

Multilingualism and structural borrowing in Arbanasi Albanian

Jana Willer-Gold, Tena Gnjatović, Daniela Katunar, and Ranko Matasović
University of Zagreb

In this paper we present a brief overview of the history of linguistic contacts of Arbanasi Albanian, a Gheg Albanian dialect spoken in Croatia, with Croatian and Italian. Then we discuss a number of contact-induced changes in that language. We show that Arbanasi Albanian was subject to strong influences from Croatian (and, to a lesser extent, from Italian) on all levels of linguistic structure. Using the data from our own fieldwork, we were able to show that there were also influences on the level of syntax, including the borrowing of certain constructions, such as analytic causative and imperative constructions, as well as the extension of the use of infinitive in subordinate clauses.

1. INTRODUCTION. Arbanasi Albanian (AA) is a Gheg Albanian dialect currently spoken in a suburb of Zadar, Croatia. Its speakers moved to Zadar in the early 18th century. They originated from a region on the border of Albania and Montenegro, which was ruled by the Ottoman Empire at the time. Since their arrival in Zadar, the speakers of Arbanasi Albanian lost all contact with other Albanian speakers, and their idiom was heavily influenced by the surrounding Čakavian dialect of Croatian, as well as by Italian, which was the language of education and government during much of the history of Zadar before 1945 (Barančić 2008).

The Christian Arbanasi emigrated to Zadar (Zara) from their former homeland in three waves in the beginning of the 18th century: The 1st emigration in 1728 brought 21 families with 450 members from three villages around the Lake Scadar – Šestana, Briske (and Livari) (south of Ulcinj). The Arbanasi first arrived to the Venetian port of Kotor, whence they were transported to Zadar; the 2nd migration in 1733 brought 28 families counting 199 people from Šestana and surrounding villages, and the 3rd one in the year 1754 also included a large number of immigrants. Apart from Zadar itself, the speakers of AA also settled in villages around the city, today called Prende, Šestani, Ćurkovići, and Paleke, as well as in Zemunik, Dubrovnik, and Kotor. However, during the following three centuries only the Arbanasi in Zadar have resisted integration, and therefore they are of interest for this study.

The Arbanasi fled from the Ottoman Empire mainly to avoid recruitment into the Ottoman army, and in part because of religious oppression. They fled to Zadar, then under Venetian rule, and settled there with the help of the archbishop of Zadar, Vicko Zmajević. Their migration has to be seen in light of Venetian efforts to repopulate the devastated parts of Dalmatia. One of the local magnates in Zadar, Erizzo, provided the first families to arrive with a house and land just outside the town walls. This led to the founding of the

settlement named Arbeneši by Arbanasi, Borgo Erizzo by Italians, and Varoš Eričina by Croats (after the magnate Erizzo). Later all three communities started calling it Arbanasi. Arbanasi is today part of the town of Zadar.

The town of Zadar and the community of the Arbanasi shared the fate of Dalmatia. After the collapse of the Republic of Venice (1797), they were ruled by Austria, which evolved into Austro-Hungarian monarchy (except for a brief French rule during Napoleon). Under Venetian and Austro-Hungarian rule, most education in Zadar was conducted in Italian and, at lower levels, in Croatian. In 1748, archbishop Zmajević established a Glagolitic school, educating young clergy that would later disseminate nationalist ideals in northern Dalmatia. Some educated Arbanasi clergy wrote letters in Croatian, in Glagolitic script, and during the period of the Croatian national revival, Arbanasi cultural and intellectual elite matched that of Croats. Yet the community was ethnically (if not linguistically) divided, as some of its members became ethnic Italians. In 1896, a primary school was established where the pupils were taught in Italian, with only two lessons a week in Croatian and AA. There was also a Croatian primary school, where most lessons were given in Croatian. In 1901, learning Albanian became obligatory in the Croatian school in Arbanasi, but only for those pupils whose first language was AA.

In the period of the two world wars, 1920-1943, during the Italian Fascist occupation of Zadar and Arbanasi, the Croatian language was forbidden. The Arbanasi Albanian language was tolerated at first, but during the later years of the Fascist regime it was forbidden to speak Albanian and to teach it at school.

In 1945, Zadar became part of Croatia and Yugoslavia, and most speakers of AA who were ethnically Italian either chose to leave their town, or were expelled by the Communist regime. The Arbanasi Albanian language was not taught in school, and until quite recently there were very few attempts at its cultivation and preservation.

1.1. ETHNOLINGUISTIC IDENTITY. As there has been no contact between Arbanasi Albanians and the Albanians in their homeland until the very end of the 19th century, the cultural values they have kept until today belong to the times when they left Albania. Only recently, since the middle of the 20th century, contacts with Kosovo and Albania have been revived, as new immigrants started arriving from these areas.

When discussing the degree to which the Albanian Gheg dialect has been preserved in Zadar for the last three hundred years, some extra-linguistic factors have to be taken into consideration. First, oral tradition is the primary means of linguistic transmission of the AA culture. Social meetings (attended mostly by women) where folk stories were told were an important vehicle in the transmission of the language. Secondly, a strong sense of community allowed Arbanasi to stay aware of their uniqueness when compared to the Croatian-speaking majority surrounding them. Thirdly, in many cases of mixed marriages with the local population the spouse would move and be integrated into the Arbanasi family. More often than not this allowed the spouse to acquire the Arbanasi language to the degree of first language proficiency.

1.2. THE CURRENT STATUS OF ARBANASI ALBANIAN. Today, the dialect is endangered, with less than 200 fully competent speakers, although there are probably around 500 people that understand the language to some extent (Kovačec 2002). It is generally not written, except in a handful of occasional publications (journal *Feja*) and in the works of collectors of traditional lore (Stipčević 2011).

The attitude of the speakers towards their language and its use is generally positive, and the same holds for all of the informants that have participated in our research. Since the speakers of Arbanasi Albanian are ethnically Croats and confessionally Catholic, like the large majority of the inhabitants of Zadar and its surroundings, they generally do not face any ethnic or religious discrimination. The use of their language is not stigmatized, but until quite recently it has not been particularly encouraged. Our informants have not reported any problems associated with the use of their mother tongue.

1.3. HISTORY OF RESEARCH. The first scholar who wrote about the Arbanasi dialect of Albanian was the great Slavic scholar Franz Miklosich. In his *Albanische Forschungen* (1870–1871) he provided some information about the Arbanasi dialect and its speakers, but at that time Albanian linguistic studies were still in their infancy. Tullio Erber (1883) was primarily interested in ethnography and history of the Arbanasi community, but he also gave a brief account of their language. The idiom was described briefly by Gustav Weigand (1911), and in 1937 the Italian linguist and Indo-Europeanist Carlo Tagliavini wrote the first grammar of Arbanasi Albanian. Since he spent only a few weeks in Zadar and consulted only a handful of informants, his description is sketchy and unreliable. Moreover, he was interested mostly in historical phonology and etymology, and a large part of his book is devoted to the etymological dictionary of the words from his corpus. His account of the morphology is brief and incomplete, and his book contains very few remarks about the syntax. More extensive is Ismail Ajeti's Ph.D. thesis, published in Serbian in 1961, in which the Arbanasi dialect was compared with the other Albanian dialects. However, even Ajeti's focus was primarily diachronic, and he seems to have been more interested in sound laws deriving AA vowels and consonants from Proto-Indo-European than in the exhaustive description of the idiom. Even though his account of the AA phonology is more detailed and reliable than Tagliavini's, he still failed to give a complete description of the morphology, and the information he gives about the syntax is scarce and impressionistic. Both Tagliavini's and Ajeti's books contain folklore texts they recorded among the speakers of AA, and these can be used to compare the syntax of the language around the middle of the 20th century with the present situation.

The only dictionary of AA was published by a Croatian scholar, Kruno Krstić, who was a native speaker of the language, in 1987. His dictionary contains around 4500 entries, and it is especially valuable because the use of words in the dictionary is amply illustrated with examples collected by Krstić himself.

Finally, some up-to-date information on AA can be found in the brief encyclopaedia article by August Kovačec (2002), and some sociolinguistic problems of language identity among Arbanasi Albanian speakers are discussed by Maksimilijana Barančić (2008), also a native speaker of the language. Aleksandar Stipčević's book about the traditional culture of the Arbanasi (2011) is a rich source of texts that the author collected himself or re-published from earlier sources. Furthermore, some occasional publications containing folklore texts have appeared during the last decade (e.g. *Feja* 2005). However, it is still fair to say that Arbanasi Albanian is linguistically under-studied (especially with regard to its syntax), and that a larger collection of texts in the idiom would be a big desideratum.

As we saw, all of the research published about AA was written from the point of view of traditional dialectology, and important issues of syntax were left undescribed, especially with respect to contact-induced changes affecting the Arbanasi speech during its three hundred years of co-existence with Croatian and Italian.

2. LINGUISTIC INFLUENCES ON ARBANASI ALBANIAN. In the following chapters we will provide an overview of lexical, phonological and morphological data on language contact between AA and Croatian and Italian, supported by data from our own research.

2.1. LEXICAL INFLUENCES. Lexical borrowing occurred both from Croatian (Cro.) as well as Italian (Ital.), although Krstić's dictionary (1987) notes mostly Croatian loanwords, many of them borrowed from the local Čakavian dialect, e.g. AA *bodull* "islander" < Cro. *bodul* vs. Standard Cro. *otočanin*. Some loanwords seem to have been international words also borrowed via Croatian, e.g. AA *gazet* "gazette, newspaper" < Cro. *gazeta*. As is usual in such situations of linguistic contact, semantically full words were the most commonly borrowed ones (i.e. nouns, verbs, and adjectives, e.g. AA *junc* "calf" < Cro. *junac, junica*, AA *brod* "beard" < Cro. *brada*, AA *pole* "field" < Cro. *polje* (Čakavian *pole*)). An interesting case is AA *breg* "hill". This word was borrowed in Common Albanian from Slavic at a very early stage, and its original meaning was "shore", as in Standard Albanian (Std. Alb.) *breg* (cf. also Russian *bereg*, which preserves the original Slavic meaning). The meaning "hill" in AA developed under the influence of Cro. *brijeg* (Čakavian *brig*), which means "hill". It is interesting to note that in addition to semantically full words, some conjunctions were borrowed as well, e.g. AA *ma* "but" < Ital. *ma*, and the subordinative conjunction AA *da* "that" < Cro. *da*. Krstić also notes the borrowing of the emphazier Cro. *baš* > AA *bash* "very, really".

2.2. INFLUENCES IN PHONOLOGY AND MORPHOLOGY. Arbanasi Albanian underwent a number of sound changes, mostly described by Tagliavini (1937) and Ajeti (1961). Although the details of these changes need not concern us here, it is important to note that most of them led to phonological convergence between the Arbanasi dialect and the surrounding idioms, both Čakavian Croatian and Italian (including the Venetian dialect):

- Gheg nasal vowels are lost, e.g. AA *an* "moon", Gheg. *ān*, Std. Alb. *hënë*. Neither Italian (Venetian) nor Čakavian Croatian have nasal vowels.
- The phoneme /h/ was lost: AA *und* "nose" (Std. Alb. *hundë*), AA *anger* "eat" (Std. Alb. *hëngrë*). Italian and Čakavian also lack /h/ as a phoneme.
- The palatalized velars became affricates, i.e. *gj* > *dž* (AA *gjum* "sleep" is pronounced [dʒum]), *q* > *č* (AA *qen* "dog" is pronounced [tʃen], cf. also AA *pleq* "old men" [pletʃ]); both Croatian and Italian do not have palatalized velar stops, but they do have affricates [dʒ] and [tʃ], phonetically very similar to the AA phonemes.
- While Albanian generally distinguishes two different vibrants, *rr* [R] and *r* [r], in AA the two sounds merged. The single remaining vibrant is very similar to Croatian and Italian [r], cf. AA *ar-a* "nut", Std. Alb. *arrë*.
- In the idiom of most speakers *th* [θ] > *s* [s] (cf. AA *san* "said" vs. Std. Alb. *thane*) and *dh* [ð] > *l* [l] (AA *le* "earth" vs. Std. Alb. *dhe*, AA *mal* "big" vs. Std. Alb. *madh*). Tagliavini (1937) noted the change in progress, but recorded that many speakers still differentiated interdental spirants *th* and *dh*.

Similarly, some morphological changes occurring in Arbanasi Albanian made it more similar to Croatian (Čakavian) and Italian. Among such changes, we may note the elimination of plurals formed by ablaut, e.g. AA *dora* "hands" (pl. of *dor(ë)*, cf. Std. Alb.

pl. *duar*), as well as the almost complete loss of the opposition of aorist and imperfect.¹ It is also interesting to note that AA borrowed the vocative case ending *-e* from Croatian in some nouns, chiefly those denoting close relatives, e.g. *tate* “o father”, *nane* “o mother”. Other varieties of Albanian do not have the vocative case.

3. PRESENT RESEARCH. During our research visit to Arbanasi in March 2012 we interviewed ten informants. All were native speakers of Arbanasi Albanian, i.e. bilingual in Arbanasi Albanian and Croatian, and they belonged to different age groups (from mid-twenties to mid-sixties). Nine were male and one was female, and all of them claimed to be using the language every day. We collected our material by elicitation, asking the informants to translate sentences and short texts from Croatian into Albanian. Through these tasks we tested the fluency of our informants and the richness of their vocabulary, and assessed the degree of syntactic interference between Croatian and Arbanasi Albanian.

For the purposes of our analysis it was necessary to distinguish the phenomena of linguistic interference and code-switching, in order to be able to analyze the instances of the former in our data. Therefore, we will discuss some of the literature on these phenomena in the next chapter.

3.1. LANGUAGE INTERFERENCE OR CODE SWITCHING? The terminology in studies dealing with language contact phenomena is often inconclusive when it comes to clearly distinguishing code-switching from language interference. This is clearly illustrated by various terms that can be used to refer to the two, for instance code mixing, language mixing, language transfer, convergence, intersystemic influence, among others (Treffers-Daller 2012).

Although both terms stem from the field of contact linguistics, their distinction seems to depend on various factors, including the goal of a linguistic analysis (for instance bilingual or sociolinguistic studies), whether the speech event is made continuous or discontinuous by the language switch, the linguistic levels appropriated from one language into the other and so forth (Auer 1998, Skiba 1997). Code-switching is a relatively new term, introduced into bilingual studies because of the need to stress the online switch made between two language systems in bilingual language use (see Auer 1998). From this perspective, code-switching is primarily a usage-based phenomenon which presumes parallel existence of two rather clear cut language systems in the mind of a bilingual. The switch occurs due to various communication factors, for example establishing the familiarity of speakers or the societal status and meaning one language carries over the other (Llamas et al. 2007). Moreover, as Treffers-Daller (2012) states, the notion of speaker control is more present during code-switching than language interference situations. We came across such examples in our research, where speakers of AA would use a Croatian word because of their lack of vocabulary in AA, in order to continue with the task at hand.

Language interference, on the other hand, relies more on the notion of a “language mixture”, a blend exhibiting the competing properties of more than one language at a time. This notion of a “mixture” has been addressed in works by Haugen (1956, 1972), who deems it rather vague when it comes to describing properties of the process of borrowing. In an attempt to classify stages of language contact, Haugen (1956) distinguishes “switching” from “interference” as two subsequent stages of an ongoing process of diffusion. According to Haugen, “switching” is the first stage, with alternate use of lexical items from L1

¹ Our informants used only one general past tense roughly corresponding to Croatian perfect.

and L2. “Interference” is the second stage, where two languages overlap, and it is followed by the third and last stage, “integration”, where the linguistic structures from L1 are fully integrated in the system of L2, and there is no overlapping, except in a historical sense (Haugen 1956). Furthermore, loanwords seem to vary according to the level of their morphological, phonological or syntactic integration within a new linguistic system, and thus full integration on all three levels is usually considered to be a classic case of a completed transfer. Also, transfer of certain syntactic constructions can be related to the pragmatic salience induced by communicative needs (Matras 2012).²

To differentiate the cases of code-switching and language interference in our own AA data we used two criteria: A lexical item was considered to be a Croatian or Italian loanword if it is a) attested in Krstić’s dictionary (1987), or b) it is found in at least two of our sources (including our informants). Krstić (1987) makes explicit reference of his attempt to put only “proper” AA words in his dictionary, and the words in question demonstrate the phonological, morphological and syntactic integration discussed above. The inclusion of a word in the vocabulary of more than one speaker means that we were able to separate nonce loanwords from conventional loanwords. Furthermore, words are considered to be adapted to Arbanasi Albanian if the speakers can inflect them according to Albanian grammatical patterns.

3.2. STRUCTURE OF THE QUESTIONNAIRE. The questionnaire consisted of five sections:

a) Narrative translation – Cinderella story

The first task for the informants was a translation of a short story about Cinderella from Croatian into Arbanasi Albanian. We chose the Cinderella story because we assumed that all the informants would be familiar with it. We asked the informants to read the story one paragraph at a time and translate it orally. Our objective was primarily to assess their fluency, but also to check how certain syntactic constructions would be translated when encountered within a longer text instead of just a single isolated sentence. For example, we used infinitival as well as finite subordinate clauses in order to see whether the informants would differentiate between these two structures in their translations. We also used constructions with a causative meaning to check whether we can elicit the expected Italian-type causative construction “make + INF”. One part of the story was construed so as to potentially elicit the admirative construction which exists in Albanian, but has not been described in the literature on the Arbanasi Albanian language. The Cinderella story also served to distinguish between the highly fluent speakers and those whose language seems to be influenced by Croatian to a greater extent.

b) Subject / object control sentences

The second part of the interview consisted of a set of semantically unrelated sentences with subject and object control constructions, which the informants were again asked to translate. Some of the sentences contained an infinitival clause, while in others the verbal complement consisted of a finite subordinate clause. The task was divided into three parts throughout the interview in order to avoid too much repetition. For example, a sentence meaning “He needs to wash windows constantly” appeared at two separate times in the questionnaire, construed in two different ways – once with an infinitival complement, and the other time with a finite clause introduced by the subordinator *da* “that”. The aim was

² Some of these examples can include the transfer of e.g. imperative constructions (see also our data below).

to see whether the informants' choice of the construction in Arbanasi Albanian would be influenced by the structure used in the Croatian examples. Our findings on this specific construction will be discussed in more detail in the next chapter.

c) Vocabulary check – newspaper texts

In the following section of the questionnaire the informants were asked to translate orally two very short newspaper texts – a weather forecast and an excerpt from an article on the parliamentary elections in Croatia – and a brief passage from a high-school chemistry book. This task was designed to show us how rich the informants' vocabulary is in three very specific domains in which we expected them to use primarily Croatian. The results proved our expectations correct, the informants admittedly could not translate most of the technical vocabulary related to politics, chemistry, and meteorology into Arbanasi Albanian and used Croatian lexemes instead.

d) Admirative construction

Another set of Croatian sentences that the informants were asked to translate were construed so as to elicit the admirative construction, in order to see if it exists in the language. However, the data we collected from our informants does not suggest that this construction is present in Arbanasi Albanian.

e) Phonological task

In the phonological task we presented the informants with twelve pairs of Croatian words, the Albanian equivalents of which were minimal pairs differing in either *dh* – *l* ([ð] – [l]), *rr* – *r* ([R] – [r]), *th* – *s* ([θ] – [s]), or *ll* – *l* ([ʎ] – [l]). Our aim was to check whether the distinction between these phonemes has been lost in the language of our speakers, and the data we collected shows that this is indeed the case: i.e. *dh* and *l* merged into *l*, *rr* and *r* into *r*, *ll* and *l* into *l*, and *th* and *s* into *s*.

f) Sociolinguistic questionnaire

In the final part of the questionnaire we asked the informants about their attitudes regarding the Arbanasi Albanian language, attempts towards its preservation, and their personal experiences as speakers of this language within the wider Zadar community. Though they all spoke their language on a day-to-day basis with their friends and/or family, most of them seemed rather skeptical about the preservation of the language and recent attempts made by the local community to revive Arbanasi Albanian by organizing courses, workshops etc. One part of the informants considers it a good idea to introduce Arbanasi Albanian courses in kindergartens and schools, while others believe that there are not enough young people and especially children who are fluent in the language, and, as one of the informants explicitly said, language courses are not an adequate substitute for everyday communication and spontaneous language use. All the informants would like to see their language survive, but in general they seem to think it is too late for that, given that the speakers have stopped teaching their children the language. The informants also explained that being bilingual in Croatian and Arbanasi Albanian brings neither significant advantages nor disadvantages in terms of job opportunities, social status, etc. However, given that there are occasional cases of discrimination towards Albanians in general in Croatia, some mentioned that their origin sometimes, though rarely, does trigger a somewhat negative attitude toward them, most often during arguments or fights.

4. SYNTACTIC INFLUENCES ON ARBANASI ALBANIAN. In this chapter we make explicit the results in our data specific to syntactic influences of Croatian and (to a lesser extent) Italian on Arbanasi Albanian. We have observed that influences from Croatian and Italian are evidenced in various syntactic structures of Arbanasi Albanian, including the calquing of certain constructions (4.1, 4.2, 4.3) borrowing of complementizers (4.4), and the extended use of the infinitive instead of the finite verbs in subordinate clauses (4.5).

4.1. THE ROMANCE-TYPE CAUSATIVE. The Romance-type causative with the verb “to do” (Ital. *fare*, Cro. Čakavian *činit*) is calqued:³

- (1) *Ai i ko bo me iq but-in* [Ta 53]
3SG 3PL.ACC AUX.3SG do to raise barrel-ACC.SG.DEF
“He made them raise the barrel.”
- (2) *E ko bo me sua* [T]
3SG.ACC AUX.3SG do to learn
“He made him learn.”
- (3) *Ai ko bo soldata m'u qesh* [T]
3SG AUX.3SG do soldiers to-REFL laugh
“He made soldiers laugh.”

This type of causative construction is otherwise unattested in Albanian (both Gheg and Tosk). It developed under the influence of Italian, whence it also spread to Croatian Čakavian dialects. The Arbanasi Albanian examples are structurally perfectly equivalent to Italian causatives, such as for example *La frase li ha fatti ridere* “The sentence made them laugh”. One cannot establish with certainty whether Arbanasi Albanian acquired it directly from Italian, or through Croatian (Čakavian) intermediary.

4.2. THE CROATIAN CONSTRUCTION *čini se da*. The Croatian construction *čini se da* “it appears that” (lit. “it makes that”) is calqued:

- (4) *Po mu bajet da ko ro shi* [S]
PROG 1SG.DAT do.PASS.3SG that AUX.3SG fall rain
“It appears to me that it has rained.”
- (5) *Më baet se e ko lan zjarmi* [Kr. 132]
1SG.DAT do.PASS.3SG that 3SG.ACC AUX.3SG leave heat.NOM.SG.DEF
“It appears that the heat will stop.”

It is relevant to note that, although AA has the verb meaning “to seem/appear”, in this structure they use the verb *bo* “to make”, a literal translation from Croatian, with the clitic personal pronoun rather than the reflexive pronoun.

³ Abbreviations: 1 – first person; 3 – third person; ACC – accusative; AUX – auxiliary; DAT – dative; DEF – definite; IMP – imperative; NEG – negation; PASS – passive; PL – plural; PROG – progressive; PRS – present; REFL – reflexive; SG – singular.

4.3. THE CROATIAN PARTICLE *nek*. The imperative construction with the Croatian particle *nek* is borrowed. Unlike the standard language and the Gheg dialects closest to it, Arbanasi Albanian uses the particle *nek* in the 3rd person of the imperative mood (both singular and plural), cf. AA *nek vinje* “let him come”, *nek vinjen* “let them come” (Ajeti 1961: 140). The particle *nek* has an equivalent use in the Čakavian dialect of Croatian, as in (6):

- (6) *Nek dođu*
 IMP.particle come.PRS.3PL
 “Let them come.”

In Standard Albanian, the imperative of *la* “let” is used in this construction, together with the subjunctive of the inflected verb, cf. Std. Alb. *le të vinjë* “let him come”.

4.4. THE CROATIAN SUBORDINATOR *da*. The Croatian subordinator *da* was borrowed. In those instances where AA uses full subordinate clauses, rather than infinitives (to be discussed below), the Croatian subordinator *da* “that” is used alongside the inherited subordinator *se* “that”. We have not been able to discover any systematic difference in the use of these two subordinators, which seem to be quite synonymous. The Croatian loanword *da* is attested already in the texts collected by Tagliavini (1937), but it still has not ousted completely the Albanian subordinator *se*. Example (7) illustrates the use of *da* with a complement clause, and examples (8) and (9) its use with an obligatory control construction.

- (7) *Ató i kan than da nu(k) ko kúrgj* [Ta]
 3PL 3SG.DAT AUX.3PL say that NEG have.3SG nothing
 “They told him that there was nothing.”
- (8) *Po mendoj da kam me vot nesër në qine* [S]
 PROG intend.PRS.1SG that AUX.1SG to go tomorrow in cinema
 “I intend to go to the cinema tomorrow.”
- (9) *Marko ko san da ko me art* [T]
 Marko AUX.3SG say that AUX.3SG to come
 “Marko said he would come.”

4.5. THE INFINITIVE. The use of the infinitive (formed with *me* + participle) is extended to nearly all types of subordinate clauses. Example (10) exemplifies the inchoative construction, example (11) the obligatory object control construction, and example (12) the obligatory subject control construction. It is worth noting that in Croatian, the equivalent of example (11) would involve the use of subordinator *da* and the finite verb, rather than the infinitival construction, while in Italian the infinitive would be used. It appears that AA has generalized the use of infinitives even in those cases where Croatian prefers the use of finite subordinate clauses.

- (10) *Ali gjél-i ko zan me kantát* [Ta]
 but rooster-NOM.SG.DEF AUX.3SG start to sing
 “But the rooster started to sing.”

(11) *Gjuqi i ko lishua me fol* [T]
 judge 3SG.ACC AUX.3SG let to speak
 “The judge let him speak.”

(12) *Ko aruá me vot në tempo* [V]
 AUX.3SG forget to go in time
 “He forgot to leave on time.”

Standard Albanian (and Tosk dialects generally) uses subordinate clauses with finite verb forms in all of the constructions listed above; the Gheg dialects use the infinitive in some of these constructions, but not as frequently as Arbanasi Albanian,⁴ where the finite verb is used in subordinate clauses only with verba dicendi, e.g. *san* “say”:

(13) *Po folin da ko Gjani në brombi kap shum peshki* [S]
 PROG say.PRS.3PL that AUX.3SG Gjani in tonight catch much fish
 “They say that Gianni caught a lot of fish tonight.”

(14) *Ajo ko san se mu ko me dimua me interpretat* [T]
 3SG AUX.3SG say that 1SG.DAT AUX.3SG to help to interpret
 “She said she would help me translate.”

However, when the verb of saying (*san*) is used to mean “to advise” or “to order”, the infinitive is used in the subordinate clause rather than the finite verb:

(15) *Ivica iu ko san me vot në muzej*
 Ivica 3PL.DAT AUX.3SG say to go in museum
 “Ivica advised them to go to the museum.”

4.6. WORD ORDER. Interestingly, it appears that Croatian and/or Italian word order have not significantly influenced AA. Although these languages shared some word-order features (e.g. they are all SVO, in all of them the relative clause precedes the nominal head, and the numerals and demonstratives precede the head nouns), where they do disagree AA preserved the original Albanian word order, e.g. with respect to the order of nouns and adjectives: While in Croatian the adjective generally precedes the noun (e.g. *lijepa djevojka* “beautiful girl”), in AA it follows the noun (Alb. *vajza e bukur* lit. “girl-the-beautiful”); note, however, that in this respect Albanian agrees with Italian word order, which may have helped its preservation in AA. AA also preserved the postposed Albanian articles (clitics) rather than developing preposed articles (as in Italian), or losing the articles altogether (Croatian does not have any articles).

5. CONCLUSION. In this paper we presented a brief history of language contacts between Arbanasi Albanian and Croatian and, to a lesser extent, Italian. We subsequently discussed a number of instances of contact-induced changes in Arbanasi Albanian, and we showed that the language was influenced by its neighboring adstrates (Croatian and Italian)

⁴ The exact conditions on the use of infinitives in Gheg dialects is difficult to ascertain, and the syntax of the Gheg dialect area from which the speakers of AA emigrated is virtually undescribed. It is worth noting that the use of the infinitive in Old Albanian (especially in Old Gheg texts in the 16th century) was more widespread than in the modern language (Demiraj 1989, Demiraj 1993).

and superstrates on all levels of linguistic structure. In our fieldwork, we focused on syntactic influences of Croatian and Italian on Arbanasi Albanian. They include the calquing of certain constructions, the development of particular analytic causative and imperative constructions, as well as the extension of the use of infinitive in subordinate clauses. This type of syntactic influence may be due to the pragmatic salience of constructions induced by communicative needs, a fact which is well attested in the literature on language contact (e.g. Thomason 2001, Grinevald Craig 1988, Matras 2012), and we believe that Arbanasi Albanian data contribute to such conclusions.

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Jana Willer-Gold
jwgold@ffzg.hr

Tena Gnjatović
tgnjatov@ffzg.hr

Daniela Katunar
danielakatunar@gmail.com

Ranko Matasović
rmatasov@ffzg.hr