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Auxiliary selection and past participle agreement in the Griko periphrastic perfect:
A (micro)diachronic and diatopic study of a Greek variety in contact with Italo-Romance

The phenomenon of auxiliary selection in the present perfect among Italo-Romance languages has been extensively studied due to its many diverse patterns, the most common of which are the unaccusativity-split (like in Standard Italian) and various kinds of person- and tense- driven split (both widespread across Central and Southern dialects; see Manzini & Savoia 2005 for a complete picture).

This mosaic of diatopic variation proves to be particularly interesting when the analysis is conducted on Griko, a Greek dialect spoken in Salento (extreme south of Apulia) at least since the Middle Ages, and in intense contact with Salentino and Italian, which is reflected in its morphosyntax. Indeed, due to the contact situation with Italo-Romance, Griko developed a periphrastic perfect tense built with auxiliary BE/HAVE + past participle (with invariable ending for transitives and unergatives and with possibility of past participle agreement (PPA) with unaccusative subjects).

The descriptions provided so far of auxiliary selection mechanisms in the Griko periphrastic perfect turn out to be incomplete and furthermore they do not take into account the diatopic and diachronic variation occurring in the language: according to Baldissera (2013), Griko displays the typical person-driven split, with obligatory HAVE in the 3rd person, but this account does not consider all the attested instances of BE also in the 3rd person; an unaccusativity-split is proposed by Morosi (1870), who also observes the frequent use of HAVE with unaccusatives, but fails to account for the much more extensive use of BE with transitives in some Griko varieties; Rohlfs (1972) confirms the existence of an unaccusativity-split and correctly observes the generalization of BE in some areas, but he explains this fact by treating the periphrasis as adjectival, despite the lack of PPA in his transitive examples. Furthermore, none of the descriptions pays attention to the presence or absence of PPA with unaccusative subjects in the different varieties and to its connection with the selected auxiliary. This study aims to provide a consistent account of auxiliary selection in Griko, looking at the interaction between Greek and Italo-Romance features in the development of the periphrasis and analysing prose and poetry texts from Sternatia, Calimera, Martano and Corigliano – all ranging from the 16th to the 21st century – in order to capture the noted diatopic variation and

to ascertain the effect of (micro)diachronic change in these areas, especially during the last two centuries.

As a first result of this work, different patterns across time and space can be identified, which point towards an underlying unaccusativity-split for all the varieties under investigation – following the original Proto-Romance pattern – with a successive generalization of BE in some of them, namely Martano and Calimera. While in the former the change is complete at least since the 19th century and accompanied by the total absence of PPA with unaccusative subjects, in the latter there still is some optionality in auxiliary choice, and PPA is the default. The Sternatia variety maintains the split, but in older texts an optional use of HAVE with unaccusatives is attested as well: however, PPA obtains only if the unaccusative verb selects BE. The data collected from Corigliano until now are limited to traditional poems and confirm the usual unaccusativity-split, with PPA on unaccusatives.

These patterns are even more interesting, as they diverge from the consistent generalization of HAVE occurring in most Salentino varieties at least since the Middle Ages (see *Il Libro di Sidrac Salentino*), with obligatory PPA with unaccusative subjects. Additionally, the Salentino data analyzed until now from some recent works from Calimera (Vito Bergamo's stories) pattern more similarly to the other Salentino varieties than to Griko, since they show a tense split with the usual unaccusativity-split in the perfect, always with PPA, and HAVE-generalization in the pluperfect.

Further work is collecting more Salentino evidence from Calimera and other neighboring towns, where Griko and Salentino coexist or have coexisted for a long time. In this way, we can frame more closely and in detail the situation evidenced in Griko, also analysing more deeply the observed PPA patterns and putting them in relation to language contact and to the change of alignment in auxiliary selection over time.

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