Ideologies of Heritage Language Hybridity Among Return Migrants

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Περίληψη

Αυτή η μελέτη διερευνά τις γλωσσικές και πολιτιστικές εμπειρίες των μετεγκατεστημένων Ελλήνων της διασποράς ως ενήλικες στην Αθήνα. Χρησιμοποιώντας αφηγηματική προσέγγιση, αναλύουμε τις περιγραφές των ομιλητών για τις γλωσσικές τους πρακτικές και συγκεκριμένα την υβριδική γλωσσική ποικιλία "Grenglish" που χρησιμοποιείται στις δασπορικές τους κοινότητες. Μέσα από τις περιγραφές προβάλλουν τυπικές γλωσσικές ιδεολογίες περί «ανόθευτων και παραφθαρμένων» ελληνικών. Η γηγενής ποικιλία κρίνεται ως πιο σύγχρονη και κοσμοπολίτικη, ενώ οι ποικιλίες της διασποράς συνδέονται με μια κουλτούρα «κολλημένη στο παρελθόν». Αυτή η μελέτη αποτελεί μια συμβολή στην ελληνική γλωσσολογία τεκμηριώνοντας τις διασπορικές ποικιλίες και τις ιδεολογίες που σχετίζονται με την κοινωνιογλωσσική παραλλαγή στα νεοελληνικά.

Λέξεις - Κλειδιά: *Ελληνοαμερικανός, γκρίκλις, γλωσσικές ιδεολογίες, αφήγημα, παλιννόστηση, κοινωνιογλωσσολογία*

1 Introduction

Over the past couple decades, dramatic changes in communication technologies, the global economy, and ethnopolitical boundaries have resulted in increasingly complex flows of people and resources on a global scale. These flows have had profound effects on linguistic diversity, not just in terms of the emergence and disappearance of varieties, forms, and uses of language; they have also created new and at times conflicting hierarchies and ideologies associated with these varieties (Arnaut et al 2015, Blommaert 2010).

In the context of globalization, migration is no longer assumed to be a unidirectional journey with a fixed start and endpoint, and the concepts of immigration and emigration have given way to transmigration (Schiller et al 1995), which emphasizes how migrants' material and symbolic resources are drawn from and affect both home and host cultures. With this orientation comes increased reflexivity, in which speakers explicitly display their heightened consciousness of their liminal status in relation to the modern concepts of language, place, and belonging.

Speakers who find themselves at these intersections are asking the same questions that have long been at the heart of sociolinguistic inquiry: What does it mean to be multilingual in transnational spaces? And how does this alter the way mobile speakers define their communities and identities? We investigate these questions through an analysis of interviews with transmigrants about their views on language, culture, and identity as they go through the migration process.

2 Diasporic return to Greece

While Greece is a nation that has historically been associated with emigration and diaspora, the nation has also received a large pool of immigrants over the past couple decades. While the majority of these hail from former Soviet bloc countries and Asia, Greece has also become home to many ethnic Greek return migrants from the diaspora, including many Anglophone countries including the United States, the United Kingdom, and Australia. This trend has contributed to the "superdiverse" (Vertovec 2007) cosmopolitan society of current-day Athens, and has heightened the indexical potential of the Greek language as a marker of ethnic heritage and belonging, or as a symbol that separates "good" and "bad" migrants in a multiethnic and multilingual setting (Christou & King 2006).

Against this backdrop, our current study examines how ethnic Greek returnees to Greece describe and evaluate their linguistic repertoires, and specifically, the hybrid language variety "Grenglish" that was spoken in the diasporic communities of their upbringing. Past studies on return migration to Greece have highlighted the multiple and conflicting senses of identity among returnees (Christou 2006, Christou & King 2006). Our inquiry into their specific attitudes toward language in the diaspora and homeland reveal that while some participants frame the linguistic variation they observe as simply a matter of regional or register differences, others invoke standard language ideologies, describing differences in terms of "pure versus impure" or "standard versus corrupt" Greek. In particular, our examination of metalinguistic discourse reveals that speakers' illustrations of Grenglish aligns with their discussions of other cultural differences between homeland and diasporic cultures.

3 Data

Our data collection began in 2014 in the form of semi-structured interviews and is ongoing. This study reports results from 12 interviews conducted with diasporic Greeks– 10 Americans, 1 Englishman, and 1 Australian, who were either currently living in Greece at the time of the interview, or had spent extended periods in Greece as adults. The first author interviewed 2 participants in the United States and England, the second author interviewed 8 participants in Athens, and the co-authors conducted one joint interview (in person and via Skype). Participants were recruited via personal and professional networks and through snowballing. The matrix language of the interview was English, as the participants were recruited through English-speaking institutions, but code-switching into Greek was not discouraged and occurred in many interviews when the second author, a native speaker of Greek, was present. The interviews lasted between 20 and 50 minutes with the average length of 34 minutes and all were subsequently transcribed.

The selection of excerpts analyzed in the present study focus on participants' discussions of variation between their diasporic varieties and the Greek language they encountered upon moving to Athens. We take a sociolinguistic approach to the analysis of personal narrative (De Fina & Georgakopoulou 2011, Wortham 2001), focusing on how participants position themselves (Bamberg 1997) vis-à-vis their multiple

communities in interaction, and how take stances toward their linguistic repertoires (DuBois 2007), through which they authenticate and delegitimate (Bucholtz & Hall 2005) different varieties of the Greek language and how they index Greek identity.

Many of these examples involve "Grenglish" words and grammatical patterns. In general, participants expressed initial surprise at the discovery that what they had previously believed was "regular Greek" was in fact a hybrid variety specific to their diasporic community of origin.

4 Analysis

The first narrative excerpt we consider comes from an interview with Theresa[1], a student in her mid-twenties who grew up in a Greek community in Boston. She describes becoming aware of variation in Greek at a young age through the juxtaposition of the Greek she heard at home—a northern dialect spoken by her mother—and the one she encountered at Greek school, which she attended at the local Orthodox church:

(1) I remember, just by picking up on little things like,
I would hear my teacher say certain things
and I'm like "Why is she saying that?"
And it- and I'd tell my mom and she'd be like,
"It's common to say that where she's from."
Like, in maybe sort of in that region in Greece and-
Things my mom would say that other people would find odd,
was because of where she grew up in Greece
and I'm like "Okay."
I started to differentiate when I was young,
I'd be like "Alright, you're speaking different!"

In this excerpt, Theresa compares her mother's variety with that of her Peloponnesian Greek teacher. Later in the interview, Theresa also discusses having learned about register variation from exposure to these two contexts, giving the example of the two forms of the third person plural form of the verb 'eat'—formal *έφαγαν* versus informal *φάγανε.* She describes having learned about which forms were "proper": in her view, the proper form was taught in her Greek school, and what she describes as "slang" forms were ones that she learned in her family.

Theresa is atypical in our sample in that she is the only participant to report an awareness of any type of variation in Greek before she moved to Athens as an adult. However, throughout the interview, she conflates register and regional variation into one cline of "proper-slang". It is important to note that she does not exhibit any personal affective stance toward different varieties of Greek; instead she just voices her discovery in epistemic terms ("Alright, you're speaking different!"). By contrast, the majority of participants in this study did not express awareness of language variation until they moved to Athens as adults, but they did show strong evaluative orientations toward the varieties.We'll now turn to examine narratives of returnees' discoveries of linguistic differences when they moved to Greece, and their stances toward the varieties. The

[1] Pseudonyms are used for all participants to protect their anonymity.

following discovery narrative comes from Daisy, a Greek-American in her seventies who only came to Greece for the first time when she was 60 years old. Here, she describes some of the linguistic and culture "shocks" she experienced when she first arrived in Greece:

(2) The other thing I was shocked
because I was associating with people
who are professors and- and diplomats etcetera
((hh)) I'd be talking and they would go into hysterics
and I would say to them, "What are you laughing about."
Because *I* did *not* know that I was speaking Greek English…
How would I know that, because this is part of what I learned
as I was growing up?
And so the first time they went into hysterics on me
was when I said to them "*Moovare το κάθισμα*[2]." ('Move the seat')
They said "τι ('What')?" ((laughs))
So now if I do that they'll tell me what the word is.
μετάφερε το κάθισμα ('Move the seat'), Okay.
But I- how would I know that?

In this story, Daisy provides some background about the status of her Greek friends as a preface to her narrative about unknowingly using a Grenglish form—"moovare" rather than μεταφερε—and being laughed at by her friends. In contrast to Theresa, Daisy frames the difference between these varieties in terms of a social class distinction, through her reference to her interlocutors' white-collar professions as "professors and diplomats etcetera." Next, Daisy displays an affective stance through the repetition of the rhetorical question, "How would I know that?" However, despite Daisy's report of initial incredulity, she expresses no negative orientation toward either language variety or toward the speakers who teach her the "correct" forms.

Considering the age difference between Daisy and Theresa, which is almost 50 years, the difference in their awareness of language variation before arriving in Greece is not surprising. While Theresa reports growing up with easy access to Greek radio, television, and internet resources in her home, Daisy's upbringing in the same diasporic community was during a time when communication between Greece and the diaspora was relatively limited. But while the contrast between Theresa and Daisy can be attributed to generational differences, we also encountered narratives told by participants of other ages who construe their repertoires—and specifically the hybrid Grenglish—in conflicting ways. The following passage is excerpted from an interview with Dora, a psychology professor who moved to Athens from New York several years earlier. In response to the interviewer's request for examples of Grenglish, she responds as follows:

(3) U::m ((sucks teeth)) *mapizo, mapizo to flori*? ('mop, mop the floor')
Nah, huh, huh!
και τα κλίνουμε κανονικά, έτσι, ('and we decline them normally, like')
mapizo, mapizis, mapizi. e:: mapizoume, ('I mop, you mop, he mops. Um, we mop')
ξε- κανονικά! ('you kn- normally!')

[2] Grenglish forms are transcribed in Latin script and italicized, followed by the English gloss in parentheses. Modern Greek forms are transcribed in Greek script, followed by the English gloss in parentheses.

Mapizo, ('I mop')
έχει πάρα πολλά και το ξέχασα τώρα γιατί είναι πολύς καιρός ('I have forgotten now because it has been a long time')
but, *mapizo, flori, rufi* ('I mop, floor, roof')
τι άλλο, και όταν πηγαίνω πίσω τ 'ακούω πάλι και γελάω, ('What else, and when I go back I listen to them again and laugh,')
'Coz now I understand it, 'coz I, ah when I came here, Alexandre,
I didn't know that those words were not Greek *words*?
Like I didn't get it, until people were looking at me like "What're you talking about?"
Like it's a word, my mother uses it.
And the people would say "No::, that's not a Greek word!
That's a mix of the two, languages."

Here, Dora recounts her realization that the Greek she spoke at home with her first-generation parents was distinct from the Modern Greek spoken in Athens today, illustrating her family's phrase for "mop the floor", in which English lexical items are adapted to the morphology and phonotactics of Greek. In this story, Dora presents her linguistic trajectory as a personal narrative, in which she learned "true" Modern Greek upon moving to Athens, while her family members, who represent an earlier generation of Greeks that moved to the US in the 1970s, remain in the past, still unaware (or simply ambivalent to the fact) that their language is different from the homeland variety. However, Dora does not delegitimate the hybrid language of her youth nor her Greek American identity (Bucholtz & Hall 2005), but rather positions her former self as simply unaware of these differences. She also presents continuity with this former self (Bamberg 2011) through first person plural reference and present tense markers when she says τα κλίνουμε ('we decline them').

Dora then continues in standard Greek to say 'when I go back I listen to them again and laugh'. On the one hand, she defends her own former use of Grenglish through her defiant response to her native Greek friends when she first arrives in Greece, but at the same time, she also laughs at her native Greek parents and diasporic community in New York, who continue to use these forms today. Her stance-taking (DuBois 2007) in this passage is complex; she oscillates linguistically between epistemic and affective stancetaking strategies, which are seemingly dependent on which "centre of authority" (Blommaert 2010) to which Dora is oriented to at the moment. Through this polycentric positioning, she deftly alternates between voicing a diasporic identity of the past, and an enlightened returnee of the present.

This narrative presents different levels of linguistic trajectories of Dora's biography. From a personal perspective, Dora moves from a diasporic place as a hybrid Grenglish speaker to the ancestral place, where she becomes a speaker of "pure" Greek. However, the *newer* language in Dora's personal history is the *older* language in the larger imagined ancestral history of the Greek language. We have found that returnees orient to these space-time trajectories, or chronotopes (Bakhtin 1981, Blommaert 2015, Woolard 2013), in multiple and layered ways.

The following example of a participant's demonstration of Grenglish comes from Beatrice, a psychologist and social worker in her thirties who moved to Athens from Boston around the same time as Dora:

(4) And with family I think even now my parents because they're older,
an-I see for example my father who-who came recently to visit,

and so he sometimes uses, English, words
or there are certain words that we learned,
that don't exist in the Greek language?
This is the known Grenglish?
Um I'll give you some examples, uh, like for example
I thought the word for um an air fan was *fena*?
but it's ανεμιστήρα ('fan'),
or um, for elevator, which is ανελκυστήρας ('elevator') is *elevetora*?
a::h- or for example, truck instead of φορτηγό it was *traki*,
you know so there are certain words like that that they never,
because what happened with technology, let's say,
um they sort of made their own language there.
So, th-you know I had to sort of re- still, to this day I have to tell them
"It's not *fena,* it's ανεμιστήρας[3]."

Like Dora, Beatrice describes Grenglish lexical items that she once used and are still used by her parents who have remained in the United States. However, the evaluative element of this narrative departs substantially from Dora's; rather than simply "laughing" at the forms she now recognizes as Grenglish, Beatrice describes her obligation to *teach* her parents correct Greek, thus authenticating her own Greek identity and evaluating her language as a purer variety than that of her native-born parents. This positioning reveals a nexus of standard language ideologies (Milroy 2001, Woolard & Schieffelin 1994). First, Beatrice's preference for these terms illuminate a purism associated with Greece's distant past, since these words are etymologically fully Greek, without influence from English or other languages. This is especially apparent when one considers her choice of the term for elevator—ανελκυστήρας—over the synonymous ασανσέρ, which is a Greek borrowing from French. Meanwhile, a second place-based purist language ideology emanates from this narrative, as Beatrice places higher value on the language associated with the geographic homeland rather than her diasporic place of origin.

Through this story, Beatrice maps out a chonological trajectory where the homeland is not just the "older" space in terms of the lived experience of the generation of emigrants, but is also "older" in terms of being less industrialized—that is, without modern conveniences and innovations like fans, elevators, or trucks. We argue that this particular example that Beatrice provides is likely ideologically rather than experientially motivated, given that in other parts of her interview, Beatrice describes her parents' social standing as upper-middle class in Greece before they immigrated to the US in the 1970s, so it can be assumed that they had access to—or at least familiarity with—the modernities she discusses here.

The final narrative excerpt returns to Daisy, who throughout much of the interview, presents herself as the "englightened Greek American", with epistemic claims related to both Greek and American culture, which she presents from the perspective of the "Other". Below, Daisy discusses her culture shock when she first arrived in Greece, which she views as more modern than her diasporic community:

(5) What Greeks did that went to America,
they created a Greek ghetto with everything- nothing changed from the thirties.

[3] Note that Beatrice is inconsistent in her use of the nominative case ending in the two demonstrations of the Greek word ανεμιστήρα(ς) in this excerpt.

So when I came to Greece and I expected that it would be the way we had everything in America.
Wow e- e- G-Greece moved on?!...
America's still stuck in the th- in thirties and forties,
you have any αμα έχεις χοροεσπερίδα, ('when there is a dance party')
ότι έχεις έχουμε τ- τα ('you have we have th- the')
Greek dances ((claps hands))
That's it?!..
Here [in Greece] it's only when there is a presentation or something going on…
Secondly, I was shocked ελληνίδες εδώ δεν κάνουν όλα τα- τα ('Greek women here don't make all the- the')
um uh uh τα ('the') sweets που εμείς όλα- ('that we all-')
There's no bakery so everybody knows how to go- cook all the Greek sweets.
'N here nobody does it.
You go to the: ζαχαροπλαστίο ('pastry shop') you go to the- στο φούρνο ('to the bakery') and you buy everything okay.
It was just the *cultural* things that *we* have a static Greek mentality there [in America] that doesn't move on.

Daisy portrays Greek Americans as decades behind Greece, culturally speaking, by citing examples of stereotypical performances of Greekness in the diaspora like performing traditional dances or preparing traditional sweets in the home, while the Greeks she has met in Athens have "moved on" by embracing modern entertainment and consumer culture. The contrast that she sets up through describing these cultural differences can be argued to authenticate her identity as more ethnically or culturally Greek than nonmigrant Greeks on one hand, within a frame of traditionalization (Bauman & Briggs 2003). On the other hand, her negative attitude toward the traditional nature of diasporic Greeks as having a "static mentality" illustrates her ambivalent stance, and the value she places on modernization. She uses this knowledge of the evolved Greek culture—as well as her display of knowledge of the Greek language—to negatively evaluate the diasporic traditions. Interestingly, Daisy's contrast of modern Athens and traditional diasporic culture contrasts with Beatrice's representation of her parents' trajectory, whom she characterized as moving from a rural, traditional village in Greece to the modern, industrialized diaspora. These chronotopes of modernities and non-modernities (Dick 2010, Koven & Marques 2013) overlap and intersect in complex ways when the personal experiences of return migrants are projected as individual facets of a larger wave of biographical history (Irvine & Gal 2001, Woolard 2013).

5 Conclusion

Through a close examination of participants' evaluative metalinguistic discourse on Greek varieties and customs associated with the homeland and diaspora, we have demonstrated that returnees orient differently to homeland and diasporic varieties. While some returnees frame linguistic differences between varieties in non-evaluative terms, others' attribute difference to class distinction. Their current bidialectal repertoires give them a unique vantage point, and in some cases, their linguistic dexterity gives rise to the construction of a more "cosmopolitan" identity than either their homeland or diasporic peers.

Returnees view their familial trajectories in terms of various chronotopes, as either personal, autobiographic journeys or as a unit in a larger sociohistorical wave of migration. Within these chronotopes (Bakhtin 1981, Blommaert 2015, Woolard 2013), their descriptions of standard Greek language and authentic Greek culture can be plotted along multiple axes of time and place: While the homeland is valued for its "older" history, it is also the "newer" place in the personal history of return migrants, and it is the locus of modern Greek culture, against which diasporic communities are esteemed as "stuck in the past."

This study contributes to Greek linguistics by documenting diasporic varieties and ideologies associated with sociolinguistic variation in Modern Greek. It also adds to the growing body of sociolinguistic literature on language and globalization by demonstrating how transmigrants polycentrically align themselves with home and host societies through metalinguistic discourse, and how they negotiate ambivalent orientations to the language varieties, ideologies, and cultural norms associated with the homeland and diaspora. Finally, it sheds light on how speakers plot the substrates of their hybrid linguistic repertoires along multiple scales—as relics of the homeland's illustrious ancient past; as indicators of a rural, agrarian familial past; or as indexes of progressive, cosmopolitan individual identities.

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Appendix: Transcription Conventions

-	False start
:	Elongated vowel
<u>text</u>	Emphatic tone
,	Continuing intonation, as in mid-sentence
?	Rising intonation, as in a question
..	Pause
…	Omitted talk