Resultative Constructions in Albanian and English

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Abstract *This paper discusses the expression of resultative meaning in Albanian and English. This two languages bear both resemblance and dissimilarity when it comes to building resultative constructions.[1] We argue that secondary predicates with resultative meaning, widespread in English and other Germanic languages, don't occur as often in Albanian. Instead, Albanian uses mostly other strategies, like resultative clauses, verb + ablative construction, gerund phrases, etc. This fact should be taken into consideration during the translation from English into Albanian and vice versa.*

Key words: *resultative constructions, Albanian, English translation.*

1. Introduction

In last decades researchers have dedicated too much attention to resultative constructions, especially in English and other Germanic languages, but also in Romance and Slavic languages, as well as in Chinese, Japanese, Korean, etc. (see Boas (2003), Carrier and Randall (1992), Dowty (1979), Goldberg (1995), Hoekstra (1988), Levin and Rappaport Hovav (1995); Mateu (2002); Nedjalkov (1988), Rappaport Hovav and Levin (1998, 2001); Simpson (1983); Wechsler (1997), among many others). However, resultatives in many other languages have yet to be studied. As Zhang (2009) notices, resultative constructions take an important place in contemporary linguistic research, because they shed light on the nature of relationship between semantics and syntax. Resultatives are common crosslinguistically, but different languages conceptualize the resultative meaning differently, so there are both similarities and variations not only across language families, but also within each language family. In the present paper we will compare resultative constructions in Albanian and English. We argue that Albanian, as a verb-framed language, doesn't posses adjective-like form resultatives, while this is not the case with English, which is a satellite-framed language.[2]

This paper is organized as follows: we start with a typology of resultative constructions and with a cross-linguistic overview on variation of resultative constructions in sections 2 and 3; while in sections 4 and 5 we are going to make a short description of resultatives in English and Albanian respectively, focusing on a few suggestions for a better translation of English resultative constructions into Albanian.

2. The Typology of Resultative Constructions

Resultative constructions express the result of an action described by the main verb. They are common in natural languages, although there are languages that don't possess resultatives. According to Washio (1997), based on the meaning of the main predicate (matrix verb), resultative constructions can be classified into three sub-classes: **weak, strong** and **spurious**. In weak resultative constructions (e. g., *The*

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[1] In the relevant literature the term *resultative construction* is used only for resultative secondary predicates. In the present paper we have reserved this term for both resultative predicates and resultative clauses.
[2] On the distinction between satellite-framed and verb-framed languages, see Talmy (1991, 2000)

blacksmith hammered the metal flat) the semantics of the main predicate determines in what state the argument is going to be in the end, while in strong resultatives (e.g., *to paint the house red*) "the meaning of the verb and the meaning of the adjectives are completely independent of each other" (Washio, op. cit., p. 7). On the other hand, spurious resultatives (also called "pseudo-resultatives"; e. g., *to cut one's hair short*) are not considered as real resultative expressions, because they only superficially resemble adjectival or adverbial resultative constructions.

As for resultative predicate constructions, they can be classified into two groups: **transitive** and **intransitive** resultatives. The later can be divided further into constructions with **unergative** and **unaccusative** (ergative) verbs (see Levin and Rappaport Hovav (1995)). Unergative and unaccusative verbs differ both in their syntactic configuration and in their argument structure. The subject of unergative verbs is perceived as the doer of the action denoted by the verb, whereas the subject of unaccusative verbs has its origin as a object and is perceived as a "patient". So, while in English, verbs like *die, arrive,* etc. are unaccusative and take the auxiliary verb *to be*, their Albanian counterparts (*vdes, mbërrij*) are unergative and take *kam* (to have). Unaccusative verbs form normally resultative patterns, while unergative verbs need a so-called fake object to do that. Thus, the matrix verb of the sentence *The river froze solid* is unaccusative, and we can test this by removing the secondary resultative predicate *solid*: what remains from the sentence is still a grammatical sentence (*The river froze*). On the other hand, the verb matrix *shouted* in the *They shouted themselves hoarse* is unergative: what we get if we leave out the secondary predicate *hoarse* or the reflexive pronoun *themselves* doesn't make sense. (Neither *They shouted themselves nor *They shouted hoarse are complete sentences.)

3. Cross-Linguistic Variation of Resultative Constructions

Different languages have different types of resultative constructions. Some languages have both weak and strong resultative constructions, while others allow only weak resultatives. That means that languages with only strong resultatives don't exist, at least as far as we know. On the other hand, the result phrases are either adjectival (APs) or prepositional (PPs) in some languages, while they are only prepositional in others. Again, we can draw the conclusion that it doesn't exist any language that depends only on adjectival phrases.

Tsuzuki (2007) (cited from Chigusa) sums up the distribution of resultative phrases in the following table:

	English	German	Dutch	French	Italian
Weak resultatives	AP, PP	PP	AP, PP	PP	PP
Strong resultatives	AP, PP	AP, PP	AP, PP	Nonexistent	Nonexistent

4. Resultative Cnstructions in English

As we can see from the table above, English has a broad range of resultative patterns, together with other Germanic languages like German and Dutch, while in Romance languages, namely French and Italian, strong resultatives and adjectival resultative phrases are not available (see Note 2).

English resultative construction has these properties: subject argument has to be an animate agent and object argument a patient, verb should encode direct causation, while resultative adjective has to designate the endpoint of a scale and cannot be deverbal (Evans, 2007: 184, *Table 11*).

As for the syntax of resultatives, according to Wechsler and Noh (2001), there are three basic types of structures:

1. The causing and the resulting events can be expressed by their own clauses, with separate sentences; by a subordinate resultative clause; or the main clause can express the result event and the subordinate clause the causing event;
2. Resultative secondary predicates;
3. Unergative or unaccusative resultative predicates.

So, for example, let's say that a blacksmith hammered a piece of metal and made it flat. If we were to use English to describe such a situation, we were going to have different linguistic options at our disposal. We could say (see Wechsler and Noh, op. cit.):

1.
a. *The blacksmith hammered the metal; consequently, the metal became flat.*
b. *The blacksmith hammered the metal, resulting in the metal becoming flat.*
c. *The blacksmith hammered the metal, thereby flattening it.*
d. *The blacksmith hammered the metal, so that it became flat.*
e. *The blacksmith hammered the metal until it was flat.*
f. *The blacksmith hammered the metal, causing it to flatten.*
g. *The blacksmith flattened the metal by hammering it etc.*

But most probably we would use a shorter version, the adjectival resultative construction:

2.
The blacksmith hammered the metal <u>flat</u>.

Let's take now another situation. A baby fell asleep after her mother sang her a song.. Again we have different options to convey this information. Besides several clausal resultative constructions, like *The mother sang until her baby went to sleep* etc., we can use a resultative predicate with a prepositional phrase:

3.
The mother sang her baby <u>to sleep</u>.

In English we also can choose between using unergative or unaccusative resultative predicates and resultative clauses. Thus, we can say *The river froze <u>solid</u>*, but also *The river froze until it became solid* or … *to the point it became solid;* we can use the simple *They sang themselves hoarse*, but also the co-referential sentences *They sang until they hoarsened*, etc.

5. Albanian Rsultative Cnstructions and some Rmarks on Tanslating English Rsultatives into Albanian

As we have mentioned already, in contrast with English and some other languages, Albanian lacks adjectival predicative resultatives. Instead, in Albanian are more frequent the gerund phrases, just like in Romance languages, as well as resultative clauses,[3] the structure *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:

4.
a. *U ngjirëm   duke kënduar.*
   hoarsen-PAST-1PL   sing-GER
   lit. "We hoarsened singing."

b. *Kënduam   sa   u ngjirëm.*
  sing-PAST-1PL   until   hoarsen-PAST-1PL
 "We sang until we hoarsened."

c. *U ngjirëm   së kënduari.*
   hoarsen-PAST-3PL   singing-ABL
 "We sang until we hoarsened." or "We sang themselves hoarse."

Adverbial resultatives are also possible in Albanian:

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[3] We use here the term "resultative clause" or other terms interchangeable with it, like "clausal resultative constructions" or simple "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 asydentic clause.

5.
a. *E   mbusha   gotën   plot.*
it-CL-ACC fill-PAST   glass.the-ACC   full.
'I fill my glass <u>full</u>.'

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

In Albanian we also find some adjectival resultative constructions, but they appear less than adverbial resultative constructions. So, we can say:

6.
Motra   e tij   i   preu   flokët   të shkurtër.
Sister.the-NOM   his   3PL-CL-DAT   cut-PAST   hair.the-ACC   short-ADJ.
"His sister cut her hair <u>short</u>."

but not:

7.
*E   mbusha   gotën   të plotë.
it-CL-ACC   fill-PAST   glass.the-ACC   full-ADJ.
'I fill 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 <u>full</u>* may have a direct translation into Albanian, this is not the case for its opposite. The literal translation into Albanian of *I drank my glass empty* (**E piva gotën bosh*) would be ungrammatical, but we can say *E piva gotën krejt (të gjithën)*, lit. "**I drank the glass completely (all)*".

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 <u>soft</u>* (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:

8.
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:

9.
a. *The dog barked the neighbours <u>awake</u>.*
"Qeni   i   zgjoi   fqinjët   me   <u>të lehura</u>."
Dog.the-NOM   3PL-CL-ACC   wake-3SNG-PAST   neighbours   with   barkings. ACC

b. *He ran his shoes <u>threadbare</u>.*
"Iu hëngrën këpucët <u>nga vrapi</u>."
lit. '(To him) the shoes were made threadbare by the run.'

c. *She painted the house <u>red.</u>*
"Ajo e leu shtëpinë <u>me të kuqe</u>"
lit. "She painted the house in red".

Both Albanian sentences in (9a) and (9b) have also their gerund versions:

10.
a. *Qeni i zgjoi fqinjët duke lehur.*
"The dog woke up the neighbours by barking."

b. *Iu hëngrën këpucët duke vrapuar.*
lit. "(To him) the shoes were made threadbare by 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)):

11.
Ana   e   lexoi   letrën   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 (3) 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 roughly "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:

Drita   e saj   ishte e mjaftueshme për të zbuluar   udhën.   (*Gramatika*, 1996: 574)
Light.the-NOM. her/its   was   enough-ADJ   to find out   way.the.ACC.
'Its/Her light was enough to find out the way.'

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'), but it may sound a little weird in Albanian if we say "Meri e pastroi tryezën duke e fshirë" ('Mary cleaned the table by wiping it') or "Meri e fshiu tryezën(,)[4] duke e pastruar" ('Mary wiped the table(,) (by) cleaning it').
        As we have seen already, Albanian uses result clauses more often than English does. In fact, English result clauses can pretty much have a literal translation into Albanian. So, we can translate the sentences in (1) as follows:[5]

12.
 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-ACChammer.3SNG-PAST metal.the-ACC, make.GER it-CL-ACC
metalin   të shtypur.'
metal.the-ACC. flat.

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

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 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-ACChammer.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-ACChammer.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-ACChammer-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.:

13.
a. *Ata qen*ë   *kaq të befasuar, sa   nuk   u përpoqën   ta ndalnin.*
  They be.3-PL-PAST so   surprised   that   not   try-PAST-PL to stop him.
"They were so surprised they didn't try to stop him".

b. *Ishte   një gëzim i tillë,   sa donim   ta bënim prapë.*
be-3SNG-PAST   a joy   such, that want.1-PL-PAST to do it   again.
"It was such a joy that we wanted to do it again."

6. 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 are 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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