

The Syntax and Semantics of Desideratives in Albanian*

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1 Introduction

1.1 What is a desiderative?

- A desiderative construction is one that has the meaning “want to V” or “feel like V”.
- Three types of desiderative constructions
 - Periphrastic: Contains an overt verb
 - (1) I feel like eating cookies.
 - Overt: Marked with a dedicated desiderative morpheme
 - (2) *Nuka-ta-ka punu- naya-rka.* (*Quechua*)
1s.acc.Top sleep.Desid.3pst
'I want to sleep.'
(Cole and Hermon, 1981)
 - Covert: There is no overt “want” verb or dedicated morpheme, but rather is cued by a combination of other morphology, such as oblique case marking and non-active or causative morphology.
 - * This form has been observed for many diverse languages.
 - Finnish (Pylkkänen, 1999)
 - South Slavic languages (Marušič and Žaucer, 2006; Rivero, 2004; Franks, 1995)
 - Albanian (Kallulli, 2006)
 - * Covert desideratives have also been called many other terms such as Causative Desiderative, Involuntary State Construction and the Feel Like Construction.
 - * This talk will focus on covert desideratives in Albanian.

1.2 Desideratives in Albanian

- In Albanian, the desiderative is composed of the non-active form of the verb and a dative argument.

- (3) *Agimit kërcehet në zyrë.*
Agim.dat dance.3.s.nonact.pres in office.s.def
'Agim feels like dancing in the office.'
'There was dancing in the office and it affected Agim (i.e. it was Agim's office)'¹

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¹All desideratives in Albanian are ambiguous between the desiderative reading and the distinct affected argument reading, the latter which is not limited to non-actives

- (4) *Molla m'u hëng.*
 apple.def.nom me.dat eat.nonact.pst.3sg
 'I felt like eating the apple.'²

- Albanian also has a periphrastic desiderative which is equivalent in meaning.

- (5) *Më vjen (që) të kërcëja.*
 me.dat come.3sg that MOOD dance.1sg
 'I feel like dancing.'

1.3 Central Issues

- Semantics

- Where does the desiderative meaning come from? What is the source of the modality?
 - * Either there is a covert element that is the source of the modality.
 - * Attempt to derive it from other components in the construction.

- Syntax

- What is the syntactic structure?
- What is the role of the other morphology, specifically the non-active morphology in the desiderative construction?

1.4 Organization

- Section 2 motivates a covert element.
- Section 3 explains the morphology.
- Section 4 develops the full analysis.
- Section 5 discusses alternative analyses.
- Section 6 concludes the presentation.

2 Evidence for Covert Element

- Claim: Covert Desideratives in Albanian have a phonologically null desiderative element.
 - Argument 1: Non-agreeing adverbs
 - Argument 2: Ambiguity with the presupposition introducing adverb 'again'

2.1 Marušič and Žaucer (2006)

- Murašič and Žaucer noted that desideratives in Slovenian can have conflicting adverbs.

- (6) *Včeraj se mi ni slo jutri domov.*
 yesterday SE IDAT AUXNeg,Past go tomorrow home
 'Yesterday, I didn't feel like going home tomorrow.'

- Non-agreeing adverbs are impossible in ordinary monoclausal constructions (McCawley, 1979).

²Word order is fairly flexible.

(7) *Tomorrow, Jim will play basketball in two weeks.

- However, this is allowed in biclausal constructions.

(8) Tomorrow, Jim will want to have a new bike in two weeks.

- Moreover, biclausality holds when the ‘have’ is null (Larson and Ludlow, 1997).

(9) Tomorrow, Jim will want a new bike in two weeks.

- Therefore, Murašič and Žaucer conclude that if the structure is biclausal than that is an indication that there exists a phonologically null desiderative verb.

2.2 Evidence for covert element in Albanian

- The Albanian desiderative, like its Slovenian counterpart, can support two conflicting adverbs.

(10) *Dje më kërcëhej sot.*
 Yesterday, me.dat dance.nonact.past today.
 ‘Yesterday I felt like dancing today.’

- Further evidence that Albanian desiderative construction involves a phonologically null desiderative element is that it produces ambiguities with the adverb ‘again’.

(11) *Më kërcëhej sërish.*
 me.dat dance.nonact.past again.
 ‘I feel like dancing again’ (I’ve felt like this before)
 ‘I feel like dancing again’ (I’ve danced before)

- The ambiguity of again suggests that there are two possible attachment places (Bale, 2006).
 - One to modify the overt verb
 - One to modify the desiderative

2.2.1 Biclausal vs. Bivalent

- Claim: Albanian desideratives are not biclausal.³
 - Argument 1: Tense and Aspect
 - Argument 2: Complementizer
- Contrary to Murašič and Žaucer, conflicting adverbs does not necessarily indicate a biclausal structure.
 - Modals can have conflicting time adverbs.

(12) As of now, I would play baseball tomorrow, but if it snows, I will not. ⁴

- Albanian desideratives only one tense and aspect.
- Furthermore, the tense and aspect modify the desiderative event and not the internal predicate.

³I take biclausal to mean having two full clauses. Albanian complement clauses can appear with a full range of tense, aspect and agreement

⁴Albanian modals are biclausal, however this does not necessarily mean that a covert modal couldn’t be monoclausal.

– Present tense

- (13) *Një mollë më hahet një mollë.*
 a apple.nom.s.indef me.dat eat.3.s.nonact
 ‘I feel like eating an apple.’

– Past tense

- (14) *Një mollë m’u hëng.*
 A apple.indef.nom me.dat eat.nonact.pst.3sg
 ‘I felt like eating an apple.’
 *‘I feel like I ate an apple.’

– Past Imperfect tense

- (15) *Një mollë më hahej*
 A apple.indef.nom me.dat eat.nonact.pst.3sg.imp.
 ‘I was feeling like eating an apple.’
 *‘I feel like I was eating an apple.’

- In addition, desideratives cannot have complementizers.

- (16) **Që më (që) kërcëhej*
 comp me.dat dance.nonact.past
 ‘I feel like dancing’

- (17) *Më vjen (që) të kërcëja.*
 me.dat come.3sg that MOOD dance.1sg
 ‘I feel like dancing.’

- Therefore, all that is needed to support conflicting time adverbs is the introduction of another event.⁵

3 Morphology

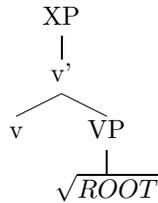
3.1 Embick (2004)

- Embick proposes an account of the morphological syncretism of the non-active voice in Greek in the Distributed Morphology framework (Halle and Marantz, 1993).
- Non-Active voice morphology appears on passives, reflexives and unaccusatives.
- Embick suggests that non-active morphology is a reflection of unaccusative syntax.⁶
- Unaccusative syntax is any syntactic structure where the external argument is not projected.
- At spell-out, whenever there is a syntactic structure without the projection of the external argument, the non-active morphology is inserted.
- In the tree below, *v'* is projected but not the full *vP* or spec *vP* where the external argument would be placed.

⁵The second event of the overt predicate is included in the possible world introduced by the modal. Truth-conditionally desideratives are not bi-eventive like causatives, however there needs to be two events in the semantics in order for adverbs to access each one independently.

⁶This assumes that external arguments are not introduced by the verb itself but introduced by a higher functional head, Voice. (Kratzer, 1996)

(18)



3.2 Non-Active in Albanian Desideratives

- Non-Active voice morphology in Albanian also appears on passives(19), reflexives(20) and unaccusatives(21).

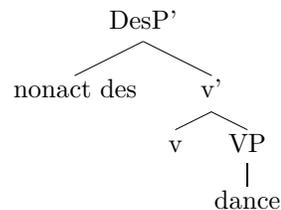
(19) *Molla hahej.*
 apple.nom.def nonact.pst.3sg
 ‘The apple was eaten.’

(20) *Unë ushqehem.*
 1S.Nom feed.1S.Nonact
 ‘I feed myself.’

(21) *Papritmas, u duk dielli.*
 suddenly nonact appear.3.s.pst.nonact sun.def.nom
 ‘Suddenly, the sun appeared.’

- I propose that the null desiderative head selects for v’.
- Since the external argument of the overt verb does not project, the non-active morphology is inserted
- However, since v’ selects for v, agenthood is introduced into the semantics.

(22)



3.3 Dative Argument

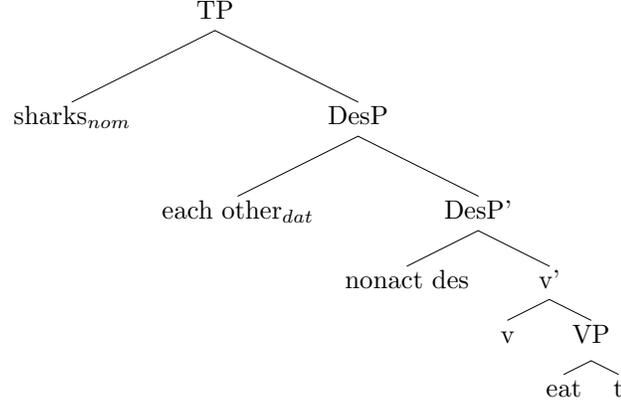
- Experiencer arguments in Albanian receive dative case.

(23) *Agimit vjen (që) të kërcente.*
 Agim.dat come.3sg that Mood dance.3sg
 ‘Agim feels like dancing.’

- This suggests the covert desiderative element assigns case to the experiencer argument.
- Nominative case on the internal argument of the overt verb is assigned by TP.
- This predicts that the nominative object would c-command dative argument.

(24) *Peshkaqenët₁ i hahen njëitjetrit₁.*
 Shark.pl.nom CL.pl eat.nonact.3pl each.other.dat
 ‘The sharks feel like eating each other.’

(25)



4 The Analysis

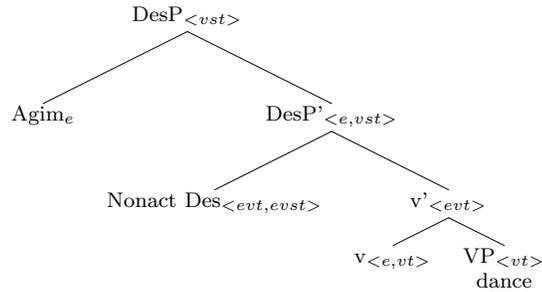
4.1 Semantic Denotation

- I posit a null desiderative functional head with the following denotation.⁷

$$(26) \quad \llbracket \mathbf{Desiderative} \rrbracket^{w,g} = \lambda P_{\langle e,vt \rangle} \lambda x. \lambda e. \lambda w. \forall w' [w' \text{ is compatible with what } x \text{ feels like in } e \text{ in } w] \rightarrow [\exists e' \text{ in } w'. P(x)(e')]$$

- The null desiderative modal does the following things:
 - Provides modality
 - Introduces another event; namely the ‘feeling like’ event
 - Introduces an experiencer argument
- The following is a sample derivation

(27)



- (28) a. $\llbracket \mathbf{dance} \rrbracket = \lambda e. \text{dance}(e)$
 $\llbracket \mathbf{v} \rrbracket = \lambda x \lambda e. \text{Agt}(e,x)$
 Event Identification
- b. $\llbracket \mathbf{v}' \rrbracket = \lambda x. \lambda e. \text{dance}(e) \ \& \ \text{Agt}(e,x)$
 $\llbracket \mathbf{Des} \rrbracket^{w,g} = \lambda P_{\langle e,vt \rangle} \lambda x \lambda e. \lambda w. \forall w' [w' \text{ is compatible with what } x \text{ feels like in } e \text{ in } w] \rightarrow [\exists e' \text{ in } w'. P(x)(e')]$
 Function Application

⁷There is some debate as to whether this is a lexical verb or modal, I remain neutral on this question.

- c. $[[\mathbf{DesP}']^{w,g} = \lambda x \lambda e. \lambda w. \forall w' [w' \text{ is compatible with what } x \text{ feels like in } e \text{ in } w] \rightarrow [\exists e' \text{ in } w'. \text{dance}(e') \ \& \ \text{Agent}(e',x)]]$
 $[[\mathbf{Agim}]] = \text{Agim}$
 Function Application
- d. $[[\mathbf{DesP}']^{w,g} = \lambda e. \lambda w. \forall w' [w' \text{ is compatible with what } \text{Agim} \text{ feels like in } e \text{ in } w] \rightarrow [\exists e' \text{ in } w'. \text{dance}(e') \ \& \ \text{Agent}(e', \text{Agim})]]$

5 Alternative Analyses

5.1 Rivero (2009)

- Rivero claims that the imperfect operator is the source of the modality.
- She cites English Progressives as an example of monoclausal constructions that can have two conflicting time adverbs.

(29) For two weeks, the Red Sox were playing the Yankees today.
 (Copley, 2002)

- Therefore, the structure isn't necessarily biclausal and there is no necessity of a covert desiderative verb.
- Rivero also argues that the dative argument is a high applicative that is in topic position above the TP.

(30) [ApplP NP^{DAT} [Appl' Appl [TP Tense [AspP IMP^{OP} vP[v VP]]]]]

- However, if the dative argument was above TP, then we would not predict the c-command relation seen in (24).

5.1.1 Imperfect in Albanian Desideratives

- The imperfect in Albanian does not support two conflicting time adverbs.

(31) **Per dy jave skuadra luante neser.*
 For two weeks, team.nom.def play.imp.3sg tomorrow.
 For two weeks, the team was playing tomorrow.

- Moreover, while the imperfect may be a crucial element in South Slavic desideratives, it is not necessary for the Albanian desiderative.
 - Albanian desideratives can appear both with perfect (aorist) and imperfect morphology (14) and (15).
 - Furthermore, the imperfect aspect is incompatible with telic events.

(32) #*Unë haja mollën brënda një minute.*
 I.nom eat.1sg.pst.imp apple.def.acc in a minute.
 'I was eating an apple in a minute.'

- However, Albanian desideratives can describe a telic event.

(33) *Një mollë më hahej brënda një minute.*
 a apple.indef.nom me.dat eat.nonact.pst.3sg. in a minute
 'I felt like eating an apple in a minute.'

- Therefore, it cannot be the case that there is a null imperfect aspect modifying the internal predicate.

5.2 Kallulli (2006)

- Kallulli provides an account for various functions of non-active morphology.
- She claims that non-active morphology in Albanian is an event type-shifting device, applying to higher events types to yield lower event types.
- Specifically, when non-active morphology is affixed to an activity verb, it becomes a stative verb.⁸
- Furthermore, this effectively strips the agenthood of the external argument.

5.2.1 Problems for Kallulli’s analysis

- Kallulli objects to Murašič and Žaucer’s phonologically null desiderative analysis because the unified analysis of non-active morphology is lost.
 - However, by using a distributed morphological account of non-active voice in Albanian, we can retain a unified analysis of non-active morphology and explain why desideratives in Albanian have non-active morphology.
- Kallulli also claims that it is not necessary to be biclausal to support two conflicting time adverbs.
 - She states that certain psychological verbs can have two conflicting time adverbs.

(34) *Sot më kujtohen fjalët/rrobat e Anës dje.*
 Today, me.dat recall.nact.pr.1s words/clothes.nom AGR Ann.dat yesterday.
 ‘Today, I recall Anna’s words/clothes of yesterday.’

- However, statives cannot have two conflicting time adverbs.

(35) **Sot, Besa e dashuron (atë) dje.*
 Today Besa.nom AGR love.3sg. him yesterday.
 ‘Today, Besa loved him yesterday.’

- Furthermore, the notion of agent is still available semantically in Albanian desideratives.
 - Albanian desideratives can occur with purpose adverbs which modify the agent of the overt verb.

(36) *Më flihet qëllimisht.*
 me.dat sleep.nact.imp intentionally
 ‘I feel like sleeping intentionally.’

6 Conclusion

- Desideratives in Albanian are best accounted for by positing a null desiderative functional head.
- This modal answers the central question of the source of the modality.
- Furthermore, this allows us to explain the bi-eventive nature of desideratives.
- Additionally, dative case can be assigned to the external argument by the null functional head.
- Lastly, by using Distributed Morphology, we can explain the non-active morphology as a reflection of unaccusative syntax.

⁸Kallulli mentions that certain verbs cannot appear in a desiderative with perfect aspect. The speakers I consulted did not find the sentences ungrammatical based on aspect. However, there does appear to be selectional restrictions which is outside the scope of this talk.

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