Some Comparative Views of Nominative, Dative and Accusative in English and Albanian Language

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Abstract

This research paper is based on comparative aproach of english and albanian language as far as the grammar cases is concerned. The main focus would be especially directed toward nominative, dative and accusative cases since, accordingly, there is a clear line of differences between these two languages. Both languages use different grammatical tools for these cases. On the one hand, albanian language uses case suffixes, whereas, on the other hand english language uses certain positions of the sentence constituents which corespond to certain case functions. The comparative method is the main research method used in this paper, since the nature of such research requires for this material to be compared in order to highlight the differences as well as the commonalities that would eventually appear between these two languages. The descriptive method is also used to describe the language phenomena which is the subject of this research. The describtion of grammatical units in this paper is based on accordance with the modern world grammarians. The survey method is another form of research that helped to classify, compare and analyze the material, thus comming to a conclusion. The differences as well as the commonalitioes that came out of this paper gives as a strong believe that the syntactic forms and structures achieved in one language through specific grammar tools can be reached by other grammar tools in the other language.

Introduction

Over the centuries, languages undergo various changes that deals with the meaning of words, spelling, pronunciation, as well as the forms of their use. In this way, (among other things) by applying the so-called language economy, the English language has forced the loss of case suffixes. On the other hand, the Albanian language has continued to use the different case suffixes for specific purposes. Therefore, a big difference is created between Albanian and English language on the function of case forms (tools).

In English language, as a trace, we find the forms of a single case at personal pronouns, accusative case (called objective case), as: *me* for the first person singular, *them* for the third person plural, etc., which are used for both, direct and indirect object.

Albanian Language has kept various different case suffixes which are applied to each noun, being singular or plural, either in definite form or in indefinite form. Based on this fact, there are a lot of cases when people discuss about case forms, simply declaring that English language has lost case forms and do not further discuss about it. In deed, it is not the case forms that are lost but it is the case suffixes that are lost while adopting the case functions through a special way, which is *a certain position* of the words (sentence constituents) in the sentence.

In order to elaborate this phenomena, only the nominative, dative and accusative case will be used, based on the fact that through these case forms, nouns (as linguistic units that represent nominative structures) take the function of the subject, the indirect object and direct object, respectively. Only through these sentence constituents in english language, which has got certain positions in a sentence, a comparison research could be made in order to distinguish the differences as well as the similarities between english and albanian language as far as the case forms is concerned.

Grammar Cases of Nouns as Representative Units Functioning as the Subject, the Direct Object and the Indirect Object

At the very beginning, through the simple examples of some noun forms in both languages, we can see the clear difference between these to languages:

Nominative case	*dative case*	*accusative case*
the bird - (zogu)	the bird - (zogut)	the bird - (zogun)
the worm - (krimbi)	the worm - (krimbit)	the worm - (krimbin)

According to examples mentioned above, it is obvious that nouns in English language don't have specific suffixes according to cases but they are used in the same form for all three different cases. On the other hand, in Albanian language there are case suffixes like: *u,i* for nominative; *ut, it* for dative: *un, in* for accusative. (In Albanian language there are three types of case declension depending on the type of the noun, which, together with the plurality and the definiteness, form a great number of various case suffixes. Since they are not the subject of this research they won't be dealt with in the rest of the discussion.) For a better comparison, let us take sentence examples using the nouns mentioned above in both languages:

[1]   Dje zogu e hëngri krimbin.

[2]   Yesterday the bird ate the worm.

In Albanian language the noun in [1] *zogu* being the subject of the sentence is used in nominative case while the noun *krimbin* being the object of the sentence is used by taking the suffix *in* of accusative case.

In English language the noun in [2] *the bird* being the subject of the sentence and having got no case suffixes, has taken the initial position immediately before the predicator, while *the worm* having got the function of the object of the sentence has taken the position immediately after the predicator.

In Albanian language the sentence constituents having got no specific sentence positions can be used in different positions and they will still be understood correctly. All of this is possible when the case suffix is attached to the noun, like *zog-u* and as such it can be used everywhere in the sentence and still be recognized as the doer of the action, like:

[3]   i   E hëngri *zogu* krimbin dje.
       ii   Dje *zogu* krimbin e hëngri.
       iii E hëngri krimbin *zogu* dje.
       iv Dje krimbin e hëngri *zogu*.

But, in English language such movements of the sentence constituents would disorganize the sentence making it semantically incomprehensible or even ridiculous, giving them different semantic functions by their positioning, like in the sentence below:

[4]   The worm ate the bird.

The noun in [4] *the worm* has taken the initial position where it could function only as a subject (the doer of the action) while *the bird* being used after the predicator take the function of the direct object (the element that suffers the action). Let us remind that in every language, through the semantic meaning of the function, the subject is understood as the agent (doer) of the action, the direct object as the patient (undergoer) of the action, and the indirect object is understood as the receiver. As it can be seen from the above examples, *the bird* can be understood as the subject of the sentence in nominative case only if it is used initially in front of the predicator. Therefore the corresponding form for the Albanian nominative suffix *zog-u* in English is the noun *the bird* in *initial position*. In the same way, the corresponding form for Albanian accusative suffix *krimb-in* is the noun *the warm* in *end position* after the predicator (in the sentences having only one object).

In the sentences where the both objects (indirect and direct) are used, the sentence pattern is S+P+IO+DO. This arrangement is used in English language in the strict way, which can be seen by analyzing the sentences below:

[5]   I dhashë Merit një libër.

[6]   I gave Marry a book.

Even though in Albanian language there is a small tendency to use the pattern S+P+IO+DO there is not much to discuss about it since every kind of arrangement is possible. In English language the situation is totally different. The nouns *Marry* and *a book* take their certain syntactic function only through their position, where firstly the indirect object (*Marry*) is used immediately after the predicator followed by the direct object (*a book*).

In order to understand and to prove that the certain position of sentence constituents take certain case functions, which correspond to the case suffixes of Albanian language, the above sentence [6] will be modified by using the personal pronoun *it* instead of the noun *a book* as the example below:

    * I gave Marry it.

It becomes an anomalous sentence because in English language there is always a tendency for *the light structures* to be used initially (normally after the predicator – since they are objects). Therefore the pronoun *it* comes at the first position immediately after the predicator, like:

    * I gave it Marry.

It is still anomalous. In this sentence the indirect object *Marry* is forced to leave its position and to be used elsewhere. In the same time by leaving its position it also loses the syntactic function (being the indirect object). Therefore out of its strict position it can be never understood as the indirect object (the recipient) and as such the sentence has no meaning. In such cases English language has adopted a kind of a marking tool *to* (introductory to the receiver) to mark the noun *Marry* as the receiver which is a semantic function of the indirect object, like:

[7] I gave it to Marry.

Finally, only after using the marking tool *to* we come to semantically correct sentence. Such cases, when the indirect object is forced to move from its original position and as such cannot function without the marking tool, can be taken as a very strong prove that the grammatical function of cases in English language can operate only through the certain positions of different constituents in the sentence.

Moreover, there is a question that arises here whether these structures should be considered as Indirect Objects. Obviously the structure *to Marry* is a prepositional phrase and as such it doesn't correspond to the structures with which the indirect object is realized.

The traditional grammar, no doubtfully, considers these kind of structures to have the function of the Indirect Objects since their semantic role is of a recipient.

Yet, Huddleston & Pullum (2002, p.248) oppose, by saying that syntactic functions must be assigned on the basis of syntactic properties not semantic ones. They understand them as prepositional phrase complements (non-core complement) which are syntactically quite different from Indirect Objects.

Quirk et al. (1985, page 59) are a bit more modest in opposing it. They don't apply the term *Indirect Object* to the corresponding prepositional phrases. they use the term *Prepositional Object* for the complement in such phrases which are regarded as grammatically equivalent to Indirect Objects.

The great variety of case suffixes makes the Albanian language hard to be learned from the foreigners, especially for those that don't have case suffixes as the English language to whom it looks complicated. Indeed, the Albanian language is not at all complicated as far as the cases is concerned but through them it becomes clearer and it gives the speakers different opportunities to express themselves.

Simply, the great variety of case suffixes being in singular or plural, definite or indefinite, represent a precious linguistic treasure which must be respected and cultivated further by native speakers.

Conclusion

As a conclusion of what is outlined in this research paper, it can be said that understanding and exposing of thoughts, ideas, even the theories of any syntactic themes should never be done only on the scope of one language, but rather such information should be given in comparison to other languages, because it is through such comparisons that we might come to better and more generalized conclusions about syntactic elements.

To assign a syntactic function to an element, not only the syntactic structures should be taken under consideration but the semantic ones as well, and also other, smaller specific characteristics in order to meet all the criteria for syntactic features. Based on this point of view, prepositional phrases in English language when they represent the semantic meaning to the recipient should be regarded as indirect objects, while the proposition "to" when it introduces the indirect object should be considered as an introductory element of the recipient.

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