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Abstract: Among the numerous engaging puzzles from the history of linguistics is Leonard Bloomfield's use of the language name *Albanese* for the national language of Albania, as when Bloomfield (1933: 13) states that 'Later, Armenian and Albanese, and a few ancient languages known to us only from scant written records, proved also to belong to the Indo-European family.' Given that the most common English term for this language was and is *Albanian*, this is an odd terminological choice on Bloomfield's part, as has occasionally been acknowledged, e.g., by Charles Hockett in the foreword to the 1984 reprint of Bloomfield (1933). This note offers argumentation suggesting just how this detail of Bloomfield's usage is to be accounted for, building on the findings of Hinrichs, Erdmann, and Joseph (2016). We propose that Bloomfield's use of *Albanese* instead of *Albanian* is most directly due to his teacher and mentor Eduard Prokosch. This claim is based on Prokosch's own usage of the term *Albanese*, Bloomfield's deep admiration of Prokosch, and Bloomfield's interactions with Prokosch at a very early stage of his academic career. Bloomfield's use of the term was then reinforced by his exposure to Germanophone scholars and scholarship, as argued in Hinrichs et al. (2016).

Keywords: Leonard Bloomfield, Albanian, Eduard Prokosch, linguistic terminology

Leonard Bloomfield and *Albanese*

Among the numerous engaging puzzles from the history of linguistics is Leonard Bloomfield's use of the language name *Albanese* for the national language of Albania.¹ To give two examples of the usage, Bloomfield (1914: 272) writes, in a discussion of Indo-European dialect features, that 'There are certain phenomena in which the historic "western" languages, namely the Greek, Italic, Celtic, and Germanic, are apparently opposed to the "eastern", Balto-Slavic, Indo-Iranian, Armenian, and Albanese'; and in his classic *Language*, Bloomfield (1933: 13) states that 'Later, Armenian and Albanese, and a few ancient languages known to us only from scant written records, proved also to belong to the Indo-European family.' Given that the most common English term for this language was and is *Albanian*, this is an odd terminological choice on Bloomfield's part, as has occasionally been acknowledged. Such acknowledgements include Kent (1933: 47), who writes 'For Albanese, read Albanian' and Hockett (1984: xix), who, in his foreword to the 1984 reprint of Bloomfield (1933), notes that 'The language which Bloomfield calls *Albanese* ... is usually called *Albanian*' (italics in original). This terminological choice raises the following question: why did Bloomfield use the term *Albanese* instead of *Albanian*, counter to the usual practice of North American linguists of the time? In this note, we offer argumentation suggesting just how this detail of Bloomfield's usage is to be accounted for, building on the findings of Hinrichs, Erdmann, and Joseph (2016).

Hinrichs et al. (2016) is the fullest treatment of this question. They point out that in German the terms *Albanese*- and *Albanier* are used for the people, *Albanisch*- and *Albanesisch*- for the language, and suggest that, given that Bloomfield's main academic mentor was the Austro-Hungarian scholar Eduard Prokosch (whose native language was German), and that Bloomfield spent the 1913-1914 academic year studying in Germany, 'one cannot help but wonder whether Bloomfield's choice of the term *Albanese* ... has its roots in the German scholarly tradition' (Hinrichs et al. 2016: 38-39; italics in original). They support this hypothesis by examinations of the usage of the term *Albanese* in English and German, as documented in various corpora (e.g., the Google Books collections for English and German, the Corpus of

¹ Albanian is now also the national language of the Republic of Kosovo and is spoken by significant numbers of speakers elsewhere as well (especially the Republic of North Macedonia, Montenegro, southern Italy, and parts of Greece). Even though this geographic distribution is more or less the same as it was in the era of Bloomfield and others we write about here, the main focus then was the region in the western Balkans known as Albania that was part of the Ottoman Empire until independence in 1912.

Historical American English [COHA], and the Deutsches Text Archiv [DTA]). Their searches of these corpora yielded the following conclusions: (1) in COHA and in the Google Books collection for English, ‘almost all data points for *Albanese* ... concern persons with the last name *Albanese*, rather than persons from Albania’ (Hinrichs et al. 2016: 39);² (2) in the Google Books collection for German, ‘*Albanesisch*- outranks *Albanisch*- in relative frequency for most of the 19th century and up until 1914 and then shows a steady decline for the remainder of the century’ (Hinrichs et al. 2016: 40); and (3) ‘For the period covered by the DTA corpus, the language of Albania was referred to as *Albanesisch* and the people were referred to as *Albanesen* or *Albanier*’ (Hinrichs et al. 2016: 41). They thus conclude that “These corpus findings support the hypothesis that Bloomfield’s use of the English term *Albanese* may be due to his close contacts with German scholars who would have used the German cognate” (Hinrichs et al. 2016: 41).

There are a number of factors that favor this hypothesis. Bloomfield spoke and wrote German fluently (having published the occasional article written in German), was exceptionally well-networked in German and Germanophone scholarly circles, and had read widely in Germanophone linguistic work.³ Our proposal builds on their account: we suggest that the immediate source of Bloomfield’s use of the term *Albanese* was Eduard Prokosch, a native speaker of German, Bloomfield’s teacher at the University of Wisconsin from 1906-1908, and

² A search of the Corpus of Contemporary American English (COCA; <https://www.english-corpora.org/coca/>), conducted on October 18, 2021, yielded similar results: there were 151 hits, all of which are for people whose last name is *Albanese*. A search of the Oxford English Dictionary (OED; www.oed.com), conducted on June 3, 2022, yielded slightly different results: the usage is labeled ‘rare’ in the OED. The OED cites eleven examples of *Albanese* or *Albinese* being used for the language, including Bloomfield’s own usage (in Bloomfield 1933), e.g., ‘...the exposition of the Albinese in Romaic and Italian’ from 1812 (Lord Byron, *Childe Harold*). The most recent such usage for the language is from a 1989 article in the *New York Times*: ‘He spoke Albanese with the chemist of the town.’ The OED results show that *Albanese* is still in very occasional use for the language, but do not contradict the arguments made here. (We note that the 1989 example is attributed to the movie director Francesco Rosi, who is not a native speaker of English, for instance.)

³ A reader of an earlier version of this paper points out that the Romance languages all have similar names for the language, e.g., French *albanais*, Italian *Albanese*, and suggests that this usage also influenced Bloomfield. We find this point unconvincing: while Bloomfield was clearly well-versed in the Romance languages, as illustrated by the number of Romance-language works cited in Bloomfield (1933), Romance-language scholarship certainly had less of an impact on Bloomfield’s own scholarship than German-language scholarship did.

his most important academic mentor.⁴ We further contend that Bloomfield's usage of the term was then reinforced by his extensive exposure to Germanophone scholars and scholarship.⁵

We raise three points in support of our claim: (1) Prokosch's own usage of the term *Albanese*, (2) Bloomfield's admiration for Prokosch, and (3) the stage of Bloomfield's career in which he worked most closely with Prokosch. To the first, Prokosch did use *Albanese* instead of *Albanian*, at least in his earlier work written in English. Examples of this include the following. First, Prokosch (1912: 196) writes that 'All eastern languages, including **Albanese**, abandon the labial element of the labiovelars...' (emphasis added). Second, Prokosch was dismissed by the University of Texas at Austin in 1919, as a consequence of the strongly anti-German attitude that then prevailed in Texas (see Nicholas 1972 for details). During the dismissal process, Prokosch suggested, in a letter to Robert Vinson, then president of the University of Texas, dated July 1, 1919, that he could be a 'translator ... [for] faculty members or students who might need foreign language material for research purposes. I intended to suggest translations from the following modern languages with which (in addition to a number of dead languages) I am more or less acquainted: **Albanese**, Arabic, Armenian, Bulgarian Swedish, Ukrainian (Ruthenian)' (Texas Board of Regents Minutes, July 7, 1919; emphasis added). The second example is particularly important, as it shows Prokosch's use of the term in a context that was not related to linguistics. This further indicates that *Albanese* was Prokosch's regular term for the language, as would be expected of a native speaker of German of Prokosch's age and background.

⁴ Prokosch was born in Eger (then part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, now in the Czech Republic and normally called Cheb) in 1876, and graduated from the *Gymnasium* there in 1894. He studied law in Prague and Vienna, passing the state bar examinations in 1897, before moving to the United States in 1898. Prokosch returned to Europe in 1904 to continue his education in Heidelberg and Leipzig, earning a doctorate from Leipzig in 1905. His dissertation, *Beiträge zur Lehre vom Demonstrativpronomen in den altgermanischen Dialekten* ['Contributions to the Study of the Demonstrative Pronoun in the Early Germanic Dialects'], was supervised by Eduard Sievers. We suggest that the account presented in Hinrichs et al. (2016) of Bloomfield's use of the term could apply directly to Prokosch, as in our view, Prokosch's usage in English reflects the prevailing usage in his native German in the late 19th century and early 20th century.

⁵ Bloomfield was trained extensively in Germanic linguistics and published a considerable amount of research in this area. Perhaps most importantly for the matter at hand, he studied in Leipzig and Göttingen in 1913-1914, where he worked with some of the giants in the field, including Karl Brugmann, August Leskien, and Jacob Wackernagel. An anonymous referee reminds us that Bloomfield may well also have known Gustav Weigand, an important Albanologist in Germany at the time (as demonstrated by works like Weigand 1913, 1914), during his stint in Leipzig. See Moulton (1970) and Pierce (2009) for additional details on Bloomfield's Germanic work.

The counterpoint to this is that Prokosch's own usage changed later in his career (although Bloomfield's own usage apparently never did). A search of the electronic version of Prokosch (1939), available through <babel.hathitrust.org>, conducted on October 18, 2021, for example, yielded four hits for *Albanian*, e.g., 'Roughly speaking, the palatal articulation prevailed mainly in the eastern half of the Indo-European territory, but *Albanian*, a satem language, is farther west than Greek, while Tocharian, in the extreme east, is a kantum language' (Prokosch 1939: 45). A similar search for *Albanese* yielded no results. This suggests that Prokosch changed his usage from *Albanese* to *Albanian* in later work. That he might have changed his usage to be more in line with the prevailing terminology in the United States in the first half of the 20th century is not really surprising. At the same time, given that Prokosch (1939) was published posthumously, we cannot definitively rule out the possibility that this change was made by someone other than Prokosch himself.⁶ But the most important point here is that Prokosch used the term *Albanese* in his earlier work, i.e., at the time when Bloomfield worked most closely with him.

To the second point, Bloomfield's admiration for Prokosch is obvious in a number of places in his work, most clearly in his obituary of Prokosch (Bloomfield 1938). This text is full of Bloomfield's praise for Prokosch, as the following quotations (out of several possible) demonstrate:

Eduard Prokosch found it possible to work sixteen hours a day; he forgot nothing that he had attentively heard or read; he did not know the meaning of worry, pain, or fear and he dealt kindly and understandingly with people and with dogs. His knowledge was vast, not only in his professional domain ... but also in apparently remote matters of science and of practical life (Bloomfield 1938: 311).

In the summer of 1906 I came, fresh out of college, to Madison, to be looked over for an assistantship.... The kindly Professor Hohlfeld delegated Prokosch, one of his young instructors, to entertain me for the day. On a small table in Prokosch's dining room there stood a dozen technical books ... and in the interval before lunch Prokosch explained to me their use and content. By the time we sat down to the meal, a matter perhaps of fifteen

⁶ Since, however, Hans Kurath states in the foreword to Prokosch (1939) that "Galley proof of the book had been read" by Prokosch, we do not want to make too much out of the timing of the publication.

minutes, I had decided that I should always work in linguistics. At the end of the two years of pupilhood that followed, I knew no greater intellectual pleasure than to listen to Prokosch (Bloomfield 1938: 311-312).

In light of Bloomfield's admiration for Prokosch, it is entirely plausible that Bloomfield adopted various aspects of his own technical usage from Prokosch.

Our third point concerns the stage of his career when Bloomfield worked most closely with Prokosch. As noted above, Bloomfield studied with Prokosch from 1906 to 1908, starting when he was 19 and finishing when he was 21. At the time, then, Bloomfield was a young man (and exceptionally young for a graduate student) at a very early stage of his scholarly career, and thus presumably very open to influences from other scholars and mentors. It is therefore entirely unsurprising that Bloomfield adopted at least one of the terms used by his main academic mentor, even though it was different from mainstream Anglophone usage, and then retained this usage throughout his scholarly career, even into the 1930s when Prokosch himself had changed his usage (as noted above, this assumes that Prokosch was responsible for the use of *Albanian* in Prokosch 1939). It is especially unsurprising that Bloomfield did this with the name of a language that was particularly obscure in the early 20th century and remains understudied today. It would have been considerably more surprising for Bloomfield to have adopted a Germanism for a much more familiar language like French (say something like **Frantsisch*).

In sum, we propose the following account: Bloomfield's use of *Albanese* instead of *Albanian* is most directly due to his teacher and mentor Eduard Prokosch. This claim is based on Prokosch's own usage of the term *Albanese*, Bloomfield's deep admiration of Prokosch, and Bloomfield's interactions with Prokosch at a very early stage of his academic career, when he would have been particularly open to influences from Prokosch. Bloomfield's use of the term was then reinforced by his exposure to Germanophone scholars and scholarship, as argued in Hinrichs et al (2016). As noted above, we further suggest that the account of Hinrichs et al. (2016) of Bloomfield's use of the term could apply to Prokosch. Thus, Bloomfield's use of *Albanese*, we suggest, derives directly from Prokosch's use of the term and indirectly from the common German usage of the late 19th and early 20th centuries that Prokosch himself was naturally a party to.

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