

Myriam Klapi was born in Athens and has been raised bilingual. She has always wanted to understand how language works in terms of language acquisition and speech production. She studied German philology at the National University of Athens, where she was first introduced to Linguistics. After graduating in 2008, completely fascinated by the field, she decided to do a Master's Degree in Linguistics at the Humboldt-University. She has worked as a student assistant to Prof. Dr. Katharina Spalek in the department of Psycholinguistics, which enhanced her linguistic empirical knowledge. At the same time and together with student colleagues it was decided to build a spoken Corpus called Berlin Map Task Corpus under the supervision and support of Prof. Dr. Anke Lüdeling, who inspired the project. In her masters thesis she examined Disfluency Patterns of native and nonnative German speakers, a research which was based on the Berlin Map Task Corpus data.

The shift to sign linguistics was inspired by the Deaf community in Athens and Dr. Chrisostomos Pappaspyrou. Since her involvement with sign languages and after visiting a series of relevant workshops, she realized that the field offers a whole new perspective among modalities and research. Currently and after receiving a Pre-Doc fellowship from the Max-Planck Institute for History of Sciences, she has started working on the PhD thesis under the supervision of Prof. Dr. Markus Steinbach (University of Göttingen). The PhD thesis involves a comparison of Greek and Turkish Sign Language by embracing sociolinguistic and historical aspects.

Working in Sabine Arnaud's research group, The Construction of Norms in 17th to 19th Century Europe and the United States, Myriam's Ph.D. project is titled "History of Sign Language in Ottoman Greece: A Study of sociolinguistic aspects in the Eighteenth and the Nineteenth Century," and the scope is to examine the correlation between Turkish Sign Language (TİD) and Greek Sign Language (ENΓ) as it derives from linguistic similarities and historical facts. The overall aim of the research is to examine the language contact between the two ethnicities which is hypothesized to have had an important sociolinguistic impact in the evolution of Greek Sign Language. The sociolinguistic and bicultural factors that have influenced the attitudes and ideologies towards the Deaf are expected to strengthen our understanding about the construction of norms in Ottoman Greece during the 18th and 19th centuries.