

Greek dialects as a linguistic repertoire among Greek immigrants in Canada: Dialect Performance

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With this paper we present the preliminary findings of a research project on the Greek dialectal repertoire of first generation Greek immigrants in Canada.

The main assumption was that the first-generation immigrants would still use the dialectal variety of their place of origin, as their only Greek linguistic repertoire, as it was spoken the time they had left, especially if they have not travelled back to Greece all these years. This assumption was based on the fact that these immigrants have not lived the contact conditions that lead to the development of a new Greek Koine (i.e. the Standard Modern Greek Koine), and to the well spread assumption that the linguistic system of an individual is developed during his/her first two decades of his/her life, and after that period of time, it becomes quite stable (therefore, the apparent time studies of linguistic change).

Interestingly, both of the above assumptions proved wrong. During the pilot data collection, it became apparent that first generation Greek immigrants code-switched between different varieties of Greek, according to a) their addressee –i.e. to his/her linguistic repertoire, education, as well as social status, b) the topic of discussion, as well as c) the type of the communicative event and the social conditions that determined it (verifying Speech Accommodation Theory (Giles, 1973) and Audience Design Theory (Bell, 1984).

More importantly, during the pilot study, first generation Greek immigrants did not produce any dialectal speech at the presence of the field worker from Greece who conducted the pilot data collection.

One of the findings of our research is that speakers who don't feel comfortable to use the dialect of their place of origin, due to status and prestige 'reasons', they have no problem to *perform* their dialect, especially when they narrate a story that was held in the past, through the *voices* of previous generations' inhabitants of their villages (see also, Archakis et al. 2009).

In this paper, we evaluate the above *performance*, using qualitative analysis of stereotypical phonological phenomena of the dialects –like vowel raising and vowel loss (Kainada & Baltazani 2015, Lengeris et. al. 2016, Topintzi & Baltazani 2012), as well as perception tests, performed by local dialect speakers in Greece.