

## LINGUISTIC AND SOCIOLINGUISTIC ASPECTS OF A RHODIAN GREEK VARIETY <sup>1</sup>

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### 1. Introduction – The case study – Issues examined

This paper examines aspects of the linguistic repertoire of the bilingual in Greek and Turkish Muslim community of Rhodes. More specifically, we examine the structure of a Greek-based pidgin variety used by members of this community and the sociolinguistic parameters of its use. It is based on research conducted in an *ethnographic framework* (see also Georgalidou, Spyropoulos & Kaili 2004 and Georgalidou, Kaili & Celtec 2005) and aims at:

- describing the structure of this Greek-based pidgin variety with emphasis on the structural interference from Turkish
- exploring the impact of *social networks* on the variation and change observed in the codes used by the community (Gumperz 1982, Milroy & Li Wei 1995, Zentella 1997, Milroy 2002).

### 2. About the community

- ✓ Muslims of Rhodes are Greek citizens of Turkish origin who have been living in Rhodes since 1522.
- ✓ They mainly resided in the castle -today's Old Town- but smaller groups also settled in the country and engaged in farming.
- ✓ From 1522 till 1912 Dodecanese was part of the Ottoman Empire and the people of Turkish origin, or the Ottomans as some people even today call themselves, were the dominant group.
- ✓ In 1912 the Italians occupied Dodecanese islands and the Turks were recognized as a religious community (1912-1943).
- ✓ They became Greek citizens after the annexation of the Dodecanese islands in 1947.
- ✓ They were not deemed as covered by the Treaty of Lausanne, but special status was acknowledged as far as the Vakf and the schools were concerned.
- ✓ The teaching of the Turkish language in Muslim schools was *de facto* abolished in 1972 as a counter measure for the shutdown of the Greek schools of Tenedos and Imvros (Tsitselikis & Mavrommatis 2003).

#### Today:

- ✓ Estimated population: 2500-3000 people on the island of Rhodes.
- ✓ Muslim students of Turkish origin attend public schools and the Turkish language is mainly used within the community, as it is not formally taught or used in transactions with the Greek-speaking majority neither in formal or informal contexts.
- ✓ As a consequence, in the last 50 years almost the entire Muslim community has shifted from near monolingualism in Turkish to bilingualism in Turkish and Greek.

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- ✓ As it will be discussed subsequently, older speakers, who are fluent in the local variety of Turkish, also use a pidgin variety of Greek (i.e. a *contact vernacular*, in the sense of Winford 2003: 236), based on the local Greek dialect of Rhodes with substantial interference from Turkish. Later generations use a variety of Greek with less interference (the *intermediate variety*). This interference is gradually fading away to the near or completely native varieties of younger generations.
- ✓ The shift towards native Greek varieties in urban settings precedes the shift in suburban and rural settings by one generation.
- ✓ There are different proficiency levels in Turkish among members of the community
- ✓ Near monolingualism in Greek has traditionally been the case for all members of the subgroup of Muslims of Cretan origin, as well as for Muslims that originate from specific rural areas where the number of Turkish population was minimum.
- ✓ Linguistic competence in Turkish among members of the children generation group is a matter that requires further research. All children in our data exhibit preference for Greek as well as at least passive knowledge of Turkish.
- ✓ As a consequence, there is variable mastery of both languages within the community depending on historical, social and individual factors.

### 3. The research procedure

- ✓ We examine two subgroups of the Muslim minority community of Rhodes, one residing in the city of Rhodes and the other in a suburban settlement a few kilometers away from the city
- ✓ Ethnographic data collection procedures → they allow us to obtain a realistic picture of: (a) patterns of language use, (b) patterns of the informal social organization, i.e. networks operating in the community (see also Gumperz 1982, Milroy & Wei 1995), (c) patterns of contrast between the urban and the suburban environment, and their impact on the linguistic repertoire of the community
- ✓ Linguistic and social information were derived from *participant observation* carried out by two of the researchers (both Rhodian natives, one of them member of the minority community and a bilingual himself), which has been going on for more than two years
- ✓ Linguistic data were collected/recorded mainly during “coffee time”. This is a well-established social practice that aims mainly at preserving contact between the members of close-knit networks of family and friends. Also, part of the data consists of lunchtime conversation between members of the nuclear family (parents-children) in the urban setting.
- ✓ The aim was mainly to collect linguistic data that would allow the analysis of patterns of language use by community members who belong to different age groups, so that they could be juxtaposed to the structure of their personal networks.
- ✓ The analysis is based on 20 hours of conversations with and among 17 speakers at the urban setting, members of 4 partially overlapping *exchange networks* (Milroy & Wei 1995) and 19 speakers at the suburban setting, all of them members of an overlapping kinship network that resides within definable territory.
- ✓ The age span of the participants is as follows:
  - 13 speakers born between 1930 and 1954 who are now grandparents (6 in the suburban setting, 7 in the city) (the grandparents generation)
  - 15 speakers born between 1955 and 1972 who are now parents (9 in the suburban setting, 6 in the city) (parents generation)
  - 8 speakers born between 1980 and 1990 who are the children and the grandchildren of the other two groups (4 in the suburban setting, 4 in the city) (children generation)

## 4. The analysis

- ✓ We analyze the grammatical properties of the Greek varieties used by the members of the community. More specifically, we identify the linguistic features that distinguish successive generations of speakers and can serve as indices of linguistic change.
- ✓ We relate the shift from a pidgin variety of Greek used by the older speakers in the sample to the more standard varieties of the younger generations to the change in the structure of community networks, which is related to macro political and socioeconomic changes.

### 4.1. Varieties of Greek used by members of the community

#### 4.1.1. The pidgin variety

- ✓ Substratum: The Greek dialectic variety of Rhodes, which belongs to the South-Eastern dialectic group of Greek (Kontosopoulos 1994, Trudgill 2003)
- ✓ Interference: Phonological & morphosyntactic structure of Turkish

Grammatical structures that exhibit interference from Turkish

#### MORPHOLOGY

Structure 1: Confusion and/ or avoidance of gender marking by using the default gender value of neuter.

- evyale to peθameno, troi  
took.out-3SG the-NT.ACC dead-ACC eats  
'S/he dug out the dead and ate him'
  - to iðia ora  
the-NT.SG same-FEM.SG time-FEM.SG
  - a proskalesume a (e)rti o xotzas mia vradi  
SUBJ invite-1PL SUBJ comes the xotza a-FEM.SG night-NT.SG  
'Let us invite the xotza come some night...'
  - mia mera o liko endamose me to alepu  
one day the-MASC wolf met-3SG with the-NT fox-FEM  
'One day the wolf met the fox'
- ✓ Greek: nominal elements are morphologically specified for gender (masculine, feminine, neuter). Gender is marked on the article of the noun phrase.
  - o kalos anθropos  
the-MASC good-MASC man-MASC
  - i kali yineka  
the-FEM good-FEM woman-FEM
  - to kalo peði  
the-NT good-NT child-NT
- ✓ Turkish: no gender marking
  - iyi adam  
good man
  - iyi kadın  
good woman

- c. iyi çocuk  
good child

Structure 2: Words consisting of a turkish stem + greek endings

- (4) xazmevo ‘digest’ ← xazm (< *hazmetmek* ‘to digest’) + evo

SYNTAX

Structure 3: Omission or inconsistent use of the article

- (5) yeneka pjo arya ekatse, nomizo, antras pjo γριγoρα  
woman-NOM more late sat-3SG think-1SG man-NOM more quickly  
‘The wife sat down later, I think, and the husband earlier’

- ✓ Greek: Nouns are modified by articles when definite or plural generic (Holton et al. 1997).
- ✓ Turkish: No articles (Lewis 2000)

Structure 4: No agreement between adjective and noun. Adjective in a fixed form of neuter nominative

- (6) a. meγalo θia  
big-NT.NOM aunt-FEM.NOM  
‘the elder aunt’
- b. irte skilos ... pinasmeno ita  
came-3SG dog-NOM hungry-NT.NOM was  
‘The dog came ... it was hungry’

- ✓ Greek: The adjective agrees with the noun in number, gender and case (see example 2)
- ✓ Turkish: The adjective does not inflect, so no agreement can be observed (see example 3)

Structure 5: The syntax of NPs with a numeral: [NP numeral + noun in singular]

- (7) ishe ðio tria peretria  
had-3SG two three servant-SG  
‘S/he had a couple of servants’

- ✓ Greek: the noun agrees with the numeral in number

- (8) ixē ðio tris iperetries  
had-3SG two three servant-PL  
‘S/he had a couple of servants’

- ✓ Turkish: numeral + noun-singular

- (9) iki üç kitap aldım  
two three book bought-1SG  
‘I bought a couple of books’

### Structure 6: Verb final word orders

- (10) a. afto nomizi xotza ine...  
it-NOM.SG thinks xotza is  
'she thought that it was the xotza...'
- b. sineteros tu erkete  
partner-NOM his comes  
'his partner came'
- c. aftos epese ke eneka epese, orea kimunte  
he fell-3SG and woman fell-3SG well sleep-3PL  
'He went to bed and his wife went to bed and they slept well'

- ✓ Greek: free word order with predominant SVO and VSO. Greek is a head initial language
- ✓ Turkish: a head final language with SOV predominant order

### Structure 7: Omission of adpositions marking the syntactic functions of indirect object and locative

- (11) a. en imba mayazi tu eyo  
NEG entered-1SG shop his I  
'I didn't enter his shop'
- b. spiti tu itan ðipla minare  
house his was next minaret  
'His house was next to the minaret'
- c. ipe yineka tu eyo a pao kinii  
said-3SG woman his I FUT go-1SG hunting  
'He told his wife "I will go hunting"'

- ✓ Greek: locative and indirect object functions are marked by the preposition *se* 'in, to'
- ✓ Turkish: locative and indirect object functions are marked by locative and dative endings on the noun.

### Structure 8: Postpositions instead of prepositions

- (12) ulo ruxa evale nero mesa  
all-NT.PL.ACC clothes-NT.ACC put-3SG water inside  
'She put all the clothes in the water'

- ✓ Greek: head initial language → prepositions
- ✓ Turkish: head final language → postpositions

### Structure 9: Omission of the subjunctive marker *na* in subordinate subjunctives

- (13) a. sikoθike xeretisi mazi mbamba  
stood.up-3sg greet-3sg with father  
'He stood up in order to greet (somebody) with his father'
- b. arkinikse munta  
started-3sg attack-3sg  
'It started attacking (her)'

- ✓ Greek: subordinate clause may employ subjunctive verb groups (*na* + verb form)
- ✓ Turkish: subordinate clauses employ either infinitive or verbal noun

### Structure 10: Omission of complementizers and conjunctions

- (14) afto nomizi xotza ine...  
it-NOM.SG thinks xotza is  
'she thought that it was the xotza...'

- ✓ Greek: subordinate clauses are introduced by the relevant complementizer or conjunction
- ✓ Turkish: no complementizers (with the exception of *ki*)

### Structure 11: Confusion in the syntax of *exo* 'have' and *iparxi* 'there is'

- (15) a. ishe enan antropo, peðia en ishe, ishe parayio, ishe oreo mayazi  
had-3SG a-MASC man children NEG had-3SG apprentice had-3SG nice shop  
'There used to be a man, who had no children, (but) he had an apprentice (and) he had a nice shop'  
b. lamba ishe palia  
lamb had-3SG past  
'In the past, there used to be lambs'

- ✓ Greek: two different verbs for each construction
  - possessive construction: verb *exo* 'I have'

- (16) *exo/exis/exi/exume/exete/exun* ena kipo  
have-1SG/2SG/3SG/1PL/2PL/3PL a-ACC garden-ACC

- existential construction: verb *iparxi* 'there is'

- (17) a. *iparxi* enas kipos  
there.is a-NOM.SG garden-NOM.SG  
b. *iparxun* poli kipi  
there.are many-NOM.PL garden-NOM.PL

- ✓ Turkish: *var* for both the existential and possessive constructions
  - possessive

- (18) bir bahçe-m/-n/-si/-miz/niz/-leri var  
a garden-1SG/2SG/3SG/1PL/2PL/3PL VAR

- existential:

- (19) a. bir bahçe var  
a garden VAR  
b. çok bahçe var  
many garden VAR

### Structure 12: Absence of weak pronouns (clitics)

- (20) a. evyale to peθameno, troi  
took.out-3SG the-NT.ACC dead-ACC eats  
'S/he dug out the dead and ate (him)'

- b. ala ixē mbrosta sto rofudzo mia γramiθia, tesera atoma agaliazane etsi  
 but had-3SG in.front of-the shelter one oak tree four men embraced-3PL so  
 ‘But there used to be an oak tree in front of the shelter, which could only be  
 embraced by four men’

✓ Greek: weak pronouns (clitics) are used to refer back to something present in the discourse

- (21) efera ta vivlia ke ta evala sto trapezi  
 brought-1SG the books and them put-1SG on-the table  
 ‘I brought the books and put them on the table’

✓ Turkish: strong pronominal form or no pronoun is used to refer back to something present in the discourse

- (22) kitapları getirdim ve masaya koydum  
 books-ACC brought-1SG and table-DAT put-1SG  
 ‘I brought the books and put (them) on the table’

#### PHONOLOGY

Structure 13: Intervocalic /k/ voicing and /g, γ/ deletion (productive, categorical)<sup>2</sup>

- (23) *intervocalic voicing and deletion*

- |    |                            |                        |                                     |
|----|----------------------------|------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| a. | ce <sup>ν</sup> enéka      | ce jinéka (Rh.Gr)      | ‘and woman’                         |
| b. | a <sup>ν</sup> ámis        | na kámis (Rh.Gr)       | ‘do-2SG.SUBJ.PRES’                  |
| c. | xrónja <sup>ν</sup> alatás | xrónja γalatás (Rh.Gr) | ‘for many years (he was) a milkman’ |

- (24) *intervocalic deletion*

- |    |      |               |                 |
|----|------|---------------|-----------------|
| a. | élee | éleye (Rh.Gr) | ‘say-3SG.PAST’  |
| b. | aníi | aníji (Rh.Gr) | ‘open-3SG.PRES’ |

✓ Turkish intervocalic voicing and deletion

- (25) a. çocuk + I → çocuğu [tʃodʒuu]  
 child + ACC  
 ‘the child’  
 b. jinekolog + A → jinekologa [zinekoloa]  
 gynecologist + DAT  
 ‘to the gynecologist’

COMMENT: intervocalic voiced fricative deletion is a widespread phenomenon in the dialects of the Dodecanese, and, especially, in the dialect of Rhodes (Papachristodoulou 1986). The rule is attested in the speech of our informants as well. However, intervocalic /γ, g/ deletion applies to domains larger than the word, as shown by the examples in (23). This way it contrasts with intervocalic fricative deletion of the type attested in the dialect of Rhodes, which is limited to the domain of the phonological word, e.g. *foúme* < *fovúme* (Rh.Gr). Moreover, it applies to delete velars that are the product of intervocalic voicing (23b). It is likely that language contact in this respect was assisted by the existence of a similar rule in the substratum Rhodian variety.

<sup>2</sup> All speakers have it.

Structure 14: Interdental and velar fricatives → stops, especially before another C or word initially (variation).<sup>3</sup>

(26)	a.	télo	θélo (St.Gr)	‘want-1sg.pres’
	b.	mígdala	amíγðala (St.Gr)	‘almond-NOM.PL’
	c.	fév̥ji	fév̥ji (St.Gr)	‘go away-3SG.PRES’
	d.	érkete	érçete (St.Gr)	‘come-3SG.PRES’
	e.	otomanós	oθomanós (St.Gr)	‘Ottoman-NOM.SG’

✓ Turkish lacks fricatives

Structure 15: Vowel harmony -- restricted to the first two or last two syllables of the word (unproductive)<sup>4</sup>

(27)	a.	jenéka	jinéka (St.Gr)	‘woman-NOM.SG’	(initial: sonority-driven)
	b.	zúlja	zílja (St.Gr)	‘envy-NOM.SG’	(final: backness)

Cf. Cappadocian and Megisti Greek<sup>5</sup> (Revithiadou *et al.* in press):

(27) *initial domain (sonority-driven harmony)*

a.	tsunúrjo	cenúrj-o	‘new’ Meg, P105
b.	luturja	liturj-á	‘liturgy’ Meg, P105
c.	lakáni	lekán-i	‘basin’ Sil, Ko30
d.	mayalóna	meyalón-a	‘first toe’ Sil, Ko30

(28) *final domain (back harmony)*

a.	águra	ájir-a	‘anchor’ Meg, P102
b.	sutsá	sic-á	‘fig tree’ Meg, P108
c.	fúma	/f̥im-a/	‘fame’ Meg, P102
d.	ómurxa	/ómixl-a/	‘mist’ Sil, Ko61

#### 4.1.2. The intermediate variety

- ✓ Most resistant interferences are those related to (a) gender confusion, (b) head final constituent order (SOV orders and postpositions), (c) special lexical items (*var* constructions and words with a Turkish stem and Greek endings) and (d) absence of weak pronouns.
- ✓ The specific status of each of the structures with interference
  - Structure 1: limited to a partial gender confusion
  - Structure 2: attested
  - Structure 3: disappears
  - Structure 4: disappears
  - Structure 5: disappears
  - Structure 6: limited to copula, existential and possessive constructions (the last two correspond to *var* constructions)
  - Structure 7: disappears
  - Structure 8: attested
  - Structure 9: limited appearance

<sup>3</sup> Just a few examples in all the speakers examined.

<sup>4</sup> Few examples in one ‘anomalous’ intermediate (see section 4.2.1) and one grandparent speaker.

<sup>5</sup> The Megisti data are drawn from Pantelis (2002) and the Silly data are drawn from Kostakis (1968).

- Structure 10: limited appearance
- Structure 11: limited to partial confusion
- Structure 12: attested
- Structure 13: attested (productive)
- Structure 14: limited appearance (variation)
- Structure 15: almost disappeared

✓ An additional interference: uvular /q/ before the back low vowel /a/

(29)	a.	qátsane	kátsane	‘sit-3PL.PAST’
	b.	qafé	kafé	‘coffee-NOM.SG’
	c.	vríqane	vríkane	‘find-3PL.PAST’
	d.	miqrá	mikrá	‘small-NOM.PL’
	e.	qárvuna	kárvuna	‘coal-NOM.PL’

(30) *Turkish*

- |    |       |        |          |
|----|-------|--------|----------|
| a. | kahve | [qavé] | ‘coffee’ |
| b. | kar   | [qar]  | ‘snow’   |

## 4.2. Social networks in the study of minority ethnic communities

Social networks operating in minority/ immigrant bilingual communities (Milroy 2002)

- ✓ Definition: An individual’s social network is the aggregate of relationships contracted with others. Strong network ties correspond to network closure whereas weak network ties correspond to network openness.
- ✓ General principle: Analysis of change in the operation of social network mechanisms which support localized linguistic codes (i.e. close-knit networks) can illuminate the phenomenon of linguistic change.
- ✓ Bilingual communities are seen as a variant of the same general principle: networks constituted chiefly of strong ties function as a mechanism to support minority languages. When networks weaken, language shift is likely to take place.

Characteristics of the linguistic repertoire of minority bilingual communities

- The creation of *contact vernaculars*, which involves a stage of continuing interaction and competition among individual interlanguage grammars that is eventually resolved into a shared communal system. The degree of borrowing and mixture is determined by the behavioral norms and network structures of each community (Winford 2003: 236).
- Members of minority groups usually become bilingual in the host language or shift entirely to it, often by the third generation. Children born in the 3<sup>rd</sup> generation acquire native proficiency in the host language → the three-generation shift pattern (Milroy & Wei 1995, Zentella 1999, Winford 2003).
- Language choice patterns
- Systematic *code-switching*

### 4.2.1 Varieties used by different generations of speakers in the close-knit neighborhood type suburban network of our sample

The grandparents generation

- ✓ consistent use of the pidgin variety

- ✓ participation in the same close-knit extended family network whose members live within a definable territory
- ✓ interaction networks mainly consist of members of the same ethnic group → most people with whom this group interacts are speakers of Turkish
- ✓ Two “anomalous” speakers: use of the intermediate variety
  - one of the oldest members of the group, who became a wage earner and therefore participated in Greek interaction networks in the professional domain.
  - the youngest female in the group (today 57 years old) systematically contracts loose-knit network ties with individuals of Greek origin

#### The parents generation

- ✓ consistent use of the intermediate Greek variety
- ✓ participation in the same close-knit extended family network whose members live within a definable territory
- ✓ due to the rapid growth of tourism and the service industries, family income is derived from non-farming sources too → the dependence of this group on in-group socioeconomic and friendship networks has decreased
- ✓ interaction networks maximize contact with native speakers of Greek and enhance shift to standard forms
- ✓ two “anomalous” speakers: native speaker ability in Greek
  - one is married to a Greek – a rare occurrence
  - the other is the daughter of the “anomalous” female in the grandparents generation → she has been participated in mixed ethnic interaction networks from a very young age

#### The children generation

- ✓ native speaker ability in Greek
- ✓ participation in the same close-knit extended family network whose members live within a definable territory
- ✓ their interaction networks consist of members of both ethnic groups
- ✓ they have graduated from, or still attend monolingual state schools
- ✓ they contract strong personal ties with native speakers of Greek, who are members of their peer group
- ✓ no “anomalous” speakers

### **4.2.2 Varieties used by different generations of speakers in the city networks of our sample**

#### The grandparents generation

- ✓ consistent use of the intermediate variety
- ✓ participation in the same overlapping exchange networks of people with the same ethnic origin
- ✓ their interaction networks consist of members of both ethnic groups
- ✓ two “anomalous” speakers: use of the pidgin variety (their ties with non-minority networks are rare)
  - the oldest male of the grandparents generation in the sample (74 years old)
  - the youngest female of the grandparents generation in the sample (51 years old)

#### The parents generation

- ✓ native speaker ability in Greek
- ✓ participation in the same overlapping exchange networks of people with the same ethnic origin
- ✓ their interaction networks consist of members of both ethnic groups

- ✓ they are either wage earners or small time entrepreneurs, whose success depends on their urban ties with people that do not necessarily share their family and ethnic history
- ✓ they contract strong personal ties with native speakers of Greek who are members of their peer group
- ✓ no “anomalous” speakers

#### The children generation

- ✓ native speaker ability in Greek
- ✓ participation in the same overlapping exchange networks of people with the same ethnic origin
- ✓ their interaction networks consist of members of both ethnic group
- ✓ they have graduated from, or still attend monolingual state schools
- ✓ they contract strong personal ties with native speakers of Greek who are members of their peer group
- ✓ no “anomalous” speakers

#### **4.2.3. The dimension of education**

- ✓ After 1972, the attendance of monolingual state schools introduces children to literacy in the Greek language as well as to the mainstream Greek-speaking society from a very early age.
- this reinforces
  - the acquisition of Greek
  - the formation of extensive interaction networks with Greek speakers
  - the development of friendship networks with strong ties among their members (all of the 8 teenager speakers of our sample had ‘best friends’ of Greek origin).
- ✓ This is the case for both the suburban and the city dwellers

### **5. Results – Conclusions – Extensions**

*Table 1: The linguistic repertoire of the community*

		PIDGIN	INTERMEDIATE	NATIVE
SUBURBAN	GRANDPARENTS	✓		
	PARENTS		✓	
	CHILDREN			✓
URBAN	GRANDPARENTS		✓	
	PARENTS			✓
	CHILDREN			✓

More specifically:

- ✓ The dominant Greek varieties quickly replace the pidgin variety used by older speakers
- ✓ There is a difference in the linguistic repertoires of the grandparents and parents generations in relation to the urban vs. suburban setting. Grandparents and parents generations in urban settings have already abandoned the pidgin variety and progressed to the intermediate and native Greek varieties respectively
- ✓ The younger generation in both groups (speakers below 30) exhibit native proficiency in Greek
- ✓ The three-generation shift pattern observed in bilingual minority communities also applies to the community under study.
- ✓ Concerning other aspects of the community linguistic repertoire, systematic code alternation is observed in the grandparent and parent generation groups in the urban networks, as well as in the parent generation group of the suburban network. Also, bilingual speakers switch to either

Greek or Turkish to accommodate addressee's preferred language or in relation to the context of the interaction (Georgalidou, Kaili & Celtec 2005).

Extensions for further research

- ✓ Part of an on-going project
- ✓ Examination of Turkish varieties
- ✓ Code-switching by younger generations of speakers
- ✓ Issues of language and identity

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