What’s in a dialogic construction?
A constructional approach to polysemy
and the grammar of challenge

Abstract: In this paper we address lexical polysemy in a constructional perspective, arguing that each of the conversational meanings we identify for Modern Greek ela (2nd person singular imperative of the verb erxome ‘come’) is appropriately modeled as a conceptual gestalt of formal (including prosodic) and semantic-pragmatic properties. In turn-initial position, ela is used to challenge a preceding utterance; we show that the variations in the kind of challenge expressed are systematically tied to the word that follows ela, the speech act force and the sentence type of the preceding utterance, and finally prosodic and textual cues. To the extent that these varieties of conversational challenge are conditioned by particular contextual features, we treat them as a family of related constructions whose common features can be captured in the form of a generalized ela construction abstracted from the different sub-patterns. Our analysis thus demonstrates the appropriateness of a constructional framework for dealing with the different kinds of parameters involved in dialogic meaning and strongly suggests that at least some of the variation inherent in discourse is amenable to a grammatical description, so that sentence-level and supra-clause patterns can be analyzed in a uniform way.

Keywords: (dialogic) constructions, construction grammar, polysemy, (speech act of) challenge, exclamations, particles, Modern Greek, discourse

DOI 10.1515/cog-2014-0060
Received December 21, 2013; revised June 7, 2014; accepted June 19, 2014.

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1 Introduction

The conventional aspects of naturally occurring dialogue have been the object of several studies that seek to integrate conversational regularities with grammatical theory. Constructionally-oriented work, in particular, has recently veered in the direction of identifying formal and semantic-pragmatic features of patterns pertaining to supra-clause conversational language, extending constructional methodology to the analysis of dialogic grammatical constructions (Fried and Östman 2005; Lindström and Londen 2008; Linell 2009; Wide 2009; Ariel 2010; Fischer 2010; Antonopoulou and Nikiforidou 2011). While such an extension seems warranted in that it has yielded principled descriptions of conversational patterns in the form of dialogic constructions, it has also brought forward the problems associated with approaching dialogic interaction in a constructional methodology. Prominent among these are a) the variation inherent in naturally-occurring conversation and pertaining to all formal, semantic and pragmatic levels, and b) the identification of the appropriate values (features) that would cover conventional aspects of dialogic patterns.

In this paper, we investigate uses of Modern Greek *ela* (2nd person singular imperative of the verb *erxome* ‘come’), in turn-initial position, to challenge a preceding utterance. In this sense, *ela* heads a “reactive” (or, more generally, “responsive”) construction (Linell 2009: 100) in that “the speaker reacts to (or against) the use of a word or expression occurring in a prior utterance” and involves “sequential dependencies”. The general conversational exclamative function of challenge is also found in combinations of *ela* with other lexical or grammatical elements such as *pu* (‘that’ complementizer), *tora* (‘now’), or *de* (hortative, intensifying particle), which, however, are further characterized by additional pragmatic functions and constraints. Given the semantic-pragmatic overlap, we treat these as a family of related constructions, which share both formal and pragmatic features. Some of the semantic-pragmatic properties of all *ela*-based conversational patterns naturally derive from features of the deictic verb and the imperative form (cf. parallel uses of English *come* as reflected in many of the glosses) and the properties of the combining contexts (*pu, tora, de*). Keeping track of the semantic motivation allows us to trace the development of the conversational functions from the literal motion-verb use through intermediate patterns, and delineate precisely those features that are truly part of the dialogic constructions.

A big challenge in working with authentic conversational data is, as said, the great amount of variation involved and the general resistance to identifying regu-
larities amenable to a grammatical description.\footnote{1} Our aim here is to show that at least some of the variation in the components of these patterns can be captured naturally, in terms of the variation allowed by the constructional model within a specific slot, whether substantive (lexical) or formal (schematic). To the extent that the different realizations can be described in general terms (rather than as lists of words or arbitrary features – cf. Fillmore 1997), they can be considered constraints associated with the particular pattern(s), thus enhancing constructional status. Crucially, in the case of the ela family of constructions such generalizations relate not only to the turn introduced by ela and the following clause but also to the preceding utterance (“antecedent” segment), showing that this is indeed a dialogic construction. Greek ela emerges as a highly multi-functional category; the possibility arises, therefore, that ela itself is lexically polysemous. We argue that the particular meanings we identify here are best analyzed as a network of related constructions occupying a functional space; this amounts to a claim that any one of the meanings of ela is really a function of a particular constructional setting, i.e., a conceptual gestalt of formal and semantic-pragmatic properties. Given the conversational nature of the meanings involved, the former crucially include prosody. Lexical polysemy and constructional analyses are not of course contradictory or mutually exclusive given that a dominant trend in lexical semantics currently is the shift of focus “from words as building blocks to usage events, in all their contextual detail” (cf. Cuyckens et al. 2003: 21). Any polysemy account, therefore, may well be compatible (and mutually informative) with a constructional approach. The point is that context (including prosody, morpho-syntax, semantic and discourse-pragmatic properties, and lexical preferences) plays such an important role that any account focusing exclusively on de-contextualized semantic nodes or niches seems simplistic (see also Bergs and Diewald 2009; Boogaart 2009).

\footnote{1} This is not of course an argument against attempting principled descriptions of discourse (dialogic or other) patterns. Constructionally-oriented work more and more recognizes explicitly that sentence-level constructions are also characterized by variation, and that constructional descriptions really correspond to an abstraction over possible manifestations, which may or may not be all directly represented in the constructional description (see for example, Grondelaers, Speelman and Geeraerts 2002; Colleman 2009; Bybee 2006, 2010; Torres Cacoullos and Walker 2009; Nikiforidou and Torres Cacoullos 2010). Most often, such abstracted descriptions are extracted on the basis of the most frequent, and in this sense dominant, formal and/or semantic features, while less frequent characteristics are left out. In addition, variation may be also due to dialectal, or in general, context-related parameters (Geeraerts 2005; Geeraerts, Kristiansen and Peirsman 2010; Hoffmann and Trousdale 2011; Heine 2011), in which case it can be accommodated in the form of dialect (or context) sensitive constructions.
The functional space shared by the various sub-constructions can be captured in the form of a generalized ela construction abstracted from the different sub-patterns. Such general patterns are postulated in constructional analyses (e.g., Kay and Fillmore 1999; Michaelis and Lambrecht 1996) as a principled way of accounting for shared properties inherited by the more specific constructions. We argue for the plausibility of such a generalized pattern for conversational ela on the basis of a) conceptual content common to all sub-constructions (cf. Marmaridou 2012), b) overarching lexical and structural specifications, and c) productive extensions of both discourse-pragmatic and formal features of the generalized construction to other, more peripheral, patterns.

The paper is organized as follows. In 2.1 and 2.2 we briefly address other functions of ela in Modern Greek, embedding our family of constructions in the other uses of the word. In 2.3, we present the basics of what we term challenging ela, we outline possible connections with the other uses, and argue for the particle-status of ela in its challenging functions. In 3, we analyze the five ela-based challenging patterns, arguing for the necessity for a constructional analysis. In 4, we present evidence from intonation analysis that shows that challenging ela correlates with distinct intonational properties, further supporting the existence of distinct dialogic constructions. In 5, we relate the present work to the larger picture of dialogic grammar.

2 From motional, hortative, and telephone-call ela to the challenging uses: motivation and links

2.1 Deictic motion and the imperative

All the expressions we investigate contain the 2nd person singular imperative form of the verb erxome, ela. As an imperative, ela evokes the cognitive model of ordering (and related functions) and further incorporates the schematic speech event activating the roles of speaker and addressee (Langacker 1991: 505; Marmaridou 2000: 93). In this respect, the imperative combines illocutionary force and grounding. In particular, the participants evoked by the ordering model are equated with the speaker and the addressee and the utterance is equated with the actual speech event. In its literal motion sense, the imperative ela thus predictably performs a directive speech act while at the same time evoking a speaker “in authority” or “in a position to ask” and an addressee who is expected to carry out
the mandated event; the latter is typically left unexpressed “since the cognitive model of ordering specifically identifies the trajector of the mandated process with the addressee” (Langacker 1991: 504)2:

(1) \( \text{ēla} \quad \text{sto} \quad \text{γraftio} \quad \text{mu} \quad \text{molis} \quad \text{teliosis} \quad \text{ti} \)
\( \text{come-2\textsuperscript{nd}} \sg \text{Imp.} \quad \text{to-the} \quad \text{office} \quad \text{my} \quad \text{as-soon-as} \quad \text{finish-you} \quad \text{the} \)
\( \text{δulia} \quad \text{su} \textsuperscript{3} \quad \text{work} \quad \text{your} \quad \text{\textit{Come} to my office as soon as you finish your work.’} \)

(GkWaC 7299)

Like its English counterpart come (see Fillmore 1982; Goddard 1997, among others), the central condition licensing the use of erxome is that either the speaker or the addressee is at the goal of motion at utterance or arrival time. Erxome, however, extends to contexts where English could use go in addition to come (cf. Antonopoulou and Nikiforidou 2002); in Greek, if the addressee is making the same journey, then the speaker must “acknowledge” this by using erxome, thus extending obligatory conditions of this verb, e.g. (2):

(2) \( \text{boro} \quad \text{na} \quad \text{??pao/erθo} \quad \text{mazi} \quad \text{su} \quad \text{(ke} \quad \text{na} \quad \text{m} \quad \text{afisis} \quad \text{spiti)?} \)
\( \text{can-I} \quad \text{to} \quad \text{go-I/come-I} \quad \text{with you} \quad \text{(and to me drop-off-you home)?} \quad \text{‘Can I go/come with you (and be dropped off at home)?’} \)

Whereas the English translation with ‘go’ is appropriate in a context where the speaker merely wishes to leave a party (with the addressee) and be dropped off at her home, in the same context the Greek example requires the use of erxome, the relevant condition being that if the speaker is involved in the motion event then her presence should be made explicit. In this respect, erxome appears to code a

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2 Crucially however, and in contrast to the uses we’ll examine here, in regular directive contexts the addressee/subject can be expressed for emphasis or for getting the addressee’s attention unmistakably (You leave them alone!).

3 We follow a broad phonetic transcription for the Greek utterances in italics, followed by a word-for-word translation with grammatical features marked only when relevant to the discussion. Imp. stands for ‘imperative’, part. for ‘particle’, sg. for ‘singular’, pl. for ‘plural’, subj. for ‘subjunctive’, voc. for ‘vocative’. A dash is used to signal a turn when more than one turn appears in the example. Bold is used to facilitate the identification of the expressions discussed in the text.
higher degree of speaker involvement already in its literal motion sense and is therefore a likely candidate for developing dialogic functions.

2.2 Hortative and acknowledging functions

In accordance with well-attested cross-linguistic tendencies (cf. English *come on*, French *venir*, etc.), *ela* further develops hortative meanings where literal motion is no longer involved. The speech act performed by such utterances is still directive, the speaker making a suggestion, issuing an invitation, giving advice, expressing wish etc., but deictic motion is obviously not part of the meaning of the utterance, e.g. (3)–(4):4

(3) *ti sta leo tora afta, ela*
what to-you-them tell-I now these, *come*-2nd sg. Imp.
*pjes to frappe su mi xasume ke to leoforio*
drink-2nd s. Imp. the coffee your not miss-we and the bus
*jia Braxami*
for Brahami
‘What am I telling you all this for, *come on* drink your coffee; we don’t want to miss the bus to Brahami.’

(GkWaC 42686)

(4) *neos δromos, anekserevnitos, ela na δume*
new road, unexplored, *come*-2nd sg. Imp. to see-we-subj.
*pu vyazi, ime eδo ke mono esi δipla mu, ke*
where takes-it, am here and only you by-side my, and
*to siban stamatise*
the universe stopped-it
‘This is a new road, unexplored, *come* see where it takes us, I’m here, only you by my side, the universe has stopped.’

(GkWaC 12129)

4 In some of these examples (e.g. (3), (5), (6)) we seem to have a type of serial verb construction (Aikhenvald 2006), where there is no marker of syntactic subordination (or coordination) between *ela/elate* and the following verb, the two expressing a single event. As pointed out by a reviewer, this could be taken as evidence of grammaticalization of the *ela* word; although a serial verb analysis of these cases is at least plausible, it should be noted that the pattern is not fully productive. For example, *pame* (5) is the only 1st person form that can follow *ela* without an overt subordinator (cf. (4)), whereas 2nd person forms are always possible. While this certainly merits systematic investigation, it is beyond our present scope.
As evident from the included context, speaker and addressee are already at the same place and literal motion is not therefore involved. Instead, *ela* is rather interpreted as a hortative marker, intensifying the directive expressed also by the following imperative (3) or subjunctive form (4). We may plausibly speculate that such contexts, where the presence of *ela* in its literal sense is rendered superfluous or incongruous, are in fact one type of transitional context for the rising of the hortative meaning and the development to particle status. While the hortative interpretations are lexicalized enough to occur with motion verbs without the speaker issuing conflicting instructions, e.g. (5), *ela* in such examples still has verbal status as evidenced by the occurrence of the 2nd person plural form (*elate*) in contexts with multiple addressees (e.g. (6)) and its position in the utterance, which is not yet fixed. The syntax associated with the hortative interpretation involves an imperative verbal form (*ela* or *elate*) typically followed by another imperative (3, 6) or subjunctive (4, 5):

(5) *hazi ... nomizis oti eyo troo afta pu ftiaxni i*  
*silly ... think-you that I eat-I these that makes the*  
*mama? *ela*  
*pame na katsume sto*  
mum?  
*come-2nd sg. Imp. go-1st pl. subj. to sit-we in-the*  
*saloni.*  
‘Silly ... do you really think I would eat whatever mum makes? *Come (let’s)* sit in the living-room.’  

(GkWaC 11917)

(6) *alios, me tin iparxusa katastasi pu espevzmena,*  
*otherwise, with the existing situation that urgently*  
*enayonios ke alojista proxorame se δieθni klisi*  
anxiously and senselessly proceed-we to international call  
*elate*  
*parte oles tis stratijikis simasias*  
*come-2nd pl. Imp. take-2nd pl. Imp. all the strategic importance*  
*eteries mas, ...*  
‘Otherwise, in the current situation where we urgently, anxiously and senselessly proceed to an international call “*come* take all our strategically important companies,...  

(GkWaC 34)

As suggested by Traugott and Dasher (2002: 176–78) in relation to the development of hortative *let’s* from the imperative “*(you) let us X*”, the development
of hortative functions by ela may well be described as an instance of subjectification of an already inter-subjective (i.e. addressee-oriented) meaning, encoded morphologically (the imperative coding a typically unexpressed addressee) and lexically (by virtue of the addressee-deferring semantics). In other words, an inherently inter-subjective expression “is recruited by the speaker to encode and regulate attitudes and beliefs” (Traugott 2010: 4), that is to express meanings which include the speaker’s viewpoint and may (also) involve the speaker. Evidence for the shift of ela toward a subjective particle comes also from negation; in its hortative functions ela/elate cannot be in the scope of negation (apparently the speaker cannot negate her own wish), whereas the verb following ela/elate naturally can (e.g. (7)):

(7) *ela* min araxis tis grinies pali mu come-2nd sg. Imp. not begin-you the grumbling again, me lei ekinos

says-he he

‘Come on, don’t start grumbling again, he says.’

(GkWaC 7444)

While the development of hortative functions may entail subjectification (and loss of inter-subjectivity), the acknowledging functions of ela are clearly inter-subjective though no longer directive. The acknowledging functions include the use of ela as the standard informal telephone-call opener both for the caller and the called (e.g. the use of ela by the caller in (8)) and in general as an acknowledgement/greeting in (typically) non face-to-face interactions like chatrooms, blog postings, radio communication (generally, first- or second-turn communication with no visual contact, e.g. (9)):

(8) – *pare* mu sto tifono ti jineka mu call-2nd sg. Imp. me to-the telephone the wife my

‘Call my wife for me.’

– *ela* Natasa! … θα petaxto mexri tin trapeza … come-part. Natassa! … will stop-by-I to the bank … θα sikoso ta xrimata jia to kolejio ton peδjion.” will get-I the money for the college the boys.”

‘Hi (ela), Natassa! I’ll stop by the bank to get the money for the boys’ college.’

(GkWaC 1335a)
(9) i apostoli itan efkoli ke me pilotus san aftus δὲν
the expedition was easy and with pilots like them not
xriazosun pola loja jia na sinenoiðis – ena aplo
needed-you many words for to communicate-you a simple
liknizma ton fteron arkuse. Alla δὲν εφταναν pote
swaying the wings was-enough. But not reached-they ever
mexri to stoxo ... “ela, Pier, δio aeroskafi ora 11”.
to the target ... come-part., Pier, two aircrafts hour 11”.
Itan i foni tu Jimmy
Was the voice the Jimmy.
‘The expedition was easy and with such pilots you didn’t need to say much to
communicate – a slight swaying of the wings was enough. But they would
never reach the target ... “Ηi (ela) Pierre, two aircrafts at 11 hours”. It was
Jimmy’s voice.’

According to Pavlidou’s (1995) study of telephone-calls (see also Antonopoulou
and Sifianou 2003), second turn ela primarily serves the purpose of recognition
of the caller by the called and in all occurrences presupposes great familiarity
between the interlocutors. In telephone calls and other acknowledging/greeting
contexts, therefore, second turn ela evokes an addressee in the preceding context
and presupposes an antecedent segment, even if only to conventionally acknowl-
edge a preceding opening. Unlike the hortative uses, the 2nd person plural form is
not possible in the telephone-call or more general acknowledging contexts, and
since ela is marked as familiar/informal, the 2nd person plural polite form is also
not possible. Although not conclusively, this indicates that the acknowledging
function is derivative of the telephone-call one, since the latter imposes a “one-
addressee” requirement on such interactions. Finally, unlike the hortative, in the
acknowledging functions ela is restricted to turn-initial/sentence-initial position,
which along with the impossibility of other inflected forms, points to a discourse-
particle status with a specialized function.5

5 Unlike the hortative function, which is present in medieval Greek, we do not have any evi-
dence that telephone-call and acknowledging ela precede the exclamative/challenging func-
tions we examine in the following sections. So, these dialogic uses are only cited as analogous
instances in terms of conversational structure, simply showing that exclamative ela (to which we
turn next) is not an isolated, totally arbitrary function.
2.3 Challenging ela and the features shared with the hortative and acknowledging functions

In the constructions we focus on here, *ela* is typically dialogic in evoking a preceding utterance to which it “reacts” (as in Linell 2009). In particular, it is characterized by a special reactive function we term “challenge”. This function is certainly motivated by the functions of *ela* discussed previously and related to some of them in specific ways. Reactive challenge is also associated with imperative ‘come’ in languages such as English and German (though apparently not French), which further points to motivational links with the motional and hortative uses. While we claim that the challenging function as such arises in a constellation of features which crucially include properties of the surrounding context – and is therefore best described as a construction (see section 3), any meaningful claims about the polysemy of *ela* and pattern-specific properties require that we place challenging *ela* in the larger *ela* category; so in this section we focus on the motivation and intermediate patterns.

Reactive challenge entails that the scope of the *ela* segment of the utterance, like telephone-call *ela*, is backwards, necessarily referring to a previous utterance. In this respect, *ela* constructions involve what Linell (2009) calls “sequential dependencies”, e.g. (10) where *ela* serves to reject the speech act force of the previous speaker’s utterance:

(10) – *nomizo oti ta isopeδonis ola tora.*
  think-I that them level-out-you everything now
  ‘I think you level everything out now.’

  – *ela!*  *Ke o telefteos anθropos s afti ti ji come*-part.!  And the last man on this the earth
  *kseri ti jinete sta ipurjia.*
  knows what happens in-the ministries.
  ‘*Come on* (ela)! Even the last person on earth knows what is happening in the Ministries.’

(HNC 848851)

In all exclamative/challenging constructions, *ela* is not only sentence initial, but also utterance initial, introducing a new turn in a dialogue. This structural feature, which also characterizes telephone-call and acknowledging *ela*, is a feature uniformly shared by all relevant constructions. In the few cases where challenging *ela* appears in a narrative (monologic) text, it is still interpreted as imposing dialogic structure, evoking a preceding utterance (cf. (11) below). While the inte-
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The integration of *ela* with the following segment may vary, ranging from independent, clearly exclamative status (as in (10)) to more integrated syntax and intonation, in no case does it maintain its verbal status, being more consistent with the category “particle”. This is supported by the fact that an explicit *esi* ‘you’ subject is never possible in the challenging dialogic uses (see footnote 3) and, like in telephone-call openings, the 2nd person plural inflected form does not occur (but cf. 3.3) with exclamative/challenging function. It is further supported by the possibility of substituting *ela* in many such contexts (see the discussion in the following sections) with clearly exclamative non-verbal (non-conjugated) forms such as *ande* and *siya*. As overarching features, common to all sub-patterns, the structural and morphological fixedness argue for a grammaticalized status of the *ela* word, the shift to leftward peripheral position being consistent with the target position of discourse markers in VO languages (like Greek) (Bybee 1985; Traugott 2010).

In characterizing challenging *ela* as a particle introducing an exclamative clause, we are in agreement with all major grammars of Greek and related articles (Tzartzanos 1963; Triantafillidis 1979; also Setatos 1993) and the major dictionaries. The description of *ela* as a particle or exclamation (rather than a verbal imperative form) in reference works implicitly reflects the arguments outlined above regarding its morpho-syntax. In accordance, an *ela* clause appears to satisfy at least some of the criteria defining exclamative clauses: it is deictically anchored in person (speaker) and time (present), which is a feature characteristic of exclamatives in general (Wilkins 1992; Michaelis and Lambrecht 1996) and it emphasizes the speaker’s strong emotional reaction (as opposed to intellectual appraisal characteristic of declaratives) to what she takes to be a fact (Sadock and Zwicky 1985: 162); in the case of *ela*, what the speaker takes as fact is the occurrence of the addressee’s preceding utterance, which she acknowledges and at the same time challenges or rejects.

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6 *Ande*, also glossed as ‘come on’, derives etymologically from a verbal form, the ancient Greek 2nd person plural imperative *άγετε*, but it has never functioned as a verb in the modern language nor is it etymologically transparent (Tzartzanos 1963: 130). *Siya* is an adverb with the literal meanings “slowly, gradually, in a low voice”, which in conversational contexts serves to reject a preceding utterance.

7 For word order issues in Greek see Lascaratou 1998 and the references therein.

8 Triantafillidis (*Leksiko kinis neoellinikis*), Babinotis (*Leksiko neas ellinikis glossas*).

9 Michaelis and Lambrecht definitionally restrict the class of exclamatives in English to those which additionally express contravention of an expectation with respect to a scalar property (e.g. It’s *amazing* the amount I spent ..., It’s incredible how much I spent, etc.). Although such sentences do seem to make up a natural class, the elements which are cross-linguistically identified as exclamations and exclamative sentence types are not necessarily restricted to scalar interpretations.
Also relevant to its characterization as an exclamative particle is whether *ela* itself has propositional content, since this is a feature assumed to differentiate exclamations (claimed to have propositional content) from interjections (Michaelis and Lambrecht 1996). The difference between exclamations and interjections is not so clear-cut. In reference works the consensus seems to be that interjections are emotive words like *oh*, *wow*, *ouch*, *uh-huh*, etc. (Quirk et al. 1972; Huddleston and Pullum 2002) which lack referential content, even though they are conventionally associated with particular instances of emotion (e.g. surprise, affirmation, pain, etc.). On the other hand, exclamation is a term typically reserved for types of expressions ranging from words to different types of sentences and it generally refers to the use of these expressions in discourse to signal the speaker’s emotional attitude towards the proposition expressed. It might be plausibly suggested that in an example like (10), isolated to the left of the clause and separated from the following text with an exclamation mark, *ela* approximates an interjection, expressing disagreement or discontent, without any obviously recoverable propositional content. There are many such examples in the corpus with (graphically and presumably intonationally) separated *ela* expressing surprise or disbelief (see 3.1). However, the lexically transparent form of this word seems to discourage its categorization as an interjection. Moreover, there are many examples where *ela* serves precisely to signal the reconstruction of a missing antecedent clause and therefore determine, so to speak, the object of the challenge, e.g. (11):

(11) *ixa sovares asxolies, sovares jia tin psixiki mu*  
*had-I serious business, serious for the psychological my*  
*ijia, *ela* δe θelo kakies, kati exi mini*  
*health, com-e-part. not want-I meanness, something has left*  
*apo enoo ... psixiki ijia.*  
*from mean-I ... psychological health.*  
‘I had serious business, serious for my psychological health I mean ... *Come on* (ela), don’t be mean, there is still something left of psychological health.’

(GkWaC 11779)

The text in (11) is monologic, the same speaker producing the whole utterance. Yet, the clause starting with *ela* evokes someone else’s prior turn, setting up an imaginary addressee, whose utterance the speaker anticipates and reacts to (cf. the gloss). The clause following *ela* provides the assumed content of the missing turn by implication: “You are not psychologically healthy”. The speaker of (11) rejects the truth of this proposition by making the weaker claim of the existence of at least some degree of psychological health. In such examples, *ela* imposes dialogic structure to otherwise monologic texts in accordance with its conven-
tional dialogic function. In these cases, *ela* appears to function as a marker of procedural meaning serving to express “the speaker’s attitude to the text under production” (Traugott 2010: 30), with a plausible claim to propositional content, a conclusion consistent with its still transparent lexical source. In addition, in several occurrences the speaker’s reaction as expressed by the *ela* utterance is associated with judgement or belief, rather than emotion, the latter being the domain associated with interjections par excellence. For all these reasons, we consider *ela* to be an exclamation particle and the utterances it introduces to be exclamative.

In addition to *ela* having particle status, the challenging and the telephone-call/acknowledging functions of *ela* share the features of new turn marking and initial position and presumably a general acknowledging pragmatic purpose. Challenging *ela* may be also linked to the hortative functions through examples like (12) where *ela* happens to be turn-initial and reacting to the previous speaker’s wondering while at the same time maintaining the speech act force of a directive (by virtue of the following imperative). Similarly in (13), the speaker of the *ela* sentence clearly performs a directive but the coherence of the text dictates that the directive is interpreted as reacting to the plausibility of the preceding statement.

(12) – *sto milito tis ekanan tis prosklisis?* *Jiati*  
*to-the speaking them issued-they the invitations? Because*  
*se mena tin ekanan me mail.*  
*to me it issued-they by mail.*  
‘Were the invitations issued by word of mouth? Because mine came by e-mail.’

– *ela*  
*min ise axaristos, se mena ðen tin*  
*come-part. not be-2nd s. Imp. ungrateful, to me not it*  
*ekanan ute me e-mail.*  
*issued-they nor by e-mail.*  
‘*Come on* (*ela*), don’t be ungrateful, to me they didn’t even send an e-mail.’

(GkWaC 1236)

(13) – *ine toso aliotiki afti i politia – ða iðela na*  
*is so different this the country – will wanted-I to*  
*ziso tin ipolipi zoi mu eki.*  
*live-I the rest life my there.*  
‘This country is so different – I would love to spend the rest of my life there.’
In terms of metaphorical motivation and the tendencies predicted by cross-linguistic mappings, the challenging uses may be plausibly characterized as instances of an originally spatial meaning (i.e., deictic motion) extending, possibly through the hortative contexts, to the speech act domain (a tendency attested in many languages and for different kinds of words – cf. Sweetser 1990). Indeed, we may suggest that one aspect of meaning in challenging *ela* is to issue a metaphorical invitation to the addressee to the effect that he should abandon his position and move toward the position of the speaker, hence the challenge (see also section 3.4)\(^{10}\). This extension is motivated by the widely documented change is motion conceptual metaphor (e.g. *he went crazy, economy seems to spiral downwards*) and is compatible with the directive semantics of the imperative and the deictic motion meaning of *ela* (= “move to where I am”). Relating the challenging meaning to the conceptual motivation of the metaphorical mapping goes some way into accounting for its existence in different languages although, as noted above, not all languages with motional or hortative ‘come’ extend it to the expression of challenge.

Although it is important to recognize the strong motivational tendencies and embed the multi-functionality of *ela* in well-documented paths of semantic change and grammaticalization, it is equally important to recognize that specialized discourse-pragmatic functions and individual morpho-syntactic and prosodic properties of each of the *ela*-based patterns we discuss are not predictable from properties of related constructions or from any general diachronic trends. In the following sections, we analyse five such patterns including that introduced by simple *ela* (as in (10)–(11)). The other patterns are *ela tora, ela more, ela de*, and *ela pu* each featuring *ela* in combination with other lexical (*tora* ‘now’), particle-like (*more, de* ‘intensifying particles’), or grammatical (*pu* ‘that’) elements. Drawing on corpus-based research, we sought to confirm the initial intuition that the combinations above function as collocations, characterized by meaning that is not derivable from their components and creating specific expectations regarding the preceding and following context. We attempt a principled

\(^{10}\) Pavlidou (1994) also assumes a metaphorical motivation for telephone-call *ela* (from the literal motion sense). It should be noted however that contrary to the exclamative/challenging use, the use of deictic motion verbs as conventional call openings is not common cross-linguistically.
description, keeping track of the compositional part of the meaning in each case while identifying pattern-idiographic properties.

3 The *ela*-based challenging constructions: data, methodology, hypothesis

Data (in the following as well as preceding sections) were extracted from the Greek Web as Corpus (GkWaC) available on Sketch Engine (www.sketchengine.co.uk), which is comprised of Internet texts – mostly blogs, but also business, organization, and government websites – downloaded in 2007. Additional data from newspapers (printed in the 1990s and early 2000s), literary works and parliamentary records were extracted from the Hellenic National Corpus (HNC) (http://hnc.ilsp.gr/en/). Both were searched in 2012–2013 using the corresponding concordance program. Given the informal/familiar register of the expressions at hand most data expectedly came from the GkWaC and in particular blogs, which clearly exhibit oral register. This is the closest we could get to naturally occurring speech, given that at the moment there are no oral corpora available with associated concordance programs for Greek.

In particular, fifty randomly-selected examples of each pattern were annotated systematically for the following factors: the sentence type and speech-act force of the utterance preceding the *ela*-based expression, the sentence type and speech-act force of the turn introduced by the *ela*-based expression, the text type (monologic or dialogic) each of the patterns may appear in, typical lexical choices before and after the *ela* expression, and finally morpho-syntactic and intonational features (cf. Footnote 13 and section 4, which discusses the experimental intonational evidence) compatible or uniquely associated with each pattern. Although results remain to be statistically verified, we detected a clear quantitative relation between various pragmatic, textual, and prosodic factors and the occurrence of specific *ela* patterns, amounting to robust trends worth of further statistical analysis.

Our analysis, therefore, does not simply assume meaning differences based on unverifiable intuitions, nor does it ascribe speaker motivations based on example-by-example interpretations, since speaker intent cannot be directly ascertained in a replicable manner. Rather, we test hypotheses about meaning or function indirectly, by relying on clues in the linguistic context (Sankoff 1988: 154); contrary to their treatment in reference grammars, which suggests that these *ela*-based expressions are in free variation expressing some sort of speaker attitude (Tzartzanos 1963: 25–27), we show that these patterns do not in fact vary
freely. On the one hand, they share a general pragmatic function and morphosyntax that justify their treatment as a family of related constructions. Indeed, the “challenging” function appears to be overarching pragmatics for all the subconstructions we look at in the following sections. On the other hand, they are each conditioned by particular contextual features strongly favoring the occurrence of one or the other.

3.1 The (simple) ela construction

The utterance introduced by simple ela is typically in the form of an independent, self-standing clause, e.g., (14)–(15):

(14) – oli i xroni ine tropi veltiosis tu NTU ke tis all the times are ways improvement the NTU and the sxolis Ilektroloyn school electrical.engineer
‘All times are ways of improving the National Technical University and the School of Electrical Engineering in particular.’

– ela sinaδelfe afta mas ta ’pan ki ali come-part. colleague-voc these us them say-they and others ‘Come on (ela), colleague, people have said so in the past to no avail.’

(15) – jia na leme ke tu stravu to δikjo pandos i for to say-we and the blind the right though the Charlize ine talentara Charlize is talent-great
‘To be fair, though, Charlize is a great talent.’

– ela re peðja … pu iðate to talendo tis come-part. re folks-voc … where see-you the talent the Theron sti sigekrimeni tenia? Theron in-the particular film?
‘Come on (ela) folks, where exactly did you see Theron’s talent in the particular film?’

Both examples illustrate clearly the particular function associated with simple ela, namely the challenging of the speech act force of the preceding utterance. This is explicitly done in (14) through the following clause (“these were said
by others as well”), and is also a possible reading in (15) where the speaker of the ela-turn directly questions the assertion of the previous speaker regarding Theron’s talent by using a rhetorical question. The vocative forms which follow ela, representing typical contexts in this use, further testify to its deverbal status: Vocatives do not form a syntactic part of a clause, but, inflected for number, they nevertheless provide information about the addressee(s) respectively. In example (15), the addressees are clearly more than one, yet ela occurs in its fixed (“singular”) form.\footnote{The use of elate (2nd person plural) in this context would not be inconceivable or uninterpretable, but its absence from the corpora signals that the ela form is the generalized one as the expression of exclamative challenge.}

That ela targets the speech act force of the preceding utterance, rather than its propositional content, is not immediately obvious in all examples; in particular, in cases where the preceding utterance is a statement or assertion and the text following ela does not disambiguate toward one or the other interpretation, as for example in (15), it may not always be possible to tease apart the difference between a speech act reading (I challenge your stating/saying/claiming so) and a propositional one (I challenge the truth of what you said). Aside from the validity of the distinction as demonstrated in a wide array of data (Sweetser 1990; Dancygier and Sweetser 2005), our argument draws on the existence of examples that are unambiguously speech act (along with the ambiguous ones), e.g., (14) above, also (16), whereas there are no examples which support only a propositional reading. In (16), the speaker of the ela-turn comments clearly on the banality of the claim urging the hearer to say something else by means of the following imperative.

\begin{verbatim}
(16) – ti vlepis?
what see-you?
‘What do you see?’

– vlepo ... vlepo ... vlepo esena pantu
see-I ... see-I ... see-I you everywhere
‘I see ... I see ... I see you everywhere!’

–ela aiδies, tetrimeno banal, pes oti
come-part. bullshit, unimaginative banal, say-2nd s. Imp. that
vlepis kati alo ...
see-you something else ...
‘Oh come on (ela), this is bullshit, unimaginative, banal; say you see something else ...’
\end{verbatim}

(GkWaC 323)
The procedural function of *ela* to the effect that it issues instructions as to the interpretation of the surrounding context is clearly evidenced in the few monologic examples in our sample where it imposes a dialogic interpretation by evoking an imaginary addressee, e.g., (11) above and (17):

(17) *γαπίτο μου ιμερολογιό, χτες το ντίρι εμφαστά στο γνωστό μαγαζί της Εολο* (*ela* έξωνόμη τι) "Dear my diary, yesterday the evening was-I at-the known shop the Aeolou (*come*-part. hate-I the διαφιμήσι). *Πιγά μου μια φωτο.* advertisement). Went-I for a drink.

‘Dear diary, last night I was at the usual place at Aeolou (*come on* (*ela*), I hate advertising). I only went for a drink.’

(GkWaC 2281)

The statement following *ela*, relating to the speaker’s attitude to advertising, appears to be irrelevant to the topic discussed, which is the speaker’s outing the previous evening. Nevertheless, on the assumption of the Cooperative Principle, it must be relevant. The speaker’s attitude towards advertising here can only make sense if some material is added. *Ela* evokes precisely this utterance. More specifically, it creates the assumption that an imaginary addressee has asked for the name of the place the speaker visited. By giving the reason why she does not grant the favour, the speaker metonymically implies her refusal to comply with the request. In other words, *ela* evokes an utterance that constitutes a missing premise (“my interlocutor has asked for the name of the place”) in generating the implicature “I will not give you the name of the place”. In short, *ela* in this context introduces the reason why the presumed request will not be granted. Clearly then, as outlined in the relevant syllogism, *ela* distinctly evokes propositional content to which it “reacts”:

P1: Interlocutor 1 has made reference to a place she’s been (utterance-based).
P2: When people refer to places they know, they typically provide their names (culture-based).
P3: Interlocutor 1 has not provided the name of the place (utterance-based).
P4: Interlocutor 2 has asked for the name of the place (*ela*-based).
P5: Providing names of places, especially on the internet, is typically taken to constitute advertising (culture-based).
P6: Interlocutor 1 explicitly says that she loathes advertising (utterance-based).

Implicated conclusion: Interlocutor 1 will not provide the name of the place.
In one variety, the *ela*-introduced utterance consists of *ela* and possibly a vocative form, but nothing else, i.e. there is no independent clause following *ela* and thus no additional context which supports the challenge interpretation. We give an example in (18):

(18) – δen ksero ti θesis exi ala vareθika tus knites me not know-I what views has but be-sick-I the knites with 
    ti mizerja tus ke ta entexna tus. δen ksero an the misery their and the arty their. not know if 
    i ali ine kaliteri pantos ine pjo-liji the others are better but are fewer.

‘I don’t know his views exactly but I’m sick of the communist (party) youth, their misery and their arty music. I don’t know if the others are better, but they are fewer.’

– *bravo* peδi mu. ke is anotera congratulations child my. and to higher! ‘Congratulations, my son! I’m so proud of you!’

– *ela* re mana ...

  come-part. re mother ...

‘Come on (*ela*) re mum!’

– *pos milas etsi? pu ise? se poria pali?* how talk-you so? where are-you? at march again?

‘How dare you talk to me like that? Where are you? In a demonstration again?’

(GkWaC 1067)

The monolexemic exclamative challenge (by the youngster) is directed toward his mother’s ironic exclamative that precedes. Crucially, the existence of such examples seems to suggest that the meaning of challenge is lexicalized in *ela*, since the interpretation here is unambiguously the challenging of the preceding speech act (as opposed, for example, simple acknowledgment of the addressee’s utterance along the lines of “Got you” or “I heard you”). In turn, this raises the possibility that *ela* is *lexically* polysemous (we take this point up in section 5).

Table 1 summarizes the *ela* features we discussed in this section.

Two slots in Table 1 should be clarified further; first, the term “polite” is used here (and in all Tables in the following sections) to refer to second-order politeness, or Politeness2, as a “theoretical construct, a term within a theory of social behaviour and language usage” (Watts et al. 2005: 3), which encompasses “the
entire range of behaviours and linguistic forms reflecting and/or affecting people’s standing in relation to one another” (Terkourafi 2012: 619). In this respect, Politeness2 covers the use of all forms that are somehow marked for or related to interpersonal relations, as opposed to being neutral, and its inclusion in the constructional specifications is meant to reflect the fact that the use of the ela-based challenging patterns is necessarily tied to the social substratum of the conversation. Therefore, it also covers an example like (18), which is not about saving face, but reflects a strictly speaking “impolite” behavior, as evidenced by the mother’s reply to the ela turn. Secondly, falling tone as the value of the intonation attribute was ascertained on the basis of the pronunciation of the two informants we used for the intonation study described in section 4, and it refers to the fall between the starting $f_0$ value of the ela word and the ending $f_0$ value of the word that immediately follows ela (i.e. tora, more, pu, or any word in the case of simple ela). Four of the five patterns we discuss are in fact associated with a falling tone, consistent with the “exclamatory fall” usually linked with the exclamative function in European languages (Wells 2006: 59–61). The necessity of having prosodic specifications for conversational constructions such as those we analyze here is further discussed in section 4.

### 3.2 The ela tora construction

In the ela tora combination, ela departs from the cross-pattern valid generalization to the effect that as an expression of exclamative challenge it behaves

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**Table 1: The simple ela construction**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Text type</th>
<th>Dialogic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Pragmatics</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conversational Structure</td>
<td>Re-active, turn-initial</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interactional Style</td>
<td>Polite</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Register</td>
<td>Informal/familiar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speech act force of turn, (ela turn)</td>
<td>Challenging of preceding speech act</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Morpho-syntax</strong></td>
<td>a. Particle + (vocative) + independent clause</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>b. Particle + vocative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>c. Particle + o</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Intonation</strong></td>
<td>Fall</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Lexis</strong></td>
<td>/ela/</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
morpho-syntactically like a particle rather than a verb. When followed by the word *tora* ‘now’, *ela* may appear in the second person plural form, either in true plural contexts (19) or as the plural of politeness (20)\textsuperscript{12}:

\begin{itemize}
\item (19) – *oxi* δὲν ixe kunjes sto δασος, *ala* I dikja sas δὲν
\item no not had swings in-the wood, but the own your not
\item διαμαρτιριθικε (δὲν exete δὶ pjo kalovolo)
\item complained-she (not have-you seen more obliging
\item kakomaθιμενo!)
\item spoilt!)
\item ‘No, there were no swings in the wood, but your friend did not complain
\item (you have never met such an obliging brat!’)
\item
\item \textbf{- elate} \quad \textbf{tora}, \quad \textbf{min} griniazete,
\item \textbf{I epomeni}
\item \textbf{come-2}\textsuperscript{nd} pl.Imp. \textbf{now}, \textbf{not} complain-2\textsuperscript{nd} pl. Imp., \textbf{the} next
\item \textbf{eksormisi stin peδiki-xara ine konta!}
\item \textbf{outing to-the playground is near!}
\item ‘\textbf{Come now} (elate tora), don’t complain, our next outing to the play-
\item \textbf{ground is approaching!’}
\end{itemize}

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\hspace{1em} \text{As pointed out by a reviewer, this may raise questions as to the particle status of *ela* that
\item we have claimed for all the challenging-exclamative uses. However, it is clear that the 2\textsuperscript{nd} person
\item plural form is restricted to the combination with *tora* and it is also very rare in the corpus, pointing
\item to a vestige of verbal use. Without denying that in this context *ela* may still retain (morpho-
\item logically) verb status, it should be also clear that function- and syntax-wise it is fully analogous
\item to all other *ela* (non-conjugated) challenging-exclamative uses. It should be also noted that
\item even in the plural politeness form, the use of *ela tora* evokes an informal context and serves to
\item diminish the social distance between speaker and addressee.}
– elate tora. ynorizete poli kala oti ime
  come-pl.part. now. know-you-p. very well that am
  anθropos sas mexri to meδuli.
  man Your to the marrow.
  ‘Oh, come now (elate tora). You know only too well that I’m yours to the
  very bone.’

– papse epitelus na mu milas se afto ton
  Stop-2nd s. Imp. at-long-last to me talk-you in this the
  emetiko pliθintiko!
  hateful plural!
  ‘At long last! Stop addressing me in this hateful plural.’
  (GkWaC 93954)

Formally, therefore, an ela/elate tora exclamative is distinguished from an ela/
elate tora (motion or hortative) imperative only by intonation (see section 4). In
terms of pragmatic force, however, the former challenges a preceding utterance
(as in the examples above) while the latter is clearly directive and (possibly) mo­
tional. The existence of a distinct ela tora pattern in the family of exclamatives is
supported by further specialized pragmatics associated with this particular com­
bination; in particular, the occurrence of ela tora appears to correlate strongly
with the speech act force of the preceding utterance, which in the majority of ex­
amples is typically a complaint or accusation, or anything that can in context be
construed as such. This is true of examples (19)–(20) above, and from the corpus
search it emerges as a robust priming factor; out of 50 ela tora sample examples,
42 were unambiguously of this type, the speaker of the ela tora utterance chal­
lenging or rejecting the “right” of complaining by the addressee. In example (19),
this is explicitly stated in the segment following elate tora (cf. min griniæzete ‘do
not complain’), and this is the interpretation in all other examples as well. As all
exclamative ela’s, ela tora conventionally evokes a preceding utterance; addition­
ally, however, it sets up a conventional expectation to the effect that the preced­
ing utterance be a complaint. In support, consider also example (21) which pro­
vides straightforward evidence for the conventionalized pragmatics at hand:

(21) – tosa xronja meyalosan me ti mana tus, enas
  so-many years grew-up-they with the mother their, a
  θeos kseri ti tus exi pi ji afton. Θa
  god knows what them has said for him. will
  piste√√un oti o aryíris ine kanena teras me kerata
  believe-they that the Arγiris is some monster with horns.
‘They’ve been with their mother for such a long time, God knows what she’s told them about him. They probably believe that Argyris is a monster with horns.’

– kerata?
  horns?
  ‘Horns?’

– ela tora ki esi … mu ksefje …
  come-part. now and you … me slipped-it …
  ‘Oh, come now (ela tora), it slipped my tongue …’

(GkWaC 92855)

Here, the one-word utterance preceding the ela tora turn (kerata? ‘horns?’) is in principle amenable to several interpretations (e.g., the interlocutor may not have heard the word and repeats it for confirmation, or questions its meaning or appropriateness). Yet, the speaker of the ela tora turn unambiguously interprets it as a complaint to which he apologizes.

Given the conventional association of ela tora with a preceding complaint and the resulting interpretation of “stop it/cut it”, tora ‘now’ may be argued to make a predictable semantic contribution, meaning “immediately, right now”. This analysis clearly presupposes the existence of an individual constructional pattern, with conventional semantic-pragmatic import, in which the lexical item tora may be seen as carrying one of its standard meanings; that this is constructionally-restricted compositionality is evidenced by the impossibility of replacing tora by any of its synonyms or paraphrases (amesos ‘immediately’, afti ti stijmi ‘this minute’) while maintaining the challenging/rejecting interpretation. Tora can thus be said to retain its basic deictic semantics but the constructional context requires that this semantics now modifies a constructionally-derived interpretation.

Table 2 summarizes the basic features of ela tora.

3.3 The ela more construction

The particle more is defined by Babiniotis (2002) as an exclamation typically preceding a vocative, adding emphasis (e.g. afiste me more pedja na kano ti dulia mu ‘You guys, just let me do my job’), or as generally expressing protest, complaint, wondering (more ti mas les! ‘You don’t say!’). It might seem reasonable then to suggest that in combination with dialogic ela it predictably adds emphasis, enhancing the expression of challenge. Corpus research, however, clearly supports
a specialized pragmatic function for *ela more*, that we may label “dismissive” pragmatics; *ela more* construes the preceding utterance by the addressee (content or speech act-wise) as insignificant or unimportant.

(22) – *tis leo to sima δen ine efkoli ipoθesi θeli her tell-I the trade-mark not is easy task needs liji δulja.
little work
‘I tell her the trade-mark is not an easy task, it needs work.’

– *ela more* avrio θa to exis etimo.
*ela*-part. *more* tomorrow will it have-you ready.
‘Oh, come on/don’t fuss (*ela more*), you’ll have it ready by tomorrow.’

(GkWaC 55052)

Since the preceding utterance can perform a variety of speech acts (statement, complaint, accusation, etc.) a generalization in terms of the preceding context is not readily available. However, evidence for the *ela more* specialization comes from at least two other features of the linguistic context: the first is the semantics of words in the preceding or following context, which conventionally express the “no big deal/not important/downplay” concept as part of their lexical meaning, e.g. (23)–(24), hence priming the occurrence of *ela more*. The second is the possibility to nominalize *ela more* (by means of a preceding article) and
use it as an expression that can be glossed as “who cares/gives a damn”, as in (25)–(26):

(23) *min to pernis elafra tu stil “ela more, not it take-you lightly the style “come-part. more, peδiko ine”. Θα katalavis poli perisotero jiasi i for-children is”. will understand-you much more why the xaraktires feronte opos feronte o enas ston alon. characters behave-they as behave-they the one to-the other. ‘Don't take it lightly, like “come on, it's only for children”. You will understand much better why the characters treat each other the way they do.’*  

(GkWaC 29529)

(24) *na apaksiononte oli ke kirios na enisxiete i to be-scorned everyone and mainly to be-supported the apopsi tu “ela more, stin elaδa δen jinete view the “come-part. more, in-the Greece not happens pote tipota …”! ever anything …”! ‘to scorn everybody and support the view “oh come on, nothing can ever be done in Greece …”!’*  

(HNC 3053)

(25) *vevea, pantu ke panta, poso malon se katastasis of-course, everywhere and always, much more in situations krisis to “ela more” iperisxii. ke δistixos crisis the “come-part. more” wins-over. and unfortunately plironete. is-paid-for. ‘Of course it’s always the case, everywhere, much more so in times of crisis, that the “it's no big deal” can be heard all too often. Unfortunately, we regret it.’*  

(GkWaC 61417)

(26) *to kinima tu “ela more” the movement the “come-part. more” ‘The “no big deal” movement.’ (title of an article posted by a well-known Greek journalist on May 14, 2013)*
preceding context. The correlation between \textit{ela more} and such contexts, amounting to a clear semantic prosody, is extremely high (45 out of 50 random examples are of this type), which points to a high degree of conventionalization for the dismissive challenge and accounts for the use of the expression as a noun in examples like (25)–(26), where the “who cares/gives a damn” interpretation is the only possible one even without supporting context.

The “lexicalization” of \textit{ela more} as a collocation associated with a distinct pragmatic function is further supported by the scarcity of hortative (non-challenging) examples, where \textit{more} would be simply construed as emphasizing or strengthening hortative \textit{ela}. Out of 210 (total) \textit{ela more} hits in the GkWaC, only 2 were of the non-challenging variety. Further, the high entrenchment of \textit{ela more} is evidenced by cases where the expression occurs with other \textit{ela}-based turn openers, such as \textit{ela pu} (3.5) or \textit{ela tora} (3.2). Although such examples are very few, they are characterized by fixed word-order (\textit{ela more tora} but not *\textit{ela tora more}\textsuperscript{13}, \textit{ela more pu} but not *\textit{ela pu more}), and the resulting interpretation is always that of dismissive challenge associated with \textit{ela more}, e.g., (27). We interpret this as evidence to the effect that the \textit{ela more} construction superimposes its requirements on the other sub-patterns cancelling out or back-grounding their associated meanings.

\begin{verbatim}
(27) otan persi pirame to kipelo, i yavri leyane
when last-year won-we the cup, the yavri said-they
“\textit{ela more tora} to kipelaki?” to iðjio kipelo
“\textit{come-part. more now} the cup-dimin.?” the same cup
panijirizan fetos san treli
celebrated-they this-year like crazy.
‘When we won the cup last year, our opponents said “\textbf{come on/no big deal (ela more) now}, this little cup?”’. It is the same cup they celebrated like crazy this year,…’
\end{verbatim}

(GkWaC 22285)

Table 3 summarizes the features of the \textit{ela more} pattern.

\textsuperscript{13} There is only one example in the GkWaC featuring \textit{ela tora more}. Here as well the interpretation is that associated with \textit{ela more} (not \textit{ela tora}).
3.4 The ela (mu) de construction

This construction features ela in combination with the particle de. In Babiniotis (2002) de is defined as a particle of informal register with hortative meaning and several “emotive overtones”, which intensifies the meaning of the preceding word, typically an imperative. As an exclamative dialogic turn-opener, ela de forms a prosodic unit, clearly separated from the following segment (this is reflected consistently in the corpus by punctuation marks, in particular exclamation marks, periods and points of omission). To the extent that the corpus texts are for the most part highly informal chat-rooms and blogs reflecting oral use, it stands to reason that the systematic occurrence of punctuation reflects speakers’ mental production of a prosodically independent exclamation.

In some of the examples, the genitive singular form of the first person personal pronoun (“weak”/clitic form) mu appears between ela and de, e.g., (28):

(28) – kapjos prepi na apoðíksi pos an δεν valis ton iljo, someone has to prove-he that if not put-you the sun, ton aera, to nero ke ti ji isotimus sineterus, θα the air, the water and the earth equal partners, will spasume ta mutra mas. Πjos θα to apoðíksi afto break-we the face our. Who will it prove-he this mathimatika? mathematically?
‘Someone’s got to prove that if the Sun, the Air, the Water and the Earth are not equal partners, we’re going to have a hard time. Who can prove that mathematically?’

– ela mu de pjos? i amerikaniki ikonomia
ela-part. me de who? The American economy
exi-paθi-plaka me ti nea katastasi.
is-helpless with the new state-of-affairs.

‘Who indeed (ela de)? The American economy is helpless in the current state of affairs.’

(GkWaC 93212)

The occurrence of this mu form of the pronoun is interesting in two respects. First, it reflects a common pattern in the use of literal, motional ela, e.g., (29), where mu, explicitly and redundantly, denotes the goal of motion, i.e., the speaker:

(29) ela mu δo na ksaploθis ke mi mu come-2nd sg.Imp. me here to lie-down-you and not me fernis ala.
bring-you other-things.

‘Come to me here and lie down, and don’t bring me anything more.’

(GkWaC 75247)

In this sense, it may be said to provide evidence for the semantic motivation (as outlined in section 2.3) for the development of challenging dialogic ela as urging the interlocutor to “come” to the “location” (view) of the speaker. It is also the only case among the patterns discussed where the anchoring to the speaker, characteristic of exclamations (cf. Michaelis and Lambrecht 1996), becomes explicit through the use of the pronoun (*ela mu, *ela mu pu, *ela mu tora, *ela mu more do not occur with the meaning of challenge). This in turn may not be unrelated to the fact that ela de is a pattern which does not express challenge directly and in which the speaker essentially agrees with the interlocutor (see the discussion below).

This special semantic-pragmatic function of ela (mu) de – we may dub it “challenge by proxy” – qualifies it as a separate construction, since the hortative/intensifying function of de as a particle does not predict the distribution and use of ela (mu) de. As in the case of the previous patterns, there emerge from the corpus strong correlations between ela de and very specific conditions in the preceding context supporting a special pragmatic function. In 38 (of 50) examples, the preceding utterance is a question, which the speaker of the ela (mu) de turn
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echoes, implying “good question!” or “well put” (the echoing, at least in our rendering of the examples, is also prosodic since the ela (mu) de utterance is characterized by the contour of the preceding question and varies according to the type of question and its associated prosody). The challenge in this case (hence the link with the overarching function in the ela family of exclamatives) is thus performed by the interlocutor, i.e. the speaker of the preceding question, who typically uses it to challenge an established or contextually-available “truth”, idea or suggestion. This accounts for the fact that many of these questions, echoed by the speaker of the ela de turn, are rhetorical. Consider (28) above, also (30) here:

(30) – klisto trietes simvoleo tu ekane o panmejistos
Closed 3-year contract him made-he the gran
psaras ton vorion balason. Pu tha vri o fisherman the north seas. Where will find-he the
yalos kalitera apo ton olimpiako???
French better than the Olympiakos???
‘He was offered a full-proof three year contract by the grand fisherman of
the North Seas. What could be better for the Frenchman than Olympiakos?’

– ela de ... mia xara tin pernane meriki ston
come-part. de ... a fun it have-they some in-the
olimpiako ... kafenio kanoniko ...
Olympiakos ... coffee-house regular ...
‘What indeed (ela de)? They are having great fun in Olympiakos, a regular coffee house it is.’

(GkWaC 85414)

Examples (28) and (30) are typical in containing rhetorical questions which the speaker of the ela de turns echoes. In (30) in particular, the question has the conventional form of a rhetorical, the only possible answer (should one be given) would be a negative one (The Frenchman won’t find anywhere better than Olympiakos [Greek football team]). The echoing of the question is also explicit in (28) in which the speaker of the ela mu de turn repeats the wh- word and in which the previous speaker, through his questions, challenges the wisdom of unrestrained development.

In conclusion, it should be noted that, as is also the case for ela more (3.3), ela (mu) de can only have challenging/dialogic functions; motional and hortative meanings are not found in the corpus, again pointing to a collocational, unit-like status for ela (mu) de.

Table 4 summarizes the features of the ela (mu) de pattern discussed above.
Table 4: The ela (mu) de construction

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<tr>
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<th>Text type</th>
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<td>Interactional Style</td>
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<tr>
<td>Speech act force of turn₁</td>
<td>Increduous question, rhetorical question, request for information</td>
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<td>Speech act force of turn₂ (ela turn)</td>
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<td><strong>Morpho-Syntax</strong></td>
<td>Sentence type of turn₁</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>turn₂ (ela turn)</td>
<td>a. Particle + independent clause</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>b. Particle + ᴜ</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Intonation</strong></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Lexis</strong></td>
<td>/ela (mu) de/</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3.5 The ela pu construction: Stretching the blueprint

The ela pu pattern departs from all other patterns in two ways, hence we may think of it as stretching the blueprint (in the sense of Fried and Östman 2004) of the ela-based constructions. It is the only pattern that occurs in monologic (narrative) texts (rather than introducing dialogue turns) and the only pattern in which ela and the following word (pu) cannot stand on their own as an independent exclamation\textsuperscript{14}, e.g., (31):

(31) \(θα\) \(bοrusa\) \(tοte\) \(nα\) \(jino\) \(pλuσios\) \(κe\) \(nα\) \(exo\) will could-I then to become-I rich and to have-I 
\(tελiοσι\) \(jια\) \(pαndα.\) \(Ela\) \(pυ\) \(δεν\) \(iνe\) \(aftο\) \(pυ\) \(mε\) finished for ever. \(cοmε\)-part. \(tħat\) not is this that me 
\(aπαξολι.\) \(Iμε\) \(ksetrelαmenos\) \(mε\) \(aftο\) \(pυ\) \(κανο\) \(κe\) \(δεν\) bothers. Am-I crazy with this that do-I and not 
\(sκoπευo\) \(nα\) \(αlakσo.\) plan-I to change-I.

\textsuperscript{14} This is because \(pυ\) is a grammatical morpheme that introduces different kinds of clauses (see discussion that follows) and can only appear with a following clause.
‘I could have become rich and stop worrying about everything. Despite of what you may think (ela pu) this is not what’s bothering me. I’m crazy about what I do and have no intention of changing it.’

(GkWaC 40889)

The primary function of pu in Modern Greek is to introduce dependent clauses, in particular complement clauses (complements of restricted classes of predicates), relative clauses, and adverbial clauses of various types (temporal, causal, contrastive/concessive) (cf. Tzartzanos 1963; Christidis 1981). For instance, after (literal) motional ela, pu can introduce an adverbial clause expressing cause, as in (32):

(32) ela kamari mu, mexri to konaki tis arxontisas.
Come-2nd s. Imp. joy my, to the house the lady’s.
Jia ela pu se θelume!
Just come-2nd sg. Imp. because you want-we!
‘Come, my joy, to the lady’s house. Come here because (pu) we want you.’

(GkWaC 12982)

So, a motional and a challenging ela pu utterance are distinguished formally only by intonation (see section 4). However, in the challenging use pu cannot be plausibly said to introduce an adverbial clause of cause modifying ela; rather, the ela pu combination as a whole introduces an independent clause expressing some sort of contrast with the preceding context (see below). It should be noted however that this more peripheral use of pu is not unique and appears to be related to other uses which are motivated by the factive semantics generally recognized for all the different types of pu clauses (Christidis 1986; Nicholas 1999; Nikiforidou 2006). In such contexts, where pu appears after particles or verbs that do not normally take a sentential complement, the pu clause functions pretty much as an independent clause with given content (e.g. ande (= hortative particle) pu su leo ‘go, I’m telling you’, trexa pu viazese ‘run, you’re in a hurry’, mila pu su leo ‘talk, I’m telling you’, etc.).\(^\text{15}\) In this respect, the segment following ela, although syntactically marked as a dependent clause, functions as an independent one, thus approximating the typical syntactic context in all other ela exclamatives.

In examples like (31), pu introduces an expected conclusion or inference from the preceding context, which is disputed or cancelled by the speaker.

\(^\text{15}\) As noted early on by Christidis (1982), even in clear complementation contexts, pu clauses retain a semi-independent status that renders them akin to nominal objects.
The challenging of the ‘normal course of events’ or the default expectations by the ela pu construction correlates with the frequent co-occurrence of contrastive conjunctions such as omos ‘but, however’, as in (33), or ala ‘but’, em, am, etc., which conventionally mark the counter to expectation development of events.

(33) me polus filus apo ton xoro ton blogs simfonume
with many friends from the space the blogs agree-we
pos i apoxi ke to lefko ine katastrofika.
that the abstaining and the white is catastrophic.
Ela omos pu oso plisiazi i mera,
come-part. but that as-much-as approaches the day
toso pjo poli ben thelo na pao na psifiso
so-much more not want-I to go-I to vote-I
‘With several friends from blogs we agree that abstaining or casting a white vote is catastrophic. And yet (ela omos pu), the closer the day comes, the more I don’t want to vote.’

(GkWaC 7804)

But what really sets the ela pu pattern apart from the others is that the challenge does not appear in a dialogic turn (by another speaker) but in a narrative sequence (by the same speaker); this in turn explains the total absence of vocatives, typical in other ela-based patterns. Yet, the predominant dialogic function of the ela exclamative constructions is imposed on the ela pu pattern as well; indeed, the special pragmatic force of an ela pu utterance is to frame the challenge in anticipation of an addressee in the larger context; in the case of blogs, webpages, and in general public interactional contexts, this is of course factually true, and although the addressee is generally not available in the immediately preceding turn, the speaker evokes his/her expected statement, only to challenge or reject it. But even in narratives embedded in non-interactional contexts (e.g. articles, book monologues, etc.) the “dialogic” pragmatics is conventionally evoked. This is independently supported by the attested switch to 2nd person discourse and quotes attributed to the character after the ela pu clause (in otherwise third person narratives) as in (34), or the occurrence of direct questions (to the evoked addressee) following the ela pu clause, as in (35):

(34) i ipothesi an I Sultana Gatsiuði akoluthuse to
the case whether the Sultana Gatsiuði followed-she the
siziyo tis, to mikro jo, tus sigenis ke tus filus
husband her, the young son, the relatives and the friends
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Table 5 summarizes the features of the ela pu challenging pattern.

4 Evidence from intonation

Prominent in the formal makeup of a dialogic construction is prosody. Pitch range variation has been found to express categorical differences in meaning cross-linguistically (Ladd 1994, 2008; Chen 2003; Vanrell 2006; Borràs- Comes et al.)
Both the height of the initial $f_0$ and the $f_0$ range have been found to convey distinct intonational contrast in Italian (Savino and Grice 2011), Spanish (Face 2011) and Catalan (Borràs-Comes et al. 2014). On the basis of such results in other languages, we have thus investigated various parameters of $f_0$ range variation as they relate to prosodic features of the $ela$ patterns.

In this section in particular, we seek to confirm the intuition that the challenging uses differ from the literal, hortative, and telephone-call ones also prosodically in terms of $f_0$ variation. To this effect we aimed to identify systematic differences in the pronunciation of $ela$ (3.1), $ela tora$ (3.2) and $ela pu$ (3.5), which are the three patterns that exhibit both challenging and non-challenging uses. $Ela more$ (3.3) and $ela de$ (3.4) were not included in the contrastive analysis since, as noted in the corresponding sections, they only have the challenging function. Although our focus was on the overarching features in all three challenging patterns and their contrast with the non-challenging ones, there emerged also features that appear to differentiate systematically one particular challenging pattern from the others; although not part of this work, this raises the possibility of pattern-specific contours and merits further investigation.

### 4.1 Methodology

In order to experimentally test the intonation effect we recorded two 25 year old female speakers (A & I) using a noise reduction microphone in a quiet room. Each speaker read corpus-derived (with allowed context) non-challenging (= control) and challenging (= experimental) $ela$, $ela tora$ and $ela pu$ samples (30 of each type, 180 total). Before recording, each speaker was given time to familiarize with
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the content of the text and was instructed to read each text with a natural, unmarked style. All texts were printed out on separate sheets and were shuffled before handed to the speakers. All speech samples were recorded using 22 KHz sampling rate and 16 bit resolution. We further used 70 Hz high-pass filter in order to eliminate background noise. All recordings were analyzed using Praat software (v. 5.3.42).

We measured the starting and ending $f_0$ values of the *ela* word and the starting and the ending $f_0$ values of the words that immediately follow *ela* (i.e. *tora*, *pu*, or *other* (*other* corresponds to the simple *ela* construction in which *ela* can be followed by just any word). In addition we measured the $f_0$ range of *ela* and the following words as the absolute difference between the starting and ending $f_0$ of their initial and ending $f_0$. Finally, we measured the $f_0$ rate of change per millisecond calculated as absolute value of the difference of the $f_0$ start and the $f_0$ ending of the word divided by the word’s duration measured in milliseconds.

For the purposes of the analysis, we fitted linear mixed models with dependent variables the initial and ending $f_0$ measurements and the respective range of *ela* and the following words and the $f_0$ change rate of *ela* and the following words.

Both absolute pitch height and pitch rate of change have been previously used as markers of various pragmatic functions and we systematically measured them in all the utterances of the corpus. As fixed factors, we used the type of the utterance (control or experimental) and the word following *ela* (effectively distinguishing the three patterns *ela* (= *other*), *ela tora*, *ela pu*). Since our two female speakers exhibited considerable variation in $f_0$ range, we used Speaker as a random effect variable in order to assume a different “baseline” pitch value for each subject. In this way we can model these individual differences by assuming different random intercepts for each speaker.

In order to attain $p$-values, we used Likelihood Ratio Tests between an intercept-only model, i.e. a model where we estimate just the mean of the dependent variable and many augmented models containing our fixed factor in various

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16 Linear Mixed Models were performed using lme4 package of the R statistical language (Bates et al. 2013).

17 Steep pitch change rate has been associated previously to positive predisposition to new information (Freese and Maynard 1998: 198).

18 For example, the mean $f_0$ range of the *ela* word for Speaker A was 65 Hz and for Speaker I 40 Hz respectively. An independent samples t-test was performed to evaluate the above mentioned mean differences and was found to be statistically significant ($t = 6.9, p < 0.0001$).

19 The procedure was performed using a customized R function which iteratively fits (via maximum likelihood instead of restricted ML) models reduced by each fixed effect and compares them to the full model, yielding a vector of p-values based on $\chi^2(1)$. 
combinations. In each case, we conclude that a fixed effect is significant if the
difference between the likelihood of these two models is significant. More specifi-
cally the models which contrasted with the intercept-only model are:
1. A fixed effect model using the “Type of Utterance”
2. A fixed effect model using the “Word following ela”
3. An interaction model between “Type of Utterance” and “Word following ela”.

4.2 Results

First, significant results concern the steepness of the fall of the intonation curve
of the ela word which crucially varies according to whether the utterance belongs
to the control or the experimental group, and also according to the particular
pattern (i.e. according to the word that follows ela). As shown in Figure 1, the
“Utterance type” was found to be statistically significant (χ²(1) = 20.5, p < 0.0001)
affecting the $f_0$ change rate of the pronunciation of ela. More specifically, experi-
mental (challenging) utterances exhibited significant higher $f_0$ change rates of ela
(76.1 Hz/sec ± 16.6 standard errors) compared to the control utterances, implying
a much steeper $f_0$ movement in the pronunciation of all three ela, ela tora and ela
pu in their challenging function. Interaction of the fixed factors was also found
statistically significant (χ²(1) = 24.6, p = 0.0001).

![Fig. 1: $f_0$ change rate of ela according to the utterance type and the words that follow it.](image-url)
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We further tested whether the $f_0$ range of ela is associated with the “Utterance Type” and the words that follow it. Here also we had a statistically significant effect of the variable “Utterance Type” which affected the $f_0$ range of ela ($\chi^2(1) = 14.3$, $p = 0.0001$) with the experimental condition to extend it by $13.7 \pm 3.6$ (standard errors) (cf. Figure 2). It seems then that the pronunciation of ela in challenging functions covers a broader frequency spectrum than the corresponding control utterances, especially as it concerns the simple ela construction and ela tora.

Whereas the initial $f_0$ of ela was not affected significantly in the challenging uses (compared to the non-challenging ones), speakers used lower $f_0$ when they finish pronouncing ela. Thus, “Utterance Type” affected the final $f_0$ of ela ($\chi^2(1) = 9.9$, $p = 0.0016$) with the experimental condition to lower it by $12 \pm 3.8$ standard errors (cf. Figure 3).

We further detected an interaction effect between the ending $f_0$ of ela when it is followed by tora and at the same time the utterance belongs to the experimental condition ($t = -2.1$, $p = 0.036$). More specifically, a $f_0$ drop of $19.5 \pm 9.3$ (standard errors) was observed compared to our reference category (“other”). This suggests that the ela tora challenging pattern, more than the other two, is characterized by a bigger pitch drop, the exclamatory fall being significantly more pronounced.

The ela tora pattern is further differentiated from the other two in that the $f_0$ change rate of the tora word is significantly lower than our reference category “other”, i.e., words that follow ela in the simple ela pattern ($-55 \text{ Hz/sec} \pm 20.5$...
standard errors), meaning that our speakers pronounced it with slower $f_0$ transition speed (see Figure 1 for the change rate, “steepness” results on the pronunciation of the ela word). Overall, this confirms our intuition that ela tora is associated with a more distinctive intonation than the other challenging patterns.

Summarizing, we found that the challenging contexts affect both the final $f_0$ of the ela word and its $f_0$ range. In addition to their effect on absolute $f_0$ values, the challenging uses appear to accelerate the change rate (or velocity) of $f_0$ during the pronunciation of the ela word. We have thus shown that parameters in pitch variation are significant for Greek as well, in particular as it concerns the difference between challenging and non-challenging uses, and established that challenging ela formally differs from the non-challenging one in terms of prosody.

5 Conclusions

In recent work, Du Bois (2014) argues for the need to recognize structural and other dependencies across the utterances of multiple conversational participants, which jointly constitute the syntax of a given dialogic exchange; such multi-sentential constructions may shape “not only the immediate situated meaning but the ongoing learning of language and, ultimately, the emerging structure of language itself” (Du Bois 2014; cf. also Brône and Zima 2014). The data we discussed here in a sense constitute a case of crystalized dialogic syntax,
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representing fully conventional grammatical patterns characterized by syntactic, semantic and pragmatic dependencies across dialogic turns.

Our initial motivation for the present work was native speakers’ intuition that the patterns of dialogic challenge we identified are not free variants. While acknowledging that once we venture into supra-sentential (dialogic or other) patterns variation is bound to increase, we nevertheless attempted to show that at least some of the variation inherent in discourse can be captured in the form of regular sub-patterns. The analysis has necessarily extended to the preceding context as well, since particular constructions were shown to impose particular requirements (or constraints) on the speech act force and/or the sentence type of the utterance preceding that introduced by the ela expression. Such specifications are no less regular or predictable, no less conventional or less part of constructional makeup, than pragmatic or textual specifications associated with sentence-level constructions.

The realization that discourse, and dialogue in particular, are amenable to this kind of regularity has presumably motivated all the work cited in the Introduction, and the work we reported here also demonstrated that constructional specifications can and should extend to beyond the sentence. A constructional framework, which accommodates partially productive patterns and constellations of formal (including prosodic) and semantic-pragmatic features, is precisely the kind of framework (probably the only kind) that can extend naturally from sentence-level constructions to discourse units with conventional makeup (see also Östman 2005). While the majority of constructionally-oriented work has focused on sentence grammar, the idea that the right kind of grammatical framework may be also appropriate for discourse was there in seminal work; As noted by Fillmore (1981: 150–51), “I’m inclined to think that judgments of grammaticality and judgments of sequiturity are intuitively different sorts of things, but I cannot believe this difference imposes a boundary between different kinds of linguistic units.”

Ela can carry challenging meaning by itself, without the support of any following context. This in turn suggests that like the literal (motion), the hortative, and the telephone-call/acknowledging senses, challenge is yet another meaning of lexically polysemous ela. Stopping here, however, seriously underestimates the complexity of the factors influencing interpretation, not least the dialogic, turn-initial context and prosody. Other ela-based expressions, as we showed, are further sensitive to pragmatic factors in the preceding context or to text type. It is in such multi-faceted, multi-layered gestalts (minimally represented in the corresponding Tables), that the relevant “meanings” emerge; hence our claim is that a lexical polysemy (“semantic niches”) approach by itself does not do justice to the full array of relevant parameters.
In a functional space we may term “dialogic challenge” each of the *ela*-based patterns expresses a specialized kind of challenge, e.g., challenge of a preceding complaint, dismissive challenge, challenge by proxy, etc. This space is also served by other exclamative items, e.g., *ande* or *siya* (cf. 2.3), and possibly other lexical or grammatical expressions, some of which may partially overlap prosodically and pragmatically with the *ela* patterns we discussed here. This in turn highlights further the need for an approach that includes detailed pragmatic, prosodic, textual etc. specifications, since by itself semantic labeling may not be enough to distinguish one pattern from the other.

The commonalities found in the *ela* patterns can be captured in the form of a generalized *ela* exclamative/challenging construction including the following features:

**Table 6: The generalized *ela* construction**

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<th>Conversational Structure</th>
<th>Re-active</th>
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<tr>
<td>Register</td>
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<tr>
<td>Speech act force of <em>ela</em> utterance</td>
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<td>Challenge</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Morpho-syntax</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Intonation</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Lexis</strong></td>
<td><em>/ela .../</em></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

In this template, the text-type is not specified so as to allow for the monologic *ela pu* construction, which however is still interpreted as reacting to a previous (evoked) utterance. The systematic correlation of such an interpretation with the *ela pu* pattern is in fact a clear argument for the existence (and cognitive reality) of the generalized *ela* construction and its conventionally-imposed dialogic/reactive import. Similarly, intonation is specified generally as non-declarative so as to include the interrogative prosody associated with *ela de* (3.4). The speech act force is ‘challenge’, covering the different subtypes discussed in the previous sections, and the lexis necessarily includes *ela* (possibly along with other elements). Obviously, such a representation is not meant as any kind of formalization. However, like all the other Tables in the preceding sections, it serves to highlight the multiplicity of parameters giving rise to a particular interpretation. These features of the generalized construction are inherited (Kay and Fillmore 1999; Fried and Östman 2004) by the more specific patterns, which are further characterized by idiosyncratic properties.
In the other direction, the *ela* exclamative/challenging construction is naturally linked to other exclamative constructions and possibly to a generalized Greek exclamative; such links are not in our present scope. Still, both the postulation of a generalized *ela* construction and its presumed links with exclamatives in general bring forward one of the fundamental tenets of constructional approaches, namely the cline between the general and the arbitrary, the motivated and the idiosyncratic. Our preoccupation with the intonation properties of the *ela* exclamatives – admittedly at an initial stage – can be embedded in the same context: identifying some of the prosodic cues that prime the challenging interpretation at least offers testable hypotheses as to its (prosodic) relationship with other (exclamative or not) constructions in the language. At the same time, the systematic prosodic differentiation of the *ela* exclamatives from literal/hortative *ela*, *ela tora*, *ela pu* (as outlined in 4) highlights the importance of prosodic cues among constructional specifications, most notably in conversational data (see also Terkourafi 2010).

**Acknowledgments:** We are grateful to Eleni Antonopoulou for help with the intonation analysis. We would also like to thank the reviewers for insightful comments. This work was partly supported by research grant 70/4/11099 of the University of Athens Special Research Account.

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What's in a dialogic construction?


