

Standard albanian opposite dialectic features in audiovisual media in Kosovo

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Summary

The media, means as modern of expression and cultural lingual communication, encompass one of the essential spaces where the standard Albanian must be mastered and promoted. With the unification of Albanian language in the Albanian Orthographic Congress in 1972, and preliminarily with the Council of Prishtina in 1968, the Albanian standard was embraced and supported as the official version, practical in all public, institutional and educational spheres also in Kosovo. The reality today proves there is an unsatisfactory level of grasping and use of the standard as opposed to dialectical forms or provincial speeches, which features are heavily encountered in the media domain.

This paper aims to reflect the real situation of the use of standard Albanian by its speakers and media newscasters in some electronic broadcasters, such as: RTK, Klan Kosova, RTV 21 and RrokumTV (the latter as a broadcaster promoting Gheg speech, as a language version opposed to its standard).

We have made efforts to answer some questions in regard to the scale of the use of standard, the influence of lingual formation of guests towards the presenters, the level of standard mastered by speakers and presenters, their commitment to correctly use the norm of standard Albanian and the typology of TV shows, as dictators of the use of standard and dialectic forms.

Key words: *standard language, media, dialect, phonetic feature, speech.*

Introduction

The standard language has already entered into the fifth decade of its codification and functioning as a language of prestige in all public spheres, where media take an important role towards the use and cultivation of this variety.

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Despite the long period of Albanian language standardization, its development in practice is not satisfying. Certainly, the field of media is characterized by interpersonal interaction, which realized by the language in its both existential forms: written and spoken language. In this indivisible and cyclical relation, the media language is presented in a multiform use, by making us every day cope with different language varieties, which claim non consolidation of Albanian norm in the media domain. Language development of the program presenters, their commitment to use correctly and with responsibility the standard Albanian, different social factors, as: situation, domain, location and the topic of conversation,¹ are some of the incentive components of language varieties selection in audiovisual media. Consequently, in face to face communication more often appears the phenomenon of displacement of style from formal, towards the less formal and informal and vice versa.²

In this paper, with the help of the examples that are classified by a monthly systematic research, we will reflect the real situation of Albanian language use, by focusing in most frequent cases of violation of the norm (especially in phonetic and morphological field), which not only demonstrate dialectal pronunciation variations, also presenting the features of regional and individual dialects, by seriously jeopardizing the regulated status of Albanian in television premises.

The construction path of standard albanian language and its influence in Kosovo

Paving the way of a common language upon dialectal differences between Albanian speakers across all Albanian territories, is characterized by numerous efforts of renaissance adherents, which, under the influence of many different factors of historical, political, social, cultural, with the only intention of serving the national union

¹ Shkumbin Munishi, *Përdorimi i shqipes në mediet audio-vizuale:çështje të përzgjedhjes së kodit*, Filologji 20, Universiteti i Prishtinës, Fakulteti i Filologjisë, Prishtinë, 2013, f.157.

² PP.

have historically contributed to the creation of a set of alphabets, whose number, on the verge of Congress of Monastir 1908 (Kongresi i Manastirit), came falling to focus on the three most commonly used alphabets: the alphabet of Istanbul (1879), alphabet of the society "Union" ("Bashkimi") , (1899) and alphabet of the society "Dawn" ("Agimi"), (1901).³ The Congress of Monastir finalized these efforts with the creation of an alphabet, the alphabet that we also use it today. ⁴ The creation of this alphabet will be followed chronologically by a few important events, crucial on the process of consolidation of Albanian standardization , such as *Albanian Literary Commission of Shkodra (Komisia Letrare Shqipe e Shkodrës)* (1916-17), *Language Consultations of Prishtina (Konsulta Gjuhësore e Prishtinës)* (1968) and *Albanian Language Orthography Congress (Kongresi i Drejtshkrimit të Gjuhës Shqipe)* (1972).

Hence, Albanian Literary Commission of Shkodra with the aim of creating the orthography of Albanian Language decided that the Albanian orthography shall rely on the dialect of Elbasan. *The arguments pro the dialect of Elbasan were more of an integrating and geographical nature, since this area is closer to both the main dialects, although its basis was southern Gheg.*⁵ Recognized by the Educational Congress of Lushnja (Kongresi Arsimor i Lushnjës) (1920) and promulgated as the official language of Albania (1923), this variant will eventually get the stamp of a standardized language, making that in 20's and 30's years of the 20th century to be regarded as the fundamental basis of literary variant of Gheg orthography.⁶ Regarding this, Sindorela Doli-Kryeziu ⁷ asserts that "the literary variant has been used after the World War II in Kosovo and Macedonia as the single norm of spoken and written Albanian literary language, up to the Congress of Orthography (1972), but, also having

³ Anastas Dodi, *Fonetika dhe fonologjia e gjuhës shqipe*, ASHSh, Instituti i Gjuhësisë dhe i Letërsisë, Tiranë, 2004, p. 281.

⁴ The same.f.282.

⁵ Rrahman Paçarizi, *Gjuha shqipe*, Thesis Kosova, nr.1, AAB, Prishtinë, 2008, p. 106.

⁶ Fadil Raka, *Historia e shqipes letrare*, Prishtinë, 2005, p. 195-196.

⁷ Sindorela Doli-Kryeziu, *Shtrirja e shqipes standarde në Gjakovë*, Disertacion doktorate, Tiranë, 2013, f. 34.

a slightly wider basis including linguistic elements of the other dialects of Gheg." The presence of literary Gheg is also asserted by Desnickaja⁸ writing that "...In Kosovo, because of the mutual influence between literary and dialectal language the traits of southern Albanian literary language do not participate, but in all traits of written and oral-public dialects only Gheg literary language norms are used."

It is the Kosovo Albanian intellectuals,⁹ those who, at the Linguistic Consultations of Prishtina (Konsulta Gjuhësore e Prishtinës) (1968) decided "to take an attitude towards the fate of literary Albanian in Kosovo and other areas of ex-Yugoslavia inhabited by ethnical Albanians, by discussing the Rules of Orthography (project) of the year 1967."¹⁰ With the motto *One nation - one literary language - one orthography* the Consultations of Prishtina (Konsulta e Prishtinës) has unanimously enlivened the admission "as its own literary language the literary language of its mother country".¹¹ Based on the taken decision "as an important step towards the unification of the literary language" in all educational institutions and pedagogical-entities, journalistic and publishing, scientific and cultural, its rapid implementation was imperatively requested.¹²

The standard albanian and linguistic reality in Kosovo

Today, 43 years after the Congress of Orthography (Kongresi i Drejtshkrimit), standard Albanian is found in the midst of a reality with significant problems in terms of acquisition of its tenure as the language of prestige, battling with a linguistic environment, in which

⁸ Agnia Desnickaja, *Gjuha shqipe dhe dialektet e saj*, Enti i teksteve dhe i mjeteve mësimore, Prishtinë, 1972, p. 124.

⁹ Konsulta e Prishtinës was organized by the Albanological Institute and the Department of Language and Literature of the Faculty of Philosophy of Pristina, on 27-28 April 1968.

¹⁰ Fadil Raka, vep. e cit., p. 227.

¹¹ Rami Memushaj, "46 vjet nga Konsulta e Prishtinës-lufta për njësimin e gjuhës", Shqiptarja.com, 22 April 2014.

¹² PP.

the spoken language differs significantly from the written one. This separate and parallel development, more and more, is deepening the gap created between the standard and linguistic varieties, often creating a sense of inferiority between the speakers themselves. This reality, claims the sociologist Besnik Pula¹³, also cannot be denied by Kosovan linguists, that live in the structured and logic universe of literary language only in texts and literary contractions, which outside this imaginative world do not feel limited in using the literary language while communicating with their mother, brother or cousin. In Kosovo, the literary language, as a language of administrative documents, of journalism and literature, of politicians and the people of knowledge, plays the role of a herald or announcement language, a language of authority (political, moral, scientific).

In an interview, the Albanologist Shefkije Islamaj¹⁴ aligns factors that determine today the development of standard Albanian and, resultantly, also the problems appearing in this regard, the quality of Albanian school, particularly in Kosovo, including the teaching process, preparation of cadres, quality of textbooks, status of Albanian language within the Albanian area inside and outside its borders, Albanian territories and diaspora; the effort for a linguistic space fragmentation or its variance, the efforts to change the standard; globalization; deficient mastery of linguistic norms; decreased level of linguistic culture; imposition of the media and conversational language as main functional styles; decline of discipline and responsibilities in educational institutions, public institutions and media; the vulgarization of media language, theatres, film, literature, also of the everyday language, great infiltration of foreign words, especially of Anglicisms in Albanian, reduction of cadre, the lack of a law on the use of standard language in public institutions etc.

¹³ Besnik Pula, *Gjuha letrare dhe sfera publike në Kosovë*, 24 janar 2003, at www.vetevendosje.org; last accessed on 10 May 2015.

¹⁴ Shefkije Islamaj, *Kush shkruan për shqipen standarde si për një projekt të dështuar, nuk është serioz:shqipja standarde apo modernizim*, *Sot News*, 5 December, 2010, p.22; last accessed on 10 may 2015.

Whereas Rrahman Paçarizi¹⁵, while speaking of the causes of poor dissemination of the spoken standard of regulated Albanian by the native speakers, especially of those Gheg in Kosovo, specifies that spoken Albanian in Kosovo differed from the one in Albania due to fact that the spoken standard in Albania had its basis in “vocal model of Tosk”, while the spoken standard in Kosovo relied upon the vernacular language of Prishtina, which sometimes had also characteristics of disarray of the vocal model of Kosovo. He¹⁶ considers that the extension of standard language is mainly focused at schools, partially in literature and in the media, by considering its acknowledgement by the intellectual circles in Kosovo as an identity need, but not as a natural process of standardization,¹⁷ which would guarantee the functionality and widespread acceptance in the relevant domains of use.

Albanian language norms vs. the dialects in media environment

Although, the debates, mainly regarding the dialectal basis of Albanian, still continue to be present in the academic spheres and beyond, the Albanian standard has the status of the official language, and, as such, until its reformation and enrichment, it shall be respected and used correctly. From all what we have introduced so far, there is no doubt that media, as contemporary means of expression and linguistic and cultural communication, constitute one of the mandatory areas where the standard Albanian shall be owned and promoted. Today's reality proves to a level of ownership and unsatisfactory use of standard counter to dialectal traits or regional dialect, features that are intensely encountered in the media domain.

Language is the main means of communication amongst people. With its both forms, writing and speech, not only realize a face-to-face

¹⁵ Rrahman Paçarizi, *Rruga e zhvillimit të shqipes standarde në raport me nevojat e komunikimit*, QSA, Tiranë, 2011, f.97, (quoted here according to: Haki Hysenaj, *Shqipja e folur 40 vjet pas standardizimit të gjuhës*, Tiranë, 2012).

¹⁶ Rrahman Paçarizi, *Gjuha shqipe*, Thesis Kosova, nr.1, AAB, Prishtinë, 2008, p. 108.

¹⁷ Furthermore, regarding the steps that must pass standardized version see: Richard A. Hudson, *Sociolinguistika*, Dituria, Tiranë, 2001, p. 43.

communication, but also in situations where the parties involved do not carry out such communication. Media, according to McLuhan's thesis, in fact is nothing other, than a message.¹⁸ Television, as one of the audiovisual means of information dissemination, enables this communication act by confronting one-another, the sender of the message and its recipient. The television development, also accompanied by the aim of increasing the audience, dictates a great influence upon the public's linguistic culture. But, if in the newspapers and magazines the written linguistic traits appear almost consolidated, with minor mistakes in standard language use, the audiovisual media situation leaves a lot to be desired. Also, this is the reason for conducting this research, through which we will unfold an overview of the actual situation on the use of standard speakers and presenters in some of the electronic broadcasters, as: RTK, Klan Kosova, RTV 21 and RrokumTv (the latter as a broadcaster promoting the Gheg dialect, as a linguistic variation against the standard).

The relation of standard language use against the ordinary speech of the individual depends primarily from the typology of the program and the purpose and objectives in relation to the public. Thus, in news bulletins, mainly characterized by a one-way communication of the television speaker, the use of standard Albanian dominates, even though partly accompanied by variations of individual pronunciation, mostly related to nasal vowels and equalization of the opposition between palatals *q-gj* and affricates *ç-xh*.

The formal linguistic situation is presented totally differently in television debates or in programs of a social and entertaining character, audience of which embodies a much wider and diverse structure. Consequently, the impact of the linguistic model is more powerful too.

As on the TV debates the communication between the participants is developed in a form of interactive communication, initially an increased attention is obvious, often far-fetched, for use of standard norm by the hosts. This also due to psychological pressure, which is created by the presence of cameras, microphones and the fact that

¹⁸ Ibrahim Berisha, *Media - agjensët e komunikimeve*, Pen - AAB; Botimi 3, Prishtinë, 2009, p. 46.

they are under the judgment of the public. But if this situation should be accompanied by increased responsibility for the hosts (speakers, presenters, journalists, etc.), it creates a counter effect for the majority of interlocutors, since such pressure produces relocation of speaking style accompanied by the change of pace of the conversation, acceleration mainly because many speakers feel more comfortable when revealing their usual way of speaking.

Such situations are encountered on our screens and the following examples prove this:

1. The Debate¹⁹ was held with the participation of the host, analysts and two guests. This show was characterized with relocation of speaking style and domination of dialectal elements by the locutors eg. : "*Greva e punëtorëve të arsimit është duke vazhduar edhe sot e tashmë është e konfirmuar që do të ketë përparime në negociatat me ministrinë...*", "*...kemi mësimdhënës që thjesht shkojnë në punë vetëm për ta marrë pagën...versus dialect traits "...nuk pati gadishmëni për me qenë në studio"; "...kemi një situatë të krijime..."; "Tash po du me theksu..."; "Dhe në fund ka ardhë..."etc.*

2. Also in this show²⁰ there is a noticeable presence of dialectal variation of the two participants, mainly in the use of verbal forms: "*Ai ka gati dy muaj e gjysmë..... që është larguar nga...*", "*...për të filluar me prologun e kapitullit të parë...*" versus dialect traits "*me çka e keni nisë këtë rrëfim?; "Kjo propagandë, fatkeqsisht, asht propagandu nga shumë intelektualë..."etj.*

3. The host of this debate²¹ manifests correct use of norms of Albanian language. Deviations from this norm are encountered in the course of the debate, which, when tensioned, is dominated by shifting of style interlocutors, from controlled to impulsive with many individual dialect features, characteristic for a low variety, arising from the wrong use of verbal forms and subject and possessive pronouns; the presence of phonetic phenomena associated with modifications or changes of phonemes, and the presence of nasal vowels, etj. Eg.: "*Edhe po du me u ndërlihdh (!) te plani rregullativ...*",

¹⁹ Click, *Greva në arsim- arsyet dhe pasojat*., RTV 21, 30. 04. 2015.

²⁰ "Zona e debatit", Klan Kosova, 30. 04. 2015.

²¹ "Ju flet Prishtina", Klan Kosova, 03. 05. 2015 (rebroadcast).

"..keni ngritë çështje...", "...nuk je **tu m'lon me përfundu...**"; "**Une po ju them: ma s'mirti e dëshmon kjo...**", "...veçte përfundoj edhe **qeto...**", "...propozimet e **tyne.**"etj. Within the same show, at an interview conducted with one of the advisors of Municipal Assembly we have found a number of violations of the Albanian norm by the interviewing journalist interviewing, e.g. misuse of preposition and name in ablative "...menjëherë **mas luftime..**" në vend të "...menjëherë pas luftës..", "Ecjen ne e **kemi vazhdu** te sheshi 'Ibrahim Rugova' në vend të "Ecjen ne e kemi vazhduar te sheshi 'Ibrahim Rugova'", "Me çfarë projekti **jeni ndi krenar?**" në vend të "Me çfarë projekti jeni ndier krenar"...

The relations of written language and spoken language are visibly compounded on TV shows addressing social issues, very close to the daily lives of the audience, as well as those of entertainment character, which have a powerful influence on young ages. There are frequent cases concerning violation rate (especially in the field of morphological phonetic), which demonstrate not only pronunciation dialect variations, but also features of individual regional dialects, seriously jeopardizing the regulated status of Albanian on TV. Below are listed some examples of the discourse of presenters and reporters in the studio, which reflect the real situation of (non) use of normative variety:

*Unë shpresoj që kur të rritesh të na e ndritësh **ftyren.** ...**Ma murr mendja.... Jemi kthj** në studio... Prindërit i **bijnë** fëmijët në vizita para se **me u mirr** me sport? ... i shohim fëmijët me veshje sportive, të cilat duken të holla **me i pa** me sy. Edhe prindërit janë ata **të cillt për fëmiun** e tyre kërkojnë.... Sporti është mënyra më e mirë që **fëmiu** juaj **të shtijë** në lëvizje krejt trupin. **Dashta ta pys** edhe trajnerin. **Qysh e keni prit** ju dhe shoqnia? Nuk mundet edhe Gërmia **me na nxan** atje.²²*

Entertainment shows are characterized by a "free behavior and quite redeemed language" of hosts, mainly young, who show a poor understanding of the standard. Their speech shows social and regional dialect variations, often coming close to simple speaking style, which derives from the limits of the norm. Violations reflect uses of language forms involving phonetic sphere, such as:

²² "Familja ime", Klan Kosova, 03. 05. 2015.

assimilation of sounds, additions or drops of sounds, elision of vowels, stressing; morphological sphere, mainly uses verbs, adjustments of adjective with respective names, the use of pronouns, etc.

I. " Shpresoj që **jeni da** të kënaqur me atë që kemi përgatitur.", "Javës tjetër **do të vie**...."²³

II. "Mos **pritoni**, aplikoni...", "Vetëm **jasht** do t'i **gjuni**.", "Garuesi, siç **pe shihni**, **është** në litar.", "Tërhiqë pak **ma** shu:m!", "Kjo sfi:d e përcakton edhe **fitusin** e kësaj gare.", "Sfidoje, **nxjerre** hakun e fitores", "...nëse e **rrxoni** të dy:t., "Çfarë **gëzimi** **osht** ky?!"²⁴

III. "**shpesh**here m'kan **pyt**..", "Pse e **don** publiku aq **sh:umat'** **njëri?**, "Ato **t'cillat** **japen**, **japen** për mos m'u **përmend**.", "...mos me t'u **shterr** zoni.."²⁵

The examples provided are evidence of the use of informal language forms of spontaneous spoken discourse of television presenters, which is characterized by a lack of accountability and attention to respect the standard, versus cases where the materials are prepared in advance and, therefore, read without difficulty by the same presenter. But what will set forth below lists the most egregious cases that have been found during the data processing in this research. It is about two shows with different character, the first with investigative character, and the second with entertaining character. Linguistic situations recorded present the lowest level of recognition, possession and use of Albanian language norms, which has the status of a language of prestige. In the show "Drejtësia në Kosovë"²⁶ two linguistic realities are disclosed: the one of the speaker who uses the exact normed traits, and on the other side of the journalist interviewing him, which completely destroys these forms, using a variety that is far from dialect, even though it is assumed that the interview should be prepared in advance. Questions posed by the journalist are:

- A mund t'na tregoni rreth punës juve?

²³ "Refleks", RTK, 02 .05. 2015.

²⁴ "SuperSfida", Rtk. 03. 05. 2015.

²⁵ "Një kafe me Labin", RTV 21, 03. 05. 2015.

²⁶ "Drejtësia në Kosovë", RTK. 01. 05. 2015.

- Kur po **thu** mosmarrëveshje verbale, çka po nënkupton?
- Çfarë fjalësh **ka pas** **atu n'at** mbledhje?
- Çka i **ke thon** ti z. T..... kur **ai osht dash me thirrë** policinë?
- Presione prej **kujna**?
- Çka **ki me bo tash**? **Cilla osht rruga qi ki me ndjek**?
- A i **kini bo dert ju me dikon n'parti**?
- A keni **qa hall me dikon tjetër**?
- D.m.th ju **po thuni që n'vazhdimësi ka ndodh**?
- Nëse kjo gjendje vazhdon, çka do të ndodhë me Trepçën? Ku **jet nesër**?

Even more devious linguistic situation appears in the show "Wazzup"²⁷, which appears on the screen every afternoon, offering direct communication with youth through the use of social networks. As a result, the linguistic model offered, labeled as 'youth language', does not meet the criteria for use of certain public domain at all.

Also in this show, the prepared sections read are in standard, but, indeed distinguished by an unnatural style, characterized by pronunciation and dialectal variations. However, what is observed, with a disturbing trend, is the fact that its hosts show a refusing attitude, and sometimes disdainful to the norm itself, displaying replacement of the code with higher variety to that of a lower variety e.g.: "Kjo është një politikë e **mençur**.... e përsërit..një politikëe **mençme**.", "Ai tipi **ka pshtu**, mandej ia 'futi me të katra'."

Here are some examples extracted from the communication of the presenters:

- Kjo e fundit **ke kapaku**- 82 vjeçare **m'u bo** modele.
- Krejt i **lexojna**. Edhe **un hi** e i lexoj. - Në disa media **shkrujke**....
- **Hala asgjo zyrtare** nuk ka... - **Mos kofsh** shqiptar **me kallxu** veten.- Ohoo, **t'lutna**..... rri. - **Faimnderit shu:m!** - **Për qata ta zgjedha**, se e di që **t'pëlqen**. - **Po get** edhe **njerzve** u pengon. - **S'koka** puna **mir**, hiç. -**Kangën e re** që **ja nxjerrëm** ne **fjalt**. - **Shu:m ke** e bukur, edhe **mu m'pëlqej**.

We mentioned above that the media represent one of the domains where the regulated standard language must be used and correctly transmitted to a wider public. Compared to conclusion on forms through which it is presented in some of the audiovisual media, in

²⁷ "Wazzup", Klan Kosova, 15. 04. 2015.

this work we have dedicated a modest space also for the use of dialectal variant in Rrokum TV. Given the policy guidelines, the channel, this in its initial phase, has propagated the use of "Gheg variant" to that of the regulated. Such examples as "*Talenti i ri holandez Memphis Depay ka fillue me u krahasue me lojtar të medhaj të Manchester United'it hala pa fillue me luejt për ketë ekip*"; "*S'un e marrin veten Milwaukee Bucks*"; "*Femite e varfun i pergjigjen Ibrahimovic'it*"²⁸; "*Kur Madona knon me instrumente shkollore. Ngone!*"²⁹ are encountered almost every day on the channel and official page of this broadcaster..

But, does this linguistic choice serve the audience? On which Gheg variant do the editors rely upon? Has this variant passed over the appropriate stages, which will guarantee the validity of a "language of prestige", alongside the standard that already exists?

When Richard Hudson³⁰, treats the relation of *Standard language* and *dialects*, he highlights that "standard languages are interesting, because they establish a special report to the society They are the product of a direct and deliberate intervention by the society. "But according to him³¹, in order to be certified as such, a standard language must pass the following stages: 1) *Selection* (selection of an existing variety, or blend different varieties); 2) *Codification* (an institution, e.g. an academy should develop vocabulary and grammar "to fix" the exact forms by unanimous compliance of the compilers. These forms must be used correctly by citizens, using "incorrect" forms that may exist in their native variety); 3) *Cultivation of function* (its use in all public areas: government, parliament, courts, education, official scientific documents, and undoubtedly different forms of literature); 4) *Acceptance* by the population as the *only* variety of community, therefore, normally, as the national language. Only in this way, the language serves as a powerful *unifying* power for the state, as a symbol of its *independence* from other countries (if it's standard language is unique and not shared with others) and as a sign of

²⁸ Rrokum HD, online page, 13. 05. 2015.

²⁹ The same 13. 04. 2015.

³⁰ Richard A. Hudson, *Sociolinguistika*, Dituria, Tiranë, 2001, p. 43.

³¹ The same pp. 43-44.

distinction from other states. It is obvious that the choice and favoring a variety that is used by this transmitter has not followed the standard procedure, and while this does not happen, the existing norms should take the place it deserves.

Conclusions

Above cases proved a situation where dialectal variations dominate significantly compared to standard Albanian language, as a result of which the high variety has failed to accommodate naturally and comprehensively, and this is not due to the lack of ability to be in line with the standard, but due to the lack of education and awareness of new generations of the necessity of knowing and mastering his many aspects of life. Numerous deviations from the norm of Albanian language dictate an emergent need for responsible treatment and adherence to the standard language in the media domain. This relates not only to law enforcement television spaces, but must be accompanied by a proper and rigorous language education for everyone who wants to devote to television journalism.

What the schools, as fundamental normative language educational institutions are failing to implement properly, the media must complete with all the options, because this is nothing more than the fulfillment of its functional spectrum³².

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³² B. Musai, J. Godole, T. Abdurrahmani, *Edukimi mediatic*, Instituti Shqiptar i Mediave, Tiranë, 2011, p. 9.

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