

EDITOR'S NOTE

I am saddened to report the death of Lukas Tsitsipis, a member of this journal's Editorial Board since 2005. The following appreciation was written by a fellow Greek sociolinguist. A more detailed commemoration of Professor Tsitsipis, also written by Professor Georgakopoulou, is forthcoming in the Journal of Sociolinguistics.

Barbara Johnstone

Lukas Tsitsipis, born 31 January 1946, passed away on 14 September 2008 after a moving battle with lung cancer. In the words of his partner, Ifigeneia Moulinou (personal communication), he chose to view the disease as unresearched and un-researchable, unlike most things in his life. He simply lived with it as bravely as he could have done and continued to be the kind of scholar, teacher, and colleague that he had been, until the very end.

Tsitsipis was Professor of Anthropology and Linguistics at Aristotle University of Salonica, Greece, a title fit for somebody who singlehandedly introduced into Greek academia an unlikely combination until then, that of linguistic anthropology. Tsitsipis was always drawn to the challenges and rewards of this interdisciplinarity, as is attested to by the fact that he held two master's degrees, one in anthropology and one in linguistics, from the University of Wisconsin. (He also held a Ph.D. in anthropology from the same institution). His courses in the ethnography of communication, another first in the context of linguistics teaching in Greece, were very popular too with students other than his own in the Department of French Language and Philology. His *Introduction to the anthropology of language: Language, ideology and performance* (Athens, 1995; in Greek), yet another first, has already become a classic textbook for students of linguistics in Greece and should continue to stand the test of time.

Tsitsipis kept an active presence on the international sociolinguistics scene and published extensively in English. His articles appeared in *Anthropological Linguistics*, *International Journal of the Sociology of Language*, *Journal of Pragmatics*, *Journal of Sociolinguistics*, *Language in Society*, *Semiotica*, and *Word*, among others. His scholarly eyes remained fixed on the advances of the American school of linguistic anthropology of the past three decades. To cast his work, however, as a mere "application" of the tools of linguistic anthropology in the Greek setting would do justice neither to the original synthesis of approaches that it exemplified nor to his own epistemological motto that one should not "serve the partial." A rigorous and committed ethnographer, Tsitsipis was fully aware of the utopian quality of totalizing accounts, opting for approaches as densely contextualized as possible. In his terms, he scrutinized the "dense indexicality" of language. The result was multi-layered analyses that served as exemplars of eclecticism, drawing on dialogical approaches to language, linguistic anthropology, discourse and narrative

analysis, and a wide range of sociolinguistic frameworks ranging from dialectology and the sociology of language (in his earlier work) to interactional sociolinguistics (in his later work). His book *A linguistic anthropology of praxis and language shift: Arvanitika (Albanian) and Greek in contact* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998) pulls together practice-based views of language, ethnographic sensibilities, and classic sociolinguistic perspectives on language shift and death compellingly and effortlessly, making unlikely alliances seem entirely obvious. Perhaps more important, it bravely and firmly puts on the map a hitherto neglected (perhaps even taboo) topic in mainstream Greek sociolinguistics, that of linguistic minorities in Greece and the official and lay ideologies shaping the use of minority languages and varieties, paving the way for what is currently a flourishing strand of research that includes lay participants and voices.

Praxis was a central concept in Tsitsipis's work, which sought to scrutinize language as a mode of action and to theorize social practice in ways that would address issues of ideology. This remained a focal point of inquiry for him, and one that he intended to expound in his book in preparation on *Language, praxis, and ideology: A dynamic approach to sociolinguistic processes*, which sadly he did not complete.

In a country where heated public debates on language among linguists and non-linguists alike are common, Tsitsipis chose public silence, opting instead for painstaking empirical studies that spoke on his behalf. I share the view of our colleague Spiros Moschonas that abstinence from the media circuit "may have been the reason why his work was not 'appreciated' in Greece as much as it was outside it. This is why, [I believe], his influence will prove longer-lasting" ("The linguistic anthropology of Lukas Tsitsipis," *Kathimerini*, Sept. 28, 2008; my translation from Greek).

I had the privilege to meet Lukas first through his writings and then in person: I found his intellectual integrity, passion and intensity a perfect match with how I had imagined him from the pages of his books. Face to face and over a drink, Lukas came with a treat: a great sense of humor and a self-reflexivity that knowingly set out to undermine the male professorial model but unassumingly ended up adding finishing touches to his natural charm. Besides the irrevocable loss of this embodied charisma, his departure leaves spaces for warmth and humanity, a praxis of sociolinguistic sensitivity, and unwavering scholarly commitment. Inhabiting those spaces would perhaps be the most fitting tribute to him.

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