Research Article

WORD ORDER IN ENGLISH AND ALBANIAN
SENTENCE TYPES

Syntax

Rilind Mahmudi	Faculty of Social Studies, 'Mother Teresa' University in Skopje Republic of North Macedonia
Majlinda Ismaili Mahmudi	'Rexhe Rushit Zajazi' Elementary School, Kicevo Republic of North Macedonia

Abstract

Sentences types and word order patterns are directly related to each other. When referring to sentence types, one must keep in mind that we do not refer to them according to their structure, but to their purpose, i.e., declarative, interrogative, imperative and exclamative sentences. Word order, especially the S-V-O pattern, may vary depending on the type of the sentences.

The typical pattern of the subject, verb and object in English language is normally fixed because English is an analytical language. On the other hand, Albanian language has a free word order mainly because it is a synthetic language, and because of noun cases and verb inflections. For example, we can say '*I bought a bike.*', but we cannot say '*A bike bought I.*'. However, in Albanian we can say '*Unë bleva një biçikletë.*' and '*Një biçikletë bleva unë.*', with a normal and inverted word order. This word order change in Albanian must not be confused with passive voice, i.e., when a subject and an object change their places. Syntactic functions do not change even after a word order change in Albanian language.

A word order with a S-V-O pattern is expected in declarative sentences, except for sentences with inverted word order in Albanian language. However, word order changes are expected in imperative and interrogative sentences in both languages. Subject position is normally different in these two types of sentences in both languages, but since Albanian language has a free word order, there may be sentences with a S-V-O pattern even in interrogative sentences. Finally, there are idioms with the same and different word order in English and Albanian language.

Research Questions and Research Methodology

Having a clear conception and defined research questions is the key to having a paper that makes a clear distinction between syntactic changes in two languages. The main question of this paper is whether the word order is the same in English and Albanian language. Another question is if the word order changes in different sentence types. In this paper, when we refer to word order we mostly think of the S-V-O pattern and the position of the adverbial as these are the most common sentence patterns. Another important question is whether the subject is present in all types of sentences, or it can be omitted in different sentence types.

The research methodology is important when we deal with syntactic changes. This paper relies on the following research methodology:

Descriptive Method

The descriptive method shows the ways in which smaller units like forms and words are related to one another in larger bounded units like clauses and sentences[1]. Defining the object of the research is the most important part of the paper since it gives a clear idea of the study and of the examples. With this method we have described what the object of this research is, the factors that affect the word orderpattern and the consequences they have on translated sentences.

Inductive and Deductive Method

While the inductive method aims at developing a theory, we rely on different available linguistic theories. Furthermore, the deductive method aims at testing the existing theories, and we come to different conclusions after collecting the data and analysing the results. Therefore, these two methods are used in parallel with each other. With this method the researcher uses observations to build an approach or describe the phenomenon or issue, resulting in a data collection used by the observer in a systematic manner[2]. Therefore, the observer prepares a generalization after analysing this data collection.

Comparative Method

The comparative method in this paper is used to perform a feature-by-feature comparison of the given examples in both English and Albanian language. This method helps in comparing factors, phenomena, same or similar processes and identifying similar or distinct features[3]. The comparison of translated simple sentences from English to Albanian language and vice versa gives us a clear picture of the linguistic similarities and differences.

Literature Review

Certain grammar rules must be followed in order to have grammatically correct sentences. Words and the rules how those words become part of sentences have long been studied. Different grammar rules apply to different languages, andthis is why we must refer to the basic rules of word order in English and Albanian language. Here we must highlight the basic sentence patterns in English language, i.e., S-V, S-V-O, S-V-SC, S-V-IO-DO, S-V-O-OC and S-V-A[4]. When we refer to word order, in this paper we refer to the subject and verb on the one hand, and the object, subject complement, object complement and adverbial on the other hand. We make such distinction because the subject and verb are directly related to each other, while the others depend

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[1] Whatmough J. 'Language: A Modern Synthesis – Volume 10', New American Library, 1957, p. 113.
[2] Lodico M. G., Spaulding D. T. "Methods in Educational Research: FromTheory to Practice", Jossey-Bass; 2nd edition, 2010, p. 5.
[3] Azemi B., Bujari R. "Bazat e kërkimit në edukim", Instituti Pedagogjik i Kosovës, Prishtinë, 2013, p. 23.
[4] Quirk R., Greenbaum S., Leech G. & Svartvik J. "A comprehensivegrammarof the English language", Longman, London & NewYork, 1985, p. 720.

mostly on the verb, i.e., the valence and transitivity of the verb. This means that if the verb is a transitive one, that it will have another word accompanying it. If it is intransitive verb, then the verb will not be accompanied by another word.

Word order has been studied for some time in Albanian language. To be more specific, the first paper referring to word order has been published in 1927 by Ila Dilo '*Gramatikën dhe sintaksën e gjuhës shqipe (Grammar and Syntax of Albanian Language)*', followed by Kostaq Cipo's '*Syntax*' in 1952 and Mahir Domi's '*Sintaksa për shkolla të mesme (Syntax for high schools)*[5]'. Another really important paper that had its focus on word order was Klaus Hebler's '*Njërregullë e shqipesmbirendin e fjalëve (A rule of Albanian language on word order)*[6]'. The only issue with this study is that it is focused only on the most typical word order patterns and on the subject and the verb, while leaving aside more complex word order patterns.

Word order in Albanian is more complex than in English language. On the first hand, word order patterns must follow four rules related to: 1) inflection, 2) word order as a syntactic means and 3) intonation[7]. Other words such as prepositions, conjunctions and noun endings are directly related to word order in Albanian language. Furthermore, Albanian grammar is rich in noun cases and verb inflections. According to Nuhiu, Albanian language has free word order because: 1) it is a flective language (inflections), 2) grammar function is marked in words, 3) the word order is largely a matter of style[8]. All these factors make word order in Albanian more complex than English language. At the same time, it is clear that Albanian has a free word order when compared to English language.

English language has a fixed word order. What is meant by fixed word order is that the subject is expected to be in the initial position followed by the verb. In English the syntactic function is marked and identified from the word order and the context of the words and this is the only way of identifying all word functions in a sentence[9]. English is definitely a S-V-O language, but this does not mean that Albanian is not a S-V-O language as well. The normal word order in Albanian is the same, i.e., S-V-O (subject in the initial position followed by the verb). Fixed word order normally would influence on the ability of forming more complex sentences. Such is the case with English Language. As a result, English has found ways to compensate for the fixed word order. Some of those effects are: 1) English has permitted a reconciliation of discourse-pragmatic needs with structural requirements, 2) English sentence constituents have gained greater mobility across clauses (which is not the case within clause boundaries), 3) The immediate context plays a great role in keeping the relationship between form and meaning (or function)[10]. Theory is normally more difficult than practical examples, and this is why now we turn to examples to make

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[5] Floqi, S. 'Mbi disa çështje të rendit të fjalëve në shqipen e sotme', Studime Filologjike – Nr.2, 1969, p. 125.

[6] Haebler, C. 'EinealbanischeWorstellungsregel', MunchenerStudienzurSprachwissenschaft, 1957, Heft 11, p. 49-61.

[7] Dhima, T. 'Gjuhashqipe - Sintaksa', SHBLU, Tiranë, 2008, p. 40.

[8] Nuhiu, V. 'Ndikimiianglishtesnëgjuhënshqipe', ASHAK, Prishtinë, 2013, p. 283.

[9] Ibid, p. 283.

[10] Kortmann, B. 'English Linguistics: Essentials', Springer, 1999, p. 123.

things more clear. The following examples show the difference between Albanian and English language:

(1) Joni bleu një biçikletë. / Jon bought a bike.   (normal word order)
(2) Një biçikletë bleu Joni. / A bicycle bought Jon*.   (inverted word order)

As we can see from the above examples, it is clear that in Albanian we can have two different word orders, S-V-O and O-V-S. The only difference would be the intonation as emphasis is given to the subject ('Joni') in the first example, and to the direct object ('biçikletë') on the second sentence. Emphasis falls on the most important part, and intonation is there to help for it. Word order change, such as in this type of sentences, happens because of style or emphasis. Thus, if something is more important to us, then we could put it in the initial position. We must highlight that the change of word order does not change syntactic functions in Albanian language. In English language, on the other hand, we can only use the first sentence as a grammatically and semantically correct sentence. If we try to change the word order and 'adapt' the words, then we will end up with a different form, i.e., passive voice:

(3) A bicycle was bought by Jon. / Biçikleta u blenga Joni. (passive voice)

When we compare sentence (3) and sentence (1), we can see that we deal with two different forms and different syntactic functions. This is why we say that Albanian has a free word order, and English has a fixed word order.

Word order in different sentence types

Sentence comparison is the most effective way of finding differences and similarities in different languages. But when we refer to sentences, we must not refer only to one type of sentences. Here we refer to sentence types, not sentence structure. There are four types of sentences in English language: declarative, interrogative, imperative and exclamatory sentences[11]. The same types of sentences exist in Albanian language as well, with a small difference (in Albanian there is one extra sentence type – optative sentence[12]). Word order may change on the type of the sentence. When there is a word order change, we normally have a change in intonation, especially in Albanian language. Another distinction when we consider sentences is whether the sentence verb is positive or negative. Regardless, in Albanian declarative sentences may normally have a free word or inverted word order. While this is clear for declarative sentences, we must take into account other types of sentences, starting from imperative sentences. Normally, the subject is omitted both in Albanian and English language. But this cannot be considered a general rule because there may be sentences like the following:

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[11] Verspoor, M. & Sauter, K. 'English Sentence Analysis: An Introductory Course', John Benjamins Publishing Company, 2000, p. 17.
[12] Çeliku, M. "Sintaksë e gjuhës shqipe (përbërësit sintaksorë)", ILAR, Tiranë, 2012, pp. 286-287.

(4) (You) Don't break the door! / (Ti) Mos e thyej derën!
(5) Do your homework! / Bëji detyrat e tua!

As a general rule, English language must have a subject all the time. When there is no real subject, then it has an empty or a 'dummy' subject[13] expressed with the pronouns '*it*' or '*there*'. But this rule has an exception when we deal with imperative sentences, like sentences (4) and (5). We can omit the subject in both languages and sentences will be grammatically and semantically correct. Sentences (4) and (5) are just an illustration of how imperative sentences would look like with and without a subject. But there may be other types of sentences where the subject may be added in order to have a clear imperative sentence, like the following one:

(6) Don't (you) do it! / (Ti) Mos e bëj!

Even though the subject may not necessarily be added, its presence may be for a stylistic effect. On the other hand, the subject may be omitted in Albanian language, like in English. The only difference in this sentence would be the position of the subject. While the subject in English is between the auxiliary and the main verb, in Albanian it is in the initial position. There is no possibility for the subject to be in the middle, but only in the initial position, and in the final position if an inverted word order is used (*'Mos e bëj (ti)!'*). A similar sentence to sentence (6), but with a really important difference, is the following one:

(7) Didn't you do it?/A nuk e bëre (ti) atë?

In sentence (7) we face a really interesting difference. The change of tense makes the omission of the subject impossible in this type of interrogative sentence. Imagine the sentences: '*Didn't do it*?'* / '*A nuk e bëre atë?'*. What we can see here is that the subject must be necessarily present in this sentence in English language, but not in Albanian language (we can omit the subject 'ti'). Again, when the subject is present, we have different subject position in sentence (7), i.e., between the auxiliar and main verb in English, and after the verb in Albanian. The subject in Albanian can be understood from the verb inflection even when there is no real subject. Verb inflections help us understand the subject in Albanian language not only in interrogative sentences, but in other types of sentences as well.

Normally, interrogative sentences in English are formed with the move of the auxiliary verb in the initial position. In Albanian, interrogative sentences are normally formed with question words where the most typical word is '*A*'. For example:

(8) Do you want an ice-cream? / A dëshiron akullore?
(9) Have you watched this movie? / A e ke shikuar këtë film?
(10) What did he say? / Çfarë tha ai?

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[13] Downing, A. & Locke, Ph. 'English Grammar – A University Course Second Edition', Routledge, 2006, p. 44.

The above sentences represent different interrogative sentences. While in sentences (8) and (9) the auxiliary verbs have moved to the initial position, in Albanian there is no auxiliary verb, but the question word '*A*'. Sentence (10) is somehow different because there is a pronoun instead of an auxiliary verb, and the same happens with the sentence in Albanian language. When we refer to word order, we can see that in sentences (8) and (9) the subject is present in English, but not in Albanian. On the other hand, in sentence (10) the subject is present in both sentences, but in different positions (between the auxiliary and main verb in English and in the final position in Albanian). The three interrogative sentences are normal sentences in both languages. However, we have mentioned in the beginning that intonation may play a crucial role on word order. To prove this statement, let us look at the following example:

(11) Ai këndon nesër? / He sings tomorrow*?

Based on the word order, sentence (11) is a S-V-A sentence. However, there is a question mark in the end, which means that this is an interrogative sentence. This is totally correct sentence in Albanian language in discourse, but not in English. Both factors, free word order and intonation, are crucial factors that influence word order pattern in Albanian language. Furthermore, the subject ('*ai*') can still be omitted in Albanian and the sentence would still be correct. A sentence with a normal word order, but with a different intonation may change from declarative to interrogative sentence in Albanian. This is not the case with English language. If we translate this sentence into English language, then the proper one would be: '*Does he sing tomorrow?*'.

Another informal form to translate the same sentence would be: '*He sings tomorrow?*'. Naturally, this sentence cannot be used in written language, but it can only be informally used in spoken discourse.

Exclamatory sentences represent the last type of sentences in English, but not in Albanian. In Albanian there are exclamatory and optative sentences as well. The main difference is that in optative sentences the subject may or may not be omitted.

(12) What a bike! / Çfarë biçiklete!   (exclamatory sentence)

(13) What a fish we had last week! / Çfarë peshku hëngrëm javën e kaluar.

                                            (object in initial pos.)

(14) I wish you all the best! / Të dëshiroj gjitha të mirat! (exclamatory vs. optative sent.)

Sentence (12) is a usual exclamatory sentence. The structure of the sentence is the same in both languages, with no word order change. The word order is the same in sentences (13) and (14) as well. The only difference is that both sentences (13) and (14) in English are exclamatory, but in Albanian there is another type of sentences – optative sentences. As a result, sentence (13) is exclamatory sentence, while sentence (14) is optative sentence in Albanian language.

There are still debates in Albanian language whether a revision on the sentence types is necessary or not. However, the only difference again is that the subject in sentence (14) may be omitted in Albanian, but not in English.

In addition to sentence types, idiomatic expressions represent an interesting point in the word order typology. To be more specific, there are idioms with the same or different sentence structure in both languages. This is because some idioms may be translated the same from English to Albanian language, but there are idioms with a totally different sentence structure after translation. For example:

(15) Long live the queen! / Rroftë mbretëresha!
(16) Break a leg! / Paç fat!
(17) Take him down! / Hiqe qafe!

We can see the same sentence structure in sentence (15), but that is not the case in sentence (16) and (17). Even though 'break' and 'paç' are both verbs/predicates, and 'a leg' and 'fat' nouns/objects, they are not the same. This is because they are not the same words, even though the idiomatic expression is the same. In sentence (17) we can even see a totally different sentence structure, i.e., word order. Idioms are numerous in both languages and there are many different and additional examples to support the claim that idioms may have the same, similar or totally different sentence structure, i.e., word order.

Conclusion

The above examples are only a small input on the vast field of word order examples. Word order patterns are generally fixed in English language. Exceptions could be seen in some imperative and exclamative sentences. In interrogative sentences we normally see a change of the auxiliary verb to the initial position. But sometimes sentences in Albanian language were not that similar to those in English language, such as sentences (2, 6, 7, 8, 9, 11 or 16).

Inverted word order is more than common in Albanian language. Having an inverted word order does not mean that syntactic functions change. The free word order enables words to keep the same syntactic functions, regardless of the position. Intonation is another factor that directly influences on the word order change. Intonation plays crucial role in interrogative sentences in spoken discourse, like sentence (11). That is not the case with English language. The position of the words assigns the syntactic function. If a word is in the initial position, it is expected to be a subject, or an adverbial. Verbs are normally placed after the subject, and other words are placed after the verb. So, while there are fixed S-V, S-V-O (IO/DO), S-V-SC, S-V-A, S-V-O-OC patterns in English language in different sentence types, we cannot expect the same patterns with translated sentences in Albanian language.

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