

FATHER JUSTIN RROTA FOR THE UNIFICATION OF LANGUAGES IN THE NEWSPAPER “POSTA E SHQYPNIËS”

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Abstract

The Magazine "Posta e Shqypniës" has played an important role in the political and cultural life during the years when the magazine was published (5 December 1916 - 23 November 1918). The newspaper in its first number echoed the call of “Komisisë Letrare të Shkodrës” (1916 - 1918), but also dine for discussion on scientific grounds linguistic planning, unified literary language issues. This was demonstrated in the article of Maxmilian Lamberts (published in German language) and the new Franciscan who had just completed his studies at Insburg, Father Justin Rrota. Precisely in this paper I will present the case for the unification of the languages in the writing of Father Justin Rrota in the newspaper “Posta e Shqypniës”. In his writings, Father Justin Rrota discussed on scientific basis for a literary norm and a standard spelling for Albanian language. “Posta e Shqypniës” published in its articles some articles about linguistic problems, where one of those was the unification of the Albanian language. So Father Justin Rrota published same articles about the same issue in the last numbers of this newspaper. He wrote some articles for the unification of the Italian, English, French, German, language. In this article he describes, how these languages are unified. This study has the intention to show the important role that the newspaper “Posta e Shqypniës” had for the unification of Albanian language, and at the same time the ideas about how this language can be unified by referring to other language unifications in some developed countries. Some study writings, with a scientific level for the period when they are published on the pages of this newspaper, which can be coherent in nowadays.

Keywords: *Standard, Unification, Dialect, Language, Article.*

- The newspaper *Posta e Shqypniës* and the Albanian language



The newspaper ‘*Posta e Shqypniës*’ has played an important role in the social and cultural life in the years when it was published (5 December 1916- 23 November 1918). This newspaper was published in two languages: Albanian and German. Shkodra was the city where the newspaper ‘*Posta e Shqypniës*’ was first published with the order of Military High Command of Austro-Hungary, after the foundation of *Komisia Letrare e Shkodrës*¹. This was published by Franciscan printing of monks twice a week. Gjergj Fishta was the director of the Albanian language whereas for the German language was responsible the Austrian philologist Maks Lamberc (Maximilian Lambertz). According to Fishta the newspaper was “*themelue për Kombin Shqypnar; veç po artikuj kanë me u botue edhe gjermanisht, qi edhe dheu i jashtëm të dijë do punë tona për të cilat Kombi mundet me pasë interesë*”. (founded for the Albanian nation; but the articles will be also published in the German language, in this way the broad land, other countries, would know some of our issues for which the nation might have interest)

The newspaper ‘*Posta e Shqypniës*’, has played an important role on the development and cultivation of the written language in the best and advanced variant of gegë areal. Since in its first number this newspaper echoed the call of ‘*Komisisë Letrare të Shkodrës*’ (1916-1918)².

Among the several articles with different topics, the newspaper ‘*Posta e Shqypniës*’ discussed on scientific bases of language planning about the issue of unified literary language. This was demonstrated in the several writings of Maximilian Lamberts (published in German) and the young Franciscan who had just finished the studies in Insburg Father Justin Rrota. The first research work of Maximilian Lamberts that was published on the first pages of this newspaper in the rubric of ‘‘Science, Art and Literature’’ was the article with the title ‘‘*Si lindën gjuhët e shkruara*’’³. (How were the written languages dawned). In this study he analyzed the languages with an old literature⁴. Mainly this study treated the history of Greek language creation and the problems of Latin language which was developed step by step in the written form of language like other languages. Like Maximilian Lamberts, Father Justin Rrota on the pages of this newspaper wrote some articles on the ‘‘civilized’’ languages, in order to present the best examples for Albanians to choose the correct way for the unification of Albanian language.

¹ Eqerem Çabej, ‘‘*Studime gjuhësore V*’’, Prishtinë, 1975, fq. 185

² Tomor Osmani, ‘‘*Komisia Letrare në Shkodër*’’, Shkodër 2004, fq. 15

³ Tefë Topalli, ‘‘*Maksimilian Lamberts-i dhe gazeta ‘Posta e Shqypniës*’’, Buletini shkencor, Universiteti ‘‘Luigj Gurakuqi’’, 2009, fq. 15

⁴ The newspaper *Posta e Shqypniës*, 10 Kallinduer 1917, fq. 4

This study has the intention to show the important role that the newspaper “*Posta e Shqypniës*” had for the unification of Albanian language, and at the same time the ideas about how this language can be unified by referring to other language unifications in some developed countries. Some study writings, with a scientific level for the period when they are published on the pages of this newspaper, which can be coherent in nowadays.

▪ Father Justin Rrota for the unification of languages



At. Justin Rrota 1869-1964

In the rubric “*Literaturë e hartë*” Father Justin Rrota published some articles with the title “*Permbi burrim të gjûhve letrare*”. In each article he presented on scientific bases the unification of literary language, especially for the unification of Italian, French, English and German language. The articles aimed that despite the informative issue for the unification of these languages, to show Albanians the ways of the unification of Albanian language.

These articles are writing with scientific level arguments that tell a hay level of Father Justin Rrota like a language.

The issue of language unification by the time when this magazine was printed was very discussed because the unification of language personified the unification of all Albanian people. He highlighted that in these short articles, everyone can see the way how literary languages of other countries are treated. These articles are written with scientific arguments that show the high level of the author as a linguist. Since the first article the author expressed that the ways for the unification of languages are not same. “*Gjuhët letrare as janë zhdrivillue gjithkund në t’njajtën mndyrë, as shkasi i përparimit të tyre s’âsht gjithkund nji doret. Por me gjithkta Shqyptarët, qi sod me sod merren me çashtje të gjûhës, do të mujn me ndi ndonji send, qi mundet me u shtî në pûnë për zhdrivillsim të gjûhës shqipe...*”⁵. (“*Literary languages are not developed in the same way everywhere and their development reason is not the same everywhere too. However, Albanians that today are studying the language issues, will hear something that might be used in the development issues of Albanian language*”

- The first article for the unification of languages refers to the Italian literary language issue. Since the beginning of the article is told that some other articles will be written on the unification of literary languages in some developed countries; on the source of Italian, French, English and German literary language.

⁵ The newspaper “*Posta e Shqypniës*”, artikulli “*Permbi burrim të gjûhvet letrare*”, 26 Qershuer 1918, Nr.54, fq 4

Regarding to the studies on the sources of Slav and Greek literary language, the author tells that for the unification of these languages, Dr. M. Lamberts had written in newspaper “*Posta e Shqypniës*” in the previous editions.

The main reason, despite informing how these languages were unified, Rrota highlights that with these group of articles wants to: “...me hi në çashtje të gjûhës letrare shqypë ...”⁶ (to be part of the Albanian literary language issue). The years 1916-1919, were the years when “*Komisia Letrare e Shkodrës*” was created and the main issue of Komisise was the unification of Albanian language. Because this issue was a hot discussion, Father Justin Rrota tried that with articles to tell Albanians and especially those who were working on the unification of the Albanian language, the way how literary languages of other countries were treated and the way they were developed. In this article the issue of Italian literary language is presented as old as the issue of the nation unification. In the article is described the work of Dante for the unification of the Italian language. The work of Dante “*De vulgari eloquio*”, counted 14 dialects of Italian language, but he did not choose any of them because no one answered his ideal. Literary language will take material from all the dialects. The general language of Italy would be that which would have more elements from all dialects and not from only one. The real unification of language happened in Italy during the humanism period in the middle of the XVI century. In that time Italy was full of purists (people who try to clean mother tongue from foreign words and choose words from the dialects to substitute them). The biggest MERITAT for the unification of Italian literary language go for two politicians and clever men Pjeter Bembo (1470- 1547) and Nikoll Machiavelli (1469-1527). Both these scholars were purists, both from Firenze and did not want to know for other dialects of Italy. Bembo during that period was apostolic vicar and later cardinal and used Latin literature. In his writings “*Prose della volgar lingua*”, used the theoretical concept the language of Firenze as a general language for the whole Italy. In that time was published the book of Françesk Fortunio “*Regole Grammaticali della volgar lingua*” which from his practice point of view, the language of Firenze was ordained as literary language for all Italy. The article continues with the history of selection of the literary language in Italy, with the contribution and several ideas given from important people in Italy trying to show Albanians one of the ways that might be used for the unification of the Albanian language. In this essay, the author stops at war for literary language of Machiavelli and Bembo. Why was the dialect of Firenze chosen as the dialect that would represent the Italian language? The factors that favored the selection of Firenze dialect were: geographical position, civilization and the development of this city, the rich literature, not forgetting Dante, Boccaccio and Petrarch. The dialect of Firenze took the name of the Italian language because all linguists and literals saw in this issue the campanili of Machiavelli. In the end of the article, considering the author as a “*diftim të shkurtë të historis s’gjûhës letrare italjane...*”⁷, (short telling of the history of the Italian literary language), it is

⁶ The newspaper “*Posta e Shqypniës*”, artikulli “*Permbi burrim të gjûhvet letrare*”, 26 Qershuer 1918, Nr.54, fq. 4

⁷ The newspaper “*Posta e Shqypniës*”, 26 Qershuer, 1919, Nr. 55, fq. 4

obvious that the Firenze dialect, “killed” other dialects with a rich and prosperous literature and not with “*arte della guerra*” (the art of war) of Machiavelli.

- On the pages of the newspaper “*Posta e Shqypniës*”, in the rubric of “*Literaturë e hartë*” continue the articles for the unification of languages from Father Justin Rrota. The second article with this theme treats the unification of the French language⁸. The article presents the history of the creation of French literary language on scientific bases. Since the beginning of the article is told the book where he was referred to write this article and the supportive literature for the article of the unification of Italian language. The language spoken in the French territory in the XI century was divided into four big dialects. In France these dialects were strong because did not exist a center, a capital, which should persuade other to work on the unification of the language. The dialect “*langue*”, which was firstly spoken in a part of France, and lately was spread in other sub dialects, time after time, reached the whole France. Today French language, continues the author, is made of three parts: the language people, loan-word and formed words. In 1694 the French academy published the biggest work of French language “*Dictionnaire*”, and republished in 1876. Everything told by the Academy was like Scriptures. The rules established from this academy were never omitted by anyone. An academy of a high level, compounded by specialists that recognized the issue of language. The academy had the full support of French government.

Father Justin Rrota reaches in the conclusion that for the formation of the French literary language was taken people who were competent on this field. Others who were not specialist in this field were not allowed to participate. The language is built by writers and scholars who knew very well the field of language. About 51.85% of all French national language is created by scholars and literals. Together with literals and scholars exists other ordinary people of the country that make the language as a whole.

- The next article for the unification of languages, in the rubric “*Literaturë e Hartë*” Father Justin Rrota will treat the unification of English language⁹. The article gives a historic view of the development of this language, with its ups and downs. The dominance of French language in the English territory, the French speaking in schools, high society, in offices, churches and preaching has disappeared the English language. But people continued to speak English and after some time began the big substitution of French language which was in favor of the national language. Later, the French language was banned in schools and institutions. Because of political cause Edward divided the French language from the English language. In 1380 Wickliffe translated a part from Bible. In 1388 appeared “*The father of English poetry*”, Chaucer with the work “*Canterbury Tales*”. With these works begin the establishment of English literature. Later, Shakespeare spread the English language up to the new continent, in America. Chamber in the book “*The English language and literature*”, among the others highlights that the English language is not simply English. Because English was spread in other countries of the world, she took and gave a lot of words from other countries.

⁸ The newspaper “*Posta e Shqypniës*”. 29 Qersher, 1918, Nr. 56, fq. 3.

⁹ The newspaper “*Posta e Shqypniës*”, 3 Korrik, 1918, Nr. 57, fq. 4.

Further the author continues his writing by analyzes the work of Chambers “*The English language and literature*”. He says that the English language in 1485 was the same as today. Most of the words in English language are not simply English. From 1440 England expanded its power over seas and land, by giving and taking linguistic products. This is a cause that is not presented in other languages of the world, borrowing words from other languages, but today is very useful for the particular language. The causes of this change and confusion in language are political and social. The foreign elements have entered in the language, which are fused in our language and already form an important part in it (*important and familiar contributions to our tongue*)¹⁰. English and French people have two offices which attend for the development of national language. The ideal for all countries is the phonetic orthography according to the principle “*Shkruej si flet*” (write the same you speak). This is the reason why lately in England is spoken against nowadays orthography, concludes the author’s argument.

In the end of writing studies of English literary language, Father Justin Rrota tells that it is obvious that the nature does not recognize skipping and always the strongest succeed in the end. The development of mother tongue should be released from politic. It should not have foreign influences. The mother tongue should be used in institutions, in everyday conversations, and the foreigners should recognize and learn to speak it.

In the end, the article is concluded with a call that is addressed to all Albanians: “*Shkruejm njani tjetrit në gjûhë të hueja, nder zyra perdorojmë gjûhët e hueja, ne shoqni flasim ne gjûhë të huej, prandej per në ngjatt puna sko dore, kan me u dasht qindra vjetsh para se gjûha kombtare e jona të çohet m’nji shkallë të madhe e të naltueshme*”¹¹. (We write to each other in foreign languages, in offices we use foreign languages, we speak with our friends in foreign languages, in this way it is difficult and it should take years to raise our language in a higher level).

- The latest article published on the pages of the newspaper “*Posta e Shqypniës*”, in the rubric “*Literatyrë e hartë*”, with the topic “*Mbi burrim të gjûhëvet letrare*”, for the unification of languages, treats the formation of German literary language¹². In the beginning of the article the author tells that the formation of language and the successes of German people have to do with the correctness that they have toward their duties. In the selection of the language Germans showed clarity, love and discipline. Germans of this century are convincing the world with their braveries and wars, but the German language is not created from the wars but from the philosophy and the linguistics like: *Fichte, Schelegel, Kant, Münstersberg*. Fichte woke up the German language with speeches, where later he became professor in the University of Berlin. He was presented as a brave patriot, who preached for the German Nation. Hegel told the German people that big come and go, and for the German people is coming a glorious future, and it will decide for the fate of other nations. Kant strengthened the inner character of each German with the imperative category for the feelings of each man’s duty. In Germany are always honored and valued intelligent

¹⁰ The newspaper “*Posta e Shqypniës*”, 3 Korrik, 1918, Nr. 57, fq. 4

¹¹ The newspaper “*Posta e Shqypniës*”, 3 Korrik, 1918, Nr. 57, fq. 4

¹² The newspaper “*Posta e Shqypniës*”, 6 Korrik, 1918, Nr. 58, fq. 5

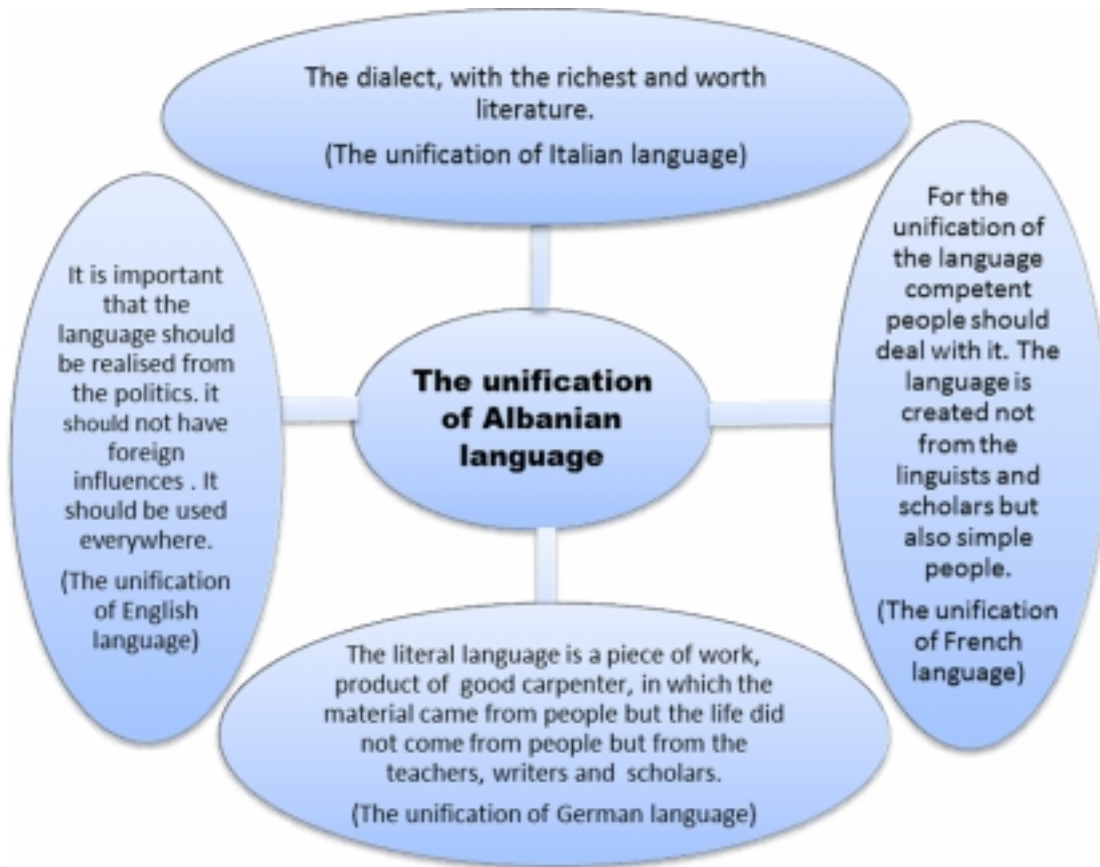
people of all fields. All brave warriors have always honored the influence of philosophers on the German nation.

In the article the author highlights that German people use a language which is not spoken the same everywhere, but it is difficult to explain the sources of the German literary language. The Great Carl was the first one who decided to use the German language to spread Christianity. He chose the Frank dialect as the language of his palace. The language of government office of Saxons was determined by Carl IV (1347-1378). Referring to the work of professors in Praga, they are still today proud because they gave the literal language of Germany. The historic development of literary German language and dialects are presented in “*Karta e Dialekteve Gjermane*” (the Card of German Dialects). The literal German language is a work of art, product of a possible plane, in which the material came from people, but people did not gave the life but the one who gave them life were the ancestors, teachers and especially the writers and the linguists. In the conclusion of the article Father Justin Rrota highlights that the language in Germany is created in a very special way and no one is compared to it. This language is created from different factors: the unification and agreement need to create a big country, the will that belong to a great unit, the planning, discipline, and organization. The support from great people of the nation and the great political reasons: “...*kta faktorë kan krijue gjûhën njerzve të gjytetnuem...*”¹³ (*These factors have created the language of civilized people*)

▪ Conclusion

The Franciscan Father Justin Rrota discussed on scientific bases to decide a literal norm and a standard orthography for the Albanian language. In the writings that he published in the newspaper “*Posta e Shqypniës*”, for the unification of languages he gave theoretical, practical considerations and evaluations for the formation and of the unified literal language. These writings were “*këmbanë*” (bells) for those Albanian intellectuals of that time that directly deal with the unification of Albanian language, by giving them an informative view for the formation of these languages, and ideas over scientific bases that which way should be followed for the unification of the Albanian language.

¹³ The newspaper “*Posta e Shqypniës*”, 6 Korrik, 1918, Nr.58, fq. 5.



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