

## Internationalisms: Do They Affect or Enrich the Modern Albanian Language?

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### Abstract

Language is a symbol of cultural, national or state identity. For Albanians, language was and is the most important feature establishing their identity. The first attempts to codify the written Albanian language were distinguished since the second half of the nineteenth century by the Albanian scholars, who led the cultural movement "Albanian National Renaissance", where first of all we can mention Konstandin Kristoforidhi and Sami Frashëri. As an isolated Indo-European language, Albanian language is part of the Balkan linguistic connection. Although the Albanian language has not lost its origin, throughout its history it has proven and suffered interventions and major influences not only from the Indo-European but also from non-Indo-European languages. These influences are more directly reflected in the lexicon as the most fluid system of language. Like any other language, the Albanian language has responded to the demands of social development, changes in the field of production, technology, science, culture and so on by enriching and further developing its vocabulary, *inter alia*, by borrowing words from other languages. Language lexicon flows are larger than outflows and this explains the fact that the lexicon is expanded from generation to generation with new units. In general, there is a large number of words in Albanian language borrowed from Latin, Slavic languages in the south and Turkish. Most of the borrowed words such as anglicisms, germanisms, grecisms, italicisms etc are introduced in Albanian language in written form and orally, mainly in the last thirty years as a result of direct contact of Albanians with European and transatlantic countries, where they have lived and continue to live as immigrants, asylum seekers or workers. The number of foreign lexemes in Albanian language often differs from region to region and even from one person to another. Motivation of borrowing the words from a linguistic community, who regarding the cultural, technical and economic aspect prevails to the other community, is the desire and need to name new terms, objects and events, which are unknown in the language that takes these words. Borrowing new words for new issues also serves to cover linguistic requirements. However, taking foreign expressions does not necessarily show a sign of weakness; in a typical case there is a language enrichment, because new words are attributed to new things, new knowledge or new spiritual values. There are also cases when a word already exists in Albanian, but it is still replaced with the foreign word. In different circumstances both can be used. From this point of view, a question arises: What attitude should be taken for foreign words? Do foreign words enrich or spoil a language?

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The society adjusts language with the age it lives in. What distinguishes a vivid language is that it has been subjected to changes in its depth and that it naturally receives and collects sometime also words and denominations from other languages, with which the population is in contact in a certain fashion.

Even Albanian language like other languages has accepted and allows foreign lexical elements, translates, adjusts, assimilates them and creates neologisms based upon them, therefore it activates own mechanisms to accomplish own needs. This is happening even nowadays when in Albanian language as never before in its life, ideas, concepts, notions and terms are embraced from various languages and cultures, especially from those bearing huge impact on globalizing processes.

A considerable part of foreign words in Albanian language is composed of internationalisms, which are current and present in almost every page of the vocabulary of Albanian language and in every article of every Albanian daily newspaper. Dealing with loan-words and internationalisms, which are understood and spread worldwide, implies the wakening of sensitivity on problems of communication. The benefit here lies that in such fashion it can be ascertained and proved among other things, how conveniently these loan-words have been integrated in the linguistic system of Albanian language, provided there is a tendency of internationalization of the vocabulary and if all loan-words must be replaced with respective words in Albanian.

The relevance of internationalisms on international and inter-linguistic communication is becoming increasingly bigger. More and more it becomes apparent the goal towards European integration at any cost (even at the cost of linguistic and cultural independence). In this regard, Braun also deems that „Internationalisms can be seen as vocabularies of a potential European integration“. <sup>1</sup> Thus, in the role of a supplementary source, internationalisms affect directly the "westernization" of modern Albanian lexicon.

The internationalisms play an important role not only in translation, but they bear significant importance also to the international adjustment of terminology. They are witnesses of a European cultural and intellectual history, which transport concepts, symbols, conceptual models and joint traditions. In the event of something missing in the relations among nations, internationalisms would be able to facilitate mutual understanding with other nations in our age of global communication. According to Braun, common linguistic items „ provide explanations on processes, historical and cultural events of contacts in Europe“. <sup>2</sup> As „preliminary conditions for the creation and spread of internationalisms“ Volmert mentions two factors: 1. „historical loan-words among languages in contact “and 2. Simultaneous definitions based on agreements, or the entering of new expressions of inter-linguistic value“. <sup>3</sup>

The lexical equalities or similarities in various languages are based not on coincidence, but on the contrary they must be understood as results of historical, political, cultural, economical, historical-linguistic developments etc. Numerous developments have had an impact especially on the reception of new internationalisms. Recently internationalisms show in most of the cases notions of international modern developments in science and technique. The most important developments which influence on general vocabulary among other things are: global exchange of information, becoming increasingly fast, multinational cooperation in many fields, massive tourism beyond the borders of countries and worldwide spread of political, cultural and sport events. As a result of globalization international vocabularies bear so a particular relevance not only in scientific and professional languages, but even increasingly more in the language of daily life.

The lexical loan-words among them also internationalisms exist in the vocabulary of Albanian language in a substantial number and this part of vocabulary shows the trend to increase continuously. The causes of changes in the Albanian language fund of words are related as elsewhere with economic, political and cultural transformations of Albanian society. The trend for vocabulary internationalization comprises nowadays almost all fields of life, where apart from the field of science and technique, a part of foreign words in Albanian language arrive from the fields of politics. Thus we can mention several internationalisms, which have entered the political lexicon of Albanian language: *anarki, anarkist, aparteid, atom, autonomi, azil, azilant, bojkot, burokrat, burokraci, delegacion, demagog, demagogji, demokraci, demokrat, demokratik, demonstratë, deputet, diktator, diktaturë, diplomat, diplomaci, diplomatik, diskriminim, ekzil, elitë, ekstrem, ekstremist, ekstremizëm, fashist, fashizëm, fundamentalist, fundamentalizëm, gjenocid, ideologji, institucion, kaos, klasë, kongres, konservativ, kushtetutë, ideologji, legjislativ, mafie, militant, nacionalist, nacionalizëm, pacifist, parlament, parti, patriot, patriotizëm, pluralist, politikë, propagandë, puç, puçist, racist, racizëm, radikal, reformë, republikë, revanshizëm, simpatizant, shovinist, territor, terrorist, terrorizëm, totalitar, totalitarizëm, ultranacionalist.*

In Albanian language the foreign word is often used as a scientific term, whereas the respective expression in Albanian bears also a general meaning. It is often difficult to ascertain accurately from which source internationalism derives and it is not always verifiable in which place internationalism was used for the first time and how its path progressed in other languages. The oldest loan-words in Albanian language, which nowadays are partially internationalisms, derive from Greek and Latin. The Albanian language is more of a language that borrows than loans words. As to new internationalisms in

<sup>1</sup> Braun, P. 1990: Internationalismen – Gleiche Wortschätze in europäischen Sprachen. P. 32

<sup>2</sup> Therto, Pg. 32

<sup>3</sup> Volmert, J. 1993, Pg. 71.

Albanian language codification is missing until now and they are not standardized, such as. *avokado, bajt, butik, celibat, disketë, e-mail, globalizim, hamburger, internet, keçap, piceri, xhins, softuer, slip, karies, modem, maço, loto* etc. <sup>1</sup>

The Albanian language is facing a bit peculiar situation nowadays: on one hand several Albanologists try to avoid not only spread loan-words but also internationalisms; while on the other hand, there is a tendency of continuous widening of vocabulary with new loan-words of international character, especially in the field of science and technique as well as in the sphere of international relations. In this regard the question emerges: Is it necessary to remove from use the timely rooted loan-words in the language of people and that are understood by all, replacing them with new words or loan-words from western languages that people fail to understand?

Clear efforts to the enrichment of Albanian language date back to 19<sup>th</sup> century by the writers of Albanian National Renaissance, who requested the purification of Albanian language from foreign words, especially from Turkish words. Among other things there were also efforts to replace international words of Greek and Latin origin, which were never used later such as. :<sup>2</sup>

<i>astronomi</i>	<i>qiellshkronjë -</i>	<i>astronomy</i>	<i>skyscraper</i>
<i>gjeometri</i>	<i>dhematje -</i>	<i>geometry</i>	<i>land surveying</i>
<i>vullkan</i>	<i>mal që nxjerr zjarr -</i>	<i>volcano</i>	<i>mountain that spits fire</i>
<i>satelit</i>	<i>pasës etj. -</i>	<i>satellite</i>	<i>passer etc.</i>

In the 20<sup>th</sup> century we own in Albanian language a considerable number of neologisms in the shape of borrowed translations, new words and transfers of meanings. Nowadays in Albanian language there are several studies<sup>3</sup> and vocabularies of foreign languages, which try to replace foreign words with formations and creation of loan-words or with other Albanian words. <sup>4</sup> Likewise numerous studies<sup>5</sup> have shown that all loan-words, including also internationalisms can be integrated in Albanian language, whereas Maksuti<sup>6</sup> expresses his opposition against such thought to albanianise all loan-words, therefore also internationalisms, since according to him, such maximal purification has not been present in Albanology. A vivid Albanian language would be also able to borrow and accept many foreign words, given that a language that is not capable to adjust to other language, implying assimilation, is a dead language.

The continuous entry of internationalisms in the lexicon of Albanian language does not imply that Albanian language is losing own originality. The migration of words and foreign expression is not harmful to the language; but on the contrary the demolition of the system of linguistic rules is such. Given that internationalisms fail to bring about changes in the grammatical structure of the language, they represent no risk and do not harm originality of language. Many foreign words in Albanian language have already become part of Albanian vocabulary and their replacement with other Albanian words can no longer apply.

Several authors prefer clearly equivalent Albanian words with internationalisms. For instance, in Shkurtaj we find a word list of „foreign words, which can be replaced entirely or partially“. <sup>7</sup> Even in Murati we also find a word list with „vocabulary from foreign languages “. <sup>8</sup> Given the aims of these two authors to avoid foreign words and replace them with new Albanian words, Maksuti deems that on one hand, we must oppose to the infinite use of foreign words, but on the other

<sup>1</sup> Maksuti, I. 2009: Internationalismen im Albanischen, Pg. 104.

<sup>2</sup> Shkurtaj, Gj. 2003, Pg. 160

<sup>3</sup> Shkurtaj, Gj. 2003, Pg. 129-156; Murati, Q. 2004: Standardi gjuhësor dhe kultura e shprehjes, Prishtinë

<sup>4</sup> See Fjala shqipe në vend të fjalës së huaj. Prishtinë 1989; Fjala shqipe në vend të fjalës së huaj. Tiranë 1998.

<sup>5</sup> Çabej, E. 1975-77; Thomai, J. 2002; Shkurtaj, Gj. 2003; Murati, Q. 2004 etc.

<sup>6</sup> Maksuti, I. 2009: Internationalismen im Albanischen, Pg. 94-100.

<sup>7</sup> Shkurtaj, Gj. 2003, Pg. 129-158

<sup>8</sup> Murati, Q. 2004, Pg. 121-127

hand we must also oppose ungrounded efforts to get rid of these words by means of unnecessary neologisms, often formed improperly.

Particular loan-words not always are replaced with their respective words in native language, be it because they contain particular connotations of meaning, missing in a replaceable word, or due to social and linguistic reasons. Thus, not every foreign word can be translated and replaced with its equivalent in Albanian, since the huge deepening of scientific knowledge requires not only the thinnest semantic aiming of notions, ideas and contents, but also their thinnest explanation. In Albanian language Turkish and Slavonic words are avoided in general and they are replaced with native lexicon, new words or with a lexicon of another foreign language. Taking into account the increased requirements of linguistic communication, the language requirements cannot be met only by its internal sources. In this context, the loan-words can be perceived as natural constituents of language.

In general, internationalisms must be greeted, given that they enrich the vocabulary of the mother tongue and contribute in the creation of an international vocabulary. Thus, we mention for example foreign words of the last two decades, so the new words have found use in Albanian language like: *bestseler, bingo, bumerang, haker, hobi, kampus, klikoj, kompjuter, lider, lobi, marketing, masmedia, menaxher, monitor, poster, snajper, softuer, sprej, stek, supermarket, shou, tender, tinejxher, tost, trend, xhins*.

Even if we have a look at newspapers nowadays, both in Albania and Kosovo and Macedonia, it is evident that in general there is a positive attitude toward internationalisms and that as a result no attention is paid to maintenance and care to Albanian language. On the other hand, it must be taken into account also the fact that the penetration in abundance of loan-words triggers their negative aspect, where language becomes incomprehensible to simple speakers and apart from that, it loses expressivity furnished by native elements. This requires the need to prevent the overflow of foreign words, given that the preservation of purity of lexicon is linked directly to the preservation of national character of Albanian language from any foreign blend, as well as crystallization of the norms of standard language in lexicon. <sup>1</sup> But in lexicon, the norm is looser. This implies that apart from several lexical variants (synonyms etc. ), the standard language accepts also foreign words, indispensable for their content and for the requirements of several fields such as terminology, scientific speech etc.

As a conclusion we can say that the entry of foreign words /internationalisms in the lexicon of Albanian language is no dangerous or harmful in the event of their integration in the linguistic system of Albanian language, not ruining its fundamental features and if they help linguistic communication. Thus, internationalisms must be considered as relevant elements in the process of enrichment of language, in order to widen its expressive means. The Albanian language cannot sidestep the lexical impact of foreign languages. But in general, it must be the case of a prudent relation with lexicon of foreign languages, not without any control and restriction. Therefore, a genuine and contemporary democratic linguistic policy must be followed, which sees the purification of lexicon of Albanian language not as a purpose in essence. "The purification merely for purification of lexicon could trigger not its enrichment but its impoverishment, weakening or restriction of social functions of language. "<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Memushaj, Rami. 2012: Hyrje në gjuhësi, Pg. 181

<sup>2</sup> Samara, Miço (2008): Rreth leksikut politik e shoqëror në gjuhën shqipe. Pg. 205

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