

6 Gender construction and the *Word Thesaurus* for Greek

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In our contribution we first examine the system of gender in Modern Greek, placing emphasis on the grammatical means of the language, as well as their use and participation in the construction of social gender. We thus distinguish between morphological, lexical and social gender and refer to the reflection of social roles in Greek gender. We then turn to the main question, namely the way gender construction is reflected in the *Word Thesaurus* for Greek, which seems to follow the inadequate lexicographic practice of non-electronic dictionaries.

1 Gender in Modern Greek

1.1 Morphological gender

Modern Greek has a gender-marking case system, which can best be described as a typical case of co-operation between meaning and form in the assignment of gender (see Anastasiadi-Symeonidi and Chila-Markopoulou 2003: 16). Thus, gender in nouns is marked through a morpheme, representing a fusion of the grammatical categories of number and case.

Modern Greek is one of the European languages in which the grammatical category of gender makes its presence felt in large parts of the language system. To a certain extent, one can argue that this is a conservative feature of the language, carrying on an Indo-European inheritance. Thus, Modern Greek still recognizes three morphological genders: masculine, feminine and neuter. In addition, grammatical gender is found in a large number of word categories: articles, nouns, adjectives, as well as most pronouns (in the third person).

Each one of the three genders has more than one inflectional paradigm, which are not equally represented either in the vocabulary or in their frequency of occurrence in discourse.¹ Although most grammars agree in distinguishing three morphological classes² (masculine, feminine, neuter), there is significant overlap in case marking to the extent that inflectional paradigms cannot be systematically related to semantic distinctions such as male/female, animate/inanimate or human/non-human. We can define

gender in Greek as a purely grammatical category, arbitrarily (and obligatorily) assigned to the lexical units of the language: thus, all nouns are marked as masculine, feminine or neuter.

To complete the picture, we should mention those cases of gender variation found in a small part of the vocabulary. There are in fact morphologically related nouns where gender corresponds to a greater or lesser distinction in meaning, e.g. *μαρτυρία* (f.) 'testimony' vs *μαρτύριο* (nt.) 'torture', *περίβολος* (m.) 'enclosure' vs *περιβόλι* (nt.) 'orchard, garden', etc. (all examples are from Triantafyllidis 1991: 219–22).

There are also a few cases where the same noun can be used both in masculine and in feminine, e.g. *άμμος* 'sand', *δίφθογγος* 'diphthong', without any change in meaning. This possibility, which only holds for the inflectional paradigm ending in *-ος*, is explored in the construction of social gender in professional nouns (see §1.4 below). Equally interesting from a morphological point of view are cases of nouns which appear in two genders, each of which belongs to a different inflectional paradigm e.g. *η γάτα* (f.) – *το γατί* (nt.) 'cat', *ο σάκος* (m.) – *το σακί* (nt.) 'sack'. In all these cases, double gender is due to diachronic processes such as a re-analysis of hypocorism in an earlier phase of the language, which can no longer be recognized by modern speakers. It may also relate to an elaborate stylistic or sociolinguistic variation, as in *η μελάνη* (m.) vs *το μελάνι* (nt.) 'ink', *ο λάρυγγας* (m.) vs *το λαρύγγι* (nt.) 'larynx', *ο νεφρός* (m.) vs *το νεφρό* (nt.) 'kidney', where the first member belongs to a formal register and the second is colloquial (see also Anastasiadi-Symeonidi & Chila-Markopoulou 2003: 18–19). It is significant that the alternative gender in all these cases is the neuter, seen by Greek speakers as linked to the minor, the trivial and the inanimate.

It is also necessary to note that noun gender is not *immediately* recognizable through its endings or even its participation in a morphological paradigm.³ For instance, there is no way to predict if a noun ending in *-ος* is masculine, feminine or neuter, while even if we go through the whole inflectional paradigm, this ambiguity remains with respect to masculine/feminine (though not holding for the neuter). As a result, the phenomenon of gender, number and case agreement is particularly important for the construction of the noun phrase in Greek: the marking of these categories characterizes the entire language system, since formal marking of gender is necessarily repeated in all inflected constituents of the noun phrases (see §1.3 below for some examples).

Most determiners are in fact marked for grammatical gender, agreeing with the noun they specify and thus following natural gender or sex. For instance, the article can be used to differentiate gender in cases of nouns (mostly professional) whose endings do not differentiate it, e.g. with *πρόεδρος* 'president' we can have either *ο* (m. art.) or *η* (f. art.), distinguishing reference to a male from a female person. Similarly, most types of pronouns are marked for gender; thus the possessor or the person talked about is marked for gender, though not the speaker or listener. Most adjectives are also marked for the three morphological genders and all show agreement

with the noun they specify, thus indicating grammatical rather than natural gender. Grammatical gender is also assigned to proper nouns which are normally preceded by the definite article: *η Μαρία* 'the Mary', *ο Πέτρος* 'the Peter'.

As regards the contribution of semantics to gender assignment, most nouns and nominalized adjectives bearing the features [+ animate] and [+ human] can be assigned two or even three genders, e.g. *πωλητής* (m. noun) 'salesman' – *πωλήτρια* (f. noun) 'saleswoman', *τυφλός* – *τυφή* – *τυφλό* (m. – f. – nt. adjective) 'blind'. The same is true for third person pronouns marked for gender, e.g. *αυτός* – *αυτή* – *αυτό* 'this'. In each case the basic type is thought to be the masculine one, on the basis of which the other types are produced, according to rules for each inflectional paradigm. Nouns bearing the same features, i.e. [+ animate] and [+ human], which do not allow for gender distinctions, e.g. *το παιδί* 'the child; the guy', or nouns in which gender is differentiated by lexical means, e.g. *αγόρι* (nt.) 'boy' – *κορίτσι* (nt.) 'girl', are always neuter (see §1.2). On the other hand, nouns which do not bear these semantic features are not necessarily neuter, but can belong to any of the three genders.

As a result of this, the neuter has a special role to play: while the correspondence between referential (natural) and grammatical gender (i.e. male/female and masculine/feminine) could lead to a bipolar distinction, in fact, the contrast is based on a three-pronged distinction, where the neuter is employed to fulfil several functions in gender construction.

1.2 Lexical gender

In addition, referential gender is shown in a great variety of – mainly animate – nouns, including professional, national and proper names, as well as kinship terms. In some cases, gender is included in the meaning of the lexeme itself, e.g. the nouns *αγόρι* 'boy' and *κορίτσι* 'girl' are morphologically neuter, but semantically marked as male and female, correspondingly. The same is true for a number of words which belong to two semantic categories:

1 [+ animate], [+ human]: apart from the pair *άντρας* 'man' – *γυναίκα* 'woman', this category also includes kinship and familiarity terms such as *πατέρας* 'father' – *μητέρα* 'mother', *γιος* 'son' – *κόρη* 'daughter', *παππούς* 'grandfather' – *γιαγιά* 'grandmother', *γαμπρός* 'groom' – *νύφη* 'bride'. We can also find here an occasional group noun, neuter and in the plural, covering both members of the pair, e.g. *τα παιδιά* 'the children' (meaning *γιος* + *κόρη* 'son + daughter' or *γιος* + *γιος* 'son + son' or *κόρη* + *κόρη* 'daughter + daughter'). However, in the most common case the masculine member is used as a group noun, e.g. in the sentence *ήρθαν οι θείοι μου* 'my uncles have come', *οι θείοι* (m. plural) can mean either 'uncle + uncle(s)' or 'uncle(s) + aunt(s)'. This use presupposes the inclusion of at least one male member in the group: if it is 'aunt + aunt(s)', the expression should be *ήρθαν οι θείες μου* 'my aunts have come'.

2 [+ animate], [- human]: this category includes animals. In this case there are no group nouns but some alternative possibilities:

- (a) The animal may be named by a unique word, belonging to any of the three genders: *φάλαινα* (f.) 'whale', *αετός* (m.) 'eagle', *φίδι* (nt.) 'snake'. Thus gender is not related to sex and is just considered as a particular lexical feature of the noun (see also Ralli 2003: 75).
- (b) The pair male/female may be represented by a pair of words composed of neuter/feminine instead of masculine/feminine, e.g. *βόδι* (nt.) 'ox' – *αγελάδα* (f.) 'cow', *κριάρι* (nt.) 'ram' – *κατσίκα* (f.) 'goat', where the male is always represented by the neuter. This mainly applies to domestic animals or animals that are most familiar to humans.

In conclusion, there is a complex correspondence between referential and grammatical gender in Greek, though preference for the masculine seems to be dominant in most cases.

1.3 Gender conventions

Although Greek is equipped with the necessary morphological devices for a full correspondence between grammatical and referential gender, there is a clear imbalance in the use of these devices. Thus, in a phrase like *τα ψηλά βουνά* 'the high mountains', all constituents are marked as neuter, whereas in *οι ψηλοί λόφοι* 'the high hills' they are marked as masculine, following the gender, number and case of the head in both cases. On the other hand, things are different where the head includes more than one noun belonging to a different gender. According to Greek grammars (e.g. Tzartanos 1991, vol. 1: 47–8), there are two possibilities: for inanimate nouns the neuter is used, whereas the masculine 'predominates' in the case of animate nouns. For instance, in a sentence such as:

- (1) *η κουζίνα και το ψυγείο λάμπουν σαν καινούργια*
the kitchen and the refrigerator shine like brand new

The noun *κουζίνα* 'kitchen' is feminine, *ψυγείο* 'refrigerator' is neuter and *καινούργια* 'new' is marked as neuter plural; similarly in:

- (2) *ο πατέρας και η μητέρα μου ήταν εθελοντές στους Ολυμπιακούς Αγώνες*
my father and mother were volunteers in the Olympic Games

Here *εθελοντές* 'volunteers' is marked as masculine plural (see also Frangoudaki 1988; Archakis & Kondyli 2002: 158–9). The clear conclusion to be drawn from these cases is that the feminine is the only gender that can never be used in cases of combined heads,⁴ remaining thus marginal in gender assignment.

This imbalance is even more prominent in generic and group uses of

nouns and pronouns. Apart from the cases of lexical gender noted above, we can here mention phrases addressed to a mixed audience. In cases such as:

- (3) *αν κάποιος ενδιαφέρεται . . .*
if someone is interested . . .
- (4) *ποιος μπορεί να με πληροφορήσει για . . .*
who can inform me about . . .

indefinite markers (*κάποιος*, *ποιος*) are in the masculine gender. The same happens in phrases belonging to a general statement:

- (5) *όλοι οι μαθητές θα εξεταστούν την ίδια μέρα*
All students will be examined on the same day.

In (5), *μαθητές* 'students' is marked as masculine plural. In these cases the use of masculine is obligatory even if all students are female. As grammar textbooks put it, 'the male gender is generally the strongest personal gender' (Triantafyllidis 1991: 216 and Tzartanos 1991, vol. 1: 47). It is significant that occasional deviations from this convention, coming, e.g., from university lecturers who address their class in the feminine, are generally taken as instances of joking.

There are also cases where the use of the masculine gender with a generic meaning is obligatory as e.g. in [+ animate], [+ human] nouns, which are not semantically marked as male or female but are used to refer to both:

- (6) *όλοι_m οι_m πολίτες_m είναι ίσοι_m απέναντι στο νόμο*
All citizens are equal before the law.

In example (6), *πολίτες* 'citizens' is marked as m. plural. The role of the masculine gender is reinforced by the phenomenon of gender, number and case agreement: in example (6), the masculine gender (referring to both men and women) is present in four out of the eight words of the sentence: *όλοι* 'all', *οι* art., *πολίτες* 'citizens', *ίσοι* 'equal'. Nouns like *άνθρωπος* 'human being', *γονιός* 'parent', *χρήστης* 'user' belong to the same category (see Makri-Tsilipakou 1989).

Another indication of the imbalance in the use of morphological gender is the meaning and use of diminutives in proper names like *Κωστάκης* (m., referring to men) vs *Κατινάκι* (nt., referring to women). In these cases the diminutive for men is also in the masculine gender, whereas the diminutive for women changes into neuter. Similarly, the use of diminutives for common nouns has the effect of making the word derogatory for women (e.g. *γυναϊκάκι* 'insignificant little woman') but not for men (e.g. *αντράκι* 'little man'), especially in cases where connotations work differently for men and women (see Makri-Tsilipakou 2003). This correlates with the preferred adjectives which collocate with the nouns for man and woman. A number of studies using material from various dictionaries, mainly from the Greek

Thesaurus entitled *Antilexicon* (Vostantzoglou 1962), mention that the abundance of positive terms for the masculine is enhanced by the mass of derogatory terms for the feminine. The same can be observed in the case of the adjectives *ανδρικός* 'male/masculine' and *γυναικείος* 'female/feminine', derived from the corresponding nouns in phrases such as *ανδρικές/γυναικείες δουλειές* 'male/female business' or *ανδρικές/γυναικείες κουβέντες* 'male/female words', which carry distinctly different connotations (see Makri-Tsilipakou 1996: 6; Archakis & Kondyli 2002: 159–60; Pavlidou 2002: 51–2; Pavlidou *et al.* 2004).

1.4 Social gender and social roles

The uses of language described above must be seen as integrated within a wider socio-political frame, in which gender construction and roles are related to a particular division of labour and protection of a social status quo. In the case of Greek society, a fundamental parameter of this social code is the notion of honour, which shapes (or at least is expected to shape) notions of gender. Thus, while Greek women are not traditionally thought of as the 'weaker' or the 'fair sex', they are given a number of negative features that delimit their social role.⁵ Thus social hierarchy can be detected, for instance, in sayings, proverbs, fairy tales and stereotypical expressions (see §3 below), which build on and reproduce a number of sexist stereotypes placing woman in an inferior position.

One implication of this social hierarchy on the linguistic level concerns the use of surnames, which is unique among European languages. Like all nouns, surnames are formally marked for gender, just as in Slavic languages. However, in contrast to the latter, this gender is always masculine and appears in the nominative case for males and in the genitive for females. For instance, we have Dionysis Goutsos (m. nomin.) but Marianna Goutsou (m. gen.), Dionysis Katsoyannos (m. nomin.) but Marianna Katsoyannou (m. gen.). Nikiforidou (1991) suggests that the main use of the genitive in the system of Greek is to indicate ownership (see also Tsamadou 1984). As a result, the fact that the official identity in the case of women is morphologically related to her father's or husband's identity suggests that it follows the identity of her 'owner' (see also Pavlidou 2002: 44). We can add here that morphology acts in this way as a means of counteracting the recent positive effects of legislation, according to which women retain their original surname after marriage.

One last category concerns the names of professions, an issue which is inextricably linked with language change and reform, relating to Greek diglossia. First, many professional nouns, as happens in many other languages, have only a masculine form, since these professions have traditionally been related to men. Thus, a number of professions like *ναύτης* 'sailor', *ψαράς* 'fisherman', *υδραυλικός* 'plumber', have no feminine form. In this case, the problem is how language can follow social progress, that is how to create new forms that will make women visible in new professional spheres.

What is peculiar in Greek is that, whereas different forms can often be created for the feminine gender, these forms are socially stigmatized, since they come from 'low' social dialects and are used by uneducated people. The deliberate use of such forms for women is derogatory and is usually thought to be ironic. As a result, in the place of feminine word-forms like *βουλευτίνα* 'woman MP', *γιατρίνα* 'female doctor', or *προεδρίνα* 'female president, chairwoman', the corresponding masculine forms are used (*βουλευτής, γιατρός, πρόεδρος*). These may equally refer to both men and women but are not totally devoid of a [+ male] semantic feature, since their use, without any further clarification, is automatically assumed to relate to men. In addition, the masculine article can also be used with those nouns even where women are involved, for instance in a sentence like

- (7) *ο_m πρόεδρος_m του συλλόγου μας είναι η_f κυρία_f X*
the (m.) president (m.) of our society is the (f.) Mrs (f.) X

although the feminine version can also occur, i.e.

- (8) *η_f πρόεδρος_m του συλλόγου μας είναι η_f κυρία_f X*
the (f.) president (m.) of our society is the (f.) Mrs (f.) X

This problem relates to Greek diglossia and its inheritance and, at the same time, it is an instance of a linguistic sexism, which suggests that the feminine forms of certain nouns are 'words against world order' (Frangoudaki 1989: 44).

Although the feminist movement has never met with popularity in Greece, language reform was achieved with the establishment of demotic Greek as the official language of Greece in 1976, following the demise of katharevousa.⁶ The new official language was symbolically associated with all progressive movements, but linguistic changes with respect to gender have not been particularly successful, partly because of the fact that demotic Greek was not considered prestigious enough to support new language practices, including new vocabulary formation.

Going back to professional nouns, when a masculine name follows the older katharevousa morphology, the formation of a corresponding feminine version may follow either katharevousa or demotic rules. In the former case, however, the resulting type is difficult to integrate into the modern language, whereas in the latter case, the failure to use the masculine version is interpreted as ignorance and the new word is stigmatized as belonging to an uneducated idiom. In consequence, masculine forms of katharevousa origin, like *πρόεδρος* 'president', are used for both genders, while demotic forms like *προεδρίνα* 'female president', are used to express derogatory views on women. This is a special application of the diglossia principle, according to which the use of a low variety in an inappropriate context may be interpreted as derogatory. The 'small difference', in this case the variant of a derivational

ending, is sociolinguistically realized as the ridiculing of the object of reference, i.e. women.

2 Gender in the Greek *Word Thesaurus*

2.1 *Crucial pairs*

Our analysis concerns the *Thesaurus* of Microsoft *Word* 2000, which is also the most recent version, since no updating has been made for the XP version. It must be pointed out from the outset that the quality of the Greek *Thesaurus* is considerably lower than those of other widely used languages (e.g. the English *Thesaurus*) and this undoubtedly has to do with the limited tradition of lexicographical material of this kind in Greek. It is significant that the only major published thesaurus for Greek first appeared in the late 1940s and has remained unaltered since then (Vostantzoglou 1962).

In the case of the electronic thesaurus in question several important defects can be observed:

- 1 Overabundance of synonyms, e.g. 24 synonyms are suggested for *γυναίκα* 'woman' and 27 for *άντρας* 'man'; similarly, for *όμορφος* 'handsome, pretty' we find 33 synonyms and 27 antonyms.
- 2 Frequent mixing of word categories, e.g. for *άντρας* 'man' (noun), one of the meanings given is *σταθερός* 'stable' (adjective), for which two synonyms are given: *σταθερός* 'stable' (adjective) and *βράχος* 'rock' (noun).
- 3 Introduction of 'related words' or 'expressions', which include words or extended phrases semantically related – at least to some extent – with the main word, e.g. for *άντρας* 'man' the following related expressions are given: *ανθρώπινο ον* 'human being', *λογικό ον* 'rational being', *νοήμον ζώο* 'intelligent being', *απόγονος του Αδάμ* 'Adam's offspring'. This is completely unpredictable and does not seem to follow any clear principles.
- 4 In many cases, antonyms pick up different aspects of the word meaning but are always given all together in a separate group; for instance, the antonyms of *κοπέλα* 'girl' include *παντρεμένη γυναίκα* 'married woman', *γριά* 'old woman', *γιος* 'son', *αγόρι* 'boy', which are all presented together.
- 5 Most importantly, the synonyms given originate from a wide diversity of registers, levels of formality, field domains, etc. The problem is particularly serious, since Greek vocabulary draws on a plethora of sources from its particularly rich diachronic variation, relating to its long-standing history of diglossia. In the case of the *Thesaurus*, alternative forms are listed without any indications for appropriate use or any sense of usefulness for the user. For example, some of the synonyms given for *κοπέλα* 'girl' are the dialectal forms *τσούπρα* and *τσούπα*, the old-fashioned/obsolete *κοράσι*, *κορασιδα*, *κορασιά* and *νια* and the archaic *νεάνιδα* and *κοράσιο*.

It could thus be argued that problems with the representation of gender in the Greek *Thesaurus* reflect the poor overall quality of the tool as a whole.

What is particularly significant, however, is that defects or 'mistakes' do not equally affect both genders but seem to be less frequent in the case of the masculine or male pole of the antithesis.

This imbalance is clearly shown in the arrangement of the crucial pair *άντρας* – *γυναίκα* 'man' – 'woman', which is blatantly divergent in both the selection of meanings and their sequencing. Whereas for *άντρας* 'man', the meanings selected are 'man', 'soldier', 'of male age', 'spouse', 'stable', 'manly', 'noteworthy' (in this order), the meanings provided for *γυναίκα* 'woman' are 'woman', 'spouse' (second in order), 'maid', 'effeminate'. The two words thus turn out to represent an opposition between positive and negative qualities and in particular firmness, courage and magnitude as male qualities and servility and effeminacy as female ones. The individual terms given as synonyms also reflect this gross and rather embarrassing stereotyping, by including offensive or obsolete words. Antonyms are also revealing, since those given for man are 'woman', 'child', 'timid', 'coward', whereas those for woman are 'man', 'spouse', 'male', 'virile' (or 'hot!'), 'brave fellow'. Similarly, the related expression 'better half' is only given as a synonym for 'woman'. It is clear that the selection of synonyms is related to the situation described above with reference to the structure of society and social roles attributed to women. These are rarely real synonyms that can be used in place of the word in question, but are rather attributes that are traditionally ascribed to each social gender.

A surprising reversal of positive and negative qualities is found in the pair *αρσενικός* – *θηλυκός* 'male/masculine' – 'female/feminine'. In the case of 'male', the meanings given are 'man' and 'infertile', whereas for 'female' the meanings are 'womanly' and 'fertile' ('fertile, creative, inventive'). Although this seems to attribute positive qualities to the female side, there is nevertheless a hint of a patronizing attitude in the overall choice of acknowledging fertility as the only positive feature of women, and this is undoubtedly related to their social role. In relation to the latter, we can note the presence of the entry *θηλυκό*, a rather derogatory neuter noun, infrequently used to connote cunningness, for which two meanings are given: *έξυπνη γυναίκα* (*έξυπνη γυναίκα* 'clever woman') and *κόρη* (synonym: *κόρη*, *κορίτσι* 'daughter', 'girl'). Apart from the obsolete association of the word with the generic second sense, it is interesting to observe that no synonyms are given for the corresponding *αρσενικό* 'male'.

The same lack of balance is shown in the pairs *αγόρι* – *κορίτσι* 'boy' – 'girl' and *γιος* – *κόρη* 'son' – 'daughter'. For *αγόρι* three senses are given, corresponding to 'male offspring', 'non-adult' and 'lover' (for 'boyfriend'), with two synonyms each: *αρσενικό παιδί* (synonyms: *αρσενικό παιδί*, *γιος*), *ανήλικος* (synonyms: *ανήλικος*, *νεανίας*), *αγαπητικός* (synonyms: *αγαπητικός*, *ερωμένος*). In contrast, three senses are given for the two terms for 'girl' with 17 and 20 synonyms each. These senses include the alternative term *κορη* ('girl') with synonyms meaning 'virgin', 'toddler', 'young female', as well as the senses of 'daughter', 'lover' (for 'girlfriend') and 'female servant' or 'cleaning lady'. The picture is similar for the last pair, 'son' – 'daughter',

since no synonyms at all are given for the male term, whereas the female term has 6 senses with 19 synonyms in total.

Apart from the usual senses noted above (including 'female servant'), special emphasis is given to the sense *ανύπαντρη* 'unmarried female', for which the following synonyms are given: *ανύπαντρη*, *άγαμος* 'unmarried', *άνανδρος* 'without a man' (obsolete), *παρθένος*, *παρθένα* 'virgin'. It would thus seem that the increased emphasis on female terms in these pairs goes hand in hand with the highlighting of stereotypical and outdated roles assumed for women such as virgin or cleaning lady. As noted above for the case of Vostantzoglou (1962), the plethora of terms for women is only accounted for by the preponderance of derogatory items.

2.2 Social roles

Turning now to the social role of male and female in the Greek *Word Thesaurus*, we can indicate a number of terms relating to activities, titles, economic and professional roles as well as evaluative terms that suggest a similar imbalance in the representation of men and women.

First of all, whereas synonyms may be given for the male form of nouns or adjectives referring to professions etc. (e.g. *αγρότης* 'farmer', *αθλητής* 'sportsman'), no synonyms are given for the corresponding female forms. This is especially noticeable in roles which are traditionally related to women, e.g. *δάσκαλος* 'teacher', *βασιλιάς* 'king', *νοικοκύρης* 'house-husband'. The only exception found in the *Thesaurus* is also telling, since it concerns *υπηρέτης* – *υπηρέτρια* 'male servant' – 'female servant', for which, moreover, antonyms are only given for the male form (12 forms), whereas many derogative forms such as *δουλάκι*, *δουλικό*, *δουλίτσα* (diminutives of *δούλα* 'servant', 'slave') are given in the female form.

Similarly, all synonyms are given in the male form, which is reasonable for male terms but actually results in a *Thesaurus* loaded exclusively with male forms of nouns and adjectives and thus concealing the highly inflected character of the language – to the detriment of female forms. In relation to this, the absence of many professional and other roles and titles from the *Thesaurus* also contributes to the suppression of the female presence in the social sphere. For instance, there are no entries for *γραμματέας* 'secretary', *ηθοποιός* 'actor' – 'actress', *κομμώτρια* 'hairdresser', *νοσοκόμα* 'nurse', *νηπιαγωγός* 'kindergarten teacher', *δακτυλογράφος* 'typist', *πωλήτρια* 'sales-woman', *οικοδέσποινα* 'hostess' – let alone *εργοδότης* 'female employer', *επόπτρια* 'female supervisor', etc.

Finally, an interesting case is that of the evaluative adjective *όμορφος* 'pretty, handsome', for which synonyms are given again for the male form only. This follows the well-known rule, according to which the masculine form is used for the adjective entry; what is particularly interesting, however, is that in the particular synonyms (34 in total) and antonyms provided (27 in total), we can find particular derogative terms reserved for women only (e.g. *καρακάξα*, *μαϊμού*, *πανούκλα*, *σκύλα*). Whereas similar gender-specific

derogatory terms are also given for men (*κουασιμόδος*, *θερσίτης*, *σάτυρος*, *πήθικος*, *μούργος*), what is particularly surprising is that female-specific words should appear within a male entry and that this should happen in listing antonyms for derogatory terms. In addition, two related expressions are given (*μπουκιά και συχώριο* 'to be eaten in a swallow', 'a mouthful', *να την πιεις στο ποτήρι* 'to be drunk in a glass'), which again are female-specific and particularly patronizing and sexist.

3 Conclusion

In conclusion, it seems that the poor quality of the Greek *Thesaurus* affects the representation of the two genders. We believe that the restricted value of the *Thesaurus* is particularly unfavourable to the female gender because of the following features:

- 1 imbalance in both the selection of meanings and their sequencing;
- 2 marked prominence of male forms with respective absence of female forms;
- 3 systematically negative or stereotypical associations of synonyms given for women;
- 4 inclusion of derogative terms, even where it is clearly uncalled for.

To be fair to the *Word Thesaurus*, these problematic points do not seem to differ from existing lexicographic practice, for which similar observations have been made (Tsokalidou 1996; Pavlidou 2002), though no systematic study exists (with the exception of the recent Pavlidou *et al.* 2004). Our conclusions point to the fact that the design of the Greek *Thesaurus* does not differ from old-fashioned dictionaries of Greek, which both reflect current linguistic practices and are heavily biased towards a sexist view of language and the world.

Notes

- 1 For statistical evidence, see Katsimali & Kavoukopoulos (1996).
- 2 See, however, Ralli (2002) and (2003) for an alternative classification.
- 3 See Ralli (2003: 63), according to which it is not always clear whether gender is a feature of the stem or the inflectional suffix.
- 4 This view concurs with the conclusions of Chila-Markopoulou (2003), where more details are given.
- 5 For a survey of related work see Papataxiarchis & Paradellis (1998).
- 6 Until 1976, the linguistic situation in Greece represented a prototypical case of diglossia, in Ferguson's terms. Katharevousa was an artificial form of the language, whose use was obligatory in writing as well as in formal situations.

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