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THE APPROPRIATENESS OF [ts] IN CERTAIN GREEK SUFFIXES

In his recent meticulous and carefully documented monograph (1982) on the derivational suffixes in Modern Greek with consonantal nucleus [ts], Demetrius GEORGACAS has given the definitive statement on the historical provenance of these (and other) affixes. In particular, the question of borrowing versus native development as the source of the occurrence of these suffixes can now be considered to be resolved, and Georgacas has struck an appropriate balance between the two extremes, finding the suffixes in general to be of native Greek origin but occasional instances of them, i. e. in a few specific words or formations, to be the result of language contact, for example as borrowings from Slavic.

Although that issue concerning these suffixes is now apparently settled, there are yet additional observations that can be made on the matter of these suffixes, and it is in the context of honoring Prof. Georgacas that these observations are offered here.

It is, of course, well known that among the suffixes in question is a series of suffixes with diminutive or generally affective value. For example, we find a neuter diminutive suffix -ίτσι, as in λεμονίτσι 'little lemon' (cf. λεμόνι 'lemon'), a feminine diminutive suffix -ίτσα, as in λεμονίτσα 'little lemon tree' (cf. λεμονιά 'lemon tree'), an expressive adjective-forming suffix -ούτσικος, as in γλυκούτσικος 'sweet-ish, cute (said, e. g., of a baby)' (cf. γλυκός 'sweet'), and others. Though they differ on other aspects of their formation, these suffixes all share a consonantal nucleus -τσ- ([ts]). What is especially interesting about the occurrence of this nucleus [ts] in these suffixes is that it may not be accidental that it appears here. That is to say, there is good reason - in the form of both a language-external and a language-internal nature - to believe that the innovation of such suffixes with [ts] as their consonantal nucleus was an especially appropriate one for Greek to have undergone.

First, there is some indication that [ts] and related sounds, such as

the palatal affricates [tʃ] and [dʃ], the palatal fricative [ʃ], the palatalized [kʲ] and [tʲ], are, in some real sense, "favored" sounds in diminutives and highly expressive and iconic vocabulary in general cross-linguistically. That is to say, there are numerous languages, of varied genetic and geographic distribution, in which sounds are to be found in such "affective" lexical items. Inasmuch as the [ts] in these Greek suffixes seems generally to derive from an affrication of a palatalized [kʲ] (e. g. in the suffix -ίκιον(ο)ν; as Georgacas (1982 : 184-190) has argued, this cross-linguistic fact is especially relevant.

For example, Pentland 1975 has shown that for Proto-Algonquian, a sound symbolism rule shifting *t and *s to *tʃ and *ʃ respectively can be reconstructed. This rule has a synchronic reflex in Cree dialects (among others) in which diminutives are regularly characterized by palatalization of stem-final as well as word-internal dental stops; Wolfart (1973 : 80) describes the process in the following manner: "usually, when a word contains one of the diminutive suffixes /es/, /esis/, etc., all preceding *t*'s in that word are replaced by [the roughly palatal affricate] *c*, e. g. *nite:m* 'my horse' : *nice:misis* 'my little horse'". Moreover, in Cree, "pervasive palatalization to indicate diminution is not restricted to stems with a diminutive suffix", for example, *yo:tin* 'it is windy' : *yo:cin* 'it is a little windy'. Additionally, within the sphere of North American languages, Haas 1970 has found that in Wiyot and Yurok, two languages distantly related to the Algonquian languages, and in Karok, a Hokan language, too, such sound symbolism (occurs in diminutives and for Wiyot, augmentatives as well) with the consonants [c], [tʃ] [ʃ] (among others), and Nichols 1971, in her survey of consonantal symbolism throughout the native languages of North America, has uncovered other instances of languages which use [ts] or [tʃ] or more generally, palatalization of some sort in such sound symbolism. Finally to cite an example from another continent, Anttila 1975) has noted that in Finnish affective vocabulary, the sound [ts] has a certain "descriptive color" and in a later work (1977 : 120) states further that the Finnish "combination *ts* has great affective value also in slangy loanwords, e.g. *pitškata* 'cry' *poinsi* 'point' *putsata* 'clean', or even *vitsi* 'joke'".

Thus while it is certainly not the case that all languages must have a formative like [ts] with sound-symbolic, especially diminutive, value. Classical Greek, for example, seems not to have- or that only such a sound can fill such a function (cf. -ζ- in Ancient Greek diminutives in -ίζων, Modern Greek diminutives in -άκι and similar formations in Slavic), we are faced here with a striking cross-linguistic parallel. If, as is often the

case with features found in a variety of diverse languages, the occurrence of [ts] in such lexical items is a response to some aspect, however elusive to define, of the overall conditions - social, physical, psychological, etc. - under which human communication takes place, then Greek has innovated a diminutive suffix with an especially appropriate consonantal nucleus. Such a line of reasoning does not, and can not, explain why Greek "chose" to innovate a form of this suffix in this particular way and at the particular time it did, inasmuch as Ancient Greek speakers, it seems, were perfectly content without a diminutive suffix in [ts], but it does allow the innovation to be put into an appropriate context; if a language were to innovate a diminutive suffix or alter an existing one, as the case may be, then the "choice" of [ts] as the primary exponent of this symbolic function is one which would be highly favored, it seems, from a language-universal standpoint. It may even be possible to say that such sounds are unmarked in their occurrence in such functions, so that their appearance here would not be extraordinary.

Going along with this external, cross-linguistic evidence bearing on the status of [ts] in affective vocabulary is some evidence internal to Modern Greek itself, specifically to the Modern Greek phonological system. That is, it can be shown that [ts] (and its voiced counterpart [dz]) has a special functional status within the synchronic phonological system of Greek. This special status can be called "allolinguistic" to borrow a term proposed by Wescott (1975:497) for "language that is alienated from conventionally structured speech". It refers specifically to elements such as conventionalized child language forms, slang, onomatopoeic and generally sound-symbolic words, and in addition - a point which is interesting from the standpoint of the -ιτσ- suffixes in Greek - diminutives and expressive/affective vocabulary in general.

The main argument for taking *ts* (and *dz*) to have allolinguistic status within Greek comes from their lexical distribution. These sounds occur quite frequently, though not exclusively, in just those types of lexical items which Wescott would assign to the "allolanguage". For example the following forms, constituting just a small sampling of items with *ts/dz* give an indication of the range of occurrence of these sounds: child-language forms like τζίτσια (with a variant τσίτσια) 'peepee', τσιτσι 'meat' τσάτσα 'aunty', onomatopoeic words and words derived from noises such as τσάκ 'sound of something breaking' and τσακίζω 'I break' or γράτς (with variants κράτς/χράτς) 'sound of scratching' and γρατσουνάω 'I scratch', expressive words like τζάμπια 'for nothing, free' and τζουτζές 'dwarf, ugly im-

moral person' and a number of sound-symbolic words such as τσιμπῶ 'I pinch', τσιμ(π)οῦρι 'tick, pest', τσιβίκι 'tick', τσουκνίδα 'nettle', where the initial τσV- appears to signal a stinging, biting sensation or figurative extension thereof. Moreover, as we have seen, *ts* occurs in the variety of diminutive suffixes under consideration here.

What is especially significant about the distribution of *ts* and *dz*- and this is a point developed in more detail in Joseph (1983a, 1983b, 1984)- is that the vast majority of their occurrences in Greek lexical items is in such allolinguistic words. No other sounds in Greek have such a lexical distribution, i. e. one that is skewed in the direction of allolinguistic items. Thus, though one finds, for instance, a [k] in some allolinguistic forms (e. g. in κῶτις and in the diminutive suffix -άκι) but it is not the case that [k] occurs primarily in allolinguistic items while this is so for *ts* and *dz*. Thus one is justified in singling out *ts/dz* for allolinguistic status in Greek based on the range of morphemes they occur in.

Since diminutives in general fall under Wescott's allolinguistic rubric, the fact that *ts* is to be found in so many Greek diminutive and affective suffixes becomes particularly interesting. The occurrence of *ts* in these suffixes, it can be argued, fits into an overall pattern for the lexical distribution of [ts] throughout the language. Viewed in this way, the innovations that led to Greek having [ts] in diminutive suffixes take on a certain appropriateness that they would not have if considered merely as accidental and isolated events that happened to have this result. Moreover, one can discern mutually-reinforcing developments in the language, whereby *ts* arising in diminutives both feeds and feeds items off of the developing allolinguistic status of [ts] based on its occurrence in other lexical.

What the facts marshalled together here show is that the occurrence of the consonantal nucleus -τσ- in diminutive and affective suffixes in Greek must be viewed in a larger context. On the one hand, it must be fit into the widespread appearance of certain types of consonantal symbolism throughout the languages of the world, and on the other hand, it must be fit into the particular phonological and functional patternings that have emerged in the Greek language itself in the Post-Classical period. While it seems likely, then, that the occurrence of -τσ- in these suffixes is not accidental, a word of caution in closing is important. As noted above, the ultimate reasons for the causation and actuation of the linguistic changes leading to τσ in these suffixes may never be fully explicated. It is hoped, though, that these brief comments here have brought us closer to an understanding of this aspect of the situation with -τσ- in Greek, just as Prof. Georgacas has done in much more copious and detailed a manner with regard to another

side of the question of Greek -τσ-. Still, as Malkiel (1966 : 350) has pointed out in connection with the high frequency of the vowel [a] in Latin words denoting infirmities of various sorts, so also, at the moment at least, with -τσ- in Greek : "there can be no talk, then, of any prediction from form to meaning or vice versa, but only of heightened, if you wish : sharply increased, probability".

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