

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

Reports on the major dialectal areas in Southern Italy

Calabria

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1. History

1.1. Antiquity

In pre-Roman times, Calabria, originally called *Bruttium*, was inhabited by *Brettii*, an Oscan population who gave their name to the region. The Greek colonization of the area started in the 8th century BC: the major Greek-speaking group who settled in this area (and in the whole Magna Graecia) were the Dorians. The Greek language was preserved for a long time, even after Rome's victory in the war against Carthago (201 BC). In fact, the Greek language enjoyed the highest prestige among the Romans. Therefore, it is likely that a widespread and long-lasting bilingualism between Greek and Latin characterized Calabria for many centuries (Fanciullo 1996, 2001, a. o.). In fact, in Southern Calabria, on the slopes of Aspromonte, there are villages, where varieties of Greek, though strongly endangered, still survive (see Katsoyannou 2001, Manolessou 2005, Martino 1980 among many others). Yet, bilingualism has not always been considered as the common-or-garden linguistic situation in Southern Italy. In fact, the origins of the Greek-speaking communities still surviving in Calabria (and Salento) gave rise to a heated debate in the 20th century. In a nutshell, the terms of the dispute were the following: had Greek uninterruptedly been spoken through the centuries since *Magna Graecia*? Or did the Romanization cancel all the relics of Magna Graecia, leading us to assume that the Greek was brought in Calabria again in the Middle Ages, after the Byzantines' conquest? The first hypothesis was first supported by Rohlfs (1924, 1933) and, in more recent moments, by several Greek scholars (Tsopanakis 1968, Karanastasis 1984), whereas the second hypothesis was supported by most Italian scholars (Parlangèli 1953, G. Falcone 1973, among many others). In support of either thesis or the other one, many pieces of evidence have been pointed out, which have been critically summarize in recent works, such as Manolessou (2005), Fanciullo (1996, 2001), Guardiano and Stavrou (2014, 2019, 2021).

We are not going into much detail into this heated debate about the origin of Greek. Suffice it to say that, as convincingly noted by Fanciullo (1996, 2001), the more one moves southwards, the easier is to find lexical Greek borrowings, especially in the realm of traditional economy and toponymy. Also, Rohlfs, in all his works, notes that Calabria can be divided into two parts: the Northern part, more "Latin", and the Southern part, more "Greek". The differences between the "two Calabrias" are based on linguistic factors and also on some interesting cultural details. For example, Rohlfs (1972: 59) notes that there is a difference in the shape of the farmers' hats between the North (where the "birritta longa", lit. "long cap" is widespread) and the South (where the "cappeddu pizzutu", lit. "spiked hat" is more common): the border between the two areas is set near the isthmus of Catanzaro. Of course, it is not always easy to assign all aspects of material culture to the Latin or Greek substratum, but there is no doubt, according to Rohlfs, that the isthmus of Catanzaro

represented in the past an important line of ethnic differentiation between the Latin and Greek civilizations. According to Mosino (1987), the boundaries between the “two Calabrias” should be located not on the Isthmus of Catanzaro but more to the north, around the Neto river; however, there is widespread concord that the Southern part has been traditionally more deeply “Greek” than the Northern one.

1.2. *The Middle Ages and the Modern Age*

The difference between a Northern, “Latin” and a Southern, “Greek” Calabria has kept sharp during the Middle Ages. In particular, the Northern part of the region was a disputed area where the Longobards tried to gain some grounds against the Byzantines, who dominated the Southern part of the region and Sicily. In fact, most of the still surviving relics of the Longobards’ language (for an extensive list, see Mosino 1987, Trumper 2018: 189ff) are attested more frequently in Northern Calabria (in the north of a line Nicastro – Cutro – Catanzaro). This shows that the Pollino and the valley of the Crati river might have been a sort of natural barrier separating the Longobard Duchy of Salerno from the Byzantine dominions. As for the Greek-speaking community, Mosino (1987) points out that by the end of the Roman Empire in Northern Calabria Greek inscriptions are almost absent, whereas in Southern Calabria Greek was still predominant until the XIV century.

Although the Normans (XI century) and the Angevins (1268-1442) established the Latin linguistic and cultural element above all others, the Greek tradition did not decline immediately. Only in the late Middle Ages, when the Aragonese eventually conquered Calabria in 1442, Calabria (and Southern Italy) knew a slow economic decline and the Greek-speaking communities became increasingly isolated. The migration from the Balcanic peninsula after the fall of Byzantium (1453) of many Greek speakers was not able to leave any deep footprint in the Romance varieties of Calabria (Von Falkenhausen 1982). Moreover, not all the people coming from the Balcanic peninsula were Greek speakers: many of them, for example, were Albanian and gave rise to several (mostly isolated) Arbereshe (the local name of these Albanian varieties spoken in Italy) villages (for a general overview on this topic, see Altimari and Savoia 1994). Finally, Greek has kept losing native speakers until XX century in favor of the local Romance dialects. Yet, no Romance variety has ever been able to unify the region: none of the cities of Calabria stood up among others and, as a result, a linguistic Calabrian *koiné* never arose. The role of Cosenza as an over-local linguistic reality is too recent and has not yet been entirely accepted by all the speakers of the surroundings (Trumper 1980); by contrast, Reggio Calabria, in the extreme Southern part of the region, has traditionally had deeper linguistic and cultural connections with Sicily rather than to the rest of Calabria.

2. The dialects of Calabria



Fig. 1: The classification of the dialects of Calabria (adapted from Pellegrini 1977)

There are several classifications of the dialects of Calabria, depending on the different phonological, morphological and lexical elements observed: Falcone (1976) divides Calabria into three parts, whereas Trumper (1997) identifies five different zones. Yet, as pointed out by Fanciullo and Librandi (2002), these partitions are somehow arbitrary, because they consider different phenomena lacking a broader vision. Fanciullo and Librandi (2002) suggest that the broad division proposed by Rohlf's (1972) and Pellegrini (1977) is still the most reliable one. According to these classifications, the dialects of Calabria form two major groups: a northern group, which is part of the Upper Southern dialects (the pink-coloured area in the map above); a middle-southern area, which is part of the Extreme Southern dialects (the purple-coloured area in the map above). The border runs roughly along the Cetraro-Bisignano-Melissa line, which is the border of the crucial isoglossae listed in (1) – (3):

- (1) a. unstressed final vowels reduced to schwa (Northern Calabria): e.g. *figghjə* < *FILIU/-A-I ‘son/daughter/children’
 b. Unstressed final vowel presenting three-timbres /i a u/ (Southern Calabria): e.g. *figghju* < FILIU ‘son’ *figghja* < FILIA ‘daughter’ *figghi* < FILII ‘children’
- (2) a. apocope in the infinitival desinence of the verbs in Northern Calabria: e.g. *jukà* < IOCARE ‘to play’; *vənì* < VENIRE ‘to come’
 b. no apocope in central and southern Calabria. e.g. *jukàri* < IOCARE ‘to play’, *vinìri* < VENIRE ‘to come’
- (3) a. assimilation of Lat. Clusters -ND- > *nn* and -MB- > *mm*: e.g. *kwannə* < QUANDO ‘when’, *kjummə* < PLUMBUM ‘lead’
 b. preservation of clusters -ND- > *-nd-* (e.g. [‘kwandu] < QUANDO ‘when’) and -MB > *-mb-* (e.g. *kjumbu* < PLUMBUM ‘lead’ (Rohlf’s 1966-69 § 253 ff.)

3. Relevant dialect features

3.1. Stressed vowel system

Except for the Lausberg area (that will be the focus of a separate report), Calabria (both Northern and Southern areas) is generally – setting aside some transitional areas that show Neapolitan influence – characterized by the pentavocalic Sicilian system (adapted from Falcone 1976: 27ff):

Ī Ĭ Ē	Ĕ	Ǻ	Ō	Ō Ū Ū
i	ε	a	ɔ	u

Examples: *filu* < FĪLU ‘thread’, *nivi* < NĪVE ‘snow’, *vila* < VĒLA ‘canvas’, *peri* < PĒDEM ‘foot’, *karru* < CARRUM ‘wagon’, *tɔstu* < TŌSTUM ‘hard’, *skupa* < SCŌPA ‘broom’, *čipudda* < CIPŪLLA ‘onion’, *lupu* < LŪPUM ‘wolf’

As for the influence of the Neapolitan vowel system, it is worth a mention that the metaphonic diphthongization is spread in the Northern part of the region, but it is almost absent south of the isthmus of Catanzaro (adapted from Fanciullo and Librandi 2002: 793):

- (4) a. *čentu* (Stilo, RC) *čiantu* (Santa Severina, KR) “a hundred”
 b. *ventu* (Stilo, RC) *viantu* (Santa Severina, KR) “wind”
 c. *joku* (Stilo, RC) *jwaku* (Santa Severina, KR) “game”
 d. *vèni* (Stilo, RC) *viani* (Santa Severina, KR) “you come”

However, unlike most Upper Southern dialects, where metaphony became the only means to convey

(partially, at least, see Guardiano et al. 2022) some gender and number distinctions after that all final vowels had weakened to schwa¹, in the dialects of Calabria that preserve final vowels as in (5)(1), metaphony is not directly involved in such processes, for gender and number distinctions are generally realized through suffixes (Falcone 1976:11):

- (5) a. **nuovə** ~ **novə** ‘new.M.SG ~ new.F.SG’
 mesə ~ **misə** ‘month.SG mont.PL’ Papasidero (CS)
- b. **bbon-u** ~ **bbon-a** ~ **bboni** ‘good.M.SG ~ good.F.SG ~ good.PL’ Southern Calabria

The characters in bold show the root-vowel alternation due to metaphony, which is the only means to recover some gender and number distinctions; instead, in (5b), gender and number distinctions are conveyed through suffixes, since final vowels are not reduced to schwa.

4. Morpho-syntax

4.1. Final /-a/ and agreement

As far as final vowels are concerned – a very important field of analysis because morphosyntactic features are generally conveyed through endings² – the examples in (1) and (5) show the difference between Upper and Extreme Southern Italian dialects. Nevertheless, the shift from Upper Southern to Extreme Southern dialects is not so clear-cut, as there are several border-line dialects (for a general sketch of these border-line situations, see Vignuzzi and Avolio 1994: 646-647). One of these dialects is the variety spoken in Verbicaro, in the Northern part of the province of Cosenza. In fact, even if this village is located north of the line Cetraro-Bisignano-Melissa, that is the lower border of the centralization in [ə] of all unstressed final vowels (Rohlf's 1966-69, I: 187), such centralization did not affect final Lat. -A > /-a/ (Loporcaro and Silvestri 2011: 331):

- (6) a. ['a bbə'nɔ:ta ma'ri:ja]
 has come.F.SG Mary.F.SG
 ‘Mary came in’
- b. ['ajə ' jɔ:t aa ' ka:sa]
 have.1SG gone to.the.F.SG home.F.SG
 ‘I went home’
- c. [mə ' sɛnt a ' frɛ:va]
 me feel.1SG the.F.SG fever.F.SG
 ‘I have got the flu’

¹ For a general sketch of these phenomena, see Fanciullo (1994), Savoia and Maiden (1997), among many others.

² For a general sketch on the way gender and number is codified, see also Guardiano et al. 2022.

Since final /a/ is preserved, not all suffixes are reduced to *-ə*/. Therefore, an opposition between feminine singular (encoded by final *-a*/) and all other classes is still phonologically visible (Loporcaro and Silvestri 2015:69):

(7)	a.i.	a/ssa	kasa	ii.	i/ssi	kasə
		the.F.SG/this.F.SG	house.F.SG		the.PL/this.PL	house.PL
		‘the/this house’			‘the/these houses’	
	b.i.	a/ssa	kwatrara	ii.	i/ssi	kwatrarə
		the.F/this.F	girl.F		the.PL/this.PL	girl.PL
			nice.F			nice.PL
		‘the/this nice girl’			‘the/these nice girls’	

Moreover, there is a further morphosyntactic distinction that is preserved thanks to the alternation */-a/ ~ /-ə/*: there are some nouns whose plural ending */-a/* is reminiscent of Latin neuter plural ending *-A*. Although the class of nouns retaining final plural ending */-a/* is quite restricted (it usually encompasses some body parts), these nouns trigger agreement with adjectives, both in attributive (8a) and predicative (8b) position (Loporcaro and Silvestri 2015: 70-71) and also with past participles that are part of a perfective verbal form (8c) (ib.:74):

(8)	a.	u	lwabbrə	grwossə	ii.	i	labbra	grossa
		the.M.SG	lip.M.SG	big.M.SG		the.PL	lip.PL	big.PL
		‘The big lip/s						
	b.	i	jidəta	su	llonga			
		the.PL	finger.PL	are.3PL	long.PL			
		‘The fingers are long’						
	c.	i	'vrattsa/'jidəta	s-an	allur'dwa:ta			
		the.PL	arm.PL/finger.PL	self-have.3PL	soiled.3PL			
		‘The arms/fingers are soiled’						

In a few words, the preservation of */-a/*, both with feminine, singular nouns and for neuter, plural nouns, is not just a fossilized relic, preserved as an idiosyncrastic difference pertaining to some specific lexical entries; rather, it should be considered as a synchronically active process that is still able to trigger agreement.

4.2. Possessives

In the dialects of Calabria, possessives can surface in different positions and with several configurations. Roughly, we can distinguish the following types:

- Post-nominal uninflected possessives in Northern Calabria (adapted from Silvestri 2016: 135)

- (9) a. u/i kanə mijə tujə sujə Santa Maria del Cedro (CS)
 the.SG/.PL dog my your his
 ‘my/your/his/her dog/s’
- b. a/i buttigghjə mia tua sua Verbicaro (CS)
 the.F.SG/PL bottle.PL my your his
 ‘my/your/his/her bottle/s’

- Post-nominal inflected possessives in Central and Southern Calabria (Falcone 1976:70)

- (10) a. u kani meu i kani mei Reggio Calabria
 the.M.SG dog my.M.SG the.PL dog my.PL
 ‘My dog/s’

In Southern Calabria, possessives can also be prenominal and have a reduced (or absent) morphology (i.e., no gender and number agreement with the head noun) (Manzini and Savoia 2005, III:557):

- (11) a. u me to so kani Seminara
 the.M.SG my your his dog
 ‘my/your/his/her dog’
- b. a me to so kammisa
 the.F.SG my your his shirt.F.SG
 ‘my/your/his/her shirt’
- c. i me to so kammisi
 the.PL my your his shirt.PL
 ‘my/your/his/her shirts’

Guardiano et. al (2016, 2018) list the properties of these possessives: they are not contrastive, they systematically attach to D (usually to an article, either definite or indefinite, or a demonstrative) and are never found post-nominally:

- (12) i/sti mo tri libbra Ragusa
 the.PL/this.PL my three book.PL
 ‘My books/ these books of mine’

At first sight, possessives like those in (11) and (12) fit into the distinction discussed in Giorgi and Longobardi (1991, Chapter 3, Appendix). The authors distinguish between weak and strong surface positions for possessives (as well as some other adjectives and determiners): the weak forms are proclitic to the head

noun or prenominal adjectives; the strong ones fail this condition, and typically occur postnominally. However, in Southern Calabrese (as in several other dialects in Sicily), there is evidence for a further distributional restriction. In fact, since they attach to D, prenominal possessives always precede numerals, if a determiner is visible, as shown in (13). Due to this restriction, these possessives have been dubbed “Wackernagel” in Guardiano et alii (2018, see also Guardiano and Stavrou 2021):

- (13) *i/sti tri mo libbra Ragusa
 the.PL/this.PL three my book.PL
 ‘My books/ these books of mine’

5. Instances of contact-induced variation

In the following subsections we mention some phenomena which might shed light on some issues related to language contact between Romance and Greek in Southern Italy. Even a sketchy description of few of these phenomena can give the idea of the complexity of contact phenomena between the two languages in such a long-standing bilingual area.

5.1. Southern Italo-Romance instances of Polydefiniteness?

5.1.1. Polydefiniteness in Greek

As opposed to Southern Italo-Romance, where postnominal adjectives are the *default* pattern, in Standard Modern Greek adjectives follow the noun they modify only under specific restrictions. In particular, in definite nominals, postnominal adjectives are only allowed if the adjective is introduced by an additional definite article (14) - a phenomenon often referred to as “polydefiniteness” or “determiner spreading” (Stavrou 2012, 2013, 2019; Guardiano and Stavrou 2014, 2019, 2021).

- (14) a. to pedì to kalo
 the child the beautiful
 b. * to pedì kalò
 the child beautiful
 ‘the beautiful child’

According to the some literature, the definite article occurring on the adjective is not *stricto sensu* a definite article, but «rather a morpheme homophonous to the article which plays a special role in polydefiniteness (realization of definiteness and case)» (Guardiano and Stavrou 2019: 20). The analysis proposed in the abovementioned literature for these structures is that adjectives in polydefinites originate as predicates in the complement of a “predicative” (/clausal) head Pred. The noun phrase, on the other hand, is merged in the specifier of PredP. A simplified version of the proposed structure is the following (Guardiano and Stavrou 2019: 37):

(15)	[DP	D	[PredP	[NP	amaksi]	Pred	[AP	akrivo]]
		[+def]					[+def]	
		to		amaksi		to		akrivo
		the		car		the		expensive
		‘The expensive car’						

The analysis in (15) assumes that the feature that is spelled out as the definite article, labelled [+def], is found not only in D, but also in the head Pred, where it is spelled out as the same morpheme, although devoid of any semantic content. Moreover, since in Standard Modern Greek nouns and modifying adjectives show agreement in phi-features and case, the authors propose the following hypothesis: if the adjective is merged pre-nominally, phi-feature concord is valued straightforwardly; by contrast, if the adjective is merged post-nominally (as in the polydefinite construction) this kind of concord is not available. Therefore, some mediator is required. The Pred head takes up precisely that function: it mediates concord in “definiteness”, phi-features, and case between noun (subject) and adjective (predicate).

5.1.2. Polydefiniteness and contact between Greek and Romance

In the currently spoken varieties of Italiot Greek, polydefinite DPs are unattested or residual (see Guardiano and Stavrou 2014, 2019, 2021). However, the written sources provide evidence that the phenomenon was active in the past and disappeared only recently. In particular, Calabria Greek apparently retained it until very recent times: in some texts (e.g., those collected in Caracausi and Rossi-Taibi 1959), postnominal adjectives are regularly articulated in definite DPs.

The loss of polydefiniteness in Italiot Greek is probably an indirect consequence of contact with the neighboring Romance dialects, where this construction is not usual, at least in Southern Italy.³ By contrast, it is not impossible that, during a long time-span of mutual influence, polydefiniteness, which is typically a Balcanic phenomenon, might have intruded in some Southern Italo-Romance varieties. This might be the case of the Romance dialect of Polia (in the administrative area of Vibo Valentia, south of the Cetraro-Bisignano-Melissa line), where Marchese (2018) detects some patterns which seem to resemble polydefinite structures (adapted from Marchese 2018: 166-67):

(16)	a.	i	scarpi	i	gruossi
		the.PL	shoe.PL	the.PL	big.PL
		‘the big shoes’			

³ Manzini and Savoia (2014) show that Aromanian, a Romance variety spoken in the Albanian towns of Diviakë and Fier, does have preadjectival linkers under the influence of Albanian. «The linker agrees with the head noun in gender, number, and case [...] for the masculine (singular and plural). It is generally excluded in contexts with an indefinite noun recalling the ‘polydefiniteness’ distribution of Greek» (Manzini and Savoia 2014: 86):

(1)	fiʃfor-u	(a)tse-u	mar-u
	boy-m.sg	Lkr-m.sg	big-m.sg
	‘the big boy’		

- b. a mamma a vecchia
 the.F.SG mother.F.SG the.F.SG old.F.SG
 ‘the old mother’

In Marchese (2018), all cases of this alleged polydefiniteness appear in definite constructions, that is the same context where it occurs in Greek (Guardiano and Stavrou 2014, 2019, 2021). Nevertheless, one might wonder about the reason why in Romance the functional head Pred should be spelled out. Therefore, much more in-depth data collection and analysis are required on this specific phenomenon, in order to provide a clearer description of it.

5.2. Expletive article with proper names: traces of language-contact?

Another feature that has been related to language contact is the co-occurrence of articles with proper names in some dialects of the Southern-most part of Calabria. For instance, in the dialect of San Luca, De Angelis (2019) shows that the article (m. sg. *u*; f. sg. *a*; m. f. pl. *i*) systematically co-occurs with personal proper names (both male and female), in argument position:

- (17) a. [ɔ lɔ'ɪ:ʃɪ camaɔ (prɔ:prjɔ) *(a) mmi:a]
 the.M.SG Luigi called.3SG just DOM me
 ‘Luigi called (just) me’.
- b. [mbat'tɪ:a ɔ' pɛppi]
 met.1SG the Giuseppe
 ‘I met Giuseppe’. (De Angelis 2019: 63)

This has been regarded as a consequence of Greek influence. Indeed, in Italo-Greek dialects, proper names «Sono preceduti dall’articolo determinativo: il nome di Dio, i nomi di persona, i nomi di città e di stati [...]» ([proper names] are preceded by the definite article: the name of God, personal proper names, proper names of cities and states[...]), and «Si premette l’articolo ai giorni della settimana» (“articles precede the names of the days of the week”) (Rohlf’s 1977:181). The co-occurrence of articles with proper names is ruled by a well-known abstract property by virtue of which the position D (= determiner) must be made visible for a noun to get referential interpretation (Longobardi 1994). The D position can be made visible either by means of the movement of the proper name to the position generally occupied by determiners (N-to-D: see It. *Mario mio* vs. **mio Mario*, with the proper name *Mario* rising to N bypassing the possessive), or through the presence of an article in D (*il mio Mario*). In the Greek dialects of Southern Italy, as well as in Standard Modern Greek, proper names do not reach the D position, which is thus generally occupied by an expletive article (e.g. Bovese *i María, o Pétro* lit. ‘the Maria, the Pietro’). The occurrence of an expletive article in the dialect of San Luca with a subclass of proper names seems to be at odds with the other Southern Italo-Romance varieties (except for Salentino) (Ledgeway, Schifano, Silvestri 2018, 2019). Therefore, one might be induced to invoke a substratum influence from Bovese Greek.

5.3. Dative and genitive syncretism

Another issue of contact-induced variation can be observed in the realization of morphological case. Although Italo-Greek dialects are on the brink of extinction, nouns and determiners display a fully-fledged case morphology, with gender and number distinctions:

TABLE 1 based on Rohlfs (1977:66f.) Italo-Greek definite nominal paradigms

Greko				Griko				
Masculine (<i>lik-</i> ‘wolf’, <i>min-</i> ‘month’)								
	Sg	Pl	Sg	Pl	Sg	Pl	Sg	Pl
Nom	<i>o liko</i>	<i>i liki</i>	<i>o mina</i>	<i>i mini</i>	<i>o liko</i>	<i>i/e liki</i>	<i>o mina</i>	<i>i/e mini</i>
Acc	<i>to lliko</i>	<i>tu lliku</i>	<i>to mmina</i>	<i>tu mminu</i>	<i>(t)o lliko</i>	<i>(t)u lliku</i>	<i>(t)o mmina</i>	<i>(t)u mminu</i>
Gen	<i>tu liku</i>	<i>to lliko</i>	<i>tu minu/-a</i>	<i>to mmino</i>	<i>(t)u liku</i>	<i>(t)o lliko</i>	<i>(t)u minu/-a</i>	<i>(t)o mminò/ mmino</i>
Feminine (<i>alé-</i> ‘olive’, <i>man-</i> ‘mother’)								
Nom	<i>i alèa</i>	<i>i alè</i>	<i>i mana</i>	<i>i mane</i>	<i>e alèa</i>	<i>i alè</i>	<i>i mana</i>	<i>i mane</i>
Acc	<i>tin alèa</i>	<i>tes alè</i>	<i>tim mana</i>	<i>te mmane</i>	<i>(t)in alèa</i>	<i>(t)es alè</i>	<i>(t)i mmana</i>	<i>(t)es mane/ (t)e mmane</i>
Gen	<i>tis alèa</i>	<i>tos alèo</i>	<i>ti mmanò</i>	<i>to mmanò/ mmano</i>	<i>(t)is alèa</i>	<i>(t)os alèo</i>	<i>(t)is mana/ (t)i mmana</i>	<i>(t)os manò/ mano/ (t)o mmanò/ mmano</i>
Neuter (<i>krea(-)</i> ‘meat’, <i>peð-</i> ‘child’)								
Nom	<i>to krea</i>	<i>ta krèata</i>	<i>to peðì</i>	<i>ta peðì</i>	<i>(t)o krea</i>	<i>(t)a krèata</i>	<i>(t)o peðì</i>	<i>(t)a peðìa</i>
Acc								
Gen	<i>tu kreatu</i>	<i>to kkrèato</i>	<i>tu peðiu</i>	<i>tos peðio</i>	<i>(t)u kreatu</i>	<i>(t)os krèato/ (t)o kkrèatu</i>	<i>(t)u peðiu</i>	<i>(t)u peðio</i>

However, like Modern Greek, the Italo-Greek dialects show a general loss of some case morphology. One of the most striking phenomena is the melting into one single case of genitive and dative, which can be traced back to the third century AD (Rohlfs 1977:184). This melting has no dramatic consequences in Italo-Greek dialects, but it might act as a substratum effect on the Romance dialects of the area. An example of this substratum action is the so-called "Greek dative" (= recipient or receiver codified by the genitival preposition *di* < DE instead of the preposition *a* < AD), which can be found in some Romance varieties in Southern Calabria, along the Ionian shore. This “Greek dative” has not replaced the Romance one (introduced by preposition *a* < AD), but it seems to have polarized its functions:

- (18) a. *La machina, nci la vindu a nu studenti*
the car to.him 3.F.S.OBJ sell.1s to a student
‘As for the car, I’ll sell it to a student’
- b. *La machina, nci la vindu di nu studenti.*
the car to.him 3.F.S.OBJ sell.1s of a student
‘As for the car, I’ll sell it to a student’ (Ledgeway Schifano Silvestri 2018: 102).

The sentences in (18a) and (18b) are not mutually interchangeable, for there is a subtle pragmatic distinction between the two. In (18a), the recipient is a generic student that the speaker does not have in mind yet, whereas in (18b) the speaker has in mind a *specific* student that is known both to the speaker and the hearer, though it is not explicitly mentioned in the sentence.

6. Conclusions

The dialects of Calabria are a privileged playground to explore the consequence of a long-standing contact between Greek and Romance. We have tried to provide only a sketchy description of phenomena concerning the syntax of the noun phrase, such as the co-occurrence of expletive articles and proper names or the genitive-dative syncretism, in a particular sub-part of the region that has been Greek-speaking until very recently (Rohlf 1924, Martino 1980, Fanciullo 2001, Manolessou 2005, among many others). However, Greek influence might be still relevant in more northern parts of the region. In this sense, further research should be devoted to the supposed cases of polydefiniteness provided by Marchese (2018), to better clarify the syntactic condition underlying those phenomena.

Moreover, Calabria is not only interesting for contact issues between Greek and Romance. Being one of the frontiers between Upper and Extreme Southern dialects, in Calabria we find interesting cases that are somehow in between two isoglosses. These are the cases shown in Verbicaro which, like other Upper Southern varieties, centralize all final vowels into [-ə]. By contrast, Verbicaro preserves final /-a/, thus preserving some morphosyntactic distinction on final vowels, as it generally happens in Extreme Southern dialects.

At present, within the Parametric Comparison Model, the dialects that have received a first data collection and first attempts of analysis are: Verbicaro, Cutro, Nicastro, Catanzaro and Reggio Calabria. 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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