

Labeling of Derogatory Words in Modern Greek Dictionaries¹

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Abstract

The purpose of the present paper is to examine the problems of usage labeling in two Modern Greek dictionaries (the LNEG2 and the LKN) through a survey of their treatment of 'negative' terms. To do this the terms studied are drawn from various semantic groups that denote nationality, racial or cultural group, lack of intelligence, age, sexual orientation, terms addressing women, bodily effluvia, etc. The investigation of the treatment of these terms in the two Modern Greek dictionaries reveals that it is difficult to support the usage labeling distinctions they make in their prefaces for derogatory, offensive, slang or taboo words.

1. Introduction

This paper surveys the treatment of 'negative' terms in two Modern Greek dictionaries (the LNEG2 and the LKN) and reveals a series of problems relating to the usage labels attached to many of the entries. The terms studied come from various semantic groups such as those denoting nationality, racial or cultural group (*γκέκας* 'resident of Northern Epirus', *τουρκομερίτης* 'sb. who comes from a Turkish region', *σκυλάραπας* 'bloody nigger'), lack of intelligence (*βλαμμένος* 'idiotic'), age (*σκατόγερος* 'fucking old man'), sexual orientation (*κουνιστός* 'sissy', *νιγκιντάγκας* 'faggy'), terms for women (*καραποντάνα* 'harlot', *γύναιο* 'slut'), terms for the organs and acts of sex (*ψωλή* 'dick', *μαλακίζομαι* 'jerk off'), bodily effluvia (*σκατό* 'shit', *χέσιμο* 'dump', etc. (cf. Allan & Burridge 2006; Kechagia 1997;

¹ We would like to thank Jason Merchant, Anastasia Giannakidou, Lydia Mitits and Anna Sarafianou, for the help in the translation of data entries in English. We are also grateful to the anonymous reviewers for their useful suggestions.



Ξυδόπουλος 2008). The paper is structured as follows. In section 2, we offer a brief overview of the relevant literature on taboo and insulting words. We also provide a brief discussion of the literature on dictionary policies in what concerns the labeling of these words. In section 3 we explain how the data of this study were selected, and we also present and discuss our results. In the last section 4, concluding remarks are given.

2. Research Background

In this section, we give a brief overview of the previous literature on our subject. In 2.1 we present the various categories of the offensive words, whereas in 2.2 we discuss dictionary labeling of these words.

2.1. Taboo and Insulting Words

Modern Greek, like other languages, contains words, which people avoid using in most contexts, because they feel them extremely embarrassing or offensive. Words of this type vary from **taboo** words to **insults** or **swearing** (cf. Crystal 1995; Mercury 1995; Allan & Burridge 2006). According to Crystal (1995: 173), these three categories may overlap or coincide, but they are not identical: to call someone *κώλος* 'an ass' is to use a taboo word as insult, but if used with enough emotional force could be considered an act of swearing. On the other hand, *στυρνάρι* 'blockhead', is a term of insult, but it is neither a taboo word nor a swear word. Finally, the swear word *κατάρα* 'curse' is neither a taboo word nor an insult (cf. Ξυδόπουλος 2008).

Taboo language contains the so-called 'dirty words', i.e. mainly terms for bodily organs associated with sex, excretion and the act of sexual intercourse (*αρχίδι* 'prick', *μουνί* 'cunt', *κώλος* 'ass'), terms for activities involving these organs (*καυλώνω* 'get horny'), terms for bodily effluvia issuing from these organs (*κουράδα* 'turd', *σκατό* 'shit'), terms for disease, death and the supernatural (*καρκίνος* 'cancer', *πεθαίνω* 'die'). The term 'dirty words' denotes people's attitudes towards the denotations and connotations of these words, which are the most emotionally evocative of all language expressions (Allan & Burridge 2006). People not only avoid using them in polite society, but also tend to replace them by a more technical term (e.g. *πέος* 'penis', *κόπρανα* 'stool', *πρωκτός* 'rectum') or a euphemism, which refers to the taboo topic in a vague or indirect way (e.g. *έφυγε* 'be gone' instead of *πέθανε* 'died', *πουλάκι* 'cock' instead of *πούτσος* 'prick') (Crystal 1995).

According to Crystal (1995: 173), **swearing** refers to the strongly emotive use of a taboo word or phrase, and its function is to express a wide range of emotions,

like annoyance, frustration or anger. Swearing can mark also social distance, as for example when swearing in public (*το Χριστό!* 'God damn!'), or act as an in-group solidarity marker, as when a group shares identical swearing norms (Mercury 1995; Allan & Burridge 2006; Crystal 1995). According to the same author, swearing can be further divided into smaller categories like blasphemies, which show contempt towards God, profanities, which show contempt to holy things or people, and obscenities, which involve the expression of indecent sexuality (cf. also Mercury 1995).

Dysphemistic terms of **insult** (or abuse) are usually used in order to debase someone's physical appearance (*αλόγα* 'cow', *καράφλας* 'bald-headed', *πατάτας* 'fathead'), mental ability (*στουρνάρι* 'blockhead'), character (*καριόλης* 'fucker'), behaviour (*καλοπερασάκιας* 'shirker'), beliefs (*αγροτοπατέρας* 'trade unionist who takes advantage of farmers; lit. father of farmers'), and familial or social relations (*μπούλης* 'roly-poly', *μαμόθρεφτος* 'mama's boy') (Allan & Burridge 2006; Mercury 1995). Furthermore, terms of abuse (or vulgarisms) can be used to devalue a thing described (*αραμπάς* 'ox-cart') (Mercury 1995)

In particular, the vast majority of the insulting words comment on someone's ugliness (*μαλλιαρός* 'hairy', *μπακατέλα* 'pot-bellied'), skin color or complexion (*ασπρουλιάρης* 'whitey, honky', *κιτρινιάρης* 'chink, sick-looking, yellowish', *κοκκινοτρίχης* 'red-haired'), clothes (*κοντοβράκι* 'knee-breeches', *μαυροφορούσα* 'dressed in black', over- or undersize (*κοιλαράς* 'pot-bellied', *κοκαλιάρης* 'skinny', *μαούνα* 'battle ship', *σαμιαμίδι* 'little worm', *στούμπος* 'shorty'), age (*αρχαίος* 'ancient', *μουστόγρια* 'shriveled up old woman', *μπαμπόγερος* 'dirty old man'), physical defects (*κουλός* 'armless', *καλαμοπόδαρος* 'spindle-legged', *καρπουζοκέφαλος* 'large-headed', *σακάτης* 'cripple', *στραβούλιακας* 'blind as a bat'), slovenliness or incontinence (*αρχιτεμπέλης* 'lazybones', *προκομμένος* 'good for nothing', *καφενόβιος* 'a café habitué', *μεθύστακας* 'drunkard', *μπεκροκανάτα* 'boozer'), smelliness and dirtiness (*κατουρλιάρης* 'pissing on one's pants', *κλιανιάρης* 'gassy'), stupidity (*καρπαζοεισπράχτορας* 'punching bag'), unreliability and untruthfulness (*αρχιψεύτης* 'big liar', *κατσικοκλέφτης* 'scoundrel; lit. goat thief') or incompetence (*αστοιχείωτος* 'ignorant', *αχυράνθρωπος* 'puppet man', *απήδηχτος* 'not screwed', *κουραμπιές* 'desk soldier; lit. sugared bun', *μάπας* 'soft touch', *μπάμιας* 'dupe'), greediness and flattery (*πειναλέος* 'ravenous', *κολογλειφτης* 'licking sb's ass'), meanness (*αρχίδι* 'prick', *καριόλης* 'fucker', *κουμάσι* 'sly'), tartiness, sexual laxness or perversion (*καραπουτάνα* 'slut', *κνώδαλο* 'scally wag', *καμπαρατζού* 'slut', *κανλιάρης* 'horny'), sexual orientation or practice (*κολομπάρης* 'pansy', *κουνιστός* 'sissy'), familial relationships (*μαμόθρεφτο* 'mamma's boy'), violent behavior (*κανίβαλος* 'cannibal'), social or economic status (*αριστοκράτης* 'aristocrat', *μπουρζουάς* 'bourgeois', *μπασκλάς* 'low class'), profession (*καθηγητιλίκι* 'professorship (iron.)', *καραβανάς* 'ranker', *μπάτσος* 'cop', *πεθαμενατζής* 'grave digger', *προφέσορας* 'professor (iron.)', *πολιτικάντης* 'tricky politician'), religious or ideological beliefs (*αλλόπιστος* 'heathen', *κομματόσκυλο* 'henchman', *κομμούνι*

'commie'), or racial or ethnic group (*αράπης* 'nigger', *μπαστονόβλαχος* 'hillbillies'). Additionally, insults may comment on supposed inadequacies of someone's family or friends (*κερατάς* 'cuckold').

It is worth pointing out that a large number of the terms of abuse derive on nouns denoting 1. animals that are conventionally associated with unpleasant characteristics (*αλόγα* 'big ungainly woman', *αγελάδα* 'cow', *καρακάτσα* 'magpie', *σκυλί* 'dog', *μουλάρα* 'she-mule', *μουλάρι* 'mule', *μαντρόσκυλο* 'sheepdog'), 2. tabooed bodily organs, effluvia and sexual behaviours (*αρχίδι* 'prick', *μουνί* 'cunt', *κουράδα* 'turd', *κολογλείφτης* 'licking sb's ass') or 3. proper names (*Κατίνα* 'Katina, woman who likes gossiping', *Σταχτοπούτα* 'princess, lit. Cinderella') (cf. for example, Allan & Burridge 2006; Kechagia 1997; Labov 1978). Finally, it should be noticed that a taboo word or a term of abuse may have several uses, which vary from insult to intimacy and solidarity. In everyday conversations one can find examples where apparent terms of abuse (ex. *μαλάκας* 'asshole') are used in a humorous way to display friendship or affection to someone close to the speaker (Allan & Burridge 2006; Crystal 1995; Kechagia 1997; Ευδόπουλος 2008).

2.2. Labeling of Insulting Words in Dictionaries

Although taboo and insulting words are extremely frequent in everyday conversation, particularly of young people, it took dictionary writers some time to decide to include these words in their headwords (entries) (Bejoint 2000; Landau 2001). According to Landau (2001), dictionary labelling of insult is essentially political and moral. If a general purpose dictionary needs to be commercially successful, it must reflect the ideological values of its public (Béjoint 2000). On the other hand, according to Béjoint (2000: 129), the more recent a dictionary is, the more liberal it is. According to him, all contemporary general purpose dictionaries in all countries move towards greater liberalism in the inclusion of taboo or offensive words (Béjoint 2000: 127)². Most modern dictionaries try to warn the potential user against the offensive character of these words by using usage labels, like derogatory, offensive, disparaging, etc. Nevertheless, as already mentioned in the literature (Abecassis 2008; Landau 2001; Norri 2000; Wachal 2002; Fedorova 2004; Ptaszynski 2010; Αναστασιάδη-Συμεωνίδη 2007; Κατσούδα & Τράπαλης 2007), dictionaries inconsistently label

² It seems also that the decision whether to include or not to include offensive words in a dictionary relates also to the purpose of the dictionary, i.e. whether the dictionary is descriptive or has normative or pedagogical aims (Landau 2001: 230).

taboo and insulting words such as 'colloquial', 'informal', 'derogatory', sexist, etc. On the other hand, as Landau (2001: 233) observes, there are no agreed-upon criteria for characterizing some usages as offensive or abusive. Labels cannot tell us everything about the degree of offensiveness of specified terms under specific conditions (cf. Landau 2001). Furthermore, Norri's study on English dictionaries revealed that with certain semantic categories (terms for nationality or race, terms for stupidity and terms for deceitfulness) the likelihood of uniform treatment is greater than with others (ex. terms for sexual orientation, physical appearance, arrogant or aggressive behavior) (cf. Norri 2000: 91). In addition, one of Norri's findings was that terms for nationality are consistently accompanied by a 'negative' in at least sixty per cent of the entries and that the percentage of labeling is radically smaller in the semantic categories that refer to unintelligent or deceitful people. Finally, it is worth noting that usage labels have recently received renewed attention in Modern Greek literature (Αναστασιάδη-Συμεωνίδη 2007; Τράπαλης 2005; Τράπαλης & Κατσούδα 2007). These studies compare the labelling systems employed in Modern Greek dictionaries, point out the problems emerging from their use and proceed to suggestions for the creation of labelling systems which would be more functional.

3. Labeling of Insulting Words in the LKN and the LNEG2

As already mentioned in the introduction, the purpose of the present paper is to survey the treatment of 'negative' terms in two Modern Greek dictionaries, namely the LNEG2 and the LKN. The main hypothesis is that negative label usage in dictionaries varies according to the semantic class of the entry. We also expect variation in the labeling of the same negative words between the LNEG2 and the LKN.

3.1. Data Description

For the corpus elaboration of the present study first we automatically extracted all the entries of the letters Α, Κ, Μ, Π, Σ marked with the labels *ειρωνικό* (ειρ.) 'ironic', *μειωτικό* (μειωτ.) 'pejorative /derogatory', *σκωπτικό* (σκωπτ.) 'satirical/jocular', *υβριστικό* (υβρ.) 'offensive', *χλευαστικό* (χλευ.) 'derisory', *χυδαίο* (χυδ.) or ! 'vulgar' and *κακόσημο* (κακοσ.) 'disparaging' from the online version of the LKN (<http://www.komvos.edu.gr/dictionaries/dictonline/DictOnLineTri.htm>) and from the LNEG2. The extraction provided

543 entries. Then an ACCESS data base was created including each entry followed by the labels used in the two dictionaries for each entry. Since very often the negative sense of a word is conveyed by the definition of that word without the use of special labels, we undertook a second extraction of the words starting with Α, Κ, Μ, Π, Σ marked as *προφορικό* (προφ.) 'spoken', *μεταφορικό* (μτφ.) 'metaphorical' or *οικείο* (οικ.) 'colloquial', and including the terms *ανόητος* 'stupid' or the expressions *αρνητικός χαρακτηρισμός* 'negative characterization', *υβριστικός χαρακτηρισμός* 'offensive characterization' or *μειωτικός χαρακτηρισμός* 'derogatory characterization' within their definition. The new extraction provided another 162 entries.

In a second phase the entries were classified according to their meaning in the following categories:

- words evaluating nationality / racial or cultural group
- words evaluating mental abilities
- words evaluating appearance (ugliness, weight)
- words evaluating behavior
- words evaluating political beliefs
- words evaluating sexual orientation
- derogatory words for women or men
- words relating to sex (terms for the organs and acts of sex)
- words denoting bodily effluvia
- words evaluating the age of a person or an object
- words relating to religion
- words relating to diseases or disabilities

From the total 705 entries only 331 were classified in the above mentioned categories. These words constituted our final corpus.

3.2. Results

3.2.1. Labeling Comparison between the LKN and the LNEG2

From the initial 543 LKN entries including the labels *ειρωνικό* (ειρ.) 'ironic', *μειωτικό* (μειωτ.) 'pejoratif/derogatory', *σκωπτικό* (σκωπτ.) 'satirical/jocular', *υβριστικό* (υβρ.) 'offensive', *χλευαστικό* (χλευ.) 'derisory', *χυδαίο* (χυδ.) 'vulgar', *κακόσημο* (κακος.) 'disparaging' and ! the LNEG2 had separate labels only for 242 words. 124 of the 543 shared the same label with the equivalent entry in the LKN. Table 1 presents the frequency of labels used in the LKN and the LNEG2 entries of our sample.

Table 1.

Frequency of labels in the LKN and the LNEG2

LABELS	LKN	PERCENTAGE	LNEG2	PERCENTAGE
Iron.	185	34%	43	17,8%
Pej.	256	47,1%	91	37,6%
Satir.	10	1,8%	24	9,9 %
Off.	51	9,3%	26	10,7%
Der.	21	3,8%	-	0%
Vulg.	31	5,7%	-	0%
Disp.	-	0%	33	13,6%
!	-	0%	25	10,3%
TOTAL	543	100%	242	100%

As was expected differences were found in the labeling systems for derogatory words in the LKN and the LNEG2. This finding is consistent with previous research (Αναστασιάδη-Συμεωνίδη 2007; Τράπαλης & Κατσούδα 2007) which has shown that labelling systems in Modern Greek dictionaries differ in respect to the number of lexicographic labels and the way they are used. In many entries of our sample no labels are used in the LNEG2 for words that are labelled, the LKN as for example in *κοκκινότριχης* 'red-haired' (labeled *σκωπτικό* 'satirical/jocular' in the LKN), *αλλόπιστος* 'heathen' (labeled *μειωτικό* 'pejorative/derogatory' in the LKN), *κουνιστός* 'sissy' (labeled *μειωτικό* 'pejorative/derogatory' in the LKN). In some other cases, different labels described the same entries, as for example *πατσαβούρα* 'slut' (labeled *μειωτικό* 'pejorative/derogatory' in the LKN and *υβριστικό* 'offensive' in the LNEG2), *ποντικομαμή* 'insidious; lit. mouse midwife' (labeled *σκωπτικό* 'satirical/jocular' in the LKN and *υβριστικό* 'offensive' in the LNEG2), *κιτρινάρης* 'chink, sick-looking, yellowish' (labeled *μειωτικό* 'pejorative/derogatory' in the LKN and *κακόσημο* 'disparaging' in the LNEG2). Finally from the 124 entries which shared the same labels in the LKN and in the LNEG2 81 concerned the use of the label *μειωτικό* 'pejorative/derogatory'.

On the other hand, as we can see in Table 1, there is unanimity as far as the frequency of use of various labels in the two dictionaries is concerned. More precisely, the most frequent negative label both in the LKN and in the LNEG2 is the label *μειωτικό* 'pejorative/derogatory' followed by the label *ειρωνικό* 'ironic', *υβριστικό* 'offensive' and finally *σκωπτικό* 'satirical/jocular'.

3.2.2. Distribution of Labels According to Semantic Categories

Tables 2 and 3 present the distribution of labels into semantic categories in the LKN and the LNEG2, respectively.

Table 2.
Distribution of labels into semantic categories in the LKN.

CATEGORIES	Iron.	Pej.	Sat.	Off.	Deris.	Vulg	Spok.	Met.	Coll.	Def.	total
Nationality		7		1	1						9
Mental abilities	4	3					2	3	17	6	35
Appearance	9	18	2	1			4		3	10	47
Behavior	21	40		10	3	5	4	3		29	115
Political beliefs	1	15		2						4	22
Sexual orientation		3				1	1				5
Derogatory words women/ men	2	4	1	10		1		3		16	37
Sex		2				8	2	1			13
Bodily effluvia	2	2		1		9	3			1	18
Age	3	8	1	2	1	1					16
Disease		4	1		1		1			2	9
Religion	2	3		1							6

Table 3.
Distribution of labels into semantic categories in the LNEG2.

CATEGORIES	Iron.	Pej.	Sat.	Off.	Disp.	!	Spok.	Met.	Coll.	0	Def.	total
Nationality		2	1	1	1					2	2	9
Mental abilities	1	5	1	4				7	1		16	35
Appearance	1	23	5	1		2		2			13	47
Behavior	5	17	5	10	8	10		13		12	35	115
Political beliefs	1	11			2					3	3	20*
Sexual orientation		1				1				1	2	5
Derogatory words women/ men		3		10		6		4			14	37
Sex	1					8					4	13
Bodily effluvia		1	1			9			3	1	1	16*
Age	1	3	1	4	1	1		2		3		16
Disease	3	5								1		9
Religion			1								5	6

A. Words Evaluating Nationality / Racial or Cultural Group

Three out of the seven sample words for nationalities share the same label in both the LKN and the LNEG2: *μπουρτζόβλαχος* 'red-neck' and *αράπη* 'nigger' (labeled *μειωτικό* 'pejorative/derogatory') and *μούλος* 'bustard/'bastard' (labeled *υβριστικό* 'offensive'). The LKN systematically labels such words as *μειωτικό* 'pejorative/derogatory' except for two cases, *μούλος* labelled as *υβριστικό* 'offensive' and *μακαρονάς* 'spaghetti eater' (literal translation), which refers to Italians, labeled as *χλευαστικό* 'derisory'. The labelling policy of the LNEG2 is not that systematic. In some cases there is neither a label nor a description of the negativity within the definition (e.g. *αρναούτης* 'bungler'). In some others (e.g. *αραπιά* 'nigger land', *αρβανίτης* 'arvanites') the negativity of the term is expressed in the definition. Finally in the LNEG2 nationality terms are occasionally labelled as *σκοπτικό* 'satirical/jocular', *υβριστικό* 'offensive' or *κακόσημο* 'disparaging'.

B. Words Evaluating Mental Abilities

The labeling tendency in the LKN for words evaluating mental abilities is to characterize them as *οικείο* 'colloquial', whereas in the LNEG2 there is a systematic description of the negativity of such terms within the word definition. Some other labels used marginally in the LKN are *μειωτικό* 'pejorative/derogatory' (e.g. *στουρνάρι*, *στούρνος*, *κούτσουρο* 'blockhead'). For these words the LNEG2 adopts the label *υβριστικό* 'offensive'.

C. Words Evaluating Appearance (Ugliness, Weight)

As can be noticed in Tables 2 and 3, both the LKN and the LNEG2 have the tendency to mark such terms mainly by the use of the label *μειωτικό* 'pejorative/derogatory' or by describing the negativity in the entry definition. The LKN also quite frequently uses the label *ειρωνικό* 'ironic' for cases like *στούμπος* 'shorty', *καρπουζοκέφαλος* 'largeheaded', *καράφλας* 'baldheaded'. Other marginal labels used to characterize appearance in the LKN are *σκοπτικό* 'satirical/jocular' (e.g. *κοκκινοτρίχης* 'redhaired') and *χλευαστικό* 'derisory' (e.g. *μαυροτσούκαλο* 'man/woman with dark complexion; lit. black pot') whereas in the LNEG2 *ειρωνικό* 'ironic' (e.g. *στούμπος* 'shorty') and ! (e.g. *κωλαρού* 'fat ass').

D. Words Evaluating Behavior

The majority of our sample words evaluating behavior receive in the LKN the label *μειωτικό* 'pejorative/derogatory'. A high number of cases are also labeled as *ειρωνικό* 'ironic' or their negativity is described in the definition. Finally, ten out of 115 cases were labeled *υβριστικό* 'offensive'. On the contrary, studying Table 3,

it could be claimed that no clear tendency is adopted in the LNEG2: while the majority of such entries are marked for their negativity with information provided in the definition, however there is use of a wide range of labels, such as *ειρωνικό* 'ironic' (e.g. *πολύξερος* 'smart ass', *κυράτσα* 'aunty'), *μειωτικό* 'pejorative/derogatory' (e.g. *κουραμπιές* 'desk soldier', *μούτρο* 'rascal'), *σκωπτικό* 'satirical/jocular' (e.g. *μπεκρούλιακας* 'drunkard', *μπεκροκανάτα* 'boozer'), *υβριστικό* 'offensive' (e.g. *μπάμιας* 'bootless, coy; lit. okra', *μουλάρι* 'mule'), *κακόσημο* 'disparaging' (e.g. *κοπρόσκυλο* 'bum', *καρεκλοκένταυρος* 'an executive who cannot be moved from his position'), *!* (e.g. *κολοβαράω* 'lazy around', *καριόλης* 'fucker') or *μεταφορικό* 'metaphorical' (e.g. *μαϊντανός* 'someone who appears everywhere; lit. parsley', *σπάρος* 'lazybones'). Finally, the LNEG2 provides neither labels nor negative description in the definition for 12 out of 115 entries.

E. Words Evaluating Political Beliefs

Both the LKN and the LNEG2 mainly adopt the label *μειωτικό* 'pejorative/derogatory' for words evaluating someone's political beliefs (e.g. *κομμουνιστοσυμμορίτης* 'communist ganger', *μοναρχοφασίστας* 'monarcho-fascist'). This unanimity could be attributed to the fact that use conditions of such words are unambiguous; the intention of a speaker who uses such words is to express in a strongly contemptuous way his negative opinion of the other in order to offend him.

F. Words Evaluating Sexual Orientation

From the five sample words the three are described through the label *μειωτικό* 'pejorative/derogatory' in the LKN (*πούστης* 'faggot', *κουνιστός* 'sissy', *κίναϊδος* 'poof'). One is characterized *χυδαίο* 'vulgar' (*κολομπαράς* 'pansy') and one *προφορικό* 'spoken' (*μπινές* 'sod'). In the LNEG2 the negativity of one word for sexual orientation is described in the definition as slang (*αργκό*) (*κολομπαράς* 'pansy'), one is labeled *μειωτικό* 'pejorative/derogatory' (*κίναϊδος* 'poof'), two are labeled *!* (*πούστης* 'faggot', *μπινές* 'fag') and for one there is no special indication of their pejorative character (*κουνιστός* 'sissy').

G. Derogatory Words for Women or Men

Our data show that derogatory words for women or men are usually labeled either as *υβριστικό* 'offensive' or they receive a description of their negativity in their definition both in the LKN and in the LNEG2. Quite frequent in the LNEG2 is the use of the label *!* (*καραποντάνα* 'harlot', *μαλάκας* 'asshole', *μαλακισμένος* 'dickhead', *παλιοσκρόφα* 'old bitch'). Other labels marginally used in the LKN are *ειρωνικό* 'ironic' (*Σταχτοπούτα* 'princess; lit. Cinderella'), *μειωτικό* 'pejorative/

derogatory' (*καμπαρετζού* 'slut'), *σκωπτικό* 'satirical/jocular' (*ποντικομαμή* 'little worm'), *χυδαίο* 'vulgar' (*αρχιδάτος* 'lit. with balls').

H. Words Relating to Sex (Terms for the Organs and Acts of Sex) / Bodily Effluvia

Both dictionaries agree in labeling words relating to sex or bodily effluvia as *χυδαίο* 'vulgar' (the LKN) or ! (the LNEG2).

I. Words Evaluating the Age of a Person or an Object

The LKN mainly labels words evaluating the age of someone as *μειωτικό* 'pejorative/derogatory'. Other labels are also used marginally (*ειρωνικό* 'ironic', *σκωπτικό* 'satirical/jocular', *υβριστικό* 'offensive', *χλευαστικό* 'derisory', *χυδαίο* (*χυδ.*) 'vulgar'). The LNEG2 makes no systematic use of a wider range of labels *μειωτικό* 'pejorative/derogatory', *ειρωνικό* 'ironic', *σκωπτικό* 'satirical/jocular', *υβριστικό* 'offensive', *χλευαστικό* 'derisory', !, *κακόσημο* 'disparaging', *μεταφορικό* 'metaphorical', etc.

J. Words Relating to Religion

For such words the LKN uses the labels *ειρωνικό* 'ironic', *μειωτικό* 'pejorative/derogatory' and *υβριστικό* 'offensive'. On the other hand, the LNEG2 has a clear tendency to provide negative description in the lemmas' definitions.

K. Words Relating to Diseases or Disabilities

Finally derogatory terms for diseases or disabilities are described in the LKN with the labels *μειωτικό* 'pejorative/derogatory' (*σακατιλίκι* 'the characteristic of being cripple, incapable/incompetent'), *κουτσαμάρα* 'cripple'), *σκωπτικό* 'satirical/jocular' (*μύωψ* 'myopic, short-sighted'), *χλευαστικό* 'derisory' (*στραβοκάνης* 'bow-legged'), *προφορικό* 'spoken' (*κουφάλογο* 'deaf horse; lit. for someone who can't hear well'). In the LNEG2 the labels used are *μειωτικό* 'pejorative/derogatory' (*στραβούλιακας* 'blind as a bat') and *ειρωνικό* 'ironic'.

4. Conclusions

In this paper we surveyed the treatment of 'negative' terms in two Modern Greek dictionaries, the LNEG2 and the LKN. The investigation of the treatment of these terms has revealed that 1. the distinction made in the prefaces between derogatory, offensive, slang or taboo words is hard to maintain, 2. dictionaries

do not always agree in the labeling of the same negative words, 3. there is a wide range of possible descriptions of negative usage, and 4. the likelihood of a 'negative' indication varies from one semantic group to another. Finally, we notice that these findings are consistent with Norri's (2000) findings about usage labeling in English dictionaries.

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