

The development of future / modality markers: Evidence from Modern Greek dialects*

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This paper investigates the semantic / syntactic properties of various constructions occurring in the Modern Greek dialects that are formed on the basis of the future-referring / modal ‘periphrasis’ ‘tha + finite form’ and its numerous variants (e.g. ‘the na + finite form’). It highlights the wide dialectal variation exhibited with respect to the syntactic and semantic uses of ‘tha’, a phenomenon that had not been properly investigated. Moreover, this paper demonstrates the various semantic / syntactic ‘paths’, which a linguistic element such as ‘tha’ can follow in its development; these paths are shown to constitute a challenge not only for a theoretical account of language change in general (due to their complexity), but also –and more specifically– for generative syntax, mainly because of the variation observed even in the same dialect. Finally, the adequacy of the traditional criteria of dialectal differentiation is questioned, since it is argued that the inclusion of syntactic isoglosses would alter rather emphatically the borderlines between the Modern Greek dialects.

Keywords: Greek dialects, future / modality markers, combination of particles, syntactic variation, isoglosses

0. Introduction

The Standard Modern Greek (SMG) future / modality marker ‘tha’ has been recently the focus of attention of many scholars, in reference both to its synchronic properties (cf. e.g. Tsangalidis, 1999 among others) as well as its diachronic development from the rather controversial Medieval Greek periphrasis involving ‘thelo’ (cf. e.g. Joseph & Pappas, 2002 and Markopoulos, forthcoming). The interest in the diachrony of ‘thelo’ does not extend though to all stages of its development: on the contrary, it is mainly concentrated on the exact linguistic origin of the form, i.e. it covers the period up to its initial appearance in the texts of the ‘Cretan Renaissance’ (16th – 17th c.). The thorny issues associated with the developments of this period constitutes the main reason why little attention has been paid to subsequent developments regarding ‘tha’, that is *after* its appearance. Apparently, it has been tacitly assumed –but

not explicitly stated- that all major properties of the SMG 'tha' should presumably exist from its very first attestations.

This tacit assumption had not been put to the test of the data of the Modern Greek dialects, which could constitute the link bridging the 'Cretan Renaissance' and the SMG period. No comprehensive account has been given concerning the semantic and syntactic properties of 'tha' in the Modern Greek dialects, or even its morphological variants, for that matter. Only isolated comments in descriptions of specific dialects can be found (e.g. Pangalos, 1955), and these mainly refer to its morpho-phonological properties.

This paper aims to cover this 'gap' in the linguistic research of the future-referring periphrasis based on 'thelo / tha'. Its goal is three-fold:

- i) To highlight the extensive variation associated with the semantic and syntactic properties of this construction in the Modern Greek dialects
- ii) To investigate whether this variation can provide us with novel insights concerning the possible development of futurity / modality markers in general and
- iii) To discuss the possibility of syntactic isoglosses and their implications on constructing a plausible dialectal map.

Unless otherwise stated, all the data of this paper come from the Archive of the Academy of Athens. This database essentially constitutes the only source for oral material of dialectal origin, the philological descriptions aside. Obviously, it is not devoid of problems of various kinds: the material was collected at different periods of the 20th c., with the rare exception of some documents dating from the 19th c., and, consequently, is considerably distant from the late 'Cretan Renaissance' texts. Moreover, it does not allow for any quantitative analysis, as the abundance of relevant attestations is entirely dependent on extra-linguistic factors (e.g. the duration of the specific research trip, the number of speakers in certain areas etc.). Despite all these problems, it still represents as closely as possible the oral speech of various dialectal areas and constitutes the main source for our investigation.

Before proceeding, a comment on the term 'marker' is in place. In the relevant literature, the term 'grammatical marker' usually -albeit not necessarily- refers to a phonologically reduced element marking a grammatical notion / category (tense, aspect, modality, case etc.). As is evident, this definition has a distinct functional 'flavour', without saying much with regard to the morpho-syntactic status of such linguistic elements. From a morpho-syntactic point of view, 'markers' are considered clitics, affixes or often 'particles', a term as problematic as 'marker' itself (cf. Zwicky, 1985). For the purposes of this paper, I will use the term 'marker' rather loosely referring to its functional definition.

The paper is structured as follows: section 1 illustrates various uses of the 'thelo / tha' construction, in section 2 I focus on a number of these uses which are of theoretical interest, and in section 3 I discuss the importance of the

distribution of such constructions in the various dialectal areas, and their implications for the dialectal map of Greece.

1. Variation at a glance

Although the future / modality marker 'tha' is found in almost every Modern Greek dialect, there is extensive variation concerning its morphological form: its SMG form ('tha') is attested in almost every single dialectal area, even though it is impossible to tell from the existing material whether this should be attributed to the influence of SMG. Apart from this form, 'tha' is manifested in eight other variants, as illustrated below:

- a. θα (tha): Almost everywhere
- b. δα (da): Crete, Macedonia, Thrace, Lemnos, Paros...
- c. χα (ha): Rhodes, Macedonia, Cyprus...
- d. α (a): Crete, Symi, Rhodes, Chios, Kalymnos, Nisyros...
- e. άα (aa): Samothraki
- f. θθα (ththa): Chios, Kos
- g. τθα (ttha): Astypalaia
- h. σα (sa): Symi
- i. θι (thi): Lesbos, Tsakonia

The list is not exhaustive, as the morphological variation does not fall into my main focus of attention. It is worth noting, however, that more than one variant are attested in the same area: for instance, in Symi both 'α' ('a') and 'σα' ('sa') are attested, and in Rhodes both 'χα' ('ha') and 'α' ('a'). We will get back to this point in the discussion of the isoglosses and the dialectal map of Greece (section 3).

Our main interest, as already mentioned, lies in the semantic / syntactic properties of the constructions involving the 'thelo / tha' periphrasis occurring in the Modern Greek dialects. I have excluded from my investigation constructions attested in the most 'deviant' dialects, i.e. the dialects of South Italy, Pontos, Cyprus and Tsakonia, since the speakers of these dialects had minimum contact with other Greek-speaking populations, and therefore they represent an altogether different linguistic and extra-linguistic situation from the speakers of the majority of the Modern Greek dialects. Even by excluding these 'deviant' dialects, the interesting constructions involving 'thelo / tha' are numerous, the most prominent of which are exemplified below:

i. Negation + 'tha'

- (1) Dostona more pedi m' to gadro, **da** ton fag' gia! (Thrace)
Give-him kid mine the donkey, will-not.prt him eat..!
'My kid, give him the donkey, he won't eat it!

(2) Ane kami mia nerouxa sia ti brothesini, **da min** afisi mia elia!
(Crete)

If makes one storm like the day-before-yesterday, will not spare one olive-tree

“If it rains like it did the day before yesterday, all olive-trees will be destroyed”

ii. *Combination ‘na – tha’*

(3) Ma ontas dis kati goulia sto piato **na tha** tim piaso,
(Cr.)

But when see-2nd sing. some beetroot in-the plate that-subj. will-prt. it catch-1st s.

“But when you see in the plate some beetroots that I’m about to catch (?)...”

iii. *Combination ‘tha – thelo / prepei (= must)’*

(4) A **pao thelei** (Nisyros)

will-prt. go will-3rd sing.

“I will go”

(5) **Tha na stathike prepei** i nikokera ... (Crete)

will-prt. that-subj. stopped must the housewife

“The housewife must have stopped...”

iv. *Combination ‘tha – thanna’*

(6) **Tha tin edakasseth-thanna** (Symi)

Will-prt. her bit-must (?)prt.

“(She) must have bitten her ...”

v. *‘Tha’ as a conjunction*

(7) **Tha** buresu, than ertu (Imbros)

If can-1st sing., will-prt. come-1st sing.

“If I will be able to, I will come”

vi. *Epistemic ‘thelei’*

(8) Den ipige **thelei** (Kythera)

Not went must

“He probably has not gone...”

vii. *Deontic ‘thelo / thelei (impers.)’*

(9) T’ apogioma **thelis na potisis** to horafi (Peloponnese)

The afternoon should-2nd sing. that-subj. water -2nd sing. the field

“You must water the field in the afternoon”

viii. *Wishes*

(10) **Nathele se skotosoune** (Crete)
wish-prt. you-acc. kill-3rd pl.
“I wish they would kill you”

(11) **Makari as the bao** (Sifnos)
wish-prt. wish-prt. prt. go
“I wish I went...”

The constructions in (1-11) are representative of the wide variation of uses that the ‘thelo / tha’ periphrasis had acquired in various dialectal areas. This exemplification does not contain similar constructions involving the past form of ‘thelo’, namely ‘ithela’ (in its various morphological forms), which followed a different path of development and will not be discussed here.

A full account of all uses in the above list cannot be provided, as it lies well beyond the scope of this paper. Instead, in the next section, I will concentrate on the constructions (i-v) that arguably constitute the most interesting and also to an extent challenging uses of the ‘thelo / tha’ periphrasis.

2. A closer look

2.1 ‘Tha’ and other particles

2.1.1 The combination of ‘na-tha’

The relation between the SMG ‘subjunctive’ marker ‘na’ and the futurity / modality marker ‘tha’ has been extensively studied (cf. Roussou, 2000 for a recent syntactic analysis and an overview of previous analyses). What has mainly sparked this interest is the well-known fact that the two markers cannot co-occur in the same clause: in other words, even though ‘tha’ can follow various complementizers (such as ‘oti’), the combination ‘*na tha ertho...’ is ungrammatical. It has remained hitherto unnoticed though that the Cretan dialect depicts a different picture with regard to this combination. The example (3) in section 1 (repeated here as 12 for convenience) illustrates convincingly that such a co-occurrence is *grammatical* in the Cretan dialect:

(12) Ma ontas dis kati goulia sto piato **na** **tha** tim piaso
(Cr.)

But when see-2nd sing. some beetroot in-the plate that-subj. will-prt. it catch-1st s.

“But when you see in the plate some beetroots that I’m about to catch (?)...”

The considerable problems associated with the existing material (cf. Introduction), as well as the fact that the above example constitutes the only instance of this construction, could lead us to assume that this construction is not ‘authentic’, in the sense that it does not represent a feature of the actual spoken language of the area, but rather possibly a ‘performance’ error. Tempting as this conclusion might be, it is not correct, since similar instances are found in *Fortounatos*, a Cretan comedy of the 17th c., as shown in (13):

- (13) Apokoto ...tuti ti komodia mou ... **na** **tha** kathieroso
dare-1st s. this the comedy mine ... that-subj. will-prt. dedicate-1st sing.
“I dare....this comedy of mine... to dedicate...”
(*Fortounatos, dedic.*, 35-37)

The importance of such examples in this specific text is two-fold: firstly, this text was written in Crete, a fact suggestive of a diachronic continuation of such a pattern in the very same area, if we take the evidence in (12) into account; and secondly, the authenticity of the instances found in *Fortounatos* cannot be disputed, because we are lucky enough to possess a copy of this text written by the hand of its author, Foskolos (Vincent, 1980).

An issue immediately arises: what is the historical origin of this pattern and what can it tell us with regard to the diachronic development of the two markers? Regarding the former, suffice to say that the ‘na tha’ co-occurrence is not a novel formation of the 17th c., but merely a continuation of a wider pattern, already attested in the 6th c. (cf. Markopoulos, forthcoming), according to which future-referring periphrastic forms appear in contexts where the morphological Subjunctive would be expected¹, one of them being in complement clauses, as in (13). This pattern affected the ‘eho + Infinitive’ periphrasis as well as the ‘thelo’ periphrasis, and as a result instances involving ‘na the na...’, i.e. the immediate predecessor of ‘tha’, are found as early as the 15th c., in the writings of Falieros (Markopoulos, forthcoming). Obviously, such attestations constitute the origin of the pattern found in (13).

In these cases, the marker ‘na’ arguably functions exclusively as a complementizer, that is it does not convey any modal meanings which are provided by ‘tha’ (or ‘the na’ for earlier stages). This is more evident in (12), where the most natural interpretation is ‘na tha tim piaso = oti tha tim piaso’ and where SMG would indeed require ‘oti’ instead of the Cretan ‘na’.

If this assumption is correct, then the difference between SMG and the Cretan dialect could be captured as a difference in the semantic features of ‘na’:

in the latter, 'na' can occasionally appear without any –apparently- modal features, functioning as a complementizer, similarly to 'oti', while in SMG, this cannot occur, as 'na' has always a two-fold role in such contexts, i.e. complementizer and modal marker, hence the controversy regarding its exact status.

The previously unknown Cretan evidence challenges the account of the story of 'na' in the generative framework provided in Roberts & Roussou (2003), according to which 'na' was grammaticalized as features associated with it moved ever higher in the syntactic tree. Apparently, this account should be modified to capture the Cretan facts, which imply that 'na' could sometimes function solely as a complementizer or, in Roberts & Roussou's terms, could merge high in the domain of the left periphery at an earlier stage of its development, a possibility that was subsequently lost. A possible solution would be to postulate two different lexical entries for 'na' associated with partially different feature specification, even though such solutions de-associate the various historically related functions of one form. This issue is obviously linked with the development of the whole system of complementation of Greek, which can be partially clarified by the dialectal evidence, as manifested above.

2.1.2 'Tha' and negation

SMG has developed a straightforward pattern of negation with regard to 'tha' as opposed to 'na', according to which 'tha' is associated with the negative marker 'den', while 'na' is associated with the marker 'min', or schematically 'den tha' vs. 'na min'. This opposition has been considered central for the different status of these two particles, and for the syntax of SMG in general. In various Modern Greek dialects, though, different patterns of negation can be observed, offering us a 'glimpse' into possibly different 'grammars'. In what follows, I will present two such patterns and I will discuss their origin and significance.

i) 'da = den tha' (Macedonia + Thrace)

In the northern dialects, the negative marker 'den' can be incorporated with 'tha', giving the form 'da', as in (1), repeated here as (14):

(14) Dostona more pedi m' to gadro, **da** ton fag' gia! (Thrace)

Give-him kid mine the donkey, will-not.prt him eat..!

'My kid, give him the donkey, he won't eat it!

This incorporation could constitute the subsequent stage of development of the SMG situation, but is still unattested. Despite the well-known fact that these markers cluster together in SMG and do not allow any element to appear

between them, they have not yet showed any signs of incorporation. The phenomenon exemplified in (14) has no close parallel in the other dialects, and thus could be considered as a distinctive feature of the Northern dialects. However, parallels involving other constructions are attested, not only in the Cretan dialect (15), but also in Southern Italian dialects (16):

(15) *thoris to ipokimeno pa drapo ti muri tu?*

See-2nd sg. the scoundrel, that-will be-ashamed the face his?

“He is such a scoundrel that I will not be ashamed in front of him...”

(16) *Stativi attenti nommu caditi*

Be-2nd sg. careful not-part. fall-2nd sg.

“Be careful not to fall”

(Roberts & Roussou, 2003: 90)

In (15), the form ‘pa’ stands for the combination of the complementizer ‘pou’ and the marker ‘tha’. A different incorporation, but apparently the same mechanism that yielded ‘da’ in (14) is at work here. The Cretan example corroborates the validity of the evidence from the Northern dialects, because it suggests that a mechanism of incorporation affected ‘tha’ in different contexts, but resulted in similar forms. More evidence is needed in order to determine whether the fact that SMG lacks these forms provides any insights concerning either its syntactic or its phonological properties.

The example in (16) displays an almost identical development attested in the Southern Italian dialects: the marker ‘mu’, close equivalent to SMG ‘na’, can be incorporated not only with the negative marker ‘non’, as in the above example, but also with other elements (cf. Roberts & Roussou, 2003: 90-91). This cross-linguistic evidence implies quite straightforwardly that such incorporations are not peculiar to Greek, but should be probably considered as a development affecting futurity / modality markers as a class, if indeed these markers in Italian and Greek are representative of the same class of elements, an assumption far from self-evident, but plausible.

ii) ‘da / tha min = den tha’ (Crete, Asia Minor)

A more interesting pattern is occasionally found in Crete (2, repeated here as 17) and also Asia Minor (18), whereby ‘tha’ ‘selects’ / is followed by the negative marker ‘min’, a combination clearly ungrammatical in SMG:

(17) *Ane kami mia nerouxa sia ti brothesini,*

da min afisi mia elia!

(Crete)

If makes one storm like the day0before-yesterday, will not spare one olive-tree

“If it rains like it did the day before yesterday, all olive-trees will be destroyed”

(18) I Olga **tha min** erth (Asia Minor)

The Olga will-prt. not come

“Olga will not come”

This pattern has been noticed before, in relation only to the Cretan dialect, and two explanations have been already suggested: Kapsomenos (1958) argues that this construction originates from the Ancient Greek negation ‘oudami’, while Pangalos (1955) proposes that it comes from the ‘mixing’ of the negative patterns for ‘tha / da’ and ‘na’, i.e. from the mixing of ‘den da / tha’ and ‘na min’, without indicating though how and why this ‘mixing’ could have taken place. With regard to the former, it constitutes a rather over-simplifying account, linking an Ancient Greek negative marker with developments centuries after the specific linguistic element was productive. Pangalos’ approach is not very detailed, but there is some evidence that it might actually be partially correct: from a morphological point of view, ‘na’ and ‘tha’ could both surface as ‘a’ in certain dialectal areas (cf. Kontosopoulos, 2001 for evidence on ‘na’ and section 1 for ‘tha’). Their morphological overlap might have even been further facilitated by their semantic similarity, since ‘na’ could be used as a futurity marker from the Medieval period (cf. Horrocks, 1997), and continued to do so in some dialects as well, and certainly in some areas of Crete (Pangalos, 1955).

Although Pangalos’ explanation seems plausible on the light of the facts discussed, it could be hard pressed to account for the example in (18), where no phonological overlap between the two markers is apparent. I would like to suggest that two factors are significant for the emergence of this pattern: first, as is very well-known, ‘tha’ is itself the outcome of an incorporation process affecting ‘the na’, which would expectedly be negated by ‘min’, due to the presence of ‘na’. Therefore, the pattern ‘tha min’ could be simply seen as a residue of this historical development. And secondly, the close semantic affinity between ‘tha’ and ‘na’ must have facilitated the continuous existence of such a construction.

In any case, this negation pattern bears evidence in favour of a stage prior to that attested in SMG, whereby the different negation marking of ‘tha’ and ‘na’ is not yet consolidated and there exists variation between ‘den tha’ and ‘tha min’. In other words, it suggests a grammar in which the two markers had more in common than they have today in SMG. Even though further evidence is needed to support this view, it raises interesting issues with regard to the syntactic / semantic properties of ‘tha’ (and ‘na’) in previous stages or in certain dialects or both: did it have more modal (‘irrealis’) features, hence its ‘selection’ of ‘min’ and its ability, in syntactic terms, to merge higher in the tree, similarly

to 'na' in SMG? Why should this be and how could it be proved? And how and when did the situation in SMG emerge? These questions suggest possible subsequent stages of this research.

On the whole, the dialectal evidence reveals various stages of development that 'tha' (and very possibly 'na' too) passed through before reaching the stage attested in SMG, both in relation to the other modal marker 'na' and to the negative markers. Alternatively, one could argue that the dialects depict space-restricted developments that never gained ground in SMG and disappeared; under this view, the importance of the dialectal evidence lies solely in the documentation of possible developments for markers such as 'tha'. And while some more evidence will be discussed in the following sections, further research is needed to determine which one of the views corresponds more closely to the actual facts.

2.2 'Tha' + 'thelo': a challenging co-occurrence

As is well-known, the future-referring construction 'thelo / thelei (impersonal) na + Subj.', presumably the origin of the formation of 'tha', is still attested in various dialects (cf. Kontosopoulos, 2001 and Komninou, 1970, among others). On the other hand, it has remained hitherto unknown that a very similar construction, involving 'tha' (instead of 'na') and both the personal 'thelo' and the impersonal 'thelei' can be found, as illustrated in (20, 21) respectively:

(20) A **pao thelo** (Kastelorizo)
 will-prt. go will-1st sing.
 "I will go"

(21) **Da su to xrosto thelei** ke sto bzefti kosmo ke sto badotino
 (Crete)
 will-prt. you it owe will-imp. and in-the fake world and in-the eternal
 "I will be grateful to you both in this fake world and in the eternal one"

Importantly, this is not an isolated development, since it is attested in various areas: Crete, Paros, Naxos, Chios, Nisyros, Symi, Shinussa, Kastelorizo and Asia Minor. All these islands, together with the coast of Asia Minor, are situated in the South of the Aegean. It could be argued therefore that the construction illustrated above constitutes a spatially restricted feature, hence its absence from the Northern dialects.

As can be seen from the example in (20), it is occasionally quite difficult to determine whether the specific construction involves 'na' or 'tha', since both could surface as 'a'. The presence of 'tha' in this construction cannot

be questioned by virtue of examples such as (22), where both ‘na’ and ‘tha’ in their full forms are used side by side:

- (22) Martis in’, **th’ alaxi the, na kalokeresi the** (Chios)
March is, will-prt. change will-prt, that-subj. become-better will-prt
“It is March, so [the weather] will change, it will become better”

The construction with ‘na’, as already mentioned, is to be expected, as it continues the development that resulted in the formation of ‘tha’. The simultaneous use of a construction in two (or more) stages of its development is not surprising, since this situation is found in many instances of grammaticalization (Hopper & Traugott, 2003). On the other hand, the appearance of ‘tha’ is both surprising and interesting, in the sense that it realizes the following pattern:

- (23) Marker + Finite verb + Auxiliary (Marker²)

Apart from the apparent double marking of a specific grammatical category, such as futurity, (23) is exceptional as both the marker and the auxiliary come from the very same verb (namely, ‘thelo’). What could be the reason for the appearance of ‘tha’ in such a context?

Obviously, an immediate answer would be to attribute (23) to the semantic, syntactic and phonological overlap manifested between ‘tha’ and ‘na’ (cf. also section 2.1.2). In other words, the fact that these two markers are semantically related and that both could surface as ‘a’ might have led speakers to re-analyse ‘a’ which originally constituted a truncated form of ‘na’ as ‘tha’, since the whole construction had a future-referring meaning.

Plausible as it might be, this account is only partially satisfactory. On the one hand, it is not exactly clear if it would predict that in all areas where this pattern is attested the form of ‘tha’ should be ‘a’. If so, then we lack the necessary data to support or discard this claim. On the other hand, there is evidence suggesting that the ‘overlap’ account is over-simplifying. Consider (24):

- (24) **Tha na stathike prepei** i nikokera ... (Crete)
will-prt. that-subj. stopped must the housewife
“The housewife must have stopped...”

In this example, a similar construction is attested, but in the place of ‘thelo / thelei’ occurs ‘prepei’ (must), and instead of ‘tha’ its predecessor ‘tha na’ is found. This example implies that, firstly, the pattern was wider including other modal meanings expressed by other modal verbs (such as ‘prepei’) and secondly,

that the phonological overlap cannot be the only reason for the emergence of the pattern, since it is attested with a form of the first marker that must have given no ground to phonological confusion ('tha na'). This conclusion is further corroborated by a similar construction involving two markers (instead of a marker and an Auxiliary), which will be discussed in the next section.

It has been established that phonological considerations alone cannot account for the emergence of the pattern in (23). A plausible alternative would be to postulate a disambiguation mechanism as its origin, according to which the 'Auxiliary' following the verb disambiguates the construction, since the marker in pre-verbal position, namely 'tha', can be ambiguous between a modal (epistemic) and a future interpretation. The ambiguity of 'tha' in SMG is well-known and is usually resolved by the precise form of the verb following, i.e. its tense and grammatical aspect (cf. Tsangalidis, 1999). Even though conclusive evidence is lacking, there is no reason to doubt that a similar ambiguity existed in the Modern Greek dialects, as suggested by the examples in (20-24). Unfortunately, no work has been done on the verbal forms following 'tha' depending on its interpretation, as far as the dialects are concerned, and as a consequence, there is no way to determine whether the SMG pattern of disambiguation was possible or there existed inherent ambiguity in the utterances involving 'tha', solved purely –or at least mainly– by contextual means.

An example of such a disambiguation mechanism is found in a completely unrelated language: Babungu, a language spoken in Cameroon, has two 'future' markers that can co-occur, since the first is ambiguous between a tense and a modal interpretation (Schaub, 1985). Obviously, an explanation along these lines is mostly relevant for the emergence of the pattern in the Modern Greek dialects, since after its proliferation it might have generalized to constructions and dialects where no communicative reason of a similar kind would exist.

Apart from its controversial origin, this pattern is rather challenging from a purely syntactic point of view, basically because the Auxiliary is always found immediately after the verb: in all the relevant examples in my corpus, there is not a single attestation of the Auxiliary preceding the 'tha + verb' combination, and all grammars that mention this construction (e.g. Pangalos, 1955 for the Cretan dialect) agree on this point. The exceptionless rigid word-order clearly implies a syntactic constraint, and although not much is known with regard to the syntax of the Modern Greek dialects, I will attempt to highlight at least what challenges this mechanism suggests for the current generative framework.

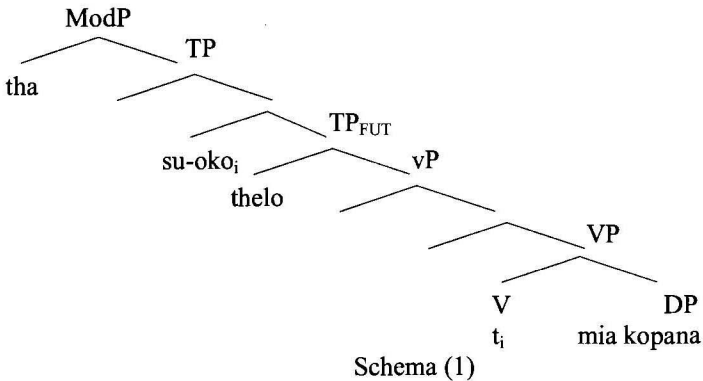
My main assumption will be that the construction exemplified in (20-24) is monoclausal. This is by no means uncontroversial, since the opposite view, i.e. that constructions involving complex tenses are bi-clausal has been put

forward (cf. Alexiadou, 1997 and Julien, 2001, among others), albeit not for the kind of constructions discussed above. On the other hand, Tomic (2004) provides examples quite similar to the Modern Greek dialectal data from the Slavic languages and argues for a monoclausal analysis. Without supporting the type of analysis that she suggests, I follow her assumptions concerning the monoclausal character of such constructions, as the data rather confirm to this hypothesis, as will be illustrated in the following example:

- (25) **A** **su oko** **thelo** **mia kopana...** (Crete)
 Will-prt. you give-1st sing. will-1st sing. one blow...
 “I will give you such a blow...”

In this example, the ‘Auxiliary’ ‘thelo’ surfaces between the verb ‘oko’ and its object ‘mia kopana’. This word-order provides almost insurmountable problems for a bi-clausal analysis, which would have to include numerous movements of dubious plausibility (and triggering) in order to achieve the necessary result. Moreover, semantically there is no basis for assuming two propositions, since ‘a...thelo’ should be analysed as one discontinuous morpheme with a common set of semantic features. In the opposite case, ‘a su oko’ should be regarded as a complement of ‘thelo’ (similarly to the situation occurring with the volitional ‘thelo’); but there is no semantic evidence to support this analysis. For these reasons, I will assume a monoclausal analysis for this construction.

This does not solve the problems, however. The main problematic aspect is related to the order Marker - Verb – Auxiliary, and especially the relative order of the Verb and the Auxiliary. Following the assumption of Cinque (1999) that a clause can contain at least two TPs for different temporal interpretation, we can postulate that ‘thelo’ surfaces in the TP_{FUT} (cf. schema 1). Even so, the question remains: how is the Verb spelled-out above the Auxiliary?



Two solutions have been proposed in the literature for this problem: According to the first (Roberts, 1992 and Rivero, 1994), the Verb moves to T skipping the Auxiliary. This type of movement, usually referred to as ‘long head-movement’, has been criticized, since it violates cyclicity, one (perhaps the only) of the basic constraints on movement that have remained hitherto rather unchallenged in the Minimalist program. In his account of similar phenomena in the Slavic languages, Boskovic (1997) repeats the above criticism against ‘long head-movement’ and argues instead for head-adjunction, either left or right. Boskovic’s account is not devoid of problems either, since the mechanism of adjunction constitutes a long-standing problem in the syntactic literature, especially in relation to adverbial adjuncts (cf. Alexiadou, 2002). In order to apply this account to the data of the Modern Greek dialects, we need to assume that ‘auxiliaries’ can be adjuncts (a highly controversial issue), and that adjuncts can participate in syntactic operations such as Agree, since ‘thelo’ obviously manifests agreement with the verb, except when it is used as an impersonal. Without a comprehensive theory of adjunction, these assumptions remain controversial, to say the least.

There is not conclusive evidence in favour of either of these two analyses, and the solution is far from clear. It is evident though that the Modern Greek dialects pose important challenges to the current generative framework, and therefore a thorough research into the syntax of these dialects is needed, which offers a rather strikingly different picture from SMG.

2.3 *Other grammatical uses*

The data from the Modern Greek dialects contain also instances of other grammatical uses of ‘tha’ and its variants, which are not attested in SMG, and are therefore worth mentioning. The first of them constitutes a pattern rather similar to the one discussed in the previous section, while the remaining refer to uses of ‘tha’ outside the strictly verbal domain.

2.3.1 ‘tha + thanna’: ‘double’ marking again

In the corpus of the island of Symi are found three attestations of a pattern exemplified in (26):

- (26) **Tha tin edakasseth-thanna** (Symi)
 Will-prt. her bit-must (?)prt.
 “(She) must have bitten her ...”

This phenomenon, apparently of a local character as there are no attestations from any other dialect, bears close resemblance to the one discussed in section 2.2, whereby ‘tha’ was followed by a Verb and an Auxiliary. Despite the

obvious similarities, which suggest that (26) be seen as a sub-case of this pattern, the construction from Symi is different in two respects, semantically and morphologically. First, it always conveys an epistemic meaning, and is therefore more restricted semantically than the pattern in (23), which as already mentioned could occur both with a future-referring and an epistemic meaning (even though with different Auxiliary in each case). Secondly, instead of an Auxiliary another ‘marker’ occurs, namely ‘thanna’, which constitutes a predecessor of ‘tha’; more interestingly though, ‘thanna’ might have been able to attach more closely to the verb, as in all the relevant examples in the corpus the verb is written with a ‘th’ in the end, possibly indicating its close union with the following ‘thanna’.³ Due to lack of further evidence, it is almost impossible to tell if this is the case and if ‘thanna’ constitutes a verbal clitic or an inflectional affix (for this notorious problem, cf. Halpern, 1998). In any case, the pattern initially mentioned in (23) can be further elaborated as in (27):

(27) Marker + Verb + Auxiliary / Marker

The epistemic modality in the local variety of Symi could also be expressed by a variant construction, exemplified in (28):

- (28) Annuli, i ornithes sas kakrakitzun, **egenisath-thanna**
 Ann, the hens yours shout, laid eggs-must.prt
 “Ann, your hens are shouting, they must have laid eggs”

In this example, the first marker ‘tha’ is absent, while the order of the verb and the second marker remains unchanged. The earlier emergence of ‘thanna’ as opposed to ‘tha’ implies that (28) represents a previous stage than (26) does, even though the evidence is too scarce for any solid conclusions. Once again, the amount of variation associated with markers such as ‘tha’ is remarkable, since there are two variant constructions for the expression of one meaning just in a local dialect (Symi)!

2.3.2 ‘Complementizers / Adverbials’

i) ‘Tha’ = if?

There is some, although dubious, evidence that ‘tha’ could be also used in conditionals, as shown in (29):

- (29) **Tha** buresu, than ertu (Imbros)
 If can-1st sing., will-prt. come-1st sing.
 “If I will be able to, I will come”

Unfortunately, this is the only example of this kind, and therefore no firm conclusions can be drawn. The co-occurrence of the two markers might entail that (29) should be best analysed as a case of ‘asyndeton’, whereby the conditional interpretation is derived from the specific context and is not a property of ‘tha’ itself. Similar cases exist in SMG, but they crucially involve ‘na’ and convey a specific conditional interpretation, usually doubt or threat (cf. Christidis & Nikiforidou, 1994). Furthermore, in the dialect of Samothraki, an island in the same area of the Aegean, the form ‘aa’ is the equivalent of both ‘an =if’ and ‘tha’; still, this might be entirely attributed to phonological developments of the specific dialect and not to any semantic / syntactic properties. Since (29) is not very illuminating by itself and possible parallels from other varieties of Greek are difficult to establish, I will remain sceptical as to the exact meaning of this example.

ii) Epistemic adverbial: ‘thagi’

From the same island of Imbros comes another obscure example, involving an adverbial possibly based on ‘tha’:

(30) **Thagi** den eh da tiputa to pidi (Imbros)

Adv. not has nothing the kid

“Probably the kid has nothing”

According to the scholars that noted down this example, the adverbial ‘thagi’ comes from the combination of ‘tha’ with the conjunction ‘kai’. However, it is unclear how this incorporation took place, and in what contexts, since ‘tha’ could hardly be expected to be immediately followed by a conjunction. A possible parallel to such a development is attested in the various official documents of the Venetian-ruled parts of Greece (e.g. Crete, Corfu etc.), where conjunctions such as ‘estontas kai = because’ and ‘anisos(tas) kai = in case that’ are highly productive. Still, not one of these conjunctions involves ‘tha’ or any of its variants. On the whole, more data is needed in order to determine the origin of this development as well as the authenticity of the specific example.

3. Conclusions: Syntactic variation and isoglosses

The Modern Greek dialects exhibit extensive variation with regard to the future-referring constructions involving ‘tha’ and its variants. This was observed with relation to the co-occurrence of ‘tha’ with other linguistic elements, such as the particle ‘na’ and the negation markers ‘den’ and ‘min’ (cf. section 2.1), as well as to its co-occurrence with another future-referring Auxiliary or marker of the same etymological origin (cf. 2.2-2.3)! To the extent that the Modern Greek dialects display patterns not attested in SMG, their

investigation can shed light to the exact path of developments that resulted in the contemporary linguistic situation or, alternatively, to possible developments of such futurity / modality markers that did not proliferate in SMG. Moreover, it has been shown that the dialectal data provide considerable challenges for the current generative syntactic framework, and therefore their investigation is interesting even from a purely theoretical point of view. Further material is needed not only from the contemporary dialects, but also from the 17th-19th centuries, in order to determine the sequence of developments that led to the picture observed today, both in dialects and in SMG.

The data discussed in the previous sections also pose interesting questions with regard to the drawing of a possible dialectal map of Greece. Trudgill (2003) has recently suggested such a map, based as he himself admits mainly on 6 phonological isoglosses. According to Trudgill's proposal, Greece could be divided into 15 dialectal areas. This picture is only partially in accordance to the evidence concerning the futurity / modality markers. On a morphological level, the distribution of the various forms of 'tha' is indicative: for instance, if we follow Trudgill's classification, the form 'da' is attested in three different dialectal areas, namely Northern Greece, the Cyclades and Crete, which are not traditionally related as parts of a wider dialectal continuum. It could be argued that this fact could simply be attributed to independent morpho-phonological developments, and cannot be considered a plausible feature of dialectal differentiation. However, the very same argument can be said for many of the 'traditional' criteria used, which almost exclusively make reference to phonological patterns.

Even more importantly, perhaps, syntactic phenomena illustrated in this paper cast some doubt to the validity of this division. The 'double marking' construction, discussed in section 2.2, is attested in five different dialectal areas of Trudgill's map, namely in Crete, North and South Cyclades, Chios and the Dodekanese. Obviously, this distributional pattern is different than the one mentioned regarding the form 'da'. And such differentiated distribution could be repeated for each one of the phenomena discussed in this paper. This only illustrates the complexity of such categorisations, and how conflicting evidence must be somehow made to fit into an overall picture. A dialectal map is by necessity the product of generalizations. The question is, why these generalizations should be based on phonological features and not on syntactic constructions and phenomena, and what should be done in case those two levels of grammar provide contradictory evidence.

Trudgill himself knows and explicitly states that more work should be carried out in order to include 'grammatical' features in the dialectal map (2003: 61). This paper has arguably proven that the wide variety of syntactic constructions associated with the futurity / modality markers is challenging both for theoretical accounts but also for the 'traditional' ways of constructing

dialectal areas in Greece. The systematic and thorough investigation of the dialectal evidence at hand, as far as syntax / semantics is concerned, appears as a pre-requisite in order to better understand the grammar of the various Modern Greek dialects and their relationship with SMG.

4. Notes

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¹ This is not a phenomenon peculiar to Greek: in Old English, the ‘modal verbs’ apparently had similar uses (cf. e.g. Warner, 1993). Perhaps the gradual ‘weakening’ of the Subjunctive as a morphological category, attested in both languages, is the main reason for the emergence of such a pattern, even though the matter needs further research.

² The status of ‘thelo’ cannot be discussed in detail here. Suffice to say that although ‘thelo’ in (20) bears many characteristics of a typical Auxiliary, the form ‘the’ in (22) is more difficult to classify, and could even be argued to constitute a marker similarly to ‘tha’. Cf. also section 2.3.

³ On the contrary, ‘the’ in example (22) does not seem to have any phonological effect on the preceding verb. Moreover, there is historical evidence (Markopoulos, forthcoming) that this form is not opaque, and certainly not as opaque as ‘thanna’ must have been. This is the reason why I have included the example in (22) in the pattern ‘Marker + Verb + Auxiliary’.

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6. Περίληψη

Η παρούσα μελέτη εξετάζει τις σημασιο-συντακτικές ιδιότητες των διαφόρων δομών που εμφανίζονται στις Νεοελληνικές διαλέκτους και έχουν ως βάση την μελλοντική / τροπική 'περίφραση' 'θα + παρεμφατικός τύπος', με επιμέρους παραλλαγές (π.χ. 'θε να + παρεμφατικός τύπος'). Η μελέτη αναδεικνύει την ευρύτατη διαλεκτική ποικιλία στις συντακτικές και σημασιολογικές χρήσεις του 'θα', γεγονός που μάλλον δεν είχε

επισημανθεί ιδιαίτερα από την σχετική γλωσσολογική έρευνα. Επιπλέον, φανερώνει τους διάφορους σημασιο-συντακτικούς 'δρόμους' που μπορεί να ακολουθήσει ένα γλωσσικό στοιχείο όπως το 'θα' στην εξέλιξή του, οι οποίοι συχνότατα αποτελούν 'προκλήσεις' όχι μόνο για την θεωρητική προσέγγιση της γλωσσικής αλλαγής (λόγω της πολυπλοκότητάς τους), αλλά και για το γενετικό συντακτικό μοντέλο, κυρίως λόγω της ποικιλίας που παρατηρείται ακόμα και στην ίδια διάλεκτο. Τέλος, διερευνάται κατά πόσον μία πιθανή ενσωμάτωση συντακτικών 'ισογλώσσων' θα διαφοροποιούσε την παραδεδομένη εικόνα για τα γεωγραφικά όρια των Νεοελληνικών διαλέκτων, αλλά και για τον καθορισμό των διαλέκτων γενικότερα.