

*Hellenes and Romans: Oppositional Characterological Figures
and the Enregisterment of Istanbul Greek*

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Abstract

Language users discursively circulate ideologies of identity, especially in stances taken while assigning social characteristics to enregistered personae. Previous research has demonstrated that with the Istanbul Greek diaspora, speakers use the emic terms of *Ellines* and *Romioi* to orient to or away from Mainland Greeks, respectively. In this paper, I discuss how Istanbul Greeks in Turkey relate such ethnonyms to linguistic features and how they rely on enregistered dialectal features to construct their ethnicity as *Romioi* in opposition to *Ellines*. These ethnonyms result in personae that are used stylistically, but in turn fractally (re)create differentiation into separate ethnic categories. Such sociolinguistic processes demonstrate how linguistic variation is socially embedded in a minoritized indigenous speech community. Studying variation in concert with ethnonym use shows how speakers add nuanced meaning to established identity categories and create new ones based on their lived experiences.

Keywords: stance, metapragmatic discourse, enregisterment, ideologies, variation

Το λογοπλαίσιο (discourse) της γλωσσικής επικοινωνίας αποτελεί όχημα διακίνησης ιδεολογιών ταυτότητας ιδίως σε περίπτωση που ορισμένες στάσεις εμπεριέχουν απόδοση κοινωνικών χαρακτηριστικών σε καταχωρισμένα πρόσωπα. Προηγούμενη έρευνα δείχνει ότι οι ελληνόφωνοι εντόπιοι της Κωνσταντινούπολης μεταχειρίζονται τους ημικούς όρους «Έλληνες» και «Ρωμιοί» χάριν ομοίωσης ή διαφοροποίησής τους από τους Ελλαδίτες αντίστοιχα. Η παρούσα πραγματεία διερευνά πώς οι Κωνσταντινουπολίτες συνδέουν τέτοια εθνώνυμα με γλωσσικά χαρακτηριστικά και πώς βασίζονται σε καταχωρισμένα διαλεκτικά χαρακτηριστικά για να διαπλάσουν την εθνότητά τους ως «Ρωμιοί» έναντι της εθνότητας «Έλληνες». Αυτά τα εθνώνυμα καταλήγουν σε πρόσωπα που χρησιμοποιούνται στιλιστικά, αλλά, διά της τεθλασμένης, διαμορφώνουν ξεχωριστές εθνικές κατηγορίες. Τέτοιες κοινωνιογλωσσικές διεργασίες καταδεικνύουν πώς η γλωσσική διαφοροποίηση είναι κοινωνικά ενσωματωμένη σε μια μειονοτική αυτόχθονα κοινότητα. Η μελέτη της παραλλαγής με τη χρήση εθνώνυμων δείχνει πώς οι ομιλητές προσθέτουν ένα διαφοροποιημένο νόημα σε καθιερωμένες κατηγορίες ταυτότητας και δημιουργούν νέες με βάση τα βιώματά τους.

As Evridiki and I cross the major boulevard of Ergenekon Caddesi approaching the last few winding roads to the church, our conversation shifts to names. We related to each other's struggles of trying to "justify" our own names; her first name to most Turks and my last name to most Americans. I tell her that for me, not only has it been difficult to explain what Aramaic is, but then that I am also Armenian and Greek from Turkey, which is confusing for most Americans who are unaware of the region's history. She asks if there are separate terms in English for Greeks from what is now Greece and for those from the lands of the former Byzantine Empire, as Greek and Turkish separate the two. I tell her no, that you just say "Greek." She then continues my code-switch in English. "I would never say I was just Greek though; they would confuse me with the mainlanders. I'm part of the Greek minority of Turkey."

Introduction

Linguistic variation is intricately linked to broader social differentiation (Bourdieu 1977, Gal & Irvine 2019). Furthermore, language users construct their identities through processes of differentiation wherein individuals relate to others along social continua. Self-identification, as one fundamental aspect of identity formation (Bucholtz & Hall 2005; Edwards 2009), builds on

positioning the self away from others, which is often represented in reflexive speech or metapragmatic discourse (cf Silverstein 1993). Metapragmatic discourse demonstrates how people as social actors contribute to their language variety and the indexical linkages of linguistic forms within specific contexts. Metapragmatic discourse may thus reveal ways that enregistered speech comes to characterize a distinct persona, which reinforces conceptualizations of social differentiation.

Agha (2007:81) has discussed enregisterment as “processes and practices whereby performable signs become recognized (and regrouped) as belonging to distinct, differentially valorized semiotic registers by a population.” The processes and practices wherein enregisterment occurs are left rather open and researchers have developed varied arguments about how and why linguistic forms are linked with social meaning based on a community’s particular sociohistorical developments. Gal (2019) provides useful demarcations to processes involved in enregistering linguistic forms in the political sphere. She discusses claspings, relaying, and grafting as different processes in which specific categories are (re)created by connecting social meaning to linguistic forms associated with specific groups of social actors. Gal’s framework expands on notions of enregisterment to account for how language users appeal to social structures to reinforce sociopolitical dynamics. Particularly useful and applicable beyond politics is the concept of claspings, whereby enregisterment “links the action arena in which a discourse is assembled to the arena of the objects or person-types that a discourse names and characterizes.” (Gal 2019: 453). She discusses how Hungarian politicians using racialized slurs (e.g., “gypsy”) to depict Roma as criminals clasp social and political meaning. Others have applied claspings to diverse ideological

frameworks. For example, Borba (2022) discusses anti-gender ideologies clasped from different politicians' rhetoric and social practices that recirculate named beliefs (e.g., "feminism") as indexing negative, immoral practices. In this paper, I apply the concept of clasping to competing endonymic ethnic labels in Istanbul Greek to demonstrate how separate characterological figures of Greek personae discursively emerge and aid in differentiation. I show how speakers draw from their experiences and link linguistic and other social practices to enregistered personae, for which clasped labels indexically serve as shorthand.

Figures and Labels

Johnstone (2017) and Kiesling (2018) discuss the development and circulation of characterological figures in terms of stance. Stancetaking is the evaluation of and through language, encompassing affective and epistemic evaluations of sociocultural elements (Jaffe 2009). When the indexical properties of particular linguistic or other sociocultural signs are conventionalized, those forms can be integrated in stancetaking for speakers to intersubjectively construct themselves in interaction and interpersonal relationships (Kiesling 2009). Kiesling (2018) demonstrates how speakers map linguistic features and other social factors (e.g., socioeconomic status, race) of the US city Pittsburgh to the "Yinzer" figure via online performances where social actors embody localized Pittsburgh understandings of personhood in terms of clothing (e.g., wearing Steelers uniform jerseys), occupations (e.g., manual labor), and linguistic repertoire (e.g., monophthongization of /aw/). As such, not just any Pittsburgher is a ratified Yinzer, but rather those who take stances aligning with blue-collar localness and embodying related personality traits (e.g., toughness) are understood as constituting a Yinzer

identity. Pittsburgh locals draw on their awareness of linguistic and broader social repertoires (c.f. Babel 2018) to create a prototypical homogenized Yinzer whose appearance and behavior represents an expected persona that no individual perfectly resembles. The Yinzer figure is therefore the accretion of stances speakers take in relation to the linguistic repertoire and social values with the (re)circulation of the Yinzer, further reinforcing linkages between language use and associated social ways of being.

Recent work on enregisterment includes Ilbury's (2020) study of queer British men being "sassy queens" when adopting Black women's linguistic practices in their online repertoire and Pratt's (2020) work on northern Californian performing arts school students' embodying "tech" by using velarized laterals and backed vowels. Ilbury (2020) and Pratt (2020) are both interested in how individuals use and understand language practice as demonstrative of group belonging. Such studies show different levels of language structure mapped onto social meaning understood as personality types or characteristics. However, less studied are the sociocultural mechanisms employed in naming such figures. Labels tend to be most widely accepted and circulated when attached to an enregistered conceptualization of personhood. Such practices lead to and reinforce ideologies of distinction concerning language. McConnell-Ginet (2020) contends that the way groups of people are socially arranged affects their success in metalinguistic projects, particularly in establishing power dynamics between hegemonic and minoritized communities. In the case of Ilbury (2020), Black American women's language, often stereotyped as "fierce" and "sassy," is used by white gay Brits online to enact a "sassy queen" persona. With "Yinzer," speakers not only recognize *yinz* as a Pittsburgh-based linguistic feature (second-person plural marker) but then

ascribe it to a person embodying related linguistic and other cultural practices (Johnstone 2017; Kiesling 2018). Consequently, salient linguistic features are mapped onto local meaning-making practices and the labeled name of the figure. I assert that these labels clasp (Gal 2019) the enregistered persona with their relevant indexicalities. Recursively, figures and associated linguistic and sociocultural behaviors are semiotically constructed as naturalized beings. That is, the more that enregistered figures and their respective names are circulated in discourse, the more they become understood as specific person-types.

Greeks, Nationalism, and the *Helleno-Romaic* Divide

The Greek-speaking world encompasses a range of geographic areas consisting of peoples with varied sociocultural practices, including those along the European and Asian sides of the Bosphorus. Istanbul Greeks are an indigenous minoritized group who have continuously inhabited their homeland since c657 BC and whose population has shrunk from 300,000 in the early 20th century to currently 2,500 (Chatziioannou & Kamouzis 2013). Greeks from Megara initially founded the city as Byzantium, which later was renamed Constantinople in 330 AD honoring Constantine the Great. Greek-speakers from all over the empire migrated to Constantinople, giving shape to a distinct koine (Hadodo 2020). During this time, the Greek-speaking populace across the Empire adopted *Romios*, a derivative of Roman, to refer to themselves as subjects of the Eastern Roman Empire and especially as Christians. This was done in part as *Ellinas* “Hellene,” *Graikos*¹ “Greek,” and other Ancient Greek communities’ names began to represent paganism (Mackridge 2009). After the Ottoman conquest of Constantinople in 1453, Istanbul Greeks tended to occupy a more privileged position amongst Greeks and the other subjugated *millets* and often served

important roles within the Imperial court.² Constituting a major part of Istanbul's cosmopolitan character throughout the Byzantine and Ottoman Empires, Istanbul Greeks served in noteworthy commercial, cultural, and political roles due to their proximity and connections to the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate located in Istanbul (Örs 2017). When Greece gained its independence in 1821, it was smaller than the current nation-state and many Greek regions were still under Ottoman or foreign rule. At this point, Greek nationalists embraced *Ellinas* as an ethnic label to legitimate their status based on Western Europe's fetishization of Classical Greece, ultimately forming the Hellenic Republic (Herzfeld 1986). Ottomans adopted local Greek designations and referred to Greeks within Ottoman territory as *Rum* and those from the nation of Greece as *Yunan* (derived from Ionian).

When the Ottoman Empire transitioned into the Republic of Turkey in the 1920s, a forced population exchange of ~1.5 million Greeks from Turkey and .5 million Turks from Greece was enacted. Excluded were Muslims in Northern Greece and Greeks from Istanbul and the islands of Imvros and Tenedos (Chatziioannou & Kamouzis 2013). Asia Minor Greek refugees were initially received poorly in Greece as many were completely Turcophonic and even more maintained traditions foreign to Mainland Greeks (Hirschon 1998). Over the past century, the descendants of Asia Minor Greeks have been absorbed into and helped shape modern Greece (see Hadodo forthcoming a for comparisons between Asia Minor and Istanbul Greeks).

Despite the exemption, a series of geopolitical policies throughout the 20th century led to a diminished Greek presence in Istanbul and a growing diaspora in Greece and elsewhere. For example, heavy taxes placed on minorities in the 1940s incentivized Istanbul Greeks, as well as

Sephardic Jews and Armenians, to leave the country or face poverty or workcamps (Brink-Dannon, 2012). The Istanbul Greek population plummeted as a direct result of becoming increasingly marginalized and excluded from economic and other social freedoms. Critical events contributing to this situation were the “Citizen, speak Turkish!” campaign, *Septemvriana* (“September events”) pogrom targeting Istanbul Greeks in 1955, the “deportation” of indigenous Istanbul Greeks in the 1960s and other tensions over Cyprus in the 1970s. Despite many Istanbul Greeks having increased contact with Mainland Greece and Standard Modern Greek (SMG), the centuries with the separate modern nation-state of Greece plus specific Byzantine and Ottoman experiences local to Istanbul have created a different language ecology and social context for the IG linguistic repertoire to develop (Hadodo 2020).

As Örs (2017) has discussed, many IG-speakers in Athens have been accused of being “Turkified traitors to Hellenism” and their Greekness was often distrusted by dominant SMG-speakers questioning their religious affiliation and cultural legitimacy. Although Mainland Greeks tended to perceive Istanbul Greeks as having higher social status than Asia Minor Greek refugees, the latter group largely assimilated into mainstream Greek culture, whereas the former is still removed. This sociohistorical trajectory resulted in tensions with diasporic Istanbul Greeks in Greece challenging mainstream narratives (Örs 2017; Hadodo forthcoming a). Such tensions allow for naming conventions to be recruited in distinction-making practices. As Mackridge (2009) and others have discussed, names were contested throughout the later Ottoman era and early Greek independence. Mainland Greeks refer to all Greeks as *Ellines*, whereas *Elladitis* specifies someone born in Greece (*Ellada*). Few Mainland Greeks may refer to themselves as *Romioi*, especially

when emphasizing Byzantine/Orthodox heritage, albeit rarely. Contributing to such fluidity is the mainstream Greek nationalist ideology of *omoyenia* (meaning “homogenous/same genes”), referring to one overarching imagined Greek collectivity (Örs 2017). Halstead (2014: 270) demonstrates the complexity of ethnonyms for the Istanbul Greek diaspora in Greece:

“I do not intend to imply any strict definitional distinction between the two terms, nor do I consider them to refer to discrete ethnic identities, but rather am interested in how they are used variably as signifiers. My informants sometimes treat the two as synonymous, sometimes as overlapping or one as part of the other, and sometimes as antithetical.”

Örs (2006), however, suggests that Istanbul Greek migrants in Athens are more likely to refer to themselves exclusively as *Romioi*, especially when orienting to their distinct cosmopolitan legacy. I explore how IG-speakers remaining in Istanbul use these terms for distinction. Although *Politis* means either “citizen” or “someone from Istanbul,”³ ethnographic research described below shows how Istanbul Greeks often employ *Romioi* to distinguish themselves from other types of Greeks. Many Greek-speakers not belonging to the mainstream Greek nation (e.g., Cypriots or Pontians in Mariupol) may still refer to themselves as *Romioi* and their language as *Romeika* (Ioannidou et al. 2020). IG-speakers, however, recruit the competing terms of *Ellinas* and *Romios* for specific differentiation projects.

Ethnographic Methods and the Enregisterment of Istanbul Greek

The Istanbul Greeks’ population reduction ushered a decreased awareness of their presence amongst the Greek-speaking world and the remaining community only recently has received scholarly attention. The little linguistic work acknowledging IG tends to do so in passing and often erases difference, citing it to be not dissimilar from SMG (Kontosopoulos 2008; Ralli 2012) or focusing on ethnolinguistic vitality without considering local features (Komondouros & McEntee-

Atalianis 2007). However, IG-speakers have a repertoire distinct from SMG. IG-speakers are minimally bilingual in Greek and Turkish and most speak a third or fourth language such as French or Armenian. Certain IG phonetic and morphosyntactic features are found in Northern dialects of Mainland Greece, lexical items and verbal conjugations are found in Aegean varieties (e.g., -kso endings, *kam(n)o* for *kano* “to do”), in addition to retaining perceived “older” forms, contact-induced change from Turkish and other local languages, and internal innovations (Hadodo 2020). Importantly, there is no singular IG variety; rather, speakers draw from a large repertoire of features. Nevertheless, some IG-speakers reinforce the boundedness of IG based on key salient linguistic features that diverge from SMG, some of which are explored below.

Peripheral Greek ⁴	Retentions	Contact-induced	Innovations
Velarized laterals	Intervocalic verbal /ɣ/ [leyo, troyo, payo]	Lexical items: French, Italian, Turkish	[s] in Fem NOM e.g., [dropis]
ACC for DAT	Lexical items e.g. [xuljari] “spoon”	Copula deletion	Vowel shifts: /i/ > [u], /i/ > [e], /e/ > [o]
[-a] in M/F ACC forms e.g., [aftina], [o enas ton alona]	Prenasalized voiced stops e.g., [eɲgoni]	Verb final tendencies	[ts] > [tʃ]

Table 1. Select IG features absent in SMG. Bold represent salient forms.

Table 1 shows an abridged list of some noteworthy features circulated in IG organized by whether they also are found in other non-SMG varieties, reflect less-common forms, are influences from other languages or are potentially innovations. Bold items in cells represent features that circulate in metapragmatic discourse to varying degrees (see Hadodo forthcoming b for more).

Despite little sociolinguistic work, extensive ethnographic accounts of the migrant population in Greece have been published. Örs (2006, 2017) and Halstead (2014) have demonstrated how Istanbul Greeks in Greece have different referents to Greekness, such as

Byzantine and Ottoman elements largely erased in mainstream Greek narratives, embracing cosmopolitanism and cultural syncretism as opposed to reinforcing homogeneity of Greekness from the Classical era onward. Both have demonstrated how Istanbul Greeks tend to view Greece, including Athens, as a rural village in comparison to Istanbul's urbanity. This urban/rural tension is seen in cultural artifacts such as the novel *Loxandra* by Maria Iordanidu (1963). Örs (2017) also has shown how IG-speakers invoke tea consumption and preparation (virtually nonexistent in Greece), fashion, and daily routines as loci of differentiation.

To show how IG-speakers differentiate themselves and circulate conceptualizations of differences from other types of Greeks based on linguistic resources, I conducted sociolinguistic ethnography (Hadodo 2020) encompassing extensive observation in Istanbul over multiple trips from 2016 to 2018. IG-speakers hesitate to meet outsiders, and those without intimate ties to the community are often outright rejected. I am a heritage IG-speaker and son of an Istanbul Greek migrant, which influenced how I related to informants and their trust in me. I gained access to more of the community through my aunt and extended family members' introductions, attending local events (e.g., church services, school functions, cultural performances, community meetings) and visiting Istanbul Greek-owned businesses such as cafés to observe IG-speakers in interaction and participate in daily activities. The Greek Orthodox Church has historically been important as a government-sanctioned space for Istanbul Greeks to gather and maintain multiple traditions. Therefore, many observations came from church services and related activities. Community members tended to be active in the Greek Orthodox Church, with older IG-speakers participating the most and younger IG-speakers split in religious and overall community involvement. Through

weeks of observation and community participation, I ultimately interviewed 81 informants still residing in Istanbul. Of these informants, 41 were women and 40 were men aged 18-90 at the time of the interviews. I also conducted fieldwork with 28 Istanbul Greeks in Athens in 2017, but here I focus on those residing in Turkey although migrants' experiences informed ethnographic conclusions.

The data below are from interviews completed during fieldwork supplemented by my observations. I began semi-structured interviews with biographical questions, asking participants about where in Istanbul they were born and have lived, education, work experiences, family background, and language background. I asked relevant follow-up questions and explored other topics depending on the informants' responses. Because a component of the fieldwork was an exploratory description of IG, I presented a series of photo elicitations, pictures depicting culturally relevant images or actions to elicit some IG variant. Next, participants recited a wordlist. Lastly, I asked how speakers would respond in a series of scenarios. Final questions targeted metapragmatic discourse: what are differences between IG and SMG, and is any Greek variety better than another? Nevertheless, informants engaged in metapragmatic commentary throughout different portions of the interviews. As this paper's primary interest concerns labeling enregistered personae, data come from any metapragmatic comments, which represent ideologies circulated by IG-speakers in daily life.

I examine the phenomenological explanations of Istanbul Greek community members in their construction of what it means to be an IG-speaker. Some participants claimed, "there is very little difference," whereas others claimed IG and SMG "are unrecognizable to one another." The diversity of responses to these questions underscores different experiences speakers have with

language, which influences how they understand linguistic repertoire linked to personhood. Some informants made claims contradicting others, and sometimes IG-speakers contradicted themselves or qualified their assessments by appealing to differing ideologies or applying those ideologies across other types of Greeks. Participants mentioned not only dialectal differences, but also differences related to personal characteristics of IG-, SMG-, and other Greek-speakers. One prominent type of metapragmatic evaluation concerns the concept of *qualia*. Chumley & Harkness (2013), Gal (2013) and others have discussed the importance of the *qualia* of linguistic forms, wherein personality traits are linked to linguistic features and vice versa. Language users essentialize people based on whether their language (any structural level) is deemed “harsh,” “simple,” “oily,” etc.

The most common linguistic differences IG-speakers noted included lexical items; specifically, vocabulary considered to be outdated or borrowed from Turkish, French, Italian, and other languages. Many described non-contact induced change that also appear in other varieties as a difference from SMG, typically the use of the accusative rather than the genitive for the historic dative case. Speakers often drew on these types of linguistic features to appeal to different ideologies surrounding contact, purity, and authenticity (Hadodo forthcoming a).

The second most frequent response participants noted was velarized laterals. Laterals tend to be velarized before /a, o, u/ in IG and northern dialects, but not in SMG. Clear laterals are typically produced in a single articulation with the tongue tip touching the alveolar ridge and with the tongue root in neutral position, whereas velarized laterals have a second articulation with the tongue tip and blade more dentalized and the tongue root approaching the velum (Recasens 2012). IG lateral velarization is more advanced than in Northern Greek dialects and potentially is the

result of contact with Turkish, although there is evidence of internal changes by way of assimilation (Hadodo 2020). Analogous to how velarized laterals are often referred to as “dark” in English, in Greek such laterals are often called “heavy.” This and related descriptors were also used to describe not only laterals but the dialect overall. Although other stigmatized varieties are labeled “heavy” (Karatsareas 2018), IG-speakers appeal to qualia referring to themselves as embodying “heaviness” in ways I will examine in the following sections.

Below, I examine the linguistic and other sociocultural elements that constitute the semiotic field that have led to the enregisterment of the terms *Ellines* and *Romioi* that clasp as opposing characterological figures and distinct identities for IG-speakers. I present data from six IG-speakers, all given pseudonyms, who emphasized differences amongst Greeks representative of the overarching community. I present a broad phonetic transcript accompanied by an English translation.

Discussing Difference

Grigoris, born in 1979, received primary and secondary education in Istanbul. Active within the local community, he also often travels to Greece for work. Here Grigoris responded to an elicitation task, conjugating the verb “to ask” in the past and future tenses:

Extract 1

G: **rotisa**. ala eyo sto ipa afto... mexri ta 18 mu tha leya to **rotiksa**. Ite **tha to rotikso** tha leya mexri ta 18 mu. meta ta 18 epiði imuna para poli me tus **elines** ke lipa, ixē alaksi ðilaði. akoma enas **romios** tha to leje **rotiksa**. ite o babas mu as pume to **vrikes** ðe leji to **ivres** leji.

MJH: ki’ yo. efī to leyo.

G: bravo ne, ne, ne. etsi ine. i siniθia **mas** etsi ine.

G:[**rotisa**]. But I told this to you...until I was 18 I would say [**rotiksa**]. Or [**θa to rotikso**] (future tense) I would say until I was 18. After I turned 18 because I was often hanging around with *Ellines* and whatnot it changed. A *Romios* still would say [**rotiksa**]. My father, for example, to [**vrikes**] (you found) he doesn't say to [**ivres**] he says.

MJH: Me too. That's how I say it.

G: Great, yeah, yeah, yeah. It's like so. **Our** custom is like so.

When I expressed my interest in IG prior to the interview, Grigoris mentioned that his language use had changed reflecting increased SMG-speaking social networks. Grigoris makes a clear distinction with *Ellines* being Mainland Greeks rather than *Elladitis*, and he uses *Romios* rather than *Politis* for an IG-speaker. Furthermore, by invoking his father as a *Romios* who says [**ivres**] presumably in addition to [**rotiksa**] and other dialectal features, he links different types of language to different types of Greekness. Despite having adopted more SMG features at varying structural levels, Grigoris's discourse does include the IG variant of the verb "to say" [**leyo**] with the underlying velar fricative, compared to SMG [**leo**]. His use of this form might be explained by frequency and stigmatization of other features, but he arguably uses it here to take an IG stance in discussing his *Romios* father and "**our** custom." The reinforcement of linguistic and social characteristics that distinguish *Ellines* from *Romioi* is seen with Fanis, a man born in 1945.

Extract 2

ðiaferi poli afto. ta elinika tis **konstandinupoleos** ine ðiaforetika, ta elinika ton **elinon** ine poli, tora eki pera e... "**ela!**" Eyo tora perno stin eksadelfi mu tin proti fora sin **elaða**, tin aniyo to telefono ke ti leo... "**ela!**" me leei keyo nomizo, pou θa erto ti leo, pu pu pu na erto? ekini me leei ja su, ðilaði, "[Fani], ja su." emis eðo pera leme **alo**...os ya mena ta elinika tis **turkias** ine pio orea, tis **konstandinupoleos**. ðen kataλavis eci pera se lene

anguri [andi] *ðrosero* ke kaθe “**ela ti mu kanis.**” i omilies pu kanune e ine liyo me fenete emena **koroiðeftika** na pume. ja tis polis ta elinika ine poli pio oreia.

It's very different. The Greek of **Istanbul** is different, the Greek of the **Ellines** is very, now over there uh... “**Come!**” [ela] Now I call my cousin, my first time in Greece [ełaða], I give her a phone call and I tell her... “**Come!**” She tells me, and I’m thinking where should I come I tell her, where, where, where should I come? She was telling me hello, in other words “[Fani], hello.” Over here we say **other** things instead...As for me, the Greek from **Turkey** is nicer. Greek of **Istanbul**. You don’t understand over there when they tell you *anguri* [instead of] *ðrosero* (cucumber), and every “**Come now, what are you doing to me [genitive].**” The speeches that they make uh it’s a little, they seem to me a bit **mocking**, let’s say. Really, the Greek of Istanbul is much nicer.

Responding to the differences between Greek spoken in Istanbul and Greece, Fanis paused before doing a stylistic performance of SMG (Rampton 2009). He encapsulated this experience as how SMG-speakers use “unrecognizable” discourse markers, such as “come,” which is infrequent in IG and considered informal. *Embros* “forward” or *oriste* “at your service” are the conventional IG terms and considered formal in SMG. Although he did not mention *Katharevousa* (literally “the purging language,” the historic H form in Greek’s diglossic past) explicitly, Fani used the *Katharevousa* genitive declension of -poleos rather than demotic -polis for Istanbul, which contribute to his evaluation of IG and *Romioi* as more formal, and therefore more polite and “nicer.”

Furthermore, Fanis was one of the most velarizing informants based on acoustic analyses in Praat (Boersma & Weenink 2017). When performing SMG by recounting *ela* “come,” his lateral was alveolar (midpoint F2 1595 Hz). In the next sentence, when not performing SMG and recounted calling his cousin in Greece *elaða*, his /l/ is velarized (F2 825 Hz). Even though he never mentioned specific phonetic aspects of IG being different, he demonstrated this knowledge

implicitly in these performances, which were intended to explicitly highlight lexical difference and politeness. Therefore, a highly salient indexical IG feature was recruited to construct difference, even when not overtly discussed as such in the discourse.

Addressing language attitudes, Fanis provided examples of not understanding SMG speech, although in doing so he demonstrated that he in fact could understand such terms, but rather dispreferred them. For example, the distinction between *anguri* and *đrosero* for “cucumber” is not one of comprehension on the part of IG-speakers, as they merely serve different pragmatic functions. Specifically, *anguri* is used euphemistically for male genitalia in both SMG and IG. IG uses *đrosero* a derivative of “cool” as a taboo avoidance strategy. Importantly, Fanis regards SMG and *Ellines* as being *mocking* and *insincere*.

Grigoris and Fanis demonstrated ideologies of difference that circulate by directly appealing to specific linguistic features as belonging to specific varieties and speakers of these varieties being labeled as either *Ellines* or *Romioi*. Fanis’s performance of SMG (less expected for standardized “unmarked” varieties) by shifting lateral quality demonstrates the implicit metapragmatic awareness of features linked to personae. Consequently, *Romios* clasps the enregisterment of IG to a specific speaker-type (polite and formal), and *Ellinas*, clasps SMG to an opposing persona (mocking and insincere). Other members of the Istanbul Greek community may underplay these linguistic differences, or circulate an ideology of similarity, and in doing so tend to use the label of *Ellines* as a discursive way to achieve sameness (Hadodo 2020).

Negotiating Mainstream Ideologies

Not everyone shared Fanis's evaluation of IG. Some positively evaluated certain features over others, creating tension when discussing their speech holistically, and some informants waffled between evaluations with initial reactions that were immediately qualified. These seemingly conflicting attitudes, understandings of ideologies, and evaluations of language often revolved around notions of purity and historical legacy not unusual for speakers of stigmatized endangered varieties (Dorian, 1987). Take Maria, born in 1964. After living in Athens for four years for university, she returned to Istanbul, married an Istanbul Greek man, and worked in one of the few IG high schools in Istanbul teaching Greek language. Here are her responses when asked about dialectal differences between IG and SMG:

Extract 3

M: i meyaliteri ðiafora ine to “me.” To “me” ine poli endono to “me” ke to “se.” ine i leksis Turkikes pu vazume anamesa, ke stin profora to lamða ke to siyma... Poli, poli endono ine to “f” to “dʒ” to “j” ke to lamða ine poli endono epiði ine perasmena apo ta Turkika. Epiði to lene to “dʒ” to “f” ine poli endona sta Turkika ke to “j.” An akusis **Turkus** pu exune maði elinika na miłane to proto prayma pu kani endiposi ine to siyma akujetai poli endona. Eno stus **elines** ðen paratirite to siyma na miłane.

MJH: i *elaðites* ðilaði.

M: malista. i *elaðites* ðen to akus to siyma ena “s” ne. Ała to afto sirtari ðilaði vjenane endona “s” otan ðilaði ine epiði epirezomaste apo tin turkiki ylosa to “s” to pai asxima, to akus endona to “s” to lamða ke to “f” “dʒ.” Afto... tora stin ełaða otan les ełaða ti enois? jati stin Aθina exis toso poli ksenokosmo pu arki ke eliniki ylossa tis Aθinas na alazi, na perni leksis pu palja ðen tis akuyo stin Aθina.

M: The biggest difference is the [use of] “me.” The “me” is very intense, both the “me” and the “se.” Also the Turkish words that we put in between [Greek words] and regarding pronunciation, the “l” and the “s.” ...It's very, very intense. The “ch” and the “j” and the “sh” and the “l” are very intense because they are passed onto us from Turkish. Because

“j” and “ch” are said very intensely in Turkish and the “sh,” too. If you hear **Turks** who have learnt to speak Greek, the first thing that makes an impression is that the “s” sounds very intense. Meanwhile you don’t notice the “s” when the **Ellines** speak.

MJH: The *Elladites* you mean.

M: Yes. The *Elladites*. You don’t hear the “s” a [slight] “s,” yes. But this *sirtari* [drawer] then comes out as an intense “s” because we are influenced by the Turkish language, the “s” becomes ugly, you hear it intensely the “s” and the “l” and the “ch” and the “j.” This....Now in Greece when you say Greece what do you mean? Because in Athens you have such foreigners that even the Greek language in Athens is changing, taking words which before I would not *hear* in Athens.

Like others, Maria distinguishes between *Ellines* and *Romioi* wherein the former aligns with Mainland Greeks and the latter with Istanbul Greeks. As Preston (2011) asserts, speakers often rely on presuppositions for language attitudes to be made clear for their interlocutors in metacommentary. Only when I interjected to clarify that she meant Mainland Greeks rather than Istanbul Greeks with her use of *Ellines* did she continue with *Elladites* (although she switched back to *Ellines* for Mainland Greeks later). As she was comparing Turks with Greeks, it potentially could be ambiguous had she meant Istanbul Greeks when she used *Ellines*. However, she (correctly) presupposed I as a second-generation IG-speaker would know that she would have used *Romioi* had she meant Istanbul Greeks. This presupposition exemplifies Preston’s (2011) assertions of the importance of pragmatics in attitudinal research, while also challenging mainstream norms of Greekness and labeling. Maria employed a different approach from how Halstead (2014) has discussed Istanbul Greeks in Greece using these emic terms to contrast Turks from Greeks, where we would assume *Ellines* as the catch-all term for Greeks when compared to Turks. However, Maria was highlighting differences among three groups in this passage: SMG-

speakers, IG-speakers, and Turks, where she positions Istanbul Greeks as occupying an intermediary space between *Ellines* and Turks. Saying, “we are influenced by the Turkish language,” demonstrated standard language ideologies of purity and a stance as an IG-speaker speaking an “uglified” version of Greek due to Turkish contact. Despite evidence of lateral and affricate backing as place assimilation in other Greek varieties, many IG-speakers viewed backing as contact-induced change (Hadodo 2020). Nevertheless, by discussing Turkish influence and Turks learning Greek, Maria was not claiming that Istanbul Greeks are Turkish. Instead, she presupposed I know about Turks who attend Greek language courses, and asserted that IG-speakers occupy an intimate, shared space with Turks and not necessarily with Greeks. This negotiation of Istanbul Greeks being neither Mainland Greeks nor Turks further reinforces the need for *Romioi* as a separate category that phenomenologically distinguishes the lived experience of IG-speakers from others.

Although she began by stressing the primary difference as accusative use, Maria mainly discussed phonetic differences of fricatives and affricates, claiming that SMG fricatives are less “intense.” Like “heavy,” some IG-speakers described backed productions of affricates and laterals as “intense.” Maria has extended the usage to non-phonetic features, and in doing so holistically marked IG as an intense variety with intense differences. Contrary to Maria’s claim, Arvaniti (2007) and others have discussed SMG fricatives’ large range in place of articulation that often are so retracted that they approach a postalveolar position. Nevertheless, when demonstrating SMG and IG /s/ Maria’s COG went from nearly 7200 Hz to around 5000 Hz, or alveolar to postalveolar. Maria therefore embodied her own perceptions of difference between SMG-speaking *Ellines* and

IG-speaking *Romioi*. Despite evaluating certain aspects of IG as “ugly,” Maria tempered this claim by asserting that even SMG has contact-induced change that she “would not hear” in Athens before. Like Grigoris, she used IG [akuyo] rather than SMG [akuo] and thus demonstrated a stance implicitly aligning with IG’s “archaism,” lending credibility to IG at SMG’s expense.

Danai is active in dense Istanbul Greek networks and consistently participates in local events. Like Maria she teaches at a local community high school. Unlike Maria, she teaches science and was born in 1990. Below is Danai’s commentary when asked about dialectal differences:

Extract 4

D: to “me.” to “mu” ke to “me.” (*jelai*). ekino ine.

MJH: ke me tin profora?

D: ke mia to lamða...**kata**. liyoooo nomizo oti poli ðen to...xrisimopio etsi, ala vevea otan vlepo otan akuo vasika perisotero ekino. ke mas lene poles fores, “apo **thesaloniki** iste?” otan milame.

MJH: tipota alo me tin profora?

D: to “j” bori...ne ke turkika ine “j”... apo ki ine epiði...**ÇOCUK** ine.

MJH- pio vari ine?

D: eno to “katse” ine pio lepto “ts”...to mu uhuh fenete oti ine pio xoriatiko...ðen ine etsi? “na mu kanis kati” ðilaði me fenete oti prepi na ine “me!”...ðen exume profora ke xoriatika.

D: The [use of] me. The mu and the me. (*laughs*). That’s what it is.

MJH: And with the accent?

D: One difference is the lamða...**kata**. I think a liiiittle that I don’t...use it like that, but certainly when I see when I hear, basically mostly that. And they tell us many times, “Are you from **Thessaloniki**?” when we speak.

MJH: Anything else with the accent?

D: Maybe the “ch”...yes because in Turkish it’s a “CH” it’s from there because... *ÇOCUK* (child) is how you say it.

MJH: So it’s heavier?

D: Whereas “katse” is a lighter “ts”... But the [use of] “mu” uhuh. It seems so villagey...Isn’t that right? “Can you do something for me [mu]” it just feels like it should be [me]!...so we don’t have an accent, let alone a village one.

When asked about language differences, Danai also cited accusative use for the historic dative case. When specifically describing the accent, she noted the lateral and performed a velarized lateral in the word *kala* “well.” She noted similarities with Northern Greek dialectal regions (Thessaloniki), where there is more linguistic and cultural overlap with Istanbul, demonstrating a scalar notion of difference. Whereas Maria evaluated certain aspects of contact-induced change on IG as negative, Danai negatively viewed SMG using the genitive for historic dative. Referencing the “villagey” quality of SMG pronouns, she extended this quality to SMG speech, engaging in historic IG discourse of Athens being a rural village in opposition to Istanbul being an urban cosmopolitan city (Iordanidu 1963; Örs 2017). Furthermore, “villagey” is frequently attributed to stigmatized Greek varieties (Karatsareas 2018), so IG-speakers invert the term’s indexical properties when applying it to standard features. Danai later claimed that IG has no discernible accent, despite listing several phonetic differences between SMG and IG. This tactic potentially empowers IG as a stigmatized variety as being more similar to SMG than less mutually intelligible varieties, such as Cypriot, while questioning the normative status of SMG.

Maria and Danai negotiated mainstream standard language ideologies, where they applied yet subverted norms with IG and SMG. Maria's repeated use of "intense" in describing IG variants clasps the qualia of IG and SMG linguistic features (cf Gal 2013) to the *Romios* and *Ellinas* figures; many Istanbul Greek informants discussed how the community is guarded, and a few SMG-speakers visiting Istanbul expressed that IG-speakers are not very relaxed or open to outsiders. When I referenced the emic term of "heavy" in asking Danai about the postalveolar affricate, she responded with the SMG alveolar form being "lighter," reinforcing the oppositional nature of the characterological figures clasped to *Ellines* and *Romioi* seen below.

Different Experiences

Whereas Grigoris linked *Romioi* to IG verbal conjugations, and Fanis linked *Romioi* as being more polite and formal, Maria and Danai linked the use of the accusative for the historic dative (rather than using SMG genitive), contact-induced change, and multiple phonetic differences to different characteristics. These yielded different holistic evaluations of both IG and SMG, with different types of ideologies attributed to the specific constellations of features that speakers attend to. Consequently, IG-speakers are a heterogeneous group with their own experiences differing amongst themselves and from SMG-speakers.

I now present data from Thanasis who has lived in both Turkey and Greece. Born in 1988, Thanasis attended local Istanbul Greek schools before attending a Greek university. He stayed in Greece for seven years and has worked in both countries. He had been back in Istanbul for several years and in fall 2018 had opened his second business in Istanbul. Here is his discussion of differences between dialects:

Extract 5

poles ðiafores. katarxin, e, emis miłame poli yliyrora berðemena. Ke eki pera miłane yriyora i anθropi ala emis ta berð-strome ke tis leksis. eki ta lene ke pio ksekaθara. emis...strome. sin elaða **pio kaθara** ta lene ne. liyo pio **xałara** ine eki pera apo ðo. eee to'xume tis leksis sto mjało mas tin exume ti leksi as pume ti vyałume, blokari. istera xrisimopiume pio palies leksis. eyo piyena sin ełaða ke eleya "*kałoθosfero*" ke me koroiðevane, mu lene "ti '*kałoθosfero*' *małaka*" mu lene, "*basketboł* pezume eðo pera." eki pera kseris epiði...kaθe yłosa sto kaθe xoro jinete yłosa tu ðromu. emis tora pu zume stin poli, yłosa tu ðromu pu miłane sin elaða ðen ti maθame.

Many differences. For starters, uh over here we speak very fast, confused. Well over there the people speak fast too, but we confu- we muddle the words. There they speak so much more clearly. We...muddle. In Greece, they speak **more clearly**, yes. They are a little bit more **relaxed** over there than here. Uh: We have the words in our mind, we have the word let's say we try to get it out, it's blocked. Moreover, we use older words. I went to Greece and I said "*Kalathosfero*" and they were making fun of me, "what '*kalathosfero*' *małaka* [wanker]" they tell me "we play *basketball* over here." Over there, you know because...every language in every place becomes a language of the street. We who now live in the City, the street language they speak in Greece we didn't learn.

In describing SMG, Thanasis attributed SMG-speakers with being more relaxed. This "relaxedness" can be interpreted both in speech and in behavior, as multiple participants commented that in Greece people are a lot more open, comfortable and regularly take siestas. Rather than the heaviness of velarized laterals and other backed phonetic properties being tied to Istanbul Greeks' closed off nature, here we see Mainland Greeks' relaxed nature related to adaptability in their language use. This metapragmatic discussion reinforces the IG semiotic field both in terms of the linguistic features used by IG-speakers, but also overarching characteristics of members of the community and the community holistically.

Thanasis's commentary echoed Fanis's experience with telephone greetings, although Fani evaluated "archaisms" positively than Thanasis. This makes sense due to being ridiculed for using an IG term deemed outdated by SMG-speaking peers while living in Greece. The term "malaka" while potentially endearing amongst Greek men has a much more effrontery usage within the Istanbul Greek community as Hirschon (2001) has noted. Furthermore, although Fanis has visited Greece multiple times and has family there, he has lived in Istanbul his entire life. Thanasis, on the other hand, not only travels frequently to Greece but lived there for several years in addition to attending university. As a result, lived experiences and intimate relationships with SMG-speakers also influence how IG-speakers orient to and take stances regarding language use.

Finally, consider Iraklis, born in 1980 and educated in IG until going to England for university. He currently resides in Istanbul after extensive time in both Athens and London. Married to a Turkish woman, Iraklis emphasized concerns about transmitting Greek to his children in an exogenous marriage (increasingly common amongst younger Istanbul Greeks). Below, is a portion of his response to dialectal differences between dialects.

ine i leksis pu xrisimopiume, andi na pume **kotopulo**, xrisimopiume **orniθa**, *paraðiymatos xari*. exume merikes leksis turkikes loyo tis turkikis glossas xrisimopiume se merikes periptosis, ke mono i **romioi** ta kataλavenun afta. ke otan pame jenika stin eλaða, kapote menune ðilaði, borume na pume andi na zitisume mia sakula "borite na me ðosete enan torva?" ean xrisimopiume turkikes leksis, veveos ine laθos afto, ala i profora mas jenika mas kani iðieterus ke afto nomizo oti ine kati θetiko, ine **diversity** ine kati to opio mas ðiaferi ke θa iθeλa na ixa akoma perisotero tin politiki profora me plusio leksiλojio.

It's the words we use, instead of **kotopulo** [chicken] we use **ornitha**, *for example*. We have some Turkish words which due to the Turkish language we use in some cases and only the **Romioi** understand them. And generally when we go to Greece, sometimes they stay, like instead of asking for a *sakula* [bag] "can you give me a *torva*," ... if we use Turkish words in Greek, of course this is wrong, but our accent generally makes us special and I think that

is a positive thing, **diversity** is something that differentiates us and I would like to have even more of an Istanbul accent with a rich vocabulary.

Iraklis aligned with other informants who discussed “old” words maintained in IG. Like Thanasis and Fanis, he presented “misunderstandings” between *Ellines* and *Romioi*, with the latter having exclusive knowledge. He also asserted that while improper for IG to have Turkish elements, their presence is an important part of demarcating the community and that the diversity of the dialect, presumably the combination of archaisms and contact-induced change, make the variety “special.” Whereas Maria and Danai engaged with and inverted standard language ideologies of purity between IG and SMG, Iraklis invoked cosmopolitan diversity to temper mainstream ideologies. His codeswitch to English for “diversity” not only highlights his experience having lived abroad, but also contributes to the cosmopolitan nature of IG and IG-speakers who commonly codeswitch among multiple languages, incorporating lexical borrowings to greater degrees than SMG-speakers. As a result, Iraklis circulated the image of IG-speakers being distinct from other types of Greeks because of their “rich vocabulary” that “only *Romioi* understand.” He reinforced Örs’s (2006) assertion of how IG-speakers in Athens demonstrate distinction wherein *Romioi* “carefully demarcate their differences from the wider Greek and Turkish community, while at the same time they imagine and construct an inclusive multicultural community that is exclusively reserved for Istanbulites” (91).

Both Thanasis and Iraklis have lived in Greece for varying periods of time and recognized how daily language use reflects and builds what it means to be local to specific places. They showed how individual members of the Istanbul Greek community have different experiences

from one another, including with language. Whereas Thanasis recounted being mocked for “archaisms” and how IG-speakers “muddle” the Greek language by not being relaxed enough, Irakli referenced archaisms and Turkish influence as a positive form of diversity to embrace. These contribute to different ideologies of value of IG, wherein IG-speakers sometimes appeal to the same linguistic repertoire to elevate either IG and *Romioi* or SMG and *Ellines*. In other words, archaisms, contact-induced change, and internal variation are all stance objects that different speakers ascribe as either positive, negative or both depending on what ideologies they appeal to at a given time. These stances in turn develop and clasp the oppositional meanings of *Ellines* and *Romioi*. The stances taken in the six metapragmatic commentaries built on perceived contrasts that create the figures (seen in the table below) that are clasped unto the two labels.

Ellinas~Greece~SMG	Romios~Istanbul~IG
Impolite	Formal
Mocking	Sincere
Villagers	Urban
Loose	Refined
Light	Heavy
Modern	Old-fashioned
Relaxed	Intense
Open	Closed-off
Coffee preparers/drinkers	Tea preparers/drinkers
Casual Clothes	Formal Clothes
Uniformity	Diversity
European	Cosmopolitan
Ancient/Classical Greece	Byzantine/Ottoman Istanbul

Table 2. Characteristics of *Ellines* and *Romioi*

Discussion

As Gal & Irvine (2019) have discussed, linguistic variation is an aspect of social differentiation achieved through multiple ideological processes emphasizing linguistic and social

contrast. With the Istanbul Greek community, specific features have been enregistered that then are mapped onto the terms *Ellines* and *Romioi*. While most IG-speakers recognize multiple differences between their variety and SMG, not all dialectal features are iconic. Trudgill (1986) has discussed how salient dialectal forms tend to be those most divergent from an established standard, and Eckert (2019) has asserted sound is particularly meaningful socially compared to other linguistic structures. Therefore, it is logical that lateral velarization, a phonologically-driven process absent in SMG, has become indexically linked to IG despite occurring in other varieties. In turn, the qualia of laterals and related phones are iconically mapped onto IG-speakers. I connect qualia to Babel's (2018) semiotic field for Spanish-Quechua bilinguals in Bolivia wherein speakers use available linguistic (i.e., features from varieties of both languages) and other sociocultural repertoire (e.g., clothing, political affiliation, etc.) to create opposition. This is evidenced by how characteristics such as “heavy” and “intense” are used to describe both laterals and the community. Meanwhile, SMG-speakers are perceived to be “loose” and “more relaxed” socially, which corresponds to how they speak more “relaxed” and “openly” than Istanbul Greeks. Describing SMG features as “less intense” and “lighter” and connecting SMG with *Ellines*, then allows for the semiotic unpacking of *Ellines* as less intense, convivial people. This latter assemblage is seen with how Thanasis discussed Mainland Greeks as being more relaxed in both speech and style, which combines with the “villagey” and “mocking” quality of SMG and *Ellines* as opposed to the more refined IG and urban, sophisticated *Romioi*.

Applying Gal's (2019) concept of claspings shows how linguistic repertoire becomes enregistered as a speech variety that essentializes speakers to a specific label. This process

demonstrates the importance of labels that (re)create series of opposition aiding in differentiation. Consequently, within the IG-speaking community, *Ellines* and *Romioi* have become competing characterological figures that represent different experiential types of Greekness. Halstead (2014) has demonstrated that Istanbul Greeks relocated in Greece use *Ellines* to align themselves with Mainland Greeks and use *Romioi* to distinguish themselves. IG-speakers in Turkey, however, add much complexity to this dichotomy by typically reserving these terms to highlight sociocultural differences more broadly. Grigoris, Fanis, Maria, and Iraklis made clear boundaries between the two groups and use the ethnonyms to keep them separated. By incorporating linguistic, sociocultural and historical knowledge, IG-speakers in Istanbul add layers of meaning to these emic terms that then clasp onto labeled characterological figures that further serve as points of differentiation.

Consequently, IG-speakers referring to themselves as *Romioi* rather than *Ellines* take stances in which they evaluate their Greekness as distinct from Mainlanders across multiple social dimensions. By invoking *Romioi* to distinguish themselves from other Greeks, IG-speakers link linguistic practices, social practices, and personal characteristics in opposition with SMG-speakers. Table 2 showcases aspects of the semiotic field for SMG and IG based on IG-speakers' practices. The semiotic field's available linguistic and other social practices then get mapped onto the enregistered speech and the ethnonyms are clasped with this meaning. As Fanis stylistically performed different Greekness based on lateral quality and that Grigoris and Maria took IG stances using /-yo/ endings, IG-speakers take stances (Kiesling 2018) based on the semiotic field when

employing *Romios* and *Ellinas*, using the clasped labels as a shorthand for the set of semiotic linkages accompanying linguistic and other sociocultural practice.

Conclusions

Characterological figures are discursively negotiated using complex semiotic processes in stances speakers take at given moments. In the case of *Ellines* and *Romioi*, IG-speakers recognize their speech as having been enregistered and consequently draw from the entirety of their available sociocultural knowledge to form figures. They relate characteristics to linguistic traits based in part on the qualia of the linguistic forms and then attach social meaning to larger socially circulated ideologies. IG-speakers achieve this construction by recruiting two existing ethnonyms in the broader Greek consciousness to clasp locally made meaning to distinguish the terms and communities, thereby creating a differentiated Istanbul Greek identity.

Unlike previous work on enregistered personae like “Sassy Queens” (Ilbury 2020), “Tech,” (Pratt 2020) and “Yinzer” (Johnstone 2017) which show a figure emerging as a locus of wholesale difference, the *Romios* is crucially a figure opposing another, the *Ellinas*. The clasped terms are anchored to seemingly static categories based on sociohistorical knowledge and experience. Thus, the fractal recursivity involved in an initial oppositional force circulates the meaning to clasp unto these labels that then allows the ethnonyms to independently index respective figures. Because Istanbul Greeks treat *Ellinas* as a character distinct from *Romios* despite historically denoting the “same” community, what for Mainland Greeks may be viewed as outdated synonyms become clasped with distinct social meaning. These figures then work as part of differentiating repertoire and metapragmatic discourse serves as a locus of stylistic performance and ideology circulation.

Despite acknowledged social and linguistic gradience, labels reinforce categories based on stances regarding the differentiating figures. Although not all Istanbul Greeks extensively use the vast IG repertoire or exclusively take IG stances, these categories of *Ellinas* and *Romios* serve major social functions.

IG-speakers use the term *Romios* to signal an Istanbul Greek identity and emphasize the clasped sociocultural details that circulate the *Romios* figure. This sort of ideological process relies on the opposing figures used as a source of differentiation with the attribution of qualities that align linguistic phenomena to social phenomena. The *Ellines/Romioi* opposition differs from other types of characterological figures, in that while most figures or personae are invoked for stylistic purposes in discourse (c.f. Ilbury 2020), this process is not often examined with general terms for racialized or ethnicized groups, such as “Greek.” Although Halstead (2014) claims these terms do not form separate ethnic categories for the diaspora in Greece, the way IG-speakers remaining in Istanbul take stances with these figures suggests these terms have minimally become involved in the process of reimagined ethnic boundaries. As Heller (personal communication, April 28, 2022) asserts, the overarching “Greek” and “Turkish” labels may be too taxing for Istanbul Greeks to uphold, given their marginalization by two competing hegemonic groups. The *Romios* label allows IG-speakers to maintain their Greekness while accounting for sociohistorical and linguistic differences from Mainland Greece, while not taking on a Turkish ethnic label nor having to prove themselves as *Ellinas* or give up the social meaning of *Romios*. The decreased awareness of the Istanbul Greek community also leads the construction of an Istanbul Greek persona to create a

locally understood sense of self, empowering Istanbul Greeks as a minoritized community with a stigmatized linguistic repertoire. Hence, Evridiki's desire to not be "confused with the mainlanders." As Benor (2010) discusses the utility of examining ethnolinguistic repertoires rather than ethnolects to avoid the essentialization of linguistic features to speakers (among other reasons), then we should also consider the essentializing processes that ethnonyms employ and how these may harm or empower. Speakers draw from their linguistic repertoires and lived experiences as part of local meaning-making strategies, including ethnonyms. These processes suggest that interactionally stance-driven terms can circulate as ethnocultural boundary markers and create new social categories.

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¹ Although Greek-speaking enclaves in Southern Italy tend to maintain the Graci/Griko label.

² Each *millet* was a group of non-Muslims linked primarily by religion rather than language or ethnicity for the purpose of practicing non-Sharia law. Each *millet*'s highest-ranking religious leader governed their community.

³ Πόλη/Poli means both “city” and a short form of Constantinople (the City of Constantine). -itis is a derivational suffix that when attached to Poli creates the ambiguous word of either “citizen” or someone from Istanbul.

⁴ I use the term peripheral to denote features also found in other varieties of Greek located in geographic peripheries to Athens.