## Type of proposal *(If you choose both, the scientific committee will decide.)*

☐ Paper  ☐ Poster

## Keywords *(3 max.)*

1. Syntax
2. case attraction
3. quantitative methods

## Title

*Rethinking case attraction on Classical Greek infinitive clauses*

## Abstract

Case attraction on infinitive clauses (contrast item (1-a) with item (1-b) below) has been analysed over the recent years as a idiosyncratic and strictly syntactic construction (Tantalou 2003, Spyropoulos 2005 and Sevdali 2013a; 2013b), lacking many parallels across either ancient or modern languages and across other linguistic phenomena. In this paper, I offer a new assessment of the process, arguing that case attraction is similar in nature and distribution to *agreement / concord*, namely similar to the cases of *non-canonical agreement* and *long distance agreement* (as discussed in Corbett 2006).

1. συμβουλεύει     τῷ Ξενοφῶντι     ἐλθόντα          εἰς Δελφοὺς
   advice.3SG      X.DAT.SG         going.ACC.SG     to-Delphi
   ἀνακοινοῶσαι     τῷ θεῷ          περὶ τῆς πορείας.
   ask.INF         the-god.DAT.SG   about-the-travel
   He advices Xenophon to go to Delphi and ask the god about the travel. (Xen. *Anab*. 3.1.5)

2. ἀφῆκε           μοι              ἐλθόντι          πρὸς ὑμᾶς
   allowed.3SG     PRON.1SG.DAT     going.DAT.SG     in-front-of-you
   λέγειν         τἀληθῆ.
   say.INF        the-truth.ACC.
   He allowed me to go and speak the truth in front of you. (Xen. *Hell*. 6.1.13)

The evidence across natural languages shows that non-canonical agreement / concord takes place in a non-deterministic fashion as semantic or pragmatic features of the

sentence appear more marked, which is similar to the contexts associated with case attraction assumed by grammarians as early as Buttmann (1826), contexts in which some sort of *emphasis* is assigned to the target of attraction makes it more likely to be attracted. Although the intuition seems to be sound, there is little to no specificity in what is denoted by emphasis and the explanation is prone to ad hoc interpretations.

Using data from literary sources of Classical Greek, including oratory speeches, drama, historiography and philosophical dialogues from Attic and Jonic sources, I provide a data driven quantitative analysis of the contexts in which case attraction is a possible agreement / concord resolution. The addition of Jonic sources is due to the fact that it has been assumed that case attraction is more common if not the rule in the Attic dialect (e.g. Buttmann 1826, *passim*. and Cooper and Krüger 1997, *ad loc*.). The data has been collected and annotated in a combination of manual and computational methods using the Diorisis Ancient Greek Corpus (Vatri and McGillivray 2018).

A quantitative analysis of case attraction requires caution in the methodological approach, as semantic and pragmatic features are often latent, i.e. not explicitly present in the morpho-phonological level, and the use of proxies such as word classes, constituent distance and word order may hinder the quality of the results and the causal inference built upon them. As such, our analysis will rely on the causality analysis (e.g. Pearl 2009) and Bayesian modeling (e.g. McElreath 2020), which I argue could enhance the results of data driven linguistic research by including at the quantitative analysis the qualitative knowledge built on the Ancient Greek and general linguistics. The analysis must be thus twofold. Firstly, it assess how the linguistic and extralinguistic factors could reasonably be causally linked with case attraction, so as to inform the statistical modeling and tell what effects are possible to estimate from the data. Later, a general linear model is build as to adequately estimate the direct effects of semantic and pragmatic factors on case attraction and the interactions between linguistic and extralinguistic variables.

# References

Buttmann, P. (1826). *Griechische Grammatik*. Berlin: Ferd. Dümmler's Verlagsbuchhandlung.

Cooper, G. L. and K. W. Krüger (1997). *Attic Greek prose syntax*. Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press.

Corbett, G. G. (2006). *Agreement*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

McElreath, R. (2020). *Statistical Rethinking*. Boca Raton: Taylor & Francis Group, LLC.

Pearl, J. (2009). *Causality: Models, Reasoning, and Inference: Models, Reasoning, and Interference*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Sevdali, C. (2013a). "Ancient Greek Infinitives and Phases". In: Syntax 16.4, pp. 324–361. doi: https://doi.org/10.1111/synt.12004. url: https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/abs/10.1111/synt.12004.

— (2013b). "Case Transmission beyond Control and the Role of Person". In: *Journal of Historical Syntax* 2.4, pp. 1–52.

Spyropoulos, V. (2005). "The syntax of Classical Greek infinitive". In: *Universal Grammar in the Reconstruction of Ancient Languages.* Ed. by K. Kiss. Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter, pp. 295–337.

Tantalou, N. (2003). "Infinitives with overt subjects in Classical Greek". In: *Μελέτες για την ελληνική γλώσσα: πρακτικά της 23ης ετήσιας συνάντησης του τμήματος φιλολογίας του Αριστοτελείου Πανεπιστημίου Θεσσαλονίκης, 17-19 Μαΐου, 2002.* Θεσσαλονίκη: Αφοί Κυριακίδη, pp. 358–365.

Vatri, A. and B. McGillivray (2018). "The Diorisis Ancient Greek Corpus". In: *Research Data Journal for the Humanities and Social Sciences 3.1*, pp. 55–65. url: https://brill.com/view/journals/rdj/3/1/article-p55%5C%5F55.xml.