INTERNATIONAL SCIENTIFIC JOURNAL

"Monte" Ulcinj

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THE CHARACTER OF AHMET NUREDINI IN THE NOVEL THE DERVIS AND THE DEATH OF MESHA SELIMOVIĆ

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Abstract

Balkan literature is a literature represented by writers who, through their art, have occupied an important place in world literature. The themes that appear in their works are mainly based on the cultural, customary, social and social basis of the Balkans, the course of Balkan life over the centuries, starting from the state of the Balkans under the Turkish occupation, the Balkan wars, the First and Second World Wars, the systems of socialist realization reaching up to modern times. In their works they reflect the Balkan character.

Mesha Selimovic is known for his mastery and unique style of creating unique characters that influenced national and world literature. His characters could not breathe freely in their own world, but they were still characters characterized by their dreams and positive thoughts about the near future. Mesa Selimovic created characters that were prejudiced by others at every step, but this was also a result of the social circle and the influence of foreign cultures, which were already part of their everyday lives and the world knew them through them. His characters were the warriors of life from early morning until late at night, when the enemy had the greatest opportunity to act and achieve his goals, against an oppressed people who constantly tried to subjugate them for a certain period of time. His characters forgot all other things, but they did not forget the right that belonged to them and the love that the enemy tried to take away from them and make them beings without consciousness and without the support that only their family and brother could give them, as we have in this case with the novel in question by the author M. Selimovic.

INTRODUCTION

The personality of the character in the theoretical aspect includes all the reactions of the individual and is the unity of all biological and psychological processes of man. But it is impossible to study all his activities, because at every moment he acts and experiences something new.

The character of Dervish as a Bektashi believer and with a white dress, as a personality has certain hereditary characteristics, dependent on biological and social factors. The latter are necessary for the development of human individuality in him into a human being, that is, into a being, which has characteristics that are considered human characteristics.

1. Closed personality - suffers from a high degree of spiritual pain, introverted and taciturn, quiet, pedantic, and with meaningful glances...

2. Unstable personality - often changes mood, at every small loss or frustration, he bursts out in anger and calls himself guilty for some events, very easily goes into a state of anger and rage.

3. Psychological construct - sings, cries, falls into a trance, is disappointed, provoked, hurt, prejudiced, overlooked, abused, self-sacrificing, is depressed, has spiritual fluctuations, at first is stable, but then becomes critical of power, finds punishments, loses faith and becomes alienated.

4. Paradoxical character - the circle cannot often understand its actions and just like the world, it also functions through opposites.

5. Round personality - complex and multidimensional

6. Dynamic personality - changes in a significant way due to the action of various life events.

Here is how Ahmed Nuredini describes himself: - "I have been a dervish for twenty years. I went to school since I was very young and I know nothing except what they wanted to teach me. I have learned to listen, to be patient and to live with faith. There was no one better than me, no one closer to faith. I have always known what I should do, the dervish sect has thought for me, while the foundations of faith are harsh and broad and there has been nothing that could not be inserted there. I had a family that simply lived its life, lived as it knew how. It was mine, of my blood and came from distant memories from childhood. They were mine and they existed and that was very enough for me and equally valuable for them.".

OTHER CHARACTERS IN THE NOVEL

In addition to the main character, in the novel we also have many other characters, who with their actions, decisions and thoughts affect the life and daily life of the protagonist Ahmed Nuredini.

1. Kadi Ajni Efendiu - had signed the order for the imprisonment of the dervish's brother. In the end, he finds death at the hands of the authorities.

2. The kadi's wife - at every moment she tried to change the dervish's opinion. She asks him to help her bring her brother Hasan to the right path.

3. Ahmed's father - a character who appears only once and even in that appearance is unfair, as he only thinks about the other son and on this occasion influences Ahmed's thoughts to think that he is dead to her and is not treated the same as his younger brother.

4. Haxhi Sinanudini- the most positive character in the novel, altruistic, gives his wealth to the poor and through them his life takes on the meaning it should have.

5. Hasan- the brother of the judge's wife, who was involved in bad jobs and spent most of his time with a Dubrovnik woman, but later returns to the right path and becomes the dervish's best friend, supporting him in every decision.

6. Ikanak Isak- escaped from prison, but we cannot understand if he really exists after the dervish sees him once again where he is not.

7.Mulla Yusufi- student and spy of the judge

QUR'AN INTERTEXT IN THE NOVEL

As I mentioned at the beginning, each chapter of the work opens with a Quranic verse and we see it on all the pages of the novel, which the author wrote out of the great pain he felt for his brother who was killed on Goli Otok. Some of them will be mentioned below:

1. "If God could punish for every evil, not a single living thing would be left on earth".
2. "Whoever believes in God and the Last Day, do not befriend the enemies of Allah and His Messenger, whether they are their parents, brothers or relatives".
3. "Do not support or help the disbelievers".
4. "O you who believe, avoid suspicion and slander, for slander and suspicion are sins".
5. "Protect the ties of kinship".
6. "Obey God and the Prophet and those in authority over you."
7. "Man gains when he gives."
8. "For mankind are hardships."

THE MENTION OF GOD IN THE NOVEL

On every page of the novel we have the name of God and the author does it to show the only faith that the main protagonist had, and he was the only one on whom the dervish relied and found the answers he sought from the depraved world and from evil and treacherous people.

DESCRIPTIVE ANALYSIS OF THE CHARACTERS

This novel has similarities with many other novels by other writers, both in terms of the theme and in terms of the suffering and pain of the main character.

The novel has similarities with the novel "The Trial" by Franz Kafka. Here we see a shocking truth of reality with the simple man inside and the system that change and see the latter as an obstacle or as a good for them. A simple and ordinary citizen, a bank clerk from an unknown city, is arrested in the morning by two police officers without any reason, for a crime that is not told to him or the reader. God-K does not have the ability to understand the system, although he tries to understand something, he is still drowned in ambiguity. During this time he gets acquainted with the fog of the courts, the absurdity, the hierarchy of positions not only in court, but also in real life. Then he imagines the most desperate tricks, to reveal incomprehensible and suffocating gears before him. Not knowing who to trust and where to get hold of, he sits down to compose his own defense, in which he asks for forgiveness for everything he has done, thus signing the act of guilt and his own punishment. When we see how much the protagonist suffers, we must remember Kafkaesque's saying: - "Suffering is a positive element of this world, in fact the only connection between this world and the positive". The novel also has similarities with the novel "The General of the Dead Army" by Ismail Kadare. The general here is the one who is always looking for the bones of Italian soldiers who fell during the invasion of Albania. While the dervish is always looking for truth and justice, which no one gives him.

The novel also has similarities with the tragedy "Antigone" by Sophocles. She who went against the king's order not to bury her murdered brother, and the dervish does the same, thus going against the law and the rulers, to bury her brother, in the way that God required and so that his soul may rest in peace. There are also similarities with the poetic collection "Lum Lumi" by Ali Podrimja, where we have the great pain that the author himself feels for his son, who was suffering from an incurable disease, and the dervish also feels pain for his murdered brother.

TURKISH BORROWINGS IN THE NOVEL AS INTERTEXTUAL ELEMENTS

On many pages of Mesha Selimovic's novel we encounter words from the Turkish language, namely from the old Ottoman, which we often see in the writings of other writers. As in Ismail Kadare's novel "The Castle". We will see some of the Turkish words used in the novel in the table below.

1. Comparing Ahmed Nuredin with Kabil, the one to whom God had sent a raven to dig in the ground, to learn how to bury the body of his dead brother. He had said: - "Oh! Woe to me, can I not even do like the raven, to bury the body of my dead brother". The raven in this case is an element of mourning and human awareness.

2. Comparing Ahmed Nuredin with a poor sheep, which respected the opinion of others and belonged to darkness and blindness. The sheep in this case is the crowd that respected the opinion and order of the judge.

3. Comparing Ahmed Nuredin's heart with a fiery cauldron where intoxicating drink was boiling. In this case, his heart was intoxicated by the game, jealousy and deceptions that were being done to him.

4. The comparison that Ahmed Nuredini makes to the judge and his wife with bloodthirsty scorpions. In this case, they were his secret killers and assassins.

5. The comparison of the dead man to a child, with a folded handkerchief and a sheaf of wheat. He compares him to a child because he agreed to go wherever he was ordered, with a handkerchief, since the dead man was also folded in such a way.

6. The comparison that the dervish made to life with a murrain. Even life for him after the murder of his brother had remained a murrain and it was difficult to build it again, since the elementary parts were missing.

7. The comparison that the dervish makes to justice with health. Man seeks justice, just like health, only when he lacks it, when he does not have it, and when it is uncertain.

8. Comparing Ahmed Nuredin to a falcon. In this case, there is a similarity because he fought for a right and a truth. He was courageous, had strength, omnipotent, and high in office.

CONCLUSION

From the beginning of this scientific study, we tried to get acquainted with the life and main tasks of the main character, the one whose main goal was to understand the truth of the murder of his brother, also pushed by his father, a murder that was committed by the government of the Ottoman Empire and made the dervish lose faith in it. We analyzed how the Dervish believed in man and his goodness, but the murder of his brother destroyed the entire system built within him. Now he called himself unlucky, since he had no one else but himself and God. When the dervish defended his brother, others accused him of opposing the law.

We also analyzed the physical beauty of the judge's wife. An important aesthetic value of the work is that she had a beautiful and pure face covered with a veil. The dervish valued desire and dignity in her. She had an embroidered and transparent shirt, smooth and shiny skin, long, flexible and mobile fingers. Everything about her was harmonious and inseparable: black eyes, a golden emerald attached to her forehead, a foot that wriggled easily inside a silver slipper, a face drawn with soft lights, teeth shining through full lips.

This novel has the most beautiful character in all of Balkan literature, a unique and rare character in literature. Ahmed Nuridini is a special typology of character and as such he is presented with high values of Sufism, the desire for justice which he seeks from the state, from man, and from God.

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ON THE TEACHING OF THE STANDARD IN MOTHER LANGUAGE BOOKS IN AMU.

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ABSTRACT

An issue that has become worrisome today in our schools is the possessing of the standard, especially in written Albanian in various speeches to students. The concern relates to the finding that left much to be desired in the spelling of words in various languages. Incorrect use or avoidance of rate spelling are different types , but we will get specified to errors encountered mostly in the writings of pupils , exactly the wrong use of the vowel e- terminal.

Why is it so disturbing this problem ? Where do we recognize it? What are the causes that lead to wrong uses of standard or avoidance of rate spelling ? Does curricula and curriculums offer a clear picture of theoretical and practical criteria of good quality acquisition for a precise written Albanian language ?

Does the text of the Albanian language offer the possibility that the student year after year gain the skills needed for a precise written Albanian language ?

These questions such problematic that comes as a result from the recognition of the problematic situation regarding the possession of the standard written Albanian writings of the different school, homework, essays, exams, etc. , have oriented our paper.

Key words: teaching, standard, curriculum, spelling, phonics

ENTRY

The point of this work is to tell the formation of expressions in writing correctly and without mistakes needs not only knowledge of the standard structure of Albanian grammar, but also persistent and systematic work, this seen in different writings of students (home-work, class-work, written work) for grades 6,7,8 nd 9.

The process of standardization of a language, the writing norms take a central place, tending to them. The direct connection with possessing this norm and possessing the standard as a whole, we have seen in experience. The high and low performance of the writing norm is a teller of a competence with shortcomings and low of the standard as whole.

This problem we have evidenced in different works and written work of pupils. This work is focused and directed with chosen rules in the release of ''Drejtshkrimi i gjuhes shqipe'' in 1973, from which we have detached only the rules about the use of the –ë vowel in all the cases like down below:

- ❖ Vowel –ë prefix
- ❖ Vowel –ë post-emphasis
- ❖ Vowel –ë terminal

We will see how the albanian products from one school to another, from one class to another and from one pupil to the other will be offered. After presenting the factual material, written quantitative research of students, classification and analization of albanian facts we will try to achieve the planned expectations at the top of the beginning:

1. Keeping in mind the planning and the workload for spelling hours.
2. Reflecting on the information taken from the pupils work to encourage the right solutions.
3. Finding methods to direct the teaching of spelling towards improvement and adapting the reality of the new changes.
4. These expectations can lead us to improvement of this documented condition to emphasise more than what is given until now to spelling in a close connection with grammar and spelling the right way.

THE OBJECT OF WORK

1. To give a presentation of the given data in connection with possessing the standard Albanian in writings of the pupils in grades 6,7,8,9, and to create a clear idea for those.
2. To analise the mistakes in the writings of the –ë vowel in three important cases of the usage of it.
3. To reflect on this data so that we can contribute and ask the right way for the reduction of the deviations.

Metodology

- ❖ Exploration: different writings of pupils of different classes (rural and urban) have been viewed.
- ❖ Classification: mistakes and avoidance of spelling that pupils have done for the –ë vowel have been classified by the certain rules of spelling in different writings of pupils in grades 6,7,8,9.
- ❖ Analytical: Mistakes in writings of pupils have been analized according to the rules of spelling.

I: Pedagogical view on standard Albanian in school lectures.

1.1 On writing according to the spelling norm

Writing not only is a means of communication but it is a process, in fact a lng process that needs work. When you communicate through writing we have only one key element, words, a help to organise them in a logical way, punctuation, and also knowledge of spelling that definitely reinforce that expression: ***write clearly, beautifully and without any mistakes.***

In school writing is a necessity but also an internal need where the pupils write because *''they are forced to''*(home-work, writring works etc), but they often write started of desire. In all of

the cases, it is important for pupils, to understand that the best way to learn the ability to write correctly, is by writing in the standard Albanian, where *the norms of spelling makes the direct reflection and the most emotional possession and the use of the standard as a system with the greatest functional extent in our society[1]*. But the expressions of writing can't be learned fastly and easily.

''Expressions of writing without mistakes are formed in a certain way almost unconsciously in a very young age[2]'' , this coincides with the primary part of the 9-year. So if the pupil doesn't understand correctly and clearly these expressions in the early phases of tuition, he will have a lot of diffuculties to correct the wrong expressions and to learn new ones.

The question is born:Why does this happen?

This is explained with the psychic features of the age, because at children mechanical memory prevails and this later is replaced with the logical one, where are the rules are learned with systematic work and deliberate effort.(citation from psychology)

Emphising that embezzelement of the rules of spelling and their implementation in practise are not the same things. This is seen in different writings of pupils, home-work, dictation, where the avoidance from the norms of spelling are a lot, especially in the writing of the –ë vowel.

We are giving examples of exerices and literary piece to understand how pupils write:

Example 1.

> ➢ ☐ *This year's winter was very long.*
> ➢ ☐ *When the little one learns faster. Even a small child has his rights[3]*

Example 2.

☐ *Daylight slowly dissipates. Water rests and sleeps again. Every now and then a fish and another, sound the water.*

Example 3.

When he woke up he heard the sound of the waves, but he didn't believe his ears. It seemed to him that he was in a dream. There was a lot of waves. He swam easily, easier than any other time.

Example 4

These are the tasks that good people have given me, because only they can set tasks. You have to have an idea of how art was valued at the time. If he could not solve then I will start to doubt.

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[1] Toska.T,*''Shqipja standarde ne ligjerimet shkollore''* kumtese… cit,..pg.1

[2] Memushaj.R, Standard Albanian, *Si ta flasim dhe ta shkruajme*, Toena, Tirana 2005

[3] Look ''Gjuha Shqipe 6'' Albas, Tiranë 2010… exercise 7 pg, 221

From these examples we see pupils write with a lot of spelling mistakes, they don't write words with the ë vowel how they are supposed to. But we will see a lot more examples where this vowel not only is missing but it is also added, or if we have more problems with the usage of it that we will see later on.

1.2 Spelling classes in the curriculum "Albanian language 6,7,8,9", relevant objectives

A teacher in education is driven bt goals, the planned objectives for each subject so that he needs to be prepared for an intensive and preview work. In education to put over objectives means to specify in what condition will the pupils learn, what facts, concepts, abilities and skills.

Precisely objectives are a guidance for the planning of learning together with *''the procedure of education, learning and evaluation constitute what todays methodology is called ''the magical triangle''[4]*.

To organize and to do this work with success, it is necessary that the teacher knows well the program of classes, to know in a deep way the requests of this program of each class, to rely on the spelling knowledge that the Albanian texts have, to study the additional Albanian materials for the problems that he will develop in class.

In the study plan of the Albanian language subject the place that the 6,7,8,9 grades hold for the spelling hours for all the learning structures is just like down below:

1. For the sixth grade, a total of 175 teaching hours, including 10 hours of orthography.
2. For the seventh grade, a total of 175 teaching hours, including 9 hours of orthography.
3. For the eighth grade, a total of 175 teaching hours, including 12 hours of orthography.
4. For the ninth grade, a total of 175 teaching hours, including 10 hours of orthography.

If we examine carefully, the hours allocated for orthography are not in a considerable number, but a attentive teacher can use a significant portion of the available hours from the free hour fund for various orthographic exercises or even dictations. What remains afterwards is the task of the students guided by their teachers.

I will specifically outline the specific objectives related to the student's writing for grades 6, 7, 8, and 9 of the 9-year cycle. These objectives include[5]:

❖ To correctly write words that have the vowel "ë" in different positions (in the body and at the end of the word) - Grade 6.

❖ To respect the rules of orthography and punctuation in various writings - Grade 7.

❖ To write the vowel "ë" correctly in the body of the word - Grade 8.

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[4] Gjoci,P ''Metodologji e mesimdhenies'' Rama, Graf.botimi i dytë, Elbasan, 2014
[5] The learning program for the ''Albanian language''subject in 6,7,8 grade

To write correctly the names ending in -ër, -ërr, -ël - Grade 8.

Meanwhile, the teaching objectives regarding the orthography of the vowel "ë" for grade 9 are more extensive since here the knowledge is expanded. They include[6]:

- ❖ To write with the final vowel "ë" the names of females, males, surnames, and pronouns - Grade 9

    To write correctly compound words where the second word starts with a vowel - Grade 9.

As evident from these objectives, knowledge about orthography is not presented here as discrete elements, as is the case in the lower cycle, where words are treated as isolated components. Instead, the objectives justify orthographic solutions based on the respective rules. It is understood that students not only acquire knowledge but also practice applying it to develop the necessary skills in adhering to each rule. This implies that for each orthographic solution, the student refers to the rule, verifying the answer. However, this process does not end there because gaining proficiency does not simply mean acquiring the right expressions but also using them appropriately in writing according to orthographic norms.

Theoretical Overview of the Relationship between Orthography and Standardization in the Albanian Language

2.1 Principles Supporting Albanian Language Orthography

The significant role of Albanian orthographic rules in anchoring the standard is well known. However, mastering orthography does not imply mastery of other norms of the standard language, and orthographic rules cannot be assimilated independently of other norms. On the contrary, *''orthography ultimately reflects what has been achieved in the phonetic, grammatical, and lexical structure of the standard language''*[7].

Another principle on which orthography relies is morphological, also known as morphematic, which requires maintaining the unity of morphemes in writing in all cases of their usage, regardless of phonetic changes.

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[6] The learning program for the ''Albanian language'' subject for the 9 grade.

[7] A.Kostallari,the journalist tribute,1974,nr,3,vep..of cit.Rami Memushaj.''Shqipja standarde, Sita flasim e ta shkruajme'', Toena,Tirane 2003

Another foundational principle for orthography is the historical-traditional principle, implying the preservation of the traditional way of writing, even though pronunciation has diverged considerably. This means that words are no longer pronounced as they were written in the past.

Moreover, we cannot overlook the historical-traditional principle, as it is not only connected to the linguistic heritage from the past but also to the interaction between literary variants and different dialectal bases that have entered the standard language. Words and groups of words, whose orthography today cannot be included in the systemic general type, have been influenced by this interaction.

Thus, the application of the two principles (phonetic and morphological) for the same phonetic conditions and the same words during word formation appears in this case:

a) Phonetic principle: "anë-i anshëm" (ë changes to 0).

b) Morphological principle: "anë-anëtar" (in contrast to the pronunciation)[8].

As we observed, the connections between these principles are very close and mutually supportive. The intersection of the phonetic and morphological principles is applied particularly in the orthographic rules provided for the vowel "ë." For example:

 The replacement of the vowel "ë" with zero is seen in connection with the phonetic position of "ë" in the word (in pretonic and post-tonic positions). Therefore, for the replacement of the vowel "ë" with zero, orthography relies on the general literary pronunciation based on the phonetic principle.

In conclusion, orthography, supported by each of these principles, becomes simpler and more practical.

The causes that lead to the establishment or incorrect use of the orthographic norm.

The formation of stable orthographic expressions, as mentioned earlier, is a long and difficult process that requires planned and systematic work from both the teacher and the student, and it also requires time.

Despite the significant effort made in our schools for this purpose, weaknesses and shortcomings in the acquisition of spelling are also observed, especially in the use and writing

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[8] The Academy of Science ''Kongresi i Drejtshkrimit te gjuhes shqipe'' Tirane,1973,cit,pg,68

of the letter "ë," where students make numerous mistakes. The causes of students' weaknesses in spelling are numerous and varied.

One of the reasons for incorrect use of the standard or deviations in the use of the letter "ë" is the predominance of the spoken (and heard) form of the word and word form over the written one. Thus, in writing, errors and deviations from the orthographic norm *"occur because the Albanian writer uses, during the mental and physical process of writing, the image or acoustic figure, and not the graphic image and figure of the word form''.*[9]

To understand the reasons for harmonizing pronunciation with writing in Albanian, one needs to look at the early stages of education, especially in the teaching of initial writing (using the alphabet). Thus, *"the formation of these expressions depends to a large extent on the ability of children of this age to photograph the word and memorize its forms.*[10]*"*

Therefore, the work of the Albanian language teacher should be significant from the first grade onward. Other causes of errors and deviations from the orthographic norm include:

➢ The level of the student's academic and cultural achievement.
➢ The social group to which the student belongs.
➢ The territory or region they come from.
➢ Family background, etc.

However, these causes are not the only ones, as one must also look at the incomplete work of the teacher. Such factors include:

➢ The absence of a comprehensive and scaled system for the entire work with spelling rules to identify and specify students' errors for each class.
➢ The lack of continuity and the failure to create a system of exercises based on previously acquired knowledge.
➢ The absence of criteria in the selection and use of diverse methods and forms for the presentation, reinforcement, and repetition of spelling rules.
➢ The individual work of students, the lack of willingness, and the careless completion of various tasks.

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[9] Teuta Toska ''Shqipja standarde ne ligjerimet shkollore'' pg.1
[10] Rami Memushaj, ''Shqipja Standarde, Si ta flasim dhe ta shkruajme'' cit. pg,49

These are some of the reasons that lead to the incorrect use and establishment of the orthographic norm.

The reasons for the rootedness of such a self-tendency to harmonize pronunciation with writing certainly need to be sought in the early stages of education, especially in the teaching of initial writing (through the alphabet). In the monograph on alphabets in Albanian, authors Osmani and Kazazi refer to alphabets as *"carriers of the common alphabet, representatives of the norm of literary language."*[11] Kolë Xhumari, a well-known author of the primer text, while explaining the type of methods for teaching initial writing and reading, expresses: *"The Analytic-synthetic method, used in our country for 45 consecutive years for the teaching of reading and writing, relies on the phonetic values of the language, so the process of analysis and synthesis is done only through pronunciation and listening... And all of these (the process of analysis from the sentence to the sound) only through listening, clashes with the psychological characteristics of the child.[12]"*

Although we believe that the data is limited (for the scope of this research, the investigation of the orthographic norm requires a broader numerical and geographical extension, according to us), initially, they are acceptable to present an overview of the state of mastery and use of the standard, the problems arising from this situation, the solutions that need to be encouraged, etc. From our perspective, this information will stimulate a future experiment with a broader scope, which will include data that differentiate the subject, his social group, the territory he comes fro.

Presentation of numerical and statistical data regarding the establishment of the standard, the level of academic and cultural achievement, and material background.

4.1 Data from the sixth grades collected from schools in rural and urban areas regarding the use of the letter "ë."

In the following tables, we will provide data from the numbered texts for the sixth, seventh, eighth, and ninth grades collected from schools in rural and urban areas for the use of the letter "ë" in its unmodified form. N represents the number of elements after quantifying all the utterances of the classes: the number of spelling errors for each rule when a letter is missing,

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[11] Shefik Osmani, Njasi Kazazi, Abetaret Shqipe dhe trajektorja e tyre historiko-pedagogjike, Tirane,2000 pg,21
[12] Kole Xhumari, Abetare-Libri i mesuesit per klasen e pare, Shtepia Botuese e Librit Shkollor, Tirane,1995 pg,12-13

added, or replaced by another. The data is presented in percentages, comparing the total number of errors with the number of errors for each rule.

A- Data from the sixth grades collected from schools in rural areas: sample = 30 subjects; N1 = 4571

Rule	Missing	Added	Replaced	Total	Percentage
It is prepositional	25	8	3	36	18.46
It is post-emphatic	7	15		22	11.28
It's final	90	39	8	137	70.25
Total				195	

The calculation for the percentage for the preface is: 36195×100=18.4619536×100=18.46.
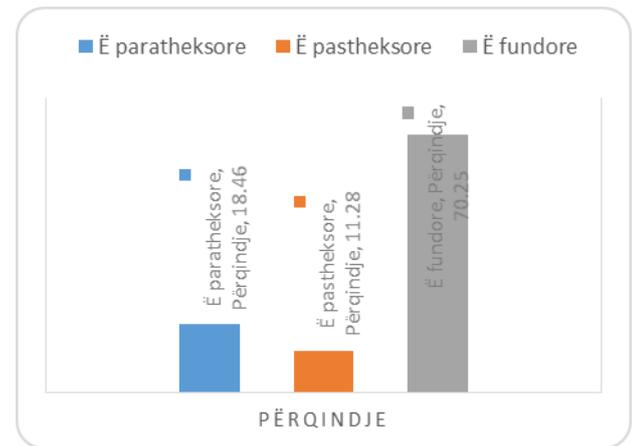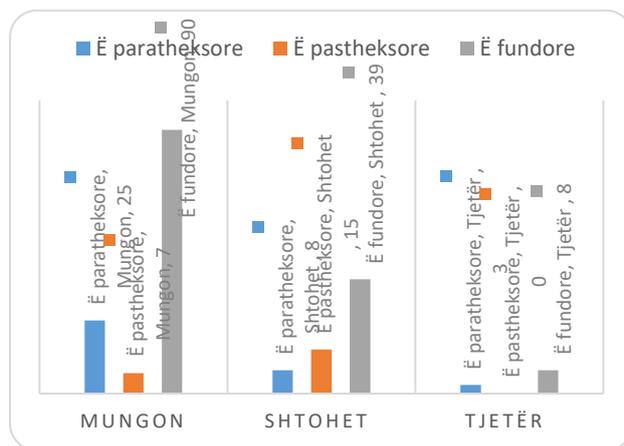
From the table data, the highest number of errors is related to the back vowel "ë" (70.25%), while errors with the front vowel "ë" are 18.46%, and incorrect writing of the diphthong "ë" accounts for 11.28%. The percentage of errors in the text is calculated as 1954571×100=4.266%4571195×100=4.266%.

B- Data from the sixth-grade classes taken from schools in urban areas: sample size = 26 subjects; N1=3900N1=3900.

Rule	Missing	Added	Replaced	Total	Percentage
It is prepositional	10	6		12	24
It is post-emphatic	6	4	1	11	22
It's final	20	5	2	27	54
Total				50	
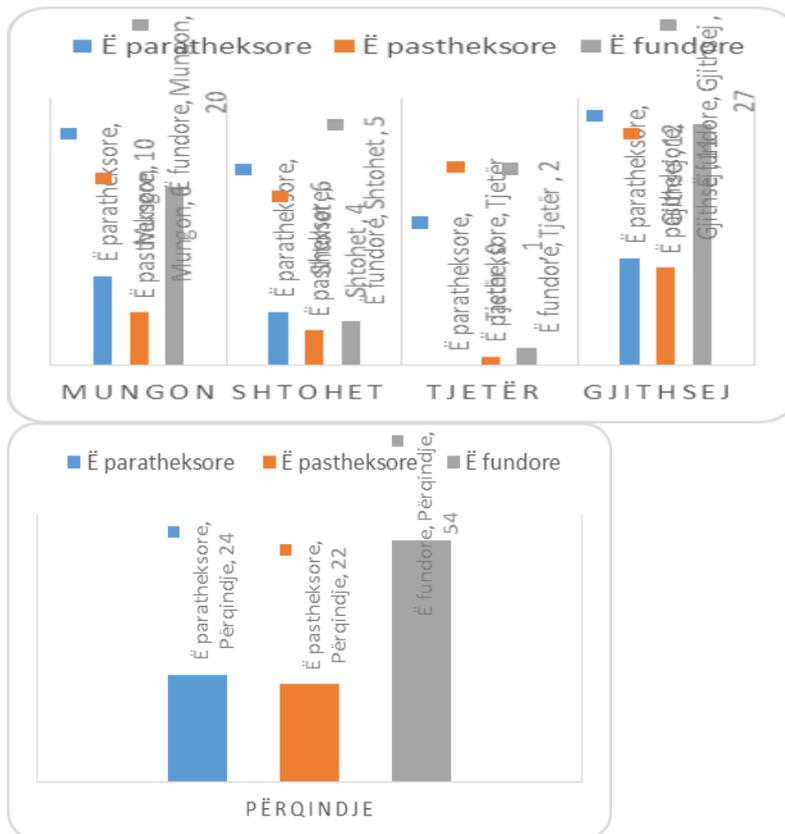
From the table data, the highest number of errors is related to the back vowel "ë" (54%), while errors with the front vowel "ë" are 24%, and incorrect writing of the diphthong "ë" accounts for 22%. The percentage of errors in the text is calculated as 503900×100=1.28%390050×100=1.28%.

4.2 Seventh-grade data obtained from schools in rural and urban areas on the use of the vowel

4.3 A- Data from seventh grades obtained from schools in rural areas: sample = 25 subjects; N1 =3800

Rule	Missing	Added	Replaced	Total	Percentage
It is prepositional	22	**7**	5	34	18.57
It is post-emphatic	10	15	2	27	14.75
It's final	80	32	10	122	66.66
Total				183	

From the data in the table, the highest number of errors is related to the final vowel (66.66%), while the pre-accented errors are 18.57% and the wrong writing of the post-accented vowel is 14.75%. The percentage of errors in the text is = 183/3800 *100 = 4.81 %.B-Data from the seventh-grade classes taken from schools in urban areas: sample size = 29 subjects; N1=4847N1=4847.

Rule	Missing	Added	Replaced	Total	Percantage
It is prepositional	6	7	1	14	25
It is post-emphatic	8	6	2	16	28.57143
It's final	15	7	4	26	46.42857
Total				56	
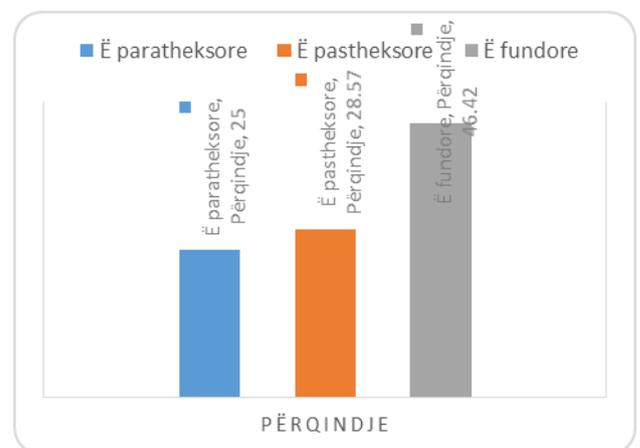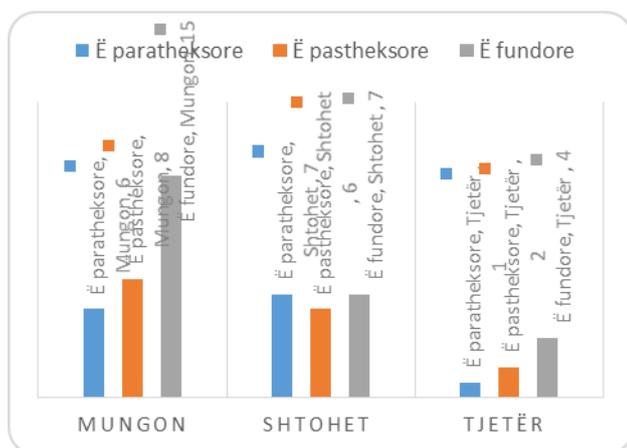
From the table data, the highest number of errors is related to the back vowel "ë" (46.42%), while errors with the front vowel "ë" are 25%, and incorrect writing of the diphthong "ë" accounts for 28.57%. The percentage of errors in the text is calculated as
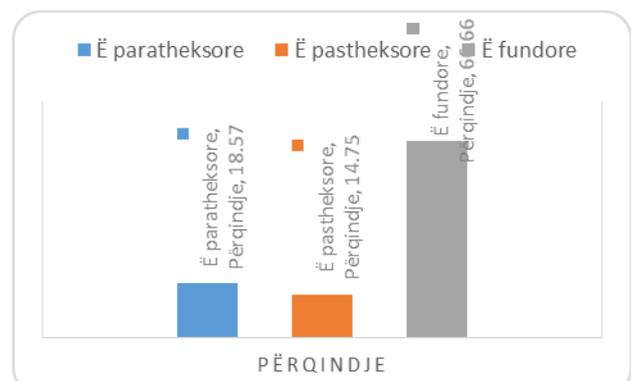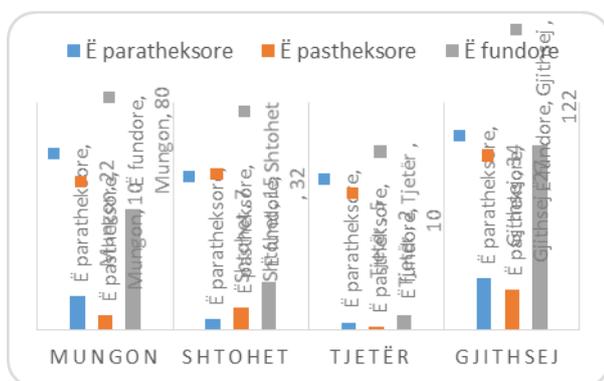
$$\frac{56}{4847}\times100=1.155\% \quad \frac{48}{4756}\times100=1.155\%.$$

4.3 Data from the eighth-grade classes taken from schools in rural and urban areas for the use of the vowel "ë".

A- Data from the eighth-grade classes taken from schools in rural areas: sample size = 32 subjects; N1=5340N1=5340
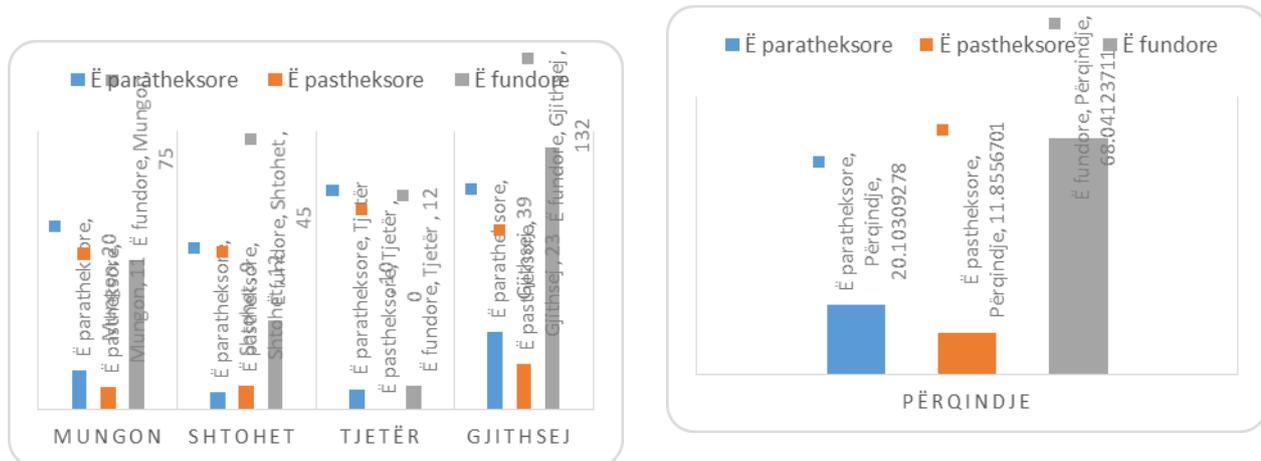
Rule	Missing	Added	Replaced	Total	Percantage
It is prepositional	20	9	10	39	20.10309278
It is post-emphatic	11	12		23	11.8556701
It's final	75	45	12	132	68.04123711
Total				194	

From the table data, the highest number of errors is related to the letter "ë" fundore (68.04%), while errors with Ë pretheksoresh are 20.1%, and the incorrect writing of Ë pastheksore occupies 11.85%. The percentage of errors in the text is calculated as 194/5340 * 100 = 3.63%.

B- Data from the ninth grades collected from schools in urban areas: sample = 22 subjects; N1 = 2780

Rule	Missing	Added	Replaced	Total	Percentage
It is prepositional	5	3	2	10	16.66667
It is post-emphatic	7	9	1	17	28.57
It's final	18	9	6	33	46.42
Total				60	

From the table data, the highest number of errors is related to the letter "ë" fundore (46.42%), while errors with Ë pretheksoresh are 16.66%, and the incorrect writing of Ë pastheksore occupies 28.57%. The percentage of errors in the text is calculated as 60/2780 * 100 = 2.158%.

4.4 Data from the ninth grades collected from schools in rural and urban areas for the use of the letter "ë".

A- Data from the ninth grades collected from schools in rural areas: sample = 26 subjects; N1 = 2900

Rule	Missing	Added	Replaced	Total	Percentage
It is prepositional	15	8	11	34	19.65317919
It is post-emphatic	10	14	1	25	14.45086705
It's final	55	55	4	114	65.89595376
Total				173	
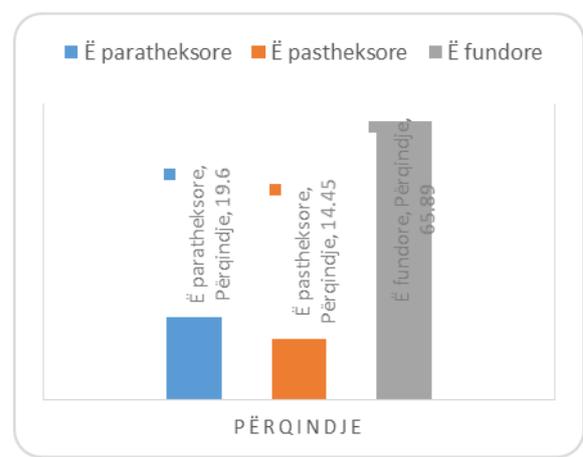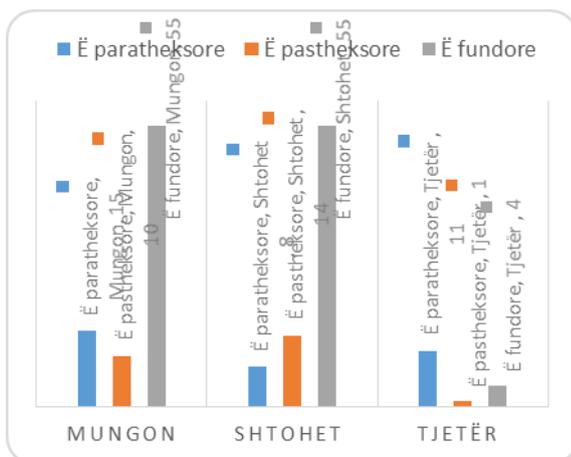
From the data in the table, the highest number of errors is related to the final vowel (65.89%), while the pre-accented errors are 19.6% and the wrong spelling of the post-accented vowel is 14.45%. The percentage of errors in the text is = 173/2900 *100 = 5.96%.
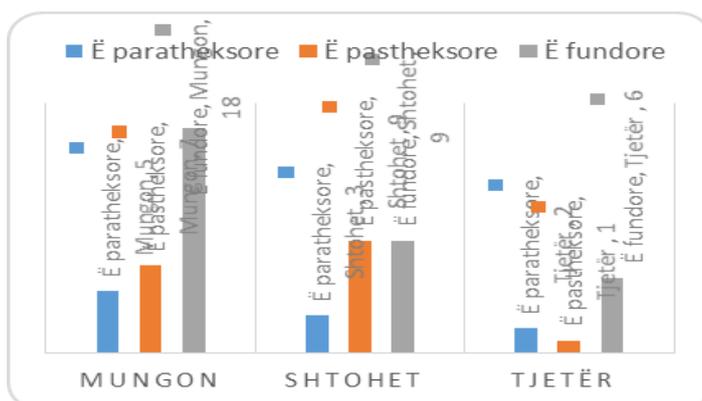
B- Data from ninth grades obtained from schools in urban areas: sample = 30 subjects; N1 =3200

Rule	Missing	Added	Replaced	Total	Percentage
It is prepositional	3	3	2	8	13
It is post-emphatic	6	10	2	18	29
It's final	19	10	6	35	57
Total				61	

From the table data, the highest number of errors is related to the back vowel "ë" (57%), while errors with the front vowel "ë" are 13%, and incorrect writing of the diphthong "ë" accounts for 29%. The percentage of errors in the text is calculated as 613200×100=1.9%320061×100=1.9%.

❖ **Study Results**

Summary Mirror.

Champion (controlled text)	220
N (the number of qualified units in the text)	31338
The number of mistakes	973
The percentage of the mistakes	3.1

The percentage of error is found by dividing the number of errors by the number of ualified units in the texts. Summary according to the rules and in descending order

Rule	Number of mistakes	Percentage
It is prepositional	626	64.40
It is post-emphatic	187	19.2387
It's final	159	16.358
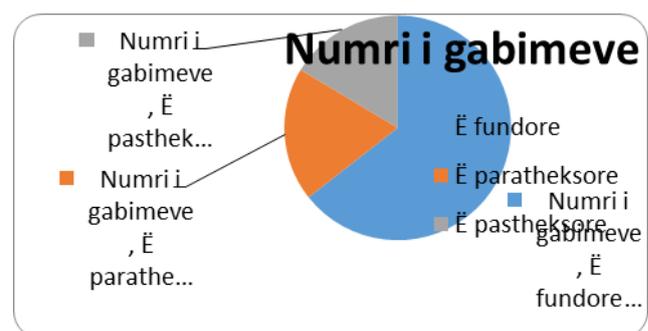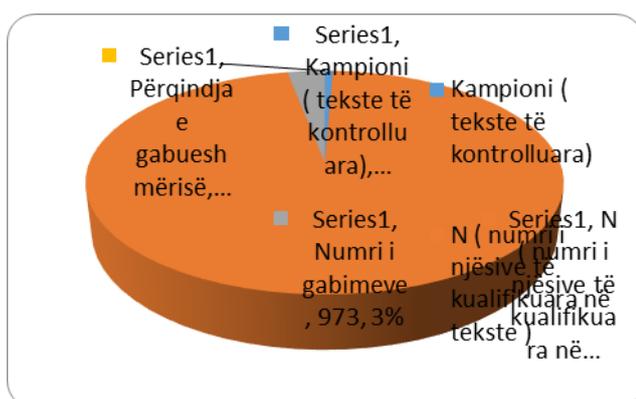
Conclusions and Recommendations

The content of this micro-thesis is composed of the review of written works (homework, essays, etc.) of students in grades 6, 7, 8, and 9, respectively, from urban and rural schools: 'Rilindja,' 'Mehmet Babamusta,' '28-Nëntori' in Vorrozen, 'Qamil Xhani' in Luzi i Vogël.

In the conclusions drawn from the study and analysis of the students' written speeches, we emphasize that our students write with many spelling errors, especially words and word forms that have the vowel "ë." This is because they do not give proper importance during spelling lessons, especially in village schools where regional dialect dominates the spoken language. The absence, addition, and indiscriminate use of other vowels instead of "ë" make the speeches not only grammatically incorrect but also unattractive in the precise articulation that students should have.

These deviations of the students are more evident in their written speeches, starting from what they hear and without considering the visual image of the word. In general, the objectives were clear, but the implementation by each teacher varies. Similarly, techniques and strategies are not lacking, but they need to be applied with precision.

I would propose that:

Firstly, spelling lessons be conducted as clearly and extensively as possible throughout the school year, paying close attention to practical exercises (homework, writing assignments, essays).

Secondly, each student's writing assignment should be carefully and objectively corrected by teachers, highlighting the students' errors and providing rewriting sessions.

Thirdly, spelling rules should be taught not only theoretically but also until automatic expressions of standard Albanian writing are acquired.

Fourthly, more dictations, spelling exercises, and copies of passages should be developed to guide the student towards the final writing result according to spelling norms.

Lastly, successful correction of spelling errors results from the joint efforts of teachers and students.

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DIN MEHMETI, A SPECIAL VOICE IN ALBANIAN LITERATURE OF THE 20TH CENTURY BY

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Abstract: As one of the most classic and well-known representatives of Kosovar poetry, unlike the young poets who start their literary creativity with great enthusiasm and dedication, but in the future this flame gradually fades and falls to the artistic level of poetry , Din Mehmeti climbs uphill calmly, but confidently and without interrupting his poetic journey. A full 60 years of journey, in its path of development, his poetry has undergone ideological, thematic and stylistic changes, sometimes big and sometimes small. The connection of the poet with the historical fate of Kosovo and the Albanian people in general is inextricable. His tireless efforts to create a modern poem, with a rich metaphorical expression, but also close to the reader which sometimes reaches the highest degree of poetic abstraction, are amazing. Even though he is not a poet of the stands, Din Mehmeti still joins the ranks of creators who do not want to free poetry from its social mission, nor alienate it from man, from his fate and life. His poems deal with the joy, the pain, the hope, the suffering, the falls and the rise of man and especially of the people who live in the Dukagjin Plain. As a deep poem, full of emotion, unlike the creativity of other poets who make their self as an axis around which the world revolves, Din Mehmeti identifies the poet's self with the fate of other people, and especially with the fate of people of the Kosovar territory.

Keywords: poet, metaphor, man, work, poetry, fate, territory.

1. Introduction

As one of the most classic and well-known representatives of Kosovar poetry, unlike the young poets who start their literary creativity with great enthusiasm and dedication, but in the future this flame gradually fades and falls to the artistic level of poetry, Din Mehmeti climbs uphill calmly, but confidently and without interrupting his poetic journey.

The first collection *In the wings of fireworks*, published in 1961, brings the young poet, with an expression full of transparency and a narrow vision of life and poetry, with more or less broad thematic interests.

The publication of the second collection titled *Solar Youth*, in 1966, shows him as a poet with a broader vision of life and experiencing deeper poetic emotions, while with *Shivers of light* published in 1969, he comes to the eyes of the reader as a meditative and quite emotional poet..

The Burned Silence published in 1972 and *Time* in 1974 affirms him as one of the most talented poets not only of his time. Over the years, the poetic tendency deepens and expands.

As dedication to creativity becomes one of the most important factors, the expansion of culture will strongly influence the flourishing and poetic realism of the trend. And of course, he would bear his fruits, unlike many of his peers, poets or prose writers who, although they may have been talented, left their literary creativity in the middle of the road.

1. **1. Din Mehmeti, the great big-voice of Albanian literature.**

A full 60 years of journey, in its path of development, his poetry has undergone ideological, thematic and stylistic changes, sometimes big and sometimes small. The connection of the poet with the historical fate of Kosovo and the Albanian people in general is inextricable.

His tireless efforts to create a modern poem, with a rich metaphorical expression, but also close to the reader which sometimes reaches the highest degree of poetic abstraction, are amazing.

He started his poetic creativity there around the fifties, at a time when the number of Albanian writers in Kosovo was still small and their creative platform was almost unique to all of them. Soviet poetry and Mayakovsky's verses were the best model, the songs of post-revolutionary fun, joy and collective happiness were still fresh.

His first two compilations show his extraordinary, almost unrestrained joy with which he sang about the days of liberation, the efforts for the backward social transformation of Kosovo. This is how he expresses himself in the poem *On the railings of the dawn*:

> *Now I sing*
> *The youth song*[1]

Inspired by the ancient and difficult fate of the Albanian woman, covered in pieces, closed, oppressed, but also by the fate of the farmer, the mountaineer and even by the fate of the black slaves who fights to get out of the yoke of the whites, he will pour verses from the master.

Very embodied with his poetry, a prolific poet, he will create long and without interruption a large number of works, about 17 collections of poems in total, not counting the selections and anthologies.

As a poet who lived and created in different social, political and historical contexts, including the liberation war of 1998-1999 and the liberation of Kosovo from the centuries-old

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[1] Din Mehmeti, *In the wings of fire,* The Renaissance, Pristina, 1961, p. 18.

conqueror, he never avoided his obligation as a contemporary poet and the collectivity to which he belonged.

Even though he is not a poet of the stands, Din Mehmeti still joins the ranks of creators who do not want to free poetry from its social mission, nor alienate it from man, from his fate and life.

His poems deal with the joy, the pain, the hope, the suffering, the falls and the rise of man and especially of the people who live in the Dukagjin Plain. The usual poetic themes such as love, death, lost youth, old age and others so preferred by other poets, do not seem to attract the poet.

It returns to personal experiences, sometimes of childhood and sometimes of mature age, but also as an objective and intellectual lyric. As a deep poem, full of emotion, unlike the creativity of other poets who make their self as an axis around which the world revolves, Din Mehmeti identifies the poet's self with the fate of other people, and especially with the fate of people of the Kosovar territory.

In the poem *In the ankle of my verse*, published in the first collection, *In the wings of fire:*

Come out, my verse!

Take my wandering pains

In the shadows of the suppressed streets

With joy and tears...

I forgave my heart like a child

I will laugh and cry for you, Man...[2]

Born and raised in a country where historical hardships have often passed, spiritually formed among people who have passed on their life experience from generation to generation, Din Mehmeti proves that he was formed in the bosom of our poetic tradition and that he is its worthy successor.

2. Modernism in Din Mehmet's poetry.

As a poem with a modern poetic structure, Din Mehmet's most accomplished poems have extended poetic feeling within the rhythmic structure and figures of verse.

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[2] Din Mehmeti, *In the wings of fire,* The Renaissance, Pristina, 1961, p. 55.

Built on metaphor, a metaphor built on the basis of the environment where the poet grew up and was inspired, his poetry, between the border of traditional poetry, in which the clarity of ideas and the realizations of meaning are not easy to be grasped by the reader. usual, the symbolic meaning of metaphorical expressions and verses is a clear indication that this poet bases the greatest value and effect of his verses on the metaphorization of the poetic language.

A deep experiencer of human fate, and especially of the Dukagjin Plain region, he often merges with them and becomes one. In the collections *Shivers of Light* and The *Burned Silence*, he returns to childhood experiences, tales told on winter nights, songs sung to bravery and suffering.

Just like the storyteller or the folk singer, his attention is directed to the numbers which are always associated with the unexpected, joys or sorrows, an attention that comes and grows since the publication of the first volume: Seven boys, seven villages, seven pairs of clouds, the seven lame kingdoms, the seven-headed solitude.

Through the symbolism of numbers, it wonderfully creates the atmosphere of belief, mood and popular mythological thought. So as we read between the lines of the poem *There was a name*:

> *It was what it was*
> *There was a pipe*

Or:

> *And what it was*
> *True if it was*
> *There would be no name.*[3]

they remind you of the endings of folk tales. Despite the similarity to the folk verse, he will take care to insert into the structure of his verse, the well-known formula of the folk tale: *go and go*, thus making a connection between the mythological consciousness and his modern poetic expression.

We see him as a romantic towards the past, towards which he has a sense of worship, often inspired by the people around him, their mindset.

Even at the beginning of poetry, we often come across the well-known ah-e, uh-e, oh-e of our traditional poetry and folk lyric poetry, which we still find in the creations of other poets.

Even though the poetic feeling comes out a bit inflated, quite direct and the verse a bit heavy and prosaic, in the later poetry it is partially freed from these flaws, it comes to be perfected.

In his most beautiful poems, he does not inflate feelings artificially, but manages to realize them within the rhythmic and pathetic structure of the verse. With the help of

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[3] Din Mehmeti, *Time*, The Renaissance, Pristina, 1974, p. 39.

metaphors borrowed from the environment and nature in which he grew up and inspired, this beautiful feeling is born, which lives in the verse created by him.

The difference between traditional poetry and contemporary poetry is that the last one, based on symbols, metaphors and associations derived from them, first conquers the feelings, and after it penetrates them, it is also realized in consciousness as a significant experience, which often depends on culture and inclination of the reader.

His poetry, in most cases, achieves the measure of clarity, it is neither clear to the point of exception to the exploratory curiosity of its meaning, nor so dense as to cause disagreement between the author's meaning intention and of the meaning the reader expects from it.

We are taking as an example, some of the verses of the poem *Wanderings after the rain*, one of the most difficult poems created by him:

> *I say to myself: I am a shell forgotten by the sea on the shingle*
> *In which the winds of early coves whistle.*
> *I am a shelter for others - my broken tribe...*[4]

This poem expresses a tragic existential condition in its essence, a tragic experience and is realized through a metaphorical expression. The forgotten shell on the seashore, battered by merciless winds, and the gnawed shed, which does not hold the raindrops, are prominent metaphors close to associative logic, yet distant enough to engage the reader's imagination.

Through striking, quite beautiful metaphorical expressions, he also creates symbolically outstanding expressions, and he even manages to transform poetry into a symbol:

> So fly migratory birds without fear, fly
> That on your side I also travel with the keys to the future in us
> With eyes full of new time that endures neither repulsion nor viciousness,
> Fly high because by flying your wings grow in space…[5]

So wonderful are Din Mehmet's metaphorical expressions in the compilations *Shivers of light, The Burned Silence* and *Time*: the spiders of thought, the windows of time, the bored rock, the confused streets, the walled lights, the sewers of the earth, the light was weeping, the earth was chewing the bones and many others.

Conclusion

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[4] Din Mehmeti, *Shivers of Light* The Renaissance, Pristina, p. 92.
[5] In the same, p. 92.

Although for many creators, poetry is the carrier of feelings and impressions, Din Mehmeti manages to realize them through verses full of meaning, meaning, which also bring valuable thoughts.

He combines the clear and sincere lived lyrical feeling and the meditative meaning of the verses leaving an indelible mark on the field of poetry.

The elevation of metaphorical verses and expressions to symbolic meaning clearly show that the poet relies on the metaphorization of the poetic language for the greatest value and effect of his verses.

Poetry, according to him, has great possibilities of influence on the spiritual world of man and on the humanization of relations between people. His optimism makes his commitment to poetry transparent, and some of his poems with which he has responded to the demands of the day, have led him, one might say, to poetic journalism.

In conclusion, we can say that Din Mehmeti is one of the outstanding poets of Albanian literature, without whose name its history would be poorer.

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TOWARDS A SMART & COMPACT CITY:
CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR TIRANA, ALBANIA

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Abstract

Urbanization has become one of the defining dynamics of the 21st century, generating growing pressures on mobility, housing, environmental quality, and governance. Smart City and Compact City models have emerged as complementary paradigms for addressing these challenges: the former through technological innovation and data-driven governance, and the latter through spatial efficiency, high density, and sustainable mobility. This study investigates how the capital of Albania, Tirana, can integrate these approaches into a comprehensive Smart–Compact–Resilient framework grounded in citizen participation and climate adaptation. Using a mixed-methods design, the research combines quantitative and qualitative analyses based on a structured survey of 350 residents across Tirana's central, suburban, and newly developed areas. The questionnaire examined four dimensions urban, social, environmental, and health through six sections that assessed mobility, housing, participation, technology, and resilience. The study proposes an integrated model for a Smart, Compact, and Resilient Tirana, combining digital innovation, inclusive governance, and climate resilience.

Keywords

Smart & Compact City, Tirana, Urbanization, Sustainability, Resilience.

Introduction

Urbanization is one of the defining processes of the twenty-first century, with more than half of the global population currently living in urban areas a figure projected to reach nearly 70% by 2050 (United Nations, 2020). This transition has created complex challenges for cities worldwide, including traffic congestion, air pollution, housing shortages, waste management, and pressure on infrastructure and natural resources. Addressing these issues requires new approaches that integrate technological, spatial, and social dimensions of urban development. The Smart City concept has emerged as a strategy for enhancing efficiency and innovation through digital technologies, big data, and ICT-based governance (Caragliu& Nijkamp, 2011; Mathew et al., 2024). In parallel, the Compact City model emphasizes high-density development, mixed land use, and sustainable transport to curb urban sprawl and reduce environmental impacts (OECD, 2012; Kain et al., 2020). Yet, the implementation of these paradigms has often faced structural limitations. In Central and Eastern Europe, the main barriers involve bureaucratic fragmentation, lack of coordination, and insufficient technical expertise (Janurová et al., 2020).

A growing body of literature criticizes the technocentric bias of Smart City policies, arguing that they prioritize efficiency and economic growth over inclusivity and environmental justice (Lee, 2017; Simonofski et al., 2019). Lee (2017)

proposes integrating the Smart City and Sustainable City paradigms into a single framework, where technology functions to enhance citizen well-being rather than as an end in itself.

Recent international frameworks mark a paradigm shift toward people-centred urbanism. The UN-Habitat People-Centred Smart City Guidelines (2025) emphasize that technology should be a tool for equity, sustainability, and human rights rather than a goal itself. The four guiding principles of shared prosperity, resilience, community participation, and inclusiveness are central to the new generation of smart initiatives (UN-Habitat, 2025; Oikawa et al., 2023). Similarly, the OECD (2012) and UNDP–ARUP–TalTech (2024) frameworks advocate integrating digital innovation with spatial planning, social justice, and climate resilience as interdependent pillars of sustainable development.

In the Albanian context, Afezolli (2022) emphasizes that the country's rapid urbanization and increasing car dependency have led to significant environmental and social pressures, particularly in Tirana. She argues that adopting smart growth strategies such as compact spatial planning, improved public transit, and green infrastructure can mitigate the negative effects of uncontrolled urban expansion and automobile dependence in Albanian cities (Afezolli, 2022). Tirana, the capital of Albania, provides a revealing case within this evolving debate. Over the past three decades, the city has experienced rapid demographic, economic, and spatial transformations driven by internal migration and market liberalization. Despite notable progress including municipal digitalization, the expansion of cycling lanes, and urban greening projects, major challenges remain, such as traffic congestion, air pollution, rising housing costs, and limited citizen participation (Municipality of Tirana, 2021). Survey results from this study confirm these concerns: 88% of citizens identify traffic as their main daily problem, 74% point to air pollution, and 65% to high living costs. At the same time, strong public support for smart transport (69%), green infrastructure (68%), and compact urban growth (83%) illustrates a widespread readiness for transformative policies. National research has shown similar climate-related transformations, where increasing temperatures and declining precipitation have altered land use and urban dynamics (Gjoni &Kucaj, 2025). Building on these insights, this study examines how the principles of Smart and Compact Cities integrated within a people-centred and resilience-oriented framework can serve as a roadmap for Tirana's transition toward a sustainable, inclusive, and climate-adaptive future. By linking citizen perceptions with urban policy and international best practices, it aims to contribute to the global debate on how post-socialist and Global South cities can avoid technocentric pitfalls and align with the UN's 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Methodology

Research Design and Case Study Selection: Tirana, Albania

This study adopts a mixed-methods approach, combining quantitative and qualitative analyses to explore citizens' perceptions and challenges in Tirana's transition toward a Smart and Compact City. This aligns with global recommendations emphasizing that integrating statistical and participatory methods enhances urban policy design (OECD, 2012; ARUP, 2024).

Tirana was selected as the case study due to its rapid urbanization and transformation in demographics, infrastructure, and mobility (Afezolli, 2022). Key challenges-transport congestion, air pollution, housing affordability, and climate

risks—shaped the study's six analytical sections. Following UN-Habitat's (2025) *People-Centred Smart City Guidelines*, citizens were placed at the core of the analysis, focusing on participation, equity, and resilience.
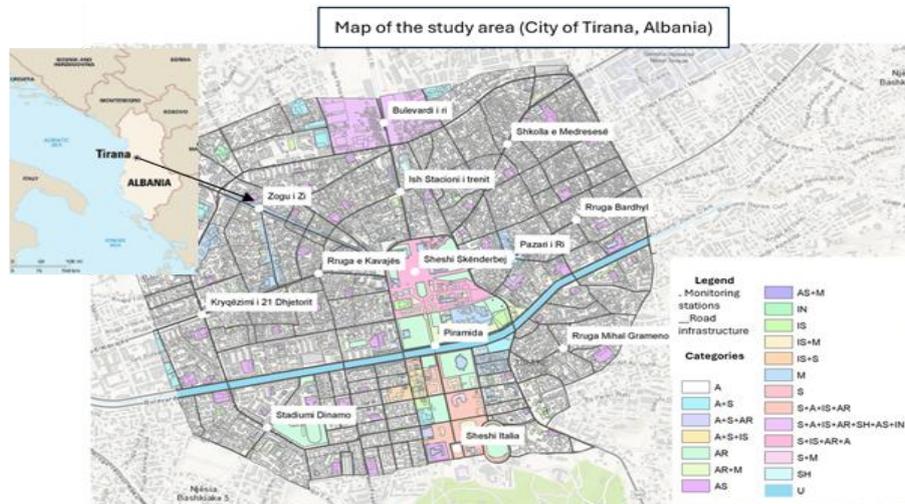
Figure 1. Map of the study area, Tirana, Albania (Source: Adapted from Annual Report "Air Quality and Noise Pollution ", Co-PLAN 2024. Designed by the authors using ArcGIS, 2025)

The structured questionnaire was built on four dimensions from Smart–Compact City literature urban, social, environmental, and health and seven thematic sections covering quality of life, digital governance, urban compactness, inclusion, and future visions for Tirana. Its structure drew from international models such as the Composite Citizen Framework **(**Mendybayev et al., 2022**)** and the People-Centric Smart City Model **(**Oikawa et al., 2023**)** to ensure methodological consistency with global practices.

Data Collection

The survey combined closed- and open-ended questions to merge statistical analysis with qualitative insights. A pilot test (15–20 participants) ensured clarity and validity. The target population included Tirana residents aged 18+, with a sample of 350 respondents selected through stratified random sampling across three urban zones (city centre, suburbs, new developments). The survey was distributed both online (238 responses) and in person (112 interviews).

Data Analysis

The study used both quantitative and qualitative methods to comprehensively understand citizens' perceptions and experiences. Quantitative analysis applied descriptive statistics (frequencies, means, standard deviations) and comparative tests by gender, age, and residential area, identifying key urban challenges in transport, air quality, public services, and housing (Sections 4.1–4.3).

Qualitative analysis examined open-ended responses through thematic coding, revealing issues such as mobility, greenery, waste management, digital access, and social inclusion (Sections 4.4–4.6).

Finally, the findings were compared with international research on Smart, Compact, and Resilient Cities to contextualize Tirana's development within global best practices. This mixed-method approach ensured both statistical accuracy and

interpretive insight, forming a strong basis for citizen-centred urban policies and the advancement of Tirana's Smart & Compact City vision.

Figure 2 summarizes the study's methodological structure, outlining a sequential process: selecting Tirana as the case study, collecting data via a structured questionnaire, conducting quantitative and qualitative analyses, and integrating results with international Smart, Compact, and Resilient City experiences.

Research Design & Case Study	Data Collection (Questionnaire)	Data Analysis (Quality and Quantity)	Comparative Integration

Relationship between 4 dimensions of literature (Urban, Social, Environmental, Health) and 6 sections of the study questionnaire for Tirana.	
Urban	Quality of life and public services.
	Smart technologies and solutions (smart transport, air pollution, green spaces)
Social equity	Citizen participation and digital governance.
	Housing affordability.
	Social inclusion
Environmental	Urban compactness and spatial planning.
	Environmental monitoring and greening
Health	Citizens' perception of public health, safety and resilience (heat waves, floods)

Figure 2. Methodological Framework for the Smart & Compact City Study, Source: Authors' elaboration, adapted from Composite Citizen Framework (Mendybayev et al., 2022), People-Centric Smart City Model (Machida et al., 2023), and European Smart Cities Information System (SCIS, 2017).

The figure also illustrates the connection between the four analytical dimensions Urban, Social, Environmental, and Health and the six thematic questionnaire sections, covering quality of life, public services, digital governance, spatial compactness, environmental monitoring, and urban resilience.

This framework highlights how the mixed-methods design ensured coherence between theory and empirical evidence, linking global Smart–Compact City concepts with Tirana's specific socio-urban context.

Results and Discussion

From the 350 respondents in Tirana (66% women, 34% men), the results show several important trends which are divided into 6 main sections.

The survey findings reveal a complex picture of Tirana's urban transition, where technological innovation, spatial efficiency, and citizen participation coexist with deep challenges of inequality, limited transparency, and environmental stress. The discussion interprets these results within six main analytical dimensions -urban, social, environmental, and health while situating Tirana in the broader context of Smart and Compact City practices in Europe and beyond.

General Information about Civic participation

Section 1 indicates that the survey sample is representative of educated, long-term residents, particularly women and working-age adults, who can provide valuable insights for shaping Smart & Compact City policies in Tirana.

The demographic profile of respondents reflects a socially active, well-educated, and economically engaged segment of Tirana's population. The majority are young to middle-aged adults (25–44 years old, 67%), with a clear predominance of female respondents (65%). Education levels are strikingly high, with over 90% holding university or postgraduate degrees, which suggests that survey results are shaped by citizens with greater awareness of urban development issues. Employment data show that most participants are employed (70%), meaning their views are closely tied to daily experiences of transport, housing, and public services. Regarding place of residence, half live in the city centre, while the remainder are distributed across suburbs and newly developed areas, offering a mix of perspectives shaped by location-specific challenges. Furthermore, nearly three-quarters have lived in Tirana for more than a decade, demonstrating that many respondents have long-term familiarity with the city's urban transformation.
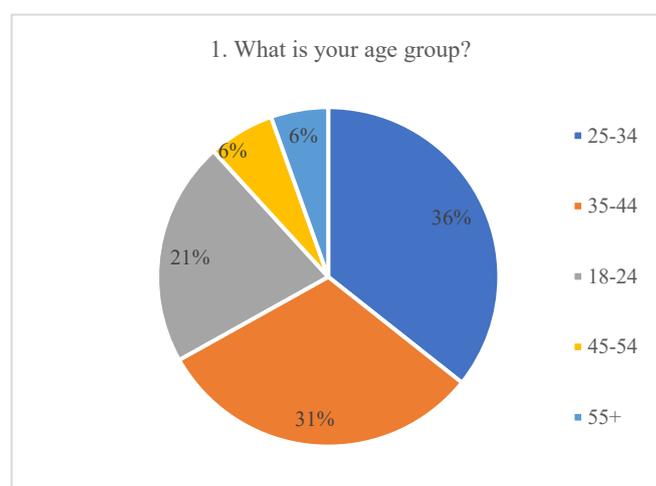
Figure 1. What is your group age?

The largest share of respondents belongs to the 25–34 age group (35.7%), followed closely by those aged 35–44 (31.1%).Younger respondents, 18–24 years old, represent 21.4%, while older age groups (45–54 and 55+) together account for only about 11.8%.This indicates that the survey mainly reflects the perspectives of young and middle-aged citizens who are actively engaged in the labour market and urban life (Figure 1).
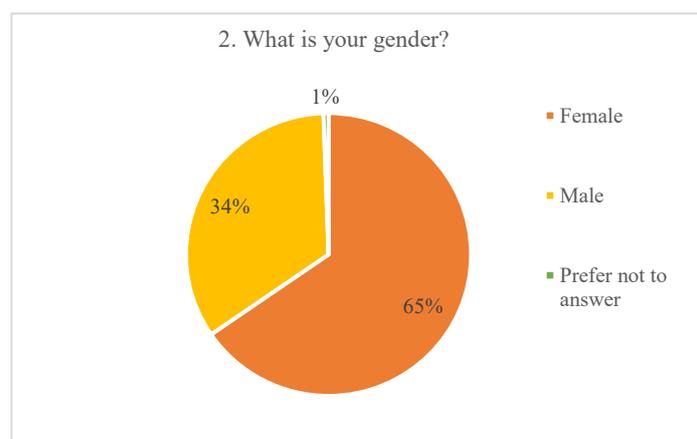
Figure 2. What is your gender?

Females represent the majority (65.6%), while males make up 34% of the respondents. Only 0.4% preferred not to disclose their gender. This shows that women were more engaged in the survey, reflecting a stronger interest in issues such as urban quality of life, environment, and social well-being (Figure 2).
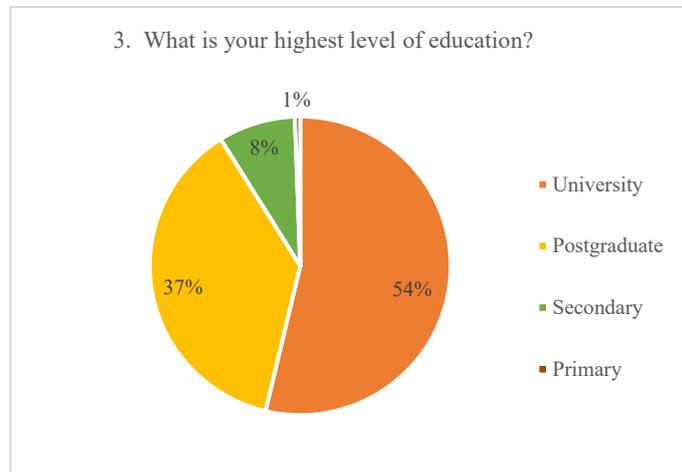
Figure 3. What is your highest level of education?

A highly educated sample: 53.8% hold a university degree and 37.4% hold a postgraduate qualification. Only 8.4% completed secondary education, and 0.4% only primary education. Over 90% of the respondents have higher education, suggesting that the survey represents citizens with strong awareness and interest in urban development and governance issues, (Figure 3).
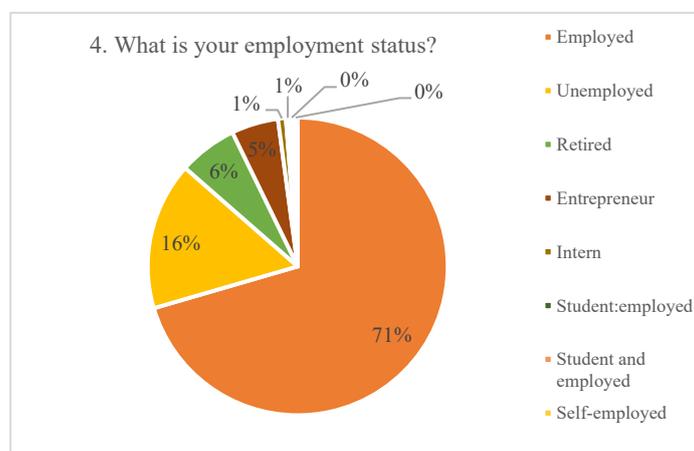
Figure 4. What is your employment status?

The majority are employed (70.2%), while 16% are students and 6.3% unemployed. Also, 5% are retired, and smaller groups include entrepreneurs, interns, or self-employed individuals. The dominance of employed respondents highlights perspectives from economically active citizens who directly experience urban challenges such as transport, housing, and services (Figure 4).
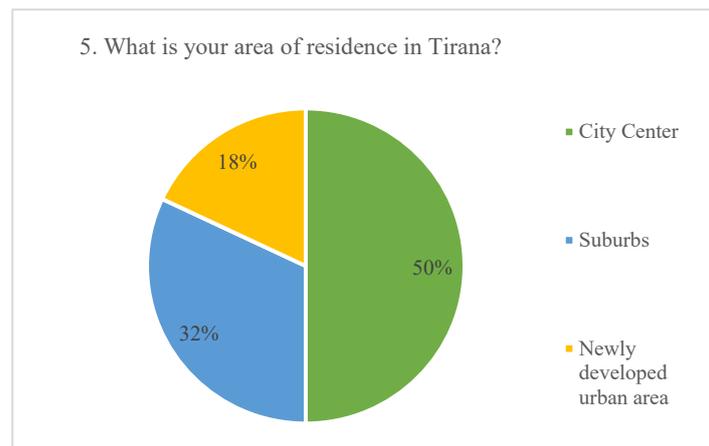
Figure 5. What is your area of residence in Tirana?

In Tirana, 50% live in the city centre, 32% in the suburbs, and 18% in newly developed urban areas. This distribution reflects a mix of urban experiences: central residents are more exposed to congestion and pollution, suburban residents face access and service challenges, and new urban area residents are experiencing rapid urbanization (Figure 5).
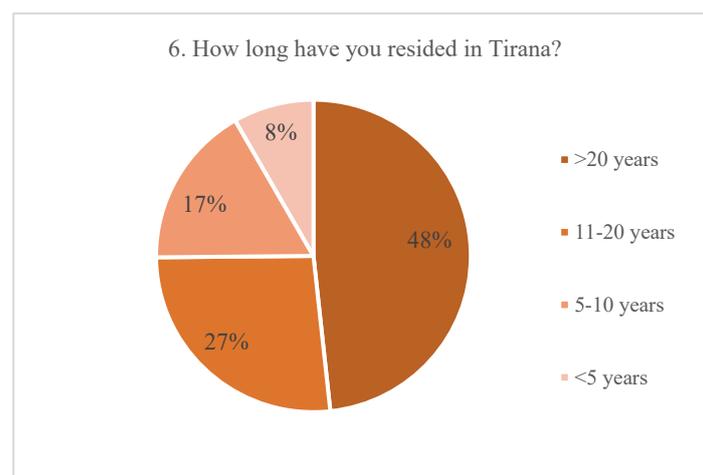
Figure 6. How long have you resided in Tirana?

The majority are long-term residents, which strengthens the reliability of their perceptions about changes, improvements, and challenges in the city. The largest segment, 48.3% have lived in Tirana for over 20 years, and 26.5% between 11–20 years, 16.8% have resided for 5–10 years, while only 8.4% are recent residents (<5 years) (Figure 6).

Urban Dimension (Mobility, Services, and Urban Liveability)

This section underscores the urgent need for improvements in transport, waste management, and air quality, along with better promotion and trust-building for digital municipal services. These findings demonstrate that citizens expect a more efficient, sustainable, and responsive urban system as a foundation for Tirana's Smart & Compact City vision. The survey

results reveal a critical perception of Tirana's urban conditions. Nearly half of respondents rate the quality of life as average, while a substantial share considers it low or very low, with only a minimal percentage perceiving it as high.
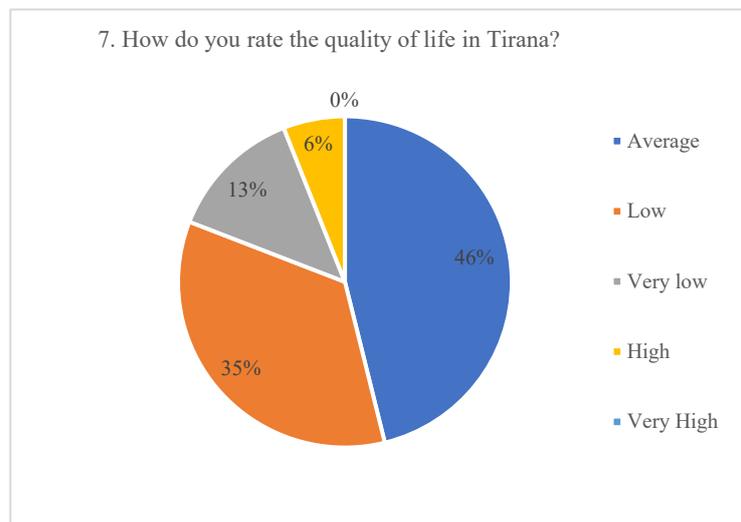
Figure 7. How do you rate the quality of life in Tirana?

Almost half of the respondents (46.2%) rated the quality of life as average. A significant portion (34.9%) rated it as low, and 13% as very low. Only 5.9% considered it high, while none rated it as very high. This indicates that citizens have a predominantly critical view of living conditions, with very few perceiving high standards of quality of life (Figure 7).
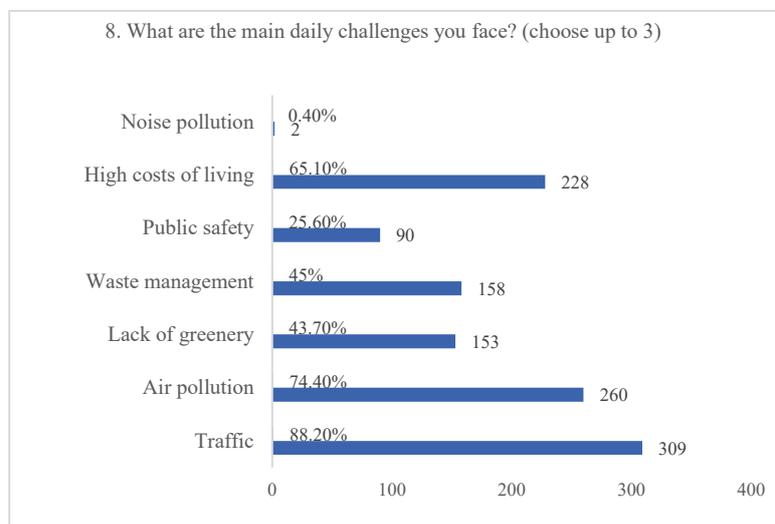
Figure 8. What are the main daily challenges you face? (choose up to 3)

Among the most pressing issues, traffic (88.2%) is by far the most common problem. Also, air pollution (74.4%) and the high cost of living (65.1%). Other significant challenges include waste management (45%) and lack of greenery (43.7%). This shows that mobility, environment, and affordability are the most serious urban problems shaping daily life in Tirana (Figure 8).
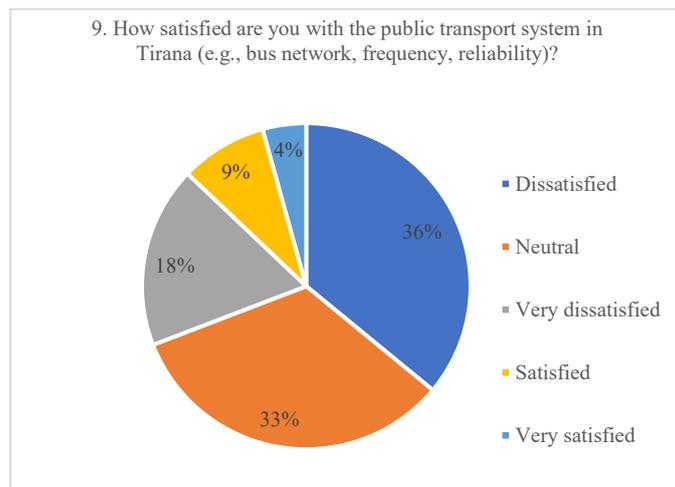
Figure 9. How satisfied are you with the public transport system in Tirana?

Regarding the satisfaction with the service of public transport, the majority are dissatisfied (36.1%) or very dissatisfied (18%), while only 12.7% are satisfied/very satisfied; 33.2% are neutral (Figure 9).
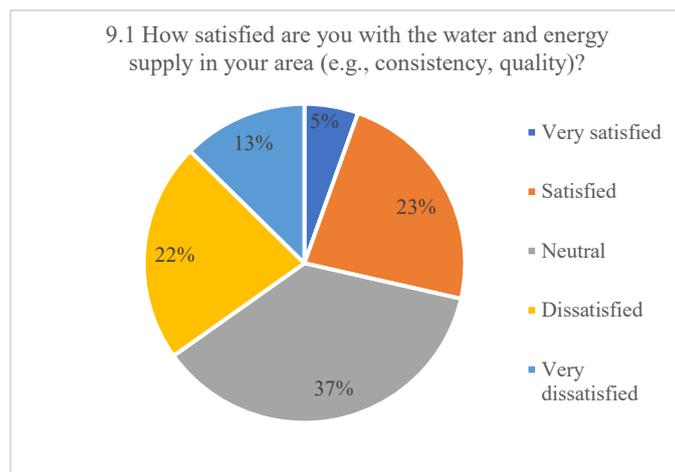
Figure 9.1 How satisfied are you with the water and energy supply in your area (e.g., consistency, quality)?

Regarding the water and energy supply sector, views are mixed. The highest portion, 36.6%, were neutral, but dissatisfaction is relatively high (22.3% dissatisfied, 12.6% very dissatisfied), compared with only 28.5% satisfied/very satisfied (Figure 9.1).
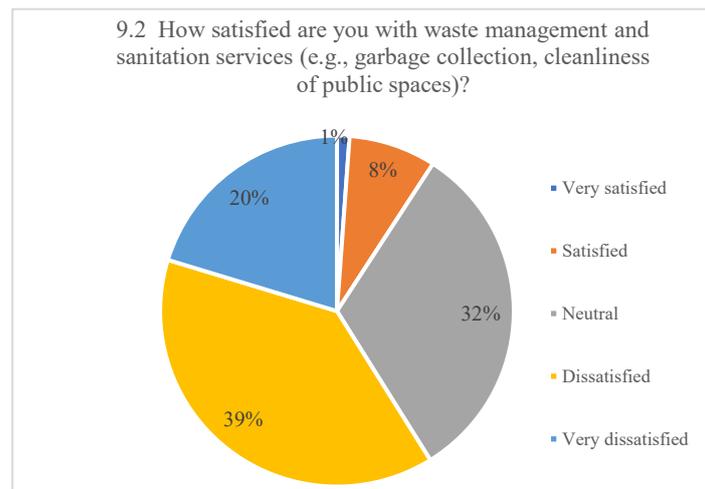
Figure 9.2 How satisfied are you with waste management and sanitation services?

The most negative ratings are for the waste management: 59% dissatisfied/very dissatisfied, only 9.2% satisfied/very satisfied, with 31.9% neutral (Figure 9.2). Waste management emerges as the least satisfactory public service, followed by public transport, while water and energy services receive more balanced but still critical views.
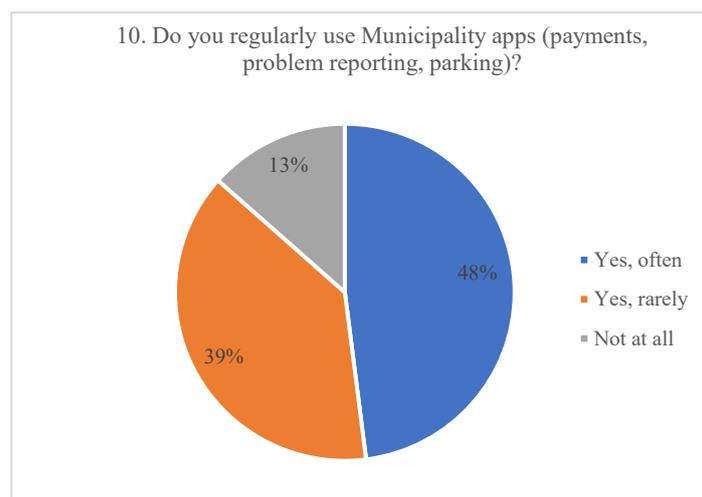
Figure 10. Do you regularly use Municipality Apps (payments, problem reporting, parking)?

Use of Municipality Apps is widespread, with 13.4% not using them at all, 38.7% using them rarely, and only 47.9% using them often. This shows a little slightly high uptake of digital municipal services, which limits the potential of e-governance and smart city tools (Figure 10).

The predominant concerns of traffic (88%), air pollution (74%), and the high cost of living (65%) underscore the intensity of urban pressures in Tirana. These challenges mirror those documented in other post-socialist cities, where rapid motorization and insufficient public transport infrastructure have worsened air quality and congestion (OECD, 2012). The citizens' dissatisfaction with public transport (54% dissatisfied or very dissatisfied) and waste management (59% dissatisfied) confirm that infrastructure and service provision remain the weakest pillars of Tirana's Smart & Compact transition. However, the relatively high use of municipal apps (48% often use) indicates growing digital readiness and

openness to smart urban tools. The challenge, however, lies in converting this digital potential into tangible improvements in mobility, waste reduction, and service quality.

The predominance of traffic congestion and air pollution in Tirana mirrors findings by Afezolli (2022), who highlights that Albania's shift toward car dependent urbanism has intensified both environmental degradation and urban sprawl. Her recommendations for integrated public transport and compact redevelopment remain critical for achieving sustainable urban growth.

Social Equity (Citizen participation and affordability)

This section reveals serious challenges in social equity and citizen participation. While citizens strongly demand technological improvements in healthcare, transport, and education, they feel largely excluded from urban planning and report very low levels of trust in municipal transparency. Housing affordability stands out as a critical pressure point, with an overwhelming majority viewing costs as unaffordable.
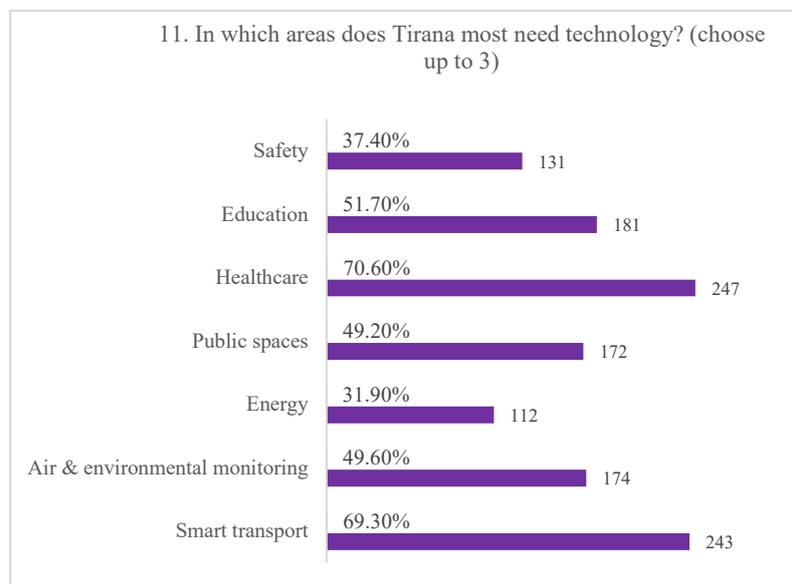
Figure 11. In which areas do Tirana most need technology? (choose up to 3)

Respondents highlighted several priority areas where citizen participation is crucial. Healthcare (70.6%) and smart transport (69.3%) were the most frequently mentioned. Education (51.7%), Air and environmental monitoring (49.6%), and public spaces (49.2%) also stand out as significant. Safety (37.4%) and energy (31.9%) were considered less urgent but still important (Figure 11). This shows that citizens perceive participation as vital in essential services (health, transport, education) and in areas tied to environmental quality and public space management.
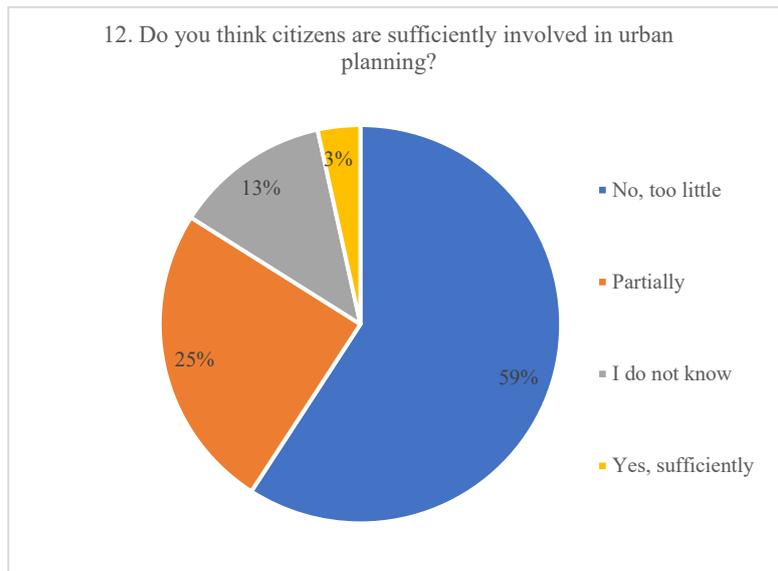
Figure 12. Do you think citizens are sufficiently involved in urban planning?

Regarding perception of citizen involvement in urban planning, about 59.2% believe that citizens are insufficiently involved, while 24.8% think their involvement is only partial. Another 12.6% are unsure, while only 3.4% feel citizens are sufficiently included (Figure 12). This demonstrates a strong perception of exclusion from decision-making processes.
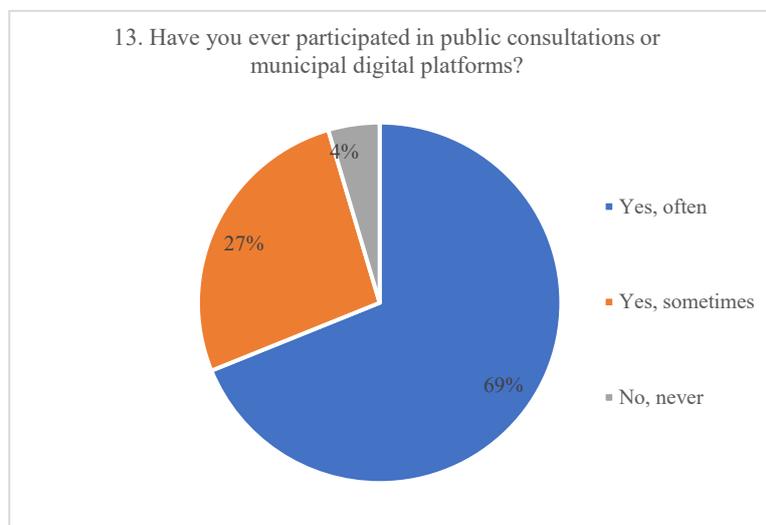
Figure 13. Have you ever participated in public consultations or municipal digital platforms?

When asked about participation in public consultations or digital platforms, about 68.9% of respondents said they use them often, 26.5% use them sometimes, and only 4.6% have never participated (Figure 13).
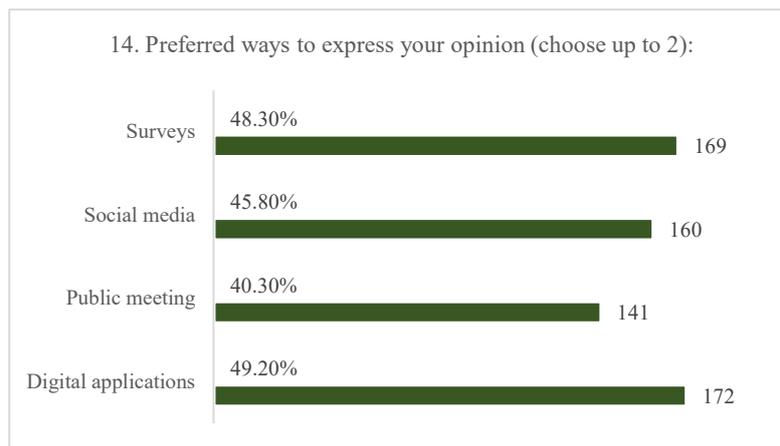
Figure 14. Preferred ways to express your opinion (choose up to 2)

Citizens favour a range of engagement methods, such as digital applications (49.2%) and surveys (48.3%) being the most popular. Social media (45.8%) and public meetings (40.3%) also play significant roles (Figure 14). There is a clear preference for modern, digital, and accessible channels, although traditional meetings remain valued.
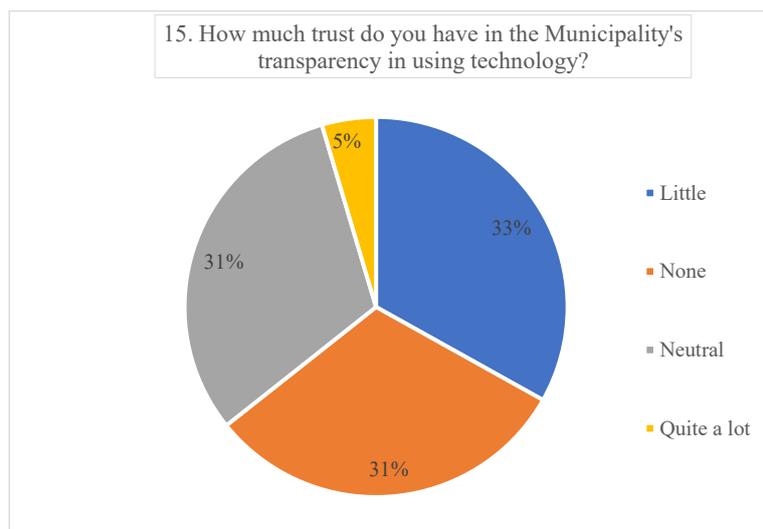
Figure 15. How much trust do you have in the municipality's transparency in using technology?

When asked about trust in the municipality's transparency when using technology, 64.3% reported that they have no trust, 31.1% are neutral, and 4.6% express higher levels of trust (Figure 15). These numbers highlight low confidence in transparency, which undermines citizen engagement.
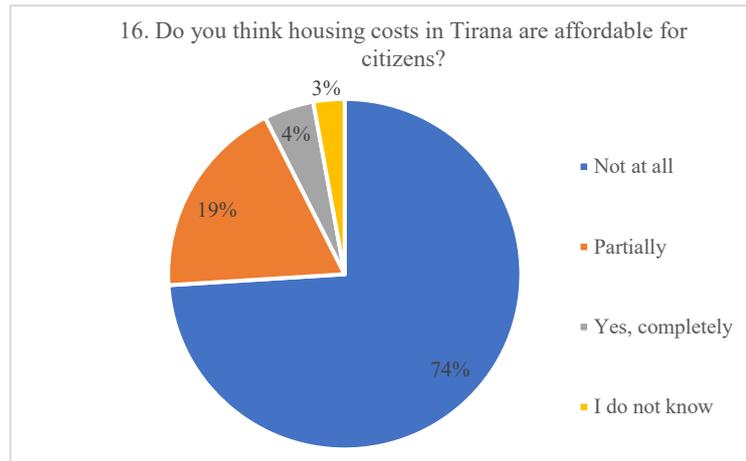
Figure 16. Do you think housing costs in Tirana are affordable for citizens?

A striking 74% state that housing is not affordable at all, and 18.5% believe it is partially affordable. Only 4.6% see it as fully affordable, with 2.9% unsure (Figure 16). Housing affordability emerges as a major social challenge in Tirana.
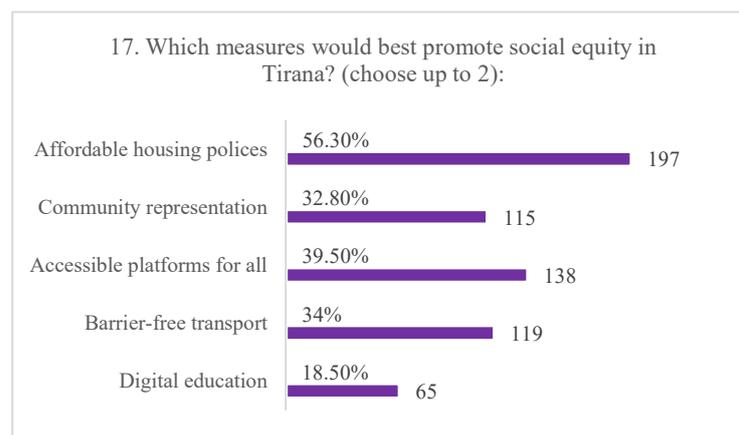
Figure 17. Which measures would best promote social equity in Tirana? (choose up to 2)

Citizens place the greatest emphasis on affordable housing as the most urgent social equity measure in Tirana, reflecting widespread concerns about rising living costs and urban affordability. Affordable housing policies (56.3%) were chosen most frequently, showing that housing affordability is considered the top priority for promoting social equity. Accessible platforms for all (39.5%) also scored highly, highlighting the need for inclusive digital and physical access to services. Barrier-free transport (34%) and community representation (32.8%) were also significant, pointing to the importance of mobility and inclusive decision-making. Digital education (18.5%) was selected less often but still seen as relevant for long-term equity (Figure 17).

These results illustrate a gap between citizen readiness for engagement and the lack of institutional channels to support it, a dynamic also emphasized by UN-Habitat's People-Centred Smart City Guidelines (2025). Housing affordability represents another major challenge with 74% considering housing costs unaffordable. To prevent similar outcomes, Tirana's Smart–Compact policy must incorporate inclusive housing strategies, following OECD recommendations (2012) for balancing density with affordability and accessibility. Overall, the results indicate that citizen participation and social

equity are the weakest pillars of Tirana's Smart & Compact City framework. Despite citizens' openness to digital tools (70% willing to use apps), institutional transparency and trust remain low. Building inclusive governance and ensuring affordable housing must therefore become central to Tirana's Smart & Compact strategy.

Environmental Dimension (Compactness, Green Infrastructure, and Climate Risks)

This section shows that Tirana's citizens are generally supportive of compact city principles, especially when linked to better transport, access to services, and environmental improvements. However, their concerns highlight the risks of overcrowding, unaffordable housing, and infrastructure pressures, along with the potential loss of cultural heritage and exposure to noise.
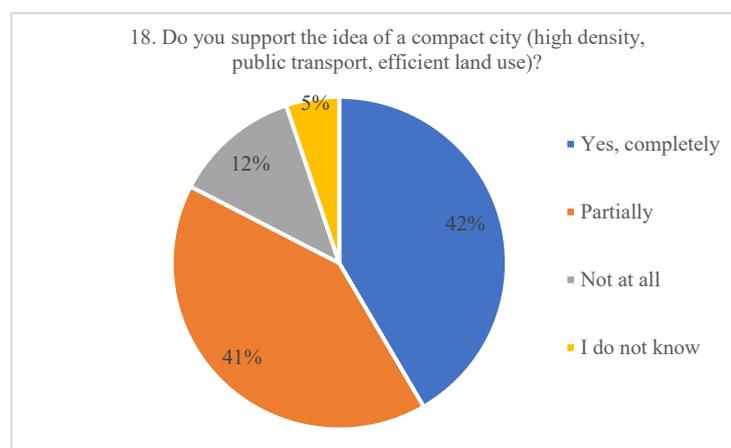
Figure 18. Do you support the idea of a compact city

(high density, public transport, efficient land use)?

A strong majority of respondent's express support for the compact city model, with 41.6% fully supporting it, and 41.2% partially supporting it. Only 12.2% reject the idea, and 5% are uncertain (Figure 18). This indicates a broad acceptance of the compact city approach, suggesting citizens recognize the potential benefits of density, efficient land use, and improved public transport.
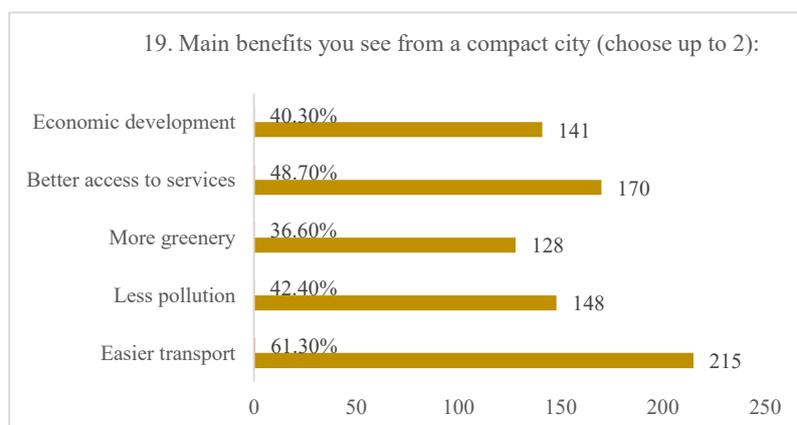
Figure 19. Main benefits you see from a compact city (choose up to 2):

Respondents identified multiple advantages of compact urban development, such as easier transport (61.3%), which is seen as the most significant benefit. Better access to services (48.7%) also ranks highly. Less pollution (42.4%) and economic development (40.3%) are also considered important. More greenery (36.6%) is highlighted by a substantial minority (Figure 19). Citizens associate compact urban form with improved mobility, service accessibility, environmental benefits, and economic opportunities.
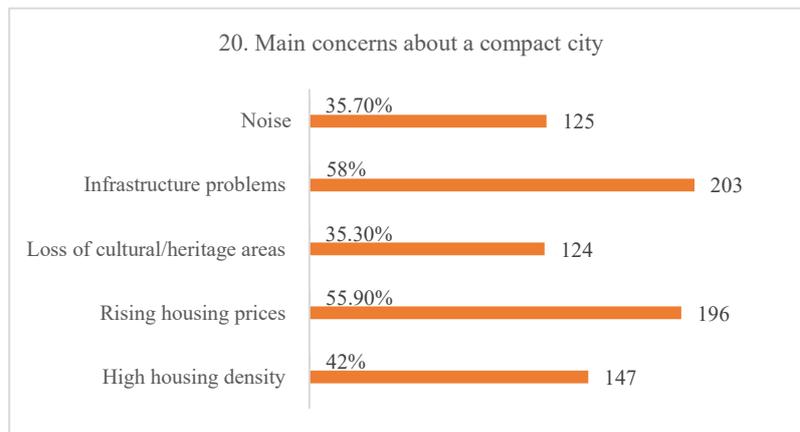
Figure 20. Main concerns about a compact city

Main concerns about a compact city range from infrastructure problems (58%) and rising housing prices (55.9%), which stand out as the most pressing concerns. High housing density (42%) is also a significant worry. Loss of cultural/heritage areas (35.3%) and noise (35.7%) are additional issues (Figure 20). Strong support for the compact city model (83%) shows public recognition of its benefits for transport and services, though concerns persist about infrastructure overload (58%), housing costs (56%), and heritage loss (35%). Priorities such as cleaner air (61%) and more green spaces (69%) highlight demand for nature-based solutions (NbS) and ecological resilience. Unlike Vienna or Amsterdam, Tirana still lacks integrated systems for air monitoring and climate adaptation. These results align with findings on climate vulnerability (Kucaj et al., 2024) and OECD (2012) guidance on compact, green growth. Building green corridors, low-carbon transport, and community monitoring is key to a Smart–Compact–Resilient Tirana.

Health and Resilience (Environmental Awareness and Urban Safety)

A vast majority of respondents acknowledge the harmful effects of air pollution, with 60.9% saying "very much" and 26.9% "quite a lot". Only a small minority think air pollution affects their health only slightly (6.7%) or not at all (0.4%) (Table 1). This indicates a high level of public awareness and concern regarding the direct health risks of air pollution in Tirana.

	21. Do you think air pollution affects your health		22. How prepared do you think the city is to face floods, heat waves, or other climate crises	
	No. questionary	%	No. questionary	%
Very much	213	60.92	9	2.52
Quite a lot	94	26.89	19	5.46
A little	24	6.72	104	29.83
Neutral	18	5.04	59	16.81
Not at all	1	0.42	159	45.38

Table 1. Results of the answers for question no 21 and 22.
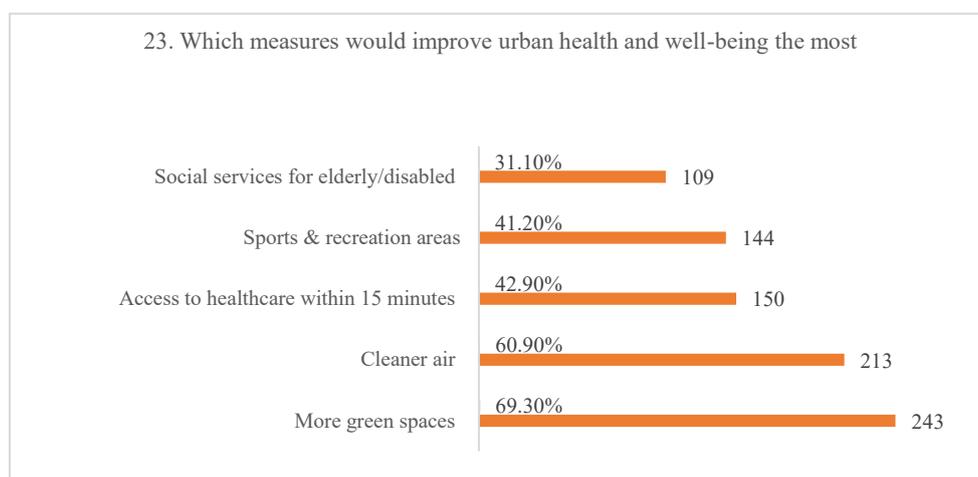
Figure 23. Which measures would improve urban health and well-being the most

Respondents prioritized more green spaces (69.3%) and cleaner air (60.9%), followed by healthcare access within 15 minutes (42.9%), sports and recreation areas (41.2%), and social services for the elderly and disabled (31.1%) (Figure 23).

These choices show a strong demand for environmental quality and accessible health and social services to enhance resilience and well-being. A large majority (87%) view air pollution as harmful to health, while 75% believe Tirana is unprepared for floods or heatwaves—indicating weak climate resilience. Citizens' emphasis on nearby healthcare (43%) and recreation spaces (41%) reflects the "15-minute city" model promoted by ARUP (2024). Integrating health, mobility, and environmental quality within this framework could strengthen urban sustainability.

Previous studies show that extreme heat and temperature variations directly affect public health and urban liveability (Kucaj & Gjoni, 2020). Strengthening early-warning systems, green corridors, and health-monitoring technologies would better align Tirana's resilience strategies with European and global frameworks. Overall, the findings confirm that public health and climate resilience are interdependent within Tirana's Smart & Compact City vision.

Citizens' Perspectives

This section emphasizes that there is a prevailing perception that the city is unprepared for climate risks, highlighting the need for stronger resilience strategies.
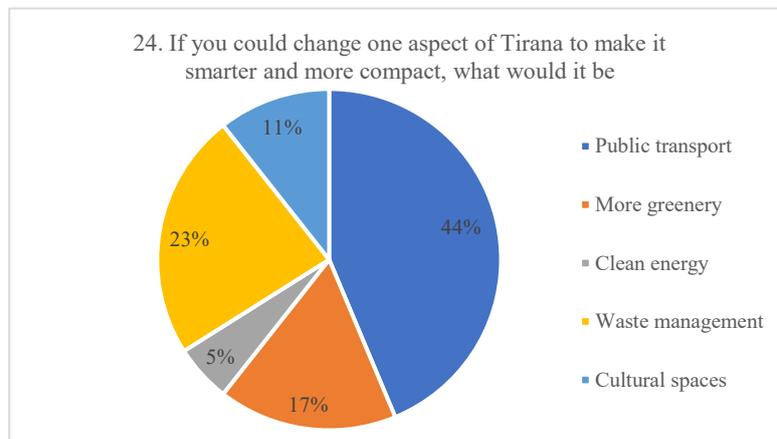
Figure 24. If you could change one aspect of Tirana to make it smarter and more compact, what would it be?

The most frequently mentioned priority is public transport (43.7%), showing citizens' strong demand for more efficient, reliable, and accessible mobility solutions. Waste management (23.5%) and more greenery (16.8%) are also important areas where citizens want improvements. Cultural spaces (10.7%) and clean energy (5.3%) received less emphasis but still reflect concerns about cultural vitality and sustainable energy use (Figure 24). Overall, citizens see mobility, waste management, and green infrastructure as the main levers for transforming Tirana into a smarter and more compact city.
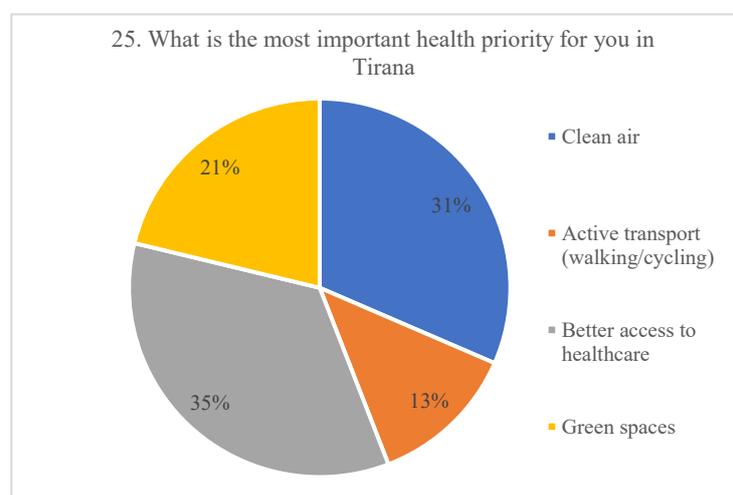
Figure 25. What is the most important health priority for you in Tirana?

The most important health priority in Tirana is considered to be better access to healthcare (34.5%). Clean air (31.5%) also ranks very high, reflecting environmental health concerns. Green spaces (21%) and active transport (12.6%) are also valued for promoting healthier lifestyles (Figure 25). Citizens emphasize both healthcare accessibility and environmental quality as essential pillars of public health in the city.
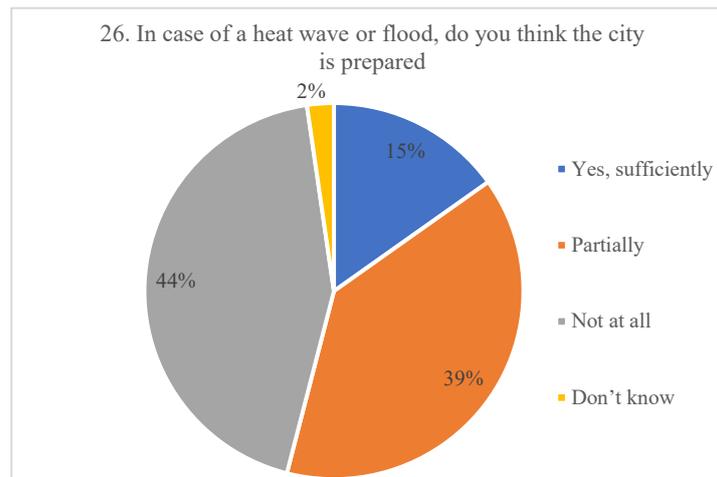
Figure 26. In case of a heat wave or flood, do you think the city is prepared?

Most respondents believe Tirana is either unprepared (43.7%) or only partially prepared (38.9%) for heatwaves and floods, while only 15.1% consider the city sufficiently ready (Figure 26). This reflects widespread concern about urban resilience and Tirana's capacity to respond to climate-related crises. The prioritization of public transport (43.7%) highlights both dissatisfaction with current inefficiencies and a collective aspiration for a cleaner, more sustainable city. Waste management (23.5%) and greenery (16.8%) also rank high, emphasizing citizens' awareness that environmental quality is essential for liveability, consistent with OECD (2012) Compact City principles promoting ecological balance and resource efficiency (Matsumoto et al., 2019). In the health domain, access to healthcare (34.5%) and clean air (31.5%) are top concerns, showing the perceived link between environmental and health issues, as underscored by UN-Habitat's (2025) People-Centred Smart City Guidelines. Similar trends appear in post-socialist cities, where rapid urbanization has strained both healthcare and environmental systems (Janurová, 2020). The low perception of climate preparedness (over 80%) reveals a gap between environmental awareness and the lack of visible resilience measures.

Addressing this requires policies aligned with national adaptation priorities for drought management and agricultural resilience (Kucaj et al., 2024; Gjoni et al., 2024). Implementing nature-based solutions, strengthening early-warning systems, and improving healthcare access would not only meet citizens' expectations but also align Tirana with international best practices for sustainable, people-centred urban governance (Kim et al., 2015; ARUP, 2024).

Conclusion and Recommendation

This study examined how Tirana can integrate Smart City and Compact City principles within a people-centred framework addressing key urban, social, and environmental challenges. Using a mixed-method approach with 350 respondents, it identified traffic congestion, air pollution, and high living costs as the most pressing issues. Although citizens show strong interest in technological solutions, particularly smart transport, waste management, and digital public services, overall satisfaction remains low. Improving the efficiency and accessibility of these systems is crucial for advancing Tirana's smart and compact transition.

From a social perspective, the research reveals limited civic participation and low trust in governance. While most residents are digitally literate, few engage in decision-making, suggesting that technology alone cannot guarantee inclusivity. Strengthening participatory governance and social equity, especially in housing, is vital to ensure that compact development does not deepen inequality.

Environmentally, citizens are highly aware of pollution and climate risks but view Tirana as unprepared for heatwaves and floods. Expanding green spaces, improving air quality, and increasing urban resilience must be central goals for sustainable development.

As overpopulation continues to grow, a city needs to achieve a balanced combination of liveability, vitality, and prosperity, thereby fostering sustainable development.

Compact city measures can enhance land efficiency, public transport use, and neighbourhood vitality, provided they are adapted to local conditions. However, success depends on citizen understanding and participation. Reaching consensus with residents through transparent communication and community dialogue should be a policy priority.

Another important direction involves the adaptive reuse of vacant buildings and disused public facilities. While some may be unsuitable for habitation, they can be repurposed for disaster prevention, climate resilience, or community-based uses. Such actions align with compact city principles and contribute to sustainable urban regeneration.

Overall, Tirana's transition toward a Smart, Compact, and Resilient city requires balancing technology with inclusion, transparency, and environmental care. Collaboration among public institutions, citizens, and the private sector is essential to create a liveable and equitable city. Future research and policy experimentation drawing also from international examples, such as Japan, can further guide Tirana toward a sustainable, adaptive, and people-oriented urban future.

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SKANDERBEG'S FIGURE IN LITERATURE

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Abstract

Skanderbeg's figure is present in Albanian literature almost as much as any other historical figure that has appeared in the literature of any European or world country. Since the beginning of Albanian literature, Skanderbeg's figure is present. At times, it appears as a central figure and as a figure that inspires writers to write about the struggle of the Albanian people for freedom.

Among the first authors who dealt with the Scanderbeg's era is the great poet Jeronim De Rada. One of the most prominent works of De Rada, which in the center of attention has the Albanian hero and describes the deeds and wars of Skanderbeg and Albanians for freedom, is "Unlucky Skanderbeg". This is one of De Rada's greatest works, both in terms of the thematic breadth and the social value that is dealt with in it. Indeed, this is a collection of 32 poems with a beautiful tendency of a historical-romantic epic.

Among other writers who have taken on Skanderbeg's figure and have left an indelible mark in Albanian literature is definitely Naim Frashëri. With his work "Scanderbeg's History", Naim Frashëri elevated Scanderbeg's monumental figure in accordance with the liberation ideas and fundamental concepts of the Renaissance.

Although there are few Albanian writers who have not written about Skanderbeg or his age, we have focused only on these two authors. By making a comparative look at these two works, we will highlight the features that Skanderbeg recognizes, as described in these two works, and will consider the essential elements that distinguish these two works, which are also elements that recognize the period of Albanian Romanticism.

Keywords: Skanderbeg, De Rada, Naim Frasheri, Romanticism, figure, poem

Skanderbeg and his wars constitute a living phenomenon, and every era of our history has looked at and conceived of it, bringing something new, something of its own, to its understanding. And this is natural, because the importance of the giant wars that he waged for almost a quarter of a century for the land, freedom, and political union of the Albanian people, exceeded the goals of his era. In the difficult centuries that came for the Albanians after the death of the hero, in the successive uprisings that they developed against the Ottoman invaders, the name of Skanderbeg became a flag and a symbol of the fight for freedom. For these reasons, the figure and era of Skanderbeg inspired Albanian writers, who from early on, created works permeated by love and ardent admiration for the fate of Kruja.

In one word, as the well-known Albanian writer Ernest Koliqi writes, "The figure of Kastrioti symbolizes the unity of Albanians."[1]

The name and memory of Skanderbeg was preserved first in the popular tradition, of which the hero became a part during his lifetime. Later, through an entire literature, starting with the work of Barleti, the echo of Skanderbeg's heroic deeds not only did not die out, but gained a special strength and resonance.

"From Marin Barleti to Ismail Kadare, the figure of Skanderbeg has been treated, connected with the fate and deeds of Albanians in certain periods of their history. The dimension of the national ideal is strengthened in the works of historians as well as in the works of writers."[2]

From the middle of the 19th century, when the efforts of the Albanians to shake off slavery were renewed with an unprecedented momentum, when Albania was swept by a powerful wave of uprisings and the liberation movement recognized wide proportions and acquired a conscious character, the figure of Skanderbeg took on a meaning especially important and new echo. Under these conditions, the figure of Skanderbeg not only symbolized national unity against feudal, provincial, and religious disunity, but also marked the path to victory over the enemy. Therefore, the National Renaissance turned to the figure of the 15th century hero as a symbol of invincible resistance against the foreigner.

This reason explains the interest and the great place that the figure of Skanderbeg occupied in the literature of the Renaissance, which was inspired by the ideals of the war for the national liberation of the Albanian people. Taking the great patriotic theme of the 15th century epic and its immortal leader, Gjergj Kastriot - Skanderbeg, the Renaissance writers laid the foundations of a new literature, which had a national content and was an expression of the aspirations and concerns that characterized most Albanians in that time.

Romantic poets, meanwhile, imagine that period as "The period of independence, freedom and happiness of the Albanians."[3]

Among the first authors who dealt with the topic of Skanderbeg's era is the great Arber poet Jeronim De Rada. In his poems "Skenderbeu i pafan", "Pasqyra e e nje jete njerezore" and "Gjon Huniadi", the figure of Skanderbeg is created with quick dashes; he appears to us as a symbol of insurgent Albania, as an invincible knight and an outstanding leader.

One of De Rada's most outstanding works, which focuses on the Albanian hero and describes the exploits and struggles of Skanderbeg and the Albanians for freedom, is "Skanderbeu i pafan" (Unlucky Scanderbeg). This is one of De Rada's greatest works, both in terms of thematic breadth and the social values it deals with. In fact, this is a composite collection of 32 poems with a beautifully pronounced tendency of a historical-romantic epic.

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[1] Ernest Koliqi, Fishta interpreter of the Albanian spirit, Franciscan Assembly, Gjakovë, 1997, page 81.
[2] Sali Bashota, Skanderbeg of history and Skanderbeg of literature, Albanology 9, Institute of Albanology, Pristina 2019, page 84.
[3] Rexhep Qosja, History of Albanian literature, Romanticism I, Rilindja, Pristina, page 184.

De Rada, for weaving this work, of course, in addition to the oral literature of Arbëresh, which was rich with many data from the era of Skanderbeg, also used Barleti's History of Skanderbeg, therefore the reflection of many situations also coincides well with the historical data of development of events. Thus, this work now appears to us as a conglomeration of events of the fifteenth century, be it war or social relations in general, where Albanian heroes and heroines such as Radovani and Bosdari, Astiri and Gjekoviti, Ganeta and Serafina, Agata and Imatea and many other faces form the richest gallery of types that Albanian romanticism created for the era of Skanderbeg, to which De Rada dedicated almost the entire literary work. This is a great merit of De Rada, since he was the first to shine artistically the face of our legendary fate, whose era later became a source of inspiration for our renaissance.

Among the other writers who dealt with the figure of Skanderbeg and left an indelible mark on Albanian literature is undoubtedly Naim Frashëri. With his work "Histori e Skenderbeut" (Skanderbeg's history), Naimi exalted the monumental figure of Skanderbeg in accordance with the liberating ideas and basic concepts of the Renaissance.

Addressing the great subject of our national literature with a lively poetic language and a dedicated spirit, Naim, both in terms of artistic strength and resonance, far surpassed what was written before his work. Naim's poem gained great popularity and played a prominent role in the formation of the national consciousness of our people, in the conditions when he was preparing for the decisive match with the hundred-year-old conqueror.

Naimi tried to speak to his compatriots, through the time and the figure of Skanderbeg, with the voice of the homeland worn out by five centuries of captivity, to remind them of their duties towards him, to give light to Albania from the bright spirit of the hero, to sound the trumpet for the complete liberation of the country.

Naim's Skanderbeg is the personification of the heroic spirit of the people of his century - a source of inspiration for heroism in the coming war. With the high awareness of the work he performed before history, with the precious virtues of patriotism, bravery, and wisdom, Skanderbeg should serve as a model to help Albanians understand the historical tasks of the time and become masters of them. The great influence exerted by that work had its source in the strong patriotic ideas it carries, in the actual sound that the poet has given them, as well as in his skill to create a beloved hero close to the spirit of the Albanian.

It is known that European romantics, to escape the reality in which they lived, turn to the past, be it mythology or history. As researcher Osman Gashi explains, "The history of world literature is inextricably linked to myths."[4]

Putting him in the center of the work for the first time, Naimi, relying on Barleti, presented Skanderbeg as a popular hero, loved, and respected by all. He is an example of moral and physical perfection. Alongside bravery and manliness, there are simplicity, goodness, magnanimity and wisdom, traits that make him an ideal leader, in accordance with the

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[4] Osman Gashi – Myth and European Romanticism, Kosovo Pen Center, Pristina, page 36.

requirements of the European Renaissance for the hero, as well as with the Enlightenment beliefs of the poet.

Although he adheres to a systematic presentation of the story of Skanderbeg's life and warriors, although he presents it mainly through action, the poet has also paid attention to the discovery of the inner world of the hero. The confession that Skanderbeg makes to the old man Hasan in a foreign land, through which he pours out the voice of his heart saddened by longing for his motherland, the pangs of conscience he feels after the reproaches of his father's shadow, the feelings that boil inside him when he finds out for the sorrows of the homeland and the family, the bitter tears he swallows when he hears about the betrayal of Moisi Golemi and the emotions he feels when he forgives him with patience, are some of the elements that enrich the spiritual world of the hero.

Conclusion

In the works of Jeronim De Rada and Naim Frashëri, the figure of Skanderbeg is elevated from a historical leader to a powerful literary and national symbol. De Rada presents Skanderbeg through a romantic and idealized lens, emphasizing heroism, sacrifice, and the collective spirit of the Albanian people. His portrayal reflects the Romantic movement's tendency to mythologize history in order to inspire national consciousness.

Naim Frashëri, on the other hand, offers a clearer and more didactic image of Skanderbeg, portraying him as a moral guide and a unifying figure for the nation. In The History of Skanderbeg, Naim transforms the hero into an embodiment of freedom, wisdom, and patriotism, directly addressing the needs of the Albanian National Awakening.

Together, De Rada and Naim Frashëri shape Skanderbeg as a timeless symbol of resistance and identity, demonstrating how literature plays a crucial role in preserving historical memory and strengthening national awareness.

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COMMUNICATION THROUGH THE FINE ARTS

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ABSTRACT

The paper entitled "Communication through the Fine Arts" addresses the importance and essential and multifaceted role of the fine arts in promoting verbal and nonverbal communication in preschoolers. Based on the critical role of early childhood for the overall development of the child, this research elaborates on how artistic expressions, such as: drawing, music, dance, crafts and dramatic play, serve as unique platforms to articulate thoughts, emotions and understanding, as well as to form communicative competence in children.

The purpose of the paper is based on identifying the role of integrating language and fine arts, as well as the impact on the development of verbal and nonverbal communication skills in preschoolers. A total of 50 participants participated in the research, with the sample consisting of educators, parents, preschool students/internships and support teachers from the municipality of Gjakova. The research was distributed online, and the research instrument was a semi-structured survey questionnaire with closed alternatives, carried out through various social networks. The methodology of the work was mixed, with theoretical and practical research methods. The research results were analyzed with statistical platforms and presented with numerical values and graphs.

The results of the study highlighted the effect and importance of activities based on fine arts, in terms of vocabulary development and encouraging communication, bringing important data for the interdisciplinary integration between the field of language and communication and fine arts.

Keywords: *verbal communication, non-verbal communication, fine arts, communication skills, preschool education.*

INTRODUCTION

Communication is one of the fundamental life skills for the holistic development of children, especially in the preschool age, when the foundations of social interaction and overall learning are formed. It includes two main forms: **verbal communication**, which is realized through spoken language, and **nonverbal communication**, expressed through facial expressions and body movements. During this important developmental period, children acquire various ways of expressing their needs, emotions, and thoughts, using not only words but also nonverbal elements.

This paper aims to examine the role and importance of communication in relation to the fine arts in preschool children, to analyze the influence of the environment and preschool education on their development, and to highlight the positive effects that the fine arts have on the linguistic and emotional development of early childhood. Based on various scholarly sources and educational practices, the study seeks to contribute to a deeper understanding of how the quality of preschool education can be improved and how healthy developmental processes in preschool children can be encouraged. Through the fine arts—such as drawing, music, reading, drama, handicrafts, and dance—children are given the opportunity to develop and enhance their communication in a creative and inclusive manner.

Accordingly, the paper focuses on key aspects such as knowledge about communication and its types, the importance of communication in connection with the fine arts, the role of preschool education and the essential elements for children's development and skill acquisition, as well as the impact of art on the development of communication and language advancement in children. This approach helps identify best practices for supporting the comprehensive development of children during early childhood. In this process, parents and educators play a crucial role in fostering verbal communication by employing various strategies that involve attention to body language and children's nonverbal expressions, encouraging interaction and dialogue. Their role is fundamental, as they create a positive and stimulating environment in which children feel safe and encouraged to express themselves and their inner world. Through the fine arts, children develop linguistic expression and communication, experience emotions, enhance creativity and social skills, and positively influence their further emotional, intellectual, and social development.

CHAPTER I

1. COMMUNICATION AS A PROCESS, ITS ROLE AND IMPORTANCE IN EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

The word **communication** originates from the Latin *communicatio*, which has two meanings: notification or information-sharing, and connection or linkage. In everyday language, communication is often used as a synonym for conversation; however, communication is more than a simple exchange of words. Communication can be more effectively understood through drawing and symbols (Xhakli, 2016, p. 48).

In early childhood (the preschool period), communication is not merely a skill, but the central axis of a child's holistic development. It represents a fundamental and highly complex process, as it forms the basis of all human interaction.

Everything we do in our relationships with children constitutes a form of communication. Not only words, but also tone of voice, facial expressions, and body language and gestures have a powerful influence on a child's life. The way we communicate with children can convey messages of respect, empathy, and care, but it can also transmit opposite messages (Miller, 2005). Communication is any process through which people share information, ideas, and emotions. It includes not only spoken or written words, but also body language and style, in other words, everything that contributes to the meaning of a message. Thus, communication is viewed as a transaction that involves not only physical actions but also psychological ones. Communication is a message exchange, where teaching is the message delivered by the teacher and learning is the message received by the student (Gixhari, 2016, p. 7).

Verbal communication is enabled through language and speech. Words are the key to success. Knowing how to speak is an art that everyone can learn. Nonverbal communication constitutes the majority of communication. Some researchers claim that approximately 65–70% of communication is nonverbal. Studies confirm that nonverbal communication is often far more significant than verbal communication (Doli Kryeziu, S. & Rexha Pruthi, E., 2020).

Based on the definitions of various scholars, Panxhi (2016) cites that "communication is the transmission of ideas, emotions, information, and skills through the use of symbols, words, numbers, graphs, and images" (Berelson & Steiner, 1964, p. 254). Individuals voluntarily invest energy to fulfill their needs through the use of discourse, which presupposes the use of language, whose modalities are determined by communicative purposes. Language is a tool of communication, whose organization has developed over time to achieve specific goals, and its use for such purposes guarantees the continuity of its functioning (Martinet, 1974, p. 212).

Communication in early preschool education is among the fundamental factors for a child's overall development, influencing not only linguistic abilities but also social, emotional, and academic aspects. It interweaves individuals, ideas, and their worlds, enabling understanding, cooperation, and progress.

1.1. Communication as an act of socialization

Communication is among the essential elements of socialization and the construction of interpersonal relationships among individuals. As an act of socialization, communication serves not only for the exchange of information, but also for the formation of social bonds and the transmission of norms, values, and acceptable behaviors within a group or society.

"No type of human activity can be conceived without the exchange of messages. Thus, to communicate means to live, and to live means to communicate" (Memushaj, 2004, p. 23).

According to Hudson (2002, p. 105), language itself is a tool of socialization, a term that expresses the process through which children become fully competent members of their respective society. Nevertheless, most of culture is transmitted through speech, and it is often stated that the development of human speech made possible the replacement of biological evolution, which operates through genes, with cultural evolution, which operates through minds. This implies that language is the central component of the socialization process.

"When we communicate, we do not merely exchange information, but simultaneously enter into social relationships. For this reason, every exchange of information is embedded in

processes of understanding, cooperation, and mutual interpretation of reasons for action, intentions, discourse, and expected behaviors" (Scherr, 2000, p. 176).

"The child is born biologically prepared to speak, but speech develops in the child alongside physical, emotional, and cultural development, taking as a model the speech of the micro-environment to which the child belongs" (Shkurtaj, 2009, p. 97). The social environment has a direct influence on the enrichment of vocabulary. Social differences affect not only the quantitative aspect of language, but also the formal aspects of syntactic and grammatical structure. The structure of child language also appears to be linked to affective and cognitive stimulation (Reçka, 2005, p. 80).

Researchers emphasize that "child development generally does not occur in laboratories, but at home within the family; at school with classmates and teachers; in playgrounds with neighbors and peers; and, more broadly, within a wider social and cultural environment. Development therefore always occurs within a context, and most importantly, circumstances often influence the course of development" (Vasta, Haith & Miller, 2007, p. 71).

1.2. The Formation of Communicative Competence and Spoken Fluency

By competence, we mean the ability of individuals to communicate under conditions determined by linguistic, social, psychological, pragmatic, and other norms. The ability to produce and understand messages in a given language also requires a range of extralinguistic skills. Communicative competence requires that the speaker knows how to produce the message appropriately for a given situation, embed it in the relevant context, use the basic linguistic tools and other supportive codes—such as gestures, postures, and facial expressions—and be able to switch from one language variety to another.

To understand the changes that occur in children's language use from around the age of four and their impact on cognitive development, researchers focus both on word comprehension and on speech fluency. Verbal comprehensibility and oral fluency develop with age, as children gradually acquire appropriate, sophisticated metacognitive strategies for verbal understanding and expressive abilities (Orhani, 2016, p.195).

According to researchers, communicative competence consists of four components, namely:

1) *Grammatical competence: knowledge of words and rules;*
2) *Sociolinguistic competence: understanding the social and cultural norms of speech use,*
3) *Discourse competence: ability to maintain cohesion and coherence in communication;*
4) *Strategic competence: appropriate use of utterances according to communication strategies (Canale & Swain, 1971; Hymes, 1971; Brumfit & Johnson, 1979)*

The ability to produce and comprehend messages in a given language does not imply only grammatical or lexical proficiency, but necessarily requires a range of extralinguistic skills, including cultural, ethnographic, and social competencies (Shkurtaj, 2009).

The concept of communication involves an exchange between the speaker and the listener(s) to convey facts, opinions, or information through speech, writing, or signs—something that is transmitted or shared, such as a document or a message carrying news, viewpoints, information, etc. The participants in the communication process include the self or the speaking subject, the interlocutor or co-speaker, and the entity or topic being discussed.

Today, communication constitutes one of the core skills every individual should master, which is why it is considered a fundamental competence in educational systems. In schools, communication is defined as the process through which the content of a message is conveyed, serving as a tool to create shared understanding. This process requires a rich and extensive repertoire of expressions for personal and interpersonal interactions, encompassing listening, observing, speaking, questioning, analyzing, and evaluating. Communication is closely and directly linked to the development of language and classroom discourse (Musai, 2014, p.227).

1.3. Functions of Language in Message Communication

Language is the main tool of human communication and involves the use of symbols to convey messages to others or to oneself. Language allows us to express ideas that are not related to the present. We can talk about the past, the future, and the present (Pettijohn, 1996, p.269). Language is a form of communication that uses the manipulation of symbols to transmit meanings and messages. Grammar is the set of rules that determines what structure language must have in order to be understood. The main sounds of speech are called phonemes. Phonemes combine into morphemes, which are the smallest units of meaning in language. Syntax is the part of grammar that arranges words into phrases and sentences. The meaning of language is called semantics. Humans acquire language according to a regular model. Infants initially cry at birth, make sounds when they are one month old, coo at six months, and speak when they reach one year. During the second year, children use one-word sentences. Here we are dealing with holophrastic speech. Around the age of two, children use telegraphic speech, in which they form two-word sentences. Later, their sentences become longer and more complex, and their vocabulary grows (Pettijohn, 1996, p.309).

The functions of language are infinite, as they are, more than functions of language itself, functions of human activity realized through language. The theory of language functions has a long tradition, which states that the fundamental function of language is to express and communicate thought.

According to Shkurtaj (2009): The scheme of language functions, now generally accepted, is the one proposed by the well-known linguist Roman Jakobson, who reexamined and deepened Bühler's concept of six main functions:

1) ***Referential or denotative (naming) function, which relates to the referent, to things, to the concrete and imagined external reality, and to the expression of thought***;

2) ***Expressive (emotive) function, which relates to the speaker, their intention, emotional state, behavior, etc.***

3) ***Conative (directive) function, which relates to the listener—or more precisely, to the addressee—and to what the speaker aims to elicit from them***;

4) *Metalinguistic, which relates to the code being used; every message manifests a sort of "revelation" of the code on which it is formed;*

5) *Poetic, which pertains to the message itself, to its internal organization, where the speaker operates with a degree of creativity related to the code;*

6) *Phatic, which concerns the psycho-physiological contact between the speaker and the addressee, through the communication channel that connects them (Shkurtaj, 2009, p.271).*

Through communication, individuals learn to interact, cooperate, and adapt to their social environment. This process begins within the family, continues in institutions such as preschools and schools, and extends across all levels of social life, moving from interpersonal communication to group and mass communication.

1.4. Types of communication and their specifics

"Communication is the process through which information is exchanged and understood between two or more people, with the aim of motivating or influencing their behaviors or attitudes. Communication requires that all parties understand a common language that can be shared" (Xhakli, 2016, p.48). Human communication is diverse and can be verbal or linguistic, and nonverbal or non-linguistic. Verbal communication occurs through spoken or written words (Gixhari, 2016, p.61). Communication is the essence of human interaction, and when it comes to preschool children, it takes on unique dimensions and specificities. Primarily, communication is divided into two main types: verbal and nonverbal, which interact with and complement each other, and are considered the foundation of language development, especially during early childhood.

1.4.1. Verbal communication – communication through words

Partners in action are simultaneously communication partners, since they exchange information and address each other reciprocally. Communication partners interact, and when they use language, they engage in linguistic interaction. Linguistic interaction is a

defining feature of language activity, and for this reason, it stands on the same level as communication (Shkurtaj, 2009, p.102).

Communication, in general, represents the process of exchanging information, ideas, feelings, and understanding between two or more individuals. Essentially, it serves as a bridge connecting individuals, their ideas, and their worlds, enabling understanding, cooperation, and progress.

"The most important tool of communication in humans is speech (verbal communication). Speaking and verbal communication rely on the human ability to produce a wide variety of sounds (phonemes) and to combine these sounds into groups that carry meaning, forming words (morphemes) and further, word systems. Spoken language and the system built upon it is the most important form of human communication because it represents a symbolic social system" (Gixhari, 2016, p.62).

Verbal communication is realized through language, words, and the selection and arrangement of words into sentences. Words can be spoken or written (Panxhi, 2016, p.52).
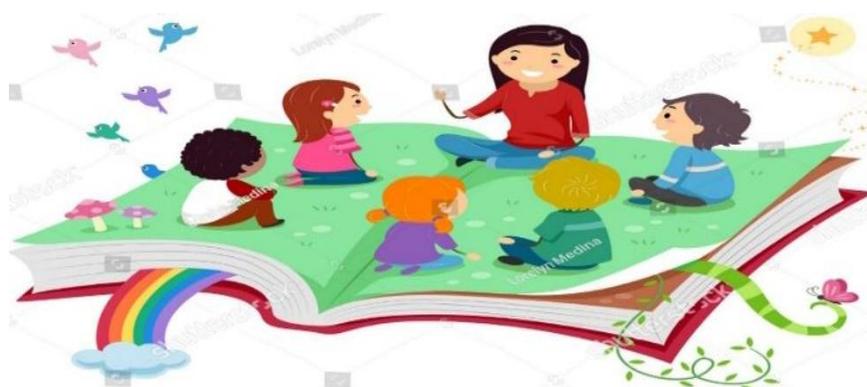
Foto 1. *Verbal communication encouragement with kids*
(Burimi: https://www.shutterstock.com/image-vector/illustration-stickman-kids-teacher-telling-story-1146105623 , më 24.04.2025).

Characteristics of Verbal Communication

The features of verbal communication are as follows: words are a symbolic reflection of thought; the meaning of words is agreed upon socially; meaning is developed from the verbal context in which the word is used; verbal communication is primarily under conscious control (Gixhari, 2016, p.62).

"Verbal communication opens the way for social interactions that create favorable situations for educating active listening and proper reception of messages. In this regard, selecting content in various activity areas aimed at developing speech and enriching vocabulary creates attractive circumstances for a learner to correctly understand the overall structure of sentences, words, and to pronounce sounds clearly and correctly. For this purpose, in cases of deviation from the standard Albanian norm, phonetic games and reading texts rich in proper sound usage are particularly helpful, as they exercise correct and standardized pronunciation of all sounds" (Mulla, 2012, p.52).

Language is not only a tool for communication but also a means for understanding, regulating, and controlling behavior (Reçka, 2005, p.78).

1.4.2. Nonverbal Communication – Communication Through Body Language

Humans have a rich "vocabulary" for nonverbal communication, such as smiling, frowning, chewing, facial expressions, and body movements (Key, 1992), most of which are shared not only across human societies but also in some primate species (Whiten, 1994). Some of the skills necessary for symbolic play are likely innate, as maintaining symbolic representation is a general human need (Hudson, 2002, p.131).

Rrokaj (2012, p.61) emphasizes: *"Nonverbal communication is related to the use of nonverbal signs to transmit messages of various kinds."* We learn a lot about other people through nonverbal communication. The face can express many emotions, such as happiness, sadness, surprise, fear, anger, and disgust. Eye contact is important, and we tend to judge people based on the amount of eye contact we have with them. We are more likely to observe people we like, but prolonged staring can be interpreted negatively. People transmit information through body language, posture, and movements. Gestures or touch can also be used to emphasize what we say (Pettijohn, 1996, p.384).
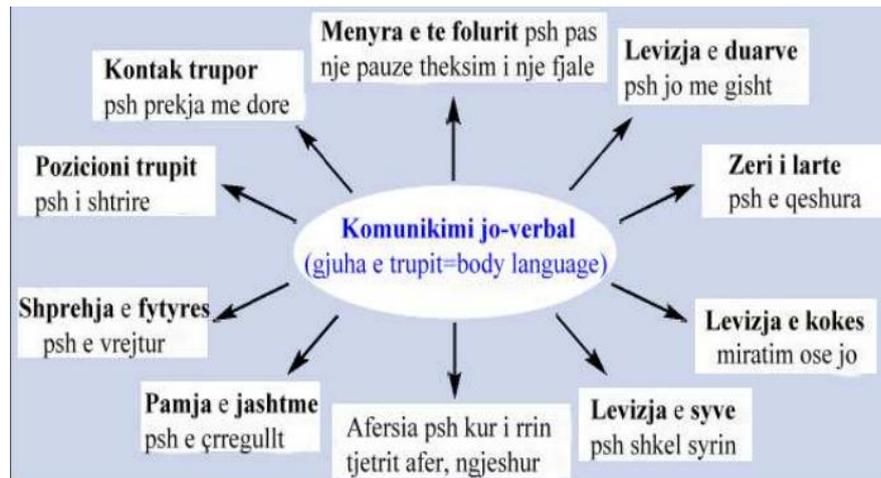
Figura 1. *Komunikimi jo-verbal dhe gjuha trupore*
(Burimi: Gixhari, 2016, f.54)

Thus, *"nonverbal communication is the information and emotion expressed without words and without the aid of language. Compared to verbal communication, nonverbal communication is less controllable, but more powerful, because it conveys many emotions and feelings that are often impossible to express with words and sometimes even difficult to understand"* (Doli Kryeziu & Rexha Pruthi, 2020).

Visual communication is also included in nonverbal communication, representing *"communication without words"* (Knapp & Hall, 2010).

Studies (Bateson, 1972; Watzlawick et al., 2008) emphasize that: *"Nonverbal communication supports and complements verbal communication and also performs the function of metacommunication, as it provides a wide range of elements that help interpret verbal expressions. It gives meaning to the content aspect and also reconcretizes it"* (Panxhi, 2016, p.57).

Foto 2. *Non-verbal communcation-body language*
(Burimi: https://www.dreamstime.com/illustration/children-gesture.html, më: 24.05.2025).

CHAPTER II

2. EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION AS A CATALYST FOR CHILD DEVELOPMENT

Early Childhood Education as a Foundation for Learning

Preschool education is based on the **Core Curriculum for ages 0–5** (MASHT, 2019), and the educational role of the preschool institution should be considered within the context of coordinated influences aimed at achieving the goals and objectives defined in the preschool curriculum (MASHT, 2006, p.35).

2.1. Preschool Education – The Basis of Learning Formation

During the early years of life, children's abilities are closely linked to the time spent with peers and the quality of interactions with parents, caregivers, educators, their surroundings, and age-mates. The approach to learning encompasses all behavioral patterns that children exhibit when engaging in tasks, activities, and learning experiences across all areas of development, reflecting how children learn. Children learn best when curiosity and interest, initiative and persistence, creativity, and imagination are encouraged, supported, and integrated across developmental domains (MASHT, 2011, p.71).

Children should be educated to learn independently, developing a system of knowledge, expressions, and attitudes considered essential for coping with present and future challenges. Preschool education should foster, within age-appropriate limits, the development of traits that children will need as they grow, such as: the ability to adapt to change; critical thinking; problem-solving for new challenges; creativity, imagination, and resourcefulness; social skills to care for their environment, community, and country, among others. The process of preschool education is organized, continuous, and systematic work aimed at shaping the child of the future, capable of facing societal development and engaging with it critically (Vadahi, 2002, p.24).

The Role of the Educator in Developing Communicative Skills in Preschoolers

Educators play a crucial role in shaping both **verbal and nonverbal communication** during the critical years of early childhood, when such development is essential for children. The Core Curriculum (0–5 years) guides educators to focus their activities on achieving **competence-based learning outcomes**. At this level, educators should plan all activities using an **interdisciplinary approach**, linking curriculum areas so that educational activities contribute to achieving competence outcomes.

Learning outcomes should be achieved through **play and other educational activities**, allowing children to develop holistically, based on the following curriculum areas:

- **Languages and Communication**

- **Arts**

- **Mathematics**

- **Natural Sciences**

- **Society and Environment**

- **Physical Education, Sports, and Health**

- **Life and Work** (MASHT, 2016)

The educational process in preschool equips children with a system of **linguistic skills and expressions**, and it is the responsibility of the educator to engage in:

1. **Developing communicative abilities** related to clear expression in various situations, dialogue, storytelling, explaining and justifying, and formulating correct questions and answers.

2. **Developing writing-related skills**, including understanding the purpose of materials such as books, magazines, posters, newspapers, and dictionaries, recognizing text elements and their functions (titles, illustrative drawings), and understanding the connection between spoken and written language.

3. **Developing the use of language functions**, enabling children to name objects, actions, and emotions, retain and apply vocabulary in context, use verb tenses and personal pronouns, and employ connecting words appropriately.

4. **Developing skills to use learning tools properly**, such as handling pencils, pens, and other materials correctly (Vadahi, 2002, pp.39–40).

This approach ensures that preschool education acts as a foundation for **holistic development**, fostering language, cognitive, social, and emotional growth, which is crucial for success in later educational stages.

CHAPTER III

2. INTEGRATION OF THE FINE ARTS IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF PRE-SCHOOL CHILDREN

Integration of the Fine Arts in the Development of Communication Skills in Preschoolers

The integration of the arts is used as an **umbrella term** for incorporating the arts into general education classrooms. The four fields of the arts—music, visual arts, drama, and dance—are actively taught in connection with other subject areas such as mathematics, reading, science, and social studies. Arts integration is not just a mix of content areas; it involves coordinating and aligning activities so that lessons in one area support learning in another (Sorensen, 2010).

Art education represents a kind of encounter between the child and art, along with the emotions generated by this nonverbal communication, giving children opportunities to engage in artistic activities. By imagining and creating sounds, images, graphics, and scenarios accompanied by gestures and words, the child learns to express personal emotions and thoughts. This field encompasses all activities that allow children to communicate through visual representations, musical sounds, dramatic expression, audiovisual media, and more. In this way, the child begins to discover the many possibilities for self-expression and to give freedom to their imagination (Vadahi, 2002, p.43).

In everyday life, children are exposed to **various forms of the fine arts**, and their presence is almost ubiquitous. Daily routines in early childhood classrooms include diverse activities: children may sing different songs during morning meetings, communicate their feelings and perspectives on the world through drawings, artistic work, and dramatic play. Many researchers have emphasized the significant role of art in a child's life—from building self-esteem to facilitating and stimulating learning. Arts have the power to support the **"complete and holistic" development** of every child (Froebel, 1886, p.24), helping them develop cognitive, social, and motor skills (McKean, 1999). Art is thus recognized as a **"universal language,"** used in the context of European multilingualism (Doli Kryeziu & Rexha Pruthi, 2020) and even among children's languages around the world.

3.1. Benefits of the Arts for Developing Communication in Preschoolers

Visual arts align with personal expression, as students are able to create art that reflects their emotions, choosing the level of artistic appropriateness. When children create and write about their art, they bring their feelings and perspectives into written form (Cowan & Albers, 2006).

The connection between visual art and reading also provides mutual benefits, often through the use of illustrated books in the classroom. Educators frequently use picture books as instructional tools to draw children's attention to illustrations, which can help develop reading skills and raise awareness of art. For early readers, illustrations support the decoding of unfamiliar words. Children can draw inferences from illustrations regarding story events and how story comprehension connects with the written words on the page. During shared reading sessions, educators often ask children to use illustrations to **predict what will happen next** in the story, which enhances critical thinking and early reading skills (McDonald & Fischer, 2002).

Picture books and alphabet books are two specific types of children's books used in teaching literacy. Alphabet books reinforce phonemic awareness, while picture-rich books can also be used for discussions about visual art and creative expression. Even wordless picture books support the development of speaking and writing skills, as educators often encourage children to **narrate a story based on the illustrations** (McDonald & Fischer, 2002).

When students talk about art—whether their own creations, those of peers, or works by other artists—they are developing their **communication skills**. Artists also frequently practice critique. Critique—the process and outcome of thinking critically about art, typically involving **description, analysis, and interpretation, along with some judgment or evaluation of the quality of the work**—not only improves students' artistic abilities but also enhances their capacity to **assess and communicate effectively** (Sorensen, 2010).

3.1.1. Art as a Tool for Aesthetic Education and Language Development in Preschoolers

Art is the primary tool for the **aesthetic education** of preschool children. It represents the most complete form of aesthetic acquisition of truth. Art has its own language and specific means of expression. For preschool-aged children, it is essential during aesthetic education to utilize nearly all forms of the fine arts, particularly: **Literature, Visual Arts, Music, Theater, and Film**.

Literature – Even though preschoolers cannot yet read or write, they show interest in various literary contents. Many researchers have studied children's interests in different types of literary works. Among the earliest studies were those by Charlotte Buhler, who analyzed the types of literary creations that preschool children are drawn to. According to her results, children aged 2–4 showed interest in stories created by their parents. Children aged 4–8, however, showed a preference for fairy tales, which she therefore called the **"period of fairy tales"**, as these stories best correspond to the child's mentality at that age, and the characters are aligned with their psychological development.

Visual Arts – Exposure to illustrations and picture books fosters the development of interest in visual art among preschoolers. Children, inspired by photographs and illustrations, wish to hear short stories connected to the images. Well-executed illustrations serve as an important educational tool (Veseli, 1999, p.179).

Music – For a long time, music was minimally included in preschool education programs, particularly for ear training and listening skills. Thanks to scientific insights revealing the importance of the environment in developing listening and musical rhythm, preschool music education has made significant progress. From an early age, children can sing correctly if they are in a supportive musical environment. They not only reproduce simple melodies they hear but also enjoy the experience of listening to musical works performed with instruments. Early exposure to classical and high-value musical works is essential, as musical sensitivity develops during the preschool period. Music enhances the child's sense of rhythm, harmony, and love for music. Therefore, preschoolers should have opportunities to listen to, sing, and play music, including simple instruments. A suitable repertoire includes folk songs and easy pieces from classical composers worldwide. Music as a tool

of aesthetic education can also stimulate **individual aptitudes** and, particularly, the child's creativity (Veseli, 1999, p.180).

Theater and Film – A key pedagogical task in preschool is to introduce children to understanding these forms of art. **Children's theater** has an educational character, including puppet theater, which often presents fairy tales and other age-appropriate plays. Dramatic and cinematic arts combine literature, visual arts, and music. Elements such as set design, music, lighting, and action attract children's attention and help them intuitively understand and represent an event. Educators should prepare children to analyze and evaluate what they watch (Veseli, 1999, p.181).

Today, **mass media** also plays an important role in artistic education, alongside dramatic activities. Media activities aim to actively utilize radio and television programs, technological games, animated films, and children's movies for preschool educational purposes. These serve as a major source of information that children absorb through various channels (Vadahi, 2002, p.44).

Creativity in preschoolers can be stimulated through various types of play, especially: role-playing games (puppet theater, cinema, circus, etc.); singing games; playing different instruments; reciting poems; dance games; reading illustrated books for children; folk dances; puppet theater; and free dramatizations (Veseli, 1999, p.188).

The Importance of Interaction Through the Arts in Early Communication Development

Aesthetic education begins in the family and is further cultivated in a planned, programmed, and appropriately executed manner, according to the child's cognitive abilities, across all educational activities: in **physical and health activities**, in **language development** (culture of speaking and expression), in **clean and tasteful dressing**, in **polite behavior at home, on the street, and in public places**, in **care for nature** (planting trees, maintaining gardens, protecting the environment from pollution), in **learning mathematics** (drawing shapes, geometric forms…), in **self-awareness** activities (personal and collective hygiene, cultivating elegant behavior in physical education, play, work, and social or family visits), in **music education** (listening to folk and artistic music, singing solo, duets, or in choir,

playing instruments, attending children's concerts or theater performances), and in **visual arts** (drawing, painting, sculpting, visiting art exhibitions and galleries).

From these factors arise the **tasks of aesthetic education**:

- **Enabling children to notice, identify, and experience beauty** in the natural and social environment.

- **Helping children cultivate beauty** in the natural and social environment, through play, work, behavior, and attire.

- **Teaching children to distinguish beauty from ugliness** and elegance from inelegance, so that through experiencing beauty, they learn to value it (Brada, 2013, p.130).

In aesthetic education, it is especially important to **awaken children's emotions**, which in the preschool age are not only a core part of their overall reaction to beauty but also serve as a foundation for developing an **aesthetic attitude**. Therefore, stories, fairy tales, songs, and music should stimulate children's feelings and emotional experiences.

Even at an early preschool age, children display **individual differences**. Preschoolers vary in their interests toward certain aesthetic contents and activities, as well as in their ability to absorb these aesthetic experiences. They also differ in their developmental pace. Therefore, aesthetic educational work with preschool children should focus as much as possible on **individualized attention**, working with each child separately and according to their unique needs (Veseli, 1999, p.178).

Art plays a fundamental role in the education of every child for two main reasons:

First, art expands a child's natural way of exploring the world. Children's initial explorations are based on their senses. Through art, they improve their ability to perceive and interpret. As they try to communicate their interpretations and understand the communications of others, they continuously refine their concepts and deepen their understanding of the world.

Second, art contributes to other areas of learning. Dewey (1934) explained that experiences, in order to be fully understood, must be studied through all possible modes of inquiry. He argued that it is not possible to isolate aesthetics from other cognitive ways.

Researchers Eisner (1978) and Broudy (1979) observed that understanding reading requires prior knowledge, which can only be gained through the study of art and other "subjects," such as music, social studies, and science. Other studies also support the importance of art, emphasizing that arts programs are linked to increased achievements in reading and language, improvement of self-concept and personal adjustment, and reduction of aggression (Hall, 1979; Hanshumaker, 1980). Moreover, the inclusion of art in elementary schools has also been shown to improve achievements in reading and mathematics, as well as increase participation in learning (Ross, 1982).

3.3. The Role of Creative Arts in the Holistic Development of Children

Children's tendency to use art as a means of communication is often motivated by the challenge posed by the complexities of the language system, which they cannot yet fully master in early years, even though they have a wealth of environmental experiences they wish to share. This encourages them to use art—especially drawing—as a communication tool. Children have different artistic ways to express themselves and make sense of the world around them, and drawing provides them the opportunity to unfold their thoughts and emotions regarding their surroundings (Anning, 1999).

Aesthetic education requires observing nature, distinguishing beauty in the natural and social environment, caring for the environment and flowers, painting and shaping with clay, paper, and cardboard, using scissors and glue, making mosaics, and engaging with illustrated texts. Aesthetic education is further nurtured through visits to parks, urban spaces, exhibitions, and puppet theater performances. Special attention should be given to listening to folk, artistic, and entertaining music, singing solo, in duets or groups, and playing musical instruments (Brada, 2013, p.206).

Art education plays a critical role in the development of creativity and self-expression during early childhood (Oktaviani, 2024). At this stage, children are in an intensive phase of exploration, where they begin to understand the world around them in various ways. Art,

in its different forms—drawing, painting, singing, and dancing—offers a rich medium for self-expression and the development of creative skills. The creative process involved in artistic activities helps children learn to think outside the box and develop innovative ideas. Through art, children can explore their imagination more freely and deeply. When children draw or paint, transforming their imagination into tangible visual forms, it helps them understand and communicate by presenting their inner world.

Educators and caregivers should provide an environment rich in artistic experiences, such as art materials, books about art, and opportunities to visit art galleries or performances. Additionally, parents can support children by participating together in artistic activities, offering encouragement, and valuing their efforts and creations. In today's digital age, technology can also be used to enrich art education (Saefurrohman, 2024).

3.4. Creating Learning Corners for Communication through the Fine Arts

Creating learning corners that integrate art and communication in preschool education is a highly effective strategy to promote communicative skills, foster creativity, and support children's emotional well-being. These corners are designated spaces within the classroom where children can explore different forms of art and use language to express themselves.

The learning corners integrating art and communication include: the Drawing and Painting Corner; Music and Dance Corner; Dramatic Play Corner; Puppet Corner; Kitchen Corner; Reading and Storytelling Corner; Message Corner; and Quiet Corner (Hoxha Cekani, 2010, pp.30–31).

In the art corner, children play, model, create, express themselves, and communicate through painting, graphics, drawing, paper, tools, and their environment. They touch, caress, press surfaces and shapes of materials, draw, cut, compile, and form different shapes. They use specific techniques for drawing, painting, gluing, constructing, and modeling with both artificial and natural materials. Children observe the world around them and create various forms using contrasts, and they work with clay, modeling materials, and other tactile substances (Ibid., p.31).

Foto 3. *Art as a stimulator of expression*

Meanwhile, for music and dance, some of the activities that can be developed in this corner are: children listen to music, express themselves and communicate through it, try to keep the rhythm in children's songs and folk songs, accompany rhythmic sensations with songs or with different instruments and movements; listen to, copy, and imitate sounds from nature; follow musical recordings and performances; sing children's songs and folk songs; perform or follow rhythmic melodies with clapping; play small rhythmic and melodic instruments; explore the characteristics of instrument sounds, "produce" simple instruments and play with them, collaborate in music educational games; improvise short or long musical motifs; express, communicate, and create through movement and dance; pay attention to body posture and movements, dance and differentiate between different movements (Po, aty. 31).

Foto 4. *Music corner as art, communication, and entertainment*

In the drama corner, children play by imitating animals and fairy tale characters; they use their voice, body, environment, props, costumes, and masks; they animate with puppets and various materials; they collaborate in play with others and participate in games with multiple scenes; they can "read" a painting or drawing and develop a story, performing

22

monologues, dialogues, etc.; they express themselves through body, movement, gestures, and facial expressions; they identify theater equipment such as the stage, stage props, costumes, lighting, acoustics, masks, puppets, etc.; and they experience and enact different tensions within the drama storyline.

Foto 5. *Role-playing, as a bridge between the arts and communication*

Meanwhile, recitations, stories, fables, and riddles, when practiced and implemented systematically in institutionalized preschool education, create conditions for children in this age group to develop coherent expression and correct, logical pronunciation of words. Recitations performed with emotion and experiencing events during reading, storytelling, and fairy tales are natural and highly suitable opportunities to educate children in clear articulation of sounds within words. These activities also help prevent localisms and cultivate standardized literary pronunciation (Mulla, 2012, p.56).

3.5. Communication through Art: Creation, Motivation, Exploration, and Learning

Children's drawings hold psychological and emotional significance, as they are a powerful tool for understanding a child's emotional state, family relationships, sense of security or insecurity, as well as their interests and concerns. Through drawings, children express what they cannot convey with words, providing a valuable window for parents and educators into their inner world. The artistic creations of preschool children are not only indicators of their motor and cognitive development but also reflect their feelings, experiences, and relationships. Evaluating these creations helps educators and parents better understand children and support their holistic development.

Some characteristics of children's drawings at ages 1–6 include:

❖ **1-2 years old: Irregular scribbling**

Children begin to make random marks on paper, moving their arms freely. This is more of a motor exploration than an attempt to represent something real. These marks are large, uncontrolled, and children take pleasure simply in the act of drawing.

Foto 6. *Children's drawings - Irregular scribbles*

❖ **2-3 years old: Controlled scribbling**

Children begin to understand the connection between the movement of their hand and the mark they create. They experiment with different shapes, lines, and colors, and start to give names to their drawings, even if they don't resemble real objects ("This is Mommy!").

Foto 7. *Children's drawings - Controlled scribbling*

❖ **3-4 years old: Para-symbolism**

Drawings begin to take on a clearer form. Children create simple figures like "tadpole people" (a head with legs), circles, and lines that represent objects or people, with few, simple details.

Foto 8. Children's drawings – Parasymbolism

❖ **4-6 years old: Symbolism and the development of the figure**

Children develop personal symbols to represent objects, people, or events. Their drawings begin to include more details: head, body, limbs, hair, clothing, and even emotions on the faces of characters. They start using basic lines to indicate the environment, showing a better understanding of space and the relationships between objects

Foto 9. *Children's drawings - Symbolism and the development of the figure*

❖ **5-6 years old: Organizing and deep understanding**

Drawings become more organized and intentional. Children start including entire scenes, use more realistic colors, and depict spatial relationships (e.g., trees taller than houses, people on the grass). They express personal interests and experiences through their artwork, while their style becomes increasingly distinctive (Roland, 1990, 2006).

Foto 10. *Children's drawings - Organizing and deep understanding*

4. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The methodological approach used in this research is a mixed approach, oriented toward both qualitative and quantitative research methods. Regarding the qualitative approach, we focused on collecting various theoretical materials from the literature of local and international scholars who have studied issues related to the integration of two very important areas in child development—specifically, the integration of the fine arts and language, or communication. On the other hand, the quantitative approach helped collect numerical and graphical data. To achieve this, a semi-structured questionnaire in the form of a survey was created using the Google Forms platform, distributed online through social media, and remained open for 48 hours. The survey included 50 respondents from the municipality of Gjakova, consisting of parents, educators, students/interns, and support teachers. The data collected from the survey were analyzed and then examined to test the assumptions raised in the research. The combination of these two approaches (qualitative and quantitative) ensures a comprehensive and in-depth understanding of how the integration of the arts influences communication development in preschoolers, including perspectives from various studies and the fieldwork process. As a conclusion, valuable data were obtained regarding the interdisciplinary integration between these two curricular areas within the 'golden' period of early childhood.

4.1. The aim of the paper

The aim of the paper corresponds to the collection and analysis of perceptions and experiences regarding how communication is integrated with and interacts with various forms of fine arts, as well as the impact of this interaction on the development of preschool children. The study seeks to explore how verbal communication (spoken word, storytelling, discussion, singing, etc.) interacts with the fine arts (drawing, music, dramatization, literature) to support language and communication development in preschool children (ages 0–6). The main objective of the paper is to highlight the role, influence, and effects of integrating the arts in relation to communication among preschoolers.

4.2. Paper objectives

- ✔ To understand the effects of the interaction between fine arts and communication.
- ✔ To identify the role of integrating fine arts in the development of communication in preschool children, with particular attention to the formation of communicative skills.
- ✔ To analyze the impact of artistic activities (music, drawing, dramatic play) on the improvement of children's verbal and nonverbal expression.
- ✔ To highlight the positive effects of integrating fine arts on the social, emotional, and linguistic development of preschool-aged children.

4.3. Research questions

1. What is the impact and how important is the integration between the visual arts and language in the development of preschool-aged children?
2. What do artistic activities determine and encourage in favor of developing communicative skills and expanding the vocabulary of preschoolers?
3. How important are visits to monuments or artistic events for the artistic and linguistic development of preschool children?

4.4. Paper hypotheses

- o **H1: The integration between the visual arts and language helps the development of linguistic skills in preschoolers.**
   H2: The visual arts foster self-creativity and support the social and emotional development of children, reinforcing their communicative abilities.
   H3: Visits to artistic centers support the artistic and linguistic development of preschoolers.

4.5. Research methods

For the realization of this study, several methods were used, including:

- ✓ **Descriptive method: Helped in describing how the integration of fine arts influences the development of communication in preschool children.**
- ✓ **Observation method: Assisted in collecting direct data from artistic activities and from communication with children in the preschool environment.**
- ✓ **Survey through a questionnaire: Provided information from the research participants about their perceptions and experiences regarding the integration of the two fields, arts and language, as well as the impact, role, and effects of this integration on communication development in preschool children or early childhood.**
- ✓ **Comparative method: Helped in comparing the artistic works of the children.**

4.6. Research instruments

As a research instrument, a survey questionnaire was used, specifically designed for the purposes of this study. The questionnaire aimed to identify the role and importance of the interconnection between these two curricular fields, in order to assess the effect of this integration on the development of communication in preschool children. It consists of two parts: the first part includes five questions on demographic data, such as the respondent's role regarding the child, years/experience in child care, child's age group, type of institution (or home), and location, whether city or village. The second part consists of ten questions

mainly addressing the interconnection between the fine arts and language, specifically communication. The questionnaire is semi-structured, and the questions are of the closed-type, where participants are asked to choose one or more options. Initially, permission was obtained from the directors of the institutions, who then distributed it to groups of educators and parents. Additionally, the questionnaire was shared on social media platforms such as Viber, Facebook, Instagram, and WhatsApp among students/practitioners and other parents of preschool children. The results collected from the questionnaire were processed via Google Forms and presented using statistics, charts, and descriptive summaries for each question.

4.7. Population and Sample

- **Population:** The population of the study includes all preschool children, as well as all stakeholders in preschool institutions, including parents, educators, students/practitioners, and supporting teachers.

- **Sample:** The sample consists of a random selection of 50 participants from the Gjakova municipality, including parents, educators, students/practitioners, and supporting teachers who work with preschool children.

5. RESEARCH RESULTS

5.1. Data analysis

The research results present an analysis of the data collected through the survey questionnaire, carried out using thematic analysis, from which each section was reported. The results show that participants expressed positive perceptions regarding the integration of fine arts and language in favor of developing communication skills and language abilities during early childhood.

1. Roli juaj ndaj fëmijës?
50 responses

- Prind
- Edukatore
- Praktikante/Studente
- Kujdestare/Mësuese mbështetëse

52% / 26% / 20%
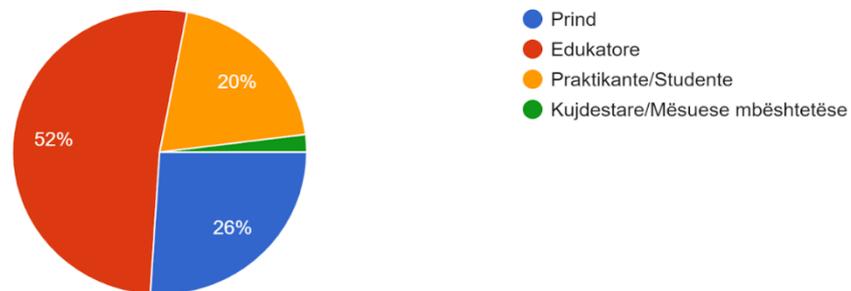
Grafiku 1. *Role in the relationship with the child*

From the data in Graph 1, it can be seen that the questionnaire included a total of 50 participants, of whom 26 (52%) were educators, 13 (26%) were parents, 10 (20%) were interns/students, and only 1 (2%) was a caregiver/support teacher.

2. Përvoja juaj me fëmijë?
50 responses

- Më pak një 1 vjet
- Deri në 5 vjet
- 5-10 vjet
- Mbi 10 vjet

20% / 22% / 14% / 44%
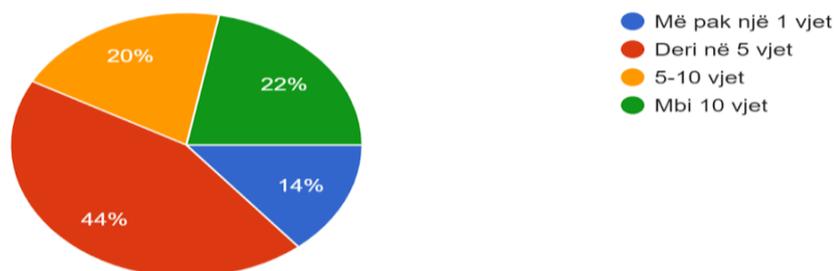
Grafiku 2. *Years working with a child*

In Graph 2, the years of experience with children are presented. It shows that 22 participants (44%) reported up to 5 years of experience with children, 11 participants (22%) reported

over 10 years of experience, 10 participants (20%) reported 5–10 years of experience, and 7 participants (14%) reported less than 1 year of experience with preschool children.

3. Grupmosha e fëmijës?
50 responses
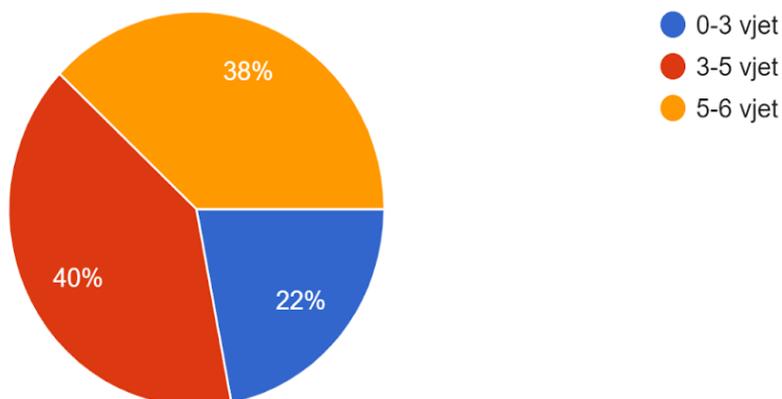
Grafiku 3. *Child/Children's age group*

The results in Graph 3 show that 20 participants (40%) work with children aged 3–5 years, 19 participants (38%) work with children aged 5–6 years, and 11 participants (22%) work with children aged 0–3 years.

4. Lloji i institucionit:
50 responses
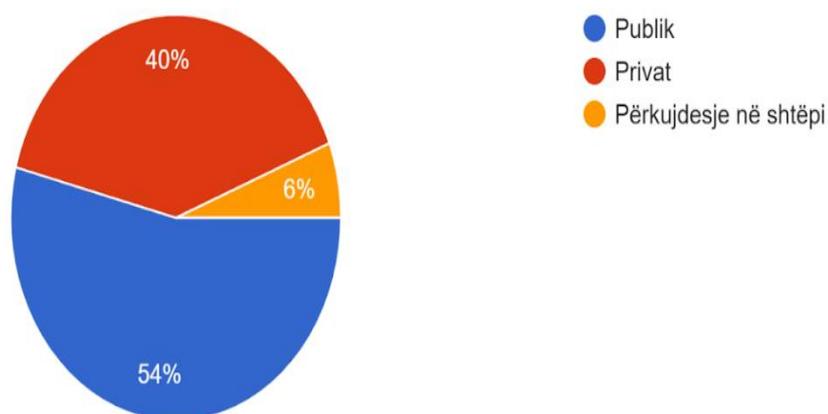
Grafiku 4. *The type of institution the child attends*

From the statistical results in Graph 4, it is observed that 27 participants (54%) were from public institutions, 20 participants (40%) were from private institutions, and only 3 participants (6%) provided care at home.
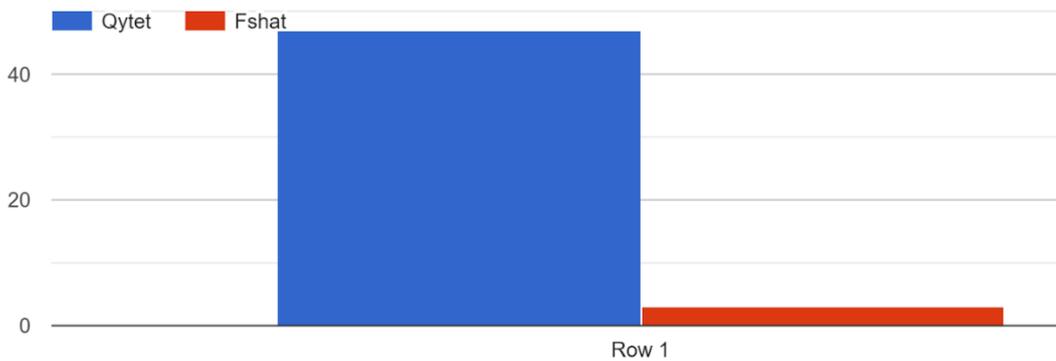
Grafiku 5. *Attendants by place of residence*

The results from Graph 5 show that out of a total of 50 participants, 47 (94%) were from the city, while 3 (6%) were from the village.

6. A pajtoheni se aktivitetet përmes arteve të bukura (vizatimi, muzika, dramatizimi etj.), ndihmojnë zhvillimin e komunikimit te parashkollorët?
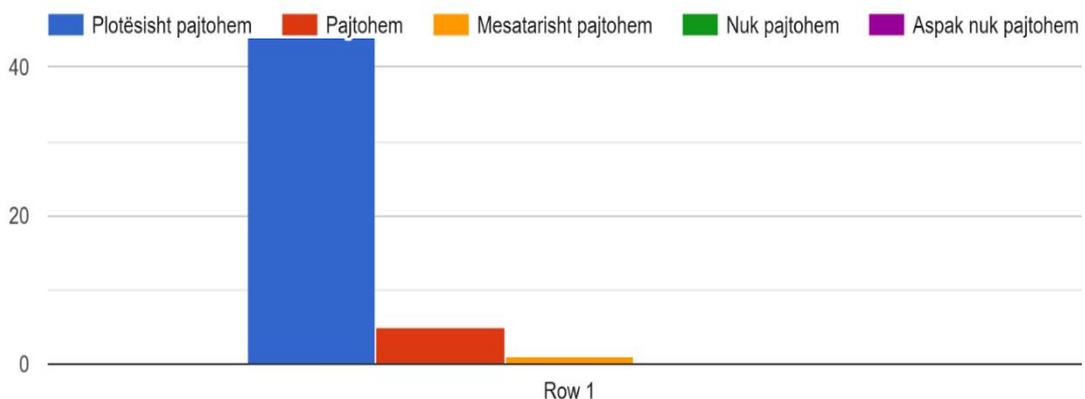
Grafiku 6. *The assistance of activities through the fine arts in the development of communication in preschoolers*

The data from Graph 6 present the results regarding the question of whether activities through the fine arts help in the development of communication in preschoolers. Out of the total, 44 participants (88%) stated that they fully agree with this statement, 5 participants (10%) said they agree, while only 1 participant (2%) indicated that they somewhat agree

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that activities through the fine arts aid in the development of communication in preschoolers. On the other hand, there were no participants who disagreed with this matter.

7. Çfarë determinon përdorimi i arteve të bukura në punën me parashkollorë?
50 responses
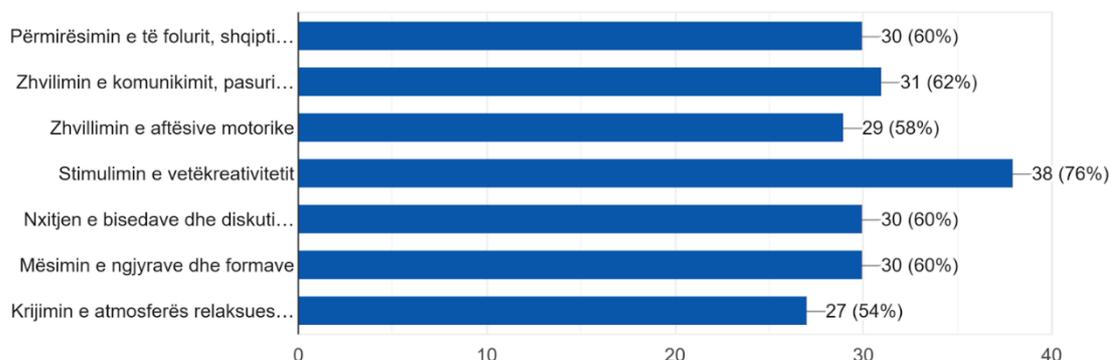
Grafiku 7. *Aspects of the influence of fine arts in working with preschoolers*

The results from Graph 7 show what the use of fine arts determines in working with preschoolers. The statistics indicate that the highest percentage, 76%, corresponds to: Stimulating self-creativity; then 62% indicate: Developing communication competence and enriching vocabulary; 60% indicate: Improving speech, pronunciation, and language; another 60% indicate: Encouraging conversations and discussions, as well as 60% for: Learning colors and shapes; 58% indicate: Developing motor skills; and 54% indicate: Creating a relaxing and entertaining atmosphere. From all this, we understand that the use of fine arts in working with preschoolers influences various developmental aspects.

8. Sa shpesh duhet të përfshihen aktivitetet e mëposhtme artistike në punën rutinore me fëmijë?
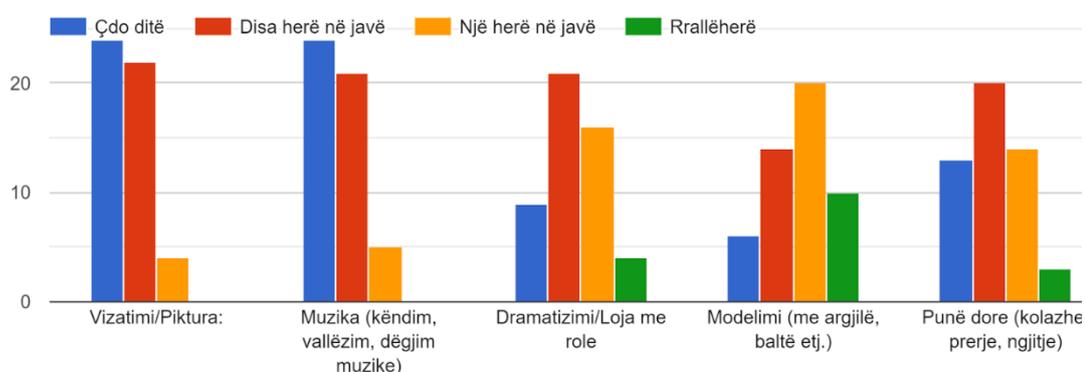
Grafiku 8. *Incorporating artistic activities into the routine work with children*

Regarding the question of how often artistic activities such as drawing, music, dramatization, modeling, and handicrafts should be included in the routine work with preschool children, the results from Graph 8 show the participants' perceptions. Thus:

1. *Drawing/painting shows that 24 participants (48%) believe it should be included daily, 22 participants (44%) think it should be included several times a week, while 4 participants (8%) believe it should be included once a week.*

2. *Music (singing, dancing, listening to music, etc.): 24 participants (48%) think it should be included daily; 21 participants (42%) think it should be included several times a week; and 5 participants (10%) think it should be included once a week.*

3. *Dramatization/role play: 21 participants (42%) believe it should be included several times a week; 16 participants (32%) say once a week; 9 participants (18%) say daily; and 4 participants (8%) think it should be included rarely.*

4. *Modeling (clay/mud): 20 participants (40%) believe it should be included once a week; 14 participants (28%) think several times a week; 10 participants (20%) think rarely; and only 6 participants (12%) believe it should be included daily.*

5. *Handicrafts (collages, cutting, gluing): 20 participants (40%) think it should be included several times a week; 14 participants (28%) say once a week; 13 participants (26%) say daily; and 3 participants (6%) think it should be included rarely in daily activities.*

9. Cilat janë materialet artistike më të përshtatshme për integrimin ndërmjet arteve dhe komunikimit? (Mund të zgjidhni më shumë se një mundësi)
50 responses
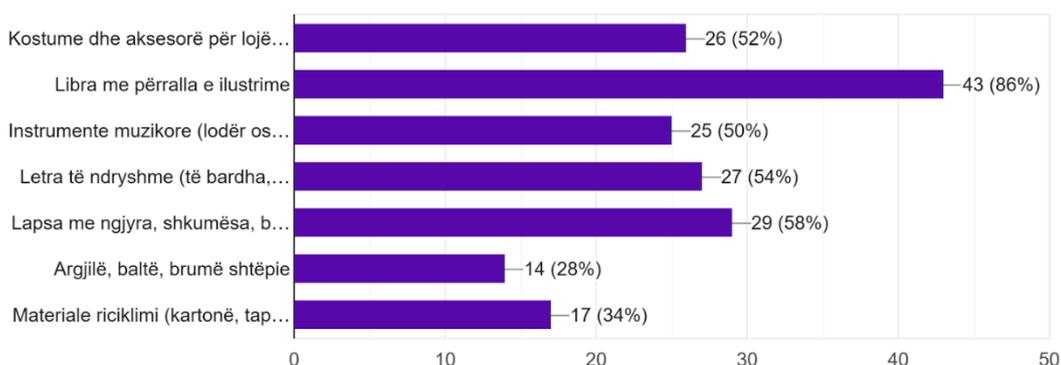
Grafiku 9. *Suitable artistic materials for integrating arts and communication*

Regarding the most suitable artistic materials for integrating arts and communication, the results in Graph 9 show the following: the highest percentage, 86%, corresponds to storybooks with illustrations; then 58% for colored pencils, sponges, watercolors, and tempera paints; 54% for various types of paper (white, colored, cardboard); 52% for costumes and accessories for role-playing; 50% for musical instruments (toy or real); 34% for recycled materials (cardboard, caps, bottles); and 28% for clay, modeling dough, or homemade dough.

10. Sa ndihmojnë aktivitetet artistike zhvillimin e aftësive komunikuese dhe zgjerimin e fjalorit?
50 responses
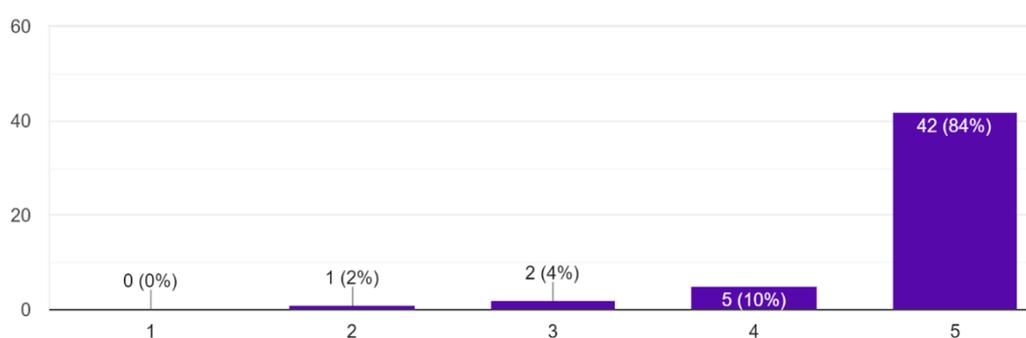
Grafiku 10. *The evaluation of the contribution of artistic activities to the development of communication skills and the expansion of vocabulary*

The data from Graph 10 show the evaluation results regarding the contribution of artistic activities to the development of communication skills and vocabulary expansion. The assessment was based on a Likert scale from 0 = not at all to 5 = completely agree. The statistics indicate that a relatively large number, 42 participants (84%), completely agree with this contribution, rating it at level 5 on the Likert scale. Five participants (10%) rated it at level 4, two participants (4%) gave a medium rating of 3, and only one participant rated it at level 2 on the Likert scale.

11. Çfarë inkurajojnë aktivitetet artistike, në favor të zhvillimit të aftësive komunikuese?
50 responses
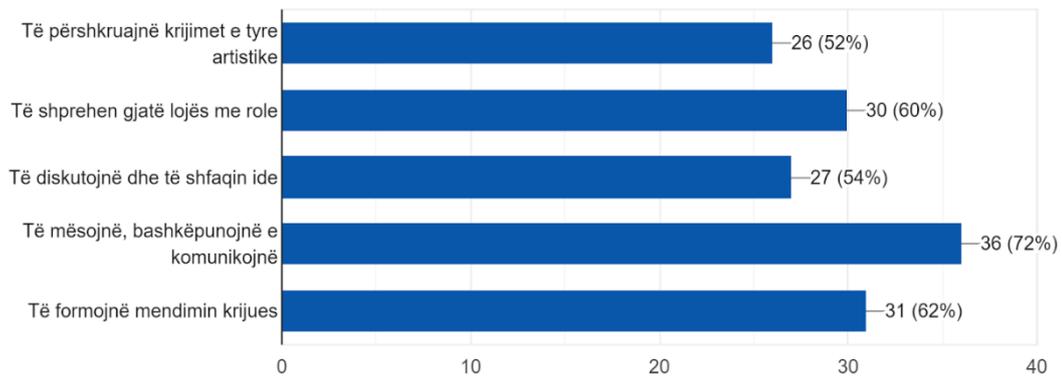
Grafiku 11. Aspects of Encouraging Artistic Activities in Favor of Developing Communication Skills

As for what artistic activities encourage in favor of developing communication skills, the data from Graph 11 show that the largest number of participants, 72%, declare that these activities promote learning, cooperation, and communication among children; next, 62% indicate that they foster creative thinking; 60% highlight expression during role-play; 54% mention discussion and sharing of ideas; and 52% note describing their artistic creations.

12. Cili është avantazhi më i madh i dramatizimit/lojës me role për zhvillimin e komunikimit te fëmijët?
50 responses
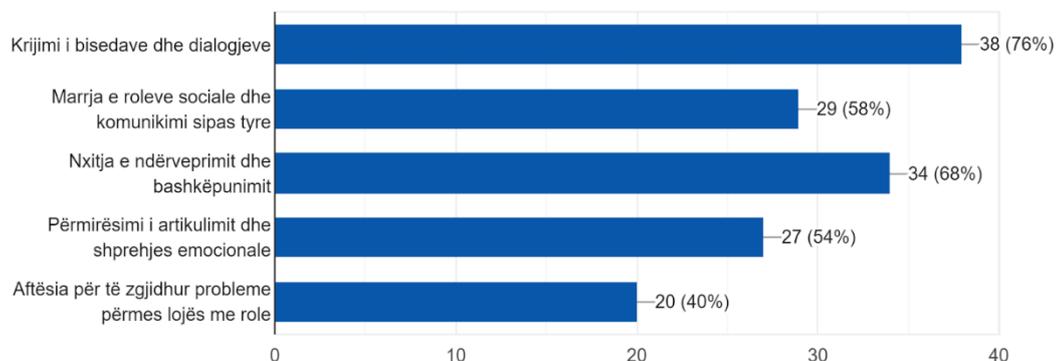
Grafiku 12. *The advantages of dramatization/role-play for developing communication skills*

In Graph 12, the results present the elements that make dramatization/role-play most advantageous for developing communication skills in children. Based on the participants' perceptions, the highest-rated aspect, at 76%, is: **Creating conversations and dialogues**; followed by 68% for: **Encouraging interaction and cooperation**; 58% for: **Assuming social roles and communicating accordingly**; 54% for: **Improving articulation and emotional expression**; and 40% for: **The ability to solve problems through role-play**.

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13. Çfarë ndikimi kanë aktivitetet muzikore në zhvillimin e aftësive gjuhësore?
50 responses

Zhvillojnë të folurit dhe artikulimin e fjalëve — 31 (62%)
Mësojnë të dëgjojnë me vëmendje udhëzimet — 23 (46%)
Kuptojnë ritmin dhe intonacionin e gjuhës — 28 (56%)
Zhvillojnë aftësinë për të dalluar tingujt — 35 (70%)
Kuptojnë përmbajtjen dhe mesazhin e këngëve — 25 (50%)
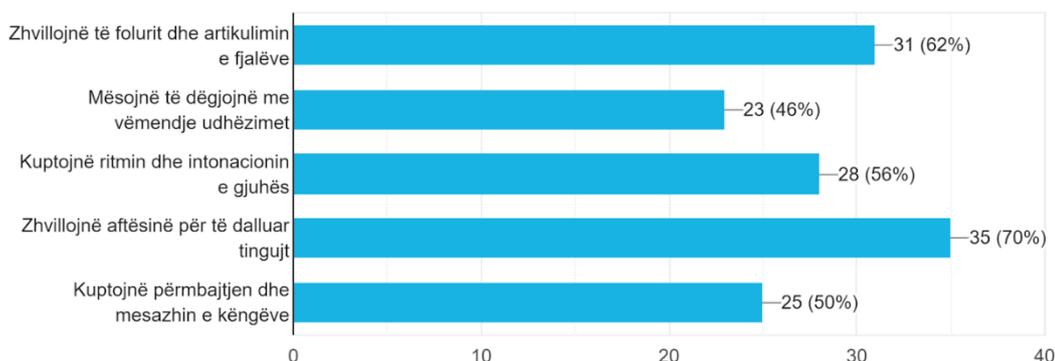
Grafiku 13. *The impact of musical activities on the development of language skills*

In Graph 13, the statistics on the impact of musical activities on the development of language skills are presented. The results show that the largest number of participants, 70%, stated that these activities contribute to the development of the ability to distinguish sounds; 62% indicated that they support the development of speech and word articulation; 56% noted they help in understanding rhythm and intonation; 50% reported they aid in comprehending the content and message of songs; and 46% stated that they teach children to listen attentively to instructions. From this, it is clear that music influences the development of children's language skills in multiple ways.

14. Cilat aftësi komunikuese zhvillohen përmes arteve të bukura?
50 responses

Shprehja me fjalë e vizatimit/pu… — 36 (72%)
Emërtimi i ngjyrave, gjërave, o… — 29 (58%)
Të treguarit e historive përmes… — 34 (68%)
Bisedat me veten dhe me lodrat — 22 (44%)
Komunikimi me të tjerë — 27 (54%)
Artikulimi përmes këngëve — 25 (50%)
Nuk zhvillohen aftësi komuniku… — 5 (10%)
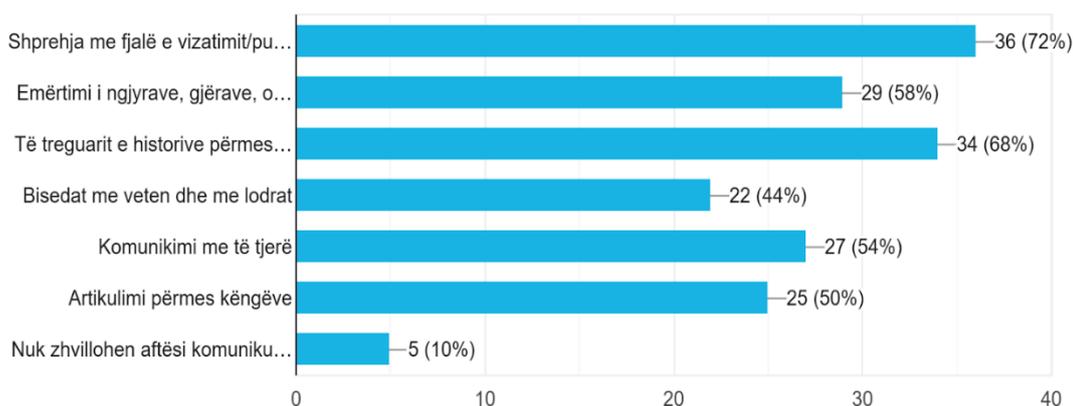
Grafiku 14. *The skills developed through the fine arts*

The results in Graph 14 show the skills developed through fine arts. According to the participants' perceptions, the highest-rated skills, at 72%, are: **expressing oneself verbally through drawing or crafting**; 68% reported **storytelling through visual art**; 58% noted

naming colors, objects, and things; 54% indicated **communication with others**; 50% mentioned **articulation through songs**; 44% noted **conversations with oneself and with toys**; while a small portion, 10%, stated that **fine arts do not develop communicative skills**.

Average rating (4.88)
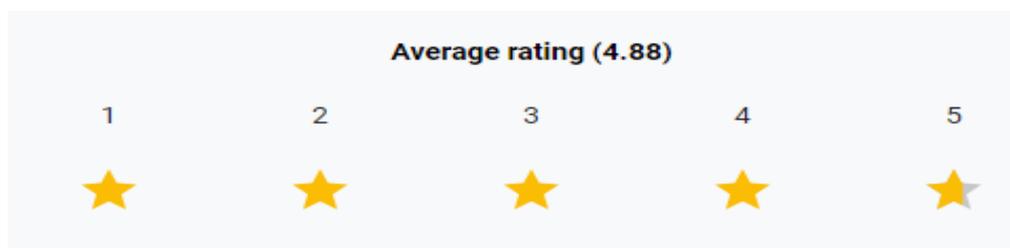
15. Sa i vlerësoni me rëndësi për zhvillimin artistik e gjuhësor të fëmijës, vizitat në teatër, kinema, muze, galeri arti, festivale e koncerte?

50 responses
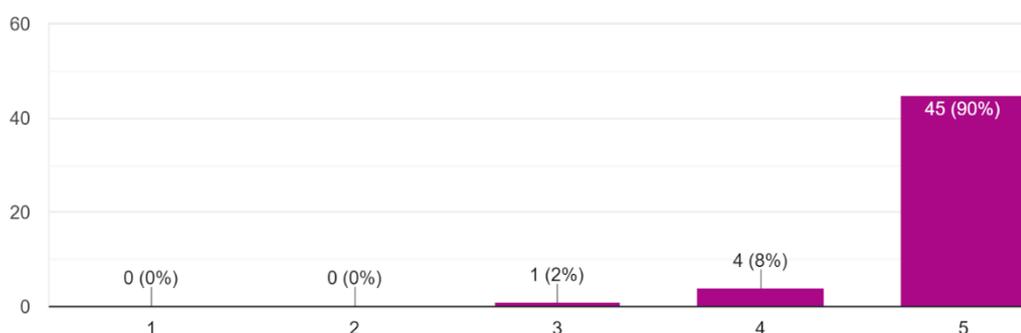
Grafiku 15. *Visits to monuments, institutions, and art events and their importance for the artistic and language development of children*

In Graph 15, the results show participants' perceptions regarding the importance of visits to theaters, cinemas, museums, art galleries, festivals, and concerts. The evaluations were based on a Likert scale from 0 = not at all to 5 = extremely, with an average score of 4.88. The statistics indicate that the majority of participants, 90% (45 participants), consider these types of visits extremely important and assigned them a level 5 on the Likert scale, while 8% (4 participants) rated them as important with a level 4, and only 2% (1 participant) rated them as average, giving a level 3 on the Likert scale.

5.2. Verification of

o **H1: The integration between fine arts and language helps develop the language skills of preschoolers.**

o   The results from Graph 6 show that activities through fine arts contribute to the development of communication in preschoolers, with 88% of participants fully agreeing with this statement, and another 10% agreeing.

o   Data from Graph 10 further indicate high agreement that activities through fine arts support the development of communication skills and the expansion of vocabulary in preschoolers, with 84% fully agreeing (Likert scale level 5) and 10% agreeing (Likert scale level 4).

o   Results from Graph 12 highlight that one of the advantages of dramatization/role-play, as an activity integrating fine arts and communication, is the opportunity to create conversations and dialogues, with 76% participation.

o   From Graph 13, statistics show the impact of musical activities on the development of language skills: 70% of participants state that music helps develop the ability to distinguish sounds, and 62% indicate it supports the development of speech and word articulation.

o   Results in Graph 14 reveal that the main skills developed through fine arts are verbal expression of drawings/creations (72%) and storytelling through visual art (68%).

Based on these results, we can say that our hypothesis is fully supported, as the integration between fine arts and language helps develop preschoolers' language skills in multiple ways: it enriches their vocabulary, enhances speech, articulation, and communication, facilitates sound recognition, and stimulates numerous conversations and dialogues, allowing children to express themselves freely through their creations.

o   **H2: Fine arts stimulate self-creativity and support children's social and emotional development, while reinforcing their communication skills.**

o   **Data from Graph 11 show that artistic activities aimed at developing communication skills encourage learning, cooperation, and interaction among children (72%). Results from Graph 12 indicate that one of the advantages of dramatization/role-playing for developing communication skills is promoting interaction and collaboration (68%), as well as improving articulation and**

emotional expression (54%), which reflects social, emotional, and linguistic development. Graph 14 shows that fine arts help develop the ability to communicate with others (54%). Graph 7 highlights that fine arts stimulate self-creativity (76%), develop communication competence and enrich vocabulary (62%), and encourage conversations and discussions (60%).

Based on the research results, it is evident that the hypothesis—that fine arts stimulate self-creativity (76%) and support children's social (72%) and emotional development (54%), while reinforcing their communication skills (98%)—is fully supported. This shows that the use of fine arts shapes multiple aspects of children's development, contributing to their overall growth.

- o **H3: Visits to artistic centers have a positive impact on the artistic and language development of preschool children.**
- o **The results from Graph 15 show participants' perceptions regarding the importance of visits to theaters, cinemas, museums, art galleries, festivals, and concerts, with an average rating of 4.88 on a 1–5 Likert scale. The statistics further indicate that as many as 95% of participants consider visits to artistic centers to be extremely important.**

Based on the statistical results, we can conclude that our hypothesis is fully supported, and that visits to artistic centers have a positive impact on the artistic and language development of preschool children.

CONCLUSIONS

Child development in the preschool years is a crucial period that lays the foundation for further cognitive, linguistic, emotional, and social growth. During this stage, communication plays a key role in building relationships and expressing the child's inner world. The integration of the fine arts into early childhood education represents a powerful component, supported by theoretical foundations, as it promotes the development of comprehensive skills as well as verbal and nonverbal communication in preschool children.

Research results showed that artistic subjects such as drawing, music, dramatic play, modeling, and handicrafts offer unique opportunities for children to express ideas, stimulate

creative, cooperative, and interactive skills, and develop communication while enriching their vocabulary.

The integration of language and the arts enables preschoolers to express their inner states and bridge the gap between nonverbal and verbal communication, creating favorable situations for self-expression through art and language. At the same time, the educational environment and its organization directly influence the stimulation of various developmental skills. The fine arts hold particular importance in this context, as they provide opportunities for creative expression and linguistic development naturally and enjoyably for children. The effects of using the arts in communication with preschoolers include fostering artistic sensitivity, developing imagination, and enhancing the ability to express feelings and ideas in multiple ways.

Therefore, we can say that verbal and nonverbal communication through the fine arts in early childhood is a powerful tool for developing children's communication skills, creativity, and social interaction, where the role of educators and a stimulating environment is decisive in achieving these goals. The results indicate that integrating language and communication with the fine arts provides a strong foundation for the holistic development of preschool children, serving as a method that encourages the child's creative skills and supports vocabulary development and the formation of effective communication skills. The study emphasizes that the fine arts are not merely supplementary activities but valuable means through which children explore, express, and make sense of their world, developing comprehensive communication abilities.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations aim to enhance the quality of preschool education by creating a favorable environment for the cognitive, linguistic, emotional, and social development of children during early childhood.

✓ **For parents:**

- o Actively engage in the educational process of the children by creating a warm and supportive home environment where the child feels safe to communicate and express themselves and their inner world.
- o Collaborate closely with educators to understand the child's needs and interests, sharing information and participating in the educational activities of the preschool institution.
- o Stimulate the child's linguistic and creative development through reading, games, and artistic activities at home.

✓ **For educators:**

- o Create an educational environment rich in artistic and communicative stimuli, where children have the opportunity to express their creativity and naturally develop their language skills.
- o Use contemporary methods and a holistic approach in planning and implementing activities, taking into account the needs and interests of each child.
- o Collaborate with families and the community to build a supportive network that fosters the overall development of children.
- o Engage in professional development and reflect on their practices to improve the quality of preschool education.

✓ **For students/interns and supporting teachers:**

- o Integrate theoretical knowledge with professional practice, using artistic activities as tools for developing children's communication and language skills.
- o Participate in creative and appropriate activity planning, focusing on motivating and actively engaging children.
- o Seek guidance and support from experienced educators and take advantage of every opportunity for training and professional advancement.

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ANNEX

Questionnaire

Questionnaire for parents and educators

Hello,

My name is Arrita Pruthi, and I am a student in the Preschool Program at UFAGJ. This questionnaire has been prepared for research purposes related to my thesis entitled *"Communication through the Fine Arts"* under the mentorship of Prof. Dr. Sindorela Doli Kryeziu. Its purpose is to gather your perspectives on the effects of integrating the fine arts (music, drawing, dramatization) in the development of language and communication in preschool children (ages 0–6).

Your responses will help us better understand the impact and influence of the fine arts on communication development in early childhood. The questionnaire is credible, and your answers will remain confidential and used solely for research purposes. Please select the option that best reflects your viewpoint.

Thank you for your contribution!

General information (demographic):

1. **Your position:**
   o Parent
   o Educator
   o Intern/Student
   o Caregiver/Support teacher

2. **Your experience with children:**

   o Less than 1 year
   o Up to 5 years
   o 5-10 years
   o Over 10 years

3. **Child's age group:**
   o 0-3 years old
   o 3-5 years old
   o 5-6 years old

4. **Type of institution:**
   o Public
   o Private
   o Home parenting

5. **Residence:**

   o City
   o Village

Part 1: The inclusion of fine arts in communication with preschoolers

6. **Do you agree that integrated activities linking language with the fine arts (drawing, music, dramatization, etc.) help develop communication skills in preschool children?**

   o Completely agree
   o Agree
   o Kind of agree
   o Don't agree
   o Don't agree at all

7. **What does the integration of fine arts in communication with preschool children determine?**

   o Improvement of speech, pronunciation, and language
   o Development of communication skills, enrichment of vocabulary
   o Development of motor skills
   o Stimulation of self-creativity
   o Encouragement of conversations and discussions
   o Learning colors and shapes
   o Creation of a relaxing and enjoyable atmosphere

8. **How often the following artistic activities should be included in the daily routine with children?**

   a) **Drawing/Painting:**
      o Every day
      o A few times a week
      o Once a week
      o Rarely
      o Nevrr

   b) **Music (singing, dancing, listening to music, playing instruments):**
      o Every day
      o A few times a week
      o Once a week
      o Rarely
      o Never

   c) **Dramatisation/Roleplay:**
      o Every day
      o A few times a week
      o Once a week

    o Rarely

    o Never

   ç) Sculpting (pug, clay etc.):

    o Every day

    o A few times a week

    o Once a week

    o Rarely

    o Never

   d) Handwork (collages, cutting, gluing):

    o Every day

    o A few times a week

    o Once a week

    o Rarely

    o Never

9. **Which artistic materials are most suitable for linking the arts with communication?** (*Can choose more than one option*)

  o Costumes and accessories for role-playing games
  o Storybooks with illustrations
  o Musical instruments (toy or real)
  o Various types of paper (white, colored, cardboard)
  o Colored pencils, foam sheets, watercolor paints, tempera
  o Clay, mud, homemade dough
  o Recycled materials (cardboard, caps, bottles)

10. **How much do artistic activities help in developing communication skills and expanding vocabulary?**

   (None = 0) 0 1 2 3 4 5 (Fully agree = 5)

11. **What do artistic activities encourage in favor of developing communication skills?**

  o Describe their artistic creations
  o Express themselves during role-play
  o Discuss and share ideas
  o Learn, cooperate, and communicate
  o Develop creative thinking

12. What is the greatest advantage of dramatization/role-play for the development of communication in children?

- o Creating conversations and dialogues
- o Taking on social roles and communicating accordingly
- o Encouraging interaction and collaboration
- o Improving articulation and emotional expression
- o Ability to solve problems through role-play

13. What impact do musical activities have on the development of language skills?

- o Develop speech and word articulation
- o Learn to listen attentively to instructions
- o Understand the rhythm and intonation of language
- o Develop the ability to distinguish sounds
- o Understand the content and message of songs

14. Which communication skills are developed through the fine arts

- o Verbal expression through drawing/creating
- o Naming colors, objects, and things
- o Storytelling through visual art
- o Talking to oneself and with toys
- o Communication with others
- o Articulation through songs
- o No communication skills are developed

15. How important do you consider visits to theaters, cinemas, museums, art galleries, festivals, and concerts for the artistic and language development of the child?

(Not at all = 0)   0   1   2   3   4   5   (5 = Very)

THE LANGUAGE OF IDEOLOGY: A METADISCOURSE ANALYSIS OF ALBANIAN POLITICAL SPEECHES AND MEDIA DURING COMMUNISM

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ABSTRACT

This study examines how metadiscourse which are the elements of language that the author uses to address the reader and comment on his or her own statements, were used in political speeches and press texts during the communist period in Albania (1960-1990) to reinforce communist ideology. Drawing on Ken Hyland's theoretical model of metadiscourse, as well as the Critical Discourse Analysis approach to language and ideology, the analysis compares official political speeches with press articles (newspapers and magazines). A corpus of 90 speeches by leaders and 135 articles from the propaganda press of the time was constructed, and key metadiscourse categories were identified. The results show that the authors of communist texts consciously used these elements to shape the ideological message: reinforcers and stance expressions often appear to confidently assert the "truths" of the Party line and to present the world in a polarized "us versus them" frame. Comparison between genres reveals that, despite differences in style, speeches being more emotional and dialogical, propaganda journalism more formal and "objective", both served to naturalize Marxist-Leninist principles by presenting ideological assertions as self-evident and unquestionable. The study demonstrates that even "secondary" components of language, such as these metadiscursive markers, played a central role in maintaining and reproducing ideology in the public discourse of the communist regime.

Keywords
Metadiscourse; Ideology; Political discourse; Communist Albania; Propaganda language

Introduction

During the communist regime in Albania (1945-1990), language became the main means of transmitting and legitimizing the official ideology. As in many totalitarian systems, public discourse was characterized by "*wooden language*", a formulaic, rigid style filled with ideological clichés (Stoica, 2016; Toska, 2020). Communication was largely a monologue from the state to the people, where "one person speaks and the rest listens" in a strict top-down hierarchy. This official language established sharp boundaries between the ruling group and its opponents: absolute virtues were attributed to the "us" (the Party and its people), while any external element was portrayed as a hostile "them" (van Dijk, 1995, 2006). Such polarized "*us versus them*" rhetoric was a means of unifying the masses against external or internal "enemies" and of justifying the regime's authority. For Albanian communist leaders, control of public discourse was the key to ideological hegemony. Enver Hoxha's regime ensured that every means of communication, from speeches at Party Congresses, to editorials in the official newspaper "*Zëri i Popullit*", to school textbooks, directly served the Party's interests and mythology. The press, radio and television were under state monopoly and functioned as "Ideological State Apparatuses" (according to Althusser's concept), where every news item or article was expected to reflect the Party line (Althusser, 1971/1984). Independent journalism did not exist; Hoxha himself defined the media as "the educator of the masses" and "the mobilizer of the people for the construction of socialism.". Consequently, the public discourse of the time was highly ideologized not only in content, but also in the way that content was conveyed. Scholars have noted that the official communist language often favored fiery slogans and ideologized over reasoned argumentation, eliminating alternative voices (Fairclough, 1989; Bedini, 2014). Within this framework, language served not only to communicate ideology, but to actualize it through linguistic style, where rhythm, lexicon, and syntax functioned together as mechanisms to reconfigure reality according to doctrine (Toska, 2020).

Despite the attention that has been paid to the language of propaganda in communist Albania (e.g.,

analyses of Hoxha's speeches for ideological slogans and clichés, or studies of the official rhetoric of the time), one dimension remains understudied: metadiscourse, or the way in which the text itself "speaks" about itself and guides the receivers. As we will see in this paper, the orienting elements of the text, which go beyond the factual content, can have important ideological functions. For example, the way something is said often reinforces what is said: a simple statement can sound like unshakable dogma if it is preceded by the phrase "*it is well known that…*" or "*as comrade Enver teaches us…*". These seemingly superscripted expressions tell the audience how to understand the message, giving it doctrinal authority. For example, in a propaganda article of the time, a sentence like "*as comrade Enver taught us…*" immediately cements the following statement as an indisputable truth, invoking the supreme authority of the leader to legitimize it. Similarly, a self-assured expression like "it is well known that our Party always defends the truth" dictates to the reader that the following statement must be taken for granted and undeniable. In this way, beyond direct ideological slogans, it is precisely these metadiscursive elements, words that connect, comment on, intensify or soften the statement, that subconsciously guide the way the audience interprets the message.

The aim of this study is to shed light on this delicate layer of propaganda discourse. We focus on two main genres of public discourse of the period: political speeches of the leadership and press texts (newspaper and magazine articles). By comparing these, we aim to understand how metadiscourse contributed to the strengthening of communist ideology in each genre and what stylistic differences emerge between them. The article begins with a theoretical overview of the concept of metadiscourse according to Hyland and its connection to ideology, then describes the methodology of the study, and continues with the analysis of the findings by genre: first for political speeches, then for press texts. Finally, in the discussion we highlight the ideological functions of the observed patterns and their broader significance, while also offering the main conclusions of the paper.

Literature Review

Metadiscourse: text-author-audience interaction

The term metadiscourse refers to those elements in a text by which the author speaks about how the text should be understood, not by adding referential information about the world, but by guiding the interpretation of what is said. According to Hyland (2005), metadiscourse is "the self-reflective expressions used to negotiate interpersonal meanings in a text, helping the author (or speaker) to express a point of view and engage with readers as members of a particular community.". In other words, metadiscourse includes the linguistic signals that the author uses to communicate his or her position, organize the message, and address the audience during the unfolding of the text. These include, for example, conjunctions (e.g., however, therefore) that orient the logic of the argument, frame markers (e.g., firstly, finally) that indicate structure, evidentials (e.g., citations according to source X) that assert the basis of information, as well as interactive expressions that manifest the author's presence as a voice in the text. Within the latter, Hyland identifies five main subgroups:

- Hedges, expressions that indicate the author's reservations or uncertainty (such as, *perhaps, it seems*), making the statement more cautious and open to alternative views. E.g.: "This policy may have a positive effect." Here the speaker does not assert it absolutely but leaves room for doubt.
- Boosters, the opposite of hedges; words that express high certainty and close the room for objection (such as, *undoubtedly, certainly, without a doubt*). E.g.: "The data, without a doubt, confirm our hypothesis." The use of the booster *undoubtedly* signals the speaker's complete

conviction about the truth of the statement.
- Attitude markers, expressions that directly communicate the author's assessment, emotion, or attitude toward what he or she is saying. These include evaluative adverbs (*fortunately, surprisingly*), expressions such as *it is important that…, it is a pity that*…, or personal comments (*we hope, I agree*). For example: "Unfortunately, the results were not up to the expected level." The word unfortunately indicates to the reader the author's negative attitude (regret) towards the fact that follows.
- Self-mentions, references by the author to himself in the text, mainly with first-person pronouns (I, we) or possessive forms (my, our). Through them, the author establishes his or her presence in the discourse. For example, in a scientific study, authors often avoid "I" to appear objective, while in more personal genres, the use of "I" can help build credibility. In our context, the pronoun "we" is often encountered, which can be an exclusive "we" (only the speaker and the institution he represents) or an inclusive "we" (the speaker together with the audience).
- Engagement markers, expressions that directly address and include the audience in the text. These include: rhetorical questions ("*What does this mean for us*?"), commands and appeals to the listener ("*think about it for a moment...*", "*note that...*"), the use of you/you and inclusive we ("*as we all know*"). These markers create a dialogic tone and make the reader or listener feel called into the argument. For example: "Let's consider the consequences of this measure.", here the speaker invites the listener to mentally join the reasoning.

Hyland divides metadiscourse into interactive resources (such as transitions, frame markers, endophoric markers, etc., which structure the text to make it easier to follow) and interactional resources (such as hedges, boosters, attitude markers, engagement markers, self-mentions, which express the author's personality and connect him to the audience). Both dimensions are especially important in persuasive texts: the author simultaneously organizes information and orients himself to the audience to make the argument acceptable to them. For example, in a sentence like: "*But perhaps this result cannot be generalized*", we have both an interactive element (*but*, which serves as a logical transition) and an interactional element (*perhaps*, which expresses hesitation). In the literature, it is argued that metadiscourse embodies the author's voice and values in the text. Crismore (1983) described it as "*the speaker's invasion of the text*", noting that these secondary comments of the author inevitably convey attitudes and prejudices (Crismore, 1983). This is particularly important in ideological contexts: metadiscourse provides means by which authors can bring their audience closer to their point of view, forestall objections and naturalize the preferred worldview. In the case of communist discourse, authors are expected to use metadiscourse to give maximum force to the ideological message. Paradoxically, hedging is expected to be minimal in these texts, since totalitarian ideology does not accept doubt or uncertainty, it claims to possess "absolute truth" (Hyland, 2005; van Dijk, 2006). Instead, we find frequent use of boosters to express unwavering conviction and to close any room for doubt, as well as an expanded presence of markers of commitment that directly appeal to the masses (e.g. "*Comrades*!" at the beginning of speeches) (van Dijk, 2006). These predictions, which we base on Hyland's theory, constitute the basis for our comparative analysis. In what follows, we will see how they are realized in the concrete linguistic practices of Albanian communist speeches and press.

Metadicourse and the communist ideology
Metadiscourse analysis in this context also relies on the theoretical framework of critical discourse analysis (CDA), which helps us interpret the ideological functions of linguistic choices. According to CDA, language is never neutral: it both reflects and constructs power relations and belief systems

(Fairclough, 1989; van Dijk, 1995). Van Dijk (1995; 2006) argues that ideologies are typically expressed and reproduced through discourse, being codified particularly in the public messages of elites and the media. In the case of communist discourse, this coding takes the form of in-group vs. out-group polarization, as mentioned: "we/us" carries all the positive values, "they/them" all the vices. A concrete example is the language of the press of the time: whenever a state newspaper praised the "*glorious achievements*" of socialism or denounced the "d*espicable plots*" of the imperialist powers, it was not simply reporting facts, it was conveying ideological judgments and contributing to the reproduction of existing power relations. Fairclough (1989) on the other hand emphasizes that dominant groups impose their meanings as "self-evident" by shaping discourse in such a way that the consensus of the subordinates is gained without overt violence. In Gramsci's words, hegemony is maintained as much by consent as by force, and language is the main means of gaining that consent (Gramsci, 1971).

In this context, metadiscourse can be seen as a subtle tool of linguistic hegemony. By guiding the receiver how to think, rather than simply what to think, metadiscursive elements serve to "manage" the relationship between the author and the audience in accordance with ideological interests (van Leeuwen, 2008). Previous studies in Albanian have noted that precisely these orienting elements, e.g. self-references, evaluative expressions and attitude markers, play a central role in institutional communication. In communist texts, we expect that they are used to legitimize the official message and to prevent alternative interpretations. In fact, some of the research questions we pose are: *Are boosters and attitude markers used to present ideological claims as unquestionable and to express contempt for "enemies"? Are engagement markers directed at the people to mobilize them around the socialist cause? Do self-mentions build a "family" bond between the speaker (the Party) and the listener (the people)?*

These are the mechanisms that are expected to emerge in our analysis and that will allow us to understand that even the most subtle linguistic choices were orchestrated to reinforce ideology.

Methodology

Corpora for study

To carry out the study, a corpus (in Albanian, but with two genre categories) of texts from the period 1960-1990 was established. The aim was to include representative materials of public ideological discourse, so that the analysis could capture both the common features of Albanian communist discourse and any possible differences between genres or periods. The corpus was divided into three main subcorpora: (1) political speeches , 90 transcribed texts of official speeches by Enver Hoxha and other PPSh leaders (delivered at party congresses, mass meetings, state anniversaries, etc.); (2) newspaper articles , 85 articles from Party-controlled newspapers, mainly "*Zëri i Popullit*" (the central organ), but also other organs such as the newspapers "*Bashkimi*" (of the Democratic Front) and "*Zëri i Rinisë*" (of the communist youth); and (3) magazine articles, 50 articles from literary and political propaganda magazines of the time, which dealt with ideological, cultural or economic topics from a Marxist-Leninist perspective. In total, the corpus contains about 225 documents with approximately 676 thousand words, of which ~60% belong to speeches (which were usually longer) and ~40% to the written press. This distribution provides a broad basis for comparison, including the personal voice of the leader on the podium and the institutional tone of journalists on the pages of the press.

All source texts were obtained from official archival publications; most were written (articles) while speeches were transcribed from spoken speeches (radio/TV or meetings) published later. It

should be noted that the authors of these texts, whether party leaders or journalists, were public figures writing in an official capacity. This means that, although the text carried the individual voice of the author, it in fact represented the institutional discourse of the regime. When building the corpus, care was taken to cover the entire time span of Albanian communism (from the early 1960s to the late 1980s) and to include texts from key moments (e.g. party plenums, ideological campaigns, political crises such as the break with the allies, etc.). This also allows for a possible diachronic perspective in the analysis, although the main focus of this article remains the cross-genre comparison (speeches vs. press).

The method of the analysis
The study combines quantitative and qualitative methods. First, a quantitative corpus analysis based on Hyland's model was applied. A list of key words and expressions corresponding to different metadiscourse categories (adapted for Albanian) was compiled. This list included, among others: typical conjunctions (e.g. *but, and, therefore*), frame markers (such as *first, in conclusion*), evidentials (formulas *according to…, as it says…*), as well as interactional expressions such as stance adverbs (*unfortunately, undoubtedly, surprisingly*), first-person pronouns (*I, we, us, ours*), exclamations and leading formulas (*dear…, it is noted that…, etc.*). The corpus was then processed with computer programs for extracting concordances, which allowed us to count the frequencies of each marker and see in what context it appears. Separate counts were conducted for each subcorpus (speeches, newspaper articles, magazine articles), as well as for the entire corpus as a whole. To enable comparisons, frequencies were normalized (e.g., number of occurrences per 10,000 words) and comparative tables/figures were constructed. These quantitative data gave us an overall picture: for example, which metadiscourse categories predominate in each genre, which are rarer, and where speeches differ from the press. However, a large part of our analysis has been qualitative and interpretive. Following the paradigm of Critical Discourse Analysis, we have examined how metamarkers are used in context to perform "*ideological work*." This required careful reading of text fragments to interpret the pragmatic function of each element in the situation. For example, it was not enough to know that the word "*certainly*" appears 30 times in speeches; it was necessary to see what it was reinforcing, was it emphasizing a key slogan? was it confirming an achievement? etc. Attention was also paid to the use of language in the function of ideological polarization: e.g., Are these markers used to glorify "us" and denigrate "them"? Do they appear in speeches especially when talking about enemies or socialist victories? etc. Given that many markers can perform different functions depending on the context, a conservative principle was followed: each suspicious case was manually examined and counted as metadiscourse only when its metadiscursive function was clear. This ensured that the quantitative data accurately reflected the real presence of ideological metadiscourse, and not simply the occurrence of a few words that could have been used in a literal sense.
Finally, representative examples from the texts are integrated into the analysis to illustrate the findings. These examples are taken directly from Hoxha's speeches and "*Zëri i Popullit* /magazine articles, to show concretely how numbers are translated into linguistic use. In presenting the results, we will first look at the features of each genre and then discuss them in comparison with each other.

Results

Political speeches
The speeches of Albanian communist leaders provide a paradigmatic example of personified

ideological discourse, where the speaker (leader) himself appears as an authoritative and close voice at the same time. The analysis results that the speeches had a high density of interactional metadiscourse, especially through self-mentions and boosters. According to our quantitative data, there were over 110 cases of boosters in political speeches, which constituted a considerable rate (about 16 boosters for every 10,000 words).
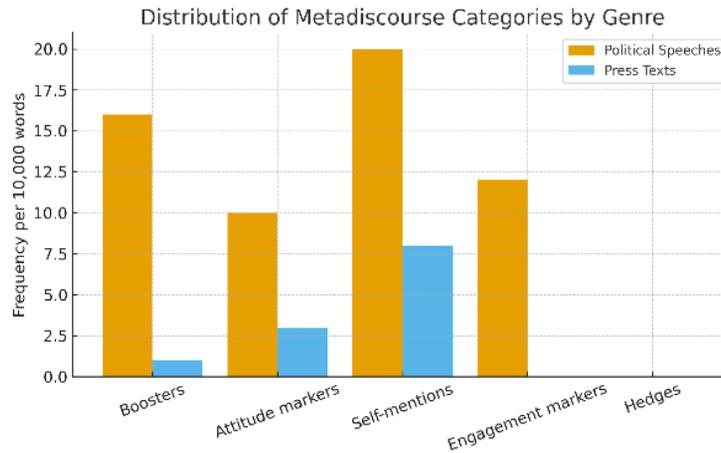
Figure 1. Distribution of Metadiscourse Categories by Genre
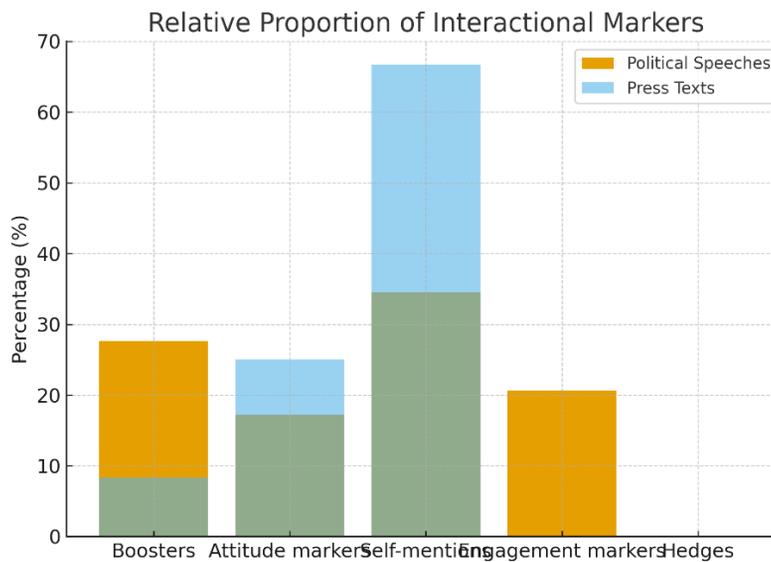
Figure 2. Relative Proportion of Interactional Markers

These uses served to present ideological theses with absolute conviction. It was observed that speakers often used expressions such as "*certainly", "without a doubt", "in fact"* while declaring socialist principles or achievements, closing any room for doubt for the audience. For example, in a speech Enver Hoxha declared: "*Certainly our people have achieved great victories in agriculture*" Hoxha, 1970). Here, the word certainly functions as a booster that presents victory as something indisputable, while the phrase our people itself includes the audience in the pride of the national achievement. The combination of the booster with the inclusive self-mention ("we/our people") is characteristic of the rhetoric of the speeches: the message is conveyed in an authoritative tone, but in the name of a collective "we".

In the same vein, the speeches demonstrate the frequent use of attitude markers to load the messages with emotional assessments along the Party line. Expressions such as "unfortunately", "*it is clear that", "we can proudly say*" were encountered, which show that the speaker is never neutral towards the topic, on the contrary, he instructs the audience on how to feel about it. For example, Hoxha often stated: "*Unfortunately, even in the ranks of our glorious Party there were some traitors…*". Here, unfortunately, it is preceded by a self-critical statement (the presence of "traitors"), communicating to the audience the Party's regret and anger over this fact, before they have even processed the news themselves. At the same time, the term "traitors" is a harsh label for internal enemies, which in the written press would usually be avoided as direct language, but in the speeches it is used openly to galvanize the emotions of the listeners. Thus, the speeches are not afraid to articulate extremely positive attitudes about us and extremely negative attitudes about them, an act that gives the discourse a polemical charge that makes the ideology seem natural: we are definitely heroic and righteous, they are definitely despicable enemies.

An important finding is that leaders also use metadiscourse to create artificial intimacy with the masses. This is realized through inclusive self-mentions and engagement markers. Instead of the speaker speaking as a separate "I," the language of speeches is full of "we" sometimes in the sense of "we the Party," sometimes as "we the people" collectivizing the speaker's identity. Enver Hoxha rarely said "I think"; more often he declared "*Our Party thinks*," "*We have decided.*" Even when he spoke of himself, he often used the institutional plural. This strategy of self-effacement in the collective "we" serves to construct the image that the leader and the people are in complete harmony, are one body. For example, speeches usually opened with greetings such as "*Dear friends and colleagues*" addressed to the delegates or the masses, a form of direct address that addresses the listeners as "*comrades*" of the speaker himself. An illustrative case: at a meeting with the electorate, Hoxha began his speech with the words "*Dear brothers and sisters*," immediately creating a familial rapport with the crowd. Such direct addressing was not simply formal courtesy, it was a conscious rhetorical act to position the audience within the discourse as part of the socialist "family" (Toska, 2020).

Also, the body of the speeches contains rhetorical questions and imperative appeals that aim to emotionally engage the listeners. For example, Hoxha might ask: "*What do we want*? (Crowd: *We want freedom!) What does the Party teach us*?" prompting the audience to react collectively. These rhetorical questions were usually not recorded in the transcript as questions with a question mark (because the answer was known or given by the speaker himself), but they influenced the audience: they created an artificial conversation where the crowd was supposed to approve and be enthusiastic. Also, speeches often ended with mobilizing calls like "*Forward to the victory of socialism*!", an all-encompassing imperative let us… which is a classic form of the commitment marker. Thus, even though the speeches were actually a one-sided communication, their metadiscursive structure created the illusion of dialogue and audience participation in the discourse. A distinctive feature of the speeches is the almost total absence of expressions of doubt or uncertainty. We do not find in them phrases like "maybe we can" or "I think that"; on the contrary, every objective is presented as definitely achievable, every decision of the Party as infallible. This lack of hedging is truly typical: ideology does not allow for "ifs" or "buts" when it comes to its self-legitimization. Even when some difficulty or failure must be acknowledged, the language of the speech immediately turns it into motivation: instead of saying "we did not achieve the plan, we are in doubt", it was said "*we did not achieve the plan because the enemies prevented us, but we will definitely achieve it next year*". It is seen here that the lack of hedging is often accompanied by an intensifier (definitely) and an attitude/emotion marker (blaming "enemies" with indignant tones), which preserves the Party's dogma as infallible.

Overall, the findings confirm that political speeches used metadiscourse to give maximum strength to the ideological message. Boosters and attitude markers presented communist ideas as safe, just, and universally valid, creating a black-and-white narrative framework along the lines of "*we the righteous against the wicked enemies*" (Hyland, 2005; van Dijk, 2006). Meanwhile, plural self-mentions (we/our) and direct addresses (engagement markers) aligned the audience with the speaker, making them feel part of "*our heroic people*" or *"the great socialist family"*. This interpersonal interaction is what Fairclough describes as the production of consensus through language, the audience is not simply a passive listener but is addressed as an active subject who receives the message enthusiastically and without doubt. In this way, political speeches managed to create the illusion of complete Party-people unity and to inject the doctrine into the mind of the listener as a "truth" that he himself believes.

Press texts (newspapers and magazines)
The discourse of the communist written press (mainly editorials, opinion pieces or party press reports) presents a somewhat different face of propaganda, more formal and impersonal in style, but equally effective in conveying ideology. Our analysis shows that newspaper and magazine texts tended to have a more objective and "cold" tone compared to speeches, which is reflected in the more sparing use of interactive metadiscourse. Journalism of the communist era claimed a kind of institutional neutrality: the journalist typically wrote as if he were simply informing the reader, not as if he were conversing with him. This is clearly seen in the extremely low frequency of engagement markers addressed to the reader, in fact, newspaper articles almost never encounter forms with "you" or "let us…", which would imply a dialogical tone. For example, a newspaper article of the time would never address the reader with sentences like: "As you can see in the table below…"; instead, it would say: "*The table below shows…*", presenting the information without personalizing the address (Bedini, 2014). Direct addressing "*you*" in state media was considered unusual, except when used as a form of slogan or general appeal (e.g., a poster might appear in a campaign with "*You, citizen, do your duty*!", but in daily writings journalism avoided the personal tone).
However, an interesting feature of the communist press is the use of collective and possessive forms that include the reader without addressing him individually. For example, editorials often spoke on behalf of an institutional "we", which could mean the nation or the state. Expressions such as "*our country", "our people", "our Party*" were quite common (van Dijk, 1995). Instead of the journalist saying "the Albanians have shown bravery", he would write "*our people have shown heroism*". This collective self-reference is worth analyzing: the journalist, as a citizen and representative of the official will, speaks with the collective voice of the nation. The use of the possessive pronoun "our" serves to tell the reader that "you and I are in this together, it is our people, our party, our cause". So, even though there is no direct "you", the reader is included as part of the common group "we". This strategy of latent inclusion is maintained in a formal tone, it does not sound familiar or intimate, but at a subtextual level achieves the desired ideological effect: it makes the reader identify with the statements that follow.
In terms of boosters and hedges, the language of the press presents interesting contrasts with speeches. Our study found that newspapers almost entirely avoided explicit boosters in their information texts. Unlike speeches, where "*certainly*" and "*undoubtedly*" were frequently heard, these words were rare in news articles. For example, in the newspaper subcorpus, the marker "certainly" was found only once throughout the corpus. Journalists seemed to avoid phrases that expressed the author's personal certainty, as the reporting style required distance and impartiality.

As noted, "journalists usually avoid words such as '*certainly' or 'without a doubt'* in reporting, as they signal confirmed truthfulness", something that reporters preferred to communicate indirectly. The typical way was: instead of the author saying "of course, the plan was exceeded", he would say "*the plan was exceeded*" and let the fact itself (the plan being exceeded) impose the idea that this was an indisputable success. The ideology was transmitted not by openly declaring the author's conviction, but by selecting and emphasizing the facts in a biased manner. This is a more refined technique: the newspaper text gives the reader the impression of objective and cold information, but in fact the very choice of words and of the facts mentioned vs. those left unmentioned conveys the desired ideological message.

In line with the above, attitude markers are also more limited in print, especially in news. Newspapers of the time would rarely include overt emotional comments like "*unfortunately*" within a report. In a *Zëri i Popullit* article, we would not see a sentence like: "Unfortunately, agricultural production fell this year"; instead, it would read: "*Agricultural production fell this year*", allowing the reader himself (in fact, the reader's expectations shaped by propaganda) to conclude that this is negative news. Also, highly emotionally charged epithets were often presented as official quotes or statements, not as assessments by the journalist himself. For example, an article would not directly call a Western politician a "corrupt reactionary" in the newspaper's own voice; instead, it might say "*In his speech, Minister X condemned the reactionary policies of imperialism…*". Thus, the terms "*reactionary*", "*traitor*", "*agent*" etc. will be found in the press but often placed in the mouths of the Party or the masses (e.g. "*the people call them traitors…*"). As a result, the tone of the journalistic text remains uncommentary, seemingly only transmitting the words of the Party as objective truths.

However, one should not think that the press did not express positions. On the contrary, the entire discourse of the newspaper was filled with ideological positions coded in a linguistically "objective" way. As our study notes, newspapers present "the impression of objectivity and authority, while essentially reproducing the ideology of the state". This was achieved in several ways. First, through the choice of lexicon: ideologically charged terms were part of the standard vocabulary of reporting. For example, Western countries were NEVER called simply "Western countries", but usually "*imperialists*" or "*imperialist monopolies*"; Tito's Yugoslavia was called "*revisionist*", dissident groups were called "*hostile elements*", etc. These ideological labels were seemingly part of the content, but from a functional perspective they are markers of attitude, because they clearly indicate how the reader should evaluate those actors (e.g., "*revisionist*" = bad). Second, the structure of the text played a role: often the article opened with praise for the Party and its achievements and closed with an appeal or mention of a quote from Hoxha, giving the reader the entire frame of interpretation from the beginning to the end. These openings/closings functioned as metadiscourse at the macro level (frame markers of ideology): they told the reader that this news item should be read as a success, that other as a warning, and so on.

From the quantitative analysis, an interesting finding was that in the press, especially in magazines, there was a somewhat greater presence of some attitude markers compared to speeches. This may seem contrary to our expectation (since speeches are more emotional). The explanation is that in some magazine articles (which were more essayistic), the authors allowed themselves to use adverbs such as *"unfortunately", "surprisingly",* when reflecting on some social or cultural issue. For example, an article in the magazine *Nëntori* could say: "*Unfortunately, some remnants of backward customs still hinder our social progress.*". Here, unfortunately, it expresses the author's (and the Party's) regret for that fact. In the context of a magazine, with the aim of pedagogically educating the reader: the author pretends a little like an "advisor" who speaks freely, although the message is the same as the Party's. However, even in the magazine, these interventions of personal

tone were rare and limited. No polemical extremes were reached there; the language was still kept within the official and "correct" framework. The magazine played a supporting role in propaganda, clarifying and complementary, without going beyond the limits of the Party's monological discourse.

One area where print differs significantly from speech is the use of organizing metadiscourse (interactive resources). The analysis showed that newspapers were less likely to "explain" to readers with glosses or repetitions. For example, markers such as "that is to say," "in other words," which were common in speeches (where the speaker, after making a statement, reinforced it "concretely" with examples) were much rarer in print. The newspaper preferred to provide information directly without didactic intervention, a telegraphic style. This is related to its role: newspapers assumed that the reader would either understand the messages themselves from the context, or else structured the articles so that the explanation was implicit. Thus, print authors rarely used phrases like *"e.g."* within the text; instead, they simply listed the facts. Even when they wanted to give an example, they often integrated it into the sentence without prefacing it with "*for example.*". This makes the newspaper's style more compact, but maintains an authoritative tone, as if to say: "I'll give you the facts as they are, draw your own lesson (which coincides with that of the Party)." Of course, in reality, the reader of that time was accustomed to the fact that the "facts" selected by the newspaper were themselves the ideological conclusions to be drawn.

To sum up, the texts of the Albanian communist press operated with more subtle methods, but with the same ideological aim as speeches. They naturalized ideology by merging it with the facts: the reporting of the news and its ideological interpretation were one, so much so that the reader took it for granted that "this is how things really are." For example, a typical editorial would state: *"Our people have always shown determination in building socialism"*, a sentence written in calm tones, without blatant hyperbole, but nevertheless with the use of the collective possessor "our" (which makes the reader a part of it) and an absolute generalization (always determination) that leaves no room for doubt. The reader takes this as an objective historical statement, while it conveys the message "we are steadfast, therefore we are on the right path". Thus, the journalistic style gave the reader the impression of objectivity and authority, while pushing the ideological agenda under the rug. Even though direct emotional appeals were lacking, the propaganda effect was achieved: that the enemy was nameless but omnipresent, that the Party was always right. However, the comparison with the speeches highlights an important difference: the press maintained a facade of rationality, while the speeches openly played on emotion. For example, where Hoxha would say in a speech "unfortunately, the objectives were not achieved" (expressing regret and implying guilt), the newspaper would report simply *"Production objectives were not achieved"* but would immediately insinuate elsewhere that *"these failures came from the conspiracies of the enemies"* without using emotional words. In this way, the press appeared "neutral," but the reader was served the same interpretation: that the failure is temporary and caused by the enemies, and that we will succeed. Newspaper articles lacked insulting epithets for specific figures (you wouldn't read "such and such a stubborn bureaucrat"), but enemies were labeled with general terms (*traitors, saboteurs, reactionaries*), always in the plural and at a distance. This impersonal style made propaganda seem like the truth in itself, not the opinion of the editorial staff. As it was found, "although the newspaper undoubtedly carried ideological content, it transmitted it through the selection and emphasis of information rather than through personal interventions". This is precisely the method of "indoctrination without understanding": the reader hears the voice of the Party but hears it as if it were the voice of truth.

Discussion

The above-mentioned differences between political speeches and press texts lead us to a deeper understanding of the linguistic mechanisms that served communist ideology. Fundamentally, the two genres functioned as complementary propaganda vehicles, albeit in somewhat different styles and approaches. Speeches, with their personal, emotional, and dialogical tone, can be seen as the means for the immediate mobilization of the masses. They accomplished what Althusser calls the "interpellation" of individuals as ideological subjects: they directly called out to people *("Friends!", "Comrades!")* and instilled in them the identity of a loyal member of the socialist collective. The metadiscourse of speeches created a theatrical stage where the speaker and listeners seemed united (through the shared "*we*") and the enemies were portrayed clearly and isolated. As a result, the audience of the speeches felt part of a close community (around the charismatic leader) and at the same time hostile to the "*Other*", a powerful dynamic to strengthen loyalty and political mobilization. Our findings confirm this: the speeches used a lot of reinforcers and positional expressions to emphasize that our cause is just and safe, just as van Dijk and other scholars have noted about polarizing ideological discourses. Also, direct appeals and rhetorical questions made the audience not only understand, but also react emotionally to the message, internalizing it (applause, cheers at rallies are evidence of this successful interaction).

On the other hand, the propaganda press (especially newspapers) played the role of "normalizing" the ideology in everyday life. By presenting the Party's discourse in the format of ordinary news, the press achieved what Gramsci would call cultural hegemony: the Party's ideas appeared in the newspaper as facts and news, and thus the public absorbed them without treating them as genuine propaganda. The style of the press, measured, bureaucratic, with objective tones, was itself a means of making ideological claims seem "neutrally true". We have here a naturalization of ideology: for example, when every economic article begins with "*The plan was carried out with complete success*" and every political article ends with "this proves the superiority of our system", the reader after a while accepts this as the norm, even as an objective given. As Fairclough describes, a framework has been imposed in which the communist worldview seems so self-evident that it is no longer questioned. Our study found precisely this tendency: newspapers spoke with technical authority (they selected facts, cited statistics and plans) but through them they communicated ideological authority (the only interpretation of those facts). Thus, the press contributed to the creation of a tacit consensus: people saw the world according to the categories offered to them by the official discourse, without thinking that an ideology was being imposed on them. It is significant that readers themselves began to use the Party's phraseology (e.g., they divided others into "*us*" and "*them*", they spoke with official slogans in conversations), which shows that propaganda had penetrated the general mindset.

The comparison between genres also highlights an interesting dynamic: what the press could not do openly (e.g., display strong emotions, give direct orders, or use offensive ideological language), the speech did; and conversely, where the speech might have sounded too biased to be believed (e.g., when it praised itself excessively), the press would come and deliver the same message "independently" (reporting that the people themselves expressed this praise or that the facts themselves confirmed it). This interaction between rhetorical and factual discourse made propaganda multifaceted and effective. Our results show that despite the different uses of metadiscourse, its ideological function was consistent: in speeches and press releases, both boosters and self-references and markers of commitment served the same purpose, to bind the masses behind the Party and convince them that reality matches the official narrative. Sentences like "*Our people are marching confidently towards new victories, with no room for uncertainty…*" are emblematic

of this stylistic symbiosis: they sound like a report (in the third person) but also like a moral appeal (with the keywords "*confident", "without uncertainty*"). In them we find at the same time the booster (confident), the lack of hedge (without uncertainty), the self-reference (our people) and the clear ideological implication (the new inevitable victory).
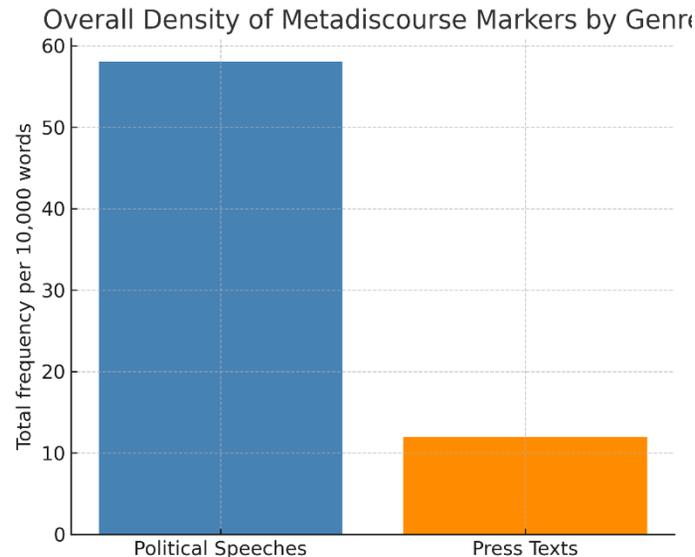

Figure 3. Overall Density of Metadiscourse Markers by Genre

From a theoretical perspective, our study once again confirms the explanatory power of Hyland's metadiscourse model in a previously undeveloped context: that of totalitarian propaganda discourse. Hyland's categories helped us to dissect communist texts and to identify concretely the mechanisms by which rhetorical effects were achieved. It is clear that in our corpus, boosters and self-mentions were the main "weapons" of speakers to impose authority and project unity, while engagement markers were bridges to the mass, they called people to participate (even if only mentally) in the discourse. Meanwhile, minimal hedging was equally significant: it shows that the ideological discipline of the discourse did not allow for the violation of dogma. This constitutes a departure from common practices in other genres (e.g. in academic writing hedging is considered a sign of modesty and realism), but in our texts the lack of hedging was precisely a sign of ideological dogmatism. Our findings also place Albanian communist discourse in a broader theoretical framework: they are consistent with what is known about similar discourses in other communist regimes. For example, the "us-them" polarization and the claim to absolute truth have also been observed in analyses of Soviet and Chinese discourse (van Dijk, 2006; Stoica, 2016, etc.), and our work confirms these features. Is this then a general phenomenon of communist discourse? The chances are yes, although each language and culture has its own specificities, it seems that the methodology of linguistic control of ideology has striking similarities from case to case. It is worth discussing another methodological aspect: the adaptation of the metadiscourse list for Albanian. We treated some ideological clichés as part of the discourse, not simply as "words". For example, the phrases "*populli ynë*" (our people) or "*Partia e Punës nen udheheqjen e shokut Enver*" constituted repeated structures that carried a metadiscursive function (they built the speaker's ethos by evoking the highest authority). Although Hyland focuses on smaller units (words or short expressions), our study shows that in ideological discourses, even entire formulaic phrases often play the role of metadiscourse. In our case, the repetition of phrases like "*led by the Party*" or "*our ideological weapon*" functioned as frame markers that always reminded the reader of the paradigm of interpretation (that every action is done under the direction of the Party, that everything is an

ideological war, etc.). We have captured these elements in the qualitative analysis, and they provide additional data on the cultural context: Albanian propaganda also had its own linguistic refrains (e.g. "*the Party line", "the brilliance of socialism", "ideological armament"* and others like these) that deserve attention as much as the classical metadiscourse.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the study confirms the main idea that metadiscourse was an essential component of ideological strategy in communist Albania. Alongside direct political messages, it was precisely the ways in which these messages were packaged and communicated that ensured their effectiveness with the audience. Reinforcers, self-references, markers of attitude and those of commitment, all these categories were put to work reinforcing the fabricated ideological reality: a reality where the Party was always right, the people were one with the Party, the enemies were evil and, in the minority, the future was safe and bright under the Party's leadership. Metadiscursive choices in speeches made this reality seem enthusiastic, dramatic, lively, electrifying the masses; while choices in the press made it seem ordinary, rational, inevitable, normalizing the Party's view as daily "news". In essence, both speeches and the press worked together to achieve ideological hegemony, each in its own way. The main findings of the paper , such as the frequent use of intensifiers and the lack of hedging, the presence of the collective "we", direct appeals to the people, reflect and concretize with linguistic elements the theoretical principles of totalitarian discourse described by authors such as van Dijk, Fairclough, Althusser and others. The way something was said directly reflected what was said: the directed, confident, "collective" metadiscursive style was the very linguistic manifestation of the authoritarian socialist ideology.

The contribution of this study lies both in the results obtained for Albanian during the communist period, and in the demonstration of an analytical approach that can be widely applied. By adapting Hyland's model to an atypical (propagandistic and undemocratic) context, we showed that this model is flexible enough to capture unique features of discourse. The categories of metadiscourse allowed us to pinpoint where and how ideology intervenes in the text: whether through a "without a doubt" placed before a doctrinal statement, or through a "we" speaking on behalf of all, or an "unfortunately" that emotionally colors a piece of bad news to show who the regime considers guilty. In this way, the study takes a step towards the "linguistic" decomposition of power: it shows how political power is translated into discursive choices and vice versa, how through the analysis of language we can reconstruct the mechanisms of the exercise of power. In conclusion, we can say that the analysis of metadiscourse in the texts of Albanian communism offers a special window into understanding the language-ideology relationship. Through it, we saw that ideology does not lie only in what is said openly (the doctrine), but also in the subtext, in every choice of sentence that is guided by that doctrine. The language of the regime, although wooden and full of clichés, was a carefully sculpted instrument: every sentence was intended to convey power, whether by saying it or by implying it. This makes it even clearer why such studies are important: by knowing how metadiscourse functioned then, we are better prepared to discern the discursive strategies of power even in today's contexts, wherever language tries to direct us on how to think.

Limitations and Future Studies

Although the study reached clear results on how metadiscourse served to strengthen communist ideology, some issues remain to be further developed. First, it should be noted that the types of

texts included in the corpus are diverse: newspapers and magazines were treated together as part of the "press", although some minor differences were noted between them. Magazines, for example, allowed for more commentary and reflective tones, while newspapers maintained a drier and more institutional style. A future study could treat these subgenres separately, analyzing more specifically the editorials of *Zërit i Popullit* as a more rigid and official discursive form of propaganda. Second, the analysis of metadiscourse itself presents methodological difficulties, due to the often unclear boundary between "metadiscourse" and "content". Although the criteria were carefully applied, a dose of subjectivity remains in determining whether an ideological term is part of the message or a commentary on it. For example, when a text writes "disgusting enemies," the word disgusting was classified as an attitude marker (expressing the author's negative assessment), but it could also be interpreted as a descriptive epithet. In such cases, the interpretation was based on the context and pragmatic function of the sentence. Despite these difficulties, the results of the study provide a compelling insight into the way in which metadiscourse functions as an ideological instrument in Albanian communist texts. They show that even seemingly secondary linguistic elements (such as conjunctions, pronouns, modal adverbs) play a key role in the construction of social reality under the control of the dominant ideology. This finding is important not only for the history of the Albanian language, but also for general studies on political discourses. For the future, it would be of interest to compare the period before and after 1990, to see whether these metadiscursive practices have continued or have been transformed in post-communist political discourse. Likewise, extending the analysis to other genres (such as academic texts, educational lectures, or literature with ideological messages) would help to assess the universal scope of the observed pattern. However, the approach followed in this paper which combines metadiscursive analysis with ideological critique, could serve as a model for similar studies in other languages or contexts.

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THE SPEECH OF THE ALBANIANS OF MANDRTSA
(Bullgari)

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Abstrakti

This paper addresses the Albanian spoken variety of the Albanians of Mandritsa, a village located in southern Bulgaria, which represents a unique case of the preservation of the Albanian language outside the Albanian ethnic territory. Drawing on historical, linguistic, and dialectological sources, the study aims to analyze the origin, development, and main phonetic, lexical, and grammatical characteristics of this speech variety. Special attention is given to the influence of surrounding languages, particularly Bulgarian, Greek, and Turkish, as well as to the role of historical and social factors in the preservation or erosion of this linguistic heritage. The paper highlights the importance of documenting and studying this variety as an integral part of Albanian linguistic heritage and as evidence of interlinguistic contact in the Balkans.
Keywords: Mandrica, Albanian outside the borders, Albanian dialectology, linguistic contact, linguistic heritage.

The main purpose of this paper is to present and comprehensively analyze the Albanian spoken variety of the Albanians of Mandritsa in Bulgaria, situating it within the broader context of Albanian dialectology and the history of Albanian migrations in the Balkans.
The paper aims to:

- to examine the historical origins of the Albanian community of Mandritsa and the circumstances of its formation;
- to identify the main phonetic, morphological, and lexical features of the Mandritsa speech variety;
- to make evident the influences of other Balkan languages on this speech variety;

- to analyze the social, cultural, and historical factors that have influenced the preservation or weakening of the use of Albanian in Mandritsa;
- to emphasize the importance of preserving and documenting this speech variety as part of the Albanian linguistic heritage.

Research method

The study has been conducted using an interdisciplinary methodology that combines historical, linguistic, and sociolinguistic approaches. The main methods employed are:

- The bibliographic analysis method, which involves reviewing existing scholarly studies on Mandritsa and its speech variety, such as the works of Dhimitër Shuteriqi, Mahir Domi, Ludmilla Stankov, and other contemporary authors;
- The descriptive and analytical method, used to analyze the phonetic, lexical, and grammatical features of the Mandritsa speech variety based on documented materials;
- The comparative method, through which the Mandritsa speech is compared with standard Albanian and other Tosk dialects, with the aim of identifying archaic features and borrowings;
- The sociolinguistic approach, which assists in analyzing the role of social factors—such as migration, education, bilingualism, and cultural integration—in the use and preservation of the Albanian language within the Mandritsa community;
- The field research method in Mandritsa, which helps to observe firsthand how linguistic, cultural, and historical aspects have developed in recent years.

The combination of these methods allows for a comprehensive and balanced treatment of the topic, providing a clear overview of the linguistic and cultural significance of the Albanian speech variety of Mandritsa.

Introduction

Mandritsa (Bulgarian name: Mandritsa) is a historic village in southeastern Bulgaria, known as the only Albanian village in the country where a distinctive form of the Albanian language is still preserved and spoken (Gjinari, Shkurtaj, 2003:392). Mandritsa is impressively situated on the right bank of the Byala River (Lumi i bardhe), in the eastern part of the Rhodope Mountains, right at the border with Greece (Hristova Georgieva, 2015:25). This speech variety represents a unique dialectological case in the Balkans, demonstrating the preservation of Albanian language and culture outside the territory of Albania and Kosovo for centuries.

1. Historical Origin of Mandritsa and the Albanian Speech

Mandritsa was founded in 1636, according to an inscription in the village church, by several Orthodox Albanian shepherds who lived under the administration of the Ottoman Empire and supplied the army with dairy products.

The initial settlers came from the Korçë region and later from the Souli area (Epirus), and until the early years of the 20th century, Albanian was spoken in the village as the primary language. This deep historical period contributed to the formation of a unique linguistic context in which the Albanian language was preserved despite numerous Slavic and Greek influences in the area.

2. Characteristics of the Mandritsa Speech Variety

2.1 The Albanian-Mandritsa Dialect

The Albanian speech in Mandritsa contains elements linking it to Tosk, but it has also developed distinct forms due to socio-geographic isolation and contact with other languages. The phonetic and lexical structure of this variety shows remnants of archaic elements of classical Albanian, alongside borrowings from Bulgarian and other surrounding languages.

The studies of Dhimitër Shuteriqi and Mahir Domi, as well as updated work by Ludmilla Stankov, provide dialectological and psycholexical material documenting the vocabulary, phraseology, and grammatical structures of Mandritsa.

2.2 Vocabulary and Phraseology

In a detailed dictionary of the Mandritsa speech compiled by Dhimitër Shuteriqi, a large repertoire of words has been documented, including names of plants, animals, tools, human body parts, days and months, as well as everyday expressions used in communication.

This dictionary also records numerous lexical borrowings from Bulgarian, Greek, and Turkish that have been integrated into the Mandritsa Albanian speech, reflecting historical cultural and linguistic contacts beyond national borders.

3. Historical and Social Influence on Language Preservation

From the 19th century until today, Mandritsa has experienced significant demographic changes, including mass emigration to Greece and depopulation, especially following the Balkan wars and shifts in state borders.

Nevertheless, the remaining inhabitants have preserved their Albanian language as part of the community's identity. Until the early years of the 20th century, only Albanian was used in Mandritsa, while with the introduction of education in the Bulgarian language (1913–14), the official presence of the host country's language also began.

4. The Mandritsa Speech Today and Prospects for Preservation

Examining how people use language in different social contexts provides valuable insight into how language functions, social relationships within a community, and the ways in which individuals express aspects of their social identity through language (Holmes, 2015:36).

In recent decades, efforts to preserve this speech variety have included dialectological studies, dictionary and monograph publications such as *The Albanian Speech in the Village of Mandritsa*, as well as intercultural collaborations between Albanian and Bulgarian scholars.

Nevertheless, low population numbers and the integration of villagers into broader society increase the risk of this unique speech disappearing if sustainable measures for documentation and language transmission to younger generations are not implemented.

Case Study

1. **Lexical Analysis**

   nimit / nimët

Vjen nga "një mijë" (one thousand)

Typical Features of Archaic Albanian:

një mijë → nimijë → nimit

This is not Bulgarian, but a phonetic and lexical reduction within Albanian itself..

Albanian Words with Internal Historical Development

tëkminde

Related to the Albanian verb "të kem / kam (to have/have)"

Meaning: *u bënë*, *u arritën*, *janë bërë bashkë*

Structure:

të- (particle)

këm / kim / kin (older form of *kam*)

-nde (pjesëz përfundimtare narrative)

Typical oral use, non-standard but Albanian.

zënimit

From the Albanian verkb "zë" (me zënë (to catch))

Meaning: *të mbledhura*, *të fituara*, *të zëna (gathered, earned, caught)*

The nominal form *zënim* is archaic; today we would say:

të ardhurat / fitimi (earnings/winnings)

Albanian words, today outside standard usage.

tristo

From treqind

Shortened, colloquial form:

treqind → trëqint → tristo (three hundred)

Typical phenomenon of speech economy in dialects.

gashki

One of the most interesting words in conversation

May be related to:

gashkë / gash (send i vogël, copë, njësi (a small thing, a piece or unit)

or a Slavic borrowing adapted into the Albanian system

Important:

The word takes the Albanian plural -i

It functions within Albanian syntax

Even when it is a borrowing, the word has been Albanianized and is thus part of the speech variety's lexicon.

kocanski

Local regional designation

Used as a label for the speech variety, not as a separate language

A typical phenomenon in peripheral Albanian speech varieties

studentka

Borrowing for *studente (student)*

Suffix **-ka** (femërore (feminine))

The word functions fully within Albanian discourse

profesora / po-profesora

From profesor (professor)

po- as an intensifier (*më shumë, më të fortë (more, stronger)*)

Balkan conversational structure

vlogovite

From vlog (anglisht (english))

With a local plural suffix

Indicates integration of modern vocabulary

sërdski

Popular term for Serbian

Dialectal phonetic change

Clear semantic function

naemstva

Meaning: *qira / qëndrime me pagesë (rent)*

Mixed administrative word

Non-standard in Albanian, but functional in context

majsterski

From mjeshtër (master)

Meaning: *mjeshtëror, profesionist (master, professional)*

A borrowing adapted to the local system

kërfiç / kërpich (qerpiç (tulle))

Important ethnolexical word

Related to traditional construction

Key term of material culture

kamëk (gur (rock))

Basic construction term

Used in the description of the foundation

Пепер (Peper)

Can be connected to: the Slavic root *peper* = "piper" (melmesë (spice))

Linguistic Conclusion

The speech variety is the archaic Albanian of Mandritsa. Its lexicon is primarily Albanian, with archaic forms and integrated borrowings, as is typical in any Balkan dialect.

2. Phonetic Analysis

Alphabet and Pronunciation

All the words are in Cyrillic and follow Slavic phonetics.

Approximate pronunciation (IPA / latin):

Пепер → /ˈpɛ.pɛr/

Пепера → /ˈpɛ.pɛ.ra/

Киджек → /ˈkid͡ʒɛk/

Пирогар → /piˈrɔ.gar/

Phonetic Features:

> An open syllable structure predominates
>
> The stress is dynamic, usually on:
>
>> the first syllable (*Пепер, Пепера, Киджек*),
>>
>> or on the second syllable (*Пирогар*).
>
> The phonemes /d͡ʒ/ in *Киджек* are typical of Slavic and are absent in the standard
>
> Albanian phonetic system. There are no pronounced vowel reductions.

3. Morphological Analysis

Analysis based on words:

Пепер

> Simple noun, morphologically uninflected
>
> Single root (peper).
>
> **Gender:** masculine
>
> **Number:** singular

Пепера

> Morphological variant of "Пепер"
>
> Suffix -a:
>
> it can function as a familiar, expressive, or differentiating form.
>
> Feminine noun, which in Albanian we use as *melmesë*.
>
> **Number:** singular

Киджек

> Simple noun, but phonetically marked.
>
> Ending -ек:
>
>> typical of hypocoristic/diminutive forms in Slavic.
>
> **Gender:** masculine
>
> **Morphological function:** personal name

Пирогар

> Derived noun:
>
>> **Root:** пирог ("byrek/pie")

Suffix: -ap (used to form agent/professional nouns)

Structure: root + suffix

Gender: masculine

Morphologically motivated.

4. Syntactic Analysis

The syntactic structure was not properly ordered, as they are not fully proficient in Albanian.

The units are listed as a list of nouns.

They do not form complete sentences.

Missing:

verb,

syntactic relations (subject–predicate).

Syntactic function (possible depending on context):

They can function as:

call (vocative),

character names,

implied subjects in oral discourse,

or an identifying list.

Contextual example:

Пепер, Пепера, Киджек, Пирогар — сите дојдоа.

(Here, the nouns take on the function of the subject.)

Summary

Aspect	*Evaluation*
Phonetic	*Typically Slavic, clear pronunciation, dynamic stress*
Morphological	*Nouns, some simple, some derived*
Syntactic	*Nominal units outside the sentence, serving a referential functionl*

5. Conclusion

The speech of the Albanians of Mandritsa constitutes a valuable element of Albanian linguistic and cultural heritage outside the national borders. Through philological studies, dictionaries, and other documentation, it is possible to preserve and study this dialect as a living testimony of the linguistic history of the Balkans. Furthermore, the preservation and promotion of this speech variety form part of the cultural identity and the endangered linguistic heritage.

6. Final Observations

In this study, linguistic units extracted from oral discourse were analyzed, specifically the nominal forms *Пепер*, *Пепера*, *Киджек*, *Пирогар*, which belong to the Slavic linguistic system and appear outside the norms of standard Albanian. The multi-faceted analysis showed that these units function primarily as nouns, serving an identifying and stylistic role, rather than as lexemes with general semantic content.

From a lexical perspective, it was observed that the units examined are not part of the active Albanian lexicon but represent foreign onomastic elements, some of which are semantically motivated (e.g., *Пирогар*), while others remain lexically neutral or expressive. This demonstrates the presence of language interweaving and cross-linguistic influences in oral communication.

Phonetic analysis revealed features typical of Slavic phonetics, such as the use of phonemes absent in standard Albanian and dynamic stress, which reinforces the linguistic identity of these units and clearly distinguishes them from the Albanian phonetic system.

Morphologically, it was found that the units are mostly simple nouns, with the exception of derived forms formed through characteristic Slavic suffixes, which serve to create nicknames, professional designations, or hypocoristic forms. This indicates a functional morphological structure, though foreign to the normative Albanian system.

From a syntactic perspective, the units do not form complete sentences but appear as lists of nouns, which in the context of oral discourse can assume different syntactic functions, such as implied subjects, calls (vocatives), or identifying elements within the discourse.

In conclusion, the analysis demonstrates that the material examined provides a significant example of the use of non-Albanian elements in oral communication, reflecting the interaction between languages, the flexibility of conversational discourse, and the importance of context for linguistic interpretation. This study contributes to the understanding of cross-linguistic phenomena and the functioning of onomastic units in everyday speech.

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