



# Imperfect Acquisition of a Related Variety? Residual Clefting and What It Reveals about (Gradient) Bilectalism

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This article explores the concept of gradient bilectalism by capitalizing on insights from recent developments in second language acquisition, particularly the suggestion that aspects of the syntax–discourse interface that are not easily accessible to the learner may lead to fossilization, even at end state. I explore the implications of this suggestion for bilectal grammars by examining the ways in which speakers of Cypriot Greek do syntactic focusing in Standard Greek. The phenomenon is structurally different in the two varieties of Greek examined: clefting is the Cypriot syntactic focusing strategy *par excellence* while in Standard Greek the relevant strategy is movement of the focused item to an immediately preverbal position. Interestingly, this focusing strategy is largely unattested in the acrolectal or standard-like production of bilectal Greek Cypriot speakers; on the contrary, the preferred strategy for syntactic focusing appears to be clefting, as is indicated by data from spontaneous speech. Quantitative data from a questionnaire survey presented in this article confirm that such “residual clefting” persists even at end state, which in turn suggests imperfect acquisition of the relevant structural aspect of Standard Greek, the second variety of these otherwise bilectal speakers. The data invite an approach couched within the Interface Hypothesis, and the argument is put forward that, being a structure at the interface between syntax and other modules or cognitive domains (semantics, pragmatics, and discourse), focusing in the target variety is vulnerable as regards acquisition.

**Keywords:** bilectalism, cleft, clitic, Cypriot Greek, diglossia, focus, interface

## INTRODUCTION

The sociolinguistic situation in the Greek Cypriot speech community arguably still meets the criteria for Fergusonian diglossia, despite ongoing processes of leveling of local subvarieties and the emergence of a pancypriot *koine* with numerous standard-like structural features (Tsipakou et al., 2016). The exploration of structural mixing within the Cypriot Greek *koine* (Tsipakou, 2014a,b) points to “arrested” convergence to Standard Greek, the H variety in Cyprus’s diglossic context. Alternatively put, in terms of acquisition of a second, related variety, it seems that the dialect speaker is not fully bilectal (Grohmann and Leivada, 2012; Rowe and Grohmann, 2013).

## OPEN ACCESS

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### Specialty section:

This article was submitted to  
Language Sciences,  
a section of the journal  
Frontiers in Communication

**Received:** 01 July 2017

**Accepted:** 31 October 2017

**Published:** 20 December 2017

### Citation:

Tsipakou S (2017) Imperfect  
Acquisition of a Related Variety?  
Residual Clefting and What It Reveals  
about (Gradient) Bilectalism.  
Front. Commun. 2:17.  
doi: 10.3389/fcomm.2017.00017

The purpose of this article is to explore what this assumption means for bilectal grammar(s) by looking at syntactic focusing, which is structurally different in the two varieties of Greek in question: clefting is the Cypriot syntactic focusing strategy *par excellence*; in *wh*- questions (with the exception of those introduced by *i'da* “what”) the clefting strategy is optional and arguably conditioned by D-linking (Grohmann et al., 2006; Tsiplakou et al., 2007; Fotiou, 2009; Grohmann, 2009). Interestingly, clefting surfaces consistently in Cypriot speakers’ standard-like or acrolectal production, although genuine clefting is unavailable in Standard Greek, with the added wrinkle that in such production the copula inflects for tense and agreement, unlike in the *bona fide* Cypriot cleft, while the Standard Greek syntactic strategy for focusing, focus movement, is largely unattested in the acrolectal production of bilectal speakers (Tsiplakou, 2014a). Such “residual clefting” data arguably invite an approach whereby an aspect of the syntax of the target variety which relates to the syntax–discourse interface has strong effects on syntactic acquisition (Sorace, 2011; Tsiplakou, 2014a).

## BILECTALISM IN CYPRUS: STRUCTURAL AND SOCIOLINGUISTIC FACTORS

Unlike other geographical Greek varieties, which have been leveled out or are undergoing sweeping processes of leveling (Contosopoulos, 1969), and despite the fact that diglossia between Cypriot and Standard Greek is still going strong (Papapavlou, 1998; Arvaniti, 2010; Hadjioannou et al., 2011; Tsiplakou, 2011; Rowe and Grohmann, 2013), Cypriot Greek is a variety that still by-and-large resists full dedialectalization (Tsiplakou, 2011, 2014a,b; Rowe and Grohmann, 2013).<sup>1</sup> As has been argued in previous work, dense contact between Standard and Cypriot Greek as well as a host of historical, socio-political, economic, and demographic factors have spurred on currently ongoing processes of leveling of local varieties and the emergence of a pancypriot *koine* (Terkourafi, 2005; Tsiplakou, 2006, 2009a,b; Tsiplakou et al., 2006, 2016; Tsiplakou and Kontogiorgi, 2016), which now stands in a diglossic relationship to Standard Modern Greek. The *koine* acts as a robust buffer against dedialectalization in virtue of the fact that it is (perceived as) a hybrid system, displaying strong structural influences from Standard Modern Greek; such standard-like structural aspects allow for what Rowe and Grohmann (2013) have aptly termed (co-)overt prestige to accrue to the *koine*, due to its perceived, if not actual, convergence with the standard variety (Tsiplakou, 2011, 2014b).

Such structural quasi-convergence with Standard Greek results in hybrid structural patterns akin to code mixing, which are however pragmatically/discursively difficult to interpret as code mixing since they seem to serve no obvious discourse purpose, suggesting instead that some kind of grammatical convergence is at work.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Dialectalization is defined as full leveling of a variety and its subvarieties and concomitant convergence to a related standard (see, e.g., Trudgill, 1999; Kerswill, 2010). The data presented in this paper provide further evidence against the full dedialectalization of Cypriot Greek.

<sup>2</sup>Hence the argument for the availability for competing grammars (Kroch, 1994; Kroch and Taylor, 2000) put forward in Tsiplakou (2009a,b, 2014a) and taken up in Grohmann et al. (2017).

In previous work I have suggested that such structural hybridity ultimately “does not allow the two systems to merge fully, as convergence *qua* structural mixing is mostly achieved through (surface) morphological, as well as lexical, choices, while Cypriot phonology and syntax remain largely intact” (Tsiplakou, 2014b: 164). The argument was based on the availability in acrolectal/standard-like registers of the *koine* of structures where surface lexical or morphological exponents from Standard Greek are inserted in structures which are otherwise *bona fide* Cypriot (or common to both varieties), giving the data its hybrid, quasi-standard flavor, as in (1), where the accusative plural of the feminine determiner appears in the same utterance in both its Standard Greek and its Cypriot form (*tis* and *tes*, respectively):

(1)	na to	e'dopísyme spot.PERF.1P	tis the ACC.FEM.P	ðinatótites strength.ACC.FEM.P
	ce and	tes the.ACC.FEM.P	aðinamíes weakness.ACC.FEM.P	
“in order to spot the strengths and the weaknesses”				

In (1) above, the underlying syntactic structure and the morphosyntactic features of the determiner are identical in both varieties; of much greater interest are cases of hybrid production where the syntactic properties of the two varieties differ. Syntactic focusing is a very interesting case in point, not least because, together with clitic placement, it is one of the two core syntactic areas distinguishing the two varieties in question.

## CLEFTS IN THE CYPRIOT KOINE AND IN STANDARD(-LIKE) PRODUCTION

Cypriot Greek has focus clefts (Grohmann et al., 2006; Tsiplakou et al., 2007; Grohmann, 2009) whereas in Standard Greek syntactic focusing involves movement of the focused element to a position in the left periphery (a syntactic Focus Phrase above TP) and verb raising (Tsimplici, 1995, 1998):

(2)	ti the.ACC.FEM.S	stavrúla Stavroula.ACC. FEM.S	vlépo see.NONPAST.1S
“STAVROULA I am looking at.”			(Standard Greek)

<sup>3</sup>The converse pattern obtains in the innovative periphrastic tenses of Cypriot Greek, where dialectal phonology and syntax (e.g., clitic-second effects) occur in innovative, morphologically and semantically standard-like, periphrastic perfect tense structures (Tsiplakou et al., 2016):

ixamen had.1P	tjin that.ACC.MASC.S	ton the ACC.MASC.S	filóloyon Greek teacher.ACC.MASC.S			
ton the.MASC.ACC.S	fasísta fascist.MASC.ACC.S					
ífen had.3S	mas us.CL.GEN	ta them.CL.ACC	priksi swollen	me with	tin the.ACC.	eóka EOKA FEM.S

“We had this Greek teacher, a total fascist; he had busted us our balls about EOKA.” (Melissaropoulou et al., 2013; Tsiplakou et al., 2016).

(3)	en be	tin the.ACC.FEM.S	stávrin Stavri.ACC.FEM.S	pu that
	θωρό see.NONPAST.1S "It's Stavri that I am looking at." (Cypriot Greek)			

Cypriot Greek presents an added wrinkle: there is a Cypriot-specific clefting strategy (of the *est-ce que* type) available in *wh*- questions; it is obligatory in *wh*- questions introduced by *í<sup>n</sup>da* "what" when *í<sup>n</sup>da* is an argument and it is optional when *í<sup>n</sup>da* is adverbial. In the case of all other *wh*- expressions, the clefting strategy is optional and arguably associated with a D-linked interpretation for the *wh*- expression that is "doubled" by *en pu* "is that" (the Cypriot equivalent of *est-ce que*, *m bu* below being its phonetically reduced form; see Grohmann et al., 2006; Tsiplakou et al., 2007; Grohmann, 2009; Kanikli, 2011):

(4)	a.	í <sup>n</sup> da what.ACC	m be	bu that	kámni do. NONPAST.3S
		i the.FEM.NOM.S			stávri Stavri. FEM.NOM.S
		"What is it that Stavri is doing?"			
	b.	*í <sup>n</sup> da what.ACC	kámni do. NONPAST.3S	i the. FEM.NOM.S	stávri? Stavri. FEM.NOM.S
		"What is it that Stavri is doing?"			
	c.	pcos who.MASC.NOM.S	{en {be	pu} {that}	írten? come.PAST.3S
		"Who {is it that} came?"			

By contrast, Standard Greek exhibits only *wh*- movement, the feature [wh] inducing verb raising to C:

(5)	a.	ti what.ACC		káni do.NONPAST.3S
		i the.FEM.NOM.S		stavrúla Stavroula. FEM.NOM.S
		"What is Stavroula doing?"		
	b.	pços who.MASC.NOM.S		írthe? come.PAST.3S
		"Who came?"		

In previous work (Tsiplakou, 2009a,b, 2014a,b), data from spontaneous speech production in Cypriot Greek were discussed in which Cypriot focus and *wh*- clefts display some rather unexpected surface properties: there are instances of focus clefts with the Standard Greek third person copula *íne*, rather than the Cypriot *en* [a form which looks like the third person singular or plural form of the copula but which in fact lacks tense or agreement features, as has been argued in Grohmann et al. (2006) and Tsiplakou et al. (2007); see Merchant and Pavlou (2017) for further extensive discussion]:

(6)	íne be	fitítés student.MASC.ACC.P	pu that	θα FUT	aksiolojísime evaluate.1P
	"It's students that we will evaluate."				

There are also some occurrences of focus clefts *cum focus* movement to the left of the "copula" (see also Gryllia and Lekakou, 2007; Fotiou, 2009; Papadopoulou et al., 2014):

(7)	teliká ultimately	o the.MASC. NOM.S	arçiepiskopos archbishop. MASC.NOM.S	íne be	pu that
	ta CL.NEUT. ACC.P	ðici rule. NONPAST.3S	óla all.NEUT. ACC.P	"Ultimately, it's the Archbishop that rules everything."	
(8)	pcos who.MASC. NOM.S	én:a FUT	me me.CL.MASC. ACC.S	kataçjili? denounce.3S	
	stin in the.FEM. ACC.S	cípron Cyprus.ACC	en be	pu that	ímasten be. NONPAST.1P
	"Who is going to denounce me? It's in Cyprus that we are."				

The standard-like form of the "copula" may furthermore inflect for tense, although, at least in the data from spontaneous production, there are no instances of the copula inflecting for agreement; the Cypriot-specific *est-ce que* type strategy may also occur in *wh*- questions with the standard form of the copula (also inflecting for tense but arguably not for agreement):

(9)	ítan be.PAST	metaksi tus among them	pu that	eðiaskeðázan have fun.PAST.3P
	"It was among themselves that they were having fun."			
(10)	pu where	ítan be.PAST	pu that	emísen? speak.PAST.3S
	"Where was it that she spoke?"			

Of particular interest for this discussion is the fact that clefts also show up in written production by Cypriot Greek speakers, in texts otherwise written in Standard Greek, e.g., in the newspaper articles in (11) and (12) below<sup>4</sup>:

(11)	Εμείς emís we.NOM.P	δεν ðen NEG	είναι íne be	που pu that	θέλουμε thélume want.NONPAST.1P
	να na MOD	λύσουμε lúsime solve.1P	το to the.NEUT.ACC.S	κυπριακό. cipriakó Cypriot.NEUT.ACC.S	"Isn't it us that want to solve the Cyprus problem?"
(12)	Είναι íne be	εμάς emás us.ACC.P	που pu that	πρέπει prépi Must	
	να na MOD	απασχολήσει. apasxolísi concern.3S	"It's us that this should concern."		

<sup>4</sup>Sources: <http://politix.com.cy/article/o-nikos-pou-xeperase-ton-tasso> and <http://www.nomisma.com.cy/υπερ-της-μεταρρυθμισης-της-δημοσιας-υ/> [retrieved 07/18/2017].

In earlier work, it was suggested that “such cases may be treated as arising as a result of an extension of a grammatical structure of the base variety in an attempt to fit the ‘perceived’ structural properties of the target variety” as “the structural properties of the target variety may not be fully recoverable” (Tsiplakou, 2014b: 175; cf. Tsiplakou, 2014a), an issue which will be taken up in detail in this article.

## QUANTITATIVE DATA

### Convergence to Standard Greek Does Not Affect Clefting

The data presented above were sampled from spontaneous speech (Tsiplakou, 2014a,b; Tsiplakou et al., 2016). In this section, I will present quantitative data from a questionnaire survey, which indicate that clefting displays resistance to language shift; I will attempt to relate the resilience of focus clefting to acquisition factors, with the hope of shedding some (more) light on the notion of gradient bilectalism.

In Tsiplakou et al. (2016), a sociolinguistic study is presented the aim of which was to gauge whether there is consistency and coherence vis-à-vis rates of occurrence of particular variants, either Cypriot or standard(-like). The methodology adopted was the sociolinguistic interview; the two interviewers, both young males, were speakers of Cypriot Greek, who used the *koine* throughout, taking care to speak relatively informally. Participants were asked to relate something exciting or emotionally loaded (typically a previous experience) to ensure spontaneity and naturalness in their linguistic production. A total of 57 participants were interviewed, 29 males and 28 females. Their ages ranged from 26 to 90. The participants’ profiles were similar in all respects except age, gender and education. All were city dwellers. The variants analyzed quantitatively were (i) the ratio of [ʃ] over [ç], (ii) the ratio of [tʃ] over [c], (iii) the ratio of Simple Past over the innovative periphrastic tenses and (iv) the ratio of enclisis over (unexpected) proclisis.<sup>5</sup> The finding which is of relevance for the discussion in this article is the fact that in that sample there was not a single instance of the Standard Greek syntactic focusing strategy, focus raising; by contrast, every single instance of syntactic focusing involved clefting. This finding is in stark contrast to the variation exhibited in the phonological data and the data involving periphrastic tenses and clitic placement. In all of these areas, standard-like variants were ubiquitously present in the participants’ oral production.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>5</sup>As regards the correlations among these variants and their correlation with extralinguistic factors, the reader is referred to Tsiplakou et al. (2016) for extensive discussion.

<sup>6</sup>Below are examples of “unexpected” proclisis or exceptional clitic placement, i.e., proclisis without a triggering element in the C field:

a. kséro	to	túto
know.NONPAST.1S	it.NEUT.ACC.S	this.NEUT.ACC.S
kséro	to	
know.NONPAST.1S	it.NEUT.ACC.S	

Of special interest here is the syntactic variation in the data from the other core syntactic area where Cypriot differs radically from Standard Greek, namely pronominal clitic placement. As is well-known, the generalization is that in Standard Greek proclisis (clitic placement in the immediately preverbal position) depends on the finiteness of the verb form, hence gerunds and imperatives trigger enclisis; Cypriot Greek displays clitic-second/Wackernagel or, alternatively, Tobler–Mussafia effects (Horrocks, 1990; Terzi, 1999; Agouraki, 2001; Condoravdi and Kiparsky, 2002; Pappas, 2004, 2014; Revithiadou, 2006, 2008; Tsiplakou, 2006; Chatzikyriakidis, 2010, 2012; Mavrogiorgos, 2010, 2013; Grohmann, 2011; Neokleous, 2015; Grohmann et al., 2017 among others). As with the other variants, while the Cypriot structure, enclisis, was the preferred option, the standard-like strategy of proclisis without a triggering element in C or below, i.e., exceptional clitic placement, was certainly present in that extensive sample of Cypriot Greek oral production.<sup>7</sup> It would then seem that proclisis is seeping into Cypriot Greek grammar (or that competing grammars are at work). This is, however, clearly not the case with focus raising; by contrast, the Cypriot syntactic focusing strategy appears to be used *in lieu of* focus raising even in production which is (or attempts to be) standard-like [as is also indicated by examples such as (7), (11), and (12) above].

to	éʃi	maθítis	mu
it.NEUT.ACC.S	have.NONPAST.3S	student.MASC.NOM.S	my.GEN.S
“I know it, this one, I know it! A student of mine has it.”			
b. o	cemális	ítan	télos
the.MASC.NOM.S	Kemal.MASC.NOM.S	was.3S	pá’don
			anyway
tútos	o túrkos		
this.MASC.NOM.S	the Turk.MASC.NOM.S		
o	meθístakas		
the.MASC.NOM.S	drunkard.MASC.NOM.S		
tʃ	ercetun	tʃe	mas
and	come.PAST.3S	and	us.ACC
			efoitʃazen
			scare.PAST.3S
“Anyway, Kemal was this Turkish drunkard, and he would come and scare us.”			
c. eʃó	pa:á	ðen	milúsa
I.NOM.S	in the past	NEG	speak.PAST.1S
tin	cipriací		ðiálektó
the.FEM.ACC.S	Cypriot.FEM.ACC.S		dialect.FEM.ACC.S
tin	eθeórun		ðiyman
CL.FEM.ACC.S	consider.PAST.1S		sign.NEUT.ACC.S
amorfoʃás			
illiteracy.FEM.GEN.S			
“In the past I did not speak the Cypriot dialect; I used to consider it a sign of lack of education.”			

Such exceptional clitic placement occurred at 19% in the data in Tsiplakou et al., 2016.

<sup>7</sup>Leivada et al. (2017) present comparable data, with exceptional clitic placement reaching 17% in their spontaneous speech corpus (which however contained data from five participants). On the whole, both studies present data that may plausibly be taken to attest to the partial reshuffling of the syntax of cliticization in Cypriot Greek.

## The Study

As the numerical data from the study in Tsiplakou et al. (2016) were too few to make meaningful comparisons, and, crucially, as it is impossible to draw any conclusions based solely on the *absence* of a phenomenon in a particular sample, indicative though that absence may be, for the purposes of this article a questionnaire survey was conducted, the focus of which was to gauge whether this absence relates to the observation made in previous work and already discussed above to the effect that Cypriot Greek speakers opt for clefting rather than focus movement even in acrolectal/standard-like production, moreover couching the clefted structure in Standard Greek phonology and morphology. The case can then be made that Cypriot Greek speakers treat clefts as part of the grammar of the standard variety, while Standard Greek focus movement slips under the radar, as it were. If this is the case, the findings can be taken to suggest a transfer effect from Cypriot Greek in the acquisition of

the standard variety, which needs to be accounted for (cf. Tsiplakou, 2014a,b).<sup>8</sup>

## The Questionnaire

The questionnaire, which was administered electronically, tested for the acceptability of Cypriot-like focus clefts of the following types: (a) clefted adverbials/PPs (two items), (b) clefted first and second person pronominal subjects (four items), (c) clefted third person subjects, pronominal and non-pronominal (two items), (d) clefted direct objects, pronominal and non-pronominal (six items), (e) clefted indirect object PPs (P + ACC, two items) and (f) clefted indirect objects in genitive (two items). The questionnaire also contained nine fillers. Examples of questionnaire items are provided below:

<sup>8</sup>The study was carried out in accordance with the general recommendations of the Cyprus National Bioethics Committee and with written, informed consent from the subjects; ethics approval was not required as per the Open University of Cyprus guidelines and national regulations.

(13)	Μετά metá after	από apó from	πολλές polés many.FEM.ACC.P		καθυστερήσεις, kathisterísis delays.FEM.ACC.P
	είναι íne be	μόλις mólis just	χτες xtes yesterday	που pu that	άρχισαν árchisan start.PAST.3S
	πάλι páli again	οι i the.FEM.NOM.P		συνομιλίες. sinomílies talks.FEM.NOM.P	
(14)	Πάλι páli again	φασαρίες fasaríes troubles. FEM.NOM.P		έχουμε éxume have.NONPAST.1P	
	στη sti at the.FEM.ACC.P		δουλειά, ðulá work. FEM.ACC.P		
	και ce and	είναι íne be	εγώ egó I.NOM.S	που pu that	θα ða FUT τα ta them.CL.ACC.P
	τραβήξω travíkso suffer.1S "We have problems at work again, and it's I that'll bear the brunt of if all."		όλα. óla all.NEUT.ACC.P		
(15)	Έχω écho have.NONPAST.1S	πολλούς polús many.MASC.ACC.P	φίλους, fílus friends.MASC.ACC.P		
	αλλά alá but	είναι íne be	ο o the.MASC.NOM.S	Σπύρος spýros Spyros.MASC.NOM.S	που pu that
	με me me.CL.ACC.S		στηρίζει stirízi support.NONPAST.3S		
	στα sta in the.NEUT.ACC.P "I have many friends, but it's Spyros who stands by me when the going gets tough."		δύσκολα. ðískola difficulty.NEUT.ACC.P		
(16)	Στην stin in the.FEM.ACC.S	παρούσα parúsa current.FEM.ACC.S	πολιτική politicí political.FEM.ACC.S		
	συγκυρία, syngkyría, concern	είναι íne be			

	sijiría situation.FEM.ACC.S	íne be			
	τους tus the.MASC.ACC.P	εξωκοινοβουλευτικούς eksokinovuleftikús extraparliamentary.MASC.ACC.P	που pu that		
	εμπιστεύεται ebistévete trust.NONPAST.3S	ο o the.MASC.NOM.S	κόσμος. kózmos people.MASC.NOM.S		
	"In the current political situation, it's the extraparliamentary forces that people trust."				
(17)	Αν κι an ci although	είναι íne be	πολλοί polí.MASC.NOM.P many.NOM		
	οι i the.MASC.NOM.P		συνυποψήφιοι, sinipopsíffii candidates.MASC.NOM.P		
	είναι íne be	εσένα eséna you.ACC.S	που pu that	θα θα FUT	επιλέξουν. epiléksun select.3P
	"Although the candidates are several, it's you that they'll select."				

The 12 controls, all highly educated monolingual speakers of Standard Greek, all found the questionnaire items ungrammatical.<sup>9</sup>

Participants were asked to rate the sentences as grammatical or ungrammatical in Standard Greek and were moreover asked to suggest corrections in case they thought the sentences were ungrammatical. Data were discarded in case the corrections were irrelevant to the focus of the study.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>9</sup>The controls were also asked to correct the sentences; all opted for focus movement, as in

Εσένα eséna you.ACC.S	θα θα FUT	επιλέξουν. epiléksun select.3P
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A second choice for some of the controls was a structure involving an inflected copula and a relative clause, which has only partial similarity to the Cypriot cleft, e.g.:

Εσύ esi you.NOM.S	είσαι íse are.2P	αυτός aftós he.MASC. NOM.S	που pu that	θα θα FUT	{του} {ton} {him. CL.ACC.S}	επιλέξουν. epiléksun select.3P
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"YOU are the one that they'll select."

This structure, however, differs from the Cypriot cleft in several important respects: first, it involves an inflected copula and number and person agreement between the copula and the focused item, which, crucially, has been changed to a subject; second, the nominative case on the focused element along with the presence of an object pronoun in the relative clause suggests that no extraction of the focused object out of the non-matrix clause has taken place; this is a major difference to true focus clefts such as the Cypriot Greek ones, where the focused element in the cleft retains what case marking corresponds to its position within the lower clause (e.g., accusative for the direct object in the example above) and the use of a resumptive pronoun results in ungrammaticality.

<sup>10</sup>The questionnaire also examined the acceptability of focus clefts cum focus movement to the left of the "copula"; the results for these items will be discussed in future work.

## Participants

A total of 96 subjects participated in the study, 61 females and 35 males. All identified themselves as native speakers of Cypriot Greek. All participants were born and raised in Cyprus, they had Greek Cypriot parents, and there were no bilingual speakers in the sample. Their ages ranged from 18 to 70 ( $M = 37.1$ ,  $SD = 11.1$ ). As regards age groups, 64 were younger than 40, while the rest (32) were 40 years old or older. It is worth noting that most participants were quite highly educated (with degrees from tertiary education or higher at 92%), while the rest (8%) had only completed secondary education. The high education level of participants may in fact be advantage, if not a *desideratum*, in this case as highly educated speakers can be reasonably assumed to be highly proficient speakers of Standard Greek, so their judgments reflect accurately the acquisition of the phenomenon in question at end state.

Regarding geographical provenance, 60 participants were of urban origin, while 36 were of rural origin;<sup>11</sup> the expectation was that the urban-rural distinction would be more relevant than precise geographical provenance for the purposes of this discussion.

## RESULTS

Overall, participants accept clefting as a focusing strategy in Standard Greek at 53%. A binomial test indicated that the

<sup>11</sup>Participant groupings into areas of origin are shown in the following table:

	M	N
Lefkosia	47%	45
Lemesos	20%	19
Larnaka	13%	12
Ammochostos	11%	11
Pafos	9%	9

Grouping of subjects according to area of origin.

observed acceptance rate of clefts (53%) was significantly different from the 50% chance level,  $p = 0.017$  (two-sided).<sup>12</sup>

A logistic regression was performed to ascertain the effects of gender, age group, education, area of origin and the urban-rural distinction on the likelihood that participants accept cleft structures in otherwise Standard Greek sentences (see **Table 1**). The logistic regression model was statistically significant,  $\chi^2(23) = 217.096$ ,  $p < 0.0005$ . The model explained 16.4% (Nagelkerke  $R^2$ ) of the variance in cleft acceptability and correctly classified 62.8% of cases.

<sup>12</sup>I am very grateful to Spyros Armostis for his invaluable help with the analysis.

**TABLE 1** | Logistic regression results.

	<i>b</i> (SE)	Sign.	Exp <i>b</i>	95% CI for exp <i>b</i>	
				Lower	Upper
<b>Included</b>					
Gender	0.913 (0.302)	0.002	2.491	1.379	4.500
Age group	2.637 (0.878)	0.003	13.969	2.500	78.046
Area (Lemesos)	-2.405 (0.498)	<0.0005	0.090	0.034	0.239
Area (Pafos)	-4.408 (1.241)	<0.0005	0.012	0.001	0.139

$R^2 = 0.095$  (Hosmer and Lemeshow), 0.123 (Cox and Snell), 0.164 (Nagelkerke).  
Model  $\chi^2(23) = 217.096$ ,  $p < 0.0005$ . Percentage of correct prediction: 62.8%.

As can be seen from **Figure 1**, males accepted clefts were 2.491 times that of females,  $b = 0.913$ , Wald  $\chi^2(1) = 9.144$ ,  $p = 0.002$ . Males ( $M = 57\%$ ) accepted clefts at *higher* rates compared with females ( $M = 51\%$ ).

The odds of older subjects ( $\geq 40$ ) accepting clefts was 13.969 times that of younger subjects ( $< 40$ ),  $b = 0.913$ ,  $W b = 2.637$ , Wald  $\chi^2(1) = 9.023$ ,  $p = 0.003$ . As can be seen from **Figure 2**, older subjects ( $M = 56\%$ ) accepted clefts at *higher* rates compared with younger subjects ( $M = 51\%$ ).

Quite interestingly, there was no statistically significant difference between subjects of tertiary and secondary education (**Figure 3**).

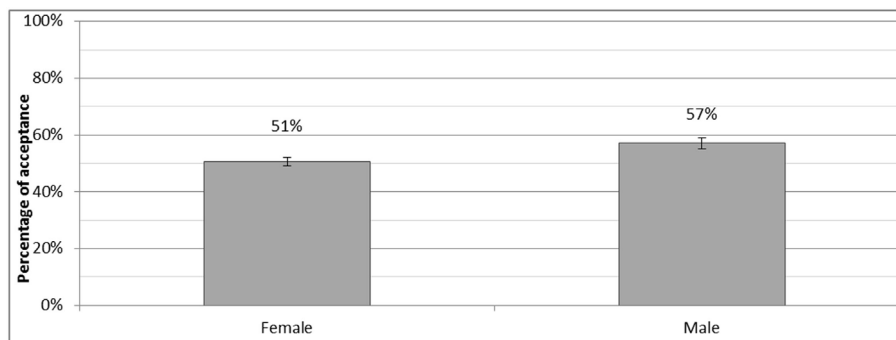
Also quite interestingly, there was no statistically significant difference between subjects of urban and rural origin (**Figure 4**).<sup>13</sup>

The data were further analyzed on the basis of cleft type. Results were as follows (**Figure 5**):

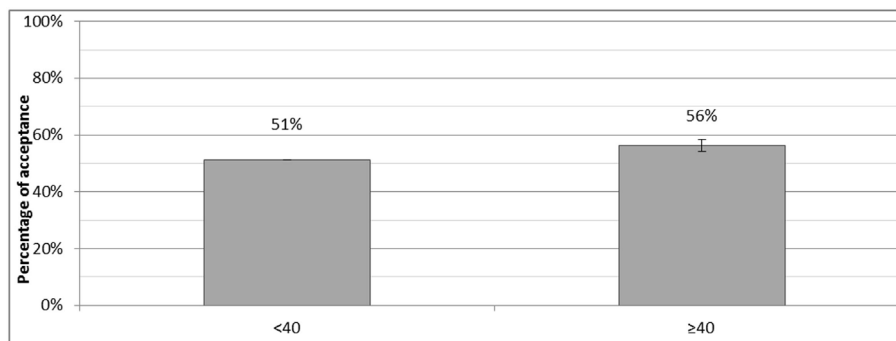
A binomial test indicated that the observed acceptance rate of *Clefted Adverbials/PPS* (41%) was significantly different from the 50% chance level,  $p = 0.014$  (two-sided).

A binomial test indicated that the observed acceptance rate of *Clefted Subjects (third person)* (68%) was significantly different from the 50% chance level,  $p < 0.0005$  (two-sided).

<sup>13</sup>As regards precise area of origin, overall this was not a predictive factor, as expected.



**FIGURE 1** | Rates of cleft acceptance as a function of gender.



**FIGURE 2** | Rates of cleft acceptance as a function of age group.

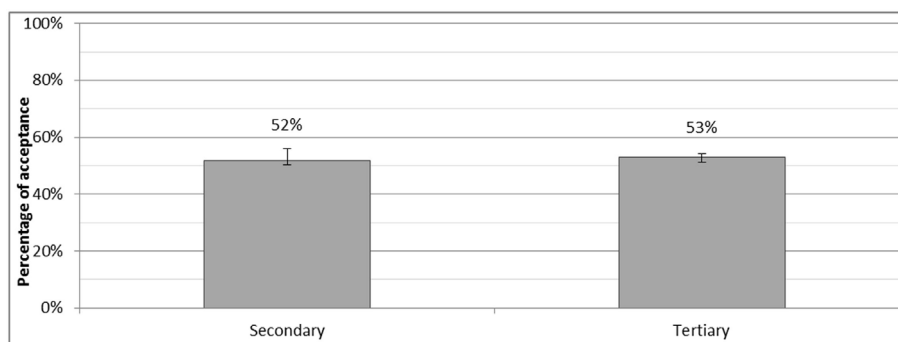


FIGURE 3 | Rates of cleft acceptance as a function of education.

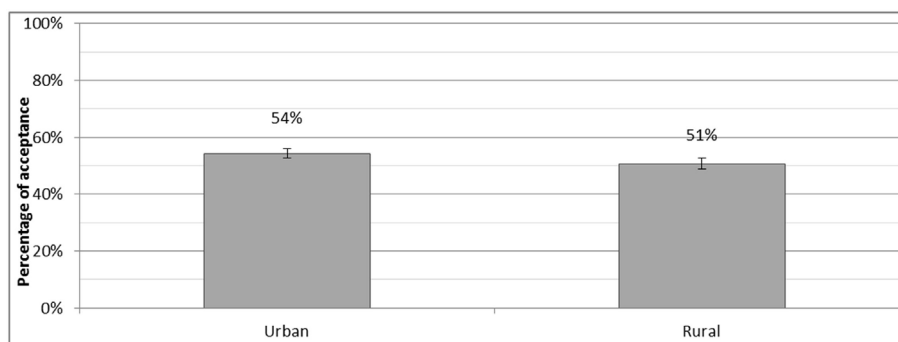


FIGURE 4 | Rates of cleft acceptance as a function of urban vs rural provenance.

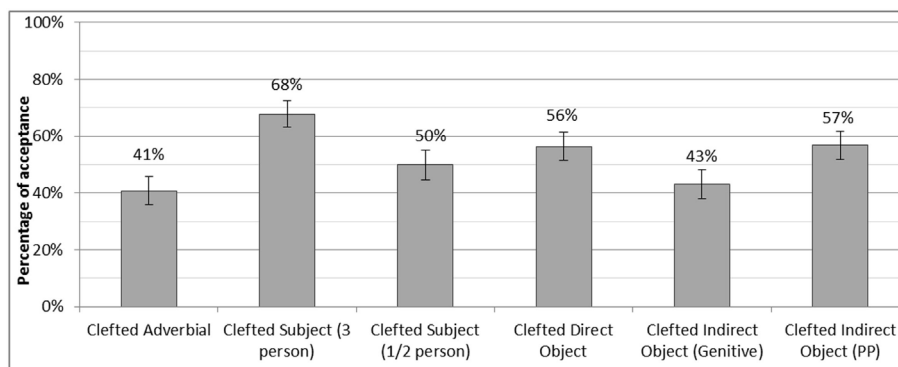


FIGURE 5 | Percentage of cleft acceptance as a function of cleft type.

A binomial test indicated that the observed acceptance rate of *Clefted Subjects (first or second person)* (50%) was not significantly different from the 50% chance level,  $p = 1.000$  (two-sided).

A binomial test indicated that the observed acceptance rate of *Clefted Direct Objects* (56%) was significantly different from the 50% chance level,  $p = 0.002$  (two-sided).

A binomial test indicated that the observed acceptance rate of *Clefted Indirect Objects with Genitive* (43%) was not

significantly different from the 50% chance level,  $p = 0.071$  (two-sided).

A binomial test indicated that the observed acceptance rate of *Clefted Indirect Objects with PP* (57%) was not significantly different from the 50% chance level,  $p = 0.071$  (two-sided).

On the basis of these findings, it appears that the acceptability of focus clefts in Standard Greek, our participants' second variety, an effect which I termed "residual clefting" in the beginning of



this article, is still quite prevalent, as is evidenced by the fact that participants performed significantly above chance.<sup>14</sup>

## DISCUSSION

A closer look at the quantitative data reveals some interesting details as regards the distribution of variation in acquisition: women and the younger age group accept focus clefts in Standard Greek less than do men and the older age group, the differences between groups being statistically significant. In other words, women and younger speakers display higher rates of convergence toward the standard than do men and the older age group.

As regards variation in acquisition depending on the type of cleft, what is rather striking is the difference in acceptability between clefted first and second vs third person subjects (50 and 68%, respectively). A possible explanation may be that participants accept to a lesser extent structures in which there is person mismatch between the “copula,” which superficially looks like a morphological third person form, and the subject, which may in turn be taken to suggest some kind of reshuffling in the grammar, in the sense that the preference for third person clefted subjects may indicate that the “copula” is treated as having agreement features (cf. the Standard Greek data in text footnote 9).

On the whole, the imperfect acquisition of the Standard Greek focusing strategy evidenced by the data and the concomitant transfer of Cypriot Greek clefting into the target variety may at first blush appear to be puzzling. In a sense, focus raising is a “simpler” strategy than clefting, which involves a more complex biclausal structure (Grohmann et al., 2006; Tsiplakou et al., 2007). Moreover, it may be reasonably assumed that the acquisition of focus movement is not underdetermined by input, as structures with syntactic focusing are quite run-of-the-mill in the standard variety. The perseverance of clefting in standard-like production is probably less hard to account for: excluding clefting would involve focusing on negative evidence (White, 1987), i.e., somehow deducing the absence of this structure in the target variety.<sup>15</sup> What needs to be accounted for independently is the acquisition deficit as regards the Standard Greek syntactic focusing strategy.

As stated in the introductory section, the problematic acquisition of syntactic focusing, as evidenced by the “residual clefting” data in the target variety, invites an approach in terms of the Interface Hypothesis, according to which adult second language acquisition of phenomena which only pertain to a particular module of grammar, e.g., syntax only, is ultimately fully achieved at end state, whereas acquisition of phenomena which pertain to an interface (e.g., syntax–semantics, syntax–pragmatics/syntax–discourse) is extremely hard to achieve and is almost never perfect. It is tempting to suggest that this is what underpins the imperfect acquisition of syntactic focusing in Standard Greek by Cypriot Greek speakers, as evidenced by the questionnaire data, as it would seem that an aspect of the syntax of the target variety which relates to the syntax–discourse interface has strong effects

on syntactic acquisition (Montrul, 2011; Sorace, 2011; White, 2011; Tsiplakou, 2014a).

Relevant research in SLA has shown that, as regards formal grammatical properties and operations in the narrow syntax, near-native competence can be reached despite the fact that these are often underdetermined by input (Tsimplici et al., 2004; Lozano, 2006, 2008, 2016; Sorace and Filiaci, 2006; Tsimplici and Sorace, 2006; Tsimplici and Dimitrakopoulou, 2007; Tsimplici and Mastropavlou, 2007; Sorace and Serratrice, 2009).<sup>16</sup> By contrast, syntactic focus movement involves operations not only in the narrow syntax but, crucially, at the syntax–discourse interface: in Greek syntactic focus movement involves an (interpretable) [+f] feature associated with an F<sup>0</sup> in an FP which is lower than C but higher than I; the syntactic reflexes of [+f] include changes in the word order, raising of the focused constituent to FP and concomitant I-to-F raising, which accounts for the fact that syntactically focused constituents occur in the immediately preverbal position (Tsimplici, 1995, 1998). Crucially, these operations need to be mapped on to the relevant information/discourse structures, which in turn involve notions such as old vs new, presentational vs contrastive focus (Kiss, 1998). A further complication is that in Standard Greek focused constituents *in situ* may be interpreted either as presentational or contrastive foci, while moved focused constituents are interpreted as contrastive foci. The acquisition of the relevant structural configurations thus involves aspects of the syntax–discourse interface and is therefore predicted to be complex, underdetermined by input, and perfect attainment is predicted to be hard to reach (Tsimplici and Sorace, 2006; Sorace, 2011). Standard Greek syntactic focus structures indeed appear to be a problematic case for acquisition, as evidenced by the persistence of transfer of focus clefts in otherwise standard(-like) production by speakers of Cypriot Greek and the level of non-native competence suggested by the data presented in this article.

## CONCLUSION

In previous work it was argued that the grammatical systems of Standard and Cypriot Greek are far from converging, and this despite leveling of local subvarieties and the emergence of a

<sup>16</sup>As was mentioned earlier, exceptional clitic placement appears to present the opposite picture from that of residual clefting for bilingual grammar(s), not only in terms of full acquisition, but also as full acquisition arguably has structural effects on the syntactic system of the first variety. It is worth posing the question whether the full acquisition of Standard Greek clitic placement can be attributed to the fact that this structural phenomenon relates to formal operations in the narrow syntax, with pragmatic or discourse considerations not bearing upon the acquisition of such operations. However, Standard Greek clitic placement relates to finiteness, with proclisis depending on full person agreement on T (Mavrogiorgos, 2010, 2013; cf. Neokleous, 2015) or, alternatively, to verb movement to Mood or above (Agouraki, 1997, 2001; Terzi, 1999; cf. Uriagereka, 1995); in other words, in available analyses the formal operation of clitic placement also seems to involve some aspect of the syntax–semantics interface. It is worth exploring whether the differential acquisition of cliticization and syntactic focusing may be related to the fact that in the former interfacing takes place between modules of the grammar and involves formal semantic features that are arguably internal to the grammar (e.g., Mood) while in the latter interfacing also takes place between grammar and discourse, which makes for more vulnerable acquisition [as is argued, e.g., in Tsimplici and Sorace (2006), Sorace and Serratrice (2009), and Sorace (2011)].

<sup>14</sup>On optionality as non-native attainment see Sorace (2000, 2005, 2006).

<sup>15</sup>A confounding factor may be the availability in Standard Greek of structures such as those discussed in text footnote 9.

pancypriot *koine* which displays grammatical hybridity; in this article the suggestion was taken up that grammatical hybridity is achieved through standard-like morphological choices while the syntax of the base variety remains intact and this suggestion was explored further by examining syntactic focusing in acrolectal, standard-like production. It was shown that speakers do not achieve native-like attainment as regards Standard Greek focus movement at end state, as evidenced by the prevalence of Cypriot clefts in acrolectal, standard-like production and related acceptability judgments. An attempt was made to show that imperfect acquisition of this core area of Greek syntax may be captured by the Interface Hypothesis and the difficulties for acquisition posed by phenomena at the syntax–discourse interface. Exploring and accounting for different levels of attainment in a second, related

variety along such theoretical lines in turn yields a richer understanding of gradient bilectalism.

## ETHICS STATEMENT

This study was carried out in accordance with the recommendations of the “Cyprus National Bioethics Committee” with written informed consent from all subjects. All subjects gave written informed consent in accordance with the Declaration of Helsinki.

## AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

The author confirms being the sole contributor of this work and approved it for publication.

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**Conflict of Interest Statement:** The author declares that the research was conducted in the absence of any commercial or financial relationships that could be construed as a potential conflict of interest.

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