On Pseudo-Coordination in the province of Catania

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Sicilian dialects display a syntactic construction featuring an inflected verb (V1), usually of motion, an optional linking element *a* (more rarely *e*), and a second inflected verb (V2), which shares mood, tense and person features with the preceding verb (cf. Cardinaletti & Giusti 2001, 2003; Di Caro & Giusti 2015):

(1)　a.　*Vaju　a　ppigghju　u　pani.*
　　　　go.1SG　*a*　fetch.1SG　the　bread
　　　　'I go and fetch the bread.'
　　b.　*Vegnu　a　ffazzu　a　spisa.*
　　　　come.1SG　*a*　do.1SG　the　shopping
　　　　'I come and do the shopping.'

This construction has been discussed since the early description by Fulci (1855) and the early analyses by Pitrè (1875), Cremona (1895) and Ascoli (1896), and is referred to here as Pseudo-Coordination (PseCo, henceforth; cf. Di Caro 2017).

PseCo shows a high degree of micro-variation on different parameters: (i) the selection of V1, (ii) the selection of V2, (iii) the mood/tense/person restrictions, (iv) the level of grammaticalisation of V1. Three types of PseCo can be identified (cf. Di Caro 2019b): Type 1, as found in the variety spoken in Marsala (Trapani), is possible only in the imperative and in the indicative present; Type 2, as found in Delia (Caltanissetta), extends to the indicative preterite; In Type 3, which is typical of the eastern Sicilian dialects and further extends to the indicative imperfect and the subjunctive imperfect (cf. examples in (2)-(4) from the dialect of Acireale), the V1 GO appears in a reduced form (i.e. *o-*):

(2)　*Opigghja　u　pani!*
　　　o+fetch.IMP.1SG　the　bread
　　　'Go (and) fetch the bread!'
(3)　a.　*Oppigghju　u　pani.*
　　　　o+fetch.1SG　the　bread
　　　　'I go and fetch the bread.'
　　b.　*Oppigghjava　u　pani.*
　　　　o+fetch.IMPERF.1SG　the　bread
　　　　'I used to go and fetch the bread.'
　　c.　*Oppigghjai　u　pani.*
　　　　o+fetch.PAST.1SG　the　bread
　　　　'I went to fetch the bread.'
(4)　*Opigghjassi　u　pani.*
　　　o+fetch.SUBJ.1SG　the　bread
　　　'I would go and fetch the bread!'

In Type 3, no person restrictions are generally found (cf. Manzini & Savoia 2015 for the fully-fledged paradigm PseCo in Modicano), contrary to what happens in Type 1 and 2. On the other hand, Type 3

is generally limited to the V1 GO. Moreover, in this configuration, V1 is usually invariable for all the persons of the paradigm and can display different forms (i.e., *o-*, *uo-*, *vo-* and *va-*).

From the available literature on Type 3 PseCo (Di Caro 2019a, b; Di Caro & Giusti 2015) the following facts emerge:

(i) Younger speakers tend not to accept the configuration with fully inflected V1 (as in, e.g., ***vaju** a ppigghju u pani* in (1a) *supra*) and when they do, they struggle to acknowledge it as the original source to ***o**ppigghju u pani* (as in (3a) *supra*);

(ii) Other V1s (such as *vèniri* 'come' and *passari* 'come by') are not generally allowed, not even in their extended form, especially by younger speakers.

However, the data in the available literature are not sufficient to a deep understanding of the dimensions of variation of the phenomenon under analysis. The number of varieties considered is small and varieties very different from one another are taken into consideration, such as those of the province of Catania and those of the provinces of Ragusa and Syracuse. Moreover, there is no study specifically focused to young speakers.

The aim of the present work is to fill in these gaps by showing the results of a specific study on Type 3 PseCo in the province of Catania only, based on an anonymous online questionnaire which focuses on 295 bilingual (i.e., Italian and a Sicilian dialect) speakers, aged between 18 and 26 (M = 20.95; SD = 2.73).
The goals of the present study are:

(i) to survey the many possible invariant forms of the V1 GO used by young speakers;

(ii) to investigate the selection of V1, with the possible lexical restrictions, by taking into account the hierarchy of the V1 selection proposed in Di Caro (2019b) (i.e., GO > COME > COME BY > SEND > COME BACK > START…);

(iii) more generally, to investigate the productivity of Type 3 PseCo in the relevant age range.

PseCo is confirmed to be a very productive construction in the province of Catania. Nevertheless, some interesting facts emerge from the new data collected that may address further research:

(i) The fully-fledgedness of the paradigm with the reduced invariable V1 GO is far from being unquestionable (with 30% of the sample judging as ungrammatical one or more cells of the paradigm corresponding to (3a) *supra*);

(ii) A good deal of speakers (26% of the sample) accept PseCo with the fully inflected V1 GO, which is more than what was claimed in the previous literature;

(iii) More than one invariable form of the V1 GO is generally accepted, with 37.62% of the sample accepting 2 forms and 22.03% accepting 3 forms (*o-* + *uo-* being the most frequent combination);

(iv) COME BACK as V1 (which was tested in the sentence *tonnu a ppigghju u pani* 'I come back to fetch the bread' or 'I fetch the bread again'), has a score close to that of the V1 SEND (54% vs. 49.9% of the sample, respectively). This suggests that COME BACK (used especially with an iterative meaning) is still productive among young speakers of the relevant province.

On the basis of the geographical distribution of lexical types, variants and inflectional restrictions, a tentative diachronic account and an allomorphy analysis will also be proposed.

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