



THE ROLE OF INTERTEXTUALITY IN THE TWITTER DISCUSSION ON THE GREEK REFERENDUM

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Abstract

This thesis investigates Twitter posting in Greek during the period of the Greek referendum in 2015 and in particular between June 27, when the referendum was announced, and July 6, one day after the referendum was completed, and how the Greek people use various external sources to express themselves (i.e. political thoughts, actions, inquires). The main research question is “What is the role of intertextuality in the Twitter discussion on the Greek referendum in Greek during the period of June 27 until July 6?”. This is answered with the help of three more specific questions: firstly, “What is the content of the tweets containing intertextuality during the referendum?”, secondly “What are the contextualized interpretations of the tweets?” and thirdly “Which intertextual relations can be discerned in the tweets and how do the tweets connect to history, proverbs, music, literature?”

50 tweets (with the hashtag categories #referendum, #yes or #no) from every day from June 27 until July 6 2015 were collected and studied (500 tweets in total). Categories were constructed based on the most repeated features concerning intertextuality in the tweets. At least one tweet from each category of intertextuality was analyzed, one from each of the three hashtags (#greekreferendum, #yes, #no) (16 tweets in total). The analysis is based predominantly on Gee’s (2014) methodology of discourse analysis. The categories of intertextuality are the following: intertextuality with historical events, proverbs, poetry, songs, and political slogans. This means that Greek people are familiar with these and either refer to them directly and indirectly or create wordplays with them to express their opinion about what to vote in the Greek referendum. There were also cases, in which the intertextual relations were ambiguous (a different kind of or a more inexplicit intertextuality).

Keywords: Twitter, hashtags, discourse analysis, intertextuality, Greek referendum, content, context.

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Chapter 1. Introduction

This study deals with social media posting and specifically Twitter posts by Greek people at the time of the Greek referendum, which was completed on July 5 2015. The Greek referendum is a recent political event, the results of which affected the economy of both Greece and of Europe. A discourse analysis will be applied as the main theoretical and methodological framework in order to investigate the Greek reaction at the time of the Greek referendum. This is achieved by analyzing Twitter posts. The main concern is how the Greek people use various external sources to express themselves (i.e. political thoughts, actions, inquires) from June 27, when the referendum was announced, until July 5, when the referendum was completed. One day after the referendum is included in my study to examine how Greeks expressed themselves the day after the referendum (July 6 2015) via posting on Twitter. A qualitative research methodology is used in order to examine the Greek reaction during this period for Greece and how it is portrayed in Twitter by non-professional Twitter users (“every-day” people’s accounts, not official accounts of Greek media, such as Greek TV channels and newspapers and not official accounts of politicians).

1.1 Aim and research questions

The motivation of this research was a general expectation: social media, and in particular Twitter, can express sociopolitical messages during a social and political crisis, such as the case of the Greek referendum. Many Greek people expressed themselves about this event via posting on Twitter. The goal of this study is to contribute to the body of knowledge surrounding Twitter from a linguistic perspective and in particular the case of the Greek referendum.

My main research question is the following: *What is the role of intertextuality in the Twitter discussion on the Greek referendum during the period of June 27 until July 6?* To answer this, it is necessary to address two more specific questions. What is the content of the tweets containing intertextuality during the referendum and what are the contextualized interpretations of the tweets? Which intertextual relations can be discerned in the tweets and how do the tweets connect to proverbs, literature, music and history?

Chapter 2. Background

2.1 Contextualization - the Greek referendum

Before continuing with the methodology and the theoretical perspectives that will be applied, it is necessary to address and explain what the Greek referendum was about and what it meant for the Greek people. The referendum was officially announced by the Greek Prime Minister, Alexis Tsipras, on June 27 and was completed on July 5. The Greek people had to vote on “whether Greece was to accept the bailout conditions proposed by the European Commission (EC), the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the European Central Bank (ECB) on June 25”.¹ 61, 31% of the Greek people voted for “no”, rejecting the bailout conditions, while 38, 69% approved of them.² Two things are significant in order to understand the context. Firstly, the short time that was given to the Greek people to decide on how to vote (only one week). This detail is noteworthy because it will be examined how Greek Twitter users used other sources to express themselves about the referendum in that extremely limited time.

Secondly, the Greek media propaganda must be pointed out, especially on Greek TV. The private TV broadcasters, such as ALPHA, ANT1, MEGA, SKAI and STAR were accused of being in favor of the “yes” vote. The way they covered the debate the days before the referendum (by cutting the interviews of the “no” supporters and showing the ones by the “yes” supporters, by showing scenes of the big queues in the ATMs, showing in that way that the people were worried about their money, by fighting the “no” voters in TV talk shows) is now under scrutiny of the law.³ These major Greek private TV channels were accused for partiality by E.Σ.Ρ. (Εθνικό Συμβούλιο Ραδιοτηλεόρασης), that is NCRTV (Greek National Council for Radio and Television) in English.⁴ The main accusation and complaint against the major Greek broadcasting channels was that they distorted the truth and interpreted and changed the question of the referendum. The referendum question (“Is Greece to accept the bailout conditions?”) changed into “Do you want Greece to remain in

¹In this link the official announcement of the referendum by the Greek Prime Minister and the parliament can be found: <http://www.hellenicparliament.gr/UserFiles/349e985f-20b7-4581-95f9-5e4c1c78b7bd/%CE%94%CE%97%CE%9C%CE%9F%CE%A8%CE%97%CE%A6%CE%99%CE%A3%CE%9C%CE%91.pdf>

²In the following link the results of the referendum can be found, posted in the official site for the Greek referendum by the government: <http://www.referendum2015.gov.gr/en/news/ellinika-telika-apotelesmata-dimopsifismatos-5is-iouliou-2015/>.

³More information about the Greek media propaganda can be found in this source: <http://thelinknewspaper.ca/blogs/entry/the-greek-medias-pre-referendum-propaganda-and-why-it-failed>.

⁴The title of the praxis by NCRTV is “(06/07/2015) - Δελτίο Τύπου της 6/7/2015 σχετικά με παραβίαση της εκλογικής νομοθεσίας από τα ηλεκτρονικά Μ.Μ.Ε.” in the following link: http://www.esr.gr/arxeionxml/pages/esr/esrSite/list_docs?section=27bbc131d0871e7683571826e98263e5&categ=2fd0d8b2d0871e7683571826e98263e5&last_clicked_id=link4.

Europe and Euro or not?”, passing out the message that voting “yes” would mean yes to Europe and Euro and voting “no” would mean no to Europe and Euro, and therefore Greece’s exit from Europe (Grexit) and return to the old currency of Greece, the drachma.⁵ There are also intertextual relations to the media coverage in the tweets that were read, of which there is an example in this study.

2.2 Research background

Zappavigna notices that there is a general interest in “mining the Twitter stream for sentiment, particularly for opinion on political events and politicians” (Zappavigna, 2012:177). There is recent previous research on Twitter posts about Obama’s election in the USA, made by Zappavigna (Zappavigna, 2012: 176-183). The research explores how language is used to build community with the micro blogging service Twitter. Analysis of the structure and meaning of tweets in a corpus of 45.000 tweets that were collected in the 24 hours after the announcement of Barak Obama’s victory in the 2008 US elections was made. The study examines the language used to affiliate in tweets. “Hashtagging plays an important role in tracking international events and crises” (Zappavigna, 2012:174). The findings of this research are that hashtags used in Twitter help to track conversations about a topic and that hashtags are used to mark potential targets of evaluation and to render these as metadata that may be found by other users (Zappavigna, 2011:804).

After searching for investigations about the Greek referendum, it does not seem to be any previous research about Twitter posts about the Greek referendum from a linguistic perspective, and this is what makes this research special. However, previous research from different disciplines has been made, such as sociology, politics, linguistics, media and communication studies, and journalism about Twitter and social media generally and how a political event or revolution can be portrayed in them (Buettner & Buettner, 2016:2).

2.3 Theoretical concepts

The methodology and theoretical framework is predominantly based on Gee’s perspectives of discourse analysis, which are described in “An introduction to Discourse Analysis” (Gee, 2014). Discourse analysis is the study of written, vocal or sign language in use or any semiotic event in order to find hidden meanings. There are different approaches to discourse analysis. Some of them focus on the content (the issues being discussed in a discourse) and some of them focus on the structure of language and the grammar (how they function in order to make meanings) (Gee, 2014:8).

⁵<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/jul/02/former-greece-pms-throw-support-behind-yes-vote-ahead-of-referendum>.

More references can be found here: <http://news247.gr/eidiseis/koinonia/to-esr-thymhthhke-na-kanei-ereyna-enantion-twn-mme-gia-to-dhmopshfisma.3564477.html>.
<http://www.efsyn.gr/arthro/esr-vrohi-oi-kataggelies>.

Gee suggests that whenever we speak or write, we automatically build “seven things or seven areas of reality”, also known as the “seven building tasks” of language. Asking seven different questions based on these seven building tasks can help us do discourse analysis (Gee, 2014:17). The task that plays the most important role in the analysis of the tweets is *connections*: what kind of connections or associations are made in order for the message to be transmitted. Significance, practices, identities, relationships, politics and sign system and knowledge are the remaining six tasks (Gee, 2014), but there is no need to explain these further, since they are not used in this research.

According to Gee, there are some tools of inquiry that can be used by linguists (Gee, 2014: 28) to do discourse analysis. These tools are the following: (1) *Social languages* (different styles or varieties of language can be used for different purposes), (2) *Conversations* with a big “C”⁶ (common and public conversations and debates with which society is familiar, such as the effects of smoking, global warming etc.), (3) *Intertextuality* (references to other texts or kind of texts, whether quoting directly or indirectly), a concept that will be explained further below, (4) *Situated meanings* (the meanings of words or signs are situated in experience, which means that meanings are not decontextualized), (5) *Figured words* (cultural models or simplified and often taken for granted folk theories about how the world works) and (6) *Discourses* with a big “D”⁷ (people build identities not only through language but also using other “stuff”⁸ that is not language, like body language, intonation, using particular objects that enact their identity. (Gee, 2014: 28-68)

Context is an additional important notion in linguistics and discourse analysis. When we speak or write, we rarely say what we mean explicitly, because it would be both tiring and time consuming. We rely on our listeners' or readers' common knowledge or shared history and context in order for them to understand what we mean (Gee, 2014:100). This is why the context is explained in the tweets' analysis. That is in itself one important part of discourse analysis.

Finally, more information on the concept of intertextuality is necessary. Intertextuality is the relation of a text with other texts (Wodak, 2001:87) and is a tool for making discourse analysis as well (Gee, 2004), as explained above. It was first developed by Mikhail Bakhtin, who developed an intertextual approach to analysis of texts, but the term was coined by Kristeva in the late 1960ies, after bringing the work of Bakhtin to light. According to Bakhtin, all utterances both spoken and written are related to utterances of

⁶ Gee uses the term Conversation with a big “C” because the notion has a different meaning than the word “conversation” with a small “c”, which is “a talk between two or more people in which thoughts, feelings, and ideas are expressed, questions are asked and answered, or news and information is exchanged” as defined by Cambridge dictionary. (<http://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/conversation>)

⁷Gee uses the term Discourse with a big “D” because the notion has a different meaning than the word “discourse” with a small “d”, which is “written or spoken communication or debate; a formal discussion of a topic in speech or writing; (in linguistics) a connected series of utterances, a text or conversation, as defined by Oxford dictionary. (<http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/discourse>)

⁸ Gee uses the word “stuff” in his explanation of the notion of Discourse (Gee, 2014:28).

previous speakers and of the next speakers. These utterances - or “texts” - are inherently intertextual. Any kind of text is placed in a “chain” of ongoing historical and political events (Fairclough, 1992:101-102). “At any given moment of its historical existence, language is heteroglot from top to bottom (Bakhtin, 1981:291). According to Bakhtin, texts do not stand alone, but in relation to other texts, either directly or indirectly (Bazerman, 2004:173-174), they are “dialogic” and “polyphonic” (Greenleaf & Katz, 2004: 174). According to Kristeva, the concept intertextuality replaces or at least complements the notion of “intersubjectivity” in psychology and sociology studies (psychological relation between people), “when we realize that the meaning is not transferred directly from writer to reader but instead is mediated through, or filtered by, “codes” imparted to the writer and reader by other texts” (Kristeva, 1980:69).

Norman Fairclough writes that “for any particular text or type of text, there is a set of other texts and a set of voices that are potentially relevant and potentially incorporated into a text” (Fairclough, 2014:97). Identifying intertextuality is not always easy, though (Fairclough, 1992:109). Intertextuality can appear either directly (quotes, the exact words, usually in quotation marks, tense and deictics are the original of the speaker or writer) or indirectly (the summary of what is said or written, usually with a reporting clause and without quotation marks, tense and deictics are shifted to incorporate the perspective of the reporter) (Fairclough, 1992:107).

Twitter is an on-line social networking service. It is, after Facebook, the second most popular social media platform (Buettner & Buettner, 2014:1). Registered users can read and post short messages of 140 characters at the most, which are called “tweets” (Buettner & Buettner, 2016:1). Non-registered users can just read the tweets, but not post. Time is of particular significance to online texts, and particularly social media texts. Social media corpora are “time-bound datasets” (Zappavigna, 2012:16). Text time (time that the text is composed) and real time (time that an event is actually happening) can be very close. Even if social media offers a rich resource for research for linguists (Zappavigna, 2012:15), there are several problems that make the collection of data difficult. Non-standard orthography is one of them. It is very common that the users substitute some characters with numbers or other characters that look similar or are close and easy to make sense of. Some users, also, make spelling mistakes. This can be a problem for filtering the hashtags or the words in search. Abridged posts cause problems to the data collection, too. Users have the ability to use a web service to extend their message and make it longer than the 140 characters, to which Twitter posts are limited (Zappavigna, 2012:21). This situation could cause issues in searching for tweets that contain a specific word or a sequence of words, because, depending on the protocol the web service uses, some words may be segregated, part of them in the original tweet text of the 140 characters and the rest in the link of the tweet that the web service provides.

Hashtags include the hash symbol (#) in the beginning and an annotation of a topic after. The main use is to put a supertitle, a sum of the meaning of what the previous or the

following sentence is about. It was broadly used by the users of Twitter in the beginning, but lately more and more social media have implemented this functionality. Hashtags also provide a more clear way to do searches of a certain topic. The same hashtag can be replicated by users talking about the same topic. (Zappavigna, 2012:85) This also helps keeping track on the conversation about the Greek referendum. It is important to note that only one word can be used as a hashtag. This is why it is very common to see more than two words in a hashtag but without a space in between them, for example #GreekReferendum2015 #WeVoteForNo etc. Many users try to separate the words in a hashtag by writing the first letter of each word in capital letters, something that makes no difference in the functionality of the hashtag, as it is not case-sensitive, but it makes it easier to read (Zappavigna, 2012: 84-95).

2.4 The style

The language that is used in the tweets is mostly everyday slang language, full of anger or hate either from the *ne* (yes)-side or the *ochi* (no) -side. The tweets are reproduced in English as correctly as possible, given the sometimes quite vulgar language.

Greeklisch is the Greek language written with the Latin alphabet. The use of *Greeklisch* started earlier in the past, since some Greek literary works of the Renaissance were written in the Latin alphabet (e.g. *Fortounatos* by Markos Antonios Foskolos, 1655). After the wide use of Internet and other electronical media, in the 1990s, Greeklisch became widely known internationally (Androutsopoulos, 2016:221). Some computers that were constructed outside Greece did not even offer the possibility of changing alphabets or at least it was and still can be difficult to do this setting all the time. Greeklisch is by several scholars considered a threat to the Greek language, because of the simplified orthography when using Latin characters. (Androutsopoulos, 2016:221). Last but not least, no corrections were made in any spelling or punctuation mistakes. Any mistakes in the tweets will be indicated after the misspelling with [sic!].

The tweets are extremely small (max. characters in tweets are 140), but the ones selected are even shorter so they can easily be translated into English. They are first transliterated in Latin characters and then translated from Greek into English. Of course, some semantic elements and the background have to be explained.

Chapter 3. Methodology and data

The first step in this study was to find the hashtags (most repeated keywords) in the tweets that were posted between June 27 and July 6 in Greek about the Greek referendum. Twitter is an excellent tool for data searching, as it provides the possibility of using filters in order to search specific language, location, hashtags and words. Only posts in Greek were selected in order to examine what the Greek people, or the people that live in Greece and speak the language, posted about this event, the Greek referendum. No filtering of the location was made, because many users do not use it. Some of the Greek people that posted on Twitter might stay abroad, but they are still part of the Greek population. Meanwhile, the words and hashtags about the topic of the Greek referendum were searched and filtered and here are several hashtags that were repeated:

- #greekreferendum, #greferendum, #dimopsifisma, #δημοψήφισμα (= referendum)
- #yes, #ne, #ναι, #lemenai (= wesayyes)
- #no, #oxi, #ochi, #όχι, #lemeoxi (= wesayno)
- #grexit
- #capitalcontrol
- #bailout, #kourema, #κούρεμα
- #drachmas, #draxmi, #δραχμή
- #tsiprexit

Due to limited space and time, only the tweets from the first three hashtag categories (#greekreferendum, #yes, #no) were selected. It is impossible for the present study to examine all the tweets even from the first three categories, and therefore 50 tweets (with any of the hashtag categories #referendum, #yes or #no) from every day from June 27 until July 6 2015 were collected and studied. This means 50 tweets per day for 10 continuative days, i.e. 500 tweets in total. From the 500 tweets, 161 had the hashtag #referendum (or #greekreferendum, #greferendum, #dimopsifisma, #δημοψήφισμα), 123 had the hashtag #yes (or #ne, #ναι, #lemenai), 216 had the hashtag #no (or #oxi, #ochi, #όχι, #lemeoxi), as shown in Figure X.

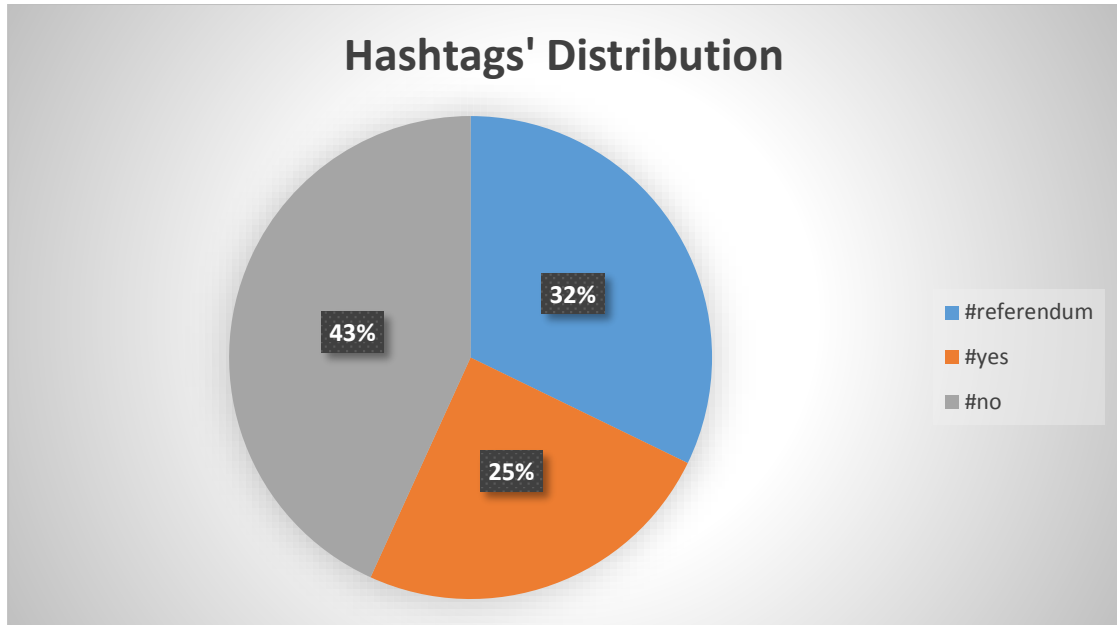


Figure 1. Distribution of the 500 tweets according to the three hashtags

It must be clarified that in some cases there were tweets that had more than one hashtag and therefore there are some double categorizations. In this case, the tweets were placed in one of the hashtag categories, but they could easily have been placed in the other hashtag category as well. The tweets were posted during the period of June 27 to July 6, at all hours of the day. The selected tweets are posted during this period and it was decided not to necessarily analyze posts from each day separately during this period.

It is noteworthy that even though #yes and #no tweets during these days are a broader category than the #greekreferendum, most of the tweets that were posted with the hashtag yes or no during this period in Greek dealt with the topic of the Greek referendum. After reading a great amount of tweets, some that were irrelevant to the topic had to be excluded (i.e. their content was not the Greek referendum).

Another point that must be highlighted is that the tweets analyzed are more sympathizing with the side of “no”, rather than the “yes” side. This happens for the simple reason that the amount of “no” tweets found in the corpus is greater than the amount of “yes” tweets, as shown above. The result of the referendum was “no” (61, 31% of the Greek population voted for “no” and 38, 69% of it for “yes”).

Given the limitations of my investigation it should be mentioned that it would be impossible to document every tweet and every politician’s or newspaper’s tweets about the Greek referendum. This study also excludes tweets that are in another language than Greek or tweets with images, emoticons or videos, even if they include text, too. In other words,

no multimodal analysis⁹ is done in the present research. Moreover, not all of the accounts are visible in public so it is not possible to have an overview of all tweets and it is impossible to document every tweet that can be found since there are too many (thousands of tweets per day).

In a first step of the analysis, the 500 tweets were classified according to whether they displayed intertextuality predominantly with (a) historical events (b) proverbs, (c) songs, (d) poetry, (e) political slogans, or (f) did not display any intertextuality. The results are shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Classification of the corpus according to the hashtags and the intertextual relations they displayed and the case they did not display any intertextuality

	I-Y ¹⁰ with historical events	I-Y with proverbs	I-Y with songs	I-Y with poetry	I-Y with political slogans	no I-Y
#referendum	31	30	19	17	10	54
#yes	9	33	6	20	13	42
#no	11	27	36	33	16	93

In a second step, a number of tweets that were deemed to be representative for each category of intersubjectivity were selected for further qualitative analysis. Their distribution is shown in Table 2.

In the analysis chapter, in each section (historical events, proverbs, poetry, songs, and political slogans) bold letters were used in the hashtags to indicate in which hashtag category each tweet belongs (referendum, yes or no). 16 tweets were analyzed in total, two of which are classified as “ambiguous”, meaning that they could be seen as belonging to more than one category.

⁹“Multimodality is the combination of different semiotic modes in a communicative artefact or event” (Van Leeuwen, 2005:281). Communication and message transmitting can be achieved through different modes and not only texts, such as visual resources.

¹⁰ “I-Y” = Intertextuality.

Table 2. Close readings of the intertextuality categories discerned

	historical events	proverbs	Songs	Poetry	political slogans	ambiguous
#referendum	1	1	1	1	1	-
#yes	1	-	-	1	1	1
#no	-	1	3	1	1	1

It would not have been ethical, if the real names of the users were shown. This is why they were replaced with common Greek names. However, the real names with the nicknames given to them as well as all of the tweets that were posted between June 27 and July 6, and that were read, are saved in a separate document.

Chapter 4. Analysis

In this chapter, the 16 selected tweets are analyzed. In each section (historical events and symbols, proverbs, poetry, songs, and political slogans) the tweets that belong to each category are analyzed. In most of the cases, one tweet from each hashtag category is analyzed with the exception of the #no hashtag category, from which more tweets are analyzed, and the exception of the #yes hashtag category in the song category, as explained above.

4.1 Historical events and symbols

In this category the tweets that have intertextual relations with texts that refer to historical events are included. To make it clear, since it is difficult to be familiar with historical texts, determinant historical events or historical symbols are included in the category of intertextuality with historical events. Greek Twitter users seem to be familiar with historical events and symbols and they even use them in their tweets to express their opinion about the referendum. Two tweets from this category are selected, one from the hashtag category #referendum and one from the hashtag category #yes. The tweet that follows is an example from the category of intertextuality with historical events, from the hashtag category #referendum.

Kostas 4 July 2015

Oχι #1 28-10-1940 Oχι #2 05-07-2015 #Greece #OXI #**dimopsifisma** #democracy #Greferendum
#Syntagma

Ochi #1 28-10-1940 Ochi #2 05-07-2015 #Greece #OCHI #**dimopsifisma** #democracy #Greferendum
#Syntagma

No #1 28-10-1940 Ochi #2 05-07-2015 #Greece #NO #**referendum** #democracy #Greferendum
#Syntagma Square

Here there is intertextuality to historical resources. “Oχι-no” reminds of October 28, 1940, when the Greek Prime Minister and Dictator Ioannis Metaxas said “όχι-no” to Mussolini, who demanded to take over Greece. After this reply, the war between Greeks and Italians started. The 28th of October is the national day of *No* for Greeks and it is celebrated every year. In this post, the voice of Metaxas is heard, as the user uses direct intertextuality, the word that was used by Metaxas years ago; no. The user tries to pass the message that Greeks should do the same as they did in the past, be strong and dare to say “no” again. He tries to indicate on how to vote, using emotions, setting the example from history.

The second example from the category of intertextuality with history is a tweet with the hashtag #yes. The user refers to history to transmit her message about the referendum, in this case to vote for “yes”.

Eleni 4 July 2015

NAI υπέρ πάντων ο αγών #dimopsifisma #**NAI**
NE iper pandon o agon #dimopsifisma #**NE**
YES the fight for everything #dimopsifisma #**YES**

Here the user paraphrases the famous words from an Ancient Greek paean, which was sung during the Battle of Salamis during the Persian wars. A paean is a song of praise, joy, or triumph, or a hymn of invocation or thanksgiving to Apollo or some other ancient Greek deity.¹¹ The Battle of Salamis actually marked the end of the Persian wars and the victory over the Persian enemy. This is why this fight is very important. The user here seems to consider the referendum very important and determinant for the future of Greece as a country. She believes that Greek people should vote “yes” for the great struggle to start and save Greece. The original wording from the paean is the following:

“Νυν υπέρ πάντων ο αγών” (in Ancient Greek)
“Τώρα είναι ο αγώνας για τα πάντα” (in Modern Greek)
“Nin iper panton o agon”
“Now is the fight for everything”

Here the user has replaced “now” with “yes”, as these two words both start with the letter “n” in Greek and have three letters. The user communicates that voting “yes” in the referendum is fighting for Greece.

4.2 Proverbs

This category includes the tweets that have intertextual relations with well-known proverbs in Greece. The users often refer to them either directly or create word plays with them to show their opinion about the referendum. The following tweet is an example of the above category, from the hashtag category “no”.

Maria 5 July 2015

του ΣΥΡΙΖΑίου ο καημός, #**OXI**#Grexit και χορός!
Tu SYRIZeu o kaimos, #**OCHI** #Grexit ke choros!
The SYRIZA supporter’s longing, #**NO**, #Grexit and dance!

This tweet is a word play with a famous Greek proverb which goes:¹²

¹¹ <http://www.dictionary.com/browse/pean>

¹² The proverb can be found here: <http://www.slang.gr/lemma/4557-tis-gynaikas-o-kaimos-lousa-poutsai-kai-xoros>.

“Της γυναίκας ο καημός, λούσα, πούτσα και χορός”
“Tis ginekas o kaimos, lusa, putsa ke choros”
“A woman’s longing, luxury, dick and dance”

The Greek proverb is paraphrased here. The Twitter user tries to transmit the message that the left-winged government, SYRIZA, is causing Greece’s exit from Europe, by encouraging people to vote “no” in the referendum. At the same time, SYRIZA and the “no” voters seem to be happy about the result and dance in Syntagma Square. This tweet was posted on July 5, after the referendum was completed and the Greek people that supported this result were dancing, singing and celebrating the result in the main square of Athens. An exclamation mark “!” is added at the end of this post, emphasizing the message.

The last example of the category of intertextuality with proverbs is a tweet with the hashtag category “referendum”.

Konstantina 3 July 2015

Τα πολλά τα διαγγέλματα τα βαριέται και ο ψηφοφορος.... #diaggelma **#dimopsifisma** #xreokopia
#YesEurope #NAI
Ta polla ta diangelmata ta variete ke o psifoforos.... #diangelma **#dimopsifisma** #xreokopia
YesEurope #NAI
Even the voter can get bored of the too many proclaims.... #proclaim **#referendum** #bankruption
YesEurope #YES

This is a paraphrase of a well-known proverb in Greece. The original expression is the following (Yatzoglou-Giannopoulou, 1996: 128):

“Το πολύ το κυρ ελέησον το βαριέται κι ο παπάς”
“To poli to kir eleison to variete ki o pappas”
"Even the priest can get bored of too many liturgies".

The proverb is used to describe the cases when someone exaggerates about an event and keeps talking over and over again about it, trying to convince people that something is true or should be done in a certain way and in the end they reach a point where they begin to lose the public support. The Greek prime minister spent a lot of time on interviews during the time of the referendum trying to convince the public to support him and talked so much about the same topics over and over again that eventually some Greek people got tired of his speeches because they had enough of the government’s proclaims.

4.3 Songs

Greek Twitter users seem to be familiar with Greek songs and they often refer to the lyrics of them either directly or by making word plays in order to transmit their message about

the referendum with humor. The first example from the category of intertextuality with songs is from the hashtag #referendum.

Elpida 5 July 2015

Μετά την παρέμβαση του Σάκη Ρουβά, οι επιλογές στο #δημοψήφισμα άλλαξαν σε "θέλεις" ή "δεν θέλεις"

Meta tin paremvasi tu Saki Ruva, i epiloges sto #dimopsifisma allaxan se "thelis" i "den thelis"

After Sakis Rouvas' interference, the options in the #referendum changed into "do you want" or "don't you want"

This is a word play with a well-known song (which was performed in 1998) of Sakis Rouvas, a well-known Greek pop singer, who openly supported voting for "yes" at a political spot. For several Greeks, his action felt like surrendering to what Europe wanted for Greece. The words of the song are the following:

“Θέλεις ή δεν θέλεις, θα μου πεις απόψε;”

“Thelis i den thelis, tha mu pis apopse?”

“Do you want or don't you want, will you tell me tonight?”

Here the user wants to emphasize on the comic side of the referendum, maybe because, as several Greeks claimed, the referendum was useless. The user, through this pop song, transmits her point of view on the referendum.

The second example from the category of intertextuality with songs is from the hashtag category “no”.

Nikos 4 July 2015

Χωρίς ευρώ μπορώ, χωρίς εσένα #όχι!!!

Choris evro boro, choris esena #ochi!!!

I can survive without euro, but without you #not!!!

This is a word play with the lyrics of a song by the well-known Greek singer, Panos Kiamos. The song was performed in 1998. The words of the original song are:

“Χωρίς νερό μπορώ, χωρίς εσένα όχι”

“Choris nero boro, choris esena ochi”

“I can survive without water, but without you not”.

The words *neró* (water) and *evró* (euro) rhyme. The Twitter user just replaced water with euro in order to express his opinion about how to vote in the Greek referendum using humor. Water, a crucial component in life, is replaced with euro, which is also supposed to be “crucial in life” in Greece. Euro replaced drachmas, the old currency in Greece, which is considered to be good for Greece. Just as the singer finds his love (esena = you) more

important than water in order to survive in life, the user finds Greece and freedom (esena = you) more important than staying in Europe and euro in order to survive. Voting “no” is for the user more important than euro.

As explained in the introduction (Chapter 1), many people, as well as the media believed that voting for “no” in the referendum would mean the return to the old currency in Greece, because Greece would not reach to an agreement with the European Commission. This is why the supporters of “no” started to argue that, even if the above was true, the return to drachmas would not necessarily be the end of the world, but on the contrary it might actually make economic recovery for Greece.

The tweet below is another example of the category of intertextuality with music from the hashtag category “no”.

Marianna 3 July 2015

ΣΙΓΑ ΜΗΝ ΚΛΑΨΩ ΣΙΓΑ ΜΗ ΦΟΒΗΘΩ.#OXI ΘΑ ΨΗΦΙΣΩ ΚΑΙ Θ'ΑΝΤΙΣΤΑΘΩ.
SIGA MIN KLAPSO SIGA MIN FOVITHO. #OCHI THA PSIFISO KAI THA ANTISTATHO.
NO WAY I WON'T CRY I WON'T BE AFRAID. I WILL VOTE FOR #NO AND I WILL RESIST.

Here there is a use of capital letters, either for emphasis or randomly used by the user when typing the post. The writer of the post uses a famous Greek song: “No way I won’t cry I won’t be afraid”, first performed in 2005, by a well-known Greek rock singer and musician, Giannis Aggelakas. The user adds one more stanza to the famous song, expressing her view about the referendum, making a rhyme at the same time. Rhyming can be helpful for the readers to remember the meaning and content.

The song of Giannis Aggelakas is also connected to a dramatic event for several Greeks that happened recently in Greece. Pavlos Fisas, a Greek anti-fascist rapper was murdered in Athens by a member of Golden Dawn, the nationalist party in Greece. There was a huge reaction to this event and the above song is connected to his murder, and was played everywhere in the media, because he had himself sung it in the past. Therefore, the intertextuality of this tweet has definitely a left-wing content, especially after the Twitter user adds her opinion about the referendum.

Below there is another example of the hashtag “no”.

Efi 3 July 2015

Ψάξε ψάξε το #OXI δε θα το βρεις. Σε κανένα κανάλι όμως #propaganda #mme
Psakse, psakse to #OCHI de tha to vris. Se kanena kanali omos #propaganda #mme
Search for it search for #NO you won’t find it. At no channel at all #propaganda #media

This tweet refers to an old game played by children where all stand in circle and one is in the middle going from person to person, touching their closed fists and singing this song.

The point of the game is to find or guess who has a ring hidden in their hand. In most cases the person in the middle doesn't guess it correctly.

This tweet is a paraphrase of the original song. The user actually uses the exact words of the song adding one extra word, "no", meaning that no Greek channel was reporting from the great gathering of people supporting the "no"-side, because they wanted to promote the "yes"-side. The meaning therefore is most probably that as much as you search on Greek TV news, the extensive protests of the "no"-side was nowhere to be found in the news. There has been an extended Conversation (see section 2.3) about the Greek media propaganda, as explained above (section 2.1). It is very important to note the fact that this song is a well-known children's song. The user might want to transmit the message that the Greek people are victims of the media propaganda and they are helpless and weak, like children.

4.4 Poetry

In the category of intertextual relations with poetry, I have included tweets in which the users refer to well-known poems in Greek literature, either by referring to titles of the poems and lyrics or to symbols in these poems. The first example of this category is from the hashtag category "referendum".

Anna 3 July 2015

Σάκη... Αξιον δεν εστι... #dimopsifisma **#greferendum** #sakis #oxi

Saki...Axion den esti.. #dimopsifisma **#greferendum** #sakis #ochi

Sakis...Worthy it is not.. #dimopsifisma **#greferendum** #sakis #no

Axion Esti (=It is Worthy in English) (Elytis, 2006) is a work of the Greek poet, Odysseas Elytis, who was awarded with the Nobel Prize in Literature in 1979. It is a complex poem with a complicated structure and it is dedicated to Greece and its past focusing on how much Greece suffered in the past, as well as on the belief in freedom. This work was set to music by Mikis Theodorakis, a very well-known Greek composer who suffered in his life to support his left-wing ideas during the years of dictatorship in Greece. The Greek junta was a harsh right-wing military dictatorship that governed Greece during the period 1967-1974 (Tsarouhas, 2005:1-13). Georgios Papadopoulos, the leader of the junta, is known in Greek history for being very cruel.

This post should be analyzed keeping in mind Gee's notion of Conversation (section 2.3). Sakis Rouvas, the well-known Greek pop singer mentioned in section 4.3, recently sang *Axion Esti*, for which he was criticized, because the poem is often used for inspiration in rebellion groups, and Greeks also have the belief that it represents the years of glory when they were fighting for their freedom and the establishment of the democracy. The Greek society is familiar with this debate, just as the user is. As explained above, Sakis Rouvas supported voting for "yes" at a political spot. Therefore, singing *Axion Esti* was considered a "blasphemy" for several Greeks, mainly because of the fact that the same poem has been

sung by left-wing singers and is a composition of Mikis Theodorakis. This tweet is mainly directed towards Sakis Rouvas and the massive criticism that was targeted against him after supporting voting for "yes" in public media. The user of this post uses the exact title of the work, adding the negative particle *δεν* (*den* = *not*) which reverses the meaning of the title of the work of Elytis from "it is worth it" to "it is not worth it".

Below there is the second example of the category of intertextuality with poetry, from the hashtag category "no".

Vangelis 3 July 2015

Ο πολιτισμός του Βόλφ Βέρμαν από την μία, Ρουβάς από την άλλη "Με τα τόσα χρόνια Μύκονο, άντε, βρές τόν δρόμο για την Ιθάκη" #OXI #Syntagma

O politismos tu Wolf Biermann apo tin mia, Rouvas apo tin alli "Me tosa chronia Mikono, ade, vres ton dromo ya tin Ithaki" #OCHI #Syntagma

Wolf's Biermann culture on the one hand, Rouvas on the other "With so many years in Myconos, try to find the way to Ithaca" #NO #Syntagma

Wolf Biermann was a German left-wing singer, poet and songwriter. His mother was a communist and his father was a Jew that was murdered by the Nazis (<http://wolf-biermann.de/vita>). The user chose this example from the German music and literature in order to emphasize on the black pages of the history of the German people, and in that way probably label Germany. The connections of this word are made easily by almost every Greek. Asking what kind of connections are made in order for the message to be transmitted can help conducting discourse analysis (Gee, 2010:19). *Ithaca* is a Greek island located in the Ionian Sea, the island of the legendary hero Odysseus in the epos *Odyssey* of the Ancient Greek author Homer. Odysseus was the king of Ithaca but after the war in Troy, he wandered for twenty years before he managed to come back to his island (Mavropoulos, 2010). After all these adventures to reach his island, he became wiser and stronger, and his life was full of experiences. *Ithaca* is a symbol for most Greeks, it has a situated meaning (section 2.3) for them. It symbolizes the destination, the completion of an objective. The well-known Modern Greek poet Constantine Cavafy has written a poem, which is called *Ithaca*. In his poem, he expresses his feelings about how important the journey and the obstacles in life are, and that everyone must go through difficulties before they achieve their objectives, just like Odysseus did. It is the journey that counts and not only the destination (Cavafy, 2013). On the other hand, *Myconos* has another situated meaning for several Greeks. It is a Greek island in the Aegean Sea, which is well-known for its heavily touristic night life. It is a luxurious holiday destination, because it is both expensive and full of celebrities and pop stars, which spend their holidays there. The user tries to pass the meaning that those that will vote for "yes" are rich and privileged people, who probably go to *Myconos* for holidays in the summer. This would imply that people that will vote for "yes" in the referendum have lost their way to *Ithaca*, their destination, and are stuck in

Myconos, which is here a symbol for narrow-minded and superficial people who do not have critical thinking and will therefore vote for “yes”.

The last example of the category of songs from the hashtag category “yes” is the following:

Vassilis 3 July 2015

Ω Ελλάς ηρώων Χώρα τι μαλάκες βγάζεις τώρα ... #dimopsifisma #NAI

O Ellas iroon chora ti malakes vgazis tora... #dimopsifisma #NE

Oh Ellas the country of heroes such assholes you produce now... #referendum #YES

The user here uses the lyrics of a Greek poem, written by Georgios Souris. Georgios Souris was a Greek satirical poet who lived between the middle of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th. He has written the poem “Ω Ελλάς, ηρώων χώρα, τι γαϊδάρους βγάζεις τώρα;” (= Oh Greece, the country of heroes, such donkeys you produce now?). The poem concerns Greece and its brilliant past on the one hand and Greek people who keep making actions without thinking enough thus destroying their country on the other hand. The poet calls Greeks “donkeys.” Some lyrics of this poem were recently also used in a song, which was sung by Vassilis Papakonstantinou, a left-wing rock singer. The actual lyrics¹³ in the poem and the song are:

“Ω Ελλάς, ηρώων χώρα, τι γαϊδάρους βγάζεις τώρα; ”

“O Ellas, iroon chora, ti gaidarus vgazis tora?”

“Oh Hellas, the country of heroes, such donkeys you produce now?”

There is intertextuality in the post, but not direct. The Twitter user here uses the lyrics of the poem, but not directly, since he replaces the word “donkeys” with “assholes”, making a pun. He is probably doing that, because he is trying to advise the Greek people to vote for “yes” in the referendum and for one time do the right thing, according to him (the user uses the hashtag #yes). Another interpretation could be that the user is tired of the political and economic crisis in Greece and he just wants to insult the Greeks. It is a very common Greek mentality to insult their country and their people, including themselves.

4.5 Political slogans

The last category of intertextuality is political slogans. The users use well-known political slogans to transmit their own thoughts on how to vote in the Greek referendum. The first example of the political slogan category is from the hashtag category #referendum.

¹³The poem can be found here: <https://greekpoems.wordpress.com/2011/09/07/ποιος-είδε-κράτος-λιγοστό-georgios-souris/>.

Stelios 3 July 2015

Δεν θα πεθάνουμε ποτέ κουφάλα τεχνοκράτη **#dimopsifisma**

Den tha pethanume pote kufala technokrati**#dimopsifisma**

We will never die you airhead technocrat**#referendum**

The intertextuality in this tweet is indirect, as the user paraphrases a famous slogan in Greece:

“Δεν θα πεθάνουμε ποτέ, κουφάλα νεκροθάφτη”

“Den tha pethanume pote, kufala nekrothafti”

“We will never die, you airhead gravedigger”

The user replaces the word “gravedigger” with the word “technocrat”, which is a negative word to describe the political system and its corruption. This slogan is used mainly in protests by Greek people, who either write it on banners or shout it out in order to protest and resist the government. The user tries to express his view that Greek people have to be strong. The use of the first person plural pronoun here is noteworthy. The first person plural pronoun, together with the verbal type “we will never die” creates a spirit of collectivity.

The second example from the political slogans category is from the hashtag category “yes”.

Thanasis 30 June 2015

ΟΡΓΗ!

ΛΥΠΗ!

ΑΠΟΓΝΩΣΗ!

#Greece #Greferendum #NAI

ΟΡΓΙ!

ΛΙΠΙ!

ΑΠΟΓΝΟΣΙ!

#Greece #Greferendum #NE

ANGER!

SADNESS!

DESPAIR!

#Greece #Greferendum #YES

The intertextuality here is indirect but the structure of a political slogan is obvious. It is very common that political slogans have only two or three words with an exclamation mark. As Gee points out (2014:28, see also section 2.3 on social language), when we speak or write, we use different varieties or styles of language for different purposes. The

language that is used in slogans is simple and easily memorable by the receiver. The use of capital letters, exclamation marks and different lines for each word supports this idea. These words could easily be written on a banner at a protest. All three words that are written describe feelings, and the user is trying to convince the readers to vote for “yes” using emotional language.

The last example from the political slogan category is from the hashtag category “no”.

Christina 3 July 2015

ΕυρωΠΑΙΟΙ δεν εμμαστε, ευρωΠΕΗ ισως. Ξύπνα ηλιθιε έλληνα! **#OXI** #oxi2015 #οχισεολα

EvroPEI den imaste, evroPEI isos. Ksipna ilithie ellina! **#OCHI** #ochi2015 #ochiseola

We are not EuropEANS, but maybe EuroPENISES. Wake up you stupid Greek! **#NO** #no2015

#notoeverything

This is a word play between the two last syllables of the word Europeans, whose ending in Greek sounds like the word phallus. (Evro-pei, where "pei" in Greek means penises). One interpretation of this tweet could be that the user wants to insult Greeks, probably including herself. For several Greeks, being a European, except for the obvious meaning which is to belong to the European Union, often means being educated and open minded. Here the Greeks are called stupid, instead of smart and open minded, features that are supposed to be connected to the European Union.

Another interpretation of this post could be related to the belief that some Greek people share that from the time Greece joined the European Union, Greek people feel like they are the "little brother" or the poor relative. This feeling of inferiority and of being excluded from the development of Europe might be one possible reason why Greece is compared to the phallus of Europe, according to that tweet, meaning that Greece was never part of the decisions the countries in Europe make, but merely had to follow their guidance.

The use of the second person singular in the imperative mood ξύπνα ("ksipna" = wake up) indicates that the Twitter user tries to motivate the Greek people to do something, to not be afraid, and to vote for “no”. The use of the exclamation mark highlights the imperative form of the post. This together with the word “wake up” has the structure of a political slogan. It is very common that people shout out “wake up, wake up” to express resistance to whatever the undesirable decision or problem is.

4.6 Ambiguous instances

In this category two tweets that display a different kind of or a more inexplicit intertextuality are included. The following tweet is an example of the category of ambiguous intertextuality from the hashtag category #no. It is placed in this category, since its intertextuality with historical events is not clear.

Niki 3 July 2015

Στο Αδειομάρμαρο τι γίνεται; **#Syntagma #oxi**

Sto Adiomarmaro ti ginete? #Syntagma #ochi

What's happening in Emptymarmaro? #Syntagma #no

Here there is a paraphrase of the toponym *Kallimarmaro*, known also as *The Panathenaic Stadium*, which is a sports stadium in Athens, where many athletic events take place. The word Kallimarmaro actually means the "beautifully marbled" (kalos = beautiful in Ancient Greek, marmaro = marble). Here the user replaces the word "kalli" with the adjective "adios" (= empty).

Through this paraphrase, the user tries to express the message that this stadium, where the "yes" voters were gathered, is empty compared to Syntagma square, where the supporters of "no" were gathered at the same time. She is ironic about the small percentage of the "yes" supporters compared to the "no" supporters.

The tweet below is another example of the category "ambiguous", from the hashtag category "yes". Intertextual relations to both proverbs and historical events can be detected.

Petros 30 June 2015

Δυστυχώς επτωχεύσαμεν κύριοι #ηελπιδα_εφυγε #vai #GreeceCrisis #MenoumeEvropi #Greferendum

Distichos eptochefsamen kirii #ielpida_efige #ne #GreeceCrisis #MenumEvropi #Greferendum

Unfortunately, we bankrupted gentlemen #hope_is_gone #yes #GreeceCrisis #MenoymeEvropi

#Greferendum

In the phrase "Δυστυχώς επτωχεύσαμεν" the voice of a former Prime Minister of Greece, Harilaos Trikoupi, is heard, from 1893, when Greece failed to pay its debts and the government declared bankruptcy. His exact words are written in historical books. The intertextuality of the tweet with the above historical event is obvious here. The above phrase is nowadays used by Greek people, when they want to denote failure in economic or more general cases and this is why this tweet could also be put in the category of intertextuality with proverbs.

Here the user tries to match the above historical event to the case of the Greek referendum, as he believes that voting "no" will lead Greece to bankruptcy just as happened in 1893. There has been a Conversation (section 2.3) in Greece about what would happen if the result of the referendum was "no" and this would probably be bankruptcy, according to several Greeks. The majority of Greeks are familiar with the above historical event and it is very common that Greeks use this phrase in times of crisis.

Chapter 5. Discussion

The Greek referendum is a recent event that concerned media and politics, as well as society and people internationally. This study offers the opportunity to examine Greek people's reaction on this critical event. The study is the first attempt to analyze tweets that were posted during the Greek referendum period through a discourse analysis perspective. An exploration of a new field and a recent event, the Greek referendum is attempted.

The tweet with intertextuality with proverbs and with the hashtag #no (του ΣΥΡΙΖΑίου ο καημός, #OXI#Grexit και χορός= The SYRIZA supporter's longing, #NO, #Grexit and dance!) must be discussed, since it is a case in which the hashtag does not represent what the user supports about what to vote in the referendum. Although the hashtag in this tweet was #no, the user seems to be a supporter of "yes". It must be pointed out that this can happen in the tweets, as the hashtag does not necessarily represent the opinion of the user about what to vote. Moreover, it is noteworthy that several users connect a vote on "no" to freedom and on "yes" to poverty or even slavery.

There is still much research that needs to be conducted on this topic. For example, study and analysis of a more extensive corpus of tweets, and a study of the pictures, videos and emoticons (i.e. multimodal discourse analysis) that are included in the tweets can be achieved. Social media, and in particular Twitter, offer excellent data, because they can portray what everyday people think about an event. There is much further research that can hopefully be done on Twitter posts and even on Twitter posts about the Greek referendum.

This paper examined how the Greek Twitter users used various external sources to express themselves (i.e. political thoughts, actions, inquires) from June 27, when the Greek referendum was announced, until July 6, one day after the referendum was completed.

50 tweets (with the hashtag categories #referendum, #yes or #no) from every day from June 27 until July 6 2015 were collected and studied. This means 50 tweets per day for 10 continuative days, i.e. 500 tweets in total. 16 tweets containing intertextuality in total were selected for analyzing, applying some perspectives of discourse analysis that were described in section 2.3.

My main research question was: *What is the role of intertextuality in the Twitter discussion on the Greek referendum during the period of June 27 until July 6?* To answer this, three more specific questions were formed, the answer to which helped answer the key question. The first and second sub question (What is the content of the tweets containing intertextuality during the referendum? What are the contextualized interpretations of the tweets?) were answered by thoroughly analyzing both the content and the context of 16 tweets in the Analysis chapter (3). The third sub question (Which intertextual relations can be discerned in the tweets? How do the tweets connect to proverbs, literature, music and history?) was also answered. After studying 500 tweets, it was shown that there is intertextuality in the tweets and more specifically intertextuality with history, proverbs, songs, poetry and political slogans. The exact amount of tweets per category was shown in table 1. in chapter 3. There was also a great amount of tweets that do not have any

intertextual relations to other texts at all. The exact amount of them was also shown in table 1. in chapter 3.

From the 500 tweets, 161 have the hashtag #referendum (or #greekreferendum, #greferendum, #dimopsifisma, #δημοψήφισμα), 123 have the hashtag #yes (or #ne, #ναι, #lemenai), 216 have the hashtag #no (or #oxi, #ochi, #όχι, #lemeoxi). It was shown that there are intertextual connections of varying types to be detected in all tweets. Greek history, proverbs, poetry and songs are alive in the mind of Greek Twitter users and the users often refer to them. The Twitter users, borrowing words either directly or indirectly, express their feelings about the referendum. The most repeated features of the tweets concerning intertextuality were (a) historical events (b) proverbs, (c) songs, (d) poetry, (e) political slogans and the exact amount of them according to the hashtags were shown in the table 1.

Lastly, it must be highlighted here that there was no use of *Greeklsh* language found in any posts, but only in the hashtags. The reason for this could be either that patriotism can arise in times of crisis or that more intellectual Twitter users are interested in politics and therefore choose to use Greek before *Greeklsh*.

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