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Old Albanian

Morphosyntactic Structures – Part 2: The Admirative

Roadmap

- Formation of the admirative in Modern Albanian
- Meanings of the admirative in Modern Albanian
- The admirative in Old Albanian
- The admirative in the diaspora
- The origin of the admirative

Formation of the admirative

in Standard Albanian

1. Take the participle
2. Delete its suffix, i.e., *-(u)r(ë)* or *-në*
3. Suffix a finite form of *ka* 'to have'

participle	truncation	ADM.PRS.3SG
<i>pasur</i> 'had'	<i>pas-</i>	<i>pas-ka</i>
<i>qenë</i> 'been'	<i>qen-</i>	<i>qen-ka</i>
<i>larë</i> 'washed'	<i>la-</i>	<i>la-ka</i>
<i>mësuar</i> 'taught'	<i>mësua-</i>	<i>mësua-ka</i>

The endings of the admirative

Present:

Identical to the finite forms of *ka* 'to have'

Imperfect:

Kësh- instead of *kish-*;

In 3sg., *-kësh* or *-kej*

participle	ADM.IMPERF
<i>pasur</i> 'had'	<i>pas-kësh</i> 1SG
<i>mësuar</i> 'taught'	<i>mësua-këshit</i> 2PL
<i>qenë</i> 'been'	<i>qen-kësh</i> 3SG
<i>larë</i> 'washed'	<i>la-kej</i> 3SG

The meanings of the admirative

Some of its main uses:

- exclamations ('Wow, he has come!')
- surprise at new findings ('So he *has* come!')
- bewildered questions ('Has he *come*??')
- indirect speech and hearsay ('They say he has come')
- remote narrative ('Once upon a time there came...')

Pragmatic components:

- emotion ('mirativity')
- source of information ('evidentiality')
- comment, intention ('modality')

Some concrete examples

Category **Surprise** : From Ismail Kadare, Dosja H.

Oh shiko shiko, ora paska ecur pa kuptuar!

Oh look look.IMP time.DEF have.ADM.PRS.3SG proceed.PTCP without notice.PTCP

‘Oh look, time **has been flying!**’ [said while looking at his watch]

Some concrete examples

Category **Inference**: from Ismail Kadare, Dosja H.

Aha atë arkë siç duket e ruajtkan nga shiu

Aha that chest.ACC as appear.PRS.IND.3SG it keep.ADM.PRS.3PL from rain.DEF

‘Aha, so **they are keeping** that chest from the rain’ [said while observing how carefully they are moving a chest from a coach to an inn]

Some concrete examples

Category **Hearsay**: from Ismail Kadare, *Dosja H.*

Zonja Sofia thoshte: Paska ardhur

Mrs. Sofia say.IMPERF.3SG have.ADM.PRS.3SG come.PTCP

për të përmirësuar shëndetin

for AGR improve.PTCP health.ACC.DEF

‘Mrs. Sofia said: **They say he has come** to improve his health’ [but I’m not so sure...]

Some concrete examples

Category **Narration**: from the folk story ‚The mare and the wolf‘ (Mustafa Abdyli, 1914)

Paska *një pelë* *një vakët*
have.ADM.PRS.3SG one mare.INDEF one time.INDEF

‘Once upon a time **there was** a mare.’

Summary for Modern Albanian

- The admirative is a **non-confirmative** mood:
the speaker does not take (full) responsibility for the asserted proposition,
but claims indirect knowledge.
Hence: uncertainty, report, inference, surprise.
- Origin in the analytic perfect, ‘has come’ > ‘comes!’, ‘comes?’
Cross-linguistically there is a frequent link between perfects/preterites
and non-confirmatives.

The perfect in Old Geg

The unmarked word order in the (non-admir.) **perfect** is AUXILIARY + PARTICIPLE:

Example from Buzuku:

kā *dërguom*
have.PRS.3SG send.PTCP
'He has sent'

janë *klenë*
be.PRS.3PL be.PTCP
'They have been'

The perfect in Old Geg

The inverted word order PARTICIPLE + AUXILIARY is marked, mainly found in relative clauses:

Bekuom baktë qi tÿ bartunë kã

bless.PTCP belly.DEF that you.ACC carry.PTCP have.PRS.3SG

‘Blessed is the belly that **has carried** you’

Porsi gratë thanë kishnë

like woman.PL.DEF say.PTCP have.IMPERF.3PL

‘Just like the women **had told**’

The inverted perfect in Buzuku

Synthetic admiratives are very rare in main clauses in Buzuku:

e ti ruojtë-kë venënë e mirë djerie tash
but you keep.PTCP-have.PRS.2SG wine.ACC.SG.DEF AGR good.ACC.SG.DEF until now

(the master of the wedding at Cana, amazed):

‘But you **have kept** the good wine until now!’

Combination of ‘perfect’ and ‘mirative’ semantics.

The inverted perfect in Buzuku

Marrë-kishnë *Tenë-zonë* *ën* *vorit*
take.PTCP-have.IMPERF.3PL Our-Lord.ACC.SG.DEF from grave.ABL.SG.DEF

(Mary Magdalene finds Jesus' tomb empty):
'They **have taken** Our Lord from the grave'

Combination of 'perfect' and 'mirative' semantics.

The inverted pluperfect in Buzuku

Inverted word order is more frequent in hypothetical clauses. Always in the pluperfect, and **without** admirative connotation (but counter-factual):

e jū në njihnjitë muo,

and you.PL if know.IMPERF.2PL me

e Atënë tem të njoh-kishtë

AGR father.ACC.SG.DEF my.ACC.SG.DEF PTCL know.PTCP-have.IMPERF.2PL

‘And if you knew me, you **would** also **know** my Father’ (Buz.)

The inverted pluperfect in Buzuku

E ū në mos ar-keshë e ū në mos

and I if not come.PTCP-have.IMPERF.1SG and I if not

keshë thanë atyne, të mos pas-kishnë kuat

have.IMPERF.1SG say.PTCP they.DAT PTCL not have.PTCP-have.IMPERF.3PL sin.ACC

‘And if I **had not come**, and if I **had not spoken** to them, they **would have** no sin’

The inverted pluperfect in Bogdani

Also especially in subclauses and without admirative context:

tue bam me-u mbytunè

while make.PTCP with-REFL kill.PTCP

mascujtë chi se riu le-kescine prej mamizasc

male.NOM.PL who recently be_born.PTCP-have.IMPERF.3PL from nurse.ABL.PL

‘in order to have the males who **had** recently **been born** be drowned by their wetnurses’

The inverted pluperfect in Bogdani

Po ende kthye-kescinë së riu

but even return.PTCP-have.IMPERF.3PL again

e flisinë kech për Mojsessnë

and talk.IMPERF.3PL bad.ADV about Moses.ACC.SG

‘On the contrary, they **turned** again and spoke badly about Moses’

Arvanitic

Remnants of the imperfect admirative in irrealis conditionals are found in Arvanitic from the 19th century (Hydra, Poros):

t u vratë-keshim

PTCL REFL kill.PTCP-have.IMPERF.1PL

‘If we had been murdered’

This resembles Buzuku’s hypothetical clauses.

Hence, Arvanitic retained a pre-admirative archaism of the inverted pluperfect.

Arbëresh

PRESUMPTIVE PERFECT in part of Arbëresh (Italo-Albanian):

ra shi 'it rained'

AORIST

ka rat shi 'it has probably rained'

PERFECT

Semantic nucleus of PERFECT → NON-CONFIRMATIVE already present in pre-diaspora Albanian of 15th century? Disputed.

Summary of the admirative

- resultative perfect → non-confirmative present
 - no monopoly on inverted word order
 - full morphology and core semantics in Old Geg of 16th c.
 - counterfactual core also in Tosk diaspora of 14th-15th c.
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- May have started in marked pluperfect, used as counterfactual.
 - Language contact with Turkish may have provoked the specific grammaticalization in Albanian.

Faleminderit për vëmendjen tuaj!

Thank you for your attention!

For further reading

- Oda Buchholz & Wilfried Fiedler (1987): *Albanische Grammatik*. Leipzig.
- Victor Friedman (1999): 'Evidentiality in the Balkan Languages'. *Handbuch der Südosteuropa-Linguistik*, ed. by Uwe Hinrichs. Wiesbaden. Pp. 519-44
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- Del Puente, Patrizia (2007): 'Il perfetto presuntivo italo-albanese fra storia e tipologia'. *Incontri Linguistici* 30, 165-173.
- Liosis, Nikos (2010): 'If only Arvanitika had an admirative mood!'. *Zeitschrift für Balkanologie* 46, 184–202.
- Breu, Walter (2015): 'Der Präsumptiv im Italoalbanischen'. *Sprache und Kultur der Albaner*, ed. B. Demiraj, 205–231.