A SURVEY OF MODERN GREEK DIALECTAL COMPLEMENTATION*

Abstract

This survey concentrates on the semantic factors subject to cross-dialectal variation in the distribution of complementiser-που. The Standard Modern Greek constraint that που-complements be factive is violated in six distinct dialects (Italiot, Corfiot, Tsakonian, Western Macedonian, Thracian, Livisiot)—which have developed completely autonomously from each other; in only one instance (Western Macedonian) can linguistic contact serve as an explanation. The constraint that που-complements be stative is likewise violated in two dialects (Italiot, Corfiot).

Three issues of theoretical interest arise from these findings. First, on the available evidence the dialects themselves are inhomogeneous in their distribution of που. This indicates that linguistic change in complementiser distribution normally occurs piecemeal, akin to lexical diffusion; while analogical levelling completes the process, one may find instances where the process remains incomplete. Second, not all semantic factors are equal: που is constrained most frequently by Information Modality, less frequently by Evaluation Modality, and least frequently by Semantic Clas (after Ransom 1986). This implies a hierarchy of salience of these semantic factors. Lastly, diachronic developments are contingent realities, and cannot be outright predicted; it may be argued that the Mainland Greek (= Standard Greek) distribution of που, if anything, is the oddity in the account.

1. Standard Modern Greek Distribution

Modern Greek complementation is based on two paradigmatic oppositions: that between πο/ναι and νο, and that between που and πο/ναι. The former distinction appears reasonably straightforward (grosso modo realis/irrealis), and the distribution of νο has drawn relatively little comment. Likewise, while there are other complementisers available in Standard Greek and Greek dialects, they have not drawn much discussion in the literature, though their distribution is in some cases involved (but see Delveroudi 1994 on και).

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1The exception has been the dubitative stative use of νο after weak assertives, e.g. πιστεύω νο, νομίζω νο. See for instance Christidis (1982).

2Standard Greek: και and Ø. Amongst the dialects of Greek, Apulian Italiot has ca (borrowed from Italian dialect), Anatolian Greek has το (ντ/του), Pharasiot has κι (borrowed
The distribution of πού, on the other hand, has attracted considerable discussion in the literature. Though it is clear that πού is marked against πως/ότι as a realis complementiser, it has proven surprisingly difficult to characterise semantically the distinction between the two in the paradigm:

e.g. Χαίρομαι πού ἔρθε/Χαίρομαι πως ἔρθε 'glad'
Θυμάμαι πού ἔρθε/Θυμάμαι πως ἔρθε 'remember'
(Το) Ξέρω πού ἔρθε/Ξέρω πως ἔρθε 'know'
(?!)Λέω πού ἔρθε/Λέω πως ἔρθε 'say'
*Νομίζω πού ἔρθε/Νομίζω πως ἔρθε 'think'

It has been a commonplace of Modern Greek linguistics since Christidis (1981) to describe the distribution of the realis complementisers πού and πως in terms of factivity. In broad terms, it has been found that in Contemporary Standard Modern Greek (CSMG), πού is obligatory following true factive predicates (Kiparsky & Kiparsky 1971), such as γράφω, and πως/ότι is obligatory following non-factive predicates, such as νομίζω. For the predicates Kiparsky & Kiparsky term semi-factive (i.e. whose factivity is defeasible under certain syntactic conditions), πού is marked as a complementiser, while πως/ότι is unmarked.

What πού is marked for after semi-factives is what has proven so elusive to pin down. There have been two trends in the literature:

(1) The distinction is in terms of truth valuation/assertivity: a sentence containing πως/ότι makes distinct complement (fact) assertion and matrix assertions, while πού ‘presupposes’ the truth of its (event) complement, and does not assert it as a claim distinct from the matrix. (Christidis 1981; Svalberg 1992; Ginzburg & Kolliakou 1997 [1995])

(2) The distinction is in terms of givenness/theme: a πως/ότι-complement is foregrounded in discourse, whereas a πού-complement is backgrounded, or alternatively constitutes a discourse theme. (Kakouriotis 1982; Delveroudi, Tsamadou & Vassilaki 1994 [1993]; Varlokosta 1994)

The difficulty in determining the distribution of complementiser-πού in CSMG has led to speculation on the diachronic processes that have led to it. This speculation has been couched in the more general terms of the major paradigmatic opposition involving πού in Greek: πού versus να. Christidis (1986) and Papadopoulou (1994) have characterised this opposition in terms of a metaphorist grammaticalisation account: they argue that the modern range of meanings πού and να have taken in the language originates in their etymologies. In particular, να is held to originate in a directional relativiser; 3 accordingly, Chris-

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3As I argue in my dissertation (Nicholas 1998 Chapter 5), this claim is not borne out by the linguistic evidence; the directional sense of ‘να is secondary.
tidis and Papadopoulou claim, its modern meanings metaphorically extend directionality in space to irrealis in the world. Similarly ποῦ originates in the static locative ὅπου; its modern meanings are thus characterised by a metaphorical extension from stationarity in space to givenness in discourse.

As I have argued in my dissertation (Nicholas 1998), the diachronic data does not support this view of the development of ποῦ. But diachrony is not the only challenge to this view. A source of data has hitherto ignored in investigating the semantics of ποῦ is the distribution of complementiser-ποῦ in the dialects of Modern Greek, which has not been surveyed until now. As becomes clear from the Modern Greek dialectal data, the Standard Modern Greek distribution of complementiser-ποῦ was by no means the only possible outcome, and should not be regarded as in some way privileged.

2. Semantic Factor Analysis

By contrast to the often fine semantic judgements invoked in CSMG studies on complementisers, the attrition of Modern Greek dialects means that a survey of dialectal complementation can only be undertaken based on written sources. As a result, a survey can only rely on factors readily discernable from printed texts: in the first instance the matrix predicate of the complementiser, and to a lesser extent the polarity of the complement, and whether it presents new or given information. As it turns out, the disparity in distribution between CSMG and several dialects is great enough that such a restricted approach can still unearth a wealth of information.

Relying on matrix predicates to describe the distribution of ποῦ-complements means that a survey needs to posit a vector space classifying those predicates, in order to allow the distribution of ποῦ to be classified objectively. The scheme used here follows Ransom (1986), and uses a vector space consisting of three dimensions: Semantic Class (the semantic domain of the predicate), Evaluation Modality (how strongly the validity of the complement is held), and Information Modality (the ontology of the complement):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SEMANTIC CLASS:</th>
<th>Emotive</th>
<th>Physical/Cognitive</th>
<th>Linguistic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>e.g. χαίρει ‘glad’</td>
<td>e.g. ξέρω ‘know’</td>
<td>e.g. λέω ‘say’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EVALUATION MODALITY:</td>
<td>Predetermined</td>
<td>Determined: Strongly Asserted</td>
<td>Determined: Weakly Asserted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>e.g. ξέρο ‘know’</td>
<td>e.g. βέβαιος ‘certain’</td>
<td>e.g. νομίζω ‘think’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4I have introduced assertivity (Hooper 1975) into the Evaluation Modality cline, as a semantic cline commensurable with it for Determined predicates.
The terms in which complementiser distinctions have been traditionally discussed can be readily translated into this framework. Factivity corresponds to *Predetermined* Evaluation Modality (the complement is always valid) and *truth* information modality (the complement is always a fact); true factives are *Cmotive*, while semi-factives are *Cognitive-Physical*. With the semantic factors made explicit, it is possible to describe the distribution of complementisers in terms of this vector space. The following three-dimensional charts plot the distribution of που and of οτι/πως in terms of the matrix predicates they follow; dark squares indicate normal use, while lightly shaded squares indicate marked or atypical use:

As this presentation shows, που is:

- near-obligatory for Emotive Predetermined Truth (true factives)—though as it turns out, less so for subject complements (appraisals, using Ransom’s (1986) terminology) than object complements (reactions), as already noted by Christidis (1981);
- marked for Cognitive-Physical Predetermined Truth (semi-factives);
- marginal for Linguistic Predetermined Truth;
- disallowed for any other evaluation or information modality.

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5 Truth complements are stative, and may be considered facts. Occurrence and Action complements are non-stative, and may be considered events; Action complements are additionally volitional.

6 The classification of CSMG predicates is undertaken at some length in Nicholas (1998 Chapter 4); a similar survey appears in Papadopoulou (1994:142–189).
These trends are borne out by investigation of CSMG texts. As an instance of this, I have analysed (Nicholas 1998 Appendix C.1) the complement-taking predicates in *To Τρίτο Στεφάνι* (Tahtsi 1971 [1963]), a representative CSMG text, inasmuch as it avoids the ruralism of much Greek twentieth-century prose. The extent of που is as predicted: it occurs with 85% of true factives, 3% of semi-factives, and 0% in linguistic predetermined truth and any other modalities.

It is possible to refine the semantic categories: που occurs after 93% of Emotive Predetermined Truth Reactions, but only 69% of Emotive Predetermined Truth Appraisals. Furthermore, Physical (perception) and Cognitive semi-factives behave differently: που occurs 7% of the time for the former (indicating direct rather than indirect perception), but only 2.4% for the latter. Cognitive semi-factives can be subdivided yet further; as noted by linguists from Christidis (1981) on, static knowledge predicates allow που-complements (1.6% in *To Τρίτο Στεφάνι*), while knowledge acquisition (learning) predicates do not (0%).

The following chart plots the relative preponderance of που versus ότι/ποις complements for the various established semantic categories of matrix predicates.

![Chart showing relative preponderance of που versus ότι/ποις complements for various semantic categories](chart.png)

Given this framework, we can now attempt to apply it to Modern Greek dialect data.

3. Dialect Survey

The areas in the Greek-speaking world in which significant deviation from CSMG complementation is to be noted are plotted in Map 1. As can be seen, the map includes the ‘usual suspects’, the outlier dialects of Greek, including Pontic, Italiot, and Tsakonian. But it also includes quite mainstream dialects of Greek: Thracian (including Bithynia and islands of the North-East Aegean), Western Macedonian, and Corfiot.

Deviation from the CSMG norms of που-complementation can be described as the expansion in extent of που-complements along all three semantic axes posited by Ransom.
3.1. Spread in Evaluation Modality

Weak assertive που-complements, which are disallowed in CSMG, are to be found in Thracian, Western Macedonian, Corfiot, Livisiot, and Italiot (1 instance in my corpus). For example:

\[(1a)\] Βρομάει η κούκκος, νοεί ο νομός πως η φωλιά σου
The cuckoo stinks, he thinks that it’s his nest that stinks (HDMS 1065:145; Palladari, Bithynia)

Semi-factive που is found used in broader contexts than is allowed in CSMG. For example, που occurs before cognitive complements not only not presupposed or given, but in fact known to be false (2a); and introducing complements of indirect perception predicates (2b). This spread occurs in the following dialects: Thracian, Western Macedonian, Corfiot, Livisiot, Italiot, and Tsakonian:

\[(1b)\] Αφεν μάς έδειξαν που πρέπει να καταφρονήσουμε τον πατέρα μας τη γλώσσα, είτουν συνέπεια να καταφρονήσουμε και τον πατέρα τον ίδιο που τη μιλεί.
Since they have shown us that we should have contempt for our father’s language, it was only natural that we should also have contempt for our father who speaks it. (Psichari 1987 [1888]:120; Constantinople)

\[(1c)\] Έκαναν χωρόσβιαξαν, κι ιππάμας σούβλις κι έτρεξαν.
They heard that they’d slaughtered pigs, and they took spits and ran (Mouseou-Bouyoukou 1961 §1125; Livisi)
3.2. Spread in Semantic Class

Linguistic \textit{poy}-complements are at best marginal in CSMG (\textit{Σου το είπα \textit{που} θα έρθω}). However they turn up, with varying degrees of frequency in Thracian, Corfiot, Livsiot, Western Macedonian, Italiot (1 instance in my corpus), and possibly also Tsakonian (my only example is a dictionary entry). Note that while Linguistic \textit{που}-complements in CSMG are restricted to given, topicalised contexts, this does not obtain with the dialectal data; as with semi-factives, the \textit{που}-complement may even be false:

\begin{enumerate}
\item \textit{Μη ματασκευάσετε, όπως ματατερώσες βορεί κουνέ, τι \textit{ψέματα λένε \textit{που}} βρισκολάκησε ο γέρο Ντίος.}
\item Don’t you get scared when you pass by again, you fool, because they’re lying saying that old man Dios turned vampire. (HDMS 817:286; Othoni, near Corfu)
\end{enumerate}

The proportion of Linguistic \textit{που}-complements varies greatly even within the single dialect of Thracian. Though my corpus was unsatisfactorily small, it still yielded surprising variability. The proportions I found of linguistic \textit{που}-complements to combined linguistic \textit{που}- and \textit{πος/ότι}-complements were:

- 100% in Kouvoukli (Bithynia) (Deliyannis 1940) [corpus contained 4 Linguistic complements]
- 100% in Saranda Ekklisies (Psaltes 1905) [4 predicates]
- 93% in Psichari (1975 [1901]—written in 1886) [56 predicates]
- 35% in Cavafy (1975) [17 predicates]
- 43% in Lemnos (Kontonatsiou 1989) [28 predicates]
- 12% in Marmara (HDMS 756) [26 predicates]

The proportion of Linguistic \textit{που}-complements is likely to be sensitive to many factors, not least of which is the subject matter under discussion. Nonetheless, this inhomogeneity within a relatively small geographical area suggests that there has been something akin to lexical diffusion (McMahon 1994:50–56) at work underlying the distribution of complementiser-\textit{που}: \textit{που} spread from context to context following linguistic predicates at different rates in various locales within the broader Thracian area. The effects of such diffusion in most paradigms \textit{που} is used in would have been smoothed over in most dialects through analogical levelling (Harris & Campbell 1995:77); this process does not appear to have run to completion in Thracian.

3.3. Spread in Information Modality

Change along the third axis is rather more infrequent in Greek: Occurrence and Action \textit{που}-complements are certain only in Italiot (14 instances in my corpus), with a dubious instance also in my Corfiot corpus:
Doing all sorts of jobs, far from Calimera, I managed to bring together God’s grace. (Palumbo 1971:169; Calimera, Apulia)

In CSMG, of course, this would be expressed not with πως, but with να: κατάφερα να περιμαζώντας τις χάρες του Θεοῦ. (In English likewise the predicate takes an infinitival rather than a that-complement.) For πού to displace να rather than πως as a complementiser is startling, and a development quite different in nature to those considered above.

There is also a syntactic phenomenon in which πού occurs routinely with Italiot Action complements: Morosi (1870:156) reports that in Apulian Italiot, though the usual progressive is steso ce (στε严格执行 VERBFINITE ‘I stand and VERB = I keep VERB-ing’, this becomes steso πού VERB when the action is located in the present. In Calabrian Italiot, the equivalent locution is steko VERBPARTICIPLE (Rohlfs 1950:221—cf. Calabrian steko legonda and Standard Italian sto dicendo); it is quite likely that the Apulian πού-complement is calquing the participle, now obsolete in its supplementary function in Apulia. Although examples of Morosi’s phenomenon are hard to come by, I believe the following is an instance, though mistranslated by its collector Anastasios Karanastasis:

(3b) λέανε, πού στέονε, πού διαλιόνε τα παιδία, έχουν μεά θεσόν-λο ατστέ νεφό
λέγουν (πού) ότι κλαίει τα παιδία, έχουν μεγάλη ανέγκη από νεφό
they said that children are crying, they have great need of water
[Karanastasis]
they said, when children keep crying, they have great need of water
(HDMS 836:171; Corigliano, Apulia)

The results obtained show that the relative ‘impermeability’ of the πού/πως barrier follows the hierarchy EVALUATION MODALITY > SEMANTIC CLASS > INFORMATION MODALITY. The tendency namely of πού to spread at the expense of πως/ότι, and to efface the grammaticalised differentiation between the two poles of the axis, recurs in the most dialects for Evaluation Modality, and the least for Information Modality. This is a result borne out cross-linguistically; the distinction most frequently expressed by a choice of complementiser is that between facts and events, an Information Modality difference—already expressed with remarkable stability across the dialects of Greek by πως/ότι versus να. Conversely, a complementiser differentiation between evaluation modalities is relatively rare cross-linguistically (see the survey in Ransom 1986); so one would expect that the distinction between πού and πως/ότι is cross-dialectally unstable.
3.4. Reduced presence of ποὺ

Up to this point, dialects have been considered in which ποὺ is more widespread than in CSMG. There are also dialects in which the reverse is the case. As a complementiser, ποὺ is wholly absent in Silliot and Mariupolitan. This holds even for the CSMG shibboleth of obligatory use after emotive predicates: the two dialects retain the archaic ὅτι in this function:

(4a) Οὐγνωμηθεὶς σεβονδύ πολὺ, ὅτι ομοίωσα το σπανά.  
The goldsmith is very much pleased that he has gained much money.  
(Dawkins 1916:298; Silli)

(4b) Limbizmen at' perasan n' dunja liq ιπι joja  
Regretting that they had traversed life without children. (Karpozilos 1994 verse 4; Mariupol)

ποעית is also wholly absent as a complementiser in Western Cappadocian and Pharasiot. The seeming exception to this from Silata (4c) may be explained by the fact that Dawkins was only able to obtain texts in that village from school-children, who had thus been exposed to Constantinopolitan (the prestige language variant in Anatolia) and its widespread use of complementiser-ποעית:

(4c) Ας το αίνα μέσα βάρτα το κορίτις, καπ δεν υάκθανεν πόνι το σκότωσαν.  
In the looking-glass she saw the girl, and did not believe that they had killed her. (Dawkins 1916:440; Silata)

The relativiser ποעית itself is marginal in Silli and Cappadocia, which instead use χοτ and το/του respectively. The failure of complementiser-ποעית to take hold in the Anatolian hinterland and the Crimea (where the Mariupolitans originally dwelled) should therefore be explained as an archaism. On the other hand, the relativiser το/του is in prominent use as a complementiser throughout Anatolia; but for a variety of reasons, it is best regarded as a Turcism, and is not a phenomenon related to the diffusion of ποostringstream considered here. In that it calques the Turkish personal participle, however, το/του is being used in exactly the same fashion as I have claimed for στεό pu in Apulian Italiot.

ποostringstream is also vestigial as a complementiser in Pontic: whereas there are 80 ποostringstream-complements in the 118,000 word CSMG corpus of Tahtsis (1971 [1963]), my 200,000 word corpus of Pontic yielded just 16 ποostringstream-complements. It is possible that in the case of Pontic, the ποostringstream-complements represent merely a contingent reanalysis of το, which like ποostringstream is both a relativiser and a complementiser, but is much more widely used (193 instances in my corpus as a complementiser.) Thus, even though 9 of the 16 instances of complementiser-ποostringstream in my corpus are Emotive Predetermined Truth Reactions—a proportion reminiscent of CSMG—το occurs in the same function 27 times, and even ποostringstream occurs 20 times. Thus ποostringstream is not a salient member of the Pontic complementiser paradigm, and its development there is probably unrelated to that in European Greek.
3.5. Diachronic Explanation

As can be seen on Map 1, the regions in which the ‘deviant’ behaviour of complementiser-
που obtains are geographically scattered. Though there is no space to expound this here, I
have established (Nicholas 1998 Chapter 6) that almost all the dialects involved are also
diachronically independent from each other. In particular, there is no reason to accept the
earlier belief by linguists like Hatzidakis that Livisi was a Northern Greek (i.e. Macedonian
or Thracian) colony (see discussion in Andriotis 1961). And although data from Western
Thrake is scant, there is no reason to believe that Thracian and Western Macedonian are part
of a contiguous zone in their handling of που-complements.

The only region where one can speak of diachronic relations is Anatolia; Dawkins
(1937:21–23) speculated that Mariopolitan is closest diachronically to Silliott, constituting
the remnants of Old Western Anatolian Greek. This would explain their conservative reten-
tion of ἀρτι, reduced to the verbal clitic δι in Pharasa and absent in Western Cappadocian
and Pontic. The retention of ἀρτι with emotives makes these the most archaic dialects with
regard to που in the Greek-speaking world; the absence of complementiser-πος in Silli and
Cappadocia (though not Mariopolitan, judging from the texts in Ashla 1999) confirms this
conservatism. The fate of the other two Anatolian dialects reflects their extensive Turkicis-
tion: as a calque of the Turkish personal participle, το/του/το has effaced the older com-
plementation strategies of Cappadocian, and essentially preempted the spread of πος into
Pontic.

There is only one European Greek dialect in which external influence might be invoked to
account for the prominence of που as a complementiser: the use of που in Western
Macedonian Greek is strongly reminiscent of Macedonian Slavonic deka ‘where; relativiser;
non-factive realis complementiser’ (Koneski 1961–66 s.v. deka); the factive complementiser
in that language is instead ἄτο ‘what’). Furthermore, the part of Western Macedonia in
which I have been able to identify significant discrepancies in the use of complementiser-
πος is the area of Greek/Slavonic bilingualism; in Chalcidica, where Slavonic has not been
spoken in modern times, no appreciable deviation from CSMG was noted.

I have not been able to establish that the same has occurred with Bulgarian and Thracian
Greek. While non-standard Bulgarian extends the locative-derived relativiser дето (cognate
to deka) to a factive complementiser (Rudin 1985:45), I have seen no evidence that
Bulgarian makes of дето a non-factive complementiser, particularly in the southern dialects
adjoining Thracian Greek.7 The developments in Thracian, it seems, are independent of
Western Macedonian, and should rather be attributed to common linguistic drift. Likewise,
although there is a suggestive parallel between Calabrian Italiot steko legonda and Standard
Italian sto dicendo, the Apulian decision to calque this with a pu-clause, and to extend pu
to Occurrence and Action contexts, is unmotivated by any traits of Italian or Salentino—

7The spread in complementiser-πος includes Sozopolis in coastal Eastern Rumelia, though
Philipopolis (Plovdiv), north of modern Western Thrace, seems to have had CSMG com-
plementation.
though Apulian Italiot strongly favours the borrowed Southern Italian complementiser *ca*, and thus would be amenable to such influence.

So with the apparent exception of Western Macedonian, the breakdown in the distinction between *pov* and *pov* in Greek dialect has neither a single origin in time, nor in place: it represents a common development on the part of several dialects, essentially moving along the same lines (with the single, though spectacular exception of Italiot), yet proceeding to different extents from dialect to dialect and from region to region.

4. Extensions

The expansion of *pov* from a factive into a non-factive domain is a cross-linguistically commonplace instance of loss of markedness. One development it is strongly reminiscent of is that of Biblical Hebrew *asher* (Givón 1991), which seems to have been originally a locative, and which developed from a relativiser into a generic complementiser. Two of the pathways it followed in doing so were factive, and have their parallels in Greek: causative > emotive complementiser, and appositive > cognitive complementiser. The third does not: *asher* was also a purposive, allowing it to become an irrealis complementiser just as happened with Greek *iva* > *va*.

The purposive behaviour of *asher* immediately casts doubt on the metaphoricist account promulgated by Christidis and Papadopoulou for the distribution of *pov*. A look at the Greek dialectal situation only strengthens that doubt. Pontic *vto*, for example, has an overall distribution in its various functions rather similar to CSMG *pov*; yet it is etymologically distant from any notion of stationarity. I believe it is most useful to account for the factive distribution of Pontic *vto* and CSMG *pov*, not in terms of their ultimate etymologies, but in the fact that their spread in the language radiated out from the function of relativiser—itself inherently factive. And their factivity was perpetuated into novel functions by virtue of the paradigmatic oppositions they entered into; this accounts for its subsequent trajectory much more concretely than invoking metaphor, an approach which has no synchronic corresponding mechanism to actuate it, once etymologies have been forgotten.

The movement away from factive *pov* indicates that its etymology was indeed forgotten, and the persistence of factivity in *pov* was neither preordained nor guaranteed. As I have found in my doctoral research, this is part of a general pattern of fractiousness in Eastern Greek dialects—Contossopoulos’ (1983–84) *Grèce du eîvta*, in which the factivity constraints on the distribution of *pov* are frequently violated, even if in small ways. By contrast, Western [= Mainland] Greek (‘Grèce du ri), which includes CSMG, tends to abide by the factivity constraints very closely.

Tomić (1992) has speculated that the Macedonian Slavonic connective paradigm is simpler and more compositional than its Serbo-Croatian counterpart because Macedonian Slavonic, spoken in an area of high bilingualism, was under pressure to remodel its paradigms into a more analytical, perspicuous system. It is known that Eastern Greek has greater linguistic heterogeneity than Western Greek, more lexical and grammatical archaisms, and a more diver-
sified vocabulary (Contossopoulos 1982–83). Dawkins (1940:7–13) has attempted to explain this division in Greek dialect by the islands being where “the Greek blood is most purely kept [...] very much less so on the mainland where there have been successive incursions of Slav, Albanian and Roumanian tribes.” (Dawkins 1940:7) While few nowadays would accept that ‘racial purity’ determines linguistic behaviour, long-time coexistence with heterogloss populations is a different story. Dawkins’ comparison of Western Greek to the Hellenistic koine is thus highly appropriate: bilingualism on the Greek mainland could well have acted as an impetus to paradigmatic simplifications in the variants of Greek spoken there—a pressure avoided by the more insular populations of Eastern Greek (the Aegean islands, and the Greek linguistic islands in Anatolia).

The examples Dawkins discusses are from Greek morphology; yet there is no reason to think the same did not take place with Greek dialectal syntax. This means that far from being the endpoint of a development governed by universals of grammaticalisation, the distribution of πού in CSMG, with its consistent adherence to factivity, is in fact the oddity among Greek dialects. Its simplicity results from contact-induced simplification of the πού-paradigm; left to its own devices, a more ‘natural’ endpoint for πού is manifested in the chaotic heterogeneity of Eastern Greek. Though it should be obvious, it still bears saying: the modes of diachronic explanation of Modern Greek need to take the vicissitudes of Greek history into account.

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