KATEŘINA BOČKOVÁ LOUDOVÁ
Masaryk University
katerina.bockova@phil.muni.cz
ORCID: 0000-0002-3555-9483

GREEK AS AN SAE LANGUAGE: DEVELOPING ON THE MICRO-ORIENTATION PERSPECTIVE*

Keywords: Standard Average European, Greek, areal linguistics, typology, morpho-syntactic features

Abstract

This paper considers the Greek language as a member of the Standard Average European (SAE) linguistic area as defined by Haspelmath (1998, 2001). After a brief presentation of the model, there follows a detailed analysis from this perspective of four selected features in Greek: relative clauses with relative pronouns, the "have"-perfect with a passive participle, participial passives, and negation. The approach applied focuses on specifics that concern standard and non-standard varieties, not only in the language system itself but also in its diachronic development. The results are then measured using Seiler's (2019) classification of SAE features, with an eye to enriching the classification both empirically and theoretically.

1. Introduction

Areal linguistics investigates the similarities among languages resulting from their common historical development on shared or adjacent territories and through the multifarious contacts between their speakers. Although areal linguistics is deeply rooted in the linguistics of the first half of the 20th century or even earlier, it is only

since the 1950s that a considerable number of areal linguistic studies have appeared. Traditionally, the research has focused on smaller areas, such as the Balkan, Central European, or Circum-Baltic linguistic unions, and the specific linguistic features characteristic of the languages belonging to them. An entirely new research perspective emerged thanks to our better understanding in recent decades of non-European languages around the world. It has been recognized that, in comparison to the majority of non-European languages, the languages of Europe exhibit many features, particularly in the realm of morpho-syntax, which tend to be distributed areally. Consequently, it has been proposed to treat most European languages as a kind of linguistic unit, a unit now commonly known – following an early expression used by Whorf (1941)[1] – as *Standard Average European* or SAE. There are several, slightly different approaches to this concept (cf. Stolz 2006 for an overview), but the centre vs periphery approach eventually emerged as the most influential, hierarchizing the European languages according to the number of linguistic features present in them that conform to the SAE ideal. The degree to which these features are present in a European language is then decisive to its belonging to and position within the SAE.

In the 1990s, extensive research was conducted from this perspective within the EUROTYP project, which focused on the areal relations between European languages and their typological profiles. In addition to eight volumes addressing individual features that were presumed to represent "Europeanisms" (Auwera 1998; Feuillet 1998; Siewierska 1998; Hulst 1999; Riemsdijk 1999; Dahl 2000; Plank 2003; Bernini and Schwartz 2006), the overall results were presented and commented upon by Martin Haspelmath in two seminal papers (Haspelmath 1998, 2001). Summarizing the main results of the EUROTYP project, Haspelmath proposed a general picture of the SAE linguistic area. In Haspelmath (1998), a broader set of salient grammatical features was chosen, which were considered to be characteristic of the core European languages and which, according to Haspelmath, define the SAE Sprachbund: a total of 11 features were described that only partially intersect with the set of nine SAE features finally used in Haspelmath (2001),[2] as shown in the list below:

Haspelmath (1998)

1. anticausative prominence
2. nominative experiencers
3. A-and-B conjunction
4. verb fronting in polar questions

---

[1]   Whorf pointed out several strong differences between the North American Hopi language and European languages. These he collectively named "Standard Average European" because of their similarities. The article was published in the year of Whorf's death and gained importance primarily within the theory of linguistic relativity.

[2]   Haspelmath (2001) discusses a total of 26 structural SAE features, from which he finally chose the nine most prominent and best documented.

Haspelmath (1998, 2001)

5. definite and indefinite articles
6. relative clauses with relative pronouns
7. the "have"-perfect with a passive participle
8. participial passives
9. dative external possessors
10. negative pronouns and a lack of verbal negation
11. relative-based equative constructions

Haspelmath (2001)

12. subject person affixes as strict agreement markers
13. intensifier-reflexive differentiation

When the presence of these features in European languages is combined, their areal distribution across Europe can be summarized in cluster maps (cf. Figures 1 and 2). In the 2001 model, the nucleus of SAE comprises German and French, with all nine features present. It is closely surrounded by a core group of Romance languages (Spanish, Portuguese, Italian, Sardinian), together with Albanian and Dutch (eight features). Modern Greek (MG), with Romanian on the southern "Balkan wing" and English on the "Germanic wing", is in the outer core with seven features. Then, there is the "Nordic group" (Icelandic, Norwegian, Swedish) and Czech (six features) and finally the "Eastern group" (South and East Slavic, Polish, Baltic, and Hungarian) with five features.[3] Due to the larger number of included features, the assumed nucleus of the 1998 SAE model was broader, encompassing German, French, Dutch, and the northern Italian dialects. The core included MG along with the other Romance, Germanic, Balkan, as well as West and South Slavic languages.[4] Thus, MG was closer to the SAE core in the earlier model, while slightly more distant from it in the later version. In the final model, MG exhibits features (5), (6), (7), (8), (9), (11) and (13) from the aforementioned list.

There are three essential characteristics of Haspelmath's work and the EUROTYP project more generally: 1) studying only contemporary varieties of European languages through a synchronic approach, 2) investigating only standard varieties of these languages, and 3) applying the criterion of the mere presence or absence of the feature under investigation in a given language. However, recent studies in the areal typology of Europe (Murelli 2011; Murelli and Kortmann 2011; Seiler 2019;

---

[3] Haspelmath (2001: 1505) established that five Europeanisms as a minimum were necessary to include a language in the SAE linguistic area, with the remaining languages exhibiting only one or two features.

[4] MG lacked only one of the 11 features defined in the 1998 model, namely feature (10). Of the remaining features included in this model that were absent from the 2001 model, features (1), i.e. a high percentage of anticausative verb pairs, and (2), i.e. expressing experiencer arguments by nominative subject, were prominent in MG when compared to the other SAE languages. Cf. Haspelmath (1993) and Bossong (1998) for detailed studies of these phenomena across European languages.
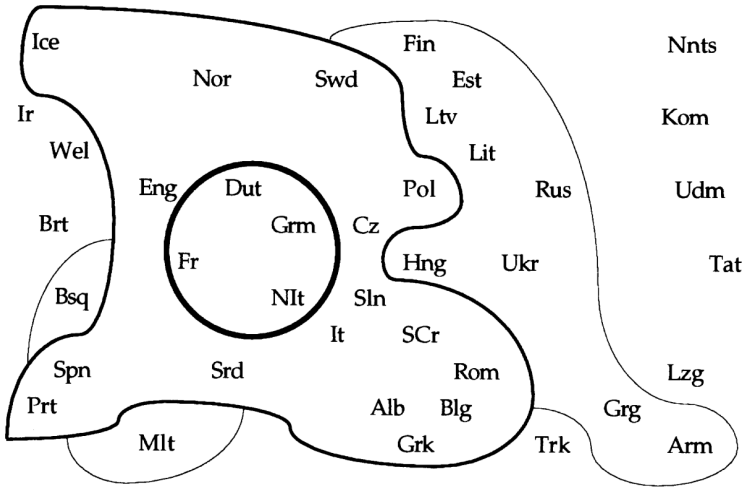
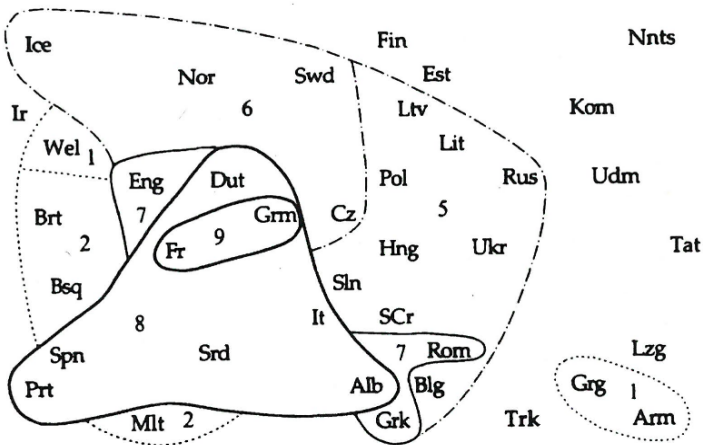Figure 1: Haspelmath (1998: 273)

Figure 2: Haspelmath (2001: 1505)

Fagard et al. 2020) have sought to extend the scope of the research into SAE by addressing the questions of diachrony, non-standard varieties, as well as the possible constraints on a feature within the language system and its use. These recent advances are based on the work of Auwera (2011), who has called this approach a "micro-orientation perspective". Following this trend, our aim in this paper is to show that by looking at SAE from this expanded viewpoint, we can achieve more accurate results by analyzing diachronic and stratification factors, and thus look at the situation within SAE from a more comprehensive perspective. Our objective is to show the need for a more detailed analysis using Greek as an example. We will attempt to describe and assess four selected SAE features in Greek, which we consider the most illustrative in this respect. Three of them (relative clauses with relative pronouns, the "have"-perfect with a passive participle, and participial passives) have been acknowledged by Haspelmath (1998, 2001) as being present in Greek, whereas the remaining feature (lack of verbal negation) was claimed to be absent.

2. The specifics of the selected SAE features in Greek

2.1. Relative clauses

Postnominal relative clauses formed by a relative pronoun that is inflected and syntactically integrated into a subordinate clause, a strategy that is quite exceptional outside Europe, are considered to be one of the unique European areal features. According to Haspelmath (2001: 1494), in this "European" type of relative clauses, the relative pronoun functions as a resumptive relative and, with a few exceptions,[5] is derived from the interrogative pronoun in most European languages. In MG, this SAE feature is supposedly represented by the relative pronoun *o οποίος* (m.), *η οποία* (fem.), *το οποίο* (n.) 'who, which, that', a declinable relativizer which, introducing a relative clause, agrees in gender and number with the noun phrase it modifies, but it must be in the case appropriate to its function within the relative clause itself (Holton et al. 2012: 533). In what follows, we will attempt to verify whether this pronoun, when viewed from a micro-orientation perspective, does indeed fit Haspelmath's definition of this European areal feature.

First, the assumption that *o οποίος* was derived directly from an interrogative pronoun as in other European languages is not fulfilled in Greek. Although the question of its origin is extremely complex and complicated, recent research has tended to conclude that the second part (*οποίος*) is derived from the ancient indefinite relative pronoun *όποῖος* 'of such a sort, as', which gradually acquired a definite relative function ('who, which'),[6] and not from the interrogative pronoun *ποῖος*.

---

[5] There are exceptions with a special relative pronoun (Finnish) or a relative pronoun based on a demonstrative (German), which, according to Haspelmath, do not affect the overall picture of the European type of the relative clause.

[6] In Ancient Greek, *όποῖος* was syntactically used not only as a relativizer to introduce relative clauses but also to introduce indirect interrogative clauses (*όποῖος* < PIE *$\i$-o- + *kwo- 'who?' + with suffixal -*οῖος*; Beekes 2016: s.v., Nicholas 1998: 166). In both functions, it is attested in the

The first part *ó* probably arose from the erroneous division of *ὁποῖος* into *ὁ ποῖος* and a subsequent hypercorrection into *ὁ ὁποῖος* (cf. e.g. Horrocks 2010: 294–295). The segmentation into an "article" and a second segment may have been due to the considerable influence of the Romance relatives *il quale* (It.)/*lequel* (Fr.) in territories with close contacts between Greek and the Romance languages. The expression *ὁ ὁποῖος* is first attested in the 13th century, especially in southern Italy, and from the 14th century onwards with increasing frequency in territories under Frankish or Venetian rule (Cyprus, Rhodes, Crete). Nevertheless, the theory of a pure calque induced by the Romance languages (i.e. the definite article + the interrogative pronoun *ποῖος*) no longer seems to be accepted in light of new data (see Holton et al. 2019: 1105–1109 with a further bibliography). Even in Romance languages, moreover, the question of the origin of relative expressions is not completely clarified, as Giacalone Ramat (2005: 124–125) has shown in the case of Italian in her discussion of the grammaticalization process leading to the constituency of a new relative, namely *il quale*. In addition to the traditional scenario in which the possible source for this relative construction is the interrogative *qualis*, she also considered the possibility of its origin from the correlative/comparative meaning of *qualis* (*talis – qualis*). This consideration with regard to Italian is interesting in the overall context of how the origin of this SAE feature is generally defined across European languages and corroborates the need to develop more comprehensive, diachronically oriented descriptions of the SAE relatives' characteristics.[7]

Second, in the standard variety of Modern Greek (Standard Modern Greek, SMG), *o οποίος* competes with an indeclinable relative complementizer *που* which is the major relativizer in Greek.[8] The parallel existence of the two relative expressions is not unique in European languages (Eng. *which* vs *that*, Cz. *jenž* vs *co*, etc. Cf. also Seiler 2019: 546 for the situation in German), but the indeclinable particle relatives cannot be considered a specifically European feature, as they are attested widely elsewhere in the world. As far as the competition between *που* and *o οποίος* in Greek is concerned, these expressions are, in many cases, interchangeable. Nevertheless, certain functional and frequency limitations caused by pragmatic or structural factors may mean one is preferred over the other (Holton et al. 2012: 532). The relative pronoun

---

language of the non-literary papyri from the 3rd century BC to the 6th/7th century AD, and in these instances rarely used as a mark of official or archaic style, especially in legal documents (Kriki 2013: 387). As an archaic survival, it rarely introduces indirect interrogative clauses in Medieval Greek vernacular texts, while as an indefinite relative with the meaning 'whoever, whichever, whatever', it is common both in literary and non-literary Medieval Greek texts (Holton et al. 2019: 1009, 1139).

[7]   We observe a somewhat similar situation in Czech as Giger (2004: 63) points out: there is no derivation from the interrogative pronoun for the high-style and archaic relative pronoun *jenž* 'which'. In contrast, this holds true for the colloquial, uninflected relative particles *co* 'what' and the substandard *jak* 'how'; however, these particles do not fulfil the SAE-type characteristic through their uninflectedness, as with colloquial expressions in other European languages including MG.

[8]   Interestingly, *ὁποῖος* and *που* share a common etymological origin, and their Ancient Greek antecedents belonged to the same pronominal stem *ὁπο- (*που* < *ὅπου* < PIE *i̯-o- + *kwo- 'who?'; Nicholas 1998: 165–167).

ο οποίος is more frequently used in formal discourse, especially in written texts, than the relative complementizer *που*. *Ο οποίος* is also preferably chosen instead of *που* with oblique/prepositional cases, even in less formal discourse, to avoid the ambiguity caused by the uninflectedness of *που*. Although there are as yet no quantitative studies on the frequency of *που/ο οποίος*, it is implicitly assumed that *ο οποίος* is generally less frequent in SMG than *που*, partly due to its "learned" character.[9]

In dialects of Modern Greek *ο οποίος* is almost entirely absent, and if present, it is thought to have been incorporated into the language of dialect speakers during the 19th century, resulting in the hypercorrect doublet *ο οποίος που* (Nicholas 1998: 345 with examples and further bibliography). In Greek, Haspelmath's definition of this Europeanism would be much better matched by the pronouns *τίς* and *ποίος*, originally interrogative pronouns, which in the Hellenistic and early Byzantine periods had already expanded via indirect questions into non-restrictive and later restrictive relative clauses (Holton et al. 2019: 1097–1098). These relative pronouns, partly or almost fully grammaticalized as uninflected relativizers, are still preserved in certain peripheral MG dialects that retain many archaic features, such as in Cappadocian, Pontic, and the dialects of Southern Italy (Liosis and Kriki 2013; Kriki 2013: 164).

In this example, we see that the Europeanism in question does not hold a prominent position in the standard or colloquial varieties of contemporary Greek, where it competes with *που*, nor does it appear in dialectal varieties. On the contrary, only in dialects do we find any relatives (*τίς*, *ποίος*) through which we can diachronically trace expressions "more suitable" to Haspelmath's definition, although today they have mostly lost the parameter of inflection. A more precise definition of this SAE feature thus proves highly desirable – either a broader one (e.g. not insisting that the relatives originate from an interrogative pronoun) or, conversely, a narrower one, but one that would change the distribution of this SAE isogloss.

2.2. Constructions with passive participles

Two commonly acknowledged features of the SAE languages are the "have"-perfect, formed by the auxiliary verb "have" with a passive participle, and participial passives, formed with a passive participle and an intransitive copula-like verb ("be", "become", etc.). Again, these two features are rare in languages outside Europe (Haspelmath 2001: 1495–1497). In MG, we find such constructions with the verbs *έχω* 'I have' (*έχω το γράμμα γραμμένο*, lit. 'I have the letter written') and *είμαι/γίνομαι* 'I am/become' + perfect passive participle (*είμαι δεμένος*, lit. 'I am tied/I have been tied').

With regard to the former feature, the "have"-perfect, Haspelmath (2001: 1495) was aware of its different semantic functions in SAE languages because the perfects are at different stages within the grammaticalization process: while in English, for example, this perfect has a present-anterior meaning (*I have eaten an apple.*), in German

---

[9] Related to this is the question of the putative disappearance of *ο οποίος* from the language after the Middle Ages and its reintroduction into SMG via Katharevousa, which has been convincingly challenged by Manolessou (2004).

it can also be used as a normal perfective past (Germ. *Ich habe einen Apfel gegessen.* = Eng. *I ate an apple/I have eaten an apple.*). In MG, it is a strictly resultative construction restricted to a very limited subset of verbs which require a direct object in the accusative (cf. Moser 1988: 122–123, 131–145, 239ff for a historical overview and thorough analysis of additional restrictions). Even if the "have"-perfect with a passive participle in an exclusively resultative function[10] was already documented in Archaic, Classical (Bentein 2016: 110, 147–151), but mainly in Early Post-Classical Greek from *circa* the 3rd century BC onwards (Bentein 2013: 162),[11] it has undergone only a partial process of grammaticalization. The incompleteness of the grammaticalization process of the participle prevented it from being used with every verb and from losing its morphosyntactic restrictions in the process (Moser 2003: 247–249). Semantically, it is also not a "true" perfect, that is referring to an action or event that occurred in the past, but is related to or continues into the present; instead it more describes a state in the present (cf. above *ἔχω το γράμμα γραμμένο* 'I have the letter written' rather than 'I have written the letter'). Consequently, this construction plays only a marginal role in the verbal system of SMG, being significantly constrained in its usage to certain classes of verbs[12] and mostly replaced by the much more common periphrastic perfect construction in SMG, i.e. "have" + fossilized infinitive[13] (*ἔχω γράψει* 'I have written'). It follows from the above that the "have"-perfect with a passive participle in SMG does meet the definition of an SAE feature according to Haspelmath's conception. However, it is a feature with significant frequency and functional limitations, occurring in specific semantic contexts and restricted to a certain group of verbs. This raises the question to what extent the frequency or functional restrictions of an SAE feature in a language should influence its ranking or classification within the SAE *Sprachbund*.

  The passive counterpart of the *ἔχω* 'I have' + perfect passive participle construction, i.e. the intransitive copula-like verb *εἶμαι/γίνομαι* 'I am/become' + perfect passive participle,[14] presents a different picture. This construction is much more productive in SMG than the former, being formed by a very large number of verbs. In addition to three-place and two-place predicates, this construction is also possible with a subclass of one-place predicates, the so-called unaccusative (ergative) predicates (Agouraki 2006: 43). These are semantically characterized by the fact that

---

[10]   Bentein (2016: 118) adopts Carey's classification, using her term "resultant state object construction" for the "have"-perfect with the medio-passive perfect participle.

[11]   It gained common usage in Post-Classical Greek, but in Medieval Greek, there is evidence of a significant decline in its frequency before the 15th century. Cf. Holton et al. (2019: 1834) for a discussion of the influence of Romance languages on this construction's use and frequency.

[12]   Moser (1988: 131–145) establishes the criteria for *ἔχω* + perfect passive participle forms based on Fillmore's case grammar. The construction is allowed for verbs that involve a locative case (LOC) which identifies the location/spatial orientation of the state or action denoted by the verb, or, possession (whether it is overtly present in the utterance or not).

[13]   By "fossilized infinitive", we refer to the active (or passive) descendant of an otherwise extinct infinitive, the indeclinable verb form in perfective aspect.

[14]   In this passive, the original direct object becomes the subject while the original subject may be omitted or expressed as an adverbial agent phrase. Such constructions occur in almost all European languages except Basque, Welsh, Finnish, and Estonian (Haspelmath 2001: 1496).

their subject is not actively responsible for the action of the verb, it neither undertakes any action (is not an agent) nor is involved in it (e.g., *πέφτω* 'I fall': *γέρικα δέντρα είναι πεσμένα στο έδαφος* 'old trees are fallen/lying on the ground'; *ανθίζω* 'I bloom': *τα λουλούδια είναι ανθισμένα* 'the flowers are in bloom'). While unaccusative verbs can also possibly form a "have"-perfect with a passive participle (cf. *έχουμε ανθισμένα λουλούδια όλο τον χρόνο* 'we have flowers blooming all year round'; *έχουμε πεσμένα δέντρα* 'we have fallen trees'), the second subclass of one-place predicates, unergative verbs, where the subject is interpreted as an active agent or an agent actively responsible for the action expressed by the verb, cannot form the "have"/"be"-constructions with a perfect passive participle (**έχω τηλεφωνημένο* / **είμαι τηλεφωνημένος* 'I have phoned/*I am phoned'). Thus, in the case of intransitive verbs, the choice of either *έχω* 'have' or *είμαι* 'be' depends on unaccusativity or unergativity (cf. Agouraki 2006 with further examples).

As far as the semantic function is concerned, this construction indicates a state which is purely stative, not resulting from the previous action, and therefore cannot be classified as a genuine perfect. A resultative interpretation is also possible, but only if based on the lexical meaning of the verb itself.[15] Thus, if these criteria are met, this construction may be equivalent to the much more common, "competing" resultative SMG perfect *έχω* 'I have' + fossilized infinitive (*το γράμμα έχει γραφτεί* 'the letter has been written') in expressing the resultative meaning.

If we turn our attention from the standard variety of MG to its dialects, a completely different picture of these Europeanisms emerges. There is a predominance of "have"/"be" constructions with passive participles at the expense of the perfect constructions common in SMG (*έχω γράψει* 'I have written', *έχω γραφτεί*, lit. 'I have been written'). If these SMG perfects exist in a dialect, it is due to a secondary influence from SMG (Ralli et al. 2007: 365), where the perfect *έχω* + fossilized infinitive appears very late, that is not before the end of the 17th century. Even then, it was very rare, and therefore it seems logical that the Greek dialects did not adopt it.[16]

As convincingly attested by the Medieval Greek sources (cf. Holton et al. 2019: 1831–1833), after the disappearance of the monolectic perfect in late antiquity, the aorist indicative took over the entire category of perfect to express the resultative meaning, being simultaneously "accompanied" by a stative passive present represented by the "have"/"be" constructions with passive participles. This diachronic picture of European-type constructions with "have"/"be" plus passive participles in Greek suggests that they have existed consistently throughout the history of Greek, probably in all its territories, undergoing a process of grammaticalization at different stages (Ralli et al. 2007: 363ff). As with the relativizers discussed in section 2.1., the

---

[15]   Moser (1988: 234, 283) points out that this periphrastic construction is already attested in Homeric Greek, even there denoting a state. It continues to appear in all later phases of Greek, sometimes corresponding to a present and sometimes to a perfect (depending on the lexical meaning of the verb). Also cf. Bentein (2016: 125–147) for further discussion and references.

[16]   Cf. Agouraki (2006) for the case of Cypriot Greek which lacks the SMG perfect "have" + fossilized infinitive and uses either the "have"/"be" constructions with passive participles or the aorist to express resultative meaning.

two assumed SAE features are present more, or even exclusively, in the non-standard varieties of Greek than in the standard variety.

2.3. Negation

Another feature to note in the diachronic development of the SAE features is the negation of the type verb + negative indefinite (V-NI), that is, the construction in which the negation is expressed by a NI pronoun only. This type of negation is very rare across world languages. Therefore, it was considered by Haspelmath (2001: 1498) to be specific to the European area, where it is only present in Standard Modern English (*nobody*[NI] *entered*[V]) and German (*niemand*[NI] *kam*[V] 'nobody came'). The second type of negation distinguished across European languages is that in which a verbal negation (NV) and NI co-occur (NV-NI); such languages are referred to as *negative-concord languages*. These are further divided into *strict* and *non-strict negative concord languages*. The difference between them lies in the type of sentence constructions in which the negative concord occurs. In non-strict negative concord languages, the position of the NI relative to the predicate is important: if it precedes the predicate verb, the verb must not be negated, and negative concord does not occur (It. **nessuno**[NI] *viene*[V] 'nobody comes'). If the NI occurs after the verb, the predicate verb must also be negated, and negative concord occurs (It. **non ho visto**[V] **nessuno**[NI] 'I didn't see anybody') (see Giannakidou 2000 with examples and further bibliography). Haspelmath (2001: 1498) classifies European non-strict negative concord languages with (N)V-NI negation as a subtype of the V-NI languages in order to include them among the SAE-type core languages possessing this specific SAE feature. This is, for example, the case with modern Romance languages, which have acquired V-NI or (N)V-NI negation with varying uses in written and colloquial varieties (cf. French *ne*), while in Latin, the strict negative concord was formerly present (*nemo*[NI] *venit*[V] 'nobody comes'; cf. Irslinger 2013: 67–71).[17] Nevertheless, in most modern European languages, negation is formed by means of *strict negative concord*, i.e. the negative concord always occurs regardless of the position of the NI to the predicate (NV-NI). This is the case with Slavic, Finno-Ugric, and Balkan languages including MG (Cz. *nikdo*[NI] *ne-jde*[NV], Gk. *κανένας*[NI] [*δεν έρχεται*][NV] 'nobody comes'), but this type of negation is not considered to be a specific SAE feature due to its common occurrence in other world languages. Based on these criteria, then, MG does not possess this SAE feature.

However, this has not always been the case. Classical Greek was a non-strict negative concord language since the co-occurrence of an NV and an NI pronoun depended on their position relative to the verb (Willmott 2013: 300; Muchnová 2016: 198; Gianollo 2021). Similarly to modern languages, *n-words* in Classical Greek required a negator if they were in a postverbal position (Aesch. *Agam.* 632 [*οὐκ*

---

[17]   According to Haspelmath (2001: 1498), Albanian is also a non-strict negative concord language. However, this statement has been disproved by Scherpenberg (2012: 62–63), arguing that Albanian obligatorily combines NI with the verbal negation regardless of the position of the NI, and thus belongs among the strict negative concord languages, similarly to the Slavic languages.

οἶδεν]^{NV} οὐδείς^{NI} 'no one knows'), whereas if they were in a preverbal position, its use was not permitted (Aesch. *Prom. Desm.* 234 τοῖσιν οὐδεὶς^{NI} ἀντέβαινε^{V} πλὴν ἐμοῦ 'against this none dared make a stand except me'). Greek in this period was thus a non-strict negative concord language ((N)V-NI) and was, therefore, one of the core SAE languages because of the possible V-NI negation.[18]

The evolution of Greek from a non-strict to a strict negative concord language is still a matter of debate, with one possible explanation being the change in word order in Late Ancient Greek, which allowed for two schemes of potentially neutral word order, SVO and VSO (Horrocks 2010: 108–109, Holton et al. 2019: 2022–2023). Emphasis could be achieved either through stress alone or by moving the originally neutral constituent into a focalizing position (along with the emphatic/contrastive stress). This became the left periphery of the clause, i.e. the preverbal position. This is also where in Medieval Greek newly developed emphatic *n-words* (τις/τινάς, κανείς) began to be placed as a negative focus (Horrocks 2014), yet with the verb negator being still present.[19] Thus, Greek became a strict negative concord language and, in its modern form, diverged from the SAE core languages. However, the language is not unique in this development: strict negative concord only gradually spread and became established in other SAE languages as well, including not only in the peripheral Russian but also in the more centrally located Czech (Giger 2004: 62).

3. The prospects of SAE: Seiler's "realistic areal typology"

Our study has demonstrated that individual linguistic properties of Greek, previously considered in synchronic approaches as clear instances of SAE features, or, conversely, as not representing SAE features, exhibit variable behaviour if reconsidered via the micro-orientation approach. It is now tempting to incorporate our observations into Seiler's (2019) classification of SAE features, which considers both diachronic (examining the degree of feature representation throughout language development) and stratification (investigating the similarities and differences in feature representation between standard and non-standard varieties) dimensions. In his "realistic areal typology" ("realistische Arealtypologie") concept, which has been applied to historical (Old High German), modern standard (Modern Standard German), and non-standard/dialectal (Low Alemannic) varieties of German,

---

[18] The concept of negative concord has been successfully applied to Classical Greek in many recent studies, which predominantly consider Classical Greek as a non-strict negative concord language. The question of the combination of the NV and NI pronouns in Classical Greek is, however, more complex: there is evidence of postverbal use of the NI (οὐδείς) without the preverbal negator οὐ, but these are very rare and mostly limited to the pragmatically non-neutral word order (cf. Horrocks 2014: 61). A few examples of a (non-standard) variant with the preverbal order of NI + NV are also attested, with a possible affirmative meaning (Xen. *Symp.* 1.9.4. οὐδεὶς^{NI} [οὐκ ἔπασχέ]^{NV} τι 'everyone felt something'). See a discussion of this sequence in Denizot (2012) and Muchnová (2016: 190–196).

[19] Cf. also Willmott (2013: 332–334) for a discussion about a possible semantic explanation for the phenomenon.

Table 1: The dynamics of SAE features according to Seiler's (2019) classification. Legend: + = feature present/expanding; − = feature absent/recessive; −/(+) = feature absent/recessive or present, but in limited frequency/function or in parallel/competition with another expression

		Historical phases of the language	Modern standard variety	Non-standard variety (dialect)
Expanding features	indifferently	+	+	+
	from-above	−/(+)	+	−/(+)
	from-below	−/(+)	−/(+)	+
Recessive features	indifferently	+	−	−
	from-above	−/(+)	−/(+)	+
	from-below	−/(+)	+	−/(+)

Seiler (2019: 548–549) distinguished between expanding and recessive SAE features ("expandierende/rezessive SAE-Merkmale") in terms of their diachronic dynamics. According to Seiler, the expanding SAE features only appeared after the Old High German period or at best became further established then. This implies that Seiler's classification admits the existence of certain SAE features in the language even before Old High German. For the recessive features, again, a decline from the Old High German period can be observed (Seiler 2019: 548).

Within each of the two groups of recessive and expanding features, Seiler further discerned three subclasses (Seiler 2019: 548–549; cf. Table 1 below for a schematic overview):

A. expanding features
    a) *indifferently expanding features*: they only spread in the observable history of the language, expanding equally in standard and non-standard varieties;
    b) *from-above expanding features*: they only emerged in the modern standard variety but do not occur (or are less prominent) in the historical phases of the language (Old High German) and in non-standard varieties (Low Alemannic);
    c) *from-below expanding features*: they emerged in the non-standard variety (Low Alemannic) but are absent or restricted in Old- and also Modern High German, i.e. the modern standard variety because the conservatism of its codification prevents them from expanding into it.

B. recessive features
    a) *indifferently recessive features*: declining equally in standard and non-standard varieties;
    b) *from-above recessive features*: they recede only from the standard while remaining in dialects; and
    c) *from-below recessive features*: they recede only from dialects while remaining in the standard.

The "indifferent"-Europeanisms (A.a, B.a) are supposed to be the oldest of the three subclasses, perhaps going back to language contact after the Migration Period (as proposed by Haspelmath 2001: 1506–1507), a period marked by large-scale population migrations and the transition from late antiquity to the early Middle Ages in Europe. The "from-above"-Europeanisms (A.b, B.b) probably emerged later as a "product" of the common codification strategies of the written languages, not as a result of language contact and convergence. The "from-below"-Europeanisms (A.c, B.c) are most likely the youngest innovations among the three subtypes, not being attested in the early phases of the language (cf. Seiler 2016).

Our analysis of four SAE features in Greek allows us to tentatively attribute these characteristics to Seiler's (sub)classes of SAE features. The first difficulty that arises when applying these criteria to Greek is the question of the presence or emergence of SAE features in the historical phases of the language. As can be seen from the previous sections, all the discussed SAE features in Greek are attested in the historical phases of the language. Most of them, moreover, were already present in Classical or even Archaic Greek (as in the case of the "have" and "be" constructions) or, conversely, only in the late Middle Ages (*ο οποίος*). Only one of the features discussed, namely the changes in the system of verbal negation, can be assigned to the period between Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages when, according to Haspelmath and Seiler, the oldest SAE features should have emerged. In Greek, then, the historical presence of SAE features attested in the earlier phases of the language should be considered in comparison to Seiler's model, and this is the case for all the subclasses of expanding or recessive SAE features.

With this in mind, we can make an attempt to correlate the SAE features in Greek to Seiler's subclasses described above. The case of Greek negation (section 2.3.) is unambiguous: the evolution from the non-strict to the strict negative concord that took place in Medieval Greek corresponds to Seiler's definition of an indifferently recessive feature because the original SAE language feature is eventually absent in both SMG and MG dialects.

The other two features, the "have"-perfect and "be"-construction with a passive participle (section 2.2.), are very close to what Seiler calls a "from-above" recessive Europeanism. They are still present and prevailing in MG dialects, while in SMG, they are restricted in frequency and function, ceding to the more productive and highly prevalent active/passive perfect forms (*έχω γράψει, έχω γραφτεί*).

A similar but inverse case is the relative pronoun *ο οποίος* (section 2.1.): its prevalence in SMG (albeit in competition with *που*) and its absence from MG dialects suggest "from-above" expansion. Even if Seiler's definition of the "from-above" features as a relatively recent sociolinguistic phenomenon, possibly induced by the codification process, does not match the Greek feature which is already attested in the Middle Ages, we may still view it as induced "from-above": in Medieval Greek, it is first attested in higher registers such as notarial and legal documents (Manolessou 2004), and so it emerged and spread into the language from the more educated strata of society. This "from-high-register" spread can be likened to the "from-above" spread, even though there was no codified language at the time.

Table 2: The dynamics of SAE features in Greek based on Seiler's (2019) classification. Legend: HP = historical phase of the language; SMG = Standard Modern Greek; D = dialect(s); + = feature present/expanding; – = feature absent/recessive; –/(+) = feature absent/recessive or present, but in limited frequency/function or in parallel/competition with another expression

			Negative pronouns and lack of verbal negation	'Have' + perfect pass. Ptcp.	'I am' + perfect pass. Ptcp.	Relative clauses with ο οποίος
Expanding features	from-above	HP				+
		SMG				+
		D				–/(+)
Recessive features	indifferently	HP	+			
		SMG	–			
		D	–			
	from-above	HP		+	+	
		SMG		–/(+)	–/(+)	
		D		+	+	

Table 2 summarizes the investigated SAE features in Greek according to Seiler's classification, with the caveat that for "from-above"- and "from-below"-Europeanisms we admit the possibility of their being older Europeanisms, also present in earlier phases of the language. We also believe – given that in the development of modern Greek, the codification process generally did not play a major role – that, for the "from-above"-Europeanisms, it is desirable to consider also high, but not yet codified varieties, as the possible source of their origin and the means of their spread.

In general, the lesson to be learned from Seiler's definition of the latter two subclasses (A.b, A.c, B.b, B.c) and from the evidence introduced in this paper is that crossing the diachronic and stratification criteria is not an easy task: Seiler (2019), probably due to the limitation of studying material only from German varieties, may have failed to address all the possibilities. But in spite of this, or perhaps because of it, his approach remains deserving of attention and further rethinking. In any case, the research into the question of a language swinging towards or, conversely, moving away from the defined SAE ideal helps us to understand better the dynamics of the areal profiling of European languages. In this context, the question may arise as to what the cultural and social implications of SAE are and whether "the SAE linguistic area really exists, and if so, in which terms", as one of the reviewers of this text rightly asks. It is important to note that the existence of a linguistic union in general has a different validity than the existence of another group, often considered complementary, namely the language family. While the latter can be clearly defined on the basis of regular sound correspondences between specific

elements (roots, morphemes in general), the language union is to a much greater extent a scientific construct whose acceptance or non-acceptance depends on how well this model helps us to make sense of the multifaceted linguistic reality. Seiler's approach, and – we hope – our modification of it, is an attempt to provide a more detailed description "from the bottom", i.e. from individual language varieties. Only the sum of such descriptions will possibly provide the basis for a more significant change in the understanding of the SAE linguistic area in terms of its cultural and social aspects, and possibly of language unions in general. Our creed is to remain cautious and not draw overly generalizing conclusions based on data from only one or two languages.

References

Agouraki Y. 2006. The perfect category: A comparison of Standard Greek and Cypriot Greek. – Janse M., Joseph B.D., Ralli A. (eds.). *Proceedings of the 2nd international conference of Modern Greek dialects and linguistic theory (Mytilene, Greece, 30 September – 3 October 2004)*. Patras: University of Patras: 42–57.

Auwera J. van der (ed.). 1998. *Adverbial constructions in the languages of Europe*. Berlin, New York: De Gruyter Mouton.

Auwera J. van der 2011. Standard Average European. – Kortmann B., Auwera J. van der (eds.). *The languages and linguistics of Europe. A comprehensive guide*. Berlin, Boston: De Gruyter Mouton: 291–306.

Beekes R.S.P. 2016. *Etymological dictionary of Greek*. [vol. 2]. Leiden: Brill.

Bentein K. 2013. HAVE-perfects in Post-classical and Early Byzantine Greek. – *Emerita. Revista de Lingüística y Filología Clásica* 81.1: 151–182.

Bentein K. 2016. *Verbal periphrasis in ancient Greek: Have- and be-constructions*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Bernini G., Schwartz M.L. (eds.). 2006. *Pragmatic organization of discourse in the languages of Europe*. Berlin, New York: De Gruyter Mouton.

Bossong G. 1998. Le marquage de l'expérient dans les langues d'Europe. – Feuillet J. (ed). *Actance et valence dans les langues de l'Europe*. Berlin, New York: De Gruyter Mouton: 259–294.

Carey K. *Pragmatics, subjectivity and the grammaticalization of the English perfect* [unpublished PhD dissertation, University of California].

Dahl Ö. (ed.). 2000. *Tense and aspect in the languages of Europe*. Berlin, New York: De Gruyter Mouton.

Denizot C. 2012. La double négation et le tour οὐδεὶς οὐκ ἦλθεν. – *Revue de philologie, de littérature et d'histoire anciennes* 86.2: 65–90.

Fagard B., Pinto de Lima J., Stosic D., Smirnova E. (eds.). 2020. *Complex adpositions in European languages. A micro-typological approach to complex nominal relators*. Berlin, Boston: De Gruyter Mouton.

Feuillet J. (ed.). 1998. *Actance et valence dans les langues de l'Europe*. Berlin, New York: De Gruyter Mouton.

Giacalone Ramat A. 2005. Persistence and renewal in the relative pronoun paradigm: The case of Italian. – *Folia Linguistica Historica* 39, no. *Historica* 26.1–2: 115–138.

Giannakidou A. 2000. Negative… concord? – *Natural Language and Linguistic Theory* 18: 457–523.

Gianollo Ch. 2021. Indefinites and negation in Ancient Greek. – *Journal of Historical Syntax* 5: 1–38.

Giger M. 2004. 55 let po Garvinovi: čeština a standardní průměrná evropština. – Hladká Z., Karlík P. (eds.). *Čeština – univerzália a specifika.* [vol. 5]. Praha: NLN: 58–66.

Haspelmath M. 1993. More on the typology of inchoative/causative verb alternations. – Comrie B., Polinsky M. (eds.). *Causatives and transitivity*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins: 87–120.

Haspelmath M. 1998. How young is Standard Average European? – *Language Sciences* 20: 271–287.

Haspelmath M. 2001. The European linguistic area: Standard Average European. – Haspelmath M. et al. (eds.). *Language typology and language universals. An international handbook.* [vol. 2]. Berlin, New York: De Gruyter Mouton: 1492–1510.

Holton D., Horrocks G.C., Janssen M., Lendari T., Manolessou I., Toufexis N. 2019. *The Cambridge grammar of Medieval and Early Modern Greek.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Holton D., Mackridge P., Philippaki-Warburton I. 2012. *Greek: A comprehensive grammar*. London: Routledge.

Horrocks G.C. 2010. *Greek: A history of the language and its speakers.* [2nd edition]. Malden (Mass.): Wiley-Blackwell.

Horrocks G.C. 2014. Ouk ísmen oudén: Negative concord and negative polarity in the history of Greek. – *Journal of Greek Linguistics* 14: 43–83.

Hulst H. van der (ed.). 1999. *Word prosodic systems in the languages of Europe*. Berlin, New York: De Gruyter Mouton.

Irslinger B. 2013. Standard Average European and the Western fringe – a reconsideration. – *Historische Sprachforschung* 126: 33–88.

Kriki E. 2013. *Morfosyntaktikoi neoterismoi stē glōssa tōn mē filologikōn papyrōn: oi anaforikes domes.* [unpublished PhD dissertation, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki].

Liosis N., Kriki E. 2013. Towards a typology of relative clauses in Modern Greek dialects. – Janse M., Joseph B.D., Ralli A., Bagriacik M. (eds.). *MGDLT 5. Proceedings of the 5th international conference on Modern Greek dialects and linguistic theory (Ghent, Belgium, September 20–22, 2012)*. Patras: 245–271.

Manolessou I. 2004. Oi anaforikes protaseis tēs ellēnikēs: diachronikē prosengisē. – *Praktika tou 6ou diethnous synedriou ellēnikēs glōssologias (Rethymno 18.–21. 9. 2003).* [e-book].

Moser A. 1988. *The history of the perfect periphrases in Greek.* [unpublished PhD dissertation, University of Cambridge].

Moser A. 2003. Tense, aspect, and the Greek perfect. – Alexiadou A., Rathert M., Stechow A. von (eds.). *Perfect explorations*. Berlin, New York: Mouton de Gruyter: 235–252.

Muchnová D. 2016. Negation in ancient Greek: A typological approach. – *Graeco-Latina Brunensia* 21.2: 183–200.

Murelli A. (ed.). 2011. *Relative constructions in European non-standard varieties*. Berlin, Boston: De Gruyter Mouton.

Murelli A., Kortmann B. 2011. Non-standard varieties in the areal typology of Europe. – Kortmann B., Auwera J. van der (eds.). *The languages and linguistics of Europe. A comprehensive guide*. Berlin, Boston: De Gruyter Mouton: 525–544.

Nicholas N. 1998. *The story of pu. The grammaticalisation in space and time of a Modern Greek complementiser.* [unpublished PhD dissertation, The University of Melbourne].

Plank F. (ed.). 2003. *Noun phrase structure in the languages of Europe*. Berlin, New York: De Gruyter Mouton.

Ralli A., Melissaropoulou D., Tsolakidis S. 2007. O parakeimenos stē nea ellēnikē kai stis dialektous: paratērēseis gia tē morfē kai tēn exelixē tou. – *Studies in Greek Linguistics* 27: 361–372.

Riemsdijk H. van (ed.). 1999. *Clitics in the languages of Europe*. Berlin, New York: De Gruyter Mouton.

Scherpenberg C. van 2013. Albanian as a member of the 'Standard Average European' Sprachbund. – *Res Albanicae. Rivista di albanologia* 2.1: 51–66.

Seiler G. 2016. *Variation as a window to the past: On the origins of Standard Average European. Abstract from the 49th Annual Meeting of the Societas Linguistica Europea (University of Naples, Napoli, Italy, 31 August – 3 September 2016)*. [available at: https://seiler.userweb.mwn.de/Downloads/Seiler_SLE2016.pdf, accessed: 23 April 2023].

Seiler G. 2019. Non-Standard Average European. – Nievergelt A., Rübekeil L. (eds.). *Raum und Sprache: 'athe in palice, athe in anderu sumeuuelicheru stedi'. Festschrift für Elvira Glaser zum 65. Geburtstag*. Heidelberg: Universitätsverlag Winter: 541–554.

Siewierska A. (ed.). 1998. *Constituent order in the languages of Europe*. Berlin, New York: De Gruyter Mouton.

Stolz T. 2006. Europe as a linguistic area. – Brown K. (ed.). *Encyclopedia of language and linguistics.* [vol. 4]. Oxford: Elsevier: 279–295.

Whorf B.L. 1941. The relation of habitual thought and behavior to language. – Spier L. (ed.). *Language, culture and personality. Essays in memory of Edward Sapir*. Menasha (Wis.): Sapir Memorial Publication Fund: 75–93.

Willmott J. 2013. Negation in the history of Greek. – Willis D., Lucas Ch., Breitbarth A. (eds.). *The history of negation in the languages of Europe and the Mediterranean: Vol. 1. Case studies*. Oxford: Oxford University Press: 299–340.