


<b>PRE-SCHOOL TEACHING AND LEARNING ENGLISH ACCORDING TO FRAMEWORK EDUCATION PROGRAMMED FOR PRE- SCHOOL EDUCATION</b>		<b>Linguistics</b>  <b>Keywords:</b> Very early English teaching/learning, preschoolers, language acquisition, didactic principles of very early English teaching/learning.
<b>Afërdita Ademi</b>	<b>University of Tetova "Fadil Sulejmani". Department of English Language and Literature. Tetova. North Macedonia.</b>	
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Abstract</b></p> <p>This case study deals with teaching and learning English to preschoolers in Tetova. The theoretical part commences contextualization of very early English teaching/learning, followed by characterization of preschoolers', their language acquisition and development. Next section discusses advantages and potential drawbacks of very early English teaching, based on foreign researches. Subsequently, the author formulates underlining theoretical input relevant for very early English teaching/learning, focused on didactic principles. The practical part consists of an empirical research, which with the help of observation and interview, aims on finding out how and to what extent are the chosen principles for teaching English language to very young learners followed in the practice in chosen kindergarten and private courses (Helen Doron).</p>		

## Introduction

Nowadays the knowledge of one foreign language became a necessity. Teaching/learning English became a trend and hand in hand with this trend goes the world's education. As The Framework Education Program for Basic Education in the Czech Republic says: Acquiring a foreign language helps to reduce language barriers and contributes to increase mobility of individuals, in their personal life and in their further study and future career (MOEYS 2016, p. 12). The quote suggests learning languages as something important. But, the situation has changed and students very often learn the second language without actually knowing so. As a result, the interest in teaching and learning a second language is constantly growing. Nowadays English has become Lingua franca, and the center of attention not just of many researchers and scholars but also of teachers and parents. Many European countries have lowered the age for foreign language education in order to increase the effectiveness of the learning process. Nowadays, most children learn foreign language unconsciously during early childhood. The sooner the better idea is confronted by empirical evidence from all around the world. Afterwards, very early English teaching is focused on didactic principles and they are: silent period, variety of activities and routines in the classroom. In this thesis the aim and the related research questions together with research tools, methodology and procedures will be introduced and after that the obtained data will be analyzed and presented, followed by a relevant conclusion.

## The research subject

To define a preschool learner just by age would not be exactly right. As Phillips highlights, some other factors are even more important than the age itself. The other factors that influence

children's development differ from culture, environment or sex to the influence of their peers and parents (Phillips, 1993, p. 3). Moreover, the development is very individual. Some children develop early, some later, some gradually and others in leaps. As Scott and Ytreberg (1990, p. 1) point out: "it is not possible to say that at the age of five all children can do x, at the age of seven they can all do y, or that at the age of ten they can all do z". Preschoolers are certainly not those learners that complex grammatical rules would be presented to. For the purpose of this thesis, I will deal with children from 2 to 6 years.

### **Theme argumentation**

Teachers should be aware of the fact that pre-school children have not developed the sense for comparison with their peers (Šulová 2007, p. 55) Last but not least factor in preschoolers motivation are parents. Dunn's (1983, p. 16) research results clearly prove that home and parents represent „the strongest and most intensive influence on a child.” Hence, parents' interest and support of children's achievements in the language will seemingly have a great influence in motivating VYLs. Preschoolers better acquire the second language unconsciously and in an informal environment, rather than formally and deliberately. They do not learn by focusing on the language rules or structures, but with the help of incidental learning by experience (Moon 2005, p. 31).Cameron (2001, p. 20) states that “the broader and richer the language experience that is provided for young children is, the more they are likely to learn.” Planning the activities for a group of preschoolers can be definitely very challenging, keeping in mind, that the level of psychological development of each child can be very different. Besides, considering the affective aims, learners should be offered with the chance to feel successful from the very beginning, so the teacher should not assign too demanding task, otherwise the high affective filter should prevent the successful acquisition. However, in my opinion, creative activities are very engaging, and if they are not too long, most of the children will always enjoy it.

### **Research Goals**

Many authors (Hendl 2006, p.; Švaříček, Šedová 2007, p.22) state that there is no bad, good or universal research methodology; it is rather considered by suitability to a particular research problem. This specific research applies multiple research methodology - a combining of two research tools, namely structural classroom observations, and semi-structured interviews. The observations will be analyzed with the help of a structured observation sheet that focuses on the chosen principles, their presence, frequency, and nature of existence. As Chrátka (2016, p. 148) alerts, one of the considerable drawbacks of observations can be a large degree of subjectivity. Thus, the observations are to be supplemented by semi structured interviews that aim to analyze the teacher's subjective views and interpretations of their own teaching, restricted to the chosen principles. This should help us to interpret the observed data and look at the phenomena in a more objective manner. Using multiple research methodology should facilitate the investigation of given principles externally (by the structured, non-participant observation) and internally (from the point of view of the participated teacher).

## General Hypothesis

It has been hypothesized for over a century that preschoolers learn a second language easier than adults. This phenomenon is called the Critical Period Hypothesis. This period relates to a lateralization process, which is: “The specialization of the dominant hemisphere of the brain for language functions” (Singleton 2004, p. 33). Therefore, children’s brain is able to use “the mechanism that assisted first language acquisition” (Cameron 2001, p. 13. Lightbown and Spada (2006, p.17) provide the research evidence suggesting that children who had no access to language for a long time in infancy or early childhood will never fully acquire the language.

### Research Methods

Many authors (Hendl 2006, p.; Švaříček, Šedová 2007, p.22) state that there is no bad, good or universal research methodology; it is rather considered by suitability to a particular research problem. This specific research applies multiple research methodology - a combining of two research tools, namely structural classroom observations, and semi-structured interviews. The observations are to be analyzed with the help of a structured observation sheet that focuses on the chosen principles, their presence, frequency, and nature of existence. As Chrástka (2016, p. 148) alerts, one of the considerable drawbacks of observations can be a large degree of subjectivity. Thus, the observations are to be supplemented by semi structured interviews that aim to analyze the teacher’s subjective views and interpretations of their own teaching, restricted to the chosen principles.

## Review of Related Literature

Preschool education is the essence and the cornerstone of national education in a country. It plays a very important role in the development of national education. Previous literature demonstrates that domestic scholars mainly focus on the current situation of educational funds, financial investment system of early childhood education and financial investment performance evaluation theory, while foreign scholars are more interested in the importance of early childhood education, the supply model and present situation of childhood education. The advantages and limitations of the research are summarized and the performance evaluation model of financial investment is also discussed. Early childhood education plays an important role in the development of individuals and the society with vital significance. The problem of optimization financial investment in early childhood education is not only the urgent of the public finance management system, but also an effective way to improve the efficiency of the financial investment, as well as to realize rational allocation resources of the children education and to realize the education goal. Many researchers have investigated the impacts of school, teacher, and classroom characteristics on young children’s academic, social, and behavioral outcomes. In the following chapter, I describe what we know about the different resources with which children enter formal schooling, including those related to child and family characteristics and those related to early learning environments. Then I describe research on the relationships between

socioeconomic status, school quality, classroom quality, and teacher education and their effects on children's school readiness outcomes.

As learners of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) begin English studies at increasingly younger ages, tertiary level EFL instructors can expect to encounter students with greater levels of English proficiency in lecture halls. How best to confront this issue and the resulting debate is nothing new (Ajideh, 2006; Benesch, 1993; Gieve, 1998; Kramsch & Nolden, 1994).

The role that literature plays within this context has also received attention. Examining literature's role in this trend, Hall (2005) noted the increasing tendency of introducing literature to facilitate language teaching since the latter part of the past century. Evidence (Ajideh, 2006; Paran, 2008) has since suggested that this is no longer a trend but has become the norm. However, as Paran (2008) duly noted, although much research has identified how best to utilize literature in the EFL classroom, little research exists on how learners react to classroom literature teaching practices.

Krashen (1982) posits that language acquisition and language learning are two distinct cognitive functions. Acquisition focuses on comprehension of language, while learning focuses on the rules of grammar, which produce correct speech. Both functions are necessary. Language acquisition input is most effective when it is natural, interesting, and understood (Krashen, 1982). Thus, rules of grammar are first intuitively acquired through meaningful language use and then later they can be formally learned. English language acquirers benefit from practice in listening comprehension. Students acquire a second language only when they are exposed to comprehensible input (Krashen, 1982), which is listening to or reading the target language that is a little beyond their current level of competence ( $i+1$ ). Providing learners with comprehensible input facilitates their natural language acquisition (Krashen, 1981). This phenomenological study explores the challenges faced by Malaysian early childhood teachers in using English as a second language to interact with young English language learners. The main participants of this study were six teachers from one early childhood centre. Research methods included observations and semi-structured pre- and post-observation interviews. Observations were carried out over a six week period which enabled a series of snapshots of challenges faced by the teachers as they used English to interact with the children. The findings were analyzed using thematic analysis, and presented three themes: teachers' limited English proficiency, children's comprehension, lack of confidence and unsupportive environment. These themes impacted the learning experiences of the children attending the early childhood education centre as well as the teaching approaches of the early childhood teachers. The findings revealed that it is significant for the early childhood teachers to be proficient in English as this will affect their confidence and attitudes in using English as an interactional tool in early childhood settings.

## English Lessons for Kindergarten

Kindergarten marks a turning point in a child's life, in the sense that he/she has got over the preschool difficulties and troubles, and has started to learn and study in earnest. This is an appropriate time for learning languages, and there should be enough exposure for the child both in the school and at home, to English and other languages. The best way to learn a language is of course by using it, in oral and written communication. During the kindergarten years, children should be able to listen to correct and fluent English and encouraged to speak the same. They are still at an age when learning is best done through play and fun, but there can be some serious lessons incorporated, especially in reading and early writing. The chief methods by which kindergarten children can be taught English is through rhymes, role plays, short plays, poems, stories, songs, and reading picture books. It is also important to encourage children to speak English, especially in places where English is not the mother tongue. Communication between the teacher and students, as well as interpersonal communication among students, should be in English, at all times, in order to ensure the right degree of immersion in the language. Here we provide you with lessons in English for kindergarten children in oral, written, listening and speaking. Choose the lessons that are most appropriate for your children. As it has been stated above, kindergartens can have their whole programmed in a foreign language, nevertheless, most commonly, they run just a few classes in English. Some kindergartens offer these classes of English in the afternoon, some have them incorporated in their morning programmed, which is obviously better since children are still alert and therefore their attention and concentration are much higher. The optimal length of each lesson ranges between 20-30 minutes. Children are usually divided according to their age; one group are 3-4 years old children (their tuition is predominantly restricted to action-based activities), the second one are 5-6 years old children (their tuition can also include some drama techniques). Sometimes, when just a few children attend the English lessons, children are divided according to their knowledge. English classroom activities often include TPR. The teacher tries to mimic the process during the English lesson and children respond to instructions requiring physical movement. This approach can be used for practising and teaching various things and using it in children's activities is double effective. Moreover, it does not really take much for the teacher to prepare TPR-based English language activities because this approach requires basic language, universal preschool lesson themes: Greetings; Family members; Numbers; Colours; Animals; House; Body parts; Food; Fruit and vegetables; Clothes; Weather, four seasons.

Some of the TPR activities might be songs. For example, when talking about the body parts, teachers can use the song Head, shoulders, knees and toes. While children are singing, they are also pointing at the parts of their body. The lyrics of the song are as follows:

Head, shoulders, knees and toes, knees and toes.

Head and shoulders, knees and toes, knees and toes.

And ears and eyes and mouth and nose.

Head, shoulders, knees and toes, knees and toes.

Another song for learning the body parts is If you are happy:

If you are happy and you know it, clap your hands.  
 If you are happy and you know it, clap your hands.  
 If you are happy and you know it and you really want to show it.  
 If you are happy and you know it, clap your hands.  
 If you are happy and you know it, stamp your feet.  
 If you are happy and you know it, stamp your feet.  
 If you are happy and you know it and you really want to show it. If you are happy and you know it, clap your hands.  
 If you are happy and you know it, shout HURRAY.  
 If you are happy and you know it, shout HURRAY.  
 If you are happy and you know it and you really want to show it.  
 If you are happy and you know it, clap your hands.  
 If you are happy and you know it, do all three If you are happy and you know it, do all three If you are happy and you know it and you really want to show it. If you are happy and you know it, clap your hands.

Or when learning colors, children can touch things of the colour the teacher says. For example, the teacher says: red! And all the children look for the red thing. When they find it, they touch it and say red. Another TPR activity is a guessing game. The teacher has a bag, full of different kinds of fruit and children repeat after the teacher: Hands up, hands down, it's big, it's small, what is it?

The teaching of English to pre-school children is undoubtedly meaningful if it meets a natural development of a child and it is appropriate to his/her age. Moreover, it is successful if the teacher of English has an adequate knowledge of the target language, masters relevant methodology of teaching English at this stage of education and s/he is enthusiastic about teaching young children (cf. Frydrychova Klimova 2011). Then, it is also an asset for the child since s/he picks up the language in the same way as s/he acquires his/her native language.

#### *Participants in questionnaire*

The first stage in the data collection was conducting interviews with 30 EFL students shown in the table below. The native language of participants was Albanian Language.

Tab.1

High School	EFL teachers
Shkolla fillore Lirija	30

The questionnaire include this data	The total number of respondents
Gender	30
The age of respondents	From 25 till 50
Location of living	Tetovë

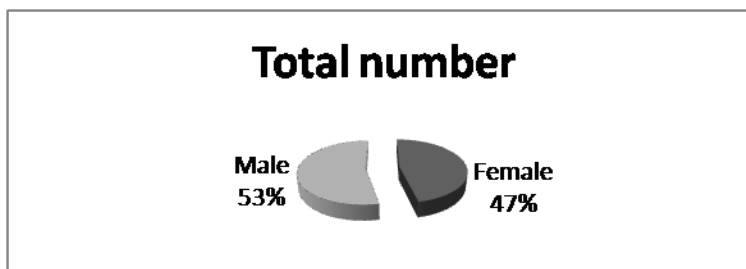
The research results are presented in tables and graphics.

The total number of interviewed teacher is 30 from them 14 are female and 16 are male.

Tab.2

Total number	30
Female	14
Male	16

Graph.2

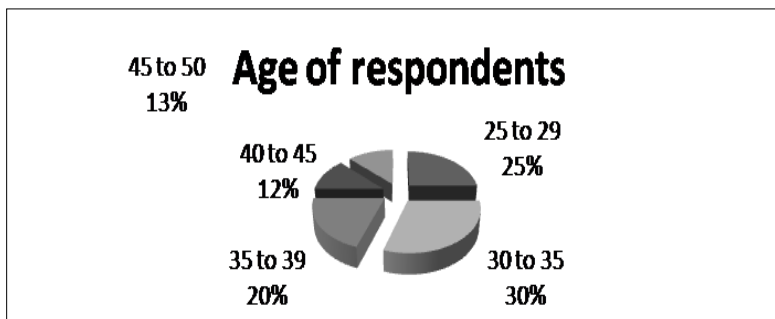


By this graph. We can understand that 53% of interviewed teachers are Male and 47% are women.

Tab.3

Age of respondents	Number of teachers
from 25-29	10
From 30-35	12
From 35-39	8
From 40-45	5
From 45-50	5

Graph.3



Generally speaking, there are no rigid age limits to teach English abroad, but every country or school has different requirements and/or restriction. While a large number of teachers abroad are in their early 20s as they are more mobile in their life after college, teaching jobs are

professional positions and many schools are looking for a level of maturity and both life and professional experience (even if it's not necessarily in teaching) when they hire English teachers. By this graph.

We can understand that the Teachers that teach English Language in Lirija are mostly in age 30 to 35 in 30%, with 12% is the age of teachers from 40 to 50. A teacher who promotes interaction in the English class does justice to their profession by empowering learners and helping them develop their communication skills. They motivate their students, create opportunities for them to interact with one another through commutainment (communication through entertainment) activities such as role-plays, groups discussions, mock interviews, etc.

Your English teaching training qualifications:

Tab.4

	30 EFL Teaching
Teaching English to speakers of other languages.	2
Certificate of English language teaching to adults.	2
Teaching English as a foreign Language.	18
Diploma in English Language to adults.	8

Graph.4

60% of the interviewed teachers have The diploma of Teaching English as a Foreign Language, 6 % of them have the Diploma for Teaching English to speakers of others languages



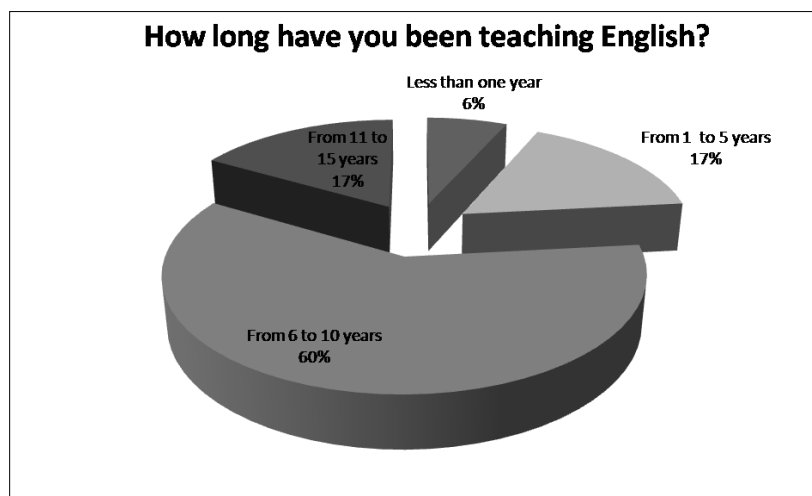


How long have you been teaching English?

Tab.5

	EFL teachers - 30
Less than one year	2
From 1 to 5 years	5
From 6 to 10 years	18
From 11 to 15 years	5

Graph.5.



Educational researchers have been able to pin down how much teacher experience matters.

Experienced teachers are on average more effective in raising student achievement than their less experienced counterparts. This happens not just because experienced teachers are more likely to work in schools and classrooms with more advantaged students. When researchers carefully adjust for this reality, they still find that more experienced teachers are, on average, more effective than teachers with fewer years of classroom experience. In the research I have done with colleagues on teacher performance in Tetovo, the greater effectiveness of experienced teachers in boosting student achievement is clear for elementary, middle, and high schools alike.

Teachers do better as they gain experience. Researchers have long documented that teachers improve dramatically during their first few years on the job. Less clear has been what happens after those early years. In our new research on middle school teachers in Lirija we find that math teachers become increasingly effective at raising the test scores of their students through about 15 years. At that point, they are about twice as effective as novices with two years of experience. The productivity gains are less dramatic for middle school English teachers, but follow the same trajectory.

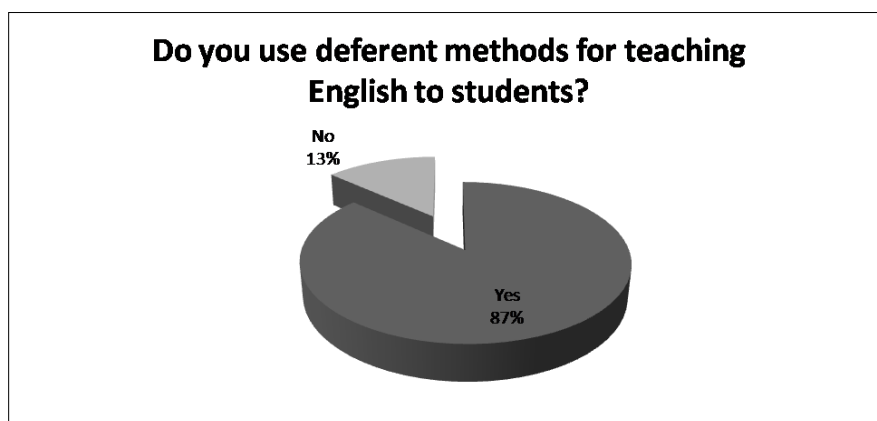
Experienced teachers also strengthen education in other ways beyond improving test scores. Our research in progress suggests that, as Lirija school teachers gain experience, they become increasingly adept at doing other important things – like reducing student absences and encouraging students to read for recreational purposes outside of the classroom. More experienced teachers often mentor young teachers and help to create and maintain a strong school community.

Do you use deferent methods for teaching English to students?

Tab 6.

	EFL teachers - 30
Yes	
No	

Graph.6.



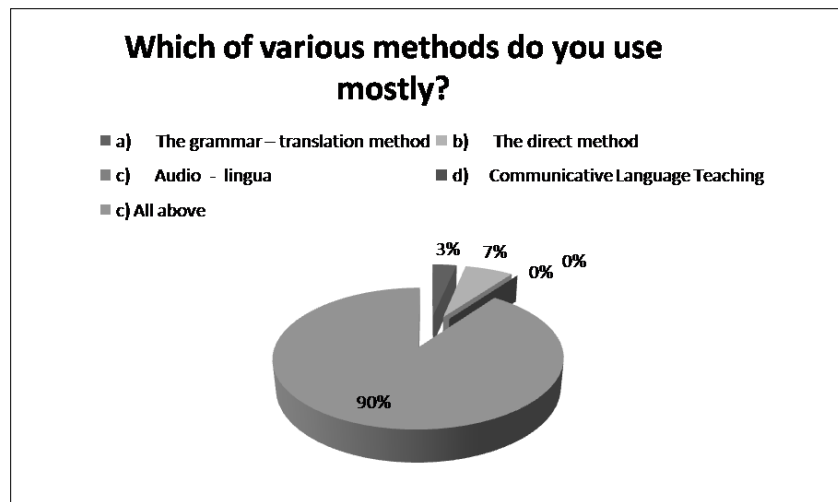
87 % of teachers are using different methods for teaching English to student, 13 % of them are continuing with traditional teaching. No two teachers are alike, and any teacher with classroom teaching experience will agree that their style of teaching is uniquely their own. An effective teaching style engages students in the learning process and helps them develop critical thinking skills. Traditional teaching styles have evolved with the advent of differentiated instruction, prompting teachers to adjust their styles toward students’ learning needs.

Which of various methods do you use mostly?

Tab.7

	EFL teachers - 30
The grammar – translation method	1
The direct method	2
Audio - lingua	0
Communicative Language Teaching	0
All above	27

Graph 7.



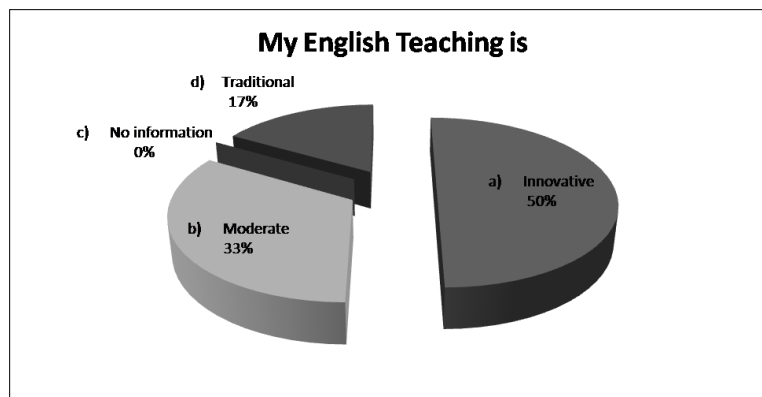
Each method has a different focus or priority, so let’s look at what this means in practical terms in the classroom. There are several methods of teaching English to students who are learning the language for the first time, each with their own unique pros and cons. Depending on the teaching situation, setting, and resources available, any one of these English teaching methods could be right for you and your students. Teachers and students who are able to travel and stay in another country long enough to develop a strong grasp on the English language. 90% of teachers are using all above those methods.

My English Teaching is:

Tab.8

	EFL – Teachers 30
Innovative	15
Moderate	10
Traditional	5

Graph.8



If you see that some of your students start to study worse, have no desire to do all schoolwork you give them, and just want to give up everything, do not be in a hurry to argue and tell them about how bad or lazy they become. You can become like a parent to them. Support your student, ask about what happens to him, push him to do better. If you see that your student is depressed, maybe it would be better to meet with him after classes and find out what exactly is going on.

The teaching of reading is not easy. As children's fluency in reading increases, it's hard to know what reading skills need to be taught, and when. We ensure that specific reading strategies are modeled explicitly to the class; this provides children with a holistic bank of skills to draw upon. This could include scanning a text, making an inference, predicting or creating a mental image. Our teachers use 'think aloud' statements to model to the children how these skills are used, and how they can help them become better readers. These strategies are then shared as a class, and then assessed in follow up guided reading activities.

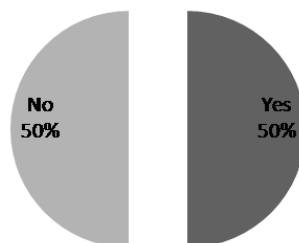
Do you have problems by teaching English during the class?

Tab.9

	EFL – teachers 30
Yes	15
No	15

Graph.9

**Do you have problems by teaching English during the class?**



## Conclusion and Recommendations

Most researches specified that very early second language education should be always introduced with regard to the individual development of a child. The following part debates the ideal age for starting a second language. The-sooner-the-better idea is confronted by empirical evidence from all around the world. This research investigates how and to what extent are the chosen principles for teaching a second language to preschoolers followed in the practice in chosen kindergartens and private courses. While in the past many foreign language instructors have wrestled with the idea of teaching language's inherent culture as a separate entity to the language itself, today researchers and educators are pushing more and more towards their concurrency.

Retiring the tired concept of a chapter designated to “culture” or “civilisation”, educators must understand the prevalence of culture in language. To illustrate, try to envision grammar as a singular entity. Is it not true that no matter how you approach a language, grammar is being treated in one form or another? One cannot remove grammar from language. Moving back then to culture, teachers must not think of it as being the so-called fifth element of language learning<sup>1</sup> as though it were feasible to detach it. Culture, be it the speaker's own culture, that of the target language or both, infuses and infects all of these language learning aspects; how they are treated, how they are perceived etc. The fact of the matter is, separating culture from language learning is an injustice to the language itself and robs the language learner of the true essence of the language; the key being their unity.

Research shows that treating culture as though it were a “chapter” or “unit” only promotes generalizations and “traditional” views rather than an up to date, realistic vision. There is also research stating the connection between foreign cultural awareness and how it relates to the diminishing of one's ethnocentricity. These articles will therefore furnish a myriad of reasons why culture inclusion in a foreign language course is elemental. This is a succinct article outlining the background of culture in the foreign language classroom including a breakdown of culture in language instruction over the past four decades: the basic movement from describing socio-cultural contexts to an understanding of and ability to function communicatively in a foreign culture, this being the major shift.

Keeping in mind the goal of communicative competence, Lessard-Clouston includes research from many authors stating the importance of culture instruction in the foreign language classroom, whether or not it is overtly present in the curriculum. While pressing the fact that language teaching IS culture teaching, he offers simple guidelines for introduction and purpose. Very extensive bibliography. Although there are various points of view about the best time to begin English language instruction (see the discussion below), and minor differences in student age and program categories, the fact is that in most countries, children are learning English at younger and younger ages. In many countries, English is a compulsory subject in the early

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<sup>1</sup> Generally, the four elements of language learning are broken into speaking, listening, writing and reading.

primary grades (Nikolov, 2009; Pinter, 2006). Even in countries where families may choose the foreign language for their children to study, English is “overwhelmingly the first choice” (Garton, Copland, & Burns, 2011, p. 5). The growing demand for English, plus parents’ belief that English skills provide their children with a better education and better employment opportunities, have led to an increase in the number of EYL programs (Enever & Moon, 2009; Gimenez, 2009). Language has a central role in the development of intellectual, social, and emotional support learners and the learning success in all fields of study, language learning is expected to help students know themselves, their culture, and cultures of others. In addition, language learning helps learners are able to express opinions, ideas and feelings, participate in society, and even find and use the capabilities of existing analytical and imaginative performance itself. Although children develop skills in reading, writing and oral language (listening and speaking) at an early age, oral language must be the foundation of English as a foreign language (EFL) in the kindergarten learning program. That is being said, a child whose first language is not English would have difficulties to understand, and in return it would have disadvantages on the child. This is true with the case of Kuwaiti kindergarten public schools. While it takes time and conversation-rich environments to learn a new language, learning the new language is very much like learning a first language (Samway & McKeon, 1999). To learn a new language, there must be opportunities to communicate about real things and events. Children need places inside and outside the classroom to practice their new language where errors are accepted and recognized as part of the process of acquiring English. These kindergarten children need certain conditions which are determined with respect to the building and curricula as well as the teaching methods. Therefore, there is no more any traditional method suitable for the children, and neither is there any traditional teacher fit to teach them; specific qualifications have been agreed on internationally. The teacher should be qualified academically in order to meet the children’s wishes and needs; she should be endowed with a positive personality in dealing with them. Thus, she would be able to develop and advance the standard of the children’s capabilities and creativity; she would also attain a higher standard in their knowledge acquisition and build harmonious characters endowed with a high self-concept. It has been claimed that foreign language learning should start in the primary years (Cameron, 2008). However, teaching kindergarten children could be considered an extension of mothering rather than as an intellectual enterprise (Cameron, 2008). So, when children first learn their home language, they begin as infants to produce all the phonemes necessary to be a speaker of that language (Adams, et al, 1999). Adams added that between ages 1 and 3 years, children acquire about 1,000 to 3,000 words and start to form simple forms, often one-word, and then sentences. From ages 3 to 5 years, they start to play with language and become aware of rhymes and phonological aspects of language such as words that begin with the same sound. From 5 to about 8 years they learn more sophisticated vocabulary and complex structures of the home language (Geva & Petrulis-Wright, 1999). With this development in mind, now what must a child do to add a new language to this rich language base in his or her home language upon entry to school? Language does have important elements, some more formal than others (Richgels, 2005). Richgels (2005) describes the formal elements of a language as phonology, morphology, semantics, and syntax, whereas the informal elements of the language are paralinguistic which involves learning

about signs, gestures, and facial expressions that parallel language production. The functions of language were described by Halliday (1975) and they include: Instrumental—Expression of needs and wants, Regulatory—Regulation of others' behavior, Interactional—interaction with others, Personal—Expression of opinions or feelings, Imaginative—Imagination, Heuristic—Inquiry, and Representational—Information; and finally, conversation or discourse when children need to understand how to engage in conversations with peers and with teachers. In addition, they learn to observe the language of school and to participate in conversations with the language capabilities they have. For as long as students have shown differences in backgrounds, talents, and interests, effective teachers have instinctively tailored methods and materials to accommodate those differences (Ong and Murugesan, 2007). Creative teachers have purposefully crafted instructional menus that cater to the many learning appetites in any one classroom (Middendorf, 2008). While teachers make a difference in the ease with which students come to learn English, in classrooms where there is space for conversations, both social and academic, students tend to become more adept in English (Bartolome, 1998; Gutiérrez, 1995). As a compelling body of evidence exists about the knowledge and skills that kindergarten teachers must possess (Kagan, Kauerz & Tarrant, 2008; Shore, 2009b), generally speaking, these teachers are most effective when they are trained to understand—and be prepared to put into practice their knowledge about—child development, diverse learning styles, social and emotional development, cultural diversity, successful teaching strategies, SL/FL language methodologies, and engaging families (Carter & Nunan, 2007). Unfortunately, the formal education and certification required of Kindergarten teachers, as well as the professional development provided to them, especially if we are speaking with regard to the teaching of the English language, rarely reflect the support of the kindergarten children's learning and development in the English language. That is because an important dimension of classroom interaction is the teacher questions and when teachers fail to elicit any response from the learners, then they need to modify their questions (Carter & Nunan, 2007). The teacher's awareness of the target language is vital for improving pedagogical practice, especially if she needs to include the syntactic and semantic modifications. However, an important distinction should be made between second language learning and foreign language learning. A second language is “one that is learned in a location where that language is typically used as the main vehicle of everyday communication for most people” (Zare, 2012). The second language context provides constant visual and auditory stimulation in the target language. However, if second language learners are surrounded by informal or incorrect models of the language they are learning, emphasis on grammar will be especially important to make them aware of formal, correct speech as well as informal dialects. By contrast, a foreign language is “one that is learned in a place where that language is not typically used as a medium of ordinary communication” (Zare, 2012). Foreign language learners are at a disadvantage because their own native language surrounds them. The foreign language student typically receives input from the target language only in the classroom setting and lacks the opportunity of a second language learner to practice the target language on a daily basis. Much has been done in the last decade and a half to meet the demand for English teaching in Kuwait, but more has to be done to ensure quality teaching and learning in the kindergarten classrooms. In observing these classrooms, the researcher constantly felt a sense of opportunities missed, which

mirrored the teachers' conviction that they were not giving the children as much knowledge as they wanted to give. The kindergarten curriculum left out most of the elements of foreign language teaching that are found around the world, such as translation, grammar, reading, writing, spelling, and dictation (Richards, 2002). Teaching all four language skills together is widely regarded as preferable to other approaches, as the same material is reinforced when it is learned in different modes. Because of the emphasis in the curriculum on learning from context, the teachers were reluctant to translate, and, therefore, some children did not seem to be learning the meanings of the core vocabulary. Teaching meanings from context alone without translating tended to confuse children and seemed unnecessarily slow and artificial. The teachers were frustrated to conduct classes entirely in English and thought it was unrealistic with beginning students who did not hear English spoken outside their one English classroom. The classroom did not offer the variety of situations that a natural speech environment would offer, nor did children have the same intense motivation that first language learners would have to imitate the speech of their caregivers. The kindergarten teachers did not have the fluency or the confidence of native speakers, and, in fact, they modeled grammatical errors, even in repeating the simple sentences in the official lesson plans. They also did not model native speaker pronunciation, and the audio cassettes of songs that accompanied the textbooks were poorly recorded and hard to understand. These deficiencies raise additional questions about the overwhelming emphasis on speaking and listening in this curriculum. As Li's (1998) rightly commented: "The deficiency in spoken English apparently prevented some teachers from applying CLT, but, for others, lack of confidence was more likely to have been the reason" (p. 686).

When I summarize the findings there are four main areas that seem to show some corresponding and interesting facts. Point that has a great influence on teacher's choice of methods is education, continuous self-reflection and search for new methods and ideas. Three areas have been looked at; academic education, use of internet as a source of materials and attendance to educational seminars. The result is that teachers with higher level of education, greater interest in searching for additional materials and more training in general have a much greater tendency to use wider range of methods like CA, DM and TPR and a much more frequent use of Task-based learning. The last area that I would like to comment on is the reasons that teachers have for using PPP more often than TBL. Two areas of answers proved that there is a great shortage of materials for TBL compared with PPP. Most textbooks and additional materials in print or on the internet are PPP-based. Most teachers realize the advantages of TBL for students but say that they are limited by time and availability of materials. My suggestion would be to organize more seminars that would be more concerned with new methods and materials development than promotion of books by certain publishing houses. This would solve the situation with availability of materials as well as with knowledge of new methods and approaches by language school teachers. Over the short history of the EFL field various methods have been proposed. Each method has in turn fallen out of favor and has been replaced with a new one. Audiolingualism, functionalism, communicative paradigms, and now the fad is "task-based syllabuses." In his critique of the task-based syllabus Sheen (1994:127) points out, "frequent paradigm shifts in the field of second and foreign language teaching have not resulted in significant progress in language learning." Since no



method has been proven to be more effective than another, many teachers have jumped on the "eclectic" bandwagon. Common sense would have this as the best available choice since variety is the spice of language. Other than considering method, what can the EFL teacher do to ensure success? What follows are some DOs and DONTs that I have found to be very useful in teaching EFL in Albania . None are revolutionary; these are principles I didn't necessarily learn in ESL graduate school, but should have been taught.

1. Learn your students' names.

This cannot be overemphasized. You will be able to control your class better and gain more respect if you learn the students' names early on. If you are one who has a poor memory for names, have all the students hold up name cards and take a picture of them on the first day of class. On the second class, impress them by showing them you know all their names.

2. Establish authority from the beginning.

Expect your students to use English 100% of the time, and accept it if they only achieve 95% usage. Do not let them get away with speaking their mother tongue to communicate with their partner. Deal quickly with inappropriate conduct in a friendly yet firm manner.

3. Be overly prepared.

If you don't have a clear lesson-plan down on paper, then make sure you have a mental one. You should know about how long each activity will take and have an additional activity prepared in case you have extra time.

4. Always consider the learners' needs when preparing for each lesson.

Why are your students studying English? How will they use English in the future? What do they need to learn? If many of the students are going to study abroad at an American university, for example, then the teacher should be preparing them for listening to academic lectures and academic reading to some extent. If, on the other hand, most of the students have no perceived need for English in the future, perhaps you should be focusing on useful skills that they may use in the future, but may not be essential--skills such as understanding movie dialog, listening to music, writing an email to a pen pal, etc.

5. Be prepared to make changes to or scrap your lesson plan.

If the lesson you have prepared just isn't working, don't be afraid to scrap it or modify it. Be sensitive to the students--don't forge ahead with something that is bound for disaster.<sup>2</sup>

6. Find out what learners already know.

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<sup>2</sup> [http://www.eflpress.com/teacher/EFL\\_teacher.html](http://www.eflpress.com/teacher/EFL_teacher.html)

This is an ongoing process. Students may have already been taught a particular grammar point or vocabulary. In Japan, with Japanese having so many loan words from English, this is especially true. I have explained many words carefully before, such as kids, nuance, elegant, only to find out later that they are now part of the Japanese language.

7. Be knowledgeable about grammar.

This includes pronunciation, syntax, and sociolinguistic areas. You don't have to be a linguist to teach EFL--most of what you need to know can be learned from reading the students' textbooks. Often the rules and explanations about structure in the students' texts are much more accessible and realistic than in texts used in TESL syntax courses.

8. Be knowledgeable about the learners' culture.

In monolingual classrooms the learners' culture can be a valuable tool for teaching.

9. Don't assume that your class textbook has the language that your students need or want to learn.

Most textbooks follow the same tired, boring pattern and include the same major functions, grammar and vocabulary. The main reason for this is not scientific at all--it is the publisher's unwillingness to take a risk by publishing something new. Also, by trying to please all teachers publishers force authors to water down their materials to the extent of being unnatural at times. It is the teacher's responsibility to add any extra necessary vocabulary, functions, grammar, or topics that you feel the students may want or need.

10. Don't assume (falsely) that the class textbook will work.

Some activities in EFL textbooks fall apart completely in real classroom usage. It is hard to believe that some of them have actually been piloted. Many activities must be modified to make them work, and some have to be scrapped completely.

11. Choose your class textbooks very carefully.

Most teachers and students are dissatisfied with textbooks currently available. Nevertheless, it is essential that you choose a textbook that is truly communicative and meets the needs of your students.

12. Don't neglect useful vocabulary teaching.

The building blocks of language are not grammar and functions. The most essential thing students need to learn is vocabulary; without vocabulary you have no words to form syntax, no words to pronounce. Help your students to become vocabulary hungry.

13. Proceed from more controlled activities to less controlled ones.

Not always, but in general, present and practice more structured activities before freer, more open ones.

14. Don't neglect the teaching of listening.

It is the opinion of many ESL experts that listening is the most important skill to teach your students. While listening to each other and to the teacher will improve their overall listening ability, this can be no substitute for listening to authentic English. As much as possible, try to expose your students to authentic English in a variety of situations. The best way to do this and the most realistic is through videos. Listening to audio cassettes in the classroom can improve listening ability, but videos are much more motivating and culturally loaded.<sup>3</sup>

15. Turn regular activities into games or competition.

Many familiar teaching points can be turned into games, or activities with a competitive angle. A sure way to motivate students and liven up your classroom. 4

16. Motivate your students with variety.

By giving a variety of interesting topics and activities, students will be more motivated and interested, and they are likely to practice more. With more on-task time they will improve more rapidly.

17. Don't teach linguistics.

Language and culture are inseparable. If culture isn't a part of your lessons, then you aren't really teaching language, you are teaching about language.

18. Don't teach phonetics

By all means teach the more important aspects of pronunciation, but don't bombard the students with minimal pair drills that cannot be applied to real communication. They don't really understand the meaning of any of those minimal pairs you teach anyway, do they? A more rational approach would be to teach pronunciation in context, as necessary. For example, if you are teaching a section on health, teach syllable stress with sickness words: fever, headache, backache, earache, constipation, etc.

19. Don't leave the learners in the dark

Explain exactly what they are expected to learn in a particular lesson. Make sure that students know what they are doing and why. The lessons should be transparent to the students, with a clear organization.

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<sup>3</sup>[http://www.eflpress.com/teacher/EFL\\_teacher.html](http://www.eflpress.com/teacher/EFL_teacher.html)

<sup>4</sup>[http://www.eflpress.com/teacher/EFL\\_teacher.html](http://www.eflpress.com/teacher/EFL_teacher.html)

In the past, many national and state entities charged with oversight and direction for early childhood teacher preparation had not singled out the DLL population for special consideration. In some cases, teacher education about DLLs was included under the poorly defined umbrella concept of “diversity” (Ray et al., 2006a). More recently, professional organizations have revised their standards to include a stronger DLL focus. For example, the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE), the primary national accreditation body for P–12 pre-service education, although previously criticized for minimizing its focus on diversity (Tellez & Waxman, 2008), has developed a specific criteria (e.g., Standard 4) stressing diversity as an integrated approach across curricular content areas and specific knowledge of DLLs. This includes a strength-based emphasis toward cultural and linguistic diversity, knowledge of first and second language acquisition, and sensitivity in working with culturally and linguistically diverse families (NCATE, 2008). Also, Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL), in conjunction with NCATE, is currently revising their set of expectations for P–12 English as a Second Language (ESL) teacher education (TESOL Task Force on ESL Standards, 2008). These standards include understanding the complexities in first and second language and literacy development; the relationships between culture and language development, including identity issues; specific pedagogical strategies to support the development of English; the use of appropriate resource materials; understanding appropriate and authentic assessment for DLL populations; and the development of professionalism.

In the early childhood education arena, the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC), whose focus is on children from birth through age 8, adopted a position statement in 1995 (NAEYC, 1995) that unequivocally asserted the importance of children’s home language in their overall development. Specifically, NAEYC indicates that children’s home language does not interfere with their ability to learn English and that knowing more than one language is an asset and not a limitation to their developmental progress. In NAEYC’s accreditation standards for the preparation of early educators at the associate and baccalaureate levels, language diversity is subsumed under the term culture and is referenced in three of the five major standard’s categories: (a) the promotion of child development and learning, (b) building family and community relationships, and (c) teaching and learning (Hyson, 2003).

The National Board of Professional Teaching Standards has adopted a specific criteria for the Early and Middle Childhood and English as a New Language certification with two paths: one for educators stressing bilingual language development and the other for individuals specializing in helping children gain proficiency in English to access content across the curriculum (see <http://www.nbpts.org>). The Association for Childhood Education International’s (ACEI) position article on teacher preparation mentions the need to accommodate the interests of young children in a diverse society (ACEI, 1998); however, a more current document on global guidelines for early education and care emphasizes diversity as an important element of quality programs (ACEI, 2006).

From this overview, it is clear that there is range of emphasis on issues of diversity, including linguistic diversity, from professional organizations that guide and influence teacher preparation and professional development. However, regardless of the degree of emphasis they place on understanding linguistic diversity, professional organizations interested in teacher preparation have concluded that preparation should focus on five major content areas that range from understanding the processes underlying first and second language acquisition to the importance of working with families. The following sections describe these five areas.

For the entire thing that I said higher I conclude that we have to support language development in the early years. Take a moment to imagine what it would be like to look at the words on this page and not be able to comprehend the meaning these words have collectively. Perhaps you do not have to imagine. How young children develop and understand language is a complex topic, and is one of the key developmental milestones of early childhood. Language allows children to identify and communicate feelings, needs and emotions, with parents, educators and other children. Comprehension, understanding and interpretation of language—both oral and written—provide the foundation for lifelong learning. Engaging children with language from birth is one of the best ways to develop strong literacy skills. People who cannot comfortably read in their own language are unlikely to read to their children. Many of the parents in your services will chat to their children quite naturally, establishing expressive and responsive conversations from the very beginning, equipping their children in the best possible way with the building blocks of language and literacy. But some, for a variety of reasons, will not, and these parents need your support and guidance to be able to appreciate the benefits of language development in very young children and most importantly, to enable parents to become their child’s first teacher. Language is an important skill that allows a person to communicate. A child begins to develop language even before she can use words, as seen by a baby who cries to get her needs met. A delay in language skills can cause frustration for a child as well as miscommunication about what she may be trying to convey. Language development is important to a child in order to adequately exchange information with others in a meaningful way. Nature-based preschools, sometimes simply referred to as nature preschools, are licensed early childhood programs for 3-5 year olds where at least 30% of the class day is held outside, nature is infused into all aspects of the program, and the pedagogy emphasizes inquiry-based learning through play and hands-on discovery. This means the curriculum is emergent (i.e., based on children’s interests), but given the frequent outdoor time experiences are typically rooted in the seasonal happenings of the natural world. Additionally, nature is integrated into the indoor spaces, and the play areas have an overall appearance of a natural area rather than structured play equipment. Nature-based preschools include time spent beyond the designated play area, nature infused into the indoor spaces, and with nature as the driving theme of the curriculum (Bailie, 2010; Green Hearts, 2014; Larimore, 2011b, 2011a; R. C. Moore, 2014). Another way of describing this is nature is integrated into learning “indoors,” “outdoors,” and “beyond” (Warden, 2015). Nature-based preschools are different from forest preschools which include longer periods of time outdoors (70-100%) and limited use, if any, of indoor space (Larimore, 2016; Sobel, 2014). This nature-based preschool model originated in the United States with the first nature-based preschool at New Canaan Nature Center in Connecticut in

1967. Until the early 2000s many referred to this model as nature-center based preschools (Bailie, 2010) and then the language shifted to nature-based preschools (Larimore, 2011). In many cases this history still influences the balance between learning in, about, or with nature in particular nature-based preschools. Any student or parent that experiences a nature-based preschool inevitably wants to attend a nature-based kindergarten (and first grade, second grade...). Like nature-based preschools, the students have daily outdoor time as part of their curriculum. Nature is also brought into the classroom through physical materials, but also in the selection of reading materials, topics for small group activities, and so forth. In other words, nature is infused into all aspects of the classroom and serves as a tool to achieve learning outcomes.

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