

THE LANGUAGE OF MARTIN CAMAJ'S WORK AND HIS CONTRIBUTION IN THE FIELD OF LINGUISTICS

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Abstract

The aim of the research consists of an overview of Camaj's language with its expressive possibilities. He was not only a linguist, but also the best known specialist of material and spiritual culture of its people. His contribution to the standard Albanian can be seen in many directions: in lexis, in semantic treatment, in phraseology, in compounds and ways of expression, in lexical expression and in the system of figures. For expressiveness are very important means and ways of word formation, the relation of words with word- forms and neologism. So he used many rare words and expressive forms, such as: *rrejt (gënjej)*; *andja (kënaqësia)*; *gërgasje (ngacmim)*; *marre (turp)*, etc, as well as expressions generated by them, such as: : *çkado t'i shohë syni ia qet dora, ka me i rrejt e mi kaçarrejt, mos me u gërگا* etc. But in his work he presents also a different form derived from other languages, such as: "*Pa njohjen e botë s'e ke il termine di paragone*" or "*...qenka tepër e vogël për ezigjencat e breznisë së re*". 1. Besides the above-mentioned features, Camaj express his consent for a "gegerisht" dialect 2. He introduces us to some elements of phonology, especially vowels, where nasal vowels distinguishes the existence of â in Northern areas. 3. As for the lexicon he traits problems of emphasis. 4. In other studies he traits linguistic features of the dialects of some villages of exactly "arberesh" language, publishing a number of linguistic articles about it. I found that Camaj's creative work offers much more than supposed and that it deserves much more attention that we could give here in our work.

Key words: *expressive forms, linguistic problems, phonology, dialect.*

Introduction:

Although it has been written and spoken enough about the man and scholar Martin Camaj, it cannot be said that it has been done enough, because he is part of those writers, that the more you investigate his creativity, you will always find new things, since his work in poetry, prose and drama, shows a rich imagination, a work and a dedicated creative talent for more than half a century.

Aim of study/research:

In this way, by entering deep into his dramas we can distinguish three main features: the vast lexical wealth, expressed by an extensive and diversified vocabulary of his work, innovation and linguistic novelties that appear in numerous creations of new words and expressions, and the efforts of codification in the field of spelling and grammar.

In terms of linguistic wealth, the work of Martin Camaj is a living proof of the deep knowledge of popular treasury and hard work in the field of language. As a good connoisseur of live structural models of Albanian language, he used several new words, even beautiful expressions that enrich his work.

Research topics:

Characteristic of these creations is that he relied on popular language and took those elements that are productive in today's language.

*The figures of speech used in the work of Martin Camaj are rich, unique and closely linked to his homeland. The popular comparisons and phraseology, as well as the rich linguistic variation of Gheg and the selected vocabulary are characteristic for the language Martin Camaj used in his work.*¹

Research questions:

This is also confirmed by Camaj himself in his poetry collection "Legend" expressing that *"Even our poetry in the bulk derives from folk songs or to say it best, it stems and grows in the soil of oral literature, which being still alive among us, continues to affect even nowadays willingly or unwillingly any literary creation reflexes."*²

Data analysis:

Thus, in his work we distinguish two groups of words. In the first group are those words that belong to the dialect of the author, that of Dukagjini, as:

Rrejt.....gënjej

*"Mirë e kanë me i rrejt e mi kacarrejtë"*³

Mirakandje.....lezet

-me gërگا, gërgasje.....me ngacmu, ngacmim

*"Prapë me gërgasje, ky, dhe shënon me gisht kah mjeku pa fakte"*⁴

Mulla...diçka që të ngel në mendje.

*Dikush ka diçka në zemër , një mulla.*⁵

Qet...nxjerr, bën.

*Çkado t'i shoh syni ia qet dora.*⁶

Marre-turp

*Si nuk ju vjen marre.*⁷

Andja- kënaqësia

*Andja e lojës i ka kapë të gjithë.*⁸

¹ Zef Gjeta, "Trajtimi i vendlindjes në veprën e Martin Camajt", në Martin Camaj për kulturën shqiptare, St. shqiptare 17, Shkodër 2011, f. 60.

² M. Camaj "Legjenda, në vepra letrare 1, Apollonia, Tiranë 1996, f. 149.

³ M. Camaj, *Loja e mbasdrekës*, Tiranë 1996, f. 26.

⁴ M. Camaj, *Loja e mbasdrekës*, Tiranë 19996, f. 44.

⁵ M. Camaj, *Loja e mbasdrekës*, Tiranë 19996, f. 40.

⁶ Po ai, po aty, f.114.

⁷ Po ai ,po aty, f.42.

⁸ Po ai, po aty, f. 52.

With these words he created rare expressions, which constitute important evidence of the ethnography of speaking, such as: *mos me u gërگا me fjalë*⁹, *çkado t'i shohë syni ia qet dora*¹⁰, *ka me i rrejt e kaçarrejt*¹¹ or examples of phrases almost proverbial, such as: *veshun për çudë, flokë gjatë e mend pakë, me dorë në zemër, si me dashtë t'i plasim rrashtën, me krye në thes, e kapte djega për dhena të largëta* etc.

Whereas in the second group are words created by the author himself; *duer-fortë, frymëshkurtë, i motnuem, shkokrrushëm, kurm- këputun* –(*Lulet kurm-këputuna me qafë sa peni*) etc.¹²

But, according to Camaj a dialect does not meet the needs of a cultural language. Language should reflect the entire linguistic areal. For the author "*full recognition of old textbooks, especially those Gheg, which are close to the structure of Tosk, would have affected to solve many problems for standardization of the literary language easily and without pain.*"¹³

Therefore we can say that he has not written in standard, but he had the tendency to write in a simpler language by choosing common forms, and removing in many cases the nasal accent, but always in defense of Gheg, with the desire to be understood by a large readership, and to attain more breathing in his works.

Once he asked to write a rough Albanian language. At first, he commenced from the choices that had been made in this field by the "Komësia Letrare Shqipe" of Shkodra (1916-1918) at the level of grammar and spelling. Due to these linguistic factors, it had a great influence and was read without difficulty.

Thus, in the part where the dialectal problems are treated, Camaj between three dialects: Arbëresh, Gheg and Tosk, expressed his consent for Gheg.

This circumstance was best explained by J. Lankshi, former student and translator of several books by the writer, who states: "*The point was not that he did not know the standard language. He knew very well all variants of the Albanian language. He would not have had any problems writing in Tosk or standard language. Nor did he write in Gheg due to a certain comfort or to have been accustomed to Gheg. Camaj used Gheg pursuant to a clear and conscious decision and will – to fight for Gheg*"¹⁴.

But in his dramas is also noticed his close relationship with the places where he lived and worked. So, for Italy he says: "... it is my second homeland" while for Rome he said that it is the city "... *I learnt to appreciate the art of centuries, as a precious thing, as the dowry of humanity*"¹⁵.

Therefore, in his dramas we find not by chance some words and phrases in a foreign language, such as: "*Without knowing the world you do not know il termine di paragone*"¹⁶

"... *movable and immovable property of our fathers is too small for the exigencies of the new generation etc.*"¹⁷

⁹ Po ai, po aty, f. 83.

¹⁰ Po ai, po aty, f. 114.

¹¹ Po ai, po aty, f. 26.

¹² Ina Arapi "Pasuri leksikore të Njeriut me vete e me të tjerë" në Martin Camaj për kulturën shqiptare, St. shqiptare 17, Shkodër 2011, f.282,288.

¹³ T. Osmani, Konsidera gjuhësore të Martin Camajt për gjuhën letrare shqipe dhe ndihmesa e tij për një afirmim ndër-dialektor, në Martin Camaj për kulturën shqiptare, f. 208.

¹⁴ Behar Gjoka, "Gegënishtja mallkimi e lavdia e Camajt", në Martin Camaj për kulturën shqiptare; shkrimtari dhe albanologu, St. shqiptare 17, Shkodër 2011.

¹⁵ A. Dani, L. Kazazi, *Dimensioni perëndimor i shkrimtarit dhe albanologu* në "Martin Camaj për kulturën shqiptare- Shkrimtari dhe albanologu, St. Shqiptare 17, shkodër 2011, f. 174.

¹⁶ M. Camaj, *Kandili i argjendit*, Tiranë 1996, f. 94.

It is worth mentioning that Camaj gave a great contribution in the field of linguistics. Thus, as Prof. Shaban Demiraj notes, Martin Camaj gave a special contribution to the Albanian linguistics in a range of albanological studies with rare scientific values.

It is worth mentioning that he was the first scholar with an academic qualification in this branch. In addition to the completed volumes, there are also several scientific studies published in various European authorities specialized in the phonetic history of the Albanian language or dialects of different regions of Albania, Kosovo and diaspora or about the Albanian language used by older authors, the typology of language etc.

A pronounced contribution is his work in Rome, where during his stay there he worked for the edition of the outstanding Albanian magazine in exile "Shejzat" and the publication in this magazine of about 85 articles and reviews on the problems of the history of language.

Since 1961 he appeared as one of the most remarkable albanologists in Europe. Thus in the field of linguistics his major works are:

His first linguistic monograph, which was his doctoral thesis, was titled "**Missal of Gjon Buzuku**" Rome 1960, where Camaj was introduced to us as a good connoisseur of the tradition of studies conducted on the Missal.

"**Textbook on learning the Albanian language**" Wiesbaden, 1969 that will serve foreigners to learn Albanian, is structured in three main chapters, Phonetics, Morphology and Syntax. After that is given the general knowledge about Albania and an Albanian-German dictionary. In chapter of Morphology, which is the most important in this work, as noted Prof. Emin Lefe, the verb occupies the largest place where the author defines it as a word denoting *a) physical or physiological activities (work, see) b) psychological activities (think, annoy), c) a condition (am)*.¹⁸ Then he divides the verb into three conjugations by treating in the end even the irregular verbs by dividing them in suppletive verbs¹⁹; *bie(ra , rënë), bie (pru, prurë)* and other irregular verbs, such as; *due , drue, vdes* etc.

15 years later he published another booklet titled "**Albanian Grammar**", Wisenbaden 1984, which was later reprinted even in Italian by the scholar Ardian Vehbiu, who appreciates in the preface the special work of the author on linguistic level. This grammar also preserves almost the same structure with three main chapters Phonetics, Morphology and Syntax. As usually happens in the grammar of Albanian language, the verbal system is treated more broadly, but here he describes mainly the grammatical means used in the formation of verb forms as;

apofonia **e/o**; *bredh- brodha, a/o dal-dola, e/ye; kreve-kryej* etc .

qiellzorizimi **k/q; pjek- poqa, g/gj; djeg/dogja** etc.²⁰

Whereas the chapter of Syntax occupies only 23 pages though, there Camaj included the key concepts for the definition of the sentence, for the predicate as the core of the sentence etc.

While in 1966 he published the monograph "*The Albanian language word formation. Ways of forming old names*" which is of particular interest in some problems of the history of Albanian language, historical phonetics and etymological studies.

In other studies are also treated the characteristics of dialects in several Arbëresh villages. Thus, he devoted the main part of his research mainly to the language, folklore and literature of the Arbëresh people in Italy. He has also published a great number of articles about the

¹⁷ M. Camaj, *Kandili i argjendit*, Tiranë 1996, f. 119.

¹⁸ A. Çerpja, E. Lefe "Sistemi foljor te vepra "Lehrbuch der Albanischen sprache", në Martin Camaj për kulturën shqiptare, f. 218.

¹⁹ A. Çerpja, E. Lefe "Sistemi foljor te vepra "Lehrbuch der Albanischen sprache", në Martin Camaj për kulturën shqiptare, f. 218.

²⁰ Po ai ,po aty, f. 220.

specific features of Arbëresh dialects in Italy, as about the Italian-Arbëresh bilingualism, about the Arbëresh typology etc, such as:

“Albanian dialect in the province of Avelino” Florence 1971.

“Albanian songs” Dusseldorf, 1974 etc.

A special work in publishing these literary, linguistic and scientific works of Martin Camaj was made by the magazine "New Life" in Pristina in 1951, occupying a place of honor in the publications in Rome, Pristina, Cosenza.

Conclusions:

Prof. Ernest Koliqi evaluating the literary and scientific studies of Camaj in the magazine "Fire" in 1960, clearly defined the outstanding talent of this writer "who possesses a particular voice in modern Albanian literature, for which researchers will already speak. ..." ²¹

Therefore, we can say that Camaj is one of the greatest masters of Albanian literature, a prominent personality who with his work had a great influence not only for the development of literature, but also for the Albanian language through the language used and in particular in treating specific language issues. He has represented with his work a safe point of reference for all foreign scholars dealing with Albanology and intellectuals of diaspora.

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²¹ Ernest Koliqi, revista “Zjarri”, nr 15, Kozencë.

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