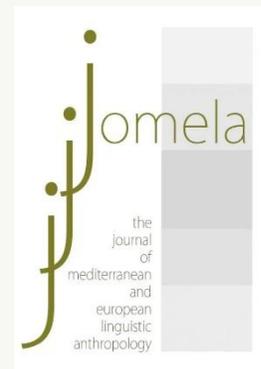


Indexicality and the Interactional Construction of Identity in Narratives of Return Migration

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Abstract

This study investigates narrative accounts of “return” migration told by second-generation biethnic Greeks (Greek Americans in their majority) who have migrated to Athens as adults. Based on a corpus of 12 ethnographic interviews about the linguistic and cultural experience of their ‘returns’, we focus on participants’ recounting of their relocation to their parents’ homeland as an experience of cultural assimilation and conflict, authenticity and hybridity. Narrative discourse has proven to be a fruitful locus for this area of inquiry because it allows speakers to construct and negotiate alignments and disalignments between Self and Other by adopting interactional positions in discourse. In line with current work on discourse and identity, we view identity as the product of discursive performance through a variety of linguistic devices.

Employing the frameworks of positioning (Davies and Harre 1990; Bamberg 1997) and stance (Dubois 2007) we examine how biethnic Greeks discursively navigate multiple overlapping and at times contradictory lingual, cultural, and national identities in their stories of return migration, and in doing so, how they take positions of authentication/denaturalization, and authorization/delegitimation (Bucholtz & Hall 2005). More specifically, we address the following questions: How do return migrants construct identity positions of themselves vis-à-vis (1) other members of their immigrant community; (2) native Greeks; and (3) the interviewer? How are

positioning devices employed and how are they negotiated during the interview in the construction of their cultural and national identities?

Our primary analytical focus is indexicality as a central process in the creation, enactment and ascription of identities (De Fina, Schiffrin and Bamberg 2006). In this paper, we are looking at the use of pronoun shifting, code-switching and double voicing as micro-level devices of positioning within the storyworld and the interactional context of the narrative (Bamberg 1997). The guided interviews provided the interactional framework within which participants narrated their early experiences as children of immigrant parents in the foreign land, their efforts to cultivate and maintain intra-ethnic group affiliations, as well as their problematic and often painful experience of settling in the parental homeland.

Return migrants constitute an understudied group, especially from a sociolinguistic perspective, and we argue that understanding the complex positioning of identities among this group may provide unique insights into the broader ideologies that mediate hybrid and hyphenated identities in general.

Keywords: *Return migrants, linguistic anthropology, indexicality, Greece*

1. Introduction

The past two decades have witnessed a flurry of research activity in the area of migration, transnationalism and diaspora from a wide array of social science disciplines - sociology, anthropology, geography and political science - (Faist, 2010). Almost in parallel, scholarly work in the humanities and social sciences firmly established the centrality of language in processes of identity construction, negotiation and maintenance. (Benwell & Stokoe, 2006; De Fina et al., 2006; Nikolaou, 2013). Increasing migration flows against the backdrop of intensifying globalisation and the demise of the former Eastern bloc, sparked interest in the study of return migration, a phenomenon that has received systematic attention since the 1990s from multiple theoretical perspectives: psychology (Gottesfeld & Mirsky, 1991), cultural geography (King & Christou, 2010a; King, 1977), sociology (Kulu, 1998; Zhou, 1997), anthropology ((Brettell, 2002), economics (Arowolo, 2000). Return migration is to a considerable extent not just a movement in space but also a movement in time and a pursuit of an identity that connects the individual with the imagined community that transcends geographical and temporal boundaries. Identity has a pivotal role in processes of return migration as it is the sustaining force that links migrant communities with their ancestral past, real or imagined, and a key motive behind the journey of return.

This study takes as its point of departure the recent research in sociolinguistics on the topic

of discourse, identity and migration, examining processes of immigration, the discursive construction of immigrant identities and communities and issues related to conflict, integration and assimilation in the host communities. It contributes to the current literature in terms of focus and in terms of perspective. It focuses on second generation Greek American return migrants, a group that has received extensive attention in the work of Anastasia Christou, mainly from an anthropological perspective. Our study, while firmly grounded in ethnomethodology, examines the intersections between language, identity and return migration as they emerge in narratives of relocation, belongingness and conflict, assimilation and estrangement. Our primary analytical focus is indexicality as a central process in constructing and negotiating identities at the level of narration, interaction and connection with broader socio-cultural ideologies. We argue that the study of return migration from a linguistic perspective may provide unique insights into the linguistic, ethnic and national ideologies that mediate hybrid, hyphenated and liminal identities on a broader scale.

2. Identity and Return Migration

Identity has been generally understood as a set of stable, immutable personal traits that lie at the core of the Self and define personality. Labels such as 'Greek', 'male', 'patriot' have been viewed as essentially unproblematic, unitary descriptions of inborn or early acquired (through the process of socialisation) characteristics that a person carries with them throughout their life. Following the 'postmodern turn' in social sciences and the humanities, identity has been radically reconceptualised as fluid, multidimensional, ongoing, discursively constituted (Benwell & Stokoe, 2006). In the era of globalisation, which Bauman (2013a) refers to as liquid modernity, identities are "perhaps the most acute, most deeply felt and troublesome incarnations of ambivalence" (p. 32). Crucially, Bauman (2013b) notes that individualisation, an ongoing process of modernity, has transformed identity from an ascriptive concept to a performative one. In other words, identity is no longer perceived as a given but as a task that the individual is responsible to perform. This view reflects current social constructionist approaches to identity emphasising the emergent nature of identity as arising in interactional intersubjective positions. (Bucholtz & Hall, 2005; De Fina et al., 2006; Jaffe, 2009; Johnstone, 2007).

Traditionally, immigration was viewed as a process that involves not only geographical and cultural re-alignments but also "a continuous definition and re-definition of one's identity and of one's membership into larger communities" (De Fina, 2003, p. 3) in the efforts of the individual to cope with the disruption of familiar patterns of life, the psychological alienation that often accompany relocation and the long process of adaptation to a new way of life. According to Bash et al. (2005) the underlying assumption identifies immigration as a permanent settlement in a foreign country which immigrants are expected to adopt as their new home and to which "they

will pledge allegiance” (p. 4). The three scholars argue that this conceptualisation, while grounded in historical precedent, is becoming increasingly outdated as contemporary immigrants maintain active links both with home country and their host country and “develop subjectivities and identities embedded in networks of relationships that connect them simultaneously to two or more nation-states” (p. 8). This new conceptualisation of immigration has given rise to the terms transnationalism and transmigrant to denote precisely the multiple ways in which immigrants forge ties across borders establishing multiple points of reference in an increasingly globalised and culturally deterritorialised world. For the purposes of this study, we adopt as a working definition of transnationalism “the process by which immigrants forge and sustain simultaneous multi-stranded social relations that link together their societies of origin and settlement (Schiller et al., 1995, p. 48).

Transnationalism is a relatively new term employed by social science as a descriptive and analytical category for the study of processes that link individuals, groups, and organisations across national borders. (Faist, 2010). Notionally, it is very closely related to diaspora, a very old concept with a long historical pedigree. The two terms are often used interchangeably although it has been persuasively argued that diaspora is a paradigmatic manifestation of transnationalism (Vertovec, 1999), focusing more narrowly on cultural, religious and national distinctiveness rather than broader issues of mobility and networks (Faist 2010) with the aim of “constructing a shared collective identity or ‘imagined community’” (Adamson, 2012, p. 13) Originally used to describe the exile of Jews from their ancestral homeland and by extension the forced dispersal of ethnic and religious communities, diaspora has more recently been conceptually stretched to include any type of dispersal including labour and trade migration (Cohen, 1997).

The literature abounds in taxonomic criteria providing conceptual demarcations pertaining to diasporic communities as distinguished from broader transnational processes and while their discussion lies beyond the scope of this article, two criteria are particularly relevant to the present study: (1) a collective memory of a common ancestral homeland, real or imagined and (2) a widely held hope of an eventual return (Safran, 1991).

The Greek diaspora is not only among the oldest historically attested diasporas in the world but it in fact played an instrumental role in the creation of the modern nation state of Greece (Jusdanis, 1991). Over several centuries Greek merchants and intellectuals scattered throughout Europe and the Near East had been engaged in nation building and in the late 18th and early 19th centuries there was a concentrated effort to forge a national(istic) ideology with an almost exclusive emphasis on the Hellenic classical heritage “whereby a new Greece in the image of Periclean Athens was invented” (Bien, 2005, p. 228). This vigorous and largely successful attempt to (re)-hellenise the Orthodox subjects of the Ottoman empire became the bedrock of a

modern Greek identity.

While the historical Greek diaspora predated Greece as an independent political entity, in the twentieth century new diasporic communities began to form as large numbers of Greeks migrated mainly to the United States, Western Europe, Canada and Australia for economic reasons. The official label used by the Greek government to refer to these communities is *apodemoi* 'expatriates', (literally 'away from the homeland') and applies to all persons of Greek ancestry irrespective of whether they were born in Greece or abroad. Although, the children and grandchildren of Greek emigrants are not literally *apodemoi*, the term implies an unbreakable link with the Greek homeland by virtue of a common ancestry. The related term *omogeneia* "ethnic group" (literally 'coethnicity'), also used to describe Greek diasporic communities, suggests according to Moskos (1989) an extension of the homeland. On the other hand, Greek migrant communities abroad have shown an extraordinary degree of integration into their host societies through political, cultural and entrepreneurial activity while retaining and promoting their cultural distinctiveness. Thus, Greeks of the diaspora feel and define themselves as much a "part of the Greek polity while they simultaneously remain embedded in the nation-states in which they are settled (Schiller et al., 1995, p. 53). Writing specifically about Greek Americans, Jusdanis (1991) maintains that this dual commitment cultivates a consciousness of membership of a transnational entity "while the unifying force of the Hellenic diaspora is no longer a place, the state-nation of Greece, but the imagined transcendent territory of Greekness which groups or individuals may appropriate to suit their own needs and interests" (p. 217). This very insightful observation is in line with current conceptualisations of transnationalism which view the homeland not only as a geographical location to which first generation immigrants or their descendants "return to for visits but also a concept and a desire – a place to return to through the imagination" (Le Espiritu & Tran, 2002). Although studies of the construction of identity reflecting transnational experiences presuppose theoretically or pragmatically the existence of a nation-state/birthplace/ancestral home, postmodern understandings of transnational networks challenge unidimensional/unidirectional notions of ethnocultural affiliation, placing emphasis on what has been characterized as increasing deterritorialisation (Basch et al., 2005), an uncoupling from the nation state (Tsolidis, 2014), a "long distance nationalism" that motivates people to participate in activities that link them with the ancestral homeland and at the same time binding them together with their homeland compatriots into what Fouron and Schiller (2002, p. 173) call a "single transborder citizenry".

As noted earlier, the desire to return to the homeland is one of the defining criteria of diasporic expatriate communities. Its accomplishment marks the reversal of the process of out migration and a sizeable minority of first-generation migrants accomplish it by moving back to their home countries. But it can also be accomplished vicariously through the relocation of their

children to the parental homeland actualizing the “deferred ambition of the first generation to return” (King & Christou, 2010a, p. 116). The two authors put forward the term ‘counter diasporic migration’ to describe precisely the process of the ‘homecoming’ of the second and subsequent generations as “the quintessential concluding moment of the diaspora cycle” (p. 115). Adopting an anthropological, constructivist perspective, Christou is the first scholar to theorise on second generation return migration as journey of self-discovery by focusing on the narrated stories of second-generation Greek Americans, who moved to Greece as a life stage decision and tracing identity construction processes as they emerge in their accounts of settling in the homeland of their parents. Their accounts are characterised by a sense of being between and betwixt, feeling connected and marginalised, belonging and estranged at the same time (Christou, 2006a, 2006b, 2006c, 2011) displaying hybrid identities “nuanced by place, space and time” (Tsolidis, 2014, p. 6).

3. Methodological Framework

In *sensu stricto*, the term ‘return migration’ applies to people who, having emigrated from their country of birth, return to the country (Bovenkerk, 2012). As such, the use of the term ‘return migrant’ in this study emerges as somewhat of a misnomer, because all but two of the participants were not actually born in Greece – and they have all spent the majority of their early lives in the ‘hostland’ of their parents, mostly in the US. However, we choose to use the blanket term ‘return migrant’ because all participants in our study had spent some time in Greece before moving there indefinitely. Additionally, many participants referred to their relocation to Athens as moving “back”, even if they had only spent a few summer vacations there previously, in the sense that this was a move back to the homeland of their ethnic roots and families; in fact, all participants reported having several members of their extended family who had never left Greece. The view of second generation migration to the parental homeland as a ‘return’ which is at the same time a ‘destination’ is nicely conceptualised by King and Christou as a chronotope involving movement in space and time (2010b). Almost all of our participants fall into the subtypes of return migration identified by the two authors, in their paper, provide a fine categorisation of different types of return migration.

It should be noted, however, that one participant challenged the interviewer’s use of the term ‘return’ when talking about his move to Greece, pointing out that he was born and raised in Australia, thus indicating that terms such as ‘home’ and ‘homeland’ are not unproblematic and carry different significations for different people.

3.1 Narrative Construction of Identity and Positioning Theory

Positioning theory provides the overarching framework of our study. It builds on the notion that

identity is performed or accounted for in dialogic encounters. The term was introduced by Hollway (1984) in relation to the analysis of subjectivity in the domain of psychology but it was Davies and Harré (1990) who first used positioning as an analytical tool in the analysis of social interaction and narratives (Deppermann, 2013). The two scholars distinguish between interactive positioning, in which a person positions another person by what they say, and reflexive positioning in which a person positions oneself. They define positioning as “the discursive process whereby selves are located in conversations as observably and subjectively coherent participants in jointly produced story lines” (1990, p. 48). Storylines provide the interactional ground whereby individuals locate themselves in a moral universe within which subjective positions are taken, enacted, rejected and contested. These possibilities imply an underlying tension between determinism and choice which is also indexed by fact that as a verb ‘position’ can be used both actively and passively (Hermans & Hermans-Konopka, 2010). The performative dimension of positioning underscores Bamberg’s (1997, 2004; Bamberg & Georgakopoulou, 2008) as it is specifically applied to narrative analysis. Bamberg identifies three distinct levels of positioning in narrative practice: that within the storyworld of a narrative (Level 1), within the interactional context of the narrative telling (Level 2) and with respect to broader discourses and master narratives that extend beyond the reported events and interactional context (Level 3).

Narrative discourse in particular has been considered a “privileged site for the negotiation of social reality” (De Fina & King, 2011 p. 166) because it allows speakers to construct and negotiate alignments and distinctions between the Self and various Others. Viewing narrative, in De Fina and King’s words, as “a form of argumentation, allowing narrators to express opinion and beliefs indirectly, through the mediation of characters,” we believe that stories told about the experience of return migration are particularly fruitful in the exploration of the complex hybrid identities of return migrants. These narratives also shed light on return migrants’ beliefs about their competence in the heritage language the role that language ideology plays in their authentication and delegitimation of their Greek, American, and cosmopolitan or transnational identities.

3.2 Analytical Categories

A central element of our analysis is Ochs’ (1993) observation that identity is, in most cases, not directly indexed in the grammatical structures of language but is mediated through stance i.e. epistemic and affective attitudinal positions (Du Bois, 2007). We view, indexicality as a set of resources that mediate between the local context of the interaction and wider cultural assumptions ideologies and presuppositions or in Malinowskian terms, they are devices that anchor the context of situation to a context of culture. More specifically, we draw on metapragmatic discourse, membership categorisation, constructed dialogue/double voicing

and evaluative indexicals.

3.3 Sample and Data Collection

Our study is based on guided narrative interviews with return migrants from the English-speaking diaspora that lasted between 20 and 50 minutes with an average time of 34 minutes. From a socio-constructionist standpoint narrative interviews have been an invaluable instrument in exploring the discursive construction of identity because they provide an interactional frame for “a situated co-constructed interaction between participant and interviewer” (Benwell & Stokoe, 2006 p. 143).

To date, a total of 14 interviews have been conducted with 11 Greek Americans, 1 Greek Canadian, 1 Greek Australian and 1 Greek British, most of whom were living in Greece one was on a short-term stay in Athens, two had already relocated to the USA and one to the UK at the time of the interviews. To complicate matters more, three of our informants, have subsequently relocated to the UK and the US, which renders the concept of return migration fairly fluid and multi-layered. The first author interviewed 11 participants (10 of which were based in Athens and one in Crete) and the second author interviewed 2 participants in the US and the UK via Skype. Finally, one participant in Greece was jointly interviewed by both authors (first author in-person, and second author via Skype). Interviews took place in English, since this was the language most interviewees felt more comfortable with and also the language of communication between the two authors, and were fully transcribed using a reduced version of Gail Jefferson’s (2004) transcription system. All interviews were based on an interview guide that aimed to elicit information from the respondents about six main areas:

- Family history
- Home language practices
- Formal instruction in Greek while in the diaspora
- Connections with and travel to Greece while in the diaspora
- Language and identity

Frequently, we departed from our guided script and followed the trajectory of the participants’ account of their diasporic life and the experience of relocating to Greece with probing questions and requests for elaboration. Unlike ordinary conversational interactions, ethnographic interviews are characterised by a minimal level of turn-taking as the focus is the storytelling of the interviewee. However, this built-in interactional asymmetry allows the narrator to engage in identity work while establishing the necessary common ideological and cultural ground with the interviewer (De De Fina and King, 2011). Notwithstanding the inherent interactional one-sidedness in our interviews, it should be acknowledged that on occasion interview questions positioned the participants to take up specific identity positions either by accepting or rejecting

their underlying presuppositions, thus demonstrating the subject's agentive role in accepting or accepting or countering identity positions (Johnson, 2006)

Our analysis in this paper focuses on extracts from two interviews. Both informants are female, in their early 50s at the time of the interviews, holding academic positions at an American University in Greece. They are second generation Greek Americans but interestingly they do not fit neatly into King and Christou's (2010b) typology of second generation return migrants. Antigone was born to a Greek father and an Italian American mother in Saigon and at an early age she moved with her parents to the United States. Christina, was born in Greece and migrated to America when she was 3 and a half. At the age of 5 she moved back to Greece and 3 years later she emigrated back to the US where she spent 21 years before relocating permanently to Greece at 29. It is evident that transnational experiences are so complex and diverse that resist attempts at quick and dirty categorisation.

4. Data Analysis

4.1 Metapragmatic Labels as Positioning Devices

A common theme that emerged in the interviews was the perception of the difference between the Greek spoken in the diaspora and in Greece. For most of the participants this came as a realisation when they moved to Greece, some expressing surprise mixed with embarrassment caused by the reactions of their autochthonous compatriots. The discovery of self-ascribed linguistic deficiency is epitomised in a memoir published by one of the participants, Antigone, appropriately entitled *Broken Greek: A Language to Belong* and which she mentions in the interview. Antigone, problematises her relationship to her Greek heritage both on a cultural and a linguistic level against the backdrop of her father's problematic relationship with Greece. The extract below is part of Antigone's response to the interviewer's question about which language was spoken in her home before moving to the US.

51	A	Althou::gh my parents sometimes spoke in a kind of broken
52		Greek sort of thing cos they thought we didn't understand
53		it, 'cos my father never taught it to us formally

Excerpt 1

Antigone makes an indirect admission of linguistic inadequacy through the metapragmatic label 'broken Greek' with which she describes the quality of Greek spoken in her home and interestingly she also attributes it to her father's unwillingness to teach her Greek formally. This is a rather odd justification as her father, a native speaker of Greek, was born on the Princes' Islands (Turkey) and raised in Greece. Moreover, parents do not normally pass on their mother

tongue to their children through formal instruction. This extract appears early in the interview and is the first in a series of accounts through which Antigone, implicitly or explicitly indexes her cultural in-betweenness (see Nikolaou & Sclafani, 2018 for a more detailed discussion). Later in her interview, Antigone explains that her father's relationship with his parents was strained because of his marital choice and his relationship with his homeland was no less problematic as he literally fled to America shortly after the end of World War II and before the Greek Civil War broke out to avoid political exile because of his left-wing affiliations.

The next extract is an extended self-reflection whereby Antigone frames her lack of adequate proficiency in Greek as a concomitant of her father's ambivalent feeling toward his co-ethnics.

150	A	Uh informally, uh I learned it in the summers when I was here
151	I	Mmm
152	A	With my grandparents my father ne:ver made the effort to pass on the language
153		which was which later in life became an issue for me: of (.) complaint u:m but it
154		was part of his like general rejection of the culture I ↑think uh in
155		in different lev- on the different levels one was because he left so young and then
156		sort of left kinigimenos (hunted)
157	I	Hm-mm
158	A	U:m you know chased so to speak
159	I	Hm-mm
160	A	And the other thing is I think that he basically u:m felt uh u:m (2.5) that this
161		was the language that belonged to his pa:s[t and something that didn't
162	I	[uh-hu:::h
163	A	necessarily want to pass on
164	I	U:h I see .hhh e:h so you did not go to Greek school you eh acquired the language
165		Informally, mmm
166	A	Yeah and this is the problem for me this is has remained the problem.

Excerpt 2

In line 153 she uses the word 'issue' to frame her linguistic deficiency as a problem and immediately upgrades to the word 'complaint' which belongs to a class of metapragmatic descriptors known as *verba dicendi* and explicitly denote a narrated addressee (Agha, 2006) in this case Antigone's father against whom the complaint is directed. In the next line Antigone makes an explicit connection between her father's rejection of his Greek identity and his unwillingness to pass on the language to his daughter making an implicit appeal to one of the most time-honoured language ideologies that language is an indisputable index of ethno-cultural affiliation. Antigone, evaluates negatively her lack of adequate proficiency in Greek, as result of her father's unwillingness to do so, by using the word 'problem' twice in line 166, a typical example of a retrospective label as it meets its two defining criteria: it signals how the preceding

stretch of discourse is to be interpreted and it sets the evaluative framework for her subsequent account (Francis 2002). A little later in the interview, she refers to the Greek that she spoke when she moved to Greece in her early twenties as “a kind of bastardised Greek”. She further elaborates this description through explicit metalinguistic commentary in lines 351-353 on her difficulty to adhere to normative uses of grammar.

331	I	U::h ah-um (1.0) a::nd u:m: .hhh (0.5) in in in casual encounters do
332		acquaintances and strangers assume you are fully Greek?
333		(0.8)
334	A	Yes they do indeed and that's very uncomfortable
335	I	((laughs)) why is this uncomfortable?
336		(1.1)
337	A	because I'm embarrassed at the fact that I don't speak fluent Greek.
338	I	They might realise later on (0.5) that
339	A	Yeah like somehow d[eceptive
340	I	[having them on yes .hhh
341	A	And that I that I se:ll my identity as a Greek in fact I'm this like hybrid (.)
342	I	you know fusion ((laughs))
343		(((laughs))
344		A:nd have you ever gotten the impression that people realised you were Greek
345		American because of the way you talk?
346		(2.0)
347	A	U::h I'm not sure↑ that's a good question from which side from the Greek si[de o]r
348	I	[yea]
349		the Americ[an]?
350	I	[th] the Greek side .hhh
351	A	Yeah yeah yeah the Greek side first for sure especially when I confuse the tenses
352		not only the tenses the gender the thing I'm I'm always told that I turn everything
353		into female

Excerpt 3

In this extract, Antigone in addition to engaging in a metalinguistic evaluation of her Greek language skills, she also links her linguistic hybridity expressed earlier as ‘bastardised’ Greek with her cultural hybridity. She seems to accept the essentialist presupposition nested in the interviewer’s question that there is such thing as an ‘ethnically’ full person and the concomitant ideological assumption that hybridity presupposes anterior cultural purity (Hutnyk, 2005). Crucially, Antigone, positions herself as someone who cannot lay a legitimate claim to full Greekness and this is a source of embarrassment for her which she tries to play down with a burst of laughter in line 442 perhaps as a way of lessening the tension (Coates, 2015) arising from the troublesome account of her hybridity.

4.2 Positioning Oneself as ‘Other’ Through Double Voicing

So far we have looked at examples of what Davies and Harré (1990) refer to as reflexive positioning through which Antigone locates herself culturally and linguistically as an in-between person by using evaluative lexis and engaging in metalinguistic commentary. In this excerpt, the interviewer asks Antigone to recount any experiences of conflict with her social milieu in Greece as a result of her admitted less-than-satisfactory level of competence in Greek and her diasporic cultural background. Antigone starts out by referring explicitly to her ‘conflict’ with the Greek university system. In a casual conversation some time before this interview, she had related to the first author the details about her failed attempt to obtain a faculty position at a state university in Greece as a result of cronyism.

498	A	Yeah, yeah I think that came up more in the past but um in Broken Greek the
499		chapter Traffic Politics and the other chap- and the other chapter that has the you
500		know of that has has to do with my my conflict with the Greek university system.
501		Those were two very uh those were sort of discussed especially the the the
502		encounter with the Greek university system. That sort of answers your question on
503		multiple l[evels] because you know as you know the whole public sector in Greece in
504	I	[uh-huh]
505	A	the eighties particularly during the Papandreou you know situation and so forth
506		I almost said regime but anyway .hh um has, had, had: (0.2) had to do with you
507		know who knew whom and whether or not you were sort of within this tribe so
508		obviously not speaking Greek fluently and not being ένα δική μας (one [neut.] of
509		us [fem.])που δεν είσαι δική μας είσαι απ' έξω είσαι ξένο ή ξένη (who you are not
510		one of us you are a foreigner (lit. from abroad) [neut.] or
511		foreigner [fem.]you know you're something other the sense of otherness was very a-
512		acute).

Excerpt 4

It is clear in what follows (lines 505-507) that she views this incident not as an isolated event in her personal history but as an endemic problem of the political life in Greece in the 1980s. Her use of ‘regime’, a word with a strong negative semantic prosody and in-group marker ‘tribe’ accentuate her psychological alienation from unfair institutional practices where appointment with the civil service was largely based on political affiliation and personal connections rather than merit. In line 508, Antigone segues into performative display of othering (Van Langenhove & Harré, 1999) by switching into Greek to illustrate how she was positioned by Greeks as an alien. Code-switching performs two functions here. First, it frames the quotation sequence that follows, animating her narrative (Sebba, 1993), and possibly expressing emotionally charged meanings (Gardner-Chloros, 2009) as Antigone echoes the voice of the autochthon, whom she

implicitly blames for ostracising her from the public sphere because she is the ‘other’. This leads to the second function of her code-switching. She acts out her otherness through the realisation of a grammatically anomalous utterance¹. Her ‘otherness’ is constructed through double-voicing in the form of reporting and enacting. On the one hand she invokes through reported speech the voice of the autochthon, the legitimate member of the ‘tribe’ encapsulating her feeling of exclusion from the national fabric. On the other hand, Antigone accentuates her hybrid status through her grammatically anomalous utterance in Greek, which interestingly displays the very grammar mistakes she reports as committing when she speaks Greek (line 352), thus indexing her problematic relationship with Greece.

4.3 Identity Shifts through Membership Categorisation

In the next excerpt, Christina, a Greek-American professional in her early 50s presents an interesting case of shifts through multiple identities not necessarily all mutually inclusive.

232	C	I think that (.) the fact that I call myself a Greek American when my sister calls
233		herself American Greek (0.7)
234	I	Mmm
235	C	Eh I’m just gonna use that as a reference point to say that I consider myself Greek
236		with a strong influence by the American culture and cos my attitude to my belief
237		system
238	I	Uh-um
239	C	((caughs)) uhm I think I have (.) especially toward other people it’s the American
240		personality too but (.) I definitely that has been influenced by the Texan culture
241	I	(0.3)
242	C	Mm-[um
243	I	[(not the) American culture, Texan culture.
244	C	I see.
245		Cos when I was in Europe I thought these people are very rude (.) whereas in Texas
246		people smile and (.) you know what ↑ whether they mean it or not I appreciate the smile.

Excerpt 5

In this example, Christina begins by taking up an explicit identity position (line 232). She uses a matching relation pattern (‘I call myself X’, my sister calls herself Y’) that allows her to accentuate the contrast with her sister in her self-representation as a Greek American in opposition to her sister’s self-representation as an American Greek. Moreover, this pattern is realised through the identifying relational process² verb ‘call’ which frames her as well as her sister’s membership ascription as the result of conscious choice rather than an imposed ascription. In line 235, she repositions herself as a non-hyphenated Greek by dropping

'American' from the complement of the second identifying relational clause and relegating it to an adjunctive position as part of the prepositional phrase "with a strong influence by the American culture". At first, this example shows an affiliative positioning toward the Greek identity but in line 239, she begins to juxtapose her self-ascribed dominant Greek identity not against her (subordinate) American identity but her Texan one. She goes on to compare unfavourably Europeans and Texans on politeness (lines 244-236) suggesting that Texan people are friendlier, which begins to gradually undermine her earlier categorical self-positioning as a Greek only to restore it a few lines later when she emphatically states "I definitely consider myself more Greek," which, in the context of what follows is an outright contradiction but in reality it undergirds the underlying complexity and multifacetedness of identity.

In this example, Christina provides an account of how she experienced adjustment after her relocation to Greece in her late twenties. She begins by evoking her occupational status as a psychologist not only as new identity marker but also as a 'buffer' against her encounters with what she considers a stifling parochialism. Her professional identity provides the strongest claim of affiliation. She frames her invoked membership in a group of professionals, people of a socially elevated status and ethnically diverse background as providing protection and safety against the perceived threat her immersion in Greek society poses. By employing membership categorization, she makes a series of statements of identity affiliation through the use of "I" plus the relational possessive 'belong':

"I belonged in a group of professionals"

"I belonged with the Greek Americans in the American College of Greece..."

"I belonged with eh the: you know people from the embassies

"and an international group of people"

that culminate in her affirmation of her American identity as the dominant in line 333. Intriguingly, however, asked by the interviewer in line 319 to clarify her earlier claim in line 314 that she sought protection from the local culture through her professional and social affiliations, Christina backtracks on her claim with an explicit agentive statement with which she positions herself as someone who 'chose' to belong in that group. The group to which she refers to, however is an amalgam of professionals, academics and diplomats not characterised by specific ethno-cultural affiliations. This marks a radical identity realignment, away from a nearly non-hyphenated Greekness as expressed in the attributive relational clause "I consider myself Greek with a strong influence by the American culture" (lines 235-236) toward an identity position from which the attribute 'Greek' has been replaced by 'international' and 'American' and itself relegated into a location adjunct, "in Greece" (line 332). Greeks now become a group to which she can relate but not fully belong (line 334).

305	C	I think a big buffer for me at that time was my professional life which is very
306		active
307	I	Mm-hm
308	C	it had to do with eh (.) people in my profession
309	I	Mm-hm
310	C	who were also exposed into the American, the internation- and international
311		cultures and so (.) I was a different person but you have to also consider the
312		field of psychology we deal with individual differences so
313	I	Mm-hm-um
314	C	and protected I think by those people
315	I	[Mm-hm
316	C	[and] didn't really experience the Greek culture per se.
317	I	Uh-um
318	C	And I think what I really tried to do I I don't think I really belonged there.
319	I	You used the word "protected" by the people so did you uh somehow ah perceive this
320		eh u:m eh integration or reintegration as a (.) as as as a threat?
321		(0.9)
322	I	E:::hm
323	C	I saw it as the choosing where I belong
324	I	Mm-hm.
325	C	and I belonged in () of professionals
326	I	Mm-hm.
327	C	I belonged with the Greek Americans in the American College of Greece at the time
328	I	Mm-hm.
329	C	I belonged with eh the: you know people from the embassies
330	I	Mm-hm.
331	C	and an international group of people
332	I	Mm-hm.
333	C	So I don't I () see myself international (2.8) um American but in Greece.
334	I	Right
335	C	Not really ever considered myself a Greek Greek. Although I could relate to them
336		but[I'm not] gonna be a part of them but because it's not me it's no- not a good
337	I	[Ah-huh]
338		match for me. Even my husband is very well travelled is an international guy oand o
339		and his I don't really (0.7) not Greek Greek.
340	I	Uh-um (0.7) Right.
341	C	>Does that make sense?<
342	I	Yeah↑ it does. U::h it's in[teresting
343	C	[I mean I love to go to Plaka I love to go to Thesio I
344		love to go to (.) you know and none of none of the touristy places I love to you
345		know go to eh (.) Peristeri or you know to go to Pirea you know but I don't
346		experience it as a local person I experience it as a (.) person who just loves the
347		environment and (.) you know chooses though from the environment who to interact
348		with.

349	I	Mm-hm.
350	C	(like) the Greek Greek people, people who never travelled outside of Greece↑ that are not
351		open-minded possibly they are just not my kind of eh (.)
352	I	Mm-hm.
353	C	people that I would be attracted to
		((a few turns omitted))
365	C	Um that (.) culture and values and language are all intertwined and play a role in
366		how a person (.) experiences reality express reality so I I think that eh before I
367		said that I will not be attracted to somebody but I don't think that they will be
368		attracted to me too↑

Excerpt 6

Toward the end of this excerpt (lines 349-352) Christine resorts to negative stereotyping via membership categorisation: Greeks, never travel outside Greece and are not open-minded. They lack the very traits which by implication she possesses i.e. cosmopolitanism and open-mindedness. This is the culminating point of a process of disaffiliation that Christina has been building up, beginning with a token statement of affiliation to a Greek American identity (line 232) and ending with a remarkable U-turn away from that position when she says in lines 350-352 that Greeks “are just not my kind of...people”. This extract ends on a high disaffiliative note with Christina setting up an implicative contrast between herself and her non migrant co-ethnics on the basis of cultural differences, invoking traditional markers of ethnonational identification (culture, values and language) which accentuate the mentality contrast expressed as a reciprocal sentiment of antipathy (‘I don’t like them – they don’t like me’) as suggested in lines 367-368.

4.4 *Self-authentication as a ‘True’ Greek.*

In this extract, Christina, engages in a lengthy response to the interviewer’s question about whether she thinks that there are any advantages or disadvantages to being a Greek American in Greece. She begins by listing positive traits that Greek Americans are defined by, namely that they “can think outside the Greek constraints”, are “flexible”, and can “generate more ideas”, which she implicitly juxtaposes with domestic parochialism and narrow-mindedness that she views as characteristic of many Greek Greeks. Prima-facia, this appears to be a typical performance of self-otherisation but, significantly, this turns out to be an act of counter-othering as she weaves into her list of advantages an unqualified claim to ethnocultural membership in line 397 that she is a descendant of (ancient Greek) philosophers and by implication she lays claim to the ancestral optimism and realism that defines Greek Americans but which her modern indigenous compatriots seem to have lost. Through a skilful interactional move Christina authenticates herself as a true heir of Greekness within a frame of cultural superiority.

391	C	I think a big disadvanta- eh advantage right now is that eh Greek Americans
392		generalizing just doing that u:m (.) can think outside of the Greek e:h
393		constraints↑
394	I	Mm-hm, Mm-hm
395	C	And you know that you know and the (.) Greek mindset (0.5)
396	I	Mm-hm.
397	C	Unfortunately, I come from a a nation of ph- philosophers and ((laughs)) they
398		should think () on philosophy and were optimistic and realistic and you know
399		more e::h οπως το λένε αυτό τώραο (how do you say this now) e::h flexible
400	I	[flexible]
401	C	[()] but, but I think that (.4) e::h (1.5) what I notice is that we
402		generate more ideas as Greek Americans.
403	I	Mm-hm
404	C	because we've had that exposure to another country and we've (.) really you know
405		I have the operations of another country (.) inside of us through television through
406		schooling and through you know the way that education is e:h
407	I	Mm-hm
408	C	done in the States a:nd um social life, business you know the way that it's done
409		in the States and the thing we bring that with us
410	I	Mm-hm
411	C	and I think that's the big advantage
412	I	Uh-[um.

Excerpt 7

4.5 Performing Self-otherisation Through Style-shifting and Double-voicing

Following her enumeration of advantages, Christina begins her discussion of disadvantages (line 415). The only disadvantage she mentions is her perception from an early age of being stereotyped as “to xazoamerikanaki 3”, a longstanding cultural stereotype in Greece about Americans. Line 418 marks a significant interactional point at which Christina begins to construct a discursive representation of herself as “the other” not on the basis of self categorisation but as a result of negative stereotyping from the community of people she nominally identifies with. The shift from the “I” of the previous self-ascriptions to the “we” that extends to the wider Greek American community and its repetition in line 419 signals a clear and sharp dichotomy between ‘us’ the Greek Americans and ‘them’, the autochthonous Greeks. She embeds this new episode of disaffiliation into a narrative about the time she would visit Greece in the summer as a child and her unsuccessful efforts to blend in with the local people. At the interactional level, the construction of the stereotype is jointly accomplished here.

413	C	[you wanna hear a disadvantage?
414	I	Yea ye- [(if you can)] think of any?
415	C	[[coughs]] A disadvantage that I don't think that I really tried to avoid
416		when I was growing up was that I did not want to be called τo hazoamerikanaki (the young naive American)
417	I	((laughs))
418	C	because we were always the innocent people we were always the u::h the: gullible
419		and
420	I	naïve
421	C	naïve↑ and I I heard I've heard that a lot and when I was growing up I remember
422		coming to Greece in summer and hanging out with the Greek Americans and also making
423		it a point of hanging out with the locals (.) making the point to hang out with all
424		different kinds of people (0.5) and (.) and being afraid to be put in that
425		category of τo xazoamerikanaki (the young naive American) (.) I never heard that (the young naive American)
426		for myself but I did hear for other people.
427	I	Yeah, yeah a:[nd
428	C	[and] and some times I thought it was u:m not fair but I I thought
429		that they I knew where I was coming from that they talked e:h in Greek in with with
430		the the interruptions and with eh with this with the kind of jokes that the
431		American make the point of the jokes but (.) you know τin profora you know the (the accent)
432		accent (and so) I thought that that was you know something I really wanted to avoid
433		so I tried not and I was good at it (1.2) a- adjusting my voice (from what I'm aware because I
434		am from Texas I can talk like this if I want ((affects a Texan accent))
435	I	((laughs))
436	C	So I I worked on that though I think that when I was living in this small city I
437		tried to talk with the locals .hh and tried to blend in
438	I	Yes, mm-hm
439		and um so I I I did feel that then and I do think it happens now when people say
440		Α τι κάνεις you know είσαι καλά ↑ and όλα καλά↑((affects a Greek American accent)).
441		You know I do think that people look at an Ameri- in the back of their mind I
442		(sometimes am afraid that they have this image of (0.7) η xazoamerikana (the naïve American woman).

Excerpt 8

In line 420 the interviewer offers a descriptor of the xazoamerikanáki, which she takes up in her explanation. In the rest of this part, which concludes the interview, Christina offers an account of her efforts to amalgamate by supressing her American accent so as to avoid being the butt of jokes by non-migrant Greeks. She engages in voice stylisation (line 434) by affecting the accent of her native Texas thus demonstrating her linguistic agility which coupled with her earlier assertion (lines 425-426) that she had never been the target of the pejorative

“xazoamerikanáki” may suggest that she self-positions as an untypical member of the category Greek American who wants to be seen on an equal footing vis-à-vis non migrant Greeks.

After her evaluation of her efforts to integrate as unsuccessful in line 441, she resorts to free direct speech switching to Greek pronounced with an exaggerated American accent to illustrate the point she just made and three lines below she reiterates “i xazoamerikána” (the naïve American woman) to make more emphatic the point she made in lines 415-416. Code-switching here has a metaphorical use because it allows the speaker to index a misalignment with her Greek identity by weaving into the narrative a second voice in the form of quoted speech which is an instance of a typical formulaic greeting sequence in Greek. However, Christina’s mimicking of the American accent gives it a sense of otherness, which in Rampton’s (1998, p. 304) words, drawing on the Bakhtinian notion of double-voicing, “makes the appropriation conditional and introduces some reservation into the speaker’s use of [the second voice]”. In other words, Christina switches to Greek not so much to index proximity but estrangement from fellow Greeks which is indexed by her exaggerated foreign pronunciation. Her normal pronunciation when she speaks Greek is native Greek. But in this particular example the foreignness was intentional and motivated.

The extracts we have examined from Christina’s interview nicely capture the process of conflicting tendencies of membership affiliation and disaffiliation where the latter seem to prevail. Pronominal shifts, language stylisation and membership categorisation allow the interactional accomplishment of shifting through multiple identity positions.

5. Conclusion

In this paper we have explored the interactional construction of identity in the narratives of return migration of two Greek Americans who in their adult life decided to move to their parents’ homeland. Antigone and Christina are two emblematic cases in our data, articulating very clearly the fluid and elusive nature of identity. To add to the complexity, Antigone has recently moved back to the United States (possibly another ‘return’) something which challenges the seeming fixedness of our analytic categories. The participants construct identity positions as narrators, (positioning level 1), as interactants (positioning level 2) and as inhabitants of socio-cultural spaces that transcend the here and now of the interactional moment (positioning level 1). More specifically, Antigone, through metapragmatic labels and evaluative indexicals positions her father as being responsible for her lack of her “broken Greek”. At the same time, she seems to accept the essentialist presupposition in the interviewer’s question (Excerpt 3, line 332) and respond to the question without challenging it, thus allowing the implicative positioning of herself by the interviewer as not fully belonging to the category “Greek”. This is further accentuated in Excerpt 4 through the narration of a painful incident that made her feel a cultural

alien. By resorting to constructed dialogue and code-switching she provides a performative demonstration her cultural and linguistic hybridity. Similarly, Christina, employs mainly membership categorisation as a positioning device indexing, in the context of her narration, a gradual move away from her initially avowed Greekness to professional and supra-ethnic categories, with one significant exception: she lays claim to 'authentic Greekness' because she is more attuned as a cosmopolitan oriented Greek American to the cultural legacy of ancient Greece. Finally, like Antigone, she engages in a performative display of disaffiliation from her Greek identity through style-shifting and constructed dialogue. Both participants use indexical cues that position them as close and at the same time as far away from their ethnic heritage. They representative of a large sample of bi-ethnic Greeks who are moving across space and time in a multidirectional journey of personal discovery.

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7. Endnotes

- ¹ In Greek the indefinite article must agree in gender with the possessive pronoun. In her utterance Antigone, uses the neuter form of the indefinite article, 'ένα' instead of the feminine form 'μία' although this is followed immediately by correction signalled by the disjunctive 'ή' (or) where the phrase is repeated without the indefinite article. The same pattern is repeated when she uses the adjective 'ξένο' (foreigner: neuter) to be followed immediately by its feminine counterpart 'ξένη' through disjunction again. The fact that Antigone, is able to self-correct, although her falling intonation contour does not appear to index self-correction, indicates linguistic ambivalence than outright inadequacy, which reinforces her self-ascribed hybrid identity.
- ² We use the term 'process' as it is used in Systemic Functional Linguistics to denote a verb's broad semantic category.
- ³ The term 'xazoamerikanáki' is a combination of the Greek adjective 'χαζός' [xazós] which means 'naïve', 'simple-minded' and the noun 'Αμερικανάκι' [amerikanáki] which literally means 'a young American' but it is almost exclusively used in its metaphorical sense 'a person who can be easily taken for a ride', a 'sucker'. The compound form is heard in

a few of the interviews with Greek Americans but it is rarely heard in Greece. Normally, Greeks use only the noun ‘Αμερικανάκι’ (usually in the plural form ‘αμερικανάκια’) to refer to Americans collectively or in expressions such as “με περνάς για Αμερικανάκι?” [me pernas gia Amerikanáki?] (lit. do you take me for a young American? metaph. ‘do you take me for someone who can be easily cheated?’). As Papapoliviou (2014) suggests, the word traces its history to the post-war period when young American servicemen began to appear en masse in mainland Greece due to the Civil War and the establishment of American military bases. The innocent looks on their faces (unlike savvy Europeans) made them easy targets for local artful crooks who easily cheated them out of their money. Moreover, according to Slang.gr, an online Greek slang dictionary, the expression ‘amerikanaki’ was used in the first decade after the restoration of democracy in mid 1970s to express political anti-Americanism on a cultural level.