


<p>THE STANDARD AND ITS APPLICATION IN SCHOOL</p>		<p style="text-align: center;">Education</p> <p>Keywords: standard language, language trends, competence-based curriculum, application of the norm.</p>
<p>Eneida Pema</p>	<p>Department of Albanian Language. University of Tirana. Tirana – Albania.</p>	

Abstract

In order to follow up on the trend and development of spoken language standards, we focused on their application in school. The study targeted the 6th, 9th, and 12th parallel classes of students. These stages of their linguistic education were chosen as particularly important for the closure of the relevant cycles. Given that the knowledge subject to this survey is very recent for this target group, its members are considered relevant for the research. According to the new school curriculum, students have 53 hours of teaching across the first 9 grades and 14 hours throughout the middle education. However, the findings show a problematic situation. In addition to tests for the students of these classes and the findings collected, questionnaires were also developed for teachers of orthography. The teachers were asked about the level of coverage of orthography in our school texts with the new competence-based curriculum, and the methodologies used for our students to be able to absorb the standard. The results of the survey were of priority importance considering the latest trends they identify in the spoken language, as well as their extent in users, which is afterwards compared with the knowledge obtained through the texts. The research results are expressed in the form of suggestions to help studies by linguists as a modest contribution of practical value for further deepening our knowledge of language study as an evolving process.

Introduction

The creation of standard Albanian language in the Orthography Congress in 1972 is a great achievement of the Albanian linguistics and culture. This was made possible after the constant efforts of linguists and intellectuals since the National Renaissance and further until its crowning. This unified written language was used in all Albanian territories and throughout this period played its social and cultural role and had a nation-wide unifying effect. However, new circumstances require linguists to respond quickly through a language policy, which should aim at expanding communication skills, increasing the flexibility of standard norms by means of further elaboration. It is the job of the scholars of the standard language to determine trends in development, to research spoken and written language, changes required by the time and which make it possible to include and make part of the norm those elements which help make the standard language lively and flexible.

A lot of attention has been given to this phenomenon by linguists, who are increasingly being involved in amending the standard. The linguist Rexhep Ismajli says: "The standard needs changes, which are in turn a requirement of the time we are living in". Likewise, linguists such as E.Likaj, E.Hysa, Gj.Shkurtaj, K.Topalli, in their recent studies hold the same view. However, what is being proposed by the linguists does not pose difficulties to be accepted by users, as they mainly relate to simplification of rules, avoidance of dimporphics, etc. They also continue to re-emphasize the observance of the existing norm.

The application of standard Albanian in our schools is of great importance to the language level of our users. Through the orthographic knowledge which is taught in basic education and is further strengthened until the pre-university education, the spoken and written discourse presents a clear picture of the quality of the assimilation of the standard, the problems it faces in its journey from the source to its own destination. Teaching curricula, which sometimes change, as well as textbooks with the respective curricula, insufficient policies and insufficient number of teachers for providing a good level of formation, are also some of the factors which shape the current language situation.

Method

From the methodology point of view, a whole set of qualitative methods has been used for this study, such as: a) A survey, which enables students and teachers to provide information on study issues; b) Focus groups, with 9th and 12th grade students. c) Analysis of Albanian language textbooks for grades 6-12.

The focus group participants were teachers and students who work with textbooks, according to the new competence-based curriculum. All of these have contributed to identifying the problems encountered in working with these texts, as well as the trends and developments that dictate the use of the standard. The survey was conceived in the form of questionnaires, which were filled out by 80 students for each of the 6-9-12 grades, in total 240 pupils, and 6 subject teachers of these students. This survey has been accompanied by testing exercises, designed according to the level of students for each class.

Analyses, results and conclusions

Given the errors and uncertainties of the students in the use and implementation of the standard, the following cases have been selected and tested, which are related to: the use of capital letters, the plural form of names, the use of demonstrative pronouns, and the use of verbs. Also, there have been critically reviewed some issues regarding orthographic knowledge in the current texts developed under new programs, according to competence-based curricula.

With regards to the use of capital letters, there were reviewed the cases listed in the table below, where there are shown the percentages of use, consistent or not with the orthography. It turns out that the use of the capital letter in writing the names of institutions and title holders is predominant when they present an official nomenclature.¹

No.	Use as per the standard	Grade 6 (%)	Grade 9 (%)	Grade 12 (%)	Non-standard use	Grade 6 (%)	Grade 9 (%)	Grade 12 (%)
1	deputeti i Kuvendit Popullor	35%	34%	32%	Deputeti i Kuvendit Popullor	65%	66%	68%
2	presidenti i Republikës	34%	36%	29%	Presidenti i Republikës	66%	64%	71%
3	Ali pashë Gucia	34%	35%	28%	Ali Pashë Gucia	66%	65%	72%
4	doktor profesor Aleksandër Xhuvani,	32%	35%	36%	Doktor Profesor Aleksandër Xhuvani,	68%	65%	64%
5	sulltan Murati II	29%	30%	31%	Sulltan Murati II	71%	70%	69%

In the writing of local toponyms, the form of local denomination should be respected as well as avoiding sub-dialect phonetic variations (e.g. Lushnje); the titles of the textbooks should be written in the

¹ E.Likaj, "Issues of Morphological Norm in Albanian Literary Language", Philological Studies I (Çështje të normës morfologjike në gjuhën letrare shqipe, Studime filologjike I), Tiranë, 1985, pg.113

definite form, e.g.: *Teksti: Gjuhë shqipe, Matematikë, Letërsi – Gjuha shqipe, Matematika, Letërsia*. The geographic names with two or more components (*Liçeni i Shkodrës*) each one of the words should be written in capital letter.²

no	Use as per the standard	Grade 6 (%)	Grade 9 (%)	Grade 12 (%)	Non-standard use	Grade 6 (%)	Grade 9 (%)	Grade 12 (%)
1	kepi i Rodonit	34%	36%	29%	Kepi i Rodonit	66%	64%	71%
2	kroi i Zejmenit	35%	34%	32%	Kroi i Zejmenit	65%	66%	68%
3	liçeni i Prespës	34%	36%	29%	Liçeni i Prespës	66%	64%	71%
4	liçeni i Shkodrës	29%	30%	31%	Liçeni i Shkodrës	71%	70%	69%
5	lumi i Matit	35%	34%	32%	Lumi i Matit	65%	66%	68%

1. f. 73 Names of state officials' positions, those of political and military positions, ranks and religious titles, et., should be written in small letters.
2. § 78 Orthography of the Albanian Language, 1973
 - In the field of orthography, from the testing of use it results that in the names which end in *një* and *nje*, both versions are equally valid (foshnje/foshnjë, vishnje/vishnjë).
 - Ethnic of Albanian origin are noticed to be written in the highest percentage with the suffix **-j** (-jan): (*matjan, lezhjan*), while ethnics of foreign descent, which have **-i** in the theme, are written with **-i**: *bolivian, irakian*, etc.
 - Words such as *tramvaj, hokej, koktej*, etc, are noticed to be written with **-j** at a high percentage.
 - It has been noticed that the words *angjin, gjips* are at a high percentage written with **-g**: *anginë, gjips*.

“Among the grammatical categories of the noun system, what is characterized by more fluctuations is that of the number”.³ Language developments represent a complex situation, full of uncertainties, avoidance of the general rules. Thus, in the field of morphology, regarding the plural of names, we have listed below the cases considered:

- a. The plural form of the nouns such as: *teatër, kablllo, kuadër*, is noticed to be used in the form of: *kablla, kuadra, teatra*.
- b. The plural form of the noun *xham* is noticed to be mostly used as *xhama*.
- c. It is noticed the use of two versions: *pus-pusa* (as a free version *pus-puse*), *stof-stofra, grusht/grushta/grushte, çengel/çengelë/çengela, gisht-gishta/gishtërinj*,
- d. It is noticed mostly the use of the plural form with **-a**: *gisht-gishta* and *nip-nipa* (dhe jo *nipër*). Also: *antigaz-antigaze/antigazra, fishekzjarr-fishekzjarre, autobus-autobusë/autobusa, drapër-drapra/draprinj, barbun-barbunj/barbunë, prift-prif-ër, mbret-mbret-ër, dreq-dreq-ër, prind-prind-ër*.

² R. Memushaj, "Grammatical norms, standard Albanian" ("Norma gramatikore", Shqipja standarde", Tiranë 2005, pg.61

³ Contemporary Albanian Language Dictionary (Fjalori i gjuhës së sotme shqipe), Tiranë, 1984.

It seems that even in the cases below, again the suffix **-a** prevail in inanimates *legenë, sergjene* bringing the most used versions *legena, sergjena*, as per analogy with *trena*. The plural form of the inanimate *sergjen* seems unstable since it is observed also in the form *sergjenë*⁵, and *sergjenë*⁶.

Nouns whose theme ends in -en		
suffix -ë	suffix -a	suffix -e
legenë, kapitenë	trena	Sergjene



It is noted that users are not using the ambigender of names which make the plural with **-ra**: *fshat-ra të elektrizuara, ujëra të ftohta, leshra të dredhura*, etc. We propose that they remain in masculine gender: *fshat-ra të elektrizuar, ujëra të ftohtë, leshra të dredhur*, etc.

No.	Use as per the standard	Grade 6 (%)	Grade 9 (%)	Grade 12 (%)	Non-standard use	Grade 6 (%)	Grade 9 (%)	Grade 12 (%)
1	<i>fshat-ra të elektrizuara</i>	40%	38%	37%	<i>fshat-ra të elektrizuar</i>	60%	62%	63%
2	<i>ujëra të ftohta</i>	38%	36%	35%	<i>ujëra të ftohtë</i>	62%	64%	65%
3	<i>leshra të dredhura</i>	39%	37%	37%	<i>leshra të dredhur</i>	61%	63%	63%

▪ For the replacement of the suffix **-nj** of the plural with **-j**, there is first a need to see the connection of the plural suffix with the type of the theme. Thus, in feminine gender nouns: *qershë, shtëpi, rini*, etc., the plural does not take a suffix. In the nouns of the masculine gender, the noun *mi* does not become *minj* in plural, because it does not end in **-n** in order to have a plural with **-nj**. Following the usage test, it results that in the masculine gender nouns of this theme noted in paragraph 29 of the Orthography it does not result that the suffix **-nj** is replaced with **-j**, but that it will not be used at all, and the plural form is equal to the single form. *Bari /disabari; Ari, çilimi, kallajxhi, sharrëxhi, komshi, dajrexhi, jabanxhi, axhami, të zi, tëri*. It is noted that all these nouns in definite single form take the article **-u**.

The suffix **-nj** of the plural form is generated in the nouns of oxytonetheme in **-n**: *mulli (n)-plural: mullinj, pe- penj, gju-gjunj, kalli-kallinj, gji-gjinj, kushëri-kushërinj, turi-turinj, ulli-ullinj, hu-hunj, kërcu-kërcunj*, etc. The following nouns also belong to this same theme: *ftua-ftoi-ftonj, dragua-dragoi-dragonj, patkua-patkoi-patkonj, përrua-përroi-përrenj*, etc. For all these nouns, as a result of dominance of use with the highest percentages, it is noted that they have the plural in **-j**.

The plural ending **-nj** is used also with nouns with a pronounced-**a** in the theme: *budalla-budallenj*, *maskara-maskarenj* where here as well needs to be replaced with -j. It is noted that **- j** is also predominantly used with the following nouns: *lumej, lëmej, të këqij, të mëdhej*.

- For the forms of inflections of the adjectives *i shkurtër* and *i shkurtë* according to their use, it is noted that predominantly both forms are accepted as free versions.
- It is noted that in adverbs with suffixes-**as/azi** such as *barkas/barkazi, haptas/haptazi* both forms are used in free use.
- The use of the demonstrative pronouns **ato, këto** has been generalized by the user also for the masculine gender instead of **ata, këta**, e.g.: *Djemtë u vonuan. Ato nuk arritën në kohë. Këto persona, këto lojtarë, ato studentë, ato mësues, ato libra* etc.

It is also noted that quite a generalised use is found in the forms: *nga mua, te mua, tek ty*, instead of the standard forms: *nga unë, nga ti, tek unë, te ti*, etc.

Also it is noted that the following terms are widely used: *neve, juve* also for the denominative case instead of **ne, ju**: *neve duhet të jemi aty, neve jemi të brengosur; kush jeni juve, juve folët mire*, etc.

The replacement of the accusative case with the respective preposition is also quite frequent. *Në/për/mbi/me* should be used with **ju, ne** and not *neve*.

- Also the forms: *na pa neve* and *ju pa juve* instead of: *na pa ne, ju pa ju*, are noted to have quite an extensive use.

No.	According to the standard	Grade 6 (%)	Grade 9 (%)	Grade 12 (%)	Non- standard use	Grade 6 (%)	Grade 9 (%)	Grade 12 (%)
1	<i>Këta persona</i>	39%	37%	37%	<i>Këto persona</i>	61%	63%	63%
2	<i>Ata libra</i>	35%	34%	32%	<i>Ato libra</i>	65%	66%	68%
3	<i>Nga unë</i>	34%	36%	29%	<i>Nga mua</i>	66%	64%	71%
4	<i>Tek unë</i>	35%	34%	32%	<i>Te mua</i>	65%	66%	68%
5	<i>Te ti</i>	38%	36%	35%	<i>Tek ty</i>	62%	64%	65%

- The forms of the active nouns: *tregues, dëgjues, mësues, përfaqësues*, etc., as well as the participle forms within the adjectives ending in **-shëm**: *e punueshme, e papërtueshme, i kushtueshëm* with bivowel-**ue** are noticed to have an extensive use in the following forms: *e pranushme, i kushtushëm, i papërtushëm*.

- There is no notice of the extensive use of the *gheg* participle form as part of the analytical forms of the past: *kam la-jam la, kisha pi-isha pi, pata kritiku*, etc.

Participles in the use of the infinitive: *me thënë, me lënë, me marrë, me nxjerrë, me vjelë, me mbjellë, me pasë* etc., are not noticed to be used as free forms, except for the cases of stylistic use.

- For the verbs which in the first person singular of the indicative mood are allowed to take **-tand-s**: *avit-avis, bezdit-bezdis, dremit-dremis, përgatit-përgatis, korit-koris, padit-padisetc.*, it turns out that the form ending in **-sis** more prevalent than the form ending in **-t**

- In the standard use, there is an increase use of the future form *do punoj, do laj, do bluaj, do vij*, etc., instead of: *do të punoj, do të laj, do të bluaj, do të vij*. It is worth it to follow this type of use, in case it will be widely and extensively used, also for the sake of language thriftiness.

Regarding the spelling knowledge in the textbooks, according to the new competence-based curriculum, I will focus on two issues: 1- treatment of language concepts and knowledge, concretely regarding the reflexive pronouns; 2- inclusion in language spelling knowledge in the school curricula.

In the Albanian language textbook 11, Mediaprint publishing house, with authors: Prof.as. E. Kapia, L. Murthi. (Upgraded Reprint 2018), p. 19, the topic reflexive pronouns, the forms given are not correct: "... in the Albanian language the words: *vete-vetja, vetvete-vetvetja* play the role of the reflexive pronouns". According to the Albanian Language Grammar, it should be: "The words *vetja* and *vetvetja* serve as reflexive pronouns in the Albanian language. The definition given in the introductory part of the lesson, is incorrect because the forms *vete dhe vetvete* are forms of use when the reflexive pronoun is used with the prepositions *në, me, mbi, për*. Another problem encountered during the work with the students who are studying this text seems to be the wording: *In what form and case are the reflexive pronouns used with prepositions?* This question creates confusion, as no proper clarification has been given. The students are still not clear whether the reflexive pronoun has the category of form or not. Making reference to the Grammar of the Albanian Language 2002, we emphasize: ... "Reflexive pronoun is also used as a noun in the indefinite form. In this form it is used only in the accusative case with the preposition: *në, me, mbi, për* etc." In the text, this is only required but not clarified. The only explanation in this case, in the text, is: "The reflexive *veten* is used as a feminine gender noun, in the definite form, even though there is a preposition." There is no explanation for the student on the indefinite form, or a clarification by examples of what the uses in each case are (i.e. in the definite and indefinite forms). There is also no information on knowledge such as:

- The reflexive also does not have special form to distinguish its plural form, so it is only singular.
- The word **vetë** bonds with the reflexive pronoun becoming thus a pronoun.

In the Contemporary Albanian Language Dictionary, it is given as reflective pronoun, but in the lesson there is nowhere such definition made, despite it being used in the sentence without explaining it for the students.

- The lesson does not mention anything about the cases when the reflexive pronoun is used for persons and when it is used for objects, but it requires such a distinction to be made by the students in exercise 5 p. 20.

- **Writing of particles and prepositions** is a knowledge obtained in the 9th grade and it is nowhere explained for the students of 12th grade. No doubt this knowledge is difficult to be implemented. This legitimates the high error rate in standard use.

duke kënduar e duke brohoritur	√ 41%	duke kënduar e brohoritur	× 59%
pa u lodhur e pa u përpjekur	√ 38%	pa u lodhur e u përpjekur	× 62%
në verë, në vjeshtë e në dimër	√ 39%	në verë, vjeshtë e dimër	× 61%

- 4th grade students who are studying with the new competence-based curriculum write correctly at 80%, numerals 1-20. Problems represent the numerals: six, ten, twenty. Meanwhile, the difficulties encountered in the higher grades are related to the lack of treatment of this topic, as a separate case, both with the 9th-grade students or the high school students. Of course, in this case, student mistakes are justified by the lack of knowledge obtained. It should also be appreciated the attention given to this topic in the new curriculum and its treatment in the second grade of primary education. Cases such as: *dyzet mijë, dyqind mijë, një milion, njëzet e një, një mijë e nëntëqind e shtatëdhjetë e tre*, as well as the ordinal numeral: *(i,e) njëzetënjëtë, (i,e) pesëdhjetëegjashtë, (i,e) njëqindedytë, (i,e) njëmiliontë*) are where the most mistakes are noticed.

- The generalized use of the form *tre* is noticed instead of *tri*: *tre vajza, tre motra, tre ditë, tre ndeshje*, etc. The form *tri* is preserved only as composing part of the numeral *tridhjetë*. Regardless of the percentages and their dominance, it should be noted that for each case it is worth to expect what direction the language development will take.

Conclusions

The purpose of this study was the standard and its implementation in the school. The pursuit of new trends and developments in the language was also its key objective, which was based on critical and constructive analysis, with practical suggestions. It seeks to assist language scholars, language teachers and students by identifying the current use situation, its implementation in the school, and the wide range of trends that emerge in the implementation of the standard, qualities governed by internal laws of the language as a living, ever-evolving process.

Survey questionnaires completed by 80 students per each parallel, in total 240 students and 6 subject teachers of these students, contributed to the elaboration of orthographic issues under consideration, diagnosis of usage changes as deviations from the standard or its correct implementation, the way how these concepts have been treated in the new textbooks, according to competence-based curricula, processes which require continuous attention and suggestions on their path towards improvement and perfection.

From the conducted tests and surveys with subject teachers, a number of conclusions were reached on the use of the standard in our schools. Cases were tested in 3 parallels, respectively 6th, 9th and 12th and the results showed the extent of use of the most preferred form by the users of the norm. These results related to the implementation of the norm in the use of capital letters, plural of nouns, the use of ambigender nouns, the use of personal and demonstrative pronouns, the use of verbs, as well as the treatment of some orthographic issues in current textbooks.

Dynamism and innovation, as features of the tested group, bring in the new era of change, enable tracing linguistic trends in their natural manifestations. This leads us to conclude that continuous studies in the implementation of the norm should follow its evolution.

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