

Greek as a minority and as a majority language in heritage contexts: Theoretical, experimental, and sociolinguistic perspectives

Heritage speakers (HSs) are typically understood as early bilinguals, whose first language, the heritage language they were exposed to from birth at home, is different from the main language of their society (Valdes, 2000; Polinsky & Kagan, 2007, among others). Like L2 speakers, they are typically unbalanced bilinguals. Unlike L2 speakers, though, they are typically—though not always—weaker in their first/heritage language, that is, in the language they acquired from their parents, siblings and wider family during their early years of language development. The recognition of HSs as a special group of bilinguals has given rise to a number of theoretical and experimental studies concerning the grammatical domains in which their competence and performance diverge from that of monolingual native speakers or L2 speakers, as well as the possible sources of the observed diverging performances (Benmamoun et al. 2013a, 2013b; Montrul, 2016; Rothman 2009; Scontras et al. 2015). More recently, sociolinguistically-oriented studies have also begun to emerge showing very intriguing disparities and seemingly conflicting results with experimental studies even for specific linguistic phenomena (Nagy, 2015).

Despite the fact that Greek is spoken as a heritage language by an estimated 5 million speakers outside Greece, studies on the acquisition and use of Greek as a heritage language are still scarce. At the same time, despite the stark increase in the number of immigrant populations in Greece, there has been little work on heritage communities in the country, for which Greek is the majority language. Our workshop aims at addressing these two gaps while at the same time contributing to the study of HSs more widely. To this end, we invite contributions focusing on Greek as a minority and/or majority language in heritage contexts that address, but are not limited to, the following questions:

- To what extent and in which linguistic areas do Greek heritage speakers' competence and/or performance differ from or are similar to that of monolinguals and/or L2 speakers?
- Does Heritage Greek replicate the patterns observed in other heritage languages (e.g. simplification of inflectional morphology, overuse of overt pronominal Subjects and of SVO, loss of grammatical gender distinctions)? What is the role of the language properties of the dominant language on heritage language acquisition?
- How do language-internal factors (such as the interface status of the target structures) and language-external factors (such as input factors and the age of onset to the dominant language) influence the outcome of heritage language acquisition?
- What is the role of social and individual factors (socio-economic status, attitudes, motivation) in heritage language acquisition and maintenance?
- What is the relationship between comprehension and production in heritage speakers and how do the two different modalities contribute to the characterisation of the heritage speakers' linguistic system?
- What are the benefits from combining experimental and sociolinguistic methods in the study of heritage languages?

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