

# Language ideologies among refugees in Greece

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This paper is based on ethnographic material produced in the framework of project P.R.E.S.S. (Provision of Refugee Education and Support Scheme) which is funded by the Hellenic Open University. It draws on our ongoing ethnographic fieldwork in three locations – Lesvos, Athens and Thessaloniki- from three different refugee camps in Greece. We are currently investigating the language practices of refugees who have been “trapped” either on the Greek island of Lesvos or in major cities like Athens and Thessaloniki.

The central concern of our paper is to explore the language ideologies that are emerging from the refugees' past lives, current encampment experience as well as their future aspirations. We seek to examine how historical and current political, sociocultural and the experience of encampment intersect with language ideologies. Using Irvine and Gal's (2000 ) framework of language ideologies and the semiotic processes of *iconization, fractal recursivity and erasure*, we argue that linguistic features of variation in Dari, Kurmanji and Arabic index social groups as well as projecting inclusion, exclusion and the invisibility of certain groups in the context of camps.

We will organize our discussion in three sections. First, we will discuss how ideologies about standard versus non-standard varieties are constructed among Kurdish refugees in Lesvos. Second, we will analyse how the stratification of linguistic varieties is connected to perceptions of marginalization among Afghan refugees in Athens. Third, we will document how the encampment experience, in Thessaloniki, creates new spaces of interaction between Syrian and Afghan communities. We conclude by drawing attention to the multiplicity and contention of language ideologies in such a fluid context as that of our

participants. This ideological fluidity is displayed in the refugees' fragmented attendance of language learning activities, their explicit comments about various linguistic varieties used in and outside the camp, their language policing actions, their linguistic repertoires and linguistic choices made during their encampment experience.