

The Similarities and Differences between English and Albanian Progressive Tenses In Terms of Manner Form Usage Aspect and Modality

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Doi:10.5901/jesr.2014.v4n4p158

Abstract

The major focus of this study is the contrastive analysis between the English Progressive Tenses *visa vi* their Albanian correspondents and thus, contribute to the theoretical linguistics, to the general theory of contrastive linguistics, to the development of contrastive studies in Albanian, to the development of Albanian prescriptive grammars. From a practical view, it aims to facilitate the teaching and the learning process of the noted tenses. This approach has many advantages; it will provide us with all the information needed about form, usage, modality or aspect. My assumption is that the difficulties the Albanian speaking teachers and learners of English are facing are due to the following: 1) English and Albanian being typologically two different languages; English as a typical analytical language and Albanian as a typical synthetic language, differences are inevitable; 2) The English language in comparison with the Albanian and other languages has a relatively large number of progressive expressions. Having all of these in mind, we can conclude that the contrastive study in general, and my study in particular, aims to highlight the similarities and the dissimilarities between both languages

Keywords: Be, modal, verb, Present Continuous, Past Continuous, Future Continuous, similarities comparison, differences, modality, aspect.

1. Introduction

Every language in the world possesses its own rules based on grammar, morphology, syntax, phonetics and linguistic. Grammar describes the structure of expressions in the English Language, including the structure of words, phrases, clauses, and sentences. This research paper it is focused more on grammar tenses but mostly highlights the progressive tenses in English language. Things may happen in the past, now or in the future. The tenses show the time of an action or state of being which are shown by a verb, and the verb ending is changed to show at what a particular time we are referring to.

Time can be divided into three periods The Present , The Past and The Future. The tenses we use to show what time we are talking about are divided into the Simple, Perfect and Continuous tenses.

We use two tenses to talk about the present, six tenses to talk about the past and three to about the future actions in English language. However, there are several ways to talk about the future some of which use the present tenses.

The goal of this research paper is to point out and to find differences and similarities between English and Albanian continuous (progressive) tenses. Equivalence will be part of this research where will be shown grammar differences but mostly about verb tenses and the verb usage on both languages, such as English and Albanian.

Morphology as a field of linguistics that studies the structure of a word, where each word belongs to a given class named as word class, which may be an open class or a closed class. Open classes acknowledge the addition of new words. Therefore, closed classes generally do not change and they may be called as unproductively and immutable in form.

To have understandable acces about the topick, tere is going to be a short description about verb tenses and their usage. A verb is a word that means an action, an occurrence or a state of being.

"In many languages, verbs are inflected (modified in form) to encode tense, aspect, mood, and voice. A verb may also agree with the person, gender, and/or number of some of its arguments, such as its subject, or object. In many languages, verbs have a present tense, to indicate that an action is being carried out; a past tense, to indicate that an action has been done; and a future tense, to indicate that an action will be done".¹

¹ <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Verb> (accessed on 12/11/2013, 6:58 pm)

2. Introduction to the English Verb Tenses

2.1 What is a Progressive Tense?

Progressive tenses are formed by *auxiliary verb + present participle and the appropriate modal* and auxiliary verb have that show the process of continuation. "We use continuous verb forms to describe actions which we see happening over a period of time".²

Progressive tenses are used to describe an action in progress. Such as:

- **Temporary** - the situation is not permanent and will not continue for a long period of time. *They were practicing to dance while the audience was coming in.*
- **Happening around a point of time** - *At 10 o'clock the students were still having exam.*
- **Involving change or development** - *She was getting fatter day by day.*
- **Incomplete** - I was having a marvelous holiday.

The continuous infinitive (to) be + *ing* also emphasizes an action is in progress at a particular time.⁴
The children seem to be enjoying the vacation.

2.2 Special uses of Progressive Forms

"**Progressive with always.** We can use a progressive form with *always* and similar words to talk about repeated but unpredictable or unplanned events".³

Always + progressive form (something that is happening regularly)

Ex. *He is always missing the first lesson.*

However, *always* + the continuous form is also common. This structure stresses the repetitiveness of the action and often indicates that the speaker finds the repeated action surprising, strange or irritating.

The structure with the adverb "**always**" is often used to make criticism or complaint.

- **Past Continuous for polite requests** – to make the request more polite and experimental verbs like: wonder, hope, etc may be used.

Ex. She **was hoping** to win the lottery again after a lot of years passed.

- **Present Continuous for future arrangements** – in a sentence can be used a future time phrase or otherwise, we can understand from the context that we are talking about the future.

Ex. What **are you doing** the next weekend?

- **Modal verbs** – "With modal verbs, the continuous infinitive can have a different meaning from the simple infinitive".⁴

Ex. He **might be graduating** by the end of the year.

2.3 Verbs which change meaning in Continuous and Simple Forms

2.3.1 State verbs

State verbs occur only in the simple form.

Clara *seems* very attractive.

State verbs often used are:

- Be
- Verbs of possession and unchangeable states (measure, fit, weigh)
- Verbs that deals with the sense (appear, smell, taste)
- Verbs describing thoughts and processes (think, feel)

² Cunningham, S., Moor, P., Carr, C. J. "Cutting Edge - Advanced" – 2003, Longman, (pp. 116)

³ Swan, M., Walter, C. "Oxford English Grammar Course" – 2011, Great Clarendon Street, OX2 6DP, United Kingdom, (pp.26)

⁴ Ibid (pp. 116,117)

2.3.2 Verbs that describes states and actions

If the state verbs are used in progressive form they become actions of some sort.

“**to be**” occurs in the progressive form when it refers to a behavior which is temporary or deliberate.

Why **is** everybody so excited?

Why **is** everybody **being** so excited?

There are other verbs that have a different meaning in their continuous and simple forms.

States	Actions
I see him coming.	I'm seeing him tonight.
I have to bath my little baby.	He is having a bath.

3. Interpretation of Continuous Tenses

3.1 The Present Continuous

The Present Continuous is a tense especially used in English, but can't be found in Albanian or in many languages of the world. We use the present continuous tense to talk about things that are happening at the time of speaking:

- Keep quiet! The people **are reading**.

“We also use the present continuous tense when we talk about something that is happening around the time of speaking, but not necessarily exactly at the time of speaking”.⁵

- **Pellumb is styding** designe technology at Coventry University.

Using the present continuous to talk about a period around the present, for instance: this morning, this month, tonight, etc.

- I'm skiing in the montain this month.

And when we talk about changing situations:

The Structure of a Continuous sentence

Affirmative Sentence

Subject + auxiliary verb + main verb -ing (Present participle) + object

Subject + am/is/are + (1st form of verb or base verb + ing) + object

4. Explanation and Comparison Between English & Albanian Verb Tenses and Verbs

In a comparison between English and Albanian language we will encounter a lot of differences and similarities on both languages, even more if we do understand well both languages and try to translate from one to the other. There may be a lot of differences and similarities, like: the Word Formation Process, Vocabulary, Verb Tenses, Conditionals, Modals, Gerunds, Prepositions, Irregular Verbs, etc.

Some of the progressive tenses don't even exist in Albanian Language.

If we talk about grammar tenses in Albanian language there should definitely be given verbs. And while the verbs are give we have to know everything that has to do with them, because the use of the verbs in thesentences explain the grammar tenses. Verbs in Albanian have many grammatical categories and classificationssuch as; conjugations, manners, verb formation, finite verb phrases, non-finite verb phrases, etc.

In English language as well as in Albanian language, a verb has these grammatical categories: grammatical category of a number and person (*kategoria gramatikore e vetës dhe numrit*), grammatical category of the voice (*kategoria gramatikore e diatezës*), category of the mood (*kategoria gramatikore e mënyrës*), category of the aspect (*kategoria gramatikore e aspektit*) and grammatical category of the tense (*kategoria gramatikore e kohës*).

The grammatical categories of verbs are; the category of person, tense, manner, number, mood, and diathesis(voice).

The classification of verbs; regular, irregular, modal, auxiliary verbs, transitive and intransitive verbs.

The conjugations of verbs: synthetic and analytic forms.

The category of the mood: indicative, admirative, subjunctive, conditional, optative, imperative.

The verb formation: the derivative verbs, suffixed formation, prefixed (submissions) formation, verbs formed

⁵Murphy, R. “Grammar in use” – 1998, The Pitt Building, Trumpington Street, Cambridge CB2 1RP, United Kingdom

without any affixes, composed verbs, adjacent verbs, etc.

The finite verb phrases (*forma të shtjelluara të foljes*): participle, gerundive.

The non-finite verb phrases (*forma të pashjelluara të foljes*): are the six manners listed above.

When we talk about **the grammatical categories of the number and person** (*kategoria gramatikore e numrit dhe e vetës*) there is to say that these grammatical categories also exist in Albanian Language and they are almost the same as in English Language.

Grammatical category of the voice (*kategoria gramatikore e diatezës*) - the voice of a verb describes the relationship between the action that the verb expresses and the participants identified by its arguments. In English Language as well as in Albanian Language there are; **active voice** (*diateza veprore*) and **passive voice** (*diateza pësore*).

Grammatical category of the mood - in English Language we classify three types of the mood: **the indicative mood** (*mënyra dëftore*), **the subjunctive mood** (*mënyra lidhore*), and **the imperative mood** (*mënyra urdhërrore*). These can be found as well in Albanian Language, but in Albanian Language there are three more moods such as; **the conditional mood** (*mënyra lidhore*) **the optative mood** (*mënyra dëshirore*) and **the admirative mood** (*mënyra habitore*). The difference is that each of Albanian mood is conjugated with different endings and each of them contains certain tense.

Grammatical category of the aspect - expresses an action or state related to the flow of time. It can be; **the continuous aspect** (*aspekti i vazhduar*) and **the indefinite aspect** (*aspekti jo i vazhduar*).

Grammatical category of the tense - Tenses in English Language are divided on that what we express in the past, present and in the future.

- Present tenses are presented by four forms: **present simple tense** (*koha e tashme e thjeshtë*), **present continuous**, (*koha e tashme e vazhduar*), **present perfect** (*koha e kryer*), and **present perfect continuous** (*koha e kryer me aspektin e vazhdimësisë*). In Albanian Language there is only the simple present tense but it is conjugated in all types of the mood.
- Past tenses include four forms: **past simple** (*koha e kryer e thjeshtë*), **past continuous** (*koha e pakryer*), **past perfect** (*koha më se e kryer*) and **past perfect continuous** (*koha më se e kryer me aspektin e vazhdimësisë*). While, in Albanian Language the past tense includes five forms: **past simple** (*koha e kryer e thjeshtë*), **past perfect** (*koha më se e kryer*), **present perfect** (*koha e kryer*) and the last two forms which do not exist in English language, but in Albanian they are called: **koha e pakryer** and **koha e kryer e tejshkuar**.
- Future tenses are presented by four forms: **future simple** (*koha e ardhshme*), **future continuous** (does not exist in Alb.), **future perfect** (*koha e ardhme e përparme*) and **future perfect continuous** (does not exist in Alb.). The Albanian future tense includes these forms: simple future tense (*koha e ardhme*) and future perfect (*koha e ardhme e përparme*).

5. English Progressive Tenses Vs. Albanian Progressive Tenses

5.1 The Present Continuous (Alb. *Koha e tashme e vazhduar*)

Singular	Njëjës	Plural	Shumës
I am asking You are asking He/she/it is asking	Unë jam duke pyetur Ti je duke pyetur Ai/ajo është duke pyetur	We are asking You are asking They are asking	Ne jemi duke pyetur Ju jeni duke pyetur Ata/ato janë duke pyetur

Below are some examples in English Language that are presented in four types of sentences and they are shown in Albanian language. The Present Continuous tense textually translated, looks like this:

Affirmative: He is studying at his room. / Ai është duke studjuar në dhomën e tij.

Negative: He is not studying at his room. / Ai nuk është duke studjuar në dhomën e tij.

Interrogative: Is he studying at his room? / A është duke studjuar ai në dhomën e tij?

Interrogative – negative: Isn't he studying at his room? / A nuk është duke studjuar ai në dhomën e tij?

It is used to indicate a future action, which is previously planned and it is one's plan. So these are actions that will happen in the future but are planned in the present.

Affirmative: She is dining with her friends. / Ajo është duke ngrënë darkë me shoqet e saja.

Negative: She is not dining with her friends. / Ajo nuk është duke ngrënë darkë me shoqet e saja.

Interrogative: Is she dining with her friends? / A është ajo duke ngrënë darkë me shoqet e saja?

Interrogative – negative: Isn't she dining with her friends? A nuk është ajo duke ngrënë darkë me shoqet e saja?
Even though it is textually translated the Present Continuous tense complies with *Koha e Tashme e vazhduar* in Albanian language.

"The basic meaning of the verb in the Present tense in indicative mood, is to show the performing action at a time that includes the moment of oration".⁶ However, in some cases the present tense may be used in the sense of the future tense or the past tense, with the help of auxiliary verb "jam" and with the particle "po". Eg. *Po vështroj, jam duke vështruar, etc.*

5.2 The Past Continuous (Alb. *Koha e pakryer*)

The Past Continuous tenses sometimes may be interrupted.

He was working at his computer when the power cut occurred.



"This use is sometimes called the 'interrupted past continuous'. We use the simple past to describe the action which 'interrupted' the past continuous action".⁷

Below are some examples in English Language that are presented in four types of sentences and they are shown in Albanian Language. The Past Continuous tense textually translated, looks like this:

- **Affirmative:** She was living in Paris. / Ajo ishte duke jetuar në Paris.
- **Negative:** She was not living in Paris. / Ajo nuk ishte duke jetuar në Paris.
- **Interrogative:** Was she living in Paris? / A ishte ajo duke jetuar në Paris?
- **Interrogative – negative:** Wasn't she living in Paris? / A nuk ishte ajo duke jetuar në Paris?

The Past Continuous tense complies with *Koha e pakryer* in Albanian language.

"Basic meaning of the imperfect (*pakryerës*) is to show an action in progress at a certain moment of the past".⁸ And the form is build with the auxiliary verb "jam" and rarely with the particle "po". Eg. *Ishte duke ecur, ishte duke endërruar, po priste, po vdiste, etc.*

5.3 The Future Continuous (*Koha e ardhme e vazhduar*)

Below are examples in English language that are presented in singular and plural and how they are shown in Albanian language. The Future Continuous tense textually translated in Albanian language, looks like this:

	Affirmative	Negative	Interrogative	Int. - Negative
I/you/we/they Unë/ti/ne/ju/ata	I will be walking Unë do të jem duke ecur	I won't be walking Unë nuk do të jem duke ecur	Will I be walking? A do të jem unë duke ecur?	Won't I be walking? A nuk do të jem unë duke ecur?
He/she/it Ai/ajo	He will be walking Ai do të jetë duke ecur	He won't be walking Ai nuk do të jetë duke ecur	Will he be walking? A do të jetë ai duke ecur?	Won't he be walking? A nuk do të jetë ai duke ecur?

This tense is similar to the tense E Ardhmja e Përparme in Albanian Language, which looks like this: do të jetë prishur, do të kenë zhdukur, do të kenë ikur, etc.

5.4 The Present Perfect Continuous (Alb. *Koha e kryer me aspektin e vazhdimësi*)

The Present Perfect Continuous tense textually translated in Albanian Language, ccomplies with *Koha e Kryer* in Albanian language. "The basic meaning of the performed time in indicative mood shows a completed action that has not

⁶ Dharmo, A., Angoni, E., Hysa, E. "Gramatika e Gjuhës së Sotme Letrare Shqipe (Morfologjia)" – 1989, Enti i teksteve dhe i mjeteve mësimore i krahinës socialiste autonome të Kosovës, Prishtinë, (pp. 221)

⁷ Parrott, M. "Grammar for English Language teachers" – 2000, Cambridge university press (pp. 198, 199)

⁸ Dharmo, A., Angoni, E., Hysa, E. "Gramatika e Gjuhës së Sotme Letrare Shqipe (Morfologjia)" – 1989, Enti i teksteve dhe i mjeteve mësimore i krahinës socialiste autonome të Kosovës, Prishtinë, (pp. 222)

cut off the connections with the moment of oration".⁹

	Affirmative	Negative	Interrogative	Int. - Negative
I/you/we/they Unë/ti/ne/ju/ata	I have been observing Unë kam vëzhguar	I haven't been observing Unë nuk kam vëzhguar	Have I been observing? A kam vëzhguar unë?	Haven't I been observing? A nuk kam vëzhguar unë?

5.5 The Past Perfect Continuous (Alb. *Koha më se e kryer me aspektin e vazhdimësisë*)

The Past Perfect Continuous tense textually translated in Albanian language, complies with *Koha e Kryer e Tejshkuar* in Albanian language. "The basic meaning of *e kryerës së tejshkuar* is to show a completed action before a certain moment of the past".¹⁰ Eg. *Kishte hedhur = pat hedhur, kishin folur = patën folur, etc.* And it is formed with the help of the past perfect of the auxiliary verb "*kam*" = **had been**; and with the present participle (*pjesoren e tashme*).

	Affirmative	Negative	Interrogative	Int. - Negative
I/you/we/they Unë/ti/ne/ju/ata	I had been collecting Unë kisha/pata mbledhur	I hadn't been collecting Unë nuk kisha/pata mbledhur	Had I been collecting? A kisha/pata mbledhur unë?	Hadn't I been collecting? A nuk kisha/pata mbledhur unë?

5.6 The Future Perfect Continuous

The Future Perfect Continuous tense textually translated in Albanian language, looks like this:

	Affirmative	Negative	Interrogative	Int. - Negative
I/you/we/they Unë/ti/ne/ju/ata	I will have been approving Unë do të kem qenë duke miratuar	I won't have been approving Unë nuk do të kem qenë duke miratuar	Will I have been approving? A do të kem qenë duke miratuar unë?	Won't I have been approving? A nuk do të kem qenë duke miratuar unë?

This tense is similar to the tense *E Kryera* in conditional mood (*mënyra lidhore*) in Albanian language, which looks like this: *do të kenë lexuar, të ketë qenë rrëmbyer, etc.*

6. Conclusion

The above pages of this research paper are discussing about general characteristics and the various uses of tenses referred to present, past and future time. There are explained all the uses of Continuous tenses, followed by an appropriate example.

Giving a definition of a tense in one or the other language is a very straight concept. But, when studying differences, one needs deep analytical sense. So, this research paper has been distinguishing the similarities and differences between English and Albanian Language Progressive tenses, where can be seen a lot of examples and their interpretation in both languages.

The outcome of this research paper is to conclude, that there is a great difference between both languages in using progressive tenses where a major percentage of foreign learners are exposed to these confusing issues. Foreign speakers do make a lot of mistakes while using tenses. However, based on this research, it is understood that the misinterpretation and the misuse of grammar, related to the Progressive tenses, conducts to misunderstanding. The translation doesn't correspond while translating a certain tense from English to Albanian. The equivalent time and tense may not exist or is totally different in both cases.

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⁹ *Ibid* (pp 225)

¹⁰ *Ibid* (pp 228)

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