Present Perfect vs. Simple Past in Greek school textbooks:
A competitive relation?

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Abstract
This paper examines the use and the functions of the Standard Modern Greek Present Perfect A in comparison with those of the Simple Past as presented in Greek school textbooks of Secondary Education. The available data indicate that the relation between the two tenses is both complementary and competitive depending on the environment and the function. Crucially, the attested uses of the Present Perfect are not mentioned in the school grammars. Thus, school texts could contribute to a better usage-based acquaintance with other text-oriented uses of the Present Perfect in comparison with the Simple Past.

Keywords: Present Perfect, Simple Past, Greek school textbooks, current relevance, definiteness

1. Introduction
The study of Present Perfect (PP) structures has been a favorite topic in Greek linguistics and has been treated from different perspectives and within different theoretical frameworks (cf. Setatos, 1984; Psaltou-Joycey, 1991, 2012; Iatridou et al. 2001; Moser 2009; Veloudis 2010).

The function and the uses of the PP are usually examined in comparison with those of the Simple Past (SP), since both categories refer to past events, i.e. to events that took place before the time of speech (cf. Setatos 1984; Psaltou-Joycey 1991, 2012; Veloudis 2010). However, these tenses cannot be freely interchangeable since they are subject to a variety of divergent semantic and pragmatic restrictions (cf. Reichenbach 1947; Klein 1992; Giorgi & Pianesi 1998; Iatridou et al. 2001, Moser & Bela 2003; Moser 2009).

The present paper is a contribution to the study of the uses of Standard Modern Greek PP in comparison to those of SP as represented in texts of official written speech, namely the various Greek textbooks of the Secondary Education which are available online through the Text Corpora of the Centre for the Greek Language...
The standard assumption in the relevant literature is that written speech does not favour the realization of the PP structures (cf. Setatos 1984; Psaltou-Joycey 2012).

Given that, the questions that are addressed here are: a. What are the main uses of the two tenses in the corpora under examination and whether they appear to overlap each other significantly. b. Whether SP takes regularly or usually the place of PP, because it denotes something very similar to the PP and, if so, to what extent. c. Whether there are certain contexts where the PP seems to be preferred with respect to the SP and vice versa, and if so, how it could be accounted for. d. To what extent the uses of PP in our corpus are in the same line with the available grammatical descriptions used as school textbooks (Filipaki et al. 2009· Hatzisavidis & Hatzisavidu 2009). In other words, does the pupils’ contact with the texts of Greek Secondary Education textbooks provide them with extra knowledge about the uses of the PP and the SP, or does it just help them to consolidate what they may already know?

The paper is organized as follows. Section 2 discusses the position of the PP and the SP in the Greek verbal system, their relation, as well as the readings associated with them. In section 3 all the relevant data are presented while in section 4, discussion, specific claims on the use and the relation between the two tenses are put forward. Section 5 concludes the paper, providing ideas for further research and putting them to good use within the frame of the educational process.

2. Present Perfect and Simple Past in Modern Greek

2.1 The position of Present Perfect and Simple Past in the Modern Greek verbal system

In grammatical descriptions of Modern Greek both PP and SP are usually considered to be typical members of its verbal system, touching upon both the category of tense and the category of aspect (cf. Triandafyllides 1941; Tzartzanos 1946; Tsopanakis 1995; Klairis & Babiniotis 1999; Holton, Mackridge & Philippaki-Warburton (1997). SP is used to denote something that took place in the past as a completed whole or in a neutral way (Triandafyllides 1941; Holton, Mackridge & Philippaki-Warburton 1997). Concerning the PP, there is no general consensus either on its temporal or on its aspectual characteristics. It is regarded either as a present tense that could also belong to the past tenses (Triandafyllides 1941; Tzartzanos 1946) or as a past tense (Tsopanakis 1995; Klairis & Babiniotis 1999). With respect to grammatical aspect,
grammatical descriptions generally agree on the property of the PP to denote perfective aspect. However, Holton, Mackridge & Philippaki-Warburton (1997) argue that Perfect tenses stand outside the Modern Greek aspectual system of imperfectivity vs. perfectivity. The PP in particular describes an action that is anterior to the time of utterance but its consequences are relevant to the present. According to Moser (2009), perfect aspect is a subcategory of perfective aspect, while the PP denotes anteriority in relation to the moment of speech.

Remarkably, grammatical descriptions currently used as reference tools in Primary and Secondary Education (Philippaki et al. 2009 and Hatzisavidis & Hatzisavidu 2009 respectively) do not describe the PP in a very similar way. Even though they agree that the PP is a present tense denoting perfect aspect, in Philippaki et al. (2009: 134) PP is just described as “showing that an action is already completed in the time of speech” (our translation), while Hatzisavidis & Hatzisavidu (2009: 125) - in a more detailed description - argue that PP “regularly denotes that an action took place before the time of speech but its result continues to hold true in the present […] In many cases the Perfect can be replaced by Simple Past. That is why it would best be thought of as a past tense […] Generalizing, the semantic limits between the use of Simple Past and Perfect in Modern Greek are not clear” (our translation). Interestingly, the description of Hatzisavidis & Hatzisavidu (2009) is in line with the views depicted in the relevant literature about PP, concerning its ability to relate (the result or the consequences of) a past event with the present and its interchangeability with the SP.

The basic difference between the two tenses lies in the fact that PP is used in order to (re)introduce into the “universe of the discussion” some past events which are in current relevance with what is currently under discussion, while SP just integrates a past event into the temporal structure of the discussion (Veloudis 2010). Following Moser (2009), SP is unmarked concerning current relevance and that is why it can replace PP in every case that an event of the past continues to be currently present. According to Veloudis (2010), PP expresses the “given-that” as the result of a completed event, while SP, due to its perfectivity, is conventionally associated with an implicature of givenness. Consequently, in certain cases both PP and SP could be used, the first denoting the “given”, the latter denoting something completed but focusing on the “given” which is the result of the completed event or action.
Besides, PP has been designated as relating to old information, i.e. information as given, whereas SP is used to present new information (Setatos, 1984; Hedin, 1987; Psaltou-Joycey, 1991, 2012; Veloudis, 2010). Lastly, it is a common belief that PP, unlike the SP cannot be modified by adverbials of definite reference, such as yesterday, at 10 o’clock etc (Comrie 1976; McCoard 1978; Setatos 1984; Moser & Bela 2003; Veloudis 2010). However, Psaltou-Joycey (1991) argues that PP can actually co-occur with this kind of adverbials in order to express either the speaker’s emotional closeness to an otherwise objectively distant situation or logical or causal connection between a past event and a current situation. As regards the teaching written material examined in the present study, adverbials of definite reference that cannot usually co-occur with PP could be the following: in chapter 1, in the previous unit, in paragraph 2.1, in the 1st High School year etc (cf. ch. 3.2).

2.2 Readings associated with the Perfect

There are partly different descriptions of the readings associated with the PP. To illustrate the point, we could mention that Iatridou et al (2001) distinguish among a universal reading, an experiential/existential one, a resultative one and a recent past one, while Portner (2003) distinguishes among a resultative reading, an existential one, a continuative one and a “hot news” one. The Standard Modern Greek PP is used only with the resultative and the experiential/existential reading (Psaltou-Joycey 1991; 2012), for example:

(1) (experiential/existential reading)

ˈexo djaˈvasi poˈles foˈres to ˈxari ˈpoter
have.1S.PRES read.PPL.PERF many times the Harry Potter

“I’ve read Harry Potter many times”

(2) (resultative reading)

ˈexo djaˈvasi ˈtora boˈro na ˈνγo
have.1S.PRES read.PPL.PERF now I can to go out

“I’ve studied. Now I can go out”

According to Psaltou-Joycey (1991), Modern Greek resultative and experiential/existential PPs operate within the same temporal specifications, and, consequently are temporally identical. So, their difference lies on the speaker’s focus of attention, which is defined by discoursal requirements or the interpretation of the
current relevance conditions. In the case of experiential/existential PP, speakers focus to the repeated (or sometimes single) occurrence(s) of an event prior to the moment of speech in relation to its contribution to a present context of discourse. Experiential/existential PP could appear in a variety of contexts: with adverbs of frequency, quantifiers, words or phrases denoting plurality or temporal duration. Besides, it could be employed to refer to the occurrence of past situations indefinitely, without co-occurring with an adverbial of frequency or duration.

For the purposes of this paper we focus on the experiential/existential reading, because in our corpus this reading is usually associated with something that is already known and is related with what is currently being taught, meaning that the writers of the texts under scrutiny would like to focus on the contribution of something that is already mentioned once or several times to a current discourse context of teaching. An indicative example is provided in 3 below:

(3) (MGL.L3.P6474)1

\[ p\text{ca} \ '\text{ine} \ i \ \text{api'li} \ ja \ to \ '\text{melon} \ tu \ \text{an'\text{thropu}} \]

which is the threat for the future of the human being

[...] stin \ o'\text{pia} \ an\text{a'ferete} \ o \ 'papas \ sto

to which he refers the Pope in the

\[ '\text{cimeno} \ '\text{pende?} \ '\text{eçete} \ \text{a'kusi} \ i \ δja'\text{vasi} \]

text five have.2P.PRESENT listen.PPL.PERF or read.PPL.PERF

\[ '\text{ales} \ '\text{tetçes pa'romies a'popsis?} \]

other such similar views

“Which is the threat for the human beings’ [...] future mentioned by the Pope in text no. 5; Have you already listened to or read about similar views?”

3. Data and discussion

3.1 The data

Both PP and SP are being used in order to refer to elements probably already known and related to what is currently taught. E.g.:

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1 The examples presented in this paper are codified as follows: firstly the subject is denoted (for example, MGL=Modern Greek Language), secondly the grade (for example L3=3rd grade of Lower Secondary Education), and thirdly the Centre for the Greek Language Text Corpora coding number, for example P6474 means that our example (1) comes from the text with the code number P6474 in the Centre for the Greek Language Text Corpora. For a full list of abbreviations used in this paper, see the Appendix.
(4) **(ADPE.U3.P0777)**

you know what is algorithmic approach you know that already

have.2S.PRES use.PPL.PERF a lot of algorithms

“Do you know what an algorithmic approach is? Do you know that you have already used a lot of algorithms?”

(5) **(MGL.L2.P1197)**

in the book of 1st grade learn.PAST.1P what is paragraph

what is the basic of her parts will we try later on to

them connect all these studying carefully the text four

“In the textbook of the 1st grade we learned what a paragraph is, and what its basic parts are [...] Later on, we will try to relate all these things, by studying carefully text no. 4”

But there is a notable difference: as shown in the example under (4) perfect is in use at the very first part of a chapter on algorithms, where pupils are asked whether they already (know if they) have some previous everyday experience concerning the use of algorithms, in order to relate them with what is currently taught. SP never appears in contexts in which what is discussed is already known from previous out-of-school pupils’ experiences. Of course, the use of SP in (5) also puts certain situations in chronological order [cf. also (10)]. In (4) the use of PP is related to ήδη and πολλούς, indicating iteration. Of course, this does not preclude the use of PP for indicating something already known owing to previous experiences. On the contrary, by denoting iteration in cases like (4), PP highlights that some elements are known since they have already been subject of discussion. In the case of SP the already existing knowledge is always the result of a previous in-school teaching activity.

Besides, SP is more usually used in order to refer to something already taken place in a summarizing way, for example:
(6) (ADPE.U3.P6888)

'opos anaferðice 'idi ce 'opos 'fanice a'po ta

as mention.3s.PAST already and as show.3s.PAST from the

proi'γumena to andi'cimeno ton alya'riðmon 'eçi me'γali isto'ria

previous, the subject of algorithms has a big history

[...] sta proi'γumena ce'falea mi'lisame ja

in the previous chapters speak.2P.PAST about

anaðromi'kus ce epanalipti'kus alya'riðmus sti si'neçia

recursive and iterative algorithms. in what follows

θa anafer'ðume se meri'ces 'nees 'enes şceti'ka me tis katiyo'ries

will we refer to some new concepts about the categories

ton alya'riðmon

of algorithms

“As was already mentioned and shown from the above, the subject of the

algorithms is very wide [...] .In the previous chapters we spoke, among others,

about recursive and iterative algorithms. In this chapter, we will refer to some new

concepts about the categories of algorithms.”

This function of SP is more obvious in cases where, at the end of a teaching unit, it

is used in cases where a summary is given of what has already been taught. For example:

(7) (ADPE.U3.P0044)

Se a'fio to ce'faleo parusi'astikan ta vasi'ka xarakтирisti'ka tis

in this the chapter present.3P.PAST the basic characteristics of

'γlosas [...] ka'ðos ce i 'ðomi pu 'prepi

language [...] as well as the structure which must

na 'eçi 'kaθe 'proγrama

have every program

“In this chapter the following were presented: the basic characteristics of

LANGUAGE [...] as well as the structure that every program needs to have.”

PP could also have this summarizing function but it appears only at the beginning

of a chapter, presenting a certain piece of information as known. For example:
We have already referred to Arrhenius’ views about electrolytes during the 1st year of High School. However, there are also other theories about acids.

Examples like the one under (6) and (8) above show that at the beginning of a new chapter the relation between PP and SP is a competitive one. However, SP is being used more frequently in this context, since in our corpus the summarizing Simple Pasts appearing in this context are the 51.1% of the total of SP forms examined in this study, while the respective PP forms are only the 26.53% of the total of the attested PP forms.

Generalizing on the distribution of PP in the data in hand, we see that it tends to appear more frequently in the middle of a text and not at its beginning. For example:

“The creation of the final program goes back to the creation of the single parts of the programs and their connection. Some of these parts, such as the computing of the mean and standard deviation have.3P.PERF already address.PPL.PERF in the previous chapter."

\[\text{812} \quad \text{(C.U3.P5115)}\]

\[\text{exume} \quad \text{'i迪 analfer'di} \quad \text{stis} \quad \text{a'po'psi} \text{t} \quad \text{have.PRES.1P} \quad \text{already refer.PPL.PERF to the views of the} \quad \text{a'renius} \quad \text{'jiro a'po tus ilekro'lit} \text{es, stin'proti li'ciu [...] Arrhenius about the electrolytes during the 1st Grade of High School 'omos i'parxun ce 'alets theo'ries however there are also other theories 'We have already referred to Arrhenius’ views about electrolytes during the 1st year of High School [...] However, there are also other theories about acids’} \]

\[\text{9} \quad \text{(ADPE.U3.P0277)}^2 \]

\[\text{i di} \text{miur'jia tu te} \text{li'ku pro'garamatos a'na} \text{jete sti di} \text{miur'jia ton the creation of the final program goes back to the creation of the epi'merus tmi'maton pro'gra'maton ce ti 'sin'desi a'f} \text{ton meta'ksi tus single parts of the programs and the connection of them between them meri'ka a'po a'fia ta 'tmimata o'pos o ipoloji'zmos tis 'mesis some of these parts such as the computing of the mean 'i tipi'cis a'poklisix 'exun} \quad \text{'i'di andimetopi'sti} \text{sto or standard deviation have.3P.PERF already address.PPL.PERF in the proi'yuneno ce'faleo previous chapter “The creation of the final program goes back to the creation of the single parts of the programs and their connection. Some of these parts, such as the computing of} \]

\[^2\text{The previous part of this chapter had to do with a computing program for a composite problem.}\]
the mean or the standard deviation, have already been addressed in the previous chapter.”

In cases such as the one under (9) we could say that the function of PP is not really a summarizing but a “reminding” one, in the sense that it presents some data as already known (and related to what is going to follow), because the passage “Some of these parts [...] have been already addressed in the previous chapter” actually just reminds pupils that some elements have already been taught in a previous teaching unit. The adverb ἰδέα ‘already’ contributes to this use of the PP. See also the example under (10) about the SP.

(10) (P.L2.P0075)³

jenika to fe'nomeno tis metatro'pis e'nos stere'u se ýyro to generally the process of the change of a solid to liquid it onomazume 'tiksi e'no tis metatro'pis tu i'ýru se stere'o, we call melting while of the change of the liquid to solid 'piksi. 'idame 'oti i thermokra'sia 'tiksis solidification. see.1P.PAST that the temperature of melting si'mbipti me ti thermokra'sia 'piksis is the same with the temperature of solidification “Generally, we call melting the process by which a substance goes from the solid phase to the liquid phase, while we call solidification the change of a fluid into a solid. We saw that the melting temperature is the same with the solidification temperature”.

Consequently, we could argue that the SP and the PP are competitive concerning the “reminding” use when occurring in the middle of a text.

The same holds true for the appearance of both tenses in relative or comparative clauses with ὅπως “as”. For example:

(11) (R.L3.P4702)

stin andimeta 'riðmisí 'prosferan sima'ndices ipire'sies i Isu'ites [...] to the Counter-reform they offered important services the Jesuites to 'taýma orýa'noðice ka'litera ce 'pire andiprotestandi ko xara'ktira, the order was organised better and it took anti-protestant character

³ The previous part of this chapter dealt with melting and solidification.
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that’s why it caused strong reactions

I Isu’ites, ’opos ’iði ’exume ana’feri,

the Jesuits as already have

δia’kritikan sta ‘ýramata, stin epistimoni’ci ’erevna

[...] stood out in Letters in the scientific research

“Jesuits offered important services to Counter-reform. The order was better organized and it adopted an anti-protestant character. That’s why it caused strong reactions. Jesuits, as we have already mentioned, stood out in Letters, in scientific research”.

(12) (ADPE.U3.P4555)

the methods of the solving of a problem which they come out from the analysis of it they lead to the design of an algorithm which it constitutes the sequence of steps which must to be followed in order to be solved the problem.

as mentioned.3S.PAST there is case to be presented more than one technique for the solution of a problem

“A notable difference concerning the frequency of the appearance of the PP and the SP in this context is that the 77.78% of the PP forms examined in the present study appear in this context, in contrast to the 57.5% of the SP forms. This difference is owing to the fact the PP presents a situation as known, while the SP summarizes the individual moments of a situation. As correctly observed by an anonymous reviewer,”
the choice of the tense-form has to do with the speakers’/writer’s intention as to how to present a given situation.

Lastly, the PP and the SP differ significantly in their co-occurrence with adverbials of definite time reference such as: *in chapter 1, in the previous unit, in paragraph 2.1, in the 1st High School year* etc., since in the case of PP this combination appears only 6 times in the available corpora, while in the case of the SP 115 times. Indicative examples can be seen under (13) and (14) below.

(13) (R.L3.P4520)

\[ \text{stin proi’γumeni e’notita δίδα’xðikame ʹoti i isto’ria} \]

in the previous unit teach.1P.PAST that the history

\[ \text{ekse’tazi meta’ksi ʹalon ce ta θemata ton θrískefti kon pepi θiseon} \]

it examines among others and the topics of the religious beliefs

“In the previous unit we were taught that history examines - among others - topics of religious beliefs, too”

(14) (CCA.U.P5790)

\[ \text{mña a’po tis ’siNándes mor’fes epicino’νias pu} \]

one of the modern forms of communication which

\[ \text{ʹexume ʹiði se proi’γumeno ce’faleo ʹine i} \]

have.1P.PRESENT see.PPL.PERF in previous chapter is the
tileði’askepsi teleconference

“One of the modern forms of communication, which we have seen in a previous chapter, is teleconference”

3.2 Discussion

Generalizing, our data show that both PP and SP are used with the function of current relevance. Moser (2009) and Veloudis (2010) have pointed out that the two tenses could be interchangeable concerning this function. Various arguments have been proposed to account for this interchangeability. On the one hand, Moser (2009) argues that everything somebody says is in current relevance with what has been said or will be said. So, it is quite natural for both tenses to refer to something related with what is currently under discussion. On the other hand, Veloudis (2010) postulates that, since PP is used in order to (re)introduce into the “universe of the discussion” some past
events which are in current relevance with what is currently under discussion, and SP integrates a past event into the temporal structure of the discussion, they could both be used with the function of current relevance.

Besides, both tenses are used with an existential/experiential reading (cf. ch. 2.2), since both of them are associated with something that is already known and is related with what is currently being taught. This common reading is owing to the fact that PP could generally refer to something as possible preexisting experience, and the SP could refer to a certain past event, which, as already taken place, consists of an experience (cf. Psaltou-Joycey 2012). Therefore we go back to examples seen under (4) and (5),

(4) (ADPE.U3.P0777)

you know what is algorithmic approach you know that already have.2S.PRES use.PPL.PERF a lot of algorithms
“Do you know what an algorithmic approach is? Do you know that you have already used a lot of algorithms?”

the PP form ἔχεις χρησιμοποιήσει in (4) is used to refer to a very possible pre-existing experience.

(5) (MGL.L2.P1197)

in the book of 1st grade learn.PAST.1P what is paragraph what is the basic of her parts will we try later on to them connect all these studying carefully the text four
“In the textbook of the 1st grade we learned what a paragraph is, and what its basic parts are [...] Later on, we will try to relate all these things, by studying carefully text no. 4”

The SP form μαθαμε in (5) refers to an event already taken place in the past, thus conceived as a pre-existing experience. However, there are some differences concerning the context where the PP and the SP structures appear. These differences
are not qualitative but mainly quantitative, in the sense that PP and SP forms could appear in the same context. Nevertheless, in some of the contexts the former gains over the latter and vice versa. More specifically, SP appears usually at the beginning and the end of a teaching unit/chapter, while the PP appears more usually in the middle of it. We claim that this difference has to do with the fact that SP could refer to an event or a sequence of events as a whole (Psaltou-Joycey 2012), while the PP focuses on a ‘given’ outcome of something completed which (the outcome) is related with what is currently under discussion (Veloudis 2010; Psaltou-Joycey 2012). Consequently, in case of school textbooks both tenses could be used either mainly referring to something already taught as a whole, or reintroducing something already taught in “the universe of the discussion” of what is currently taught. By reintroducing something into a current or under development discussion, PP seems to be more parenthetically used, something that is indicated by the fact that in more than 75% of the examined cases, PP forms appear in comparative or relative clauses in the middle of the texts examined in the present study. As for SP, the percentage is slightly higher than 50%. In sum, SP tends to appear more frequently at the beginning or at the end of a chapter, and this seems to be related to its “summarizing” use, already mentioned in the previous section. This may happen because a summary of something could appear either at the beginning of a new – to be discussed – teaching unit which is related with what is summarized by SP forms, or at the end of a teaching unit, which is also summarized with the use of SP forms.

A major difference with respect to the contexts where the two forms appear, concerns their co-occurrence with adverbials of definite reference. As already mentioned in section 3.1, PP scarcely co-exists with this kind of adverbials (we traced only 6 examples out of the total of 60 PP forms in the examined corpus). On the contrary, the SP forms appear with these adverbials 115 times (out of a total of 142 the SP forms in the examined corpus) in the available corpus and this could be related to the fact that the use of an adverbial of definite reference makes clearer the position of an event in the temporal structure of a discussion. E.g.:

(15) (ADPE.U3.P7110) Introduction
sta proiˈγumena ceˈfalea anaferˈθikame analitiˈka stin
in the previous chapters mention.1P.PAST in detail to the
In the previous chapters we addressed in detail the development of algorithms and various techniques. In the next chapters we will deal with programming, i.e. the formulation of the algorithms in such a form so as to be able to be realized by the computer.

“In the previous chapters we addressed in detail the development of algorithms [...] In the next chapters we will deal with programming, i.e. the formulation of algorithms in such a form that they can be realized by a computer”.

In (15), the co-existence of the SP form αναφερθήκαμε ‘referred’ with the adverbial of definite reference in the previous chapters denotes more clearly that the reference to “the development of algorithms and various techniques” is something belonging to the past but is also in relevance with what is currently under discussion or will be discussed “in the next chapters”.

Generalizing, the quite frequent co-occurrence of the SP forms with adverbials of definite reference and the rare appearance of PP forms in this kind of context are in accordance with the established claims in the relevant literature. According to Moser & Bella (2003), the PP, in contrast to the SP, cannot function anaphorically, in the sense that it cannot refer to time spans which are clearly defined. It is interesting that, according to Moser & Bella, it is only in the informal oral speech that PP forms can coexist with adverbials of definite reference. Psaltou-Joycey (2012; 1991) also comments on the above mentioned co-existence especially in the oral speech. However, she adds that it could appear when, among others, the speaker’s intention is to establish a logical or causal connection between the situation located within the past temporal interval and the topic of discourse at the moment of speech. Our data show, even though to a lesser extent, that PP could co-exist with adverbials and this could have to do with the intention of establishing a logical or causal connection between something already taught and something that is to be taught. In any case, we believe that the combination of PP forms with adverbials of definite reference could be interpreted as an introduction of oral speech elements in a more formal speech context, or, agreeing with Psaltou-Joycey (1991), even as an indication of linguistic
changes that the SP/PP opposition is undergoing, especially concerning the expression of anteriority.

The use of a significant number of PP forms in our data indicates that, at least in the frame of Greek Secondary Education textbooks, the view that PP forms do not usually appear in (official) written speech, is not verified.

Lastly, an important point to make is that pupils’ contact with these texts contributes to a better knowledge of the uses of PP, at least in comparison with what a pupil could learn about this tense in the school grammars of the Primary and Secondary Education. In both of them no reference is made to the uses of PP found in our data. Thus, we align with Hatzisavidis and Hatzisavidu (2009: 125) remark that “in many cases Perfect can be replaced by Simple Past [...]. Generalizing, the semantic limits between the use of Simple Past and Perfect in Modern Greek are not clear”.

4. Concluding remarks
In the present paper, the function and the distribution of PP and SP forms in the texts of Greek Secondary Education textbooks were examined. Our findings are summarized as follows: a) PP can be regularly used in written speech to a significant degree, b) its relation with SP in the examined corpus is actually competitive, since PP and SP forms seem to have the same function, i.e. refer to already discussed or taught elements which are related to what is currently discussed or taught, c) PP and SP forms could appear in the same context but there are actually some contexts where SP seems more preferable than PP and vice versa. SP tends to appear usually at the beginning of examined texts and in main clauses, while PP is more parenthetically used and is more usually found in relative or comparative clauses. The context where almost always SP forms appear includes adverbial elements of definite time reference, even though few (six) instances with PP forms were attested as well.

Conclusions (a-c) could indicate that PP tends to expand in relation to SP or at least it is not in danger of extinction in favour of the SP. However, these findings, which are in accordance with similar observations on informal oral speech (Moser & Bela 2003; Psaltou-Joycey 1991; 2012) come out from a relevantly small set of data and they need further support through research on other types of formal speech corpora such as the text corpora from the field of journalism of the Centre of Modern
Furthermore, it would be very interesting to carry out a comparative investigation of the uses and the functions of PP and SP in written texts of previous decades (for example, in the sixties or the seventies of the 20th century) in a more systematic corpus linguistics way, in order to investigate whether the distribution of these specific tenses shows signs of linguistic change.

Last but not least, we would like to emphasize the important implications of these findings to the educational process, i.e. dealing with the texts analyzed in the present study in a frame of enriching pupils’ acquaintance with the uses of PP, since in the texts of Greek Secondary Education acquaintance with the uses of PP that are not included in the available grammatical descriptions can be achieved.

References


Appendix

Abbreviations
ADPE=Application Development in Programming Environments
C=Chemistry
CCA=Computing & Computers Applications
L2=2nd grade of Lower Secondary Education
L3=3rd grade of Lower Secondary Education
MGL=Modern Greek Language
P=Physics
R=Religion
U=Upper Secondary Education
U3=3rd grade of Upper Secondary Education