

# Standard Languages and Language Standards: Greek, Past and Present

*Edited by*

Alexandra Georgakopoulou and Michael Silk



# Greek With No Models, History or Standard: Muslim Pontic Greek\*

*Pietro Bortone*

*In memory of Tasos Christidis*

## Background

In north-eastern Turkey, in the area known to the Greeks as Πόντος, there used to be a large, high-profile Greek community, which was forcibly expelled *en masse* in 1923 in the infamous ‘Exchange of Populations’ between Greece and Turkey. It is less well known that there are still a few rather isolated villages in the eastern corner, in the Trabzon area, especially near Of, where the locals speak varieties of a ‘dialect’ that is in fact Greek – akin to the Pontic Greek dialects once spoken there by Greeks.<sup>1</sup> The speakers, of essentially Turkish and Muslim identity, descend in part from Greeks who converted to Islam over 300 years ago, developed a separate identity, came to be regarded as Turks, and were thus able to remain in the area to this day.

## Standard Greek amongst Pontian Greeks

Until 1976, the linguistic situation of Greece was the textbook example of diglossia, with demotic (vernacular ‘Modern’ Greek) as the spoken variety, and *katharevousa* (archaizing, puristic Greek) as the normal non-literary written medium. When Pontian Greeks arrived in Greece in 1923, they found themselves in a country where their dialect had low status, where linguistic uniformity was seen as essential for political unity, where refugees coming from Turkey faced prejudice, and where

---

\* I wish to thank Peter Mackridge for encouraging me to work in this area, as well as for comments on an earlier draft of this article. I also gratefully acknowledge the support given to me for my research, through scholarships and fellowships, by The Wingate Foundation, The Alexander S. Onassis Public Benefit Foundation, The Program in Hellenic Studies of Princeton University and The Institute for the Humanities of the University of Illinois at Chicago.

<sup>1</sup> With the exception of Ioannis Parharidis in the 1870s, Peter Mackridge was the first scholar to research this dialect (see p. 88 below, under References).

From *Standard Languages and Language Standards: Greek, Past and Present*, ed. Alexandra Georgakopoulou and Michael Silk. Copyright © 2009 by Alexandra Georgakopoulou and Michael Silk. Published by Ashgate Publishing Ltd, Wey Court East, Union Road, Farnham, Surrey GU9 7PT, UK.

the wider community used the variety of Greek that even in Pontus was regarded as the proper form. The most prominent Pontian scholars soon declared that their dialect was doomed.<sup>2</sup>

The Pontic dialect, nevertheless, still survives in some of the areas of Greece to which it has been transplanted – spoken, according to some estimates, by as many as 300,000 people.<sup>3</sup> Standard Greek, naturally, has exerted a discernible influence on it – but this had already been happening even when the speakers were still in Turkey: Greek-identified (that is, Christian Orthodox) Pontians always maintained very strong cultural ties with Greece, and even had Greek schools, usually under the control of the Church, from kindergarten to secondary level. The schools were a focal point for the community, who led an independent life from the surrounding Muslims and often lived in separate villages.

Greek schools in Pontus taught Standard Greek prescriptively. In some, Standard Greek was even spoken, and the pupils' parents were also actively encouraged to use it at home. Curricula and syllabi were decided in Greece, and the books and school manuals came from Greece. School books had an explicit nationalistic outlook, and prominence was given to the classics, to Ancient Greek grammar, to religious texts and other books written in the archaic style favoured by the church. The teachers were often Orthodox clerics, many of whom had been trained in Greece. In the larger cities there were also Greek libraries, and Greek newspapers circulated. Thus the same literary models, linguistic values and language variety that were promoted in Greece were promoted among Greek-identified Pontians as well.

Pontian Greeks educated in the Greek schools of Pontus assumed that the very function of schools was to teach a language far removed from the vernacular; when they first moved to Greece, they 'trouvaient tout à fait bizarre, voire anormal, qu'une langue que les gens connaissaient déjà puisse être enseignée à l'école'.<sup>4</sup> Their surprise is not unjustified: across the world, it is rare for children to go to school already knowing the language variety that the school wants them to know;<sup>5</sup> even where the language used at school is not totally different from the one spoken by the pupils, the schools' aim is usually proficiency in the *Schriftsprache*.

### No models, history or standard

Muslim Pontic Greek speakers, on the other hand, did not regard themselves as in any way Greek. They therefore had no contact with Greeks from Greece, and no exposure to the language of Greece. To this day they have never seen Modern Greek literature, have never heard Biblical Greek, have never studied classical Greek, have never learnt any Standard Greek (not even the Greek alphabet),

<sup>2</sup> E.g. Papadopoulos (1953) 84 n. 1, and Lampsidis (1959) 204.

<sup>3</sup> Drettas (1999) 15.

<sup>4</sup> 'They found it completely bizarre, indeed abnormal, that a language that people knew already could be taught at school': Drettas (1998) 82.

<sup>5</sup> Spolsky (2004) 46.

have not heard Greek radio or TV, nor any form of the Greek language other than their own – and have not been touched by the strict Greek policies of language standardization, archaization and purism. In other words, their Greek has had no external models for centuries. Furthermore, it is not written, printed, or broadcast. So it has no recorded local tradition and therefore no internal models to refer back to either.

In Greece, Pontic studies has developed into a recognised field, with respected journals, known publishers, well-stocked archives and active research institutes. The pervasive diachronic slant and the heavy emphasis on history which is typical of traditional Greek scholarship has also been applied to Pontic studies. Greeks of Pontic origin have been writing extensively about the philological history of their dialect and about the historical background of their community, highlighting its classical past and its Greek connections. Muslim Pontic, conversely, has no history, especially for its speakers: not only do they have no written records, but many in their speech community do not even know that the language they speak has anything to do with Greek. Some do not know which parts of what they say are Turkish and which are their local ‘other language’. Many call that language *lázika* or *laziká*, confusing it with *Laz*, a quite different and unrelated language also spoken in northeastern Turkey. Many call it *Romayka*, but never *Pondiaká* (the standard term in Greece, of learned origin), and never *Elimiká* either.

Romayka is not formally taught anywhere, and no norm for it has been established, maintained or promoted. Accordingly, it has no standard of any kind: its characteristics have not been planned or fixed, there is no official variety, no prescriptive rules, no concept of correctness, no anguish about purity. All this is, of course, amazing if we consider that Romayka is, after all, a variety of Greek – one of the languages with the longest and most vexed histories of prescriptivism, politicization, artificial intervention, linguistic self-consciousness, angst over correctness, and battles over choice of a standard that have even led to people being killed in the streets.<sup>6</sup> Indeed, Romayka seems to provide the textbook example of a language in its natural state as dreamt of by sociolinguists and anthropologists:

To see language in its ‘natural’ state, one must find a variety which is neither a standard language, nor a dialect subordinate to a standard (since these too show pathological features, notably the difficulty of making judgements in terms of the non-standard dialect without being influenced by the standard one).<sup>7</sup>

### Greek standards

The Christian, Greek-identified Pontians, being Greek-educated, had firm opinions on linguistic correctness, purity and standards. Those who used to live in the Of area occasionally heard the Greek dialect spoken in the nearby Muslim villages and, given their Greek background, had clear views about that too – although they

<sup>6</sup> The εὐαγγελικά riots in Athens (8 November 1901) following the serialization, in the newspaper *Ακρόπολις*, of A. Pallis’ translation of Matthew’s Gospel into demotic.

<sup>7</sup> Hudson (1996) 34, one of the main textbooks in sociolinguistics.



were the only local Greek-speakers who judged the ‘Muslim’ dialect according to a standard. Researching historical archives in Athens, in several handwritten interviews with 1923 Pontian Greek refugees, I found that many reported with bemusement that there were *τουρκικὰ χωριά πὸ μιλούσανε ἑλληνικὰ καλύτερα ἀπὸ μας* – ‘Turkish villages that spoke Greek better than we did’.<sup>8</sup>

In recent years, a few Greeks of Pontian origin have travelled to eastern Turkey on holiday, where they heard Muslim Pontic Greek. They regarded it simply as another variety of *Pontic*, and they told me that the western varieties of the Muslim dialects, which are the ones that most closely resemble ‘Christian’ Pontic, are ‘*τὰ πιὸ καθαρὰ ποντιακά*’, the purest Pontic. This shows that they classify varieties of Pontic as good or bad with implicit reference to an ideal norm – even if that remains vague, unofficial and probably variable<sup>9</sup> – and they do so by taking the Pontic spoken in Greece (the variety spoken by the overwhelming majority of Pontic speakers) as their automatic standard. When they assess the Pontic dialects of Greece, on the other hand, they often label as ‘purest Pontic’ the varieties least influenced by Standard Greek,<sup>10</sup> treating the degree of difference from the national language as an index of dialectal ‘purity’.

Indeed, now that Greek Pontic has been relocated to Greece, and is used in parallel with Standard Greek,<sup>11</sup> its speakers have come to feel that it needs a standard form of its own. A fairly standardized orthography, after lengthy discussions in specialized journals, has been developed: it uses the Greek alphabet as a matter of course (with diacritics for the sounds that Greek lacks), and restores historical spelling – for instance, with diphthongs where pronunciation has monophthongs. Small details, such as the use of apostrophes to mark vowels ‘missing’ in comparison with the national language (e.g. *ἔγροϊκ’σα*), show how Standard Greek is treated as a yardstick. A supra-regional variety of Pontic (incorporating elements of Standard Greek) has been emerging,<sup>12</sup> and Greek linguists refer to it as *κοινὴ νεοποντιακή*, ‘Common Modern Pontic’. As the name indicates, it is conceptualized in the same terms as the standard form of Greek (*ἡ κοινὴ νεοελληνική*, ‘Common Modern Greek’), and this is probably because it is the most common *written* form of Greek Pontic – even if no form of Pontic is officially standard.<sup>13</sup> But the perception that there must be a consensus variety is not only felt when writing: actors in the Pontic theatre, even if not always fluent in Pontic, strive to maintain a ‘correct’ pronunciation.<sup>14</sup>

<sup>8</sup> Archives of the Centre for Asia Minor Studies, Athens: interview catalogued as PO129, 29. I consider what they meant by ‘better’ below, pp. 82–3.

<sup>9</sup> Drettas (1997) 21.

<sup>10</sup> Mackridge (personal communication).

<sup>11</sup> Tombaidis (1996) 230.

<sup>12</sup> Drettas (1999) 17.

<sup>13</sup> Cf. Drettas (1997) 19.

<sup>14</sup> Drettas (1998) 84.

### The 'language-or-dialect' issue

The wish to emphasize both the distinctiveness of Pontic and its Greek lineage has been fuelling an intense debate about whether Pontic should be classified as a dialect or a language. The former view is favoured by Greek scholars, while foreign (or foreign-based) scholars often support the latter view. Thus, for Andriotis and Kondosopoulos, Pontic is a dialect,<sup>15</sup> while Tombaïdis adds bluntly:

για όσους έχουν έστω και στοιχειώδεις γνώσεις της ιστορίας της γλώσσας μας δεν υπάρχει θέμα . . . Οπωσδήποτε, δεν μπορούμε να θεωρήσουμε γλώσσα την ποντιακή.

For those who have even just an elementary knowledge of the history of our language there is no question . . . We cannot possibly regard Pontic as a language.<sup>16</sup>

On the other hand, Dawkins wrote that Pontic is 'almost' a language, while Shirokof described Pontic, Tsakonian and the varieties of Greek spoken in the Ukraine, Italy and Corsica as 'self-standing languages' (самостоятельные языки). This view is echoed by Drettas, who talks of 'langue pontique' and of 'langues néo-grecques'.<sup>17</sup>

Linguists have been pointing out for a long time that there is no scientific distinction between dialect and language<sup>18</sup> – but the distinction is still commonly made. In Greek, a further complication is the currency of a third term, *ιδίωμα*, that indicates a variety only slightly diverging from the norm – and this may be another reason why Greeks may designate with the term 'dialect' (διάλεκτος) some less intelligible varieties that in English we might label 'languages'. One often comes across articles that argue, with appeals to various criteria, for or against the classification of a speech variety as a language or as a dialect. Pontic is only one example. The criteria most commonly invoked are:

- (a) quantitative: number of speakers;
- (b) political: legal and social status;
- (c) functional: suitability for multiple uses, especially depending on whether a written form exists;
- (d) communicative: intelligibility, also related to structural dissimilarity to a related standard language.

All these criteria are open to debate – clearly so if applied to Pontic:

(a) The fact that Pontic has relatively few speakers does not prove that it is a dialect, as there are many languages with only a handful of speakers.

(b) It is true that linguistic varieties classified as 'dialects' often have no official status and low social status – but few of the people keen to emphasize that Pontic is a dialect of Greek would cite as evidence the fact that Pontic lacks legal

<sup>15</sup> Andriotis (1995) 100–1; Kondosopoulos (1981) 10.

<sup>16</sup> Tombaïdis (1996) 211.

<sup>17</sup> Dawkins (1937) 24; Shirokov (1972) 317; Drettas (1997) xxi–ii, 19, and (1998) 75.

<sup>18</sup> Cf. e.g. Haugen (1966) 922–7.

recognition and has lower prestige than Standard Greek. The term 'dialect' (like the term 'accent') commonly has belittling undertones, and often suggests that the speech variety in question is *sub-standard*, whereas the label of 'language' has connotations of correctness and authority. But status cannot be the deciding factor anyway, both because dialects can be (and often have been) raised to the rank of languages – the essence of the process of language extension (*Ausbau*) – and because many languages (like Romany in Greece), whose status is indeed poor socially and non-existent legally, would never be classified as dialects given their linguistic distance (*Abstand*) from the national language.

(c) It is also true that, in popular parlance, the term 'dialects' normally describes the speech varieties for which no written form has been developed, either at all or for literature.<sup>19</sup> However, forms of Greek that are recognised as dialects, like Cretan, have been written and have included influential and widely read literary texts – and Cretan could easily have become the basis of the modern national standard. Similarly, what we refer to as the 'dialects' of Ancient Greek are known to us through their rich and largely literary written tradition. Indeed, the more general idea that there is (or should be) one normative, unifying, standard language – an assumption that has had vast linguistic, cultural, social and political consequences in modern Greece – is alien to ancient Greece. In the classical period, no single standard was recognised, probably because there was no single Greek state; and different varieties of Greek had similar social status.

Moreover, if 'dialect' means 'unwritten language', Muslim Pontic would have to be called a dialect, but Christian Pontic could not, because it has been extensively written. The writing of Christian Pontic occurred mainly after 1923, when the Christian Pontians resettled in Greece. In other countries where Greek-identified speakers of Pontic live, varieties of Pontic have also had a written form. In Russia, where Greeks, for a time, were recognised as an ethnicity and had their own schools and press, Pontic and non-standard varieties of Greek started being written and printed in the late 1920s. This entailed all the usual events associated with the writing of 'languages'; there were spelling reforms and lengthy debates about which form of Greek should be selected as the standard – Pontic being one contender. A general conference held in Moscow in 1926, during a period when Soviet authorities encouraged minority language schools and publications, ruled that the Greeks of Russia would no longer use *katharevousa* but rather demotic Greek with a 'phonetic' spelling that abandoned historical orthography and the traditional system of multiple accents and breathings.<sup>20</sup> The Greeks of Greece were horrified. The main Greek publishing house of the USSR, Κομμουνιστικής [*sic*] ('Communist'), which had a very popular newspaper of the same name, even published a Pontic grammar. The newspaper was initially in simple *katharevousa* but then switched to Pontic, developing it with Russian loanwords and words close to demotic Greek. For years after the 1926 conference, it advocated Pontic as official language of the

<sup>19</sup> Petyt (1980) 11; Chambers and Trudgill (1998) 3.

<sup>20</sup> Dawkins (1937) 40.

community and of its schools.<sup>21</sup> An editorial in 1928 revealed that the journalists had felt forced to switch to Pontic to be comprehensible to their target readership; their main worry in terms of linguistic models was that an archaic dialect like Pontic would sound like ecclesiastical Greek<sup>22</sup> – a very unfortunate situation for a communist paper that was even printed in red ink.

(d) Structural similarity and partial intelligibility with Standard Greek are often cited as reasons for classifying Pontic as a dialect. But these too are inconclusive criteria, since Pontic differs more from Standard Greek than Norwegian does from Danish, Serbian from Croatian, or Romanian from Moldavian. Conversely, the so-called Chinese ‘dialects’ are mutually unintelligible, but are traditionally seen as part of a single language because they share a written form. Greek has no close relatives amongst official languages, and this may have reinforced the Greeks’ perception that large linguistic differences (*Abstand*) are needed for ‘language’ status.<sup>23</sup> The problem with *Abstand* and intelligibility as criteria is that they are matters of degree, and their assessment is therefore subjective. Pontic has been said to be a dialect by virtue of claims that it has basically the same phonemic inventory, morphological system and syntax as Standard Greek, and that the lexical influence of Turkish did not alter the physiognomy of Pontic because the inflections remained Greek.<sup>24</sup> All this is questionable.

It is, therefore, not only the choice of criteria but also the interpretation of the criteria that remains arbitrary. Opinions are affected by extra-linguistic factors too: many Greeks object to classifying Pontic as a language because they feel that this suggests that Pontic is not Greek, and that it therefore raises emotional issues about the identity of the speakers and of the land they left behind. In Turkish, Romayka is indeed referred to by a term (*Rumca*) unrelated to the one used for the Greek of Greece (*Yunanca*), but this distinction is not unlike the one made in Greece – with good reason – between Αλβανικά (Albanian) and Αρβανίτικα (a related dialect spoken in Greece) or between Ρουμάνικα (Romanian) and Βλάχικα (a related dialect spoken in Greece).

### Turkish standards

Although there is no standard form of Greek recognised in Pontus today, it would be very misleading to say that there is no linguistic norm that is recognised and promoted amongst Muslim Pontic speakers. There is one, and that is Turkish. Turkish, of course, is unrelated to Greek – it is a language of the Turkic branch of the Altaic family, related to Uzbek, Tatar, Kazakh, Uighur, Kyrgyz, Azerbaijanian and Turkmen. Turkish scholarship often classifies all these languages as dialects of Turkish;<sup>25</sup> but even if we disregard these, and count only the speakers of Turkey’s

<sup>21</sup> Karpózilos (1988/9) 62.

<sup>22</sup> Karpózilos (1996/7) 31.

<sup>23</sup> Trudgill (2001) 23.

<sup>24</sup> Tombaidis (1988) 19.

<sup>25</sup> Cf. Hengirmen (1997) 496–510.



Turkish (*Türkiye Türkçesi*), Turkish speakers number nearly seventy million. The alphabet they use, which is an expanded form of the Latin alphabet, is the only one known to Romayka speakers.

Turkish is officially a ‘language’; as such, it has – like Greek – received many artificial interventions designed to standardize it, expand it and above all ‘purify’ it from the foreign elements it has adopted. The Turkish language reform – which took off in the 1930s and is, to a degree, still operative – went to extreme lengths, and is rightly known in Turkish history as nothing less than the *dil devrimi* ‘language revolution’. Although it is very common for languages with official status and a written tradition to undergo artificial interventions (especially if they belong to a country struggling to assert a separate or new national identity), few languages have experienced such radical and ongoing tampering as Turkish and Greek. However, Turkish prescriptivism, unlike its Greek counterpart, promoted the adoption of new forms, and only rarely the revival of old ones.

In Pontus, Turkish is the language for all official purposes. Even place names have been Turkicized. In 1964, by orders of the Ministry of the Interior, the foreign (or seemingly foreign) names of the localities in the region were modified or changed entirely. Thus, for instance, Αληθινός became *Uzuntarla*, Σαράχως became *Uzungöl*, Κατωχώριον became *Çaykara*, Ζησινό became *Bölümlü*. Many locals, nonetheless, still use the old Greek and Laz names of villages, and at times are not sure about the new ones.

As a result of the status of Turkish as their only standard, speakers of Romayka – although not sure about what ‘correct’ Romayka could be – have very clear views as to what is and is not correct Turkish. They also feel that the Turkish dialect of their area, which is also spoken by very many monolingual Turks, is not proper Turkish. Interestingly, scholars have ascribed the differences between Black Sea Turkish and the standard language, such as the striking violation of vowel harmony (the fundamental and all-pervasive principle of Turkish phonology),<sup>26</sup> to the substrate influence of Greek.<sup>27</sup>

Turkish is taught in all schools in Pontus, and is the only language that is taught. This has profound effects, since education in Turkey is free and, in principle, mandatory for both sexes until the age of fourteen. Despite the fact that to this day many Muslim Pontians report that they did not know Turkish until they went to school (indicating that their Turkish was learnt rather than acquired: late bilingualism in its technical sense),<sup>28</sup> Turkish is also the only medium of school instruction.

This attitude on the part of the schools is not peculiar to Turkey: in most, if not all, countries, and long before the development of modern media, schools have been an instrument of the state in the promotion of the official line on language use.

<sup>26</sup> I have myself often heard forms such as *gittuk*, *yukari*, *olmadi*, *güni* for *gittik*, *yukarı*, *olmadı*, *günü*.

<sup>27</sup> Cf. Brendemoen (2002) 204–7.

<sup>28</sup> Cf. Hoffmann (1991) 35.

The expectation is that pupils will adapt to the school system and not the other way round – which does not surprise any of us, given our own prescriptivist schooling. In Europe too, it has been the norm for schools to ignore or even to disallow the home language of their pupils, and very seldom has this been due to practical problems such as outside teachers lacking the knowledge of the community language. It is rare for schools to use an unwritten local language to introduce a widely-used language, despite recommendations by many educationalists who believe that this would ‘ease in’ the pupils, help them achieve, and contribute to their self-esteem.<sup>29</sup> It would also favour additive bilingualism.<sup>30</sup> Many school systems across the world do use the pupils’ home language as a medium to teach a target language, but this happens primarily when both languages have similar status, such as when English is taught in Greece. If the home language has less prestige and no written standard, it is sometimes used at least initially (in the so-called ‘early exit programmes’) but, at a later stage, the target language is employed for all purposes. Thus, for instance, in northern Switzerland, *Schwyzertüütsch* (the mother-tongue of most Swiss, but with no written standard) is used as a medium in schools, but university lectures are given only in German. The much-publicized suspicion of Turkey towards ‘ethnic’ languages is not exceptional either: it mirrors Europe’s and America’s long history of mistrust of bilinguals, who were seen as less intelligent and as potentially disloyal to their country.<sup>31</sup>

If we take the term ‘bilingual’ in its loose application<sup>32</sup> and accept that it does not necessarily presuppose *total* mastery of two languages,<sup>33</sup> we must recognise that virtually all speakers of Muslim Pontic are now bilingual. They use extensive code-switching, and many are more fluent in Turkish than in Romayka. Their proficiency in Turkish is subtractive bilingualism,<sup>34</sup> as they are clearly transitionally bilingual: Romayka is slowly being replaced by Turkish, which is already the dominant language. Subtractive bilingualism is typical of communities where the recessive language is of little advantage or prestige; additive bilingualism (such as the very fluent English of most Scandinavians, or the French of the pre-revolutionary Russian elite) would presuppose, conversely, a socio-economic utility.

There are other, largely macro-sociological, factors favouring the adoption of Turkish by Romayka speakers. Urbanization, coupled with increased geographical mobility, has dismantled many rural communities. The traditional lifestyle that kept the speakers together and *in situ* is now unsustainable, and upward social and economic mobility is more associated with speakers of Turkish. Males are also required to do military service, for which full command of Turkish is necessary, and during which they inevitably spend fifteen months in non-Romayka-speaking parts of the country. Turkish is also the language of radio and TV, which have

<sup>29</sup> Arguments and counterarguments are outlined in Appel and Muysken (1987) 61–3.

<sup>30</sup> Several studies supporting this are cited in Landry and Allard (1992) 223.

<sup>31</sup> Romaine (2000) 224–30.

<sup>32</sup> Cf. Hoffmann (1991) 14: ‘bilingualism defies delimitation’.

<sup>33</sup> Myers-Scotton (2006) 3.

<sup>34</sup> In the sense of Lambert (1974).

now become common, albeit belatedly, even in Romayka-speaking villages. Turkish is also used locally by Romayka speakers as a *lingua franca* to interact with other Turks, some of whom use other unwritten languages at home: besides Romayka, there are other languages spoken in the area – notably *Laz* – which are not normally written or broadcast, and are, like Romayka, disregarded in schools. Romayka fares poorly on most key indicators normally cited as crucial for linguistic survival:<sup>35</sup> it is demographically weak, and its speakers are culturally, religiously and visually similar to the wider community; the wider community, on the other hand, is culturally, politically, economically and demographically stronger, and allows assimilation.

The language shift away from Pontic is not peculiar to its Turkish setting. In Greece too, Pontic, like all other Greek dialects, is facing terminal attrition, and is being replaced by Standard Greek. The same is happening in other countries with a sizeable Pontic-speaking population, along the other (northern and eastern) shores of the Black Sea. In Russia and the Ukraine, Pontic is threatened not only by Russian and Ukrainian, but by Standard Modern Greek, which is promoted there by Greece, and has been introduced as a foreign language at local schools. Something similar takes place in other countries where Greek dialects are spoken: in Apulia, southern Italy, the local Greek is officially recognised and partly taught, but has to compete not only with Italian but with Standard Modern Greek, which is also taught in local schools.

### Expected effects of not having a Greek standard

A unified standard encourages, in principle, both continuity and homogeneity. It promotes diachronic and synchronic uniformity. It is normally assumed that the existence of a standard greatly favours the maintenance and survival of a language. Conversely, the existence of a written and standardized form of the *rival* majority language is considered a typical factor contributing to language shift.<sup>36</sup> Many linguistic communities have created an artificial mixed variety of their language to be used as a common form, in the belief that this will make it more durable. The standardization of other varieties of Greek spoken outside Greece, such as the Grico of Apulia, in southern Italy, has been advocated by scholars who claim that this is a priority if the speech community wants to save its language.<sup>37</sup> The same thing is happening with other Balkan languages; there is a campaign, for example, for the standardization of Arbresh, the form of Albanian spoken in Sicily, in the belief that this will halt its demise.<sup>38</sup> Indeed, other endangered languages have been standardized in the express hope of saving them: a case in point is the creation in Switzerland of *Rumantsch Grischun* in 1982, as a ‘compromise language’ to unify and preserve Romansh.

<sup>35</sup> Appel and Muysken (1987) 38.

<sup>36</sup> Paulston (2003) 402.

<sup>37</sup> Profili (1999) 52.

<sup>38</sup> Derhami (2002) 249.

To assess whether this could be done with Romayka, we need to consider what the establishment of a particular language form as the standard commonly entails:<sup>39</sup>

- (a) Selection: identification of a favoured variety ('status planning'),
- (b) Codification: graphization and grammatical definition ('corpus planning'),
- (c) Elaboration: development of vocabulary and stylistic variants,
- (d) Endorsement and implementation by the state (political support),
- (e) Endorsement and implementation by the community (public support).

None of these factors exist for Romayka:

(a) Romayka has many equal varieties, differing significantly in vocabulary, morphology and syntax.<sup>40</sup> Lack of uniformity is a weakening factor for a language. A standard, conversely, is more than an aid to interdialectal communication: it is a partial protection from linguistic (and, according to some, social and political) fragmentation.<sup>41</sup> In Greece, this used to be pointed out with reference to spoken Greek by those who supported *katharevousa* as the only unified and unifying language of a nation that they perceived as being under threat.

(b) Except for the occasional word quoted in a text in another language, a couple of internet sites, and sporadic and unsystematic use in private messages, Romayka is not written at all. Therefore, it also lacks the most common material required for the emergence of a standard: a written tradition, with an agreed canon of 'best' literature. Standardization is a practice essentially concerned with the written language: in Greece too, the perennial battle between *katharevousa* and *demotic* was about the selection of a written standard. Some hoped that *katharevousa* would also gradually become the spoken language of Greece, but even the advocates of *katharevousa* mostly used demotic when chatting. Their assumption, that an artificial, archaizing, 'purified' form of written Greek could eventually replace the vernacular, only shows the power attributed to texts: the very fact that a language variety is written gives it an air of concreteness, permanence and authority. This explicit graphocentrism has long held sway, not only in public perceptions of language but also in the history of scholarship.<sup>42</sup> The prestige of 'dead' languages like classical Greek and Latin, seen as the absolute prototypes of perfection, correctness and intellectual propriety, has reinforced the perception that linguistic models are fixed, that languages have diachronically a best phase and synchronically a *bon usage*, and that the written form is what matters and constitutes the 'real' language. Demotic Greek was often thought to have no grammar and, like many languages that had to coexist with a second, more prestigious language that had a long written history (like Yiddish with Hebrew, Catalan with Spanish), was not thought to be a language at all.

(c) The very few writers with a Romayka-speaking background, such

<sup>39</sup> Cf. Haugen (1966) 933 and Edwards (1994) 173.

<sup>40</sup> Cf. Mackridge (1987) 120.

<sup>41</sup> Cf. Myers-Scotton (2006) 392.

<sup>42</sup> Cf. Joseph (1987) 37 and Linell (2005) 11–12.



as Muhammet Çakıral, even if writing about local people in a local setting, understandably choose to write in Turkish, at most transcribing the occasional Romayka word.<sup>43</sup> When I asked Çakıral why he did not write his stories in Romayka, his response was that Romayka does not even have a standard alphabet, and that there is no grammar book for it – in other words, no established norm. But Turkish, being officially ‘a language’, has also a wider audience and – crucially – a wider vocabulary and stylistic repertoire. It is, after all, characteristic of standard languages that they have minimal variation in form but maximal variation in function:<sup>44</sup> richer lexicon and multiple registers. It must be recognised that Turkish provides Romayka speakers with a vast technical, formal and abstract vocabulary that they otherwise would not have. Romayka is stylistically more limited, and monostylism is considered another symptom of impending language death.<sup>45</sup>

(d) Romayka has no legal recognition. However, over ninety-five per cent of the world’s languages are not officially recognised in the states where they are spoken;<sup>46</sup> furthermore, institutional acknowledgement and support, such as official status or school teaching, cannot compensate for the restricted use of an endangered language by its speakers or for its limited intergenerational transmission.<sup>47</sup> Formal recognition of a language does not guarantee its survival, nor its status beyond the law books: in countries that officially recognise more than one language (Netherlands, Israel, Luxembourg, Singapore, Finland, India, Belgium, South Africa, Canada, to name but a few) each language has a different *social* standing. Legal provisions only give a weaker language a slightly better chance of survival, and only in some cases do they enable its speakers to remain monolingual. Indeed, many languages have official status in a country where they are nonetheless dying (for instance, Romansh in Switzerland, Irish in Ireland); this includes ‘situational’ minority languages,<sup>48</sup> which are very strong in another, even neighbouring, country (like Swedish, which is disappearing in Finland but thriving in Sweden). School teaching is, likewise, useful but not decisive. As has been wryly pointed out by Joshua Fishman,<sup>49</sup> schools cannot ensure active knowledge of algebra a few years after graduation, unless there is a continuous interest and use afterwards; and the same surely applies to language maintenance.

(e) Romayka speakers do not seek formal recognition of their language and do not endeavour to spread its use. In global terms, people actively fighting to save their language are usually very rare: a few activists guided by theoretical or sentimental reasons which the broader community endorses in principle but ignores in practice. Furthermore, Romayka, unlike languages such as Hebrew and Irish, lacks political motivation: the speakers have no distinct ethnic and political identity, and no

<sup>43</sup> Çakıral (2006a), (2006b).

<sup>44</sup> Haugen (1966) 931.

<sup>45</sup> Appel and Muysken (1987) 44.

<sup>46</sup> Romaine (2002) 194.

<sup>47</sup> Fishman (1997) 192–4.

<sup>48</sup> So called by Trudgill (2001) 25.

<sup>49</sup> Fishman (1992) 400.

separatist aspirations, which are often key factors in the development and retention of a different language variety. Indeed, the few Romayka speakers who might want to do something to save their language may be discouraged by the fear that their aims may be misconstrued as being political.

As the continuing demise of Irish and the unexpected success of 'Modern Hebrew' have shown, what really decides the fate of an endangered language is not institutional support but the speakers' own attitude. Becoming bilingual may be a necessity, but abandoning the use of the community's language in internal communication is, to some degree, a choice. Romayka will probably disappear, ultimately, because its speakers will not bother to keep it going.

Across the globe, the prospects for endangered languages are not encouraging. It is estimated that, in the last five hundred years, half the world's languages have vanished,<sup>50</sup> mainly with no trace, and that half of those left will become extinct in this century, with eighty per cent of the remainder being close to extinction.<sup>51</sup> Although we mourn the demise of Greek in Asia Minor (probably because we see it happening), we ourselves easily forget that, in earlier times, the spread of Greek in Asia Minor (like that of Turkish later) obliterated several pre-existing languages too.

### Greek and purism

Borrowing foreign words is the first and most common structural change resulting from language contact, and is popularly identified as the beginning of the slippery slope towards language death. The scholarly contribution to the establishment and maintenance of a standard has often involved purging foreign words (or, less often, phrases and syntactic constructions)<sup>52</sup> by studiously producing new 'native' terms. It is worth noting that even scholars who decry a prescriptive approach to languages nevertheless often favour measures to prevent one language from being gradually replaced by another.

The artificial creation of new words from native roots is very common and often successful. A language-engineering programme of this kind has been effected on a vast scale in Israeli Modern Hebrew, and the substitution of borrowed elements by native ones, often designed *ad hoc*, has been carried out in many languages, such as Swedish, Hebrew, Tamil, Croatian, French, Icelandic, Welsh, German, and Lithuanian.

In Greek and in Turkish, foreign words have been strongly objected to, and have often been successfully expurgated and replaced. Puristic intervention in both languages was a response to political rather than linguistic issues, as shown by the fact that the words the Greek purists wanted to expunge because they were Turkish (a few random examples: σοκάκι '[back] street'; κουσούρι 'flaw'; χαϊβάνι 'animal, brute'; ντέρι 'tribulation'; τζάμι 'glass'; λεκές 'stain') were

<sup>50</sup> Sasse (1992) 7.

<sup>51</sup> Hale (1998) 192.

<sup>52</sup> Cf. Thomas (1991) 115.

often the same words that Turkish purists wanted to expunge because they were *not* Turkish (*sokak*, *kusur*, *hayvan* are from Arabic, *dert*, *cam*, *leke* from Persian). Now the efforts of purists in both countries are focused, with little success, on loanwords from English.

Today, Standard Modern Greek, unlike Romayka, may have all the words it needs, but this is also because its lexicon is not only taken from demotic Greek: it has been considerably (and some may say artificially) enriched by *katharevousa*. Many missing words have been taken from the immense learned tradition (there is indeed some truth to the cliché that ‘the Greeks have a word for it’). For modern concepts, an ancient word has often been revived, given a novel semantic nuance and a new lease on life, e.g. *υπάλληλος*, ‘subordinate > employee’; *υπουργός*, ‘assistant > minister’; *βουλή*, ‘council > parliament’; *κράτος*, ‘sovereignty > state’. Other words have been made up from Ancient Greek roots, often in imitation of the western European originals, classic examples being French *réaliser* becoming *πραγματοποιῶ*, German *Weltanschauung* becoming *κοσμοθεωρία*, and English *skyscraper* becoming *οὐρανοξύστης*.<sup>53</sup> This may seem contrived and cosmetic, but it is effective. The same thing has been done in Turkish, where countless new words and morphemes have been coined, often as replacements of foreign ones. This type of artificial lexical enrichment not only aims at expanding or modernizing a language’s vocabulary, but also at ‘protecting’ the language, at least superficially, from foreign elements. In Greece this is still successfully done: even if English is making inroads, numerous new Greek words are being created by calque, with morphemes almost invariably taken from Ancient or Medieval Greek. Opening a Greek web browser, one sees that a webpage is an *ιστοσελίδα*, the navigation toolbar is the *ἐργαλειοθήκη πλοήγησης*, the cache is the *λανθάνουσα μνήμη*, and the blocking of pop-up windows is the *φραγή ἀναδυομένων παραθύρων*. The puristic tradition of lexical coinage from native roots, typical of *katharevousa*, is alive and well.

### Romayka and purism

The deliberate – and essentially learned – lexical engineering just discussed has not happened and cannot happen in Romayka. One reason is that ‘it is incontrovertible that puristic activity is usually associated with written, standard languages’.<sup>54</sup> Then again, purism presupposes an awareness of the history of one’s language which is unavailable to Romayka speakers. It is also unlikely that they would turn to Standard Modern Greek as a source of borrowing – in the way Turkish has looked to other Turkic languages, Estonian to Finnish, and Romanian to other Romance languages – because Greek is the language associated with Greece and with Christianity. Lexical and phrasal enrichment does take place in Romayka, but the source normally is Turkish. In modern Greece, awareness of the history of Greek made it clear that Western European words like *telephone* and *photograph*

<sup>53</sup> Cf. Mackridge (1985) 312.

<sup>54</sup> Thomas (1991) 2.

had been coined with Ancient Greek roots; accordingly, they were re-Hellenized as τηλεφώνο and φωτογραφία. In Romayka, the Turkish terms have been adopted, with minimal morphological and phonological adaptation: /tele'fɔni/, /fɔtɔ'ɣrafi/ < Turkish *telefon* and *fotoğraf* + Romayka *-i*.

In Romayka, borrowings from Turkish appear to have no limits: no restrictions are imposed socially or formally, and even the constraints normally expected in code-switching barely apply. The two languages are converging, as can be seen from the use of intra-sentential switching:<sup>55</sup> not only are content morphemes (lexical items) of one language embedded into the morphosyntactic frame of the other, but syntactic configurations and morphological patterns taken from both languages are also blended together. It is becoming difficult to say that Turkish is not a native language (in itself a very elusive concept) of Romayka speakers.

Why is there no purism in Romayka? Why do speakers accept the dominance and the gradual take-over by Turkish? The reason is not only the standard status of Turkish. It is true that any standard language is 'the codified wishes of the socially dominant',<sup>56</sup> and that the adoption of a foreign language by an entire community, either as first or second language, is also usually due to the political, social, economic or cultural clout (nationally or internationally) of its speakers. But this happens if that privileged position is recognised and accepted by the speakers of other dialects or other languages. A puristic attitude, on the other hand, is very often part of a nationalist stance. Theoreticians of purism as a cross-linguistic phenomenon see it as part of a dualistic perception of the world.<sup>57</sup> This might be an adequate description of the 'Greek/non-Greek' dichotomy in the world-view of ancient and, *mutatis mutandis*, modern Greeks, but it is not the way that Romayka speakers see other Turks. For Romayka speakers, Turkish is the language of their fellow-nationals; in Pontus, therefore, the crusades to 'de-Turkify' the language that were launched in Greece<sup>58</sup> (as well as in other ex-Ottoman areas, such as Bulgaria)<sup>59</sup> are neither feasible nor desired. Even the peoples who do fight against the foreign elements found in their language often do so selectively: Romanians endeavoured to expunge Slavic elements, but gladly adopted forms from French and Italian because that was the direction in which they wished to take their identity.

Another key factor is that, since their language has not been codified, systematized and given a model form, Romayka speakers have no notions of 'purity' *vis-à-vis* other languages – just as they have no notions of correctness to be used against *ad hoc* grammatical or syntactic constructions, and no notion that one local variety of Romayka is 'higher' than another. They seem free from the classic linguistic fears that beset speakers of standardized languages. The history of English also shows that anxiety about linguistic change and correctness peaked in

<sup>55</sup> Cf. Myers-Scotton (2002) 105.

<sup>56</sup> Edwards (1994) 7.

<sup>57</sup> Thomas (1991) 37.

<sup>58</sup> Cf. Dizikirikis' popular book, *Let Us De-Turkify Our Language – An Essay for the Liberation of Greek from the Words that have Turkish Origin*.

<sup>59</sup> Grannes (1970) 11.



the eighteenth century, when spelling became more standardized. Standardization, after all, is essentially the suppression of optional variability (and so, in theory, of diachronic change),<sup>60</sup> with some flexibility allowed only in speech. Romayka speakers have no standard (besides Turkish) and no worries: whenever I asked them how one decides which Romayka form is, in their view, right or better, they answered 'serbest', the Turkish for *free*(ly). This seems to contradict the general perception that:

All users of language in all speech communities apparently hold evaluative attitudes towards variant forms: some variants are regarded as 'better' or 'more beautiful' or 'more appropriate' or 'more correct' than others.<sup>61</sup>

Making up words, and even morphological and syntactic patterns, is a recognised possibility for speakers of languages without a standard, or at least without a standard known to the speakers.<sup>62</sup> This does not mean that their language lacks structure: it does not have fewer linguistic rules – only fewer linguistic norms. Effective communication and competence (in the Chomskyan sense) certainly requires a shared language, but we all have an idiolect and some room for creativity. And this is particularly acceptable in Romayka. For instance, I have heard the same (very fluent) Romayka speaker refer to the Greeks (of Greece) by four different but perfectly transparent terms:

(a) /ela'doti/

Greek \*Ελλαδ+ώτ+οι, as in Έλλάδ(α), (στρατι)ώτ(ε)s, (ἄνθρωπ)οι

(b) /e'leni/

Greek \*Ελλάήν+οι, as in Έλλην(ε)s, (Ἄγγλ)οι

(c) /ju'nani/

Turkish *yunan* 'Greek' + Greek -οι

(d) /junanistan'liðes/

Turkish *yunanistan* 'Greece' + Turkish -li or Greek -λή + Greek -δες, as in Turkish *Türkiye-li* 'from Turkey', or Hellenized Turkish μερακ-λή-δες.

### Unexpected effects of not having a Greek standard

What does a variety of Greek look like, if it is unexposed to the Greek classicizing tradition and ἀρχαιολατρεία? The paradox is that, apart from the copious Turkish elements (to be expected, since the speakers are in Turkey), Muslim Pontic Greek has remained, in some respects, far more archaic than Modern Greek – even more archaic than 'Christian' Pontic. A big paradox indeed, if we consider the extensive and strenuous efforts made by the Greeks, for centuries, to make *their* Greek more archaic. This is why Greek-educated Pontians felt that Muslim Pontic was the 'best Greek'. In unpublished interviews, several of the Christian refugees who moved from the Of area to Greece in the 1920s made relevant comments:

<sup>60</sup> Milroy and Milroy (1985) 8.

<sup>61</sup> Ferguson (1994) 18. Cf. an almost identical statement in Wald (1985) 123.

<sup>62</sup> Cf. Le Page and Tabouret-Keller (1985) 11.

οί Τουρκοί τῆς Ζησινὸς γνωρίζανε καλά τὰ ἑλληνικά. Οἱ γριές καὶ οἱ γέροι μιλούσανε τὰ καθαυτὸ ἑλληνικά, τὴν ἀρχαία γλῶσσα.<sup>63</sup>

The Turks of Zisinó [a village in the area] knew Greek well. The old women and men spoke real Greek, the ancient language.

Αὐτοὶ μιλούσανε τὰ ἑλληνικά ὅπως οἱ ἀρχαίοι Ἕλληνες. Ἐμεῖς καλὰ καλὰ δὲν τοὺς καταλαβαίναμε . . . ἐπειδὴ αὐτοὶ δὲν ἐρχόταν τόσο σὲ ἐπαφή μὲ Ἕλληνες ἄλλων περιφερειῶν τοῦ Πόντου, κράτησαν τὴν τοπικὴ μας γλῶσσα καλύτερα.<sup>64</sup>

They used to speak Greek like the ancient Greeks. We would barely understand them . . . they preserved our local language better because they were not coming into contact much with Greeks from other areas of Pontus.

ἀπὸ μᾶς πιὸ καθαρὰ μιλούσανε τὰ ἑλληνικά τ' ἀρχαία.<sup>65</sup>

They spoke purer Greek than we did – Ancient Greek.

Scholars of Greek Pontic also report that Muslim Pontic dialects are regarded as 'modèles de pureté archaïque' that Greece has lost.<sup>66</sup> In accordance with a common principle of dialect geography, Greek peripheral dialects have archaic traits; but the Greek of the Of region has traits lost everywhere else.

Within traditional Greek dialectology there has been a tendency to hunt single-mindedly for archaic elements, and even to try to claim continuity between Modern and Ancient Greek dialects,<sup>67</sup> downplaying innovations and foreign elements. This approach, with its obvious ideological underpinnings, highlights the low status and limited interest afforded to dialects in themselves – except to the ancient ones, which have the prestige of 'languages' thanks to their written tradition. While we should endeavour to avoid such pitfalls, we would do well to emphasize the archaic nature of Romayka, if only because of the implicit irony: its archaic character is due to the very fact that Romayka has been isolated from the Greek tradition. Let us review some archaic features found in Romayka.

### (a) Pronunciation

- (i) Romayka shows retention of initial unstressed vowels /ε/, /i/, /o/, /u/: /εksero/, /epiɣa/, /ekliðosa/, /ospiti/ – Modern Greek usually ξέρω, πῆγα, κλείδωσα, σπίτι etc. 'Christian' Pontic too would retain the initial vowel but, like most northern Greek dialects, it would also delete the post-tonic /i/ and /u/: οσπίτ, etc.
- (ii) There is no synzesis of final diphthongs /'ia/ /'eo/ /'io/: /mirɔ'ðia/, /ki'lia/, /pa'leo/ – unlike Modern Greek μυρωδιά 'smell', κοιλιά 'stomach', παλιό 'old', etc.
- (iii) Romayka, like Greek Pontic, has also an intriguing open /ε/ sound (for

<sup>63</sup> (PO125) 24–5.

<sup>64</sup> (PO129) 30, 33.

<sup>65</sup> (PO133) 127.

<sup>66</sup> Drettas (1998) 87.

<sup>67</sup> Tzitzilis (2000) 15.

Modern Greek /i/) where Greek spelling has an η: /ερθεν/, /ψενο/, /εκυσα/, /εγαρεσα/ – representing Greek ἤρθεν, ψήνω, ἤκουσα, ἠγάπησα. Greek scholars are certain that this is the ancient pronunciation preserved,<sup>68</sup> it is an extremely seductive thought, though doubts have been raised.<sup>69</sup>

- (iv) One remarkable feature, both philologically and sociolinguistically, is the pronunciation of third-person personal pronouns. Pontian refugees in Greece came to be derogatorily nicknamed αούτηδες to mock their pronunciation of the pronoun αὐτός: in Modern Greek it is pronounced /aftɔs/, but /autos/ in Pontic. The latter, however, is much closer to the classical pronunciation.

We may note that even the highly educated Greek archaizers never advocated that a more ancient pronunciation should be revived. Essentially, they ignored the profound changes in the phonetics of individual sounds from classical to contemporary Greek. Indeed, Modern Greeks pronounce even Ancient Greek as if it were Modern – just as, to a very large degree, they spell Modern Greek as if it were Ancient.

*(b) Morphology*

- (i) The ancient imperative in -(s)on survives: /akuson/, /suron/, /ðulepson/, /apson/ – for Modern Greek άκουσε ‘listen!’, σύρε ‘pull!’, δούλεψε ‘work!’, άψε ‘lit!’, corresponding to ancient άκουσον, etc.
- (ii) One also hears several old verbal forms such as /eton/ ‘was’ – for Modern demotic Greek ἦταν but older ἦτον – or /εκσεων/ ‘came out’ – for Modern βγήκε but Ancient ἐξ-έβην.
- (iii) The vocalic temporal augment is still used: /εγαρεσαν/, /εκυσα/ – for Modern demotic Greek αγάπησαν, άκουσα.
- (iv) Some old possessives are still in use, like /emon/ – for Modern Greek μας, but Ancient Greek ἡμῶν.
- (v) The ancient aorist passive has not merged with the perfect: /εφονεθε/, /εσταθε/, /εψεθε/ – unlike Modern Greek φοβήθηκε ‘(s)he got scared’, στάθηκε ‘(s)he stood’, ψήθηκε ‘it was cooked’, but like Ancient Greek ἐφοβήθη, ἐστάθη, ἐψήθη. These ancient forms were highly recommended and valued by purists, but all Greek scholars admitted that one could not hope to hear them in spoken Greek, not even in the most educated conversations. Tzartanos, for instance, writing in the *katharevousa* years, acknowledged that even a university professor conversing with another university professor would never say, for ‘I slept’, ἐκοιμήθην (the classical form, which now would be pronounced /εκιμήθιν/, corresponding to modern κοιμήθηκα)<sup>70</sup>. In Romayka, however, even an illiterate speaker says that (s)he /εκιμεθε/.<sup>71</sup>

<sup>68</sup> Savvidis (1973) 36–9, Tombaidis (1996) 265, and Andriotis (1995) 96

<sup>69</sup> Horrocks (1997) 312–13

<sup>70</sup> Tzartanos (1934) 17.

<sup>71</sup> Easternmost subdialects palatalize velar stops before front vowels: ετjimeθε, in this case.

*(c) Syntax*

- (i) Weak pronouns always follow the verb: /εγρικισα το/ 'I understood it'. In Standard Greek this happens only after imperatives and gerunds.
- (ii) Some varieties of Romayka also form the future tense like Medieval Greek, with *vá*: /na trɔ:/ 'I will eat' (Standard Greek θα φάω). The particle θα, used also in Christian Pontic, is known only to some Romayka speakers.
- (iii) As first noted by Mackridge, the infinitive, which has vanished from Modern Greek, from Christian Pontic, and from all dialects in Greece, is still used in some Romayka-speaking villages after the past tenses of /pɔɔ/ and /θελɔ/, as in Medieval Greek.<sup>72</sup> Romayka speakers say: /utʃ ɛpɔɛsa tʃimɛθinɛ/ 'I couldn't sleep', like Medieval Greek οὐκ ἐμπόρῃσα κοιμηθῆναι, /utʃ ɛθɛlɛɛ ɛrθinɛ/ 'he did not want to come', like Ancient Greek οὐκ ἠθέλησε ἐλθεῖν, blurring -εῖν and -ῆναι.

*(d) Semantics*

- (i) /τερɔ/ still means 'to look', as it did in Ancient Greek, unlike Modern Greek τηρῶ, which means (mainly) 'to keep'.
- (ii) /φενγɔ/ still means 'to flee', as it did in Ancient Greek, unlike Modern Greek φεύγω 'to leave'.

*(e) Vocabulary*

- (i) /καλο/ 'better': in Modern Greek, normally, καλύτερα, but classical κάλλιον.
- (ii) /γρικɔ/ 'I understand': in Modern Greek normally καταλαβαίνω, but Medieval ἀγροικῶ.
- (iii) /lihɔ/ 'I lick': in Modern Greek normally γλείφω, but classical λείχω.
- (iv) /mizɔderi/ = 'elders': lit. μειζότεροι, like *koine* μείζονες, for Modern Greek μεγαλύτεροι.
- (v) /kruo/ = 'I hit': Modern Greek normally χτυπῶ, classical κρούω, 'Christian' Pontic κρούγω.
- (vi) /u(tʃ)/ = 'not', in the Of and Sürmene areas only: in Modern Greek δεν, but Classical οὐκ.

*(f) 'Accidental' purism*

Some writers in Greece have suggested that Greek words they knew from Christian Pontic should be officially taken over to replace foreign ones used in Greek – the prospective change to be effected by inclusion in the authoritative Lexicón of the Academy of Athens – and that more terms of this kind should be sought in Pontic dialects. So, for instance, it has been recommended that instead of saying *κουνιάδος* 'wife's brother' (from Venetian *cugnado*, unknown to Romayka speakers), Standard Greek would do better ('*ασυγκρίτως καλλίτερα*'), like Pontic, to use the native, ancient ('*ελληνικώτατο*') term *γυναικάδελφος*. In the same vein, it has been

<sup>72</sup> Mackridge (1995) 159 and (1999) 27.



urged that Greek replace μπατζανάκης, 'wife's sister's husband' (from Turkish *bacanak*), with the Ancient Greek σύγαμβρος, a word still used in Pontic.<sup>73</sup>

While Romayka is innovative in many respects that would not have pleased traditionalists, it would have delighted advocates of the lexical engineering of *katharevousa* with its countless spontaneous creations such as:

- (i) /pɛrtʃɛpaɣo/ 'to accompany' (< παίρ[νω] και πάγω 'take and go').
- (ii) /ajinetʃiɣos/ 'unmarried [male]' (for \*α-γυναίκ-ιγος, whereas in Modern Greek one says, somewhat confusingly, αν-ύπ-ανδρος).

Greek purists would have been all the more thrilled with Romayka's use of certain native Greek terms (with occasional parallels in other dialects) instead of the 'foreign' ones used in Greek. Amongst these are:

- (iii) /aθɔɣala/ 'milk-cream', instead of the polysemous Standard Greek κρέμα (from Italian *crema*), or instead of Greek καϊμάκι, which is from Turkish *kaymak*.
- (iv) /leftokari/ 'hazel-nut' (in *katharevousa* λεπτοκάροον, and exceptionally, in some forms of demotic Greek, λεφτόκαρο), rather than Greek φουντούκι < Turkish *fındık* (although ultimately from Greek ποντικ-, possibly via Arabic).

These terms highlight the paradox of Romayka. A Turkish word may be used by Greeks in Greece, who, for instance, say γιαούρτι 'yoghurt'; this is from Turkish *yogurt*, a Turkish word adopted by almost all national, standardized European languages (despite *their* purism), as well as by many other languages, from Hebrew to Japanese. Romayka speakers, on the other hand – although they make no attempt to 'purify' their language, use Turkish every day, and live in Turkey – use a Greek word for it: /ksinɔɣala/.

## References

- Andriotis, N.P. (1995), *Ιστορία της ελληνικής γλώσσας – τέσσερις μελέτες*, Thessaloniki.
- Appel, R. and Muysken, P. (1987), *Language Contact and Bilingualism*, London.
- Bazin, L. (1983), 'La réforme linguistique en Turquie', in I. Fodor and C. Hagège (eds.), *Language Reform: History and Future*, vol. 1, Hamburg: 155–77.
- Brendemoen, B. (2002), *The Turkish Dialects of Trabzon, Their Phonology and Historical Development*, vol. 1, Wiesbaden.
- Chambers, J.K. and Trudgill, P. (1998), *Dialectology*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edn, Cambridge.
- Çakıral, M. (2006a), *Şamiram'ın ustaları*, Istanbul.
- Çakıral, M. (2006b), *Her zaman griydi Karadeniz*, Istanbul.
- Dawkins, R.M. (1937), 'The Pontic dialect of Modern Greek in Asia Minor and Russia', *Transactions of the Philological Society*: 15–52.

<sup>73</sup> Lavrentidis (1985) 14.

- Derhemi, E. (2002), 'The endangered Arbresh language and the importance of standardized writing for its survival: the case of Piana degli Albanesi', *International Journal on Multicultural Societies*, 4: 248–69.
- Dizikirikis, Y.S. (1975), *Να ξετουρκέψουμε τη γλώσσα μας – δοκίμιο για της απαλλαγής της νεοελληνικής απο τις λέξεις που έχουνε τουρκική προέλευση*, Athens.
- Drettas, G. (1997), *Aspects pontiques*, Paris.
- Drettas, G. (1998), 'La langue pontique comme objet identitaire: questions de représentations', in M. Bruneau (ed.), *Les Grecs pontiques – diaspora, identité, territoires*, Paris: 71–88.
- Drettas, G. (1999), 'Το ελληνο-ποντιακό διαλεκτικό σύνολο', in Α.-Φ. Χριστιδής *et al.* (eds.), *Διαλεκτικοί Θύλακοί της ελληνικής γλώσσας*, Athens: 15–24.
- Edwards, J.R. (1994), *Multilingualism*, London.
- Ferguson, C.A. (1994), 'Dialect, register, and genre: working assumptions about conventionalization', in D. Biber and E. Finegan (eds.), *Sociolinguistic Perspectives on Register*, Oxford: 15–30.
- Fishman, J.A. (1992), 'Conference summary', in W. Fase, K. Jaspaert and S. Kroon (eds.), *Maintenance and Loss of Minority Languages*, Amsterdam: 395–403.
- Fishman J.A. (1997), 'Maintaining languages – What works? What doesn't?', in G. Cantoni (ed.), *Stabilising Indigenous Languages*, Flagstaff, Ariz.: 186–98.
- Grannes, A. (1970), *Étude sur les turcismes en bulgare*, Oslo.
- Hale, K. (1998), 'On endangered languages and the importance of linguistic diversity', in L.A. Grenoble and L.J. Whaley (eds.), *Endangered Languages*, Cambridge: 192–216.
- Haugen, E. (1966), 'Dialect, language, nation', *American Anthropologist*, 68: 922–35.
- Hengirmen, M. (1997), *Türkçe dilbilgisi*, Ankara.
- Hoffmann, C. (1991), *An Introduction to Bilingualism*, London.
- Horrocks, G. (1997), *Greek: A History of the Language and its Speakers*, London.
- Hudson, R.A. (1996), *Sociolinguistics*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edn, Cambridge.
- Joseph, J.E. (1987), *Eloquence and Power: The Rise of Language Standards and Standard Languages*, London.
- Karpózilos, A. and M. (1988/9), 'Ελληνο-ποντιακά βιβλία στη Σοβιετική ένωση', *Αρχαίον Πόντου*, 42: 57–104.
- Karpózilos, A. (1996/7), 'The Greeks of Russia: pages from the political and cultural history of Pontian and Mariupol Greeks in Southern Russia', *Αρχαίον Πόντου*, 47: 16–40.
- Kondosopoulos, N. (1981), *Διάλεκτοι και ιδιώματα τής νέας ελληνικής*, Athens.
- Labov, W. (1970), *The Study of Nonstandard English*, Champaign, Ill.
- Lambert, W.E. (1974), 'Culture and language as factors in learning and education', in F.E. Aboud and R.D. Meade (eds.), *Cultural Factors in Learning and Education*, Washington.
- Lampsidis, O. (1959), 'Un dialecte qui se meurt: le dialecte grec du Pont-Euxin (Asie-Mineure)', *Αρχαίον Πόντου*, 23: 199–205.
- Landry, R. and Allard, R. (1992), 'Ethnolinguistic vitality and the bilingual development of minority and majority group students', in W. Fase, K. Jaspaert and S. Kroon (eds.), *Maintenance and Loss of Minority Languages*, Amsterdam: 223–51.
- Lavrentidis, I. = Λαυρεντίδης Ι. (1985), 'Πόντος, πόντιοι, και ποντιακή διαλεκτός', *Ποντιακή Εστία*, 61: 1–16.

- Le Page, R.B. and Tabouret-Keller, A. (1985), *Acts of Identity: Creole-Based Approaches to Language and Ethnicity*, Cambridge.
- Lewis, G. (1999), *The Turkish Language Reform: A Catastrophic Success*, Oxford.
- Linell, P. (2005), *The Written Language Bias in Linguistics: Its Nature, Origins, and Transformations*, London and New York.
- Mackridge, P. (1985), *The Modern Greek Language: A Descriptive Analysis of Standard Modern Greek*, Oxford.
- 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: 115–37.
- Mackridge, P. (1995), 'Τα ποντιακά στη σημερινή Τουρκία: αρχαία στοιχεία στο ιδίωμα του Όφη', *Αρχαίον Πόντου*, 46: 153–61.
- Mackridge, P. (1997), 'The Medieval Greek infinitive in the light of modern dialectal evidence', in C.N. Constantinides *et al.* (eds.), *Φιλέλλην: Studies in Honour of Robert Browning*, Venice: 191–204.
- Mackridge, P. (1999), 'Η ελληνοφωνία στην περιοχή του Όφη (Πόντος)', in Α.-Φ. Χριστίδης *et al.* (eds.), *Διαλεκτικοί θύλακοι της ελληνικής γλώσσας*, Athens: 25–30.
- Milroy, J. and Milroy, L. (1985), *Authority in Language: Investigating Language Prescription and Standardization*, London.
- Myers-Scotton, C. (2002), *Contact Linguistics: Bilingual Encounters and Grammatical Outcomes*, Oxford.
- Myers-Scotton, C. (2006), *Multiple Voices: An Introduction to Bilingualism*. Malden, Mass.
- Papadopoulos, A.A. (1953), 'Χαρακτηριστικά της Ποντικής [sic] διαλέκτου', *Αρχαίον Πόντου*, 18: 83–93.
- Paulston, C.B. (2003), 'Linguistic minorities and language policies', in C.B. Paulston and G.R. Tucker, *Sociolinguistics: The Essential Readings*, Oxford: 394–407.
- Petyt, K.M. (1980), *The Study of Dialect: An Introduction to Dialectology*, London.
- Profilí, O. (1999), 'Η αναζωογόνηση της grico στην Grecia Salentina', in Α.-Φ. Χριστίδης *et al.* (eds.), *Διαλεκτικοί θύλακοι της ελληνικής γλώσσας*, Athens: 47–54.
- Romaine, S. (2000), *Language in Society: An Introduction to Sociolinguistics*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edn, Oxford.
- Romaine, S. (2002), 'The impact of language policies on endangered languages', *International Journal On Multicultural Societies* 4: 194–212.
- Sasse, H.-J. (1992), 'Theory of language death', in M. Brenzinger (ed.), *Language Death: Factual and Theoretical Explorations, with Special Reference to East Africa*, Berlin: 7–30.
- Savvidis, A.St. = Σαββίδης, Α.Στ. (1973), *Αρχαϊκά φθογγολογικά στοιχεία της ποντικής [sic] διαλέκτου και των άλλων νεωτέρων*, Athens.
- Shirokov = Широков, С. (1972), 'Греческий язык', Прохоров, А. М., Большая Советская Энциклопедия. Москва, 7: 317–18.
- Spolsky, B. (2004), *Language Policy*, Cambridge.
- Thomas, G. (1991), *Linguistic Purism*, London and New York.
- Tombaidis, D.E. (1988), 'Η ποντακή: γλώσσα ή διάλεκτος;', *Ο Ξενίτεας*, 5: 19–22.
- Tombaidis, D.E. (1996), *Μελετήματα Ποντιακής διαλέκτου*, Thessaloniki.
- Trudgill, P. (2001), 'The Ausbau sociolinguistics of Greek as a minority and majority language', in A. Georgakopoulou and M. Spanaki (eds.), *A Reader in Greek Sociolinguistics*, Oxford: 23–40.

- Tzartanos, A.A. = Τζάρτανος, Α.Α. (1934), *Τὸ γλωσσικὸ μας πρόβλημα – πῶς εμφανίζεται τώρα καὶ ποιά εἶναι ἡ ὀρθὴ λύσις του*, Athens.
- Tzitzilis, H. = Τζιτζιλῆς, Χ. (2000), 'Νεοελληνικὲς διάλεκτοι καὶ νεοελληνικὴ διαλεκτολογία', in Α.-Φ. Χριστίδης (ed.), *Ἡ ἐλληνικὴ γλώσσα καὶ οἱ διάλεκτοί της*, Thessaloniki.
- Wald, B. (1985), 'Vernacular and Standard Swahili as seen by members of the Mombasa Swahili speech community', in N. Wolfson and J. Manes (eds.), *Language of Inequality*, Berlin and New York: 123–43.