

GRAMMATICAL GENDER IN INTERACTION

CULTURAL AND COGNITIVE ASPECTS

ANGELIKI ALVANOUDI

BRILL'S STUDIES IN LANGUAGE, COGNITION AND CULTURE

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Grammatical Gender in Interaction

Brill's Studies in Language, Cognition and Culture

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Grammatical Gender in Interaction

Cultural and Cognitive Aspects

By

Angeliki Alvanoudi



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On the cover: "Communication No. 1", artwork by Michele Meister. Picture courtesy of Michele Meister.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Alvanoudi, Angeliki.

Grammatical gender in interaction : cultural and cognitive aspects / By Angeliki Alvanoudi.

p. cm. — (Brill's Studies in Language, Cognition and Culture)

Includes bibliographical references and index.

ISBN 978-90-04-28314-5 (hardback : alk. paper) — ISBN 978-90-04-28315-2 (e-book) 1. Greek language, Modern—Grammar. 2. Greek language, Modern—Noun. 3. Greek language, Modern—Noun phrase. 4. Greek language—Sex differences. 5. Greek language, Modern—Psychological aspects. I. Title.

PA1057.A48 2014

489'.3045—dc23

2014034959

This publication has been typeset in the multilingual 'Brill' typeface. With over 5,100 characters covering Latin, IPA, Greek, and Cyrillic, this typeface is especially suitable for use in the humanities. For more information, please see brill.com/brill-typeface.

ISSN 1879-5412

ISBN 978-90-04-28314-5 (hardback)

ISBN 978-90-04-28315-2 (e-book)

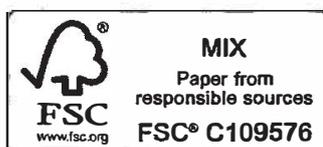
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Koninklijke Brill NV incorporates the imprints Brill, Brill Nijhoff, Global Oriental and Hotei Publishing.

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This book is printed on acid-free paper.



Printed by Printforce, the Netherlands

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Acknowledgements

The study presented in this book is based on my PhD dissertation at the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki. Writing a PhD dissertation is a lonely process, which involves many hours in front of books and computer screens. In reality though, it is a collectively produced work, as most academic work is. This section is about acknowledging the contribution of scholars and others who influenced this study and made the journey less lonely and more joyful for me.

I wish to express my warm thanks to the supervisory committee for their guidance and support: Theodossia-Soula Pavlidou (supervisor), Dimitra Kati (co-supervisor) and Savas Tsohatzidis (co-supervisor). Theodossia-Soula Pavlidou has been more than just a thesis-supervisor for me. She has been my teacher since the very early years of my undergraduate studies at the Department of Linguistics, in the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki. She introduced me to language and gender research through her academic work and teaching, and inspired my work and thinking to a very large extent. Dimitra Kati informed my perspective on language and cognition, by shedding light on various aspects of this complex issue and by generously sharing her ideas with me.

I gratefully acknowledge the input of my colleagues at the Institute of Modern Greek Studies: Lena Gialabouki, Charikleia Kapellidi, and Eleni Karafoti. I thank two feminist scholars, Mia Liinason and Maria do Mar Pereira, for passionate discussions on gender and interdisciplinarity, and for dreaming together better European academic contexts.

I am grateful to Alexandra (Sasha) Aikhenvald for encouraging me to submit this study to Brill and for giving me insightful comments on an earlier draft of the manuscript. I thank the two anonymous reviewers for their comments and suggestions that improved the manuscript. Thanks also go to Brigitta Flick and Venetia Jaschke for their assistance with proofreading the text.

Finally, I wish to thank my friend Vaso Karagouni, my sister Nancy, and my parents Anthouli and Nikos for their unconditional love and support.

Phonetic Symbols

In this book, I use broad transcriptions based on the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA).

c	voiceless palatal stop
k	voiceless velar stop
x	voiceless velar fricative
ç	voiceless palatal fricative
j	voiced palatal fricative
ɣ	voiced velar fricative
g	voiced velar stop
ɟ	voiced palatal stop
f	voiceless labiodental fricative
v	voiced labiodental fricative
b	voiced bilabial stop
p	voiceless bilabial stop
t	voiceless dental stop
θ	voiceless dental fricative
ð	voiced dental fricative
d	voiced dental stop
l	alveolar lateral approximant
ʎ	palatal lateral approximant
m	bilabial nasal
n	alveolar nasal
ɲ	palatal nasal
ŋ	velar nasal
r	alveolar trill
s	voiceless alveolar fricative
z	voiced alveolar fricative
ʃ	voiceless alveolar affricate
ʒ	voiced alveolar affricate
a	low central unrounded vowel
e	mid front unrounded vowel
i	high front unrounded vowel
o	mid back rounded vowel
u	high back rounded vowel

List of Abbreviations

1	first person
2	second person
3	third person
ACC	accusative
ADV	adverb
CONJ	conjunction
COP	copula
DAT	dative
FEM	feminine
FUT	future
GEN	genitive
IMPERAT	imperative
IMPERF	imperfect tense
INDEF	indefinite
INTERJ	interjection
IPFV	imperfective aspect
MASC	masculine
NEG	negation
NEUTER	neuter
NOM	nominative
PART	participle
PARTICLE	particle
PAST	past tense
PFV	perfective aspect
PL	plural
POSS	possessive
PREP	preposition
PRES	present tense
PRON	pronoun
RATIONAL	rational
REL	relative
SG	singular
SUBJ	subjunctive
VOC	vocative

Transcription Conventions

I follow the transcription conventions used in the *Corpus of Spoken Greek of the Institute of Modern Greek Studies*. The Corpus of Spoken Greek adopts the standard Conversation Analysis conventions with certain modifications.

1 Temporal and Sequential Relationships

[left brackets: point of overlap onset between two or more utterances (or segments of them)
]	right brackets: point of overlap end between two or more utterances (or segments of them)
=	The symbol is used either in pairs or on its own.

A pair of *equals signs* is used to indicate the following:

1. If the lines connected by the equals signs contain utterances (or segments of them) by different speakers, then the signs denote 'latching' (that is, the absence of discernible silence between the utterances).
2. If the lines connected by the equals signs are by the same speaker, then there was a single, continuous utterance with no break or pause, which was broken up in two lines only in order to accommodate the placement of overlapping talk.

The single *equals sign* is used to indicate latching between two parts of the same speaker's talk, where one might otherwise expect a micro-pause, as, for instance, after a turn constructional unit with a falling intonation contour.

- (0.8) Numbers in parentheses indicate silence, represented in tenths of a second. Silences may be marked either within the utterance or between utterances.
- (.) micro-pause (less than 0.5 second)

2 Symbols and Combinations of Symbols for Representing Various Aspects of Speech Delivery

punctuation marks	indication of intonation, more specifically,
.	the <i>period</i> indicates falling/final intonation,
?	the <i>question mark</i> indicates rising intonation,
,	the <i>comma</i> indicates continuing/non-final intonation,
;	the <i>inverted question mark</i> indicates a rise stronger than a comma but weaker than a question mark
:	Colons are used to indicate the prolongation or stretching of the sound just preceding them. The more colons, the longer the stretching.
<u>word</u>	Underlining is used to indicate some form of emphasis, either by increased loudness or higher pitch. Especially loud talk may be indicated by upper case, whereas, in extreme cases, upper case may be underlined.
Word	
Word	
°	The degree sign is used to indicate the onset of talk that is markedly quiet or soft. When the end of such talk does not coincide with the end of a line, then the symbol is used again to mark its end. When there are two degree signs, the talk between them is a lot softer than the talk around it.
°°	
-	A hyphen after a word or part of a word indicates a cut-off or interruption.
<u>_:</u>	Combinations of underlining and colons are used to indicate intonation contours. If the letter(s) preceding a colon is underlined, then there is prolongation of the sound preceding it and, at the same time, a falling intonation contour.
<u>:</u>	If the colon itself is underlined, then there is prolongation of the sound preceding it and, at the same time, a rising intonation contour.
↑↓	The arrows mark sharp intonation contours. The upper arrow indicates sharp intonation rises, whereas the down arrow indicates sharp intonation falls.
>word<	The combination of 'more than' and 'less than' symbols indicates that the talk between them is compressed or rushed.
<word>	The combination of 'less than' and 'more than' symbols indicates that the talk between them is markedly slowed or drawn out.

- h** Hearable aspiration is shown with the Latin letter *h*. Its repetition indicates longer duration. The aspiration may represent inhaling, exhaling, laughter, etc.
- .h** If the aspiration is an inhalation, then it is indicated with a period before the letter *h*.
- ^** Sandhi.

3 Other Markings

- ((*laughs*))** Double parentheses and italics are used to mark meta-linguistic, para-linguistic and non-conversational descriptions of events by the transcriber.
- (...)** The parentheses indicate that something is being said, but no hearing can be achieved.
- (word)** Words in parentheses represent a likely possibility of what was said.
- (word)/
(ward)** Alternative hearings of the same strip of talk are displayed in parentheses separated by a slash.

Introduction

1.1 Contextualizing the Problem

In the beginning of his book *We have never been Modern*, Bruno Latour (1993) wonders whether the ozone layer is an object of study for chemistry, meteorology, politics or economics, or whether it constitutes a hybrid, that is, a sort of cultural-natural network that transgresses disciplinary boundaries and combines elements of knowledge from all different disciplines mentioned above. Speaking about the ozone layer may be a bizarre way to start a book on linguistics but it is not irrelevant. Latour's rhetorical question is useful for linguists working on the relation between language, cognition and culture, because it opens a window to the intersections that characterize the language-cognition-culture complex and sheds light on its interdisciplinary nature. Based on Latour's approach, the interplay between language, cognition and culture can be conceptualized as a sort of hybrid that transgresses disciplinary boundaries. For example, it can be explored by linguists, anthropologists or cognitive scientists, and when it comes to linguistics, it can be examined by linguists specializing in psycholinguistics, sociolinguistics, cognitive linguistics, pragmatics or anthropological linguistics. Being a mental phenomenon grounded in sociocultural practices, language creates a wide range of interconnections with culture and cognition. In this book, I aim to examine how aspects of these interconnections manifest themselves in interaction, by focusing on a specific grammatical feature, gender.

Grammatical gender is a noun class system of two or three distinctions, which always include the feminine and the masculine (Aikhenvald 2000). It constitutes an inherent property of the noun, which controls grammatical agreement between the noun and other elements in the noun phrase or the predicate (Aikhenvald 2000; Corbett 1991; Hellinger and Bussmann 2001). Nouns may be assigned to specific genders according to semantic, morphological and phonological rules. In Modern Greek, the grammatical gender system includes three distinctions, the masculine, the feminine and the neuter, and it is inflected in a vast number of linguistic items, such as nouns, adjectives, participles and pronouns (Pavlidou 2003). In Greek, grammatical gender is considered to be semantically arbitrary, because gender assignment in nouns denoting inanimate referents does not follow any straightforward semantic rules. For instance, nouns denoting physical entities can be feminine (*βροχή*

[vrocí] ‘rain’), masculine (ωκεανός [oceanós] ‘ocean’) or neuter (δέντρο [ðéndro] ‘tree’). Yet, in reference to humans there is a semantic basis, because generally nouns denoting male humans are grammatically masculine (αθλητής [athlitís] ‘male athlete’) and nouns denoting female humans are grammatically feminine (αθλήτρια [athlítia] ‘female athlete’). Thus, to a certain extent grammatical gender displays a relation to meaning and more specifically to the semantic distinction of sex. Gender assignment is usually semantically motivated when it comes to reference to human beings.

The term ‘gender’ is also used in the literature to denote the lexical marking of sex, the biological distinction of sex, and the social categories of women and men. *Lexical gender* refers to the lexical marking of nouns as female or male-specific. For instance, in English the nouns *mother*, *sister* and *father*, *brother* carry the semantic property of femaleness and maleness respectively and are pronominalized as feminine (*she*) or masculine (*he*) (Hellinger and Bussmann 2001). This does not apply to nouns such as *citizen*, *patient* and *individual* which are gender-indefinite.¹ In languages with grammatical gender, the feminine or the masculine gender of the noun corresponds to the lexical marking of the noun as female or male (Hellinger and Bussmann 2001, 5). For instance, in Greek the grammatically feminine nouns *θεία* [θία] ‘aunt’, *μητέρα* [mitéra] ‘mother’ and the grammatically masculine nouns *θείος* [θίος] ‘uncle’, *πατέρας* [patéras] ‘father’ are also lexically marked as female and male respectively.

Another term often associated with grammatical gender is *natural gender*. Natural gender or sex refers to the anatomical/biological differences between female and male humans (*sex* is the term to be employed in this book). Although biology does not yield a perfect dichotomy of bodies into females or males (e.g. Fausto-Sterling 2000), feminist theorists have shown that this binary sexual split is taken as a given and then used as the basis on which *socio-cultural gender* is built (the term *gender* will often be used as an abbreviation for sociocultural gender). Sociocultural gender refers to “the many and complex ways in which social differences between the sexes acquire a meaning and become structural factors in the organization of social life”, in Braidotti’s (2000, 189) words. This means that gender is a cultural and historical product, rather

¹ However, gender-indefinite nouns in English can be pronominalized by male-specific or female-specific pronouns depending on their meaning (Hellinger and Bussmann 2001, 10–11; McConnell-Ginet 2014, 27–28). For example, very often nouns denoting higher status occupations, such as *surgeon* or *lawyer*, are pronominalized by the male-specific pronoun *he*, while nouns denoting lower status occupations, such as *secretary* or *babysitter*, are pronominalized by the female-specific pronoun *she*, because these occupations are stereotypically associated with men and women respectively.

than a static essence or a given attribute. As Widerberg (1998, 134) notes, the English word *gender* was used primarily in grammatical and literary contexts and was adopted by American feminists in the 1970s to define sex in a social sense. Contrary to English, the biological vs. social distinction is not codified in other languages. For example, in Norwegian, Danish and Swedish the words *kjønn*, *køn*, and *kön* cover the meaning of both 'sex' and 'gender' (see Braidotti 2002a for a discussion of the translation of the English term 'gender' in various European languages). A discussion about the equivalent terms in Greek is found in Pavlidou (2000). The Greek equivalent term of the English term 'gender' is *γένος* [jénos]. This word refers to 'a general concept in whose extension specific concepts are contained', 'a group of people with common descent' or 'ethnic group', and in grammar contexts it refers to the grammatical category of gender: *γραμματικό γένος* [grammatikó jénos] (Pavlidou 2000, 42). However, the term *γένος* is not used for reference to social gender. Sex and social gender are denoted in Greek via the term *φύλο* [filó], which is the equivalent of the English term 'sex'. For example, the expressions *αρσενικό φύλο* [arsenikó filó] 'male sex' and *θηλυκό φύλο* [thilikó filó] 'female sex' refer to the biological classification of humans as male or female, while the expression *κοινωνικό φύλο* [cironikó filó] 'social gender' refers to the social norms and ideologies associated with this biological classification.

In this book, I examine the relation between grammatical gender and socio-cultural gender through the lens of the relation between grammatical gender and cognition. In the following, I present a 'map' of the intellectual trajectory that has been followed in this book as well as the reasons that motivated my interest in grammatical gender in the first place. To a very large extent, this trajectory also forms a politics of location, in Braidotti's (2002b) terms, that is, a sort of cartography about the spatio-temporal territory that I share together with other women and feminist scholars, and about my situatedness in specific disciplinary contexts. My aim in undertaking this research project is to study the ways in which language contributes to the construction of socio-cultural gender and the maintenance of gender inequality. My investigation started with the following questions. How does grammatical gender contribute to the construction of sociocultural gender and the reproduction of gender asymmetry? How is this aspect related to the role of language in mediating speakers' interpretation of experience more generally? What sorts of answers can we give if we examine empirically the use of grammatical gender in interaction, that is, in the locus where speakers construct various aspects of their daily social life? In the next two sections, I sketch out some interesting points raised in the literature with respect to these questions. These points informed the argument to be presented in this book.

1.2 On Grammatical Gender and Culture

The early writings of feminist linguists in the 1970s and the beginning of the 1980s focus on the role of language as a system in reflecting or mirroring socio-cultural gender and sustaining gender inequality. I have two scholars in mind here: Robin Lakoff (1975) and Dale Spender (1980). Both scholars addressed issues of linguistic sexism in their work. Lakoff (1975) pointed to the negative representation of women in the lexicon and argued that women experience inequality in the way in which they are treated by language itself. Spender (1980) uncovered the role of language in constructing and enforcing a man-made worldview and sustaining men's domination and women's subordination. For these scholars, language contributes to legitimizing power at the social level. Therefore, language reform is treated as a crucial element in the feminist struggle for social change (Spender 1980).

One of the key issues that feminist linguists initially explored was the lexical and grammatical marking of sex in language. Feminist linguists pointed out that the semantic distinction of female or male sex can be grammaticized or be part of the noun's lexical meaning, and they explored the implications that these lexico-grammatical features have for the way in which the sociocultural world is represented and reproduced through language (e.g. Eakins and Eakins 1978; Graham 1975; Miller and Swift [1981] 1988). For example, they focused on the generic use of the masculine gender, that is, the use of the masculine gender for reference to female plus male referents or referents whose sex is unknown. They criticized the generic use of the masculine as a prescriptive practice, which sustains the social hierarchy between men and women, or the "Patriarchal Universe of Discourse", in Penelope's (1990, xxvi) words.

Lakoff's (1975) and Spender's (1980) work inaugurated a long tradition of research on language and gender which, according to Freed (2003, 701), has been dominated by three major themes: deficit, dominance, and difference theory. According to deficit theory, women's language is ineffective in comparison to men's, and reflects their socially inferior position (e.g. Lakoff 1975). According to dominance theory, the ways in which women and men use language reflect power and inequality at the social level (e.g. Thorne and Henley 1975). Finally, according to difference theory, women and men use different verbal strategies because they have been socialized in same-sex childhood peer groups (e.g. Maltz and Borker 1982; Tannen 1990). Freed (2003, 702) argues that in general these theories have approached gender in essentialist ways. They presuppose a binary way of thinking about gender, treating men and women as static categories, while little variation is acknowledged within each category.

However, recently there has been a shift in language and gender research from “essentialist and dichotomous conceptions of gender to a differentiated, contextualized and performative model which questions generalized claims about gender” (Holmes and Meyerhoff 2003, 7). This turn has been informed by Butler’s ([1990] 1999) theory on gender performativity. Instead of treating gender as a given attribute that exists prior to language and society, linguists started examining the practices that continuously produce and maintain gender as a fluid and diverse category, and the “linguistic resources” that speakers “deploy to present themselves as certain kinds of women or men”, in Eckert and McConnell-Ginet’s words (2003, 5). As Eckert and McConnell-Ginet (1992, 462) point out, gender cannot be isolated from other aspects of social identity and relations, such as age, class or ethnicity. The meaning of gender and the linguistic manifestations of that meaning vary across communities, such as family, school or work place, in which speakers may participate in different ways. Linguists working in the context of this new ‘paradigm’ have shifted their focus from language system to language use (Pavlidou 2011, 412) and from issues of representation to issues of construction at the micro-level of interaction.

More specifically, interaction and gender is explored by feminist conversation analytic studies (e.g. Kitzinger 2000; Speer 2005; Speer and Stokoe 2011). These studies examine gender as an accomplishment, a process that is constructed and maintained through the practices that participants employ in interaction. Speer and Stokoe (2011, 14) summarize some of the questions that have been explored by this strand of research as follows. What practices do speakers employ in order to “make a world of two sexes appear natural and inevitable”, and ‘pass’ as male or female in interaction? How is gender ‘done’ or accomplished in interaction? What counts as ‘orientation to gender’ in interaction? How can analysts show that gender is interactionally relevant? How does power manifest itself in interaction? If participants do not orient to their talk or the talk of others as sexist, can analysts claim that sexism has actually occurred in interaction? These questions will be highly relevant for the topic examined in this book.

Overall, grammatical gender in interaction emerges in the space created in-between the two broad tendencies in language and gender research that were discussed above. Studying grammatical gender in interaction foregrounds both language system and language use, and invites scholars to ask how the use of this grammatical feature in interaction structures the practices that speakers employ, and what are the social and cognitive aspects of this use. Traces of this line of thinking can be found in the following extract written by McConnell-Ginet ([1988] 2011, 39):

How do grammars, mental representations of linguistic systems, connect to other modules of the mind (e.g., those involved in social cognition; in person reception, in the planning of intentional action)? How do minds connect to each other through language use? [...] How are social and linguistic change connected to one another? What role does language use play in social categorization and cultural evaluation of its users? More generally, to what extent are patterns of language use reflective of social structure and of cultural values, of inequality and oppression? Can language be in part constitutive of culture and society, of women and men and their relationships?

These questions have undoubtedly inspired my work.

But how does cognition fit in the larger picture of grammatical gender and culture? Sociolinguistic approaches to gender address the aspect of cognition in indirect ways, by considering language reform practices as a tool for generating or facilitating social change, and by claiming that language constructs and maintains gender inequality. When feminist linguists formulate specific guidelines for the elimination of sexist language use, they seem to imply that language plays a key role in speakers' conceptualization of the world. For language to be 'culturally' significant, it must be also 'cognitively' salient.

1.3 On Grammatical Gender and Cognition

The assumption that language plays a role in speakers' understanding of the world is supported by empirical sociolinguistic and psycholinguistic studies that report a correlation between grammatical gender and the interpretation of referent's sex. For example, the generic use of the masculine gender is shown to correlate with speakers' strong tendency to interpret referents as male (e.g. studies reported in Doleschal and Schmid 2001 and Nissen 2002). Moreover, a number of psycholinguistic studies (e.g. Boroditsky, Schmidt, and Phillips 2003; Sera et al. 2002) report indications of a grammatical gender 'effect' on speakers' conceptualization of the inanimate world as 'female' or 'male'. For example, speakers of various languages are shown to attribute sex to inanimate objects according to the grammatical gender of the nouns denoting these objects.

The relation of grammatical gender to speakers' cognition is part of the broader question about the role that language system plays in speakers' cognition. As Lucy (1996, 39) argues, the semiotic nature of language may have interesting implications for the way in which speakers interpret experience and for the sociocultural world they live in. This view is known in the

literature as semiotic relativity (Lucy 1996). Is it possible that “the use of the semiotic form we call language in and of itself fundamentally alters the vision of the world held by humans in contrast to other species” (Lucy 1996, 38–39)? In order to reflect on the symbolic component of language, Lucy (1996, 40) draws on Peirce’s classification of icons, indexes and symbols. According to Peirce (1940), icons and indexes are signs related to the objects that they denote because of natural similarity and physical co-presence respectively. Symbols are signs standing for their objects because of convention, or “by virtue of a law [...] which operates to cause the Symbol to be interpreted as referring to that Object” (Peirce 1940, 102). Language is a symbolic medium that maintains aspects of icons and indexes. It socializes or objectifies individual activities, including thought, and it is a flexible signaling mode that allows for diversity to occur at all levels across languages (e.g. morphological, semantic but also functional), among other things (Lucy 1996, 40).

Due to these semiotic properties of language, a certain kind of linguocentrism arises in cultural and cognitive phenomena. As Enfield (2000, 126) points out, it is difficult “to isolate anything cognitive or cultural which is not already imbued with language at a profound level”. This view is supported by the fact that culture involves semiotic processes, which help humans share ideas and beliefs, and that the basic semiotic tool that humans employ for this purpose is language. In Enfield’s words,

while thoughts or private events independent of semiotic/linguistic material are possible (...), for them to serve as cultural background, they must be shared, and, further, be assumed to be shared. To achieve this recursively cognizant shared-ness, some material with semiotic potential must serve as a medium for individuals to use in aligning private representations. (Enfield 2000, 131)

Semiotic relativity serves as a background assumption in my research, as a sort of principle on the basis of which more specific questions can be addressed with respect to how the relation between grammatical gender, culture and cognition manifests itself in Greek.

Grammatical gender can be used as a case study for exploring how language relates to cognition because of its semantic basis and its systematic and obligatory use. The match between grammatical gender and referent’s sex in reference to human beings foregrounds the relation of grammatical gender to meaning, and, thus, to conceptualization. Following cognitive linguistics (Croft and Cruse 2004), meaning here is understood as construal, that is, as a process of re-structuring and interpreting experience in specific ways. The

relation between grammatical gender and conceptualization is further supported by the fact that gender is an inherent property in language system, a morphological category that marks numerous linguistic items and that speakers must use when they speak or write. The role of grammatical categories in mediating speakers' cognition has been examined by research on linguistic relativity (Boas 1938; Sapir [1949] 1970; Whorf 1956). Linguistic relativity refers to the correlation between cross-linguistic and cognitive differences, and presupposes semiotic relativity. That is, it presupposes the mediation of language in the interpretation of experience. Research on linguistic relativity shows that grammar provides a set of options for schematicizing experience for verbal expression and that grammatical categories guide speakers to unconscious interpretations of experience, because they are systematic, obligatory and automatic. The mediation of language to speakers' cognition is expected to take place at least when speakers think for speaking, as Slobin (1996; 2003) shows. Given the approaches mentioned above, the following question arises: do languages with systems of gender, such as Greek, orient speakers to specific ways of interpreting experience, that is, to the interpretation of person as female/woman or male/man? This question will be examined in this book.

1.4 Summary of the Argument to be Presented in the Book

The book is divided into two main parts. Chapters 2, 3, 4 and 5 constitute the theoretical part of my research, while chapters 6 and 7 constitute the empirical part (data analysis and conclusions).

More specifically, in chapter 2, I describe the properties of gender, by focusing on the features of the grammatical gender system in Modern Greek and the ways in which grammatical gender is related to reference in general. The key point made in this chapter is that grammatical gender in person reference codifies the semantic distinction of sex.

In chapter 3, I study the relation between grammatical gender and culture by drawing on sociolinguistic and feminist non-linguistic approaches. Sociolinguistic studies on language and gender have shown that grammatical gender is part of a wide range of linguistic resources available to speakers for denoting and constructing gender in communication (Hellinger and Bussmann 2001). Linguistic items marked by grammatical gender codify biological difference between men and women, ascribe sex to referents (Eckert and McConnell-Ginet 2003; Ochs 1992), and are used by speakers for the construction of gender identities (Borba and Ostermann 2007; Hall and O'Donovan 1996; Kulick 1998; Livia 1997). In addition, gender is constructed

on the basis of social hierarchy, as the generic use of the masculine shows (Hellinger and Bussmann 2001; 2002; 2003). The relation between language and gender is also explored by feminist non-linguistic approaches (e.g. Butler 1999; Irigaray 1985a; Wittig 1992). These approaches highlight the role of language, and of grammatical gender in particular, in categorizing subjects as women or men and constructing the dominant gender order.

In chapter 4, I explore the relation between grammatical gender and cognition through the lens of cognitive semantics and research on linguistic relativity. Lakoff (1987) challenges the idea that grammatical gender constitutes an arbitrary category with no conceptual dimension, by arguing that gender relates to conceptual categorization. More specifically, he makes the speculation that genders in Dyirbal, an Australian Aboriginal language, are conceptual categories with prototypical and less prototypical members. Following Lakoff's approach, I suggest that grammatical gender in Greek constitutes conceptual categorization and that the masculine and feminine gender correspond to conceptual categories in which men and women are prototypical members respectively.

Moreover, Lakoff argues that conceptual categories are linked with metonymic cognitive models. As Köpcke and Zubin (2003) show, grammatical gender in German may be related with metonymic cognitive models that incorporate sociocultural stereotypes. Similar to their speculation, I suggest that the generic use of the masculine gender is linked to a metonymic cognitive model that incorporates the sociocultural stereotype of man with the category of human/universal.

The grammaticization of the concept of sex in Greek is taken to have significant consequences for speakers' cognition according to linguistic relativity. More specifically, as Slobin (1996; 2003) argues, language mediates speakers' thinking before and while speaking. Language sets limits on what speakers must say, depending on what is grammaticized, and, thus, guides speakers to attend to specific aspects of experience when they speak. Because gender is a grammatical category used in an obligatory and systematic way, it is expected to guide speakers to attend to the sex distinction when they speak, and interpret referents as female or male.

In chapter 5, I formulate the research question and explore the relation between grammatical gender and person reference in interaction. In addition, I present the method to be employed for the empirical investigation of my research question. Based on the different approaches examined in chapters 3 and 4, grammatical gender is shown to have a complex nature. The cultural and cognitive aspects of grammatical gender in person reference interweave in interaction. More specifically, the role of grammatical gender in constructing

the hierarchical gender dichotomy presupposes the role of grammatical gender in guiding speakers to the interpretation of referent as female or male. The empirical investigation of the grammatical gender-culture-cognition interplay in interaction is especially interesting for two reasons. As Conversation Analysis has shown, interaction is the locus of human sociality where participants jointly construct their sociocultural world (Schegloff 2006b). Moreover, when speakers communicate with each other, they are engaged in verbal conduct and, thus, in thinking for speaking (Slobin 1996). Therefore, interaction can serve as a sort of 'lab' for exploring both culture and cognition with respect to grammatical gender. In particular, my aim is to examine empirically i) whether interaction provides indications of the role of grammatical gender in guiding speakers to interpret referents as female or male, and ii) the implications of the use of grammatical gender for the sociocultural world that speakers construct in interaction.

Person reference is an important notion in the study of grammatical gender in interaction, because it is the actual 'target' for any cultural or cognitive 'work' that grammatical gender may be doing in interaction. As a number of studies on person reference in interaction (Brown 2007; Enfield 2007; Hanks 2007; Haviland 2007) show, person reference involves a lot more than just identifying specific referents. Referential forms usually express information about social relations between speaker, addressee and third person, and their social identities. Therefore, they maintain and reinforce these social relations and identities. In a similar way, referential forms in Greek can be said to be functionally complex, because they are inflected for grammatical gender and, thus, mark referent's sex in a compulsory manner. By drawing on Silverstein's (1976) approach to indexicality, Ochs (1992) argues that linguistic items marking sex lexically or grammatically index referent's gender. Following Ochs, I suggest that linguistic items marked by grammatical gender in Greek index referent's gender and, thus, incorporate the information of gender in the covert assumptions that participants share about context and in the routine meanings produced in interaction. The link between grammatical gender and covert assumptions and routine meanings foregrounds the notions of 'ordinariness', 'taken-for-granted' and 'commonsense knowledge' (Garfinkel 1967; Sacks 1984) as key in the study of grammatical gender in interaction.

In chapter 6, I examine empirically grammatical gender in interaction, by analyzing naturally occurring conversations among friends and relatives. More specifically, I examine the cultural and cognitive aspects of grammatical gender in the following cases:

- in individual (*εγώ* [eyó] ‘I’), collective (*εμείς* [emís] ‘we’) and indefinite or generic second person (*εσύ* [esí] ‘you’) self-reference (i.e. reference to speaker), in reference to recipient (*εσύ/εσείς* [esís] ‘you.SG/you.PL’), and in third person reference (*αυτός/αυτή* [aftós/aftí] ‘he/she’, *αυτοί/αυτές* [aftí/aftés] ‘they.MASC/they.FEM’);
- in cases in which participants orient to sociocultural gender, that is, they recognize gender as a relevant category for interaction;
- in cases of non-match between grammatical gender and referents’ sex, that is, in cases where the masculine grammatical gender is used for reference to female persons only;
- and, in cases in which the use of grammatical gender creates problems in the interpretation of referent’s sex that are resolved in interaction through practices of repair.

Overall, the empirical analysis yields indications of the cognitive role of grammatical gender i) in cases in which the codification of referent’s gender via grammatical gender becomes important for what participants do in interaction, and ii) in cases in which the information of referent’s gender is simply made available in interaction. In the first instance, indications are found in cases of self-repair and exposed and embedded correction, that is, in repairs initiated by the speaker and a person other than the speaker respectively, in which the item marked by grammatical gender constitutes the repairable item. These repairs are classified as direct indications of the cognitive role of grammatical gender, because they involve interventions made by speakers in the interpretation of referent’s sex. In the second instance, indications are found in next turns, in turns’ recipient-design, in the non-match between grammatical gender and referents’ sex, and in the membership categorization device. These indications are indirect or covert, because in the latter cases the information of referent’s gender codified by grammatical gender passes unnoticed by participants.

In addition, the analysis shows that specific meanings are produced in interaction in routine and covert ways because of the compulsory use of grammatical gender in the composition of turns. Linguistic items marked by grammatical gender are gender membership categories that categorize speakers, recipients and third persons as women or men, and invoke and sustain the stereotypical association of man with the norm. When participants orient to gender, they employ the information of gender that is made available by grammatical gender in interaction to construct their own or other people’s gender identities. When gender is not interactionally relevant, the gendered categorization of referents and the maintenance of gender hierarchy occur together

with various social actions, which are not related to participants' orientation to gender.

I end the book with a series of conclusions and reflections in chapter 7. The main points to be discussed in this final chapter are the following: i) interpreting indications of the cognitive role of grammatical gender as indications of the role of language in mediating speakers' thinking for speaking, ii) reflecting on the relation of the generic use of the masculine with the covert reproduction of sexism in interaction, iii) and reconsidering the concept of gender performativity through the lens of the present study.