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## Women's Studies International Forum

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# Representing “traditional” and “progressive” women in Greek television: The role of “feminine”/“masculine” speech styles in the mediation of gender identity construction

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### SYNOPSIS

Despite the wealth of sociolinguistic studies on gender identity construction in interpersonal settings, limited research has been directed to mediated contexts. Drawing upon a popular Greek television series dealing with the contrast of “traditional” vs. “progressive women”, we explore the mediation of women’s speech styles and the role of such depictions in the reproduction of hegemonic gender identities. The analysis shows that traditional identity is constructed on the basis of categories associated with the private sphere, whereas progressive identity is construed by means of categories linked to the public sphere. Yet, the depiction of linguistic practices that index gender in mediated settings is dynamic, contrary to the mediation of speech style, which tends to be generally monolithic. Thus, masculine and feminine styles of talk are represented as forming a stylistic continuum along which television characters are positioned during the display of their gender identities in specific fictional contexts.

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Referring to women’s and men’s language, and to feminine and masculine speech styles, sociolinguistics has strived to determine the social variety that indexes gender identity. Since gender was re-conceptualized as something that people achieve through talk rather than something they are, numerous sociolinguistic studies explore how gender identity is constructed in various interpersonal settings (e.g. Bucholz, Liang, & Sutton, 1999; Holmes & Meyerhoff, 2003). In contrast, there has been limited sociolinguistic research on gender identity construction in mediated settings (Chan, 2008), or fictionalized media texts, such as a television series (Behm, 2009). Studies outside sociolinguistics address how gender is depicted on a range of fictional mediated settings, such as television series (Davis, 1990), commercials (Reichert, 2003) and films (Eschholz, Bufkin, & Long, 2002).

Drawing upon a popular weekly Greek television series contrasting “traditional” and “progressive” women, bring in dialogue sociolinguistic research on gender identity construction

with cultural and media studies of gender representations, by exploring the representation of women’s speech styles and the role of these depictions in the reproduction of hegemonic gender identities. In particular, this study examines the meaning that a Greek television series gives to “traditional” and “progressive” female identities and how these gender identities are stylistically constructed. Greek television series are an important part of the entertaining program of Greek television, always reaching high audience rates (45%: Leandros, 2000). Weekly television series are broadcast in the evening, during prime-time, and are mainly watched by 65-year-old women of low educational background (Leandros, 2000). The target audience of the television series is generally conservative regarding gender issues.

We first review feminine and masculine speech styles and mediation of gender identity construction. We then present the framework (the “identities in interaction” model, Membership Categorization Analysis, sociolinguistics of feminine and masculine speech styles) in which the study of the mediation of gender identity construction resides. Next, we sketch the textual material examined. Finally, we present and discuss the results of the analysis.

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### From “women’s” and “men’s language” to “feminine” and “masculine” speech styles

An area which has attracted the interest of sociolinguistics is the determination of “genderlect” (Tannen, 1990), the social variety that signals the gender identity of speakers. Using the terms “women’s” and “men’s language”, early studies have compiled lists of lexico-grammatical features (Lakoff, 1975) and conversational phenomena (Zimmerman & West, 1975) that characterize gendered talk in Anglo-Saxon culture.

Under the influence of the social constructionist paradigm in social research and the adoption of a performative conception of gender as something that people do rather than they are, recent sociolinguistic studies aimed to reconceptualize genderlect as a symbolic resource that women and men can use to construct their gender identity during interactions. Cameron (1998, p. 953) distinguished “women’s language” from “the language used by women”. The former is an idealized construct, inscribing the established normative attitudes of what is prototypically “feminine”. The latter represents empirical reality by attempting to describe how actual women talk in specific interactional settings.

The reconceptualization of genderlect in recent sociolinguistic research was signaled by the replacement of the terms “women’s” and “men’s language” with the labels “feminine” and “masculine” speech styles. These terms express a “doing gender” perspective and mark a shift from the determination of genderlect on purely linguistic grounds to one on interactional stances and pragmatic meanings. Specific linguistic forms cannot be uniquely attributed to a particular (gender) identity. In contrast, linguistic features have come to be ideologically linked to a specific identity through indirect “indexicality” by indicating particular interactional stances (solidarity, hesitation), which in turn point to particular social positionings (Ochs, 1992). Hence, the conception of indirect indexicality between linguistic forms and social signification form an “indexical field” (Eckert, 2008), a constellation of potential meanings to which a single linguistic form is attached. A woman might opt for a linguistic feature which marks assertiveness not so much in order to sound like a man (display a male identity) as to be associated with values (dynamism) stereotypically assigned to men and dissociated from those (passiveness) linked to women. Similarly, stylistic features like autonomy and cooperation, which are considered masculine and feminine characteristics, respectively, do not necessarily index gender but may be attached to other social meanings, such as alignment with school values (Archakis, 2008). Moreover, a particular linguistic feature cannot be linked unequivocally to (gender) identity, since the same linguistic feature can have multiple, or even contrasting, communicative functions depending on the context.

The way feminine and masculine styles of talk have been defined in the literature as symbolic constructs (Malz & Borker, 1982; also *Analytical framework: indexical processes of gender identities* section below) presupposes a patriarchal social organization in which men and women assume traditional gender roles. Hence, women who resist hegemonic female identity by displaying a more “progressive” identity distance themselves from prototypically feminine speech stylistic resources. Women found in settings that challenge their inferior status to men, such as acting as interviewers, and thus having power over their (male) addressee (Giora, 1996),

often imitate the dominant group (men) by adopting its values (masculine style of talk). The strategy of having a superior group as a role model and being unable to shape a positive distinct identity is known as “assimilation”, and is the first stage of a social group attempting to reject its inferiority (Tajfel, 1981). In assimilation, the inferior social group has a restricted level of identity consciousness and attempts to display the superior group’s qualities as a first step, such as towards its inferiors and/or equals. Hence, in the study conducted by Giora (1996), the female interviewers of the Israeli media employed masculine speech stylistic resources when interviewing women not men.

The first studies of language and gender appeared in Greece in the 1980s (e.g. Pavlidou, 1984), due to the delay in the appearance of the Greek feminist movement and the recent introduction of sociolinguistics to Greece (Pavlidou, 2006). The limited Greek sociolinguistic research on gender suggests that men display a competitive and autonomous (masculine) communicative style, while women assume a cooperative and supportive (feminine) role in informal interactions and conversational narratives (Georgakopoulou, 1995; Makri-Tsilipakou, 1994). School boys and girls assimilate the normative interactional ethos attached to their gender, while teachers position them in traditional gender identities (Archakis, 2006). Instances of women’s resistance to hegemonic gender identities through the use of masculine talk were detected (Makri-Tsilipakou, 1998), but these findings indicate the “reluctance of Greek society to disassociate women from the private sphere and acknowledge their public presence in equity with men” (Makri-Tsilipakou, 2003, p. 719).

### Mediation of gender identity construction

Many studies explore the depiction of women in fictional mediated settings, such as television series (e.g. Davis, 1990), commercials (e.g. Reichert, 2003) and films (e.g. Eschholz et al., 2002). Such texts tend to project hegemonic female identities of being a “good mother and wife”, of “looking young” and of having the “ideal body shape”. These studies focus on women’s marital status and physical traits, not their social and professional activities. When defined through their professional identity, women are usually presented as doing jobs stereotypically attached to women and inferior to men (nurse, secretary). Greek television (Stamou & Maleskou, 2007) and film industry (Kartalou, 2000) have reproduced similar traditional gender representations.

Consequently, in the portrayal of women the media perpetuate traditional patriarchal gender relations and do not reflect the diverse roles assumed by women in contemporary societies. Diachronic studies have found limited progress in the mediation of women, although their social status has improved (e.g. Allan & Coltrane, 1996). Even when attempting to mediate more “progressive” female identities, hegemonic representations of femininity persist. For instance, the celebration of female power through the depiction of single, independent and professionally successful women is often juxtaposed to the unhappiness and imbalance such women face in their personal life by being unable to find the “right man” (Kartalou, 2000; Stamou & Maleskou, 2007). The construction of successful women professionals through the adoption of masculine qualities (by “working like men”) is

often represented as being at odds with their sexuality and attractiveness as “women” (Kartalou, 2000). Thus, by representing women's professional and gender identities in conflict, since success in one domain presupposes failure in the other, such “progressive” depictions question whether women can combine the public with the private spheres.

Despite the wealth of studies on the media portrayal of women, there is limited research on the mediation of women's speech patterns and the role of such depictions in the reproduction of hegemonic gender identities (Chan, 2008; Giora, 1996). Studies exploring women's speech styles in fictional mediated settings are even rarer (Behm, 2009).

The paucity of sociolinguistic studies on the mediation of gender identity construction reflects the early sociolinguists' hostility to media texts thought to depict “non-authentic” speech (Coupland, 2007). Given the central role of media and culture in the shaping of postmodern social life, mediation was recently acknowledged as “a core sociolinguistic domain” (Coupland, 2009, p. 297). Many recent studies explore the representation of social and geographical varieties in advertising (Van Gijssel, Speelman, & Geeraerts, 2008), television series (Dhoest, 2004) and films (Marriott, 1997). Greek studies on the depiction of both geographical and social variation are few (Archakis, Lampropoulou, & Papazachariou, 2009; Georgakopoulou, 2000; Stamou, 2011). Media texts do not reflect sociolinguistic reality but contribute to its construction (see Androutsopoulos, 2010 on the “reflection fallacy” governing most early sociolinguistic studies of the media) through the representation of linguistic variation according to hegemonic ideologies about language and the world. In this context, the dominant standardness and monolingualism (Silverstein, 1996) are reproduced through the static portrayal of fictional characters as speakers of social or geographical dialect, leading to their caricaturization.

Against the monolithic depiction of speech style in mediated settings, a depiction scripted according to the ideological framework in which the media operate, the question is how does media discourse represent the linguistic practices of women: does it capture the multi-faceted quality of female identities or does it script women's style of talk as stereotypically feminine, following hegemonic patriarchal gender representations? The findings of Behm (2009) on the mediation of the conversational styles of the four female protagonists of the American television series *Sex and the City* are telling. Though the characters' depiction is at odds with traditional gender representations, by being portrayed as independent and self-confident Manhattan single women, they do not exhibit a prototypically masculine speech style. Depending on the particular female identities they construct (e.g. conservative Charlotte vs. sexually liberated Samantha), Carrie and Charlotte use many feminine speech stylistic features, while Miranda and Samantha use masculine communicative strategies. Hence, contrary to the static mediation of other linguistic varieties, the media portrayal of genderlect is more complicated and dynamic.

## Methodology

### *Theoretical framework: the “identities in interaction” model*

The mediation of gender identity construction in Greek television is examined by drawing on the “identities in

interaction” model (Bucholtz & Hall, 2005), which conceptualizes identity from a performative perspective and permits the analysis of the way gender identity is discursively constructed. Bucholtz and Hall adopt a “sociocultural linguistic” perspective on identity that identifies five principles. Our analysis emphasizes the “emergence”, “indexicality” and “relationality” principles. The “positionality” principle will be only partly addressed, whereas the “partialness” principle will not be considered.<sup>1</sup>

First, the “emergence” principle challenges the static view of identity as an internal psychological mechanism and stresses the fluidity of identity as a fruit of social interaction, constituted through language. Emergence is best shown when speakers do not comply with the social category to which they are normatively ascribed and actively produce new forms of identity. The emergence principle permits seeing feminine and masculine speech styles as symbolic resources which female television characters draw on to project their gender identities. Any cases of identity fluctuations across or within an interaction and of resistance against hegemonic (traditional) female identity through the distance from feminine speech stylistic resources will be considered by means of the emergence principle.

Second, the “indexicality” principle focuses on the mechanism through which identity is constituted: the stylistic resources that construct identity. “Indexicality”, introduced to linguistic anthropology by Silverstein (1976), alludes to the creation of semiotic links between linguistic forms and social meanings to show how specific linguistic features point to (or “index”) specific identity categories. Though associations between particular linguistic forms and social positionings are treated as “indexical” (meaning real or objective, following Peirce), they are “symbolic” (conventional, according to Peirce), rooted in cultural beliefs and ideological assumptions about what kind of speaker employs particular sorts of language (Coupland, 2007). Indexicality foregrounds the way in which the language-identity relationship has been naturalized. Moreover, language is indirectly linked to social meaning, since linguistic forms index particular pragmatic meanings, which in turn index particular identities (Ochs, 1992). Thus, linguistic forms are attached to multiple indexical values, shaping an “indexical field” (Eckert, 2008). Using “text-level indexicality”, Agha (2007) emphasizes the role of co-text for the delimitation of the indexical value of co-occurring linguistic signs. Following Bucholtz and Hall, indexical processes occur at all levels of language use, ranging from implicatures, presuppositions, labeling, and stance, to specific linguistic forms, and entire linguistic codes. Here, the gender identities of the television characters are analyzed through two indexical processes: communicative strategies characterizing feminine and masculine speech style and category terms of women and men through the tool of “Membership Categorization Analysis”.

Third, the “positionality” principle refers to the multiple positions an individual is engaged simultaneously in a single interaction. Positionality challenges the traditional view of identity as defined solely by means of broad social categories (gender, ethnicity and social class). Speakers may also adopt local identity categories that explain linguistic practices. According to Bucholtz and Hall, a speaker can be involved in: macro-level sociological categories (gender, social class, age), local and ethnographically determined cultural positions



(“jocks” vs. “burnouts”: Eckert, 1997), and temporary interaction-oriented roles (speaker, listener, evaluator). Even in a single facet of identity (demographic categories), a person usually combines diverse positions. As gender is not easily isolated from other social categories, such as ethnicity and class, men and women do not form separate social groups with the same interests and features. It is then important to consider how gender interplays with other social variables to shape a person's identity/ies. Focusing only on the first type of positions (social categories), relevant for our study is to account for the ways gender interacts with geography (urban vs. rural life).

Finally, the “relationality” principle emphasizes the construction of identity as an inter-subjective phenomenon, acquiring meaning always comparatively and in relation to other people's identities, by separating the self from the other. According to Bucholtz and Hall, there are three pairs of complementary identity relations, through which speakers position themselves or others intersubjectively. The first pair, “adequation”–“distinction”, concerns the relation of sameness and difference by which subjects are constructed as alike and different from others. Adequation downplays any possible differences that disrupt similarity, while distinction suppresses similarities that endanger the construction of difference. The second pair of relations, “authentication”–“denaturalization”, concerns issues of veridicality and imposture. Authentication describes processes by which identities are constructed as true or genuine, such as a speaker's attempt to confirm or validate his/her identity. Denaturalization challenges the authenticity of an identity and highlights ways in which it is false, problematic or crafted, such as the questioning of an identity which breaks ideological expectations. The third pair, “authorization”–“illegitimation”, stresses the role of structures of institutionalized power and ideology in the validation of identities. Authorization refers to cases when an identity receives institutional recognition or is imposed. Illegitimation concerns the denial, ignorance or censorship of an identity by institutionalized power. Although the adequation–distinction pair is the most widely, and often the only one, considered in social research, the authentication–denaturalization pair, through which the television female characters seek to confirm their gender identities, refute others' identities, or question the ways in which they are positioned by others, is more relevant for our data.

#### *Analytical framework: indexical processes of gender identities*

The indexical processes (category terms of women and men, feminine and masculine communicative strategies) used to explore the mediation of gender identity construction were selected on the basis of our main research questions: what meaning does Greek television give to “traditional” and “progressive” female identities and how are these gender identities stylistically constructed? The questions are interrelated, since different gender identities are constituted by distinct stylistic resources. Adopting “the indexical field” concept as informed by Eckert (2008) and combining these two types of indexical processes, we can explore the social meanings attached to feminine and masculine speech stylistic resources.

The way in which the television series under analysis construes “traditional” and “progressive” women is accounted for

with the Membership Categorization Analysis (MCA) (Sacks, 1992), a tool for investigating the practically oriented and commonsensical cultural reasoning of speakers (or members) in their interactions. Belonging to an ethnomethodological line of inquiry, the MCA views identity as an accomplishment of practical action in interaction with others, compatible with the “identities in interaction” model (Bucholtz & Hall, 2005: 588). It alludes to the categorizations people do of each other during talk as members in society. Such membership categories rely on social categories (“mother”, “teacher”) grouped together by members of a culture into “natural” collections known as “Membership Categorization Devices” (MCDs) (the category “mother” comes from the MCD “family” and teacher from the MCD “profession”). Such collections often include categories employed together by members, forming “standardized relational pairs” (the categories “men and “women” go together in the MCD “gender”). The explicit mention of identity categories in interaction is the most direct type of indexical process (Bucholtz & Hall, 2005). The MCA's most important contribution to the indexical process of categorization is that membership categories carry a set of typical activities and characteristics known as “category-bound predicates”, so there are conventional expectations about what constitutes a “mother's” or “teacher's” normative behavior (Watson, 1978). Category-bound predicates make members infer a membership category by a simple reference to its typical actions, attributes or obligations. The concept of category-bound predicates resides in the commonsensical ideas society members hold about categories of people. In our case, the most relevant MCD is “gender”, while different membership categories of women (with their category-bound predicates) and other relevant MCDs emerge from the interactions under analysis. Through MCA, we can study how television characters categorize each other as certain types of women and what these types of women are represented as doing and being.

The way the female identities of television characters are stylistically constructed is considered by exploiting the sociolinguistic literature on the interactional stances and pragmatic meanings characterizing feminine and masculine speech styles. Except for the well-held idea that feminine talk is a “ladies' talk” that involves adopting a deferential stance and speaking in a refined manner (e.g. orientation to standard forms of language, avoidance of vulgar expressions and taboo words), most typologies refer to the different communicative strategies prototypically attached to men and women (e.g. Malz & Borker, 1982). Feminine talk is managed on a collaborative floor, while masculine talk on a competitive one. The adoption of a collaborative orientation to an interaction implies having a supportive and conciliatory role in order to achieve mutual agreement and consensus. The competitive speech style involves having an oppositional role with the aim to control the interaction, and provoke disagreement and conflicts. Moreover feminine communicative style is a “rapport-talk”, masculine style is a “report-talk” (Tannen, 1990). The former focuses on the interpersonal functions of the interaction, emotional connection and intimacy, with the aim to maintain social relationships. Rapport-talk is achieved through symmetrical communication and engagement in intimate self-disclosure. The latter focuses on the referential functions of the interaction for the exchange of information, with the aim to stress independence, status and hierarchy. Report-talk is

mostly instantiated by asymmetrical communication and discussion of impersonal topics. Summarizing the interactional stances prototypically attached to women and men, Holmes and Stubbe (2003, p. 574) identified the following binary oppositions characterizing feminine vs. masculine speech style: indirect vs. direct; conciliatory vs. confrontational; facilitative vs. competitive; collaborative vs. autonomous; minor contribution in public; dominates public talking time; supportive feedback vs. aggressive interruptions; person/ process-oriented vs. task/ outcome-oriented; and affectively oriented vs. referentially oriented.

### Textual corpus

The television series under analysis, *The Hara's Café* (*To Kafé tis Harás*), was broadcast weekly in 2003–2006 (88 episodes in total) by a private Greek television channel. The series' script writers are well-known. Besides its high popularity, the series was selected because it treated gender issues, specifically the dipole of “traditional” vs. “progressive women”, which was expressed by contrasting “rural” and “urban life”. Except for a schematic construction of the world, the series revolved around caricaturized characters involved in humorous incidents.

The action takes place in the fictitious village “Kolokotronitsi”, in the Peloponnese. Though the village mayor (Periandros) holds a Master's degree in folklore studies from abroad (UK), he is conservative and hostile towards modernization. Following Greek rural traditions, he aims to make Kolokotronitsi a model of “order and morality”. Periandros lives with his son Manolakis and his housemaid Tassia. Everything seems peaceful until the arrival of Hara, who comes to live in the village with her out-of-wedlock daughter (Valia), and causes a stir. Hara comes from Athens (she is often called the “Athenian”) and has progressive and “modern” ideas. She intends to open a “lounge café”, and initiate villagers to the urban culture, by serving “trendy” Italian coffees, such as cappuccino, and European snacks, such as “quiche lorraine”. She is a liberated and dynamic woman, wearing sexy clothes. Thus, Hara outrages Periandros, who considers her dangerous for the villagers and tries to force her to leave Kolokotronitsi. Hara and Periandros constantly quarrel, but eventually fall in love and get engaged. In the end, Hara decides to return to Athens, because she cannot bridge her differences with Periandros. The opposite to Hara is Stavroula, Periandros's sister. Stavroula is married to Vagelis, who keeps a traditional Greek coffee place in the village with exclusively male customers (a “καφενείο”). Stavroula and Vagelis, who are constantly arguing, try to have a baby, and in the end she is expecting a son. They represent a traditional couple, with the husband being the master of the house, and Stavroula keeping the household, working in her husband's coffee place, and tolerating his cheatings. The television series includes several peripheral characters, villagers of Kolokotronitsi: the alcoholic priest and his gossip wife, the village madman, Trelantonis, and Stavrakas and Panais, Vagelis's closest friends, notorious for their laziness, thus permanent clients of Vagelis's and Hara's coffee places.

Our analysis focuses on the two central female characters, who incarnate contrasting categories of women: the “traditional” Stavroula and the “progressive” Hara. By adopting a qualitative analytic perspective to flesh out how the two

women construct their own and others' sense of gender through the structure of their talk, we focus on interactions that point to gender issues. We selected interactions in which each woman talked with the men of her life (Stavroula with Periandros and Vagelis; Hara with Periandros) and interactions between Stavroula and Hara, in order to detect differences in their gender construction depending on whether they engage in mixed- or same-sex conversations. We selected interactions from the first five episodes, which portray the two women, and the last five, during which the female protagonists undergo a radical identity change with a reversal of roles: the “traditional” Stavroula becomes “progressive” and the “progressive” Hara becomes “traditional”. Their identity change is due to a dramatic twist in their lives: Stavroula is pregnant and decides to leave Vagelis and keep the child on her own, while Hara is getting engaged to her “enemy” Periandros. Due to this reversal of identities, we compare how the two characters are constructed in traditional and progressive terms and detect possible differences in the ways the television series construes and stylistically mediates gender identities depending on the particularities of television characters.

Each episode lasts on average 42 min, and includes on average eighteen interactions of one to three minutes. Eighteen interactions from the first five and the last five episodes were selected for analysis, each having an average duration of 2.2 min. The end of each conversation was marked by scene change featuring different characters. The television series was accessed through the website [www.greek-movies.com](http://www.greek-movies.com).

### Analysis

We present two interactions of the “traditional” Stavroula, and two of the “progressive” Hara. Next, we illustrate the change of identity that the two protagonists underwent by analyzing one interaction for each protagonist with the man of her life. Finally, we present two interactions between the two women: one (excerpt 7) involves a dispute and took place before the two women became friends, the other (excerpt 8) concerns an intimate conversation between them as two closed friends.

#### *The “traditional” Stavroula*

- (1) Stavroula (S), Periandros (P), Tassia (T), Manolakis (M): Episode 1 (32:03–33:43)<sup>2</sup>  
 ((Stavroula is going to her brother's house Periandros in order to complain about her husband Vagelis))
  - 1 S: Good evening.
  - 2 P: ((looking at his watch)) Where are you going at this hour sister?
  - 3 S: Where am I going? Or somebody else where is he going? =
  - 4 P: =Don't speak in front of the child. Tassia, put Manolis to sleep.
  - 5 T: Yes, ok (.) come on, my boy, say goodnight to your aunt.
  - 6 M: Good night my aunt ((they are hugging and kissing each other))
  - 7 S: Good night my: little star.
  - 8 M: When will you bake my favorite walnut cake?
  - 9 S: Later, it's not the time yet:
  - 10 P: Come on ((He is hugging and kissing Manolis))(...)

- 11 P: What is happening with you Stavroula? Will you be arguing all the time with your husband?
- 12 S: He is treating me terribly (.) I'm his slave (.) he is swearing at me and is humiliating me in front of
- 13 people.
- 14 P: You should have thought of that when you insisted to marry him. It was your choice, and you have to
- 15 put up with him.
- 16 S: He hasn't always been a tyrant.
- 17 P: Not for you:, who were blinded by love. I told you so from the beginning, he didn't
- 18 look okay.
- 19 S: He has not been like that though (.) at least he did not have a (.) mistress.
- 20 P: ((Looking around him in order not to be heard)) You are not sure about that. Don't be an insignificant
- 21 woman now and don't listen to the gossips of the priest's wife and of the other women in the village =
- 22 S: =I'm sure he has one my brother, I found lipstick on his collar (.) ((Periandros is making a gesture of
- 23 disapproval)) and when he goes out at night he changes his underwear, who? Vage:lis, who I used to
- 24 beg to take a bath.
- 25 P: What dirty man ((with a gesture of disapproval)). Anyway, you must be patient (.) after some time he
- 26 will be bored and leave her.
- 27 S: ((rising from her chair)) My patience has run out Periandros (.) I want a divorce.
- 28 P: (rising from his chair too)) This is out of the question. You should get this out of your mind. You
- 29 shouldn't think that again. I do not allow divorces in our family.
- 30 S: But why you have//
- 31 P: //Me what? My wife has died.
- 32 S: But Peri:andros.
- 33 P: I said she died. She died.

In excerpt (1), Stavroula is constructed by means of the categories of “sister” (line 2), “aunt” (lines 5–6) and “wife” (through an invocation to the relational pair part “husband”: line 11), on the basis of the MCDs “family” and “marriage”, which allude to a patriarchal society. The category-bound predicate of the category “aunt” is to bake cakes for her nephew, whereas the predicates bound to the categories “sister” and “wife” involve a patriarchal dominance delivered from the brother to the husband. Her brother controls her moves (line 2) and forbids her from getting a divorce (lines 28–29). According to Stavroula, her husband is a “tyrant” (line 16), who constantly humiliates and cheats on her. Stavroula's invocation of the MCD “tyranny” to characterize her marriage (through the reference to the relational pair “tyrant”–“slave”) is a case of authentication, through which she victimizes herself to justify the divorce (line 27). In this way, a more dynamic female identity emerges, through which Stavroula tries to take control of her life, but Periandros suppresses her efforts. When his attempt to denaturalize Stavroula's self-categorization as a “slave” by constructing her through the derogatory category of “γυναικούλα”/“insignificant woman” fails (lines 20–24), Periandros resorts to his power as a traditional brother (lines 28–32). This way, Stavroula's emergent dynamic identity is illegitimated.

These traditional gender identity categories are stylistically constructed by the prototypical feminine style of talk of Stavroula and the masculine style of Periandros. The interaction is organized on a competitive floor, generating conflict between siblings. Stavroula expresses disagreement with Periandros indirectly: she repeats part of Periandros's turn (repair) and asks a question (line 3), she marks her hesitance with pauses (line 19), and leaves her turn incomplete (line 32). Similarly, her attempt to perform a more dynamic female identity, when she tells Periandros about the humiliation she suffers from her husband (lines 12–13) and her wish for a divorce (line 27), is also made hesitantly (marked by pauses). Moreover, the diminutive “αστεράκι μου:”/“my: little star” (and the elongation of sound) used when talking to her nephew (line 7) or her hesitation (marked by a pause) to employ the vulgar word “γκόμενα” (mistress) in line 19, characterizes ladies' talk. In contrast, Periandros's disagreements are direct (lines 28–29), his interruptions aggressive (line 31), and he adopts an imperative style through his questions (line 2) and assertive (lines 31, 33) and directive speech acts (lines 14–15). Hence, Periandros suppressed most of Stavroula's disagreements. For instance, after her disagreement (line 3), Periandros takes the floor without a pause and scolds her for talking about her marriage problems in front of his son (line 4), and then interrupts her disagreement (line 30). Consequently, in this excerpt femininity and masculinity are associated with passiveness and oppression, respectively.

- (2) Stavroula (S), Vagelis (V): Episode 5 (15:10–16:54)  
 ((Vagelis is waiting for Stavroula to have dinner, sitting at the table of the kitchen. Stavroula enters the house in a hurry))
- 1 S: I was late, isn't it? I'm so:rry Vage:lis.
- 2 V: Where have you been? I haven't eaten anything I'm starving.
- 3 S: Since you were hungry why haven't you ea:ten? The food was ready for you in the dish.
- 4 V: You were not here to dish up the food would I help myself? ((he is drinking Greek raki on a empty
- 5 table)) (.) If you wanted such a man you could marry so:me si:ssy guy.
- 6 S: ((serving the food)) You are right (.) I didn't want a sissy, I wanted a bully.
- 7 V: ((looking at the food)) What the hell have you cooked again? Is that spinach rice? Will a six feet tall
- 8 man satisfy his hunger with such a thing?
- 9 S: You are not six feet tall Vage:lis.
- 10 V: Shut up. If a man does not eat meat he will not glut himself.
- 11 S: Toda:y is Wednesda:y, it is a si:n to eat me:at.
- 12 V: You are also a devout woman damn you.
- 13 S: Take here some bread, and some olives, and if you do not satisfy your hunger I can serve you another
- 14 dish of spinach rice. I wa:nt to pop across my brother to give a dish of spinach rice for Manolakis.

In excerpt (2), Stavroula is constructed by means of predicates bound to the category “traditional wife”. She apologizes to her husband for being late (line 1), her duties are to prepare and serve him food (line 3), and she tolerates his bad language (line 7). Her traditional female identity is complemented by the

category “traditional aunt”, with reference to the predicate “care for the nephew’s food” (line 14), and her characterization by Vagelis as “θρησκόα”/“devout” (line 12). Though Vagelis displays predicates bound to the category of “husband as master” (lines 2 and 4–5) and authenticates himself as not a “sissy guy” (line 5), considering the eating of meat as a category-bound predicate of real men (line 10), Stavroula resists his dominance by denaturalizing his identities. She tells him that he could have eaten by himself (line 3), calls him a “νταρά”/“bully” (line 6), and tells him that he is not as tall as he thinks (line 9). By constantly displaying his power as a traditional husband, Vagelis illegitimizes Stavroula’s resistance.

Similar to excerpt (1) above, the traditional gender identity categories displayed by Stavroula and Vagelis are stylistically constructed by drawing on feminine and masculine speech styles. During the interaction Stavroula expresses disagreement with Vagelis and resists his dominance, but in an indirect and hesitant way, through elongations of sounds (line 3, 9, 11), pause (line 6) and a question (line 3). Vagelis suppresses all these attempts (line 10), exerting power over Stavroula through his questions (line 2, 7). Femininity and masculinity have similar indexical values to excerpt (1).

#### The “progressive” Hara

- (3) Hara (H), Periandros (P), Priest (Pr), Trelantonis (Tr): Episode 2 (40:42–42:11)  
 ((The priest is making the annual holy water rite of the primary school of the village and Hara is going there to complain about the refusal of the teacher to register her daughter to school))
- 1 H: I’m denouncing my daughter’s exclusion from the school of the village ((rising her hand)).
  - 2 And before going to the ministry of education to complain I’m appealing to your compassion against
  - 3 the racism that myself and especially my innocent child are suffering from.
  - 4 Pr: ((addressing the teacher)) What is going on? Is it true that you did not register the child to our
  - 5 school?=  
 6 Tr: =Yes it is true and this is not fair (.) do you imagine having refused to register Jesus
  - 7 Christ because it was not Joseph’s legitimate child?
  - 8 Pr: We should not mix up things (.) but brothers, except for being antichristian, it is also illegal
  - 9 ((staring at Periandros)) not to register the child to school.
  - 10 P: I don’t know if it is illegal my priest but we are doing this for our good/ fo:r our good (.) but
  - 11 especially for the good of the little girl.
  - 12 H: Why is this for the good of the little gi:rl?
  - 13 P: Because she should not constantly change school environment at this tender age.
  - 14 H: But she will not change it again. Her home is here and her school is here.
  - 15 P: ((coming closer to Hara)) Listen to me girl, you were surely watching television reality shows and
  - 16 you think that you have come here to participate in The Farm. Let me tell you that rural life is much
  - 17 tougher than what you make it and you will soon find it hard and you will be forced to leave.

- 18 H: ((coming even closer to Periandros)) And I’m telling you that I’m a woman who likes
- 19 challenges. If I have something on my mind I don’t give up (.) I am here and I have come here to stay.
- 20 P: ((coming much closer to Hara)) You will not stay (.) I will personally make sure of it (.) Periandros
- 21 Popotas.
- 22 H: This will not happen Popotas. I will never leave.

In excerpt (3), Hara constructs herself by means of categories contested by Periandros. She projects herself through predicates bound to the “dynamic mother” and “woman” categories, who stands up for her daughter’s right to go to school (lines 1–3) and likes challenges in her life (lines 18–19). Periandros attempts to denaturalize Hara’s identities, by constructing her through predicates bound to the category of “irresponsible mother” (also from the MCD “family”), who does not care about her daughter’s psychological balance (line 13), and predicates bound to the category of “city person” (from the MCD “geography”), who has a distorted image of country life (lines 15–17). However, Hara resists Periandros’s denaturalizing attempts (line 14, 18–19).

Hara’s progressive female identity categories are stylistically constructed through the use of a masculine speech style, converging with Periandros’s style. The interaction is organized on a competitive floor. Both Hara and Periandros look certain about what they say through the use of categorical assertive and commissive speech acts (lines 16, 17), stressed segments of talk and pauses for emphasis (lines 20–21). Hara strongly rejects the identity categories constructed for her by Periandros through disagreements. At first, she expresses disagreement in a refined way, by repeating part of Periandros’s turn (repair) and asking a question (line 12). This way, she imitates Periandros’s speech, giving an ironic overtone to her utterance (notice the elongation of sound in “μικρού:λα”/“little gi:rl”). This is a case of “stylization”, the artificial use of a speech style on the part of speakers, through which they “are putting on a voice” (Coupland, 2007). Her subsequent disagreements are expressed more directly and sharply (line 14, 18–19, 22). The climax of their conflict is also paralinguistically represented, by coming closer to each other. Consequently, in this excerpt masculinity signifies dynamism and competitiveness.

- (4) Hara (H), Periandros (P), Priest (Pr), Priest’s wife (PrW): Episode 5 (19:56–22:58)  
 ((After the Sunday church service, where no villager is greeting Hara, Hara is going to the priest in order to complain about the rumors Periandros is spreading against her to the village))
- 1 H: Excuse me, my priest (.) I want to talk to you.
  - 2 Pr: What’s going on?
  - 3 H: The mayor my priest has turned the women of the village agai:nst me.
  - 4 P: ((approaching)) I have the impression that the lady tells something about me?
  - 5 H: Yes, she tells something about you and has no problem to tell it to you too.(...)
  - 6 P: We tell my priest’s wife that as Trelantonis was seduced by the beauties of the beautiful Mrs.
  - 7 Haska ((Hara’s surname)), the danger is that the other males of our village will also lose their mind.



8 H: To sum up my priest, yo:ur wife must have told you that, the mayor is spreading the rumor that I will lead the  
 9 men of the village to disa:ster.  
 10 P: To disaster. That's right to disa:ster. I didn't say that, but you put it very well.  
 11 To disaster my priest. ((Hara is making a gesture of disapproval))  
 12 Pr: Do you have such intentions my girl?  
 13 H: What do you sa:y my priest? Is there a problem with inviting people to my place? Any  
 14 businessman wouldn't want to attract custo:mers?  
 15 PrW: Yes but the mayor says that people will drink spirits to your place.  
 16 H: Don't they drink spirits to Vagelis's place?  
 17 P: Yes they do, although I have forbidden them to, but they drink a glass of wine and then return  
 18 home to their families (.) because Vagelis does not use tr:icks to seduce them.  
 19 H: Who will use them tricks? Do you want me to hit on you jerk?  
 20 P: This is the character of this woman.  
 21 Pr: Peace be onto you all Christians.  
 22 H: And then, will I make tricks to them in front of their wives? Let's say I'm dirty, but am I also crazy?  
 23 P: In front of their wives?  
 24 H: But I've never said that I want them to come to my place alone. I want them to come along with their  
 25 wives.  
 26 P: Women to come into traditional coffee places ((in Greek "καφενεύεια"))? You are crazy.  
 27 H: It is you who are crazy. I can't believe it, where are you living here? What Middle Age are you trying  
 28 to enforce here?  
 29 Pr: It is not an issue of Middle Age. Our village is a model of order and morality.  
 30 H: I can't stand this. And is it immoral for women to enter a traditional coffee place ((in Greek  
 31 "καφενεύειο")) and drink a coffee, a tea, and why not? And a glass of scotch ((she means "scotch  
 32 whisky")).  
 33 Pr: What is this scotch now?  
 34 P: This anarcho-hippie my priest wants also to lure our women now. ((Hara makes a  
 35 gesture of disapproval))  
 36 PrW: She will not lu:re us to drink tea and eat scotch in her coffee place (.) I don't thi:nk so.  
 37 H: Hear, hear my priest's wife. Take the priest and come to the opening, and you will see by yourselves  
 38 if my place has something to reproach.  
 39 P: I forbid you, my priest to take your wife to that coffee-bar.  
 40 Pr: You don't have the right to forbid me Periandros. Consider that besides political power, there is also  
 41 the religious one. ((Hara has a smile of triumph))  
 42 P: The uprising conti:nues (.) Is this that you are doing? You turn everybody against me.  
 43 H: My priest's wife, I'm expecting you to my place, you and all other women. And not only for the  
 44 opening (.) I'm thinki:ng of having a La:dies' Day.  
 45 PrW: What?  
 46 H: A La:dies' Day.

47 P: A La:dies' Day. You have come to Kolokotronitsi ((the name of the village)) to have a Ladies' Day.

48 But the only thing people here know is to ride a donkey.

Excerpt (4) illustrates par excellence the fluid and emergent quality of (gender) identities. Periandros authenticates Hara by means of predicates bound to the category of "immoral woman", who wants to seduce the village men (lines 6–7, 10–11, 17–18). To resist, Hara denaturalizes this identity by displaying alternative identity categories. The priest and his wife contribute to the construction of these identities. When Hara talks to the priest, she uses predicates bound to the category of "unprotected woman", asking for his support against Periandros's rumors about her (lines 1–3). By displaying this soft-hearted identity and accusing Periandros for speaking evil of her, she tries to gain the priest's support. Moreover, she projects a more dynamic female identity, struggling to restore the truth against Periandros's false words about her, with the use of irony, by stylizing Periandros (lines 8–9), through threats against Periandros (line 19), and via appeal to reason (lines 22–23). Furthermore, she constructs herself by means of predicates bound to the category of "feminist", standing up for women's right to go out and enjoy themselves (lines 30–32, 43–44). Periandros denaturalizes this identity by categorizing her instead as "anarcho-hippie" (line 34). To further denaturalize the category of "immoral woman" attributed to her, Hara projects the identity of businesswoman (lines 13–14, 43–44), and displays predicates bound to the category of "modern woman of the city" (including an interaction of the MCDs "gender" and "geography"), involving an emancipated woman drinking at bars (lines 30–32, 43–44). Periandros denaturalizes this identity with predicates bound to the category of "city person", with no awareness of country life (lines 47–48). The category of "modern woman of the city", which combines two MCDs, is conflated with categories from other MCDs: "businesswoman" (from the MCD "profession") and "feminist" (from the MCD "movement"). This stresses Hara's multiplicity of positions. This category also invokes a distinction between "urban vs. rural life" that connotes different values for conversationalists. For Hara, the city means progress and women emancipation (lines 30–32, 43–44), while the village symbolizes "Middle Age" (especially for women: line 27) because of Periandros. For Periandros, the city equals immorality (line 34), while the village is a "model of order and morality". Finally, the priest (line 12) and his wife (line 36) contribute to Hara's attempts to denaturalize the category of "immoral woman" as authenticated by Periandros throughout the interaction. When Periandros tries to illegitimate Hara's identity by invoking his political power (line 39), the priest authorizes it by having recourse to his religious identity (lines 40–41).

From a stylistic perspective, Hara draws upon both feminine and masculine speech stylistic characteristics. Feminine stylistic features are strategically employed for the construction of identity categories ("unprotected woman", "businesswoman") through which Hara attempts to gain support from the priest and his wife. For example, Hara displays the category of "unprotected woman" by showing hesitance (pause, elongation of sounds, lines 1 and 3). The category of "businesswoman" is constructed by means of feminine pragmatic meanings, such

as indirect disagreements (statements in the form of questions: lines 13–14). In contrast, when confronting Periandros, she displays a more dynamic identity, stylistically constructed in an identical way with Periandros's style of talk, through masculine features indicating assertiveness and confrontation: categorical assertive speech acts (line 5), stressed segments of talk for emphasis (lines 24–25), disagreements expressed directly (line 27), vulgar expressions (line 19), and aggressive questions (lines 27–28). The category of “modern woman of the city”, conflated with “businesswoman” and “feminist”, is indexed through the code mixing with English (“Ladies' Day” in lines 44, 46). Thus, in this excerpt, femininity is linked to diplomacy and artfulness, whereas masculinity is attached to dynamism and competitiveness.

*Change of identity: the “progressive” Stavroula*

- (5) Stavroula (S), Priest (Pr), Stavrakas (St), Panais (Pa), Vagelis (V): Episode 88 (5:42–18:28)  
 ((When Stavroula comes to know that she is pregnant, she leaves Vagelis giving him the impression that the child she is expecting is from another man. Vagelis sinks into depression as a result of this shock. Stavroula is now running Hara's café, after Hara's engagement with Periandros and her decision to become a housewife. There she receives Vagelis's visit))
- 1 S: He:re is your rumiccino ((a coffee drink of cappuccino mixed with rum, a Hara's invention)) my  
 2 prie:st. And with double dose of rum. ((the priest is a notorious alcoholic))  
 3 Pr: Thank you my dear. Where is your daughter?  
 4 S: She went to the forest with Trelantonis. They love to watch little squirre:ls.  
 5 St: Stavroula, will you bring quickly the coffees?  
 6 S: Why? Are you in a hu:rry?  
 7 St: Yes we are. We want to pass also by from your ex house, to see your ex husband. Somebody should  
 8 ca:re about him. Since you ignore him.  
 9 Pa: You ignore him and cheat on him.  
 10 S: Clear out the place you jerks. I'm not longer that smoo:th-tongued and patient  
 11 being you remember. If I open my mouth, I will sling off at you ((literally saying “make a bath”)).  
 12 St: Why will you make us a bath? I bathed the other day. I'm clean ((Stavrakas ignores that “make a bath” in Greek slang means “sling off”))  
 13 S: You are also an idiot.  
 14 Pa: She has completely changed this woman.  
 15 V: ((Vagelis enters the café with a bunch of flowers))  
 16 Stavroula.  
 17 S: My dear Vage:lis, have you recovered? A:re you doing well?  
 18 V: I no longer have depression. (...)  
 19 S: What will you vow for me Vage:lis?  
 20 V: Well, I vow in the presence of all people here that I will love you, Boulitsa ((their adopted daughter))  
 21 and the child you are expecting (.) deeply and absolutely. I will never ask you who is the son of a bitch  
 22 who knocked up you, as long as we become a family again, all the four of us. Me, you (.) Boulitsa and the  
 23 bastard.

- 24 S: It is not a bastard Vage:lis. Then I'm revealing in the presence of all people here, that the father of the  
 25 child that I'm expecting is the one and only man whom I have ever made sex with. And since yesterday  
 26 I went to see the doctor in Tripolis ((name of the town next to Kolokotronitsi)), I'm revealing you  
 27 Vagelis that you are going to be the father (.) of a bo:y. ((Vagelis is looking at her all this time in  
 28 surprise and then faints after giving her the flowers))  
 29 S: Vage:lis. Vagelis. He has not had a stroke as I told him the news abruptly has he?  
 30 ((Stavrakas, Panais and the priest are trying to waken him))(...)  
 31 S: My dear Vage:lis are you doing well?  
 32 V: I'm well Stavroula, but I saw a dream. I dreamt of you telling me that I'm going to be a father.  
 33 S: You will be the father of a bo:y. ((Vagelis faints again))

In excerpt (5), a progressive female identity emerges for Stavroula, who constructs herself by using predicates bound to the category of “modern working woman” (concerning an interaction of the MCDs “gender” and “profession”), who knows how to handle insults received from men (lines 10–11), and has assimilated urban culture, by making “trendy” and youthful Italian coffees, such as “rumiccino” (line 1). The identity change she underwent is authenticated by herself and her entourage (lines 10–11 and 15). Her change is not complete but incorporates traditional gender identities as well, drawing on categories from the MCDs “family” and “marriage”. In line 3 the priest constructs her through the category of “mother” (by invoking the standardized relational pair part “daughter”), while Stavroula categorizes herself by predicates bound to the category of “caring mother”, who talks about what her adopted daughter likes to do. When Vagelis comes to the café, Stavroula displays predicates bound to the category of “caring wife”, interested in her husband's health (line 17, 29–31). Despite her emancipation, she tells Vagelis that the child she is expecting is not a “bastard”, adopting the word Vagelis used (lines 23–24). Vagelis also attempts to authenticate himself with predicates bound to the category of “progressive husband” (with contradictions; notice how he refers to Stavroula's supposed adultery, lines 21–22), accepting Stavroula's decision to give birth to her child and live together as a family (lines 20–23).

To construct a progressive gender identity, Stavroula draws on masculine speech stylistic features which show confrontation and direct resistance against (male) dominance: bad language, face threatening acts (lines 10–11), and aggressive questions (line 6). In contrast, the traditional female identity categories of “caring mother” and “wife” are constructed through a feminine style of talk showing emotional and informational support, marked by questions, elongations of sounds and stressed segments of talk (line 4, 17, 19). Thus, in this excerpt, masculinity acquires the meaning of emancipation, whereas femininity signifies care about the family.

*Change of identity: the “traditional” Hara*

- (6) Hara (H), Tassia (T), Periandros (P), Valia (V), Manolakis (M), Trelantonis (Tr): Episode 87 (17:28–20:02)

((After her engagement to Periandros, Hara no longer works in the café but becomes a housewife. She is welcoming her daughter Valia, who had been away to her father in Athens, in her new home, Periandros's house, and her new life as Periandros's fiancée. Valia does not believe her eyes when she sees her mother has completely changed and thinks that they are making fun of her))

- 1 T: The moussa:kas is rea:dy ((a Greek traditional food)).  
 2 H: Let me see. Da:sh, the béchame:l sauce ((an important ingredient of moussakas))  
 3 has curdled.  
 4 T: But we have not cut it in pieces yet, how do you know that the béchamel sauce has curdled?  
 5 H: What are you saying Tassia? ((she is shaking her hands with some irritation)) A good housewife can  
 6 decide on those thi:ngs by sight. ((she is hearing her daughter coming at the door)) They came.  
 7 V: Mum, mum.  
 8 H: My hea:rt, my sweet hea:rt, I missed you so much my baby. ((she is hugging and kissing her))  
 9 T: Can I kiss her too?  
 10 V: Tassia, I'm so glad to see you.  
 11 T: Welco:me, welcome my beau:ty. ((she is hugging and kissing her too))  
 12 H: Oh my God, I'm happy, I'm so happy to hug my child. ((she is hugging and kissing her again and  
 13 then looks at Periandros and Manolakis who also came in)) But Periandros.  
 14 P: What?  
 15 H: But Peria:ndros, you didn't use those ru:gs I have for you and we have wa:xed the floor with Tassi:a.  
 16 Valia didn't know it but why didn't you and Manolakis use them? Haven't we said that we should always  
 17 use ru:gs?  
 18 V: Mu:m, what are you saying?  
 19 H: What?  
 20 Tr: Who would ever think that Hara will talk about rugs, and will prepare French fries?  
 21 H: And today I have prepared them like chips, as all of you like.  
 22 P: I have repeatedly said though that fried food is not very healthy.  
 23 H: ((Valia is looking at her mother in surprise)) I know my dear, I know, we have agree:d to eat fried  
 24 food only twice a month, but since my child came today we've ma:de a violation of our agree:ment  
 25 P: Violations. Because I also see moussakas at the table. But you deserve it my dear, you cook it so well  
 26 that I might have a double serving.  
 27 V: Is that one of those delicious microwavable ones that we used to eat, mum?  
 28 H: My lo:ve don't hu:rt me, plea:se. I know, I made some sinful mistakes in the past but I have sincerely  
 29 regretted and I try to harshly atone for them. ((speaking to Periandros)) Come here my dear, come here (.) sit  
 30 down in your armchair to have a rest, you are surely very tired. I'm going to bring your slippers.  
 31 V: Come on mu:m, you are making fun of me (.) aren't you? ((nobody speaks)) I now got it, you  
 32 agreed to act in order to tease me. Aren't you making me a joke?

33 M: Welcome to Kolokotronitsi.

34 T: Come here, go to wash your hands with Manolakis and come for dinner (.) and you will be

35 informed in time of all changes.

In excerpt (6), a traditional female identity emerges for Hara, who constructs herself with the category of traditional "housewife" (lines 5–6), who can decide by sight whether the cooking of "μουσακάς"/"moussakas" was successful (lines 2–3), is obsessed with house cleaning (lines 15–17), and interested in satisfying her family (line 21). She also displays predicates bound to the category of "traditional wife" subordinate to the man-master of the house (lines 23–24). This obedience to male dominance is authenticated by the slippers Hara wants to bring to Periandros to comfort him after work (lines 29–30). Finally, Hara uses predicates bound to the category of "caring mother", who longs to see her daughter (line 8, 12). Periandros also constructs himself and Hara with predicates bound to the standardized relational pair of "traditional husband/fiancé" and "wife/fiancée" (Hara underwent an identity change because of him), by "scolding" her for cooking French fries and acknowledging her excellent cooking abilities (line 22, 25–26). Hara criticizes her old (progressive) identity, and thus authenticates her new (traditional) one, but her change of identity is denaturalized by other conversationalists. Tassia "teases" Hara for being able to judge by sight the success of her cooking, when the more experienced Tassia cannot (line 4). Her daughter Valia (having visited her father in Athens for some time), at first resists her mother's identity construction in traditional terms (line 27), and later thinks that this is a joke (lines 31–32). The village madman Trelantonis also comments on Hara's identity change (line 20). His denaturalization of Hara's traditional identity is interesting as such a sharp observation is unexpected from the madman. It seems as though we do not only hear Trelantonis's but also the script writers' voice. From Bakhtin (1981), this is an example of "double-voicing", because two voices are heard at the same time: the character's which speaks, and the author's which is echoing. Double-voicing permits the script writers to include in an implicit way comments about the characters and the plot, representing the sentiments of the audience.

To construct traditional gender identity categories, Hara draws on a feminine speech style showing hesitance, such as mitigation of face threatening acts through questions (lines 16–17), and elongations of sounds (lines 23–24). She also adopts a conciliatory stance towards Periandros (lines 23–24) and employs ladies' talk, such as diminutives, sweet words with elongations of sounds (line 8) and decent swear words like "da:sh" (line 2). Her style contrasts to Periandros's masculine features which indicate assertiveness, such as categorical assertive speech acts and stressed segments of talk for emphasis (lines 25–26). In contrast to Hara's inclination to consensus, Periandros often expresses disagreement, albeit not very harshly (line 22, 25–26). Consequently, in this excerpt, femininity and masculinity acquire indexical values similar to (1) and (2). Femininity signifies passiveness, compromise and care about the family, while masculinity is attached to power and assertiveness.

The “traditional” Stavroula and the “progressive” Hara talking together

- (7) Hara (H), Stavroula (S): Episode 4 (8:20–10:09)  
 ((Stavroula and Hara like each other but do not know each other that much, and they have not become friends yet. Stavroula is going to Hara's house in order to discourage her from opening a coffee place, after a discussion she overheard at her husband's coffee place, according to which no villager intends to go to Hara's place))
- 1 S: Hara:, Hara, Hara are you inside?  
 2 H: Who is it? ((looking from the window)) Stavroula, I'm coming. Good morning Stavroula (.) What's going on? Are you alright?  
 3 S: I'm personally okay but you will not be okay since you want to open a traditional coffee place. ((in Greek “καφενείο”))  
 4 H: I was afraid of this reaction, but you shouldn't worry, it won't compete with your husband's place.  
 5 I personally believe that there is room for everybody.  
 6 S: You are wrong. There isn't. Especially for you.  
 7 H: Relax my dear, I won't take your husband's clientele (.) besides I'm addressing a completely different target group.  
 8 S: Stop this nonsense, and I don't care about my husband (.) it is about you that I care (.) in this village a woman (.) and especially you (.) can't open an enterprise (.) and especially a traditional coffee place ((in Greek “καφενείο”)) no one will come it will be a disaster.  
 9 H: Don't say that, no:, it will be very cozy and will attract customers. I imagine it with lounge music, and during the evening there will be also some dance hits (.) ((Stavroula is making a gesture of disapproval)) I will serve all sorts of coffees, macchiato, freddo, espresso, cappuccino, everything (.)  
 10 and of course there will be also some snacks (.) ((Stavroula is looking at her perplexed)) of course, of course, so that somebody can pass by at noon for a business lunch.  
 11 S: Don't tell me about business lunch because I have learnt English at high school (.) so you mean that Stavrakas and Panais will come here to discuss how they will exterminate olive fruit fly, Barnyard grass and Johnson grass.  
 12 H: Yes, that's right by eating something light, why not? Some carpaccio, a piece of quiche lorraine, so that they will be able to continue their work in the fields.  
 13 S: Come to your senses Hara. If you tell people here about carpaccio they will laugh at you ((Hara is making a gesture of disapproval)) (.) my poor Hara, you came here to make decentralization, but you cannot get rid of Athens (.) my brother was probably right (.) you'd better go back.  
 14 H: I should have thought that you would finally take your brother's side. Tell me, did he ask you to come here and talk to me?  
 15 S: Do you believe that this is the case?  
 16 H: Yes I believe so.

- 17 S: I'm very sorry. ((and leaves))  
 18 H: ((Talking to herself)) I can't believe that she told me that I cannot get rid of Athens, I thought of opening a café not a spa center ((contrary to Stavroula who characterizes the coffee place with the Greek word “καφενείο”, Hara opts for the French word “café” in order to signal the European-oriented concept of her business))

In excerpt (7), Hara combines two positions. She constructs herself with predicates bound to the categories of “businesswoman” and “modern woman of the city” (including an interaction of the MCDs “gender” and “geography”) who knows business administration (lines 9–10) and wishes to serve trendy European drinks and foods in her café (lines 16–17 and 33). Stavroula denaturalizes Hara's positions by constructing her initially through predicates bound to the category of “trader”, considering her decision to open a coffee place in the village as commercially unwise (lines 11–13), and later through predicates bound to the category of “city person”, with no awareness of country life (lines 24–26). Stavroula tells Hara that she “cannot get rid of Athens” (line 26) (urban mentality). Hara categorizes Stavroula in patriarchal terms, by drawing on the MCD “marriage” and predicates bound to the category “wife” (through an invocation to the relational pair part “husband”: line 9), worried about her husband's clientele (lines 9–10). This is an identity category denaturalized again by Stavroula (line 11), and displays predicates bound to the category of “traditional woman of the country” (related to the interaction of the MCDs “gender” and “geography”), who only knows farming (lines 19–21), and traditional coffee places, not modern “cafés” (lines, 4, 13, 33). As a relational pair part of “modern woman of the city” constructed by Hara, the category of “traditional woman of the country” displayed by Stavroula distinguished “the city” from “the village”. “Rural life” connotes different values for the two women. For Stavroula, the village is conservative and oppressive for women (lines 11–13), and there is no room for business lunch and trendy coffees (lines 19–21). For Hara, it is a “primitive” place, whose inhabitants need “acculturation” into the urban life (lines 22–23).

The interaction is organized on a competitive floor. Stavroula attempts to discourage Hara from opening a coffee place, Hara thinks that Stavroula sees her as a rival of her husband's business. Though Hara projects herself as a progressive (urban) woman and Stavroula constructs herself as a traditional (rural) woman, they both adopt masculine speech stylistic features that indicate assertiveness and confrontation, such as categorical assertive speech acts and a marked use of the first personal pronoun “εγώ”/“I” (line 4, 7), stressed segments of talk (line 9) and pauses (lines 11–12) for emphasis, disagreements expressed directly (line 8, 14), and aggressive questions (lines 27–28). The display of urban vs. rural identity is stylistically constructed with a specialized vocabulary of drinks and foods in English (line 17), Italian (line 16) and French (line 22), vs. pests (lines 20–21), respectively. Consequently, in this excerpt, masculinity is not attached to a specific gender identity but rather to an interaction oriented to dispute and confrontation.



- (8) Hara (H), Stavroula (S): Episode 5 (32:04–33:49)  
 ((Hara and Stavroula have become closed friends and discuss their problems with each other. Stavroula is in a bad state because her husband left her for another woman. She is visiting Hara at her café. It is late in the evening but Hara is still there painting her place))
- 1 H: Where are you going my dear with your grandma's nightie at this hour? ((Stavroula is wearing a very conservative nightie))
- 2 S: ((in tears)) Give me a break Hara. At least my grandpa had a desire for my grandma.
- 4 H: What happened to you? What are you saying? Come here my dear Stavroula, what happened?
- 5 ((addressing the young people who are helping her with the painting)) Kids continue alone for a while.(...)
- 7 S: I'm telling you he doesn't want me. He constantly rejects me. And to be honest I don't blame him because I'm such an ugly woman.
- 9 H: You are not ugly, you are beautiful.
- 10 S: Give me a break Hara. Words of condolence are hurting more.
- 11 H: I don't say that to console you. You are beautiful. Besides you didn't marry Brad Pitt. ((she means the famous handsome American actor))
- 12 S: It seems that (.) I'm not good for him.
- 14 H: You have no confidence (.) and you have no taste.
- 15 S: What are you saying?
- 16 H: I'm saying that although you are a very pretty girl, the wrapping paper is (.) unattractive.
- 17 S: Which wrapping paper?
- 18 H: Listen with that nightie you are wearing Stavroula, even a sexually hungry prisoner wouldn't probably attack you.
- 20 S: What do you mean?
- 21 H: To become more feminine, more sexy.
- 22 S: Sexy? Myself? A married woman?
- 23 H: But it is for your husband that I'm saying you should become more sexy. I don't mean to go around the village like Gogo Mastrokosta ((a Greek popular television sex symbol)), but don't go out like the man of Mastrokosta.
- 26 S: Meaning?
- 27 H: Meaning, meaning that you could show your boobs.
- 28 S: Oh.
- 29 H: Don't get astonished. I will you give one sexy underwear and it is him that he will get astonished.
- 31 S: Let's say (.) that I'm wearing this thing you are saying, although it is out of the question. How will Vagelis be able to see it?
- 33 H: Why is he blind?
- 34 S: What are you saying Hara? That there will be, pardon me, ((whispering)) sexual act and I will leave my husband watching me? I always turn off the lights. ((Hara sighs with what she is hearing))

In excerpt (8), Stavroula displays a traditional female identity by constructing herself by means of the category “married woman” (line 22), who is unattractive to her husband because she is “ugly” (lines 7–8), and is prudish by

making love with the lights off (lines 34–35). Hara denaturalizes this identity by constructing Stavroula with predicates bound to the category of “sexually oppressed woman”, desirable but insecure and without sex appeal (lines 11–12, 14). While Hara authenticates femininity and sexuality as category-bound predicates of “married woman” (line 21, 23–25), Stavroula denaturalizes them (line 22). In this interaction, Hara constructs herself through a progressive female identity, namely through predicates which are bound to the category of “sexually liberated woman”, who knows sexual play (lines 29–30).

From a stylistic perspective, Stavroula and Hara engage in “rapport-talk” (Tannen, 1990). By discussing a personal topic (sex) and engaging in intimate self-disclosure, they emphasize group membership and solidarity, and show emotional connection with each other. They display a distinct female identity, but both adopt a feminine form of communication. However, Hara assumes a more active role than Stavroula in the interaction, since she offers emotional support to her friend. Hara asks questions to show interest in her friend's problems (line 4), and gives advice through the performance of assertive (line 14, 16) and directive speech acts (line 21, 27), and the emphasis on information she considers important by means of stressed segments of talk, elongations of sounds and pauses. As the person who seeks advice, Stavroula performs assertive speech acts, underscores issues which concern her through stressed segments of talk (line 7), and initiates repairs (questions of clarification: line 15, 20; repetition of Hara's turn in the form of question: line 17). Moreover, in order to show the intimacy they share, they use direct disagreements (line 9, 10), and thus they both adopt a masculine speech stylistic feature. Stavroula's traditional identity is stylistically expressed by her hesitant and prudish talk about a taboo topic (sex). She employs an interjection (line 28), and an elongation of sound and pause (line 31), avoids naming Hara's sexy underwear by using the word “thing” instead (line 31), and characterizes sex more decently and softly (by whispering) as “sexual act”, together with the use of an excuse (line 34). In contrast, Hara's progressive identity is stylistically constructed through the colloquial words and expressions she employs when talking about sex, marking familiarity with the topic (in line 27 she characterizes breast as “βύζο”/“boobs”). Consequently, in this excerpt, femininity and masculinity are not knitted to a specific gender identity but rather to an interaction oriented to emotional support and intimacy, respectively.

## Conclusions

The Greek television series under analysis defines “traditional” and “progressive” woman by drawing upon hegemonic gender representations often detected in fictional mediated settings. The traditional female identity is constructed by categories associated with the private sphere, drawn from the MCDs “family” (“sister”, “aunt”, “mother”) and “marriage” (“wife”, “married woman”), and categories positioning woman in a passive role (“slave”), thus reproducing a patriarchal social model. In contrast, the progressive female identity is construed by categories linked to the public sphere, drawn from the MCDs “profession” (“businesswoman”, “working woman”) and “movement” (“feminist”), and categories that

show the woman in an active role (“dynamic woman”, “sexually liberated woman”). These gender representations are in tune with the schematic construction of the world which the television series promotes.

The MCDs “gender” and “geography” are often conflated, and the contrast between traditional and progressive gender identity is translated into a dipole of rural vs. urban life. The village is negatively associated with conservatism and oppression of women, while the city is attached to the positive values of progress and female emancipation. Thus, the series echoes the naturalized binary opposition between “rural”/“provincial” vs. “urban”/“cosmopolitan” knitted to the construction of modernity (Bauman & Briggs, 2003, p. 2). However, the series negotiates this dipole because it is placed in a late modern socio-cultural context. Perianthos is hostile to urban modernity. Hara is represented as abandoning the city and as holding the distorted and idealistic view of rurality of post-industrial urban people with no experience of rural life (the “rural idyll”: Cloke & Milbourne, 1992).

At first glance, the television series under study celebrates progressive women. In the end, the traditional Stavroula becomes progressive, whereas Hara, after a short shift to traditional female identity, picks up again a progressive one, by deciding to abandon her fiancé and go back to Athens. There is an attempt to mediate the difficulty of being (Hara) or acquiring (Stavroula) a progressive gender identity. To handle male dominance, Hara exploits traditional gender categories (displaying the identity of “unprotected woman”). To resist hegemonic gender identities in the process of her emancipation, Stavroula preserves traditional gender identities (“caring mother/wife”). Nevertheless by representing the progressive Hara as unhappy because she stays alone, this series reproduces a gender representation that perpetuates established representations of femininity and is often found in Greek fictional mediated settings (Kartalou, 2000; Stamou & Maleskou, 2007), those of independent and dynamic women who fail in their emotional life. In this way, the script writers seem to better address the concerns of their presumably conservative female target audience.

However, a multi-faceted conception of (gender) identity is mediated. Hara and Stavroula are depicted as having a range of identities and shifting between them. Our study confirms that, against the general tendency of the media to offer a static representation of speech style, the mediation of gendered styles of talk appears more dynamic and complex (Behm, 2009). Instead of depicting a straightforward relationship between traditional female identities and feminine speech style on the one hand, and progressive identities and masculine style of talk on the other, the series treats the two symbolic resources as forming a stylistic continuum along which the two television characters are positioned during the display of their gender identities in fictional contexts. Although the traditional Stavroula is generally close to the pole of femininity, she approaches the masculine pole when she argues with Hara. When she shifts to a progressive identity and comes closer to the masculinity pole, she preserves traditional identities which bring her closer to the opposite pole. Although the progressive Hara leans to the masculine pole, she strategically employs feminine stylistic resources and moves closer to the feminine pole when she talks in an intimate tone with Stavroula. By depicting instances of women's resistance to hegemonic gender identities through

the assimilation of the dominant group's (masculine) stylistic resources (albeit still offering stereotypical and schematic gender representations in a largely humorous context), this series foregrounds a practice that rarely occurs in face-to-face interactions, at least in the Greek context (Makri-Tsilipakou, 1998). Hence, media discourse seeks to support the dramatic changes affecting the social status (and the linguistic practices) of women. According to Inoue (2004, cited in Bucholtz & Hall, 2005), cultural authorities like the media may impose particular indexical associations between linguistic forms and social meanings, which in turn may affect the ideological expectations of people and finally linguistic practices, a process known as “indexical inversion”.

Our analysis also indicates that, except for the masculine-feminine stylistic poles, gender identities may be constructed through other sociolinguistic resources, depending on the context. In the television series examined here, those resources included specialized lexis of foods and drinks in English, Italian and French (category of “modern woman of the city”) vs. terminology of pests (category of “traditional woman of the country”), or hesitance to talk about sex (category of “sexually oppressed woman”) vs. familiarity with sex, signaled through the use of colloquialism (category of “sexually liberated woman”).

This study suggests that stylistic resources shape an “indexical field” of potential social meanings (Eckert, 2008), since masculine and feminine styles of talk are attached to distinct indexical values for the two female characters. For Hara, masculinity is linked to identities (the categories of “dynamic woman” and “mother”) that signify dynamism and competitiveness, while femininity is associated with identities that denote artfulness and diplomacy (the categories of “unprotected woman” and “businesswoman”) or passiveness, compromise and care about the family (the categories of “housewife” and “caring mother”). For Stavroula, masculinity is knitted to identities (the category of “modern working woman”) that signal emancipation and assimilation of urban culture, while femininity is attached to identities (the categories of “traditional wife” and “caring mother”) that signify passiveness and care about the family. When the two women interact with each other, masculinity and femininity are not linked to particular gender identities but to the orientation of the interaction. Masculinity means dispute or intimacy, whereas femininity signifies emotional support.

In conclusion, by adopting a framework drawing on socio-cultural linguistics and ethno-methodology for the study of the mediation of gender identity, which views subjectivity as emerging during interaction, we capture the fluid representation of gender identity construction in a television series. Based on this analysis, the depiction of linguistic practices indexing gender in fictional mediated settings seems to be more dynamic, contrary to the mediation of speech style which tends to be monolithic. This is the case even in a television series which constructs a schematic representation of the world by dealing with stereotypical dipoles (traditional vs. progressive woman). Could be this linked to the perplexity of the way gender identity is sociolinguistically constructed, since there is no specific linguistic feature directly indexing gender? There is a need for more empirical studies drawing on a diversity of mediated settings across different socio-cultural contexts in order to answer this question with conviction. When

comparing our results with (unfortunately limited) empirical evidence from the Greek context gathered in interpersonal settings, we can underline the complex relationship existing between media texts and the sociolinguistic reality “out there”. Rather than being a non-authentic depiction of the latter, media discourse is in dialogue with it, contributing to its construction.

## Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> The “partialness” principle addresses the dichotomy between structure and agency. According to Bucholtz and Hall (2005), any case of identity construction is in part intentional and in part an effect of wider ideological processes and social structures. Since our analysis concerns a mediated setting, and thus structure is more relevant, this principle will not be considered.

<sup>2</sup> Due to space limitations, interactions are presented as the English translation of the Greek, original version. Excerpts in Greek can be made available upon request. The following transcription conventions are used: // = interruption, / = self-repair, (.) = pause, (...) = part of a text left out, text = stressed segment, *text* = words that appeared in foreign language in the original Greek text, ((text)) = comments made by the transcriber, text: = elongation of a previous sound, = = no pause between speaker turns, . = end of intonation unit; falling intonation, , = end of intonation unit; fall-rise intonation, ? = end of intonation unit; rising intonation.

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