



## Research Article

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# Albanian Aorist and Time Reference Points

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Doi: 10.36941/jesr-2020-0051

### Abstract

*Topics related to the structure of the temporal system of Albanian language always give opportunities for new discussions to deal with certain aspects related to various forms of this system, and one of them is the aorist, as a tense containing many semantic, temporal, aspectual, stylistic values, etc. The relationships that exist between the verbal tenses in this system within the absolute time-relative time dimension, which relate to the independent or dependent use of temporal forms against one another in different discoursing contexts, make up an interpretation-based approach to interest. Hence, the essential objective of this paper will be specifically the relations of the Albanian aorist to the other verbal forms, always observed with a time reference point, to illuminate the character of these purely temporal relations against each other under all circumstances of the actions that take place and are displayed by verbal forms in different contexts, relying on the corpus of examined materials.*

**Keywords:** *verbal system, aorist, verbal tense, time reference point, moment of discourse, time of utterance, time of verbal action*

## 1. Introduction

Factual functioning and use of verbal forms in the Albanian language, including the Albanian aorist, as verbal form observed on this occasion, has always stirred interest for Albanian scholars to understand their features, whilst issues of time reference points are not explored to the proper extent, and at least in their entirety. This paper will try to approach the issues comprehensively, aiming at drawing consistent and sustainable conclusions, without denying that controversial, or even untreated topics, may stay contingent to the limited nature of this paper. Yet, the use of aorist with the temporal moment of speaking will be the central focus, both in relation to the time of utterance and the time of verbal action, as two grammatical facts on the theory of utterance, to follow with the aorist itself as a moment point-oriented function for other verbal forms, based on its topicality in certain statement structures and reflections in the general sense of statements.

## 2. Objective, Purpose and Methods of the Research

The essential objective of this paper will be to identify the temporal moments of reference function for the temporal determination of the Albanian aorist, starting from the moment of discourse, realised by the speech act, as a dominant moment point, stemming thereafter into the moment points with this grammatical function, such as the time of utterance and the time of verbal action, as two-moment points dealing with different plans of drawing written texts, according to the theory of utterance. Pivotal bulk of the work also comprises the temporal moment of the aorist, with an orienting function for other temporal forms, always relying on concrete linguistic material, highlighting the characteristics transcending these particular linguistic structures.

The purpose of the present paper is attempting to discover the use of the aorist concerning these temporal moments, by highlighting distinct features in the interrelationship of linguistic facts in unique usage situations.

Different methods are used, through which the set objectives have been achieved, always starting from the concrete observation of linguistic materials, then the real situation of linguistic structures in context, and through inductive and deductive approach attempts are being made to elaborate the sustainable arguments and conclusions based on the factual situation of use of the Albanian aorist. In particular, the inductive approach served as a way to derive substantive reasoning compatible with the nature of this paper.

The observation, interwoven also with other methods such as descriptive, analytical and interpretive ones, is estimated to have contributed to extending the analysis and substantially contributed to the general quality of the work and to draw the significant conclusions and findings on the above topics.

## 3. The Nature of the Relation between the Albanian Aorist and Time Reference Points

Being a verbal form the core of its semantic nature lies in telling "an action already completed, at some point in the past", (ASHSH, 2002, 310), it consequently shows that "it has a more significant ability to localise an action expressed in time". (Kelmendi, 2006, 35). This feature derives from the very nature of the character of a completed action or state, which may also be known as time limits, or at least it may be more easily localised over a time period or temporal segment approximate to objective time, a determination that is made mainly from the speaking moment.

### 3.1 Relation discourse trice – aorist

The nature of relation of the aorist to the speaking moment is made in two ways: directly and indirectly. This has to do with the nature of verbal action itself: when the speaker expresses an action that has taken place in relation to the actuality of speaking, a direct relation is realised, whereas when the action expressed by the aorist belongs to a past detached from the speaking moment then it becomes indirect. What stands out from the observation of concrete examples, the aorist is directly related to the discourse trice when used in interrogative sentences, where their structure is of a simple sentence, such as:

- *What **did** you **do** to your sister? (Surroi, 1961.42)*
- *Really, why **did** you **buy** bread? - Irena told Mihal.*
- *I don't know - Mihamli said... (Lera, 1985.182)*

Even in other contexts, excluding interrogative clauses, where the speaker is clearly present in the statement and uses the aorist directly from the speaking moment, as in the examples:

- *I **stood** quite a bit in front of the mirror lined with a layer of dust ... (Kraja, 2018.8)*
- *I **took** a long walk outside the city today with the professor's family. (Spasse, 1986, 87)*

There are structures that in certain contexts the time localisation of the aorist is made not directly from the speaking moment, but indirectly from a later moment point, as in the case below:

- *The first week of September we **departed** by plane to Moscow. (Kadare, 2014.84)*
- *Yes, yes, the death just came to me in the highlands.*
- *And you got **rid** of it? (Buxhovi, 1990.5)*

Such a simple relation is also realised in other contexts where the presence of the speaker is less noticeable, such as:

- *The visit of Mhill of Vlashaj **lasted** half an hour. (Vasa, 1990.61)*
- *The car **stopped** in front of a hotel entrance. (Kadare, 2014.11)*

### 3.2 Relation aorist - time of utterance pronouncement

It is known that any uttered statement occurs at a particular point in time, as does the event to which it relates, except that the statement may be expressed both in an immediate relation to it and at a later moment point, depending on the objective circumstances, and extra-linguistic character. Examining the concrete materials, it appears that as much as the Albanian aorist is narration time it is similarly used as a discourse time, and it is sometimes difficult to identify a dividing line between these two types of utterance. However, it is the discourse that is a dominant type of construction of linguistic utterances related to the timing of their pronouncement, where the speaker takes over the discourse.

When the events expressed in a discourse context are simultaneously related to the time of their pronouncement, then the relation of the verbal form to this time-oriented moment is direct, such as:

- *Poor me... I **brought him up, enlightened** him, and nowadays he **turned** his back on me. He **left** his mother and his brother and **perished**... (Rrahmani, 1982, 57)*

However, in full contexts, events have occurred in moments of prematureness relative to the time of their pronouncement, except that they are told by the speaker, the one who experienced them as in the case below:

- *Then I **arrived** at this place. It was dusk. City lights are seen far away. It had been quite some time without seeing them. I **stood** at the place like numbed. They **woke me up** with a very unbearable craving ... It seemed, they did the opposite to him. As I was staying like that, he hit me at the back of my head by pistol. (Kadare, 2009.85)*

### 3.3 Relation aorist - time of verbal action

An event expressed by another type of discourse called the "second type of utterance" (Kelmendi, 2006, 31) is characterised, among the others, by the absence of the first person, where the speaker has almost no trace in discourse. The Albanian aorist has a solid use in this type of narrative, where not only the absence of the first person, but also the other deictics ('shifters'), which link the event with the actuality of speech come into effect, such as:

- *The men began to cover the grave. Tiri's mother **fainted**. They **attended** and **took** her away. Safoja **was lost** of sight. Nothing was believed. They **gathered** at the hut and the voice of Tiri's mother who was crying ... Darkness **fell** over the city, reached up to there. Everyone was gone... (Lera, 1985, 16)*

There is another type of compilation of statements, which although structurally deictic in time, they refer to the time of verbal action, hence they belong to this type of utterance, such as:

- ***Two weeks ago**, Triko's bride **died** of Kat's insanity ... Afërdita hated Kate for **killing** her new bride by her own hand ... when Shpresa's mother **entered**, she **stopped** talking... (Spasse, 1989, 135).*

### 3.4 Function-oriented aorist

In certain lecturing contests, the temporal moment point of the aorist may also serve as another point of reference, with a function-oriented for another verbal form. In more complex statement structures, that in different syntactic periods or in units larger than the phrase, this verbal form may

have a referential function to another verbal form, which implies that the temporal moment as expressed by the aorist timely determines another temporal moment marked by another verbal form in context. Following the use of this linguistic fact in the corpus of yielding examples, these time conjunction structures have emerged and they express this grammatical function. As for the relation of the statement to the temporal speaking moment, the statement may itself refer to this moment in time, but it may also have no direct relation to it and it refers to the time of verbal action.

#### 3.4.1 Relation discourse *trice* - aorist - present subjunctive

The aorist performs the time-oriented function unevenly concerning different temporal forms, and depending on the context of the statement it may have a full orienting function, and in others, it does not emerge with full functional potential except that this relation, first and foremost, is realised by looking into the grammatical dimension of the statement, although an objective time subordination, however dim, exists, such as:

- *I told him to wait for you Saturday afternoon. (Lera, 1985, 292)*
- *Why are you in high dungeon," Arqileja said. - I asked to know how far the war is. (Lera, 1985, 11)*

#### 3.4.2 Relation time of verbal action - aorist - present subjunctive

On the other hand, in the following case the relation between these temporal forms is made indirectly from the speaking moment:

- *One of the days, Çelë Shkoza **decided to ambush** and kill Malë Zabeli. (Mehmeti, 2010, 62)*

Because the discursive context excludes the speaking moment and the speaker as the carrier of the referring function for events or certain actions, and it is therefore the moment point of the aorist **decided** that has a time-oriented function of both subjunctive, that of **to ambush** and the following instant subjunctive **to kill**, the consequences of which are borne by another subject other than the first one. Thus, the aorist **decided** comes up with complete and independent meaning, because it refers to two subjunctives: he *decided to ambush and decided to kill him...*

#### 3.5 Relation discourse *trice* - aorist - present admirative

An indirect relation from the speaking moment can also be realised between the aorist and the present admirative, as in the case below:

- *One night he **told me that I was flammable**, but my hands were very cold. (Shkreli, 1973, 108)*

Where the grammatical dimension of the statement has surely its weight, because from the aorist point of view only a factual situation is confirmed, which objectively has no time subordination on it, but in the grammatical context the statement manifests such a relation.

#### 3.6 Relation aorist - aorist

Aorist-aorist interdependence relation is common and widely used in all styles of communication, even in popular literature, but different semantic features are observed from the structural union of constituent clauses. Thus, in the following examples, it is the aorist of the main clause that is time dependent on the temporal moment point of the aorist of the subordinate clause of time with the conjunction **when**, as expressed by the speaker himself, but the events have a different character in relation to him: there are times when the subject of actions are the others, the speaker is just an observer, such as:

- *When he **passed** by me, he **bowed** his head like an infant. (Lera, 1985, 9)*

There are contexts where the observing role of the speaker is not direct, such as:

- *When he **saw** what happened, he **returned**, he took what he needed and got in the vehicle as well. (Shkreli, 1973, 7)*

But, there are contexts where the action carrier is the speaker himself, such as:

- *The day I **was introduced** to the puppet theatre: I **realised** a truth: our behaviour was scandalous.* (Kongoli, 2005, 83)

Other structures of clauses of time joined by other conjunctions, such as **as** and **how**, express the same semantic and time features in the statement, such as:

- *As I **approached**, I **stopped** the vehicle and got out.* (Shkreli, 1973, 7)
- *As soon as he **sat down** and took a breath, he **recounted** the unexpected that had happened to him that day in the city.* (Shkreli, 1973, 95)

There are clause structures where the adverb **then** has a correlative function, (Thoma, 2002, 17) preceding the subordinate clause of time, in which the interdependence between two aorist forms is realised, such as:

- *He lived in his cell an eremite life for three days and **came out** from there **only then** when he **thought** that he had cleansed his soul by praying to God.* (Koreshi, 2005, 18)

But, when in the statement structure the correlative **then** is not preceded by a type of particle **precisely exactly, only**, etc., then its presence will not become necessary whilst the correlation of verbal forms turns to be completely functional, such as:

- *Konda **indicted** him when he **fell** into prison.* (Çela, 2005, 57)

There are structural contexts in which a verb that expresses a sensory perception is used, such as the verb **see**, for example, in an aorist, which can even be used in subordinate clauses of time, such as:

- *I found Kristo and I **was surprised to see** him with a bottle on his hand.* (Çela, 2005, 109)
- *When he **saw** his wife so different, he **felt** as if something had drilled him inside ...* (Spasse, 1986, 81)

Which has pre-time relations regarding the temporal moment of the aorist, whether precursor or subsequent.

Whereas in another structural and semantic context, the aorist, located in the leading clause, is timely subordinated to the moment point of another aorist, in the dependent one, such as:

- *When I **approached** kaymakam's tower, I **saw** that others were waiting there.* (Buxhovi, 1990, 34)

Whereas in a structure of statements with subordinate type clauses:

- *I **saw** that he **put** aspirin on the tongue ...* (Çela, 2005, 52)

No matter how the clause is constructed with the verb **see**, in the aorist **saw**, the semantic composition of the statement itself nevertheless proves that there is a subordination, though not fully functional, because *putting* aspirin on the tongue seems to "condition" the temporal moment of *sight*, thus it is actually the time moment of the subordinate clause that "orients" the timing of the main clause.

Likewise, even in conjunctive structures linked by the conjunction **and**, although we have the *aorist-aorist* correlation with the time sequence of actions, it cannot be said that we have a pure realisation of time subordination, because the very nature of the coordinating periods does not contain such features of interdependence, although there may be such semantic elements, as in the examples:

- *He **turned back** to me and **mumbled** something that my brain could hardly break down. I'm sick, he said, I'm going to die.* (Kongoli, 2005, 11)
- *A reddish vehicle, with black glass, **stopped** hastily and also **set off** hastily, and a buxom woman came out and seated on a side of the sidewalk ...* (Kraja, 2018, 9)

However, observing the logical side of the content of these statements it cannot be said that there is no type of time subordination, perhaps not by the weight of real subordination, as in subordinate ones, but there is a logical dependence, conditioned by the objective reality itself, as in the statement below:

- *The driver **pulled out** a cigarette and **lit** it...*

Where the chronological point of time manifests its function, expressing an objective dependence of given actions themselves, once *pulling out* of a cigarette, and then its *lighting*. The

following examples show the order of the statement structure determined by the fact that the aorist in the leading clause, positioned at the beginning of the statement, is timely subordinated by the moment point of the aorist of subordinate clause of time, linked by the conjunction **when** in subsequent position. In these semantic-syntactic structures, the subordinate clause of time refers to a precursor of a starting character **from that day**, or of the type **that day, that morning**, as in the following examples:

- *These you have **won** since that day you **tied** your fate to that of Luli, so you are as my daughter to me. (Vasa, 1990, 60)*
- *I **listened** to this song for the first time that morning, when I **unloaded** the crates at the olive factory in Rro. (Arapi, 1971, 17)*
- *When the night **fell**, the lampshade **went** into the water ... When it **was** morning, the gentleman **came** and saw him alive ... (from popular prose)*

Also, in a statement structure with more terms, the subordination does not appear to be quite clear, namely the time consequence of actions in a way is likely to imply a time subordination of these forms of aorist, although the other consequential-motivational connotations are involved therein, as in the example below:

- *When the groom **set foot** in the village, half of the world **lighted**, when the bride **went out** to the porch ... Even the sun **burst out** of envy and **was not seen** for three days ... (Kuteli, 1968, 108)*

### 3.7 Relation aorist - perfect indicative

Even such a conjunction may express time subordination, considered from the grammatical point of view, but it appears to be less motivated, because the act of past is only confirmed as an objective fact in relation to the temporal moment point of the aorist, which in turn, it has the speaking time moment as an orientation point, as in the case below:

- *I am sorry, oh darling! I **realised** that I **am the cause** of your illness. (Spasse, 1986, 70)*

### 3.8 Relation aorist – past perfect indicative

These relations are realised in different semantic-syntactic contexts, somewhere with clear referential function and somewhere more faded. Thus, in the case:

- *When he **went** at the end of the village, the sun **had risen** above the sky ... (Rrahmani, 1986, 78)*

Although the speaker has no trace of discourse, this correlation also functions as being motivated by the time-oriented function aspect of the aorist, always in the grammatical plan, where the simultaneousness of actions, objectively partial, is evident.

Even in other structures, coupled with the syntactic conjunction **that**, where a semantic category verb is primarily included, such a relation can be realised, though not with all the referential functional potential, but more closely related to it, such as:

- *The head of the sector **told me he had asked for** a girl ... (Lera, 1985, 292)*
- *Skanderbeg **thought he had found** in him a man of great heart ... (Godo, 1976, 46)*

Or in another structure with prefixes of a clause of time, joined by the conjunction **when**, like:

- *It seemed that the day when John **visited** the abbey, it **had happened** something in the very foundations of Mat Valley. (Godo, 1976, 5)*

There are other structures, where the realisation of the time subordination comes out quite clearly, in which the action given by the past perfect **had recalled** refers to the moment point of the aorist in the subordinate clause of time **when he saw** ..., as:

- *When he **saw** her sitting on the armchair of the police chief, the reporter was immediately **had recalled** ... (Pashku, 1986.139)*

There are contexts where there is also a time subordination between the actions expressed by

the aorist and the perfect indicative, in a clear sense of time sequence, but which, from a different point of view, depends solely on the moment point of the aorist (**returned**) in the subordinate clause occurs the realisation of past perfect (**had met**) in the leading sentence, as in the case:

- *It was exactly Lami, whom I **had met** after I **returned** from studies. (Buxhovi, 1990, 140)*

### 3.9 Relation aorist - past pluperfect

Even the past pluperfect may have a time subordination to the moment point of the aorist, where the statement has a clear cause-effect connotation, as in the case below:

- *When Lucija **died**, he **had wept** that he had fainted and they brought him home on the back of a mule. (Koreshi, 2005, 32)*

The speaking moment has no role in this context of the conjugation of verbal forms since the time reference point serves as the time of verbal action.

### 3.10 Relation aorist - future

In certain structures of statements, in which the cause-effect connotation is an essential meaning, there is also a sequence of tense of these verbal forms, an observable subordination, such as:

- *Go home, go, if **you stayed**, you **will all die!** (Pireva, 2019, 87)*

Because if the subjects to whom the speaker is addressing **were staying** in the designated place, the probable **death** will occur, expressed in the verbal form of the future, with time subordination being created by the cause-event connotation. The speaking moment has the function of a time reference point in this statement context.

### 3.11 Relation aorist - future of the past

The aorist also has a structural correlation to a future of the past, with which it is most commonly used in almost all discoursing styles, although its orientating designation does not manifest all the functional potential.

These clause structures are joined by the syntactical conjunction **that**, although semantically different in content, in the grammatical sense of the future it seems as if they do not completely realise the time meaning dependant on the time moment of the aorist, thus giving rise to a faded function of this semantic time component, as in the examples:

- *Victor raised his head. It was his fiancée.*
- *You **told** me that you **would not go out** tonight. Where are you going? (Lera, 1985, 159)*

However, in other structures, such as the subordinate subject clause, this time subordination actually seems less motivating, but in the grammatical sense it can also be interpreted as follows:

- *It went a week, a month, the season passed as well. The old man didn't know anything. But he was waiting. **He was sure** something **would come up** to the light. (Mehmetaj, 2010, 83)*

Even in a subordinate object clause:

- *Andrea Topia **asked** who **would protect** their principalities from pashas' attacks in the border ... (Godo, 1976, 55)*

No matter that grammatically a structural dependency is realised, functionally it does not appear to be so, as the future of the past **would protect** objectively has no time subordination on the moment point of the aorist **asked**, except for clarifying reference to the relevant discoursing context.

Almost in the same semantic-syntactic terms, the following statement is also realised:

- *As soon as I passed Erenik, I kissed my land... I am yours, oh land, I said and **swore I would work** for its good until the last beat of my breath. (Buxhovi, 1990, 21)*

Where the future of the past **would work** actually has no time subordination to the aorist, but a formal reference that may eventually have a moral impact on the motivational character of the speaking subject in context.

3.12 Relation aorist – perfect admirative

Also, a verbal form of admirative may be time-oriented by the time moment of the aorist, and in this particular case this is realised by the perfect admirative, such as:

- *Oh Ahmet, oh! **They said**, man, that you **had bought** Qamil Hamza's land. (Rahmani, 1986, 83)*

In these contexts, although the actual events may objectively occur at distinct time moments point and with no relation to each other, in grammatical terms, there are linguistic realities and interpretative facts motivated by pointing to the temporal orientating function.

3.13 Relation aorist - perfect conditional

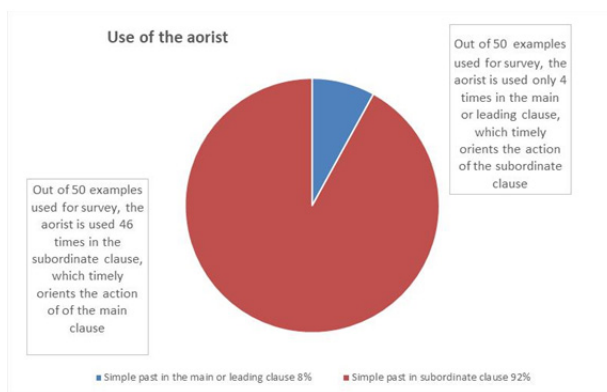
In certain contexts, albeit rarer, the moment point of the aorist may also timely orient a temporal type of conditional mood. The statement includes other connotations, besides the cause-effect one, of the consequential relations, as in the case below:

- *The train railed... stopping from time to time, as they sat inside fearing that **if they come out, they would miss it** or their seats **would be occupied** by others. (Mehmetaj, 2010, 102)*

In certain contexts, the time subordination is realised by the entire functional potential, because the realisation of one action stirs or motivates the other one.

**Table 1:** Relation reference point - aorist - other verbal forms

<b>Reference point</b>	Aorist	Present subjunctive
	Aorist	Present admirative
	Aorist	Aorist
	Aorist	Perfect indicative
	Aorist	Past perfect indicative
	Aorist	Past pluperfect
	Aorist	Future
	Aorist	Future of the past
	Aorist	Perfect admirative
	Aorist	Perfect conditional



**Chart 1:** Use of the aorist with an orientating function in the main and subordinate clauses

**4. Conclusions**

Regarding the theoretical background, having always as its starting point the corpus of concrete examples and this survey line, an attempt has been made to reach an objective conclusion on the



independent and dependent use of the Albanian aorist by drawing some consistent facts. Therefore, the conclusions should also be understood as a manifestation of their dominant character, as obvious features of the utterance, and not as their full substantive and functional potential in all possible contexts of discoursing use.

The reference point represents a grammatical fact with a function of time characterisation of the verbal forms of Albanian, which realises its identity as: a. speech moment (speaking moment); b. time of utterance pronouncement; c. time of verbal action and ç. temporal moment point of a verbal form with orientating function for another verbal form in the statement.

If one observes the grammatical nature of the aorist, there are two ways of interrelation to the speaking moment: directly and indirectly, whilst there is another nature of use in relation to other moment points.

To the extent that it emerges from the examples observed in this paper, the Albanian aorist enters a correlation of time subordination in:

- the subordinate structures with the **aorist in the leading clause**, which timely directs the action expressed in the subordinate clause from the present subjunctive.
- the subordinate structures with the **aorist in the subordinate clause**, which refers to the time moment of the main clause expressed in the verbal form as presented in Table 1, whereas the frequency of the use of aorist in the leading and main clause with orienting function is presented in Chart1.

It cannot be assumed that a given period, where the action of the subordinate clause is oriented by a directional verb or vice versa, expresses distinctive features in the syntactic sense, whether of a restrictive character or of any nature other than semantic content, the real-time of occurrence of concrete events, which also makes the reference point conditional to one another.

The semantic weight of time in the grammatical dimension of the statement, i.e, its time objectivity, whether in statements in which time comes to the fore or in the other cases, where it comes to second place, serves as a starting point for any analysis. Likewise, as in statements that reflect effectively real events and in others that contain less real or completely fictitious events, where the objective weight of the event is of a different, non-concrete character, which also has to do with the speaking attitude, the reflection on the independent or dependent use of verb forms in relation to temporal moment points does not change, and this results from the syntactic character of this grammatical category.

There are structures where time subordination is not realised in its entire functional reference potential, thus the temporal moment point of one verbal form does not directly motivate the occurrence of another event, but it merely manifests it as an existential reality. On the other hand, there are discoursing structures, in which time reference appears to be quite legal and fully functional.

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