The discovery of Modern Greek as a second language[*]

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Abstract

Modern Greek as a second/foreign language (G2) is a relatively recent field. This paper focuses on the early, formative years of the field of G2 (1985-2004). It discusses the relevant literature and places particular emphasis on the textbooks for teaching G2, with an aim to revealing their latent conceptions about language and second language acquisition. Assessment and proficiency standards are also taken into account. It is argued that G2, as the most recent phase in a continuing process of Modern Greek standardisation, has been influenced by conceptions and practices that prevail in the field of G1.

Keywords: Second Language Acquisition, Greek as a second/foreign language, Standard Modern Greek, standardisation

1. Introduction

Modern Greek as a second language (henceforth G2) is a newly constituted field of study.

During the so-called Greek Language Question (Γλωσσικό Ζήτημα), demoticists – i.e., defenders of the *demotic* or vernacular variety of Modern Greek – made only passing reference to the issue of teaching Modern Greek as a second or as a foreign language. Demoticists, one may suppose, were well aware of the distinction between first and second/foreign language and of its implications. They insisted that *katharevousa*, the archaized and puristic variety, along with Ancient Greek, should be treated as foreign languages, in contrast to the native and "natural" *demotic* variety. A

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typical argument in favor of *demotic* stated that it was about as difficult for Greeks to learn a foreign language as it was for them to master *katharevousa* (Mackridge 2009: 100, 110, 257, 227). However, preoccupied as they were with *katharevousa* (the adversary of *demotic*), the demoticists were not in a position to see *demotic* itself as a second/foreign language to be learned by non-Greeks or by Greeks not speaking Greek. They could not *imagine* Greek as a foreign language.

Manolis Triantaphyllidis (1883-1959), a late representative of the demoticist movement, is rightly considered to be the founder of Standard Modern Greek, i.e. of the standardised variety based on the vernacular language. He envisaged the possibility of teaching the *demotic* variety to minorities in Greece as well as to expatriate Greek Americans. His argument was that teaching the vernacular instead of *katharevousa* would make it much easier for non-Greek speaking minorities in Greece to learn the Greek language as well as for heritage speakers of Greek in the United States and elsewhere to preserve their language. Here are two characteristic extracts from Triantaphyllidis' writings on these issues:

> Η γλωσσική αφομοίωση δεν μπορεί να γίνη παρά με τη ζωντανή γλώσσα, και η γλώσσα αυτή πρέπει να καθιερωθή στα σχολεία της Μακεδονίας, παντού όπου υπάρχουν ξενόφωνοι (Τριανταφυλλίδης 1963 [1916[1]]: 257).
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> "Linguistic assimilation could only be achieved through the living language [*demotic*], and it is the living language that has to be established in the schools of Macedonia as well as everywhere where there are non-Greek speakers."
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> Είχα τονίσει άλλοτε πως και αν ακόμη εμείς οι Ελλαδικοί επιθυμούμε να επιμένωμε στην καθαρεύουσα, είναι απαραίτητη η δημοτική και η διδασκαλία της όσο αποβλέπομε σε γλωσσική αφομοίωση ξενοφώνων – και φυσικά και σε διατήρηση ομογλώσσων που κινδυνεύουν να χάσουν τη γλώσσα τους (Τριανταφυλλίδης 1965 [1952[1]]: 117 n. 56).
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> "I had also stressed on another occasion that, even if we, the citizens of Greece, want to insist on *katharevousa*, teaching the *demotic* variety is necessary as long as our aim is to linguistically assimilate the non-Greek speakers [in Greece] as well as to preserve the language of the Greek speakers [abroad], which is in danger of becoming extinct."

To these views about G2, one should add Triantaphyllidis' hostile attitude towards bilingualism or multilingualism, evidenced, e.g., in his *Οι ξένες γλώσσες και η αγωγή* [Foreign languages and education] (1946). He seems annoyed by those Greeks, especially of the upper classes, who are prone to have their children taught a foreign language by private tutors at a very early age. He thinks that this habit reveals a disregard for their children's native tongue. Foreign languages, for Triantaphyllidis, should be taught only after the fourth grade, when the knowledge of the vernacular has been consolidated (Τριανταφυλλίδης 1946: 146). He claims that the brain of an early learner of foreign languages can be afflicted by a variety of ζημίες, "damages", of which he makes an impressive list (Τριανταφυλλίδης 1946: 51-92). He quotes with approval Friedrich Ludwig Jahn (the German gymnastics innovator and nationalist) for his dictum that "σε *μία* γλώσσα μεγαλώνει κανείς" ("one can grow up in/with only one language"; Τριανταφυλλίδης 1946: 99-100).

The monolingual mindset of *Οι ξένες γλώσσες και η αγωγή* is betrayed by the asymmetry in the way second language learning is perceived: it is permissible and desirable to have others learn your own language, but it is unnecessary, or even disadvantageous for one to start learning the languages of others – or to start thinking of one's own language through the languages of others.

Here is an overview of what follows: In the next two sections I will concentrate on the bibliography of G2 of the period 1985-2004. By focusing on the book of Genesis, one hopes that the constitutional, genetic characteristics of G2 would, somehow, be revealed. Since the mid 2000s, G2 as a scientific discipline has seen remarkable advances. A considerable amount of linguistic research on G2 has been carried out, with precise methodology, through hypothesis testing, in many of the environments G2 learning takes place as a process. This was not the case in the mid 1980s; if this is now the time for descriptive work, then the 1980s was the period of prescriptivism, when G2 practitioners were preoccupied with teaching and assessing rather than learning. After a quick review of the main types of entries in the bibliography of G2, I will, in the next but one section, focus on the characteristics of G2 textbooks that were published during this early period. Extensive comparisons of textbooks have been available since the beginnings of G2. I will not be concerned with issues of grammatical coverage or efficiency; I am more interested in finding out what conception of G2 these textbooks project; how their authors *imagine* G2 and the stages of learning it. My argument will be that the textbook conception of G2 has

been influenced by the monolingual mindset; that the inoperative machinery of teaching G1 has been carried over to the teaching of G2; and that those aspects of the language that the native speakers are not aware of are also disregarded in the teaching of G2. In the last section I will concentrate on assessment and provide some evidence on how the G2 proficiency levels have been constructed. 1985-2004, the period this paper concentrates on, was a period of transience: the four proficiency levels available then, have now been restandardised to six, in accordance with the Common European Framework. Despite the precision gained in the grammatical and functional specification of proficiency levels, proficiency, I will argue, has been standardised on the model of G1 and, in certain settings, such as the "Examinations for the certificate of attainment in G2", is still dependent on the intuitive judgments of the examiners.

Although my focus is on the period 1985-2004, I have not avoided references to more recent developments. Recent literature marks a break with the past, but it also reveals certain tendencies that have been consolidated. I hope at the end to have provided sufficient justification for my claim that G2 is the most recent stage in the continuing process of Modern Greek standardisation.

2. A bibliography of G2

G2 is a relatively recent field, following the resolution of the perennial Greek Language Question. The birthdate of this newly constituted field should be placed somewhere in the early 1980s, just when Greece started experiencing the first of successive waves of immigration. G2 followed the adoption, in 1976, of an official language, Standard Modern Greek, largely based on *demotic*, i.e. the vernacular variety or the vernacular Standard (Mackridge 2009: 319-320).

That G2 was born in the 1980s should not be taken to imply that before the 1980s there were no people learning Greek as their second language, no teachers teaching Greek and no methods addressed to non-native speakers, or that there had been no predecessors in this field of study. It should be taken to imply, however, that G2 has been constituted as a field, as a *champ* (Bourdieu 1982: 53-58), as a market in which products are circulated, several services are provided and professionals of various professions are involved, only in the 1980s. It should also be taken to imply that, in order to be constituted as a field, G2 possibly had to reinvent itself; it had to forget its origins and overlook its predecessors, who are only very recently being rediscovered (Brown 2016; Caravolas 2009; Delveroudi 2015, 2016; Παντελόγλου 2016).

A scientific field is largely coextensive with the literature written in it. For this reason, most of my remarks in this section will be bibliographical in nature. My account of G2 will be based on ΚΕΓ (1996), Βάμβουκας & Χατζηδάκη (2001), Αντωνοπούλου, Τσαγγαλίδης & Μουμτζή (2000), but mainly on Αντωνοπούλου (2006), an annotated bibliography available online, amenable to statistical analysis. To this date there has been no updated bibliography of G2[1].

A scientific field is also defined by *practices*; I will allude to the practices of teaching, learning and assessment, through which the field of L2 has been constituted, only through the bibliographical references to them. Certainly, this is the view from a keyhole; in exercising this self-imposed restraint, my critical remarks will remain, I hope, grounded in the published literature. For the practice of teacher training in G2, see Μοσχονάς (2017).

The bibliography consists of 535 entries, which cover works published between 1985 and 2004. Only works in G2 were considered: there are no entries on teaching/learning languages other than Greek (such entries were excluded from the bibliographic database); entries on related but distinct subjects, such as the sociolinguistics or psycholinguistics of bilingualism, language policies, language contact, etc, were taken into account only to the degree they pertained to G2 . In total, forty-two (42) Greek and seventy-three (73) international (mostly English and French) scientific or semi-scientific journals were consulted, from which 48 articles were selected, in addition to 136 articles published in edited books, 186 articles published in conference proceedings, as well as 28 monographs and/or PhD theses – a total of 398 entries. The remaining 137 entries concern G2 textbooks or related "educational materials" (εκπαιδευτικά υλικά). (Educational materials exclusively on CD/DVD were not listed separately, although there are listings for publications in which such materials are included.)

A few preliminary generalisations are in order:

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[1] The reference works on which this and the next section draw, Αντωνοπούλου (2006) and Σπυρόπουλος & Τσαγγαλίδης (2005), as well as the first book-length studies in G2, completed in 2004 and collected in http://www2.media.uoa.gr/language/studies/, have all been supervised by me in the Program for the "Education of the Muslim Minority Children in Thrace". The following are tokens of important recent work in G2, also containing references to other works: Dimitrakopoulou *et al.* (2004); Tsimpli (2006); Tsimpli & Dimitrakopoulou (2007); Κατσιμαλή (2007); Agathopoulou, Papadopoulou & Zmijanjac (2008); Psaltou-Joycey (2008); Agathopoulou & Papadopoulou (2009); Fotiadou & Tsimpli (2010); Agathopoulou, Papadopoulou & Sismanidou (2012); Παπαδοπούλου, Αγαθοπούλου & Πούλιου (eds) (2015); Σκούρτου & Κούρτη-Καζούλλη (eds) (2015); Γαβριηλίδου & Ρεβυθιάδου (eds) (2016).

1. The amount of educational materials is certainly impressive (137 entries out of a total of 535 – almost ¼ of the total number of entries). Some of the entries cover multivolume publications, usually accompanied by CD/DVDs, table- or digital games, etc. In 2014, some publishing houses reported the following figures for the total number of copies sold: *Ελληνικά τώρα 1+1* (Νόστος 1987, 2002[5]): 105,000; *Ελληνικά τώρα 2+2* (Νόστος 1989, 2006[4]): 60,000; *Αστερίας 1/2/3* (1997/1998/1999, with subsequent reprints): 24,000; *Ορίστε! Ελληνικά για αρχάριους* (2004, 2014[4]) and *Ορίστε! Βιβλίο δραστηριοτήτων* (2013, 2014[2]): 15,000 copies[2]. Whole series of textbooks have been produced by institutions such as the Center of Intercultural and Migration Studies (E.ΔIA.M.ME.), the School of Modern Greek Language of the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, The Modern Greek Language Teaching Centre of the University of Athens as well as by several EU-funded programs, such as the Education of Repatriate and Foreign Students (Εκπαίδευση Παλιννοστούντων και Αλλοδαπών Μαθητών), the Education of Expatriate Greeks (Παιδεία Ομογενών), the Education of Gypsy Children (Εκπαίδευση Τσιγγανοπαίδων), and the Education of the Muslim Minority Children in Thrace (Εκπαίδευση Μουσουλμανοπαίδων). Presumably, the textbooks published by these organisations are adapted to the needs of their audience and they circulate in local markets. One may conclude that G2 was – and remains – firmly oriented towards the manufacturing of educational "products", on the one hand, and the promotion and consumption of such products, on the other, mainly through instructed learning.

In Αντωνοπούλου (2006: Part Β′) the G2 textbooks are distinguished with respect to their prospective audience: 39 are addressed to a general audience, 11 to English-speaking students, 4 to French-speaking, 15 to German-speaking, at least 1 to Russian-speaking, 13 to Turkish-speaking Muslims, 9 to Greek students in Australia, 7 to children and adolescents. (To repeat: the period covered is 1985-2004; some of the entries are about a whole series of textbooks.) The most important target groups therefore seem to be: adults, expatriates and repatriates, the Muslim minority in Greece (the only minority officially recognised – as a religious minority, not as a

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[2] Here are the figures reported in 2014 for some of the more recent textbooks: *Λοιπόν τι λες;* (Νόστος 2010): 2,000 copies; *Εμβαθύνοντας στα ελληνικά* (Μεταίχμιο 2011): 2,000; *Κλικ στα ελληνικά: Επίπεδα Α1 & Α2* (ΚΕΓ 2013): 1,000. *Κλικ στα ελληνικά* has now turned into a series of specialised textbooks; published by an esteemed organisation which also runs the state's "examinations for attainment in Greek", the series' sales should be on the rise.

linguistic one), and children – in this order of significance.

2. The 398 entries remaining after we substract the entries for the G2 textbooks can be classified into four distinct categories:

2.1.   A large number of publications in this group, usually in conference proceedings, are also about G2 textbooks, i.e. they present, or more rarely criticise, an existing textbook. The authors of the textbook and the authors of the review are usually the same persons. Most of these publications are promotional in character. One can thus speak of "double entries" in the bibliography, one for the textbook itself and another for its public presentation and promotion.

2.2.   Of similar informational content is the group of articles that could be best described by the structure of their title: "Teaching Greek in [a region/an institution] ("Η διδασκαλία της ελληνικής σε [περιοχή/ Ίδρυμα]"; e.g., Μανδάλου 2000) or Teaching Greek to [a group or a population] ("Η διδασκαλία της ελληνικής σε [πληθυσμιακή ομάδα]"; e.g., Ντελόπουλος 1994) or "Teaching Greek according to or with [a method]" ("Η διδασκαλία της ελληνικής σύμφωνα με [μια μέθοδο εκμάθησης]"; e.g., Μαυρίδης & Μπόλλα-Μαυρίδου 2003).

2.3.   There are a few articles on didactics or teaching methodology. Those do not focus on a particular teaching method or a G2 textbook (3.2.), nor are they concerned with particular grammatical phenomena. Usually, they are programmatic in character and amount to an open declaration of principles; e.g., they advertise the importance of intercultural education, they stress aspects of the communicative approach, or they recommend traditional literary texts or new media genres. Even today, there are no general introductory coursebooks on G2, for academic use. It is of some importance that the newer introductory coursebooks on SLA that were written directly in Greek (such as Μπέλλα 2007, 2011[2]), contain almost no references to research conducted on G2, while the available general textbooks on language teaching (Μήτσης 1998; Τοκατλίδου 1986, 2003; Χαραλαμπόπουλος & Χατζησαββίδης 1997) do not have chapters or sections on G2.

2.4.   Many entries in the bibliography are about the definition of proficiency levels, language testing and assessment. During the period from 1985 to 2004, two partially antagonistic and partially overlapping models of language proficiency emerged, one

elaborated by the Center for the Greek Language and the other by the Linguistics Department of the University of Athens: ΚΕΓ (1997, 2001a, 2001b) and ΕΚΠΑ (1998, 2002, 2004). The Center for the Greek Language (henceforth: ΚΕΓ) has continued the elaboration of proficiency levels to this day: see ΚΕΓ (2013). It has certainly become a dominant institutional authority in the formation of assessment standards. We will come back to the intriguing issue of language assessment later on.

3. In the G2 literature there are only sparse references to the *learning* process, the interlanguage, the stages the learners are going through, the cognitive mechanisms they employ or the difficulties they encounter. One could isolate hardly more than 20-25 research articles on the subject of G2 learning[3]. Just a few had been published in international journals. In 2004 there were no comparative studies for different groups of learners (with the exception of Αμπάτη et al. 2004, whose utility, however, was restricted by the fact that learners were tested on predefined teaching materials). In the G2 literature, the teacher-centered approach predominates over the learner-centered one (Μοσχονάς 2003a).

If this – all this – is the case, then the following question is reasonable: Which research data were the available textbooks based upon? The answer is appallingly simple: they were not based on research data. The ingenuity of the textbook authors, the experience of the teachers or, more likely, the *habitus* that prevails in the various settings of G2 instructed learning seem to have played a formative role, but not preparatory research.

3. G2 textbooks

There are a few early evaluations and comparisons of G2 textbooks: ΚΕΓ (1996, 2001c). Κίτσα (2003) only examines the textbooks used in the School of Modern Greek Language of the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki. My presentation draws on Σπυρόπουλος & Τσαγγαλίδης (2005), a detailed comparative evaluation of twenty-two widely-used textbooks that concentrates on their overt or covert grammatical organisation. On the basis of their inventory, the following generalisations can be made (which the authors wisely refrained from making):

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[3] For specific references, see Μοσχονάς (2006: 71-72, note 8); to this list just a few more works should be added (such as early works by I. M. Tsimpli, not mentioned in Αντωνοπούλου 2006).

1. All textbooks look alike. Although the texts in them differ, exercises and activities are fairly similar. There are indications of mild plagiarism or, to put it mildly, of systematic influences[4]. If we were able to follow the *paths of influence* (i.e., the effects earlier textbooks had had on later ones; e.g., to what degree has Δημητρά & Παπαχειμώνα 1987 paved the way for Αρβανιτάκης & Αρβανιτάκη [1988]), we could better understand how G2 has been constituted not merely as a field of study but also as a market for the circulation of products.

2. All textbooks follow the model of traditional grammars. The textbook chapters are organised on the basis of the "parts of speech" and particular emphasis is placed on morphology. The basic unit of analysis is the word; rules for sentence structuring or text formation are not taken into account. Pragmatic constraints on the use of language are usually not explained to learners (with the exception of few politeness and formality markers). The written language is emphasised throughout (see also point 3 below). Information about pronunciation is limited, confused and confusing. In 2004, just a few textbooks provided an overview of the phonology of Modern Greek and even those failed to mention rules such as palatalisation (e.g., [ciló] "kilo", with a palatal [c] before front vowels, vs. [kaló] "good", with a velar [k]). This rule is, of course, followed by all native speakers in a way that is natural, subconscious and instinctive; it is easily overlooked by textbook authors who happen to be native speakers of Greek. Instructions on other aspects of oral production, such as tips for conversation maintenance, are also absent.

3. The authors of many textbooks claim that they place equal emphasis on the four skills of reading, writing, listening and speaking. Although all four skills are supposed to be integrated in teaching, listening and reading exercises are invariably paired with writing tasks (reminiscent of written comprehension exercises in standard assessment tests); thus, the balance is constantly shifting from speech to the written language[5].

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[4] A clear case of plagiarism has been documented in Μοσχονάς & Παθιάκη (2013).

[5] I will illustrate this claim with examples from only two textbooks, an older one and a newer one. In Αρβανιτάκης & Αρβανιτάκη ([1988]), a textbook widely used in Greece and abroad since the late 1990s, there is no single exercise combining listening comprehension with the naturally paired skill of speaking (the following exercises were considered from the 2002[4] edition, 22nd reprint): p. 40 ex. 6, p. 51 ex. 12, p.58 ex. 11, p. 66 ex. 9, p. 83 ex. 13, p. 91 ex. 13, p. 131 ex. 18, p. 151 ex. 16, p. 177 ex. 7, p. 193 ex. 12, p. 217 ex. 14, p.225 ex. 11. A more recent textbook, Γκαρέλη *et al.* (2012), designed for the

4. It seems that G2 has been influenced by the pedagogical habits that prevail in teaching Modern Greek to native speakers. Especially in the environment of public schools, native learners do not so much practice grammar as they do exercise the application of traditional grammatical terminology to specific linguistic phenomena. Native speakers do not practice the language they have already acquired, but a metalanguage; they learn *about* their language (Βελούδης 1996: 104 ff.). It is my contention that this pedagogical mentality has also been applied to the teaching of G2. Obviously, this is the reason that most of G2 textbooks are addressed to adults, i.e. to that age group that is already fluent in metalanguage. Nevertheless, exercises in metalinguistic labeling are not uncommon even in textbooks for young learners, as in the following two examples:

> *Separate these words as follows*: [list of words follows; table with headings:] Persons, Animals, [T]hings, Describe, Do Something (Papaloizos 2004: 62).
>
> *Συμπληρώστε την άσκηση με ό,τι χαρακτηρίζει τον ωραίο καιρό και τον κακό καιρό*. Πότε λες – Τι ωραίος καιρός; Το λέω όταν … Πότε λες – Τι κακός καιρός; Το λέω όταν … (Γεωργαντζή 2000: 12).

5. Many authors of G2 textbooks claim that they follow a "communicative approach". This is far from evident. G2 textbooks are "communicative" in the trivial sense that they propose a more or less specific pattern of communication between the teacher and the learner. However, most G2 textbooks do not suggest and neither do they simulate communicative activities outside the classroom. The structural approach predominates in the grammatical exercises and the exercises for the production of oral and written speech. The Fill-in-the-blanks is the commonest type of exercise.

6. Traditional text genres (as epitomised, e.g., in Μπαμπινιώτης et al. 1993: 281, Unit 18, "Γιορτές και έθιμα") seem to predominate over new or hybrid ones, such as e-mails, chats, text messages, etc. The most common contextualisation cue for the

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local market of incoming Erasmus students at the University of Athens, contains just one exercise which pairs listening comprehension with speaking: p. 198 ex. 11; the following were also considered: p. 51 ex. 13, p. 64 ex. 15, p. 76 ex. 14, p. 87 ex. 15, p. 106 ex. 19, p. 122 ex. 20, p. 136 ex. 16, p. 151 ex 12, p. 165 ex. 9, p. 179 ex. 12, p. 211 ex. 12, p. 220 ex. 13, p. 232 ex. 7.

exercises in writing ("παραγωγή γραπτού λόγου") seems to be: "Write a letter to [a recipient] on [a subject]". Old textbooks should, of course, be excused for not teaching new media genres. In a recent textbook for levels A1/A2 (Καρακύργιου & Παναγιωτίδου 2013), one can count no less than 30 texts and/or exercises with similar contextualisation cues; texts range from simple texting exchanges to quite elaborate e-mails on how to prepare a Greek salad (p. 374; wouldn't a telephone conversation be more appropriate?) and extensive, 19th century style, letters on how better plan a trip (pp. 110, 131). A few paired exercises (pp. 348, 330, 312-313) elaborate on the formality-informality dimension. Overall, however, new media texts tend to be treated on a par with traditional ones. Writing an e-mail, is, just like writing a letter, an empty frame. I leave it to the reader to establish the authenticity of the following e-mail (p. 160):
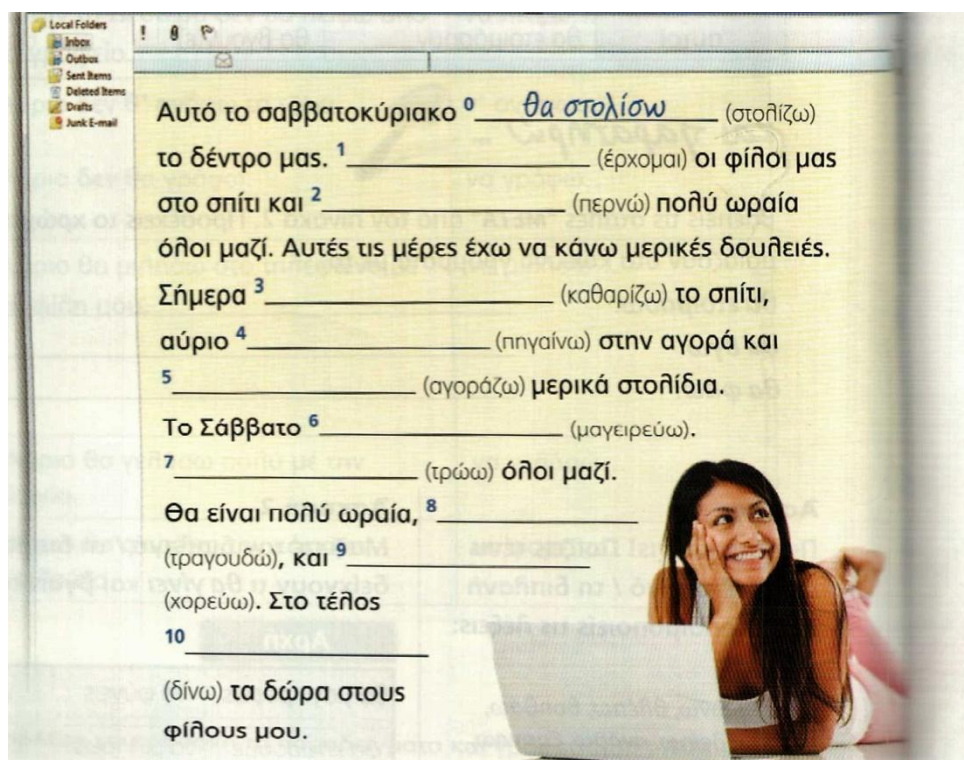
7. It should be stressed that in most of the G2 textbooks surveyed, the grammatical phenomena are arranged in a methodical way that tends to become standard. Generally, grammatical phenomena that are structurally and conceptually simpler precede phenomena that are structurally and conceptually more complex; e.g., the simple past precedes the perfect tenses. Typically, the teaching of noun declension starts with the presentation of masc. *-ος, -ης, -ας,* fem. *-α, -η,* neut.*-o, -ι, -μα* (sing.

nom.) and ends with masc. *-έας/-είς*, fem. *-η/-εις*, neut. *-ας, -ως, -ός, -όν, -ον, -αν, -εν*, while, in between, acc. < gen. < P+acc. < pl. Verb declension starts with pres. *είμαι* and ends with the participles, while perf. < imperf., conjugation A΄ < conjugation B΄, indicative < subjunctive < imperative, active < passive. Interestingly enough, the communicative criterion is prioritised when in conflict with the structural one; thus, common irregular forms of the simple past – ήπια "drank", είδα "saw", etc. – might be taught before the regular forms – περπάτησα "walked", μίλησα "spoke", etc. – due to their communicative utility.

It is nevertheless doubtful whether the order of presentation of grammatical phenomena in the available G2 textbooks reflects the real phases in the learning of G2, i.e. whether textbook grammars actually reflect a learner's "interlanguage" – supposing such an intermediate language exists. With only a few exceptions, G2 textbooks are not addressed to the native speakers of a particular language or language family, nor do they take into account their specific needs or habits, interference mistakes, overgeneralisations, linguistic innovations, etc. As already stated, most G2 textbooks are generic.

But is there a "natural order" in the learning of a second language? There is some evidence in favor of the hypothesis that second language learning follows certain stages, $l_1, \ldots, l_n$, independently of the stages of teaching, $t_1, \ldots, t_n$ (Bailey, Madden & Krashen 1974; Krashen 1987: 12-15; Krashen & Terell 1983: 28-30; for evidence concerning G2 learners, see Αμπάτη et al. 2004; Μοσχονάς 2006: 46-56). There is also evidence that supports a stronger hypothesis, "the input hypothesis" (Krashen 1987: 20-30), according to which learning follows the stages of teaching and profits from it only to the degree that teaching is modeled after learning. If something like the input hypothesis is accepted, there are obvious consequences for language assessment and also for proficiency evaluations: levels of proficiency, identified and standardised mainly for the purpose of testing, should not be defined independently of such a "natural order". We touch on this issue in the next section.

4. Proficiency levels

In more recent years, emphasis in the G2 literature seems to have shifted from the production of educational materials to language assessment and testing. Following the *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages* (Council of Europe 2001), both ΚΕΓ and the Linguistics Department of the University of Athens had

elaborated on the levels of G2 proficiency through performance, functional and grammatical descriptors (ΚΕΓ 1997, 2001a, 2001b; ΕΚΠΑ 1998, 2002, 2004). However, instead of the six commonly accepted levels of the Common European Framework (CEFR) (from basic proficiency at A1 to highest proficiency at C2), these institutions had until recently defined and standardised only four levels of proficiency (A to Δ). ΚΕΓ published its revised six-level framework in 2013 (ΚΕΓ 2013), although it has been circulating since 2010; the University of Athens has not restandardised its proficiency levels.

Papageorgiou (2008: 33) has shown convincingly that "the four Certificate levels [of ΚΕΓ] aim at CEFR Levels A2, B1, B2 and C1 respectively, with a clear progression of difficulty from lower to higher levels". Thus, ΚΕΓ level A puts claim to both CEFR levels A1 and A2. The early framework seems to have concentrated on the intermediate levels of proficiency (B to Γ, or, alternatively, A2 to B2). There used to be no exact standards for the highest level of proficiency; and there is still a lot of uncertainty as to how the beginning levels are to be defined.

Possible incompatibilities between frameworks could, of course, be attributed to the following reason: the definitions of proficiency, in both the CEFR and the Greek frameworks, are mainly functional rather than grammatical; as a result, the definitions of levels tend to be quite loose. But this explains the condition; it does not explain the reason for the confusion between levels, which, I believe, is to be sought elsewhere. The Greek frameworks, as mentioned already, tend to presuppose a certain amount of knowledge in or about the Greek language, and, for this reason, they tend to disregard the beginner's level and concentrate on the intermediate ones. Let's put it this way: in order for a learner to enter the Greek language, the learner should already be in it. It is as common for newer textbooks to cover both A1 and A2 in a single course (e.g., Σιμόπουλος et al. 2010; Γκαρέλη et al. 2012; Καρακύργιου & Παναγιωτίδου 2013) as it is for reprints of older ones to appear with their old A level changed to A1+A2. Interestingly enough, there is as yet only one textbook or preparatory course for C2 (subsumed under Δ in the older frameworks): Γεωργιάδου (2013). Ideally, C2=G1!

Although more comfortable with the older framework, the market of G2 commodities has not been deterred by the redefinition of the rules of the game; to the contrary, it has taken advantage of the confusion between levels. That there is some confusion concerning the G2 levels of proficiency, even after they were aligned to CEFR, should not be denied. If more evidence is needed, one should look at the

"Examinations for the Certificate of Attainment in Greek", of which there are available plenty of tests. In what follows I will look at some of the texts on which the comprehension skills of the examinees were tested and conclude that a) they are indistinguishable as to proficiency; b) the selection and adaptation of texts does not follow a strict set of descriptors; rather, it follows intuition. I cannot claim that such texts are the rule and not the exception. They cannot be the rule: examinations are repetitive events; they create expectations and they respond to expectations. They cannot tolerate discrepancies such as the ones discussed below. I will nevertheless present my examples for all they are worth. The first two come from the early period; the third is a recent one.

Let us look first at Text (1) below, which is an excerpt from a made-up conversation that is included in an exam preparation book for level Δ, published by ΚΕΓ (ΚΕΓ 2000b: 18). Text (2) is a similar excerpt from a conversation included in a preparation book for the presumably more elementary level Β (ΚΕΓ 2000a: 32).

(1) (level Δ)

Δημοσιογράφος: Αγαπητοί μας ακροατές, το θέμα της συζήτησής μας σήμερα είναι αρκετά πρωτότυπο αλλά και πολύ ενδιαφέρον. Θα μιλήσουμε για την αποδιοργάνωση του βιολογικού κύκλου εξαιτίας ενός υπερατλαντικού ταξιδιού, τις συνέπειες και την αντιμετώπιση του προβλήματος. Σήμερα έχουμε μαζί μας δύο εκλεκτούς καλεσμένους που θα δώσουν χρήσιμες πληροφορίες σε όσους κάνουν ή πρόκειται να κάνουν υπερατλαντικά ταξίδια. Είναι η κυρία Μπάκα, υπεύθυνη ενός μεγάλου και πολύ γνωστού ταξιδιωτικού γραφείου[,] και ο γιατρός κύριος Δημητρίου. Κύριε Δημητρίου, ας αρχίσουμε από σας. Πείτε μας πρώτα, για να καταλάβουν οι ακροατές μας, τι είναι το jet lag, όπως συνηθίσαμε να το λέμε.

κ. Δημητρίου: Το jet lag είναι η κατάσταση που ταλαιπωρεί τους περισσότερους ταξιδιώτες έπειτα από πτήσεις προς χώρες με μεγάλη διαφορά ώρας. Η ιατρική λέει ότι οφείλεται στην απότομη αλλαγή των καθημερινών συνηθειών λόγω της διαφοράς της ώρας. Αυτό που συμβαίνει είναι να νιώθει ο ταξιδιώτης παράξενα για μερικές ημέρες, δηλαδή να είναι αφηρημένος, να έχει πονοκέφαλο, να νιώθει υπνηλία κατά τη διάρκεια της ημέρας και να μένει άυπνος κατά τη διάρκεια της

νύχτας, να έχει πρήξιμο στα πόδια και ξηρό δέρμα.

(2) (level B)

Δημοσιογράφος: Το μοντέρνο πένταθλο και το τρίαθλο είναι δύο αγωνίσματα των Ολυμπιακών Αγώνων που δεν είναι τόσο γνωστά στον πολύ κόσμο. Κι όμως, και τα δύο έχουν ένα μεγάλο αριθμό θαυμαστών. Γι' αυτά τα δύο αγωνίσματα θα μας δώσει κάποιες πληροφορίες ο κύριος Γιώργος Αλεξίου, γυμναστής. Κύριε Αλεξίου, σας ακούμε.

κ. Αλεξίου: Ένας γάλλος αξιωματικός στα τέλη του 19ου αιώνα χρειάστηκε να κάνει μια περίεργη διαδρομή με το άλογό του για να μεταφέρει ένα επείγον μήνυμα. Στη διαδρομή χρησιμοποίησε το ξίφος, κολύμπησε σε ποτάμι, έτρεξε και πυροβόλησε. Έτσι, γεννήθηκε το μοντέρνο πένταθλο που μπήκε στο ολυμπιακό πρόγραμμα από το 1912 στους Ολυμπιακούς της Στοκχόλμης. Στην αρχή οι αθλητές αγωνίζονται στη σκοποβολή. Πρέπει να ρίξουν 20 σφαίρες σε στόχο που βρίσκεται 10 μέτρα μακριά μέσα σε 40 δευτερόλεπτα. Μετά αγωνίζονται στην ξιφομαχία. Ύστερα κολυμπούν 200 μέτρα σε πισίνα και μετά το κολύμπι τούς περιμένει το άλογο για να τρέξουν και να πηδήξουν εμπόδια. Η δυσκολία είναι ότι οι αθλητές δε γνωρίζουν το άλογο που ιππεύουν. Τέλος, πρέπει να μπουν στο στάδιο και να τρέξουν 3.000 μέτρα.

    Το τρίαθλο είναι αρκετά διαφορετικό. Αν και έχει ζωή 26 ετών, μπήκε για πρώτη φορά στους Ολυμπιακούς Αγώνες του Σίδνεϊ το 2000. Το σπορ αυτό το αγαπούν πολύ στην Αυστραλία, και στους Ολυμπιακούς του Σίδνεϊ χιλιάδες θεατές παρακολούθησαν την προσπάθεια των αθλητών. Ο αγώνας περιλαμβάνει κολύμβηση 1500 μέτρα στη θάλασσα, 40 χιλιόμετρα ποδηλασία σε ανώμαλο έδαφος και 10.000 μέτρα τρέξιμο, επίσης σε ανώμαλο δρόμο. Τα τρία αγωνίσματα είναι συνεχόμενα, κάτι που κάνει την προσπάθεια των αθλητών πολύ κουραστική.

    Both texts are employed for testing oral comprehension skills (the examinees first listen to the conversation and then they have to answer a number of multiple-choice questions). The two texts have obvious similarities. The exact same type of activity is associated with both texts. They both simulate conversations between hosts and guests in radio broadcasts. In both cases, the dialogue develops in the highly standardised

form of two separate monologues. Although such texts are presumably the products of a so-called communicative approach to language teaching, the two texts have only distant similarity to conversations as they actually unfold in real radio broadcasts. Both texts contain words that belong to a wide variety of declensional paradigms; they both make use of relatively complex syntactic structures (such as relative, causal, adversative and concessive clauses, complex adverbial phrases, preposings etc.); and they both contain extremely specialised vocabulary, from subject areas which are not common in everyday communication. Interestingly enough, the vocabulary of the text (2), a level B text, seems to be rather more specialised than the vocabulary of the text (1), a level Δ text. The only factor that differentiates these two texts as to their difficulty is their length: excerpt (1) is from a text of 531 words, and excerpt (2) from a text that is only 278 words long.

Let us now have a look at our third example, which further illustrates how the proficiency levels are constructed in an intuitive manner. Text (3) is from a website of obscure authorship but presumably specific readership, as it is taken from its section "για μανούλες" (addressed to mothers). Text (4) is an elaboration of text (3) as it appeared in the ΚΕΓ certification exams for proficiency level B1. The words in bold are the ones in the original text that have been altered or omitted; the arrow indicates the right answer that has to be filled in for the reading comprehension task.

(3)

Αποφασίσατε να πάτε διακοπές και πρέπει να φτιάξετε **επειγόντως** βαλίτσες, **αλλά μόλις προτείνατε** να σας βοηθήσει η οικογένειά σας, **ο μεν** σύζυγος έβγαλε φτερά και εξαφανίστηκε με τη δικαιολογία ότι έχει επείγον συμβούλιο στο γραφείο, **τα δε** χαριτωμένα και γλυκά σας παιδάκια έκαναν ότι δεν γνωρίζουν καλά τα ελληνικά; Μην **πτοείστε**, και φέτος δεν υπάρχει περίπτωση να σας ξεφύγουν! **Ιδού** η έξυπνη λύση: Κρύψτε ένα από τα **πολυτιμότερα** πράγματα του άντρα σας (π.χ. το πορτοφόλι του, **το t.v. control ή τη φωτογραφία της μαμάς του (!)** σε μέρος ασφαλές **και** όταν εκείνος **ανακαλύψει** ότι το 'χασε πείτε του **το πολύ απλό**: «Θέλεις γλυκέ μου να στο βρω αμέσως; **Κάπου το πήρε το μάτι μου.** Αρκεί **μονάχα** όσο εγώ θα ψάχνω εσύ να φτιάχνεις τις βαλίτσες με τα πράγματά σου»! Μόλις **σιγουρευτείτε** ότι ο σύζυγος έχει μαζέψει **μέχρι και το νυχοκόπτη**, βγείτε μπροστά του **κρατώντας περήφανα το**

απολεσθέν πολύτιμο αντικείμενο. **Όσον αφορά τα πράγματα των παιδιών σας** μπορείτε να κάνετε το εξής: Κάντε πως μιλάτε στο τηλέφωνο με τον γιατρό σας **χρησιμοποιώντας τις εξής φράσεις**: «Ώστε έτσι γιατρέ μου, να μην κουράζομαι, να μην στενοχωριέμαι γιατί υπάρχει σοβαρή περίπτωση να ουρλιάζω συνέχεια στις διακοπές μου **από την κούραση**. Αααα, άμα φτιάξω βαλίτσες μόνη μου να μην πάρω παιχνίδια, περιοδικά, κουβαδάκια και φορτηγά γιατί μπορεί να **πάθω υπερκόπωση**. Μόνο αν με βοηθήσουν τα παιδιά μου είπατε; **Μπα, γιατρέ μου δεν έχω τέτοιες ελπίδες…**». Αν ακούσουν τα παιδιά σας αυτά τα δύο ενδεχόμενα και δεν τρέξουν αμέσως **να μαζέψουν τα πάντα**, ε τότε… θα έρθω εγώ να σας βοηθήσω!!! ("A-B, Το αλφάβητο μιας καλής μητέρας και συζύγου", http://junior2.gr/manoules/alphabet/popup.php?pid=3, accessed 15 January 2016)

(4)

Αποφασίσατε να πάτε διακοπές και πρέπει να φτιάξετε αμέσως βαλίτσες; Είπατε στο σύζυγο να σας βοηθήσει, αλλά έβγαλε φτερά και εξαφανίστηκε με τη δικαιολογία ότι έχει επείγον συμβούλιο στο γραφείο; Είπατε στα γλυκά σας παιδάκια να βοηθήσουν, αλλά έκαναν ότι δεν γνωρίζουν καλά τα ελληνικά; 0. Μην ανησυχείτε γιατί ➔ *φέτος δεν υπάρχει περίπτωση να σας ξεφύγουν!* Να η έξυπνη λύση: 1. Κρύψτε ένα από τα πιο σημαντικά πράγματα ➔ *του άντρα σας (π.χ. το πορτοφόλι του) σε μέρος ασφαλές.* Όταν εκείνος δει ότι το έχασε, πείτε του: «Θέλεις, γλυκέ μου, να στο βρω αμέσως; 2. Αρκεί μόνο, εσύ να φτιάχνεις ➔ *τις βαλίτσες με τα πράγματά σου, όσο θα ψάχνω»!* 3. Μόλις δείτε ότι ο σύζυγος τα έχει μαζέψει, βγείτε μπροστά του και ➔ δώστε του το χαμένο αντικείμενο. Όσο για τα παιδιά μπορείτε να κάνετε το εξής: 4. Κάντε πως μιλάτε ➔ στο τηλέφωνο με τον γιατρό σας και πείτε: «Ώστε έτσι, γιατρέ μου, να μην κουράζομαι, να μην στενοχωριέμαι, γιατί υπάρχει σοβαρή περίπτωση να ουρλιάζω συνέχεια στις διακοπές μου. 5. Αααα, άμα φτιάξω βαλίτσες μόνη μου, να μην πάρω παιχνίδια, περιοδικά, κουβαδάκια και φορτηγά ➔ , γιατί μπορεί να κουραστώ πολύ. Μόνο αν με βοηθήσουν τα παιδιά μου είπατε;». 6. Αν ακούσουν τα παιδιά σας αυτά τα δύο ενδεχόμενα και δεν τρέξουν αμέσως, ➔ ε τότε … θα έρθω εγώ να

σας βοηθήσω!!! (ΚΕΓ, "Β1, Πιστοποίηση επάρκειας της ελληνομάθειας – Κατανόηση γραπτού λόγου – Δεύτερη σειρά δειγμάτων 02", http://www.greeklanguage.gr/certification/sites/greeklanguage.gr.certificat ion/files/2._v1_katanohsi_grapta.pdf, accessed 15 January 2016)

Let us disregard the cultural stereotypes that these texts endorse and reproduce, and concentrate instead on the conception of level B1 that emerges from the elaboration of text (3). To start with, on what grounds is the original text judged to be of proficiency level B1+? The proofread text (4) looks smaller and syntactically simpler than text (3). Clearly, participles κρατώντας and απολεσθέν belong to B2 and C1 respectively, according to ΚΕΓ's grammatical definition of proficiency levels (ΚΕΓ 2016); their omission or rephrasing is justified. The same applies perhaps to the temporal clause introduced by μόλις. Ιδού is an obvious learnedism. Otherwise, it is difficult to find a justification for most omissions or rephrasings, which are not explicitly prescribed in the ΚΕΓ proficiency level definitions. It seems that in this and, I dare say, in many similar cases, the following circular procedure has been followed: A text was first isolated which was intuitively judged to be of some proficiency level X and then the text was modified in order to make it look as if it were of that level.

We can conclude that text (4) seems to have been reconstructed on the basis of a vague conception of B1. Such a conception is based on intuition. The source of intuition is, of course, G1. The process of learning, an additive process, is imagined from its end, by substraction.

5. Summary and conclusion

Having examined the ways in which the field of G2 has been constituted since the early 1980s, a period during which the first systematic attempts were made to teach G2 on a massive scale, we have discerned the following trends:

1. In the scientific and semi-scientific literature on G2 there is a widespread confusion between *acquiring* Greek as a native language and *learning* it as second or a foreign language. Mastering a first language is assumed to take place in two stages: first comes the early stage of the acquisition of the language, to be followed by the later stage of its so-called "cultivation" (καλλιέργεια) in school. This second stage in the development of a first language concentrates mainly on its written form. G2

follows the pedagogy of a first language as it is practiced during this second stage. We have found that most G2 textbooks follow the standards, the terminology and the organisation of the traditional grammars of Modern Greek. They place emphasis on the grammatical terminology and not on the practices of learning language structures *in use*. In a way, they presuppose that learners have some knowledge of such structures, and that the role of the G2 grammar is mainly classificatory: structures are categorised by applying to them the traditional grammatical terminology. Grammatical phenomena that are obvious to the native speakers or belong to the native speaker's naturally acquired linguistic competence are usually not covered in the textbooks of G2. Because of their inability to explicate the grammatical regularities of the Modern Greek language, most textbooks for G2 presuppose that G2 learners, just as native speakers, have an implicit knowledge of certain grammatical rules of Modern Greek, which of course is not the case. Paradoxically, then, in order for Modern Greek to be taught to foreigners, they need to have already acquired it, at least to a certain degree. As we have seen, there are only a few G2 textbooks for beginners. Because of the considerable amount of implicit knowledge they presuppose, most textbooks for G2 are addressed to literate adults, who have some familiarity with the traditional grammatical terminology and know how to handle the most common types of structural exercises; only a few textbooks are addressed to children or to adolescents learning G2, i.e. to learners who are not familiar with the grammatical terminology and they are not as literate as adults. For the same reasons, G2 textbooks seem to fit better to the intermediate proficiency levels.

2. The dominant approach to G2 has been teacher-centered rather than learner-centered. If, following the suggestion of Larsen-Freeman and Long (1991: 5), we look at some of the early SLA bibliographies (e.g., Hatch 1978; Raimes 1983), we will realise that there is a turning point around the mid 1960s, marked by an important shift in SLA research from language teaching to language learning. The interest shifted from curriculum designing and teaching techniques to the study of the actual learning process, instructed or not. The SLA literature ceased to be teacher-centered and it became learner-centered. We have seen that in many ways the early Greek literature on G2 could be placed before the turning point of the international SLA literature, lagging behind by decades. We also saw that in the period 1985-2004 just a few papers were published in accredited international journals, another indication that

G2 has not kept pace with the field of SLA. Although there are plenty of textbooks and other "educational materials" for teaching G2, there used to be only a handful of linguistic studies that concentrated on the learner's cognitive mechanisms, the dynamic language the learners construct in their effort to master Modern Greek, the precise sequence of grammatical phenomena they go through during the learning process, and the interference effects that their native language might have on their output. We also saw that most of the available textbooks for G2 are generic: they are not addressed to specific groups of learners, they do not take into consideration the learners' native language and they do not compensate for interference. Just as the unconscious and deep-seated knowledge of Greek is merely presupposed and disregarded by the authors of G2 textbooks, the native language of the learners (and, in most cases, their specific cultural characteristics) are also "erased" (in the sense of Irvine & Gal 2000). In the field of scientific research, it was found that of the total number of papers published in the period from 1985 to 2004, only a very small number (at most 20 to 25 papers, or 5 to 7 percent) touched on the learning process[6].

These characteristics of the field of G2 (and, by field, I mean, again, the market, not the scientific discipline) point to a certain conception of language which is incompatible with the aims and methods of SLA. The whole G2 *champ* seems to aspire to a *holistic* conception of language. Language is not considered to be a process that varies according to the circumstances; rather, language is conceptualised as an object. This reified "something", language, is monological rather than dialogical. It is not gradable, and hence cannot be approached by degrees. It is homogeneous, uniform - standardised. It forms a complete whole at all times and stages in its acquisition and use. It is as if there were no stages in the learning of the Modern Greek language and no differentiation in its use. Needless to say, such a conception of language places particularly strong demands on the learners, who are faced with the impossible task of learning a language that they should already know.

A study of the Greek State's official and unofficial policies towards immigrants, minorities and expatriate or repatriate Greeks would probably reveal that G2 has served the double aim of linguistic and cultural assimilation and that such an assimilation policy is actually met with wide consensus, despite the occasional

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[6] Of course, this situation has changed considerably since the mid 2000s, and one can now hope that new research on G2 will ultimately change the way G2 is conceived and presented to learners.

rhetoric against it[7]. Assimilation, however, is a policy that is being undermined by its very practitioners and their inability to imagine Greek as a second or as a foreign language. The G1 *habitus* still dictates how G2 is being practiced. G2 educators seem to rely very much on introspection, a dubious method for developing habits in a second language. Through introspection, only those aspects of the language that the native speaker is aware of are projected to the second language.

G2 can be viewed as a fairly recent development in the continuing process of standardizing Modern Greek. Chronologically, G2 is placed after the official resolution of the Greek Language Question. Ideologically, G2 also serves the assimilation policy envisaged for Modern Greek by Triantaphyllidis and other late demoticists. So far, Greek as a second language, as practiced in the classroom, seems to resemble more to an artificial language, highly standardised, with limited or no variation – a "textbook language". One may assume that once actual samples of Greek as spoken by non-native speakers start being carefully listened to and systematically studied – not just corrected or assessed – the whole field of G2 will be restructured in accordance with ongoing G2 research.

I have only offered a quick sketch, a caricature, of the newly founded field of Greek as a second language, concentrating on the period of its discovery. My aim has not been to document the insufficiency of practitioners in this field, nor to ignore or downgrade the volume of linguistic research conducted on Modern Greek as a second language in recent years. Rather, my aim has been to capture the rapidly developing field of Greek as a second language in its formative period.

I hope that this paper has provided some evidence on the ways the complex process of standardisation affects the activity of teaching Greek as a second language and is also affected by the ways Greek is imagined and conceptualised as a second language.

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[7] Μοσχονάς (2003b) provides evidence for both claims in a minority setting. Μοσχονάς (2010) discusses the role of assessment in exclusionary language policies; cf. Ανδρουλάκης (2015).

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