Curriculum Renewal in Albania

Curriculum renewal in English language teaching and learning in Albania: an exploration of the language learning pedagogy underpinning the teaching and learning of English in elementary schools in Albania.

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By

Irma Kuci

Supervisor: **Dr Peter Mickan**

The University of Adelaide

School of Humanities

Discipline of Linguistics

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Table of Contents

5 JUSTIFICATION, RECOMANDATIONS AND CONCLUSION 74

REFERENCES 82

APPENDICES 87

LIST OF IMAGES

LIST OF TABLES

ABSTRACT

Amidst calls for foreign language curriculum renewal in Albania aligning with the Common European Framework outcome of communicative fluency, this study seeks to understand the existing English language teaching and learning pedagogy in Albanian elementary schools. This is achieved by analysing the pedagogic purpose and function of a unit in the textbook syllabus used in English language classrooms in elementary schools in Albania. Further to this the practice of teaching English through media, common in English language programs in Albanian elementary schools, is analysed in order to understand the pedagogic purpose and function of this practice in English language programs. From the results of this twofold investigation, a justification for the recommendation for the text-based approach to language learning, theorised through a social semiotic view of language and language and learning (Halliday, 1975, 1978, 1993) is made for consideration in foreign language curriculum renewal initiatives in Albania. The text-based approach is recommended because it provides a theorised pedagogy conducive to achieving The Common European Framework foreign language learning outcome of communicative language competence and provides a theorised approach which could underpin the existing practice of teaching through media.

DECLARATION

This work contains no material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma in any university or other tertiary institution and, to the best of my knowledge and belief, contains no material previously published or written by another person, except where due reference has been made in the text.

I give consent to this copy of my thesis, when deposited in the University Library, being made available in all forms of media, now or hereafter known.

Irma Kuci   30 November 2012

Signature

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Overview

This chapter explains the rationale and background of the study. The stance taken in this study is explained. This chapter includes the theoretical significance of the study, aims, objectives of the study and the research questions this study seeks to answer. Following this is an overview of the study, including the limitations of the study. This chapter concludes with a description of the organization of the study.

1.1 Rationale

Foreign language curriculum renewal, including the teaching and learning of English, has been an ongoing issue of importance for the Ministry of Education and Science in Albania beginning with the fall of the People's Socialist Republic of Albania in 1992 and the ending of the Soviet Russian configured way of life. Since this time the compulsory learning of foreign languages in the Albanian school system, especially English, has been due to the recognition that being a multilingual society is desirable. Albania becoming a 21st century multilingual and intercultural society therefore has become the focus of foreign language curriculum renewal initiatives. This is because Albania is seeking to become a member nation of the European Union; thereby

current curriculum renewal is for the purpose of aligning with the foreign language learning policies of the European Union (EU) described in the Common European Framework. The necessity for alignment with the Common European Framework can be understood through the Council of Europe: Education and Languages, Language Policy which "provides a common basis for the elaboration of language syllabuses, curriculum guidelines, examinations, textbooks, etc. across Europe" (para 2). The common basis describes what language learners in EU nations should learn in order to use a language for communication. Further to this, the purpose of The Framework is to provide "the means for educational administrators, course designers, teachers, teacher trainers, examining bodies, etc., to reflect on their current practice, with a view to situating and coordinating their efforts and to ensuring that they meet the real needs of the learners for whom they are responsible" (para 2).

In terms of the real 21st century needs of the English language learner in Albania, historically English was taught for the purpose of a school subject through the Grammar Translation Method by which students learnt about English rules of grammar which they then applied in translation exercises from Albanian into English, rather than for the current day purpose of learning English for communicative fluency. Amidst calls for foreign language curriculum renewal in Albania, this study undertaken by an Albanian teacher of English currently studying and living in Australia who used to teach through traditional grammar based methodology in the early 2000's, seeks to reflect on and understand the current English language teaching and learning pedagogy in elementary schools in Albania in order to understand if the desired outcome of curriculum renewal is being achieved which, according to Kromidha and Tabaku, (2011), is for students to become communicatively fluent in English.

According to de Silva Joyce and Feez (2012), knowledge about language has increased over the last five decades, resulting in curriculum and syllabus planners and language teachers and educators being influenced by a series of approaches in designing language learning programs. With the emergence of a new approach de Silva Joyce and Feez (2012) contend teachers are often advised to abandon existing methods and take up the new approach, even if traditional methods had worked for them. As de Silva Joyce and Feez (2012) state, because of what could be considered as the changing fashions in language teaching and learning approaches over the years not always backed by an evolving and increasing body of knowledge informing these ever emerging approaches, language educators, teacher trainers and teachers can become divided over the use of traditional and progressive approaches. Because of this divide, de Silva Joyce and Feez (2012) recommend "teachers to continue to innovate in the light of new developments in language education, while retaining those aspects of earlier approaches that have demonstrated

their effectiveness" (p. 57).

The importance of retaining aspects of approaches to English language learning in Albania which have been effective is the stance taken in this paper when justifying the recommendation for the text-based approach be considered for language curriculum renewal following the exploration undertaken in this paper of the existing pedagogy underpinning the teaching and learning of English in Albanian elementary schools. This understanding of existing pedagogy is achieved through analyzing the pedagogic purpose and function of a unit in the English language textbook syllabus, the AmBri series (Tafani,, Vasquez, and Leksi, 2008, *A trip to AmBri;* and Tafani, and Vasquez, 2008, *Welcome to AmBri.*) and the pedagogic purpose and function of two English language lessons in which the practice of teaching through media (Tafani, 2004, 2009) is used.

From this twofold analysis this paper concludes with justifying why the text-based approach (de Silva Joyce and Feez, 2012, Mickan 2012 in press) theorized from a social semiotic perspective of language and language and learning (Halliday, 1975, 1978), is recommended as a way to provide a theorized pedagogy which could underpin the existing practice, teaching through media (Tafani, 2004, 2009), which many Albanian teachers and students, according to the teacher questionnaire and student survey undertaken in this study,   currently find motivating and enjoyable.   Although, according to de Silva Joyce and Feez (2012), text-based approaches have been adopted in many sectors of education over the past twenty years, in justifying the recommendation of the text-based approach (Mickan 2012 in press, de Silva Joyce and Feez 2012),   for consideration in language curriculum renewal in Albania, the strength of this approach is its grounding in the social semiotic theoretical perspective of language and language learning (Halliday, 1975, 1978).

Therefore the rationale in undertaking this study is to build an argument, through illustrative examples from the data analysed in this study, for the need for a theorised pedagogic approach to language teaching and learning in Albania which enables not only the 21st century communicative fluency desired in foreign language curriculum renewal in Albania according to The Common European Framework, but also the literacy level required for the functional use of English as the globalised language. The contention in this study is functional fluency and literacy in English language can be achieved through the social semiotic theorised text-based approach to language learning in which written, spoken, aural and multimodal and traditional and digital

in format English language texts are used which enable Albanian students to making meaning of and enact the many practices, purposes and functions of written and spoken English.

This study of the current language learning pedagogy underpinning the learning of English language in Albanian elementary schools seeks to fill a gap in the research because it provides a justification for recommending the text-based approach for curriculum renewal in Albania as an effective approach to language learning and literacy, after exploring existing methods, approaches and practices, because it not only could build a theorized pedagogy into the established practice of Teaching Through Media (Tafani, 2004, 2009), it could also facilitate the desired outcome for communicative fluency in English as described in the Common European Framework.

1.2   Research background

Curriculum renewal in Albania has been ongoing as a result firstly of the ending of the People's Socialist Republic of Albania in 1992 in favour of a democratic system of government. Curriculum renewal within educational reform was necessary at this time because Albania had followed a communist ideologically centred education system in which text books, syllabi and curricula were translated into Albanian from the Soviet Russian education system and teachers were trained in teaching and learning approaches according to this system. According to Lamu, Sula and Gjokutaj (2011) 70% of teachers currently teaching in Albania have been educated and trained in the previous communist system.

Educational reforms implemented in Albania during the period 1992-1998 included the revision of curricula and the introduction of new directives in many areas, including foreign language teaching (Albania: World Data on Education, 2010/2011). Within the drive for curriculum renewal and modernisation in Albania, the learning of foreign languages became compulsory in 1992, beginning at the third grade of elementary school and continuing to the ninth grade, the final level of elementary schooling.

Despite reforms in the education system, the ongoing professional development of teachers in Albania remains problematic with teachers finding it difficult to keep up with the changes in school curricula and teaching approaches, many preferring to retain traditional teaching methods. Lamaj, Sula and Gjokutaj (2011) identify a lack in ongoing professional training for teachers resulting in teachers continuing to use what is considered as out-dated teaching

methodology because of lack of knowledge of contemporary approaches recommended in the curriculum reforms and renewal in Albania. Therefore many teachers of English in Albania have undergone few changes in their conception of what they believe is effective language instruction in their classroom teaching practice.

In more recent times the need for curriculum renewal in Albania has once again become pressing since the granting of European Union (EU) candidate status in 2012 after Albania applied to become a member of the EU in 2009. This has resulted in the necessity for a national curriculum in Albania which aligns with EU standards, reflected in the Albanian government National Strategy for the Development of pre-university education stating "the foreign languages policy of the Ministry of Education and Science has been designed and applied in accordance with the developments in our country and in concert with the EU policy in this regard, following two basic EU directives, multilingualism and intercultural education" (MOES, 2008, in Kromidha and Tabaku, 2011). Curriculum renewal in foreign language teaching and learning in Albania is therefore considered of great importance to ensure multilingual and intercultural education according to EU standards of literacy and communicative competency is achieved.

An exploration of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment (CEFR) reveals that the authors stress "We have NOT set out to tell practitioners what to do or how to do it. We are raising questions not answering them. It is not the function of the CEF to lay down the objectives that users should pursue or the methods they should employ." (Council of Europe 2001: Note to the User, p. xi). Therefore whilst there is a desire for language curriculum reform in Albania to ensure EU standards and the CEFR is increasingly used in the reform of national curricula, no recommendation for a language learning pedagogy is given in the CEFR.

Most schools in Albania are public schools which are funded by the government. This is exemplified in the following table (Table 1) which shows the number of students who were enrolled public and private schools in the year 2000. Although more up to date statistics could not be found, this appears to be the case in present times.

Category of school	State institutions No. of pupils/students	Private institutions No. of pupils/students
Pre-elementary	80337	2543
Primary	543967	4717
Secondary	102971	1975
Tertiary	23000	0

Table 1: Number of students enrolled in private and public sector schools in Albania in 2000 (Source: Qano, n.d)

As Table 1 illustrates, most Albanians prefer schooling in public sector schools. The compulsory schooling system in Albania begins in Year 1 when students are 6 years of age and continues to Year 9 when students are 14 years of age. Prior to 2008, there were only 8 grades of elementary school education however following the 2003 signing of the Bologna Declaration this meant Albania, in following the Bologna system, was required to implement new study cycles, improve academic standards and manage teaching loads. Therefore the number of years of elementary school education changed from 8 years to 9 years. Along with this came curriculum renewal, including in the area of teaching and learning foreign languages.

Albania gives much importance to foreign language education, especially English language. The learning of a foreign language, a compulsory subject in the Albanian school curriculum from elementary school since 1992, begins at the third grade and continues until the ninth grade of primary school (Table 2).

Subject	Number of weekly periods in each grade								
	First stage					Second stage			
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Mother language (Albanian)	8	8	6	5	5	5	5	5	5
Foreign language	–	–	2	2	2	2	2	3	3
Mathematics	5	5	5	4	4	4	4	4	4
Knowledge of nature	–	–	2	3	2	–	–	–	–
Physics	–	–	–	–	–	1	2	2	2
Chemistry	–	–	–	–	–	–	1	1	2
Biology & health education	–	–	–	–	–	2	2	2	2
Our country	–	–	–	–	2	–	–	–	–
History	–	–	–	1	–	2	2	2	2
Geography	–	–	–	–	–	2	2	2	2
Civic education	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Art education	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	–
Music education	1	1	1	1	1	2	2	2	2
Technological training	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	–	–
Physical education	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
Computer studies	–	–	–	–	–	–	1	1	1
Additional activities, electives	1	1	1	2	2	2	1	1	1
Total weekly periods	20	20	22	23	23	27	29	29	29

Table 2: Weekly lesson time table in primary schools in Albania 2010-2011
(Source: World Data on Education, 2010-11)

In recent years, English language learning has gained great popularity within Albania and is being taught in public and private sector schools throughout the nation. Many schools have therefore made English language learning compulsory. English classes in elementary school consist of two 45 minute lessons per week in Years 3- 7 and increasing to three lessons per week in Years 8-9 over the 35 week school year. Examinations are a compulsory and regular component of the foreign languages program, culminating in a final exam at the end of the school year. This method of assessment is considered the most effective way to rate student achievement and progress.

Albanian Prime Minister Sali Berisha when addressing the British Council conference 'Albania, Education and English: A New Opportunity' (18.5.2012, Keshilli i Ministrave: Republic of Albania Council of Ministers webpage) stated his belief that because English is what Berisha (2012) terms 'the globalization language' it is important for "the Albanian children to master this language" (18.5.2012, Keshilli i Ministrave: Republic of Albania Council of Ministers webpage). Berisha (2012) states "We teach English as the first foreign language beginning from the third grade up to the secondary school-leaving examinations". Further to this Berisha (2012) describes the need for a "better quality of teaching of this language" stating "English

language far from being a subject must be passion and an essential knowledge of the pupils."(Keshilli i Ministrave: Republic of Albania Council of Ministers).

Prime Minister Berisha stated in his reflection on the importance placed on learning foreign languages, especially English, in the Albanian education system -

"It is important to consolidate English from the third grade and to the obligatory high school graduation tests, as the first important foreign language for every Albanian. Every child must graduate from the high school with two foreign languages. The second could be French, Italian, German, Spanish or Chinese. China is today the second economic power"

(18.5.2012 Keshilli i Ministrave: Republic of Albania Council of Albania)

Kromidha and Tabaku (2011) reinforce the need for EU literacy standards in education in the Albanian school system and for the levels of foreign language competence described by the Council of Europe (Common European Framework, 1996, 1998) to be reached. In order to achieve this level of foreign language competency, language teachers in Albania are directed to use the communicative language teaching approach in which the aim is for students to develop not only what are described as language skills, but also for students to achieve what are described as "intercultural and learning skills" (Kromidha and Tabaku, 2011, p. 51).

Learning foreign languages, especially English, is viewed in Albania as a 21st century necessity. Because English is the current global language it has become the priority foreign language and most widely taught language in many countries around the world (Crystal, 2003), including Albania. The numbers of English learners across the globe is increasing every year. It is especially true, according to McKay, (2003) when we consider bilingual and multilingual speakers of English who use English as their second or their third language for internationally wider communication (McKay, 2003). In our globalised world, English has become an indispensable language and from my point of view as an Albanian teacher of English language currently living and studying in Australia, it has become increasingly difficult to attain professional success and advancements in many countries without having a high standard of communicative fluency and literacy in English.

In Albania, learning English and reaching a high standard of communicative fluency and literacy is viewed as necessary, not only to comply with EU Framework Standards of multilingual and intercultural education but also because it is the language of international communication, therefore Albanians believe it will assist them to find employment, to study and work overseas and to immigrate. Furthermore learning English, the dominate language of the Internet, allows Albanians access to the wealth of online information and knowledge and enables global

connections with English speakers around the world including through social media. English is the global language of science, commerce, trade, sport, the media, popular entertainment, international politics, and the Internet (Crystal, 2003). Because English is playing an ever increasingly important role in international business, world communications and cultural and social affairs (Graddol, 2001), it has become the most in demand foreign language Albanians desire to learn. Therefore because of the status of English as the global language of communication, this has led to a focus in Albania in English language curriculum renewal as part of an overall renewal in the way foreign languages are taught and learnt to insure alignment with the Common European Framework.

1.3 Theoretical significance of the study

Although, according to de Silva Joyce and Feez (2012), text-based approaches have been adopted in many sectors of education over the past twenty years, in the text-based approach recommended in this study (Mickan 2012; de Silva Joyce and Feez 2012), the strength of this approach is its grounding in the social semiotic theoretical perspective of language and language learning (Halliday, 1975, 1978) developed over 40 years of research by Halliday and many other scholars and researchers whose work is grounded in this theoretical perspective. The Ministry of Education and Science directive to use communicative language teaching approaches, viewed in Albanian as contemporary and progressive, is due to the perceived need to move from the traditional grammar translation method of teaching languages whereby students learn about the structure of foreign languages, to an approach in which the outcome is communicative fluency in the foreign language. The need to move to communicative approaches to language teaching and learning, according to Kromidha and Tabaku (2011), is because "the widespread contact with foreigners, mobility abroad, the introduction of foreign textbooks, a wider access to authentic language through literature, films and music led to a different attitude to teaching and learning (Kromidha and Tabaku, 2011, p. 2). Hence my research interest as an Albanian teacher of English language who last taught in Albania in 2002, in gaining an understanding of the current language learning pedagogy underpinning English language learning and teaching approaches in Albania, specifically in the English language elementary school classrooms in which I observed and collected data.

This interest arose because despite the perceived need to move to communicative approaches to language teaching and learning, according to Kromidha and Tabaku, (2011), classroom teachers in Albania have reported they have experienced confusion with curriculum renewal

directives to implement new English language teaching theories and practices. Kromidha and Tabaku, (2011), state this has resulted in many teachers continuing to use traditional teaching methodology due to a lack of knowledge and training in the contemporary approaches recommended in curriculum reforms and renewal. Further to this it is not compulsory in Albania for teachers to attend professional development courses to learn about new approaches thereby teachers continue to use the approach they were originally trained in, or by which they learnt languages.

According to the UNESCO Albania World Data on Education Report, (7th edition , 2010/2011 - Albania - World Data on Education - Données mondiales de l'éducation Datos Mundiales de Educacion), the Albanian education system renewal is aimed at aligning the current curriculum content and processes with the 21st century aspirations and needs of students and their parents. Within the curriculum renewal focus it is recommended that included in the reform of curriculum content, alongside the knowledge and skills to function in an ideologically democratic free market economy centred education system, should be what are described by the Ministry of Education and Science (2005, in the Albania - World Data on Education Report, 2010/2011), as "authentic integrated learning activities reflective of everyday life experiences which are also relevant to Albanian local circumstances and traditions" (p.9).

Therefore the theoretical significance of this study is due to the theoretically framed perspective of language learning through social practice pedagogy underpinning the recommendation for the text-based approach concluding this study. This is because the text-based approach can provide authentic integrated English language learning reflective of experiences which are relevant to the needs of Albanian students. This is because in language learning as social practice pedagogy, language and language learning is viewed as a functional process of making meaning by choosing (Halliday, 1978). From this perspective educational knowledge can be understood as a "social construct built in through the patterns of language interactions that takes place in the classroom, and through the reading and writing in which students engage" (Sharpe, 2001, in Hammond (ed), p.32). As Mickan (2012 in press) states through viewing language learning as a social construct and a functional process of making meaning by choosing, students become aware of the wordings in texts. This awareness of wordings in texts , according to Mickan (2012 in press) prepares students for the comprehension and the composition of written, oral and multimodal texts, therefore learner familiarity with texts supports language learning as an integrated and purposeful activity.

1.4 The aims and objectives of the study

The following are the aims and objectives of the study

1.4.1 Aim of the study

- To identify the pedagogy underpinning English language teaching and learning in elementary schools in Albania

1.4.2 Objectives of the study

- To identify the language learning pedagogy underpinning the English language textbook syllabus, the AmBri series (Tafani, Vasquez, and Leksi , 2008 *A trip to AmBri ;*and Tafani, and Vasquez, 2008, *Welcome to AmBri*)

- To identify the language learning pedagogy underpinning the practice of 'Teaching Through Media' (Tafani, 2004, 2009).

- To understand if the foreign language curriculum renewal desire for communicative fluency aligned with the Common European framework is occurring in Albanian elementary school English language classrooms.

- To recommend and justify the use of the text-based approach for teaching and learning foreign languages in Albania which complements the existing practice of teaching through media by providing a social semiotic theory of language and language and learning pedagogy to this practice as well as achieving the Common European Framework outcome of communicative fluency.

1.5 Research questions

This study investigates the following research questions

- What pedagogical approach to English language teaching and learning is indicated through analysing the purpose and function of the textual content of a unit in the AmBri (Tafani, et al, 2008) series textbook syllabus used to teach English language in elementary school Grade 3-9 English language classrooms in Albania?
- What pedagogical approach to English language teaching and learning is indicated by analysing the purpose and function of the use of media in relation to the aims an

objectives of an English language lesson in which the practice of 'teaching through media' (Tafani, 2004, 2008) occurs in English language programs in elementary school classrooms in Albania?

- Is the desired curriculum renewal outcome of communicative fluency in English revealed in the analysis of the textual content of a unit in AmBri, and in the analysis of the use of media in English language elementary classrooms?

1.6   Overview of the study

As an English language teacher in Albania in the mid 2000's before immigrating to Australia and commencing my studies towards a Masters of Arts (Applied Linguistics), my approach to teaching English was to use the Grammar Translation Method which I was taught in my teacher training and by which I learnt English and other languages. I also used a grammar based textbook syllabus which I was required to follow along with writing a daily diary of lesson plans (see Appendix C). It is interesting to note the format of the daily diary I was required to write (2002) is identical to the format of a daily diary written by an English language elementary school teacher in 2012 (see Appendix C). The focus of the grammar based approach evident in both diaries is on students attaining English language competence as opposed to performance, on attaining grammatical competence rather than communicative competence, and on understanding the formal as opposed to the functional properties of grammar which was assessed through tests and written examinations. My research interest in undertaking classroom observations over a three week period in January 2012 in order to understand the pedagogy underpinning English language learning in elementary schools in Albania is to understand if curriculum renewal initiatives aimed at communicative fluency in English, referenced by the Common European Framework, are being achieved.

Based on the evidence arising from the analysis of the data collected over a three week period in Albania in January 2012, from which a unit in the text book syllabus and two teaching through media lessons are examined for pedagogic purpose, this study concludes by justifying the recommendation for the text-based approach to language learning theorised through a social semiotic perspective (de Silva Joyce and Feez, 2012; Mickan 2012 in press) be considered in the curriculum renewal initiates currently being undertaken by the Ministry of Education and Science in Albania.

1.7   Limitations of the study

This qualitative study is limited to a snapshot investigation of the classrooms of five Albanian elementary teachers of English and their students over a three week period in January 2012, then specifically for the purpose of analysis two English language lessons. The study is limited to data collection from classrooms in two elementary schools within the same region in Albania. It is further limited by the examination of one unit in the textbook series approved for use by the Ministry of Education and Science as the English language teaching syllabus in Albanian elementary schools. The inexperience of the researcher in designing a survey and questionnaire is also acknowledged therefore the results should be viewed as contributing to a study which is mixed methods in approach but rather as information for building up a picture of English language teaching and learning in a localized setting rather than for purposes of statistical reliability and validity.

1.8　　Organization of the thesis

This thesis is made up of the following five chapters.

- Chapter 1: Introduction: The first chapter is the introduction chapter that discusses the research background, identified problem, aims, objectives, research questions as well as research limitations.
- Chapter 2: In this chapter literature relevant for informing this study is reviewed.
- Chapter 3: is the Research Methodology chapter which details the research strategy, paradigm, design, sampling design, data collection and analysis techniques used in the study.
- Chapter 4: In this chapter the research questions are answered using primary sources from the analysis of data and secondary sources informing this study.
- Chapter 5: In this chapter justifications for making recommendations following the answering of the research questions are made and the study is concluded.
- Following the Conclusion chapter is the References section containing the list of secondary sources used in the study.
- The final section is the Appendices containing the primary sources used in the study.

Chapter 2: Literature review

Overview

2.1.   Defining curriculum and syllabus.

2.2.   Language, Learning and Pedagogy.

2.3.   English language teaching approaches in Albania.

2.4.   The practice of Teaching through Media in Albania.

2.5.   The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning,

       Teaching, Assessment.

2.6.   Texts as resources for language learning.

Overview

The following chapter reviews the literature relevant for informing this study and for answering the research questions in this study. The chapter begins with defining the terms curriculum and syllabus. This is followed by examining the literature to build up knowledge about language, learning and pedagogy. Literature concerning English language learning in Albania is then reviewed followed by a review of the practice of teaching through media in Albania. This is followed by a review of The European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching document. Reviewing the literature concerning the use of texts as resources for language learning completes this literature review.

2.1   Defining curriculum and syllabus

In order to analyze the function and purpose of current approaches and practices in the teaching and learning of English language in Albanian elementary schools, it is important to understand institutional structures, in terms of curriculum and syllabus, which guide and frame practices and approaches.

Curricula are used as guidelines or directives in education in general and therefore in language teaching and learning. The literature points to different approaches to the design of language curriculum (Yalden 1983; Nunan, 1998; Celce-Murcia & Olshtain, 2000). The main points

coming out of these studies are that language teaching and learning curricula models are formulated according to pedagogic perspectives and theoretical orientations directing how language should be taught. The way a curriculum is outlined and what it contains indicates how a subject or course should be taught and learnt through a focus on goals, aims and objectives, directing desired student outcomes and the teaching approach a teacher should use.

Differing definitions for curriculum are apparent in the literature. Celce-Murcia & Olshtain (2000) define a curriculum as a document that provides a framework or a set of guidelines to teachers, educators and textbook writers which present overall perspectives that are applicable to a variety of programs and courses, at a state or district level, or a school or university level. Curricula, according to Candlin (in Nunan 1988) are "concerned with making general statements about language learning, learning purpose and experience, evaluation, and the role relationships of the teacher and learners", (p. 3) A curriculum document or framework is important for textbook writers, test developers and program evaluators. This is because, according to Celce-Murcia & Olshtain , (2000), a curricula framework or document provides these material and test developers with clear unambiguous guidelines for developing materials courses and assessment instruments.

Confusingly the term curriculum is often used interchangeably with syllabus. Nunan (1998) believe a syllabus, in contrast to a curriculum, deals more specifically with localized planning at the classroom level. Breen (in R. Carter and D. Nunan, eds, 2001) describes syllabus as part of an overall language course or curriculum, in terms of the specific plan enacted through teaching which identifies what content students and teachers will engage with depending on the overall goal of the syllabus and the aims, content, methodology and evaluation according to desired curriculum outcomes.

Breen (in R. Carter and D. Nunan, eds, 2001) believes a syllabus can consist of a formal document with aims and content described according to an institutional or national program designed for a particular group of learners. Alternatively a syllabus can be described as the content material found in published textbooks. Whilst every classroom teacher traditionally follows a syllabus, it can vary from being a day-by-day choice of content found in a textbook or content accessed from a formally documented course.

In consideration of textbooks as syllabus, Scarino and Liddicoat (2009) believe "all language textbooks, traditionally the main resource for language learning input beyond that provided by the teacher, is limited and constrained because of the personal stances, views and objectives of the developer or developers" (p. 59). They indicate the problematic nature of using textbooks in language learning, pointing out textbooks are   "not always designed to meet the needs of

particular learners, respond to local needs or provide locally relevant content" (p.59). Littlejohn (1998) believes whilst textbooks can be viewed as fixed and therefore unchangeable and thereby should be followed by teachers faithfully and systematically, they should, like any other materials or resources, be viewed starting points for teaching and learning. Furthermore Littlejohn (1998) asserts textbooks should be adapted, changed or supplemented according to teaching goals and the needs and interests of students.

Hutchinson and Waters (1987) describe a syllabus as "a document which says what will (or at least what should) be learnt" (p. 80). A syllabus is therefore viewed as predetermined within institutionalized frameworks, usually a curriculum, in which most teaching occurs. Hutchinson and Waters (1987) point out the complexity of issues involved in a syllabus and thereby state there are a number of alternative ways a syllabus can be defined, dependents on the statement of what will be learnt which then passes through several stages, each imposing an additional layer of interpretation which describe the criteria by which a syllabus can be organized and broken down to manageable units based. Hutchinson and Waters (1987) indicate this analysis can be achieved by examining the Contents list or page of a syllabus. They give the examples of :

- a topic syllabus in which content is ordered according to topics

- a structural/situational syllabus in which content is ordered according to a situation which is then used to teach structural or grammatical points of language

- a functional/notional syllabus which content is ordered according to functions and notions with language taught through these functions and notions such as within a science syllabus, a skills syllabus in which skills such as academic literacy events including study techniques, taking part in seminars, note taking, and the research, organization and writing or presentation of text types are taught.

- a situational syllabus in which content is ordered according to a specific situational language learning need such as English for secretaries.

- a functional/task-based syllabus in which content is ordered according to the function of tasks specific to, for example, English for business.

- a discourse/skills syllabus in which content is ordered according to generalized or specific discourse skills such as writing a paragraph, organizing an essay, application of reading strategies to a text.

- skills and strategies with content ordered around topics which contain exercises such as examining job needs, how to make meaning of a job advertisement, how to personally evaluate your needs to learn a language.

Hutchinson and Waters (1987) conclude that although breaking down a syllabus into neat descriptions is difficult due to the complexities of overlaps and combinations of syllabus types as they describe occurring, the point they are making is that each syllabus "carries certain assumptions about the nature of language and learning"(p. 88). The authors stress that these assumptions are not always explicit.

Richards (The official website of applied linguist Dr. Jack C Richards, accessed 2.12.2012) contends it is the combination of a theory of language and language learning underpinning an instructional curriculum or syllabus design which results in the development of language learning principles which guide the process of teaching and learning. Therefore Richards believes different instructional designs in language teaching and learning can reflect different understandings of language and of language learning because the theory of language and language learning underlying an instructional design leads to further levels of specification. These include learning objectives or the goals of teaching and learning, syllabus design determining the units of organization for a language program, the roles of the teacher and learner in the classroom and the kinds of activities and practices used in the language program. Richards further explains that an explicit instructional design at the level of theory of language and learning can be applied in many different ways at the levels of objectives, teacher and learner role and activities therefore it is referred to as an approach to language learning.

2.2 Language, Learning and Pedagogy

In order to develop an understanding of the existing pedagogy underpinning the teaching learning of foreign languages in Albania, common methods and approaches used in language teaching are reviewed. The review of relevant literature pertaining to language, learning and pedagogy is for the purpose of aligning methods and approaches to language teaching with current methods and approaches used in Albania evidenced in the data analysis undertaken in this study.

From de Silva Joyce and Feez (2012) comes the understanding that methods and approaches to language education originating in the 19th century were based on a belief that "language is separate from content" (p. 57) . From this rose the belief that learning language is a skill, so from this came the belief that students should firstly be, according to de Silva Joyce and Feez

(2012) "taught language in the form of separate and discrete components and sub skills, beginning with the smallest and simplest components and progressing to larger and more complex ones" (p. 58). Secondly came the belief this necessitated "a skills-based approach involves intensive teacher-controlled practice including repetition, drilling and memorization" (de Silva Joyce and Feez, 2012, p. 58).

Scarino and Liddicoat (2009) point out traditionally language was viewed as a code by which "language is made up of words and a series of rules that connect words together" (p.16). From this narrow understanding of language, according to Scarino and Liddicoat (2009), comes the view " language learning just involves learning vocabulary and the rules for constructing sentences" (p. 16) thereby language as seen as "fixed and finite and does not explore the complexities involved in using language for communication" (p. 16). Feez (1992) suggests the old idea that language learners learn a fixed set of grammatical structures in a fixed order does not make sense when we think about language in terms of whole texts being used purposefully in social contexts. According to Shepard (2000, p. 4) "dominant theories of the past continue to operate as the default framework affecting and driving current practices and perspectives".

An alternative to the view of language as a code is to consider language as a social practice, thereby according to Scarino and Liddicoat (2009), language "is not a thing to be studied but a way of seeing, understanding and communicating about the world and each language user uses his or her language(s) differently to do this" (p.16). From researchers viewing language and language an learning from a functional perspective of language and language such as Halliday (1975), Painter (1984), and Mickan (2012, in press) comes the understanding that language is the social practice of meaning making and therefore used for purposeful communication and for building understandings and knowledge by participating in the social practices of, for example, families, schooling, higher education, trades, professions, organizations, cultural celebrations and other practices. Furthermore Kramsch (1994)   believes language is not a body of rules and knowledge to be learnt but a social practice in which to participate. Mickan (2012, in press) explains the assumption of social theory is we learn from our socialization experiences, from our interactions with people using cultural tools and experiences because people are meaning-makers. Therefore essential to human experience is to make sense or make meanings through and in our relationships with material and mental environments.

As stated by Scarino and Liddicoat (2009) "Teachers who view language simply as code make acquiring grammar and vocabulary the primary, if not the only, goal of language learning. Within such a limited approach, students do not begin to engage with language as a

communicative reality but simply as an intellectual exercise or as a work requiring memorizing" (p.16)

According to de Silva Joyce and Feez (2012), knowledge about language has increased over the last five decades, resulting in curriculum and syllabus planners and language teachers and educators being influenced by a series of approaches in designing language learning programs. In addition, according to Scarino and Liddicoat (2009), current day understandings of language teaching and learning indicates an important relationship between the theory underpinning language teaching and learning approaches, stating "a good theory can be immensely practical, just as excellent practice informs theory-making. It is learning theory that provides big picture understandings when teachers wish to reconsider and potentially change their practices." (p. 23). Therefore underpinning or influencing language teaching learning methods and approaches over the years have been various pervasive theories of learning.

Behaviorism as a theory of learning appeared in the 1940s and 1950's based on positively or negatively reinforced stimulus-response associations, characterized according to Scarino and Liddicoat (2009) as entailing a staged step-by-step process involving "the accumulation of atomized bits of knowledge that are sequenced and ordered hierarchically. Each item of knowledge (called 'objectives' in curriculums and programs) is to be learned independently on the assumption that this makes learning more manageable. All the constituent parts of learning are to be mastered before proceeding to the next part (objective) in the hierarchy, gradually leading to a complex whole" (p.33). Learning is viewed to be taking place through the forming of habits in response to a stimulus in approaches which context and task dependent as "learning is broken down into ever-smaller, analytic parts that are no longer integrated to form a whole" (p. 33).

Underpinning approaches to language teaching and learning and challenging behaviorisms are what Scarino and Liddicoat (2009) describe as various cognitive theories pointing to the concept of metacognition which "introduced the concept of a thinking mind" (p.34) thereby learning is viewed "as a process of active construction whereby each individual makes sense of new information in his/her mind by mapping it onto his/her existing framework of knowledge and understanding" (p. 34). Cognitive theories, according to Scarino and Liddicoat (2009) further orientate learning as context-dependent or 'situated' thereby "new knowledge can only be taken in when connected to existing knowledge structures ... learning involves a process of making connections" (p. 34). Scarino and Liddicoat (2009) point out cognitive theories of learning concern how unrelated bits of knowledge and experience are organized into new patterns, creating integrated wholes, thereby learning takes place through students relating

new experiences to prior knowledge thus creating new meanings, generally expressed through language. In cognitive learning theories, according to Scarino and Liddicoat (2009) "language, meaning and thinking are closely related" (p. 34) .

Further underpinning language teaching and learning methods and approaches are sociocultural theories of learning which not only consider the relationship between thinking but also the social, cultural, institutional and historical context in which learning takes place. From Vygotsky (1978) comes the constructivist orientation within sociocultural learning theories and the understanding that learning is embedded in culture and society and is takes place in mediated processes. Learning according to Vygotsky (1978) occurs through social interaction with more knowledgeable others thereby mediating the construction of knowledge as learners make meaning of the social and cultural practices and processes in which learning takes place through socialization in which language is integral. From Vygotsky (1978), therefore comes the understanding learning is socially constructed, dynamic and developmental and mediated through language and other tools by which learning is supported or scaffold by supportive situated interactions with more knowledgeable others in what Vygotsky (1978) terms the 'zone of proximal development' through which learning develops over time.

In a social semiotic theorized perspective to language and language and learning within sociocultural theories of learning, Halliday (1993) in developing a language based theory of learning, contends from studies concerning language development in children, it is apparent language development is learning how to mean through engaging in semiotic processes. Halliday (1993) believes human learning is fundamentally semiotic in nature therefore learning processes should be modeled in terms of "the way children construe their resources for meaning. - how they simultaneously engage in "learning language" and "learning through language." "(p. 94). From this perspective Halliday (1993) believes it is "appropriate that a general theory of learning, interpreted as "learning through language," should be grounded in whatever is known about "learning language." ... "the salient features of what happens when children learn language which could be taken account of within the framework of a language-based theory of learning" (p. 113).

Furthermore, according to Halliday (1993) language functions as what he terms the "signifier" for higher level systems of meaning, giving the example of scientific theories. Halliday (1993) believes "learning as a semiotic process is obviously consistent with verbal learning, which includes all learning in educational contexts" (p. 113). Further to this Halliday (1993) believes nonverbal learning is learning systems of meaning and "characteristic of the human species: once having evolved the power of semiotic, we encode all of our experience in semiotic terms"

(p. 113). Halliday (1993) states "the prototypical resource for making meaning is language" (p. 113).

In understanding the development of language teaching methods and approaches, according to de Silva Joyce and Feez (2012), at the beginning of the 20th century the focus on language learning was in the teaching of vocabulary and rules of grammar, through the grammar translation method. This emanated from the teaching of languages in Europe and the US prior to the late 1800's, when language was taught in the same way as any other school or university subject. Therefore teachers used the native language of students to introduce rules of grammar and vocabulary about the target language which was followed by translation exercises, thereby students learnt grammar and vocabulary by direct translations with a focus on the written not spoken language.

According to Mickan (2004) the grammar translation method is one of the universal language teaching methods which continue to be practiced nowadays usually in combination with other approaches. Skehan (1998) points out grammar -based approaches are used in many contexts all over the world, and whilst Skehan (1998) believes these approaches are not theoretically or contextually based and do not lead to communicative fluency, teachers continue to teach this way because they are comfortable in using traditional grammar-based approaches. According to Mickan (2004) grammar-translation involves teaching through students learning traditional grammar rules, where language is defined structurally and classified as grammatical items such as nouns, verbs and adjectives. Teaching languages this way, according to Mickan (2004) is viewed by many teachers as being suitable for large class sizes, with students spending class time listening to the teacher explaining rules of grammar and students required to do exercises involving translating sentences as well as writing exercises which the teacher corrected. Johnson and Johnson (1999) point out in cases when the class sizes are very large and consist of 30-40 students or more, the use grammar translation method is preferred as an easier and more efficient method of teaching and examining student knowledge of the grammatical structure of language.

Mickan (2004) claims that the biggest criticism of the grammar translation method is that texts are broken into single items thereby ignoring the social functions and meaning of the language. Problematic are assumptions that learning the grammar of a language   proceeds communication. A further problem with a grammar approach to language learning identified by Mickan (2012, pre- publication p. 18) is "grammatical knowledge does not translate into language use nor transfer to different communicative functions".

Subsequent developments, arising from dissatisfaction with the Grammar Translation Method led to the Audio-Lingual method in the United States and the Oral Approach or Situational Language Teaching in Britain. From de Silva Joyce and Feez (2012) comes the understanding structural and audio-lingual approaches were further developed within situational teaching settings in teacher-centered one size fits all pedagogic approaches which continue to be very influential in curriculum settings. In these approaches, influenced by behaviorisms and cognitive theories of learning, the focus is on written language at the expense of spoken interaction, with the teacher controlling and implementing the topics, exercises and activities.

As pointed out by de Silva Joyce and Feez (2012) in structural approaches in situational teaching language teaching programs students are given opportunities to practice language components in more meaningful ways than the Grammar Translation Method in which the teaching of rules of grammar and vocabulary was the focus so it could be applied in the translation of texts of literature or other specialized study. However as more people started to use English for functional purposes like work and travel, the Grammar Translation Method gave way to audio-lingual and structural and situational teaching as occurred, according to Kromidha and Tabaku, (2011), in Albania.

In structural approaches to language learning as indicated by de Silva Joyce and Feez (2012) the teaching syllabus or program is sequenced according to the grammatical structures being learnt and speaking and listening activities are included. Grammatical structures however continue to be taught as discrete items and the language used to exemplify them is usually isolated from any meaningful content or context. Therefore in order for students to gain more opportunities to practice language components in more meaningful ways, situational teaching programs were developed which integrated target vocabulary and structures into dialogues related to everyday settings and situations such as going to a restaurant, buying a ticket etc. Because the structures are selected before being integrated into the setting, the language or texts used in situational dialogues can lack authenticity and seem contrived and stilted.

According to de Silva Joyce and Feez (2012) structural and situational approaches can be useful for students when first learning the target language because they need to be able to quickly memorize simple formulaic expressions in order to manage, for example, everyday transactions or greetings. These approaches are not so effective however for developing fluent language use or supporting students as they move beyond the early stages of language learning to the more advanced specialized language needed for community participation, education, training or skilled employment. According to de Silva Joyce and Feez (2012), in a skills based structural approach in teacher-centered pedagogy, a disconnect occurs between learning

language in the form of discrete language components as opposed to actual real authentic language use. This leaves students unprepared to meet the increasingly complex language and literacy demands of the 21st century.

In the 1970's, according to de Silva Joyce and Feez (2012) as progressive pedagogies appeared, the focus on language learning course design shifted away from learning language as discrete items to focusing instead on meaning making, including comprehension and interaction. In communicative teaching approaches to language, teachers focus on designing opportunities for students to use the target language for authentic communication through an approach known as Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) which, according to Richards and Rogers (2001) and Brown (2007) is still widely used across the world.

CLT emerged between the 1970's – 1980's as an approach by which teachers and teaching institutions began to rethink their teaching approach and the materials used in the classroom. This, according to Richards (2006), led to the planning of language courses within a communicative approach rather than a grammar focus used as the dominant approach over the years. However implementing communicative teaching successfully, according to Mickan (2009) relies on teaching in contexts such as small class sizes, the availability of resources and materials, and creating situations and activities in which students are encouraged to communicate in pair and groups work. The success of this approach depends on high levels of teacher proficiency because communicative language teaching increased the time teachers need to prepare the lessons.

The design of CLT, according to de Silva Joyce and Feez (2012) is based on elements which include topics, functions and notions and language skills. Topics are described as the starting point in teaching drives the teaching sequence which should be organized to reflect on real life functions described as communicative purposes exemplified in a topic about job seeking might be organized to reflect the real life sequence a job seeker has to go through. In a topic based approach to language learning, this enables a student to apply knowledge of the topic across related contexts of language use. Functions in communicative language teaching comprise communicative language used for specific purpose such as greetings, apologizing and suggesting whereas notions are general areas of meaning such as time or emotions used for communicative purposes.

In functional-notional approaches to language teaching, according to de Silva Joyce and Feez (2012), a link is made between target functions and notions to specific language structures however these only make up part of a whole instance of meaningful authentic real language use. In terms of language skills and strategies, de Silva Joyce and Feez (2012) describe language

skills or macro-skills as listening, speaking, reading, viewing and writing. Because students in communicative language teaching approaches, according to de Silva Joyce and Feez (2012), are often taught strategies for using these skills especially when digital technologies are used in language learning, the macro-skills are becoming increasingly integrated in many contexts, these needs to be reflected in the design of language teaching programs.

Indicative of progressive approaches to teaching and learning languages, Scarino and Liddicoat (2009) believe one of the major developments in language teaching emerging in the 1980s, alongside communicative language teaching, was the task-based approach. This approach recognized that whilst students needed to have knowledge of the structure of a language, they also needed to develop the ability to use language to achieve communicative purposes. Therefore language learning was not described in terms of lists of language items, but in terms of tasks that learners could accomplish. Richards and Rodgers (2001), in describing the task-based approach to communicative language learning, state tasks should involve an information gap and information transfers, therefore when learners work on the same task, each learner brings different information needed to complete the tasks.

Mickan (2011) believes task-based teaching through the analysis of tasks identifies language needed to perform specified tasks, however "in practice, the tasks are often mock performances with tasks devised for language rehearsal" (p. 17). Problematic according to Mickan (2011) is the "analysis of the language of tasks assumes a predictable relationship between the grammar and the language needed to perform tasks" (p. 17) . As Mickan (2011) points out "in natural language use, tasks are performed with different discourse selections due to speakers' preferences, proficiency, and purposes" (p.17) .

Mickan (2011) states genre-based teaching is becoming increasingly influential with the focus on spoken and written genres, using authentic examples as models. In the genre-based approach the "grammar of the texts is analyzed as functional for realization of the social purposes of texts" (p. 17) . However as Mickan (2011) contends in the "applications of genre teaching, the analysis of the linguistic elements comprising texts dominates with a consequent neglect of the social purposes of texts" (p. 17).

Sharing features with task-based approaches to language teaching and learning in which instruction is based around tasks, are text based approaches, in which texts are selected as the framework for teaching and learning. In the text based approach, texts are viewed, according to Richards (The official website of applied linguist Dr. Jack C Richards, accessed 2.11.2012), as structured sequences of language that are used in specific contexts in specific ways.

A text based approach theorized from the social semiotic perspective (Halliday, 1975, 1978), is a language learning and teaching approach in which learners make meaning in response to texts according to the social purpose of texts. Texts, according to Mickan (2012, in press) are understood as a way to describe the language or discourses which mediate social practices of communities. Through a text-based approach to language learning, students are familiarized with texts, by firstly building on their prior knowledge and experiences and then with the purposes and practices of the texts and discourses they encounter. In a text-based approach, according to Mickan (2012, in press) texts are selected to organize lessons according to the needs and local circumstances of the students. Because in the social theory grounded text-based approach to language teaching and learning lexicogrammar and meaning are not separated, according to Mickan (2012, in press), students learn language in a text-based approach through understanding how texts function to make meaning because instructional texts are selected which are recognizable, relevant, authentic and real for learners and representative of community practices.

According to the Richards (The official website of applied linguist Dr. Jack C Richards, accessed 1.11.2012), a text-based approach to language teaching and learning focuses on preparing learners for real-world uses of English. Therefore in a text-based approach, learners in different contexts master the use of the text types which occur frequently in specific contexts. In a text-based approach, designed to focus on language skill development within a whole text, the structured and grammatical features of written, spoken and multimodal texts are explicitly taught through linking written and spoken texts to cultural contexts and practices of use through guided units of work as students learn to meaningfully communicate through their developing language skills. In other words, as stated by Mickan (2012, in press), the text, spoken or written, becomes the unit of instruction thereby integrating reading, writing, listening and speaking in what Richards (The official website of applied linguist Dr. Jack C Richards, accessed 1.11.2012 2) describes as a type of mixed syllabus which specifies components of texts, including grammar, vocabulary, topics and functions.

Students therefore, in a text-based approach, learn how grammar functions within a text through the mastery of texts rather than in isolation because the structure of different text types is explicitly taught according to what Richards (The official website of applied linguist Dr. Jack C Richards, accessed 1.11.2012) describes as purpose features which guide students through to the scaffold production of their own texts. In other words, the text-based approach to language learning is based on the study of model or authentic texts and the creation of texts based on these authentic models.

The text-based approach is underpinned by social semiotic theory based on the concept of a text in relation to the systemic functional model of language theorized by Halliday (1978). Key to a text based approach according to Mickan (2012 in press) is the use of language for real purposes through language learning instruction in which students learn to make sense of texts and how texts function through the lexicogrammar within a text to make meaning. Teaching and learning through a text based approach based on written, spoken or multimodal texts enables students to make sense and meanings about the context in which they live because texts, according to Mickan (2012 in press), are threaded into the social fabric of relationships, work and leisure. In a text-based approach it is recognized different language is used for different purposes and in different circumstances, informal or specific, according to the terminology and lexicogrammar used to create the texts. Mickan (2012 in press) points out texts are therefore created through selection of wording from a language system. The text-based approach is therefore based on a definition of language as a system for making meanings in which texts represents what Halliday (1978) describes as the actualization of meaning potential.

2. 3   English language teaching approaches in Albania

Research conducted by Krodhima and Tabaku (2011) indicates many teachers are not moving from traditional foreign language grammar translation methods to the communicative approaches desired in foreign language curriculum renewal in Albania. Questionnaires distributed to 120 future teachers of English French, Italian, German Greek and Turkish studying in the Masters foreign language teaching program between 2010-2012 at the Tirana University in Albania, revealed the foreign language teacher training curricula directive aimed at insuring the development of key competencies in language and education and provision of practical experiences accomplished by using successful strategies in classroom activities which are student-centered, did not eventuate. Instead the study of Krodhima and Tabaku (2011) revealed the student teachers in their Masters education and training program had been exposed to predominately teacher guided exercises in teacher-centered learning environments in which students were expected, for example, to learn vocabulary by heart and write grammatically correct sentences using this learnt by heart vocabulary.

Krodhima and Tabaku (2011) indicate Albanian foreign language teachers are not changing their grammar based teaching approaches because they have not been exposed to approaches to alternative teaching approaches when they are trained to become teachers. Therefore they

rely on the teaching approaches and practices that they have experienced in their training. Krodhima and Tabaku (2011) state their belief that the practical training for future foreign language teachers consisting of one month teaching practice during the five years of teacher training is inadequate. They conclude that the desire for curriculum renewal and the enactment of progressive approaches to English language teaching will not occur in Albania until improvements in the teacher education and training curriculum are revised and renewed.

According to Seferaj (2009) in Albania before 1992 the traditional grammar translation method was used for foreign language teaching in teacher- centered, textbook-centered classrooms. Communicative approaches were not practiced at this time, according to Seferai (2009), due to the lack of teacher knowledge and training and the lack of resources in schools. Seferai (2009) believes this lack of knowledge and teacher training and lack of resources persists today in Albania.

Between the years 1992 and 1998, according to Krodhima and Tabaku (2011), educational institutions in Albania encountered a revision of curricula and new regulations in several fields, including the teaching and learning of foreign languages. These revisions were introduced during the academic year 1997-98 with the aim of providing what are described as greater prospects for the teaching process and for enhancing efficiency (Wold data of education, Donees mondiales de l'education , Datos mundiales de education, 2010/2011). Included in these revisions and renewal of foreign language teaching and learning in Albania, according to Krodhima and Tabaku (2011), has come the directive for the use of the communicative language teaching approach now recommended by the Ministry of Science and Education in Albania.

2.4   The practice of 'Teaching through Media' in Albania

Tafani (2004) in her book *Teaching Through Media* , a text book used in university teacher training courses in Albania, advocates the practice of teaching through media as a way for teachers to develop language skills and to meet the needs and interests of their students. Furthermore Tafani (2004, 2009), believes using media is stimulating because it promotes communication and collaboration among students and helps create a motivating and positive atmosphere.   Tafani (2004, 2009) states media can be used for various activities and tasks for learners in classrooms in which language learners have differing ability levels and different levels of knowledge. In addition Tafani (2004, 2009) asserts the use of media promotes critical thinking and can also motivate students to read for pleasure.

Through the use of media Tafani (2004, 2009) believes teachers are able to develop all four skills (reading, writing, listening and speaking) in an integrated way. Furthermore Tafani (2009) states "Media can help with many issues such as: motivation, clarity, recycling, drafting, revising, editing, variety, mixed-ability classes, updating information in the textbook, giving life and color to classroom procedures and methods, thus at the same time helping the students improve accuracy and fluency. There are a lot of issues that can or cannot be solved by media" (p. 94)

Tafani (2009) analyses the importance of what she terms 'Mass Media' in 'Media Education' in the classroom and recommends teachers find ways of using 'Printed and Audio-visual Media' in the classroom, because media is "persuasive and pervasive" (p. 83). Tafani (2009) further contends media provides "students with a lot of language practice through activities using newspapers, magazines, radio, TV, movies, books, Internet, etc., and tasks which develop reading, writing, speaking and listening skills. They entertain students and encourage reading English in general, both inside and outside the classroom, promoting extensive reading by giving the students the confidence, the motivation and the ability to continue their reading outside the classroom" (p. 81). Tafani (2009) believes in the use of mass media in the classroom because "above all they enhance motivation" (p.83).

Furthermore Tafani (2009) believes 'Media Education', including in the teaching and learning of English, is important because. " it develops students' creative powers for those images, words and sounds that come to the students from various Media. Thus, creating more active and critical media users, who will always be more demanding in the future ... (the) aim is to enable students to develop critical thinking, analyzing and reflecting on their experiences while using various means of Media" (p. 83).

Tafani (2009) states "We can exploit a piece of learning materials offered by various Media in several different ways through: analyzing a text in the book, reading and generating ideas from a text in the newspaper or magazine, watching and discussing a TV program or a movie, classroom presentations, exercises and activities using various kinds of Media, pair and group work, reconstructing the text based on the above information brought from different Media, engaging students in useful writing and revision activities, etc." (p. 82). Furthermore Tafani (2009) believes in the successful use of multimedia in the classroom and teaching through media it is important to recognize that media, giving the example of information found on the

Internet, is a tool which can be used to assist in teaching and learning English, dependent upon the "students' and teachers' ability not only to examine and make sense of information they encounter, but also to evaluate this information" (p. 94).

2.5   The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment

Foreign language curriculum renewal in Albania seeks to align the teaching and learning of foreign language according to The Common European Framework.   A function of The Framework is to provide a comprehensive, transparent and coherent framework for language learning, teaching and assessment which relates to what is described as a "very general view of language use and learning". (para 1, Council of Europe: Education and Languages, Language Policies website)

The Framework recommends what is termed an 'action-oriented' approach to teaching and learning foreign languages in which users and learners of a language are viewed as 'social agents'. Individuals in the action based approach to language learning recommended in the European Framework are therefore viewed as social agents performing tasks in which actions are performed according to specific competencies. The action based approach is therefore explained in very general terms, with interpretations left up to EU member countries.

Language use and learning is described in the European Framework as *"Language use, embracing language learning, comprises the actions performed by persons who as individuals and as social agents develop a range of competences, both general and in particular communicative language competences. They draw on the competences at their disposal in various contexts under various conditions and under various constraints to engage in language activities involving language processes to produce and/or receive texts in relation to themes in specific domains, activating those strategies which seem most appropriate for carrying out the tasks to be accomplished. The monitoring of these actions by the participants leads to the reinforcement or modification of their competences" (p.9)*

In The Framework it is pointed out that "learners, teachers, course designers, authors of teaching material and test designers are inevitably involved in this process of focusing on a particular dimension and deciding on the extent to which other dimensions should be considered and ways of taking account of these" (p.10). Further to this, The Framework

explains that "the often stated aim of a teaching/learning programmers is to develop communication skills (possibly because this is most representative of a methodological approach?), certain programmers in reality strive to achieve a qualitative or quantitative development of language activities in a foreign language, others stress performance in a particular domain, yet others the development of certain general competences, while others are primarily concerned with refining strategies" (p.10).

.Learning to communicatively interact, according to The Framework, involves not just learning to receive and to produce utterances but in the interactions which occur in language use and learning, central in communication. The Framework states "Mediating language activities – (re)processing an existing text – occupy an important place in the normal linguistic functioning of our societies" (p.14). Further to this The Framework describes how carrying out tasks involves language activities, necessitating the processing of oral or written texts through reception, production, interaction or mediation in an overall approach to language learning which is positioned as action-oriented. This orientation is through the belief a language learner "uses strategies linked to their competences and how they perceive or imagine the situation to be and on the other, the task or tasks to be accomplished in a specific context under particular conditions" (p.15). The Framework contends the relationship between strategies, task and text depends on the nature of the task..

The Framework contends "communication strategies and learning strategies are strategies among others, just as communicative tasks and learning tasks are but tasks among others. Similarly, 'authentic' texts or texts specially designed for teaching purposes, texts in textbooks or texts produced by learners are but texts among others" (p.16).

2. 6   Texts as resources for language learning

Halliday and Hasan (1976) describe a way of recognizing a text as "If a speaker of English hears or reads a passage of the language which is more than one sentence in length, he can normally decide without difficulty whether it forms a unified whole or just a collection of unrelated sentences" (p.1). Mickan (2004) affirms these describing texts as readymade resources which consist of a piece of spoken or written language in use. Within the Common European Framework text is described as "any sequence or discourse (spoken and/or written) related to a specific domain and which in the course of carrying out a task becomes the occasion of a language activity, whether as a support or as a goal, as product or process" (p. 15). The

30

Common European Framework of Reference states the "relationship between strategies, tasks and texts depends on the nature of the task" (p.15).

Arnold (1991) confirms this view stating the use of authentic resources are no guarantee that purposeful and authentic language learning will occur because the use of authentic materials resources depends on the teaching and learning pedagogic context in which they are used. Arnold (1991) argues that "the tension between the teaching-learning situation and the original communicative purpose of the resources being used is resolved if several types of authenticity come together: authentic materials and learners' purposes, authentic materials and authentic interactions, authentic responses, authentic participants, authentic status, settings and equipment and, authentic inputs and outputs" (Arnold, 1991 p. 237). Arnold (1991) points out in this way authentic materials can expose learners to actual and real modern day language use rather than idealized grammatical structures, thereby language learners can become closer to contact with the real world of the target language and culture. According to Arnold (1991) because authentic materials are developed or created within the cultural context of target language speakers, they carry with them values and ways of communicating particular to that culture.

Through the use of English medium texts, language students can be introduced to as Larsen - Freeman (2002) states, real context and natural examples of language. Through this perspective, texts can further be orientated as a text devised originally for fulfilling a social purpose within a language community therefore include according to (Crossley, Louwerse, McCarthy, McNamara, 2007, p. 17) "novels, poems, newspaper and magazine articles, handbooks and manuals, recipes, postcards, telegrams, advertisements, travel brochures, tickets, timetables, and telephone directories written in the target language for the genre-intended target language audience". Mickan, (2003, 2004, 2011, 2012 - in press) describes the use of authentic texts in language learning as resources for the learner to see and make meaning of language in action. This is confirmed by Wells (1990) who suggests that the use of authentic texts in the classroom provides the opportunity for the learner to experience language in action.

A study undertaken by Rings (1989) highlights some of the contrasting features in using authentic texts compared with traditional teaching material designed specifically for the purpose of teaching grammatical structure and vocabulary. Rings (1989) argues that traditional textbook authors have included "the perceived need to couch grammatical structures and

vocabulary items in a type of text with the intention to communicate something and have needs met, as well as increasing the desire for some sort of relationship with particular speakers or writers of a language" (p.35).

Sato and Kleinsasser (1999) believe when the goal of instruction is communicative competence, everyday authentic textual materials such as train schedules, newspaper articles, and travel Web sites should be adapted as classroom materials. This is because Sato and Kleinsasser (1999) believe in reading texts; communicative competence is developed by the learner through word and syntactic structure recognition and in the processing of meaning in the information contained within texts. Melvin and Stout (1987) found that students use authentic materials to study the culture in the language classroom, gain a better understanding of the practical benefits of being able to use language in real world circumstances. According to Guarantor and Morley (2001)   the use of authentic materials in the classroom can increase the motivation of students for language learning because the learner is exposed to real language in use. Furthermore Wilkins (1976) states "authentic texts embrace both the written and spoken word and help to bridge the gap between classroom knowledge and a student's capacity to participate in the real world events" (p. 79). The literature further indicates studies which have been conducted concerning the use of authentic texts in an EFL language classroom. Hovorakova (2009) describes her teaching project at higher primary schools with sixth, eighth and ninth graders in the Czech Republic, where she implemented authentic texts mostly pictures, leaflets and audio- video material into her English language teaching. Hovorakova (2009) states "authentic materials plays an important role in teaching a second language" (p. 198), concluding that authentic materials enriched the traditional lesson and the students were delighted with the change from the textbook because they found the texts interesting.

 Mekheimer (2011) undertook a study over a period of one academic year in King Khalid University, Abha, Saudi Arabia with a group of sixty four students using videos in the classroom for the purpose of gaining improvements in the four skills of reading, writing, listening and speaking in English. He reports that using videos in the English language lesson enables the students to become more engaged with and focused upon following the lesson. Mekheimer (2011) believes the use of videos produced more student-student, and student–teacher discussions and furthermore the participants in the research improved in all the skills of listening, speaking, writing, and reading after two semesters of English learning in which they were provided with video supported instruction. Mekheimer (2011) concludes that the use of authentic video texts assists students to make meaning of the text as well as presenting a

platform for integrated language skills instruction, which Mekheimer (2011) believes is a valuable approach to whole language teaching.

Mickan (2012 in press) describes his experiences in teaching with texts in a German foreign language program in Port Pirie, South Australia. The secondary school students, according to Mickan (2012 in press), were not motivated to speak German because the syllabus was based on grammar, the use of audio visual teaching materials and no real language was used such as transcribed or audio dialogues relating to the real lives of the students. In order to assist the students to read, write journals and to communicate about their lives and interests in German, Mickan (2012 in press) reports bringing German magazines, newspaper articles, and letters as texts themed around topics that interested the students. Mickan (2012 in press) concludes "teaching with selected texts reduced my stress in class as the students were not repeating meaningless expression and dialogue or doing exercises on decontextualized grammar. They become independent learners and were able to write and communicate with their pen-pals in Germany, also the lesson become livelier" Mickan (2012, pre- publication copy p.88).

Littlejohn, (1998) believes confirming Arnold (1991), and The Common European Framework, the selection of resources and how these resources are adapted for teaching purposes is important in terms of how it is used for language teaching and learning, particularly what learners will be required to do with the resource. This is because, according to Littlejohn (1998), each exercise, activity or task developed around a resource constructs a way for students to engage with language and culture. Therefore activities, exercises and tasks can limit or develop opportunities for student engagement. Littlejohn (1998) gives the example of a text reading task in which students undertake an exercise or activity based on engaging with superficial issues such as finding specific information in the text, rather than using the text for developing interpretation, textual analysis, engagement with and questioning of issues and themes within the text or comparison with other texts.

Scarino and Liddicoat (2009) stress the authenticity of purpose must be considered when authentic resources are used in language learning because tasks and activities can limit opportunities for student engagement. Scarino and Liddicoat (2009) give the example of a text reading task in which students engage with superficial issues such as locating information in the text, however the same text could be used for developing interpretation, analysis and reflection, personal engagement with themes and issues, comparison with other texts or questioning aspects of the text's message.

Chapter 3: Research methodology

The following chapter describes

3.1 The research approach

3.2 The research site

3.3. The participants

3.4 Data collection

3.5 Ethical considerations

3.1 The Research approach

This study is qualitative in approach. According to Denzin and Lincoln (1994), qualitative research includes a naturalistic and interpretive approach, which means that in the natural setting in which a study takes place, researchers seek to make sense of phenomena. Qualitative research includes the studied use and gathering of a range of empirical materials such as a life story, a case study, an introspection, an historical study, a personal experience, an interview, visual texts and observations undertaken in real settings. The information from qualitative data sources, according to Neergaard & Ulhoi (2007) explains the regular and real lives of individuals.

In this study observations are undertaken in the real setting of five classrooms in two elementary school classrooms in Albania. Further to this real setting data sources such as Department of Science and Education curriculum documents sourced from the branch office in a town in Albania are analysed along with an English language textbook series used in the real setting of Albanian English language classrooms in elementary schools in Albania. The personal experiences of 5 teachers and 94 students are gained through a questionnaire and survey designed to help build up an in depth real picture of English language teaching and learning in Albania.

3.2 The research site

The research site for this study is two primary schools in Elbasan in Albania, where English teachers and students in the Grades 6, 7 and 9 levels were observed in classroom lessons and interviewed via a questionnaire and survey in order to build up an understanding of the pedagogy underpinning English language teaching and learning in elementary schools in Albania. The questionnaire and survey were originally designed to gain an understanding of the use of authentic texts, specifically media texts, in English language classrooms however as is the

nature of qualitative research, after researching via the literature and through analysing the themes arising in the data through member checking with other students also undertaking Masters dissertations, the study shifted to examining the pedagogy underpinning English language teaching and learning in Albania, of which the use of authentic media texts is one aspect.

In order to gain an understanding of the research site Elbasan, it is necessary to gain an understanding of Albania as a country. Albania is a country in south Eastern Europe and is officially known as the Republic of Albania. It is shares boundaries with Kosovo to the northeast, Montenegro to the northwest, Greece to the south and southeast and Macedonia to the east. To the west is the coastline of the Adriatic Sea and to the southwest there is the coastline of the Ionian Sea. Albania is just less than 72 km from Italy, across the Strait of Otranto which links the Adriatic Sea to the Ionian Sea (US Department of State: Diplomacy in action, background note Albania, 2012).

Image 1: Republic of Albania

(Source US Department of State: Diplomacy in action, background note: Albania, 2012).

The total area of Albania is 28,748 square kilometres. The country is covered around 70% by the rugged mountains. The total population of the country according to 2011 figures is 2,994,667. The official language is Albanian. The city of Elbasan is located in the central Albania and is one of the largest cities in Albania with a 2011 population of 79,810 and is historically the Islamic centre of Albania.

In Albania, education is compulsory from Grades 1 to 9. Most students continue on to complete secondary education. Students have to pass the graduation exam at the end of the 9th grade and

at the end of the 12th grade in order to continue further with their education (Education, 2009). There are approximately 5000 schools in Albania including both private and public with most schools being public therefore financed through government funding. In this study observations were conducted in five classes in two elementary public schools in Elbasan city.

3. 3 Participants in the study

The participants were 5 female elementary school English language teachers aged beaten 25 to 45 years. The teaching experience of the teachers ranges from 2 to 20 years, with an average of 10 years. All teachers had completed a teaching diploma in English language.

In order to add to the picture of understanding the pedagogy underpinning English language learning in Albania 94 students of aged between 10 to 15 years were surveyed and 8 teachers from two elementary schools in Elbasan were sent an email questionnaire. The inexperience of the researcher in designing questions for use in surveys and questionnaires is acknowledged therefore, although being originally designed to gain an understanding of the importance of the use of authentic texts in English language classrooms thereby the questions inappropriately positioned for research purposes because they influenced the answers, the teacher and student comments should be viewed as assisting with building up an understanding of the pedagogy underpinning English language teaching and learning in Albania.

3.4 Data collection methods

According to Struwig & Stead (2007), primary data is the new data which is collected for the purposes of a study. The secondary data is the data that is pre-existing in other sources which inform the study being undertaken. In terms of primary data source collection, observations were undertaken in five classrooms in two public elementary schools in Elbasan over a period of three weeks in January 2012. English language classes were conducted over 45 minute lessons. Teacher interviews were conducted prior to and after the lesson lasting 3- 5 minutes. Audio recordings or filming was not permitted in the classrooms therefore data was collected in the form of field notes taken during observations (see Appendix I).

In addition to observations, primary sources of data collected are the textbook series AmBri approved for use as an English language syllabus in Albanian elementary schools by the Ministry of Education and Science together with curriculum documents from the Elbasan branch of the Ministry (see Appendix D, Appendix H).In terms of secondary data sources, a review of the literature relevant to informing the aim, objectives and research questions in this

study was undertaken. Triangulation is achieved in this research through the use of multiple primary and secondary data sources.

3. 5 Ethical considerations

Prior permission from the schools and teacher participants was gained before undertaking classroom observations and interviews and the teacher questionnaire which was conducted by email. The purpose for undertaking the student survey was clearly communicated to the students before they were asked to undertake the survey within their English language classes. The students were informed the survey was not compulsory. The researcher now realizes parental or guardian permission was also required. Teachers and students were informed their identity would be kept confidential and no names would be used of teachers, students and schools and the information collected would only be used for the academic purpose of undertaking a Masters dissertation.

Chapter 4 : Analysis and Discussion

Overview

4.1 Introduction

4.2 Analysis and discussion of the data relevant to building up an understanding of the language learning pedagogy underpinning the textbook AmBri recommended as an English language syllabus in elementary schools in Albania.

 4.2.1 Textbook analysis Welcome to AmBri and A Trip to AmBri (Grade 3-9)

4.3 Analysis and discussion of the data relevant to building up an understanding of the language learning pedagogy underpinning the teaching through media lesson in which a magazine text is used.

 4.3.1 Teaching through Media Lesson using magazine "Summer"

4.4 Analysis and discussion of the data relevant to building up an understanding of the language learning pedagogy underpinning the teaching through media lesson in which a video is used.

 4.4.1 Teaching through Media lesson using a video

4.5 Overall conclusion of the analysis of the purpose and function of the textual content of a unit in the AmBri textbook series and two teaching through media lessons.

Overview

The purpose of this chapter is to answer the research questions through analyzing the primary data sources and discussing the findings in relation to the secondary data sources. The research questions are answered through examining the purpose and function of a unit in one of the AmBri textbooks, a recommended syllabus used to teach and learn English language between grades 3-9 in elementary schools in Albania. In addition the purpose and function of using two different media texts in the practice of teaching English through media in two elementary classes in Albania is examined. Through answering the research questions, this chapter seeks to fulfill the aim of this study which is to identify the pedagogy underpinning English language teaching and learning in elementary schools in Albania. This chapter also seeks to fulfill the objectives of this study which are:

Aim of the study

- To identify the pedagogy underpinning English language teaching and learning in elementary schools in Albania

 Objectives of the study

- To identify the language learning pedagogy underpinning the English language textbook syllabus, the AmBri series (Tafani, Vasquez,and Leksi , 2008 *A trip to AmBri* ;and Tafani, and Vasquez, 2008, *Welcome to AmBri*)

- To identify the language learning pedagogy underpinning the practice of 'Teaching through Media' (Tafani, 2004, 2009).

- To understand if the foreign language curriculum renewal desire for communicative fluency aligned with the Common European framework is occurring in Albanian elementary school English language classrooms.

- To recommend and justify the use of the text-based approach for teaching and learning foreign languages in Albania which complements the existing practice of teaching through media by providing a social semiotic theory of language and language and learning pedagogy to this practice as well as achieving the Common European Framework outcome of communicative fluency.

Research questions

This study investigates the following research questions:

- What pedagogical approach to English language teaching and learning is indicated through analysing the purpose and function of the textual content of a unit in the AmBri (Tafani, et al, 2008) series textbook syllabus used to teach English language in elementary school Grade 3-9 English language classrooms in Albania?
- What pedagogical approach to English language teaching and learning is indicated by analysing the purpose and function of the use of media in relation to the aims an objectives of an English language lesson in which the practice of 'teaching through media' (Tafani, 2004, 2008) occurs in English language programs in elementary school

classrooms in Albania?

- Is the desired curriculum renewal outcome of communicative fluency in English revealed in the analysis of the textual content of a unit in AmBri, and in the analysis of the use of media in English language elementary classrooms?

4.1 Introduction

During the period of data collecting in Albania in January 2012, after inquiring if there was an official foreign language curriculum or English language curriculum at the Ministry of Science and Education branch in the town in which classroom observations in two elementary schools were undertaken, two documents were produced. These were firstly the Materiale Burimore per Legjislacionin Arsimor (Basic Materials for Education - see Appendix D) which outlines official government education policies and secondly a booklet written in English titled Programme Structure (Appendix H). This booklet outlines the English language programme structure (Grade VIII level) and explained as exemplifying the format by which guidelines for structuring the English language program are supplied for each level of English language teaching in elementary schools (Grade 3-9). This booklet could to be described as a curriculum document because it contains overall aims and educational aims.
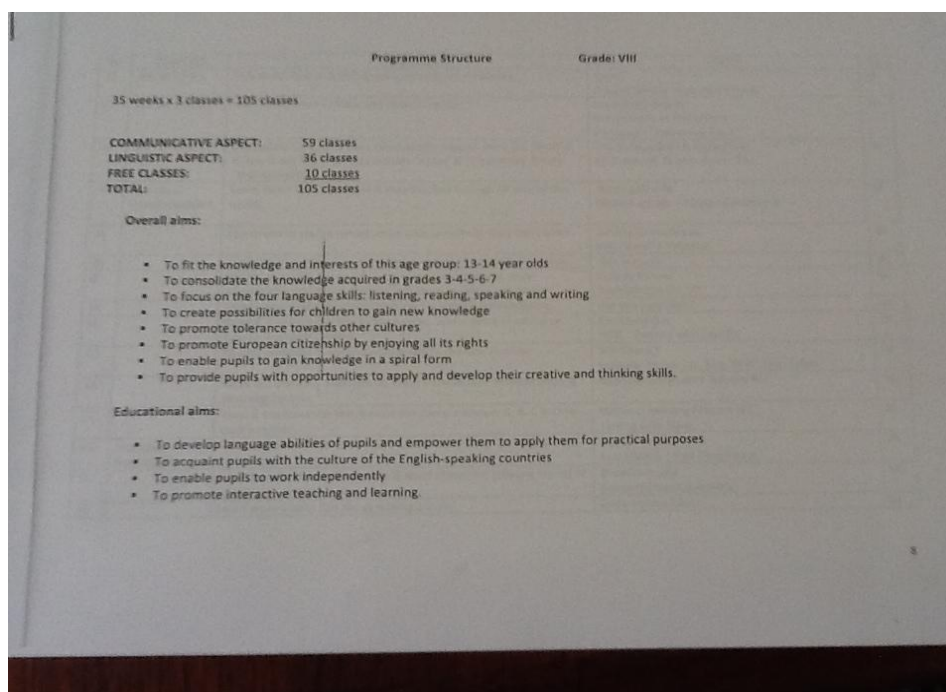
Image2: Programme Structure Grade VIII (Appendix H)

From Image 2 it can be seen the English language programme structure at the Grade VIII level consists of 35 weeks of 3 lessons per week, totalling 105 classes. These classes are broken down into what are described as 59 covering the 'communicative aspect', 36 covering the 'linguistic aspect' and 10 'free classes'. This indicates a programme structure weighted in favour of the 'communicative aspect' of learning English. It should be noted no online Albanian foreign language curriculum or English language curriculum or syllabi could be located, including within the Ministry of Science and Education website (MASH: http://www.mash.gov.al/?lang=en) . The Programme Structure (Appendix H) in its hard copy booklet form, which is distributed to schools by the Ministry of Science and Education, therefore appears to be the current English language curriculum document. In order to enact the Programme Structure, the Ministry of Education and Science recommends the use of the AmBri textbook series which is used as the English language teaching and learning syllabus.

It is apparent from the examining the aims in the Programme Structure booklet (Image 2), the Educational Aims are then transferred by Albanian classroom teachers into their teacher diaries (Image 3) as Overall Aims (Image 3, bottom left). English language teachers are required to keep a daily handwritten diary in which lesson plans, materials, structuring of lessons according to whole class, group or pair work, assessments and so forth are recorded. The formatting of teacher diaries has not changed since I last wrote a diary in 2002 (Appendix C). This indicates there has been no change in the way aims and objectives have been written from the Programme Structure (Appendix H) since 2002 therefore it appears the overall aims curriculum document provided to elementary schools has not changed either.
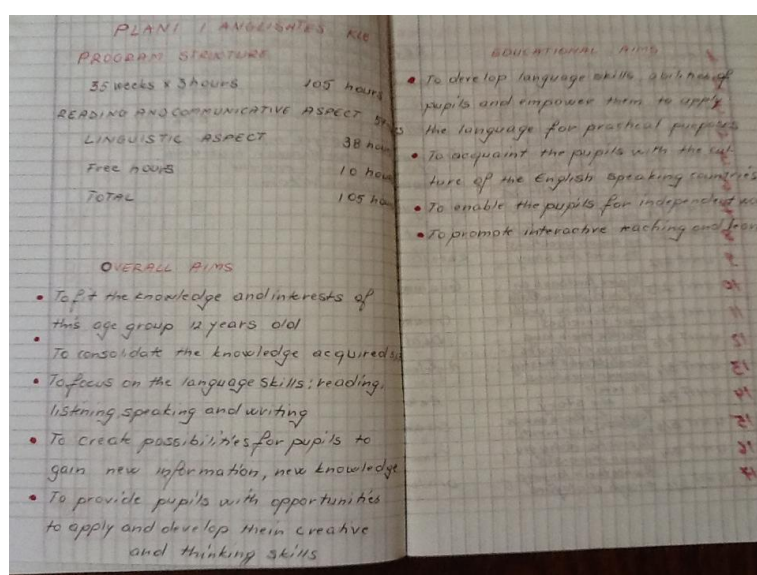

Image 3: Teacher Diary (2010-2011)

The foreign language learning in the Albanian Curriculum Structure document and in the teacher diaries sets out the following goals: (Appendix C, Appendix H)

- To develop language skills, abilities of pupils and empower them to apply the language for practical purposes

- To acquaint the pupils with culture of English speaking countries

- To enable the pupils for independent work.

- To promote interactive teaching and learning.

From these goals it would appear in Albania that learning foreign languages is regarded as a skill therefore students should firstly be "taught language in the form of separate and discrete components and sub skills, beginning with the smallest and simplest components and progressing to larger and more complex ones" (de Silva Joyce and Feez, 2012, p. 58). The purpose of learning foreign languages is to apply the language for practical purposes. Important in learning foreign languages in Albania is for students to understand the culture of English speaking countries, learn to work independently and to promote what is described as interactive teaching and learning. From these broad, general and eclectic goals, no apparent theory of language or language learning is present or any way to identify the pedagogy underpinning English language teaching and learning in elementary schools in Albania, the overall aim of this study.

From the teacher questionnaire comes the understanding;

"In Albania teachers have to follow a text book which is part of the curriculum and is obligatory to use it." (Teacher 2 - Appendix B)

"I am using 'A trip to AmBri' textbook, and use the teacher's book for recommendations which is compulsory from MASH." (Teacher 3 - Appendix B)

Therefore , as directed by the Ministry of Education and Science, the obligatory and compulsory syllabus used in Albanian elementary schools for the teaching and learning of English is the AmBri textbook series, '*Welcome to AmBri'* Grades 3 - 5 (Tafani, V, and Vasquez, I, 2008), and '*A Trip to AmBri*' Grades 6 – 9 (Tafani, V, Vasquez, I, and Leksi , 2008). The series consists of a Student Book, Student Workbook, Teacher's Book (Tafini, 2008) and an Audio Cassette/CD for teacher use only. According to the Introduction page of the Student Book (Grade 7) the purpose of the series is: "This school text book is designed for students of the seventh grade in

elementary education in Albania. It includes stories and dialogues of two Albanian students, Ilar and Anisa who are going to study English at AmBri Island. AmBri is the name of an imaginary island and refers to the merging of the two words America and Britain or American and British English considering that very often students are faced with some language differences in lexis, grammar and pronunciation which belong to the two language varieties" (A Trip to AmBri, Grade 7, Tafani, et al. 2008). Therefore examples of American and British versions of English are used in the textbook.

The series 'Welcome to AmBri' (Grade 3-5) is themed around children from different countries, including Albania, who go to school to learn the AmBri language through topics which include various activities and exercises. Problematic and confusing for the needs of language learners in becoming communicatively fluent in English for real world needs is in the conception of AmBri as an imaginary island in which a variety of English called AmBri is used, is this is not a real or recognised dialect or variety of English language, a real place named AmBri exists in Switzerland and in terms of English as the global lingua franca, many varieties of English are spoken in addition to American and British English. As Canagarajah (2005) points out, "new competencies [are] required for communication and literacy in today's world" (p. xxv). This is because a single dialect of English, or considering English in terms of just American English or British English "fails to equip our students for real-world needs" (p. xxv).

In examining an AmBri Teacher Guide accompanying the student textbooks, there is a focus in English language learning on assessing the learning of grammar through a combination of what are described in the text book as 'grammar practice' and 'integrated skills'.

(See next page for images of table of contents)

Image 4: Example of Table of Contents in AmBri student book

"Gramatika ze nje vend te konsiderueshem ne kete tekst, ku prezantohet si rubrike me vete ''Grammar Focus' e cila nderthuret praktikisht me pas me rubrika te tjera, si: 'Grammar Practice' dhe 'Integrated Skills'. (Tafani et al, Teacher Guide, Level 5, p. 5).

Translation: Grammar takes a significant place in this text, which is presented as a separate rubric 'Grammar Focus' which is combined with practical part such as: 'Grammar Practice' and 'Integrated Skills'.

Image 5: Table of content page example

In examining the Table of Content in the student books, contents is organised in topics. This indicates a topic syllabus in which content is ordered according to topics. A structural/situational syllabus in which content is ordered according to a situation which is then used to teach structural or grammatical points of language is also indicated. This is evidenced in a column in a Table of Contents page labelled Topics, Key Structures, and Grammar.

In addition to using a textbook syllabus, the English language practice of 'Teaching through Media' (Tafani, 2004) is recommended in teacher training university programs in which Tafani's book *Teaching through Media* (2004) is used as a textbook in teacher training programs. Therefore teaching by using media texts in English language lessons is commonly practiced in elementary school English language classrooms. Tafani (2004) states the practice of 'Teaching through Media' provides a way for English language teachers to use different kinds of English language found in traditional and digital media texts available in the Information Age. Therefore Tafani (2004) advises teachers of their responsibility to use media texts in their programs to prepare Albanian students for participation in the Information Age. Tafani (2004) further recommends the use of media texts as a way to increase motivation by not only working from a syllabus text book but to also using a media text as a topic in a lesson, stating the aim of the teaching through media approach is "to provide teachers, student teachers and students of English with practical and creative ideas, which exploit the different means of Media" (p.9). Further to this Tafani (2004) believes by teaching through media teachers can meet the various needs and interests of their students, through the use of different kinds of media. Tafani (2004) further states "another aim is to provide students with a lot of language practice through activities using newspapers, magazines, radio, TV, movies, books, Internet, etc., and tasks which develop reading, writing, speaking and listening skills" (p.9).

Two English language lessons in which the practice of teaching through media was observed are analysed in order to attempt to identify the pedagogy underpinning English language teaching and learning in elementary schools in Albania, the overall aim of this study.

4. 2 Analysis and discussion of the data relevant to building up an understanding of the language learning pedagogy underpinning the textbook AmBri recommended as an English language syllabus in elementary schools in Albania. .

4.2.1 Textbook analysis Welcome to AmBri and A Trip to AmBri (Grades 3-9)

Curriculum Renewal in Albania

The focus of this analysis is to answer the research question:

- What pedagogical approach to English language teaching and learning is indicated through analysing the purpose and function of the textual content of a unit in an AmBri (Tafani, et al, 2008) series textbook syllabus used to teach English language in elementary school Grade 3-9 English language classrooms in Albania?

The Grade 3-5 series 'Welcome to AmBri' , specifically a unit in the Grade 5 level of the series, is the focus of this analysis. The text book series consists of a student workbook containing a variety of exercises, activities and dialogues recommended as suitable for differing levels of English language ability, a teacher book which includes various ways of organising activities and it also contains an answer key to all exercises in the student workbook. The teacher book also includes sample tests and explains British and American versions of English language. The audio cassette CD,(for teachers only) includes recorded songs, chants, stories, descriptions and dialogues. The purpose of the CD, according to the teacher's book, is to assist with listening to English language.

'Welcome to AmBri' (Grade 5) consists of 126 pages divided into three major chapters covering the three semesters which make up the academic year in Albania. The book begins with two pages of Contents, the first indicating the topic (Image 4 and 5) of each unit and the second consisting of three tabulated columns headed Unit Topic, Key Structures and Grammar (Image 5). The Contents pages function as a summary of all topics which make up each unit.

Welcome to AmBri (5) is a natural continuation of Welcome to AmBri (3 - 4). Alongside with revision of the third and fourth grade, "Welcome to AmBri" 5 serves not only as a summary of the first cycle but also as a bridge for the second cycle "A Trip to AmBri" (Grades 6 – 9). "Welcome to AmBri" 5 is designed with a different structure to "Welcome to AmBri" 3 - 4, the unit structured as an Icebreaker, Hands-on Activities, Integrated Skills, Creative Corner, this format continuing in textbooks Year 6 – 9. Grammar Focus and Grammar Practice make up the main content in the textbook. Activities include comprehension cloze exercises where students have to fill in the gaps. Some activities and exercises with an asterisk (*) are for more advanced students.

The structure of the textbook covering the academic year is shown in the Teacher Book (Grade 5) -

- 35 weeks from 2 hours a week   = 70 hours
- Welcome fifth graders   = 1 hour
- New lesson 20 (units) from 3 hours   = 60 hours

Curriculum Renewal in Albania

- Revision   = 3 hours
- Test   = 3 hours
- Total   = 70 hours (1 hour = 45 min)

The textbook contains 20 units and three chapters. The topic of each unit, revolving around a group of students attending AmBri School is:

Chapter one: Five days at AmBri

Unit 1: Time table of the fifth grade

Unit 2: Schools rules and Regulations

Unit 3: Getting to know each other

Unit 4: Personal preferences, hobbies, interests and leisure activities

Unit 5: Getting to know about AmBri School and places where AmBri students live

Chapter 2: Five days in AmBri families and house

Unit 6: Meting Emi's family

Unit 7: How the house in AmBri looks like

Unit 8: Celebrating a family reunion

Unit 9: Five tips for good Health and Nutrition

Unit 10: Five places to go when you are ill

Chapter 3: Five days going around

Unit 11: Touring around AmBri School

Unit 12: Shopping at AmBri Mall

Unit 13: Getting ready to go …..

Unit 14: Travelling a visit to ……. (A place, city, town)

Unit 15: A visit to a Famous Building

Unit 16: Happy Meals!

Unit 17: Five things to do with Media

Unit 18: TV vs. Radio

Unit 19: Sending letters, postcards, e-mails

Unit 20: Summer again. Five places you would like to go for summer

Each unit follows the same structure: Icebreaker activity, Listen/read activity, Communication activity, Grammar focus, Practice Grammar, Speaking activity and Creative Corner.

To address the aim of this paper which is to develop an understanding of the pedagogical approach to teaching and learning English in Albanian elementary schools, one unit is analysed, specifically Unit 17, centred around the topic 'Five things to do with Media', in order to understand the purpose and function of the textual content within the unit. A topic-based syllabus could signal a CLT approach which is designed around topics, functions and notions and language skills. Topics are described in CLT as the starting point in teaching driving the teaching sequence which should be organized to reflect on real life (de Silva Joyce and Feez, 2012).

According to the Teacher Book (Grade 5) the objectives of Unit 17 are:

"In this unit students will learn new features related to media. They will also learn the position of adverbs and adjectives in a sentence" (p. 38) .The second objective indicates a grammar focus in language skills rather than the real life focus found in CLT.

Analysis of the purpose and function of the textual content of Unit 17 - Five things to do with media

 Image 6: Unit 17: Activity 1 Ice Breaker (Student Book, Grade 5, p. 98)
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Activity 1: Icebreaker: Mention five Media. Discuss the following. Make two sentences
          for each.

The purpose of this activity is for students to 'mention five media'. It is unclear what this means. The students are then asked to 'discuss the following' which presumably means the pictures in the book (Image 6), the one word text and accompanying pictures functioning to help the students make meaning of the words accompanying the pictures. It is unclear if this is a whole

class, group, pair or individual activity. The Teacher's Book provides suggestion for how the teacher should conduct the icebreaker activity such as asking students if they know what the word media means. If they do not know the teacher is directed to explain it to them and give examples, asking students to identify their favourite type of media and explain why and asking students to speak in sentences in English using the vocabulary accompanying the images. After discussing media the students must write two sentences containing the media vocabulary they have learnt. The purpose and function of the icebreaker is to introduce vocabulary which names various types of media, the vocabulary then used by the students to write two sentences.

Activity 2 Listen/Read

In this activity, according to the Teacher Book, pupils read the passage below several times for the purpose of discussing new vocabulary.

Media is very important in everybody's life. Different kinds of media accompany us everywhere, in every moment of our day. In the morning we get up and while having a shower we listen to the radio. (Student Book, Grade 5, p. 98)

After reading this passage several times pupils complete what is described as a communication activity which is a comprehension exercises activity, consisting of asking 'wh' questions. Firstly the positions of adverbs in the text are identified by the teacher. The students then write sentences with adverbs in order to answer the following questions -

- What is printed Media?
- What is online Media?

The text used in this activity functions for the purpose of identifying the position of adverbs therefore it is unclear why it is called a communication activity. It is also unclear how the text functions to answer the 'wh' questions as it contains no information about printed or online media.

Activity 3 Practice Grammar

This activity consists of two grammar exercises labelled A and B

A) Rewrite the sentences and put the adverbs in the right place. The first sentence provides an example for the students.

-He walks his dog (rarely)

-She waited (patiently)

- Cats can hear... (well)

B) Rewrite the following in the right order. The first is done for the students

-Help/ immediately /I / need.

-Always/ weather/ in /is /November/ bad.

-Speaks /well/John/ English.

The purpose of this activity is for the students to place adverbs in the correct place in sentences, Activity B consisting of isolated words jumbled out of the order of how a sentence is structured in English. The sentences are not connected to the topic '5 Things to do with Media' so how these sentences within two activities in which adverbs must be put in the correct place in these sentences functions in relation to the Unit topic is unclear.

Activity 4 : Speaking /Writing activity. Say what the following items are, and write what they are used for.

Image 7: Say what the following items are and what they are used for

The activity functions as a speaking and writing activity in which the purpose of the activity is for students to say the names of media related objects (Image 7) then write what three of these objects (audio tape, video tape, books) are used for. Based on the Teacher's Guide (Grade 5, p. 39) the pupils are expected to write such as :

➢ Audio tape - to record

➢ Video tape - to tape movies

➢ Books - to read

It is unclear how the students will name these objects if they have no prior knowledge of the words they are expected to associate with an image. Not all the images and words were introduced in the icebreaker. This activity appears to be for the purpose of the students using vocabulary to label a picture and for them to write down the meaning of three of the words. It is

unclear how this vocabulary activity functions as a speaking/writing activity beyond a repeating words and an exercise in vocabulary.

Image 8 : Creative Corner

Activity:5 Creative corners

This activity concludes the unit 'Five things to do with media'. The purpose of this activity is for students to sit in groups of three or four (Teacher Book, Grade 5, p. 39) and to identify the pictures relating to media (Image 8). The activity functions as a discussion activity in which students are directed to describe and discuss the pictures with group members. The students are further directed to discuss the advantages and disadvantage of an aspect of media identified in the pictures. The purpose of this discussion is for one representative from each group to present the group's discussion to the class. According to the Teacher's Book the purpose and function of Activity 5, recommended for group work, is to stimulate discussion, communication and active participation in class however if the students have no knowledge of the advantages and disadvantages of an aspect of media identified in the pictures, it is unclear how a discussion, in terms of communicative fluency in English, will take place.

Conclusion

The aim of this unit was for students to learn new features related to media and to learn the position of adverbs and adjectives in a sentence. It would appear only the positioning of adverbs

was addressed. The activities focus on learning new features of grammar and on learning vocabulary associated with media, rather than on language in action relating to helping the students make meaning in English of the purpose and function of media itself.

The purpose and function of the unit 'Five things to do with media' in relation to the English language curriculum aims in Albania is unclear in terms of how these predominately grammar based activities empower pupils to develop language skills for application in practical purposes, acquaint students with the culture of English speaking countries, enable independent work or promote interactive teaching and learning. Further to this it is unclear how this unit and the grammar and vocabulary centred activities within this unit function for the purpose of developing communicative fluency desired in language curriculum renewal which seeks to align curriculum with the Common European Framework.

Mickan (2004) points out that often the concept of a communicative language approach has been misused to make traditional grammar approaches look more communicative and progressive. This appears to be the case here. Mickan (2004) claims that the biggest criticism of grammar based approaches is that texts are broken into single items, such as occurs in these activities which focus on vocabulary and placing adverbs in the correct place in sentences which have no relation to the topic. The topic title itself is difficult to make meaning of as one of the five activities, grammar practice, has content which is unrelated to the topic. The activities do not provide five ways to explore the purpose and function of the use of media beyond a discussion of pictures in a book matching a word in what are vocabulary activities or providing a title for the unit which is suggestive of a CLT approach. However an analysis of activities reveals a grammar and vocabulary focus indicating a mismatch in achieving the outcome of English language for application for practical purposes and therefore a mismatch in fulfilling an English language curriculum renewal aim.

In considering the pedagogy underpinning this lesson it appears this lesson could be representative of a cognitive theory of learning in that the icebreaker activity connects new vocabulary knowledge with pre-existing vocabulary, because the students are asked to make connections with what they already know about media with new English language vocabulary and then are expected to organise new vocabulary into new texts consisting of writing sentences or using new vocabulary in discussions. This suggests the authors of the AmBri series (Tafani, et al, 2008) believe learning takes place through students relating new experiences to prior knowledge thus creating new meanings, expressed in this unit 'Five things to do with media' through the incorporation of pre-existing and newly introduced media vocabulary into their spoken and written language in English. A structural/situational skills based approach is

indicated in which content is ordered according to a situation, in this case things to with media, which is then used as a topic to teach structural or grammatical points of language, in this lesson vocabulary and the positioning of adverbs in sentences, rather than an outcome of communicative fluency, as evidenced in the activities. However aspects of communicative language teaching approach are evident as teachers are directed in the Teacher's Book to form groups for the Creative Corner activity which functions for the purpose of group discussion concerning pictures of types of media. In terms of aligning with The European Common Framework and the desired outcome of communicative fluency, this is unable to be determined unless observations of lessons in which this unit is operationalized are undertaken.

From this Grade 5 AmBri unit, focussing on media vocabulary and the positioning of adverbs in sentences unrelated to media, this indicates language is viewed by the textbook series authors as a code made up of words and a series of rules that connect words together thereby language learning occurs through the learning of vocabulary and the grammatical rules for constructing sentences. This indicates language is understood as fixed and finite rather than through considering the complexities involved in using language for communication and in developing communicative fluency. Language is thereby considered a skill, therefore, as indicated in this analysis, language is taught "in the form of separate and discrete components and subs kills, beginning with the smallest and simplest components and progressing to larger and more complex ones" (de Silva Joyce and Feez, 2012, p. 58). The activities in unit 'Five things to do with media' function for the limiting purpose of introducing media vocabulary and points of grammar rather than in activities which have the purpose and function of showing authentic English language concerning media in use and how language functions to make meaning through different text types concerning media occurring in social contexts, events and practices, referenced around 5 things which can be done with media.

4.3 Analysis and discussion of the data relevant to building up an understanding of the language learning pedagogy underpinning the teaching through media lesson in which a magazine text is used.

The purpose of this analysis and discussion is to answer the research question

- What pedagogical approach to English language teaching and learning is suggested by analysing the purpose and function of the use of a media text in relation to the aims and objectives in an English language lesson in which the practice of 'teaching through

media' occurs in English language programs in elementary school classrooms in Albania?

In this English language lesson in which observations were undertaken, an article from an English medium magazine is used to provide the topic from which activities and exercises are generated, indicative of a topic based language teaching and learning syllabus structure. The lesson provides an example of the Albanian practice of Teaching through Media (Tafani, 2004, 2009). Tafani (2009) recommends the use of English language magazines in the classroom because there are many different kinds of magazines. According to a questionnaire reported by (Tafani, 2009), high school and university students stated they enjoyed reading political, scientific, fashion, cultural, entertaining and sport magazines. Tafani (2009) therefore recommends because of the interest students have in reading magazines as indicated by the survey, teachers should exploit " up-date their teaching materials and break the monotony of the lesson by using always the textbooks" (p. 86).

Furthermore Tafani (2009) recommends "As with newspapers, magazines are resources for different subjects, cutting out pictures and passages associated with particular topics" (p. 86). Magazines, Tafani (2009) believes "are also sources in language development in providing pictures to stimulate verbal or written stories" (p.86). Tafani (2009) gives the example of using magazines for "introducing colours and clothes, means of transport, short stories, stimulating picture discussions and for other supplementary materials as well, which cover a topic that may be under discussion in a language class" (p.86). Like the use of newspapers in language classroom, Tafani (2009) believes magazines in the target language can be useful for language learning because of the target language cultural content. Further to this Tafani (2009) believes magazines, as a source of authentic materials, are what she describes as linguistically up-to-date thereby providing valuable linguistic data. Tafani (2009) recommends the magazines are used because they are not only motivating for students to work with but are also representative of the authentic language and the "many varieties of Written English" (p. 84) and "the wide variety of text types and language styles, not often found in textbooks" (p. 84). Magazines, like newspapers, can therefore, according to Tafani (2009), be used as "teaching materials to develop students' language skills" (p.84). Tafani (2009) states the most important thing to enhance success in using newspapers or magazines in the classroom are the careful design of tasks. Tafani (2009), in using the words 'language skills' signals she considers language a skill and thus a structural entity separate from content in which students should firstly be "taught language in the form of separate and discrete components and sub skills, beginning with

54

the smallest and simplest components and progressing to larger and more complex ones" (de Silva Joyce and Feez, 2012, p. 58), Tafani also uses the work 'task' indicating the pedagogy underpinning the practice of teaching through media could be a task-based approach to language and learning. Tafani (2004, 2009) does not explicitly state the language learning pedagogy underpinning the practice of teaching through media.

From the literature review it should be remembered Scarino and Liddicoat (2009) believe one of the major developments in language teaching emerging in the 1980s, alongside communicative language teaching, was the task-based approach. This approach recognised that whilst students needed to have knowledge of the structure of a language, they also needed to develop the ability to use language to achieve communicative purposes. Therefore language learning was not described in terms of lists of language items, but in terms of tasks that learners could accomplish. Instead of focusing on skills-based written tasks, in progressive approaches, such as the task-based approach, according to Christie (2005), students experience written, spoken or multimodal texts, instead of isolated sentences and inauthentic and prescriptive language found in graded readers and graded language learning textbooks. Therefore in progressive approaches to language learning, according to Christie (2005), students are involved in creative writing, speaking and presentation experiences which echo the way texts are produced in the real world.

Therefore backgrounded against the purpose and function of the task-based approach to language teaching and learning as representative of a progressive approach as opposed to a skills-based approach, the activities and exercises arising from a lesson which uses a magazine text as the topic is analysed in order to understand the purpose and function of the use of the media text and the activities and exercises which arise from them in order to understand if the task-based approach to language learning and teaching underpins this lesson in which a magazine text is used.

4.3.1 Teaching through Media Lesson using magazine 'Summer'

Class : Grade 5

Number of students: 30 students (boys and girls)

Duration : 45 min

Topic : "When every summer day was an adventure" an article taken from "The Essentials" magazine.

Aim : By the end of this lesson students will be able to speak and write about their summer vacation using related vocabulary.

The purpose of this lesson, according to the aim, is for students to use vocabulary or English language words related to summer in their speaking and written work relating to the topic 'When every summer is an adventure', the magazine text used as the topic in this lesson. The purpose in using the magazine text in this lesson is unclear in relation to the lesson aim as is an understanding of how the magazine text will function in order to achieve this aim.

Objectives:

- ➢ To understand the vocabulary. (Low level students)
- ➢ Students will be able to use new words in context.(high level students)
- ➢ To discuss about the new words.

The purpose of the objectives of this lesson is for students, described by the teacher as low and high level indicating a mixed ability Grade 7 English language class, is to understand vocabulary, use new words in contexts and to discuss the new words. How these objectives function in terms of the lesson aim for students to speak and write about their summer vacation is unclear from these objectives which are restricted to the understanding, use and discussion of English language vocabulary which is not specified or described in any way with relation to the magazine text chosen as a topic for this lesson. The purpose and function of the use of the magazine text as the topic for this lesson is unclear from the lesson objectives which are restricted to vocabulary. Therefore from the focus on vocabulary building in the aim and objectives of this lesson it appears language is regarded as a skill indicative in the breaking down of the lesson to focus on the component of vocabulary before progressing to more complex skills such as writing a paragraph and the homework exercise of writing an essay about "your own experiences during summer vacations (see Appendix E).

The topic 'Summer' used for the planning of this lesson and design of activities, exercises and tasks in which observations were undertaken comes from the AmBri (Tafani et al, 2008) textbook at the Grade 5 Level. The AmBri textbook Level 5, Unit 20, topic was 'Summer Again'. The aim of the observed lesson 'Summer' in the Year 5 class was 'by the end of this lesson students will be able to speak and write about their summer vacation using related vocabulary'. This is identical to the objective in the AmBri Teacher Book, Level 5, p. 44. (See next page for Image 9).
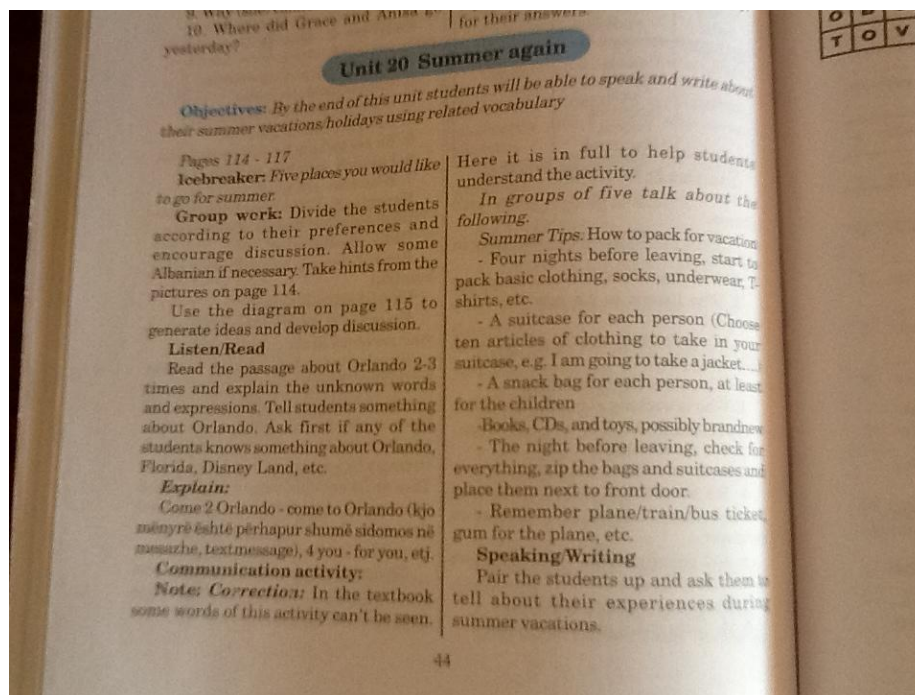
Image 9: Unit 20 'Summer Again'

Instead of using the text supplied in the AmBri textbook, in order to achieve the lesson aim, the teacher has substituted a text concerning 9 interviews of summer holiday adventures taken from pages of 'The Essential", an English-medium magazine. From the lesson aim, matching the AmBri textbook topic aim of students being able to speak and write about their summer vacation using related vocabulary, it indicates the approach of breaking down language to teaching target language features, in this case vocabulary. Hutchinson and Waters (1987) advise that a syllabus design which is language-centred in approach is realised in a syllabus which is the generator of teaching materials and the production of texts and exercises which form the basis on which proficiency is evaluated. This appears to be the case in this lesson, indicative of not only appearing to be language-centred around vocabulary building, it is also a structural/situational syllabus in which content is ordered according to a situation which is then used to teach structural or grammatical points of language. This is indicated in the lesson objectives of low level students understanding vocabulary, high level students using new vocabulary in context and the discussing of new vocabulary. The teacher reported that although she follows the format of a topic text and exercises in the AmBri textbook, used as the language teaching and learning syllabus in her classroom, she substituted a magazine text because, in her opinion, the magazine contained more information, richer content and used true life language compared with the text in the AmBri topic. The use of the magazine text in this lesson provides an example of the practice of teaching through media (Tafani, 2004, 2009) commonly used in

Albanian English language classrooms, in which a media text is used as a substitute or to supplement topic texts in the AmBri textbook syllabus.

The AmBri textbook topic 'Summer Again' contains exercises and activities accompanied by pictures. In one activity students are asked to describe the pictures. The written text provided in the 'Summer Again' topic consists of eight sentences making up the text in which is included a website address www.orlandoinfo.com for what is described as a Listen/Read activity. The activity is titled 'Plan an Orlando activity to remember' , suggesting a task based approach, and consists of a written text, photos of Orlando and a map. Whilst the teacher in the observed lesson in which a magazine text is substituted for the AmBri text (Image 10) and the AmBri format of an icebreaker warm up activity is followed by other activities, the activities are not identical.
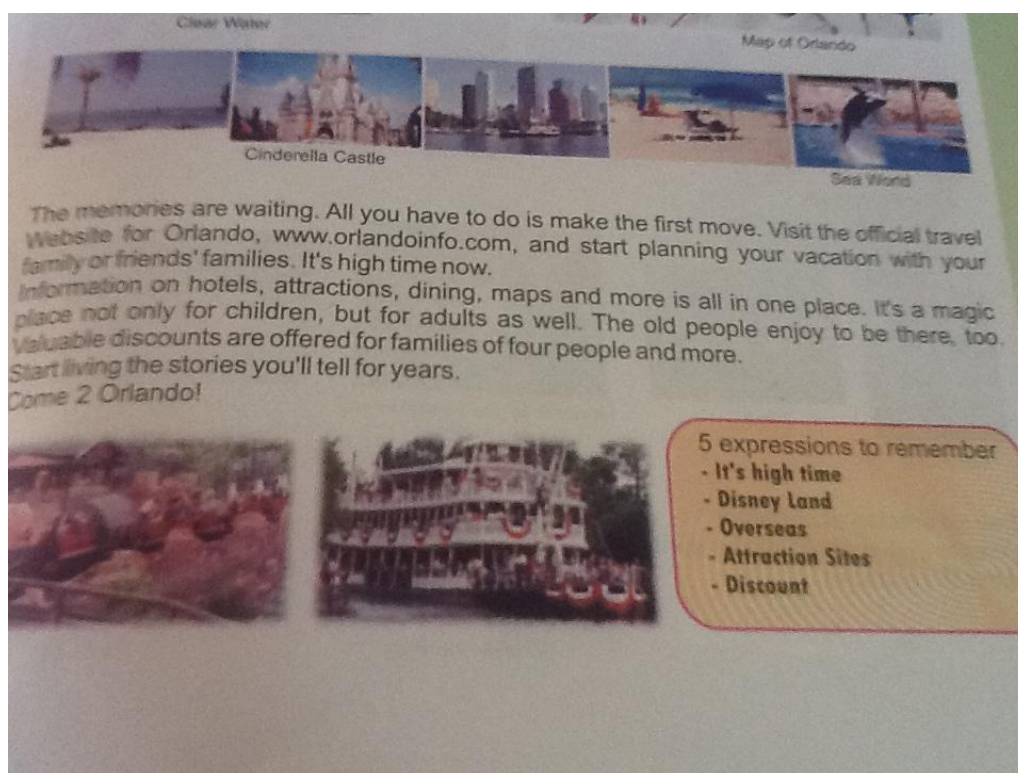
Image 10: AmBri text book 'Summer Again' text 'Plan an Orlando Activity to Remember

Lesson Plan: analysis of field notes taken during observations

- **Warm up ' icebreaker ' activity**

In order to introduce the lesson the teacher began with what is termed in the AmBri textbook as an 'icebreaker' by introducing what she calls a 'brainstorming' activity. It is evident the plan for this lesson, beginning with an 'icebreaker' follows the initial lesson plan structure in the AmBri textbook 'Summer Again' topic. At this stage of the lesson the magazine text is not introduced.

The teacher greets the students and she asks them how they are feeling.*" Good morning everybody how are you today?* Students answer chorally *"good morning teacher ".*

The teacher explains to the students the topic of the day which is 'Summer and Vacations' writing the word 'summer' on the blackboard and asked the students to say the words that came into their minds when they hear and read the word 'summer'. From the students' verbal responses the teacher wrote the words holiday, sports, lake, hot, fun, games, beach, river, travel on the blackboard. (Image 11, see next page)

This differs from the AmBri ice breaker in which students are asked to brainstorm 'things to do' (Image 12, see next page) in Orlando based on a set of pictures but the teacher has adapted the visual representation of 'things to do' for the word 'summer' in order for the students to 'brainstorm' English words they know which they associate with summer, rather than 'brainstorming 'a set of ideas' according to the AmBri brainstorming warm up activity. The purpose of the 'brainstorming' icebreaker activity in the observed lesson is for the teacher to write English words on the blackboard which some students already know which they associate with the word 'summer', indicating the function of this activity is to access the prior knowledge of English vocabulary which some students already have and which they associate with the word 'summer'. In terms of the objectives of the lesson, this activity could fulfil the objective of helping low level students 'understand vocabulary', although this objective is very general and unclear in its lack of specificity. In terms of the aim of this lesson, (By the end of this lesson students will be able to speak and write about their summer vacation using related vocabulary), the warm up activity provides some examples of English vocabulary students could use when speaking or writing about their summer vacation. Because the magazine text has not been introduced at this stage, this activity is unrelated to the text in any direct way.
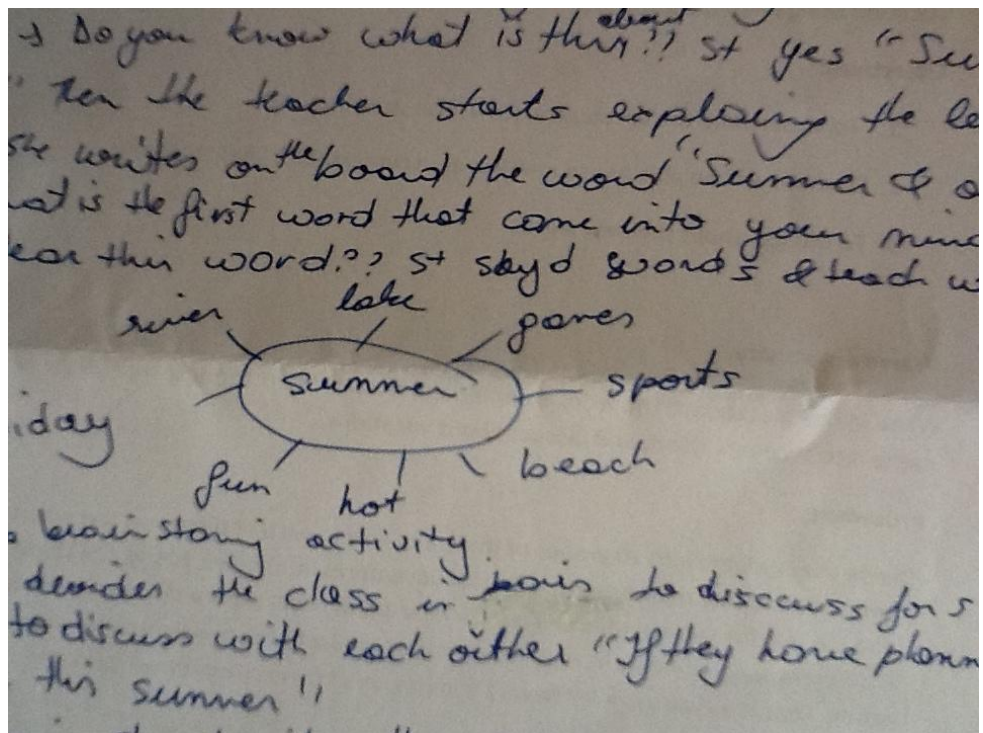
Image 11: Diagram from field notes of icebreaker warm up activity
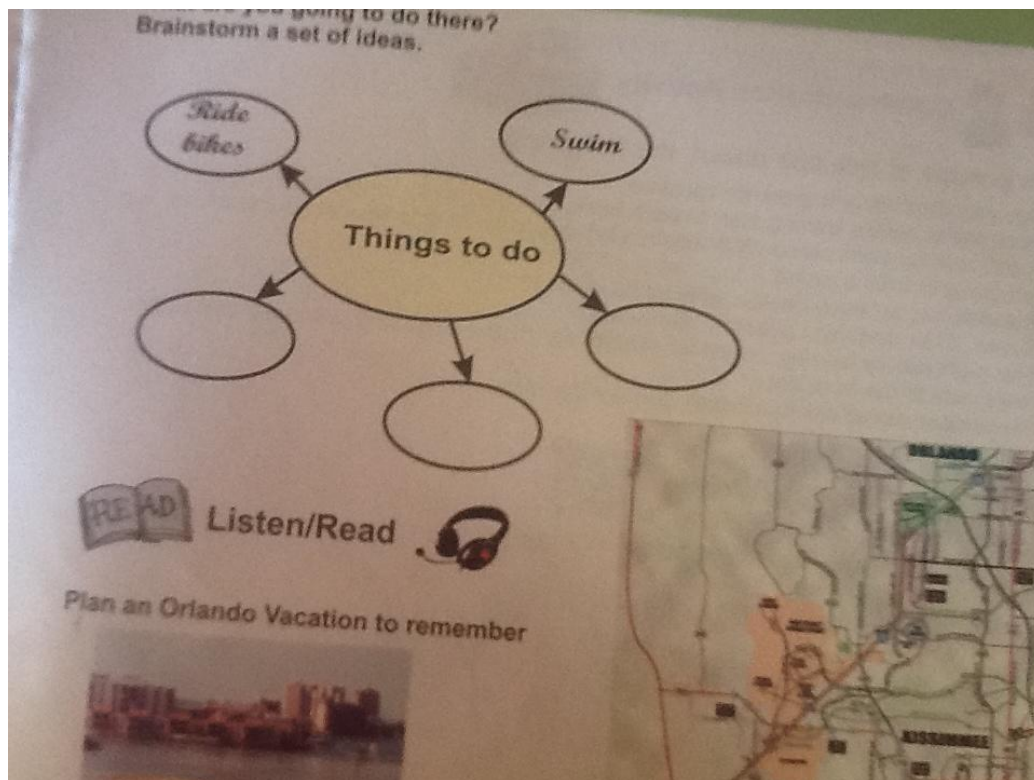
Image 12: AmBri textbook icebreaker warm up activity

❖ **Activity - pair discussion about plans for the summer**

The students are asked to discuss for five minutes in pairs about their plans that they have for the coming summer. At this stage of the lesson, the magazine text had not been introduced therefore was not connected to this activity.

The purpose of this activity is for a student to discuss with another student their plans for the summer. It was observed the students discussed their holiday plans in the target language English, the purpose and function of this activity matching the aim of students speaking in English about their summer vacation. However it is unclear how this activity explicitly functioned in achieving the objectives of this lesson which are understanding, using and discussing new English vocabulary. Communicative fluency in English was observed in the pair discussions.

• **Activity - group activity with the magazine text**

The teacher divided the students into 10 groups of three and gave each group a photocopied handout of a page from an English-medium magazine (See Appendix E) in which 9 different women are interviewed about their summer holiday adventures. The interviews are formatted in individually boxed reports consisting of a paragraph, accompanied by photographs of the women and holiday photographs and images. The students, in their groups of three, are directed by the teacher to read the text for two minutes and underline any new and unfamiliar vocabulary words. The teacher advised the class she would then explain the new words to them in different ways and from these new words, the students would be required to write a paragraph similar to the ones they were reading in the magazine text. The teacher allocated 20 minutes for the paragraph writing activity.

After the two minutes of reading and underlining of new words in the 9 students reports in the magazine text, one representative of each group was asked to say the words that were new to the group. These words included tents, roller –skating, mortified and cliffs.

The teacher then explained the new words in Albanian and English and wrote them on the blackboard.

❖ **Activity (Writing a paragraph)**

For 20 minutes the students remaining in the same groups were asked to write a group paragraph using the new words on the blackboard. After 20 minutes the teacher asked one representative of each group to read the paragraph written by the students using new

vocabulary. The teacher did not correct any mispronunciations. After the last group had read their paragraph, the teacher asked the class to vote by raising their hands to indicate which they thought was the best and the worst paragraph, naming the participants in the best group. The teacher then collected the group paragraphs in order to evaluate if students were able to transfer new vocabulary into new contexts. The purpose of this activity appears to be to address the objectives of this lesson by showing students were understanding vocabulary and students were able to use new words in contexts. No discussions of new words were apparent in this activity. The magazine text was not used in this activity therefore it played no function in this activity beyond being used for the purpose of locating and underlining new vocabulary.

❖ **Homework task**

The students were then given homework which was to write about their own experiences during summer vacations. No further instructions were given. The magazine text was not referred to.

Conclusion

Despite the use of an authentic text from a magazine, the text functioned for the limiting purpose of underlining unknown vocabulary. In considering the pedagogy underpinning this lesson it appears this lesson could be representative of a cognitive theory of learning in that the teacher is connecting new vocabulary knowledge with pre-existing vocabulary and asking the students to make connections and then expecting the students to organise new vocabulary into new texts, firstly a paragraph and then the homework lesson, to create a new whole. The teacher believes learning is taking place through students relating new experiences to prior knowledge thus creating new meanings, expressed in this lesson through the incorporation of pre-existing and newly introduced vocabulary into their spoken and written language in English. Rather than a task-based approach to language learning, structural/situational skills based approach is indicated in which content is ordered according to a situation, in this case summer vacations, which is then used as a topic to teach structural or grammatical points of language, in this lesson vocabulary as evidenced by the lesson objectives.

Communicate language teaching is also evident as learners were provided with opportunities in pair and group work to use language in communicative activities. The teacher stating "**I use group work and pair work very often. It encourages active learning, communication and also motivates students" (**Appendix B). In terms of aligning with The European Common Framework and the desired outcome of communicative fluency, varying levels of communicative fluency in discussions in English, encouraged by the teacher as she moved around the classroom, were observed in pair and group work however the outcome of using

new vocabulary in a paragraph indicates a structural/situational skills based approach to language learning and teaching.

From the teacher questionnaire undertaken in this study it is apparent teachers in Albania use media texts for various reasons **"It's important to engage learners with texts that are meaningful to them such as newspapers and magazines. They contain cultural information, lots of pictures, real use language and they also motivate the student for more readings"** (Appendix B)

From this lesson, focussing on vocabulary, it appears the magazine text was not used for the cultural information, pictures and real language contained in it. The focus on vocabulary indicates language is viewed as a code made up of words and a series of rules that connect words together thereby language learning evidenced in this lesson involves learning vocabulary and the rules for constructing sentences. This indicates language is understood as fixed and finite rather than through considering the complexities involved in using language for communication. Language is therefore considered a skill, therefore, as indicated in this analysis language is taught "in the form of separate and discrete components and subs kills, beginning with the smallest and simplest components and progressing to larger and more complex ones" (de Silva Joyce and Feez, 2012, p. 58).The magazine text functioned for the limiting purpose of underlining new vocabulary rather than as a tool for exploring how authentic language in use functions to make meaning through different text types occurring in social contexts, events and practices, such as a magazine article reporting on the summer vacations experiences of nine women.

4.4   Analysis and discussion of the data relevant to building up an understanding of the   language learning pedagogy underpinning the teaching through media lesson in which a video is used.

The purpose of this analysis and discussion is to answer the research question

- What pedagogical approach to English language teaching and learning is suggested by analysing the purpose and function of the use of a media text in relation to the aims and objectives in an English language lesson in which the practice of 'teaching through media' occurs in English language programs in elementary school classrooms in Albania?

This observed lesson provides a further example of teaching through media (Tafani, 2004, 2009) used in Albanian language learning classrooms. Tafani (2009) believes the activity of film-watching should be active rather than a passive with teachers "setting questions about the film, promoting discussions in small groups, asking the students to comment on various things, inviting criticism, etc" (p.88). She advises pausing the film from time to time to "ask the students what has happened so far or guess what might happen next" (p. 88). Tafani (2009) believes subtitles and dubbing in English is important because it assists teachers and the aim of helping learning English through films, "depending on the procedure the teachers decide to follow" (p. 88) . Tafani (2009) contends subtitles assist in making the understanding of English easier "as listening to authentic language is more difficult than seeing the expressions written, thus matching the words with pictures and voice" (p. 88).

Tafani (2009)further states "While using a film in the classroom to help our English we have paid attention to the accent, voice, body language, choosing of the words, training ear and the eye, lifestyle, plot idea, summary, what's going on, why and how, and many other things depending on the aim we have put to ourselves" (p.88) .

The strength in using English medium videos in the classroom, according to Tafani (2009) is for the overall aim of maximising comprehension and learning more English through organizing different activities that enable this aim. Tafani recommends the students watch the film at home first and the teacher tells the students the story of a film then shows key scenes. She further recommends accompanying the film with the book which tells the story on which activities can be based such as students developing their own characters for acting out stories, writing about their favourite film, favourite characters, favourite actors, and writing or speaking about the differences they observe in a film that has been adapted from a book. It is Tafani's contention that "activities also contribute to the promotion of critical thinking especially in evaluating films and improving language skills" (p.88) . Tafani (2009) believes activities for using films in the classroom could include "Segmenting the film, pre-watching, while-watching and post-watching activities, which are very useful as cloze exercises, quizzes, related readings, web sites, film presentations, discussions, research work, etc." (p.88), advising teachers to "be creative and decide themselves for the procedures that they feel that worked well" (p.88).

4.4.1 Teaching through Media lesson using a video

Year level 7

Media text : Extract from the video of 'Cinderella' (movie made in 1950)

Number of students: 34 students

Lesson time: 45 minutes

Aim: Using cultural videos for details: Students will be able to practice listening skills, pronunciation and intonation and grammar practice, verbs tenses and the degrees of comparison.

From the teacher aim for this lesson it can be seen the teacher intends to use the video for the purpose of teaching listening skills, pronunciation, intonation, grammar and verb tenses and something she terms 'degrees of comparison' followed by the writing of an assignment. It is unclear what is meant by a 'cultural' video as the extract from the video used in this lesson is from a US motion picture movie company 1950 English medium adaptation of a 17th French fairy tale inspired by a traditional French orally told folk story.
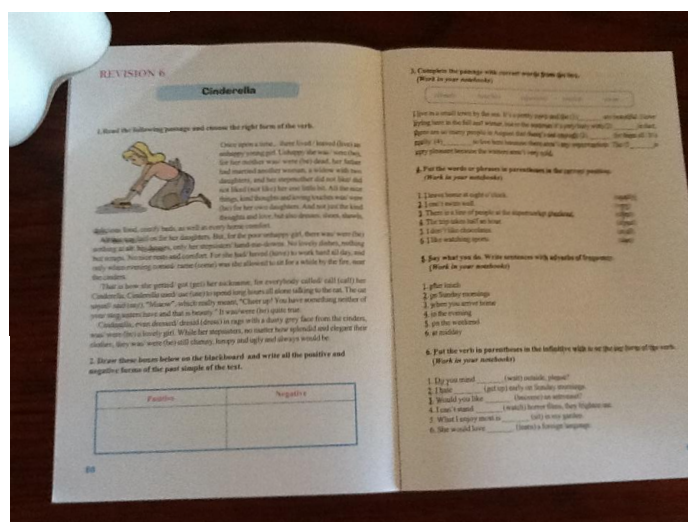
Image 13: Cinderella text in AmBri Level 7

The lesson plan follows the format typical in the AmBri textbook series and further evidenced in teacher diaries (2002, 2012, Appendix C). It should also be noted in the AmBri textbook Level 7 (2008, p. 88,) the Revision 6 topic includes a text about Cinderella (Image 13) in which there are 11 exercises, 10 of **which** are grammar practice exercises and the only reading **activity** directly involving the Cinderella text asks the students to identify the main idea conveyed in the text (Appendix G). In grammar revision exercises students are asked, for example, to read the paragraph and to choose the right forms of verb.(Appendix G) Looking at the grammar revision exercises in the Revision 6 topic in the AmBri Level 7 textbook it appears the teacher using the video in the classroom in which observations were undertaken is trying to fulfil the textbook aims of grammar revision by developing her own activities modelled on the activities in the text book.

❖ **Activity 1.** Pre watching the video brainstorming of the story (10 minutes)

In this activity teacher shows the class pictures of Cinderella, the students having also been asked to bring to pictures of Cinderella to the lesson which were also shown to the class.

The teacher divided the class into three groups, 2 groups of 12 students and one group of 10 students. Each group was given an activity to accompany their pictures.

The first group: Guess what you are going to watch, what you know about the story, write a short summary of the story.

The second group: Guess the vocabulary that might be used, match words with pictures you brought to class , make a list of words and try to build up a summary of the story.

The third group: Predicting what might happen next from your pictures, guess another ending for the story.

The purpose of this activity is for the students, through their prior knowledge of the story of Cinderella and the pictures they and the teacher brought to the class, is to use their prior knowledge and the pictures to discuss, give opinions and to compare pictures. The pictures function as a tool to facilitate discussion thereby is used to build upon the prior knowledge of Cinderella which the students bring to this activity.

❖ **Activity 2 (20 minutes)**

Before the teacher plays a segment from the video (approximately 15 minutes) she summarises the story of Cinderella. She said: *the beautiful girl with the two mean step-sisters, and wicked step-mother. Well you already know the ending, the beautiful girl marries the handsome prince, and they live happily ever after. Now you will see it in the video* (See Appendix G)*.* The teacher tells the students to watch and listen carefully, explaining the video has both an English soundtrack and English subtitles.

The purpose of using the video extract, as explained by the teacher, was so students could see and hear English vocabulary in use. The video functioned as a tool to help achieve this according to the teacher, however it is unclear at this stage, given the general directive to the students to listen carefully, how the video functioned in terms of the lesson aim of practicing listening skills (apart from listening carefully) , pronunciation and intonation and grammar practice, verb tenses and the degrees of comparison, and the assignment for writing skills.

❖ **Activity 3 (20 minutes**).

Before the students watch the segment of the Cinderella video for a second time the teacher divides the class into four groups, giving instructions concerning what she expects them do in

the second viewing. She asks them to take down notes while watching with the intention of completing the activities below.

The first group will watch carefully and try to catch the main idea and look for specific events.

The second group will look for linking time devices, tenses of the verbs, trying to build a timeline of events.

The third group will write down the words describing Cinderella and some key phrases.

The fourth group will write down the adjectives used in this story**.**

The purpose of the watching the video for the second time is for students, depending on what group they are allocated, to listen and take notes about the main idea the extract is conveying and events which occur in the extract, to look for what are described as time devices to build a time line by listening for verbs which convey the tense, to listen for words and key phrases which describe Cinderella, and lastly to look for all the adjectives spoken in the story. The video extract is therefore predominately functioning as a tool by which the students are looking for points of grammar or English language structure, the exception being to find the main idea conveyed in the extract. These activities in terms of the lesson aim of practicing listening skills, pronunciation and intonation, grammar practice, verbs tenses and the degrees of comparison, and the assignment for writing skills function for the purpose of listening skills, grammar practice, specifically listening and looking for spoken English dialogue or written English subtitles showing verb tenses, words concerning the description of Cinderella and adjectives in general. It is unclear how the activities address pronunciation and intonation as the teacher makes no explicit reference to these. It is also unclear how these activities will be used for writing skills for the assignment which at this stage has not been given to the students.

❖ Activity 4 (10 minutes)

When the students finish watching the video for the second time, the teacher asks them to compare their notes with their group members. The teacher briefly checks some of the notes and asks a representative of groups one two and three to report on notes on behalf of the group in front of the whole class, while the fourth group records on the blackboard notes which describe Cinderella. Below is what is written on the blackboard -

- *Very <u>hard working</u>*

- *<u>Beautiful</u>*

- Tried her <u>best</u>, tried to do the <u>impossible</u>

- *Her eyes are a <u>lovely</u> shade of blue*

- *she has <u>rosy pink</u> lips.*

- *Her <u>small</u> feet are <u>ideal</u> to her <u>famous</u> glass slippers,*

- *her <u>evil</u> stepmother Lady*

- *she is <u>shy and romantic,</u>*

- *She is <u>hopeful</u>....*

- *she is <u>unhappy</u>*

- *her <u>little</u> friends*

- *Tried her <u>best</u>, tried to do the <u>impossible</u>*

- *The Prince <u>was</u> totally <u>captivated</u> by her beauty*

- *Cinderella is a <u>beautiful seventeen year old</u> girl shoulder-length, light <u>burnt</u> <u>orange</u> hair.*

The purpose of this activity is for the whole class, according to the teacher, to practice listening skills and focus on pronunciation and intonation. However in examining the activities given to each group it can be seen that each activity contains different aims such as:

- The activity for the first group has to do with listening comprehension, with understanding and meaning.
- The activity of the second group has to do with cohesion and coherence, time sequence, grammar – tenses of the verbs.
- The third group activity has to do with lexicology and semantics, lexicon, meaning of words, vocabulary.
- The fourth group activity has to do with grammar, adjectives and the degrees of comparison.

The purpose of the use of the video is for it to function as a tool or topic through which the teacher organises differing activities concerning different language skills.

❖ Activity 5 Assignment: Writing skills (10 minutes)

The students are asked to write two paragraphs, one paragraph for describing the physical appearance of Cinderella, and another about describing personality using mostly the adjectives written on the blackboard.

The purpose of writing notes taken during the second viewing of the video is therefore to provide vocabulary for writing two descriptive paragraphs about Cinderella. Therefore the

purpose of showing the video for a second time is for it to function as a tool or topic in which English adjectives describing Cinderella can be located in the audio or subtitles.

❖ **Activity 6 Grammar, the degrees of comparison. (10 minutes**)
The teacher writes the adjectives on the blackboard again, this time grouped in the following way,

- Short adjectives (One or two syllables): short, hard, shy, happy, strong
- Long adjectives (More than two-syllable): Beautiful, sensible, sensitive, interesting, handsome, impossible, famous, romantic, hopeful
- Irregular: good, little
- Adjectives showing colors: pink, blue (rosy pink; dark blue, light orange hair)

The teacher explains through her own examples from the story how the comparative and superlative degrees of these adjectives are formed and then asks the students to make their own examples. The purpose of this activity is to teach points of grammar concerning adjectives, the video functioning as the tool or topic which provides the content spoken and written content facilitating this.

❖ **Activity 7 (10 minutes)**
The lesson concludes with the teacher asking five students to read the paragraphs they have written aloud to the class, and asks the students to vote on the best written paragraphs. The purpose of this activity, according to the teacher, provided a way for the teacher to check if the students understood the grammar, specifically if they could use adjectives correctly in a sentence. The teacher then reads the best sentences within the best paragraphs voted for by the class.

Physical appearance

Cinderella is a beautiful seventeen year old girl with shoulder-length, bouncy light burnt orange hair done in a French twist as seen with her iconic grown.

Personality

Cinderella is made a servant in her own home and is constantly derided by her evil stepmother Lady Tremaine and two step-sisters. Although she is shy and romantic, she maintains hope through her dreams and always waits for her prince to come .

The teacher then asks the students if they have any questions and if they liked the lesson, to which she received an enthusiastic response.

Conclusion

The use of the Cinderella video in this lesson fulfils the aim of practicing listening, grammar, verbs tenses and the degrees of comparison. In addition, it provides vocabulary and grammatical points for writing the assignment. Intonation and pronunciation practice could be considered occurring implicitly as no explicit mention is made of how this will be achieved or evaluated. By using videos in the classroom the students are exposed to English language, listening to intonation and pronunciation of English language spoken by the actors portraying characters in the movie adaptation of Cinderella. As Tafani (2004, 2009) contends using a video in a lesson provides an opportunity for students learning English as a foreign language to hear language in use. In such cases when classes sizes are large the students do not get much opportunity to communicate with each other in English however, according to the class teacher, by using videos in the class this not only provides information but the students are stimulated and they become active and motivated learners in classrooms which are more lively due to the stimulus of sounds, images and pictures.

The grammar focus of the activities arising from viewing the video twice indicates despite the use of authentic English language video, it functions for the limiting purpose of a grammar focus, specifically on adjectives and tenses of verbs, which are then used by the students to write two paragraphs describing Cinderella. In considering the pedagogy underpinning this lesson it appears this lesson could also be representative of a cognitive theory of learning in that the teacher is connecting new vocabulary knowledge with pre-existing knowledge of Cinderella evidenced in the students discussing pictures they had brought to class thereby the teacher is asking the students to make connections and then expecting the students to organise new vocabulary, specifically adjectives, into new texts, by writing two paragraphs. This indicates a belief that learning is taking place through students relating new experiences to prior knowledge thus creating new meanings, expressed in this lesson through the incorporation of pre-existing knowledge of the story of Cinderella and newly introduced vocabulary into their spoken and written language in English.

A structural/situational skills-based approach is indicated where content is organized according to a situation. In this case, the video representation of an aspect of the fairy story Cinderella, provided the organization of the activities in the lesson. The video of Cinderella is therefore used as a topic to teach structural or grammatical points of language, as evidenced by the lesson aim. This indicates language is viewed as a skill to be learnt therefore students should be "taught language in the form of separate and discrete components and subs kills, beginning with

the smallest and simplest components and progressing to larger and more complex ones" (de Silva Joyce and Feez, 2012, p. 58)

Communicative language teaching is also evident as learners were provided with opportunities in the group work to use language in communicative activities. Again varying levels of communicative fluency, in terms of aligning with The European Common Framework and the desired outcome of communicative fluency, were observed in the group and class discussions in English, encouraged by the teacher as she moved around the classroom. However the outcome of using new vocabulary, specifically adjectives describing Cinderella, in the writing of two paragraphs, indicates a structural/situational skills-based approach to language learning and teaching. Overall the lesson was observed to be enjoyable, motivating and providing students with a chance to exploit what they know and learn through real communication with each other. The focus on grammar in this lesson in which the practice of teaching through media occurs indicates language is viewed as a code made up of words and a series of rules that connect words together thereby language learning evidenced in this lesson involves learning vocabulary and the rules for constructing sentences. This once again indicates language is understood as fixed and finite rather than through considering the complexities involved in using language for communication. The video Cinderella functioned for the limiting purpose predominately finding adjectives in order to write two descriptive paragraphs about Cinderella, rather than as a tool for exploring how authentic language in use functions to make meaning through different text types occurring in social contexts, events and practices, such as a video representation of a motion picture film of the fairy tale Cinderella. Using media as a tool as described above would be more aligned with Tafani's (2009) belief concerning all the ways a video could be used in English language lessons beyond a vehicle for the teaching of points of grammar such as "focusing on accent, voice, body language, choosing of the words, training ear and the eye, lifestyle, plot idea, summary, what's going on, why and how, and many other things depending on the aim we have put to ourselves" (p.88),

4.5 Overall conclusion of the analysis of the purpose and function of the textual content of a unit in the AmBri textbook series and two teaching through media lessons.

In conclusion, from analysing three data sources it appears the pedagogical approach underpinning English language learning in Albania is primarily structural and situational in orientation and grounded in cognitive theories of learning. This indicates language is viewed as a code made up of words and a series of rules that connect words together thereby language learning evidenced in this analysis which shows activities in the unit within the AmBri textbook and in the teaching through media lessons predominately concern the learning of vocabulary

and grammatical rules for constructing sentences in English. Language is therefore understood as fixed and finite rather than through considering the complexities involved in using language for communication.

In terms of the language curriculum aims handed out to Albanian elementary schools by the Ministry of Education and Science in the form of a document titled Program Structure as evidenced in the data (Appendix☐), the aims being -

- To develop language skills, abilities of pupils and empower them to apply the language for practical purposes

- To acquaint the pupils with culture of English speaking countries

- To enable the pupils for independent work.

- To promote interactive teaching and learning.

The analysis reveals indications of communicative language teaching approaches, which promoted some interactive teaching and learning as learners were provided with opportunities for interactive pair and group work in which language could be used in communicative activities. However the activities in the textbook unit and teaching through media lessons did not appear to promote the application of English language for practical purposes beyond learning grammar and vocabulary. It is therefore also difficult to ascertain how students were being prepared for English speaking cultures. Students were observed working independently within pair or group work however the activities focussed predominately on vocabulary and grammar and constructing written sentences which were orally presented by a group member, indicative of language being regarded as a skill learnt through structured and situated activities. Varying levels of communicative fluency within this pedagogic approach to language learning, in terms of aligning with The European Common Framework and the desired outcome of communicative fluency, were observed in the classroom observations.

With no explicit statement of a theory of language or language learning in the Ministry of Education and Science curriculum document Programme Structure which has aims which have been in existence at least since 2002 evidenced in the teacher diary (2002 – Appendix C), nor in the AmBri text book series or the practice of teaching through media (Tafani, 2004, 2009), it appears a mix of grammar-based methodology, structural and situational approaches, influences of the task-based approach and communicative language teaching approaches suggestive of an eclectic English language teaching and learning pedagogy lacking a theory of language and language and learning underpins English language teaching in Albania. As evidenced in the analysis of primary and secondary data in this study, this resulted in confusion

for Albanian teachers and the syllabus textbook writers due to mismatches between lesson aims and objectives and activities which are predominately grammar-based in spite of the curriculum renewal objective of communicative fluency. Because of this confusion and lack of ongoing professional development, teachers continue with traditional approaches which are still being taught in university teacher training programs. This situation persists despite curriculum renewal directives for communicative fluency aligning with the Common European Framework. The framework does not recommend a pedagogic approach therefore this study recommends curriculum renewal in Albania should be grounded in an explicit theory of language and language and learning. The recommendation for consideration in curriculum renewal in Albania and the desired outcome of communicative fluency, following this analysis of the data, is for the text-based approach in which language and language and learning is viewed through the social semiotic lens, accompanied by ongoing professional training for teachers.

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Chapter 5: Justifications, Recommendations and Conclusion

5.1 Introduction

5.2 Justification for a text-based approach to be considered for language curriculum renewal

5.3 Recommendations and Conclusion

5.1 Introduction

Chapter 5 which concludes this paper recommends the text-based approach underpinned by social semiotic theory (Halliday, 1975, 1978, 1993) be trialled in curriculum renewal in Albania, as a way to build on the existing practice of teaching through media. This is because the student survey (Appendix A) and teacher questionnaire (Appendix B) undertaken in this study indicate the use of authentic media texts is viewed by teachers and students as positive and motivating and enlivening of classrooms due to the discussions which arise from their use. Therefore teachers view the use of authentic media texts as a way to plan lessons which take into consideration of the interests of the students. The text-based approach recommended in this study provides a theorised way for teachers to use the media texts as for the purpose of displaying how English language functions to make meaning through text types occurring in authentic social contexts, events and practices

5.2. Justification for a text-based approach to be considered for language curriculum renewal

In order to justify the recommendation for the trial of the text based approach, theorised through a social semiotic perspective of language and language and learning, from the voices of the teachers working in elementary schools in Albania comes the understanding they view authentic media texts used in the practice of teaching through media as valuable and useful in their English language classrooms.

" **I think that is important to use newspapers and videos in the class for many reasons such as they provide cultural information, exposure to real life and have a positive effect on students motivation and participation."** (Appendix B)

"I think authentic texts, such as videos contain useful language and they provide real life language and cultural insight. In an EFL situations students don't get exposed to real language outside the classroom so I think it is important to help them by bringing casual language in classroom" (Appendix B)

"It is important for the students to get exposed to a real language use such as slangs, it gives students and opportunity to get exposed to different accents by using videos , which is necessary nowadays that English is becoming the language of communication all over the world". (Appendix B)

"There are many vital things to use in an English language teaching such as videos are important, students will break their ear by listening to native English people speaking, magazines and newspaper too but I also have a textbook which is compulsory to use finish it." (Appendix B)

"I think that bringing something real and interesting in class it does help with student's participation and motivation and it also breaks the routine of using the same textbook" (Appendix B)

"From my experience I think that authentic texts are very highly motivating, and also encourage the students for further readings. They participate more while I am using authentic materials as they don't have many chances to be involved in the real use of the language and they speak English only in class especially when we see a famous movie in class they are very motivated. "(Appendix B)

"Authentic texts do increase the student's motivation and participation, especially the pictures in there or the famous songs texts or any famous film and information taken from the internet that the students want to know the meaning of them". (Appendix B)

'It really does motivates them not only motivates but also gives students a chance to be exposed to everyday English language in this way they improve their vocabulary too.'" (Appendix B).

These comments indicate a positive endorsement of the practice of teaching through media, therefore this practice could be further developed in terms of the foreign language curriculum renewal desired outcome of communicative fluency, by a well-considered theorised pedagogic position in relation to practices in the Albanian context. Therefore because the practice of teaching through media using authentic media texts in English language elementary school classrooms in Albania already exists and is valued by teachers and students as a motivating and interesting alternative to the textbook syllabus, the text-based approach for language curriculum renewal through socialisation is recommended for consideration.

The teacher questionnaire undertaken in this study indicates many English language teachers in Albania prefer to teach through traditional grammar based methods using the textbook syllabus. This approach, as evidenced in the data analysis of a unit in the textbook syllabus AmBri and two teaching through media lessons, confirms the continuation of traditional approaches to language teaching, in which, as evidenced in the data analysis, vocabulary and grammar is separated from texts. Language is therefore treated as a series of objects as evidenced from the data in the text book unit format of topics and activities and in the teaching practices of teachers in the observed teaching through media lessons, who when teaching began with the introduction of grammatical items and lists of words, following the textbook unit format. Students are thereby taught that language consists of parts for assembling into pre-arranged sentence patterns. In order to crack the code of a new language it is believed students need to learn the rules for putting together these parts into patterns.

In this approach, evidenced in the data, the sequencing of grammatical items and the lists of words, according to Mickan (2011) is unrelated to the texts learners need for real communication. This is especially relevant to consider in terms of language curriculum renewal in Albania which has the desired outcome of aligning with the Common European Framework recommendation for communicative fluency appropriate for the 21st century globalized world. Currently in Albania, as evidenced in the data, grammatical forms and rules are learnt through textbook and teacher activities in decontextualized sentences or dialogues. Therefore grammar is practiced repetitively without meaning, evidenced in the grammar focus and revision exercises in the AmBri textbook series. Vocabulary items, as evidenced in AmBri and teaching through media activities, are memorized as lists of words and tested in gap filling exercises, which as Mickan (2011) points out are not functional. The preference of teachers for using traditional grammar based approaches to language learning is evidenced in the following teacher comments indicating grammar based approaches to English language learning in Albanian elementary schools.

"I use a traditional style, based on grammar as the textbook contains a lot of grammar exercises. And I think that grammar is important for students to know how to use it." (Appendix B)

 "The time is very limited only 45 minutes with 35-40 students and I also have to work with the textbook which is part of the curriculum and I should finish it by the end of the year" (Appendix B)

"My focus is on grammar exercises as I think it is important for EFL learners. I go through all the exercises in the textbook" (Appendix B)

"It is mostly textbook centred, grammar exercises and some communicative exercises." (Appendix B).

"I don't have much spare time in class to use other materials and I will have to finish this book in the end of the year so I try to focus on it." (Appendix B).

The textbook syllabus AmBri and the practice of teaching through media have no explicitly stated theorized pedagogy underpinning their use. Halliday (1993) believes it is "appropriate that a general theory of learning, interpreted as "learning through language," should be grounded in whatever is known about "learning language." ... "The salient features of what happens when children learn language which could be taken account of within the framework of a language-based theory of learning" (p. 113). From the perspective of language as a resource with which people make meanings, therefore according to Mickan (2011) this "makes explicit a theory for language learning—learning language is learning to mean"(p. 23). This explicit theory for language learning is recommended for consideration for language curriculum renewal in Albania.

5. 3   Recommendations and Conclusion

This study concludes by recommending language curriculum renewal in Albania in terms of curriculum and pedagogy should begin with an explicit theoretical framework grounded in the understanding that language should be viewed through the social semiotic lens thereby, as opposed to viewing language as a code or structure existing separate from context, language is viewed as a resource situated in contexts with which learners make meaning. Furthermore, through this perspective, language is viewed as a system which is organized functionally.

Furthermore, according to Mickan (2011), "instances of use relate to what is going on in contexts and who is involved." (p. 23). Mickan further believes it is through encounters with each other, language builds not only understandings but also the potential for expression of meanings in many texts because we "select wordings from the language system to realize purposes in contexts" (p.23). In other words we structure and word texts in ways which determines the function of texts "through selections from the language system to form text types for the expression of meanings" (p. 23).

As Halliday (1975, 1978, 1993) and Mickan (2011, 2012) point out, the process for learning to mean begins very early in life and continues throughout life, language being the fundamental resource for meaning making Learning to mean is therefore, according to Mickan (2011) "a social process of communication amongst and with members of communities of practices" (p. 23). Language viewed through this perspective, "is learnt through participation in language practices, both as observers and as contributors" (p. 23). In education Mickan (2011) points out tasks and texts used in instruction depend on language use. According to Mickan (in press 2012) awareness of wordings in texts therefore prepares students for comprehension and composition of texts. Thereby familiarity with texts supports language learning as integrated and purposeful activity. Further to this, language teachers when working with authentic texts indicative of the contexts and practices in which these texts occur have the opportunity to engage in the natural, normal and ongoing process of meaning-making with their students.

In contexts such as Albania in which English is learnt as an additional and foreign language, learning to mean with new language resources involves, according to Mickan (2011), on building on already known discourses and texts which the students are familiar with in their first language. Mickan (2011) points out from their first language experiences, students when working with texts in an additional language "expect to mean because this is their experience of language. Language learners know much about actual language use from their initial language experiences, this familiarity is the basis for learning new languages through engagement with texts" (p. 18). Through the text-based approach, language learners work with texts for the purpose of expressing meanings and to share meanings enabling participation in what Mickan (2011) describes as community practices configured and enacted through language.

Therefore Mickan (2011) contends because learners bring to the learning of an additional language a familiarity with texts, their purposes and contexts of use, this positions language learners, according to Mickan (2011, p. 18) "to make meanings from texts in a target language from the commencement of a program ... Learners use language normally and experience the satisfaction in making sense of texts from the outset". From this it can be understood from

Mickan (2011) the authentic language, found in multi-sensory (spoken, written and illustrated) and multimodal texts, by replacing pretend and imaginary contexts, settings and dialogues and imaginary people such as found in textbooks such as AmBri and in activities, exercises and practices, this enhances comprehension and learning through the use of language for the real purpose of authentic communication in real practices. This includes reading newspapers, magazines, journals and books for information, listening to plays, novels and watching videos, speaking in order to complete a task which can be accomplished through the selection of texts of interest and relevance in classroom activities. Therefore the use of authentic media texts in teaching through media lessons can, through the adoption of the text-based approach, be used for the real purpose of authentic communication in real practices relevant to the needs of learners.

The text-based approach provides a pedagogy through which this can be achieved by building a social semiotic theoretical language learning base into the current practice of teaching through media in Albania. Therefore the text-based approach to language learning will enhance the practice of teaching through media through the selection of texts which will enable lessons to be used for real purposes, the classroom becoming the site for authentic communication, discourse and literacy practices. This is important to understand in language curriculum renewal initiatives because of the contention of Mickan (2011) who states learners can experience frustration with traditional language teaching because of the "delay in using the language in a sensible way which transcended mouthing phrases and repeating lists of colors, days of the week and numbers, which were nonsensical" (p. 19). These ways of language teaching and learning, as evidenced in the data analyzed in this study, occur in the textbook unit analyzed in this paper and also in the activities and exercises in the teaching through media lessons. Mickan (2011) points out texts in terms of authentic purposes, functions and practices, are readily accessible for all ages and language proficiency levels from preschool through to university, stating "being read to, working out the meanings of a text, and constructing a text together all contribute to experiences of making meanings" (p. 19).

It should be noted in the text-based approach grammar is not ignored or not taught as can occur in communicative approaches to language learning. Grammar is taught through the analysis of texts, foregrounded in the knowledge that, according to Mickan (2011, p. 20), "texts are functional in different contexts for realization of different purposes". Texts are therefore studied through analysis of the wording of texts; thereby teaching grammar is situated and contextualized through the realization grammar and vocabulary, or the lexico-grammar, function together in texts. Therefore it can be understood through Mickan (2011) the "analysis

of lexico-grammar is concerned with the functional analysis of texts" (p. 20) which "reveals how through selective wording the specific functions of a text are realized." (p. 20).

Therefore, as Mickan (2011) states, linguistic analysis, rather than through traditional grammar based approaches, is directed at the purposes of a text thereby the learner begins to understand "how wordings and meanings are interconnected: a change in the choice of words changes the meaning potential for a listener or reader" (p. 19). Through the text-based approach to language learning, the objective is for learners "to understand how to make language choices in the composition of texts for the creation of different meanings" (p.19).The strength of text-based instruction, rather than teaching skills separately as occurs in Albanian English language programs in elementary schools, is the integration of spoken and written language in natural language use, Mickan (2011) pointing out it is "normal for people to combine reading and writing, just as listening and speaking occur together" (p.21).

Mickan (2011) states that the aim of text based teaching is:

 "... to immerse students in experiences with texts in order to reflect the richness of students' everyday experiences of texts. The teacher's role is to select and sequence texts for planned and direct instruction for a class to learn the texts for participation in the class community and the community they aspire to beyond schooling. Programming involves selection of texts for students' participation in targeted language practices specific to students' purposes for learning the language. The main idea is for students to work to understand relevant texts, to respond to texts, and to express meanings in texts" (p. 21).

The activities based on texts, rather than as currently occurs in Albania in which skills are taught   separately from texts, include, for example as stated by Mickan (2011), involve observing texts in action in functional use and situational context, reacting to texts, analyzing texts, and composing texts.

Of importance in the consideration of language curriculum renewal in Albania aligning to the Common European Framework outcome of communicative fluency, Mickan (2011) points out that current approaches require fundamental reorientation. This is because the viewing of "language as linguistic objects, and the theory of language learning as learning the language system, fails to make the distinction between linguistic study and communicative use of language" (p. 17) This is problematic in view of globalization in which languages are used for specific purposes, including the role of English as the lingua franca. Mickan (2011) believes with "the exception of genre teaching, changes have been at the surface level, with instruction, teaching materials and tests maintaining the discrete treatment of language apart from

contexts"(p. 17). From the analysis undertaken in this paper aimed at understanding the pedagogy underpinning language learning in Albania, this appears to be the case in Albanian elementary school English language programs therefore renewal through theorized pedagogic reorientation is required.

In text-based instruction in terms of pedagogic reorientation, recommended for consideration in language curriculum renewal in Albania,) the aim from the beginning, according to Mickan (2011) , is to build on the discourse resources students bring to class thereby 'sexualizing' meanings by working with texts. The text-based approach is recommended because teaching with authentic texts integrates language skills or modes and the discourse understandings of language learners through the development of an understanding that texts have distinctive structure and lexicons-grammar which functions according to social and cultural function.

The goal of communicative fluency in language programs as desired in language curriculum renewal in Albania, according to Mickan (2011) "requires students to apply their knowledge of the wording of texts in the expression of meanings in conversation and in composition" (p. 23). Through a text-based approach to language learning, students learn how to make language selections for conversation and composition, thereby outcomes of communicative fluency and literacy are optimized because students learn to express meanings in their additional language evidenced in the kinds of texts they produce, preparing them for the globalized trans lingual and transcultural demands of our globalized 21st century world.

Therefore as an Albanian teacher of English language, in light of the survey undertaken with 94 elementary school Grade 5- 9 students (Appendix A) which indicates students strongly endorse the use of authentic media texts as enjoyable, interesting, as providing the chance for using real English and as a way to understand the culture of English speaking countries, I recommend the text-based approach   theorized through a social semiotic understanding of language and language and learning be trialed in the practice of teaching through media. Such trials could signal the beginning to language curriculum renewal and studies could be undertaken to assess the effectiveness of the text-based approach in the Albanian foreign language curriculum renewal context. Furthermore reason for this consideration has been through my observations of my own son, now aged 7, and how through participating in the socializing practices of family, friendships, school and the community he has become a communicatively fluent and trilingual speaker of Albanian, Italian and English and effortlessly uses all three languages depending on the context of this socialization.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A

For the students of grade year 6, 7 and 9

The questionnaire for the students was to investigate their attitude towards the authentic materials.

English knowledge and the attitude towards the authentic materials

1. **Which grade are you?**
   - a. Year 6
   - b. Year 7
   - c. Year 9

2. **How do you rate your English proficiency ?**
   - a. Very high
   - b. High
   - c. Average
   - d. Low
   - e. Very low

3. **Do you enjoy the lesson when the teacher uses newspapers or TV in the class?**
   - a. Agree
   - b. Mildly agree
   - c. Undecided
   - d. Disagree
   - e. Strongly disagree

4. **How much do teachers use newspapers or TV in the class?**
   - a. Very often
   - b. Often
   - c. Average
   - d. Not often
   - e. Not at all

5. **Do you think that the use of authentic materials provide the chance to use real English in class?**
   - a. Strongly agree
   - b. Agree
   - c. Mildly agree

      d. Disagree

      e. Strongly disagree

6. Do you find it hard to understand the materials that teacher brings in class?

      a. Strongly agree

      b. Agree

      c. Mildly agree

      d. Disagree

      e. Strongly disagree

7. Do think that newspapers and magazines motivate you to learn English language?

      a. Strongly agree

      b. Agree

      c. Mildly agree

      d. Disagree

      e. Strongly disagree

8. Do you think that reading a magazine or newspaper in class is waste of time?

      a. Strongly agree

      b. Agree

      c. Mildly agree

      d. Disagree

      e. Strongly disagree

9. Do you like to report on an interesting newspaper or magazine article in English?

      a. Strongly agree

      b. Agree

      c. Mildly agree

      d. Disagree

      e. Strongly disagree

10. Do you like to learn about the culture of English speaking countries?

      a. Strongly agree

      b. Agree

      c. Mildly agree

      d. Disagree

      e. Strongly disagree

11. Do you think that newspaper, magazines, articles, TV contain cultural information about English speaking countries?

      a. Strongly agree

      b. Agree

      c. Mildly agree

      d. Disagree

      e. Strongly disagree

Comments, if any

_____

_____

Appendix B

Dear English Language Teacher,

I am a student currently enrolled in an MA in Applied Linguistics program at school of Humanities, University of Adelaide, Australia .To conduct my research I am going to observe some Albanian EFL teachers and also prepared a questionnaire for them. If you are willing to participate in this research please answer the questions given below and kindly send the completed form to my email address kucirma@yahoo.com.au or hand it over to me in within 21 days. All information obtained will be kept confidential no name will appear in the study.

Personal profile:
    a. **Gender:**

English teaching and using of authentic materials

    1. **Would you please give some information about your qualifications?**

    _____

    _____

    2. **What about your professional experience (teaching experience)?**

    _____

    _____

    3. **What approaches do you use to teach English? (Or) How do you teach the EFL curriculum in your classroom?**

    _____

    _____

    4. **What instructional materials do you use?**

    _____

    _____

    5. **Do you supplement other materials like authentic texts?**

    _____

    _____

    6. **Do you have group work/pair work? Why?**

_____

_____

7. **Do you adapt or change parts in the textbook you use?**

_____

_____

8. **Do you think authentic text motivates the students?**

_____

_____

9. **Is there any difficulty that you would like to mention related with the use of authentic texts in the classroom?**

_____

_____

10. **Do students find it hard to understand the materials that you bring in class?**

_____

_____

11. **Do you think that the use of authentic materials, such as, newspapers, magazines, and videos in the class is important?**

_____

_____

Comments, if any

_____

_____

_____

APPENDIX C – APPENDIX H (accompanying folders)

were not provided and do not appear on the

Adelaide Research and Scholarship Digital Repository