Greek-Romance contact in southern Italy: Two case studies in argument marking

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Greek and Romance have been spoken alongside of one another for centuries in southern Italy. Even though the Greek-speaking areas have been dramatically reduced over the centuries such that today Greek is now only spoken by a small number of increasingly elder speakers in a handful of villages of Calabria and southern Apulia (Salentino), the influence of Greek is still undeniable in that it has left its mark on the structures of the surrounding Romance dialects. Indeed, in this respect Rohlfs aptly coined the phrase *spirito greco, materia romanza* (literally 'Greek spirit, Romance material') to highlight the fact that in many respects the syntax of these so-called Romance dialects is underlying Greek, despite employing predominantly Romance lexis. By the same token, in more recent times the indigenous Greek dialects of these areas have increasingly been subject to Romance influence (in particular, from regional Italian) giving rise to a number of underlyingly Romance structures and features in an otherwise Greek syntax. In this paper I shall draw on two cases studies from the Romance and Greek varieties spoken in Calabria to illustrate how the syntax of argument-marking has variously been subject to contact-induced change, giving rise to significant variation in the marking and distribution of RECIPIENT arguments in accordance with both pragmatic and structural factors, as well as in the marking of embedded subjects in causative constructions. In all cases, it will be shown that contact-induced borrowing does not replicate the original structure of the lending language but, rather, produces hybrid structures which are ultimately neither Greek nor Romance in nature. The research presented in this paper forms part of the Leverhulme Research Project RPG-2015-283 *Fading voices in southern Italy: investigating language contact in Magna Graecia*.