

Resultative Constructions and some Remarks on Translating Albania Resultatives into English and Vice Versa

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Abstract

The structures of both languages, especially Albanian as a synthetic-analytical and English as an analytic-synthetic, one have their own peculiarities; but as Indo-European languages, they have also similarities, as it appears in the translation of resultative sentences from English to Albanian and vice versa.

These two languages have similarities as well as differences concerning the meaning of the resulting expression. Above all, Albanian differs from English in consequential sentences. As it is known, Albanian, like the other Neo-latin languages, does not have a strong resultative sentence, as well as the weak sentences, especially adjectival ones, which are more limited compared to English and other Germanic languages.

These and other features of the consequential sentence should be considered in their translation from Albanian into English and vice versa.

Key words: *Resultative Constructions, syntax, Albanian, English, translation.*

Introduction

Resultative sentences, in general express, the relationship between a cause and its effect. Firstly, they can be divided into simple sentences and compound sentences (the latter ones are also called *period* in the Albanian syntax terminology). According to Washio (1997), simple sentences, based on the meaning of the main verb, can be further classified into weak, strong and false or pseudo-consequential ones. For example, in English, in weak resultative sentences such as *She painted the house red*, (“Ajo e leu shtëpinë **me të kuqe**”; fjalë për fjalë: “Ajo leu shtëpinë **të kuqe**”: Albanian version) the main verb meaning determines in what situation will be the object at the end of the action expressed by the verb, while in the strong sentence such as *The dog barking awaked the neighbors awake* (Qeni i **zgjoi** fqinjët me të lehura: Albanian version); *She danced into the room*, (Ajo hyri **në dhomë** duke kërcyer: Albanian version), the meaning of the verbs and the meaning of the adjectives are completely independent from each other. On the other hand, pseudo-consequential sentences are not real sentences. They look as sentences just in surface, as they do not conform to the schema X

caused the doing Y to Z. Some of the researchers claim that only such constructions as *I closed the door tight*, can be analyzed as real sentences.

However, it is noticed that different languages have different types of constructions of consequential sentences. Consequential clauses in some languages might be analyzed not only as strong constructions, but as weak ones as well, while in some other languages, these sentences are to be analyzed only as weak constructions, because the latter ones have a logical connection between the meaning of the predicate and the consequential phrase, which means that mentally they require less effort from the speakers to elaborate on them¹.

Translating English resultatives into Albanian

As we have mentioned already, in contrast with English and some other languages, Albanian lacks real adjectival predicative resultatives. Instead, in Albanian are more frequent the gerund phrases, just like in Romance languages, as well as resultative clauses,² the phrase verb + ablative, etc., but not verbal prefixes, unlike Slavic languages and some other non-Indo-European languages. Thus, if we sing ourselves hoarse, we can say it in Albanian as follows:

1.

a. *U ngjirëm* *duke kënduar.*

hoarsen-1PL-PAST singing

lit. "We hoarsened singing."

b. *Kënduam* *sa* *u ngjirëm.*

sing-1PL-PAST until hoarsen-1PL-PAST

"We sang until we hoarsened."

c. *U ngjirëm* *së kënduari.*

hoarsen-1PL-PAST singing-ABL

"We sang until we hoarsened." or "We sang ourselves hoarse."

Adverbial resultatives are also possible in Albanian:

2.

a. *E* *mbusha* *gotën* *plot.*

it-CL-ACC fill-1PL-PAST glass.the-ACC full.

¹ For further details, see Washio (1997).

² We use here the term "resultative clause" or other terms interchangeable with it, like "clausal resultative constructions" or simply "clausal resultative" in a broader sense than that used in "Gramatika e gjuhës shqipe" (*The Grammar of Albanian Language*) (1996), including in this definition conclusive clauses and so called temporal clauses with resultative nuance, as well as asydic clauses.

'I filled my glass full.'

b. *Motra* *e tij* *i* *preu*
flokët *shkurt.*
 Sister.the-NOM his 3PL-CL-DAT cut-1SNG-PAST
 hair.the-ACC short.
 "His sister cut her hair short."

In Albanian we also find some adjectival resultative constructions, but they are "pseudo-resultatives". So, we can say:

3. *Motra* *e tij* *i* *preu*
flokët *të shkurtër.*
 Sister.the-NOM his 3PL-CL-DAT cut-3SNG-PAST
 hair.the-ACC short-ADJ.
 "His sister cut her hair short."

but not:

4. **E* *mbusha* *gotën* *të plotë.*
 it-CL-ACC fill-PAST glass.the-ACC full-ADJ.
 'I filled my glass full.'

But Albanian adverbial resultatives too have some constraints compared to their English counterparts. For example, although the sentence *I filled my glass full* may have a direct translation into Albanian, this is not the case for, let's say, *I drank my glass empty*. Its literal translation into Albanian (**E piva gotën bosh*) would be incorrect (and illogical, although grammatical, meaning "I drank the empty glass"). Still, in Albanian we can say *E piva gotën krejt*, lit. "*I drank the glass completely".

Sometimes a direct translation of English adjectival resultatives may have a depictive reading in Albanian. For example, if we translated literally the resultative sentence *John boiled the meat soft* (Washio, 1997: 9) - "Xhoni e zjeu mishin të butë" - this would suggest that the meat was already soft before John started boiling it, and not that it became soft because John boiled it. An adequate translation can be made by using a clausal resultative construction:

5. *Xhoni* *e* *zjeu*
mishin *derisa u zbut.*
 John-NOM 3SNG-CL-ACC boil-3SNG-PAST meat.the-ACC until
 soften-3SNG-PAST
 "John boiled the meat until it softened."

Many times an adjectival secondary predicate in an English resultative construction can be translated into Albanian by using a prepositional phrase:

6.

a. *The dog barked the neighbours awake.*

“Qeni fqinjët i zgjoi me të lehura.”
 Dog.the-NOM 3PL-CL-ACC wake-3SNG-PAST neighbours.the-ACC with barkings-ACC.

b. *He ran his shoes threadbare.*

“Iu hëngrën këpucët nga vrapj.”

lit. ‘(To him) the shoes were made threadbare by the run.’

c. *She painted the house red.*

“Ajo e leu shtëpinë me të kuqe”

lit. “She painted the house in red”.

Both Albanian sentences in (7a) and (7b) have also their gerund versions:

7.

a. *Qeni i zgjoi fqinjët duke lehur.*

“The dog woke up the neighbours barking.”

b. *Iu hëngrën këpucët duke vrapuar.*

lit. “(To him) the shoes were made threadbare running.”

English resultative prepositional phrases may have often their equivalent in Albanian, like in the following example (taken from Kallulli and Tasmowski (eds.) (2008: 2)):

8. *Ana letrën e lexoi deri në fund.*
 Ana.the-NOM 3SNG-CL-ACC read.3SNG-PAST letter.the-ACC until in end
 ‘Ana read the letter until the end.’

But sometimes Albanian may not license the use of a prepositional phrase or of any other pattern similar to it. Thus, the English PP *to + infinitive* in *The mother sang her baby to sleep* cannot be translated using its direct Albanian equivalent constructions *për të + (past) participle* or the subjunctive (“Nëna i këndoi foshnjës për të fjetur” or “Nëna i këndoi foshnjës (që) të flejë”) if we want to convey the right meaning. Both “Nëna i këndoi foshnjës për të fjetur” and “Nëna i këndoi foshnjës (që) të flejë” are purpose sentences, meaning “the mother sang to her baby in order for him to sleep”. The closest equivalent to resultative secondary predicate construction *The mother sang her baby to sleep* would be the resultative clauses *Nëna i këndoi foshnjës derisa e zuri gjumi* or *Nëna këndoi derisa foshnjën (e saj) e zuri gjumi*, meaning respectively “The mother sang to her baby until he went to sleep” and

“The mother sang until her baby went to sleep”.

Nonetheless, the structure *për të* + (*past*) *participle* or the subjunctive too can be resultative phrases:

9. *E tashmja* *është* *e mjaftueshme* *për të sjellë* *gëzim*.
 present.the-NOM. be-3SNG enough-ADJ bring out-INF joy.

‘The present is enough to bring out joy.’

Sometimes it is possible to have a translation of a second predicate construction with a simple sentence, maybe by leaving some information out. Thus, an expression like *Mary wiped the table clean* can be translated “Meri pastroi tryezën” (‘Mary cleaned the table’) or “Meri fshiu tryezën” (‘Mary wiped the table’), but it may sound a little unnatural in Albanian if we say “Meri e pastroi tryezën(.)³ duke e fshirë” (‘Mary cleaned the table(.) (by) wiping it’) or “Meri e fshiu tryezën(.) duke e pastruar” (‘Mary wiped the table(.) (by) cleaning it’).

As we have already seen, Albanian uses result clauses more often than English does. In fact, English result clauses can pretty much have a literal equivalent into Albanian. So, we can translate the sentences in (1) as follows:⁴

10.

a. *The blacksmith hammered the metal; consequently, the metal became flat.*

‘Farkëtari rrahu metalin;
 si rrjedhim, metali
 Blacksmith.the-NOM hammer.3SNG-PAST metal.the-ACC; consequently,
 metal.the-NOM
 u bë i shtypur.’
 become.3SNG-PAST flat.

b. *The blacksmith hammered the metal, resulting in the metal becoming flat.*

‘Farkëtari e rrahu
 metalin, duke e bërë
 Blacksmith.the-NOM it-CL-ACC hammer.3SNG-PAST metal.the-ACC, make.GER
 it-CL-ACC
 metalin të shtypur.’
 metal.the-ACC. flat.

c. *The blacksmith hammered the metal, thereby flattening it.*

‘Farkëtari e rrahu
 metalin, kësisoj duke e shtypur.
 Blacksmith.the-NOM it-CL-ACC hammer.3SNG-PAST metal.the-ACC, thereby

³ It should be noticed that in this case the gerund phrase can have both a causal and a resultative interpretation. Actually, a comma may help in resolving the ambiguity.

⁴ We are concerned here with syntactic structures rather than single lexical units, which sometimes may not be quite adequate.

flattening it-CL-ACC.

d. *The blacksmith hammered the metal, so that it became flat.*

‘Farkëtari e rrahu
metalin, kështu që ai
Blacksmith.the-NOM it-CL-ACC hammer.3SNG-PAST metal.the-ACC, so that
it-NOM
u bë i shtypur.’
become.3SNG-PAST flat.

e. *The blacksmith hammered the metal until it was flat.*

‘Farkëtari e rrahu
metalin derisa u bë
Blacksmith.the-NOM it-CL-ACC hammer.3SNG-PAST metal.the-ACC until
become.3SNG-PAST
i shtypur.’
flat.

f. *The blacksmith hammered the metal, causing it to flatten.*

‘Farkëtari e rrahu
metalin, duke e bërë
Blacksmith.the-NOM it-CL-ACC hammer.3SNG-PAST metal.the-ACC, make.GER
it-CL-ACC
të shtypet.’
to flatten.

g. *The blacksmith flattened the metal by hammering it.*

‘Farkëtari e shtypi
metalin duke e rrahur.’
Blacksmith.the-NOM it-CL-ACC hammer.3SNG-PAST metal.the-ACC hammer-GER
it-CL-ACC .

Other clausal resultative patterns co-occur in both languages, like those introduced by conjunctions such as: **ndaj** “so”, “so...(that)”; **prandaj** “so”, “so...(that)”; **aq ... sa** “so...(that)”, **kaq ... sa** “so...(that)”; **aq ... saqë** “so...(that)”; **kaq ... saqë** “so...(that)”; **i tillë ... sa** “such...(that)”; **i tillë ... që** “such...(that)”, etc. For example:

11.

a. *Ata ishin kaq të befasuar, sa nuk u
përpoqën ta ndalnin.*
They be.3PL-PAST so surprised that not
try.3-PL-PAST to stop him.

“They were so surprised they didn't try to stop him”.

b. *Ishte* *një zhurmë e tillë, sa s'dëgjonim gjë.*

Be.3SNG-PAST a noise such that not hear.3PL-PAST anything.

“It was such a noise that we couldn’t hear anything”.

VI. Conclusion

In this paper we compared and contrasted various resultative constructions in Albanian and English. While English tends to rely on secondary predication, especially on its most typical form, adjectival resultative construction, the most natural ways to convey the resultative meaning in Albanian usually resultative clauses, the gerund, prepositional phrases etc. But we think that resultative constructions are an important and complicated research topic, so a further and deeper investigation is needed, especially in Albanian language.

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