On the diachronic evolution of grammatical gender in Cappadocian Greek*

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1. Introduction

- Majority of Cappadocian Greek (Cappadocian) varieties: no tripartite 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:

(1) Ulaghátsh Cappadocian

đo καλόν đo ἀνδρα
đo καλόν đo ναίκα
đo καλόν đo πεί

dα καλάν dα ἀνδρες
dα καλάν dα ναικες
dα καλάν dα πειγια

Note: i. Obligatory definiteness spreading (or polydefiniteness)
   ii. Morphophonological rule conditioning the final -v in καλόν and καλάν (καλό and καλά in other syntactic environments.

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

(2) SMG

o καλός (ο) ἀντρας
η καλή (η) γυναικα
τo καλό (τo) παιδί

io καλοί (οi) ἀντρες
io καλές (οi) γυναικες
τa καλά (τa) τa παιδιά

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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 morphological information:
  a) inflectional class
  b) processes of word formation
  c) agreement in syntax (for noun stems which are underspecified for gender).
- SMG: formal grammatical gender system.
- Agreement domains:
  a) the noun phrase
  b) predicate-argument constructions.
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

\[ \text{ένα \ άλλο νουμάι \ ίς} \quad [\text{Araván Cappadocian; Phosteris \& Kesisoglou 1960: 110}] \]
\[ \text{γούλα \ τα \ πα\'\'άδες} \quad [\text{Delmesó Cappadocian; Dawkins 1916: 324}] \]
\[ \text{εκείνο \ χριστιανός} \quad [\text{Axó Cappadocian; Dawkins 1916: 390}] \]
\[ \text{τρία \ μήνες, \ τέσσερα \ μήνες} \quad [\text{Axó Cappadocian; Dawkins 1916: 404}] \]
\[ \text{ως \ τα \ μέρες \ μας} \quad [\text{Araván Cappadocian; Phosteris \& Kesisoglou 1960: 98}] \]
\[ \text{μι \ ένα \ μέγα \ αυλή} \quad [\text{Araván Cappadocian; Phosteris \& Kesisoglou 1960: 118}] \]
\[ \text{ετό \ ναίκα} \quad [\text{Axó Cappadocian; Dawkins 1916: 394}] \]
\[ \text{τρία \ χούφτιες \ νερό} \quad [\text{Delmesó Cappadocian; Dawkins 1916: 320}] \]

b. Argument-predicate domain

\[ \text{σανόναι \ μι \ ιτό \ νο \ χερίφος} \quad [\text{Ulaghátsh Cappadocian; Kesisoglou 1951: 156}] \]
\[ \text{το \ φοβός \ του \ πολύ \ ήτουν} \quad [\text{Araván Cappadocian; Phosteris \& Kesisoglou 1960: 110}] \]
\[ \text{τό \ να \ δεβεδής \ ήτουν \ ί\'υφλό} \quad [\text{Ghúrzono Cappadocian; Dawkins 1916: 344}] \]
μάνα μ’ νητόκναι [Axó Cappadocian; Dawkins 1916: 392]
τρανά κι το θύρα 
διζιδιμένου [Malakopí Cappadocian; Dawkins 1916: 408]
da βύκες κειότανε μεγάλα [Phloítá Cappadocian; Dawkins 1916: 416]

Note: Traces of grammatical gender still found in Sinasós, Zalēla, 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
tὴν ναίκα τ πήρεν δὸ [Dawkins 1916: 316]
b. Potámia Cappadocian
πήγαν να σκοτώσουν τὴν γάτα [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

- Absence of grammatical gender distinctions in Turkish:

(6) Turkish

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

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

c. Bu yaşlı ağaç hasta.
*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 (to appear)).
• 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:

(7) SMG Ulaghátsh Cappadocian
   a. Masculine
      ύπνος γύπνος
      διάβολος γιάβολος
   b. Feminine
      καρδιά καργιά
      αυλή νευλή
   c. Neuter
      ξύλο ξύλο
      χαρτί χαρτί

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
   a. μεγάλο θεία
   b. ήρτε σκύλος ... πεινασμένο ήτα

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

άλλα πολλά αράπ [Phloïtá Cappadocian; Dawkins 1916: 416]
oύλα τα λίρες [Araván Cappadocian; Dawkins 1916: 332]
σα υσικάγια τα σπίτια [Ferték Cappadocian; Dawkins 1916: 328]
σα τεχλικάλάδια σα τόπους [Delmesó Cappadocian; Dawkins 1916: 320]
μαύρα μέρες [Araván Cappadocian; Phosteris & Kesisoglou 1960: 114]
ας τα μεγάλα τα Δεσπό [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

tuflo'z μαι

tuflo'sai

tuflo'z'vai
tuflo'z'mestē
tuflo'z'oste
tuflo'z'vdaī

• 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(-dur)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 ἐμψυχα and ἄψυχα 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

τὸ καλὸν ὁ λόγος

[Archelaos 1899: 150]

Archelaos: “ἐπὶ ἀψύχων ἄρσ. καὶ θηλ. τὸ ἐπίθετ. τίθεται κατ᾽ οὗ δέτερον γένος”.

“It [the ἐμψυχα versus ἄψυχα 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 ἐμψυχα, but not before ἄψυχα, 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 ἐμψυχα and ἄψυχα, 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 Phárasa Greek).

3.4.1.1 Ἐμψυχα and ἄψυχα 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
   ο ἀντρας, ο μήνας
   η μάνα, η κοσάρα
   το στόμαν, το ἀλογον

c. Adjectives
   καλός, καλέσσα, καλόν
   βαρύς, βαρέσα, βαρύν

d. Pronouns
   αβούτος, αβούτε, αβούτο
   άλλος, άλλε, άλλο

e. Numerals
   ένας, έναν
   τρεις, τρία

• Another distinction: [+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 [−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>SINGULAR</td>
<td>[+HUMAN]</td>
<td>[−HUMAN]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nominative</td>
<td>ο ἀντρας</td>
<td>ο μήνας</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accusative</td>
<td>τον ἀντραν</td>
<td>τον μήναν</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

|                | [−HUMAN]     | [+HUMAN]    | [−HUMAN]    |
| PLURAL         |             |             |             |
| Nominative     | οι ἀντρες   | ΤΑ μήνας    | οι μανάδες  | ΤΑ κοσάρας  |
| Accusative     | τους ἀντρας | τα μήνασ    | τοι μανάδας | τα κοσάρας  |

• 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

το καλόν ο μήνας
το καλόν η κοσάρα

τα καλά τα μήνας
τα καλά τα κοσάρας

• [+HUMAN] nouns present a slightly more complex picture. In the latest documented stage 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

οι καλοί οι άντρες
οι καλοί οι γυναίκες

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

• 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

ο καλόν ο άντρας
η καλέσσα η γυναίκα

οι καλοί οι άντρες
οι καλέσσες οι γυναίκες

• Neuter agreement with [–HUMAN] nouns is also found in the predicate-argument domain:

(19) Pontic Greek

Η παρά εν´ ασημένον.

Η σεβτά σ´ εν´ πολλά τρανόν. [Anastasiadis 1995: 86]
3.4.1.2 Ἐμψυχα and ἄψυχα in Cappadocian

• The Ἐμψυχα versus ἄψυχα 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 either in the singular or in the plural
  b) [–HUMAN] masculine nouns combine with the neuter form of the definite article in both numbers
  c) feminine nouns combine with a contracted form of the definite article in the singular and with the neuter form of the definite article in the plural

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

  a. Singular
     [+HUMAN] masculine     Ø ἀρχωπος
     feminine               τ ναίκα
                           τ καργιά
     [–HUMAN] masculine/neuter  το γύπνος
                               το ζευγλί
  b. Plural
     [+HUMAN] masculine     Ø ἀρχώπ
     other                  τα γύπνοσια
                           τα ναίκες
                           τα καργιές
                           τα ζευγλιά

• 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 [±HUMAN] feature:

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

  το καλό ἀρχωπος
  το καλό ναίκα
  το καλόν το παιί
• 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)

a. το καλόν το παιί
ta kalán ta naíkes
ta kalán ta pайдιά

b. * το καλόν τ ναïκα
* το καλόν τον ἁρχωπο
* τα καλάν τ αρχωπιούς

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 costrucions 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 as represente a later stage in the decline of grammatical gender distinctions in the Asia Minor Greek dialects.

STAGE 1 a. [+HUMAN]

ο καλός ο ἄντρας
η καλέσσα η γυναίκα

οι καλοί οι ἄντρες
οι καλέσσες οι γυναίκες
b. \([-\text{HUMAN}]\)

\[\begin{align*}
\text{το καλόν} & \circ \text{ο αντρας} \\
\text{το καλόν} & \bullet \text{η γυναίκα} \\
\text{τα καλά} & \circ \text{τα αντρες} \\
\text{τα καλά} & \bullet \text{τις γυναίκες}
\end{align*}\]

\[\begin{align*}
\text{το καλόν} & \circ \text{ο μήνας} \\
\text{το καλόν} & \bullet \text{η κοσσάρα} \\
\text{τα καλά} & \circ \text{τα μήνας} \\
\text{τα καλά} & \bullet \text{τα κοσσάρας}
\end{align*}\]

\textbf{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 \([-\text{HUMAN}]\) nouns is levelled.

\textbf{STAGE 2}  

a. \([+\text{HUMAN}]\)

\[\begin{align*}
\text{o καλός} & \circ \text{o αντρας} \\
\text{η καλέσσα} & \bullet \text{η γυναίκα} \\
\text{οι καλοί} & \circ \text{οι αντρες} \\
\text{οι καλέσσες} & \bullet \text{οι γυναίκες}
\end{align*}\]

b. \([-\text{HUMAN}]\)

\[\begin{align*}
\text{το καλόν} & \circ \text{ο μήνας} \\
\text{το καλόν} & \bullet \text{η κοσσάρα} \\
\text{τα καλά} & \circ \text{τα μήνας} \\
\text{τα καλά} & \bullet \text{τα κοσσάρας}
\end{align*}\]

\textbf{CHANGE 2} The contrast between grammatical gender and the \([\pm \text{HUMAN}]\) feature is levelled in the modifiers. Neuter agreement in the modifiers is introduced for \([+\text{HUMAN}]\) nouns.

\textbf{STAGE 3}  

a. \([+\text{HUMAN}]\)

\[\begin{align*}
\text{το καλόν} & \circ \text{αντρας} \\
\text{το καλόν} & \bullet \text{γυναίκα} \\
\text{τα καλά} & \circ \text{αντρες} \\
\text{τα καλά} & \bullet \text{γυναίκες}
\end{align*}\]

b. \([-\text{HUMAN}]\)

\[\begin{align*}
\text{το καλόν} & \circ \text{ο μήνας} \\
\text{το καλόν} & \bullet \text{η κοσσάρα} \\
\text{τα καλά} & \circ \text{τα μήνας} \\
\text{τα καλά} & \bullet \text{τα κοσσάρας}
\end{align*}\]
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]

το καλόν το ἀντρας
to kalon ton antras
το καλόν το γυναῖκα
to kalon ton gunaiaka

τα καλά τα ἀντρες
ta kalá ta antres
τα καλά τα γυναίκες
ta kalá ta gunaikes

b. [–HUMAN]

το καλόν το μήνας
to kalon ton menas
το καλόν το κοσσάρα
to kalon ton kosará

τα καλά τα μήνας
ta kalá ta menas
τα καλά τα κοσσάρας
ta kalá ta kosarás

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


