

## MICROVARIAZIONE, DIACRONIA E INTERFERENZA: DUE CASE-STUDIES DALL'ITALIA MERIDIONALE ESTREMA

### ABSTRACT

*It is well-known that the dialects of Extreme Southern Italy are deeply influenced by a long-time contact with Italo-Greek. Nevertheless, such an influence is anything but uniform, since it produced many different grammars, which coexist side-by-side in a quite homogeneous linguistic area. This dramatic variation (so-called microvariation) can be explained in different ways: the different period in which the same calquing occurred in distinct varieties is one of the conceivable explanations. The present paper aims at showing two case-studies related to such "diachronically grounded" microvariation. The first one concerns the so-called "loss (or avoidance) of the infinitive", a contact-induced change by which a broad range of subordinate clauses, generally coded by the infinitive in Standard Italian and most of Western Romance languages, is replaced in these dialects by finite clauses introduced by a complementiser. In such a replacement, north-eastern Sicilian dialects show a conservative status, in that they keep the infinitive in coreferential structures; others dialects display a transitional stage, in which infinitive clauses, available with a class of restructuring predicates, are replaced first when a pronominal clitic surfaces in the sentence. The latter case-study involves another calquing from Greek, i.e. the coding of complementiser-headed main clauses with a "volitional" meaning: next to the present indicative, some dialects also use the imperfect for conveying counterfactual meanings. In such a case, a Greek pattern (a main clause headed by a complementiser) intertwines with an aspectual feature of the Romance verbal system, and turns out to produce a morphological "blend", otherwise unattested in other Romance languages.*