

THE CONTRASTIVE ANALYSIS OF THE ENGLISH – ING CLAUSE AS DIRECT OBJECT AND ITS ALBANIAN CORRESPONDENTS

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Abstract

This paper is a corpus-based contrastive analysis between English and Albanian. It aims at describing and analysing the structural differences and similarities between the nominal functions of the –ING clauses in English and their Albanian correspondents. The data collected in our corpus from fictional sources is contrasted in terms of their syntactic structures. In developing this research towards satisfactory outcomes, the study also includes an error survey of 27 Albanian students from the English Department of the Faculty of Languages, Cultures and Communication at South East European University in Tetova, and 21 students of the fourth year in secondary school at ‘Sami Frashëri’ in Kumanova. Furthermore, the findings and results of the survey are presented in the table labelled 1.

Keywords: Nominal -ING clause, Albanian correspondents, Verbal nouns phrase, Non-finite verb forms.

Introduction

The process of learning a foreign language can be exhausting for almost all language learners. This process has been thoroughly described in terms of Contrastive Analysis as a branch of Applied Linguistics which dates back to 1940s through to the 1950s. In particular, it describes the role of L1 in the process of learning the L2. In a recent book by Alhawary (2009:21) the Second Language Acquisition is defined as a subject which is concerned with how a language is learned and has the learner in its focus including the learner’s developing language. Since this thesis is concerned with contrastive analysis between English and Albanian, it can make a potential contribution to foreign language learning and teaching in the English classroom. It can

achieve this by trying to present evidence about the English nominal –ING clauses and their Albanian correspondents. Particularly, the main focus has been on the potential negative transfer of the Albanian structurally different patterns into the English language production of the Albanian EFL students.

This paper has tried to diagnose the problems Albanian EFL learners may come across in the process of acquiring nominal –ING clauses. The Albanian correspondents of the English –ING clauses in different nominal functions have been described, analysed, and categorized according to their relative learning difficulty. The following types of Albanian correspondents have been detected: Albanian clauses introduced by verbal noun phrases, gerund constructions, finite and non-finite clauses. A test was conducted with the students of the fourth semester at SEEU and the fourth year students at “Sami Frashëri” secondary school in order to verify the hypotheses of this thesis. The findings of this study may help the Albanian EFL teachers to overcome the problems in their teaching of the English –ING clauses in different nominal functions.

Therefore, we will be utilising contrastive analysis as a method in conducting this research. Contrastive analysis as a steering mechanism in the process of foreign language teaching and has been applied for decades by many linguists. It has been used to find out the relationship between the mother tongue and any other languages that follow, such as L2, L3 etc. Therefore, it has also been used to predict and explain the difficulties in the process of language learning. Since the foreground of this thesis has to do with contrastive analysis between the English –ING clauses in nominal functions and their Albanian correspondents, the method stated above has been applied in order to highlight the errors that might be conducted by the Albanian EFL learners in second language acquisition.

1. The contrastive analysis of the English – ING clause as direct object and its Albanian correspondents

The –ING clause can be used as the direct object after certain verbs. This study will focus on different verbs followed by the –ING clause, based on Collins Cobuild Grammar Pattern 1 Verbs by Francis, G. *et al.* (1996), these verbs are divided into several meaning groups. Examples from different verb meaning groups will be described for the purpose of this research.

This part of the study sets off with the “LIKE and DISLIKE” meaning group of verbs. The verb list indicating that someone likes or dislikes something is: *adore, appreciate, (cannot) bear, (not) begrudge, detest, dislike, (cannot) endure, enjoy, hate, like, loath, love, (not) mind, mind, prefer, relish, resent, (cannot) stand, (cannot) stomach, (not) tolerate, take to* (Francis *et al.* 1996, p.83).

The examples of the –ING clause as the direct object are extracted from our corpus with the verbs indicating likes or dislikes occur with or without a new subject. The subject is the same for the verb and the –ING form in the following examples:

- (1) Silas did not highly *enjoysmoking*, and often wondered how his neighbours could be so fond of it. (“Silas Marner”, p. 81)

Sajllësit nuk i sillte kurrfarë *kënaqësietë pirët e duhanit* dhe habitej me pasionin që kishin fqinjët e tij për këtë punë. (“Sajllës Marnër”, f. 163)

- (2)and with the raucous shrieking from gin-cracked throats of the women of the seaport towns. Ruth *enjoyedsinging and playing to him*. In truth, it was the first time she had ever had a human soul to play with,...(“Martin Eden”, p.66)

...dhe me të thirrurat e ngjirura të grave të qyteteve bregdetare. Edhe Ruthit i *pëlqentetë këndonte dhe t'i biente pianos për Martinin*. Në të vërtetë, ishte hera e parë që ajo kënaqej në këtë mënyrë me shpirtin e një njeiu....(“Martin Iden”, f. 88)

In (1) the Albanian correspondent of *smoking* is a clause introduced by a verbal noun neutral gender *tëpirët*. In (2) the Albanian correspondent of *singing and playing to him* is a finite clause introduced by a verb in the imperfect, third person singular subjunctive mood *tëkëndonte*. In the examples used above, we can notice that the English –ING clause after the same verb *enjoy* leads to two different Albanian correspondent clauses.

As far as ‘like and dislike’ meaning group of verbs are concerned, Palmer (cited in Kvacanovic, 1997) states that the nominal –ING clause as direct object after certain verbs expresses the double interpretation. The example in (3) answers the same questions: What do you love? Or What do you love doing?

- (3) As the grammar had shown him the tie-ribs of language, so that book showed him the tie-ribs of poetry, and he began to learn metre and construction and form, beneath the beauty he *lovedfinding the why and wherefore of that beauty*. (“Martin Eden”, p. 63)

Ashtu si gramatika i kishte treguar kyçet e gjuhës, kështu edhe ky libër i ri i tregoi kyçet e poezisë. Filloi të mësonte metrikën e vargut, ndërtimin dhe format e tij, e kështu ndjente *kënaqësiduke zbuluar edhe arsyen e bukurisë së poezisë*. (“Martin Iden”, f.83)

The event of the nominal –ING clause in (3) is dependent on the matrix verb *loved* which evokes a simultaneous action with that of the main predicate (Duffley, 2006, p.15). The Albanian correspondent clause introduced by *duke zbuluaris* the single case found in the corpus which is a non-finite clause introduced by the particle *duke*.

Intensive work has been carried out in order to find a solution to defining the tense of the –ING form. Thereafter, the –ING clause has been seen to be capable of evoking events which are not only simultaneous, but also prior or subsequent with respect to the main verb (Duffley, 2006, p.34). Duffley also confirms that the – ING clause’s event can even be the future and completely non-realised. This is illustrated within following example:

(4) I asked him couldn’t I be a Catholic and marry you? I knew you *wouldn’t mindgoing through a service*. Every time I asked him a question I had such hope. (“The End of the Affair”, p. 98)

E pyeta nëse mund të bëhesha katolike dhe të martohem për ty. E di se nuk *do të kishte kundërt’i bësh shërbimet*. (“Fundi i Aferës”, f. 155)

In both excerpts, the English nominal –ING clause and the correspondent in Albanian *t’ibëshshërbimet* evoke future events and non-realised actions. The Albanian correspondent is a clause introduced by a verb in the present tense subjunctive mood *t’ibësh* evoking future time.

It has been established that it will be useful if some more examples of the –ING clause functioning as the direct object of the verb from our corpus are provided.

(5) Well, if a lot of mysterious niggers armed with all kinds of fearful weapons suddenly *took totraveling on the road between Deal and Gravesend*, catching the yokel’s right and left to carry heavy loads for them, I fancy every farm and cottage thereabouts would get empty very soon. (“The Heart of Darkness”, p. 12)

Sikur një grup zezakësh tinzarë, me llojloj armësh të tmershme, papritmas të *fillonintë ecnin rrugës mes Dilit dhe Greisvëndit*, duke i marrë fshatarët nga të dy anët e udhës që t’ua barrët e rënda, jam i mendimit se të gjitha farmat dhe shtëpizat aty përreth, do të zbrazeshin së shpejti. (“Zemra e Errësirës”, f. 30)

The English non-finite –ING clause as direct object in (5): *traveling on the road between Deal and Gravesend* has, as its Albanian correspondent does, the finite clause *tëecninrrugësmesDilitdheGreisvëndit* with a verb in the imperfect subjunctive mood *tëecnin*.

The second meaning group of verbs “THE RECOMMEND GROUP”, as mentioned earlier, can also be followed by an – ING clause as the direct object of the sentence. According to Francis *et al.* (1996) the verbs *admit, deny, report, advise, recommend, suggest, debate*, etc., belonging to this meaning group may express an idea of the past action, may suggest an idea about the future, and discuss something.

(6) Never? Of course he *denied working for you*. They offered him a lot of money if he would work for them instead. (“Our Man in Havana”, p 116)

Asnjëherë? Natyrisht, ai *e mohoiqë punonte për ju*. Ata premtuan një shumë të mire parash po të pranonte të punonte për ata. (“Njeriu Ynë nga Havana”, p. 170)

Willis (2003:106) explains that the –ING clause is a tense-less one taking its timing from the associated verb. In example (6) the tense-less *denied working for you* takes its timing from the associated verb in past simple *denied*. However, this is not the same in Albanian. The structural pattern of the Albanian correspondent is a tensed clause introduced by a verb in the imperfect tense *mohoiqëpunontepërju*.

Another example extracted from our corpus, which belongs to the recommend meaning group and is usually used to suggest things about the future follows below:

(7) ‘Let me take it all out of your hands,’ I suggested, just as in the same room, by the same fire, I *had suggested visiting Mr Savage for him*. (“The End of the Affair”, p.92)

„Ma lë këtë punë mua,” i sugjerova, pikësisht në të njëjtën dhomë, pranë të njëjtit zjarrë, si kur i *patasugjeruarta vizitoja Z. Savixhin në vend të tij*. (“Fundi i Aferës”, p. 119)

The example (7) reflects the assumption that the English tense-less nominal –ING clause *visiting Mr Savage for him* has a tensed Albanian correspondent introduced by the verb in the imperfect subjunctive mood *ta vizitojaZ. Savixhinnë vend tëtij*.

The general overview of the verbs followed by the –ING clause in English can be spread to the “REMEMBER” meaning group as well.

The attempt to find as many cases of the –ING clause as the direct object as possible belonging to this meaning group has only resulted in finding examples of the –ING clause following the verb *remember* apart from other verbs listed in the book of Francis *et al.* (1996) which belong to the same meaning group such as: *forget, miss, recall, regret, remember, miss* etc.

- (8) “I **remember****reading in Egyptian history** something to the effect that understanding could not be had of Egyptian art without first studying the land question.” (“Martin Eden”, p.208)

Më kujtohet se kam lexuar në një histori të Egjiptit se arti egjiptian s’mund të kuptohet pa studiuar më pare karakteristikat e atij vendi. (“Martin Iden”, f.290)

- (9) ...should have to go back to it through so much pain, but I **remember****leaving the hot and crowded room**, after drinking too much bad sherry, (“The End of the Affair”, p.15)

...do të më duhej shumë kokëçarje për ta gjetur, por *më kujtohet se lashë dhomën e ngrohtë e plot me njerëz*, pasi kasha pirë tepër sherri të keq,... (“Fundit i Aferës”, f.28)

As can be seen from the above examples, the verb *remember* followed by the –ING clause *reading in Egyptian history* evokes a past time action. The Albanian correspondent in (8) *kam lexuar në një histori të Egjiptit* is a finite clause introduced by the verb phrase in the present perfect tense. The Albanian correspondent in (9) *e lashë dhomën e ngrohtë e plot me njerëz* of *leaving the hot and crowded room* is a finite clause introduced by the verb phrase in the past simple (e kryera e thjeshtë) *lë – lashë*.

Another meaning group of verbs followed by – ING clauses are the verbs which belong to the NEED group. Francis *et al.* (1996) cited that these verbs are concerned with needing or deserving action or treatment of some kind (*deserve, need, require, want, etc.*).

The example follows:

- (10) He was always saying they *didn’t need***controlling**, that they already knew what cleanliness and honesty were, which was all that anyone could hope to be taught. (“The Sound and the Fury”, p. 206)

Ngaherë më thoshte se *nuk u duhet ndonjë mbikëqyrje* se ata edhe vetë e dinin se çështë pastërtia dhe nderi, e vetëm këto, para se gjithash, kishin rëndësi. (“Këlthitja dhe Mllefii”, f.255)

According to Willis (2003:106) the tense-less – ING clause takes its timing from the associated verb. Therefore, in the examples mentioned above, the – ING clause **controlling** takes its timing from the associated verb which describes an activity in the past *didn’t need*. On the other hand, the Albanian correspondent is a clause introduced by a verbal noun *mbikëqyrje* whose timing is dependent on the tense (imperfect) of the associated verb *thoshte*.

2. Categorization of the Differences, Similarities and Identities between the English –ING clause as Direct Object and their Albanian Correspondents, Reflecting their Relative Learning Difficulty

As mentioned in section 1, this study is based on verbs which belong to different meaning groups. The –ING clause as direct object reveals to have the most versatile structural patterns as its Albanian correspondents.

As stated above the –ING clause as direct object of the verbs belonging to “LIKE AND DISLIKE” meaning groups have similar and different structural patterns to its Albanian correspondent.

The following examples from our corpus show this clearly: *Silas did not highly enjoy smoking* (gerund construction) vs. *Silas nuk i sillte kurrfarë kënaqësie të pirët e duhanit* (gerund construction). Since these two examples have similar structural patterns it can be predicted that Albanian EFL students may not have difficulty in the acquisition of this English structure.

Another example of the English –ING clause as direct object of the verb *enjoy* as its Albanian correspondent has a different structural pattern, for e.g. *enjoyed singing and playing to him* vs. *Pëlqente të këndonte dhe t'i biente pianos për Martinin*. As a result we can make a reasonable prediction that Albanian EFL students will encounter difficulties in the learning of this pattern of English.

The difference of the structural patterns between the English –ING clause as direct object after the verb *love* and its Albanian correspondent can be examined in the following example: *loved finding the why and wherefore of that beauty* vs. *Kënaqësi duke zbuluar edhe arsyen e bukurisë së poezisë*. This structural difference between the English –ING clause as the direct object and its Albanian correspondents means it can be reliably predicted that Albanian EFL students may face difficulties in the learning of this function of English –ING clause.

As stated above, the Albanian correspondents of the “REMEMBER GROUP” of verbs followed by nominal –ING clause as direct object also resulted to have a different structural pattern.

“I remember **reading in Egyptian history** something to the effect that understanding could not be had of Egyptian art without first studying the land question.” (“Martin Eden”, p.208)

Më kujtohet se kam lexuar në një histori të Egjiptit se artiegjiptianët mund të kuptohet pa studiuar më pare karakteristikat e atij vendi. (“Martin Eden”, f.290)

The difference of these structures: *reading in Egyptian history* (a tense-less –ING clause) vs. *Kam lexuar në një histori të Egjiptit* (a finite clause introduced by the verb phrase), gives reasonable belief that Albanian

EFL students will face difficulties in the learning of the English –ING clause as the direct object.

As stated in section 1, the Albanian correspondent of the English – ING clause as the direct object after the “NEED GROUP” of verbs has identical form: *didn't need **controlling*** vs. *nuk u duhet ndonjë **mbikëqyrje***, and this suggests that the Albanian EFL students need not have difficulties in learning this form.

In conclusion, a fairly reasonable prediction can be made that Albanian EFL students may face serious difficulties in the learning of the – ING clause as direct object in English.

3. Conclusion

After analysing the Contrastive Analysis of the English nominal – ING clause functioning as the direct object after different meaning groups of verbs and their Albanian correspondents, it can be concluded that the Albanian correspondents differ in almost every case.

Based on the ranking of the differences, similarities and identities between the English nominal –ING clauses and their Albanian correspondents according to their relative learning difficulty, this research reached the following conclusion:

As the study is based on verbs which belong to different meaning groups as mentioned in section 1.1, it has been revealed that the *V-ing* clauses as direct object have the most versatile structural patterns in the Albanian correspondents. Furthermore, a reasonable prediction can be made that the Albanian EFL students are likely to face serious difficulties in learning this function of the –ING clause. The hypothesis was correct to some extent. According to the results obtained from the pilot questionnaire with the –ING clause following the verbs, such as: after the verb *risk*, eleven percent (11%) of the fourth semester participants and forty-three percent (43%) of secondary school students have used the –ING clause as the direct object correctly. After the verb *suggest* seven percent (7%) of the fourth semester participants and twenty-nine percent (29%) of the secondary school participants have used the structural pattern correctly. Finally, after the verb *recommend*, fourteen percent (14%) of the fourth semester participants and nineteen percent (19%) of the secondary school participants have used the – ING clause correctly.

The hypothesis that Albanian EFL students can be expected to face difficulty in the learning of the –ING clause as direct object after the verb *forget* did not prove entirely correct. According to the results of the pilot questionnaire forty-eight percent (48%) of the fourth semester participants and fifty-seven percent (57%) of the secondary school participants have used the –ING clause as the direct object correctly.

The hypothesis that Albanian EFL students need not have difficulties in learning the –ING clause after the verb *need* proved to be correct, the results of the pilot questionnaire show that: seventy percent (70%) of the fourth semester participants and eighty-six percent (86%) of the secondary school participants used the –ING clause as the direct object correctly. The performance and the results of pilot questionnaire participants are displayed in tables below.

Fourth year secondary students of intermediate level

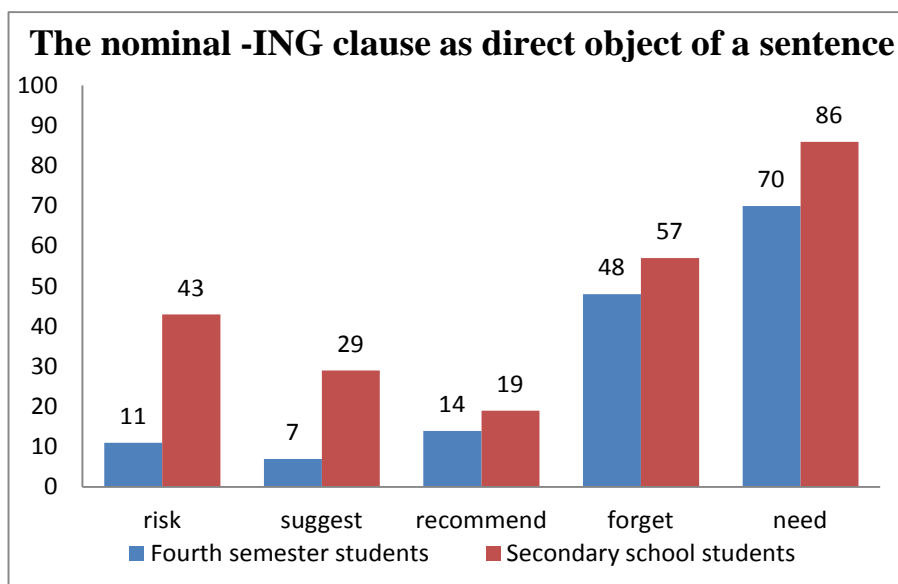
The nominal –ING clause as		Correct Responses Percentage %
Direct Object after <i>verbs</i>	<i>risk</i>	11%
	<i>suggest</i>	7%
	<i>recommend</i>	14%
	<i>forget</i>	48%
	<i>need</i>	70%

Fourth semester students of Syntax I at South East European University

Direct Object after <i>verbs</i>	<i>risk</i>	43%
	<i>suggest</i>	29%
	<i>recommend</i>	19%
	<i>forget</i>	57%
	<i>need</i>	86%

Table 1.

In addition to the contrasted percentage, a graphical display will detail the correct results obtained from all the students:



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