The Cases of the Albanian Language - Based on the Point of View of the Linguist Fatmir Agalliu

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Abstract

This paper aims to provide the contribution of the linguist Fatmir Agalliu and his point of view for Albanian language's cases. Fatmir Agalliu belongs to the first generation of Albanian linguists that were educated inside the country that have given important support in the study of Albanian Language. An important and big value case is also his contribution on the determination of the number of cases in Albanian Language. In the determination of the number and the classification of cases of a language, we should consider specific features of that language and we should not apply a case system of another language mechanically. In Albanian declension there are two different aspects, definite and indefinite aspect. That means that case forms are doubled. Therefore, instead of having two nominative forms, one for singular and one for plural, we have four forms in fact, two for singular (definite and indefinite) and two for plural (definite and indefinite). Form and the content should take into consideration in treating case as a grammatical category claims Fatmir Agalliu.

Keywords: case, number, ablative, definite, indefinite

1. Introduction

In the determination of the number and the classification of cases of a language, we should consider specific features of that language and we should not apply a case system of another language mechanically. Based on the facts, most Albanian Grammar books discuss that Albanian declension distinguishes definite and indefinite aspects. On the cases issue, the singular should not be viewed as detached from the plural. In the singular indefinite form, noun has three forms in all cases in Modern Albanian Language, but in definite it has four forms. In singular, ablative case is not distinguished from dative but in plural it has a specific form for ablative: *libra-sh*. Therefore, all case forms in Albanian should be seen in the background of five cases: *nominative, genitive, dative, accusative, ablative*. In cases differentiation from each other we need to take into consideration their meaning as well, function, apart from grammatical expression form of meaning. Thus, it can be asserted that ablative case in its basic meaning expresses *'largim' (eng. run, departure or leave) e.g.: Iku prej shiut e ra në breshër. (Eng. Ran from the rain and fell on the hail.)* The number grammatical category is also closely related to the case grammatical category. Number grammatical category finds explanation on people's perception about number of things in nature. Although it has taken a noted abstract character, number category in Modern Albanian interacts with words' lexical meaning, through which it appears. Thus, most of abstract (summarizing) nouns in Albanian Language don't have plural. The issue of number in grammar gets confused even more by the existence of summarizing numbers which by their meaning interact with singular and plural as well. For Indo-European inflected languages, a general tendency is characteristic that moves towards the release of nominative case by case specific indicator which made the nominative on equal morphological aspect with other cases. Thus has happened with singular nominative in Albanian Language, to which have fallen its own case indicators. As well, the ending has fallen of the indefinite accusative and it identified with nominative. In plural, nominative case endings overspread on other cases as well by losing the function of case differentiation and only the number indicator remaining itself. In the process of forming case forms in plural, Albanian Language has shifted from Indo-European type and has moved closer to agglutinative (synthetic) languages. Fatmir Agalliu claims that, the present state of language development in plural nominative and accusative, as well in singular nominative and accusative, should be spoken about zero endings. Generally, it is known that zero endings have appeared as a result of drop of the endings during language historical development.

2. Methodology

For the realization of this study, we have taken into consideration the opinions of different authors about the cases of Albanian language. We have looked at these thoughts since the first grammars and presented them by analyzing and comparing them with each other. So, to carry out the paper, we used the analytical and the comparative method. Through these methods we have aligned the thoughts and theories and we have seen Fatmir Agalli's point of view on this important issue of the Albanian language.

3. Number of Cases in Albanian Language

There are two different aspects in Albanian declension, definite and indefinite aspect. That means that case forms are doubled. Therefore,

instead of having two nominative forms, one for singular and one for plural, we have four forms indeed, two for singular (definite and indefinite) and two for plural (definite and indefinite). Fatmir Agalliu claims that by treating case as a grammatical category we need to take into consideration the form, and the content. Moreover, by treating the cases as components of a unique system, we should look them related to each other. Whereas, forms' homonym, more precisely of endings should be accepted only on inter-systemic aspect which means inside paradigmatic system of declension, between its subsystems, and not at the same link of the same subsystem. Division principle should be homogeneous, that is, the same principle should be applied in all instances. When the form of cases is observed, the endings should be in regard because Albanian cases in formal genuine aspect, can be distinguished by the endings solely. Other external indicators, whether morphological or syntactical are not determinant. The author discusses about the so-called genitive case, which not like in other cases, in formal aspect is distinguished in the article aspect solely, otherwise it is equal to dative. From the above-mentioned features, it is out of every discussion the being of nominative and accusative cases, subject case and of direct object respectively, that in formal aspect are distinguished between them in the singular definite form solely. Likewise, the differentiation of a third 'case' within which the dative appears as a case of indirect object, is undeniable. For the genitive and dative functions, expressed in the forms of this 'case', oppositions are morphologically marked in all four links of the paradigmatic system. Therefore, the two accepted cases, the nominative and the accusative, there is also added a genitive-dative, within which at the time being we include the so-called ablative. If we take into account the meaningful differences in the sphere of definiteness and indefiniteness, supported by the formal differences, from this 'third case' the genuine genitive-dative would be distinguished by that that is called ablative or genitive when it is in attributive function. What the author points out as a feature of the Albanian is that the noun in genitive-dative cannot be used without article or without determinant words. In Albanian, in the attributive phrases a case form without front article is used, which in the singular is identical to the genitive-dative, while the plural has a specific form with the ending - *'sh'*. The abstract character of the determination is given by the indefinite form of the noun, which by its meaning approaches close to relative adjective. Because of this meaningful distinction and because of the form of plural with *'-sh'* this case form divides from the genitive-dative and it is emerging as a separate case. The encounter of objective and determinant functions in the common form of the indefinite plural with '-sh', and of the singular accompanied by demonstrative in ablative, even though here we emerge from the paradigmatic noun declension system, which exists despite that of the pronoun, this encounter makes the author synchronously speak about a single case, which according to tradition continues to name it as ablative. The dative differentiates both for its form and meaning. But within the dative there is a 'case' that corresponds to the genitive in the Indo-European languages. Its function is to define a noun. By the genuine form it is distinguished by the dative only from the front article, which is an external tool, analytical. Dative admission as a separate case by the form itself does not justify it. He argues that it would be better to talk about a dative that also fulfills the functions of the genitive when it gets a front-articled, therefore for a dative with an adjectival form that functions as a genitive. For the dative article and for other front articles prof. Çabej thinks they are lately embedded in tongues: "I do not believe to be known that the placement of the article between a noun in definite genitive or dative and partly in the so-called local, and its attribute, placement that is usually taken as a rule: *ujit t ë kroit, sht ë pis ë s ë madhe*, etc., has never been in the Albanian language, and is not even in the language of free discourse today." Dozon considers the front article of the Albanian as an attributive pronoun (Dozon, 1879: 202). K. Cipo claims the same, who speaks of an attribute pronoun, while S. Riza names the genitive article as demonstrative. F. Agalliu disagrees with these thoughts, either for its fixation or naming. He considers as right in core the explanation of Sh. Demiraj, who says it is an elliptical use of the genitive case. This is explained in more detail by F. Agalliu, as a display of the contextual "substantivism" of the genitive case, which, as for the function of that, even more for its form approaches with the adjective, that it can be called a quasi-adjectival case. Genitive can be used in these functions: the value of the subject, the value of the direct object, the value of the indirect object, the function of the noun predicate, as predicate, as separate apposition, as complement comparison with the conjunctions '*si*' and '*sa*', as vocative, with different prepositions. Noun in present Albanian language for F. Agalliun has at most four cases (for the indefinite). In the definite this number descends to three, because the ablative is absent in this form, since it has been replaced by dative. Thus, he presents schematically the noun declension of literary Albanian:

Indefinite singular	definite singular
Nom. (nj ë) lis / Eng. (a) tree	lis-i / tree-(the)
Gen. Dat (i) nj ë lis-i / Eng. (of) a tree	i lis-it / Eng. of tree (the) Dh. (i) nj ë lis-i
Accu. (nj ë) lis / Eng. (a) tree	lis-in / Eng. tree-(the)
Abl. (nj ë) lis-i / Eng. (a) tree	-

Indefinite plural	definite plural
Nom. lisa- / Eng. trees	lisat / Eng. trees (the)
Gen. Dat. ca... lisa-ve / Eng. some trees	(i) lisa-ve / Eng. (of) the trees
Accu. lisa- / Eng. trees	lisa-t / Eng. the trees
Abl. lisa-sh / Eng. Trees	

4. About Albanian Ablative Case

The ointment or ablative, according to tradition, is known as the fourth birth of the Albanian. From Albanian grammar practitioners, who

have a somewhat different vision than the predominant one for the current trend, according to which this present-day Albanian race equals existing in both aspects of bending, prominent and undefined, and has full value as all the other races, worth mentioning among the first Dossier. According to him, *the singular number is replaced by the gender, the meaning of which is often in the plural itself*. It is noteworthy that while in the singular in the mirrors of the curse the genitive and ablative marks them together, in the plural gives it divided and what is the most unexpected, the form of the prominent stem the bees, the brides also gives to the prominent, which shows that the form of the prominent beehive dative, brides in every use knows it as dative. According to this author, the paradigm of noun declension would consist of four cases: nominative, genitive-ablative, dative and accusative for singular, and five cases: nominative, genitive, dative, accusative and ablative for the plural. Sami Frasheri discusses the ablative, without being further explained, he says it is solely indefinite. Thus, will Majer act later, who accepts a case with *'-sh', '-shi'*, or *'-shit'*. Among the authors who have been directly dealing with the issue of cases in general and in particular with the ablative, Justin Rrota should be mentioned. In his study, categorizing the cases that are in the nature of the language, he recognizes the Albanian the ablative as well, but in the definite plural he admits as such only the archaic form, more precisely dead, *lopshit*. Looking at the continuity of the tradition, the fact that with respect to the ablative J. Rrota approaches to Sami Frashëri, with the only difference that the latter could not include in the statements of definite ablative declension *'më-shit*, even though he recognized it. From J. Rrota assertions and justifications, F. Agalliu's eagerness has been echoed his statement that the prepositions are not the ones that give the cases to the nouns. The preposition from, with which some grammarians have accompanied the form of the ablative, as well as some other prepositions, which were previously used mainly with this case, according to the author have changed the reaction, shifting from the ablative to the dative. A. Xhuvani speaking of the front prepositions, maintains in the established tradition, which recognizes a use only with the ablative case. However, when it comes to reviewing prepositions with adverbial derivation, claims that they are built more dynamically with dative-ablative, following at this point K. Cipo. S. Riza has given a special contribution in the determination of the status of the ablative case in present Albanian declension system. This author within this case has distinguished the self-sufficient ablative, the one which is used without preposition, and the non-self-sufficient ablative, that is with preposition. For the first he claims that it can only serve as the determinant of another indefinite noun. Another important conclusion emerges when it says that the ablative in the case system of the literary Albanian have ceased before the Renaissance and be a valuable case, on the contrary it constitutes a relic revelation mainly, both in the noun declension system, and in the pronoun system. Unlike some foreign grammarians, S. Riza in the second limb of the phrase *'mish kau'* he didn't notice a genitive case, but an ablative, which he calls as synthetic. Sh. Demiraj has given to this issue synchronous profile, he thinks that the second limb of the phrase-type *'bukë gruri'* is a relic-shaped form of genitive value and homonyms with the ablative. For the present categorization of the plural form of *'maleve'*, used in functions previously performed by ablative with or without preposition, Sh. Demiraj has not declared very clearly, that we can come to a definite conclusion. When he noticed that present constructions *'afër mendsh', 'larg mendsh'* are responsive to Bardhi's construction *'jashtë mendshit'*, Sh. Demiraj has in fact proved that some of present constructions with a formal indefinite ablative, even idiomatic, are, in terms of origin are a continuation of the definite ablative *'më-shit'*, and have emerged, according to us, after the drop of definiteness determinant *'-it'*. And finally, it is to be noted that even this author has emphasized that *"in present Albanian the ablative appears as a fairly reduced case in use"*. F. Agalliu gives the opinion that besides the nominative, the accusative and the genitive-dative there is also a fourth case in the Albanian language, and says that there should be no objection to this because that form of the singular, identical to the dative, in the syntagm with a modifying value such as *'para një viti'* corresponds to the plural a form with a different ending from that of the dative (-*sh*), on the contrary with the same function: *'para dy vjetësh'*. Therefore, looking at the issue of the category of ablative in the Albanian language case system, on both sides, both formal and semantic, F. Agalliu, along with all the other authors, recognize it as a separate case in it two numbers, in singular and plural. The issue of denomination, he says, does not have any substantial value, it is important to determine its content. Generally speaking, from the grammarians and scholars, to the ablative case has been recognized as a basic realization that of the origin and elimination, which is also apparent in the emigrational denominations (S. Frashëri) and the ablative. Regarding the issue of accepting or not the ablative for the definite form of the singular and plural, F. Agalliu is concerned about the theoretical character, and consequently the scientific solution, because in the practical point of view the line of tradition comes out more legitimized. Regarding the question of whether the derivation is correct, he argues that an extreme synchronous attitude would undermine the scientific description equally as diacronism that does not take into account systemic ties. It is known that in a language, when the number of cases decreases, the functions of lost cases are taken by other cases; at the same time the value of prepositions increases. On the other hand, as these processes are often gradual and carried out over a relatively long period of time, it will be necessary for this period of time to coexist in obsolete language forms and uses or in use with newer forms and uses. Thus is the issue with a definite case as well, whose functions diminish by time, because they are now expressed by other means and categories, and at the same time, this or that form gets out of use after it becomes extremely archaic. In such a state lies the ablative of the Albanian language, which, once identified with the dative in the singular, came and mingled with it even in the plural, initially losing the definite form and narrowing to a great extent the use of the indefinite form. With the removal from the language of the definite form of the plural and with its substitution with the corresponding dative, the complete unification of these cases in the definite form in both numbers was made. Even in the definite form of systematic linkages in terms of cases, they must be accepted even among the singular and the plural. Thus, for the definite singular we would look at constructions of the type *'doli malit', 'kishte dalë pazarit'*, etc., and for the plural *'ishin shpërndarë pyjeve'*. An indirect test that the ablative case in nouns represents a corrugated phenomenon, is the pronoun declension, where this case has almost disappeared completely. In the substitution of the ablative from the dative, a special role has also played the direction of the prepositions, which is also a syntax factor. In the present literary Albanian system, the ablative case should be regarded as a largely relic demonstration, F. Agalliu

claims. The original indefinite plural ablative *'m ë sh'*, Dozon in the paradigms of declension has also marked for the indefinite, and the definite. And K. Kristoforidhi, the plural of the definite ablative of type '*qensht*', who says that is present for his time, has equated by the meaning with the indefinite form '*qensh*'. G. Majer as well, did not distinguish two forms in terms of definiteness (G. Meyer, 1888). Furthermore, this author and S. Frash ëri as well, in the paradigms, besides the form *'m ë sh'* is also written *'nj ë m ë shi'*, which is not encountered in other grammarians. In addition to the process of replacing the ablative by the dative, where the important role played by the change of the direction of the prepositions, another process has been proved, that of the decline of the definiteness indicator *'-it'* after the ending '-sh' and the formal unification of the definite ablative with indefinite ablative. F. Agalliu assumes that even in this case there has been the phenomenon we observe with the definite genitive-dative as well as with the definite dative when it functions as ablative, the decline of the definiteness indicator '-t' after the ending '-*ve'*. Regarding the former plural definite ablative *'m ë - shit'*, the author thinks that the drop of *'-it'* ending and formal equalization of both forms must have been proved only in cases when this case was used with the function of adverbial of place and time, i.e. as near-verbal ablative. In the adverbial functions, where the noun leans by the adverb, the decline in the definiteness indicator '-it' has been easier, because the indefinite form *'m ë - sh'*, was fulfilled well these functions. According to F. Agalliu, with the plural definite ablative 'm ë-shit' the evolution has pursued three directions: unifying with the indefinite *'m ë sh'* through the decline of the definiteness indicator '-*it*', a process that has been proved even in our days with the dative after the fall of *'-t'* ending; the substitution from the definite dative *'m ë vet'*; and thirdly, the loss of some functions, such as that of cause, agent, etc. We affirm that the ablative type *'malesh'* in adverbial functions without prepositions is the continuation of the definite ablative *'m ë shit'*, leaving open the possibility of explanation of the second form from the beginning through the fall of the ending '-*it'*.

5. Conclusions

We think that, although closely related, yet synchronously the syntactic function of a form, which makes it to incline to another part of speech, should be well distinguished, relying well on semantic-grammatical criteria. This does not prevent any such category such as definiteness, where the plural dative without preposition functions as ablative, to be neutralized. Looking at the internal developments of Albanian in these last centuries, these phenomena should be explained to determine the causes, and this cannot be done without regard to the relations of two types of declension, definite and indefinite, as well as the possible neutralization of the semantic definiteness in certain conditions.

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