



MËSIMI I PARË

1. Bisedë (Conversation)

Hysniu: Tung Xhev!

Xhevdeti: Tung shoqi! Qysh je vëlla? A je mirë?

Hysniu: Krejt rahat, shëndosh jam. Falemnderit. A je lodhë ti?

Xhevdeti: Nga pak, vëlla. A ka najsen të re?

Hysniu: Jo. Njiherë jo. Hajt pra. Shëndet. Mirupafshim!

Xhevdeti: Po, mirupafshim. Shifemi prapë.

Fjalorth (Vocabulary)

All the vocabulary presented in these lessons is listed in an Albanian to English glossary at the end of the book for ease of reference.

Hysni, Xhevdet (Xhev)	Albanian male names	nga pak	a little, a bit
tung (short for <i>tungat, tungjatjeta</i>)	hi! hello!	ka	there is
shok/shoqi	friend, mate	najsen	anything, something
qysh	how	të re	new
(ti) je	you are (familiar form)	jo	no
vëlla	brother/mate	njiherë	at the moment, right now
mirë	good, fine, okay	hajt pra	okay then
krejt	completely, entirely	pra	then
rahat	fine	shëndet (pronounced: <i>shnet</i>)	(good) health
shëndosh	healthy, in good health	mirupafshim	goodbye
(pronounced: <i>shnosh</i>)		po	yes
falemnderit	thank you	shifemi	we'll see each other
a	(question marker)	prapë	again
a je lodhë ti?	are you okay?		

2. Sqarime (Explanations)

a) The standard Albanian word for ‘hello’, *tungjatjeta*, literally translating as ‘may your life be lengthened’, is regularly abbreviated in conversation to either *tungat* or the more colloquial *tung*, as in the conversation above.

b) To address a close friend in a similar way to how one might say ‘mate’ in English, Albanians tend to use the word *shok* (literally ‘friend, comrade’) or the word *vëlla*, which literally means ‘brother’, although it is more often than not simply used to refer to a close friend.

c) Kosovar and Macedonian Albanians particularly use a myriad of expressions for saying ‘how are you?’ or ‘how’s it going?’ As well as the literal *qysh je?*, a popular expression is *a je lodhë?*, literally meaning ‘are you tired?’, two variations on which are: *a je mërzitë?* (literally ‘are you upset?’) and *a po plakesh?* (literally ‘are you getting old?’) The standard response to all three is *nga pak*, i.e. ‘a little’, whether one is tired/upset/getting old, or not!

d) The word *shëndet* literally means ‘health’, but it is used as an expression on its own to mean either ‘(I wish you) good health’, or ‘bless you’, in response to somebody sneezing.

e) Just as the Albanian word for ‘hello’ (*tungjatjeta*) is actually made up of a number of words sandwiched together, the word for ‘goodbye’ (*mirupafshim*) is also made up of several words, literally meaning ‘may we see each other in good times’.

3. Gramatikë (Grammar)

a) The verbs ‘to be’: *me qenë*, *me konë* and ‘to have’: *me pasë*

Although there is a pattern to most verbs in Albanian, the verbs ‘to be’ and ‘to have’, as in many other languages, are irregular, and their present tense forms in Geg Albanian are given below. A point to note is that, also as in many other languages, Albanian does not normally need to use subject pronouns (‘I, you, he, we etc.’), as verbs have specific endings to mark which person is doing the action/in the state concerned. The present tense forms of *jam* and *kam* are as follows:

jam/jem/jom	I am	kam/kem/kom	I have
je	you are	ke/ki	you have
është/â	he/she/it is	ka	he/she/it has
jemi/jena	we are	kemi/kena	we have
jeni	you are	keni/kini	you have
janë	they are	kanë	they have

Geg Albanian pronunciation tends to differ from region to region, and the forms *jam* and *kam* above can be pronounced in the three possible ways shown. *Jemi* and *jena* and *kemi* and *kena* are virtually interchangeable alternatives, although the *jena* and *kena* forms tend to be used in less formal registers.

b) Expressing ‘you’ in Geg Albanian

Albanian has two forms for the English ‘you’. *Ti*, used in the conversation above, is a familiar form, used to address family, friends, subordinates etc, and its form in the present tense of the verb ‘to be’ is *(ti) je*. *Ju* and the verb form *jeni* are used to address more than one ‘you’, regardless of how friendly or not the speaker may be with those people, OR as a polite form used when addressing strangers, superiors or anyone to whom the speaker wishes to show respect. A note of caution, however - in practice, Albanians will quite freely swap between the two, often in the same sentence, and even the closest of friends can find themselves being addressed as *ju* one minute, and *ti* the next.

c) 'There is, there are'

The word *ka*, used in the conversation above, literally means 'he, she, it has', but it is also the translation of the English 'there is' or 'there are', as in *a ka najsën të re?*, 'is there any news?' The plural verb form *kanë* can also be used to express the equivalent of 'there are'.

d) Expressing a question

Questions in Albanian can either be formed by changing one's intonation, as in English, or by prefixing the sentence with the question marker *a*, hence *a je mirë?*, 'are you okay?' versus *je mirë*, 'you are okay', and *a je lodhë?*, literally 'are you tired?', as opposed to *je lodhë*, 'you are tired'.

4. Ushtrime (Practise)

- How would you say, 'hello! How are you?'
- Reply that you are fine, and ask 'how are you?' using a different expression.
- Ask whether there is any news.
- Reply that, just at the minute, there's nothing new.
- End the conversation by saying 'goodbye, we'll see each other again'.
- Translate into English:

Jena mirë, falemnderit.

A jeni rahat, shëndosh?

Xhevdeti është mirë njëherë.

Po, jem lodhë nga pak.

5. Zakone dhe histori (Customs and history)

a) A point to remember when face to face with an Albanian is that Albanians shake their heads to indicate 'yes', and nod their heads for 'no'!

b) Geg Albanian is the national dialect of the UN-administered province of Kosovo, the northern and western regions of Macedonia, bordering on Kosovo and eastern Albania, Montenegro, northern Albania as far south as the Shkumbin river (including Tirana and Elbasan) and most of the Albanian diaspora in Europe and the USA. Geg is characterised by nasal vowels, monosyllabic words, little standardisation and a large number of words of Turkish origin, mainly absent from the Tosk and Arbëresh dialects of southern Albania, Greece and parts of Italy. The first recorded sentence ever found in Albanian, dating from a 1462 translation of the Latin baptism service, was in Geg, and Geg formed the basis of the original standard Albanian language in the 1920s. A standardised spelling for written Geg Albanian was also established at Pristina University in 1964, although it has never been widely applied.

c) All ethnic Albanians, wherever they live, and whatever their official statehood, consider the Albanian National Anthem, *Himni i Flamurit* ('The Hymn of the Flag'), to be their own. The *Himni i Flamurit*, written by Aleksandër "Asdren" Drenova in the late 19th century, was adopted as the national anthem of independent Albania in November 1912, but is now sung at all solemn occasions by ethnic Albanians in Kosovo and Macedonia especially, as a further affirmation of their separate identity.



d) The Albanian national flag, consisting of the double-headed black eagle (*shqiponja* or *shkaba dykrenore*) on a red background, derives from the banner of the Albanian national hero, Gjergj Kastrioti-Skënderbeu, known in English as Skanderbeg, who held the invading Ottomans at bay from the northern Albanian mountains in the first half of the fifteenth century, until his death in 1468.

MËSIMI I DYTË

1. Bisedë (Conversation)

Beqiri: Mirëmëngjesi nuse! Qysh po kalon?

Selvetja: Mirëmjesi Beqir! Boll mirë po shkojnë punët. Ça ka të re najsen?

Beqiri: Kejt me të vjetra njëherë. Shka po bân Mirsati tash? A po punon hala në Prizren?

Selvetja: Jo. Hala jo. Ai është tue punuë në Ferizaj momentalisht. P'e ndihmon kryetarin e partisë në Ferizaj me fushatën zgjedhore.

Beqiri: Ku ku! Të lumtë dora! Gëzohem qi ka një punë të mirë. Shpresoj qi e ka rrogën shumë e mirë!

Selvetja: Jo, jo, vëlla. Fatkeqësisht, fiton veç pesëdhjetë euro në muej.

Beqiri: Nejse, motra jeme. Mos u bân merak. Me kejt ato pare qi po t'i çon vllau yt pej Gjermanisë, s'ki nevojë për kurrgjâ hiç.

Selvetja: Keni të drejtë. Unë e Mirsati jena shumë mirënjohës.

Beqiri: Hajde pra... Dëgjohemi prapë. Të fala i bân Mirsatis!

Selvetja: Të fala edhe juve. Mirë u dëgjofshim!

Fjalorth (Vocabulary)

mirëmëngjesi/mirëmjesi	good morning		surprise)
nuse (f)	married woman/bride	të lumtë dora!	good on him! he's done well!
kalon	getting on/passing		
boll	very, really (colloq.)	gëzohem	I'm glad
shkojnë	(they) go, are going	qi	that
punët (fpl)	things, matters	punë (f)	job, work
ça/shka	what	shpresoj	I hope
me të vjetra	there's no news (lit. 'with old')	rrogë (f)	salary, wages
bân	(he/she) does, is doing	shumë	very/a lot of
qe tash	right now	pare (f)	money
punon	(he/she) works, is working	fatkeqësisht	unfortunately
hala	still, yet	fiton	(he/she) wins, is winning
Prizren, Ferizaj	towns in Kosovo	veç	only
ai është tue punuë	he is working	pesëdhjetë	fifty
momentalisht	at the moment	euro (f)	euro (unit of currency in Kosovo)
ndihmon	(he/she) helps, is helping	muej (m)	month
kryetar (m)	leader, chairman	nejse	never mind/whatever
e partisë (f)	of the party	motra (f)	sister
me	with	jeme	my
fushatë (f)	campaign	mos u bân merak	don't worry
zgjedhor/e	electoral	çon	(he/she) sends, is sending
ku ku!	(exclamation of admiration or	yt	your
	admiration or	p(r)ej	from

nevojë (f)	need	mirënjohës	grateful
kurrgjâ	nothing	dëgjohemi prapë	we'll talk again
hiç	(nothing) at all	të fala	regards
keni të drejtë	you're right	juve	to you
dhe (shortened to 'e' in conversation)	and	mirë u dëgjofshim	goodbye (on the telephone)

2. Sqarime (Explanations)

a) Other than the informal and “all-day” greeting *tung* or *tungjatjeta*, Albanian also has literal equivalents of the English ‘good day’, ‘good morning’ etcetera. As you know, the Albanian word for ‘good’ is *mirë*. The standard words for ‘day’, ‘morning’, ‘evening’ and ‘night’ are: *dita*, *mëngjesi* (or *mjesi*), *mbrâmje* and *natë*. Therefore the greetings are (written as one word): *mirëdita*, *mirëmëngjesi*, *mirëmbërâma* and the slightly different *natën e mirë*. Just as ‘goodbye’ in Albanian, *mirupafshim*, literally means ‘may we see each other in good times’, ‘goodbye’ on the telephone, *mirë u dëgjofshim*, literally means ‘may we hear each other in good times’.

b) Just as male friends are often referred to in Geg conversation as *vëlla* or *shoqi* (literally ‘brother’ or ‘friend’), female friends or associates are generally referred to as *motra* (‘sister’) or even *nuse* (literally meaning ‘bride’), if the woman is known to be married. The female equivalent of *shoqi* is *shoqe*.

c) Informal Geg conversations often linger for some time on pleasantries and set phrases requiring set responses. The most common of these is the response to *a ka najsën të re?* (‘is there any news?’), which is almost invariably *jo, k(r)ejt me të vjetra*. This literally means, ‘no, everything’s old’! Having said this, the speaker will then go on to say what *is* new!

3. Gramatikë (Grammar)

a) The present (indicative) tense of the verb - first conjugation (*Zgjedhimi i parë*)

In the conversation above, you came across several verbs in the present tense. Most of these verbs belong to what is known as ‘the first conjugation’. In a nutshell, first conjugation verbs in Albanian end in the letter *-j* in the first person singular of the present tense - e.g., *punoj* - I work, *shkoj* - I go, *bâj* - I do, etcetera. As in many other languages, in Albanian it is not necessary to use the words for ‘I, you, he, she’ etc, as the ending of the verb clearly shows who is doing the action. The full present tense of the verbs *punoj* (work) and *bâj* (do, make) is given (with subject pronouns) below:

(unë) punoj	I work	(unë) bâj	I do, make
(ti) punon	you work	(ti) bân	you do, make
(ai/ajo) punon	he/she works	(ai/ajo) bân	he/she does
(ne/na) punojmë	we work	(na) bâjmë	we do, make
(ju) punoni	you work	(ju) bâni	you do, make
(ata/ato) punojnë	they work	(ata/ato) bâjnë	they do, make

The verbs *shkoj*, *kaloj*, *shpresoj*, *ndihmoj* etc from the conversation above form their present tenses in the same way, as do verbs such as *hij* (‘I enter’) and *ruej* (‘I guard’).

As well as meaning ‘I work’, ‘we do’ etc, these same forms can also translate the English progressive ‘I am working’, ‘we are doing’ etc. If, however, you wish to emphasise the continuous nature of the action in Albanian, you can add the word *po* before the verb - e.g., *A po punon hala në Prizren?* ‘**Is** he still working in Prizren?’

b) The noun - gender and case

Also as in many other languages, all Albanian nouns are classified as either masculine or feminine, and this determines their case endings, forms of adjectives used with them and so on. An older neuter gender has now largely been replaced by the masculine gender, although some neuter nouns do still exist (*kryet* meaning ‘head’, for example).

Albanian has no actual word for ‘the’. Instead, all nouns are either ‘definite’ (‘the’) or ‘indefinite’ (‘a, an’). All the nouns given in the vocabularies accompanying the conversations are in the indefinite form. Hence: *nevojë* means ‘need’ or ‘a need’, and *kryetar* means ‘leader’ or ‘a leader’. Occasionally, if you need to stress that a noun is indefinite, you can place the number ‘one’, *nji*, in front of the indefinite form.

Kryetar is a masculine noun. MOST indefinite nouns ending in consonants (but usually not *-l*, *-ll* or *-rr*) are masculine. In order to translate ‘the leader’ in Albanian you add *-i* to the end of the masculine noun - e.g., *kryetari*. Masculine nouns ending in *-g*, *-h*, *-k* or a stressed vowel in their indefinite form, however, add the letter *-u* to give their definite form - e.g., *shok*, ‘a friend’, *shoku*, ‘the friend’.

Nevojë is a feminine noun. MOST nouns that end in *-ë* or *-e* in the indefinite form are feminine. In order to translate ‘the need’ in Albanian, you remove the final *-ë* and replace it with *-a*, hence *nevoja*, ‘the need’.

As well as genders and definite and indefinite forms, Albanian unfortunately also has a case system! *Kryetari* and *nevoja* are the forms used when the noun is the subject of the sentence, also known as the ‘nominative’ case. Hence:

Kryetari punon në Prishtinë. ‘The leader works in Prishtina’.

If the noun is the direct object of the verb, then it appears in the so-called ‘accusative’ case, which in the definite singular is normally marked with the ending *-n*.

E.g., *Ai e ndihmon kryetarin*. ‘He is helping the leader’.

Ajo po e bân punën. ‘She is doing the job’.

The accusative case is also used after certain prepositions, including *me* (‘with’), *në* (‘in, on’), *për* (‘for’), *mbi* (‘on top of’), *nën* (‘under’) and *nëpër* (‘throughout’) as in the conversation above: *...me fushatën zgjedhore*. ‘...with the election campaign’.

c) Adjectives

In Albanian, all adjectives are divided into two types. They are either ‘articled’ adjectives or ‘non-articled’ adjectives! ‘Articled’ adjectives are so-called because they must be preceded by an ‘article’ which agrees with the noun in gender, number and case. For masculine and feminine nouns in the nominative singular, these articles are *i* and *e* respectively. Some articulated adjectives *also* add an *-e* when used with feminine nouns - e.g., *i keq* but *e keqe*, and *i madh* but *e madhe*.

E.g., *Ai është shok i mirë*. ‘He’s a good friend’. *Puna është shumë e keqe*. ‘The work is really bad’. *Vllavi i madh dhe motra e madhe nuk janë këtu*. ‘My big brother and big sister are not here’.

‘Non-articled’ adjectives are used on their own, without these articles. However, they still ‘agree’ with the gender of the noun that they qualify. In the singular, an *-e* would be added to the end of the adjective if it accompanies a feminine noun.

E.g., *Fushata zgjedhore* - ‘the electoral campaign’, but *shoqi jem është mirënjohës boll* - ‘my friend is really grateful’.