

# MORPHOSYNTACTIC PROPERTIES OF THE CYPRIOT GREEK -NDE

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This paper explores the morphosyntax of a rather unusual suffix used by specific populations in the variety of Cypriot Greek, in order to present in detail its distribution in the clause, as well as provide some suggestions with regard to its possible syntax. Among other phenomena in the literature of the Cypriot Greek syntax, the behavior of the Cypriot Greek suffix *-nde* in the clause is unique to the variety in question when compared to the close variety of Standard Modern Greek. The interesting implications as discussed in the paper concern its blocking with post-verbal clitic placement, while the fact that no other similar phenomena of this type appear in this variety suggest a possible borrowing from other languages in contact.

## 1 Introduction<sup>1</sup>

The linguistic situation in Cyprus is not irrelevant to the appearance of this unusual suffix on the verb, as phonologically similar cases appear in Standard Modern Greek (hence SMG) and Turkish. The linguistic status of the Republic of Cyprus is traditionally described as diglossic, with a sociolinguistically ‘low’ variety of CG co-existing with the ‘high’ Standard Modern Greek, the variety spoken in mainland Greece. Cyprus shows *de jure* bilingualism (Greek, Turkish; referring to the standard varieties in both cases) and *de facto* trilingualism in Greek, Turkish and English (Arvaniti 2002) or bilingualism in SMG and CG (Newton 1972, Vassiliou 1995) or bidialectism in SMG and CG (e.g. Pavlou & Christodoulou 2001, Yiakoumetti et al. 2005) or more generally a ‘bi-*x*’ context (Grohmann 2011, Grohmann & Leivada 2012, Grohmann et al., 2012) proposed to cover any possible combination of language-dialect. Another approach (Rowe & Grohmann 2012) suggests that a *co-overt prestige* of CG has prevented its

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<sup>1</sup> This topic was firstly discussed in Pavlou & Panagiotidis (in press), where the focus was on the possible borrowing of *-nde* and some of the syntactic restrictions mentioned in the current paper. I would like to thank Phoevos Panagiotidis for encouraging me to think about this topic and Karlos Arregi for a long fruitful discussion of the data. I also thank Anastasia Giannakidou for her suggestions and the audiences of the MGDLT 5 and the Challenging Clitics workshop, where an earlier version of this paper was presented.

death and that diglossia in Cyprus relates to a type B diglossia. In this sense, the individual speakers of this society are identified as (discrete) ‘bilectal’.

The defined linguistic environment clarifies that we have at least two linguistic codes (whatever their status is), whose grammars, even if not clearly defined, can intervene with one another, as SMG input is provided through the medium of television programs, books, and education. As Grohmann & Leivada (2012) point out, in contexts involving the coexistence of a standard and a regional variety, syntactic differences fade away with the passing of time in favor of an intermediate (Cornips 2006) or ‘diglossic’ speech repertoire (Auer 2000, 2005), based on a more standard/dialect continuum.

The morphological productivity of the verb with regard to *-nde* in Cypriot Greek (hence, CG) as presented in this paper is particularly interesting, because it seems to deviate from the usual verb paradigm that could be constructed for CG. In (1), the optionality of the *-nde* suffix on the verb is acceptable by speakers, while its presence can be related to a lack of a significant function (inflectional vs. derivational) on the morphological structure of the verb.

- (1) E fame(-nde) to fain.  
*ate.1PL-nde the.ACC food.ACC*  
 ‘We ate the food’

Apart from its importance in the morphosyntax of CG, it can be observed that *-nde* is used less among younger populations and avoided by speakers that associate it with the *xorkatika* ‘peasantry’ register. This term is used by speakers nowadays to refer to a particular way of speech characterized by features of non-formal way of speaking, irrelevant to an urban vs. rural dialect (Tsiplakou et al. 2006). CG undergoes ‘dialect moribundity’, in the sense of ‘dialect loss’ associated with loss of specific features (Rowe and Grohmann 2012), so it could also be the case that the synchronic point of view of this paper may lack a more diachronic use of the particular item in the absence of previous literature.

The morphological restrictions of the appearance of *-nde* on the verb and the syntactic consequences of its presence in the clause will be discussed in Section 2. One of the motivating factors to believe that *-nde* is not restricted to the morphological representation, but rather extends, or even just concerns certain syntactic aspects will be mainly based on its interaction with clitic placement. Clitic placement in CG, a well-studied phenomenon by now (Grohmann et al. 2012, among others), has been argued to target post-verbal positions except in a few cases. The ungrammaticality of a post-verbal clitic with *-nde*, following the speakers’ judgments, and the insignificant role of it in the morphology of the verb provide the grounds to argue for a more complex syntactic analysis.

Even for elements appearing as affixes on a host, it is not always the case that one could not treat them as syntactic items. Languages that use post-verbal clitics can allow their affixation in certain environments, as discussed in Section 3, but what does that imply for the word/affix nature of clitics?

In Section 4, the suggestions follow the data from the previous sections and propose that this phenomenon can be viewed either as morphological by finding a way to explain the ungrammaticality with post-verbal clitics or as a true case of affixation/fusion by treating *-nde* as a syntactic item that affixes on the verb.

## 2 Morphology or syntax?

The appearance of *-nde* as a verb suffix creates the first question concerning the morphology of the verb. The optionality of it suggests that this is not a necessary morpheme that takes a particular function for the usual inflectional or derivational part of morphology. In fact, as will be seen below *-nde* appears after the inflectional morphemes have attached to the stem, satisfying any relevant person and tense features. No other similar cases in CG have been recorded or can be observed to show a similar type of morphological productivity, suggesting that the case of *-nde* may be a case of true affixation of an element to the verb.

The verb paradigm for a verb like *ðino* ‘tie’ in the first and a second conjugation a verb like *ayapo* ‘love’ in the second conjugation are given in Table 1 below.<sup>2</sup> At large, the verb paradigm for these two cases follows the verb paradigm on SMG with the exception of the suffix *-usin* for the 3<sup>rd</sup> person plural and the past tense prefixed augment *e-*, which has been preserved from Ancient Greek (Joseph & Tserdanelis 2003).

	First Conjugation			Second Conjugation		
	Non-Past. Imperfective	Past. Perfective	Non-Past. Perfective	Non-Past. Imperfective	Past. Perfective	Non-Past. Perfective
<b>1 sg</b>	'ðin-o	'e-ðis-a	'ðis-o	aya'p-o	a'yapis-a	aya'pis-o
<b>2 sg</b>	'ðin-is	'e-ðis-es	'ðis-is	aya'p-as	a'yapis-es	aya'pis-is
<b>3 sg</b>	'ðin-i	'e-ðis-e	'ðis-i	aya'p-a	a'yapis-e	aya'pis-i
<b>1 pl</b>	'ðin-ume(n)	e-'ðis-ame(n)	'ðis-ume(n)	aya'p-ume(n)	aya'pis-ame(n)	aya'pis-ume(n)
<b>2 pl</b>	'ðin-ete	e-'ðis-ete	'ðis-ete	aya'p-ate	aya'pis-ete	aya'pis-ete
<b>3 pl</b>	'ðin-usin/ 'ðin-un	e-'ðis-asin/ 'e-ðis-an	'ðis-usin/ 'ðis-un	aya'p-usin/ aya'p-un	aya'pis- asin/ aya'pis-an	aya'pis- usin/ aya'p-un

Table 1. The CG verb paradigm

The CG *-nde* shows morphological restrictions in its distribution. As already mentioned, it always appears as a bound form and can only take a verb as its host.

- (2) Eðisame-nde ti varkan  
*tied. 1PL-nde the boat*  
 ‘We tied the boat’

<sup>2</sup> The distinction follows the one usually assumed for Modern Greek. Verb conjugation in Modern Greek depends mainly on stress: verbs in the first conjugation have the stress on the penultimate syllable, while verbs in the second conjugation take stress on the last syllable.



objection to the previously uttered statement. In SMG, *(n)de* is purely a discourse particle which possibly adds emphasis to the context in certain occasions. In all the examples above, it is used in the final position in the clause and does not appear to be affected by the preceding item. However, these sentences form fixed phrases and its use in a more productive way has not been documented. The SMG *(n)de* can also be found in initial positions in the clause as the following examples show:

(10) a. De ke kala (na vɣo mazi su)  
*de and well-ADV (to go-1SG with you.GEN)*  
 ‘I should go out with you in any case’<sup>3</sup>

b. De ke soni  
*de and enough-ADV*  
 ‘whatever happens’

(Leivada, pc)  
 (SMG)

It seems from the example in (10) that *(n)de* imposes a certain meaning in initial positions in the clause. Apart from a phonological similarity with the CG *-nde*, the SMG *(n)de* also adds or alters the meaning of the sentence. The two, though, are fundamentally different- and possibly irrelevant to each other- when compared with the more complex restrictions that the CG *-nde* imposes.

Based on what was said above, *-nde* cannot be assumed to be an inflectional suffix, since the 1st person plural suffix *-me* already carries the inflection features. It should also be noted that *-nde* cannot appear before *-me* (e.g. \**ipcandeme*), so it always needs to appear after inflection has taken place (either that is a procedure in the lexicon or the syntax). Inflectional clitics are argued to be lexical clitics, only if they can interact with canonically distributed inflectional affixes and appear inside of other inflections (Halpern 1995). By arguing that *-nde* is an inflectional affix, there are two problems occurring. One problem is the redundancy of the assumption that there are two suffixes for 1<sup>st</sup> person plural suffixes in Cypriot Greek, with one of them appearing optionally or with both of them appearing at the same time. Two different suffixes can appear in the 3<sup>rd</sup> person plural, namely *-usin* and *-un* or *-asin* and *-an*, but the two can never appear at the same time. Another problem is that, if *-nde* is an inflectional affix and can affect the distribution of pronominal clitics as will be discussed later, then this should be the case for other inflectional affixes as well.

The grammatical properties of *-nde* can be revealing with regard to its semantic or pragmatic function. The data considered so far cannot provide any strong support to the idea that *-nde* has a particular role to play in the verb morphology. Before considering its interaction with syntax, the pragmatic use of *(n)de* in SMG in the way that it interacts with the meaning of the sentence, will also be extended for the CG *-nde* as well.

It is clear from the morphosyntactic restriction on agreement that *-nde* carries a certain meaning or relation to semantics. A possible argument is that *-nde* carries some feature or rather that it behaves in a speaker-oriented manner. Speaker oriented suffixes, as appearing in Korean (Chung 1999) for example, are argued to be associated with the speech acts that the speaker is directing towards the addressee. In Pavlou & Panagiotidis (in press), it

<sup>3</sup> *De ke kala* and *de ke soni*, (‘no matter what’) can be translated as ‘willy-nilly’, to express that an action will happen whether you desire it or not.





- (22) \*To       aku  
*it-CLI.3SG listen-2SG*  
 ‘Hear it’

Syntactic analyses of mixed clitic placement in CG (Agouraki 2001, Terzi 1999a, 1999b) have suggested that the verb in CG moves to a higher position (CG is pro-drop) and generates the verb-clitic order. Agouraki proposes that the verb moves to C<sup>0</sup> in order to satisfy the ‘filled C’-criterion in CG. On a feature-based account, Terzi suggests that the verb needs to move to the Mood<sup>0</sup> to satisfy strong V features. In both cases though, verb movement is assumed for the possibility of generating both positions.

When *-nde* appears on the verb, it is not allowed in the presence of a post-verbal clitic, as follows:

- (23) \*Akusame-nde       to  
*listened.nde-1PL. it-CLI.ACC*  
 ‘We listened it’

However, the same restriction does not appear in proclisis contexts, when *-nde* is not adjacent to a clitic.

- (24) Speaker A: Idete       to       ergo?  
*saw-2PL the-ACC movie-ACC*  
 ‘Have you seen the movie?’

Speaker B: Theloume na to       dume-nde.  
*want-1PL to it-CLI.ACC see.nde-1PL*  
 ‘We want to see it’

(Neocleous, pc)

In other proclisis environments, like *wh*-questions, *-nde* can also be used:

- (25) a. Pci efame-nde       sto       trapezi?  
*who ate.nde-1PL at-the dinner*  
 ‘Who ate at the dinner?’
- b. Pci       embu efame-nde       sto       trapezi?  
*who       embu ate.nde-1PL       at-the       dinner*  
 ‘Who ate at the dinner?’

In the same context, *wh*-questions can appear with clitics with the use of *-nde*:

- (26) Pci       to       akusame-nde?  
*who it-CLI.ACC listened.nde-1PL*  
 ‘Who heard it?’

In negative environments, *-nde* can appear with a full DP (27).



- (27) En akusame-nde to trayuđi  
*not-NEG listened.nde-1PL the song-ACC*  
 ‘We did not listen the song’

With regard to clitic appearance and negation, variation can appear among the speakers (28).

- (28)(?) En to akusame-nde  
*not-NEG it-CLI.ACC listened.nde-1PL*  
 ‘We did not hear it’

These data show that *-nde* interacts with the syntactic environment and more particularly with post-verbal object clitic placement. Clitics can appear in the clause, if they do not appear adjacent to *-nde*, as in *wh*-questions, negation and *na*-clauses. What are the implications of this behavior? Could one say that a post-verbal clitic and *-nde* compete for the same position? Could it be a phonological restriction that originates from the adjacency of the two? Some possible suggestions will be outlined in Section 4, arguing for possible position of *-nde* in the clause. Importantly though, *-nde* does not seem to contribute to the morphological structure of the verb, but rather appears as part of the verb and affects syntactic elements positioned closed to it.

### 3 Affixation

Affixation of post-verbal clitics on the verb is not an unusual concept for languages that allow this. In a language like European Portuguese, also a mixed clitic placement language with certain restrictions on the syntactic environment (see Lobo and Costa 2012 for a more detailed discussion), has pronominal object clitics as mentioned for CG, but can also have clitics attaching to auxiliary verbs in the following contexts:

- (29) a. *tinha-me dado*  
*had-me-CLI given*  
 ‘has given me’
- b. *Vai-me dar*  
*go-me-CLIGIVE-INF*  
 ‘is going to give me’
- c. *vai dar-me*  
*go give-me-CLI*

(Lobo, pc)

In Galves, Ribeiro and Moraes (2005) clitics in European Portuguese are defined as Infl-clitics and have a morpho-phonological property, subject to word formation rules like any other affixes. The clitic attachment to an auxiliary also appears as a possibility:

- (30) *tinham-se entendido perfeitamente*  
*and had-CLI.3SG understood perfectly*  
 ‘and they had understood each other perfectly’  
 (Galves, Ribeiro and Moraes 2005)

Enclitics attaching to auxiliaries in cases with a preposition appearing before the verb are also reported for European Portuguese.

- (31) *O senhor está-me a guiar em silêncio*  
*the sir is-CLI.1SG to lead in silence*  
 ‘You are leading me in silence’  
 (Galves, Ribeiro and Moraes 2005)

Given these examples, a late syntactic or post-syntactic process is assumed to reorder the syntax so that the phonological or morphological criteria are satisfied and that the special feature involved is responsible for this. In this analysis, the position of clitics is defined by morphological rules, like word affixes.

It is often the case that research on the topic has focused on arguing that post-verbal clitics in certain environments behave as suffixes (see Pycha 2013 for a discussion on Spanish pronouns) on the verb. If clitics in this environment needs to fulfil a particular adjacency condition, or are thought as affixes than lexically prominent items, then the presence of *-nde* on the verb seems to act as an intervener between the clitic and the verb. Such an argument has not been supported for CG and there is no strong data to support this in a direct way as this would appear in Portuguese. However, it is necessary to emphasize that already existed literature (see also Mavrogiorgos 2010) has emphasized in showing the possibility of affixation of a clitic following the verb in order to indicate the close relation of the post-verbal clitic and its host.

## 4 Possible scenarios

In this section, two possible scenarios will be discussed to argue for the position of the CG *-nde* following its distribution with object clitics, as discussed in the previous section. It has been argued in Section 2 that *-nde* does not contribute morphologically to the verb and in other words it does not carry any morphological features (i.e. inflectional features). The agreement restriction with 1<sup>st</sup> person plural is assumed to be a semantic restriction of the type met in other languages and referred to as speaker-oriented modality. It is further implied that *-nde* interacts with the syntax of the CG clause in a way discussed in the previous section and it therefore needs to be given a syntactic account for its distribution in the clause.

### 4.1 *-nde* as directly merged on the verb

By assuming that the originating position of a post-verbal pronominal clitic and *-nde* is definitely a different one, we cannot argue that the ungrammaticality found when the two exist in the same clause originates from competition for the same position. In fact, if post-verbal clitics

placement is derived by verb movement, then the clitic position or any position associated with it is already occupied with the clitic.

One possible assumption argued in Pavlou & Panagiotidis (in press) is that *-nde* attaches to the verb before verb movement, and not after movement to a higher position like C (Agouraki 2010) or Mood (Terzi 1999a, 1999b), since it can appear with preverbal object clitics. Generating the clitic-verb or verb-clitic structure has been argued to depend on the movement of the verb to higher projections, which is commonly found in feature-driven verb movements in null-subject languages. The grammaticality of *-nde* with a pre-verbal clitic indicates that *-nde* can be merged with the verb while still in the vP and not in any other particular position to satisfy any features (Agouraki 2010). If verb movement triggers the post-verbal placement in Cypriot Greek, it could be argued that the merge of *-nde* on the verb prevents verb movement to a higher position and only proclisis is allowed. The insertion of *-nde* may be a late insertion, since it does not satisfy any morphological features on the verb.

The other environments showing restrictions to post-verbal clitic placement, such as wh-questions, *na*-clause and negative environments, differ from the case of *-nde* in deriving obligatory proclitic environments. It should also be noted that all the environments restricting post-verbal clitic placement are found pre-verbally (wh-phrases, negation, *na*-head), but the restriction speakers claim to have with *-nde* can be seen only post-verbally, as *-nde* appears as a suffix on the verb. It could be, however, that another scenario argues better for the position of *-nde* in the syntax of CG and it is not actually post-verbally positioned as it appears to be.

#### 4. 2. *-nde* as a different projection

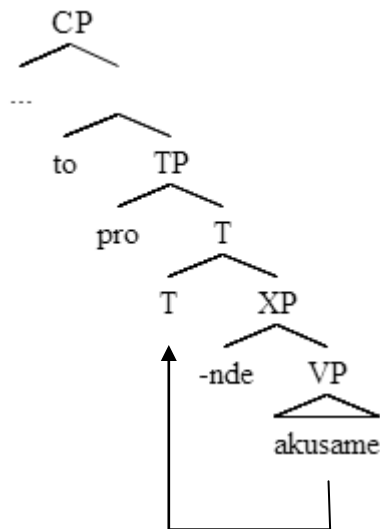
The assumption that *-nde* is inserted directly on the verb when treated solely as a morphological phenomenon firstly does not explain the assumption that the verb does not move in that case, and secondly the lack of theoretical motivation for morphology to assume that *-nde* is inserted to contribute to the morphological structure of the verb. Another possible scenario would want *-nde* to be inserted below T so that when the verb moves to T, it triggers fusion of the verb. The *-nde* head possibly blocks further movement of the verb to a higher projection, hence disallowing the overt appearance of a post-verbal clitic that is usually assumed to be in a higher position<sup>6</sup> than TP in CG. In this scenario, post-verbal clitic placement in the presence of *-nde* is not disallowed because of an adjacency condition between the object clitic and the verb while *-nde* is intervening, but because of no movement of the verb to a higher position than the clitic.

For a proclitic environment involving an object clitic *to* ‘it’ appearing before the verb ...*to akusamende* ‘(we) heard it’, the following structure applies:

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<sup>6</sup> I will not discuss here whether this is a derived position or not, as this is a topic that deserves its own investigation and I will just focus on verb movement and how the latter interacts with the clitic in that higher position. Verb movement has been assumed also in Agouraki (2001) and Terzi (1999a, 1999b) to predict the possibility of post-verbal clitic placement.

(32)



In (32), the verb moves to T, hence deriving the linear order of the verb and *-nde*. Fusion of the two heads takes place then (whether this would be a phonological effect or a result of syntactic movement will not be discussed here). This assumption gives the correct order for other structures, such as negation, where proclisis is also observed.

This analysis gives a different view on the position of *-nde* in the clause, not as a morphological suffix, but rather an item (whatever category that is) that affixes on the verb and stops its movement to a higher position.

## 5 Conclusion

This paper investigates the distribution of the Cypriot Greek *-nde*, which appears as a suffix on the verb. It shows certain agreement restrictions, but these are assumed to originate from a possible speaker-oriented interpretation that it imposes to the semantics of the clause. Even though it appears as part of the CG verb, it is argued that this is actually a syntactic matter. One of the main reasons for this argument is the lack of relevant (overt) features functioning in the morphological derivation of the verb.

This phenomenon has been addressed with regard to post-verbal object clitics that CG allows in declarative contexts, but disallows in the presence of *-nde*. Two proposed analyses suggest that *-nde* actually targets the verb (Pavlou & Panagiotidis) or that it actually affixes to the verb by fusion, as long as the two appear in the relevant environment that allows them to do so. The latter follows the argument that the verb moves in CG, which gives the result of post-verbal clitic placement, but the fusion of *-nde* with the verb blocks further movement to a higher position. The most interesting point though is that following the speakers' intuitions the CG *-nde* interacts with the syntax of the clause, even if it does not form a syntactic element that can appear on its own.

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