

The Albanian Middle Construction

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Table of Contents

Chapter 1: Introduction.....	8
1.1 Introducing the middle generic construction.....	8
1.2. Structure of the thesis.....	10
1.3. Why are middle generic constructions interesting?	11
Chapter 2: Overview of Past Studies	16
2.1. Early treatments of middle generic construction in English	16
2.1.1. Summary.....	19
2.2. Generative accounts of the middle generic construction.....	20
2.2.1. Discussion	26
Chapter 3: The Generic Agent and Property Reporting in Albanian Middles.....	30
3.1. The middle interpretation.....	30
3.2. Interpreting the generic agent in Albanian.....	33
Chapter 4: Generic Middle Constructions in Albanian	43
4.1. The corpus	43
4.2. Methodology	44
4.3 Results.....	47
4.4. Analysis and discussion.....	55
4.5. Conclusions	58
Chapter 5: General Conclusions and Future Research	60
Bibliography.....	62
Appendix: Generic middle constructions from corpus	66

Chapter 1

Introduction

1.1 Introducing the middle generic construction

The present thesis investigates the middle generic construction in the Albanian language. Albanian is part of the Indo-European family and is spoken by about 7 million people mainly in Albania, Kosovo, Western Macedonia, Southern Montenegro as well as in other parts of the world owing to its relatively large Diaspora (Lewis, 2009). A first example of a middle generic construction in English and its Albanian translation are given below:

- (1) This book reads nicely
- (2) Ky libër lexo-het kollaj
this book read-NACT.3SG easily
this book reads easily

The middle generic construction in Albanian, just like the same construction in many of the IE languages, is parasitic on non-active morphology (Condoravdi 1989; Lekakou, 2005), and its interpretation has been defined as denoting a property of a grammatical subject¹. This interpretation is not very specific or conclusive given that many types of sentences have an interpretation which expresses a property of the grammatical subject, but not all of them are middle generic constructions. As it has been noted in various studies, some of which are

1 Although in Albanian and Greek the middle generic construction relies on non-active morphology, its interpretation should not be confused with middle verbs, which denote actions with ambiguous/vague transitivity and which also make use of the same non-active verbal marking. These include, but are not limited to, verbs of grooming or body movement.

presented below, the syntactic manifestation of a middle generic interpretation is also diverse cross-linguistically. Therefore relying on a combination of syntactic and semantic properties of the middle generic construction does not encompass the variety with which it is manifested in natural languages. The goal of this thesis is to study the middle generic construction in Albanian as is found in natural language, in the hope that surveying its realization in this language can contribute to a better understanding of its interpretation. For this purpose, a corpus of about 600 000 words² has been investigated, consisting of written texts of various genres, from fiction to political essays and includes diverse Albanian contemporary authors, as well as two translations into Albanian of English and Portuguese books. The focus of the thesis will be a specific type of middle generic construction, which, for lack of a better term, I will term a bare³ middle generic construction, as exemplified in (3)⁴:

(3)	Molla	ha-het
	apple.NOM.SG	eat-NACT.3SG
	the apple is edible	

The reason for this choice is that the addition of a manner adverbial makes most middle constructions in Albanian acceptable: in most types of sentences which have a third person non-active imperfective verb that agrees with the grammatical subject (i.e., the grammatical structure of the middle construction in Albanian) the middle generic construction succeeds in producing the middle interpretation. However, only a restricted number of verbs can be in this construction without an adverbial modifier. Therefore, I found it more

² The corpus, which was initially estimated to be about 1,200,000 words, was diminished in size for the final analysis, due to time constraints.

³ I thank Kees de Schepper for suggesting this term

⁴ Lekakou (2002, 2005) considers (3) a middle construction as is found in Greek

interesting to explore constructions such as the one in (3) and investigate what makes the middle interpretation possible in these constructions, which seem to have less 'variables' to account for.

1.2. Structure of the thesis

In the following section of this chapter, I give an overview of the importance of the middle construction for the exploration of the relationship between syntax and semantics. In chapter 2 I provide an overview of some of the most important studies regarding the middle construction. While for languages like English, Dutch and German as well as French, the middle has been analysed as its own type of construction, linguists focusing on Albanian and Greek have analyzed it as a type of *impersonal passive*, based on the apparent uniformity with passives in terms of verbal morphology and the lack of a specific agent. In Chapter 3 I suggest a working definition of the middle interpretation for Albanian based on previous treatments as well as on the specifics of the data. I propose that the core characteristic that needs to be realized in order to obtain a middle interpretation is the *modality-of-ability reading* in the presence of a *generic agent-role*. In Chapter 4 I present the data, the methodology used for studying it, as well as some discussion on the problems with the methodology and with the corpus. In the section 3 of Chapter 4 and onwards I present the findings of the investigation and analyze its implications. Based on our data, it turns out that in Albanian verbs which do not have a [+human] agent in their argument structure cannot produce a middle interpretation. Moreover, it seems that mainly verbs of cognition and perception can produce an *ability reading* in a non-modified (i.e., bare) middle generic construction⁵. At a finer level of detail, even within the group of cognition and perception verbs, there are verbs which do not allow for

⁵ Modifications include negation, adverbials as well as contrastive intonation

a middle interpretation in their third person non-active imperfective forms. This data suggests that the *ability reading* which I equate with the middle interpretation in non-modified middles tends to be realized for those verbs which imply a process in their meaning. In general, the structural complexity of sentences where verbs can produce this modality of ability reading in Albanian suggests that this reading is due to the semantic properties of the verb, and grammatical and discourse changes that occur when the verb is used in the non-active form. Chapter 5 concludes the project, where I present the general conclusions of this work as well as future research avenues on the middle construction.

1.3. Why are middle generic constructions interesting?

Below I present examples of one type of middle construction in English, Dutch, French, Greek, Italian, and Albanian, respectively (Lekakou, 2005; e. and f. are translations of the above):

(4)

- | | |
|----|---|
| a. | This book/A large print book reads easily |
| b. | Dit boek leest gemakkelijk
this book read.3SG easily |
| c. | Ce livre se lit facilement
this book REFL reads easily |
| d. | Afto to vivlio diavazete efkola
this the book read.PASS.3SG easily |
| e. | Questo libro si legge facilmente
this book REFL read easily |
| f. | Ky libër lexo-het kollaj
this book read-NACT.3SG easily |

The commonly accepted interpretation of the sentence above is that it expresses a generalized assertion about a property of the grammatical subject (Ackema & Schoorlemmer 2005). The subject of a middle construction, i.e., the entity that the generalized assertion is about, can be a specific or a 'kind' of object, as in (4a), a human entity as in (5), or a general *event* as in (6):

(5) John scares easily

(6) Graduating from a prestigious university reads nicely on a CV

Even though the sentences above are grammatically acceptable for native speakers, my impromptu investigations for English suggest that they sound slightly odd at first, if the speaker is new to this type of sentence. Clearly, linguists did not invent the construction, but it can be safely said that they might be the only group of individuals worldwide who are completely at ease with it, and are keen on understanding it further. And there is a reason why linguists are interested in this construction: it is a testing ground for theories of syntax and semantics and their interaction (Fagan, 1992) because its interpretation seems to be uniform but its syntactic manifestation is varied in different languages.

From the syntactic point of view the middle construction is interesting, because, in some languages like English and Dutch, it manifests both properties of active and passive sentences (Lekakou, 2002). Firstly, the grammatical subject of the middle construction is, in the most popular examples, the logical object of the verb. At the same time, in languages like English and Dutch the verb stays in the active form, while in Albanian, Greek, Italian and French the verb is in its non-active form. However, in Albanian and Greek we can have middle constructions with the verb both in the active and non-active form as pointed out by Condoravdi (1989) for Greek, where some verbs can form a middle construction in both, some only in the active form and some only in the non-active form. For

example, the following sentence can be interpreted as a middle construction:

- (7) ky laps shkruan (mirë)
this pencil write.3SG (well)
this pencil writes (well) (i.e., it is comfortable to write with it)

At more theory-internal levels, there is the question whether the construction is the result of a movement operation in the syntax, as is assumed by transformational accounts (Keyser & Roeper, 1984) or whether it involves the projection of pre-syntactic ‘features’ of the elements of the middle construction into syntax proper (Ackema & Schoorlemmer 1994), which is a topic we will cover more in depth in Chapter 2.

From the semantic point of view, the middle construction provokes interest at various levels. In the field of lexical semantics it is of interest to understand whether a verb’s lexical conceptual structure allows for the middle interpretation to arise (Stalmaszczyk, 1993). A lexical conceptual structure captures the meaning components of a verb which are responsible for its syntactic behaviour (Levin & Rappaport-Hovav, 2008), i.e., what types of arguments can verbs take and in what types of constructions they can appear. For example, a verb such as ‘break’ can form an anticausative, i.e., a construction similar to the passive but where the agent is completely removed from the meaning (Haspelmath & Müller-Bardey, 2004). In a sentence like ‘the glass broke’, the agent is not only removed syntactically but it is also not necessarily implied in the interpretation of the sentence because the lexical conceptual structure of the verb ‘break’ contains the resulting state of being broken but does not specify any agent causing the change of state of the glass, as is illustrated below from Levin & Rappaport-Hovav (2008:4)

(8) break: y come to be BROKEN (Guerssel et al. 1985: 54, ex. (19))

With regards to the middle generic construction, the question is whether we can stipulate that they can be formed only with a specific class of verbs that have a specific lexical conceptual structure. From another viewpoint, middle generic constructions are one kind of generic sentence (Carlson & Pelletier, eds., 1995) and therefore it is plausible that they be also accounted for in terms of reference to 'kinds' of entities and 'properties' of entities.

The middle interpretation in fact is still an open issue: what does the middle interpretation tell us? What state of affairs does it evoke? One view assumes that, given an entity or a state of affairs, what the middle interpretation recounts is the *ability of a generic/potential human agent* to perform the action described by the verb; this action in turn is somehow related to or affects the grammatical subject (Fagan 1992). Another view discusses the middle interpretation as conveying a *generalized statement about events*, and there is no need for an implied generic/potential agent (Condoravdi, 1989, Rapoport 1999a). As an illustration of this conflict, consider the following sentence:

(9) Alloy blackens easily

This is clearly a natural process and there is no human agent involved in its realization. If (9) is considered to have a middle interpretation, then the generic human agent who would perform the action is lacking in this instance. In addition, the role of the grammatical subject/topic of a middle construction is also in question. In various treatments (Keyser & Roeper 1984 and many others) the grammatical subject is described as the logical object of the verb. However, there are different types of middles in other languages which do not abide by this specific criterion. For example in Dutch there are middles where the

grammatical subject of the phrase is not an underlying object. Consider the following sentence from Hoekstra & Roberts (1993:197):

- (10) Die stoel zit lekker
the chair sits nicely
the chair sits nicely (this is a comfortable chair)

In addition, as it was pointed out in the introduction, in Greek and Albanian, middle generic constructions are well-formed without the need of an adverbial (Lekakou 2002, 2005):

- (11) Ky ujë pi-het
this water drink-NACT.3SG
this water is potable⁶

Finally, the middle construction enables a *modality of ability* interpretation (Ackema & Schoorlemmer, 2005; Lekakou, 2005), which has seldom been analysed in depth on its own. The *modality of ability*, in my understanding, can be termed as the relationship between the generic agent that is implied in middles and the predication.

In conclusion, the middle construction presents many interesting aspects which require an explanation of how they come about. The different viewpoints in previous treatments are not mutually exclusive, nor are the answers convergent to a satisfactory degree from a cross-linguistic perspective. Although the construction is well studied, the topic is hardly exhausted and it provides scope for deeper investigations into its properties.

⁶ This phrase also has other interpretations but these will be indicated below as here they would be outside the scope of the chapter

Chapter 2

Overview of Past Studies

2.1. Early treatments of middle generic construction in English

The middle construction seems to have been first made prominent as a special case of structural arrangement in the English language quite early in 20th century linguistics. There was a time when it was not yet called a “middle construction”. Jespersen (1927) talks about “activo-passive” use of verbs, bringing the following examples to the table⁷: my plays won’t act; my poesy won’t sell; I am at a sentence that will not write; this filthy fluff will never brush off my bags; the figures made her cry...they would not add up; the coat had been tighter, ‘t would never have hooked nor buttoned; can compare with thee for the rare effects of magic; the meat cooks all the better if you cook it slow; alabaster cuts very smooth and easy; constitutional ill-health [does not] necessarily transmit to a child; the ham was not digesting very well; reaming swats (ale) that drank divinely; one of our French wither’d pears, it looks ill, it eats drily; if the cakes at tea eat short and crisp, they were made by Olivia; the story told well; the words would not form on her lips; we might put up two or three [big houses] and see how they let; that doesn’t listen so bad; four babies, none of whom photographed well; the old gentleman’s speech reads excellently; the dirt rubs off⁸.

Jespersen’s analysis particularly hinges on the interpretation of these

⁷ Providing these examples from the original authors seems useful for readers who still need to familiarise with the different manifestations of this construction in English.

⁸ The examples are not kept in the alphabetical order as in Jespersen’s book, and some orthographic changes have been made to fit today’s orthographic rules of English.

constructions. He supports an even older idea that the grammatical subject of a middle construction (or activo-passive construction in his terminology) is in fact the logical object of the verb, while the logical subject itself is not specified because it is indefinite (cf. Sweet, 1986). On the other hand, Jespersen suggests that even though the grammatical subject of a middle construction is the object of the predicate, it also serves as some kind of agent because the properties of this subject are what the construction describes; it is *in virtue of* something that is "characteristic" of the subject that the construction makes sense⁹. In his own words "when we say 'his novels sell very well' we think to some extent of the books as active themselves, as the cause of the extensive sale, while we do not think so much of the activity of the bookseller" (Jespersen, 1927: 350). Therefore, he places no restrictions on the verb that can be in this construction, but states that there are special circumstances (which we can interpret as conceptual and contextual) which apply to the well-formedness of the middle construction. A last interesting point from this early take on the middle construction is the proposal that Jespersen puts forward about the origin of the construction. He sees the origin of the middle in an extension of the use of gerundive forms, which do not distinguish between active or passive in their formation rules: 'the book is selling well' → 'the book sells well'. In gerundive forms as the one in the example, the subject of the verb does not have to be a human agent but it can also be an object as well as many other types of entities. A second early treatment of the middle construction is Hatcher (1943)'s paper on the construction, which she terms a 'derived intransitive'. In O'Grady's (1980) summary of this paper, she is also quoted as supporting the view that the 'derived intransitive' "is used to emphasize some property inherent in the ontological patient" (O'Grady, 1980, p. 62). In her paper, Hatcher differentiates

⁹ We might think of this statement as a first hint at the 'characterizing generic' nature of middle construction (Carlson & Pelletier, eds., 1995).

between what today is termed anticausative constructions, such as 'the door opens' and middle constructions, where the former can occur without the presence of an animate agent but the latter can't. Moreover, she suggests that the construction does not describe "the activity of this agent but an attribute of the subject" (p. 9), or "the possibility of such activity" (Hatcher, 1943, p. 10). In other words, the predicate expresses "a way of realizing the potentialities of the object" (p.11). Here we find a first approximation of what in current literature is referred to as the generic agent in middle constructions, which Hatcher labels as a "qui que se soit" human (p.12). While Hatcher interprets the middle as describing a property of the grammatical subject, the realization of this interpretation seems to be crucially dependent on the presence of the animate *agent* that can hypothetically perform the action. She brings examples from the advertisements of the time, explaining how this construction is becoming more frequent at the time due to its use in advertising campaigns: Couches convert easily into beds; Bed-lamps attach and adjust easily; Drawers pull out and trays lift out easily; Faucets turn on and off easily; The clock winds easily; Lingerie tubs quickly and irons easily; Garments pack and unpack neatly; Automobiles steer and park easily; Cream whips quickly; Paint applies evenly; Nail-polish removes easily; Bond paper erases neatly; Linoleum wipes off easily (p.12-13). Hatcher also notes that the grammatical subject of a middle construction can also be an animate, e.g. (1) I don't scare easily; (2) I don't surprise so easy (p.14).¹⁰

O'Grady (1980) is influenced by these early accounts and states that the derived intransitive construction (i.e., middle construction) should be accounted for in terms of interpretive constraints rather than pre-interpretive ones, since any 'production' model would posit problems of over-generation, and it is only

¹⁰ For a more detailed historical overview of the middle construction in English, see O'Grady (1980) and Stalmaszczyk (1993) from which this summary benefitted.

through interpretive mechanisms that over-generation can be constrained. Such interpretive mechanisms involve *actualization of the predication* and *facilitating such actualization*. Hence, the derived intransitive in O'Grady's terms involves a situation which describes inherent properties of the grammatical subject and therefore the elements in this construction refer to the potential/hypothetical actualization of such property *by an agent* that is related to the grammatical subject in a manner that is coherent to the grammatical subject, its properties, as well as the agent him/herself. He also emphasizes that only verbs which imply the presence of an agent can occur in a derived intransitive construction, giving the example of 'wear' vs. 'wear out', where, he claims, the latter can't be in such construction. Summarizing, he posits that the well-formedness conditions on derived intransitives "seem to result from the subtle interaction of the concept of actualization with the semantic properties associated with the referent of the grammatical subject" (p. 70).

2.1.1. Summary

Early accounts of the middle construction stress three main points. Firstly, the grammatical subject needs to have semantic coherence with the action described by the verb. This coherence can be thought of as one or a number of properties inherent in the meaning of the grammatical subject to which the middle construction applies. The 'responsibility' of the grammatical subject in the construction is crucial to its well-formedness. Secondly, especially stressed in Hatcher (1943), the middle construction's well-formedness is contingent upon the existence of an implied *generic agent* who can actualize the event described by the clause. Thirdly, as stressed in O'Grady (1980), the middle construction should be accounted for more in terms of its interpretation than from its surface grammatical form, which varies across language, and which, even within a single language, needs to be semantically and contextually motivated.

2.2. Generative accounts of the middle generic construction

Two views are prominent in the middle construction analysis. One view offers an account of the middle at the syntax-semantics interface, where the properties of the middle can be explained by the semantic-syntactic properties of verbs and the grammatical subject in a middle construction. Indeed, the middle motivates different grammatical architectures of the interaction between different syntax and the lexicon and has proved a feast for the generative tradition, because the well-formedness of the construction seems to rely on the semantic properties of verbs and their arguments.¹¹

Keyser and Roeper (1984) propose an account of middles that is similar to the passive formation in a generative transformational framework. They analyse middles vis-à-vis ergative verbs while accepting that both transitive and ergative verbs can be successfully used in a middle construction. Ergative verbs are those verbs which can suppress the causer of an action completely such as the verb 'break'¹². Thus, for them, the following are both middle constructions:

(12) This door opens easily

(13) This dress buttons easily

They suggest that verbs which can be both in a middle and in an anticausative construction (such as 'open'), the so-called *labile* verbs, realize two argument structures, a transitive and an intransitive one. The *anticausative* construction is formed by the *intransitive* member of such pairs while the middle construction is formed by the *transitive* member. From this account, only transitive verbs in English can enter a middle construction, stipulating that the middle *must have a*

¹¹ Of course, the theory-internal issue of what syntax and semantics encompass is at the core of this debate.

¹² The terms 'ergative' and 'anticausative' will be used interchangeably throughout the thesis.

logical direct object in its subject position.

Ackema & Schoorlemmer (1994) however, point out that middles in Dutch do not involve movement because they appear to be syntactically unergative. Starting from Perlmutter's (1978) insight that in some languages unaccusatives in the perfect tense take the auxiliary 'be' while unergative verbs take the auxiliary 'have', they point out that in Dutch, middle generic construction with a perfect tense verb take the auxiliary 'have', therefore pattern with unergatives, as illustrated in the example below (Ackema & Schoorlemmer, p. 61):

- (14) Dit vlees heft/*is altijd gemakkelijk gesneden
 this meat has/is always easily cut

Since their assumption is that auxiliary selection depends on whether the D-structure subject is the surface subject or not, this shows that in Dutch the surface subjects of the middle generic construction are also underlying subjects at D-structure. Ackema and Schoorlemmer also acknowledge the presence of the *generic agent*, which they explain by assuming the projection of an arbitrary agent role from a two-tiered Lexical Conceptual Structure (LCS) of verbs containing a thematic tier and an action tier. In this architecture, the arguments which are specified in the LCS are then projected onto Deep Structure and then to Surface Structure. In their description, the thematic tier involves information on the thematic roles of the predicate like theme, agent, goal, etc. Overall, representations at the thematic tier only include information on spatio-temporal relations between arguments, e.g., causality. On the other hand, the argument structure of a predicate is determined at the next level of representation, i.e., the Action Tier. Here is where the relationships between arguments are specified and no argument is arbitrarily external, but it is assigned as such by a specific argument structure which is dictated by the action tier. Ackema & Schoorlemmer

attribute this to the whole frame of the middle, which contains a feature (+ext) that externalizes the argument with the highest-ranking thematic role that is projected onto D-structure. In their treatment of the middle formation the agent in an middle construction is not suppressed as in a passive or an anticausative, but it is only assigned the feature 'arbitrary' at the level of the action tier, and it is recoverable precisely due to its arbitrary nature, or from the linguistic context.

Lekakou (2005) uses the Principles and Parameters framework (Chomsky & Lasnik, 1993) for her account of the construction. She compares the middle constructions in English and Dutch with those in French and Greek, pointing out the main differences in how the middle construction is formed in the two groups of languages. Most significantly, in Greek the presence of an adverb is not obligatory as in English she claims, due to the fact that Greek encodes genericity morphologically while English and Dutch license genericity through a generic operator that is not present in syntax. In Greek, genericity is parasitic on the imperfective aspect making middle generic constructions more prevalent in spoken language. For Lekakou, in English and Dutch as well as in Greek and French, middles include a generic agent which she terms as *ONE. The difference between the languages is that in English and Dutch the generic agent is not projected onto syntax contrary to Greek and French. Precisely this fact makes middle formation more flexible in the latter two languages.

The second view on middles analyses the construction from a strictly semantic viewpoint, arguing that the middle is a *notion, an interpretation* which is realized differently in different languages (I provided examples of this in the introduction) and therefore understanding its nature is the more pressing issue. Valuable arguments are offered on both sides. Condoravdi (1989) proposes an approach to the analysis of the middle construction that is reminiscent of O'Grady (1980), by suggesting that while the manifestation of the middle construction may be parasitic on the morpho-syntactic properties of different

languages, the middle interpretation as a notional category is the same in all languages. Following the treatment of generic sentences by various authors, including Heim (1982), Schubert & Pelletier (1989), Krifka (1987b), she applies a similar semantic analysis to middle sentences. Generic sentences are assumed to have a tripartite structure represented in their logical form consisting of a generic operator, a restrictive clause and a nuclear scope. In this analysis the following structure would be applied to the sentence (Condoravdi, 1989, p.18):

- (15) This bread cuts smoothly
[e: bread (x), cut (e), Patient (e, x)] [smooth (e)]

It seems then that the generalization in middles is over events in the nuclear scope (i.e., the adverb in the 'classical' middle construction), the latter also allowing for contextual and presupposed information to be integrated. Paraphrasing Ackema & Schoorlemmer's (2005) review of this work, Condoravdi's interpretation of (15) would be something along the lines of "in general, in events in which this bread is cut, the event is 'smooth'". This account explains the necessity for adverbials or some other kind of modification to the event in English middles, because the nuclear scope must be given content. Condoravdi does not support the line of research that tries to delimit a class of verbs that can be in a middle formation, due to its highly contextual nature. However, it must be noted that the analysis here does not take into account adverbless middles or middles without some other type of modification, like negation or contrastive focus, which are the elements that fill the nuclear scope of the generic middle sentence. At the same time, by providing an account of the middle interpretation only in terms of a generic statement about events, then the ability reading of the middle interpretation is lost. Indeed, it seems that by providing this account she includes as middles those sentences which she clearly

exempts from the middle interpretation, such as sentences from Fellbaum & Zribi-Hertz (1987, in Condoravdi, 1989), who claim a middle interpretation for sentences which only can be said to have a generic reading, like:

- (16) *Aristophane se traduit rarement*
 Aristophanes REFL translates rarely
- dans les lycées*
 in the high.schools

Aristophanes is rarely translated in high schools.

While I support the insight that the sentence above is not a middle construction, my suggestion is that it fails to produce a middle construction because it does not produce an ability reading. The French sentence in (16) is only a generic statement about the state of affairs regarding Aristophane's books in the educational system of France. In my data-filtering process, where I have attempted to distinguish between 'simply' generic sentences with non-active verb forms and those which successfully incorporate a middle interpretation, I have applied precisely this distinction.

Another extensive treatment of the middle construction is that of Fagan (1992), who focuses on English, German and French. She treats middle formation as a generalizing operation on *object-like arguments*, which is realized through the assignment of an arbitrary or indefinite implicit agent to the predication. Paraphrasing Ackema & Schoorlemmer (2005), Fagan's interpretation of the middle in (15) would be: "given this bread, anyone who will cut it will experience it as a smooth event". For the realization of the middle interpretation, stress is placed on the accessibility of the implied generic agent. Fagan

distinguishes between factors that enter into play in English and German middles vs. French middles, and summarizes her research on the constraints on middle formation. The implied agent in English and German is generally recovered owing to the fact that it is assigned an *arbitrary* feature in the logical form of the sentence. In French on the other hand, the implied agent can have both the features *arbitrary* and *indefinite*. The addition of the indefinite agent allows for the attested flexibility of the middle in French, where it is suggested that the interpretation of the construction is not necessarily “be able to be X-ed” but also just “be X-ed” but by an indefinite agent. This interpretation would consider a sentence like (16) under the definition of a middle generic construction. In fact, generic sentences that produce modalities like the prescriptive one and also eventive middles are subsumed under this hypothesis. With regards to restrictions on the formation of the middle, it is claimed that in German and English verbs need to be accomplishments or activities, in the lexical semantic framework provided by Vendler (1967), while in French, verbs that allow for middle formation must be agentive. Even though these two classes of verbs are not necessarily comparable given that they are used in different theoretical frameworks, we can for now agree that in English and German aspectual differences are more prominent in determining the grammatical properties of the verbs (i.e., in which construction they can appear) than in French, where *agentivity* plays a more prominent role. The reason why this is so it is unclear in Fagan’s treatment, just as it remains unclear to me why there should be two different interpretations of middles in English on the one hand, and in German and French on the other.

2.2.1. Discussion

The definition of the middle construction in the generative tradition encompasses different conditions on well-formedness proposed by different scholars. By well-formedness, we mean not only the grammatical constraints on the construction, such as the presence of a grammatical subject and contingent agreement of the predicate with the subject, but also conditions *on the interpretation* of the middle construction. The generally accepted properties of the middle generic construction are summarized by Ackema & Schoorlemmer (2005):

- (17) A: The subject of the sentence corresponds to the internal argument (the understood or notional object).
 B: The agent is demoted and receives an arbitrary interpretation.
 C: The interpretation of the sentence is non-episodic. Middles do not make reference to an actual event having taken place; rather, they report a property of the grammatical subject. The otherwise eventive verb becomes a derived stative and, more precisely, receives a generic modal interpretation.

The first and second well-formedness conditions are self-explanatory while the third condition deserves a deeper analysis, namely, the aspect of *reporting a property* of the grammatical subject. How can this property reporting be characterized and how does it come about? In order to investigate this question, the following chapters of this thesis will focus on adverbless middle constructions in Albanian, a type of middle constructions which has seldom been

covered in previous treatments and, of course, not with regards to Albanian. Ackema & Schoorlemmer (2005) indicate that these adverbless constructions are *non-core middles* as they put it, due to their lack of an adverbial, which construes a different interpretation. The difference in interpretation between a canonical middle and an adverbless middle is summarized in the table below (A&S 2005:154):

(18)

<p>Type I middle (X V Adv): 'X has a property such that it is possible for anyone somehow to V X.' (e.g., this paper washes easily 'this paper has a property such that it is possible for anyone to wash it with ease')</p>	<p>Type II middle without adverbial modification (X se-V): 'X has a property such that it is possible for X to be V'ed.' (e.g., <i>ce papier se lave</i> (65a) 'this paper has a property such that it is possible for it to be washed')</p>
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Clearly, the difference between the two types of middles is supposed to be subtle. However, it seems that the difference proposed here distracts us from the main notion which these two middle types share, and which in fact is the key component of a middle interpretation: i.e., *the property of the grammatical subject/topic is spelled out by the potential actions of a generic agent*. In other words, in both types of middles something *about* the grammatical subject/topic is uttered, and this aboutness consists in how a generic agent can act with regards to the subject/topic, *in virtue of* the properties of said grammatical subject. Consider the following examples:

- (19) a. This dress buttons
 b. This dress buttons nicely/easily

Intuitively, in 19(a) one interprets the dress as having a property: the property that someone (an implicit agent) buttons it when wearing it. In 19(b) we further expand the interpretation in (a) and understand that the dress, which can be buttoned, has the property of being pleasant to the eye because of the buttons / is easy to button. An attempt to paraphrase the interpretations in (19a) and (19b) is given in (20):

- (20) (a) This dress has buttons and that is how it is worn (while that other one zips up);
 (b) This dress has buttons (and that is how it is worn) but the buttoning has some other quality to it, e.g., it looks nice/it is an easy process.

Thus it seems clear that (19a) is sufficiently able to convey a property of the grammatical subject, and therefore is a suitable candidate for being considered a middle generic construction. Further support for my interpretation of (19a) comes from the examples that were brought by Jespersen and Hatcher in chapter II. One can see that some of them do not have an adverbial modification, or even no modification at all, e.g., *the dirt rubs off*.

In the rest of this thesis I will give examples of non-modified middle generic constructions without adverbial modification. However, it must be noted that in the data I have not excluded for the present purposes other types of modification which are often sufficient for the well-formedness of a middle construction.

The reason for this modus operandi is purely pragmatic: I would like to provide broad resources in Albanian in this thesis, and especially provide a broader

picture of the construction as it is found in text in order to be able to undertake adequate comparative analysis. In case the modification turns out to play a crucial role in the realization of the middle interpretation (i.e., if say negation is the crucial element that makes the middle interpretation possible), this will be highlighted in the analysis.

Chapter 3

The generic agent and property reporting in Albanian middles

3.1. The middle interpretation

In the previous chapters we have outlined a number of perspectives which focus on the semantic and syntactic properties of components of the middle generic construction. From this point onwards, we will shift our paradigm of investigation and will provide an interpretation of the middle generic construction from a functional perspective. The middle generic construction is reminiscent of impersonal constructions in that it constraints the interpretation of a generic agent. The difference between the two is that the middle generic construction also contains *an element of modality*. Indeed the middle generic construction in traditional Albanian grammars is described as an impersonal construction with a modality reading (Camaj 1984). An impersonal construction expresses a state of affairs where a generic agent is implied, as in 21(a), while a middle construction expresses the potentiality of a generic agent to perform the action, as in 21(b):

- (21) *Këtu* *kërce-het*
 here dance-NACT.3SG
 a. Here is where dancing usually happens/where people
 dance (*generic*)
 b. Here one can dance/is allowed to dance
 (*middle generic*)

In a context where the pragmatic features of the discourse/situation provide for a modality reading, a reading such as 21(b) is obtained. For example, if one goes on a terrace that seems a bit shaky, one may ask in Albanian:

- (22) A kërce-het këtu?
Q dance-NACT.3SG here
Can one dance here? (i.e., does the terrace hold?/will the neighbors mind?)

The same difference exists between an impersonal passive and a generic middle construction with a transitive verb. Let's consider our first example of a bare generic middle, repeated here for convenience, where we add its various potential interpretations:

- (23) Molla ha-het
apple.SG eat-NACT.3SG
a. the apple is eaten
b.. the apple is edible
c. the apple should be eaten (it should not be thrown away/boiled for making jam)

In this instance, we can have three interpretations: in 23(a) we understand a concrete event to have taken place by an unspecified agent; in 23(b) and 23(c) we understand that an event can be/ should be performed by an unspecified agent which is also generic. Kemmer (1993:147-8), in her cognitive-typological study of middle verbs suggests that the middle-generic construction is not part of the actual category of middle verbs, which were defined in footnote 1. She points out that, contrary to what its terminology suggests, in her perspective, the middle generic construction is closer in interpretation to a passive construction.

Kemmer indicates that in middle generic constructions “the patient has initiator status...[because] the event is conceived as proceeding from the patient (i.e., grammatical subject : B.L) by virtue of the inherent characteristics of that entity. In other words, the constituent about which something is predicated in the middle construction is the topic and the *aboutness* expressed is construed along its semantic and pragmatic properties. In my perspective, the *aboutness* that is reported in middle generic constructions as the one above can be further refined. An apple is edible of course due to its inherent qualities; however, while the apple is edible in virtue of its qualities (e.g., freshness), the middle generic construction does not refer directly to these qualities, but rather, it refers to, if you like, a derived property of the apple, i.e., being edible *because of* its qualities. Thus, the contextual properties of the apple (e.g. freshness, lack of poison, fell on the ground but the 5-second rule was applied) are implied, while the derived property is the fact that it is possible to eat the apple, or that there would be no negative consequences if a human being were to eat the apple. On the other hand, in a different context, the above construction would have alternative modal meanings, such as permission or prescription. Having this picture in mind simplifies and expands the conception of how the property ascription comes about in middle generic constructions and allows us to further delineate what we are looking for in the data. Based on the above analysis, I would like to offer the following definition for the interpretation of the middle:

(24)

The defining characteristic of the middle generic interpretation is in fact *the realization of the modality of possibility in non-active generic constructions with regards to the generic agent.*

I suggest that the middle interpretation is available only when this modality reading is available in the discourse. This, I propose, is contingent upon: i) whether a generic agent is interpreted, ii) whether the linguistic context provides for the modality of possibility to be realized, as opposed to other modal readings or lack of modality.

3.2. Interpreting the generic agent in Albanian

The non-active suffix *-(h)e*, which depends on the linguistic context, can be found in eight strictly defined constructions: (a) passives, (b) reflexives/reciprocals, (c) middle verb constructions, (d) generic sentences, (e) generic middle sentences, (f) prescriptive generic sentences, (g) anticausative sentences and, (h) impersonal passive sentences. Here I will illustrate some of these constructions with examples from the corpus, which will generate the grounds for the initial discussion of the role of the non-active suffix:

(25)

a. Passive

(F. Lubonja, Përpjekja E-zine)

ky	“oktapod”	...	ushqe-het	...	nga	ekonomia	ilegale
this	octopus		feed-	NACT.3SG	by	economy. DEF	illegal

this “octopus” is ...fed... by the illegal economy

b. Reciprocal

(K. Mehmeti, Kali i Bardhë)

Popujve	të	Ballkanit	u	ka	ndodhur
People.DAT	AGR	Balkan.GEN	DAT.CL	have.3SG	happen.PTCP
të	vëllazëro-hen	e	të	miqëso-hen...	
to	fraternize-NACT.3PL	and	to	befriend-NACT.3PL	

It has occurred with the Balkan people that they were able to be friends and brothers...

c. Middle verb construction

(K. Mehmeti, "Vitet e Urithit")

e, and	kur when	lësho-he-t drop-NACT.3SG	terri, darkness,	pahetueshëm unsuspected
shëtisin stroll.3PL	nëpër along	rrugët street.DEF.PL	e	fshatit of village
edhe and	ngjit-en lift-NACT.3PL	nëpër tavanet onto roofs	e of	kullave kulla.PL ¹³
nga from	i ACC.CL	sodisin gaze.3PL		shtëpiarët-e-fjetur. the-sleeping-family.members

...and when darkness falls, they stroll unsuspected along the streets of the village and climb onto the roofs of the *kulla-s*⁷ from where they gaze at the sleeping dwellers...

d. Middle generic construction

(Online Albanian Portal¹⁴)

Karakteristikat characteristic.PL	kryesore main.F	të of	peshkut fish	të AGR	freskët fresh
janë: be.PRS.3SG	luspata scale.PL	hiq-en remove-NACT.3PL	relativisht relatively	me with	vështirësi difficulty

The characteristics of fresh fish are: scales are relatively hard to remove...

Kemmer (1993) indicates that the more grammaticalized a morpheme is, the more functions it can take within a language. The non-active imperfective suffix in Albanian seems to be an example of this claim, given how each of these examples conveys a different meaning. However, one can make some

¹³ Kulla refers to a traditional stone construction typical of northern and northeastern Albania.

connections in terms of how these constructions are conceptualized. To elaborate on this point, I draw on the notion of agent-patient distinguishability, proposed by Kemmer (1993, 2003). In her study of the typology of middle verbs (as in 23(c)), Kemmer proposes that humans systematically distinguish between *situation types* by “means of a difference in grammatical coding” (2003., p. 90). Situation types are (Kemmer, 1993:7 in Sansò, 2006:238):

(26) “sets of situational or semantic/pragmatic contexts that are systematically associated with a particular form of expression. By semantic/pragmatic contexts I do not mean ‘real world contexts’ existing independently of the language user; situational contexts include ‘real world’ information, but that information is necessarily filtered through the conceptual apparatus of the speaker”.

It is argued that the grammatical coding of meanings is instantiated in a host of interlinked linguistic phenomena. For example, in order to describe a transitive event, speakers mark the ‘agent’ and the ‘patient’ roles differently because they conceptualize this event based on the number of participants as well as the relationship between them. According to Kemmer, in attempting to predict the way that the number of participants and their relationships are encoded in the grammar of a language, we can group different situation types. Transitivity categories, as she points out, can be defined by the degree of agent-patient distinguishability, where one and two-participant events are at the edge of a continuum and middle and reflexive are in between the former categories. Middle verbs accordingly are defined as types of events where agent and patient are neither pragmatically, nor conceptually distinguishable. However, agent-

patient distinguishability is not the only parameter along which we conceptualize events. A more inclusive parameter, namely the *degree of elaboration of events* is proposed, which involves not only the number of participants, but all other factors which determine the event structure of a certain type of event.

Another continuum which can be proposed is that of *agent specificity*: events can be categorized as being performed by a concrete agent, or by a generic agent. In the Albanian imperfective non-active paradigm, the agent specificity continuum can be applied to obtain the correct interpretation in a sentence with a non-active imperfective verb. Along the continuum of agent/patient distinguishability, the passive and the middle generic constructions with transitive verbs are more similar than, for example, the middle verb formation and the middle generic constructions in 25(c) and (d) respectively. In both the passive and middle generic constructions, the agent and the patient are very clearly separated (following Kemmer 1993). The non-active marker refers to an agent, while in middle verbs as in 25(c), the action cannot be generic unless there are other elements that would construe a generic interpretation, and the agent and the patient are not clearly distinguished. Impersonal passives and middle generic constructions are also similar in that they denote a state of affairs where an intransitive action *is* performed by *everyone* or *can be* performed by *anyone*. On the other hand, along the *agent specificity continuum*, passive constructions as well as reflexive and middle verb constructions differ from generic middle/impersonal constructions, in that in the former the agent is specified, i.e., known, while in the latter it is not. Thus, the correct interpretation of a sentence with a non-active verb relies on the speaker's understanding of who/what the non-active suffix refers to.

In determining whether the generic agent is accessible we need to understand how the non-active suffix realizes agent defocusing and whether it is feasible to suggest some type of generalization regarding their interpretation in discourse. Sansò (2006) investigates four agent defocusing phenomena, including periphrastic passives, middle verbs, middle generic constructions as well as impersonal passive constructions. Based on the features and the status of agent, patient and the event itself (Kemmer's (1993) *situation types*), Sansò suggests that the different agent defocusing strategies employed in the constructions under investigation rely on the distinguishability and prominence of the agent. He investigates three situation types: patient-oriented processes, bare happenings and agentless generic events. Patient-oriented processes are "two-participant event[s] from the point of view of the patient...[where] the agent is typically identifiable from the context, or even syntactically encoded as an oblique, but less discourse-central and individuated than the patient" (p. 238). This type of event is grammatically constructed as a passive form. A bare happening is defined as a conceptualization where "none of the participants is focused: as a result, the event too is characterized by low salience" (p. 241). A bare happening can be an impersonal passive construction such as 19(a) while agentless generic situations types encapsulate our middle generic construction. The following table summarizes the prototypical features of the participants in an event as well as the event itself (Sansò, 2006: 245):

	Patient-oriented process	Bare happening	Agentless generic event
Individuation of the patient	+	-	-
Individuation of the agent	±	-	-
Reason for defocusing agent	Agent is less topical than the patient/unimportant	Agent is irrelevant/unimportant	Agent is generic
Mode	Realis	Realis	Irrealis (deontic, potential)
Aspect	Perfective	Perfective	Imperfective
Contextual salience of the event	±	-	-

The agent defocusing strategies for these three situation types can be re-defined for our purposes from the perspective of *agent specificity* focusing only on the non-active imperfective verb marking under survey. Thus, we distinguish between patient-oriented situations on the one hand, and bare happenings and generics on the other. The following definitions are given for the status of the agent in the three situation types, translated into grammatical constructions:

- (27)
- i. Passive Construction: agent is backgrounded but present and expressed either explicitly (for example as a prepositional phrase) or inferred from the context (not present in the sentence but from the context we know who the agent is)
 - ii. Reflexive Construction: agent is present and topical and carries out an action on him/herself
 - iii. Middle verb formation: agent is present and topical and carries out an action by him/herself

iv. Generic Middle Construction: agent is in the background and is generic

Following a discussion of the properties of agent defocusing strategies as evidenced in corpus data, Sansò concludes that, while a tentative hierarchy of agent defocusing can be proposed for the recoverability of the agent in discourse, one-to-one correspondences between form and function in agent defocusing strategies is to be abandoned, especially when one investigates such phenomenon cross-linguistically. Taking into account the observed data from the present study however, it seems that proposing such hierarchy could be viable if we restrict the field of inquiry. Sansò's treatment focuses on diverse forms (periphrastic passives, the generic 'they' or 'one' expressions etc.) therefore making it more difficult to generalize on form-function correspondences, because the syntactic manifestations of agent-defocusing strategies put into play a larger number of factors. In this study however, I only concentrate on one form, namely the imperfective suffix, thereby focusing only on the different interpretations of the status of the agent and on how the correct interpretation can be recovered in context.

In addition, Sansò suggests that the distinguishability of the patient/topic is as important in understanding the situation type as that of the agent. The reason for this assumption is the fact that he includes in his analysis the classical middle verbs (the middle Greek diathesis), where the agent and patient are not distinguishable. However, from the perspective of *agent specificity*, the strategy of agent defocusing in middle verbs does not align well with passives or generic middles, and therefore should not be included in such tentative hierarchy. Although it can be argued that there is agent defocusing in functional terms in the middle diathesis, the 'strength' of the agent is hardly compromised. If we

recall example (25c), it is clear that, while the verb 'climb' is a middle verb, the agentivity of the individuals climbing is not compromised. The genericity of the patient/topic/clause on the other hand does play a role in the interpretation of the sentence. It can be argued that when a non-active clause predicates about a generic subject, the interpretation of the entire clause will be generic and not temporally bound (Carlson & Pelletier, 1995). However, it does not affect the status of the agent as being separate from the topic in generic sentences. This point can be exemplified in the following example:

- (28) a. Apples are usually harvested in autumn
 b. Apples are usually harvested by farm workers

Therefore, I maintain that the status of the patient is not relevant in order to understand agent defocusing in our case. In fact, there need not be a patient at all in the functional sense, given that, in our data we have encountered numerous examples of generic middle constructions which predicated about a location, or about an entire clause. In the spirit of Sansò, I suggest that in order to determine correctly to which entity the Albanian non-active suffix refers to, we can rely on a prominence hierarchy of *agent specificity*. In line with the definitions of the status of the agent in non-active sentences in (27), I propose the following accessibility hierarchy:

- (29)
- agent in passives > agent in reflexives/reciprocals/middle verbs >>
agent in generics / middle generics / impersonals

With this accessibility hierarchy I intend to align the strength of agentivity in terms of the prominence and specificity of the agent. In passives that contain a

formally transitive verb, the agent is implicit and the force of the agent is not diminished by the topicality of the ‘patient’. In reflexive/reciprocal and middle verbs the agent is still prominent, specific and also topical, but its force is diminished due to the simultaneous status of the agent as patient or experiencer. In generic and impersonals, the force of the agent is highly diminished given that it is ultimately not specific. We can align along a similar *specificity* hierarchy the events themselves. In passives and reflexives/reciprocals and middle verbs, the events are specific unless there is a distinct element of genericity/habituality, e.g., an adverbial like *always*. In middle generics and impersonals on the other hand, the event is not specific unless there is a temporally-binding element. The following paragraph from our corpus exemplifies this point (from the Albanian translation of “Alice in Wonderland”):

(30)

Xhelati_i mendonte se nuk [**mund të prit-ej**]_g një kokë nëse kjo nuk ishte e kapur pas një trupi...**Mbreti**_j ngulte këmbë se çdo kokë [**mund të prit-et**]_g...**Mbretëresha**_m theksonte se po [**të mos zbato-hej**]_n urdhëri menjëherë, do t'i vriste [**të gjithë**]_n.

The **executioner**_i's argument was that you [**couldn't cut off**]_g a head unless there was a body to cut it off from... **The King**_j's argument was that anything that had a head [**could be beheaded**]_g...**The Queen**_m's argument was, that if something [**wasn't done**]_n about it in less than no time **she**_m'd have **everybody**_n executed, all round. (*from the original English version*)

As we can see, a non-active form of the verb produces a middle interpretation in the first two sentences where there is no prominent agent within or outside the

clause. It is worth noting here that although the Albanian translation of this paragraph includes the overt modal *mund*, a middle interpretation would hold even in its absence in both cases (Newmark, Hubbard & Prifti, 1982, p. 30). In the third sentence, the agent in the conditional clause is recovered at the end of the sentence (everybody/people present there/concrete entities) therefore the interpretation of the verb is not a middle but a passive. The original paragraph in English demonstrates how this interpretation is accurate for the Albanian translation.

In conclusion, middle generic constructions, generic constructions with transitive verbs as well as impersonal passive constructions differ from passive and middle verb/reflexive construction from the point of view of agent specificity. The prominence of the agent in discourse, i.e., the specificity of the agent, determines the correct interpretation of what the non-active marker *-(h)e* refers to. When there is no prominent and specific agent in discourse, the non-active marker is interpreted as referring to a generic/unspecified agent. With regards to the second criterion of the middle generic interpretation, namely, interpreting *a modality of possibility* for the generic agent, we turn to our data.

Chapter 4

Generic Middle Constructions in Albanian

4.1. The corpus

The data collected for the purpose of investigating the middle construction in Albanian contains the following books:

Translated into Albanian

- "The Alchemist", by Paulo Coehlo
- "Alice in Wonderland" by Lewis Carol.

Written in Albanian

- "Thus walks man" by Kim Mehmeti
- "The years of the mole" by Kim Mehmeti
- "The white horse" by Kim Mehmeti
- "Criticism: between art and science" by Natasha Lushaj
- "His signature was his oath" by Natasha Lushaj
- "Her veil of freedom" by Natasha Lushaj
- "An everlasting fire" by Natasha Lushaj

Moreover, the corpus includes excerpts from various Albanian literary works and political essays, including the authors: Ismail Kadare, Nazmi Rrahmani, Kasem Trebeshina, Sabri Godo, and Martin Camaj, Natasha Lushaj, Ernest Koliqi, Ernesto Sabato, Jasunari Kavabata, Fatos Lubonja¹⁵ and Petro Marko.

¹⁵The entire work of Fatos Lubonja's political essays in his blog Përpyjekja was originally included in the corpus and pre-processed, but it is only partly included in the analysis due to time constraints.

4.2. Methodology

The texts were scanned using R software, individuating all those instances of words which ended with one of the following non-active suffixes:

	Present	Imperfective
1SG	-(h)em	-(h)esha
2SG	-(h)esh	-(h)eshe
3SG	-(h)et	-(h)ej
1PL	-(h)emi	-(h)eshim
2PL	-(h)eni	-(h)eshit
3PL	-(h)en	-(h)eshin

Table 2: Non-active suffixes in Albanian

Following this stage, the corpus was pre-processed in order to locate those occurrences which were in fact instances of verbs in the non-active form, instead of other elements in a sentence with the same ending. Upon having identified sentences containing non-active verbs, the corpus was further filtered in order to distinguish generic sentences from other types of non-active sentences, like those explained in Chapter 3, i.e., middle verbs, passives, reflexives and others. The next step in the filtering process was the discrimination of different types of generic sentences such as impersonal generics and middle generic sentences. The filtering process was based on the judgements of the author of this thesis. It should be pointed out that often the judgements with regards to these generic sentences are quite subtle, especially when determining the type of modality in generic modal sentences. Thus, the methodological downside of this work is very obvious: only one native speaker (the author of the thesis) has proposed judgements on the corpus sentences. However, much time was spent on understanding the text itself so that the judgements on the interpretations can be justified if we take into account the linguistic context of the phrase.

Several difficulties were encountered in the process of determining whether a middle interpretation arises in sentences with non-active verbs in the filtered data. As it was explained above, the sentences selected for this analysis, are either clearly eventive or clearly generic. While it was simple to distinguish between eventive and generic sentences, it was more problematic to distinguish between non-active sentences about a certain state of affairs, e.g., habitual/generic sentences and non-active sentences with a middle interpretation, as well as non-active sentences with a different modal interpretation (e.g., prescriptive). The only viable way in which to distinguish between these different interpretations was to rely on the possibilities afforded by context, and it is acknowledged that in various cases the judgements are open for debate. The following example from our corpus illustrates a case where interpretation is not straightforward:

(31) *[i jati]...vetëm pas tri vitesh vajti ta takonte në burgun e Burrelit, bashkë me Nuren. Ata të dy kanë ndenjtur babë e bir për më shumë se dy orë e kanë biseduar vetëm. Ç'mund të kenë thënë? **Fetiu për atë kohë sikur ka në kujtesë një fushë të bardhë ku nuk shkruhet asnjë fjalë. Pas pak muajsh lirohej.***

[his father] only after three years went to visit him in the prison of Burrel, together with Nure. Father and son talked alone for more than two hours. What might they have said? **About that time, it is as if in Feti's memory, there is a white field where nothing is written/can be written.** He would be released in a few months.

In the first sentence, the clause *ku nuk shkruhet asnjë fjalë* can potentially have the following interpretations:

(32)

- i. where nobody has written anything (passive construction)
- ii. where it is impossible to write anything (middle generic construction)
- iii. where it is not allowed to write anything (prescriptive generic)
- iv. where nothing is written (characterizing generic)

Out of these four possibilities, ii) and iv) are possible interpretations. The other two are not interpretable due to, a. lack of an expressed discourse agent to which the non-active suffix can refer to, b. contextual information regarding the individual in question (i.e., we know the person talked about in this section is a former political prisoner who is now mentally disabled due to harsh prison conditions and treatment), which excludes the prescriptive interpretations. However, the ability and simple generic interpretations are equally viable: the modality interpretation can be argued to derive as expressing the inability of this individual to write (i.e., narrate) his sufferings due to shock and trauma, or the inability of any other person to be able to remind Feti about that time. The simple generic interpretation can be derived if we understand the locative clause to further elaborate on the 'resultative' reading, i.e., the present emptiness in the memory of Feti about those traumatic experiences. However, oftentimes the interpretation can be quite obvious, as in the following paragraph from our data:

(33)

*Para disa kohësh Ben Blushi, duke përshkruar gjendjen në partinë e tij, përdori një metaforë sipas së cilës PS është **si një autobus ku shkruhet** “mos i fol shoferit”.*

A while back, Ben Blushi, in describing the situation of his party, used a metaphor according to which the SP is like **a bus where it is written "do not speak to the driver"**.

In conclusion, the methodology applied is not strict, given that at such fine level of analysis and interpretation it is difficult to dissociate sentences from their context. Contextual/discourse knowledge as well as linguistic meta-understanding both play a role in arriving at the right possible interpretation of the non-active form. The variety and diversity of these factors have made the analysis of the sentences a rather challenging task. An attempt was made to select only those phrases where the ability reading is highly unequivocal and in various cases other native speakers were solicited to interpret the selected sentences. However, given the subtlety of analysis and the differences in understanding the context of the texts, it is not excluded that other native speakers might have different interpretations from mine.

4.3 Results

7,662 occurrences of non-active imperfective verbs were found in the corpus, out of which **586** sentences were selected. These either (i) produced an unambiguous modality-of-ability interpretation, or (ii) produced a generic interpretation, or (iii) were considered interesting examples for comparison purposes. In other words, the sentences were chosen based on how/whether they exemplified a typical example of, or typical contrast with, the property ascription of middles as defined above. Out of the 586 sentences in the corpus, 120 receive an ability interpretation, and 55 do not include adverbial modification. Below a table is given of verbs that occurred in bare middle generic

constructions:

Verbs in bare middles	
Feel	15
Understand	13
Hear	7
See	7
Explain	3
Distinguish ¹⁶ (dallosj)	2
Appear	2
Build	2
Distinguish (shquaj)	1
Achieve	1
Notice	1
Crush ¹⁷	1
Total sentences	N=55

These sentences convey a modality of ability interpretation that is unequivocal. However, out of the filtered 586 sentences, there were also cases of generic sentences with the same verbs as the ones above, where the modality of ability is not available. Consider the following contrast:

(34)

- a. Kudo që bënte biseda
 Everywhere that do.IPFV.3SG talk.PL
- dëgjohej me vëmendje dhe respekt
 hear-NACT.PST.3SG with attention and respect

In any place he held talks he was heard with attention and respect.

16 The verbs *dallosj* and *shquaj* are synonymous; *dallosj* refers to being able to tell something apart from the surroundings, or to distinguish between entities; *shquaj* refers to being able to see something with one's own eyes which is far away or hidden from direct view.

17 The verb *thërmoj*, 'cause something to break into small pieces'; it does not necessarily involve the

b. Në fshatin tim... zërat
 in village 3SG.POSS voice.PL

dëgjohen qartë
 hear-NACT.PRS.3PL clear.ADV

nga një lagje në tjetrën
 from one neighborhood to next

In my village...voices can be heard clearly from one neighborhood
 to the next

In the first example, the interpretation is a passive one with an unspecified agent: it was the case that the participants in the talks listened to the individual in question with attention and respect. The backgrounded agent in this sentence is recovered by the contextual queues that suggest an audience: a talk, as well as the manner in which he was heard. The same interpretation would hold if the verb would be in the present tense. In the second example, the agent is not recoverable from the context and therefore can only be interpreted generally. The middle interpretation would have been equally viable without the adverbial *qartë*.

Cognition and perception verbs ‘feel’, ‘understand’, ‘hear’, ‘see’, ‘explain’, ‘distinguish’, and ‘appear’ (Onishi 2001; Comrie & van den Berg, 2006; Malchukov, 2008)¹⁸ are the most frequent verbs that produce the ability

physical strength that can be inherent in ‘crush’

¹⁸ The verb ‘dukem’ which is translated ‘appear’ in this thesis is a special verb in two senses: it is a deponent verb, i.e., it does not appear in the active form; and its lexical meaning suggests ‘ability’. A more accurate translation would be “able to be visible”

interpretation in the non-active constructions where they appear. These verbs have an ability interpretation even in constructions where they are complemented by an entire clause. We illustrate this in the following example with the verb *ndiej* ‘feel’:

(35)

Ndi-het	se	pozicioni	nuk	është	më	
feel-NACT.3SG	that	position.DEF	not	be.3SG	more	
ai	i	poh-uesit	të	çiltër	të	forcës
3SG.M	of	assert-NMLZ	AGR	candid	of	strength
së	njeriut...					
of	man...					

It can be felt that the position [of the author] is no longer one of candid affirmation of the strength of mankind...

A marginal case of ability reading would be the verb *kuptoj* ‘understand’, which is ambiguous since it can be interpreted as producing a modality-neutral impersonal verb or an ability reading. A case in point is the example below:

(36)	Kupto-het	që	në	art	veprojnë
	understand-NACT.3SG	that	in	art	act.3PL
	disa ligje	të	tjera...		
	some law.PL	AGR	other.PL		

It is understandable/It is understood that in art, other laws
operate...

In (36), the ability interpretation of the non-active verb is at the margins between the ability reading and the impersonal reading (in a free translation, the non-active verb could very well translate in 'it is clear that...').

Of course, not all the verbs in the above list are verbs of cognition. There is also the verb *ndërtoj*, 'build' and *thërmoj* 'smash'. Again, context here plays the crucial role in achieving the correct interpretation: the ability reading is available due to the contrastive nature of the coordinate clauses, where 'destroy' and 'build' are in opposition. Indeed, in uttering this sentence, the second clause will be pronounced in contrastive intonation:

(37)

Edhe Nuro e Sadik Bylyshit u - a
and Nuro and Sadik Bylyshi.DAT DAT.CL-ACC.CL

prishi shtëpitë (tërmeti)...
destroy.PST.3SG house.PL (earthquake)

POR ndërto-hen PRAPE ato
BUT build-NACT.3SG AGAIN 3SG.F.NOM

“Also Nuro and Sadik Bylyshi’s houses were destroyed [by the earthquake], *but they can be built again.*”

With regards to the verb ‘crumble’, it is found in the following context:

(38)

...mermeri i palëvishëm është historia me të dyja kuptimet: edhe fakti, ngjarja që **nuk zhbëhet më**, edhe historia e shkruar, që edhe ajo është shumë vështirë **të ribëhet**...ky raport vjen...duke u përmbysur ...madje në fund, më lehtë mund të besosh se **thërmohet** mermeri...

...the immovable marble represents history in both senses: the fact, the event that **can't be undone**, and also the written history, which is also very difficult **to remake**...this rapport is progressively...reversed...in fact, at the end, it will be easier to believe that the marble **can crumble**¹⁹

Here again the ability reading can be interpreted as occurring throughout the paragraph as exemplified in the preceding non-active verbs, and can therefore be easily interpreted in the case of the verb 'crumble'.

At the same time, not all verbs with an inherent experiencer agent can obtain an ability reading. For example, there is no instance in the corpus of the verb 'know' giving rise to the ability reading, although of course a 'generic' agent reading, or an 'impersonal reading' is possible, as can be seen in the (randomly selected) sentence below:

¹⁹ This paragraph is taken from N. Lushaj's commentary on a poem by I. Kadare. In order to better explain the context, it must be noted that throughout this section, Lushaj describes the difficulty with which truth about Laocoön, the subject of the poem, is unfolded verse after verse. Therefore, at the end of the paragraph the author concludes that it seems easier to conceive that a marble statue of Laocoön could crumble and he could appear to us to recount his story in person, than to conceive that truth can emerge unscathed by the manipulations of history. Unfortunately this poem does not seem to be translated into any foreign language, but can be found in Kadare (1976) Selected Works. Shtypshkronja e Re, Tiranë.

(39)	Di-het	se	me anë	
	know-NACT.3SG	that	through	
	të	saj	[poezisë]	
	AGR	3SG.F	[poetry]	
	njeriu pushtoi	botën për	herë të	parë...
	man conquer.PST.3SG	world for	time	AGR first

“It is known that through it [poetry] man conquered the world for the first time....”

In the corpus, some verbs were individuated which, it seems, can't be in a middle construction, not only in a non-modified middle, but even in a modified one. These verbs are given in the following table:

Verbs which can't be in middles²⁰	Definition
Ndodhet	to be located somewhere
lartohet	to stand erect ²¹
Përpiqet	to try
Përbëhet	to be composed of
zhvillohet	to occur
Gdihet	to become dawn
ngryset	to become dusk
Nxithet	to hurry
Shpeshtohet	to happen more often
Dihet	to come to be known
Quhet	to be named

²⁰ All the verbs are presented in their 3rd person non active form in the present tense.

²¹ Usually about an object in nature such as a tree

All the verbs which can't be in a middle construction are stative verbs, however, they have another aspect in common, in that the majority of them have an unaccusative/impersonal meaning, i.e., there is no need for an inherent agent to perform the action.

4.4. Analysis and discussion

Fellbaum (1985) notes that in English, verbs of perception, doubt, emotion, etc. can't form a middle construction. Such claim is also supported by Fagan (1992) about English and German. Condoravdi (1989) on the other hand points out that if examined from a cross-linguistic perspective, the middle is a notion, a specific meaning, and it is not viable to attempt to define a class of verbs that are available in this construction, especially due to the pragmatic constraints that are very much affecting the successful realization of the construction. I support Condoravdi's argument, especially in light of the data presented above: the more I investigated the possible interpretations of different verbs that were encountered through the filtering process, the more I realized that given a specific context, a majority of these verbs would be able to form a middle construction in Albanian, especially if they were modified middles, containing an adverb or negation. It was for this precise reason that I decided to narrow down the types of middles under investigation and only focus on the non-modified ones. This latter investigation seems to have produced some interesting results, which were truly unexpected when I began to work on this topic.

Firstly, I believe that a much clearer and simpler definition of the middle interpretation was proposed: where the realization of the modality of ability with regards to the implied generic agent is the demarcation line between generic constructions or constructions of different kinds of modality and the middle generic construction. This definition seems to be borne out from the data since the predicates which don't allow or don't necessarily need a [+human] agent in their argument structure are not available for a middle construction in Albanian.

Secondly from our data it was clear that the presence of the generic agent in the predicate's argument structure is not the only condition for the realization of the

modality of ability interpretation. As was shown, the verb 'know' is not available for this construction, even though it requires the presence of a [+human] argument. What the verbs that were shown to be able to realize this construction in our data have in common is also a type of unboundedness of the event described by the psychological verbs. Apart from an experiencer agent, verbs like 'feel', 'understand', 'hear', 'see', 'distinguish' etc, all involve some kind of process in their meanings, which an experiencer agent goes through. The verb 'know' on the other hand, has a punctual meaning, as the boundary between knowing and not knowing can be termed conceptually very clear. Similarly, the verb 'be named' is grammaticalized as a type of copular verb and in that sense is a stative one, i.e., it does not include in its meaning the process by which someone is named.

A functional-cognitive approach to the middle realization (Davidse & Heyvaert, 2007) proposes that the meaning of the middle is derived from a process of subjectivization of an "agentive-patientive process-participant relation into an activo-passive letting modality" (p. 40). In other words, contexts that allow for the realization of a middle construction contain elements such as a proto-patientive element (which can also be a locative in their view) as well as a generic agent (which does not have to be a human agent). This context allows speakers to conceptualize an event involving such entities into an active-passive formation, where the proto-patientive element realizes the 'letting' modality (Talmy 2000), i.e., it is conducive to the realization of the action. What this seems to suggest is that the grammatical subject of the middle is the element which is crucial in the realization of a middle construction. Crucially, in this work, the orientation of the modality involved in a middle construction is NOT assigned to the generic agent. As such, the level of clausal organization in a middle construction is no longer a predicative one (i.e., statements about states of affairs) but an interpersonal one (Halliday 1985; Hengeveld 1989; McGregor

1997). At the interpersonal level of discourse, individuals rely on shared notions of cause and effect and other such basic elements, in order to formulate some type of metaphorical description of the relationship between the grammatical subject and the verb in a middle generic construction, which is then grammatically encoded as an actor-patient relationship. They provide the following example to elaborate on this point (p.71):

(40) That organic flour bakes delicious bread.

While the above sentence of course characterizes a relationship between the properties of the flour and the quality of the bread, the verb implies an agent through its reference to an instrument.

This treatment provides, in my opinion, a crucial insight about the functional mechanisms that allow for the middle interpretation to be realized, namely, the identification of the interpersonal level of clause organization as the most appropriate one in which the middle should be treated. In Albanian however, based on the data, what I have found is that, given the necessity for an implied generic agent for the realization of the modality of ability that is crucial for the middle realization, it is more viable to characterize the subjectivization of such a process-participant situation as the subjectivization of the experiencer generic agent implicit in middles. In addition, our data shows that there are some restrictions in terms of the semantics of the predicates which allow or never allow for a middle interpretation to arise. Our data indicates that agent-experiencer verbs do not all realize the middle interpretation in a non-modified setting, but differ with regards to the notion of process: if these verbs denote a process, they tend to allow for the modality of ability to be interpretable.

The discourse dependency of the ability interpretation is another interesting issue which emerged during the study of the data. What is clear is that the

modality of ability that could be interpretable in different verbs (not necessarily psychological verbs as above) depends also on context boundaries: if any element in the linguistic context restricts the unboundedness of the generic agent or of the process described by the verb, then the ability interpretation of non-active imperfective verbs in Albanian is not available.

4.5. Conclusions

Analysing the middle construction in this Albanian corpus presented some difficulties. Firstly, starting from absolutely raw data gathered online or through contacts with the authors, it was a lengthy process to have the data analyzable in an acceptable format. However, the development of this corpus was not sufficiently elaborate to allow for tagging of syntactic functions in specific sentences and therefore, I had to rely only on the verbal suffix as the only way to scan through the data and identify relevant constructions. Secondly, given that middle constructions are dependent on the non-active verbal paradigm of Albanian, during the pre-processing stage, a great deal of time and effort was given to discarding verbs from non-verbs, and most importantly, to choosing relevant examples of non-active verbs. Since this project had an exploratory nature and did not start with pre-assumptions about middles in Albanian or about the types of verbs that could be involved in it, the structural flexibility of Albanian sentences was seen as an asset rather than a liability. However, the richness of structure manifested in the corpus it was very difficult to provide coherent judgements from untagged data.

Secondly, a significant problem was posed by the undefined nature of the middle construction in terms of interpretation. Examples given in previous literature covered different types of generic constructions and most of the examples were sentences provided by researchers themselves, rather than a corpus. Therefore,

finding comparable constructions in a corpus of natural language was from the start improbable, or at least very difficult. Indeed the definition of middles as having the crucial property of modality was arrived at only after a thorough and lengthy review of the data itself.

Finally, the project did not involve any kind of direct judgements from other native speakers of Albanian, either to test the interpretations of the psychological verbs interpreted as bearing a modality interpretation above, or to test other types of verbs that could potentially obtain an ability reading provided they were in an adequate linguistic context.

Chapter 5

General Conclusions and future research

The present project presents an overview of the different verbs and contexts which allow for a middle interpretation in Albanian. Firstly, the presence of the generic agent in a middle construction is crucial for the realization of its meaning, and the modality that is interpreted in these bare middle generic constructions is that of an ability of the generic agent. The generic agent in discourse can be identified based on a hierarchy of agent specificity: the non-active imperfective verb will refer always to the most prominent and specific discourse agent. In cases where a specific agent lacks in discourse, the reference can only be interpreted as generic. Verbs which don't specify a human agent in their argument structure are not available for such interpretation. Secondly, it turns out that a specific type of agent is prone to realize the middle interpretation more than other types, namely, an agent with an experiencer semantic role. Thirdly, the middle interpretation is sensitive to boundedness: given that it is a generic sentence it is of course clear that telic situations are in contrast to its meaning. However, even in a non-telic situation, non-active imperfective verbs do not always provide an ability reading. This last issue is somewhat unclear, and the corpus was not explored at sufficient depth in order to resolve this ambiguity.

In conclusion, based on the findings of this study, it seems that middle constructions as can be found in natural language discourse in Albanian can be considered an extension of the interpretation available in bare middle generic constructions with experiencer agent verbs. The subjectivization of the generic agent allows for this interpretation to be carried on by different verbs as long as

the discourse does not provide/include event-delimiting elements, and as long as other modality alternatives are excluded by the context.

Future research on the middle generic construction in Albanian, and potentially in other syntactically similar languages, I believe should be on further defining the definition of the middle construction based on natural language, and mainly spoken language. Moreover, it would be very useful if the present corpus were further utilized. For this purpose an effort in tagging the data would facilitate research and would provide us with more definite conclusions about the difference between generic sentences that bear modality vs. those which don't., as well as to test the hypothesis of agent specificity hierarchy presented in this thesis.

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Appendix: Generic middle constructions from corpus

1. Kuptohet, do ishte e padrejtë dhe mëkat...
2. ...pasqyrë ku do të shihej fytyra e një demokracie të deformuar
3. thua jse askund nuk dëgjohej zëri i atyre të cilët do e zbusnin acarimin e marrëdhënieve ndëretnike
4. shihej qartë se të gjithë mbronin vetëm etnitetin e vet...
5. ...nga çdokundë dëgjohej ulërime e çmendurisë shoviniste serbe
6. vitet e fundit të dekadës së tetë të shekullit të njëzet, ishin pasqyrë ku qartë shiheshin fytyrat e moshuara të nacionalizmave të shumtë...
7. sa herë që VMRO-DPMNE-ja sundonte, PDSH-ja ishte "ligj" i vetëm për shqiptarët, dhe në Maqedoni ndihej një "dyqeverisje"...
8. Si shpjegohet që flet spanjisht?
9. ke ndonjë mendim si shkohet atje?
10. Çaji, për mendimin e tij, ishte gjithnjë më i mirë kur shërbehej në enë kristali, sepse kundërmimi ruhej më mirë
11. E kuptoi se rrethana mund të kuptohej edhe në këtë mënyrë...
12. Por karvani u nis për udhë dhe ishte e pamundur të dëgjohej se çfarë thoshte...
13. Dëgjoheshin klithma, të qara fëmijësh, hingëllima kafshësh...
14. Nga toka nuk nxirrej më gjë...
15. Kur futesh në shkretëtirë nuk kthehesh dot mbrapsht...
16. Devexhiu deshi të dinte se në ç'rrethana të jashtëzakonshme Zoti lejonte të shihej e ardhmja
17. Rrinte mbi humnerën e thiktë poshtë, duke zotëruar pamjen e gjerë deri përtej luginës ku shquheshin fshatra të tjerë
18. Nga qendra e fshatit shihej pamja e saj ballore

19. Halimi e dinte se kështu i kishte dhënë frymë një zjarri që nuk do të shuhej lehtë
20. Apo (është) një gjë që s'kuptohet dot në kohët e sotme, kur më lehtë ndiqet ajo rruga "e lehtë" për të siguruar pak komfort?
21. (jeta e tij) është shkruar jo me fjalë, po me vepra që nuk shuhën kurrë
22. ...në personin e tij dalloheshin tiparet e një djaloshi patriot
23. Pranvera ndihej në erën e re të malit
24. LANÇ në Shqipëri nuk mund të shuhej lehtë
25. Edhe tani dallohen në fund të faqes së Qores...ca brezare me gurë...
26. Thonë se në errësirë përreth zjarrit dëgjoen zëra të çuditshëm që s'kuptohet nga vijnë
27. Në fshatin tim...zërat dëgjoen qartë nga një lagje në tjetrën
28. ...pylli mban mbi vete plagët e një shpate të madhe, që nuk mbyllen kurrë
29. Edhe Nuro e Sadik Bylyshit ua prishi shtëpitë (tërmeti), por ndërtohen prapë ato.
30. Ndihej era e mishit të djegur...
31. Në qetësinë e asaj nate dëgjoeshin vetëm bisedat me zë të ulët të grave...
32. Por ndoshta ajo ishte e lumtur, megjithëse plagët e shpirtit s'mund t'i shëroheshin lehtë...
33. Në errësirë nuk dallohet se ku janë vajzat e ku janë djemtë...
34. duken edhe përgjetet e dheut mbi zgjatimet e llogoreve anash që lidhen me të...
35. disa të tjerë nuk kishin besim se mund të fitohej kundër një armiku kaq të fuqishëm...
36. E ardhmja e lirë ende nuk kishte ardhur por ndihej nëpër erën e barutit...
37. me derte që nuk harrohen...
38. ato plagë që s'harrohen
39. kjo lidhje mund të vihej re më thjesht në tematikën e veprës së tij

40. në përgjethësi ndjehet thyerja që ka pësuar poeti i ri
41. te jembanë ndjehet dhimbja e ndarjes si me thikë
42. vargu është i shtruar, ka një trishtim të madh që nuk vihej re më parë
43. këtij romani do të duhej kohë gjersa t'i gjendej ana, të kuptohej plotësisht
44. janë ngritur mbi shtratin e eposeve e miteve, me...filozofinë epokale të të cilave shpjegohen shumë gjëra
45. kjo shpjegohet me përpjekjet për të kuptuar shenjat e fshehta të botës
46. kush nuk blihej, kalbej
47. për Kadarenë nuk mund të thuhet asnjëherë fjala e fundit
48. Ato nuk përmbliidhen dot në një frazë të vetme
49. Mosbesimi i portave dukej hapur...
50. 'bjeri, bjeri qenit!' - dëgjoheshin nga të katër anët
51. Me ç'mjete (letrare) kalohet nga gjendja e pritjes në atë të zhgënjimit dhe trishtimit?
52. kryesisht kjo situatë ndërtohet me dialogje...
53. ngjarja nuk zhbëhet më...historia...është shumë vështirë të ribëhet
54. madje më lehtë mund të besosh se thërmohet mermeri...
55. Por, në planin kohor ky raport interpretohet ndryshe
56. ngjarjet...nuk mund të zhbëhen më
57. pa këtë shqetësim poetik e qytetar nuk mund të kuptohet biografia e tij (Agolli) poetike...
58. ai nuk e ka qejf pozicionin e poetit si një nga zotat e universit, nuk përpiqet ta hutojë lexuesin me truke e figuracion që, sa më shumë të mos kuptohet, aq më të mistifikuar bëhet imazhi...edhe [i] vetë krijuesit...
59. ...mund të themi se nuk besohet kollaj se ky pelegrin i thinjur nuk do të nisët përsëri në udhë...
60. ndihet se pozicioni nuk është më ai i pohuesit të çiltër të forcës së njeriut
61. ...ende ndihet lodhja, mërzia dhe vetmia...

62. ...motivet e tij ndihen anë e mbanë poezisë së Agollit
63. ...autori nuk e manipulon figurën, ashtu si edhe fshatari që nuk rrotullohet kollaj...
64. Siç shihet edhe nga sasia e madhe e koncepteve...
65. por në qënien e tij ndiheshin një kënaqësi e madhe dhe një lumturi e hapur
66. ndihet në kujdesin e autorit për t'i përdorur ato e për të krijuar të tjera me brumin e lashtë...ajo dhimbje tragjike
67. kuptohet që në art veprojnë ligje të tjera, ndryshe ai do të ishte kopje e keqe e realitetit...
68. një gjëje që ecën e s'ndalet dot
69. por s'kuptohet ç'fituan prej saj njerëzit
70. ...yll në hapësirën e poezisë e prozës shqipe, e që s'mund të shuhet shpejt
71. ky pozicion i ka dhënë një këndvështrim përtej të zakonshmes, që mund të fitohet vetëm me sytë e atij që ka vajtur...atje ku askush tjetër nuk ka guxuar...
72. kuptohet që pikëçuditsja këtu është plotësisht me vend...
73. ja si shpjegohet largimi nga të tjerët, moskuptimi me ta, dhe mospranimi i realitetit nga heroi romantik
74. ...dhe fshihen më vështirë nga kujtesa
75. kuptohet se objekti i mallit...vjen në mendje në formë kujtimesh...
76. ...(bora) zbret pa zhurmë, nuk dëgjohet...
77. ...rimat fundore...japin pikën kulminante të dhimbjes, që duhet të jetë e tillë, përndryshe nuk shkohet dot tek akti i flijimit...
78. ...në formën e tyre është ndërtuar konstrukti i brendshëm i shpirtit të tij, gjë që nuk mund të priset më kurrë
79. Kështu shpjegohet vdes me gaz...
80. Siç shihet, nuk llogariten si rrokje m[vete dy zanore kur takohen në fund

e në fillim...

81. ...do të thotë se jeta kuptohet, mësohet sesi të jetohet duke u zhytur në (impersonal), nga eksperiencia personale...
82. Tani që u bë plak guxoi, tani ka përvojën e duhur, nga ato që fitohen vetëm pas një jete të tërë
83. lakmitar edhe për liri, që s'mund të kuptohet e të arrihet pa mirëqënie, drejtësi e dinjitet
84. Por është një e errët e shndritshme, si ajo e hapësirës ndërujore, ku në vështrim të parë ndihet kaosi
85. Është një fillim premtues sepse ndjehet talenti origjinal...
86. Në rradhën e metaforave shpesh ndihet motivi i zhgënjimit
87. Ndjehet brenda kësaj shembjeje të përgjithshme edhe një shembje tjetër
88. Kështu kuptohet fëmijëria me heshtjen ndjellakeqe të vetvetes dhe që s'arrin ta mbysë as era e mandarinës
89. Kuptohet se kur të gjendem në anën tjetër të tokës
90. ...në atë strofkull të ngushtë miu nuk futej as koka e saj
91. ...dera hapej nga brenda...
92. ...por nuk arriti të dallonte asgjë që mund të haej ose të pihej...
93. ...kuptohej se nuk ishte ndonjë dëshirë të merrej as me Lizën dhe as me të tjerë...
94. ...Midis tyre Liza dalloi edhe Lepurin e Bardhë, i cili fliste me nxitim e nervozizëm dhe kuptohej se ishte i shqetësuar sepse...
95. Në qendër të Sallës së Gjyqit shihej një tavolinë
96. Ata kishin një thes të madh, që mbyllej nga njëra anë me lidhëse
97. ...në barakën aty pranë dëgjohej tringëllima e filxhanëve të çajit të Lepurushes Marzolina
98. s'mund të përfytyrohet njeriu pa hije
99. degjoheshin thirrjet e njerëzve të kapur nga ethja e shkatërrimit të

pushtuesit

100. ...kështu është njësoj sikur të mendosh se bulimia mund të shërohet duke ngrënë...ajo në fakt shërohet me të tjera metoda...
101. ...E ky (dinjitet dhe respekt) nuk mund të arrihet pa kultivimin e virtytit politik për të cilin flet Montesquieu
102. ...paaftësia për të parë e përballuar realitetin e zi që na rrethon nuk mund të kuptohet plotësisht pa marrë në shqyrtim kulturën që kemi trashëguar prej komunizmit...
103. ...vetëm kështu mund të shiten gazetatat në krizë
104. ...çështja e vetëvrasjes së adoleshentëve nuk është ndonjë gjë e panjohur që mund të shpjegohet vetëm me magjira dhe me punët e të paudhit...
105. ...kuptohet se pastaj më vërshuan nëpër tru pluhurat që hamë, ndotja akustike, ndotja vizuale...
106. Rritja e masave për të penguar hyrësit kuptohet se edhe ne na largon...
107. Lehtësia me të cilën trajtohet ky problem vihet re më së pari në mënyrën se si analizohet humbja
108. Për fat të keq edhe nga LSI, që luftën kundër korrupsionit e kishte një nga pikat bazë të programit të saj, nuk dëgjohet ndonjë zë në këtë aspekt
109. në Shqipëri është krijuar tashmë tradita se profesioni që mund të arrihet më shpejt pa qenë nevoja të bëhesh diçka duke investuar intelektualisht dhe moralisht është ai i politikanit
110. Shtoi kësaj edhe traditën e trajtimit të elektoratit si një tufë debilësh që manipulohen lehtë
111. sipas meje kjo masë kritike do të arrihej kur shumica e kësaj kategorie do të humbnin besimin se qeveria po punon për ta sikurse ka premtuar
112. njerëzit nuk janë budallenj që mund të mashtrohen lehtë
113. Ato (mediat) duhet të kenë një identitet të tyrin që krijohet nga mbledhja së bashku e një ekipi gazetarësh të cilët ndajnë afërsisht të njëjtat

aspirata...

114. Si shpjegohet kjo?

115. Asnjë makinë nuk riparohet duke debatuar për të nga lulishtja përballë

116. Dhe po të jetë i qartë ky vullnet, zgjidhet shumë më lehtë edhe problemi i
mënyrës së shkarkimit të Prokurorit...

117. E kuptohet se kjo kërkon kohë

118. ky do të ishte fillimi i një krize ekonomike dhe financiare, që, gjithë sipas
gubernatorit, ndoshta do të krahasohej me atë të fundit që ka kaluar
Shqipëria

119. (njohja intuitive) nuk mund të fitohet veçse duke e jetuar përditë një
realitet

120. ...mungojnë dy gjëra kryesore që të arrihen konsensusë midis
kundërshtarëve