

ARISTOTLE UNIVERSITY OF THESSALONIKI

PROCEEDINGS OF

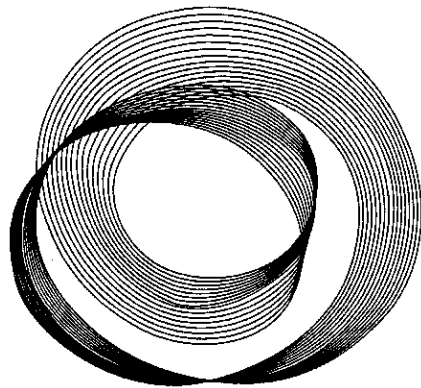
th INTERNATIONAL

SYMPOSIUM

ON ENGLISH AND GREEK:
DESCRIPTION AND/OR
COMPARISON OF THE
TWO LANGUAGES

MARCH 28-30, 1994

ΠΕΡΙΛΗΨΕΙΣ 8ου ΔΙΕΘΝΟΥΣ ΣΥΜΠΟΣΙΟΥ
ΑΓΓΛΙΚΗΣ ΚΑΙ ΕΛΛΗΝΙΚΗΣ ΓΛΩΣΣΑΣ
ΠΕΡΙΓΡΑΦΗ ΚΑΙ ΣΥΓΚΡΙΣΗ
EDITOR: Α.ΚΑΚΟΥΡΙΟΤΙΣ



ORGANIZED BY THE DEPARTMENT OF THEORETICAL AND APPLIED LINGUISTICS, SCHOOL OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE.

ΟΡΓΑΝΩΝΕΤΑΙ ΑΠΟ ΤΟΝ ΤΟΜΕΑ ΘΕΩΡΗΤΙΚΗΣ ΚΑΙ ΕΦΑΡΜΟΣΜΕΝΗΣ ΓΛΩΣΣΟΛΟΓΙΑΣ ΤΟΥ ΤΜΗΜΑΤΟΣ ΑΓΓΛΙΚΗΣ ΓΛΩΣΣΑΣ ΚΑΙ ΦΙΛΟΛΟΓΙΑΣ.

FACULTY OF PHILOSOPHY
ARISTOTLE UNIVERSITY
OF THESSALONIKI

ΦΙΛΟΣΟΦΙΚΗ ΣΧΟΛΗ
ΑΡΙΣΤΟΤΕΛΕΙΟ ΠΑΝΕΠΙΣΤΗΜΙΟ
ΘΕΣΣΑΛΟΝΙΚΗΣ

THESSALONIKI 1994

SOME PRELIMINARY REMARKS ON THE GREEK CAUSATIVE
CONJUNCTIONS

γιατί, επειδή AND διότι

Eliza Koutoupi-Kitis

*Department of English
Aristotle University of Thessaloniki*

The main causal conjunctions in subordinate structures in the Greek language according to Tzartanos (1989: 59) are: *γιατί, διότι, επειδή* and *που*. In this talk I will make some preliminary observations on *γιατί, διότι, and επειδή*, but I am not going to examine *που* at all.

Tzartanos does not say very much about their specific senses or their use or function in the language. Triandafyllidis says even less. The assumption is therefore that these lexical items are interchangeable and, consequently, both semantically and functionally equivalent.

At first glance, indeed, they seem to be interchangeable, as shown in the following examples:

1. Το βάζο έσπασε *γιατί/ επειδή/ διότι* το έρριξε ο Γιάννης.
2. Πνίγηκε, *γιατί/ επειδή/ διότι* έπεσε με τ' αυτοκίνητό του στη θάλασσα.
3. Δεν τα πούλησε *γιατί/ επειδή/ διότι* δε βρήκε αγοραστή.
4. Προτιμώ την κηπουρική *γιατί/ επειδή/ διότι* σου δίνει την αίσθηση της ελευθερίας.
5. Δεν επανέρχεται το έμβολο στην αρχική του θέση ακριβώς *γιατί/ επειδή/ διότι* υπάρχουν τριβές.

However, a few more examples will suffice to show that this assumption is wrong:

6. *Επειδή/*διότι/*γιατί* εσύ είσαι σαΐνι, δε σημαίνει ότι εγώ είμαι τεμπέλης.
7. *Επειδή/*διότι/*γιατί* έπεσε απ'την αποβάθρα, πνίγηκε.
8. *Επειδή/*διότι/*γιατί* ζούμε στην εξοχή, είμαστε απομονωμένοι.
9. *Επειδή/*διότι/*γιατί* δεν ανέκυψε άλλο θέμα, η συνάντηση τεματίσθηκε.
10. *Επειδή/*διότι/*γιατί* είμαι φτωχός, έχω ανάγκη να δουλέψω.
11. *Επειδή/*διότι/*γιατί* σ'αγαπώ, ήρθα.

It should be noted that neutral or unmarked intonation is assumed throughout, so that the invocation of contexts in which a previous causal clause was part of the discourse is excluded.

It seems quite clear that in cases in which the event or state of affairs to be explained has not been stated or is not presupposed or assumed, only *επειδή-*

clauses can be preposed, i.e. can occur in initial position, whereas γιατί- and διότι- clauses are ungrammatical in unmarked/ neutral contexts.

What is the significance of this observation? Επειδή seems to have a certain potential for thematization processes and consequently it can influence the interpretation of what follows. More specifically, it can initiate discourse which can be organized in terms of the point of departure, the because-clause, highlighting a particular perspective.

Επειδή-clauses, but not γιατί- or διότι- clauses, can bring their propositions into greater prominence due to their ability for 'staging' or thematization (Grimes, 1975, Halliday, 1967). Example 11 might look as a counterexample to what has been said, or rather to what is concomittant to what has been said. In other words, the main clause "ήρθα" carries a low degree of communicative dynamism (CD), but this is due to its low informational increment for obvious reasons. So we might conclude by saying that only επειδή-clauses can occur in initial position under the conditions specified, but not γιατί or διότι-clauses.

Is this the only difference amongst them as far as distribution is concerned? Half a glance into the same examples, slightly altered as in the following sentences, will show us that επειδή-clauses can be quite readily, not only preposed, but also interposed:

12. Η συνάντηση, επειδή δεν ανέκυψε άλλο θέμα, τερατίσθηκε.
 13. Ο Γιάννης κι εγώ, επειδή ζούμε στην εξοχή, είμαστε απομονωμένοι.

Halliday and Hasan (1976: 257-8), who are concerned with cohesive relations only, write that

the reversed form of the causal relation, in which the presupposing sentence expresses the cause, is less usual as a form of cohesion. Within the sentence, it is natural to find the structural expression of cause going in either direction; a structure functions as a whole, and the sequence 'b, because a' is no less acceptable—in fact considerably more frequent—than 'because a, b'. Within the cohesive relation between sentences, however, in which the text unfolds one sentence after another, the logical precedence of cause over effect is reflected in the typical sequence in which sentences related in this way tend to occur.

However, they do not seem to offer any explanation for the frequent occurrence of 'b, because a' structures, but an answer would be an easy job for the epistemologist and the social psychologist, I presume.

Having settled the issue of distribution in non-dialogic discourse, can we say that this is the end of the story? Hardly so. Let's have a look at examples 14-21:¹

14. Ήρθε, γιατί του μίλησα στο τηλέφωνο.
 14. He came, because_I I talked to him on the phone.
 15. Ο Γιάννης πρέπει ν'αρρώστησε, γιατί/*επειδή/?διότι δεν ήρθε στη δουλειά.
 15. John must be ill, because_I he didn't show up for work.
 16. Πάρε μου ένα κουτί τσιγάρα, γιατί/*επειδή/?διότι* δε θα κατέβω.
 17. Σκάσε, γιατί/*επειδή/?διότι θύμωσε ο μπαμπάς.
 17. Shut up, because_I Dad is angry.
 18. Ήταν πωμένος, γιατί/*επειδή/?διότι έπεσε από την αποβάθρα.
 18. He was drunk, because_I he fell off the pier.
 19. Μή! μη το τσιγάρο σου από το καντήλι της Παρθένας.

20. Έφυγες απ' την παρέλαση; Γιατί/*επειδή/?διότι δε σε είδα.
 21. Έφυγες απ' την παρέλαση, γιατί/*επειδή/?διότι δε σε είδα.

What is common in all these sentences is that the because (γιατί)-clause does not provide an explanation for the event or state of affairs in the main clause. For example, assuming that the expression 'the reason why' is a good key for paraphrasing the above sentences (Morreall, 1979) preserving the same interpretation, we end up with the following unacceptable sentences:²

22. *Ο λόγος που ήρθε ήταν που (γιατί) του μίλησα στο τηλέφωνο.
 23. *Ο λόγος που αρρώστησε ήταν που δεν ήρθε στη δουλειά.
 24. *Ο λόγος που ήταν πιασμένος ήταν που έπεσε απ' την αποβάθρα.
 25. *Ο λόγος που έφυγες απ' την παρέλαση ήταν που σε είδα.
 26. *Ήταν ο λόγος που έφυγες απ' την παρέλαση που (γιατί) σε είδα;

On the other hand, the very first examples, 1-5, can be paraphrased with the key phrase 'the reason why' quite nicely without distorting the message:

27. Ο λόγος που έσπασε το βάζο είναι που (γιατί) το έρριξε ο Γιάννης.
 28. Ο λόγος που πνίγηκε ήταν που (γιατί) έπεσε με τ' αυτοκίνητο στη θάλασσα.
 29. Ο λόγος που δεν τα πούλησε ήταν που (γιατί) δε βρήκε αγοραστή.
 30. Ο λόγος που προτιμώ την κηπουρική είναι που (γιατί) σου δίνει την αίσθηση της ελευθερίας.
 31. Ο λόγος που δεν επανέρχεται το έμβολο είναι ακριβώς επειδή (γιατί/*που)³ υπάρχουν τριβές.

What is going on is apparently very simple: Halliday and Hasan (1976: 257) write that

the distinction between the EXTERNAL and the INTERNAL types of cohesion tends to be a little less clearcut in the context of causal relations than it is in the other contexts, probably because the notion of cause already involves some degree of interpretation by the speaker.

Davison (1975: 163) argues that in some cases the reason clause is actually related to presuppositions associated with the performative verb, the conditions that must hold, in the belief of the speaker, in order for the speech act to be sincere and successful.

Morreall (1979), who restricts his attention to declaratives only, points out in this respect that quite often because-clauses hark at the speaker's reason for judging that the event or state of affairs in the main clause obtains, and proposes that we posit a verb of judging in the deep structure of these sentences. A test that would reveal this underlying structure is the addition or the occurrence in their surface structure of modals like 'probably', 'definitely', 'must', 'might', and 'may,' which can function as sentence adverbials. The function of sentence adverbials is well known: they add to the modality of the sentence, i.e., they display the speaker's attitude to what s/he is saying. For example:

32. Προφανώς η Μαρία αρρώστησε, γιατί/*επειδή/?διότι δεν ήρθε,

or as in 33 and 34:

33. Κάτι συνέβη στη Μαρία, γιατί/*επειδή/?διότι άργησε.
 34. Κάτι συνέβη, γιατί/*επειδή/?διότι η Μαρία δεν αργεί συνήθως.

Van Dijk (1979), with regard to other connectives, pointed out that connectives do not always conjoin propositions but they may on occasion link to the illocutionary force of one of the two parts, and McTear (1980) claimed that 'because' can be one such connective.

Concluding this section, therefore, we can say that only γιατί-clauses, or primarily γιατί-clauses, to lessen the force of our claim, can be linked to the constituent defining the illocutionary force of the main clause, underlining the force with which the utterance is issued.

It is worth noting, though, that if the illocutionary force becomes explicit *via* a performative verb, for instance, as in the following examples, then 'επειδή' is as acceptable as 'γιατί':

- 14α. Το ξέρω ότι ήρθε γιατί/επειδή/διότι του μίλησα στο τηλέφωνο.
 18α. Κρίνω ότι ήταν πιωμένος γιατί/επειδή/διότι έπεσε απ'την αποβάθρα.
 20α. Εφυγες απ'την παρέλαση; Σε ρωτώ γιατί/επειδή/διότι δε σε είδα.

It must be emphasized that this function of 'γιατί' clearly falls within the realm of discourse as action structure or internal cohesion, as Halliday and Hasan would say, are domains of structure belonging to discourse. However, can we say that the different function of 'γιατί' can be explained solely in terms of the force of the utterance? Let us have a look at some more examples:

35. Θα σε βοηθήσω, γιατί/ *επειδή/ ?διότι ίσως νάταν η επιθυμία του πατέρα μου.
 36. Αναψαν φωτιά, γιατί/ *επειδή/ ?διότι βλέπω καπνό.

37. Τ'αυτοκίνητα σταμάτησαν, γιατί/ (?επειδή/ (?διότι ο τροχονόμος ύψωσε το χέρι του.
 38. Ο Γιάννης έκαψε το χέρι του γιατί/ *επειδή/ ?διότι ξέχασε ότι η σόμπα ήταν αναμμένη.
 39. Έσπασε το πόδι του γιατί/ *επειδή/ ?διότι η Μαίρη κλότσησε κάτω τούβλα.

Although in 36 the option for 'γιατί' can be explained in terms of the illocutionary force of the main clause, i.e., as providing evidential grounds for claiming that 'they lit the fire', the semantic connection between the two propositions is very prominent to overlook. However, the cause-effect relationship is reversed and my seeing the smoke did not cause the fire.

In all the rest the because-clauses give a reason or an explanation for the state of affairs reported in the main clause. Why is 'επειδή' not felicitously interchangeable with 'γιατί'? The reason, I think, lies in the type of causal connection obtaining between the propositions of the two clauses. The causal connection in all cases (apart from 36) has to be inferred because it is indirect. By "indirect" I mean that the explanation arrived at on the basis of what is stated is not subsumed under a regularity or a generalization.⁴ On the face of it, therefore, sentences do not exhibit the same degree of explanatory coherence as they would if the accession of the explanation did not require any extra inferential effort. As examples of the occurrence of 'γιατί' in sentences in which there is no instituted causal regularity between the propositions of their parts, consider the following:

40. Ορκίσου να με παντρευτείς, γιατί/ *επειδή/ ?διότι θ'αυτοκτονήσω

41. Ορκίσου να μη με προδώσεις, γιατί/ *επειδή/ ?διότι χάνομαι.
 42. Σώπα, μικρούλα μου, μην κάνεις έτσι, γιατί/ *επειδή/ ?διότι δε χάνεται ο κόσμος.
 43. Μη φωνάζεις γιατί/ *επειδή/ ?διότι θα σε κλειδώσω στο δωμάτιό σου.

The exclusion of 'επειδή' and the preference for 'γιατί' can be explained in terms of the loose, indirect, non-causal—in the nomic or psycho-social sense of—explanation. In actual fact, 40, 41 and 43 have the form of $\neg p \vee q$, which is equivalent to material implication $p \rightarrow q$.

Moreover, 'γιατί' in discourse can occur in initial position when the event or state of affairs to be explained has preceded. In this case 'γιατί' can function as a paratactic connective (Tzartanos, Schleppergrell, 1991). 'Επειδή', on the other hand, seems to be the better choice for the realization of direct causal links and this is shown by the likely exclusion of 'επειδή' on the basis of the presence of modal particles such as 'ίσως' ('perhaps') and the subjunctive in 35.

Intonation also affects the type of causality as when the stress is placed on 'επειδή', or when the modifier 'ακριβώς' ('precisely') qualifies it. It is instructive to mention at this point that cleft because-clauses can only be translated in Greek with the aid of 'επειδή' and the probable addition of the modifier 'ακριβώς' or 'γιαυτό' ('for that reason').

'Επειδή' also functions more successfully when a deliberative orientation needs stressing. The adjunct 'επίτηδες' may intensify this orientation as shown below in 44:

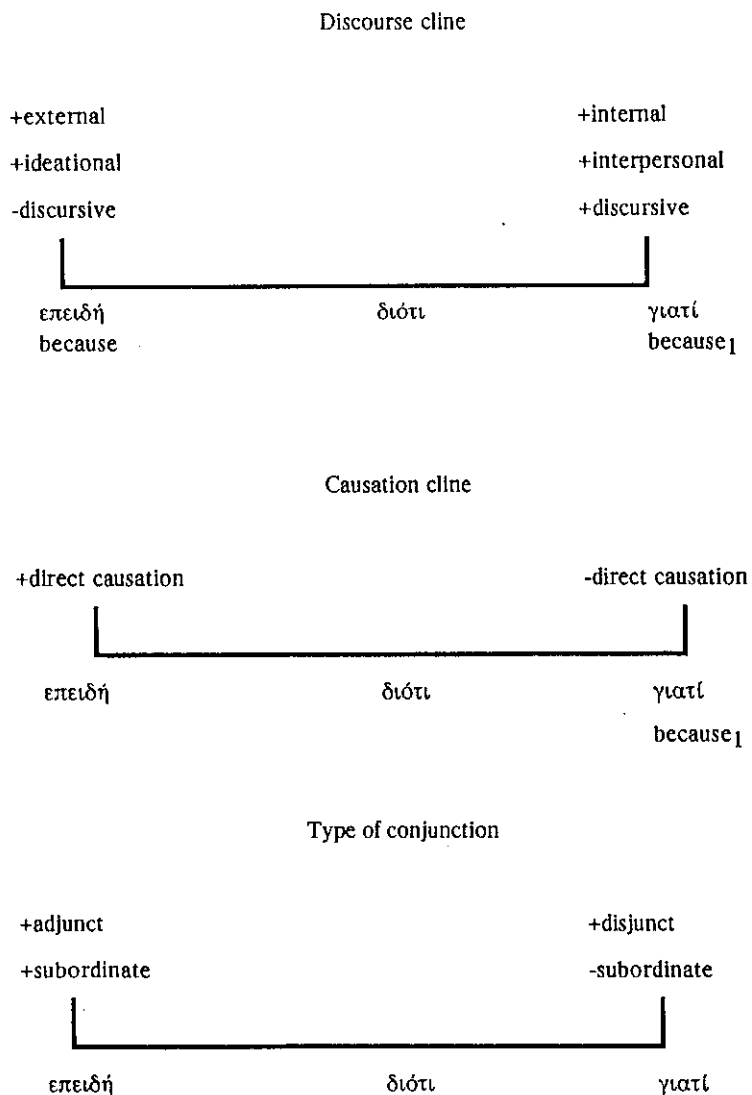
44. Στην αποκάλυψη της απάτης, που γιαυτή δεν έφταιγε βέβαια ο ανύποπτος Επτανήσιος, επειδή δε διατηρούσε επίτηδες τις θαυμάσιες φθοριζέτες του, για να παίξει κάποτε τον άγγλο, μα έφταιγεν ο νικημένος και άοπλος λαός, που δημιούργούσε διαρκώς φαντάσματα ξένων, τινάχτηκε ο πρόεδρος...
 Παπαντωνίου

It is hypothesized that for all these reasons 'επειδή' is the favourite causative connective in physics textbooks, although one has to research into it. On the other hand, the occurrence of 'γιατί' must be not only considerably more frequent in dialogic discourse, but also its function must be wide ranging and needs researching, as one or two examples might show:

45. A: Μήπως έρχεσαι σε μένα;
 B: Όχι πάω στη βιβλιοθήκη το βιβλίο.
 A: [γιατί...
 (real data)
46. Interviewer: Θέλω να ρωτήσω εσάς, κυρία Κόντου, γιατί...
 K. Κόντου: [Ναι, φυσικά...
 (real data)
47. Δήμη, έλα να φας το steak σου. Θα το φάω αν δεν έρθεις αμέσως γιατί πρέπει να φύγω.
 (real data)

45 and 46 are cases in which a causative conjunct is used as an organizing unit at the discursive level. But I will have to come back to this point on another occasion.

Rounding up, we can summarize the findings in terms of the following three clines:



What I have just said are preliminary remarks on the function of the Greek causative connectives, but they suffice, I think, to warrant an understanding of why 'γιατί', but not 'επειδή', is considered to be stylistically more appropriate for poetry, more poetic so to speak and less "scientific". And indeed it is γιατί and not επειδή that is overwhelmingly encountered in poetry as some Elytis shows so characteristically:

Πιο ψηλά
Στην ενωμένη μοναξιά των άστρων της
Θρονίζεται η Γαλήνη

Γιατί την απαλλάξαμε από το κορμί μας
Γιατί την εξαντλήσαμε από τις ελπίδες μας
Γιατί της φέραμε τόμα την Ιδέα μας

Ξαναγεννάει αισθήματα.
Ελύτης, Ωρίων

Αίμα στην πράξη αυτή! Αίμα στις πράξεις μας—στις
καυτερές αφές του γήινου κόσμου αίμα!
Γιατί πετάξαμε μιαν αγκαλιά φλοιούς με χαραγμένα ονόματα
στην αμμουδιά που ελπίζει πάντα
Γιατί λασκάραμε όλα μίς τα χαλινάρια κατακτώντας
τις νωπές κοιλάδες της νοτιάς.
Γιατί τρεμίσαμε τα βλέφαρα της κάθε μας συγκίνησης
μέσα σε πανδαμόνιο βόμβων και χρωματισμών.
Ελύτης, from Διόνυσος

Και πάντα μελαγχολικά τελείων' η γιορτή τους.
Γιατί θυμούνταν που κιαυτά ήσαν Έλληνες.
Καβάφης

¹A caveat: Asterisks need not be thought as having an absolute value. Rather, I would say that appropriateness or grammaticality in this case should be seen in terms of degrees and not in absolute measures.

²"Unacceptable" in the sense that the because-clause preserves the same meaning as in their corresponding explicanda.

³This (the unacceptability or reduced acceptability of πΩΩ) is a very interesting situation but it will not be dealt with here.

⁴That is probably why 37 sounds OK with all conjuncts.

REFERENCES

- Davison, A. (1975) "Indirect speech acts and what to do with them". In P. Cole and J. Morgan (eds.) *Syntax and semantics: V. 3. Speech acts*. New York: Academic Press, 143-85.
- Grimes, J. (1975) *The thread of discourse*. The Hague: Mouton.
- Halliday, MAK. (1967) "Notes on transitivity and theme in English. Parts 1 and 2". *Journal of Linguistics* 3: 37-81, 199-244.
- Halliday, MAK. and R. Hasan (1976) *Cohesion in English*. London: Longman.
- McTear, M.F. (1980) "The pragmatics of because". Ulster Polytechnic Ms.
- Morreall, J. (1979) "The evidential use of because" *Papers in Linguistics* 12, 1/2, 231-8.
- Schleppergrell, M. J. (1991) "Paratactic because" *Journal of Pragmatics* 16, 4, 325-37.
- Tzartanos, A. (1989) *Νεοελληνική Σύνταξις*. Θεσσαλονίκη: Κυριακίδη.
- Van Dijk, T. (1979) "Pragmatic connectives". *Journal of Pragmatics* 3, 5, 447-456.