

Adjective-noun constructions in Griko: focusing on measuring adjectives and their placement in the nominal domain

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ABSTRACT

This paper examines adjectival placement in Griko, an Italian-Greek language variety. Guardiano and Stavrou (2019, 2014) have argued that there is a gap of evidence in the diachrony of adjectives in prenominal position and in particular, of measuring adjectives. Evidence is presented in this paper contradicting the aforementioned claims. After considering the placement of adjectives in Greek and Italian, and their similarities and differences, the adjectival pattern of Griko is analysed. The analysis is based mostly on written data from the early 20th century proving the prenominal position of adjectives and adding to the diachronic schema of adjectival placement in Griko.

1. Introduction

In recent years, much research has been conducted focusing on varieties spoken in Southern Italy with the aim to detect the influence of both Romance and Greek on them by examining verb-related phenomena (Lekakou and Quer, 2016; Ralli, 2016; Ledgeway et al., 2018; a.o.), clause-focused phenomena (Ledgeway, 2015; Baldissera, 2013b; Torcolacci and Livadara, 2019; a.o.) and phenomena occurring in the nominal domain (Guardiano and Stavrou, 2019; Melissaropoulou; 2014; Ralli et al., 2015; a.o.). This study sets out to examine the placement of measuring adjectives in Griko, a variety of Southern Italy.

In Southern Italy, many Greek-speaking communities existed in the regions of Salento, Grecia Salentina and southeast Lecce. Griko¹ is one of the language varieties spoken in the area of Lecce. Nowadays, there are few speakers of Italian-Greek varieties such as Griko in the enclaves of Southern Italy, estimated to be less than 20,000 (Horrocks, 2009; Douri & De Santis, 2015). According to Chatzikyriakidis (2010), this number is considered to be an overestimation, as some varieties are "practically extinct", e.g. Greek in Bovesia or otherwise named as Bovesese (Guardiano & Stavrou, 2019), a Greek variety spoken in the region of Southern Calabria. This is the main reason that Italiot Greek², a variety consist-

1 Also spelled as "Grico" in the literature.

2 Italiot Greek, also known as Salentino-Calabrian Greek, Italic-Greek or Apulia-Calabrian Greek, refers to Greek varieties spoken in some areas of southern Italy. There are two small Griko-speaking communities known as the Griko people who live in the Italian regions of Calabria, the southern part of the Italian peninsula, and Apulia, its south-easternmost part.

ing of the varieties Grecanico and Griko, was classified as highly endangered in the Unesco Red Book of Endangered Languages in 1999 (Anastasopoulos et al., 2018). In order to indicatively illustrate the regions that these varieties are spoken, Map 1 is presented:



Map 1. Dialects of southern Italy (Ledgeway, 2016: 247)

This paper aims to provide a brief overview of the research associated with adjective-noun constructions focusing on the variety of Griko, and especially on adjectival phrases containing a measuring adjective. Towards this goal, the paper is set

out to give further evidence for Griko's syntactic change from a Greek adjectival pattern (prenominal adjectives) to a Romance/Italian one (postnominal adjectives), adding up to the strong diachronic contact of Greek and Romance varieties, while adopting the analysis made by Guardiano & Stavrou (2014, 2019). Lastly, this paper serves as the "link" between the Ancient/Modern Greek and the Romance adjectival system for Griko, a link that Guardiano and Stavrou (2019: 4) report as "missing", meaning not accounted for.

The structure of the paper is as follows. In section 2, a very brief overview of historical and societal reasons is presented aiming to contribute to the explanation of Griko turning from a Greek to a Romance variety. In section 3, an analysis is presented of both the Italian and Modern Greek adjectival systems, including examples of measuring adjectives, in order to provide a clear illumination of their workings and contribute to explaining Griko's adjectival system. Section 4 presents previous work on Griko's adjectival system that use recent data not only for Griko, but also for other Italian-Greek varieties that survived through time in the region of Southern Italy. The aim is to detect similarities or differences between them and illustrate how their adjective syntax and ordering has been formulated. Moreover, section 5 briefly describes the methodology that was followed in the present paper. In section 6, Griko data from the early 20th century is presented contradicting previous claims for the positioning of adjectives, and especially measuring adjectives. The present paper contributes data of the diachronic contact of Griko with Romance varieties. Finally, in section 6, a brief summary of this study's findings follows along with lines for future research and a possible limitation.

2. Setting the scene: historical and societal background of Griko

According to Rohlf's (1972) and Fanciullo (2001), Greek had a direct and massive effect on the local Romance varieties spoken in Southern Italy, as the area was reported to be Greek-speaking before the Latin domination. However, Fanciullo (2001:76) highlights that the relation of local Greek-Italian varieties were not in balance timewise with Greek: "whereas Bovesè (Calabrian Greek) is directly connected to the Greek of Graecia Magna (an indication of this can be precisely the large number of Doric items Bovesè preserves), Griko (Apulia Greek) could originate in the Hellenization of Southern Apulia during the (late) Roman empire".

Moreover, as Guardiano and Stavrou (2014; 2019) report, Greek in Southern Italy has been linked with low social prestige and hence, Greek-speakers' identity perception is not as strong as in the past. This social decline explains why the Italiot Greek varieties are not preferred for communication. That explains why these varieties are in regression. It is worth mentioning that recent studies on Griko (Guardiano & Stavrou, 2014; Lekakou et al., 2013) have shown that there are no monolingual native speakers, as Italian is the dominant and main language of communication, and the variety of Italiot Greek follows as a remnant of previous eras.

Therefore, written texts from previous centuries can shed light upon the course, rhythm and type of change that these varieties have been under. Moreover, present data that contributes to the questions why and how these varieties have arrived at the point of presenting only a few instances of “resistance” to the Romance dominance.

3. Adjectival placement in Modern Greek and Italian

As Griko is an Italian-Greek variety, it is essential to outline both the Greek and Italian adjective syntax in order to provide insights for similar and differing patterns with Griko.

3.1 Adjectival placement in Modern Greek

In Modern Greek (and Ancient Greek) adjectives precede the noun. As Alexiadou et al. (2007: 364) highlight: “in Greek all adjectives are prenominal”, meaning that the adjectives are placed to the left of the noun at default. Alexiadou (2003) and Alexiadou et al. (2007) also illustrate that a certain hierarchy is followed in the linearization of two or more adjectives modifying a noun regardless of the absence of the definitive article, see examples (1) and (2):

- (1) Quantificational/Numeral > Quality/Speaker-oriented > Size/Height > Shape > Color > Provenance/Argument

Alexiadou (2003: 5), Alexiadou et al. (2007: 310)

- (2) a. Τα πολλά όμορφα μεγάλα κόκκινα
 DET.N.PL many.N.PL beautiful.N.PL big.N.PL red.N.PL
 αγγλικά βιβλία
 English.N.PL book.N.PL
 ‘The many beautiful big red English books’
- b. Πολλά όμορφα μεγάλα κόκκινα αγγλικά
 many.N.PL beautiful.N.PL big.N.PL red.N.PL English.N.PL
 βιβλία
 books.N.PL
 ‘Many beautiful big red English books’

However, it is possible in Modern Greek for adjectives to occur postnominally via the phenomenon of ‘Determiner or Definiteness Spreading’ (Androutsopoulou, 1996; Alexiadou, 2003), allowing more than one definite determiner to accompany adjectives modifying a noun. As illustrated in example (3), every adjective is preceded by its own determiner and both Adjective-Noun and Noun-Adjective placements are possible:

- (3) a. Τα κόκκινα βιβλία τα αγγλικά
 DET.N.PL red.N.PL book.N.PL DET English.N.PL
 ‘The red English books’
- b. Τα βιβλία τα κόκκινα τα αγγλικά
 DET.N.PL book.N.PL DET red.N.PL DET English.N.PL
 ‘The red English books’
- c. Τα κόκκινα τα αγγλικά τα βιβλία
 DET.N.PL red.N.PL DET.N.PL English.N.PL DET.N.PL
 book.N.PL
 ‘The red English books’

Besides being an important part of adjectival placement in the Modern Greek nominal domain, this hierarchy will play an important role in the examination of Griko data later on.

Until now, the examples mentioned above involve a definite determiner or no determiner at all (2b). Another environment in which Greek adjectives are placed postnominally is when there is an indefinite determiner at the beginning of an adjectival phrase (Kolliakou, 2004). As illustrated in the following examples, both the postnominal (4a) and prenominal (4b) positions of the adjectives are acceptable.

- (4) a. Ένα βιβλίο παλιό
 DET.N.SG.NOM book.N.SG.NOM old.N.SG.NOM
 ‘An old book’
- b. Ένα παλιό βιβλίο
 DET.N.SG.NOM old.N.SG.NOM book.N.SG.NOM
 ‘An old book’

If we were to use a definite article for construction (4a), the phrase would not be grammatical:

- (5) *Το βιβλίο παλιό
 DET.N.SG.NOM book.N.SG.NOM old.N.SG.NOM
 ‘The old book’

When a DP has a definite article, postnominal adjectives follow a definite article resulting in determiner doubling (Alexiadou, 2003), as shown in example (3).

Having presented prenominal and postnominal placement of adjectives in Modern Greek, it is crucial to note that as the position of the adjective changes so does its interpretation/meaning. Many studies have reported these differences before, such as Guardiano and Stavrou (2019), Kolliakou (2004), Campos and Stavrou (2004), Stavrou (2012) and Alexiadou et al. (2007). In example (4), the adjective is interpreted restively and intersectively, whereas adjectives in a prenominal position are interpreted in a non-restrictive, non-intersective, and specificity-inducing way (Guardiano and Stavrou, 2019: 14-15). In other words, postnominal adjectives are interpreted at a stage-level (4a) and prenominal ones at an individual-level (4b).

As regards to the adjective syntax, it has been claimed that adjectives placed to the left of the noun originate prenominally, so there is no noun movement (Alexiadou et al., 2007; Cinque, 2010). Giusti (2011). This supports that the Spec-Head relation is responsible for the agreement of φ -features between the determiner, the adjective and the noun. For postnominal adjectives, Stavrou (2012, 2013) has proposed that adjectives right to the noun are merged postnominally at “a predicational/appositional structure” (Guardiano and Stavrou, 2019: 4, 38).

Measuring adjectives in Greek follow the analysis and hierarchy presented in this section in terms of the position of size or height adjectives in the clause, and do not constitute a separate category of adjectives, as they behave identically.

3.2 Adjectival placement in Italian

In Italian, some adjectives follow the head noun while others precede it. See examples (6), (7), and (8):

- (6) Il bambino grande
 The.N.SG.NOM child.N.SG.NOM big.N.SG.NOM
 ‘The big child’
 (Alexiadou, 2003:1)

- (7) Bella grande palla rossa
 Beautiful.F.SG.NOM big.F.SG.NOM ball.F.SG.NOM red.F.SG.NOM
 ‘A/The beautiful big red ball’
 (Alexiadou, 2003: 1)

- (8) Gli edifici alti di New York
 DET.M.PL.NOM building.M.PL.NOM tall.M.PL.NOM of New York
 colpiscono tutti
 strike.PRS.3PL.ACT all.M.PL.ACC
 ‘The tall building of New York impress everyone’
 Guardiano and Stavrou (2019: 11)

According to Cinque (2010), the prenominal adjectival position is strongly associated with the direct modification of the noun and an individual-level/ absolute interpretation, as in Modern Greek. At the same time, postnominal adjectives are interpreted both at a relative/stage- and an individual-level, as illustrated in (7) where two interpretations are possible: on the one hand, that the buildings are tall in comparison with the other buildings (relative), and on the other hand, that the buildings are all tall, impressing everybody (absolute).

It has been claimed (Longobardi, 2001; Laenzlinger, 2005; among others) that postnominal adjectives in Italian are a result of N/NP-movement to higher functional projections letting adjectives merge prenominally. Moreover, as Alexiadou (2001) has illustrated, contrasting Cinque (2010), there is the account for postnominal adjectives being a part of a reduced relative sentence and hence, not merging prenominally, but postnominally. Lastly, Guardiano and Stavrou (2019) highlight that N/NP-movement is the reason for adjectives placed right to the noun and note that there are different meanings rooted from this differentiation in their position. For example, the adjective *vecchio*, when placed prenominally means 'known for a long time', while then placed postnominally means 'aged'.

The key difference with Greek is the presence of determiners with regard to the placement of the adjectives. This should be one of the basic criteria for detecting whether a century ago adjectives, and especially measuring adjectives in Griko are found prenominally or postnominally and why.

4. Previous work on Griko's adjectival domain

Guardiano & Stavrou (2014) have conducted a study examining the changes caused by the contact with Romance varieties that Griko and Bovesese have experienced. They focus on the patterns of adjectival modification and aim to explore how language contact influences the development and alteration of the varieties involved. It is essential for such an analysis to take into account the behavior of adjectives in Greek and Romance, since the varieties examined are strongly influenced by them.

Guardiano and Stavrou (2014) presented adequate data for the adjectival functions in Modern Greek, Italian and the Southern Italy varieties of Sicilian, Salentino, and Northern Calabrese. They detected differences in regard to the notion that the varieties are very much affected from the dominant languages in the region, Italian and Romance varieties, since adjectives are behaving mostly as in Italian, except under certain circumstances. In particular, it was observed that certain types of adjectives, meaning numerals and adjectives defining quality, are found in a prenominal position, while all the other types of adjectives consistently occupy a postnominal position. This is the intriguing difference of these varieties with respect to Modern Greek, where the adjectives occur prenominally. It is reported that Bovesese and Griko have a lot of similarities but differ when it comes to postnominal adjectives, as Bovesese allows prenominal adjectives to exist and

Griko does not. Guardiano and Stavrou (2014: 22) support that the behavior of postnominal adjectives in both Griko and Bovesese depends on the fact that the noun moves to higher positions, a movement happening in Romance varieties and not in Modern Greek, where the noun does not move. They support that the limited instances with adjectives in postnominal positions happen because either the noun moves (Romance varieties) or the noun is generated at the base of a relative or a small clause (as in Modern Greek). Lastly, with regard to measuring adjectives, Guardiano and Stavrou (2014: 12) present data in Griko supporting that size adjectives are found postnominally and very rarely prenominally, being the only example of adjectives found in a prenominal position.

Furthermore, Guardiano and Stavrou continued their research and, in a more recent study (2019), found that polydefiniteness, another phenomenon responsible for the ordering of noun and adjectives in Italiot Greek (and hence, Griko), has been lost. As mentioned before with referring to ‘Determiner Spreading’, polydefiniteness is acceptable in Modern Greek. They propose that this loss is a result of postnominal adjectives merging prenominally, which is a pattern detected in Italian and Romance varieties, as opposed to Modern Greek. Moreover, regarding measuring adjectives, Guardiano and Stavrou (2019: 29-30) report that size adjectives are not acceptable prenominally in Salento Greek, a variety of Italiot Greek spoken in a neighboring area of Griko, and Calabria Greek, also a variety of Italiot Greek spoken in South Italy. They note that “the adjective *megàlo* ‘big’ never found prenominally in the texts, is accepted in prenominal position by some speakers” (ibid. 2019: 31).

Although Guardiano and Stavrou’s (2014; 2019) approach is based on recent data for the variety of Griko, there are data from a previous era (early 20th century) proving that the recent result of Griko not allowing prenominal adjectives was probably an on-going alternation one hundred years ago.

5. Method

The Griko and Modern Greek data for the present study will be presented in the next section. The source of the Griko data is the book “*Io’ mia fora’ - Fiabe e Racconti della Grecia Salentina*” written by Palumbo V. D. in 1885-1915 and published by Salvatore Tommasi and Salvatore Sicuro in 1998. For about forty years the scholar Palumbo V.D. had gone around the houses of the Grecia Salentina to collect stories, from the voice of women, the elderly, from which the elements of popular literature transmitted orally for centuries. Further information on the characteristics of the speakers, from which the stories were collected, are not available. Palumbo V.D. tried to create a collection of oral stories in Griko, the variety spoken in Calimera, which nowadays is the most spoken in the nine communities of the region that still use it (Anastasopoulos et al., 2018).

The author of this paper is a native speaker of Modern Greek, therefore the Modern Greek examples that follow are sourced from their individual knowledge and intuition.

6. Data & Analysis

6.1 Adjectival placement in Griko

The following examples are presented first in Griko and then in English, aiming to provide evidence that will contribute to the mosaic of syntactic change and documentation of the Griko variety. In example (9), both postnominal and prenominal constructions exist with an indefinite determiner preceding the adjective-noun combination. What is more, there is a differentiation in meaning depending on the position of the adjective, as in Italian. This differentiation happens in the dialects Salento Greek and Calabria Greek as well, as Guardiano and Stavrou (2019) have detected in their study.

- (9) Mia' forà iche mia'
 One.F.SG.ACC time.F.SG.ACC have-PST.3SG.ACT DET.INDF.F.SG.ACC
 signura mali ce ìchane mia'
 lady.F.SG.NOM rich.F.SG.NOM and have.PST.3PL.ACT DET.F.SG.ACC
 mali probetà
 a.lot.F.SG.ACC property.F.SG.ACC.
 'Once upon a time there was a rich lady who had a lot of property'

In examples (10) & (11) it is evident that at the time, there were still constructions with prenominal adjectives, following the pattern of adjectival position in Modern Greek, where the construction is starting with either a definite (10) or an indefinite (11) determiner, followed by the adjective and then the noun:

- (10) nsignase na klafsi e mara
 begin.PST.3SG.ACT cry.INF.ACT (DEF.F.SG.NOM) poor.F.SG.NOM
 mana
 mother.F.SG.NOM
 'the poor mother began to cry'
- (11) iche ena' pedì anechò
 have.PST.3SG.ACT DET.INDF.N.SG.ACC child.N.SG.ACC alone.N.SG.ACC
 '(she) had only one child'

Lastly, in example (12) it is apparent that the adjective-noun combination is constructed following the pattern of 'Determiner Spreading' in Modern Greek. This instance of postnominal adjective with a definite determiner preceding is in contrast with the data presented for Griko in Guardiano and Stavrou's (2014) study, meaning that the loss of such constructions has happened in the past century probably due to the constant language contact with Romance varieties and Italian and the

fact that today Griko speakers are at least bilinguals, as Italian is the dominant language of communication (Guardiano and Stavrou, 2019).

- (12) in dattilìstrammu ti'
 DET.DEF.F.SG.ACC thimble.POSS.F.SG.ACC DET.DEF.F.SG.ACC
 krusì
 gold.F.SG.ACC.
 'my golden thimble'

As shown by the examples above, there is agreement in number, gender and case between the noun and the adjective. The concord of them is achieved via a Spec-Head relation (Guardiano & Stavrou, 2019). The adjectives are generated in a prenominal position, as in examples (8), (9) & (10). Agreement in postnominal position as in examples (8) & (11) is obtained by movement of the noun phrase to a higher position and depends on whether the adjective is DP internal or a DP adjunct (Guardiano and Stavrou, 2014). Additionally, the presence of determiners in these examples contradicts the absence of determiners spreading in the recent Griko data of Guardiano and Stavrou (2014), meaning that the influence of Romance varieties had significant impact on Griko in the recent past decades.

6.2 Placement of measuring adjectives in Griko

In this section examples with measuring adjectives placed prenominally will be presented, contradicting Guardiano and Stavrou (2014, 2019), who support that measuring adjectives are only found postnominally, especially in written texts, as reviewed in section 4. Moreover, it will be explained why some Griko speakers accept size adjectives prenominally today:

- (13) mu kanni lio
 OBJ.1SG.ACC make.PRS.3SG.ACT a.little.bit.NEUT.SG.ACC
 krea ftimeno ?
 meat.NEUT.SG.ACC PTCP.PRF.PASS.3SG.ACC
 'Can you make me a little bit of roasted meat?'
- (14) Jati, o atzilo pedàimmu?
 Why DET.DEF.NEUT.SG.ACC tall.NEUT.SG.ACC child.POSS.NEUT.SG.ACC.
 'Why, my tall child?'
- (15) o mea paddhikari
 DET.DEF.NEUT.SG.NOM big-NEUT.SG.NOM young.man.NEUT.SG.NOM
 'The big young man'

As illustrated in the examples above and in example (9) with the adjective *mali* ‘a lot of’, measuring adjectives are found prenominally with a definite determiner in examples (14) and (15), an indefinite one in example (9) and no determiner in example (13). It is apparent that examples (9), (14) and (15) add up to the argumentation for Griko demonstrating patterns of Modern Greek. It is crucial to say that example (14) contradicts example (8) from Italian, where a measuring adjective of height is placed postnominally. Moreover, in example (15) we see a size-denoting adjective, which in Italian is placed both pre- and postnominally in Italian (see examples (6) and (7)), but still contradicts Guardiano and Stavrou’s (2014; 2019) claims for size-denoting adjectives unacceptable in prenominal positions in Griko.

Except for the account presented in section 6.1 regarding the prenominal position of adjectives in Griko, where the construction is starting with either a definite (10) or an indefinite (11) determiner, followed by the adjective and then the noun, and its syntax resisting the Romance influence a century ago, example (13) gives rise to another question: Can the account of quantificational adjectives in Italian explain their prenominal placement? As shown in section 3 quantificational adjectives are very high in the hierarchy and therefore, placed left of the noun (Alexiadou, 2003; Alexiadou et al., 2007). According to Cardinaletti and Giusti (2011), in Italian, existential quantifiers co-occur with a DP with a null determiner:

- (16) molti / tanti / pochi suoi edifici
 many / many / few-M.PL.NOM POSS office.M.PL.NOM
 ‘many/few offices of his/hers’

And there is also a subset of existential quantifiers that can be found after a determiner:

- (17) a. i suoi molti / tanti / pochi
 DET.M.PL.NOM POSS many/many/few.M.PL.NOM
 edifici
 office.M.PL.NOM
 ‘the many offices of his/hers’
- b. i molti / tanti / pochi suoi
 the.M.PL.NOM many /many/few.M.PL.NOM POSS
 edifici
 office.M.PL.NOM
 ‘the many offices of his/hers’

As example (13) has no determiner preceding the adjective (or existential quantifier), it can be inferred that the account of existential quantifiers in Italian explains this case. However, it is essential to take into account that in Modern Greek *λίγο* ‘few’ can also be found with or without determiner:

- (18) Θα μου κάνεις λίγο
 C POSS.1SG.GEN make-PRS.2SG.ACT little.N.SG.ACC
 κρέας ψημμένο;
 meat.N.SG.ACC roasted.PTC.PRF.PASS.3SG.ACC
 ‘Will you make me a little bit of roasted meat?’

I believe both accounts are suitable and explain this case, but as illustrated in examples (1), (2) and (18), Modern Greek places quantificational adjectives high in the hierarchy, resulting at a left position towards the noun with or without a determiner preceding them. Since all the other evidence are towards Griko’s resistance to the Romance dominance in the late 19th and early 20th century still, I would propose that in example (13) there is an adjective functioning as an existential quantifier following still the pattern of Modern Greek. This account would also explain why some Griko speakers nowadays accept size-denoting adjectives in a prenominal position, as there is the Modern Greek pattern underlying these adjectives and an instance of existential quantifiers in Italian, that are semantically very close to size-denoting adjectives, also occurring prenominally. This combination would probably be felicitous in cases where nowadays some Griko speakers accept them in prenominal position, as they are familiar with the prenominal placement in Italian as well.

7. Conclusion

To sum up, the present data suggests that the variety of Griko in the 1900s was more similar to the variety of Bovese in the 1950s and Modern Greek with regard to its adjectival behavior in the nominal domain. The development of the nominal domain and especially of adjectives towards the Romance varieties and Italian is more than apparent. Both prenominal and postnominal adjectives co-occur with determiners at this stage of Griko’s development, moving mostly away from the Modern Greek pattern towards the Italian one with the movement of the N/NP to a higher position, leading to postnominal adjectives on the surface. Regarding measuring adjectives, this paper presented evidence towards their placement prenominally and possible accounts, using both Modern Greek and Italian, explaining their positioning a century ago and why some Griko speakers accept their prenominal positioning nowadays.

In order to confirm the conclusions of the present paper, larger datasets should be taken into account. It would be insightful to use corpora in such a study, in order to see what the preference for the syntactic position of adjectives in general and

measuring adjectives in particular was, and arrive at a more ‘complete’, statistically sound result. A step in this direction has been made by Anastasopoulos et al. (2018), but there is still a lot of work to be done.

A possible limitation for the data presented in the present paper is that they are taken from written texts and therefore, are not representative of the informal language spoken at the time. Although this is a reasonable objection, it has been mentioned above that these texts are a collection of oral stories, meaning that they encode informalities and patterns used in the daily life of Griko speakers rather than formal language or complex literary expressions. ■

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