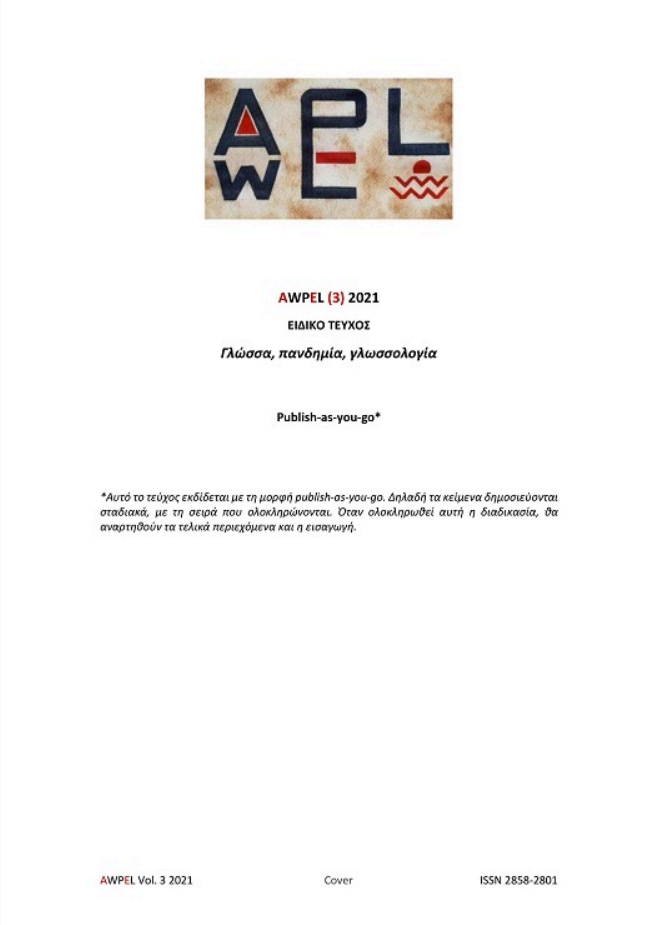
Aegean Working Papers in Ethnographic Linguistics

Vol 3 (2021)

Ειδικό τεύχος: Γλώσσα, πανδημία, γλωσσολογία



Face covering as a social practice

Roula Kitsiou

To cite this article:

Kitsiou, R. (2022). Face covering as a social practice: The rhetoric of anti-/masking during the COVID-19 pandemic in the Greek digital public sphere. *Aegean Working Papers in Ethnographic Linguistics*, *3*, 273–291. Retrieved from https://ejournals.epublishing.ekt.gr/index.php/awpel/article/view/30653

Face covering as a social practice: The rhetoric of anti-/masking during the COVID-19 pandemic in the Greek digital public sphere

Roula Kitsiou

University of Thessaly
stavroulakitsiou@uth.gr

Abstract

During the COVID-19 pandemic, early public health messages about masking led to public confusion due to conflicting statements, rendering masks a controversial sociopolitical issue. This study employs computer-mediated discourse analysis and tools developed by the discourse-historical approach to explore discourse topics and (anti-/pro-)masking rhetoric patterns in the content of (a) a Greek news video posted on a news site on Facebook, and (b) a corpus of 44 online Facebook comments posted in response to (a). The findings of the study point out that, in the context of the post-truth era, conflicting messages on public health have resulted in politicization of masking and to polarization over socially un-/acceptable behavior. Face covering thus constitutes a sociospatial practice in the process of *becoming* a form of politic behavior, which is contested among members of Greek society.

1. Introduction

COVID-19, perhaps more than a 'pandemic', could be better approached as a 'syndemic', examining how health consequences interact with the social, cultural, economic, political, and environmental factors of the disease (Ryan 2021a). In most countries measures have been imposed that have "changed the proxemics of public spaces and the grammar of 'living together'" (Ricca 2020: 1), as well as the ways we experience our body in public spaces (e.g., social distancing, face mask use, hand hygiene). Therefore, since June 2020, the World Health Organization has recommended that healthy people wear non-medical masks to control the spread of COVID-19, especially in settings where physical distancing cannot be achieved (World Health Organization 2020). Covering the mouth and nose with homemade or commercially sold coverings as a public health measure has been applied in different ways by various countries during the COVID-19 pandemic. Nevertheless, early public health messages about masking led to public confusion due to conflicting statements (see Afouxenidis & Chtouris 2020), and the emergence of mask-wearing behaviors marked an unusually rapid sociocultural practice change (Ryan 2021a, 2021b). Especially since state regulations have coded face masks into social rules and the "new normal" in many countries, an assemblage rhetoric[1] (Chen 2020) has emerged

[1] Assemblage is a concept developed by Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari (1980), to refer to social complexity on the basis of fluidity and connectivity. Here, I follow Chen (2020) and use the term to denote this fluid interchange of discourses used for arguing in favor or against face masking.

rendering masks a controversial sociopolitical issue and resulting in large rallies against masking mandates.[2]

This controversy, emerging in front of a crisis that violates fundamental forms of freedom, has fed the imaginary conspiracy accompanying the health crisis (Taguieff 2020). Specifically on social media, new conspiracy theories have been developing, so that Facebook and Twitter have come up with new policies to control misleading user content. Easton (2020) observes that levels of social media usage are related to belief in conspiracy theories, and consequently to the postmodern, post-truth fracturing of sociopolitical reality. The key condition for this is the affordances provided by digital platforms, which have led to a new era of public participation based on the "attention economy" of social media (Davies 2021), with implications for performing solidarity (Meeker 2021).

According to Contiades (2020: 18-19), handling the 2020 pandemic is the broadest, the most intensive, and maybe the most necessary biopolitics exercise in History. Agamben (2020), adopting the Foucauldian approach on biopolitics (2012), perceives medical science as a biopolitical tool and considers enforcing health protocols on society a measure of control and discipline. A rationalized biopolitical discourse is thus articulated as a state command. In result, there is a great ethical and political distance between (a) self-restriction, which includes the core of understanding, responsibility and solidarity, and (b) hetero-restriction, which entails the dimension of suppression and biopolitical heterodefinition (Schismenos 2020: 338-339, 343-344).

The current study focuses on social media usage in the Greek-context with the aim of exploring how face masking is constructed and contested as a social practice in discourse. More specifically, face covering is first examined in a news media report posted on Facebook, as contested (non-)politic behavior, i.e., a struggle over what behavior (pro-masking or anti-masking) should be evaluated as politic in public space. Consequently, competing arguments are identified in related Facebook commentary that draws on an assemblage rhetoric mapping polarization in the Greek digital public sphere. By focusing on aspects of this polarization, we aim to map (meta)participants' discursive patterns and agency in shaping discourses on the mask.

2. Theoretical background: Politic behavior and digital performances of identity and conflict

Watts (2003: 217 ff.) proposes the concept of *politic behavior* to refer to mutual consideration for others, thus defining polite behavior as an observable addition to politic behavior or impoliteness as its observable violation. He perceives (im)politeness as part of the discursive social practices through which interlocutors negotiate the creation of emergent networks, evaluate their own and others' positions within them, and thus reform and transform their social worlds (*ibid*.: 255). The struggle over politeness thus represents the struggle over the reproduction and reconstruction of the values of socially un-/acceptable non-/linguistic behavior

[2] See for example the "No child will go to school wearing a mask this year" movement that started as a mask-deniers' Facebook group, and relevant protest rallies by parents in the Greek context during September 2020.

(Watts 2003: 11). In order to explain how communication takes place, it is necessary to determine politic behavior, which is:

> appropriate to a social activity type, verbal or nonverbal, and explaining when and why certain forms of behaviour constitute social payment, i.e. when and why certain forms of behaviour can be called 'polite' (Watts 2003: 29).

Examining the case of queueing, Watts (2003) observes that there are at least three preconditions in order to be able to categorize a social activity type as subject to an interaction order: (a) other participants must have also internalized the same institutionalized conventions; (b) social activities must be culturally relative; and (c) there must be potential situations when our feelings of outrage and indignation are overridden or neutralized (e.g., the appearance of a policeman in the queue).

Moreover, in these social activity types, non-/linguistic forms of politeness are noticeable by their absence. "It is only when the politic behaviour of the activity type is violated that we actually become aware of the conventions" (Watts 2003: 28). Although not a verbal act in itself, violation of queueing might provoke aggressive verbal responses. This means that the social activity of queueing is not coded by interactants as polite behavior unless the interaction order is violated. Therefore, queueing is identified as a form of politic behavior since it has become institutionalized.

Referring to the Greek context, Sifianou and Tzanne (2010) report that impoliteness is mostly expressed verbally, whereas politeness is performed mainly as non-verbal action. According to Sifianou (1992a: 88, as cited in Watts 2003: 15), Greek perceptions of "politeness" index concern and consideration for the addressee as the fundamental characteristic of the term. Complaints about lack of consideration and self-control in public space, on the other hand, indicate the absence of a socio-culturally coded definition of politeness (Blum-Kulka 1992, as cited *ibid*.: 16).

Makri-Tsilipakou (2019: 286) supports that observing members of communities-of-practice do the evaluations of politic behavior as participants or metaparticipants[3] to situated interactions may serve to avoid "imposing the researcher's specific understanding of politeness". Focusing on metaparticipants, digital social environments may prove a great opportunity for observing such practices. Politeness research has mostly concentrated on face-to-face synchronous interactions between interlocutors who engage in some type of interpersonal relationship. Yet, it is important to explore understandings of im/politeness also among more ephemeral and fluid encounters with strangers or in sources such as articles in printed and on-line newspapers and magazines, including ensuing comments on online articles (Sifianou 2019: 2). Addressing this research need, Tzanne and Sifianou (2019) applied Van Dijk's ideological discourse analysis on on-line newspapers articles and the ensuing comments, identifying two emerging social identities, the 'polite' and 'impolite citizen'. Furthermore, Herring (2004) recognizes digital interaction, the

[3] According to Makri-Tsilipakou (2019: 286), metaparticipants are "members whose evaluations of politeness is the result of vicarious participation in an interaction that they view on television or the internet or read or hear about it".

discursive negotiation and expression of social relations in cyberspace, as one of the most promising future research areas.

Commenting patterns on Facebook, which are most relevant for this study, unfold in a rhizomatic way; i.e., in a non-hierarchical, non-linear way and with fluid turn-taking practices. However, they are "less legitimate" –in comparison to other media– and deploy a "conversational mode" (Jouët & Le Caroff 2013, as cited in Calabrese & Jenard 2018) often including practices such as flaming and trolling to perform online hate (KhosraviNik & Esposito 2018). Disinhibited online behavior,[4] along with features inherent in Computer Mediated Communication (henceforth CMC), such as anonymity and physical separation, contributes to triggering social practices like polarization and mob dynamics online (Henry & Powell 2018). In the age of social media and after Donald Trump's paradigm, divergent opinions, when performed through offensive language and meant as incivility, lead to intensifying political division, giving rise to hate speech and a variety of exclusionary and reactionary discourses (KhosraviNik & Esposito 2018).

Concerning face mask use, there is limited –yet rapidly emerging– research on pandemic-related public discourse especially for the Greek context (see for example Archakis 2020; Mouchtouri et al. 2020). There are quite a few studies exploring (a) attitudes and debates on face covering (see Dolan 2020), (b) conspiracy theories and cultural wars about masks (McGowan 2020; Romer & Jamieson 2020), or (c) the politicization of masks in CMC-contexts (see Sanders et al., 2020). To our knowledge, so far face masks have been approached as a discursive object only by Huo and Martimianakis (2020) in an ongoing study applying critical discourse analysis in the field of medical education in the Canadian and the Chinese context. The present paper aims to contribute to this growing body of research employing a discourse-analytic approach that is informed by a sociopragmatic/sociolinguistic perspective (Canakis 2007). Our focal point is face masking as a current public concern that has fueled heated discussions in digitally facilitated spaces. More specifically, Watt's theory of politic behavior is applied here in order (a) to identify processes of (non-)linguistic/ discursive struggle over how to behave in public space (vis-à-vis face mask use during the pandemic), and (b) to explain the construction of such behavior into a sociopolitical matter of public concern.

3. Research Methodology

This study is informed by a socio-pragmatic/sociolinguistic perspective and uses the tools of the Discourse-Historical Approach (DHA) (Reisigl & Wodak 2009), which is a social media approach to Critical Discourse Studies (KhosraviNik & Esposito 2018: 54). Computer-Mediated Discourse Analysis (Herring 2004) applies to five domains: 1) structure, 2) meaning, 3) interaction, 4) social behavior, and 5) participation. In addition, DHA identifies four different heuristic levels of context that could be taken into account, including: 1) the immediate co-text; 2) the intertextual and interdiscursive relationship between utterances, texts, genres, and discourses; 3) the extralinguistic social/sociological variables and institutional frames of a specific context of situation; 4) the broader sociopolitical and historical contexts which the discursive practices are embedded in and related to (see Reisigl & Wodak 2009).

[4] Disinhibition is "an apparent reduction in concern for self-presentation and judgement of others" (KhosraviNik & Esposito 2018: 47-48).

Focusing on a specific Facebook post as the unit of analysis of digital public discourse, this case study includes two intertextually related genres: (a) a recorded and transcribed oral conversation (as part of a reporting event), and (b) Facebook comments (as responses to (a)). Moreover, employing Watts's (2003) theory of politic behavior and the referential and predicating discursive strategies of the DHA approach, we identify the construction of (a) mask deniers or pro-maskers as social actors, (b) face mask use as a social phenomenon, and (c) anti-/pro-masking processes and actions. First, we analyze the content of Case A (00:00-00:47, news video) and then a corpus of comments posted under the video that refer to positionings of the participants.

The corpus was constructed on December 11, 2020 and consists of online comments in a Facebook news site posted from September 19, 2020 to October 7, 2020, in response to a re-posted video from YouTube shortly after the end of the second Greek lockdown. The title of the news video re-posted on Facebook on September 18, 2020 is "Mask Deniers in Public Transportation", reported by the Greek TV channel SKAI. In this video a female reporter discusses the topic of mask use in a public bus with 4 citizens in Athens who may or may not wear the face mask. While the YouTube video (17.09.2020) has a duration of 2 minutes and 29 seconds, the re-posted video on Facebook (18.09.2020) has been edited and reduced to 1 minute and 24 seconds, mostly omitting the reporter's comments and appearance. After refining the corpus of the comments, only 470/661 comments appeared under the post by 11.12.2020. 125 comments responded straightforwardly to the post.

The corpus of this study consists of 47 seconds of the YouTube version news video and 44 comments (a) *that are primary*, i.e., they appear as original comments and not as replies to others' comments on the video-post; (b) *that refer to Case A*; i.e., to the first 47 seconds of the news video featuring the interaction of a reporter (R), a young woman (W1), and an older woman (W2) (see Table 1).

Facebook post popularity by 11.12.2020:	**1,8K** reactions; **661** comments; **310** shares
Refined corpus - *primary comments*:	**125** primary comments with 345 replies
Corpus of this study - *primary comments referring to Case A*:	**44** primary comments • 32/44 with W1 as deictic center Responses to W1's positioning ➢ 16/32 approval ➢ 16/32 disapproval/hate speech • 11/44 with W2 as deictic center Responses to W2's positioning ➢ 1/11 approval ➢ 10/11 disapproval/hate speech

Table 1: Commentary under the Facebook post- Corpus of the study

Since the limits of a discourse are partly fluid, discourse as an analytic construct is always dependent on the analyst's perspective, and constitutes a dynamic semiotic entity, open to interpretation (Reisigl & Wodak 2009). Therefore, situating the

researcher, a middle-class white woman, in the sociopolitical context on which she draws is important. Experiencing the pandemic in a middle-class area of Athens as regulated by the Greek government, the researcher was initially overwhelmed and confused by conflicting messages of political discourse. While being quite skeptical and reflective regarding the government's decisions and handling of the pandemic, she has employed mask wearing in her daily practices as an act of solidarity through self-restriction. She has opted for carefully examining this sociopolitical issue of public concern, while keeping an analytic distance through reflexivity.

4. Results

In the data corpus, I have identified four categories of social actors combining two criteria: (1) anti-/pro-masking rhetoric (how they argue about face mask wearing as a practice); (2) anti-/pro-masking practices as revealed discursively (what they say they do with the mask as a medical or biopolitical technology). *Pro-maskers* and *mask deniers* are the two poles examined in this study. The intermediate categories are *non-/maskers* and *masqueraders*. Non-/maskers exhibit context-specific behavior depending on the emergent health or legal/institutional context respectively; i.e., they may wear a mask or not according to the state of their health or employ the behavior prescribed by state regulations. They perceive the mask as a medical technological tool for sick people or to be used when coming in contact with diagnosed cases (i.e., not as a prevention measure unless it is imposed by law). On the other hand, *masqueraders* fake masking. They employ varying mask-wearing practices to avoid punishment in case of defying the law and engage in anti-masking rhetoric. They do not necessarily follow public health instructions; instead of the face they place the mask on various parts of the body (mouth only, neck, ears, arm, wrist), remaining usually unmasked.

In this section, first, I analyze the content of the news media discourse video in order to explore the politicization of face covering as a social practice; i.e., how "mask deniers" as a group and "anti-masking" as a phenomenon are constructed in discourse (see Table 2). Second, I explore how polarization is recontextualized by metaparticipants' vicarious participation in an interaction they view on the internet.

4.1 Face masking behavior in news media discourse

In Table 2, I apply Reisigl and Wodak's (2009) DHA on the content of the news video in order to examine how face masking is discursively constructed and contested as politic behavior within the public space of the bus through interlocutors' different positions.

Conversation among R, W1, and W2	**Conversation among R, W1, and W2**
[1] R – Εσείς δε φοράτε μάσκα μέσα στο λεωφορείο. Θα μας πείτε γιατί;[[2] W1 – [Ναι, γιατί:: δεν πιστεύω στον κορωνοϊό και::: με προσβάλλει η χρήση της μάσκας./ [3] W2 – Ναι. Και θα το κολλήσεις και σε εσένα και σε άλλους.	[1] R – You are not wearing a mask inside the bus. Will you tell us why?[[2] W1 – [Yes, because I do not believe in coronavirus a::nd I am offended by the use of the mask. [3] W2 – Yes, and you are going to infect yourself and others as well.

[4] W1 – Ναι. ((looking down)) [5] R – Ναι αυτό είναι. [6] W2 – Πρέπει να φοράμε μάσκα. [7] W1 – Και δεν πιστεύω. Όλα αυτά τα μέτρα[[8] W2 – [Δεν πιστεύεις. Επειδή δεν πιστεύεις κάνεις κακό σε άλλους. [9] W1 – ((turning towards W2, eye contact)) Εσύ φόρα μάσκα. Εγώ γιατί να είμαι υποχρεωμένη να φοράω; Να φοράω μάσκα; ΕΣΥ μπορείς να προστατεύεσαι. Δικαίωμά μου είναι. [10] W2 – Κι εσύ πρέπει να προστατεύεις τους άλλους. [11] W1 – Υπάρχει κορωνοϊός ή δεν υπάρχει; [12] R – Το ότι κάποιος όμως μπορεί να πιστεύει και να φοβάται; [13] W1 – [Να φορά[(ει) [14] R- [Ενώ εσύ μέσα στο λεωφορείο δεν φοράς; [15] W1 – Άμα θέλει, μπορεί να κάτσει και σπίτι του, να βγει, να περιμένει να κάνει και το εμβόλιο να φοράει τη μάσκα του, ό,τι θέλει. Αλλά εμένα γιατί να με υποχρεώσει;	[4] W1 – Yes. ((looking down)) [5] R – Yes, that's it. [6] W2 – We should wear a mask. [7] W1 – And I do not believe. All these measures[[8] W2 – [You don't believe. Because you don't believe you do harm to other people. [9] W1 – ((turning towards W2, eye contact)) You go ahead and wear the mask. Me, why should I be obliged to wear one? To wear a mask? YOU can protect yourself. It is my right. [10] W2 – You should also protect others. [11] W1 – Is there coronavirus or not? [12] R – But the fact that somebody may believe and be scared? [13] W1 – [They may wea[(r) [14] R- [Whereas you do not wear one inside the bus? [15] W1 – If they want, they may also stay at home, go outside, wait till they get vaccinated, wear their mask, whatever they want. But me, why should they oblige me?

***Transcription symbols*:**
[interrupted/unfinished enunciation; @@@ unintelligible; NO emphasis; ::: lengthened syllable; (( )) comments on extra-linguistic elements

DISCOURSE TOPICS based on Case A (SKAI news video

Pro-masking discourse topics

1. The use of the mask in the bus.
2. Infection- spread of the virus.
3. Use of the mask as an obligation.
4. Harmful social implications of mask use denial.
5. Fear about life/health.

Anti-masking discourse topics

1. Use of the mask as an offence.
2. Use of the mask as part of the measures.
3. Use of a mask as a personal choice/the right to deny the mask.
4. Disbelief in the existence of coronavirus.
5. Alternatives for others' social behavior a) staying at home, b) going outside using mask, c) waiting for the vaccine.
6. The mask protects you (from me).

Nomination & Predication Strategies		
Social Actors	**Mask (Usage) Object/Phenomenon**	**(Anti)Masking Process/Action**
Discourse on face mask denial: *Me and You as individuals-as members of different groups with the right to decide for ourselves* **Counter discourse:** *We as part of society in front of the law, the state, among people who are afraid for their life*.	**Material**: mask; bus; use of the mask; vaccine; home **Abstract**: outside, coronavirus (*environmental/biological*); fear, harm, obligation (*mental object/feelings*); measures, rights (*political issues*); belief, disbelief (*ideological issues*)	**Material**: wear the mask inside the bus, do harm to other people; stay at home; go outside; protect others (*social*); it is my right; question measures (*political*); get infected; infect others; wait for vaccination (*medical*, *biopolitical*) **Mental**: disbelief in coronavirus; offended by the use of the mask; be scared

Table 2: Applying the Discourse- Historical Approach on the content of Case A

In the first part of line [1], starting with an indirect speech act, R uses an assertive instead of a directive act. She addresses W1 in the second person plural "politeness" form (*εσείς* [1]) as part of the expected politic behavior in the communicative event of an interview. She continues (line [1]) with a straightforward question that has a different illocutionary force than the act performed; i.e., R, who is wearing a mask herself (see YouTube version of the news video), does not necessarily ask for the reason why W1 is not wearing a mask. Instead, she intends to evaluate this behavior, since this is the purpose of this news report (see title). Her question then, mostly addresses the audience (implied by *us* in *will you tell us*) concerning anti-/pro-masking as a social behavior. Moreover, social deixis in Greek is already evident in the conjugation of the verb (*δεν φοράτε* being marked for second person plural). Thus, the addition of the pronoun *Εσείς* serves to explicitly mark and single out 'the other'.

R's positioning therefore assesses the use of the mask as a norm and evaluates W1's behavior as divergent from the norm. This results into constructing a binary distinction, the other part of which is *me*, *us*, or *other passengers* who wear a face mask. Taking into consideration the macro-contextual (pandemic) and spatiotemporal parameters (bus, crowded, social distancing not possible) of the conversation is important here. The event is situated after the second Greek lockdown, when wearing a mask had been imposed by the government as a prevention measure in public spaces under threat of a fine. Mask wearing is therefore assessed as expected state-regulated behavior in this context –a current convention for using public space– and W1's behavior is perceived as a violation of politic behavior; therefore, masking is perceived as the socially unmarked *emergent* politic behavior and anti-masking is constructed as impolite behavior.

On the other hand, in lines [2], [7], [9] and [15], W1 (*I*, *me*, *my*) appears to classify face mask wearing as impolite social behavior (*I am offended by the use of the mask*), in contradistinction to R's classification. W1 actually negotiates what should be

identified as politic behavior. She asserts that she does not believe in coronavirus, thus resisting what has been identified as a "pandemic" since March 11th, 2020 on a global level by the World Health Organization. Therefore, not only does she question measures and authority (*all these measures*, in an elliptic clause of low affinity), she also evaluates face masking as an offense, denying its use as part of politic behavior, as part of performing consideration for the other. Consequently, she constructs face mask wearing as non-politic behavior, indeed as impolite and offensive behavior (*offended*). Disbelief in coronavirus is used as the reason why W1 questions measures and therefore denies face mask use as offensive. This positioning addresses the pandemic as an ideological issue that draws on matters of belief (*believe*) and as a matter of biopolitics (*measures, protection of life, wait till they get vaccinated*). Henceforth, we use the label "mask deniers" to refer to commenters who identify with W1 and are, therefore, considered to be in-group members who engage in –and shape– "anti-masking" rhetoric.

Based on her *individualistic perspective*, W1 in line [15] provides options for one's social behavior, in case they fear for their lives. Staying at home, going out with or without a mask, and waiting to get vaccinated are some of the sociospatial[5] alternatives provided in anti-masking rhetoric. Fear for one's life due to possible exposure to the virus and risk of virus infection as the reason to wear a face mask do not inform the mask denier's social behavior. Since she does not believe in the existence of coronavirus, she experiences no sense of fear or risk. The topos of definition relates to questioning the existence of coronavirus that may further be explained as redefining coronavirus as a rumor, a fraud, a biopolitical experiment or a conspiracy theory, as it appears in Facebook commentary. This is constructed discursively as an instance of free will to regulate one's body (*whatever they want* [15]) suggesting alternative options that refer to certain spaces while reflecting lack of empathy for out-group members, for those who believe and therefore fear for their health and use a face mask.

Next to W1 –one seat away– is an older woman (W2) with a non-standard translingual accent (probably of migrant background) wearing a cloth mask that covers her nose and mouth who also engages in the dialogue interrupting W1. W2 in line [3] addresses W1 in second person singular form, using simple future tense with high affinity to perform an accusation (*you are going to infect yourself and others as well* [3]). In this case, the second person implied by the morphology of the verb shows that *you* and *others* may get infected due to not wearing a face mask. It is inferred that W2 is self-excluded from this process since she is wearing a mask. Further on, in [6] she employs the inclusive first person plural pronoun *we* and uses a deontic modal (*must*) to refer to mask wearing as social behavior that needs to be universally observed, indexing a *pro-social/solidarity perspective*. W2 as a social actor is thus identified as a "pro-masker". Based on her "pro-masking" positioning, she engages in this social practice and argues in favor of the face mask as well.

In line [8], W2 repeats W1's words (*You don't believe* [8]), apparently accepting this phrase as a proposition. She then recontextualizes this phrase in a causal clause (*Because you don't believe* [8]) that explains the consequences of W1's positioning

[5] Drawing on the sociospatial perspective in urbanism research and perceiving the body as "topia, utopia-generator and embodied heterotopia" as proposed by Roux & Belk (2018), I use this term here to refer to spatial practices that relate to regulation of one's body on a social level.

for others. She thus implicitly evaluates anti-masking as an anti-social practice (*you do harm to other people* [8]). Using present tense (*do harm* [8]) she indexes high affinity (categorical modality) and commitment to the proposition, avoiding a conditional that would imply *harm* as a possibility, and presenting it as a process which W2 is certain is already taking place. Therefore, anti-masking is discursively constructed here as harmful. Masking, then, becomes an act of self-protection from mask deniers. Anti-masking is perceived as an infectious social practice/process and mask deniers as the disease. *Κακό/Harm* mentioned in an indefinite way in line [8], it is only further specified in the reporter's words in line [12] as related to another passenger's fear (for one's health/life); anti-masking is thus construed as lack of empathy for the feelings of others (see Table 3 for an overview of anti-/pro-masking rhetoric elements identified in this section).

Anti-masking rhetoric elements *(social actors, phenomena, processes)*	***Pro-masking rhetoric elements*** *(social actors, phenomena, processes)*
I/you (Individuals) [*individualistic approach*]	We (society < people & government) [*pro-social approach*]
Deniers of the mask [*in-group members, group "Anti-Maskers"*]	Maskers [*out-group members, group "Pro-Maskers"*]
Disbelief in coronavirus (construct out-group members as believers)	Respect science/laws (accept coronavirus as a premise)
Offense/offended (condition related to ideology, pandemic as a political issue)	Fear/afraid (condition related to health, the pandemic as a biomedical issue)
Civil right/free will	Measures/obligation/obedience
Masklessness as a rightful movement across spaces (out/bus/home)	Use of face mask as a precondition for regulated sociospatial practices
Face mask use by others	Face mask/vaccine
Lack of empathy	Solidarity/self-protection

Table 3: Anti-/Pro-masking rhetoric elements

4.2 Assemblage rhetoric on face masking in Facebook commentary

In this section, we examine how metaparticipants perform evaluations of pro-/anti-/masking behaviors using examples of pro-masking and anti-masking rhetoric. We present them in pairs of counter-arguments posted by various Facebook users drawing on the same discourses and comparing how they are performed discursively in this CMC micro-context.

Anti-masking

[17a] Μπράβο! Καλά κάνεις ! Όποιος φοράει καλά σαράντα![6]

[17a] Well done! You are doing very well! Whoever wears one, have a good forty days!

[6] Original spellings have been retained.

Pro-masking
[17β] Μακάρι ΜΕΘ
[17b] May you end up in the ICU (Intensive Care Unit)

In the two previous examples, both comments, performed as expressives, draw on health (care) discourse to address the implications of using or refusing to use a face mask, respectively. Interestingly, face mask use as a practice is approached as life threatening, as a matter of life and death, in both cases.[7] Specifically, in [17a] the Facebook user, addressing W1 in the second person singular, approves of her stance (W1 as the deictic center, referent). He performs the exclamation *Bravo* as a speech act to express approbation/approval, i.e., to make known his feelings and attitudes about a state of affairs which the illocution presupposes (see Makri-Tsilipakou 2001: 148).[8] He goes further on to address out-group members performing malediction. *Καλά σαράντα!/Have a good forty days!* is usually uttered as a wish for women who have just given birth to their child or refers to the memorial service held forty days after somebody's death in the Greek Orthodox tradition. The commenter interdiscursively recontextualizes this morbid utterance here in an ironic way to imply that using the mask foreshadows their death. Face mask use here is related to death in a causal way; using the mask (*Whoever is wearing one*) means they are already dead, so that after forty days we may attend their memorial.

Likewise, in [17b] the commenter uses an elliptical clause including an interjection and one of the most widely used lexical items that has entered media and public discourse, the acronym ICU. Performing malediction again (with a morbid curse), the commenter wishes W1 to experience the Intensive Care Unit; prompting W1 to experientially discover the utility of face mask use, with the overall aim to review her perspective on coronavirus. Therefore, denying the face mask is related to getting infected and requiring health care so as to review one's perspective on the pandemic.

Anti-masking
[18a] Μπράβο, στην κοπελιά!!! Όποιος θέλει, μπορεί να φοράει και 7 και 10 μάσκες για να προστατευθεί!!! Άλλωστε οι ίδιοι μας έλεγαν πως δεν προστατεύει η μάσκα!! Τι έγινε άλλαξε η λειτουργία του ανθρώπινου οργανισμού μέσα σε 5 μήνες;;

[18a] Good for the girl!!! Whoever wants, they may wear 7 and 10 masks in order to get protected!!! Besides they themselves used to tell us that the mask does not protect!! What happened has the function of the human body changed within 5 months??

In example [18a] the commenter approves of W1's behavior. Extended use of exclamation marks intensifies her comment. She draws on public health discourse

[7] See for example relevant articles trying to reassure people that it is safe to use masks. "It is important for the public to know that the discomfort related to the mask should not lead to unsubstantial concerns about safety [..]. The public should not believe that masks kill" (https://www.tofarmakeiomou.gr/el-gr/blog/ugeia-diatrofh/maskes-kanoun-kako-sto-anapneustiko-susthma-).

[8] *Bravo* seems to be an exclamation done in the spur of the moment, in recognition of agreeable behavior that requires personal agency (Makri-Tsilipakou 2001: 149).

and criticizes ironically the initial confusing messages reported by *them themselves*, a phrase that may index the government or the group of scientists that advised the government or both. Exaggerating the number of masks necessary to protect oneself indicates mistrust in government recommendations and mandates. Posing a rhetorical question presupposing a commonsensical negative (*the function of the human body does not change within 5 months*), she uses irony to refer to the fact that while face mask use has been variably pro-/im-posed (mask use as the variable), the human body is an invariant. Therefore, she questions the utility of face mask use, the government's rationale, and the decisions made following recommendations by experts. This may further imply the use of the human body as a biopolitical experiment. Scientism here appears as a result of conflicting messages communicated five months ago: *they themselves used to tell us that the mask does not protect!!*

Pro-masking

[18β] Καλά είπε η κυρία πιυ φορούσε. […] Δε πιστεύεις, απόλυτο δικαίωμα σου, παρ' ότι δε το τεκμηριώνεις επιστημονικά. Μη φοράς μάσκα. Μείνε όμως σπίτι σου. Δε σου χρωστάω τίποτα εγώ, να μη φοράς μάσκα και τα σταγονίδια της ανάσας σου, να πέφτουν πάνω μου και να τα εισπνεω. Εγώ που σε σέβομαι, φοράω μάσκα, για να μη σε "φτύνω" άθελά μου, με την ανάσα μου. Σ' αγαπώ και δε θέλω να κολλήσεις από' μένα, αν ώ μη γένητο, έχω κάτι...

[18b] Well said by the lady who wore one. […] You don't believe, your absolute right, although you do not substantiate it scientifically. Do not wear a mask. Stay at home though. I don't owe you, that you don't wear a mask and the drops of your breath, reach me and I inhale them. Me, respecting you, I wear a mask, so as not to "spit" on you by mistake, with my breath. I love you and I do not want you to get infected by me, if -God forbid- I have something…

On the other hand, in example [18b] the commenter identifies with W2 who wears a mask in the video. She addresses W1 using the second singular person, acknowledging that it is her right to not believe. But she points out that her argumentation lacks scientific substantiation. She recontextualizes W1's words with intertextual references in order to deconstruct them and pose counter-arguments using concessive conjunctions (*παρ' ότι/although*, *όμως/though*): it is your right to not believe-ALTHOUGH-you don't substantiate it scientifically, I accept that you do not wear a mask-BUT-Stay at home. Drawing on scientific, and more specifically on biomedical discourse, this commenter refers to *drops of breath* that may reach her and infect her. Employing public health discourse, she recognizes the ways in which coronavirus is transmitted and suggests that the alternative for mask deniers is to stay at home. While W1 proposes that pro-maskers stay at home if they fear for their life, this commenter proposes the same option for mask deniers. It appears that just one group can use public space each time, contesting the right to public space and to regulation of one's body in this context. Additionally, as an out-group member, the commenter defines her own behavior, face masking, as an act of respect, as an act of love and empathy (*I love you and I don't want you to get infected by me*).

Anti-masking
[19a] Καλά κάνει. Τα πιστεύω του καθενός είναι δικαιώματα του. Αυτοί πού επιβάλουν τα πιστεύω τους σε άλλους να κλείνουν το στόμα τους
[19a] She does well. Each one's beliefs are their rights. Those who impose their beliefs upon others they should shut their mouths

Pro-masking
[19β] Δεν μας ενδιαφέρει τι πιστεύεις. Δεν φοράς θα φας πρόστιμο. Τελος
[19b] We do not care what you believe. You do not wear (one) you will get a fine. End of story

In [19a] and [19b] the commenters draw on political discourse and use of the face mask appears as a matter of civil rights (topos of right) and law enforcement. In [19a] the female commenter approves of W1's social behavior and recognizes her decision as her right. She constructs out-group members as the ones who force their beliefs on others implying anti-democratic behavior. Suggesting that the others should *shut their mouths*. On the contrary, pro-masking discourse in [19b] is performed as an attack against anti-masking rhetoric, suggesting that mask deniers should be fined. In [19b] the male commenter, addressing W1 in the second person singular, overrides W1's argument concerning her perception of reality and points out what she has to expect punishment since she breaks the law. He intensifies his threat-like conditional using the lexical item *τέλος*/*end*, typically used to end a conversation abruptly –cf. *end of story*– while indexing that there is no room for negotiation and exchange of views on the topic.

Anti-masking
[20a] ΜΡΑΒΟ ΚΟΠΕΛΑΜΟΥ ΤΑ ΠΡΟΒΑΤΑ ΒΑΖΟΥΝ ΜΑΣΚΑ
[20a] WELL DONE MY GIRL THE SHEEP WEAR A MASK

Pro-masking
[20β] Μπροστά σας έχετε μερικά από τα ψεκασμένα σούργελα, φτύστετα, είναι ανέυθινα νούμερα
[20b] In front of you, you have some of the sprayed numbnuts/carnival freaks, spit on them, they are irresponsible jokes

Examples [20a] and [20b] draw on conspiracism. They both approach using or denying the face mask as a matter of political awareness that indexes (a) an act of conformism due to blind obedience ignoring "the truth" or (b) counterconformity, due to awareness of a certain "truth" (e.g., about *spraying*), respectively. Therefore, the man in [20a], after showing his approval of W1, comments on out-group members, describing the use of mask as a practice employed by sheep. Face mask use here is metaphorically presented as obedience to state governance; like sheep who follow the shepherd, maskers follow the government. Apart from the use of the word *sheep*, the commenter also intensifies the content by repetitive use of a sheep emoticon to multimodally denote his perception of pro-maskers as obedient animals who conform with disputed government regulations, while othering mask deniers as radicals resisting control. His ironic *WELL DONE* is performed through flaming

strategies, namely irony, insults, and "typographic energy" such as capital letters and multimodal elements (Jane 2015: 66).

In example [20b], the commenter uses hate speech, referring to mask deniers as *sprayed numbnuts/carnival freaks*. He calls for engaging in hate actions such as spitting on face masks deniers (as an iconic act of humiliation), since *they are irresponsible*. The topos of responsibility is activated here as part of political discourse, while the commenter's hate speech acts target a certain group identified as *sprayed* (cf. the chemtrails conspiracy theory, see Tingley & Wagner 2017). The *sprayed* are considered to perceive the pandemic as a conspiracy denying the validity and usefulness of any scientific data. The commenter employs flaming, which entails swearing (Moor et al. 2010: 1536) and trolling practices performing deliberate insensitivity through dehumanizing wording; for example, calling mask deniers *σούργελα/numbuts*, he uses the plural neuter grammatical gender that predominantly denotes animate non-human or inanimate entities in Greek. He also calls for violence (*φτύστετα/spit on them*), thus fueling an equally aggressive reaction (KhosraviNik & Esposito 2018).

Table 4 includes an overview of the competing arguments used by the two social groups discussed above to argue in favor of conflicting behaviors, thus co-shaping an assemblage rhetoric around (anti-/pro-)masking.

Discourses	***Competing arguments- Discourse topics***
Health (care) discourse	Anti-masking rhetoric: face mask use as life threatening Pro-Masking rhetoric: face mask use acceptance only if one's life is at risk, Intensive Care Units as institutions validating the existence of coronavirus through experiential processes (get treated in ICU)
Scientism vs Public health discourse/ Medical discourse	Anti-masking rhetoric: confusing information/conflicting public health messages, denying face mask use following the state's initial instructions Pro-Masking rhetoric: employing face mask use as a prevention measure and for protecting each other, solidarity
Political discourse	Anti-masking rhetoric: disbelief in coronavirus justifies the right to not wear a face mask Pro-Masking rhetoric: denying face mask use may be punished by penalty/law enforcement or vigilantism
Conspiracism	Anti-masking rhetoric: face mask use implies lack of political awareness, people as obedient sheep Pro-Masking rhetoric: face mask denial implies irresponsibility, people as "sprayed" conspiracists

Table 4: Assemblage rhetoric of (anti-/pro-)masking

5. Discussion: Constructing face covering as emergent politic behavior

Struggling over what is socially acceptable or unacceptable behavior (Watts 2003: 11), intertextual and interdiscursive strategies are employed by participants and metaparticipants, who draw on competing discourses to define politic behavior concerning the use of face mask in the public space of the bus during the pandemic. *Pro-maskers* employ mask-wearing practices and pro-masking rhetoric that is based on discourse topics such as (i) fear for their life based on public health discourse (medical/scientific discourse), (ii) respect for the law and government measures

(political discourse), (iii) solidarity to others based on public health discourse and political discourse, or (iv) combinations of the above. In addition, they appear to employ face masks as a prevention technology and accept the existence of a virus that is transmitted through air, in accordance with the findings of the relevant literature (see, e.g., Janzwood & Lee 2020). On the other hand, *mask deniers* do not wear a mask and engage in anti-masking rhetoric featuring discourse topics such as (i) exercising critique on government policies (political discourse), (ii) questioning scientific methods and medical authority (scientism, anti-scientific discourse), (iii) activating the imaginary conspiracy (Taguieff 2020), which provide alternative explanations for the pandemic and the use of masks as one of the measures which aim to control people as part of a hidden bigger plan (conspiracism, see Contiades 2020), as also observed in other studies (see for example Meeker 2021; Ryan 2021a, 2001b).

Both *pro-maskers* and *mask deniers* engage in the debate based either on logical reasoning (argumentation) to defeat opposing arguments or drawing on hate speech and verbal violence in order to attack members of the opposite ideology. This is achieved by applying (i) online hate tactics such as flaming and trolling, which include typographic energy, name-calling, swearing, malediction, and threats; (ii) multimodal texts such as pictures and emoticons that relate to the techno-discursive design of social media intensifying practices of online hate; and (iii) irony performed through rhetorical questions and intertextual references quoting interlocutors' words in order to deconstruct them and recontextualize their arguments. Polarization among Greek citizens in the public space is thus currently fueling aggressive reactions and heated arguments (cf. Tannen 1998), transferring conflictual behavior in digital mode through elements of the techno-discursive environment of CMC (KhosraviNik & Esposito 2018).

The two groups are thus constructed as either foolish people blindly obeying orders resembling sheep (obedience), as victims of biopolitics (othering of pro-maskers), or as "sprayed" conspiracists who are irresponsible and therefore anti-social (see, e.g., Romer & Jamieson 2020). Anti-/pro-masking is contested as an act of political awareness that aims to define politic behavior; consideration for the other is thus perceived as helping the other "see the truth". What is contested is consensus on "the truth" (Rotaru, Nitulescu & Cristian 2020) and therefore on the meaning of "solidarity" (see, e.g., Schismenos 2020; cf. Tomasini 2021[9]), which may be variably construed by in- and out-group members with the overall aim of eventually redefining politic behavior in the public space of a bus in a syndemic context. Confrontational discourse among in- and out-group members of mask deniers becomes part of the struggle for using public spaces and the right to self-regulation of one's body. Conflicting perceptions and enactments of face masking indicates lack of a shared socio-culturally established understanding of politeness through relevant conventions relevant to this pandemic-infused sociospatial practice.

Drawing on the example of Watts (2003) on queueing, recognized as a social activity subject to interaction order, I suggest that, as long as the syndemic is present, face mask wearing may be recognized as politic behavior and performed as

[9] Tomasini problematizes "solidarity" discussing heterotopian social ordering and the illusion of solidaristic strategies.

an act of solidarity and care for others. Each violation, verbal or nonverbal, may require "social payment" (Watts 2003: 29). Like in the case of queueing, the act of face mask denial, although not necessarily a verbal act, might provoke virulent verbal reactions. Masking, on the other hand, could not be overtly classified as polite behavior, unless we can point to an already established and entrenched interaction order which is violated.

In conclusion, on a micro-communicative level of interaction, face masking can therefore be understood as an *emergent* yet still contested form of politic behavior re-enacted through every new realization of "face masking" in the process of becoming institutionalized behavior situated in syndemic conditions. Digital recontextualizations of this negotiation among citizens may render visible and easily observable metaparticipants' evaluations of enactments of this social activity, which require further research. On a macro-discursive level, analyzing discourses of masking in a social media context contributes to the discussion that links the use of new media with irrational, postmodern perspectives (Rotaru, Nitulescu, and Cristian 2020). Nevertheless, the "rise of platform capitalism has occasioned a new phase which needs to be understood, if critique is not to be ensnared by a platform logic of rating and trolling" (Davies 2021: 86).

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank the anonymous reviewer and Costas Canakis for their valuable comments which have reshaped my text.

References

Afouxenidis, A. & Chtouris, S. 2020. "Introductory note: Discussing about the pandemic." [Προλογικό σημείωμα: Συνομιλώντας για την πανδημία]. *Επιθεώρηση Κοινωνικών Ερευνών* 154: 1-10.

Agamben, G. 2020. W*here are we? Epidemics as politics.* [Πού βρισκόμαστε; Η επιδημία ως πολιτική.]. Athens: Alistou Mnimis.

Archakis, A. 2020. "The disease of coronavirus and migration "flows" as national threats: Parallel reading from a sociolinguistic perspective and beyond." [Η νόσος του κορωνοϊού και οι μεταναστευτικές «ροές» ως εθνικές απειλές: Παράλληλες αναγνώσεις από μία κοινωνιογλωσσολογική οπτική και όχι μόνο]. In P. Kapola, G. Kouzelis, & O. Konstantas (eds.), *Topika ιθ΄: Depictions in times of danger.* [Τοπικά ιθ΄: Αποτυπώσεις σε στιγμές κινδύνου.]. Athens: Nissos, 405-412.

Calabrese, L. & Jenard, J. 2018. "Talking about news. A comparison of readers' comments on Facebook and news websites." *French Journal for Media Research [online].* Available at: https://frenchjournalformediaresearch.com/lodel-1.0/main/index.php?id=1684

Canakis, C. 2007. *Introduction to Pragmatics: Cognitive and Social Aspects of Language Use*. [Εισαγωγή στην πραγματολογία: Γνωστικές και κοινωνικές όψεις της γλωσσικής χρήσης]. Athens: Ekdoseis Eikostou Protou.

Chen, J. 2020. "The assemblage rhetoric of face masks in COVID-19 in China." *DRC*. Available at: https://www.digitalrhetoriccollaborative.org/

Contiades, X. 2020. *Pandemics, biopolitics and rights. The world after COVID-19* [Πανδημία, Βιοπολιτική και Δικαιώματα: Ο κόσμος μετά τον COVID-19]. Athens: Kastaniotis.

Davies, W. 2021. “The politics of recognition in the age of social media.” *New Left Review* 128: 83-99.

Deleuze, G. & Guattari, F. 1980. *A thousand plateaus: Capitalism and schizophrenia*. University of Minnesota Press.

Dolan, B. 2020. “Unmasking history: Who was behind the Anti-Mask League protests during the 1918 influenza epidemic in San Francisco?” *Perspectives in Medical Humanities* 5(19): 1-23.

Easton, M. 2020. “Coronavirus: Social media ‘spreading virus conspiracy theories.’” *BBC*, June 18.

Foucault, M. 2012. *The Birth of Biopolitics.* [Η γέννηση της βιοπολιτικής]. Athens: Plethron.

Henry, N. & Powell, A. 2018. “Technology-facilitated sexual violence: A literature review of empirical research.” *Trauma, Violence, & Abuse* 19(2): 195-208.

Herring, S. 2004. “Computer-mediated discourse analysis: An approach to researching online behaviour.” In S. A. Barab, R. Kling, & J. H. Gray (eds.), *Designing for Virtual Communities in the Service of Learning*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 338-376. Available at:
http://frenchjournalformediaresearch.com/lodel-1.0/main/index.php?id=1684

Huo, R., & Martimianakis, M. A. 2020. “A critical discourse analysis of face masks and its association with health construction in medical education.” *Canadian Medical Education Journal* 12(1): e186-e187.

Jane, E. A. 2015. “Flaming? What flaming? The pitfalls and potentials of researching online hostility.” *Ethics and Information Technology* 17(1): 65-87.

Janzwood, S., & Lee, M. 2020. “Behind the mask. Anti-mask and pro-mask attitudes in North America.” *Inter-Systemic Cascades: Pandemic Shock*, *Brief #6*: 1-19.

KhosraviNik, M. 2014. “Immigration discourses and critical discourse analysis: Dynamics of world events and immigration representations in the British press.” In C. Hart & P. Cap (eds.), *Contemporary Critical Discourse Studies*. London: Bloomsbury Academic, 501-519.

KhosraviNik, M. 2017. “Social media critical discourse studies (SM-CDS).” In J. Flowerdew & J. E. Richardson (eds.), *Handbook of Critical Discourse Analysis*. London: Routledge, 583-596.

KhosraviNik, M., & Esposito, E. 2018. “Online hate, digital discourse and critique: Exploring digitally-mediated discursive practices of gender-based hostility.” *Lodz Papers in Pragmatics* 14(1): 45-68.

Makri-Tsilipakou, M. 2001. “Congratulations and bravo!” In A. Bayraktaroglu & M. Sifianou (eds.), *Linguistic Politeness across Boundaries. The case of Greek and Turkish*. John Benjamins, 137-176.

Makri-Tsilipakou, M. 2019. “(Greek) im/politeness: Predication and evaluation practices.” In N. Topintzi, N. Lavidas & M. Moumtzi (eds.), *Selected Papers on Theoretical and Applied Linguistics from 23rd ISTAL*, 284-304.

McGowan, T. 2020. “The mask of universality: Politics in the pandemic response.” *Crisis Critique* 7(3): 229-243.

Meeker, J. K. 2021. “The political nightmare of the plague: The ironic resistance of anti-quarantine protesters.” In J. M. Ryan (ed.), *COVID-19. Volume II: Social consequences and cultural adaptations*. New York, USA: Routledge, 108-120.

Moor, P., Heuvelman, A. & Verleur, R. 2010. "Flaming on YouTube." *Computers in Human Behavior* 26: 1536-1546.

Mouchtouri, V. A., Agathagelidou, E., Kofonikolas, K., Rousou, X., Dadouli, K., Pinaka, O., Agathocleous, E., Anagnostopoulou, L., Chatziligou, Ch., Christoforidou, E. P., Chalntoupi, Th., Kalomoiris, L., Kapoula, Ch., Kokkinou, V., Constantinides, A., Konstantinou, P., Kostara, E., Kourentis, L., Lantou, A., Lempidakis G., Liasidi, P.N., Michalakis, C., Panagiotou, D., Panteliadou, F., Papadoulis, V., Papantoniou, G., Psatha, M., Ragias, D., Ringa, V., Syrakouli, A., Skoutari, A., Stergiadou, S., Theodorou, A., Tzika, V., Lagiou, A., Dardavesis, T., Prezerakos, P., Hadjichristodoulou, Ch. 2020. "Nationwide survey in Greece about knowledge, risk perceptions, and preventive behaviours for COVID-19 during the general lockdown in April 2020." *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health* 17, doi:10.3390/ijerph17238854. Available at: www.mdpi.com/journal/ijerph

Reisigl, M. & Wodak, R. 2009. "The discourse-historical approach." In R. Wodak & M. Meyer (eds.), *Methods of critical discourse analysis.* London: Sage, 87-121.

Ricca, M. 2020. "Don't uncover that face! Covid-19 masks and the niqab: Ironic transfigurations of the ECtHR's intercultural blindness." *International Journal for the Semiotics of Law*, https://doi.org/10.1007/s11196-020-09703-y

Romer, D. & Jamieson, K. 2020. "Conspiracy theories as barriers to controlling the spread of COVID-19 in the U.S.." *Social Science & Medicine* 263: 1-8.

Rotaru, I., Nitulescu, L. & Cristian, R. 2020. "The post-modern paradigm. A framework of today's media impact in cultural space". *Procedia-Social and Behavioural Sciences* 5: 328-330.

Roux, D. & Belk, R. 2018. "The body as (another) place: Producing embodied heterotopias through tattooing." *Journal of Consumer Research* 46(3): 483-507.

Ryan, M. 2021a. "COVID-19: Social consequences and cultural adaptations." In J. M. Ryan (ed.), *COVID-19. Volume II: Social consequences and cultural adaptations*. New York: Routledge, xxxviii-8.

Ryan, M. 2021b. "The SARS-CoV-2 virus and the COVID-19 pandemic." In J. M. Ryan (ed.), *COVID-19. Volume II: Social consequences and cultural adaptations*. New York: Routledge: 9-20.

Sanders, A., White, R. C., Severson, L. S., Ma, R., McQueen, R, Alcântara Paulo H. C., Zhang, Y., Erickson, J. S., & Benett, K. 2020. "Unmasking the conversation on masks: Natural language processing for topical sentiment analysis of COVID-19 Twitter discourse." *AMIA Joint Summits on Translational Science Proceedings*: 555-564.

Schismenos, A. 2020. *Elsewhere and Formerly: Time and absence.* [Το Αλλού και το Άλλοτε: Χρόνος και απουσία.] Aftoleksi (online). Available at: https://www.aftoleksi.gr/2020/03/25/to-alloy-to-allote-chronos-apoysia-ebook/

Sifianou, M. & Tzanne, A. 2010. "Conceptualizations of politeness and impoliteness in Greek". *Intercultural Pragmatics* 7(4): 661-687.

Sifianou, M. 2019. "Im/politeness and in/civility: A neglected relationship?" *Journal of Pragmatics* 147: 49-64.

Taguieff, P.-A. 2020. "Beyond the fears of the pandemic: Reinventing the nation-state?" *Occasional Papers* 1: 1-21.

Tannen, D. 1998. *The argument culture*. New York: Random House.

Tingley, D., & Wagner, G. 2017. “Solar geoengineering and the chemtrails conspiracy on social media.” *Palgrave Communications* 3(12): 1-7.

Tomasini, F. 2021. “Solidarity in the time of COVID-19?” *Cambridge Quarterly of Healthcare Ethics* 30: 234-247.

Tzanne, A. & Sifianou M. 2019. “Understandings of impoliteness in the Greek context.” *Russian Journal of Linguistics* 23(4): 1014-1038.

Watts, R. J. 2003. *Politeness*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

World Health Organization. 2020. “Advice on the use of masks in the context of COVID-19: interim guidance, 5 June 2020”. Available at: https://apps.who.int/iris/handle/10665/332293. License: CC BY-NC-SA 3.0 IGO.