

The Phenomenon of Bilingualism in Rahovec's Spoken Language

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ABSTRACT

The paper focuses on addressing the bilingual phenomenon among bilingual speakers that learn or even speak the language at the same time L1 and L2. The phenomenon of bilingualism emerges as a result of the languages in contact. Within this phenomenon, we will consider the use of Albanian language and the local speech of the citizens of Rahovec, *Rahovecjançe*. Quantitative study, in this paper consists of sociolinguistic measurement, in individual interviews recorded with voice recorder in "smart phone". The graphical presentation we claim to bring concrete results about the degree of bilingualism in the different social strata, as a result of this and also toward s the emergence of the concrete situation of the use of language codes in each language domain. Social stratification shows the current state of the use of both language codes. The bilingual phenomenon with the local speech is considered to be disappearing, and the level of bilingual speakers should be declining.

INTRODUCTION

Language belongs to people who speak it or have spoken it. The choice of language depends on the history of the people, the way of life, economic, social and political relations. Almost no language community is monolingual, such cases are rare, as the phenomenon of bilingualism is present in most communication societies. Language belongs to people who speak it or have spoken it. The choice of language depends on the history of the people, the way of life, economic, social and political relations. Almost no language community is monolingual, such cases are rare, as the phenomenon of bilingualism is present in most communication societies. In most cases, bilingualism is considered a normal situation. By relating to the place and social circumstances, bilingualism carries its specific features and characteristics. This phenomenon, which emerges as a result of language contacts, is very complex, closely related to general economic, social and political developments. Changes to these factors directly affect even in the aspects of bilingualism within the bilingual social ethnicity. (Munishi, 2012-256). Rahovec's speakers belong to such bilingual ethnicity. Bilingualism in these speakers appears as a result of contact and language conflict with Rahovec's speech, *Rahovecjançe*. Serbian language as an official and neighboring language was imposed on these speakers, but this did not always lead to submission

or change of language. Bilingualism has long been an embedded and common occurrence among inhabitants of Rahovec. Rahovec's speakers adapted to this phenomenon and developed it into numerous life domains.

Previous sociolinguistic research and analyzes about the languages in contact created prerequisites to elaborate on the main lines, among other things, and the consideration of bilingualism in linguistic minorities. The phenomenon of bilingualism in this research will be examined within a narrow linguistic area, since it applies only within this area. The findings of use of the language codes of Rahovec speakers intend to lead us to accurate conclusions about the degree of bilingualism in different social strata. Consequently, these results will lead us also towards the emergence of the concrete state of use of language codes in each language domain.

LITERARY REVIEW

Sociolinguistic development began during the second half of 19th century and first half of the 20th century. During the '50s and '60s of the 20th century a great development has taken place in the field of linguistic contact, as in descriptive study, as well as in the provision of sustainable theories, which served as a stimulus for further developments. Within the context of linguistic contact, special attention was paid

to the study of bilingualism. This linguistic phenomenon has long been a matter of discussion among scholars: Bloomfield (1933), Weinreich (1953), Haugen (1956), Hockett (1958), Diebold (1961), Mackey (1962), Romaine (1989) etc.

For the first time, the concept of bilingualism is used by Weinreich (1953) and Haugen (1956). Constraints imposed by prefix bi – to learn a second language, according to these authors, are excluded from bilingualism; it involves all languages after adopting the childhood language (Diebold, 1961:99). The exact effect of bilingualism in a person's speech differs from many factors, some of which Weinreich (1953:4) calls "*extra-linguistic*". According to the author, two or more languages can be said to be in contact if they are used alternately by the same person. Individuals who use language are therefore the contact point. The practice of occasional use of the two languages will be called bilingualism, while the person involved, bilingual. However, Haugen (1956:94) considers bilingualism as a "*whole range*" involving a number of different language skills and degrees in each one's he master. The criterion of being bilingual Haugen (1953:7) considers a speaker of a language that produces meaningful expressions in another language.

Studies of contact language that treat the sociolinguistic problems of Albanian in Albanian linguistics were late. In addition of foreign authors such as Trudgill (1975), Byron (1976), Tsitsipis (1998) contribution to this branch of linguistics provided the works of authors: Ismajli (1991, 1994, 1998, 2003, 2005), Ymeri (1993, 1994, 2005), Shkurtaj (1996, 2009), Nuhiu (1990) etc. A contribution to the contact linguistics, namely bilingualism, emerged as a result of linguistic contact between Albanian and Serbian language, recently given by Rugova (2012) Munishi (2006, 2010, 2012, 2013) and Dulaj (2016).

Albanian Dialectal Speech of Rahovec

The Albanian dialectal speech of Rahovec's inhabitants is part of the continuum of other gegë dialectal speeches of (north) western part of Kosova, with influences related to the linguistic elements of the local Rahovec's speech, *Rahovecjançe*. Apart from the Albanian language as L1, in this linguistic area is also spoken *Rahovecjançe*, or Rahovec's speech as L2. In some cases, these two languages play opposite roles and functions. Rahovec's speech, *Rahovecjançe*, is the community language of these speakers with the predominance of Slavic linguistic elements.

The majority of the population of this dialectal speech is the Albanian population, but this linguistic area has long been distinguished for the coexistence of the Albanian population with the minority population of Slavs. Observing the lifestyles of these inhabitants, who in the course of time, besides the uninterrupted contacts, have had mutual relations, the demographic division of this area, we noticed that, in addition to material and spiritual exchanges, they also changed words.

The Albanian and Serbian language communities, though they were different speaking communities, lived and worked in a common territory, had daily interaction and intercommunication with each other. In reciprocal reports and atti-

tudes between these communities reflected the language reports used by these communities (Munishi 2012, Rugova 2012). In such a situation, Munishi (2013:30) considers that speakers were obliged to be bilingual. Of course, such circumstances have led to the spread of all those phenomena that are characteristic of language situations in contact.

Language contacts also result in language contacts. Language fluctuations in former Yugoslavia came as a result of contact between Albanian and Serbian language. In this context, Rugova (2012:169) considers that Serbian language is the more prestigious language and had supremacy toward Albanian language in most of the functions and formal domains... Serbian speakers were more privileged. Meanwhile, according to Munishi (2012:556), after the end of the Kosovo war and removal of the Serbian regime (1999), new political, economic and cultural circumstances were created, which had a direct impact on the process of development of bilingualism of the Albanian-Serbian language. Today, these language communities live almost entirely separate, the domains of contacts between Albanian and Serbian language are significantly limited. Improvement of the position of Albanians resulted is status improvement (Munishi 2013:23) and the use of Albanian language, which results also in the current findings during the research of this speech.

Language contacts over a long period of time between the Albanian and Serbian created a new reality in this linguistic area. Dulaj asserts that the state of Rahovec's speech is in the conditions of dialectal bilingualism, that it to say the linguistic codes are used alternately, but we often have "*mixed*" linguistic performances. However, based on reality that is being create, it seen that linguistic development is moving towards the integration of idioms and linguistic areas to build a commonness, or rather, towards a more organized communication intended to be common to all the speakers of Albanian. The consequences of the interruption of the development of the Albanian language (the emergence of *Rahovecjançe* language, contraction of spoken Albanian language until the loss of meaning, then restoring its use) have left visible traces, making this dialectal speech to be seen as not the same as the northeastern gegërishte dialect (Dulaj, 2016: 63-69).

Knowing that learning a language can not happen outside the context and social interaction, it is more than natural that bilingualism be present to the Rahovec speakers, who have used it uniformly, and some of them continue to use two codes of different linguistic, Albanian and Rahovec's language. Based on the results of the interviewed respondents, these speakers appear in the sense of the bilingual situation. Although the Albanian language carries the statute of official language, the functions and domains of its full used remain limited.

The Importance of the Study

In today's linguistic studies, a fairly wide range of dialectal dialects, both in dialectological and sociolinguistic fields, has been addressed. However, in the light of these studies for Rahovec's speech, very little has been said, especially in the sphere of social stratification of speakers. This is because

Rahovec's speech has a characteristic linguistic system that is influenced by the social context that relates to the degree of bilingualism in this area and, which should be considered in multilayer dimensions that are related to communication situations and the registers of language use.

Since this linguistic area, until recently, coexisted in a heterogeneous society it is natural that the bilingual element has influenced the communication of its Albanian speakers. Therefore, this research presents the primary importance of identifying the degree of bilingualism by answering these questions:

- What are the social strata most affected by the bilingual element?
- Do we have cases where we can conclude for homogeneous/unilingual social strata?
- Has the use of rahovecjançe from the past to the present been diminished?

Such issues, being untreated in this speech, are at the same time are both of great importance and interested to be studied.

METHODOLOGY

The issue of bilingualism, in contrast to other linguistic fields, is more treated in the sociolinguistic field, so we will look at Rahovec's speech from the sociolinguistic point of view. Studies of this kind include a sociolinguistic level, in addition to obtained data, the element of social stratification of these data is needed on the merge of four sociolinguistic elements that can point to certain influences within the spoken language.

To find the answers to sociolinguistic stratifications, sociolinguistic measurements will be made through the interview. The interview will be conducted in a sample of 8 informants. The interview is made on a sample of 8 informants. We are fully aware that this number of informants participating in the interview on the nature of sociolinguistic studies is small, but this choice is made due to the simplicity and the concise interpretation of the findings.

Quantitative studies provide numerable, measurable information. Based on the data processed as a number or as a percentage, certain conclusions can be drawn that support a certain hypothesis or not. The data of a corpus mainly serves as orientations and trends and, as such, want interpretation (Rugova and Sejdiu - Rugova, 2015: 191).

Therefore, these informants serve as a sample for the verification of hypothesis. The outcome of results does not conclude a scientific review. If the results obtained support the hypotheses raised above, we intend to extend this number of informants to a more extensive study. Thus, the phenomenon of bilingualism will be analyzed in limited number of speakers as representatives of a linguistic area.

Of the 8 informants 4 will be educated and 4 uneducated, 4 of them will be male and 4 female. Within this sample will also be a classification based on their age. Hence, 8 observed respondents will be divided equally: 2 informants will be 7-15 years old, 2 aged 16-35, 2 informants aged 36-55, and 2 final respondents will be over the age of 55. The informants, educated, will also be of different level of education: low,

middle and high level, in order to see what role this factor has in the way of their communication. Meanwhile, there will also be informants of various professions, and those who also master foreign languages. All informants are locals, born and raised in Rahovec.

Among all informants will be analyzed their use of language during communication:

- the use of the first or second language in the family/society is Albanian/Rahovec's language (Rahovec's speech);
- use of electronic media in the Albanian/Rahovec's language;
- use of daily newspaper/reading in Albanian/Rahovec's;
- the use of any foreign language in the family/society;
- the use of only one language in the family/society.

Through sociolinguistics measurements we intend to see the level of communication, as well as the influence of standard language and bilingualism. These measurements will also serve comparisons, and then to see changes in the use of language in the course of time. Finally, we will interpret the results that result from the research done.

FINDINGS

In order to see the level of communication, the impact of the standard language and the degree of bilingualism, 5 questions have been asked. The first question was to choose the use of the language code. *The use of the first or the second language in the family/society is Albanian/Rahovec's language?*, out of 8 informants interviewed 3 of them, 2 males, one educated and the other with low level of education, and 1 female, uneducated in the old age, stated that the use of the first language is done in *Rahovecjançe*. 3 of them 1 male, with higher level of education, and 2 female, also educated, stated that the first language in the family is Albanian. While 2 respondents find that their language flows in their families depending on the topic of discussion and the people they communicate with. In this case, communication with children is carried out in the Albanian language, while the adults communicate in *Rahovecjançe*.

From these data, it is obvious that in the family domain Albanian and *Rahovecjançe* have the same ratio usage. The same phenomenon occurs also in social domain, depending on the participants with whom they communicate. Hudson (2002:63-64) sees the replacement of the code as an inevitable consequence of bilingualism. The bilingual speakers choose language according to the circumstances. Uses in different language circumstances, according to the author, are always controlled by social rules.

Out of the total number of informants, 3 educated informants communicate only in Albanian, while an educated informant claims to communicate in *Rahovecjançe*. Language preferences are closely related both to the awareness and influence of the social circle, even from the will of the speaker. Ferdinand de Saussure (1959) supported the idea that the speech (*parole*) is completely individual, as it depends only on the "*will of the speaker*" and, otherwise, the language (*langue*) is completely social. (*according to Hudson, 2002: 121*).

The opinion on the eventual extinction of dialect varieties, but also of the other social variety (in the case of Rahovec's dialectal speech, *Rahovecjançe*), under the pressure of the standard spoken language, does not seem to us correct. Joshua Fishman (1978) rightly states that "where there is a standard variety, it does not remove non-standardized varieties from the linguistic repertoire of that language community, in functions that are different from the functions of the standard variety but are complimentary with it" (*According to Munishi, 2006: 322-323*). In this linguistic situation, the use of Albanian language does not avoid the variation of local *Rahovecjançe*, but it goes into complementary use with it, reflecting on a large scale the gradual decline of bilingualism.

As an important element for bilingualism Munishi (2013: 573) considers *the stability of contact in different domains*. Generally, Holmes writes (2015: 82) on as many domains as using a minority language, the greater the opportunities for it to be preserved. The home is the domain that every family has under control: especially in those families where grandparents and older members of the language use it, this is likely to be preserved. This reality was proved by two younger interviewees in this research, and according to the answers we realized that in their family grandparents and parents communicated in *Rahovecjançe*, even though communication with young people was conducted in Albanian.

The interpretation of data leads us to the conclusion that educated women, both in the family and in the society, as the first language use the Albanian language, in the comparison to educated males, who prefer to use *Rahovecjançe speech* as a first language. This shows that in any society where men and women have the same opportunities to use the standard form, women use the standard variant of high prestige more often than males do (Hudson, 2002:217). Therefore, we can say that the use of the Albanian is entirely determined from the most prestigious social group speech.

In sociolinguistic research of Labov (1990, 1994), Trudgill (1974, 1983) the fact is that women are generally more carefully and to use the most prestigious linguistic form.

Since the reality of this current linguistic range differs from that of the past, there is a decrease in the use of *Rahovecjançe*, and an increase of in the use of Albanian language. An innovation – a form in growing – will be graphically presented as a rare form of use by adults and as a frequent use by young people. For the form of extinction, the opposite happens. Young people will use it less, while adults, more (Holmes, 2015:208). Again, the use of age-based language registers in the findings of our study is again relative.

The second question that was asked to respondents was about choosing the use of electronic media. *The use of electronic media is done in Albanian/Rahovec's language?* Out of total number of respondents except 1 informant, in this case nine-year-old child states that at home, with the exception of the Albanian-language media, they follow the news in the Serbian language, 7 other informants claim that the use of electronic media is only performed in Albanian language and that the electronic media in *Rahovecjançe* did not exist and do not exist, while they do not follow any media in Slavic language.

These data prove that the national language of this locality remains the Albanian language, which is used in all domains and other spheres of daily communication, and that this language, *Rahovecjançe* (Rahovec's dialectal speech), is treated as lingual remains of the past.

The third question asked to respondents was to choose the use of daily newspaper/reading in Albanian/*Rahovecjançe*. *The use of the daily newspaper/reading is done in Albanian/Rahovec's language?* Out of the total number of respondents, all unanimously stated that reading the daily newspapers and other reading are done only in Albanian. The informants claimed the fact that this dialectal speech is local, informal, stripped of the prestige of the written language. But respondents who have studied in Slavic languages claim that they read in Slavic languages, compared to other middle-aged and young respondents who claim that they can not read in Slavic languages. We conclude that the knowledge the Slavic language of these speakers could have reinforced the phenomenon of bilingualism, affecting the resistance of a greater duration of use of the two language codes.

The data once again confirm the fact the dominant language of Rahovec's dialectal speech is Albanian language, but this does not exclude the possibility that the speakers have answered unanimously correctly, always responding with a doubt.

The following question was posed to the respondents: *Using a foreign language in the family/society?* By which we claimed to obtain on the eventual use of any foreign language in the family/society, as a possibility of bilingualism and multilingualism. Of the 8 interviewed respondents, 3 of them educated, 2 women and 1 male, of young age and a middle-aged, stated that in addition to communication in the Albanian language, occasionally they communicate in foreign languages, mainly in English. 3 other respondents, 1 middle aged male and 2 children stated that they do not use any language apart from the Albanian language. While 2 other senior respondents, one of them an educated male and an uneducated female, claim that they do not know any foreign language, but other members in the family speak foreign languages, such as English and German.

Language choices are influenced by the prestige and structure of social networks. Blom and Gumperz (1972) in social networking structures differentiate between closed and open networks. Closed networks defined groups of people are connected and everyone knows each other well. Meanwhile, in open networks not all people in the network know each other. In this case, the closed networks favor the use of local dialectal speech, *Rahovecjançe*, while the open networks favor the use of foreign languages, which are inter-linked with wider social values. Since English and German have a prestige and a wider use of network, the interest of young and middle-aged speakers, educated, as a local dialectal speech by these speakers are increasingly regarded as inferior, even worthless, discarding its use.

The last question was about the denseness of using language codes in different domains. *The use of only one language in the family/society?* 4 respondents, 3 educated speakers, 2 of them women and a male of different age group and a nine-year-old child, have stated they the use of only

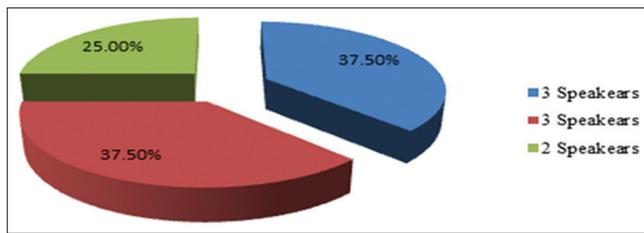


Figure 1. The use of the second language in the family/society is Albanian/Rahovec's language?

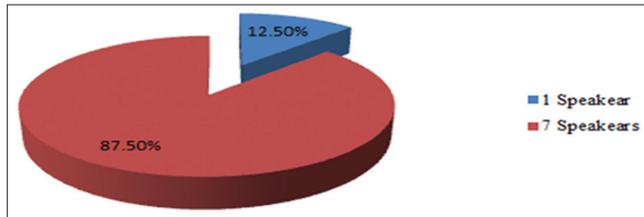


Figure 2. The use of electronic media is done in Albanian/Rahovec's language

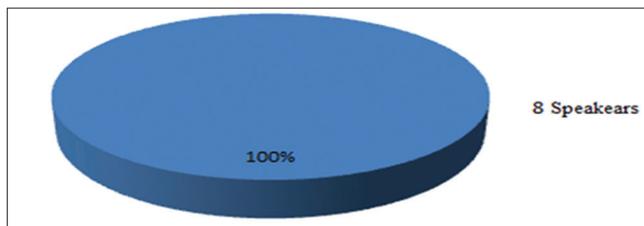


Figure 3. The use of the daily newspaper/reading is done in Albanian/Rahovec's language?

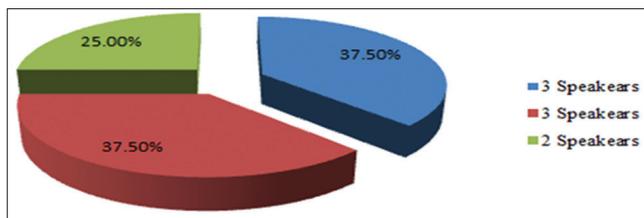


Figure 4. Using a foreign in the family/society?

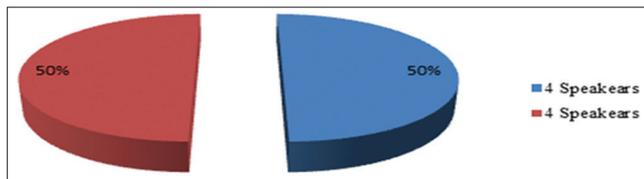


Figure 5. The use of only one language in the family/society

one language is done only in Albanian. While 4 other respondents, one of them an educated male and 2 uneducated males of different age groups, and an old uneducated woman, have stated that they uniformly use both language codes in the family domain as well as in the social domain. Communicating with children is done only in Albanian, while with other members of family they communicate in *Rahovecjançe*. This indicates that these informants choose different languages according to the context in which they communicate. No cases were excluded when middle-aged informants use uniform-

ly the two language codes, or even one language code, the one in Albanian. Within each age group Rahovec's dialectal speech was reflected to users with lower status of the social group, while the speakers with higher educational and professional status used the Albanian language. However, all this depended on linguistic circumstances and communication situations, and, especially, as Ehala says (2018:538), from the "language resources available to the individual". Domains in which language changes occur may vary from individual to individual and from group to group, but gradually, over time, the language of the majority in the society replaces the mother tongue of minorities (Holmes, 2015:62), and that such a linguistic phenomenon may occur in the future with the language of the locality of Rahovec such as *Rahovecjançe*.

From this it follows that the variation of the speech citizens of Rahovec, *Rahovecjançe*, remains an *intimate code* for communication in the family, partly in the society, depending on the need for individual use and topic of discussion. Failure to use the language in the most common domains directly affects the Albanian language and *Rahovecjançe*, and consequently to the reduction of bilingualism. The attitude towards the Albanian language, especially in the spoken language, is aimed at improving its use.

We are fully aware that this research may not have given completely precise results. But these results provide a relatively good overview of the current state of linguistic bilingualism, dialectal speech of Albanian language of Rahovec and the local speech of Rahovec, *Rahovecjançe*, that has remained from the substrate language.

CONCLUSION

The study of bilingualism identified the degree of use of the Albanian and *Rahovecjançe* among the speakers of this linguistic area. During our research and field research, we were convinced that the inhabitants of Rahovec were bilingual and that the educated ones and especially young people more willingly speak Albanian than *Rahovecjançe*, but cases were not excluded when selecting the use of the language code was the opposite.

The social strata most affected by the phenomenon of bilingualism seem to be somewhat of the middle class, but at higher level the older one. Occasions for homogenous/unilingual social strata in this dialectal speech are rare. In the coming generations one day, that may be very far, anyway, their dialectal speech will end in Albanian language, the latter is the language of the school, the administration and the majority of the professions exercised by the inhabitants of Albanian-speaking site.

These speakers consider that Albanian as most prestigious language and standard language at the same time should be mastered at the propel level, and as a result the bilingual phenomenon with the dialectal speech of Rahovec, *Rahovecjançe*, is in the process of disappearance. Summarizing the results discussed here, it can be concluded that the level of those who speak *Rahovecjançe* is declining, especially among young and middle-aged generations. The use of Albanian and *Rahovecjançe* is done by category, status and function in society.

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