

GENDER AND INFLECTION CLASS IN LOAN NOUNS INTEGRATION¹

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ABSTRACT

This paper deals with loan nouns in two Modern Greek dialects, Heptanesian and Pontic, which have been affected by Romance and Turkish, respectively. It claims that the morphology of the recipient language proves to be of paramount importance for the integration of borrowed words. More specifically, it shows that the adaptation of Romance nouns in Heptanesian and Turkish nouns in Pontic has been subject to the requirements of Greek morphology in that, like native Greek nouns, loans are overtly inflected for grammatical gender, case and number, are ascribed to a specific inflection class, and obey a number of native morphological tendencies. Nevertheless, phonology plays also a significant role, since the endings that match the Greek ones are reanalyzed either as pieces of Greek inflection or as stem-final segments and through them, the integrated nouns are allocated to specific inflectional paradigms.

Special focus is put on grammatical gender. In accordance with gender assignment in the recipient language, that is, Greek, +human loan nouns become masculine or feminine, depending on whether their referents denote male or female beings. However, for -human ones, a neuter value is generally triggered by the recipient's 'neuterizing' morphological tendency, which, sometimes, may create pairs of forms, where an original masculine or feminine form may coexist with a neuter one.

The paper demonstrates that the way of borrowing and accommodating loan nouns may function as a test bed for theoretical proposals about the central role played by the form compatibility of the two systems in contact, as well as of that of certain tendencies characterizing the morphology of the target language.

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Key words: language contact, loan-noun integration, grammatical-gender assignment, inflection class, Heptanesian, Pontic.

1. ASSUMPTIONS AND PREMISES

In language-contact studies, special attention has been devoted to lexical borrowing and more specifically to loanword accommodation (see, among others, Brown 1999, Winter-Froemel 2008, Haspelmath & Tadmor 2009, Thomason & Kaufman 1988, Thomason 2014). From all categories, it is stated that nouns are more easily borrowed (Whitney 1881, Moravcsik 1978, Hock & Joseph 1996), and Matras (2009: 168) attributes this fact to their referential properties.

Various factors, language internal and external, have been claimed to contribute to the transfer of nouns from one language to another. For instance, beside the vital role of socio-political and economic (language external) factors which facilitate borrowing in contact settings, there are also language internal mechanisms which govern the process between the system that exerts a controlling influence (source language or donor) and the affected language (target or recipient), such as form similarities, structural and semantic equivalences (see, among others, Ibrahim 1973, Poplack, Pousada & Sankoff 1982, Winford 2005, 2010).

For the integration or non-integration of transferred nouns, approaches may vary and range from the so-called ‘retentionist’ position (e.g. Meillet 1921, Weinreich 1953, Field 2002), according to which the structure of nouns can be fully integrated in the recipient’s morphology if the latter is structurally compatible with that of the donor, to the extreme ‘diffusionist’ views (e.g. Wackernagel 1926, Thomason 2001) that the transfer of structural features can be entirely unrestricted provided that, in the contact situation, the two languages are under intense contact and the speakers fully bilingual. Interestingly, a ‘weak retentionist’ position is assumed by Jakobson (1962), and more recently by Ralli (2012a,b), who claim that integration of structure is possible if the grammatical structure of the recipient is compatible with the structural tendencies of the donor language.

There are usually two strategies according to which a noun can be inserted in the recipient’s morphology: by direct or by indirect insertion (Wichmann & Wohlgemuth 2008: 99). In the first case, nouns are transferred directly by taking on slight (or none) phonological modifications, while in the second case, loan nouns become compatible with the requirements of the recipient’s morphology only with the support of some functional elements, for instance affixes.

In this paper, we deal with the integration of loan nouns in two Modern Greek (hereafter Greek) dialects, Heptanesian and Pontic, in differently conditioned situations of linguistic contact.² Our study shows shared tendencies in the way the dialects in question handle inflection, more specifically grammatical gender assignment and inflection class in their loan noun integration, notwithstanding their contact with genetically and typologically unrelated systems: Heptanesian has been affected by the semi-analytical Romance, whereas Pontic has been influenced by the agglutinative Turkish. It is demonstrated that the integrated nouns display an overt

² Pontic is an Asia Minor dialect and Heptanesian is the dialect of the islands of the Ionian sea. See sections 3.1 and 3.2 for more information about these dialects.

inflectional ending according to the Greek standards, which may be either a reanalyzed element of the donor language or a Greek inflectional ending. Since the adaptation of nouns presupposes only the presence of inflection and not that of extra material, as for instance, a derivational suffix, we assume that the items under examination follow the direct-insertion strategy. Note that the use of extra material is usually needed for the integration of loan verbs, as shown by Ralli (2012a,b, 2014)

As exposed in the following sections, our investigation reveals: (a) the predominant role of morphology of an inflectionally-rich language for the inflectional adjustment of nominal loanwords; (b), a certain role played by the pure matching of forms between the donor and the recipient language proving that certain properties of the donor are also vital for the transfer of words; (c) a tendency of the target language, that is Greek, to distinguish between native nouns from loans in terms of grammatical gender and inflection class. These issues are essential in that they point out to the general issue of morphological creativity and the way in which both the donor and the recipient's morphology in language-contact situations function en masse (Aikhenvald 2000, 2006, Ralli 2012a,b, 2013).

Our data are drawn from the available written sources (inter alia Angelopoulos 2008, Pomonis-Tzaglaras 2007, Kasimatis 1996, Kollas 1960 for Heptanesian and Dawkins 1916, Topharas 1932, Oekonomides 1958, Papadopoulos 1955, 1958-1961, Drettas 1997 for Pontic), the databases and the digitized oral material of the *Laboratory of Modern Greek Dialects* (www.lmgd.philology.upatras.gr) of the University of Patras.

The paper is organized as follows: after the introduction, section 2 investigates the notion of gender cross-dialectally and provides a correlation between gender and inflection class in Greek. In section 3, a sketchy description of the sociolinguistic background of the two dialects is offered, and specific properties are described of gender and inflection class of their loan nouns. The dialectal data are analyzed in section 4, where claims and proposals are put forward through a comparison of the morphology of [+/- human] dialectal loans. In particular, the interplay of semantic, morphological and phonological factors underlying grammatical gender assignment is thoroughly examined. In section 5, there is a recapitulation of the main arguments discussed in the paper.

2. ON GENDER AND INFLECTION CLASS

According to Corbett (1991: 1) gender is of crucial importance as is “the most puzzling of the grammatical categories”. It is an inherent feature of nouns, which is stored in the mental lexicon as part of their distinctive features, and contributes to their classification.

Grammatical gender does not characterize every language, but in languages with gender, its assignment may depend on semantic and formal (phonological and morphological) criteria. The grammatical gender of a noun is distinct from natural gender (sex), the latter being based on the relevant attributes of its referent. However, it usually correlates with it for nouns expressing animacy (Dahl 2000), or for certain languages ‘humanness’, as shown by Ralli (2002) for Standard Modern Greek (hereafter SMG).

The notion of ‘default gender’ has been used in many different senses in the literature; it is connected to the less marked option, is usually called ‘prototypical gender’, and it is the category with most members (Corbett & Fraser, 2000). In this

paper, we show that in the dialects under investigation, a certain preference for the neuter value as the default gender of -human loan nouns enlightens certain aspects of gender realization of the recipient system, in accordance with Ibrahim (1973), Poplack, Pousada & Sankoff (1982), Kilarski (2003) and Stolz (2009). In fact, the neuter value has been already proposed as the unmarked/default gender option for Greek, by Dressler (1997), Anastasiadi-Symeonidi (1994) and Christofidou (2003).

Grammatical gender is a fundamental morphological characteristic of Modern Greek, where nominal words are specified for one of a tripartite value system, that is, masculine, feminine or neuter. According to Ralli (2002) gender is an inherent and abstract property of noun stems and derivational affixes and is actively involved in inflection and word formation.³ She has shown that for +human nouns, grammatical gender is closely related to the biological sex of the referent, in that male nouns are masculine while female ones are feminine; in contrast, in -human nouns, gender assignment is triggered by the specific inflection-class, which the nouns belong to.

Following Ralli (2000) Greek displays eight inflection classes (ICs) of varying productivity, two for masculine nouns (IC1 and IC2), two for feminine (IC3 and IC4) and four for neuter ones (IC5, IC6, IC7, IC8). Their division is based on the presence or absence of allomorphic variation of noun stems as well as on the form of the inflectional endings. Like gender, the inflection-class feature characterizes noun stems. However, as opposed to it, inflection class is also a property of the endings. Thus, it functions like a matching device between stems and endings, ensuring the well-formedness of the inflected nominal structures. For an illustration of the distribution of Greek nouns into eight inflection classes, consider the following examples, as well as Appendix I for more information regarding the form of the entire inflectional paradigms:

(1) SMG

a. Masculine nouns⁴

skil.MASC.IC1-os.IC1	‘male dog’
patera.MASC.IC2-s.IC2	‘father’
maθiti.MASC.IC2-s.IC2	‘student’
kafe.MASC.IC2-s.IC2	‘coffee’
papu.MASC.IC2-s.IC2	‘grandfather’

b. Feminine nouns

mitera.FEM.IC3-∅.IC3	‘mother’
tixi.FEM.IC3-∅.IC3	‘luck’
alepu.FEM.IC3-∅.IC3	‘fox’
poli.FEM.IC4-∅.IC4	‘town’

c. Neuter nouns

vun.NEU.IC5-o.IC5	‘mountain’
spiti.NEU.IC6-∅.IC6	‘house’
krat.NEU.IC7-os.IC7	‘state’
soma.NEU.IC8-∅.IC8	‘body’

³ In a derived noun bearing an overt suffix, inflection class characterizes the suffix and, through the word-formation process, it is inherited by the noun as a whole.

⁴ In this paper, examples appear in a broad phonological transcription. Glosses and stress are given only when they are relevant to the argumentation.

As shown above, IC2 and IC3 contain stems ending in a vowel of a varying form (most often /a/ or /i/). This is crucial for the transfer of borrowed nouns which happen to end more or less in the same vowels in the donor language.

Interestingly, most of Greek dialectal varieties share similar gender and inflection-class properties.⁵ There are some exceptions though: for instance, in Pontic, there are relics of an Ancient Greek inflection class, which is preserved to mark definiteness in masculine nouns (see below).⁶ Moreover, in Cappadocian⁷, especially in its Southern variety, there is a significant simplification of inflection classes, and a tendency to lose the tripartite grammatical gender distinction in favor of the neuter gender. This change, is principally observed on the use of the article (Janse forthcoming, Karatsareas 2009, 2011).

It should be mentioned that in both SMG and its dialects, the accommodation of loan nouns has attracted the interest of linguistic research and is recently seeing a rising trend (cf. Anastasiadi-Symeonidi 1994, Christofidou 2003, Melissaropoulou 2013a,b, 2014, Makri, Koutsoukos & Andreou 2013). Within this framework, we show that, in the two dialects under investigation, the adoption of nouns from another language is obligatorily accompanied by the assignment of inflection. We would like to claim that this is due to a minimum requirement imposed by the Greek system - which is rich in inflection and overt inflectional endings - in order to borrow and accommodate foreign nouns. However, in the few instances where elements remain uninflected (mainly in the adoption of foreign terms designing technical objects), inflection is indirectly assigned with the use of an article, where there is no overt distinction between the stem and the inflectional ending and the morphosyntactic features are incorporated in the article itself. The following examples drawn from SMG, depict inflectionally integrated and non-integrated elements, while the source languages are Turkish (2a) and English (2b):

(2)a. SMG *o parali-s* < Turkish *paralı*
 det.MASC.NOM.SG wealthy.man.MASC-NOM.SG

b. SMG *to film* < English *film*
 det.NEU.NOM.SG film

Finally, as will be presented in the following sections, loan data from the two dialects under examination reveal resemblances, but also incongruities, in terms of inflection, particularly with respect to gender distinctions and inflection class, as compared to data from SMG.

3. THE DIALECTAL DATA

⁵ With the exception of IC4 which is absent in most dialects.

⁶ Note that in Pontic, the division into eight inflection classes is often blurred due to many cases of heteroclisia affecting the plural number and the genitive case. Moreover, for IC6 and IC8 there is a number of slightly different endings from those of Modern Greek.

⁷ Cappadocian was spoken in about 32 Greek-speaking settlements in central Asia Minor before 1923, when the exchange of populations between Greece and Turkey took place. Today, there are few remaining native speakers, in certain parts of Northern Greece (in the areas of Karditsa, Volos, Kilkis, Larisa, Thessaloniki, Chalkidiki, Kavala, and Alexandroupoli), all of them descendants from Cappadocian refugees. For details about Cappadocian, see Dawkins (1916) and Janse (forthcoming).

3.1 HEPTANESIAN

Varieties of the Heptanesian dialectal group are spoken on the islands of the Ionian sea, Corfu, Cephalonia, Ithaca, Zante, Paxi, Kithira and on the smaller islands of Othoni, Herikusa, Mathraki, Antipaxi.⁸ These islands were the only part of Greece that was not conquered by the Ottoman Turks. They went under Venetian rule for four or five centuries (ca. end of 14th –beginning of 19th c.), depending on the island. Although the Venetian occupation did not obstruct communication, the imposition of the Venetian dialect for broad communication and Standard Italian, the official language used in administration and education (cf. Fanciullo 2008), imported to Heptanesian a considerable number of features (Papageorgiou 1994, Kontosopoulos 2001), which are mostly shown on phonology, morphology and the vocabulary.

Apart from collections of dialectal material and some sporadic descriptions which chiefly bring into focus the recording of the ‘peculiar’ pronunciation and the ‘deviant’ vocabulary of Heptanesian, the vast majority of which places emphasis on Corfiot (variety of Corfu), the dearth of any systematic modern linguistic studies on the current form and use of the dialect is more than evident. The existing research has been conducted on earlier methodological techniques and targeted at the comparison with SMG, with a view to either highlighting differences or similarities with Ancient Greek. It overall elicits conclusions related to the decline of the dialect and its gradual replacement by SMG (Alexakis 2005).

Comparing the two systems in contact, that is, Romance as donor and Greek/Heptanesian as recipient, it is worth pointing out that they share some properties in relation to inflection, although the Romance system is much poorer in overt forms: in the two languages, nominal inflection is fusional but case has disappeared from Romance which does not display the wealth of inflectional paradigms/classes that we observe in Greek. Moreover, both Greek and Romance have an overt gender phonologically manifested on the noun, but while Romance has a two-gender value system, Greek displays a tripartite value one.

Interestingly, Matras (2009: 174) mentions the possibility of gender maintenance between languages having more or less similar gender systems, and claims that languages which assign gender to their nouns, equally assign gender to borrowed words as well. In this light, we expect Heptanesian to assign gender to loan nouns originating from Romance. And in fact, nouns inserted from Italian and Venetian either preserve or modify their original gender value in order to fit the new morphological requirements imposed by the target system.

As will be seen in the examples below, Heptanesian masculine loan nouns end in *-os*, *-is*, *-as*, *-es* (3a), like those in SMG (1), but feminine nouns end only in *-a* (3b) and neuter nouns in *-o*, or *-i* (3c). In other words, there are no loans assigned to IC4, IC7 and IC8, which, nevertheless, contain examples of native nouns. This is not surprising as IC4 and IC7 comprise +learned nouns, that is nouns which are either remnants from Ancient Greek or are built according to Ancient Greek patterns. As for IC8, it covers mainly derived deverbal nouns, which presuppose a combination of a verb stem and the derivational suffix *-ma* (e.g. *jemizma* ‘filling’ < *jemiz* ‘to fill’ + *-ma*). Note that in Heptanesian, there may be some loans in *-ma* containing a borrowed

⁸ The dialect of Lefkada does not belong to the Heptanesian dialectal group, due to geographical and historical reasons (proximity to the Greek mainland and the late Venetian occupation, compared to the other islands). This dialect shows similarities to the dialectal varieties of Continental Greece.

base, as for instance, *premurarizma* ‘care, willingness’, which derives from the verb *premuraro* ‘to care’, itself a derived structure on the basis of the Italian noun *premura* ‘attention, care, consideration, haste’. These examples will be excluded from our examination since they do not constitute cases of direct adaptation.

(3)	Heptanesian		Italian/Venetian
	a. Masculine nouns		
	avokat.MASC.IC1-os.IC1	‘lawyer’	avvocato.MASC
	avventurieri.MASC.IC2-s.IC2	‘adventureman’	avventuriero.MASC
	profesora.MASC.IC2-s.IC2	‘professor’	professore.MASC
	lavorante.MASC.IC2-s.IC2	‘worker’	lavorante.MASC
	b. Feminine nouns		
	insenianta.FEM.IC3-Ø.IC3	‘female teacher’	insegnante.FEM
	c. Neuter nouns		
	apartament.NEU.IC5-o.IC5	‘apartment’	appartamento.MASC
	tsenturi.NEU.IC6-Ø.IC6	‘belt’	cintura.FEM

3.2 PONTIC

Pontic is an Asia Minor dialectal group originally spoken in a geographical area which was spread over 400 kilometers (from Inepolis to Colchis) in the northeast of Asia Minor, as well as in parts of the inland of Asia Minor, located 100 kilometers from the coast (Tombaides 1996). The emigration of the 19th century led to the establishment of Pontic communities in Caucasus, whereas the population exchange in accordance with the Lausanne Treaty in 1923, following the Greek-Turkish War (1919–1922), resulted in the subsequent massive movement of people to mainland Greece.

Since then, the dialect has been used by second and/or third generation refugees, in northern Greece, but can also be found in few cities of Northern Caucasus and Georgia. Moreover, the dialect is still spoken in certain dialectal enclaves in the western part of Trebizond (Tonya and Ophis), by Muslim Pontics, who were exempted from the population exchange, and is usually called Muslim Pontic or Romeyka (Mackridge 1990).

Pontic has been mainly a spoken dialect, with limited written appearance. Apart from a Russian-Greek textbook of the 15th century (Tzitzilis 1999), there are no other dialectal texts to be found until the 19th century. From 19th century and on, there have been efforts to preserve dialectal material and we also find attempts to elaborate the dialect as a literary language (Karpozilos 1983, 1985).

Pontic preserves a number of archaic features, characteristic of earlier stages in the history of Greek, retains a number of shared features with the rest Modern Greek varieties of Asia Minor and exhibits contact-induced features from Turkish, which affected Pontic both on the vocabulary and the structural level.

Unlike the Greek–Italian connection, the case of contact between Greek and Turkish denotes an instance of interaction between two different in linguistic nature systems: the fusional Greek and the agglutinative Turkish. Turkish does not have

inflection classes and in terms of gender, we deal with a ‘battle’ between an overtly gendered language such as Greek and a morphologically gender-neutral language, such as Turkish, with inherent gender properties, referred as ‘covert gender’ system (cf. Aronoff 1998). Thus, whereas in the Greek–Italian pair, Greek as a recipient language can possibly accept the gender markers of Italian, such adaptation mechanisms aren’t possible when it comes to Turkish loanwords.

As shown in (4), loanwords are almost exclusively accommodated as masculine nouns in *-is* or *-as* (rarely in *-es*) that is, as nouns of IC2 (4a), while adaptation to nouns in *-os* (IC1) is not common. Feminine borrowings are accommodated in *-i*, *-a*, *-e* (IC3) while neuter nouns end in *-in* (IC6).

(4) a. Masculine nouns in Pontic		Turkish
tsopan.MASC.IC1- <i>os</i> .IC1	‘shepherd’	çoban
pekiari.MASC.IC2- <i>s</i> .IC2	‘unmarried’	bekar
hovarda.MASC.IC2- <i>s</i> .IC2	‘spender, womanizer’	hovarda
kiose.MASC.IC2- <i>s</i> .IC2	‘bold man’	köse
b. Feminine nouns		
orospı.FEM.IC3- \emptyset .IC3	‘prostitute’	rospı
balduza.FEM.IC3- \emptyset .IC3	‘bride’	baldız
kaxpe.FEM.IC3-.IC3	‘prostitute’	kahpe
c. Neuter nouns		
kartalin.NEU.IC6- \emptyset .IC6	‘hawk’	kartal

For the same reasons explained for Heptanesian, IC4, IC7 and IC8 are not found among loan nouns, although many native nouns belong to these inflection classes. However, as opposed to Heptanesian, IC5 is missing from loans due to historical evolution, according to which many old nouns in *-on* got restructured into nouns in *-ion*, and with the ultimate loss of /o/, they emerged as nouns in *-in*. While native Pontic nouns in *-on* can still be found (e.g. *aerophon* ‘breeze’), together with the more recent ones in *-in* (e.g. *aðelfin* ‘brother’), loan nouns are uniquely adapted as those in *in*.⁹

4. THE INTERPLAY OF SEMANTIC, MORPHOLOGICAL AND PHONOLOGICAL FACTORS

In what follows, we demonstrate that gender assignment to loanwords and their integration into an inflection class is subject to various criteria, that is, phonological, morphological and semantic, separately or conjointly. As already mentioned in section 1, Ralli (2002) has shown that there is a hierarchy in gender assignment in SMG, where the role of semantics prevails over that of morphology: +human nouns are assigned the masculine or feminine value, depending on whether they are male or female, while in -human ones a gender value is triggered by the inflection class which they belong to. The same priority to semantically-driven gender

⁹ Note that, as stated in Papadopoulou (1955) and Oekonomides (1958), the final *-n* of neuter nouns has been deleted in some areas of Pontus. For instance, it is absent in the variety of Romeyka (areas of Ophis and Tonya).

seems to apply to borrowed nouns as well. For an illustration consider the data in (5-6) drawn from both Heptanesian and Pontic.

4.1 [+HUMAN] LOAN NOUNS

(5) Heptanesian		Italian
a. impresario.MASC.IC1-os.IC1	‘agent’	impresario.MASC
b. generali.MASC.IC2-s.IC2	‘general of the army’	generale.MASC
c. arkevista.MASC.IC2-s.IC2	‘archivist, file clerk’	archivista.MASC
d. abitante.MASC.IC2-s.IC2	‘dweller’	abitante.MASC
f. infermiera.FEM.IC3-Ø.IC3	‘nurse.woman’	infermiera.FEM
(6) Pontic		Turkish
a. pekiari.MASC.IC2-s.IC2	‘unmarried’	bekar
c. hovarda.MASC.IC2-s.IC2	‘spender, womanizer’	hovarda
d. kiose.MASC.IC2-s.IC2	‘bold man’	köse
e. tsopan.MASC.IC1-os.IC1	‘shepherd’	çoban
f. orospı.FEM.IC3-Ø.IC3	‘prostitute’	rospı
g. balduza.FEM.IC3-Ø.IC3	‘bride’	baldız
h. kaxpe.FEM.IC3-Ø.IC3	‘prostitute’	kahpe

As far as Heptanesian is concerned (5), human male loanwords are accommodated as masculine nouns in *-os*, *-is*, *-as*, *-es* (5a-d), while human female ones are feminine, ending in *-a*. For their incorporation into a specific inflection class, phonology seems to play an important role: as seen above, Romance masculine nouns ending in *-o* are accommodated in Heptanesian according to the IC1 *-os* masculine nouns (5a); in contrast, those ending in *-a* are adapted according to the IC2 ones (5c).¹⁰ Phonological shape also triggers membership to IC3 for Romance feminine loans (5f).

In other words, the matching of Romance and Greek final segments prompts assignment to a particular inflection class.

Crucially, the interference of phonological factors may override the semantically-driven assignment and explain the existence of a small number of double-gender formations in the singular number, masculine and neuter¹¹:

(7)a. maritimo/maritimos vs. maritimi *maritima	< It. marittimo
seaman.NEU.SG/seaman.MASC.SG vs. seaman.MASC.PL	< seaman.MASC.SG
b. kontadino/kontadinos vs. kontadini *kontadina	< It. contadino
peasant.NEU.SG/peasant.MASC.SG vs. peasant.MASC.PL	< peasant.MASC.SG
c. deputato/deputatos vs. deputati *deputata	< It. deputato
deputy.NEU.SG/deputy.MASC.SG vs. deputy.MASC.PL	< deputy.MASC.SG

For these examples, parallel to masculine, there is also neuter gender assignment on the basis of the phonological shape of the word of the donor, since, as

¹⁰ For the important role of phonology into assigning gender to loans of the Asia Minor dialects, see also Melissaropoulou (forthcoming).

¹¹ These examples provide evidence to Corbett’s (1991: 181) observation that in languages, double-gender nouns may display two forms belonging to two different declensional types.

depicted in (8), the Romance inflectional suffix *-o* that marks masculine nouns¹² is identical to the Greek suffix that is related to neuter nouns:

- (8)a. Greek *vuno*.NEU.IC5
 mountain
 b. Italian *giardino*.MASC
 garden

Interestingly, the fact that neuter gender is assigned only in the singular number and not in the plural also adds evidence to the role played by phonology, since the *-i* plural ending of Romance (e.g. It. *marittim-i* ‘seaman-PL’) does not coincide with the *-a* plural suffix of neuter nouns in Greek:

- (9)a. Greek *vun-o* *vun-a*
 mountain-SG mountain-PL
 b. Italian *marittim-o* *marittim-i*
 seaman-SG seaman-PL

Note now that with respect to Pontic, the gender properties of the target language override those of the donor, since Turkish loans are assigned a grammatical gender value in spite of the fact that Turkish are deprived of morphologically overt gender. In fact, as shown in (6), +human +male loans appear mostly as masculine nouns in *-is* and *-as* (6a-c) and rarely in *-es* or *-os* (6d,e), whereas +human +female loanwords are allotted the feminine value, represented by nouns ending in *-i*, *-e*, and *-a* (6f-h). Like for Heptanesian, phonology also plays a vital role for ascribing these nouns to a particular inflection class. In fact, Turkish male nouns in *-a* and *-e* are accommodated as Pontic masculine nouns of IC2, that is, as nouns ending in *-as* and *-es*, and female nouns ending in *-i* and *-e* are assigned the feminine value and inflect according to IC3 (6f,h).

Comparing now the inflection of masculine loans in Pontic to the native one in effect in both SMG and its dialects (among which, Pontic as well), we observe an indubitable preference for IC2, that is, for the inflection class of masculine nouns in *-as/-is/-es*, as opposed to an inherent tendency of native nouns, where inflection realized according to IC1 (i.e. nouns ending in *-os*) is equally or even more productive.¹³ Linguists dealing with this phenomenon (Hatzidakis 1907, Kyranoudis 2009, Malikouti Drachman & Drachman 1989) have attributed the low productivity of the *-os* masculine loans to the position of stress. According to them, loans of Turkish origin are stressed on the ultimate or the penultimate syllable, while Greek native nouns ending in *-os* often bear stress on the antepenultimate, provided that their length is more than two syllables.

However, the position of stress does not seem to be crucial for SMG and other Asia Minor dialects affected by Turkish (e.g. Aivaliot¹⁴), where the same loans display a formation with the IC1 ending *-os* (*-us* in Aivaliot, see ft 15).

¹² For the operation of phonological rules in assigning gender in Italian, see Thornton (2001: 484).

¹³ There are no accurate statistics though for the exact productivity of inflection classes in Modern Greek dialects.

¹⁴ Aivaliot was once spoken in western Asia Minor. In 1922, after the end of the war (1919-1922) between Greece and Turkey, Aivaliots were forced to leave their homeland (Lausanne Treaty 1923). Today, few hundreds of speakers can be found in refugee enclaves on the Aegean island of Lesbos.

- (10) Pontic kolayúzi.MASC.IC2-s.IC2 ‘driver’ < Tr kılavúz ‘guide’
 vs.
 SMG kolaúz.MASC.IC1-os.IC1 ‘follower’
 Aivaliot kulayúz.MASC.IC1-us.IC1¹⁵ ‘follower’

Although we do not have a real answer to this problem, we would like to propose that the different usage of the two inflection classes in Pontic is done for classificatory purposes: IC2 prevails in loans, while IC1 refers mostly to native nouns and is only exceptionally used for loans (6e). This is also supported by the fact that Pontic has maintained a large number of archaic features, among which, masculine forms in *-on* (e.g. the native *likon* ‘wolf’) of the Ancient Greek third declension in order to express definiteness, as opposed to forms of the common IC1 in *-o(s)*, which are innovatively used to denote the notion of -definiteness:

- (11)a. lik-os ‘wolf_{-definite}’ vs. lik-on ‘wolf_{+definite}’.
 b. pap-os ‘grandfather_{-definite}’ vs. pap-on ‘grandfather_{+definite}’

To the question why a classification into native and borrowed nouns is not depicted on the inflection of feminine nouns as well, a possible answer could be found in the fact that, as opposed to masculine nouns which inflect according to IC1 and IC2, feminine nouns belong to one single inflection class, that is, IC3.

4.2 [-HUMAN] LOAN NOUNS

So far, we have seen that following the properties of the target language, humanness triggers specific gender assignment in loan nouns of both dialects, and that the particular inflection class which they belong to may be determined either by a certain phonological matching of the endings between the donor and the recipient or by a language-specific strategy for classifying borrowed nouns distinctively from native ones (in Pontic).

However, according to Haugen (1950: 217) in language-contact situations, there may also be a clear tendency to assign loanwords to one particular grammatical gender, unless specific analogies intervene to draw them into another class. Haugen’s premise seems to apply to -human loan nouns of both Pontic and Heptanesian, where the neuter value seems to occupy a predominant position (see relevant examples in 12-13 and 16 below), as opposed to many native -human nouns which bear a masculine or feminine value. This runs against to the usual grammatical gender assignment in Greek -human nouns, where a gender value is triggered by their markedness for a specific inflection class (Ralli 2002).

In Heptanesian, -human Romance loans which fall into the neuter category are divided into two inflection classes, those ending in *-o* (12) and those in *-i* (13).

- (12) Neuter nouns in -o
 a. soðisfatsi.NEU.IC5-o.IC5 ‘satisfaction’ < Ven. sodisfaziòn.FEM
 b. kapar.NEU.IC5-o.IC5 ‘down payment, deposit’ < It. caparra.FEM

¹⁵ In Aivaliot, unstressed /o/ is raised to /u/.

- c. apartament.NEU.IC5-o.IC5 ‘apartment’ < It. appartamento.MASC
 d. ajut.NEU.IC5-o.IC5 ‘aid, support’ < It. aiuto.MASC

(13) Neuter nouns in -i

- a. stratoni.NEU.IC6-Ø.IC6 ‘alley’ < It. stradone.MASC
 b. edukatsioni.NEU.IC6-Ø.IC6 ‘education’ < It. educazione.FEM
 c. kumerki.NEU.IC6-Ø.IC6 ‘trade’ < It. commercio.MASC
 d. tsekini.NEU.IC6-Ø.IC6 ‘old Venetian gold coin’ < Ven. zéchin.MASC

It should be noted that for loans originating from Romance nouns in *-o*, the neuter gender may be justified by a form matching between the Romance endings and their Heptanesian counterparts: as depicted in (12a,c,d) and (8) above, the *-o* ending of masculine Romance nouns coincides (12c,d), or almost coincides (13a), with the *-o* ending of neuter nouns in Greek (e.g. Greek native *vuno* ‘mountain’). However, for Romance nouns ending in a vowel other than *-o* (12b) there is no form similarity with the Heptanesian counterparts. For those cases, we suggest that the already mentioned morphological tendency for ‘neuterization’ plays a decisive role.

Interestingly, this language-internal neuterization tendency is further corroborated with evidence provided by some Romance -human nouns ending in *-a*, which develop a neuter gender in Heptanesian, parallel to the feminine one, the latter being justified for phonological reasons, that is, by the matching of the endings between the nouns of the donor and the nouns of the recipient:

- (14)a. burl.NEU.IC5-o.IC5 & burla.FEM.IC3-Ø.IC3 ‘mocking mood, anger’
 < It. burla.FEM ‘prank, trick, joke’
 b. spitseri.NEU.IC5-o.IC5 & spitseria.FEM.IC3-Ø.IC3
 < It. spezieria.FEM ‘drugstore’
 c. belatzi.NEU.IC6-Ø.IC6 & belatza.FEM.IC3-Ø.IC3
 < It. bilancia.FEM ‘weighing scale’

It is important to stress that the neuterization tendency can be diachronically confirmed, as noted by Hatzidakis (1907) who has shown that, in the medieval period, there is a shift of some Ancient Greek -human masculine and feminine nouns towards the neuter value (see also Browning 1969).¹⁶ These nouns had first acquired the ending *-ion*, typical of neuter nouns, which, in subsequent periods, had been reduced into *-in*, and *-i*, as noted by Georgacas (1948: 243) and Horrocks (2010: 175-176).¹⁷

(15) Ancient Greek	Medieval Greek	Modern Greek	
pus.MASC	ποδion.NEU	ποδι.NEU	‘leg’
kormos.MASC	kormion.NEU	kormi.NEU	‘body’
kefali.FEM	kefalion.NEU	kefali.NEU	‘head’
trapeza.FEM	trapezion.NEU	trapezi.NEU	‘table’

Neuterization is also observable in Pontic, where most Turkish -human nouns ending in a consonant, or in *-i*, *-l*, *-y*, *-ii*, are integrated as neuter nouns in *-in*:

¹⁶ Note that some of the original masculine or feminine nouns still exist today with a rather lexicalized meaning (e.g. *trapeza* ‘bank’).

¹⁷ As exhibited in (16-17), Pontic still keeps an older form of these neuter nouns, since they end in *-in*.

(16)	Pontic		Turkish
	a. kartali.NEU.IC6-n.IC6	‘hawk’	kartal
	b. kindi.NEU.IC6-n.IC6	‘the time of nightfall’	ikindi
	c. kamtʃi.NEU.IC6-n.IC6	‘lash, whip’	kamçɪ
	d. poi.NEU.IC6-n.IC6	‘height’	boy
	f. sjutsi.NEU.IC6-n.IC6	‘bayonet’	süngü

Note, however, that in these cases, neuterization may not be the real reason for gender assignment because the neuter gender could be phonologically motivated. In fact, most of the endings of the original Turkish items match, or are reminiscent of, the Greek final vowel *-i* of native neuter nouns: vowel harmony being absent in Pontic, all *-i*, *-ɪ*, *-y*, and *-ü* Turkish vowels are often pronounced as /i/. A phonological motivation may also hold for those Turkish items ending with a consonant (17), since the absence of /i/ could most probably be perceived by native speakers as the result of a well-known Greek phonological law which characterizes many dialects¹⁸ and is responsible for deleting final unstressed /i/s.

Nevertheless, there is another category of Turkish loans which do not display any form similarity between the donor and the recipient, as far as the ending is concerned, like the noun depicted in (17). Thus, the neuter gender of these nouns provides support to the already described tendency for neuterization.

(17)	kuzi.NEU.IC6-n.IC6	‘lamp’	< Tr. kuzu
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In addition, it is worth stressing that the tendency for assigning the neuter value to *-human* loans applies mostly to nouns whose endings in Turkish do not match the endings in Pontic. If such a matching exists, as for instance for the cases of Turkish and Greek nouns ending in *-a* (compare the Greek *latría.FEM* ‘adoration’ to the Turkish *sevda* ‘love’), then, *-human* loans in Pontic are allotted the appropriate inflection class, that is, IC3 in this case, and through it the feminine value, in accordance with Ralli’s (2002) claim for SMG, where gender assignment in *-human* nouns is elicited by the inflection class feature.

(18)	Pontic		Turkish
	a. sevda.FEM.IC3-Ø.IC3	‘love’	sevda
	b. zurna.FEM.IC3-Ø.IC3	‘a musical instrument’	zurna
	c. yuturma.FEM.IC3-Ø.IC3	‘lie’	yudurma
	d. dđereme.FEM.IC3-Ø.IC3	‘penalty’	cereme
	e. ŗelte.FEM.IC3-Ø.IC3	‘mattress’	ŗilte

Finally, as shown in (15-17), Turkish neuter loans in Pontic are exclusively assigned the ending *-in* and as such, they inflect according to IC6. However, beside IC6, the dialect displays the other inflection classes too which are identified in SMG for neuter nouns, that is, IC5, IC7 and IC8:

(19)	aerop.NEU.IC5-on.IC5	‘breeze’
	jel.NEU.IC7-os.IC7	‘laugh’
	votanasma.NEU.IC8-n.IC8	‘gardening’

¹⁸ Usually the Asia Minor Aivaliot, Cappadocian and Pontic, as well as the Northern Greek dialects.

It is important to note that IC5, IC7 and IC8 are reserved for native nouns (IC5 and IC7), or for deverbal ones (IC8) which may derive from a native or a loan verb via a Greek derivational process. The fact that the dialect excludes direct loanword integration from those particular paradigms offers a robust argument in favor of a language-internal tendency to provide a classification, that is, to distinguish between loan and native nouns in terms of inflection.

To sum up, data from the two dialects under consideration provide significant evidence that -human loans enter the Greek system as neuter while, as shown in section 3.1, the semantically-driven gender assignment, that is, the values masculine and feminine, are reserved for +human ones.

Moreover, the high frequency of -human borrowings allotted the neuter gender can be used as an indicative criterion for identifying neuter as the unmarked gender value of -human nouns, and thus, confirming the hypothesis about neuter having properties of a prototypical default value, as has been claimed by Dressler (1997) and Anastasiadi-Symeonidi (1994: 191) for SMG.

5. CONCLUSIONS

In this paper, we have argued that the factors regulating gender assignment to loanwords are principally subject to language-internal properties. In particular, the rich inflectional morphology of Greek is of utmost significance for the adjustment of nominal borrowings. This is proved by the incorporation of loanwords into specific inflection classes, and the adoption of specific gender values. Hence, our claims invoke Ralli's (2013, 2014) assertion, according to which the language's intra-linguistic actuality primarily constrains loanword integration on the grounds that borrowed words are exposed to the necessary modifications, so that they fit the target's word pattern. Moreover, we have shown that the phonological coincidence of particular endings between the languages in contact can govern the noun-loanword accommodation and shed light on the decisive role of certain properties of the donor language in loanword integration. Crucially, we have maintained that the analysis of the dialectal data divulges a tendency of the target language, that is Greek, to mark loans in the lexicon in terms of membership to specific inflection classes and grammatical gender, differentiating them explicitly from native nouns. Finally, we have provided hints for stressing the importance of the study of language contact even for dialects which are superficially discordant or seem to be ill-assorted or even beyond comparison, such as Pontic and Heptanesian, for they can highlight endosystemic tendencies or behaviors which are otherwise disregarded.

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Appendix I: Nominal inflection classes in Modern Greek

	Singular		Plural
Class I	skilos.MASC	‘dog’	
Nominative	skil-os		skil-i
Genitive	skil-u		skil-on,
Accusative	skil-o		skil-us,
Vocative	skil-e		skil-i
Class II	pateras.MASC maθitis.MASC	‘father’, ‘student’	
Nominative	patera-s, maθiti-s		pater-es, maθit-es
Genitive	patera-∅, maθiti-∅		pater-on, maθit-on
Accusative	patera-∅, maθiti-∅		pater-es, maθit-es
Vocative	patera-∅, maθiti-∅		pater-es, maθit-es
Class III	mite´ra.FEM ti´xi.FEM	‘mother’, ‘luck’	
Nominative	mitera-∅, tixi-∅		miter-es, tix-es
Genitive	mitera-s, tixi-s		miter-on, tix-on
Accusative	mitera-∅, tixi-∅		miter-es, tix-es
Vocative	mitera-∅, tixi-∅		miter-es, tix-es
Class IV	poli.FEM	‘town’	

Nominative	poli-∅		pol-is
Genitive	poli-s/pole-os		pole-on
Accusative	poli-∅		pol-is
Vocative	poli-∅		pol-is
Class V	vuno.NEU	‘mountain’	
Nominative	vun-o		vun-a
Genitive	vun-u		vun-on
Accusative	vun-o		vun-a
Vocative	vun-o		vun-a
Class VI	spiti.NEU	‘house’	
Nominative	spiti-∅		spiti-a
Genitive	spiti-u		spiti-on
Accusative	spiti-∅		spiti-a
Vocative	spiti-∅		spiti-a
Class VII	kratos.NEU	‘state’	
Nominative	krat-os		krat-i
Genitive	krat-us		krat-on
Accusative	krat-os		krat-i
Vocative	krat-os		krat-i
Class VIII	soma.NEU	‘body’	
Nominative	soma-∅		somat-a
Genitive	somat-os		somat-on
Accusative	soma-∅		somat-a
Vocative	soma-∅		somat-a

Appendix II: Maps of the Heptanesian (Ionian) islands and Pontus



