

PRIN 2017 - Models of language variation and change: new evidence from language contact

Reports on the major dialectal areas in Southern Italy

Campania

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0. Introduction

The toponym “Campania” has presumably an Etruscan origin: it is assumed to be the Latin adaptation of the ethnonym “Cappani”, i.e. the inhabitants of Capua, one of the most important Etruscan colonies in the area, founded in the 9th century BC (De Blasi 2005). Nevertheless, “Campania” did not refer in ancient times to what we call Campania today. The Romans used to label Campania only the area around Vesuvius up to the plains including Capua and the so-called *Terra di Lavoro* (Southern Lazio and part of the administrative area of Caserta) while the areas of *Cilentum*, *Samnium* and *Irpinia* were not included. Only after the unification of Italy in 1861 the term Campania was extended also to these areas, whereas part of the *Terra di Lavoro* was wripped out of Campania and assigned to Lazio during the Fascist era.

1. History

1.1. Pre-Roman and Roman Age

Etruscans were one of the first populations that installed some colonies in the area but were soon defeated by Greeks (VI century BC, see De Blasi 2006: 4), who created powerful and rich colonies (especially along the coase), of which Cuma was the most important one. The other areas of the region that we call today “Campania” were inhabited by other populations, which sometimes contended for some territories with the Greeks: the area south of the Sele river (Cilento) was inhabited by the Lucanians, whereas the internal hills of the east were occupied by the Samnites and the Oscans. The Romans, who began to penetrate the region after the Samnite wars (343-290 BC), partitioned the territory following the abovementioned ethnical divisions.

1.2. Middle Ages

During the Middle Ages, Campania was disputed between the Longobards and the Byzantines. The kingdom of the Longobards, whose capital was Benevento, stretched from the valley of the Sangro river to that of Volturno, and included most of the current central-eastern Campania. By contrast, the Byzantines controlled the most important harbors, such as Amalfi, Gaeta and Naples. In this period, Naples began to play an important connecting role between the “Latin” area (the western part) and the “Greek” one. It later became the hegemonic city of the area in the 12th century. On the eastern side of the region, the Duchy of Benevento was an important hub for the diffusion of Benedictine monasteries. After the Normans’ conquest of southern Italy, in the 11th century, Benevento rebelled against Normans and surrendered to the Pope in 1052. This city remained *patrimonium Petri* until the unification of Italy, in 1861. During the Norman age, southern Italy was unified under the kingdom of Federico II, and Naples became an important cultural center, where the first university

not linked to religious power in Europe was founded (De Blasi 2006). With the decline of the Norman dynasty, southern Italy underwent foreign dominations, among which the French domination of Anjou (1266), that promoted Naples as the capital of the Kingdom.

1.3. Modern and Contemporary Ages

In the 15th century, the Aragonese dynasty took over and transformed Naples into an important center for economy and commerce. Southern Italy remained in foreign hands until 1734, when Charles III of Bourbon took power and gave the capital a new image: the construction of the Royal Palace of Caserta and the San Carlo Theatre date back to this period. Naples ceased to be the capital of southern Italy in 1861. Although it had been the capital of a unitary kingdom for about six centuries, it never managed to unify southern Italy linguistically: the influence of Neapolitan certainly played an important role in the area, but it was apparently limited to single morphological, lexical or phonetic borrowings. This is likely to be due to the fact that the city was dominated by foreign rulers for a long time, and for this reason the Romance variety spoken in Naples was never promoted as the official language of the kingdom and never spread as such. The Neapolitan dialect was an official language for a very short period of time, i.e. only during the Parthenopean Republic in 1799 (De Blasi and Fanciullo 2002, Fanciullo 2015).

There are also cultural factors that may explain why the dialects of Naples never gave rise to a linguistic *koiné* in southern Italy. As a matter of fact, among the people of southern Italy, there is (and there has always been) some ambivalent attitude towards their former capital. There is no doubt that Neapolitan has been, and still is, albeit to a lesser extent, a prestigious variety because of its traditional culture (music, poetry, theatre). Nevertheless, the chaotic vitality and the labyrinth-like confusion (one might think about the composite and multiform background of the events occurring to Andreuccio da Perugia, in Boccaccio's famous tale) of Naples has often inspired a sneaky sense of suspicion. A note of folklore could help the reader to better understand this way of thinking. In many southern dialects, there is an idiomatic expression, used to send to hell a person, that sounds something like '*va lu piglia a Napuli*' (lit. 'go and take it to Naples!') (De Blasi and Fanciullo 2002: 629).

2. An overview of the dialects of Campania



As shown in the map above (adapted from Pellegrini 1977), the dialects of Campania belong to the so-called upper southern Italo-Romance dialects, with which they share most of the major isoglosses, such as sonorization of post-nasal consonants (1), the assimilation of Latin clusters ND > [nn] and MB > [mm] (2), and the generalized reduction to all final vowels into schwa (3):

- (1) kandà < CANTARE ‘to sing’; tjem̩bə < TEMPUS ‘time’
- (2) kwannə < QUANDO ‘when’; kjummə < PLUMBUM ‘lead’
- (3) fiλλə < FILIU/A/IAE ‘son/s, daughter/s’

2.1. Vowel system

Most dialects of Campania show the so-called “common Romance” vowel system (see Tab.1), with the exception of southern Cilento, which displays the Sicilian vowel system (see § 5.1):

Ī	Ī Ē	Ĕ	Ǻ	Ŏ	Ō Ū	Ū
i	e	ɛ	a	ɔ	o	u

Table 1

- (4) i. filə < FĪLU ‘thread’
- ii. nevə < NĪVE ‘snow’ and telə < TĒLA ‘canvas’
- iii. terrə < TĔRRA ‘land’,
- iv. kanə < CANE ‘dog’,
- v. fərtə < FŎRTE ‘strong’
- vi. vofə < VŌCE ‘voice’ krofə < CRŪCE ‘cross’,
- vii. lufə < LŪCE ‘light’.

2.2. Consonantism

In the dialects of Campania, as in the rest of the upper southern dialects, intervocalic unvoiced consonants preserve the Latin properties. Instead, voiced consonants are characterized by an allophonic alternation between an occlusive realization in post-consonantic position¹ (*strong* position) and a fricative realization word-initially and in intervocalic position (*weak* position):

	WEAK POSITION		STRONG POSITION	
(5)	<i>a</i> < ILLA	[v]očə	<i>a</i> < AD _[+RF]	[bb]očə
	the	voice	at	voice
		‘the voice’		‘verbally’
(6)	<i>o</i> < ILLU	[r]itə	<i>tre</i> < TRES _[+RF]	[dd]etə
	the	finger	three	finger
		‘the finger’		‘three fingers’
(7)	<i>a</i> < ILLA	[ɣ]allinə	tre _[+RF]	[gg]allinə
	the	hen	three	hen
		‘the hen’		‘three hens’

3. Criteria for a classification of the dialects of Campania

Within the traditional literature, several criteria to classify the dialects of Campania have been proposed (Radtke 1988, Avolio 1989, Sornicola 1997). Among phenomena used for classification, Del Puente and Fanciullo (2004) choose the ones which are uniformly found together in that part of region which was the “core” Campania for the Romans (see §1). Although they are not absent outside of Campania, they have a scattered distribution beyond the boundaries of this area. Such phenomena are the following: metaphony (§ 3.1); absence of vowel alternations triggered by the syllabic structure (§ 3.2); Rafforzamento Fonosintattico (henceforth RF) triggered by clitic and neuter determiners (= mass nouns, abstract concepts, colors) (§ 3.3.); RF triggered by plural feminine determiners (§ 3.4).

3.1. Metaphony

Broadly speaking, metaphony is an instance of vowel harmony, whereby some phonetic traits characterizing final unstressed vowels can influence some other phonetic traits of the stressed vowels. Although metaphony was in principle a phonetic phenomenon, metaphonetic outcomes brought about important changes at morphosyntactic level, as we will show in this paragraph (see Guardiano et al. 2022). In the upper southern dialects, metaphony is triggered by the continuers of the Latin final vowels -I and -U and affects stressed root middle vowels /e, ε/ and /ɔ, o/. There are at most two different combinations of metaphonetic changes affecting stressed vowels: a) raising and diphthongization, or b) just raising. The former combination is typical of the core Campania and is generally known as “southern metaphony” (8) - (11), whereas the latter involves north-eastern Sannio and is called “Sabine metaphony”. To be more precise, in the Sabine metaphony the raising of Latin long vowel is the same of southern metaphony in (8) and (9), whereas the diphthongization of short vowels

¹ Morphemes that trigger RF (Rafforzamento Fonosintattico) are considered as post-consonantic contexts.

shown in (10) and (11) is substituted by another raising process shown in (12) and (13) (see De Blasi and Fanciullo 2002: 630).

- (8) /e/ → /i/ mesə < MENSE → misə < *MENSI ‘month → months’
 (9) /o/ → /u/ nəpotə < NEPŌTE → nəputə < NEPŌTI ‘nephew → nephews’
 (10) /ɛ/ → /je/: pɛrə < PĚDE → pjɛrə < PĚDI ‘foot → feet’
 (11) /ɔ/ → /uo/ tɔstə < TŎSTA → tuostə < *TŎSTU ‘hard.F → hard.M’
 (12) /ɛ/ → /e/: pɛdə < PĚDE → pedə < PĚDI ‘foot → feet’
 (13) /ɔ/ → /o/ tɔstə < TŎSTA → tostə < *TŎSTU ‘hard.F → hard.M’

3.1.1. *Metaphony and morpho-syntactic distinctions*

Since all final vowels have melted into [ə], the morpho-syntactic distinctions originally conveyed through final vowels became opaque, as shown in (3). However, thanks to metaphony, such distinctions are partially (i. e., only lexemes having stressed vowels /e, ɛ/ and /ɔ, o/) retrieved. For example, in (11) (and in its “Sabine” equivalent in (13)) the vowel alternation triggered by metaphony is the only strategy that allows to distinguish gender, whereas the metaphonetic alternations in (8)-(11) distinguish the singular from plural interpretation (Guardiano et al 2022). Other instances of partially retrieved morpho-syntactic features are found in the verbs. The examples in (14) show the ‘normal’ situation, while the centralization of final words blurring (some) person distinctions, whereas the examples (15) - (17) show the ‘metaphonetic’ cases, where some person distinctions are retrieved (De Blasi 2006: 28):

- (14) i. ijə parlə ‘I speak’
 ii. tu parlə ‘You speak’
 iii. issə parlə ‘He speaks’
 (15) i. pɔrtə ‘I bring’
 ii. puortə ‘You bring’
 (16) i. sɛndə ‘I hear’
 ii. siendə ‘You hear’
 (17) i. korrə ‘I run’
 ii. kurrə ‘You run’

Since these vowel alternations originally triggered by metaphony are the only strategy to convey some morphosyntactic features, this mechanism – which Fanciullo (1994) calls “morphometaphony” – became increasingly productive and gave rise to new analogical alternations not etymologically predictable. For example, in (18) we would not expect any alternation between the masculine and feminine form, for stressed [u] < Ū cannot be further raised, whereas in (19) we would expect [ɛ] < Ě to undergo diphthongization both for singular and plural, for both final -*U and -*I can trigger metaphony. Yet, the alternations are produced in analogy with other etymologically predictable alternations shown in (9) and (10), from De Blasi and Fanciullo (2002: 633).

- (18) nfosə < INFŪSA ‘wet.F’ → nfuosə < INFŪSUM ‘wet.M’
 (19) mbrellə < *ŪMBRĚLLU(M) ‘umbrella’ → mbrjellə < *ŪMBRĚLLI ‘umbrellas’

In the dialect of Ischia, metaphony extends to some feminine plural nouns, on the model of *torrə* < TŪRRE(M) ‘tower’ ~ *turrə* < *TŪRRI ‘towers’ (De Blasi and Fanciullo 2002: 633):

(20) *skaupə* < SCŌPA ‘broom’ → *skupə* < SCŌPAE ‘brooms’

(21) *rauttə* < *CRŪPTA ‘cave’ → *ruttə* < *CRŪPTAE ‘caves’

3.2. Absence of vowel alternations triggered by the syllabic structure

Another feature that distinguishes Campania from other upper southern dialects is the absence of vowel alternations triggered by the syllabic context (Del Puente and Fanciullo 2004: 153). This kind of vowel alternations can be found, although scattered, in a vast Romance-speaking area which, stretching from the French and Franco-Provençal language areas, characterizes a major part of the Rhaeto-Romance and northern Italo-Romance and goes down to the dialects of Abruzzo and Puglia up to the Bari area and to Eastern Lucania, although in Southern Italy this phenomenon is not phonologized (Lausberg 1971: 216ff). For example, in Apulian varieties, such as Altamura, stressed vowels in open syllables carry diphthongization, whereas vowels remain unchanged in checked syllables:

(22) i. /ɛ/: open syllable *p[ei]tə* ‘foot’, checked syllable *t[ɛ]rrə* ‘land’

ii. /a/: open syllable *k[ei]nə* ‘dog’, checked syllable *kav[a]ddə* ‘horse’

(Altamura, Loporcaro 1997: 340-42)

Campania, on the other hand, seems immune to this kind of vowel alternations: vowels remain unchanged both in open and checked syllable:

(23) i. /ɛ/: open syllable *p[ɛ]rə* ‘foot’, checked syllable *t[ɛ]rrə* ‘land’

ii. /a/: open syllable *k[a]nə* ‘dog’, checked syllable *kav[a]llə* ‘horse’

Del Puente and Fanciullo (2004: 157-159)

3.3. RF and the relics of the Latin neuter

Rohlf's (1966-69:108ff) points out that the dialects of Campania have preserved neuter gender in some nouns: in particular, neuter gender distinctions seem to be visible on originally neuter Latin nouns denoting mass entities (such as *vinum*, *salt*, *mel*, *lac*, *lardum*, *serum*, *ferrum*), and they have also been extended to other mass nouns that had masculine gender (such as *panis*, *caseus*, *piscis*, *sanguis*) in Latin. Such distinctions are usually not realized through as bound morphemes on nouns/adjectives like in Latin, but only through RF, triggered by the definite article on the consonant of the following noun. The form of this article is *o*, which is superficially identical to the masculine one. Despite this superficial similarity, they have different etymologies. In fact, the masculine *o* < Lat. ILLUM, with final -M falling without triggering RF. By contrast, the neuter *o* < Lat. ILLUD, with the final -D that, after being deleted, triggers RF on the following noun (De Blasi 2006:36):

- (24) i. o ssalə 'the salt'
 ii. o ppanə 'the bread'
 iii. o kkafè 'the coffee'
 iv. o mmalə 'the bad'
 v. o rrusə 'the colour'
 vi. o mmanzà 'the food'

When these nouns get countable interpretation, the article does not trigger RF (25), so it can be considered as a masculine determiner:

- (25) i. o vekə o kafè
 3S.M.CL see.1S the.M.S caffè
 'As for the caffè, I can see it'
 ii. o bbekə o kafè
 3S.N.CL see.1S the.N coffe
 'As for the coffe, I can see it'

De Blasi and Fanciullo (2002:631)

In some other dialects of the region, even if mass morphology is not visible on nouns, it is codified through articles. For example, in the dialect of Vallata (which is part of the eastern part of the modern region, the Irpinia), we find a dedicated article denoting mass entities, *ru* and, another one denoting masculine, *lo*:

- (26) ru ppane 'the bread'
 (27) lo kane 'the dog'

De Blasi (2006: 52)

At some point in diachrony, speakers might have considered RF as very closely linked to the mass interpretation, so much so that several mass nouns, even if they are feminine, can undergo RF when introduced by a resumptive clitic, which assumes the "neuter" form *o* < ILLUD and not, as expected, the feminine form *a* < ILLA:

- (28) a karnə niššu:nə o bbə
 the.F.S meat nobody 3S.N.CLI want.3S
 'Ad for the meat, nobody wants it'
 (29) a muttsarellə o kkattə tu
 the.F.S mozzarella 3S.N.CLI buy.2S you
 'As for the mozzarella, you'll buy it'
 (30) piállə a rrəbbə e o jjetə
 take.3S the.F.S stuff and 3S.N.CLI throw.3S
 'He carries on his stuff and he throws it'
 (31) a lutammə o mməttévənə
 the.F.S mud 3S.N.CLI put.IMP.3P
 'As for the mud, they used to put it...'

Salerno, Cascone (2014) in Loporcaro (2017:124)

- (32) i. o nɔttə ‘the darkness’
 ii. a nɔttə ‘the night’
 (33) i. o kkartə ‘the paper’
 ii. a kartə ‘the card’

Naples, Avolio (1996: 113)

RF with neuter/mass nouns is almost absent north of the Volturno river (in the administrative area of Caserta) and has a scattered distribution in Sannio and Irpinia. As far as the administrative area of Salerno is concerned, the more we proceed southwards, the less these forms are found (De Blasi and Fanciullo 2002, De Blasi 2006).

3.4. RF and feminine plural nouns

Another phenomenon typically found in Campania is the RF triggered by plural feminine resumptive clitics and determiners:

- (34) i. a guaglione
 the.F.S girl
 ‘the girl’
 ii. e gguaglione
 the.F.P girl
 ‘the girls’
 (35) i. kella melə
 that.F.S apple
 ‘that apple’
 ii. kelli mmele
 that.F.P apple
 ‘those apples’
 (36) i. a vekə
 3S.F.OBJ see.1S
 ‘I see her’
 ii. e bbekə
 3P.F.OBJ see.1S
 ‘I see them’

De Blasi (2006: 33-35)

Like the neuter determiners and clitics seen in § 3.3, feminine articles do not trigger RF north of the Volturno river, in part of Sannio and it is found less frequently south of Salerno.

4. Some scattered morphosyntactic notes

4.1. Number morphology and bare nouns

We have already said that in the southern Italo-Romance dialects, final unstressed vowels are centralized in [ə]. This led to the loss of morphological distinctions of gender and number (Guardiano et al 2022). However, this does not hold for all areas of Campania. For example, in the southern part of Cilento and in parts of Irpinia and Sannio final unstressed vowels are preserved and, consequently, morphological exponence of gender and number is preserved as well (Iannace 1983: 26, 70):

- (37) i. kannila ‘candle’
 ii. kannili ‘candles’
 (38) i. kriaturu ‘child (male)’
 ii. kriatura ‘child (female)’
 iii. kriaturi ‘children’

Camerota, Del Puente (2009: 152)

- (39) i. fiλλo/i ‘son/s’
 ii. fiλλα/ə ‘daughter/s’

San Leucio del Sannio, Iannace (1983: 26, 70)

The morphological realization of number on nouns has important consequences on the realization of *bare* nouns (Guardiano et al. 2022). Crosslinguistically, the possibility for a language to license nominal structures with no visible articles/determiners in argument position has been connected with number exponent on nouns (see, for instance, Delfitto and Schrotten 1991, Crisma and Longobardi 2020:

- (40) J’ai mange *(des) pommes

As for the dialects of Campania, the examples given in (37) - (39) for Cilento and Sannio show that nouns, in these dialects, preserve final vowels and, consequently, retain robust number morphology. Therefore, we would expect in these languages argument bare nouns to be possible. This prediction is met, for example, in the Cilentano dialect of Felitto², whose morphological number exponence is comparable to the one of Camerota in (37) and (38):

- (41) e tsii mjei skukkjularunu fasuli
 the.M.P uncle.M.P my.M.P peel.3P.PAST bean.M.P
 ‘My uncles have peeled beans’

By contrast, in most upper southern dialects, final vowels are centralized as shown in (3), blurring gender and number distinctions, except for the metaphonetic examples shown in (8) - (10). Therefore, it is not straightforward to predict whether bare nouns can or cannot be licensed in these dialects. A previous analysis had concerned the variety of Santa Maria Capua Vetere (Guardiano *et alii* 2016: 128), where current speakers do not accept bare nouns, so a filler for the D position must be always made visible:

- (42) Gjuvànə sə mangə semp *(e/assaj) spaghètə
 Giovanni SI eat.1/3S always the.P/much spaghetti
 ‘Giovanni always eats a lot of spaghetti’

In Guardiano et al (2022), two other dialects of Campania were added to the sample: Palma Campania and Amalfi. In Palma Campania, bare nouns are accepted only as pivots of existential clauses:

- (43) fə stannə makkjə kə nun sə lləvənə
 LOC stay.3P spot that not SI go.away.3P
 ‘There are spots that are hard to clean’

² I am grateful to Mariangela Cerullo, who kindly provided the data.

By contrast, data collected for the dialect of Amalfi show that bare nouns are acceptable also in object (44) and post-verbal subject (45) position:

- (44) kella dittə frabbəkə kasə grössə
 that.F.S firm build.1/3S house big.F
 ‘That firm builds big houses’
- (45) ennə vənutə turistə spanɲwolə ind o paesə
 have.3P come tourist Spanish in the.M.S village
 ‘Some Spanish tourist came at the village’

Ledgeway (2009) collects data from both older stages and modern ones of Neapolitan, putting together both written and oral sources. As for older stages, we do not expect any restrictions on the possibility of licensing bare nouns, since final vowels were not completely blurred into [ə] until XV century. However, Ledgeway’s data provide bare nouns even for modern stages where all vowels had already melted into [ə] and even today they seem to be accepted in more contexts than those seen for Palma Camapania, except for post-verbal subjects.

- (46) facevano pertose alle mure
 did.3P hole to.the.P wall.P
 ‘They made holes in the walls’ (XVI century)
- (47) Cuoglie fasule e torna fra doje ore
 Pick.2S bean.M.P and come.back.2S.IMP in two.F hour.F.P
 ‘Pick beans and come back in two hours’ (XVII century)
- (48) quannə vedə uommənə sə ncə mena ncuollə
 when see.3S men.M.P SI LOC throw.3S in.neck
 ‘When she sees men, she jumps in their arms’ (XIX century)
- (49) ce sta casə si vilitə
 LOC stay.3S cheese if want.2P
 ‘There’s cheese if you want’ (XX century)
- (50) arrivaeno po’ *(cierti) ammicce
 arrive.3P.PAST then some.M.P friend
 ‘... and then some friends arrived’

Ledgeway (2009: 191)

How to account for these different distributions of bare nouns? Although bare nouns might have been productive at older stages, as shown for Naples in Ledgeway’s data, in the dialects of Palma Campania and Santa Maria Capua Vetere, current speakers do not seem to recognize the role of ə as a morpheme expressing number. Therefore, they do not accept bare nouns. By contrast, by accepting bare nouns, the dialects of Naples and Amalfi show that «final -ə is not merely the “relic” of a phonetic change (weakening of final vowels): it has rather retained the morphological properties of a suffix expressing number information that, though, is not encoded overtly» (Guardiano et al 2022: 24). Therefore, when overt number alternations are realized through the stressed root vowel only, as the metaphonetic cases shown in (8) - (10), final -ə harmonically agrees (Manzini and Savoia 2016) in Number with metaphonetic number alternations, thus replicating number information “silently”.

4.2. Partitive-like possessives

Like other upper southern dialects, in Campania, adnominal possessives are only spelt out post-nominally (Manzini and Savoia 2005, vol. III: 557ff). In definite noun phrases, possessives co-occur with definite determiners:

- (51) a kasa nostra
 The.F.S house.F.S our.F.S
 ‘our house’
- Giffoni

When occurring within indefinite DPs, possessives exhibit a different superficial configuration. In indefinite DPs, possessives are licensed through an additional structural device, i.e. a *de* + -article phrase. In this specific configuration, both the possessive and the article in the *de*-phrase must agree with the head noun they modify:

- (52) nu libbrə r-o tuojo
 a.M book of-the.M.S your.M.S
 ‘a book of yours’
- (53) tre ccumbagnə r-e suojo
 three friend of-the.M.P his.M.P
 ‘three friends of yours’
- (54) cierti ccugginə r-e ssojo
 some.F.P cousin of-the.F.P his.F.P
 ‘Some of his cousins’

Naples, Ledgeway (2009: 263)

Arguably, this syntactic configuration in the past had a partitive value. Ledgeway (2009: 263) reports data from the 17th century, where the head noun does not agree with the possessive:

- (55) no pilo de li suaie
 a.M fur.M.S of the.M.P his.M.P
 ‘a single piece of his fur’
- (56) na trezza de le soie
 a.F braid.F.S of the.F.P his.F.P
 ‘one of his braids’

The same configurations characterizing the possessives in DPs headed by an indefinite determiner are also displayed if the DPs are introduced by demonstratives and even with some plural definite articles. Thus, one might be induced to maintain that this kind of possessive does not simply entail indefiniteness, they might be related to some abstract parameter encoding non-uniqueness:

- (57) st amico d-o mio
 this friend.M.S of-the.M.S my.M.S
 ‘this friend of mine’
- (58) arrivanoo e frate r-e suojo
 arrive.3P the.M.P brother of-the.M.P his.M.P
 ‘Here arrive his brothers’

Since the partitive value of these possessive is entirely lost, one might wonder about the historical processes that gave rise to this configuration. Ledgeway (2009: 263) argues that the rise of this construction is intertwined

with the obligatory co-occurrence between determiners and possessives. Actually, in the upper southern dialects, articles co-occur obligatorily with possessives even in predicative contexts:

- (59) chistu calennario è *(o) mio
 this.M.S calendar.M.S be.3S the.M.S my.M.S
 ‘This calendar is mine’

Since possessives are obligatorily introduced by an article, it is likely that speakers might have reinterpreted possessives as a ‘noun-like’ element, and no more as an adjectival element. Therefore, the only way to embed this noun-like possessive was to spell it out just like a common genitive, i. e., within a *de* + phrase.

More recent analysis, such as the one proposed in Silvestri (2020) for another dialectal varieties of southern Italy with the same structure, pursued this interpretative path. The author assumes that possessives as the ones analyzed before correspond to a full DP marked as genitive (i.e. DPGen). Indefinite DPs show different semantic-syntactic properties with respect to definite DPs, in that indefinite DPs lack PRON features. Again, for the possessive to be licensed as a DPGen in a functional genitive position, its PRON features need to be checked by entering a relation with the D position of the main definite DP. Therefore, in an indefinite DP some operator – Silvestri calls it “Linker”, laying on the definition given by Manzini and Savoia (2014) – is required to license the possessives in an indefinite DP. Given the obligatory insertion of the Linker in indefinite contexts, we can assume that the Linker, i.e. *de*-phrase+definite article, corresponds to an empty nominal element that displays PRON features and is able to project a nominal structure.

5. Some other local characteristics

We highlight some other important characteristics which have been used in the literature to draw a more precise partition between the subparts of the region.

5.1. Cilento

Two very important characteristics set aside Cilento from Campania and make it more similar to Calabria dialects: the pentavocalic vowel system (60) and the phonetic evolution -LL- > [dd] (instead of [-ll-]) that is typical of the other parts of Campania (see Rohlfs 1966-69: 328-332):

- (60) i. filu < FĪLU ‘thread’
 ii. nivi < NĪVE ‘snow’
 iii. tila < TĒLA ‘canvas’
 iv. terra < TĚRRA ‘land’
 v. kani < CANE ‘dog’
 vi. fōrti < FÖRTE ‘strong’
 vii. vutʃi < VÖCE < ‘voice’
 viii. krutʃi < CRŮCE ‘cross’
 ix. lutʃi < LŪCE ‘light’

Camerota, Del Puente 2009: 151-152

- (61) i. kwiddu < ECCU(M) ILLU(M) ‘that’
 ii. kavaddu < CABALLU(M) ‘horse’

De Blasi 2006: 47

5.2. Sannio

We have already mentioned in (39) that in Sannio (more or less, the north-eastern part of the provinces of Avellino and Benevento) final vowels have been preserved. This is probably due to the different history that singled out Benevento from the rest of the southern Italy (see § 1 above). Other two important phonetic features are worth a mention: the palatalization of lat. -LL- into [ʎʎ] and the palatalization of [st-] into [ʃt]. The former phenomenon reveals the influence of the dialects of southern Lazio, whereas the latter is very often found in Abruzzo (Rohlf's 1966-69: 259, 328-332).

- (62) i. chi[ʎʎ]u < ECCU(M) ILLU(M) ‘that’
ii. kava[ʎʎ]u < CABALLU(M) ‘horse’
- (63) i. [ʃ]tupitə < STUPIDUM ‘stupid’
ii. [ʃ]tessə < ISTUM IPSUM ‘same’

6. Perspectives for future work

Number marking and bare nouns. As shown above, in several dialects of Campania, the relationship between the strategies to realize morphological marking of number on nouns and the realization of bare argument nouns is opaque. A better investigation, crucially through the investigation of diachronic data, of the dynamics which govern this relationship is thus in order.

Possessives. The realization of possessive in the dialects of Campania poses challenges which go beyond those discussed in the traditional literature, which mostly focus on the realization of enclitic possessives with kinship nouns. A phenomenon that appears to be widespread across the upper southern dialects is the realization of postnominal possessives as preceded by the combination [DE + article], that looks superficially as a partitive construction but has actually lost any partitive value. This construction is apparently obligatory with indefinite nouns and is not incompatible with plural definites and when the head noun is preceded by a demonstrative. The relationship between possessives and the realization of D is worth further exploration.

At present, within the Parametric Comparison Model, the dialects that have received a first data collection and first attempts of analysis are: Santa Maria Capua Vetere, Palma Campania and the Cilentano dialect of Felitto. We refer the reader to the link <http://www.parametriccomparison.unimore.it/site/home/projects/prin-2017/romance-and-greek-dialects-the-database.html> for further data and an up-to-date list of all the dialects that have been parametrized.

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