# Similarities between Albanian and English Considering Word-Formation

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**Abstract:** *Because of new inventions and changes, every language is in need of new words – borrowed, derived or otherwise formed – simply because new things need new words. When new inventions and changes enter our lives, we are in the need of naming them and of course to communicate about them. Language is dynamic, it changes constantly If we take a look at the vast amount of new inventions made in the 20th and 21stcentury, it is obvious that the words we knew before were not enough to cover all these things. Exclusively in the 21st century, abbreviations were and still are everywhere, thanks to the internet and the cell phone. The vocabulary of a standard language can be seen in different ways, one of them is word formation.Regarding word-formation, in this paper we will analyze the major formative opportunities that these two languages have. Both, English and Albanian languages belong to Indo-European languages but they differ. Each of them has got its own authenticity. Considering their grammatical forms we can say that the Albanian is a synthetic-analytic language, while English is an analytic-synthetic one. The structure of each language has its own determinations even in the word-formation process. If we survey these two languages we can notice that there are similarities as well as differences considering the ways the new words are formed.*

**Keywords:** word-formation, derivation, compounding, blending, English, Albanian, tendencies

## 1. Introduction

Because of new inventions and changes, every language is in need of new words – borrowed, derived or otherwise formed – simply because new things need new words. The human community is steadily growing and developing, just as the tool we use to communicate: Language. When new inventions and changes enter our lives, we are in the need of naming them and of course to communicate about them. Language is dynamic, it changes constantly The key here is usage: If a new word is used by many speakers of a language, it survives and enters the dictionary of that language. Especially in the last centuries, many word creations are spread amongst the language community.

For example, if you take a look at the vast amount of new inventions made in the 20th and 21stcentury, it is obvious that the words we knew before were not enough to cover all these things. Exclusively in the 21st century, abbreviations were and still are everywhere, thanks to the internet(chat rooms and e-mail) and the cell phone (text messaging with its limited number of characters).

And of course there are language trends that come and go as time passes, for example youth language (college slang: *cool*, *chill*, *wasted* – Finegan 2007, 321) or the formerly mentioned abbreviations in the so-called txt spk (language abbreviated to fit into text messages: *cu*, *gr8*, *lol*,etc.). There are old words with new meanings, like *surf*, *bug* and *web*, whose meanings have broadened since the new technological inventions, but there are many other ways in which new words are created: If there is a new thing and the language community has no word for it, there are several options to create a new one. In the past and the present, people used – and still use – a variety of methods to create new words, such as compounding, derivation or coinage. In the following, some of these word formation processes are illustrated and examples for their use are given.

## 2. Word-Formation and the Major Formative Opportunities in Both Languages

The vocabulary of a standard language can be seen in different ways, one of them is word formation Regarding word-formation, in this paper we will analyze the morpho-semantic phenomenon of affixes as well as the major formative opportunities that these two languages have. Both, English and Albanian languages belong to Indo-European languages but they differ. Each of them has got its own authenticity. Considering their grammatical forms we can say that the Albanian is a synthetic-analytic language, while English is an analytic-synthetic one. The structure of each language has its own determinations even in the word-formation process. If we survey these two languages we can notice that there are similarities as well as differences considering the ways the new words are formed. For example English is characterized by the dominant tendency to create verbal expression, verbal collocations, verb plus noun, verb plus preposition, determined on the order of the members in a syntagma. Some general observations about verbal collocations are that they consist of fixed combinations, for example:
*look forward to* (verb + preposition)
*look after* (verb + preposition)
*commit suicide* (verb + noun)

Albanian language has a very pronounced origin. It is very rich in affixes which are very active in forming new words. It has got about 170 suffixes (Xhuvani, Çabej, 1976, p.53) and about 80 prefixes. Even English is rich in affixes which are very active in forming new words nowadays. Both languages have in common some affixes of Greek or Latin origin.

The example of a typical prefix common in English and Albanian is mega- ´a great amount of´ (from Greek megas ´great´). Combination of the prefix mega- with an ordinary word gives word stronger emphasis. ( megabitch, megawork,

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meganap, megaslow, megaparty )
(Albanian: megaqytet, megafshat, megakonference) etc.

There are many affixes of Latin source used in either Albanian or English which are active in word-formation, for example "anti-" in the English word "anticipate" and "antipatik", "antikomunist" in Albanian. bi- meaning "two" as in the English words "binary, binoculars". It can also be found in Albanian as "bipolar, bipartzan, biseksual"etc. Using affixes is not the only way of forming new words. Both languages have got other ways for enriching the vocabulary. Word-formation is regarded as the process of the formation of words with larger dimension.

The ways in which new words are formed, and the factors which govern their acceptance into the language, are generally taken very much for granted by the average speaker. To understand a word, it is not necessary to know how it is constructed, whether it is simple or complex, that is, whether or not it can be broken down into two or more constituents. We are able to use a word which is new to us when we find out what object or notion it denotes.

Word-formation is the process of forming new words, more complex than simple words. Classical studies in English contrast the simple word with the complex word. Simple word is conceived in terms of root (root is a constitutive element, undivided without adjustment or inflexions) or as a word-root.

According to "Word-formation in English" by Ingo Plag ,there are two main word-formation processes in English language: 1) major word-formational processes which include compounding, derivation and conversion; and 2) minor word-fornational processes which include blending, clipping, backformation, root-creation and reduplication

## 3. The Main Word-Formation Processes in Albanian

According to "Gramatika e gjuhës shqipe" published by the Institute of Linguistics and Literature and the Academy of Science of Albania, the ways in which the words are formed is:
1) Derivation which includes words formed with prefixes, words formed with suffixes, words formed with either prefixes or suffixes, derivation without an affix; 2) articulation, 3) composition, 4) compounding, 5) conversion, 6) mixed modes which include: compounding and suffixation, composition and suffixation, articulization and compounding. Some other Albanian linguists classify the Albanian words in different ways, for example, the Albanian linguists Agalliu, Demiraj and Domi make another grouping of the ways of word-formation:
1. Morphological methods which include affixation, articulization and composition
2. Non-morphological methods that are compounding and conversion.

The linguist Jani Thomaj classifies the Albanian words according to their construction in a) base words, b) derivative words, and c) compound words. This is the most common division of the words in the Albanian language. He

goes on with a subdivision and divides the derived words into two other groups: a) derived words which are formed with affixes (prefixes and suffixes) and b) derived words without affixes (articulization and conversion)

Another Albanian linguist, who is fond of Anglo- American language school, R. Memushaj claims that the vocabulary enrichment is done through three ways: a) by enriching the semantic structure of words with new meanings, b) by creating new words by means of word-formation, c) borrowed words from other languages . According to the Albanian linguists who prefer the Anglo-American language school, the formation of the new words by means and ways of word-formation or morphological origin, is the most productive way of enriching the lexicon with lexical units. R. Memushaj thinks that the most popular ways of word-formation are derivation with affixes and compounding. There are also other ways to enrich the vocabulary as blending, acronyms and backformation, ways which are also used in English word-formation.

## 4. The Main Word-Formation Processes in English

### Derivation

Derivation, as "the most common word formation process", builds new words by adding morphemes to stems. These morphemes are added to the target stem by affixation, through prefixes and suffixes. While prefixes like *un-* or *dis-* usually do not change the lexical category of a word, suffixes, such as *–ness,-ment, -ing,* or *-ation*, usually do. If you take the examples *employ, employment, unemployment* It is obvious that because of the suffix *-ment*the lexical category of *employ* has changed. The meaning is always slightly changed, but in a way that the final word is still closely related to the former word. There are of course more prefixes and suffixes, each indicating another aspect of change made to the meaning of the original word. All English words formed by derivational process use either prefixes or suffixes, or both. Thus *mislead* has a prefix, *leader* has a suffix while *disrespectful* has both a prefix and a suffix. There are words which are formed with two suffixes, for example *foolishness.*

The same thing can be noticed in the Albanian language.The structure of the derived words is binary, i.e. it always consists of two elements: the theme and the affix, for example, *rindërtoj* (Albanian) which means *rebuild* in English. So the Albanian word is formed by the prefix *ri*, (which means "again" like the English prefix *re)*, plus the theme *ndërtoj* (which means the same thing like the English "build")

### Compounding

Compounding is the process of putting words together to build a new one that "does not denote two things, but one" and that is "pronounced as one unit". English examples would be *bookcase* (book + case), *textbook* (text + book), *wastebasket* (waste + basket)etc.

This very productive source of new terms has been well documented in English, but also in Albanian language. Compound words as derivative ones, always have a binary structure and are two-membered formations. In Albanian language two theme, which can be either simple roots, or derived and compound ones, are joined. For example *syzi* (sy + zi) which means "black-eyed person" in English. There are a lot of examples of compound words in Albanian language as:

*ditëlindje* – ditë + lindje (which means *birthday* in English and is a compound word that means birth + day); *zemërgjerësi* – zemër + gjerësi, (in English, *generosity*, a derivative word)

## Blending

A blending is a combination of two or more words to create a new one. However, blending is typically accomplished by taking only the beginning of one word and joining it to the end of the other word. Blending are lexemes formed by the merge of two words in such a way that is difficult to separate the morphemes. For example, in some parts of the United States of America, there is a product which is used like gasoline, but is made from alcohol, so the term for this product is *gasohol.* Let's consider the following examples of new words like *spork*(spoon + fork), *motel (*motor + hotel), or Spanglish (Spanish + English), smog (smoke + fog) which are created by blending. There are of course other ways to create a blending: for example, you can take both beginnings of a word (cybernetic + organism → *cyborg*) or take a whole word and combine it with a part of another one (guess + estimate → *guesstimate*).

Blending has also become a source of generating new words even in Albanian language and it is a very old process, for example *rrëmoj* (rrëmih + gërmoj) which means "dig" in English.

There are also new formations in Albanian language, for example: *mapo* (magazinë + popullore), which means "department store" in English, *Profarma* (product + farmaceutik) which means "pharmaceutical products" in English.

## Abbreviations

Abbreviations include three essential forms: a) Initialisms, b) Acronyms and c) Clipping Initializms are formations of abbreviations by the first letters of a denomination. Initialisms are pronounced "a sequence of letters" (USA, UK). Initializms are used in Albanian language, for example SHBA (for USA).

Acronyms are shortenings that are pronounced as single words. Acronyms is a word of Greek origin (old Greek, akro "top, edge" + "onyma") Some acronyms even become words of everyday language, for example *OK, zip* code etc. Some new words, known as acronyms, are formed from the initial letters of a set of words. These can remain essentially "alphabetisms" such as CD (compact disk), VCR (video cassette recorder) where the pronunciation consists of the set of letters. Some new acronyms come into general use so quickly that many speakers do not think of their component

meanings. Recent innovations in banking such as ATM (automatic teller machine) and the required PIN (personal identification number) are regularly heard with one of their elements repeated as in "You should know your PIN when you go to ATM). Albanian language is characterized by a great number of acronyms, for example: *ATSH* (AgjensiaTelegrafikeShqiptare), which means Albanian Telegraphic Agency, *OKB* (Organizata e KombevetëBashkuara) which means The Organization of The United Nations), *FMN* (FondiMonetarNderkombëtar) etc.

## Clipping

Clipping is a kind of reduction that occurs when a word of more than one syllable is reduced to a shorter form, more often in casual speech. Common examples in English are *ad* for "advertisement", *math* for "mathematics", *gym* for "gymnasium", *lab* for "laboratory", etc. English speakers also like to clip each-other's names, as in *Sue* for "Susan", *Sam* for "Samuel" *Ann* for "Anna", etc. We can find out formations of words by clipping in Albanian language. Some examples are as follows: *etj,*( etëtjera) which is equivalent to the English *etc., borë* (dëborë) that is equivalent to the English word *snow, tv* (television) as the English *television* etc.

## Conversion

A change in the function of the word, as, for example, when a noun comes to be used as a verb is known as conversion. Sometimes conversion is realized with the shifting of the word stress. Conversion is much present in English. The following sentences are examples of conversion.

*What do you know about the import of this production?* (the word "import" is stressed on the first syllable and it is used as a noun)
*What do you import in your country?* (The stress shifts onto the second syllable of the word "import" which is used as a verb)
*What's your name?*
*Name the pictures on the blackboard*

The conversion process is particularly productive in modern English. Conversion can involve verbs and, even phrasal verbs becoming nouns, for example, *to print out* becomes *a printout,to take over* becomes *a takeover, etc.*
There are cases when some compound nouns have assumed adjectival or verbal functions, for example, *blue eyes* becomes as an adjective, *blue-eyed girl.*
In Albanian language conversion is realized in two ways:
1. by changing the function of the word, without any inflections.

a. an adverb becomes a preposition, for example:
*Ajohyribrenda.* ("brenda" in Albanian is an adverb of place, in English means "inside the room")
*Ajohyribrendadyqanit.* (in this case "brenda" is used as a preposition of the noun "dyqan". In English it means "She entered the shop")

b. an adverb comes to be used as a conjuction, for example:

*Kurndodhi?* ("kur" which means "when", is used as an adverb of time.)
*Kurajohyri ne klasë, ne u çuamnëkëmbë.* ("kur" in this case is used as a conjuction to join the main clause with the subordinate one; in English it means "When she entered the classroom we stood up")

2. by changing the function of the word and using inflections
a. an adjective becomes a noun, for example:
*Kjo shtepi është e verdhë.* (English: This house is yellow.)
The word "e verdhë" is used as an adjective in Albanian. This word also comes to be used as a noun, for example:
*E verdha e vezës më pëlqen më shumë.* (English: I like the yellow of the egg most)

## 5. Conclusions

This study aimed to give an overview of the main types of the wordformation types in both English and Albanian language consulting different sources of information, mostly grammars and articles by foreign and Albanian linguists. The focus of this paper was the study of the vocabulary enrichment by means of wordformation processes, the ones which result as the most productive in creating new words. In the derivational process, in both languages, there are used prefixes and suffixes to create new words. However, blends, backformation and clipping are more typical of English language. Even though we canfind several examples of blends, backformation and clipping in the Albanian language, still they are quite limited in number, if compared to the English language.

In conclusion, both languages do have the potential to create new words by means of the word-formation process, by which a wide range of new words are formed in English and Albanian languages.

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