

Greek and Romance “Voices” in southern Italy: when active syntax meets passive morphology

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1. Introduction. The aim of this presentation is to discuss a case of Romance-Greek contact and hybridization in relation to the expression of the pragmatic-semantic values typically encoded by the formal passive construction, i.e. defocusing of the Agent and topicalization and subjectization of an affected non-Agent. In the Italo-Greek varieties of the extreme south (Greko/Griko) the verb system presents a formal distinction between active and non-active voice. The latter includes sets of forms which, despite the distinctively non-active morphology (1a vs 1b), convey active meaning, such as anticausative/impersonal, reflexive or reciprocal. Conversely, this formal distinction is not present in the system of the corresponding Romance varieties (Calabrese/Salentino), where only morphologically active structures are available for the expression of the same meanings (2).

- 1 a E Maria pleni calà us piattu. (Griko, Calimera)
the Maria wash.PRS.3SG well the dishes
'Maria washes the dishes well.'
- b E Maria e pplenato mai calà. (Griko, Calimera)
the Maria NEG=wash.DEP.IPFV.PST.3SG never well
'Maria never washed herself well.'
- 2 a La Maria, li piatti, l'ha lavati già. (Salentino, San Pietro Vernotico)
the Maria the dishes them=has washed already
'As for the dishes, Maria has already washed them.'
- b La Maria non s'ha lavata. (Salentino, San Pietro Vernotico)
the Maria NEG self=has washed
'Maria hasn't washed herself.'

It is precisely this formal ambiguity that explains phenomena of contact in the expression of voice in these areas where, after a first stage of straightforward convergence towards Romance-like periphrastic constructions in both Italo-Greek and Calabrese/Salentino, innovative constructions are created in Italo-Greek in order to restore the original Greek-like pattern of morphosyntactic ambiguity in the expression of (non-)active voice.

2. Strategies for the expression of passive voice: the traditional picture. When Italo-Greek medio-passive forms ceased to license passive interpretations, becoming restricted to anticausative/impersonal, reflexive and reciprocal values (§1) (e.g. Morosi 1870; Rohlfs 1970; Katsoyannou 1995), alternative strategies were developed to convey non-Agent saliency. According to the literature, these include active sentences (3a), and the new analytic strategy COME/BE + *-meno* (3b) (e.g. Rohlfs 1970; Baldissera 2013; Squillaci 2017).

- 3 a Óli ton agapúne. (Griko, Rohlfs 1970:200)
all him.ACC= love.PRS.3PL
'Everyone loves him.' (to render: he is loved by everyone)
- b Írte vriméno. (Griko, Rohlfs 1970:200)
come.PST.PFV.3SG find.NON-FIN
'He was found.'

On a par with other (Italo-)Romance varieties (Ledgeway in press), in Calabrese/Salentino active structures are also typically employed in place of the passive (4a), alongside the Romance COME periphrastic construction (4b) (Rohlfs 1969).

- 4 a Ajeri bruciaru u bar. (Calabrese, Bova, Squillaci 2017:75)
yesterday burn.PST.PFV.3PL the bar
'The bar was burnt down yesterday.'
- b La fimmina vinne muzzicata. (Calabrese, Rohlfs 1969:129)
the woman come.PST.PFV.3SG bitten

‘The woman was bitten.’

In the light of the evidence provided by the existing literature, the picture which seems to emerge is thus one of straightforward unidirectional contact of Romance on Greek, whereby Italo-Greek first lost the possibility of conveying passive value through its morphologically distinctive paradigms, possibly under the pressure of the surrounding Romance dialects, and then replaced these either with the active strategy (cf. also standard modern Greek, Holton et al. 2012), or with the Romance BE / COME + non-finite verb pattern. In this talk we shall describe the strategies for the expression of passive value attested in our corpus which, however, do not simply confirm but actually enrich the traditional picture just outlined in ways which prove to be particularly relevant for our understanding of the phenomenon of language contact in the Romance-Greek context.

3. Strategies for the expression of passive voice: new data. In order to investigate alternative strategies for the expression of passive voice in Italo-Greek and Calabrese/Salentino, we tested variants of (5) with native speakers, who produced the structures summarised in Table 1.

5 [La porta_{theme}] è stata rotta [dal vento_{agent}]. (Italian)
 the door be.PRS.3SG be.PTCP.PST broken by.the wind
 ‘The door has been broken by the wind.’

Table 1. Expression of passive voice in *Magna Graecia*

	Griko	Greko	Salentino	Calabrese
(A)	active syntax (subject AGENT) + active V (+ CLLD THEME)			
(B)	middle syntax (subject THEME) + middle V + instrument AGENT		n.a.	n.a.
(C)	passive syntax (PP AGENT) + COME + non-finite V	n.a.	passive syntax (PP AGENT) + BE + non-finite V	n.a.
(D)	(i) passive syntax (PP AGENT) + HAVE + non-finite V	(ii) active syntax (subject AGENT) + BE + non-finite V (iii) active syntax (subject THEME) + active V + instrument AGENT	n.a.	n.a.

After discussing the active strategy (A), representing a solution which is consistent with both language families (cf. also partly B), and the passive (C), which is a straightforward instance of Romance contact on Italo-Greek (cf. adaptation of Romance pattern COME + non-finite V to Greek material, viz. *érkome* + *-meno*), our talk will focus on the discussion of the additional structures in (D) brought to light by our investigations. Our claim is that these should not be discarded as random combinations of morphological structures and syntactic patterns of highly attrited grammars, but should, rather, be analysed as new hybrid options that combine passive syntax with active morphology (D-i) (or the reverse, D-ii,iii) triggered by a principled force, i.e. a drive to restore an underlying Greek pattern, viz. the morphosyntactic ambiguity in the expression of (non-)active voice, thus shedding new light on the forces that can trigger innovations in a contact-induced contexts of change.

Selected references. Baldissera (2013). *Il dialetto Griko del Salento*. Ca’ Foscari, Doctoral thesis. Holton et al. (2012). *Greek*. London: Routledge. Katsoyannou (1995). *Le parler gréco de Galliciano*. Paris VII, Doctoral thesis. Ledgeway (in press). ‘Passive periphrases in the Romance languages’. Gardani & Loporcaro (eds), *The Oxford Encyclopedia of Romance Linguistics*. Oxford: OUP. Morosi (1870). *Studi sui dialetti greci della Terra d’Otranto*. Lecce: Tip. Editrice Salentina. Rohlfs (1969). *Grammatica storica della lingua italiana e dei suoi dialetti. Sintassi*. Turin: Einaudi.

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