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**Albanian-Americans – Identity, Language Preferences and  
Code-Switching**

**Албанските американци – идентичност, езикови  
предпочитания и превключване на езиковия код**

**АВТОРЕФЕРАТ**

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## **1. General overview of the study**

The interest in this topic stems from the fact that there are practically no studies dealing with the language use and code-switching (hereinafter CS) between Albanian and English in the case of Albanian immigrants to the USA. At the same time, this community is constantly growing both through the arrival of new immigrants and the natural growth of earlier immigrant families. However, the use of English and / or Albanian in various situations has not been researched, neither are there studies on the immigrants' personal perceptions of their identity. Therefore, this dissertation attempts to give a starting point and pave the way for further inquiries into the language behavior and identity change within the Albanian-American community.

## **2. Aims of the study**

The present study adopts a sociocultural approach to the investigation of code-switching as manifested in the speech behavior of Albanian immigrants to the US. Language preferences and code-switching instances, as well as direct questions provide information about participants' perceived identity. The study starts from the following assumptions leading to the respective aims:

- CS is “discourse-related” (Auer, 1998: 8), where ‘discourse’ is understood in the widest meaning of the term, including not only purely linguistic representations but also social dimensions (Fairclough, 1993). The latter comprise a number of features of the particular communicative situation, such as participants, place of interaction, aim of interaction, context, channel, feedback, etc. Of course, various authors identify different elements of the communicative situation, depending on the specificities of their studies (see, for instance, McLean, 2010). However, not all of them could be taken into consideration in this

study due to the methodology of data collection (see 3.). Thus, from a sociolinguistic perspective, the aim here is to identify the contexts in which American-Albanians codeswitch between Albanian and English.

- Instances of CS exhibit certain functions (see part 3. Methodology) that point to the reasons why speakers switch languages. These reasons may vary from purely linguistic through socially determined to expressions of personal emotions, and all of them will receive due attention in the study.
- The latter takes us into the realm of psycholinguistics, and from this viewpoint, it is assumed that personality characteristics, including demographic ones such as age, sex, length of stay in the USA, also have a huge impact on CS strategies and will thus be an integral part of the research.
- Another assumption of the study is that CS occurs at all levels of language. Therefore, a detailed analysis will be presented of the various points of CS occurrences in terms of their lexical, grammatical and discursal features, as well as of the linguistic changes that can be observed in the process of CS (addition, deletion, insertion, etc.).
- There is a difference between speakers' perception of their use of the two languages and their actual code-switching behavior. This hypothesis will be tested by comparing the results from the two research instruments used in the study – semi-structured interviews and an online questionnaire.
- The preference for use of English or Albanian depends primarily on demographic factors such as age at the time of immigration, family and social environment.
- From a cultural perspective, the analysis of discourse-related CS will consider the social characteristic features of the Albanian minority in the US and look into the degree of

success of locally applied policies in terms of ‘multiculturalism’ and ‘interculturalism’ within this community. This will be elicited through the subjects’ answers to the question about their perceived identities.

- The issue of identity emerges both through the online questionnaires and the interviews and is an indelible part of both language choice and code-switching behaviour.

To sum up, the study investigates the phenomenon of CS from the following perspectives: social, cultural, historical, linguistic and psycholinguistic. This multifaceted approach is expected to provide a comprehensive picture of the language behavior of Albanian immigrants to the US, which may further be of help in determining language and cultural policies within and towards this community, as well as to raise the awareness of its members of their *de facto* cultural belonging. In terms of questions content, respondents’ perceived identity can be clearly identified and partly explained from a socio-cultural perspective.

### **3. Methodology and data collection**

In order to elicit data for the present study, **two instruments** were used: an online-distributed questionnaire in English and semi-structured interviews carried out in the mother tongue (Albanian), then transcribed and translated into English. The anonymized questionnaires were filled in by 72 respondents, while the interviewees were 14. All participants in both procedures were first-generation immigrants who, however, had moved to the US at various ages and, respectively points of their development as personalities. The latter accounts for a number of differences in their language behavior and identity perception.

Besides, most of the Albanian-Americans are not only bilingual, but more often multilingual, speaking, apart from Albanian and English, also Spanish, Polish, Macedonian, Serbian, Bosnian, depending on their territory of origin and their immediate environment in the US. The present study, however, will focus only on code-switching between Albanian and English as the two main languages all Albanian-Americans speak.

The online-distributed questionnaire required demographic data such as age, sex, and length of stay in the US. More importantly, it focused on language choice in different environments (family, friends, workplace, institutions, on Internet-based platforms), the degree of importance for children of immigrants to learn Albanian, as well as that of maintaining the language and the culture through reading Albanian newspapers published in the US. Twelve reasons for CS from Albanian to English were enumerated, where the subjects could choose more than one. The options were formulated so as to cover the six functions of language, namely: referential, conative, emotive, phatic, metalingual and poetic (after Appel & Muysken (1987:29), as well as to consider Gumperz's (1982) domain approach. The questions thus revolve around topics linked to the level of knowledge of the two languages, lexical choices aiming at more precision/shortness/expressivity, or absence of a particular lexical item in the respective language, avoidance of taboo words and phrases, and keeping the communication lines open, among others.

For the purpose of the analysis, Appel & Muysken's (1987:29) classification of the functions of language shall be adopted in this study. As elaborated in Yankova and Vassileva (2013: 108-109), the functions cover the following instances of CS:

1. The referential function – the case where the speakers switch language either because they are not able to find the right word or the word does not exist. Grosjean (1982: 125) calls this

“the phenomenon of the most available word” that saves the speaker time and efforts to find the exact word in the current language spoken.

2. The directive and integrative function: “By using standard greetings, conventional modes of address, imperatives, exclamations, and questions contacts are made with others, and enough of an interactive structure is created to ensure cooperation” (Appel & Muysken 1987:29).

3. The expressive function: “By making one’s feelings known one can present oneself to others as a unique individual” (ibid).

4. The phatic function is observed when the speaker tries to keep communication channels open.

5. The metalinguistic function refers to the case when the speaker makes explicit references to one of the languages involved.

6. The poetic function denotes cases where speakers change the language when they tell jokes or use word-play in another language, or when they try to avoid taboo words and phrases in the main language used in the particular conversation.

The semi-structured interviews included a list of 10 questions which followed a previous study on CS in Bulgarian immigrants to Canada for the sake of future comparison (Vassileva, Yankova, 2015), as well as because the latter study provoked interesting results. The questions aimed at obtaining information of primarily sociological and psychological character, touching upon issues such as time and reason(s) for the choice to immigrate to the USA, difficulties encountered in the course of adjustment to the foreign country, perception of personal identity (Albanian, American, both) and the motives for the particular perception. Another group of questions related to the

subjects' immediate environment in terms of friends and family, the closeness of ties, and types of nationalities involved. Besides, because of the history of the Albanian-American community, the interviewees were also asked about the customs and traditions they maintain from their native culture, the connections with the larger community through religious and ethnic associations, newspapers, clubs, libraries and the like. In conclusion, the subjects were asked to mention one particular event since coming to the US that deeply affected their entire life positively or negatively. As mentioned above, the interviews were conducted in Albanian, and the transcripts provided information about the points of CS to English, which was then classified and analyzed. The analysis considers both lexical and structural (linguistic) issues and sociocultural elements, that is, which topics trigger more often CS and why.

Apart from the socio-cultural and purely linguistic features of CS, the semi-structured interviews were expected to deliver information mostly related to Gumperz's (1982: 75-79) conversational functions, comprising: (A) *Quotations*, (B) *Addressee Specification*, (C) *Interjections*, (D) *Reiteration*, (E) *Message Qualification*, and (F) *Personalization versus Objectivization*. The terms used for the functions are quite self-explanatory: in the case of 'quotation', the speaker repeats somebody else's words directly or indirectly and would switch to English for the sake of preciseness. Then, the speaker may choose to address a specific person in a group and code-switch for better understanding. Interjections are used as fillers and often adopted from English even in cases of non-native speakers with a low level of knowledge of the language due to either frequent use, or in order to sound 'cool', where the latter is more applicable to the younger generation. Reiteration in the context of CS stands for repetition of the same word/phrase/ sentence in the other language, usually to ensure precision and avoid misunderstanding, or to place special focus on the

importance of what has been said. Message qualification implies elucidation of the utterance, and ‘personalization versus objectivization’ demonstrates the speaker’s involvement.

In terms of linguistic features, the analysis considers the code-switching of the various parts of speech as individual words, the code-switching of phrases and whole sentences. Due to the nature of the corpus from the semi-structured interviews, two discourse environments will be analyzed: first, code-switching with English as the matrix language and Albanian as the embedded language and, second, code-switching with Albanian as the matrix language and English as the embedded language.

The results from the two questionnaires will then be compared in order to elicit the similarities and differences between speakers’ actual code-switching behavior (derived from the interviews) and their intuitive perception (derived from the questionnaire).

#### **4. Structure of the dissertation and content summary**

The dissertation consists of 150 pages, including 3 Appendices, 15 graphs, 3 tables and a list of references comprising 138 entries, of which 131 from source in English, 6 – from sources in Albanian and 1 – from a source in Bulgarian.

After setting the **aims** of the study in **Section 2**, **Section 3** introduces the methodology of the study, based on Appel & Muysken’s (1987:29) classification of the functions of language and Gumperz’s (1982: 75-79) conversational functions. The two instruments used to collect data – an online questionnaire and semi-structured interviews – are outlined, as well as the procedures employed for the processing of the data.

**Section 4** (Literature overview) first outlines the history of the Albanian-American Community, including the immigration waves, the first places Albanian immigrants settled in, as well as the reasons for these immigration waves in the respective periods of time. An overview is included of the Albanian national movements and organizations in the US, their aims and leading figures. Special attention is paid to the organization called “Vatra” as one that succeeded in uniting Albanian immigrants in the name of facilitating the liberation of the home country. During the Great War, Albanian-Americans and their organization played a major role in the attempts at uniting the Albanian ethnic territories that were divided at the London Conference in 1913. During WWII, the attitude of the Albanian-Americans towards the war in Europe was not uniform – while the USA fought against the Nazis, some members of the community were afraid of the danger of a communist regime as a result of the partisan war led by Enver Hoxha together with the Yugoslavian communists. This confusion was resolved as late as in the 1950s, when new immigrants arrived in the US, who suffered under the realities of the new dictatorship and managed to convince the Albanian-American community to reorganize “Vatra” and take up an anti-communist course. The most recent historical period of Albanian activities in the USA was between 1980 and 1999 when the community as a whole and individual members started lobbying for the independence of Kosovo as the most oppressed territory among those outside the borders of Albania. Eventually, the independence of Kosovo was a result of the bombing of Yugoslavia by American troops and the intervention of UN peacekeepers.

The last sub-section presents the case of Chicago, Illinois Albanians as an example of the development of one of the largest Albanian-American communities in the US.

The **second part** of **Section 4** focuses on various aspects of the phenomenon of code-switching. To begin with, CS is discussed in relation to multiculturalism and interculturalism policies and their impact on the social characteristic features of the Albanian minority in the US. Secondly, the notion of 'identity' is considered from a psychological and sociological perspective, with special focus on the development of the idea of 'American identity'. The probably most frequently used metaphor to describe American society is that of the 'melting pot' - a term coined by the British immigrant writer Israel Zangwill, which stems from his play from 1908 with the same title, and stands for a blending of ethnicities, nationalities and cultures. As Thornton (2012) puts it: "This image, then, communicated the historically exceptional notion of American identity as one formed not by the accidents of blood, sect, or race, but by the unifying beliefs and political ideals enshrined in the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution: the notion of individual, inalienable human rights that transcend group identity." Sometime in the 1960s, as a result of the dissatisfaction of immigrant communities with the policy of assimilation, the idea of the 'melting pot' was replaced by the metaphor of the 'salad bowl', where ethnic groups are expected to co-exist as ingredients of a salad, united by the dressing of common laws, civil rights and the free market. The latter metaphor has also been criticized as one leading to the compartmentalization of these ethnic groups and the danger of their marginalization from mainstream society (see Thornton 2012). Nevertheless, the idea of multiculturalism as described above continues to serve a basis for American policy.

Various views on the notion of American identity have been discussed: Suárez-Orozco's (2003) distinction between "Achieved and Ascribed Identities", Falicov's (2002) "Transcultural Identities" among children of immigrants, as well as the relationship between identity development and age of immigration. The latter also leads to the question of whether children immigrants should

be considered (as they are traditionally) first-generation immigrants or, due to the fact that they grow up in the new environment with all its facets, they should be considered second-generation immigrants.

Thirdly, an overview of the theories of CS and their roots is presented, in order to look closer, further on, at the existing sociolinguistic, psycholinguistic and structural approaches to CS. The viewpoint on what constitutes a bilingual accepted in the present study follows Grosjean (1995:259), who duly maintained: “Bilinguals are not the sum of two complete or incomplete monolinguals but have a unique and specific linguistic configuration.”

**Section 5** concentrates on the structural differences between Albanian and English, as well as on the influx of English in Albanian. It starts with a short overview of Albanian in terms of territories it is spoken in, dialectal varieties and standardization. Lexical borrowings are considered in more detail with a focus on English borrowings and their integration in Albanian. The latter is explicated in terms of the complex morphological structure of Albanian while looking at all relevant parts of speech. The main differences in the syntax of the two languages are outlined as well. This section is included in the study in order to facilitate the understanding of code-switching phenomena described in Section 6. Besides, it is an attempt to consolidate the, unfortunately, few contrastive publications on English and Albanian.

The results obtained from the online questionnaire and the semi-structured interviews are discussed in detail in **Section 6**. The analysis is supported by statistical data, graphs, tables and a number of

examples illustrating the respective findings. The first part of this section presents the results of the online questionnaire whose aim was to:

1. Collect demographic data from Albanian-Americans of different age groups, sex, duration of stay in the US;
2. Collect data regarding the respondents' relationships to Albanian organizations in the US, engaging with Albanian publications there (newspapers), immediate environment in terms of family and friends, to eventually gain a general picture of their perceived identity.
3. Collect data related to the participants' language behavior in the family, with friends, at work, on social Internet-based platforms, and thus try to predict possible environments where CS may take place.
4. Probe into the reasons for CS and their correlation with the six functions of language serving as a theoretical framework for the study.

Noteworthy, all functions of language play a role in the code-switching behavior of the respondents, as expected, to various degrees. The referential function is perceived to trigger CS to the highest degree, which is not surprising, considering the linguistic and cultural differences between the two languages and the necessity to refer to objects and phenomena in the most precise way. Next in terms of frequency comes the expressive function that allows bi- and multilinguals in general to mix languages in order to make their speech more vivid and emotionally coloured. The metalinguistic function demonstrates speakers' awareness of language differences and the need to specify them explicitly. The integrative and poetic functions seem to play a role in the speakers' choice of behavior towards their interlocutors, while the phatic function is hardly represented, possibly due to its unconscious use.

The **second part** of **Section 6** presents the results from the semi-structured interviews. In terms of demographic and socio-cultural profile, in spite of the low number of interviewees, the results reflect to a large extent the demographic characteristics of the Albanian-American population at present (personal observations, no statistical data available). Most of the immigrants left their home country as minors, below the age of 18. Only two people left in the 1970s, two – in 1983 and 1986 and two - in 1988. The largest proportion of the interviewees were forced to immigrate as a consequence of the Kosovo war and had no choice of their own. In the meantime, they have lived in the US for at least 20 years, and those who practically grew up there may be said to be fully integrated into the American way of life. When asked about their identity, it seems that most of the interviewees have lost pure Albanian identity. Six of them clearly stated that they are American only, while the other seven identified themselves as Albanian-Americans. For those who feel themselves as being Albanian-Americans, it appears that each side of this double identity dominates depending on the communicative situation and its environment. To sum up, although many of the interviewees have not entirely lost their Albanian identity, they have also embraced the omnipresent American identity in their new home country. Contacts with the community and the larger family are maintained primarily for celebrations, noteworthy of both Christian (adopted in the US) and Muslim feasts. Many of the young generation are hardly aware of ethnic traditions. The acceptance and celebration of all-American holidays, such as Thanksgiving, also reveals the high degree of integration of the members of this community. Besides, it appears that the family and the community as a whole do not exert pressure on the younger generations to stick to traditional customs and religion from the homeland.

Concerning the maintenance of closer relationships, some of the examples suggest that the connections with Albanians (relatives and friends) tend to weaken with time and are gradually replaced by closer relationships with colleagues and friends from various nationalities, mainly with Americans, particularly at the work place. It should be noted here that when they refer to “Americans”, they mean people from various ethnic backgrounds.

**Section 6.2.2.** focuses on code-switching phenomena in the speech of Albanian-Americans as reflected in the semi-structured interviews. The analysis discusses the linguistic functions of the code-switched elements, on the one hand, and their grammatical integration into the matrix language, on the other, and is based on typical samples. Considering the fact that the interviewer conducted the interviews in Albanian, in reality, 10 of the interviews were predominantly (or only) in English, and only 4 – in Albanian, although more than 4 of the interviewees stated at the beginning of the conversation that they would prefer Albanian. That is, they switched to English unconsciously, as they probably felt more comfortable in that language. Therefore, the analysis is divided into two parts: in the first case, **English** is treated as the **matrix language** and **Albanian** – as the **embedded language**, while in the second part the two functions are switched.

Nouns are most frequently code-switched and while they retain their plural endings in Albanian, they lose the case endings and are used in the nominative irrespective of their syntactic function in the sentence. The adjectives attached to the nouns are post-positioned, thus adhering to the Albanian word order, but breaching the word order rules of the matrix English sentence. Verbs are code-switched as part of whole clauses and the clauses follow the grammatical rules of Albanian, while phrases seem to play a minor role.

In the cases where Albanian was the matrix language and English – the embedded language, as expected, words and phrases denoting notions specific for the American culture, or notions the speakers became acquainted with in the US, were regularly code-switched. The number of code-switched phrases equals that of individual words and adjective + noun combinations. The phrase (clause) that occurs most frequently is “*I feel (American)*”. In general, the words and phrases that are code-switched seem to fulfil mainly the expressive function (*I feel American*), and the referential function to refer to accepting culture-specific notions or to use the best available word / phrase acquired in the English-speaking environment. Language economy (using the shortest available phrase) may also be the reason for some code-switches.

The overall impression that remains from the interviews in terms of language choice is that older immigrants who have also spent a long time in the US tend to choose Albanian more often than the young generation of immigrants.

**Section 7** – Conclusions – summarizes the results of the study by focusing on three main points, namely: (1) Demographic and socio-cultural profile of American-Albanians based on both the online questionnaire and the interviews; (2) Albanian Americans’ identity; (3) The language of Albanian-Americans considering language choice in various contexts, mother tongue maintenance, knowledge of English, as well as the phenomenon of code-switching and the factors triggering it.

The last part of this section discusses the limitations of the study in theoretical and practical terms, as well as some ideas for future research.

The list of references is included under **Section 8**, while three appendices (**Section 9**) present the online questionnaire (Appendix 1), the semi-structured interviews questions (Appendix 2) and the transcripts of the interviews (Appendix 3).

## 5. Conclusions

### 5.1. Demographic and socio-cultural profile of Albanian Americans

Due to practical difficulties in reaching respondents for both the online questionnaire and the semi-structured interviews (see 7.4. Limitations below), the two groups vary in terms of age and sex. While the online questionnaire was filled in by more people of 50+, the interviewees belonged to the younger generation. The average number of years spent in the US in both groups varies between 20 and 30, so their US experiences are comparable. In terms of membership in Albanian organizations, while half of the respondents of the online questionnaire claim to have one, much fewer of the interviewees do. The same is true for reading Albanian newspapers published in the US. Contacts with compatriots seem to take place mainly within the family and, to some extent, among friends. It is the family that also keeps the language, customs and traditions alive through celebrations of weddings, national holidays, but also US holidays. The most frequently mentioned environment for meeting countrymen is the mosque with the (usually) attached to it school, cultural centre, and the like. Thus, judging primarily by the results from the online questionnaire, the Albanian community in the US seems to be quite close-knit, held together not so much by religion but by a sense of belonging as part of their national identity.

## 5.2. Albanian Americans' identity

However, some of the interviewees from the generation that grew up in the US state that they are not interested in maintaining close contacts with Albanians only, or preserving and practicing national customs and traditions. This is the Kosovo war generation of children – refugees who were forced to immigrate together with their families or were kept in refugee camps until united with the families. They seem to be fully Americanized and integrated in the new country and its society. Thus, it seems that the results of the study support Weinreich's (2013) idea of 'hybrid identity', and especially Falicov's (2002) assumption that children of immigrants develop "Transcultural Identities" that allow them to feel comfortable in both cultural environments.

Moreover, in contrast to older, economic or political immigrants, they did not experience any problems in adapting to the culture and the language, nor did they encounter financial difficulties, as their families were strongly supported by various American institutions in the process of settlement – services provided for refugees only, but not for immigrants of other categories, legal or illegal. Nevertheless, a couple of interviewees blame "Corporate America" for the dissolution of ethnic groups and the disruption of contacts with compatriots. Therefore, it seems that Suárez-Orozco's (2003) distinction between "Achieved and Ascribed Identities" is much more applicable to older immigrants who had to struggle to create a new life in a (sometimes) hostile environment, than to children immigrants.

Thus, while 72% of the online questionnaire respondents define themselves as Albanian-American, this is the case with 7 (50%) of the interviewees. Almost half of the latter (6) feel "100% American" and only 1 – Albanian. A 2004 survey about the "Beliefs about the Content of American Identity" carried out by Schildkraut (2008) shows that the parameters with the highest frequency (over 90%) are: "Respecting other people's cultural differences; Being able to speak English; Thinking of

oneself as American; Seeing people of all backgrounds as American”, among others. Thus, language skills, respect for diversity and a feeling of identity appear to be the main features considered to be attached to American identity.

The results of the present study could again be ascribed to the age differences between the two groups. Still, the fact that the majority of the study participants are inclined to accept double identity, means that they are trying to preserve their national identity while, at the same time, accepting the American values and ideals. Although this is often the case with smaller minorities in large immigrant countries such as the US, Canada, Australia, for Albanians the US was and still is *the* country that supported most actively Albania and Albanian minorities territories in their struggle for independence in the course of history (see Section 4 for more details). This highly positive attitude towards the US and its citizens was expressed repeatedly by the interviewees of all ages.

To conclude, it could be summarized that while keeping close relationships with family and compatriots is still important for Albanian-Americans, they are just as much receptive for contacts with other ethnicities among the American society, designating the latter as “Americans”. It therefore appears that the members of this community have accepted the idea and ideal of the US as a melting pot where race, ethnicity, religion do not matter. Especially the young generation are not only eager to integrate – they have already fully integrated and are starting gradually to lose their Albanian identity. It could therefore be tentatively speculated that future research on second- and third-generation Albanian Americans will show their complete Americanization.

This brings us to the controversial question of the distinction between first- and second-generation immigrants. The results of the study appear to support Rumbaut’s (2004) view that persons who migrated as children could be regarded as members of the “second” generation”, since they are

raised and educated in the new culture. The formation of the personalities and identities of this group of subjects in the present study depends to a large extent on the relationships within the family and the degree to which ethnic traditions, culture and language are maintained there. As the discussion above demonstrated, Albanian-American parents do try to preserve their ethnic identity but do not necessarily impose it on their children. Besides, as already mentioned, religion plays a minor role in the community as a whole, so it is not a factor that would interfere in the formation of personal (American) identity, either.

To sum up, no matter whether we accept the idea of the US being a ‘melting pot’ or a ‘salad bowl’, Albanian Americans appear to show every sign of full integration into mainstream American society.

### 5.3. The language of Albanian-Americans

The development of the mentality described above is very well-reflected in the choice of language – the initial assumption of the study was that the interviews will be conducted in Albanian, where certain elements will be code-switched to English. Instead, since the interviewees were given a choice of language, most of them opted for English instead of the expected Albanian. In the family, both languages are spoken by the majority of the online questionnaire respondents, which would presuppose a lot of code-switching, especially where there are children of school age or young people who moved to the US in their early years (personal observations support this claim). English, as expected, is the dominant language used at the workplace for 75% of the respondents and half of the interviewees. The latter also note that it is the workplace where they make new friends who are Americans of various ethnic backgrounds.

Turning now to the phenomenon of code-switching, the data collected from the interviews confirm Grosjean's (1997) claim that bilinguals who share two languages tend to code-switch more often, as the examples given in Section 6.2.2. demonstrated. The observer effect plays a major role here, since the interviewer was also a bilingual, fluent in both languages. It could be speculated that in case the interviewer spoke Albanian only, the picture would be quite different, but this may be an idea for future research and comparison. Poly-languaging is apparently also practiced by Albanian-Americans both in the family and at the workplace, as well as with friends of other nationalities apart from Albanian and American.

Regarding language functions, the results of the online questionnaire clearly point to the prevalence of the referential function as a reason for code-switching (35% of the answers), followed by the expressive function (26%), while the other functions are represented with 8-9%. These functions were discussed in detail in Section 6.1. above. In the interviews with Albanian as the matrix language, the referential and the expressive functions also dominate but it is difficult to say which one prevails in triggering code-switching. Language economy and frequently used English phrases may also be the reason for some code-switches. The interviews with English as the matrix language also demonstrate a high degree of code-switching of culture-specific words and phrases fulfilling the referential and/or the expressive function. Besides, sometimes it is difficult to distinguish in which function – the expressive or the poetic – a certain code-switch appears, as in the following example:

(F, 11) The new country treated us superbly, the first lady, Hillary Clinton addressed us in a military camp, Fort Dix, NJ by saying: “ju nuk jeni refugjatë këtu, ju jeni mysafirët tanë”  
[You are not refugees here, you are our guests”].

This is an unusual instance of CS in the sense that it includes a quotation whose original is in English, but it is embedded in Albanian in an otherwise English piece of discourse. It also contradicts Myers-Scotton's (2002:58) principle stating that: "EL islands are under the constraint of ML grammar."

Besides, the bulk of code-switched sentences in the corpus also refute the principle postulating that: "the unit of analysis should be independent or dependent clauses rather than sentences" (Myers-Scotton 2002:54). Therefore, the results of this part of the study seem to be more in corroboration with Nortier's (1990) view that distinguishes between a matrix language operating within separate sentences and a base language operating within the whole discourse. Of course, as the discussion and the examples in Section 6.2.2. show, code-switching occurs at all levels: individual words, phrases, sentences and the entire discourse. In the case of individual nouns and adjective + noun phrases it was established that when embedded in the English sentence, they keep the inflexions for plurality (if in plural), but breach the rules for case in Albanian and are used exclusively in the nominative. This confirms Myers-Scotton's (1993:83) Morpheme-Order Principle: "Thus, in bilingual speech, system morphemes are used only from the ML [..]" As far as verbs are concerned, they are code-switched within clauses only, where the whole clause adheres to the rules of Albanian grammar morphologically and syntactically. In Myers-Scotton's (2002:58) terms, these are EL islands formed by EL grammar. It has to be noted here that no cases of adding functional morphemes from the ML (both English and Albanian) to words from the EL were observed in the corpus, as were, for instance, in Vassileva and Yankova's (2015) study of the speech of Bulgarian-Canadians. In most of the instances, the two languages were kept separate, with code-switching occurring at phrase, clause or sentence border.

The latter also accounts for the unproblematic for the understanding of the message word order that was preserved for the respective ML (English or Albanian), with the exception of the reverse order of adjective + noun phrases in Albanian EL islands.

## 6. Contributions

To sum up, the study employed a multifaceted and multidisciplinary approach and threw new light on the following aspects of the Albanian-American community in the US:

- A historical overview of Albanian immigration to the USA;
- An overview of Albanian grammar in contrast to English; English borrowings in Albanian and their integration;
- A socio-cultural profile of Albanian-Americans in terms of attitudes towards their compatriots, homeland customs and traditions, experiences in the US, ethnic identity, language behavior in various environments and contexts, among others;
- A detailed analysis of Albanian Americans' identity as demonstrated by the results of the study;
- An examination of the phenomenon of code-switching from the following perspectives: social, cultural, historical, linguistic and psycholinguistic.

The results are supposed to provide a comprehensive picture of the language behavior of Albanian immigrants to the US, which may further be of help in determining language and cultural policies within and towards this community, as well as in raising the awareness of its members of their *de facto* cultural belonging.

## 7. Limitations of the study and future research

From a **theoretical** point of view, in the general case, similar studies have the possibility to draw on existing contrastive studies of the languages involved in order to find explanations of code-switching phenomena. Unfortunately, apart from a few publications dealing primarily with lexical issues, there is a shortage of reliable contrastive studies of English and Albanian. Along these lines, Albanian linguists seem to be mainly interested in recent borrowings from English in the mass media and political discourse. However, their publications appear in problematic English and are published in local, non-peer reviewed journals, which does not make them internationally visible and trustworthy. Besides, there is also a lack of databases and dictionaries of English borrowings in Albanian and a dearth of up-to-date grammars of Albanian based on approaches beyond the structural approach (functional grammar, discourse analysis). Moreover, very few studies focus on the language of Albanian communities outside the main geographical area where the language is spoken – *Arbëresh*, an old dialect spoken in the south of Italy and Sicily being an exception.

From a **practical** viewpoint, a problematic issue was the lack of reliable data about the number of Albanians living in the US (legal and/or illegal). The official number mentioned in the Introduction (203,600) was the only one that could be found, but it is from 2012. Besides, it is well-known that, due to the immigration policy of the US, reliable data concerning the number of immigrants of any ethnicity is practically unavailable because of the enormous amount of illegal immigrants residing in the country. Secondly, while the number of participants in the online questionnaire could be accepted as representative, the number of interviewees is low and problematic in terms of representativity with respect to age and sex. At the same time, any researcher who has ventured to

collect such data has encountered the difficulties of finding the right people who would also be ready to share their experiences related to the interview questions.

Another point that has to be made here is the impact of the observer effect, also known as the *Hawthorne effect*, which means that people tend to change various aspects of their behavior when they are aware of being observed. In this particular case, the interviewer was a member of the Albanian-American community, speaking fluently both languages. Besides, the interviews followed specific questions; therefore, they cannot be labelled as 'spontaneous speech' to a full extent.

Considering the fact that this is the first study of the language of Albanian-Americans and the way it reflects their identity, **future research** is necessary on a larger scale to confirm (or refute) the results and conclusions presented here, especially in view of recording and analyzing spontaneous speech. Similar studies could also be carried out on Albanian immigrants in other countries for the sake of comparison.

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## 10. Summary in Bulgarian

### Албанските американци – идентичност, езикови предпочитания и превключване на езиковия код

В дисертацията се възприема социокултурен подход към изследването на превключването на езиковия код (ПК), който се проявява в поведението на албанските емигранти в САЩ и се приема като отражение на тяхната идентичност. Заложени са следните предположения, чиято проверка води до реализиране на съответните цели:

(1) Превключването на езиковия код е явление, проявяващо се в рамките на дискурса, където „дискурс“ се разбира в най-широк смисъл на термина, включително в неговите социални измерения. Последните включват редица особености на конкретната комуникативна ситуация като участници, място на общуването, цел на общуването, контекст, канал, обратна връзка и т.н. Така, от социолингвистична гледна точка, целта е да се идентифицират контекстите, в които албанските американци превключват между албански и английски. (2) Случаите на превключване на кода притежават определени функции, които указват причините, поради които говорещите сменят езиците. Тези причини могат да бъдат чисто лингвистични, социално определени, изразяващи лични емоции и др. и се изследват подробно в разработката. (3) Последното ни отвежда в сферата на психолингвистиката и от тази гледна точка се приема, че характеристиките на личността, включително демографските, като възраст, пол, продължителност на престоя в САЩ, също оказват огромно влияние върху стратегиите за смяна на кода и затова са неразделна част от изследването. (4) Друго предположение на изследването е, че превключване на кода се среща на всички нива на езика. Ето защо се представя подробен анализ на различните конкретни места на превключване на кода в потока на речта по отношение на техните лексикални, граматични и дискурсивни характеристики, както и на езиковите промени, които се наблюдават в този процес.

Очертава се историята на албанско-американската общност, включително и емиграционните вълни, първите места, в които се заселват албанските емигранти, както и причините за тези емиграционни вълни в съответните периоди от време.

Фокусира се върху различни аспекти на феномена на кодовото превключване. Най-напред той се обсъжда във връзка с политиките за мултикултурализъм и межкултурност и тяхното въздействие върху социалните характеристики на албанското малцинство в САЩ. На второ място е представен преглед на теориите за ПК и техните корени, с цел по-нататъшно разглеждане на съществуващите социолингвистични, психолингвистични и структурни подходи към ПК.

Раздел 4 се концентрира върху структурните различия между албанския и английския език, както и върху нахлуването на английски думи в албанския език. Лексикалните заемки се разглеждат по-подробно с акцент върху тяхната интеграция в албанския език от гледна точка на сложната му морфологична структура. Накратко са описани основните разлики в синтаксиса на двата езика.

Описани са двата инструмента, използвани за събиране на данни – анонимен онлайн въпросник и отчасти структурирани интервюта, както и процедурите, използвани за обработка на данните.

В заключението се обобщават резултатите от проучването, като вниманието се съсредоточава върху три основни точки, а именно: (1) демографски и социокултурен профил на албанските американци въз основа на онлайн въпросника и интервютата; (2) Идентичността на албанските американци и факторите, които я определят, отразени в данните от проучването; (3) Езикът на албанските американци, разглеждан като езиков избор в различни контексти, поддържането на майчиния език, владенето на английски език, както и феноменът на ПК и факторите, които го активират.

В обобщение, дисертацията представлява мултидисциплинарно изследване, в което, като се изхожда от езика, се правят редица демографски, социално-културни, свързани с идентичността и социално-политически заключения по отношение на албанско-американската общност в САЩ.