The functional variation of clitic doubling in Albanian dialects

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3rd person accusative clitic doubling (hereafter clitic doubling) 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 and Fiedler, 1987; Kallulli, 2000). According to Përnaska (2012) clitic doubling in Albanian is in an ongoing process of generalization. A frequency analyses based on a self-compiled Albanian dialect corpus that consists of approx. 100.000 words produces the following interim picture regarding the frequency and the degree of generalization of clitic doubling in five adjacent Balkan countries where modern Albanian is spoken (definite: definite/given objects; indefinite: indefinite/not given objects):

It can be assumed that these big frequency differences, especially between Albania and the other four countries, is the result of functional differences. The existence of functional variation of clitic doubling between different dialects is a common phenomenon (cf. Belloro, 2007; Zdrojewski and 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 clitic doubling within the Albanian speaking territory is in most cases congruent with the areal distribution of the factors for clitic doubling in other neighbouring Balkan languages/dialects. Thus, broadly speaking, definiteness can be regarded as the main factor in Albanian and Macedonian dialects spoken in West Macedonia (Ylli and Sobolev, 2003) and topicality/focus as the main factor in Modern Greek and in the neighbouring South Albanian dialects (Kallulli, 2000).

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. Bickel and Witzlack-Makarevich, 2008), this talk aims to give an overview of the functional variation of clitic doubling in Albanian on the basis of a dialect corpus. Furthermore, these findings will be used to assess the influence of areal dialects on the usage of clitic doubling in Albanian newspapers from Albania and Kosova.
References