

## How Parental Encouragement and Evaluation for the English Teacher Reflect Pupils Attitudes to Learn the English Language

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### Abstract

*This study aimed at identifying the factor of pupils' evaluation for parents and teachers while studying the English language as a major priority in Albanian schools. In order to discover the attitudes and the evaluation for the English teacher the ATMB test (Attitude and Motivation Test Battery) was used in a sample of 200 pupils of secondary school in Tirana. The test was administered for two of its scales, the parental encouragement and English teacher evaluation. The data was gathered and calculated afterwards on the SPSS 18. This study has taken out results based on quantitative research thus conveying statistical values of the respective answers from the respondents. The answers varied from the absolute disagreement to the utmost agreement of statements for each scale. The selected scales had a total score of 70 each. It resulted from the measurement for the scale of English teacher evaluation a score of 60 out of which stands for slightly higher than moderate degree of evaluation for the teacher and a score of 56 for the parental support to learning the language. In other terms this study concludes that pupils in secondary cycle of studies highly evaluated the teacher of English language and they were only moderately encouraged by their parents to learn the language.*

**Keywords:** English language learning, secondary school, evaluation for the teacher of English, parental encouragement to learn English, internationally recognized English tests

### 1. General Overview

Educational reforms in Albania have significantly affected the curricula in undergraduate school system. Major national strategies instead promote the values and importance of the application of the English language in Albanian schools, as a necessity for integration and cultural development of pupils. National Education Strategy, 2005-2015 writes in a special division: "Treatment with the advantage of the English language. Among other things, the Albanian state began addressing the priority of English, so mastering this language better. For this purpose it was decided that the teaching of English language start since primary third grade, (MASH, 2005, Case Approval Program English language, Primary Cycle, CF, p.3), and English test should be obligatory taken at Matura with a high coefficient of points for university admission. Also there is extended the market of publishing in English language, and English departments were established in universities (MASH, SCAP, 2007, p.10). Pace of these changes orients to a new approach to find analog programs and school systems in Europe. It is worth mentioning Bologna Declaration on Higher Education or the introduction of new ICT full program.

English in primary school, third grade, which is writes in the introduction:

" The integration of our country into the family of European -Atlantic structures, preparation of citizens of a united Europe ,necessarily requires an understanding and mastery of effective foreign language , which should begin to learn as a new age . Primary school level where the jump is the basis for everything that society holds as valuable to learn, there is space and learning a foreign language English. Sensitization to small children learning English is a positive contribution to the overall formation of the student, his identity, he extends to the ability to distinguish the difference between cultures" (MASH, 2005, Case Approval Program English Language, Primary Cycle, CF P.3)

### 2. Problem of Research

The school programs requires that young children start learning English since the pre -school system and then follow during the elementary school up to high school when they take Matura exam and English test is an optional test, with a very high coefficient for university admission 1.3 -1.6) (MASH, 2010, Udhëzues për zhvillimin e Kurrikulës së re të Gjinnazit, f.11)

Due to ongoing reforms in education system in Albania mainly related to English language taught in Albanian

schools, in terms of curricula, program, tests taken, teachers training, certification of English language knowledge with international standards and imposing the latter a must for the issuing of post university degrees, the continuous efforts to make the English test an obligatory test for the A levels, this study aims to find out the pupils evaluation for teachers of English class and the encouragement this group age going to the secondary gets from their parents.

### 3. Research Questions

- At what degree are students in Albania encouraged by their parents to learn the English language?
- At what extent do students in secondary schools evaluate their English teacher?

### 4. Literature Review

The English language is now a must for student academic achievement, like the university degrees for different high education programs, which obliges them to take an international exam to certify the knowledge in English language. The affective role into language learning has been of great importance in the recent researches. The studies with pupils of high schools in the late 90's revealed that there exists an intense correlation between the affective filter and achievement in language learning (Gardner, Tremblay and Masgoret, 1997: 344)

The big challenge in an era of educational developments is to preserve the balance between the new and the old, to surpass gap between them and the new approach to environmental flows where they will be applied. In university education is handled with care by educational policy-making institutions such as the Institute of Curriculum Development (ICD) or Education Regional Directories (DARS) for designing programs and curricula. There has been significant sensitization training for working groups that deal with curricula and school programs.

In the case of English language programs for pre-university cycle curriculum statistically there have been significant differences both in content and in form. The aim is to adapt educational strategies in place, such as sector but central, and what is most important for English language programs, their design based languages to European standards. Specifically, English language programs in Albanian schools match closely with the European Framework of Reference for Languages and Foreign Language Portfolio. New educational programs is also provided preparatory aspect of teachers, who must have a certain level of not only education but also vocational, cultural, aiming: "Increasing accountability of teachers for the recognition and implementation of education legislation and in particular the latest innovations to educational reform; Increasing skills and professional competence of the teaching staff; a direct impact on enhancing the effectiveness of the learning process towards a successful teaching. Increasing the accountability of teachers for the necessity of knowing the basic concepts and scientific cases and their implementation in practice, in accordance with the specifications of the age of the students and the class where they teach. Practical implementation through concrete demonstration of skills acquired, and in particular by assessing achievement through testing" (IED, 2011, program of professional development for getting the qualification rates for English, p.2)

Harter in (1981) surveyed over 3000 pupils in Connecticut, New York, Colorado, and California with a five scale test measuring : challenge, curiosity, professionalism, an criteria which he defined as a " tendency to challenging tasks rather than easy ones, curiosity and interest against the teacher approval, the independent attempts for professionalism against the teacher dependency, independent judgment against the teacher belief, and outer criteria to inner criteria for success or failure' p. 300. He found that student's responses for the scale of challenge, curiosity and professionalism changed dependently to the age difference.

Mascgoret et.al. (2001) in the test applied to measure some factors of language learning were not found 'distinct indicators for the grouping which reflected integration, students attitudes, motivation or anxiety for the language" (p. 291). Nikolov (1999) in his study Pecs, in Hungary reported that the group age 11- 14 stated that they studied mainly for utilitarian reasons compared to the answers of little children. Longman would state in the book 'Practice of English teaching' that 'there are two types of motivation, intrinsic and extrinsic motivation to learn'.

### 5. Methodology

This study tried to research the attitudes of 200 pupils to the language learning in a non public secondary school in the capital city of Albania, Tirana. This place selected for the study to the migration reasons occurring in the past decade when most of the population moved to the capital. This brought the increase of population and a greater concentration of young ages in the pre university system, but not only. The study also focused on the degree of evaluation the pupils had for the teacher of English language. To complete the research the AMTB (attitude motivation test battery) was used in

two scales adopted for the Albanian territory. The test was translated in the Albanian language by a two experienced translators and was reviewed by a peer group, consisting of pedagogy and psychology test raters from the University of Tirana. After it was proved reliable with a coefficient of 0,7 in a sample of 100 pupils, it was later used for the whole sample, taken at convenience reasons. The test completion was monitored by two teachers from another secondary school so that the pupils were not affected; they were previously trained to fulfill the requirements of the test manual for effective test use.

## 6. Procedures

The study is fully based on quantitative method of research, relying on statistical data processing and analysis on SPSS 18. The test was given for completion to 6 groups of students of tenth, eleventh, twelfth grade. Each of the groups was composed of 35 pupils each. It was applied in 210 students and it took two months to administer. This was a sample with probability, taken from the names record list at school database. The scope of the study was introduced to the students for ethical reasons and the students were free to participate or not in it. The pupils were willing to complete the test for the scales of teacher evaluation and attitudes to the language learning. After the test completion, the data was taken and answers of the respondents were carefully processed in the statistical program for two weeks.

## 7. Data Analysis and Results for the Scale 'Evaluation of the Teacher of English'

The overall score for each scale was 70 as it was instructed in the test manual. So the pupil's responses varied in values from the lowest degree with a null value (0) to the most extreme value (70). In order to find out the respective values for the answers, the frequency values were taken, and descriptive statistics for the mean values, and the modes for the most frequent answers. The alternatives of choice started with a strong disagreement coded Absolutely Disagree to absolutely agree, in a range of 6 degrees.

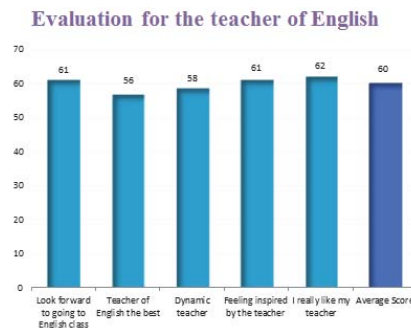
For the evaluation of the teacher results this data where the answers are mostly gathered around code 5, moderately agree.

The mean value after calculation results 5.1 and it corresponds to the score 60 in this scale.

**Table 5.** Data for the Evaluation of the teacher of English

Alternatives of respondents	Number of students	frequency %	Mean value	Score of the whole scale
Slightly agree (4)	75	25,8	5,1	60
Moderately Agree(5)	135	74,2		

The following graph shows the statements of the scale and their respective values gathered from the answers of respondents for each item. The values are compared to the maximum score of the scale (70). These values stand for the intensity of their feelings.



**Figure 1:** Evaluation for teacher of English

## 8. Data Analysis and Results for the Parental Encouragement

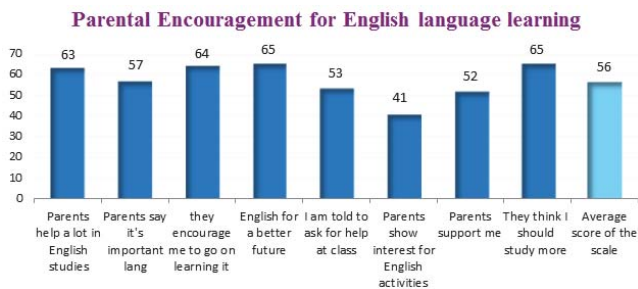
The alternatives of choice started with a slightly disagreement coded (3) Slightly Disagree to moderately agree (5), in a range of 3 degrees.

For the parental encouragement results this data where the answers are mostly gathered around code 5, moderately agree. This means that most of the pupils 179 of them have answered that they moderately agree with the statement that they are moderately encouraged by the parents to learn the language. The mean value after calculation results 4,73 and it corresponds to the score 56 in this scale.

**Table 2.**Data for the frequencies of the scale 'Parental encouragement'

Alternatives	Number of students	Frequency in %	Mean value	Score of the whole scale
Slightly disagree (3)	22	3,6	4,73	56
Slightly agree (4)	39	11,8		
Moderately agree (5)	179	84,5		

The statements and the respective values for each of the item in this scale are revealed in the graph below, showing the intensity of the pupils' feelings toward their parents and their support for learning the language. The individual values are compared to the top value of the scale (70). See figure 2)



## 9. Conclusions

This study found that pupils in non public secondary school in Albania were moderately encouraged by their parents to learn the English language and they evaluated their teacher of English in a highly moderate degree. The average score after the data processing for the parents' encouragement to learn the language was 56 out of 70. This concludes that parents support and encourage their children at a moderate degree to learn English language. The two highest values for this scale are for the items about the encouragement to study more the language and parents believing that it English language would help their children for a better future (65). The lowest consideration resulted for parents being only little interested to know about the activities their children did in the English class. In relation to the degree of evaluation for the teacher of English class the respondents revealed a better consideration compared to the parents support by evaluating more their teacher of English at a moderately high degree, score 60 out of 70. They showed that they were considerably inspired by the teacher and looked forward to going to the English class. However, they little believed that teacher of English was the best one. These results conclude that English language is very important in the curricula of the secondary schools and pupils have a high interest in learning the language. They expect a better support from their parents to learn English language and their parents should encourage them more. The teachers of English are also crucial to language learning mainly due to the new programs offered by the Ministry of Education and the continuous changes in the Albanian educational system. It results from the study that the teaching behavior of the teacher has changed progressively and positively, considering that it is highly evaluated by the target group in this study. Furthermore, the teachers are more aware of the importance of their class in the Albanian school system. It seems that the pupils attending secondary schools have a higher awareness of the importance of the English language, since these expectations of the people concerned, like parents and teachers, are quite high.

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