

English and its Role in Education		Linguistics Keywords: English language, education, consolidation, internationalization, globalization.
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<p style="text-align: center;">Abstract</p> <p>This paper deals with the themes of the concrete impact of globalization in the consolidation of English as a global language, as well as the consolidated correlation between English and education. The article sheds light on the internationalization of higher education as an inevitable phenomenon of globalization and the role of English in preserving and advancing it. The analysis focuses on the concrete influence of English as a global language in Albania, well as the approaches and policies of the Albanian state for the inclusion of English in school/university curricula, as a language that will stimulate Albania overall development.</p>		

1. Introduction

Friedman defines globalization as follows:

"Globalization is the inexhaustible integration of markets, states and technologies to a degree that has not been encountered before - in a way that allows individuals, corporations and states to reach the world faster, deeper and cheaper than ever"¹⁴.

The fact that the academic world has broadly accepted globalization and its real effects, has given focus at the same time to a group of areas directly affected by it and are sensing the changes that it brings. Understandably, the language remains one of the inevitable elements that will be affected by it, as long as the language will enjoy the status of the main means of communication.

The way in which world languages are affected by globalization makes one of them superior, which "was in the right place at the right time" getting the right to gain global status. This would be the "fortune" of the English language, which was used by one of the most powerful countries politically, economically, technologically, in different periods of history, from colonization to technological revolution.

Education was one of the areas that had English integration in its policies. Each of the governments of most of the world states and then the universities that followed the same line, realized that internationalization of education was inevitably linked to English.

2. The Impact of English in Education

The numerous technological and media developments, the focus on knowledge and discoveries, highlighted the need for a global language and English "found itself in the right place at the right moment". Thus, most of the world knowledge began to be exchanged and transmitted through

¹⁴ Friedman, Th. (2006), *The World is Flat- A Brief History of the Twenty-first Century*

English. From the surveys made over the years, the main reasons for converting the English into an official language or foreign language into many schools and universities around the world have been related to education¹⁵.

English has become the primary means of communication at university institutions in many countries and continues to be widely used in other countries where it is not an official language since 1960s. In recent decades, the pressure to use English at universities has increased. In this way, universities are each year welcoming international students, placing pedagogical staff in front of a heterogeneous auditor in linguistic terms. Inevitably, only in the last half of the century, the "business" of learning English as a second language is turning into the most developed industries in the world.

It is now clear that where new technologies paved the way for new language use, English would be the first language in the respective industries. Undoubtedly, its influence in all social aspects such as communication, transportation, media, entertainment, was self-evident. The world of cultural heritage promoted new networks of international alliances which necessarily brought the need for a common language. Even in this case, English was the first choice.

English domination had been established since the 1960s but still could not be called a global language by definition. There were two subsequent events that ensured the international English status. Firstly, it was the declaration of independence from the former colonies of English-speaking countries. For them, English had taken a vital role in the well-functioning of all institutions and the course of everyday activities, so that they could never think of another one. Secondly, it was the electronic revolution in which English was again in the right place and at the right moment. Almost all the computer and Internet development "was conducted" by the US, making English inseparable from another historical moment.

Finally, it is difficult to imagine the nearest future without English at the center of knowledge and information sharing. Such a guaranteed role is also ensured by the broad impact it has put on education, starting from the international politics and continuing with those in university institutions.

3. The Internationalization in Higher Education

The International Survey of the International Association of Universities (2014) summarizes the phenomenon of internationalization of higher education as follows:

"Internationalization is fast becoming one of the most important forms of higher education ... It is interpreted differently by various university institutions, government institutions and NGOs. For some, it is translated into international activities such as studying abroad, international development projects, institutional arrangements or new branches of their university in different countries. For others, it means integrating an international dimension in teaching, learning and

¹⁵ Crystal, D. (1997), English as a Global Language

research. A third group considers it as a way to increase competition both nationally and internationally. Consequently, internationalization in the field of university studies is leading to the development of new policies, programs and practices at national and international levels. "

The internationalization in education is growing rapidly, shifting its geographical spread and bringing new challenges for governments and policy-makers around the world.

Internationalization can not be seen apart from the interstate movement of students, lecturers and programs. According to the OECD, higher education has become increasingly international in the last decade as many students are opting to study abroad or attend online courses by universities / colleges that offer such programs.

Many scholars have identified the mathematical / measurement factors of the internationalization of university education, but the most widely accepted ones are those Van Damme, listed as follows:

1. The mobility of people (students, professors, experts), such as study of full-time programs, exchange programs or semesters abroad.
2. The pedagogical staff movement
3. The internationalization of study curricula
4. The opening of branches of universities in other countries
5. The arrangement and networks of university / institutional cooperation – the cooperation between universities and the cooperation in teaching, as a new field.

4. The Students Mobility with the Help of English

In recent years, cross-border internationalization with English in the forefront to support and advance its development has been implemented through the creation of programs that carry out the movement of people or otherwise of students and pedagogical staff. The number of such programs increases annually, increasing the necessity for the presence of the Student Mobility Office or as it is known in English, Student Mobility, in most universities. Among the most popular programs we can mention: the Fulbright Scholar Program, the Vulcanus in Japan Program, the Eiffel Program and the Erasmus Program.

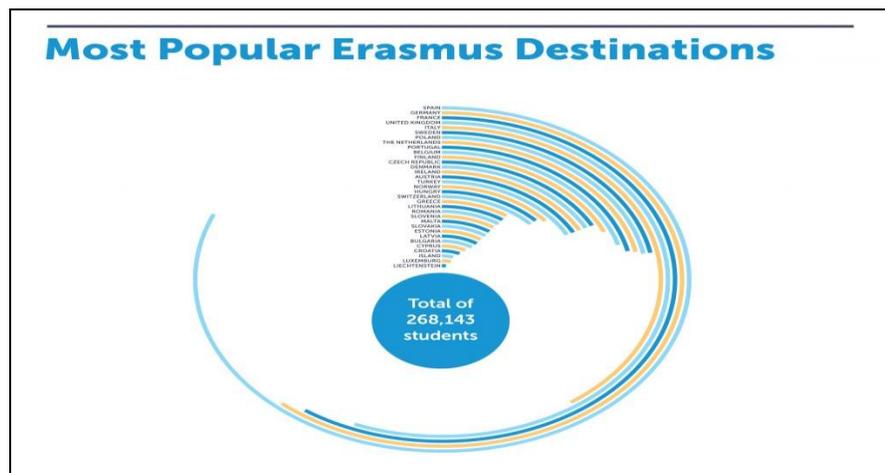
The Erasmus Plan was created in 1987 to enable a high degree of mobility for university education and was signed by the Council of Europe. Nowadays, the network of students involved in the Erasmus Program, which operates in over forty different countries, is being created and it offers various programs like Erasmus + and Erasmus Mundus.

The Albanian institutions have also been included in the Erasmus Mundus program with a variety of projects, especially with regard to academic cooperation and exchange of students and staff. Over two hundred Bachelor and PHD students and about eighty university professors have been

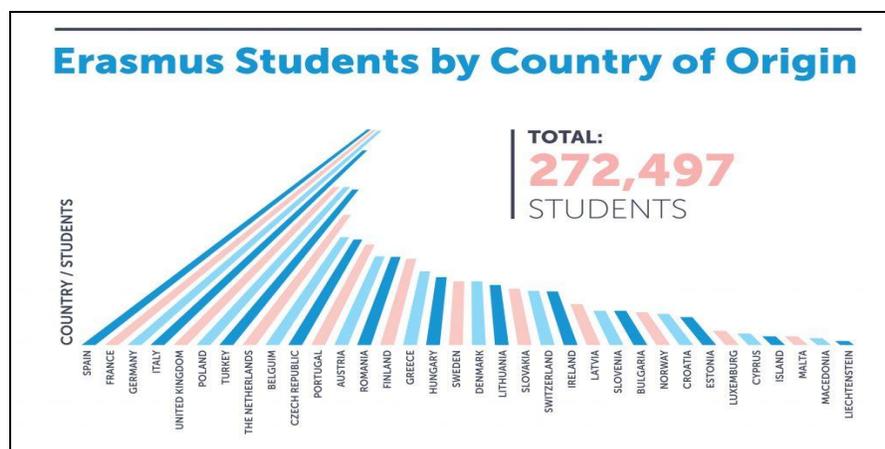
part of the programs it offers. Over the last decade, over one hundred and forty students from Albania have benefited from Master and Doctorate degrees at European universities.

In all programs that Erasmus offers internationally, English knowledge and the results in one of the most popular tests, such as TOEFL, IELTS, etc is necessary. According to the UNESCO Institute of Statistics, over twenty-four thousand Albanian students study abroad and it is estimated that over ninety percent of them have taken an international English test.

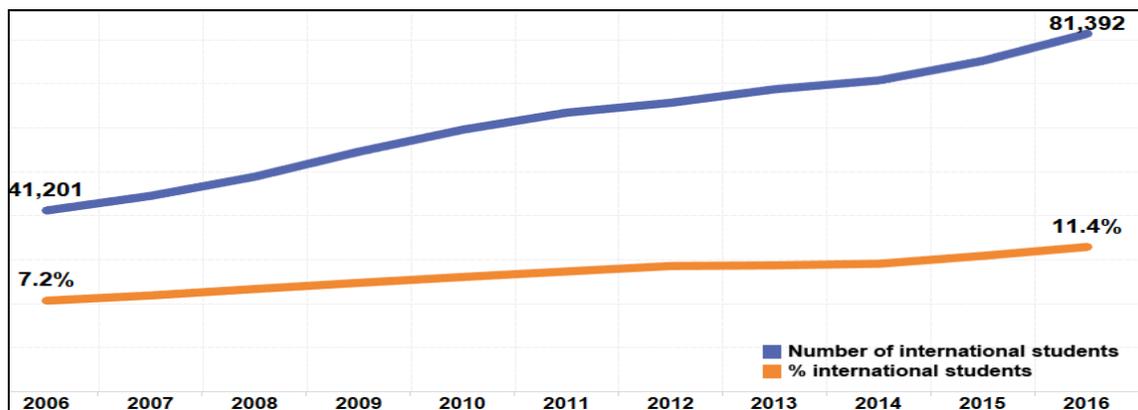
The most popular hosting Erasmus students are Spain, Germany, France, United Kingdom, Italy, Sweden, Poland, Netherlands, etc. The following graphic illustrates the spread of Erasmus students in Europe. There may be different reasons these countries are preferred to. Except for academic reasons the students prefer the countries' weather, leisure activities, sightseeing, etc. The motivation might be searching for employment after studying, or of prestigious universities, enriching experience, cooperative works, various collaborations and, above all, affective ties at a social level. (*Graph. below*)



On the other hand, it is almost the same countries which export most of the Erasmus Programme students:



The number of international students is continuously increasing. If we consider one of the preferred students' importing countries, Netherland, we will notice that the numbers are already doubled.



Albanian universities have only recently joined actively the Erasmus programmes. Only in the last two years 'Aleksandër Xhuvani' University of Elbasan has implemented 45 Erasmus + ICM agreements, University of Tirana 56 Erasmus+ ICM agreements, The University "Aleksander Moisiu" of Durrës 11 Erasmus + ICM agreements, etc.

All the programs attended by our students are offered in English.

5. English as the Language of Globalization in Albania

The most intensive period of the spread of English influence in Europe is thought to be in the period 1945-1980. In Albania the communist regime isolated not only the borders but also the Albanian language and Albanian culture. On the other hand, throughout the world, during this time, the creation of many international organizations brought the need to communicate in a common language. Some languages were chosen as the official language of the League of Nations, and later the United Nations. Some countries decided

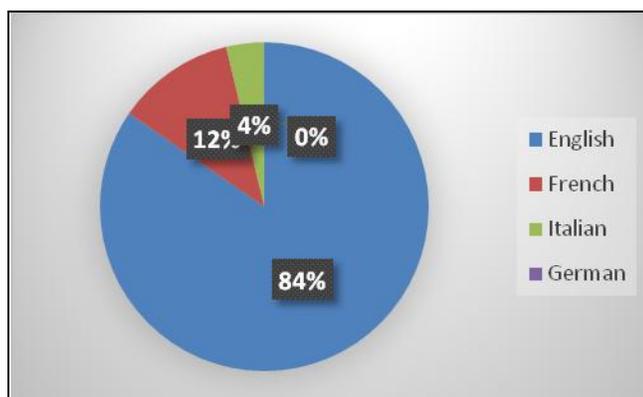
Political pluralism, which was decreed in December 1990, broadened the spectrum of politics in Albania. This act marked the end of the last communist regime in Europe and the establishment of relations with other countries of the world that would lead Albania towards democratization. Consequently, the influence of English-speaking countries, such as the United States and the United Kingdom, and the knowledge of English at the same time, were of great importance.

From the 1990s onwards the great influence of American culture and its linguistic reflexes intensified even more. Examples of this intensification are reflected through Internet-wide communication across the globe or the globalization of national economies. The latter led to the creation of multinational corporations and commercial television with adverts and video clips, leading to a new dimension of lexical borrowing at least in the technical languages of business and commerce, computer science, advertising and the language of young people.

6. Educational Policies for English as a Foreign Language in Albania

The Albanian education system offers students the opportunity to learn a foreign language starting from the third grade in the 9-year public schools and from the first grade in private schools. Albania has followed the Conformity Line of Orientation provided by the Council of Europe with regard to multilingualism and multiculturalism. The central focus of the policies for foreign languages in general and English in particular is reflected in the National Strategy for Pre-University Education for 2014-2020. The Ministry of Education, Sports and Youth plays a key role in closely following the whole process of engaging English in school curricula, taking care of selecting textbooks, designing curricula as efficiently as possible, and upgrading study groups to analyse the progress of the pursued policies.

According to the new curriculum, the students will have three classes per week in the first foreign language and two hours a week for the second foreign language. Such changes are intended to improve the quality of education and show the commitment of the Albanian Government to English, its recognition and readiness to meet the European standards. The foreign language learning due to the relevant reforms in pre-university education has been a priority since 2004. Compared to other languages English taught in elementary schools is making about 85% of foreign languages teaching:



Or given in figures:

Academic year	Total number of stud/s	Stud/s attending English	Stud/s attending French	Stud/s attending Italian	Stud/s attending German
2004-2005	241521	176007	57919	7595	0
2005-2006	243720	184144	49312	10264	0
2006-2007	249770	190181	50869	8720	0
2007-2008	272857	206814	50420	15623	0
2008-2009	294995	227152	53998	13845	0
2009-2010	302988	242519	47225	13244	0
2010-2011	297471	246239	41173	10059	0
2011-2012	288258	241905	36611	9645	97
2012-2013	283420	239239	34844	9296	41
2013-2014	274339	229844	34581	9794	120
2014-2015	265763	225907	31075	8661	120
2015-2016	250816	213044	29355	8297	120

In 2012, further changes reinforced the English-language relationship, listing the latter as compulsory subjects in the Matura examinations, in addition to the Albanian Language / Literature and Mathematics.

For the nine-year education the tested English level is A2, while in the high school B2. The tests are designed based on the school curriculum addressed throughout school years and according to the CEFR standard - Common European Framework of Reference for Languages.

In the course of the recommendations of the Council of Europe, Albania participated in the European Year of Languages, being closely acquainted with the concrete implementation in the CEFR classroom. The teachers of English in Albania have had the opportunity to be trained on knowledge transmission and preparing students for after-school life and the world of work.

7. Conclusions

The dominance of English as a global language has been seen as a positive phenomenon that has helped in facilitating the communication between individuals of different backgrounds, businesses, states, and international organizations, certainly serving a world of ever-growing welfare.

The increase in the demand for English language acquisition as a criterion for the future success of the individuals, corporations, states, organizations, has led to the teaching and learning of the English language being considered as a real business. This is utilized by different institutions which carry out Standard English Language Testing or from universities that are using globalization and English as a way to set up new study programs to attract as many international students and staff as possible. Such programs include those of semester exchange, Erasmus Program, Fulbright Scholar Program, Joint Degrees, etc.

Such a development does not have any necessarily negative impacts. On the contrary, the number of students or pedagogical staff who value the experience offered by the above mentioned programs is higher, and the number of employers who take into consideration the individuals who could have been part of them is as high.

The fast development of English makes the assumption of its future unavoidable. We can say that in a world with technology and internet as its primary driving force, a final prediction becomes difficult. The development of translation tools of different languages of the world would put the global status of English language "at risk" but so far this seems to be just an imagination. Thus, as long as there is no tool or application that can correctly replace the language of communication between two people of different backgrounds, a world without English as the main mediator in the exchange of information and knowledge is unthinkable.

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