

The effects of multiple dialect exposure on non-native perception: A case study in Greek

Erik Morris

Université Paris Cité

Abstract

Previous research in High Variability Phonetic Training (HVPT) use in L2 acquisition produced differing recommendations regarding the use of multiple dialects of the target language during training. Likewise, research in imitation has shown that it functions cross-linguistically. This thesis investigates the broader implications of dialect exposure on perception and production of naive listeners of modern Greek.

In order to examine whether exposure to multiple dialects has a positive or negative effect on perception and production by naive French L1 speakers, this study controls both speaker and dialect variability for modern Greek obstruents. Modern Greek contains six fricatives and two stops /θ, ð, x, ɣ, ç, ʝ, c, ʒ/ not present in French. Native Greek speakers from three regions of Greece (Thessaloniki, Athens, Crete) produced 166 words containing these obstruents in word-initial, stressed position. 28 French L1 speakers, divided into three conditions, completed a 4I2AFC task to test their perception of these foreign words. An imitation experiment was used to test production, with participants first imitating another French L1 speaker to establish a baseline level of imitation, followed by imitation of the Greek speakers used in the perception experiment.

Preliminary results for perception suggest that Condition 1 (single speaker, 1 dialect) is the easiest for naive speakers (highest accuracy), followed by Condition 3 (12 speakers, 3 dialects), with Condition 2 (4 speakers, 1 dialect) showing lowest overall accuracy.