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Spoken varieties of Greek and Turkish in the Muslim bilingual community of Rhodes

1 Introduction

In this paper, we examine aspects of the linguistic repertoire of the bilingual in Greek and Turkish Muslim community of Rhodes. We examine the structure of a Greek-based pidgin variety used by members of this community and the sociolinguistic parameters that underline its use. In addition, we discuss instances of interference of Greek to the Turkish variety used by the same group of speakers. More specifically, we describe the structure of the Greek-based pidgin variety as well as the local Turkish variety used by Rhodian Muslims with emphasis on the structural interference from Turkish and Greek, respectively. Our research is conducted within an ethnographic framework (see also GEORGALIDOU, SPYROPOULOS/KAILI 2004 and GEORGALIDOU, KAILI/CELTEK 2005) and aims at exploring the impact of social networks on the variation and change observed in the codes used by the community.

The *social network* approach to sociolinguistic variation is based on research carried out within both monolingual and bilingual communities. It is used to explore the impact of macro and micro aspects of social organization, i.e. the political and socioeconomic changes, and the structure of personal social networks, in relation to the linguistic choices made by their members (GUMPERZ 1982, MILROY/WEI 1995, ZENTELLA 1997, MILROY 2002). An individual's social network is defined as the aggregate of relationships contracted with others. Strong network ties correspond to network closure, whereas weak network ties correspond to network openness. As a point of departure we take the *General Principle* that applies to both monolingual and bilingual speech communities, which states that analysis of change in the operation of social network mechanisms which support localized linguistic codes or minority languages (i.e. close-knit networks) can illuminate the phenomenon of linguistic change (MILROY 2002). Networks that consist primarily of strong ties function as a mechanism to support minority varieties and languages. When networks weaken, language shift is likely to take place.

Another aspect of the linguistic repertoire of bilingual communities that is of importance to the present study is the creation of *contact vernaculars*. This involves a stage of continuing interaction and competition among individual interlanguage grammars which 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). Also, minority bilingual communities often exhibit the *three-generation shift pattern* (MILROY/WEI 1995, ZENTELLA 1997, WINFORD 2003), as their members become bilingual in the host language or shift entirely to it. This is particularly attested in third generation speakers, who normally acquire native proficiency in the host language.

In this paper, we study the contact phenomena observed in the speech of the Muslim community of Rhodes taking into consideration its macro- and micro-social organization and, especially, the three generation shift pattern. More specifically, we analyze the grammatical systems of the Greek and Turkish varieties used by the community as these are depicted in the speech of different age groups, which crucially

belong to different social networks. Furthermore, we discuss the linguistic markers of the language shift patterns observed within the community in relation to the political and social changes that affect the linguistic repertoire of its members.

Our study focuses on two subgroups of the Muslim community of Rhodes, one residing in the city of Rhodes and the other in a suburban settlement a few kilometers out of the city. The ethnographic data collection procedures allow us to obtain a realistic picture of patterns of language use. More importantly, they provide the necessary means to explore patterns of informal social organization (i.e. networks operating in the community, see also GUMPERZ 1982, MILROY/WEI 1995) and patterns of contrast between the urban and the suburban environment. Linguistic and social information was collected by means of *participant observation* for a period of three years (2003-2005). Two of the authors, both Rhodian natives, participated in this phase of the research. One of them was a member of the minority community and a bilingual himself. Linguistic data were collected mainly during "coffee time", a well-established social practice that aims mainly at preserving contact between the members of close-knit networks of family and friends. Part of the data was also collected during lunchtime conversations between members of the nuclear family (parents-children) in the urban setting. The aim was mainly to gather linguistic data that would permit the analysis of patterns of language use in relation to the structure of the personal social networks and the age of the participants.

The analysis is based on a sample of 20 hours of recorded conversations with and among (a) 17 speakers at the urban setting, who are members of 4 partially overlapping *exchange networks* (MILROY/WEI 1995) and (b) 19 speakers at the suburban setting, who are all members of an overlapping kinship network that resides within definable territory. The age span of the participants is as follows:

a. 13 speakers born between 1930 and 1954 who are now grandparents (6 in the suburban setting, 7 in the city) (*grandparents generation*)
b. 15 speakers born between 1955 and 1972 who are now parents (9 in the suburban setting, 6 in the city) (*parents generation*)
c. 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*)

2 About the community

Rhodian Muslims are Greek citizens of Turkish origin who have been living in Rhodes since 1522. They mainly resided in the castle (Old Town), although a few smaller groups settled in the country, where they were engaged in farming activities. From 1522 till 1912 Dodecanese was part of the Ottoman Empire and the people of Turkish origin were the dominant group. In 1912, the Italians occupied the islands of the Dodecanese and the Turks were recognized as a religious community (1912-1943). They became Greek citizens after the annexation of the Dodecanese islands to Greece in 1947. They were not deemed as covered by the Treaty of Lausanne, but special status was acknowledged to them as far as the Vakf and the schools were concerned. Nevertheless, the teaching of the Turkish language in Muslim schools was *de facto* abolished in 1972 (see also TSITSELIKIS/MAVROMMATIS 2003).

Today, the estimated population is approximately 2500-3000 people. Muslim students of Turkish origin attend Greek-speaking public schools. Turkish is mainly used within

the community, since it is not formally taught nor used in any transactions with the Greek-speaking part of the local population. As a consequence, in the last 60 years almost the entire Muslim community has shifted from near monolingualism (Turkish) to bilingualism (Turkish and Greek). 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), which is based on the local Greek dialect of Rhodes with substantial, however, interference from Turkish. Later generations use a variety of Greek with a lesser degree of Turkish interference (*intermediate variety*). This interference gradually gives way 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. This tendency is reinforced by the attendance of monolingual state schools which introduce children to literacy in the Greek language from a very early age. This situation reinforces the acquisition of Greek and the formation of extensive interaction networks with Greek speakers. Furthermore, it enhances the development of friendship networks with strong ties among their members in both the suburban and the urban members of the community.

As far as the Turkish varieties are concerned, 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 negligible. Linguistic competence in Turkish among members of the children generation group is a topic that requires further investigation. In our corpus, all children exhibit preference for Greek although they may have passive knowledge of Turkish. As a consequence, there is a variable degree of competence in both languages within the community, depending on historical, social and individual factors.

3 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 serve as indices of linguistic change. We associate the shift from a pidgin variety of Greek, which is used by the older speakers, to the more standard varieties of the younger generations with the change in the structure of community networks. Moreover, we present instances of interference of Greek to Turkish in order to illustrate the fact that linguistic interference has affected important grammatical structures that differentiate the local variety from standard Turkish.

3.1 Interference of Turkish to Greek
3.1.1 The pidgin variety

The pidgin variety has a Rhodian Greek basis but, at the same time, exhibits profound interference from Turkish at all grammatical levels. In this section, we provide some representative cases of interference from morphosyntactic and phonological structures.

Structure 1: Avoidance of gender marking by using neuter as the default:

(1) to   íðia   óra   'the same time'
      the-NT.SG same-FEM.SG time-FEM.SG

Structure 2: Omission or inconsistent use of the article:

(2) γenéka   pió arγá ékatse,   nomízo, ándras   pió γríγora
      woman-NOM more late sit-PAST.3SG think-1SG man-NOM more quickly
      'The wife sat down later, I think, and the husband earlier'

Structure 3: Lack of agreement between adjective and noun:

(3) meγálo   θía   'the elder aunt'
      big-NT.NOM aunt-FEM.NOM

Structure 4: Verb final word orders:

(4) aftós épese   ke enéka épese,   oréa kimúnde
      he   fall-PAST.3SG and woman fall-PAST.3SG well sleep-3PL
      'He went to bed and his wife went to bed and they slept well'

Structure 5: Omission of adpositions marking the syntactic function of indirect object:

(5) ípe   γinéka   tu eγó a páo   kiníi
      say-PAST.3SG woman-ACC his I FUT go-1SG hunting-ACC
      'He told his wife "I will go hunting"'

Structure 6: Postpositions instead of prepositions

(6) úlo   rúxa   évale   neró   mésa
      all-ACC.PL clothes-ACC put-PAST.3SG water-ACC inside
      'She put all the clothes in the water'

Structure 7: Omission of complementizers and conjunctions in subordinate clauses:

(7) aftó nomízi xótza   íne…
      it   think-3SG xotza-ACC be-3SG
      'She thought that it was the xotza…'

Structure 8: Use of éxo 'have' instead of ipárxi 'there is' in existential structures:

(8) lámba íʃe   paliá
      lamb have-PAST.3SG past
      'In the past, there used to be lambs'

Structure 9: Absence of weak pronouns (clitics)

(9) alá íxe brostá sto   rofúdzo miá γramiθiá, tésera
   but have-PAST.3SG in.front of-the shelter-ACC one-ACC oak tree-ACC four
   átoma   agaliázane   étsi
   man-ACC.PL embrace-PAST.3PL so
   'But there used to be an oak tree in front of the shelter, which could only be
   embraced by four men'

Structure 10: Interdental and velar fricatives are realized as stops:

(10) a. télo   θélo (St.Gr)   'I want'
      want-1SG
   b. érkete   érxete (St.Gr)   'S/he comes'
      come-3SG

Structure 11: Vowel harmony, usually restricted to the first two syllables of the wordQ

(11) γenéka   γinéka (St.Gr)   'woman'

3.1.2 The intermediate variety

The intermediate variety exhibits only a subset of the structures described above. The more persistent ones are related to (a) gender-marking avoidance, (b) head final constituent order (SOV orders and postpositions), (c) the existential use of the verb *exo* 'to have', and (d) the absence of weak pronouns. Table 1 summarizes the exact status of the relevant cases of interference:

Structure 1	limited to a partial gender confusion
Structure 2	extinct
Structure 3	extinct
Structure 4	limited to copula, existential and possessive constructions
Structure 5	extinct
Structure 6	attested
Structure 7	limited appearance
Structure 8	limited to partial confusion
Structure 9	attested
Structure 10	limited appearance
Structure 11	almost extinct

Table 1. Interference in the intermediate variety

3.2 Interference of Greek to Turkish

An interesting finding in the data of our corpus is the existence of interference to the opposite direction. In particular, certain structures from Greek are transferred to the Turkish variety spoken by the members of the community.

A very common type of interference is the direct translation of Greek idioms to Turkish. For instance, the Greek idiom in (12a) directly translates in Rhodian Turkish as (12b). In Standard Turkish, this expression literally means 'I take a telephone' whereas the intended meaning of (12a) is expressed by the sentence in (12c).

(12) a.   pérno tiléfono   *Greek*
                take-1SG phone-ACC
                'I give a call'
      b.   telefon al-mak   *Rhodian Turkish*
                phone   take-INF
                'to give a call', lit. 'to take a telephone'
      c.   telefon et-mek   *Standard Turkish*
                phone make-INF
                'to make a telephone call'

Another characteristic type of interference is the avoidance of causative constructions. More specifically, the community members use example (13a) with both an agentive and causative reading. Significantly, in Standard Turkish, the sentences in (13a) has only the agentive interpretation; the causative reading must be expressed with the relevant causative marker (i.e. *-Dir* in this case), as illustrated by the sentence in (13b).

(13) a.   saç-ım-ı   kes-ti-m
                hair-1SG-ACC cut-PAST-1SG
                'I cut my hair' and 'I had my hair cut'
      b.   saç-ım-ı   kes-**tir**-di-m
                hair-1SG-ACC cut-CAUS-PAST-1SG
                'I had my hair cut'

Finally, in Rhodian Turkish yes/no questions sometimes lack the characteristic question particle *-mI* and are simply rendered with the Greek intonational pattern of questions:

(14) a.   ders-ler-in-i   yap-tı-n?
                lesson-PL-2SG-ACC study-PAST-2SG
      b.   ders-ler-in-i   yap-tı-n   mı?
                lesson-PL-2SG-ACC   study-PAST.2SG Q-PART?
                'Have you done your homework?

4 The sociolinguistic distribution of the Greek varieties[1]
4.1 The close-knit neighborhood type suburban network

The group of informants residing in a suburban area forms a close-knit overlapping kinship network with strong ties among its members. In this network, the members of the grandparent generation consistently use the pidgin variety, although there are still people among them who are monolingual in Turkish. These are mainly elderly women who had minimal contact with people of different ethnic origin. With respect to the

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[1] For a more detailed analysis see also GEORGALIDOU, SPIROPOULOS/KAILI 2004.

interaction networks of this age group, they mainly consist of members of the same ethnic group, that is, speakers of Turkish.

In the same network, the parent generation makes consistent use of the intermediate Greek variety. Apart from their participation in the same close-knit extended family network, their interaction networks maximize contact with native speakers of Greek and enhance shift to standard forms. This is due to the rapid growth of tourism and the service industries that resulted in less dependence on in-group networks, given that family income is nowadays derived from non-farming sources as well. The children generation exhibits native speaker ability in Greek since children attend monolingual state schools and, consequently, their interaction networks include members of both ethnic groups. It is important to note that all informants of this age group have contracted strong personal ties with peers who are native speakers of Greek.

4.2 The city networks

With respect to varieties used by members of the city networks, we observe that the shift towards Standard Greek has already taken place in the city one generation prior to that observed in the suburban network. As a result, the grandparent generation makes use of the intermediate variety. Accordingly, the parent generation exhibits native speaker ability in Greek. Although they both participate in the same overlapping exchange networks of people of the same ethnic origin, their interaction networks consist of members of both ethnic groups. They are usually either wage earners or small scale entrepreneurs whose success depends on their urban ties with people of different family units and ethnic backgrounds. Moreover, they all have established strong personal ties with native speakers of Greek of their peer group. As it is expected, the children generation also exhibits native speaker ability in Greek. They participate in the same network types as their grandparents and their parents, but they also contract strong personal ties with native speakers of Greek, especially at the monolingual state schools.

5 Summary and conclusions

The linguistic repertoire and the language shift patterns observed in minority bilingual communities are closely related to the macro and micro aspects of social organisation. The present study has particularly focused on the community networks of the bilingual in Greek and Turkish Muslim community of Rhodes. This community consists of speakers of different generations and members of urban and suburban networks. We have followed a broad variationist perspective in describing the structure of community networks in a non-quantitative way (GUMPERZ 1982, MILROY/WEI 1995, ZENTELLA 1997). More specifically, we examined the structure of a Greek-based pidgin variety used by members of this community and the sociolinguistic parameters that determine its use and explored the shift towards intermediate and standard varieties of Greek.

The pidgin and the intermediate varieties are the result of the prolonged contact between the Turkish and the Greek speaking communities, which has led to shared communal systems that are variably used by the speakers. Taking the major political event of the annexation of the Dodecanese islands to Greece as a starting point, we observed that the change in the status of the community had an impact on the varieties used by its members and initiated the gradual shift towards standard Greek varieties. More specifically, even though the first generation of speakers, i.e. the people born between

1930 and 1954, use the pidgin or the intermediate varieties, the younger generations, whose personal networks involve people of different ethnic origin, have already shifted to the use of standard Greek varieties. However, the members of the parent generation in the suburban network have not followed this shift and use the intermediate variety, since their community network ties still remain strong. The younger generations, which consist of speakers below the age of 30, exhibit native proficiency in Greek in both the urban and the suburban groups. We therefore conclude that the dominant Greek varieties quickly replace the pidgin and intermediate varieties used by older speakers both inside and outside of the city. This change follows the *three-generation shift* pattern, which is also observed in other bilingual minority or immigrant communities (MILROY/WEI 1995, ZENTELLA 1997).

Finally, we made a first attempt to define some structures of interference of Greek to the Turkish variety spoken by the members of the community. Extending this line of research to the opposite direction will help us acquire a more comprehensive picture of the sociolinguistic parameters that control the use of the Rhodian Turkish variety as well.

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