

## Kosovo musicians' efficacy of using English language: internationalization of Albanian songs

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### Abstract

The English-speaking market is huge. English dominates the international music. The two most powerful countries in the world, the USA and the UK are the bases of the music industry. There is over one billion people who speak English worldwide. It is no surprise that the English language is used as a base for music by so many musicians. This work's main objective is to find out the Kosovar musicians' English language proficiency level as well as gain knowledge about the importance of being an English-speaking musician. The present study delves further into examining the internationalization of Albanian songs from the viewpoints of musicians in Kosovo and investigating whether the Albanian songs would have a different impact or would be more successful if translated and sung into the English language. Last but not least, the researchers are also interested in discovering the communication of languages (Albanian and English) through music and their harmonization. To go deep into the understanding and the perception of the issue and answer our research questions, a descriptive qualitative approach was used. To collect the data, semi-structured interviews with open-ended questions were conducted. Ten (10) Kosovar musicians who have a lot of knowledge on the issues participated in this study and thus provided us the necessary information. The results of this research correspond with the theoretical framework. The results obtained from the data analysis reveal that Kosovar musicians are proficient in English which is considered very advantageous since performing in English can help musicians build an international music career. It is also indicated that an Albanian song can also be an international success without the need to translate it into English since music is a universal language, musical notes sound the same in all languages around the world, they are written the same, they have the same position. Thus, the same musical sounds are found in every language of the world and they harmonize with rhythm, melody and lyrics.

### Keywords

*Albanian songs, English level, internationalization of music, musician*

### Introduction

Music began to be created 500,000 years ago while speech and language developed only 200,000 years ago. The evidence shows that speech as a verbal means of communication has evolved from our original development and use of music. Adults who are musically trained from a young age are able to learn

foreign languages more quickly and more efficiently than the ones who did not have musical training in early childhood. Music training is considered to be beneficial in the acquisition of foreign languages and plays a central role in developing foreign language grammar, vocabulary, colloquialisms and pronunciation (Support the Guardian, n.d.).

English is the universal language of today spoken by over one billion people in the world including both native and non-native speakers. A large number of musicians make music in the English language. Needless to

say, music makes money and more listeners make more money. It is also thought that English sounds better, it is simpler and is easier to rhyme in English (LewisG, 2015).

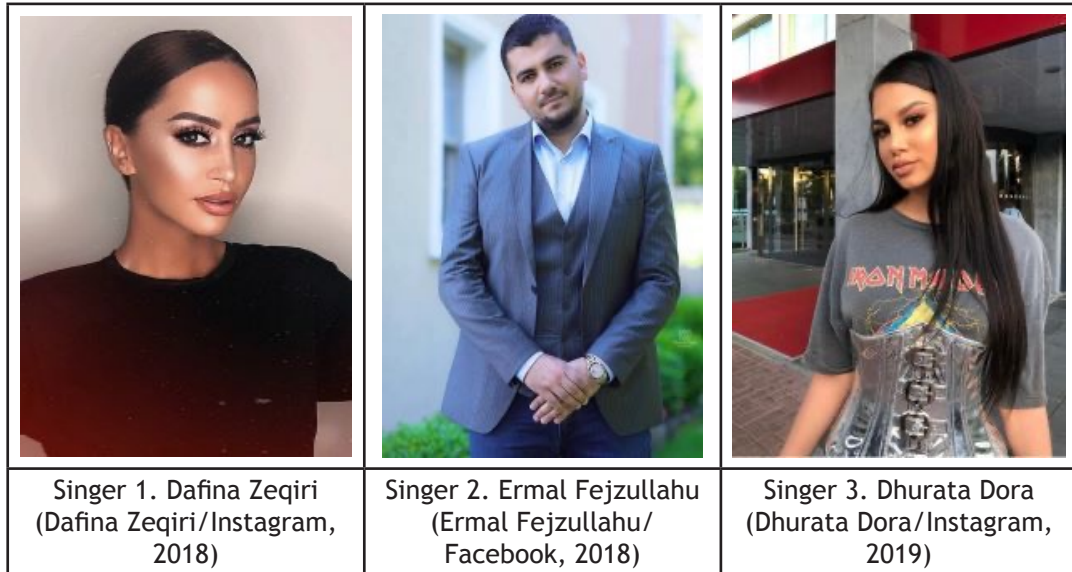


Figure 1. Images of famous singers in Kosovo

What is the level of Kosovar musicians in English? Why being an English-speaking musician is important? What do the musicians in Kosovo think about the internationalization of Albanian songs? Do they think that if Albanian songs were translated and sung in English, they would have a different impact or they would be more successful? How do languages (Albanian and English) communicate through music and how well do they harmonize with each other? These are some of the issues discussed in this paper.

### Literature Review

Being good with languages is among the skills needed to be a professional singer. In most songs, emotions that are carried through words are expressed. Understanding song's lines fundamentally will help singers analyze in detail the meaning of what they are trying to express as well as know exactly why they are having that certain emotion while singing a line (Huizinga, 2012).

Music is a beautiful, powerful language. Music, by its very nature, knows no boundaries. It necessarily redefines itself by increasingly crossing cultural boundaries (Reuell, 2018). Music as a cultural and creative sector is probably the one that reaches the largest audience. It has the power to emotionally, morally, and culturally affect society and improve people's wellbeing (European Commission, n.d.).

Performing in different languages can help singers connect with their fans as well as make music more global. Fans can be reached by releasing music in more than one language and thus allow the bilingual singer communicate with the fans in a language they can understand. Being a bilingual singer and a musician is very challenging but extremely rewarding (Lyons, 2019).

Internationalization is an extremely popular and widespread term. According to Kertz-Welzel (2021) it includes initiatives

going beyond national borders. Moreover, internationalization involves the transfer and exchange of knowledge (De Wit et al., 2017).

An integral part of the regular work life of artists and culture professionals is mobility. It is very important as it allows the artists to display their work, access new career opportunities, audiences and markets as well as promote and experience cultural diversity (European Commission, n.d.).

The practices of musicians have become highly internationalized due to economic,

technological, cultural and political developments. It is so important to invest in the internationalization of the arts. However, this is not something that can be easily explained to governments and other stakeholders. Musicians indicate that they have to work harder and harder to achieve the same results in a foreign market. Hence, promoting art should be one of the top priorities. There should be concrete projects that will promote musicians in European countries, but also other countries (Janssens, 2019).


 <p>Dua Lipa (IMDb, n.d.)</p>	<p>Singer Dua Lipa comes from Kosovo. She currently lives and works in Great Britain. Born in London on August 22, 1995, Dua grew up under the influence of the music of her father, Dukagjin Lipa, who is a musician. She attended Fitzjohn's Primary School where she took music lessons, specifically in Cello. At the age of 9, she began weekend singing lessons at the Sylvia Young Theatre School. In 2008, her family moved to Kosovo after the country's independence, but at the age of 15 (2010), Dua decided to return to London. At Parliament Hill School she passed her A-Levels, then re-entered Sylvia Young Theatre School part-time. She started working as a model at the age of 16 and publishing covers of her favorite songs on YouTube. She gained the most attention when she won the audition for participation in the 'X Factor UK' commercial, in 2013. When she was 19 years old, she released her first song, "New Love" (2015). With the breakthrough of her first single, there was no limit to what she could achieve in the future. Therefore, Lipa started breaking many records by producing albums that went viral and peaked on famous platforms like Billboard Hot 100. Six Brit Awards, three Grammy Awards, two MTV Europe Music Awards, an MTV Video Music Award, two Billboard Music Awards, an American Music Award, and two Guinness World Records are among the numerous accolades that Lipa has received ("Dua Lipa", n.d.)</p>
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Figure 2. Image and biography of Dua Lipa-a famous singer from Kosovo

Singers aim for the overseas markets to expand the horizons and go international. Consequently, they need to translate songs in order to make it on the global market because fans want to understand the lyrics they hear. However, translating literary texts respectively songs is not an easy task

because word-for-word translation is not acceptable, the original meaning of the song's lyrics needs to be conveyed as well as the song's context needs to be adapted into something that could be directly opposite to the source (Franzon, 2008).

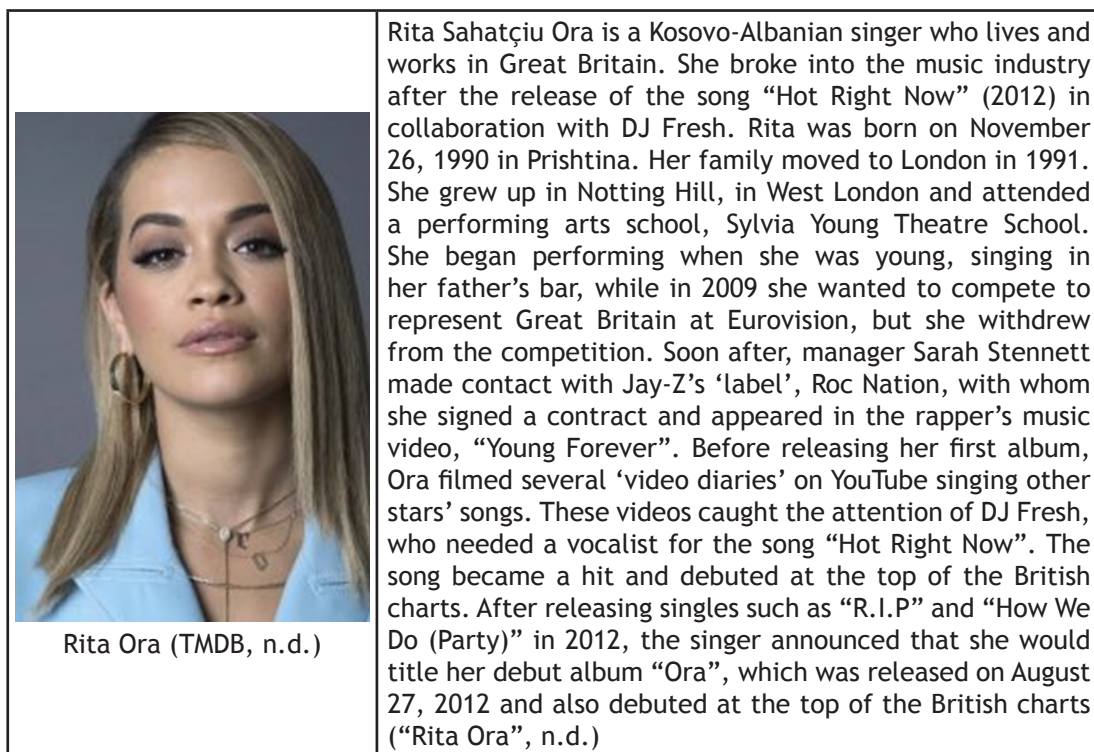


Figure 3. Image and biography of Rita Ora-a famous singer from Kosovo

Translation becomes more complex when the historical and cultural references of the target audience need to be adjusted into a language. Examples of this are the songs such as “Bed of Roses” by Bon Jovi and “Yesterday” by the Beatles. Even though they are significant and poignant in their original language, the sensitivity is lost in the translated versions of these songs. But, the following songs “Life of Mars” performed in Portuguese; “Paint it Black” performed in Italian; “Hotel California” performed in Spanish; “Baby Love” sang in French; “Somebody to Love” performed in Spanish; “Stand by Me” performed in Italian are more beautiful when performed in other languages (Smith, 2021).

There is no need for the artists to be constrained to producing music in just one language. Bilingualism in music has seen a dramatic rise recently. Artists have produced songs written in multiple languages thus opening audience’s eyes and ears to the diversity of music across the world. The

value of different musical styles which are linguistically diverse has been shown to them. Artists widen their audiences by producing two versions of songs. Their music is doubly accessible (Buccisano, 2021).

### Research Aim

The objectives of this research are:

- to find out the Kosovo musicians’ English language proficiency level;
- to understand the importance of being an English-speaking musician;
- to examine the internationalization of Albanian songs from the viewpoints of musicians in Kosovo;
- to discover the communication of languages (Albanian and English) through music and their harmonization;
- to identify the Kosovo musicians’ most common problems in learning English and the most effective ways to improve English language skills.

### Research Problem

This study was guided by the following research problems:

- What is the level of Kosovar musicians in English and what factors contributed to that English level?
- Why being an English-speaking musician is important?
- What do the Albanian musicians think about the internationalization of Albanian songs?
- How do languages (Albanian and English) communicate through music and how well do they harmonize with each other?
- What were the Kosovo musicians' most common problems in learning English and what are the most effective ways to improve English language skills from the viewpoints of musicians in Kosovo?

### Method

#### Research Model

This study employs a descriptive qualitative research method. This type of methodology is considered more suitable for our research purposes due to the small numbers of Kosovar musicians who were available for interviews. And since the qualitative research is aimed at seeking insight rather than statistical analysis (Bell, 1999), this is the most

appropriate methodology for this study. Moreover, the qualitative approach allows a more subjective study of the problems presented (Wilson, 2016). The selected data has been analyzed without proposing any hypothesis. As in qualitative research the situations, events or phenomena are described (Mason & Bramble, 1997), the data is collected, arranged and analyzed and then the conclusions are made in accordance with the interpretation after the data analysis is being investigated.

#### Participants

In total, there were ten (10) Albanian musicians from different cities of Kosovo who responded positively to the invitation and accepted to participate in this study. There were four (4) male and six (6) female participants of different ages. The intention of the researcher was to interview different age musicians to get as diverse perspective as possible of the opinions, experiences from people who are part of the music industry, have formal music training and were actively practicing at the time of the research. All the musicians involved in this research study sing and hold a bachelor's degree in music. The technique of random sampling was used in this research implying that every Kosovo musician that has experience in the music industry as well as formal music training has equal chances of being selected to participate in this research study (Halonen & Santroct, 1999).

Table 1. Structure of research participants

Participant No	Gender	Age	Musical experience (year)	Code
1	M	32	22 years	P1-M-32
2	F	25	16 years	P2-F-25
3	F	29	18 years	P3-F-29
4	M	35	20 years	P4-M-35
5	M	40	25 years	P5-M-40
6	F	38	24 years	P6-F-38
7	M	45	28 years	P7-M-45
8	F	24	15 years	P8-F-24
9	F	27	19 years	P9-F-27
10	F	33	23 years	P10-F-33

## **Data Collection Tools**

### **Semi-structured Interview Format**

Data collection is a crucial step in doing research. In the present study, a semi-structured interview with musicians in Kosovo was used as the instrument for collecting data. The interview is a common instrument for gathering information from people. An interview is a conversation of one person with another person, either face to face or in other forms, and between two or more individuals for a specific purpose (Kumar, 2017). Interviews are intended to facilitate the collection of research data and have specific features and techniques that enable researchers to conduct it efficiently (Mathews & Ross, 2010).

The interview was conducted face-to-face. The researcher took notes during the interview so that it was easier for her to analyze the results later. The interview contains seven (7) questions which were divided into some sections that include English Language Proficiency Level of Kosovar musicians, factors that influence the English language development, importance of speaking English language for musicians, musicians' views on the internationalizations of Albanian songs, the communication of languages (Albanian and English) through music and their harmonization, the Kosovo musicians' challenges of learning English, the Kosovo musicians' views on the effective ways to improve English.

### **Documentation**

To testify the research results from the semi-structured interview with Kosovo musicians on their English knowledge as well as the influence of the English language in the success of a song, videos of Kosovo musicians giving interviews in English were researched on YouTube. As a result, 3 videos were found. In these videos, the musicians' proficiency level in English can be defined. Moreover, 3 Albanian songs which have been versioned into English were detected in order to examine whether the translation of these songs into English influenced their success.

## **Data Analysis**

The qualitative data collected from the interview were analyzed with codes generating themes according to the questions and the issues brought by the researchers to the research. The themes arising from the analysis of data can help describe the English level of musicians for the research question 1, they can help gain a deeper understanding of the importance of being an English-speaking musician for the research question 2, themes can also demonstrate the internationalization of Albanian songs for the research question 3, as well as clarify the communication of languages (Albanian and English) through music and their harmonization for the research question 4 and eventually explain the challenges in learning English and show the most effective ways to improve English language skills for the research question 5. According to Crosley and Jansen (2020) qualitative data coding is the process of creating and assigning codes to categorize data and to identify different themes. Coding is the foundation of high-quality analysis. It is important to make sure that the data is valid and to ensure that the analysis is undertaken systematically. The interviewees' responses were coded using the usual method of Content Analysis which analyses different sources of content dividing it into categories and thus facilitating their comprehension and subsequent classification (Silva & Fossa, 2015 as cited in Brandao & De Oliveira, 2019).

## **Results**

**Findings from Interviews with Kosovo musicians**

The results of the interview questions are presented along with the dimension with which they are associated.

### **Findings from Interviews with Kosovo musicians**

The results of the interview questions are presented along with the dimension with which they are associated.

English Language Proficiency Level of Kosovar musicians

Table 2. The content analysis of musicians’ English language proficiency level

Theme 1. English language proficiency level of musicians in Kosovo	f
C1 English (Advanced)	6
B1 English (Intermediate)	4

Some quotations on musicians’ responses about their level in English are as follows:

*“I am a proficient user of the English language. I can use the language naturally, flexibly and effectively almost without making mistakes in social, academic and professional environments” (P2-F-25).*

*“I have a high level of English. I have the confidence to communicate in English as well as understand complex texts and write song lyrics” (P5-M-40).*

*“I can express my opinion in English. I can understand and produce texts on topics I am familiar with whether in work, study or leisure contexts” (P9-F-27)*

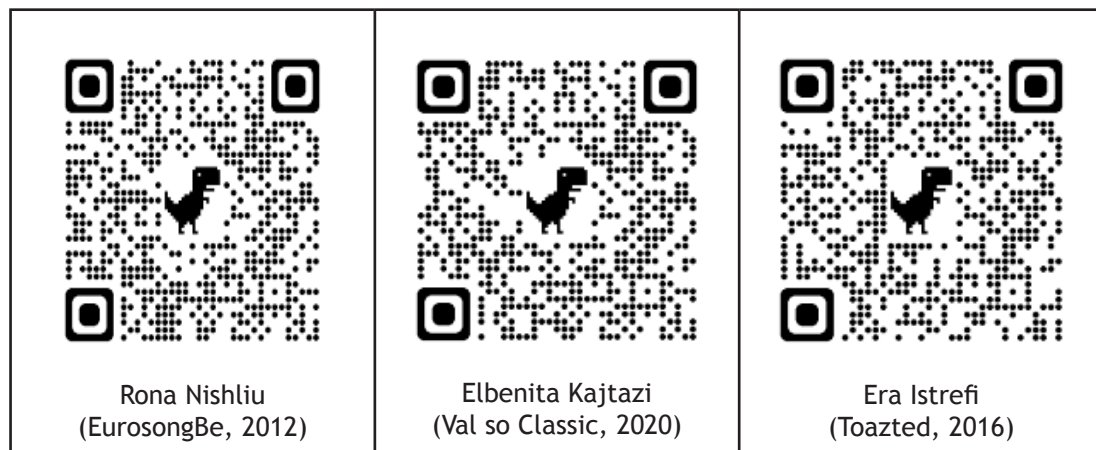


Figure 4. Kosovar singers giving interviews in English

The videos above also show that Kosovo musicians are proficient in English. It can be noticed that they possess sufficient structural accuracy and vocabulary in English to answer effectively the interviewer’s questions. Moreover, musicians express themselves clearly and succinctly, they are calm and concentrated, they know the vocabulary

of their field, they develop well-structured sentences that are easily understood. Taking into account the fact that they are non-native English speakers, it can be said that their English is quite good and they can put together meaningful sentences.

## Factors that influence the English language development

Table 3. The content analysis on the factors that contributed to the above levels of English

Theme 2. Factors that contributed to the above English levels of Kosovo musicians	f
English language courses	6
School	6
English movies	5
English songs	5
The progress of professional education	4
Internet	1
Native speakers	2
English literary works	2

Some quotations on the factors that contributed to the above English levels of musicians are as follows:

*"I attended private English language courses and thus improved proficiency in the English language" (P1-M-32).*

*"I had great English teachers in primary and secondary school who helped my English get better and better" (P2-F-25).*

*"I watched a lot of movies with English subtitles which helped me learn English" (P3-F-29).*

*"I enjoy listening to English songs which definitely enhanced my language comprehension" (P10-F-33).*

*"As a factor, I can point out the progress of my professional education. I attended a lot of training programs on the subjects*

*such as interpretation, solfeggio, choral singing, orchestration etc. Training programs were offered in the English language from experts of different countries. The training programs helped me to build up much more knowledge of the English language related to my career" (P7-M-45).*

*"Internet gives us access to a world of information. Using many resources of the internet improved my English" (P4-M-35).*

*"I have a lot of friends who are native speakers of English. I talk with them very often" (P8-F-24).*

*"I enriched English language skills and vocabulary by reading English novels" (P9-F-27).*

## The importance of speaking English

Table 4. The content analysis on the importance of speaking English for musicians

Theme 3. The importance of being an English-speaking musician	f
Find success in career	9
Understand song's lines	9
Become a worldwide singer	7
Create music at a higher level	6
Find music literature	2
Go international	9
Get into music festivals abroad	8



Some quotations on the importance of speaking English for musicians are as follows:

*“In English language performances to understand the song’s lines, to get the chance of making it in the music industry, to know how to communicate in order to open the paths to success” (P3-F-29).*

*“English is an international language and is spoken in almost every country in the world. English helps us find music literature which cannot be found in the Albanian language” (P6-F-38).*

*“The most advanced music industry in the world is in the English language, so knowing the English language helps us to orient ourselves to create music at that level” (P2-F-25).*

*“It is very important to speak English in order to build an international music career” (P7-M-45).*

*“Speaking English can help musicians perform at a music festival abroad which is a great way to get their music in the world and reach new fans” (P4-M-35).*

### Views on the internationalization of Albanian songs

Table 5. The content analysis on the Kosovo musicians’ views about the internationalization of Albanian songs

<b>Theme 4. The internationalization of Albanian songs: Would they have a different impact or would they be more successful if translated into the English language?</b>	<b>f</b>
No	9
Maybe	2

Some quotations on the internationalization of Albanian songs: Would they have a different impact or would they be more successful if translated into the English language? can be found below:

*“I don’t think so. An Albanian song reflects our culture, the circumstances in which we live and the original Albanian spirit. Our expressions cannot be fully translated into another language. (For example, the song ‘Përrallë’(Fairytale) performed in English at Eurovision Song Contest 2016 received negative comments such as: It’s a big mistake to perform this song in English! The Albanian version has more feelings and passion; Another fan wrote: The song has lost its power. Where is the love madness she feels in the original version?)” (P3-F-29).*

*“Absolutely not. The English version of the song ‘Shaj’ (Fall from the sky) at Eurovision Song Contest 2020 made the fans feel disappointed. According to the fans the song would be more successful if it was sung in Albanian” (P8-F-24).*

*“Of course not. I believe that the original version of a song gives it its uniqueness” (P1-M-33).*

*“Not really. The song ‘Bonbon’ even though performed in Albanian was a successful international hit” (P10-F-33).*

*“Possibly. English cannot be ignored as it may offer more opportunities for songs to enter the international market” (P7-M-45).*

*“It is possible but our genuine Albanian music has very ancient roots and has its own beauty and distinctive characteristics according to the regions” (P9-F-27).*

The Albanian songs below have been versioned into English. It can be seen that they are not translated literally. The translation has been adapted to the original music. An effort has been made to respect both the music and the content. These songs were performed in the Eurovision song contest 2011, 2014 and 2017. But none of them made it to the final even though they

were sung in the English language. On the contrary the Albanian song “Suus” did not contain any English lyrics, it was qualified for the grand final and was ranked 5th at Eurovision song contest 2012. This matches

with the opinions of Kosovo musicians that it does not mean that an Albanian song must be translated into English to be successful. It seems that a song simply needs to sound good in order to be listened and loved.

Table 6. The Albanian song “Botë” and its English version “World”

Albanian	English
Jemi pranë dhe larg Po më ngel në fyt çdo fjalë Unë dhe ti sa shumë ne ngajmë Sa vështirë për ne me falë	We're so alike, yet different At a loss for words, suffering It don't make sense what's happening? I just don't understand
Këtë realitet Ne e zgjodhëm vetë Smundem as të fle Të gjata janë këto netë	What's the fight all for? What's the cost of life in this world? Almost impossible Just to let the love unite as all
Sa shumë lotë Sa shumë dhimbje në këtë botë Jo më smund të duroj Do të doja të jem më e fortë (Kryeziu, n.d.)	Does anybody care? I am weak and I'm afraid Wondering if I will make it through this day For the life of me I refuse to be Anything but free But I'm tired of all the battling (ESC Passiii, n.d)

**“World” Eurovision Song Contest 2017** LINDITA

Table 7. The Albanian song “Kënga ime” and its English version “Feel the Passion”

Albanian	English
<p>Zemër ti mos më lër pa fjalë                      Dua t’ia them e dua t’ia marrë                      Sa herë vij edhe shkoj si frymë të kërkoj                      Ne gjak më je futur pa ty s’mund të rroj</p> <p>Më bëhesh det edhe më bëhesh valë                      Më than një lot edhe më ndez një mall                      Sa herë vij edhe shkoj si frymë të kërkoj                      Në gjak të kam kënga ime moj, ehehej</p> <p>E pasur jam se ty të kam                      Nuk jam në tokë e asgjë s’më ndal</p> <p>Sot që këngën ma ke fal më lër ta ndaj                      Nuk ka ngjyrë e nuk ka fjalë muret se mbajnë                      Tokën qiellin e bën bashkë harron e fal                      Se më deh e më mban gjallë asgjë s’më ndal</p> <p>(TeksteShqip, n.d.)</p>	<p>We’re so alike, yet different                      At a loss for words, suffering                      It don’t make sense what’s happening?                      I just don’t understand</p> <p>What’s the fight all for?                      What’s the cost of life in this world?                      Almost impossible                      Just to let the love unite as all</p> <p>Does anybody care? I am weak and I’m afraid</p> <p>Wondering if I will make it through this day                      For the life of me I refuse to be                      Anything but free                      But I’m tired of all the battling</p> <p>(ESC Passiii, n.d)</p>

### “Feel the Passion” Eurovision Song Contest 2011

Aurela Gaçe

The first system of musical notation for 'Feel the Passion' is in 3/4 time and F major. It consists of a piano accompaniment with a treble and bass clef. The melody is in the treble clef, starting with a quarter rest followed by a quarter note G4, then a quarter note A4, and a quarter note B4. The piano accompaniment features a steady eighth-note bass line in the left hand and chords in the right hand. Chord symbols 'Fm' are placed above the staff at measures 3 and 5.

The second system of musical notation continues the piece. It starts at measure 7 with a treble clef and a bass clef. The melody continues with a quarter note C5, a quarter note D5, and a quarter note E5. The piano accompaniment maintains the eighth-note bass line and chordal accompaniment. A chord symbol 'Fm' is placed above the staff at measure 7.

The third system of musical notation starts at measure 16. It features a treble clef and a bass clef. The melody includes a triplet of eighth notes (G4, A4, B4) followed by a quarter note C5. The piano accompaniment continues with the eighth-note bass line and chordal accompaniment.

Table 8. The Albanian song “Zemërimi i një nate” and its English version “One night’s anger”

Albanian	English
<p>I do, s'i do                      fjalën e fundit mos e mendo                      dysho, beso                      mikun e ngushtë ti mos e lendo                      se ja vjen një ditë,                      dite e re që do ta kërkosh                      qetësohu një natë,                      mendoje pak gjatë                      Ti largo zemërimin nga mendja jote                      që çdo mëngjes është më i zgjuar se çdo                      mbrëmje                      mos lejo çmendurinë e një zemre                      mendohu dhe pak,                      harroje ket natë</p> <p>Kujto, harro,                      fjalën e fundit mos e lësho                      mos u nxito                      miqësinë ti mos e lëndo                      se ja vjen një ditë që miqësinë ti do ta                      kërkosh                      mos mbaj kaq inat,                      mos mbaj zemra plagë</p> <p>(TeksteShqip, n.d.)</p>	<p>Say no, let go                      Keep your breath                      As the anger flows                      I know, you know                      Words can hurt                      You'll regret them though                      So say say say                      You'll be there                      When the words are done                      Don't give in your pride                      Keep calm and think twice</p> <p>Free your mind                      From the doubts                      That are tickling                      Free your heart                      And let the peace                      Enlighten your feelings                      Sun will rise                      And the light                      Will be clearing                      The tides of the night                      Keep calm and think twice</p> <p>(FiK TV, n.d.)</p>

**“One Night’s Anger” Eurovision Song Contest 2014**

Hersi

The image shows the piano accompaniment for the song "One Night's Anger" by Hersi. The score is written for piano and consists of three systems of music. The first system contains measures 1 through 5, the second system contains measures 6 through 10, and the third system contains measures 11 through 15. The music is in 4/4 time and B-flat major. The right hand plays a melodic line with some grace notes, while the left hand provides a steady bass line. Chords C, F, and Bb are indicated above the staff.

### Albanian and English - Their communication and harmonization through music

Table 9. The content analysis on the communication of languages (Albanian and English) through music and their harmonization

Theme 5. Communication of languages (Albanian and English) through music and their harmonization	f
There is a standard musical notation	8
The differences in the number of syllables	7
The difficulty of translating Albanian expressions	7
Two languages are mixed throughout a song	7

Some quotations on the communication of languages (Albanian and English) through music and their harmonization are as follows:

*“Music is a universal language. Musical notes sound the same in all languages around the world, they are written the same, they have the same position. Thus, the same musical sounds are found in every language of the world and they harmonize with rhythm, melody and lyrics” (P1-M-33).*

*“During the translation, not only the meaning is lost, but also the adaptation of the syllables to the rhythm, and since the languages differ in the number of syllables the rhythm automatically*

*changes. Therefore, the translation and the context are often changed just so that the rhythm remains the same in both languages” (P3-F-29)*

*“Some expressions may not be fully translated into English. I think that sometimes the context of the song is lost as often the Albanian expressions translated into English have no meaning” (P4-M-35).*

*“As a result of the globalization of music, two languages are being used in modern music lyrics, for example (Albanian and English) and they are being understood by young people who have acquired English as a second/foreign language” (P9-F-27)*

### The Kosovo musicians’ problems in learning English

Table 10. The content analysis on The Kosovo musicians’ problems in learning English

Theme 6. The most common problems in learning English for Kosovo musicians	f
Pronunciation	8
Grammar	7
Communication	6

Some quotations on the most common problems in learning English are as follows:

*“As one of the difficulties I can emphasize was pronunciation. The English language is written, spelled and pronounced differently. There are a lot of words in English which are not pronounced the way they are spelled which can confuse non-native speakers” (P2-F-25).*

*“Some grammatical patterns were so difficult to be learned. I think the*

*grammar of English is very tricky. There are so many grammar rules that are not clean-cut. There are exceptions to most of them. That is why it was difficult to memorize them and even more difficult to apply them in different contexts” (P3-F-29).*

*“It is very challenging to be fluent and to express yourself properly in English. Communication was one of the most frequent problems in learning English.” (P8-F-24).*

## The Kosovo musicians' views on the effective ways to improve English

Table 11. The content analysis on the most effective ways to improve English for Kosovo musicians

Theme 7. The most effective ways to improve English for Kosovo musicians	f
Writing down the new words and phrases	7
Watching movies in English with English subtitles	8
Listening to English songs	8
Communicating with native speakers	9

Some quotations on the most effective ways to improve English are as follows:

*“The best and most effective way that has helped me a lot is writing down unknown words and phrases, listening to English songs as well as watching movies in English with English subtitles because you can listen and read along at the same time. I think that these help a lot in enriching your knowledge in the English language” (P3-F-25).*

*“In order to be fluent in English, it is very necessary to interact with native English speakers, a great chance to practise English. Being surrounded with English speakers will force you into speaking the English language as well as learn slang and conversational English” (P4-M-35).*

### Discussion

This study aimed at gaining insight into the importance of being an English-speaking musician as well as examine the internationalization of Albanian songs and see the communication and harmonization of languages (Albanian and English) through music based on the perspectives of musicians. To reach the aims of this study, the qualitative research design was an adequate approach to use as data collection. A semi-structured interview was conducted with ten (10) musicians in Kosovo whose answers helped to generate data to answer the research questions of this study.

The results of this study revealed that it is very important for musicians to speak English in order to build an international

music career. Moreover, speaking English helps musicians get their music in the world and gain more fans. This result aligns with the study of Lyons (2019) which indicates that performing in different languages can help singers connect with their fans as well as make music more global.

European Commission (n.d.) states that internationalization is an integral part of the regular work life of artists and culture professionals. Internationalization is very important since it allows the artists to display their work, access new career opportunities, audiences and markets. Similarly, based on the Kosovo musicians' perceptions, internationalization gives the chance to artists to become a worldwide singer as well as make it in the music industry.

Regarding the question ‘Would the Albanian songs have a different impact or would they be more successful if translated into the English language?’, the study respondents unanimously answered ‘No’ illustrating it with the examples such as: the song ‘Përrallë’(Fairytale) performed in English at Eurovision Song Contest 2016 received negative comments such as: It is a big mistake to perform this song in English! The Albanian version has more feelings and passion; Another fan wrote: The song has lost its power. Where is the love madness she feels in the original version? then the English version of the other song such as ‘Shaj’ (Fall from the sky) at Eurovision Song Contest 2020 made the fans feel disappointed. According to the fans the song would be more successful if it was sung in Albanian. Moreover, the song ‘Bonbon’ by Era Istrefi

even though performed in Albanian was a successful international hit. The opinion of the musicians was supported by presenting in this study the Albanian songs “Botë” (“World”), “Kënga ime” (“Feel the passion”) and “Zemërimi i një nate” (“One night’s anger”) which even though were versioned and sung in English failed to make it to the Eurovision final. The Albanian song “Suus”, on the other hand, was qualified for the grand final and even ranked 5th at Eurovision song contest 2012 although it was solely sung in Albanian. This result is consistent with the study of Smith (2021) showing that the songs such as ‘Bed of Roses’ by Bon Jovi and ‘Yesterday’ by the Beatles, even though significant and poignant in their original language, the sensitivity is lost in their translated versions.

## Conclusion

This research study has helped to promote a better understanding of the topic Kosovo musicians’ efficacy of using English language: Internationalization of Albanian songs. Based on the results of analysis, these conclusions are drawn.

First, musicians in Kosovo have a high level of proficiency in English. English language courses, school, English movies, English songs, the progress of the professional education, Internet, native speakers are among the factors that contributed to this English level of musicians. The English language proficiency can also be seen on the above YouTube videos showing Kosovar musicians giving interviews in English.

Second, being an English-speaking musician was considered very important. Since English is an international language and is spoken in almost every country in the world, being able to perform in English helps the musicians to open the paths to success, go international, reach new fans, promote their music overseas in short become successful in the music industry.

Third, it is believed that an Albanian song would not be more successful if translated into the English language. The original version of a song gives it its uniqueness. Any musical composition sounds more powerful and better in the language that it was created. According to Kosovar musicians an Albanian song reflects our culture, the circumstances in which we live and the original Albanian spirit. Our genuine Albanian music has very ancient roots and has its own beauty and distinctive characteristics according to the regions.

Fourth, musicians claimed that music is a universal language. It is not necessary to translate melody, harmony, silence, rhythm variations in order to reach different cultures. Musical notes sound the same in all languages around the world, they are written the same, they have the same position. Thus, the same musical sounds are found in every language of the world and they harmonize with rhythm, melody and lyrics.

Last but not least, pronunciation, grammar and communication were the most common problems faced by musicians while learning English. It is thought that writing down the new words and phrases, watching movies in English with English subtitles, listening to English songs and communicating with native speakers are the most effective ways to improve English language skills.

## Contribution of Authors

All authors contributed to the final manuscript. The first author took the lead in writing the manuscript. The second and the third author provided critical feedback and helped shape the research, analysis and manuscript. The fourth author played a great role in designing the research instrument and finding the research participants.

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## **Appendix 1. Semi-structured Interview Format**

### **Semi-structured Interview Format**

Dear Musicians,

This interview is a data collection tool about our research paper titled “Kosovo musicians’ efficacy of using English language: Internationalization of Albanian songs”. Your contribution will be of great help to make the research work achieve its objectives. You are kindly required to answer the questions. All information provided will remain anonymous.

We appreciate your cooperation!

#### **Respondent Details**

**Gender:** Female ( ) Male ( )

**Age:**

**Education level:** High school ( ) Bachelor’s degree ( ) Master’s degree ( ) Doctorate ( )

#### **Interview Questions**

**Q1.** How would you describe your level of English?

**Q2.** What are the factors that contributed to this English level? Please explain shortly?

**Q3.** Why is it important for musicians to know English?

**Q4.** The internationalization of Albanian songs: Would they have a different impact or would they be more successful if translated into the English language?

**Q5.** How do languages (Albanian and English) communicate through music and how well do they harmonize with each other?

**Q6.** What are some of the most common problems in learning English?

**Q7.** What are the most effective ways to improve English language skills?