

Contact-induced grammatical changes in Pontic Greek spoken in Georgia

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The paper presents an empirical study on contact-induced grammatical changes in Pontic Greek (PNT), an endangered variety spoken by Pontic community of Georgia. The under-documented variety is a good candidate for a case study about language contact, because it has always been in typologically different multilingual environment. The cross-linguistic influence of contact languages, those of concatenative morphology (Turkish, Georgian) and those of non-concatenative morphology (Russian, Standard Greek) always caused the changes while transferring single words or constructions, and stimulated different processes in the language.

The discussed topics include contact-related influences of Georgian (KAT), Turkish (TUR) and Russian (RUS) as donor languages on the grammar of this genetically unrelated language variety, spoken by relatively small number of speakers. The research is based on the Pontic Corpus compiled in 2013-2016 at Bielefeld University as a result of the original fieldwork, within the framework of the project: *The impact of current transformational processes on language and ethnic identity: Urum and Pontic Greeks in Georgia*, funded by the Volkswagen Foundation and available to the academic community via the TLA archive.

The paper focuses on the synchronic outcomes of the language contact in Pontic spoken in Georgia from lexical towards structural borrowings in order to reveal the role of the source language in transference phenomena and answer the main research questions: (a) is there any sign of movement between the morphological types, i.e. acquiring of some agglutinative features by PNT; and (b) is there an advantage associated with transference between languages of the same morphological type, i.e. non-concatenative (RUS) to non-concatenative (PNT).

PNT as spoken in Georgia has different examples of structural interference: (a) shift in default gender, (b) neutralization of neuter agreement in NPs, (c) the increasing of putative cases of differential subject marking (DSM) with feminine nouns, (d) selective limitation of definiteness marking, (e) agglutination of personal suffixes in verbs, and (f) verbal agreement in number with [\pm animate] nouns. The talk shall be limited to the phenomena related to the developments affecting gender marking, like those that show neutralization of neuter agreement in NPs, from neuter (1) towards corresponding gender agreement (2)

- (1) *to* *tranón* *odá*
DEF:N.SG.NGEN big:N.SG.NGEN room:F.SG.NGEN_{TURKISH}
'The big room'
- (2) *atín* *tin* *káshan*
3:F.SG.ACC DEF:F.SG.ACC hot_cereal:F.SG.ACC_{RUSSIAN}
'This cereal'

and differential subject marking which is more consistent in PNT spoken in Georgia in comparison with other Pontic varieties and is attested not only with masculines (3) but with feminines (4) as well

(3) *o* *θίον* *ίπεν*
DEF:M.SG.NOM uncle:M.SG.ACC say:PFV.PST:3.SG
'The uncle said'

(4) *i* *διαφοράν* *εν* *πολά*
DEF:F.SG.NOM difference:F.SG.ACC be:3.SG many:N.PL.NGEN
'The difference is big'

The novelty of the presentation is that it presents the original data of an understudied variety of PNT, as currently spoken by Pontic community of Georgia and it underlines structural changes that happened in Pontic after the contact with other languages in Georgia.