

# ROMANCE VERBAL LOANS IN MODERN GREEK DIALECTS\*

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## 1 Premises and Assumptions

The notion of loan word is particularly complex, more than one can think of. A language does not borrow a word in a mechanic or uniform way, or just because an equivalent term is missing from its vocabulary. Loan words are adopted under different and variable conditions, depending on various factors, such as the properties of the two languages in contact, the historical circumstances, the geographic area, the socio-linguistic context, the degree of bilingualism.

In this paper, I will examine the ‘accommodation’ of Romance loan verbs in those Modern Greek (MG) dialects which, in certain periods of their history, underwent change due to contact with specific Romance dialects. The Greek dialects are those of South Italy, Ionian islands, Crete, Cyprus and Lesbos, and the Romance dialects are principally Salentino and Venetian.

I will show that the integration of verbs of foreign origin in the recipient language, that is, MG dialects, follows more than one strategy and is constrained by several both internal and external factors:

- (a) The major characteristics of Greek native morphology, namely, the structure of Greek verbs to contain a stem and an overt inflectional ending as well as the basic property of most Greek verbs to display two stem allomorphs, one for the -perfective context and another for the +perfective one.

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- (b) The degree of productivity of the derivational suffix which may be used as an integrating element.
- (c) High command of the dominant language and the speaker's consciousness of its structure, which do not necessarily imply extensive borrowing.

## 2 The Dialectal Data

In this section, I will examine the Greek dialects which have been affected by Romance, either because the dialect has been spoken in Italy, since ancient times, or because its speakers and geographic area have been under Italian rule, namely Venetian (or Genovese), for more than one century. I will begin the description with the two most affected dialects due to language contact, Grekanico and Heptanesian. I will continue with Cypriot and Cretan which underwent a minor influence, and will conclude with Lesbian where the Romance influence is also noticeable but in a lesser extent.

### 2.1 Grekanico (Griko and Bovese)

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 Grekanico) competes with both the local Romance varieties and Italian, the official language of the state (Fanciullo, 2001; Manolessou, 2005: 106). Grekanico in Calabria presents a rapid decrease and Katsoyannou (1995) mentions that there are no more than 500 native speakers left, while several villages are 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, Soleto, Sternatia, and Zollino), where speakers communicate in Griko mostly in family (Profili, 1985).<sup>1</sup>

Griko and Bovese present a number of differences (see, among others, Rohlf's, 1933, 1997; Karanastasis, 1997). These differences, however, are not as significant as to consider Griko and Bovese to be different dialectal systems; they constitute varieties of the same dialect, Grekanico. For the purpose of this paper, I will restrict my attention to Griko, some verbal loans of which are listed below. All of them originate from Salentino, the local Romance dialect of the area.

(1) <i>Loan</i>	<i>Salentino</i>	<i>Greek integrating element</i>
kunteo 'to narrate'	kuntare	-e(v)-
nutrieko 'to feed'	nutricare	
resceo 'to succeed'	riuscire	
vombikeo 'to vomit'	vombikare	

<sup>1</sup> See Profili (1985), Telmon (1992), Katsoyannou (1995) and Manolessou (2005) for details about the socio-linguistic situation in the Greek speaking areas of South Italy.



## 2.2 Heptanesian

Heptanesian is the dialect spoken on the islands of the Ionian sea, Corfu, Kephallonia, Zante, Ithaca and Paksí (Kontosopoulos. 2001: 67), which were under Venetian rule for almost four or five centuries (ca end of 14th – end of 18th c.), depending on the island.<sup>5</sup> 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 contact with Venetian, and also through contact with Italian, the official language used in administration and education (Fanciullo, 2008).<sup>6</sup> 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 phonology (mainly in intonation) and morphology (introduction of certain affixes, like the noun forming suffix *-ada* < Venetian *-ada*), while there are almost no changes on the syntactic level. Many loanwords of Venetian/Italian origin are items related to 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 SMG.

(5) <i>Loan</i>	<i>Venetian</i>	<i>Greek integrating element</i>
desponero 'to dispose'	dispóner /despóner	ø
fioriro 'to blossom'	fiorir	
patiro 'to suffer'	patir	
imitaro 'to imitate'	imitar	
jarbujaro 'to confuse'	ingarbugiar	
protestaro 'to protest'	protestar	

Interestingly, while the Griko speakers seem to have analyzed the Salentino verbal loans and this analysis has led to the retention of the root and the substitution of the Romance endings for the

<sup>5</sup> Corfu was the first to undergo Venetian domination, as early as 1387, while Venetians occupied the other islands during the 15th century.

<sup>6</sup> 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.

Greek ones, Heptanesian speakers follow a different path in borrowing Venetian verbs: as shown in (5), the entire infinitival word, i.e. root and ending (*-ar*, *-er/-ír*), is retained. For example, the Venetian verbs *protestár* ‘protest’, *despóner* ‘dispose’ and *patír* ‘suffer’ appear in Heptanesian as *protestaro*, *desponero* and *patiro*, respectively. This strategy of accommodating verbs could be considered to belong to the so-called *direct insertion* (Wichmann and Wohlgenuth, 2008: 99), according to which verbs of the donor language are plugged directly into the verbal morphology of the recipient, while occasionally, there may be only slight phonological modifications.

### 2.3 Cretan

For more than four centuries (1211–1669), the island of Crete was ruled by Venice. During this period, and due to contact with the Italian renaissance, the island experienced an impressive bourgeoning of the arts, but only in the 15th and 16th c. because Venice proved to be a particularly despotic ruler: Cretans were not allowed to be educated in Greek or practice their religion and often revolted against foreign domination (Maltezou, 1988). From the beginning of the 15th century, this flourishing is mainly depicted in literature and painting and as far as the language is concerned several Venetian words entered the Cretan vocabulary. It should be noticed that similarly to Griko and Heptanesian, these words underwent hellenicization, that is, nouns, adjectives and verbs accepted a Greek inflectional ending. With respect to verbs, some occurrences are still in use, typical examples of which are listed below:

(6) a. <i>Cretan</i>	<i>Venetian</i>	<i>Greek integrating element</i>
tsetaro ‘to accept’	accetar	∅
stimaro ‘to estimate’	stimar	
ruvaro ‘to steal’	rubar	
riyosiro ‘to succeed’	riuscir	
stupiro ‘to amaze’	stupir	
<i>but also</i>		
b. aviserno ‘to advise’	avisar	–n– (?)
skapeterno ‘to escape’	scapar	
and		
c. abonderevo ‘to abound’	abbondar	–ev–
vistirizo ‘to invest’	investir	–iz–

(from Pangalos, 1983)

Like in Heptanesian and contrary to Griko, the vast majority of verbal loans appear hellenicised as *-aro* forms (occasionally *-erno*), while there are also examples in *-iro* or *-ero*, depending on the original Venetian/Italian verb. Again, this may also be considered as a case of direct insertion, since the entire infinitival form is inserted in the recipient language as a stem and the inflectional ending is the only Greek element added to it. However, contrary to Heptanesian, there are also instances with a Greek integrating element, that is, occurrences which show a derivational suffix, *-ev-* or *-iz-*, inserted between the form in *-ar/-er/-ir* and the inflectional ending (6c). Thus, Cretan shows the application of both accommodation strategies, direct and indirect ones. Crucially though, the integrator is not as systematic as in Griko and is added to the entire Romance infinitival form, while in Griko, it substitutes the infinitival suffix. Moreover, there are also examples where an epenthetic segment *-n-* appears between the /r/ and the inflectional ending (see the *-erno* forms in 6b). This element will be explained in detail in the section dedicated to Lesbian (section 2.5), since, in this dialect, it applies to all Romance verbal loans.

## 2.4 Cypriot

Cyprus was under Venetian rule for almost one century (1489 – 1571), but Cypriots had been in close contact with Venetians since the 12th c. (that is, since the French dominion of the Lusignan family) with whom they had many trade relations (Dendias, 1923). As a result, Cypriot displays a considerable number of loan words of Venetian origin, mostly nouns, but also verbs. In fact, many of them have replaced the older French forms and nowadays, they are still in use. Venetian verbs are accommodated in Cypriot following the direct strategy, that is, no Greek-based integrator appears between the stem and the inflectional ending, similarly to Heptanesian and to some Cretan occurrences. As illustrated in (7), entire Venetian infinitives were transferred to Cypriot, where they underwent hellenicization by accepting Greek inflection.

(7) Cypriot	Venetian	Greek integrating element
trattaro 'to treat'	trattar	∅
siyuraro 'to secure'	assicurar	
kastiyaro 'to punish'	castigar	
δισπjazaro 'to be sorry'	dispiacer	
δifendero 'to defend'	difender	
proveδero 'to foresee'	proveder	

(from Dendias, 1923)

Curiously though, direct insertion is not the case for verbal loans originating from French during the Lusignan dominion (12th–15th c.), where, similarly to Griko, an integrating Greek derivational suffix, *-iaz-*, appears between the Romance stem and the Greek inflectional ending:

(8) <i>Cypriot</i>	<i>French</i>	<i>Greek integrating element</i>
finiazo 'to finish'	finir	–iaz–
manteniazo 'to maintain'	maintenir	
protestiazo 'to protest'	protester	
soufriazo 'to suffer'	souffrir	

## 2.5 Lesbian

A significant Romance influence can be detected on the dialect of Lesbos, originating from the period that the island was governed by the Genovese Gatelusi family (1355 – 1462). According to Paraskevaidis (2005), the Genovese rule was not as despotic as the Venetian one on Cyprus and Crete, but with the exception of the upper class, the Greek inhabitants of the island did not receive any education. During this period, several Romance verbs entered the common vocabulary, while some of them are still frequently used. As is the case with the other dialects, loan words underwent hellenicization, that is, they received a Greek inflectional ending. Consider the following examples:

(9) <i>Lesbian</i>	<i>Venetian</i> <sup>7</sup>	<i>Greek integrating element</i>
salternu 'to jump'	saltar	–n– (?)
arivernu 'to arrive'	arrivar	
kurernu 'to cure'	curar	
sirvernun 'to serve'	servir	
siyurnun 'to secure'	assigurar	

(from Ralli. to appear)

As shown in (9), all loan verbs end in *–ernu*, that is, they display an *–n–* between the Romance infinitival form and the Greek inflectional ending *–u* (SMG *–o*)<sup>8</sup> denoting the first person singular. Recall that the same *–n–* has also been detected in Cretan, although not systematically, affecting only a small number of Cretan verbs. In both dialects, *–n–* appears before the Greek inflectional ending, while the original Romance thematic vowels /a/, /e/ or /i/ are all leveled into /e/.

<sup>7</sup> I give the Venetian verbs since Venetian was used on Lesbos during the 14th and the 15th centuries, although the island was ruled by a Genovese family. I should also add that it has been particularly difficult to find information on the specific Genovese verbs of this period.

<sup>8</sup> In Lesbian, as well as in other Northern Greek Dialects, unstressed /o/ and /e/ are raised to /u/ and /i/, respectively.

Historically, it is important to note that in the early middle ages (ca 6th–12th c.) the insertion of *-n-* between stems ending in *-o-* and the inflectional ending had become a very productive process in Greek; it assisted the Ancient Greek contract verbs in *-oo-*: to transform their present stem (stem used in the *-perfective* context) and change conjugation, shifting from the less productive inflection class (IC) II to the most productive IC I:

- (10) *Ancient Greek* δῖλό-ο: > SMG δῖλόν-ο  
 declare-1sg  
 ‘I declare’

Browning (1969: 70) states that the productivity rate of *-n-* had even more increased around the 12th c., to such an extent that *-n-* was responsible for the formation of many native present stems, which were molded on the aorist ones (stems used in the *+perfective* context). Thus, it is not surprising that during the 14th and 15th centuries Romance verbs in *-ar/-er/-ir* are accommodated in Lesbian as verbs in *-ern(u)*. Moreover, according to Hatzidakis (1905: 287–288), analogy had also played a role for the final shaping of the *-ern-* form. For him, the appearance of /e/ before the consonant cluster /rn/ was triggered by the phonological similarity with the native verbs in *-ern(o)*, like *δερνο* ‘to beat’, *φερνο* ‘to bring’, *γδερνο* ‘to skin’.

It is of major importance to specify that in the medieval period, or even before, *-n-* did not have the status of derivational suffix, since it did not fulfill the basic criteria of such a functional element. For instance, contrary to other verbal derivational suffixes (e.g., *-ev-*, *-iz-*) it was not used to build new items (items belonging to a new grammatical category). Therefore, it can be considered as a simple formative, creating new stem allomorphs out of old ones, that is, stem allomorphs to be used in the *-perfective* context (stems of present and imperfect tenses) which were shaped on the basis of stems utilized in the *+perfective* context (aorist stems).

Being a simple formative, I do not consider *-n-* to be a true integrating element, at least like those appearing in verbal loans of indirect insertion, for instance, *-e(v)-* in Griko (1). Substantial proof to this observation comes from the fact that in Lesbian, as well as in Cretan, *-n-* is confined to specific stem allomorphs appearing in the paradigms of present tense, imperfect and the periphrastic imperfective future. For an illustration, consider the following verbal types of the Lesbian loan verb *saltérnu* ‘to jump’, where for clarity reasons a hyphen separates the stem from the Greek inflectional ending:

- |      |                            |                  |                            |
|------|----------------------------|------------------|----------------------------|
| (11) | <i>Present</i>             | <i>Imperfect</i> | <i>Imperfective future</i> |
|      | 1sg saltérn-u <sup>9</sup> | sáltirn-a        | na saltérn-u               |
|      | 1pl saltérn-umi            | saltérn-ami      | na saltérn-umi             |

In contrast, *-n-* is completely absent from the paradigms of the so-called perfective tenses, that is, from the aorist and the periphrastic perfect, pluperfect and perfective future:<sup>10</sup>

- |      |                |                |                   |                          |
|------|----------------|----------------|-------------------|--------------------------|
| (12) | <i>Aorist</i>  | <i>Perfect</i> | <i>Pluperfect</i> | <i>Perfective future</i> |
|      | 1sg saltár-sa  | éx-u saltár    | íx-a saltar       | θα saltár-u              |
|      | 1pl saltár-ami | éx-umi saltár  | íx-ami saltar     | θα saltár-umi            |

<sup>9</sup> *sáltirna* results from *sálterna*. Compare also *sáltirna* with *saltérnami*. For an explanation, see ft. 8.

<sup>10</sup> The particular form of the periphrastic tenses of perfect and pluperfect is due to a SMG influence. The true dialectal forms are with the auxiliary *ime* (Lesbian *imi*) ‘to be’ and the past participle *saltarsmenus* ‘jumped’



### 3 Facts and Proposals

The data described above show that borrowing is not limited to pure transfer of words, but raises a number of questions referring to aspects of word structure in general, as for instance:

- why certain dialects use the indirect strategy, that is, they borrow a stem (a sub-lexical element) as is the case with Griko, while others adopt the direct strategy, that is, they borrow an entire word;
- why in some dialects (Lesbian and Cretan) there is creation of a particular stem allomorph with the use of the formative *-n-*;
- why *-ev-* is used as an integrator in borrowing Romance verbs, while Medieval Greek had a range of verbalizers, *-iz-*, *-ev-*, *-en-*.

A possible answer to these issues may raise further questions of more general nature. For example, one may wonder about

- the role of productivity and language-dependent constraints in the accommodation of verbs of foreign origin and
- the way extra-linguistic factors trigger or inhibit borrowing.

#### 3.1 Borrowing stems or word forms

According to the so called “diffusionist” position (e.g. Thomason and Kaufman, 1988: 67; Thomason, 2001: 70-71), external factors, such as long duration of contact, socio-economic dominance from the part of one group upon the other, and high-level bilingualism induce heavy borrowing. In fact, in South Italy, borrowing can be seen on all linguistic levels, phonology, morphology, syntax and semantics (see, among others, Rohlf, 1933 and Fanciullo, 2008). However, along the lines of Ralli (2012b), I would also like to suggest that intense contact, presupposing extensive bilingualism can explain not only heavy borrowing, but also a possible resistance to it.

I believe that the Griko speakers who had and have high competence skills in Romance, and were under an excessive pressure of the dominant language on every aspect of life, i.e. social, economic, cultural and religious, had subconsciously tried to restrict heavy borrowing by hellenicizing Romance verbs as much as possible with the help of the very productively used derivational suffix *-ev-* and the Greek inflectional endings. Being well aware of the Italian *-are* or *-ere/-ire* as infinitival markers, they subtracted these markers from the verb and replaced them with the Greek suffixes. In contrast, speakers of the other Greek dialects who had either a low command of Romance or no command at all during the Venetian or Genovese domination—as reported in many studies (see section 2.2)—did not seem to have any difficulties in importing the entire word and hellenicizing it with the only addition of the appropriate inflectional endings (see (7) above). In other words, in a language-contact situation, high bilingualism may trigger, but also forbid the amount and type of the transferred material; it may facilitate, and at the same time constrain borrowability. Andres Enrique-Arias (2010: 97) has reached a more or less similar conclusion. He has stated that while a widespread assumption in the linguistic literature is that language change is an expected, or even unavoidable, result of language contact, very little

attention has been paid to the opposite scenario, that is, to the possibility that the presence of two languages in the same speech community may constitute a factor promoting the retention of native features.

It should be noticed that according to a different hypothesis, Griko speakers select to borrow stems instead of entire word forms because the linguistic properties of the donor language play a major role in the choice of the integration strategy.<sup>11</sup> As has been mentioned in several works (see Calabrese, 1993; Ledgeway, 1998, among others), Southern Italian dialects, among which Salentino, do not display an extensive use of infinitives, as the following example clearly depicts:

- (13) *Salentino*: lu Karlu ole ku bbene kra  
 lit. Il Carlo vuole che viene domani  
 ‘Carlo wants to come tomorrow’

Thus, limited access to infinitival forms could have led the Griko speakers to borrow Romance stems. Note now that contrary to the Southern Italian dialects, Venetian, like other Northern Italian dialects, has preserved the infinitival forms. Within the same spirit, one could suggest that frequent access to Venetian infinitives made the Greek speakers of the other dialects to borrow and hellenicize the entire infinitival words.

Although promising, this hypothesis seems to fade by evidence drawn from the incorporation of Turkish verbs in MG dialects, where, in spite of the fact that infinitives are frequently used in Turkish, the dialectal speakers do not adopt them. For an illustration, consider the following Pontic examples which contain a Turkish stem, a Greek integrator *-ev-* (the same suffix used in Griko) and the Greek inflectional ending:<sup>12</sup>

- |                    |   |                         |
|--------------------|---|-------------------------|
| (14) <i>Pontic</i> |   | <i>Turkish</i>          |
| γazan-ev-o         | < | kazan-mak <sup>13</sup> |
| ‘to earn’          |   | ‘to earn, profit’       |
| axtar-ev-o         |   | aktar-mak               |
| ‘to overturn’      |   | ‘to relocate/transfer’  |
| pašla-ev-o         |   | başla-mak               |
| ‘to begin’         |   | ‘to begin’              |

(from Papadopoulos, 1955)

The linguistic situation with respect to Romance loans in Cypriot (7)–(8) is particularly interesting and argues in favor of the hypothesis put forward above. According to Dendias (1923: 157) during the French rule (12th–15th c.), there was a revival of the Greek culture in Cyprus as everywhere in Greece, and the Greek language was taught at schools. As a consequence, when borrowing occurred, loan words were heavily hellenicized by combining the French stem with

<sup>11</sup> I am indebted to Franco Fanciullo for giving me this piece of information.

<sup>12</sup> 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 dialectal 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.

<sup>13</sup> *-mak* is the infinitival marker in Turkish.

the integrating Greek suffix *-iaz-* and a Greek inflectional ending, as exhibited in (8) and repeated below for convenience:<sup>14</sup>

(15) <i>Cypriot</i>	<i>French</i>	<i>Greek integrating element</i>
finiazo 'to finish'	finir	<i>-iaz-</i>
manteniazo 'to maintain'	maintenir	
protestiazo 'to protest'	protester	
soufriazo 'to suffer'	souffrir	

In contrast, during the subsequent Venetian period, schools were closed and there was a severe pursuit of the Greek language and education in general. I suppose that educational deficiency led the speakers to borrow entire infinitival words. In other words, I propose that, similarly to Heptanesian and Cretan, there was no use of Greek integrator for the adoption of Romance loans, and the entire verbal infinitives were hellenicized with the simple addition of the Greek inflectional ending.

### 3.2 The role of stem and stem allomorphy in Greek contact morphology

It is usually asserted that in borrowing, words are transferred first and that the transfer of structure comes at a later stage (King, 2000). With the exception of Griko (and Pontic as shown in (14)), where stems, i.e. sub-lexical elements are borrowed, the data from the other dialects confirm this assertion: the entire infinitival forms of Romance verbs are inserted in the dialectal vocabulary and since they need inflection in order to be incorporated into the Greek verbal system, they are morphologically reanalyzed/recategorized as stems ending in *-ar-*, *-er-*, or *-ir-* depending on the case. As such, they are combined with the proper Greek inflectional endings of the least marked IC I.<sup>15</sup> Therefore, independently of whether the borrowed items are full-word forms or not, they end up by being stems, because only stems can fit the general structural pattern of Greek inflected words consisting of a stem and an inflectional suffix.

The important role that the morphological category of stem plays in Greek morphology finds its absolute confirmation in Griko (and Grekanico in general), where direct transfer of stems occurs, without the mediation of the reanalysis of the infinitival words. It is also substantiated by the dialectal data of the island of Lesbos. As conveyed in 2.5, in this dialect, the infinitival loans are not simply reanalyzed as stems, as is the case with the other dialects, but transform the *-ar-*/*-er-*/*-ir-* forms into the *-ern-* ones with the insertion of the productively used formative *-n-*, which also triggers the change of the vowel /a/ into /e/ (see (9) above). Along the lines of Hatzidakis (1905) and Ralli (2012b), this change finds its justification within the framework of a general tendency of the Greek language to have its verbal system built on two stem allomorphs in complementary distribution, one used for the -perfective forms and the other for the +perfective ones. Regarding this property, it is of crucial importance to stress that the innovative

<sup>14</sup> According to Menardos (1900) at the end of the 19th century, the old French loans had almost disappeared and only four verbs of French origin were still in use.

<sup>15</sup> IC II contains the ancient contract verbs and is less productive compared to IC I.

–*ern*– form appears only in the -perfective context (11). In the +perfective context (12), the stem displays its original –*ar*– form. Thus, verb borrowing in Lesbian not only depicts how loan verbs are integrated in a dialectal system but adds a confirmation to the hypothesis about the crucial role of stem and stem allomorphy in verb conjugation as well.

### 3.3 Grammaticalization and productivity

As already maintained (section 2.1), the derivational suffix –*ev*– is used to accommodate in Griko the Salentino verbs. In this context, –*ev*– does not provide the verbal category, as is its usual role when added to nominal bases, but flags a particular class of verbs, those of Romance origin, and assigns these verbs to a specific conjugation (IC I). From the range of Greek verbalizers it is the only one to be used as an integrating element. Therefore, I suggest that in the particular setting of accommodating Romance verbs, it has lost its verbalizing properties (creation of verbs from nouns) and has become a class marker. In other words, in the Griko loan morphology, –*ev*– seems to have acquired a more functional status, the status to indicate a particular class of verbs. This change is a typical case of grammaticalization in Kuryłowicz’s (1975: 69) sense, who has defined grammaticalization as “the increase of the range of a morpheme advancing from a lexical to a grammatical or from a grammatical to a more grammatical status”. However, it is important to stress that –*ev*– as a loan integrator has not lost its old derivational character. It is still productively added to nominal bases in order to form verbs. The coexistence of the old status together with a new, more functional one, is what to be expected, since during the grammaticalization process, the old and the new properties may co-exist (Heine, 2003).

As already noted in (14), the use of the verbalizer –*ev*– can also be found in Pontic, 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,<sup>16</sup> where another derivational suffix, –*iz*– is more susceptible to act as an integrating element. For an illustration, consider the data in (16):

- (16) a. *Griko*    nat-e-o    ‘to swim’                    (< *Salentino* nat-are)  
       b. *Pontic*    kazan-ev-o    ‘to earn, become rich’ (< *Turkish* kazan-mak)  
       c. *Aivaliot* kazad-iz-u    ‘to earn, become rich’ (< *Turkish* kazan-mak)

In my opinion, the choice of a specific integrating element across dialects relates to the varying degree of productivity between the verb-forming derivational operations. I would like to suggest that derivation with –*ev*– is particularly productive in Pontic and Grekanico, 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 MG 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).<sup>17</sup> 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

<sup>16</sup> Aivaliot was once spoken in western Asia Minor. After 1922, most Aivaliot refugees moved to Greece. Today, few hundreds of speakers can be found in refugee enclaves on the island of Lesbos. See Ralli (2012a) for details on the formation of verbal loans in Aivaliot.

<sup>17</sup> Manolessou and Pantelidis (2011) have investigated the presence of /e/ in Pontic, which originates from the Ancient Greek ‘η’ (pronounced as /ɛ:/).

Classical Greek (5th–4th c. BC).<sup>18</sup> 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 Rohlf's (1933), Caratzas (1958) and Karanastasis (1997). Thus, there is good reason to suppose that Griko and Pontic had followed a parallel development into adapting verbal loans in their system, while they still preserve features from Ancient Greek.

## 4 Conclusions

In this paper, I have dealt with the issue of Romance verb integration in several MG dialects. In particular, I have examined data from Griko, Heptanesian, Cretan, Cypriot and Lesbian, which underwent varying degrees of Romance influence, resulting to a variety of loan-integration phenomena. This investigation led to the following conclusions:

- (a) The accommodation of loan verbs in MG dialects is subject to both intra-linguistic and extra-linguistic factors.
- (b) Morphological borrowing is heavily constrained by linguistic features of the recipient language, in our case by the prominent role of stems and stem allomorphy in Greek morphology, while properties of the donor language may also play a role.
- (c) Borrowed words are modified/hellenicized to fit the native Greek word pattern which combines a stem and an inflectional ending.
- (d) Productivity may act as catalyst for the selection of a particular suffix as an integrator.
- (e) Social factors may cause but also restrict heavy borrowing.

Obviously, the entire topic and mechanisms of Romance verb integration in MG dialects is far from being completely understood. I hope to have shed some light on the different factors involved in the incorporation of loan verbs in Greek and the importance of contact-induced change in morphology.

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<sup>18</sup> See Chantraine (1945: 244) for details on the productivity of the formation of verbs in *-ev(o)*.

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