

CONTRASTIVE ANALYSIS OF ENGLISH AND ALBANIAN ADJECTIVES

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Abstract. Language is a systematic means of communicating by the use of sounds or conventional symbols. Learning a foreign language is never easy especially when we try to express our thought, opinions, feelings and ideas from mother language to target language. Because English is so widely spoken, it has often been referred to as a “world language” or “lingua franca”. While it is not an official language in most countries, it is currently the language most often taught as a foreign language. Since English language is taught as foreign language in our country learning its grammar is still challenging. Proper grammar is essential for learning and comprehending the second language knowing that grammar is a guide how language should be written and spoken. As basic Grammar deals with parts of speech this paper will concentrate on adjective both in English and Albanian their formation, function, degree, order and semantic classification. This seminar paper deals with contrastive analyses of English and Albanian adjectives and aims at describing and analyzing similarities and differences that exist between them. The methodology of the study is descriptive and contrastive. Even though the English and Albanian languages belong to the Indo-European family they do share similarities and differences both in morphological and syntactical terms.

Keywords: *English and Albanian adjectives, contrastive analysis, similarities, differences.*

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Introduction

Contrastive analysis (CA) has been first introduced by Charles Fries in (1952), and fully described by Lado in his book *Linguistics across Cultures* (1957). Contrastive analysis is a systematic branch of applied linguistics which deals with the linguistic description of the structure of two or more different languages. Despite the fact that there are ‘linguistic universals’ shared among languages “all languages have something in common”. It is also claimed that this comparison would identify points of difference or difficulty and provide results that would be important in language teaching. Lado (1957) shares the view that comparative analysis is extremely important in curriculum development, selection of teaching materials, and the identification of problems encountered during learning.

This linguistic contrastive paper aims to simplify the learning process of adjectives and

1 Lado, *Linguistics across Cultures* 1957, p 239

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can be used as orientation material for a deeper understanding of adjectives of both languages.

Adjectives as part of the speech in Albanian and English

Adjectives as a part of speech belong to the open set of words which means they can accept the addition of new morphemes or words through processes as derivation and compounding. According to ‘*The Cambridge Grammar of the English Language*’, adjectives typically denote properties of objects, persons, places, etc.: properties relating to age (old, young), size (big, small), shape (round, flat), weight (heavy, light), colour (black, blue), merit or quality (good, bad), and so on.² In Albanian language³ the adjective is a part of speech which denote the characteristic features (quality, property and relation) of noun (name, object, and place) and agrees with noun or pronoun in number, gender and case.

Morphological features of adjectives

According to morphological structure English adjectives are grouped into:

a. **Simple** – consisting of a single root

2 Rodney Huddleston, Geoffrey K. Pullum A Students Introduction to English Grammar 2005 p. 526

3 Shaban Demiraj - Gramatika e gjuhës shqipe 1(2002, Botimi i Akademisë së Shkencave, page 153

(small, big, soft, large, late, dark, hot)

- b. Derived
- c. Compound and
- d. Conversed adjectives formed through the conversion process.

Most productive way regarding the formation of adjectives in Albanian language is by derivation compounding and through conversion process. However they can be classified as follows:

- a. Simple- consisting of a single root (gjallë, i keq, i mirë, i parë, i ri, i shëndoshë)
- b. Derived (prefixes, suffixes, articulation, articulation and derivation at the same time).
- c. Compound
- d. Conversed

As we can see from above, both languages share similar characteristics concerning adjective formation.

Formation of English and Albanian adjectives by derivation (affixation)

Derivation is formation of a new word from another word by the addition of an affix (prefix or suffix)

Prefixes

In English language prefixes give to the adjectives negative meaning mostly. The most common prefixes used in English are: im, un, non, and in.

E.g., impatient, imperfect, impossible, inevitable, infinite, unhappy, unprecedented, inaccurate, premature, nonexistent.

E.g. Tom is **unhappy**. (Means that Tom is not happy)

As we can see in Albanian language the adjectives formed by prefixes do not always have negative meaning while in English is opposite prefixes are used to give word a negative meaning.

Albanian Adjectives formed by prefixes are quite a lot in number but the most productive are: pa, jo, anti-, para, prepa, pro, nder dhe prej.⁴

Albanian adjectives formed by prefixes can be:

1. By article and prefixes: i paaf-

4 Shaban Demiraj - Gramatika e gjuhës shqipe 1(2002, Botimi i Akademisë së Shkencave, page 184, 185

rueshëm, i pabotuar, i pakundërshtueshëm, i palavdishëm, i pashkruar, i prapambetur, prapambetës, i prapavendosur

Or just prefix: antifashist, antifetar, antikombëtar, antiamerikan, antipopullor, asimetrik, apolitik, anorma, jofetar, jokapitalist, jonormal, jopërparimtar, jozyrtar

Suffixes

The most important suffixes by which English adjective are formed are:

able/ible, less, ish, ous, ive, ic.

E.g. Understandable, capable, functional, influential, beautiful, artistic, hopeless, attractive, gorgeous, fabulous

In Albanian language the most productive way of forming adjectives is by adding suffixes.

The most common suffixes by which adjectives are formed are: (ë)s, -ar, -tar, -ues, -or, -tor, -ak, -ian, osh,

e.g. grindës, mbytës, ngjitës, bregdetar, elementar, letrar, drusor, gjyqësor, rrënjësor, paqësor, jetësor, tokësor, dimërak, perandorak, qortues, shkarkues, vlerësues etc.

Albanian languages are formed also by adding article and suffixes: i bujshëm, i dëmshëm, i famshëm, i ligjshëm, i lëngshëm, i nevojshëm, i mundimshëm, i rrufeshëm, i ujshëm, i zakonshëm.

Substantiation of adjectives in English and Albanian

By substantiation we understand the formation of adjectives from nouns through process of conversation. In English language there are two types of substantiation:⁵

- Full substantiation: the adjective becomes the noun and possesses all its categories,

E.g. relative, a – relative, n; criminal, a – criminal, n.

E.g. a relative pronoun, a criminal minds
A criminal lawyer ~ a lawyer specializing in criminal law

An atomic scientist ~ a scientist specializing in atomic science

A woolen dress ~ a dress made of wool
- Partial substantiation: the adjective has only some features of the noun.

Old – the old, young – the young.

5 Quirk, R, S. Greenbaum, G. Leech, and J. Svartvik. (1973). A Grammar of Contemporary English.

In Albanian language two types of substantiation can be distinguished:

- Full substantiation: the adjective becomes the noun and possesses all its categories.⁶

E.g. E mira dhe e liga nuk harrohen.

Good and evil are not forgotten.

- Partial substantiation: the adjective has only some features of the noun.

As we can there are quite similarities in both languages concerning formation of adjectives by substantiation.

Compound adjectives in English and Albanian

Compound adjectives in English language consist of at least two stems.

They may be of several patterns but according to **Bauer**⁷ they are as follow:

1. **Noun + adjective**: colour-blind, machine-readable, computer-literate, etc.

2. **Adjective + adjective**: open ended, deaf-mute, cognitive-affective etc.

3. **Noun + participle**: hand-operated, a well-informed person, data-handling.

4. **Particle + adjective**: over-qualified.

5. **Numeral + noun + adjective**: 41-year-old, one-year-old, nine-month-old, etc.

6. **Verb + adjective**: fail safe

7. **Adverb + adjective**: cross-modal

In Albanian language the compound adjectives are formed by the union of two or three stems in one word:⁸

1. **Noun + noun**: hundëshkabë, sylesh, shpirtkazmë, vetullsorë, zemërgur, zemërlepur.

2. **Noun + adjective**: ballëhapët, bark-gjerë, belhollë, cipëplasur, derëbardhë etc.

3. **Adjective + adjective**: elektromagnetik, elektromekanik, gjermanolindor etc.

4. **Noun + adverb**: kryejashtë, kokëjashtë, hundëpërpjetë

5. **Quantifier + adjective / Quantifier + noun**: njëditor, njëmujo, njëvjeçar, shumëvjeçar, treqindvjeçar, i dyanshëm, 6 Domi Mahir (kryeredaktor). Gramatika e gjuhës shqipe. Vëllimi I. - Morfologjia, page 182

7 Bauer, Laurie 2004. Adjectives, compounds and words.

8 Shaban Demiraj - Gramatika e gjuhës shqipe 1(2002, Botimi i Akademisë së Shkencave, page 197

Njërrësh, dykësh, tringjyresh, etc.

6. **Participle and adverb**: dashamir, dashakeq, bakeq, ngrënëkeq etc.

The syntactical function of adjectives in English and Albanian

In English language the function of adjectives is known by the position they take in the sentence so, adjectives placed before nouns are called attributive adjective and adjective that came after nouns are called predicative adjective. Attributive adjectives function as internal pre-head modifier to a following noun; predicative adjectives function mainly as predicative complement in clause structure:⁹

1. **Attributive use**: an old car black hair good news

2. **Predicative use**: The car is old.
Her hair is black. The news is good.

The position of adjective in Albanian can be placed in two positions either before the noun or after but mostly are used after noun.

E.g. Veturë e vjetër. Flokë të zeza.

3. **Attributive use**: E gjora vajzë nuk kishte ku të shkonte.

4. **Predicative use**: Vajza e gjorë nuk kishte ku të shkonte.

Before nouns are used only in special occasions in order to emphasize person or the object.

E.g. Të dashur shokë!

Adjective order in English and Albanian

As far we do realize that adjectives describe and modify nouns. However, in order to describe nouns in everyday life we use more than one adjective but in English language there is an order Generally the adjective order in English language is as follows:

a. quality, e.g., beautiful, cute, good, bad,...

b. size, height, length, e.g., small, big,

9 Rodney Huddleston, Geoffrey K. Pullum A Students Introduction to English Grammar 2005, page 112

short,...

c. age, temperature, e.g., young, old,
hot, cold,...

d. shape, e.g., triangle, square, round,...

e. colour, e.g., white, red, black,...

f. participle, e.g., boring, charming, neglected, amazing,...

g. origin, e.g., American, English, Albanian, Scottish,...

h. material, e.g., wood, steel, stone, iron, etc.

E.g. She was a beautiful, tall, young, black-haired, charming, Scottish woman.

In the above example, **beautiful** is an adjective indicating quality, **tall** is an adjective indicating size, **young** is an adjective indicating age, **black** is an adjective indicating colour, **charming** is an adjective describing people, **Scottish** is an adjective indicating origin. On the contrary in Albanian language doesn't exist such an order the adjectives are used freely according to the speaker choice.

E.g. Vajze **punëtore** dhe e **bukur**.
Vajze e **bukur** dhe **punëtore**.

Adjectival articles

One characteristic of adjectives in Albanian language is articulation, there is a large number of these adjectives that are called articulated adjectives. In this aspect the English adjectives differ from Albanian adjective they never take article like their counterparts in Albanian.

The articles that adjectives in Albanian language take are: i (masculine), e (feminine) and të (plural form of three genders).¹⁰

E.g. Laps i kuq.

Vijë e kuq.

Shokë të përbashkët.

Is also important to emphasize that Possessive adjectives are articulated as well. E.g. Libri i saj. Libri i tij (singular third person)

Librat e mi. Librat e tu. (First and second person plural)

¹⁰ Shaban Demiraj (ed.) - Gramatika e gjuhës shqipe 1 (2002, Botimi i Akademisë së Shkencave), page 163

Adjective Number

Adjectives in English do not depend on nouns like Albanian adjective, they do not change if noun is in singular or plural, they stay the same.

E.g.

White shirt.

White shirts.

In Albanian we have two numbers of adjectives: singular and plural. Albanian adjectives depend on the noun it corresponds with, so if the noun is singular the adjective too will be in singular the same is with the plural form too.

Unarticulated adjective form singular and plural form by taking the ending ë as shown in the example below:

E.g. malor – malorë, popullor- popullorë, etc.

The articulated adjectives form singular and plural form by changing article i (masculine), e (feminine) into të. Bahri beci 86

A.adj. Singular	A.adj. Plural	Eng.adjectives
i/e mire	të mirë/a	nice
i/e ëmbel	të ëmbel/a	sweet
i/e bardhë	të bardhë /a	white
i/e bukur	të bukurë/a	beautiful

Adjective Gender

Adjectives in English don't have gender, they don't change their form regardless noun gender. On the contrary Albanian adjective have gender depending on noun's gender they are used with, so if noun is in feminine gender the adjective is too so the gender of adjectives is determined by nouns gender

E.g.

Feminine	Masculine	Eng. adjectives
Vajzë e madhe	Djalë i madh	Nice boy/ girl
Veturë e bukur	Libër i bukur	Beautiful car/book
Mësuese e re	Mësues i ri	New teacher

As we see from examples the article e is used for feminine adjective and also take the ending e depending on noun's gender and article i is used for masculine adjectives and

takes the ending i.

Degrees of adjectives in both languages

In English language many adjectives which have more than one sense are either graded or ungraded depending in which sense are chosen.¹¹ Similar situation exist in Albanian language too, some adjective don't have comparative and superlative form.¹²

Eg. Dorzë e **hekurt**, radha e **pestë**, gazetë e **sotme**

The **western** part of island, five **adult** children, **political** power, **legal** process

The graded adjective in both languages have three degrees:

Positive, comparative, superlative.

The positive degree of adjectives

In both languages the positive degree meets the same criteria. The positive degree of adjectives in English and Albanian is the same, so positive adjectives are the base form of adjective which describe nouns (people, objects or things)

This building is **tall**.

Liqeni i Ohrit është **i thellë**

The comparative degree of adjectives

The comparative form of adjectives in English and Albanian expresses a higher degree of some quality which means comparing the quality of nouns (people, objects or things) with another quality.

Eg. This building is **taller than** our building.

My sister is **more beautiful than** Jane.

Liqeni i Ohrit është **më i thellë** se liqeni i Shkodrës.

Short adjectives (adjectives with one or two syllables) in English make comparative form by adding **est** to the end of adjectives and long adjectives (more than two syllables) make comparative form by using **more** before

11 Collins Cobuild] Susan Hunston, Elizabeth Manning, Gill Francis - Grammar Patterns II_ Nouns and Adjectives (1998, Collins) page 367

12 Beci Bahri. - Gramatika e gjuhës shqipe, Tiranë 1997, Prishtinë 1998, 2002, page 91

adjectives. In Albanian the comparison form is made by: **më i (M) më e (F) and më të (P)**. As we see the comparison form is different from English to Albanian.

E.g. This building is **as tall as the other one**.

Liqeni i Ohrit është **po aq i thellë** se liqeni i Shkodrës.

As we see from examples **as.....as, po aq** (adverbs of quantity) show the **degree equality** of humans or places of the same entity, so indicating that the buildings are of the same height.

This building is **not as tall** as the other one.

Liqeni i Ohrit është **më pak i thellë** se liqeni i Shkodrës.

Apart from the degree of equality we have also the degree of inequality in both languages, which shows that two objects are not the same regarding their quality. As we see from examples in English the inequality degree is formed by using **not ...as** while in Albanian by using the adverbs **më pak**, or **me shumë më pak**.

The superlative degree of adjectives

Short adjectives in English make superlative form by adding **est** to the end of adjectives and long adjectives make superlative form by using **most** before adjectives. In Albanian the comparison form is made by: **më i (M) më e (F) and më të (P)** and also using adverbs **shumë, mjaft, tepër, fort** before the adjectives etc. As we see the comparison form is different from English to Albanian.

Semantic features of the adjective both in languages

Semantically adjectives in both languages are classified into two groups: **qualitative and relative**.

Qualitative adjectives describe objects directly by denoting their shape, size, color or other general characteristics.

He lives in a big house.

Ju varën degët e gjelbra mbi kokë.

Relative adjectives describe objects indirectly, through their relations to other objects.

Woolen, wooden, silver. He lives in a wooden house

Conflict of interests

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

Conclusion

The purpose of this paper was to compare and contrast English adjectives with their counterpart in Albania also to find if there are any similarities between these two parts of speech.

Knowing the fact that both languages belong to Indo-European families we came to conclusion that they do have similarities in common as well the differences between them are unavoidable.

The similarities and differences between English and Albanian adjectives are as follow:

1. Adjectives as a part of speech in both languages, describe and modify the noun or pronoun.

2. According to morphological structure both English and Albanian adjectives are grouped into: simple, derived, compound and conversed.

3. Adjectives formed by prefixes either in Albanian or English are used mostly to give word a negative meaning.

4. In English and Albanian language the most productive way of forming adjectives is by adding suffixes.

5. In both languages adjectives are formed by compounding and conversion.

6. According to syntactical function in both languages adjectives are placed before nouns (attributive) and after nouns (predicative).

7. English and Albanian adjectives show differences regarding adjective order. As English adjectives have an order to follow Albanian adjectives can be used freely depending on the speaker's choice.

8. Another important fact to mention is the articulation. In Albanian language a large number adjectives are articulated. In this aspect the English adjectives differ from Albanian adjective they never take article like their counterparts in Albanian.

9. Another characteristic in which English and Albanian adjective are different is gender. As Albanian adjectives agree with noun in gender e.g. if noun is in feminine gender the adjective will be too, English adjectives don't have gender they don't change their form regardless noun gender.

10. Adjectives in English do not depend on nouns like Albanian adjective, they do not

change if noun is in singular or plural, they stay the same. Therefore they are different in number too.

11. However, English and Albanian adjective share similarities regarding the degree of adjective. Both languages have positive, comparative and superlative form

12. Semantically adjectives in both languages are classified into two groups: qualitative and relative.

The findings of this contrastive analyses regarding English and Albanian adjectives will help students to see and comprehend similarities and differences that exist also to get a better understanding of adjectives.

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