

The Vp And Inflp of Albanian Language Construction under the Generative Perspective of Head Movement

(The Vp-to-InflP movement in Albanian language.)

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Abstract

In this article, we are making commendable efforts to shed some light on some very crucial structurally sentential issues concerning the Head Movement and Split Inflection hypothesis. On the other hand, we are trying to introduce the Albanian language morpho-syntactic sentence structure to the recent and lately achievements in the generative and transformational grammar. So doing, our efforts go beyond a mere introduction aiming at their principled or parametric application in the Albanian language complex sentence structure. The Albanian language sentence complexity springs from the fact that such a language is a fully-inflected one falling under the typological classification of synthetic languages. It displays a fully elaborate system of derivational and inflectional morphemes or endings, the latter being the most productive ones. The article mostly focuses on the verbal endings or suffixes of the Albanian language and the free order the Albanian words or phrases enjoy within the sentence boundaries due to the above inherited morphological feature. The verb is treated as the nucleus of the sentence and as the most important semantic element Θ -marking both the subject and object DP, whereas on the other side is the InflP that governs the sentence structure and checks or license the morphological features of case marking. The article goes further deeper in the subtleties of the inflectional projection and its division into two other functional projections headed by abstract functional heads as Tense and Agreement as so marking a turning point in the generative thinking placing a great importance on the functional rather than lexical heads. This period in the linguistic generative and transformational thinking was identified as the period of functional “explosion”

Key words: *agreement phrase and tense phrase; functional explosion; functional projections; head V-to-Infl movement; Split Infl Hypothesis.*

INTRODUCTION

Albanian language in its remote past used to be a fully-inflected language. Nowadays it has preserved the greatest part of its nominal and verbal inflections. According to Çabej (2008) the verbal simplification (reduction) process is highly related with the Albanian language evolution and with the cultural development of the people speaking or having spoken such a language. He cited that; *“Language evolution inexorably influenced the grammatical system simplification. Grammatical richness (the abundance of grammatical forms) is a determining indicator of its primitive state”*. In order to make up for the grammatical void created afterwards there was witnessed a tendency to enhance the language lexicon. Previously, it was Jespersen (1922) who argued that *“The conclusion I arrive at is that a simplification of grammatical structure due to the abolition or reduction in case and verbal conjugation distinctions go hand in hand with development of fixed word order. This cannot be accidental but there exists a relation of cause and effect between the two”*. Çabej (2008) goes

further by citing J. J. Rousseau that *“Each language with the passing of time loses its musicality and such a loss was compensated by quality amelioration”*. *Language quality (or better saying the pure semantic meaning of the grammatical markers and the commendable efforts against the language impoverishment (due to the pragmatic polysemy) are still troubling Albanian language and Albanian linguists as well.*

Albanian language, a decent successor of the Indo-European family of languages, is a suffix language, very rich in inflectional and derivational suffixes. The most productive ones are inflectional suffixes marking nominal and verbal categories. Albanian nominals take inflectional suffixes denoting gender, number and case, whereas Albanian verbal categories are inflectionally marked for person, number and tense.

If we are to conjugate an Albanian verb in simple tenses we will have to highlight the fact that the tense system in Albanian is reconstructed according to the present, imperfect, aorist and future tenses.

Table 1Folja - **lexoj** (the verb – **read**)¹

Person	Present		
	Imperfect	Aorist	Future
Une (I)		lexoj	
	lexoja	lexova	do te
lexoj			
Ti (you)		lexon	
	lexoje	lexove	do te
lexosh			
Ai/Ajo (he/she)		lexon	
	lexonte	lexoi	do te
lexoje			
Ne (we)		lexojme	
	lexonim	lexonim	do te
lexojme			
Ju (you)		lexoni	
	lexonit	lexonit	do te
lexoni			
Ata/Ato		lexojne	
	lexonin	lexonin	do te
lexojne			

The bolded inflectional morphemes denote number, person and tense altogether. The inflectional markers are fused together and there is not possible to determine the

boundaries between each inflectional marker as it happens in Hungarian

1.a Ugral – t – am

1.b Une lexo-va

Jump – past tense – 1st person

singular I read – past tense+1st person sing.

I jumped.

I read.

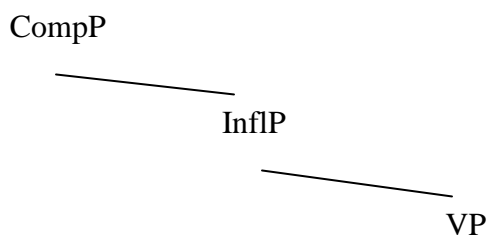
In addition the hierarchical analysis of every language clause is represented under the assumption of three structural layers of X-bar scheme. (Rizzi 1997).

1. The lexical layer headed by the verb as the only clause element responsible for the assignment of Θ -roles. (Albanian linguists consider the verb as the nucleus of the sentence (S) or clause.)

2. The inflectional layer headed by functional heads (concrete or morphological instantiations of the verb) responsible for licensing case and agreement features.

3. The complementizer layer, headed by a free functional morpheme hosting: interrogatives, relative pronouns focalized elements, etc.

¹ Imperfect and aorist both in English language are represented by the simple past tense. The bolded letters in the verb final position represent the inflectional endings. The pre-verbal “do te” elements of Albanian language verb conjugation in English are represented by the future element “will”.



This is a late assumption as we have to state here the fact that within transformational grammar and related approaches in the 1960' and 1970' the S (sentence) was not headed but includes an Auxiliary category to host auxiliaries (Chomsky 1965).

Albanian

- 2.a Joni **do te** largohet neser
 2.b Ju **duhet** te vini ne shtepi me heret

John will leave tomorrow

You must come home earlier (duhet =must)

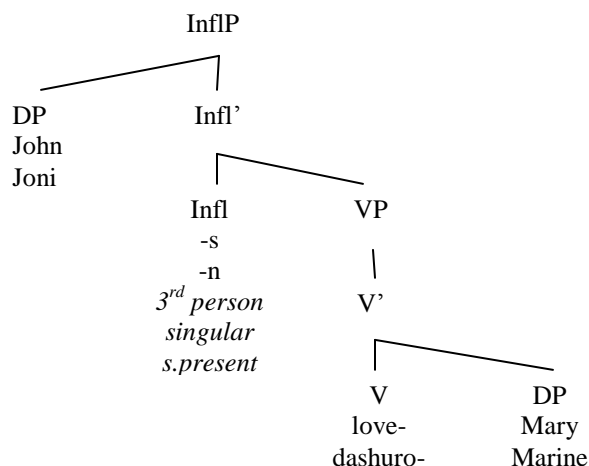
English

- 3.a John **will** leave tomorrow
 3.b You **must** get home earlier

The Aux category was thought to host elements (such as will, should, do, have etc) denoting tense and mood agreement features. Later on Jackendoff (1977) proposed that S category is a verbal projection headed by a verbal category taking the auxiliaries and temporal adverbs (usually, often, sometimes etc) in the

specifier position of the VP. Chronologically, just one year later Edmonds (1978) proposed the existence of an inflectional category that would host auxiliaries in the Infl head nodes. In their absence it will host features associated with T (tense) and Infl (inflection).

Ken Hale (1979) proposed in his lectures and in his unpublished paper that Infl is the head of S category. It was not until 1981 under Stowell (1981) proposal that Infl category was adopted to the X-bar approach providing the sentence structure an InflP (inflectional projection).



To sum it up, it is quite understandable that in mid-eighties the X-bar representative of the clause structure was broadly accepted the Infl based on two assertions

1. The sentence is an Inflectional Projection.

2. This projection is considered an X-bar one.

THE V-TO-INFL MOVEMENT IN ALBANIAN LANGUAGE CLAUSES.

It was not until the acceptance of verbal inflections heading a functional projection InflP representing the sentence structure that a very debatable issue was raised concerning the raising of V^0 head toward the Infl^0 .

Pesetsky (1982), Huang (1982) and Folk (1983) taking into analysis the auxiliary clauses of English argue that an auxiliary occupies Infl^0 or when the inflectional ending appeared on the verb the inflectional category is lowered to V^0 .

Koopman (1984) further argued that the variation in the position of the verb relative to various elements, such as negative or adverbs between languages like English and French could be attributed to whether V^0 moved to Infl^0 or Infl^0 lowered to V^0 .

SVO languages fall into two groups considering the order of the finite verbs – when an adverbial element occurs between the subject and the complement of the verb.

4.a. Jean mange **suivent** du chocolate.
(French)

4.b. John **often** eats chocolate.
(English)

Albanian

4.c. Joni ha **shpesh** çokollate. Joni
shpesh ha çokollate Joni ha çokollate
shpesh.

John eats often chocolate John
often eats chocolate John eats chocolate
often.

In French clause the finite verb precedes the adverb whereas in English the finite verb follows the adverb. The Albanian marks a distinguishable difference where the adverb either precedes or follows the verb or it is positioned sentence final. The above examples beg the question of whether the verb has undergone movement or not.

Various linguists (Kosmeijer 1986 and Roberts 1985) comparing the English and French clauses suggest that the presence or absence of V-to-Infl movement is linked to the inflections' strength. In the French language the verb precedes the adverb as the verbal strong features attract the verb from V^0 to Infl^0 . English language is characterized by weak verbal features which ban the V-to Infl movement suggesting lowering of Infl^0 to V^0 . Throwing a closer look at the above examples we can extract the 's' inflectional ending of the 3rd person singular, a remnant of Old English verbal inflections. Its presence brought Vikner (1990) to the assumption that inflectional

morphemes are not enough to trigger V-to-Infl movement, but on the contrary they have to be strong. The arising question is: How strong or how high should the number of inflectional morphemes be to count as substantiation? There are cases of languages such as French and Faroese that have the same number of distinct inflectional forms and quite different V-to-Infl movement attitudes as French allows movement whereas Faroese does not. In support to the above argument we have one and the same language, Albanian, characterized by strong verbal features (considerably inflected verbal paradigm) that behaves both as English, not allowing V-to-I movement and as the French counterpart, allowing such a movement (three different examples 4.c of one and the same sentence composure).

In order to clarify such a parametric distribution of the adverbial element and its influence in the raising and lowering process of the verb in the X-bar scheme of the above clauses Roberts (1993) proposed that V-to-Infl movement is triggered by the existence of the overt “distinct number morphology” whereas Rohrbacher (1999) goes further deeper by bringing up the following formulation:

The paradigm: verb - raising correlate.

- A language has V-to-Infl movement if and only if in at least one number of one tense of the regular verbs the person feature 1st and 2nd are both distinctively marked

- SVO language has V-to-Infl movement if and only if :

a. tense morphology never occurs without person morphology

b. person morphology is found in all tenses.

If we wrestle with the above formulation seriously enough trying to adopt them to the Albanian language (see table 1) we will witness that Albanian is the most appropriate language that best fits the aforementioned postulations. But how come there are cases that adverb precedes the verb?

Edmonds (1978) proposed a class of elements, apart from adverbs, that are regarded approximately positioned on the left edge of the VP. These elements include negation and floated quantifiers.

5.a Jean ne mange **pas** du chocolate.
(French)

5.b. John **does not** eat chocolate.
(English)

5.c. Joni **nuk** ha çokollate. (Albanian)
John not eat chocolate

6.a. Les enfants mangent **tous** le chocolate, (French)

6.b. The children eat **all** the chocolate.
(English)

6.c. Femijet hane **gjithe** çokollaten.
(Albanian)

The children eat all the chocolate.

In French negative sentences the verb “manger” is to the left of the negative element “pas” indicating that the verb has raised to the Infl head. There is a second negative morpheme that acts as a clitic preceding the verb. In English the verb “eat” is positioned to the right of the negative element “not” preceding the object NP “chocolate” occupying a VP internal position. A dummy auxiliary is positioned to the Infl head. In the Albanian negative sentences the verb “hane/eat” is to the right of the single negative element “nuk/not”, behaving as the English language verb, even though we are speaking of two different typologically languages (respectively fully-inflected (Alb) and inflectionless (Eng) presuming that the Albanian verb lacks head movement).

In the following examples, making use of the Floated Quantifiers, all the languages under observation behave quite similarly with the verb positioned on the left of the Floated Quantifier presuming that V-to-Infl movement of the verbal element is possible.

By the above set of the examples we can infer that in English, a language characterized by a weak inflectional morphology, (the English verb in all the examples above sits on the left of the adverb, negative element and floated quantifier) the Infl⁰ is lowered to the V head. According to Chomsky (1993,1995) the lowering is problematic as the trace of the lowered Infl⁰ would not be governed by its antecedent, as the latter it is being lowered. He furthers his argument by confirming that verbs and lexical heads do not pick up their inflectional endings as a result of their raising to functional heads, dominating the inflectional morphology. The functional heads do not dominate inflectional material. They dominate bundles of abstract features corresponding to the inflectional morphology of the verb. The morphological endings associated with the lexical heads have to be licensed or checked by the corresponding abstract features on the functional head. The feature checking is done by adjoining the inflected head V⁰ to the relevant functional head Infl⁰. Under this view the verbal lexical heads building up sentences in any language of the world (inflected or inflectionless languages) “eat/manger/ha” are base-generated under V⁰ and its inflectional endings (no matter

how many) have to check their abstract morphological features under Infl⁰.

If for certain less inflected or inflectionless languages the verb does not leave the VP (as it is positioned on the left) how are the morphological features of the verb checked?

In cases when English and Albanian finite verbs behave as they have failed to undergo V-to-Infl movement Chomsky (1993, 1995) under the Feature Checking approach argues that they do not check their morphological features at S-structure but at the level of LF. Such a LF movement of V-to-Infl is covert. As so the lexical verbs move from V⁰ to Infl⁰ either at S-structure overtly (the case when the verb is positioned to the left of the adverb or negative element) or covertly and LF (when the verb is positioned to the right). In conclusion V-to Infl movement is considered to be a universal head movement including Albanian language verbal head movement (covertly at LF or overtly at S-structure) no matter the strength or weakness of the inflectional system.

THE SPLIT OF INFL HYPOTHESIS

The integration of the functional projection in the X-bar scheme at this point of the article is a given. Another undisputable fact is the movement of V-to-Infl either covertly

or overtly to license the semantic properties of the verb in the V⁰ and to check the morphological properties of the verbal category in the Infl⁰. Chomsky (1986) recaps in his “Knowledge of Language” that the Principle of Full Interpretation concerns the issue that, “*Every node must have a role in the sentence and it must be licensed*”. On the other hand Abney (1986) assumes that not only every node has a role in the sentence but for every node there is a unique relation by which it is licensed fulfilling the Licensing Condition:

- Every node must uniquely be licensed by entering into a sufficiently strong relation with an independently licensed node.

Such a theoretical proposal gave rise and supported the generation of functional projections (InflP, ComP, NegP, etc) within the sentence structure by the mid-eighties marking a period of functional explosion.

The InflP structurally representing a simple SVO sentence is headed by the Infl⁰ node where are projected the inflectional morphemes of the verb. The verbal inflections mostly and uniquely indicate tense and agreement (subject-verb) features. The strength and weakness of each feature above the other depends on the language typological classification.

7.a. *The boy (he) plays in the garden.*
(English)

Le garçon (il) joue ou jardin.
(French)

Djali (ai) luan ne oborr. (Albanian)

7.b. *The boys (they) play(?) in the garden.* (English) (no ending to denote person)

Les garçons (ils) jouent ou jardin.
(French)

Djemte (ata) luajne ne oborr.

The above example once more testify that inflectional languages as Albanian and French have stronger subject-verb agreement compared with English one. Such a strength in Albanian language is further supported by the existence of Null Subject sentences.

8.a. *Luajne ne oborr me shoket.*

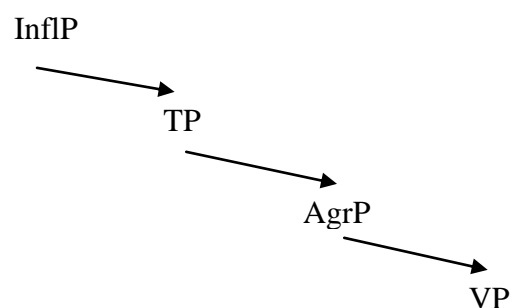
Lexon librin me perralla.

(We- Null) play in the garden with friends
(He-Null) reads the fairy tales book.

The sentence subject is not phonetically expressed, but it is psychologically implied and linguistically represented by the inflectional endings.

If we go back to the negative sentences and V-to-Infl movement hypothesis Pollock (1981) proposed the generation of two

functional projection, respectively AgrP (agreement phrase) and TP (tense phrase).



Pollock (1989) argues that these functional projections are universally applicable to languages without separate tense and agreement morphemes (comparing Hungarian with Albanian). Furthermore, he states that inflections are generated as separate elements from the verb if they come together as a result of some syntactic processes. There are two possible surface positions where the verb might occur: 1- in the verb position with the Infl adjoined to the verb or 2 – in the inflectional position with the verb adjoined to the Infl. These are parametric differences between languages.

The debate raised afterwards concerned the dominating element. Pollock (1981) assumed that Agr dominated T as it presumably stands in a governing relation with the subject to yield the standard subject-verb agreement.

According to Belletti (1990) there is evidence (the case of Hungarian) where the

agreement element follows the tense one. To reconcile these conflicts Chomsky (1993, 1995) suggested the existence of two kinds of V-NP (DP) agreements: subject-verb agreement (Agr_sP) which should be close to the subject. Agr_s is a collection of Θ -features (gender, person, number). In addition both Agr and T features have two functions: 1 – they check the Θ -properties of the verb that raises to the corresponding Agr head and 2 – license the case properties of the NP (DP) that raises to the specifier position, thus ensuring that NP and V are properly paired. There are languages where tense affixes are closer to the verb stem than agreement affixes suggesting that these tense features are associated or checked by the verb before the agreement features. Secondly it seems more natural for the subject NP (DP) to be positioned to the specifier of an agreement projection rather than the specifier of the TP since the subject agrees with the verb in a specifier head relation. Chomsky (1991) adopts a combination of Pollock (1981) and Belletti (1990) proposals positing two AgrP in the clause one above and one below TP. The upper is associated with the subject agreement projection and the lower with the object agreement projection.

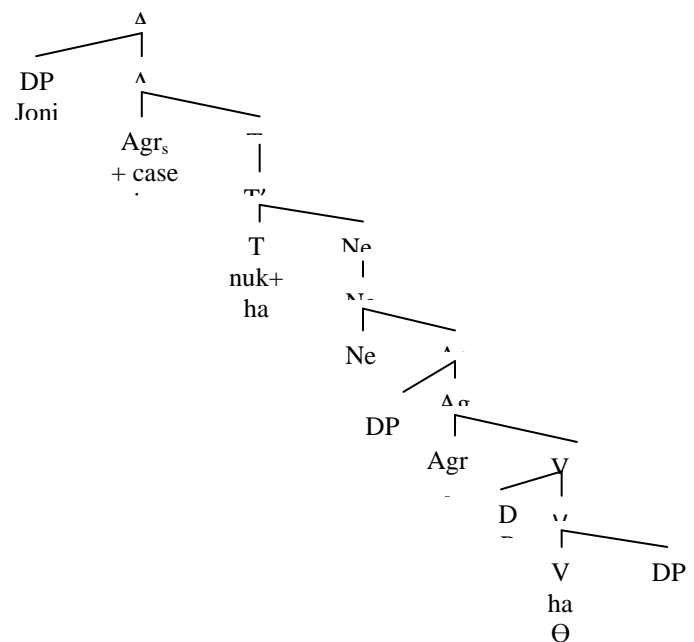
Being faced with Chomsky's broadly

accepted proposal we concur that Albanian language distinct adverbial and negative constructions fit properly to such a transformational X-bar scheme. To concretely analyze the above assumptive statements let us revisit once again the Albanian language negative and adverbial constructions.

9.a Joni nuk ha çokollate

John not eat chocolate.

John does not eat chocolate



Within the simple sentence the verb “ha/eat” Θ marks the subject (Agent) and the object (Theme) of the sentence. Later, the object NP(DP) moves to Agr_oP to check the case features and assign the accusative case to the NP (DP) “çokollate/chocolate” as Chomsky (1991) proposed case is assigned under the specifier-head relation. Next, according to the undisputable fact that the Albanian language is an inflectional language with a strong subject-verb agreement the negative particle “nuk/not” together with the verb “ha/eat” forms a verbal complex and move to T^0 head of the TP to check the tense morphological features. The last movement attracts the negative particle “nuk/not” + verb complex” to the Agr_s^0 to license the case features and assign the nominative case to the subject NP (DP) “Joni” under the specifier-head relation.

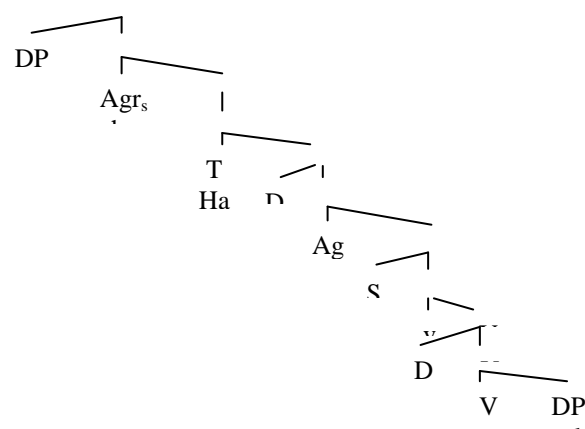
The Albanian sentences making use of an adverbial element are the most complex ones as the adverb must precede the verb (as the English version), follows it (as the French version) or the exceptional construction with the adverbial element placed in the final position. Such a complexity will be attributed to the mere fact that Albanian as a fully-inflected language allows free word order.

10.a Joni **shpesh** ha çokollata (John often eats chocolate)

Joni ha **shpesh** çokollata. (John eats often chocolate)

Joni ha çokollata **shpesh**. (John eats chocolate often)

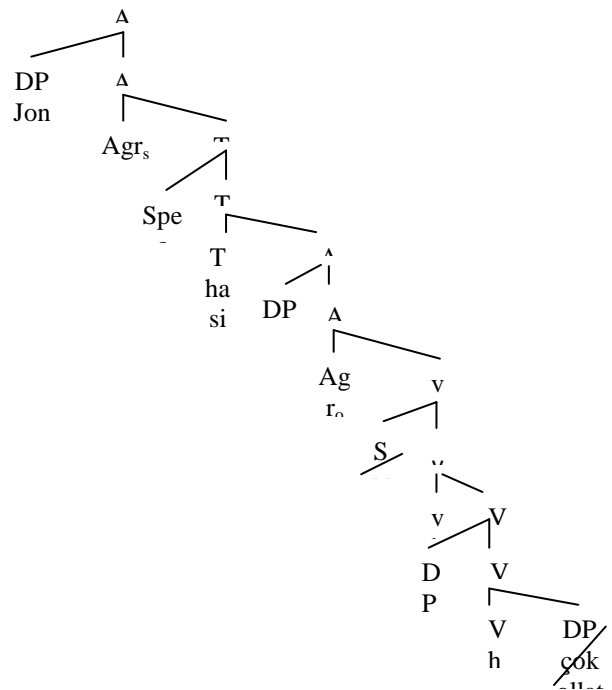
The first and the last examples are easily projected under the X-bar scheme as the verb raises to the T^0 of the TP.



Within the strong VP the finite verb Θ marks both the Agent NP (DP) “Joni” and the Theme NP (DP) “çokollate/chocolate”. The light vP projection, proposed by Pollock (1981) hosts in its specifier position the adverb of frequency under the assumption that adverbs modify the verb. Form the above generation we take “Joni ha çokollate **shpesh** (John eats chocolate often)” where both object and subject NP (DP) moved to the S-structure toward the $\text{SpecAgr}_o\text{P}$ and $\text{SpecAgr}_s\text{P}$. As the subject NP moves from the SpecVP to the $\text{SpecAgr}_s\text{P}$ in order to

license its semantic properties, check the uninterpreted features of case and be assigned the Nominative case the adverbial element moves overtly toward the unoccupied position of the SpecTP as T^0 represents a morphological feature of the verb. Thus we take the sentence “Joni ha **shpesh** çokollate / John eats often chocolate”

In order to get the next version of one and the same sentence “Joni **shpesh** ha çokollate. / John often eats chocolate” we should assume that the verb raises to the Agr_s^0 of Agr_sP to check and license the case features and so assign the Nominative case to the NP (DP) “Joni”. The raising of the verbal element it is realized at an abstract level of representation LF and thus the verbal element after checking and licensing the morphological features of case marking is deletable leaving a “*t*” (trace) behind.



DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The above research was an attempt to integrate the Albanian language morphological and syntactic structure to the recent revolutionary theories application. We have already cited above that Albanian language make the difference as it is distinguished for its richness in inflectional and derivational morphemes, more concretely inflectional verbal endings. So, it is quite understandable that we are focused mostly to the verbal phrase (VP) headed by a lexical category (the verb) representing the sentence (S) nucleus. The number of verbs determines the number of clauses within one and the same meaningful sentential unit. In

every language the verb is further distinguished for denoting the person, number and tense features displayed in the verbal inflection. The inflectional endings must denote the above morphological properties either separately (the case of Hungarian) or they must be fused together in one and the same morpheme (the case of Albanian).

In mid-eighties the generative and transformational grammarian furthered their studies and researches by proposing as the main X-bar projection of a sentence (S) the inflectional phrase (InflP) which is headed by the inflectional endings denoting tense and agreement subject-verb feature (person). But due to different typological classification languages fall into synthetic and analytical subgroups depending on the strength and weakness of their inflectional system. Furthermore, this characteristic on the other hand attributed to the classification of languages as free word order or fixed word order ones where Albanian falls under the former one.

During this period generative linguists have been engaged in a very controversial debate whether the finite verb moves to Infl⁰ or the Infl⁰ moves to V⁰. The fact that V-to-Infl movement was triggered by the strong

inflectional was supported by a number of researchers who have mostly been focused on languages as French or Albanian in our case. Whereas for less inflected or not inflected languages as English they have proposed vice versa.

The disagreements were reconciled by Chomsky (1991,1995) contribution according to whom V-to-Infl movement is considered to be a universal head movement, no matter the strength of inflectional morphology. According to him the V-to-Infl movement is realized either overtly at S-structure or covertly at LF level. The entering of the InflP into the X-bar sentence structure marked a period of explosion in functional projections as due to the morphological features of tense and agreement mirrored in the inflectional ending of the verbal element there were licensed other functional projections as TP or AgrP. At this point, the historical development of the debate veered away to determining the dominating and governing projection, which is generated higher in the X-bar projection of the sentence structure.

Chomsky (1991) by adopting a combination of both Pollock (1987) and Belletti (1990) proposals gave a praiseworthy contribution by assuming the generation of two agreement phrases one above and the TP

and one below it in order for both subject and object DP to check and license their case features.

The above proposals came really in handy to the Albanian language specific morphological properties offering free positions for adverbial and negative elements to be realized in nodes that either precede or follow the verb.

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