

# 8 The pragmatic functions and the interpretations of the particle ‘taha’ (τάχα) in classroom discourse in the Cypriot-Greek dialect: the emergence of a new function

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## Abstract

This paper aims to present the pragmatic functions and the interpretations of ‘taha’ (τάχα) (a very commonly used particle in oral Cypriot-Greek interactions) as it is used in classroom discourse. The present study collected and analysed data from a three hour recording of the participants’ speech, and isolated 32 critical episodes that included ‘taha’. Students were also asked to note the functions of ‘taha’ through the use of a questionnaire, and to interpret its functions through a discussion. Following the pragmatic analysis proposed by Tsiplakou and Papapetrou (2020), the current research concluded that the basic meaning of ‘taha’ (‘supposedly/allegedly’) may perform several pragmatic functions, depending on the context. Among others, ‘taha’ functions as a pragmatic marker of (1) dissociation from the associated implicatures, (2) dissociation from the propositional content, (3) request for clarifications, and (4) a hedging device. In addition, ‘taha’ sometimes works as a pragmatic marker of emphasis to the propositional content, a function that has not been reported in the bibliography so far.

**Keywords:** Cypriot-Greek ‘taha’, pragmatic functions, oral interactions.

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## 1. Introduction

The aim of this paper is to present the pragmatic functions and the interpretations of ‘taha’ (τάχα) (‘supposedly/allegedly’) as it is used in classroom discourse (Cazden, 1988, pp. 53-79), in the programme ‘Greek for academic purposes’, where participants used the Cypriot-Greek dialect.

Based on the above, this paper presents initially the lexical entry of ‘taha’ in six dictionaries and then the relevant research on it. Next, the phenomenon of language change is presented briefly.

‘Taha’ (τάχα) (‘allegedly/supposedly’) is very frequent in oral use in the Cypriot-Greek dialect, especially by teenagers (Tsiplakou & Papapetrou, 2020). From a pragmatic point of view, ‘taha’ is considered as a particle (Pavlidou, 1989, p. 327) or as a pragmatic marker (Tsiplakou & Papapetrou, 2020). In Modern Greek dictionaries, ‘taha’ is an adverb meaning ‘supposedly/allegedly’ used by a speaker who considers the content of a statement as non-real. It is used in narrations, reported speech, questions, and declaratives (Charalambakis, 2014, p. 1566; Institute of Modern Greek Studies, 2003, p. 1326; Mpampiniotis, 2002, p. 1744). It also appears as an adjective ‘taha mou’ (τάχα μου) (fake) (Institute of Modern Greek Studies, 2003, p. 1326), and ‘ton taha’ (τον τάχα) (someone who pretends to be important or magnificent) (Mpampiniotis, 2002, p. 1744), while in other cases it adds an ironic meaning to ‘allegedly/supposedly’. In some contexts, ‘taha’ expresses a speaker’s query or interest (Charalambakis, 2014, p. 1566; Institute of Modern Greek Studies, 2003, p. 1326; Mpampiniotis, 2002, p. 1744), while elsewhere it is equivalent to ‘perhaps’/‘maybe’ (ίσως) (Charalambakis, 2014, p. 1566; Institute of Modern Greek Studies, 2003, p. 1326).

‘Taha’ also appears as ‘tahates’ (τάχατες) or ‘tahamou’ (τάχα μου). Triantaphyllides (1978, as cited in Pavlidou, 1989, p. 327) in his grammar calls a set of little words in Modern Greek including ‘taha’ hesitation adverbs, and claims that their function can be accomplished by the conjunctions ‘μη’, ‘μήπως;’ (can it be that...?/ by any chance?), while Tzartanos (1953, as cited in Pavlidou, 1989, p. 327) calls ‘taha’ a particle, which refers to something that is imaginary.

Cypriot-Greek dictionaries (Yiangoullis, 2009, p. 464; Yiangoullis, 2014, p. 532) treat ‘taha’ mainly as an adverb, meaning ‘allegedly/supposedly’, or ascribe to it the meanings of ‘forsooth’, ‘apparently’, ‘lest’, ‘as thought’ (Papaggelou, 2001). It is worth mentioning that in many Cypriot-Greek dictionaries (Lexicography of the Cypriot dialect, database<sup>2</sup>; Hadjipieris & Kapatas, 2015; Petrides, 2016; Hadjioannou, 2000; Yiangoullis, 2002), the lexical entry of ‘taha’ and its variations are absent.

### 1.1. Literature review

There is little literature concerning ‘taha’ in both Standard Greek and the Cypriot-Greek dialect. Pavlidou (1989, pp. 316, 318), disagreeing with Triantaphyllides (1978), states that not all the members of this set of linguistic items (including ‘taha’) express hesitation on the part of the speaker, adding that those items differ in a syntactic, pragmatic, and semantic point of view. Adopting the terminology ‘particle’, suggested by Tzartzanos (1953), Pavlidou (1989) points out that ‘taha’ has a metacommunicative function as a result of its semantic effect by which it “reverses the truth value of the sentence” (p. 327).

Studying ‘taha’ in Modern Greek informal conversations and written prose, Ifantidou (2000, pp. 119-144) states that when ‘taha’ is used with its evidential meaning (‘maybe’, ‘it seems’, ‘apparently’<sup>3</sup>) the speaker’s commitment to the proposition expressed is reduced. However, in some contexts, ‘taha’ is used as an expression of implicature. Furthermore, she presents the account of Pavlidou (1989), who states that (1) rather than speaker’s hesitation, ‘taha’ expresses an indirect and subjective certainty; (2) in interrogatives, ‘taha’ turns a genuine request for information into a rhetorical question and, consequently, it functions as an indirect assertion that the action which is described in the question will not happen, taking the meaning ‘I doubt’; (3) in other cases, ‘taha’ is interpreted as ‘I wonder’, ‘I express doubt as to...’; while (4) in imperatives,

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2. Λεξιλογική βάση δεδομένων κυπριακής διαλέκτου [Lexicography of the Cypriot dialect, database]: <http://lexcy.library.ucy.ac.cy/>

3. When ‘taha’ carries the meaning of apparently, it is associated with hearsay.

‘taha’ could be equivalent to ‘pretend to perform A’ or ‘I doubt indirectly that P’ or ‘I do not really ask you to perform A’. Those interpretations lead to the conclusion that in imperatives, ‘taha’ is an indirect request that the interlocutor should merely pretend to make. Finding Pavlidou’s (1989) account of ‘taha’ problematic, Ifantidou (2000) argues that there is little evidence on the semantic nature of ‘taha’ in that study as well as insufficient analysis on the double function of the word (which is sometimes interpreted as an evidential particle and sometimes as a hearsay particle). Based on Wilson and Sperber’s (1994) relevance theory<sup>4</sup>, she proposes an alternative analysis, in which:

“taha is a procedural marker which directly encodes weak evidential information, i.e. something like the meaning ‘it seems’. As a weak evidential, it affects the strength of the assumption communicated (and hence the recommended degree of commitment to the proposition expressed). The hearsay, and other implicatures communicated, are pragmatically derived from its evidential meaning. On its hearsay interpretation, it makes the ground-floor assertion to which it is attached as a case of interpretive rather than descriptive use. In both cases, it alters the truth-conditional status of the ground-floor assertion to which it is attached and will be perceived as making an essential contribution to truth conditions. Which interpretation (evidential or hearsay) the hearer is intended to recover, or does in fact recover, is determined by considerations of the relevance” (p. 120).

In a later research, Ifantidou (2005, pp. 386-387) concluded that the evidentials that are more complex from a syntactic point of view (i.e. ‘it seems that/to me’) are acquired earlier than the evidentials which are syntactically less complex (i.e. ‘τάχα’/ ‘δήθεν’). Extending Ifantidou’s (2001) conception,

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4. Relevance theory (Wilson & Sperber, 1994) is a cognitive approach, according to which the communication process involves: a) encoding, transfer, and decoding of messages, and b) other elements, including inference and context. In order to understand and interpret an utterance, the hearer needs not only to know the meaning(s) of a sentence/word. On the contrary he/she needs to infer what was implicitly conveyed, to decide if the utterance was literally, metaphorically, or ironically intended etc. Thus, “every utterance creates an expectation of relevance in the hearer, with the preferred interpretation being the one that best satisfies that expectation of relevance” (Wilson & Sperber, 1994, p. 85). The information is relevant to the hearer if it interacts in a certain way with his/her existing assumptions about the world. The new information may confirm or strengthen his/her existing assumptions. In cases where the new assumption contradicts the old one, the weaker is abandoned.

Tsiplakou and Papapetrou (2020) reached the conclusion that some functions are shared between the Cypriot-Greek ‘taha’ and the Standard Greek ‘taha’. More specifically, in both varieties, ‘taha’ functions as an evidential/hearsay particle, disputing the factuality of the proposition. In questions, it has the function of ‘maybe’ and ‘perhaps’, while in imperatives it is equivalent to ‘pretend to’. Moreover, in declaratives, ‘taha’ does not necessarily express a dissociative speaker’s attitude but carries out an evidential/hearsay function, related to the speaker’s attitude toward the source of the evidence. ‘Taha mou’ (τάχα μου) (a variation of ‘taha’) in declaratives indicates that the speaker does not endorse the truth or the factuality of the proposition in its scope.

Apart from the above-mentioned functions, shared in the two Greek varieties, the researchers showed convincingly that the Cypriot ‘taha’ has some extra functions, since it can be a pragmatic marker of dissociation, not from the propositional content, but from associated implicatures, therefore ‘taha’ is non-truth functional. In addition, their study revealed that in questions, ‘taha’ functions as a marker used by the speaker to ask of the interlocutor to expand on and clarify his/her statement, while simultaneously he/she questions the validity of the possible explanations. Moreover, in imperatives, in some cases ‘taha’ is related to clarifications only at first blush, while its substantial function is to indicate a repetition of the interlocutor’s utterance by the speaker. Focusing on the ‘young taha’ (used mainly by adolescents) the researchers claimed that it is not just mere filler used for conversational purposes. On the contrary, it could be considered as an innovative speech mark since it can only be found in youth speech. Consequently, ‘young taha’ is not as different as it seems to adult ‘taha’. Based on the above, the researchers concluded that Cypriot ‘taha’ (both in its ‘adult’ and ‘young’ version) has a metarepresentational use, namely it marks the use of the proposition in its scope (a set of implicatures of the proposition expressed, which the speaker does not endorse) as attributive or metarepresentational. Thus, ‘taha’ allows for suspended speaker commitment or non-endorsement. Furthermore, ‘taha’ indicates a metarepresentational use of the speaker’s own utterances and thoughts. Based on the above-mentioned, the researchers suggested the investigation of a full semantic ‘bleaching’ of ‘taha’ over time.

## **1.2. The phenomenon of language change**

The phenomenon of language change happens macroscopically, and it is a universal, normal, and continuous process, resulting in all languages. The effect of social factors on language change have been proven by sociolinguistic theories (Lyons, 2001, pp. 204, 234-240), shedding light on the phenomenon as a part of the wider natural world change, not as a matter of progress or of the language fading away (Aitchison, 2001, p. 4). On the contrary, Nikiforidou (2002, p. 102) points out that the language of a generation is never the same with the language of the previous or the following generations.

In light of the above, the students' frequent use of 'taha', while speaking the Cypriot-Greek dialect, and its several contextual functions were noted and researched by the author during the past two years. The research question is as follows: how many and what functions does 'taha' take in the participants' Cypriot-Greek oral speech?

## **2. Method**

### **2.1. The participants**

Twenty-nine first-year university students of the Cyprus University of Technology Language Centre participated in the research. The 29 participants were 17 males and 12 females. Apart from one student of Greek origin, the rest of the participants were all Cypriot-Greeks, having the Cypriot-Greek dialect as their mother-tongue.

### **2.2. Data collection**

The current study was conducted during a period of 13 weeks. The aim was to examine the pragmatic functions of the Cypriot-Greek 'taha' as it was used in the field of classroom discourse. The students were informed of the researcher's intention to study their oral interaction in classroom discourse, without being

given any details about the focus of inquiry to avoid influencing their speech. The next step involved describing the method the researcher intended to follow (video recordings and field notes), as it is proposed by Baynham (2002, p. 320) and Filias (2003, pp. 97-98). The second step involved the students signing a consent form for their participation in the research and being informed about the ethics behind the study. In order to confront the problems created by IRE/F scheme (Chafi, Elkhouzai, & Arhlam, 2014, p. 103), the 32 critical episodes included in the research were drawn from the parts of 18 lessons called ‘10 minutes of free discussion’. During that time, the students were given the opportunity to discuss lesson-related issues.

The researcher’s role in this process was restricted, participating in the discussion only after she was called by the students. Lessons were video-recorded, and three hours of oral speech were collected out of which 32 critical episodes were isolated. Then, a questionnaire that incorporated the 32 critical episodes in their context (the phrase included ‘taha’ and both its previous and next phrase, accompanied by the topic of the conversation) was developed by the author. The students were asked to note the functions of ‘taha’ according to their opinion, by answering ‘open-ended questions’ (Filias, 2003, pp. 147, 154-155). The post-questionnaire data analysis discussion aimed to help students interpret the functions they had attributed to ‘taha’ during the questionnaire completion.

### **3. Results and discussion**

Data analysis revealed that ‘taha’ appeared 35 times in the 32 critical episodes that were isolated from the three hour oral exchanges, having several functions according to the context.

#### **3.1. Indicative results of the questionnaire**

The questionnaire was given intentionally to the 29 participants in order to ascertain how the users themselves interpret their own language choices. The

participants interpreted the functions of ‘taha’ in their own utterances using the following: ‘no meaning’ (in 30 critical episodes, 336 times), ‘allegedly/supposedly’ (in 28 critical episodes, 163 times), ‘for example/let’s say’ (in 29 critical episodes, 145 times), ‘namely/that is to say’ (in 16 critical episodes, 81 times), ‘namely?/what do you mean?’ (in 16 critical episodes, 81 times), ‘that’ (in 4 critical episodes, 39 times), ‘in order to’ (in 5 critical episodes, 35 times), ‘emphasis’ (in 6 critical episodes, 27 times), ‘certainty’ (in 2 critical episodes, 9 times). They all interpreted ‘tzie taha?’ as ‘so what?’ What is interesting is that they ascribed to ‘taha’ several functions depended on the contexts and more specifically, depended on their attitudes/thoughts toward the propositional content or the associated implicatures.

### **3.2. Indicative content discussion post-questionnaire completion**

After the questionnaire completion by the students, an interesting discussion unfolded. Most of the interpretations of ‘taha’ as a word devoid of content (as it was stated in the questionnaire 336 times) were recanted, by phrases/words such as ‘lack of certainty’, ‘disbelief’, ‘irony’, ‘indifference’, ‘unawareness’. Also, many of the questionnaire’s statements were enlightened, e.g. the participants explained that they used ‘taha?’ as equivalent to ‘namely?’ (δηλαδή;), as a word that asks from the interlocutor to proceed to clarifications or explanations. Regarding their statements that ‘taha’ somehow works as ‘that is to say/namely/for example’, an assertion emerged: in specific contexts, ‘taha’ works as a hedging device, ‘protecting’ the speaker from potential face-threatening acts.

Another interesting fact is that many of the students mentioned they used ‘taha’ in an incompatible way, which they found to be very amusing. Among their reactions were “Oh my God! I say ‘taha’ with no reason!”, “I don’t know why I said ‘taha’, it doesn’t make sense”, “I wanted to say ‘must’, ‘taha’ means that I don’t believe him”. This is probably due to the fact that the participants were influenced by the power of the dictionaries and the meanings they ascribed to it.

### 3.3. The results of the pragmatic analysis

A deeper analysis based on the method proposed by [Tsiplakou and Papapetrou \(2020\)](#) proves that not only did the participants use ‘taha’ in a compatible way, ascribing to it several pragmatic functions, but they indeed used it based on (1) the desirable speech acts they wanted to perform, and (2) their own attitudes/ thoughts toward the propositional content or the associated implicatures.

Table 1. Conversation about students’ duties in group work

S1	Γιατί εμ με έπκιαες τηλέφωνον εχτές; Why didn't you call me yesterday?
S2	Είπεν μου ο Μάριος <b>τάχα</b> εν ημπορείς. Marios told me <b>taha</b> you can't.
S1	Όι μάνα μου... Oh, my God...

In the above utterance ([Table 1](#)), S1 asks her interlocutor S2 why he did not call her the previous day (to study together). He answers that he did not because Marios told him that ‘taha’ she could not study with him. Assuming that ‘taha’ is used by S2 implying that Marios lied to him is problematic, since almost all the participants stated in the questionnaire and during the discussion that Marios indeed told the truth. Considering the above, ‘taha’ can be seen as a pragmatic marker of dissociation (not from the propositional content) but from associated implicatures, connected to the suspicion of S2 that S1 intentionally let Marios believing that she could not study with S2 (insincerity). Another potential analysis is that ‘taha’ works as a hedging device, ‘protecting’ the speaker (S2) and mitigating potentially face-threatening acts (see [Tsiplakou & Papapetrou, 2020](#), ‘young taha’). In other words, it could be interpreted as an index through which the speaker (S2) excuses himself for not calling S1. This ‘bipolarity’ indicates that these examples need further investigation.

Table 2. Conversation about the decoding of the ‘hidden meanings’ in a journalistic article

S1	Κυρία, <b>τάχα</b> τζείνον με τα «κρυμμένα νοήματα» εν το κατάλαβα. Mrs., I didn't understand <b>taha</b> the part with the ‘hidden meanings’.
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T	Θυμηθείτε τον Τριβιζά τζαι το αόρατον πράσινον καγκουρό του. Please remember Triviza and his green invisible kangaroo.
S2	<u>Τάχα</u> οι αόρατες λέξεις; Να μπουν τούτον; <u>Taha</u> the ‘invisible words’? What is that?
T	Να ξαναδούμεν τον Τριβιζάν; Shall we study again Triviza?

In **Table 2**, the first speaker uses ‘taha’ as a marker requesting a clarification regarding the ‘hidden meanings’, therefore ‘taha’ does not work as an evidential/hearsay particle, or as a marker of dissociation from the propositional content. On the contrary, it seems that it works as a shield protecting the speaker from being ‘exposed’ for not understanding the ‘hidden meanings’ (face-threatening acts). Consequently, it works as a hedging device. The second ‘taha’ included in the contribution of S2 implies that what follows (the ‘invisible words?’) is possibly the answer to S1 query and, at the same time, it is connected to his teacher scaffolding, “Please remember Triviza and his green invisible kangaroo”. Simultaneously, the question mark at the end of the phrase (“Taha the invisible words?”) in combination to the later question, “What is that?”, indicates that ‘taha’ works as a hedging device, expressing hesitation, protecting S2’s face from a possible wrong connection between the ‘hidden meanings’ and the ‘invisible words’, and waiting for a confirmation by the teacher while he is not sure what the ‘invisible words’ are.

Table 3. Conversation about the strategies used in order to discover the irrational purpose in a journalistic article

S1	Ποιος έβαλες ότι εν ο σκοπός του αρθρογράφου; What did you write as the writer’s purpose?
S2	Ότι <u>τάχα</u> η πόμπα στην Βόρειον Κορέαν εν επικίνδυνη. That <u>taha</u> the bomb in South Korea is dangerous.

The above utterance in **Table 3** is quite impressive, considering that most of the participants stated, both in the questionnaire and discussion, that the speaker wanted to indicate that the bomb in South Korea is indeed dangerous. Most of them confirmed that ‘taha’ is a marker of emphasis to the speaker’s attitude toward the propositional content. Considering the factuality of the proposition, it is more than obvious that ‘taha’ is not a hearsay particle, it does not work

as a hedging device, nor as a marker of dissociation from the associated implicatures. On the contrary, it works as a marker that emphasises the propositional content, rendering it as completely factual. The speaker is totally committed to the factuality of the proposition and expresses his agreement to the writer’s purpose. This function of ‘taha’ (a marker of emphasis to the propositional content) has not been recorded in the bibliography so far, thus, it brings a new function to the surface.

Table 4. Conversation about the power and the influence of the media

T	Θέλεις να μοιραστείς μαζί μας την εμπειρία σου από την ομιλία που πήγες; Would you like to share with us your experience from the speech you attended?
S	Εμ μου άρεσεν καθόλου. Επέμεναν ότι <b>τάχα</b> το ραδιόφωνον επηρεάζει παραπάνω που την τηλεόρασην. I didn’t like it at all. He (the speaker) was insisting that <b>taha</b> radio influences more than television.

Filling out the questionnaire, the participants ascribed to ‘taha’ the function of ‘supposedly/allegedly’, the function of a marker of disagreement to the propositional content and stated that it is a word devoid of content. Analysing this critical episode (Table 4), it is obvious that ‘taha’ works as a marker of the speaker’s dissociation from the propositional content, disputing the factuality of the proposition (“radio influences [people] more than television”). Besides, this is supported by the previous utterance, which expressed the speaker’s discontent with the speech he had attended.

Table 5. Conversation about the difficulties of academic writing

S1	Πάντως η κυρία Αντρέου είπεν ότι <b>τάχα</b> είμαστε οι καλλύττεροι που τ’ άλλα group. Mrs. Andreou said that <b>taha</b> we are better than the other groups.
S2	Επήαμεν τα καλλύττερα, κυρία! We did better, Mrs!

According to the participants, the speaker in the above utterance uses ‘taha’ to emphasise the statement given by the lecturer (Table 5). The latter acknowledged

that the specific group, including the speaker, had a better performance than the other groups. Some other participants considered ‘taha’ as an index of certainty from the speaker’s part, regarding the meaning of the statement. Analysing the above critical episode, from a pragmatic point of view, undoubtedly, ‘taha’ emphasises the speaker’s agreement to the propositional content and the associated implicatures.

Table 6. Conversation regarding the date of the midterm exam

T	Την επόμενη βδομάδα εννά ’χουμε την ενδιάμεση μας. Next week we will have our midterm exam.
S1	Μα κυρία έχουμε ενδιάμεση με τον Στυλιανού. But, Mrs. we have a midterm with Stilianou.
S2	<b>Τζιαι τάχα;</b> Εν ημπορούμεν να τα κάμουμεν τζιαι τα θκυο; Να ποσπαζούμαστεν. <b>Tzie taha?</b> Can we do both? To get it over with.
T	Θα το συζητήσουμεν. We shall speak about this.

It is important to note that, while the participants were filling in the questionnaire, they interpreted ‘tzie taha?’ as a marker of disagreement to the previous utterance of S1 or as a marker of irony, considering ‘tzie taha?’ as equivalent to ‘so what?’ (Table 6). It is obvious that ‘tzie taha?’ works as a marker of dissociation not from the propositional content (The following week the students have a midterm exam in another lesson), but from the associated implicatures in S1’s utterance. S2 ironically disputes S1’s implicature that it is not feasible for the students to have two midterm exams in the same week, while he rejects in advance any possible argumentation/explanation. Besides, what follows (“Can we do both? To get it over with”) strengthens this function of ‘tzie taha?’.

Table 7. Conversation for the preparation of the students prior to the lesson

S1	Έπρεπεν <b>τάχα</b> να θκιαβάσουμεν ούλλον το PowerPoint. We <b>taha</b> should have studied all the PowerPoint.
S2	Είπεν μας έτσι πράμαν; Did she say such a thing?
S3	Ναι, στο προηγούμενον μάθημαν. Yes, in the previous lesson.

The participants' statements in the questionnaire about the specific function of 'taha' were various: 'namely', 'supposedly/allegedly', an index of obligation, an index of disagreement, and an index of emphasis to the propositional content are those with the highest frequency. However, considering that the students were, indeed, assigned with the specific presentation prior to the lesson, it is obvious that 'taha' cannot work as a dissociative from the propositional content, nor as an evidential/hearsay particle, indicating that the speaker does not endorse the factuality of the proposition. On the contrary, it works as a hedging device, protecting the speaker's face from threatening acts (i.e. to be exposed that she did not study the whole PowerPoint). What is interesting is that, when the specific student (S1) was later asked if she had studied the whole PowerPoint, she admitted to not studying even a slide of it (Table 7).

Data analysis also revealed the placing of 'taha' at the beginning, in the middle, and at the end of sentences. Furthermore, when 'taha' appeared in sentences which had the illocutionary force of a question, no participant interpreted it as carrying no meaning but as a marker through which the speaker asks the interlocutor to expand or clarify his/her statement (see also Tsipalou & Papapetrou, 2020) – sometimes disputing possible clarifications/explanations, but sometimes in a neutral attitude towards them. Finally, what should also be mentioned is the fact that, even though the students were neither aware of the speech acts theory (Austin, 1962), or of the relevance theory (Sperber & Wilson, 1986), in most cases they interpreted 'taha' based on its function in specific contexts, and they attributed to it (among others) the following: "It shows irony", "It stresses the meaning of the sentence", "It is equivalent to 'namely'", "Taha means for example", "Taha stresses the purpose of the speaker", "Taha shows certainty", "In this case 'taha' is the same as uncertainty".

## 4. Conclusions

There is little literature concerning 'taha' in Cypriot-Greek dialect (Papapetrou, 2017; Tsipalou & Papapetrou, 2020). In the current research, the participants used 'taha' in Cypriot-Greek oral speech frequently and spontaneously, deploying

its several functions depending on the context. During the conversation that followed the completion of the questionnaire, most of the participants changed their first interpretations of ‘taha’ into different ones. Probably the differentiation between the first (in questionnaire) and the second (in discussion) interpretation of ‘taha’ is connected to the fact that the participants spontaneously use ‘taha’, choosing one of its functions that is suitable to their attitudes/thoughts toward the propositional content or to the associated implicatures, but in their mind, the basic meaning that the dictionaries ascribe to ‘taha’ (‘supposedly/allegedly’) is more dominant. Another interesting conclusion is that out of 32 critical episodes, only three included ‘taha’ as a dissociative, non-endorsing of the truth or the factuality of the proposition. Briefly, ‘taha’ functions as a marker of dissociation from the associated implicatures, as a hedging device mitigating potential face-threatening acts, as a marker that requests clarifications/explanations regarding a previous utterance, and as a marker of dissociation from the propositional content. The above-mentioned conclusions agree with a previous study by [Tsiplakou and Papapetrou \(2020\)](#), according to which ‘taha’ marks the use of the proposition in its scope as attributive or metarepresentational. In the current research, ‘tzie taha?’ appears to work as a marker disputing the factuality of the proposition, implying an ironical attitude to it and being dissociative from the implicatures connected to the proposition. Finally, in the current study an additional function of ‘taha’ was revealed: in some contexts, it works as an index of emphasis to the propositional content, while in some other contexts it emphasises the associated implicatures. Considering this study as exploratory, it is believed that more research is needed.

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