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Contents

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Abstract

This research paper aims to examine and address core challenges faced by teachers in assessing students in the context of *force majure, such as the COVID-19 pandemic, within the Kosovo education system,* a period in which the rules for student assessment had either been changed or imposed by central government directives. As an unprecedented global crisis, the pandemic disrupted life in all aspects; this was a new period everyone was obliged to live in, and the pandemic unfortunately affected life in all its aspects. Education, a fundamental pillar and source of societal development, was caught largely unprepared to handle the teaching system at all levels, and to shift to remote format of teaching classes, handling homework, exercises, and assessments. This study investigates why student evaluation is pedagogically critical, how English teachers in Kosovo high schools navigated assessment during remote, and which methods they employed under pandemic conditions. As with any similar crisis and *force majeure* situation, the long-term consequences of this period are likely to extend far beyond initial expectations.

Findings indicate that, despite the extraordinary and highly unnatural circumstances, the Ministry of Education, Science, Technology and Innovation (MESTI) in Kosovo managed, in a short time, to organise remote teaching via TV channels, Zoom, Teams, and Google Classroom. Such management was considered a success, as it eased teachers' work and their interactions with students. However, when it came to student assessment, the entire system was subject to centrally provided instructions from the Government, which dictated the assessment methods and their outcomes. Some of the respondents have claimed that during this period they "were expected to grant only positive grades" and that "the final grade had to be the same or not lower than the existing grade granted before March 11 (MESTI, 2020). For many teachers, such directives conflicted with fundamental principles of fair assessment.

Keywords: assessment, pandemic, formative method, remote learning, English teacher

Introduction

Assessing students during force majeure situations can be challenging and require specialised knowledge and care. It is rare for the world to face a global crisis *and force majeure*. Therefore, it is important to raise awareness, learn about the different forms and manifestations of force majeure, and understand how nations should manage them within their abilities and capacities. A force majeure (fors mazhər), according to Black's Law Dictionary [Law French "a superior force"] (1883) is an event or effect that can be neither anticipated nor controlled; esp., an unexpected event that prevents someone from doing or completing something that he or she had agreed or officially planned to do (Reuters, 2024).

During the COVID-19 pandemic, the teaching process and assessment have been mainly dictated by instructions and decisions issued at the central level, as well as by the approaches adopted to sustain the educational system in the most affected countries. The responsibility for education has primarily fallen to families (parents and guardians) and students themselves. However, in the process, there have been many challenges, ranging from IT literacy to economic conditions, space availability, fatigue from remote learning (both for teachers and students), and support from family members.

This research aims to investigate and study the methods teachers have used at the assessment stage, whether they have focused on formative, summative, or a combination of both (queried indirectly), or whether they have used alternative methods to make an effective, efficient, and ethical assessment. The study has been conducted through a survey and one-to-one interviews with High School English teachers in the Municipalities of Prishitna and Prizren. As a foundation, the document produced by the MESTI of the Government of Kosovo was also used, based on which all teachers were instructed on their assessment methods, the results they had to produce, and how those clashed with the reality in their virtual classes.

As Derek Rowtree stated, assessment methods can largely determine what and how students learn, and therefore, it is vital for all teachers to use appropriate methods that align with the factual educational purposes (Rowtree, 1987). It is widely believed that learning and assessment are closely interlinked, with assessment the outcome of teaching and often the result of both the student and the teacher. According to a study found in Innovative Assessment in Higher Education by Cordelia Bryan and Karen Clegg, "modern society is demanding and complex" (Clegg, 2006). Moreover, regardless of the situation we are living in, according to

Andreas Schlicher, "assessment methods should not change, and they should be basic in their nature" (Schleicher, 2020).

However, although it is a very sound judgment to conclude that assessment methods should not change, encounters with situations such as Covid-19 have proved the opposite. The assessment methods not only had to be changed, but the entire education system had to be adapted to the needs and circumstances pertaining thereto. According to Andreas Schleicher, "in many countries, lockdowns were immediately introduced in response to Covid-19, and in many schools, the conventional schooling was interrupted, and alternative education or schooling was tried. Countries used a variety of resources to support students' learning, using several tools to reach as many students as possible. Online platforms were the most popular tool used during school closures" (Schleicher, 2020).

There remains a huge question mark whether the purpose of teaching is being achieved by remote learning. Are the students benefiting from these adapted teaching methodologies, and is the assessment of students demonstrating their progress, development, lack of progress, or stagnation in their education and learning processes? Many of the respondents in this study fear that the impact of these circumstances will be mirrored in future years, possibly even years later, and that unless assessment is permitted in the same way as under normal circumstances, the consequences will be significant. Many respondents have referred to the obligation to comply with the Government's instructions in student assessment, as well as to unwritten or verbal instructions from school principals or Municipal Directories to impose only positive grading (Schleicher, 2020).

At the global level, a recent survey was conducted by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and Harvard University on the education conditions in countries and the approaches adopted to sustain educational opportunity during the pandemic. It has been found that "the learning that had taken place during the period when schools were closed was at best only a small proportion of what students would have learned in school" (Schleicher, 2020).

In general and under normal circumstances, there are two primary forms of student assessment: formative or summative, or a combination of both. Indeed, an exam at the end of the term shall contribute to the teacher's decision regarding the student's success, which constitutes a summative assessment. At the same time, the teacher's comments on a student's homework or their response to remarks in class indicate a formative assessment (Rowtree, 1987). However, whether teachers

have used only these forms of assessment, what their response to Covid circumstances has been, and why they found this part of teaching challenging and stressful are still areas that need further exploration and elaboration.

As one of the respondents in this study stated very well, "the purpose of assessment is to gather information about students' performance and progress to specific learning objectives. Often, the assessments cannot be 100% real, especially when students take tests, as they cannot show their knowledge through that test because they get stressed and they have a time limit". Further, this teacher stated that she had cases where brilliant students got a 3 or 4 on a test, but given that she would get to know her students very well, she would always give them a chance to try themselves by asking further questions on grammar to raise the grade. The pandemic, however, has limited the interaction with students. Some classes were organised initially only through TV sessions, and later the Zoom platform and Google Classroom were introduced. The same teacher stated that this year, during the pandemic, along with her other English teachers, they decided to assess homework at 30%, participation at 10%, class engagement at 10%, and a group project at 50% for the final grade. However, after the Department of Education of the Municipality of Prishtina set a rule that prevented them from lowering their previous grades, they could no longer rely on those percentages. Therefore, their assessment could not rely on students' actual performance or progress, but had to be subject to the instructions issued by government authorities.

Purpose

The purpose of this study is to identify how teachers have adapted their teaching and assessment practices and the challenges they have faced during the COVID-19 pandemic. The purpose is not only identification of ways and methods they have used, to help their students learn more and achieve a great success in language acquisition and general learning of English Language and Literature, but also to help teachers learn of their peers' experiences and take the necessary steps and measures to be prepared for another wave of the pandemic or another year of online teaching and remote assessment of students, so that education system does not fail, it is not deteriorated, and the end product is not a generation who passed a class just for the sake of passing it and because we all lived under the same sky which was conquered by the invisible enemy called Corona Virus.

Methodology

The methodology used for this study has been qualitative research, including an analysis of the Document produced by the Government, namely the Ministry of Education, titled "Instruction on the Assessment of Students during distance learning," as well as interviews with English teachers from high schools in Prishtina and the Prizren region. I have also used an open survey with questions (similar to those discussed during interviews) addressed to English teachers, from which a certain number of responses were received. Literature reviews and studies on educational institutions' responses to COVID-19 and the measures taken to address the most challenging aspect of the teaching and learning process, such as student assessment, were also considered.

Findings and Results

The interviews and survey conducted for this research produced several significant findings regarding assessment practices and methods used during the COVID-19 pandemic across Kosovo's high schools. First, teachers consistently reported that assessment procedures were entirely dependent on instructions issued by the central government, namely the Ministry of Education, Science, and Technology. In particular, they were prohibited from granting lower grades than the ones already given before 11th March. Teachers interviewed in this study state that they not only had to comply with this written instruction, but also had to comply with the "verbal order" not to fail any student. As a result, negative grades were effectively forbidden.

Second, all teachers expressed concerns about the integrity and authenticity of student work. They observed that homework and assignments were frequently shared among students, making it difficult to determine authorship and to assess individual achievement reliably. Consequently, many educators felt that no genuine or valid assessment could be conducted under such circumstances.

Third, respondents highlighted inadequate support from parents or guardians, citing limitations in intellectual capacity, economic hardship, and insufficient IT literacy. These structural barriers further impede meaningful assessment and hinder students' engagement with remote learning.

According to the official document produced by the Ministry of Education, Science, Technology, and Innovation, the primary purpose of assessment, in compliance

with the Curriculum Framework (2016), is to support student learning. The document further emphasised that this goal, along with the principles of evaluation for distance learning, should guide the distance assessment process. The document emphasised that distance assessment should prioritise essential learning outcomes, student well-being, and encouragement rather than rigorous measurement of what students had learned. However, recommendations were given that in the circumstances created by the COVID-19 Pandemic, it is recommended to assess what is essential for the tasks, commitments, practical activities and learning outcomes related to the type of learning that takes place and approaches to teaching applied during distance learning and that emphasis should be placed in the well-being of students, encouraging them to learn more, rather than assess what they have learned (MESTI, 2020).

Despite these guidelines, several respondents reported that they "were expected to grant only positive grades" and that "the final grade had to be the same or not lower than the existing grade granted before March 11" (MESTI, 2020). For many teachers, such directives conflicted with fundamental principles of fair assessment, which require accuracy, transparency, and the ability to differentiate levels of student achievement (Black & Wiliam, 1998). By restricting teachers' evaluative autonomy, the policy not only undermined their professional judgement but also risked distorting the learning process. Restricting teachers' evaluative autonomy not only compromised the integrity of the assessment process but also limited their ability to provide differentiated, evidence-based feedback. Research consistently shows that as implied by studies on assessment and learning conducted by scholars such as Richard Stiggins and Wynne Harlen, when grades are inflated or disconnected from performance, the credibility of assessment is undermined, weakening both accountability and instructional planning (Stiggins, 2005; Harlen, 2012).

Teachers also expressed concern about the motivational consequences of mandated grade inflation. If grades did not reflect genuine effort or competency, students had limited incentive to engage meaningfully with instructional materials, participate in online activities, or develop new skills during remote learning. In this sense, the requirement to award only positive grades may have inadvertently diminished both intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, undermined the formative purpose of assessment, and potentially exacerbated existing learning gaps. These findings illustrate the significant tension between crisis-driven policy decisions and pedagogical integrity, revealing long-term implications for learning quality. If grades no longer reflected actual performance, students had limited incentives to engage

meaningfully with instructional materials, complete assignments, or develop skills during remote learning. In this sense, the requirement to award only positive grades may have inadvertently weakened students' intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, reduced the formative value of assessment, and potentially widened existing learning gaps. These findings reveal significant tensions between crisis-driven policy mandates and pedagogical integrity, highlighting the long-term implications of assessment decisions made under emergency conditions.

Analysis of the interviews and survey data further indicated that the reality teachers have faced is entirely different from the polished image of remote learning presented or shown on TV classes. Although the government introduced new platforms and promoted innovative approaches to distance education, the transition from classroom-based to online learning remained challenging for teachers, students, and families alike. The difficulties encountered ranged from limited access to technology and internet connectivity to varying levels of IT literacy among both students and parents.

The shift to remote learning may be understood through the framework of "flexible learning," as conceptualised by Jeff Moonen and Betty Collins (Moonen, 2001). According to Huang et al. (2020), flexible learning is characterized by (1) offering learners diverse pathways and choices, and (2) adopting a learner-centred, constructivist approach in which responsibility for learning shifts from the teacher to the student. It is thereto stated that flexible learning first of all "offers learners rich learning choices from multiple dimensions of study. Second, it applies a learner-centred constructivist approach, as indicated by a shift from the teacher taking on learning responsibilities to the learner taking them on. Therefore, flexible learning requires learners to be more skilled at self-regulation in terms of goal setting, self-monitoring, and making adjustments and instructors to promote active learning so that learning in such situations can be engaging and effective" (Huang et al, 2020). According to this study, the burden of success in remote schooling must fall on learners (students), not on the teacher. Consequently, the assessment should reflect how much effort students have put into their learning.

Within this conceptual framework, the burden of success in remote schooling rests largely on families (parents and guardians) or, even more specifically, on students alone rather than teachers. Consequently, assessment should reflect not merely compliance with centrally issued instructions but the degree to which students demonstrate responsibility, effort, and authentic engagement with the learning process during distance education.

Conclusion

This study has demonstrated that the assessment practices implemented in Kosovo during the COVID-19 pandemic were shaped more by centralised directives and crisis management than by pedagogical principles. In general, the impression is that remote teaching was challenging not only for teachers but also for the students and their families. Assessment during the COVID-19 pandemic in Kosovo was difficult and could not accurately measure students' learning. One of the teachers in the survey stated that she was not sure if they assessed all their students at the end of the school year, as they had to assess them only based on their homework. Another teacher stated that it was "obvious that homework was being shared among students". It is difficult to assess students from a distance because some copy their homework from others; they join the class and stay active, but they do not listen or answer voluntarily. Moreover, you immediately notice that they did not understand the topic because they were either sleeping or doing something else, another teacher implied. Therefore, while the Ministry of Education, Science, Technology, and Innovation acted swiftly to ensure continuity of instruction through remote platforms, the imposed assessment guidelines—particularly the expectation to avoid negative grades, maintain pre-existing scores, and pass all students—placed teachers in a position where their professional judgement and the validity of evaluation processes were significantly constrained. Evidence from interviews and survey data reveals that such directives not only conflicted with widely accepted standards of fair and reliable assessment (Black & Wiliam, 1998; Stiggins, 2005; Harlen, 2012) but also reduced the motivational value of grades by weakening the connection between effort, performance, and achievement.

The results show that remote teaching was challenging not only for teachers but also for students and families. In particular, it is therefore established that assessment during the Covid-19 pandemic in Kosovo has been difficult and has not been able to measure students' learning outcomes. The discrepancy between the polished image of remote teaching presented through televised lessons and the difficult realities experienced by teachers, students, and families further underscores the systemic challenges of emergency remote education. Limited technological resources, varying levels of digital literacy, and disparities in home support created inequitable learning conditions that assessment policies failed to adequately address, as theories of flexible and learner-centred education suggest (Moonen, 2001; Huang et al., 2020). Remote learning places greater responsibility on students for self-regulation, engagement, and persistence. Yet the grading policies during the

pandemic shifted accountability away from learners, resulting in assessments that neither differentiated achievement nor captured meaningful learning.

Asked what assessment was, one teacher stated that "assessment is the systematic collection of data, review and use of information about the educational program, in order to improve students' learning. "Knowing where they have done well and where they need to make great efforts", – implied another one.

Most of the teachers stated that they were not aware of any action plan for managing crises in education during the pandemic, and that the only official document produced for this purpose was the Ministry of Education's Instruction on Assessment of Students during the pandemic. There was an obvious fatigue felt during interviews with teachers. The majority of them considered the solution to saving the education system and the generation of students to be "getting back to school" or using only "formative assessment". One English teacher from a High School in Prizren stated in the Survey that formative assessment is better, as it requires continual monitoring of students' development and progress, rather than assessing their knowledge only at the end of the period or semester. She further maintained that "interacting more with students" is crucial to encouraging them to speak more, learn more, and get engaged in class, with the aim of learning and developing their skills and capacities in English. In other words, assessment for learning rather than assessment of learning would be the most appropriate approach, as also advised by the MESTI, which encourages them to learn more rather than assess what they have learned (MESTI, 2020).

The findings of this research, therefore, highlight a crucial tension between policy-driven crisis responses and pedagogical integrity. They demonstrate that while extraordinary circumstances necessitate flexibility, assessment must remain grounded in principles that uphold accuracy, fairness, and student growth. Looking forward, the education system in Kosovo would benefit from developing crisis-responsive assessment frameworks that balance empathy with professional standards and approach, support every teacher's professional autonomy, and preserve the motivational and instructional value of evaluation. Only through such measures can future disruptions – such as pandemic-related or other unknown force majeure - be navigated in ways that safeguard learning outcomes and educational equity for all students.

To conclude, as most respondents have stated, teachers are not challenged by the assessment of their students' learning; however, it is necessary to take all measures,

and therefore it is recommended to have action plans in place and to update them as society, technology, and infrastructure evolve. Moreover, it is recommended to establish a strategy with an action plan and a task force to ensure adequate preparation. Preparation can only take place after proper induction and training on the management of such similar situations because everyone should be ready for another wave of the pandemic or another year of online teaching, and that for only one reason - so that the education system does not fail.

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Nondirective Supervision and Teacher Performance in Public Primary Schools in Ibanda Municipality, Uganda

Abakunda Johnson, Kule Jerald, Kanyesigye Stella, Tumwesigye Boaz, Mugabe Alex, Mohamed Hussein Hirsi, Wabyanga Derrick

Abstract

Research shows that supervision enhances the performance of teachers in primary schools because it leads to effective teaching, which impacts the outcomes of students. However, there has been low performance among teachers in primary schools in Ibanda municipality despite recognising that nondirective supervision practices potentially influence the performance of teachers. Notwithstanding this problem, there has been limited research on nondirective supervision and teacher performance in the context of public primary schools in Ibanda municipality. Therefore, the purpose of this study was to investigate the connection between nondirective supervision and the job performance of teachers in public primary schools in Ibanda municipality. The study was mixed methods and found theoretical underpinning from the path-goal theory. Consequently, a self-administered questionnaire was used to collect quantitative data from 133 teachers, while head teachers, a municipal inspector of schools, and a municipal education officer were interviewed for qualitative insights. The researchers analysed qualitative data thematically, while quantitative data were analysed statistically using SPSS. Results indicate a significant negative but weak correlation of -0.29 between nondirective supervision and teachers' performance, meaning that when the level of nondirective supervision increases, the level of teachers' performance reduces. The findings offer context-specific insights regarding public primary schools in Ibanda municipality, and similar contexts elsewhere, as they can be used as benchmark opportunities in transferable situations. Most importantly, these findings are relevant to policymakers and educational leaders as they may inform educational policy reviews and improvements regarding teacher supervision and performance. Future researchers may explore the relationship between integrated supervision on performance or extend focus on rural contexts and private primary schools.

Keywords: nondirective supervision, teachers' performance, public primary schools, Ibanda municipality, Uganda, educational leadership

Introduction

Effective supervision of teachers has been found essential in improving educational outcomes in public primary schools since the quality of teaching significantly impacts the performance of pupils in these schools (Mujuni et al., 2022). Historically, education supervision has evolved from administrative inspections of the 17th century to more collaborative approaches in the contemporary era (Gordon, 2019). For instance, as part of early education supervision in early colonial New England, local people were involved in inspecting the work of teachers, yet later in the 19th century in Britain, school inspectors were introduced to oversee teaching quality (Darling-Hammond, 2010; Gordon, 2019; Marzano et al., 2011). This evolution implies that school administration practically prioritises teacher performance, accountability, and efficiency. Therefore, teacher performance remains a core area of focus for educational supervisors in public primary schools in Sub-Saharan Africa, and Uganda in particular (Abakunda et al., 2024; Ntege et al., 2023; Okia et al., 2021). However, research also shows that there is still space for creativity in supervision to address persistent challenges such as low teacher productivity. Lubwama et al. (2024) note that despite numerous supervisory interventions in public primary schools, challenges such as low teacher dedication and productivity have persisted.

In the context of Ibanda municipality, the performance of teachers in public primary schools remains low and below expectations despite the implementation of nondirective supervision practices that have been previously recognised by researchers as potentially supportive (Abakunda at al., 2024; Akanshemeza, 2018; Department of Education, 2024). For example, the 2024 Ibanda municipality inspection report indicates that only 60% of teachers prepared schemes of work, 40% made lesson plans, while only 20% made learning materials to use in their class. This situation is an example of poor performance of teachers, which is usually the reason behind the lower learning outcomes and poor results in primary leaving examinations.

Research suggests that supervision significantly influences the way teachers perform (Abakunda et al., 2024; Auma, 2015; Kule et al., 2023; Mushtaq et al., 2021; Namara & Kasaija, 2016; Okia et al., 2021; Valentine & Abraham, 2023). However, there are limited context-specific empirical studies on the relationship between nonsupervisory practices and the performance of teachers in public primary schools in Ibanda municipality. Most of the relevant studies focus on other forms of supervision other than nondirective, while others are done outside the context of the current study. This leaves much desired, and supports the current

context-specific study to investigate the nexus between nondirective supervision and teachers' performance.

Therefore, the current study investigated the relationship between nondirective supervision and the performance of teachers in public primary schools in Ibanda municipality. The study hypothesised that there is a significant relationship between nondirective supervision and performance of teachers in public primary schools in Ibanda municipality. However, the study also sought to explore the perspectives of head teachers and municipal education leaders on how nondirective supervision influences the performance of teachers. Under teacher performance, the researchers studied four constructs that include teacher motivation, satisfaction, commitment and productivity. By doing this, the study contributes new scientific knowledge in the area of educational leadership and teacher performance by offering local insights from public schools in Ibanda municipality. This is necessary for informing policies that may enhance educational leadership practices and the performance of teachers in Ibanda municipality and similar contexts elsewhere, as findings from this study are benchmark opportunities in similar or transferable settings. Additionally, the study offers an extension to the path-goal theory by discussing its application to nondirective supervision and teacher performance in public primary schools in Ibanda municipality.

Theoretical Background

The study was based on the guidance of the path-goal theory to understand the impact of nondirective supervision on the performance of teachers. This theory, which was introduced by Robert House in 1971 and later enhanced by House and Mitchel (1974), explains how leaders guide their subordinates to achieve the aims and objectives of their organisations. This model also suggests that effective supervisors help remove obstacles, clarify objectives, and provide the necessary support to motivate their teams to achieve performance-related goals (Evans, 1970; House & Mitchell, 1974; Martin, 2009; Northouse, 2022). This theory is directly applicable in the study since it provides a framework for investigating how nondirective head teachers might influence the performance of teachers by empowering them to control their performance. Researchers have used the path-goal theory in investigating how approaches of leaders enhance the motivation and performance of their staff (Pacia & Guevarra, 2023) and the role of educational management and leadership (Olowoselu et al., 2019). These studies emphasise that the theory has

the ability to provide relevant insights to help explore the impact of nondirective supervision on the performance of teachers. The current study, therefore, offers an extension to the path-goal theory by discussing its applicability in moderating the impact of nondirective supervision on teachers' performance in the context of public primary schools in Ibanda municipality. The theory can be applied to remove obstacles and empower teachers to achieve their performance goals more freely. Teachers can participate in shaping their goals with more autonomy so that they can own these goals, as it is important in improving performance. However, it is important to note that the path-goal theory also emphasises other leadership approaches such as directive, supportive, and achievement-oriented supervision, which may imply that head teachers in Ibanda municipality should not over-rely on one approach if they want to maximize results. They may find it helpful to integrate different supervisory approaches for better results.

Literature Review

Research on the impact of nondirective supervision on the performance of teachers reports varying results. Some researchers report mixed outcomes regarding nondirective supervision and performance, emphasising that the effectiveness of nondirective supervision depends on context, much as others praise nondirective supervision, stating that it enhances teacher independence and professional growth. For instance, Okia et al. (2021) state that nondirective supervision moderately improves the performance of teachers, yet Owan et al. (2023) indicate that nondirective supervision strongly enhances teacher effectiveness. Other studies also strongly link nondirective supervision to open communication, support, and performance (Altinok, 2024; Pacia & Guevarra, 2023). Therefore, there is still a need to re-examine nondirective supervision and its influence on teachers' performance to iron out such controversies.

Additionally, many Ugandan studies on supervision and performance have identified the lack of relevant skills by head teachers to enable them to provide effective guidance (Okia, 2022; Wekutile, 2019; Zikanga et al., 2021). For this reason, some scholars such as Okia (2022) suggest that combining directive and nondirective methods could offer a more balanced approach and address persistent challenges in the performance of teachers.

Insights from the reviewed studies reveal limited empirical inquiry on nondirective supervision and performance of teachers in the context of public primary schools

in Ibanda municipality. Many studies reviewed were either done outside this geographical context, focused on secondary schools, or were so general that they lacked context-specific insights about Ibanda (Okia et al., 2021; Owan et al., 2023; Zikanga et al., 2021). Regarding the methodology, some studies are purely quantitative, while others are only qualitative. Therefore, we found a need for a mixed methods study in Ibanda municipality as it would offer a comprehensive understanding of the relationship between the study's variables. Consequently, previous studies provide a strong foundation that enables the current study to narrow its focus but remain comprehensive.

Methodology

Research Paradigm

The study was based on pragmatism, which is a research philosophy that values practical applications of knowledge to solve problems. Therefore, pragmatism rejects the strictness of either quantitative research or qualitative research, and instead emphasises an approach that works best in practice. This made pragmatism the most appropriate paradigm to support our mixed methods study.

Research Approach

The researchers used a mixed methods approach since it facilitated the combination of both qualitative and quantitative methods. Therefore, both interviews and a self-administered questionnaire were used to collect data. The methods of analysis were both qualitative (thematic) and quantitative (statistical analysis using SPSS). This made the study comprehensive enough to offer a balanced and thorough understanding of the nexus between the variables studied.

Research Design

The research design was cross-sectional as it enabled the collection of data at a single point in time to capture a snapshot of the variables. The design aligned well with pragmatism and mixed methods because it enabled the integration of both qualitative and quantitative methods to provide thoroughness within the same timeframe.

Sampling

A sample of 147 respondents was drawn from a population of 251. The participants included teachers, head teachers, a municipal inspector of schools, and a municipal

education officer. The sample size for teachers was determined using Krejcie and Morgan's (1970) table of sample size determination and recruited using stratified random sampling. Besides, the head teachers were selected through convenience sampling, but their sample size was determined by the saturation principle. Finally, the municipal education inspectors and officials were recruited through purposive sampling. Only 22 public primary schools were studied out of the 42 in Ibanda municipality. These made over 50% and were representative enough of the municipal cells that had public primary schools. This is illustrated in Table 1 below:

Table 1

Population Distribution and Sampling

Category	Target Population	Sample Size	Sampling Technique
Head teachers	22	13	Convenience
Teachers	227	141	Stratified random
Municipal Education Officer	01	01	Purposive sampling
Municipal Inspector of Schools	01	01	Purposive sampling
Total	251	147	

Data Collection

Quantitative data were collected from teachers using a self-administered questionnaire. The questionnaire had three sections. Section A gathered background information on age, gender, qualifications, and experience in school. Section B gathered data on nondirective supervision and had 8 items, while Section C had 13 items gathering data about job performance. On the other hand, qualitative data were collected from the municipal inspector of schools, head teachers, and municipal education officers through interviews.

Data Analysis

Qualitative data from interviews were analysed thematically. The thematic analysis process began with familiarisation with the data, followed by coding, generating and reviewing themes and finally naming themes and reporting. Quantitative data from the questionnaires were analysed through SPSS using descriptive and

inferential statistics. Therefore, frequencies, percentages, means, and correlations were used to organise and interpret quantitative data.

Validity and Reliability

A validity test was performed to establish if the questionnaire items could measure the variables in the study. Researchers engaged experts to examine the questionnaire and identify relevant and irrelevant items, then suggest improvements. The content validity index (CVI) was then determined by dividing the number of relevant items by the number of all items. The calculated CVI was 0.80 which is above the recommended. Therefore, the questionnaire was regarded as valid for data collection.

On the other hand, reliability was tested through piloting the questionnaire among 10% of the teachers (14 teachers). The pilot results were analysed for reliability using SPSS version 27, and internal consistency was determined by Cronbach's alpha coefficient, a statistical measure. The coefficient value was 0.80, which is adequate for the questionnaire to be considered credible for the study.

Finally, for qualitative data, the researchers ensured trustworthiness through transparency, consistent questioning, and member checking. Besides, credibility was enhanced through rich descriptions, while dependability was ensured through systematic documentation and transferability through providing a detailed context to support meaningful interpretation.

Results

The findings of the study are presented in line with the purpose, hypothesis, and question investigated in the study. Therefore, both qualitative and quantitative findings are presented below.

Response Rate

The questionnaire response rate was very good at 94% because out of the 141 questionnaires distributed, 133 were returned. For interviews, out of the 22 head teachers that were scheduled to be interviewed, data saturation was achieved at 13 because themes started recurring and additional interviews yielded no new information. In addition to the head teachers, one municipal inspector of schools and a municipal education officer were interviewed, bringing the total of interviews to 15 (63%). The response rate is presented in Table 2 below.

Table 2

Response Rate

Instruments	Targeted	Actual	Response Rate
Interview	24	15	63%
Questionnaires	141	133	94%

The response rate was sufficient enough for the researchers to continue with data analysis, as advised by several researchers, such as Mellahi and Harris (2016), that a response rate of 50% and above is sufficient in humanities research.

Background Information

Background information on age, gender, highest level of qualification, and years spent in school was collected from teachers through a self-administered questionnaire. The results are summarised in Table 3 below:

Table 3

Background Information of Respondents

Item	Categories	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	78	59
	Female	55	41
	Total	133	100
Age group	Below 20 yrs	2	1.5
	20-30 yrs	63	47.4
	30-40yrs	31	23.4
	40-50yrs	19	14.2
	Above 50yrs	18	13.5
	Total	133	100
Highest level of education	Certificate	75	56.3
	Diploma	51	38.4
	Bachelors	5	4.0
	Masters	2	1.3
	Total	133	100

Years in school	1-5yrs	72	54.3
	6-10yrs	39	29.1
	11yrs+	22	16.6
	Total	133	100

Table 3 shows that respondents have diverse demographic characteristics and experiences. Therefore, the sample was diverse enough to offer credible, valuable, rich and generalisable insights about the study's purpose. All genders, age groups, official levels of qualification for primary school teachers, and various levels of experience were represented. For example, males were 78 (59%) while females were 55 (41%), showing fair representation of views from both genders. For the age group, as the majority (63 or 47.4%) were 20-30 years, all age groups were represented, connoting a mixture of maturity and youthfulness. These different age groups have different tastes and preferences when it comes to supervision and performance. Therefore, the representation of all groups ensured a balance of views. The respondents were also qualified enough to respond to the self-administered questionnaire. This could partly explain the high questionnaire response rate of 94%. Respondents had also spent sufficient time in their school to enable them to familiarize themselves with supervision, so they can give reliable information. However, there could also be gaps in advanced training or experience due to the predominance of young teachers and certificates. This could influence both supervisory practices and teacher performance.

Nondirective Supervision

The questionnaire had eight items measuring nondirective supervision on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from SD=Strongly Disagree to SA=Strongly Agree. Table 4 below presents the descriptive results of the nondirective supervision.

Table 4

Descriptive Statistics for Nondirective Supervision

Items measuring non-directive supervision		SD	D	NS	A	SA	Mean
My head teacher avoids deciding	F %	24 (18.0%)	38 (28.6%)	30 (22.6%)	25 (18.8%)	16 (12.0%)	2.78

My head teacher is unavailable when needed	F %	22 (16.5%)	35 (26.3%)	34 (25.6%)	27 (20.3%)	15 (11.3%)	2.83
My head teacher reacts to problems only if serious	F %	21 (15.8%)	31 (23.3%)	28 (21.1%)	35 (26.3%)	18 (13.5%)	2.98
My head teacher reacts to problems only if chronic	F %	26 (19.5%)	30 (22.6%)	29 (21.8%)	29 (21.8%)	19 (14.3%)	2.88
My head teacher reacts to failure	F %	19 (14.3%)	33 (24.8%)	27 (20.3%)	34 (25.6%)	20 (15.0%)	3.02
My head teacher delays responding to issues	F %	25 (18.8%)	32 (24.1%)	26 (19.5%)	30 (22.6%)	20 (15.0%)	2.91
My head teacher reacts only when the situation worsens	F %	23 (17.3%)	30 (22.6%)	31 (23.3%)	29 (21.8%)	20 (15.0%)	2.95
My head teacher avoids involvement	F %	27 (20.3%)	34 (25.6%)	28 (21.1%)	25 (18.8%)	19 (14.3%)	2.80

Results in Table 4 regarding the practice of nondirective supervision by head teachers in public primary schools in Ibanda municipality generally indicate that the majority of the respondents either disagreed or remained neutral (not sure), as responses look fairly balanced. On average, responses with "Disagree" and "Not Sure" frequently record higher percentages as responses on "Strongly Agree" record relatively lower percentages. This suggests that, much as nondirective supervisory practices exist, they are not dominant.

Mean scores range between 2.78 and 3.02, which indicates a moderate level of agreement with the statements related to nondirective supervisory practices. The most commonly observed practice is associated with item "My head teacher reacts to failure," which has the highest mean score (3.02). On the other hand, the lowest prevalent nondirective supervision behaviour is associated with item "My head teacher avoids deciding" which has the lowest mean score (2.78). However, most mean scores for most of the items are generally in the middle of the scale. This suggests that nondirective supervision is practiced but not dominantly. Therefore, nondirective supervision is moderately expressed in public primary schools in Ibanda Municipality.

Results were enhanced with findings from the interviews carried out, where thematic areas identified discouraged nondirective supervision. All the respondents interviewed agreed that they sparingly use nondirective supervision. Respondent B said, "I use nondirective supervision to motivate my staff. Many of them do not prefer direction all the time." However, Respondent A noted, "Much as nondirective supervision is preferred by my teachers, it does not bring about performance. When you avoid direct involvement, your teachers end up being lazy."

Respondent N said:

> When teachers come in to work for the school, they are given a copy of school rules and regulations. They are also expected to sign a contract which contains their job description and specifications. One key duty of management is to make sure that teachers are supervised to find out if he is doing his job well as specified in the contract. I don't encourage nondirective supervision as it doesn't cause performance, yet directive supervision also discourages performance. I therefore prefer collaborative supervision.

These views support the descriptive results, which showed that nondirective supervision in the schools was moderately practiced, as it was not found dominant. Findings from interviews add an interesting element of performance, as most respondents interviewed were using nondirective supervision sparingly, citing that the approach does not encourage performance.

Job Performance of Teachers

Job performance of teachers in public primary schools in Ibanda municipality was studied using 13 items that were rated on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from Strongly Disagree (SD) to Strongly Agree (SA). The table below summarises the descriptive statistics drawn from the results on this variable.

Table 5

Descriptive Statistics for Teacher Job Performance

Items measuring job performance of teachers		SD	D	NS	A	SA	Mean
I am planning on working for another school within a period of three years	F	28	9	53	19	24	3.00
	%	20.6%	7.5%	40.2%	14.0%	17.7%	
Within this school, my work gives me satisfaction	F	10	4	61	26	32	3.50
	%	7.5%	2.8%	45.8%	19.6%	24.3%	

If I wanted to do another job, I would look first at the possibilities within this school	F %	5 3.7%	16 12.1%	45 33.6%	41 30.8%	24 18.7%	3.49
I maintain accurate records of my learners' progress and use them to improve my performance	F %	8 6.0%	16 12.0%	37 27.8%	41 30.8%	31 23.4%	3.55
I create an inclusive and conducive environment for effective teaching and learning	F %	10 7.5%	10 7.5%	35 26.4%	39 29.3%	39 29.3%	3.63
I see a future for myself within this school	F %	7 5.6%	12 9.3%	60 44.9%	32 24.3%	18 14.0%	3.32
It does not matter if I am working for this school or another, as long as I have work	F %	9 6.5%	17 13.1%	36 27.1%	40 29.9%	28 21.5%	3.48
I actively contribute to school improvement projects like extracurricular activities	F %	7 5.6%	17 13%	36 27.2%	41 30.8%	32 23.4%	3.55
If I could start over again, I would choose to work for another school	F %	3 1.9%	5 3.7%	54 41.2%	50 37.3%	21 15.9%	3.61
If I received an attractive job offer from another school, I would take the job	F %	5 3.7%	9 6.5%	57 43.0%	38 29.0%	24 17.8%	3.50
I love working for this school and I always prepare teaching/learning materials like lesson plans	F %	11 8.4%	9 6.5%	35 26.2%	40 29.9%	38 29.0%	3.63
I have checked out a job in another school previously	F %	19 14.0%	10 7.5%	32 24.3%	41 30.8%	31 23.4%	3.42
The work I am doing is very important to me so I always provide feedback to my students to improve their learning outcomes	F %	4 2.7%	6 4.7%	20 15.0%	15 11.2%	88 66.4%	3.34

Table 5 shows that most teachers expressed moderate to high levels of agreement on most items. Much as percentage distributions show that most respondents were satisfied and dedicated to their work, there is openness to change in the workplace. This is indicated by 24.3% respondents who strongly agree with the statement "Within this school, my work gives me satisfaction," while 40.2% were unsure regarding the item "I am planning on working for another school within a period of three years,"and 30.8% had previously explored jobs in other schools. However, it is important to note that many respondents show strong involvement in professional responsibilities, which indicates good levels of job performance. For example, 66.4% strongly agree that they provide feedback to improve student outcomes, 58.9% generally agree that they always prepare teaching materials. Another area to note is the big number of respondents who are not sure about performance of their responsibilities. For example, 27.8 were not sure about maintaining records, while 26.4 were not sure about creating conducive and inclusive learning environments.

Regarding mean scores, this range is between 3.00 and 3.63, which suggests that there was moderate to high job performance. Highest means were seen in items like preparing lesson materials and creating a conducive teaching environment (3.63), while the lowest mean reflected uncertainty about remaining in the current school (3.00), which indicates mixed long-term commitment.

In relation to interviews with head teachers and municipal education officials, there was a general consensus that teacher performance was not so bad, save for some stubborn teachers who were not yielding to the demands of their responsibilities. They were asked to rate the job performance of instructors in their school over the years, and various associated replies were provided, indicating that teachers in their schools had a high degree of dedication, satisfaction, motivation, and performance.

For example, Respondent A said:

> As school administrators, we ensure that teachers are encouraged to speak out about the issues they face in order to become more stable in the workplace. We occasionally consult with instructors to determine their contentment with the working environment under which they function. With the exception of a few teachers, most teachers report being satisfied with their working conditions. However, we are making an effort to communicate with them and ensure that their requirements are met. This will help us when it comes to their roles. When we reach out to them in our supervision schedules, they will do what we want them to do, or what the profession demands that they do. Nevertheless, there are a few teachers who insist and ignore their roles and duties and perform poorly, despite our efforts to motivate them to work and supervise them

> well so that they meet their performance expectations. However, I see that whenever we step up supervision, they change and work.

However, this is inconsistent with studies and reports that have previously alluded to low levels of teacher performance in the municipality, such as Abakunda et al. (2024), Akanshemeza (2018), and some reports from the Department of Education of the municipality.

Correlation Analysis

The research hypothesis stating that there is a significant relationship between nondirective supervision and the performance of teachers in public primary schools in Ibanda municipality was tested through correlation analysis. The results of the correlation test are presented in Table 6 below.

Table 6

Correlation Analysis

	Job performance of teachers	Non-directive supervisory practices
Job performance of teachers	1	- 0.29**
Non-directive supervisory practices	- 0.29**	1

Table 6 reveals that there is a negative relationship between nondirective supervision and job performance. However, it is also indicated that, although it is a statistically significant relationship, it is weak as indicated by a correlation coefficient of -0.29**. This means that an increase in nondirective supervisory practices will reduce the job performance of teachers. The double asterisks (**) indicating the significance of the correlation imply that the relationship is not due to random chance. Therefore, this reinforces the importance of supervision in influencing educational outcomes, much as the negative correlation indicates that nondirective supervisory practices may not be conducive to improving the performance of teachers. This is in agreement with findings from interviews where all respondents were in agreement that, although nondirective supervision is sometimes practiced, it does little to improve the performance of teachers.

Discussion

The main purpose of the study was to establish the relationship between nondirective supervision and the performance of teachers in public primary schools in Ibanda municipality. In order to be thorough and comprehensive, the researchers also gathered perspectives of head teachers and municipal educational officials about how nondirective supervision influences the performance of teachers. Results indicate that there is a significant but weak negative relationship of -0.29** between nondirective supervision and teacher performance in public primary schools in Ibanda municipality hence accepting the research hypothesis. This means that when head teachers practice more nondirective supervision, the performance of teachers reduces because the two variables move in different directions. The correlation results are consistent with the descriptive results for both nondirective supervision and teacher performance. For instance, the nondirective supervision mean scores that range from 2.78 to 3.02 generally indicate that there was neutral to moderate disagreement with the statements about nondirective supervision. This shows that nondirective supervision is not dominant much as it is practiced. This weak agreement aligns with the negative correlation because it shows that nondirective supervision is not sufficient enough to enhance teacher performance. On the other hand, the mean scores for teacher performance ranging from 3.00 to 3.63 suggest that there are moderate to high performance levels.

The quantitative results are further strengthened by qualitative findings from interviews, as many interviewees generally agreed that nondirective supervision is not a major style they rely on most of the time, as it may encourage laziness and poor performance. Much as interviewees said they use the nondirective approach to empower teachers and make them more involved in their own affairs, it is done sparingly, as many teachers take advantage of this approach to dodge work. This elaborates on the negative relationship between nondirective supervision and teacher performance, which the correlation results produced.

Much as these results are in agreement with some earlier studies, they diverge from others. For example, they diverge from Okia et al. (2021), who posit that nondirective supervision enhances the effectiveness of teachers. On the other hand, the findings align with studies by Hoque et al. (2022) and McGhee and Stark (2021), who suggest that nondirective supervision is negatively associated with the performance of teachers. Therefore, the current study adds to the discussions of earlier studies by providing context-specific evidence from public primary schools in Ibanda municipality.

The results also streamline the application of the path-goal theory in enhancing teacher performance in the context of Ibanda municipality public primary schools. Since the path-goal theory emphasises other approaches such as directive, supportive, and achievement-oriented supervision, this may imply that there should be a balanced application of supervisory approaches for better results. This is because the current study reveals that nondirective supervision alone is negatively associated with performance. Therefore, other supervisory approaches may be needed to enhance teacher performance.

However, the researchers recognise that there are some limitations regarding the current study, especially relating to context. The study was limited to public primary schools in Ibanda municipality. The study also did not extend to other supervision styles as it focused on only nondirective supervision. Therefore, future studies may explore areas outside the context of this study such as private schools or other geographical areas within Uganda. Besides, other studies can compare private and public schools or combine both directive and nondirective supervisory practices.

Conclusion

This study reveals that there is a statistically significant but weak relationship between nondirective supervision and the performance of teachers. These findings imply that nondirective supervision is not sufficient to solve the poor teacher performance in public primary schools in Ibanda municipality, hence calling for an integrated approach in supervision. Therefore, supervisors such as education officials and head teachers need to employ a variety of supervisory practices to create balance and maximise teacher performance. The study is unique as it provides context-specific mixed methods insights on nondirective supervision and performance of teachers in Ibanda municipality. This presents a strong foundation necessary for refining educational policies and supervisory practices both in Ibanda municipality and similar contexts elsewhere because the findings offer a good benchmark opportunity for improvement in educational leadership and teacher performance. Results for this study are a wake-up call for policymakers and other stakeholders in education, such as school leaders and administrators, to reconsider supervision approaches so as to take a more collaborative and integrated framework in supervision for better results. This will ensure alignment of supervision with the current demands of the modern education system. We reiterate that future studies should focus on integrated supervision or open contexts in other areas.

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An Analysis of Phonetic and Phonological Content in English Curricula for High Schools in North Macedonia

Marija Stevkovska

Abstract

In today's world of global communication through English as a Lingua Franca, raising EFL learners' awareness of English phonological features is essential for enhancing students' intelligibility. Sound articulation and prosody are key elements that support effective interaction without requiring native-like pronunciation. Phonological awareness enhances EFL learners' listening, speaking, and communicative skills. This study examines the incorporation of phonetics and phonology content in English curricula for high schools in North Macedonia, their alignment with CEFR scale for phonological control, and congruence with the English coursebooks concerning phonological awareness and pronunciation exercises. While the national curricula emphasize all four language skills, phonology remains insufficiently addressed. The qualitative research design through document and content analysis of national curricula and approved coursebooks reveals varying degrees of phonology-related exercises, highlighting a disconnect between curricula and teaching materials. The study's findings indicate the need for curriculum developers and policymakers to integrate explicit phonological content and align national curricula with contemporary linguistic research.

Keywords: Phonetics, Phonology, English national curriculum, CEFR, coursebooks

Introduction

In a world where English is increasingly used as a global lingua franca, pronunciation remains one of the key features of successful communication. English is spoken by a quarter of the world population, approximately 2 billion people, making it a truly universal language (British Council, 2013; Crystal, 2008). The significance of English as a Lingua Franca is further underscored by the fact that approximately 80% of all conversations in English occur between non-native speakers (Timmis, 2002). It is important to note that pronunciation should not be conflated with native-like speech or accent. In a world of many Englishes, it is impossible to define a single "correct" pronunciation (Crystal, 2003). Therefore, pronunciation, in the context of teaching English as a foreign language, refers primarily to clear and comprehensible articulation of the English sound system, rather than the attainment of native-like pronunciation (Jeong et al., 2022). Foreign accents often result from L1 transfer and have a minimal effect on intelligibility (Council of Europe 2018, p.136).

In the context of North Macedonia, English plays a vital role in international communication. This role is further reinforced by the widespread presence of English in the media, such as television, radio, and the internet. Given the fact that English is taught as a compulsory subject in primary and secondary schools, it is crucial to consider how and whether English phonetics and phonology are included in the national curricula for English.

There is a lack of research on how national curricula for English as a foreign language integrate crucial aspects of English phonetics and phonology explicitly and whether they align with both the aims of the coursebooks and the CEFR in North Macedonia.

The study has four aims:

1. to investigate if and how phonetics and phonology are included in the North Macedonian national curricula for English in high schools;
2. to analyze the phonetic and phonological content and exercises in the English coursebooks used across high schools in North Macedonia;
3. to examine the phonetics- and phonology-related goals of the CEFR; and
4. to assess the extent to which the national curricula align with the coursebooks and the CEFR to identify potential congruencies and differences.

The main hypothesis is that there is little alignment between the national curricula for English taught in high schools and a) the sections in the English coursebooks and b) the CEFR referring to developing students' pronunciation, listening, and communication competence.

Document and content analysis of the curricula, the coursebooks, and the CEFR is used to conduct the analysis and make the comparison.

The results of the study will contribute to existing research by providing an evidence-based analysis of how English phonetics and phonology are taught in English classes in high schools in North Macedonia. The findings will offer insight into the local context and the degree of alignment with international guidelines on teaching pronunciation of English sounds. The analysis will also support teachers in improving their students' pronunciation, speaking and listening skills so that they can be better understood and communicate more effectively when using English as a Lingua Franca worldwide.

Literature Review

Roach (2009) defines phonetics as the study of the actual, i.e., physical sounds humans produce across languages. It consists of articulatory phonetics (how sounds are actually produced by speech organs), acoustic phonetics (properties of sound waves), and auditory phonetics (how sounds are perceived by the listener). Phonology, on the other hand, is 'the study of the sound patterns within a particular language' (Rogerson-Revell, 2011, p.12). While phonetics focuses on the segmental features such as specific sounds (phonemes), phonology studies the suprasegmental properties of speech that include larger units such as syllables, words, and phrases. These consist of the following features - stress, intonation, pitch, rhythm, and length, all of which add to the melody and prosody of speech rather than focusing on individual phonemes.

Raising students' awareness of the importance of the phonological features of English is crucial for three major reasons. Firstly, knowledge of English phonetics and phonology enables accurate and intelligible communication among EFL speakers from diverse linguistic backgrounds. According to Deterding (2013), errors in pronunciation are one of the main causes of miscommunication in English as a Lingua Franca (ELF); therefore, teachers should focus on the essential elements of English pronunciation as described in the Lingua Franca Core (Jenkins, 2000). Jenkins (2000) argues that not all traditional native English pronunciation features

are essential for mutual intelligibility among non-native speakers of English. In fact, many of them can be considered acceptable variations in the speakers' interlanguage rather than errors. Walker (2022) summarizes four key areas in Jenkins' Lingua Franca Core: clear pronunciation of most consonant sounds; proper articulation of consonant clusters; vowel length distinctions, and nuclear (sentence) stress placement. Piccardo (2016) narrows these to three: articulation, prosody, and accentedness.

Secondly, phonological awareness improves EFL learners' listening, speaking, and communicative skills in a global English context. Non-native speakers of English can decode, produce, and manipulate English sounds more effectively if they are familiar with the English sound system. This is particularly important since learners typically communicate with speakers of varied accents, be they native or non-native speakers. Instruction that emphasizes phonological features like stress, intonation, and sounds typical of English supports intelligibility, thus promoting successful communication instead of favouring imitation of native-like accent (Jenkins, 2000; Newbold, 2021).

Finally, teaching these aspects of the English phonetic and phonological system fosters self-monitoring, and it also helps students become more confident and effective ELF users. Several studies have shown that phonological awareness instruction increases students' motivation to speak since it has a positive effect on students' pronunciation, leading to clearer articulation of phonemes, more accurate stress placement, and better intonation (Alghazo et al., 2023; Wardana et al., 2022, Derwing, 2017).

The Bureau for Development of Education (BDE) is the unit in the Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of North Macedonia that is responsible for preparing the national curricula for all courses taught in primary and secondary schools in the country. English as a foreign language is introduced as a mandatory subject starting in grade 1 of primary school and is taught throughout all nine years of primary education, followed by an additional 4 years of high school education. Since there is a lack of goals related to developing phonetic and phonological awareness in the national curricula for English in primary schools, the study focuses solely on English curricula for secondary (gymnasium) education with a duration of four years. These curricula are aligned with the language proficiency levels defined in the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages. Specifically, after the first year, students should attain A2+ level, followed by B1 in the second year, B1+ in the third, and finally B2 in their fourth and final year.

The curricula incorporate all four language skills (listening, speaking, reading, and writing), as well as grammar and vocabulary. Apart from the curriculum for the first year, where language skills are categorized as language functions, lexical sets, and grammatical structures, the curricula for the second, third, and fourth year divide skills in line with the CEFR (2001). However, the phonology component, which was added to the updated and extended illustrative descriptors in the 2018 edition of the CEFR, is not included in any of the current curricula (CEFR, 2018, p.47). Namely, since the phonology scale was the least developed, and it was implied that the norm was that of a native speaker, a new scale for phonological control was developed. The criteria included overall phonological control, sound articulation, and prosodic features (CEFR, 2018, p.136). The update focuses on intelligibility, which is in line with current research on the Lingua Franca Core, as mentioned above (Newbold, 2021; Piccardo, 2016; Jenkins, 2000). This is especially relevant in the context of preparing descriptors to build on plurilingual and pluricultural repertoires.

Concerning the course books approved by the Ministry of Education and Science of North Macedonia, schools could choose several books by different publishers: *Close-Up, Focus*, and *Think*. Schools typically use course books from the same series in the first and second years and different books in the third and fourth years. In July 2025, the Ministry approved the use of the *Get Involved* series (covering A2+ to B2 levels) in all secondary schools in the country. In contrast to the insufficient emphasis on phonetic and phonological skills in the national curricula, the analyzed course books contain exercises aimed at raising students' awareness of their phonological control of the English sound system to varying degrees. These types of exercises include listening activities, pronunciation drills, and other types of exercises that foster phonological awareness of English phonemes, stress, and intonation patterns. A detailed analysis and comparison of the content related to English phonetics and phonology is presented in the *Results* chapter. There is an obvious discrepancy between the curricula on one side and the CEFR new descriptors from 2018 and the course books on the other. The curricula have not been updated to reflect the latest trends in teaching aspects of English phonology to EFL learners.

The study aims to offer an understanding of the extent to which phonetic and phonological awareness is incorporated into the national curricula, specifically within the North Macedonian context. It also examines the lack of alignment of curricular aims with coursebook content in phonetics and phonology, as well as the new descriptors

for phonological control in the CEFR. This should increase the awareness of relevant authorities and teachers about the importance of incorporating phonetics and phonology content into English national curricula in North Macedonia, which would ultimately lead to improving students' speaking and communication skills.

Methods

The study adopted a qualitative research design utilizing content analysis to examine relevant documents and content. This method was used due to its suitability for a) exploring extensive textual data within educational materials, and b) employing analytical strategies that emphasize meaning, context, and recurrent themes rather than mere frequency counts. Content analysis is a systematic way to make inferences from texts based on the context of the content (Krippendorff, 2019). Its benefits include a nuanced interpretation of large volumes of data, as well as improved reliability and validity of research findings through transparent coding and systematic procedures.

The following data sources were analyzed:

- the national curricula for English covering first to fourth year in high schools in North Macedonia, prepared by the BDE and available on the website of bro.gov.mk, dated 28 July 2025
- four EFL course books, including *Close-up A2, Close-up B1, Focus 1 (2nd ed.), Focus 2, Focus 3 (2nd ed.), Focus 4, Think level 1 student's book (2nd ed.), Think level 2 student's book (2nd ed.), Think level 3 student's book (2nd ed.), Think level 4 student's book (2nd ed.), Get involved! A2+ student's book, Get involved! B1 student's book, Get involved! B1+ student's book, Get involved! B2+ student's book,* and the CEFR for Languages (2018).

The content analysis was conducted using several coding categories related to phonetics and phonology, including the criteria for phonological control as defined in the new CEFR Illustrative Descriptor Scales – overall phonological control, sound articulation, and prosodic features (CEFR, 2018, p. 136). A comparison was made between the criteria in the curricula and the CEFR. Next, the explicitness, depth, and variety of phonetics and phonology content in the national curricula and the course books were analyzed. Finally, the alignment concerning coverage depth, sequencing, and instructional approach between curriculum objectives and learning outcomes, and coursebook exercises was examined.

The analysis procedure consisted of three steps:

- *Step 1*: Systematic extraction of relevant curriculum statements and goals mentioning phonetics and phonology as shown in Table 1 below.
- *Step 2*: Cataloguing phonetics/phonology-related content and exercises in the coursebooks, as Table 2 below indicates.
- *Step 3*: Comparing findings to identify matches, gaps, or mismatches.

This rigorous qualitative content analysis provided a nuanced understanding of the phonetic and phonological emphasis in English language education across secondary schools in North Macedonia.

Validity and Reliability of the Study Results

To ensure the validity and reliability of the findings, several rigorous strategies within the qualitative content analysis framework were employed. First, established standards such as the CEFR Illustrative Descriptor Scales for phonological control were consistently applied to minimize bias. Next, reliability was enhanced through detailed documentation of the coding process, which enabled reproducibility and ensured transparency. Triangulation was achieved using three different data sources—the national curricula, multiple EFL coursebooks, and the CEFR. This provided cross-verification and a more comprehensive understanding of the findings. Finally, step-by-step procedures for data extraction, cataloguing, and comparison ensured consistency in the interpretation of the true nature of phonetic and phonological content in North Macedonian English curricula for secondary schools.

Results

The study focuses on phonetics and phonology content in the national curricula for English as the first compulsory foreign language in high schools in North Macedonia. Primary school national curricula for English are not included in the study, as they do not contain a language skills division; listening skills are mentioned only in grades 7, 8, and 9, with no reference to phonetic- or phonology-related content.

The results of the content analysis are shown in Table 1 below.

Table 1:

Curriculum statements and goals mentioning phonetics and phonology in national English curricula for high schools in North Macedonia

Year	overall phonological control	sound articulation	prosodic features
First year (A2+ level)	/	/	/
Second year (B1 level)	Aim: to be able to interact successfully in simple oral communication with correct pronunciation	/	- Can accurately place stress on both basic and derived words. - Can derive nouns from verbs and vice versa by appropriately shifting stress. - Can use rising and falling intonation patterns with precision. - Can produce sentences where stress placement clearly determines meaning.
Third year (B1+ level)	Aim: to be able to interact successfully in simple oral communication with correct pronunciation	/	-Can accurately stress compound nouns and adjectives. -Can correctly use intonation patterns in interrogative, imperative, and declarative sentences to convey meaning.
Fourth year (B2 level)	Aim: to be able to interact successfully in oral communication with correct pronunciation	/	- Can accurately place stress on compound words - Can correctly use intonation patterns in interrogative, imperative, and declarative sentences, and in requests.

The first-year curriculum was prepared in 2025. As Table 1 shows, it does not contain any content related to phonetics and phonology, neither as aims nor as can-do statements. It is important to note that although the English curriculum for the first year is the most recent one, written and uploaded on the BDE's website in 2025, the CEFR Companion volume with the new descriptors (including the phonological control) from 2018 has not been taken into consideration.

The curriculum for the second year that can be found on the BDE's website was written in 2015. The results of the analysis of the second-year curriculum show that there is a division of language into 8 components: lexical units, grammar, functional language, listening comprehension, speaking (both spoken production and spoken interaction), reading comprehension, writing, and culture. Regarding the activities and methods, teachers are provided with a list of activities such as listening and repeating sentences, reading aloud, impromptu speech, describing pictures, drama activities like roleplays and simulations, interviews, surveys, and discussions.

The English curriculum for the third year was designed in 2016. As with the second year, the third-year curriculum is organized according to the 8 components. The same methods and activities are suggested as in the second year, with an additional activity of comparing and identifying the differences in intonation between English and students' mother tongue.

The latest uploaded version of the fourth-year English curriculum was written in 2017, and it follows the same pattern as the curricula for the second and third years. The aims and prosodic features are the same as those for the previous two years. The recommended methods and activities resemble the ones in the second-year curriculum.

Although the foundation of the national curricula across all four years is the CEFR, the changes in the CEFR from 2018 are not fully reflected in any of the curricula.

Four EFL coursebooks approved by the Ministry of Education were analyzed in terms of phonetics/phonology-related content and exercises. Until the academic year of 2024-2025, schools could choose one or more books from the coursebooks recommended by the Ministry: the *Close-up*, *Focus* and *Think* series. As of 2025-2026, the *Get Involved!* The series will be used in all high schools across the country. The curricula analyzed in this study had been written before this series was approved. The *Get Involved!* coursebooks are included in the analysis to provide future perspectives for the officials from the BDE who prepare the English curricula and

to motivate them to update the curricula in line with the new coursebooks and novelties in the CEFR for languages, specifically the descriptors in the new scale for phonological control.

Table 2 shows the analysis of the phonetics/phonology content and exercises across the four English coursebooks approved by the Ministry.

Table 2:

Phonetics/phonology-related content and exercises in the English coursebooks

Coursebook	Overall phonological control section	Sound articulation	Prosodic features	Exercises
Close-up A2 (used in the first year)	No explicit reference to phonetics and phonology	/	/	/
Close-up B1 (used in the second year)	No explicit reference to phonetics and phonology	/	/	/
Focus 1 (used in the first year)	Phonological control is included in the listening skills section under the term *Pronunciation focus*.	- the letter c - silent letters - numbers - /θ/ and /ð/ - /iː/ and /ɪ/ - the letter a -the letter o	/	yes
Focus 2 (used in the second year)	Phonological control is included in the listening skills section under the term *Pronunciation focus*.	- long vowel sounds - large numbers - silent letters - diphthongs	Word stress in particular lexical sets (personality adjectives, scientists, countries and nationalities, stress in job names	yes

Focus 3 (used in the third year)	Phonological control is included in the listening skills section under the term *Pronunciation focus*.	-numbers - long vowel sounds - vowel sounds	word stress in compounds, Word stress in particular lexical sets	yes
Focus 4 (used in the fourth year)	Phonological control is included in the listening skills section under the term *Pronunciation focus*.	-word families -verbs ending in *-ise* -sounds and spelling –consonants -long and short vowel sounds -vowel and consonant minimal pairs	Sentence stress – future question forms, Word pairs – nouns and verbs; Word stress, Word stress in four-syllable words, word stress in word families	yes
Think level 1	Phonological control is included in the pronunciation section.	- /s/, /z/, and /ɪz/ - contractions - /iː/ and /ɪ/ - er /ə/ at the end of words - /d/, /t/, and /ɪd/ - vowel sounds /uː/ and /ʊ/ - strong and weak forms of *was* and *were* - /ɪ/ and /aɪ/ - voiced /ð/ and unvoiced /θ/ consonants -the h consonant	-Stressed syllables in words - sentence stress	yes

Think level 2	Phonological control is included in the pronunciation section.	-words ending in /ə/ - the short /ʌ/ vowel sound -/iː/ and /ɪ/ - /f/, /v/, and /b/ consonant sounds - the /juː/ sound - /tʃ/ and /dʒ/ - silent consonants	- Intonation and sentence stress - word stress - intonation of question tags - intonation: rude or polite	yes
Think level 3	Phonological control is included in the pronunciation section.	- initial consonant clusters with /s/ - strong and weak forms: /ɒv/ and /əv/ - the schwa /ə/ in word endings - the /ʒ/ phoneme - short and long vowels sounds: /ɪ/ -/iː/, and /ɒ/ - /əʊ/ - strong and weak forms" /tuː/ and /tə/ -different pronunciations of *ea*	- consonant-vowel word linking - intonation: inviting, accepting, and refusing invitation -intonation: expressing surprise - moving word stress	yes

Think level 4	Phonological control is included in the pronunciation section.	-diphthongs: alternative spellings - pronouncing words with *gh* - the schwa /ə/ sound - weak forms with conditionals	- phrasal verbs stress - adding emphasis - linking words with /dʒ/ and /tʃ - intonation: encouraging someone - linking: intrusive /w/ and /j/ - linking: omission of the /h/ sound - stress on modal verbs for speculation - linking: intrusive /r/	yes
Get Involved! A2+	There is a section: pronunciation:,	- silent letters - do you and /dju/ - /iː/ and /ɪ/ - can - /n/ and /ŋ/ - past simple endings /d/, /t/, and /id/ - /ə/ -will		yes

Get Involved! B1		-ed endings -recognizing contractions - /ɔ:/ and /ɒ/ - diphthongs - weak forms: /ə/ with *was* and *were*	- intonation in reported speech - sentence stress	yes
Get Involved! B1+		-words starting in s+consonant - /w/ and /h/ - weak forms with past perfect - /g/ and /dʒ/ -weak forms with *have to* - /ʃən/ - /e/, /iː/, and /eɪ/ - /θ/ and /ð/	- stress in question tags - word stress with phrasal verbs - word stress in longer words - intonation in conditional sentences - intonation in reported questions	yes
Get Involved! B2		- /h/, homophones - /**æ**/, /ɑː/ and /eɪ/ - /b/ and /v/ - /ʃ/ and /tʃ/	- word stress: nouns and verbs, -connected speech: word linking - sentence stress in conditionals - word stress: expressions with make and do - intonation when interrupting	yes

As the table shows, all coursebooks, except *Close-up A2* and *Close-up B1,* contain similar phonetics and phonology-related content and exercises. This content is included under different sections, labeled as *Listening skills: Pronunciation focus* in the *Focus* series, and *Pronunciation* in the *Think* and *Get Involved!* coursebooks. Overall phonological control is not explicitly defined, but the material refers to sound articulation and prosodic features, without a specific division under separate headings. For the purposes of this analysis, the author categorized the content as either sound articulation or prosodic features. All course books, except *Close-up*, have exercises related to the content.

The 2018 updated CEFR, along with its Companion volume containing new descriptors, was analyzed because the national English curricula for years 1 to 4 are designed in alignment with the CEFR, as stated in each curriculum. However, the results reveal discrepancies between the CEFR's new scale for phonological control and the curricula. Namely, sound articulation is not included among the aims of any of the curricula. In contrast, prosodic features such as word and sentence stress and intonation patterns are part of both the curricula and the 2018 version of the CEFR.

A similar mismatch is evident between the curricula and the coursebooks. Apart from *Close-up A2* and *Close-up B1,* all the other books include sound articulation, which is absent from the national curricula.

Discussion

The results of the content analysis of the national English curricula show that phonetic and phonological aspects are neither explicitly nor comprehensively incorporated into North Macedonia's national English curricula. Aspects like phonemic awareness, pronunciation accuracy, and phonological rules are not clearly defined and emphasized. Specifically, the curriculum for the first year contains no aims related to phonetics and phonology, despite the fact that it was prepared in 2025, which is 7 years after the CEFR had been updated. The content for years 2 to 4 refers only to prosodic features, while sound articulation is not addressed. Furthermore, the curricula do not include aims such as enhancing overall phonological control or conducting contrastive analysis with Macedonian phonology, both of which could help students improve their pronunciation and intelligibility.

The analysis of the coursebooks reveals that most of the books contain phonetic and phonological content and exercises. Regarding sound articulation, the

coursebooks for the first year include different English sounds, with *Think level 1* covering more sounds than *Focus 1* and *Get Involved! A2+*. Diphthongs are added in the second year (in *Focus 2* and *Get Involved! B1*), while in the third-year course books, the repertoire of sounds is broadened, except in *Focus 3*, where the focus is only on certain long and short vowels. The books for the fourth year further broaden the phonemes, including strong and weak forms of certain verbs, homophones, and minimal pairs.

Prosodic features are covered in all coursebooks for years 1 to 4, except *Focus 1*, where the emphasis is only on sound articulation. In *Focus 2-4*, word stress—particularly in specific lexical sets and compounds —is practised, but there are no exercises on different intonation patterns or sentence stress. The *Think Level 1-4* series begins with word and sentence stress in the first level, continues with various intonation patterns in levels 2 and 3, and ends with phonological processes in connected speech, such as intrusion, in the fourth and final level. The *Get Involved!* series introduces prosodic features starting from the second-year coursebook and follows a similar progression in the third- and fourth-year books.

To summarize, the coursebooks fully support the curriculum's aims regarding the prosodic features and offer relevant exercises. However, they also provide extensive content on sound articulation and appropriate activities, which are not listed among the curriculum's aims. The sound articulation criterion was introduced in the new CEFR 2018 scale on phonological control. All coursebooks, except *Close-up A2* and *Close-up* B1, align with the latest changes in the CEFR for Languages and address most Macedonian learners' needs. Therefore, the curricula should be revised and updated to reflect CEFR trends and to raise students' awareness of the correct pronunciation of certain sounds that are typical of English but do not exist in Macedonian.

The main hypothesis is partially confirmed, as the content analysis indicates a partial alignment between the national English curricula for high schools, the English coursebooks, and the updated 2018 version of the CEFR in terms of phonological control. Prosodic features are emphasized across all three data sources, except for first-year students, but sound articulation, which is present in the coursebooks and the CEFR, is not addressed in the curricula.

The national curricula should be improved to better integrate phonetics and phonology, which would have a positive impact on learners' phonological competence and on teaching practices. With clearer curriculum guidelines, more structured and

varied phonological exercises, and the inclusion of cross-linguistic awareness, the textbooks, which already have more phonetics and phonology content than the existing curricula, would support the curricula's aims more efficiently. The content scope of the official curricula should be widened to cover both segmental (phonemes and minimal pairs) and suprasegmental phonological features (stress, rhythm, intonation, and connected speech processes such as elision, intrusion, assimilation, and linking). These features are included to varying degrees in the coursebooks, as Table 2 indicates. It is not necessary to include theory and transcription using the International Phonetic Alphabet. Instead, practice should be emphasized through applied activities. Additionally, L1-L2 contrasts (L1-L2 interference and transfer) should be included in the curricula, particularly in connected speech, which is what students find most difficult to understand. Developing students' speaking and listening skills begins with increasing the number of listening discrimination exercises. This allows students to initially focus on receptive (listening skills) through sound recognition and distinction, which can then be followed by pronunciation practice. This approach helps students improve their productive (speaking) skills by engaging in activities focused on articulation, intonation, rhythm and stress.

Concerning the pedagogical approach and methodology, the curricula provide teachers with the same methods and activities across all four years. These approaches should be more specific and aligned with the latest developments in AI educational technology. Recommendations for specific AI and digital tools, as well as other supplementary resources, should be included to help teachers integrate technology effectively and enhance language learning outcomes.

Since the national curricula are said to be aligned with the CEFR for Languages, expected outcomes and phonological competencies should be added to the curricula.

Changes in the curricula also necessitate teacher training. This would help teachers improve their phonetics and phonology awareness and develop resources to teach the aspects of phonetics and phonology that students find challenging.

Conclusion

In North Macedonia, English is a compulsory subject in primary and secondary education, and it plays a vital role for Macedonian EFL learners engaged in international communication. According to the CEFR (2018), intelligibility is more important than native-like pronunciation, so it is important to examine the inclusion of English phonetics and phonology in the national curricula. Currently, there is a

lack of research on how this is integrated into the curricula and whether there is alignment with the goals of English coursebooks and the CEFR for Languages.

The study aimed to investigate the presence of phonetic and phonology content in North Macedonian high school English curricula, analyze related content in coursebooks, review the CEFR's goals on these topics, and assess the alignment among these three document types. The hypothesis suggested limited consistency between the national curricula, EFL coursebooks, and CEFR concerning pronunciation, listening, and communication skills. The document and content analysis provided evidence that, while prosodic features such as stress and intonation are included both in the curricula and most of the coursebooks, sound articulation is not considered in the curricula. Although the curricula state that they are based on CEFR, there is no complete congruence between the new scale with descriptors of phonological control and the curricula. These insights can assist curriculum developers, educators, and EFL book authors in explicitly incorporating phonetics and phonology. This could ultimately enhance students' pronunciation and communication competence for the effective use of English as a global lingua franca.

Recommendations for Further Research

In light of the study's findings, further research could focus on effective digital and AI tools that can be incorporated into the curriculum section on teaching methods and activities for improving students' pronunciation and intelligibility. Additionally, since the results of the study were based solely on content and document analysis, future empirical classroom-based studies could examine the actual use of phonetics and phonology exercises, teacher perceptions, and learner outcomes.

Limitations

The study had two limitations. Firstly, the research focused on documents without classroom observation or teachers' perspectives. Despite the lack of phonetic and phonological content in the curricula, teachers may include such types of instruction in their classes. Secondly, the study included selected materials, i.e., the English course books recommended by the Ministry of Science and Education. Teachers have access to a variety of elective course materials they can use with their students.

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Prosopopoeial Poetry of Personal Prophetic Transfiguration - Sylvia Plath's "Lady Lazarus" and David Bowie's "Lazarus"

Tatjana Srceva-Pavlovska

Abstract

Prosopopoeia, as a literary device is not uncommon in both English and American literature, since authors have been using it throughout literary history in order to introduce a manufactured and contrived presentation of characters or personified things, that is, feigned *sub specie personae*. This paper examines the importance of prosopopoeia as a literary device in revealing certain personal prophetic visions when in anticipation of one's own imminent death with examples from Sylvia Plath and David Bowie's poetics. Through the impersonation of the absent speaker or a personification, the language of the prosopopoeia has a purpose of transfiguration by revealing the staggering horrors of inner struggles, thus becoming the enabling device through which one speaks about one's forthcoming, expected death. More specifically, this paper focuses on the adoption of such voices of the imagined Biblical figures in Sylvia Plath's poem "Lady Lazarus" and in David Bowie's song "Lazarus" which express a prophetic vision of the personal self, as well as the predictive resurrection and life after death through one's own immortal artistic legacy and output.

Key words: prosopopoeia, David Bowie, Sylvia Plath, Lazarus, transfiguration

Introduction

This paper examines the importance of prosopopoeia in revealing certain deeply personal prophetic visions when in anticipation of one's own imminent death. Through the impersonation of the absent speaker or a personification, the language of the prosopopoeia works as a means of achieving transfiguration through the process of revealing the staggering horrors of inner struggles, thus becoming the enabling device through which one speaks about one's forthcoming, expected death. More specifically, the paper focuses on the adoption of such voices of the imagined Biblical figure in Sylvia Plath's poem "Lady Lazarus" who announces her own personal doom through a visual presentation of the horrors of the Holocaust's imagery. In addition, this research sheds light on David Bowie's song lyrics and video "Lazarus," which also expresses a prophetic vision of the personal self, as well as the predictive resurrection and life after death through one's own immortal artistic legacy and output.

The General Idea of Prosopopoeia and Resurrection – From the Biblical Lazarus to a Modern-Day Inspiration

Prosopopoeia is a literary device with the main goal of introducing in a particular discourse (in this case, in verse), a contrived, manufactured presentation of characters or personal things, that is, a *sub specie personae*. The most common and usual form of such presentation is through attribution of certain human properties or qualities, most frequently, those of speaking (dialogismos) or listening (sermonocinatio). Plath, though, incorporates a new level, the so-called property or quality of observing, to enable the spectators of the act, the voyeurs who are present, an opportunity to enjoy the freak-show performance, but also, at the same time, to witness a "spectacular death" (Jacobsen, 2016) and the follow-up resurrection, leading to artistic immortality. In the same manner, despite the actual death of the man David Jones, the personae of the artist David Bowie continue to shine with a distinctive luminosity and navigational function, in absence and in repetition in various venues (Mendes & Perrott, 2019), as on wall murals, social media, YouTube videos, street and tattoo art, as well as in today's world of graphic arts and fashion.

In this respect, it is important to point out that cases of metaphorical resurrection in literature and philosophy are numerous, representing the symbolic rebirth of a person or idea, and a momentous personal transformation. In addition, it signifies overcoming hopelessness and emerging stronger from pain, loss, or despair, often

through personal growth and the integration of new perspectives. Thus, the examples are plentiful, ranging from Poe's Gothic ghost-hunt stories "The fall of the House of Usher" and "Ligeia", through the analogy of sin, death and resurrection in *Crime and Punishment* when, at one point even Raskolnikov contemplates the story of Lazarus being raised from the dead, through the allegorical resurrection of Aslan in C.S. Lewis's *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*, and the fantastical Tolkien's trilogy and the miraculous reappearing of Gandalf and many more.

The striving urge and impulse for achieving artistic and creative immortality through resurrection have been known since ancient times as well. The Roman poet Horace wrote: *Non omnis moriar, multaque pars mei vitabit Libitinam* ("not of all me shall perish, and a great part of me will escape Libitina"), expressing certainty in the immortality of his creative output even in times before it became a widely-embraced and desired Christian concept (Horace, *Odes*, 3.30). The answer to this compulsion for transfiguration beyond temporal self into memory, into creative impulse which surpasses the mortal flesh is in the first lines of the first stanza of *Ode* 3.30, lines 1–5, which was published in 23 BC:

> *Exegi monumentem aere perennius, regalique situ pyramidum altius…*
>
> ("I have crafted a monument more lasting than bronze,
> and loftier than the royal pile of the pyramids,
> a thing which neither biting rain nor the obstreperous
> North Wind can destroy, nor the countless run of years,
> the flight of time.")

The monument in question is, of course, his own poetic craft, which transcends life and time, remaining even today, his three books of *Odes*. Horace confidently predicted his enduring fame as the first and greatest of the lyric poets of Rome, just as Plath and Bowie did with their self-referential final adieus.

Plath's Poetics of Announcement of Her Imminent Death and Resurrection

Several months before her tragic end, Plath, aged 30, composed some of the most controversial poetry of the twentieth century. She achieved her artistic brilliance despite her ill mental state, repetitive attacks of flu that affected both her and her two small children. But pressed by her desire to overcome the collapse of her marriage and her absorbing desire to write herself to stellar success, she succumbed

in a period of extended profound clinical depression and tragically ended her own life on a bleak February morning in 1963 in London. Nine months later, ten of the late poems appeared in *Encounter Magazine* and began what can only be labelled a phenomenon of contemporary poetry of the confessional-self. Despite the fact that she corresponded with her mother just that October about her resolution to pull herself together and bring her life right back on track by writing:

> "…feel only a lust to study, write, get my brain back and practise my craft. (…) I have no desire but to build a new life. Must start here (…) I must not go back to the womb or retreat. I must make steps out (…) I am fighting against hard odds and alone" (Plath, 1962).

still, in "Lady Lazarus" she demonstrates as different state, expressing and re-confirming her firmness of contemplating yet another suicide and turning it into a poetic and visual spectacle.

Silvia Plath had long been interested in the story of Lazarus and the concept of resurrection. As early as February 19, 1956, she recorded that captivation that borderlines with fixation in her journal:

> "I feel like Lazarus: that story has such a fascination. Being dead, I rose up again, and even resort to the mere sensation value of being suicidal, of getting so close, of coming out of the grave with the scars and the marring mark on my cheek which (is it my imagination) grows more prominent." (Plath, 1956)

Related to this, Susan Gubar, in her essay entitled *"Prosopopoeia and Holocaust Poetry in English: Sylvia Plath and Her Contemporaries,"* states that "*Lady Lazarus* offers up a chilling warning about the fetishization of suffering with which the figure of prosopopoeia flirts" (Gubar, 2001, p. 207). She also asserts that the red rage that rises out of the ashes only fuels self-combustion, debunking the idea of transcendence or rebirth (read resurrection) at the end of the poem. The outcome seems a mere confirmation of this statement. Plath's "Lady Lazarus" is the *sub specie personae*, an artistic spectacle announcing yet another "real spectacle" in the form of a spectacular death (Jacobsen, 2016) and a process of transfiguration and metamorphosis in order to achieve artistic confirmation and resurrection. In the light of the ideas conveyed during the October 1962 intimate correspondence with her family, and even more intimate presentation of her state of mind and her determination to commit a conscious act of suicide, it becomes clear that she uses prosopopoeia as a literary device for "selfish reasons," to voice a dreadful plan.

"Dying
Is an art, like everything else.
I do it exceptionally well.
I do it so it feels like hell.
I do it so it feels real.
I guess you could say I've a call." (Plath, 1962)

Her request serves can be read as an invitation to be seen by those courageous enough to witness her in all her tragedy; to be seen is to connect and, in this respect, her words of suicide suggest a well-planned work of art. Plath's fixation with death and resurrection had been previously announced in her poem in a clear fashion, since the phrase "Your call!" means "one's own decision, one's own choice," and the verb itself carries the meaning of "to predict," because often we say "I called it!" which means that we correctly predicted something. Her death of carbon monoxide poisoning, having meticulously sealed the rooms between her and her sleeping children beforehand with tape, towels, and cloths, may exactly mean that with a cool head, she had announced her "calling" some time before it actually happened. In her biography *Giving Up: The Last Days of Sylvia Plath*, her final days are presented in great detail, somehow leading to an intention which seems quite expected, obvious, and quite clear, and the fact that she had arranged everything and secured her sleeping children with such care removes any possible doubts that her action was anything but an irrational compulsion.

In "Lady Lazarus," the nature of the speaker is peculiar and defies our ordinary notions of someone prone to attempt suicide, which is not a joyous act and still, there is something of a triumph in the speaker's assertion that she has done it over and over again, in front of the "peanut-crunching crowd," triumph which seems to be sprouting of the possible end result of the "spectacle" (Reeves, 2012), which is achieving artistic immortality through resurrection. And though it seems psychologically impossible for the suicide victim to have the energy to rise at all against other people, much less to threaten to "eat men like air," yet, the speaker demonstrates a remarkable control not only of herself but of the effects she wishes to achieve on those who surround her.

In Plath's poem, the walking miracle, the re-gendered speaker's consciousness of her performance for the readers (who are implicitly part of this abovementioned "peanut-crunching crowd") works to reverse the gaze of the readers so that they become "overlooked in the act of overlooking," and through the process foretelling one's own transfiguration, to die with one's head in the oven and resurrect like the

imagined female Lazarus and catapult oneself consciously into one's own stardom of artistic immortality, in the light of the one described with precision in the Biblical story:

> "Martha therefore said to Jesus: Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died.
> But now also I know that whatsoever thou wilt ask of God, God will give it thee.
> Jesus saith to her: Thy brother shall rise again.
> Martha saith to him: I know that he shall rise again, in the resurrection at the last day."
> (King James Version, *John* 11:21–24)

In addition to the spectacle performed in front of the multitude of people, constructed upon the Biblical reference of the death of Lazarus and his resurrection by Jesus Christ, Susan Gubar furthermore points out yet another, even more important correlation, the one between Plath's personal tragic ending and "her appropriation of the voices of Holocaust victims," which, according to her, "still seems outrageous to those who reject any reasonable affinity or parallelism between Plath's individual suffering and mass murder." Furthermore, she underlines the intensity of rage she evoked by just daring to presume or imagine herself as being one of the victims, "to appropriate the Otherness of the deceased through a projection that might be said to profane the memory of people exterminated by the Nazis" (Gubar, 2001).

But Uroff's claim that "Lady Lazarus" draws on Plath's own suicide attempt but is not a personal confession because it reveals only Plath's understanding of the way the suicidal person thinks" (Uroff, 1977, pp. 108–112) is not entirely true; she does not only see herself as a victimized Jew but she is also a partisan who, by using the Holocaust imagery and the personified, prosopopoeic language of a "dead ma/woman walking" (again), by taking control of what seems to be a completely uncontrollable situation, performs a conscious, deliberate act of committing suicide. Although the Romanian-born American writer, professor, political activist, and Nobel Prize laureate Elie Wiesel reprimanded that, in order "to honor the dead the living must comprehend that no one has the right to speak on their behalf," still, the usage of prosopopoeia as a literary device allowed Plath not only to summon the posthumous voice and to comprehend subjectivity enduring beyond the concentration camp, but also to announce her own doom and prophetic resurrection from the ashes like an imaginary feminine Biblical figure, a re-gendered Lazarus. During a radio interview, Plath herself defined Lady Lazarus as "a woman who has the great and terrible gift of being reborn."

Undeniably, since the poem is about a woman's (Plath's) suicidal attempts, it seems that the female speaker furthermore "highlights the losses that Plath has experienced losses she chose as well as those over which she had no control: abortion, miscarriage, childbirth, severe postpartum depression, divorce." In this respect, the prosopopoeic re-gendered Lazarus decides to take control over for one last time, decisively and resolutely, and from the overstated archetypal victim to adopt the trope of the oven and turn it into a symbol of complete control and personal power. The process includes voyeurism, just like in the Biblical reference from *The Holy Gospel of Jesus Christ According to St. Luke*, Chapter 16, lines 17–18:

> "The multitude therefore gave testimony, which was with him, when he called Lazarus out of the grave, and raised him from the dead.
> For which reason also the people came to meet him, because they heard that he had done this miracle." (*Luke* 12:17–18)

Teresa De Lauretis, who is theorizing of the cinematic positioning of women, notes that "the apparatus of looks converging on the female figure integrates voyeurism into the conventions of storytelling (...) the woman is framed by the look of the camera as an icon, an image, the object of the gaze, and thus, precisely, spectacle: that is to say, an image made to be looked at by the spectator(s) as well as the male character(s), whose look most often relays the look of the audience. But it is the male protagonist, the 'bearer' of the spectator's look, who also controls the events of the narrative, moving the plot forward" (De Lauretis, 1984, p. 99), which is exactly Plath's intention, to initiate the plot being moved forward through a process of transfiguration, into another creative dimension—immortality achieved through imaginative reappearance before that same audience, but not exclusively or solely as a woman, but an artist and poet.

Bowie's Poetics of the Blackstar – "Lazarus"

Just as Plath used prosopopoeia to announce her imminent death and achieve artistic immortality, a similar singularity can be observed in the final works of David Bowie, whose album Blackstar and the song "Lazarus" serve as a modern articulation of prophetic self-transfiguration. On January 10, 2016, British pop icon David Bowie died at the age of 69. Two days before Bowie passed away, impeccably timed with his 69th birthday, he released a new studio album, his last goodbye, his swansong. He was an exceptional artist with an immense power of transformation, the mastermind on the leading edge of what became known as Glam Rock—in fact, it

is probably not far off the mark to say that he invented it. As soon as he started to attract audiences, his flamboyance, ambiguous sexuality, and charisma propelled him into stardom (...) David deserved his success—it was a long time coming and he worked very hard to achieve it. In addition to his talent as a composer, he knows how to maintain focus and to constantly re-invent himself" (Finnigan, 2015, p. 152). His early-day biography portrays him at the age of 22, at the beginnings of his career, a paragon of beauty and sex, a young idealist, talented and irrelevant, one of the torchbearers for sex 'n' drugs 'n' rock 'n' roll life philosophy, a member of the ones that "did not care about social conventions, broke many rules but much to our surprise nearly everyone ended up loving us" (Finnigan, 2015).

The span from these days until the artist's last album named *Blackstar* was almost 50 years of stardom. However, *Blackstar* was covered under a veil of controversy, which was opened by the renowned UK newspaper *The Telegraph* in January 2016, following David Bowie's death. *The Telegraph* published an article in which they re-questioned the origin of the last album's title (Vincent, 2016), linking it with a common medical term for breast lesion cancer, thus opening a myriad of questions regarding the artist's prophetic last message to the world on the eve of his death. His personal experience is intrinsically and indisputably related to his work and the profound poetics of his lyrics, which is most evidently expressed in his last album, which makes sense even with the seemingly nonsensical atmosphere serving the purpose of disseminating his complex emotional state after stopping all medical treatments in the final stages of the diagnosed terminal cancer.

It has also been argued that the power of Bowie's star image rests largely upon his private emotional life taking precedence (for the listening-body) over his private life (Cinque et al., 2015). Even more so, Cinque further makes a reference to Ahmed (2004, p. 202), who asserts that the social philosophies of trauma and scarring—with the understanding in this context that the exposure of the private emotional life is necessary to developing a correlation with the listener-viewer—which is exactly what Bowie is trying to convey through the prosopopoeic discourse in "Lazarus," without bypassing the Biblical story from the Gospels of *"The Death of Lazarus,"* which is basically about the public demonstration of God's wonders and His power to raise a dead man to life. Therefore, in his video for the song "Lazarus," Bowie's words, his "sound and vision," linked spiritual belief and death by depicting the metaphoric Lazarus bearing linen superposed around his head, perhaps pitting his faith upon his own spiritual and/or physical resurrection, similar to the Biblical story.

"Now a man named Lazarus was sick (...) 'Our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep: but I am going to wake him up' (...) 'Did I not tell you that if you believed, you would see the glory of God?' (...) When he said this, Jesus called in a loud voice, 'Lazarus, come out!' The dead man came out [of his tomb], his hands and feet wrapped with strips of linen, and a cloth around his face." (*John* 11:1–44)

The prosopopoeic notion in "Lazarus" is deliberate, serving the purpose of creating a spectacle and drama, to be observed voyeuristically and deliberately, which employs multiple elements of fame, dominance, control and power as well as artistic performance, the so-called "spectacular death," the transfiguration leading to resurrection. In the article entitled *"Walking the Dead – David Bowie and the Humanizing Obverse,"* Namik Mačkić and Eliyahu Keller elaborate on a famous Bowie quote perceiving mortality and death, with a clear reference to one of his final public moments, his appearance in the video "Lazarus" (Keller & Mačkić, 2018). They sketch a vision of the process of transfiguration, when the artist, through the outer mutation, ignites the first stage of the procedure of metamorphosis, when a living person transforms from a walking dead, a corpse, into ethereal form, the risen Lazarus, who then undergoes the stages of resurrection and becomes an immortal entity living through his art:

> "His face is now covered not with makeup but with gauze, the hallmarks of this endlessly painted and reconfigured visage hidden. The heterochrome eyes are gone—windows to a soul that have been gouged and hollowed, purged of even alienated humanity that eyes convey. Replaced by hardware nuts, the eyes suggest a soothsaying Tiresias in a steely grip, blindly delivering a prophecy of a future hidden in the unknowability of technical objects (...) the past is revisited, as Bowie is now looking inside into the inner workings of a human dying—neither superhuman, nor post-human; no bionic man." (Keller & Mačkić, 2018, p. 91)

In this respect, we get yet another glimpse inside other similarly orchestrated human dying; the "man who fell to Earth," not from Heaven, but from Mars, and who had a planetary career in music, art, and the film industry, uses as well, in a similar manner, the same metaphor of "Lazarus's rising" and prosopopoeia to announce spectacularly and voyeuristically his own death to the world. Bowie as an artist embodies numerous stances that are alien, alternative, and transgressive, and by using these powerful metaphors, parallelisms, and alter egos, he not only re-confirms himself as an utterly strange and unique persona who has firm control over his own passing, but also, with the release of his last album *Blackstar* and his single "Lazarus," he demonstrates to the world his profoundly personal philosophy of

trauma and scarring, at the same time, just like Plath did more than half a century before, confirming his own existence in the afterlife.

Conclusion

Plath and Bowie, with the usage of prosopopoeia, and through their "spectacular deaths," achieve so-called creative and artistic immortality, one by the publication of what is today known as the best verse in Confessional poetry, the other by the release of an album, videos, and music which break the records of all the world's top lists. According to Jacobsen, such "spectacular death" inaugurates an obsessive interest in appearances that simultaneously draws death near and keeps it at arm's length—it is something that we witness at a safe distance with equal amounts of fascination and abhorrence; we wallow in it and want to know about it without getting too close to it (Jacobsen, 2016, p. 10).

But Plath's and Bowie's artistic legacy surpasses the instances of the obvious, of the moment of such spectacular passing away and resurrection. The resurrection through their alter egos "Lady Lazarus" and "Lazarus" occupies not only the realm of immortal fame, but also, by giving the world a sublime artistic creation, it achieves its only purpose: to rise above mortal existence and reappear beyond the essential quality of humanness.

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Students' Errors in the Translation of English Collocations into Albanian – A Case Study with Undergraduate English Students at the University of Tetova

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Abstract

Collocations are combinations of usually two, sometimes three or more words that are paired and naturally go together, be that in a spoken or written form. In other words, collocation is an integral unit of every language, and as such, it occurs commonly and adds spontaneous and vivid coloring to the written and spoken language. English collocations with all their semantic, grammatical, and lexical characteristics have their equivalents in many languages, but they may or may not appear in the same grammatical form. In some languages, it is difficult to find equivalents for all the English collocations, which can make their transfer and translation complicated. The purpose of this study is to locate errors that undergraduate English language (EFL) students at the University of Tetova make while translating English collocations into Albanian. The theoretical support of this study relies on other similar studies of collocations and various problems that researchers face while translating collocations from one language into another. Additionally, this study is of mixed type, both qualitative and quantitative. The study data were collected through a test, in which 71 undergraduate students of different academic years were presented with 60 collocations, with the purpose of identifying some of the most common errors students make while translating them from English into Albanian. The collected data contains demographic information, as well as the types of errors that undergraduate English language students make while translating collocations. The findings suggest that students' errors during translation are mainly of lexical and grammatical types.

Keywords: English and Albanian collocations, lexical errors, grammatical errors, undergraduate students.

Introduction

In all languages, there are words that go together and sound natural as such. Still, their occurrence in groups cannot be combined freely, nor can they always be analyzed separately in such combinations. According to Sinclair (1991), the process of speech and its formation, how it functions and develops, is regulated by two different factors: creativity and unrestricted use of language potentiality, and unproductiveness and fixed use of predefined and tightly connected word groups. Further, Sinclair (1991) provides two key principles for models concerning language: *the principle of free (open) choice* and the *principle of idiom*. The author suggests that *the principle of open choice* views a linguistic text as the outcome of a multitude of complex decisions. At each position where a unit ends (be it a word, a sentence, or a phrase), many options are open, but the only requirement is for the units to be grammatically correct. Yet, it is evident that words do not appear irregularly and randomly in the text. It would be impractical to create a normal text using the principle of free choice alone. The freedom that the speaker uses to combine words can be limited by language criteria, its grammatical patterns, and internal language rules. Differently, the co-occurrence of words must follow certain grammatical rules.

The principle of idiom considers constraints that are not included in the open choice model. The central meaning of this principle is that people do not formulate sentences word by word, but they use a group of words or ready–made phrases that come to their minds as natural units.

According to Mohammed (2023), collocation is explained as a grammatical word combination that is conditioned by the co-occurrence of words with synchronic syntactic patterns and rules that enable the connection of words of a certain class. Moreover, O'Dell & McCarthy (2017, p. 6) define collocation as "A pair or group of words that are often used together". Danilevičienė & Vaznonienė (2012) suggest that the freedom given to a speaker when connecting words in verbal expression can be influenced by the rules of the language, its grammatical structure, and its internal norms and laws. This can be shown and better explained through colligations and collocations as it follows. Danilevičienė & Vaznonienė (2012) present several types of collocations, such as: N + V, Adj. + N, V + N, Adverb + Adj., V + Adverb, N + N, V expr. + prep, etc. Since collocations are conditioned lexically and grammatically, Ibrahim & Adeeb (2019) distinguish the following structures:

- lexical collocations:

Adverb + Adj – seriously ill

Adj. + N – fatal accident

N + V – tigers roar

V + N – make plans

- grammatical collocations:

V + Prep. – waiting for

Adj + Prep. – interested in

N + certain V form – permission to leave

This study emerges from the significance that collocations have in foreign language learning and their role in achieving communicative fluency. Lastly, it is necessary to consider collocations in several aspects, such as: they are often the subject of discussions among language teachers and linguists; there are different categorizations about collocations; they are essential when mastering a second language, and being complex as units, they lead to errors while translating from one language to another.

Literature Review

Firth (1962, p. 13) was the first linguist to single out collocations as 'grammatical abstractions' and gave them a separate status in a language. Concretely, he suggested that collocations needed to be distinguished as separate units, which have the tendency to be grammatically or lexically associated. Being based on Halliday (2013), there are examples of collocations that are not only semantically connected, as are hyponyms, synonyms, and others, but also are lexically connected, which means they have the tendency to appear together in a cohesive context. Further, Sinclair (1996) defined collocations as co-occurring words and emphasized that their meaning does not come from single words but from words that co-occur and produce meaning.

In his theory, Hoey (2010) describes collocation as a phenomenon of cohesion in a text, which arises through the choice of words and their combinations by the author of the text. Additionally, Carter (1998) states that a collocation represents a group of words that frequently appear in language, while Murcia & Schmitt (2010) note that collocations are chunks of words that appear together and are frequently

used by native speakers. Hill (2000) views collocations as a combination of words that can be predictable and recognizable, but he also considers as collocations the following multi-word units, such as phrasal verbs, compounds, and idioms, where phrasal verbs and compounds have literal and natural meaning, whereas idioms have figurative meaning. In terms of defining collocations, Lackman & Associates (n. d.) offer some peculiarities by which collocations can be recognized, such as: they are words that often appear together; they are made up of all parts of speech; it is possible to separate them with other words in between; that phrasal verbs are counted as one verb; that the auxiliary verb be cannot be used in collocation, and that proper nouns cannot be counted as collocations either.

Previous Research

There are many studies on the importance and role of collocations in developing English fluency, as well as developing teaching strategies in learning and using collocations appropriately among EFL students. Sun & Park (2023) recognized in their study that higher education institutions are leading in teaching corpus-based collocations, but they have not been neglected in secondary schools either. They further suggest that in order for students to achieve natural communication efficiency and master language skills properly, the teaching of collocations should be introduced and elaborated professionally and responsibly by the teachers. Asadova (2024) also investigated the impact of teaching English collocations, and she came to the conclusion that mastering them can significantly affect the knowledge and correct use of the language. Nhung & Thom (2024) conducted research with EFL teachers and came to the conclusion that teachers, apart from students, have a superficial knowledge of this combination of words and do not give the necessary attention to structure and use of collocations. Next, they concluded that, although the teachers recognized the importance of collocations, they still admitted that in the teaching and learning process, more attention is given to other parts of English vocabulary and grammar. Further, Eid, I. and Al-Jamal, D. (2023) in their study dealt with the presence of collocations in English textbooks, concluding that their poor presence, presentation, emphasis, and their explicit teaching lead to EFL students having difficulty mastering them, and their translation into the students' native languages was particularly challenging. In his research with EFTL and ESL students on the use of collocations in written essays, Trang, N. T. (2024) concluded that greater use of collocations leads to more advanced language knowledge. The author also located the most frequent errors and challenges in the use

of collocations, which are mainly errors made due to the influence of the mother tongue and literal word-for-word translation, as well as the limited understanding of collocations. The above-mentioned works emphasize the importance of mastering collocations, but also the most common challenges of their correct use are related to translation. The same issue was treated by Ali (2019), who suggests in his study that the best solutions for translating collocations are: using an equivalent, if there is one, or using an equivalent based on the situation, and when you have to go for a word-by-word translation, it should be supported by well-illustrated examples. He also underlined that collocations linked to culture are the most challenging for translation and illustration, while Do & Le (2023) highlighted the problem of translation by the fact that this group of words represents natural co-occurrence and recommend learning collocations with understanding, applying accurate translation techniques, and using the existing online vocabulary of collocations in order to avoid translation errors. Moreover, Kwong (2020) mentions literal translation, which is very often possible, and when it is not, then one goes to transposition, paraphrase, creativity, and modulation, stressing that collocations related to culture often require a change in the word class or the use of idiomatic expressions when necessary. However, in terms of mastering the right translation techniques of collocations, the author states the following aspects, such as the need for richer lexical associations, prioritizing equivalents, and enriching the mental lexicon. Finally, Mounassar (2021) studied the strategies that are most effective in the translation of collocations. In his work, he also concluded that literal translation, equivalence, transposition, paraphrasing, deletion, and modulation are the most appropriate strategies in the translation of collocations.

Research Methodology

The focus of this study is to identify the types of errors students make while translating collocations from English into Albanian. Specifically, the students were given 60 sentences taken from "The Education of Little Tree" by Forrest Carter; each of these sentences contained a collocation, and the students were asked to locate them and translate them into Albanian. Thus, we collected both quantitative and qualitative data, which were further processed in charts and percentages and accompanied by comments on the findings. The aim of this research is to answer the following questions:

1. Can English collocations be translated into Albanian?

2. Do undergraduate EFL students make errors when translating collocations from English into Albanian?

3. What type of errors are the most common among undergraduate EFL students when translating collocations from English to Albanian?

The data collector was a student's sheet with 60 sentences from "The Education of Little Tree" by Forrest Carter, which also required demographic data of students regarding their gender and academic year of study. The sheet was administered to a sample of 71 EFL students, aged 18 to 23, where 42 of them were females, and 29 males, and all of those EFL undergraduate students were from Ist to IVth academic year in the Faculty of Philology at the University of Tetova. The participants were familiar with the collocations, and it was explained to them how to fill in the sheet. The demographic data included in the students' sheet were collected on-site, simultaneously with the students' responses. The number of student participants in the study per academic year was: First year - 20, Second year - 11, Third year - 17, and Fourth year - 23. The aim of this study was to see the translatability of English collocations into Albanian, as well as to see what errors students make while translating and what type of errors are most common when translating English collocations into Albanian. Student errors are presented in the total number of errors per academic year, with the additional graph including the types of the most frequent errors observed during the translation of collocations from English into Albanian.

Research Findings and Discussion

The collected data were quantitatively and qualitatively analyzed using statistical and descriptive methods, with results expressed in both numbers and percentages, with the aim of determining the translatability of English collocations into Albanian, students' errors during translation of collocations, and the most common types of errors when translating English collocations into Albanian. The result tables and charts are followed by comments on findings.

Table 1.

Participants divided by gender and academic year as EFL students

Academic year N = 71							
I		II		III		IV	
M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
8 11.26%	12 16.90%	5 7.04%	6 8.45%	6 8.45%	11 15.49%	10 14.08%	13 18.30%

Table. 1 contains demographic data and presents the total number of participating students sorted by academic year and gender, presented in numbers and percentages. The number of female participants is higher (42 – 59.15%/) than male (40.85%) participants, which means that the majority of EFL students at the University of Tetova are females.

Figure 1.

Student's Total Errors

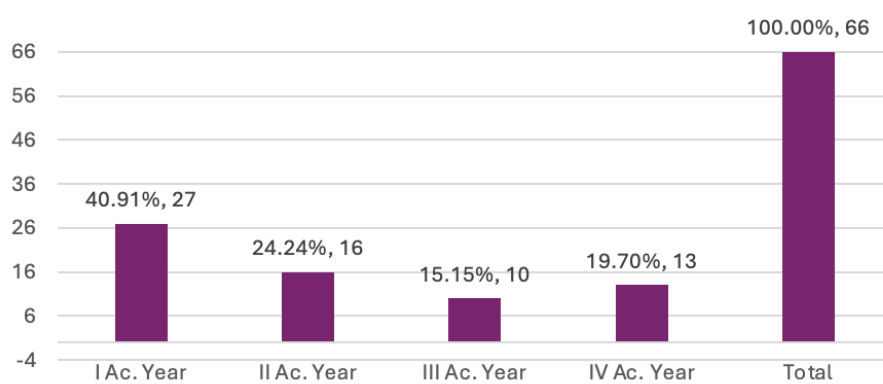


Figure 1 presents the total number of students' errors across all 4 years. From the chart, we can determine that the highest error count comes from 1st year students, with a total of 27 or 40.91% error count in a lexical and grammatical dimension. The remaining errors come from 2nd year students with 16 or 24.24%, 3rd year students with 10 or 15.15%, and 4th year students with 13 or 19.70% error count.

Figure 2.

First Ac. Year Students' Errors

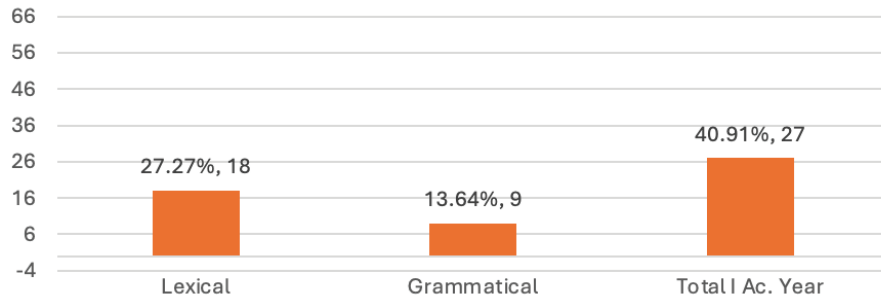


Figure 2 presents the analysis of collocation errors produced by 1st year students. From the chart, we can deduce that 1st year students especially struggle with lexical errors (made out – *shpikëm* instead of 'kuptuam', creek bank – *bregu i lumit* instead of 'bregu i përroit', had passed on – *kaloi* instead of 'ndërroi jetë', across the yard – *nëpër oborr* instead of 'përmes oborrit', etc.), with 18 collocation errors or 27.27% of the total number of students' errors. On the other hand, it is noted that they have produced a large amount of grammatical errors (9 or 13.64% of total errors), mostly related to the verb *make* and *auxiliary verbs* (make sense – *bëj kuptim* instead of 'ka kuptim', make out – *bëj kuptim* instead of 'kuptojmë', do away with – *bëjmë largim* instead of 'të hek dorë nga', do the gathering – *bëj tubim* instead of 'mbajmë tubim', have a trade – *kam tregti* instead of 'bëj tregti, etc.), due to them still being in the early stages of learning the parts of speech. These errors amount to 27 or 40.91% of the total amount of errors produced by all students.

Figure 3.

Second Ac. Year Students' Errors

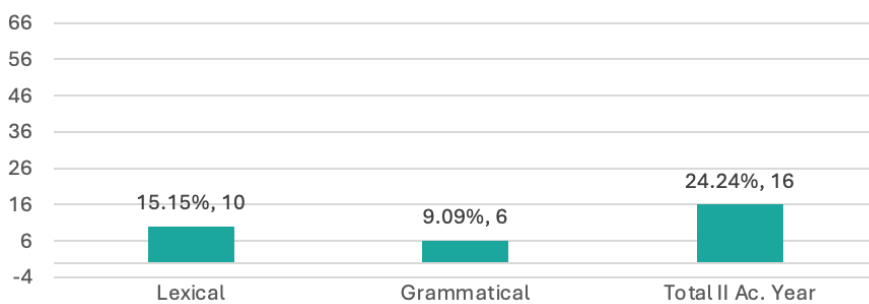


Figure 3 presents us with the analysis of errors produced by 2nd year students. Here we see a total of 16 errors or 24.24% of the total number of students' errors, divided into 10 or 15.15% lexical errors (back porch – *dera e pasme* instead of 'terraca prapa shtëpisë', grazing ground – *barishte* instead of 'tokë kullotash', plaited hair – *flokë të thinjura* instead of 'flokë të gërshetuara' – before too long – *para shumë kohe* instead of 'brenda pak kohe', honest day's work – *ditë pune e sinqertë* instead of 'ditë pune me nder' etc.) and 6 or 9.09% grammatical errors, mostly related to the verb make and verb tenses (make a living – *bëj jetesë* instead of 'siguroj jetesën', make a speech – *bëj fjalim* instead of 'mbaj fjalim', have to bend – *kam për tu përkulur* instead of 'duhej të përkulesha', have figured this out – *e kuptova* instead of 'e kam kuptuar', etc).

Figure 4.

Third Ac. Year Students' Errors

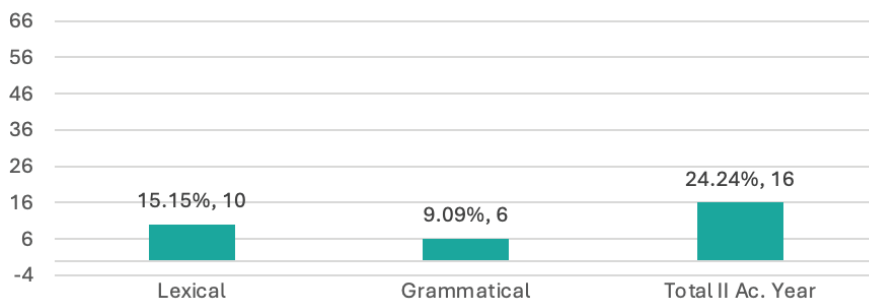
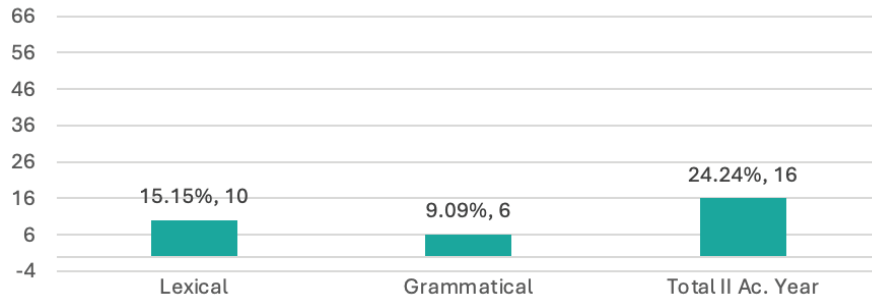


Figure 4 presents us with the analysis of the total number of errors produced by 3rd year students. From the total of 10 errors or 15.15% of the total students' errors, we see an uneven split of 8 or 12.12% of the total students' errors that relate to lexical aspect (hillside shack – *stan* or *kasolle mali* instead of 'kasolle në shpat të kodrës', across the yard – *nëpër oborr* instead of 'përmes oborrit', heavy rain - *shi i dendur* instead of 'shi i rrëmbyeshëm', wild cherry - *qërshi e egër* instead of 'thanë', mountain hollow – *gropë malore* instead of 'luginë malore', etc.), and 2 or 3.03% of the total students' errors being of grammatical nature (about that time – *për atë kohë* instead of 'rreth asaj kohe' and instead of – *në vend të* instead of 'përkundrejt')

Figure 5.

Fourth Ac. Year Students' Errors



Finally, Figure 5 presents us with the analysis of errors produced by 4th year students, where of the total of 13 errors or 19.70% of the total students' errors; we see that 9 or 13.64% of their errors are lexical (pearly gate – *porta me perla* instead of 'porta e parajsës', took the decision – *morri vendim* instead of 'solli vendim', get worked up - *të punosh* instead of 'të shqetësohesh', have a feeling – *kam ndjeshmëri* instead of 'parandjej', etc.), and 4 or 6.06% are grammatical (along the ridge – *përkrah kodrës* instead of 'përgjatë kodrës', at daybreak – *gjatë agimit* instead of 'në agim', take it over – *e merr përsipër* instead of 'e pushtoi', etc.). Though the results seen in this chart show great similarity to the results produced by 2nd year students, we must also take into account that there is a higher total amount of 4th year students than there are 2nd year students, with there being more than double the amount of students in the 4th year (23), than there are in the 2nd year (11). We would also like to mention that most errors, whether lexical or grammatical, are consistent and repeated by students across all academic years.

Conclusion

In conclusion, we can say that this study gave us an insight into the collocational errors made by undergraduate EFL students at the University of Tetova. The results showed us that lexical errors prevail over grammatical errors in terms of translating collocations. Grammatical errors were mainly limited to incorrect translation of verb make (*make a living, make a speech, make a point,* etc.); errors in the translation of verb tenses (*have to bend, have figured this out*), and prepositions (*along, about, across*). There were a large number of lexical errors due to insufficient knowledge of English collocations, but also due to the literal translation of collocations that have their appropriate Albanian equivalents (heavy rain - *shi i dendur* instead

of shi i rrëmbyeshëm, wild cherry - *qërshi e egër* instead of thanë, mouning dove - *pëllumb mëngjesi* instead of pëllumb vajtues, deep blue - *e kaltër e errët* instead of e kaltër e thellë, etc.). The collocation - *to jump a tooth* – a technical collocation was the collocation in which we recorded the largest number of students' translation errors, both grammatical and lexical. The limitations of this study are related to the number of participants. Future studies on the topic could include a larger number of participants, for the benefit of both, and more relevant results of raising awareness of similar translation issues.

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