The nature of infinitives in Griko-Greek dialects of Southern Italy

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1.   Introduction

The gist of this paper is to shed light on the syntactic and morphological nature of infinitives in a selected number of Modern Greek dialects spoken in southern Italy. Specifically, infinitives of a set of Griko(-Greek) dialects spoken in Salento, a geographic region in the southernmost portion of Apulia, will be scrutinised. This study is underpinned by a collection of linguistic data gathered by the authors during two fieldwork expeditions that took place in three villages of Salento, i.e. in Calimera, Sternatìa and Zollino, in the summer months of 2015 and 2016. Data from these three dialects show that infinitives are very restricted in use in Griko dialects, as they are generally attested only after the modal 'sózzo' (cf. can). Other modals, e.g. 'é' (cf. must), and control verbs, are instead consistent in selecting verbal complements composed of a finite verb which in turn is preceded by a particle, the morphological shape of which corresponds to 'na' (na-clause).

This paper is structured as follows: in §2, an overview of the syntax and morphology of infinitives of the Griko dialects will be outlined. Prominence will be given to the dialects documented by the authors during their fieldwork expeditions in the Griko speaking communities of Salento. §3 provides a study that concerns the syntactic and morphological configuration of infinitives in the dialects under scrutiny in this paper. The conclusions are drawn in §4.

2.   The morphosyntax of infinitives in Griko dialects. An overview

In the south of Italy, two Greek dialectal communities are found. One includes a set of dialects spoken in southern Apulia, in the region of Salento, the geographic extension of which stretches from the hinterland of Gallipoli, in the west, up to the hinterland of Otranto, in the east. The other is located in southern Calabria and includes a scant number of dialects spoken on the southern side of the Aspromonte mountain. To date, these two separate groups of dialects represent the only Greek speaking 'islands' still alive within the Italian linguistic scenario. In the past, however, as Fanciullo (2001) contends, the situation was very different, inasmuch as Greek speaking communities in the south of Italy were found in a large geolinguistic domain

that included the entire region of Salento, as well as central and southern Calabria and north-eastern Sicily. All in all, the Modern Greek dialects spoken nowadays in southern Italy are called Griko and Greko, whereby the former refers to the Modern Greek dialects spoken in the Salento region and the latter, conversely, to the Modern Greek varieties spoken in southern Calabria. The geographic extension of these two groups of dialects is represented in Figure 1, adapted from Pellegrini (1977).[3]
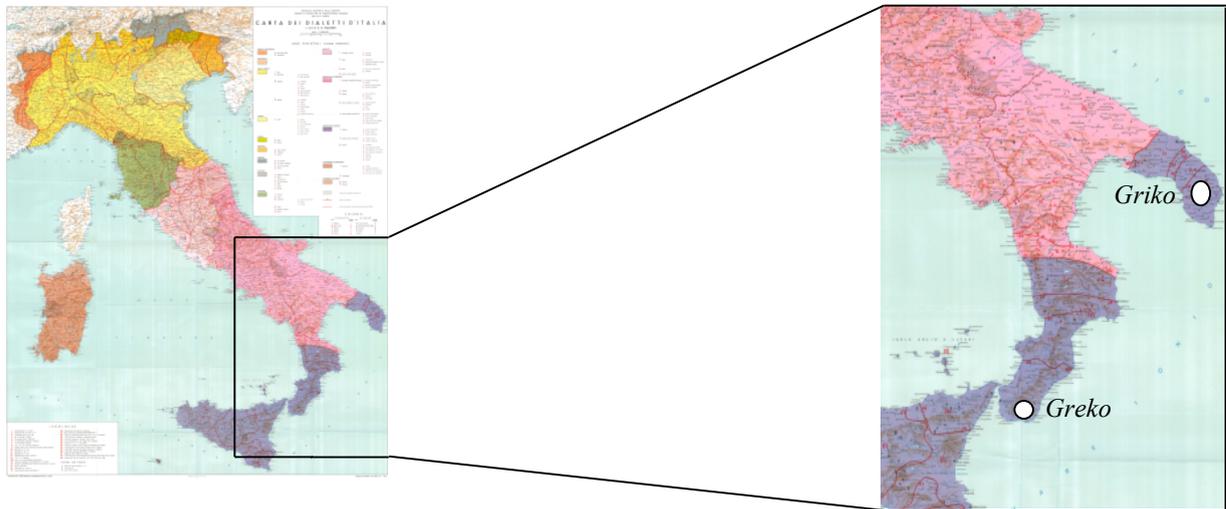

Figure 1: *The geographic location and extension of Griko and Greko (Italiot Greek) dialects*

In the literature on the diachrony of Italiot Greek dialects, Griko and Greko are considered to be the relics of a large Greek-speaking community that emerged in southern Italy in the past (cf. Falcone 1973; Horrocks 1997; Manolessou 2005; Ralli 2006). However, two different views on the origins of Griko and Greko survive in the current literature. According to Rohlfs (1924, 1933, 1974 & 1977), Italiot Greek dialects derive from Greek spoken in southern Italy during the period of Magna Grecia. On the other hand, Morosi (1870), Battisti (1927) and Parlangeli (1953) assert that Griko and Greko are the relics of Greek spoken in some areas of southern Italy during the Byzantine period, namely between 535 and 1071 A.D.

Regardless of the two hypotheses depicted above, Griko and Greko spoken nowadays share a wide set of syntactic and morphological properties with Modern Greek (henceforth MG). One of these properties is the 'unpopularity of the infinitive', which mainly consists in the replacement of infinitival clauses by means of verbal complements composed of a finite verb preceded by a particle, generally shaping as 'na' (na-clause).[4] An example of these facts is provided by the constructions in (1), where the Griko example of the dialect spoken in Martano

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[3] From a taxonomic standpoint, Griko and Greko are considered to form a unified group of dialects, which in the literature is dubbed Italiot Greek (for a recent overview on the topic, see Ralli 2016). Recent surveys indicate that the amount of Italiot Greek speakers has drastically diminished throughout the last decades. Ledgeway (2015), for instance, reports that Griko dialects are spoken by approximately 20,000 speakers scattered throughout seven towns of Grecìa Salentina, i.e. in Calimera, Castrignano dei Greci, Corigliano d'Otranto, Martano, Martignano, Sternatìa and Zollino. Greko dialects, on the other hand, are spoken by approximately 500 speakers in five towns of southern Calabria, i.e. in Bova (Marina), Choriò di Rochudi, Condofuri (Marina), Gallicianò and Roghudi (Nuovo). Given the massive decrease in number of Italiot Greek speakers over the last generations, Griko and Greko dialects have been included in the Red Book of Endangered Languages in 1999.

[4] It is worth noticing that the 'unpopularity of the infinitive' is not restricted to MG, Griko and Greko, but is further attested in other languages of the Balkan area, typologically included within the Balkan league. A large set of Italo-Romance dialects of southern Italy also feature a reduced usage of infinitives, as indicated by Calabrese (1993) and De Angelis (2016), amongst others.

in (1a), taken from Morosi (1870), is put in comparison with the MG example in (1b), transliterated into the Latin alphabet.[5]

(1)
'If you hear the bells ringing'

a. *A*	*cusi*	*na*	*simànun*	*'e*	*campane*	
if	hear-SUBJ-PRES-2SG	that	ring-SUBJ-PRES-3PL	the	bells	
b. *Eán*	*akúsis*	*na*	*xtipún*	*i*	*kampánes*	
if	hear-SUBJ-PRES-2SG	that	ring-SUBJ-PRES-3PL	the	bells	

It should be pointed out that infinitives were a highly productive grammatical category in the older stages of Greek, the decline of which started during the period of Classical Greek (henceforth CG). In CG, indeed, infinitives, which were a still highly productive verbal category, were generally found combined with a wide set of verbs including aspectual, control and raising verbs, as well as verbs of perception. Infinitives of CG had the property of expressing different types of aspectual interpretation, i.e. durative, instantaneous and completed viewpoint.

Between late and post CG, infinitives, which started to decrease in use, were generally found in combination with genitive neuter particles (cf. 2a), as well as with complementizers such as *hina*, *hopos*, *hoti* (cf. 2b), the presence of which was previously found only in combination with finite verbs.

(2)
a. *tou* [...]   *athumeĩn*
   GEN-NEUT   lack.confidence-INF
   'to lack confidence' [cf. Joseph 1983: 49]

b. ... *hina*   *pémpsai*
   that   send-INF
   'to send' [cf. Joseph 1983:50]

As for their distribution, infinitives of post CG were mainly selected by subject control verbs (cf. dunamai (can), opheilo (ought)) and aspectual predicates (cf. arkhomai (begin)) (cf. Joseph 1983: 52). Object control verbs such as thélo (want), on the other hand, had the property to combine with both infinitives and finite verbs preceded by particles, amongst which *hina* (cf. Joseph 1983: 53: i. tẽ:i epaúrion e:théle:sen ekseltheĩn eis té:n Galilaían 'the-DAT next-day wanted-3SG go-out-INF into the-Galilee-ACC', lit.: The next day, he wanted to go out into Galilee; ii. thélousin hoi Ioudaĩoi hína phoneúousin autón 'want-3PL the-Jews-NOM kill-3PL him-ACC', lit.: The Jews want to kill him').

According to Joseph (1983), the free alternation between finite verbs and infinitives started to prevail during the Byzantine/Medieval period, and came together with a well-defined set of morphophonological changes that affected the ending of the infinitive.[6] These facts are illustrated by means of the minimal pair in (3), which shows that the aspectual verb 'begin' in Byzantine Greek selected both an infinitive and a na-clause. It should be noted that the infinitive in (3a) and the finite verb in (3b) are represented by the very same lexical item.

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[5] In what follows, a full list of all the abbreviations used for the glosses that appear in this article is given: ACC: accusative, DAT: dative, GEN: genitive, IND: indicative, INF: infinitive, MASC: masculine, NOM: nominative, PL: plural, PRES: present, SG: singular, SUBJ: subjunctive, 1: first person, 2: second person, 3: third person.
[6] An overview of this topic is presented in §3.2, and is discussed in breadth and depth in Joseph (1983: 55 – 56).

(3)
   (S)he began to speak
   a. *árkseton*   *laleĩ*
      begin-IND-PAST-3SG   speak-INF [Joseph 1983: 57]

   b. *ẽ:rksen*   *na*   *lalẽ:i*
      begin-IND-PAST-3SG   that   speak-IND -PRES-3SG [Joseph 1983: 58]

While the grammar of MG has undergone a process of a complete loss of infinitives in favour of na-clauses (cf. 1b),[7] Italiot Greek dialects spoken nowadays still admit the selection of infinitives under specific circumstances, namely after the set of verbs in (4), whose list is from Rohlfs (1950).

(4)
a. Modals (e.g. can);   b. Causative verbs (e.g. do/make);
c. Aspectual verbs (e.g. finish);   d. Verbs of perception (e.g. hear).

The constructions in (5), taken from Ledgeway (2015: 8), exemplify these facts and show that the modal 'sózo' (cf. can) of the dialect of Zollino (cf. 5a) and the verb of perception 'cústi' (cf. hear) of the dialect of Martano (cf. 5b) are able to select infinitives.

(5)
a. *Oria*   *se*   *sózo*   *pi*
   beautiful   you-DAT   can-IND-PRES-1SG   say-INF
   'I can call you beauty'

b. *Cústi*   *o gáddo*   *cantalísi*
   hear-IND-PRES-3SG   the cock   sing-INF
   '(S)he heard the cock singing'

Several studies conducted in the last centuries in the area where Griko and Greko are spoken have revealed that infinitives are not obligatory after the type of verbs in (4). This has been shown in (1a), where the verb of perception 'cusi' (cf. hear) does not license an infinitival clause, but a na-clause (cf. a cusi na simànun 'e campane). Based on these facts, it is straightforward to assume that the selection of infinitives in Italiot Greek dialects spoken in the last decades does not follow a well-defined pattern, but is rather affected by a huge microvariation, the shape of which is illustrated in Figure 2. In Figure 2, the dimension of alternation between infinitives (cf. I) and na-clauses (cf. F), i.e. verbal complements composed of a finite verb preceded by a particle, generally 'na', in Italiot Greek dialects is illustrated. This alternation relies on a collection of data gathered by different authors from the fifties of the last century up until today.

Griko	*can*	*hear*	*do*	Aspectual	**Greko**	*can*	*hear*	*do*	Aspectual
Data I	I	/////	/////	F	Data I	I	I	/////	F
Data II	I	/////	F	F	Data II	I	F	F	F
Data III	I	F	F	F	Data III	I	-	/////	F
Data IV	/////	F	F	/////	Data IV	/////	/////	F	F

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[7] As far as the morphosyntax of na-clauses of MG is concerned, it should be taken into account that embedded verbs contained within this type of construction allow the overt expression of perfective and imperfective aspect, the selection of which is based on the aspectual properties encoded on the verb in the main clause. For further references on this topic, see Terzi (1992) and Roussou (2009 & 2010).

Figure 2:[8] *The infinitive versus na-clause alternation in Italiot Greek dialects.* Adapted from Ledgeway (2015)
Despite the huge variation affecting the selection of infinitives and na-clauses, Figure 2 indicates that infinitives in Griko and Greko are generally consistently found after the modal 'can' and the verb of perception 'hear', and occasionally attested after causative and aspectual verbs.

2.1 Insights from newly collected data

As is evident from Figure 2, the microvariation that affects the infinitive versus na-clause alternation in Griko and Greko results from a collection of data carried out by different authors that took place in different research periods, i.e. from the fifties of the last century until recently. However, Figure 2 reveals that the selection of infinitives has drastically decreased in use in the last century and further shows that infinitives are generally attested after the modal 'can', as is the case of Griko, and after the modal 'can' and the verb of perception 'hear', as is the case of Greko. In order to provide a novel study of the syntax and morphology of infinitives in contemporary Italiot Greek dialects, we aimed to gather new data through interviews and translation of questionnaires addressed to a selected number of native-speakers of Italiot Greek dialects. The interviews and questionnaires used during the fieldwork were made up of fifty sentences, all headed by the type of verbs listed up in (4). For the purpose of this data collection, no Greko dialects have been documented. Our survey was conducted exclusively in the Griko area, i.e. in the villages of Calimera, Sternatìa and Zollino, and took place in the summers of 2015 and 2016.[9] The geographic position of these three localities is given in Figure 3.
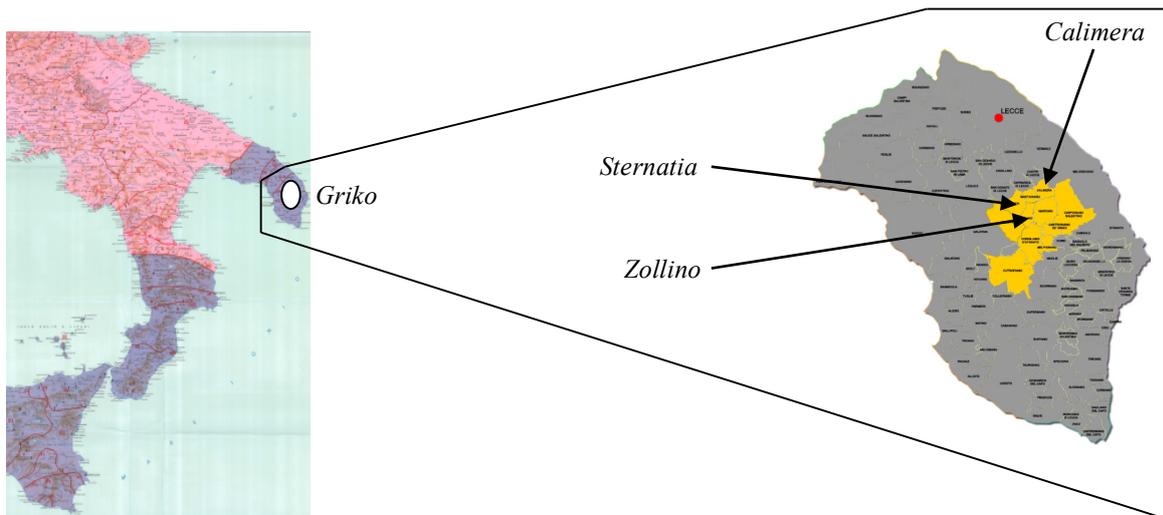

Figure 3: *The geographic location of Calimera, Sternatìa and Zollino within the Griko area of Salento* (in yellow)

Differently from Baldissera (2013), according to whom infinitives in the Griko dialects spoken nowadays are attested only after the modal 'can' and the aspectual verb 'finish'[10], the

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[8] As for Griko, Data I are from Rohlfs (1950), Data II from Cotardo (1975), Data III from Frassanito (2010) and Data IV from Baldissera (2013). As for Greko, Data I are from Rossi Taibbi & Caracausi (1959), Data II from Katsoyannou (1992), Data III from Remberger (2011) and Data IV from Bovese.

[9] The choice of these three localities was not random, but strictly followed the indications provided by Baldissera (2013), according to which the towns of Calimera and Sternatìa, together with Martano, host the most consistent number of Griko speakers. Due to already established contacts with some locals speakers, we decided to conduct our investigation also in the village of Zollino.

[10] Baldissera (2013) claims that aspectual verbs in Griko dialects are not uniform in the selection of verbal complements. Precisely, she observes that while 'finish' can combine with both infinitival and na-clauses, other aspectual verbs such as 'continue' and 'start' can only combine with na-clauses.

data that we collected in the field indicate that infinitives are selected only by 'can', whereby 'finish', on the other hand, only selects a na-clause. These facts are illustrated in (6) and refer to the dialect of Calimera, which is the variety we will make reference to in (6), as well as in the remainder of this paper.

(6)
a. Modal 'can': I can work

Sózzo	polemísi
can-IND-PRES-1SG	work-INF

b. Verb of perception 'hear': I hear Antonio speaking

Cúo	on António	pu	milí
hear-IND-PRES-1SG	the Antonio	that	speak-IND-PRES-3SG

c. Causative verb 'do/make': I make you eat pasta

Su	kánno	na	fái	i pasta
you-GEN	do-IND-PRES-1SG	that	eat-SUBJ-PRES-2SG	the pasta

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d. Aspectual verb 'finish': I am finishing to cook

Sté	spiccéo	na	marézzo
stand-IND-PRES-SG	finish-IND-PRES-1SG	that	cook-SUBJ-PRES-1SG

The data in (6) illustrate that infinitives in the dialect of Calimera documented for the purposes of the present study are found only in combination with the modal 'sózzo' (cf. 6a), and unattested elsewhere. While the verb of perception 'cúo' selects a verbal complement headed by 'pu', which in turn is followed by a verb in the indicative mood, the causative verb 'kánno' and the aspectual verb 'spiccéo' both select a na-clause.[11] As far as modals are concerned, however, it must be considered that infinitives in the Griko dialect under scrutiny in this article are selected only by the modal 'can', and not by other modal verbs, such as 'must'. The sentences in (7) exemplify these facts.

(7)
a. Modal 'can': I can work

Sózzo	polemísi
can-IND-PRES-1SG	work-INF

b. Modal 'must': I must/have to work

È	na	pulizézzo/plíno
have-IND-PRES-SG	that	clean-SUBJ-PRES-1SG

In the next section, the syntactic structure (cf. §3.1) and morphological make-up (cf. §3.2) of infinitives of the Griko dialect referred to in this article will be scrutinised.

3. The syntactic and morphological nature of infinitives in Griko

3.1. The syntax

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[11] Italiot Greek dialects, on a par with MG and other southern Italo-Romance dialects, display a double system of complementizers, the selection of which seems to be determined by the type of verb merged in root position (cf. Rohlfs 1969; Calabrese 1993; amongst others).

Since the studies advanced by Rizzi (1976) and Aissen & Perlmutter (1976), infinitives are considered to be verbal forms that can either possess or lack independent clausal status. While infinitives that possess independent clausal properties are generally thought of merging in syntactic domains that constitute a boundary for clause-bound processes, infinitives that lack independent clausal status are often treated as been embedded within the same clause with their selecting verbs. Generative linguistics considers the union between a main verb and an infinitival clause as deriving from the application of a syntactic operation called *Restructuring* (cf. Rizzi 1976) which, according to Wurmbrandt (2003), is generally licensed by modals (e.g. 'can', 'must', etc.), motion verbs (e.g. 'come', 'go', etc.), aspectual verbs (e.g. 'start', 'finish', etc.) and causatives (e.g. 'make', 'let', etc.). The Griko data in (6) and (7), however, show that infinitives are attested only in combination with the modal 'can', and not with the modal 'must' (cf. 7), causative and aspectual verbs (cf. 6). Based on this empirical evidence, our goal is to inspect why infinitives in Griko only emerge in combination with the modal 'can'. Griko, however, is not the only language that allows the presence of infinitives only after the modal 'can'. Romanian, a language of the Balkan league, also displays the selection of infinitives only in combination with the modal 'a putea' (cf. can) (cf. Joseph 1983:162: îţi pot spune 'you-DAT can-IND-PRES-1SG tell-INF', lit. I can tell you). Instances of infinitives in Romanian are also found after the verb 'şti' (cf. know how (to)), whose semantic property is that of expressing the ability of performing an action by the subject (cf. Joseph 1983:162: ştiu lucra 'know-IND-PRES-1SG work-INF', lit. I know how to work).

In syntactic theory, the modal 'can', also referred to in literature as a dynamic modal, is considered to be externally merged in a different syntactic position than other modals, amongst which the epistemic/deontic modal 'must' (cf. Roberts & Roussou 2003). Roberts & Roussou (2003) claim that the dynamic modal 'can' is externally merged in a syntactic position sandwiched between V°, i.e. the syntactic layer that assigns theta-roles to arguments, and T°, i.e. the syntactic position where non-dynamic modals are externally merged[12]. From a semantic point of view, Huddleston & Pullum (2002: 179) contend that a dynamic modal is "less central to modality than deontic permission in that it does not involve the speaker's attitude to the factuality or actualisation of the situation". Capitalizing on this definition, one might be tempted to assert that the infinitival clause 'speak Griko' contained within the sentence 'I can speak Griko' is a true proposition independently of the fact that the event of speaking Griko performed by the speaker does not take place at the time of utterance. Indeed, a sentence headed by a dynamic modal would be rather infelicitous if hosting a temporal adverb such as 'tomorrow' (cf. *I can speak Griko tomorrow, where 'can' means 'to be able to'). A different situation is at play in the case of a sentence headed by a deontic modal and a causative verb, which in turn select events that are not real at the utterance time. In the sentence, 'I must speak Griko', the event of speaking Griko does not take place in the real world, i.e. the activity of speaking Griko is supposed or rather expected to take place in a moment posterior to the utterance time. The same can be said for sentences headed by causative verbs, as 'I will make him speak Griko', where the event of speaking Griko performed by a 3rd person subject does not take place in the real world, but in a moment that follows it.

Based on the argumentation outlined above, we will advance the hypothesis that Griko infinitives, which combine only with the dynamic modal 'can', correspond to verbal forms that host a specific morphosyntactic feature. More concretely, our claim is that infinitives in Griko dialects are verbs that move from T° to Mood° due to the presence of the morphosyntactic

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[12] According Roberts & Roussou, dynamic modals are externally merged between V° and T°, i.e. in *v*°, because their property is to determine argument structure, and more precisely that of the subject. This idea is in line with the assumption that these verbs are subject oriented. For an alternative view of dynamic modals as being able to assign 'adjunct' theta-roles, see Zubizarreta (1982). On the other hand, epistemic modals, which are devoid of argument structure, should be considered as being directly merged in T°.

feature [Realis] encoded on Mood°, the syntactic position of which corresponds to a functional head merged between T° and C°.[13] These facts, outlined in (8), refer to the syntactic structure of the sentence presented in (6a) and (7a).[14]

(8)   **sózzo** ...
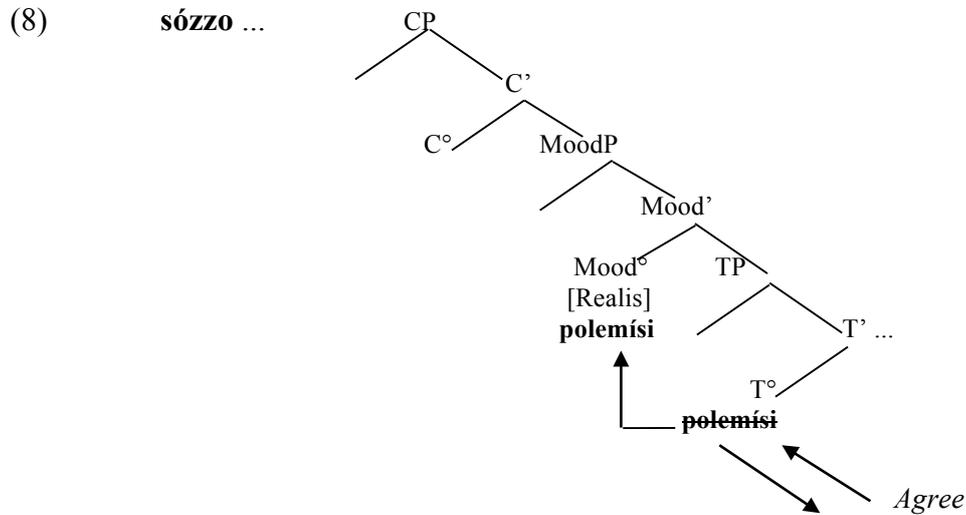
In (8), the verb 'polemísi', after having entered an *Agree* relation with the sentential subject in a lower position (cf. Chomsky 2001), moves to Mood° because of the presence of the [Realis] feature encoded on this head. In the presence of a deontic modal, instead, Mood° encodes [Irrealis], the overt expression of which is represented by the particle 'na'. The idea that 'na' is a syntactic element merged in Mood° has been proposed by several authors in the literature, amongst which Veloudis & Philippaki-Warburton (1983), Tsimpli (1990), Rivero (1994) and Roberts & Roussou (2003). These facts are illustrated in the structure in (9), which refers to the construction in (7b). In (9), the particle 'na' is followed by a finite verb expressing person and number information as a consequence of the *Agree* relation between the verb in T° and the sentential subject merged in a lower position (cf. Chomsky 2001).

(9)   **é** ...

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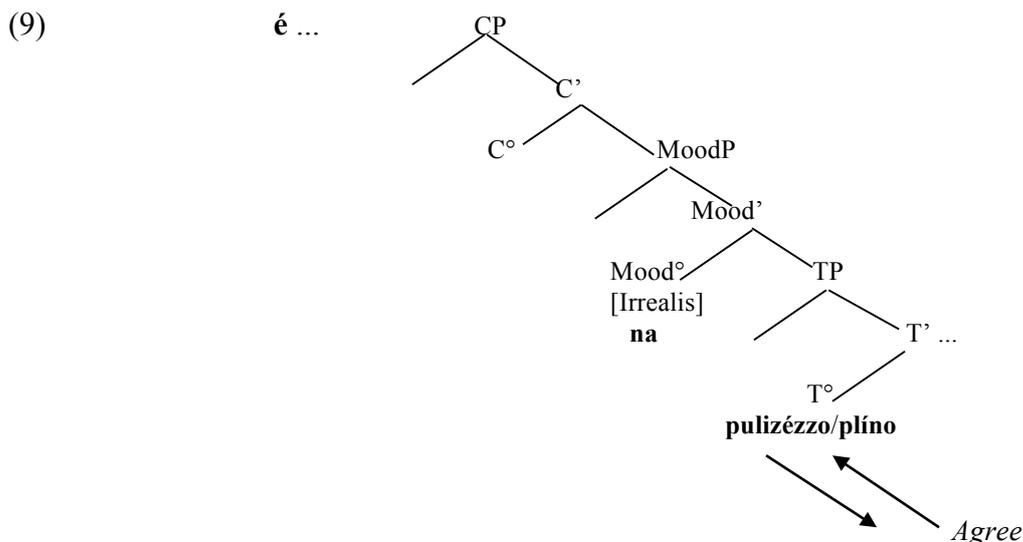
[13] Hoekstra & Hyams (1998) and Hyams (2001) propose that Mood° codifies the morphosyntactic feature [±Realis], whereby [+Realis] represents realis mood and [-Realis], conversely, irrealis. In the present treatment, [Realis] and [Irrealis] are treated as monovalent features, thus as not the positive or negative value of the dimension [Realis].

[14] (8) and (9) only illustrate the representation of the infinitival and the na-clause, thus leaving aside the syntactic configuration that merges below T°.

Having considered the syntactic ingredients that induce the selection of infinitives in Griko-Greek dialects, the next section proposes to analyse the morphological properties that relate to infinitives in this group of varieties.

3.2 The morphology

As Joseph (1983) contends, the decline in the use of infinitives in Greek took place in the period that spans from ancient times until medieval times, and was accompanied by a series of morphophonological changes that affected the endings of these verbs. Specifically, Byzantine/Medieval Greek infinitive endings started to lose the morpheme <n>, and as a result the infinitive verb became homophonous with a 3rd person singular verbal form. Figure 4 shows the morphological shape of the infinitive endings attested for Ancient and Byzantine/Medieval Greek, i.e. Greek spoken from the 12th century onwards.[15]

	Ancient Greek	Byzantine/Medieval Greek
	Active	Active
Present/Future	-ein	-ei(n)
First Aorist	-(s)ai	-(s)ei(n)
Second Aorist	-ein	-ei(n)

Figure 4: *The morphological shape of infinitive endings in Ancient and Byzantine/Medieval Greek*

The syncretism between infinitive and 3rd person singular verbs has already been taken into account in the example in (3), where 'lale(:)ĩ' corresponds to both an infinitive and a 3rd person singular verbal form. This sort of syncretism is attested also for modern Griko infinitives, which are homophonous with 3rd person singular verbs. However, as Baldissera (2013) illustrates, Griko infinitives are syncretic with 3rd person singular verbs that occur in embedded position, and not with 3rd person singular verb that emerge in root clauses. These facts are shown by means of the constructions in (10).

(10)
  a. O   António   milí
     the-MASC-SG Antonio   speak-IND-PRES-3SG
     'Antonio speaks'

  b. Sozzo   milísi
     can-IND-PRES-1SG   speak-INF
     'I can speak'

  c. Téli   na   milísi
     want-IND-PRES-3SG that   speak-SUBJ-PRES-3SG
     '(S)he wants to speak'

From an etymological standpoint, the infinitival form 'milísi' (cf. 10b) can be considered to derive from CG infinitive forms that encoded instantaneous aspect (cf. §2). Notwithstanding this, aspectual properties are unattested in contemporary Griko infinitives, as the form 'milísi' can refer to events that encode both perfective and imperfective reading. However, it is relevant to observe that the suffix <ís> sandwiched between the root <mil> and the ending <i> is found

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[15] Figure 4 does not take into account the final endings of Ancient Greek infinitives in the passive and middle voice, as well as of the Middle-Passive voice of Byzantine/Medieval Greek. For an overview of these data, see Joseph 1983: 55 & 56.

on both the infinitive (cf. 10b) and the 3rd person singular verb contained within the na-clause (cf. 10c). The main verb in (10a), by contrast, does not display the <is> suffix, and therefore it is represented by the root <mil> followed by the <i> suffix.[16]

In this paper, we propose that the suffix <ís> corresponds to a morphological marker whose property is to indicate that both the infinitive (cf. 10b) and the embedded verb preceded by the particle 'na' (cf. 10c) are attested within syntactic configurations that feature structural union between the main and the embedded clause. From a technical point of view, the union between the main and the embedded clause is considered here to derive from the presence of a defective C head (cf. Chomsky 2001), the presence of which does not create a barrier between the main and the embedded clause. The suffix <ís> is followed by the vowel <i>, which we hypothesise to correspond to a morpheme signalling 3rd person singular information. Based on a number of studies on the acquisition and the spell-out of morphosyntactic features (cf. Harley & Ritter 2002; Ackema & Neeleman 2012; Torcolacci 2015, a.o.),[17] we consider the selection of <i> at word-final position of infinitive forms to derive from the application of a markedness rule which predicts that 3rd person singular is a default.[18] The overt realization of a default morpheme for person and number features on the infinitive would depend on the fact that Mood° is endowed with a [Realis] feature, the presence of which is able to blur the agreement properties inherited by the verb that has undergone T°-to-Mood° movement (cf. 8). A fine-grained scheme of the morphological representation of infinitives of Griko is provided in (11).

(11)
[mil {Root}   [ís {Clause Union}   [i {3SG}]]]

Contrary to infinitive forms, embedded verbs preceded by 'na' in Griko overtly express person and number properties at word-final position. This would be determined by the fact that the finite verb in na-clauses stays in T°, thus not interacting with mood features, which are instead encoded on the particle 'na' in Mood° (cf. é na pulizzézzo 'must-1SG that clean-SUBJ-1SG').

4.   Conclusions

In this paper, we have shown that infinitives in Griko correspond to verbal forms merged in Mood° that encode a specific morphosyntactic feature, i.e. [Realis]. This assumption is based on the empirical evidence that shows that infinitives in Griko dialects spoken nowadays generally combine with 'can', which in literature is considered as a dynamic modal. Following Huddleston & Pullum (2002), we considered verbal complements that merge with dynamic modals as true predicates. On the other hand, predicates that merge with other verbs, amongst which the deontic modal 'must' and control verbs, are not considered to be true predicates, and therefore select a na-clause. In the present analysis, we proposed that 'na' is a particle that encodes an [Irrealis] feature, whose merging site corresponds to Mood°. As for their morphology, Griko infinitives have been considered in the present treatment as verbal forms that host a morpheme, namely <ís>, whose property is that of signalling a well-defined class of clause-type. The vowel <i> at word-final position of the infinitives, homophonous with a 3rd

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[16] Allomorphic distinctions similar to the type described for Griko are taken into account in Ralli (1988 & 2003) with reference to MG verbs.

[17] The term default we refer to in this paper hinges upon the study of acquisition of morphosyntactic features advanced by Harley & Ritter (2002), which in turn is based on previous studies on the markedness of person feature put forward by Forchheimer (1953) and Benveniste (1966 & 1971). In their seminal article, Harley & Ritter claim that a default morphosyntactic feature is a feature that is acquired before others during the acquisitional path. Since 3rd person is acquired before 1st and 2nd person, then the assumption is that 3rd person is a default, as opposed to 1st and 2nd person features, which are instead marked.

[18] The idea that 3rd person singular represents a default per person and number features has been also proposed by Georgiou, Papatzlas & Terzi (2016) with reference to Cypriot-Greek varieties.

person marker, has been treated as a default marker for person and number features. The idea of default exploited in this paper leans on the argument put forward by Harley & Ritter (2002), according to whom 3rd person is a default, as opposed to 1st and 2nd person, which are instead marked.

The analyses presented in this paper seem to suggest that a few research questions on the nature of infinitives of a wide set of languages should be addressed. Since we postulated in this paper that Griko infinitives are verbal forms that encode a specific morphosyntactic feature, we propose that infinitives in other languages other than Griko should be investigated to see if they can also be treated as verbs that encode a well-defined morphosyntactic feature. A method of conducting this research would be to consider the type of verbs that merge together with infinitives, with the intention of envisaging the semantico-syntactic relation that pertains between the main verb and the infinitive. In addition, it would be relevant to determine if infinitives in Griko are also found in combination with factive verbs, i.e. verbs that license content clauses that are assumed to be true.

Finally, we propose to carry out a comparative study regarding the selection of infinitives in Griko and other languages of the Balkan area, amongst which Romanian. Since infinitives in Griko and Romanian, as outlined in §3.1., are attested only after the modal 'can', we propose to consider why these two languages, albeit being spoken in two different geo-linguistic areas, license infinitives in the very same context. In relation to this, we aim to take into account why Griko and Romanian oppose to the other languages of the Balkan league, as far as the selection of infinitives is concerned.

From a diachronic point of view, we propose to consider the historical steps that have led to the retreat of infinitives in Griko dialects and Romanian in relation to other languages of the Balkan league, in order to envisage whether all these languages have undergone the same steps as far as the decrease in use of the infinitive is concerned. In addition, we consider that it should be relevant to detect the sociolinguistic and pragmatic factors that have triggered the retreat of infinitives across the languages of the Balkan area in the last centuries (cf. Leivadara 2014).

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