

## Attribute in French and Macedonian Language

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### Abstract

In French grammar, the attribute has a primary sentence function, the exclusion of which makes the sentence ungrammatical. In the Macedonian language, the attribute presents a second-degree sentence member which is not necessary for the correct functioning of the sentence, although it deprives the sentence of the richness of its content. Taking into consideration the presumption that what is called an attribute in French, in most cases corresponds to the nominal element of a nominal predicate with copula in Macedonian, the aim of this paper is to conduct a detailed comparison through an analysis of examples of subject attribute and object attribute in order to detect the remaining equivalent structures of the French attribute in the Macedonian language.

**Keywords:** French, Macedonian, attribute, equivalents, nominal predicate with copula

### Introduction

In French, attribute is a primary sentence-member performing an essential function which presents a precondition for the grammaticality of the sentence. The role of the attribute is most frequently assumed by an adjective or adjectival group, as well as many other word categories such as: nouns, pronouns, adverbs, participles, a completive or relative clause. The attribute can refer to the subject or to the object, describing them from the aspect of a certain characteristic, with which it is related through a copular, i.e. an attributive verb. The most frequent copular verb is *être*, which represents a semantically emptied verb and serves as a linking verb, however, the list of other attributive verbs is much longer and is not finite. On the other hand, in Macedonian language, the attribute is not a necessary sentence-member, i.e. its abolishment does not influence the grammaticality of the sentence. It assigns the trait or characteristic directly, without mediation of an attributive verb. Having in mind the terminological differences and the different function of the attribute in the two languages, the aim of this paper is to investigate which are the equivalents of the French attribute in Macedonian, as well as their functions.

Before we conduct the analysis of the selected examples, we will present a brief review of several definitions of the attribute in both languages.

#### 1. Definition of the French Attribute

The traditional French grammar studies the relation the attribute establishes with the subject or the object, i.e. primarily studies the meaning of the message, putting secondary accent on the verbal element. According to the traditional concept, each sentence is attributive in essence and can be presented through the canonical formula:

*subject+être+attribute* where the verb *être* is semantically empty. This description is related to Aristotle's concept of logical judgement, according to which the thought structure is formed by the logical relations. Therefore, the sentence analysis is based on two primary elements: subject and predicate.

*Grammaire générale et raisonnée* (Arnauld and Lancelot, 1810) uses Aristotle's concept, defining the attribute as *the thing claimed about the subject*. According to this grammar, our judgement on the matters essentially includes two terms. First is the subject, the thing something is claimed about, while the second is called attribute, i.e. the thing which is claimed about something, while the relation between those two terms is actually established through the logical judgement about the matters.

A similar semantic definition is also offered by Von Wartburg and Zumthor (in *Précis de syntaxe du français contemporain*, 1947: 21-22) according to which the attribute describes the condition the verb claims that somebody or something is in. This condition can refer to the subject or to the first object. In that same direction, Wagner and Pinchon (in *Grammaire du français classique et moderne*: 1987) also define the attribute as one part of the predicate. A noun performs the function of attribute when, as a part of the predicate, it describes a characteristic which is attributed to somebody or something. On the other hand, an adjective in the function of attribute presents a part of a clause in which predicative judgement is presented and describes a characteristic which is attributed to a person or an object.

More recent French grammars offer attribute definitions which give advantage to the morphosyntactic criteria, describing the attribute primarily through the function it performs in the sentence. Thus, Riegel, Pelat and Rioul (in *Grammaire méthodique du français*, 1994: 233-234) define the attribute function as a generic function type which can be performed by various constituents. According to this definition, the subject attribute presents the second constituent of the verbal group (GV→V+X) in which the verb *être* appears as an introductory verb. Both Le Querler (in *Précis de syntaxe française*: 1994) and Le Goffic (*Grammaire de la phrase française*, 1994: 260-266) analyse the attribute from the aspect of the function it performs as part of the sentence, describing it as an elementary primary function which is directly dependent on the main verb and the abolishment of which makes the sentence ungrammatical.

## 2. The Attribute in the Macedonian Language

In Macedonian language the attribute is a secondary member which establishes a syntactic relation with the centre-noun of the nominal group without the mediation of a copular verb, although the attribute in essence derives from a relation of a real predication. (*Убавата Марија → Марија е убава.*)

Adjectives and nouns forming an *adjectival* and *nominal* attribute can be encountered in the role of an attribute. The adjectival attribute can be *ordinary*, when the description is ascribed by an adjective with its primary meaning (**Високиот** господин), while the attribute is realized as an epithet when the adjective appears with its metaphoric meaning (**Руса** коса). The nominal attribute can be formed by nouns or nominal groups determining the centre-noun of the nominal group (**Господин** Митров). Beside these two types, there is also a *predicative attribute* which presents a predicative nominal group used without a copula. It can be *integrated* or *non-integrated*. In the case of the non-integrated attribute we can talk about a certain similarity with the French object attribute, which we will focus on in the analysis of the examples.

### 3. Equivalents of the French Attribute in Macedonian: Analysis

The examples in the following analysis are extracted from four French novels and will serve as an illustration of the results from a broader analysis conducted on a bigger number of examples. We selected sentences containing the two types of attributes in French: the subject attribute and the direct object attribute, which realize the attributive relation here through the most frequent copulative verbs. Apart from the word groups encountered as equivalents of the attribute in the Macedonian language, we consider that it is unavoidable to conduct an analysis of the attributive verbs in the two languages, as well.

In order to illustrate the attribute function, we present the following examples:

- (1) Sa voix *était rude*, mais pourtant *agréable*, [...]. (Ca)  
(1a) Гласот му беше *рапав* но *пријатен*, [...]. (Kar)
- (2) [...] Chapalangawa *était colonel*, et j'ai joué à la paume vingt fois avec son frère, [...] (Ca)  
(2a) Чапалангара беше *полковник* а јас дваесетпати играв топка со неговиот брат кој беше сиромав како и јас. (Kar)
- (3) *J'étais tout occupée* à étudier le corse.(C)  
(3a) *Бев сета обземена* со проучување на корзиканското наречје.(K)
- (4) Il *paraissait abattu et soucieux*. (Lp)  
(4a) Изгледаше *отепан* и *загрижен*.(Ch)  
(4b) Се чинеше *отепан* и *загрижен*.(nv)
- (5) Et Orso *devint pâle* comme la mort.(C)  
(5a) И орсо *побледна* како мртовец. (K)  
(5b) И Орсо *стана блед* како мртовец. (nv)
- (6) Les bruits du matin dans les rues *semblaient plus vifs, plus joyeux* qu'à l'ordinaire. (Lp)  
(6a) Утринскиот цагор по улиците *изгледаше пожив* и *повесел* одошто инаку. (Ch)  
(6b) Утринскиот цагор по улиците *се чинеше пожив* и *повесел* одошто инаку. (nv)
- (7) Orso ne sortit pas de sa maison, et la porte des Barricini *resta constamment fermée*. (C)  
(7a) Орсо не излезе од куќата а вратата на Баричиниевите *остана постојано затворена*. (K)
- (8) Le colonel, sa pièce à la main, *demeurait tout ébahi*.(C)  
(8a) Полковникот, со златникот в рака, *стоеше сиот вчудовиден*.(K)
- (9) Après nous être disputés pendant une heure, je *sortis furieux*. (Ca)  
(9a) *Отидов сиот бесен* откако се расправавме цел час. (Kar)  
(9b) *Излегов сиот бесен* откако се расправавме цел час. (nv)
- (10) *Calli elle est née, Calli elle mourra*. (Ca)  
(10a) *Како кали е родена, како кали ќе умре*. (Kar)

- (11) Il vivait **complètement retiré** dans son appartement et faisait monter ses repas d'un restaurant voisin. (Lp)
- (11a) Сега живееше **сосема повлечен** во својот стан а јадењето го нарачуваше од блиската гостилница. (Ch)
- (12) Ils **se croyaient libres** et personne ne sera jamais libre tant qu'il y aura des fléaux (Lp)
- (12a) Веруваа дека се **слободни** а никој никогаш нема да биде слободен додека има стихии. (Ch)
- (12b) Тие **се сметаа за слободни** а никој никогаш нема да биде слободен додека има стихии. (nv)
- (13) Le lendemain matin, elle **était rentrée si lasse, si malade** de cette aventure, qu'elle n'avait pu se rendre à la fosse. (G)
- (13a) Наредното утро таа **се врати толку уморна, толку болна** од таа авантура што не можеше да слезе во окното. (nv)
- (14) Elle l'embrassa avec une espèce de fureur, baisa les balles et la chemise, et sortit de la chambre, **laissant son frère comme pétrifié** sur sa chaise. (C)
- (14a) Таа го бакна некако избезумено, потоа ги избаци куршумите и кошулата, и излезе од собата **оставајќи** го брата си **како вчудовиден** на столот. (K)
- (15) Le silence retomba, Maheu et Étienne se levèrent et **laissèrent** la famille **morne**, devant les assiettes vides. (G)
- (15a) Повторно настапи молк, Мае и Етјен станаа и **го оставија семејството потиштено**, пред празните чинии. (nv)
- (16) C'était après la rupture, lorsqu'il l'**avait vue malade de chagrin**, qu'il avait accepté [...]. (Z)
- (16a) Откако ја **виде болна од тага**, по раскинувањето, тој прифати [...]. (nv)
- (17) Les rumeurs lointaines de la fête faisaient paraître le quartier silencieux et il l'**imaginait aussi désert que muet**. (LP)
- (17a) Далечните звуци од прославата го правеа тој крај тивок и тој си го **замислуваше** во исто време **напуштен и безгласен**.(nv)
- (18) Pluchart fut **nommé président**, puis on **désigna** comme **assesseurs** Maheu et Étienne lui-même. (Z)
- (18a) Плишар беше **именуван за претседател**, потоа Мае и Етјен ги **назначија за помошници**.
- (18b) Плишар го **именуваа претседател** потоа Мае и Етјен ги **ставија помошници**. (nv)
- (19) Puisque vous êtes un enfant, je vous **traiterai en enfant**. (C)
- (19a) Бидејќи сте дете, **ќе се однесувам со вас како кон дете**. (K)
- (19b) Бидејќи сте дете, **ќе ве третирам како дете**.
- (20) Tu me **prends pour un voleur**, coquin que tu es! (C)
- (20a) Ти ме **сметаш за крадец**, никаквец низаеден! (K)

The attribute function is illustrated in the examples from (1) to (13), however, we will analyse example (13) together with two other verbs introducing an object attribute due to their common specifics.

The verbs introducing subject attribute can be divided into *basic attributive verbs* and *temporary attributive verbs*. (Riegel: 1981). The first group includes the verb *être*, as well as the verbs describing a state: *paraître, devenir, sembler, rester, demeurer*. The remaining verbs, i.e. *sortir, vivre, naître, mourir, se croire* can be classified in the second group. Beside the syntactic differences and the differences in the semantic relation introduced between the verb and the attribute, the thing that in essence differentiates these verbs, is the possibility to abolish the attribute in the constructions with occasional attributive verbs. The basic attributive verbs do not allow for that kind of abolishment, or if that is possible, it would lead to disruption of the sentence's grammaticality or semantics. Concerning the Macedonian language, the most frequent copular verb is *сум*, however, in the role of copulas we also encounter verbs describing a transition from one trait or condition of the subject, to another, which is its temporary trait.

In the subject attribute examples we analyzed, as equivalents of the French attributive verbs, in the Macedonian translation we encounter: *изгледа, се чини*, as equivalents of *paraître, sembler*; as well as *стане, останува* as equivalents of *devenir, rester, cmou* for *demeurer*; *мисли* and *се смета* for *se croire* and *отиде, излезе* as equivalents for *sortir*. In Macedonian, all of those verbs are also classified as verbs introducing a subject attribute, with the difference that the word groups which enter the copula construction and describe the subject from the aspect of a certain characteristic, have the function of a nominal element of a nominal predicate which in Macedonian language has a primary function in the sentence.

An adjective, i.e. an adjectival group (1), (4-*soucieux*), (5), (6), (9), (12), (13) or a participle form used as an adjective (3), (4), (7), (8), (11) are most frequently encountered as subject attribute in the analysed examples. From the corresponding translations, it can be noticed that in Macedonian, their equivalents are also adjectival groups in which the adjective most frequently is a descriptive one: (1a), (5b), (6a), (9a), (9b), (12a), (13a), although, in the role of a nominal element of the predicate, in Macedonian pronominal, numeral and relative adjectives can be encountered. Sometimes, the meaning of the attribute-adjective can be transferred by a verbal form, such as the case in example (5a).

The French participle forms are translated in the Macedonian examples with the *-n/-t* participles with adjectival meaning, in the function of a nominal element of the predicate: (3a), (4a), (7a), (8a). These participle forms in Macedonian are much less frequently encountered in the predicate position, than those with a verbal meaning. (Cvetkovski: 1988). As far as example (11a) is concerned, the verbal adjective here presents a part of the prepositional object, but has the meaning of an adverb, above all due to the valency of the verb *живее*.

In French, a nominal group can be encountered in the role of a subject attribute, which is the case in examples (2) and (10). Concerning the Macedonian examples, nouns with the function of a nominal element of the predicate (2a) and prepositional object (10a) are encountered as equivalents. One has to point out that the verbs *се паѓа* and *умира* are not classified as copulas in the Macedonian language.

In the examples from (14) to (20) as attributive verbs we encounter: *laisser (comme), voir, imaginer, nommer, désigner* which build a direct attributive relation with the object, as well as the verbs *traiter en, prendre pour* which build their relation with the object in an indirect way, with the mediation of prepositions.

Before moving on to a specific analysis, we should note that in the Macedonian language, the nominal element of the nominal predicate with copula which refers to the object, does not build a primary, but a secondary predicate relation, specifically due to the fact that the trait refers to the object. (Cvetkovski: 1991). This secondary relation is established solely through certain verbs of the following type: *се смета, назначува, именува, става*. Such are the examples (18a), (18b) and (20a) where the verbs *именува, назначува, става, смета за* appear as translation equivalents of the French *nommer* (used in a passive sentence (18)), *désigner comme* и *prendre pour*. Due to their incompleteness, these verbs in the Macedonian language most frequently establish a syntagmatic relation with the other members, with the usage of the preposition *за*. Their basic semantic characteristic is changed, with special emphasis on the cause of the change. As equivalents of the attribute in these examples, we encounter nouns serving as nominal element, i.e. as nominal predicate from the semantic level where the prepositional constructions appear with a transitive meaning (Cvetkovski: 1991). In the example (18b), the *за* preposition was omitted and it can be considered also as a *double accusative* (Minova-Gjurkova: 2000) sentence.

The examples (13), (15) and (16) where the attributive relation is established through the verbs *laisser (comme), voir* and *rentrer*; in Macedonian are viewed as an *integral predicative attribute* which presents a predicative nominal group used without a copula, appearing as a result of real predication. (Minova-Gjurkova: 2000). Therefore, it can be assumed that the corresponding verbs *остава, гледа* and *се враќа* do not have a status of copulas. Subsequently, in the examples (13a), (13b), (14a), (15a), (16a), the adjectives referring to the object, i.e. the subject in the example (13a) will have a function of an integrated predicative attribute. To support this claim is Cvetkovski's explanation concerning the verb *види* which as a transitive verb, beside with the object, establishes a direct syntagmatic relation with the complement. In this case, the verb becomes a full verb and the *complement refers to the omitted copula-verb of the second reduced clause, and not to the lexical full verb*. (Cvetkovski:1988: 35). Meaning: *Ја виде болна од тага* → *Ја виде. Таа беше болна од тага*.

As an equivalent of *imaginer* (17), the verb *замислува* appears in the example (17a) where as a nominal element of the predicate a direct object pronoun is encountered. The verbal forms *се однесува* (19a) and *третира* (19b), equivalents of *traiter en* (19), which are used with the *secondary* preposition *како*, introduce an adverb of manner, by way of comparison.

#### 4. Final Remarks

From the analysis it can be noticed that as the most frequent equivalent of the subject attribute in the French language, we encounter adjectives with a function of a nominal element of the predicate with copula. With certain verbs, the adjective can also be encountered with the function of an integrated adjectival attribute. We illustrated this use with an example which contains the verb *се враќа*, however, we consider that this type of constructions deserves greater attention and a broader analysis in a subsequent study.

When talking about the object attribute, in the Macedonian examples, as an equivalent we encounter the adjective in the function of an integrated attribute and a nominal element of

a predicate with copula which in this case has a secondary meaning, but in certain cases in the Macedonian language, the verbs appearing with the same or similar meaning compared to the French, have no copulative character at all.

The analysis also points out that during the comparison of the attribute in the French and in the Macedonian language, of special and maybe even of key significance are the attributive verbs, i.e. their semantic value and distribution, upon which depends the selection of the word group to fill in the place of the attribute, i.e. its adequate equivalent.

## Abbreviations

- (C) –Colomba, Prosper Merimée (electronic version)
- (K)-Kolomba, Nasha Kniga, Skopje, 1995 (Translation: Ljubisha Stojanovic)
- (Car)-Carmen, Prosper Merimée (electronic version)
- (K)-Karmen, Nasha Kniga, Skopje, 1995 (Translation: Ljubisha Stojanovic)
- (LP)-La Peste, Albert Camus (electronic version)
- (Ch)-Chuma, Alber Kami, Slovo, 2011 (Translation: Vera Hristova)
- (G)-Germinal Emile Zola (electronic version)
- (nv)-nasha verzija (our version)

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