



## Syntactic Combinations in Frederik Rreshpe's Poetry

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### Abstract

*This article will explore the poetical style of Frederik Rreshpja, with specific attention to the syntactic aspect of his poetry. Through the implementation of a poetical structure analysis guided by the concept of prevalence in the text, this research aims to determine the distinguishing features of the creative individuality of the poet and outline his main trends. In our view, the method of text structuring, the selection of constructions, and their distribution in sustaining units are fundamental components for identifying the original spirit and investigating the creative individuality of Rreshpja's poetry. By analyzing a selection of Rreshpja's main poems, we will outline the key features that mark the poetic syntax of this poet.*

**Keywords:** Poetry, Frederik Rreshpja, Syntax, Style, Rhythmic Organization

### 1. Introduction

Poetry has its own unique language that sets it apart from other literary genres. As a result, the grammar of poetry is also different. The differences in grammar are highlighted by binary features, such as ordinary vs. extraordinary word order, poetry vs. prose, poetic language vs. scientific language, and poetry vs. non-poetry. Therefore, the syntax and grammar of poetry deviates from the standard syntax used in other forms of writing.<sup>1</sup>

The individuality and creative style of an author are most evident in the way they structure their sentences. Even well-respected poets like Friedrich Hygo and Donald Davie recognize that the placement of words and phrases in poetry is a crucial element in highlighting an author's style.<sup>2</sup>

The way of expressing language is what sets an author apart, not the words themselves. This is because syntax plays a significant role in determining one's writing style. In the poetry of Rreshpja, the ideas portrayed are derived from the way the statement is constructed rather than the specific words used. Therefore, the poetic meaning is not solely dependent on the language used, but rather on the way the words are combined.

The way this poem is structured carries a specific meaning. If we change the order of the words or phrases, the meaning of the poem will change as well. Even if the meaning doesn't change, the rhythm, rhyme, and musicality of the poem will be affected. To illustrate this, let's take the poem "My Fate/Fati im" as an example.

1 Ferguon, Margaret W, "Syntax, poetic", *Princeton Encyclopedia of Poetry & Poetics*, 4th, red. Roland Greene et al (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2012). Post-print version (2013), pg. 1.

2 *Syntax in English poetry 1870-1930*, University of California Press, United States of America, 1967, pg. 6.

*Kështu iku dhe rinia, filigrani i djalërisë  
I mallkuar me art.  
Mos e pastë njeri këtë fat!*

*Tani që po vdes ëndëroj vetëm një kryq te koka  
Dhe të harrohem së nuk dua që edhe pas vdekjes  
Të më ndjekë mallkimi i artit.  
Mos e pastë njeri këtë fat!*

*Po kur të vdes portreti im  
Ka për t'u shfaqur nëpër gjethet  
Se unë kam pasur miqësi me çdo dru.*

*Në stinë kur bien gjethet  
Do të bien edhe sytë e mi.*

*Tani e tutje shirat do jenë lotë e mi.  
Mos e pastë njeri këtë fat!<sup>3</sup>*

Upon initial observation, this poem may appear to be centered on a particular theme or ideology, with the dominant motive being the unfortunate destiny of the lyrical subject. However, upon closer inspection of the verse's construction, it becomes apparent that fragmentary adverbs are the primary feature, dividing the main thought into incompatible parts and creating a graphical contrast.

In Rreshpja's poetry, similar to modern European poetry, some phrases stand out without a clear connection to the rest of the text. These phrases can interrupt the flow of the discourse by breaking or "splitting" the verse and the thought. The transition is often realized through a break or a sudden metaphorical transition from the state of nature to that of the lyrical subject.

The epiphora "no one should have this fate/ mos e pastë njeri këtë fat" is repeated multiple times throughout the poem. This phrase serves as a cohesive threads that not only graphically but also conceptually ties the poem together.

Frederik Rreshpja's poetry differs from traditional poetry in terms of syntax. While regular poetry usually presents complete thoughts or landscapes in each line, Rreshpja's poetry includes syntactic interruptions and "fragmenting" adverbs as a unique feature of poetic expression. Although linguistically his poetry may appear to have grammatical errors, it is, in fact, correct poetically. This stylistic choice even allows readers to reconstruct the intended meaning for them.

In his scholarly work, Friedrich Hugo contends that fragmented syntax in poetry is a deliberate technique employed by poets to express their personal attitudes. Even the most archaic elements of poetry, such as comparison and metaphor, have evolved into a new style where the poet eschews natural expressions of comparison and instead unites logically and objectively incompatible elements. In modern painting, colors and forms have become autonomous, often disrupting or circumventing the representation of objects. Similarly, in poetry, the autonomous structure of language - non-linear expression of sounds and variations in intensity - can make a poem comprehensible through its presentation alone. Thus, the actual content of a poem becomes the excessive excitement of external and internal formal forces.

Frederik Rreshpja's poetry boasts a common syntactic combination - inversion. This deliberate swapping of the order of the noun with the verb is what leads the serial constructions, resulting in a variety of rhyme constructions with nouns, adjectives, and other grammatical categories. The interchanges of the syntactic position of the noun with the verb are typical throughout Rreshpja's poetic world, creating a catalyst for displacement from one space to another and from one state of mind to another. This technique exudes a certain confidence, with verbs (as markers of action and abstraction) dominating the verbal rhyme. These exchanges sometimes appear clearly as in the case of the phrases "Don't curse this night with separation /Mos e mallko me ndarje këtë natë", "Stay with me tonight / Rri sonte te unë", "Let me come with you /Lermë të vij me ty" etc. and other times the verbs are elliptical "I am cursed with art" (meaning the verb "am", thus "I am cursed with art"). Whether clear or elliptical, verbs are the grammatical tools that express the movement from earthly to heavenly space, from season to season, from color to color, from mythology to contemporary and from dream to reality.

The lyrical subject in Rreshpja's work represents the author himself, who lived a free-spirited and bohemian

<sup>3</sup> Extracted from *Lirika të zgjedhura, Frederik Rreshpja, ShB Europa, Tirana, 1996, pg. 56.*

lifestyle. He was indifferent towards the political system and even served time in prison. Despite experiencing numerous disappointments and betrayals from those he considered friends, Rreshpja remained committed to seeking freedom. One of his verses reads: "the last friend I had, betrayed me, now I feel completely free /më tradhtoi dhe miku i fundit që pata/ tani ndjehem krejtësisht i lirë."

In poetry, shifts from one state to another and from one motif to another are achieved through a series of verbal phrases that convey action and continuous change. This phenomenon is not only found within the poems themselves, but also in their titles, such as "The Gypsies are Coming/vijnë ciganët", "Stay with Me Tonight/ rri sonte te unë", "Where Were You/ ku ishe ti?", "Let Me Come with You /lërmë të vij me ty", "We Became Strangers u bëmë të huaj", "Stay and stay/Rri e rri", etc. In these titles, the verb or action is the element that leads the phrase. This type of juxtaposition of parts of speech is especially prominent in erotic and intimate lyrics, which makes the poetic expression more natural, clearer, and closer to the psychological and spiritual state of the lyrical subject.

Rhythmic organization also has an important role in the syntax of the poem under consideration. The rhythm in Rreshpja's poetry is created using accents and repetitions on the phonetic and semantic level of phrases, constructions of which give the benefit of different intonations. In most cases, the rhythm is not perceived directly, but appears as a companion of the general intonation, subjecting to poetic thought and feeling. This submission to the pulsation of the content is done through cacophony and asymmetry between the phrases, which at first glance, creates the impression that his poetry has no rhythm.

In his poetry, the textual aspect carries more weight than the musical aspect, since the metrical plane is not important, even though there is musicality within it. More than rhyme, the emphasis is on rhythm, which, unlike classical poetry, is achieved here thanks to word combinations. So for example, in the poem considered above, the rhythm originates from the way the parts are connected and not from the beautiful sounding effects of the sounds.

In Frederik Rreshpja's poetry, the repetitions are significant and contribute to the overall structure of the poem. These repetitions bring attention to important keywords or concepts and create a rhythm that can speed up or slow down. The use of conjunctions, prepositions, and other words can compress actions or poetic images, making them more prominent. Through repetition, the poem becomes more coherent and meaningful.

The poetry of Rreshpja is characterized by the use of abrupt syntactic breaks, which elicit an accelerated rhythm and sharp intonations. Nonetheless, these breaks may also have the opposite effect of slowing down the rhythm and minimizing uniformity. In contrast to traditional Albanian poetry, the rhythm in Rreshpja's poetry is predominantly internal and elusive, often employing cacophonous devices such as allusions, meditations, and complex discourse. The rhythmic harmony or disharmony of the poem is achieved through fragmentary allusions, which are united by a marked conceptual dynamism that discerning readers can apprehend.

As a conclusion we can say that the poetry of Frederik Rreshpja is characterized by a unique combination of techniques that engenders spontaneity, naturalness, and rich metaphorical imagery. This author employs a specific psychological, spiritual, and emotional vocabulary to create a clear poetic discourse. His poetics is notable for its subjective and socially conscious themes, often expressed through a blend of real and surreal similes that reflect a redeemed self-detached from external reality. Rreshpja's innovative suggestions, unencumbered by the rigidity of traditional poetry, produce a multifaceted discourse that mirrors his unique poetic vision.

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