

Voice in Greek Diaspora

Personal fieldwork from spontaneous speech in Argentina and Australia provided the data to be presented in this paper. The central question of the entire project is to examine how Greek in Diaspora has changed in regards to grammatical structures in general, and whether the observed attrition in the two Greek Ethnolects, Australia-Greek and Argentina-Greek, is due to the hosting languages, English or Spanish (Zombolou 2009). In this paper, however, we will focus on Voice phenomena, such as deponents, passives, reflexives/reciprocals, and anticausatives.

Greek adults of second and third generation in Diaspora tend to overgeneralise: (a) deponents are used with the active form (1), (b) anticausatives I bearing the active form are used with the non active form when an agent is present or salient (2), (c) anticausatives II bearing the non active form are used with the active form when the agent is unspecified (3), (d) not fully, or not, accepted passives are passivised (4), and (e) verbs expressing reflexivity/reciprocity periphrastically only are reflexivized/reciprocalized by the non active form (5) (see also data in Seaman, 1972; Koukoulas, 1993; Katsigianni, 1996; Tamis, 2006; Antonopoulou et al., 2006).

The data in (1) to (5) raise the question whether these ethnolect variations are based on Language Contact or obey the Universal Economy Principle (in terms of Thomason, 2001; Aikhenvald, 2006, and further references therein; see also Trudgill, 1986; Barbiers and Cornips, 2002; Cornips and Corrigan, 2005; Köpcke, 2007; Schmid, 2009; Sitaridou and Terkourafi, 2009). The Language Contact hypothesis, in the sense that languages which are in contact are likely to become gradually more like each other, can be supported by the facts that English and Spanish (a) lack deponents, (b) do not show morphological ambiguity for anticausatives, (c) passivise and reflexivise without particular semantic restrictions, unlike Greek (Zombolou, 2004; see also Kalluli, 2006).

Nevertheless, much data from L2 within Greece, as well as L1 acquisition, provide evidence for the Language Economy Hypothesis, in the sense that a language accepts foreign structural elements only when they correspond to its own tendencies of development; in other words and as Triantafyllidis (1953: 275) already put it: "[...] we can't blame Greeks in Diaspora for their language since these errors are according to the general rules and the tendencies of our language. The difference is that in Diaspora these errors might occur more often because of insufficient input from reading and schooling."

More concretely, deponents are used with the active form also by 12-14 year-old Turkish and Pomakian (minority in Greece) children (6), just like Greeks in Diaspora (Ampati et al., 2004; Iordanidou and Ampati, 2007). Furthermore, spontaneous speech studies report that monolingual 3-6 year-old children also use deponents with the active form (Stephany 1997). In addition, Greek monolingual adults already use deponents with the active form, as data from newspapers show (7) (Newspapers Ta NEA, 9.07.2008; Papangeli and Lavidas, 2007: 10). Finally, many verbs are reported as deponents in some dictionaries of Modern Greek while the same verbs are reported as non deponents in some others (Zombolou 2004; 2008; in progress). Similarly, an overgeneralisation of the active form over the non active form is observed for anticausatives II by (a) L2 9-11 year-old children in Greece (native speakers of English) (8) (Ampati and Iordanidou 2002), (b) L1 monolingual 2;7-4;3 year-old children; data from spontaneous speech (Stephany 2007), as well as experimental studies (9) (Driva & Terzi, 2008; Zombolou et al., 2010; see also Tsimpli, 2006). Finally, Greek native speakers recently have tended to passivise verbs that are not fully accepted (10) (Newspapers Ta NEA, 17.01.2009). Therefore, while there are arguments supporting the Language Contact Hypothesis, the data in (6) to (10) provide much stronger evidence for the Language Economy Hypothesis.

