

The Contrastive Analysis of the English – ING Clause as Prepositional Complement and Its Albanian Correspondents

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Abstract: This research paper aims at describing and analysing the structural differences and similarities between the nominal functions of the –ING clauses in English and their Albanian correspondents. Regarding the Albanian correspondents of the English –ING clauses in different functions, the following correspondents have been detected: Albanian clauses are introduced by verbal noun phrases, gerund constructions, finite and non-finite clauses. In light of this, it is hypothesised that these structural differences and similarities may cause difficulties for the Albanian EFL classroom students learning the nominal functions of the –ING clauses in English.

Keywords: Nominal -ING clause, verbal noun phrase, gerund construction, finite clause, non-finite clause.

I. Introduction

The research paper will target the two languages, English and Albanian, in relation to their syntactic structures. Based on this study, teaching complex English syntactic structures requires an exhaustive search for as well as use of methods and techniques transmitting knowledge to second language learners. While doing this, EFL teachers/students should pay attention to the role of the mother tongue influencing the second language acquisition. Most linguists say that the role of L1 is the most significant part at the early stages of second language acquisition. However, Pit Corder cited in Gass and Selinker (1993, p.23) disagrees with this view, arguing that it is not the starting point of the L1 in syntactic acquisition but it is a continuum of increasing complexity or as he called it a ‘*developmental continuum*’ which takes place in second language acquisition. It is because of this that it is assumed that EFL learners will have trouble in manoeuvring with these linguistic structures in their language output.

As mentioned above the EFL students can face large difficulties in producing certain linguistic structures. According to the findings of this study, Albanian EFL learners, in special cases, might face problems while producing English structures with –ING clauses in nominal functions. It can be seen that because of this complexity of the nominal –ING clauses in English it has been noted that the various Albanian correspondents might affect the literal output in English. One basic element for the success of the Albanian EFL learner lies in the ability to make generalisations of such structured correspondents.

Consequently, this paper intends to help Albanian EFL teachers/learners to overcome the problems they face while dealing with the complexities of the nominal –ING clauses. This study will focus on finding differences, similarities and identities between the English –ING clauses and their Albanian correspondents and by ranking them according to their relative learning difficulty.

Therefore, we will be utilising contrastive analysis as a method in conducting this research. Contrastive analysis as a steering mechanism in the process of foreign language teaching and has been applied for decades by many linguists. It has been used to find out the relationship between the mother tongue and any other languages that follow, such as L2, L3 etc. Therefore, it has also been used to predict and explain the difficulties in the process of language learning. Since the foreground of this thesis has to do with contrastive analysis between the English –ING clauses in nominal functions and their Albanian correspondents, the method stated above has been applied in order to highlight the errors that might be conducted by the Albanian EFL learners in second language acquisition.

A hypothesis has been put forward in the section that categorises the differences, similarities and identities between the English –ING clauses and the Albanian correspondents reflecting their relative learning difficulty:

Because of the fundamental structural differences between the English –ING clause as prepositional complement of a sentence and its Albanian correspondents, it can be hypothesised that the Albanian EFL classroom learners will face serious difficulty in learning the English structural pattern **prep. + -ING clause**.

II. The contrastive analysis of the English – ING clause as prepositional complement and its Albanian correspondents

The prepositional complement is sometimes referred to as object of preposition. Curme cited in Velecka (2010) emphasises that “to serve as the object of a preposition is one of the most common functions of the –ING form”. According to Velecka (2010), the prepositional verb might be understood as a verb that is closely bound to a preposition. Duskova also cited in Velecka (2010) the –ING clause proceeds by assuring that the prepositional verbs do not differ from the “bare” verb taking the direct object. The nominal –ING clause after prepositions will be described and analysed in terms of contrastive analysis in order to determine whether the Albanian correspondents are identical, similar or different.

In our corpus the nominal –ING clauses occur as prepositional complement in the following structural patterns: **V. + Prep. + - ING clause**, **Adj. + Prep. + -ING clause**, **N. + Prep. + – ING clause**. These structural patterns will be compared contrastively with their Albanian correspondents.

Such as is illustrated within the examples below:

- (1) Nationalism has been remarkably successful **in establishing national identity as a people’s primary affiliation in much of the world**. (“International Relations”, p.33)

Nacionalizimi ka qenë jashtëzakonisht i suksesshëm **për perforcimin e dallueshmërisë kombëtare si një ndjenjë përparësore e njerëzve në një pjesë të madhe të vendeve të botës**. (“Marrëdhëniet Ndërkombëtare”, f.46)

The English example in (1) contains the pattern **Adj. + Prep. (in) + – ING clause**. The English structural pattern has an Albanian complex abstract verbal noun as its correspondent. Its Albanian correspondent contains the preposition *për*: **Adj. + Prep. (për) + Verbal noun phrase**. Domi, *et al.* 1, (2002, p140) state that the endings *im* and *je* are added to verbs and are very productive in forming abstract verbal nouns in Albanian.

Based on the same preposition *in*, the English structural pattern **N. + Prep. (in) + ING clause** in the following example from our corpus resulted in having the same structural pattern as its Albanian correspondent. The noun *suksese* in Albanian determines the use of the preposition *në*. This can be seen in the example below:

- (2) The Soviet economy had some notable successes **in rapidly industrializing the country in the 1930s**,... (“International Relations”, p 35)

Ekonomia Sovjetike kishte pasur disa suksese **në industrializimin e shpejtë të vendit në vitet 1930**,... (“Marrëdhëniet Ndërkombëtare”, f.48)

- (3) ...for even in the depths o' winter there's some pleasure **in conquering the butter**,.... (“Silas Marner”, p.159) ...edhe në mes të dimrit mund të kënaqesh **duke nxjerrë gjalpin**. (“Sajllës Marnër”, f. 173)

However, in examples (2) and (3), the same English structural patterns **N + Prep. (in) + -ING clause** have two different Albanian correspondents. In example (2), the Albanian correspondent **N+ Prep. (në) + Verbal NP** is similar to the English pattern and is introduced by an abstract noun with the preposition *në*. In example (3), the English structural pattern has a different Albanian correspondent which is introduced by a non-finite clause with the particle *duke*.

The Albanian correspondents of the English –ING clause as prepositional complement differ according to whether the same preposition follows a noun or a verb in the sentence.

The contrastive analysis of the following examples reveals some of the important differences between the prepositional complement of *in* and their Albanian correspondents.

(4) A love affair had to begin after lunch, and however late I might be *ingetting to bed* - so long as I slept in my own bed - (“The End of the Affair”, p. 21)

Dashuriçka duhej të fillonte pas dreke, dhe sado vonë **të shkoja në shtrat për të fjetur** – përderisa flija në shtratin tim... (“Fundit i Aferës”, f. 36)

(5) It was inconceivable how he had existed, how he had succeeded *ingetting so far*, how he had managed to remain--why he did not instantly disappear. (“The Heart of Darkness”, p. 38)

Ishte e papërfytyrueshme si kishte gjallëruar, si ai kishte dalë në krye **të arrinte aq larg**, si mund të qëndronte – përse nuk zhdukej menjëherë. (“Zemra e Hidhërimit”, f. 88)

In these two examples taken from our corpus, the two –ING clauses as prepositional complements take their timing from their matrix verb tense. In the examples mentioned above the English pattern is **V. + Prep. (in) + – ING clause**. The Albanian correspondents have no prepositions. The Albanian clauses are introduced by verb phrases in the imperfect subjunctive mood *të shkoja* in (4), and *të arrinte* in (5). Moreover, the Albanian correspondents have the following patterns: (4) **Adj. + Finite clause (FC)**, and (5) **Verbal idiom (kishte dale në krye) + Finite clause (FC)**.

It can be noticed that the English preposition *in* followed by the –ING clause has different Albanian correspondents; as seen in the following examples:

(6)...this new concept was a perpetual amazement to Martin, and he found himself engaged continually *intracing the relationship between all things under the sun and on the other side of the sun*. (“Martin Eden”, p101)

Ky koncept i shkaktoi nja habi të përhershme Martinit, të cilit paskëtaj i doli një punë më e madhe, **duke kërkuar lidhjet midis të gjitha sendeve**, që ndodhen nën diell e përtej diellit. (“Martin Eden”, f. 135)

(7) I can't forget him, though I am not prepared to affirm the fellow was exactly worth the life we lost *ingetting to him*. (“The Heart of Darkness”, p.35)

Jo; nuk e harroj dot, edhe pse s'jam i gatshëm të pohoj që ky shok ishte vërtet I denjë për jetën, të cilën e humbëm **duke shkuar tek ai**. (“Zemra e Errësirës”, f. 81)

The two actions in the two English examples above happen in the past and contain the progressive aspect. According to Willis (2003:106), the –ING clause takes its timing from the associated verb and has a range of possible meanings. The examples in (6) and (7) of the English –ING clauses take the timing of past because of the main verbs *engaged* and *lost*.

Duffley (2006:16) has stated that, “it is the English preposition *in* which also enables the –ING’s event to be evoked as simultaneous to the moment in time occupied by the main verb’s event.” The Albanian correspondents are non-finite clauses introduced by the particle *duke* which express the same aspectual meaning of progressiveness. The Albanian prepositions are omitted in front of the non-finite clauses because of the verbs which do not allow them.

As stated, there are other prepositions such as *by* and *from* that can be considered in this study, followed by nominal –ING clauses as prepositional complements.

The preposition *by* and its complements are described in the following examples.

(8) This was done *by dumping them into a spinning receptacle that went at a rate of a few thousand revolutions a minute*, tearing the matter from the clothes by centrifugal force. (“Martin Eden”, p.130)

Kjo kryhej **duke i futur ato në një arkë me vrima**, që rrotullohej disa mijëra here në minutë dhe kë shktu e nxirrte ujët me anë të forces centrifugal. (“Martin Iden”, f. 177)

(9) You pimped *by giving opportunities*. You pimped *by being a bore and a fool*, so now somebody who isn't a bore and fool is playing about with her in Cedar Road. (“The End of the Affair”, p. 43)

Ishe piziveng **duke i dhënë raste...duke qenë i mërziqshëm budalla**, kështu që tash diksuh nuk është i mërziqshëm e budalla me të në Sedar Roud. (“Fund i Aferës”, f. 72)

In the above examples *by dumping them into a spinning receptacle* vs. *duke i futur ato në një arkë me vrima*, and *by giving opportunities* vs. *duke i dhënë raste*, it can be noticed that the preposition *by* followed by the –ING clause in (8) and (9) have, as do their Albanian correspondents, non-finite clauses introduced by the particle *duke*. The English structural pattern in both examples is **V + Prep. + -ING** clause. The conclusion is that the prepositions *in* and *by* followed by the nominal –ING clause as complement have, as their Albanian correspondents have, non-finite clauses introduced by the particle *duke*. It can also be noticed that there are no prepositions in the Albanian correspondents.

However, the –ING clause as complement after the preposition *by* in the following example has resulted in having a different Albanian correspondent from the cases in (8 and 9). In example (10) the idea of *keeping his eyes on chance...fulfils* the balance of encoding an on-going activity (Egan, 2008:200).

(10) And perhaps he was cheered *by keeping his eye on a chance of promotion to the fleet at Ravenna by-and-by*, if he had good friends in Rome and survived the awful climate. (“The Heart of Darkness”, p. 3)

Mbase e mbante shpresa se do **t'i shfaqej rasti të gradohej në flotën e Ravenës**, po të kishte miq të mire në Romë dhe po të shpëtonte nga kjo klimë e tmerrshme. (“Zemra e Errësirës”, f.10)

The –ING clause of English in (10) has as its Albanian correspondent a tensed clause which is introduced by a verb phrase in the imperfect subjunctive mood.

In conclusion, the examples found in our corpus with the preposition *by* followed by –ING clauses as prepositional complement have two different Albanian correspondents: 1) non-finite clause introduced by the particle *duke*, and 2) a finite clause with the verb phrase in the imperfect subjunctive mood.

We will continue our contrastive analysis of the –ING clause as prepositional complement with the preposition *for*. The structural pattern of the following example is **V. + Prep. + –ING** clause.

(11) His eyes were made *for seeing*, but up to that moment they had been filled with the ever changing panorama of the world, (“Martin Eden”, p.34)

Sytë i kishte **për të parë**, por gjer në atë cast me ta kishte pare vetëm pamje të panumërta të botës... (“Martin Iden”, f. 45)

According to Çeliku (2000, p.110), the Albanian correspondent **për të pare** is preposition *për+ gerund construction*, which in standard Albanian is known as infinitive.

The same English preposition *for* followed by –ING clause in a different corpus example has a different Albanian correspondent:

(12) Her mother financed the settlement, you see, so the girl wasn't afraid of being punished *for letting me go*. (“Martin Eden”, p.198)

Nëna e saj mbante koloninë me të holla, kështu që vajza s'kishte frikë se mund të dënohej **duke më lënë të iki**. (“Martin Iden”, f. 276)

The structural pattern of the Albanian correspondent in (12) of *for letting me go* is a non-finite clause introduced by the particle *duke* showing the progressive aspect.

In the following examples we will continue the contrastive analysis with the preposition *to* followed by the –ING clause complement. The English structural pattern of the following example is **V. + Prep. + – ING** clause.

(13) "You do not object *to having your picture taken, Mr Eden*?" ("Martin Eden", p. 288) Kujtoj që nuk do të kundërshtoni **t'ju marrim në fotografi, zoti Eden** – i tha ai. ("Martin Eden", f.401)

In example (13), the English –ING clause *to having your picture taken, Mr Eden* has, like its Albanian correspondent, a finite clause introduced by the verb in present tense subjunctive mood. The pattern of the Albanian correspondent is **V + finite clause**. It can be noticed that there is no preposition in this pattern.

The following English example from our corpus has the structural pattern **Adj. + Prep. + – ING** clause.

(14) It's a fair duel, he told himself, he's more accustomed *to killing than I am*, the chances are equal enough; ("Our Man in Havana", p. 166)

Ky është një duel i ndershmëm, - i tha vetes, - fundja ai është më i stërvitur **për vrasje se sa unë**, kështu që shanset janë mjaft të barabarta...("Njeriu Ynë në Havanë", p.366)

The Albanian correspondent of the –ING clause in (14) is a clause introduced by the preposition *për* followed by **vrasje se sa unë**. In this case it is the Albanian adjective *i stërvitur* that determines which preposition can be used after it.

On the basis of the examples above the following conclusion was drawn:

The structural pattern of the Albanian correspondents of the English –ING clause after the preposition *to* differ according to whether it follows a verb or adjective in the sentence.

An example of complementation after the preposition *with* will follow; the structural pattern of the English example is **Adj. + Prep. + -ING** clause.

(15)...a woman can always be satisfied *with devoting herself to her husband*, but a man wants something that will make him look forward more.... ("Silas Marner", p. 163)

Gruaja mund të jetë e lumtur **duke iu kushtuar burrit**, por burri ka nevojë për diçka që ta lejojë të shohë drejt së ardhmes...("Sajllës Marnër", f.176)

The English –ING clause *with devoting herself to her husband* is different from its Albanian correspondent resulting in a structural pattern without preposition. The pattern of the Albanian correspondent is **Adj. + Non-finite** clause introduced by the particle *duke*.

The next example is with the preposition *at*.

(16) Perhaps writing to Mary momentarily healed the loneliness he felt *at being away from Milly*. ("Our Man in Havana", p. 48)

(Ndoshta letrat që i shkruante Merit e ndihmonin të shpëtonte përkohësisht vetmisë që ndiente **kur ishte larg Millit**. ("Njeriu Ynë në Havanë", f. 132)

In (16) the Albanian correspondent of *at being away from Milly* has a completely different structural pattern. It is an adverbial clause (within a relative clause *që ndiente kur ishte larg Millit*) introduced by the subordinator *kur*.

Categorization of the Differences, Similarities and Identities between the English –ING clause as Prepositional Complement and their Albanian correspondents, reflecting their Relative Learning Difficulty

As stated in above section, the Albanian correspondents of the English –ING clause as a prepositional complement have various forms. This variety means that it can be predicted that Albanian EFL students will face nearly insurmountable difficulties in the learning of the English pattern **prep. + V-ing** in English.

It has been stated that the Albanian correspondents of the English preposition *in* followed by –ING clause has a different structural pattern: *in establishing national identity* vs. *Për perforcimin e dallueshmërisë kombëtare* (International Relations, p.33).

In view of the example above, the prepositions differ in both clauses. Because of this structural difference between English –ING clause and its Albanian correspondent, it can be predicted that Albanian EFL students are expected to encounter real difficulties in learning this function of the – ING clause.

The other cases where the preposition *in* is followed by an – ING clause as complement have been categorized as different from Albanian correspondents because of their structural differences: *in getting to bed* vs. **të shkoja në shtrat për të fjetur** (The End of the Affair, p.36);...*in tracing the relationship between all things under the sun and on the other side of the sun* vs. **duke kërkuar lidhjet midis të gjitha sendeve** (Martin Eden, p.135).

The variety of forms of the Albanian correspondents of the –ING clause suggests that Albanian EFL students will face real difficulty in the acquisition of this structure.

In above section, the contrastive analysis of the –ING clause after the preposition *by* and its Albanian correspondents has been carried out. The examples from our corpus showed that the English – ING clause has different forms from its Albanian correspondents: ...*by dumping them into a spinning receptacle* vs. **duke i futur ato në një arkë me vrima** (Martin Eden, p. 130); ...*by keeping his eye on a chance of promotion to the fleet at Ravenna by-and-by* vs. **t'i shfaqej rasti të gradohej në flotën e Ravenës** (The Heart of Darkness, p.3)

In view of the examples above, it can almost certainly be predicted that Albanian EFL learners will encounter major difficulty in learning this structure.

The preposition *for* followed by the –ING clause as described above, showed a great difference from its Albanian correspondent. There are no similar or identical Albanian correspondents of the English –ING clause after the preposition *for* found in our corpus: His eyes were made *for seeing* vs. **Sytë i kishte për të parë**, and ... wasn't afraid of being punished *for letting me go* vs. **s'kishte frikë se mund të dënohej duke më lënë të iki** (Martin Eden, p. 45).

As it can be seen from the examples taken from our corpus, there is a considerable difference between the –ING clauses and their Albanian correspondents. As a result of this, the Albanian EFL students are expected to encounter great difficulty in learning this structure with the preposition *for*.

In section above, it was also shown that the –ING clause after the preposition *to* is different from its Albanian correspondent: accustomed *to killing than I am* vs. **stërvitur për vrasje se sa unë** (Our Man in Havana, p.166).

The English –ING clause as complement after the preposition *to* also has a different structural pattern from its Albanian correspondents, as shown in the following example: *object to having your picture taken, Mr Eden* vs. **kundërshtoni t'ju marrim në fotografi, zoti Eden** (Martin Eden, p.288).

On the basis of these examples, it can be predicted that the Albanian EFL students may have considerable difficulty in the acquisition of the –ING clause as prepositional complement after the preposition *to*.

Finally, the –ING clause following the prepositions *with* and *at* have different Albanian correspondents: ...*with devoting herself to her husband* vs. **duke iu kushtuar burrit** (Silas Marner. 163), and ... *at being away from Milly* vs. **kur ishte larg Millit** (Our Man in Havana, p. 48).

This great variety in the forms of the Albanian correspondents enables one to make a reasonable prediction that the Albanian EFL student may face real difficulties in acquiring the English nominal –ING clause complementation after prepositions.

III. Findings and Results

This section presents and discusses the correct responses obtained from the error survey conducted in two different educational institutions with a different level of English knowledge. The error survey was first conducted with 27 students at the English Department of the Faculty of Languages, Cultures and Communication at South East European University in Tetova. They had started their English Syntax 1 course but had not taken their examination yet. Secondly, the same error survey was conducted with 21 randomly-chosen students attending intermediate level of English classes at 'Sami Frashëri' secondary school in Kumanova.

The results obtained from all participants are presented in two separated tables below (1 and 2) in order to verify the predictions made.

The verification of the predictions is completed with the pilot questionnaire which consists of 16 examples. Originally, all the examples are in English and taken from different and reliable sources, such as: internet pages, periodicals, and books. The sentences used in the questionnaire are of a pedagogical nature.

A crucial element of this questionnaire is to test the Albanian EFL students' ability to produce proper English structures containing the English –ING clause in six different nominal functions. The performance and the results of all pilot questionnaire participants are displayed in tables below.

Table 1

The nominal –ING clause as		Correct Responses Percentage %	Correct and Incorrect Prepositions Percentage %		Omission of prepositions before –ING clause percentage %
Prepositional Complement after the prepositions	in	40%	in	26%	
			on	7%	
			to	3%	
			for	3%	
	by	70%	by	22%	44%
			with	3%	
	with	85%	with	30%	12%
			in	26%	
			for	4%	
			on	12%	
	at	74%	at	48%	

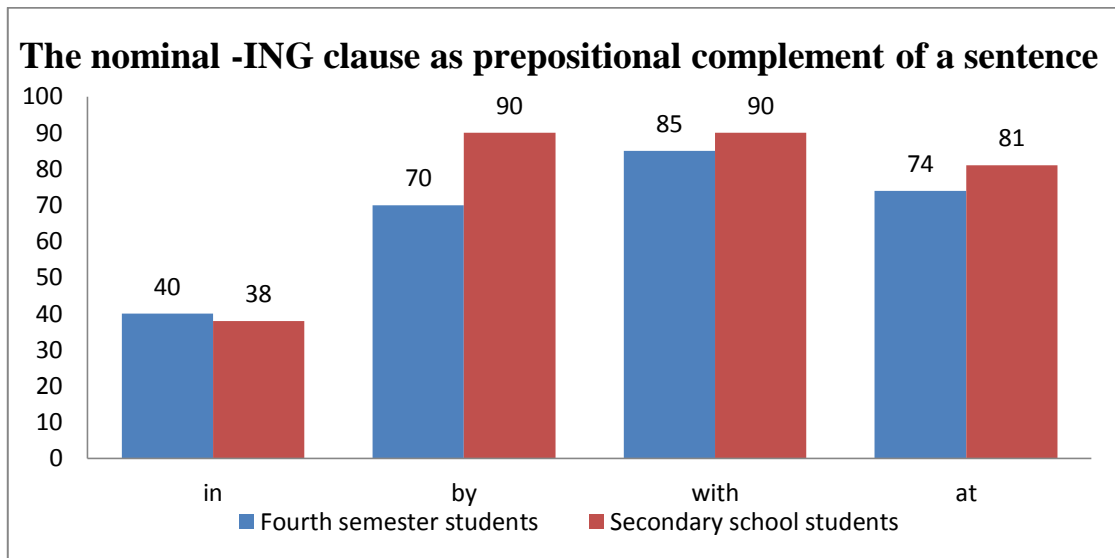
Table 1 displays the correct responses obtained from the fourth semester students Syntax 1.

Table 2

Prepositional Complement after the prepositions	in	38%	in	19%	9%
			on	10%	
	by	90%	by	24%	57%
			with	9%	
	with	90%	with	52%	
			in	14%	
			by	5%	
			on	19%	
	at	81%	at	24%	

Table 2 displays the correct responses obtained from the fourth year students of intermediate English level at secondary school.

This can be illustrated the following graphical display:



IV. Conclusions

The process of learning a foreign language can be exhausting for almost all language learners. In above section, this process has been widely described in terms of Contrastive Analysis as a branch of Applied Linguistics which dates back to 1940s through to the 1950s. In particular, it describes the role of L1 in the process of learning the L2. In a recent book by Alhawary (2009:21) the Second Language Acquisition is defined as a subject which is concerned with how a language is learned and has the learner in its focus including the learner’s developing language. Since this research paper is concerned with contrastive analysis between English and Albanian, it can make a potential contribution to foreign language learning and teaching in the English classroom. It can achieve this by trying to present evidence about the English nominal –ING clauses and their Albanian correspondents. Particularly, the main focus has been on the potential negative transfer of the Albanian structurally different patterns into the English language production of the Albanian EFL students.

This research paper has tried to diagnose the problems Albanian EFL learners may come across in the process of acquiring nominal –ING clauses. The Albanian correspondents of the English –ING clauses in different nominal functions have been described, analysed, and categorized according to their relative learning difficulty. The following types of Albanian correspondents have been detected: Albanian clauses introduced by verbal noun phrases, gerund constructions, finite and non-finite clauses. A test was conducted with the students of the fourth semester at SEEU and the fourth year students at “Sami Frashëri” secondary school in order to verify the hypotheses of this thesis. The findings of this study may help the Albanian EFL teachers to overcome the problems in their teaching of the English –ING clauses in different nominal functions.

The paper is based on the contrastive analysis of the data collected from the corpus which was collected from two types of texts: fictional and academic. The two kinds of sources have been used in order to find examples of the nominal –ING clauses. Other sources have been used to find examples for designing the pilot questionnaire such as the internet, grammar reference books, and periodicals.

Based on the ranking of the differences, similarities and identities between the English nominal –ING clauses and their Albanian correspondents according to their relative learning difficulty, this research reached the following conclusions:

The hypothesis that Albanian EFL students may face insurmountable difficulties in learning the English structural patterns **V. + prep. + -ING** clause, **Adj. + prep. + -ING** clause as well as the **Adj. + prep. + -ING** clause was correct only after

the preposition *in*. The results from the pilot questionnaire show that forty percent (40%) of the fourth semester participants and thirty-eight percent (38%) of the secondary school participants used the –ING clause after the preposition *in* correctly.

The hypothesis that Albanian EFL students can face great difficulties in learning the –ING clause as complement after the prepositions *by*, *with*, and *at* was not correct. The pilot questionnaires results show that seventy percent (70%) of the fourth semester participants and ninety percent (90%) of the high school students used the –ING clause as complement after the preposition *by* correctly. The results also show that eighty-five percent (85%) of the fourth semester participants and ninety percent (90%) of the secondary school participants used the –ING clause as complement of the preposition *with* correctly. Furthermore, seventy-four percent (74%) of the fourth semester participants and eighty-one percent (81%) of the secondary school participants used the –ING clause as complement of the preposition *at* correctly.

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