

## REF impact case study

### Title of case study: ROMEYKA

#### 1. Summary of the impact (100 words)

Dr Sitaridou's research on Romeyka, an endangered Greek variety still spoken in mountainous Turkey, has had a profound effect on the self-image of the community, in particular its women, as well as on how Romeyka is viewed within Turkey. Both the actual fieldwork and the publicity have raised the prestige of the language and the community, which is the only realistic means of revitalisation. Dr Sitaridou's research, featured in international and national media, engaged audiences in both Turkey and Greece into discussions about identity and the "other". Globally, audiences were captivated by the plethora of Ancient Greek features in Romeyka.

#### 2. Underpinning research (499 words)

Dr Sitaridou has been a member of the Department of Spanish and Portuguese since 2004, holding the position of University Lecturer. Since 2008, she has undertaken four periods of fieldwork in Pontus, Turkey which have resulted in publications in English on the last remaining Hellenic varieties in Pontus (Romeyka). Dr Sitaridou's expertise is both in synchronic and historical syntax.

Dr Sitaridou's most urgent aim was to document Romeyka in case of its probable extinction, using state-of-the-art theorizing and field methods. For this purpose, she visited on several occasions a remote community (ca. 850km northeast of Ankara) where she successfully penetrated into its female community, participating in their daily activities whilst collecting data under authentic conditions and identifying the most the least attrited speakers to conduct her syntactic questionnaires. Having accomplished this to a great extent, her research has had two main foci, which together constitute one programme of work on language change and contact.

The first element of the research has been continuity [3d,e]. Greek has lost the infinitive since the Hellenistic times. Remarkably, Romeyka has preserved, to this day, a robust infinitive usage. By comparing the current infinitival distribution in Romeyka with previous stages of Greek, it was argued that the Romeyka infinitive has its roots in Hellenistic Greek. Proof for this claim derives from the preservation of the construction *prin* 'before' the infinitive which remains extremely productive to this day. Crucially, this construction did not survive into early medieval times and it is only found as a learned construction in 'high' registers of the Medieval Greek record. This analysis of the trajectory of the Romeyka infinitive opens up new phylogenetic routes for Asia Minor Greek.

The second main element of Dr Sitaridou's research has been the study of discontinuity [3d,e]. It is shown that the Romeyka infinitive has a peculiar distribution which permits it to be licensed in the context of modals, *before* clauses and counterfactuals. Once Romeyka was cut-off from other medieval varieties (as early as the 12th and as late as the 15th Centuries), the Romeyka infinitive was used in contexts which were linked by antiveridicality. Given that this was what all the contexts had in common, the Romeyka infinitive came to be reanalysed as a negative polarity item, a remarkable transformation. Crucially, the discontinuity that ensued was only possible thanks to the continuity of the *before*-construction.

Whilst Dr Sitaridou studied other areas of the Romeyka grammar [3a,b], her work on the infinitive is the most important because: (i) despite the first descriptions of the Romeyka infinitive in Parharidis (1880), Deffner (1878), Dawkins (1936) and Mackridge (1995, 1996), collectively, they did not provide more than a few items of data whilst we now have hundreds of data; (ii) previous works were met with great scepticism since it was claimed that the infinitive was long gone from Pontic Greek (Tombaidis 1977) whilst now we have both irrevocable proof that it has survived and an explanation why the quest for the "golden infinitive" has become so ideologised.

### 3. References to the Research (indicative maximum of six references)

#### PUBLICATIONS

- a. Michelioudakis, D. & I. Sitaridou (2012). 'Syntactic microvariation: Dative Constructions in Greek. *Datives in variation: a micro-comparative perspective* (eds. Ricardo Etxepare and Beatriz Fernández). Oxford: OUP. 212-255
- b. Michelioudakis, D. & I. Sitaridou. (2013). 'Multiple *wh*-fronting across Pontic Greek dialects'. On-line Proceedings of the Fifth International Conference of Modern Greek Dialects and Linguistic Theory (MGDLT4), Chios, 11-14 June 2009, eds. A. Ralli, B. Joseph, M. Janse, A. Karasimos.
- c. Sitaridou, I. (2013). 'Greek-speaking enclaves in Pontus today: The documentation and revitalization of Romeyka.' In *Keeping Languages Alive. Language Endangerment: Documentation, Pedagogy and Revitalization*, (eds.) Mari Jones & S. Ogilvie. Cambridge: CUP. 98-112
- d. Sitaridou, I. (2013). 'The Romeyka infinitive: Continuity, contact and change in the Hellenic varieties of Pontus'. *Diachronica*. (accepted; to appear in January 2014).
- e. Sitaridou, I. (2013). 'Variation in complementation strategies in Pontic Greek: The emergence of the polarity sensitive Romeyka infinitive'. *Lingua*. (Resubmitted; awaits final result).

All the above have undergone peer review and can be supplied by the University of Cambridge on request.

#### GRANTS

- f. Dr Sitaridou was the recipient of Stanley J. Seeger Visiting Research Fellowship in Hellenic Studies at Princeton University for the project: 'Continuity, Contact and Change: The Hellenic varieties (Romeyka) of Pontus'. Spring 2011. Amount awarded: \$14000
- g. Dr Sitaridou is Principal Investigator for the project: 'Continuity, contact and change: Documenting the morphosyntax of the Greek varieties in Pontus.' Funding Body: Small Research Grant by British Academy. April 2011- October 2013. Proposal Grade awarded: A+ Amount awarded: £7500

### 4. Details of the impact (657 words)

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### 5. References to corroborate the contribution, impact or benefit (10 references)

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