Language processing and ambiguity resolution in monolingual and bidialectal ageing

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As the numbers of older people around the world are growing drastically, the effects of ageing on their linguistic and cognitive profile are attracting increasing research interest. Although evidence from research on bilingualism in relation to its protective role against age-related decline is rather extensive and robust (Bialystok et al., 2009; Alladi et al., 2013) much less is known about the possible existence of similar advantages in bidialectalism. Greek, a morphologically rich language, constitutes an excellent candidate for such a research.

Under this rationale, the present study examined the impact of ageing on linguistic processing, as well as the effect of Pontic-Greek bidialectalism on ambiguity resolution. To this aim, we used an on-line self-paced reading paradigm with locally complex structures of Greek that involve a subject/object ambiguity (following Papadopoulou & Tsimpli, 2005). 16 Pontic-Greek bidialectals of older age and a control group of 16 Greek age-matched monolinguals were recruited for the study. Our results showed that bidialectals were faster than monolinguals, providing support for the bidialectal advantage in linguistic processing. Interestingly, when compared to previous findings from young adults, bidialectals exhibited effects similar to young adults for the Deteminier and Noun segments. They initially showed a direct-object bias (Late Closure effect), later replaced by a subject preference during the Noun. This finding suggests a rather protective role of their linguistic repertoire to age-related processing declines. On the other hand, monolinguals showed no particular preference during the Deteminier readings, but followed the same subject preference upon the Noun. Accuracy of the two groups of older participants did not show any differences from each other, but they both showed lower performance when compared to young adults.
**Figure 1.** Determiner: Mean RTs per group per condition

**Figure 2.** Noun: Mean RTs per group per condition

**References**

