

Tel Aviv University
School of Philosophy, Linguistics and Science Studies,
Department of Linguistics

THURSDAY INTERDISCIPLINARY COLLOQUIUM

Thursday 27/04/2023

16:15-17:45

Webb 103

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The documentation and the syntax of Corfioto

In this talk I present current findings of my PhD research project on the documentation and the syntactic analysis of (Italián) Corfióto, the highly endangered Romance variety traditionally spoken by the Jewish community of Corfu, in Greece, which is still spoken today by a small number of speakers living in Greece and in Israel. Corfioto is a Romance variety, many features of which emerged from the contact of different Italo-Romance varieties, including Venetian and Southern Italian dialects, Spanish with Hebrew and Greek, originally spoken by the Corfiot Jews in the Italian and the Iberian Peninsula and Corfu, starting from the late 14th century. Although the lexis of Corfioto is mainly of Venetian origin, the syntax of Corfioto diverges significantly from that characterizing the diachrony of Venetian and indicates the emergence of hybrid structures originating in different languages, in which similar patterns can be identified transparently. Such hybridity is reflected on Corfioto's finite verb complementation system.

In Corfioto, different types of verb complement clauses are introduced by a unique subordinator/particle *ke*, followed by a morphologically finite form, regardless of the semantic and grammatical properties of the matrix verb form, both in subject co-reference and disjoint reference, a pattern typically found in the Balkan Sprachbund. I show that the element *ke* values different oppositions of tense, mood and (morphological) finiteness, while realizing different positions across v, T and C. I argue that once finiteness is defined in terms of grammatical and/or language-specific morphological features, it may not be confined to a particular domain of the clause but can be distributed over all the domains of the clausal spine, namely v, T and C. My analysis adheres to a perspective whereby although (non-)finiteness cannot be regarded as a cross-linguistically or cross-constructionally valid grammatical or linguistic category, it is universally subject to implicational correlations that can be accounted for in terms of principles of morphosyntactic properties and semantic or functional interpretation.

Click [here](#) to see the colloquium program.