On Some Hyperadaptations in Greek and in Greece

Brian D. Joseph

The Ohio State University

1. Preliminaries

It is an undeniable truth that when one speech form comes into contact with another speech form, change in one or both can result. This is so whether the speech forms in question are considered to be dialects or languages. In fact, though, contact almost always takes place at a dialectal level, in that the speakers who are in contact with one another are always speakers of a dialect (i.e., at least their own).[1] Therefore, instances of change through contact generally can be considered to be contact between dialects, in a certain sense, rather than language contact, even though it must of course be admitted that the speech forms in question could be dialects of different languages.[2] What this means, however, is that the study of what is usually called "language contact" necessarily brings dialects into the picture, and by the same token, since dialect formation involves the diffusion of features from one or more speakers to another speaker or group of speakers, that is, by virtue of contact among speakers, dialects must be understood as contact-related phenomena.

Various mechanisms are responsible for change in contact situations. One with interesting applications as far as Greek is concerned is hyperadaptation, in the sense of Trudgill 1986, i.e. the extension of a pattern or structural element, in a contact situation, beyond what is

[1] I say 'almost always' since contact through the written medium of texts, as can happen with the borrowing of learned vocabulary, could be said to involve contact at the language level, especially if the texts are written in some standard language.

[2] Since "languages" are often defined with respect to a standard, it is easy to think of language contact in terms of standard language forms. In fact, though, contact between speakers can often involve regional and nonstandard dialects as the vehicle for contact. See below, section 5, and footnote **XX**, for an example of such a case.

historically or etymologically justified, based on a perception by speakers of one speech form of what the norms of the other speech form are. Hyperadaptation actually has a long history within Greek, as hyperdialectalisms are to be found in ancient Greek.[3]

This mechanism is evident in Modern Greek and in modern Greece too. In this paper, accordingly, cases of hyperadaptation in the modern era, involving both dialects of Greek and non-Greek dialects within Greece, are documented. Moreover, these cases can be used as a basis for considering speaker agentivity in contact situations.

2. Types of hyperadaptation and the relevance of speaker agentivity

At least two types of (linguistic) hyperadaptation can be identified, differentiated by the nature of the parties involved: **hypercorrection**,[4] when different dialects/sociolects are involved and relative prestige is an issue (including that induced by a sense of correctness), and **hyperforeignization**, when different languages are involved and there is a palpable perception of foreignness (as discussed by Bloomfield 1933, Janda, Joseph, & Jacobs 1994, Hock & Joseph 1996: 270). In **hypercorrection** a perception of a model of correctness leads speakers to alter a form of their own in the direction of the dialect form perceived as correct, ending up with something that is not necessarily "correct", at least not etymologically so. An example, as described by Trudgill (1986: 77), is the occurrence of unetymological [r] in some English dialects: "in rhotic/non-rhotic border areas in the United States, such as parts of North Carolina and Texas … items such as *walk* and *daughter* may be pronounced with [postvocalic] /r/ … an

[3] Sihler (1995: 51) mentions 'hyperdoric" forms, and cites the example of "πα:δός 'blade of an oar' for genuine Dor[ic] πηδός", based on the regular sound correspondence of Doric *a:* to Attic η (due to a sound change in Attic away from the earlier *a*:).

[4] Trudgill (1986: 66), citing Knowles 1978, notes that there are two different types of hypercorrection. Thus further divisions and subdivisions beyond what is given here are possible, even if they are not essential to the discussion at hand.

example either of hypercorrect /r/, or of hyperdialectal /r/, or of both".[5] In **hyperforeignization**, a perception of foreignness, and a desire to create a foreign-sounding form (or to mark a form as foreign, for some reason), lead speakers to alter a form in the direction of foreignness (not necessarily correctly so), as with American English *lingerie* pronounced in a pseudo-French way **[lãZərej]**, based on a perception that many French words end in strressed [e] or mock-Spanish *problemo*, based on a perception that many Spanish words end in /o/. Such hyperforeign forms are neither "real" as far as English is concerned, in that phonemic nasalized vowels are otherwise not to be found in English and the English word for 'problem' does not end in a vowel, nor real as far as the putative source language is concerned, in that French *lingerie* has nasalized [ɛ] in the first syllable and an [i] in the final and the real Spanish for 'problem' is *problema*, with a final [a].

In all of these cases, speakers extend a feature beyond its historically legitimate bounds based on their perception of what is appropriate for the dialect or language they are aiming at speaking or summoning up in their usage. This means that speakers are acting as agents of change in these contact situations, so that it is appropriate here to recall van Coetsem's (1988) notion of "speaker agentivity". That is, language contact doesn't just "happen" to speakers; they can be and generally are actively involved in shaping outcomes in contact situations.

In the sections that follow, examples of both of these types of hyperadaptation are presented from Modern Greek dialects.

[5] The difference in labeling, hypercorrect versus hyperdialectal, has to do more with the motivation and circumstances surrounding the particular case at hand; the basic mechanism seems to be hyperadaptive, no matter what label is attached to the example.

3. Hypercorrection in Modern Greek Dialects

There are cases of hypercorrection in Greek that arise purely within, or rather across, the varieties of the standard language involving the creation of pseudo-learnèd forms -- what Kazazis 1968 has called "Sunday Greek" (see also Kazazis 1992). In such "Sunday Greek" forms, speakers, generally armed with an imperfect knowledge of *katharevousa* (the high-style variety that prevailed in the Greek diglossic milieu for much of the first three-quarters of the 20th century), aim at producing *katharevousa* forms to impress an interlocutor or interviewer, but fall short of the mark; the result is a form that is neither an appropriate low-style (*dimotiki*) nor appropriate high-style form, but owes its existence to the effect of the normative pressures of *katharevousa*. Besides these, however, there are several cases of hypercorrection reported in the literature that involve regional dialects of Modern Greek in contact with the standard, and these are most relevant to the matter of hyperadaptation.

3.1. Hyperadaptation Involving Northern High Vowel Loss

One case involves the phenomenon of high vowel loss in the northern dialects. For the most part, in northern dialects, the underlying high vowels /i/ and /u/, when unstressed, are lost and thus fail to occur on the surface. This is not so for the standard language, which is generally based on a southern dialect. Thus, in the north, underlying /krátisa/ 'I held' surfaces as [krátsa], whereas underlying /kratísame/ 'we held' surfaces as [kratísami]; the standard language here has [krátisa / kratísame], with unstressed [i] corresponding to a northern [Ø] and a stressed [í] corresponding to a northern stressed [í]. Therefore, within any given northern dialect there are paradigmatic alternations between stressed [í] and zero in comparable positions within a word, e.g. between [t] and [s] in *kratísami* / *krátØsa*, but also across dialects there are correspondences

of unstressed [i] with [Ø]. Thus even though there is a dialect-internal source that would allow for some northern –CC- clusters to be remade as –CiC- sequences, dialect contact between the north and the standard language would also promote an awareness of the potential for surface clusters to be the result of high vowel loss.

This analytic ambiguity and standard language-regional dialect contact have led to the occasional introduction of some unetymological [i]'s whereby [i] occurs in northern forms where the standard language has a cluster, a phenomenon counter to the more usual correspondence outlined above. Newton (1972: 188) cites the following:

(1) aorist [kapín'sa] 'I smoked' (Zagori, for expected [kápn'isa]), going with a present tense (1SG) [kapnízu] (standard Greek: [kapnízo]) and thus as if it is based on an aorist stem [kap<u>i</u>nis-]

(2) aorist [pín'ksa] 'I drowned' (Zagori, for expected [épn'iksa]), going with a present tense (1SG) [pníγu] (standard Greek: [pníγo]) and thus as if it is based on an aorist stem [p<u>i</u>niγ-s-]

Newton treats these as cases of "mistaken reconstruction of the underlying form … [with generalization of] pattern of alternation provided by verbs such as *filó* 'I kiss'", which, in the northern dialects would have an aorist stem [fíl's-] (cf. 1SG [fíl'sa]) as opposed to a present stem [flá-] (cf. 1SG [fláw]), and thus with a vowel occurring in the aorist between two consonants that form a cluster in the present. That is, for him, analogical generalization is involved here. Still, the introduction of a vowel between the [p] and the [n] in these two verbs is exactly where the standard language, looked at from a northern dialect speaker's point of view, could in principle have a high vowel, since that high vowel when unstressed would not surface in the north. Thus it is also fair to say that "mistaken reconstruction" is really a type of "hyper-"action on speakers' part, and knowledge of standard forms surely was relevant here, essentially providing basis for

generalization, a reason to look to a model. Thus these northern verbs innovatively show a [pn] cluster having been hypercorrected/hyperadapted to a non-/hyper-standard […pin…] as if reflecting the effects of High Vowel Loss vis-à-vis a (perceived/invented) standard form.[6]

3.2. Hyperadaptation Involving Northern Mid Vowel Raising

Besides the high vowel loss, the northern dialects also show raising of unstressed mid vowels, by which new surface instances of unstressed [i] and [u] are created. Again, this feature is absent from the standard language. The final [–e] of standard [kratísame] cited above has a correspondent in the north as [-i], for instance, [kratísami].

Interestingly, this dialect difference also seems to figure in a hyperadaptive northern form. That is, there are northern dialect speakers from Giannitsa (west of Thessaloniki) and from Pilea (in the greater Thessaloniki area) who have an innovative form, [ya so],[7] for the common salutation in Greek for 'hello' or 'goodbye' which in the standard language is [yasu] (literally "health your", i.e. 'to your health').

This form can be analyzed as follows: the final [-o] is due to the adoption of standard [yasu] into northern usage in that form, and integrated into northern usage as [yásu]. This form could then be interpreted by northern speakers as showing a raised [u]. Indeed, a word with an unstressed [u] in the north ought in principle to correspond to a standard form with unstressed [o]. Thus, for a northerner using [yásu] as if it were a typical northern form, the corresponding standard form, to be used in contexts where a standard form is called for, as in speaking to a

[6] It is of course interesting that both examples involve [pn] clusters and one might suppose that there could be a purely phonological element to the innovation, with speakers moving away from what might be viewed as a difficult consonant cluster. However, since the northern dialects, largely due to the workings of High Vowel Loss, have many clusters, including [xn], [bð], [γl],among others, so that invoking a need for phonological repair seems to be misguided.

foreigner (see footnote 6), would be [yáso]. Such a form with [-o] is not an actually occurring standard form, and while Newton might say it was "mistakenly reconstructed" as such, given that the standard form is involved in its generation, it must rather represent a hypercorrect/hyperstandard form with the [-o] generated by reference to the northern-dialect-to-standard-dialect correspondence of unstressed [u] to unstressed [o].

3.3. Hyperadaption Involving Affrication

Another sound correspondence between regional dialects and the standard language that figures in hyperadaptive forms involves the development of affricates out of dentals and velars occurring before front vowels. Thus, in Siatista (in Macedonia), a palatal affricate [tʃ] arises from [t] before front vowels, as in [yatʃí] 'why', with an innovative affricate, versus standard [yatí] with a [t] that reflects the older state of affairs with this morpheme. Newton (1972: 145) wants to treat this palatal [tʃ] as equivalent phonemically in that dialect to, i.e. an allophone of, /ts/, and he argues for this analysis by remarking that "That this affricate also reflects /ts/ is suggested by the occurrence of hypercorrect forms such as [katíka] for [standard] /katsíka/ 'goat', [tiγáro] for [standard] /tsiγáro/ 'cigarette'". That is, based on a correspondence of [t] ~ [tʃ /ts] before front vowels between standard and dialect forms, standard forms that legitimately have an affricate are remade, hypercorrectly, by dialect speakers as having [t], yielding forms that do not actually occur in the standard language.

The same sort of effect is seen in Kythnos (in the Cyclades), where a dental affricate [ts] arises from [k] before front vowels, as in [kotsinos] 'red' versus standard [kokinos]. Interestingly, early 20th century Kythnians, as reported by Kukules 1923: 290 (discussed also in

[7] While I have not seen these forms cited in any source, I have heard them myself, and noted them during a stay in Greece in the fall of 1987, uttered by speakers from these two northern venues when addressing me.

Joseph 1992: 73) overapplied the local-to-standard correspondence and produced [papukia] ‘shoes’ (for standard [paputsja]) and [kakiarola] ‘saucepan’ (for standard [katsarola]). Such forms are hypercorrect attempts at standard forms that actually are nonexistent as far as the standard language is concerned.

Thus these examples show that hyperadaptation across dialects is found in Greek, with regional dialects in contact with the standard language showing forms that reveal the effects of hypercorrective pressures.

4. Hyperforeignization in Modern Greek Dialects

As for hyperforeignization, it too can be found in dialects of Modern Greek. One possible case from a regional dialect involves a curious Turkish loan in the local idiom of Tyrnavo in Thessaly, as discussed by Tzartzanos 1909 and Newton (1972: 50). The form in question is **[**baldürs**]**, cited as meaning ‘vagabond’. This form is found neither in the Babiniotis 1998 nor the Triandafilidis 1998 dictionaries, and thus presumably represented a regionally restricted “occasionalism” in a local dialect of about 100 years ago.

This Tyrnavo form is presumably connected with Turkish *baldır* 'calf (of leg), stem (of a plant)', but if so, then some explanation for the semantic difference and the phonetic difference is needed. As for the semantics, the primary meaning in Turkish for this work is indeed 'calf; stem', but there is a phrase, *baldırı çıplak* 'barelegged; rowdy, ruffian' (*çıplak* = ‘naked; destitute’) in which the somewhat pejorative meaning of the Greek form is approached; thus presumably the Greek form is extracted from such a phrase, and perhaps even downgraded somewhat by being a recognizable Turkish word, given that Turkish words in Greek, as in most Balkan languages, end up in the low-style stratum of the lexicon, as Kazazis 1976 has noted.

As for the form, the final *–rs* probably reflects a Greek attempt at rendering Turkish final devoiced *–r#*, though it is conceivable that it shows the addition of the typical masculine nominative singular ending *–s*, perhaps in an attempt at morphological nativization,[8] added on). The vocalism, however, is a different story. With regard to the [ü], it can be noted first that while the standard form in Turkish now is *baldır* (Redhouse 1979: s.v.) there are dialect (and most likely older) forms with [u], i.e. *baldur*, that offer a better approximation to the Tyrnavo form and are a more likely direct source therefore. As for the front quality of the rounded vowel, Newton states that for Tyrnavo [u] is fronted to [ü] after [j] (and palatals more generally), but that does not account for the [ü] of *baldürs*. He notes only other than after palatals, [ü] is found "in certain loans from Turkish … and various onomatopoetic words ([ksü] used in chasing poultry)". However, a hyperadaptive account of the [ü] is possible. In particular, *baldürs* can be seen as a hyperforeignism: based on the occurrence of [ü] in other Turkish words, and assuming some degree of familiarity with Turkish in general in Thessaly at that time and thus a recognition that Turkish words *can* have [ü], it seems that Tyrnavo Greeks over-/hyper-marked *baldur* as foreign, giving it an [ü] that, from the Turkish standpoint, is nonetymological, and from the Greek standpoint is certainly not Greek, the hallmark of hyperforeignism, a form that is correct neither for the source language nor the borrowing language.

5. Further Evidence of Agentivity of a Hyper-Nature in Contact in Greece

As noted in section 1 above, these examples show that speakers, when confronted with nonnative forms, those outside of either their own dialect or their own language, can be proactive in dealing with the "alien" material. They thus show agentivity on their part, though the type of

[8] If a morphological adaptation, though, one would have to wonder why the unusual end sequence *–rs* was created instead of it being nativized with a theme vowel (i.e. as *–ros* or *–ras*).

agentivity involved may be somewhat different from what van Coetsem 1988 had in mind with his distinction between recipient language agentivity (corresponding to the traditional notion of "borrowing") and source language agentivity (corresponding to the traditional notion of "substratum influence") in that speakers are not necessarily acting in accordance with the structural properties of their native dialect or language but rather overtly working across the different speech forms. Nonetheless, they are active in shaping material in their own speech and are reactive to the influence of external sources.

From these examples, one might surmise that such hyper-activity in Greece is Greek-oriented phenomenon, just a matter of what Greeks do. In fact, though, there are cases involving such hyper-activity in other languages in Greece.

In particular, in Aromanian, the Balkan Romance language spoken by a minority in central Greece (and elswhere in the Balkans), Greek-like fricatives, /θ, ∂, γ /, occur in loanwords from Greek (Sandfeld 1930: 103-4; Marioteanu et al. 1977), adopted without alteration, as the forms in (3) indicate:

(3) /θ/: θimél^{u} 'foundation' (< Gr. *θemélio*)

anaθima 'curse' (< Gr. *anáθema*)

/∂/: ∂áscal^{u} 'teacher' (< Gr. *∂áskalos*)

a∂ínat^{u} 'powerless' (< Gr. *a∂ínatos*)

/γ/: aγru 'wild' (< Gr. *aγrios*)

It can be surmised that these sounds could be borrowed as such (i.e., without alteration or adaptation of any sort) due to high degree of familiarity with Greek on the part of these Aromanian speakers (thus unlike what is found with Aromanian in Slavophone territory where similar loanwords end up with stops /t, d, g/; Saramandu 1984: 432)

In a sense, there is nothing unusual about the facts in (3), once it is recognized that for Aromanians in Greece, for the most part, the Greek language is something they know well and use quite readily. Interestingly, though, from the perspective of hyperadaptation, the presumed familiarity with fricatives and adoption of fricatives into Aromanian allowed for a hyper-active extension of these new sounds into new contexts, replacing /g/ in some words of Slavic origin and even /v/ in some inherited words of Latin origin. In particular, Sandfeld (1930: 104) points out that southern Aromanian dialects have /γ/ for /g/ in some Slavic loans, e.g. *aγunesku* 'chase' ultimately from Slavic *goniti* (cf. Daco-Romanian *gonesc*, with /g/). And, Capidan 1940 notes that there are some words of Latin origin in some Aromanian dialects that take on the Greek fricatives, e.g. *∂imtu* 'wind' for the more usual and widespread *vimtu* (Latin *ventus*). These innovative (and nonetymological) fricatives suggest that familiarity with the other language makes these originally foreign sounds less foreign-seeming, more assimilable into a lexicon via speakers (hyper-)actively using and trying out their new sounds in contexts where they did not originally belong.

6. Conclusion

These various examples all show the effects of "hyper-activity" on the part of speakers when involved in contact situations; in each case, though, the activity is reasonable and principled, in that speakers were simply extending and generalizing on the basis of patters they became aware of. In a real sense, these acts on the part of the speakers are "hyper" only from the broad perspective that the linguist can take on the developments, knowing, as linguists would, what the etymology of the various words is and thus what sorts of outcomes are expected. From the speaker's standpoint, that kind of information is not available, so that we can say that there is

nothing "hyper" about any of this from the point of view of the speaker; it is only hyper when viewed from the somewhat omniscient position that the linguist is able to take.

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