

FRAMES FOR POLITENESS: A CASE STUDY

Marina Terkourafi

1. Introduction

In this paper,¹ I shall present the results of a pilot-study investigating the use of non-literal diminution as a communicative strategy in Mainland Greece and in Cyprus. Previous research² has shown the extensive use of diminutives in Standard Modern Greek to convey politeness. In these cases, rather than literal 'smallness', diminutives serve to encode the attitude of the speaker toward the referent and/or the addressee. Within the framework of Brown and Levinson's politeness theory (1987), this finding has been interpreted as an indication of the positive politeness orientation of Greek society.³ This claim, however, proves problematic when contrasted with empirical findings from Cypriot Greek. Here, non-literal diminution does not constitute a conventional means of expressing politeness - at least not to the same degree as in Mainland Greece - while the use of other politeness markers, such as the polite plural and address terms, attests to the emphasis placed by Cypriot Greeks on solidarity and in-group relations, in other words, to the positive politeness orientation of Cypriot society.

This evidence casts some doubts on the adequacy of Brown and Levinson's theory of politeness. In formulating this, they postulate the existence of a Model Person endowed with *rationality* and *face*. Rationality in this context refers to "The application of a specific mode of reasoning [...] which guarantees inferences from ends or goals to means that will satisfy those ends" (Brown & Levinson 1987: 64). Face, on the other hand, consists in a) *negative face*, understood as the basic claim to freedom of action and freedom from imposition and b) *positive face*, or the desire that one's wants be appreciated and approved of in interaction (Brown & Levinson 1987: 62-64).⁴ Based on the notion of face, Brown

¹ The present paper was written as part of my doctoral research, which is funded by the State Scholarships Foundation in Greece. I should like to thank Professor Richard J. Watts for his helpful comments on a previous draft.

² See, for example, Triantafyllides 1963: 146-49; Babinotis 1969: 21-3; Mackridge 1985: 158; Daltas 1985: 63; Joseph & Philippaki-Warbuton 1987: 217; Sifianou 1992.

³ Sifianou (1992: 155) remarks that, rather than minimising impositions, "In Greek [...] the use of diminutives mainly serves to establish or reaffirm a solidarity framework for the interaction". She goes on to note that "the highly developed system of diminutives in Greek facilitates the expression of positive politeness" (1992: 172).

⁴ The notion of face originates in the writings of Goffman (1967, 1971), while the distinction into positive and negative face also draws on Durkheim's views on religious rites (1976 [1915]). However, as Mao (1994) points out, the authors' conceptualisation of face is narrower than Goffman's original notion, thereby failing

and Levinson introduce the concept of *Face Threatening Acts* (FTAs), acts that intrinsically threaten the speaker's or the hearer's face. When planning the performance of an FTA, the speaker is faced with a choice of five strategies, ranging from (1) bald-on-record to (5) non-performance of the FTA, passing through (2) on-record with positive redressive action, (3) on-record with negative redressive action and (4) off-record (see figure 1).

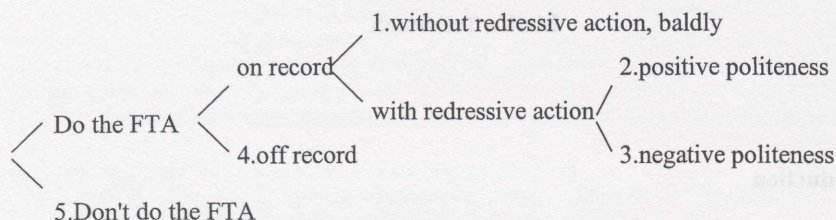


Figure 1: Strategies for doing FTAs (Brown & Levinson 1987: 69)

Each strategy intrinsically affords some pay-offs⁵, which, together with the seriousness of the FTA, will inform the speaker's final choice of strategy. Finally, the authors provide a formula for computing the seriousness or weightiness of an FTA, based on the social distance (D) between the speaker and the hearer, the relative power (P) of the hearer over the speaker, and the ranking of the imposition (R) carried by the FTA in any particular culture (see figure 2). As the weightiness of an FTA increases, a higher-numbered strategy will be selected.

$$Wx = D(S,H) + P(H,S) + Rx$$

Figure 2: Formula for computing the weightiness W of an FTA
(Brown & Levinson 1987: 76)

to account for the facts of Chinese and Japanese conversation. Throughout his article, Mao reinstates Goffman's claim that face is "located in the flow of events" and "on loan from society", based on which he suggests the theoretical construct of "relative face orientation" (1994: 471-2). This, he claims, allows for different, yet related, underlying forces to shape the interactional ideals of different communities. Such underlying forces may follow either a *centripetal* direction, in which case "face gravitates toward social recognition and hierarchical interdependence" or a *centrifugal* one, in which case "face spirals outward from individual desires [...] and sees the self as the initiating agent". Brown & Levinson's notion of face as wants covers only this latter case. And, while Mao's suggestions, which he supports with Chinese conversational data, seem to be in the right direction for any theory of politeness, if universality is to be claimed, they cannot be incorporated into Brown & Levinson's model in its present form, since both the notion of Face Threatening Acts and the suggested hierarchy of strategies are motivated by, and explained with reference to, the content the authors attribute to the two aspects of face which they predict.

⁵ Brown & Levinson's discussion of pay-offs (1987: 71-4, 83-4) centres on the speaker, a move consistent with their pragmatic concern with a Model Person mentioned earlier. It is however difficult to see how the hearer might be excluded from such a discussion, when a large part of these pay-offs are achieved through showing that the speaker has his/her interlocutor's best interests at heart. That is, they constitute pay-offs for the speaker only by benefiting the hearer first. In addition, the "possible multifunctionality of all utterances" (Turner 1996: 4), otherwise referred to as "the ambiguity of linguistic strategies" (Tannen: 1994: 23-4), brings to the forefront of any related discussion the notion of the hearer's uptake (Clark 1996: 137ff.; Goffman 1976: 263), and prompts the question whether this last one, by providing an uptake to the speaker's utterance, does not play an equally important role in the acting out of such pay-offs.

As it stands, the theory has been criticised on several counts, such as the association of degree of politeness to degree of indirectness, the placement of positive and negative politeness on a unidimensional scale of indirectness - despite the fact that they achieve redress in different ways - as well as the relative ranking of the latter higher than the former, the distinction between on-record and off-record strategies and the assessment of their relative politeness values, and the content and adequacy of the three sociological variables D, P and R, to mention but some. The evidence presented in this paper challenges still a different facet of Brown and Levinson's theory, namely the attribution of absolute politeness values (e.g. positive, negative) to linguistic strategies (e.g. 'use in-group identity markers', 'hedge' respectively). Arguing on the basis of the use of non-literal diminution in Mainland Greece and in Cyprus, it appears that the same linguistic means can, in different communities (which may well share essentially the same linguistic code), be governed by different contextual presuppositions and, as a result, correspond to different underlying needs. And while in their essay the authors recognise both functions of diminution (i.e. as an in-group identity marker and as a hedging device), its actual use in the two communities cannot be wholly subsumed under their positive and/or negative politeness strategies, thereby bringing into question both the suggested distinction between strategies as well as the viability of a move associating such overarching strategies with specific linguistic means. Moreover, it appears that no generalisation as to the politeness orientation of a society can be drawn based on a consideration of the formal means which it employs alone. Rather, the politeness 'value' of a linguistic means in any given society seems to be determined by the way it interacts with other formal means available for the expression of politeness in the society in question, and ultimately to be assessed relevant to the norms⁶ that are in operation at any one time therein,⁷ as opposed to an absolute scale of rationally derived polite import.⁸

On the other hand, an indication of the underlying ends which formal means are employed to achieve in any given community, and therefore a way of inferring their contextually defined politeness import, may well lie in looking at the functions which they perform in each case, as illustrated by their distribution in different contexts. This task, I wish to propose, is better served by an empirical approach to politeness, which seeks to achieve universality with reference to the notion of cognitive frames. By incorporating directly observable information about the whole speech situation and only subsequently associating this with particular communicative intentions on the basis of recurring regularities of usage, frames prove a useful descriptive tool in fleshing out the politeness

⁶ The term 'norm' is used here in the sense introduced by Bach & Harnish (1980: 271), where a discussion of both the 'normal' and 'normative' aspects of social norms can also be found.

⁷ Werkhofer (1992: 173-4) draws essentially the same conclusion, when he comments (based on experimental results reported in the same article) that "the subjects in [the reported] study view politeness as being relative "to some norm of behaviour which, for a particular setting" is regarded as typical in "a particular culture or language community" (Leech 1983: 84) and that, "as soon as we are willing to take such relativity into account, the scalability assumption [...] is probably quite misleading".

⁸ Cf. Werkhofer's suggested analogy of politeness to money and his subsequent analysis of it as a "symbolic medium" which is "historically constituted and reconstituted", with the result that "its functions and the values it is associated with are essentially changeable ones" (1992: 190).

'potential' of a linguistic means, while at the same time not imposing any theoretically predetermined interpretation of the facts.

2. The study

The issue under investigation is the use of non-literal diminution to express politeness in Standard Modern Greek and in Cypriot Greek. I use the terms Standard Modern Greek (SMG) to refer to the language ordinarily spoken today in the large urban centres of Mainland Greece, and Cypriot Greek (CG) to refer to the language spoken today in urban areas of the Republic of Cyprus. The latter should not be identified with the Cypriot dialect, a peripheral dialect of Greek primarily used in rural areas, as it combines elements of this with SMG. Due to its non-standard status, CG is avoided - to the degree that the speaker's ability allows it - in the presence of Mainland Greeks, on formal occasions and in written discourse. In other words, Cypriot Greeks are aware not only of the grammatical forms characteristic of SMG, but also of conventions of usage as these have developed in Mainland Greece, and have recourse to them selectively, according to the situation. Indeed, as instances of hypercorrection in the data testify, they do not always master such conventions of usage.

Data from the speech of the two communities were collected in spring 1997 and consist of (a) recordings of spontaneous speech in informal settings, (b) examples taken down in a notebook⁹, and (c) recordings of individual interviews conducted on the basis of a questionnaire.¹⁰ For the interpretation of these data and the related frames proposed in this paper, a brief reference to diminution as a grammatical phenomenon in Modern Greek is in order. One may distinguish three types of morphological/ functional diminution in Modern Greek:¹¹ derivational via suffixation, derivational via compounding, and periphrastic. Derivational diminution via suffixation is by far the most common type, relevant to both the SMG and the CG data. This consists in adding to the stem an appropriate suffix from a range of suffixes, only a sample of which are attested in the data (and consequently the frames based thereon). The stem may be a proper name, common noun, adjective or adverb. What is important to note, though, is the predominantly dialectal nature of the relevant suffixes for CG, and the different connotations carried by using one of the two types of suffixes (standard or dialectal) in this community. Derivational diminution via compounding as attested in the data (other possibilities exist) consists in compounding the adjective *psilos*, 'thin, fine', with a common noun, adjective, adverb or verb. Although equivalent forms (using different modifiers) are available in CG, these seem to be exclusively used to modify propositional content (i.e. literally). Therefore, the use of derivational diminution via compounding as a means of expressing politeness appears relevant to the SMG data alone. The same is true of periphrastic diminution, involving the

⁹ In the following sections such examples are marked as NB.

¹⁰ Although it was attempted to decrease the artificiality of the questionnaire as a means of collecting data by using this as the basis for oral interviews, the data collected in this way were found primarily useful in providing insights into speakers' intuitions regarding the forms they use and their reasons for doing so.

¹¹ Cf. Babinotitis 1969: 19.

juxtaposition of the adverb *liyo*, 'a little', to a common noun, adjective, adverb or verb. Combinations of these three types are possible, as, for example, when the stem is doubly diminutivised by means of compounding and suffixation, or when the adverb *ligo*, 'a little', appears as *ligaki*, 'a little bit', a diminutivised form (via suffixation) in its own right. Again, such combinations occurred in the SMG data alone. As regards the use that these three types are put to in the data, the first type is used both literally and emotively, while the remaining two types are typically used emotively, that is to signal non-literal diminution.

3. Main findings

The main finding of this pilot-study was that the use of non-literal diminution to convey the attitude of the speaker toward the referent and/or the addressee has been conventionalised to a larger extent in Mainland Greece than in Cyprus. This finding can be illustrated with reference to three components of the conversation: the participants involved, the setting of the conversation and the senses conveyed by the use of diminution in each case.

Let us begin by considering the first of these, the participants involved. An examination of the distribution of non-literal occurrences of diminutives across the sexes and according to the relative ages of speaker and addressee (see tables¹² 1 and 2) shows that in Cyprus these tend to be primarily used by women and typically when addressing younger addressees. This finding fits in with what research has shown to be the 'prototypical', so to speak, context of use for diminution, that is, the presence of young children, with whom women (the mother in particular) generally tend to be more closely associated (cf. Sifianou 1992: 158; Daltas 1985: 66-7; Jurafsky 1996: 562-4). The situation changes when one looks at the SMG data: although occurrences of non-literal diminutives do tend to increase in the presence of young children here as well, these are relatively freely exchanged between conversationalists of both sexes and of various ages.

	Produced by women		Produced by men		Total occurrences of diminutives
	Literal	Non-literal	Literal	Non-literal	
SMG	3 (2)	47.7 (31)	7.7 (5)	41.5 (27)	100 (65)
CG	19 (16)	63 (53)	8 (7)	9.5 (8)	100 (84)

Table 1: Distribution of literal : non-literal occurrences of diminutives across the sexes

¹² In this paper, tables are used descriptively. The figures in parentheses indicate the actual number of occurrences as opposed to the percentages (in bold). The total referred to is the sum of occurrences in the recorded conversations and in the notebook examples (see section 2). Occurrences of diminutives were classified as 'literal' when the meaning of the diminutivised item in context could be rendered by a phrase modified by "small". Although the situations recorded in the two communities exhibited significant similarities, the greater amount of recorded data from Cyprus (10 hours) as opposed to Mainland Greece (5 hours) makes these tables inappropriate for vertical comparison (i.e. across communities).

Addressee	Younger	Same age	Older	Mixed age group	Total non-literal occurrences of diminutives
SMG	34.5 (20)	36 (21)	12 (7)	17.2 (10)	100 (58)
CG	42.6 (26)	19.7 (12)	6.6 (4)	31.1(19)	100 (61)

Table 2: Distribution of non-literal occurrences of diminutives according to the relative ages of speaker and addressee

The setting of the conversation, including a reference to the topic of discourse, provides further evidence of the discrepancy noted above. In general, discussions about politics, sports, financial or professional matters in the data are completely devoid of diminutives. Typically, these are to be found in task-oriented verbal exchanges, as well as descriptions of incidents involving children. However, the two communities differ with respect to the range of situations in which non-literal diminution may be used. For the SMG data, these include: at home and at informal social gatherings, in shops and restaurants, at the doctor's surgery, in airports and taxis, on the radio and television, and during brief exchange of information between strangers in the street. The corresponding range of settings is much more limited for the CG data, where non-literal diminution typically occurs at home and at informal social gatherings.

This situational distribution of non-literal diminution is closely interrelated, on one hand, with the kinds of speech acts which diminutives can be used to perform, and, on the other hand, with the range of senses that they may acquire in context. The relevant speech acts for both communities are, in order of frequency, requests (for action or information), offers, promises, compliments, invitations, refusals, acceptances of offers or thanks, as well as a function as a downtoner of self-praise. In the SMG data only, non-literal diminution is further used to state an opinion (occasionally with the ultimate purpose of convincing the addressee about practical matters), and to downplay the strength of negative judgements and angry replies.

The fact that this last possibility is open to Mainland Greeks should be associated, in my view, with the quantity and quality of senses non-literal diminution may acquire in context in each community. In attempting to sketch these, I will adopt a model proposed by Jurafsky (1996), aiming at providing a unified account of the various semantic and pragmatic senses which diminutives exhibit cross-linguistically. Based on a corpus of over sixty languages, Jurafsky draws the conclusion that the core sense of the category of diminutives is 'child' rather than 'small'. He then goes on to suggest that the remaining senses are motivated by this core sense and structured around it in the fashion of a radial category (cf. Lakoff 1987). Links from the core sense (the prototype of the category) to peripheral senses are provided by means of the following mechanisms of semantic change: inference (I), metaphor (M), generalisation (G) and lambda-abstraction (L). The resulting radial category is shown in figure 3.

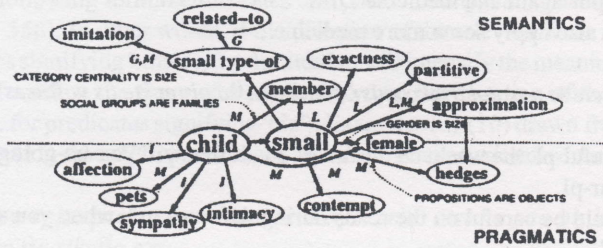


Figure 3: Proposed universal structure for the semantics of the diminutive (Reproduced from Jurafsky 1996, p. 542)

The advantage of representing the various senses of the diminutive as a universal radial category lies with the possibility that not all of these have to be synchronically documented in a specific language. As Jurafsky (1996: 543) points out, the category which he suggests "is a kind of skeletal category; the diminutive in particular languages can be described as instantiating coherent portions of it, and perhaps extending it". In other words, the links between the core sense 'child' and the various peripheral senses are optional: they exist as possibilities on which different languages¹³ may draw to construct language-specific radial categories for diminutives. In this sense, I believe Jurafsky's model can be of use in illustrating some of the intra-linguistic mechanisms through which the underlying communicative needs of a community find their way towards shaping the actual range of senses that a linguistic means (in this case, non-literal diminution) assumes in this community, out of the whole range of senses it can potentially serve to express.

Coming now to the respective ranges of these senses for SMG and CG, one may start by noting that the various senses which diminutives may acquire in context are not totally unrelated. They form a structured whole which determines the extent to which diminution may be used as a communicative strategy and the direction it will follow in each case. Frequent occurrences of non-literal diminution in SMG as well as CG involve the senses of 'affection', 'intimacy' and 'sympathy', prompted by inference. All of these can be addressed to children. When the speaker refers to something by means of a diminutive, the addressee infers that s/he feels toward the referent the same kind of affection one feels toward children. Conventionalisation of such inferences results in diminution being used to signal affection/intimacy/sympathy in a variety of contexts. Examples¹⁴ (1) and (2) from SMG and (3)–(5) from CG help illustrate this point:

¹³ Or different varieties of the same language, as is the case here, assuming that these are shaped by and reflect the communicative needs of different communities. The question of the extra-linguistic motivation for the specific structure that the category of diminutives assumes in each community is taken up in section 5 below.

¹⁴ For reasons of simplicity, examples are transcribed phonologically. /ð/ represents the voiced interdental fricative, while /j/ stands for the palatal approximant, whose phonemic status in Greek is controversial (cf. Philippaki-Warbuton 1992:52–3). The abbreviation DIM. should be expanded to DIMINUTIVE. Pl. stands for 'plural'.

- (1) *θα ksanavalume ke farmakaki*. [NB; at the dentist's]
 Shall we-put-again and medicine-DIM.
 'We shall also apply some more medicine'.
- (2) *na prosexete to savatokirjako stus δromus pu θα pi'ēnete tis voltitses sas*. [NB; on the radio]
 To be-careful-pl. the weekend on-the-pl. roads that will you-be-going-pl. the ride-DIM. your-pl.
 'You should be careful on the roads during the weekend, when you will be going for a ride'.
- (3) *aresken tu na mbi pu ka stin karkolu*. [middle-aged woman referring to her son as a child]
 It-liked him to he-gets from under at-the bed-DIM.
 'He liked to go under the bed'.
- (4) *itan to engonaki mu. molis efiasin tora*.
 It-was the grandchild-DIM. my. Just they-left now.
 'That was my grandchild. They just left'.
- (5) *mana mu to alikudin ti epaθe*.
 Mother my the Alik-DIM. what she-suffered.
 'Poor Alik, what happened to her'.

Hedging, a further sense of diminution in both SMG and CG, is accounted for with reference to a metaphor, namely PROPOSITIONS ARE OBJECTS. Jurafsky (1996: 557-9) defines the type of hedging achieved by diminution as 'metalinguistic' in that it contains a second speech act which comments on the sentence or its content. According to this line of thought, example (6) from SMG, uttered by a man in a shop, includes two speech acts: (i) an act of asserting and (ii) an act of asserting that what he is about to ask is not much. A similar instance from the CG data is given in (7).

- (6) *θelo δjo pramatakja tria*. [NB]
 I-want two things-DIM. three.
 'I want a couple of small things'.
- (7) *exi kreas enan kom:atui?*
 It-has meat one piece-DIM?
 'Is there a small piece of meat?'

The sense of approximation, on the other hand, involves hedging the propositional content of an utterance. The mechanism by means of which diminutives may acquire this approximative sense is 'lambda-abstraction'.¹⁵ As Jurafsky (1996: 555) notes, "the direction

¹⁵ This consists in producing a second-order predicate from an initial expression, by replacing one of the predicates in its domain by a variable which ranges over predicates.

in which the diminutive modifies the predicate depends on the direction of the relevant scale". The following formula illustrates this point: "dim (point *x*, scale *y*) = lower than *x* on *y*" (ibid.: 556). In other words, if the direction of the relevant scale is downward (e.g. for predicates signifying 'small'), the diminutive will intensify the meaning of the predicate, while it will weaken the force of a predicate, when the direction of the relevant scale is upward (e.g. for predicates signifying 'big'). Examples (8)-(10) drawn from the SMG data, and example (11) from CG, provide instances of this approximative sense.

- (8) *θα mu epitrepset emena distixos θ apoxoriso etsi na pao na ksaplosο θelo mja oritsa θα sikoθo etsi.*
 Will me you-allow-pl. me unfortunately shall I-retire so to I-go to I-lie-down I-want one hour-DIM. shall I-get-up so.
 'You will allow me, unfortunately I shall retire to go and lie down for an hour or so and I shall get up'.
- (9) *edaksi den ine stilaki. ine enas aksioprepestatos psiloxodrulis. oxi xodros ala xodrulis.*
 OK not he-is fit-DIM. He-is one very-decent DIM.-fat-DIM. Not fat but fat-DIM.
 'OK he is not fit. He is a very decent slightly fat guy. Not fat but slightly fat'.
- (10) *itan sibaθitika. itan sibaθitikutsika.* [NB; uttered by a young man commenting on a recent piano recital he gave)]
 It-was nice. It-was nice-DIM.
 'It was nice. It was quite nice'.
- (11) *afto, kita, afton erxete olon kato...etsi...etsi, loksudin dame ze dame pefti.*
 (hairdresser explaining a haircut to a customer)
 This, you-look, this comes all down... so... so, diagonal-DIM. here and here it-falls.
 'Look, this comes straight down... like this... like this, sort of diagonal here and here it falls'.

The senses listed so far are attested in both the CG and the SMG data. A further sense however, namely 'contempt', is attested only in the SMG data, as in the following example:

- (12) *kati ixan eki ta neoðimokratakja.* [NB; taxi-driver explaining to a customer why the road was closed]
 Something they-had there the-pl. members-of-the-New-Democracy-party-DIM.
 'Members of the New Democracy party had some kind of a meeting there'.

The metaphor motivating this derogatory sense is CATEGORY CENTRALITY IS SIZE (cf. Jurafsky 1996: 547-8). Based on this metaphor, marginal members of a category may be referred to by means of a diminutive. (Observe how, in this respect, augmentatives are used for central/prototypical members of a category.)

In view of this last remark, it seems to me that one may be not far from the truth in maintaining that it is not only the smaller number of senses with which diminutives may be used in CG, but, more importantly, the absence from these possible senses of that of

'contempt', which is responsible for the characteristically intimate 'flavour' of non-literal diminution in CG. In SMG, on the other hand, the possibility of using diminutives in context with this derogatory sense contributes to the attenuation of similar affectionate connotations, thus making diminution appropriate for use in a wider variety of situations. However, once the dialectal nature of the CG suffixes involved in diminution is taken into account¹⁶, the intra-linguistic and extra-linguistic pressures appear to reinforce one another: the dialectal nature of these suffixes makes them inappropriate for use in more formal registers or situations involving strangers, while it is the resulting restriction of their use in familiar settings which contributes to their retaining their strong connotations of affection. This explanation appears to be in line with the facts outlined in table 3 below giving the analogy of literal vs. non-literal occurrences of diminutives in the CG and the SMG data.

	Literal	Non-literal	Total occurrences of diminutives
SMG	10.77 (7)	89.23 (58)	100 (65)
CG	27.38 (23)	72.62 (61)	100 (84)

Table 3: Analogy of literal : non-literal occurrences

The fact that Cypriot Greeks are more attuned to literal use of diminution may provide an insight into comments by CG informants that the SMG usage sounds "stand-offish" and "hypocritical", "attempting to present things different from how they are". The nature of the suffix used in each case may also prove important here: nearly half of the literal occurrences in the CG examples (11/23) involved the suffix *-aki*, which is the SMG diminutive suffix *par excellence*. Now, if Cypriot Greeks actually associate use of this suffix with literal diminution (while reserving use of the dialectal suffixes, such as *u(δ)i(n)*, *u(δ)a*, for non-literal diminution), this could partially explain why non-literal occurrences of diminutives in SMG such as *kafedaki* (literally 'small coffee') or *neraki* (literally 'small water') not only are not used by Cypriot Greeks but may even incur negative judgements.

4. Toward a formalisation

The notion of frames and their role in human understanding have been researched into by scholars in a number of disciplines, such as artificial intelligence, sociology and linguistics. Use of the term has consequently been extended to cover a range of conceptualisations, from the perception of static scenes and objects (Minsky 1975) to the sequential unfolding of events (Schank & Abelson 1977) and the construction of meaning therein (Goffman 1976). Within linguistics, one may briefly recall Fillmore's "frame semantics" (1976, 1977), as well as a number of studies published under the title "Framing in discourse" (Tannen 1993), which appeal to frames in order to explain a variety of intra- and cross-cultural discourse phenomena, to mention but a small part of the related research. What remains constant throughout these approaches is a reference to a stereotypical piece of

¹⁶ See section 2 above.

knowledge, acquired through experience in the course of interaction with the surrounding environment, and which is stored in memory in such a way as to be easily retrievable - indeed automatically - when features of the current situation are reminiscent of it. This piece of knowledge plays an important role in understanding, by participating in matching and filling-in processes which proceed sequentially.

Within the field of politeness studies, a related proposal is being put forward in Escandell-Vidal (1996), where the author argues for a relevance-theoretic approach to politeness as a means of achieving a more economical account of politeness phenomena by integrating these in a general account of inferential processes. On this view, "inferential distance"¹⁷ is not directly linked to politeness, but to relevance: the greater the inferential distance, the greater the processing effort, and consequently, the greater the expected effects" (Escandell-Vidal 1996: 638). A cognitive approach to politeness along these lines relies crucially on the notion of frames, understood as combining information about prototypical participants and activities, as well as the appropriate use of language. Compared to previous models of politeness, this approach affords us with some important advantages. First, by appealing to frames as culture-specific ready-made patterns of interpretation which contribute to making more accessible some related set of assumptions, it allows us to account for real-time processing. Second, in accordance with the internal notion of context advocated in relevance theory, it enables us to capture the creativity of linguistic politeness. If understanding a situation involves internally representing external data, for example an utterance, and matching it with some previously acquired organised set of assumptions, then frames are to be seen exactly as such guides to an interpretation, which will only be arrived at after the specific details of the context have been considered. An internal view of context and the notion of frames further allow us to account for 'politeness default values' assigned to linguistic forms in any given culture. Finally, cross-cultural miscommunication is typically seen as occurring when interlocutors have internalised the context in a similar way but their frames for the situation are different by virtue of being culture-specific, while intra-cultural miscommunication is understood as involving divergences in the way interlocutors internalise the context, resulting in a mismatch between the frames selected.

Based on the findings outlined in the previous section, I would like to suggest the following frames as a first attempt at uncovering the regularities that govern the use of diminutives in SMG and in CG. Adapting an idea originating in Aijmer's (1996) work on conversational routines, different frames are given for the various pragmatic functions of diminutives in context.¹⁸ Each frame contains a specification of the formal and situational features associated with the particular function of diminution which is being described. However, given the limited amount of the data, the proposed frames should only be viewed as approximations and not expected to capture the total extent of diminution as a communicative strategy in SMG and CG. In other words, they illustrate typical instances of use rather than the whole range of possible applications of diminution.

¹⁷ I take use of the term 'inferential distance' in this context to be related to the notion of accessibility of assumptions in the framework of Relevance theory (cf. Sperber & Wilson 1995: 77, 167).

¹⁸ These stem from, and allow for the expression of, the respective inventories of senses proposed for SMG and CG in section 3 above.

FRAMES FOR THE USE OF DIMINUTIVES IN SMG

Expressing endearment	
Type of diminution	Settings
Derivational via suffixation ¹⁹ (- <i>aki</i> , - <i>ula</i> , - <i>itsa</i> , - <i>jo</i> , - <i>ako</i>)	At home, at social gatherings
Speech acts	Participants
Comments, compliments, promises, wishing, giving instructions, accepting invitations	Acquaintances, friends, members of the same family

Cajoling the addressee	
Type of diminution	Settings
Derivational via suffixation (- <i>aki</i> , - <i>ula</i> , - <i>uli</i> , - <i>itsa</i>)	At home, at social gatherings, at work (including on radio/TV)
Speech acts	Participants
Offers, requests, suggestions, advice	Members of the same family, friends, acquaintances, customer-owner/employee

Hedging	
Type of diminution	Settings
Derivational via suffixation (- <i>aki</i> , - <i>ula</i> , - <i>ulis</i> , - <i>itsa</i> , - <i>utsika</i>)	At home, at social gatherings, at work (including on radio/TV), in the street
Derivational via compounding	
Periphrastic	Participants
Speech acts	
Criticisms, requests, rebukes, comments on personal information	Members of the same family, friends, acquaintances, customer-owner/employee, strangers

¹⁹ Diminutive suffixes appear in these frames in order of frequency of occurrence in the data. They consequently do not exhaust the relevant categories of suffixes available to speakers of SMG or CG.

FRAMES FOR THE USE OF DIMINUTIVES IN CG

Expressing endearment	
Type of diminution	Settings
Derivational via suffixation (- <i>u(δ)i(n)</i> , - <i>u(δ)a</i> , - <i>aki</i> , - <i>ula</i> , - <i>itsa</i>)	At home, at social gatherings
Speech acts	Participants
Compliments, comments, accepting thanks, refusals, accepting offers, expressing sympathy	Members of the same family, friends

Cajoling the addressee	
Type of diminution	Settings
Derivational via suffixation (- <i>u(δ)i(n)</i> , - <i>u(δ)a</i> , - <i>aki</i>)	At home, at social gatherings
Speech acts	Participants
Offers, requests, suggestions, invitations, promises, orders	Members of the same family, friends

Hedging ²⁰	
Type of diminution	Settings
Derivational via suffixation (- <i>aki</i> , - <i>u(δ)i(n)</i> , - <i>u(δ)a</i>)	At home, at work
Speech acts	Participants
Convincing, accepting thanks, apologising	Friends, acquaintances, customer-owner

5. In search of explanatory adequacy

It was my contention at the beginning of this paper that Brown & Levinson's (1987) model of politeness proves inadequate in capturing the internal workings of non-literal diminution as a means of expressing politeness in SMG and in CG, and that instead a more empirically oriented, frame-based approach is needed to do justice to the findings of this pilot-study. I shall now proceed to establish this claim, first by pointing out the relevant difficulties facing Brown & Levinson's proposals, and then by widening the scope of the discussion to include a reference to the extra-linguistic motivation for the observed discrepancy in the use of non-literal diminution by the two communities. In this way, I hope to emphasise the

²⁰ The inclusion of this last frame was judged necessary in order to cover a limited number of examples which could not be accounted for with reference to the two frames already proposed for CG. Such occurrences of diminutives could, however, be attributed to the influence of SMG (observe the relative preference for the SMG suffix -*aki*) and interpreted as an indication that diminution as a communicative strategy may be tending to become generalised in Cyprus as well (cf. fn. 31 below).

need to follow the acting out of linguistic politeness in any given society back to its roots, that is back to the underlying communicative needs from which it emanates and which it has developed in response to, as a safer starting point for the discovery of regular associations between linguistic means and their significance, a move which may point the direction toward eventual universals in language usage.²¹

a) *Interpreting the findings within Brown and Levinson's framework*

Brown and Levinson (1987: 109) remark that extensive use of diminution marks a conversation as positively polite, by signalling emotional agreement when this is deemed as more important than the subject of talk itself. Elsewhere (1987: 157, 177) they recognise the hedging function of diminution, which they subsume under negative politeness. I wish to argue that these claims are inadequate to capture the way non-literal diminution is used in Mainland Greece and in Cyprus on the following counts:

I) The use of non-literal diminution is not confined to utterances using positive or negative strategies. In the following example from the SMG data, where a young wife angrily rebukes her husband's repeated requests that they leave, in the presence of guests, diminutives are combined with irony (the wife is treating the husband the way one would treat an impatient child), a rhetorical question ('won't you tell me') and ellipsis (the wife's intention remains opaque), all of which Brown and Levinson classify under off-record strategies.²²

- (13) *de mu les apostolaki* ((unintelligible words)) *isjose to kormaki su*.
 Not me you-tell Apostoli-DIM. ((unintelligible words)) straighten the body-DIM.
 your.
 'Won't you tell me, Apostoli, ((unintelligible words)), stand up straight'.

Notice that, in order to account for the choice of the off-record strategy in this case using the authors' suggested formula (see figure 2) for computing the weightiness W of an FTA_x , one would have to claim that a significantly high R value is involved, given that D and P

²¹ In advocating this position, I share Glick's (1996: 167) viewpoint, when he writes that:

"A universalising study, however, would want to take more seriously how first-order indexicalities are organised into coherent, regular utterances that are somehow flavoured by concepts of politeness. The presence or absence of specific ideologies about social interaction and its component parts marks an important starting point to such an exercise. We must allow native ideologies to inform us as to both the relevant contextual presuppositions (including usage itself) and their relative significance(s). All this suggests that we need to return to a more explicit investigation of the actual empirical facts associated with politeness in order to discover the empirical bases for universalising schemes of and for regularities of usage".

²² One may want to suggest that what we have in this example is a mixture of strategies, a possibility which Brown and Levinson explicitly allow for (1987:230-2). However, such an interpretation is ruled out by the fact that, in this case, the diminutives are used to achieve the ironic effect and should thereby be classified as off-record politeness markers.

values are relatively low. In my view, this choice may be more safely attributed to the presence of guests, a variable whose repercussions the above formula cannot capture.²³

A similar point can be made with reference to example (14) below from SMG, uttered during a visit at the doctor's surgery. The speaker is a 40-year-old male dentist, replying to a 25-year-old female patient's request to tune into her favourite radio station during the visit. The dentist chooses the off-record strategy to decline her request, by saying that:

- (14) *andi na vazun ti musikula, kaθonde ke milane.*
 Instead to they-put the music-DIM., they-sit and they-talk.
 'Instead of playing music they sit and talk'.

Such a reply violates the maxim of Relevance, since it does not provide a direct yes/no answer or other sign of the speaker's intention to comply with her request. Rather, the speaker chooses to provide an association clue, namely that the programs of the station in question contain more talk than music, to trigger the inference that he actually prefers to listen to music, based on which the hearer can derive his intention not to comply with her request. The above inference crucially depends on the speaker's use of the diminutive *musikula*, 'little music', here functioning as an endearing device, to efficiently convey his preference for programs containing music. In other words, the diminutive provides that piece of "specific knowledge extrinsic to [the] H[earer]'s desired act" (Brown & Levinson 1987: 216) required to decode the association clue contained in the utterance. By thus ensuring the success of the off-record strategy opted for by the speaker, the diminutive once more proves an important component of this -rather than any other- strategy.

A final example from SMG illustrates the difficulty of consistently classifying diminution under one overarching politeness strategy rather than another. In (15) below, a middle-aged restaurant-owner is registering his reluctance for a recording session to take place in his restaurant, by implying that it is not the most appropriate setting for such a purpose. Instead, he suggests an alternative setting where he claims the researcher's interests will be better served.

- (15) *to pjo oreo ap ola ine na kanonisete sto spiti tu manoli, na mazefti to pareaki me ta mandolinakja. kitakste, ama pjune ke kanena potiraki ine aljos.*
 The more beautiful of all it-is to you-arrange-pl. at-the house-of-the Manolis, to be-gathered the group-of-friends-DIM. with the-pl. mandolins-DIM. You-look-pl., when they-drink and any glass-DIM. it-is otherwise.
 'The best thing is for you to arrange for the mates to come round at Manolis's house with their mandolins. Of course, if they have a couple of drinks too, it's different'.

At first sight, the speaker demonstrates by his utterance his consideration for the hearer's interests and needs, thereby appearing to be positively polite (Brown & Levinson 1987: 102). Knowledge however of the situation (Manolis is a common acquaintance of the

²³ An alternative explanation can be found in Sifianou (1992:119), where it is claimed that in Greek, indirectness is generally used where explicitness is deemed unnecessary (as opposed to face-threatening), for example, when the speaker and addressee are familiar with one another.

hearer and the speaker; earlier Manolis's mother arranged for this session to take place over the phone) allows the hearer to pick up the hint that the speaker is not very happy with this arrangement, and would now rather he could come out of it in some way. In this case, the speaker's utterance contains two speech acts: one act of 'offering' an alternative solution to the hearer's problem, which is an instance of being positively polite²⁴; and an underlying speech act of requesting that the recording session in question may not take place in his restaurant. For the realisation of this second speech act the speaker opts for the off-record strategy, here manifested as a violation of both the Relevance maxim (drawing on background knowledge, the hearer is to infer that a relaxed environment where live music and drinks are available is a more appropriate setting for her purposes) and the Manner maxim (the speaker's final words "it's different" with reference to having a couple of drinks are rather vague). In this case, the three diminutives used by the speaker aim at cajoling the hearer into accepting his offer, a move which would ensure her compliance with his off-record request. Again, the positive politeness and the off-record strategy are too closely intertwined to allow for diminution to be consistently classified as a means of achieving either one of them alone.

II) The regularity with which diminutives recur in situations involving young children presents the suggested hierarchy of strategies (see fig. 1) with problems. Take the following example from the CG data, where a middle-aged woman is reporting an incident from the time when, as refugees from Famagusta, her family were living in a tent. Her then five-year old son, whose speech she is reproducing in the example, is now married and has children of his own. Still, although the snakes referred to in the example are rather big, she refers to them using a diminutive.

- (16) *mama mama pu ka sto krevatin pu pezo exi tris kufuðes toses.* (shows with hands)
 Mum mum from under to-the bed where I-play it-has three snakes-DIM. that-big.
 'Mum, mum, there are three snakes that big under the bed where I play'.

The informal setting of the conversation, as well as the emotional involvement of the speaker make this a likely candidate as an example of the positive politeness strategy. On the other hand, the obvious violation of the maxim of Quality (50cm-long snakes referred to by means of a diminutive literally used to convey smallness, when there is not even anything nice or appealing about the referent to justify this), would, according to Brown and Levinson's predictions (1987: 214), make this an example of the off-record strategy. In this case, only a reference to the whole speech situation may be able to resolve the resulting contradiction.

b) Investigating the extra-linguistic motivation for the findings

In the course of their investigation of the morphopragmatics of diminutives and intensifiers in Italian, German and other languages, Dressler and Merlini Barbaresi (1994: 144) identify a feature [non serious] as a component of the morpho-pragmatic meaning of the category

²⁴ One may however question the validity of terming this speech act an offer, since it does not involve any effort on the speaker's behalf.

of diminutives. Furthermore (1994: 145, 170), they suggest that this feature is attached to speech acts involving non-literal diminution, and in fact applied to the domain of the whole speech situation and/or to the whole speech act.²⁵ Indeed, the authors claim (1994:228) that it is among the primary functions of non-literal diminution to weaken the relative strength of the illocutionary force of a speech act. This observation may in fact hold the key to the discrepancy noted above regarding the greater extent to which non-literal diminution as a communicative strategy has been conventionalised in Mainland Greece compared to Cyprus.

I wish to argue for this point using two terms from the field of sociology pertaining to the different ways in which society can be organised, *Gemeinschaft* and *Gesellschaft*.²⁶ The former is used to describe a community form of social solidarity based on the fact that individuals share a common history and common traditions, while the latter refers to a society regulated by impersonal organisations, where relationships are contractual and rights based on mutual agreement rather than acquired through the natural processes of birth and growth within a family and a community. Research²⁷ has shown the importance of this distinction for the structuring of discourse and the different contextual presuppositions guiding interaction which emanate from it. An investigation of the potential applicability of this distinction to the two communities which are of concern to us here, however, requires us to widen the scope of our study somewhat, in order to consider other formal means available for the expression of politeness therein. Such means include the polite plural and address terms,²⁸ an examination of which revealed a greater emphasis placed on solidarity and interpersonal relations in Cyprus compared to Mainland Greece, as well as differences in the way the social distance between the speaker and the hearer and the relative power of the hearer over the speaker are assessed in the two communities.

According to the evidence, in Cyprus, contrary to Mainland Greece, the polite plural is not a primary feature of polite speech.²⁹ Rather it is perceived of as cold and distant and is reserved for addressing individuals who are not members of the in-group, or tentatively used at the very first stages of an acquaintance. Instead, where a Mainland Greek would have used the polite plural as a sign of deference, as with older addressees, Cypriot Greeks use the singular plus an appropriate address term, which conveys respect without sounding

²⁵ In light of the authors' statement that "In a certain sense, the feature [non serious] is already a metaphor of the denotative feature [small] and thus in itself generates first-order figurative uses" (1994: 327), I believe that it is possible for one to do away with their labelling of this feature ([non-serious]) a *primary* component of the morpho-pragmatic meaning of diminutives, without betraying the spirit of their argument. In this way, one is able to maintain Jurafsky's proposal about 'child' constituting the core sense of this category (see section 3 above), while still recognising a feature [non serious] as a *derived* component of the morpho-pragmatic meaning of the category, applied to the whole domain of speech acts involving non-literal diminution.

²⁶ Cf. Scollon & Scollon 1995: 135-137, where references to the original text by F. Tšnnies can also be found.

²⁷ Cf. for example George's work on the different sequential structure of speech acts according to whether the context is defined as a primarily *Gemeinschaft* or *Gesellschaft* one.

²⁸ Evidence for their use comes from on-the-spot observation, as well as from the interviews recorded as part of this pilot-study.

²⁹ With reference to this point, recall Brown and Levinson's discussion of pluralisation as an impersonification device (1987: 198-204).

formal. In a similar vein, common address terms in Cyprus include *file*, 'friend', or *re kumbare*, literally 'hey, best man', to a male stranger, in situations where in Greece one would have used the more formal *kirie*, 'mister', or would have avoided the address term altogether. Finally, the possessive pronoun *mu*, 'my', shows a wider distribution in Cyprus, where it is of common use with first names between friends and family members, and in the phrases *kori mu*, 'my daughter', *je mu*, 'my son', used with younger addressees, and *mana mu*, 'my mother', used indiscriminately of age. As regards assessments of social distance, one may note that the notion of in-group appears to cover a far wider range of addressees for Cypriot Greeks, including roughly anyone who they feel shares a similar background - an assumption easily reached on the basis of accent -, while for Mainland Greeks a minimum amount of social contact is required before one can be considered part of this. Finally, assumptions about relative power, at least as constituted in Mainland Greece, that is based on the social determinants of the interlocutors' relative ages and positions in a social/professional hierarchy, appeared of limited importance to assessments of politeness in CG³⁰ as opposed to SMG.

The importance attributed to in-group relationships and the demonstration of solidarity in Cyprus as illustrated above translates into the emphasis being placed onto a closely-knit social network, relevant to which the individual's social identity is defined. In Mainland Greece, on the other hand, similar social networks appear to be more loosely knit, thereby allowing individuals relatively greater flexibility in assuming the social identity which they wish. In other words, on the resulting continuum defined by the notions of *Gemeinschaft* and *Gesellschaft*, the organisation of society in Mainland Greece may be compared to that of a *Gesellschaft*, while, in relation to this, Cyprus exhibits more features of a *Gemeinschaft* form of organisation.³¹

Reference to the notions of *Gemeinschaft* and *Gesellschaft* and their role in determining the discourse patterns of different communities allows us to make the following conjecture regarding the use of diminution in Mainland Greece and in Cyprus: in a *Gesellschaft* type of social organisation, lowering of the speaker's commitment toward the performed speech act and the introduction of an element of fuzziness in the expected standards of precision are desirable effects, since they allow greater flexibility in future moves and further negotiation of rights and obligations. These effects can be consistently achieved by attaching a feature of non-seriousness to the speech act, a function standardly fulfilled by diminution.³² Since SMG reflects the discourse patterns of such a *Gesellschaft* type of organisation, at least more so than Cypriot Greek, it consequently has developed a greater number of senses for non-literal diminution, which in turn affords non-literal diminution with the potential for use in a wider range of settings. According to this line of thought, the speaker's choice to use diminution as a means of expressing politeness in a particular situation, rather than reflecting his/her own assumptions about the amount of politeness that the situation calls for, is conditioned by, and ought to be assessed relevant

³⁰ In terms of Brown and Levinson's theory, this finding renders the variable of power inappropriate to account for the distribution of politeness strategies across contexts in CG.

³¹ *Gesellschaft* features are however not totally absent from CG interactions.

³² On this view, one would expect other hedging devices to be in use in languages that do not possess the rich derivational system of Greek.

to, the norms governing polite interaction in the community in question, which in turn have developed out of the particular society's underlying communicative needs.

I believe that the findings which I presented in this paper contribute toward pointing out the necessity of effectuating a shift of focus from the individual as a rational agent³³ to the 'supra-individual', 'societal' rationality,³⁴ of which frames are to be seen as a manifestation. Based on the data collected for this pilot-study, frames illustrating typical instances of the use of non-literal diminution in SMG and in CG were proposed in section 4 above. A comparison of these frames shows that in Cyprus, but not necessarily in Mainland Greece, familiarity constitutes an important feature of the situations in which non-literal diminution may occur. Given the different definition of social distance and relative power by the two communities, this feature cannot be reduced to conversationalists' assumptions about such attributes. Rather, such a description of the facts gives us an idea of the whole speech situation with which children are faced during the early stages of acquisition, and on the basis of which they acquire the various senses of diminution.³⁵ Since these senses bear a direct relation to the underlying needs of the communities involved,³⁶ frames prove a useful tool in discovering and comparing regularities of usage across cultures.

6. Conclusions

In this paper I have presented evidence from SMG and CG which illustrates the different extent to which non-literal diminution has been conventionalised in the two communities as a means of expressing politeness. I have attributed this discrepancy to the different forms of social organisation pertinent in the two communities, which give rise to distinct social requirements to be met by polite interaction in each case. As a result, non-literal diminution used to this end has developed distinct senses in SMG and in CG, a fact which if one fails to be sensitive to - as indeed the average user of one the two varieties may well be - can give rise to criticisms and misunderstandings.

Based on this evidence, I have argued against Brown and Levinson's theory of politeness as too rigid in its attribution of absolute politeness values to linguistic means, as well as in its distinction between strategies, to capture the different contextual presuppositions with which linguistic means may be used in communities which are distinguished on the basis of social organisation, albeit not language. In its stead, I have argued for a relevance-theoretic approach to politeness built around the notion of cognitive frames, which capture the whole speech situation in which a linguistic means may be called upon to perform specific politeness functions. By summarising essential, directly observed information defining the speech situation, frames raise no general claims as to the

³³ Brown and Levinson establish this as one of their premises when they construct their theory around a Model Person (1987: 58-60); see also section 1.

³⁴ Terms taken from Mey 1993: 263.

³⁵ Cf. Dressler & Merlini Barbaresi 1994: 408; Werkhofer 1992: 194.

³⁶ Reference is made here to the notions of *Gemeinschaft* and *Gesellschaft* discussed above.

politeness import of specific linguistic means, thus proving a viable tool which can be used across cultures to represent empirically attested regularities of usage.

References

- Aijmer, K. (1996) *Conversational routines in English*. New York: Addison Wesley Longman.
- Babiniotis, G. (1969) *O dia syntheseos ypokorismos is tin Ellinikin (Derivational diminution via compounding in Greek)*. Athens: Sofia N. Saripolos Library.
- Bach, K. & Harnish, R.M. (1980) *Linguistic communication and speech acts*. Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press.
- Brown, P. and Levinson, S.C. (1987) *Politeness: some universals in language usage*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Clark, H.H. (1996) *Using language*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Daltas, P. (1985) Some patterns of variability in the use of diminutive and augmentative suffixes in spoken Modern Greek Koine (MGK). *Glossologia* 4: 63-88.
- Dressler, W.U. & Merlini Barbaresi, L. (1994) *Morphopragmatics: diminutives and intensifiers in Italian, German and other languages*. Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter.
- Durkheim, E. (1976) *The elementary forms of the religious life*. London: George Allen & Unwin. [First edition: 1915]
- Escandell-Vidal, V. (1996) Towards a cognitive approach to politeness. In: Jaszczolt, K. & Turner, K. (eds.) *Contrastive semantics and pragmatics*. Oxford: Pergamon Press, 629-50.
- Fillmore, C.J. (1977) Scenes-and-frames semantics. In: Zampolli, A. (ed.) *Linguistic structures processing*. Amsterdam: North Holland, 55-81.
- George, S. (1990) *Getting things done in Naples: action, language and context in discourse description*. Bologna: Bologna Editrice.
- Glick, D.J. (1996) A reappraisal of Brown and Levinson's *Politeness: some universals in language use* eighteen years later. *Semiotica* 109: 141-171.
- Goffman, E. (1967) *Interaction ritual: essays in face-to-face behavior*. New York: Pantheon Books.
- Goffman, E. (1971) *Relations in public: microstudies in the public order*. London: Penguin Press.
- Goffman, E. (1976) Replies and responses. *Language in society* 5: 257-313.
- Joseph, B. & Philippaki-Warbuton, I. (1987) *Modern Greek*. London: Routledge.
- Jurafsky, D. (1996) Universal tendencies in the semantics of the diminutive. *Language* 72: 533-78.
- Lakoff, G. (1987) *Women, fire and dangerous things: what categories reveal about the mind*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Lakoff, G. & Johnson, M. (1980) *Metaphors we live by*. Chicago: Chicago University Press.

- Mackridge, P. (1985) *The Modern Greek language: A descriptive analysis of Standard Modern Greek*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Mao, L.M. (1994) Beyond politeness theory: 'face' revisited and renewed. *Journal of Pragmatics* 21: 451-486.
- Mey, J. (1993) *Pragmatics: an introduction*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Minsky, M. (1975) A framework for representing knowledge. In: Winston, P. (ed.) *The psychology of computer vision*. New York: MacGraw-Hill, 211-277.
- Philippaki-Warbuton, I. (1992) *Eisagogi sti theoritiki glossologia (An introduction to theoretical linguistics)*. Athens: Nefeli.
- Schank, R.C. & Abelson, R.P. (1977) *Scripts, plans, goals and understanding: an inquiry into human knowledge structures*. New Jersey: Laurence Erlbaum.
- Scollon, R. & Scollon, S.W. (1995) *Intercultural communication: a discourse approach*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Sifianou, M. (1992) The use of diminutives in expressing politeness: Modern Greek versus English. *Journal of Pragmatics* 17: 155-73.
- Sperber, D. & Wilson, D. (1995) *Relevance: communication and cognition*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Tannen, D. (ed.) (1993) *Framing in discourse*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Tannen, D. (1994) *Gender and discourse*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Triantafyllides, M. (1963) I geniki ton ypokoristikon se -aki kai to Neolliniko klitiko systema (The genitive of diminutives in -aki and the Modern Greek system of inflections). In: *Apanta Manoli Triantafyllidi (The complete works of Manolis Triantafyllides)*. Vol. II. Thessaloniki: Institute of Modern Greek Studies, 141-171.
- Turner, K. (1996) The principal principles of pragmatic inference: politeness. *Language teaching* 29: 1-13.
- Werkhofer, K.T. (1992) Traditional and modern views: the social constitution and the power of politeness. In: Watts, R.J., Ide, S. & Ehlich, K. (eds.) *Politeness in language: studies in its history, theory and practice*. Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter, 155-199.