

On the functional variation of clitic doubling in Albanian dialects: a corpus-based study

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3rd person accusative clitic doubling (hereafter 3ACD) in Standard Albanian (which is based predominantly on the South Albanian dialect) correlates to focus marking since it is ruled out in combination with rhematized/focused objects (Buchholz & Fiedler, 1987; Kallulli, 2000). According to Përnaska (2012) 3ACD in Albanian is in an ongoing process of generalization. Self-conducted analyses of an Albanian dialect corpus (approx. 67.000 tokens with 3155 transitive clauses to be analysed) produced the following picture regarding the frequency and the degree of generalisation of 3ACD in the Albanian speaking territory:

Country	Dialect	Frequency of clitic doubling	Number of accusative objects
Albania	South & Cham Tosk	26 %	202
Albania	North Tosk	35 %	330
Albania	South Gheg	38 %	329
Albania	Central Gheg	40 %	309
Albania	Northwest Gheg	43 %	346
Albania	Northeast Gheg	56 %	257
Montenegro	Northwest Gheg	68 %	325
Macedonia	North Tosk	68 %	266
Macedonia	Central Gheg	75 %	344
Kosova & South Serbia	Northeast Gheg	88 %	361
Kosova	Northwest Gheg	88 %	86

The existence of functional variation of 3ACD between different dialects is a common phenomenon; cf. Zdrojewski & Sanchez (2014) for Spanish and Friedman (2006, 2008) for Balkan Slavic. Furthermore, the findings of the corpus analysis corroborate evidences that the distribution of main factors for 3ACD within the Albanian speaking territory is in most cases congruent with the areal distribution of the factors for 3ACD in other neighbouring Balkan languages/dialects: thus, [+*definiteness*] can be regarded as the main factor in Albanian and Macedonian dialects spoken in West Macedonia (Friedman, 2008) and [-*focus*] as the main factor in Modern Greek and in the neighbouring South Albanian dialects (Kallulli, 2000). In contrast, in Northeast Gheg spoken in Kosova and South Serbia almost any accusative object triggers clitic doubling; the only exception being mostly *wh*-elements (indefinite or interrogative pronouns).

Although the areal distribution of factors for 3ACD in Albanian dialects seems neat at first glance, a great number of exceptions can be found: for instance, even though definite objects are mostly clitic doubled in Albanian dialects spoken in Macedonia, there are also cases without 3ACD:

Albanian example from Tetova, West Macedonia (Sulejmani, 2006: 349)

Gje *kërko-jshe* *shatk-ën* *sot* *kërko-jshe* *shatok-in.*
yesterday demand-2SG.IMPERF duck-ACC.DEF today demand-2SG.IMPERF drake-ACC.DEF
'Yesterday you wanted the duck, today you wanted the drake.'

The example above allows to explain the omission of the clitic on the basis of what is called *contrastive focus* or *contrast*. Thus, the areal distribution of main factors as described above (*focus* in the South, *definiteness* in the Northwest) shows a mere tendency of main factors, which, despite their predominance, have to be viewed in strong correlation with additional factors, such as: *contrast*, *specificity*, *definiteness*, *salience*, *left-dislocation* etc. More importantly, the tendency to generalize clitic doubling is most prominent in peripheral Albanian dialects, especially in those dialects which are spoken in the countries of the former Yugoslavia.

By taking into account different factors on the pragmatic, semantic and morphosyntactic level, most of which are mentioned in the current literature on clitic doubling or differential argument marking (cf. Seržant & Witzlack-Makarevich, 2018), this paper aims to give an overview of the functional variation of clitic doubling in Albanian on the basis of a dialect corpus consisting of folk narratives dialectological descriptions.

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