

Refugees, Heritage languages and Language Attrition



Programme

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Themistoklis Papadopoulos

The Languages of Immigration in Greece and their Educational Status

The present study examines the languages of the immigrant populations in modern Greece. Since 1990, many European and other populations immigrated to Greece. The successive governments had to review their linguistic and educational policy in order to help the immigrants become adjusted to new conditions in the Greek society. As far as the immigrant populations are concerned, many changes took place in the last few years. The two main reasons for this transitions are the economic crisis and the arrival of a big number of refugees from the Middle East. The aim of this study is to analyse the linguistic and educational policy of the Greek state which was applied to the immigrant and refugee populations until now and to juxtapose it with the current situation of the so called new minority languages in Greece.

Themistoklis Papadopoulos obtained PhD in Applied Linguistics (Université Paris 3 Sorbonne Nouvelle), specialized in language policies and multilingualism/multiculturalism in modern societies. Independent researcher. Publications: 6 in French, 2 in English, 2 in Greek

Liliana Correia

Heritage language use, attitudes and intergenerational language transmission within Portuguese families living in Germany

According to the United Nations (2019), nearly 272 million people live in a country in which they were not born. As migration flows intensify, contact between languages/cultures also increases and the number of individuals who grow up exposed to more than one language/culture significantly becomes larger, making host societies progressively more multilingual and multicultural (Guardado, 2018). Nevertheless, although the protection and promotion of multilingualism/multiculturalism are part of the agenda of international organisations such as the UN/UNESCO (2003) and the Council of the European Union (2009), many societies still foster assimilation attitudes which do not value the linguistic and cultural diversity of minority groups (Faneca, 2013; Romaine, 2010). Having to deal with multiple socioeconomical and political issues associated with the hosting of the increasing number of migrants, several host countries relegate to second plan questions related to the preservation of the language of origin of their new

citizens, making its intergenerational transmission and maintenance (almost) the sole responsibility of migrant families. In fact, parents have been reported in the literature as the key players in the intergenerational transmission of the language of origin (i.e., the heritage language (HL)), since they “are the first HL contact for second generation immigrant children and the main source of HL for those children” (Brown, 2011:31). Thus, whether the transmission/acquisition of the HL is a successful process seems to be highly dependent on several factors related to HL practice within migrant families as well as to the valorisation of the minority language by its speakers and host societies (Montrul, 2016; Pearson, 2007).

In this talk, we are going to present data from a recent research focused on HL use, attitudes and intergenerational language transmission within Portuguese families living in Germany – a country which hosts 123 thousand Portuguese-born migrants (Pires *et al.*, 2018). Twenty-six Portuguese-migrant families with 6-10-year-old children participated in this study. Parents filled in a sociolinguistic and language attitude questionnaire. Children participated in a face-to-face structured interview centred on their attitudes towards the languages under acquisition. Children also participated in two experimental tasks (Costa, 2011; Cunha, 2011) aimed at assessing their HL proficiency (receptive and productive vocabulary).

Results show that all the parents consider the transmission/maintenance of the HL important and encourage (to different degrees) their children to use it. Rationale and strategies for transmitting the HL vary from parent to parent. Integrative motivations (i.e., communication with extended family members and Portuguese-speaking peers; transmission/maintenance of the culture of origin) are at the core of the rationale presented by most of the parents. Language use in the home, HL classes, and spending holidays in the country of origin are the most-used strategies to transmit the HL. Regarding the children, most of them hold positive attitudes towards the acquisition of the HL, with 46% showing a preference for speaking the HL. Affection, cultural affiliation, and communication with Portuguese speakers (mainly relatives) are the stated reasons for the aforementioned preference. Nevertheless, some children also reported feeling ashamed of speaking Portuguese when among native speakers due to their self-perceived low proficiency level in the HL. As for societal attitudes, the host country does not seem to hold unfavourable attitudes towards the transmission/acquisition of Portuguese - only two parents (8%) reported having been advised not to speak Portuguese with their children. However, some children (15%) reported having been prohibited from speaking Portuguese at school. The main results from statistical analyses show positive correlations between: (i) caregivers’ attitudes towards the HL and the amount of HL use in the home; (ii) children’s attitudes towards the HL and the quantity of HL use in the home/their productive vocabulary knowledge; (iii) vocabulary knowledge and the children’s HL language experience.

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Liliana Correia holds a master's degree in Portuguese as Foreign or Second Language. Currently, she is a PhD student in Language Sciences (Applied Linguistics) at University of Minho. Her research interests focus on Heritage Bilingualism, namely on the lexical development of heritage speakers of European Portuguese.

Pedro Guijarro-Fuentes & Cristina Suárez-Gómez

Tense and Aspect in Bilingual Speakers of English as Heritage Language and World Englishes

English heritage language speakers have been exposed to English since childhood and have acquired the language at home. English is one of their first languages, but they have other dominant languages. The proficiency level and command of English differs, because it is used as a home language and they may not have received any formal instruction. Their English frequently exhibits features comparable with language contact situations, such as code-switching and language attrition. Regarding speakers of World Englishes, these are also products of language contact and acquisition processes. These varieties have also emerged in multilingual settings and their speakers also show different levels of proficiency. The purpose of this presentation is to build bridges between both varieties. We will present an experimental study with sequential and simultaneous child heritage speakers in adulthood on the acquisition of Tense and Aspect. The experimental study will be complemented by an original pilot study to check whether the previous results hold for English-Spanish bilinguals from Mallorca (Spain). Based on two linguistic tasks with a total of 100 speakers, we observe child HS, regardless of their degree of bilingualism, perform like monolingual L1 speakers, and generally outperform L2 learners. Regarding World Englishes, these varieties are independent and go beyond the specific influence(s) of the languages in contact in that they show nativized features which can be further analysed in the light of cognitive determinants of learning. As to the expression of Tense and Aspect, these are also challenging grammatical features in the acquisition process which mainly depend on a semantic-pragmatic context that is constrained by time specifications. We will demonstrate that despite their own idiosyncrasies, there is a shared core in both types of English, as a Heritage Language and

as Postcolonial Languages, justified by cognitive factors of learning and language contact.

Pedro Guijarro-Fuentes is a Professor in Spanish linguistics at the University of the Balearic Islands and has headed multiple projects on the acquisition of various phenomena on Spanish language. He has authored and co-authored numerous journal articles, book chapters and books, published by various international publishers and in high impact journals. He has organized many professional meetings and has been a participant in many professional conferences.

Cristina Suárez-Gómez is a Senior Lecturer of English Linguistics at the University of the Balearic Islands. She has participated on multiple projects on language variation and change in English and World Englishes. Her main areas of research are English historical syntax, English historical sociolinguistics, dialectal variation in English, from both synchronic and diachronic perspectives, and morphosyntactic variation in World Englishes.

Christoph Gabriel & Jonas Grünke

Patterns of language dominance in German-Turkish heritage bilingualism: the case of adolescent learners of French

The contribution focuses on heritage bilingualism and concomitant language dominance patterns by analysing six German-Turkish high school students, who have grown up in Northern Germany (ages 15–17). We calculated dominance scores for the participants based on the interplay of language use and self-assessed proficiency as indicated in a sociolinguistic questionnaire, which categorized them as balanced bilinguals. However, proficiency measures in both languages revealed that all but one participants score higher in German than in Turkish concerning reading comprehension (LGVT, Schneider et al. 2017) and writing skills (Klinger et al. 2019). This finding might be explained by the fact that they generally use German in public and educational contexts, while Turkish is restricted to the familial domain, as a closer look at the questionnaires shows.

Furthermore, to determine how strongly the Turkish spoken by the bilinguals is affected by CLI from the environmental language German at the prosodic level, we compared their productions to control data recorded from (a) Turkish monolinguals and (b) monolingual German learners of Turkish. Measurements of rhythmic and intonational properties showed that the bilinguals' prosody does not substantially deviate from the monolinguals'.

Finally, as Turkish largely patterns with French regarding rhythm and intonation and thus might constitute a source of positive transfer, the HL speakers' prosody was also assessed in their foreign language French. However, they did not perform better than a control group of monolingual German learners. We interpret this finding as showing that in a clearly German-dominated domain such as the educational system the degree of activation of the HL Turkish is low and French seems to be mainly acquired through the majority language. To make HL speakers benefit from their first language at school, both activation and awareness of its structural properties should be fostered in the multilingual classroom.

Christoph Gabriel is Full Professor of Romance Linguistics at Johannes Gutenberg University Mainz, Germany. His research focuses on phonetics/phonology, multilingualism, and migration-induced linguistic change. **& Jonas Grünke** is a PhD candidate in Romance linguistics at Johannes Gutenberg University Mainz, Germany. His areas of interest include phonetics/phonology, sociolinguistics, and multilingualism.