Global English metaphors on Greek press

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Abstract

This paper focuses on how English as a global language influences the modern Greek online journalistic discourse. The data consist of 126 Greek texts published between 2011-2015 in 14 newspapers, 4 magazines and 6 pure players. The texts are retrieved from three journalistic genres: *news articles*, *opinion articles* and *interviews*, and five semantic fields. We conducted a double analysis based on the theory of linguistic borrowing and the theory of conceptual metaphors to identify how conceptual metaphors reflect the power of English in the Greek press. According to results, these texts reflect the "effect of indexicality" and the "dramatization of discourse" to captivate the public. Metaphors are mostly in the fields of *everyday life*, *nature*, *technology*, *war,* and *disease,* and reveal the dominance of English on the journalists' perception of the Greek society.

Keywords: Global English, Modern Greek, online press, conceptual metaphor

Introduction

In the era of the Worldwide Net revolution, Internet transformed our society into a digital world with traditional media turning into "new media" (Manovich 2001). This paper examines how English as a global language (global English hereafter) affects Modern Greek online press and proposes an interdisciplinary study of language contact. We aim to find the means of this contact and if there are hints of linguistic globalisation.

This study is based on the theory of linguistic borrowing as the process of introducing new words in a language system through recipient language speaker's agentivity (Winford 2005: 376). The criteria to search all types of borrowing from global English include the *frequency* of their use, their *spread* and high level of *recognition* and *acceptance*.

English has acquired the status of a global language, i.e., the dominant language for international communication. Global English is examined by many researchers (Crystal 1997, Jenkins 2000, Seidlhofer 2005, Graddol 2006, etc.), while others point out its *linguistic imperialism* and *hegemony* (Phillipson 1992, Calvet 2002, etc.). Finally, the social context in Greece today is also characterised by the extensive use of English, as the first taught foreign language, broadly used in international communication, academia, job-searching, media and culture (Mackridge 2012).

Method

Our method is based on the theory of linguistic borrowing combined with Fairclough's discourse analysis framework (2010), and the theory of conceptual metaphors to identify the power of English in the journalists' discourse.

By using the Fairclough's framework, we followed the three-dimension model of analysing a text by examining: *discourse-as-text*, *discourse-as-discursive-practice* and *discourse-as-social-practice*. Yet, the social aspect cannot be examined in the present study (ibid.).

In addition, it is important to define the notion of metaphor. "A metaphor is a figure of speech in which a word or phrase is used to describe something that it does not literally mean" (McGlone 2007: 109). For Lakoff the context is necessary to understand metaphors since they are present in our everyday life and give meaning to our concepts (1993). They are the network of relationships between our experience of the world and our cultural perception (Lakoff & Johnson 1980). We also distinguish three components of a metaphor: the *topic/tenor* (the subject), the *vehicle* (the term used metaphorically), and the *ground* (the relationship between them) (ibid.).

Data

The data of this study consist of 126 Greek texts published between 2011-2015 in 14 newspapers, 4 magazines and 6 digital newspapers, i.e., pure players. Our texts are retrieved from three genres: *news articles, opinion articles* and *interviews*, and five semantic fields, also known as columns in the press. We regrouped them into the five most read columns for a more illustrative sample, which are *art-fashion, finance-politics, world-environment, science-technology* and *health-sports*.

Results and discussion

For the analysis of our corpus, we employed the theory of conceptual metaphors, evoking the idea that the metaphorization is based on the experiences we have with physical objects and with our body. This type of metaphors are ontological metaphors, and they are frequent in daily discourse, as well as in the press. It is therefore important to understand that in stating a metaphor, we already have in mind a stereotype image of the terms to compare, which helps us when encoding and decoding the message. All the examples of global English metaphors in our data are translated loans from English (calques) that convey the semantic categories of *nature, everyday life* including *technology, site construction* and *finance*, *war* and *health-disease*. In Table 1, we noted some metaphors (2nd column) as indicative examples followed by the English prototype cognitive concept (3d column) and the message's metaphorical meaning (4th column). The 1st column shows the number of the text in our corpus (T: text, H: text-hyperlink), the column it is extracted from press and the semantic field that the metaphor illustrates.

Table 1. Examples of English metaphors in the Greek journalistic discourse.

Nₒ Text/Column/semantic field	Metaphors in Greek corpus	English cognitive concept	metaphorical meaning
T20/world-environment/nature	Πράσινες λύσεις	green solutions	something respectful to nature, ecological
H8.1/finance-politics/every-day life	πράσινο φως	green light	go forward, green traffic light
T56/world-environement/nature	φιλικά προς το περιβάλλον	environment friendly	something respectful to nature, ecological
T2/art-fashion/every-day life	Ρούχα έξυπνα	smart clothing	word play with the loan smartphone, something practical
T14/finance-politics/every-day life	ένα «μαξιλάρι» ομολόγων	cushion bond	a lifesaving cushion from drowning, a cushion for the funds' protection
T10/finance-politics/war	τα στρατόπεδα του Eurogroup	The Eurogroup's camps	conflicting countries' mapping (like war camps)
T28/science-technology/medicine	μολυσμένα PC	infected computers	infecting with a malware/virus

In other words, we found conceptual metaphors in the fields of technology used in everyday life (e.g. *έξυπνες συσκευές* = smart devices, *έξυπνες τηλεοράσεις* = smart televisions), construction and building (e.g. *χτίζω ένα όνομα* = to build a name), finance (e.g. *μαξιλάρι ομολόγων* = a cushion bond), internet and technology (e.g., *έξυπνα κινητά* = smartphones, *«Ta social media είναι τα παράθυρα της ψυχής μας»* = social media are the windows of our soul), war (e.g. *«Ta στρατόπεδα στο τραπέζι του Eurogroup»* = the camps at the Eurogroup round table) or health and *disease* (e.g. *μολυσμένα PC* = infected computers, τοξικούς ανθρώπους = toxic people). Yet, this remark drove us to further distinguish this influence in two complementary types of factors that explain the use of translated English metaphors in the Greek press.

On the one hand, we suggest the *external factors* showing the implantation of anglicisms from top-to-bottom in the discourse to underline the power and the hegemonic status of English. On the other, the *internal factors* propose that the occurrences of global English influence on Greek press are linked to the bottom-up movement and show the proper journalists' choices (*word preference and personal stance in discourse*) highlighting either their language skills (*English as a marker of indexicality*) and their need to promote their skills, or rather giving a humorous tone to their texts (*symbolic function of English*) to gain the public's attention. Nevertheless, even if these occurrences are not numerous, it is worth to mention that these factors form the continuum of this contact. They reveal that the choice of each discourse strategy underlines both the hegemonic status of English in the Greek journalistic discourse, and an influence on what people read, write and what remains memorized since it becomes common knowledge.

Conclusion

To sum up, this study examined a corpus of texts from three journalistic genres of the Greek online press using a combined methodology of a discourse and semantic-orientated framework that finally proposed a two-factors system of journalists' word choices and discourse strategies. In brief, we hope that this study will be welcome for the scientific processing of these data and will stimulate further studies so to give a larger image of the Greek online press.

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