

## THE ECONOMY PRINCIPLE IN THE SPOKEN LANGUAGE

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### Abstract

The economy principle based on the theory of least effort, proposed by George Kingsley Zipf, is present in different life field. This phenomenon is also present in the Albanian language. The spoken language as a dynamic part of lexis is affected from the influence of this principle. Our goal on this paper is to look at the economy principle and its influence in the spoken language. We aim to say why the speakers are more disposed to chose on their discussions the shortest words (but without affect the whole discussion). On the other side, in Albanian language it has been found that some words or phrases such as: *shtepi (shpi)*, *falemnderit (falemnderit)*, *naten e mire (naten) etc.*, in the spoken language are used in short forms. In the same time, some composites, for example: *kushtrim (kush eshte trim)*, are indicators of the economy principle in the spoken language and in the written language too. On this paper we are observing also some types of abbreviations such as: *sms, flm, klm*, etc., currently presented in the spoken language, especially from the young people or teenagers. The goal of this paper is to expose the presence of the economy principle in the spoken language and it's influence in the whole language developments. On the other side, we aim to present the impact of this principle on the changes that affect the language. The applied scientific methods are the observation, the analysis and the comparison with the other languages. We will see the phenomenon in English, Italian and French language. On this paper we are asking why is happening this phenomenon and how does it affect the development on the language. For what reasons the users are more disposed to chose the short forms of the words? Is the economy principle one of the reasons the language change?

**Keywords:** *Economy principle, spoken language.*

### Introduction:

The spoken language as the most variable part of the lexis is in the same time mostly affected by the changes or influenced by different factors, part of the communication. On the other side "in the spoken language and especially in the conversational discussion the speakers aren't carefully to follow the rules of the language or the less to use the standard (Thomai, 1999, p. 264). It seems that the tendency for economy is an important reason for the speakers to use a word instead of another and this is why they are more disposed to choose the short form of a word instead of the full form of it. This phenomenon we can find in different categories or groups of words with a frequent usage in the everyday language such as the names of the persons or the salutation. In the same time there is a category of the abbreviations or shortenings, used especially from the young people in the written electronic messages that now are part of the spoken language especially at the young people jargon. As we know, the spoken language is always putting its pression under the written language and

under the standard too. “The words used in the written language had been first part of the spoken language” (De Saussure, 2002). Although the standard choose and absorb only a small part of the words created and used in the spoken language, it is interesting to see and discuss this trend and its influence in the language. The applied scientific methods are the observation, the analysis and the comparison with the other languages.

## **Data analysis:**

### **Economy principle with least effort**

What does the economy principle means?

In the Albanian dictionary 1984 (Fjalori i Shqipëse Sotme , 1984), one of the meanings for the word economy is: “rule or measure on the spending, saving, for example use with economy”. Another meaning for this word is: “that give the possibility to save, that doesn’t spend”. So we find that economy it is based on the principle of saving. The humans being are oriented by the idea to save energy, to save on everything they do. The same meaning of the word remains in the language field. The principle of economy in linguistics possibly for the first time has been used by F. Müller. “All the language development, that are results of the phonetics alterations have a physiological explanation based on the general principle that is a law at the economy of the effort or the principle of the least effort”. (Kokochkina, 2011) This idea was expressed later by Andre Martinet as the economy principle in language with the goal to give a lot of information with least effort. In this case, we can save both, energy and time. Martinet told that usually “the human behavior is inclined to follow the principle of least effort. The human being is disposed to save energy, because only this way he can achieve their goals” (Martinet, 2002, p.149). On this case our goal is the communication. “The speakers attempt to realize the communication and saving energy, because the balance between the energy spent and the information that is transmitted, determine mostly the meaning the and the detail of the language development” (Martinet, 2002, p. 150). It seems that this balance is desired in the spoken language too, as a flexible part of the language influenced by the general development of the whole life.

### **Economy principle in the spoken language**

On this paper it is necessary to explain the usage of the term spoken language. It is referred to the everyday language, to the conversational discussion. “As we know this is the kind of discussions where the deviations of standard are mostly present and where the standard is influenced by the changes determined by the circumstances, by the fields of the language arrangement, by the kind of discussions, etc” (Thomai, 1999, p. 264). This is why in this paper referred to this kind of communication; we can find the simple words of every day usage.

In the Albanian language, mostly the word of salutations is created by a considerable number of phonemes, compared with the same words in other languages. (We refer on this case to English, Italian and French). For example, in the Albanian language, the word *pershendetje* is created by 12 phonemes. In English the same word has only 5 phonemes – hello (hi only 2) and so in French salut and in Italian, salve. But in the Albanian language there is no another word, shorter than *pershendetje* to express the same meaning without touching or damaging the whole communication, so the speakers continue to use the full form of the word

*pershendetje* in a frequent use. It is not the same situation with another word, *tungjatjeta*. We can find in Albanian two shorter form of it, *njatjeta* or *tjeta*. So, the speakers can choose between them and they are disposed to use more frequently the shorter form, because of the economy principle. This is the syntagmatic economy principle where the speaker chooses a word with 5 phonemes (*tjeta*) or with 8 phonemes (*njatjeta*) instead of a word with 11 phonemes, *tungjatjeta*. In this case the users of the language choose to respect the syntagmatic economy (they have 5 phonemes instead of 11) but they lose in the paradigmatic economy, because they have 3 word instead of one. The language by itself is making the selection. But a new entry for the word *tungjatjeta* is the usage of the short form of it, in the Kosovo dialect *tung*. The usage of these shorter's forms is clearly expression of the economy principle in the spoken language and we can see it in some other salutations.

*Miremenges* - *ges* (good morning- morning)

*Naten e mire*- *naten* (good night- night)

*Mireupafshim*- *pafshim/ pacim* (good bye - bye)

In different cases, very often instead of *mireupafshim* in Albanian language is used the Italian word *ciao*, especially at the young people. Why? It's not just a trend of the influence of Italian language but is also the matter of the economy principle that has determined the usage of Italian word instead of Albanian word. On the other side we believe it's important to know and to say that the short forms of this word are used only in the spoken language, not in the written language. But it seems that the economy principle doesn't affect in the same way all the language. For example in the same salutations type, such as *mirembrema* or *miredita*, there is not for analogy another short form. These salutations had only their full form. The speakers choose to save energy while they are speaking so we find in the spoken language the short form of some popular words such as *shtepi*- *shpi*, *keshtu*- *kshu*, *faleminderit*- *faleminderit* (we are not considered the dialect) or *gjeagjeza*- *gjeza*. The last word, is a composite and we can see an interesting phenomenon in this kind of words.

As we know in the Albanian language “the composites are created as the result of the merge or the union of two words that had been used together along the history” (Thomai, 1999, p. 164). Staying together is one of the reasons and the economy principle in another reason that had brought on this result. For example we can find the same occurrence in some words, where the components have lost the lexical traces from the phrase they are created:

*gjithmone*- *gjithe motne*, *faleminderit*- *te falem nderes*, *lamtumire*- *e lame te mirën*, *mireupafshim*- *mire u pafshim*, *kushtrim*- *kush eshte trim*, etc.

In the Albanian language (this phenomenon happen in other languages too) the name of the persons are usually used in a short form. It happen very often, we ask someone for his name and after we ask for the short form of it, because we know or we expect that he/ she will have a short form for the name. We believe that the an important reason in this case (except the carees purpose) is the language economy: *Dritan*- *Tani*, *Sibora* – *Bora*, *Lindita*- *Lida*, *Anila*- *Nila* etj.

Referring the examples above we have the possibility to see the economy principle presence in Albanian spoken language today, but we can see in the same time the presence of this principle along the history in the creation of the new words.

Nowadays the presence of economy principle in the language is very clear on the usage of the shortenings and abbreviations used especially on the s.m.s or electronic communication. This tendency had been in the focus of our papers in the past. The economy principle is crucial in

the shortenings used in the electronic communication, because it save time and space. Because of this tendency (not only at Albanian speakers) we can find in sms, chat or mail, shortenings like: *flm- faleminderit, klm- kalofsh mire, sms/ msg – mesazh, nsr- nesor, vtm- vetem, tel- telefon, prof- profesor, cel- celular, dpd- drejtperdrejte* etj. This kind of communication used especially from the young people it's now a reality on the language. But it may be unexpected to know that the usage of these shortenings is now part of the spoken language. We can find at the young people jargon the usage of shortenings without vocals words like: *flm, sms, klm, tel, cel*, used in the spoken language. You know the phrase: *Flm per sms?* It is a kind of joke, but now it is part of the language.

## **Findings:**

The shortenings in the spoken language are not a phenomenon only in Albanian language. The salutations or the names of the persons we refer above are present in English and in Italian too: We can see the examples:

*Good night- night*

*Buonna sera- sera*

*Buona notte- note*

*Good bye- bye*

*Frensis – Fre*

In their paper Giovanni Gobbe and Moreno Morani referring the economy principle in Italian language admit that the economy principle is one of the reasons for the deviation of the standard. They are speaking about the usage of indicative instead of conjunctive, because it has a minor number of verbal forms to remember and a minor effort to express. (Gobber & Morani, 2010) In French language there are some words such as: television –Télé, métro – métropolitain, auto –automobile, currently used in different languages (in Albanian too) with their short forms.

## **Conclusions:**

It seems the economy principle is an important factor on the usage of the shortenings in the spoken language. Through the general understanding the spoken language is an important feeding factor for the whole language, so we can say that the economy principle is also an important factor for the whole language and for the creation of the new forms. "As we know the language doesn't accept word that haven't been tested in the spoken language, but after this it adopt only a small part of them". (De Saussure, 2002, p. 184) Now are the speakers and the language with its developments that will determine the forms that will resist with the time. On this paper we have seen that in some cases, the speakers prefer to use a word from another language because of the economy, so we can say the economy is a factor that influences the entry of the foreign words in the language. On the other side, we have seen the economy principle as a factor that increases the deviation from the standard language, so the economy principle affects the standard.

## **Recommendations:**

Is this the moment to get worried about the changes that affect the language because of the economy principle? May be our communication will remain without vocals in the future? May be it is not the case the get worried, but is the case to be attentive, especially on the

flagrant cases of the deviation from the literary language, otherwise on the future the communications between young people it would be like this.

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