procedure (for instance step 3 below) will render it impossible to acquire a procedure of higher order and, consequently, makes it impossible for the learner to acquire grammatical features that depend on them (Ellis, 2009, p. 146).

This hierarchy of acquisition – processability according to Pienemann (taken from Ellis, 2009, p. 146) - is structured as follows:

1. Word/lema

2. category procedure (lexical category)
3. phrasal procedure (head)
4. S-procedure and the word order rule
5. matrix/subordinate clause.

Further in this article, we will witness an order of acquisition, more or less, similar to the processability steps above.

Types of languages and natural order: Studies on the natural order of acquisition of L1 were initially carried on English language. Due to the analytic nature of English language, the identified order of acquisition was viewed as a simplified and measurable order of acquisition of a number of morphemes. Namely, Brown established that from among the English basic morphemes, the *-ing* denoting continuous present tense was the first to be acquired. Similarly to *-ing*, the third person and genitive case ending *-s*, and past simple *-ed*, and other analytic morphemes have unchanged forms for all respective aspects and tenses. As a result, the entire theory of natural order of acquisition was viewed from this simplified perspective and the expectation was created that it is possible and relatively straightforward to measure the natural order of acquisition also for other languages, synthetic ones, such as Albanian, included.

However, as it became apparent in the early stages of the current study, reference to acquisition of English morphemes (as L1) did not suffice to address acquisition of Albanian as a first language. The complexity of the case ending system in Albanian language rendered any such exercise significantly different and in many ways more complex. Formal marking of number, person, case and definiteness in the same word (such as *të miat* – Eng. *mine*) is far more complex than, for instance, working to identify the first occurrence of the English possessive pronoun *mine*, wherein various aspects mentioned

above are expressed through analytic mechanisms. For illustration the plural form (*they* or *these are mine*).

This because English and Albanian vary significantly by their very nature. Both these languages apply analytic and synthetic mechanisms for expression of various grammatical meanings. However, despite the presence of both mechanisms, in Albanian language the synthetic element is dominating, whereas English language is predominantly analytic.

Numerous Albanian and international authors (Demiraj, 1988a, 1988b; Pedersen, 1894; Meyer, 1883; Ismajli, 2003; Bokshi, 1980), have studied and ascertained presence of both elements in Albanian language; they witness a dominating presence of synthetic mechanisms, albeit parallel with a minor presence of the analytic ones. In the Albanian Language Grammar of the Albanian Academy of Sciences we learn that "Grammatical forms of Albanian language are both analytic and synthetic" (Akademia e Shkencave e Shqipërisë, 2002). Further in the same text the various forms are described, but without stating which of the forms are dominating in Albanian language. Among the synthetic forms authors describe a number of inflections (*mal-i*, *hap-a*, *hap-ëm*, *mir-i*)<sup>i</sup> that are added to the main parts of speech, a number of word-forming suffixes (*shokë*, *male*, *burra* etc.) and phonetic changes. Among analytic forms are included the forms established with auxiliary verbs (*kam* – have and *jam* – be), with word-forming particles (*të punoja* – to work, *pa punuar* – without work, *për të punuar* – to work and so on), and articles presented analytically similar to prepositions in English (*i/e nxënësit* – of the student) and so on. Shaban Demiraj (1988b), tells that during its historical evolution, Albanian language developed synthetic-analytic elements, whereas English language developed analytic – synthetic ones. In his Historical Grammar of Albanian, but also in his other publications, is pointed out that:

The evolution of structural words made for some of them to ... turn into entities forming categories, and as a result the grammatical structure of languages transformed from a synthetic type, ... into a synthetic-analytic type (as was the case with Latin, Greek, Albanian, Slavic languages etc.), or analytic-synthetic (as was the case with English, western roman languages, etc.). (Demiraj, 1998b, p. 31).

Demiraj continues presenting dominating synthetic elements found in Albanian language that express mood, inflection, verb tenses, definiteness, word order (more rigid or more flexible) in a sentence (Demiraj, 1988a). Another author, Besim Bokshi (1980), in a publication on nominal inflections, also confirms the dominating synthetic features of Albanian language by studying and presenting morphological and phrasal aspects of nominal flexion.

As briefly discussed above, whereas Albanian language is characterised by a dominating synthetic element, English language features prevailing analytic means:

Most of grammatical categories which could be formed synthetically, can also be expressed by analytic means (such as comparison of adjectives, or genitive case); others can be formed through periphrastic means or by using functional words (as is the case with numerous tenses and aspects), or ceased to be expressed (as for instance, grammatical gender). Due to the limited number of case endings, the modern English language is considered an analytic language (Dorgeloh, 2009).

Role of dialect: Dialect and vernacular appeared to be important aspects that had to be taken in consideration during the study of acquisition of Albanian as a first language.

Consequently, the dialect shed new light on the role of family and school in the process of language acquisition. In the Grammar of Contemporary English we learn that regional variations appear to take place mainly in phonology. Put in other words, we commonly discern various dialect based on their pronunciation and accent before realizing that it is also their vocabulary that varies. Grammatical variations are less frequent and therefore less conspicuous (Quirk, 1992). During this research, however, a large number of grammatical variations were encountered (such as *shkojna*, *shkojmi*, *shkojim*, *shkojmë*)<sup>ii</sup> partly contradicting the above statement. In the same book (Quirk, 1992) authors note “a significant polarisation between the speeches of the uneducated persons and the educated ones in a way that the first are identified with a regional dialect, whereas the latter avoid the regional dialect using a form beyond dialect borders.” (p.19). As will be seen later, schooling and teacher support does not appear to have a significant impact in the use of standard Albanian language by children even after several years of schooling.

Rexhep Ismajli (2003), discussing the relation between popular and standard Albanian, refers to them as ‘standard’ and ‘organic’ variations pointing out that the ‘organic’ variety is the mother tongue, that is the first variety which is acquired through imitation. This is a socially homogenous and isolated variety, with well-defined physiognomy, spoken by people in a given geographic area, a milieu, and therefore presented as a dialect - a vernacular. Further, the author points out that that standard variety is connected mainly to the written language and that *The standard is more autonomous, normed, polyvalent,... and psychologically non-spontaneous, controlled, and acquired through schooling*. This fragment refers to a number of aspects under the current study, but two are more relevant: (i) the organic variety is acquired through imitation and (ii) the



standard is acquired through schooling. These two theses have been tested through the research in order to find out about the role of family and environment on one side, and that of schooling on the other, in acquiring Albanian as a first language. Further the author presents another important thesis on the role of addressing popular and standard variety of Albanian language in teaching and learning in schools. Ismajli (2003, p. 170) thinks that the popular variety can serve to improve the development of verbal expression and communication skills, whereas the standard variety could serve to explain the language norm to students. However, he insists that these should be applied through an integrated approach in teaching. The research has addressed this segment of teaching by looking at the verbal production of the observed children.

Transitional forms: An important aspect for acquiring the first language is the so called concept of transitional forms. In this context, Stephen Krashen (2009) tells about the distinction between fully acquired forms and morphemes and those partially acquired. The latter take on transitional or developing usages reflected in mispronunciation and errors (p.12). As the current study found, this is a common phenomenon for Albanian language, too. For illustration, *mami më /fa/* (in stead of */më tha/*)<sup>iii</sup>, *Dea nuk don me ku<sup>iv</sup>* – (use of third person singular and mispronunciation of the word *shkuar*); *butujose* (*bukuroshe*), *tutël* (*kukull*)<sup>v</sup> and so on. These transitional forms are of great interest, since a number of them, instead of transforming into well-formed structures, with the passing of time get petrified and remain in use as final forms by children and even young persons.

### ***Forming questions***

Similar to other grammatical categories, forming questions appears to follow the same pattern of natural order of

acquisition. Discussing creation of interrogative forms or questions, Lois Bloom (1991) states that “A regularity has been found in the way children learn to form questions in English language. In this context, one is dealing with a predictable order of presentation of question words. Usually 'What' is the first question word used by children. It is usually acquired as part of a whole entity ('whassis?') and some time will pass before the child understands that the produced form has different versions *What is this?* Or *What are these?* (Lightbown and Spada, 2013, p. 11). These findings were confirmed in another earlier study by Bloom et al, who state that “Children in this study learned to make questions with /wh/ question words in an identical development order so that *what*, *where*, and *who* were acquired before words *why*, *how*, and *when* (Bloom, 1982). In the current study, efforts were made to ascertain the order of first occurrence of question words and forming of questions in Albanian.

*Forming of negative sentences - negation:*

In “How languages are learned”, Patsy Lightbown and Nina Spada (2013) state that as in the case of questions, expression of contradiction and forming of negative sentences requires a learning process that moves from simple forms through to more complex negative sentences (p. 9). Further, they provide an order for creating negative forms consisting of several stages starting from gesticulations expressing contradiction and using the word ‘no’ (*stages 1 and 2*), up to more complex negative sentences (with question tags in stage 6). The same as in English language, other studies have confirmed existence of an order of acquisition of negative forms in other languages as well (Wode, 1981). The current research has looked into the phenomenon of phased forming of negative forms in Albanian as a first language.

*Language acquisition through imitation and generalization:*

Imitation and generalization are important processes of acquisition of first language. Regarding imitation, Fraser (1963, p. 121) states that *“children’s imitation of grammatical constructs regularly surpassed their comprehension, which in turn was superior to their freely generated speech.”* This means that children commonly express more than they understand or verbalise in their purposeful speech. Namely, they can reiterate structures heard in their environment, but could not identify the same objects when shown to them in pictures (Fraser, 1963). Generalization, on the other hand, is a learning process that creates linguistic constructs building on material they pick up from everyday communication and interaction. Explaining the process of generalization, Adele Goldberg poses the following questions:

How do learners acquire generalizations such that they can produce an open-ended number of novel utterances based on a finite amount of input? Why are languages the way they are? ... These approaches emphasize that speakers’ knowledge of language consists of systematic collections of form-function pairings that are learned on the basis of the language they hear around them. (Goldberg, 2006).

The current research focused on the moment of transition from imitation to acquisition through generalization.

*Methodology:*

Empirical data were collected by 97 bachelor students, who conducted a survey of about 200 children by observing their (verbal and nonverbal) communication with other people in their environment. Observed children were divided into four

age groups: 0-2, 3-4, 5-7, and 7-11 years. This division is based on the important stages of cognitive development of the child, also corresponding to the cognitive development phases identified by the Piaget. The age group of 1-2 years represents initial forms of proper communication with the environment, the age of 3-4 years brings significant changes in the development of imagination and verbal communication, the age of 5-7 is related to the acquisition of reading and writing skills and socialization and more active interaction with other children, whether in nurseries or in pre-school institutions; the last phase (pre-operational) reflects a more complex phase of development and more intensive use of verbal and written communication. These four phases partly coincide with the cognitive development stages of Piaget (1959), with the age-group 11-16 years (formal operational stage) not included in this research. This stage is left aside on purpose as it does not bring about any significant development (from the perspective of natural order hypothesis), and also because it exceeded the research skills of our team of (junior bachelor) students of English.

The research was carried out by collecting naturalist linguistic materials (Creswell, 2012) that emerged from the communication of observed children with their environment. The observation was of a non-experimental naturalistic type (Frey, 1999) and was focused on forming and use of: questions, negative forms, verb tenses, sentences, and the use of other forms (adjectives, pronouns, and adverbs). The research workload was equally divided among the researchers: each student observed at least one to two children in one or two different age-groups focusing in at least two aspects (such as questions, or negatives, or verb tenses) over a period of two weeks. The observed children were the researchers' family or kin, or they were neighbours. Observations were carried out

only after formal approval by the child's parents. Whenever possible and with special permission, researchers also observed children in preschool institutions.

Apart from classical observation, the researchers engaged in keeping written notes on linguistic materials observed and provided audio and/or video evidence of their observations. At least half of the researchers (those engaged with children over 4 years of age) drafted simple sets of questions (based on guidelines given in the observation protocol).

Together with recording or taking notes of materials, researchers registered their most important observations in a table consisting of five columns, one for each of the observed aspects: questions, negations, verb tenses, forming of sentences and other forms respectively. Researchers observed and filled in the tables based on written instructions distributed prior to the research and practised in preparatory sessions with the lead researcher. Data on the sixth aspect (dialect and vernacular) were processed and analysed after all materials had been collected.

The collected naturalist data were then processed, coded and classified, according to age-groups and aspects observed, by thirteen junior researchers, those who proved most active during the process of data collection. Each of them were asked to process data on one (out of five) aspect and two (out of four) age groups. In more concrete terms, one student, for example, processed data on forming of questions for two age-groups. This made it possible for cross-checking since all data were processed by at least two different students. Apart from mere processing of data, this group of thirteen students also took note of their preliminary generalizations from the processed data.

Key difficulties encountered by the researchers involved observation of the youngest children, who kept silent or got

distracted every time a telephone/camera/or voice recorder was activated.<sup>vi</sup>

### ***Presentation and discussion of outcomes***

Findings of the research on natural order of acquisition of Albanian as a first language are presented below, structured according to key aspects (variables) and by age-group of observed children:

Aspects analysed (dependent variables):

- questions
- negatives
- sentences
- verb tenses
- use of various forms (adjectives, adverbs, pronouns) and
- influence of dialect and vernacular (included later on).

Age groups<sup>vii</sup> (independent variables):

- 1-2 years old
- 3-4 years old
- 5-7 years old
- 8-11 years old.

Aspect 1: Questions

#### ***Age 1-2:***

At this age, especially during the first year, we come across simple telegraphic questions formed with particle ('a') or with question words ('where' or more rarely 'why'), but which express a complete meaning. Questions are deficient in terms of syntax as they omit secondary elements of the sentence and are based on structural words, predicate, and more often subject.

- Examples: A? "Ku beba?"[Where baby?]/ Ku mama? [Where Mammy?]/ Ku papa? [Go bye-bye?]/Ku babi? [Where Daddy?]

At this stage, we encounter requests more often than questions. Requests are expressed with exclamations and interjections. Gestures play a very important role at this stage, as do the nonverbal expressions, which more often express emotions and persistence. Requests are mainly expressed with one word only (noun) and sometimes with a noun and a verb (*ama ujë*) [give water]. Intonation appears to be very important at this age.

*Mamaa! Mil! Opa!?* [Mammy! Good! Take me!?] *Amaaa!* [Give meeee!], *Totaaaa* [Caaaaake] (asking for cake); *Pshe?* [Why?]; *Amaaa!* [Give me!]; *Pet a?* [Again?]; *“aaaaa qafi”* [“Hug you”] holding arms in the form of a hug. *‘a?’[a]*, *‘e?’[e]*, *‘ë?’[ə]*; *‘ama ujë’* [Give me water]; *‘ama top’* [give me ball]; *‘ama mu’* [give me]; *‘mami jep’* [Mammy give]; *‘ama lugë’* [give spoon]

The question in some cases emerges only from intonation due to lack of other indicators:

- *Mami vi unë?* [Mummy I come?] (Can I go with you?).

Elements of more complex questions appear during the second year of life, such as:

- *“A kojna te Andi? (A do të shkojmë te Andi?)* [Shall we go at Andi’s?”], *“Qa ban ti n’kol?”* [What you do at school?], *“A e din qa oqt”* [Do you know what it is?] *“A pim bjen lojna”* [Will you bring me toys?], *“A nuk ka televigjoli ljet a”* [Doesn’t the TV have network?]. The latter, *Doesn’t the TV have network* – most likely learnt by way of imitation. *“Ku opa te Gani?”* [Go bye-bye at Gani’s].

### **Age 3-4**

More complex questions are made at this age, including particle *‘a’* and all question words, including *why*, *who*, *when* and questions beginning with *what*, *how many*, etc.

- Examples: *Why? Who? Where?*

- *Për sa pot vyjn lojat?* (Për cka po të duhen lodrat?) [*What do you need the toys for?*]<sup>viii</sup>  
*A pot vyen sikjo?* (A po të duhet kjo?) [*Do you need this?*]  
*A po i don dyat?* [*Do you want both of them?*]  
*Ska po skrun?* (Çka po shkruan?) [*What are you writing?*]  
*Kul ka me alë babi?* (Kur ka me ardhë babi?) [*When is Daddy coming?*]  
*Sa mke ble?* (Cka më ke ble?) [*What have you bought me?*]  
*A fej me ty sot?* (A flejë me ty sot?) [*Can I sleep with you today?*]

However, the process of forming correct and more complex questions, from the syntactic aspect, is not complete at this age. Namely, the questions are made more complex, more complete, but they often lack the syntactic accuracy and correct pronunciation of sounds. Gestures, mimics and other nonverbal signs play an important role at this stage, too.

At this stage, children's questions show that they still do not distinguish very well the time concept:

*Mam a shkona edhe na qatje* [*Mammy, shall we go there too?*]  
(Watching a wedding party on TV which took place several months ago).

### **Age 5-7:**

This is the kindergarten and school age, which is expressed both in the content and in more complex question forms. At this stage, questions are mainly formed using the Albanian language interrogative particle 'A' and relative pronouns 'who' 'what' 'why'.

- Examples: *A po i bajna detyrat?* [*Shall we do homework?*], *A guxoj mi ble dy loja?* [*May I buy two toys?*], *Cka je tu shkru ti?* [*What are you writing?*] *Pse **pom bon** shumë pyetje?* [*Why are you asking me so many questions?*], *A ma jep pak*



*telefonin? [Will you give me your phone for a while?], A ma lexon prallen ti sot? [Will you read me the fairy tale today?], A skom me shku neser ne shkolle a? [Am I not going to school tomorrow?], A munesh me ma ndreq qit lojë? [Can you fix me this toy?], Kush ka me ardhë neser? [Who is coming tomorrow?] E ti kush je? [And who are you?], Qysh e ki emrin? [What is your name?], Kush të pëlqen ty ma shumë? [Who do you like more?]*

*Sa osht ora? [What time is it?], kur ja fillon msimi [When does the lesson start?], shka kemi sot per dreke" [What do we have for lunch today?]. Also: pse spe rrin ti te na [why aren't you staying at our place?], a kemi me shku te halla mi pa? [Are we going to Auntie's for a visit?].*

Pronunciation errors still occur at this stage because of their young age. However, it is worth pointing out that dialect forms start to appear more frequently, mainly in vocabulary. Namely, the pre-primary and the first grade do not have the expected impact in the quality of questions formed by children at this age.

This stage represents also the more complex understanding of the time concept. Children start becoming more aware of the future and past tense – expressed by way of questions:

- *Kur është mas pushimit? [When is it after holiday?], A keni me ardh nesër? [Are you coming tomorrow?]*

### **Age 7-11:**

Children already form more complex and, from the grammatical and syntactic aspect, more accurate questions. By this time, children form complete interrogative sentences with all parts of the sentence, including interrogative pronouns, interrogative particle 'a', personal pronouns, objects, and so on. At this age, we also come across correct usage of questions

formed in the present and past tense. Question words ‘Which and Who’ also start to be used more frequently at this age, most likely as a form of standardized language acquired at school. It is important to emphasize that only at this stage one can notice the impact of education on application of standard language and in forming questions, including polite requests (for example *A ban me ma qu ni foto të bebes?* [Could you send me a picture of the baby?]). However, the dialect forms are also retained, albeit at a smaller degree:

*Kur është programi?* [When is the programme?], *A jeni ju në fakulltet?* [Are you at faculty?], *Qka studioni?* [What do you study?], *Cila ngjyre e keni qef?* [What colour do you like?], *Qka je tu thanë?* [What are you saying?], *Qysh po kalon fakulltet?* [How are you getting along faculty?].

*A keni me nejt?* [Are you staying?], *A kini me shku najkun per vikend?* [Are you going anywhere for the weekend?], *A ban me ma qu ni foto bebes?* [Could you send me a picture of your baby?], *Kush a qajo qika nfoto?* [Who is that girl in the picture?], *Pse pom bertet?* [Why are you shouting at me?], *Qka tha mami me ba?* [What did Mum say to do?].

*Aspect: Negative form – negative sentences:*

### **Age 1-2:**

Expressing negation, objection and protest at this stage is very expressive and consists of few verbal and many more powerful and emotionally charged nonverbal elements. This is present particularly when related to food, parents, competition, rejection of unknown persons, etc. The main verbal forms are: ‘jooo’ [nooo], ‘ë-ë’ [ə-ə], ‘jemiii’ [mine], followed mainly with mimics and powerful gesticulations as a sign of negation and objection. At this stage appear adjectives expressing likes or dislikes (*keq – milë*) [bad – good]; the negative form is often

formed by combining the verb with the negative word /jo/ [no] instead of the particle *nuk* [not] (Jo du - s'du) [*no want for don't want*] or by providing the affirmative form due to inability to pronounce a certain phoneme (/s/); for example *ta jap* [*I will give it to you*] intending to say *s'ta jap* [*I won't give it to you*]. In such cases, the meaning is derived mainly from the abundant mimics or gesticulations at this age. More examples for illustration of the above generalisations:

- Jo [No], “ jo jo, ë-ë [no no, ə ə] (more frequent) with facial mimics expressing refusal, *Ma-maaa* [*don't don't*], *jemiiii* [*mine*], *Joooo* [*Nooooo*], *MAMI i mile* [*MAMMY good*], *BABI i mile* [*DADDY good*], *ma/ mo* [no/not](for “don't”), *a-a*, *Jo* [No], *ssdu* [*don't want*]; *Se jo se du* [*No because I don't want*]; *Jo se keq* [*No because bad*].
- Shakes the head in the form of negation, body movement denoting rejection, facial aggressive mimics, moves away with entire body denoting negation.

### **Age 3-4 years:**

Children of this age already form short negative sentences by using negative particle *nuk* [not] (and its short form 's' [n't] in combination with a verb for example 'sdu' [*won't*]). The negation is still emotionally charged and conveyed with body expressive forms. Sentences consist of telegraphic elements but far more complete than in those of 1-2 years of age, thus expressing complete negative stances or opinions, often including also justification of such stances. Examples: *jo nuk du* [*no, I don't want to*], *kurgjo hiq sdu* [*I want nothing at all*], *hiq sdu* [*don't want*] *jom idhnu skom ty moter mo* [*I'm mad at you, you no longer my sister*], *du me shku n'çerdhe edhe n'fakulltet* [*I want to go to the kindergarten and to faculty*], *sdu me shku n'klas te pare hiq* [*I don't want to go to first grade at all*], *Joooo,une hiq spo don* [*No, I wants not*].

Negative sentences are often constructed based on the negative comparison of two things or concepts:

Examples: *Qenin e du, macen se du* [I like the dog, don't like the cat]; *Une ty nuk du* [I no love you]; *une ty jom idhnu* [I mad at you]; *Nuk e kam ba unë, ai e ka ba*; [I didn't do it, he did it]; *mos bëtit ti mu, ti je e keqe* [Don't shout you me, you are bad].

### ***Age 5-7 years:***

Children of this age use better constructed and more complex forms. Their emotionally outlined attitudes continue to be present here as well; however, a more rational thinking is observed and negation is often followed with justification. Negative sentences are used at this age to give orders, but also to stage threats. One can observe here errors in using persons (*s'ka me lujtë ma me ty – në vend të skam*) [no more play with you – instead of I will not play any more with you), use of dialect or vernacular forms (*sum, spe, ncuk, etc.*) [not, why, no, etc.]

- Examples: *Jo se ajo loder osht i keq* [No because that toy is bad], *Jo se ajo mu niher mka bertiiiit edhe osht i keq* [No because she shouted at me once and is bad], *Jo une nuk bona kurgjoo* [No, I did nothing], *une se kom preeek* [I didn't touch], *Jo se nuk jom fmi* [No 'cause I am not a child], *Jo se shume nxeht* [No because is too hot],
- *Ma ka marre kukllen e nuk osht tu ma kthy* [He/she took my doll and won't give it back]; *Jo spe du kerrin* [No, I don't want the car]; *ama telefonin* [Give me the phone]; *Shko prej shpies tem* [Leave my house]; *mas hajde ma* [Don't come again]; *Mos m'ba kaq shum pyetjeeee (i inatosur)* [Don't ask me so many questions (upset)]; *S'ka me lujt ma me ty* [I won't play any more with you].

- *Ncuk, duke tundur kokën* [Ntzə, shaking his/her head]; *Jo qaq shumë* [Not so much]; *Hiq sum pëlqen* [I don't like him/her at all];

The adverb *never* and the negative particle *either*,

- *Se kom pa kurrë; [I never saw him/her]; s'jom tu e gjetë librin* [Can't find the book]; *As dje nuk kemi pas shkolle* [We had no school yesterday either].

### **Age 8-11 years old:**

Negative sentences become more complex, but the change does not match the difference in age (as was the case with the more complex forms of questions).

Examples: *Jo nuk shkoj* [No I won't go], *Jo dielli e kish nxe* [No, the sun warmed it], *Se msusja neve hiq detyra nuk na ka jep edhe une nuk po du me msu* [Teacher gave us no homework and I don't want to study], *Mu nuk um pëlqen* [I don't like him/her], *Shumë e keqe* [Very bad], *Hiq se kam qef* [I don't like him/her at all], *Për mu nuk është* [It is not for me]. *Jo nuk është qashtu!* [No, it is not like that!], *Jo, nuk e di* [No, I don't know], *Tenisi nuk më pëlqen* [I don't like tennis], *Jo unë nuk rri me bebe* [No, I won't stay with the baby];

The level of use of dialect and vernacular at this age is also surprising.

- *Mu nuk um pëlqen kafsha gjarpri* [I don't like animal snake], *Mu s'um pëlqen landa e pundores* [I don't like the handicraft subject]; *Ja,ja,ja* [no, no, no]; *Nc* [ntzə]; *jo mor cfarë banketi* [no, what party, come on]; *Nuk um hahet dardha qaq* [I don't like pear so much].

*Aspect – verb tenses:*

### **Age 1-2 years:**

Out of 59 cases analysed for the aspect of verb usage, 27 do not use any tense but instead use parts of speech either solely or

combined with one another; 25 use present tense in active voice; 6 use past tense or a mixing of tenses; and one child uses past perfect tense, which was either an imitation or a very specific individual case.

Another thing worth mentioning is that the observed children from 12 until 20 months of age predominantly use only present tense in active voice. Other cases are with children of above two and around three years old, where one can observe the simple past tense, or in some cases a mixture of these two tenses.

With children that do not use any of the tense, one can observe usage of specific parts of speech. Under the age of 20 months, children mostly use nouns (mum, dad, cradle, water, snacks) and particles. From 20 months of age and onwards, they use more noun phrases with adjectives in order to describe and achieve what they want (babi mil [*daddy good*], nga pejt [*run fast*], fjal e keqe [*bad word*]).

#### ***Age 3-4 years:***

Out of 59 observed children, the following was noted: 32 examples in the present tense, 21 in present perfect tense, 11 in simple past tense, 5 in past perfect tense, 12 in future tense and in 10 cases no significant example was registered.

In light of the above, it can be said that children of 3-4 years old, in compliance with the processability theory, initially learn to use the simple present tense, then simple past and finally future simple tense. Most of them have difficulties with correct pronunciation of words. Most of them do not make the distinction between the time concept of the past tense and the future tense, whereas some of them have grasped these concepts. This means that the grasping of the time concept begins approximately at this time with the observed children. Some children use the third person singular when referring to

themselves. Children of this age mainly use the key elements of the sentence, rarely using adverbs, structural words, particles and conjunctions.

Based on the language used by children it can be noted that parents do not use standard language or more complex concepts in communication with their children. It is likely that while conversing with their children, parents use the modified language or child language. For example, all children use the form of auxiliary verb *kam* [have] (as in *I have to go*) instead of the form “*do të*” [will] while forming the future tense; or they use ‘*jam kanë*’ [dialect form of *have been*] instead of ‘*kam qenë*’ [have been]. This aspect would require further research of the form and content of parents’ communication with their children.

#### ***Age 5-7 years:***

Confusion of verb tenses:

*During the research of the tense forms for the age of 5-7 years old, more complex forms have been encountered, as well as confusions of the used tenses. This shows that children are now beyond the imitation phase, they understand mainly the time concept but they have problems with articulating and using the correct tense forms and relating them with time.*

Examples of incorrect usage: *Dje kom me shku te Lisa* [I will go yesterday at Lisa’s]; *Dje kena me shku te dajt* [We will go yesterday at uncle’s]; *Une jam kan neshel te dajt* [I was at my uncle’s tomorrow]; *Kur I bleve patikat* [When did you buy the sneakers?]; *Qetash kemi shku* [We will go now]; *Aroni du akullore* [Aron want ice-cream]; *Ku ke shku nesër?* [Where did you go tomorrow?]; *Jom kon nesër* [I was there tomorrow]; *Ka me ardh dje te Kosova* [He/she will come to Kosovo yesterday].

Examples of correct usage: *Mesuesja na ka then mi be detyrat* [The teacher told us to do our homework]; *Kam me shku te dajet* [I will go at my uncle's]; *Jam kan ne shitore* [I was at the shop]; *Kam me shku papa me mamin* [I will go bye-bye with Mammy]; *mami ka ku punë* [Mammy went to work]; *Pak ma von vi* [I will come a bit later]; *Kena mu knaq në pushim* [We will have fun on our holiday]; *E ka pa në film* [He/she saw it in the movie].

Form of learning: imitation – generalisation: transfer of learning through imitation to generalisation of more complex forms is observed at this age. Example: *Kom me ta këputë gjuhen* [I will cut your tongue]. An expression learnt through imitation from parents or the people around. However, on the other hand, we come across an original reaction of the child towards the action understood: *Une e mshefna gjuhen* [I hid my tongue] – the generalised response (learnt as a reaction to a threat and as a result of understanding);

### ***Age 8-11 years:***

A more frequent use of past tenses, as well as more complex forms combined with adjectives, was observed here. But at the same time one can observe strengthening instead of weakening of dialect and vernacular forms.

Thus, while monitoring 59 respondents of the mentioned age, 14 cases of use of present tense were encountered; 2 cases of past perfect; 19 cases of present perfect; 5 cases of simple past; 1 of past progressive tense; 7 cases of future tense; in 15 cases it was difficult to clearly tell tenses used.

Therefore, in contrast to children of 3-4 and 5-7 years old, the age group of 8-11 years uses almost all verb tenses. In general, they apply good pronunciation of words. They can use conjunctions and they are aware of what is 'yesterday' and 'tomorrow'. In general, they can make the difference between the concepts of yesterday, today and tomorrow.



*Unë di ma shumë se ti me numëru [I can count more than you](present tense and comparison of adjectives); Unë kesh e bleva [I went and bought it]; Kisha harru me ble ni laps [I had forgotten to buy a pencil]; Msusja e ka shkrujtë [The teacher wrote it]; Mka msu [He/she taught me]; Jena kan [We've been]; Kom shkru [I have written]; Kom ba [I've done]; Dje kam shku me lujt [I went to play yesterday]; Testin e matematikes e kam kry [I have completed the math test];*

*Unë do të punoj [I will work]; Do të lexoj një lektyrë [I will read a book]. Kum hangër picë [I ate pizza]; Gjyshi jem i ka pas dy grue [My grandfather had two wife] (incorrect use of the noun wife in plural). Mam nesor në ora 8 kam mu kan në shkollë [Mum, I have to be at school tomorrow at 8]; Shumë e mirë u kan koha sot [The weather was very good today]; T'hanen kam me shku me lu basket [On Monday I will go to play basketball].*

They do not identify themselves with the third person singular as was the case with younger ages.

*Unë kam qenë dje të luaj futboll. [I went yesterday to play football] /Unë do të shkoj nesër në shkollë [I will go to school tomorrow]. Yet, errors are still encountered in expressing themselves, as well as the usage of inadequate or words outside the standard language.*

*Aspect: sentences*

### **Age 1-2 years:**

At this age, child form incomplete sentences to express complete thoughts, often using third instead of first person singular when talking about themselves: *Jora ku!* (*Jora ka shku*) [*Jora left*]. Usually, sentences consist of 1 or 2 words. At least on surface, words appear unconnected and telegraphic.

For example, burning of the hand is *xhixha* [hot]; sentences often consist of a single noun: “mama” [mammy], “baba” [daddy], “Kuku” [wow], “Dada”, “Aba”, “Hala (Halla) [Auntie]”, or referring to various animals “*mjau mjau* (maca) [*meaow, meaow (cat)*]”, “*hum hum* (qeni) [*woof, woof (dog)*]”. Sentences are usually in the first person of present tense and in exclamative and imperative form “*du çokolladë* [*want chocolate*], *jo* [no], *nuk po du* [*don’t want*], *nuk po shkoj* [*I’m not going*]. They use the verb mainly in the present tense, while sentences are incomplete. In spoken language obstacles are encountered in linking words, whereas conjunctions and particles are missing.

#### ***Age 3-4 years:***

Sentences at this age are still mainly in the present tense, though the number of words and parts of speech has increased (verbs, adjectives, structural words), use of objects is noted, etc.

- *Unë e kum pa filmin* [*I have seen the movie*]; *Unë e di ma mirë se ti* [*I know better than you*].
- *Pe fyt (fryt)* [*I am blowing it*]. *Hajde t’perqafoj, t’qafi* [*Let me hug you*]; *Une e kom qendesën mamin e dytë* [*Qendesa is my second mum*]; *Ka shku larg (larg)* [*He/she went far away*]; *Hekma zinxhirin, jom bo nuqe* [*Remove my chain, I became a bride*]. *Une du me lujt me kuklla* [*I want to play with dolls*]. *Me ka marrë mari (malli)* [*I miss you*].

At this age, sentences begin to express an understanding of the concept of future and past time:

- *Kom me gjet gjyshe tjetër* [*I will find another grandmother*]; *Kom me ndrru në spital* [*I will swap her in the hospital*]; *Oj tete te ka hup djari (djali)* [*Auntie, your son is lost*]; *Vi te ti nëse mi plotëson dëshirat* [*I will come to your place if you fulfil my wishes*]; *Msim me mësuar* [*Lesson to learn*]; *ka me shku shkollë* [*Has to go to school*]; *kur ta vëraj këmishën mamit më tej ku e ke vëraj*

*kamen e une fam te ruga [When I hurt my leg, Mammy ask where you hurt your leg and I say in the street].*

### **Age 5-7 years:**

As a result of education and cognitive maturity, sentences at this age contain more sentence elements, they are more complex and describe things in more detail. Example: *babi mka thane me shku drejt mandej djathtas mandej ne kthesen e pare mu kthi majtas [Daddy told me to go straight, then to the right and then on take the first turn left].*

Thoughts are now more complex and expressed more accurately: *Msusja nuk mka pelqy [I didn't like the teacher]. Une kaloj shume mire ne shkolle [I have a great time at school]. Edukatorja na ka mësuar qysh me numëru [Our educator taught us how to count]; Shumë është lehtë [It is very easy]; Unë i di numrat edhe në shqip edhe në anglisht [I know numbers both in Albanian and in English].*

### **Age 8-11 years:**

At this stage, children use more complex forms and sentences, including indirect speech (*I thash mamit a bujna te daj, thojke jo*) [*I told Mum, we should sleep over at uncle's, she said no*] and sometimes even subordinated clauses.

Examples: *Une kom me shku ne hane kom mu bo astronaut [I will go to the Moon to become an astronaut]. Jom biznesmen pe maj mallin me kamiona [I am a businessman I am getting goods by trucks]. Po dal jasht, po luj me top [I'm going outside; I'm playing with a ball]. Nuk po du me shku ne Albi, du mi pa pinguinat [I don't want to go at Albi's, I want to see penguins]. Shum po vonohesh [You're so late]. Mami i ka dy shoqe [Mum has two friends]; Albina, po me bon shum nervoz [Albina, you make me so upset]. Une spo kom qka me bo [There's nothing I can do]. Kanihere pe rrej mamin [Sometimes I lie to my Mum]. Kta veq mu po me bërtasin [They're shouting only at me]. Po du qaj [I want tea]. Spom shkohet [I don't feel like going]. Po du mi*

*vesh qeto tesha* [I want to wear those clothes]. *Mkeni lodh me kto detyra* [You've badgered me with this homework]. *Une jom spiderman* [I'm a Spiderman]. *Llamburgjini kom me ble kur bohna i madh* [I will buy a Lamborghini when I am a grownup].

As noted in the examples above, simple sentences remain however the most frequent syntactic forms used to express opinion. Something else that appears with somewhat stronger persistence at this stage (as also presented in the examples above) is the strengthening of the dialect element in spoken language. Parallel to the dialect and regional vernacular, one also comes across the usage of standardized language. This shows the increased role of school, but also a growing influence by the neighbourhood:

*Une do të bëhem mjeke, ushtarë, këngëtare, violoniste, futbollër, infermiere* [I will become a doctor, soldier, violinist, football player, nurse]. *Ka ra bore* [It snowed]. *Kena msu për zgjedhimin e foljeve* [We learnt about conjugation of verbs]. *Po du me ba një pyetje* [I want to make a question]. *Kena ba test* [We did a test].

*Aspect: Use of various forms and parts of speech*

### **Age 1-2 years:**

Comparison of adjectives

At this age, the adjective serves to qualify a noun (even when not followed by it). The use of comparative degree was not observed. *Bukujose, e milë, buda, e kece, babi mile* [Beauty, good, fool, bad, daddy good].

### ***Pronouns***

Obviously, children of this age are focused on the first person of pronouns (personal, possessive) and possessive adjectives.

Transitional forms are also present (see below *tu, e vet, ota, mue*) [*your, his/her, they, me*]. Examples: *Jemja, tu, jemi, e jemja, e vet, jem, ota (jotja), mue* [*mine, your, my, his, mine, yours, me*].

#### *Adverbs and relative pronouns*

A wide range of adverbs and relative pronouns is used at this age (more frequently *where* and *when*).

Examples of adverbs: *dje* [*yesterday*], *sot* [*today*], *neser* [*tomorrow*], *tash* [*now*], *tu* [*here*], *jashte* [*outside*], *neqel* [*tomorrow*], *qitu* [*here*], *pak* [*little*], *qum* [*a lot*], *larg* [*far*], *shum* [*much*], *kur* [*when*].

### *Transitional forms*

With regards to phonetically unclear words, we came across instances that children cannot use the sound SH [ʃ] in a word when this sound is followed by a consonant. They often describe things based on the noise they produce ((for instance, *wroom* (*car*)) and so on. While articulating words they tend to use voiced sounds, either modifying the sounds or completely omitting them.

*Rlzu* (*rrëzuar*) [*fall*], *ljet* (*dhjet*) [*ten*], *lad* (*çokollatë*) [*chocolate*], *oqt* (*është*) [*is*], *pehen* (*prehër*) [*lap*], *zhdu* (*nuk dua*) [*I do not want*], *kojna* (*shkojmë*) [*let us go*], *mjau* (*cat*), *bee* (*sheep*), *keli* (*kerri*) [*car*], *jes papa* [*yes we go*].

#### *Age 3-4 years:*

Comparison of adjectives begins at this age and so does the use of degrees of comparison. Actually, one can talk more about the awareness related to the degrees of comparison than about their proper usage, namely it is observed that understanding precedes articulation. This is because instead of using comparative degree *i mirë - më i mirë* [*good -better*], children of

this age prefer to use *shumë i mirë* [very good] or *sa bukur* [how beautiful] or using a word denoting greater quality of something *sjam e total – jam e male* [I'm not little – I'm big]. Although rarely, forms such as *ma i mav (më i madh)* [older], *ma e mir* [better], *ma i folt (më i fortë)* [stronger] are also encountered. In addition, using more than one adjective in an utterance (sentence) also appears at this age (*e male, e tuqe*) [big, red].

Adjectives are compared by using a limited number of words and forms; in general those adjectives that are heard more often are used by placing in front of them the word *shumë* [very], *e madhe* [big], *e vogël* [small], *e mirë* [good], *e keqe* [bad], while other words are very rare: *Sjam e total, jam e male* [I'm not small, I am big]; *un jam i mav ai osht i vogej* [I am big, he is small]; *un jam i madh sa ti* [I am as big as you are], *ma i folt se babi* [stronger than Daddy]; *ma e mirë* [better]; *qum bukul* [very beautiful]; *Unë jam rritë ma e madhe* [I have grown taller], and so on.

*Je e keqe* [You're bad]; *butujose (bukuroshe)* [beauty], *tutel (kukull)* [doll]; *e male e tuqe* [big red]; *laki zi* [black nail color]; *un jo e vogël* [I'm not little]; *sa e bukur* [how beautiful]; *filma vizatimor (me siguri me imitim)* [cartoons - probably through imitation]; *unt un* [me hungry]; *ni keqee; e bukur, e mile* [you bad, beautiful, good].

#### *Pronouns:*

Children of this age begin using more pronouns and not only personal ones but also other types, such as demonstrative pronouns. They also begin understanding the plural of pronouns and also their application in standard language. They also distinguish pronoun gender and number although they still do not use them accurately. One encounters here usage of pronouns in gender and number as well as expressed in two or more forms of the same pronoun: *jemja, jem, em, jeme, jemi* [mine]. With regards to pronouns, it is somewhat surprising that no considerable progress is observed from the age 1-2 years old.

*Examples:*

- *Ti [you], un [I], aj [he], ajo [she], na [we], atë [that], këtë [this], kjo [this], mu [me], kto [these], ty [you]*
- *Jemja [mine], jem [mine], em [mine], mijat [mine –plural], jeme [mine], jemi [mine], tonden [yours], e vet [his], mue [me].*

*Adverbs:*

The comparative degree of adverbs was also encountered here, whereas adverbs of time, place and quantity are more often used (*ma anej, veq pak*) [*further, just a little*]. Examples: *Nalt [high], nesra [tomorrow], qeshtu [like this], qetash [now], larg [far], kur [when], ma von [later], neser [tomorrow], ku [where], tash [now], neshel [tomorrow], ma anej [further there], qetu [here], pak [little], veq pak [just a little], dje [yesterday], shum [a lot].*

*Transitional forms:*

At the age of 3-4 years old, children also articulate words through voiced sounds. Likewise, at this age children begin to recognize more objects describing them the way they see and hear. These transitional forms are understood almost without any exception and are used with empathy by their family members. For example, a family stated that the word /*tutël*/ (*kukull*) [*doll*] was used similarly by the elder sister and the other members of the family.

- *Jonat [ours], arll [come], xysi [grandpa], ydyn, shlojn [drop], las [speak], lak [colour], tutël [doll], sangalep [carrot]. Naqa [pleased], ere [and], fam [say], doa [hand], gjogi [bird], mquqja [teacher], dili [sun], koka [coke], pija [drank].*

### **Age 5-7 years:**

#### *Comparison of adjectives*

Adjectives are almost regularly used at this age, however, a distinctive feature at this age is that comparison of adjectives is applied very seldom! Examples: *Keq* [bad], *e mil* [good], *djali i keq* [bad boy], *e mirë* [good], *I vogël* [small], *të gjatë* [long], *të njëjtë* [same], *e kuq* [red].

#### *Pronouns:*

Personal and possessive pronouns and possessive adjectives are used correctly at this age. However, a frequent use of dialect forms (*jemja*) [mine] is observed here as well. Illustrations: *Unë* [I], *ti* [you], *ai* [he], *ne* [we]; but also *Im – imja* [my – mine], *yt – jote* [your – yours], etc.

#### *Adverbs*

Adverbs are used extensively at this age. This may reflect an evolution in understanding of the concepts of time, place and size (including the rule of the conservation of objects). However, as with adjectives, the limited usage of comparative and superlative degrees of adverbs is impressive. On the other hand there is a growing use of dialect forms (see below). As with adverbs, relative pronouns (*ku, kur, pse*) [where, when, why] continue to be widely and correctly used by children of this age: *Sot* [today], *dje* [yesterday], *nesër* [tomorrow], *atje* [there], *nalt-lart* [high], *larg* [far], *pram-mbremë* [yesterday evening], *shumë* [a lot], *shumë mire* [very good], *sod-sot* [today], *tash* [now], *kurrë* [never], *sonte* [tonight], *niher-njëherë* [once], *ktëtu-ktu* [here], *lart* [up], *posht* [down].



### *Transitional forms*

Words, unintelligible for the interviewer, are observed here; however, these words most likely bear a meaning for the child and the family, as transitional forms towards a certain meaning or function. Examples: *Mshueshka*, *qatmakin*, *e tuq*. The word *e tuq* here – refers to the red colour. *Mshueshka* – *mësueses* [*to the teacher*], while the word *qatmakin* might refer to *çamçakëzin* [*chewing gum*]

### *Age 8-11 years:*

At this age, children use correctly most of the parts of speech. Use of comparative degrees is observed with adjectives and adverbs; the list of properly used pronouns is extended and uncomprehensible words begin to vanish.

### *Aspect: Dialect usage and its impact*

### *Age 1-2 years:*

At this age, it is not clear whether pronunciation and usage of incorrect forms is the result of using dialect forms (vernaculars), typical errors of the age or transitional forms. It was observed that in some cases it is the issue of using dialect forms (language heard in the child's environment). Such are the cases of using the dialect form *du* instead of *dua* [*want*], *kojna* instead of *shkojmë* [*we go*], *tamin* instead of *qumështin* [*milk*], *lu* instead of *luaj* [*play*], and so on. The last three cases are cases of both dialect forms (*tamlin* – *shkojna*) [*milk* – *we go*] and transitional forms (*tamin* – instead of *tamlin* [*milk*] and *kojna* instead of *shkojna* [*we go*]).

More examples: *Mami vi une?* [*Mammy, I come?*]; *Unë koj* (*une po shkoj*) [*I am going*]; *Du lu top* [*I wanna play with the ball*]; *Duu mami* (*të dua mami*) [*Love you Mammy*]; *Du pi tamin* (*qumështin*)

*[I want to drink milk]; Une tat kuka (unë fle me kukulla) [I sleep with dolls];*

The expression *une tat kuka* [*I sleep with dolls*] is a pure transitional form as it is not a form borrowed neither from the dialect nor from any regional vernacular. On the contrary, it seems that the children's transitional form *tat* [*sleep*] has influenced the spoken language of the adults, given that one can often come across formulations using the word *tat* (denoting sleep) in discussions between adult persons.

### ***Age 3-4 years:***

Dialect forms at this age are the result of the language used by the family and the environment where the child is growing up. During the research, no influence of the kindergarten or nursery-school was observed in the form of standard Albanian language used by children of this age. This may occur either due to inadequate inclusion of children in preschool institutions or as a result of language (dialect or vernacular) used in such institutions. At this age, usage of dialect forms begins to differentiate from usage of transitional forms.

*Jo gabim e ki* [*No, you're wrong*]; *Nuk është qështu* [*It's not like that*]; *Un e kum pa filmin* [*I have watched the movie*];

The vernacular forms *ki* [*you are*], *kum* [*I have*] and *qështu* [*like this*] may continue to be used by the child even after going to school.

On the other hand, researchers have also registered regular forms of standard language with this age group: *Jo, nuk dua* [*No, I don't want to*]; *Nuk ta jap* [*I won't give it to you*]; *Nuk te thirra* [*I didn't call you*]; *Nuk dua te luj* [*I don't want to play*]; *Mos ma merr* [*Don't take it from me*]. In all five sentences one encounters only one dialect usage (*luj*) [*play*]. Based on this, one finds that most often, the family influences the usage of non-standard language forms in the spoken language of pre-school children<sup>ix</sup>.

### **Age 5-7 years:**

One can easily notice the influence of education in this age group (especially the pre-primary grade and first grades of primary education). Children use more correct and more complete forms. In general, the collected examples show a qualitative and positive transfer in expression and in the forms used. It seems that, besides the more regular and more complete spoken language, the education gained at school also reflects at this age (*Mos rrej se s'bënë*) [*Don't lie because it is improper*].

#### **Examples:**

- *Mami a t'dal me lujt me top* ["Mammy, may I go out to play football"], *"Mami a me dergon ne shkollë?"* ["Mammy, will you take me to school?"], *"Mami kur kena me shku te dajit?"* ["Mammy, wher are we going at uncle's?"], *"Kur vjen babi?"* ["When is Daddy coming?"]
- *Kur t'rritna dua t'bëhem ose mësues ose profesoreshë* [I want to be either a teacher or a professor when I grow up], *kur jam kan e vogel jam qu n'katër n'mëngjes* [When I was little I woke up at four in the morning], *Dje e kemi msu njeriu dhe natyra* [Yesterday we studied Man and Nature]
- *E ti kush je?* [And who are you?] *Qysh e ki emrin?* [What is your name?] *Kush të pëlqen ty ma shumë?* [Who do you like more?] *A keni me ardh nesër?* [Are you coming tomorrow?]
- *Shumë është lehtë* [It is very easy]; *Unë i di numrat edhe në shqip edhe në anglisht* [I know numbers both in Albanian and in English].

Nevertheless, one observes frequent occurrences of dialect usage:

- *Kur është mas pushimit?* [When is it after the break?] *Mos m'ba kaq shum pyetje* (i inatosur) [Don't ask me so many

*questions (upset)]; S'ka me lujt ma me ty [No more playing with you]; Nuk e kum ba unë [It wasn't me]; Unë ngaj ma shpejt se ai [I run faster than he does]; Idhnohum e apet nrequm [We quarrel and reconcile again]; E kum pas shoqe prej klasës parashkollor [She was my friend since pre-school grade].*

One can assume that this happens due to a child's individual situation, but also due to the language used in the family and at school. As a rule, however, this age shows greater progress in using standard Albanian language – compared to all other age groups.

***Age 8-11 years:***

Two equally powerful tendencies are observed in this group: respect of standard and greater usage of dialect and vernacular forms. A more careful study of this age group may give important indications also on the quality of schooling in Kosovo for the respective level (grade 3-6) of education.

## ***Summary of findings***

The table below provides a summary of initial occurrence of main forms and categories for the respective studied aspects.

*Table 3: A more summarised presentation of findings:*

Aspect	Question	Negation	Verb tenses	Sentences	Forms (adjectives/adverbs)	Dialect/standard
Age						
1-2	Particle /a/? Requests Exclamation Cajoling	Nonverbal mimics, no, not, exclamation	Infinitive Present One word	Incomplete sentences S - P	Basic adjectives Personal pronouns Some question words	Transitional forms Some dialect
3-4	Simple questions Do ... Request	Nonverbal No, not, /no/ + verb	Present Other forms with mistakes appear	Incomplete sentences 1-5 words S-P + IO-O	Basic forms are compared (Adj. and Adv.) Possessive pronouns - mine Question words: Why, Who	Dialect Transitional form Some standard
5-7	More complex questions Question words	Simple and more complex negative sentences	Use of past and future tense	More complete sentences, also compound sentences. Complex sentences are lacking	Comparison of adj. Comparison of adv. Possessive adjectives	Standard language Some dialect

8-11	Complete questions Not so complex forms	Simple and more complex negative sentences	Use of past and future tense. Passive voice, indirect speech and verb modalities are lacking	Compound sentences are lacking	Comparison of adj. (comparative degree) Comparison of adv. Possessive pronouns and many pronouns	Not clear. A more complex situation. Needs to be studied
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## *Conclusions*

In the end, we can conclude that, as in the case of English language, there appears to be a natural order of acquisition of various morphemes and forms in Albanian as a first language.

Based on the results of our research, the main tendencies in acquisition of Albanian as a first language, an upward movement is discerned - from simple to more complex forms - relative to the age of observed children, in accordance with Pienemann's Processability Theory. More specifically, the following processes in the development of speaking are noticed among the observed children:

- From non-verbal - emotional expression to rational and verbal thinking (in coherence with the stages of cognitive development).
- From simple forms, often through transitional forms, to the standard language or dialect forms.
- Lack of complex forms (conditionals, passives, reported speech and so on). If Pienemann's stages of language acquisition are taken as a criterion (see above in the

theoretical framework), then stage four rarely takes place among younger Kosovars since no compound sentences with relative and/or subordinate clauses have been recorded during the observation.

- Relative lack of more advanced concepts (even in the 8-11 age group). Most of the language recorded is characterized by a limited vocabulary both in content and form.
- Repetition of dialect forms (kum – [I have], qështu – [like this], zdu – [I do not want], shkojna – [we go], etc.). This phenomenon is also a source of concern since it results in petrification of dialect or vernacular forms.
- The equivocal role of the school: on the one hand, promoting the use of standard Albanian (especially in primary education), but also in the petrification of dialect and vernacular forms (in lower secondary education), on the other hand.
- The increased importance of imitation in the use of dialect and other forms (see the summarized table presentation of the main findings above). Most of the collected materials appear to have been learnt through imitation, rather than generalization or systematic efforts of parents, the environment, and even teachers.

Referring back to research questions, one can say that, as in the case of English, there is a natural pattern of acquisition of Albanian as a first language. However, based on this first research, similarities and differences between the forms acquired in these two languages cannot be identified with certainty. This may also be due to the significant differences between the two languages in the forming of different grammatical categories and aspects: English as an analytic and Albanian as a synthetic language. A pattern identified with

Albanian language acquisition is that it goes from the simple to more complex forms: from one word to more words; from individual words to connecting them in a more complex and meaningful wholes; from the initial use of present tense to more complex tense forms, albeit the most complex ones are rarely or not encountered at all; from using a basic adjective to describe a noun, through comparing two base adjectives (*unë milë - ti keq*) [me good - you bad] to the use of the comparative form, though rarely using the superlative form of comparison; moving from non-verbal questions or requests to one word questions, and further to more complex forms of questions, and so on. These sequences in acquisition of various forms matches the cognitive development of children. Nevertheless, variations are noticed depending on: environment the child is raised in, the quality of the language material the child is exposed to, learner characteristics of individual children, parents' work and engagement in child's language development, quality of education and teaching, and so on.

Two important things emerged during the research, which were not originally planned:

1. While in English there is a language standard in speech and, particularly in writing, in Albanian, the use of dialect and even vernacular forms has emerged as an important element in the process of language acquisition.
2. The use of more complex morphological and syntactic forms in Albanian language are seldom or never encountered. Children are limited to the use of simple sentences and three or four basic verb tenses, they rarely use superlative forms of adjectives, and possess a limited vocabulary (even when observing children over the age of ten). These are some indications of a relatively poor education provisions, in the field of languages, in particular, but they are also indications of the simple



language material students are exposed to in the family early in their life.

Consequently, the quality of language material children are exposed to and use for communication in their families and environment, together with the quality of education and teaching provided in Kosovar schools, come to the forefront as issues that require thorough consideration and study in the future.

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<sup>i</sup> Mal-i – masculine definite suffix i; hap-a – past simple suffix a; hap-ëm – first person plural suffix - ëm, mir-i – case ending for accusative – I and so on.

<sup>ii</sup> Different ways of saying *let's go*, all in vernacular.

<sup>iii</sup> *mami më* /fa/ - similar to mom /tod/ me, instead of *told me* in English

<sup>iv</sup> Dea does not want to go – pronounced like /Dea don won go/

<sup>v</sup> *butujose* (for bukuroshe – beauty in English), *tutël* (for kukull – doll in English)

<sup>vi</sup> On the other hand, the research lacked a procedure – a more standardized questionnaire for all age groups.

<sup>vii</sup> Age groups were defined also based on the Piaget model on the stages of cognitive development of the child.

<sup>viii</sup> Guidelines for reading examples in this article:

*No brackets* - The form as pronounced/uttered by the child in mother tongue  
ex. *Për sa pot vyjn lojat?*

*Sometimes* (round brackets) - the meaning in standard Albanian. Ex. (Për cka po të duhen lodrat?)

*[square brackets]* - the meaning in English. Ex. [What do you need the toys for?]

<sup>ix</sup> Another study may explore the level of influence of various factors: family, pre-school institutions, environment, in the forms used in children's spoken language.

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# ***What do advanced ESL\EFL students' need to know to overcome 'collocational' hurdles?***

*Silvana Neshkovska<sup>1</sup> Ph.D*

*St. Kliment Ohridski University – Bitola, Macedonia, Faculty of  
Education*

*silvana.neshkovska@uklo.edu.mk*

## **Abstract**

This paper deals with the issue of collocations. More specifically, it investigates the role collocations play in achieving a native-like level of English language proficiency, and the essentials that advanced students of English should know to be able to overcome 'collocational' hurdles.

The paper proposes that advanced EFL\ESL students be provided with a solid theoretical background to be able to understand the concept of collocation, as this, in turn, can considerably alleviate the process of collocation reception and production. Based on a thorough literature review, the paper highlights aspects of collocations that should necessarily be brought to students' attention since the true mastery of English is unconceivable without a proper collocational competence. In that respect, first, different definitions of collocations are discussed; then, the most distinctive features of collocations which help in distinguishing collocations from similar phraseological expressions are presented; and, finally, the focus is placed on the different types of collocations. In addition, the paper lays out a selection of useful 'tools' and practices such as

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<sup>1</sup> Article received on the 10th October, 2018.

Article accepted on the 18th December, 2018.

Conflict of Interest: The author declares no conflict of interests.

regular and well-organized note taking (students' collocation glossaries); consulting collocation dictionaries, electronic language corpora and concordances, all of which are essential for advanced students of English to approximate native-like proficiency.

**Keywords:** *English collocations, advanced ESL\ EFL students, types of collocations*

The English language is probably one of the world's richest languages in terms of vocabulary, and collocations surely present a huge chunk of its vocabulary pool. Thus, Hill (2000) notes that collocations comprise as much as 80% of any written text in English. This means that in order to use the language in a more native-like way, ESL and EFL learners must acquire adequate collocational competence. Research has shown that learners' command of collocations influences their performance when it comes to their different language skills and components (Jaefarpour & Koosha, 2006). In other words, using collocations in listening, speaking, reading or writing helps learners "think more quickly and communicate more efficiently" (Hill, 2000). Collocational competence also functions as a benchmark used to distinguish the different levels of competence among advanced language learners (Zhang, 1993 in Chang, 2011). Language learners who are at a more advanced level of proficiency are expected to be able to recognize and use more collocations in the target language than learners at a lower level.

Despite this widely accepted importance of collocational competence, students in general seem to experience serious difficulties when it comes to collocations. Researchers have come to the conclusion that students very frequently are unable to place a word in the right combination with other words (Ellis, 1996; Chang, 2011), and that the most common errors in



learners' performance are, in fact, collocation errors (Faghih & Sharafi, 2006). This indicates that this specific segment of the EFL\ESL teaching practice has not received its due attention (Farghal & Obiedat, 1995 in Chang, 2011) in comparison to grammar and vocabulary, for instance. EFL\ESL students learn new words in isolation without considering their interaction with other words and the context in which they are used (Chang, 2011). They remain unaware of the interrelationship existing among words since they have not been instructed to notice the relationships among different lexical items. Thus, they end up producing syntactically correct, but collocationally inappropriate sentences.

One possible explication why collocations are not adequately treated in the teaching practice is, perhaps, related to the fact that, English textbooks chiefly present new vocabulary in isolation and pay scant attention to collocations in general (Wang and Good 2007). Given that, in most cases, the textbook is the main resource used in class, many teachers are enticed to follow closely this teaching resource, and as a result they unconsciously fall into the trap of neglecting collocations, partly or completely.

Having detected this issue, a lot of scholars strongly advocate for teaching practice which places more emphasis on words that demonstrate frequent co-occurrence with other words, i.e. collocations (Lewis, 1997; Bahns, 1993; Lewis, 2000). These are, in fact, the proponents of the so-called Lexical Approach<sup>i</sup> to language teaching, according to which a combination of words commonly found together should be recognized and processed as a unit so that second and/or foreign language learners can make the production fluent and without semantic mistakes. Collocational competence, in their view, is one of the main hallmarks of an advanced language user.

Nowadays, analyzing language statistically by means of large computer-based corpora has contributed immensely to raising an even greater awareness of the role collocations play in language learning and usage. In fact, it seems that with this newest trend of corpus analysis a realization has been reached that in a way “every word has its own grammar ... (and) ...‘knowing a word’ involves knowing its grammar – the patterns in which it is regularly used” (Lewis, 2000). One might assume that, due to this fresh surge of salience attached to collocations, they have finally received the attention they deserve in the teaching process. Unfortunately, practice shows that this segment of EFL/ESL teaching and learning is still pretty much lagging behind the other segments of language teaching (Hodne, 2009).

The aim of the paper is, in fact, in line with what the advocates of the Lexical Approach propose – an increased emphasis on collocations in teaching EFL\ESL. Namely, the paper at hand aims at making a contribution to sensitizing both EFL/ESL students and teachers of the pertinence of collocations especially in approximating native-like fluency and ‘idiomaticity’ of expression. Our position, however, is that true mastery of collocations, particularly in the case of the advanced students of English, should be based on providing students with a solid theoretical background about the nature of collocations. In that respect, the paper, drawing on the existing literature on collocations, discusses several vital aspects of collocations that students should be familiarized with: the most relevant definitions of collocations, the distinctive features of collocations and the different types of collocations.

In parallel with the theoretical background EFL\ESL, the paper proposes a selection of useful ‘tools’ and practices that students can use in their endeavor to ‘conquer’ collocations –

students' collocation glossaries, specialized collocation dictionaries, electronic corpora and concordances.

In the following sections, first, we discuss the selected aspects of collocations in some detail; and then, we present a brief overview of the suggested useful 'tools' and practices for successful acquisition and retention of collocations.

### *Defining collocations*

Raising advanced EFL\ESL students' awareness of collocations should obligatorily start with students grasping what the term collocation means.

Literature abounds with various definitions of the term collocation, which implies that "there is no commonly accepted definition of collocation" (Pecina, 2009). Nevertheless, the term "collocation" is derived from the Latin word 'collocare' which means putting or placing things together. Palmer (1931) was probably the first scholar to have used it to denote "units of words that are more than single words" (in Gyllstad, 2007). In fact, the term 'collocation' rose to prominence in linguistics almost two decades later, thanks to Firth's (1957) insistence that the term should be part of the technical terminology of linguistics, and that special attention should be paid to words and the company they keep with other words – "you shall know a word by the company it keeps". This in turn gave rise to the so-called Lexical Approach in language teaching, which, as mentioned previously, ascribes central importance to the different combinations that words enter into (Walsh, 2005).

Since the emergence of the Lexical Approach, a lot of scholars, tempted to unveil the nature of collocations, have tried to define this linguistic phenomenon. Lewis (2000), for instance, defines collocation as "the way in which words co-

occur in natural text in statistically significant ways". For Nattinger and DeCarrio (1997), collocations are "strings of specific lexical items that co-occur with a mutual expectancy greater than chance".

A thorough analysis of the existing definitions of the term collocation shows that there are two sets of scholars with somewhat distinct approaches to defining the term collocation (Trinh, 2002).

The first set of scholars tends to define collocations simply as *a co-occurrence of words* (Trinh, 2002).

*"Collocations are words combining or coming together in a way characteristic of language (e.g. strong tea, heavy drinker, by accident, etc.)"* (Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary of Current English, 1974 in Trinh, 2002).

*"Collocations consist basically of two or three lexical words, usually linked by grammatical words"* (Newmark, 1981 in Trinh, 2002).

*"Collocation is two or more words that go 'happily' or naturally with each other"* (Newmark, 1988 in Trinh, 2002).

The second set of scholars depicts 'collocation' as a *habitual co-occurrence of words* (Trinh, 2002).

*"Collocation is a group of words that occurs repeatedly in a language"* (Benson, 1985; Carter, 1987 in Trinh, 2002).

*"Collocation is the way that some words occur regularly whenever another word is used"* (Collins Cobuild English Language Dictionary, 1987 in Trinh, 2002).

*"Collocation is the habitual co-occurrence of individual lexical items"* (Crystal, 1986 in Trinh, 2002).

Other scholars who have analyzed the proposed definitions of collocations have identified two distinct approaches to

defining the term: frequency-based and phraseological approach (Cowie, 1994; Nesselhauf, 2005; Gyllstad, 2007, etc.). The frequency-based approach is predominantly advocated by scholars working within the fields of Corpus Linguistics and Computational Linguistics. Within this approach collocations are intrinsically connected to frequency and statistics. More precisely, collocations are seen as units consisting of co-occurring words at a certain distance from each other, and a distinction is often made between frequently and infrequently co-occurring words (Nesselhauf, 2005). The technical terms within this approach are: 'node' for the main element in the collocation, 'collocates' for the other words that combine with the main word, and 'span' – the number of collocates that accompany the node (Gyllstad, 2007). The phraseological approach, on the other hand, has been largely inspired by the Russian phraseology, and is more tightly linked to the fields of lexicography and language pedagogy (Gyllstad, 2007). The phraseological approach emphasizes the relation between lexical and syntactic patterning in collocations and attempts to tell collocations apart from free combinations of words, on the one hand, and from other lexical restriction phenomena, on the other hand. The point that unites researchers in the phraseological tradition is the treatment of collocation as a word combination, displaying various degrees of fixedness (Nesselhauf, 2005).

In summary, the literature review reveals that a lot of discussions have been raised about the term collocation, and numerous attempts have been made at defining this term. As a consequence, there is not one unanimously accepted definition or approach to delineating this linguistic phenomenon, but in essence, all definitions rest on the fact that collocations are recurring combinations of words.

### ***Distinctive properties of collocations: collocations vs. other types of phrases***

Apart from defining collocations many researchers have been tempted to uncover their distinctive properties, as that, in turn, can lead to making a clear distinction between collocations and the rest of the co-occurrence relationships that exist among words. Because of that, familiarizing advanced EFL/ESL students with the distinctive features of collocations, as opposed to those of the other similar types of phraseological expressions, is deemed an imperative.

This section provides an overview of significant studies which discuss this specific issue (Baker, 1992; Fernandez, 2009; McKeown and Radev, 2000, Gramley and Patzold, 1992).

The first criterion that a word combination has to meet in order to qualify as a collocation is meaning (Gramley and Patzold, 1992). Namely, in the case of collocations "each lexeme makes an independent contribution to the meaning of the whole collocation". In other words, their meaning is compositional, i.e. can be predicted from the meaning of the parts they are composed of (Fernandez, 2009). In fact, not all collocations are necessarily fully compositional – there is usually an element of meaning added to the combination (e.g. *strong tea, soft drink*). Still, compared to idioms collocations are compositional and idioms are the most extreme examples of non-compositionality since the meaning of idiomatic expressions cannot be deduced on the basis of the meanings of the lexical components they are made of (e.g. *to bury the hatchet* – to become friendly again, *the long and the short of it* – the basic facts about a situation) (Fernandez, 2009; Baker, 1992).

Another criterion for recognizing collocation is related to word classes (Gramley and Patzold, 1992). The component parts of a collocation normally belong to different word classes

(e.g. *demand-meet* (n-v), *hopes high* (n-adj.) and *apologies-profusely* (v-adv), etc.). This property clearly distinguishes collocations from compound nouns (e.g. *car park* (n-n), *university library* (n-n), etc.).

The criterion which seems to be particularly helpful in differentiating between free combination and collocations is range (Gramley and Patzold, 1992). Lexemes that belong to the core vocabulary of English are typically found in free combinations (e.g. *cheep*, *expensive*, *fast*, *great*, *new*, *nice*, *old*, *round*, *slow*, *small*, *square*, *young*, *buy*, *get*, *go*, etc.). The number of combinations formed with these is enormous. The number of lexemes (or collocates) that occur together with the node is what is meant by the range of a lexeme. The range of lexemes in collocations is significantly smaller than that of lexemes in free combinations.

In addition to the three abovementioned criteria, there are other criteria that need to be mentioned here: fixedness, substitutability, additions, deletions and displacement (Gramley and Patzold, 1992). Collocations show various degrees of fixedness. For instance, in some collocations the adverbs are not formally marked by the -ly morpheme (e.g. *swear-blind*; *drunk-blind*; *forget-clean*; *naked-stark*, etc.). Similarly, Baker (1992) draws a line between idioms and collocations in relation to fixedness and states that while the form of idioms is invariable in all cases (e.g. *to bury the hatchet*), in the case of collocations "the relationship can hold between all or several of their various forms, combined in any grammatically acceptable order" (e.g. *to achieve aims*, *aims having been achieved*, *achievable aims*, *the achievement of an aim*). With substitutability, lexemes can sometimes be replaced by close synonyms (e.g. *hardened criminal* vs. *confirmed criminal*). Additions are most often pre-or post- modifying nouns (e.g. *to meet still rising world demand*). Deletions are also possible in collocation (e.g. *I have not got the*

*faintest (idea)*). As for displacement, personal pronouns may replace the actual collocation items (e.g. '*Instead of banishing or shunning clichés, haven't we got to meet them imaginatively*').

Another property of collocations which deserves special attention is arbitrariness (McKeown and Radev, 2006). In other words, collocations are typically characterized as arbitrary, language- (and dialect-) specific, recurrent in context, and common in technical language. The notion of arbitrariness refers to the fact that substituting a synonym for one of the words in a collocation may result in an infelicitous lexical combination. Thus, for example, a phrase such as *make an effort* is acceptable, but *make an exertion* is not, despite the fact that these two are treated as synonyms<sup>ii</sup>. That near-synonyms cannot substitute for the components of a collocation can be illustrated with the following example –*shout, scream, call* and *bawl* are synonymous, but unlike *shout, scream, call* which collocate with *for help*, *bawl* does not (*\*bawl for help*)(Fernandez, 2009).

On the basis of the literature overview regarding the distinguishing features of collocations presented above, it can be inferred that it is vital to make advanced ESL\EFL aware of the fact that “collocations border on free combinations, on the one hand, and on compounds and idioms, on the other” (Grimm, 2009), and to enable students to distinguish among these similar, but still different phraseological expressions. Students' attention should also be drawn to the fact that this 'mission' is not always simple and straightforward, as the boundary line among the different types of phrases is not clear-cut in all cases. Namely, sometimes there is an evident overlap between 'free combinations' and 'collocations', as well as a grey area between 'collocations' and 'idioms' (Benson, Benson and Ilson, 1986).



## *Types of collocations*

Many scholars who have analyzed collocations noticed that there are different types of collocations which can be classified in many different ways (Benson, Benson, and Ilson, 1986; Baker 1992; Hill, 2000; Sughair, 2007; Sinclair, 1991, etc.). Raising advanced EFL\ESL students' awareness of the different types of collocational patterns is of paramount importance as it will assist students' recognition of collocations in actual contexts, and, eventually, will lead to their acquisition and retention in students' long-term memory.

This section present several major classifications of collocations based on different criteria.

Register is strongly connected to collocations and in that respect collocations can be classified as *common collocations*, which are used in everyday language (e.g. *to catch the train; to give somebody a call*), and *register-specific collocations*, which are used in specialized subject fields (e.g. *readme file, proxy server, and dummy object*, all of which are examples of IT-specific collocations) (Sinclair, 1991; Sughair, 2007).

On the basis of the degree of restriction or occurrence, there are strong and weak collocations (Lewis, 1997; Hasan, 2004). Examples of strong collocations are: *rancid butter, addled eggs, ulterior motives* and *harbor grudges*. In the case of strong collocations knowledge of the meaning of the collocator (or collocate) does not necessarily enable non-native users of English to associate them with the right base or node. On the other hand, weak collocations are 'more predictable' (e.g. *good boy, white shirt, white wine*, etc.).

Similarly, taking into consideration the number of collocates that combine with the node, Sughair (2007) in his classification of collocations distinguishes between open, restricted and bound collocations. In open collocations the node can cluster

with a large range of other words (e.g. *catch bus/train/cold/ fire, etc.*), whereas in restricted collocations the node collocates with a limited and fixed number of words (e.g. *commit murder/crime/embezzlement*). Bound collocations are those in which the node is “uniquely selective” of its collocate (e.g. *to shrug one’s shoulders*).

The actual lexical structure of collocations serves as a basis for yet another very important classification of collocations. According to this classification, collocations in English can be classified as lexical and grammatical (Benson, Benson and Ilson, 1997; Bahns, 1993). Grammatical collocations are phrases consisting of a dominant word (noun, verb, adjective) and a preposition or grammatical structure such as an infinitive or clause; whereas lexical collocations are phrases that typically consist of nouns, adjectives, verbs, and adverbs only. Benson, Benson and Ilson (1997) in their BBI Dictionary list the grammatical collocations as follows:

1. Noun + preposition (*hostility between*);
2. Noun + to + infinitive (*pleasure to do it*);
3. Noun + that + clause (*an oath that he would do his duty*);
4. Preposition + noun combination (*at anchor*);
5. Adjective + preposition combination that occurs in the predicate (*angry at everyone*);
6. Predicate adjectives + to + infinitive (*it was necessary for him to work*);
7. Adjective + that + clause (*it was imperative that I be there*);
8. Nineteen English verb patterns.

Benson, Benson and Ilson (1997) also put forth seven major types of lexical collocations:

1. Verb + noun/pronoun or prepositional phrase (*set a record*);
2. Verb + noun (*squander a fortune*);

3. Adjective + noun (*pitched battle*);
4. Noun + verb (of action) (*blizzards rage*);
5. Noun + of + noun (*a bouquet of flowers*);
6. Adverb + adjective (*strictly accurate*);
7. Verb + adverb (*apologize humbly*).

Although, the classification above is quite comprehensive, Rabeh (2010), who does not distinguish between grammatical and lexical collocations, enumerates the same types of collocations but also adds the following: adjective + adjective (e.g. *healthy and well*), adverb + adverb (e.g. *secretly and publically*), noun + noun (e.g. *nerve cell*), as-as collocations (e.g. *as strong as a lion*), parts of countable noun (e.g. *a bouquet of flowers*); and parts of uncountable nouns (e.g. *an article of clothing*).

Of all the above listed types of grammatical and lexical collocations in English, research shows that verb + noun, noun + of + noun, adjective + noun, and noun + noun are the most prevalent ones (Witten & Franken, 2010 in Shammas, 2013).

To sum up, there are different types of collocations and training advanced EFL/ESL students to recognize them is crucial in alleviating both the process of reception and production of collocations.

### *Useful 'tools' and practices*

Apart from providing students with a solid theoretical background, students need to be trained to make conscious efforts to learn and actively use, in their oral and written output, as many collocations as possible. In that context, systematic and well-organized note-taking (Hill, 2000; Woolard, 2000; Shammas, 2013) must be set as a priority. In addition, training students to regularly consult collocation dictionaries

(McIntosh et al. 2009; Hill & Lewis, 1997; Benson et al., 1986), electronic corpora and concordances (Woolard , 2000; Jaefarpour and Koosha, 2006), is also highly recommended by EFL\ESL researchers.

Taking note of collocations in a special collocation glossary is particularly useful for repeating and recycling collocations already learnt every now and then to help learners register and retain them in their memory (Hill, 2000). In order for the glossaries to serve their purpose efficiently, students should be directed to arrange their collocation glossaries: 1) grammatically: sections such as noun + noun, adjective + noun, verb + noun, adverb + adjective; 2) by common key word: collocations with *do, make, get, up, speak* etc.; 3) by topic: collocations to talk about *holidays, travel, work*, etc. (Hill, 2000), 4) alphabetically, devoting two or three pages to each letter; 5) by situation (*at the bank*); 6) by functions (*complaining, apologizing*), etc. (Woolard, 2000).

Using specialized collocation dictionaries is a very significant tool when it comes to mastering collocations. EFL\ESL students should be encouraged to look up words and their collocates on a regular basis both in class and outside the classroom. Teachers can come up with all sorts of activities based on the collocation dictionaries, such as seeking specific collocations and their meaning, but they can also use them as an integral and compulsory part of the reading, writing, listening and speaking activities. The Oxford Collocations Dictionary for Students of English (McIntosh et al. 2009), the LTP Dictionary of Selected Collocations (Hill & Lewis, 1997), The BBI Dictionary of English Word Combinations (Benson et al., 1997) are amongst the most widely recommended collocation dictionaries by EFL\ESL researchers.

Finally, many researchers recommend that in order for advanced learners to acquire collocation patterning of words

they should work with language corpora, which are accessible on the Internet, such as: The British National Corpus, COBUILD Bank of English or the on-line Collins Cobuild Concordancer and Collocations Sampler, and The Corpus of Contemporary American English (COCA) (Woolard, 2000; Jaefarpour and Koosha, 2006). Language corpora are extremely useful tools primarily because they include authentic (not pre-fabricated) language, and are enormous and versatile. The searching of collocates in language corpora is carried out by means of special concordancing technology which in turn provides students with a rich tapestry of examples of specific linguistic elements embedded in a variety of rhetorical contexts. It can also help students to construct meanings and usage patterns based on sentences or pieces of discourse collected from published or transcribed texts (Kolln, 2007). Concordances are advantageous as they turn students into researchers, i.e. language detectives, who hypothesize and test lexical or grammatical usage patterns (Johns, 1991) in the target language and, finally, come to conclusions independently of their teachers.

On the basis of the aforesaid, it can be inferred that compiling students' collocation glossaries, consulting collocation dictionaries, language corpora and concordances are vital but tools that should be brought to students' attention with regards to mastering collocations in English. Still, it is noteworthy to mention that these are by no means the only useful tools and practices in overcoming collocational hurdles, but any further pursuit of this topic here runs the risk of seriously straining the boundaries of the research article at hand.

## ***Conclusion***

Reaching mastery of the English language is impossible without a proper collocational competence. However, unfortunately, even advanced students of English very frequently seem to seriously backfire in that respect. This implies that serious improvements of the teaching process need to be made and collocations must receive the attention they deserve. The first step in that direction surely is to provide EFL\ESL students, particularly those who have reached or are about to reach advanced level, a solid theoretical foundation that will make the concept of collocation completely clear to them. In that respect we have selected several extremely important aspects of the concept of collocation, elaborated in various studies – definitions, properties and types of collocations. Secondly, students need to receive clear instructions as to how they should go about noticing, memorizing and actively using collocations not just in class but whenever they interact with the language outside the classroom. Students' collocation glossaries, collocation dictionaries, as well as language corpora and concordances, present extremely useful and widely recommended 'tools' for mastering collocations.

What this paper proposes is completely in line with what Ying and Hendricks (2004) call the collocation awareness-raising process (CAR) which, according to them, consists of four steps in teaching collocations - making students understand what collocations are; raising collocation awareness by introducing materials for target collocations; teaching students to notice and note collocations, followed by the step of incorporating the learnt collocations in tasks, and, lastly, giving feedback on students work.

Further support for what is proposed here is Lackman's study (2011), in which he underlines that it is impossible to

teach all collocations in English, and that the aim should be to raise students' awareness of the nature of collocations in general by instructing students to notice and analyze collocations whenever they encounter them. This cognitive process will, in turn, significantly aid the acquisition process itself, which, eventually will invariably result in students using collocations productively both in their oral and written output.

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<sup>i</sup> The Lexical Approach has emerged since 1993 when the term lexical approach was coined by Lewis (1993). Lewis posits his ideas that vocabulary should be the most important aspect in teaching English stating that language is grammaticalised lexis, not lexicalised grammar (Lewis, 1993, p. 95). In sum, the Lexical Approach gives more importance to vocabulary than grammar and one way to apply the lexical approach in the classroom is to focus on collocations.

<sup>ii</sup> Note that Gramley and Patzold (1992) claim that substitutability in collocations is sometimes possible.

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# *Cooperation of preschool institutions with parents toward early childhood education*

*Arberore Bicaj<sup>1</sup>, Prof. Asst. Dr.*

*AAB College, Pristina, Kosovo. Email: arberore.bicaj@aab-edu.net*

*Alberita Bytyqi, MA,*

*Tringa Azizi, Prof. Asst. Dr.*

*Arbona Xhemajli, Prof. Asst. Dr.*

## **Abstract**

Preschool education, especially institutionalized preschool education, is exceptional for early childhood. In this context, cooperation with the parents is considered vital for children's education. Very often, parents are not aware of their fundamental role in their children's education and development, through different ways of cooperation.

This research addresses the partnership between parents and preschool institutions (hereafter: PSI), and the relation of this partnership with factors such as communication, school environment, parents transferring their professional experience to children, and parents' access to preschool education curricula and policies, all of which serve to improving children's early education. The research is carried out through a quantitative approach with parents (N=60) and a qualitative approach with educators, examining the challenges and needs for the improvement of this cooperation, as well as the role and the opportunities of both parties towards the realization of a more effective cooperation.

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<sup>1</sup> Article received on the 15th September, 2018.

Article accepted on the 16th December, 2018.

Conflict of Interest: The author declares no conflict of interests.

Research findings prove that identifying forms and agents of cooperation with parents does have the positive influence on strengthening the triangle preschool institution/family/community and in increasing the level of awareness of parents and preschool institutions on benefits from such co-operation.

**Keywords:** *early childhood, cooperation, communication, parents, preschool institutions*

Preschool education, as a term, refers to all services provided to children up to the age of six (Taguchi & Munkammar, 2003). Parents' involvement<sup>i</sup> in the educational work of Preschool Institutions (PSI) has been considered irrelevant in different periods, but in fact, it has an essential importance in the child's education (Miller, 2003).

The child is in the focus of cooperation between parents and preschool institutions. Many authors have reflected on the importance of cooperation with parents through different forms. This is an opportunity for parents' involvement, since it has an impact in improving educators' work (Sandberg & Vuorinen, 2008).

In a study in Pittsburgh, it is stated that parents' involvement in schools<sup>ii</sup> is an important component of early childhood education to help promoting the so-called "long-term effect" (Barnard, 2004). In relation to early childhood, experts emphasize that the main characteristic of this level of education is its inclusive character. Among seven areas specified in their book "Early childhood education today", family centred practice is included as well. Here it is made clear that in order to meet children's needs, educators in early childhood should cooperate with the families and community (Morrison, 2007, p. VI). At the same time, Coleman (1988) involves the term 'social capital' to examine the relations

between family and school for students' achievements (Coleman, 1988). If we refer to social capital, the loss of quality of interactive time between a child and an adult is the key reason for having a lower school performance and a lower level of homework performance in preschool institutions. In addition, it was noticed that parents' time available to be close to preschool institutions is increasingly reduced due to a higher number of single parent families and double income families (Office of Student services, 2002).

In this context, the research analyses the cooperation with parents as one of the key factors in preschool level educational processes, addressing hypothesis 1: Cooperation and a more active involvement of parents in educational work at preschool institutions have a positive impact in increasing the quality of educational services. Improvement of quality in schools has a direct impact on students' better performance. A higher level of involvement of parents is very important to improve quality (Oostdam & Hooge, 2013). On the other hand, the auxiliary hypothesis addresses the interrelation of factors, as follows: a constructive cooperation between preschool institutions and parents is achieved by interrelating factors, such as communication, physical environment and knowledge of preschool education policies.

Then, the research addresses the improvement of cooperation between preschool institutions and parents, challenges to improve cooperation, interrelation between factors of cooperation, the impact on parents' attitudes and their motivation to cooperate, as well as the perception of such a cooperation by educators in the intellectual aspect. In relation to the issues mentioned, the following research questions have been formulated: Research question 1: What are the challenges and needs to improve existing cooperation between parents and preschool institutions?, Research question 2: What is the

interrelation between factors (true communication, school environment, parents' approach toward preschool education policies) in developing a constructive cooperation?, and Research question 3: What could be done to improve cooperation with parents, to the benefit of educational work in preschool institutions?

### *Parents and their pedagogical role*

The pedagogical role of parents was defined by Epstein (2001) with reference to child raising, parents' beliefs and expectations about their child's education, and the physical dimension, i.e. the suitable environment where children could learn. Parents or guardians of children have a direct impact on children's education; therefore, they have to be addressed through cooperation, focusing on the role and influence of parents in their children's education (Epstein J. , 2001).

Earlier, it was said that parents are not entitled to get involved in the educational process. Therefore, a shift in this traditional approach would be appreciated and useful, both for children and school, educators and parents as well; especially based on the premise that the role of parents in the educational process is beneficial, in both providing individual assistance and enriching class or school educational experiences (Miller, 2003, p. 224).

Berger (2004) stresses the same family function in meeting child's needs, regardless of the possibility of changes in the family structure. In general, several roles of parents were suggested, such as the primary role of parents to provide care, food, protection and shelter to children. In addition, families socialize children in line with the societal norms and cultural values. Parents are responsible in monitoring the education of



their child in school and at home. In addition, they are the primary educators of their children; therefore, the ability of a child to do well in educational institutions depends largely on the care received by that child at home (Berger, 2004).

Hence, preschool institutions should cooperate with parents, so that they are successful in their mission of educating children.

Cooperation with parents is considered to have the equal importance as the preschool education curriculum and professional development of educators. Based on data from findings, in several institutions there is a lack of parents' interest to cooperate. On the other hand, the question arises: Is there any institutional cooperation plan developed by institutions, through which they would show their commitment for such cooperation? Often, there is no intent to establish a culture of proximity between the school and parents. At the same time, according to Plakolli (2011, p. 416 – 417), parents visit preschool institutions only during parent-teacher meetings. In addition, parents often lack the proper skills to adequately approach their children.

### *The importance of establishing a culture of cooperation*

According to Michael Fullan (1999, p. 41), parent and community engagement is seen as a special characteristic of organizational changes. Fullan (1999, p. 43) presents the characteristics of cultures of cooperation to achieve success at school (organization) through theoretical explanation.

Where in Fullan's book "The new meaning of educational change", the importance of a culture of working in cooperation is stressed, Bryk, Sebring, Kerbow, Rollow & Easton (1998) refer to the impact of a cooperative school in improving students'

achievements. At the same time, Goldberg, in his study conducted in the "Freeman" school in Los Angeles, highly appreciated the moment when the school shifted from a school showing a poor progress to a full cooperative development school, improving at the same time the performance of students in their studies (Gallimore & Goldenberg, 2001). Such an approach demonstrates the responsibility of establishing a culture of cooperation toward the school as an organization, involving research findings and parents' presumption about the cooperation with the PSI.

On the other hand, Gaitan (1999) interconnects the importance of a culture of cooperation with a study about the active involvement of parents in their children's education, which took place in schools in California. In this case, it is reported that precisely because active participation requires specific cultural knowledge, conventional forms of cooperation between parents and the school were not opened, whereas non-conventional forms of cooperation, on the contrary, encouraged parents' involvement in their children's education through culturally responsive communication.

On the other hand, the importance of parents' involvement has a powerful impact on students' educational achievements (Gonzales et al., 2013). The above provides for a connotation beyond the aspect of cooperation with parents, reflecting the importance of a culture of cooperation, in the general aspect, as a factor of interaction between all subjects, to the benefit of students' success at school, and consequently, to the benefit of preschool institutions as well. How is PSI's success achieved? Of course this is measured through children's success that partially comes as a result of a constructive cooperation. That is exactly what underlines the importance of a culture of cooperation between parents and teachers<sup>iii</sup>, stressing the

impact of this cooperation for the child's development and education (Sewell, 2012).

While it is strongly emphasized that a culture of cooperation can contribute in increasing the motivation to learn and creating the belief that education is beneficial, effective cooperation and open communication can provide the school with predictions about cultural origin and show the limitations and differences (Gonzales et al., 2013). In every alternative, a culture of cooperation has a positive impact, including in the aspect of motivation to learn, but it goes further insinuating also the involvement of motivation of parents to cooperate. This is evident when Fullan (2001) interrelates the improvement in learning toward a positive approach precisely with the cooperative school.

### *International experience related to the culture of cooperation between parents and preschool institutions*

If we focus our attention to the institutional approach toward the importance of cooperation with the parents, we will encounter various experiences. Continuing with a concrete example, such relevant institutions can be found in the context of Sweden, including children of age 1-5. In Swedish practice, parents form part of institution because they have a regular contact with the preschool institution. Besides that, preschool education curriculum envisages the importance of communication and conversation as a tool of establishing a linkage between school and family. This interaction between family and school focuses on child development, learning and wellbeing both at home and in the PSI. At the same time, in Swedish practice, conferences with parents are organized and they are considered very important to maintaining and

strengthen the relations between the family and PSI. Usually, during these meetings, there are discussions taking place with the parents, where the educator manages to keep the parent active and motivates him/her, by using an artifact called "strength card ". Educators, apply these strength cards to make parents aware, so that they are "good enough preschool parents," who are cooperative and able to categorize and label their children (Markstrom 2011).

### *Motivation of parents to cooperate with preschool institutions*

The parent and the whole family represent a bridge between the knowledge students acquire in preschool institutions and learning at home while, "[t]he right to undertake the initiative, organize and plan the cooperation between the educator and parent mainly remains with the institution" (Deva-Zuna, 2009).

In many cases, both parents and educators have blamed each other for problems and difficulties faced in the PSI although solutions can only be found by working as a team.

To motivate parents to cooperate with the PSI, the institution and educators alike should exercise their impact.

In parent meetings, the teacher should make parents feel comfortable about their child and their parental abilities. Then, parents and teachers as experts working together can find an easy solution for the child (Miller, 2003, p. 225). In short, parents' motivation to cooperate depends on the ability of the teacher to engage the parent in supporting their child's learning. This is achieved by communicating positively with every parent and appreciating their contribution in supporting the child in educational institutions (Epstein J. , 2013).

If we interrelate the motivation issue with research question 1, the dilemma is precisely in the motivation as a challenge, and a good initiative at the same time, to work more toward parents' motivation, and thereby improve the existing cooperation. Meanwhile, the document of standards also provides the best example interrelated to parents' motivation for involvement in PSIs. This is done when describing conditions that institution should provide in order develop the successful cooperation with parents, motivating them to be more actively involved (see item 2.2). The question arises, what do research results indicate?

### *The approach of preschool institutions toward cooperation with parents*

Graham (2011) emphasizes that *involvement of parents* and *parents' participation* in their children's education constitutes the notion of school-family cooperation. Therefore, the term *parents' involvement* is an essential term applied for the participation of family, school and community in activities supporting the development of the child. *Parents' participation*, on the other hand, is used in the context of parents' involvement, emphasizing the involvement of parents as decision makers in educational, managerial and administrative programs.

Based on the above, the Australian definition for family - school - community states:

"Cooperative relations and activities involve school staff, parents and other students' family member in a school. Effective partnerships are based on mutual trust and respect and in joint responsibility for students' education at school" (Department of Education, 2008).

Michael Fullan (1999, p. 37) considers the cooperative school to be the decisive factor in achieving success. In addition, according to Sewell (2102), a communicative and understanding approach between two communities contributes to the fulfilment of children's needs. Teachers' education as well is considered highly important in order for them to understand the need for such an integration and cooperation. Compliance with education and preschool education standards as the awareness of educators about their role in building capacities and creating conditions for a constructive cooperation are other factors that would complement this aspect.

### *The aspect of preschool education standards*

The policy issued by the Ministry of Education, Science and Techology (hereafter: MEST) is rather advanced; it defines the standards of preschool education services. The standards aim to inform the persons responsible in institutions and educators about their work. Of seven areas of standards, the document dedicates a specific standard (number 4) to cooperation with the family. Among other activities within preschool education, preschool education standards envisage parents' involvement as well. At the same time, preschool institutions, a) provide information to parents, b) gather information to the benefit of child and family, c) support parents, d) create the conditions for parents' involvement, e) ensure parent - staff communication through different tools, f) inform parents officially, and g) involve parents within active counselling council (MEST, 2006, p. 33).

Parents are users of standards (MEST, 2006, p. 10), and precisely this creates coherence between the standards and the

factor (parents' knowledge of preschool education policies) addressed by research question 2 and the auxiliary hypothesis (see above).

The reason why parents use standards is related to the information they need about the developments taking place within the PSI, to their understanding of educational activity standards, familiarization and assessment of the level of achievement of standards within the PSI and involvement in educational activities in preschool education (MEST, 2006, p. 11).

The idea of this research came from preschool education standards with the aim to specifically examining the impact of active involvement of parents in increasing the quality in PSIs and the creation of conditions for cooperation by preschool institution.

### *Research methodology*

Both a qualitative method through interviews with educators and the quantitative method, which involved using a survey technique with parents, were adopted for the research.

Children in the age group 3-6 were the focus of the research, examining the perspective of parents having children of this age group, as presented above, and interviewing educators working with this age group as well. The educators and parents of preschool aged children were subjects of the research. The study took place in Prishtina, Ferizaj and Gjakova.

The sample selection was done using the non-probability, purposive sampling technique, exploring and interpreting experiences and perceptions of participants in the research selected based on their experience and characteristics corresponding to the field of study (Matthews & Ross, 2010, p.

167). In this case, the number of parents, participants in the research, were 60 parents in three centres, meaning 20 parents per centre in Prishtina, Gjakova and Ferizaj. In addition, 12 educators were interviewed, 4 in each center (as above). The selection was done as follows: 2 educators from a public institution and 2 educators from a private institution in each centre.

Research instruments were used to perform the research. In our study, the research instruments included the questionnaire with parents and the interview protocol, which served as an instrument to perform the interviews with the educators. The questionnaire is mainly drafted based on the document "General Standards of education and preschool education in Kosovo (3-6 years old)" and the main issues addressed in the fourth area of standards.

Several analytical approaches were applied to analyze the data from interviews so that the results are as clear as possible. The data from interviews, initially unprocessed and taken in written form, were processed through a *based approach*. Then, the *understandable interpretations approach* certainly facilitated transmitting the data in the clearest possible manner.

The clear definition of data coming from interviews was achieved through the *thematic approach*. The questions are presented in a table, and in columns. The respective answers from every interviewee are given as well. This way, *the index (indexing)*, was defined to facilitate data extraction and key issues to be elaborated. Data taken from interviewees were coded as per answers of each interviewee. Initially, the data from answers related to key issues were presented in a table, after which the analysis was continued through schemes as per relevant aspects of research (Matthews & Ross, 2010, p. 372-385).



Quantitative data were analyzed through the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS), applying the descriptive analysis – frequencies. Following that, Chronbach Alpha analysis was used to address the internal consistency (measure the questionnaire reliability) to confirm that the data are from the result of findings rather than questionnaire malfunctioning. In addition, correlation analysis was applied to measure the relation between two variables (in this case, factors as per questions and research hypothesis).

## ***Research data analysis***

### *Qualitative data analysis*

The data gathered from interviews have been presented in the table, as per categorization of answers (the table in the annex); we notice the categorization of answers as per their importance, interrelated to the issue in the focus of the research, presenting the general aspect of the answer and elaborating them in details, as key topics, through the schemes.

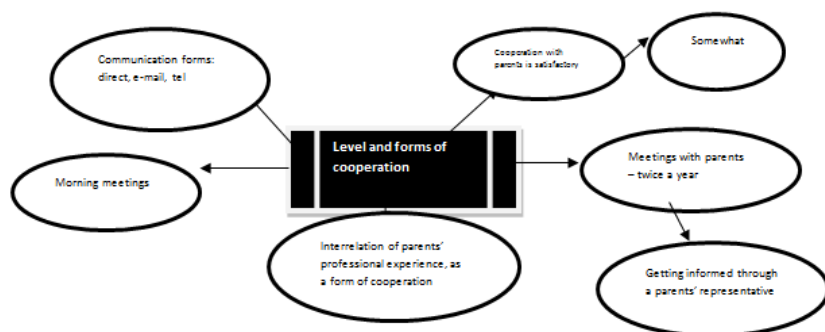
In this context, the analyses of data from the qualitative method – collected through interviews, are summarized in the following four specific dimensions:

Level and forms of cooperation between PSI and family

Preschool education policies and parents

Physical environment and supply with didactic material and technology

Challenges of cooperation between PSI and family.



*Illustration 1. Situation of cooperation with families*

### ***Presentation and analysis of the results***

Starting from the first key dimension – *Level and forms of cooperation* (see the four specific issues), in the illustration (No 1.) above, questions 1, 2, 3 and 6 of interview protocol, address the aspect of the PSIs' communication with the family (parents), where a good level of cooperation can be perceived through different forms of cooperation. This is in accordance with the preschool education standards (see point C, D, E, F of standard No. 4). The interviewee with the code IKPR1 supports this, through the following answer: "Cooperation with parents is at the level required and is achieved through meetings organized, invitation of parents to be part of activities that are linked to their professions." Often, the reason of cooperation with parents is precisely the involvement of parents' professional experience in PSI, which in fact is one of the most effective ways of cooperation (item D/5 in standard 4). This leads toward the identification of children's skills when it comes to choosing their profession inform an early age, and their

knowledge of different professions and the impact of each profession.

On the other hand, among others things, from the findings resulting from the qualitative analysis, while addressing the first key issue, there is a lack of creativity and seriousness noticed to establish a true cooperation with parents, or even lack of a form of cooperation through activities.

If we look at the second key dimension, which is related to parents' knowledge of preschool education policies, this is addressed by question No. 4 of the interview protocol, and item D/1 of the preschool education standard No. 4, which in fact does not correspond to the research results. We can explain this aspect as an issue with which parents are quite familiar with, but in fact, we could not find a convincing argument to explain it. At the same time, according to interviewees, parents are part of the PSI's decision making (supported as well by item G/2 of standards), but no evidence is presented whether parents have access in preschool education policies (preschool education standards and curriculum) or whether they are involved in drafting policies and being part of them). This could be achieved by providing trainings on policy functionalization, so that parents are acquainted with the essence of the impact of policies in children's education and development.

With regards to the third issue - physical environment in preschool institutions, included in question No. 5 - a degree of negligence can be noticed on behalf of educators in relation to this issue. The educators acknowledge that institutions are equipped with didactic material and technology, and that they are rationally used whereas there is no adjustment of physical environment to incorporate activities that allow for cooperation with parents. An example of these is the statement provided by the interviewee with the code IKFR4: "The kindergarten meets all the criteria; it is well equipped with different materials

needed for preschool age children.” In addition, there is no mobilization noticed by parties to identify the consequences resulting from the excessive use of information technology, if necessary.

At the same time, the issue of physical environment, which as a variable is addressed in research question 2 and the auxiliary hypothesis, comes from the area No. 3 of preschool education standards, addressing the environment as an encouraging factor for playing and learning (item a, b, c), supply of didactic material (item d).

The dimension of challenges encountered during cooperation between the two important factors for children education and welfare is related to parents’ lack of interest for cooperation, respectively concerning their transfer of professional experience. In this context, we can say that there is a lack of awareness mechanisms and lack of mechanisms to apply motivational strategies for parents. Consequently, lack of sufficient information provided to parents about preschool education policies is stressed through these results and the benefits of relevant documents related to child education and welfare. At the same time, the lack of interest (selfishness) of parents of children with special needs to cooperate with the PSI and educators is challenging as well. In this case, there is a barrier created toward a) a true treatment of these children, b) a serious dedication, and c) identification of their needs. In addition, the issue of parents non respecting the PSI's rules is specified, although they are informed on time about the PSI rules and this is a reflection of the lack of seriousness on the parents’ behalf and an emphasized lack of need for cooperation.

If we analyse the differences between public and private institutions, we can conclude that in private institutions educators have a more serious approach both in regards to cooperation with parents and in addressing the issue of

cooperation during the process of interviewing whereas a higher degree of negligence can be noticed with the public institution educators. The document of standards could be one of the reasons for that, which by institutions is considered a binding document that should be implemented. Such a situation creates uncertainty about shortcomings in policy drafting, lack of competences or relevant qualification of leadership in public institutions to properly apply and understand the standards.

At the same time, in two private institutions, the level of cooperation with parents is moderate and this puts into question the level of the cooperation that would be sufficient to have an impact in child development and education. In addition, in one of private institutions, a more creative approach was noticed. In this institution, there is an informative board in the wall enlisting all the activities applied with children.

### *Quantitative data analysis*

In the quantitative analysis, questions have been structured as per different factors, performing the analysis of the factors' validity, as described below. Questions measuring the same variable (factor) have been integrated in a single factor and have been analyzed.

As indicated in Table (No.1) below, participants (respondents) in the research come from three cities, respectively Prishtina (N=20), Ferizaj (N=20) and Gjakova (N=20). In regards to the child's age, 16 participants stated that their child is between 1-3 years old, 9 others stated that their child belongs to the age group 3-4. 11 participants stated that their child is between 4 and 5 years old, whereas around 40% of participants had a child aged 5-6 years old. Participants in the

study were mainly mothers (N=55, 91.7%), and only few of participants were fathers (N=5, 8.3%). Also, the same participants were asked about their respective profession. Based on their answers, only 6 participants stated to having a profession whereas the majority of them have no profession (N=54).

Table 1. *Demographic data: Place of residence. Child's age, Parent' s gender and profession*

	Place of residence		Age (N) (%)		Parent's gender		Parent's profession	
= 60	(N)	(%)	(N)	(%)	(N)	(%)	(N)	(%)
Prishtina	20	33.3%						
Ferizaj	20	33.3%						
Gjakova	20	33.3%						
1-3			16	26.7%				
3-4			9	15%				
4-5			11	18.3%				
5-6			24	40%				
Female					55	91.7%		
Male					5	8.3%		
Having a profession							54	90%
No profession							6	10%

Questions asked to measure the communication between parents and teachers have shown a better consistency level, confirmed as well by the Cronbach alpha value of 0.76, see Table No. 2. On the other hand, questions intending to measure cooperation between parents and educators have indicated a lower consistency level and a Cronbach alpha value of 0.51. Questions measuring the physical environments of the respective PSIs have indicated an unacceptable level of consistency, as indicated by the Cronbach alpha value of 0.44.

Questions used to measure parents' knowledge of preschool education policies have shown a better consistency level, as indicated as well by the Cronbach alpha value of 0.72.

Table 2. *Descriptive statistics and Cronbach Alpha*

Note. N=60.

Variables	Cronbach's Alpha	Average	Standard deviation	Range
Parent – educator communication	.76	1.50	.47	1-5
Parent – educator cooperation	.51	1.56	.45	1-5
Physical environment	.44	2.05	.53	1-5
Parents' knowledge of Presch. ed. policies	.72	2.14	.68	1-5

Therefore, we conclude that the best relation toward a constructive cooperation (as the dependent variable) stands precisely in factors, such as communication and opportunity of informing parents with preschool education policies (curriculum, standards).

Table 3. *Correlation between variables*

	1	2	3	4
1. Communication	-			
2. Cooperation	.543**	-		
3. Physical environment	.139	-.134	-	
4. Parents' knowledge of Preschool education policies	.487**	.249	.241	-

Based on the analysis of the correlation between variables (Tab.3), there is a positive correlation between the cooperation and communication of parents with the PSI,  $r(60) = .543$ ,  $p < 0.001$ . Also, based on the analysis of the correlation between variables, there is a positive correlation between parents' knowledge of preschool education policies (opportunities of parents to get familiar with the Preschool education curriculum) and communication between parents and the PSI,  $r(60) = .487$ ,  $p < 0.001$ .

### *Conclusions and recommendations*

Based on the research findings the conclusions can be identified and divided according to the specifics tackled in line with the study purpose.

*In the theoretical aspect*, the pedagogical role of parents was addressed and, within this context, the importance of creating a culture of cooperation and motivating parents to cooperate with the PSI was accentuated. This establishes coherence with the research results, precisely in the aspect of understanding the importance of cooperation, by recognizing parents' pedagogical role. In addition, it highlights the aspect of understanding the importance of parents' motivation in creating a solid ground for constructive cooperation.

If we refer to *preschool education standards* and the field of cooperation with parents, we find that standards address and support the field of cooperation with parents, indicating the importance of such a cooperation to increase the quality of educational services (see Hypothesis 1). At the same time, standards envisage a relation between factors (as per auxiliary hypothesis and research question 2), which would contribute in constructive cooperation. Therefore, providing parents with the



possibility to access and get familiar with preschool education policies facilitates raising awareness for a constructive cooperation.

On the other hand, after analyzing the data from interviews with educators and the survey with the parents, we can conclude by linking the research questions with the hypotheses presented. In attempts to provide answers to the first research question, our conclusions derive from the findings from interviews.

*Conclusions from the qualitative analysis:* From the data available from interviews, we can identify the challenges of cooperation in PSIs, such as the lack of parents' interest to cooperate and lack of willingness of parents of children with special needs to accept their children as such. On the other hand, *there is a lack of relevant mechanisms to motivate parents to get familiar with preschool education policies (standards and curriculum)*. Motivation would have a direct impact in raising the awareness of parents about the importance of respecting and applying policies. The parent, being an active participant in making these policies functional, would be the key element to increase the quality of educational services for children's education and welfare. At the same time, *there is a lack of a suitable physical environment* that would offer opportunities for cooperation. Creation of an environment that meets the conditions necessary to work with children would also have an impact in identifying shortcomings or advantages of the usage of technology tools, which would be achieved through cooperation with parents.

In accordance with the situation presented based on data from the research, there is a necessity for more interaction and more participation of parents to transfer their professional experiences within institutions, offering opportunities for children to be acquainted with new professions. Such a

necessity would have an impact on children's information at an early age for professional orientation.

There is a cooperation noticed between parents and PSIs, taking place in different ways, such as through daily meetings and general meetings twice a year, and information being transmitted through parents' representatives. However, there is still a lack of creativity and seriousness in the aspect of organizing different forms of cooperation through activities. From the research findings, we can see that in terms of addressing this issue, a more serious approach is noticed in private preschool institutions. We contend that the document of preschool education standards could be an influencing factor due to the fact that preschool institutions consider it a binding document that should be respected and implemented conform legislation.

*Conclusions from quantitative analysis:* In regards to the relation between factors aiming to develop a constructive cooperation between the parents and PSIs, the best correlation exists between the communication factor and the parents' knowledge of preschool education policies.

In attempts to interpret the conclusions in connection with the verification of the hypotheses, the first hypothesis is confirmed based on findings from interviews, and the auxiliary hypothesis is confirmed precisely from the relation of the two factors above.

From the general point of view (based on preschool education standards, theoretical and practical aspect) it is concluded that by raising the awareness of parents and preschool institutions about the importance of cooperation, numerous challenges can be overcome and many forms of communication can emerge. Compliance with education and preschool education standards and their implementation will

play part in building the grounds for a constructive cooperation.

*Recommendations:* The research results and the current situation bring forth certain recommendations, providing answers for research question 3 as well:

- To build a constructive cooperation and improve quality of educational services in preschool institutions, it is necessary to have preschool education standards applied, first of all by preschool institutions and then educators and parents as well;
- To improve the cooperation between PSIs and parents, it is necessary to raise the awareness of institutions and educators that standards should be respected and strictly implemented. In addition, it is necessary to raise the awareness of parents about their role in improving educational work;
- To overcome challenges, institutions, educators and parents need to get mobilized;
- To motivate parents: the institution should ensure a physical environment that is suitable for cooperation;

the educators should demonstrate their ability to cooperate, using their creativity, providing the conditions and a positive climate so that parents feel comfortable within the institution. In addition, educators should demonstrate the ability to engage with parents in supporting their children.

- To improve the culture of cooperation, so that children feel comfortable and motivated to be involved in the educational process, it is necessary to have the triangle - PI, parent, educator - mobilized, acknowledging the importance of parents' cooperation and professional contribution.

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<sup>i</sup> Parents' involvement in PSIs refers to the aspect of cooperation through different forms, contributing to children's education in early childhood.

<sup>ii</sup> Although the explanation given is related to school/students, there is no reason not to believe that the logic applied in regards to cooperation with parents applies similarly to preschool institutions/children of preschool age as well

<sup>iii</sup> If teachers are mentioned throughout literature, the same explanation given applies to educators as well

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# *The opposite methodological perspective: a non-dogmatic and novel approach*

*Hajdin Abazi<sup>1</sup>, Prof. Asst. Dr.*

*AAB College, Pristina, Kosovo*

## **Abstract**

The topic to be discussed here puts in focus the counter-induction approach - the conditions, circumstances and incentives, which made Feyerabend to constitute it, and the enlightening role that it plays, respectively, should play. This opposite perspective *de jure* lacked science and *de facto* has always been implemented but as an illegitimate approach.

In the methodological aspect of scientific research, the dual role of the methodical rules will be considered, which also help the research to be successful and even turn it into a dogma by narrowing and limiting the search because of their exclusivity. Relatedly, the tensions, criticisms and methodological developments will be taken into account to make the research more efficient.

The aim is to show that counter-induction is met by a great deal of shortage in the methodological approach, which, as it will be argued, makes the research itself more open and removes its obstacles.

**Keywords:** *The rules of methodology, counter-inductive methods, Feyerabend, research, methodology.*

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<sup>1</sup> Article received on the 29th September, 2018.

Article accepted on the 6th December, 2018.

Conflict of Interest: The author declares no conflict of interests.

This paper pivots on a discussion of the counter-induction approach, and aims at arguing that the implementation of this method has an essential non-dogmatic dimension and a creative power in the scientific research.

It is a well-known truism that scientific knowledge is impossible without the relevant instruments, i.e. without research methods. Such scientific instruments, i.e. different methods and techniques of research, give scientific character and depth to every knowledge. Their value lies in their rigor, defined by the rules according to which the scientists have to work. In this sense, the methodological rules are objective, and therefore valid for all users.

In spite of their benefits, in scientific practice, the use of scientific instruments also shows a negative dimension. While the negative dimension is latent, and therefore less expressively accentuated, the rigidity of methodical rules has its limitations. The rigor of the rules, which gives the methods their dogmatic character, has infrequently caused obstacles to the research. Moreover, none of them have given any suggestion on how to overcome those difficulties. Such considerations gave rise to sharp methodological debate (Karl Popper, 2002a; Thomas Kuhn, 1970; Paul Feyerabend, 1993; Imre Lakatos in Lakatos & Musgrave, 1970), enhancing understanding into how from the methodological viewpoint of geocentrism one should be allowed taking into account heliocentrism as well, or from the latter any other alternative.

It would be Paul Feyerabend who, in his masterpiece *Against Method* in 1975, synthesized all the philosophical and scientific examination of methodology: he made an assertion as no one before him, offering a theoretically unknown solution until then. His findings resulted in a collapse of confidence into the rules of the method. In fact, he also showed the validity as well as the legitimacy of the counter-rules (Feyerabend, 1993, p. 14).

The culminating idea after two decades' reflections on the subject (at least from his 1965<sup>th</sup> "Consolation for the Specialist" debating article (Lakatos & Musgrave, 1970, pp. 197-229) was the counter-induction.

This opposite methodological perspective provides an alternative approach to research which releases the rigidity of the methodological rules that narrow the scientific research providing only a given methodological action as scientifically valuable. Rather, the research activity becomes accessible without prejudice to any methodological rule. In this sense, it is methodologically equally legitimate in the scientific aspect working with a theory as with a hypothesis against it. This is a new approach to the scientific research, which throws away the methodological dogmatism and intolerance, making the scientific activity non-dogmatic, and thus rendering it with greater creative power.

### *The rigor of the rules: two sides of the coin*

Each method has clearly defined rules that characterize a given approach and show how, the method should work and be used during a study. The methodological rules are rigorous, precise and exclusive. This is why their role is generally considered decisive for research just as Lekë Sokoli has rightly summed up, when stating that "Without scientific methods there is no scientific theory, so there is no scientific knowledge" (Sokoli, 2013, p. 43). Imre Lakatos went even further, pointing out that methodology and theory are melted into one, i.e. in the methodology of scientific research programs (Lakatos in Lakatos & Musgrave, 1970, pp. 132-138).

Less emphasized is the fact that the methodological rules have a double character. On the one side, the rules determine

what is allowed to be done, in other words how to proceed in order to arrive at a conclusion. Therefore, following the rules is indispensable as far as it is done according to a given method. For example, the rules determine the inductive approach in a different way than the deductive line of research. Likewise, the qualitative approach differs from quantitative insights. Also, the different rules are those that differentiate the methods from one another, i.e. their approaches. For example, it is known that the rules of the inductive method determine that the research starts from observations of individual cases, of which a general conclusion has to be reached (Rothchild, 2006, p. 2); whereas the rules of the deductive method define an opposite approach, that from an accepted premise. and accordingly, has to be derived from the hypotheses that predicts specific data. Based on empirical findings, the hypothesis is subsequently either confirmed or rejected (Rothchild, 2006, p. 3). It is the rules that define and distinguish the qualitative and quantitative method (Cresswell, 2003, pp. 84-102), as well as the scope extended to their research, i.e., to understand in depth, or to understand in magnitude.

Thus, the rules of the method show clearly what needs to be done according to their respective instructions. Their rigorous implementation makes the research substantiated, giving it an investigative character as claimed by the respective approach. The investigative character encompasses different ranges of research including the inductive type, or research of a deductive, qualitative or quantitative research nature. The usefulness of the research methodology is that it specifies how to achieve the predicted evidence, rendering the research focused, persistent, and usually successful. However, the other side of the coin is that since the rigorous application of the methodical rules is required, the research becomes narrow and limited, assigning it with a somewhat dogmatic character.

The dogmatic character derives from the rules of the method according to which only the empirical data obtainable from the defined methodological search action are acceptable. Findings that are not the result of the fulfillment of those rules are considered as meaningless data, and correspondingly, they are deemed lacking scientific weight, and therefore, discarded or ignored. For example, in inductive research, only specific evidence that is similar is required to enable arriving at a scientifically found conclusion (Papineau, 2005, p. 4), and anything that conflicts or is not alike has to be dismissed as not in alignment with the concept. The deductive research, which concerns a hypothesis drafted from the premise seeks to find only data predicted by the hypothesis; and, as Popper (2002a) emphasized, if the findings are compatible the hypothesis will (temporarily) be confirmed. In turn, however, if the findings are contrary to the predictions - then the hypothesis will be falsified (Popper, 2002a, pp. 55-56, 57- 73). Furthermore, conflicting findings and the missing of predicted data that may prove a hypothesis wrong may render the risk of remaining out of the methodological attention. The same can be said concerning the quantitative and qualitative research division. While in qualitative research, the purpose and scope of the research concerns an in-depth understanding based on case studies, where the numerical magnitude of the study is set outside the researchers' field of interest. In contrast to the qualitative approach, the quantitative research involves an understanding of the magnitude of the research object (Creswell, 2003, p. 84-102) without placing decisive weight on particular cases.

However, the scientific practice has undoubtedly proven that the application of the roles of the method in particular cases is usually scientifically useful as it puts empirical evidence needed in the focus of a specific research. Such examples are the discovery of the Higgs boson (Abazi, 2018, p.

58), and the confirmation of the gravitational waves (Abazi, 2018, pp. 59-60), which took several decades. Examples like these show that persistence and the consistency of the approach is, of course, what gives value to the rules of the method. However, scientific practice has also witnessed that during the research scholars are often met with findings (hypothesis and data) that are far from consistent with the empirical focus, and, in spite of this reality, none of the methods (until the counter-induction was formed) gives any suggestion of what to do with those findings. Rather, they are simply considered and treated a priori as useless and non-scientific. This methodological behavior as determined by the rules of the method becomes latently dogmatic, as it considers other alternative approaches illegitimate, and therefore not scientific, conversely causing stagnation in the research.

### *Criticism of methods*

The rigidity of the methodical rules as an obstacle has been understood by various philosophers as well as scientists, who have put it under the anvil of criticism. While at times alternately criticized or in more moderate terms by various scholars, serious problems have been consistently uncovered. All critics of any method have advocated some other method, and thus put forward from their given methodological position. The first to address the issue beyond a definite methodological stance were Thomas Kuhn and Paul Feyerabend.

Though the trajectory of the criticisms to methods goes through centuries in history, in the current paper, the contemporary debate will be primarily considered, a debate which sometimes escalated to argue for any method as a non-scientific approach, as Karl Popper did in his famous *The Logic*

of *Scientific Discovery* in 1935, in which he argues against the inductive method (Popper, 2002a, pp. 3-17). When logical positivism was at its height in the 1930s, the inductive method was almost identified - if not entirely - as the main scientific method in the natural disciplines; at such frequencies were most philosophers of science among whom Moritz Schlick, Otto Neurath, Hans Han, Rudolf Carnap to name a few. Only Karl Popper had another point of view, strongly criticizing the logical positivism's approach (Popper, 2002a, pp. 3-17, 248-268 when arriving at the conclusion that induction results either "[...] in endless regression, or in the doctrine of *apriorism*! (p. 6).

Popper did not leave, of course, the science without method. His powerful advocacy was for the deductive approach (Popper, 2002a, p. 10), which, as he believed, was the only true scientific method (*ibid.*). This method, however, would be hit in the heart by Bertrand Russell. Speaking of the Euclid *Elements*, calling it one of the greatest books ever written and one of the most perfect monuments of the Greek intellect, he expresses a very sharp critique. According to Russell, the great work of Euclid "has, of course, the typical Greek limitations: the method is purely deductive, and there is no way, within it, of testing the initial assumptions" (Russell, 2003, p. 221), since such assumptions, being considered as the main premises, i.e. as true theories, were considered to be unquestionable. What Russell wanted to say is this: As the testing of specific propositions was based on the essential assumptions of the theory, the fault stems from the fact that these essential assumptions, although taken as true, might be wrong, as, for example, in the 19th century, it was shown that the initial assumptions of Euclid's work could have been wrong and that only observations could decide whether they were so (*ibid.*) This appropriate criticism of Russell has been supported throughout the history of science: from around the third century BC, most philosophers and

scientists of astronomy considered the essential assumption of geocentric theory on earth as the center of the universe as true, and accordingly, astronomers had been led through centuries in their scientific work by that "initial assumption", which was shown to be erroneous. Another example can be found in the social sciences: The essential assumption of socialism was the claim for social justice as the equality of well-being of all citizens, which has been shown to be erroneous too (now it is known that after many decades of the "experimentation" - in Russia and elsewhere - the social reality in the former socialist countries showed the contrary: social injustice and inequalities in well-being had grown and deepened, with the consequence that the workers and peasants were depleted into slave labor, while the bureaucratic and technocratic classes and party caste were enriched and transformed into rulers).

Despite the mutual criticisms of philosophers who considered one method as being most scientific than the other, whether concerning the inductive or the deductive method likewise in terms of quantitative and qualitative approaches or any other method, scientific experience, as Steven Eric Krauss (2005) suggests, showed that no method is more scientific than the other (Krauss, 2005, pp. 758-761). This perception is widespread: Despite the plurality of methods, the methods employed by the researchers are many and varied, as underlined in the Routledge Encyclopedia of Philosophy, where it is stated that all are scientific methods (REP, 1998, pp. 7769-7773).

Criticism of the diverse methods has yielded fruitful benefits to science. As Krauss (2005) emphasizes, the criticisms have led to improvements that made it possible for the best understanding of each mode of research and the possibilities of their mixing (Krauss, 2005, pp. 761-762). In social sciences, limitations and the insufficiency of the qualitative or



quantitative method as exclusive research approaches has given rise for a need for their combination, which has resulted in the widespread use of the mixed-method approach, which is hitherto considered as a "legitimate alternative" even in the field of medicine, where it is increasingly gaining popularity (Doyle, Brady & Bryne, 2009, pp. 175-185). The use of the mixed method developed in the mid-twentieth century, and has been broadly in use since 1980 (McKim, 2017, p. 202). And according to the same author, the mixed method is now used by well-known scholars like Creswell, JW (2003), Creswell, JW, & Plano Clark, VL (2007), Dunning, H., Williams, A., Abonyi, S. & Crooks, V. (2008) etc.

Once the methodical rules are constituted, they are modified with difficulty in a long, complex process presented with arguments and counter-arguments and coupled with philosophical tensions. An example is the debate that has caused the problem of the induction: It became a challenge to find any solution and to overcome it. Some of the main efforts of this enterprise are presented in Papineau's *Methodology* (2005, pp. 8-13), which sets out with the solution Popper claimed by eliminating the induction itself as a method and its alternative through the deductive testing in the scientific research. Subsequently, the new problem of Goodman's induction as an issue of distinguishing "projectable" predicates (those that are rooted in practices used by the human community to produce inductive conclusions in the past) from "non-projectable" (Papineau, 2005, pp. 19-22) is discussed. On this basis, Papineau (2005, pp. 13-19, 60-72) pleads for the inductive approach, expanding and explaining some aspects, while arguing that this method is useful in scientific research. Similar criticisms for and against the inductive and deductive approach can be found in many reviews (Rotchild, 2006; Medewar, 1996; Popper, 2002a; Ayer, 1971).

Unlike the above criticisms with regards to criticizing the rigor and strict character of the methodical rules, Thomas Kuhn has presented us with another point of view, namely that there are no criteria in the sense of the rules of any method or methodology to be of universal validity in order to determine the status of a theory beforehand (Kuhn in Lakatos & Musgrave, 1970, pp. 19, 237). This was argued by the fact that there was no methodological rule to be more valid than the following theory: "Paradigms may be prior to, more binding, and more complete than any set of rules for research that could be unequivocally abstracted from them" (Kuhn, 1970, p. 46). In this regard, Feyerabend (1993) went on further by pointing out that "all methodologies, even the most obvious ones, have their limits" (Feyerabend, 1993, p. 23).

### *Attempts to find suitable research rules*

Driven by the scientific practice and the difficulties caused by the rules of the methods scientists and philosophers have continuously detected obstacles regarded the methodical rules, and thus have understood the need to extend the approach and partially change it. These enterprises express the effort to find suitable rules for research in attempts at overcoming their limitations and avoid stagnation.

Many centuries ago, Francis Bacon made such an examination. At the time when the inductive method was at its peak as a scientific approach, Bacon had already stressed in his *Novum Organum* published in 1620, that by targeting only positive instances as the approach was deficient. According to Milton, Bacon had realized that, to work according to the claim, the inductive approach could have benefits from both instances, the positive as well as the negative ones (Milton, 1998, p. 766;

Bacon, 1902, p. 130). This is why Bacon found out that, in order not to remain isolated in the conceptual framework, two rules should be applied by the researcher: (i) to la[y] aside received opinions and notions; and (ii) to restrain [...] from the generalizations (Bacon, 1902, i, pp. 106-107).

This contribution was not the only one, nor an isolated work. On the contrary. The sciences guided by rigorous methodical rules constantly encounter hypotheses or data that cannot be accommodated in the theoretical framework like paradigm. Findings impossible to become naturally integrated parts of the theoretical framework are called anomalies (Kuhn, 1970, p. 52; Lakatos. 1989, p. 53; Feyerabend, 1993, pp. 11-12), and that is why they remain beyond research considerations.

Understanding the limitations of the rules, different philosophers of science and scientists attempted to find a more open, non-dogmatic approach that would methodologically make the research more efficient. The logical positivists from the standpoint of verification rules, conceived as anomalous certain claims in science, like the "meaningless assertions" and the metaphysical assertions that were considered empty (Ayer, 1959, p. 145). According to logical positivists, metaphysical assertions did not refer to anything in reality, which is why such non-scientific or pseudo-scientific claims had to be cleansed from the science courtyard, so that scientists could work only with empirical predictions. With all good intentions, if scientists would strictly apply the methodical rules of the logical positivists as set against the metaphysical assertions, the result would be quite the opposite. If all the claims not referred to in empirical reality had to be eliminated, then the methodological rules of the logical positivists themselves should be eliminated too as "meaningless assertions", and resultantly, as rightly claimed Karl Popper (2002a), the result would be the elimination of science itself (Popper, 2002a, p. 14).

To solve the methodological problem brought by the logical positivists, Karl Popper (2002b) introduced another approach believed by him to be compatible with the scientific practice. The methodical rules constructed were much more liberal as no assertion should be prejudiced in advance. The methodological rules defined the testing of the theories, which had to be twofold: On the one hand, a theory must face another theory, and on the other, each of theories had to face the empirical evidence. The status of each theory in the end had to be determined by the result of the experiment. To sum it up, Popper points out that the methodological goal of scientists had to be finding and eliminating false theories (Popper, 2002b, pp. 19, 66-67).

Popper's (2002b) falsifications methodology seems to clean the yard of science from deceptive theoretical fruits, which on the surface seemed to be true but were in fact not. Such rules would, in fact, have the contrary effect, which Thomas Kuhn argued already in his well-known *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* published in 1962. According to Kuhn, new theories have always less support in empirical evidence compared to the old theories. Hence, the methodological rules of falsification, as well as those of verification, and even the combined verification-falsification rules (Kuhn, 1970, pp. 146-147) would not methodologically provide the claimed results.

The debate of philosophers and scientists has always highlighted certain limitations of methodological rules and their negative effects. Their contributions, through critical approaches, aimed the opening of the way for changes in the rules of the methods, so that they became more suitable to the scientific practice. The hope to find suitable rules became a myth since after every correctional change, it became always obvious that the rules, however flexible, were deficient and had limitations. This was convincingly emphasized by Thomas

Kuhn (1970), who stated that there are no methodologies, rules or criteria to have universal validity, and that, as such, their validity was limited only to a given paradigm. He even pointed out that compared to every rules or criteria it is the paradigm which has the priority (Kuhn, 1970, p. 46). Lakatos (1989) synthesizes this when constructing a methodology molded in theory, which in his view was seen as a scientific research program (which is like Kuhn's paradigm) with very tolerant criteria like that progressive-degenerative ones. In the end, however, he ascertained that his criteria are valid only post hoc (Lakatos, 1989, p. 112).

The trajectory of efforts in finding suitable rules and the continuing failure of any rule to be as alleged, made Paul Feyerabend (1993) to understand that no methodological rule can be entirely suitable for research. Consequently, he expressed the main deficiency to date, which could be seen from the opposite methodological perspective in order to assert the following conclusion:

... there is not a single rule however plausible, and however firmly grounded in epistemology that is not violated at some time or other. It becomes evident that such violations are not accidental events, they are not results of insufficient knowledge or of inattention which might have been avoided (Feyerabend, 1993, p.14).

### *The counter-induction - a new and different method*

Feyerabend (1993) took lessons from the history of science in order to look at scientific research from the position of the counter-rules' perspective. The lesson was this:

[...] given any rule, however 'fundamental' or 'rational', there are always circumstances when it is advisable not only to ignore the rule but to adopt its opposite (Feyerabend, 1993, p. 14).

From this point of view, he formulated the principle of "everything goes" (Feyerabend, 1993, p. 19), upon which the counter-inductive approach is based (Feyerabend, 1993, p. 20).

Feyerabend (1993) had realized that the lack of the opposite perspective had almost exhausted scientific research, narrowing it down and shrinking it, so that the dominant rules had to be broken once, to make the finding of the solution possible. The scientific research had to be methodologically released, which could be done according to Feyerabend (1993) by legitimizing the approach contrary to the rules or according to the counter-rules. This is his contribution to the science: the counter-induction. This method would make the methodological approach open and science would become more effective in the research of reality, as the search for knowledge would not be confined exclusively to the eliminatory rules. Rather, everything could be put into the focus of science as worthy of research if a team of scientists would see it as good as possible.

Then, how does one work with the methodological novelty Feyerabend (1993) brought?

The counter-induction, as its name suggests, is an approach that legitimizes any scientific claim, however contradictory to the dominant theory. It suggests, on the one hand, "the counterrule that urges us to develop hypotheses inconsistent with accepted and highly confirmed theories", and, on the other, "the counterrule that urges us to develop hypotheses inconsistent with well-established facts" (Feyerabend, 1993, p. 20).

While each method requires creating hypotheses that do not conflict with well-confirmed theories and develop hypotheses

that do not conflict with well-established facts, the method of Feyerabend seeks the opposite. In other words, if there are hypotheses that conflict with accepted theories or scientific facts, counter-induction suggests not eliminating them but turning the focus back on them; in the absence of opposing hypotheses, it suggests to induce them.

To acquire a better understanding, let us remember that, for example, according to the rules, inductive research requires completely similar data that form a certain class, in which nothing can be inserted except the class members assigned by definition. This is the typical mode of action by the inductive approach, and this cannot be changed, as long conclusion through induction is desired. This, in essence, also occurs with the deductive approach, according to which are acceptable only the specific cases compatible with its essential premise (theory, law), while other cases are eliminated. The same applies to the quantitative and qualitative approaches, as well as all other methods, which must follow specific rules to maintain the research as characterized by their nature. In contrast to all methods, the counter-induction method has its own focus on what is distinguishable and different; that which contradicts the rules under which a research is made; that which cannot be included in the conceptual framework of the methodological strict and eliminating rules, the one that is opposed to them.

Thus, by founding the counter-inductive approach as a methodological rule, Feyerabend (1993) has contributed to preventing scientists from falling into dogmatic frameworks of rigidity of methodical rules that make them ignore, disregard or consider absurd hypothesis or empirical evidence because they are excluded by methodological rules. In this sense, the outcome of counter-induction is that the science becomes more open and looser in the research of understanding the reality. That is why counter-induction is an alternative approach that

has emerged essentially from the stagnation of research, and as a consequence of applying the strict rules. It is also put forward as an alternative to change the research course in a mild manner and with minimal consequences.

The counter-inductive approach does not forbid scientists from acting according to the methodical rules that research teams may consider appropriate and to be guided by them. On the contrary: if in order to develop a theory a counter-hypothesis would require the use of inductive or deductive approach for instance, that would be fine. The primary notion of a counter-inductive approach is the right to allow scientists to apply other rules in cases considered as suitable. It means allowing the possibility, without any consequence, to act against standard methodological concepts that allow consistent and compatible approaches while excluding and prohibiting every other approach. In other words, that defines the counter-inductive research is the legitimacy of approaches contrary to the rules of the applied method, i.e. counter-action. The intention is restraining scientists from prejudices towards the exclusivity of some scientific instruments, to allow the use of any rule and method that could make fruitful the scientific research at arriving at empirical knowledge. In other words, counter-induction does not require the dominance, nor exclusivity as the only valid or most valuable in general. Rather, it requires legitimacy as a scientific instrument just like all other research methods that scientists can use when any other instrument does not give the expected result or prevents achieving a result. The counter-inductive approach can also, *in se*, be considered as valid in achieving knowledge of reality that cannot be done by any other method.

Then, it becomes obvious that only when we realize that not just a single method is applicable, but that each method without the exclusion of another, and including the counter-inductive



method, which enables fruitful research is of a scientific nature. In this sense, the use of just a certain methodology is not of decisive importance, but any methodological approach that enables successful inquiry when some other methodology does not make this possible. It is only by taking this into account, i.e. in such a context, that the above statement (Sokoli, 2013, p. 43) becomes meaningful: there is no scientific knowledge without a scientific method, whichever it is, which makes research successful.

### *Counter-induction as a methodologically alternative approach*

To illustrate the functionality and openness of the counter-induction approach, Feyerabend (1993) has, discussed the Galileo Galileo's inquisition (Feyerabend, 1993, pp. 77-146). In Galileo's time, the dominant methodological rules of the geocentric astronomy prohibited any other approach. Because of the narrowness of the methodological rules, any hypothesis that conflicted with geocentrism was unacceptable, as well as any empirical findings that could not be accommodated through methodical rules with that astronomical reality. If hypotheses and findings were not legitimate, they were banned methodologically and were considered non-scientific. The geocentric methodology had produced knowledge of astronomy based on the geocentric vision, that is why it was forbidden to act otherwise than in accordance with its own rules. If the geocentric methodology was strictly implemented, it would oppose everything that is contradictory or inconsistent with it, and after attempts, if they did not get accommodated, they would be dismissed as incompatible.

The same can be said of social sciences, specifically following the earlier example of socialism. The methodological rules of socialism accepted only the hypotheses that were in line with the socialist order, as well as the empirical findings conform to the theoretical predictions of socialism. They reject any hypotheses that could not become suitable with socialist rules as well as any findings that undermine socialist predictions. Moreover, such findings would be treated as illegitimate because they were methodologically banned. The outcome would be soon known: after unsuccessful attempts to accommodate them, they would be methodologically termed as anomalies.

In either of above examples, traditionally there would be no other legitimacy except for the methodologically prevailing rules. They would, of course, not allow anything that would collide with them. Moreover, incompatible findings would be eliminated. The methodological rules are the guards that select what is acceptable and what is not. If strictly followed by the respective communities, then geocentric astronomy and socialism, though incompatible with reality, would remain eternal. Thus, such methodological rules become conservative and dogmatic, transforming a given scientific or social situation into an unaltered state.

Of course, getting out of this situation is possible. Feyerabend (1993) has shown that changes usually come through breaking existing rules (Feyerabend, 1993, p. 14). Realizing that such actions are indispensable historically, Feyerabend (1993) constituted counter-rule as an approach (Feyerabend, 1993, p. 20). The main principle is that at a time when the rules turn into inhibitors and become detrimental to the research, it would be advisable to act according to the counter-induction manner. Counter-induction is a methodical rule of the alternative approach, which means that if a rule

shrinks the cognitive research up to stagnation, then the alternative approach must be considered as legitimate and scientific.

Thus, accepting the counter-induction as integral to the existing scientific methodologies, methodological support to oppose any team of scientists who have alternative theories or who deal with the research of the predictions of any hypothesis that conflicts with the dominant paradigm would be reduced. The same extends to empirical findings that at first sight conflicts with facts or reality as it is known. These counter-inductive rules liberate science from the methodological limitations and turn the main focus on knowing the reality, respectively the epistemological aspect.

## *Conclusion*

From the point of view posed above, it is seen that science has evolved even with regard to the methodological aspect of the research. Mainly from experience in scientific activity, it has become clear that all the rules of the methods at some particular moment of research have been shown to be rigid and have turned into important stumbling blocks in successful research by curbing the study. In this way, it was shown by few but important examples of natural and social sciences that the strict application of the methodical rules at any given moment may turn against the very nature of the research. We have clarified the fact that the strict application of the methodical rules compels following a certain knowing of reality, not allowing another possible knowing of reality as it indeed may actually be.

Applying the methodical rules with its consistency may causes from time to time a stagnation in the research due to the

latent dogmatism that compels compliance with the rules. Although many philosophers and scientists have contributed to liberalize the methodical rules, it was Paul Feyerabend (1993) who understood correctly the practical action of scientists, that is, how the stagnation of research had passed. This resulted in an unknown theoretical solution until then: counter-induction. Science supplemented with this method, which had thus far been lacking, constituted the whole methodical arsenal, and departed from the notion of research not becoming the prey of methodological frameworks. With Feyerabend's (1993) contribution, the alternative action of counter-induction has theoretically become legitimate. Science has taken away the methodical obstruction and has now become methodologically liberalized.

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# *Student practical work related to children motivation*

*Violeta Buza<sup>1</sup>, PhD*

*AAB College, Pristina, Kosovo*

*Email: violeta.buza@universitetiaab.com*

## **Abstract**

The establishment of a good atmosphere in class is achieved through the interconnection of subjects and creative activities with children, which affects the motivation and development of the key learning competences, in order for them to better understand the world around them. Therefore, the cooperation between institutions makes the planning and accomplishment of the student educators' practice possible, allowing them to become aware of their work with children during their studies. The analysis of the students' work remains an important process during the receiving of theoretical information. It is also important in the accomplishment of their practice in preschool institutions and pre-primary classes within schools in order to motivate the children to learn. This study emphasizes the work of student educators in the following two courses: (1) Theory of Learning Through Practice and (2) Pedagogical Practice for the planning and realization of different activities in cooperation with the educators in the preschool institutions and pre-primary classes. Hence, we think that the interconnection between theory and practice greatly affects the creative work of students in the motivation and development of the children. The study analysis is based on the analysis of classwork

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<sup>1</sup> Article received on the 12th September, 2018.

Article accepted on the 14th December, 2018.

Conflict of Interest: The author declares no conflict of interests.

records, portfolios, presentations and researches of the student educators of the AAB College. The practice is carried out in preschool institutions and pre-primary classes during a fifteen-week period by the second-year and fourth-year students of Social Sciences of the academic year 2017/2018.

**Keywords:** *practice, motivation, children development, diary, portfolio.*

Children motivation and development of their key competences is a difficult aspect and a very important part of the work of educators in the teaching process because a child who is not motivated to participate in different learning activities can experience difficulties in learning as well. Children should always be motivated for life-long learning because "Motivation to learn is intrinsic, stimulated by active learning methods" (Walsh, Kiranxhiska & Gjorgjieva, n.d., p. 16) This can be achieved by ensuring an environment appropriate to their age and development, inciting creativity in them to achieve a successful learning experience.

Seeing that the work of an educator is a work entailing responsibilities for the child development, consideration should be given to both theoretical information and students' professional practice during the years of study as a difficult, although achievable, path in the work with children. "We will succeed in shaping contemporary teachers, teachers who will achieve to meet pupils' requirements, only when theoretical and practical learning is strongly intertwined with each-other" (Winsor, 2004b, p. v). Practical learning is a challenge for student educators starting from the receiving of information during the four years of study and accomplishment of three years of practice in different preschool institutions and pre-primary classes, where they are equipped with different models and experiences of teaching from educators. Practice is a true



source of knowledge and is rightly so called the teacher's experience, because teachers make the decision to treat the curriculum, set the objectives, prepare the material for the planned topics, organize the classroom, and implement the teaching activity (Zajazi, 2003). This experience will serve student educators as a preparation for their future profession during the work with children since it is said that the educator facilitates work, replaces a parent and becomes a dear friend to children. The educator is like a treasury equipped with multiple information, achieving to be effective both in a desert, ocean or under a tree at the top of mountain (Reynolds, 2001).

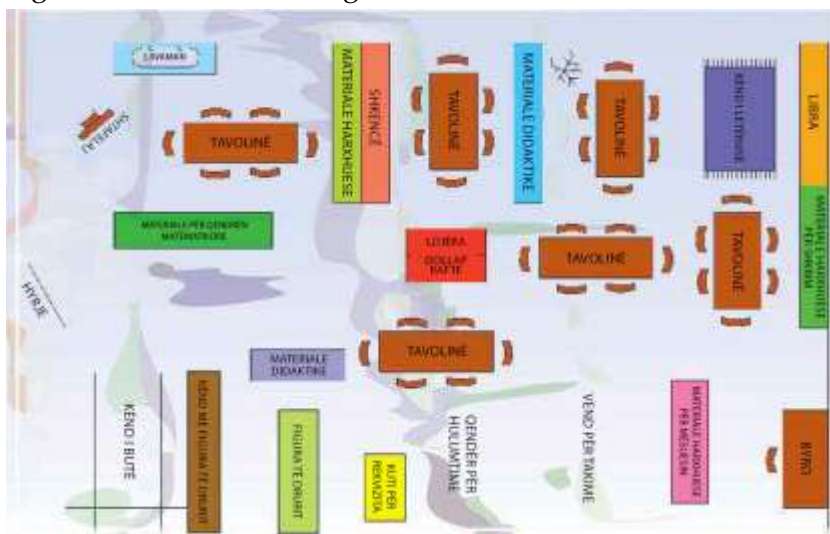
The role of students in preschool institutions and pre-primary classes is of great significance in the children's learning process. They should manage to inspire children and have an impact in their motivation by planning and accomplishing appropriate learning activities. In addition, open communication with parents for a true cooperation with educators and student educators has a positive impact in increasing learning efficiency because "Parents and teachers should recognize the complementary importance of each other in the life of a pupil" (Fullan, 2002, p. 319). The aim of this study is to analyze the work of student educators while they receive theoretical information and undergo a practice in preschool institutions and pre-primary classes within schools to motivate and develop children in all areas of life. And, to arrive at the conclusion that the interrelation between theory and practice plays an important role in the creative work of the students themselves for the motivation and development of children.

### *Theoretical context*

Based on the Kosovo Curriculum Framework, it is foreseen to integrate learning through curriculum areas, contributing to the development of competences and learning outcomes for children so that they attain life skills. The six key competences that the children should achieve during pre-university education are: Communication and expression competences, Thinking competences, Learning competences, Life, work and environment competences, Personal competences and Civic competences to achieve the final result which is being an effective communicator, creative and critical thinker, successful student, productive contributor, healthy individual and responsible citizen as an independent development of children's personalities (MASHT, 2016).

Based on the age group, activities or games appropriate for preschool education should be planned and organized to achieve success in the six areas of their development, starting from the development of language, development of math, arts education, social and personal development, scientific development and physical and health development. The productivity of children's memory and imagination increases through game as a fundamental activity in order to achieve sustainable development (Zuna, 2003). In each working corner in a classroom, it is necessary to have the materials needed for the development of their creative and cooperative skills.

Figure 1. Classroom arrangement



(Walsh, Kiranxhiska & Gjorgjieva, n.d., p. 85)

The structure of the classroom in Fig. 1, should be arranged in small work-group forms and not in the individual work form so as to enable children to cooperate, and be motivated by each other to achieve positive results. This form of work helps children to work actively, triggers different ideas for solving problems by creating opportunities for new ways of cognition through interaction with one another (Cekani, 2010).

The practical learning component, as part of the program for the preparation of educators,

will provide students the opportunity to observe teaching models, engage in teaching, get constructive instructions and learn about teaching and themselves as educators and as reflective self-evaluators (Winsor, 2004a, p. 1).

Depending on cooperation with educators, students manage to plan and accomplish different activities in preschool institutions and pre-primary classes; hence, we say that practical learning in the Faculty has two major aims:

1. To offer the students *the preparation* they need to be successful in classrooms, and
2. To offer them time and structure for *reflection and discussion*, to enable learning from the time spent in the class (Winsor, 2004a, p. 2).

Therefore, students should have sufficient knowledge about the work with children, starting from lesson plans, their implementation in classes, different activities and games to be developed in a class to create the most motivating environment for children because “Playing is the spirit of every teaching program in early childhood” (Coughlin et al, 1997, pp. I-13).

## *Methodology*

Qualitative and quantitative methods are used in the study. As a research instrument the record of classwork completed by students and the portfolio of practical work done in pre-primary classes and preschool institutions is used, which was implemented as well for the assessment of their work with children, planned and accomplished in fifteen working days. It was completed in accordance with the structure provided, which should consist of annual, monthly, weekly and daily plans, the form of observation of a child having difficulties in the classroom, photos of activities and forms of work with children as well as materials prepared and used for the concretization of the lesson. The work of students mainly took place in preschool institutions and pre-primary classes in the municipality of Prishtina and the municipality of Gjakova. Having in mind the importance of planning and organization of lessons by educators and student educators to achieve a full success with the children (Musai, 2014), students have been advised to plan and deliver a presentation based on their work

in classes during one day of practice, as per the schedule received by educators in different teaching subjects.

The presentation of the work done in classes where the practice took place had a positive effect to motivate students themselves by watching different activities from each other and planning as many attractive activities as possible, achieving the utmost success with the children in quality learning and also being competitors between them in presenting their best work.

This form of research was chosen to examine the creative work of students to participate in teaching classes, gather information for a child with difficulties without letting that child know that he/she is being observed because “it is important to record what was really *seen* rather than what we *think* we have seen” (Glenn, Cousins, & Helps, 2006) and motivate and help children gain life skills through participation of student educators in classes. The research is based on the importance of planning for the achievement of learning outcomes from children, based on the new Curriculum. The sample is purposive; it consists of 158 students from the AAB College, in Prishtina branch and Gjakova branch.

The data was collected from the analysis of 132 student diaries and portfolios completed by fourth year students during the practice and 28 presentations of their work done in preschool institutions and pre-primary classes for fifteen days. In addition to that, the presentations of 26 second year students, who beside lectures have accomplished the tasks given according to the curriculum, selecting a theory unit to implement in teaching classes in preschool institutions and pre-primary classes. Based on the theory acquired from the lectures for fifteen weeks interrelated with the practice carried out with the help of educators in classes with children, the students achieved to be more creative in planning and carrying out

activities so that they get closer to establishing a sustainable relation with children in achieving the purpose.

### *Outcome*

The data help us to provide an evaluation of the work that student educators performed during their practice in preschool institutions and pre-primary classes with the children in the municipality of Prishtina and the municipality of Gjakova. Based on the outcomes from the data, we notice that the preparation of students on the theoretical aspect and the help of educators in their work during the practice helps positively in their formation for a successful work with children. In addition, their success is noticed in the successful planning and organization of different activities and games, motivation of children to learn successfully, achievement of results with the children and students themselves after the completion of their studies to manage to be employed more easily through their dedication for a successful work.

This study is based on the work done by student educators during fifteen weeks of lectures and the tasks performed in the two subjects: (1) Theory of Learning Through Practice and (2) Pedagogical Practice for work planning and accomplishment of different activities in cooperation with educators in preschool institutions and pre-primary classes.

From the outcomes we will arrive at conclusions important with regards to the interrelation of theory and practice in order to raise the awareness of students about the work with children, the interrelation of teaching subjects, the planning and organization of creative activities that motivate children in the development of the key learning competences.

Table 1 Child observation

Child observation					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	0	56	42.4	42.4	42.4
	1	45	34.1	34.1	76.5
	2	15	11.4	11.4	87.9
	3	2	1.5	1.5	89.4
	5	1	.8	.8	90.2
	6	3	2.3	2.3	92.4
	7	1	.8	.8	93.2
	8	1	.8	.8	93.9
	9	1	.8	.8	94.7
	12	2	1.5	1.5	96.2
	13	1	.8	.8	97.0
	14	1	.8	.8	97.7
	15	1	.8	.8	98.5
	16	2	1.5	1.5	100.0
	Total	132	100.0	100.0	

With regards to the child observation task during the practice, which involved the observation of how a child behaves and how much he/she is prepared to stay in the teaching class, 56 students or 42.42% of students did not carry out the task at all, 45 students or 34.1% planned it and carried it out and wrote only one description whereas 31 students or 23.48% have written more than two descriptions about the observation carried out.

Hence, based on the study outcomes according to the Table 1, we understand that 76 students or 57.58% did an observation of a child during fifteen days of practice, describing their difficulties, working methods and forms used with those children, showing the advantages, achievements, setbacks and difficulties after their involvement in the teaching process.

Student who did the observation managed to write different forms of description for children; some of them wrote a general form or descriptive form for the child in a single page, while some other students conducted a detailed and daily description of the planning and accomplishment of activities related to the development of the child in achieving competences and positive results. Descriptions that were written in more details are for the most silent children, children having difficulties in communication, intellectually impaired children, less socialized children. In addition, in descriptions prepared by student educators we see their engagement through different activities with children having difficulties, aiming to achieve more progress during the period of practice in preschool institutions and pre-primary classes. From the data we understand that the assistance provided by student educators had a positive impact on children having difficulties with regards to motivation to achieve the best results and in changing behavior, since nearly 58% indicate how and to what extent the children were motivated at the time the student educators were doing their practice in preschool institutions and pre-primary classes. At the same time, the engagement of student educators had a positive influence on the educators themselves as the work naturally becomes more successful when two educators are engaged in a classroom.



Table 2. Group work activities

Group work activities					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	0	29	22.0	22.0	22.0
	1	8	6.1	6.1	28.0
	2	14	10.6	10.6	38.6
	3	12	9.1	9.1	47.7
	4	13	9.8	9.8	57.6
	5	11	8.3	8.3	65.9
	6	4	3.0	3.0	68.9
	7	3	2.3	2.3	71.2
	8	6	4.5	4.5	75.8
	9	1	.8	.8	76.5
	10	5	3.8	3.8	80.3
	11	4	3.0	3.0	83.3
	12	3	2.3	2.3	85.6
	13	3	2.3	2.3	87.9
	14	2	1.5	1.5	89.4
	16	2	1.5	1.5	90.9
	17	1	.8	.8	91.7
	18	2	1.5	1.5	93.2
	19	2	1.5	1.5	94.7
	23	2	1.5	1.5	96.2
	25	1	.8	.8	97.0
	26	1	.8	.8	97.7
	27	1	.8	.8	98.5
	30	1	.8	.8	99.2
	31	1	.8	.8	100.0
	Total	132	100.0	100.0	

From the data presented in Table 2, we can see that 29 students or 22% did not apply the group work form, which is considered to be the most appropriate form of performing activities with children, whereas 103 students or 78% applied this work form with children. We see that nearly 52% implemented this form of work more than four times during the practical work and that they have achieved adequate degree of cooperation among children, completion of tasks in time and the correct implementation of the lesson plan including

activities or games adequate for the development of children in preschool education.

One of the reasons why some student educators did not apply the group work form was that the educators did not allow them to apply this form of work with the justification that the classrooms are too small; therefore, they have applied the traditional work form.

Figure 2. The work of children carried out in centers

Fig. 2.1 Annual calendar



Fig. 2.2 Science center



Fig. 2.3 Build the bridge



Fig. 2.4 Math center



Photos realized by students during their practice in preschool institutions and pre-primary classes.

Photos in Fig. 2 show the work of student educators who planned and organized activities with the children in different subjects during their practical work. The first photo 2.1 presents the daily routine activity, which is carried out every day with the purpose of remembering and recalling necessary information, starting from the days of the week, months, seasons, weather and dates. The second photo 2.2 presents the work of children in groups in the science center, where children manage to be creative in their cooperative work using tools, colors and different forms. The third photo 2.3 shows the building of a bridge using recycled materials during an English class, where children communicate with each other and the educator while learning for the working tools needed, building materials, the importance of the bridge, its length and height and other important information; whereas the fourth photo 2.4 presents the math center, with prepared concretization means used to remember numbers, colors, geometric forms, materials, etc. All activities performed in different centers help children see, touch, think, recall, plan and build different objects and this contributes to their preparation and development in all areas. Some of the carried out activities to stimulate learning are given in the book *Methodology according to areas of development* to help children accomplish new successes and practices (Cekani, 2012).

Table 3. Materials used for concretization

Materials used for concretization					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	0	17	12.9	12.9	12.9
	1	6	4.5	4.5	17.4
	2	4	3.0	3.0	20.5
	3	5	3.8	3.8	24.2
	4	10	7.6	7.6	31.8
	5	4	3.0	3.0	34.8
	6	7	5.3	5.3	40.2
	7	7	5.3	5.3	45.5
	8	6	4.5	4.5	50.0
	9	1	.8	.8	50.8
	10	9	6.8	6.8	57.6
	11	6	4.5	4.5	62.1
	12	4	3.0	3.0	65.2
	13	4	3.0	3.0	68.2
	14	6	4.5	4.5	72.7
	15	4	3.0	3.0	75.8
	16	10	7.6	7.6	83.3
	17	5	3.8	3.8	87.1
	18	2	1.5	1.5	88.6
	19	3	2.3	2.3	90.9
	21	1	.8	.8	91.7
	24	1	.8	.8	92.4
	26	3	2.3	2.3	94.7
	27	1	.8	.8	95.5
	32	2	1.5	1.5	97.0
	33	1	.8	.8	97.7
	43	1	.8	.8	98.5
	54	1	.8	.8	99.2
	56	1	.8	.8	100.0
	Total	132	100.0	100.0	

In regards to the materials made by students themselves and used to make the teaching units more concrete, from the data presented in Table 3 we can see that only 17 students or 12.9% of them did not plan or use concretization means, while 115 of students or 73% used concretization materials and means to make teaching units clear and to motivate children for their development related to achievement of competences and positive learning results. Over 70% of students stated that they used more than three materials during practical work. Some of them stated that the educators helped student educators as well, guiding them in preparing materials for concretisation and helping them to prepare them so that students could apply them in the classroom, making the lesson attractive and motivational for the children to achieve a successful work.

Based on the three tables presented above, we understand that the largest percentage of student educators have achieved the results planned, in cooperation with the educators in order to achieve motivation and development of children.

Table 4. Correlation between activities carried out using different forms of work with pupils - group work, individual work and frontal work

Correlations				
		Aktivitate në punë në grupe	Aktivitate në punë individuale	Aktivitate në punë frontale
Aktivitate në punë në grupe	Pearson Correlation	1	.527**	.618**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.000
	N	132	132	132
Aktivitate në punë individuale	Pearson Correlation	.527**	1	.445**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.000
	N	132	132	132
Aktivitate në punë frontale	Pearson Correlation	.618**	.445**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	
	N	132	132	132

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

According to the data in Table 4, we can see a correlation between different forms of work applied in classes by student educators ( $r=+0.527$ ;  $r=+0.618$ ;  $p=0.01$ ). Despite knowledge acquired in theoretical part about the fact that the group work form - centers is more successful in pre-primary classes, it is noticed that traditional forms of work, such as frontal and individual work form, are still applied. But, from the data it is understood that planned activities almost in all teaching subjects have been done using the group work form to make the learning units, motivation, socialization and development of children as concrete as possible. Whereas, frontal and individual forms of work were used less to understand the general information during routine activities, games and different drawings with children, while planting flowers and other successful activities.

According to qualitative data collected from student educators for the purpose of this study, we understand that:

Table 5. Students' results in the work planned

From the achievement of results planned in a day, student educators noticed that the children:	Understood the story narrated and they repeated it in their own words
	Could differentiate between cold water and hot water
	All the children were involved in the physical education class and when they succeeded in performing the activities they felt very happy
	They were amused through different games
	The objective of the activity to familiarize children with insects and perform cutting was achieved because children were having difficulties.
	With the activity organized in nature, children learned very quickly how to classify insects into flying and non-flying insects; they were even not afraid to catch them by hand.
	Children managed to understand the time when a day begins and when is night time
	Children indicated the time when they wake up, leave for school, the time when the school is done and the time when they go to bed
	Children managed to understand the fairy tale, perform a role play and draw the characters of the fairy tale
Students managed to understand that a good classroom management is achieved by:	Organizing attractive and interesting activities for children

	Establishing a cooperation among teachers to be able to have a good planning of annual, monthly, weekly and daily plans
	Providing a good environment, spatial classes and enough lighting to enable the accomplishment of learning activities
	Implementing different inspiring learning forms by educator
	Preparing and systematically completing files for each child
	Adapting the forms, methods, techniques and tools to learning topics
	Using play and games because it stimulates the development of child
	Performing willingly and successfully the practical work, which is a motivation for the students themselves and at the same time a good experience for children
	Assisting in the organization of activities in nature since it is a useful way to interrelate theory and practice
	Dividing children in groups - centers to perform the tasks planned
From the observation of children in classes, students managed:	To be more attentive as teachers in observing children during the day
	To perform annual, monthly, weekly, daily plans and analyze the individual plan for children having difficulties
	To observe and assist children having learning difficulties during the activities they perform
	To observe and assist children who change their behavior during the activities they perform



	To gain the attention of hyperactive children to follow and perform activities
	To improve the spelling of double letters such as rr, sh, nj, dh, th.

So, from the qualitative data, we can conclude that good classroom management, a good planning and successful implementation of that plan is important in order to achieve results with children, and the assistance as well that should be provided to children having different difficulties in learning process.

### *Discussions*

During the practice, student educators had a good cooperation with educators, they involved all children in activities, applied different forms of work especially work in groups, and the children were happy to participate in attractive activities. Some of the activities organized with the purpose of stimulating curiosity and development of children in different teaching subjects indicate that student educators themselves should be well prepared to plan the learning process, rely on the experience of educator, support children to become independent adapting activities to their age. From the presentations of student educators, we understand that children love changes and attractive games, and they were also willing to participate in the following activities:

All children got dressed with the clothes I had brought and one after the other they practiced being a doctor. The activity was related to both emotional development and creativity. The interrelation between teaching subjects was done as well” - Agnesa

“During activities children were happy and interested to participate, especially in placing the colors of traffic lights” – Shpresa

“Children were able to successfully perform all the activities. I was very happy with their work” – Jetlira

“The behavior of the educator with children was correct and fruitful, management was at the level required, even the small quarrels between children ended up in hugs and apologies to each-other”, “I had a pleasant relationship with children, I overcame the difficulties encountered with the help of educator; working with children is a real pleasure” - Fitorja

“Through this practical work I managed to gain new knowledge and skills and at the same time attain the skills of group work. This practical work helped me to create a solid knowledge base that will enable my further development ” - Valdona

### *Conclusions and recommendations*

The study clearly shows that the motivation of student educators in planning and carrying out activities in preschool institutions and pre-primary classes plays an important role in accomplishing a successful practice. Based on the study outcomes, it is worth mentioning that students' support in relating the theoretical part with the practical part renders a positive impact on the children in terms of creative work in classes, and with the purpose of ensuring their proper motivation and development in all the areas of personality development. The outcomes of this study reveal the success of students during their practical work, achieving their task successfully and creating a suitable environment for children, by planning the work for children, cooperating with educators,

accomplishing activities suitable for the motivation and development of children and offering their assistance while observing children with difficulties.

One of students mentioned that because of her dedicated work during practice in the class, especially in observing and giving assistance to children having difficulties, she was offered a job by a child's parents to work as an assistant educator in the class, in order to help in enhancing the child's progress and help the educator in the class so that she can handle to help all the children.

We consider that joint engagement for cooperation between institutions with the purpose of sharing the best education practices always brings positive results. Therefore, all persons involved in education should give their best to create a warm and suitable learning environment to have the children motivated and engaged as a result of their development at the right time.

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# *Gjergj Fishta in the history of Albanian literature*

*Besa Hoxha Beqiri<sup>1</sup>, Prof. Asst. PhD*

*AAB College, Pristina, Kosovo*

## **Abstract**

Gjergj Fishta is one of the most extensively analyzed writers of Albanian literature. Although he was disowned during the communist period in Albania, his undeniable literary values brought about a restored interest into his work by many scholars. For a long time, during the communist censorship up until 2014, many discussions and writings occurred regarding the ban of some writers during the period 1912 to 1939, including Fishta. Such a conclusion emerges due to the fact that various critical and literary works into the history of literature, as well as post-war anthologies, whether individual or group writings, failed to afford Fishta with his due place. Furthermore, following the democratization of Albania, the prohibition of Fishta's writings over the course of half a century has been the subject of many writings. Therefore, this paper will analyze Fishta in communist times, his inclusion in histories of Albanian literature after 1968, which coincided with the year when the manuscript "The History of Albanian Literature 1912 - 1939" was prohibited. In particular, the proceeds with an evaluation and analysis of Fishta's writings in these histories, including the manuscript itself.

**Keywords:** *Gjergj Fishta, the manuscript, the history of institutional Albanian literature, histories of individual literature, the issue of censorship against Fishta*

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<sup>1</sup> Article received on the 24th September, 2018.

Article accepted on the 11th December, 2018.

Conflict of Interest: The author declares no conflict of interests.

After the collapse of communism in Albania, prohibited authors, along with sentenced and ostracized authors became the subject of extensive writings and discussions. This was done in the light of the institutional censorship of art in general, including literary writings.

Socialist realism remains a literary period of everything but works nurtured by imagination and artistic talent. Theoretical and thematic preconditions and restrictions have inevitably rendered any genuine art impossible, with few exceptions. Albania is not the only state of censorship, and the communist system is not the only system that used censorship to convert literature (and arts in general) into a tool for propagating certain ideas. Censorship has existed since the Roman times, in particular under Nero, which according to Vasily Rudich (2013) "[...] greatly facilitated Nero's *artistic tyranny* with a program of *cultural re-education* of the Roman people that, according to a recent view, he seriously endeavored to implement" (p. 2).

This brutality, which did not extend to his personal life, but rather only to his work, was equally prevalent in democratic countries. The best example of the above is discussed in George Orwell's essays (2000). As far as Albanian literature is concerned, however, the perception of censorship arose much earlier than its actual introduction in reality (2015). This occurred as, with the introduction of a strict state censorship, the elements and work, which may have led to creation of a rather liberal space, albeit under a dictatorship spirit, could have brought to the fore values of various writers.

However, in the manuscript "The History of Albanian Literature 1912 - 1939", found by the author in the Archive of Albanian Language and Literature in Tirana, one of the writers designated as "forbidden" was already introduced as such since 1944, as soon as the Socialists came to power. Gjergj Fishta was thoroughly analyzed in the manuscript, both in terms of his



patriotic and religious activities, but also his work as a whole. Given that this manuscript is part of an institutional project, with two published titles (Shtuteriqi et al, 1959 and Shuteriqi et al 1960), the last part of which was available in 1965, but was only prohibited upon publication in 1968, brings to light the fact that Fishta was part of the interest and research work of the authors of this manuscript.

On the other hand, there are early various histories of literature. The first attempt at a historiographic look of Albanian literature was made in the nineteenth century. A. Stratigoit wrote "Albanian Literature Handbook" (*Manuale di letteratura albanese*), published in Milan in 1896, while Marchiano's study mainly deals with Arbëresh literature. These works, in turn, were followed by: Gaetano Petrotta (2008) and Schirò (1959), Konica (2013) and Shuteriqi (1955), Justin Rrota (2006) and Eqrem Çabej (1936). There are also the works on the history of Albanian literature by English author Stuart Mann (1955), along with "Albanian writers, Part II: from the League of Prizren to date" by Ernest Koliqi and Namik Ressuli (1941). With the exception of the first two historical treatises, Fishta was analyzed in all other above-mentioned works with varying degrees of detail. However, he is not part of "The History of Albanian Literature - for secondary schools" by Dhimitër Shuteriqi (1955), although he was the editor-in-chief of the said manuscript (Hoxha Beqiri, B. 2016). In addition to reflecting on the manner of Fishta's treatment in the manuscript of 1968, we have touched upon the institutional and individual historiographic descriptions that came after the writing of this manuscript.

***Manuscript "History of Albanian Literature 1912 - 1939" and Fishta***

Among the many manuscripts preserved in the Archives of the Institute of Linguistics and Literature, there is also a "History of Albanian Literature 1912 - 1939", a manuscript not mentioned anywhere until 2014. Moreover, the way in which this manuscript was recorded creates an impression of active measures employed to silence the work that has been done around this literary period. This is because the manuscript in question is the continuation of the "History of Albanian Literature", the institutional publication of which the first two parts were published in the years 1959 and 1960. This manuscript was part of this project.

Thorough commitment had been invested into preparing the unpublished "History of Albanian Literature 1912 - 1939", which was prohibited during the process of publication (in bottles) and is a rather comprehensive manuscript (prepared for print in two volumes, although initial plans involved a single volume). In addition to other authors (who were declared "prohibited" by state censorship) Gjergj Fishta was also treated. The space afforded to this writer in a chapter dedicated for him is the same as that of Naim Frashëri. This element highlights the importance given to Fishta by the working group/editors on the discussion of the period 1912 - 1939 of the Albanian Literature History, n.d.). The manuscript was produced in the sixties and seventies, but the exact time has not been documented. Bearing in mind that the prohibition of the publication was effected in 1968, we can inevitably conclude that Fishta was not banned immediately upon the communists assuming power, which dismisses all criticisms of the post-communist years speaking of a Fishta prohibition that encompassed a 46-year timespan.

The manuscript engages in a comprehensive treatment of the writer - as has been done with other writers in these volumes as well as those published - by analyzing both his life and activity and his work in all dimensions, pointing out at first that a prominent but rather "a complex writer emerges in the Albanian literature, a writer with an extensive and contradictory creativity ...." (History of Albanian Literature 1912-1939, n.d. 122). The complexity of this writer is an element highlighted by other critics. The manuscript lists, among others, two key elements of Fishta's works (based on the subject matter), which are patriotic and religious. The chapter about Fishta makes a distinction of these elements by presenting a writer who is both patriotic and committed to national affairs, but also veiled in a religious mantle with the effort to occasionally put this element at the front to the detriment of the former. As stated "he submits the requirement that literature be auxiliary to religion, so that the writer is guided in his literary work by religious morality " (p. 126). Although the writer himself claimed his ideal was *Atme (Fatherland) and Fé (Religion)*, the manuscript attempts to relegate the former to the detriment of the latter. This is also visible when analyzing the writer's publications. Much of Fishta's publications are of contradictory character. In large part, he assumes the position of the clergy, for which the interests of the church and of the Catholic religion stand above that of the people (p. 127).

In his writings, including religious writings, the writer was influenced by the spirit he was fed all his life, because he was devoted to his calling. However, *religious morality*, so prevalent in Fishta's writings, was not at all at odds with patriotic issues (as attempted to be portrayed in the manuscript) or his continued efforts to raise the awareness of the people and European countries on the state of Albania because he "[...] denounced the great powers of Europe, which toyed with the

fate of the little people and passionately protected the right of Albanian people to self-determination and an independent state" (p. 127).

In spite of the high regard for the author's works and his efforts for the national cause, interchangeable attempts to undermine either one or the other can be perceived in the chapter.

In addition to the introductory paragraph, the manuscript's chapter (40 out of 275 pages in total, written in typewriter), writes about Fishta's life including the personal circumstances that influenced him, his preferred writers and the impact of oral literature on his work without neglecting o the "traditional friendship with Italy". "Anzat e Parnazit" (Parnaz's Ancients) and "Gomari i Babatasi" (Babatasi's Donkey) are the first works analyzed in the script, under a separate sub-chapter. "Since his early beginning of his work, Fishta emerges as a writer of a powerful drive and originality" (p. 129), while, the compilation involved is *a collection of his best poems* (p. 129). The compilation is then analyzed by motifs, starting with the motif of patriotism, and including motifs that involved the life of international politics. However, "Palok Cuca" affords a multi-dimensional analysis, including its characters and the power of the satire. Whereas, for drafting the "Babatasi's Donkey" it is noted that:

Guided by a decision of the then Ministry of Education to introduce in all the schools of Albania, both state schools and those ran by the Catholic clergy and other private institutions, a new and unified program is introduced, on the basis of which education would be offered in accordance with data of positive sciences. (p. 134-135).

After an analysis of the contents of the work, the structure of the poem is also analyzed, where "[...] its idea emerges through

only one part of the subject" (p. 135). The subject and characters are believed to be at the service of stripping the "anti-patriotism of some officials who held high positions in the state, to deplore the country's bad leadership by country's officials of the time, and to sharply criticize the major issues of the administrative system" (p. 136). Through the character of Babatas and the verses dedicated to him, Fishta's satire is illustrated, which was deemed appropriate. Also, an analysis of the poem's structure, as well as a theoretical analysis, and an analysis of the stylistic figures employed as a means of reinforcing the satire is used. Meanwhile, the value of the work is also appreciated for its comic situations rather than for ridiculing leaders only. The "Babatas' Donkey" is as such evaluated as *a profoundly publicist work*.

The sub-chapter "Mrrizi i Zanave" (Fairy's Hideout), Fishta is considered as an inspired lyrical writer. Here, selected poems are analyzed as they delve into various themes. The motives of poems are discussed, ranging from the love for the first language, the evocation of the past, the nature of Albanians, exalting the virtues of the covenant (Besa) and manhood to cursing persons who do nothing to save the country from Serbian and Montenegrin chauvinism. "Evocation of Skanderbeg's face is done with a rare portrayal art" (p. 139). Also, we have a description of Fishta's curse for Europe, as illustrated by his verses. The fact that hostilities with neighboring countries, including Greece, as well as the European countries, and Turkey are discussed points to the freedom of the editorial staff, especially Vehbi Balas, who is the author of this chapter.

This chapter, in one of its sub-sections, also dedicates few paragraphs to the compilation of religious poems, "Vallja e Parrizit" (Parriz's Dance). Many of the poems are regarded as hymns to biblical characters, although part of the translations

and adaptations are said to have limited the readership. Notwithstanding, at the end of the section it is nonetheless acknowledged that "among other religious poems, beautiful artistic accomplishments are found, written with a special spirit and Fishta's religious lyricism are important to understanding the prosaic and studying the process of evolution of language and of his mastery" (p. 143). It should be noted that, philosophical lyrical works of this volume are particularly appreciated as the poet addresses issues of life and death, from *the position of mystical idealism*. The writer's *eloquence* is also discussed, but also the inclusion of cosmic elements in these verses.

The chapter continues with "Highland Lute". Right at the outset, it is rated as Fishta's masterpiece and simultaneously described as "one of the largest and most complex creations of Albanian poetry" (p. 143). A brief background to the work is provided including the the first editions and artistic changes during the extensive period of its writing. The theme and poem structures are analyzed based on the characteristics of the poem. Also, the conflict portrayed in the work itself is followed more closely in the critique.

Similarly, when elaborating the "new era" period and associated change of circumstances, a connection is made with the age of the author and his place of living. The writer's harsh criticism towards Turks comes to the fore. The poem is analyzed using verses as illustrations, including verses collected by the people. Fishta's ultimate accomplishments are complemented with portraits of characters: Oso Kuka, Ali Pashe Gusia, as well as Tringa, although the latter is not imparted with a thorough analysis.

Of course, there is also some criticism involved with this work. "Highland Lute," as noted "[...] is a very complex and contradictory work" (History of Albanian Literature 1912-1939,

n.d., p. 153). While the Albanian struggle to protect their lands, its popular spirit and the idea of the work regarding the fight and efforts required to prevail are positively assessed, positive colors attributed to patriarchal life, conservative customs as well as mercenarism are believed to be distorted concepts. Furthermore, the poet is claimed to have been unable "to make a full distinction between the people and the ruling classes" (153). Additionally, some artistic weaknesses were also highlighted, such as "prolongation, depiction of events like mere dry chronicles, cold listing of country names, repeated verses and rhymes, etc." (ibid), which are deemed minor. More profound in this respect is the contention that "the poet was not always able to retain the warm and conscientious inspiration as seen in some of the early songs" (ibid). In the end, however, the work is considered as a rare gem in Albanian literature, and praised for its major historical subject, expressed through a multi-faceted substance. Finally, the metric analysis of the poem as well as the romantic elements of the poem are discussed.

The next chapter is the section "Dramas". After listing dramas along with brief description of their themes, focus shifts to "Judas Makabe". The subject and the characters are introduced, along with *staple tragedy acts*. The rhetoric of a part as well as a generalized and rapid presentation of events is criticized. "Ifigenia n'Aulli" and "Jerina as the Queen of Flowers" are two other dramas similarly criticized, while translations are discussed at the end.

The Chapter ends with "The art and significance of Fishta's work", showing the time of the poet's work, his inspiration, and his position in the national movement. This part also points out that although he criticized the European countries, he did not object to Austrian imperialism. The romantic part of his work is brought to the fore, along with the realistic parts. His linguistic contribution is highlighted as the dialect used in addition to

Fishta's contribution to "enriching Albanian verses" (p.161). Fishta's influence on other writers is also not overlooked. However, as far as the Fishta's work is concerned it is large in volume and equally rich in types and genres. Being a multifaceted talent, he presented almost equal artistic strengths, both in satire and dramaturgy, in lyrical and epic poetry. But he was not confined to these alone. He delved in prose, engaged in journalism, wrote literary reviews and essayist studies (p. 125).

Thus, in this manuscript, Fishta is portrayed through multidimensional aspects of his engagements and writings.

### *Gjergj Fishta - part of histories of literature after the manuscript*

Gjergj Fishta was the subject of a number of individual writings about the literary works and histories of Albanian literature. However, some authors also adamantly ignored him. In this paper, we will focus only on the histories of institutional and individual literature of the period after the writing of the manuscript.

The "History of Albanian Literature" of 1983 in Tirana, an institutional edition of the Academy of Sciences of the People's Republic of Albania, the Institute of Linguistics and Literature, completely overlooks Fishta and his writings. Indeed, he is referred to as the head of the magazine "Hylli i drites" (The Star of Light) "that represented the Catholic reaction as well as political interests of Austro - Hungary and subsequently of Italy, as would the newspaper "Posta e Shqypnise" (Post of Albania) (1716-17), which was published by Austro - Hungarian invasion troops and run by Fishta" (Bala, et al, 1989, p. 462). In the chapters discussing Albanian literature over the period 1912-1939, a general discussion of the literature



dedicated just one paragraph to Fishta as the chief clergy representative. He was credited as a poet, publicist, pedagogue and politician, and for directing Franciscan press. The analysis continues by pointing out that the "interests of the church and the religion were placed above the interests of the homeland and the people, which he proclaimed and defended with all the demagoguery and cynicism, and laid at the center of his literary work" (p. 471-472). The paragraph continues with "The Highland Lute" (as given in the book), as the main work of Fishta, an epic poem which "by attacking chauvinism, relegated the fight against the Ottoman invaders" into the background, and further criticized the glorification of "patriarchalism of bajraktarism, religious obscurantism of clericalism" (p. 472) as well as speculation concerning patriotic feelings. With regards to "Babatas' Donkey", this satirical poem allegedly attacked ideas of secularism in schools. Close associations to folklore elements are also pointed out. In addition, Fishta's art is criticized for "often [being] accompanied by proxies, desired effects, rhetoric, the brutality of expression and style sometimes bordering banality, false arguments, which strive to be impiously imposed, as well as a distinct conservative stance towards language" (p. 472). The paragraph ends with the sentence hinting that Fishta *ended his days* as an academic of fascist Italy.

Bearing in mind the submitted manuscript elements, which, based on analyzed archival documentation, should have been completed in 1965 as well as the institutional work of 1983, the impact of censorship is clearly visible in the latter. This evaluation of Fishta portrays him as a purveyor of the national cause, who used his works in an attempt to obliterate values and strengthen religion and foreign states. Fishta, in the history of 1983, was mentioned and discussed very briefly, in a rather notorious portrayal, but also as a poet who used his creativity

only to glorify the old and religious ideas, which were expressed through his *conservative language*. This negative stance towards the poet, for those unaware of his writings, renders the impression that his works were, to an extent, worthless.

"History of Albanian Literature - Romanticism" by Rexhep Qosja (1990), presented only Fishta's romanticism, which was deemed "to encompass in very broad terms, almost exhaustive, using combination of some scientific criteria" (Dado, 2011, p. 126). Although there is no special chapter on Fishta, the realist Fishta prevails over the romantic Fishta. Although his masterpiece was of a romantic period, we again find the representation of some important elements of the writer, intertwined with that of other romantic poets. As Qosja himself says "Fishta belongs to the ensuing period of Albanian literature" (Qosja, 1990, p. 38). The poet, who began writing in the Romanticism period, but whose works extend beyond this period, often listens to the popular rhapsody "in which fictional heroisms of Muja and Halil are praised, seven Shalas, Marash Uci, Oso Kuka" (p.119), which serve as a source of inspiration for many of his elements and characters, but also the "motive of female sacrifice to uphold the honor in "The Highland Lute"" (p. 119). Fishta is mentioned in the disintegration of romantic myths, religious poetry, epic songs, episms (where Fishta's "Lute" is briefly elaborated by drawing parallels with Naim Frashëri's "Scripture's Story"), epism and his extraterrestrial connections, the pace of structures and the system of motivation and fatalism. In Qosja's major work, Fishta remains illustrated only with occasional sentences about the poetics of his romantic work without any apparent devotion to deeper analysis of his writings.

On the other hand, Robert Elsie, a dedicated and eminent scholar of Albanian literature published his version of "History

of Albanian Literature” (2001) after the publication of two institutional histories.

Elsie (2001) begins the rather comprehensive chapter on Fishta with the following paragraph:

The greatest and most powerful figure of Albanian literature in the first half of the twentieth century is the Franciscan father Gjergj Fishta (1871 - 1940), who more than any other writer, gave artistic expression to the wandering soul of the new sovereign Albanian state. Listened to and hailed as the "national poet of Albania" until the World War II as well as the "Albanian Homer", Fishta would immediately fall into oblivion when the Communists took over power in November 1944. The mere mention of the name was a taboo for Albanians, which persisted for forty-six years in a row (p. 193).

Right at the start, Elsie informed the reader that Fishta could be considered as one of the greatest figures of Albanian literature of his time, whose work was banned when the communists assumed power in the territory. Given the censorship in other communist states, the censorship exhibited here is not entirely astonishing to foreign readers. Of course, Elsie (2001) came to this conclusion following the omissions of this writer in the historical overviews where he should have held a central place in the literature from 1912 to 1939

In this work, we find an analysis for the songs of "The Highland Lute" because, although Gjergj Fishta "is the author of a total of thirty-one literary publications, his name is inextricably linked with a single work, in fact, with one of the most amazing creations throughout the history of Albanian literature, with *"The Highland Lute"* (pp. 194-195).

Other parts deal with a shorter and superficial analysis of the works of Fishta, including his early writings/publications. "Parriz Dance" is considered to be the culmination of Catholic literature in Albania. However, Fishta's mastery is best shown in his satirical poetry, where he used wisdom and shrewdness, along with sharp quill to reproach the cravings of behavior and intellectual apathy of his fellow compatriots. According to Elsie (207), he did not possess the sympathetic and advising irony of Cajupi, but rather the harsh, burning, often ruthless satire, an equivalent to the poetry of Faik bey Konica's satirical prose.

In the chapter on Fishta, a number of Albanian critics weigh in, but also foreign critics, which serve to reinforce the true literary value of Fishta's work. Also, reasons behind attempts to prohibit the work of Fishta are discussed, as well as failed attempts to erasing from the verses of Fishta's works from the people's memory. Also, Fishta's return to the spotlight of critique is elaborated.

Elsie succeeds in portraying Fishta in many respects, including inspiration, influence, and the values contained in his work, along with the dominant figures at the service of artistic value. However, "after the war, Fishta was attacked and slandered perhaps more than any other pre-war writer and was immediately doomed to oblivion. The national poet turned into a curse" (p. 208). The conclusion of this chapter represents the opinion formed amidst the silence of the critics.

Also, the work "Gjegj Fishta" (1998) by author Vehbi Bala is published, but since it is similar to the manuscript chapter analyzed above, we will not delve into its characteristics. "Portrayal of Fishta by Bala at different time periods"(Hoxha Beqiri 2016) is a more detailed elaboration of the matter

## **Conclusion**

Without wishing to comment and analyze the possible changes since the manuscript was published, we will merely convey Rexhep Qosja's view, who believes that "The History of Albanian Literature", "published in Tirana in 1959 - 1960, is undoubtedly the best text of the Albanian literature, in which its most systematic and convincing separation has been made to that day" (Qosja, 2006, p. 13). Such a high praise for this comprehensive, institutional work relates to a manuscript, as the same level persisted there as well.

Moreover, having in mind conclusions of the chapter on Fishta, which state that his work is awaiting a scholarly separation between the positive part and the portion damaged by clerical ideology that played a negative role in the life of the country (History of Albanian Literature 1912-1939, p. 161) makes the fact that the handwriting was not published is even more painful.

However, in view of the above, it is easy to draw some conclusions:

- Gjergj Fishta's work was not prohibited in 1944, but in 1968.
- The "History of Albanian Literature" published in 1959 (first part) and 1960 (second part) also had a part covering the literature of 1912-1939, a manuscript that was banned during the publication process. While before the manuscript, i.e. up to 1941, Fishta's work was analyzed and written about (including the memorial volume "Father Gjergj Fishta 1871 - 1940" of 1943, although not of any prominent value), there is not much writing about Fishta's work during the period 1944 - 1968 (neither in the "History of Albanian Literature for High School" by Dhimitër Shuteriqi).

- The compilation of the chapter on Fishta in the manuscript, as well as the manuscript as such, remained silent for a period of 46 years.
- The histories of Albanian literature, after this period, mention Fishta only in derogatory terms; they cover only poems of his romantic work, but not a separate analysis of Fishta's romantic writings; or they analyze it from the perspective of a foreigner who, although based on writings of others, is able to properly portray Fishta's personality and his works (especially the "The Highland Lute").

Therefore, we may conclude that the chapter in the manuscript of "The History of Albanian Literature 1912 - 1939" is written with dedication and remains a testimony to later censure. There are also many elements that can be studied and analyzed in the future.

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## *Instruction for authors*

### **About the journal**

Thesis is an international research journal with double-blind peer review, which is published by AAB College in Prishtina. The journal presents an international forum for Balkan region, for empirical, qualitative, critical and interpretative studies, on different issues, and mainly in social and human sciences.

The journal accepts original high quality articles from various theoretical and methodological approaches and is also open to interpretative and critical articles, as well as monographic review. The length of an article should be between 4000-7000 words, including references, appendix and/or other notes. The length of the review for the monograph should not exceed 1000 (one thousand) words.

### **Journal information**

Print ISSN: 1848-4298

Thesis is published twice a year, the Spring and Fall edition. Materials of the journal are also available online with open access. The deadline for submitting papers to the Spring edition is March 15, while for the Fall edition is October 15, in the editorial email: [thesis@aab-edu.net](mailto:thesis@aab-edu.net).

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Thesis is committed to upholding the integrity of the academic record. We encourage authors to refer to international standards for authors, as provided by the Ethics Committee on Publication. Articles must be original work and must not be in review to be published in any other journal. Submissions sent may be subject to controls to detect plagiarism cases.

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The Editor uses double-blind peer review which means that the reviewer does not know the author's identity, nor does the author know who the evaluator of his/her paper is.

The journal's editorial board, consisting of international experts, accepts articles in two languages, English and Albanian, Its editorial board, made up of international experts, accepts articles in two languages, English and Albanian, while non-Albanian authors submit their work in English only.

### **Structure**

The manuscript text should be structured in principle as follows:

First page should contain the title; first and last name of the author, (title, affiliation), email

Abstract (100-150 words); Keywords: 5

Introduction

Heading...

Bibliography and sources.

Appendix

### **Style guidelines**

The editorial board uses APA Style, 6th edition ([www.apastyle.org](http://www.apastyle.org)). Please, do not use footnote, or avoid endnote as much as possible.

### **APA Style**

In text citation/reference of a scientific source, is as follows:

Last name of the author, year of publishing and page – if needed, e.g: (Bourdieu, 1997, p. 7).

**Author in a sentence**

Another study for this issue (Smith, 2016) emphasizes that...

**Author at the beginning of the sentence:**

Smith (2016) emphasizes that...

Wolton (2009, p. 53) says that internet offers an ocean of information, but every day we choose to be on diet by choosing only the information that is beneficial to us, not time-consuming.

Wolton (2009) says that internet offers an ocean of information, but every day we ask “how to interconnect communication ghettos who communicate only vertically and not horizontally through other communication tools” (p. 53). In 1974 Zukowski invented the term Literacy information to describe...

**Two authors in a book:**

Smith and Jonnes (2016) emphasize that...

**Citation within a part of the sentence:**

Another study for this issue (Smith, 2016) puts the main emphasis on the previous behavior in the environment where the child lives, because “the environment presents the nest where the child gathers information which later, he/she will imitate or apply in everyday behavior” (p. 6).

Different conflicts, terrorist attacks, insecurities etc., made citizens or even political actors, ask: “Why do they hate us” (Arndt, 2006, p. xviii). This is very important, because “today’s hate brings tomorrow’s urge of insecurity and instability not only within the country, but also for the global security” (p. 34).

**Some authors for the same issue:**

As the public diplomacy researchers point out (Nye, 2004; Gilboa, 2008; Anholt, 2004; Melissen, 2007)), having a positive image...

If two authors have the same last name, the first letter of the name is also written:

Authors Smith J. and Smith F. (2016) highlight some key features ...

**Three to five authors in one book:**

If a work has three (3), four (4) or five (5) authors, cite all authors the first time and from then on include only the last name of the first author followed by the words et al. ('et al.' is Latin for 'and others')

Eg. (Nye, Melissen, Szondi, Leonard, 2015).

Eg. (Nye et al., 2015)

**Over 6 authors in one work:**

If a work has six (6) or more authors, cite only the last name of the first author followed by et al. each time you refer to this work. In the bibliography all are written.

For example:

As noted in the recent study of corruption and political nepotism in Kosovo (Plepi et al., 2015), in this case neither exist...

**More work by one author in a year:**

As Plepi (2015a) points out, economic growth and welfare also increase family harmony, but such a phenomenon has been impossible to measure so far in Kosovo, or studies of this phenomenon are "regretful" (Plepi, 2015b).

### **Entities and institutions as authors**

The full name of the institution should be indicated in the first citation, while the following citations may be used if the name is particularly long.

The international network of humanitarian aid associations has increased considerably in recent years in Kosovo (the Active Learning Network for Accountability and Performance in Humanitarian Action [ALNAP], 2010).

Subsequent citations:  
(ALNAP, 2010)

### **References**

#### **General rules**

When a source has up to seven (7) authors, include all names in the reference list by dividing authors by commas.

In case of books without an author, place the title of the book in the first position instead of the author. Write the full name of institutions or associations (see example at the bottom).

Date of book publication:

The date comes after the author, separated by a full stop and is inserted between the round brackets. In case of documents without a date, use the abbreviation "n.d." in brackets (no date).

#### **Translated books:**

In case of foreign translated books, indicate the name of the translator.

Examples:

Wolton, D. (2009). *Informer n'est pas communiquer*. Paris: CNRS Editions.

Tuch, H. N. (1990). *Communicating with the world: U.S. public diplomacy overseas*. Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University.

Chapter or article within an edited book or summary:

Melissen, J. (2011). Concluding reflections on soft power and public diplomacy in East Asia. Në: S.J. Lee & J. Melissen (ed). *Public diplomacy and soft power in East Asia* (247-262). Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

**Journal:**

Gilboa, E., (2008). Searching for a Theory of Public Diplomacy. *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*. Los Angeles: Sage, n.2. Vol3, (55-77).

**Journal from website:**

Last name of author, first letter of the name. (2013). Online title. *Title of the online journal*. Place: Publishing house. The link or doi, eg.:

Gilboa, E., (2008). Searching for a Theory of Public Diplomacy. *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*. Los Angeles: Sage. doi: xyuu222ioooooe./e45

Piaget, J. (1969). *The psychology of the child*. New York, NY: Sage. (translated in Albanian by Filan Fisteku, *Child's psychology*).

In text: (Piaget, 1969)

Active Teaching Network for Accountability and Performance in Humanitarian Action (2010). State humanitarian system: Performance assessment and progress in pilot study. Available in <http://www.alnap.org/pool/files/alnap-sohs-final.pdf>