The loss of grammatical gender in Cappadocian Greek*

Petros Karatsareas (pk299@cam.ac.uk)
Department of Linguistics, University of Cambridge

1. Introduction

- Cappadocian Greek

![Map of Cappadocia](map_from_dawkins_1916)

- 1071: political separation of Cappadocian speakers from the rest of the Greek-speaking contingent (Janse 2002).
- 1924: relocation of the Cappadocian-speaking populations in mainland Greece.
- Isolation and intense language contact with surrounding Turkish led to extensive inter- and intradiatlectal variation and a large number of linguistic innovations in all components of the grammar.

- Majority of Cappadocian Greek (Cappadocian) varieties: no grammatical gender distinction into masculine, feminine and neuter nominals.
- All nouns behave as neuters: they combine with the originally neuter forms of the various determiners and modifiers:

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Petros Karatsareas
(1) Ulaghátsh Cappadocian

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Word</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>oM</td>
<td>kalosM</td>
<td>‘the good man’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>iF</td>
<td>kaliF</td>
<td>‘the good woman’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>toN</td>
<td>kaloN</td>
<td>‘the good child’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>iM</td>
<td>kaliM</td>
<td>‘the good men’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>iF</td>
<td>kalesF</td>
<td>‘the good women’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>taN</td>
<td>kalaN</td>
<td>‘the good children’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Note:**

i. Obligatory definiteness spreading (or polydefiniteness)

ii. Morphophonological rule conditioning the final -n in kalon and kalan (kalo and kala in other syntactic environments.

- Standard Modern Greek (SMG): gender, number and case agreement between head nouns and their determiners/modifiers.

(2) SMG

<table>
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**Objectives**

1. To offer a fresh look at the language change process whereby grammatical gender was lost from Cappadocian;
2. To identify the language-internal and language-external factors and mechanisms that were operative in the change;
3. To account for the change from a broader dialectological perspective; and,
4. To suggest a chronology of the change in stages.
2. Grammatical gender in SMG and Cappadocian

2.1 A preliminary note on gender and agreement

- “Genders are classes of nouns reflected in the behavior of associated words” (Hockett 1958, cited in Corbett 1991: 1).
- Agreement is the most important criterion that can be safely used in order to
  a) define what grammatical gender actually is, and
  b) to establish the number of genders in a given language.
- “Agreement [is] the systematic and predictable covariance between a semantic or a formal property of one grammatical form and a formal property of another” (Curzan 2003: 13).
- “Gender only exists if grammatical forms with variable gender (e.g., adjectives, pronouns, numerals) regularly adopt forms to agree with grammatical forms of invariable gender, usually nouns” (Curzan 2003: 13).

2.2 SMG

- Nouns, adjectives, determiners, a number of pronouns and a few numerals are marked for one of the three genders masculine, feminine or neuter.
- Nouns are assigned a gender by means of semantic and morphological information:
  a) inflectional class
  b) processes of word formation
  c) agreement in syntact (for noun stems which are underspecified for gender).
- SMG: formal grammatical gender system.
- Agreement domains:
  a) the noun phrase
  b) predicate-argument constructions.

(3) SMG

a. Afti i teseris tixi ine kokini.
these.M the.M.PL four.M walls.M are red.M.PL
‘These four walls are red.’

b. Aftes i teseris fustes ine kokines.
these.F the.F.PL four.F skirts.F are red.F.PL
‘These four skirts are red.’

c. Afta ta tesera vivlia ine kokina.
these.N the.N.PL four.N books.N are red.N.PL
‘These four books are red.’
2.3 Cappadocian

- **No gender agreement** in any syntactic environment, where it appears in SMG.
- Formerly agreeing determiners and modifiers appear in their originally **neuter** form when they combine with head nouns whose cognates in SMG and other MG varieties have three different gender values:

(4) Cappadocian

a. Noun phrase domain

\[
\text{ena alo numatfis} \\
\text{one.N other.N man.M} \\
\text{‘another man’ (Araván Cappadocian; Phosteris & Kesisoglou 1960: 110)}
\]

\[
\text{γυλα ta paфаδεs} \\
\text{all.N.PL the.N.PL pashas.M} \\
\text{‘all the pashas’ (Delmesó Cappadocian; Dawkins 1916: 324)}
\]

\[
\text{ekino xristjanos} \\
\text{that.N Christian.M} \\
\text{‘that Christian’ (Axó Cappadocian; Dawkins 1916: 390)}
\]

\[
\text{tria mines, tesera mines} \\
\text{three.N months.M four.N months.M} \\
\text{‘three months, four months’ (Axó Cappadocian; Dawkins 1916: 404)}
\]

\[
\text{os ta merez mas} \\
\text{until the.N.PL days.F our} \\
\text{‘until our days’ (Araván Cappadocian; Phosteris & Kesisoglou 1960: 98)}
\]

\[
\text{mi ena meγa avli} \\
\text{with a.N big.N yard.F} \\
\text{‘with a big yard’ (Araván Cappadocian; Phosteris & Kesisoglou 1960: 118)}
\]

\[
\text{eto neka} \\
\text{this.N woman.F} \\
\text{‘this woman’ (Axó Cappadocian; Dawkins 1916: 394)}
\]

\[
\text{tria xufтjes nero} \\
\text{three.N handfuls.F water} \\
\text{‘three handfuls of water’ (Delmesó Cappadocian; Dawkins 1916: 320)}
\]
b. Argument-predicate domain

sano-ne mi ito do xerifos?
crazy.N-is INT this.N the.N man.M
‘Is this man crazy?’ (Ulaghátsh Cappadocian; Kesisoglou 1951: 156)

to fovos tun poli itun
the.N fear.M their much.N was
‘They feared a lot.’ (Araván Cappadocian; Phosteris & Kesisoglu 1960: 110)

to ‘na devedʒis itun tʃiflo
the.N one.N camel driver.M was blind.N
‘One camel driver was blind.’ (Ghúrzono Cappadocian: Dawkins 1916: 344)

mana-m niʃiko-ne
mother:F-my foodless.N.-is
‘My mother is foodless.’ (Axó Cappadocian; Dawkins 1916: 392)

trana ki to ʰira dʒizdimenu
be.sees that the.N door:F locked.N
‘He sees that the door is locked.’ (Malakopí Cappadocian; Dawkins 1916: 408)

da ʃikes kjoṭane meyala
the.N.PL figs.F were big.N.PL
‘The figs were big.’ (Phloītá Cappadocian; Dawkins 1916: 416)

Note: Traces of grammatical gender still found in Sinasós, Zaléla, Potámia and Delmesó: masculine and feminine forms of the accusative of definite article τον and την when the article immediately precedes the noun:

(5) a. Delmesó Cappadocian

 tʃi neka-t piren do
the.F.PL woman.F-hit he.took it.N
‘He took his wife.’ (Dawkins 1916: 316)

b. Potámia Cappadocian

piyan na skotosun tin gata
they.went to they.kill the.F cat.F
‘They went to kill the cat.’ (Dawkins 1916: 464)
3. The loss of the grammatical gender feature in Cappadocian

3.1 Grammatical gender loss in the history of languages

- Ibrahim 1973; Aikhenvald 2004
- Language-internal factors:
  a) loss of the various distinctive gender markers of the nouns (following phonological changes),
  b) loss of the inflections that mark agreement between nouns and other word classes which agree with the nouns in terms of gender.
- Language-external factors: areal influence, language contact.

3.2 Previous accounts

- “Dawkins considers the loss of grammatical gender which is almost complete in Cappadocia [...] to be due to Turkish influence; Turkish has no gender”. (Thomason & Kaufman 1988: 219-220)
- “Again under Turkish influence, there was a progressive loss of gender distinctions, especially in South Cappadocian”. (Winford 2005: 405)
- “In most cases where when gender was lost in Indo-European, its loss can be attributed to some substratum, or adstratum language [...]. In other cases the influence of genderless languages are [sic] easier to prove: Turkish in the case of Asia Minor Greek”. (Matasović 2005: 77)
- “The loss of gender as a nominal category has occurred [...] dialectally in Modern Greek due to contact with Turkish”. (Igartua 2006: 56).

3.3 Language-external factors: the influence of genderless Turkish

- No grammatical gender distinctions in Turkish:

(6) Turkish

  a. Bu yaşlı adam hasta.  
     *this old man ill*  
     ‘This old man is ill.’

  b. Bu yaşlı kadın hasta.  
     *this old woman ill*  
     ‘This old woman is ill.’

  c. Bu yaşlı ağacı hasta.  
     *this old tree ill*  
     ‘This old tree is ill.’ (meaning ‘diseased’)
Extensive Cappadocian-Turkish bilingualism in the speech community is a prerequisite for such a contact-induced change to occur.

Cappadocian-Turkish bilingualism in Cappadocia after the separation of the area from the rest of the Greek-speaking world is well established (Dawkins 1916: 18).

Bilingual speakers are often seen as the agents of contact-induced language change by some current theories.

Such speakers resort to language ‘mixing’ in an attempt to reduce the processing overload caused by the availability of two linguistic systems in their minds.

To this end, they eliminate the linguistic elements or features which cause them this sort of ‘cognitive inconvenience’ (Field 2002; Matras 1998, 2000; Matras & Sakel 2007).

In our case, the cues for establishing the absence of grammatical gender distinctions in Turkish would come from the invariability of elements modifying head nouns.

Contact mechanism: the non-acquisition of the [determiner/modifier + head noun] agreement rule of Greek on account of the absence of such a rule from the Turkish grammatical system (see also Brendemoen 1999: 537).

3.3.1 The absence of phonological triggers

No major phonological changes causing confusion and morphological restructuring (cf. other known cases of gender loss: Middle English, other Germanic languages, Romance languages; see Karatsareas (2009)).

Despite noteworthy phonological changes that had an impact on the variety’s structure (loss of word-final unstressed high vowels; see Karatsareas (in preparation)), inflectional endings most saliently related to specific gender values in SMG are preserved in Cappadocian:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{SMG} & \quad \text{Ulaghátsh Cappadocian} \\
\text{a. Masculine} & \\
\text{ipnos} & \quad \text{jipnos} & \quad \text{‘sleep’} \\
\text{ðjavolos} & \quad \text{javolos} & \quad \text{‘devil’} \\
\text{b. Feminine} & \\
\text{karðja} & \quad \text{karja} & \quad \text{‘heart’} \\
\text{avli} & \quad \text{nevli} & \quad \text{‘yard’} \\
\text{c. Neuter} & \\
\text{ksilo} & \quad \text{ksilo} & \quad \text{‘wood’} \\
\text{xarti} & \quad \text{xarti} & \quad \text{‘paper’}
\end{align*}
\]
3.3.2 The effects of Greek-Turkish bilingualism

- SMG-Turkish bilingual data are a good indication of the outcomes of language contact between the two languages.
- SMG-Turkish bilingual speakers of the Muslim community of Rhodes (Georgalidou et al. 2005):
  a) confusion and avoidance of gender marking in SMG
  b) use of the neuter, which is taken as the default gender value in SMG:

\[(8)\] Rhodian Muslim Greek

\[\text{a. meyalo } \theta \text{ia}\]
\[\text{big.}\text{N } \text{aunt.}\text{F}\]
\[\text{‘elder aunt’}\]

\[\text{b. irte skilos } \ldots \text{ pinasmeno ita}\]
\[\text{he.}\text{came } \text{dog.}\text{M } \text{hungry.}\text{N } \text{he.}\text{was}\]
\[\text{‘The dog came… It was hungry’}\]

3.3.3 Number agreement in Cappadocian

- Number agreement within the Cappadocian noun phrase remains unaccounted for by a contact explanation:

\[(9)\] Number agreement in Cappadocian

\[\text{ala pola arap}\]
\[\text{other.}\text{N.PL } \text{many.}\text{N.PL } \text{men.}\text{M}\]
\[\text{‘many other men’ (Phloítá Cappadocian; Dawkins 1916: 416)}\]

\[\text{ula ta lires}\]
\[\text{all.}\text{N.PL } \text{the.}\text{N.PL } \text{liras.}\text{F}\]
\[\text{‘all the liras’ (Araván Cappadocian; Dawkins 1916: 332)}\]

\[\text{sa baʃkaja ta spitja}\]
\[\text{to.the.}\text{N.PL } \text{other.}\text{N.PL } \text{the.}\text{N.PL } \text{houses.}\text{N}\]
\[\text{‘to the other houses’ (Ferték Cappadocian; Dawkins 1916: 328)}\]

\[\text{sa texlikaluõja sa topus}\]
\[\text{to.the.}\text{N.PL } \text{dangerous.}\text{N.PL } \text{to.the.}\text{N.PL } \text{places.}\text{M}\]
\[\text{‘to the dangerous places’ (Delmesó Cappadocian; Dawkins 1916: 320)}\]
mavra meres

*black*.N.PL. *days*.F

‘black days’ (Araván Cappadocian; Phosteris & Kesisoglou 1960: 114)

as ta mev̄ala ta despoʃ

*from* the.N.PL. *big*.N.PL. the.N.PL. *bishop*.M.PL.

‘from the big bishops’ (Araván Cappadocian; Phosteris & Kesisoglou 1960: 126)

• No number agreement in Turkish noun phrases:

(10) Turkish

iyi adam ‘good man’
iyi adamlar ‘good men’

• Number agreement also active in Cappadocian in copular constructions:

(11) Axó Cappadocian

tifloz-me ‘I am blind’
tiflo-se ‘you (sg) blind’
tifloz-ne ‘he/she/it is blind’

tifla-meste ‘we are blind’
tifla-ste ‘you (pl) blind’
tifla-nde ‘they are blind’

• In Turkish copular constructions of this type, the predicate remains invariable across the paradigm:

(12) Turkish

kör-üm ‘I am blind’
kör-sün ‘you (sg) are blind’
kör(-dür) ‘he/she/it is blind’

kör-üz ‘we are blind’
kör-sünüz ‘you (pl) are blind’
kör(-dür)ler ‘they are blind’
Readjustment of the contact hypothesis: Cappadocian-Turkish bilingual children fail to acquire only part of the Greek morphosyntactic agreement rule, namely agreement in gender, but not in number.

3.4 Language-internal factors: gender and animacy agreement in Asia Minor Greek

3.4.1 The distinction between animates and inanimates in Asia Minor Greek

- Dawkins comments on the combination of the originally neuter form of adjectives with head nouns of originally different gender.

(13) Sinasós Cappadocian

to kalο o loyοs

*the.N good.N the.M speech.M*

‘the fair speech’ (Archelaos 1899: 150)

- Archelaos: “ἐπὶ ἁψύχων ἄρσ. καὶ θηλ. τὸ ἐπίθετ. τίθεται κατ’ οὐδέτερον γένος” (*‘the adjective is used in the neuter gender with masculine and feminine inanimate [noun]s’*).

- “[It] [the animates versus inanimates distinction] is the stage which everywhere in Cappadocian preceded the present entirely genderless state of the adjectives. This entire loss of gender can hardly but be due to the influence of genderless Turkish. But the disuse of the m. and f. adjectival endings before ἅψυχα [animates], but not before ἅψυχα [inanimates], in Pontos and, to judge from this evidence from Sinasós, in the least Turkised of the Cappadocian dialects, shews that the germ of this loss is involved in the distinction between ἅψυχα and ἅψυχα, a distinction which is certainly not of Turkish origin. It would seem that the Turkish influence found already existing a loss of grammatical gender or at least a tendency to lose grammatical gender, and carried this further to its own conditions of total absence of any distinctions of gender”. (Dawkins 1916: 116)

- The connection between Pontic and Cappadocian is also hinted at by various Greek linguists (Mavrochalyvidis & Kesisoglou 1951: 81 for Axó Cappadocian; Andriotis 1947: 46 for Pharása Greek).

3.4.1.1 Animates and inanimates in Pontic Greek

- Pontic: tripartite grammatical gender distinction into masculine, feminine and neuter nominals.

- Nouns, adjectives, determiners, a number of pronouns and some numerals are marked for gender:
(14) Pontic Greek

a. Nouns and articles

\( o_M \text{ andras}_M \) ‘the man’, \( o_M \text{ minas}_M \) ‘the month’

\( i_F \text{ mana}_F \) ‘the mother’, \( i_F \text{ kosara}_F \) ‘the chicken’

\( t_O \text{ stoman}_N \) ‘the mouth’, \( t_O \text{ alo} \, \text{y} \text{on}_N \) ‘the horse’

b. Adjectives

\( \text{kalos}_M \) - \( \text{kalesa}_F \) - \( \text{kalon}_N \) ‘good’

\( \text{varis}_M \) - \( \text{varesa}_F \) - \( \text{varin}_N \) ‘heavy’

c. Pronouns

\( \text{avutos}_M \) - \( \text{avute}_F \) - \( \text{avuto}_N \) ‘this’

\( \text{alos}_M \) - \( \text{ale}_F \) - \( \text{alo}_N \) ‘other’

c. Numerals

\( \text{enas}_{M,F} \) - \( \text{enan}_N \) ‘one’

\( \text{tris}_{M,F} \) - \( \text{tria}_N \) ‘three’

- Another distinction: \([±\text{HUMAN}].\)
- **Interaction of the two features in agreement** within the noun phrase and in the argument-predicate domain.
- **Neutralisation of gender distinction in the plural of \([–\text{HUMAN}]\) nouns**: combination with the neuter form of the definite article in both the nominative and the accusative, neuter-like syncretism:

(15) Pontic Greek

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>a. Masculine</th>
<th>b. Feminine</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>[+HUMAN]</td>
<td>[–HUMAN]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SINGULAR</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nominative</td>
<td>o andras</td>
<td>o minas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accusative</td>
<td>ton andran</td>
<td>ton minan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PLURAL</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nominative</td>
<td>i andres</td>
<td>ta minas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accusative</td>
<td>tus andras</td>
<td>ta minas</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Petros Karatsareas
• Repercussions for the agreement between head nouns and their modifiers: adjectives modifying [–HUMAN] nouns appear in their neuter form irrespective of the grammatical gender of their head nouns.

• This extends to both numbers, leading to a sort of mismatch between the determiner of the modifying adjective, on one hand, and the determiner of the head noun, on the other, given that definiteness spreading is obligatory in Pontic (Drettas 1997; Tompaidis 1980):

(16) Pontic Greek

\[
\begin{align*}
t_{N} & \text{ kalon}_{N} \ b_{M} \text{ minas}_{M} & \text{‘the good month’} \\
t_{N} & \text{ kalon}_{N} \ i_{F} \text{ kosara}_{F} & \text{‘the good chicken’} \\
t_{N} & \text{ kala}_{N} \ b_{N} \text{ minas}_{N} & \text{‘the good months’} \\
t_{N} & \text{ kala}_{N} \ b_{N} \text{ kosaras}_{N} & \text{‘the good chickens’}
\end{align*}
\]

• [+HUMAN] nouns present a slightly more complex picture. In the latest documented stages of Pontic (Papadopoulos (1955), Oikonomidis (1958), Drettas (1997)), adjectives modifying [+HUMAN] masculine and feminine nouns appear in their masculine form in the plural:

(17) Pontic Greek

\[
\begin{align*}
i_{M} & \text{ kali}_{M} \ i_{M} \text{ andres}_{M} & \text{‘the good men’} \\
i_{M} & \text{ kali}_{M} \ i_{F} \text{ jinekes}_{F} & \text{‘the good women’}
\end{align*}
\]

• This is probably a later development of Pontic. No traces of such an agreement pattern in Cappadocian or any other MG dialect of the greater area of Asia Minor (Phárasa, Sílli, Livisi, Demirdesi).

• At an earlier stage in the history of Pontic, adjectives modifying [+HUMAN] nouns agreed ‘normally’ with their head nouns in grammatical gender in both numbers:

(18) Earlier Pontic Greek

\[
\begin{align*}o_{M} & \text{ kalon}_{M} \ b_{M} \text{ andres}_{M} & \text{‘the good man’} \\
i_{F} & \text{ kalesa}_{F} \ i_{F} \text{ jineka}_{F} & \text{‘the good woman’} \\
i_{M} & \text{ kali}_{M} \ i_{M} \text{ andres}_{M} & \text{‘the good men’} \\
i_{F} & \text{ kaleses}_{F} \ i_{F} \text{ jinekes}_{F} & \text{‘the good women’}
\end{align*}
\]
• Neuter agreement with [–HUMAN] nouns is also found in the predicate-argument domain:

(19) Pontic Greek

a. i para en asimenon
   *the.F money.F is silver.N
   ‘Money is silver’

b. i sevta-s en pola tranon
   *the.F love.F-your is very big.N
   ‘Your love is very big.’ (Anastasiadis1995: 86)

3.4.1.2 Animates and inanimates in Cappadocian

• The animates versus inanimates distinction must have been **active in Cappadocian**: some Cappadocian varieties have preserved it to a very limited extent, along with an equally limited distinction based on grammatical gender (see Janse 2004).

• Axó Cappadocian (AC) (Mavrochalyvidis & Kesisoglou 1960):
  a) [+HUMAN] masculine nouns do not take any form of the definite article in the nominative of either the singular or the plural
  b) [–HUMAN] masculine nouns combine with the neuter form of the definite article in all cases of both numbers
  c) feminine nouns combine with a contracted form of the definite article in all cases of the singular and with the neuter form of the definite article in all cases of the plural

(20) Axó Cappadocian (Mavrochalyvidis & Kesisoglou 1960: 40-41)

a. Singular
   [+HUMAN] masculine           Ø arxopos       ‘the man’
   feminine                   t neka           ‘the woman’
   t karja                   ‘the heart’
   [–HUMAN] masculine/neuter  to jipnos        ‘the sleep’
   to zevyli                   ‘the yoke’

b. Plural
   [+HUMAN] masculine           Ø arxop          ‘the men’
other  
  ta jipnosja  ‘the sleeps’  
  ta nekes  ‘the women’  
  ta karjes  ‘the hearts’  
  ta zevylja  ‘the yokes’

- Grammatical gender distinctions are **neutralised in adjectival constructions** and in predicate-argument structures: adjectives in AC appear in the originally neuter form when modifying head nouns irrespective of their grammatical gender or of the \([\pm \text{HUMAN}]\) feature:

(21)  
**Axó Cappadocian** (Mavrochalyvidis & Kesisoglou 1960: 42-43)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Case</th>
<th>Word</th>
<th>English Meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>neuter</td>
<td>to kalo arxopos</td>
<td>‘the good man’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>neuter</td>
<td>to kalo neka</td>
<td>‘the good woman’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>neuter</td>
<td>to kalon to pei</td>
<td>‘the good child’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>neuter</td>
<td>ta kala arxop</td>
<td>‘the good men’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>neuter</td>
<td>ta kala ta nekes</td>
<td>‘the good women’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>neuter</td>
<td>ta kala ta pedja</td>
<td>‘the good children’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Definiteness spreading in AC: **definiteness spreading** is **possible** only when the forms of the two definite articles – the one agreeing with the head noun and the one agreeing with the modifying adjective – are **identical**, i.e. of neuter gender in form (Mavrochalyvidis & Kesisoglou 1960: 31):

(22)  
**Axó Cappadocian** (Mavrochalyvidis & Kesisoglou 1960: 31-32)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Case</th>
<th>Word</th>
<th>English Meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>accusative</td>
<td>to kalon to pei</td>
<td>‘the good child’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>accusative</td>
<td>ta kalan ta nekes</td>
<td>‘the good women’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>accusative</td>
<td>ta kalan ta pedja</td>
<td>‘the good children’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>accusative</td>
<td>to kalon t neka</td>
<td>‘the good woman.ACC’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>accusative</td>
<td>* to kalon ton arxopo</td>
<td>‘the good man.ACC’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>accusative</td>
<td>* ta kalan t arxopjus</td>
<td>‘the good men.ACC’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3.5 A series of analogical levellings

- A language-internal hypothesis:

the mismatch between the forms of the definite articles of the modifying adjective and the head noun in constructions such as the ones found in Pontic, but also even in some Cappadocian varieties, was disallowed in the most innovative Cappadocian varieties such as AC and UC. This triggered a series of analogical levellings based on the forms of the definite articles and the modifying adjectives in adjectival constructions which in turn eventually led to the total loss of grammatical gender in the Cappadocian varieties of the UC type.

- Pontic data illustrate an earlier stage; UC data represent a later stage in the decline of grammatical gender distinctions in the Asia Minor Greek dialects.

STAGE 1

a. [+HUMAN]

\[
\begin{align*}
o_M & \text{ kalos}_M & o_M & \text{ andras}_M & \text{‘the good man’} \\
i_F & \text{ kalesa}_F & i_F & \text{ jineka}_F & \text{‘the good woman’} \\
i_M & \text{ kali}_M & i_M & \text{ andres}_M & \text{‘the good men’} \\
i_F & \text{ kaleses}_F & i_F & \text{ jinekes}_F & \text{‘the good women’}
\end{align*}
\]

b. [–HUMAN]

\[
\begin{align*}
to_N & \text{ kalon}_N & o_M & \text{ minas}_M & \text{‘the good month’} \\
to_N & \text{ kalon}_N & i_F & \text{ kosara}_F & \text{‘the good chicken’} \\
ta_N & \text{ kala}_N & ta_N & \text{ minas}_N & \text{‘the good months’} \\
ta_N & \text{ kala}_N & ta_N & \text{ kosaras}_N & \text{‘the good chickens’}
\end{align*}
\]

CHANGE 1 The mismatch between the forms of the definite article appearing before the adjective and that appearing before the head noun in the singular [–HUMAN] nouns is levelled.

STAGE 2

a. [+HUMAN]

\[
\begin{align*}
o_M & \text{ kalos}_M & o_M & \text{ andras}_M & \text{‘the good man’} \\
i_F & \text{ kalesa}_F & i_F & \text{ jineka}_F & \text{‘the good woman’}
\end{align*}
\]
i_M kali_M andres_M ‘the good men’
i_F kaleses_F jinekes_F ‘the good women’

b. [−HUMAN]

to_N kalon_N to_N minas_N ‘the good month’
to_N kalon_N to_N kosara_N ‘the good chicken’

ta_N kala_N ta_N minas_N ‘the good months’
ta_N kala_N ta_N kosaras_N ‘the good chickens’

CHANGE 2 The contrast between grammatical gender and the [±HUMAN] feature is levelled in the modifiers. Neuter agreement in the modifiers is introduced for [+HUMAN] nouns.

STAGE 3  
a. [+HUMAN]

to_N kalon_N andras_M ‘the good man’
to_N kalon_N jineka_F ‘the good woman’

ta_N kala_N andres_M ‘the good men’
ta_N kala_N jinekes_F ‘the good women’

b. [−HUMAN]

to_N kalon_N to_N minas_N ‘the good month’
to_N kalon_N to_N kosara_N ‘the good chicken’

ta_N kala_N ta_N minas_N ‘the good months’
ta_N kala_N ta_N kosaras_N ‘the good chickens’

CHANGE 3 Neuter agreement in the modifiers and their determiners with all nouns leads to the loss of grammatical gender. All nouns behave as neuters.

STAGE 4  
a. [+HUMAN]

to_N kalon_N to_N andras_M ‘the good man’
to_N kalon_N to_N jineka_F ‘the good woman’

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4. Summary and conclusions

- The origins of grammatical gender loss in Cappadocian can be traced back to the emergence of a [±HUMAN] feature which became active in the nominal inflection of the Asia Minor Greek dialects.

- This feature was realised, among others, in agreement between head nouns and modifiers within the noun phrase domain and beyond it, in predicate-argument constructions, in that the modifiers and other agreeing nominals referring to [–HUMAN] nouns appeared in their neuter form.

- This, in combination with definiteness spreading, which was obligatory in these dialects, resulted in a mismatch between the form of the definite article appearing before the adjective and those appearing before the head noun in polydefinite constructions, as the definite article appeared in the neuter form before the adjective but in the masculine of feminine form before the head noun.

- While this mismatch was allowed in Pontic, this was not the case in Cappadocian, where the mismatch was levelled at the expense of grammatical gender distinctions.

- These processes of analogical levelling were probably aided and accelerated by Cappadocian-Turkish bilingualism and subsequent cross-linguistic influence from Turkish.

- The linguistic aspect that turned out to be the key in accounting for this change is agreement, especially within the noun phrase domain. The series of analogical levellings progressed on the basis of [determiner/modifier + head noun] agreement, whereas the cues for the absence of gender distinctions in Turkish in the case of the cross-linguistic influence in bilinguals undoubtedly came from the invariability of determiners and modifiers, i.e. the absence of agreement within the noun phrase in the language.
The loss of grammatical gender distinctions in Cappadocian should not be viewed exclusively as the result of language contact with Turkish, but rather as the result of a series of language-internal analogical levellings of gender mismatches in polydefinite constructions, a process most probably accelerated by language contact but not triggered by it.

References


