

A morphological comparative study between Albanian and English language

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Abstract:

The aim of this study is to point out similarities and differences of English and Albanian language in the morphological level, trying to compare different parts of speech of both languages. Many languages do not distinguish between adjectives and adverbs or adjectives and names etc, i.e. the Albanian language differs in terms of gender and plural adjectives, while English has not such a feature. Therefore formal distinctions between parts of speech should be done within the framework of a given language and should not be applied in other languages. In this study we have analyzed nouns, verbs, adverbs, adjective structures, the use of articles, pronouns etc. in Albanian and English.

In the light of modern linguistics, comparative method plays an important role in the acquisition of languages comparing the first language with the target language. Comparative method is also considered as a key factor in the scientific research of modern linguistics, so it can be used successfully in teaching.

Keywords; Albanian, English, differences, morphology, similarities, teaching.

Introduction

In Albanian language, the comparative studies in linguistics are very rare. Considering the fact that language is closely related to culture, a linguistic comparative study is also a cultural comparison. Although all languages mainly play a similar role, there are similarities and differences between them. Knowing the differences between the two languages also helps in identifying students' linguistic errors in the process of teaching the grammar.

In this paper we have tried to analyze the main parts of speech in Albanian and English language. Parts of speech are always subject of confusing when dealing with different languages. Albanian language differs in grammatical category of adjective, gender and number, while English has not such a feature.

Considering the methodological principles of comparative linguistics we are focused in a comparative viewpoint of nouns, adjectives, pronouns, verbs and adverbs, etc. in Albanian and English as languages belonging to the same linguistic family, but represented in separate branches of the Indo-European language tree. Besides identifying the differences between languages, analytical comparisons also enhance students' language awareness, for a non-spontaneous acquisition of it. These studies are very useful for teachers who teach Albanian and English language, in order to understand the nature of grammatical errors of their students and implement a teaching method for this purpose.

- Grammatical categories in Albanian are formed:

- a) By endings. Noun cases are formed ;(një) shok-u, shok-u etc., as well as the grammatical categories of the verbs:mëso-j; mëso-ja; mëso-va etc.

- b) By changing the sounds of the root: (një) dash: (dy) desh; plak:pleq; breg: brigj-e: nxjerr: nxor-a etc.

- c) By the suppletive forms. unë; mua; bie; rashë etc.

- d) By free grammatical morphemes i.e. hap, di etc.

e) By auxiliary verbs *kam* (have) and *jam* (be): *kam* (*kisha*, *pata*) *punuar jam* ((*isha*, *qeshë*) *veshur* etc.

f) By particles i.e. (do)*të punoj*, *duke(pa) punuar* etc..

g) By articles which distinguish genitive from dative case

A category of words having the same grammatical properties are called grammatical categories.

The Albanian language has grammatical categories such as gender, number, case, and definiteness, person-number indexing, tense, active or passive voice. In grammar, a part of speech (also a word class, a lexical class, or a lexical category) is a linguistic category of words (or more precisely lexical items), which is generally defined by the syntactic or morphological behavior of the lexical item in question. Common linguistic categories include nouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs, pronouns, prepositions, conjunctions, interjections. While the articles cannot be taken as a part on its own but they play the role of inflections in the definite nouns (ending) or performing morpheme function (at the beginning).

- Parts of speech

Based on morphological features parts of speech are divided into variable parts of speech and fixed parts of speech. Variable parts are the words that can be inflected and also conjugated. They are nouns, adjectives, verbs, pronouns (when it is an indicator of nouns) i.e. *U nisën të tre. Po e pi edhe unë një.*

Fixed parts of speech are those words that can neither be inflected nor conjugated i.e. adverbs, prepositions, and exclamatory particles.

- Nominal System

In Albanian, nouns are marked for gender, number, and case, they also have definite and indefinite forms (Agalliu, F. 1972). The vast majority of nouns are masculine or feminine, though there are rare examples of neuter nouns, which now function increasingly as masculine in the singular and feminine in the plural. Both in Albanian and English language a noun is a part of speech which is the name of a person, place, thing, or idea. Whatever exists, we assume, can be

named, and that name is a noun. A proper noun, which names a specific person, place, or thing (*Carlos, Middle East, Jerusalem, Malaysia, Presbyterianism, God, Spanish, the Republican Party*), is almost always capitalized. A proper noun used as an addressed person's name is called a noun of address. Common nouns name everything else, things that usually are not capitalized. Noun grammatical categories of Albanian are very similar to those of English, which show notable gender, number, and case, they also have definite and indefinite forms.

- Plural formation

As you will note below the number grammatical category of nouns in the Albanian language is very similar to that of English. In both languages nouns are inflected for grammatical number that is, singular or plural. Both languages have a regular and irregular plural of nouns. In Albanian we have;

Regular plural	Irregular plural
mendim- mendime	dhëndër- dhëndurë
ka- qe	kalë- kuaj
plazh-plazhe	njeri-njërës

In English we also notice;

Regular plural	Irregular plural
Book-books	child- children
Glass-glasses	man-men
Student-students	mouse- mice

- *The plural formation of nouns in both languages*

The regular and irregular plural formation of nouns in Albanian and English language:

a). By suffixes ;

Albanian	English
Dyqan- dyqane	bed – beds
shall- shalle	boy – boys
mbret-mbretë	bell-bells

b). By sound change;

Albanian	English
Zog-zogj	crisis- crises
Peshk-peshq	woman – women
Shekull-shekuj	goose – geese

c) By sound change and the suffix;

Albanian	English
lak-leqe	baby-babies
breg-brigje	city-cities
varg-vargje	life-lives

d) Unchanging form of the plural (the same form as the singular)

Albanian	English
një anije – disa anije	fox-fox
një ditë- disa ditë	sheep-sheep
një mollë- disa mollë	fish –fish

In both languages we have nouns which have two different plural forms;

Albanian	English
Gisht-gishta- gishtërinj	dwarf-dwarfs-dwarves
Nip-nisa-nipër	scarf-scarfs-scarves

– *Plural formation of compound nouns*

Plural formation of Compound nouns in Albanian language;

a) By changing only the second part of the compound nouns;

kryeqytet: kryeqytet-e *vendburim: vendburim-e*

b) By changing only the first part of the compound nouns;

kalë-fuqi:kuaj-fuqi *qytet-muze- qytete-muze*

c) Unchanging form in the plural (the same as the singular)

kryengritje- kryengritje *marrëveshje-marrëveshje* *bukëpjekës-
bukëpjekës*

– *Plural formation of Compound nouns in English language*

a) The majority of English compound nouns have one basic head, with which they end, and are pluralized in typical fashion:

able seaman *able seamen*

head banger *head bangers*

yellow-dog contract yellow-dog contracts

b) A compound that has one head, with which it begins, usually pluralizes its head:

attorney general *attorneys general*

bill of attainder *bills of attainder*

court martial *courts martial*

c) Two-headed compounds in which the first head has a standard plural form, however, tend to pluralize only the final head:

city-state *city-states*

nurse-practitioner *nurse-practitioners*

A particular set of nouns, describing things having two parts, comprises the major group of pluralia tantum in both Albanian and English language.

Albanian	English
Pantallona	trousers
Gërshërë	scissors
Ski	glasses

○ *Gender category*

Albanian gender differs from other grammatical categories of the noun, because the opposition masculine, feminine and neuter has to do with all class nouns and their distribution in different genres and not with various forms of the same word. In the person's nouns the gender is closely related to natural gender (sex). As to the nouns of things and ideas sex has no connection with the lexical meaning of the word. So there is no reason why the noun *mal-l* is a masculine noun and the noun *fush-a* is a feminine one. So gender of non person's nouns has a formal grammatical character. Thus, i.e. the word: 1) *shtëpi-a* → which is a typical singular, feminine ending. 2) *prid-ër* → *-ër* is the typical plural masculine ending.

Albanian language has three genders which are masculine, feminine and neuter gender. There are some traces of the old neuter gender nouns which are today mostly treated as masculine in the singular and feminine in the plural. In the English language gender manifests no grammatical features of a category, but it is generally regulated by the semantics, the meaning. Regarding noun

cases, the only noun case that plays an important role in English is the possessive case i.e. *Gent's car, makina e Gentit*.

Masculine and feminine genders in animals

English language has two genders properly so called: Masculine and Feminine. The distinction of male and female in nature is called sex. (Corbett, 1991).

In the following table we see that the English lexical means make the differentiation between adult animals and baby animals.

Adult animals	Masculine	Feminine	Baby animals
Cat	Tomcat	She-cat	kitten
Goat	Billy goat	She-goat , nanny	kid
horse		mare	foal

- *Noun Definiteness*

In grammatical theory, definiteness is a feature of noun phrases, distinguishing between entities which are specific and identifiable in a given context (definite noun phrases) and entities which are not (indefinite noun phrases).

In Albanian when a common noun is used in the singular indefinite form, it is usually accompanied by an indefinite article. But we don't encounter the English definite article *the* , in the Albanian language (Gramatika...2002: 96). The definite article in Albanian is expressed by means of a special series of endings. So, Albanian nouns have one indefinite form and one definite form for each case

both in singular and in plural. Indefinite article is the same as the number one (*një*), i.e. *një djalë/ djali-i; një vazë- vajz- a*.

In English we notice: indefinite articles such as *a, an* and the definite article *the*. The definite article is used both in singular and plural. The article does not agree with the number of the noun that specifies as in the Albanian language;

Albanian	English
Singular /Plural	Singular /Plural
Një libër/ libri	A book / the book
Libra / librat	Books / the books

There is an example below how a noun appears in both languages, in singular and plural, definite and indefinite forms.

	Albanian	English
Singular, masculine, indefinite form.	djalë	A boy
Singular, feminine, definite form.	vajza	The girl
Plural, masculine, indefinite form.	djem	boys
Plural, feminine, definite form.	vajzat	The girls

a) In Albanian, if the predicate is express by a noun, the article is unnecessary.

Genti është doktor.

Genti është doktori.

b) On the contrary, in English, the noun should be accompanied by the article.

Genti is a doctor/ the doctor.

c) With the exception where the sentence complement and the referent perform the same role in the sentence, in this case the article in English may be missing.

Genti is (the) captain of the team.

When talking about English plural common nouns, either concrete or abstract, we don't use the definite article i.e. I like flowers.

While in the Albanian language the use definite article is obligatory.

Italianët i duan makaronat.

Italians like pasta.

- *Adjectives*

Albanian adjectives have grammatical categories of gender, number, and case agreement with the noun that defines them. Albanian adjectives are inflected to display grammatical relations other than the main form. They follow the noun they modify; and they are remarkable in requiring a particle preceding them that agrees with the noun, i.e. *djalë i ri, vajzë e re*.

The adjective is in the most cases preceded by a particle referred to as a "ligature", one of the most salient features of Albanian grammar: *një vajzë e mirë* 'a good girl'. A minority of adjectives are used attributively without a ligature, e.g. *rruga kryesore* 'the main street'.

In English adjectives do not change. They remain constant in, number and gender. Just as in Albanian, and English the adjective is used as modifier of the noun in the function of the predicate, subject or object. They also form verb phrases with: *jam, është, janë/ am, is, are*;

a. *Kjo është një lule e bukur.*

Historia e popullit tonë është e

lavdishme.

b. *This is a big house.*

My green dress.

When two adjectives in Albanian follow each other they are connected by the conjunctions *e ose dhe* while in English, the conjunction is not used between two adjectives when they are found before the noun;

a. *Ky është një kopsht i bukur dhe i gjelbër.*

b. *It's a nice big room.*

- *The position of adjectives*

- The word order of adjectives in Albanian is;

a) Noun+adjective

In Albanian, adjectives follow the noun that they modify; *baba i dashur, lule e bukur*:

Zana bleu një fustan të bukur.

b) Adjective +noun

For stylistic purposes the attributive adjective may also precede the head. In this case the order is ligature + adjective + noun, and case suffixes are added to the adjective rather than the noun. Predicative adjectives also keep the ligature;

I ziu baba u kthye nga kurbeti pas shumë vitesh.

- On the contrary, in English the adjective is regularly placed before the noun that defines, i.e. *a pretty house, nice room etc.*

a) But sometimes, we encounter the structure and noun + adjective, when the adjective is used predicatively (after the verb BE, SEEM, LOOK etc).i.e. *This girl is nice.*

b) When the adjective specify the meaning of the verb i.e. *They painted the house white.*

c) When the adjective begins with the suffix a i.e. *I saw the boy asleep.*

- *Pronoun*

Albanian sequence of interrogative pronouns can be moved easily, without destroying the meaning of the sentence, while in English such a change is not possible. Interrogative pronouns should always place before the verb; *What is this?*

According to the meaning and function pronouns in Albanian are classified in; reflexive pronouns, personal, demonstrative, possessive, interrogative, relative and indefinite pronouns.

Pronouns are case marked with the exception of indefinite pronoun, i.e. *njëfarë, asgjë etc.*

- *Personal pronouns*

Personal pronouns in the first, second, third person, singular and plural both in English and Albanian act as the subject of the sentence and are always placed before the verbal forms. In the interrogative sentences they are placed after the verbal forms;

Albanian	English
Unë po flas.	I am a student.
Ai po shkruan?	She is daughter'
Çfarë po bën ti?	Are you his son?

By the comparison we note that the personal pronoun in the second person singular *you* in English coincide with the personal pronoun singular and plural *ju* in Albanian, and when they are used as the object of the sentence, they are unchangeable.

In English, we have the same form of personal pronoun in the second person singular and plural which differs from Albanian *ti* and *ju* is also used as polite singular '*you*'.

- *Possessive pronoun*

A possessive pronoun indicates that the pronoun is acting as a marker of possession and defines who owns a particular object or person. Both in Albanian and English possessive pronouns are used:

- They are used with the possessed object or person ;

Albanian

djali im

English

my hat

- They are used alone ;

Albanian

English

Miku im dhe i juaji.

This is not mine

- In English, in questions and declarative sentences the possessive pronoun is generally placed before the noun: *What's your news?*

- *Indefinite pronouns*

An indefinite pronoun is a pronoun referring to an identifiable but not specified person or thing. An indefinite pronoun conveys the idea of all, any, none, or some.i.e.

dikush, askush, kushdo/ some, all, whole etc.

- Both in English and Albanian language have negative indefinite pronouns;

Albanian

English

asnjë, asnjëri, asgjë

any

- *Interrogative pronouns*

An interrogative pronoun is used to ask questions.

- There is an analogy between English and Albanian about the interrogative pronouns *which / cili* and *what / çfarë* : the first is often used to separate a human being or a thing from the group he/it belongs to. The pronoun *cili* usually required clarification, materialization or accuracy of the human being or the thing.

Albanian

English

Cili nga ju e njeh djalin tim?

What books have

Çfarë dite është sot?

you read?

- Both in Albanian and English interrogative pronouns are different from demonstrative pronouns.

- *Verb*

A verb is a part of speech that usually tells about an action or a state and is the main part of a sentence. Every sentence has a verb. According to the meaning and the function, the verbs are classified;

a) Lexical verb or full verb typically expresses action, state, or other predicate meaning;

lexoj, punoj, këndoj/ (to) drink, (to) use, (to) sleep

b) Modal verbs are used to indicate modality; *mund ,duhet, dua/ can, must etc.*

c) Aspectual verbs: *filloj, vazhdoj, mbaroj/ begin, continue, finish.*

- *Present Tense*

In English there is a difference between ordinary action expressed (Ron Cowan, 2008) by the present tense and action that takes place at a certain moment, i.e. when an action take place.

- We have also the use of the continuous and progressive aspects that express incomplete action in progress at a specific time which are formed by the verb to be followed by the present participle of the verb.

I read my paper in the evening.

I am reading my paper now. (I'm reading it at the moment of speaking).

- *Present Perfect Tense*

The Present Perfect Tense is used more in English than in Albanian language. While in Albanian the Present Perfect express entirely past actions or events even they happened recently. In English, the Present Perfect expresses a past event that has present consequences.

I have played football this weekend.

- *Simple Past*

Simple past is used for describing acts that have already been concluded and whose exact time of occurrence is known.

- The Simple Past is sometimes used with time expressions such as *yesterday (dje)*, *last week (javën e kaluar)* etc. But the use of the Past Simple is clear even without the use of these time expressions.

I was walking along the road, when I met Tom.

- If the consequences of a certain action are visible in the present, the speaker uses Past simple.

I am not hungry, I just had my dinner.

Nuk kam uri, sapo kam

ngrënë darkë.

- Both Albanian and English form the passive form with the verb to be + past participle.

He was sent.

Ai

ishte dërguar .

- *Verbals*

Verbal is, the form of a verb that functions as another part of speech.

- *Verbals in Albanian language*

There are three types of verbals in Albanian i.e. infinitives, participles and gerund, (*punuar, duke punuar dhe për të punuar*).

- *Verbals in English language*

- In English, a participle is a verb form used as an adjective to modify nouns and pronouns. The following sentence contains both a present and a past participle:

The children, crying and exhausted, were guided out of the collapsed mine.

Crying is a present participle, formed by adding -ing to the present form of the verb (cry). Exhausted is a past participle, formed by adding -ed to the present form of the verb (exhaust). Both participles modify the subject, children.

A participial phrase is made up of a participle and its modifiers. A participle may be followed by an object, an adverb, a prepositional phrase, an adverb clause, or any combination of these. In this sentence, for example, the participial

phrase consists of a present participle (holding), an object (the torch), and an adverb (steadily):

Holding the torch steadily, Merdine approached the monster.

- A gerund is a verb form ending in -ing that functions in a sentence as a noun. Although both the present participle and the gerund are formed by adding -ing to a verb, note that the participle does the job of an adjective while the gerund does the job of a noun. Compare the verbals in these two sentences:

The children, crying and exhausted, were guided out of the collapsed mine.

Crying will not get you anywhere.

Whereas the participle crying modifies the subject in the first sentence, the gerund Crying is the subject of the second sentence.

- An infinitive is a verb form--often preceded by the particle to--that can function as a noun, an adjective, or an adverb. Compare the verbals in these two sentences:

I don't like crying in public unless I'm getting paid for it.

I don't like to cry in public unless I'm getting paid for it.

In the first sentence, the gerund crying serves as the direct object. In the second sentence, the infinitive to cry performs the same function.

- *Adverbs*

- In Albanian, adverbs can modify verbs (*Tubimi u zhvillua paqësisht.*), adjectives (*Ishte njeri aq i mire.*) and other adverbs (*Do të ishte shumë keq për shqiptarët po ta kumbisnin këtë rast.*).

a) Adverbs of manner tell us how something happens. (*bukur, mirë, pastër/well, ill.*)

b) Adverbs of place tell us where something happens. (*brenda, përjashta/ everywhere.*)

c) Adverbs of time tell us when an action happened (*sot, vjet, kurrë/ now, yesterday, today*).

d) Adverbs of degree tell us about the intensity or degree of an action, an adjective or another adverb. (*shumë, aq, kaq/ almost, nearly, quite, just*).

- Adverbs like adjectives have a comparative and a superlative form but only those whose permits lexical meaning. (*mirë, bukur, herët, prapa, shumë*).

According to the examples, we notice that the Albanian adverbs remain unchanged, while the English adverbs (Cinque G. 1999) change their form (*well, better, best*).

Comparative forms of Albanian and English adverbs	
Albanian	English
mirë/ më mirë	well/ better
keq/ më keq	bad/ worse

Conclusion

In conclusion we can say that morphological similarities between the languages taken in consideration are significantly greater than the differences. Grammatical categories of Albanian are very close to those of English. Nouns in Albanian show notable gender, case and number. Nouns in English have the category of number (singular, plural) as in Albanian, but don't emphasize the grammatical category of gender.

English language, gender does not manifest the characteristics of a grammatical category, but is generally regulated by the semantics and meaning. The Albanian language has three genders of nouns: feminine, masculine and neutral gender. English adjectives do not change as generally happens in the Albanian language, they remain unchanged, in both the number and gender.

The Albanian language is a synthetic -analytical language, with a dominance of synthetic features and an analytical trend, while English is an analytical -synthetic language. Being an analytical language English does not mark all words as the part of speech it belong to, for example: the words *break*, *outlaw*, have their own form of verbal or nominal or suffix-ly is the indicator that defines the word as an adverb, but not all the adverbs end in the suffix -ly and not all the words ending with the suffix-ly are adverbs. For example, the words *washed*, *straight*, *clear*, *tomorrow*, *slow*, *fast*, *crosswise* are adverbs, while *leisurely*, *lovely*, *lively*, *womanly*, *princely*, *scholarly*, *silly*, *ugly* are adjectives.

Considering all the above findings, we can say that teaching grammar based on morphological comparative analysis plays an important role in the acquisition of a second language.

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