THE NON-FINITE VERBS AND THEIR MAIN SYNTACTIC CHARACTERISTICS – A CASE STUDY IN ALBANIAN AND ENGLISH LANGUAGE

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ABSTRACT

During my lifelong studies of linguistics and linguistic phenomena, one of the most interesting and most specific issues that I have encountered is the phenomenon called the non-finite verbs. One of the key reasons as to why this is so is the fact that non-finites are an intermediary element. They are a hybrid between the verb and other parts of speech. You cannot tell whether they belong to a certain group by just looking at them. Maybe graphically they look like a verb would generally look, but when looking deeper at the morphological, semantic and syntactic level we can sort out that they are a special case on their own. You cannot tell whether they are a verb, or perhaps a noun, an adjective or an adverb. It is precisely this reason why I have decided to focus my study on the non-finite verbs. Their unique characteristics makes them the transitional part of speech many languages posses as one of a kind. Needless to say, my goal by making this study is to know them better. And, there is no better way of knowing them better than a proper syntactic analysis of the non-finite verbs. The view of language from a syntactic level will enable to delve deeper into the specific nature of a languages' non-finite verbs, i.e. t determine the level of transition the non-finite form has undergone from being a verb to being another part of sentence. To make the process transition even better, we have found it necessary to have at least two languages so we can know how the transition process evolves. We have taken Albanian language, a pure language viewed by many linguists as a unique language in the Indo-European family of languages, and English language, a modern language which has gone through series of transitions and adjustments before becoming what it is today. By taking in comparison the non-finites of these two languages, as well as their syntactic features, we will see just how precisely a non-finite form transforms from a verb into another part of speech in different languages and a different transitional period.

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Introduction

In order to represent what a real non-finite verb encompasses, we will on the elementary meanings and definitions at first. Then, our following necessary step will be focusing on the syntactic functions. The syntactic functions will properly evaluate

and simplify our route to making proper distinctions on what a non-finite is and how far the transition period has come unto.

This paper intends to respond to three basic questions: 1) What are the basic non finite verb forms in English, 2) What are the basic non finite verb forms in Albanian, 3) What are their similarities and differences withdrawn from the syntactic functions?

Prior to answering these questions, we need to take a look at what some of the linguists of both languages have said regarding the non-finite verb. There has always been dispute and debate on how to define the non-finites, i.e. what are the needed criteria for making non-finites work.

The first idea that comes in mind regarding this question is that these verbs are those kinds of verbs that have no endpoint, and in most cases no starting point regarding the action's time (or tense). Indeed, The Cambridge Book of grammar views non-finiteness as rather a syntactic category before an inflectional one, and hence give a strong argument that most non-finites are connected in a clause, stating that non-finiteness can be seen as an instance of the phenomenon known as "desentetialisation", the loss of properties that are associated with a clause standing alone as a full sentence (Huddlestone, R., et al., 2002:88). The key words in this definition are: loss of properties. It is basically one of the main characteristics that divide finites and non-finites. The same authors point that a finite verb is characteristically limited to person and number (see Huddlestone, R., et al., 2002:88). However, the case is different when it comes to non-finites. Being the opposite of finites, non-finite verbs are not limited in any case a person or number. But the next question is if they lose most of the properties that a verb has, can they be considered as verbs? The answer is partially, because the second characteristic of a non-finite verb is the interweaving between a verb and another part of speech. One of the main authors of Albanian linguistics, Mehmet Celiku states: " The double interweaving between the characteristics of verbs and another word class (part of speech) (nouns, adjectives or adverbs) is a general criteria upon which the categorization of non-finites needs to be based" (Çeliku,.M.,2013:32, translated by me). Based on this definition, the author has precisely divided non-finites into following categories:

1. Non-finites that are an interweaving between a verb and a noun (Gerund and infinitive)
2. Non-finites that are an interweaving between a verb and an adverb (Participle, Përcjellore)
3. Non-finites that are an interweaving between a verb and an adjective (Participle, Pjesore and gerundive) (see Çeliku,.M.,2013:33-43).

1. Non-finites in Albanian and English language

Having in mind that we deal with two different languages in two separate areas of their development, and separated into two different sub-groups of the Indo-European family of languages, it is expected that these two languages have differences in their non-finites.

As for English language there are a set number of non-finites and their definitions are known and clearly distinguishable. The first non-finite in English is the infinitive. This is the most basic non-finite verb form. Perhaps one of the basic definition of the infinitive is done by Routledge's "Language and Linguistics: The Key Concepts" as:

The infinitive is the non-finite form of a verb, unmarked for tense, person, number or mood. Some languages have a separate form for the infinitive (Spanish completer 'to complete', French venir 'to come'); English uses an uninflected stem (complete, come, be, do, go). Infinitives are most often used as the complements of other verbs:

- He wanted to go,
- I was going to be there by *ten.* (R.L Trask, edt.by P. Stockwell, 2007:117).

One of the specific features that English language possesses is its two forms of infinitive: the bare infinitive and the –to infinitive, the second being more characteristic and in wider use.
Laurel J. Brinton and Donna Brinton (2010) in their book "Linguistic Structure of Modern English" argue that the first nonfinite form is the bare infinitive (what we have encountered before as the stem form of the verb), as in the following

- The teacher made me do it.
- I saw Aaron leave*.* (adapted from Brinton, L.J., and Brinton,D.,2010:272)

We can see clearly from the examples above that a bare infinitive does not have the preposition –to before the verb, but instead has a simple form a verb, called a stem form. But, these verb forms are very rare. The bare infinitive is, in fact, quite limited, occurring after verbs of causation (e.g. *make*) and of perception (e.g. *see*), as well as modal auxiliaries. In fact most of the infinitives are made with –to preposition.

The next non-finite in English is the participle. The participle is a non-finite which is an interweaving between a verb and an adjective. The pioneer of studies regarding the non finite forms, Henrik Poutmsma states that participles are those forms of the verb which partake of the nature of both verbs and adjectives (Poutsma,H., 1923:174).

A second general property of the participle is that these words are used in combination with an auxiliary to form a compound tense, mood aspect or form (Huddlestone, R., et al., 2002:78). There are two participles: the present and the past participle, e.g.: speaking, spoken (Poutsma, H., 1923:174). E.g.:

- Seeing the movie finish like that was **disappoiniting.**(present participle)
- The **haunted** house of Mr. Lesnarowsky was quite a powerful image. (past participle)

Finally, the third non-finite in English language is the gerund. Gerund, being a similar role to the infinitive has features of both noun and verb. However, his graphical representation is totally different and in many cases stands by different words than the infinitive. The gerund is a substantial form of the verb which is intermediate between the infinitive and the noun of action; i. e. it is of a less distinctly verbal nature than the infinitive, and of a more distinctly verbal nature than the noun of action (Poutsma, H., 1923:101). E.g:

- *Swimming* makes you fit.
- The whole family has taken up *cycling.*

As we have seen from these examples, gerund is a verbal form which takes up noun attributes. However, we need to mention a huge difference between gerund and infinitive. Unlike the infinitive, the gerund may be preceded by any preposition to form with it a prepositional object, an adverbial adjunct or an adnominal adjunct, the former tolerating no other preposition than to before it in Standard English (Poutsma, H.,1923:109).

On the other hand, much of dispute and debate has been made on what a non-finite should be represented as in Albanian language. The first non-finite verb form that will be discussed in the section of Albanian language non-finite verb forms is gerund. As it is pointed out by Albanian scholars, this non-finite verb form expresses denotation of an action and has characteristics attributed to the verb and the noun, but even adverb (Çeliku, M., and 2013:45, translated by the author). The Albanian gerund has its own specifities and forms. Gerund in Albanian has two cases: **të bërë** and **së bëri** (Çeliku, M., and 2013: 45, translated by the author).

However, one of the most debated issues in Albanian linguistics is the lack of grammatically recognized infinitive and its inclusion into Albanian grammar books. While most of them agree that there is no practical infinitive in Albanian language, some linguist have pointed out that the existence of the phrase "për +gerund" as an

independent phrase is the primary reason for this form to be regarded as a step forward in the process of rendering this form as an infinitive in the future. Çeliku (2013) argues that the phrase type "për të bërë" as a secondary infinitive, meanwhile some Albanian and foreign linguists regard it as an infinitive or " an analytical verb form with the value of an infinitive with limited syntactic functions" (p.52, translated by the author). Bahri Beci (2010), on the other hand already considers this form an infinitive (p.122, translated by the author).

E.g.:

- Është **per t'u theksuar** se në dy ndërmarjet treguesit financiar janë realizuar.
- Është **për t'u vënë në dukje** mobilizimi më i madh gjatë muajit Janar nga disa ndërmarje.

Another very specific non-finite form which has no counterpart in English is "Përcjellore". "Përcjellore" is that non-finite form which has the characteristics of a verb and an adverb and which expresses a secondary concomitant action next to the main action (Çeliku. M., 2013: 64, translated by the author). Having both characteristics from adverb and verb makes an unprecedented shift to view what a non-finite verb is. It is the first example of a verb-oriented non-finite in linguistics of both languages. This verb form, as much as any other verb form, has not passed without debate and argumentation on what are its distinctive forms. Çeliku (2013) has opted for the idea that the "përcjellore" non-finite has two constructions: "duke ardhur" and "pa ardhur" (p.59, translated by the author). These constructions are also known as "përcjellore pohore" and "përcjellore mohore, e.g.:

- Thirra **duke hyrë.**
- Pa hyrë brenda, thirra.

The final non-finite in Albanian language is the participle (alb. Pjesorja). The Albanian Participle form (Pjesore) is the only non-finite verb form with mutual agreement among the Albanian linguist regarding the representation, or more exactly its constructions and definition. The Albanian participle is non-finite form which partakes the main characteristics of the verb and the adjective (see Çeliku. 2013; Akademia e Shkencave Shqiptare, 2002; Beci, 2010). The Albanian participle (Pjesore) is formed by adding to the verbal theme one of the following articles*: -rë(r),-ur,-ë, në* (Beci, B., 2010: 119, translated by the author). The Albanian Participle has two constructions: **punuar** and **i, e punuar** (Çeliku. M., 2013: 74, translated by the author).

E.g.:

- ***Ara do korur, gruri do shirë, lopa do mjelë, hajvanët duhen grazduar.*** (Akademia e Shkencave Shqiptare, 2002:332). (the first construction)
- *gotë e **thyer**, libër i **botuar,** letër e **shkruar*** etc. (Çeliku., M.,2013:76).

2. Syntactic characteristics of non-finites in both languages

The English functional analysis deals with the function of words/phrases in a sentence. Its components are: subject, predicator, object (both direct and indirect), adjunct and complements (subject and object complement) and their clauses (see Nuhiu, 1994, 38-90).

The first non-finite form which we will discuss about is the infinitive. The Infinitive's main syntactic functions are those of the subject and direct object. The Subject is that functional category of the clause of which something is predicated (Downing, A., and Locke, P., 2006:42).On the other hand, The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Linguistics defines the object as an element in the basic sentence construction of a language such as English which characteristically represents someone or something, other than that represented by the subject, that is involved in an action, process, etc. referred to(Matthews, P.H., 2003:2164). E.g.:

- To work is to win. (Subject)
- I asked her to clean the kitchen.(Direct object)

These were the main characteristic functions of the infinitive. Others include subject complement and object complement. As per Nuhiu (1994) the subject complement refers to the subject of the sentence , it follows the predicator and it contains a linking verb and completes the structure(p.45). The Object Complement is the constituent that completes the predicate when certain verbs such as *find, make* and *appoint* lead us to specify some characteristic of the Direct Object (Downing, A., and Locke, P., 2006:67). E.g.:

- John's idea was to sell his house. (Nuhiu,V.,1994:46) (Subject complement)
- He watched the boys play football.(The bare infinitive as object complement)

The other non-finite verb form, the gerund has somewhat similar syntactic functions. As well as the infinitive, it mostly occurs as a subject and direct object:

- Training has already begun.(Subject)
- He believed preaching was the key.(Direct object)

Since gerund, in difference from the infinitive can connect to prepositions, the added function of a prepositional object is present, as well as the function of subject complement, meanwhile this non-finite lacks the function of an object complement. E.g.:

- I don't depend <u>on smoking anymore.</u> (prepositional object)
- What I enjoy is <u>walking in the evening</u>. (Nuhiu, V.,1994:46).(subject complement)

Since the participle is at different crossroads than the infinitive and the gerund, taking verbal and adjective features, the difference is felt even in the syntactic functions of the participles. The main syntactic function of this non-finite is the subject complement, even though the function of an object complement is also notable. E.g.:

- The business we have made is *amazing.* **(**present participle as a subject complement)
- They look quite exhausted._ (Nuhiu,V.,1994:46) (past participle as a subject complement)
- He met her <u>walking with a friend</u>.(present participle as object complement)

Also, all of the three non-finites can function as Adverbial clauses. Adverbial clauses are extended version of an adjunct when a non-finite verb is involved in it. The infinitive , gerund and participle clauses have many functions as adverbial clauses in English, such as:

- I am sorry <u>to hear that</u>. (Infinitive clause as an Adverbial clause of reason)
- I'll come there <u>to help you</u>.(Infinitive clause as an Adverbial clause of purpose)
- <u>On arriving home</u>, somebody phoned him. (Gerundial clause as an Adverbial clause of time)
- She ran out quickly without <u>looking out.</u> (Nuhiu,V.,1994:75)(Gerundial clause as an Adverbial clause of manner)
- <u>Arriving at his office</u>, he found his secretary there. (Participle clause as an Adverbial clause of time)
- He went upstairs, <u>holding an ashtray</u>. (Participle clause as an Adverbial clause of manner).

Of course, Albanian language, as most languages do, has a subject (kryefjala) and a predicator (kallzuesi) as main parts of their sentence, each of them having different

cases of occurrence. Besides them, even in Albanian language we have secondary elements. A specific element to Albanian syntactic function is the presence of "përcaktori" which is a special trait, but also "përcaktori kallëzuesor" which in translation would arguably sound like predicative modifier or predicator complement. Also, similarly to the English language we have the object, both direct and indirect (kundrina e drejtë dhe e zhdrejtë), and adjuncts (rrethanori).

The first non-finite in Albanian which will undergo short comprehensive study is the gerund. One of the main functions of gerund in Albanian is the function of an adjunct. The Albanian Academy of Science (2002) views the Adjunct (Rrethanori) as a secondary part of a sentence which is put up to an adjunctive position with the element to which it is dependant to and connected to with a direction or a union. "Rrethanori" mainly indicates a time, a place, a reason, a manner, a purpose, a measure or a scale, but even other rapports (p.269, translated by the author). Here are some of the main functions of this kind:

- Në errësirën e natës rendën <u>për t'i hapur</u> derën. (Dh. Xhuvani, Do të jetojmë,116)(Gerund as an adjunct of purpose)
- <u>Me të dëgjuar</u> këtë emër, djali u verdh. (Sh.Musaraj,Para,378) (Adapted from Çeliku,M., 2013:103) (Gerund as an adjunct of time)

Another specific issue in regards to the gerund is the role of "përcaktori". Përcaktori" is a secondary part of speech with which relationships of a characteristic or a feature is expressed in relation to its bearer (Domi,M.,2013:221 ,translated by author). Gerund as "përcaktor" determines a noun, an adjective or a simple constituent which is extended or resolvable (Çeliku, M., 2013:105). E.g:

- E shtynte një <u>dëshirë</u> e papërmbajtur <u>për të hetuar</u> çdo gjë (V.Koreshi, Dasma,203) (Adapted from Çeliku,M., 2013:105)

The specific feature of the Albanian gerund is the connection to the predicator and the indirect object, both not existing in the English version of the non-finite. E.g.:

- Nga <u>u bë misri për t' prashitur?</u> (Zp., 20 .12.1983) (predicator)
- Ndihej i aftë <u>për t'i përdorur këmbët</u> (Dh.Shuteriqi,60 tregime,293) (Adapted from Çeliku,M., 2013:106) (indirect object)

The next in line of discussion is the secondary infinitive in the Albanian language. This non-finite form, as we will observe in the following examples, is the closest form to an

English version of a non-finite counterpart. The infinitive can actually function as a subject in Albanian language, which none other non-finite does. E. g.:

- Nuk ishte punë e vështirë <u>për t'u diktuar</u> çerdhet e gargujve(=diktimi) (Dh.Shuteriqi,60 tregime, 154) (Adapted from Çeliku,M., 2013:111)

Although it functions as a subject, it can also be considered as part of a non-finite construction which plays the role of a predicator right after the copula , which is the biggest distinction in this case . E.g.:

- Nga lopët e racës së pastër objektivi është <u>për të realizuar</u> (=realizimi) 3000 litra qumësht për krerë. (Zp.12.2.1985) (Adapted from Çeliku,M., 2013:111)

The next step in exploring syntactic features of Albanian non-finite forms, is the evaluation of syntactic functions of "përcjellore". As far as this non-finite goes, its adverbial characteristics make it prone to playing a role of an adjunct, in both its positive ("përcjellore pohore") and negative ("përcjellore mohore") construction. E.g.:

- <u>Duke ecur</u> rrugës u kujtua se kishe harruar çelsat. (Beci,B.,2010:121) ("përcjellore pohore" as adjunct of time)
- Në mes të kalldrëmit, ku dëbora që ngjeshur, e gatuar me baltë, çapitej <u>duke u lëkundur</u> i pari udhëtar i atij mëngjesi . (Beci, B.,2010:121) ("përcjellore pohore" as adjunct of manner)
- Ecëm <u>pa folur</u>. (K.Blushi,Vite,226) (Adapted from Çeliku,M., 2013:158) ("përcjellore mohore" as adjunct of manner)
- Nuk mund të gjykosh për të tashmen e një populli <u>pa studiuar</u> të kaluarën e tij. ("përcjellore mohore" as adjunct of condition)

Also, one of the main functions of "përcjellore" in both of its constructions is the function of "përcaktori". E.g.:

- Për disa kohë do të dëgjohej ende zhurma e boshteve të karrocave <u>duke kaluar</u> asfalteve të qytetit.(M.Aliaj, Karroca,94) (Adapted from Çeliku,M.,2013:157) ("përcjellore pohore" as "përcaktori")
- Mato, <u>pa ia vënë</u> veshit fjalëve të italianit,pyeti. (D. Agolli, Njeriu,153) (Adapted from Çeliku, M.,2013:190) ("përcjellore mohore" as "përcaktori")

The final part of our analysis is the analysis of the participle ("pjesore") in Albanian language. The Albanian participle mainly functions as "përcaktori". E.g.:

- Morri rrugën drejt parcelës <u>mbjellë</u> më grurë. (J.Xoxa)
- <u>Hipur</u> mbi muret e zeza të shtëpisë, Murat Bença vendoste gurët e rëzuar. (F.Gjata)

Another major function of the participle is the function of a predicator. In this case , it denotes the main action, as in:

- *Ekspozita* do të qëndrojë <u>hapur</u> një javë. (Drita)(Adapted from Çeliku,M.,2013:207)
- Rrapua qëndronte <u>i mbështetur</u> në gorricë. (D.Agolli)(=mbështetur)

Having in mind these functions, as well as their interconnection with the syntactic functions and their direct morphological representative, we can claim that Albanian non-finites are closer to the verb than the English non-finites which tend to orientate to the noun and the adjective, i.e. the other parts of speech with which the verb is interconnected to in this case.

Conclusions

Before we give our conclusions, we need to ascertain the position of non-finites in Albanian and English according to those scholars that have been concerned with the study of this phenomenon.

Albanian scholars have dealt with this issue in many occasions. One of the more significant contributions to the problem of non-finites in Albanian is Mehmet Çeliku (2016), in which he tries to solve this problem by stating that the non-finite verbs and their constructions generally do not function as a predicator in the sentence. But, thanks to situations, contextual usage and the finalized intonation, non-finites have sentence meaning (p.74, translated by the author). What this definition indicates is that non-finites, even though mainly do not play the role of a predicator in a sentence, can be a part of a single headed predicative sentence. In another attempt to define non-finites, Çeliku(2012) also claims that accompanied by modal verbs, non-finites can make a sentence(p.33). This is why in functional analysis we encountered complex modal predicators.

In English language, the case is obvious. Since the process of "desententialization" has meant the loss of so many characteristics in a language's part of speech, one of the main characteristics that has been lost in English language is definitely the predicative

nature of the non-finite verbs. Non-finites, not only are not predicative in English but also tend to function mainly in similarity to their interwoven counterpart. So, in many cases, it is absolutely reasonable for the infinitive and the gerund to function as a subject or object complement, meanwhile participle can be seen as part of a subject complement too.

However, when we have seen and analyzed through the examples of the syntactic functions in both languages, we have seen the determining difference between English and Albanian language. Namely, Albanian non-finite verb forms function mainly as adjuncts and the determiners role ("përcaktori"), while English non-finites serve mostly as subject, direct object and object complements and their respective clauses. What this indicates for both languages is striking difference. Meanwhile the Albanian non-finite has been functionally strictly connected to the action, by giving certain descriptions to the action; English infinitive has been separated from the action. The meaning of this statement can perhaps better be described by stating that the non-finite verb forms in Albanian mostly serve as a secondary givers of information, meanwhile English non-finites are actual replacements for another relevant part of speech (such as noun and adjective). So, the Albanian non-finite verb forms are less relevant in functional syntax than its English counterparts are. Another difference in Albanian and English is the connection of Albanian non-finites as part of a predicator. English language has not a single example of non-finite verbs functioning as a predicator. This makes us conclude that Albanian non-finites are still more connected to their verbal base than their English counterparts are, which tend to gravitate more to other part of speech they are interwoven with. In other words, in the evolutionary stage of the non-finites in both languages, the non-finites in English language are less verb-dependant; meanwhile Albanian language's non-finites are more verb-dependant. That is, the Albanian non-finites have just begun the process of transformation to another part of speech; meanwhile English non-finites are at the end of that process.

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