

TRANSLATING SOME LEFT-DETACHED CONSTRUCTIONS FROM FRENCH INTO ALBANIAN

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Abstract

While teaching Translation Practice, we have noticed that the majority of students have difficulties in understanding and interpreting French detached constructions, particularly when they are placed at the beginning of a sentence. To begin with, we define this type of clauses, called 'detached constructions' (constructions détachées) in French and explain why they are problematic from a French-Albanian translation perspective. Finally, we propose a syntactic and semantic analysis of Albanian literary translations in order to discover some recurrent translation strategies of the left-detached constructions which would be useful in the pedagogic as well as professional translation context.

Keywords: left- detached construction, main clause, logical relationship, translation, circumstantial value.

Characteristics of the French detached constructions

According to Combettes (1998), the detached constructions (DCs) occupy a free position (initial, medial, final), they are separated by a comma from the main clause (or with a pause in oral discourse), set a coreferential relationship with the subject of the main clause and act as secondary predicate which aims to provide an additional information. Syntactically, then, a detached construction does not contain a subject and a finite verb form in surface structure; its nucleus can be either non-finite (present participle, past participle, gerund) or verbless (adjective, noun). Semantically, the logical relationship between a detached construction and the main clause of a sentence is not so clear because the linking device is not explicitly present in surface structure. This leads us to advance a hypothesis that Albanian translations of French detached constructions are syntactically more explicit and semantically more transparent than their French counterparts. In this paper we will focus only on detached constructions having a noun, an adjective and a past participle as a base, appearing in sentence-initial position and having a logical relationship with the main clause.

Logical relationship between the detached construction and the main clause of the sentence

Between the circumstantial values of the DCs we can distinguish the temporal and the logical values. In contrast with temporal values, the logical ones are not specifically related to any particular detached construction. Almost all detached construction can set with the main clause, *a priori*, a circumstantial relationship corresponding with a causal, conditional, or concessive subordinate. In this case, the semantic relation between the secondary predicate and the primary one is more important than the grammatical category of the detached construction (past participle, gerund, adjective).

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Let's take a sentence where the condition is not expressed by the detached construction but mainly by the main predicate through the use of a specific verbal form (in French we have the use of the conditional or subjunctive mode), which makes the secondary predicate to be read as a possible or unreal act:

<p><i>Débarassé de son manteau,</i> <i>Sans manteau,</i> <i>En s'asseyant ici,</i> <i>Les mains libres,</i> <i>Le chapeau sur la tête,</i> <i>Libre de ses mouvements,</i></p>	}	<p><i>il aurait été plus à l'aise.</i></p>
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All these detached constructions can be paraphrased “*S'il ..., alors*”, representing a hypothetical sentence, which depends on the lead sentence “*il aurait été plus à l'aise*”. However, it must be said that the verbs participles appear frequently in a causal or hypothetical relationship:

- (1) *Soutenu par un conservateur et pronée par un rouge, elle devait réussir* (ES, pp. 449)
- (2) *Incapable de résister à une envie, elle s'engouait d'un bibelot [..]* (ES, pp.201)
- (3) [les pièces pour le clavecin] *Connues, je suis sûr qu'elles le rendraient célèbre.* (Porporino, pp.282)

But, in fact, we have to be careful with the interpretation of the detached constructions because they do not always set a causal relationship with the main clause. In case of a concessive relationship, the DC is preceded by: *quoique, bien que, même*:

- (4) *Quoique bien ouverts, ils semblaient un peu bridés par les pommertes* (Mme Bovary, e-book, pp.278)
- (5) *Bien que vexé un peu de la découverte, il fit semblant d'en rire* (ES, e-book, fq. 990)

The absence of an element marking the concession would lead to interpret the relationship as a causal one and the sentence will have another meaning (*Fatiguée, j'allai à l'école, etc..*)

As observed in all the above contexts, the DC has no descriptive value. The circumstantial role makes these units similar to subordinate sentences (it is attested by the use of *quoique, bien que*) and endows them with some freedom in functioning. Practical analysis: the logical **value** of the detached **constructions expressed by name, adjective and past participle**. Firstly, we think to consider detached constructions, which are expressed by a noun, adjective and verb participle and can be replaced quite naturally with a dependent clause which has in its composition the verb *être*. Therefore, we will analyze the following construction:

- (6) *Pauvre, il convoitait le luxe* (ES, pp.311) = *Deslauriers, qui est pauvre,*

- (7) *Député de la Sarthe en 1846*, il avait été réélu à l'Assemblée constituante de 184 (ES, e-book, pp.814) = Lamoricière, qui a été député de la Sarthe en 1846,.....
- (8) D'après d'autres interprétations, certains de nos songes sont d'un autre ordre que ceux qu'ont pu connaître les hommes; **d'origine artificielle**, ils sont les productions spontanées de demi-formes mentales engendrées par l'entrelacement modifiable des éléments électroniques du réseau. (La Possibilité d'une île, pp. 220)= Les songes, qui sont d'origine artificielle,
- (9) **Adossé à la porte de la salle de concert**, le duc de Cattolica nous regarde venir (Porporino, pp.185)= Le duc de Cattolica, qui est adossé à la porte de la salle de concert,

It is a fact that the verbs participles are different from nouns and adjectives because they retain their verbal origin and express an action (Combettes, 1998), as it is shown in the example 10; While in example 9, the past participle has a descriptive value:

- (10) En 1848, Lachambeaudie fit partie du club de Blanqui. **Arrêté après les journées de juin**, il fut relâché à la suite de l'intervention de Béranger = Après avoir été arrêté après les journées de juin, il fut relâché

When the DCs are paraphrased with a subordinate sentence, the verbs 'participles in detached position should have être as an auxiliary verb (Blanche-Benveniste, 1998). These paraphrases show that the verbs' participles can be part of an active or passive construction: (Lachambeaudie fut arrêté).

Since DCs may have several circumstantial values, for a correct understanding they need a good interpretation of the sentence and the context. (Combettes and Tomassone, 1991)

It seems that circumstantial values of the DCs are related to their location in the sentence. These units have a circumstantial value mostly when they are located in initial-sentence position and not somewhere else. Thus, for example, a DC with conditional or concessive value could not appear at the end of the sentence (Combettes, 1998). In the examples drawn from literary works in the original language as well as their translation into Albanian, besides the temporal value, we have mostly recognized the circumstantial values listed below, not claiming for them to be exhaustive:

- a) Causal value
- b) Conditional value
- c) Concessive value

We won't focus our attention to the temporal value as during the Translation Practice students have more difficulties with the interpretation of DCs having one of the circumstantial value mentioned above.

a) Causal value

When a DC is characterized by a causal value, a cause and effect relationship should exist between that and the contents of the main sentence. This relationship is generally implicit:

- (11) **Pauvre**, il convoitait le luxe sous sa forme la plus claire. (L'éducation sentimentale, pp. 311)

Duke jetuar në skamje, lakmonte luksin në formën e tij më të gjallë. (Edukimi i ndjenjave, pp. 295)

- (12) *Républicain austère, il suspectait de corruption toutes les élégances n'ayant d'ailleurs aucun besoin et étant d'une probité inflexible.* (ES, pp.106)

Duke qënë republikan i vendosur, shihte në çdo shfaqje elegance një lloj çoroditjeje, për vete nuk kishte pothuaj asnjë nevojë dhe shquhej për një ndershmëri të patundur. (ES, pp. 66)

- (13) *Elevé sous les yeux d'une grande-mère devote, il trouvait la compagnie de ces jeunes gens alléchante comme un mauvais lieu et instructive comme une Sorbonne* (ES, pp.108)

I rritur nën kujdesin e një gjysheje shumë fetare, shoqërimi me këta djelmosha i dukej mjaft tërheqës si ndonjë lokal publik dhe mësimdhënës si Sorbona (Edukimi i ndjenjave, pp. 72)

In addition to authentic causal value there are several DCs that exhibit causal value with temporal nuance:

- (14) *Et alors il frissonna, pris d'une tristesse glaciale* (ES, e-book, pp.284)

Atëherë ai u drodh, i pushtuar nga një trishtim i ftohtë si akulli (ES, pp.152)

- (15) *Arrêté pendant la nuit du 2 décembre, il fut emprisonné à Ham* (ES, e-book, pp. 814)

In these types of sentences, where there is a causal relationship between the DC and the main clause, the DC is mainly located in the initial-sentence position as the cause precedes the effect.

b. Conditional value

Detached Constructions, which express a condition, are composed mainly of a verb participle. In most cases, the verb of the main clause is in the conditional mode:

- (16) *Garde ceci pour toi, il compose en secret des pieces pour le clavecin, mais il ne les montre pas. Connues, je suis sûr qu'elles le rendraient célèbre.* (Porporino, pp.282)

Këtë mos ia thuaj kujt, ai kompozon fshehurazi pjesë për klavicembal, por nuk i tregon. Po të njiheshin, jam i sigurt se ato do ta bënin të famshëm. (Porporino, pp.214)

However, there are cases where in spite of the fact that the verb of the main clause is in conditional mode, the value of the verb participle in detached position will not necessarily be interpreted as a conditional one. The interpretation also depends on the semantics and contextual factors. In the following example we are dealing with a conditional interpretation being that the entire preceding context expresses the dream of the person (Frederick) to marry Ms. Rock (ex.16). In fact, the good translation in Albanian clearly indicates the conditional value of the DC, which is expressed by a gerund in Albanian:

- (17) *Sortie de son milieu, en peu de temps, elle ferait une compagne charmante* (ES, pp.321)

Duke u shkëputur nga mjedisi i saj, ajo do të bëhej pas pak kohe një shoqe tërheqëse (Edukimi i ndjenjave, pp.306)

(18) *Soutenue par un conservateur et prônée par un rouge, elle devait réussir.* (ES, pp. 449)

E përkrahur nga një konservator dhe e mburrur nga një i kuq, kjo kandidaturë duhej të korrite patjetër sukses. (Edukimi i ndjenjave, pp. 450)

In the example 18, from the preceding context we understand that it is a candidate already accepted, thereby avoiding any hypothetical interpretation of the DC.

(19) *Gai, il vous aimera cent fois mieux!* (Porporino, pp. 398)

Të gëzuar, do t'ju dojë një mijë herë më shumë (Porporino, pp. 304)

In the example 19, the detached construction is expressed by an adjective and can be paraphrased with «*po të jeni të gëzuar- if you're happy*». So, the adjective expresses the condition and the main clause the hypothesis.

c. Concessive value

The DCs used with a concessive value may have in their composition *bien que* or *quoique*. In this case, it is easy to get the semantic relation between the DC and the main clause of the sentence (20). But, the concessive interpretation may also depend partially or fully on implicit factors, complicating the translator's task, as in example (22) where there is a semantic contradiction between the idea «*Source d'informations incomparable*» and «*manquant de rigueur dans leur vérification*». Formally, in the translation of these constructions in Albanian, we always notice the presence of the linking device “*ndonëse*” making the semantic relation between the two parts of the sentence always explicit:

(20) *Bien que philosophe, M. Homais respectait les morts.* (Mme Bovary, e-book, pp. 671)

Ndonëse filozof, zoti Ome i nderonte të vdekurit (Zonja Bovari, pp. 328)

(21) *Surpris dans une position ridicule, il venait en un tournemain de reconquérir l'avantage sur le prince* (Porporino, pp. 302)

Ndonëse i befasuar në një pozitë qesharake, e kishte siguruar prapë epërsinë e tij ndaj princit (Porporino, pp. 229)

(22) *Longue et confuse, l'histoire de la Première Diminution n'est aujourd'hui connue que de rares spécialistes, qui s'appuient essentiellement sur la monumentale Histoire des Civilisations Boréales, en vingt-trois tomes, de Ravensburger et Dickinson. Source d'informations incomparable, cet ouvrage a parfois été considéré comme manquant de rigueur dans leur vérification ;* (La Possibilité d'une île, pp. 442)

E gjatë dhe e ngatërruar, historia e Pakësimit të Parë sot njihet vetëm nga pak specialistë, që bazohen kryesisht në veprën monumentale të Ravensburgut dhe Dikinsonit Historia e Civilizimeve Boreale, në njëzet e tre vëllime. Ndonëse një burim informacioni i pakrahasueshëm, ndonjëherë është menduar se kësaj vepre i mungon rigoroziteti për sa i përket provave që ata sjellin (Ishulli i mundshëm, pp. 172)

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Conclusions

The study of circumstantial values of the detached constructions that have as nucleus a noun, an adjective or a participle is important because it contributes to the correct interpretation of the relations established between these units and the rest of the sentence they belong to. As it was already known by many linguists, detached constructions, which stand in the initial-sentence position are more likely to bear these values, although it must be said that the main value, the one that appears frequently in literary texts, is the descriptive value. This value does not present any particular difficulty during the translation process, that is why we thought it would be better to treat the causal, conditional and concessive value of the detached constructions in the initial-sentence position that place translator before the task of choosing a particular semantic interpretation, which is not always easy because in addition to language skills, there is a need to mobilize both the extra linguistic knowledge and those acquired throughout the text, especially when it comes to literary texts. E. Havu (2002) compares these constructions with works of art, which can be perceived without understanding exactly what the artist meant, either by paraphrasing them or by explaining without knowing if the artist would have shared the same thought. If we wanted the translation to be in line with the (stylistic) norms of the Albanian language, in general, we would have to use a non-finite form (gerund) instead of the nouns and adjectives and in other cases (concessive value) we would have to make explicit the semantic relation and join the two clauses by an appropriate linking device.

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