

From *de* to *ke*: functional transfer of a topic shift marker from Turkish to Cappadocian Greek

This presentation discusses how the particle *ke* is used as a topic shift marker in Cappadocian Greek (CG), which I argue is the result of contact-induced language change. CG is a cluster of closely related, critically endangered dialects of the Greek language that were spoken in the Turkish region of Cappadocia until the Greek-Turkish Population Exchange of 1924 (Janse 2020). Due to intensive influence of the Turkish language, CG became a textbook example of language contact cited by many scholars as a case of heavy borrowing (Thomason & Kaufman 1988: 215-22; Thomason 2001: 74; Winford 2003: 83-4; 2005: 402-9; Matras 2020: 231-4).

A salient example of this strong Turkish influence is the extension of the functional range of the CG proclitic particle *ke*. In CG, *ke* functions as a coordinating (‘and’), additive (‘also’) and scalar-additive (‘even’) particle, as was already the case in Ancient and Medieval Greek (Beekes & Van Beek 2010: 615). However, a new function appears in the following examples:

- (1) *k’ ekíno ke lex: “írta na vró ta tría güzélja.”*
and DEM.NOM **and** say.PRS.3SG
k’ ekín ke lex: “aderé éxo éks pedjá.”
and DEM.NOM **and** say.PRS.3SG
‘And he says, “I came to find the three Fair Ones.”
And she says, “Now I have six sons.”’ (Dawkins 1916: 306-7)

Alongside a first *k(e)*, which functions here as a coordinating particle, a second, seemingly redundant *ke* is introduced, usually positioned between the topic and the verb of the sentence. I argue that this specific use of *ke* marks a topic shift, which is the result of ‘functional transfer’ (FT) from the Turkish enclitic particle *dA*. FT is defined by Siegel (2012: 189) as “applying the grammatical functions of a morpheme from one language (the Source Language) to a morpheme in another language (the Recipient Language)”. More specifically, the transfer from *dA* to *ke* is a case of ‘type II’ (2012: 194-8), meaning that “[t]he functional range of a grammatical item or construction is extended and/or reduced” (Jennings & Pfänder 2018: 91).

In this case, the functional range of the Greek (RL) proclitic particle *ke* is extended and incorporates the function of topic shift marker associated with the Turkish (SL) enclitic particle *dA*, based on already existing similarities with Greek *ke*: both are used not only as a coordinating particle, but also as a (scalar-)additive particle (Göksel & Kerslake 2005: 110; Dawkins 1916: 605). Additionally, Turkish *dA* also functions as a topic shift marker, unlike Ancient and Medieval Greek *ke*:

- (2) *Ben sinema-ya git-ti-m. Ahmet de tiyatro-ya git-ti-Ø.*
I cinema-DAT go-PFV-1SG Ahmet **TOP** theatre-DAT go-PFV-3SG
I went to the cinema. **As for** Ahmet, he went to the theatre.

It is this function of topic shift marker that is included into the functional range of the CG particle *ke*. The analysis of this specific use of the particle was carried out in a corpus of 58 CG folktales (ca. 50,000 words, the largest CG text collection to date). It should be noted that topic shift marker *ke* is only found in combination with the verb *lé(γ)ο* ‘say’. This can be explained by the distribution of the Turkish model *dA*, which introduces a new topic “without changing the direction of the discourse” (Göksel & Kerslake 2005: 513). Without this continuity or connection between two events or situations, other topic shift markers, like the clitic *ise* would be used (Göksel & Kerslake 2005: 401). Subsequently, since a reported dialogue (introduced by the verb *lé(γ)ο* ‘to say’) between constantly shifting subjects is a prototypical example of switching topics without changing the action in the predicate, this could explain why the use of CG *ke* is seemingly restricted to this specific verb.

This paper contributes to the research on language contact by investigating the mechanisms by which the Greek dialect in Cappadocia – which was isolated from the rest of the Greek-speaking world from the 11th century onwards – underwent significant changes under the strong influence of the surrounding Turkish *superstratum*. Additionally, it contributes to the overall knowledge of this underdocumented Greek dialect at the brink of extinction.

References

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