

Angela Ralli
 University of Patras
ralli@upatras.gr

Verbal loanblends in Griko and Heptanesian: a case study of contact morphology¹

Abstract

This paper deals with contact-induced change in the verbal morphology of two Greek dialects, Griko and Heptanesian, which have been affected by two Romance dialects, Salentino and Venetian, respectively. It argues that the structural properties of the recipient language (i.e. Greek), are crucial for the final outcome of the borrowing process and that the speakers' awareness of the structure of the donor language (i.e. Romance) may play a decisive role in the choice of a particular borrowing strategy. It also demonstrates that loan verbs present a major challenge to morphological theory, since, among other things, they serve to show that theoretical hypotheses and approaches can be tested in contact situations. Assuming that the boundary between a language and its dialects is fuzzy, all claims and proposals put forward in this paper apply equally to dialect-contact and language-contact issues.

1. Introduction

In this paper I investigate the topic of contact-induced change in the domain of verbal morphology.² Arguments and proposals are exemplified with data drawn from two Modern Greek dialects, Griko (spoken in the Salento area in Southern Italy) and Heptanesian (spoken on the islands of the Ionian sea), which have been affected by two Romance dialects, namely Salentino and Venetian, respectively.

My investigation covers the following issues: a) How Griko and Heptanesian import verbs of Romance origin. b) The strategies adopted by the two dialects for integrating loan verbs into their morphology. c) The factors which determine the different borrowability patterns. d) The way verbal loans affect the native word-formation domain. More particularly, I argue that although the type and category of loanwords are the same, i.e. verbs of Romance origin, the dialects in question adopt them by using different strategies: Griko borrows only the verbal root from Salentino that is, the part of the word deprived of its inflectional ending. This root is incorporated in the native morphology by indirect insertion (Wichmann and Wohlgenuth 2008: 97), with the use of one of the most productive derivational suffixes in Greek, the verbalizer *-ev-*, which flags the verbal category, defines the inflection class, and allows the item to receive a Greek inflectional ending. In contrast, in Heptanesian, the whole Venetian word, i.e. both the root and the inflectional part (the infinitival marker), appears to be adopted by the morphological system, where it undergoes reanalysis, and ultimately hellenicization with the addition of the appropriate inflectional endings.

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² General terms for contact-induced change are transfer (Gardani 2008) and copying Johanson (2002).

As stated by most linguists dealing with language-contact issues (see, among others, Thomason 2001, Aikhenvald 2008, and Matras 2009), borrowability is influenced by (a) the intensity of contact between two languages and (b) the degree of bilingualism among the speakers of the affected community. In this paper, on the basis of Griko and Heptanesian data, I demonstrate that the structural properties of the recipient language (i.e. Greek in this particular case), are crucial for the final outcome of the borrowing process. Moreover, I suggest that the speakers' awareness of the structure of the donor language may also prove to be a decisive factor for the choice of the borrowing strategy. For instance, it seems that the fully bilingual Griko speakers recognize the internal structure of Romance verbs, consciously truncate the infinitival marker of the verb, and add a Greek verbalizer to the root. In contrast, the Heptanesian speakers who have a rather low command of Venetian, or Italian, borrow the entire word.

Since the boundary between a language and its dialects is fuzzy, the claims and proposals put forward in this work apply equally to dialect-contact and language-contact matters.

The paper is structured as follows: after the introduction, there is a presentation of the various types of lexical borrowing and the strategies that may be adopted for the integration of loan verbs into the recipient language. A sketch overview of the Griko and Heptanesian data is provided next (sections 3 and 4), where emphasis is given on verbal morphology. These data are analyzed in section 5 and 6, where claims and proposals are illustrated through a comparison of the borrowed morphology between the two dialects. The paper ends with the major conclusions and a list of references.

2. Types and strategies of lexical borrowing

A loanword is a lexical item that is transferred from a language A (the donor) to a language B (the recipient) either by borrowing or by a shift-induced interference.³ In borrowing, native speakers consciously import a word from another language, while in shift-induced interference there is a rather unconscious transfer of features from their native language to the recipient language (Haspelmath 2008). In this paper, I will deal with the first case, that is, with words of a dominant language that are adopted by communities whose native language is different from the dominant.

Loanwords can be divided into various types. One well-known classification is due to Haugen (1950) who distinguishes three kinds of loan items: *loanwords*, i.e. words, whose form and meaning are copied in the recipient language, *loanblends*, consisting of a copied part and a native part, and *loanshifts*, where only the meaning is copied. I will restrict my attention to verbal loanblends, that is, to items containing a copied part of Romance origin and a Greek part. However, for easiness, I will call these items loanwords, which is the most commonly used term.

According to Wichmann and Wohlgemuth (2008) languages follow different ways to borrow verbs. They can insert a verbal root in their morphology (direct insertion), may use a verbalizer, whose function is to integrate the loan verb into the recipient's system (indirect insertion), may utilize a light verb or, in certain rare cases, they borrow the entire inflectional paradigm along with the verb.

³ Haspelmath (2008: 46) has suggested that the term loanword should not be equated with borrowed word because some linguists, for instance, Thomason and Kaufman (1988: 37ff), define borrowing in a narrow way that excludes the effects of shift-induced interference. In this paper, I deal with loan words only in the narrow sense.

On the basis of Griko and Heptanesian data, I will demonstrate, first, that the structural patterns associated with verbal loans are determined by certain major characteristics of Greek native morphology, while features of the donor language may play a role too. More specifically, these characteristics are a) the property of Greek word formation to be stem based and b) the basic structural pattern of most derived Greek verbs ([[stem-Vb]-Infl]) to consist of a root/stem⁴, a verbalizer, which under the form of a derivational affix assigns to the formation the verbal category, and an inflectional ending. Second, elaborating on views which consider the high degree of bilingualism as the engine for a widespread borrowing in the affected community, where even structure can be transferred (e.g., among others, Thomason and Kaufman 1988), I will argue that high command of the dominant language and the speaker's consciousness of its structure do not necessarily imply extensive borrowing. I will demonstrate that the fully bilingual Griko speakers show a higher resistance to morphological borrowing than the Heptanesian speakers who, as will be seen below, have a restricted bilingualism and a rather poor expertise in the donor language. Third, I will stress the role of the notion of productivity in the accommodation of verbal loans, namely into adopting, or rejecting, a particular element for the creation of inflected verbal forms.

Finally, my investigation of Griko and Heptanesian loans will demonstrate that verbs are not more difficult than nouns to be borrowed, provided that certain conditions are met, as opposed to opposite claims that have been put forward by Whitney (1881), and Moravcsik (1975). Thus, it brings support to similar and more recent claims, such as those by Campbell (1993), Winford (2003), Matras (2007, 2009), Wichmann and Wohlgemuth (2008), Melissaropoulou (2009) and Ralli (to appear).

3. Griko and Heptanesian: a sketch overview

3.1 Griko

The Greek speaking dialectal enclaves in Italy are located in Puglia (area of Salento, the so-called *Grecia Salentina*) and Calabria (the *Bovese* area), and the dialect (the so-called *Italiot*) competes with both the local Romance varieties and Italian, the official language of the state (Martino 1980: 338, Manolesou 2005: 106). *Italiot* in Calabria (*Grecanico*, or *Bovese* according to Fanciullo 2001) presents a rapid decrease and Katsoyannou (1999) mentions that there are no more than 500 speakers, several villages being deserted. In contrast, in Puglia (*Griko*), it seems to be resisting, although native competence has been confined to elderly people. Today, there are about nine *Griko*-speaking villages (*Calimera*, *Castrignano dei Greci*, *Corigliano di Otranto*, *Martano*, *Martignano*, *Melpignano*, *Soletto*, *Sternatia*, and *Zollino*), where speakers communicate in *Griko* mostly in family (Profili 1985).⁵

Griko and *Grecanico* present a number of differences (see, among others, Rohlf 1933, 1997, Karanastasis 1984, 1997). These differences, however, are not as significant as to consider *Griko* and *Grecanico* to be different dialectal systems; they are rather varieties of the same dialect, *Italiot*. It should be noticed that the origin of *Italiot* is one of the most debated issues, and arguments pertaining to the “archaism” or “byzantinism” of these dialects are both historical and linguistic (Fanciullo 2001, Manolesou 2005). There are three different views: (a) the origin of the dialect is basically byzantine (see, among others,

⁴ On synchronic grounds, there is no distinction between a root and a stem in Greek morphology (Ralli 2005, to appear). In this paper, and as far as Greek morphology is concerned, the term stem will be used for all root and stem instances.

⁵ See Martino (1980), Profili (1985), Telmon (1992), Katsoyannou (1995) and Manolesou (2005) for details about the socio-linguistic situation in the Greek speaking areas of South Italy.

Morosi 1870, Parlangei 1953, Carducci 1993); (b) Italiot originates from Ancient Greek, spoken once in Magna Grecia (see, among others, Rohlf's 1933, Caratzas 1958, Karanastasis 1984); (c) Italiot is a continuation of the Hellenistic Koine, as the rest of the Modern Greek dialects, but preserve some Doric archaisms (Browning 1969, Horrocks 1997, Ledgeway 1998). Crucially, Fanciullo (2001: 76) and Manolessou (2005: 121) characterize the debate about the origin question as a pseudo- or minor problem, and point out the significance of research oriented to synchronic linguistic and socio-linguistic issues.

3.2 Heptanesian

Heptanesian is the dialect spoken on the islands of the Ionian sea, Corfu, Kefhalonia, Zante, Ithaca and Paksi (Kontosopoulos 2001: 67), which were under Venetian rule for four or five centuries (ca end of 14th – end of 18th c.), depending on the island.⁶ The inhabitants of Leukada, another Ionian island, speak a dialect which shares many similarities with the group of northern Greek dialects due to the proximity of the island to the Greek mainland and also because it was under Venetian rule for a shorter period of time (it was taken by Venice only in 1664). Heptanesian displays features imported through the contact with Venetian, and also through the contact with Italian, the official language used in administration and education (Fanciullo 2008).⁷ During a long period that goes from the end of the 14th c. to 1847, Venetian and Italian remained the dominant language of the upper class. However, peasants and people of the lower class kept communicating in Greek (Salvanos 1918), and only few had some command of Venetian. According to some statistic figures of 1849 (Soldatos 1967-8: 100), in Corfu, 200.000 people were Greek speakers, 6000 were bilingual, 1000 spoke basically Venetian and/or Italian but had some knowledge of Greek, and only 100 people were reported to be exclusively Venetian/Italian speakers. Crucially, the contact effects on Heptanesian are mostly visible in the vocabulary, and to some extent in the phonology (mainly in the intonation) and morphology (introduction of certain affixes, like the noun forming suffix *-ada* < Ven *-ADA*), while there are almost no changes on the syntactic level. Many loanwords of Venetian/Italian origin are items related to the registers of trade, administration, culture, and social life. In contrast, basic vocabulary items and terms referring to nature, religion, and emotions remained Greek. Nowadays, Heptanesian is slowly abandoned by its speakers and is dying out under the pressure of Standard Modern Greek (hereafter SMG).

3.3 (Socio)linguistic context

Griko and Heptanesian share similarities which are due to their common origin: like the other Modern Greek dialects originate from Hellenistic Koine,⁸ but they have been subject to a Romance influence and do not display any Turkish borrowings, which usually abound in the majority of Modern Greek dialects.⁹ However, compared to Heptanesian, Griko (and generally Italiot) displays more archaisms, on all grammatical levels, phonology

⁶ Corfu was the first to undergo Venetian domination, as early as 1387, while Venetians occupied the other islands during the 15th century.

⁷ According to Fanciullo (2008), from the 16th century, a sort of diglossia was used in the Republic of Venice. Italian was the language of administration, while Venetian was the variety used for daily communication. This situation was also transferred to areas ruled by Venice, among which, the Ionian islands.

⁸ Tsakonian, spoken in south-east Peloponnese, is the only dialect which does not originate from the Hellenistic Koine but is of direct provenance from the Ancient Doric dialect.

⁹ I follow Fanciullo's (2006) and Manolessou's (2005) argumentation that Italiot has specific characteristics that do not resemble those of the other Modern Greek dialects as a result of the fact that in the Middle Ages, when South Italy was separated from the Greek-speaking world, the Modern Greek dialects had not yet assumed a definitive form.

and vocabulary, some of which date back to Ancient Greek and are also absent in the other Modern Greek dialects. According to Manolessou (2005: 117), the large number of archaisms found in Italiot may be due to the fact that communication between South Italy and the rest of the Greek speaking world was interrupted in the Middle Ages, before the 13th c. AD. Thus, while Heptanesian followed the evolution of the rest of the Modern Greek dialects, Greek in South Italy knew an independent development. Interestingly, the socio-economic situation of the two dialectal areas was strikingly different. Heptanesian enjoyed high prestige within the Greek-speaking world, since the economy of the Ionian islands was flourishing and Heptanesians never stopped being in contact with Europe and other parts of Greece; it was used in literature and became one of the basic dialects for the development of SMG. In contrast, for centuries, Italiot was considered as the ‘low’ linguistic variety of a dialect enclave in Puglia. It was spoken by the lower class of society in a very negative sociolinguistic environment, i.e. in poor and isolated areas, and lacked the support of a separate national and religious identity.¹⁰

4. The data

Griko and Heptanesian loan verbs come mainly from two sources, Salentino and Venetian, respectively, but also from Standard Italian. The influence of Standard Italian is particularly evident on Heptanesian, since, as already stated, Venice had already adopted Standard Italian as the official language, long before the unity of Italy, in the second half of the 19th century (Fanciullo 2008). In some cases, it is difficult to discern whether a loan word derives from the local Romance dialect or from Standard Italian, since the original verb has the same form and use in both varieties.

In what follows, I list indicative examples from both Griko and Heptanesian.¹¹ The loans are taken from recent texts and the oral corpora of the *Laboratory of Modern Greek Dialects* (LMGD) They are given in the citation form, i.e. in the first person singular of the present tense and are transcribed in a broad phonological transcription. The corresponding forms in Romance and Standard Italian are also provided, together with the English translation:

(1)a. Griko	Italian	Salentino ¹²	Meaning
bbundeo	abbondare	<i>bbunn(d)áre</i>	abound
bbampeo	avvampare	<i>bbampáre</i>	go red
cekeo	aceccare	<i>čikáre</i>	blind
ffrunteo	affrontare	<i>ffruntáre</i>	confront
jestimeo	bestemmiare	<i>jaštímáre</i>	blaspheme
kunteo	raccontare	<i>kuntáre</i>	narrate
mbesteo		<i>mbištíre (mm-)</i>	guess
nateo	nuotare	<i>natáre</i>	swim
ngageo		<i>ngaggjáre</i>	gallop
nkasceo		<i>nkaššáre</i>	fill

¹⁰ As quoted in Manolessou (2005: 109) “the first real blow against the Greek dialects in South Italy was struck at the end of Middle Ages, when the Catholic church banned their use under threat of excommunication (1573 in Calabria, 1621 in Puglia)”.

¹¹ The Griko examples have been drawn from Tommasi’s (1996) grammar and the LMGD oral corpus. The Heptanesian ones are taken from G. Pomoni-Tzaglára’s (2007) vocabulary and the dialectal theater play *Stou Ambelione tsi Fourkades I o gamos paei a monte* by L. Strani (2010, Patras: *Laboratory of Modern Greek Dialects*).

¹² There are two inflection classes in Salentino, one in *-are* and the other in *-ere/ire*. The majority of verbs belonging to the second inflection class have a stressed /i/ (Maiden and Parry 1997).

nutrikeo	nutrire	<i>nutrikáre</i>	feed
pareo	parare	<i>paráre</i>	decorate
pentome	pentirsi	<i>pentìre</i>	repent
resceo	riuscire:	<i>riuscìre</i>	succeed
scerreo		<i>šširráre</i>	forget
skupreo	scoprire	<i>skuprìre</i>	discover
sgarreo		<i>skarráre</i>	demolish
spaleo		<i>spaláre</i>	twist
spendeo	spendere:	<i>spéndere/spindìre</i>	spend
vombikeo	vomitare	<i>vombikare</i>	vomit

b. Heptanesian	Italian	Venetian	Meaning
avizaro	avvisare	<i>avisar</i>	advise
ambaotaro		<i>amba(l)otar</i>	count
ankoraro	ancorare	<i>ancorar</i>	anchor
brostolare	abbrustolire	<i>brusto(l)ar</i>	roast
bujaro		<i>imbugarse</i>	fill out
desponero	disporre	<i>dispóner /despóner</i>	dispose
fioriro	fiorire	<i>fiorir</i>	blossom
γoðero	godere		enjoy
imitaro	imitare	<i>imitar</i>	imitate
jarbujaro	ingarbugliare	<i>ingarbugiar</i>	confuse
kojonaro		<i>cogionar</i>	mock
kompariro	comparire	<i>comparir</i>	appear
kontsaro	acconciare	<i>conzar</i>	arrange
kornizaro	scorniciare	<i>cornisar</i>	frame
ksebukaro	sbucare	<i>sbucar</i>	show up
kselabikaro		<i>slambicarse</i>	make/be clear
ksepontaro	spuntare	<i>spontar</i>	venture out
patiro		<i>patir</i>	suffer
protestaro	protestare	<i>protestar</i>	protest
remediario	rimediare	<i>remediar</i>	cure
reveriro	riverire	<i>reverir</i>	bow
skomponerome		<i>scomponarse</i>	be indifferent
spartiro	spartire	<i>spartir</i>	segregate

A first examination of these loans reveals that they have been fully integrated into the Greek verbal system since, like the verbs in SMG and in Modern Greek dialects, they seem to have lost the infinitival form and have adopted the Modern Greek person/number endings.¹³ Crucially, the loan verbs in both dialects are regularly conjugated according to the (entire) paradigm of the first inflection class.¹⁴ An indicative example of the present-

¹³ Nowadays, there are only traces of an infinitival form in Griko. It can be found with the volition verb *sozo* ‘can’, and only in limited contexts:

(i) soz-o pi
can.PRES.1SG say.PERF.INF
‘I can say’

(Example drawn from the Griko corpora of LMGD).

Other traces of an infinitival form, dating back to the Medieval period, can be detected in Muslim Pontic (also called “Rumeika”) as noted by Mackridge (1987).

¹⁴ In Modern Greek, there are two inflection classes for verbs. See Ralli (2005) for details.

tense paradigm is given below for both Griko (3a) and Heptanesian (3b), as compared to that of SMG (3c): the verbs *skupreo* ‘discover’ and *protestaro* ‘manifest’ originate from the Salentino and Venetian verbs *skuprire* and *protestar*, respectively.

(2)a. Griko	b. Heptanesian	c. SMG
skupre-o	protestar-o	γραφ-ο
skupre-is	protestar-is	γραφ-ις
skupre-i	protestar-i	γραφ-ι
skupre-ome	protestar-ome	γραφ-ουμε
skupre-ete	protestar-ete	γραφ-ετε
skupre-o/une	protestar-une	γραφ-υν(ε)
‘discover’	‘protest’	‘write’
(Tondi 1935, Fillieri 2001 Gemma, I. and G. Lambroyorgu 2001)	(Strani, p.c.)	

5. Griko loan-verb formation

Since Meillet (1921: 82), it is often claimed that the transfer of features from the donor to the recipient language is feasible if the two languages are typologically similar, and thus, in such cases, the foreign features can be easily integrated into the recipient’s system (“retentionist” position).¹⁵ Cotenau (1957: 147), Thomason and Kaufman (1988: 15), Thomason (2001: 11) and many others have criticized this position and have argued that the transfer of structure does not depend solely on linguistic factors but is mainly conditioned by the intensity of contact and the degree of bilingualism (“diffusionist” position).¹⁶ According to this approach, anything could be transferred provided that there is very intense contact and high bilingualism in the community in question. However, the case of Griko seems to falsify this claim, since, as shown in (1a-2a), there is a systematic avoidance of the Romance inflection in spite of the fact that Griko speakers have been exposed to the dominant language for a very long period (since ancient times) and are undoubtedly fully bilingual.

It should be noticed that in language-contact studies, the transfer of inflectional morphology has been met with vast skepticism, even among people who have adopted the retentionist position. For instance, Sapir (1921: 206) has observed that morphemic diffusion is confined to derivational categories and that among structurally similar languages, inflectional morphology is hard to be borrowed. A plausible explanation to the difficulty of transferring inflection has been provided by Thomason (2001: 69) who has argued that this difficulty is due to the nature of inflection itself, which displays characteristics of a tightly structured and highly organized morphological system. In fact, while derivational morphemes may have existence of their own, and are not organized into sets of forms, inflectional morphemes are part of well-organized paradigms. However, rare examples of transferring inflectional material may occur (Bakker 1997), but this borrowing is not unconstrained.¹⁷ Gardani (2008: 46) has argued that beside the extra-linguistic factors related to extensive bilingualism and intense contact, the transfer of highly bound

¹⁵ A weaker version of the retentionist position has been put forward by Jakobson (1938: 54) who has proposed that foreign structural elements could enter a language if they comply with its own development tendencies.

¹⁶ According to Gardani (2008: 16-18) the turning point in the field was Weinreich’s (1953) work who criticized the retentionist position and provided instances of transfer of highly bound morphemes, under non-favourable structural conditions.

¹⁷ Bakker (1997) has attested the borrowing of entire verbal paradigms in the Agia Varvara Romani, a language spoken by Roma people in the suburbs of Athens (Greece).

inflectional morphemes becomes possible if (a) they attach not only to borrowed but also to native words of the receiving language, and (b) they preserve the function they carry out in the donor language. Naturally, these criteria presuppose that the two systems in contact share the same properties with respect to inflection, otherwise, unless the recipient language has changed typology, neither the native words would accept foreign inflectional endings, nor the function of these endings would be kept the same in the recipient language.

As far as Griko is concerned, there is no real burden for the satisfaction of the above criteria, since, in both Greek and Romance, verbal inflection is fusional, the person-number ending has the same morpho-syntactic function, and it combines with the same morphological category, i.e. with roots or stems. Given the most favourable socio-linguistic context for the donor language, and the high bilingualism of the Griko community, one may, thus, wonder why Greek inflection is maintained in all verbal paradigms, even with bases of Romance origin. To Sapir's (1921: 206) suggestion¹⁸ that it is easier to borrow derivational morphemes than inflectional ones, I would add that the reluctance of the Griko speakers to borrow the Romance person/number endings is due to the fusional, non-easily separable character of these inflectional markers (portmanteau morphemes) which makes them less transparent than the monofunctional derivational ones. I, thus, align with Dressler et al. (1987: 111-116) who have proposed that polyfunctionality is an impeding factor of borrowing (see also Gardani 2008: 46 and Aikhenwald 2008: 33 for the same assertion).

On the basis of the above observations with respect to borrowing in Griko, the premise so far is that extra-linguistic factors of social, economic and historical nature, which lead to long-term intense contact and diffused bilingualism, may set up the context for extensive borrowing. Nevertheless, intra-linguistic factors, such as the nature and content of the candidate element, play a decisive role on whether this element will be borrowed or not. Comparing now the Griko with the Heptanesian data, one could discern that the adoption of non-native verbs is not the same in the two dialects, which differ with respect to the amount and type of transferred material. This is not surprising, since it has already been noticed that attitudes towards non-native forms may vary between communities (Aikhenvald 2008: 39). However, there must be a reason for such variation. As noted above, in Griko verbal loans, only the Romance root is retained; the Romance ending is truncated and replaced by the corresponding Greek one. Furthermore, the link between the root and the ending is established by an integrating element *-e-*, which assigns to the word the verbal category and the appropriate inflection class. Therefore, Griko has followed the indirect strategy for adapting verbs into its system (Wichman and Wohlgemuth 2008). Crucially, the verbalizer *-e-* is nothing but the well-known derivational suffix, *-ev-*, used in Greek derivational structures to create verbs out of nouns or adjectives (Ralli 2005), as shown by the following examples:

- (3) SMG
- | | | | |
|----|-----------------------|----|-----------------|
| a. | xor(os) ¹⁹ | -> | xor-ev-o |
| | 'dance' | | 'I dance' |
| b. | ayri(os) | | ayri-ev-o |
| | 'wild' | | 'I become wild' |

Note that *-ev-* has lost its final /v/ due to a phonological law which erases voiced fricative consonants in intervocalic position (Karanastasis 1997: 34-35):

- (4) Griko SMG

¹⁸ For the same claim, see also Weinreich (1953: 31-33).

¹⁹ *-os* in parenthesis is the inflectional ending expressing case (nominative) and number (singular). Note that in Greek, the nominative singular form is the citation form for nouns and adjectives.

leome	leyome	‘we say’
strao ²⁰	stravos	‘twisted’
simai	simaði	‘mark’

However, this /v/ surfaces when it is followed by a consonant, as is the case of the past tense (aorist), where the stem ending in /v/ is combined with the perfective marker *-s-*. As further noticed by Karanastasis (1997: 34), the cluster /vs/ becomes by assimilation /fs/ and ultimately /ts/ being subject to the so-called ‘tsitacism’ phenomenon.

(5) Griko

- a. kore-o
dance-IMPERF.PRES.1SG
‘I dance’
- b. korev-s-a -> korefsa -> koretsa
dance-PERF-PAST.1SG
‘I danced’

It is worth pointing out that the use of the verbalizer *-ev-* in Griko is similar to that in another Modern Greek dialect, Pontic,²¹ which has been affected by Turkish. In fact, Pontic accommodates its loan verbs with the assistance of *-ev-*, as opposed to other dialects influenced by Turkish, e.g. Aivaliot,²² which use another common derivational affix, *-iz-*, as an integrating element. Consider, for instance, the data in (6):

- (6)a. Griko nat-e-o ‘swim’ (< Salentino NATARE)
- b. Pontic kazan-ev-o ‘earn, become rich’ (< Turkish KAZAN(MAK))²³
- c. Aivaliot kazad(i)-iz-u ~ (~)²⁴

In an effort to explain why certain dialects show *-ev-* while other dialects make use of *-iz-*, one may appeal to the difference of productivity from one dialect to another between various verb-forming derivational operations. One may suggest that derivation through *-ev-* is particularly productive in Pontic and Griko, while derivation with *-iz-* is productive in other dialects, among which, Aivaliot. However, it seems to be more to this: Pontic is one of the first attested and most conservative Modern Greek dialects; it has kept a number of ancient features and shows traces of modern dialectal phenomena already in the 5th c. AD (Manolessou and Pantelidis 2011).²⁵ In fact, Pontic verb formation with *-ev-* could also be one of these features, since derived verbs in *-ev-* belonged to a very productively built category in Classical Greek (5th – 4th c. BC).²⁶ Along the same lines, in Griko, the high productivity of verb formation in *-ev-* could also be considered as a phenomenon originating from Ancient Greek, similarly to other phenomena of the same type, which have been pointed out in works, such as those by Rohlfis (1933), Caratzas (1958) and

²⁰ In Griko, there is no word-final /s/.

²¹ Pontic was spoken in Pontus (north-east Turkey) till the beginning of 20th century, when Christian Pontic speakers were forced to abandon their land. Nowadays, they can be found all over Greece, but primarily in enclaves in Epirus, Macedonia and Western Thrace. Interestingly, the dialect is still spoken in Pontus by a small number of Muslim inhabitants (Mackridge 1987), as well as in certain areas of Georgia and the Northern Caucasus.

²² Aivaliot, like Pontic, was once spoken in western Asia Minor. After the exchange of populations in 1923, most Aivaliot refugees moved to Greece. Today, few hundreds of speakers can be found in refugee enclaves on the island of Lesbos. See Ralli to appear for details on the formation of verbal loans in Aivaliot.

²³ *-mak* is the infinitival marker in Turkish.

²⁴ In Aivaliot, verb borrowing from Turkish is based on the past-tense stem, ending in *-dl-* (Ralli to appear). E.g. Turkish *kazandı-* -> Aivaliot *kazad(i)-izu*, where double /i/ is simplified.

²⁵ Manolessou and Pantelidis (2011) have investigated the presence of the /e/ vowel in Pontic, which originates from the Ancient Greek ‘η’ (pronounced as /ε:/).

²⁶ See Chantraine (1945: 244) for details on the productivity of the formation of verbs in *-ev(o)*.

Karanastasis (1997). Thus, there is good reason to suppose that Griko has followed a parallel development with Pontic: it may originate from Hellenistic, Koine like the other Modern Greek Dialects, as many linguists have already suggested (among them, Browning 1969, Horrocks 1997, Fanciullo 2001, 2006, Ledgeway 1998 and Manolessou 2005), but, as is the case with the most conservative Modern Greek dialects, it still preserves features from Ancient Greek.

6. Verb borrowing in Heptanesian - comparison with Griko

Interestingly, while the Griko verbal loans have been structurally analyzed and this analysis has led to the retention of the root and the substitution of the Romance endings for the Greek ones, Heptanesian follows a different path in borrowing Romance verbs: as shown in (1b), the entire infinitival word, i.e. root and ending (-ar, -er/-ir), seems to have been retained. For example, the Venetian verbs *protestar* ‘protest’, *despóner* ‘dispose’ and *patír* ‘suffer’ appear in Heptanesian as *protestaro*, *desponero* and *patiro*, respectively. The procedure of borrowing the entire infinitival word is not surprising: as noted by King (2000), in borrowing, words are often transferred first, and transfer of structure comes at a later stage.

Nevertheless, as shown in (2b), the Venetian/Italian loans were morphologically reanalyzed/recategorized into stems, and in order to be used as words, they were subsequently hellenicized through combination with the inflectional endings of the verbal paradigm of the first inflection class. I would like to suggest that the specific reanalysis was induced by the property of Greek morphology to be stem based in that words consist of a bound element, the stem, and an inflectional ending.²⁷

Comparing the accommodation of borrowed verbs in the two dialects, Heptanesian and Griko, it becomes clear that although these verbs are more or less of the same origin, i.e. Romance, their accommodation follows a different integration strategy, depending on the recipient dialect. Heptanesian, uses the direct insertion (Wichman and Wohlgenuth 2008: 97-99), according to which the roots of the donor are plugged directly into the verbal morphology of the recipient. In contrast, the indirect insertion is used in Griko, involving the assistance of a verbalizer *-e(v)-*, situated between the root and the ending.

A plausible explanation is needed why there is such a striking contrast between the two dialects with respect to the integration strategies of borrowing verbs of Romance origin. In other words, there must be a reason why Griko analyzes the verbs and keeps only the root, while Heptanesian adopts the whole inflected form. As already noted with respect to the diffusionist position (e.g. Thomason and Kaufman 1988: 67, Thomason 2001: 70-71), external factors, such as the long duration of contact, socio-economic dominance on the part of one group upon the other, and high-level bilingualism induce heavy borrowing involving not only mere vocabulary, but also structure. The case of Griko does not seem to comply with this claim, at least, as far as the integration of loan verbs is concerned, since the verb is not only deprived of its Romance ending, but the Griko speakers introduce the derivational affix *-ev-* in order to hellenicize it with the use of the endings of the first inflection class.

At this point, I would like to suggest that intense contact, presupposing extensive bilingualism is not only relevant for heavy structural borrowing, but it may also be the cause of restricting structural borrowing. I believe that the Griko speakers who have high

²⁷ As shown by Ralli (to appear), this property shows in verbal borrowing even when the donor language is of completely different typology from Greek. For instance, it appears in the case of Asia Minor Greek loan verbs which originate from the agglutinating Turkish.

competence skills in Romance, and are under an excessive pressure of the dominant language on every aspect of life, i.e. social, economic, cultural and religious, are well aware that the Italian *-are* or *-ere/-ire* mark the infinitive. Since there is no morphologically realized infinitive in Greek, they subtract the infinitival marker from the verb and replace it with the Greek person/number endings. In contrast, the Heptanesian speakers who had either a low command of Romance or no command at all (section 3.2) do not seem to have any difficulties in importing the entire word and hellenicizing it with the addition of the appropriate inflectional endings. In other words, high bilingualism may trigger, but also forbid the amount and type of the transferred material which may occur in a language-contact situation; it may facilitate, and at the same time constrain borrowability.

6.1 The *-ar-* derivational suffix

It is worth stressing that the presence of loan verbs of Romance origin in Heptanesian, as well as in other parts of Greece which underwent a Venetian domination (e.g. Crete), has enriched the morphology of verb formation in SMG and in several of its dialects. This presence gave birth to the introduction of a new derivational suffix, *-ar-*, originating from the Romance infinitival marker *-ar(e)*. The particular suffix resulted from a structural reanalysis of the Romance loan verbs, according to which *-ar-* was interpreted as a verb forming suffix. This time, the morphology of the donor language, i.e. Venetian or Italian, seems to have contributed to this development, together with the indigenous structural properties of Greek. I believe that the recategorization of the Romance infinitival marker into a Greek derivational suffix was triggered by the existence of certain noun-verb pairs in the donor language, like *arrivo* ‘arrival’ - *arrivar(e)* ‘to arrive’ or *protesta* ‘protest’ - *protestar(e)* ‘to protest’, where the basic formal difference between the noun and the verb is the infinitival mark *-ar(e)*. Comparing these pairs with some corresponding Greek examples, such as those listed in (7), it is not hard to understand how *-ar(e)* could be interpreted as having the same function with the Greek verb-forming suffixes:

- (7)a. *-iz-* *zoɣraf-iz-o* < *zoɣraf-os*
 ‘to paint’ ‘painter’
 b. *-on-* *lað-on-o* < *lað-i*
 ‘to oil’ ‘oil’
 c. *-ev-* *xor-ev-o* < *xor-os*
 ‘to dance’ ‘dance’

The suffixes *-iz-*, *-on-*, and *-ev-*, occupy the same slot in the derived verb forms, i.e., the position between the stem and the ending. Given the fact that there is no morphologically realized infinitive in Greek, the infinitival marker was taken to be responsible for denoting the verbal category, and thus, was reinterpreted as a verb-forming suffix. Obviously, the marker *-ar(e)* was chosen instead of the marker *-er(e)* / *-ir(e)* due to the high frequency of the Italian verbs in *-are*.

Crucially, old dialectal texts from areas which were under Venetian domination (e.g. Crete and Corfu) show that *-ar-* was initially used for building verbs on the basis of items of Romance origin. With time, the productivity of its application was considerably expanded as to cover the formation of verbs of Germanic origin too (mainly English, see 8-9 below). Nowadays, occurrences with *-ar-* are so productively created, that in a small number of cases, *-ar-* seems to compete with *-iz-*, one of the most frequent Greek derivational suffixes, which appears with both native and Turkish bases (9d).²⁸ More

²⁸ Greek shows a range of competing verbalizers, but the common verbalizer for Turkish bases is the suffix *-iz-* (e.g. Greek *meremetizo* ‘to repair’ < Turkish MERAMET(LEMEK)).

importantly, *-ar-* is present in derived verbs, not only in Heptanesian or in the other dialects which have been affected by Venetian, but also in SMG (9):

- (8) Heptanesian
- | | | | | |
|-------------------------------|-----------|------------------------------|------------|-------|
| a. timoni-ar-o | < Greek | timoni | < Venetian | timon |
| ‘be at the helm’ | | ‘steering-wheel, helm’ | | |
| b. proposaro | < English | propose | | |
| ‘to propose’ | | | | |
| c. trapanaro or drapanaro | < Greek | drapan(o) or Italian trapano | | |
| ‘to open holes with a scythe’ | | ‘scythe’ | | |
| d. rizikaro | < Greek | rizik(o) | | |
| ‘to dare, to venture’ | | ‘fate, destiny’ | | |
- (9) SMG and dialects²⁹
- | | | | | |
|----------------------------|-----------|-----------|--|--|
| a. makijaro | < French | maquiller | | |
| ‘to make up’ | | | | |
| b. parkaro | < English | park | | |
| ‘to park’ | | | | |
| c. lufaro | < Greek | lufa | | |
| ‘to lie low, to lie doggo’ | | | | |
| d. juxaro / juxaizo | < Turkish | yuha | | |
| ‘to hoot, to boo’ | | | | |

Last but not least, it is important to notice that the passage of the Romance infinitival marker *-ar(e)* from the inflectional status to derivational one is significant at a more theoretical level. First, it proves that the notion of productivity plays a major role in the morphological change, since, among the different forms of the infinitival marker, *-are*, *-ere/-ire*, Greek has chosen the most frequent and productive one to transform into a derivational suffix. Recall that the contribution of productivity to the adaptation of borrowed elements has also been pointed out with respect to the choice of the *-ev-* integrating suffix in Griko. Second, in spite of the fact that Heptanesian shows a different path from Griko for the accommodation of its Romance loan verbs (after the reanalysis of *-ar(e)* into a derivational suffix), it also seems to conform to the general morphological structure displayed by the common Greek derived verbs, i.e. [[stem Dsuf] Infl]. Thus, independently of how the borrowed elements seem to be initially accommodated, the final output of the change matches the indigenous structural properties of the recipient language. Third, the transformation of the infinitival marker into a derivational suffix offers a well-argued example of degrammaticalization, because it illustrates the change of an element from a more grammatical to a less grammatical status. Moreover, it argues in favour of Joseph’s (2003) position that grammaticalization should be distinguished from morphologization, since morphologization could incorporate both grammaticalization (i.e. instances of words becoming functional morphemes) and degrammaticalization (i.e. inflectional markers becoming derivational morphemes, such as the *-ar-* case).

7. Conclusions

As Haspelmath (2008: 43) asserts, “understanding the nature of language change presupposes identifying constraints on language change. If there were no such constraints,

²⁹ Depending on the dialect, *-ar(o)* may display a form variation. For instance, in the dialect of Lesbos, it shows an allomorph *-ern(u)* in the present tense, *-u* being the person/number ending. E.g. *park-ern(u)* ‘I park’. See Ralli (in preparation) for details on the formation of the Lesbian *-ern(u)* from the Romance *-AR(E)*.

then [...] it would have been difficult to understand why and how change occurs”. In this paper, I have shown that borrowing is constrained by the intra-linguistic actuality of the languages involved in a contact situation, in that the type of the transferred material seems to be determined mainly by the structure of the recipient language and its productive mechanisms, but also by certain properties of the donor. The process and the outcomes of language contact depend on a number of extra-linguistic factors, such as the duration of contact, the prestige enjoyed by the donor language and high bilingualism, which may trigger borrowing and under which anything could in principle be subject to transfer. However, I have argued that these factors may equally restrict borrowability and block extensive borrowing, since the speakers’ awareness of the structure of the donor language may cause reluctance in borrowing features which do not agree with those of their native language. Finally, I have provided hints for stressing the importance of language contact into linguistic change and linguistic theory, since borrowing may enrich the grammar of the recipient language and form a scientific ground for testing theoretical issues and hypotheses.

8. References

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