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BLENDS IN GREEK DIALECTS: a morphosemantic analysis

Abstract

The basic aim of our paper is to focus on the morphosemantic status of approximately eighty Greek dialectal blends. The paper is organized in three units: in the first we give an outlook of the basic theoretical references for blending, in the second we present the lexical categories which are involved in the formation of Greek blends, and in the third we attempt their morphological analysis and semantic interpretation.

1. Introduction

With the exception of some descriptive articles, restricted in presenting catalogues of Greek dialectal blends and an article of Arvaniti (1998) on the phonological status of a series of blends used in recent Greek jokes, no other linguistic work is known to have shown interest in Greek blending, and particularly in examining their morphosemantic behavior. Actually, Standard Greek doesn't seem to offer for such a word formation process, while Greek dialects seem to be rich in blends.

The source of our data includes written as well as living speech mainly from Samos, Crete, Cyclades, Cyprus and Messinia.

2. References

Blends, also called portmanteau words, are formed by means of fusing two words into one new word, where portions of the base words are often subtracted. For example, the English blend *motel* has been formed by combining *motor* and *hotel* and subtracting the string <tor.ho> (Bat El:1996).

Scalise (1984) and Spencer (1991) mention blends in a footnote, along with acronyms and clipping as not 'of any importance to morphological theory' or as a 'minor word formation process'. Two more linguists, Bauer (1983) and Berman (1989), are often reluctant to conclude that blends have a grammar, nevertheless they specify some degree of restriction.

Bauer (1983) presents four kinds of English blends: 'in most cases the new word is created from parts of two other words, with no apparent principles guiding the way in which the two original words are mutilated' and 'the coiner is apparently free to take as much or as little from either base as is felt to be necessary or desirable' (a). However, in some cases 'the rules for blending are more obvious', since 'the two words are simply merged where they overlap, so that no information is lost, but repetition of letter combinations is avoided' (b). A third kind of blend, is the type where 'the new lexeme looks as though it is or might be analyzable in terms of other word-formation processes, in particular as neo-classical compound' (c). Finally, under blends there are words whose

'precise status in the taxonomy is difficult to discern', since 'they keep one of the two bases intact'.

(1) a. flimsy   +   miserable   →   mimsy
      parachute   +   balloon   →   paraloon

     b. slang   +   language   →   slanguage
       guess   +   estimate   →   guestimate

     c. architectural   +   ecology   →   arcology
       automobile   +   suicide   →   autosuicide

     d. car   +   barbecue   →   carbecue
       boat   +   hotel   →   boatel

Berman's study of Hebrew blends (1989), based on the ability of speakers in coining and selecting new terms, concludes that Hebrew blending is a productive device of word-formation but not a systematic one, since Hebrew does not as yet possess structure-dependent mechanisms or sets of rules for blend-formation, of the kind which govern and constrain the construction of new words and of new compounds. She notes, however, that there may be quite general agreement as to which forms are more or less acceptable -hence more or less likely to be incorporated in the conventional lexicon.

Unlike the studies mentioned above, Kubozono's (1990) analysis of blending in English and Japanese strongly suggests that blending is a part of the grammar: blending refers to grammatical structures and constraints, it does not have any characteristics which are not found in natural language and blends can be analyzed only within a constraint-based framework such as Optimality Theory, which allows constraints to be violated.

Bat El (1996) provides further support for Kubozono's view. On the basis of the principles of Optimality Theory and Correspondence Theory she suggests that Hebrew blending is governed by hierarchically ordered well-formedness constraints, all phonological in nature, such as phonological entities, segmental and prosodic. Furthermore, she discusses the non-prosodic morphological aspects of Hebrew blends: the elements in the base of the blend are not restricted to particular lexical categories, the notion of head is not relevant for either the base of the blend or the total blend and the order of the elements in the base is not given by an independent principle.

Finally, Arvaniti (1998) examines the phonological processes that give a series of semantically surreal blends used in recent Greek jokes. Following the principles of Optimality Theory, she notices that they are based on hierarchically ranked well-formedness constraints and suggests that alignment procedures show evidence for foot structure in Greek.

(2) καρχαρίας   +   καναρίνι   →   καρχαρίνι
     [karxarías]   [kanaríni]   [karxaríni]
     shark   canary

     αετός   +   τοστ   →   αετόστ
     [aetós]   [tóst]   [aetóst]
     eagle   tost

3. Lexical Categories

Blends are generally classified as nouns, verbs, adjectives and pronouns. They are made up of constituents, each belonging to the category of noun, verb, adjective or pronoun. In the following list, there are representative examples of the most frequent blend types. Nouns are given by convention in nominative singular, adjectives in nominative singular of the masculine, and verb forms are cited in the first person singular of the present tense:

(3) a. NOUNS

N + N

γούβα	+	πάτος	→	γούπατο	Messinia/Samos
[γúva]		[pátos]		[γúpato]	
hollow		bottom		hollow in a rock	

κλάρα	+	φούντα	→	κλαφούντα	Samos
[klára]		[fúda]		[klafúda]	
brunch		tuft		tuft with brunch	

παλτό	+	μαντό	→	παντό	Samos
[paltó]		[madó]		[padó]	
overcoat		coat		kind of light coat	

παράδεισος	+	κόλαση	→	παρακόλαση	Samos
[paráðisos]		[kólasi]		[parakólasi]	
paradise		hell		in between paradise and hell	

A + N

λιανός	+	λούρα	→	λιανούρα	Samos
[ʎanós]		[lúra]		[ʎanúra]	
thin		rod		thin rod	

b. VERBS

V + V

χαράζω	+	ανοίω	→	χαρανοίω	Rhodes
[xarázo]		[anío]		[xaranío]	
engrave		open		open by engraving	

κοροϊδεύω	+	γελάω	→	κορογελάω	Messinia
[korojðévo]		[jeláo]		[korojeláo]	
mock		laugh		mock and laugh	

πετυχαίνω	+	λαχαίνω	→	πετυλαχαίνω	Crete
[petiçéno]		[laçéno]		[petilaçéno]	
achieve		meet		meet with	

N + V

χαντάκι	+	κόβω	→	χαντακόβω	Rhodes
[xadáci]		[kóvo]		[xadakóvo]	
ditch		cut		cut a ditch	

c. ADJECTIVES
A + A

ψιλός	+	χοντρός	→	ψιντρός	Cyprus
[psilós]		[xodrós]		[psidrós]	
tall		fat		tall and fat	

d. PRONOUNS
P + P

ποιού	+	τίνος	→	πίνος	Kefallonia
[pçú]		[tínos]		[pínos]	

4. Morphosemantic analysis and categorization

According to Bauer (1983) there appears to be a central core of strongly morphological processes, made up of prefixation, suffixation, backformation and neo-classic compounding. Outside that central core, clipping, blending and forming acronyms appear as processes that are much less morphological. Blending is not well-defined and tends to shade off into compounding, affixation, clipping and forming acronyms. Nevertheless, it is a very productive source of words in both literary and scientific contexts.

Blending is usually treated as a process on the boundaries of morphology and phonology (a case of phonology-morphology interface) lying between compounding and acronyms. According to our corpus, the Greek dialectal blends could be categorized under the following four groups on the basis of morphosemantic criteria: compound-like blends, false-blends, infixed blends and acro-blends:

(4) The Morphological Continuum

COMPOUNDS		BLENDS				ACRONYMS
compounds	clipped compounds	compound-like blends	false-blends	infixed blends	acro-blends	

4.1. Compounding

Compounding in Greek is traditionally defined as an association of two or more stems, which always occur as one unit. According to Ralli (1992), Greek compounds are generated by a general context-free rewriting rule of the following type: X → Y Z (specific values for X, Y and Z may range among the categories of 'Stem' and 'Word' depending on the type of the compound). According to the different combination possibilities between a 'Stem' and a 'Word', the general rule pattern for Greek compounds could be formulated as follows (cf. Ralli 1992, 1999, Nespor & Ralli 1996):

(5) a. Stem → Stem Stem

αγρι-ο-περίστερ(ο)	<	άγρι(ος)	περιστέρ(ι)	Standard Greek
[aɣrioperístero]		[áɣrios]	[peristéri]	
wild pigeon		wild	pigeon	

b. Word → Stem Word

τυρ-ο-σαλάτα	<	τυρ(ί)	σαλάτα	Standard Greek
[tirosaláta]		[tirí]	[saláta]	
cheese salad		cheese	salad	

c. Word → Word Word

μαύρη λίστα	<	μαύρη	λίστα	Standard Greek
[mávri lísta]		[mávri]	[lísta]	
black list		black	list	

The transitional area between compounds and blends is occupied by a particular case of compounding, called clipping compounding, which refers to shortened compounds by means of truncation of some segment (cf. Aronoff 1976). The discriminating feature of the words in this category is the existence of the linking vowel -o- between the two constituents, a major characteristic feature of Greek compounding (cf. Ralli 1992):

(6)

αλουπ-ο-γανιάζω	<	αλουπ-ο-παγανιάζω	<	αλουπού	παγανιάζω	Samos
[alupoɣaɲázo]		[alupopaɣaɲázo]		[alupú]	[paɣaɲázo]	
chase a fox		chase a fox		fox	chase	

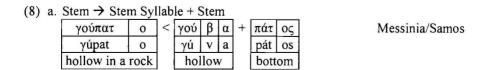| τσακμ-ό-πετρα | < | τσακμακ-ό-πετρα | < | τσακμάκι | πέτρα | Samos |
| [tsakmópetra] | | [tsakmakópetra] | | [tsakmáci] | [pétra] | |
| enlighter | | enlighter | | lighter | stone | |

4.2. Acronyms

On the other end of the morphological continuum, Greek acronyms are formed on a pattern common to other languages: the first letters or syllables of a series of words are combined in order to name organizations, services, political parties etc. The basic similarity between acronyms and blends is that they are both made up of parts of other words. However, there are three points in which they are differentiated: 1) The constituents of the acronyms may exceed the number of two, while in blends the participating constituents are restricted to two, 2) The combining parts of words are usually shorter in acronyms and 3) Blends have a more distinct, analyzable and morphosemantically transparent structure:
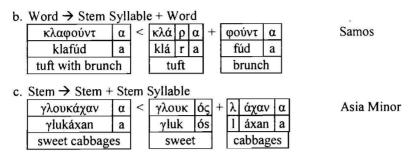
(7)

ΠΑ	νελλήνιο		PA	nelínio		Universal	Standard Greek
ΣΟ	σιαλιστικό		SO	sialistikó		Sosialistic	
Κ	ίνημα		Κ	ínima		Party	

4.3. Blends

On the blending area of the morphological continuum, there is a category of words which shares common characteristics with compounds but should be treated as a borderline case between compounding and blending and should be considered as a first stage process of blending, under the proposed term **compound-like blends.**
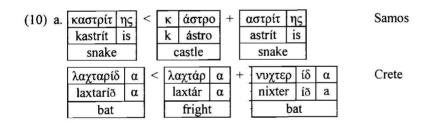
This type of words seems to follow Ralli's general rules of compounding, which adjusted to the case, could be formulated into the following three rules:

(8) a. Stem → Stem Syllable + Stem

γούπατ	ο	<	γού	β	α	+	πάτ	ος	Messinia/Samos
γúpat	o		γú	v	a		pát	os	
hollow in a rock			hollow				bottom		

b. Word → Stem Syllable + Word

κλαφούντ	α		<	κλά	ρ	α	+	φούντ	α
klafúd	a			klá	r	a		fúd	a
tuft with brunch				tuft				brunch	

Samos

c. Stem → Stem + Stem Syllable

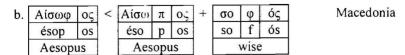| γλουκάχαν	α		<	γλουκ	óς		+	λ	άχαν	α
γlukáxan	a			γluk	ós			l	áxan	a
sweet cabbages				sweet				cabbages		

Asia Minor

The proposed term 'Stem Syllable' indicates the shortened stem of the first or the second constituent, which usually coincides with its first syllable (e.g. γύν- > γύ-, κλάρ- > κλά- etc.) and its final form is dominated by phonological and mainly phonotactic constraints (e.g. klar- > *klfúda etc.). In most cases, the shortening of a stem involves the apocope of the first or the last phoneme, depending on its position, righthand or lefthand. However, although they share significant common elements with compounds, there is a strong argument that these words differ from compounds, since no linking vowel is involved (cf. 6)[1].

The following category of blends could be sited on the further side of compounds. Morphologically, it is considered a classic case of blending, also found in other languages, such as English and Hebrew: a consonantal or vocalic sound of one of the constituents is added to or substitutes a sound of the other constituent. Nevertheless, there seems to be a significant semantic difference in Greek blends: their referent is not 'something' between the referents of the two constituents but one of the constituents functions as a folk etymology marker of the other. The influence of the folk etymology marker may be either external (a) or internal (b). We propose for these blends the term **false-blends**, since they satisfy only the morphological criterion for blending and not the semantic one.

(10) a.

καστρίτ	ης		<	κ	άστρο		+	αστρίτ	ης
kastrít	is			k	ástro			astrít	is
snake				castle				snake	

Samos

λαχταρίδ	α		<	λαχτάρ	α		+	νυχτερ	íδ	α
laxtaríδ	α			laxtár	α			nixter	íδ	a
bat				fright				bat		

Crete

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[1] Some compound-like blends can also be found in Standard Greek:

(9) ταράζω + κουνώ → ταρακουνώ
[tarázo] [kunó] [tarakunó]
to disturb to shake to disturb by shaking

θρύλος + λέων → θρυλέων
[θrílos] [léon] [θriléon]
legend lion the mascot of a football team

b.

Αίσωφ	ος	<	Αίσω	π	ος	+	σο	φ	ός
ésop	os		éso	p	os		so	f	ós
Aesopus			Aesopus				wise		

Macedonia

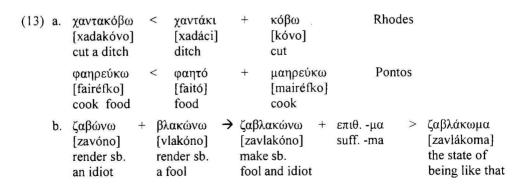Another case of blending, which is not frequent in Greek dialects, involves the infixation of a syllable or a shortened stem of one of the constituents into the stem of the other. For this type of blends, we propose the term **infixed blends**:

(11)

τσακλακίδ	ια	<	τσα	κίδ	ια	+	κλα	κέτ	ες
tsaklakíð	ja		tsa	kíð	ja		kla	két	es
dancing devices			broken items				castanets		

Samos

The last category of the blending area seems to be very close to acronyms and is frequent not only in Greek dialects but also in English and Hebrew as well: the first syllable/s of the first element is/are combined with the last syllable/s of the second element. Like acronyms, they are combinations of syllables, but not the first of each word. Due to their similarity to them, we propose the term **acro-blends:**

(12)

πα	ντό	<	πα	λτό	+	μα	ντό
pa	dó		pa	ltó		ma	dó
light coat			overcoat			coat	

Samos

αντά	λαγμός	<	αντά	ρα	+	αλα	λαγμός
ada	laɣmós		adá	ra		ala	laɣmós
storm-like shout			storm			shout of joy	

Myconos

So far, the present study of Greek blends has proved that they constitute morphological constructions. There are four arguments supporting the outcome: 1) Most of them have a degree of analyzability and morphosemantic transparency, 2) Like Greek compounds, they are usually right-headed (cf. Ralli 1992), 3) The deverbal blends have a verb as a head and an internally satisfied argument of the verb by the non-head (cf. Ralli 1992, Di Sciullo & Ralli 1994), e.g. an object argument, which semantically corresponds to a theme (a), and 4) Some of them can be productive (b):

(13) a.

χαντακόβω	<	χαντάκι	+	κόβω	Rhodes
[xaðakóvo]		[xaðáci]		[kóvo]	
cut a ditch		ditch		cut	

φαηρεύκω	<	φαητό	+	μαηρεύκω	Pontos
[fairéfko]		[faitó]		[mairéfko]	
cook food		food		cook	

b.

ζαβώνω	+	βλακώνω	→	ζαβλακώνω	+	επιθ. -μα	>	ζαβλάκωμα
[zavóno]		[vlakóno]		[zavlakóno]		suff. -ma		[zavlákoma]
render sb.		render sb.		make sb.				the state of
an idiot		a fool		fool and idiot				being like that

σαχλάρω	+	καλαμπουρίζω	→	σαχλαμπουρίζω	+ επιθ. -μα	> σαχλαμπούρισμα
[saxláro]		[kalaburízo]		[saxlaburízo]	suff. -ma	[saxlabúrizma]
to talk		to make		to make		the act of
nonsense		jokes		nonsense jokes		'saχlaburízo'

In terms of the morphological interpretation of the formation of Greek blends, we suggest that compound-like blends and acro-blends could be possibly explained by means of either a truncation of segment (cf. Aronoff 1976) or a shortening of one or both of the stems with absence of a linking vowel. Concerning false-blends, they could be explained by means of either an extension of a stem or reanalysis due to a folk etymology process.

Despite the morphological status of Greek blends, we shouldn't at all ignore the involvement of phonology for their formation: morphology interferes with their internal morphematic structure, whereas phonology interferes with the phonological constraints that are taken into account for their formation. Compound-like blends and false-blends seem to be closer to morphological constructions than infixed blends and acro-blends, where phonology seems to be of a higher priority. As a result, the more a blend is far from compounding, the more phonology interferes with its formation and morphosemantic transparency is reduced. Correspondingly, the more a blend is near compounding, the more phonology does not interfere with its formation and morphosemantic transparency is increased.

5. Semantic interpretation of the blends
5.1. Semantic relation of the elements

In order to examine the meaning of the outcome, one has to look at the semantic relations between the source words, as well as the strength of the relationship between them. Compositional analysis of lexical meaning has been proposed to elucidate semantic relations among lexical items and constraints on possible interactions of the constituents of conceptually complex words.

In these terms one can identify several types of semantic relationship between the two constituents: absolute synonyms (a), near synonyms graded in terms of their contiguity in meaning, to the mere similarity of being in the same broader semantic field (b), words that share some common component of meaning and their overlapping area is not extended (c), words not semantically related (d) and antonyms (e):

(14) a.

φρίκη	+	τρόμος	→	φρίμος		Samos
[fríci]		[trómos]		[frímos]		
horror		terror		more than horror		

διάολος	+	σατανάς	→	διάτανος		Crete
[ðjáolos]		[satanás]		[ðjátanos]		
devil		devil		curse used to avoid either term		

κατσίκα	+	γίδα	→	κατσγίδα		Samos
[katsíka]		[jíða]		[katsjíða]		
goat		aged goat		ugly goat		

χαρά	+	καλαμπούρι	→	χαραμπούρι		Samos
[xará]		[kalabúri]		[xarabúri]		
joy		fun		joy and fun		

b.	αντάρα [adára] storm	+	αλαλαγμός [alalaɣmós] shout of joy	→	ανταλαγμός [adalaɣmós] storm-like joy	Mykonos
	παλτό [paltó] overcoat	+	μαντό [madó] coat	→	παντό [padó] kind of light coat	Samos
	ξίδι [ksíði] vinegar	+	λαδιά [laðjá] oil spot	→	τζιλαδιά [tzilaðjá] a mixture of oil and vinegar	Samos
	γαρμπής [ɣarbís] SW wind	+	μπουνάτσα [bunátsa] stillness	→	γαρμπνάτσα [ɣarbnátsa] a very calm SW wind	Samos
c.	συντρίβω [sidrívo] to crash	+	βουλιάζω [vuʎázo] to sink	→	συντριβουλιάζω [sidrivuʎázo] to crash and destroy	Messinia
	βρουχώμαι [vruxóme] to growl	+	ροχαλίζω [roxalízo] to snore	→	βρουχαλίζω [vruxalízo] to snore growling	Crete
	σπηλιά [spiʎá] cave	+	λιθάρι [liθári] stone	→	σπληθάρι [spliθári] a cave-like rock	Messinia
d.	εμπόδιο [ebóðio] obstacle	+	έργο [érɣo] deed	→	έμπεργο [éberɣo] a deed full of obstacles	Pontos
	ταράζω [tarázo] to disturb	+	τζουλάω [tzuláo] to squeeze	→	ταρατζουλάω [taratzuláo] to disturb and squeeze	Messinia
e.	ψιλός [psilós] slender	+	χοντρός [xodrós] fat	→	ψιντρός [psidrós] slender and fat	Cyprus
	πιθώνω [piθóno] to place	+	σηκώνω [sikóno] to lift up	→	πιθωσηκώνω [piθosikóno] to place sth down and then to lift it up	Crete

5.2. Meaning of the blends

In all cases the meaning of a blend is different from that of each of the elements. Specifically, it can be: a near synonym, to both or one of the elements, being different due to some supplementary semantic component which in some cases may trigger for the

speakers certain associations, or have a strong carry-over from being often used (a), a specialization of the meaning of the elements (b), a contradictory meaning, when the elements are opposites (c), a novel, unknown meaning, producing an effect of novelty, usually filling in a gap in the vocabulary (d), or a redundant meaning (e), when there is really no semantic information added, serving, perhaps, to emphasize some semantic component (cf. Nida 1975, Fass 1993):

(15) a. σφαλίζω   +   μανταλώνω   →   σφανταλώνω   Kefallonia
          [sfalízo]   [madalóno]   [sfadalóno]
          to secure   to close   to close and secure

          ζουπάω   +   πλακιάζω   →   ζουπακιάζω   Messinia
          [zupáo]   [placázo]   [zupacázo]
          to squeeze   to fall on sth   to squeeze sth by falling on it

      b. κλάρα   +   φούντα   →   κλαφούντα   Samos
          [klára]   [fúda]   [klafúda]
          branch   tuft   a branch with a tuft

          γούβα   +   πάτος   →   γούπατο   Messinia/
          [γúva]   [pátos]   [γúpato]   Samos
          hollow   bottom   a hollow with a bottom

      c. κνάστος   +   άουρος   →   κνάουρος   Pontos
          [knástos]   [áuros]   [knáuros]
          ripe or mature   unripe or green   ripe but also green

          ανέφορον   +   ομάλιν   →   ανεφομάλιν   Pontos
          [anéforon]   [omálin]   [anefomálin]
          ascent   even   an even ascent

      d. μουκώμαι   +   γκαρίζω   →   μουγκαρίζω   Kythira
          [mukóme]   [garízo]   [mugarízo]
          to bellow   cry of   to bellow like a donkey
                                a donkey

          παλτό   +   μαντό   →   παντό   Samos
          [paltó]   [madó]   [padó]
          overcoat   coat   a garment that is a combination
                                                      of a coat and an overcoat

      e. φρίκη   +   τρόμος   →   φρίμος   Samos
          [fríci]   [trómos]   [frímos]
          horror   terror   more than horror

          κατσίκα   +   γίδα   →   κατσγίδα   Samos
          [katsíka]   [jíða]   [katsjíða]
          goat   aged goat   ugly goat

5.3. Contribution of each constituent

Another aspect of the semantic analysis of blends is how much each of the elements contributes to a novel or specialized meaning expressed by the word constructed. In compounds the portion of morphemes retained from the elements is normally adequate to convey the meaning necessary for the interpretation of the new word. The construction of the meaning of a blend requires a mental process similar to that of compounding. The difference is that in blends the portion "saved" from each of the base word varies a great deal. Sometimes the discarded part of a base word is so big, that, the associations required for the interpretation, are not readily provoked (Warren 1990). Furthermore, as is also the case with compounds, the way the new word is interpreted is closely related with the extra-linguistic knowledge that the speaker and the receiver share.

Regarding the way the recoverability functions in Greek blends, Arvanity (1998) says that it is not clear and she figures that two parameters are involved: 1) The way words are perceived in speech, that is the determining of their identity (and this concerns mainly the first constituent), and 2) The syllable templates which together with the stress allow the identification of the second element. However, the new meaning is predictable due to the added content morpheme and provided there exists the particular extralinguistic knowledge required.

The examination of the blends has showed that the amount of notion conveyed by the constituents is analogous to the length of the morphemic body saved from the base words:

- In compound-like blends, the not-shortened constituent maintains its total meaning, while the shortened constituent does not really offer much information, that is the second constituent cooperates with more semantic components to the interpretation of the blend (a),

- In acro-blends, where both of the base words are presented in a shortened form, the portion of semantic content offered by the two constituents is almost the same, and neither of them has a crucial role in the meaning of the blend (b)

- In false-blends, the semantic head maintains its total meaning, while the other constituent functions as a folk etymology marker of the semantic head (c):

(16) a. χαράζω + ανοίω → χαρανοίω   Rhodes
       [xarázo]   [anío]   [xaranío]
       engrave   open   open by engraving

       χαρά + καλαμπούρι → Χαραμπούρι   Samos
       [xará]   [kalabúri]   [xarabúri]
       joy   fun   joy and fun

     b. παλτό + μαντό → παντό   Samos
       [paltó]   [madó]   [padó]
       overcoat   coat   kind of light coat

       φρίκη + τρόμος → φρίμος   Samos
       [fríci]   [trómos]   [frímos]
       horror   terror   more than horror

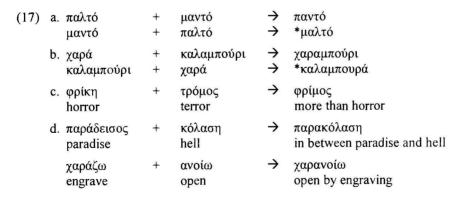c. λαχτάρα   +   νυχτερίδα   →   λαχταρίδα   Crete
   [laxtára]   .   [nixteríδa]   [laxtaríδa]
   fright   bat   bat

5.4. Order of the elements

For Kubozono (1990) blends preserve the attributes of the compounds, that is the right end is the thematic base. Bat-El (1996) disagrees and says that one of the reasons blending differs from other types of word formation is the absence of constraints in the order of the base elements, since the order is indirectly determined by the interaction of independently motivated constraints, and none of the constraints is related with the semantic content of the elements.

The examination of the blends of our corpus has led to some suggestions about the order of the elements. It seems that there exists a mechanism for handling semantically illformed blends by means of certain constraints which function only in certain conditions to block the formation of meaningless blends. They tell us the way some pairs of lexemes can combine meaningfully so that the interpretation of the blend is semantically acceptable:

- In blends with constituents that are synonyms, the "uniqueness" constraint, as Bat El (1996:288) names it, helps to avoid semantically related homonyms. In such cases, the reverse order would give blends, which are not phonologically and semantically distinct from one of the base words (a)
- In acro-blends, the second constituent should come from the base word with more syllables, so that the first base word can be different from the blends (b) or the word which seems semantically more important or marked, becomes the first element of the blend (c)
- The elements of some blends are put in order following protoypes like positive-negative, sequence of actions, known patterns etc. (d):

(17)   a.   παλτό   +   μαντό   →   παντό
          μαντό   +   παλτό   →   *μαλτό

     b.   χαρά   +   καλαμπούρι   →   χαραμπούρι
          καλαμπούρι   +   χαρά   →   *καλαμπουρά

     c.   φρίκη   +   τρόμος   →   φρίμος
          horror   terror   more than horror

     d.   παράδεισος   +   κόλαση   →   παρακόλαση
          paradise   hell   in between paradise and hell

       χαράζω   +   ανοίω   →   χαρανοίω
       engrave   open   open by engraving

In cases of blends which could have very well been constructed in a reverse ordering of their constituents and still no inconsistency or nonsensical effect would be produced by the matching of their meanings, one could say that it is the knowledge of the subject that determines which combination is more likely, and the interpretation is not mainly determined by any formation rule or the kind of the input constituents. Speakers are guided by their knowledge of the referents of the base words and select the components of meaning they want to transfer.

(18) εμπόδιο	+	έργο	→	έμπεργο
έργο	+	εμπόδιο	→	*εργόδιο
κοροϊδεύω	+	γελάω	→	κορογελάω
γελάω	+	κοροϊδεύω	→	*γελαϊδεύω
ψιλός	+	χοντρός	→	ψιντρός
χοντρός	+	ψιλός	→	*χοντλός

Actually, it is essential for the interpretation of a blend that the hearer recognizes the elements of the base and that he knows their referents. It is often stated that the mapping between lexical and conceptual structures matches the relatively stable linguistic knowledge to the changeable world knowledge (Sowa 1993). There is an interaction of the two kinds of knowledge. Speakers of a language make their choice from the available options their linguistic knowledge offers for the creation of blends, knowing how these will transmit their meaning and how other people will understand it, with the help of the general, background knowledge they possess. That is why blends are readily interpretable by speakers handling the same variety, while for others, having different lexical and conceptual patterns, the interpretation is doubtful (Saeed 1997).

Up to here there have been examined only some of the modern Greek dialects, mainly from south Greece and there is more work to be done exploring the "wealth" of northern varieties. In the process of future research perhaps new findings will come up which will elucidate new aspects of the notion of blends.

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