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ΠΡΑΚΤΙΚΑ ΤΟΥ ICGL12

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DO DIALECT VARIANTS (MIS)BEHAVE? EVIDENCE FROM THE CYPRIOT GREEK KOINE

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Περίληψη

Η εργασία αυτή εξετάζει με ποσοτικά κριτήρια τη συμπεριφορά τριών μεταβλητών της κοινής κυπριακής, η καθεμία εκ των οποίων έχει διαφορετικές πραγματώσεις. Συγκεκριμένα, εξετάζονται (α) η εμφάνιση του μεταφατνιακού ([ʃ]) ή του ουρανικού ([ç]) αλλοφώνου, (β) η εμφάνιση του μεταφατνιακού προστριβούς ([ʃ̣]) ή του ουρανικού ([ç]) αλλοφώνου και (γ) η εμφάνιση αορίστου ή περιφραστικών χρόνων (παρακείμενου και υπερσυντέλικου), σε συνάρτηση τόσο με την εξωγλωσσική μεταβλητή της ηλικίας των συμμετεχουσών/συμμετεχόντων όσο και ως προς το βαθμό συνεμφάνισης των διαφορετικών πραγματώσεων των μεταβλητών. Βασικά ευρήματα της ανάλυσης είναι ότι τα ρεπερτόρια των διαφορετικών ηλικιακών ομάδων είναι εν γένει συνεκτικά όσον αφορά τη συνεμφάνιση συγκεκριμένων πραγματώσεων αλλά και ότι διαφορετικές μεταβλητές συμπεριφέρονται διαφορετικά ως προς τη γλωσσική μετατόπιση.

Keywords: Cypriot Greek, coherence, continuum, diglossia, koine, levelling, Standard Greek

1. Introduction

Dialect-internal variation in Cyprus has been the object of study since at least the 1960s. Newton (1972) presents data collected during that decade from 128 villages in Cyprus and plots in great detail a host of geographical variants, which are, however, mostly phonological. It is worth noting that most of Newton's variants are spread in

ways that do not allow for the delineation of particular geographical dialect areas, and hence they cannot be treated as distinguishing isoglosses *stricto sensu*. Interestingly, other older studies of Cypriot Greek (Contosopoulos 1969, Newton 1983) make reference to *registers* of Cypriot Greek (Newton’s “stylistic levels”) and they distinguish between local, basilectal ones, and a more ‘urban’ or ‘metropolitan’ register (Newton’s “town speech”), which displays (greater) approximation to Standard Greek. Such suggestions in the early studies point to the fact that internal variation in Cypriot Greek was not just geographical, but that speakers may have always had at their disposal a more varied repertoire, including a register that was supralocal, i.e. not geographically situated or constrained and sociolinguistically more prestigious due to its (partial) parity with Standard Greek, the ‘H’ variety in Cyprus’s diglossic context.

More recent research (Karyolemou & Pavlou 2001, Tsiplakou, Papapavlou, Pavlou & Katsoyannou 2006) has put forward the suggestion that the present-day Cypriot Greek dialect displays both rather significant internal variation and some interesting overlaps with Standard Greek in unexpected aspects of its phonology and morphosyntax. As regards dialect-internal variation, the argument has been made that this is no longer ‘horizontal’/geographical but ‘vertical’/sociolectal (Papapavlou & Sophocleous 2009, Tsiplakou, Papapavlou, Pavlou & Katsoyannou 2006) arguably, due to the levelling of local subvarieties, which is in turn due to a host of relevant socio-historical and demographic factors (Hadjioannou, Tsiplakou & Kappler 2011). As regards overlaps with Standard Greek, these have been viewed as a result of the prolonged diglossic situation between Cypriot and Standard Greek and of the pressure for convergence imposed upon the dialect by the standard due to the increased sociolinguistic prestige of the latter; this has not, however, led to full de-dialectization, arguably because of the emergence of the Cypriot Greek *koine*, a variety which is ‘mixed’ enough and pancypriot enough to carry (overt) prestige and thus to act as a robust buffer against full convergence with the standard (Arvaniti 2010, Rowe & Grohmann 2013, Tsiplakou 2009a, b, 2010, 2014a, b).

Koine production displays quite some hybridity, since it features structures such as the ones below:

- (1) e'ɣo pa'ɫ:a ðe m:i'lusa
 I.NOM in the past NEG speak.PAST.IMPF.1S
- tɪŋ ɟipria'ci ð:i'alekto
 the. Cypriot. dialect.ACC
 ACC ACC

tin eθe'oru 'ð:iyman
 it.CL.ACC consider. PAST.IMPF.1S sign.ACC

amoffo'fas
 illiteracy.GEN

'In the past I did not speak the Cypriot dialect; I used to consider it a sign of lack of education.'

(2) a. 'exo afipire'tisi ton 'avyusto
 have.PRES.1S retire.PPL.PERF the.ACC August.ACC
 'I have retired (: retired) last August.'

b. e'kama m:u 'int^h:ervju tʃe
 do.PAST.3S me.CL.GEN interview and

'ixa tus ana'feri
 have. them.CL.GEN mention.PERF
 PAST.1S

tin 'erevnam bu 'ekama
 the.ACC research.ACC that do.PAST.1S

'They interviewed me, and I had mentioned (: mentioned) to them the research I did (: had done).'

The example in (1) contains an instance of unexpected standard-like proclisis (cf. Pappas 2014) in an utterance that is otherwise mostly couched in Cypriot phonology and morphology; similarly, the examples in (2) make it clear that periphrastic tenses such as Present Perfect and Past Perfect, which older studies report as absent from Cypriot Greek (Menardos 1925/1969), are becoming integrated in the *koine*, albeit without the semantics of the corresponding Standard Greek forms, as these innovative periphrastic tenses of the Cypriot *koine* are variants of the Simple Past, as has been shown in previous work (Melissaropoulou, Themistocleous, Tsiplakou & Tsolakidis 2013, Tsiplakou, Armostis & Evripidou 2016, Vasiliou 2014).

This paper addresses the role of such variation in the shaping of the linguistic repertoires of *koine* speakers. The purpose of the analysis conducted was to explore whether,

in a sociolinguistic context of dialect levelling, diglossia and koineization, the range of variants that speakers have at their disposal is used differentially for different indexical purposes, thereby putting paid to the reification of the notion of sociolect or register as a coherent clustering of variants (cf. Eckert 2008, Silverstein 2003, Tsiplakou & Ioannidou 2012) or, conversely, whether one ought to expect consistency and coherence vis-à-vis rates of occurrence of particular variants (Guy 2013); if the answer to the latter is in the affirmative, then an exploration is also required of the extralinguistic factors affecting or conditioning such coherence (cf. Hinskens 2014, Hinskens & Guy 2016, Tsiplakou, Armostis & Evripidou 2016).

2. The study

2.1. *The variables*

The study examines two phonological and one morphological variable, each with variants which are perceived as ‘more Cypriot’ or as ‘more standard-like’, i.e. as forms of relatively higher prestige, namely

- (a) the postalveolar ~ palatal alternation: [ʃ] vs. [ç] and [tʃ] vs. [c] before the front vowels [e] and [i];
- (b) Simple Past vs. Present and Past Perfect; in the Cypriot *koine* the latter two are variants of the Simple Past Tense, as was shown above.

2.2.. *Methodology*

The data was collected through individual interviews with 51 participants, 25 males and 26 females, whose ages ranged from 26 to 90. The participants’ profiles were similar as regards income and education. Following standard practice, participants were asked to recount a past experience, preferably exciting or emotionally loaded. The two interviewers were both young male speakers of Cypriot Greek and they took care to speak informally throughout the interviews.

2.3. Results

2.3.1. General results

Generally speaking, in the data there was a preponderance of the ‘more Cypriot’ variants:

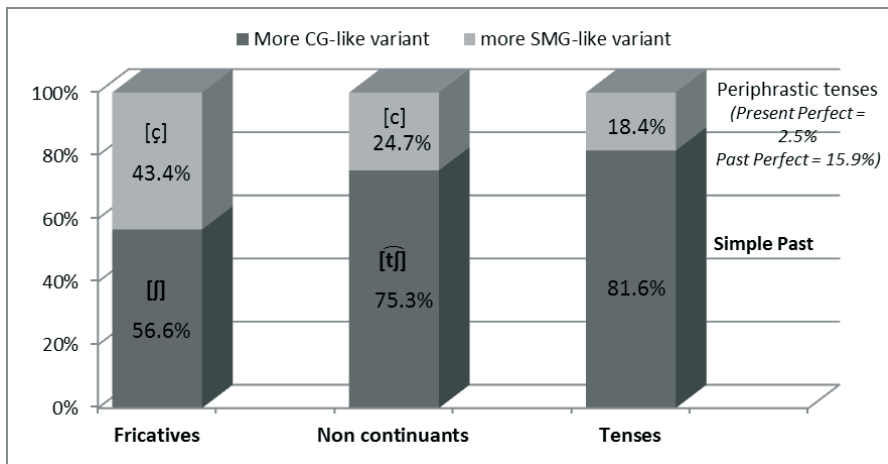


Figure 1 | General results for all participants

All three variables, broken down into their corresponding variants, were tested for possible correlation with age. The results are shown in the following table:

Fricatives	Non Continuants	Tenses		
[ʃ] (vs [ç])	[tʃ] (vs [c])	Simple Past	Present Perfect	Past Perfect
$\rho = -.424$, $p = .002$	$\rho = -.213$, $p = .066$	$\rho = .536$, $p < .0005$	$\rho = -.533$, $p < .0005$	$\rho = -.502$, $p < .0005$

Table 1 | Correlations of Age with the variants of the variables tested (Spearman's rho and significance for one-tailed tests). Significant correlations are marked in bold

The test indicated that there are significant correlations with age for four of the variants; the only exception was the use of the affricate [tʃ], which showed negative correlation with age, but this result was not significant. The use of the fricative [ʃ] increased

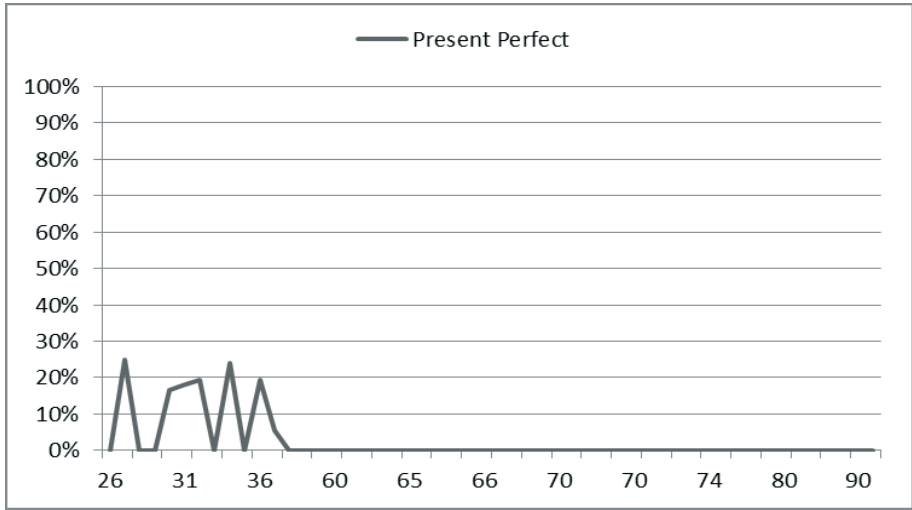


Figure 2 | Use of Present Perfect as a function of Age

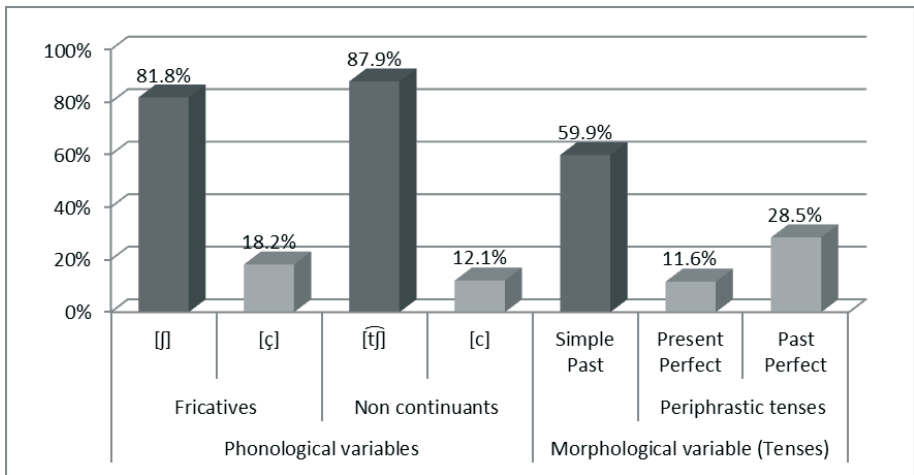


Figure 3 | The younger age group

significantly with age. Similarly, the use of Simple Past increased with age. The use of Present Perfect and Past Perfect decreased the older the participants were. The correlations show that age plays a role, and indeed, as shown in Figure 2, participants over 40 years or age did not use the Present Perfect at all.

2.3.2. Correlations by age group

Since the two age groups (younger vs older) differed from one another, correlations between the variants of the variables investigated were performed for each age group separately.

Figure 3 above shows the percentages of usage of the variants of the variables measured for the younger age group (≤ 40).

Correlation analyses were performed among the variants of the test variables. The results are shown in the following table:

	$[\widehat{t}]$ (vs [c])	Simple Past	Present Perfect	Past Perfect
[j] (vs [ç])	$\rho = .794,$ $p = .003$	$\rho = -.460,$ $p = .090$	$\rho = .241,$ $p = .251$	$\rho = .499,$ $p = .071$
$[\widehat{t}]$ (vs [c])		$\rho = -.287,$ $p = .196$	$\rho = .095,$ $p = .390$	$\rho = .406,$ $p = .108$
Simple Past			$\rho = -.764,$ $p = .003$	$\rho = -.897,$ $p < .0005$
Present Perfect				$\rho = .481,$ $p = .067$

Table 2 | Correlations between the variants of the test variables for the younger age group

The results indicated a strong positive correlation between the two phonological variables: the more participants used the fricative [j], the more they used the affricate $[\widehat{t}]$. The negative correlations between the use of Simple Past and the periphrastic tenses are as expected. The correlation between the two periphrastic tenses was positive but not significant.

It is interesting to note that the two phonological variables $[\widehat{t}]$ and [j] were negatively correlated with Simple Past but positively with the periphrastic tenses. This means that the more the younger participants used $[\widehat{t}]$ and [j], the more they used periphrastic tenses (and the less they used Simple Past), which may suggest that periphrastic tenses are already integrated in the system of younger speakers (as was also shown in Melissaropoulou, Themistocleous, Tsiplakou & Tsolakidis 2013, Vasiliou 2014). It ought to be noted that the periphrastic tenses were more often than not couched in Cypriot phonology and syntax; cf. the pronominal enclisis (as opposed to Standard-like pro-

clisis, cf. (1) and (2b) above) and the use of [ʃ] (as opposed to Standard-like [ç]) in the example below (see also (2b)):

- (3) 'ife m:as ta
 have.PAST.3S us.CL.GEN them.CL.ACC
 'priksi me tin e'oka
 swollen.PERF with the.ACC EOKA
 'He had busted our balls about EOKA.'

However, the interpretation of this finding is only tentative, as none of the correlations are statistically significant.

The following graph shows the percentages of usage of the variables measured for the older age group (>40).

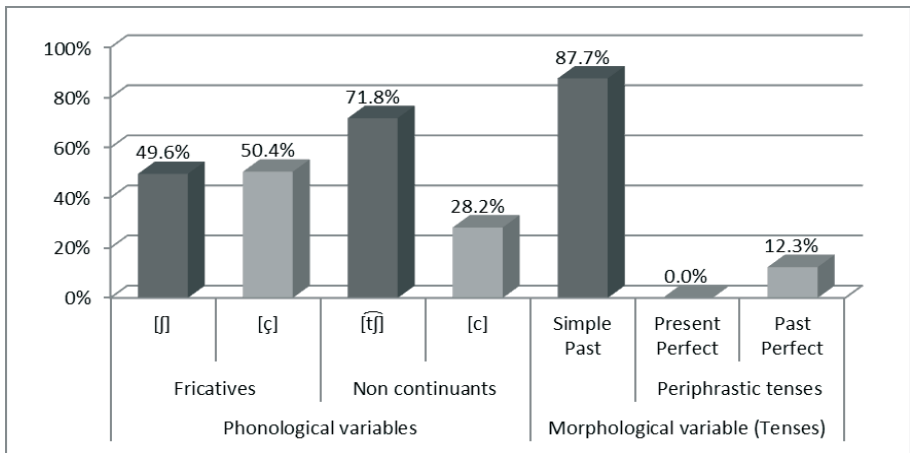


Figure 4 | The older age group

Correlation analyses were performed among the variants of the test variables. The results are shown in Table 3 on the next page.

Again, the results indicated a strong positive correlation between the two phonological variables: the more our participants used the fricative [ʃ], the more they used the affricate [tʃ]. Present Perfect was not used at all by older participants (a fact requiring an independent explanation), thus it yielded no correlations.

	$\widehat{[tʃ]}$ (vs [ç])	Simple Past	Present Perfect	Past Perfect
$[ʃ]$ (vs [ç])	$\rho = .695,$ $p < .0005$	$\rho = .187,$ $p = .142$	NA	$\rho = -.187,$ $p = .142$
$\widehat{[tʃ]}$ (vs [c])		$\rho = .118,$ $p = .237$	NA	$\rho = -.118,$ $p = .237$
Simple Past			NA	$\rho = -1.000,$ $p = .000$
Present Perfect				NA

Table 3 | Correlations between the variants of the test variables for the older age group

Regarding the phonological variables $\widehat{[tʃ]}$ and $[ʃ]$, they were positively correlated with Simple Past but negatively with the periphrastic tenses (they displayed the opposite pattern of that in the younger age group). This means that the more our participants used $\widehat{[tʃ]}$ and $[ʃ]$, the less they used periphrastic tenses (and the more they used Simple Past). In other words, the more the older speakers used the non-Cypriot variants $[ç]$ and $[c]$, the more they used periphrastic tenses. This may mean that for older speakers, periphrastic tenses, are perceived as non-Cypriot elements, on a par with $[ç]$ and $[c]$, i.e. as elements that may be indexicals of more acrolectal registers, or even outside the Cypriot dialect continuum. Thus, periphrastic tenses may be less integrated in their system compared to that of younger speakers. Again, these results are only tentative, as the correlations were not significant.

3. Conclusions

The analysis presented in this paper is a preliminary approach to variation internal to dialect speakers' repertoires in situations of levelling, koineization and dense language contact with the standard variety in the diglossic Greek Cypriot setting. As regards phonological choices, the contrast in the rates of use of $\widehat{[tʃ]}$ and $[c]$ was striking in both age groups, and also similar in both. Interestingly, it was the $[ʃ]$ - $[ç]$ ratios that were different in the two age groups, as $[ç]$ emerged much more frequently in the speech of the older informants. As regards the morphological variable, the picture was as expected: given the relative informality of the interview register, the ratio between periphrastic (prestige) and non-periphrastic (non-prestige) tenses indicated an overall

preference for the non-periphrastic ones. However, it appears that the periphrastic tenses were more frequent in the speech of younger informants- *ceteris paribus*, this may be taken as an indication that the periphrastic tenses are more of an ‘extraneous’ variant in the speech of older informants than in that of our younger ones.

As regards language shift, levelling and, concomitantly, innovation as convergence with the standard, the data present a complex picture: based especially on the behavior of the younger group, it would seem that [ʃ] and [tʃ] are both resistant to levelling, and, in fact, especially as regards [ʃ], this allophone is more resilient in the speech of the younger group than in the speech of the older informants, which may lead us to assume the reversal of a levelling tendency. In contrast, the younger group is more innovative as regards the use of the periphrastic tenses. With respect to coherence within repertoires, while overall there is a preponderance of the ‘more Cypriot’ variants and overall parity among the rates of use of the ‘more Cypriot’ vs. ‘less Cypriot’ variants across both the phonological and the morphological variants examined, the breakdown into different age groups yields a first glimpse into a more complex picture, which requires further investigation by taking into account additional extralinguistic variables (cf. Tsiplakou, Armostis & Evripidou 2016) as well as linguistic factors such as register/stylistic differences, which may in turn depend on the topic of conversation, aspects of the configuration of social relationships among participants, etc.

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