In the Shadow of Diachrony: Ancient Greek Language in the Contemporary Greek *Gymnásio**

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Abstract

In this article, I examine features of the current methodology employed in the teaching of Ancient Greek in compulsory education in Greece. After considering the historical dimensions of the subject as well as its association with the modern Greek language question, I highlight one important aspect of the current teaching practice as revealed by the textbook of the first grade of the junior high school (*gymnásio*), namely, the diachronic strategy, which focuses on the study of the Greek language through time. I argue that the principle of diachrony is superficially intermingled with the 'modern' technique of the 'genre approach' in parallel with a traditional method, which I discuss under the term *Altertumswissenschaft*. This compound methodology results in a training philosophy that not only seems ineffective but also reflects the uncertainty surrounding the teaching of the ancient language.

Introduction

The Ancient Greek language has played a central role in the school syllabus since the establishment of the Modern Greek state in 1830.[1] This is especially remarkable in that, as regards its position in the first three grades of secondary education, the subject has enjoyed an astonishing continuity down to the present, with a comparatively brief interval of sixteen years (1977-92). The reason for the endurance of the course in the Greek curriculum may well be traced principally to one element: the strong admiration for the classical era harboured and promoted by the modern state in the attempt of the latter to construct a common national identity for its citizens, both distinct from that of other nations in the Balkans and potentially respected by western European countries.[2] The policy of the admiration of antiquity was first put into practice by the Bavarian Otto (1815-67), the first king of Greece, who *inter alia* formed an educational system according to the standards of German Hellenism, which idealized the classical language and culture and included a heavy load of teaching of Ancient Greek;[3] and second, by the Greek elite, who came from various places within the Ottoman empire, but mainly from the Fanari area in Constantinople (Istanbul), and progressively immigrated in the liberated part of Greece mainland after the War of Independence in 1821-28.

Ancient Greek and the Language Question

The precedence of classical over modern Greek culture is furthermore signified by the creation and imposition of an official national language that was based upon and resembled classical Greek. This led to the so-called language question and the emergence of modern Greek diglossia. This archaistic 'exemplary' language, called *katharévousa* ('purifying'), was conceived by the intellectual elite, following primarily (though not always faithfully) the ideas of Adamantios Korais (1748-1833), and was used as the official language of the state for almost a century and a half (1834-1976).[4] *Katharévousa* aimed at eradicating 'foreign' elements that had managed to permeate Greek during a four- to five-hundred-year occupation by other peoples (principally, the Ottomans but also the Italians and the French). However, since this hybrid idiom was never spoken actually by its contemporaries, it had to be learned at school, and the best means to achieve competence in this 'laboratory-born' linguistic form was an intensive training in Ancient Greek. Therefore the subject was initially taught in place of

the vernacular ('*demotikí*'), and for many years undermined – and possibly still does – school training in Standard Modern Greek (SMG)[5] (in terms of the hours of teaching per week and the emphasis given by the curriculum). Naturally, this decision kept up with an educational system that lacked practical orientation, did not regularly address the needs of the people, and often served the dominant ideology of the elite.[6]

The next significant stage in the history of the subject would go once again hand in hand with the evolution of the language question. With the educational reform of 1976 / 77 the first democratically elected Hellenic government after a seven-year military dictatorship (1967-74) abolished the training in the ancient language from the junior high school (*gymnásio*), thus marking the end to the uninterrupted presence of the course in the first grades of secondary education for one hundred and forty years (1836-1976). This act was not seen as any kind of regression at the time; in fact, it came as a result of the since long expressed and much debated proposition of progressive parts of the intellectuals to replace *katharévousa* with demotic as the official language of the state.[7] According to the new reform ancient Greek literature was now studied solely in translation in the *gymnásio*, and since *katharévousa* was abolished, there was no longer any need to learn the ancient language at this stage (which was actually the concluding one of compulsory education). Thus, the teaching of the Attic dialect would be confined to the first and second grades of the senior high school (*lýkeio*) with an additional year of instruction for pupils studying humanities. The arguments brought forward in support of this major change focused on the following factors: first, the cognitive development of the average pupil in the *gymnásio* was thought as inadequate for the proper learning of classical Greek. Second, the teaching hours saved from this reorganisation of the curriculum could instead be devoted to further training in SMG. Third, the practice of approaching literature in translation was deemed to be of higher educational value, because it would help learners become acquainted with a more profound meaning of the texts as opposed to the previous practice of superficial engagement with morphology

and syntax.[8] All in all, the common denominator in this reform and its overall argumentation was the necessity (and hope) for the improvement of the linguistic education of a much larger number of pupils than ever before, but still falling short of eradicating ancient Greek culture from the last stage of compulsory education.[9]

Re-introducing Ancient Greek into the *Gymnásio*

In the 1980s, however, concerns were raised about the removal of the ancient language from the junior high school curriculum, because it was thought that the new generation of young Greeks were becoming linguistically impoverished. These concerns, which took the form of a campaign led by Georgios Babiniotis, professor of linguistics at Athens University, resulted in a revision of the original planning,[10] and, in the school year 1993-94, the subject was re-introduced. The teaching philosophy now took a different direction in that the newly written school-books (entitled *The Greek Language through Ancient, Byzantine, and Learned Texts*) focused on a linguistic training in all periods of Greek. It may be argued that the combination of texts from very different eras of Greek literature was innovative at the time, but the perception of the proposal could be regarded as unfortunate, chiefly because the comprehension of so great a linguistic and textual variety required a basic knowledge of the Attic dialect, which ought to have been acquired at an earlier stage in education. Therefore, it is not surprising that the application of the diachronic method was heavily criticized by teachers and pedagogues alike for its superficial engagement with language and the confusion it caused to learners.[11] As an outcome of the 1997 / 98 educational reform, which aimed to modernize and Europeanize the curriculum,[12] the 'diachronic' textbooks were replaced in 2000-01 with a more ancient-Greek-centred series bearing the title "Ancient Greek Language". Although poorly justified in terms of methodology, material and expectations,[13] this replacement seems to incorporate some of the criticism on the previous series in that it attempts to mitigate the diachrony

principle as regards the texts chosen and tends towards a more moderate grammar-translation method, which principally focuses on classical Greek.

Ancient Greek Language and Current Methodology

The tendency to employ the diachrony principle was further explored in the next series, commissioned by the Greek Ministry of Education in 2006. On the one hand, the principal feature of these textbooks is that they make extensive use of the diachronic strategy - that is, the study of Greek language through time - but with a particular emphasis on etymology and the formation of ancient words. On the other hand, the teaching of grammar and syntax, which I do not examine in this article, ought to be conducted – despite the statements of the official guidelines – according to the traditional classical or grammar-translation method. These principles are superficially intermingled with the genre approach in order to present a methodology, which seemingly conforms to current norms of (language) instruction, but essentially results in a mixture of practices which, as I maintain below, seems awkward as well as unsuccessful.

It becomes obvious that one major problem in dealing with this issue is that there is no reliable data available to underpin any robust argumentation. Thus, the views expressed here rely on personal experience from everyday school practice and theoretical research. The lack of official evidence is admittedly no coincidence, and seems to reflect the uneasiness of the education bureaucrats to touch on this delicate issue. It is striking that the Pedagogical Institute (now Institute of Educational Policy), which is the government organisation responsible for curricula and subjects, has been refusing any survey that could reveal the place of Ancient Greek in schools, the evaluation of the textbooks and the teaching practices they sustain.[14] Other than the study of the views on and the position of the subject in contemporary education, which may be useful to a certain extent, I would suggest that the main emphasis should be placed upon the development of a language acquisition theory applicable exclusively

to (the teaching of) Ancient Greek for native speakers of SMG.[15] Since many words that date back to classical times are integrated in commonly spoken Greek or have become part of a more scholarly form of the language under the influence of *katharévousa*, this theory would shed light on which elements of the Attic dialect, for instance, can be taught at certain levels of secondary education. This premise could then serve as a basis for further discussion by experts (linguists, Hellenists, pedagogues and active classroom teachers) of the best means to achieve competence in the ancient language. The construction of such a new theoretical approach is particularly important nowadays, since it is common knowledge among both teachers and academics that the pupils' performance in the subject has been deteriorating in the last twenty years.[16] This period of time is not only adequate enough for the production of reliable data, but also marks a significant *terminus post quem*, for the school year 1993-94, as mentioned above, is the time when the ancient language was essentially re-introduced into compulsory education.

The absence of any reliable research on the teaching of Ancient Greek reflects a vague and perplexed situation, which is exemplified in the relative school-books for contemporary *gymnásio*. In order to illustrate my point, I will employ a few examples that reveal the way in which the prevailing diachrony approach undermines the proper instruction of classical Greek. The examples are drawn from the first two sections of the introductory textbook, which is intended as a primary means for the initiation of 13 year-olds into the study of the ancient language.[17] The book is divided into eighteen units, and apart from the opening one, all the other units comprise three main sections: A. Text, B. Etymology (often divided in B1. Table of words, and B2. [Ancient Greek] Etymology), and C. Grammar-Syntax. There is also an Addendum (pp. 141-82) that includes the following parts: A. Parallel texts (pp. 142-61), B. Vocabulary (pp. 162-73), C. Tenses of verbs (p. 174), D. Tables of grammar (pp. 175-9), of syntax (p. 180), and of etymology (pp. 181-2). The texts in the first part of every respective unit are drawn from authors of the classical period (Plato, Xenophon,

Isocrates) or from later authors that wrote in the Attic dialect (Lucian, Aesop, Diodorus of Sicily, Arrian, Antoninus Liberalis, Saint Basil), and almost all have been modified, except for the passage of Saint Basil (p. 126), which has been left unaltered. In the case of grammar (taught from Unit 3 onwards), the book mainly covers the active and passive indicative, the participle and the infinitive, the first, second and partly the third declension of nouns as well as a few adjectives and pronoun-forms. Syntax parsing (taught from Unit 11 onwards) includes the analysis of the basic noun and verbal phrase structures, that is, subject, verb and complements (object and predicate), plus the examination of the various syntactic functions of the participle as well as of the infinitive clause (AcI).[18]

Teaching is supposed to start with the main text in section one and then moves on successively to the next parts (i.e. etymology, morphology, and syntax). For the presentation of the proposed methodology I have selected the text in Unit 2, which signifies the very first contact of pupils with Ancient Greek.[19] The passage, which is an adapted excerpt from Plato's *Protagoras* (325c-326c), reads as follows:

Ἐν Ἀθήναις τοὺς παῖδας μετ' ἐπιμελείας διδάσκουσι καὶ νουθετοῦσι. Πρῶτον μὲν καὶ τροφὸς καὶ μήτηρ καὶ παιδαγωγὸς καὶ αὐτὸς ὁ πατὴρ ἐπιμελοῦνται ὅπως βέλτιστος γενήσεται ὁ παῖς, διδάσκοντες ὅτι τὸ μὲν δίκαιον, τὸ δὲ ἄδικον καὶ τόδε μὲν καλόν, τόδε δὲ αἰσχρὸν ἐστι. Εἶτα δέ, ἐπειδὰν οἱ παῖδες εἰς ἡλικίαν ἔλθωσιν, οἱ γονεῖς εἰς διδασκάλων πέμπουσιν, ἔνθα οἱ μὲν γραμματισταὶ ἐπιμελοῦνται ὅπως γράμματα μάθωσιν καὶ τὰ γεγραμμένα ἐννοῶσι, οἱ δὲ κιθαρισταὶ τῷ κιθαρίζειν ἡμερωτέρους αὐτοὺς ποιεῖν πειρῶνται καὶ τὰς τῶν παίδων ψυχὰς πρὸς τὸν ῥυθμὸν καὶ τὴν ἁρμονίαν οἰκειοῦσι. Ἔτι οἱ παῖδες ἐν γυμνασίοις καὶ παλαίστραις φοιτῶσιν, ἔνθα οἱ παιδοτρίβαι βελτίω τὰ σώματα αὐτῶν ποιοῦσι, ἵνα μὴ ἀναγκάζωνται ἀποδειλιᾶν διὰ τὴν τῶν σωμάτων πονηρίαν.

As the curriculum and the official guidelines determine, the text should be taught according to the diachrony strategy and the genre approach.[20] Initially developed in the 1980s under the influence of the work of M. Halliday in linguistics,[21] the genre approach is mainly concerned with the examination of the

structure, content and style of texts as opposed to the traditional grammar-translation method.[22] Accordingly, the teacher should place emphasis on fabric as this is represented by key words (mainly verbs and their subjects). Thus, in the present passage pupils should be able to recognise at first sight words that would direct them to the meaning of the text as a whole, even though they don't have any Ancient Greek at all. But can this ever be possible?

As already stated, there are no acclaimed criteria for safely assessing which elements of 'old' Greek can normally be understood by native speakers of 'new' Greek, and especially by 13-year olds whose language potential is still in progress. Therefore, in order to evaluate to what extend the above excerpt from Plato can be grasped by learners I would employ a general principle of *similarity* in morphology and meaning between ancient and contemporary linguistic forms (and exclude syntax which would require a more sophisticated approach). For instance, the words διδάσκουσι, πρῶτον, παῖδες, καλόν, γονεῖς, and γεγραμμένα are easily understandable, since they occur in the same (γονείς) or similar form in SMG (διδάσκουν, πρώτα, παιδιά, καλό, γραμμένα). The same is perhaps valid for words that may not be in current use, but their sense could be deduced with recourse to both etymology and context (e.g. γραμματισταί, though not τροφός). Likewise for terms that have a different meaning in contemporary Greek, but can be grasped in terms of context only (e.g. γυμνασίοις). On the contrary, when an ancient word shares the same root with its modern derivative, but its etymology is not obvious (e.g. πέμπουσιν) or the contemporary meaning changes dramatically (e.g. πονηρία, ὅπως), I would register it as material incomprehensible to pupils. Therefore, according to the above criteria, there are 81 different words or different 'tokens' of the same word (e.g. παῖς, παῖδες, παίδων, παῖδας) in Plato's excerpt; 46 of these (almost 57%) are known or may be comprehensible without much effort; 35 of these (roughly 43%) should be unknown or not straightforwardly clear.[23] If we look closer, the evidence is even more discouraging: although 78% of the nouns, pronouns, adjectives, and articles may be recognized easily, another 71%

of the verbs, adverbs, prepositions, and conjunctions are not normally intelligible. So, on which basis should the teacher apply the genre approach in order to shed light on the basic structure of the passage, given particularly that many of its most fundamental constituents are incomprehensible? The official answer would require the employment of the diachrony method, that is, the guidance to the correct or at least to a tentative meaning of the unfamiliar words by means of stressing their resemblance to SMG. But this is certainly not an easy task for 13 year-olds, so on the facing page (p. 15) one finds a selective translation of words, phrases and even sentences, which corresponds to nearly 50% of the text. It is as if the writers of the book secretly admit that the combination of the genre and diachrony approaches can by no means lead to a decent understanding of the content even in general terms. The ineffectiveness of this compound

p. 14) it would not be particularly hard to answer the two content-specific questions that currently constitute 40% of the total grade in the assessment of the subject.[24] The fulfilment of this condition provides the only indication that learners have grasped what the passage talks about, since there is no translation requirement in the first and second grades of the *gymnásio*. It becomes thus evident that the curriculum aims only at a very relative familiarity with the text and is not concerned with any real knowledge of its discourse or of the ancient lexicon itself. On the contrary, the only understanding that ought to be developed has to do with etymology and, to be more specific, the relation of the modern words with its ancient base forms.

The diachrony strategy is further employed in the next section, which accumulates in one table dozens of derivatives of a single word. For instance, the related part in Unit 5 reads as follows:[25]

to the traditional classical or grammar-translation method, in which "much vocabulary [is] taught in the form of lists of isolated words",[26] it is generally agreed that when it comes to language teaching, words cannot be taught out of context.[27] In discussing the methods for vocabulary instruction, in particular, Tricia Hedge summarises some of the arguments of Schouten-van Parreren's related research as follows: "If the words are presented as isolated elements, there is no point of support, no 'cognitive hold' for them in the learners' memory, so despite sometimes considerable learning effort, they are quickly forgotten again."[28] Even though the above point refers to second language acquisition, there is no reason to question its application to our 'diachronic list' either. It would therefore not be too great an exaggeration to maintain that this lexical chart is practically of no use other than persuading learners that an ancient base form may have a plethora of derivatives across the whole spectrum of Greek. In consequence, the way in which vocabulary is integrated in the teaching process does not lead to its active use by pupils, while the few exercises that follow cannot make up for this deficient method in language instruction. It is obvious then that the focus here is again on the theoretical awareness of the history of Greek, and the three lists do not contribute to the proper training either of the ancient or of the modern language. However, this table is revealing for the background of the diachrony strategy, since it recalls the ideas of Adamantios Korais about the creation of a new idiom (the so-called 'middle-way') that would resemble classical Greek, a mixture that is evident in List 2.[29]

The focus on vocabulary takes a somewhat different route in the next part (B2. [Ancient Greek] Etymology), which highlights the formation of ancient words. Particularly illuminating for the examination of this practice is the related section from Unit 4, which deals with nominal derivatives: diminutives, collectives, and 'locals' (denoting place, establishment or edifice).[30] After a brief explanation of the terminology used, one encounters a list of several ancient Greek endings per category followed by one example for each of them (p. 31):

Some of the base words in the

ἡ γῆ		
Ancient Greek [List 1]	**Ancient Greek/ Modern Greek [List 2]**	**Modern Greek [List 3]**
ὁ γεωρύχος [the one who digs up the earth] ὁ γεωμόρος [landowner] γεωργέω, γεωργῶ ὁ γεωτόμος [the one who cuts the ground] ἔγγαιος (syn. ἔγγειος) [local, indigenous]	γήινος γεώδης (& γαιώδης) ὁ/ἡ γηγενής, τὸ γηγενές ὁ γεωπόνος ὁ γεωργός ὁ γεωγράφος ὁ γήλοφος, γεώλοφος [small hill] τὸ γήπεδον (-ο) [*AGr.* piece of land, *MGr.* sports field] ἡ γεωμετρία ἐπίγειος ἔγγειος μεσόγειος ὑπόγειος	γεωλόγος (geologist) γεώμηλο [potato] γεώτρηση (drilling) γεωτρύπανο (drilling machine) γεωδυναμική (geodynamics) γεωπολιτικός (geopolitical) γηπεδούχος (the home team) περίγειο (*Astronomy*, the farthest point in the orbit of a celestial body or of an artificial satellite) απόγειο (zenith) υδρόγειος (globe) ισόγειος (the one on the ground) υπέργειος (the one above the ground) απογειώνω (to elevate; *middle voice*, to take off) προσγειώνω (to land)

methodology is also reflected in the ensuing "interpretative comments" (p. 15) that restate parts of the passage. With the assistance of these comments and through a general familiarity with the text (supported by the introductory note and the image of an ancient school scene on

In the above table one can see derivatives of the word γῆ (earth), which has been drawn from the main text in the previous section. The derivatives are divided into three lists corresponding to the evolution of Greek. Apart from the dedication of this kind of instruction

Endings of diminutives	Endings of collectives	Endings of locals
-άριον ἀνθρωπάριον < ἄνθρωπος	**-(ε)ών** ἀμπελών < ἄμπελος ἐλαιών < ἐλαία	**-ιον** ἐμπόριον < ἔμπορος
-ιον σωμάτιον < σῶμα		**-(ε)ῖον** ἰατρεῖον < ἰατρός
-ίδιον οἰκίδιον < οἶκος	**-ιά** μυρμηκιά < μύρμηξ στρατιά < στρατός	
-ίς νησίς < νῆσος		
-ίσκος νεανίσκος < νεανίας		
-ύδριον νησύδριον < νῆσος		
-ύλλιον εἰδύλλιον < εἶδος		

table (ἄνθρωπος, σῶμα, νῆσος) occur in the main text of the related unit, so that teaching can start off from material previously taught. Once more the emphasis here is placed on the continuity of Greek, and particularly on the dependence of the 'new' language upon its classical ancestor, since most of the endings as well as some of the examples provided are used in contemporary Greek too, albeit slightly simplified (e.g. εἰδύλλιον > ειδύλλιο, ἀμπελών > αμπελώνας, ἐμπόριον > εμπόριο). It is surprising then that this section aspires to offer an in-depth look into etymology by requesting the construction of ancient words by means of the endings provided. Although downplayed by the official guidelines, this tendency is revealed by one of the exercises that follow, according to which pupils are called to form words they have never encountered before such as κιόνιον or κιονίσκος (<κίων) and ὀμμάτιον (< ὄμμα). Even if one ignores the obvious lack of any prerequisite background that is necessary for proper training in etymology, this practice seems to reflect the devotion of the textbook to a traditional way of teaching that favours the reconstruction of the past, at least in its linguistic aspect. This method may ultimately be traced back to the German *klassische Altertumswissenschaft*, which is usually translated into English as "the science of classical antiquity". The concept was developed in Germany in the late 18th and during the 19th centuries, with an aim to embrace a thorough study of all facets of the classical world in a single comprehensive discipline to be used ultimately for the education of the elite classes.[31] Within this context, the historical reconstruction of the classical past became a value *per se*, and *Altertumswissenschaft*, which viewed the cultures of Greece and Rome as superior,

influenced schools and universities across Germany and England.[32] As mentioned earlier, the antiquity-centred ideology pervaded the Hellenic state from the outset, and imbued, albeit for different reasons, its school syllabus. Consequently, it may not be surprising that the application of the *Altertumswissenschaft* principle is evident in the present textbook, particularly since the latter is concerned with the study of classical Greek. However, although the practice of forming ancient words usually points to a historical approach of linguistic matters, here one does not witness any thorough and systematic effort towards this direction. Nor is the technique of highlighting word endings embedded in a more well-rounded programme of linguistic training. On the contrary, words are once again taught in isolation from whatever could favour both vocabulary acquisition and reading comprehension. The only cognitive background that may serve as a basis for learners to familiarise themselves with new material in this section is the aimed relation to SMG. It could be argued then that even this part of the textbook is transformed under the influence of the diachrony approach, and aims at reinforcing the idea of the continuity of Greek with a particular focus on its origin.

Conclusion

In this article I have attempted to show that different and conflicting practices and ideas are at work in the teaching of the Ancient Greek language in compulsory education in Greece. Ancient Greek has been a heavily debated subject, often laden with political dimensions, and even today experts cannot reach a tentative agreement upon its place

in junior high school. The uncertainty surrounding the subject is well illustrated by the officially proposed teaching methodology, which struggles to combine tradition with innovation. In this context, the extensive application of the diachrony principle undercuts the genre approach and even influences the historical way of reading antiquity, with a view to highlighting the evolution of Greek. This teaching practice, however, seems to undermine proper language instruction after all.

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References

[1] The subject was introduced in 1834 in the initial four-grade primary school, and in 1836 in secondary education, which was divided in the three-grade *ellinikón scholeíon* (Hellenic school) and the four-grade *gymnásion*, following the German system of the *Lateinische Schule* and the *Gymnasium* (Bouzakis 2003: 40-52, Tsakmakis 2007: 753-5). For a succinct historical overview, see Polkas (2001). More detailed accounts include Varmazis (1999: 17-38), Chatzimavroudi (2007: 15-33), and Tsakmakis (2007). Particularly instructive is also the study of Tsafos (2004), which mainly discusses developments in methodology after 1976.

[2] The literature on the impact of classical antiquity on the creation of modern Greek identity is rather extensive. See, briefly, Koliopoulos & Veremis (2007: 260-7), Liakos (2008), and Mackridge (2008). The issue is closely related to the multifaceted and much debated notion of Greekness (*ellinikótita*); on this, see, more recently, Tziovas (2011), who explores the role of the literary Generation of the 1930s on the reconstruction of Greekness.

[3] Varmazis (1999: 32-5).

[4] The latest and most comprehensive study on the modern Greek language question is Mackridge (2009); see also Beaton (1999: 296-365).

[5] Let me note that throughout this paper I use the terms 'Standard Modern Greek' (SMG) and 'Modern Greek (language)' interchangeably.

[6] See Tsoukalas (1977: 529-71).

[7] This proposition took the form of serious conflict, with political dimensions becoming visible, soon after the imposition of *katharévousa*. The controversy ran roughly from the 1880s onwards and, apart from ongoing theoretical debates, led to some serious incidents such as protests in Athens (1901, 1903), the closing-down of a progressive school in Volos (1911) and the persecution of leading defenders of demotic Greek (1914, 1941). For more information on the above manifestations of the language question, see Mackridge (2009: 247-54, 263-4, 306-10).

[8] A collective volume was devoted to putting this reform into practice in which academics, school inspectors, and teachers expressed their views on the benefits of the new place of Ancient Greek in education. In this volume, see, especially, Sifakis (1976), Maronitis (1976), and Tsopanakis (1976).

[9] On the politics and values of the 1976/77 educational reform, see, in particular, the contributions by Dimaras (1978) and Persianis (1978).

[10] For the background of this campaign and for constructive criticism on the argument of language impoverishment ('*lexipenía*'), see Frangoudaki (1997) and Mackridge (2009: 321-7).

[11] Among a number of studies that criticise the philosophy of the new books especially illuminating are Pigiaki (1997) and Baslis (1997); see also Mackridge (2009: 326). The results of the diachronic method were never investigated or assessed officially, but they seem to have been rather disappointing. According to a research conducted by a postgraduate student over a body of 1,951 pupils across Crete in 1995-96, "despite the expectations of its advocates, the new subject offered no help to the pupils who attended it as regards their ability to approach original (sc. not translated) ancient Greek texts in the *lýkeio*" (Koxaraki 2000: 89); nor did it improve their writing skills in Modern Greek, as this approach had originally envisaged (61). Cf. Tsafos (2004: 52-3).

[12] On the policy underlining the 1997/98 educational reform, see Bouzakis & Koustourakis (2002).

[13] It is suggestive that Rankousis, an advocate of this change, argues vaguely that the new series was required by new demands in the curriculum without providing any further explanation (Rankousis 2001: 79).

[14] For instance, a project proposed in 2009 by the sociologist of education Kelpanidis to investigate the stance of pupils and teachers towards Ancient Greek Language in the junior high school seems to have been hindered by the Pedagogical Institute (Kelpanidis & Research Team 2009). Yet a research that was carried out by the same state organisation in 2007 (Glavas & Karageorgiou 2007) evaluated the teaching of the subject in *gymnásio* in very positive terms. This evaluation was nevertheless deemed invalid and unreliable in the following respects: although the main goal was to examine the teachers' viewpoint about the course and its effectiveness upon pupils, fieldwork was carried out among teachers only, while the type of questions used were not regarded as impartial (Kelpanidis & Research Team 2009: 41-51).

[15] The necessity to use applied linguistics in the teaching of the classical languages is also made evident by Schaps (2011: 97-8). For a groundbreaking related theoretical application as regards Ancient Greek, see Scott Morrell (2006).

[16] A suitable example, which nevertheless marks only one aspect of the situation, could be drawn from a brief examination of the grades scored in the national higher education entrance examinations. Even though the Ancient Greek syllabus has been reduced significantly after the 1997/98 educational reform and now learners study the subject for a total of six years, the results are far from satisfactory. According to the latest official statistics for the years 2009-13, approximately 50% of the pupils did not get a pass mark (0-9.99 out of 20), while another 30% in average did not perform very well (10-14.9 out of 20). The statistics are available online at: http://www.minedu. gov.gr/publications/docs2013/statistika_ bathmologiwn_g_takshs_2013_130625.xls (accessed 29/1/2014).

[17] Bezantakos et al. (2006a). The textbook is also accompanied by a teacher's manual with general guidelines per unit (Bezantakos et al. 2006b).

[18] For a detailed book review, see Ignatiadis (2008).

[19] Online viewing of Unit 2 is available at: http://ebooks.edu.gr/modules/ebook/show.php/DSGL102/457/3003,12052/ (accessed 29/1/2014).

[20] Ministry of Education (1999: 4880), Argyropoulou (2002: 16-7). The latest instructions too (Ministry of Education 2011) highlight the same methodology.

[21] Halliday (1978).

[22] See, in particular, Cope & Kalantzis (1993).

[23] In the unknown/not easily comprehensible category I would list the following: ἐπιμελείας, παῖς, τροφός, πονηρίαν, παιδοτρίβαι (nouns); τόδε (pronoun); βέλτιστος, βελτίω (adjectives); τῷ, τάς (articles); νουθετοῦσι, ἐπιμελοῦνται, γενήσεται, ἐστί, πέμπουσιν, ἐννοῶσι, ποιεῖν, πειρῶνται, οἰκειοῦσι, φοιτῶσιν, ποιοῦσι, ἀποδειλιᾶν (verbs); εἶτα, ἔνθα, ἔτι (adverbs); ἐν, μετ(ά)', εἰς, διά (prepositions); μέν, ὅπως, δέ, ἐπειδάν, ὅπως, ἵνα (conjunctions).

[24] On this argument, see also Ignatiadis (2008: 256-7).

[25] One can find this 'diachronic' lexical chart as well as the whole of Unit 5 online at: http://ebooks.edu.gr/modules/ebook/show.php/DSGL102/457/3003,12055/ (accessed 29/1/2014). For the convenience of the Anglophone reader who may not be able to read Modern Greek I have translated (in parenthesis) the words in List 3. Square brackets indicate the meanings provided in the original textbook.

[26] Brown (2007: 16). For a vivid account of the grammar-translation method, see Larsen-Freeman (2000: 11-22).

[27] On current research and methods in vocabulary teaching, see Hunt & Beglar (2002) and Nation (2002).

[28] Hedge (2000: 120).

[29] For a thorough examination of the linguistic theory of Korais, see Mackridge (2009: 102-25).

[30] Online viewing of Unit 4 is available at: http://ebooks.edu.gr/modules/ebook/show.php/DSGL102/458/3006,12078/ (accessed 29/1/2014).

[31] Latacz (2009: 404-17).

[32] Stray (1998: 23-6).

[†] The asterisk (*) indicates references in Modern Greek. I have transliterated the authors' names and translated the titles of these studies for the convenience of the Anglophone reader who may not read Modern Greek. As regards the titles of journals in Modern Greek I chose the transliterated form for reasons of consistency with the original title.