Relevance theory and na-*interrogatives* in Modern Greek[*]

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1 Introduction

In this paper I want to discuss the semantics and pragmatics of *na*-interrogatives (or as they are called in traditional grammars "subjunctive interrogatives") in Modern Greek. My paper builds on Pavlidou (1991) where a typology of questions performed by *na*-interrogatives is given. I will argue that such a typology plays no role in the way a hearer interprets a *na*-interrogative. We do not need to posit categories of questions in order to account for their interpretation. I will show that the several possible interpretations of *na*-interrogatives can be explained in a psychologically plausible way if we assume (a) the semantics for interrogatives as proposed by Wilson and Sperber (1988), (b) the semantics of *na*-clauses as proposed in Rouchota (1991, to appear) and (c) the relevance theoretic approach to utterance interpretation (Sperber and Wilson 1986). In the first part of this paper I discuss *na*-interrogatives which Pavlidou classifies under "indirect requests for permission", "indirect offers to do something", "deliberative" and "dubitative" questions. In the second part I concentrate on what Pavlidou calls "rhetorical questions" performed by *na*-interrogatives. I will show that in cognitive terms such questions are closer to exclamatives than interrogatives, although they would be lumped under "rhetorical questions" according to traditional analyses, and that this affinity has a natural explanation within relevance theory.

2 The data and a possible classification (Pavlidou 1991)

Pavlidou (1991) takes *na* to be a subjunctive marker (following previous work by Philippaki-Warburton and Veloudis (1984, 1985)) and looks at independent interrogative clauses where the main verb is preceded by the particle *na*. She offers a classification/typology of questions that can be performed with *na*-interrogatives.

The different types of questions that can be performed with *na*-interrogatives fall under two categories:

(a) Indirect speech acts: These can be indirect requests for permission to do something as in (1) and indirect proposals or offers as in (2):

(1)   na rotiso kati?
      na ask-1st something?
      Can I ask something?

(2)   na plino ego ta piata?
      na wash-1st the dishes
      Shall I do the dishes?

Indirect requests for permission and indirect proposals are yes-no questions. Pavlidou places rhetorical questions with *na*-clauses under this category, because according to Meibauer (1986),they can be regarded as 'indirect representatives'. I will have more to say about *na*-rhetorical questions in section 5.

(b) Questions that are posed rather than being asked of someone: These are deliberative and dubitative questions, as in (3) and (4):

(3)   na pao sinema?
      na go-1st to the movies
      Shall I go to the movies?[1]

(4)   pu na troi?
      where na eat-3rd?
      Where might he eat?

Deliberative questions can be yes-no or wh-interrogatives (except for why-interrogatives); dubitative questions are yes-no and wh-interrogatives.

In addition to this classification, Pavlidou suggests a set of explicit criteria for distinguishing the different types of *na*-interrogatives. Besides intonation (which

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[1] (3) can be paraphrased with the alternative question in (i)
      (i)   Na pao i na min pao sinema?
            na go-1st or na not go-1st movies?
            Shall I or shall I not go to the movies?"

she does not discuss), the various question types differ from one another along the following dimensions:

(a) **person of reference** in the reference act (speaker, addressee, a third party),
(b) **type of predication** (act, state, event),
(c) **beneficiary** of the act mentioned with the predication act (speaker, addressee),
(d) **attitude of speaker** towards the propositional content,
(e) the question's **position** in the discourse (initiating question, echo question),
(f) the **combinability** of the question with other illocutionary force indicators or **paraphrasability** to other typical forms.

For example, for *na*-interrogatives which perform indirect requests for permission as in (1) we get the following description/definition on the basis of the factors in (a)-(f) above:

(a) The person referred to has to be the speaker or in some cases a third party (eg. na rotisi kati i Maria? = Can Mary ask something?, but the subject cannot be in the second person).
(b) The predication concerns a future act of the speaker.
(c) The act mentioned has to be in the interest of the referent (i.e. the speaker or a third party).
(d) The attitude of the speaker is his or her wish or desire to perform the act mentioned.
(e) The question presupposes at least a non verbal context between speaker and addressee, i.e. such questions are typically continuation moves in a sequence.
(f) Questions like (1) readily combine with typical markers of requesting like *parakalo*, 'please', and *ligo*, 'a little'.

3 Critique of Pavlidou (1991)

The general problem with typologies of the type proposed by Pavlidou (1991) is that they amount to a simple list of the possible interpretations *na*-interrogatives may have. They do not say anything about how these interpretations are actually arrived at by hearers. It is from this point of view that I want to look in the rest of this paper at the data discussed in the last section.

  One possibility would be to treat *na*-interrogatives as multiply ambiguous. Pavlidou clearly does not take *na*-clauses to be ambiguous. She assumes a univocal semantics for *na*-clauses in terms of possible worlds as proposed by Philippaki-Warburton and Veloudis (1985). However, her views on the semantics of

interrogatives are not explicit. According to Wilson and Sperber (1988) and Clark (1991) the semantic theories for sentence types are of two sorts: They are either based on the assumption that there is a semantic link between linguistic forms and illocutionary forces (typically Searle 1969, 1979) or they are based on the assumption that there is an intervening category of semantic mood and the semantic link is then between linguistic forms and semantic moods (typically McGinn 1977). Pavlidou does not commit herself to either of these views. She does not address the question "how can one explain the several different interpretations of *na*-interrogatives?". I will argue in section 5 that we can account for the several interpretations of *na*-interrogatives in pragmatic terms. The analysis I will propose is based on the idea introduced by Wilson and Sperber (1988) in their account of the semantics of non declaratives that there is a semantic link between linguistic form and propositional attitude.

Pavlidou (1991:37) says: "It is evident from this typology that in using subjunctive interrogatives one does not neutrally seek information about the world as is the case with 'real' questions". Real questions are questions seeking information about the world (Pavlidou 1987) and they can be asked in the indicative, i.e. with non *na*-interrogatives. The question that arises here is, why can't "real" questions be asked with *na*-clauses? I will argue that this follows from the semantic contrast between *na*- and non *na*-clauses.

On the other hand, some of the types of questions that can be performed by *na*-interrogatives can also be performed by non *na*-interrogatives. For example, dubitative questions:

(6)   pu troi araje?
       where eat-3rd perhaps?
       Where does he perhaps eat?

The question here is this: are there any differences between *na* and non *na*-dubitative questions and, if so, of what sort and how do we account for them?

The next point I want to discuss is the status of the criteria that Pavlidou proposes in order to distinguish between the different types of *na*-interrogatives. As they stand they are nothing but simple descriptive statements about each type of *na*-interrogatives. Looking at these criteria from the point of view of how *na*-interrogatives are interpreted on particular occasions one may wonder whether they are all of equal importance. I will show that some of them are of little or no importance and that others are integral parts of the interpretation process and therefore do not need to be stipulated as distinct entities in our analysis. Viewed as such, they do not constitute descriptive distinguishing criteria but important

aspects of the overall interpretation of *na*-interrogatives as driven by considerations of optimal relevance.

4 A relevance theoretic account of *na*-interrogatives

Following the analysis of non declarative sentences by Wilson and Sperber (1988), I have argued in Rouchota (1991, to appear) that *na*-clauses are semantically specialised for the description of states of affairs in possible worlds. A *na*-clause encodes that the proposition expressed by the utterance represents a thought entertained as a description of a state of affairs in a possible world. In the analysis of *na*-interrogatives that follows I will assume this semantic analysis for *na*-clauses. I will also assume the analysis of the semantics of interrogatives proposed by Wilson and Sperber (1988). Wilson and Sperber (1988) argue that interrogatives encode that the propositional form of the utterance represents a thought which is entertained as an interpretive representation of a relevant thought. On the view I will put forward here the several possible interpretations of *na*-questions are the result of, on the one hand, pragmatically enriching the semantics of *na* and, on the other, pragmatically enriching the semantics of interrogatives. The pragmatic theory I will be using is relevance theory (Sperber and Wilson 1986).

According to the relevance theoretic account of interrogatives, a question is the interpretation of its answer (which the speaker considers relevant from someone's point of view). So, the question in (1) semantically encodes that it is an interpretation of its answer:

(1)   na rotiso kati?
       na ask(-1st) something?
       Can I ask something?

The important thing to note here is that the answer to this question is a (yes-no) *na*-clause:

(1')   Na rotisis kati
       na ask(-2nd) something
       You may ask something

According to Rouchota (1991, to appear) in (1') we have an imperative-like *na*-clause: the speaker is issuing permission to the hearer to ask something. As I argued there, this interpretation is reached by (a) pragmatically enriching the semantics of *na* "the world described is possible" into "the world described is

desirable and potential". This process, I showed, is driven by the context and considerations of optimal relevance; and (b) pragmatically resolving the semantic indeterminacies relating to "from whose point of view is the described state of affairs desirable" and "who grants the potentiality of the described state of affairs". When the state of affairs described in the *na*-clause is desirable from the hearer's point of view and its potentiality is granted by the speaker, (1') is understood as issuing permission.

I want to argue that (1) is the interrogative counterpart of (1').[2] Because of the particular context (say in a classroom, a pupil asks permission to ask a question) and intonation pattern, the hearer realises that the speaker does not intend to ask simply whether the state of affairs where she asks something is possible (as the semantics of *na* dictates). Such an interpretation is too weak, in the sense that it does not achieve enough contextual effects for no unjustifiable effort. For example such an interpretation would not explain why the hearer, in this context the teacher, would typically react by granting or not granting permission to the pupil to speak; or why the pupil would then typically go on to ask her question or not, depending on the teacher's answer. So, in accordance with the criterion of consistency with the principle of relevance, the semantics of *na* has to be enriched into "the world described is desirable and potential"[3]. The semantic indeterminacies relating to desirability and potentiality will then have to be resolved. In this particular context the hearer will infer that the world described by the *na*-clause is desirable to the speaker and that its potentiality depends on the hearer himself. Note that "possible" has to be enriched into both desirable and potential: the element of desirability will explain why the speaker will go on to ask the question if she is granted permission; the element of potentiality will explain why the speaker asks before going on with her wishes.

Now because (1) is a question, the information semantically encoded by questions will have to be added for the hearer to recover what is explicitly

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[2] *Na*-interrogatives like those in (1) and (2), as we will see shortly, seem to me to be what Wilson and Sperber (1988:99-100) call "subjunctive questions": "For instance, many languages have two types of interrogative sentence: those with an indicative verb, which expect an indicative answer, and those with a subjunctive verb, which expect a subjunctive answer. The Omotic languages of Southern Ethiopia have both indicative and imperative interrogatives-that is interrogatives with an imperative verb, which expect an imperative answer. In each case, the meaning of the interrogative is a function of the interrogative marker on the one hand, and of indicative, subjunctive, or imperative verb form on the other".

[3] The information encoded by the *na*-clause is taken to be procedural in the sense of Sperber and Wilson (1986). This claim is not argued for here. For more on this see Rouchota (in preparation).

communicated by (1). As I said, interrogatives encode that they interpretively represent relevant thoughts. One final semantic indeterminacy has to be resolved pragmatically: with respect to (1), as with any interrogative, the question arises to whom the speaker regards the answer to be relevant. In the case of (1) the hearer will infer on the basis of the context that the interpreted thought is relevant to the speaker herself (the pupil genuinely expects an answer). So, (1) explicitly communicates something like the higher level explicature "I find it relevant from my own point of view to know whether the desirable to me world in which I ask something is potential as far as you are concerned".

It is when a *na*-clause ends up communicating a higher level explicature of this sort that it is understood as having the illocutionary force of "a request for permission to do something". Notice that on this account there is no arbitrary link between *na*-questions and the force of "asking for permission". The "asking for permission" interpretation is the result of the processes of linguistic decoding and pragmatically enriching the proposition expressed in accordance with the principle of relevance.

Questions like (1), i.e. questions the explicit content of which is a request for permission, cannot be asked with non *na*-clauses. The reason is that non *na*-clauses encode that they describe states of affairs in the actual world. Desirable and potential worlds are, however, types of possible worlds, so the enrichment from "actual" into "desirable and potential" is not available.

The other types of *na*-questions that Pavlidou mentions can be accounted for along similar lines. The particular interpretation of a *na*-clause in a particular context depends (a) on the process of choosing a particular line of enrichment for the semantics of the *na*-clause and (b) on taking into account the semantics of interrogatives. This also involves pragmatically resolving the semantic indeterminacy concerning the point of view of the relevance of the represented thought. I will now go through the other cases.

Let me first look at (2), which is classified by Pavlidou as an indirect offer or proposal to do something:

(2)   na plino ego ta piata?
        na wash(-1st) the dishes
        Shall I do the dishes?

Let's imagine a context. In Mary's and Peter's household the usual practice is that when one of them does the cooking, the other does the washing up. Tonight Mary did the cooking but she can see that Peter is very tired, so in uttering (2) she offers to do the washing up.

By simply decoding the semantics of *na* in (2) the hearer will understand that Mary is asking whether the state of affairs where she does the washing up is possible. This interpretation, however, is too weak to be the interpretation that Mary intended: Mary does not want to know simply whether this state of affairs is possible (both Mary and Peter know that this state of affairs is in principle possible). So, the hearer will realise that some more inferential work is needed on his part in order to recover a relevant enough interpretation. How is the hearer to enrich the semantics of *na* in this case? The line of enrichment is indicated by the particular intonational pattern and contextual assumptions such as that Mary has noticed that Peter is tired, Mary is not too tired, Mary has offered in the past to do the washing up if Peter was tired and so on. Given a context like this the hearer is expected to infer that the state of affairs where Mary does the washing up is presented as potential as far as Mary is concerned and desirable to Peter. The typical answer to (2) would be a yes/no *na*-clause whereby Peter would communicate that this state of affairs is/isn't desirable to him. So, part of the explicit content of (2) will be "the world in which Mary does the washing up is desirable from Peter's point of view and potential as far as Mary is concerned". The final step is to integrate the semantics of interrogatives and resolve the indeterminacy as to whom the answer to this question is relevant. In this particular context Mary genuinely seeks an answer, so she considers the answer to her question as relevant to herself. So, Mary ends up communicating explicitly something like "I find it relevant from my own point of view to know whether the potential world, according to me, in which I do the washing up is desirable to Peter". This is why Mary's question is understood as having the illocutionary force of an offer to do something.[4]

Questions where the speaker is explicitly offering to do something cannot be asked with non *na*-clauses because, as explained earlier, the semantics of non *na*-clauses cannot be enriched into "the world described is desirable and potential".

I argued that in both (1) and (2) the semantics of *na*-clauses is enriched into "the world described is desirable and potential" as a result of pragmatic considerations. (1) and (2) differ in that in (1) the world described is desirable from

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[4]Notice that as far as the interpretation process is concerned there is no difference between questions like (2) where the speaker is offering to *do* something and questions where the speaker is offering some *information*, like the one below:

    (i)   Shall I tell you what happened?

Such questions are also asked with *na*-clauses in Modern Greek:

    (ii)   Na sou po ti egine?
            na you tell(-1st) what happened
            Shall I tell you what happened?

Such questions are not mentioned in Pavlidou's classification.

the speaker's point of view and its potentiality depends on the hearer whereas in (2) the world described is desirable from the hearer's point of view and its potentiality is granted by the speaker. Now, notice that in (1) the speaker ends up asking about the potentiality of the described world (and not its desirability) whereas in (2) the speaker ends up asking about the desirability of the described world (and not its potentiality). This is because the desirability of the state of affairs described in (1) and the potentiality of the state of affairs in (2) depends on the speaker herself.

Finally, according to Pavlidou, the *na*-interrogatives in (1) and (2) are used to perform indirect speech acts. The direct speech act performed by these utterances is presumably a (direct) request for information. This direct speech act, however,is only performed in order to perform an indirect speech act: that of requesting permission in (1) and that of offering to do something in (2). On the speech act view, the hearer has to recover the indirect speech act involved in order to interpret an utterance like (1) or (2). I have shown, however, that no such thing is needed in order to understand these utterances. The "indirect offer" and "indirect request for permission" interpretations are simply the result of pragmatically enriching the semantically encoded content of these utterances according to relevance considerations [5]. On this analysis there is only one speech act performed, that of asking. Moreover, on the Wilson and Sperber (1988) view of non-declaratives, the hearer does not even need to recognise that the speaker is performing the speech act of asking in order to interpret utterances like (1) and (2). All he needs to do is to decode the semantics of interrogatives (see also Wilson 1993).

Let's now consider (3), which is classified as a deliberative question. Suppose that A is bored and doesn't know how to spend her evening. Among the options she considers is going to the movies. So, she utters:

(3)   na pao sinema?
        na go-1st to the movies
        Shall I go to the movies?

Typically such questions do not expect answers. The speaker is better seen as wondering whether she should go to the movies or not rather than requesting herself or someone else to provide her with an answer.

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[5]For a more detailed discussion of the issue of the role of indirect speech acts in communication with special reference to the so-called "short circuited implicatures", see Groefsema (1992). She reaches the same conclusion as here, namely that the recovery of indirect speech acts is not needed in order to account for the interpretation of the related utterances.

Upon decoding (3) the hearer will realise that the speaker cannot be simply wondering whether it is possible to go to the movies in the given context. It is part of the context that the speaker is trying to decide whether she wants to go to the movies. So, the semantics of the *na*-clause has to be enriched into "the world described is desirable from the speaker's point of view". this is why the speaker is understood to be asking whether it is desirable for herself to go to the movies. The thought represented by this question, "the speaker should/should not go to the movies" is considered by the speaker to be relevant to herself. So, an utterance like (3) communicates explicitly something like "I find it relevant for myself to know whether the world in which I go to the movies is desirable to me".[6] As expected, a non *na*-interrogative cannot communicate an explicature like this.

With deliberative questions the point of view of desirability of the represented state of affairs is not always resolved in favour of the speaker. For example, consider:

(5)   Na ipograpsi o Kostas gia to danio (i ohi)?
      na sign the Kostas for the loan (or not)?
      Should Kostas sign for the loan (or not)?

Here the speaker is wondering whether it is desirable for Kostas that he signs for the loan; the question itself, however, is an interpretation of a thought which is relevant to the speaker: it is the speaker who wants to know whether Kostas should sign for the loan or not.

In uttering such a question it could even be the case that the speaker is wondering whether the described state of affairs is desirable to the addressee. Suppose you've been explaining to me your dilemma about applying for a job or for a fellowship, and I, considering these two possibilities, say:

(6)   Na kanis etisi gia ti doulia i gia tin ipotrofia?
      na do-2nd application for the job or for the fellowship?
      Should you apply for the job or for the fellowship?

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[6]Deliberative questions can also be introduced by a wh-word (except for "why"). For example, consider (i) and its equivalent in English

(i)   Pou na pao?
         Where na go-1st
         Where to go?

Such examples are interpreted in the same way as (3). For pragmatic reasons the world described in the *na*-clause (or the infinitive, in English) is understood to be desirable rather than simply possible.

In this case the speaker is wondering whether it is desirable for the addressee to apply for the job or whether it is desirable for him to apply for the scholarship. One of the ways, however, in which such a question achieves relevance is by communicating that the speaker regards the thought represented as relevant to herself.

Finally let's look at (4) which is classified as a dubitative question:

(4)   pu na troi?
        where na eat-3rd?
        Where might he eat?

The yes-no question in (7) would also be understood as dubitative:

(7)   na eho arage perasi tin eksetasi?
        na have-1st perhaps passed the exam?
        Could it be that I have perhaps passed the exam?

In these cases there is no reason for the semantics of the *na*-clause to be enriched. The speaker is asking in (4) where it is possible that he eats and in (7) whether it is possible that she has passed her exam. The speaker considers the thought represented by these questions relevant to herself. So, with (4) for example, the speaker communicates explicitly something like "I consider it relevant from my own point of view that I know where it is possible that Peter eats".[7]

Such questions may also be performed with non *na*-clauses. For example,

(8)   Ine idi sto dromo, araje?
        Is-3rd already on the road, perhaps?
        Is he already on his way, perhaps?

Because of the semantics of non *na*-clauses, the thought interpreted by the interrogative in (8) involves the description of a state of affairs in the actual world:

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[7] The semantics of the *na*-clause should remain "possible" rather than be enriched into "potential" here because the following questions where the world described is not potential but simply possible are fine:
    (i)   Na ehi zisi 400 hronia?
            na has lived-3rd 400 years
            Could it be that she has lived for 400 years?
    (ii)   Na ehi arage ksanagenithi?
            na has-3rd perhaps be born again
            Could it be perhaps that she has been reborn?

"he is/is not already on his way". In this case it is the particle *araje* ("perhaps") which by virtue of its linguistic meaning makes explicit the hesitation or doubt with which the speaker utters the question. In other words it is the presence of this particle which encourages the hearer to interpret (8) as communicating the speaker's doubt. On the other hand, in (4) and (7) above the speaker's doubt has been shown to follow from the semantics of the *na*-clause.

In this section I have proposed a pragmatic account of some of the ways in which *na*-interrogatives may be interpreted. On this view, categories like "indirect offers to do something", "indirect requests for permision", "deliberative" and "dubitative" are nothing but names for different possible interpretations of *na*-interrogatives. I have shown that such descriptive categories are not needed in order to account for the interpretation of *na*-interrogatives. I have argued that the several possible interpretations of *na*-interrogatives are the result of linguistic decoding on the one hand and considerations of relevance, i.e. pragmatic considerations, on the other.

I would now like to consider again Pavlidou's criteria for distinguishing between what she calls "the different types of questions performed by *na*-interrogatives" which were mentioned in section 2. On the approach I have developed here, some of these criteria seem to be actual aspects of the interpretation process and some seem to have no psychological basis at all.

What Pavlidou calls "the beneficiary of the act" and "the speaker's attitude" are on the relevance theoretic analysis I proposed necessary aspects of the interpretation process. These two features correspond to that part of the interpretation process as developed here where the semantics of the *na*-clause is enriched into "desirable and potential" or simply "desirable". On my approach, however, they are not defining characteristics of any type of questions performed by *na*-interrogatives but rather stages in the interpretation process well-justified by pragmatic considerations.

One of the criteria that Pavlidou proposes is "the combinability of the question with other illocutionary force indicators". Pavlidou has in mind typical markers of requesting like *parakalo* ("please") and *ligo* ("a little") which may combine with *na*-interrogatives like (1), expressions that seek agreement or reassurance like *simfoni* ("agreed") or *endaksi* ("alright") which may cooccur with *na*-interrogatives like (2), and dubitative particles like *araje, taha* ("perhaps") or the standardised verbal expression *les na* ("do you say/think that...") which may combine with dubitative *na*-interrogatives. For example:

(9)   na rotiso kati parakalo?
      na ask-1st something please?
      Can I ask something please?

(10)   na plino ego ta piata? Simfoni?
       na wash-1st the dishes? Agreed?
       Shall I do the dishes? Agreed?

(11)   pu na troi arage?
       where na eat-3rd perhaps?
       Where might he eat perhaps?

On the relevance view the combinability of such expressions with particular interpretations of *na*-interrogatives can be given a psychologically plausible explanation. Typical markers of requesting make the "indirect request" interpretation more accessible to the hearer; expressions that seek agreement make the "indirect offer" interpretation more accessible; dubitative particles and expressions make the "dubitative" interpretation more accessible. It follows from the principle of relevance that a speaker will try to make the intended interpretation of her utterance as accessible as possible. One way of achieving this is by giving the hearer clues as to the context he is supposed to construct and use for the interpretation of the utterance. So, using a request marker or an agreement expression or a dubitative particle the speaker ensures the recovery of the intended interpretation by making the right contextual assumptions accessible[8].

Pavlidou's fifth criterion has to do with the question's position in the discourse. Indirect requests and offers are, according to Pavlidou, continuation moves in a sequence, whereas deliberative and dubitative questions can be isolated in discourse. On the relevance view assumptions about the question's position in the discourse may sometimes be part of the context in which an utterance is processed, i.e. part of the assumptions against which the relevance of the utterance is established. In the analysis I proposed the question's position in the discourse is not a defining property of the possible interpretations but may contribute to the interpretation process by virtue of contributing to the context.

Finally, Pavlidou's "person of reference" and "type of predication" do contribute to the interpretation but only in the trivial sense of being parts of the linguistically decoded content of an utterance. "The person of reference" is as far as I can see the subject of the clause (so in the case of *na*-interrogatives like (1) the subject will be either the speaker or some third person as Pavlidou observes,

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[8]Some of the words which Pavlidou discusses in connection with this point may be analysed in procedural rather than conceptual terms. The most obvious candidate for a procedural approach is *araje*. *Araje* does not contribute to the truth conditions of the utterance and it only appears in questions. As a matter of fact one could argue that it is an interrogative particle (rather than a dubitative one, as Pavlidou thinks), i.e. that it turns an utterance into a question.

in the case of examples like (2) the subject has to be the speaker, etc) and "the type of predication" has to do with the temporal interpretation of the *na*-clause. When there is no tense marking on the verb as in examples (1), (2) and (3) the *na*-clause will have its usual futural temporal interpretation. When there is some tense marking, as for example with asking hesitantly about what happened in the past, the temporal interpretation will be in accordance.

In conclusion, the criteria that Pavlidou proposes in order to distinguish between the different types of questions performed by *na*-interrogatives are on her analysis simple descriptive features. On the relevance analysis I proposed they can be explained away in terms of their more or less significant contribution to the interpretation process.

5 On rhetorical questions

5.1 Rhetorical questions in general

What is a rhetorical question? Let's have a look at some definitions.
Quirk et al. (1972: 826) say: "A positive rhetorical yes-no question is like a strong negative assertion, while a negative question is like a strong positive one, eg:

> Is that a reason for desPAIR?   [Surely that is not a reason...]
> Isn't the answer OBVIOUS?   [Surely the answer is obvious...]

There are also rhetorical wh-questions. The positive question is equivalent to a statement in which the wh-element is replaced by a negative element, eg:

> Who KNOWS?   [Nobody knows]".

Also, in Leech (1969: 184-185) we find: "A rhetorical question is, in a loose sense, a question which is abnormal, in that it expects no answer: 'Who cares?', 'Aren't they wonderful?', 'Do you call that music?', etc. More strictly defined, it is a positive question which is understood as if equivalent to a negative statement: Who cares?' is an emphatic way of saying 'Nobody cares'; 'Shall I compare thee to a summer's day?' announces the poet's intention of doing no such thing. It is true that a rhetorical question produces no violent sense of incongruity. Nonetheless, its dramatic effect arises from a feeling that the question demands an answer and is not provided with one. A negation carries more weight, it seems, if the reader is challenged to question the positive assertion, only to be overwhelmed by the realisation that none but a negative answer is possible".

As these two quotes show, rhetorical questions are usually seen in the literature as having the following two properties: (a) they patently do not require an answer from the hearer and (b) they implicate the negation of the proposition expressed by the question (or the negation of some related proposition). For example,

(12)   Context: A is trying to encourage B who is a beginning laywer
       A: OK, you've lost a case. Is that a reason for despair?

where the speaker does not expect an answer and strongly implicates that the fact that the hearer lost a case is not a reason for despair. Let's call this the traditional view.
       Wilson and Sperber (1988:98) have shown how some rhetorical questions are interpreted. Like all interrogatives rhetorical questions represent relevant thoughts. In particular a rhetorical question like (13) below represents a thought which the speaker regards as relevant to the hearer:

(13)   Context: Mary to John who has just lit his first cigarette of the year.
       What was your New Year's resolution?

The thought represented by this question, namely "John's New Year's resolution was to stop smoking" is considered by the speaker as relevant to the hearer. According to Wilson and Sperber it achieves relevance by virtue of being a reminder, i.e. by reminding John of his assumption "My New Year's resolution was to stop smoking". The speaker is of course implicating that John is not keeping his New Year's resolution, that he should not be smoking, etc.
       In what follows I want to look at the *na*-rhetorical questions discussed by Pavlidou (1991, 1987) and show how we can account for their interpretation within relevance theory.

5.2 *Na*-rhetorical questions

Pavlidou (1987, 1991) discusses several "types" of rhetorical questions performed by *na*-interrogatives. "All subjunctive interrogatives of this type", Pavlidou (1991: 21) notes, "can be uttered in a more or less exclamatory tone of voice". All the examples I am considering below are uttered with an interrogative intonation. Even so, however, these questions are expressive questions, i.e. the speaker utters them in order to express her feelings.

The first type of *na*-rhetorical question, Pavlidou's E1, is illustrated by the example in (14) below. Suppose Mrs Anna has been Peter's nanny. Peter is now a grown up but has maintained contact with Mrs Anna. However, lately he hasn't been to see her as often as he used to. When they finally meet, the following exchange takes place:

(14)   Mrs Anna: Me ksehases, Petro
       me forgot-2nd Peter
       You forgot me, Peter
       Peter: Ego na se ksehasa kiria Anna?
       I na you forgot Mrs. Anna?
       Would I forget you, Mrs Anna?

Peter is understood as implicating that he did not forget Mrs Anna, that he is surprised she could think that he did, that he is maybe annoyed with her for thinking so, etc.

According to Pavlidou (1991:21), the E1-type involves "yes-no interrogatives with which the speaker expresses a negative evaluation of the propositional content P, which s/he considers impossible. The implied answer is -P, i.e. that the negation of P holds. In general, rhetorical questions of this type are rebuttals of the addressee's preceding speech act or behaviour".

E1-type rhetorical questions can also be asked with non *na*-clauses and I will start by considering the interpretation of the non *na*-question in (15):

(15)   Mrs Anna: Me ksehases Petro
       me forgot-2nd Peter
       You forgot me Peter
       Peter: Ego se ksehasa kiria Anna?
       I you forgot Mrs Anna?
       I forgot you Mrs Anna?

In the context given above, Peter's utterance in (15) communicates that he has not forgotten Mrs Anna, that he is surprised Mrs Anna thought so, etc. How can we explain this in relevance theoretic terms?

I want to suggest that the interpretation of Peter's utterance involves interpretive use (Sperber and Wilson 1986: 224-231). In particular, I want to argue that it is triply interpretive in the following way. On the relevance view, the explicit content of any utterance is an intepretation of a thought of the speaker's. Now Peter's utterance is a question. According to Wilson and Sperber's semantic analysis of interrogatives, it represents a thought which interpretively represents a

relevant thought: either the thought that Peter forgot Mrs Anna or the thought that Peter did not forget Mrs Anna. By virtue of being a positive question, it is for pragmatic reasons more likely to represent the positive thought that Peter forgot Mrs Anna (Wilson and Sperber 1988: 96). Now, this thought is identical with the thought explicitly expressed by Mrs Anna's utterance. The thought represented by Peter's question is meant to be understood as an echoic interpretation of the thought expressed by Mrs Anna. This is why Peter's utterance is not only doubly interpretive like all interrogatives but triply interpretive. Peter is attributing the thought interpretively represented by his question to Mrs Anna and dissociates himself from it. The hearer, Mrs Anna in this case, will infer that this is so from the particular intonation pattern and contextual assumptions such as "Peter has a long standing relation with Mrs Anna","Peter has always expressed his devotion to Mrs Anna", "Peter has always helped Mrs Anna whenever she needed him". Peter is therefore implicating that he did not forget Mrs Anna.

Let's go back to (14) now. The first question to ask is whether there is a difference in meaning between (14) and (15) when uttered in this context. The standard answer is that (14) is felt to be "stronger", "more emphatic", "more emotional" than (15). I want to argue that the interpretation of (14) is very similar to that proposed for (15) and that the extra overtones carried by (14) are the result of the semantic contrast between *na-* and non *na*-clauses.

The explicit content of Peter's utterance in (14) is an interpretation of a thought of Peter's in the basic sense in which any utterance explicitly represents a thought. Taking into account the semantics of *na*-clauses and the positive form of Peter's question, we can conclude that it interpretively represents the relevant thought "there is a possible world in which Peter forgot Mrs Anna". I want to suggest in the same vein as above that this thought is intended to be understood as an echoic interpretation of one of the thoughts behind Mrs. Anna's utterance. Since Mrs Anna says that Peter forgot her, she must hold the thought that it is possible that Peter forgets her. Peter is attributing to Mrs Anna the thought that it is possible that he forgot her and dissociates himself from it (as the hearer can infer from the intonation and the context). He is, therefore, implicating that there is no possible world in which Peter could forget/forgot Mrs Anna.

As a result of the semantic contrast between *na* and non *na*-clauses the set of implicatures communicated by (15) is not identical to that communicated by (14). In (15) Peter uttering a non *na*-clause chooses to attribute to the hearer the thought that "It is actual that Peter forgot Mrs Anna" and dissociate himself from it. In (14), on the other hand, Peter uttering a *na*-clause chooses to attribute to Mrs Anna the thought that "it is possible that Peter forgot Mrs Anna", which is not what Mrs Anna literally said but is one of the assumptions Mrs Anna must hold in order to say what she says. In this way Peter ends up implicating that it is not possible

for him to forget Mrs Anna, which entails that he did not forget her. This is why (14) is felt to be "stronger", etc than (15).

The last step in the interpretation of such questions is for the hearer to decide from whose point of view the speaker regards the thought represented by her question as relevant. I want to suggest that the speaker in this context regards the thought represented by her question as relevant to herself. The speaker believes that it is not possible for him to forget Mrs Anna. Because of this it would be relevant to the speaker to think that it is possible for him to forget Mrs Anna, if this proposition were true. So what the speaker says in (15) is something like "I find it relevant from my own point of view to think the thought represented by the *na*-interrogative in (14) [there is a possible world in which I forget Mrs Anna] which is an interpretation of a thought that Mrs Anna thinks" ; the speaker in (15) says something like "I find it relevant from my own point of view to think the thought represented by (15) [in the actual world I forgot Mrs Anna] which is an interpretation of a thought attributed to Mrs Anna". The hearer recovering this is encouraged to think of the ways in which it might be relevant to Peter that Mrs Anna thinks he forgot her. So, such utterances will be appropriate when the speaker intends to express her surprise, disappointment, irritation, etc towards the fact that Mrs Anna could think that Peter forgot her.

Finally, I want to raise another point. In the examples discussed above the speaker attributes the thought represented by his question to the hearer and dissociates himself from it. Now attributive interpretive use and dissociation are the key notions in Wilson and Sperber's analysis of irony (Wilson and Sperber 1989). The questions in (14) and (15), however, are not ironical (at least they are not ironical on the interpretation I am considering). How do the two cases differ? Let's see what happens in typical examples of irony. Suppose that you are certain that on Thursday the weather will be beautiful and that it will be a lovely day for a picnic. Thursday comes and it's pouring with rain. I turn to you and say "It is a lovely day for a picnic indeed". According to Wilson and Sperber, the speaker attributes the proposition expressed by her utterance to the hearer and dissociates herself from it, i.e. she does not believe that it is a lovely day for a picnic. Moreover, she finds it ridiculous that someone could hold that it is a lovely day for a picnic. So, in typical cases of irony the speaker finds what the hearer (or someone else) believes ridiculous. In the case of the examples I have been considering, the speaker does not intend to ridicule the hearer. Moreover, in (14) and (15) above the speaker's preliminary attitude is not that of dissociation but that of questioning.

Next I want to look at the second type of *na*-rhetorical questions that Pavlidou considers. Suppose that Kostas has recently repeatedly burst into tears for some reason that most of his friends including A and B below find ridiculous. A

and B discussed the situation with Kostas, explained to him that he shouldn't cry and therefore expect him to not cry any more. An hour later B informs A that Kostas is crying again and A exclaims:

(16)   A: Giati na klei?
       Why na cry-he
       Why (should he) cry?[9]

In (16) the speaker is understood as communicating that she is surprised with Kostas's behaviour, or annoyed with Kostas, disapproves of this behaviour, wishes Kostas would stop crying etc.

According to Pavlidou (1991: 21) the E2-type of rhetoricals involves "why-interrogatives with which the speaker expresses a negative evaluation of P; it is taken for granted that -P is possible. The insinuated answer is that -P should hold. Again the rhetorical question counts as rebuttal or disapproval of what the addressee reported".

A non na-question like (17) can also be used in the same context under the same interpretation:

(17)   A: Giati klei?
       Why cry-he
       Why is he crying?[10]

The difference between (16) and (17) is that once again the na-version seems to be "more emphatic", "more emotional".

Note that both (16) and (17) would be classified as rhetorical questions on the traditional view: the speaker manifestly expects no answer and the point of the utterance seems to be the derivation of some negative proposition (in this case that Kostas should not be crying).

Let's consider (17) first. A utters a wh-question. According to Wilson and Sperber (1988), wh-questions encode that they interpretively represent an incomplete thought of the speaker's which is relevant once completed. So, A's

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[9]Note that in a different context (16) could be understood as a dubitative question. For example, suppose I believe Kostas to be the happiest man on earth; one day I see him crying and I utter (16). In this context (16) communicates something like "Why is Kostas crying perhaps?". Typically when the dubitative interpretation is intended the question will be introduced or followed up by the particle *araje*. The same point holds for the question in (18), (20) and (21).

[10]Obviously, in a different context a speaker may utter (17) to ask about Kostas's actual reasons for crying. The same point holds of the question in (19).

question represents the incomplete thought "Kostas is crying for reason x". Now remember that in the particular context the hearer already knows that the speaker doesn't approve of Kostas's crying. I want to suggest that in this context the hearer will infer that the speaker already has the relevant completion of the thought represented by her question in mind and that it is something like "Kostas is crying for some acceptable reason". Now given that both speaker and hearer agree that the reason why Kostas is crying is ridiculous, the hearer will infer that the speaker does not endorse the thought represented by her question but rather attributes it to Kostas and dissociates herself from it. It is Kostas who believes that he has reasons for crying, not the speaker. So, the speaker implicates that Kostas has no reason for crying. Now this may combine with contextual assumptions like "people should not cry when there is no reason" to yield the further implicature that Kostas should not cry; it might combine with an assumption like "the speaker is irritated by people who cry without good reason" to yield the implicature that the speaker is irritated with Kostas, etc. According to this analysis, (17) involves triply interpretive use.

Note that the assumption that the speaker already has the relevant proposition interpreted by her question in mind is one that is allowed by the semantic analysis of interrogatives proposed by Wilson and Sperber (1988). On this account, whether the thought represented by a question is or is not already available to the speaker is a contextually determined aspect of the interpretation. We thus have a psychologically plausible explanation of why a question like (17) does not expect an answer. Note also that on the relevance theoretic approach proposed above we also have a psychologically plausible explanation of the derivation of the negative implicatures, which on the traditional view is a purely definitional/descriptive feature of a rhetorical question. Here the derivation of such implicatures is the result of the hearer's search for an optimally relevant interpretation. These points also hold for the questions in (14) and (15).

To complete the analysis of the question in (17) the hearer has to contextually resolve the semantic indeterminacy concerning the point of view of the desirability of the represented thought. In the case of (17) the represented thought cannot be regarded as relevant to the hearer since it is mutually manifest that there is no good reason for Kostas to be crying. I want to suggest that the speaker regards the represented thought as relevant to herself. So, what the speaker says could be informally paraphrased as "It is relevant to me to think the thought represented by (17) [in the actual world Kostas is crying for some acceptable reason] which is an interpretation of a thought that Kostas thinks". The hearer is then invited to think of the ways in which this is relevant to the speaker. In this way the speaker is encouraging the hearer to, for example, infer that she is surprised at the way Kostas is thinking and behaving (because she thinks that Kostas has no good reason for crying), etc. In this way we can offer a

psychological explanation of the emotive character of "questions" like (17): the speaker is not asking a question like (17) to seek or offer information but to express her feelings.

Now let's go back to (16). I will show that the interpretation process goes along similar lines and that the extra overtones are due to the semantic contrast between *na* and non *na*-clauses.

In parallel with the analysis of (17), the thought represented by A's question in (16) is something like "there is a possible world in which Kostas is crying for some acceptable reason". As with (17), the hearer infers on the basis of context and intonation that the speaker already has this proposition in mind - so no answer is expected. The hearer is again intended to infer on the basis of the context that the speaker does not endorse this proposition. Instead the speaker attributes this thought to Kostas, who does believe that there is a possible world in which he has reason to cry, in particular the actual world. The speaker dissociates herself from this thought and is therefore implicating that there is no possible world in which Kostas is crying for some acceptable reason.

So, here's how (16) differs from (17). The speaker in (17) implicates that there is no reason for Kostas to cry in this world. The speaker in (16), however, is making the stronger claim that there is no world whatsoever in which Kostas has a good reason to cry. This is why (16) is felt to be stronger, more emphatic, etc. Of course, what the speaker implicates in (16) entails that Kostas has no reason for crying in the actual world. It therefore additionally gives rise to all the implicatures (17) gives rise to in the same context.

Finally, the hearer will infer as in (17) that the speaker regards the thought represented by her question as relevant to herself. So, the speaker in (16) is saying something like "It is relevant to me to think the thought represented by (16) [there is a possible world in which Kostas is crying for some acceptable reason] which is an interpretation of a thought of Kostas". In this way we can account for the expressive character of such utterances.

I will now turn to what Pavlidou calls the E3 type. Suppose the speaker has just found out that her son died in a car accident. In her grief she exclaims:

(18)   A: Giati na pethani o gios mou?
       Why na die the son mine
       Why should my son die? (=why should it be the case that my son is dead?)

In (18) the speaker is understood as communicating the counterfactual wish that her son were not dead. Moreover, she expresses her grief, her anger, etc. that her son died.

According to Pavlidou (1991: 21), the E3-type concerns "why-interrogatives with which the speaker expresses a negative evaluation of P; -P is held not to be possible or achievable any longer. The implied answer is that the speaker would rather have that -P. The function of the question is to express a counterfactual wish of the speaker."

Such a question could also be asked with a non *na*-clause as in (19):

(19)   A: Giati pethane o gios mou?
        Why died the son mine
        Why did my son die?

Uttered with the appropriate intonation in the same context, (19) will communicate the speaker's wish that her son were not dead, her amazement, anger, grief, etc.

Both (18) and (19) are rhetorical questions on the traditional view. On the interpretation I am considering, no answer is expected and a strong negative implicature is derived.

Let me start this time by discussing (18). The speaker's why-question represents the relevant thought "There is a possible world in which my son died for some good reason". Obviously in the context above the speaker is not endorsing this thought but rather wishes to dissociate herself from it. But to whom does she attribute this thought? I want to suggest that this thought is an attributed potential thought: "someone might think that there is a possible world in which my son died for a good reason"[11]. The speaker therefore implicates that there is no possible world in which her son died for an acceptable reason. In the same vein as with the previous examples the hearer will infer that the thought represented by the speaker's utterance is relevant to the speaker herself. So, (18) could be paraphrased in the following way "it is relevant to the speaker to think the thought represented by her question which is itself an interpretation of a thought someone might have". The hearer is thus invited to think of the way in which the attributed thought could be relevant to the speaker.

The interpretation process is the same for (19). The only difference is that because of the semantics of the non *na*-clause the implicature derived via the dissociation is "there is no acceptable reason for my son's death in this world". (18) is felt to be stronger than (19) because there the speaker implicates that there is no possible world in which her son's death could be justified (which of course entails that there was no good reason for her son's death in the actual world either).

Processing (18) and (19), the hearer will infer on the basis of what the speaker says and contextual assumptions like "mothers want their children alive and

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[11]The concept of an attributed potential thought is introduced in Clark (1993).

well" and "the speaker knows her son can never be alive and well any more" that the speaker wishes her son were alive. (This, as expected, will take place in slightly different ways for (18) and (19) because of the semantic contrast between *na-* and non *na-*clauses. In (18) the hearer first has to infer the proposition "in the actual world there is no reason for the death of my son" and then derive any other implicatures). This wish cannot but be counterfactual since both speaker and hearer know that the world in which its object comes out true is not potential. This is the way in which (18) and (19) differ from (16) and (17). The implicated wish in (16) and (17) - that Kostas stops crying - may come true as far as both speaker and hearer are concerned. The implicated wish in (18) and (19), on the other hand, can never become true. In other words the contexts in which these two pairs of utterances are interpreted differ with respect to assumptions about the possibility/impossibility of the described state of affairs. In this way we can explain Pavlidou's observation that E2 and E3 only differ with respect to whether the communicated wish is counterfactual or not.

The next type, E4, of *na-*rhetorical questions that Pavlidou (1991: 21) discusses involves wh-interrogatives with which "the speaker indicates that it is impossible to make a true proposition out of the function expressed with the question". For example, suppose it is Sunday and all the shops are closed when Peter tells me that John has gone out to buy some flowers. I exclaim:

(20)   Pou na vri louloudia tetia mera?
       where na find-3rd flowers such day
       Where to find (=could he ever find) flowers on such a day?

The speaker is communicating that John could never find flowers on Sunday. Depending on the context she might also be communicating that John is a fool, that she is angry with him, amazed that he could have such an idea, etc.

According to Pavlidou (1991: 21) "exclamations" with *pu* ("where"), like the one above, and *pos* ("how") as in (21) are typical of this category. Suppose that you are accusing Peter, who is American, of being unable to understand the Greek way of life. I exclaim:

(21)   Pos na katalavi?
       how na understand-3rd
       How could he understand?

The speaker in (21) is communicating that Peter could never understand.

Such examples can be accounted for in the same way as the previous examples. In (20), the speaker is dissociating herself from the thought that it is

possible for John to find flowers on a Sunday, and explicitly communicates that it is relevant to her to think that John thinks that it is possible for him to find flowers somewhere on a Sunday. So, the speaker is communicating that John could never find flowers on a Sunday, that she is surprised/annoyed with John, that she thinks John is a fool, etc. In (21) the speaker dissociates herself from the thought that it is possible for Peter to understand in some way and explicitly communicates that it is relevant to her to think that someone (determined by the context) thinks (or might think, if it is an attribution of a potential thought) that there is a possible world in which Peter could understand. So, the speaker implicates that Peter could never understand, that she is surprised/annoyed with the person who thought it possible, etc.

Finally, the E5-type of *na*-rhetorical questions is according to Pavlidou (1991: 22) about "wh-interrogatives (except for why-interrogatives) with which the speaker echoes a previous question indicating that she is not very happy with a certain state of affairs". Such questions are common in phatic sequences. For example, suppose you know I don't have a job, which is causing me great financial problems. You meet me in the street and say:

(22)   A: jasou, pos ise?
       Hello, how be-2nd
       Hello, how are you?
       B: Pos na ime?
       How na be-1st?
       How should I be?

B's question here interpretively represents the thought that B is well, which is the standardly expected answer to A's question. In the same vein as with the previous examples, the hearer is intended to infer on the basis of the particular intonation and contextual assumptions that the speaker dissociates herself from this thought. In this way the speaker implicates that she is not particularly well. Once the indeterminacy having to do with the point of view of desirability of the question is resolved the explicitly communicated content of the uterance could be paraphrased as "It is relevant to the speaker to think the thought represented by her utterance in (22) [the speaker is well] which is an attributive interpretation of a potential thought". In the particular context, the hearer may additionally infer that

the speaker is distressed when reminded of her situation, or that the speaker is irritated with him, or finds him inconsiderate, etc.[12]

5.3 Rhetorical questions and relevance theory

The first thing to note about the relevance theoretic analysis proposed in the last section is that the interpretation of what Pavlidou calls "types of *na*-rhetorical questions" involves similar processes. In other words, in terms of utterance interpretation we do not need to distinguish the five categories of *na*-rhetorical questions that Pavlidou proposes. Moreover, these categories do not contribute to the interpretation process: the hearer does not need to be aware of the five categories of *na*-rhetorical questions nor does he need to match a *na*-interrogative he is processing to one of these categories in order to interpret it. As I showed, the interpretation of these interrogatives is driven by considerations of context and optimal relevance, in the same way as the interpretation of *na*-interrogatives discussed in the first part of this paper.

There are two more issues I would like to briefly discuss in connection with utterances like (14)-(22). The first has to do with their classification as rhetorical questions and the second with their expressive character.

All the questions discussed in the last section could be taken to be rhetorical questions on the traditional view. In all of them the speaker does not expect an answer to her question and implicates a negative proposition (the negation of the proposition expressed by her utterance or of some other related proposition). Note first of all that within relevance theory a psychologically plausible explanation is given for why no answer is expected. This is because the hearer can infer on the basis of the context and considerations of relevance that the thought represented by such questions is already available to the speaker. Second, within the relevance theoretic account I proposed, the communication of the negation of the proposition expressed by the question is also explained: on the basis of pragmatic considerations the hearer is expected to infer that the speaker does not herself endorse the thought represented by her question but attributes it to someone else. So, within relevance theory the properties which by definition would place such questions under the category "rhetorical" are shown to follow from general pragmatic (ultimately cognitive) principles.

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[12]As Pavlidou notes this expression has been standardised. So, even when there is no context like the one I described, B's question on its own suffices to make the hearer infer that something is wrong with the speaker.

It is interesting to note that although questions like those in (14)-(22) would be classified as rhetorical on the traditional view, they are in terms of interpretation very different from rhetorical questions like (13) repeated below:

(13)   Context: Mary to John who has just lit his first cigarette of the year.
        What was your New Year's resolution?

As I mentioned in section 5.1. rhetorical questions like (13) have been analysed by Wilson and Sperber as representing a thought which is relevant to the hearer in virtue of being a reminder. In contrast to the traditional account, within the relevance theoretic framework we can capture the difference between questions like (13) and those discussed in the last section. The questions in (14)-(22) involve triply interpretive use: the thought interpreted by the question is itself an interpretation of an attributed thought. Moreover, in these questions the thought represented by the question is regarded as relevant to the speaker (not the hearer).
        Interrogatives like those in (14)-(22) are intuitively felt to be very close in meaning to exclamatives. The speaker is felt to be exclaiming rather than asking about something. This exclamative nature is noted in traditional grammars (Tzartzanos 1989: 310) and Pavlidou (1991: 21) also notes that "all these interrogatives can be uttered in a more or less exclamatory tone of voice". On the relevance view, the affinity between such utterances and exclamatives can be explained. Exclamatives like (23) and (24),

(23)   How tall Jane is!
(24)   Who do you think the murderer was!

have been semantically analysed within relevance theory (Sperber and Wilson 1986, Clark 1991) as representing relevant thoughts like interrogatives. Two features, however, which are optional in the case of interrogatives, are claimed within relevance theory to be encoded by exclamatives: the thought represented by an exclamative is already available to the speaker and it is regarded as relevant to the speaker herself. So, in the example above the speaker already knows that Jane is very tall and indicates that she herself finds this relevant (the speaker is for example surprised at Jane's height, etc.). Now these two features, which are in general optional in the interpretation of interrogatives, are according to my account contextually resolved in the case of the questions in (14)-(22) in the way characteristic of exclamatives. In these examples, according to the proposed analysis, the thought represented is already available to the speaker and the speaker

considers it relevant to herself. This is why these utterances are felt to be somewhere between questions and exclamations.[13]

6 Conclusion

In this paper I have presented a relevance theoretic analysis for the interpretation of *na*-interrogatives in Modern Greek. I have shown that descriptive categories like "dubitative", "deliberative", "rhetorical", etc do not contribute to the interpretation process but are simply names for possible interpretations of *na*-interrogatives. The several possible interpretations of *na*-interrogatives can be psychologically explained as the result of the semantics of interrogative syntax and of *na*-clauses on the one hand and considerations of optimal relevance on the other. Finally, the *na*-rhetorical questions discussed in Pavlidou (1991) have been shown to be in terms of the way they are interpreted quite different from other questions which would also be classified as rhetorical on the traditional view. *Na*-rhetorical questions do not function as reminders; they are closer in meaning to exclamatives.

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[13]Utterances like (14)-(22) also provide evidence for Wilson and Sperber's claim that there may be no such thing as sentence types. These utterances are not clearly questions and they are not clearly exclamatives. This is compatible with the view that Wilson and Sperber take that the hearer is expected to understand an utterance on the basis of linguistically encoded procedural constraints rather than on the basis of semantically decoding the "sentence type" involved.

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