

Variation and change in comparative constructions as a conspiracy of language internal and language external factors: evidence from Cappadocian Greek

Dimitra Melissaropoulou
Aristotle University of Thessaloniki

dmelissa@itl.auth.gr

This paper sets to put prominently under scrutiny variation and change in the realization of comparative constructions of superiority (cf. Cuzzolin & Lehmann 2004; Stolz 2013) in the light of the evidence provided by Cappadocian Greek dialectal variation, investigating whether the occurring innovation could be treated more adequately in terms of combinatorial accounts, addressing both internal and external developments.

Cappadocian is an Asia Minor Greek variety spoken for great many centuries in a situation of regressive bilingualism due to intense contact with the agglutinative Turkish language (among others Dawkins 1916; Karatsareas 2011; Janse forthcoming; Melissaropoulou 2016, 2017). Dialectal data show that, while in the vast majority of Modern Greek dialects, the standard form included, comparative constructions appear fully saturated realizing all their constituents (for relevant discussion cf. Cuzzolin & Lehmann 2004; Stolz 2013), in Cappadocian, comparative constructions lack a basic constituent, that is the degree marker, as shown below:

<i>ίτο</i>	<i>άπ</i>	<i>έκεινò</i>	-		<i>μέα</i>	<i>΄ναι</i>
ito	ap	ecino			mea	ne
Comparee	Tie	Standard/base of comparison	Degree		Quality	Verb
"This is bigger than the other"						
(Ulaghats, Kesisoglou 1951: 54)						

Interestingly, opinions in the existing grammatical descriptions diverge with respect to the emergence of this structure either as a result of language contact (Dawkins 1916; Papadopoulos 1955) or as a mainly internal development (Dawkins 1921; Andriotis 1948). A thorough analysis of intra-Cappadocian variation shows that different Cappadocian sub-varieties represent different stages of the change under investigation. Moreover, while the tendency towards replacement of the synthetic constructions by analytic ones is mainly internally motivated cross-cutting the various dialectal forms, its realization, i.e. the specific form it will take may be heavily influenced by the language contact factor. Furthermore, dialectal data reveal that the examination of constituents' order, may play a decisive role towards the account of this innovation as a primarily contact-induced change. Generalizing, we propose that the concomitant pattern replication may constitute a secure diagnostic tool for the account of a linguistic phenomenon as primarily contact-induced and not as resulting solely from intra-linguistic mechanisms due to the fact that it is devoid of voiced linguistic material, thus it is not necessarily conscious from the part of native speakers, especially in situations of intense bilingualism. Lastly, we would suggest that, contrary to what

is usually the case for the vocabulary, contact-induced grammatical pattern replication precedes and paves the way for the transfer and integration of grammatical elements into the replica language. The above discussion is meant as a contribution to the thesis that combinatorial accounts, addressing both internal and external developments widen the perspective and offer the most plausible explanations for linguistic innovations in language contact settings (see among others Poplack & Levey 2010; Matras 2010; Heine and Kuteva 2010; Azucena 2013).

References

- Azucena, P. A. 2013. Contact-induced Change and Internal Evolution: Spanish in Contact with Amerindian Languages. In Léglise I. and C. Chamoreau (eds.), *The Interplay of Variation and Change in Contact Settings*. Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins, 165-198.
- Cuzzolin, P. and C. Lehmann. 2004. *Comparison and gradation*. In Booij, G., C. Lehmann, J. Mugdan, and S. Skopeteas in collaboration with Wolfgang Kesselheim (eds.), *Morphology, An International Handbook on Inflection and Word-Formation*, vol 2. Berlin, New York: de Gruyter, 1211-1219.
- Dawkins, R. 1916. *Modern Greek in Asia Minor: A Study of the Dialects of Silli, Cappadocia and Pharasa with Grammar, Texts, Translations and Glossary*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Heine, B. and T. Kuteva. 2010. Contact and Grammaticalization. In Hickey, R. (ed.), *Handbook of Language Contact*. Oxford: Blackwell, 86-105.
- Janse, M. forthcoming. Cappadocian. In Tzitzilis, C. (ed.), *Η ελληνική γλώσσα και οι διάλεκτοί της*. Thessaloniki: Institutouto Neoellinikon Spoudon (Manolis Triantafyllides Foundation).
- Karatsareas, P. 2011. A study of Cappadocian Greek nominal morphology from a diachronic and dialectological perspective. Unpublished PhD thesis. University of Cambridge.
- Kesisoglou, I. I. 1951. *Τὸ γλωσσικὸ ἰδίωμα τοῦ Οὐλαγάτς (Le dialecte d'Oulagatch)*. Athens: Institut Français d'Athènes.
- Matras, Y. 2010. *Contact, convergence and typology*. In Hickey, R. (ed.), *Handbook of Language Contact*. Oxford: Blackwell, 66-85.
- Melissaropoulou, D. 2016. Variation in word formation in the light of the language contact factor: the case of Cappadocian Greek. *Journal of Language Sciences*, 55, 55-67. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.langsci.2016.02.005>
- Melissaropoulou, D. 2017. On the role of language contact in the reorganization of grammar: a case study on two Modern Greek contact induced dialects. *Poznan Studies in Contemporary Linguistics*, 53(3), 449-485. [doi:10.1515/psicl-2017-0017](https://doi.org/10.1515/psicl-2017-0017)
- Poplack, S. & S. Levey. 2010. Contact-induced grammatical change: A cautionary tale. In Auer, P. & Schmidt, J. E. (eds.), *Language and space: An international handbook of linguistic variation*. Vol. 1. Theories and methods. Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter. 391-419.
- Stassen, L. 2008. *Comparative constructions*. In Haspelmath, M., E. König, W. Oesterreicher, and W. Raible (eds.), *Language Typology and Language Universals, An International Handbook*, vol. 2. Berlin: de Gruyter, 993-997.
- Stolz, Th. 2013. *Competing Comparative Constructions in Europe. Studia Typologica*. Academie Verlag.