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ABSTRACT

In most treatments of negation the phenomenon has been studied at a sentence level without taking into consideration how the formal realisations of negation function in discourse when there is verbal interaction and exchange of participant roles. Our paper focuses on this aspect of negation and examines how the meanings of confirmation or agreement and contradiction or disagreement between interlocutors are expressed in both Greek and English. More specifically, the attested interchangeability of the particles NAI/NO and YES/NO respectively, either when occurring as single-word responses or when followed by echoing utterances of positive or negative orientation, are analysed in an attempt to investigate and explain the parameters that are responsible for such a variability as well as to show the overt differences of linguistic patterning between the two languages.

EXPRESSING NEGATION IN GREEK

Most of us who have been dealing with English as a foreign language either as teachers or as speakers or both must have encountered (or even felt the temptation to produce) responses such as Yes, it didn’t or Yes, I won’t, which are ungrammatical in English. Moreover, as teachers of English we have most probably heard our students respond with a ‘yes’ to negatively orientated questions. To be more precise, let us have a look at the following conversation extracts:

1)  T: What about the listening?  
S: Oh, the listening was very difficult... I... I couldn’t understand anything.  
T: You didn’t use your brains, did you?  
S: Yes. [chuckle] (=No, I didn’t.)

2)  T: He couldn’t find work there?  
S: Yes. (=No, he couldn’t.)

3)  T: Are you not going to study in England?  
S: Yes. (=No, I’m not.)

4)  T: You know the book?  
S: No.  
T: You’ve not done it before?  
S: Yes. (=No, I haven’t.)

5)  Teacher (while explaining the phenomenon of ellipsis):  
   It didn’t rain at all last month. Yeah, it didn’t. (=No, it didn’t.)
The production of responses like the ones just mentioned is due to the fact that the Greek particles ‘νε’ and ‘οχι’, in contradistinction to the corresponding English particles ‘yes’ and ‘no’, when used as responses to immediately preceding utterances of negative orientation, seem to be carrying functions which go beyond an agreement with the polarity either of the phrase they are part of, as in example (5), or of the immediately preceding utterance, as in examples (1), (2), (3) and (4).

In the present paper we are going to analyse the functions of the particles ‘νε’, ‘οχι’ and ‘yes’, ‘no’ as elements expressing negation when they are employed either as single-word or as echoing responses to preceding utterances of negative orientation.

We shall begin our analysis with the Greek language first. Let us, therefore, look at the following conversation extracts, which clearly indicate that the Greek particle ‘νε’ does not mark agreement with the polarity of the immediately preceding negatively orientated question or statement, even when ‘νε’ is part of an echoing response, i.e. a short response that repeats the verbal group of the preceding utterance:1

6)  A: Μαίρη, Μαίρη;²
    Do you love me, Mary?
B: Ναι, Γιάννη.
    Yes, John.
A: Ποιας αρχής.
    How strange.
B: Γιατί; Δεν τ’ αξίζεις;
    Why? Don’t you deserve it?
A: Ναι.
    Yes. (=No, I don’t deserve it.)

7)  A: Μαίρη, τσιλικά ο Γιάννης δεν είναι εδώ.
    Mary, John isn’t here (=in Thessaloniki) after all.
B: Ναι, δεν είναι.
    Yes, he isn’t. (=No, he isn’t.)

8)  A: Εμένα η Μαίρη δε με κολλάει πια.
    Mary doesn’t flirt with me any more.
B: Nai.
Yes. (=No, she doesn’t.)

9) (In the middle of a discussion about a flight with Inter European airlines, where there was no drinking water left.)
A: Ἑβάλε λίγο νερό και μετά εἶπε: “Τέρμα. Δεν έχει αλλά.”
She poured a little water and then said, “That’s it. There is no more left”.
B: Ναι, δεν είχανε.
Yes, they didn’t (have any). (=No, they didn’t (have any).)³

10) (ΕΛΕΥΘΕΡΟΤΥΠΙΑ, 21/12/63)
"Τα νούμερα δε βοηθούν", παρατήρησε ο Πρόεδρος στον κ. Γεννηματά. "Ναι, δε βοηθούν, αλλά έχω την καθοδήγηση του Πρωθυπουργού", απάντησε ο υπουργός.
"The figures don’t bode well," the President told Mr Genimatas. "Yes, they don’t (bode well) (=No, they don’t (bode well)), but I am under the instruction of the Prime Minister," replied the Minister.

Examples (6) to (10) indicate very clearly that the Greek particle ‘ne’ does not mark agreement with the polarity of the verbal group either of the immediately preceding utterance or of the echoing response it is part of. However, ‘ne’ does mark agreement in the sense that it confirms the truthfulness of the proposition of the utterance it is a response to. If we attempted a free, English translation of the ‘ne’ occurrences in examples (6) to (10), instead of ‘yes’ we could use the following expressions or sentences: exactly, absolutely, that’s right, or even I agree with/confirm what you have just asserted or implied.

To put it differently, the Greek particle ‘ne’ indicates confirmation of what has been said before, and this happens when ‘ne’ is a response to either a leading yes-no question or to a negatively orientated statement.

Joseph & Philippaki-Warburton (1987: 4-5) make a distinction between neutral ‘yes-no’ questions and leading ‘yes-no’ questions in Modern Greek, and they describe the latter as affirmative or negative statements which are followed by the tag ἐτσι δὲν εἰσάη (=isn’t it so?) or as sentences with the overt negator δε(n), which have the characteristic rising-falling intonation. Such questions invite answers that do not contradict the affirmation or negation of the statement and are employed by the speaker when she feels certain about the
truthfulness of her/his statement and simply seeks confirmation. As we read in Joseph & Philippaki-Warburton (ibid.) the typical answer to such a question is the particle 'ne', which involves agreement with the statement's proposition, negated or otherwise, whereas the answer 'oxi' indicates contradiction of the proposition, and that is why 'oxi' is considered to be an unexpected answer to this type of questions. Thus, in a question like (11), we can have the typical answer (11a), which indicates agreement, or the unexpected answer (11b), which indicates contradiction: 4

11) Δεν πήγες στο νοσοκομείο, έτσι δεν είναι;
You didn't go to the hospital, isn't it so?

11a) Ναι, δεν πήγα.
Yes, I didn't (go). (=No, I didn't (go)).

11b) 'Οχι, πήγα.
No, I did/went.

However, if the particles 'ne' and 'oxi' indicated only confirmation or agreement and contradiction or disagreement respectively, we would not be able to use 'oxi' as a response to (11), indicating confirmation or agreement. Yet this is not the case, as we could also say 'Oxi, δεν πήγα (=No, I didn't (go).), which is not only grammatical but it is also appropriate and, furthermore, the particular response indicates confirmation, i.e. it reflects the speaker's agreement with the preceding proposition.

Veloudis (1962) discusses the question of 'ne' and 'oxi' as indicators of agreement and contradiction respectively, but rejects the idea of an exclusive interpretation of the particle 'oxi' as an indicator of rejection or contradiction because of its very interchangeability with 'ne' as a response to negatively orientated statements. As he points out, in a sentence like (12) below we can have three potential responses, i.e. (12a), (12b) and (12c): 5

12) Δεν την αγαπά ο Πάννης.
John doesn't love her.

12a) 'Οχι, δεν την αγαπά.
No, he doesn't (love her).

12b) Ναι, δεν την αγαπά.
Yes, he doesn't (love her). (=No, he doesn't (love her)).

12c) 'Οχι, την αγαπά.

No, he does/loves her.

Based on acceptable examples, just like (12a), (12b) and (12c), and on a number of anomalous responses, Veloudis (ibid.) concludes that ‘οχι’ as a response to an immediately preceding negative utterance can have a double function: it can either repeat the immediately preceding negative utterance, as in (12a), thus exemplifying ordinary negation — and in such a case it can be replaced by ‘ναι’, as in (12b) — or it can contradict/erase the immediately preceding utterance, as in (12c), thus exemplifying contradiction negation — in which case it cannot be replaced by ‘ναι’. In a few words, Veloudis maintains that ‘οχι’ as a response to negatively orientated statements can have a double function, i.e. it can indicate either agreement or contradiction, whereas ‘ναι’ in similar contexts can only indicate agreement.

We would be more than happy to accept Veloudis’ suggestion as it can explain why in the examples (6) to (10) we presented further above, ‘ναι’ can be replaced by ‘οχι’ functioning as a confirmation or agreement indicator if we did not come across a couple of examples which cannot be interpreted unless: (a) we consider the possibility that ‘οχι’ can indicate contradiction or disagreement not in relation to immediately preceding utterances only, and (b) we adopt a double function interpretation for the particle ‘ναι’ as well.

The conversation extract in (13) below took place as the two interlocutors were speaking on the phone about a paper they were working on. At first, they were both quite pessimistic, but gradually there was a change in their attitudes.

13)  A: Εγώ, Μαρίκη, είμαι αισιόδοξη ότι θα βγει καλό.
     Mary, I think it will be fine.
B: 'Οχι, 'οχι. Θα βγει καλό.
     No, no. It will be fine.

In (13) ‘οχι’ cannot be functioning as an element contradicting/erasing the immediately preceding utterance. After all, in A’s affirmative statement there is no negator ‘δε(n)’ overtly present or implied. Thus, the only plausible interpretation we can think of for the particular use of ‘οχι’ is that it indicates contradiction of the propositions of some pessimistic comments uttered previously that could still be lingering in speaker B’s mind. In other words, ‘οχι’ in (13) reflects the
speaker's contradiction in relation to a number of negatively orientated statements that were uttered long before the particular response.

In the conversation extract in (14) below the particle 'ne' cannot be interpreted as an indicator of confirmation or agreement:

14) A: Με συγχωρείτε, η Βλαχερνών που είναι;

   Excuse me, do you know where Vlahernon street is?

B: Δεν ξέρω.

   I don't know.

C: Μήπως δεν τ' άκουσε;

   Is it possible that he didn't hear the question?

A: Ναι. Είναι: "Δεν ξέρω."

   Yes. (=No. He did.) He said, "I don't know".

The 'ne' in speaker A's second response cannot be interpreted as an indicator of agreement with the proposition of speaker C's immediately preceding negatively orientated leading 'yes-no' question. On the contrary, it functions as an element of contradiction. If speaker A had been more explicit, s/he would have said something like Ναι, τ' άκουσε. Είναι: "Δεν ξέρω" (=Yes. He heard it. He said, "I don't know"). One could, of course, object to the interpretation of 'ne' as an indicator of contradiction by suggesting ungrammaticality as far as speaker A's response is concerned. Nevertheless, despite the fact that speaker A was an educated adult, who was not under any psychological strain, examples (15c) and (16a to 16f), which we will discuss further down, weaken such a possibility considerably.

To recapitulate what we have observed with respect to examples (13) and (14), we can say that 'οχι' can indicate contradiction of a proposition of an utterance that cannot be traced in the immediately preceding context, and that 'ne' seems to be carrying a double function just like 'οχι', as 'ne' can, too, indicate contradiction.

Let us now analyse example (15) below and its potential responses, where we see, once more, that the particle 'ne' carries a double function: 6

15) A: Δεν πήγας τελικά?

   You didn't go in the end, did you?

15a) B: Ναι, δεν πήγα.
Yes, I didn't. (go) (=No, I didn't (go.).

15b) B: 'Oχι, δεν πιέα.
No, I didn't (go).

15c) B: Ναι, πιέα.
Yes, I did/went.

15d) B: 'Oχι, πιέα.
No, I did/went.

We have already talked about the acceptability of utterances similar to (15a), (15b) and (15d), and their analysis as that was suggested by Veloudis (1982). Yet, although Veloudis, as we have already pointed out, does not consider the potentiality of (15c), the example in question is not only grammatical but it is acceptable as well. Moreover, both (15c) and (15d) indicate contradiction of the proposition of the immediately preceding utterance, and they are both characterised by the same intonation contour, which differs from the intonation contour of (15a) and (15b), which indicate confirmation.

To be more precise, in both (15a) and (15b), despite the comma, there is no discernible pause between 'ne' and 'οχι' and the rest of the utterances they are part of, whereas in both (15c) and (15d) there has to be a discernible pause between 'ne' and 'οχι' and the rest of their utterances. This difference in the quality of the pauses involved is due to the fact that both 'ne'/οχι' and the verb in (15c) and (15d), i.e. both elements of the utterances in question have to receive either contrastive or emphatic stress, whereas in both (15a) and (15b) it is the negator 'δεν' which is stressed and it has to receive a primary rather than a contrastive or emphatic stress, while 'ne', 'οχι' and 'πιέα' remain relatively unstressed.

In example (16) below and its potential responses, we see, once again, that both 'ne' and 'οχι', either as single-word responses or as parts of echoing responses, can indicate contradiction, provided, of course, that we employ the appropriate intonation and stress. Actually, as we see in examples (16a) to (16i), 'ne' is part of four idiomatic, fixed expressions indicating contradiction, whereas 'οχι', is found in only one fixed expression indicating the same notion.

Sorry. I didn't want to say that. (=I didn't mean it.)
Expressing negation in Greek

16a)  B: Ναι;
      (Oh,) yeah?

16b)  B: Ναι; Το ήθελες και το παραθέτες μάλιστα.
      (Oh,) yeah? You wanted it and you wanted it badly.

16c)  B: Ναι, πώς. Το ήθελες και το παραθέτες μάλιστα.

16d)  B: Ναι, σανά. Το ήθελες και το παραθέτες μάλιστα.

16e)  B: Ναι, καλά. Το ήθελες και το παραθέτες μάλιστα.

16f)  B: Ναι, πώς και δεν. Το ήθελες και το παραθέτες μάλιστα.

16g)  B: Οχι;
      (Oh,) no?

16h)  B: Οχι; Το ήθελες και το παραθέτες μάλιστα.
      (Oh,) no? You wanted it and you wanted it badly.

16i)  B: Οχι δα. Το ήθελες και το παραθέτες μάλιστα.7

Of course, one could object to the interpretation of 'ne' as an indicator of contradiction or disagreement, by pointing out the possibility that 'ne' might owe its contradiction meaning to the employment of special intonation. However, apart from the fact that 'οχι', too, must be subject to the same intonation specifications as we have already seen in examples (15c) and (15d) on the one hand, and in (16a), (16b) and (16g), (16h) on the other, we should not forget that in any discourse analysis stress and intonation are of great importance. Besides, as we read in Lyons (1977: 775): "It is obvious that stress, and also intonation, must be taken into account in any comprehensive discussion of negation; and, when they are taken into account, further complexities become apparent."

Thus, based on the interchangeability of 'ne' and 'οχι', we can come to the conclusion that both particles can indicate confirmation or agreement and contradiction or disagreement. What determines the preference of one particle over the other, however, is something we cannot provide any definite answer for, at present.

Nevertheless, based on our data we can suggest a couple of explanations. To be more explicit, according to our data 'ne' is found in 14 (i.e. 73.7%) out of the 19 conversation extracts indicating confirmation of the proposition of an immediately preceding negatively orientated utterance.8 Moreover, as we have seen, 'ne' is part of four fixed expressions indicating contradiction, whereas 'οχι' is part of only one such expression. The preference of the particle
'ne' over 'oxi' as an indicator of confirmation or, perhaps, even contradiction could be accounted for in terms of politeness, as the meaning of 'ne' is inherently related to the notions of agreement, acceptance, willingness or attention, whereas the meaning of 'oxi' is directly related to the notions of refusal, disagreement, or rejection.

However, we have considered another possible explanation as well. Based on our data again, but also on our intuitions, we maintain that 'oxi' is preferred over 'ne' as an indicator of agreement with the proposition of a preceding negatively oriented utterance when the speaker wants primarily to point out the negative element (whatever that might be) of the state of affairs described, as the following examples indicate:

17) A: Εγώ θα πήγαινω εκείνο το απόγευμα. I will go early in the evening. But you aren't (in your office) in the afternoon (=in the evening).
   B: Οχι, δεν είμαι. Γεν είμαι.
      No, I'm not. I'm not.

18) A: Όταν η Μαρία είναι στο γραφείο είναι αδύνατο να δουλέψεις.
      When Mary is in the office you cannot work.
   B: Οχι. óxì.
      No, no.

19) A: O Ταμτάκος δε ορίζει καθόλου απ' τις κουβέρτες του.
      Tamtakos does not leave his blankets at all.
   B: Οχι. [chuckle]
      No.
   A: Το πρόσφυγες, ει;
      You've noticed it, haven't you?
   B: Ναι.
      Yes.

By using 'oxi' in (17), the speaker stresses the fact that s/he is never at her/his office on afternoons. In other words, by emphasising her/his absence, the speaker indirectly confirms the proposition of the preceding utterance. Similarly, in (18) 'oxi' functions primarily as an indicator of the impossibility of working at an office when a certain person is present. Thus, we could claim that the confirma-
tion interpretation of ‘οχι’ is arrived at through conversational implicature. Finally, in (19), by employing ‘οχι’, the speaker highlights the fact that the particular referent (a cat) does not leave a certain place, and through that s/he indirectly signals confirmation of the preceding proposition.

EXpressing negation in English

We now turn to the English situation. English is normally syntactically bound in expressions of agreement or confirmation and disagreement or contradiction when the particles ‘yes’ and ‘no’ are employed as responses to preceding utterances of positive or negative orientation. Thus, to denote agreement with or confirmation of an immediately preceding positive or negative utterance, we select ‘yes’ or ‘no’ respectively followed by an echoing response agreeing in polarity with the preceding utterance as in examples (20) and (21):

20) John loves Mary.
20a) Yes, he does.
21) John doesn’t love Mary.
21a) No, he doesn’t.
21b) *Yes, he doesn’t.

As we see in (21b) ‘yes’ + a negative echoing response as an indication of agreement with a previous negatively orientated utterance is not permitted in English. This is so, probably because the echoing response contains only the operator, which is employed mainly to express formal negation and is acting as a “dummy” element, i.e. a syntactic filler, without conveying an inherent meaning of its own. In Greek, on the other hand, the whole verbal group is repeated in the echoing response following ‘he’, and negation is expressed by the particle ‘δεν’ immediately preceding the lexical verb and forming an integral part of the verbal group. Consequently, to express agreement with or confirmation of a previous utterance, either of positive or negative orientation, English selects only an echoing response both parts of which agree in polarity with it, i.e. both being either positive or negative. In other words, a preceding utterance of negative orientation cannot attract ‘yes’ followed by a negative echoing response as a potential answer when agreement is being sought. However, as we have already
seen, this is possible in Greek which selects freely between ‘ne’ and ‘oχι’ followed by a negative echoing response in similar contexts.

Contradiction in English, in the specific area we are examining, can be indicated by the employment of ‘no’, as is shown in (20b) and (21c), potential responses to (20) and (21) respectively:

20) John loves Mary.
20b) No, he doesn’t.
21) John doesn’t love Mary.
21c) No, he does.

In both cases the pattern of the operator following ‘no’ must be of the opposite polarity to that of the utterance to which it is a response.

However, contradiction can also be indicated by ‘yes’ as is shown in (22):

22) A: I’m sorry. I didn’t mean that.
   B: Yes, you did.

‘Yes’ here acts as a response to an immediately preceding negatively orientated utterance. This is possible when ‘yes’ carries a contradiction stress, just like that of ‘no’ in (21c), being reinforced by an identical stress on ‘does’ in both responses. We also note that the echoing response following ‘yes’ is of positive polarity, that is, opposite to the polarity of the utterance to which it is an answer.

Both agreement or confirmation and disagreement or contradiction, as have been analysed so far, are context-free in their interpretations and follow a predictable patterning: in agreement or confirmation the operators accompanying either ‘yes’ or ‘no’ are of the same polarity as the utterances to which they are responses, whereas in disagreement or contradiction the operators after the respective particles are of the opposite polarity to that of the previous utterances.

Nevertheless, English permits the expression of agreement or confirmation and disagreement or contradiction at a semantic level through the use of ‘yes’ (‘yeah’) or ‘no’ as single-word responses being prosodically separated from any other utterance. Thus, agreement with the proposition of a previous negatively orientated utterance may be denoted by single-word ‘yeah’ (‘yes’), which is un-
derstood as a case of ellipsis implying 'Yes, you are right. I confirm that I was going to say/I have thought of the same thing'. Examples (23) to (25) are instances of this phenomenon:

23)  
A: What's the matter with you?
B: Nothing, I'm fine.
A: You couldn't drag yourself out of bed this morning?
B: Yeah. Something like that.

24)  
A: If I turned you white your mother wouldn't recognize you.
B: Yeah.

25)  
A: Perhaps you don't even like him.
B: Yes!

In all three of the above examples speaker B is so determined to express agreement with A's utterance which s/he thinks has captured her/his own thoughts, that s/he chooses 'yes' ('yeah') as the clearest indicator of this notion.

Contradiction expressed with single-word 'yes' ('yeah') is straightforward as long as the previous utterance is negatively orientated and 'yes' carries a contradiction stress as in example (2) further above (repeated here for convenience and interpreted as expressing contradiction):

2)  
T: He couldn't find work there?
S: Yes (Yeah).

What is implied here is an echoing response of positive polarity similar to the one discussed in (22), i.e. 'Yes, he could'.

Single-word 'no' being a response to an immediately preceding negatively orientated utterance may be interpreted as denoting either agreement/confirmation or disagreement/contradiction. Disambiguation of interpretation can only be accomplished by intonation. In the following extract, for example, speaker B uses 'no' as an indicator of agreement with/confirmation of a previous negatively orientated utterance:

26)  
A: I'm sorry. I'm certain it didn't happen this time.
B: No.
In sum, single-word 'yes' and 'no' responses depend heavily on context and intonation for their interpretation since they do not seem to follow a regular pattern of agreement or disagreement based on the polarity of the preceding utterance, but they carry information independent of syntactic restrictions. To this extent, they behave more like Greek 'ne' and 'oçí' employed either as single-word or as echoing responses.

This divergence in English between syntactic agreement or non-agreement on the one hand, and agreement or confirmation and disagreement or contradiction of a more semantico-pragmatic nature on the other, causes a problem of selection for Greek learners since their mother tongue expresses the above speech-acts semantically without following strict syntactic restrictions, as is shown schematically in Table 1 below.

Table 1. Discoursal Agreement/Disagreement in Greek and English

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Following Response</th>
<th>Preceding Utterance</th>
<th>Negative</th>
<th>Positive</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Agreement</td>
<td>Ne</td>
<td>Oçí → NER</td>
<td>Ne → PER</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Oçí</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes → PER</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagreement</td>
<td>Ne</td>
<td>Oçí → PER</td>
<td>Oçí → NER</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

NER = Negative Echoing Response
PER = Positive Echoing Response

Consequently, they either respond in English by choosing a syntactic pattern which is liable to being incorrect in 50% of the cases, or, more frequently, they select single-word responses that are closer to their Greek counterparts. In the latter case, however, they often fail to select the correct intonation pattern and, as a result, their responses are either misinterpreted or, at best, ambiguous. Therefore, we would like to end our brief analysis of this phenomenon by suggesting that learners should avoid single-word responses when answering negatively orientated utterances in English. Instead, if they wish to express agreement or confirmation, they are advised to give echoing responses agreeing syn-
tactically with the polarity of the previous utterance, and if they wish to express
disagreement or contradiction to select echoing responses being of the opposite
polarity with the previous utterance. In either case, when the echoing re-
sponses are preceded by 'yes' learners can follow a “rule of the thumb”, which
says: “always accompany ‘yes’ with a positive echoing response”.

Notes

1 McCarthy (1991: 43-4), following Thomas (1987), speaks of a special type of verbal-
group ellipsis, i.e. of echoing ellipsis, which repeats an element from the verbal group, as is
shown in B’s answer in the following exchange:

A: Will anyone be staying?
B: Jim will, I should think.

In this paper, however, we shall be using the term echoing responses to describe not
only those short answers in English that involve echoing ellipsis, but also those short re-
sponses in Greek that involve a repetition of the complete verbal group.

2 We have decided to change the real names of the interlocutors in all but one of our au-
thentic examples thinking that their identification might give rise to unnecessary embarrass-
ment. Thus, we use the names Mary and John for female and male reference, respectively.

3 We are aware of the fact that the alternatives, i.e. the non-elliptical English echoing re-
sponses are not usually employed by native speakers of English. However, we have decided
to include them in order to achieve a better illustration of the differences and similarities be-
tween the two languages, since it is the non-elliptical alternatives that resemble the Greek
echoing responses we are dealing here with rather than the ones which involve echoing el-
ipsis.

4 Examples (11), (11a) and (11b) have been taken from Joseph & Philippaki-Warburton

5 Examples (12), (12a), (12b) and (12c) have been taken from Veloudis (1982: 388-91).

6 Of course, we can also have 'no' and 'oxi' as potential single-word responses.

7 In examples (16c), (16d), (16e) and (16f) we have the particle 'no' + some other specific
particles forming collocations denoting contradiction, which, however, cannot be translated
into English. Similarly, in (16i) we have the particle 'oxi' together with the particle 'da', which,
too, indicate contradiction.

8 See the appendix for the rest of our authentic examples.

9 The implied echoing response is 'it didn't'.

References

Wolfeboro, New Hampshire: Croom Helm.
Rochelle, Melbourne, Sydney: Cambridge University Press.
It's a great film and we haven't seen it.

B: Ναι, ναι. Δεν την άδειαμε.
Yes, yes. We haven't (seen it).

7) (Comment on the film "Hunt for Red October").
A: Το πλήρωμα δεν έχει ιδέα βεβαια, ε;
The crew have no idea, of course, have they?
B: Ναι.
Yes. (=No, they haven't.)

8) (The following extract is from an interview as that shown during the 8:30 news on Ant. 1, 14/1/94. Speaker A interviews speaker B, who has killed a dentist, who wanted to die but was afraid to commit suicide.)
A: Δεν το πιστεύω.
You didn't believe it.
B: Ναι, φυσικά. Όχι, δεν το πιστεύω.
Yes, naturally. No, I didn't believe it.

9) (Star Channel, talk show "Late", 7/12/93.)
A: Γενικά σαν χαρακτήρας είσαι πολύ κλειστή και δεν ανοίγεις εύκολα.
Generally speaking, you are a very introverted character (i.e. person) and you don't "open up" easily.
B: Ναι. Αυτό είναι αλήθεια.
Yes. That's true.

(Later on, during the same show)
A: Όταν είδα ότι ήταν κλειστή δεν εννοούσα ότι είσαι αντικοινωνική.
When I said that you are introverted I didn't mean that you are antisocial (i.e. unsociable).
B: Όχι, όχι.
No, no.
APPENDIX

1) (“Δέχα Μικροί Μήτροι”, Mega, 30/12/93.)
A: Και σένα, σε απειλεί;
   Does he threaten you too?
B: Ναι.
   Yes.
A: Και μετά δεν πραγματοποιεί τις απειλές του.
   And then he doesn’t carry out his threats.
B: Ναι.
   Yes. (=No, he doesn’t.)

2) A: Εκεί δεν μπορούνε να το παύει.
   They can’t say it there.
B: Ναι.
   Yes. (=No, they can’t.)

3) A: Εδώ δεν έχουμε πρόβλημα.
   We don’t have any problem here.
B: Ναι, ναι, δεν έχουμε.
   Yes, yes, we don’t have any). (=No, no we don’t have any.)

4) (While speaker A is stroking his cat, which has been sleeping.)
A: Οχι, το νατάκα μου. Ψιλοταπτίζεται. Δεν γνωστάρει.
   There, there, my little cat. He’s annoyed. He doesn’t like it (=being stroked
   while he’s sleeping).
B: Ναι.
   Yes. (=No, he doesn’t (like it).)

5) (Conversational extract of a recorded telephone exchange, which was repeatedly
played on Radio Station Sky, during the summer of 1993.)
A: Το βράδυ δεν υπάρχει καθόλου φωτισμός.
   At night, there are no lights at all.
B: Δεν υπάρχει φωτισμός. Ναι.
   There are no lights. Yes.

6) (A film has just started on T.V.)
A: Εργάζεται είναι και δεν την έχουμε δει.