



English Slang as a Linguistic Trend in Greek Social Media

Research Article

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| Correspondence: | Thomai Dalpanagioti <thomdalp@enl.auth.gr> | PhD Scholar, Department of Theoretical & Applied Linguistics, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, Greece. |
| | Kalomoira Papadimitriou <kalopapa@enl.auth.gr> | MA Scholar, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, Greece. |

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Abstract

The integration of English slang into social media communication has significantly shaped the vocabulary of non-native English speakers, particularly those belonging to Generation Z. Social media platforms, as hubs for global interaction, have enabled the rapid spread of English slang, which frequently adapts to fit the linguistic and cultural frameworks of local languages. Despite its prevalence, the use of English slang among Greek speakers remains underexamined in academic research. This study employs corpus analysis to examine the types and functions of English slang within social media interactions among Greek speakers. The findings highlight the frequent incorporation of English slang by Greek social media users, underscoring the profound impact of English language and culture on digital communication in Greece. The study also illustrates the adaptability of slang as it crosses linguistic boundaries. Overall, it offers valuable preliminary insights into the dynamics of multilingual expression within Greek digital environments, paving the way for further investigation.

Keywords: slang, social media, corpus analysis, code-switching, gen Z



1. Introduction

Slang is a multifaceted and dynamic linguistic phenomenon with diverse definitions and functions. It encompasses informal, often humorous language used within specific groups to foster solidarity among their members. In the digital age, slang has evolved in unique and unprecedented ways. English slang, in particular, has transcended borders, spreading globally through social media platforms. This evolution highlights the cross-linguistic and cross-cultural impact of digital communication.

Studies have examined slang usage on social media. For example, Nisar et al. (2019) and Zulkhaeriyah et al. (2023) underscore the critical role of social media in language evolution and slang, with little, however, emphasis on the spread of English slang on them. Some research has delved into the use of English slang by Generation Z (Gen Z), individuals born between 1997 and 2012 (Dimock, 2019). For instance, Wedananta et al. (2023) investigated the use of slang by Balinese Gen Z on Instagram, finding that English slang is more prominent than Balinese slang. They also observed frequent code-switching in Gen Z speech. This aligns with Puspita and Ardianto's (2024) argument that code-switching and the use of English slang are defining characteristics of Gen Z identity.

The prevalence of English slang online remains largely unexplored within a Greek context. Therefore, this paper investigates the use of English slang by Greek speakers on social media through a corpus analysis. Following a review of relevant literature, a newly compiled corpus of slang terms, gathered from Greek comments on TikTok videos, is analyzed using Sketch Engine. These terms are then classified based on their lexical and functional properties. Despite the small dataset, this study aims to provide an overview of the characteristics and influence of English slang in this context.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Properties and Functions of Slang

Slang is a linguistic phenomenon that is easy to locate but challenging to define. Mattiello (2008) emphasizes that numerous scholars have offered varying definitions of slang, each reflecting a different perspective: sociological, stylistic, linguistic, or lexicographic. From a sociological standpoint, slang is viewed as a tool for group members to foster closer connections within their community or to distinguish themselves from other social groups. Stylistically, it is seen as a deviation from official and formal language, often characterized as transient and associated with lower social status. Linguistically, slang is regarded as a creative extension of standard language, enriching familiar concepts with diverse morphosyntactic structures and meanings. Finally, from a lexicographic perspective, slang is defined as vernacular speech comprising innovative linguistic expressions, typically used by distinct social subgroups. This diversity in definitions underscores the multifaceted nature of slang, highlighting its dynamic and multidimensional characteristics.

The present study draws on Allan and Burridge's (2006) typology of slang terms, which categorizes slang into five types: fresh and creative, flippant, acronyms, imitative, and clipping. The 'fresh and creative' category refers to newly invented vocabulary and imaginative variations. Flippant slang

combines two unrelated words to create a new term with no connection to the literal meanings of its components. Acronyms are formed by taking the initial letters of the words in a phrase, creating a shorthand expression. Imitative slang involves standard language words that acquire new, often figurative meanings, deviating from their original sense. Lastly, clipping refers to the creation of slang by shortening a standard language word into a more concise form. In all cases, slang terms are characterized by originality and inventiveness, serving to facilitate casual, convenient and efficient communication among members of specific social groups.

Slang serves several critical roles in language and interaction, functioning as a dynamic tool for communication and social expression. This study focuses specifically on six key functions: identification, cognitive, nominative, expressive, attitudinal, and time-saving. Firstly, group bonding and identification are widely regarded as the primary functions of slang. Sabbagh (2018) and Mattiello (2008) emphasize that slang serves as an identifier of a group's values, communication style and social identity. Allan and BurrIDGE (2006) similarly argue that slang reinforces the identity and shared experiences of a group, which can be shaped by factors such as age, gender, nationality, sexuality, profession, and more. By establishing a shared code and mutual understanding, slang unites members of a group. As Wardhaugh and Fuller (2010) suggest, this code can convey convergence, where individuals adopt traits to fit in and feel included, or divergence, where individuals distance themselves from other groups. Social media, a prominent domain for slang usage, can be welcoming or exclusionary depending on the user's familiarity with its nuances.

The cognitive and nominative functions of slang further highlight its adaptability and creativity. The cognitive function relates to understanding and conceptualizing new ideas and phenomena by altering existing word meanings. This function exemplifies linguistic creativity, as slang enables speakers to convey information in imaginative and accessible ways. The nominative function, on the other hand, involves assigning names to objects, concepts, or ideas in an informal and inventive manner, creating a new lexicon rooted in specific contexts (Grigorevna, 2022). Young people, particularly those influenced by technological developments and social trends, often reshape language to produce culturally relevant terms that reflect their experiences and identities. In essence, slang facilitates the conceptualization of new phenomena (cognitive) and provides a way to label them (nominative).

Slang is also a powerful tool for expressive communication. Zhou and Fan (2013) argue that its emotive function is dominant, as slang amplifies the speaker's emotions, reactions, and feelings, making speech more vivid, humorous, and personal. This dimension of slang adds richness to communication, enhancing subjective and individual expression. Additionally, slang performs an attitudinal function, allowing speakers to express social stance, cast judgments, and evaluate situations, people, or concepts. Pesina et al. (2024) highlight that slang terms often reflect the speaker's alignment with specific sociocultural identities or groups.

Finally, the time-saving function of slang underscores its practicality in communication. Pesina et al. (2024) note that abbreviations and acronyms enable faster and more efficient exchanges by conveying substantial information in a condensed form. This brevity is particularly advantageous in online communication, which prioritizes speed and efficiency, further contributing to slang's proliferation in digital environments.

2.2 English in Digital Spaces

English has dominated the Internet since its inception due to the reliance on ASCII (American Standard Code for Information Interchange), which primarily supports the Latin alphabet (Danet & Herring, 2007). This advantage led to the early development of English content, establishing it as the Internet's primary language (Petrosyan, 2024). Despite only 16% of users being native English speakers, online communication is predominantly conducted in English (Yunker, 2022), creating challenges for speakers of minority languages.

The dominance of English online highlights the rise of “typographic imperialism” (Danet & Herring, 2007, p. 9), creating linguistic inequalities between Roman alphabet languages (e.g. English) and non-Roman ones (e.g. Greek). While Unicode has reduced some disadvantages for non-Roman scripts, many users still resort to romanization—using the Roman alphabet to write non-Roman languages—to overcome online limitations (Danet & Herring, 2007). In Greece, this trend is reflected in the rise of ‘Greeklish’ and ‘Engreek’. Greeklish, the practice of writing Greek words using the Latin alphabet, emerged due to limited algorithmic support for Greek scripts in older computers (Toumazatos et al., 2024). Greeklish remains popular for its simplicity, allowing spelling flexibility, speed and informality, appealing to online users seeking convenience and creative expression. In contrast, Engreek or Greek-Alphabet English, arose as a playful response to Greeklish. It humorously mimics English accents and critiques global English dominance by using Greek characters for English words (Spilioti, 2014). Engreek counters Greeklish’s association with globalism, emphasizing local identity and resisting cultural homogenization. Together, Greeklish and Engreek reveal the interplay between global linguistic trends and localized cultural adaptations.

Non-native English speakers, including Greek speakers, often engage in code-switching in online communication. Wardhaugh and Fuller (2010) define code-switching as the alternation between two or more languages within a single discourse, shaped by the sociocultural context. It involves a dominant ‘Matrix’ language into which one or more ‘embedded’ languages are consciously incorporated, serving specific purposes. Puspita and Ardianto (2024) highlight the role of social media in promoting code-switching among youth, particularly in informal settings where English slang is frequently used. Their study also connects code-switching and English slang to identity formation and group bonding, especially among Gen Z in Indonesia, illustrating its sociolinguistic significance.

The prominence of English in online spaces has not only resulted in novel typographic forms (like Greeklish and Engreek) and code-switching, but also significantly influenced language production and change. Barton and Lee (2013) highlight that social media plays a transformative role in daily life, driving social, cultural, economic, and linguistic shifts. Social media now serves as a hub for cross-linguistic and cross-cultural communication (Nisar, 2019). Wedananta et al. (2023) illustrate this through their study on Instagram slang among Balinese Gen Z, where English slang dominated, followed by Indonesian and Balinese, demonstrating language blending and the impact of global interaction.

Social media amplifies the circulation of slang, particularly among Generation Z, born between 1997 and 2012 (Dimock, 2019). Characterized as ‘digital natives’, Gen Z has shaped social media

discourse, creating generational slang that has become synonymous with global social media slang (Wedananta et al., 2023). Zulkhaeriyah et al. (2023) argue that English slang's global proliferation fosters inclusion and identity affirmation among non-English-speaking Gen Z, despite differing linguistic and cultural backgrounds. However, this rise in English slang poses risks to minority languages. Zulkhaeriyah et al. (2023) warn of potential language extinction, as seen with Indonesian, urging further study into non-native English speakers' perspectives and the broader implications of this trend.

The present study extends these discussions by investigating the integration of English slang among Greek speakers, offering a deeper exploration of its types, functions and linguistic adaptations in the context of social media interactions. It aims to contribute valuable insights into how global linguistic trends intersect with local language practices.

3. Data and Method

The study utilizes corpus analysis to investigate the types and functions of English slang as used by Greek speakers on TikTok. The dataset consists of comments posted by Greek speakers on Greek-language videos uploaded to TikTok.

To collect the data, a new TikTok account was created with the location set to Greece. The comments were retrieved on April 5th, 2024, from the first thirty videos appearing on the account's ForYou page (TikTok's recommendation feed). To engage the algorithm, one video was liked after every five posts, and the ForYou page was refreshed following the fifteenth post. Only comments containing at least one slang term, as defined by Urban Dictionary, were selected for the analysis. This approach resulted in the compilation of a corpus containing 1,251 words, which was named 'TikTok_Comments_Corpus_2024'.

The corpus was uploaded to Sketch Engine and analyzed using the tools Wordlist (to identify term frequencies), N-grams/MWEs (Multi-Word Expressions), and Concordances. This facilitated both the calculation of slang term frequencies and the exploration of their meanings in context. In total, 164 distinct slang items were identified. Some terms were later grouped together as they represented variations of the same slang word but with different spellings (e.g. bro/ bruh/ bruhhh/ μπρο/ βρο, cringe/ κριντζ/ κριντζαρε/ κριντζ). Of the 164 slang words identified, 84 were written in their original English form, 79 were transliterated (Engreek) or translated into Greek, and one word incorporated a combination of both alphabets (tryhardαρε).

Despite the limited dataset, the substantial presence of English slang terms in Greek comments highlights how slang can transcend national borders and integrate into the vocabulary of non-native speakers. The nearly equal use of English and Greek adaptations underscores the ongoing cross-cultural and cross-linguistic exchange facilitated by social media. This phenomenon raises intriguing questions about language evolution in the digital era, particularly regarding the influence of social media platforms on linguistic trends and norms.

Findings regarding the use of English slang within the corpus are presented in Section 4, aimed at addressing three research questions:

1. What types of slang terms are used by Greek speakers on TikTok?
2. What pragmatic functions do these slang terms serve?
3. Are there observable patterns of change in linguistic behavior?

4. Results and Discussion

4.1 Types of Slang

Drawing on Allan and Burridge's (2006) classification (see section 2.1), this section categorizes the slang items in the corpus according to their type of formation. Table 1 presents the five categories (i.e. fresh and creative, flippant, imitative, acronym, and clapping) and their frequency of occurrence in the corpus. There is a clear preference towards imitative slang (52.5%), followed by clipping (29.9%), flippant (8.5%), acronyms (6.7%), and fresh and creative slang (2.4%).

The imitative slang items are essentially formal language words that have undergone changes in their meaning and function. This showcases the fluidity of language by demonstrating how words can acquire new meanings overtime influenced by cultural and social changes without sustaining typographic transformation. For instance, *real*, *cringe* and *slay*, often found transliterated as *ριαλ*, *κριντζ* and *σλευ* respectively, have departed from their original meaning. Instead of denoting something true or authentic, *real* (e.g. *μπροήσουνΣέρρες? Real 'bro were you in Serres? Real'*) expresses agreement with someone or something. Originally meaning 'to shrink back or recoil', *cringe* (e.g. *Πλέονταβίντεοτουείναι cringe 'Now his videos are cringe'*) describes the feeling of second-hand embarrassment in slang. Similarly, *slay*, which typically means 'to slaughter or destroy', has evolved in slang to signify admiration for someone's accomplishments or attractiveness (e.g. *ομπρολούστηκεμμπύρα. slayyyπεστααα'bro bathed in beer. slay'*). These shifts reflect the dynamic nature of language evolution and creativity in the digital age, as all these slang terms appeared in the Urban Dictionary after 2017.

Clipping involves creating a new word by shortening an existing standard language word and altering its meaning. The goal is to produce new linguistic forms that are brief, efficient, and suitable for informal communication. In the corpus, there are several examples of transliterated slang terms, with the largest group in this category—and the entire corpus—being *μπρο/ βρο* ('bro'). Notably, the transliterated form appears nearly three times more frequently than the English version (32 instances compared to 12). This discrepancy may be attributed to the convenience and speed of not switching the keyboard alphabet, as users were already typing in Greek. Alternatively, it could indicate the infiltration and subsequent integration of the English term into the Greek vernacular to such an extent that it is now written in the Greek alphabet. Another fascinating example is *ριζαρει*, derived from 'rizz,' which refers to being flirty and charismatic. The Greek user transliterated the term (*rizz* → *ριζ*) and added the suffix *-άρω* to conform it morphologically to Greek verbs. This adaptation is an intriguing morphological innovation that showcases the creativity of Greek speakers and highlights how cross-linguistic exchange on social media can foster linguistic innovation.

Flippant, as previously noted, involves combining two words to create a new term with a distinct meaning and function. A particularly intriguing example from the corpus is tryhardαρε, which stands out as the only term incorporating both the English and Greek alphabets. This word is noteworthy because, like ριζαρει, the Greek user adapted the English term tryhard by adding the Greek suffix -αρω to transform it into a Greek verb. Furthermore, terms such as pick me, glow up, and βλογκ are closely associated with current online trends, as they are often used to describe specific video formats on social media. For instance, pick me typically appears in satirical videos portraying girls seeking male validation, glow up is used to showcase transformations, often related to improving one's appearance, and βλογκ refers to short videos capturing snippets of one's daily lifestyle. This demonstrates a clear link between online trends and the adoption of English slang. Additionally, an intriguing term is uwu, originally a texting emoticon similar to '@_@' or '(ΦωΦ)'. Interestingly, uwu has evolved into a standalone word used to express adorability, particularly in reference to feminine individuals. It is often paired with the noun girl to form the phrase uwu girl. This transformation exemplifies how a symbol can transcend its initial function as an emoticon to be recognized as a distinct word.

Turning to the fourth category, acronyms embody the speed, convenience, and urgency that characterize online communication. They offer a creative way to interact by condensing phrases to emphasize specific moments (e.g. af, omg), drive social media trends (e.g. pov, grwm), and enable rapid exchanges (e.g. btw, iykyk). For acronyms to function effectively, users must understand their meanings, fostering a sense of community among those familiar with the terms while potentially excluding those who are not.

The rarest category, fresh and creative, includes four instances (μπιμπο' bimbo', gyat, quagmire, chad) that are original and unique in both form and meaning. A common feature of the terms in this category is their association with sexual, flirtatious, or carnal connotations. Notably, all terms, except for gyat, are used in a taunting or satirical manner. The limited use of this category may be attributed to the explicit and provocative nature of these terms or to the infrequent incorporation of novel linguistic creations within Greek-speaking online communities. Alternatively, it could be attributed to the small size of the corpus itself.

4.2 Functions of Slang

In this section, the slang items in the corpus are categorized according to their pragmatic functions: identification, cognitive, nominative, expressive, attitudinal, and time-saving (see section 2.1). For each category, Table 2 provides examples of the slang items in context along with explanations of their meanings. Among these functions, identification emerges as the most frequent (35.4%), followed by cognitive (25.6%), expressive (17.1%), nominative (8.5%), and attitudinal (7.9%). Time-saving is the least frequent function, accounting for only 5.5%.

The majority of slang items in the corpus are employed by speakers to identify with and signal belonging, recognition, or alienation toward a group (identification function). Specifically, terms such as bro and ogs indicate belonging, as they express fellowship and rapport among members of a group. In terms of recognition, slang items like uwu girl, τρολάρισμα (trolling) and chad highlight a shared understanding among users of social media within specific online communities. These

slang terms primarily serve to recognize and acknowledge the members of these groups without necessarily casting either a positive or negative light on them. Alienation is conveyed through expressions such as *πικμι* (pick me), *μουμερ* (boomer), *μπίμπο* (bimbo), and *ακουστικός* (acoustic). These terms are often used to comment negatively on individuals or entire communities, serving to criticize, insult, or scorn them. Overall, speakers use slang to construct and establish their identity by expressing kinship, understanding, or opposition towards online communities, thereby positioning themselves in relation to them.

The cognitive function appears to be the second most prominent function of slang in the corpus. As previously noted, the slang terms in this category are words that have acquired new associations and meanings, thereby influencing cognitive processes. For example, the terms *core* and *glow up* illustrate the cognitive function as they have diverged from their original meanings to describe online trends – *core* refers to the intrinsic aesthetic elements associated with a place or situation, while *glow up* denotes a transformation video. Other striking examples include the slang terms *ate* and *fire*, which are now used in online discourse to commend someone's exceptional performance or appearance. These terms, therefore, reflect new meanings and interpretations, leading to shifts in linguistic practices and underscoring the creative, ever-evolving nature of language.

Regarding the expressive function, slang items in this category are used by speakers to convey emotions, humour, and reactions in online interactions. Terms such as *omg*, *slay*, *W*, and *gyat*, for instance, are employed to express varying degrees of excitement, admiration, surprise, or praise. These expressions are often used either sincerely or exaggeratedly to add a comedic effect to the discourse. Another notable example is the term *cringe*, which conveys intense discomfort or second-hand embarrassment. It negatively critiques the actions of others, particularly when they are perceived as socially awkward, unacceptable, or self-centred. Thus, *cringe* reflects an individual's reaction to another person's behaviour. Overall, these terms underscore shared emotional and social awareness within online communities.

Slang terms with a nominative function contribute to creating a distinct cultural and lexical environment unique to social media by labelling concepts, objects, or individuals. This practice enhances clarity in communication by reducing barriers and misunderstandings. For instance, the term *κουιν* (queen) is used to uplift or admire a confident woman, while *μπιφ* (beef) refers to interpersonal conflicts, and *savage* characterizes audacious, bold, and reckless behaviour. An intriguing example is *tea*, which now denotes gossip. These terms have transcended their original meanings, forming a unique lexicon shared among social media users that fosters a common online culture while excluding those who do not participate in it.

Slang items serving an attitudinal function, on the other hand, reflect users' beliefs, judgments, and cultural commentary. The term *based* signifies agreement within a political discourse, emphasizing the speaker's alignment with specific values and ideologies. Furthermore, terms such as *old school* and *wannabe* provide commentary on online subcultures but convey differing attitudes. While *old school* reflects a nostalgic, positive perspective on the practices of a group from a previous era, *wannabe* passes judgment on individuals who exaggerate or pretend to belong to a particular subculture. Similarly, *tryhardαρε* critiques individuals as inauthentic when they appear to be overly eager or exert excessive effort in situations that call for a more casual approach. Overall, the

attitudinal function of slang enables users to express opinions and critique the behaviour of subculture members in social media contexts.

Lastly, the time-saving function is evident in various examples from the corpus. Abbreviations and acronyms are commonly used to streamline communication, enhancing speed and efficiency. However, it is crucial to note that their effectiveness depends on shared understanding among users. For instance, slang terms such as *af* and *fr* are used to succinctly emphasize agreement and add intensity, while the abbreviation *βτυ* (*btw*) allows for brief inclusion of information. Without familiarity with these terms, communication can become more complex rather than simplified. Interestingly, some slang terms not only reflect social media culture but also facilitate quick interaction. Terms like *grwm* and *pov*, which concisely refer to online trends, as well as *μπακ* (short for *follow me back*), which requests mutual engagement, are primarily employed on social media platforms. These examples highlight slang's role in promoting efficient communication while emphasizing the importance of mutual understanding within social media communities.

In conclusion, the multifunctionality of slang highlights its adaptability and richness in communication within social media contexts. Many slang terms transcend a single pragmatic function, serving multiple purposes simultaneously. For example, terms like *grwm* combine the time-saving function through abbreviation with the nominative function by labelling specific online trends. Similarly, *bro* integrates expressive and identification functions, enabling speakers to convey emotions and foster group belonging. *Tea*, which refers to gossip, fulfils a nominative function by labelling a concept and a cognitive function by altering its traditional meaning, enriching communication. *Savage* might act as an attitudinal function, showing approval or disapproval based on context, while also having a nominative function by describing bold behaviour. This overlap underscores the dynamic nature of slang as a linguistic tool, reflecting the creativity and efficiency of language. By fulfilling various functions at once, slang terms enhance clarity, emotional connection, and cultural identity, creating a nuanced and shared lexicon among users while also evolving to meet the demands of modern digital communication.

Table 1: Types of slang in the *TikTok_Comments_Corpus_2024*

| Types of slang | Imitative | Clipping | Flippant | Acronyms | Fresh and creative |
|--------------------|-------------------|-------------------------|---------------|----------|--------------------|
| | Top/ τοπ | Bro/ bruh/ μπρο/ βρο | Βλογκ | Omg/ ομγ | Μπιμπο |
| Slang terms | Real/ ριαλ | Rizz | Tryhardαρε | Af | Gyat |
| | Slay/ σλευ | Ριζαρει | Glow up | Fy | Quagmire |
| | Cringe/ κριντζ | Μπακ | Pick me/πικμι | Pov | Chad |

| | | | | | |
|---------------------------|--------|------------|-------|----|---|
| Respect/ ρισπεκτ | Λετζιτ | Uwu girl | Iykyk | | |
| Fake/ φρεικ | W | Wannabe | Fr | | |
| Hate | | Old school | Grwm | | |
| Based | | | Ogs | | |
| Queen/ κουιν/ κουην | | | | | |
| Ακουστικός/ ακουστικοι | | | | | |
| Mentioned | | | | | |
| Rain | | | | | |
| Ικον/ αικονικ | | | | | |
| Μπιφ | | | | | |
| Savage | | | | | |
| Downgrade | | | | | |
| Edging | | | | | |
| Ate | | | | | |
| Tea | | | | | |
| Average | | | | | |
| Fire | | | | | |
| Carried | | | | | |
| Τρολαρισμα | | | | | |
| Μπουμερ | | | | | |
| Core | | | | | |
| Facts | | | | | |
| Occurrences | 86 | 49 | 14 | 11 | 4 |

Table 2: Functions of Slang in TikTok_Comments_2024

| Functions | Examples | Meaning | Occurrences |
|----------------|---|--|-------------|
| Identification | Πικ μι εισαι εσυ ακου την φωνη σου σορρυ | ‘Pick me’, describing someone actively seeking out male validation (often a girl) | 58 |
| | DO I LOOK LIKE AN UWU GIRL ? | Referring to an overly feminine aesthetic or persona | |
| | μπουμερ χιουμορ χριστουλι μου ποτε θα σταματήσει | Derived from ‘Baby Boomer’, referring to someone old in a dismissive manner | |
| | bruh ... τον λυπαμαι τον bro | Showing camaraderie and belonging in the same social group | |
| | ONLY OGS KNOW HER | Referring to the original members of a group (the first ones) | |
| | δεν μας αφήνουν να παντρευτουμε άντρας με άντρα ωραίο τρολαρισμα ο παππούς | Denoting participation in internet culture by deliberately provoking anger or irritation | |
| | Giga Chad . Τιγωνιέξείναι αυτές. No homo | Representing a masculine, confident archetype (sometimes derogatory) | |
| | έχεις απόλυτο δίκιο....και για τη χαζό μπιμπο δεν έχω λόγια | Identifying a hyperfeminine, sexualised, unintelligent girl | |
| | Είσαι ακουστικός ? | ‘Acoustic’, referring to autistic people | |
| | bro’s spitting facts | Used to show something is true | |
| Cognitive | maltacore | Refers to the essence of a trend or aesthetic | 42 |
| | το τελευταίο κομμάτι που κυματίζει η σημαία όσο οδηγάει είναι TOP | Denoting perfection and exceptionality | |
| | Ότι πιο real είδα σήμερα | Relating to or agreeing with something | |
| | Fakemelisas | Highlighting something as staged, inauthentic | |
| | Ate | Someone excelling, succeeding | |
| | this is fire | Something extraordinary or excellent | |
| | όμως ποσο glow up έχει κανει | Representing a physical transformation for the better | |
| | Downgrade | Denoting a quality or value decrease (often about romantic partners) | |

| | | | |
|-------------------|---|---|----|
| | Πλέον τα βίντεο του είναι cringe | Conveying physical discomfort caused by second-hand embarrassment and awkwardness | |
| | Omg γειααα | 'Oh my God', showing intense feelings, disbelief or surprise | |
| | Μπορούσα να τα μυρίσω τα σχόλια (btw ρε κορίτσια όλο αυτό το hate το κάνατε γτ κάνει καλύτερα το makeup από εσάς ή απλά για χαβαλέ?) | Referring to strong negative emotions, disapproval or sometimes online bullying | |
| | Καβάλα, Ξάνθη, Κομοτηνή felling the pain | Conveying discomfort usually expressed in a humorous and light-hearted way Used mainly by men expressing exaggerated excitement about the physical appearance of a woman | 28 |
| Expressive | GYATTTTT | (>charisma) Expressing approval, admiration or playfulness towards one's flirting abilities | |
| | "Rizz" | Denoting praise and admiration about one's appearance, beliefs or personality | |
| | slayyy πες τααα | Conveying surprise or acknowledgement when someone or something is mentioned in an unlikely context | |
| | καρβελας mentioned | Exhibiting excitement and praise towards one's actions | |
| | W for singing Kendrick's part, ltrl carried the whole song που μπορώ να το βρω? λετζιτ το θέλω | 'Legit', emphasizing genuine emotions and interest | |
| | Εγω ένα γεια από την κουιν ; | 'Queen', a confident woman that knows her worth | |
| | Συνήθως εγώ ξεκινάω το μπιφ γτ βαριέμαι | Being in bad terms with someone | |
| Nominative | Ε το σπρωξιμο στο αγορακι απλα αικονικ | 'Iconic', referring to someone or something fantastic, admirable | 14 |
| | savage moment | Denoting one's audacity and confidence, careless about the effects | |

| | | | |
|--------------------|--|--|----|
| | average art teacher | Describing the usual experience with someone or something | |
| | quagmire | Referring to someone sex-crazed (also a character on 'Family Guy') | |
| | I have missed some tea | Denoting engagement with gossip | |
| | kanwedging | Referring to teasing someone (in a sexual context) | |
| | W for singing Kendrick's part, lrrlcarried the whole song | Recognizing one's great contribution that leads to success | |
| | θυμάμαι τον μπαμπά σου από το βλογκ με τα γυρίσματα από το σου (μεγάλη φαν) | 'Vlog' (>video + log), labelling a specific type of online content, a video about one's life | |
| | Η κυρια στο τέλος based | Showing agreement with something, usually engaging in online political discourse | |
| | οι άνθρωποι που έβαζαν τα σύρματα απλά respect | Acknowledging someone's good act or an alternative to 'thank you' | |
| Attitudinal | Ραντεβού στο χαμηλοτάβανο . Αναχώρηση 12 το βράδυ ... ;) old school | Referring to a previous generation/ era | 13 |
| | tikanoun ta wannabe gangsters r mlk | Conveying judgement to people pretending to belong to a specific group or culture | |
| | tryhardαρε να βγάλει υλικό για luben | Reflecting judgement towards extreme effort and support towards a casual, unpretentious attitude | |
| | Ταύτιση af | Short for 'as f*ck', used for emphasis | |
| | μόνο μανγκοΜόνστερ βτγ | Short for 'by the way', adding information | |
| | FRRRRRR | Short for 'for real', agreeing with something | |
| Time-saving | ωχ Παναγία μ, ποια κουκλαρα μ βγήκε πάλι fy | Short for 'for you', referring to the For You page of TikTok | 9 |
| | Bahahah IYKYK | Short for 'if you know you know', signalling mutual understanding | |
| | Να μας δείξεις ένα GRWM όταν σε γνωρίσει στον πατέρα της | Short for 'Get Ready With Me', a social media trend focusing on lifestyle content | |

| | |
|---|---|
| POV: είσαι απουσιολόγος και έχεις 95 | Short for ‘Point Of View’, describing a specific scenario |
| μπακκκκ πλιζζκουκλαρααα | ‘Back’, short for ‘follow me back’ on a social media platform |

4.3 Patterns of Change in Linguistic Behavior

This section discusses examples of adaptation which results from integrating English slang into Greek. Syntactic adaptation, morphological adjustment and hybridization are patterns observed in the corpus under study.

For example, in English, the slang term *top* (meaning “to be the best”) is predominantly used as an attributive adjective, preceding and modifying a noun. For instance, in expressions like *I’m top man*, *yagemme!* and *That bre’s a top neek!* (drawn from Urban Dictionary), it functions to describe the nouns (*man* and *neek*). However, when borrowed into Greek, *top* undergoes a syntactic shift to become a predicate adjective, and is thus used in constructions where it describes the subject, connected by a linking verb like *είναι* (‘is’). This shift is evident in examples (1) and (2). In these cases, *top* aligns with Greek syntactic rules, where the adjective follows the subject and the linking verb. This adaptation illustrates how loanwords can be assimilated into the grammatical framework of the borrowing language, maintaining their semantic value while adjusting to different syntactic roles.

- (1) *τοτελευταίοκομμάτιπουκουματίζειησημαίαόσοοδηγάειείναιTOP* 📺 📱 👍
‘the last part when the flag is waving while he is driving is TOP’
- (2) *Επίσηςτοβίντεοείναιτοπ* ❤️
‘Also the video is top’

Interestingly, *based* (meaning “someone/something that is cool and/or speaks the truth”) demonstrates a syntactic reversal compared to *top*. While *top* transitions from an attributive adjective in English to a predicate adjective in Greek, *based* moves in the opposite direction. In English, the slang word *based* predominantly describes the subject following a linking verb, as in *That’s based, bro* (Urban dictionary). However, when adopted into Greek, *based* exhibits greater syntactic flexibility, appearing both as a predicate adjective and as an attributive adjective, as demonstrated in examples (3) and (4) respectively. This highlights the fluidity of syntactic roles when words are borrowed across languages and underscores the adaptability of linguistic systems.

- (3) *Ηκυριαστοτελοςbased*
‘The woman at the end [is] based’
- (4) *Basedγιαγια*
‘Based grandma’

From a morphological perspective, code-switching results in diverse typographic choices. Comments posted by Greek users on TikTok often reflect this variability, as they may be written entirely in English, in Greeklish (Greek written with Latin characters), in Engreek (English written

with Greek characters), or fully in Greek. This phenomenon is illustrated by examples (5), (6), (7), and (8), respectively.

- (5) *I have missed some tea*
- (6) *kanwedging*
'I am doing edging'
- (7) *Θενγκιουμπρο*
'Thank you bro'
- (8) *Είσαιακουστικός? 🗣️*
'Are you acoustic?'

Additionally, hybrid forms are attested in the corpus, such as *μιζαρει* and *tryhardαρω* (discussed in section). In these cases the suffix *-άρω* is added to the borrowed English slang terms in order to align them with Greek morphology. Such forms also serve as a bridge between the two linguistic systems, showcasing creativity and linguistic flexibility.

On the whole, despite its limited size, the dataset under study provides valuable insights into the adaptability of slang as it crosses linguistic boundaries. It highlights the dynamic processes of syntactic adaptation, morphological adjustment, and code-switching that occur when English slang is integrated into Greek. Further research with a larger and more diverse corpus could shed light on broader patterns of language borrowing and cultural exchange.

5. Conclusion

This study sheds light on the integration of English slang into the social media interactions of Greek speakers, particularly on TikTok. Through corpus analysis, it identifies several key types of slang terms, including imitative, clipping, flippancy, acronyms, as well as fresh and creative slang. These slang types serve a variety of pragmatic functions, such as fostering identification within social groups, conveying cognitive and emotional expressions, enabling self-expression, and serving nominative purposes by introducing novel terms. Additionally, they play attitudinal roles in signaling social alignment and values, as well as time-saving functions, facilitating efficient communication in the fast-paced digital environment.

Moreover, the findings indicate observable shifts in linguistic behavior, including the syntactic integration of English slang into Greek grammatical structures and an increased prevalence of code-switching. These changes highlight the creative adaptation of English slang within Greek speech, reflecting the fluid and evolving nature of language in the digital age. Such patterns emphasize the profound influence of global linguistic trends on localized language practices, demonstrating how digital communication fosters cross-linguistic innovation and cultural exchange. This process allows languages to evolve and accommodate global influences without losing their unique identity. The resulting hybrid expressions, code-switching practices and innovative linguistic patterns demonstrate the capacity for smaller languages to adapt and thrive in multilingual environments.

While this study provides valuable preliminary insights, its limited dataset calls for further exploration. Future research could incorporate a mixed-methods approach by combining more extensive corpus analysis with questionnaire-based studies to delve deeper into the beliefs and attitudes of Generation Z toward English slang. Such an investigation could uncover how Greek Gen Z adults perceive the use of English slang in their online interactions, its role in their self-expression, and its influence on their linguistic identity. This holistic approach would contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of the dynamics of multilingual expression within digital environments.

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Bio-note:

Thomi Dalpanagioti is a Laboratory Teaching Fellow at the Department of Theoretical and Applied Linguistics, School of English, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki. Her academic interests span cognitive semantics and pragmatics, corpus linguistics, lexicography, and vocabulary teaching and learning. As a full-time faculty member, she is actively engaged in both teaching and research, contributing to the advancement of linguistic studies through her interdisciplinary approach.

Kalomoira Papadimitriou is affiliated with the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, Greece. Her research focuses on contemporary language use, with a particular interest in English slang as a linguistic trend on Greek social media platforms.

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