

Welcome to Mytilene's Airport: Investigating New English in the Greek Public Transport Context*

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ABSTRACT

The focus of this paper is on a New English, Greek English, as manifested through public transport announcements and notices. Despite the historical non-existence of a Greek English (as opposed to a well-attested American Greek “Greek-American” [cf. Seaman (1974), Canakis (1992)]), there is a sizeable sector of the Greek working force which uses English as a working language. Most salient among this is the subgroup occupied in the travel industry. It is their language which is at issue here. Moreover, to delimit the scope of this brief study, I have not dealt with their conversational English, but with a highly demarcated, mostly formulaic, and official linguistic manifestation: announcements.

The thesis of this paper is that there are discernible linguistic characteristics that allow us to speak of a Greek English, at least in the travel industry (which, incidentally, is supposed to be our national strength as vacation purveyors to inhabitants of less temperate climates). My set of working hypotheses has been that: i) constructions particular to Standard English will be the first to go and shall be replaced with analogous native ones, ii) this shall be manifested not only in conversations, but even in announcements, short and clearly bounded though they may be, and iii) because of their official status, public announcements will constitute the measure against which other (conversational) usage(s) will be gauged by Greek speakers of English (cf. example 7).

All these hypotheses seem to be confirmed by the relevant data I have been collecting. Therefore, several other points may be made about Greek English, despite the fact that it meets

* I would like to thank Mary Sifianou and Athena Apostolou-Panara for their insightful suggestions in conceiving and developing aspects of this paper. The usual disclaimer holds: all responsibility for shortcomings is mine. Moreover, I would like to dedicate this work to all colleagues who have to fly it (rather than cab it or bus it) to work.

only some of the criteria outlined by Platt et al. (1984: 2-3). It emerges as a variety of English with i) its own phonetic and phonological patterns; ii) its own distinctive constructions, and even iii) its own pattern of distribution for otherwise *bona fide* Standard English vocabulary. In other words, it seems that in Greek English, the process of movement away from a / the Standard is the one typically attested in dialects (cf. Arvanitika – the Greek Albanian dialect of Attica) and traditionally called “language attrition”. However, since it would be, for all practical purposes, misleading to look at it this way, the concept of a Greek English (indeed, any New English) poses a theoretical challenge to sociolinguists.

1. INTRODUCTION: SETTING THE SCENE

That English is by now a world language, a massive linguistic super-power to be reckoned with, is an old story that needs little, and will receive no, introduction.¹ The focus of this data-oriented study is on a New English, Greek English, as manifested in public transport announcements and notices. Despite the historical non-existence of a Greek English (as opposed to a well-attested American Greek “Greek-American” cf. Seaman, 1974), there is a sizeable sector of the Greek working force which uses English as a working language. Most salient among them is the subgroup occupied in the travel industry. It is their language that is at issue here. Moreover, to delimit the scope of this brief study, I have not dealt primarily with their conversational English, but with a highly demarcated, mostly formulaic, and official linguistic manifestation: announcements.

The thesis of this paper is that there are discernible linguistic characteristics that allow us to speak of a Greek English (GE) at least in the travel industry (which, incidentally, is supposed to be our national strength as vacation purveyors to inhabitants of less temperate climates). My set of working hypotheses has been

¹ See Alatis (1990: 48-49) for a brief yet telling exposition of facts. Alatis (Ibid.: 57) drives a good point home when he says:

However in the process of the international spread of its uses and users, English is in many ways being transformed into a new language, used now by more and more non-native than native speakers and increasingly in the absence of native speakers. As a result the forms and functions of English are rapidly diversifying, presenting new tasks and challenges for the description, teaching, and testing of English.

In a similar vein, see Ferguson (1992), Kachru (1992), and Strevens (1992). Also see Trudgill and Hannah (1982: chapter 1; especially 4-7), who point out that English has developed several standard varieties as opposed to *a* or *the* standard. On the political aspect of English as international linguistic currency see Pennycook (1994: especially 73-106 and 259-294) and Fishman (1992). See Platt et al. (1984: 2-3) for the rise of New Englishes and projections on their (divergent) futures. Last, see Kachru (1990: 1-15) for a sharp introduction to the socio-cultural ramifications of the spread of English.

that: i) constructions particular to Standard English (SE) will be the first to go and shall be replaced by analogous native ones; ii) this shall be manifested not only in conversations but even in announcements, short and clearly bounded though they may be; and iii) because of their official status, public announcements will constitute the measure against which other (conversational) uses will be gauged by Greek speakers of English.

All these hypotheses seem to be confirmed by the relevant data I have been collecting. Therefore, several other points may be made about GE, despite the fact that it meets only some of the criteria for NE outlined by Platt et al. (1984: 2-3). It emerges as a variety of English with i) its own phonetic and phonological patterns, ii) its own distinctive constructions, and even iii) its own pattern of distribution for otherwise *bona fide* SE vocabulary. In other words, it seems that in GE the process of movement away from a/the standard is the one typically attested in dialects (cf. Arvanitika –the Greek Albanian dialect of Attica) and traditionally called “language attrition”. However, since it would be, for all practical purposes, misleading to look at it in this way, the concept of a Greek English (indeed, any New English, henceforth *x-E*) poses a theoretical challenge to sociolinguistics.

2. METHODOLOGY: COLLECTING THE DATA

If writing is partly a process drawing on personal experience, then this paper is a typical case. I first began looking at data such as I am about to provide two years ago, when I commuted between Athens and Mytilene and, subsequently, between Mytilene and Thessaloniki, on a weekly basis. During that time I was rewarded for my patience during long delays with what appears to be not really a pidgin English or a token of a stage in the development of someone's interlanguage (cf. James 1980), but rather a more or less standardized, yet peculiar variety of English—i.e. peculiar to the Greek travel industry.

The very first token of it was the, by now proverbial, *Welcome to Mytilene's Airport!*—clearly a false analogy from the far commoner *Welcome to Athens Airport!* Now, *Athens* /'æθinz/, was construed as a genitive by the announcer² and it subsequently formed the model for the form *Mytilene's* /'miti' liniz/. Still, there is also the SE *Welcome to Mytilene's Odysseas Elytis Airport* (extremely rare, produced off-hand once by a Greek-American flight attendant).

² Or the composer of the written text on which the announcement is based. Marmaridou (1987) mentions that Olympic Airways used to have a booklet.

Over the past few months, I have followed two methods of data collection: part of it is recorder in hand as it was produced (obviously this method will only do for very brief announcements). Later on in the process, when I felt there was more to be researched looking at longer (often much longer) in-flight announcements, I used a state-of-the-art microchip recorder. Most of the data came from airport and in-flight announcements. However, there are also a number of boat and train announcements as well. The latter set is, as expected, different mostly as regards situation-specific features.

Most of the announcements were made by women in their thirties, whereas all cockpit announcements were made by males of a, generally, slightly older age. Most of the recordings were conducted at Makedonia Airport of Thessaloniki (SKG), and Odysseas Elytis Airport of Mytilene (MJT). I have also used a recording from an Aeroflot flight for purposes of comparison.

3. WORKING HYPOTHESES

This work on announcements has been carried out on the basis of a number of hypotheses outlined above. I shall now take up each of these in turn.

3.1. The elimination of constructions particular to SE

It is commonly stated that in learning/acquiring a new language one has to grapple not only with its grammatical structure and vocabulary, but also with its constructions (understood as entities which are part and parcel of grammar). Such constructions characteristic of a language are typically the last to be acquired; the veneer in one's linguistic proficiency. Occasionally, such idiosyncratic constructions (e.g., SE [*The*] *police are investigating X*) have less idiosyncratic counterparts (e.g., [*The*] *police is investigating X*), either in another variety of the language, often a different register or, as the case may be, in another dialect. In the case of English, plural agreement for *police* is a shibboleth of (educated and rather official) British English, whereas singular agreement is both plain British and the predominant way to talk of police at all across the Atlantic.

Now, in GE (or, if you will, the Greek travel industry English), there are two processes at work: i) on the one hand, official uses of English, such as in announcements, will stick to British rather than American norms, in cases such as the one mentioned above;³ ii) yet, while this may be done religiously for some lexical

³ See Trudgill & Hannah (1982).

items it will not spill over to other, less common ones. Thus, while one may say [*The*] *police are coming*, one mostly says *Olympic Airways wishes you an enjoyable flight*. The reason for this is both that plural agreement is marked in this case and that Greek, the L1, does not allow it. Thus, once a native speaker of Greek has to use English as a working language, s/he will typically de-anglicize (cf. hellenify) English or choose the English construction least divergent from L1 norms; the more so as s/he uses English on a daily basis for well-defined tasks, such as ushering people in and out of flights.

Let us now turn to the relevant data supporting this view.

(1) Welcome to Mytilene's Airport.

In (1), we can see the following process. In GE this is an acceptable construction; one can only wonder whether it is not coined on *Welcome to Athens Airport*.⁴ However, Greek speakers of English have every reason to construe *Athens Airport* as a N^{Gen}+N (instead of the N+N compound it seems to be).⁵ Thus *Athens Airport* is reanalyzed as *Athens' Airport* which, in turn, licenses GE *Mytilene's Airport*.⁶ Occasional returns to a more standardized English construction still do not make use of the N+N, but rather of the more cumbersome and formal SE *Welcome to the Airport of Mytilene*. Somehow, *Mytilene Airport* sounds wrong to Greek speakers of English.⁷ Consider (2) below where Greek and English is provided for purposes of comparison:

(2a) Good afternoon ladies and gentlemen⁸, captain [.....-]nis and the crew welcome you in Olympic Airways flight number 576 to Mytilene. The aircraft that we're flying today is a Boeing 737-200. Our flight time to the *Airport of Mytilene* will be 35 minutes.

⁴ Athens being the commonest destination or point of departure among the country's 35 airports.

⁵ The author understands that the subscript "Gen." is debatable for English across the boards; I ask charitable readers, however, to allow me this convention for purposes of clarification.

⁶ Or *Myrina's Port Authority*, for that matter, written on the sign outside the relevant building under *Λιμεναρχείο Μόρινας*.

⁷ Incidentally, this predilection for overt genitive marking seems to affect also Russian speakers of English, one of whom addressed a letter to me to The University of the *Aegean's* Department of Social Anthropology and History (which is appropriate in colloquial English, but by no means so, when appearing on an envelope).

⁸ Almost invariably pronounced with a front [a] for the last syllable; but cf. section (3.1.1) for more details.

(2b) [...] άνης και το πλήρωμα σας καλωσορίζουν στην πτήση 576
 [...]anis and the crew you they-welcome to-the flight 576
 της Ολυμπιακής Αεροπορίας με προορισμό τη Μυτιλήνη. Σήμερα
 of-the Olympic Airways with destination the Mytilene. Today
 θα πετάξουμε με αεροσκάφος τύπου Boeing 737-200. Η πτήση μας
 will we-fly with aircraft of-type Boeing 737-200. The flight our
 για το αεροδρόμιο της Μυτιλήνης θα διαρκέσει 35 λεπτά.
 for the airport of-the Mytilene will it-last 35 minutes.⁹

During the same flight (OA 576, ATH-MJT, 28/6/02) we have indeed more occurrences of *the Airport of Mytilene*, as in (3):¹⁰

(3) Ladies and gentlemen, we have started our descent towards the Airport of Mytilene. The ground temperature is 27 degrees Celsius. Please return to your seat and fasten your seatbelt. Bring your seat up in the upright position and secure your tray-table. Make sure your hand-luggage does not obstruct the aisle or the exits of the aircraft. Thank you.

Thus, two ways of expressing SE airline-ese *Mytilene Airport* seem to emerge: i) *the Airport of Mytilene* (two occurrences), and ii) *Mytilene's Airport* (five occurrences). Moreover, the occasional attendant will produce (4):

(4) Welcome to Mytilene's Odysseas Elytis Airport.

Still we have no data (and no recollection) of hearing the much less convoluted *Welcome to Mytilene Airport*. And there seems to be a solid cognitive reason for this. If we agree that languages are cognitive systems, it makes little sense not to accept that *each* language is a separate cognitive system, no matter how similar to another one.¹¹

⁹ The interested reader will have noticed that the content of the announcement differs from Greek to English. For an interesting account of these differences in in-flight announcements, see Marmaridou (1987).

¹⁰ Olympic Airways flight attendants have, on occasion, been told that *Mytilene's airport* is “bad English” or not (standard) English.

¹¹ See Rivers (1990) for a discussion on how to incorporate our insights on languages as cognitive systems in second language acquisition. As for the similarity between these cognitive systems, one could think of it in terms of the (stunning) similarities between Indo-European languages which, as my favorite linguistic anecdote has it, “are so boring”. I guess they are indeed boring if you know half a dozen of them: they are cognitive systems with minimal variation; on occasion, they could be seen as (phonological, syntactic, or semantic) minimal pairs.

This being so, native Greek speakers are inclined to use the genitive because of the demands of the cognitive system called Modern Greek - and an English construction which is equivalent to the genitive in Greek is simply not good enough as the data shows - especially when the L2 in question possesses an inflectional marker for it.¹² Similar phenomena occur with Greek speakers of Italian (or French for that matter) for whom appositional nominal constructions (N+N) instead of N^{Gen}+N (as in English) or N+PP (as in Italian) are very common:

- (5) a. *prescrizioni farmaci*: 'drug prescriptions'
 b. *deposito baggagli*: 'left luggage'
 c. *controllo passaporti/biglietti*: 'passport/ticket control'

Greek speakers are keen on producing the expressions in (5) using the preposition *di* between the nouns, making perfect sense, but not in idiomatic Italian. But to return to English, think also of *assistant manager*, which is typically rendered in Greek as *βοηθός διευθυντή*, or *assistant professor*, which used to be *βοηθός καθηγητού/-ή*, the present day *βοηθός καθηγητής* being a more recent development.¹³ Yet, note that in Italian there is no affix marking the genitive; this is done, as in other Romance languages, prepositionally. The existence of a morphological marker for the genitive in English seems to force Greeks to use it (read: exacerbates the independently pre-existing urge), where it is not used by native English speakers, thereby making for one of the characteristics of GE.

To conclude this section, consider (6):

- (6a) Good afternoon ladies and gentlemen. Welcome to Aegean Cronus Airlines flight number 717 to Thessaloniki. *Our aircraft is ATR 72 and commander flight is Mr. Birakis. Our [estimated?] flight time is fifty minutes. The cabin crew is [here for your] safety so please pay attention to the following demonstration concerning the safety features of the aircraft. (A3 717, MJT-SKG, 4/7/02)*

¹² Makri-Tsilipakou (2002: 211, 217) quoting Kavoukopoulos (1990) points to the progressive loss through dispreference of the genitive in Greek. Note, however, that the examples cited by these authors concern different constructions where there is a choice between genitive and non-genitive. Kavoukopoulos (1990: 265) suggests that use of the genitive is a function of sociolect and register while it competes with more popular, less prestigious constructions featuring the accusative. In short, the genitive has prestige and this is, I believe, partly the reason why GE in the relevant context cannot do without it, announcements being inherently prestigious.

¹³ Indeed a short-lived rendition of Katharevousa *επίκουρος καθηγητής* which now seems to have returned to stay.

(6b) Κυρίες και κύριοι καλωσορίσατε στην πτήση 717 της
 Ladies and gentlemen you-welcome to-the flight 717 of-the
 Aegean Cronus Airlines για Θεσσαλονίκη. Η εταιρεία μας ταξιδεύει
 Aegean Cronus Airlines for/to Thessaloniki. The company our it-travels
 σε δώδεκα προορισμούς σε όλη την Ελλάδα και σε έξι
 to twelve destinations in entire the Greece and in six
 ευρωπαϊκές πόλεις. Κυβερνήτης του ATR 72 είναι ο κ. Μπιράκης
 European cities. Commander of-the ATR 72 he-is the Mr. Birakis
 και η διάρκεια της πτήσης μας θα είναι περίπου πενήντα
 and the duration of-the of-flight our will it-is about fifty
 λεπτά. Τα μέλη του πληρώματος βρίσκονται εδώ για
 minutes. The members of-the of-crew they-are-found here for
 την ασφάλειά σας γι' αυτό σας παρακαλούμε να παρακολουθήσετε
 the safety your for this you we-request that you-watch
 προσεκτικά την επίδειξη των σωστικών μέσων του αεροσκάφους.
 carefully the demonstration of-the saving means of-the aircraft.

Let us return to our first example, agreement. Here, *crew* could but does not take plural agreement, despite the expected high register. As for the other characteristics of (6a) that are obviously not SE, *commander flight* is a *hapax legomenon*, probably a function of the relentless speed at which the specific attendant was announcing in either language, whereas *our aircraft is ATR 72* seems to conform to native norms. Interestingly, in the Greek counterpart, the preference is for an elegant solution such as *Κυβερνήτης του ATR 72 είναι ο κ. Μπιράκης*.¹⁴ Note that *our aircraft is ATR 72* is produced despite the proliferation of tokens of the definite and indefinite article in the L1, Greek, apparently a slow but steady change in the language. Makri-Tsilipakou (2002: 210-211) mentions that there are two divergent tendencies as for the definite article which is neatly documented by two studies signalling completely different processes: i) expansion of the use of the definite article (cf. Apostolou-Panara 1994), and ii) shrinking of its use (Valioli & Psaltou-Joycey 1995). Apostolou-Panara, in particular, has suggested that the expansion is, among other things, a function of the increasing influ-

¹⁴ Note, incidentally, that between the 15 years that separate Marmaridou's (1987) paper and this study, in-flight announcements in either language have changed dramatically. Yet, one thing remains the same: Greek and English announcements differ "both at the grammatical level and the level of discourse organization" (Ibid.: 734).

ence of English on Greek (1994: 402). On the other hand, while Greek has seen an increase of the indefinite article in constructions where it was dispreferred in the past,¹⁵ Greek speakers of English will produce utterances such as *our aircraft is ATR 72*, showing us that the English announcements are unlikely to be direct translations from Greek. Rather they are corresponding, independently produced texts (cf. Marmaridou 1987: 725).

The point I have been trying to make is this: if Greeks can successfully avoid a peculiarity of English grammar, they will do so more often than not. However, there is a thin line between this tendency and the development of an identifiable *x-E*.

2.1.1. Replacing *SE* with native constructions

The process as outlined so far has one-sidedly focused, to put it simply, on what Greeks get “wrong”. Let us now turn to constructions particular to GE that do not seem to have anything to do with a poorly followed English model. Considering (7) we see that there are non-standard uses of articles and prepositions:

(7a) Your attention please! This is *the final call for the departure* of Olympic Airways flight number 6-4-4 to Zakynthos. Immediate boarding *to gate* number [...].

(7b) Προσοχή παρακαλώ! Τελευταία αναγγελία για την αναχώρηση της
 Attention please! Last call for the departure of-the
 Ολυμπιακής Αεροπορίας αριθμός πτήσης 644 με προορισμό τη
 Olympic Airways number of-flight 644 with destination the
 Ζάκυνθο. Άμεση επιβίβαση από την έξοδο αριθμός [...]
 Zakynthos. Immediate boarding from the exit number [...]

Although *The final call* is OK here, it is highly atypical of announcing final calls (typical being *Final call for departure of...*); *the departure* is a hellenism coined on SG. This is easy to see comparing (7a-b). As for *to gate*, one wonders whether it is not the syncretic result of the commonly used *passengers are kindly requested to proceed to the gate* and *immediate boarding from gate number X*.

The following parting is an OA classic:

¹⁵ Cf. *Θέλεις έναν καφέ;* ‘do you want a [cup of] coffee?’, which is gaining ground against the older *Θέλεις καφέ;* ‘do you want coffee?’

(8a) We say “good-bye” to you and we hope to see you again [soon] in one of our flights.

(8b) Σας αποχαιρετούμε και ευχόμαστε/ελπίζουμε να σας
 You we-say-good-bye-to and we-wish/we-hope that you
 ξαναδούμε [σύντομα] σε μία από τις πτήσεις μας.
 we-see-again [soon] in one of the flights our.

Obviously, *We say “good-bye” to you*, is “better” English than *We’re (hereby) taking our leave*, as the case would have been, had it been a word-for-word translation from Greek. However, the resulting expression is still *bona fide* GE, rather than idiomatic (S)E. Yet, there is a difference between (8a) and (9) below, an excerpt from a recorded message in Greek and English aboard the sea-liner *Vitsentzos Kornaros* (6/5/02):

(9) Dear customers, your security is not a luxury but a presupposition [...] you will hear one short sound from the ship’s alarm.

I will only attempt to comment briefly on this rich chunk of data. Let us take it apart.

- a) *customers*: instead of *passengers* which is the expected word in SE
- b) *not a luxury but a presupposition*: a case of word-for-word translation from Greek; a process that renders it totally unintelligible to English speakers to whom it is ultimately directed--and by that I do not necessarily mean native speakers of English (cf. Alatis 1990: 57). Moreover, one can argue that Greek values will inevitably try to find a way of expression in GE, oftentimes with unexpected results. As with other NE, one has the feeling that (b) was meant for a Greek audience, only it was cast in English.
- c) *one short sound*: I will not argue the adequacy of *one* here; I will simply note that, if anything, it is out of place in the targeted register. Yet, *short* for sound is a typical hellenism and often one produced by even advanced Greek learners of English (cf. students talking of having to *write a big/small paper*). Chances are that it is not *short* but *sharp* that the announcer meant or (thought s/he) said.
- d) *from the ship’s alarm*: The preposition renders the entire phrase problematic, for in SE an alarm *sounds*. This is a manifestly cognitive issue with sociolinguistic ramifications: in Greek a sound is emitted from a certain source, even in a high register, whereas in SE *the alarm makes a sound* only in low registers.¹⁶

¹⁶ The Greek equivalent, the intransitive verb *ηχώ* ‘to sound’, as in *το σήμα κινδύνου ηχεί* ‘the alarm sounds’ is antiquated and essentially lost but for fossilized expressions or when used for humorous effect.

Examples such as (9) bring us to the next point: English for whom? Greeks in the travel industry use English both among themselves, occasionally,¹⁷ and to all manner of foreigners. One characteristic of announcements that emerges from my data is that while Greek is normally comprehensibly uttered, announcements in English are almost invariably hard to get and on occasion unintelligible to all parties concerned but the announcer.¹⁸ Sometimes it is read with the distinct intonation of someone who recognizes no phrase boundaries. At times, it is simply uttered entirely too fast. I am not suggesting that Greek announcers are any worse than their counterparts in other societies--and the Aeroflot announcement in (10) testifies to that:¹⁹

- (10) In the event of cabin *decompression* your individual oxygen mask will drop down *automatically*. [...] Pull the mask down [fastly] and press the mask on your nose and mouth [...] place the mask [...] as we are now demonstrating and breathe *normally*. (Malev/Aeroflot 6104, Budapest-Moscow, 15/7/02)

The underlined lexical items were pronounced approximately as follows:

- a) *decompression*: [d'ik^womp'e' r'eijən] palatalization before front high vowels
- b) *automatically*: [ata'matikəl'I] underlying /o/ pronounced [a] in unstressed position
- c) *normally*: ['n^wormal'I] palatalization and gliding.

As we will see in section 3.1.1, nativization of English begins at the level of sound, therefore spoken announcements are a good place to look for a NE under development. For now, I will conclude this section, by providing a few more examples of what I called native norms and how they affect a nativized variety of English. Consider (11) through (13) below:

¹⁷ *Cabin crew, take-off positions* (cockpit announcement aboard an Olympic Airways flight, OA 983, MJT-SKG, 24/4/02); or the ubiquitous *doors to arm*. However, just two days earlier on a different airline the same direction was issued in Greek in a less formulaic manner, as the presence of *παρακαλώ* indicates: *Πλήρωμα καμπίνας, θέσεις γι απογείωση παρακαλώ* 'Cabin crew, landing positions, please' (Aegean Cronus, A3 718, SKG-MJT, 22/4/02). Oftentimes, workers in the travel industry will use English while talking shop, drawing heavily on IATA-regulated terminology.

¹⁸ I am not referring here to poor equipment but rather to a speed or/and intonational patterns that are inappropriate for the purpose they are meant, as entire syllables go the way of all flesh. But cf. Smith (1992: 75) who takes the position "that it is unnecessary for every user of English to be intelligible to every other user of English."

¹⁹ My second foreign announcement, one from a Malev flight 231 Athens-Budapest, 15/7/02) I could not make out scraps of. Cf. footnote 18 on Smith (1992).

- (11) A: Από δώ περνάω;
 from here I-pass
 ‘Do I get in this way?’

B: Yes, you may enter! (On board the liner *Vitsentzos Kornaros*, 11/5/02)

- (11) is from an interaction between a passenger and an employee. Although the question is asked in Greek, the (slightly off) response is in English and apparently answers a different question. Yet, one can still argue that the English expression conforms to native norms as to register choice.

- (12) Ticket! (Thessaloniki Public Transport Authority, ticket control, 14/5/02)

The ticket control officer on a public bus in Thessaloniki, erroneously believing a passenger to be a foreigner, asks for his ticket in English. In so doing, chances are he is faced with a number of choices involving L1: *Εισιτήρια [παρακαλώ]!* ‘tickets [please]!’ or *το/τα εισιτήριό/εισιτηρία σας [παρακαλώ]* ‘your ticket/s [please]!’ The request in (12) is probably an attempt to express the content of the typical Greek request using English (while, probably, ignoring the plural form of *ticket*). Consider also (13a-c):

- (13a) We request *passengers who travel in a cabin* to return their keys to the reception. We also request *the drivers of the cars* to proceed to the exit. (On board the liner *Vitsentzos Kornaros*, 11/5/02)

- (13b) Attention please! Passengers wishing to have *a dinner* are kindly requested to proceed to the dining room. (On board *Vitsentzos Kornaros*, 6/5/02)

- (13c) Attention Please! Last call for visitors. All visitors are kindly requested to proceed ashore. The ship is ready to sail. (On board *Vitsentzos Kornaros*, 11/5/02)

In (13a) *passengers who travel in a cabin* and the *drivers of the cars* correspond to Greek norms paralleling closely *επιβάτες που ταξιδεύουν σε καμπίνα* and *τους οδηγούς των αυτοκινήτων*, respectively; whereas, in (13b) *a dinner* does not seem to correspond to a native construction at all. As for (13c), we have a good example of distinctive vocabulary distribution in GE (see section 3.1.3).

2.2. On register: Conversational vs. announcement GE

The reason for drawing such a distinction, given that my data is limited, is primarily theoretical. This distinction allows us to enter into a discussion of register

while also noting that one style feeds the other and then back again. The predominant process, however, seems to be one of generalizing from the higher register of announcements to that of colloquial language as is common in “high”-feature spreading (Holmes, 1992: 142-163, 218ff). At the same time, there is a paradox here: one would expect announcements to be more careful than colloquial usage (and they are for the most part). Yet, although announcement style informs conversational English (especially for the group of people under discussion, cf. (11)), announcement English is in itself a by-product of conversational English underneath the thin veneer of IATA regulations governing the content of announcements world-wide.

The demands of the grammar and vocabulary of a foreign language are multiplied by the traps of register choice, resulting in people who speak like announcements and announcements which sound chatty, illustrated respectively in (11) and (14):

- (14a) The Crew of Air 2000 is kindly requested to the gate number 2. The crew of Air 2000 please. (Makedonia Airport, 17/5/02)

I am here referring to what is implied throughout: I deem register to be a (highly unnecessary) refinement characteristic of literate cultures, using highly codified language varieties. I would expect it to be absent or at best vestigial in pre-literate ones; at least register differentiation in colloquial language, which in literate cultures serves more the purpose of telling one's status and power than anything else (cf. Ong 1982). As such it is linguistically redundant as it is socially essential: a linguistic manifestation of a highly political nature. It is telling that diglossia, politically entrenched as it has been in any society that had to deal with it (Ferguson 1959), is also referred to as *register-variation* (cf. Georgakopoulou and Spanaki 2001). The author still understands the “unnecessary” nature of register as on a par with the unnecessary nature of forks, shoes, Armani suits, or mink coats for that matter. Most cultural achievements would fall under the relevant sense of “unnecessary”.²⁰

The Greek example in (14b) is indicative of the same process, which in itself indicates that it has nothing to do with Greek speakers of English but it is a more general phenomenon. Specifically, the use of *κατέβουν* in conjunction with (ultra) high *όπως* instead of, say, *εξέλεθουν* in (14b) is hilarious to Greeks and the butt of many jokes.²¹

²⁰ See also Kostoula-Makrakis (2001: 47-67) on register choice and diglossia. In a different vein,

²¹ Cf. Canakis (1994). See also Setatos (1997: 88-91) on the same subject and (1973) for characteristics of the Greek High variety (Katharevousa).

- (14b) Ανακοίνωση! Σε δύο λεπτά η αμαξοστοιχία αναχωρεί.
 Announcement! In two minutes the train it-departs.
 Παρακαλούνται οι κύριοι επιβάτες όπως κατέβουν.
 Are-requested the gentlemen passengers that they-step-down

Often register choice is just plain messy in either language as in (14b) or in (15) below:

- (15a) Be prepared: Ensure you are wearing your lifejacket. Cold kills, put on as much clothing as possible and wear a hat. (Written notice on board *Vitsenzos Kornaros*)
- (15b) Ο επιβάτης μας κ. [Βαλαπάρας] που ταξιδεύει για
 The passenger our Mr. [Valaparas] that he-travels for/to
 Μήλο παρακαλείται να μεταβεί στη ρεσεψιόν.
 Melos he-is-requested to he-proceed to-the reception.
- (15c) Ο επιβάτης μας που έχει χάσει το κινητό του
 The passenger our that he-has lost the mobile his---
 Motorola--παρακαλείται να μεταβεί στη ρεσεψιόν να
 Motorola--he-is-requested that he-proceed to-the reception to
 το παραλάβει.
 it he-receive.

In (15a) *ensure* clashes with *cold kills*, while in (15b) *our passenger* is a strange bedfellow to *proceed*, the same being true of (15c). Fossilization of high expressions such as *proceed/μεταβεί* seems to be why they collocate with low vocabulary items.

2.2.2. On register: Conversations feeding announcements and vice versa

The relationship between the colloquial language of everyday conversation and the language of official purposes such as announcements is subject to a complex dialectic. One can make a couple of pre-theoretical observations: i) conversational (vernacular) language is primary in a functional sense; it is also unmarked for the same reason; ii) it is, moreover, non-prestigious just because it is unmarked; whereas, iii) official language is functionally non-primary but, rather, a derivative of the former. It is marked and far more prestigious.²²

²² For brief but illuminating discussions on (style vs.) register see Romaine (1994: 19-21) and Hymes (1974: 58-59) for much more technical treatment.

Yet, the logical conclusion which would be that colloquial language (CL) informs official language (OL) does not hold; thus we leave out prestige. It is the elusive notion of prestige which typically troubles attempts at neat analyses, even without the complications arising as a result of L1-L2 interaction. Rather, the picture is complicated and could be (again pre-theoretically) described along the following lines. Despite the prevalence of CL, OL informs the former because it has prestige, just as CL, being a more versatile variety, informs and affects OL because of its unmarkedness and primacy in human experience.²³ It is for this reason that we find two peculiar phenomena: i) official GE tends to have features alluding to CL, i.e. announcements are often not as syntactically complex or tightly structured as expected (especially given the degree to which these features are present in Greek announcements); ii) at the same time, conversational GE manifests serious infiltration of learnedisms, fossilized expressions, which are characteristic of the often stilted register of official GE. For instance, consider again (11) repeated here as (16) for convenience:

- (16) A: Από δω περνάω;
 from here I-pass
 ‘Do I get in this way?’
 B: Yes, you may enter!

Disregarding both the possibility of the employee's having misunderstood the exact question and that the passenger spoke in Greek and got a response in English, the fact remains that *you may enter* is highly marked in conversational English, especially under the circumstances it was uttered: the passenger was late and the employee was busy trying to fit a large vehicle into the boat.

Note that although these observations may be seen as a certain stage in the speaker's interlanguage, they can hardly be accounted for as only that; for the very same is true of the interplay between announcements and CL in Greek as well (cf. ex. 14b and 17b):

- (17a) Passengers are kindly requested to [...] the ship is approaching to Mytilene.

- (17b) Παρακαλούμε τους κυρίους επιβάτες να ετοιμάζονται
 We-request the gentlemen passengers to they-get-ready
 για την αποβίβαση. Σε λίγα λεπτά το πλοίο φτάνει
 for the disembarking. In a-few minutes the ship it-reaches

²³ By this I am alluding to an experientially-based, cognitive linguistics as understood by the California School (cf. Lakoff 1987).

στη Μυτιλήνη
to-the Mytilene.

‘We request passengers to be getting ready to disembark. In a few minutes the ship will be arriving in Mytilene.’ (On board the sea-liner *Romilda* 29/8/02)

(17c) Arrival Aegean Cronus flight 717 from Mytilene. (SKG, 17/5/02)

The question that arises here is whether it is wise to speak of New English at all or whether we are simply faced with the vagaries of a garden variety L2 acquisition process. This issue shall be taken up in section 3.

2.3. Official English as the measure for colloquial GE

Prestige is the main force OL brings into the interaction with CL (i.e., the vernacular). This results in an interesting phenomenon: i) although we have various registers within each of these varieties, OL implicitly becomes the measure against which we gauge and evaluate colloquial usage, rather than the reverse.²⁴ If a speaker who uses *can* for all kinds of modality (deontic and epistemic alike) comes constantly in contact with OL’s deontic or “root”²⁵ *may*, then it will, sooner or later, spill over to his/her CL too, especially given a rather poor education combined with a good measure of linguistic insecurity and upward mobility. This is in keeping with well-documented sociolinguistic observations on the interaction of class and style (cf. Holmes 1992: 218-224). Moreover, it elucidates the (out of place) use of *may* in (16). Similar observations can be made for Standard American English after the yuppie revolution of the 1980’s: suddenly upward mobile young professionals talk of *assets* and *food purchases* much more than in the past.²⁶ People are becoming increasingly aware (whether through education or simply through the grape vine) that how you talk matters (and unfortunately) as much as what you say. And they do just that: they mind their p’s and q’s (cf. R. Lakoff 1973); especially if they feel they belong to “subordinate groups”, since “subordinate groups must be polite” (Holmes, 1992:

²⁴ Except, maybe, in cases of reverse linguistic snobbery which shall not be the concern of this study.

²⁵ See Sweetser (1990: 49ff) for a clear exposition on modality, especially the deontic or root sense.

²⁶ Which is, in turn, reflected in the religious observance of the protocol dictating navy-blue pinstriped suit and maroon loafers and tie to be sported by American young urban professionals (at least on the East Coast and the Midwest). Language, like dress, is undergoing a process of massive uniformity which is a side-effect of standardization.

173-176)²⁷ in the obvious sense that includes, but is not exhausted by, *conformist*.

One can predict that progressive sensitization to social issues will slowly but steadily lead to near-extinction of many colloquial forms - especially forms charged with the “wrong” attitudes and reflecting politically incorrect values. But this is tangential to the issue at hand and an indirect result of many other processes too. What remains a hot issue is the reification of marked OL (the cornerstone in the labyrinthine edifice of professional and political double-talk) in otherwise increasingly egalitarian societies. To the observation often made that a lot of the stilted language of old has gone, one may add this to complete and sober up the picture.

3. GREEK ENGLISH AND NEW ENGLISHES

So far, I have been talking of NE in general and GE in particular without defining the concept of NE in such a way that it would prove the relevance of treating what I call GE under the relevant heading. Is the English spoken by non-native speakers a token of NE? Is *x*-E to be identified with NE or not? Is it to be seen as an inadequate/insufficient native attempt at learning/acquiring or even translating a respected standard variety? This task is, in itself, a handful to deal with (cf. Platt et al., 1984: chapter 1, esp. 1-3 & 10-12) and this is not the place to do it. Still, I will embark on a brief discussion of the relevant criteria in order to show that they are hard to ascertain - all except the major ones: the *functional* and the *formal* criteria. Thus, my position is that if an *x*-E fulfills some function in a domain of experience in an otherwise non-English speaking nation/society, then, given the current rate of spreading of the English language,²⁸ it is likely that it will start meet-

²⁷ Holmes discusses this as a possible explanation of the linguistic behavior of women and other “subordinates”. She notes that a facile version of this explanation merely confuses politeness with standard language, whereas a more sophisticated one “links it to the social status explanations, suggest[ing] that by using more standard speech forms women are looking after their own need to be valued by the society” (Ibid.: 173).

²⁸ In the case of Greek, one should also co-estimate the recent discussion about whether English should become an official language in Greece. Cf. Fishman (1992: 19) on this point who says:

The ongoing nativization of non-native Englishes in various parts of the world proceeds within the penumbra of a rather stable and widespread image of English. This image is itself both influenced by and, in turn, contributory to an international sociolinguistic balance of power that characterizes the latter part of the twentieth century. This balance of power rests on three realities: (1) not only is English increasingly associated with technological modernity and power, but this association is now being fostered by non-English mother-tongue interests; (2) English is both functionally fostered and regulated by local political authorities; and (3) indigenous “preferred languages” are complementarily fostered and regulated by the same authorities.

ing more and more of the criteria postulated by Platt et al. (Ibid.).

Allow me a rather long quote from Platt et al. (Ibid.: 2-3) which will elucidate both the concept and the relevant criteria that may be employed in determining a NE as opposed to a mere stage in a learner's interlanguage:

What then is a New English? As with many attempts at classification of languages or classification within a language, there is no precise, clear-cut answer. There are always borderline cases which refuse to fit neatly into categories. However, we shall consider that a New English is one which fulfils the following criteria:

1. It has developed through the education system. This means that it has been taught as a subject and, in many cases, also used as a medium of instruction in regions where languages other than English were the main languages. [...]
2. It has developed in an area where a native variety of English was *not* the language spoken by most of the population. For various reasons, [...] pidgin and creole languages are not considered to be *native varieties of English*.
3. It is used for a range of functions *among* those who speak or write it in the region where it is used. This means that the new variety is used for at least some purposes [...]. It may be used as a lingua franca, a general language of communication, among those speaking different native languages or, in some cases, even among those who speak the same native language but use English, because it is felt to be more appropriate for certain purposes.
4. It has become 'localized' or 'nativized' by adopting some language features of its own, such as sounds, words, expressions. Usually it has also developed some different rules for using language in communication.

Considering (1), Greek meets the criterion only in part, as English has been a subject in public high schools since the '60s and in elementary schools as of the last decade. As for (2) is also obviously met at first sight, although the range of functions – the key for satisfaction of the second criterion which meshes into (3) – is limited. English, GE, is used as a lingua franca in Greece in a limited fashion. The last criterion, outlined in (4), is also obviously met. In what follows, I will devote three sections to these grammatical and communicative aspects of nativization of English in Greece, intending to show that, since the first three criteria for membership are hard to ascertain, we can at least attempt to do the obvious: look at the form and show that the last criterion is met.

GE can thus qualify at least as an emergent NE. This is partly due to an ongoing tendency against colonial attitudes (understood broadly). I understand these anti-colonial attitudes as being debatable at a first level: there is little sense in talking of an *x*-English (where *x* is any adjective denoting a place name/ethnicity), while the purpose of learning English is to communicate with other speakers of English. Yet, this is precisely the issue: the English of many speakers of English, any *x*-E, is not meant for interaction with speakers of a Metropolitan standard. It is rather meant for interaction with other non-native speakers (cf. Smith, 1992) as the least marked code. It is, first and foremost, a function of political reality and sociolinguistic awareness and (secondarily but no less importantly) of *attitude*. It is not an exaggeration to say that in present-day Greece it follows that you should know English just as you should know how to navigate the net; maybe precisely because of that.²⁹ As Kachru (1990: vii) puts it, there is “transmutation associated with the learning of English”; indeed, I find this a transmutation aiming at acquiring, by osmosis, some of “the power of English as an instrument of individual and societal transformation”.³⁰

I shall now turn to the actual grammatical features of GE at various levels of analysis.

3.1. Grammatical Characteristics of GE

As mentioned above, one of the criteria for the categorization of a variety of English as a New English pertains to its localization or nativization by the adoption of its own grammatical features and the development of a native set of rules governing communication. Following time-honored tradition to some extent, I will briefly discuss aspects of phonetics and phonology, grammatical constructions, and meaning through vocabulary distribution.

3.1.1. *GE as a variety of English with its own phonetics and phonology*

The most noticeable feature of any *x*-E is its pronunciation: this is what hits one first. Let us look, selectively, into GE where the sound system of English

²⁹ Greek language e-sites have only appeared relatively recently and then, again, they are probably not among the ones most visited by Greek net-surfers.

³⁰ And Kachru (1990: vii) continues, succinctly, as follows:

Whether these attributes are real or imagined is not important; what is vital is the public attitude toward English, the love-hate relationship with the language, and the acceptance of the functional power of English in all parts of the world. This power is now recognized, though grudgingly, even by those who would like to see English replaced by regional or national languages in Africa or Asia.

undergoes serious transmutations as speakers of GE are faced, for one, with the choice of either acquiring a system of some twelve or so vowels or conflating these vowels to the native system of just five. The first is only theoretically an option, available to very few.³¹ The second, most common option, has variable results. Most common is the reduction of the SE system of 12+ members to just 5 or maybe 6 vowels, if the learner manages to acquire an approximation of the mid front vowel [æ], or better [æ-ə-Λ] understood as an entity, a *gestalt*, produced somewhere in the region bounded by these three sounds (cf. front-to-center, mid-to-lower region, i.e. the southeast of the chart). As movement away from the targeted points of reference become greater, the outcome is often totally new to the ears of those aimed at. Indeed, on occasion so new that the very audience targeted misses it entirely (cf. Aeroflot announcement in (10)). Consider (18):

(18a) *Arrival Aegean Cronus flight number 511 from Stuttgart.*

In (18), the first syllable of *Aegean* is pronounced with diphthongization of what is a single sound in SE, often also pronounced [ei], as two sounds. Indeed it is often, as in this case, a three syllable word: *Ae-ge-an*. As for *number*, the first vowel is a fronted [a], whereas the last syllable is pronounced with an equally front [e], an ‘un-standard’ choice, no matter which variety of SE may be targeted. Last, the vowel of *from* is a back, mid-high vowel, an approximation of [o]. Pretty much the same happens with examples 18(b)-(c), in which I will discuss a few points selectively:

(18b) Last call for passengers.

(18c) To proceed ashore. The ship is ready to sail.

In (18b) *passengers* was pronounced [ˈpasendzɜrs], while in (18c) the male announcer produced [proˈsɪd] and [seɪl], but also [aˈsɔr], [sɪp]. Obviously, there are a number of neutralizations in the GE phonological system, including, but not being limited to, the ones indicated by the following minimal pairs in English:³²

³¹ Either because of who their teachers happen to be, but, yes, also because of special abilities apparently required for such a task past a relatively early age.

³² Due to software limitations I am unable to transcribe these words properly, I will therefore use their written form assuming RP pronunciation.

VOWELS

- i. seep - sip
- ii. bed - bird
- iii. cat - cut
- iv. cot - caught

CONSONANTS

- i. sip - ship
- ii. cats - catch
- iii. ads - adge

All in all, we could think of the situation Greek speakers of English face by visualizing the facts of the two sound systems. Imagine a sieve with five holes (cf. the sound system of Greek) into which one must fit twelve or so items: obviously, some of them will go through the same holes, whether at the same time or in sequence. The point is that there shall be no one-to-one, hole-per-item correspondence. Indeed, the reverse is also true and a rough illustration of what English speakers of Greek do with their sieve of twelve holes: some of them necessarily remain unused for the passage of a mere five phonemic vowels – only the rest of the holes remain almost invariably unplugged resulting in rampant vowel instability from one token of a word to the next.

I will not belabor the point further for what one may mention in addition to this will lead us astray towards a contrastive analysis of the phonological systems of Greek and English. Instead, I will move on to constructions; native GE constructions at that.

3.1.2. *Distinctive GE constructions*

GE would not be Greek without a number of native constructions, which are a reflection of the grammar of the native language, but also of native colloquial, conversational style. Consider (19):

- (19a) We say “good-bye” to you...
- (19b) Passengers wishing to have a dinner...
- (19c) The crew of Air 2000 [...] to proceed to the gate.
- (19d) Myrina's Port Authority

(19a) can be seen as a native attempt to express the referential (but also part of the emotive/affective) load of *σας αποχαιρετούμε*. And this seems to be so whether one looks at it as a translation from Greek or as a NE expression, part and parcel of a functionally dictated GE. (19b) is also distinctly GE, indeed, a case where the translation-from-Greek or negative-interference-theory can hardly be sustained: in Greek one could not possibly say *επιβάτες που επιθυμούν να έχουν/πάρουν ένα δείπνο* - and they do not. In fact they say *επιβάτες που επιθυμούν να δειπνήσουν* ‘passengers wishing to dine’, yet they fail to produce a SE announcement to the same effect, im-

mediately available in this case even translating word-for-word from Greek.

(19c) relates to earlier comments on the importance of the genitive marker for Greek speakers (cf. *The crew of Air 2000*) while also demonstrating that it sounds better to be non-specific in Greek than it does in English: i.e., *proceed to the gate* sounds just short of inane in English (despite its grammaticality) given that gates at Makedonia Airport abound. Whereas the Greek equivalent would hardly raise an eyebrow. This is where Marmaridou's work (1987) on the *tertium comparationis*³³ in contrastive analyses of translated texts becomes relevant. When contrasting two linguistic codes, we often fail to realize that the pragmatics associated with each code is not a-linguistic, but rather language-specific. There is a third, largely invisible, party in the comparison: language-specific pragmatic conventions (more on this issue in section 3.1.3).

(19d) is similar to (19c) as regards the genitive; yet there is a difference. If we tried to apply the time-honored (yet manifestly inaccurate) rule of the -'s suffix based on animacy of the modified noun, the awkwardness of (19d) would be explained but not that of (19c). SE would simply avoid the marked genitive in (19c) –marked regardless of whether one uses the preposition or the suffix. So, what is going on here? I believe the answer is, again, to be sought (and found) in register. (19c) sounds peculiarly better than (19d), taking into consideration the context and purpose for which it was produced. There can, after all, be degrees of formality even in announcements.³⁴ The peculiar ring of (19d) on the other hand, has to do (among other things) with the fact that it was the text of a written sign hanging outside the building housing The Port Authority of Myrina (Myrina Port Authority, for that matter). There is much less choice in writing –especially in the case of signs. The problem with *Myrina's Port Authority* is that it sounds desperately like *Betty's [Route 1/Highway] Diner*, or *John's Ice-cream Parlor*, and while all of the above refer to place-cum-institution, this is apparently not enough to vouchsafe the appropriacy of (18c).

3.1.3. A distinctive pattern of vocabulary distribution

The last grammatical feature of GE I will deal with here is its distinctive pattern of vocabulary distribution; incidentally, yet another feature pertaining crucially to register. The distribution of English vocabulary in GE shows the following characteristics:

³³ Marmaridou, drawing on James (1980) and Krzeszowski (1980), mentions that the TC as “[t]he background sameness that underlies the elements to be compared constitutes the constant in terms of which variables may be tested; it is referred to as the *tertium comparationis*” (1987: 724).

³⁴ Cf. announcement in (15c).

- i) High-frequency words are often replaced by low-frequency ones;
- ii) this happens in contexts where high-frequency words are dispreferred;³⁵
- iii) the reverse process is also attested in GE.

Let us take up each of these in turn. Consideration of example (20a), reveals that there is something odd about the choice of vocabulary:

- (20a) Attention please! Last call for all visitors. All visitors are kindly requested to *proceed ashore*. The ship is ready to *sail*. (on board *Vitsentzos Kornaros*, 11/5/02)

The choice of *ashore* is unfortunate not in that it clashes with the overall style, which is formal anyway, but rather in that the choice of *ashore* is so idiosyncratic that it ceases to be idiomatic English.³⁶ The grammaticality of (20a) in itself demonstrates paradigmatically the point whereabouts English ceases to be English and becomes *x-E*. Pretty much the same holds for *sail*, which, combined with *ashore*, gives a peculiarly poetic –indeed Victorian– touch to an announcement one has every reason to believe was not intended to sound poetic. Yet, prestige is again at issue: an announcement, being official, seems to invite the least frequent vocabulary items. This is especially true of Greek speakers of English since Greece is only slowly emerging from a situation of case-study diglossia.³⁷ Thus, to GE speakers, the choice is obviously for the High variety (which in this case overlaps with rarer) in a text type such as public announcements. This register variation affecting Greek (and Greek alone at least in the relevant sense³⁸) could very well be termed the *quartium comparationis*. Such a factor would be expectedly relevant in any contrastive study featuring Greek as one of the languages compared. This can be seen by comparing the Greek text preceding the English announcement on the same occasion (20b) and (20c), a near-repetition of (20b) immediately after the English text with different word order and a re-

³⁵ Typically for reasons relating to intended formality level.

³⁶ Had we had a percentage of the usage of *ashore* in SE in such contexts, we would have a better gauge of this.

³⁷ Cf. Georgakopoulou and Spanaki (2001: 9-15). Also see Alexiou (2001) and Tziovas (2001) in the same volume. Tziovas, in particular, relates textuality and orality to Katharevousa and Dimotiki, respectively, thus making Ong's (1982) distinction between orality and literacy far more relevant for Greek than may appear at first glance.

³⁸ Ferguson (1959) vs. Fishman's wider definition (1980). See also Holmes (1992: 32-41, 118-121) for a much wider view of diglossia.

deeming use of the nominative plural for *κύριοι*, favoring the resolution of the problems associated with stress movement.

(20b) Προσοχή παρακαλώ! Τελευταία ανακοίνωση για τους
 Attention please! Last announcement for the
κύριους [sic] επισκέπτες. Ειδοποιούνται οι κύριοι επισκέπτες
 gentlemen visitors They-are-notified the gentlemen visitors
 να εξέλθουν. Το πλοίο αναχωρεί.
 that they-exit. The ship is-departing.

(20 c) Τελευταία ειδοποίηση. Οι κύριοι επισκέπτες παρακαλούνται
 Last notice. The gentlemen visitors are-requested
 να εξέλθουν. Το πλοίο αναχωρεί αμέσως.
 that they-exit. The ship is-departing immediately.

Vocabulary choice in (20a) is partly explained by comparing it to (20b-c), where choices such as (high) *εξέλθουν* and, in the same breath, of low *κύριους* instead of standard *κυρίους* illustrate the legacy of diglossia.

Whereas there is clear motivation for the processes outlined in (i) and (ii), it is harder to account for (iii): there is no obvious sociolinguistic reason for doing the reverse of (i) and (ii). This is where Marmaridou's work on pragmatic factors can give a relevant answer. Marmaridou (1987: 729-731) claims that reasons such as sociocultural norms relating to politeness dictate different announcements in English and Greek in Olympic Airways flights, sometimes as different as the following (adapted from Marmaridou 1987: 732).³⁹

(21a) If you continue your flight with us, you will have to pass passport and currency control here at Rome Airport. Kindly take your hand luggage and personal items with you.

³⁹ Blum-Kulka, (1986: 25) provides a similar example from an Air Canada advertisement of New York fares in English and French. She concludes that

the two version of the Air Canada advertisement illustrate the copy writer's awareness of the different cultural assumptions of the audience they were catering for. [...] The fact that apparently they were written as two versions to serve the same purpose testifies that Air Canada public relations people are aware of the different needs of the two language communities" [i.e. mostly business for Anglophones and business and pleasure/romance for the Francophones].

Also see Kasper & Blum-Kulka (1993: 3-17) on the scope of interlanguage pragmatics and Schmidt (1993) on the acquisition of pragmatic abilities in a second language.

- (21b) Αν συνεχίζετε το ταξίδι σας μαζί μας, σας πληροφορούμε
 if continue^{2pl.} the trip your with us, you inform^{1pl.}
 ότι, επειδή θα περάσετε έλεγχο διαβατηρίων και
 that because will pass^{2pl.} control of passports and
 συναλλάγματος στο αεροδρόμιο της Ρώμης, πρέπει να
 of currency at the airport of the Rome, must to
 πάρετε μαζί σας όλα τα προσωπικά σας είδη.
 take^{2pl.} with you all the personal your items.

‘If you continue your trip with us, we inform you that, because you will pass passport and currency control at Rome Airport, you must take all your personal items with you.’

- (21b) Η υπεύθυνη πληρώματος θαλάμου επιβατών, Κυρία
 The responsible for crew of room of passengers Mrs.
 Μπέη, θα είναι στη διάθεσή σας καθ’ όλη τη διάρκεια
 Bay, will be^{3sg.} at the service your in all the duration
 της πτήσεώς σας.
 of the flight your.

‘The chief hostess on this flight, Mrs. Bay, will be at your service during the flight.’

Part of the story on the different choices in the two texts has to do with different politeness strategies predominantly employed by Greek and English speakers. As Sifianou (1992, 2001) has determined, whereas Greeks tend to be positive politeness oriented, the British favor negative politeness.⁴⁰ Specifically, Sifianou suggests that these differences concern both verbal behavior but also attitudes –and by extension contrasting cultural norms– towards specific types of interaction, such as telephone calls (2001: 154). In this light (14a) and 15(b-c) can be accounted for as attempts to empathize or be friendly (positively polite) with the passengers. Commenting on Marmaridou’s data, she suggests that

⁴⁰ For an explanation of these technical terms see Brown and Levinson (1987). Sifianou (2001) has reached similar conclusions relating to different socio-cultural norms in her study of telephone conversations in England and Greece, while Sifianou and Tzanne (1997, 1999) investigate socio-cultural norms that point to similar directions in weather forecast reports on Greek and British television. The relevance of these works lies in the fact that they also investigate short, well-bounded text types with a rather high degree of predictability (cf. de Beaugrande and Dressler 1981: 3-13).

the differences noticed, such as more explanations and fewer passive constructions in the Greek data, clearly reflect the positive politeness orientation of Greek society. More generally, her English data appear to be clear manifestations of the negative politeness strategy ‘state the FTA as a general rule’, examples of which proliferate in airline-ese’ (Brown and Levinson, 1978: 211-12). This strategy, which is closely related to indirectness, seems to be almost absent from her Greek data, which are more direct and addressee-orientated. For instance, one of her examples is: ‘Ladies and Gentlemen, if there is a doctor *on board*, kindly contact the Chief Cabin Crew,’ whereas the equivalent Greek announcement is ‘Ladies and Gentlemen, if there is a doctor *among the passengers*, s/he is asked...’ (1992: 201).

The low-frequency vocabulary that remains in these announcements (e.g. *να μεταβεί* ‘to proceed’ in 15 (a-b)) has to do with fossilization, which is intensified by diglossia in Greek. Although these are announcements in Greek, the overall style spills over to English, as in (8a) or (22) below, showing that pragmatic competence is probably the last aspect of a language to be acquired; the finishing touch in the edifice of one’s L2 acquisition:

- (22) Ladies and gentlemen welcome to the Airport of Mytilene. There will be enough time to collect your belongings before the doors open. For your safety, please remain seated until we have reached our *parking position* and the seatbelt sign is off. When leaving please make sure that no personal belongings are left behind. We thank you for flying Olympic Airways and we look forward *to welcome* you again on our flights. (OA 576, ATH-MJT, 28/6/02)

In (22) *parking position* substitutes the far more usual [*until the aircraft comes to*] *a complete stop*, whereas the choice of the verb *welcome* is odd for reasons other than the grammaticality of *we look forward to welcome you*. What is interesting here, is that in the Greek counterpart we have the matter-of-fact expression *να σας ξαναδούμε* ‘to see you again’, which makes one wonder whether Olympic Airways is exploiting stereotypes of Greek hospitality in the English version of text. Be that as it may, the fact remains that even in vocabulary distribution, we cannot explain all phenomena by recourse to the L1. Any x-E, be it a *bona fide* NE or not, will manifest grammatical and communicative characteristics which are unique.

4. CONCLUSIONS

In this study I have concentrated on the English spoken by Greeks occupied in the travel industry. Through an examination of recently collected data I have sought to verify the hypotheses that underlie this study: that i) constructions particular to (SE) will be the first to go and shall be replaced by analogous native ones; ii) this shall be manifested not only in conversations but even in announcements; and iii) public announcements will constitute the measure against which conversational uses will be gauged. Moreover, I have reviewed the criteria suggested for the verification of a NE and showed that the criteria of function and form are met, although to different degrees. The functions of GE are limited compared to those of Indian, Malay, or Singaporean English. Yet, the criterion of form is met on all levels. Thus, the latter part of this paper was devoted to a cursory discussion of the grammatical characteristics of GE showing that it is progressively becoming a nativized variety. This is also where we see that the distinctive systemic conventions in any *x-E*, are not to be understood as alluding to a fusion of two codes bearing visible marks of their pedigrees. Rather, it is a new product which could be approximately characterized as the summation of L1, L2, aspects of the *tertium comparationis* and, in the case of GE, a *quartium comparationis*, for good measure. The extent to which this new product GE will develop into a fully fledged New English will depend on the potential broadening of the gamut of its functions, such as its users will deem appropriate.

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