

Stylios Paterakis

PhD Student in Linguistics at the Department of Mediterranean Studies of the School of Humanities of the University of the Aegean (Greece)

## The reception of the Indo-European theory in Greece through the lens of the dominant language ideology of Modern Greek

Mass media are constantly referring to the ideologies which are prevalent in society. Moreover, “ideology” has been studied within the framework of various humanities and social disciplines. For instance, “ideology” signifies a system of values and beliefs in the domain of modern political science, without receiving a negative connotation (Freeden 2003). The negative meaning of the word “ideology” originates from perspectives maintained by Karl Marx and Frederick Engels. According to these thinkers, “ideology” reflects the reality misleadingly: it is the distortion of the material world. Throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century, “ideology” had the negative connotation Marx and Engels had attributed to this concept and, as a result, political and social sciences distinguished it from the “objective knowledge” (Eagleton 1991).

Although illustrious linguists do not take ideological factors into consideration as to linguistic issues, this methodological preference is ideologized, historically detectable, and originates from aspects nineteenth-century linguists voiced regarding the nature of the linguistic system. As Milroy (2012) points out by using examples, aspects maintained by the Neogrammarians, a German school of linguists (19<sup>th</sup> century), and structural linguistics (20<sup>th</sup> century), initiated by Ferdinand de Saussure (e.g. Saussure’s aspect on the autonomy of a language system), affected, to some extent, modern linguistic approaches. Nowadays, an analysis of ideological schemata procures advantages and meets the demands of a modern linguistic study, as sociolinguistic researches have shown inexorable progress.

This study aims at examining helleno-centric linguistic theories and pseudo-scientific perspectives, which are disseminated in Greek society, concerning the origins of Greek. More specifically, the present research will focus on (1) quasi-scientific approaches and (2) squarely nationalistic narratives with regard to the reception of the Indo-European theory and its dimension as to the origin of Greek, the antiquity of Greek and its speaker, and the influence Greek had on the structure of languages worldwide. Sampanis & Karantzola (2018: 183) point out aptly: “In Greece, the literature which can be called ‘para-linguistic’ and promotes the concept of Greek as an autochthonous and particularly archaic language that exerted influence on a number of languages in Europe and globally is excessive and probably more proliferous than the academic publications on IE linguistics”.

The reception of the Indo-European theory in Greece through helleno-centric approaches will be examined under the light of the dominant language ideology of Modern Greek. This ideology of Modern Greek as a regime language became dominant after the official establishment of Standard Modern Greek and the resolution of Greek Language

Question in 1976. According to this conceptual model, each language has a unified “Interior” and a threatening “Exterior”. The Interior of Greek is “pure” Greek. The Exterior of Greek is “non-Greek”. The Interior of a language does not know any historical limit and it is from its past that a language gains its symbolic strength (Moschonas 2004: 173 and 190). In the present study, it will be indicated that the ideological reception of the Indo-European theory in Greece forms part of the strategies the dominant language ideology employs in order to declare the concept of the purity of the Interior (Greek), which is presented as intact and homogeneous, knowing of no historical limits.

### References

Eagleton, T. 1991. *Ideology. An introduction*. London: Verso Eds.

Freeden, M. 2003. *Ideology. A very short introduction*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Milroy, J. 2012. “Sociolinguistics and ideologies in language history”. In: J. M. Hernández-Campoy & J. C. Conde-Silvestre, *The Handbook of Historical Sociolinguistics*. Blackwell Publishing, 571-584.

Moschonas, S. A. 2004. “Relativism in Language Ideology: On Greece’s Latest Languages Issues”. *Journal of Modern Greek Studies* (22), 173-206.

Sampanis, K. & E. Karantzola 2018. “The perception of historical and Indo-European linguistics in the instruction of Greek”. *Studies in Greek Linguistics* (38), 179-190.