

Bilingualism among Albanian Students

VJOLLCA BERISHA PALUSHI, M.A.

*English Language Teacher
Prishtina, Kosovo*

Abstract

Bilingualism considered as the ability to use two languages, is an important phenomenon in a society or group of people. However, many factors influence a person's success in becoming a proficient bilingual. Therefore, being aware of its importance and complexity of factors that influence it, a study was conducted.

The study aimed at exploring in depth the notion of bilingualism among Albanian students, especially of the students of the University of Prishtina, Faculty of Philology, English and German Department. Thus, this paper aimed at shedding some light regarding the topic.

In order to collect the data, a questionnaire was used to investigate the issue. The participants in the survey were bachelor and master students of the English Department and bachelor students of German Department of the Faculty of Philology.

The findings of the survey suggest that even though bilingualism is not so easy to be defined the participants were able to define it. In addition, it suggests that Albanian students think that the earlier a person starts to learn a second language the better; it suggests that motivation and exposure are considered to be the most important factors that influence success in second language learning; and lastly it suggests that Albanian students think a bilingual person has many advantages, but a very small number of them think that bilingualism also brings disadvantages to a person. The significance of these results stands on the extension of literature and information concerning bilingualism among Albanian students, and especially it gives a contribution on the field of linguistics in Kosovo and abroad.

Keywords: Bilingualism, Success factors, Advantages, Disadvantages

1. INTRODUCTION

The importance of knowing languages has been proved over years. People needed to communicate with each other, thus the need of knowing other languages came to light. Hence, people started to learn other languages mainly in order to be able to communicate and understand other cultures as well.

In addition, usually it happens that people learn a language because they simply like it and they want to be able to communicate in that language, but there are cases when people learn a language because they are obliged to.

Accordingly, many languages are obligatory in schools, since primary school. Thus, people, specifically children, start to become familiar with a particular language from a very young age and if they are interested and have motivation they learn to improve that language and even advance it.

Moreover, this is the case with most Albanian students. They are taught English in school from a very young age, third grade and in recent years from the first grade. Thus, they are in contact with English language and culture from early ages, and this contact or teaching/learning process usually continues until secondary school.

Additionally, there are cases when particular students decide to study English language and become proficient speakers, hence become proficient bilinguals. In general, a bilingual is considered a person who can understand and speak another language, which is not his/her mother tongue. This is just one acceptable definition, even though there are many others given by different authors.

On the other hand, apart from those students who learn English or any other language in school setting, there are cases when students learn a language informally, meaning a non-school setting. Accordingly, they may learn from their parents at home, if they are raised by bilingual parents or parents who do not speak the same language, from watching TV in that language, or from any other kind of exposure to the language.

However, in order to become a bilingual person it requires a lot of work and commitment. In addition, many factors such as age and motivation contribute to the process until a person becomes a bilingual. Therefore, it was seen as a need to investigate some issues related to bilingualism among Albanian students such as the age factor and other factors contributing in language development.

1.1. Objectives of the study

This paper aims at making clear what is bilingualism, by providing different definitions of it, given by different authors and by students themselves. In addition, it aims at identifying at what age did students of the Faculty of Philology of the University of Prishtina, English and German Department, started to learn English or German, either formally or informally, and what age is considered as the best age to start learning a second language; what factors influenced the students to learn English or German and what factors are considered as the most important ones to be successful in second language learning; and finally identify the advantages and disadvantages of being a bilingual person.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. What is bilingualism?

Bilingualism being considered an important phenomenon is defined differently by different authors. However, many authors consider it a difficult term to be defined even though it is an understandable and easy term. The term bilingualism is even compared with the term "word." It is said that even though all people understand what a word is, they still find it difficult to define, Beardsmore (1986).

According to Raithel (2003) two definitions of bilingualism can be given, a broad and narrow one. The broad one defines bilingualism as a person or a speaker of a language who can also speak in another language. On the other hand, the narrow one defines bilingualism as a person who knows two languages as a native person does. In addition, another linguist who supports the before mentioned definition of bilingualism is Bloomfield (1935) as cited in Hamers & Blanc (2000) who states that bilingualism is the "native like control of two languages." Even though these definitions are acceptable, they only account for those speakers who can speak or use a language as natives do. But, what happens to those who are able to understand and communicate in a particular language but do not have native like competence or fluency, are not they bilinguals? Hence, a broader definition, in the sense that it includes all kinds of speakers that are able to communicate in another language, meaning at whatever level of competence, is needed. Accordingly, Griffith University defines bilingualism as having some ability to use two or more languages. As regards this, Macnamara (1967) as cited in Hamers & Blanc (2000), states that a bilingual is anyone who has a minimal language competence, in a second language, in any of the main language skills such as speaking, reading, listening or writing.

On the other hand, Hamers & Blanc (2000) define it differently. They state that bilingualism refers to the state of a linguistic community in which two languages are in contact with the result that two codes can be used in the same interaction and that a number of individuals are bilingual (societal bilingualism) but it also includes the concept of bilinguality (or individual bilingualism). This definition is even a more complete one since it does not only include an individual, but a wider community. Moreover, as regards bilinguality as a concept alone, according to Hammers (1981) as cited in Hamers & Blanc (2000), it is the psychological state of an individual who has access to more than one linguistic code as a means of social communication.

Moreover, Moradi (2014) makes a distinction between the terms of bilingualism and a bilingual person. According to him, bilingualism is the use of two languages by an individual or by a group of people, whereas a bilingual is considered a person who is able to use two languages with some degree of proficiency.

Having in mind all these definitions, it can be concluded that bilingualism can be considered as a phenomenon in a community of people or in a society where people are able to speak two languages, therefore a person who can speak two languages is a bilingual.

2.2. Types of bilingualism and bilinguals

Bilingualism as a phenomenon it can be separated into many types. Therefore, according to Liddicoat (1991) there are some types of bilingualism: simultaneous, successive, co-ordinate, compound, additive, subtractive, elite, folk, and so on. However, here will be described two types of bilingualism simultaneous and successive.

Simultaneous bilingualism is considered when a child learns two languages simultaneously, meaning at the same time. According to McLaughlin (1984) as cited in Liddicoat (1991) simultaneous bilingualism can occur in the period of less than 3 years, meaning from birth until the age of 3. But if a child learns a language after the age of three according to him that can not be considered as simultaneous bilingualism since a child's first language patterns are almost established. In this case, we have to do with successive bilingualism, because first language is already acquired or learned and now it can only be talked about first and second language, because in the case of simultaneous bilingualism not a clear cut between first and second language can be put.

On the other hand, as regards types of bilinguals Moradi (2014), among other classifications mentions early and late bilinguals. Beardsmore (1986) as cited in Moradi (2014) regards early bilinguals as learners who attain native like proficiency in two languages, whereas late bilinguals are referred as non-native speakers of the second language. In addition Moradi (2014) states that early bilinguals are those who learn a second language in the pre-adolescent period of life and late bilinguals as those who learn a second language in adulthood or adolescence.

2.3. Factors that contribute to success in second language learning

2.3.1. Age

Among other factors that influence second language learning (SCL) is the age at which a person starts learning the language. In order to be successful in second language learning, what is the best age to start learning a new language? Hence, by taking into account the opinions of different authors this question will be answered.

As regards the hypothesis of "the earlier the better" there are many contradictions and agreements. Therefore, Bley-Vroman (1989) as cited in Muñoz (2010) is one of the proponents of the idea of starting early. He divides two groups of learners, pre and post puberty learners. According to this author, as regards pre puberty learners it is for sure that they will be successful in language learning, whereas those of post puberty phase will be

less successful, meaning that in very rare cases they will gain native like proficiency. Another opinion that supports the idea of starting early is the one given by Torras et al (1997) as cited in Muñoz (2010) who cite the words of a parent who says : “The younger they are, the more they are like sponges, the more they absorb, the more they retain.” In addition, Johnstone (2002) claims that young children are born with a special capability for learning languages, but this capability starts to change and fade in puberty. Moreover, Singleton (2004) as cited in Stefánsson (2013) is another supporter of the idea of starting early. According to an investigation done by the author, when younger learners were tested, meaning those who started earlier to learn a second language, they achieved better results than those who started learning a language later in their lives.

On the other hand, according to Stefánsson (2013) since the early 90s, different studies have shown positive results of learners who start learning at older stages of life and who achieve high levels of proficiency. Hence, Marinova-Todd et al (2000) as cited in Johnstone (2002) states that learners in the post puberty phase are able to achieve native like proficiency, and the previous opinions who said that later learners can not achieve native like proficiency do not count as reliable thoughts. Moreover, according to an investigation done by BAF project as cited in Muñoz (2010), they came with the conclusion that starting early to learn a language in an instructive setting, meaning in school, and does not have an automatic impact or advantage to the final success of the learner. Additionally, according to a research done by Ervinn-Tripp as cited in Stefánsson (2013) when young and older learners were tested, older ones showed better results in every part of the language.

Despite what was said by previously mentioned authors, according to Stern (1976) as cited in Johnstone (2002), different ages may bring different advantages and disadvantages to language learners. Accordingly, Johnstone (2002) states the following advantages that students who start earlier to learn a second language may have: they are better in pronunciation; they are less anxious about language learning than older learners; they have more available time for learning; those who start earlier are able to make productive links between their first and second language, etc. Moreover, as regards later or older learners he mentions the following advantages: they have acquired or build more strategies for learning than younger learners; they are more aware of why they are learning a second language; they are more experienced in handling language related activities, etc.

Thus, even though there are many different opinions and conducted studies, it can be seen that each age of starting to learn a second language, earlier or later in life, has its own advantages and disadvantages and no one can definitely say that this or that age is the best to start.

However, it should be made clear that not only age or any other factor can have a great influence by itself, without the contribution of other factors. So, more or less all factors fulfill each other.

On the other hand, some authors consider that age factor is not as important as some other factors. Accordingly, Stefánsson (2013) is one of them who states that motivation and language exposure are more important for the learning process than the age factor.

2.3.2. Motivation

The way that a language starts to be learned and developed depends a lot where, how and with whom a person lives. In addition, people who decide to learn a second language may have different reasons or motivations for doing that. They may be motivated to learn a language simply because they like that language, because of its sounds, grammar or easiness to learn it or even for their studies or future career. Moreover, they may be motivated from their teachers at school, since the job of a teacher is not simply to teach students but also to increase their motivation and interest to learn that language. Accordingly, Stefánsson (2013) states that students need to be motivated and the teacher should help the learners to be aware of their learning expectations. As regards language learning and motivation, Byram (1994) as cited in Alsayed (2003), states that there is a relationship between language learning and motivation and that success in learning raises motivation. Hence, if a student passes successfully a language test, that may be a motivation for him or her to continue learning and be even more successful. In addition, Pandey (2005) as cited in Stefánsson (2013), states that “motivation, defined as the impetus to create and sustain intentions and goal-seeking acts, is important because it determines the extent of the learner's active involvement and attitude toward learning.”

On the other hand, social environment may be a motivator too. Before moving on let us first define what social environment is. Accordingly, Barnett & Casper (2001) define social environment as” the immediate physical surroundings, social relationships, and cultural milieus within which defined groups of people function and interact.”

Additionally, if a person lives in a country or community where his first language is not spoken, then the need of knowing the language of its surroundings raises. E.g. an Albanian child or adult being raised or living in England, in order to be able to be able to communicate, be educated, have a job or in other words to be fully integrated he or she will need to learn the language of the place he/she is living in. Hence, many authors call this kind of motivation “integrative motivation”. One of them is Shirbagi (2010) as cited in Stefánsson (2013), who states that the main aim of integrative learners is to use language for social interactions. In addition, according to Gardner (1985) as cited in Stefánsson (2013), integrative learners have better attitudes towards learning and they are more committed to learning. Therefore, it

seems that integrative learners set high goals to themselves, and they have strong reasons for doing so. Thus, they work hard on the attainment of their goals, that is learning the language in order to use it for social interactions.

Conversely, the influence of social environment in our country Kosova can be mentioned. Hence, in recent years in Kosova, more specifically in the after war period, the need of knowing other languages and especially English has been prominent. This is due to different social factors, e.g. many people from foreign countries who came with a mission in Kosova were mainly English speakers. Therefore, Kosova people needed to know English in order to be able to communicate with the foreigners or even have the role of an interpreter.

Despite this, it can be supposed that people also became more aware of its importance as an international language and that is why they started learning it more than they used to.

Additionally, there are other cases when learners have a different motivation for learning a second or foreign language. According to an study conducted by Martin and Laurie (1993) as cited in Alsayed (2003), many students learned a foreign language for practical plans such as travelling or employment opportunities. Hence, if a person wants to travel to a particular place e.g. America; he/she should know English in order to be able to communicate with people there. Alternatively, if one wants to apply for a particular job e.g. journalist among other job requirements may be the knowledge of a foreign language. Thus, in order to be seen as a possible candidate for that position that person should know the language being required. Therefore, in these cases a person would be more motivated to learn a language because of having reasons behind that.

Even though motivation is considered to be an important factor for success in language learning it is not a constant factor. It changes over time and over different ages to the same person, Alsayed (2003).

2.3.3. Exposure

As it was mentioned previously, exposure is considered to be one of the most important factors for success in second language learning. In addition, a person learning a second language may be exposed to that language in a formal or non-formal setting. A formal setting is considered to be school. On the other hand, a non-formal setting may be considered home environment e.g. if parents talk to their child in the second language. In addition, a person may be exposed to a language by means of social media e.g. if he/she watches TV or reads newspapers/books in the target language. Another non-formal setting are social contacts that a person may have with friends, colleagues or other people rather than his/her family. Even though, these kinds of settings exist, many authors discuss cases of exposure in a formal setting.

Nevertheless, at whatever setting, early exposure to a language is considered a good indicator of success in second language learning. The effect

of exposure is measured by studies done by many linguists. Hence, a study done by Stern, Burstall, & Harley (1975) as cited in Mclaughlin (1992) found out that students who were exposed in a longer period to French language, showed better results on tests done for second language proficiency.

Moreover, Stefánsson (2013), states that if there is not enough language exposure it might negatively indicate the process of learning a second language. In addition, the aforementioned author states exposure to the language should be provided to the learner from the moment he/she starts to learn a second language regardless the age of starting. On the other hand, Alsayed (2003) states that early exposure plays a significant role in the acquisition of aural skills, meaning listening and speaking skills, but not in the acquisition of other language skills such as reading and writing.

Furthermore, Stefánsson (2013) states that if children are exposed to the second language in the same extent as they are exposed to their first language, they will be more successful. Apart from being successful, if parents expose their children to second language, that exposure will help in the development of children's identity. On the other hand, Genesee (2008) as cited in Stefánsson (2013), states that it is also important to provide exposure to two languages at the same time, meaning not only exposure to second language but also exposure to first language.

Even though, all authors claim that exposure to second language is very important for success, it is the choice of the learner if he/she will expose himself/herself to that language and how much exposure he/she will have. This is particularly true in the case of adult learners, since they usually decide for themselves. On the other hand, as regards younger learners, it is usually the choice of the parents how much they expose their children to the first or second language.

2.4. Advantages and disadvantages of being a bilingual

The effects of being a bilingual, its positive and negative sides have been studied over the years. Thus, many different approaches have been provided. Many researches have argued on the positive effects of bilingualism on individuals, however there are also arguments and comments about the negative effects. Hence, some of them will be mentioned.

As regards the positive effects of being a bilingual, many researchers state that those advantages are in different periods of one's life such as childhood, adulthood and old age. One of the advantages is related to cognitive abilities and performance. Accordingly, Bialystok et al (2009) as cited in Sorace (2011) state that the advantages related to cognitive abilities and performance have to do with cognitive flexibility and control of attention, characteristics that were seen during experiments with bilinguals and monolinguals, when they had to solve tasks with distracting information and bilinguals performed better. In addition, as it regards the relation between bilingualism and cognitive abilities according to Arnarsdóttir (2012) during

the 1920s there was also seen a relation between bilinguals and intelligence. Thus, bilinguals were considered more intelligent than monolinguals.

Additionally, Sorace (2011) mentions some other benefits of being a bilingual. According to him, bilingual children may have advantages in learning words because they have less or no constraints by principles such as the principle of “Mutual Exclusivity.” Another advantage mentioned by him is that bilinguals can understand easier the language structures and they also have better or increased abilities in learning new languages. On the other hand, Bialystok (2008) states that bilinguals have more efficient resources for performing tasks.

Conversely, apart from many advantages there are conducted studies that contradict the aforementioned benefits of being a bilingual. Accordingly, Genesse (2008) as cited in Stefánsson (2013) discusses some disadvantages of being a bilingual. First, he states that bilingual children may never master their first or second language as the monolinguals do. Then, he states that bilinguals may have difficulties in making a distinction between their first and second language, thus use them at the same time.

In addition, according to Ben – Zeev (1977) as cited in Arnarsdóttir (2012) studies have shown that bilinguals may have delays in the acquisition of grammatical structures and vocabulary.

Apart from what was said until now as regards the negative effects of bilingualism on individuals, according to Arnarsdóttir (2012) based on a study done by Peal and Lambert in 1962, it resulted that bilinguals do not have any disadvantage on their cognitive and metalinguistic development from bilingualism.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In this section, it is presented the methodology, respectively the overall procedure, which this survey has gone through, from the compiling of a questionnaire to the data analysis. Moreover, it includes sections of target population, instruments and of procedure.

3.1 Target population

Bachelor and master students of the English Department of the University of Prishtina, Faculty of Philology, as well as bachelor students of the German Department were part of this study. In all, there were 45 participants, 30 of them were students who study English (Master 15 and Bachelor 15) and 15 students who study German language. In all, there were 35 females and 10 males. The English students were chosen randomly whereas German students were intentionally chosen (only those who started learning German informally), and their partaking was voluntary.

3.2. Instruments

In order to acquire and measure the data concerning students' responses, related to bilingualism, a questionnaire was compiled and used for the purposes of the study. Regarding the structure of the questionnaire, it contained nine questions, where two of them had one sub-question. Hence, six of them were closed ended with two, four and five alternatives, while three of them were open-ended where the participants had the possibility of giving their own answers. In addition, even though most of the questions were with alternatives, the last alternative was "other" where the students could write their own answer if the alternatives were not appropriate for them (*See Appendix*).

3.3 Procedure

As it was stated previously, a questionnaire was constructed for the needs of the study. When this was done, the questionnaire was distributed to the students online and the time for its completion was unlimited, even though it was supposed to take 5-7 minutes. Furthermore, after gathering the data for the survey, the answers were organized by using Microsoft Office Packet. From that classification were extracted the final data. Hence, optimal conditions were ready for presenting the results and analysing them.

4. RESULTS

According to the data collected as regards the issue of bilingualism among Albanian students some results are extracted.

As regards the first question (*See Appendix*) when students were asked to define what bilingualism is, all of them were able to define it appropriately. The majority of the participants defined bilingualism as the ability to understand and use two languages. However, this is an example of how a student defined it "Bilingualism is the ability to understand, speak, listen, read and write another foreign language, besides mother tongue"

Moreover, when it comes to the second question, regarding the age of starting to learn the second language, the students who learned English language formally, most of them started at the age of ten, (22 out of 30), whereas only eight students said that they started to learn English at the age of eleven (*See Fig. 1*).

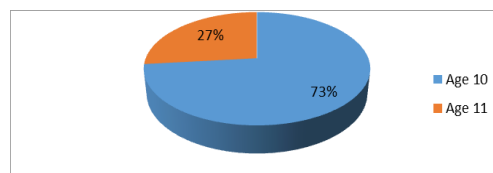


Fig.1. Age of starting to learn English formally

On the other hand, the age at which students started to learn German informally differed very much. Therefore, the following figure shows the percentages of students' particular ages of starting to learn German.

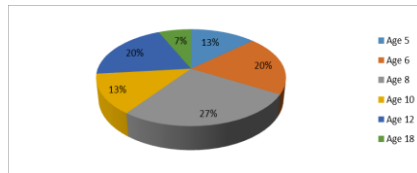


Fig. 2 Age of starting to learn German informally

In addition, as regards 3rd question (*See Appendix*) students gave their opinions regarding the best age to start learning a second language. Hence, twenty-seven students out of forty-five chose 0-8 years, eighteen students chose the age 9-16 whereas none of them chose the age 16-25. Thus, the greatest percentage goes for the age 0-8 years (*See Fig 3*).

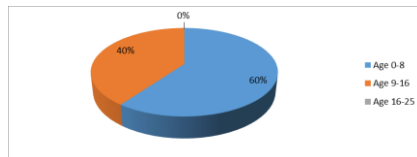


Fig. 3 The best age to start learning a second language

Regarding the informal learning of German, participants answered like this to the question as how they learned German; nine participants out of fifteen claimed that they learned from watching TV, whereas six of them claimed that they learned from contacts with other people, meaning those who spoke German, and none of them said that they learned the language from their parents.

Additionally, when students who learned English formally were asked the 5th question regarding motivation to learn (*See Appendix*) said that their greatest motivation was teacher (fourteen responses out of thirty), then family (ten responses) and social environment where they lived (six responses) (*See Fig. 4*)

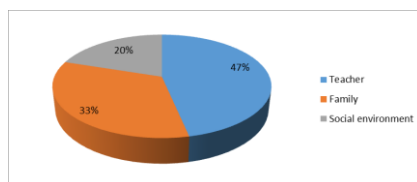


Fig. 4 Greatest motivation to learn English

On the other hand, students who learned German informally answered differently from those who learned English. Most of them (eleven participants) answered that social environment was their greatest motivator, two of them answered teacher, and three of them said that they were simply motivated by themselves.

Regarding the reason of learning English most of them answered because they liked it (twenty answers out of thirty participants), three of them said because it was obligatory in school, two of them said because they were exposed to the language, and five of the participants gave their own answers, they did not circle the alternatives. Hence, they gave answers like “because I wanted to be able to read English books,” because I wanted to be able to communicate in English,” “because I wanted to be able to watch movies without Albanian subtitles,” and so on.

Conversely, those students who learned German, eight of them said they learned the language because they liked it, five because they were exposed to the language, and two of them said for to communicative purposes.

Regarding 7th question (*See Appendix*) twenty-seven participants consider motivation as the most important factor for success in second language learning. In addition, thirteen consider exposure, three consider age and just two consider personality as the most important factor for success (*See Figure 5*).

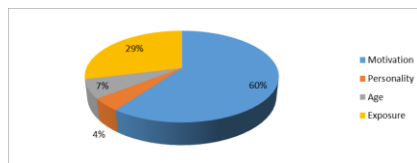


Fig. 5 Most important factors for success in second language learning

Moreover, as regards the advantages of being a bilingual person, the participants expressed varying ideas. Hence, they mentioned these kinds of advantages: more communication opportunities with other people, more opportunities to learn about other cultures, more job opportunities, cognitive benefits such as the ability to learn another language faster, more sources of information, etc.

On the other hand, participants were also asked if being bilingual has disadvantages and forty-one participants answered no. Thus, only three participants answered with yes and the disadvantages that they mentioned were: “hard to think in just one language,” “second language can overcome the first language as regards usage ” and “a bilingual may use foreign words (of the second language) instead of using words of his/her mother tongue.”

5. DISCUSSION

The present study hypothesised that in order to become a proficient bilingual it requires a lot of work and commitment and that many factors especially age and motivation contribute to the process until a person becomes a bilingual. Therefore, the issues related to bilingualism were studied and it resulted that each factor has its own contribution in the way of becoming a bilingual, and that being a bilingual it has its both positive and negative sides.

5.1. Even though the term bilingualism was considered by many authors as difficult to be defined (*See Literature Review*), all participants were able to define it appropriately. It can be said that they were able to define and give those appropriate definitions since they are bilinguals themselves and maybe they were interested to know what bilingualism is, thus they searched for the terms, or simply they gave the definitions as they understood and knew from their own experiences.

5.2. One of the factors that has a role in success in second language learning was considered age. Either the age of starting early or late to learn a language it has its own benefits. However, it seems that the participants are proponents of the idea of starting early or of the hypothesis “the earlier the better” since most of them considered the age from 0-8 as the best age to start learning a second language. In addition one of the proponents of the idea of starting early was Bley-Vroman (1989) (*See Literature Review*). However since Johnstone (2002) and many other authors have provided arguments about the benefits of starting earlier or later it is still difficult to decide the best age, since each phase has its benefits different from the other.

5.3. As it regards motivation to learn the second language formally, it resulted that their greatest motivation were their teachers. Hence, as it was mentioned previously (*See Literature Review*) teachers have a great role in motivating their students. In addition, Stefánsson (2013) states that teachers should motivate their students and also help them define their learning objectives. Even though, motivation from teachers is an important factor in learning this is not the case with learners in informal settings. They have other people or things that motivate them. Hence, it resulted that for the participants of the study, those who started to learn German informally, their greatest motivation was social environment, meaning the people that they lived with or that they were surrounded with such as friends or relatives, since they felt the need of communicating with them in that language.

5.4. Regarding the most important factors that influence success in second language learning there were given different opinions. Some consider age, others motivation and so on (*See Literature Review*). But according to Stefánsson (2013) motivation and language exposure are the most important for the learning process. Hence, it seems that also the participants agree with the aforementioned author since most of them consider motivation and language exposure as factors that influence success.

5.5. Most of the advantages of being a bilingual that were mentioned by different authors (*See Literature Review*) were also mentioned by the participants e.g. Sorace (2011) states that a profit of being a bilingual is that you have an increased ability to learn other languages. However, students/participants mentioned some other benefits that none of the consulted authors mentioned, that may be because the authors saw it from the viewpoint of language competence and performance, whereas students saw it from their own viewpoints of the reality that they are living. Accordingly, they mentioned that if they are bilinguals they have more increased job opportunities than monolinguals and they also mentioned that they have more resources of information. This can be explained with the fact that there is a lack of specialized books/studies or information available in Albanian language for students and for those who are interested to read. Hence the only solution is to find available information into another language other than Albanian.

A surprising fact from the extracted data was that only a few students (three of them) said that being a bilingual has disadvantages. Hence, it remains a question if students did not think carefully of disadvantages or they really think that there are no disadvantages, since it was proven previously by authors that except advantages there are also disadvantages in being a bilingual person (*See Literature Review*).

6. CONCLUSION

In general, bilingualism is considered to be the ability to use two languages and many factors influence the development of this ability in people. Conversely, this study deeply analysed the notion of bilingualism, by providing various definitions given by authors and students; it elaborated some ideas of what the best age to start learning a second language is; it found factors that influenced the students to learn English or German and it made clear factors that are considered as the most important ones that influence success in second language learning; and it identified the advantages and disadvantages of being a bilingual person. Therefore, the study gives a contribution in the field of linguistics in Kosovo and abroad.

6.1. Limitations

Even though the aims related to the study are met, it has some flaws. The main limitation of the study is time constraints. Therefore, due to time constraints it was impossible to increase the number of research population, especially of German informal learners, since it was difficult to find students who first started to learn the language informally.

6.2. Recommendations

Since the study was done with Albanian students of the Philology Faculty only, more exactly with English and German Department, it is seen as a necessity to broaden the research population and to do a further study with other students as well, e.g. with students of other departments and faculties whose second languages are not English and German but other languages.

REFERENCES

1. Alsayed, M. (2003) *Factors That Contribute to Success in Learning English as a Foreign Language* Retrieved from: <http://www.damascusuniversity.edu.sy/mag/human/images/stories/03230.pdf>
2. Arnarsdóttir, E. (2012) *The Importance of Being Bilingual: The Effects of Bilingualism on Cognitive Development and the Role of Language Valorisation* Retrieved from: <http://skemman.is/stream/get/1946/11531/28650/1/Elin.Arnarsd.FinalProject.Bilingualism.pdf>
3. Barnett, E. & Casper, M. (2001) *A Definition of "Social Environment"* Retrieved from: <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC1446600/pdf/11249033.pdf>
4. Beardmore, B. H. (1986) *Bilingualism: Basic Principles* Retrieved from: https://books.google.com/books?id=DX1JcMNgz7AC&pg=PA2&lpg=PA2&dq=the+notion+of+bilingualism&source=bl&ots=sxxG0LZWiu&sig=dXcANvmQs1Z_ts3Bn9aEItggc68&hl=en&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwjXqqv0KHJAhVPphoKHbc5CoAQ6AEIjzAB#v=onepage&q=the%20notion%20of%20bilingualism&f=false
5. Bialystok, E. (2008) *Bilingualism: The Good, the Bad, and the Indifferent* Retrieved from: <http://www.vumingschool.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/07/Bilingualism.-The-good-the-bad-and-the-indifferent.pdf>
6. Griffith University *What is bilingualism?* Retrieved from: <https://www.griffith.edu.au/humanities-languages/school-languages-linguistics/research/bilingualism/what-is-bilingualism>
7. Hamers, F. J. & Blanc, A.H.M (2000) *Bilinguality and Bilingualism* Retrieved from: <http://catdir.loc.gov/catdir/samples/cam032/99012600.pdf>
8. Johnstone, R. (2002) Addressing 'The Age Factor': Some Implications for Languages Policy Retrieved from: <https://www.coe.int/t/dg4/linguistic/Source/JohnstoneEN.pdf>
9. Liddicoat, A. (1991) *Bilingualism: An Introduction* Retrieved from: <http://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED404847.pdf>
10. McLaughlin, B. (1992) *Myths and Misconceptions about Second Language Learning: What Every Teacher Needs to Unlearn* <https://www.usc.edu/dept/education/CMMR/FullText/McLaughlinMyths.pdf>
11. Moradi, H. (2014) *An Investigation through Different Types of Bilinguals and Bilingualism* Retrieved from: https://www.ijhss.com/files/Hamzeh-Moradi_6813z4a4.pdf
12. Muñoz, C. (2010) *On How Age Affects Foreign Language Learning* Retrieved from: <http://www.enl.auth.gr/gala/14th/Papers/Invited%20Speakers/Munoz.pdf>
13. Raithele, V. (2003) *What is Bilingualism?* Retrieved from: <http://www.uni-bielefeld.de/lili/personen/vraithele/teaching/ial/bilingualism.pdf>
14. Sorace, A. (2011) *Cognitive Advantages in Bilingualism: Is there a "Bilingual Paradox"?* Retrieved from: <http://www.lel.ed.ac.uk/~antonell/Sorace2011-Gargnano.pdf>
15. Stefánsson, G.E. (2013) *Second Language Acquisition: The Effect of Age and Motivation* http://skemman.is/stream/get/1946/15018/35741/1/BA_EinarG.pdf

APPENDIX

Questionnaire-Bilingualism among Albanian Students

Gender: F/M

Age: ____

Second Language: English/German

1. How would you define bilingualism? (Please, give your own opinion)
2. What age did you start learning English/German?
Please specify ____
3. According to your opinion, what is the best age to start learning a second language? (Please circle one of the options)
 - a) 0-8 years
 - b) 9-16
 - c) 16-25
 - d) other (please specify) _____
4. How did you learn English/German?
 - a) formally (in school)
 - b) informally (not in school)
- 4.1. If you learned the second language informally, please circle one of the ways of how you learned it:
 - a) From watching TV
 - b) From my parents
 - c) From contacts with other people
 - d) Other (please specify) _____
5. Who was your biggest motivation to learn a second language?
 - a) family
 - b) teacher
 - c) social environment where you lived
 - d) other (please specify) _____
6. I learned English/German because:
 - a) I liked the language
 - b) it was obligatory in school
 - c) I was exposed to the language
 - d) other (please specify) _____
7. According to your opinion, which is the most important factor that influences success in second language learning?
 - a) motivation
 - b) personality
 - c) age
 - d) exposure
 - e) other (please specify)
8. According to your opinion, what is the greatest advantage of being a bilingual person? (please specify)

9. Do you think that being a bilingual person has disadvantages?
 - a) yes
 - b) no
- 9.1. If yes, please specify what is the greatest disadvantage of being a bilingual?
