

## SUBJECT DOUBLING IN FRENCH AND ITS TRANSLATION INTO ALBANIAN

Fjoralba DADO <sup>1</sup>, Eglantina GISHTI <sup>2</sup>

University of Tirana, Faculty of Foreign Languages, Department of French Language.

Tirana Albania. E mail: albadado@yahoo.com,

University of Tirana, Faculty of Foreign Languages, Department of French Language.

Tirana Albania. E mail: egishti@yahoo.com

### Abstract

Most Romance languages are languages with no subject or, *pro-drop* languages, as referred to the terminology of generative grammar, characterized by the fact that they have retained from Latin language the possibility of omitting the subject. This phenomenon exists in Albanian but not in French which is characterized by the mandatory use of the subject and if necessary by the dislocation of it, accompanied by subject doubling. This paper aims at examining how the Albanian language, as a *pro* one, compensates for the subject doubling, which is common in French. As translators, we will search for the solution offered by our language to transfer this syntactic phenomenon, which carries an emphatic character. In order to achieve this, we will use a few examples from a corpus of literary works translated from French into Albanian.

*Keywords: dislocation, doubling subject, syntax, translation.*

### 1. Dislocation or subject doubling

Most of the Romance languages are null subject languages or as referred to the terminology of generative grammar, they are called *pro-drop* languages, characterized by the possibility of omitting the subject to a sentence containing inflective forms. (Graffi, 2003). Such a phenomenon is observed in languages such as Albanian, Italian and Spanish, but not in English or French:

- (1) (Io) Mangio una mela
- (2) (Unë) Haj një mollë

On the contrary, French language is a Roman language, which is characterized by the mandatory use of the subject pronoun:

- (3) \*(Je) mange une pomme
- (4) \*(Tu) manges une pomme

In addition to the mandatory use of the subject pronoun, in French there are also the following language structures:

- (5) *Moi, je mange une pomme*
- (6) *Ces pommes, elles sont vertes*

According to the traditional grammar, such a phenomenon is called dislocation or disjunction of the subject. This controversial statement leads to the following questions: What is the subject disjoined from ? Which part of the sentence will be considered as the subject, *Moi* or *je* (5), *pommes* or *elles* (6). In terms of contemporary grammar, such a phenomenon is known as the subject doubling. We will support the second approach, the contemporary one, since it is important to highlight the fact that we are dealing with a structure that is not derived from the same unmarked language structure. It seems reasonable enough not to skip such a phenomenon whenever it occurs, especially during the process of translation, but on the contrary, it is necessary to interpret it properly. However, it is worth emphasizing that the use of "dislocation" term in all cases implies the subject doubling, but not its disjunction from any other part of the sentence.

Thanks to the translation into Albanian of selected examples of several literary works, more precisely, in this paper we will observe how the Albanian language, as a *pro-drop* language, compensates the subject - pronoun doubling, a proper characteristic of French language. In fact, it is often believed that subject- pronoun doubling is typical of spoken French. Referred to our examples, we will notice that such a phenomenon is encountered even in written language. But, which are the instruments that the Albanian language offers to the translator in order to convey such a phenomenon, taking into consideration the *pro-drop* character of this language?

## **1.1 Some features of Albanian and French language**

The use of subject in French and Albanian language is the same in many cases. We will look into the cases when this use differs because of the specific characteristics of each language. Among these characteristics, the most relevant ones include: the presence of a more complex inflection system in Albanian language than in French language, as well as the lack of (pro-drop) clitic pronouns in Albanian language.

### **1.1.1 The presence of a complex or less complex inflection system**

In general, the opportunity of omitting the subject-pronoun seems to be associated with the verb endings. The loss of a rich verbs morphology that the French language has undergone during its historical evolution is considered as an important factor when it comes to the creation

of clitic pronouns and their mandatory use. Lucien Foulet proposes a table which clearly distinguishes the change that French language has undergone. (Foulet, 1935):

Person	Ancient French Language		Medieval French Language		Contemporary French Language	
I sing.	Chant	[-]	Chant	[ë]	Chant	[-]
II sing.	Chant	Es	Chant	[ë]	Chant	[-]
III sng.	Chant	e (t)	Chant	[ë]	Chant	[-]
I pl.	Chant	Ons	Chant	[ö]	Chant	[ö]
II pl.	Chant	Ez	Chant	[e]	Chant	[e]
III pl.	Chant	Ent	Chant	[ë]	Chant	[-]

*Table 1.* Verb endings in French language during various historical periods

According to Foulet, the verb in French language necessarily requires the use of the subject- pronoun in case there is no nominal subject. This is due to the rare existence of endings. Their former role is now replaced by an external tool which is the pronoun. Meanwhile, Martin Harris, british academic and Professor of linguistics, believes that the loss of verb endings came after the mandatory use of the subject pronoun. (Harris, 1978). If we follow the same logic even for the contemporary Albanian language, the table would be as follows:

Person	Contemporary Albanian Language	
I sing.	kënd-	Oj
II sing.	kënd-	On
III sing.	kënd-	On
I pl.	kënd-	Ojmë
II pl.	kënd-	Oni
III pl.	kënd-	Ojnë

*Table 2.* Verb endings in Albanian Language / First Conjugation

According to this table, we come to the conclusion that Albanian language disposes of a rich verbs morphology and this explains its *pro-drop* character.

### 1.1.2 The absence of (pro-drop) clitic pronouns

Another difference between Albanian and French language is related to the form/s of subject – pronoun. In French language, we can notice the presence of two series of subject-pronouns. Table 3 shows the series of tonic pronouns and atonic pronouns

*Tabela 3.* Subject-pronouns in French language

Person		Tonic pronouns	Atonic pronouns
I sing.		Moi	Je
II sing.		Toi	Tu
III si.	Masculine	Lui	Il
	Feminine	Elle	Elle
I pl.		Nous	Nous
II pl.		Vous	Vous
III pl.	Masculine	Eux	Ils
	Feminine	Elles	Elles

Whereas in Albanian language, there is only one form of the subject- pronoun:

Person		Pronoun
I sing.		Unë
II sing.		Ti
III sing.	Masculine	Ai
	Feminine	Ajo
I pl.		Ne
II pl.		Ju
III pl.	Masculine	Ata
	Feminine	Ato

*Table 4.* Subject – pronoun in Albanian Language

## 1.2 Subject doubling in French language and its translation in Albanian Language

After handling the difference between two languages, the question naturally arises: Which are the linguistic tools a translator uses in order to give a solution to this difference between French and Albanian language while maintaining the emphatic effect of this phenomenon? As stated above, it is clear that the Albanian language has a more complex inflection system. Based on this fact, as stated by researcher Pollock, in Romance languages such as Italian, Spanish, or the Middle Age French, the inflected verb enables the simultaneous identification of several features: person, gender, number, which permit the absence of the subject. (Pollock, 1998). On the contrary, in today's French language, the subject should undoubtedly be present. The notion of non - null subject turns into a problem in some specific or stylistic contexts, especially when it comes to translating this phenomenon in Albanian, a language which accepts the null-subject. As noted above, we will take into consideration the dislocation of the subject in French, which is associated with the phenomenon of subject doubling. According to the examples of translations we have collected from our corpus, we distinguish two cases of clitic subject doubling, which we have frequently encountered:

- The first case when the subject doubling is related to the use of a tonic and atonic form.
- The second case when the subject doubling is related to the use of a nominal syntagm and an atonic pronoun.

### 1.2.1 Clitic doubling of the subject : Tonic pronoun + Atonic pronoun

Referred to Table 3 and 4, it is clearly evident that the Albanian language does not contain a special series of tonic pronouns in nominative case. The subject doubling in French language through the use of both tonic and atonic pronouns is due to emphatic reasons. Below, we will see examples extracted from our corpus accompanied by their Albanian translation:

(7) **Eux, ils** ignorent notre existence (*L'amant*, p.53)

**Ata nuk dinin** asgjë për ekzistencën tonë (*Dashnori*, p.33)

(8) **Lui, il** tremble (*L'Amant*, p.47)

**Ai, ai** dridhej (*Dashnori*, p.29)

(9) **Lui, les deux premières fois, il** se jette à l'eau, il essaye d'aborder le récit de ses exploits à Paris mais vain (*L'amant*, p.64)

**Dy herët e para ai e humbi** fare, provoi të tregonte për sukseset e tij në Paris, po më kot (*Dashnori*, p. 46)

From the above-mentioned examples it is clear that except the example (8) in which there is a subject –pronoun doubling, in other examples, such a doubling does not occur. As a matter of fact, in Albanian language, the subject-pronoun doubling is not a common phenomenon, why not say it does not exist. In Albanian, the subject can be repeated to highlight the emotional charge it holds and we encounter this phenomenon in expressive discourse (Akademia, 1997).

Nevertheless, it is worth focusing on other examples that do not contain a subject-pronoun doubling. Given that the Albanian language is a **pro-drop** language, the use of subject-pronoun would be possible for emphatic reasons. Therefore, we think that one way of translating this phenomenon of French language would be the use of the subject-pronoun, as noted in the examples (7) and (9). In the example (9), the subject pronoun is used only for *Lui/il*, whereas for the rest of the sentence *il essaie [..]*, the Albanian language highlights again its **pro-drop** feature by avoiding the repetition of the subject *il*, which must be definitely used in French language.

But the Albanian language uses another tool to emphasize the subject-pronoun.. To illustrate this, let's find below a few examples selected from Ismail Kadare's novel, *Jeta, loja dhe vdekja e Lul Mazrekut* (*Life, play and death of Lul Mazrek*), which has been translated into French. Examples are shown along with their respective translation:

- (10) **Unë** ta them troç (*Jeta, loja dhe vdekja e Lul Mazrekut*, p.20)  
*Moi, je* te le dis tout net (*Vie, jeu et mort de Lul Mazrek*, p.24)
- (11) **Ti** duhet ta dish (*Jeta, loja dhe vdekja e Lul Mazrekut*, p.74)  
*Toi, tu* dois connaitre (*Vie, jeu et mort de Lul Mazrek*, p.95)
- (12) *Letrën e së dashurës, kurse ti e shpërdorove atë* (*Jeta, loja dhe vdekja e Lul Mazrekut*, p. 79)  
*La lettre de celle que j'aime ! Et toi, tu t'es empressé d'en faire le pire usage* (*Vie, jeu et mort de Lul Mazrek*, p. 99)
- (13) *Kurse ajo ishte e huaj këtu* (*Jeta, loja dhe vdekja e Lul Mazrekut*, p.145)  
*Elle, elle* n'était pas d'ici (*Vie, jeu et mort de Lul Mazrek*, p.183)
- (14) **Unë** vetë s'kam turp ta them (*Jeta, loja dhe vdekja e Lul Mazrekut*, p.66)  
*Moi, je* n'ai pas honte de l'avouer (*Vie, jeu et mort de Lul Mazrek*, p.84)
- (15) **Ty** të kam mik për kokë (*Jeta, loja dhe vdekja e Lul Mazrekut*, p. 126)  
*Toi, t'es* un vrai pote (*Vie, jeu et mort de Lul Mazrek*, p. 160)

In the examples (10-13), we notice that in Albanian language the subject-pronoun, which is rather used to emphasize the doer or to express opposition (13), corresponds to the doubled subject in French language. As for the example (14), the subject represented by the personal pronoun *Unë* is followed by an enhansive expression *vetë*. As it can be seen from the translation into French, we find the tonic personal pronoun *Moi* and the atonic personal pronoun *je*.

In the example (15), the direct object represented by the strong form of the personal pronoun *ty* (accusative case) and its weak form or clitic pronoun *të*, in French language is replaced by the pronoun *toi/t'* which assumes the function of the subject. It is quite true that there is a change in the syntax function from one language to another, but we found this example interesting to explain the phenomenon of doubling, which in Albanian language (especially the

case of the direct and indirect object) can be simultaneously represented by the use of strong and weak forms of the personal pronoun.

### 1.2.2 Clitic doubling of the subject : noun preceded by a definite article noun + atonic personal pronoun

In French, there is a clitic doubling of the subject not only when it is represented by a personal pronoun, but also when it is represented by a noun preceded by a definite article. Even in this case, the function of the doubling is related to the emphasis (18) or opposition (16) (Frontier, 1997). Example:

- (16) *Luisilla, elle n'avait jamais songé à la chance de ne pas s'appeler Luigia* (Porporino, p.36)

*Luizilës, për vete, nuk i kishte vajtur kurrë mendja te fati që nuk quhej Luixhia* (Porporino, p.29)

- (17) *Dans la platitude à perte de vue, ces fleuves, ils vont vite, ils versent comme si la terre penchait* (L'amant, p. 17)  
*Në atë fushëtirë pa anë e pafund lumenjtë nxitojnë dhe derdhen sikur toka anohet* (Dashnori, p.10)

- (18) *L'ambiguïté déterminante de l'image, elle est dans ce chapeau* (L'amant, p.19)  
*Karakteri i dyfishtë dhe i qartë i fytyrës është në këtë kapele* (Dashnori, p.11)

- (19) *Et puis les aboiements des chiens, ils viennent de partout* (L'amant, p. 30)  
*Dhe pastaj, lehje qensh, ato vijnë nga të katër anët* (Dashnori, p.18)

As it is seen from the translation of these examples, generally, in Albanian language we encounter a dislocation of the subject due to the fact that in most cases the subject represented by a noun can not be dislocated or retaken by a clitic pronoun (Akademia, 1997).

However, there are specific cases when such a phenomenon could occur:

- (20) *Les projections mentales, elles aussi, disparaissent* (La Possibilité d'une île, e-book, p.165)  
*Përfytyrimet, edhe ato, do të zhduken.* (Ishulli i Mundshëm, p. 63)

- (21) *Les plus âgés de la tribu, ils pouvaient avoir atteint la soixantaine* (La Possibilité d'une île, e-book, p. 458)  
*Më të vjetërit e tribusë, ata duhej të ishin te të gjashtëdhjetat.* (Ishulli i Mundshëm, p.167)

The fact that such a reprise is not set as a grammatical rule explains us why there is no reprise in the following sentence:

- (22) ***La moquette, elle aussi, était blanche*** (*La possibilité d'une île*, p. 379)  
*Edhe mokeri ishte i bardhë* (*Ishulli i Mundshëm*, Daniel 25,12, p.147)

Whereas in example (16), the enhancive word *vetë* is present again. Referring to the context, it expresses the confrontation or opposition between the character named Luisilla and the protagonist of the novel, who is also the narrator of the story. It must be said that the use of such a tool is a good finding in order to express the same degree of opposition as the subject doubling in French language. Examples (17) and (18) mark the return to linearity in Albanian language, which for the sake of truth, does not produce the same effect as the dislocation in French language. The example (17) is irrelevant due to the change of the structure of the sentence during the transition from one language to another. On the contrary, in example (19), we notice a parcelization of the sentence in Albanian language.

As a conclusion, the dislocation of pronouns or nominal syntagms, which in traditional grammar is known as the dislocation of the subject represented by a pronoun or a noun preceded by a definite article, besides being a syntax phenomenon, it is also an important expressive resource in French language. Given its *pro-drop* character the Albanian language responds to this characteristic of French language through the use of the subject-pronoun aiming at its emphasis and at emphasizing several words. However, despite the respective language syntactic constructions the translator must find an equivalent to the target language so that it could produce the same effect as the construction of the source language, both in semantic terms, as well as in pragmatic and stylistic terms.

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