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Major Trends in Theoretical and Applied Linguistics contains 80 papers on Theoretical and Applied Linguistics by prominent and young researchers, representing a large variety of topics, dealing with virtually all domains and frameworks of modern Linguistics. These papers were originally presented at the 20th International Symposium on Theoretical and Applied Linguistics at the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki in April 2011. The second volume is organized into three main sections: Discourse Analysis – Gender – Lexicography; Language Acquisition; Language Disorders.

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**Section 3:
Discourse Analysis -
Gender -
Lexicography**

The Meaning of Discourse Markers in Classroom Interaction

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Abstract

There hasn't been much research carried out to date relating the spoken classroom discourse and the correlation between meaning and interaction. In this study, I will explore the relationship between meaning and interaction as enacted by the Greek particles *lipon* ("so") and *endaksi* ("ok"), and, in particular, I will investigate their use within classroom interaction using the tools of the conversation analytic tradition. This study investigates these lexical particles within classroom interaction in pre-primary and primary classes in schools of Nicosia. For the investigation I recorded and transcribed 20 hours of classroom interaction. The lexical items under study fit into the category of what has traditionally been framed as discourse markers. In this study I centre my attention on the classroom genre and analyze the communicative purpose of the aforementioned discourse markers in the speech of the teachers.

1. Introduction

As the main medium of instruction, classroom genres have aroused the interest of researchers. To date, most studies of classroom language have shown that classroom conversations led by the teacher and involving the whole class typically have large structural junctures that delimit lessons and tasks, and phases within them (e.g., Bellack et al., 1966; Erickson 1978; Mehan 1979; Sinclair & Coulthard 1975).

Recent studies have explored a variety of discourse markers in a number of settings, but pre-primary and primary classrooms have been largely overlooked. The main purpose of this study is to analyse the occurrence of two lexical markers, that is, *lipon* ("so", "well") and *endaksi?* (ok?) in the speech of teachers in pre-primary and primary classrooms in Cyprus. The method that is adopted in the analysis of the data is Conversation Analysis (CA), which has its origins in the pioneering work of Sacks (1992a, 1992b).

The lexical items under study could fit into the category of what has traditionally been framed as discourse markers (DMs). According to Schiffrin (1987: 31), DMs are “textual coordinates of talk that bracket units of it”. Examples of discourse markers include the particles “oh”, “well”, “now”, “then”, “you know”, and “I mean”, and the connectives “so”, “because”, “and”, “but”, and “or”.

DMs have attracted a lot of research, both in papers and in book-length studies. Some studies deal with a whole range of discourse markers (Schourup 1982, Schiffrin 1987, Watts 1989), while others concentrate on individual ones (Lakoff 1973, Svartvik 1980, Schiffrin 1985 etc.). Most available classifications of DMs are based on their core meaning as separate lexical items and/or their functions in discourse coherence. For instance, Schiffrin (1985) examines the functions of DMs in terms of conversational coherence. Blackmore, who works within the framework of relevance theory suggests mainly four ways of classifying discourse connectives: (1) Discourse connectives introducing contextual implications (e.g., so, too, also); (2) Discourse connective concerned with strengthening (e.g., after all, moreover, furthermore); (3) Discourse connective introducing denial (e.g., however, still, nevertheless, but); (4) Discourse connective indicating the role of the utterance in the discourse in which it occurs (e.g., anyway, incidentally, by the way, finally).

Brinton (1996) shows that discourse markers also serve pragmatic functions and can be termed pragmatic markers, used by a speaker to comment on the state of understanding of information about to be expressed (with phrases such as ‘like’, ‘you know’); they may also be used to express a change of state (oh; Heritage 1984) or for subtle commentary by the speaker suggesting that “what seems to be the most relevant context is not appropriate” (well; Jucker 1993:438). These lexical items used in this manner are devoid of semantic content in and of themselves (Östman 1982; Schiffrin 1986; Vincent & Sankoff 1992) and are dependent on the local context and sequence of talk for their interpretation. To this direction an important study is Cliff’s (2001) investigation of the particle ‘actually’ in interaction, because it shifts the focus from studies on the functions of DMs to investigation of the meaning of the specific particle in a range of interactional contexts.

Scarce research relating the spoken classroom discourse and the use of discourse markers using Greek data has been carried out to date. For instance, Georgakopoulou and Goutsos (1998) and Archakis (2001) investigate conjunctions versus discourse markers based on Greek data. Archakis (2002) examines the discourse marker *diladi* (‘that is’) in classroom interaction. In Christodoulidou (2011) we centre our attention on the lecture genre and we analyze the communicative purpose of *lipon* (‘well’), *ara* (‘so’), *orea* (‘fine’) within spoken academic discourse.

The term ‘discourse markers’ is used only provisionally in this study, because the aim is to uncover the meaning and use of these lexical items based on the

position of the specific lexical items within the sequence and the composition of the turn in which they occur, in order to unravel their use in context. Drew and Holt's (1998: 497) observation below sheds light on the study of language use in proposing that the study of the components of a turn's should be analyzed by taking into consideration their place in the sequence and the construction of the turn.

The components of a turn's construction—at whatever level of linguistic production—are connected with the activity which the turn is being designed to perform in the unfolding interactional sequence of which it is a part, and to the further development of which it contributes.

2. Data and Methodology

The extracts included in this article comprise transcriptions of approximately 20 hours of video-recorded classroom interaction in pre-primary and first and second year primary classes in schools at Nicosia, Cyprus. The DMs under study are examined in the speech of the teachers during the Greek language course in the first and second year primary classes and during the fairytale hour in the pre-primary classes. The language spoken during the recorded classroom interactions involves a combination of Cypriot Dialect and Modern Greek.¹

All names of participants are replaced by pseudonyms in order to protect their privacy. For the transcription and analysis of the data we adopted the analytical tools of Conversation Analysis.

The transcription symbols used in this study —cited in Appendix I— are based on the transcription conventions developed by Jefferson for the analysis of conversational turns in Anglo-American conversation (cf. Sacks, Schegloff and

1 The Cypriot Greek dialect spoken in Cyprus is an indigenous variety of Greek. Cypriot Greeks are bilingual in the Cypriot dialect and Modern Greek. The Cypriot Greek dialect is acquired naturally while Modern Greek is taught as the standard language (cf. Ferguson, 1959: 30). In recent years researchers like Davy, Panyiotou and Ioannou, (1996), Papapavlou and Pavlou (1998) and Karyolemou and Pavlou (2001) have classified village Cypriot as the basilect and town Cypriot as the acrolect of the low variety. In addition, researchers like Karyolemou (1997; 2000), Moschonas (2002: 917), Terkourafi (2004) and Arvaniti (2002) have supported the creation of a Cypriot koine in urban centres, that is, a middle variety which is different from the local vernaculars incorporating important influences from Modern Greek.

Jefferson 1974). The transcription system is intended to capture in detail the characteristics “of the sequencing of turns, including gaps, pauses and overlaps; and the element of speech delivery such as audible breath and laughter, stress, enunciation, intonation and pitch” (Hutchby and Drew 1995: 182). Significant turns for the analysis are marked with arrows.

A powerful agenda for the analysis of talk-in-interaction is Schegloff, Ochs and Thompson’s (1996) proposal that the study of linguistic structures could be richly informed by consideration of their place in the wider context of social interaction:

The meaning of any single grammatical construction is interactionally contingent, built over interactional time in accordance with interactional actualities. Meaning lies not with the speaker nor the addressee nor the utterance alone . . . but rather with the interactional past, current and projected next moment.

(Schegloff et al. 1996: 40)

Sacks et al. identified components of the turn—the turn-constructive units (henceforth TCUs; Sacks et al. 1974: 702–4)—as sentential, clausal, phrasal, and lexical units, which can constitute complete turns. On their potential completion, transition to another speaker turns out to be relevant. The turn is seen as “the habitat in which turn constructive units –henceforth TCUs– are housed” (Schegloff 1996: 56) and this reframing deepens our understanding of turns-at-talk. Schegloff et al. claim that “an important dimension of linguistic structures is their moment-by-moment evolving interactional production” (Schegloff et al. 1996:39). The shift of focus from sentences to turn constructive units proposed by Schegloff et al. (1996) proves to be essential for this study.

In what follows I explore the theoretical and methodological implications of this claim by taking the turn and its component TCUs as the frame of reference in examining the two lexical items under study (*lipon*, *endaksi*) in classroom interaction. The DMs under study will be left untranslated within the extracts in order to uncover their interactional meaning based on their sequential order within the conversational extracts.

3. *Lipon* and *Endaksi*

According to the Greek-English dictionary of Stavropoulos (1988: 119) *lipon* can be (a) a deductive conjunction translated as “so”, “then”, “therefore”, “consequently”, “hence” or (b) an interjection which is translated as “so”, “well”, “then”, “now” for the expression of surprise, relief, query, decision etc. The

questioning *endaksi* is an adverb used to confirm agreement and is translated as “ok?” or “all right?” (Babinotis 1998: 622; Stavropoulos 1988: 295). As will be shown in sections 3.1, 3.2, 3.3 in the extracts under study *lipon*:

1. occurs in the speech of the teacher to provide students with directions. Within the same turn, *endaksi?* occurs in final position to invite students’ agreement (cf. Pomerantz 1984).
2. occurs to signal return to a cut-off narration or discussion and
3. can occur to initiate inductive reasoning.

3.1. Lipon - Direction Giving - Endaksi?

In the extracts that follow the discourse markers *lipon* and *endaksi?* frame (cf. Goffman, 1974; 1979) a segment of the teacher’s speech in which she is instructing the students to follow specific directions. Generally *lipon* signals initiation of a new topic. As was shown in Christodoulidou (2011) in the sequential environment of lecture, *lipon*-prefaced turns are deployed by the lecturer in order to capture the students’ attention, signal the initiation of the lesson, and the termination of any other interaction among the students. In the data from pre-primary and primary classes, analyzed here, *lipon* introduces direction giving by the teacher to the students. The giving of directions is followed by questioning *endaksi?* with which the teacher seeks to confirm agreement by the students.

Extract 1

(T: Teacher; M: Marilena; N: Nicolas; S: Stefani; G: Giorgos. The conversation takes place after the teacher has finished reading a text-poem about weekdays.)

1. M En polla astio::
It’s very fu::nny.
2. T l::ne astio. Pco su fanice astio?
It i::s funny. What sounds funny to you?
3. M l ðef – Tri::ti.
Mond- Tue::sday.
4. T l TRITI. Jati:: su fanice astia l Triti?
TUESDAY. Why:: does Tuesday sounds funny?
5. M E::mm epiði::,
E::mm because::,
6. T epiði? ti ða kani::?
because? what will he do::?
7. M ða psaksi,
he will search,

8. T → θa psaksi mes to spiti:: Lipo::n (.) akuste me ti θelo na
he will search in the hou::se. Lipo::n (.) listen what I want you to
9. kanete. θa sas đoso đio tria lepta cero:: na to đjavasete po::li::
do. I'll give you two three minutes to read ve::ry::
10. prosektika, °o kaθenas° (.) monos tu °siya ° siya, siya::, mesa sto
carefully, °each one° (.) alone °slowly° slowly, slowly:: in your
11. mjaluđaci tu CE:: meta:: ean kati đen katalavenete::,
head A::ND the::n if there is something you don't understa::nd,
12. θa:: to ° simiosete°, θa °prospaθisete ° na to đjavasete prosextika ce
you'll ° take a note°, you'll °try° to read it carefully and
13. → meta θa to sizitisume eđo oli mazi:: Endaksi::?
then we'll discuss it here all together. Endaksi::?
14. M [NE::
[YE::S.
15. N [NE::
[YE::S.
16. S [NE.
[YES.

In extract 1 after the teacher has finished reading the text of the day, one of the students, M (1:1) proffers an appreciation, which triggers a discussion (1:1-7). The teacher (1:8-9) with *lipon* shifts the topic by initiating a request of the students attention: *Lipo::n (.) listen what I want you to do*. The request of their attention is followed in turns 9-13 by directions given to the student on how to proceed to second reading of the text. With the questioning *endaksi* that follows the teacher seeks to secure students' agreement.

Extract 2

(T: Teacher; M: Maria. Eleni is a university student, observer of the class.)

1. T I Eleni ine fiti::tria sto panepistimio >ce irθe eđo na parakoluθisi pu θa
Eleni is a stu::dent at university >and she came to watch
2. → kanume to maθima mas, to paramiθi mas<. Lipon kaθiste anapaftika::,
our course, our fairytale<. Lipon sit comfortably::,
3. fronima:: na akusete to paramiθi mas ce na to akusi ce mazi mas ce I
quietly:: to listen our fairytale and with us will listen
4. → ciria Eleni, endaksi::?
mrs Eleni, endaksi::?
5. M enna mas to pi i ciria Eleni?
Is mrs Eleni going to read it to us?
6. T oçi eyo enna sa to po to paramiθi
no I'll read the fairytale.

In extract 2, after the information the teacher provides the students with, with *lipon* she shifts the topic by commanding the students to *sit comfortably*;; *quietly*;; *to listen our fairytale and with us will listen mrs Eleni, endaksi*;;? The questioning *endaksi* is deployed to secure the students' agreement.

3.2. Lipon + Return to the Cut-Off Narration

In the extracts presented in this section the discourse marker *lipon* is deployed after an interruption or parenthetical discussion to the ongoing reading or narration of a fairytale. The use of *lipon* in turn-initial position is recurrently deployed to mark return to the narration that was in progress before the interruption.

Extract 3

(T= Teacher; A= Assistant; C= Christos; S= Stavros. The teacher is reading a fairytale.)

1. T I meres pernou::san ce I mama γlari::na ekleje epiði
The days were pa::sing and mom gu::ll was crying because
2. to micro γlaraci tis ðen ine san ta alla. Kati sinevene.
her little gull was different from the others. Something was wrong.
3. ((two children are pushing each other))
4. A ta çerja ðen ta exume ja na ðernume alla ja na aŋgaλazume, a:::: ciria
hands are not for hitting but for hugging, o::h mrs
5. prepi na to pis ce si sta peðaca su oti ta çerja ta exume ja na xaiðevume
you have to say this to your kids too, that hands are for caressing
6. oçi ja na ðernume.
not for hitting.
7. C eγo piti mu epezame me to aðerfo mu alla en ton eðera.
at home we were playing with my brother but I didn't bit him.
8. T → LIPO::N, jenniθice to mikro::=
LIPO::N, was born the little::=
9. S =γlaraci
=gull
10. T I mama γlarina ce o mpampas γlaros pos eγioθan?
how did mom gull and dad gull feel?

In extract 3 while the teacher is reading a fairytale (3: 1-2) she is interrupted by two children pushing each other (3: 3). The assistant (3: 4-6) addresses them with a reprehension. The teacher (3: 8) with the deployment of a loud LIPO::N shifts the footing from the interruption to the activity of reading the fairytale that was in progress as shown by the continuation of the narration in 3:8 *LIPO::N, was born the little*:::

Extract 4

(T= Teacher; M= Michalis. The teacher is reading the fairytale)

1. T ðen mporou::se na peta::ksi to mikro::ylara::ci ce kaθotane panta pano
the little gull couldn't fly:: and was always sitting on
2. se mia ksilini apovaθra::: Kserete ti ine I apova::θra::: mora?
a wooden do::ck. Do you know what a do::ck is kids?
3. M Ne
Yes
4. T ore::a. mono o Mixalis kseri ti ine I apova::θra::?
Go::d. only Michalis knows what a do::ck is? ((the teacher shows a picture of a dock)).
5. → lipon ekaθotan panta eki pano stin apovaθra ci evlepe ta alla
lipon it was sitting always on the dock and was watching the other
6. ylaraca na maθenun na petane.
little gulls learning how to fly.

In extract 4: 2 the teacher cuts off reading to make a clarifying question: *Do you know what a do::ck is kids?*. The second pair part to the question comes with a student's response in turn 3. After the teacher shows a picture of the dock (4: 4) she shifts the footing with the deployment of *lipon* which frames what follows as a continuation of the reading that was in progress before the parenthetical clarifying question.

3.3. Lipon + Inductive Reasoning

In this section *lipon* occurs late in the speech of the teacher in non turn-initial position and in non TCU initial position. Specifically, *lipon* is deployed by the teacher as a deductive conjunction to the inductive reasoning expressed by the teacher and leads the sequence to closure.

Extract 5

1. T lei ce me sinefça::: ekso I kakocefça:::
It says even with cloudiness kakocefça² goes out.

² *Kakocefça* does not have an exact translation in English. It could be translated as 'sadness'. It will be left untranslated because the conversation is about the etymology and meaning of the word.

2. N ti ennoi ðame?
what does it mean here?
3. T ti ine i kakocefça araje::? Ja sceftite li::yo:: ti leksula ka:ko:cefça::
what is kakocefça I wonde::r? Thi::nk of the word ka:ko:cefça::
4. ((she writes the word on the board.))
5. N kaka [ce cefça
bad [and cefça
6. E [kako::
[ba::d
7. T INE- >ðe milame oli mazi< sosta to skeftomaste, ine
IT'S- >we don't talk all together< we're thinking correctly, it
8. apo to kako:: to cefi. Kserete ti simeni exo
comes from ba::d cefi³. Do you know what's the meaning of I have
9. → cefi::? (.) Ime (.) xaru::menos. Eðo lipon kakocefça vjeni apo
cefi::? (.) I'm huppy. Here lipon kakocefça comes from
10. to kako CEFI. Ðilaði:: ðen i::me xarumenos..
bad CEFI. That i::s I'm no::t huppy.

In extract the word *kakocefça* (5:1) triggers a discussion around its meaning in 5: 3. The teacher first explains the meaning of *exo cefi* as *I'm huppy* in 5:9. *Lipon* occurs in non turn-initial position and in non TCU initial position as a deductive conjunction to extract the meaning of *kako cefi* through inductive reasoning: If *exo cefi* means *I'm huppy*, *kako cefi* means *I'm not huppy*.

Extract 6

(Before this extract the teacher gives to students words which include diphthongs and they try to categorize them based on orthography.)

1. T PEÐJA EA::N o ka::ðenas-, akuste me li::yo:: oli::, afiste
CHILDREN I::F each of you- listen to me a little:: a:ll, let
2. ta molivja kato c' akuste me, EAN o kaðenas apo esa::s (.) kani fasaria
your pencils down and listen to me, IF each of you:: (.) makes noise
3. I me tin tsantula tu I pano stin karekla I milai ce
either with his bag or on the chair or if he/she's talking and
4. mu::rmu::ri::zi::, peta::jete opote nane, ÐEN mpo::run ta peðja na
mu::rmu::ri::ng, po::ps up anytime, children caNNO::T
5. ksexorisune ce n' akusune. Ine po::li:: li- poli:: lepti ðiafora.
hear the difference. It's a ve::ry:: sl- very:: slight difference.

³ Cefi: mirth, good mood

6. *Prepi::* na kanume apoliti isiçja ja na katalavenun ta alla peðaca ce l
We nee::d to be absolutely quiet for the other kids and our
7. *simmaθites mas an ine a::f i a::v. EA::N o kaθenas*
schoolmates to hear the difference between a::f or a::v. l::F each
8. *kani ena fillo etsi:: l to moli::vi tu l to svisti::ri tu::,*
one makes a page like thi::s or his pensi::l or hi::s ru::bbe::r,
9. *ta poðara::ca tu l tin karekla tu, jinete polli fasaria o:::: mes tin*
his fee::t or his chair, it's a lot of noise o:::: in the
10. → *taksi o::::. θa sas parakale::so:: lipon na iste apO::lita omos isiçi,*
classroom o::::. I will lipon a::sk you to be absO::lutely quiet,
11. *to::so:: pu otan θa rikso tin karfitsa mu n' akusti::.* Ja na
so:: mu::ch that if I throw my pin to hea::r it. Because we need to
12. → *katalavenume an tixon kanun ta peðja laθoç. Endaksi? Mu ðinete to*
understand if the children make a mistake. Endaksi? Do you give
13. *loyo sas oti θa prospaθisete OLL::?*
me your word that you'll A::LL try?
14. P NE::
YE::S

In extract 6 *lipon* occurs after a long reprehension of the teacher to the students. It occurs as a part of the final request of the teacher to the students to be quiet. The request is presented as warranted based on the reasons exposed by the teacher about what happens when students make noise in the classroom. *Lipon* (6: 10) occurs in non turn-initial position and also in non TCU initial position as a deductive conjunction of the teacher's inductive reasoning. With *endaksi?* (6: 12) expressing request for acceptance, followed with a second request for commitment: *Do you give me your word that you'll A::LL try?* (6: 12-13), the teacher invites for agreement and leads the sequence to closure.

4. Conclusion

This article presents the use of the discourse markers *lipon* and *endaksi* in classroom interaction. In the data *lipon* and *endaksi* are used in specific sequential positions within the wider interactional context and they occupy specific positions within the construction of the turn where they occur. Hence their position within the sequence as well as their position in the turn and composition of the turn –that is their relationship with the other elements of the turn, whether they proceed or follow them, whether they are freestanding, or parts of a TCU– enabled us to unfold their meaning within lecture interaction. A simple schematic representation of the position that the lexical items under study take in the turn and the actions they accomplish as revealed in the data might look like Table 1.

Table 1.

The position and composition of the DMs and the activities accomplished.

DMs	Composition of the turn	Activity
Lipon	Non turn-initial TCU initial	Giving directions at the beginning of the lesson
	Turn-initial TCU initial	Signal return to a cut-off narration or discussion
	Non turn initial Non TCU-initial	Inductive reasoning
Endaksi	Turn final position Freestanding TCU	Asking for agreement

As was shown in the data *lipon* signals direction giving by the teacher to the students at the beginning of a new activity. It is followed by questioning *endaksi?* in turn final position seeking to secure student's agreement. *Lipon* can also occur to signal return to the narration that was in progress before an interruption has taken place. A third use of *lipon* is its occurrence in the middle of the turn as a deductive conjunction as part of an inductive reasoning.

Methodologically, the findings presented here underscore the importance of examining discourse markers within interactional sequences as well as within institutional discourse such as classroom interaction as examined here. Analyzing some of the uses of these DMs within the classroom discourse, the current study has revealed that the placement of each lexical particle in the turn and its component TCUs is highly consequential for the activities being undertaken in the sequence to which its turn belongs. Its placement not only characterizes as a particular type of activity—topic introducing, say, or implicative—the turn which contains it but also the turn to which it is responsive. To conclude with, the use of discourse marker has a significant role to play in the structure and coherence of classroom discourse and thus it should be further examined by focusing on the relationship between meaning and interaction.

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Appendix

Transcription Conventions

- [Separate left square brackets, one above the other on two successive lines with utterances by different speakers,
- [indicates a point of overlap onset, whether at the start of an utterance or later.
- [[Double separate left square brackets, distinguish pairs of overlapped utterances.
- = Equal signs ordinarily come in pairs – one at the end of a line and another at the start of a next line. If the two lines connected by the equal signs are by the same speaker, then there was a single, continuous utterance with no break or pause, which was broken up in order to accommodate the placement of overlapping talk. If the lines connected by two equal signs are by different speakers, then the second followed the first with no discernible silence between them.
- (2) Numbers in parenthesis indicate silence.
- (.) A dot in parentheses indicates a micropause.
- . The period indicates a falling or final, intonation contour, not necessarily the end of a sentence.
- ? A question mark indicates rising intonation, not necessarily a question.
- , A comma indicates continuing intonation, not necessarily a clause boundary.
- :: Colons are used to indicate the prolongation or stretching of the sound just preceding them. The more colons the longer the stretching.
- A hyphen after a word or part of a word indicates a cut-off or self-interruption, often done with a glottal or dental stop.
- word Underlining is used to indicate stress or emphasis.
- WOrd Capital letters indicate louder than the rest talk.
- ° ° Two degree signs indicate that the talk between them is markedly softer than the talk around it.
- ↑ The up arrow indicate a segment starting on sharper rise.
- > < The combination of “more than” and “less than” symbols indicates that the talk between them is compressed or rushed.
- .hhh The dot followed by “h’s” indicates inbreath

Labeling of Derogatory Words in Modern Greek Dictionaries¹

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Abstract

The purpose of the present paper is to examine the problems of usage labeling in two Modern Greek dictionaries (the LNEG2 and the LKN) through a survey of their treatment of 'negative' terms. To do this the terms studied are drawn from various semantic groups that denote nationality, racial or cultural group, lack of intelligence, age, sexual orientation, terms addressing women, bodily effluvia, etc. The investigation of the treatment of these terms in the two Modern Greek dictionaries reveals that it is difficult to support the usage labeling distinctions they make in their prefaces for derogatory, offensive, slang or taboo words.

1. Introduction

This paper surveys the treatment of 'negative' terms in two Modern Greek dictionaries (the LNEG2 and the LKN) and reveals a series of problems relating to the usage labels attached to many of the entries. The terms studied come from various semantic groups such as those denoting nationality, racial or cultural group (*γκέκας* 'resident of Northern Epirus', *τουρκομερίτης* 'sb. who comes from a Turkish region', *σκυλάραπας* 'bloody nigger'), lack of intelligence (*βλαμμένος* 'idiotic'), age (*σκατόγερος* 'fucking old man'), sexual orientation (*κουνιστός* 'sissy', *ντιγκιντάγκας* 'faggy'), terms for women (*καραπουτάνα* 'harlot', *γύναιο* 'slut'), terms for the organs and acts of sex (*ψωλή* 'dick', *μαλακίζομαι* 'jerk off'), bodily effluvia (*σκατό* 'shit', *χέσιμο* 'dump', etc. (cf. Allan & Burridge 2006; Kechagia 1997;

¹ We would like to thank Jason Merchant, Anastasia Giannakidou, Lydia Mitits and Anna Sarafianou, for the help in the translation of data entries in English. We are also grateful to the anonymous reviewers for their useful suggestions.

Ξυδόπουλος 2008). The paper is structured as follows. In section 2, we offer a brief overview of the relevant literature on taboo and insulting words. We also provide a brief discussion of the literature on dictionary policies in what concerns the labeling of these words. In section 3 we explain how the data of this study were selected, and we also present and discuss our results. In the last section 4, concluding remarks are given.

2. Research Background

In this section, we give a brief overview of the previous literature on our subject. In 2.1 we present the various categories of the offensive words, whereas in 2.2 we discuss dictionary labeling of these words.

2.1. Taboo and Insulting Words

Modern Greek, like other languages, contains words, which people avoid using in most contexts, because they feel them extremely embarrassing or offensive. Words of this type vary from **taboo** words to **insults** or **swearing** (cf. Crystal 1995; Mercury 1995; Allan & Burridge 2006). According to Crystal (1995: 173), these three categories may overlap or coincide, but they are not identical: to call someone *κώλος* 'an ass' is to use a taboo word as insult, but if used with enough emotional force could be considered an act of swearing. On the other hand, *στυρνάρι* 'blockhead', is a term of insult, but it is neither a taboo word nor a swear word. Finally, the swear word *κατάρα* 'curse' is neither a taboo word nor an insult (cf. Ξυδόπουλος 2008).

Taboo language contains the so-called 'dirty words', i.e. mainly terms for bodily organs associated with sex, excretion and the act of sexual intercourse (*αρχίδι* 'prick', *μουνί* 'cunt', *κώλος* 'ass'), terms for activities involving these organs (*καυλώνω* 'get horny'), terms for bodily effluvia issuing from these organs (*κουράδα* 'turd', *σκατό* 'shit'), terms for disease, death and the supernatural (*καρκίνος* 'cancer', *πεθαίνω* 'die'). The term 'dirty words' denotes people's attitudes towards the denotations and connotations of these words, which are the most emotionally evocative of all language expressions (Allan & Burridge 2006). People not only avoid using them in polite society, but also tend to replace them by a more technical term (e.g. *πέος* 'penis', *κόπρανα* 'stool', *πρωκτός* 'rectum') or a euphemism, which refers to the taboo topic in a vague or indirect way (e.g. *έφυγε* 'be gone' instead of *πέθανε* 'died', *πουλάκι* 'cock' instead of *πούτσος* 'prick') (Crystal 1995).

According to Crystal (1995: 173), **swearing** refers to the strongly emotive use of a taboo word or phrase, and its function is to express a wide range of emotions,

like annoyance, frustration or anger. Swearing can mark also social distance, as for example when swearing in public (*το Χριστό!* 'God damn!'), or act as an in-group solidarity marker, as when a group shares identical swearing norms (Mercury 1995; Allan & Burridge 2006; Crystal 1995). According to the same author, swearing can be further divided into smaller categories like blasphemies, which show contempt towards God, profanities, which show contempt to holy things or people, and obscenities, which involve the expression of indecent sexuality (cf. also Mercury 1995).

Dysphemistic terms of **insult** (or abuse) are usually used in order to debase someone's physical appearance (*αλόγα* 'cow', *καράφλας* 'bald-headed', *πατάτας* 'fathead'), mental ability (*στουρνάρι* 'blockhead'), character (*καριόλης* 'fucker'), behaviour (*καλοπερασάκιας* 'shirker'), beliefs (*αγροτοπατέρας* 'trade unionist who takes advantage of farmers; lit. father of farmers'), and familial or social relations (*μούλης* 'rolly-poly', *μαμόθρεφτος* 'mama's boy') (Allan & Burridge 2006; Mercury 1995). Furthermore, terms of abuse (or vulgarisms) can be used to devalue a thing described (*αραμπάς* 'ox-cart') (Mercury 1995).

In particular, the vast majority of the insulting words comment on someone's ugliness (*μαλλιαρός* 'hairy', *μπακατέλα* 'pot-bellied'), skin color or complexion (*ασπρουλιάρης* 'whitey, honky', *κιτρινιάρης* 'chink, sick-looking, yellowish', *κοκκινοτρίχης* 'red-haired'), clothes (*κοντοβράκι* 'knee-breeches', *μαυροφορούσα* 'dressed in black', over- or undersize (*κουλαράς* 'pot-bellied', *κοκαλιάρης* 'skinny', *μαούνα* 'battle ship', *σαμιαμίδι* 'little worm', *στούμπος* 'shorty'), age (*αρχαίος* 'ancient', *μουστόγρια* 'shriveled up old woman', *μαμπόγερος* 'dirty old man'), physical defects (*κουλός* 'armless', *καλαμοπόδαρος* 'spindle-legged', *καρπουζοκέφαλος* 'large-headed', *σακάτης* 'cripple', *στραβοούλιακας* 'blind as a bat'), slovenliness or incontinence (*αρχιτεμπέλης* 'lazybones', *προκομμένος* 'good for nothing', *καφενόβιος* 'a café habitué', *μεθύστακας* 'drunkard', *μπεκροκανάτα* 'boozer'), smelliness and dirtiness (*κατουρλιάρης* 'pissing on one's pants', *κλανιάρης* 'gassy'), stupidity (*καρπαζοεισπράχτορας* 'punching bag'), unreliability and untruthfulness (*αρχιψεύτης* 'big liar', *κατσικοκλέφτης* 'scoundrel; lit. goat thief') or incompetence (*αστοιχείωτος* 'ignorant', *αχυράνθρωπος* 'puppet man', *απήδηχτος* 'not screwed', *κουραμπιές* 'desk soldier; lit. sugared bun', *μάπας* 'soft touch', *μπάμιας* 'dupe'), greediness and flattery (*πειναλέος* 'ravenous', *κολογλείφτης* 'licking sb's ass'), meanness (*αρχίδι* 'prick', *καριόλης* 'fucker', *κουμάσι* 'sly'), tartiness, sexual laxness or perversion (*καραπουτάνα* 'slut', *κνώδαλο* 'scally wag', *καμπαρετζού* 'slut', *καυλιάρης* 'horny'), sexual orientation or practice (*κολομπαράς* 'pansy', *κουνιστός* 'sissy'), familial relationships (*μαμόθρεφτο* 'mamma's boy'), violent behavior (*κανίβαλος* 'cannibal'), social or economic status (*αριστοκράτης* 'aristocrat', *μπουρζουάς* 'bourgeois', *μπασκλάς* 'low class'), profession (*καθηγητική* 'professorship (iron.)', *καραβανάς* 'ranker', *μπάτσος* 'cop', *πεθαμενατζής* 'grave digger', *προφέσορας* 'professor (iron.)', *πολιτικάντης* 'tricky politician'), religious or ideological beliefs (*αλλόπιστος* 'heathen', *κομματόσκυλο* 'henchman', *κομμούνη*

'commie'), or racial or ethnic group (*αράπη* 'nigger', *μπαστονόβλαχος* 'hillbillies'). Additionally, insults may comment on supposed inadequacies of someone's family or friends (*κερατάς* 'cuckold').

It is worth pointing out that a large number of the terms of abuse derive on nouns denoting 1. animals that are conventionally associated with unpleasant characteristics (*αλόγα* 'big ungainly woman', *αγελάδα* 'cow', *καρακάξα* 'magpie', *σκυλί* 'dog', *μουλάρα* 'she-mule', *μουλάρι* 'mule', *μαντρόσκυλο* 'sheepdog'), 2. tabooed bodily organs, effluvia and sexual behaviours (*αρχίδι* 'prick', *μουνί* 'cunt', *κουράδα* 'turd', *κωλογλείφτης* 'licking sb's ass') or 3. proper names (*Κατίνα* 'Katina, woman who likes gossiping', *Σταχτοπούτα* 'princess, lit. Cinderella') (cf. for example, Allan & Burrige 2006; Kechagia 1997; Labov 1978). Finally, it should be noticed that a taboo word or a term of abuse may have several uses, which vary from insult to intimacy and solidarity. In everyday conversations one can find examples where apparent terms of abuse (ex. *μαλάκας* 'asshole') are used in a humorous way to display friendship or affection to someone close to the speaker (Allan & Burrige 2006; Crystal 1995; Kechagia 1997; Ξυδόπουλος 2008).

2.2. Labeling of Insulting Words in Dictionaries

Although taboo and insulting words are extremely frequent in everyday conversation, particularly of young people, it took dictionary writers some time to decide to include these words in their headwords (entries) (Béjoint 2000; Landau 2001). According to Landau (2001), dictionary labelling of insult is essentially political and moral. If a general purpose dictionary needs to be commercially successful, it must reflect the ideological values of its public (Béjoint 2000). On the other hand, according to Béjoint (2000: 129), the more recent a dictionary is, the more liberal it is. According to him, all contemporary general purpose dictionaries in all countries move towards greater liberalism in the inclusion of taboo or offensive words (Béjoint 2000: 127)². Most modern dictionaries try to warn the potential user against the offensive character of these words by using usage labels, like derogatory, offensive, disparaging, etc. Nevertheless, as already mentioned in the literature (Abecassis 2008; Landau 2001; Norri 2000; Wachal 2002; Fedorova 2004; Ptaszynski 2010; Αναστασιάδη-Συμεωνίδη 2007; Κατσούδα & Τράπαλης 2007), dictionaries inconsistently label

² It seems also that the decision whether to include or not to include offensive words in a dictionary relates also to the purpose of the dictionary, i.e. whether the dictionary is descriptive or has normative or pedagogical aims (Landau 2001: 230).

taboo and insulting words such as 'colloquial', 'informal', 'derogatory', sexist, etc. On the other hand, as Landau (2001: 233) observes, there are no agreed-upon criteria for characterizing some usages as offensive or abusive. Labels cannot tell us everything about the degree of offensiveness of specified terms under specific conditions (cf. Landau 2001). Furthermore, Norri's study on English dictionaries revealed that with certain semantic categories (terms for nationality or race, terms for stupidity and terms for deceitfulness) the likelihood of uniform treatment is greater than with others (ex. terms for sexual orientation, physical appearance, arrogant or aggressive behavior) (cf. Norri 2000: 91). In addition, one of Norri's findings was that terms for nationality are consistently accompanied by a 'negative' in at least sixty per cent of the entries and that the percentage of labeling is radically smaller in the semantic categories that refer to unintelligent or deceitful people. Finally, it is worth noting that usage labels have recently received renewed attention in Modern Greek literature (Αναστασιάδη-Συμεωνίδη 2007; Τράπαλης 2005; Τράπαλης & Κατσούδα 2007). These studies compare the labelling systems employed in Modern Greek dictionaries, point out the problems emerging from their use and proceed to suggestions for the creation of labelling systems which would be more functional.

3. Labeling of Insulting Words in the LKN and the LNEG2

As already mentioned in the introduction, the purpose of the present paper is to survey the treatment of 'negative' terms in two Modern Greek dictionaries, namely the LNEG2 and the LKN. The main hypothesis is that negative label usage in dictionaries varies according to the semantic class of the entry. We also expect variation in the labeling of the same negative words between the LNEG2 and the LKN.

3.1. Data Description

For the corpus elaboration of the present study first we automatically extracted all the entries of the letters Α, Κ, Μ, Π, Σ marked with the labels *ειρωνικό* (ειρ.) 'ironic', *μειωτικό* (μειωτ.) 'pejorative /derogatory', *σκωπτικό* (σκωπτ.) 'satirical/jocular', *υβριστικό* (υβρ.) 'offensive', *χλευαστικό* (χλευ.) 'derisory', *χυδαίο* (χυδ.) or ! 'vulgar' and *κακόσημο* (κακοσ.) 'disparaging' from the online version of the LKN (<http://www.komvos.edu.gr/dictionaries/dictonline/DictOnLineTri.htm>) and from the LNEG2. The extraction provided

543 entries. Then an ACCESS data base was created including each entry followed by the labels used in the two dictionaries for each entry. Since very often the negative sense of a word is conveyed by the definition of that word without the use of special labels, we undertook a second extraction of the words starting with Α, Κ, Μ, Π, Σ marked as *προφορικό* (προφ.) 'spoken', *μεταφορικό* (μτφ.) 'metaphorical' or *οικείο* (οικ.) 'colloquial', and including the terms *ανόητος* 'stupid' or the expressions *αρνητικός χαρακτηρισμός* 'negative characterization', *υβριστικός χαρακτηρισμός* 'offensive characterization' or *μειωτικός χαρακτηρισμός* 'derogatory characterization' within their definition. The new extraction provided another 162 entries.

In a second phase the entries were classified according to their meaning in the following categories:

- words evaluating nationality / racial or cultural group
- words evaluating mental abilities
- words evaluating appearance (ugliness, weight)
- words evaluating behavior
- words evaluating political beliefs
- words evaluating sexual orientation
- derogatory words for women or men
- words relating to sex (terms for the organs and acts of sex)
- words denoting bodily effluvia
- words evaluating the age of a person or an object
- words relating to religion
- words relating to diseases or disabilities

From the total 705 entries only 331 were classified in the above mentioned categories. These words constituted our final corpus.

3.2. Results

3.2.1. Labeling Comparison between the LKN and the LNEG2

From the initial 543 LKN entries including the labels *ειρωνικό* (ειρ.) 'ironic', *μειωτικό* (μειωτ.) 'pejorative/derogatory', *σκωπτικό* (σκωπτ.) 'satirical/jocular', *υβριστικό* (υβρ.) 'offensive', *χλευαστικό* (χλευ.) 'derisory', *χυδαίο* (χυδ.) 'vulgar', *κακόσημο* (κακος.) 'disparaging' and ! the LNEG2 had separate labels only for 242 words. 124 of the 543 shared the same label with the equivalent entry in the LKN. Table 1 presents the frequency of labels used in the LKN and the LNEG2 entries of our sample.

Table 1.

Frequency of labels in the LKN and the LNEG2

LABELS	LKN	PERCENTAGE	LNEG2	PERCENTAGE
Iron.	185	34%	43	17,8%
Pej.	256	47,1%	91	37,6%
Satir.	10	1,8%	24	9,9 %
Off.	51	9,3%	26	10,7%
Der.	21	3,8%	-	0%
Vulg.	31	5,7%	-	0%
Disp.	-	0%	33	13,6%
!	-	0%	25	10,3%
TOTAL	543	100%	242	100%

As was expected differences were found in the labeling systems for derogatory words in the LKN and the LNEG2. This finding is consistent with previous research (Αναστασιάδη-Συμεωνίδη 2007; Τράπαλης & Κατσούδα 2007) which has shown that labelling systems in Modern Greek dictionaries differ in respect to the number of lexicographic labels and the way they are used. In many entries of our sample no labels are used in the LNEG2 for words that are labelled, the LKN as for example in *κοκκινότριχης* 'red-haired' (labeled *σκωπτικό* 'satirical/jocular' in the LKN), *αλλόπιστος* 'heathen' (labeled *μειωτικό* 'pejorative/derogatory' in the LKN), *κουμιστός* 'sissy' (labeled *μειωτικό* 'pejorative/derogatory' in the LKN). In some other cases, different labels described the same entries, as for example *πατσαβούρα* 'slut' (labeled *μειωτικό* 'pejorative/derogatory' in the LKN and *υβριστικό* 'offensive' in the LNEG2), *ποντικομαμή* 'insidious; lit. mouse midwife' (labeled *σκωπτικό* 'satirical/jocular' in the LKN and *υβριστικό* 'offensive' in the LNEG2), *κιτρινάρης* 'chink, sick-looking, yellowish' (labeled *μειωτικό* 'pejorative/derogatory' in the LKN and *κακόσημο* 'disparaging' in the LNEG2). Finally from the 124 entries which shared the same labels in the LKN and in the LNEG2 81 concerned the use of the label *μειωτικό* 'pejorative/derogatory'.

On the other hand, as we can see in Table 1, there is unanimity as far as the frequency of use of various labels in the two dictionaries is concerned. More precisely, the most frequent negative label both in the LKN and in the LNEG2 is the label *μειωτικό* 'pejorative/derogatory' followed by the label *ειρωνικό* 'ironic', *υβριστικό* 'offensive' and finally *σκωπτικό* 'satirical/jocular'.

3.2.2. Distribution of Labels According to Semantic Categories

Tables 2 and 3 present the distribution of labels into semantic categories in the LKN and the LNEG2, respectively.

Table 2.

Distribution of labels into semantic categories in the LKN.

CATEGORIES	Iron.	Pej.	Sat.	Off.	Deris.	Vulg	Spok.	Met.	Coll.	Def.	total
Nationality		7		1	1						9
Mental abilities	4	3					2	3	17	6	35
Appearance	9	18	2	1			4		3	10	47
Behavior	21	40		10	3	5	4	3		29	115
Political beliefs	1	15		2						4	22
Sexual orientation		3				1	1				5
Derogatory words women/ men	2	4	1	10		1		3		16	37
Sex		2				8	2	1			13
Bodily effluvia	2	2		1		9	3			1	18
Age	3	8	1	2	1	1					16
Disease		4	1		1		1			2	9
Religion	2	3		1							6

Table 3.

Distribution of labels into semantic categories in the LNEG2.

CATEGORIES	Iron.	Pej.	Sat.	Off.	Disp.	!	Spok.	Met.	Coll.	0	Def.	total
Nationality		2	1	1	1					2	2	9
Mental abilities	1	5	1	4				7	1		16	35
Appearance	1	23	5	1		2		2			13	47
Behavior	5	17	5	10	8	10		13		12	35	115
Political beliefs	1	11			2					3	3	20*
Sexual orientation		1				1				1	2	5
Derogatory words women/ men		3		10		6		4			14	37
Sex	1					8					4	13
Bodily effluvia		1	1			9			3	1	1	16*
Age	1	3	1	4	1	1		2		3		16
Disease	3	5								1		9
Religion			1								5	6

A. Words Evaluating Nationality / Racial or Cultural Group

Three out of the seven sample words for nationalities share the same label in both the LKN and the LNEG2: *μπουρτζόβλαχος* 'red-neck' and *αράπη* 'nigger' (labeled *μειωτικό* 'pejorative/derogatory') and *μούλος* 'bustard'/'bastard' (labeled *υβριστικό* 'offensive'). The LKN systematically labels such words as *μειωτικό* 'pejorative/derogatory' except for two cases, *μούλος* labelled as *υβριστικό* 'offensive' and *μακαρονάς* 'spaghetti eater' (literal translation), which refers to Italians, labeled as *χλευαστικό* 'derisory'. The labelling policy of the LNEG2 is not that systematic. In some cases there is neither a label nor a description of the negativity within the definition (e.g. *αρναούτης* 'bungler'). In some others (e.g. *αραπιά* 'nigger land', *αρβανίτης* 'arvanites') the negativity of the term is expressed in the definition. Finally in the LNEG2 nationality terms are occasionally labelled as *σκοπτικό* 'satirical/jocular', *υβριστικό* 'offensive' or *κακόσημο* 'disparaging'.

B. Words Evaluating Mental Abilities

The labeling tendency in the LKN for words evaluating mental abilities is to characterize them as *οικείο* 'colloquial', whereas in the LNEG2 there is a systematic description of the negativity of such terms within the word definition. Some other labels used marginally in the LKN are *μειωτικό* 'pejorative/derogatory' (e.g. *στουρνάρι*, *στούρνος*, *κούτσουρο* 'blockhead'). For these words the LNEG2 adopts the label *υβριστικό* 'offensive'.

C. Words Evaluating Appearance (Ugliness, Weight)

As can be noticed in Tables 2 and 3, both the LKN and the LNEG2 have the tendency to mark such terms mainly by the use of the label *μειωτικό* 'pejorative/derogatory' or by describing the negativity in the entry definition. The LKN also quite frequently uses the label *ειρωνικό* 'ironic' for cases like *στούμπος* 'shorty', *καρπουζοκέφαλος* 'largeheaded', *καράφλας* 'baldheaded'. Other marginal labels used to characterize appearance in the LKN are *σκοπτικό* 'satirical/jocular' (e.g. *κοκκινοτρίχης* 'redhaired') and *χλευαστικό* 'derisory' (e.g. *μαυροτσούκαλο* 'man/woman with dark complexion; lit. black pot') whereas in the LNEG2 *ειρωνικό* 'ironic' (e.g. *στούμπος* 'shorty') and *!* (e.g. *κωλαρού* 'fat ass').

D. Words Evaluating Behavior

The majority of our sample words evaluating behavior receive in the LKN the label *μειωτικό* 'pejorative/derogatory'. A high number of cases are also labeled as *ειρωνικό* 'ironic' or their negativity is described in the definition. Finally, ten out of 115 cases were labeled *υβριστικό* 'offensive'. On the contrary, studying Table 3,

it could be claimed that no clear tendency is adopted in the LNEG2: while the majority of such entries are marked for their negativity with information provided in the definition, however there is use of a wide range of labels, such as *ειρωνικό* 'ironic' (e.g. *πολύξερος* 'smart ass', *κυράτσα* 'aunty'), *μειωτικό* 'pejorative/derogatory' (e.g. *κουραμπιές* 'desk soldier', *μούτρο* 'rascal'), *σκαπτικό* 'satirical/jocular' (e.g. *μπεκρούλιακας* 'drunkard', *μπεκροκανάτα* 'boozer'), *υβριστικό* 'offensive' (e.g. *μπάμας* 'bootless, coy; lit. okra', *μουλάρι* 'mule'), *κακόσημο* 'disparaging' (e.g. *κοπρόσκυλο* 'bum', *καρεκλοκένταυρος* 'an executive who cannot be moved from his position'), *!* (e.g. *κολοβαράω* 'lazy around', *καριόλης* 'fucker') or *μεταφορικό* 'metaphorical' (e.g. *μαϊντανός* 'someone who appears everywhere; lit. parsley', *σπάρος* 'lazybones'). Finally, the LNEG2 provides neither labels nor negative description in the definition for 12 out of 115 entries.

E. Words Evaluating Political Beliefs

Both the LKN and the LNEG2 mainly adopt the label *μειωτικό* 'pejorative/derogatory' for words evaluating someone's political beliefs (e.g. *κομμουνιστοσυμμορίτης* 'communist ganger', *μοναρχοφασίστας* 'monarcho-fascist'). This unanimity could be attributed to the fact that use conditions of such words are unambiguous; the intention of a speaker who uses such words is to express in a strongly contemptuous way his negative opinion of the other in order to offend him.

F. Words Evaluating Sexual Orientation

From the five sample words the three are described through the label *μειωτικό* 'pejorative/derogatory' in the LKN (*πούστης* 'faggot', *κουμιστός* 'sissy', *κίναιδος* 'poof'). One is characterized *χυδαίο* 'vulgar' (*κολομπάρας* 'pansy') and one *προφορικό* 'spoken' (*μπινές* 'sod'). In the LNEG2 the negativity of one word for sexual orientation is described in the definition as slang (*αργκό*) (*κολομπάρας* 'pansy'), one is labeled *μειωτικό* 'pejorative/derogatory' (*κίναιδος* 'poof'), two are labeled *!* (*πούστης* 'faggot', *μπινές* 'fag') and for one there is no special indication of their pejorative character (*κουμιστός* 'sissy').

G. Derogatory Words for Women or Men

Our data show that derogatory words for women or men are usually labeled either as *υβριστικό* 'offensive' or they receive a description of their negativity in their definition both in the LKN and in the LNEG2. Quite frequent in the LNEG2 is the use of the label *!* (*καραπουτάνα* 'harlot', *μαλάκας* 'asshole', *μαλακισμένος* 'dickhead', *παλιοσκρόφα* 'old bitch'). Other labels marginally used in the LKN are *ειρωνικό* 'ironic' (*Σταχτοπούτα* 'princess; lit. Cinderella'), *μειωτικό* 'pejorative/

derogatory' (*καμπαρετζού* 'slut'), *σκοπτικό* 'satirical/jocular' (*ποντικομαμή* 'little worm'), *χυδαίο* 'vulgar' (*αρχιδάτος* 'lit. with balls').

H. Words Relating to Sex (Terms for the Organs and Acts of Sex) / Bodily Effluvia

Both dictionaries agree in labeling words relating to sex or bodily effluvia as *χυδαίο* 'vulgar' (the LKN) or ! (the LNEG2).

I. Words Evaluating the Age of a Person or an Object

The LKN mainly labels words evaluating the age of someone as *μειωτικό* 'pejorative/derogatory'. Other labels are also used marginally (*ειρωνικό* 'ironic', *σκοπτικό* 'satirical/jocular', *υβριστικό* 'offensive', *χλευαστικό* 'derisory', *χυδαίο* (*χυδ.*) 'vulgar'). The LNEG2 makes no systematic use of a wider range of labels *μειωτικό* 'pejorative/derogatory', *ειρωνικό* 'ironic', *σκοπτικό* 'satirical/jocular', *υβριστικό* 'offensive', *χλευαστικό* 'derisory', *!*, *κακόσημο* 'disparaging', *μεταφορικό* 'metaphorical', etc.

J. Words Relating to Religion

For such words the LKN uses the labels *ειρωνικό* 'ironic', *μειωτικό* 'pejorative/derogatory' and *υβριστικό* 'offensive'. On the other hand, the LNEG2 has a clear tendency to provide negative description in the lemmas' definitions.

K. Words Relating to Diseases or Disabilities

Finally derogatory terms for diseases or disabilities are described in the LKN with the labels *μειωτικό* 'pejorative/derogatory' (*σακατιλίκι* 'the characteristic of being cripple, incapable/incompetent'), *κουτσαμάρα* 'cripple'), *σκοπτικό* 'satirical/jocular' (*μύωψ* 'myopic, short-sighted'), *χλευαστικό* 'derisory' (*στραβοκάνης* 'bow-legged'), *προφορικό* 'spoken' (*κουφάλογο* 'deaf horse; lit. for someone who can't hear well'). In the LNEG2 the labels used are *μειωτικό* 'pejorative/derogatory' (*στραβούλιακας* 'blind as a bat') and *ειρωνικό* 'ironic'.

4. Conclusions

In this paper we surveyed the treatment of 'negative' terms in two Modern Greek dictionaries, the LNEG2 and the LKN. The investigation of the treatment of these terms has revealed that 1. the distinction made in the prefaces between derogatory, offensive, slang or taboo words is hard to maintain, 2. dictionaries

do not always agree in the labeling of the same negative words, 3. there is a wide range of possible descriptions of negative usage, and 4. the likelihood of a 'negative' indication varies from one semantic group to another. Finally, we notice that these findings are consistent with Norri's (2000) findings about usage labeling in English dictionaries.

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Users' Abilities and Performance in Dictionary Look Up¹

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Abstract

The purpose of the present study was to focus on dictionary users' abilities and performance during receptive dictionary use. Forty eight students of the Democritus University of Thrace were given a worksheet containing fifteen phrases, all including a polysemous word typed in bold characters, and the *Dictionary of Standard Greek* of Manolis Triandafyllidis. The subjects were told to look up the bold words in the dictionary and write down their meaning as well as the exact position of the entry where the specific meaning was found. The results revealed that users located more easily in dictionaries noun and verb meanings than adjective meanings. It was also found that it was difficult for the students to locate the meaning of phraseologies. These findings support the idea of adopting specific training programs for raising dictionary use awareness.

1. Introduction

Dictionaries are important reference materials which can be used in various circumstances (e.g during reading comprehension, text production, grammar activities, oral discussions, etc) and which can become, under conditions, a valuable learning aid. However, dictionary consultation is a complex process that requires specific skills and strategies. Recent research has studied not only the strategies required for dictionary consultation (Cowie 1999, Fan 2000, Nesi & Hail 2002, Wingate 2004) but also the variables which affect strategy use during dictionary searches such as proficiency level, the type of dictionaries, the

¹ I would like to thank the anonymous reviewer for his/her comments which improved the initial text.

task performed, etc (Wingate 2004, Nesi & Hua Tan 2011). The present paper focuses on the specific strategies employed during receptive dictionary use.

2. Literature Review

Receptive dictionary use, in other words dictionary use mainly while reading a text and secondarily while listening to an oral text appears to be the most popular use of dictionaries (Béjoint 1981, Cowie 1999, Gavrilidou 2002, Scholfield 2002).

According to Scholfield (1999) in receptive situations, an unfamiliar word or phrase is sought in monolingual or bilingual dictionaries, consequently the sole piece of information targeted is meaning.

Receptive dictionary use involves five main steps (Bogaards 1993, Scholfield 1999):

- Identification in the text of an unknown word or phrase
- Decision to use a dictionary in order to resolve that problem and selection of an appropriate dictionary type
- Lemmatization, that is finding the citation form of inflected forms found in the text
- Localization of the correct part of the entry where different meanings of the same wordform are included
- Integration of the found meaning back in the initial text or other task where the problem arose.

However, a number of problems related with each one of the above mentioned steps may arise during dictionary look up. For instance, very often during receptive dictionary use the users fail to identify the unknown words of a text either because these words have a deceptive morphological structure or they are polysemous words whose one meaning is known to the user but not the one in the current context or they are false friends between two languages or parts of phrasal idioms (Laufer 1997). In other cases, in receptive situations users avoid using dictionaries because they consider them too difficult to deal with. Instead, they simply skip the unknown words or ask the teachers for clarifications or in some cases they try to infer word meaning from context (Hosenfeld 1977). And even when they choose to use a dictionary, they often select an inappropriate type of dictionary or they face problems with lemmatization or localization of the appropriate entry or part of the entry. For instance, users select the first definition in a polysemous entry (Nesi & Hail 2002, Nesi & Hua Tan 2011) or they tend to select familiar segments from the entry (Müllich 1990 cited in Wingate 2004). These errors in receptive use "result in the learner not finding the information needed though in fact it is there, or the learner may end up with some misunderstandings" (Scholfield 1999: 19).

In order to resolve these problems during receptive use, the dictionary user has to apply in each step different strategies which will help him/her achieve an effective look up.

2.1. Strategies for Unknown Word Identification

Effective readers do not simply classify words into known and unknown; Instead, they bear in mind that some words may look familiar but are in reality false friends, parts of idioms or polysemous words which need to be looked up, otherwise there is a danger of text misunderstandings. Consequently, while processing a text, the reader should first draw a list with the unknown words to be looked up in the dictionary. Once the words are looked up in the dictionary, the reader should return to the text and try a second reading of it by exploiting the information found in dictionary as well the information (s) he considers to be known. If comprehension problems still persist, then (s)he should re-examine the text elements (s)he considers familiar by verifying their meaning in the dictionary.

2.2. Strategies for Deciding When to Use a Dictionary and What Type of Dictionary

Recent research (Gu & Johnson 1996, Nation 2001, Oxford 1990, Schmitt 1997) has shown that dictionary use is an important vocabulary strategy that a) occurs successfully in conjunction with guessing (or inferencing) and note-taking, b) provides information about a specific item, and c) has a positive influence on the learner's acquisition process (Hulstjin 1993, Luppescu & Day 1993, Knight 1994, Laufer & Hadar 1997, Laufer & Hill 2000, Bruton 2007). However, excessive dictionary use may, on the other, hand inhibit users from developing other important strategies such as guessing, or asking for clarifications. Therefore, users should develop strategies for deciding when dictionary use is the optimal choice. Scholfield (1999), for instance, claims that the importance of an item is a reliable criterion if someone is about to choose whether to look up a word or not. More precisely, unknown words in titles or at the beginning of a text, content words frequently used in a text should be candidates for dictionary searches.

As far as the selection of the appropriate dictionary type is concerned, research has mainly focused on the eventual advantages and disadvantages of bilingual vs. monolingual dictionaries. For instance, a lot of researchers consider that bilingual dictionaries can cause errors or problems during text understanding (Ard 1982, Hartmann 1987, Nation 2001, Summers 1995), while others claim that the effectiveness of the bilingual or monolingual dictionaries

depends on the nature of task to be solved or the level of the learner (Laufer & Hadar 1997). While bilingual dictionaries are more appropriate for beginners and during translation tasks from mother tongue to the second/ foreign language, monolingual dictionaries are more useful for the advanced level since they provide more detailed information. In any case, users should be aware of the different dictionary types and the specific categories of information found in them through special instruction programs.

2.3. Lemmatization Strategies

Users should be able identify morphological indices (stems, prefixes, suffixes, inflectional morphemes) of the unknown word in order to make hypotheses about the look-up form of that word. To do so, they should first have acquired morphological awareness. In case of oral texts, users have to make hypotheses about possible spellings of the unknown words based on their knowledge of writing conventions of their mother tongue or their second/foreign language. Additionally, dictionary users should acquire basic abilities of alphabetical sequencing through teaching and practice, otherwise lemmatization is not possible.

2.4. Strategies for Appropriate Entry or Subentry Selection and Integration of the Correct Meaning Back in the Initial Text

Nesi & Haill (2002) have shown that dictionary users often accept the first definition given for a polysemous word, even when this is not appropriate in the context. This happens because "the first definition is the first users read, so choosing it shortens their dictionary consultation time, and it is also because the first definition usually represents the most familiar meaning, and is thus most likely to confirm any knowledge they already have about the meaning of the word" (Nesi & Haill 2002: 79). However, skilful users, when they realize, while looking up a word, that the specific word has more than one meaning, they check one by one all the meanings to eliminate the unsuitable one and chose the appropriate one for a given context.

Lexical phrases, idioms and complex words, on the other hand, are also difficult to locate in a dictionary, because it is difficult for a user to decide which headword to look them under. Users should be able to make inferences about the dictionary entries in which to look up such items and shouldn't give up their searches when they cannot find a word in the place they thought it would be. According to Scholfield (1999) dictionary users should be prepared to scan to the end of an entry to find a subentry for compound words or idioms.

3. Purpose and Rationale

The purpose of the present study was to investigate receptive dictionary use and more precisely dictionary user's ability to select the correct meaning of a given word as well as the parameters such as speech part, polysemy, and frozenness which affect users' selection of the appropriate or inappropriate entry.

4. Method

4.1. Participants

Forty eight first year students of the preschool education department of the Democritus University of Thrace participated in the study. As students were mainly females and shared the same age, the influence of sex and age were not studied in the present paper.

4.2. Instrumentation and Procedure

Participants were given a worksheet (see appendix I) containing fifteen phrases, all including a polysemous word typed in bold characters, and the Dictionary of Standard Greek (*Λεξικό της Κοινής Νεοελληνικής*) of Manolis Triandafyllidis. They were told to look up the bold words in the dictionary and then select and write down the meaning of the dictionary which corresponded to the meaning of the word in each phrase of the questionnaire. They were also required to note the exact position of the dictionary entry where the specific meaning was found. There was no time restriction for the completion of the task.

The distribution of task items across speech parts is presented in Table 1.

Table 1.
Distribution of items across speech parts

SPEECH PARTS	N
NOUNS	4
VERBS	7
ADJECTIVES	4
TOTAL	15

The items included in the task were the following: two different meanings of the verb *επαγγέλομαι*, four different meanings of the verb *κάνω*, *αποσπώμαι*, *εξωτερικός*, *άγιος*, *μαύρος* in the lexical phrase *μαύρη αγορά*, *αρσενικός*, *μαϊμού*, *βήμα*, *δρόμος*, *ζήτημα*.

4.3. Scoring

Each correct search was accredited one point. Correct searches were considered the ones in which the users noted in the worksheet the correct meaning of the item word as well as the right part of the dictionary entry where that meaning was found. Erroneous searches received zero points. Erroneous answers were the ones in which the user either provided an inappropriate meaning of the entry word or did not locate the target word or meaning in the dictionary.

4.4. Data Analysis

Descriptive statistics, such as frequencies, were used to check the percentage of correct or erroneous answers for each item of the experimental task. Comparisons between the correct and erroneous answers for each item were made by using chi-square test. Comparisons of the mean scores between nouns and verbs, nouns and adjectives and verbs and adjectives were made using a paired t-Test with alpha set at .001.

5. Results

Table 2.
Frequency of errors in each item.

ITEMS	CORRECT	WRONG	CORRECT %	WRONG %	χ^2
Επαγγέλομαι1	47	1	97.9	2.1	44.08*
Επαγγέλομαι2	40	8	83.3	16.7	21.33*
Κάνω1	30	18	62.5	37.5	3.00
Κάνω2	39	9	81.2	18.8	18.75*
Κάνω3	34	14	70.8	29.2	8.33
Κάνω4	46	2	95.8	4.2	40.33*
Αποσπώμαι	39	9	81.2	18.8	18.75*
Εξωτερικός	17	31	35.4	65.1	4.08
Άγια	35	13	72.9	27.1	10.08
Μαύρη	2	46	4.2	95.8	40.33*
Αρσενικός	41	7	85.4	14.6	24.08*
Βήμα	43	5	89.6	10.4	30.08*
Δρόμος	35	13	72.9	27.1	10.08*
Μαϊμού	39	9	81.2	18.8	18.75*
Ζήτημα	41	7	85.4	14.6	24.08*

* $p < .001$

Table 3.

Mean scores for noun, verb and adjective dictionary searches

Part of Speech	Mean	SD
Noun searches	.82	.15
Verb searches	.82	.19
Adjective searches	.50	.25

The mean score for noun and verb searches was higher than for adjective searches. The paired t-test analysis showed significant differences between noun and adjective searches ($t=7.04$, $p<.001$) and verb and adjective searches ($t=7.3$, $p<.001$). In other words, users located easier noun and verb meanings than adjective meanings.

6. Discussion

The purpose of the present study was to investigate receptive dictionary use. Results showed that users looked up effectively 10 out of 15 sample words (66%). More precisely the successful word searches concerned the task-items *επαγγέλλομαι1*, *επαγγέλλομαι2*, *κάνω2*, *κάνω4*, *αποσπώμαι*, *αρσενικός*, *βήμα*, *δρόμος*, *ζήτημα*, *μαιμού*. All of these words were polysemous but none of them was part of a lexical phrase or idiom. This finding might suggest that users of our sample do not tend to choose the first in the list meaning of a polysemous word. On the contrary they make use of semantic, syntactic or other cues to be guided in the appropriate meaning selection of a polysemous word. Thus, in our study, polysemy did not seem to affect users' abilities in receptive dictionary use. This result is not consistent with previous research (Nesi & Hail 2002, Neubach & Cohen 1988) who found that subjects tend to take into consideration only the first meaning in dictionary entries of polysemous words. This difference might be explained however by the fact that the sample of our study consisted of Education Department students who had the opportunity to practice dictionary use during their studies.

No statistical differences were found between the correct and erroneous searches of the four (26%) following task-items: *Κάνω1*, *κάνω3*, *εξωτερικός*, *άγια* which means that users provided an almost equal number of successful and unsuccessful dictionary consultations for these words. These task-items either present in context a metaphoric meaning (*άγια*) or they form lexical phrases (*εξωτερικές υποθέσεις*) or idioms (*κάνω πάταγο*). This finding suggests that for our sample the major source of errors in dictionary look-ups were metaphorical meanings, lexical phrases and idioms. This result is consistent with previous