Language contact and Linguistic Borrowings

Jola Bojaxhi

Faculty of Mathematical Engineering and Physics Engineering,
Foreign Language Centre, Lecturer of English language,
Polytechnic University of Tirana, Albania
Email: jolabojaxhi@hotmail.com

Abstract

Nowadays multilingualism, where a speaker has more than two languages, is not uncommon. But bilingualism and multilingualism differ from language shift or a permanent change in a person's choice of language for everyday purposes. The purpose of this paper is to highlight the cases of borrowing usage and the features they represent while integrating into the Albanian language. Unnecessary borrowings are many, and a way should be considered for their replacement so that expressive and regenerative language skills create the ability to preserve its features and identity by developing them further.

Keywords: language, communication, borrowings, linguistic, mother tongue.

Introduction

Motivation for this paper has come as a result of the need to clarify the role of borrowings (anglicisms) in Albanian. Many Albanians are worried by this phenomenon of diminishing or reducing their language as well as their consequences in their culture and lifestyle.

All languages change constantly. Therefore the concept of language contact and linguistics borrowings is not something new. These concepts have been and are constantly intertwined with languages, just like they have changed during the course of history and continue to change today. A basic definition for a language contact is:

"....the use of more than one language in the same time in the same place". (Thomason 2001, p1).

Methodology

This means, that language contact is two languages that come into contact with each other, resulting in a linguistic change occurring in one or both languages. Linguistic contact and especially close contact situations bring linguistic change. For example, Milroy (1992), has sociolinguistic perspective, seeing the linguistic change of a language or language system as a social phenomenon.

Changing from one language to the other, comes as the result of immigration. Weinreich (1974) describes the situation of changing the language like this:

"....under the invasion of a foreign force, or during immigration to a new country, the grown members of a group who share the same language, can use the new language when they deal with state institutions, while children use the new language in school; and at the same time the old language or mother tongue continuous to be used at home or during group activities.

Linguistic change, which again is a result of language contact, normally involves alterations to the vocabulary of a language, its pronunciation, or both. Linguistic borrowing is the major contributor of such changes. Borrowings can be defined as a process where a word that is used in one language begins to be used in another language.

One of the main sources of borrowings is English language and those borrowings have a specific name: Anglicism is an idiom or a feature of the English language borrowed from another language (English Dictionary Collins). English is the most prevalent language in the world. During the eighteenth century, Britain was a great empire as well as the greatest colonial power in the world, and even nowadays many of the former colonies use English as the official language. Various surveys conducted by UNESCO and other international organizations report that, English is the official or semi-official language in over 60 countries and occupies an important place in 20 other countries. English is the main language in business, technology, science, medicine, diplomacy and advertisement. To further emphasize the status of English language, Crystal (1995, p 358) notes that:

"Of all the information found in electronic systems of the world, 80% is stored in English. Radio programs in English are broadcasted from over 150 million people in over 120 countries. Over 50 million children learn English as a second language in elementary school; over 80 other millions learn it in high school (excluding China). During a year, The British Council helps thousands of foreign students to learn English in different parts of the world."

Contacts that different countries have had with the English language or culture, have resulted in direct or indirect impact in the local language.

When it comes to the integration of anglicisms, that is the alteration of a borrowed word to such extent that native speakers do not consider it any more "foreign" from a

donor language into the receiving language, anglicisms can be divided into loan words, which are assimilated phonologically, orthographically, morphologically or semantically and foreign words which are not assimilated.

In his study of anglicisms in the magazine, "Der Spiegel", Yang (1990, p 9) identified three categories of anglicisms:

1.   Conventionalized anglicisms, which are completely integrated and accepted by speakers and which are no longer considered as foreign words. For example, Computer, Manager, Jeans etc.

2.   Anglicisms in the process of being conventionalized, which are only partly orthographically integrated are still considered as foreign words. For example, Factory, Gay etc.

3.   Proper names, quotations or words related specifically to England, America or other English-speaking countries such as Ireland, Canada, and Australia etc. For example, Boat people, High School, Highway, Western, etc.

The invention of the computer was something monumental because of the change it brought. Now, computers are used for many reasons and practically in all areas of life. Currently, World Wide Web, the Internet and Email have contributed in increasing the contacts between the languages of the world, including Albanian and English. The internet is the new communication medium which with the help of microphones, speakers, cameras and the web, it has been able to replace the role of radio, television and telephone. The internet was created in America and was developed in the English-speaking world, and that is why English was the only internet language. But now thanks to globalization other languages are included in the internet.

In terminology, the foreign unit which replaced an Albanian word, does not coexist or should not coexist for long, because this coexistence would burden the language for specific purposes with an unnecessary element. The long-term use of this old element alongside the new one, creates difficulties in discovering the content of the term and obscures the relationship between concept and term.

English is putting pressure in many European languages. Anglicisms are being used in many languages, even simple words or expressions sometimes unnecessary to be borrowed such as "ok" in Italian, Russian, German etc. "Weekend", has conquered many languages of the world. The prevalence of anglicisms comes as a result of the political, economic, cultural, scientific influence of the United States of America especially after the Second World War.

English words or words that originate from English have penetrated in different areas of social activities. Russ (1990 p.249) gives many acceptable reasons for the borrowings:

"....motivation for the borrowings comes from the desire of some speakers to show they know a certain language, by filling their language with borrowings. In some areas, foreign words have more influence than words in the native language."

This citation reinforces even more the point that young people use anglicisms to look modern and trendy and even in cases when they don't know the meaning of those borrowed words. Russ (1990, p 249) notes that:

".....when a phenomenon starts in the English speaking world and becomes popular in other countries, usually the activity itself becomes popular such as aerobic, skateboard etc.

Discussion

The process of terminology translation in Albanian can be divided in two parts, before the 90s, a period in which terminology was mainly based in translations from Russian and in fields such as geology, mines etc while after the 90s, with the change of the system and the opening of the country, terminology changed as well. Priority was given to fields such as electronics, informatics and the English terms started to appear.

The appearance of new words in Albanian is becoming a norm. But of course, novelty does not always go unnoticed and not always settles in the language. It is the job and responsibility of linguists, writers, and journalists etc. to further enrich and preserve the language.

In Albania, the learning of the English language has taken on a special importance after the 90s, for pupils and students who graduate in various fields and who try to enter the labour market. Today, students who complete a master's or doctorate are required to defend a foreign language (until recently only defence of the English language was required) as a condition before receiving the card. The standard of classification of language competences is based on the description provided by the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages.

Learning foreign languages is essential for students of professional fields (in our case) such as engineering as they are required to be updated with the latest news from science and technology. This information in our country is mainly obtained from foreign literature. A large part of Albanians and students get foreign literature mainly from European languages such as English, French, Italian, German, etc. When we talk about engineering students, we mean the students of the Polytechnic University who study different branches of engineering such as electronics, informatics, telecommunications, mechatronics, electricity, etc. These students, in addition to competence and knowledge in their field, are also required to have a very good knowledge of a foreign language or several foreign languages.

At the Polytechnic University of Tirana, foreign language teaching is done using language methods for specific purposes. With the introduction of the Bologna

education system in 2003 in Albania, great importance was also given to the adaptation of teaching methods of foreign languages. Specifically, we are talking about the English language, as a language that I have covered for years at this university. The methods used in this university for years are not those of general English, but are methods of English for specific purposes. These methods are adapted to the needs of the students, since these students have received general knowledge of the English language in high school. The methods of English for specific purposes are adapted in such a way as to serve the student in the professional communication that he/she will have in the future, in real work situations, putting the emphasis on the English language lexicon of profession. Different branches of engineering at the Polytechnic University of Tirana (PUT) use English methods in the relevant field and these methods are: "Electronics" in the branch of electronics and telecommunications, "Information Technology" for computer engineering students, "Electrical Engineering" for electrical engineering students. These books were published by Express Publishing, while the book "Architecture" is used for architecture students. Also, for some branches, a book is used which summarizes different engineering branches and is titled "Engineering".

All the above-mentioned methods are divided into three parts, which coincide with three language levels A1, A2 and B1 and summarize four language competences: listening in English, reading, writing and speaking. Each of the methods contains a mini glossary of terms at the end of each of their three parts. The presentation of this mini glossary at the end of each part is done because it is very important for students to learn the terms of the field in addition to the general lexicon.

From what was analysed above, we wanted to give some recommendations, since every study is an added value for the field of linguistics and especially for the Albanian language, related to the current social context, as well as based on the aspect of many years of professional experience in teaching of English for specific purposes.

Conclusions

Loans are an inevitable phenomenon because of constant contacts but the words borrowed must respond to the needs of the language for expanding its social nature functions. For young people, it is especially necessary to create a dictionary that will help use the Albanian word and to limit the use of unnecessary borrowings in order to form them with a linguistic awareness that is distinguished for a widest range of words and phrases in the Albanian language.

We recommend that in the literature on professional subjects, where terms that are anglicisms are very often used, a mini-dictionary explaining the terms used is provided.

To work on a standardization of terminology, as we have often noticed that in the literature used, the same term is pronounced in different forms.

From experience in teaching English for specific purposes, we have noticed a lack of an actual vocabulary for the fields of computing and electronics. In this context, its drafting is necessary not only for students of these branches, but also beyond.

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