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MODERN GREEK AND AMERICAN ENGLISH IN CONTACT

by

P. DAVID SEAMAN

NORTHERN ARIZONA UNIVERSITY



1972

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INTRODUCTION

This study is an attempt to discover and investigate some of the essential tendencies of Modern Greek produced by the contact with American English. The data are based primarily upon the tape-recorded Greek speech of forty-one American Greek bilingual speakers, and upon 444 responses to a five-page bilingualism questionnaire distributed to American Greeks in Chicago and other major cities of the United States.

This research originated from the reading of Uriel Weinreich's *Languages in Contact*, Einar Haugen's *The Norwegian Language in America*, and Franciszek Lyra's *English and Polish in Contact*. The presentation is modeled for the most part after Lyra's excellent study of American Polish; our aim here was not to construct a new model of bilingual description, but rather to organize and present as much as possible of the original data we have collected, in the hope that it may serve as a partial basis, at least, for further bilingualism research and study of American immigrant languages in general, and of American Greek in particular.

Prior to this present study, there has been very little American linguistic investigation of the Greek language as it is spoken in America.¹ The otherwise excellent and quite comprehensive work published by Saloutos² contains references to the Greek language on only four of 445 pages, and these are only references in passing. Evan Vlachos, of Piraeus, Greece, has written a dissertation on the Greek community of Anderson, Indiana, for the Department of Sociology at Indiana University.³ Vlachos mentions the Greek language on

¹ Linguistically-oriented studies of standard Greek, some written by Greeks now residing in the United States (*e.g.*, Kahane, Kazazis, Koutsoudas, Sotiropoulos), are referred to on page 114 and in other pertinent places below.

² Theodore Saloutos, *The Greeks in the United States* (Cambridge, 1964). Th. Saloutos is chairman of the Department of History at UCLA.

³ Evangelos Constantine Vlachos, *The Assimilation of Greeks in the United States: With Special Reference to the Greek Community of Anderson, Indiana* (Bloomington, Indiana University Department of Sociology Ph.D. dissertation, June 1964).

seven of his 272 pages, but the references are sociological in nature, dealing more with the attitudes and problems of bilingualism which we have treated at some length here, in Chapter 1.

H. L. Mencken, in the supplements to his *The American Language*⁴ lists some Greek-Americanisms along with samples of other American immigrant usage, but these have all been omitted from the McDavid abridgement. Some American Greek lexical items are included in a Columbia University master's thesis on immigrant languages by Miss S. M. Schor, but I have not had an opportunity to examine this work.⁵ Donald Swanson's article on English loanwords in Modern Greek⁶ mentions a few Greek-American words, while giving a valuable general presentation on English loanwords in standard Greek.

In 1926, in the first volume of the periodical *American Speech*, there appeared an article by S. S. Lontos, then editor of *Atlantis*, a Greek-American daily newspaper in New York City. Lontos gives an interesting popular account of lexical items he had observed in the speech of his fellow Greeks in New York City. Even though the transliteration is sometimes hard to figure out, and many of the words have undergone further change in the vicissitudes of American Greek, this is nevertheless a very useful article, and as far as I know the first of its kind for the Greek language in America.

In 1955, James Macris wrote a Columbia University dissertation on English loanwords in New York City Greek, based largely upon the Lontos article and his own native experience in the Greek-American community of New York City.⁷ His main concern was "the adaptation of English loanwords to the sound system of Greek". He appends a list of over a thousand English words which he says are used by speakers of Greek in New York City, but gives no indication as to which words in the list were adapted phonemically and which ones were not.

Thus the 1926 Lontos article and the Macris dissertation are the only linguistically-oriented accounts we have of Greek-American bilingualism. A broadly-based definitive work on the Modern Greek language in America is yet to be written. No one has been inspired to describe systematically on all grammatical 'levels' the influence of English upon Greek as a result of the contact

⁴ H. L. Mencken, *The American Language*, 4th ed. (New York, 1936); *Supplement I* (1945); *Supplement II* (1948). A one-volume abridgement, edited by Raven I. McDavid, Jr., was published in 1963.

⁵ Sandra Moshman Schor, *English Loan Words in Some American Immigrant Languages: A Study in Multiple Language Contact* (New York, Columbia University Department of Linguistics M.A. thesis, 1954).

⁶ Donald C. Swanson, "English Loanwords in Modern Greek", *Word* 14 (1958), 26—46.

⁷ James Macris, *An Analysis of English Loanwords in New York City Greek* (New York, Columbia University Department of Linguistics Ph.D. dissertation, 1955).

of these two languages in the United States.⁸ This study is now offered as one modest step in that direction. It is hoped that the original data collected in this study — as well as the rapport and understanding now established with many potential informants⁹ in the Chicago Greek community — will serve as a springboard for many fruitful years of investigation by this writer and other students of bilingualism. For this reason, no attempt has been made to avoid raising questions we could not answer; and our conclusions — though based upon careful analysis of a limited corpus — must be regarded as partial and tentative. If the evidence raises pertinent questions which challenge others to further investigation in this neglected field, then our efforts will have been eminently worthwhile.

0.1 BASIC NOTIONS

0.1.1 *Modern Greek, Greek-American*

Purists might object to the use of the term MODERN GREEK or even GREEK for the type of Greek used by Americans of Greek descent. It is true that verbal communication would often be difficult if many an American Greek — especially of the second or third generation, were in contact with a monolingual native Greek, even though the former professed to speak Greek. In fact, the kind of Greek spoken in the United States by the average American of Greek descent is likely to cause overt impediment of communication or covert ridicule when used in Greece. But the obstruction of communication is unidirectional, from the American Greek bilingual to the native monolingual Greek. The former would usually understand the latter without much difficulty. Nevertheless, the Modern Greek spoken in the United States can be regarded as Greek by the same right as the inadequate English of a foreigner can be considered English. The reasons for deviations from the linguistic norms may be of different origin and motivation, and are likely to increase in the case of Greek, while decreasing in the case of English, depending on the individual and the socio-cultural and linguistic factors discussed in Chapter 1.

Our use of the term Modern Greek, or Greek, will include the Greek speech of American Greek bilinguals in the United States, as well as 'standard' Greek spoken in Greece. This latter (probably undefinable) term is intentionally used

⁸ The influence of Greek upon English is not directly treated here. An attempt has been made to avoid the description of scattered and individually motivated deviations from the norm of American English.

⁹ Cooperation ranged from "And bare my soul to you! *You're nuts!!*" (C 227) to "My best wishes to you, Mr. Seaman. The Greek community in Chicago has taken you to its heart." (C 334). The preponderance of responses was nearer the latter type, as is shown by the unusually high (47%) return of the anonymous, five-page bilingualism questionnaire.

in an effort to avoid here the involved matter of 'the language question' in Greece today. 'Standard' Greek as referred to in this volume may be understood as the normally accepted spoken Demotic Greek of approximately a high-school graduate in Greece, or more specifically the Greek ordinarily used by native Greek Indiana University students with Dhimotiki (as opposed to the puristic Katharevusa) preferences.¹⁰ When it is desirable to distinguish further, we have used *ad hoc* more restrictive terms, such as Katharevusa (K.) or Dhimotiki (D.), American Greek, or Greek-American. The term *Greek-American*, whether applied to an individual or to a type of Greek speech, is used for convenience and with no derogatory implications whatever. It is expected that serious students of bilingualism are beyond the 'de-hyphenating' stage in their quest for truth. When the term Greek-American is applied to individuals in this study, it almost invariably may be interpreted as referring only to those Americans of Greek descent who were born in the United States, or who immigrated before World War II.

0.1.2 *American English*

Divergencies from the American English norm due to the inadequate knowledge of English of the informants are considered English by the same definition as is applied to parallel deviations of Modern Greek in the United States.

0.1.3 *Contact*

Haugen cites André Martinet as the creator of the term LANGUAGE CONTACT,¹¹ but Lyra (p. 4) mentions use of the term by Wilhelm von Humboldt over a hundred years ago,¹² and by Sturtevant in his *Linguistic Change* (p. 52). In *Languages in Contact* (p. 1), Weinreich defines contact as follows:

In the present study, two or more languages will be said to be IN CONTACT if they are used alternately by the same persons. The language-using individuals are thus the locus of the contact.

Although all languages could theoretically be in contact with each other, most are very limited geographically and/or chronologically. Today, English is probably the most wide-spread in its extent of contact. The contact of English and Greek takes place both in Greece and in the United States. The present study deals with the contact in this country.

¹⁰ For further discussion and pertinent bibliographical references, see pages 114–15 below.

¹¹ *Proceedings of the Eighth International Congress of Linguists* (Oslo, 1957), p. 771.

¹² *Über die Verschiedenheit des Menschlichen Sprachbaues und Ihren Einfluss auf die Geistige Entwicklung des Menschengeschlechts* (Berlin, 1836; Faksimile Druck, 1936).

Language contact occurs when two monoglot speakers of mutually unintelligible languages desire to communicate verbally with each other. To achieve mutual intelligibility, one or both speakers learn the other language; either one remains a monoglot and the other becomes a bilingual, or both become bilinguals. In the United States, the English speaker usually remains a monoglot while the burden of achieving bilingualism is left to the immigrant or his descendants.

Contact between two languages usually, if not always, gives rise to linguistic interference phenomena. The degree of interference with either language is dependent upon many linguistic and extra-linguistic factors, including the degree of the speaker's commitment to one language or the other. In this study, our primary aim will be to investigate the interference with Greek caused by its contact with English, as well as deviations attributable more to non-contact with the standard Greek spoken in Greece.

0.1.4 *Bilingualism*

Definitions of bilingualism range from "a native-like control of two languages"¹³ to "any knowledge whatever of two languages".¹⁴ Writings of the past half century have produced definitions covering nearly every conceivable manifestation between the two extremes.¹⁵ Profitable discussions on bilingualism from a linguistic point of view have been published by such scholars as Haugen, Wein-

¹³ Leonard Bloomfield, *Language* (New York, 1933), p. 56.

¹⁴ Cf. Hermann Paul, *Prinzipien der Sprachgeschichte*, 3rd ed. (Halle a. Saale, 1898), p. 366; and Morris Swadesh, "Observations of Pattern Impact on the Phonetics of Bilinguals", in *Language, Culture, and Personality: Essays in Memory of Edward Sapir*, ed. by Leslie Spier (Menasha, Wisconsin, 1941), p. 60.

¹⁵ See, for example, the following works (available from Indiana University Library): R. A. Diebold, "Incipient Bilingualism", *Language* 37 (1961), 97—112; P. Christophersen, *Bilingualism* (London, 1818); T. W. Elwert, *Das Zweisprachige Individuum; Ein Selbstzeugnis* (Mainz, 1960); R. A. Hall, "Bilingualism and Applied Linguistics", *Zeitschrift für Phonetik* 6 (1952), 13—30; E. Haugen, *Bilingualism in the Americas: A Bibliography and Research Guide* (University of Alabama Press, 1956; reprinted 1964); W. Henss, "Mundart und Zweisprachigkeit", *Conférence sur le bilinguisme* (Luxemburg, 1928); 99—117; *Idem* "Das Problem der Zwei- und Mehrsprachigkeit und seine Bedeutung für den Unterricht und die Erziehung in deutschen Grenz- und Auslandsschulen", *Zeitschrift für Pädagogische Psychologie* 9 (1927); M. H. Roberts, "The Problem of the Hybrid Language", *Journal of English German Philology* 38 (1939); 23—41; G. Schmidt—Rohr, *Die Sprache als Bildnerin der Völker* (Jena, 1932); K. H. Schönfelder, *Probleme der Völker- und Sprachmischung* (Halle, 1956); H. Schuchardt, *Dem Herrn Franz von Miklosich zum 20. November 1883: Slawo-Deutsches und Slawo-Italienisches* (Graz, 1884); A. von Weiss, *Hauptprobleme der Zweisprachigkeit* (Heidelberg, 1959); *Idem*, "Zweisprachigkeit und Sprachbegabung", *Orbis* 5 (1958), 152—63.

reich, and Fishman.¹⁶ Fishman and others have recently emphasized that in bilingualism there are infinite variations both in DEGREE and in KIND of bilingualism. Both qualitative and quantitative differentiations are applicable in bilingualism, just as in intelligence measurement, for instance. In a lecture on bilingualism at the 1964 Summer Linguistic Institute, Fishman illustrated the absurd restrictiveness of Bloomfield's "native-like control" criterion, and defined bilingualism approximately as follows:

Some demonstration that an individual can communicate (for prolonged periods and natural purposes) via more than one code.

In other words, bilingualism is not necessarily "native-like control of two languages" nor "any knowledge whatever of two languages", but a *continuum* stretching most of the way between these two extremes.

In the United States, the gradual supremacy of the English language among Americans of Greek descent has nothing to do with cultural or intellectual qualities of the Greeks,¹⁷ but rather is a reflection of the primarily socio-economic pressures toward integration of all ethnic groups. Faced with the apathy of Americans toward learning Modern Greek¹⁸ (or any foreign language for that matter), the Greek immigrants set themselves the task of learning English as a prerequisite for adjustment to their new milieu. Later the task becomes that of retention of Greek in the midst of almost universal use of English, especially in the second and third generations.

0.1.5 Informants

In addition to the socio-linguistic information from the bilingualism questionnaire responses, the data for this study consists of the recorded Greek speech of forty-one Greek-American bilinguals, most of whom reside in the greater Chicago area.¹⁹ Two informants (I 15 and I 16) resided most of their lives in

¹⁶ See Haugen, *Bilingualism in the Americas*; Weinreich, *Languages in Contact*; and Joshua A. Fishman, *et al*, *Language Loyalty in the United States: The Maintenance and Perpetuation of Non-English Mother Tongues by American Ethnic and Religious Groups* (The Hague, 1966).

¹⁷ An interesting ancillary study: Harry C. Triandis and Charles E. Osgood, "A Comparative Factorial Analysis of Semantic Structures in Monolingual Greek and American College Students", *Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology* 57 (1958), 187-96.

¹⁸ Americans are popularly supposed to have a mental block against learning Greek ("It's Greek to me!") somewhat comparable to the native Greek attitude towards oriental languages ("It sounds like Chinese to me!").

¹⁹ Anonymous socio-linguistic data for each informant are given in Appendix D.

Detroit, and two (I 11 and I 14) in Pittsburgh. The generations²⁰ are represented as follows:

1st generation	13
2nd generation	20
2—3 generation	3
3rd generation	5

Since no informant has 'native-like control' of both languages,²¹ we shall use the conventional terms **PRIMARY** and **SECONDARY** in referring to the informants' present use of the two languages. Most of the informants learned Greek at home, and several attended extra Greek classes sponsored by the Greek Orthodox church. For all the informants, then, Greek is not a foreign language in the ordinary sense of the word, but neither is it any longer the primary language for most.

²⁰ 1st generation = born in Greece and immigrated to the United States; 2nd generation = born in the United States of 1st-generation parents; 3rd generation = born in the United States of 2nd-generation parents; 2nd—3rd generation = born in the United States of one 1st-generation parent and one 2nd-generation parent.

²¹ This is undoubtedly an extremely rare phenomenon in non-academic circles anywhere in the continental United States.

1.

THE SOCIO-CULTURAL BACKGROUND OF THE MODERN-GREEK/AMERICAN-ENGLISH CONTACT

'Purely linguistic studies of languages in contact must be coordinated with extra-linguistic studies on bilingualism and related phenomena The linguist who makes theories about language influence but neglects to account for the socio-cultural setting of the language contact leaves his study suspended, as it were, in mid-air.'¹ The important socio-cultural data presented in quantitative and qualitative form in this chapter will serve as a broad foundation for the primarily linguistic discussions in subsequent chapters of this volume.

Socio-linguistic works dealing specifically with Greek-Americans are listed in Section E of the bibliography. Saloutos' *The Greeks in the United States* and Vlachos' *The Assimilation of Greeks in the United States* are most helpful. These two works, in addition to United States government census publications, form the primary bases for the introductory remarks in this chapter.

1.1 DEMOGRAPHY

The exact number of Greeks who came to the United States will probably never be known. The failure of the Greek government to keep accurate records and the difficulties on both sides of the Atlantic of defining a 'Greek' account for most of the confusion.

The Greek definitions of a Greek have been more all-inclusive than the American ones. The Greek definitions have ranged from the strictly legalistic questions of citizenship (almost "Once a Greek, always a Greek") to such broad definitions as that of prime minister Venizelos given at the Versailles Peace Conference: "A Greek is a person who wants to be a Greek, feels he is a Greek and says he is a Greek."²

Census statistics compiled by the United States government regarding foreign stock are nearly always based upon the country of birth of the indi-

¹ Weinreich, *Languages in Contact*, p. 4.

² Quoted in George Vournas, "Greeks in America", *Congressional Record: Proceedings and Debates of the 86th Congress, 2nd session*, p. A137.

dual or his parents. This would omit those Greeks who immigrated from such places as Egypt, Turkey, and Italy. For our linguistic study, the 'mother tongue' (of the individual or his ancestors) will be more important than the 'country of birth' criterion.

Demographic discussions concerning Greek immigrants in the United States are further complicated by the general practice of the United States Census Bureau of tabulating only the first- and second-generations of immigrant groups, and of often lumping these together in an aggregate "foreign stock":

The foreign-born population is combined with the native population of foreign or mixed parentage in a single category termed "foreign stock". This category thus comprises all first- and second-generation Americans [and our '2nd—3rd generation']. Third and subsequent generations in the United States are included as "native of native parents". In this report, persons of foreign stock are classified according to their country of origin.³

TABLE 1. *Immigration from Greece, by Decades*⁴

Decade	Number
1821—1830	20
1831—1840	49
1841—1850	16
1851—1860	31
1861—1870	72
1871—1880	210
1881—1890	2,038
1891—1900	15,979
1901—1910	167,579
1911—1920	184,201
1921—1930	51,084
1931—1940	9,119
1941—1950	8,973
1951—1960	47,708
1961	3,124
1962	4,408
TOTAL for 142 years:	494,721

³ United States Bureau of the Census, *1960 Census: General Social and Economic Characteristics, United States Summary*, p. XIV. Thus in our census figures (in this chapter only), the designation 'second generation' will include our sub-category '2nd—3rd generation', and it will not be possible to give figures here for our '3rd generation'.

⁴ United States Department of Justice, *Annual Report of the Immigration and Naturalization Service* (Washington, D. C., US—GPO, 1962), pp. 42—4.

The linguistic and socio-cultural data in this study should help to show whether or not the census takers are premature in their implicit assumption that the third generation is already assimilated into the 'native stock'.

Persons from Greece contribute a very small percentage of the total foreign-born stock in the United States. Of the estimated 38 million people who have

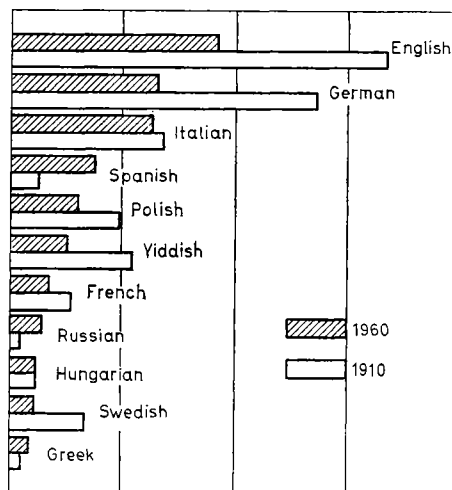


Figure 1. Immigrant Mother Tongues⁵

immigrated to the United States up to the present, less than one-half million have been from Greece (See Table 1). Even if a 'mother-tongue' criterion is used, speakers of Greek were the ninth largest group of first-generation immigrants in the United States in 1910, and tenth-largest in 1960 (See Figure 1).

In 1900, persons from Greece constituted only one-tenth of one per cent of the total ethnic (foreign) stock; the percentage was 1.2 in 1930 and 1.6 in 1960.⁶

Mass immigration to the United States lasted from approximately 1880 to 1920. Immigration from Greece was most intense between 1905 and 1915, with the peak year being 1907 when 36,580 persons were recorded as immigrants from Greece, *i.e.*, about 1.5 per cent of the total 2,631,950 population of Greece for the same year.⁷ In the early years the Greek immigrants were almost

⁵ U. S. Bureau of the Census, *1960 Census: United States Summary, General Social and Economic Characteristics*, Figure 3, p. XV.

⁶ U. S. Bureau of the Census, *1940 Census: Characteristics of the Population, United States Summary*, Table 15, p. 43; *1960 Census: United States Summary, Detailed Characteristics*, Table 163, "Country of Origin of the Foreign Stock", p. 367.

⁷ Theodore Giannakoulis, "Introduction to the History of Greek-Americans", [in Greek], *Argonauts A* (1959), 165.

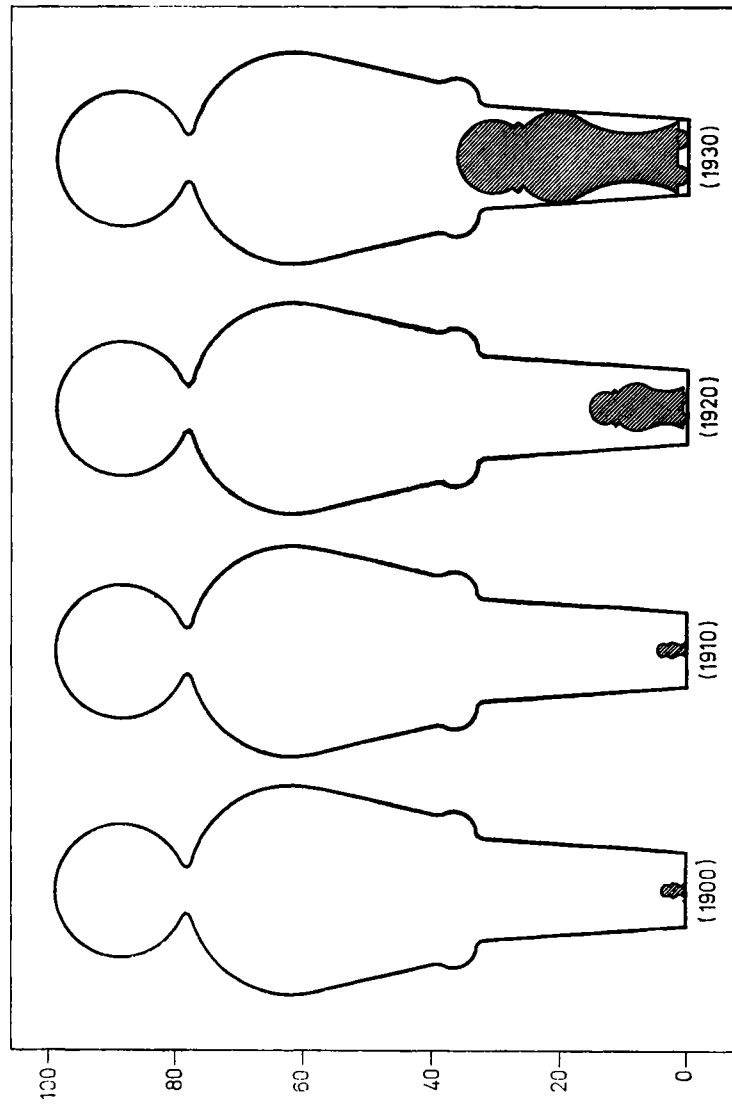


Figure 2. Ratio of Female to Male Greek Immigrants

entirely males. In 1900 only four women arrived for every 100 men coming to the United States. The average was five per 100 for the decade ending in 1910, sixteen for 1920, and 35 for 1930 (See Figure 2).⁸ Figure 3 illustrates in graphic form the vagaries of Greek immigration to the United States from 1880–1962.⁹

Even though many of these statistics must be recognized as partial or approximate, they do give a better idea of the actual size of the first- and second-generation Greek population than do some of the undocumented guesses still current. On the basis of such subjective definitions as those cited earlier, it is not surprising that the 'Greeks' in this country have been variously estimated to number between 75,000 and 800,000 or even 1,500,000.¹⁰ The total of either extreme would be quite in contrast with the actual 377,973 persons reported by the census of 1960 as tracing their parentage to Greece. Table 2 gives the actual totals of first- and/or second-generation Greeks in the United States censuses for the past 100 years.¹¹ The three-generation total of Greeks in America today is probably less than 500,000.

⁸ M. J. Politis, "Greek Americans", in *One America*, ed. by F. J. Brown and J. S. Roucek (New York, 1945), 247. John William Garrison created Figure 2 for me.

⁹ 1824–1903: U. S. Treasury Department, Bureau of Statistics, *Monthly Summary of Commerce and Finance of the U. S.* 12, Series 1902/1903 (Washington, US–GPO), pp. 4345–58; 1904/1926: U. S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Immigration, *Annual Report of the Commissioner General of Immigration* (Washington, US–GPO, 1926), pp. 175–78; 1927/1931: U. S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Immigration, *Annual Report* (Washington, US–GPO, 1931), p. 223; 1932: U. S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Immigration, *Annual Report* (Washington, US–GPO, 1932), p. 58; 1933: U. S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, *Statistical Abstract of the United States, 1933* (Washington, US–GPO, 1933), p. 95; 1934: U. S. Department of Labor, *Annual Report of the Secretary of Labor* (Washington, US–GPO, 1937), p. 83; 1935/1938: U. S. Department of Labor, *Annual Report* (Washington, US–GPO, 1938), p. 97; 1939/1940: U. S. Department of Labor, *Annual Report* (Washington, US–GPO, 1940), p. 104; 1941/1944: U. S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, *Statistical Abstract of the United States, 1944–1945* (Washington, US–GPO, 1945), p. 112; 1945/1947: U. S. Department of Justice, *Annual Report of the Immigration and Naturalization Service* (Washington, US–GPO, 1952), Table 13A; 1948/1952: *Annual Report of the Immigration and Naturalization Service*, 1957, p. 37; 1953/1957: *Annual Report of the Immigration and Naturalization Service*, 1962, p. 46; for the remaining years see the *Annual Report of the Immigration and Naturalization Service* as follows: 1958, pp. 33–34; 1959, pp. 31–32; 1960, pp. 31–32; 1961, pp. 31–32; 1962, pp. 34–35.

¹⁰ For examples of estimates of the 'Greeks' in the United States, see among others: *Argonauts A* (1959), 166; Vournas, "Greeks in America", p. A138; Greek Archdiocese of North and South America, *1964 Year Book* (New York, 1964), p. 423.

¹¹ For 1850/1900, see Niles Carpenter, *Immigrants and Their Children, 1920* (Washington, U. S. Bureau of the Census, 1927), pp. 78–9; *1940 Census: Nativity and Parentage of the White Population*, Table 2, p. 10; *1950 Census: Special Reports*, Table 13, p. 75; *1960 Census; United States Summary, Detailed Characteristics*, Table 162, p. 366.

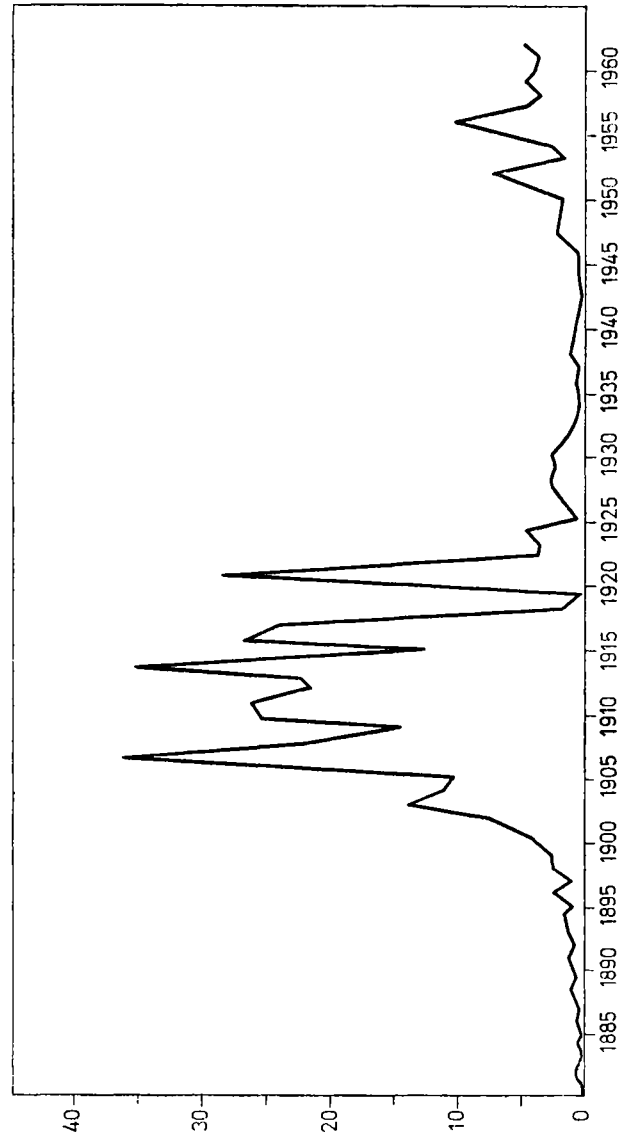


Figure 3. Greek Immigration to the United States, 1880—1962 (in thousands)

TABLE 2. *Greek Stock in the U. S., 1850—1960*

Year	Total	1st Gen	2nd Gen
1850	—	86	—
1860	—	328	—
1870	—	390	—
1880	—	776	—
1890	—	1,887	—
1900	—	8,515	—
1910	111,249	101,264	9,985
1920	228,055	175,526	52,083
1930	303,751	174,526	129,225
1940	326,672	163,252	163,420
1950	364,318	169,083	195,235
1960	377,973	158,894	219,079

1.2 POLICY AND PREJUDICE

In addition to the 'normal' difficulties of adjustment, the distrust between various ethnic groups, and the jealous hostility between established labor and the surfeit of new hands, the immigrants' problems were further compounded in the years before World War I. Native Americans, already somewhat suspicious of the unassimilated aliens in their midst, were perhaps somewhat startled and chagrined to witness the spectacle of fully-armed Greek regiments practicing in several fields in Chicago and then leaving to fight for Greece in the Balkan Wars. An estimated 57,000 immigrants returned to Greece for this conflict.¹²

The mushrooming pressure for more rapid assimilation found perhaps its clearest and most outspoken expression in Theodore Roosevelt's speech to the Knights of Columbus in Carnegie Hall on October 12, 1915:¹³

No man can be a good citizen if he is not at least in the process of learning to speak the language of his fellow-citizens. And an alien who remains here without learning to speak English for more than a certain number of years should at the end of that time be treated as having refused to take the preliminary steps necessary to complete Americanization and should be deported. But there should be no denial or limitation of the alien's opportunity to work, to own property, and to take advantage of his civic opportunities . . . If we leave the immigrant to be helped by representatives of foreign governments, by foreign societies, by a press and institutions conducted in a foreign language and in the interest of foreign governments, and if we permit the immigrants

¹² Thomas J. Lacey, *A Study of Social Heredity as Illustrated in the Greek People* (New York, 1916), p. 13.

¹³ Cited in Philip Davis, *Immigration and Americanization* (Boston, 1920), p. 655.

to exist as alien groups, each group sundered from the rest of the citizens of the country, we shall store up for ourselves bitter trouble in the future.

A number of organizations and institutions set forth to work toward a quick assimilation of the foreigners. It was conceived that the first step toward assimilation would be the learning of the English language by the immigrants. The Educational Alliance of New York, the YMCA, the American International College and other institutions, societies and committees provided the newcomers with courses in English and on a variety of subjects in several languages. Many societies in their eagerness to assimilate the immigrants hammered at their minds to make them forget as soon as possible about their past, their language, their culture, their customs.

Vlachos points out (p. 98): "The extreme nationalism of the Greeks, their inconsistent attitudes, their illiteracy due to their peasant background, and the impatience of Americans for a fast assimilation made the American attitude towards the Greeks more inflexible." The mere fact that Greeks were immigrants was not in their favor, and they felt under even more of a handicap because of their southern European origin, and their relatively late arrival. Prejudices and discrimination were mostly from competition with other immigrant groups. Vlachos (p. 98) mentions that "there were also a few cases of riots and mob action against the Greeks, but in general discrimination against them did not take any organized form".¹⁴ The Greek-American tribulations of these earlier times are thoroughly discussed and documented in the generally available Saloutos work mentioned above.

In the period between 1914 and 1924, the American immigration policy changed decisively. The changing of attitudes towards the immigrants came about as a combination of many events. There were first of all the fears and apprehensions aroused by the various ethnic groups, whose countries of origin stood against the United States in the international clash. On the other hand the great waves of immigrants after the turn of the century imperiled the standards set by the labor organizations and created fears of lowering the standard of living, pauperism, and crime. A new policy of restriction started developing with its underlying assumption being the basic superiority of the 'Older' over the 'Newer' Immigrants.

The heightened nativistic movements affected the Greeks in two ways. Vlachos (pp. 99–100) says:

One was the frustration-aggression developed from the feelings of inferiority and the striving for a higher status within the American society. The result of this was the fast discarding of the ethnic culture for a speedier identification with the dominant

¹⁴ For certain manifestations of prejudice and discrimination against the Greeks in the United States, see Theodore Constant, "Racial Prejudice and the Greek Stock in the United States", *Athene* V (1944), 8–11.

culture. On the other hand, racist ideology increased in many a Greek the feelings of superiority derived from the glory of his ethnic past and a sense of Hellenism.

I have witnessed both these forces still strongly at work today, often anti-thetically within members of the same Greek-American family.

At any rate, the 'restriction of immigrants' movement gained enough momentum that restrictive immigration laws were passed, even over the veto of President Wilson. The quota system introduced by the Immigration Act of 1924 put an end to the great transatlantic immigration, and especially restricted the 'newer' or later immigrants from southern Europe.¹⁵ The system was continued by the McCarran-Walter Act of 1952, with the Greek quota finally being set at 308 annually. With the provisions for such non-quota immigration as refugees and displaced persons, this allows for an average of 2,000 to 3,000 immigrants from Greece a year.

For purposes of our study, we may profitably note several consequences of this 'closing of the gates' and restriction of immigration after 1924. It resulted in stabilization of the ethnic population and increased acceptance of the United States as the place of permanent residence. It stopped large population replenishment from Greece and thus cut off one of the sources of perpetuation of Greek culture in the United States. It gave the homesick immigrant second thoughts about returning to Greece, because of the difficulties involved with the reentry of non-citizens. The primary result of all these factors was an increasing tempo of assimilation after 1924. Figure 4 shows Evan Vlachos' diagram of the interrelationship between exposure and assimilation. Several aspects of the assimilation process will be examined below in conjunction with the pertinent responses to our bilingualism questionnaire.

1.3 GEOGRAPHICAL DISTRIBUTION

Although the majority of the Greek immigrants were villagers, very few of them settled in agriculture. It may be true that the Greek immigrant peasant left his barren land to avoid the capriciousness and unpredictability of his agricultural profession. But perhaps more important is the fact that the relatively isolated life of a rural farm in the United States would seem to a Greek to be a far cry from the predominantly communal character of Greek rural life. Table 3 shows the almost exclusively urban pattern of settlement of the Greek ethnic stock in the United States for the years 1920 to 1960. In the reported figures of urban

¹⁵ For the general background of the immigration restrictions and the 'nativistic' movements see among others: Roy L. Garis, *Immigration Restriction: A Study of the Opposition to and Regulation of Immigration into the United States* (New York, 1927); John Higham, *Strangers in the Land* (New Brunswick, 1955); Barbara M. Solomon, *Ancestors and Immigrants* (Cambridge, Mass., 1956).

Figure 4. A Summary Design of the Interrelationship Between Exposure and Assimilation, Illustrating Certain Aspects of Social and Cultural Participation of Greek-Americans in the United States

AREAS OF ASSIMILATION	(exposure to U.S. culture)		
	"GENERATION"		
	A	B	C
ECONOMIC STATUS VOCATIONS	structural cultural	occupation // income //	preference for certain occupations // business initiative //
ORGANIZATIONS AND FORMAL ASSOCIATIONS	structural cultural	participation in organizations // participation in Greek activities //	feelings towards organizations // attitudes towards Greek activities //
POLITICS	structural cultural	voting // political frame of reference // Greek press //	attitudes towards American politics // ethnic identification //
EDUCATION	structural cultural	school years completed // Greek schooling //	desired education // feelings towards Greek schooling //
LANGUAGE	structural cultural	knowledge of Greek //	feelings towards learning and/or use of Greek in U.S. //
RELIGION	structural cultural	Church membership // Church attendance //	feelings towards the role of Greek Orthodox Church in U.S. //
FAMILY	structural cultural	rate of intermarriage // size of family //	feelings for intermarriage // attitudes towards birth control //

(assimilation)

TABLE 3. *Greek-American Urbanization*

Year	1st Gen %	2nd Gen %
1920	87.5	90.7
1930	91.3	91.0
1940	91.6	91.1
1950	—	—
1960	93.4	—

concentration, the Greeks present invariably a higher percentage than any other ethnic group.¹⁶

In spite of their preference for certain large urban areas, Greeks in their totality are considered as one of the most dispersed ethnic groups in the United

TABLE 4. *Distribution of Greek-Americans, 1960*

Region	Total Greek Stock	Per Cent
Northeast	168,315	44.5
North Central	104,326	27.5
South	49,517	13.0
West	56,428	15.0

States (See Table 4 for present regional distribution).¹⁷ This is shown by the statistics after the mass Greek immigrations were over. In the reported index of statistical concentration of the foreign white stock for 1920, the Greeks are the recent immigrant group that had not only the lowest index (*i.e.*, most widely dispersed) of all recent immigrant groups, but also the lowest index for ALL reported foreign white stock.¹⁸

Table 5 shows what percentage of the total population is made up of first- and second-generation foreign stock in five major United States cities.¹⁹ Chicago is the area of our main interest in this study. Roughly one-third (2,015,562) of the total population is first- or second-generation foreign stock, and of these only 34,545 trace their heritage to Greece (See Table 6).²⁰ Even

¹⁶ 1960 Census: *United States Summary, General Social and Economic Characteristics*, Table 100, p. 233.

¹⁷ 1960 Census: *United States Summary, Detailed Characteristics*, Table 236, pp. 623—6.

¹⁸ Carpenter, *Immigrants*, p. 57, especially Table 16.

¹⁹ 1960 Census: *United States Summary, General Social and Economic Characteristics*, Table 141, pp. 292—3.

²⁰ 1960 Census: *Illinois, Detailed Characteristics*, Table 99, pp. 474—8.