

THE CONTRASTIVE ANALYSIS OF THE ENGLISH *ING* CLAUSE AS SUBJECT COMPLEMENT AND ITS ALBANIAN CORRESPONDENTS

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ABSTRACT

This research paper aims at describing and analysing the structural differences and similarities between the nominal functions of the -ING clauses in English and their Albanian correspondents. Regarding the Albanian correspondents of the English -ING clauses in different functions, the following correspondents have been detected: Albanian clauses are introduced by verbal noun phrases, gerund constructions, finite and non-finite clauses. In light of this, it is hypothesised that these structural differences and similarities may cause difficulties for the Albanian EFL classroom students learning the nominal functions of the -ING clauses in English. This study is a corpus-based contrastive analysis between English and Albanian. The data collected in our corpus from both fictional and academic sources is contrasted in terms of their syntactic structures. In developing this research towards satisfactory outcomes, the study also includes an error survey of 27 Albanian students from the English Department of the Faculty of Languages, Cultures and Communication at South East European University in Tetova, and 21 students of the fourth year in secondary school at 'Sami Frashëri' in Kumanova. Furthermore, the findings and results of the survey are presented in the two tables labelled 7 and 8. Subsequently, the findings and the results from this research paper may help the Albanian EFL teachers in overcoming difficulties in the teaching processes of the nominal -ING clauses in English.

Keywords: nominal -ing clause, verbal noun phrase, gerund construction, finite clause.

Introduction

The research paper will target the two languages, English and Albanian, in relation to their syntactic structures. Based on this study, teaching complex English syntactic structures requires an exhaustive search for as well as use of methods and techniques transmitting knowledge to second language learners. While doing this, EFL teachers/students should pay attention to the role of the mother tongue influencing the second language acquisition. Most linguists say that the role of L1 is the most

significant part at the early stages of second language acquisition. However, Pit Corder cited in Gass and Selinker (1993, p.23) disagrees with this view, arguing that it is not the starting point of the L1 in syntactic acquisition but it is a continuum of increasing complexity or as he called it a '*developmental continuum*' which takes place in second language acquisition. It is because of this that it is assumed that EFL learners will have trouble in manoeuvring with these linguistic structures in their language output.

As mentioned above the EFL students can face large difficulties in producing certain linguistic structures. According to the findings of this study, Albanian EFL learners, in special cases, might face problems while producing English structures with -ING clauses in nominal functions. It can be seen that because of this complexity of the nominal -ING clauses in English it has been noted that the various Albanian correspondents might affect the literal output in English. One basic element for the success of the Albanian EFL learner lies in the ability to make generalisations of such structured correspondents.

Consequently, this MA thesis intends to help Albanian EFL teachers/learners to overcome the problems they face while dealing with the complexities of the nominal -ING clauses. This study will focus on finding differences, similarities and identities between the English -ING clauses and their Albanian correspondents and by ranking them according to their relative learning difficulty.

Therefore, we will be utilising contrastive analysis as a method in conducting this research. Contrastive analysis as a steering mechanism in the process of foreign language teaching and has been applied for decades by many linguists. It has been used to find out the relationship between the mother tongue and any other languages that follow, such as L2, L3 etc. Therefore, it has also been used to predict and explain the difficulties in the process of language learning. Since the foreground of this thesis has to do with contrastive analysis between the English -ING clauses in nominal functions and their Albanian correspondents, the method stated above has been applied in order to highlight the errors that might be conducted by the Albanian EFL learners in second language acquisition.

1. The contrastive analysis of the English - ING clause as subject complement and its Albanian correspondents

The nominal -ING clause can function as the subject complement in a sentence. The subject complements complete the predicate by providing information about the subject with regard to its attributes or its identity (Downing and Locke, 2006). According to Egan (2008), the -ING complement as mentioned in the section of literature review is the most versatile form of non-finite complement. Egan has also

stated that the -ING complement happens to be evident in Same-time constructions, in Backward-looking constructions, and in Forward-looking constructions of different processes such as: Mental, Attitude, Communication, Perception, Enablement, etc. of a matrix verb with both same-subject (SS) and different-subject (DF) constructions. The following example illustrates this:

- (1) The other shoe *went flying unto the devil-god of that river*. I thought, 'By Jove! It's all over. ("The Heart of Darkness", p. 32)

Këpuca tjetër *ra fluturimthi në djallin – zot të atij lumi*. Mendova. „ Për zotin, ka mbaruar puna. ("Zemra e Errësirës", f. 75)

The main verb *went* in (1) determines the tense of the -INGclause. The subject *The other shoe* and the -ING complement are in clear correlation describing each other; the verb and the -ING complement have the same subject as in (1). The nominal -ING clause denotes an attribute of the subject at the moment in time corresponding to the tense of the verb *went*, and it produces an imperfective aspect (Duffley, 2006, p.9). Comrie (1976) writes that imperfective aspect pays essential attention to the internal structure of the situation while perceptivity indicates the view of a situation as a single whole. The Albanian correspondent is an idiomatic expression introduced by the adverb *fluturimthi*. These kinds of adverbs derive from nouns. Then, different endings are added to these nouns, such as: - (*i*) *sht*, - *as*, - *azi*, and - *thi*. Moreover, the ending -*thi* is added to the noun stem, in this case *fluturim* describing fast and suddenly-ended activities (Domiet *al.* 1, 2002, p.375). Therefore, the analysis of the example belongs to same-time construction with the same-subject (SS).

Moreover, the nominal -ING clause as the subject complement expresses an on-going activity realised by the idiomatic construction *go + V-ing*. These idiomatic investigations of the verb *go* are not treated solely on their own but as a larger construction followed by -ING clause. Thus, the corpus extracts of the nominal -ING clauses as subject complements are characterised on the notion of the duration and on-going-ness. In the reference grammar, the Longman Grammar of Spoken and Written English (LGSWE) by Biberet *al.* (1999), the verb *go* is treated as commonly used with -ING clauses especially in fiction, to mark the manner in which the action is/was done. The examples from the corpus confirm this statement:

- (2) It extended on into infinity and through its golden depths his soul *went questing after hers*. ("Martin Eden", p. 33)

Shtrihej larg në pambarim dhe nëpërmjet rrezeve të saj të arta, shpirti i tij **ndiqte pas shpirtin e saj**. ("Martin Eden", f. 45)

- (3) His best stories, essays, and poems **went begging among them**, and yet, each month, he read reams of dull, prosy, inartistic stuff between all their various covers. ("Martin Eden", p. 217)

Tregimet, artikujt dhe vjershat e tij më të mira **po endeshin më kot nëpër redaksitë e atyre revistave**, kurse çdo muaj shihte në faqet e tyre gjithfarëshkrimesh pa vlerë artistike. ("Martin Eden", f. 303)

- (4) Well, Milly Jacobs was in a family way, an' she **went traveling**. ("Grapes of Wrath", p. 31)

Mili asi kohe kish qëlluar me barrë, dhe nga hidhërimi **lojti mendësh**. ("Vilet e Zemërimit", f. 64)

As noted in three cases above, the verb **go** is followed by an -ING clause which create forward-looking activities. Nevertheless, the Albanian correspondents in (2) and (3) are clauses introduced by verbs which express on-going activities: **ndiqte** and **poendeshin**. The verb **ndiqte** in (2) is in past imperfect. The verb **poendeshin** in (3) is a past tense imperfect passive voice. The construction of this verb form is **po + e pakryer** (imperfect) (Çeliku et al. 1998, p. 153). In addition to this, the Albanian correspondent in (4) is a clause introduced by a verb in simple past third person singular, **luajt-i**. Compared to other two cases, this example expresses a category of accomplishment.

Conclusion

There are 4 examples of nominal -ING clause as the subject complement described in this section of the contrastive analysis. All of the presented examples of the nominal -ING clauses follow the linking verb *go*. The Albanian correspondents of the English nominal-ING clause have different structural patterns.

Examples of nominal -ING clause as the subject complement of a sentence and their Albanian correspondents are listed below and documented the table:

Went flying unto the devil-god of that river -ra **fluturimthi** (an idiomatic expression introduced by an adverb)

Went questing after hers - **ndiqte pas shpirtin e saj** (a clause introduced by a verb in the past imperfect)

Went begging among them - **po endeshin më kot nëpër redaksitë e atyre revistave** (a clause introduced by a verb in the past imperfect)

Went raving – lojti mendësh (a clause introduced by a verb in the past simple)

Subject complement	Clauses introduced by verbs	An idiomatic expression introduced by an adverb	TOTAL
SC	3	1	4
% SC	75.0 %	25.0 %	100 %

Table 4. The -ING clause as subject complement

Based on the results of the above table, there are three examples where the English -ING clause as its Albanian correspondent are clauses introduced by verbs, and one example of the -ING clause has a clause introduced by an adverb in Albanian. These are the only examples of the -ING clauses found in our corpus.

2. Categorization of the Differences, Similarities and Identities between the English - ING clause as the subject complement and their Albanian correspondents, reflecting their Relative Learning Difficulty

2.1 As stated in section 3.4, the Albanian correspondents of the English -ING clause as the subject complement have different forms.

2.2 In section 3.4 special attention has been paid to the construction *go + V-ing*. The data analysis from the corpus has shown that the Albanian correspondent has different forms: *went flying unto the devil-god of that river* (a tense-less -ING clause) vs. *ra fluturimthi në djallin – zot të atij lumi* (an idiomatic expression introduced by adverb), and *went questing after hers* (a tense-less -ING clause) vs. *ndiqte pas shpirtin e saj* (a clause introduced by the verb phrase). As a result a fairly convincing prediction can be conceived that Albanian EFL students can be expected to encounter difficulty in the acquisition of this function of English - ING clause.

Conclusion

This thesis has tried to diagnose the problems Albanian EFL learners may come across in the process of acquiring nominal -ING clauses. The Albanian correspondents of the English -ING clauses in different nominal functions have been described, analysed, and categorized according to their relative learning difficulty. The following types of Albanian correspondents have been detected: Albanian clauses introduced by verbal noun phrases, gerund constructions, finite and non-finite clauses. A test was conducted with the students of the fourth semester at SEEU and the fourth year students at “Sami Frashëri” secondary school in order to verify the hypotheses of this

thesis. The findings of this study may help the Albanian EFL teachers to overcome the problems in their teaching of the English –ING clauses in different nominal functions. Based on the ranking of the differences, similarities and identities between the English nominal –ING clauses and their Albanian correspondents according to their relative learning difficulty, this research reached the following conclusions:

Table 1 displays the correct responses obtained from the fourth semester students Syntax 1.

The nominal –ING clause as	Correct Responses Percentage %
Subject Complement	66%

Table 2 displays the correct responses obtained from the fourth year students of intermediate English level at secondary school.

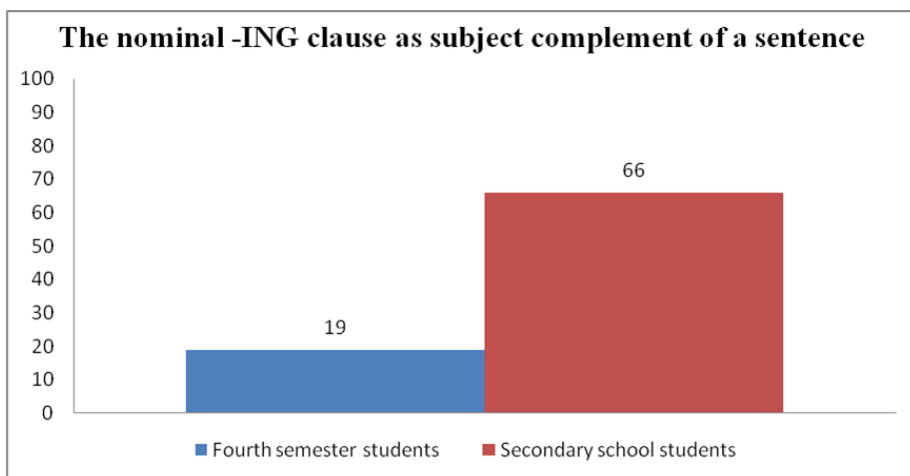
The nominal –ING clause as	Correct Responses Percentage %
Subject Complement	19%

According to the results of the pilot questionnaire presented in tables 1 & 2, sixty-six percent (66%) of the fourth semester students correctly used the *nominal –ING clause as the subject complement*. On the contrary to this, nineteen percent (19%) of the secondary school students used *the –ING clause as the subject complement* correctly. This type of clause is illustrated within the following example:

Example: *His hobby is playing computer games*. The hypothesis that the Albanian EFL students can face considerable difficulty in understanding the English –ING clause as subject complement has turned out to be partly correct.

The results from the pilot questionnaire: sixty-six percent (66%) of the fourth semester participants and only nineteen percent (19%) of the secondary school participants used the –ING clause as subject complement correctly.

This is illustrated in the following graphical display:



Graph 1

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