THE DISCURSIVE CONSTRUCTION OF MULTIPLE IDENTITIES OF THE ALBANIAN (ARVANITIKA) SPEAKERS OF GREECE [1]

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Abstract

This paper addresses the complex issue of negotiating identity among minority speakers of Albanian in modern Greece as surrounded by and interacting with major societal forces and dominant ideologies stemming from the Greek nation-state. Some of the theoretical questions related to the very concept of identity are also discussed. The major thrust of the paper is focused on a discursive construction of a shifting identity formation on the part of minority community members who often anchor their identities by means of an indexical machinery rather than by explicit propositional self-identification. This means that, even though they frequently label themselves Albanian (Arvanitika) speakers and foreground various kinds of symbolic contrasts to the dominant culture and ethnicity, they also perform an identity by referring to themselves as "we" which allows more room for negotiation and for the blurring of rigid boundaries that are frequently erected around an ethnolinguistic group in our analytical jargon.
I argue that this identity management is to be expected in conditions of late modernity in which no schemes, modes of existence, and ideological views are taken for granted, and in which one has to cope with challenges emerging from macro-centers of control. In such a process reflexivity at the local level looms large questioning the inherited understandings of this and related phenomena as easily classifiable sociologically and sociolinguistically.

Keywords: Subjectivity; Albanian (Arvanitika) ethnic identity; Internally persuasive discourse; Indexicality.

1.Introduction: Theoretical discussion of concepts and approaches

This paper has as its goal to discuss some issues related to group identity formation and transformation in the context of late modernity, and in the more specific backdrop of linguistic shift. I intend my discussion to be a kind of analytical culmination of various findings as they show up in my studies of linguistic shift and linguistic ideologies. The

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empirical focus is on the Arvanitika language communities of modern Greece, the speakers of which are bilingual in the southern dialect variety of Albanian, Tosk, and Greek. Their long presence on what is now the Greek nation state and the gradual encroachment of Greek language and infrastructures on the local communities has caused significant social and sociolinguistic problems to emerge for both local and research agents. Since it is not possible to analyze all these problems in the context of the present article, I will use data derived from the Greek-Albanian speakers in order to address issues of broader theoretical interest, directing attention primarily to the fate of group identity as this is shaped in late modernity (for a more detailed view of praxis and language shift, see Tsitsipis 1998).

Arvanitika speakers have been facing fragile conditions of existence as their language is a threatened code, due to the general modernization of the monoglot Greek state, its standardist ideology, and its techno-economic developments. They have further struggled and are still struggling with various versions of hegemonic schemes engaging different agents and discourses such as the canonically authoritative word of the linguists, educationists, the media and the official national ideology, on the one hand, and the voices of the local communities themselves, on the other. We should thus keep in mind that hegemonic positions are not exclusively generated from the broader national quarters but can also emerge from within national minorities themselves which thus become hegemonic on a sub-national level (see in this connection discussion of example 2 below). This tension between the national and state-bureaucratic, on the one hand, and the sub-national and local, on the other, is related in late modernity to the dialectic between «expert» voices and the voices of subjects constructed as lay actors which has played an important role in shaping speakers' social consciousness (see Tsitsipis 2007a).

Talking about social consciousness one talks to some extent of <u>subjectivities</u> in a way similar but not identical to classed subjectivities as developed by Rampton (2006, see below). I want to argue that such subjectivities, emerging as something close to "identities" (for a theoretical discussion of the concept, see below), are negotiated in the micro-dimensions of talk and are rich in indexicality , i.e. in what they tell us about the macro-structures of the embedding society. The latter ought to be an ever present component of an analysis that is sensitive to historical-social processes. These subjectivities are constitutive moments of human communication and relationality (Benveniste 1971 [1958]; Urciuoli 2004; for a recent sociolinguistic approach to relationality as an anti-positivistic project, see Tsitsipis 2007b: 626-640).

One of the several ways that we can understand the meaning of "subjectivity" in the social sciences is, following Garrett (2007: 235), to view it as "…the ways in which individuals come to know themselves, reflexively, as selves and to experience the world and their own being-in-the-world accordingly". It is significant to note that, through subjectivities, subject positions are constructed and embedded in complex social systems and individuals come to occupy or inhabit them in a dialectic between agency and structure. Despite the fact that "subjectivity" is associated with post-structuralist social theory its roots can also be traced in earlier theories which according to George Herbert Mead have grown out of sociological thinkers of the nineteenth century (for these points, see Garrett 2007: 235-236).

It must be noticed in the context of the present analysis that notions such as "subjectivity" can be applied in a rather wide spectrum of particular social, discursive and sociolinguistic phenomena. In Garrett's case the notion is found useful for the

investigation of bilingualism in the context of language socialization, whereas in the present case the focus is on minority sociolinguistic groups, and their social agents.

It is also necessary to distinguish between the members of a pair of concepts that lurk behind the more explicit part of this work: This is the distinction between a "group" and a "collective". I refer to Albanian (Arvanitika) speakers (and other linguistic communities) as group/groups since I have encountered and experienced them as real human beings. Nevertheless, it is analytically necessary to include in the discussion the notion of the "collective" as well, in reference to imagined communities, because it is inextricably related to that of the "group". When one, for example, researches linguistic ideologies, or ideologies more generally, or any other social constructions by the members of local communities, one is confronted with the various ways that individual agents and groups locate themselves vis-à-vis their imagined collectives. That is, how these collectives shape and show up in the materiality of agents' ideological readings and social praxis.

One further point should be clarified here, namely, the specific concept of discourse I choose to work with. The reader will notice that four or five different occurrences of "discourse" appear in more specific contexts in what follows, such as "internally persuasive discourse", "authoritative discourse", "formal machinery of discourse" (in reference to code-switching), "narrative discourse" etc. Except for cases such as "formal machinery of discourse" which are more or less self-explanatory, since (through reference to code-switching) various discursive tokens are understood as obeying to some extent conversational maxims or syntactic constraints or both (see analysis of examples), I use here "discourse" in a wider and more encompassing sense. In such a use, "discourse" is understood as including various kinds (or genres) of linguistic production that also incorporate ideological points of view and can make sense if micro- or macro-contextual parameters are taken into account in the interpretive process (narrative chunks, internally persuasive and authoritative discourse). It goes without saying that this also holds true to some extent for code-switching but there we have to worry about some linguistic details and formal issues more than in the other cases cited.

In such micro (namely, interactional)-contexts one can encounter various kinds of what Bakhtin (1981) calls internally persuasive discourse (Tsitsipis 2004). This discourse suggests that identities are not stable essences but are locatable in the constant process of being both receptive of and resistant to social and historical forces (includeing ideological voices) from various directions. This is the core of the meaning of internally persuasive discourse and dovetails nicely with recent attempts to deconstruct the stability of the epistemological subject as an inherited construct of early modernity (Butler 1999) [2].

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[2] However, a word of caution with regard to identity is offered by Pietikäinen and Dufva (2006: 206) who argue that understanding identity as socially constructed (which foregrounds an anti-essentialist definition) should not neglect an emphasis on identity from the individual point of view. This view also foregrounds experiences and their multi-voiced manifestations in discursive praxis. Further, the Bakhtinian notion of the "internally persuasive discourse" grasps exactly the point that social agents may simultaneously endorse and question (without outright adoption or rejection of) an alien voice struggling at the same time with it. Such a concept is admittedly hard to comprehend or explain in a nutshell but it is at least clear to this author that it would make no sense to try to change Bakhtin's terminology radically or turn it to its opposite by calling it "external discourse" since this would distort the very fact that it is the agents' struggle to cope with a particular discourse that matters. A paraphrase close to Bakhtin's concept which would not distort the initial spirit of the concept would be to call it "internally negotiable discourse".

But since identities are generally understood as endorsing or negating specific self- and other-referents (gender, for example) frequently by degrees I should make clear that my discussion here focuses more on themes related to language and ethnic plus national consciousness, without neglecting gender. A central theme in connection with identity formation and negotiation is that of multiple identities. Let us take a critical look at it. The late T. Christidis (1999) has called into question the ideas of multiculturalism and multi-identity formations if viewed as phenomenal symptoms of a shallow cosmopolitanism in the context of which recognition of self and other are easily marketable and manipulable aspects by the forces of a multinational free market economy. I would further suggest that some degree of identity stability is required if we are to retain a certain amount of <u>ontological security</u> (Giddens 1984). The central issue though is not the denial of multiple identities so much as their non-critical enshrining in the frame of national or global structures.

The very question of the necessity of the concept of "identity", however, has been viewed critically by Brubaker and Cooper (2000: 1-47) who discuss in meticulous detail the subject of what kinds of phenomena the analytical notion of "identity" could profitably explain without redundancies and confusion. These scholars debate both the "strong" and the "weak" versions of identity studies (the latter coming closer to constructionist approaches) arguing that both camps recruit a too compact and, at times, unclear and ambiguous concept to do excessive work. The stronger understanding of identity allows much of what is going on within and among social groups to be left out of serious consideration hardening unnecessarily their boundaries whereas the weaker or more constructivist analyses become overloaded with qualifying adjectives: Flexible, plural, multiple, fragmented, unstable etc. such that the very concept of "identity" is rendered an oxymoron. Instead, they propose alternative concepts such as identification, categorization, self-understanding and social location, commonality, connectedness and groupness that can do a more accurate and context-sensitive job. "Identification", for example, places the emphasis on social agents, avoiding the reifying or essentialist assumptions underlying "identity".

"Identisation" as a concept had already been anticipated by Hall (1996: 1-17) in a thoughtful analysis of the phenomenon. In his "sophisticated but opaque discussion" (as put by Brubaker and Cooper 2000: 9), Hall places some emphasis on Foucault's "subject" positions (but with a neglect of psychoanalysis because of its alleged taking part in the discourse of power engineering), and consequently on Butler's *rapprochement* of Foucault and psychoanalysis. Hall further points to the relation of the subject to discursive formations as an <u>articulation</u> and articulations are relations founded on historical contingencies (Hall 1996: 14; for an extensive analysis of the notion of "articulation" in the post-Marxist political theory, see Laclau and Mouffe 1985). Whichever the differences between Hall, and Brubaker and Cooper may be, the fact remains that the above cited authors give primacy to processes over facts and reified entities. The line of interpretation of the data that I follow in the present work also exhibits a strong preference for processes over states and entities even though I do not break with the paradigm of "identity".

Looking at ethnicity and nationalism, for example, we should take into serious consideration what we may call «multiple allegiances» in order to expose the hegemonic forces lurking behind dominant ideologies. One thing is clear though, namely, that we have to move constantly back and forth between the micro -level of interaction and the macro-level of national and international structurations that

dialectically incorporate interactional contingencies. I would cite as an example Billig's (1995) case of "banal nationalism"which does not reside in glamorous performances of hot nationalist projections, but in the tiny and slight instances of the everyday «we» «us» and «they» «them» etc. Billig using tools from discursive psychology and the social sciences more broadly makes a successful attempt to relate historical processes in the formation of nationalism to a highly salient indexicality as enacted in everyday discursive praxis, be this of broadcasting, printed or any other channel. Discursive praxis as a process is inevitably carried out and accomplished through various social-semiotic channels with their own specific histories, features imagined as pure or hybrid, power relations among their respective agents etc. My use therefore of the concept of "channel" here is quite broad as is the case with several other concepts used in this article. It retains however much of its social-semiotic semantics that I consider appropriate for the present analysis.

In various places in this treatment I refer to indexicality as a key concept as is generally used in various linguistic anthropological works dealing with social praxis and ideology. The twin concepts therefore of indexicals as signs and indexicality as a sign modality require some further discussion in order to be made clear. To cite Garrett (2007: 234) again "indexicality [is] the process whereby a speaker's use of a particular linguistic form or set of forms 'points to', thereby making relevant to the present context or moment of interaction, a particular identity, discourse, set of beliefs, body of knowledge, domain of activity, prior event etc.". Starting from this very clear definition I add here that my use of the concept of indexicality is quite close to the initial sense of the notion of "index" as a sign 'pointing to' its referent by virtue of a relationship of causality or contiguity (a la Peirce), and to its further elaboration by Silverstein in the context of matapragmatics and linguistic ideologies (see Silverstein 1981, and 1985 for the discussion of the dialectic between structure, use, and ideology in linguistic praxis; also his 2001 paper for an analysis of orthological-referential clarity as a reflection of ideological purity). My own addition in this article is the notion of "indexical totality" (see also below, and footnote 5 for a revision) by which refers to the tendency on the part of social agents to read a complex constellation of perceived and real social and cultural features as corresponding, 'pointing' to other series of parallel sets of features in an almost (ideologically) exhaustive manner.

2. A note on methodology

The data cited in this work stem from naturally produced narratives and conversations carried out by members of the Arvanitika-Greek bilingual communities of modern Greece. However, the analysis in its theoretical implications (and consequences) also derives inspiration from certain materials and sites examples of which are not included in the present discussion. In addition to a long-term field study of Arvanitika speech communities, a new research focus has emerged over the last few years: This has to do with what I call "popular conferences" exhibiting among other things certain features of hybrid discourses oscillating between formal conference characteristics and less constrained communication. Popular conferencing as social praxis is quite significant for the study of ideology, hegemony, negotiation and identity, the topics taken up here as well (for some discourse instances in which community members are empowered or

deskilled in their control of knowledge capitals showing up in such events see, Tsitsipis 2007a).

For both kinds of data, community verbal praxis and popular conferencing, an interpretive linguistic ethnographic approach has been adopted, even though the conference events have involved the researcher in a more intensively reflexive manner of participation than the traditionally structured fieldwork situations (even though there too things are changing; for a sensitive case of micro-ethnography see, Philips 1993). Differences in the degree of reflexivity are primarily due to the fact that in a "conference" a researcher can develop more fully her/his dual capacity as a social scientist, on the one hand, and as a member of the broader citizenry, on the other, sharing many of the same concerns that occupy the other participants' interests. This, in fact, differentiates a "popular conference" from both "typical" fieldwork situations and academic conference events. But such concerns are not entirely absent from fieldwork encounters.

The excerpts examined below are extracted from narrative events that are the product of long and intense collaborative efforts and communicative praxis between the informants and myself, and have emerged out of the building of various social networks. These networks have sustained a constant back and forth in checking and rechecking speakers' views and ideologies in their proper narrative shape and in our shared interactional space such that allowed me to provide interpretations based on this ethnographic give and take. Many encounters that started out in the rather rigid frame of an interviewing activity were being progressively transformed into more egalitarian conversations providing for the smooth emergence of narratives of various genres and subgenres. For the purposes of presentation, what follows may appear as the analyst's privileged point of view; but much of what is said should be viewed as a serious attempt to bring the local voices into the discussion.

3. Greek-Albanian discursive negotiation of identity: Analysis of the data

The «we» of Billig's banal nationalism is not exactly the same –even though similar to-- as the one I have in mind here. In order to render the local process of identity formation and transformation better understood a few additional observations are in line. Arvanitika speakers, who have been domiciled on Greek soil for more than four hundred years, have been pushed to constantly address themselves to the various historical conditions affecting the imagined community of Greekness up until and after the formation of the modern Greek state in the nineteenth century. They have been actually addressing questions of hegemony. And if we are to seriously consider their current identities, such questions should be kept in perspective. Rampton (2003), for example, has foregrounded the issue of how historical class hegemonies are emerging in the details of contemporary discursive praxis among London adolescents. Similar questions arise with regard to Arvanitika speakers albeit in a very different historical and ethnographic context and with a focus not on class but on ethno-nationalist problems.

The «we» of Arvanitika speakers of Greece is far more open to negotiation [3] than the one Billig examines, and has as its referent and indexical ground not a monolithic nationalist consciousness but a characteristic openness leading to various phenomenal contradictions. It must be added here though that national(ist) "we" forms too can be at times less monolithic and more ambivalent and contradictory given the proper historical context than expected in a normative order. This does not however subtract from the constant tendency on the part of various authorities to construct a solid nationalist ideology. Asking what exactly these bilingual Greek-Albanian speakers feel is an unwarranted question since in order to answer it we have, first, to return to the metaphysics of internalized personalist psychology, and, second, to come out of the trial without having secured an answer. But as Rampton argues subjectivities should not be sacrificed in the name of an objective structure. Speakers do feel something after all, and something is reflected in and refracted through their consciousness. This consciousness is discursively and socially structured, and the best way to grasp theoretically this notion of consciousness is to adopt, at least as a starting point, Hill's (1985) "grammar of consciousness", whereby one can discover in code-switching and other discursive techniques the traces of the workings of Mexican capitalist transformation on the body of the traditional Nahuatl society. We should further notice that "consciousness" as a notion frequently implies cognitive awareness, and thus when applied to national or ethnic identities, it may be misleading, since such phenomena operate as a part of the "habitus" (that is, as a habitualized "modus operandi"). It is therefore useful to state clearly how I understand "consciousness" since I make a rather frequent use of the concept in this article. As in many other social phenomena, one encounters here too degrees of awareness. In order to grasp the complexity of the issues discussed we have to make a concession for a middle-road-approach and view "consciousness" as admitting of various degrees and intensity of awareness.

This, initially mysterious, «we» of Arvanitika speakers I take to be an expression of what we may call a "dense indexicality". It is far more multifunctional than the way it sometimes appears to be, that is, as an abstraction of circumscribed and bounded identities. It operates both inclusively and exclusively. It includes and excludes multiple allegiances, that is, it makes a deictic reference to Arvanitika ethnicity plus Greek nationality and, at other times, it is more specifically Arvanitika- oriented.

In a large corpus of data I have examined within the rubric of an anthropology of praxis (collected in so called "normal" fieldwork circumstances, but also derived from popular conference events, see discussion of methodology above), one can discern various kinds of shifting identities. The transcripts discussed in this article are given in

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[3] A basic concept used throughout the discussion in this article is that of "negotiation". One of the anonymous reviewers of the paper has succinctly observed that I conceive of the notion in a wide manner. Such a reading grows out of the potential application of the concept in the analysis of various, different phenomena. Thus, a kind of negotiation could be involved in the interactional processes characterizing Conversation Analysis (since my examples include turn taking), or negotiation of ideological points of view or voices appears to be at the heart of Bakhtin's "internally persuasive discourse" (see note 2 and main text). Out of the several senses of "negotiation" one that can encompass all these uses as well as others in a more or less consistent manner is to take the notion to mean any social cum communicative process open to a discursive-ideological debate among multiple orientations and evaluations (pro-nationalist-antinationalist, pro-minority/anti-minority, pro-state/anti-state, gendered and racial categories as well as various hybrid and blurred conditions etc.) that either converge or clash and therefore show an interesting range from congruence to contestation.

the original languages in which they were uttered (Greek and Arvanitika) in the Appendix. In what follows I provide only the English glosses of the extracts which are further chunked into smaller parts to make following the analysis easier. Code-switched parts into Greek are in bold; square brackets are used to render bits of the content explicit as well as for information-clarification purposes; they are further used for unheard word or phrasal units. Some of these conventions are retained in the original texts (Appendix) where relevant.

In the first example from a published piece (as reworked here, see Tsitsipis 2003: 539-558) [4] we notice an ambiguous «we» that emerges as a response to military drafting acts by the Greek state. The historical context in which the narrator (an elderly male from a mainland Greece Arvanitika community) anchors his story is that of the turbulent period of the 1920s when Greece had launched a military expedition in Asia Minor (Turkey). Here is the first narrative chunk:

(1)
1   thus [the captain] told the sergeant there in: -**you'll pick up for me seventy**

2   no I got it all wrong, we were three hundred people there

3   and [the captain] told the sergeant: -**they will stand in line** all and went through [asking]:

4   -**you where do you come from? you where do you come from?** - **from Livadhia** [a town name]

5   he gathered us and said to the sergeant: -**you'll get them ready rifles, ammunition, coats, blanket and the like everything**

The five lines above launch a rather terse description of military routines which concern various drafting activities. They constitute thus a frame or background for what is to follow in the argument between the draftees and their superior officer in the second chunk (lines 6-10) of the same narrative fragment. However, this description is not offered without an attempt to produce a vivid dramatic effect. This is why it is designed to be like a succession of turns at talk (as is also the second chunk; see below). And such a narrative architecture foregrounds the fact that the quoted activity goes beyond mere description. It is an indirect (indexical) way of making relevant to the audience that they are witnessing a national parade albeit of a modest size. A sort of national identification is thus already incorporated in the orientation part of the unfolding narrative. The following lines constitute the second chunk:

(1) cont.
6   -**where are we heading to captain?** - **I'm not telling you**

7   we were afraid he might send us to Asia Minor, the retreat [of the Greek army] had not taken place yet

8   there, all in animosity [he] put us in line: - **where are we going captain** ?

9   - **shut up where we're going to we'll have a great time** [he] told us

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[4] The examples cited and analyzed here have received a different interpretation elsewhere since the focus there was on other aspects of the dynamics of linguistic shift, in particular the discussion of linguistic ideologies.

10   **- are you gonna tell us yes or no or we all leave**

After the narrator has provided the orientation of the narrated events in the first chunk (lines 1-5) encompassing contextual parameters of a typical national military drafting enterprise (albeit with a somewhat personalized and localized flavour) further dialogical exchanges ensue. The indexical anchoring of identity in this second part of the narrative fragment is a two-tier enterprise: It juxtaposes the male public sector of the population that is called to service to the military authorities, and as such it is inclusive; it incorporates the Greek citizens and their state apparatuses. In these lines the draftees are depicted as resisting the orders they receive from their superiors by arguing out the issues with their officers. This is the reason why these lines include almost exclusively dialogical material in turn-taking form (with the exception of line 7 and part of line 8). The mutual interlocking of the turns in the guise of an actual reproduction of the words spoken, that is, as direct quotations (impossible for someone to remember after so many years) increases the intended dramatic effect of the narrative, that is, to lay a claim on truth. This brief chunk is an exemplary case of purported descriptive realism or realistic fiction.

In such verbal contests the «we» vs. «you» (the other side of the argument) is defined within the imagined boundaries of the Greek-speaking world encompassing the national community. On the other hand, the «we» of the draftees also indexes an Arvanitika ethnic identity. Whatever belongs to the state legal and infrastructural apparatuses is rendered in Greek whereas the quoting parts are in Arvanitika. Code-switching, the formal machinery of discourse, helps to foreground this distinction, while the whole content of discourse frames it within the confines of the nation and its military dealings as it unfolds as an argument among various co-citizens. Code-switching operates here as an icon of a perceived functional bifurcation between Greek and Arvanitika. Thus, a very clear separation of the reporting and the reported context (Voloshinov 1973), shows up here (for examples from other communities and references therein, see Tsitsipis 2003: 539-558). Arvanitika speakers refer implicitly to themselves as Greek citizens and simultaneously index their identity as a separate ethnic «we» at some distance from the main citizenry. This ambivalent stance on the part of the Greek-Albanian bilinguals has some repercussions for their gendered as well as national/ethnic identifications. The traditional military context (in a pre-women drafting period but in the present day too) has been a route to the reinforcement of the formation of masculine identities. In many European contexts, military service and the ideologies along with the structural apparatuses accompanying it provide male members of the local communities with further grounds to become "real men". In several cases this may lead to the attenuation of former anti-nationalist feelings of male ethnic minority members and, as a consequence, nationalization becomes a context for a growing de-ethnicization (written communication by one anonymous reviewer of this piece). As much as this seems to hold true for Arvanitika as well as for other cases, it must be added here that the "real man" principle seems to have been enshrined in social consciousness since early modernity probably for the whole Balkan area (for an example referring back to earlier times in relation to military service, see Tsitsipis 2007a: 291-292).

My analysis of this example is not intended as an exhaustive case covering the potentially vast range of aspects of social consciousness. It serves though to caution research against more monolithic interpretations. One can even derive some lessons for

the various critical perspectives on discourse. I see Rampton (2006) as doing this in his attempt to offer a revisionist alternative to modernist sociolinguistics. One can further get political lessons: Processes of subordination that I have discussed elsewhere (Tsitsipis 1998), are responsible for bringing about identity shifts. This is quite similar to Rampton's argumentation in which classed subjectivities emerge in complex ways from the class structure of British society. By the same token, in a kind of internally persuasive discourse, Arvanitika bilingual speakers allow the discourse of nationalism to penetrate their consciousness by degrees and through various contradictions.

There are other cases though in which a more pure Arvanitika «we» shows up as exemplified by various instances of narrative discourse. By adding to our analysis such instances too we develop a fuller understanding of identity management. In examples discussed also elsewhere (Tsitsipis 2004) evidence is brought to bear on what I have called, following Bakhtin (1981), authoritative discourse, a discourse allowing for no negotiation or contestation. Here the boundaries between Arvanitika identity and the encompassing society are sharper and the «we» makes a rather unambiguous reference to a condition of a culture locally understood to be pristine and corresponding to the whole of a language (Arvanitika) and this language, in its turn, as pointing to the totality of a cultural formation. I have called this "indexical totality" (see analysis of the concept above).[5] Such an ideological condition highlights, as is implicated in the Bakhtinian notion of "authoritative discourse", a hegemonic moment stemming from within the minority linguistic community in its attempt to control tradition and history. This scheme referring to a "pristine" culture (and language) resembles the ideology known as "linguistic isolationism" (Bucholtz 2003: 404) according to which what is understood to be the most authentic language is untouched by various influences and is perceived as a self-sufficient whole.

The following example is offered by an octogenarian female speaker (with brief interventions by another female speaker in lines 8 and 9) coming from a somewhat more modernized community than the speaker of example (1) (back in the early 1980s), and exemplifies the discourse or word of authority discussed above. As is the case with the previous example this one too is chunked into two parts, and the break between them is almost naturally imposed on the basis of their slightly differing contents and foci. The first part consists of lines 1 through 9:

(2)
1   we faced hardships, we those years
2   [we] dug [the soil] cut the branches of the vines

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5 I have recently come to somewhat revise this label and its meaning and change it to «iconic totality». The reason is that speakers themselves, as comes out of the analysis, handle language and nonlinguistic cultural phenomena as if they were linked through primordial-natural bonds, erasing thus from their sight the various historical contingencies characterizing such phenomena. As in the case of indexicals and indexicality, clarified earlier in this work, I treat icons and iconicity in Peirce's spirit of understanding these semiotic types as relating a sign and its referent via the notional vehicle of similarity. It is important therefore to note here that speakers frequently overlook (through ideological mediation) the contingent and historical relationship between a linguistic and an extralinguistic order of things by naturalizing it, that is, by viewing it as part of a natural and reified state of affairs. Such semiotic strategies allow for a distorted picture of reality ideologically drawing and redrawing linguistic as well as ethnic, national, and social boundaries (see Gal and Irvine 1995; Irvine and Gal 2000; for "iconization" as a more encompassing concept than "iconicity" see, Irvine 2001; on boundaries see also, Bailey 2007).

3   [we] cultivated [the land] we moved with a carriage
4   [we] didn't have oxen […] people had a hard time
5   **yes but God is blessed anyway**
6   [we] had a better time in good health
7   and we worked but we had [enough] to eat
8   -Arvanitika Arvanitika they spoke Arvanitika
9   -Arvanitika these old folks [spoke]

With the exception of a brief switch to Greek (line 5) which is an invocation to God, the whole first chunk of extract (2) foregrounds a direct link between the Albanian version of the language spoken locally and other aspects of cultural and economic life. This link is perceived as such a natural condition that the two subsets of this narrative portion (lines 1-7 [culture], and 8-9 [language]) with their apparently slightly different referents are simply paratactically juxtaposed without any syntactic machinery that could provide for the building of coherence. They are related through a mutual implicational relationship. Line 5 offers a positive evaluation of the described hegemony of the traditional order. The following part is the second chunk (lines 10-14) of the whole extract:

(2) cont.
10   **the children spoke Greek**
11   **with Arvanitika women Arvanitika [we spoke]!**
12   we were dancing Arvanitika (what a) **dance** we were singing!
13   **now we don't dance we don't do [things]**
14   **the world has deteriorated now** the feast has deteriorated now

Lines 10-14 continue the theme of the previous chunk since the narrator emphasizes and underlines both the linguistic (line 11) and the cultural habits (line 12) of the past taken to be praiseworthy if we judge from her tone of voice suggesting admiration and emphasis and from her conclusion on social change (constituting the closing statement of the whole narrative) (line 14). But the cultural and linguistic ideology as encapsulated in example (2) is further foregrounded by contrasting the previous conditions (lines 1-9) to the emerging modern world as illustrated in 10-14.

In example (2) a much less negotiable identity emerges compared to example (1). Everything is confined within the orbit of an earlier social order the components of which are depicted as being icons the one of the other. Everything is controlled by the word of tradition. Arvanitika language and aspects of cultural, economic, and social life are perceived as consubstantial. The narrator, in order to establish the authoritative word of tradition, produces an imagery of what could be understood as a romantic turn to other times and social formations flooded with identities constructed as more exclusive of otherness. In fact, such identities are to be read as a protesting gesture towards the hegemonic discourses of the modernist state, or, alternatively, as a form of "romantic anti-capitalism" in a nutshell (Sayre and Löwy 1991; Wald 1994).

4. Concluding comments

In the analysis of multiculturalism and multiple identities we should pay attention to the following: We definitely have to reject any genre of shallow cosmopolitanism that

frequently depicts multi-identities as an unproblematic category. For this reason we have to look into the workings of discourse as a route through which we can understand the historicity of "eventing", to recall Bakhtin, that is, as the point where the micro- and the macro- meet. As long as we realize that indexical details of our discursive praxis tell us more about our social condition than we often think they do, we can derive the maximum of interpretive profit from such analyses. By looking only at the content or only at the form of discursive interactions one can miss the hybrid and often contradictory nature of emerging identity formations. In the case of the Greek-Albanian communities, and on various occasions, not presented here, community members have explicitly debated such issues by leaning at times towards one direction and at other times towards another. It is their national identity that is at times more prominently focused upon; and it is their ethnic background as discursively constructed that becomes the focus of some of their other interactions and narratives. The latter can be read as antihegemonic moments in which a protesting voice finds the opportunity to surface.

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Appendix

Below I am citing the full texts of the examples in the original languages: Greek and Arvanitika (Albanian). Chunking of the extracts into smaller units as is the case in the main body of this paper is not applied here. The extracts are given with the same line numbers and in a simplified phonology without any marking of Greek loans into the Albanian material or of any other features of grammar (particularly morphology) that would be worth commenting on in a differently focused analysis. In the transcriptions I have also avoided to mark certain kinds of deviations from the grammatical norm which often characterize speakers of this and other receding dialects and are related to various proficiency levels.

(1)
1   ljipon i tha epiloxji ati mberdha: -**tha mu vghalis evdhominda**
2   jo te kesha, jeshim trakoshi nomatei ati
3   edhe i tha epiloxji: -**tha bun sti ghrami** ter edhe shkoi:
4   -**si apo pu ise? esi puthe ise? -apo ti Livadhja**
5   na mbljodhi edhe i tha epiloxji: -**tha ndus etimasis opla, fisingjes, sakakja, kuverta mistirja ola**
6   -**ja pu tha pam kjir lohaje? -dhe sas to leo**
7   neve tremeshim mos na kjaw ne Mikra Ashi, akomi nuk ish opisthohorisi
8   atje ter fasaria na kjaw ghrami: -**ja pu tha pam kjir lohaje**?
9   -**sopate kji pu tha pame tha perasume kala**, na thoi
10 -**tha mas to ipis i ne i oxji i tha fighum oli**

(2)
1   neve kakoshkuame neve ata vitera
2   rremonjeme kladhepseme vreshtate
3   punonjem me sust me karene veim
4   nek keim kje [...] kakoshkoine kozmos
5   **ne ala dhoksa to theo omos**
6   shkonjem me mir shendoshat mira
7   dhe sherbenjem ala haim
8   -Arvanite Arvanite kuvendoin Arvanite
9   -Arvanite ata pljekte
10 **Elinika kuvendjazame ta pedhja**
11 **me tis Arvanitises Arvanitika !**
12 Arvanite che kechenjem **horo** kendonjeme !
13 **tora dhen horevume dhen ganume**
14 **halase o kozmos tora** u-halas panjijiri nani