

**English and translingual
adolescent identities in Greece**

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of the requirements for the degree of
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Certificate of Authorship/Originality

I certify that this thesis has not previously been submitted for any degree, nor is it being submitted as part of a candidature for any other degree.

I also certify that the thesis has been written by me, and that any help received in preparing this work, and all sources used, have been acknowledged in the thesis.

Signature of Candidate

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Maria Harissi

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Table of Contents

Certificate of Authorship/Originality	ii
Acknowledgements	iii
Table of Contents	iv
List of Figures and Tables	viii
Synopsis	ix
Notes on Notations	x
Transcription Conventions	xi

1 ETIOLOGISIS	1
1.1 Intellectual origins of this study	1
1.2 The starting point of this study	3
1.2.1 English for instrumental purposes	4
1.2.2 English as threat	7
1.2.3 Move away from and critique of the two discourses	13
1.3 The focus of this study	16
1.4 Developing the theoretical tools for the job	20
1.5 The structure of the thesis	27

2 SKEPSIS	33
2.1 Why English in Greece now?	33
2.2 Why language and identity in Greece?	37
2.2.1 Greek identity	37
2.2.2 The Greek language	39
2.2.3 Concluding remarks	42
2.3 English language teaching in Greece	43
2.3.1 English language exam bodies in Greece	45
2.3.2 Concluding remarks: Teaching for exams	50
2.4 English language and the European Union	51
2.4.1 Two key European Union documents	52
2.4.2 Greek response	54
2.4.3 Incongruities	56
2.4.4 Concluding remarks	58

3 EXEGESIS	61
3.1 Identity and the use of language as constitutive of identity	61
3.1.1 Research on language and youth identities	64
3.1.2 Language and youth identities: Studies from the Greek context	71
3.2 Performativity and the global spread of English	75

3.3	Language performance: A framework for analysis	80
3.3.1	Linguistic creativity, language performance: Theoretical perspectives	81
3.3.2	Towards an alternative definition of performance	87
3.3.3	Summary	91
3.4	Language play and second or foreign language learning	92
4	PHOTOGRAPHESIS	99
4.1	Research perspective	99
4.1.1	Interpretive aspects	101
4.1.2	Ethnography as perspective	102
4.2	Research approach	104
4.2.1	On the analyst's interpretive burden	105
4.2.2	Interpretivism, poststructuralism: Revisited	106
4.3	Entering the research site	109
4.3.1	Bureaucratic challenges	109
4.3.2	Recruiting participants	111
4.3.3	Maintaining research relationships	113
4.3.4	Reflexivity in the research process	114
4.4	The adolescents in the study	116
4.4.1	The four groups	118
4.4.2	Group positionings	120
4.4.3	Place attachment	125
4.5	Data sources	125
4.5.1	Ethnography as method	127
4.5.2	The methods in detail	128
4.5.3	Two-phase research	131
4.5.4	Theoretical challenges in the field	132
4.5.5	Interpretivism, poststructuralism: Revisited again	133
4.6	Data analysis	134
4.6.1	Data texts	136
4.6.2	Critical linguistic analysis, ethnography of text, textography	137
4.6.3	Fear and preliminary steps	141
4.6.4	Translating texts and selves	143
4.6.5	Ethnography as analysis	144
4.7	Language, power and identity shifts	145
4.8	Exchange relationships	148
5	POIESIS	153
5.1	Ludic language mixes	154
5.1.1	Gay talk and gay-ness	161
5.1.2	Reversing knowledge and status roles: Student and teacher identities at play	164
5.2	Mocking and othering	167
5.3	Using English and being Greek	177

5.3.1	Conflicted Greek subjectivities	177
5.3.2	Greek pride and peer solidarity	182
5.4	Moving among identities: The good student and the in-group	186
5.5	Underlife classroom resistance	192
5.6	Issues of ownership of English	199
6	MIMESIS	203
6.1	Mimicry and identity work	204
6.1.1	Rap-like performances, local and global identities	204
6.1.2	Language production and identities in context	216
6.2	Sounding different	220
6.3	Foreign-like sounds and selves	228
6.4	The phonetic attractiveness of English	234
6.5	Living locally, participating globally	246
7	OSMOSIS	256
7.1	Ornamental language mixing	257
7.2	The young and the rebellious	260
7.3	Hybridity in online conversations	269
7.3.1	Participants and web-based practices	269
7.3.2	Greeklish as Hellenised English and as more than Greek + English	272
7.3.3	On the study's online data	275
7.3.4	Group 2's online chats	278
7.3.5	Group 2's msn personalised comments	285
7.3.6	Thalia's online chats	287
7.3.7	Online chatting, space and identity	297
7.4	Reconstituting English	298
7.4.1	'Girls' English'	299
7.4.2	English just slips in	309
7.5	Local naturalised English and global semiotics	318
8	PRAXIS	323
8.1	English as instrumental and/or threat: Setting aside unhelpful binaries	324
8.2	Languaging and translingual identities among adolescents in Greece	330
8.3	Poiesis and implications for English language teaching	335
8.4	Mimesis and implications for English language teaching	340
8.5	Osmosis and implications for English language teaching	344
8.6	Pedagogy as ongoing praxis	348
8.7	English language use in Greece as linguistic praxis	351

APPENDICES	355
Appendix 1: Excerpt from an ASEP public job proclamation	355
Appendix 2: Common reference levels of proficiency according to CEFR	357
Appendix 3: Excerpt from an ASEP public job application form	358
Appendix 4: Collated participant data	359
Appendix 5: Attribution of data quotations	362
Appendix 6: Fieldwork overview	363
Appendix 7: Standard questions: Semi-structured first interviews	368
Appendix 8: Guide for narratives/scenarios used during interviews	370
Appendix 9: Transliteration table	371
Appendix 10: Excerpt from analysis template	372
REFERENCES	373

List of Figures and Tables

Figure 2.1:	Genealogical map of the KPG	48
Figure 4.1:	Senior high school (Likio) in the city centre	120
Figure 4.2:	‘Playhouse’ cafe	121
Figure 4.3:	‘Speed.net’ cafe	123
Figure 7.1:	Protest march through one of the city’s main roads in February 2007	262
Figure 7.2:	Cafe-bar ‘Lemon’	262
Table 2.1:	Immigrant students enrolled in public schools in Ioannina during 2007-2008	35
Table 2.2:	Ethnic background of immigrant students enrolled in the two cross-cultural public schools of Ioannina during 2007-2008	36
Table 2.3:	English tuition in the Greek public school (valid during 2009-2010)	56
Table 4.1:	Methods and synoptic information	128

Synopsis

This thesis is concerned with rethinking English and identity among adolescents in contemporary Greece. As the ‘default’ foreign language in Greece, English has been discursively produced within educational and social milieus in paradoxical ways. On the one hand, it is seen as an instrumental tool, a neutral pragmatic language essential for learners’ future socioeconomic success. On the other hand, it is discussed as a detrimental influence in that it is seen as a threat to ‘Greek’ language and identity.

Setting aside this rhetoric, the thesis offers a counter-narrative that opens up the issue of local engagement with English in Greece. Drawing on poststructuralist understandings of language and identity, on the notion of performance as well as on performativity theory, the study examines the manifold, unpredictable ways in which English becomes seamlessly integrated into Greek and playfully and idiosyncratically reconstituted locally among adolescents to create a plethora of identity effects.

The research takes an ethnographic approach comprised of participant observations and interviews with four groups of adolescents in Ioannina, Greece. It adopts a research perspective that combines an interpretive theoretical framework with poststructuralist research epistemologies and demonstrates the usefulness of such a dual paradigm for a project that seeks at once to interpret adolescents’ linguistic practices with English and to deconstruct the very category of ‘English.’ The analytic stance mobilises detailed textual analysis and poststructuralist discourse theory, thus making it possible to investigate the micro, while interrogating the macro and the political.

On the basis of this analysis and without losing sight of the cultural politics of English, the thesis argues for an understanding of this global language in Greece as linguistic praxis, as performative, as giving rise to translingual identity experiences. This new perspective may lead to a reconceptualisation of English language pedagogy in Greece which might involve an increasing engagement with learners’ distinctive ways of speaking and ‘being in and through’ their compulsory ‘foreign’ tongue.

Notes on Notations

1. In line with two of the central themes that emerged in this thesis, namely, language play and linguistic hybridity, I have wanted to ‘play’ with the naming of my thesis chapters. I have thus assigned titles for my chapters that may be characterised as ‘Greek in English’ or ‘English from Greek’ words whose ending is the same (i.e. -is) and whose meanings can be seen as informed by both the Greek and English linguacultures. The titles of the Abstract and of Chapters 1 to 4 are process-orientated titles: **Synopsis**: summarises. **Etiologisis**: gives the reason for the research. **Skepsis**: interrogates ‘facts’ and ‘realities.’ **Exegesis**: critically interprets previous research and theoretical frameworks. **Photographisis**: frames the research as more than passive observing. The titles of Chapters 5 to 7 point to the kinds of language practices that emerged in each chapter: **Poiesis**: the making, the creation or transformation of meaning. **Mimesis**: the imitation of text. **Osmosis**: the hybridisation of text. The title of Chapter 8 points to one of the main thesis arguments: **Praxis**: language use as linguistic praxis.
2. I have changed some identifying details and the names of participants and of individuals mentioned in the course of the research.
3. I have transcribed the thesis data according to the transcription conventions provided in the following page. These draw on different sources and do not align to an established research standard in conversation analysis (CA). Greek text is transcribed in Greek alphabet.
4. I have occasionally provided phonemic transcriptions of certain Greek words or phrases that appear in the thesis data following the transliteration conventions provided in Appendix 9. I have transliterated all other Greek terms (in particular individuals’ names and titles) inconsistently either according to the conventions provided in Appendix 9 or according to commonly encountered transcriptions (e.g. ‘Polytechnion’ instead of ‘Politechnio’ or ‘Mercouri’ instead of ‘Merkouri’). Word stress is not represented by any diacritical mark in these transcriptions.
5. I have occasionally provided hints to the pronunciation of certain English or hybridised (i.e. mixed English and Greek) items that appear in the data following common phonetic symbols.
6. From time to time, I have placed certain terms in scare-quotes to signal ‘contested term.’
7. References to works in Greek appear in the reference list both in Greek and translated into English by myself. References to Greek web pages and FEK /Fillo Efimeridas Kiverniseos/ [Government Gazette Issue] appear only translated into English by myself.
8. Where possible, I have deliberately included authors and editors’ first names in my reference list so that I keep in line with my contention that a person’s name constitutes one of the basic aspects of a person’s identity.
9. American English spelling conventions have not been changed in exact quotes.

Transcription Conventions

.	Stopping fall in intonation followed by a noticeable pause as at the end of a declarative sentence
?	Rising pitch/intonation followed by a noticeable pause as at the end of an interrogative sentence
!	Animated tone; not necessarily a grammatical exclamation
/	Slight fall indicating that more is to come
...	Lengthened segments/an extension of the sound or syllable
wor-	A glottal stop, a cut-off sound
,	Prodelision (i.e. the deletion of an initial vowel) at the beginning of a word; elision (i.e. the deletion of a final vowel) at the end of a word
/word/	Uncertain transcription or uncertain interlocutor
/?/	Inaudible utterance
(...)	Text omitted
(pause)	Pause or pause duration in seconds
(word)	Additions referring to grammatical information or additions used to facilitate intelligibility due to grammatical differences between Greek and English
“word”	Quoted speech
[]	Bounds overlapping speech
CAPS	Emphatic stress
Bold	English or hybridised English text
((word))	Supplementary information

Notes:

1. I have transcribed utterances horizontally to represent their relative arrangement in time.
2. I have line-numbered interactional and online chat data transcripts.
3. I have indented interview data transcripts.
4. Quotations from all data transcripts are *italicised* in text.
5. The Greek data transcripts have been translated into English by myself.
6. I have used [brackets] for my English translations of the Greek data transcripts.
7. Occasionally I have used **bold** for text in French, German or Italian.
8. I have used the phrase ‘Greek-sounding pronunciation of English’ to signal a way of pronouncing English using the Greek articulatory frame.
9. I have used the phrase ‘English-sounding pronunciation of English’ to signal a way of pronouncing English that is marked by a distinct attempt to approximate a non-Greek, English-like accent, not necessarily identifiable as British or American English.
10. I have used the phrase ‘American-sounding pronunciation of English’ to signal a way of pronouncing English approximating an American-like accent.
11. The different ways of pronouncing English are also often characterised (e.g. ironic/caricatured English-sounding pronunciation). In cases where the phrase ‘English-sounding pronunciation of English’ is characterised as ‘natural’ or ‘spontaneous,’ the implication (cf. note 9 above) of a distinct attempt not to sound Greek may not be there.