Asia Minor Greek: Contact-Induced Change Retention
Author(s): Elizabeth Sikkenga
Proceedings of the Nineteenth Annual Meeting of the Berkeley Linguistics Society: General Session and Parasession on Semantic Typology and Semantic Universals (1993), pp. 323-333

Asia Minor Greek: Contact-Induced Change and Retention

Elizabeth Sikkenga
University of Texas at Austin

I. Introduction

One area where the aims of sociolinguistics can be applied to historical linguistics with great benefit is in looking at the causes of language variation and the actuation of language change, as proposed by Weinreich, Labov, and Herzog (1968). An example of such cause is situations where contact between languages leads to structural change. To invoke language contact as the cause of language change is a difficult proposition, however, since it must be argued convincingly that the shift is not due to the natural course of change that the language would have taken without contact with the second language, or to influences either internal to the language itself or from other dialects (Lightfoot, 1979); borrowing, like analogy, is too often given as a convenient and spurious answer to complicated questions of language change. Thomason and Kaufman (1988) provide a model for analyzing contact-induced change, and there are indeed numerous clear cases where influence from another language has caused a systematic shift in the phonology, morphology, or syntax of a language. Contact-induced retention is somewhat less common, and more difficult to argue conclusively, than contact-induced change. Such influence is most apparent in contact situations where the two languages have widely divergent typological structures, as in the case of Greek, a richly inflected Indo-European language, and Turkish, an agglutinative Altaic language. In the development of the Asia Minor dialects of Modern Greek, changes have occurred in the structure that diverge from the structure of the standard (Athenian) language, but that converge with the structure of Turkish; examination of these changes, and comparison with Modern Standard Greek, reveals that they are very likely indeed to have been due to the influence of Turkish. This situation has been studied extensively by Dawkins (1916) in the case of three of the dialects of Asia Minor Greek; Dawkins' data was used by Thomason and Kaufman (1988) in a case study illustrating the heaviest level of borrowing within their framework. These and other subdialects of Asia Minor Greek have also been discussed by Mirambel, Mackridge (1987) and others.

Previous researchers have tended to focus on phonological and morphological influence, so here I will discuss syntactic and morphosyntactic changes, with particular emphasis on those features that are prevalent in narrative and are therefore pragmatic in nature. Furthermore, contact-induced retention has not previously been noted

in this language; I will discuss an interesting case of contact-induced retention of an archaic form.

II. Historical Background

Greeks and the Greek language have been present in Asia Minor since very ancient times. By the end of the Hellenistic period (300 AD.), almost all the dialects of Classical Greek had converged into Koine ('Common') Greek, the language of the New Testament. The dialects of the modern language known as Modern Standard Greek are the descendents of Koine Greek, not of the Classical dialects; the history of their divergence can be traced to the relatively recent common ancestor. These dialects of Greek were the dominant language in Greece and Asia Minor for many centuries. The long decline and fall of the Byzantine Empire, culminating in the capture of Constantinople (Istanbul) by the Ottoman Turks in 1453, led to a new structure of power in the Eastern Mediterranean and Asia Minor, and Turkish became the language of administration, government, and culture. Dawkins (1931), however, concludes that the Pontic and Cappadocian dialects were separated from common Greek as early as the Seljuk invasions of Asia Minor in the 11th century.

Throughout the Ottoman hegemony, the Greek communities of Asia Minor coexisted with the Turks and other local nationalities relatively peacefully, primarily in the Black Sea area (known as Pontus), Cappadocia and neighboring areas (including the villages of Fertek and Silli), Istanbul, and Izmir; they used Greek as the language of the home, of religion, and often of education and trade as well. Although there were a number of monolingual Greek speakers, most were bilingual in Turkish and Greek. After the dissolution of the empire, the governments of Greece and the newly-formed Republic of Turkey organized the population exchange of 1923, when Christian Turkish citizens of Greek ethnicity were relocated to Greece while Muslim Turkish ethnics living in Greece were relocated to Turkey, with the exception of residents of Northern Thrace and of Istanbul. Pitman (1988) estimates that there are approximately 25,000 ethnic Greeks living in Turkey today, mostly in Istanbul, which remains the seat of the Patriarch of the Greek Orthodox Church. During the population exchange, however, many people remained illicitly in their traditional homes and have since become submerged populations in both countries. Turkish law until very recently forbade the use of languages other than Turkish, and thus the Greek-speaking population exists as such underground; Greek is seldom spoken except in the home, and to the best of my knowledge language education and literature are almost non-existent. All or most Greek-speakers seem to

use Turkish most of the time. As an illustration of the situation, I have heard people in Trabzon (formerly Trebizond) speaking Greek, but when I approached them, they insisted that they had been speaking Turkish.

As a result of the awkward situation of Greek in Turkey today, recent data is largely unavailable; little fieldwork has been done since the population exchange, and much of what exists is clearly outdated. It is imperative that data be gathered, since these groups are growing more assimilated to the surrounding culture in each generation, and their unique dialects will soon be lost.

III. Contact-Induced Change

I will now discuss some aspects of Asia Minor Greek syntax which show clear influence from Turkish. Since much of the fieldwork available (from Dawkins 1916) is in the form of folktales, I will concentrate on narrative structures.

III.1 Reduplication

In Turkish, intensification of an adjective or adverb can be indicated by reduplication of an entire form. This process is highly productive and is used often by speakers, particularly in narration.

1. **čabuk čabuk** yükseldi
   fast rise-Past-3rd-Sg

   'he advanced very quickly'

No such process exists in Modern Standard Greek; there are a small number of reduplicated adverbials, but these are lexical. In Asia Minor Greek, however, the process is productive and frequent and, as in Turkish, is frequently used for narrative effect:

2. From Cappadocia (Dawkins 316):

   ekí to kučí **üzé üzé** pígen s éna mikró xoriós
   that the box swimX2 go-Past-3rd-Sg to a small village

   'that box, floating and floating, went to a small village'

3. From Cappadocia (Dawkins 308):

   ge to pedí estáθin **šaš qīn šaš qīn** so dengiziú so kenér
   and the boy stand-Past-3rd-Sg be bewilderedX2 on the sea on the shore

'and the boy stood very bewildered on the shore of the lake'

4. From Silli (Dawkins 290)

os pagénnuši, enískiti mniá vroši; **kalá kalá** islandúši
as go-Pres-3rd-Pl become-3rd-Sg a rain wellX2 wet-3rd-Pl
(Tk. ïslanmak)

'as they go, a shower of rain falls, and they are well wetted'

In the examples (2) and (3), the lexical items **üze** 'by swimming' and **šaĕqïn** 'bewildered' are directly borrowed from the Turkish verbs *yüzmek* 'to swim' and *šašmak* 'to be bewildered'; it could therefore be argued that these reduplicated forms are borrowed intact from Turkish. In (4), however, the reduplicated form **kalá** is purely Greek, and it is clear that the Turkish process has been applied productively.

III.2 Conjunction and Asyndeton

As I discussed in Sikkenga (1990), Turkish conjoins verb phrases in three ways: 1) with a conjunctive particle, such as ve 'and' or de 'and also'; 2) by conjunction reduction of the first verb and affixation of the enclitic conjunction -(y)ip; or 3) by simple juxtaposition of conjuncts, or parataxis. Other types of phrases are conjoined either by a conjunctive particle or suffix, or by juxtaposition.

5. Ayhan eve geldi **ve** yemek yedi
Ayhan home come-Past-3rd-Sg and food eat-Past-3rd-Sg

6. Ayhan eve gel**ip** yemek yedi
Ayhan home come-end food eat-Past-3rd-Sg

7. Ayhan eve geldi yemek yedi

'Ayhan came home and ate food'

Of these, parataxis, as in (7), is by far the most common usage; some speakers avoid using the connective particles altogether, according to Lewis (1967).

Modern Standard Greek conjunction, on the other hand, is formed only rarely by juxtaposition; this construction is used primarily for narrative effect, and is marked.

8. ðoulevi, ðoulevi, ðen kimate
work-Pres-3rd-Sg work-3rd-Sg Neg sleep-Pres-3rd-Sg

'She works (and) works (and) doesn't sleep'

Thumb (1964) points out that the same effect is achieved by repetition, as in both the above and the following examples:

9. mavros itan, katamavros, mavro ke t'aloγo tou
black-Masc be-Past-3rd-Sg very black black-Neu also the horse his

'Black he was, all black, black too (was) his horse

Parataxis as such is unusual and marked in Modern Standard Greek; the Greek of Asia Minor, however, uses asyndetic conjunction productively where no literary force is apparent:

10. From Cappadocia (Dawkins, 328)

itoun ena pedi k'ena neka ðen ixan psomi na fan
be-Past-3rd-Pl a child and a woman Neg have-Past-3rd-Pl bread Subj. Part eat-Subj-3rd-Pl

MSG: itan ena pedi ke mia yineka, ke/pou den ixan psomi na fane
and/rel. pronoun

'there was a child and a woman they didn't have bread to eat'

11. From Ophis, in the Pontic region (Mackridge 1987):

epíen estáθen apán si strátan
go-Past-3rd-Sg stand-Past-3rd-Sg on on the road

'he went, stood on the road' (sequential)

Asyndeton exists in other dialects of Modern Greek, as noted above, but it is not common and does not correspond to the unmarked usage of Asia Minor Greek; syndetic conjunction is also common in Asia Minor Greek. The Turkish-like pattern of asyndetic conjunction in these dialects is striking, and is very possibly a result of contact. Moreover, the Asia Minor Greek data in (10) could instead be interpreted as a degenerate relative construction, with loss of the relative pronoun. But this in itself is interesting, since Turkish is

known to have no relative construction per se; these data would then be due to the weakening of the Asia Minor Greek relative construction, again possibly as a result of Turkish influence.

III.3 Aspect

In both Modern Standard Greek and Turkish, aspect is of primary importance both psychologically and formally; the aspectual choices speakers make are morphologically overt in finite and non-finite verb forms in most tenses. Both languages have a perfective and imperfective viewpoint, as well as a neutral viewpoint according to the criteria established in Smith (1991). (In accordance with standard terminology, I use 'imperfective' to refer to the viewpoint aspect, while 'imperfect' refers to the tense). In standard Greek narrative, as in many languages, the imperfective serves a backgrounding function; it provides descriptive information as a backdrop against which the plot, using the perfective viewpoint, is advanced. In Turkish narrative, however, the imperfective has a somewhat broader and more crosslinguistically marked use; it can be used to foreground an ongoing situation, as in the following example from Bir Hatïra by Yakup Kadri:

12. köše bašlarïnda, šaškïn šaškïn bakïšan kimselerden kümeler görünüyordu
appear-Impf 3rd

'on the street corners, heaps of them kept appearing, looking around, quite bewildered'

Interestingly, the use of the imperfective in narrative in the Silli dialect of Asia Minor Greek seem to pattern with Turkish rather than Standard Greek; the imperfective is the foregrounded action, even in the case of a stative verb:

13. From Silli (Dawkins 302)

γurbeči ren peγenninónjiski; fovinóski čin enéka
outside Neg go-**Impf**-3rd-Sg fear-**Impf**-3rd-Sg the wife

MSG: ðen píyene ékso apó to spíti tu, fovíθike ya tin yinéka tu
Impf Aor
Tk: gurbet gitmiyordu, ešï ičin korkuyordu
Impf Impf
'he used not to go away from home; he was (being) afraid for his wife'

14. (ibid., 304)

fčúnun du op róreka forás ándras ke enéka
spit-Pres-3rd-pl him twelve times man and wife
arkadašis tu fovíski na gípi doγrú
friend his fear-**Impf**-3rd-Sg Subj Part speak-Subj-3rd-Sg true

MSG: ...o fílos tu fovíθike na pi aliθiná
Aor
Tk: ...arkadaši do:ru soylemekten korkuyordu
Impf
'The man and his wife spit upon him twelve times. His friend was afraid to speak the truth'

15. Cappadocia (Dawkins 314)

ke ándo k' értan na paršán t'álogo,
and when and come-**Aor**-3rd-Pl Subj take-**Aor**-3rd-Pl the horse
dómuškan na to párun
be unable-**Impf**-3rd-Pl Subj it catch-**Aor**-3st-Pl

'and when they came to get the horse, they couldn't catch it'

MSG: ðen borésun na to párun
Aor
Tk: ona tutmuyordular
Impf

In (13) above, the habitual imperfective **peγenninónǰiski** 'he was going' is typical of both Modern Standard and Asia Minor Greek; here it serves to background the second clause, which in Modern Standard Greek would have a perfective viewpoint. Instead, the imperfective **fovíski** of (14) and **dómuškan** of (15) are strikingly Turkish in their aspectual choice. This shift is particularly interesting because it shows a depth of structural influence reaching into the categorial systems of the language.

IV. Contact-Induced Retention

These imperfect forms are also interesting morphologically. In Silli, the imperfect has endings in -inónǰiska or -inóska, which parallel the imperfect -iška found in Cappadocia. Dawkins (1916) attributes the -nǰi- of the Silli forms to a spreading of the palatalized -nt- of the 3rd plural of the imperfect passive, bleached of its voice meaning, and agglutinized to the active imperfect ending '-ina-' and followed by the personal endings.

The -sk- of -inónǰiska or -inóska, however, is left unexplained. It may be reasonably suggested that this is in fact a reflex of the ancient Ionic durative, habitual, and iterative marker -ske- which is found productively in Ionic Greek (the dialect of Homer and Herodotus), and in isolated lexical forms in later stages of the language, including Modern Standard Greek. Some scholars reconstruct this suffix in Proto-Indo-European as mainly iterative in function, based on isolated lexical forms found in a number of Indo-European languages, and on productive suffixes maintained in Armenian and Ionic Greek. In Armenian, the *-sḱé/o- morpheme was retained in its expected form '-ç-' as the weak aorist, for example in yusay 'I hope,' aor. yusaçay; the same outcome of the suffix is apparent in the general Ancient Greek preterites in -sk- such as phaskon 'I said'. Meillet (1936) points out that the aorist in Armenian is not a proper aorist, but rather is derived secondarily from an ancient imperfect. In Ionic Greek, -ske- acts as a durative, habitual or iterative marker, as in the following Homeric examples:

Iterative: οὐδέ τι τῶν μέμνηται, ὅ οἱ μάλα πολλάκις υἱὸν
τειρόμενον σώεσκον ὑπ' Εὐρυσθῆος ἀέθλων
ἤτοι ὁ μὲν κλαίσκε πρὸς ουρανόν Iliad 8.362-4
oude ti to:n memneitai, ho hoi mala pollakis uion
teiromenon so:eskon hup' Eurustheios aethlo:n
etoi ho men klaiske pros ouranon
'nor does he remember, that very many times I **would save**
his son, oppressed by the tasks of Eurystheos,
truly he **would cry out** to heaven'

Habitual: τὴν αὐτος φιλέεσκεω, ἀτιμάζεσκε δ' ἄκοιτιν,
μητέρ' ἐμήν· ἡ δ' αἰὲν ἐμε λισσέσκετο γούνων
παλλακίδι προμιγῆναι Iliad 9.450-2
tin autos phileeskeo:, atimazeske d'akoitin,
meiter emein; ei d' aien eme lissesketo gouno:n
pallakidi promigeinai
'he himself **used to make love** to her, and **would dishonor** his lawful wife
my mother, and she **was** always clasping my knees and **begging** me
to lie with the concubine'

Durative: ἄλλοτε μέν τε Νότος Βορέῃ προβάλεσκε φέρεσθαι,
ἄλλοτε δ' αὖτ' Εὖρος Ζεφύρῳ εἴξασκε διώκειν. Odyssey 5.331-2
allote men te Notos Boreei probaleske pheresthai
allote d' aut' Euros Zephuro: eiksaske dio:kein
(while Odysseus' raft is at sea)
'sometimes the South and North Winds **pushed** to carry it,
sometimes the East and West Winds **followed** to chase'

The semantic shift from habitual or iterative to exclusively imperfective is negligible, since these functions are within the usual scope of the imperfective; the shift can be seen as a broadening of function. The categorical shift from a strictly aspectual marker to an aspect/tense portmanteau is likewise quite common crosslinguistically, as in the case of the Turkish perfective -d-.

There are numerous examples of similarly archaic features in the Asia Minor dialects. The Ophitic subdialect of the Pontic dialect, which shares a number of features with Cappadocian, resisted the post-Koine development of the aorist in -ik-, e.g. MSG foviθika, and retained instead efovéθe 'he became afraid', as is discussed in Mackridge (1987); this dialect also retains archaic suppletive forms such as present féro 'I carry' and aorist énga, compare the AG aorist énegkon and MSG aorist éfera. The Tsakonian dialect of Modern Greek, spoken in the Peloponnese, has been shown to be the direct descendant of the ancient Laconian dialect, and not of Koine Greek, as are the other dialects (Browning 1983); it retains a number of archaic features. Cypriot Greek also exhibits structural archaisms.

It is not then unlikely that an archaic form such as '-ske/o-' could have survived the Koine period, during which many archaisms were leveled, in so isolated a dialect. It would be still more likely to be retained if, as is the case, its form conforms to the typology of the language which exerts as strong an influence as Turkish does on Asia Minor Greek. In MSG, the imperfect is marked by an accent shift and the use of past tense personal inflectional endings. Turkish is of course the exemplar of the agglutinative type language; the imperfect is marked by the imperfective aspect marker -iyor- plus a tense marker plus personal endings. The piling on of suffixes as is seen in -inónjiska or -inóska is characteristic of Turkish but not of Greek. If this is indeed the reflex of the ancient -ske/o-, then I propose that it was retained due to its 'agglutinative' appearance in this context; if this is so, it is a case of contact-induced retention of a productive and archaic feature which was lost everywhere else.

V. Conclusion and desiderata

The structures of Asia Minor Greek presented here as divergent from Modern Standard Greek and convergent with Turkish are only a small part of the body of data belonging to the set of borrowings, however, a current comprehensive descriptive analysis of this dialect group is needed. There are two reasons to recommend such an analysis. First, the Greek language is perhaps the greatest resource of the historical linguist, due to the fact that we have records from almost every stage of the last few thousands of years of its development. To

lose any part of that resource would create a permanent lacuna in our knowledge of the language, and since the Greek dialects of Asia Minor are rapidly disappearing, one such lacuna appears imminent. Second, the structure and typology of Greek and of Turkish are highly divergent, and thus in a diglossic situation present an ideal vehicle for the study of contact phenomena. For this reason, it would be extremely interesting to compare these Greek dialects with the dialects of Turkish that are spoken in Northern Greece for similar contact-induced phenomena.

References

Browning, R. (1983). Medieval and Modern Greek. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Dawkins, R. M. (1916). Modern Greek in Asia Minor. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Dawkins, R.M. (1931). Notes on the Study of the Modern Greek of Pontos. Byzantion 6:389-400.

Fishman, J. (1967). Bilingualism with and without diglossia; Diglossia with and without bilingualism. Journal of Social Issues 32:29-38.

Lewis, G.L. (1967). Turkish Grammar. Oxford: Clarendon Press.

Lightfoot, D.W. (1979). Principles of Diachronic Syntax. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Mackridge, P. (1987). Greek-Speaking Moslems of North-East Turkey: Prolegomena to a Study of the Ophitic Sub-Dialect of Pontic. Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies 11, 115-137.

Meillet, A. (1936). Esquisse d'un grammaire comparée de l'arménien classique. Vienne: Pp. Mekhitharistes.

Mirambel, A. (1963). Dialectes néo-helléniques et syntaxe. Bulletin de la Société Linguistique de Paris (BSL) LVIII.1, 85-134.

Mirambel, A. (1965). Systèmes vocaliques des dialectes néo-grecs. BSL LX.1, 18-45.

Pitman III, P.M. (1988). Turkey: A Country Study. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office.

Puhvel, J. (1991). Homer and Hittite. Innsbruck: Innsbrucker Beiträge zur Sprachwissenschaft.

Sikkenga, E. (1990). Conjunction in Turkish. Unpublished paper, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

Smith, C. (1991). The Parameter of Aspect. Dordrecht: Kluwer.

Thomason, S.G., and Kaufman, T. (1988). Language Contact, Creolization, and Genetic Linguistics. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Thumb, A. (1910). A Handbook of the Modern Greek Language. trans. S. Angus (1964). Chicago: Argonaut.

Weinreich, U., Labov, W., and Herzog, M.I. (1968). Empirical Foundations for a Theory of Language Change. In Directions for Historical Linguistics., ed. W.P. Lehmann and Y. Malkiel, 95-188.