

Greek American Greek: Lexical Borrowing in the Speech of Greek Americans

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Abstract

Der vorliegende Artikel geht anhand der Analyse von englischen Lehnwörtern der Frage auf den Grund, inwieweit der griechische Wortschatz von griechischen Amerikanern in Chicago, Illinois, vom Amerikanischen Englisch beeinflusst wird, und ob es möglich sein wird, einen Unterschied zwischen einmalig auftretendem Code Switching (c.s.) und tatsächlichen Entlehnungen zu machen. Unter Einbeziehung von Seaman (1972) und Tamis (1986) wird eine Kategorisierung der beobachteten Lehnwörter nach Hock und Joseph (1996) durchgeführt. Phonologisch und morphologisch assimilierte Lehnwörter (z.B. Verbalkonstruktionen, semantische Lehnwörter, Lehnübersetzungen, etc.) werden diskutiert. Erste tendenzielle Ergebnisse eines Fragebogens zur Unterscheidung von c.s. und tatsächlichen Entlehnungen werden präsentiert.

1 Framework

Within the Greek American (GA) community American English (AmE) and Greek are in intensive contact. The Greek lexicon of GA displays one of the most common results of language contact: lexical borrowing.

In general, the characteristics of GA Greek are not very well studied (cf. Joseph 1999). The relevant publications are rather old (Lontos 1926, Marcris 1955, Seaman 1972¹) and mainly descriptive. They comment only briefly on any possible influence on the morpho-syntactic level, or doubt that influence altogether (Tamis 1986). Concerning the lexicon, they describe general features of GA Greek, not using any categorisation. Idiolect, one-time occurrences, slips and loanwords are dealt with in the same way. Long lists of words are provided, but regardless of the frequency of their use, or the actual status within the GA lexicon. Many of the words which are described were used by the early immigrants in the late 19th and early 20th century, but are no longer used

¹ Tamis (1986) deals with Australian Greek.

nowadays. Economou (2001) presents GA words in alphabetical order, telling personal anecdotes of his GA life in Chicago. The book gives revealing insight into the language behaviour of GAs in the first half of the 20th century. However, all in all, there is only little literature about the present-day language of the GAs.

The present paper² deals with GA Greek as it is spoken in the larger area of Chicago, Illinois. It aims at providing a first systematisation of English loanwords by categorising them according to Hock (1991) and Hock and Joseph (1996). Additionally, a first step is taken towards depicting a core lexicon of GA Greek. A pilot study is presented which shows that it is possible to clearly discriminate between idiolect, one-time occurrences, and actual loanwords which have entered group level among GAs.

The data pool which has been used so far consists of about 10 hours of natural conversations between all in all ten bilingual GAs which have been taped in Chicago in 2003, as well as of personal notes which have been collected when talking or listening to bilingual GAs between 2003 and 2009.

2 Lexical Borrowing: English Loanwords in the Greek Lexicon of GAs

In bilingual contexts the line between lexical borrowing and code switching is sometimes difficult to draw. Of course, the process of lexical borrowing is finalised when a loanword is listed in a dictionary. This criterion does not work in the case of GA Greek, because so far we are largely dealing with spoken language only. However, the hypothesis (which will be tested in a large-scale online study) is that we can clearly distinguish between one-time occurrences (i.e. cases of code switching) and elements which have entered group level and can therefore be called "loanwords".

In the literature, the two domains are defined as follows. Lexical borrowing is "the adoption of individual words or even of large sets of vocabulary items from another language or dialect" (Hock 1996: 253). In code switching "there is lexical material from two languages present in the clause, in addition to morpho-

² The present paper is embedded into a dissertation project which explores the influence of AmE on the lexicon as well as on the morpho-syntax of GA Greek.

syntactic structure from both languages" (Muysken 2004: 147)³. For more extensive descriptions of lexical borrowing and code switching, see for example Hock (1991), Hock and Joseph (1996), Muysken (2000) and Muysken (2004).

Hock (1996) names two factors which function as triggers for lexical borrowing: need and prestige (Cf. Hock 1996: 271ff). First of all, whenever speakers of one language come in contact with "new cultural items, new technical, religious concepts, or references to foreign locations, fauna, flora, there obviously is a need for vocabulary to express these concepts or references" (Hock 1996: 271)⁴. Second, very often the higher prestige of the donor language, in general or in certain areas, is motivation for borrowing.

My field studies among the Greek Americans in Chicago have shown that, especially nowadays, there is another powerful factor motivating lexical borrowing: language economy.

English loans have entered the Greek lexicon of GAs as phonologically and morphologically assimilated loan words. GA words derive from English nouns, verbs, verbal constructions, semantic loan words, loan translations, and hybrid constructions. The following categorisation is meant to give examples of how English as dominant language has influenced the Greek lexicon of GAs. The categorisation is of course only the first step. The next step is to test on a larger scale which elements of the individual categories have entered group level. This will allow me to depict, in a third step, the core elements of the GA lexicon as opposed to endless word lists which intermingle one-time occurrences with true cases of lexical borrowing as done in the relevant literature (Tamis 1986, Seaman 1972).

2.1 Phonologically Assimilated Loanwords

Occasionally, English words are adapted phonologically in Greek speech. An English word is pronounced with a strong Greek accent, thus made sound Greek. Usually, the speakers do not realize that they are using English words, they just come up in the flow of the speech. Phonologically assimilated English loanwords which were used among my informants included, for example, σουρηράις

³ We see how thin the line between the two domains is, when Muysken (2004: 149) points out that c.s. patterns may also be stable patterns in bilingual communities. Part of the dissertation project aims at identifying those stable patterns.

⁴ Apparently, food and dishes are also assigned to this category.

(surpráis, from Engl. *surprise*), μπαϊσίκλ (baisíkl, from *bicycle*), πίλγγκριμς (pílgrims, from *pilgrims*) for the Standard Greek προσκυνητές (proskinités), or the most frequent one, μίστερ (místér) instead of the Standard Greek κύριος (kírios).

For example, an advanced speaker describes a scene of the sit-com *My Big Fat Greek Life*: "... ke μετά βλέπεις την οικογένεια που... 'Οοoh, surpráis...írthame óli..."⁵ ("...και μετά βλέπεις την οικογένεια που... 'Οοoh, σουρπράις... ήρθαμε όλοι..."). While she is speaking Greek she also pronounces the English noun *surprise* with a Greek accent: [su\p\az]. She uses the phonologically assimilated word, even though she knows the Greek equivalent έκπληξη (ékpliksi).

Another speaker talks about his stay on a Greek island: "Den ého [sic] aftokínito... den ého [sic], you know, baisícl í mihanáki..."⁶ ("Δεν έχω [sic] αυτοκίνητο... δεν έχω [sic], you know, μπαισίκλ ή μηχανάκι..."). Again, although he knows the Greek word ποδήλατο (podílato), he phonologically adopts the English word *bicycle* to [baç'sç:kl#], and continues to talk in Greek.

Phonological assimilation is often the first step to morphological assimilation. The speakers soon add elements of Greek word-building to the phonologically adopted word and thus create blends of the two languages.

2.2 Morphologically Assimilated Loanwords

Many English words in the GA lexicon have been morphologically assimilated. That means their morphological structure has been changed, typically by adding Greek suffixes, in order to make them look (in writing) and sound Greek (often referred to as *Grenglish*; Greek with strong English morpho-syntactic and lexical influence). For the most part, Greeks from Greece do not immediately understand a morphologically assimilated word or phrase. Very often they are completely incomprehensible to speakers from Greece.

⁵ "... and then you see the family who... 'Oooh, surprise! We have all come...! "

⁶ "I don't [sic] have a car, I don't [sic] have, you know, a bicycle..."

Most of the morphologically assimilated words are nouns and verbs. Adjectives, adverbs, pronouns, articles, numerals, prepositions, and so on were hardly ever transferred in my data pool⁷.

Nouns

The largest group of English loan words are nouns. In contrast to the verbs they are used frequently by speakers of all levels. Usually those nouns are formed by adding a Greek noun-suffix to an English noun, as for instance the neuter ending -i. For example, the English noun *hotel* is turned into το *χοτέλι* (to *hotéli*; neutr.) as substitute for the much longer Standard Greek *ξενοδοχείο* (*ksenodohío*; neutr.). The loanword exists in two variations: *χοτέλι* (*hotéli*) and *χοτέλι* (*χotéli*). The first variant maintains the voiceless glottal fricative [h] of the English original which does not exist in Greek, while the second variant has adapted it to the velar fricative [χ]. In the following two examples the Greek feminine suffix -ia was added to the English stem: η *γροσαρία* (*i grosaría*; fem.), which derives from *grocery* and η (ο)*σπιτάλια* (*i (o)spitalia*; fem.), which derives from *hospital*. *Γροσαρία* (*grosaría*) is used instead of the Standard Greek *το παντοπωλείο* (to *pantopolío*; neutr.). However, nowadays the English loanword *το Σούπερ Μάρκετ* (to *Super Market*; neutr.) is used commonly in spoken and written Greek. (Ο)*σπιτάλια* ((o)*spitalia*) has substituted the much longer Greek *το νοσοκομείο* (to *nosokomío*; neutr.) Utterances which I have observed among my informants were for example: "... είναι Ικαριώτης που έχει μεγάλο *χοτέλι* εκεί⁸." ("... íne Ikariótis pou éhi megálo *hotéli* ekí."), or "Ο Μιστερ Κοτσογιάννη [sic] πήγε με το αυτοκίνητο στη *γροσαρία*."⁹ ("Ο Mister Kotsogiáni [sic] píge me to aftokínito sti *grosaría*.").

The following table gives a few more examples of loanwords derived from English nouns which I have observed in Chicago. Remarkably, in most cases the Standard Greek variants are morphologically more complicated and phonologically more difficult (for non-natives) than the loanwords. This fact might point towards language economy as motivation for the borrowing. It will

⁷ This is consistent with Muysken (2004), who names "category" as one of the "three relevant grammatical hierarchies governing insertability" in code switching. Accordingly, nouns are more likely to be subject of code switching than adjectives, which are more likely to be subject of code switching than adverbs, and so on (Muysken 2004: 153).

⁸ "... he's an Icarian who has a big hotel there."

⁹ "Mr. Kotsogiannis went with the car to the grocery store."

be subject to further research to clarify which of the nouns have actually entered group level and are thus part of a core GA vocabulary, and which are just instances of “extended” code switching.

Loanword	English	Greek
η φριτζιτέρα (i fritzitéra; fem.)	fridge	το ψυγείο (to psygío; neutr.)
ο σπανιάρδης (ο Spaniádis; masc.)	spaniard	ο λατινοαμερικάνος (ο latinoamerikános; masc.)
το μπόλο (to bóλλo; neutr.)	ball	η μπάλλα (i bálla; fem.)
η γιάρδα (i iárda; fem.)	yard	η αυλή (i avlí; fem.)
το ντόγκι (to dóggi; neutr.)	dog	ο σκύλος (ο skílos; masc.)
το τρόκι (to tróki; neutr.)	truck	το φορτηγό (to fortigó; neutr.)
το Ηαντόγκι (to Handóggi; neutr.)	Hot Dog	το λουκάνικο (to lukániko)
το μάπισμα (to mápisma; neutr.)	mop	το σφουγγάρισμα (to sfungárisma; neutr.)

Table 1: English Loanwords: nouns

Hyper-Correction

Some English words have entered the GA lexicon as a result of hyper-correction. English nouns which have entered the Standard Greek lexicon as phonologically assimilated loanwords seem to sound “too English” to Greek Americans. Thus, they fully assimilate the loanword by not only phonetically adapting it, but changing it also morphologically.

For example, the Standard Greek word το κέικ (to kèik; neutr.) is a phonologically assimilated loanword, deriving from English *cake*. GA speakers

add the neuter singular ending *-i*, in order to make it sound “really” Greek, thus creating the Grenglish word *το κέικι* (*to kèiki*; neutr.). The neuter gender is retained. An example for how the word is used is: “*Η θεία μου έφερε ένα μεγάλο κέικι.*”¹⁰ (“*I thía mou éfere éna megálo kèiki.*”)

Another example is the loanword *η μπάρα* (*i bára*; fem.), from English *bar*. The Standard Greek word is again a phonologically assimilated loanword, *το μπαρ* (*to bar*; neutr.). Greek Americans create the GA variant by adding the female suffix *-a*, also changing the gender from neuter to female. A sample utterance: “*Να με περιμένεις στην μπάρα του ξενοδοχείου.*”¹¹ (“*Na me periménis stin bára tou ksenodohíou.*”)

Verbs

In general, GA verbs are rare in comparison to the nouns. Most GAs can name some verbs. In general, GA verbs are formed by using English verbs as stem and then adding Greek verbal suffixes, usually *-ίζω* (*-ízo*) or *-άρω* (*-áro*).

Although GA verbs do exist or have existed in the GA lexicon, I have not observed one single instance of them in active usage. It seems that the verbs are about to diminish and disappear altogether in the GA lexicon. Interestingly, there are two GA verbs which are stated again and again: *μουβάρω* (*muváro*, *to move*) and *μανίζω* (*mapízo*; *to mop*). Seaman (1972) and Economou (2001) refer to them, and many Greek and GA informants immediately named them when talking about the GA lexicon. Many informants state that they have heard others using them and could also give example quotations. The actual status of the verbs within the GA lexicon will be clarified by further studies. However, we can deduce that the GA verb is by no means a large or productive category.

Verbal Constructions

Hybrid verbal constructions, or Bilingual Compound Verbs (BCVs), are much more prevalent and productive in the GA lexicon than borrowed verbs¹². The constructions *γίνομαι* (*jínome*; *to become, come into existence*) and *κάνω* (*káno*; *do*) plus English verbs were very common among my informants. They re-occur whenever GA Greek is spoken, especially among advanced speakers. It seems to be a crucial strategy for bilinguals to keep their speech fluent. For example, one first generation GA used the construction “*γίνομαι* (*jínome*) + imposed” instead

¹⁰ “My aunt brought a big cake.”

¹¹ “Wait for me in the bar of the hotel.”

¹² Edwards and Gardner-Chloros (2007) discuss grammatical constraints of BCVs, touching also upon GA and Greek Australian BCVs.

of the Standard Greek επιβλήθηκε (epivlíthike; *to be imposed*): “Αυτό προέρχεται από αυτό το cultural pressure που έχει γίνει imposed...”¹³ (“Aftó proérhete apó aftó to cultural pressure pu éhi jíni imposed...”). The structure “κάνω (káno) + English verb” is even more productive than structures with γίνομαι (jínome). Table 2 provides a few selected examples from my data pool. The Standard Greek equivalent is provided in the second column:

Verbal Construction	Greek Equivalent
κάνω collect (káno collect, P1 sg., PrT)	μαζεύω (mazéno)
κάνω order (káno order, P1 sg., PrT)	παραγγέλω (parangélo)
κάνουν translate (kánoun translate P3 pl., PrT)	μεταφράζουν (metafrázun)
θα κάνω check (tha káno check, P1 sg., Fut.)	θα ελέγξω, θα τσεκάρω (tha elékso, tha tsekáro)
θα κάνει deviate (tha káni deviate, P3 sg., Fut.)	θα αποκλίσει (tha apoklísi)

Table 2: “κάνω (káno) + English verb”

There are two other constructions with κάνω (káno) which are common in computer language: “κάνω (káno) save”, the equivalent of σώζω (sózo), and “κάνω (káno) delete”, the equivalent of σβίνω (svíno). These structures have also appeared as neologisms in standard Greek and are now commonly used in spoken language.

Semantic Loanwords

In some cases already existing Greek words are re-invented, that is they are used with a new meaning, as semantic loanwords or semantic calques.

For example, the GA noun το κάρο (to káro), which derives from *car*, is used instead of “το αυτοκίνητο (to aftokínito)” by GAs. While it does already exist in Standard Greek, it has a different meaning. Το κάρο (to káro) actually means

¹³ “That comes from the cultural pressure which has been imposed...”

(push)cart, and Greeks from Greece usually get confused when they hear GAs referring to an αυτοκίνητο (aftokínito) as κάρο (káro). Many of my GA informants, in contrast, did not know what κάρο (káro) actually means in Standard Greek.

Another semantic loan is used in computer language. The Greek word κайω (kéo) means *to set on fire, to burn s.th.* In the GA lexicon, however, it is used to say *to burn a CD*: κайω ένα σι ντι (kéo éna si nti). Analogously, the CD burner is called καυτήρας (kaftíras; masc.), which denotes in Standard Greek a device which is used by doctors for cauterization. In Standard Greek αντιγράφω (antigráfo; copy) and αντιγραφέας (antigrafèas) are used.

Loan Translations

English phrases and idioms are transferred directly into Greek as loan translations. Usually they appear so natural to the speakers that they do not even realize that what they are saying is expressed differently by a Greek native speaker. Among my informants this phenomenon occurred with speakers of all levels and increased with the ability of speaking Greek. Speakers whose first language is Greek were also "affected". Those phrases are usually incomprehensible to Greeks in Greece (unless in word jokes).

For example, a popular loan translation is "Τί είναι πάνω;" ("Τί ίνε páno?"), which results from translating the English question *What's up?* directly into Greek (τί = what, ίνε = is, páno = up). It is used in contexts where the AmE *What's up?* or the Standard Greek equivalent Τι έγινε; (Ti éjine?) would be used. Another example is the word-by-word translation of the phrase *let me know* into Greek: αφήστε με να ξέρω (afíste me na kséro). In Standard Greek αφήνω (afíno; to let) does usually not accept stative verbs as dependent.

A further loan translation which was common among my informants was παίρνω μαθήματα (pérno mathímata), a word-by-word translation of *to take lessons*. In the same way, *to give lessons* is translated literally: δίνω μαθήματα (díno mathímata). In colloquial Modern Greek, that phrase means *to take an exam (at university)*, but never *to teach somebody*.

Another GA construction which derives from English is μαθαίνω κάποιον (mathéno kápoion). It derives from *to teach someone*. In Standard Greek the verb μαθαίω (mathéno) means *to learn*. The phrase σου μαθαίω Ελληνικά (su mathéno Elliniká; *I teach you Greek*) is acceptable, though necessarily in combination with an object. In GA Greek, however, *he teaches them at home* is transferred directly into Greek: τους μαθαίνει στο σπίτι (tous mathénei sto spíti).

In GA speech the phrase πάω έξω (πάο έκσο) is used to express *to go out (to a bar etc.)*: Πάω έξω κάθε Σαββατοκύριακο (Πάο έκσο κάθε Savvatokiriako. *I go out every weekend.*). The structure is not common in Standard Greek in that context. It simply means *I go out of the room/house*.

Similarly, the English noun *first name* is translated to το πρώτο όνομα (to próto ónoma), and the structure *to write something down* is translated to γράφω κάτι κάτω (gráfo káti káto). I have observed that structure mostly used in the imperative: Γράψ' το κάτω! (Gráps' to káto! *Write it down!*), but also other forms like θα το γράψω κάτω (tha to grápsō káto; P1sg. Fut; *I will write it down*).

Finally, the Greek preposition πίσω (πίσο; *back*) has gained new meaning as a loan translation in GA speech. In standard Greek it is a local, but never a temporal preposition. In the GA lexicon however, it is used in the temporal sense of the Greek παλιά (paliá, in the past). For example, the phrase *back home* is directly transferred into Greek: πίσω σπίτι (πίσο spíti), or *back when* is translated to πίσω όταν (πίσο ótan), as for example: "Πίσω σπίτι φάγαμε όλοι μαζί."¹⁴ (Píso spíti fágame óli mazí.).

3 Pilot Study: English Loanwords in the Lexicon of GAs

A pilot study was conducted as a first step to examine English loanwords in the Greek lexicon of GAs. A questionnaire was designed in which the informants had to assess about 70 utterances containing English loanwords. The utterances were either examples presented in Seaman (1972) and Tamis (1986), or they were taken from my data pool. Additionally, I added Standard Greek sentences which contained English loanwords as a control group¹⁵. The informants were 15 GAs and 16 Greek native speakers as a control group. The GAs were aged between 25 and 76 years; 10 men, 5 women; only 2 had higher education, 13 compulsory education. The native Greeks were aged between 21 and 63; 5 men, 11 women; 11 had higher education, 5 only compulsory education. They had to assess the utterances according to their acceptability in *spoken* language (acceptable, I use it/acceptable, but I would not use it/not acceptable/I don't know or don't understand). Partly interviews were conducted on the basis of the questionnaire, partly the participants only filled in the questionnaires. The questionnaire tested

¹⁴ Back home we all ate together...

¹⁵ An English loanword was considered part of the standard MG language if it is listed in Barbiniotis (2002).

English loanwords in the “native” Greek lexicon and in the Greek-American lexicon.

The pilot study was designed in the first place to examine whether or not it is possible at all use a questionnaire to differentiate between code switching/idiolect and English loanwords. In other words, its purpose was to test if a questionnaire can help to determine which of the elements observed in individual speech have actually entered the group level. A high acceptance of certain items within the GA community, possibly accompanied by strong rejection of the same item among the Greek native speakers, would prove that a certain utterance is not only a case of individual code switching, but has entered group level. Furthermore, the pilot study wanted to test if it is possible to clarify if GA loanwords are actually incomprehensible to native speakers in Greece, and if they are thus distinctly different from English loanwords in Standard Greek. Finally, the question was addressed whether or not the GA lexicon is changing. The hypothesis was that there is a clear difference between “older Grenglish” and “more modern Grenglish”, that is that the English loanwords used by early Greek immigrants at the beginning of the 20th century were different from those used by GAs nowadays. This aspect is important, as in the relevant literature every element that ever occurred is discussed, irrespective of any diachronic developments.

I want to emphasise that the results presented below do *not* have any statistical value. Those very preliminary results should not tempt us to jump to any conclusions concerning the final outcome of the study. However, the pilot study was an important part of the project, as it clearly showed that questionnaires can be employed to examine the described problems.

3.1 Preliminary Results

First of all, the pilot study showed that it is actually possible to use the questionnaire to examine to which extent a loanword has entered group level. There were clear cases of one-time occurrences/idiolect (code switching) which could be distinguished from loanwords which were more widely accepted, and thus have obviously entered group level. For example, the item

“*ἡδροφοῖλ/hydrofoil*”¹⁶ could be classified as instance of code switching (as was to be expected). It was rejected by all of the informants. Six (of 15) persons classified it as “not acceptable”, nine stated they “don't know or understand”. Another item that could be categorised as instance of code switching was “*πίλγριμς/pilgrims*”¹⁷. Again, all of the informants rejected the item (“not acceptable”: 4 of 15; “don't know/understand”: 11 of 15). On the contrary, loanwords like “*χοτέλι/hotéli*”¹⁸ or “*γροσαρία/grosaría*” have obviously entered group level, as they were accepted by a great majority of GA informants. “*Χοτέλι/hotéli*” (*hotel*) was accepted in active usage (“acceptable, I use it”) by 13 of the 15 participants, two rated it “not acceptable”; “*γροσερία/grosería*” (*grocery*) was rated “acceptable, I use it” by 11 of 15 informants, four rated it “not acceptable”.

Second, certain GA loanwords were clearly accepted by GAs, while Greeks in Greece strongly rejected them. On the one hand, this fact proves on the one hand that a GA Greek lexicon exists independently from MG. Certain characteristics of GA Greek can be pinpointed. GA Greek is not just MG with code switching. On the other hand, those elements have clearly entered group level among GAs. For example, the verb “*μουβάρω/μυνάρο*”¹⁹ (*to move*) was on the whole accepted in active or passive language use by 11 of the 15 GA informants (“acceptable, I use it”: 6; “acceptable, I wouldn't use it”: 5; “not acceptable”: 4). In contrast, the great majority of the Greek informants rejected it (“not acceptable”: 11 of 16; “don't know/understand”: 2) Another example is the noun “*γιάρδα/yárda*”²⁰ (*yard*): the majority, namely 13 of the 15 GAs accepted it (“acceptable, I use it”: 10; “acceptable, I wouldn't use I”: 3), while the Greeks predominantly rejected it (“not acceptable”: 11 of 16; “don't know/understand”: 2).

¹⁶ The utterance was: “Πήγαμε με το ἡδροφοῖλ./Pígame me to hydrofoil.” (went P1pl. – prep. – art. acc. – hydrofoil → *We went by [“with the”] hydrofoil.*)

¹⁷ The utterance was: “Όταν ἦρθανε οἱ πῖλγριμς σ στην Αμερικὴ..../ Ótan írthane i pilgrims stin Amerikí....” (when – came P2pl. – art. nom. – pilgrims – prep. – America → *When the pilgrims came to America...*)

¹⁸ The utterance was: “... εἶναι Ἰκαριώτης που ἔχει μεγάλο χοτέλι ἐκεῖ./... íne Ikariótis pou éhi megálo hotéli ekí.” (is P3sg. – Icarian nom – who – has – big – hotel acc. – there → *[there] is an Icarian who has a big hotel there.*)

¹⁹ The utterance was: “Μούβαρε το ποδήλατο λίγο, σε παρακαλώ!/Múvare to podílato lígo, se parakalò!” (move imp. – art. acc. – bicycle – a little bit – pers. pron. – please → *Move the bicycle a little bit, please.*)

²⁰ The utterance was: “Τα παιδιὰ παιζοῦν στη γιάρδα./Ta pedιά pézoun sti giárda.” (art. nom. – kids nom. – play P2pl. – prep.+art acc – yard acc → *The kids play in the yard.*)

Third, the pilot study indicates a difference between the “older” GA loanwords and “more modern” ones. Older GAs rejected what younger ones accepted and vice versa. Many of the loanwords described in Seaman (1972) and Tamis (1986) were only recognised passively, and the informants stated they would not use them. Some of them even had funny connotations. For instance, the nouns “μπόλο/bolo”²¹ (*ball*), and “ντόγι/δόγι”²² (*dog*) were rejected by the GAs, even though in both literature and among speakers in Greece they are commonly used as prototype examples of GA Greek. All 15 GA informants rated “μπόλο/bolo” (*ball*) “not acceptable”. 11 of 15 GA participants strictly rejected “ντόγι/δόγι” (*dog*).

So far, the results have been very much in line with what was to be expected in advance. However, there were also some surprising deviations from those expectations. First, there were words from the “older GA lexicon” like “κέικι/κέικι”²³ (*cake*), or “κάρο/κάρο”²⁴ (*car*), which were accepted passively by a surprising number of natives in Greece. The noun “κέικι/κέικι” (*cake*) was rated as acceptable in active or passive language use by 11 of the 16 Greek informants (“acceptable, I use it”: 7; “acceptable, I wouldn't use it”: 4). Similarly, “κάρο/κάρο” (*car*) was accepted passively by 6 of the 16 Greek informants (“acceptable, I wouldn't use it”: 4). Second, some items which were initially classified as “GA only” and/or even cases of code switching, turned out to be widely accepted among and even used by the Greek informants from Greece. The phonologically assimilated loanword “σουρηπράις/surpriáis”²⁵ (*surprise*) was unexpectedly accepted in active [!] usage by 12 of the 16 Greek informants, even by participants who have only a very basic or no knowledge of English; two of them accepted it in passive usage (“acceptable, I use it”: 12; “acceptable, I wouldn't use it”: 2). Another interesting example is the loan translation “πρώτο

²¹ The utterance was: “Τα παιδιά παίζουν με το μπόλο./Τα pedιά pézoun me to bólo.” (art. nom. – kids nom. – play P2pl. – prep. – art. neutr. acc. – ball acc → *The kids play with the ball.*)

²² The utterance was: “Τα παιδιά παίζουν με το ντόγι./Τα pedιά pézoun me to dógi.” (art. nom. – kids nom. – play P2pl. – prep. – art. neutr. acc. – dog acc → *The kids play with the dog.*)

²³ The utterance was: “Η θεία έφερε ένα κέικι./Ι thía éfere éna kéiki.” (art. nom. – aunt nom. – brought P3sg. – art. acc. – keiki acc. → *The aunt brought a cake.*)

²⁴ The utterance was: “Ο θείος ήρθε με το κάρο στο αεροδρόμιο./Ο thíos írthe me to káro sto aerodrómio.” (art. nom. – uncle nom. – came P3sg. – with – art. acc. – car acc. – prep. – airport acc. → *The uncle came with the car to the airport.*)

²⁵ The utterance was: “Σουρηπράις! Ήρθαμε όλοι!/Surpriáis! Írthame óli!” (came P1pl. – all → *Surprise! We all came!*)

ὄνομα/próto ónoma²⁶ (*first name*). Half of the native Greek informants rated the item as acceptable in active or passive usage (“acceptable, I use it”: 7; “acceptable, I wouldn't use it”: 1). Moreover, the semantic loan word “καίω ένα CD/kéo éna CD²⁷ (*to burn a CD*) was initially classified as “GA only”, and then was surprisingly accepted in active or passive usage by half of the 16 Greek participants (“acceptable, I use it”: 6; “acceptable, I wouldn't use it”: 2).

Of course, the GA lexicon needs to be researched further before any definite statements can be made. However, the pilot study helped to discover certain tendencies. Significantly, it produced results which proved that it makes sense to conduct a similar study on a larger scale.

4 Conclusion and Outlook

The major characteristics of the GA lexicon have been illustrated by discussing examples from GAs in Chicago. The items have been categorised systematically. We have seen that a multitude of English words have entered the GA lexicon as phonologically and morphologically assimilated loanwords. A vivid sub-language with nouns, verbal constructions, semantic loan words, loan translations, and so on has developed.

So far, in the relevant literature on GA Greek idiolect, code switching and possible loan words are treated alike, long word lists full of one-time occurrences are presented. The pilot study presented here has shown that it is possible to employ questionnaires in order to depict words which have entered group level and thus constitute core elements of the GA lexicon.

The central aim of the present paper was to present a first outline of the state of the GA lexicon in Chicago. In the further course of the dissertation project a large-scale study will be conducted to explore the influence of AmE on the Greek lexicon and morpho-syntax of GA Greek in the larger Chicago area. On the one hand, questionnaires will be used as the basis for conducting interviews with GA

²⁶ The utterance was: “Πες μου το πρώτο όνομά σου!/Pes mou to próto ónomá sou!” (say Imp. – pronoun P1 indir acc – art. neutr. acc. – name acc. – pronoun P2 gen. → *Tell me your first name!*)

²⁷ The utterance was: “Μπορείς να μου κάψεις αυτό το CD;/Borís na mu kápsis aftó to CD?” (can P2sg. – “to” – pers. pron. gen. – burn P2 – pers. pron. neutr. acc. – art. neutr. acc. – CD → *Can you burn this CD for me?*)

informants. On the other hand, an extended online questionnaire is being set up on www.lisamatejka.com, which is expected to produce significant statistical results about the influence of AmE on the GA Greek lexicon and morpho-syntax. The large-scale study aims at pinpointing lexical and morpho-syntactic characteristics of the GA sub-language on the group level.

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