

# Greek in Contact with English in Australia

Anastasios M. Tamis\*

## RÉSUMÉ

Cet article présente une étude sociolinguistique sur l'état de la langue grecque en Australie telle qu'elle est parlée par les immigrants Grecs et leurs enfants. L'emphase est mise sur l'analyse du comportement linguistique des Grecs Australiens attribué au contact avec l'anglais et à d'autres influences liées à l'environnement social et linguistique. L'article examine les phénomènes non-standards des différents types des transferts inter-langues en fonction de leur incidence et leurs causes et, en corrélation avec des facteurs sociaux, linguistiques et psychologiques afin de déterminer le degré de l'assimilation linguistique. L'article examine également les transferts de l'anglais au grec et vice-versa d'un point de vue qualitatif et quantitatif, ainsi que les déviations phonémiques, lexicales, morphologiques, syntaxiques, sémantiques, pragmatiques et prosodiques. Durant les dernières 170 années de leur établissement les Australiens Grecs connaissent et utilisent une nouvelle norme de communication avec un certain degré de stabilité, l'Ethnolect (une variété de langue non-standard utilisée par un groupe ethnique dans une situation de bilinguisme statique ou dynamique) qui sert leurs besoins linguistiques.

## ABSTRACT

This paper reports a sociolinguistic study of the state of Greek language in Australia as spoken by native-speaking Greek immigrants and their children. Emphasis is given to the analysis of the linguistic behaviour of these Greek Australians which are attributed to contact with English and to other environmental, social and linguistic influences. The paper discusses the non-standard phenomena in various types of inter-lingual transferences in terms of their incidence and causes and, in correlation with social, linguistic and psychological factors in order to determine the extent of language assimilation, attrition, and the content and context and medium of the language-event. The paper also discusses the transferences from English to Greek and vice-versa from a qualitative and quantitative perspective, of the phonemic, lexical, morphological, syntactic, semantic, pragmatic and prosodic deviations. During the last 170 years of settlement, Greek Australians know and use a new communicative norm with some degree of stability, the Ethnolect, (a non-standard variety of language used by an ethnic group in a static or dynamic bilingual situation) which serves their linguistic needs.

\* University of Notre Dame Australia

## 1.0 Greek in Language Contact with English

In the field of research into language contact, increasing prominence is being given to the study of immigrant languages in North America and Australia<sup>1</sup> under the constant pressure of unstable bilingual contact in which the language of the country of settlement tends to replace the mother tongue. The Greek language in Australia, functioning in a bilingual environment without diglossia under the influence of the dominant English language, is never homogenous and hardly ever self contained as it experiences serious functional limitations, restricted to a few language domains. During the last 170 years of Greek settlement in Australia,<sup>2</sup> Greek migrants are undergoing language shift as a result of a number of socio-economic variables, including the new concepts that they meet in their new environment and naturally their language contact<sup>3</sup> with the dominant language. Through contact with the dominant language, Greek is expected to undergo, at inter-generational level, reduction in function and in form, hybridization and creolization and arguably even language death.

Since Bloomfield (1936:56) presented his definition of *bilingualism* as the “native-like control of two languages”, the terms *bilingualism* and *bilingual* have been defined differently by a number of authors.<sup>4</sup> In this study the term is adopted to involve the persons who know and use Greek and English irrespective of the degree of competence, range of skills and social use. The two languages are in contact in Australia because they are known and are used alternatively by the same person. Any linguistic variation from the norm of either language, which occurs in the speech of bilinguals as a result of their familiarity with the other language, will be called *transference* and *transfer*. It is assumed here that there is a mutual exchange of linguistic influence not only because Greek has created in Australia its own areas of prestige (family, community organization, Greek Orthodox Church, Greek media, national and ethnic functions and gastronomy), but also because it is impossible to keep the two languages completely apart beyond a certain period after migration. The inter-lingual influences resulting from language contact will not be called *interference* since we examine not only the process but also the result of the phenomenon, or *borrowing* and *loanword* since the transferred words are not on loan and will not be returned to the other language.<sup>5</sup>

Greek Australians and their children are subjected daily to the influence of the dominant language<sup>6</sup> in their process of choosing the right lexeme when they switch languages and continue to talk about the same things. The degree to which they resist changes either to the function or to the structure, phonology and vocabulary of Greek depends among other things on the following phenomena: the institutionalised Greek community forces which might halt or reverse the

trend away from Greek, the rate and the extent of intermarriages, the psychological factors (permissiveness in attitudes towards Greek, desire to assimilate), the Australian educational system, the degree of cultural similarity or differences to the Australian environment and the socio-economic variables, including age on arrival, level of education attained, place of residence, proximity to community networks and low/high density of Greek settlement. Naturally, certain domains of language behaviour (family, church, Greek media, community functions) create social pressures which tend to work in favour of maintaining Greek, whereas others (workplace, education, institutional areas) create a favourable context for the host language.

The study reported in this paper comprises data that was collected, documented and analysed from 1982 to 2008 utilizing self-administered, structured and open-ended linguistic and socio-cultural questionnaires, an open-ended and structured interviewed schedule, a set of pictures for description and a set of words. Part of the sample was selected balancing for age (8 to 65 years), generations (1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup>), gender, education, occupation on the basis of the distribution of these characteristics amongst Greeks to the 1981, 1986, 1996 and 2006 Census of the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS).<sup>7</sup> The sample comprising the children of Greek migrants was randomly selected. In 2010, from a total of approximately 500,000 Greek and Cypriot Australians there are almost 300,000 Greek-speaking of whom almost 92,000 were born in Greece or Cyprus. Second generation Greek Australians, where both parents were born in Greece or Cyprus number 146,000, and a further 30,000 second generation Greek Australians could be assumed to be Greek speaking, since one of their parents was born in Greece or in Cyprus. The remaining Hellenophone Australians belong to the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> generation.

### ***1.1. Adult Bilingualism in a Language Contact Situation***

Until the end of WWII Greek settlers were segregated socially and occupationally because of a strong attitude of xenophobia displayed by the dominant Anglo-Celtic majority. The places where they were accepted were businesses with ethnic proprietors, the food industry and the vast countryside (Tamis, 1997, 2002, 2005; Tsounis, 1975:21ff). This hostile treatment resulted in the creation of self-reliant communes where usually two or more families shared a relatively small house with its facilities. Hardships such as this led to the development of a strong ethnic conscience and the need for security and mutual support amongst the Greek migrants. Furthermore, the problems encountered because of the great differences in culture and language, concentrated them in certain areas and were instrumental in establishing their own communities.

Massive Greek immigration took place during the period 1952-1974, generating the establishment of numerous community organizations within the inner suburbs of the state capital cities (Tamis, 1997 and 2005). The multiplicity of Greek institutions and their diversity can be explained in terms of their numbers, the social, political and religious divisions related to the difficult background of the home country and to conditions in Australia. Upon their settlement most Greek settlers emerging from the rural regions of Greece have been forced to adjust to living in an industrial urban environment. This ecological change generated the need for cultural and linguistic maintenance, insisting that ethnic life must continue without compromise as far as the retention of the ethnic tradition and the home language was concerned.

The situation resolved itself with the creation of concentrated Greek speaking areas, the *sprachinseln* until 1990, when the exodus of the 2<sup>nd</sup> generation Greek Australian began towards the outer suburban areas. During the last thirty years Greek remained numerically the strongest language of ethnic origin spoken in Australia after Italian.<sup>8</sup> Socio-linguistic studies also argued that the Greece and Cyprus-born claimants showed the strongest language maintenance in Australia if compared with the users of any other language in Australia other than English. According to Tamis (1986:65ff; 1993:34ff) 99% of overseas born Greek Australians use Greek regularly, while they maintain the highest percentage of speakers of languages of ethnic origins who do not use English regularly (20%).<sup>9</sup> In 1993, among the 2<sup>nd</sup> generation Greek Australians the language shift rate from Greek has been 9% and in 2010 12%, whilst among 3<sup>rd</sup> generation claimants the shift rate has been 24% in 2010. It is worth noticing that Greek maintains the strongest language loyalty among its users at intergenerational level in Australia, if compared with any other languages of ethnic origin.<sup>10</sup>

There are many factors conducive to the retention of Greek language and culture in Australia:

1. Greek being more different from English than Romance and Germanic languages makes it more difficult for Greek immigrants to learn English;
2. The characteristically different Greek culture also insulates Greek migrants and their children, at least until their children start to bridge the communication gap between the two cultures. Over the last fifty years, a large percentage of overseas born Greek Australians continue not to mix socially with the mainstream society.<sup>11</sup>
3. Historical evidence (Price, 1963:67ff; Tsounis, 1975:19ff, 1983:8) strongly supports the notion that Greeks have developed a high ethnic awareness since antiquity. More than 40% of the Greek population has constantly been living

in the Diaspora where they have formed and maintained a substantial network for language and culture loyalty. This tendency of the Greek immigrants to retain their identity and via the strong family ties to transmit it to their children is one of the main factors for their language maintenance.

4. For Greeks, their language is not a medium of communication, but a social symbol which is inseparable from ethnicity (Tsounis, 1975; Tamis, 1985, 2005, 2009).
5. Greek Australians have an easy access to their community network and institutions as in 2006 almost 97% resided within the metropolitan areas of the state capital cities.<sup>12</sup>
6. According to the 2006 ABS the male-female ratio amongst Greek Australians was almost evenly balanced (100:99.2). This ratio, in theory at least, is an important factor encouraging intra-community marriages.
7. The prevailing permissive attitudes of the Australian society during the last 30 years, allowed for the realization of the efforts of the Greek community and family to organize better and improve their social and educational institutions.<sup>13</sup>

There are also certain factors, however, conducive to the shift from Greek. These include the termination of the Greek migration to Australia, the high rate of inter-ethnic marriages (in 2006, this was estimated to be more than 45%), the multicultural environment, the global economy, global politics and global technology, all four encouraging the prevalence of one common medium of communication.

### ***1.2. Childhood Bilingualism in a Language Contact situation***

It would be expected that as Greek children proceeded through adolescence, the influence of family on the acquisition of Greek would progressively diminish, resulting in the prevalence of English. However, despite the substantial rates of language shift among the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> generation Greek Australians, the number of students continuing their education in Greek through primary and secondary levels remains strong. In 2011, approximately 39,000 students were enrolled in the Greek language classes provided by the public sector as well as by the Greek community organizations and the Greek Orthodox Church.<sup>14</sup> With the state governments and the Commonwealth of Australia subsidising the teaching of Greek in public schools, with the enrollment of approximately 31% of non Greek-background students in Greek language classes across the country, with the establishment of the Community Language Secretariat, a public body to ensure the financial support and the accreditation of the teaching of Greek in schools

organised by the Greek community, intra-family conflict regarding the acquisition and maintenance of the Greek language at inter-generational level was moderated or even eliminated. Naturally, there has been and still is present a somewhat noteworthy discouragement of attending Greek language classes by a number of teachers who profess that its acquisition is not academically and vocationally profitable for the students.<sup>15</sup>

The previously prevailing trends among 2<sup>nd</sup> generation Greek Australians whereby older children mastered the Greek language more proficiently and used it more frequently (Tamis, 1985:71ff) could not be ascertained by contemporary research data. In 2010, differences in the linguistic mode of behaviour regarding the usage of Greek between older and younger siblings of the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> generations were relatively small or even negligible. While only 52% of the older Greek Australian children were found to speak better Greek than their younger siblings, the literacy skills of writing and reading and the oral skill of understanding were evenly distributed among the children under the same family situation.<sup>16</sup> As a general assessment it could be argued that, despite the substantial deterioration of the literacy skills, particularly the writing, in 2010, most of the Greek language claimants among the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> generations (55%) appeared to be not only receivers (passive bilinguals) but also transmitters (active bilinguals).<sup>17</sup> As a particular assessment, it could be pointed out that bilingualism among Greek Australians depends on language learning opportunities given to their children and the individual's "linguistic versability" (Fishman 1970:83) in the existing functions of language use.

## **2.0 Socio-economic Factors Affecting Language behaviour**

In a language contact situation, the language and cultural maintenance efforts and outcomes affecting the language of immigrants depend on a number of socio-economic factors. For a language to survive at intergenerational level and beyond the 3<sup>rd</sup> generation, and in our case the Greek language, it is necessary to ensure the prevalence of at least four important features: A strong numerical base of Greek language claimants, a robust acceptance of the Greek language within the broader Australian society, a vigorous function of Greek in a number of domains of language use and a stability in the form of the Greek norm used.

Until 1972 Australian politicians were reluctant to commit themselves openly regarding the integration or acculturation of immigrants. The official policy of 'national unity' defined by successive Australian Governments until 1971, with emphasis on cultural and linguistic assimilation, was replaced in 1972 by the

Labor Whitlam Government with the era of multiculturalism that prevailed in the Australian social spectrum at least until the last years of the Liberal Howard Government in 2007. Under these prevailing government-controlled socio-cultural initiatives, the loyalty attitudes towards their language and culture of Greek Australians was manifested and/or moulded by a number of networks and institutions.

The establishment of over 250 Greek language newspapers in Australia since the circulation of *Afstralis* in 1912 was instrumental in the maintenance of the Greek language and culture. In 2007, it was found that 21% of Greek Australians continue to read a Greek language newspaper on a 'regular' basis and 19% 'often'. According to the data reported in Tamis (2009 and 2010) the readership of Greek magazines is less than half of that of newspapers. Greek language radio was fully implemented in 1994 with the establishment of the Greek language station 3XY in Melbourne with segments attracting both 1<sup>st</sup> generation Greek settlers and the consecutive generations. According to available data (Tamis, 2009) almost 40% of Greek Australians stated that they listen to radio programs 'regularly', 32% 'often' and 20% 'rarely'. The listening shift of the Australian-born Greek Australians is not significant. The introduction of multicultural television SBS in 1980 and the commencement of the Greek language Hellas TV on Channel 31 in Melbourne in 1995, transmitting more than eight hours in Greek language weekly, were significant factors for language maintenance. More importantly, the free introduction and easily accessible Greek state Channel ERT in Australia in 2002 and the cable television channel ANTENA played a decisive role in the language loyalty efforts of the Greek community and became a strong leverage of encouragement for the Australian born claimants to watch it. In 2010, available data confirms that over 80% of Greek Australians are viewing those channels either 'regularly' or 'often'.

The Greek Orthodox Church constitutes the primary institution in Australia which provides Greek Australians with a substantial reason for the use of Greek. Over the last thirty years the Greek Orthodox Church underwent significant administrative and organizational changes, maintaining the status of Greek in ceremonial and liturgical levels, whilst it promoted the Greek language classes via parish schools and a number of daily schools under its control. However, isolationism and segregation as well as inconclusive policies on cultural and communal matters employed by its leadership failed to absorb the younger generations into the congregation. Church authorities progressively resort to a larger quantity of English use in liturgical functions as the Australian born clergymen from the late 1980s began succeeding with increasing pace the aging

Hellenophone priests who were ordained during the first thirty years of post-war Greek migration. Furthermore, during the first decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century the local Greek Orthodox Church, in an attempt to gain inter-ethnic faithfuls, increasingly adopted de-Hellenizing approaches in most of its functions. Hence, the Greek Orthodox Church, arguably the second most important domain of Greek language use, after the family, was progressively squandered.

### 3.0 Language Transference and Language Shift

The phonological tendencies of Greek under the influence of its contact with the English phonic system, and the phonic integration of English words in Greek substantially vary according to the generational level of the users. Certain lexical items transferred from English can either be fully or partly integrated into the sound system of Greek or else may remain unchanged.<sup>18</sup> The phonological tendencies are being influenced as a result of the quantitative and qualitative differences between the phonological systems of the two languages. For example, there are five monophthongal vowel phonemes in Greek [i, e, a, u, o] in contrast to the eleven or twelve of English<sup>19</sup> [i, I, e, ε, ae, a, o, v, u]. Furthermore, Greek vowels appear economical, symmetrical and isochronic in contrast to the English vowels which are allophonic, unsymmetrical and allochronic. In contrast to the English isochronic and symmetrical consonantal phonemes, Greek consonants, which occur initially and medially (only /n/ and /s/ occur in an absolute final position in Modern Greek), are unsymmetrical and allochronic.

Although minor phonological transferences among 1<sup>st</sup> generation Greek settlers are limited to those who arrived as children in Australia, a large number of 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> generation Australians transfer from the English phonic system a number of phonemes, including the following:

- a) Pronounce with an increased positional aspiration the Greek voiceless stops (/p,t,k/) > [pː, tː, kː/], occurring in all positions: "...o p:at:eras mu irthe ap:o t:in Elada...".
- b) Palatalize the Greek clear lateral alveolar /l/ with English dark /lː/: "...itane p:ol:i k:al:i ginek:a ...p:ol:i me voithise...".
- c) Replace the Greek lateral alveolar /l/ with the English allophone /lː/, especially the Greek Cypriot users of Greek: "...to spiti mu ine poll:i evrihoro konta stin poll:i...".
- d) Transfer the English fricative sound /rː/ in the position of the Greek lateral alveolar /r/, thus changing both the place and the manner of articulation and aspiration: "...mu arese o isihos tr:opos zois...".



- e) Replace the Greek fricative velar /x/ with the English fricative glottal /h/: “...ih:ame diko mas ergostasio...”.
- f) Replace less frequently the Greek fricative inter-dental /ð/ with the English alveolar plosive /d/: “...ed:o pou imaste...”.
- g) Have the tendency to “center” unstressed vowels and thus they transfer the English /æ:/ in the position of the Greek phoneme /a/: “...mu aresi i zoi tis Afstrae:lias...”.

Greek Australians upon their arrival in Australia faced with defining the concepts and names for the new environment utilized words from their own vocabulary or adopted the necessary lexemes from English. The latter occurred either through complete transference of the English words together with their meaning or partial, that is with some degree and/or manner of integration into Greek. Words morphosemantically transferred from English to Greek include nouns, verbs, adjectives, pronouns, conjunctions, interjections and phrases (Tamis, 1985:104ff). Available data (Tamis, 1985 and 1993) confirm that nouns comprise the largest amount of lexical transfers (73%) from English to Greek. These transferred words are mostly related to their place of work, occupation-related concepts, home environment (house environment, furniture and equipment), shopping (food, clothes, tools, type of shops, transport, general terms), institutional life (education, proper names of departments, politics and political life, general terms and titles), the Australian natural environment (flora and fauna, countryside) and political geography, sporting activities, recreational, measurement and technical terms.

Greek shares the same grammatical categories (form classes) and the same function characteristics, e.g. gender, number, case, person, tense, mode and aspect with English, thus a number of lexical transfers from English (mainly nouns, verbs and adjectives), over the last 170 years of settlement, were adapted to Greek by adding Greek morphemes which define the grammatical relationship. These are derivational and inflectional suffixes which operate in Greek as function markers. Integration of the approximately 200 English transfers into the corresponding grammatical categories of Greek is a frequent practice of the linguistic behaviour of Greek Australians, as most (35%) are words referring to occupational concepts (siftjia, basis, yuentza, bizna, yunio, kombania, bonus, protaksjio, kastomes, tzombi, kontrato, stokos, seksjo, stori), or trade and type of work (yuealdas, entzinias, importas, kitsomanos, klinas, kontraktadoros, baristas, bildas, masinistria, draivas) or place of work (delikatesja, yrosaries, milkabarja, xotelia, karpetadika, teksesjia), or concepts referring to the home environment (stofa, friza, yrila, karpeto, kapi, flatja, televizjo, xita, flori, kula, karo, piktses, pusa, plastes, tzares,

tostjera, rufi), or concepts related to shopping (marketa, basketa>basketoula>basketes>basketakja, bilja, oksja, tiketa, tsekja), or food (semutza, sositzes, tsipja, tsojpa, xemi>xemja) or the Australian environment (busi>busja, reses, kuanthrenes). There are only a few integrated verbs from English into Greek used by Greek Australians, e.g. bokserno, fiksaro, baliazo and filetarizo.

In many instances the meaning of an English word can be transferred to Greek without its actual word-form (cf. Clyne, 1967:55). These semantic transferences appear either as a replacement of the Greek construction or as a grammatical distinction by English. The former involves the reconstruction and the rearrangement of existing Greek words in a way which is close to the grammatical distinction of English, e.g. "...meta katorthosa na to *pliroso piso*..."[afterwards, though I was able to *pay them back*...]. The latter involves the redefinition of existing Greek words with an English frame of reference, without affecting the formal construction of Greek, e.g. "...tha pari to psari pu ide *sto parathiro*..."[He will take the fish that he saw in *the window*] (In Greek *prothiki* or *vitrina*=shop window).

Inter-lingual identification on the level of syntax between English and Greek dictates similar grammatical relationship of the segmental morphemes, such as word order and inflexional endings on articles and nominals. Yet, it seems that on more frequent occasions, among Greek Australians of 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> generations, English influence violates word order, encourages the omission of the definite article in Greek speech and the unnecessary use of the indefinite article. Other syntactic deviations include the incorrect use of inflexional endings on articles, the irregular use of the cases and the numbers in nouns, the erratic use of the 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> persons of the weak form of the personal pronouns, the number confusion in verbs. However, some of these deviations from the norm cannot be attributed to language contact with English but to the weakening of the *sprachgefühl* (linguistic feeling).

Multiple transference or code-switching, that is the use of distinct successive stretches of both Greek and English or the transference of more than a single word at a time, characterize mainly 2<sup>nd</sup> generation Greek Australians. This type of transference is normally triggered as a result of linguistic confusion on the part of the user, due to an overlapping area between the two languages. It was found that topics referring to the work place and institutional life trigger greater proportions of multiple transferences.

At the pragmatic level 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> generations Greek Australians fail to understand the differences in communicative competence rules emerging from different rules for the comprehension of a speech act. For example, they are unfamiliar with the use of the 2<sup>nd</sup> person plural, which is used even when he/she

is addressing a single interlocutor, simply to express respect, formality or deference. The second involves the use of first names, something common in the Australian setting but rare in Greece, where the use of the surname and titles are required. A third one involves certain words of addressing in a role-relationship form, for instance 'love', 'thio' [=uncle], which would be almost certainly be construed differently in Greece. Pragmatic transferences creating confusion mainly to 1<sup>st</sup> generation Greek Australians involve stereotyped-invitation-formulae used with reference to various calls for dinner, tea, coffee. For example, a recent arrival from Greece was complaining that she had invited her neighbours at 6.00 p.m. for tea and they came prepared for dinner, saying that "in Greece when we invite somebody for tea we mean tea not dinner...".

Weinreich (1954:47) had correctly pointed out that a foreigner who has spent a few years in an Anglophone environment, can be spotted by his monolingual countrymen even if he does not transfer a single lexical, grammatical or segment-phonemic Anglicism: "It is the elusive impact of English prosody, which apparently gives him away". Most of 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> generations Greek Australians demonstrate a raised-falling intonation in the construction not only of the non-final items, such as phrases and clauses, but also of sentences. This kind of prosody, transferred from English, functions as a form of 'persuasive' intonation, that is, it aims to convince the interlocutor about his/her argument. In almost all cases the rhythm of English is also transferred because of the differences in the variety of pitch between Greek and English. This results in most cases in the relatively lengthier stress of the vocalic phonemes, in accordance with the English prosody.

Other forms of transferences as a result of the language contact situation, characterizing the linguistic behaviour of 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> generation Greek Australians include the *discourse segments*, i.e. the linguistic routines used by a speaker to formulate or to preformulate his discourse. Greek Australians use those linguistic routines as narrative devices to describe a story in an effort to establish a better rapport between the speaker and the listener. Most of them also use *couplets*, a lexical item in English or in Greek followed by the equivalent word in the other language.

In conclusion, it can be argued that transference from English resulting in non-standard Greek varies both quantitatively and qualitatively amongst 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> generation Greek Australians although in the case of 3<sup>rd</sup> generation these deviations from the norm cannot be attributed to language contact with English but rather to the weakening of the *sprachgefühl* (linguistic feeling). At the phonological level, the transference, qualitatively at least, is not so much phonemic among 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> generations users, but allophonic; that is there is a

confusion of certain consonantal and vocalic phonemes which are in close proximity in the two languages. Phonemic transferences are evidenced mainly during the process of integration when modification even by mutation of consonants occurs. Lexicon is the most common type of inter-lingual transference. High proficiency in Greek accounts for either partial or complete elimination of lexical transference. Non-integrated lexical transfers are restricted to informants with poor knowledge of English. Integrated lexical transfers, numbered to approximately 200 are only marginally affected by length of residence and occupation.

The disposition of older generations of Greek Australian immigrants not to adopt the non-standard norm, the *Ethnolect*, and the effort that he/she devotes to keeping the two languages apart, lead to semantic transferences while reducing lexical transferences. The grammatical structure of Greek appears not to be affected by its contact with English, at least among 1<sup>st</sup> generation Greek Australians. Grammatical deviations from the norm are only apparent within the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> generation users of Greek. Syntactical transferences from English occur only in the speech of the latter, too. Semantic transference is employed by users who are reluctant to resort to lexical transfers but do not have sufficient knowledge of Greek grammatical and syntactical structures.

Non-standard transference from English into Greek in the speech of Greek Australian bilinguals depends in general on socio-cultural conditions, psychological attitudes, degree of proficiency in one or both languages, and not on personal factors of social background or duration of residence in Australia. Further to their partial social isolation from other ethnic groups, including the mainstream dominant Anglo-Australians, Greek Australians experience an adequate contact with the home countries, Greece and Cyprus, because of their frequent return visits, the recurrent visits of their relatives to Australia and the strong base of 135,000 Australian citizens of Greek descent currently residing in Greece.<sup>20</sup> In addition, the systematic campaign on Greek language education in Australia implemented by the Greek Ministry of Education via the program entitled *Paideia Omogenon*, the presence of the Greek language cable television and the formidable efforts of the organised Greek community for language maintenance will most certainly restrict the decaying effects of the dominant language on Greek Australians.

Although the total impact of English on Greek could probably not be measured, it can be argued that the linguistic feeling of Greek Australians remains relatively strong at intergenerational level. Length of residence in Australia does not determine either the amount or the type of transference. The approximately 200

integrated transfers from English into the Greek daily norm are stabilised and are used by almost all of them to the exclusion of the standard Greek equivalent words. This Greek communicative norm which is used by Greek Australians was formulated in the early stages of Greek migration to Australia, arguably during the period 1924-1950 and was maintained unchanged thereafter. Certain English words integrated into Greek, which were in use in the 1920s and are not currently used in English, remain and are being used in the Greek communicative norm. This is grounds for arguing that Greek Australians do not transfer directly from English and the broader environment but rather from within the Greek community. For example, the widely used word “botzis > botzides” and “botzaria” a transfer from the widely used English verb ‘to bodge’ which was used during the pre-war period by the mainstream society, is currently used in the *Ethnolect* of Greek Australians. The *Ethnolect*, although it remains stabilized amongst the 1<sup>st</sup> generation Greek immigrants is more flexible amongst 2<sup>nd</sup> generation speakers, reflecting the process of language shift in the direction of English, as lexical transfers and code-switching have a higher incidence.

The stability of Greek in Australia in the present bilingual situation and under the influence of the dominant English language should be viewed with respect to factors such as level of literacy obtained in Greek, the socio-economic and political organization of the Greek community, strategies of resistance and reaction against cultural assimilation, the geographic and social mobility and the social integration of the Greek Australians with the mainstream Anglo-Australian community, the engagement between the Australian Greeks and Cypriots and their home countries and the degree and level of systematic implementation of educational and cultural programs oriented for Greek Australians.

#### **4.0 The Significance of Greek in the Diaspora**

For any non-dominant language to be maintained in a bilingual environment without diglossia at inter-generational level requires (a) the existence of a populous base of speakers; (b) adequate function of language use; (c) acceptability within the broader society; and (d) stability of form.

In 2011, Greek in Australia fulfills the aforementioned four criteria and hence remains a language of wider usage; a significant language for teaching and learning for the reasons that will be explained below. The vitality of Greek constitutes an important challenge for the members of the Greek community and depends on their disposition towards its learning and use and their desire for continuing their distinctiveness as a socio-cultural group and displaying its ethno-

linguistic and cultural loyalty to Greek as a norm, native tongue or ancestral language. The vitality of Greek is also an allegiance by the state and commonwealth governments in Australia for Greek learning processes at the state school systems at all three levels of education. Greek has been the only language world wide which moved from a local dialect, to a national language, an ethno-language, a world language going beyond its national and ethnic borders and an official language used by other ethnicities around the globe. Several Greek speaking language and culture country-islands remained vivid and productive in various parts of the world for many centuries, including those in northern Africa, Middle East all the way to Bactria. The significance of Modern Greek, a diachronically developed form of one and the same language over the last 4,000 years, derives its significance for teaching and learning from the following:

- 4.1. Greek is one of the five official languages of the European Union and the official language of two European Union countries.
- 4.2. Greek is the official language of the Greek and the Cypriot shipping industries, which are responsible for almost 35% of the total transport of global products.
- 4.3. Greek is the oldest and sole survival of ancient European language bearing a linguistic tradition of 4,000 years;
- 4.4. Greek is the language in which fundamental texts of western civilization and Christian scripture were written and transmitted through the ages.
- 4.5. Greek remains the strong (re)source language for all other world languages, i.e. 28,000 English words have been originated from Greek.
- 4.6. The concepts and notions born from the Greek language, pervaded the languages of Europe and the civilizations of the world, leaving eternal mark on what is known today as “European civilization”.
- 4.7. Greek came to be not the exclusive property of the Greeks only, but remains the ancestral language for all Europeans.

## **5.0 The Vitality and Importance of Greek in Australia**

Greek language and culture remain particularly vital for Australia and New Zealand for a number of important demographical, socio-economic, religious and political reasons. Previous studies (Tamis and Gauntlett, 1993; Tamis, 2001, 2008, 2009a, 2009c, and 2010) have found the hallmark of provision for Greek teaching and learning is its diversity, diffusion and incoherence with competing

systems, problems of continuity within and linkage between levels and several other serious impediments to commencement or continuance of formal learning and to its efficacy. A major disincentive at all levels is the erroneous perception in the broader society that serious learning of Greek is the preserve of the Greek Australian community; and even within the latter community, that successful study and certification is the preserve of the elite. Sociolinguistic research (Tamis and Gauntlett, 1993; Clyne, 1982; Bianco, 1987; Tamis 2008, 2009c and 2010) also demonstrated that to learn Greek you need at least 2,600 contact hours of teaching, that is, almost six contact hours per week. Currently the policy requirement for quality teaching in Victoria is a minimum of 150 minutes per week of instruction taught by qualified language teacher. However, according to research the actual average period of instructions for Greek does not exceed even 80 minutes per week. This is a gross inadequacy given the almost zero frequency of teaching in most Victorian government schools.

Greek teaching and learning in Australian government schools is influenced by problems of under-resourcing, unfavourable timetabling, poor linkage between primary and post-primary schools and limited possibility for mounting low-enrollment classes at senior level. The government controlled Schools of Languages operating in major States which have served as a back-stop for Greek in the public sector for many years, is characterized by problems arising out of the format of its contact hours and of staff morale, in view of the conditions of appointment and status offered to fully qualified teachers. The major “grey” areas of Greek language teaching and learning at government schools could be summarized as follows:

- The provision of Greek language teaching and learning is primarily based on obsolete demographical patterns characterising the Greek community settlement in the state capitals forty years ago. The socio-demographic mobility of the Greek community members into new suburbs since the 1980s was not met with relevant provision of Greek language courses in government school within the new suburbs of settlement.
- The Greek and Cypriot Australian communities remain exceedingly generous in their support of Greek language teaching at all three levels of education, endowing schools and tertiary institutions with bequests and financially priming for the establishment of Greek teaching and lectureships in Western Australia (Notre Dame), Northern Territory (University of Darwin), Victoria (La Trobe University), South Australia (Flinders University) and New South Wales (Macquarie University).
- Surveying the range of state policies towards Greek across the Commonwealth,

it is well attested a variety of degrees of divergence from the National Policy on Languages designation of Greek as a “language of wider learning” and use. Victoria, South Australia, Northern Territory and, to a lesser extent, New South Wales appear the most favorably disposed to Greek language planning, teaching and learning and to have the most systematic program of implementation. These states offer their unequivocal commitment to upgrading the teaching from primary to senior secondary level and designate Greek a priority language. In the remaining States there is a marked discrepancy between a generally supportive policy and limited provision for implementation. Yet, in keeping with these policies or in spite of them, Greek is represented to differing extents in most systems and levels of education across Australia. Currently, the hallmark of provision for Greek is its diversity, diffusion and incoherence with competing systems, linkage between levels and problems of continuity within.

- In Australia, as a result of the *National Policy of Languages* (1987), Greek was categorized as a “Language of Wider Teaching” and was protected as a second language by the Commonwealth and State Governments among eight other languages for teaching purposes. In September 1991, the Commonwealth of Australia identified 14 “priority languages” including Greek. Under *the Commonwealth’s Priority Languages Incentives Scheme* education systems, the State and Territories selected eight languages each as the basis of funding support they received from the Commonwealth. Again Greek was defined “Priority Language” in South Australia, Victoria, New South Wales and Northern Territory, as well as a *Tertiary Entrance Language* subject in all states and Territories, attracting approximately 41,000 students, of whom 32% were of non-Greek-background (Tamis, 2001 and 2008, 2010).
- Australia is lacking a language map targeting potential students of Greek in certain suburbs of concentration within state capitals and outlining provision of Greek language courses as a matter of continuity of learning between primary and post-primary education.
- Australia is lacking Greek language pre-school centres and Greek-language kindergartens where bilingual immersion classes could be introduced;
- Greek suffers from an image problem as a “community” language in the narrowest sense, despite the fact that most of its students are 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> generations English speaking monolinguals.
- Greek is under-resourced at every level of education.



- There are serious problems of linkage between, and continuity within, levels of learning Greek.
- Inflexible curricula and assessment mechanisms, and inability to cope with mixed ability groups using appropriate materials, methods, are inimical to the survival of Greek in Australia.

Nevertheless, a codifying approach to the causes and incentives for vital Greek language teaching and learning could be summed up as follows:

5.1. In 2011, there are currently 38,450 students attending Greek language classes in Australia provided by the following sectors:

Ethnic Schools:	19,000
Government Schools:	12,200
Saturday Schools of Languages:	1,950
Greek Daily Schools:	3,800
Independent Schools:	450
Tertiary Institutions:	1,050

- 5.2. Greek language and culture is the most popular language within the Ethnic Schools sector in Australia.
- 5.3. Greek is the fourth most popular taught language within the Saturday School of Languages.
- 5.4. Greek is the sixth most widely taught language in Government schools.
- 5.5. In 2010, almost 33% of the students in government and Greek Daily schools are of non-Greek language background.
- 5.6. Greek language possesses the strongest retention rate amongst students in government schools from Preps to Grade Six (92%) and from Year Seven to Year 10 (72%), compared with any other language.
- 5.7. Greek is the third most popular home language in Australia at inter-generational level.
- 5.8. Greek has the strongest language maintenance rate in Australia at an inter-generational level. The language shift from Greek to English among 1<sup>st</sup> generation speakers is almost zero; the language shift for second generation is 8.6% and for 3<sup>rd</sup> generation Greek Australians 24%.

- 5.9. Greek is known and used by approximately 500,000 Australians of Greek and non-Greek ancestry and descent.
- 5.10. Greek is also the language of an additional 135,000 Australian citizens who live permanently in Greece. Greece is the second most popular destination country for Australian citizens after United Kingdom with 240,000 Australian citizens.
- 5.11. Greek is the official language of the Greek Orthodox Church in Australia, the *prime in parity* Church among the estimated 800,000 homodox Christians in Oceania, including Macedoslavs, Serbs, Bulgarian, Russian and Syro-Lebanese adherents.<sup>21</sup>
- 5.12. Greek has a utilitarian role in Australia because of an established presence of 600,000 Greek speaking Australian citizens and of many more thousands of Australian with ancestral, sentimental, professional, cultural and intellectual ties with Greece and *Cyprus*.
- 5.13. Greece is arguably the only home country of Australian citizens that contributes so generously and supports multifaceted types and schemes of language learning and teaching. Greece's sound and unparalleled contribution is estimated to approximately AU\$10,000,000.00 annually. This generosity deserves the reciprocal attitudes of the Australian Commonwealth Government by including Greek as one of the languages in the national curriculum policy.
- 5.14. Australia's interest in enhanced trade and investment arrangements with the European Union and the sensitive Eastern Mediterranean region and its burgeoning economy, as well as its potential links with Europe could be better implemented via a role of the Greek language in establishing and maintaining Greek speaking experts in European capitals including Athens and Nicosia.

## **6.0. The Significance of Greek as a World Heritage Language**

- 6.1. Further to the reasons outlined above, Greek does not simply derive its significance only as a community language or as the norm of the Greek-speaking sector of the Australian community, which is vigorously organized, politically robust and strongly committed to maintenance of its Hellenic Australian identity.

6.2. The significance of Greek for Australia derives principally from *heritage, moral, intellectual, academic, linguistic and utilitarian* reasons.

**6.2.1. Moral and intellectual**, because Greek is the only extant Heritage Language of the Western World known and used in Australia;

**6.2.2. Academic** because Greek language (in its Ancient, medieval and modern variants) is being taught together with Classical studies and the Greek history and culture at over 2,000 universities around the globe attracting more than 300,000 students.

**6.2.3. Linguistic** because by learning Greek language students and indeed world citizens have the opportunity to learn about and understand better their own language as a very significant percentage of their mother tongue, etymologically is derived from Greek words.

**6.2.4. Utilitarian**, because of an established presence of a vast number of Greek-speaking residents (currently estimated to over 500,000) and of many more thousands of Australians with ancestral, sentimental, professional, cultural and intellectual ties with Greece, Cyprus and the millions of Hellenes in the Diaspora.

6.3. Whence, the linguistic World Heritage status of Greek is illustrated by a number of aspects outlined below, which inevitably propagate its importance to be promoted internationally:

(a) Greek is the oldest and sole survival of ancient European languages bearing a linguistic tradition of 4,000 years. It has been the basis of the European civilization and naturally has fundamentally affected other languages and cultures.

(b) Greek remained the language of global civilization from 480 BC to A.D. 1500 in both oral and written forms and was the official vernacular of the entire Hellenized world from Western Europe to India. Hence, the general use of Greek was of enormous importance to the spread of Christianity.

(c) Greek is the sole modern descendant of the Indo-European family of languages, in which fundamental texts of Western Civilization and Christian scripture were formulated and transmitted through the ages. Even in 21<sup>st</sup> century Greek-speaking Patriarchates in Constantinople (Istanbul), Jerusalem, Alexandria, Cyprus and Greece commemorate the thousand years of Greek presence in Europe, Asia and Africa.

(d) **Roman** Catholicism and **Greek** Orthodox were the two Christian worlds in Europe and Asia. The entire world of Greek Christians, incorporating the Russians, Rumanians, Ukrainians, Bulgarians, Serbs, Macedoslavs, and Syro-Lebanese used Greek as their official language of liturgy and sermons.

(e) Greek is designated as one of the five official languages of the European Union and is rated as a major world-language in spite of the comparatively modest number of its current native speakers.

(f) Greek composed by reputed individuals of intellect such as Plato, Aristotle, Homer, Aeschylus, Sophocles, Euripides, Herodotus, Thucydides, Plutarch, Hippocrates, the Great fathers of the Christian Church, the great hymnographers, philologists, mathematicians, physicians, anthropologists, ethnologists. Naturally, the notions born herein, expressed through the words of the Greek language, pervaded the languages and the civilizations of the world and left eternal mark on what is known as the European Civilization. Studying the Greek language is not a product of fashion or of utilitarian motives. It has its origins in man's desire to study the great texts about great issues.

(g) Approximately, 28,000 English words including key words such as *idea, theory, system, analysis, synthesis, category, hierarchy, method, hypothesis, myth, poetry, drama, music, harmony, politics, democracy, thence, machine, episteme, psyche, Eros, ecclesia, Christ, Europe, theology* etc are all words of the Greek language, this great little language to paraphrase the Noble laureate Greek poet Odysseus Elytis.

(h) It would be a cultural deficit if Greek is to be confined within its current spectrum and not be accessible nationally, in terms of universal education and culture. Especially, as the Greek language came to be not the exclusive property of the Greeks only, but of the entire humanity. This is also true for other languages of the human civilization like Latin which, in the progress of the time, receded from the schools and universities in the name of utilitarianism and linguistic internationalism. This is one more violation of the "moral" aspect of language and, at the same time, an inestimable loss for humanity and civilization. Defending the right for the "unnecessary" - which is usually the most essential part of life-, is the only way for a man to fight against the ideology of utilitarianism.

(i) Every national language constitutes the identity and the physiognomy of that nation. In the case of Greek the language transmits and creatively enriches all modern western languages as it remains the robust source for

new words and concepts for these national languages. To fully understand the meaning and culture of 28,000 English words of Greek origin, it is necessary to know and study the Greek language and culture; otherwise it would be a Herculean task to understand the meaning of polis, police, politics, democracy, tyranny, tyrant, oligarchy, aristocracy just to mention some words from the field of politics. Hence, the acquisition of Greek is further enhancing the better understanding of English.

(j) Greek as a Heritage Language, besides of aspects of use and utility, possesses another aspect, the *moral* one. Hence, the learning of Greek, apart from professional improvement in terms of income or social prestige etc., can provide a better, more direct, profound and essential understanding of the people who speak it, who exist immersed in it.

(k) The significance of Greek for the host country's external trade resides both in the actual and potential links with the European Union via Greece and Cyprus and via connections between Greece, Cyprus and the Greek communities residing in the host countries and in the fact that, among others, the Greek merchant marine transports large quantity of the host country's exports across the globe.

(l) Greece is arguably one of the few home countries that contribute hundreds of million of dollars generously and supports multifaceted types and schemes of language learning and teaching.

## NOTES

1. Reference is made here to the work of Leo Pap (1949) about Portuguese, Haugen (1953 and 1973) about Norwegian, Weireich (1953) and Hasselmo (1961) about Swedish, Lyra (1962) about Polish, Hoffman (1966), Fishman and Mahirny (1966), Lieberson (1972) and Gilbert (1970) about Spanish, French, German, Czech, Polish, Serbian and Norwegian, Perkowski (1970) about Czech, Morgan (1970) about French, Nash (1971) (Spanish), Correa-Zoli (1974), Di Pietro (1960) about Italian, Blanco (1980) about Portuguese, Dweik (1980) about Arabic, Cefola (1981) about Thai in the USA and Canada; and in Australia: Clyne (1967 and 1982) about German, Tamis (1985, 1993 and 2001) about Greek, Bettoni (1981) about Italian; see also *Journal of Hellenic Studies* (Spring, 2010) edited by A. M. Tamis.

2. For a substantial analysis of the history of the Greek settlement in Australia see Price (1963 and 1975), Gilchrist (1997, 1999 and 2002) and Tamis (1997, 2000, 2002 and 2005).
3. Language contact situation is created when a single item is plucked out of one language and used in the context of another and that this kind of linguistic borrowing presupposes a bilingual situation.
4. Diebold (1961:97-112) claimed that the terms should be applied in cases where proficiency in one of the languages is minimal; Haugen (1953:6) argued the bilingualism refers to any degree of an accomplishment in the two languages; Weirich (1953:1) defined bilingualism as “alternatively using two languages”, whilst Christophersen (1958:4) claimed that the term presupposes “some degree of competence in both”.
5. Haugen (1956:40) used a third term integration to denote the use of linguistically assimilated elements from another language.
6. Multiculturalism supports the maintenance of cultural diversity, however seriously constrains the maintenance of the immigrant languages as the various cultures need one common linguistic norm to communicate amongst them.
7. The analysed data of the 1981 ABS led to the PhD dissertation on the *State of Modern Greek as Spoken in Victoria* (1986) by A.M. Tamis; two other publications were based on the 1986 and 1996 ABS: Tamis (1993 and 2001).
8. See Clyne, 1982, Tamis, 1986, 1993 and 2001.
9. See also Clyne, 1982:56ff; also Smolicz and Harris 1976.
10. For example, in the 1990s the language shift rate from Dutch has been 28% for its 1st generation users, 88% for its 2nd, while there were no claimants of Dutch among its 3rd generation. Bettoni (1981) surveying Italian in North Queensland showed that the language shift rate among Italian users was 7%, 38% and 80% respectively.
11. Tamis in 1986:66 suggested that 30% of 1st generation Greek-Australians did not mix with any other ethnic group in Victoria, whilst in 2001 the percentage was reduced to 19%.
12. This represents the highest percentage if compared with any other ethnic group in Australia.
13. The introduction of Greek in government schools, the establishment of the Greek daily schools, the operation of Greek language pre-school centres, the accommodation of Greek language televisions at home, are some of the achieved goals. See in particular Tamis 2001 and 2008.
14. See A. M. Tamis (2009a), a study entitled *Greek Language in Australia* submitted for publication to the Program “Paideia Omogenon”, EDIAMME, University of Crete. See also relevant contribution in this edition of the JHS.

15. In the 1980's it was found (Tamis, 1985:71) that almost 17% of Greek students in the northern suburbs of Melbourne experienced some form of discouragement from attending Greek language classes even when Greek was not offered as a subject in school by teachers at registered day-schools.
16. These data are in agreement with the language mode of behaviour of the Greek Australians of 2nd generation in early 1980s, see Tamis (1985:72ff).
17. Certain aspects about the popularity of Greek among 2nd and 3rd generations Greek Australians, the language that they are using at home and other language environments, parental assessment of their proficiency in Greek, the overall Greek language classes organised in Australia, the providers of Greek language education and the prevailing characteristics of those students on issues of acquisition and identity are portrayed in the study to be published by EDIAMME, University of Crete in 2009a.
18. An analysis of the phenomenon is given by Tamis (1985:89ff); See also, for example, about the German lexemes in Clyne (1967:53ff) and Italian in Bettoni (1981:55ff).
19. The articulatory quantitative and qualitative description of the English vowels differs amongst phoneticians, some (Wells and Colson, 1971:7ff) claim that they are twelve, however some distinguish eleven (Delbridge, 1965:12ff).
20. See the article by A. M. Tamis on the state of Greek language at intergenerational level in the Spring 2011 edition of the *Journal of Hellenic Studies*.
21. See A. M. Tamis (2009), "The Greek Orthodox Church in Australia" in James Jupp (ed.), *The Encyclopedia of Religions in Australia*, pp. 467-498, Cambridge University Press, London.

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