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Verb constructs in Shkodër Gheg: morphosyntax of bare bases[2]

Abstract. This article addresses the morphological nature and the syntactic distribution of the reduced (or invariable) forms of the verb in the Gheg variety spoken in Shkodër. We can identify reduced forms with bare bases[3], more precisely stems ending in consonant or including the thematic vowel. The probably best known instance of reduced form is the one that, introduced by the preposition *mɛ* 'with', realizes the *paskajore* 'infinitive', typically in control contexts where Romance and Germanic languages select an infinitive form. The reduced forms, normally identified with past participles, in reference to auxiliary contexts, show different morpho-phonological properties according to the verbal class, that we can divide, at least in the first instance, in vowel stems, including a thematic vocalic element, and consonant stems, ending in the root consonant. The occurrence of verb stems is not limited to participles and *paskajore*, but includes other contexts with different readings. Moreover, bare stems distinguish two alternants depending on the length of the stressed nucleus. We will propose an analysis based on the hypothesis that the same basic operation of Merge works both in forming sentences and complex words. Specifically, we assume that functional morphemes on a par with lexical ones, are fully interpretable, and, thus, they enter into the workspace for the syntactic operations.

Keywords: morphology, syntax, verb stems, paskajore, Gheg Albanian

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[2] This contribution is the result of a common work, and specifically: conceptualization, B. Baldi and L.M.Savoia; methodology, B. Baldi and L.M. Savoia; data curation, L.M. Savoia; writing—original draft preparation, B. Baldi; writing—review and editing, L.M Savoia. The data we discuss in this article were collected through field investigations with native speakers.

[3] In descriptive work these forms are generally labelled as 'invariable participles'. Speaking of 'reduced forms/ participles' seems to us more precise.

1. Introduction

In the Gheg variety spoken in Shkodër, a reduced form of the verb coinciding with the stem, substantially the bare base, occurs in some contexts. The typical instance of reduced invariable form is generally associated with control contexts, where it is preceded by the preposition *mɛ* 'with' realizing the so-called *paskajore* 'infinitive' parallel to the infinitive in Romance and Germanic languages[1]. The reduced forms, normally identified with participles in reference to auxiliary contexts[2], show different morphophonological properties according to the verbal class[3].

The occurrence of verb stems is however not limited to participles and *paskajore* forms, but includes other contexts; moreover, we find two alternants, contrasting a long and a short stressed nucleus. This duration difference involves also location and aperture properties. Schematizing, bare stems encompass different interpretive properties:

✓ the infinitive construct and the past participle in auxiliary contexts (long)

✓ the 3rd person of the non-active perfect (short)

✓ the 2nd person if imperative (short)

✓ finally, the 2nd and 3rd person of the indicative present in consonantal stems (long).

The phonetic aspects of the duration contrast between long and short vowel realizations in the Shkodër Gheg has been studied by Beci[4]. Here, we will examine the distribution of vocalic length properties in relation to their distribution in different syntactic contexts. The presentation of the data will allow us to synthetically characterize the points of Shkodër syntax implied in the occurrence of these verb

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[1] M. Rita Manzini and Leonardo M. Savoia, *A Unification of Morphology and Syntax. Investigations into Romance and Albanian dialects*; M. Rita Manzini and Leonardo M. Savoia, *The Morphosyntax of Albanian and Aromanian* Varieties; Leonardo M. Savoia and M. Rita Manzini, "Morphosyntax of the participle and infinitive in the variety of Shkodër".

[2] Shaban Demiraj, *Gramatikë historike e gjuhës shqipe*.

[3] Francesco Solano, *Manuale di lingua albanese*; Martin Camaj, *Albanian Grammar*.

[4] Bahri Beci, "Vlera funksionale e gjatësisë së zanoreve të theksuara në shqipen"; Bahri Beci, "Sistemi i zanoreve hundore në të folmen e Shkodrës".

forms. In order to do this, we need an adequate approach to the interplay between morphemes and syntactic categories.

2. The reduced form of verb in auxiliary and infinitival contexts

The verbal form that combines with the auxiliaries *kam* 'I have' e *jam* 'I am', in contexts which in Romance and Germanic languages require a past participle, is a bare stem, devoid of agreement inflection, whose nucleus is realized as a long vowel. Together with *kam* it forms the present perfect active, as in (1a), for *-o-* stems, while with *jam* it forms the present perfect middle-reflexive or the passive, as in (1b), *-o-* stems, and (1c), consonantal stems.

(1) a. ε kan   mlu:
   him/her they.have covered
   'They have covered him/her'

 b. jan mlu: (pɾɛi s ɒms)
   they.are covered (by Art mother)
   'They have covered up/ been covered (by mother)'

 c. ɐʃt ve:ʃ (pɾɛi s ɒms)
   he.is dressed (by Art mother)
   'He has dressed/ been dressed (by mother)'

Some verbal subclasses have invariable participle forms characterized by specialized inflections such as *–n* in the case of *jap* 'I give' in (2a), or *–t* in the case of *mai* 'I keep' in (2b).

(2) a. j a kan   ð̃ɒ̃:n
   to.him it they.have given
   'They have given it to him'

 b. ε kan   mɑit
   it they.have kept
   'They have kept it'

Although the reduced verb forms in (1)-(2) derive from past participles [1], nevertheless, the variety of *Shkodër* also possesses inflected participles endowed with a stative or resultative meaning, formed by the suffixes *-m* with vowel bases, in (3a,a') and *–un*, with consonant bases, in (3b,b'), followed by the agreement morphology. (3a") exemplifies the possibility for *-un* to double the suffix *–m* joined with vowel stems. Such participial forms behave like adjectives, taking a pre-nominal article (the Linker) and the inflection introducing nominal class (gender), number and case properties [2]. In (3) Prt indicates the participial suffix, F = feminine, PL = plural. Lkr = Linker.

(3) a. jam   i   mlu-m   / ε   mlu-m-ε
        I.am   Lkr.MSG   cover-Prt / Lkr.FSG cover-Prt-F
        'I am covered'

  a'. jan   t   mlu-m   / t   mlu-m-ε
        they.are   Lkr.PL   cover-Prt / Lkr.PL   cover-Prt-F
        'They are covered'

  a". ɐʃt   i   mlu-m-un
        s/he.is   Lkr.MSG   cover-Prt-Prt
        'S/he is covered'

  b. ɐʃt   i   vɛʃ-un   /ε   veʃ-un
        s/he.is   Lkr.MSG   dress-Prt / Lkr.FSG dress-Prt
        'S/he is dressed'

  b'. jena   t   veʃ-un   / t   veʃ-un-a
        we.are   Lkr.PL   dress-Prt / Lkr.PL   dress-Prt-PL
        'We are dressed'

In contexts where in other European languages an infinitive is inserted, Gheg varieties lexicalize the syntactic construct traditionally described as *paskajore*[3] (Cordignano 1931, Demiraj 1985, 1997, Banfi 1985, Joseph 1983, Pellegrini 1995), where the reduced form is

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[1] Fulvio Cordignano, *Lingua albanese (dialetto ghego)*; Shaban Demiraj, *Gramatike Historike e Gjuhës Shqipe*; Shaban Demiraj, *La lingua albanese. Origine, storia, strutture*.

[2] M. Rita Manzini and Leonardo M. Savoia, *The Morphosyntax of Albanian and Aromanian Varieties*.

[3] Fulvio Cordignano, *Lingua albanese (dialetto ghego)*; Shaban Demiraj, *Gramatike Historike e Gjuhës Shqipe*; Shaban Demiraj, *La lingua albanese. Origine, storia, strutture*; Emanuele Banfi, *Linguistica balcanica*; Brian D. Joseph, *The synchrony and diachrony of the Balkan infinitive*; Giovan Battista Pellegrini, *Avviamento alla linguistica Albanese*.

introduced by the preposition *mɛ* 'with', as illustrated in (4). It is of note that, beside *mɛ*, in (4a), the verb stem can be introduced also by *pa* 'without' in (4b) and *tu(i)*, in (4c). Gerunds formed with this latter particle can be embedded under the copula *jam*, giving rise to the progressive as in (4c), or under perception verbs, as in (4d).

(4) *Shkodër*

a. | kɒ | fi'lu: | mɛ | | hɒŋəɾ |
   | have.3sg | finished | to | | eat |
   'I finished eating'

b. | dol-a | pɑ | u | | lɑ: |
   | I.went.out | without | M/R | | wash |
   'I went out without washing'

c. | jam | tu | ɛ | lɑ: | / mlu: | / ve:ʃ |
   | I.am | Prt | him-her | wash | / cover | / dress |
   'I am washing/ covering/ dressing him/her'

d. | t | kam | pɑ | tui | ka'lu |
   | you | I.have | seen | Prt | pass.by |
   'I saw you pass by'

The introducers *mɛ* and *pa* can be identified with prepositions, as shown by the comparison with DPs in (5), where are followed by nouns. As for the particle *tu(i)*, yielding gerund, Demiraj (1986) connects it with the prepositional type *tu, tek* 'at'. However, it displays a slightly different behaviour in preceding the negative mark (cf. (7b)).

(5) | ɛ | kam | bõ | mɛ | kry:p | / pɑ | kry:p |
    | it | I.have | made | with | salt | / without | salt |
    'I made it with salt/ without salt'

In infinitival constructs with the bare stem preceded by a preposition, clitics are inserted in-between, as in (6).

(6) | kam | ɒ:ɾð | mɛ | t | a | ðɒ:n |
    | I.have | come | Prep | to.you | it | give |
    'I came to give it to you'

The modal negation *mas* precedes *mɛ*, as in (7a), and follows *tu*, as

in in (7b), suggesting a different structural organization in the two cases. *Mas* differs from the negation that occurs in declarative non-modal sentences, namely *nuk* or *s*, as in (7d), and coincides with the negation occurring with imperatives, in (7c).

(7) *Shkodër*

a. ɐʃt   mɐ   miɾ   mas   mɛ   ɛ   ʃkɾu:
   it.is   more   good   not   to   it   write
   'It is better not to write it'

b. tu   mas   ɛ   bɐ:
   Prt   not   it   do
   'Not doing it …'

c. mas   ɛ   θir
   not   him   call
   'Don'call him!'

d. s/ nuk ɛ   dʒɛi
   not   it   I.find
   'I am not finding him'

The construct *mɛ - verb stem* occurs in control contexts with modals as in (8a), with causatives as in (8b), with aspectuals as in (8c), in other complementation contexts as in (8d), as well as in adverbial sentences as in (8e). In sentences in (8d) *mɛ* is introduced by the finite complementizers *tʃi* and be preceded by other prepositions such as *pəɾ* in (8e). The modal negation *mas* precedes *mɛ*; on the other hand it follows other prepositions and complementizers.

(8) *Shkodër*

a. doin   mɛ   ɛ   bɛ̃:
   they.want   Prep it   do
   'They want to do it'

b. ɛ   kam   bɛ̃:   m   u   tʃu:
   him   I.have   made   Prep   M/R   wake.up
   'I woke him up'

c. kam   fi'ɫu   mɛ   hɛ̃:ŋəɾ
   I.have begun   Prep   eat
   'I have begun to eat'

d. i   kan   θã:n   (tʃi) (mas) mɛ   ɛ bẽ:
   to.him they.have   said   that not   Prep   it do
   'They told him not to do it'

e. kam   i:k pəɾ mas   mɛ   ɛ/ t   pɑ:
   I.have left for not   to   him-her/you see
   'I left to see him/her/you'

The *mɛ - verb stem* sequence is found in infinitival questions, where it is introduced by a *wh*-phrase, as in (9a), and in hypotheticals, where it is introduced by *bã:*, as in (9b). Finally, the *paskajore* can occur in non-embedded contexts as in (9c).

(9) *Shkodër*

a. nuk   di   (sɛ)   tʃa   mɛ   bẽ:
   not   I.know that what Prep do
   'I don't know what to do'

b. bã   mas   mɛ   ɑ:ɾð s   t   pɾɛs
   if   not   Prep come not you I.await
   'If you don't come, I am not waiting for you'

c. mɛ ɑ:ɾð
   to come
   'If he came!'

A lexical subject can insert between the complementizer and the *paskajore*, as illustrated in (10a); the other possible position for the subject is postverbal, as in (10b).

(10) *Shkodër*

a.   du   tʃi   ti   mɛ   ɛ   bẽ:
     I.want that   you   to   it   do
     'I want you to do it'

b.   doin   (tʃi)   mɛ   ʋ:ɾð a'ta
     they.want   that   to   come they
     'They want to come'

All in all, the data show that *mɛ+verb stem* is able to realize every types of embedded sentences in which the subject is independently

introduced, as in (10) or interpreted, as in (8)-(9). Its insertion after the declarative complementizer in (10) and (8d) suggests that it is able to realize the essential properties of the event associated to v. This is confirmed by its occurrence after prepositions in (8e) and *wh*-elements in (9a), and in exclamatives.

Before proceeding with the analysis, we note that, as well known, in Tosk standard-like varieties inflected participles correspond to the reduced forms of the verb we are investigating[1]. More precisely, we generally find the past participles in *–ur* or *–r* in auxiliary contexts, in (11a) and in a subset of the infinitival contexts of Gheg, i.e. after *pa* 'without' and *dukɛ* 'gerundive particle' in (11b) and in the *pɛr tɛ + participle* periphrasis, in (11c), from the Gjirokastër variety. (11a') illustrates the resultative/ stative reading of the participle characterized by the agreement inflection.

(11) a. ɛ   kam   zɟua-ɾ
          Him/her   I.have woken.up
          'I have woken him/her up'

     a'. jan   tə   vɛʃ-uɾ-a
          they.are   Lkr.PL dressed-FPL
          'They are dressed'

     b. tə   patʃ   dukɛ u   la-ɾ
          you   I.saw   Prt   M/R   wash
          'I saw you wash up'

     c. aɾðtʃ   pəɾ   t   a/   i   vɛʃ-uɾ
          I.came   for   Prt   him/   them   dressed
          'I came to dress him/them'

The participial inflection *-(u)r* is the rhotacized outcome etymologically connected with the inflection *–un* viewed in (3) for Gheg. The original *–n* in final position after the vowel of the base was lost in Gheg, yielding the reduced forms we have seen in the case of vocalic stems like *mlu:* corresponding to the Tosk form *mbulua-r*

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[1] Cf. Giuseppina Turano, *Dipendenze sintattiche in albanese*; M. Rita Manzini and Leonardo M. Savoia, *A unification of syntax and morphology.*

'covered'[1]. Similarly we can see the long consonantal stems such as *ve:ʃ* as the result of the compensatory lengthening due to the falling of the final participial element[2]. On the contrary, the 3rd person of the middle-reflexive perfect and the 2nd person of imperatives realize the true pure stem.

3. Other types of reduced verb forms

As we noticed in Section 1, bare stems of the verb occur also in other contexts. In the case of consonantal stems, we find the simple stem in the 3rd person singular of the middle-reflexive perfective, where it is introduced by the reflexive pronoun *u* (M/R = Middle-Reflexive), in (12a), and in the 2nd person singular of the imperative, in (12b). In these contexts, the stressed nucleus is both shorter and slightly more open/centralized.

(12) a. u   vɛʃ
          M/R   s/he.dressed
          'S/he dressed her/himself'
      b. m   vɛʃ
          me   dress
          'dress me!'

Thus *ve:ʃ* with the reading of a participle/infinitival or of a 2nd/3rd person singular of the present contrasts with *vɛʃ* 'dress.Imperative' or *u vɛʃ* 'S/he dressed him/herself'.

In the case of vocalic stems, the contrast is influenced by the quality of the vowel, because open vowels favour a longer intrinsic duration; a similar effect is determined by the nature of the final consonant in consonantal stems, where sonorants imply a possible longer duration. Altogether, also vocalic stems conform to the pattern whereby the shorter outcome in imperative or 3rd perfect person in (13a,b) contrasts with the longer realization in participle/ infinitive form, repeated in (13c).

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[1] Shaban Demiraj, *Gramatikë historike e gjuhës shqipe* and *La lingua Albanese. Origine. Storia. Strutture.*
[2] Shaban Demiraj, *Gramatikë historike e gjuhës shqipe*, pp. 940-941.

(13) a. u   ml-u
          M/R   cover
          'He covered himself'
      b. ml-a
          cover
          'Cover!'
      c. mɛ   ml-u:
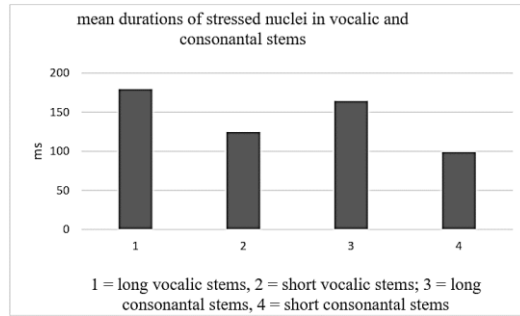   Prep   cover
          'to cover'

The 2nd and 3rd person of the present indicative selects in turn the consonantal bases with the long stressed vowel, such as *ve:ʃ* 'dress', as illustrated in (14a). Hence, the 2nd and 3rd person singular, lacking specialized inflections, contrast with the 1st person singular and the plural, endowed with specialized inflections. (14b) illustrates the present indicative paradigm of the vocalic verb *mlaj* 'I cover', where the original thematic vowel *o* is preserved only in the plural; in the singular persons, the thematic vowel *a* occurs, followed by the person exponent, *-i* for the 1sg and *-n* for the 2/3sg.

(14)   a.   ɛ veʃ-i/ ve:ʃ/ ve:ʃ/ veʃ-im/ veʃ-ni/ veʃ-in
                  3sg   dress-1sg, etc.
                  'I dress him/her'   etc.
      b.   ɛ mla-i/ mla:-n/ mla:-n/ mlo-im/ mlo-ni/ mlo-in
                  3sg   cover-1sg, etc.
                  'I cover him/her/ it'   etc.

Although based on a limited number of realizations of the alternants produced by our informants[1], a clear contrast between short and long nuclei in stems can be observed, as in the graph in (15).
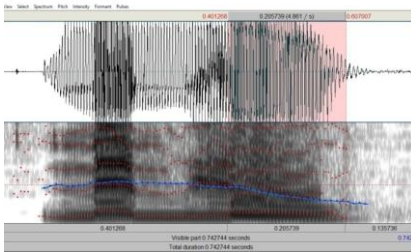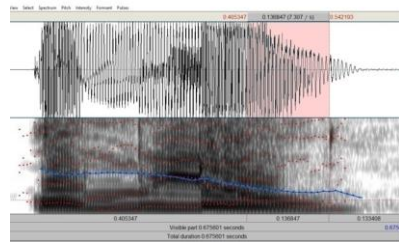
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(15)

Our data evidence a mean duration of 179,57 ms in long nuclei of thematic stems, (15.1), in comparison with the mean of 124,81 ms in short nuclei contexts in (15.2) short nuclei. A similar contrast opposes long outcomes, 165,47 ms, in (15.3), to the short ones in the consonantal stems, in (15.4) with 99 ms [1]. In the following spectrograms the long realization in *paskajore* in (16a) and (17a.i) and (17a.ii) is compared with the short realization in (16b) and (17b.i) and (17b.ii). More precisely, (16a) and (16b) exemplify the contrast between the vocalic stems *mɛ mlu:* 'to cover' and *u mlu* '(s)he covered her/himself'; (17a.i) and (17b.i) illustrate the contrast between the consonantal stems *mɛ ve:ʃ* 'to dress' and *u vɛʃ* '(s)he dressed her/himself', whereas (17a.ii) and (17b.ii) illustrate the contrast between *mɛ lɔ:ð* 'to tire' and *u lað* '(s)he get tired'.
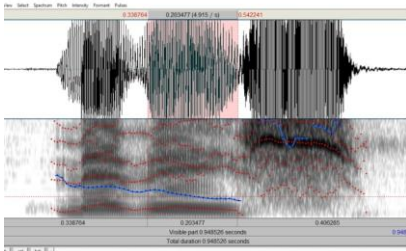
(16)   a.   b.
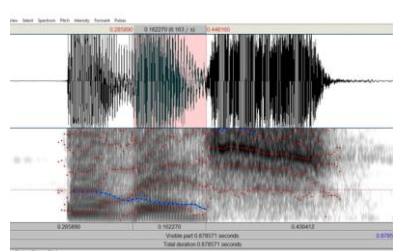

mɛ mlu: 'to cover'   *u mlu* '(s)he covered her/himself'

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[1] In both contexts, according to the Test T the differences appear to be statistically significant. In thematic stems we have P = 0,001336 and in consonantal stems P = 3,72344E-07.
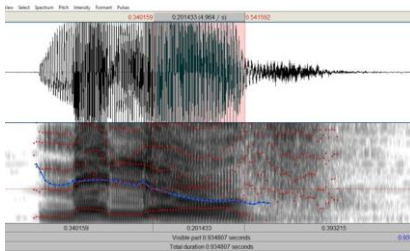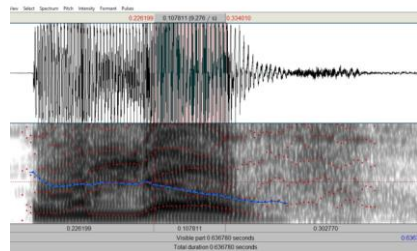
(17)   a.i

mɛ veːʃ 'to dress'

b.i

u vɛʃ '(s)he dressed her/himself'

a.ii

mɛ lɔːð 'to tire'

b.ii

u lað '(d)he get tired'

It should be noted that the spectrograms in (17) show a slightly different spectral envelope connecting with the more open and centralized realization of the vowel in short contexts. The link between shortness and aperture degree, otherwise well attested in languages[1], is evident in the formant distribution. For example, as for the values for the F1 and F2, (17b.ii) *u lað*, F1 789.82, F2 1568.56, shows a higher F1 and a lower F2 in comparison with (17a.ii) *mɛ lɔːð*, F1 683.91, F2 1662.59; similarly, (17b.i) *u vɛʃ*, F1 683.848, F2 2138.13, has a F1 higher than the one of (17a.i) *mɛ veːʃ*, F1 452.75, F2 2250.55. These differences involve also the colour of the vowel, as in the case of *ɔ*, which alternates with *a* in (17a.ii) vs (17b.ii). It is important to stress that in many types of vocalic stems the vocalic nucleus in the present indicative and in the 2nd person of imperative is different from the forms of reduced participle or the 3rd middle-reflexive perfect.

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[1] Leonardo M. Savoia, *I dialetti italiani. Sistemi e processi fonologici nelle varietà di area italiana e romancia.*

The table in (18) summarizes the distribution of the short/ long alternants in the two classes of verbs:

(18)

	2nd/3rd Present Indicative	Participle/ Infinitive	Imperative	3rd M/R Perfect
Consonantal stems	long	long	short	short
Vocalic stems	long	long	short	short

4. Morphology and syntax

Our approach to morpho-syntax is based on the idea that morphology is part of the syntactic computation and there is no specialized component for the morphological structure of words [1]. Lexical elements, including functional morphemes, are endowed with fully interpretable content, and contribute to externalizing the syntactic structure. So, this view rejects the conceptual frame of Distribute Morphology (DM) [2], in which morphology defines an independent level from syntax, where subword elements (affixes and clitics) are understood as 'dissociated morphemes' conveying an information 'separated from the original locus of that information in the phrase marker' [3]. Typically, DM uses post-syntactic rules of re-adjustment and of linear adjacency (Local dislocation) [4] able to manipulate features associated with syntactic categories. Hence, agreement and case morphemes are not represented in syntax but they are added post-syntactically 'during Morphology'.

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[1] M. Rita Manzini and Leonardo M. Savoia, *Grammatical Categories: Variation in Romance Languages*; M. Rita Manzini and Leonardo M. Savoia, "Gender, number and inflectional class in Romance: Feminine/plural –a"; M. Rita Manzini and Leonardo M. Savoia, *The Morphosyntax of Albanian and Aromanian Varieties*; M. Rita Manzini, Leonardo M. Savoia and Benedetta Baldi, "Microvariation and macrocategories: Differential Plural Marking and Phase theory"; Leonardo M. Savoia, Benedetta Baldi and M. Rita Manzini, "Sigmatic plurals in Romance varieties spoken in Italy and their interaction with -i plurals"; Leonardo M. Savoia, Benedetta Baldi and M. Rita Manzini, "Asymmetries in Plural Agreement in DPs"; cf. Chris Collins and Richard Kayne, *Towards a Theory of Morphology as Syntax*.

[2] Morris Halle and Alec Marantz, "Distributed morphology and the pieces of inflection".

[3] David Embick and Rolf Noyer, "Movement Operations after Syntax.", p. 557.

[4] David Embick and Rolf Noyer, "Movement Operations after Syntax" .

Actually, if we admit that morphemes are part of the vocabulary as meaningful element the formation of complex words can be analyzed as the result of a Merge operation that combines inflectional heads (affixes) with a category-less lexical root R, corresponding to a predicate. In the case of nominal elements, inflectional contents are Class (gender feminine/masculine) and other classificatory properties such as number and case[1]. In inflected verbal forms agreement features and mood/ tense/ aspect and voice inflections are merged with R.

So, the Merge operation[2] in (19) is sufficient to yield the combination of morphemes into complex words. Merge takes the items X and Y and creates the new syntactic object formed by the combination of X and Y.[3]

(19)   Merge(X,Y) $\rightarrow$ [X,Y]

Chomsky[4] sees in pair-Merge the way of treating labelled amalgams based on the affixation of elements endowed with φ-features, typically in head raising: 'It's always described incorrectly. If a verb raises to inflection, say to T, it's always described as if the T-V complex becomes a T; but it's not, it's a V-the outcome of the adjunction is really verbal, not inflectional'. In particular, we conceptualize the traditional categorizer *n* for nouns and *v* for verbs[5] as the bundles of φ-features that characterize the functional content of words entering into the agreement operations. Finally, agreement can be accounted for as the morphological manifestation of the identity between referential feature sets corresponding to the arguments of the sentence.

Schematizing the preceding discussion, we assume that:

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[1] M. Rita Manzini and Leonardo M. Savoia, "Reducing 'case' to denotation: Nominal inflections in Albanian".

[2] Noam Chomsky, *The UCLA Lectures*; Noam Chomsky, "Puzzles about Phases".

[3] Very synthetically, Merge can be External, in the simple case that an item is added taking it from Vocabulary or External, when an existing element is combined with another. The question, discussed by Chomsky, concerns the category assigned to the new item. (Labelling). In this case, the head and sharing of features (agreement) fix the category.

[4] Noam Chomsky, *The UCLA Lectures*, p. 55.

[5] Cf. Noam Chomsky, *The UCLA Lectures*.

✓ Morphology implies the same operations of syntax and there is no separate morphological component.

✓ Lexical elements, including morphemes, are fully interpretable, and contribute to externalizing the syntactic structure. They exclude Late Insertion and the other tools of Distributed Morphology, such as the manipulation of terminal nodes.

4.1. Reduced forms

Let us begin with the thematic vowel TV, i.e. the vocalic element that in Romance languages appears in-between the root and the tense and agreement inflections, generally connecting with the inflectional class (conjugation) of the verb. For instance, in Italian in the first conjugation verbs, the TV *-a-* occurs immediately to the right of the root and precedes the other inflectional affixes, as in *port-a-re* '*infinitive*, to bring', *port-a-v-o* '*imperfect*, I brought', *port-a-t-o* '*past particple, msg*, brought'. In Albanian, here the Gheg variety, thematic verbs present a vocalic element that occurs both in the inflected and in reduced forms, like *-u-* in the inflected participle *ml-u-m* 'covered'. In the DM framework thematic vowels have been seen as devoid of any syntactic import, 'ornamental pieces of morphology' according to Embick[1].

Given our assumption that morphemes are endowed with content, we identify thematic vowel with a bundle of nominal features introducing an argumental variable; in other words, it operates as a nominalizer that translates R into a predicate associated with an argument. In fact, the thematic vowel is able to specify the nominal (adjectival) nature of the participle, in (14a) for Gheg. On a par with some Romance languages, such as French in (20b).

(20)   a. $[_{\text{Prt/Adj}} [_{\text{R}} \text{ ml}] \text{ u}]$ 'covered'
           b. $[_{\text{Prt/Adj}} [_{\text{R}} \text{ mang}] \text{ e}]$ 'eaten'

In terms of Merger, we can look at (20) as the labelled amalgam formed by merging the TV to R, as in (21), where φ designates what we can think of as a bundle of nominal features identifying an argument.

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[1] David Embick, *Localism versus Globalism in Morphology and Phonology*.

(21)   < u$_\varphi$, ml$_R$ > → [$_\varphi$ [$_R$ ml] u]

In the case of inflected participles in (3a,b), both –*m* morphology that combines with the bases in vowel and the –*un* morphology of consonantal bases can be associated with the perfective, i.e. resultative/ stative specification of the participle. Hence, –*m* and –*un* inflections pair-merge to the verbal base, in (22a), or to the base augmented by the thematic vowel, in (22b), so that –*m* selects the lexical base inclusive of –*u*.

(22)   a.   < [$_\varphi$un], [$_R$ veʃ]> → [$_{Infl}$ [$_R$ veʃ] un]
            b.   < [$_{Infl}$m], [$_\varphi$ [$_R$ ml] u] > → [$_{Infl}$ [$_\varphi$ [$_R$ ml] u] m]

The inflected participle presents the same agreement morphology as nouns and adjectives, as illustrated in the examples in (3), including the pre-adjectival articles *i, ɛ, a, t*, that we identify with Linkers, i.e. φ-features exponents pair-merging with the structures in (23a,b)[1]. In (23a) the amalgam *veʃ-un* merges with the φ-feature bearer -*a*, yielding *veʃ-un-a* 'dressed.FPL'.

(23)   < [$_{pl}$a], [$_{Infl}$ [$_R$ veʃ] un]> → [$_{pl}$ [$_{Infl}$ [$_R$ veʃ] un] a]

In (24), the Linker realizes the categorial Link[2], substantially the nominal agreement. The pair-merge operation yields (24) where the Link *t* and the φ-features of the possessive agree

(24)   < [$_{pl}$t], [$_{pl}$ [$_{Infl}$ [$_R$ veʃ] un] a]>

An interesting issue concerns the way that the inflectional exponents are combined and added to each other. For instance, in *ml-u-m-ɛ* in (25) some of the φ-features are doubled in TV and the inflection.

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[1] M. Rita Manzini, "Chomsky's (2020) Links and linker phenomena".
[2] Noam Chomsky, *The UCLA lectures*, p. 50.

(25) $[_\varphi\ [_{Infl}\ [_\varphi\ [_R\ ml]\ u]\ m]\ \varepsilon]$
             bring- TV$_{Infl}$- Part Aspect- f
             'covered'

The same can happen as regards the participial affixes, as in the case of (3a") *i mlu-m-un* 'Linker covered'

An interesting issue concerns the status of the forms with long nucleus. We saw that lengthening can be connected with an original final morpheme now deleted (Section 3). All considered, this strengthens the hypothesis whereby the duration is an exponent of participle. Naturally, only the special form associated with *mε* and auxiliary contexts is implied, i.e. the form that does not include agreement exponents. The fact that the participle in auxiliary and prepositional contexts is invariable, devoid of gender and number inflection, is a general property of Albanian varieties, as shown also by the examples for Ghirokastër in (11). If we are on the right track, we have simply to assume that participles of the type of *ve:ʃ* and *mlu:* with long stressed vowel incorporate the participle morpheme in the shape of a morpho-phonological property, as in (26a). The linking of the vocalic slot 'x' to the adjacent nucleus yields (26b).

(26)   a. $[_{Prt}\ x]$
                                    |
                             V
        b. $< [_{Prt}\ x], [_R\ ve\int] > \rightarrow [_{Prt}\ [_R\ ve{:}\int]]$
                             |
                          V

5. *mε* infinitive and participle in auxiliary contexts

Here, we are made to wonder how the invariable bases are able to realize different meanings while lacking specialized marks connected to these latter. Only the length contrast appears, that however we have interpreted as a morphophonological mark of the participle, at least in *mε* and *auxiliary* constructs. Actually, long outcomes appear also in the 2nd and 3rd person of the indicative present; moreover, it is unclear how the participial exponent is connected with the infinitive. As to the short form, we see that they realize imperative and 3rd person of the middle-reflexive perfect. This section will be devoted to a brief

discussion of the two contexts where the stem is introduced by a lexical head, the preposition *mɛ* forming the *paskajore* and the auxiliary. The model we adopt here allows us to account for some of the problems raised by these expressions in an interesting way.

We pursue the simplest assumption that *mɛ* is a true preposition also in contexts where it introduces the invariable verb form[1]. In this line, we conclude that *paskajore* is a prepositional phrase (PP) including an uninflected verbal form, with the effect that the Irrealis modality, i.e. that one usually expressed by infinitive in other languages, is realized. Nevertheless, the past participle morpheme in itself introduces a stative aspectual reading. Manzini and Savoia[2] explain the relation between aspectual tense properties and modality resuming the proposal of Iatridou,[3] according to which the past morphology admits a scopal difference, whereby ranging over temporal variable excludes the utterance time, and ranging over possible worlds excludes the speaker's world. In this line, Manzini and Savoia assume that 'the connection between the two traditional notions of mood and aspect is established through a scopal mechanism', so that 'the progressive and habitual readings of the imperfective depend on an indefinite quantification over events'. This agrees with the Bonomi's proposal[4], which connects imperfectivity morphology with a universal/generic quantification over events, while the (past) perfective introduces an existential quantification; this analysis suggests that the same universal quantification over possible worlds can apply to the irrealis type, accounting for its link with imperfective forms. The conclusion of Manzini and Savoia is that the 'nominal character of the verbal stem make it perfective, on the assumption that (prototypical) nouns are stative predicates, in other words they denote properties [...] the infinitival interpretation will have to depend on an inferential process at the interpretive interface

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[1] Cf. M. Rita Manzini and Leonardo M. Savoia, *A Unification of Morphology and Syntax. Investigations into Romance and Albanian dialects*.

[2] M. Rita Manzini and Leonardo M. Savoia, *A Unification of Morphology and Syntax. Investigations into Romance and Albanian dialects*, pp. 283-284.

[3] Sabine Iatridou, "The grammatical ingredients of counterfactuality".

[4] Andrea Bonomi, "Aspect, quantification and when-clauses in Italian".

introducing a quantification over possible worlds, corresponding to the irrealis reading.'[1]

We agree with the semantic framework suggested by Manzini and Savoia, in the sense that the nominal nature of the bare stems makes them available to be interpreted in relation to the context and that imperfectivity is, substantially, a generic quantification over times, or, in indefinite contexts, over worlds. However, we follow a partially different approach, by connecting the infinitive reading of the *paskajore* to its prepositional nature. The preposition extends the event associated with the matrix verb by means of a secondary eventive space devoid of referential properties. More precisely, the preposition *mɛ/ pa/ tui* imply has the effect of set abstraction, changing a sentence into a predicate, whereby the argument of the participial form is a variable whose denotation is fixed by an argument of the matrix sentence. Taking into account the preceding discussion, let us now go to syntactic analysis of *paskajore*. We assume that invariable forms realize v, the eventive properties of the sentence as in (27). φ-fetures associated with the stem, substantially the argumental variable introduced by the participle, are saturated by matching the agreement features of v, as suggested in (27a). The amalgam in (27a) is merged to *mɛ* giving rise to (27b).

$$(27) \quad \text{a.} \quad < v_\varphi, [_\varphi x \,[_R \, ml] \, u{:}] > \rightarrow [v_\varphi \,[_\varphi \, x \,[ml] \, u{:}]]$$
$$ \quad \text{b.} \quad < m\varepsilon_P, [v_\varphi \,[_\varphi \,[ml] \, u{:}]]> \rightarrow [_P \, m\varepsilon \,[_\varphi \, x \,[ml] \, u{:}]]$$

The result is a PP including the eventive properties realized by the participle. As seen in the previous paragraph, a possibility is that the argumental variable has either one indefinite reading or the interpretation associated with an argument of the matrix sentence. In the case of transitive stems, the internal argument (IA) is realized by the object clitic; the same is true for a reflexive form with the M/R clitic *u*, as in (28a,b) (from (9ii) and (9iv)).

(28)   a.   ... (mas) mɛ   ɛ   bã: / mlu:
              ... NEG Prep it   do / cover

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[1] Rita Manzini and Leonardo M. Savoia, *A Unification of Morphology and Syntax. Investigations into Romance and Albanian dialects*, pp. 284.

'... (not) to do / cover it'

b.　　　... m　　　　u　　lɑ:

　　　　... PrepM/R　　wash

'... to wash her/himself'

These clauses can be expressed in terms of the Phasal organization of sentence proposed by Chomsky[1]. Chomsky identifies phases with lexical subarrays, i.e. structures computed at the Sensory-Motor and Conceptual-Intentional interfaces. As known, the procedure is constrained by the Phase Impenetrability Condition (PIC).[2]

(29)　　　In a structure $[_{ZP}$ Z...$[_{HP}$ **α** [H YP]]], where Z and H are heads, the complement YP of H is not accessible to operations at ZP and only H and its *edge* are accessible to such operations.

With that in mind, if in accord with Roberts[3] Albanian OCls, on a par with Romance ones, can be considered the head of agreement for the v phase, the OCl can be treated as the phase edge, precisely merged with the verb realizing v, as in (30a). The sequence *ɛ mlu:* is merged to *mɛ*, in (30b).

(30)　　a.　　　$< OCl_\varphi, mlu{:}_v > \rightarrow [_v \varepsilon [mlu{:}]] ...$

　　　　b.　　　$< m\varepsilon_P, [_v \varepsilon_\varphi [_\varphi [ml] u{:}]]> \rightarrow [_P m\varepsilon [\varepsilon_\varphi [_\varphi [mlu{:}]]]$

According to PIC in (29), the result is that *mɛ ɛ mlu:* is prevented from being accessed by an element out of PP because of the presence the intermediate head P, as suggested in (31). The negative element can occur in T space, where it lexicalizes the Irrealis modality connected to the non-finite verb form.

(31)　　a.　　vP phase:　... T ... P [v　　word-phase

　　　　　　　　mɛ　　　　ε_φ　　*mlu:*

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[1] Chomsky Noam, "Derivation by Phase".

[2] Chomsky Noam. "Derivation by Phase", p. 14.

[3] Ian Roberts, *Agreement and Head Movement*, p. 57.

So, a lexical subject is admitted only outside the work space of PP, as we saw in (11a,b). More to the point, the infinitival interpretation, as a generic quantification over possible worlds, is the result of the compatibility of the stems, as elementary predicates, with the readings dictated by the context. This mechanism holds also in auxiliary contexts, where we assume that the auxiliary, here *have*, is a full verbal projection, as in (32a), embedding a predicative relation between the participial stem and its IA. In the auxiliary constructs the object clitic is inserted in proclitic position on the auxiliary, as generally in Romance languages. In other words, the domain of T is the workspace of the inflectional properties of sentence, inherited from C, like in non-periphrastic constructs. This result suggests that the stem merges to T, and IA merges to that combination, in (32b) and (32c).

(32) a.   T   v   word-phase/ participle
            ε *kam ...*   *mlu:*

b. $<$ kam$_T$, [$_v$ mlu:$_\varphi$] $>$ $\rightarrow$ [$_T$ kam [mlu: $_\varphi$]]

c. $<$ ε_φ, [$_T$ kam [mlu: $_\varphi$]...]$>$ $\rightarrow$ [$_T$ ε_φ, [kam [mlu: $_\varphi$]...]

Again, the perfective reading seems to be due to the contribution of *kam* 'have' or, alternatively, *jam* 'be', while the stem introduces only its stative property of attributive predicate.

5.1. Bare bases as predicates

Long alternants characterize also the present indicative. Independently from the origin of these forms, we simply observe that they coincide with the other occurrences of the reduced forms. We must conclude that the ability of these forms to introduce an argument is exploited in order to make the usual referential properties of the subject available in the sentence. Indeed, Albanian varieties are pro-drop languages, and in the absence of the agreement inflection on the verb (cf. the complete paradigm in (14b)), the interpretation is processed as Discourse-linked.

The generic character of the predication associated with the pure bases appears to be available in imperfective readings. This is the case

of the short alternant in consonantal bases, where the simple stems is treated as a predicate devoid of any specification, however able to be saturated by an argument, as in imperatives. Vocalic stems generally show a specialized thematic vowel, for instance *–a*, as in (13b). In the 3rd person of the middle-reflexive perfective, consonantal bases introduce the pure stem, substantially the root, saturated by the referential properties realized by the reflexive pronoun *u* 'self'. In the vocalic bases the thematic form appears, for instance *u ml-u* '(s)he covered her/himself/ (s)he was covered', however exploiting its ability to select an argument (see the discussion around (21)). This explains also a certain degree of uncertainty in the informants in the realization of these forms, possibly confused with the long alternants.

It is important to note that other Gheg varieties, such as that of *Mirditë* in (35), present the distribution of verbal bases in the contexts we have analyzed, but they do not distinguish two alternants with different duration. (33i) exemplifies consonant class for mɛ+stem in (a), stem in auxiliary context in (b), 3rd indicative person in (c) and 3rd person of middle-reflexive in (d). Similar correspondences apply in (33ii) for vowel stems.

(33)   *Mirditë*
  i.   a.   ... m(ɛ)   ɛ   vɛʃ
              I.want to   her/him   dress
              '... to dress her/him'
        b.   ɛ   kam   vɛʃ
              him/her   I.have   dressed
              'I have dressed him/her'
        c.   ɛ   vɛʃ
              him/her   I/you/(s)he.dress(es)
              'I/you/ (s)he dress(es) him/her'
        d.   u   vɛʃ
              M/R   dressed
  'S/he dressed him/herself'
  ii.   a.   du   mɛ   ɛ   mlu
              I.want Prep   her/him   cover
              'I want to cover her/him'
        b.   ɛ   kam   mlu

	her/him	I,have cover
	'I have covere her/ him'	
c.	u	mlu
	M/R	cover
	'(s)he covered her/himself'	

The result is that the ability of bare bases or thematic forms to be associated with arguments as predicates is applied.

5. Concluding remarks

In this article we have investigated the morpho-phonological and interpretive properties of the verb bare stems in the Gheg variety of Shkodër. We have seen that:

✓ The bases, pure roots or root+thematic vowel stems, are predicates introducing an argumental variable.

✓ The morpho-phonological properties of consonant and vowel stems distinguish two alternants characterized by a kind of internal inflection. We have identified the alternant including a long nucleus with a type of past participial form.

✓ The infinitive *mɛ+stem* is treated as a Prepositional Phrase, with the consequence that the external argument of the embedded participial sentence is fixed by an argument of the matrix verb.

✓ We connect the ability of the bases to express different aspect/ mood interpretations with the simple nature of predicates, therefore suitable to different reading in relation to the context.

From the point of view of the morpho-syntactic analysis, we follow an approach very distant from the proposals of the DM framework. We apply two main assumptions, long discussed in our work, whereby morphemes, lexical and functional, are endowed with interpretable content, and complex words are formed by virtue of the same computation procedure operating in syntax, that is the Merge operation. This allow us to account for the syncretic distribution of the bases and their occurrence in Phases in a natural and simple way. The Phasal organization suggests a way of explaining the syntax of the *paskajore*, the infinitive, and the constraints concerning the occurrence of its subject and the object clitics.

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