The Pragmatics of the Modern Greek modal particles *θα, να, μη(ν)* and *ας*

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1 Introduction

The aim of this paper is to explore the illocutions i.e. the pragmatic aspects of language and language use associated to main clauses introduced by the modal particles *θα, να, μη(v)* and *ας*, (when *μην* is not preceded by *να* or *ας*) in Modern Greek. We are interested in the relationship between the grammatical mood these particles are associated with and the corresponding sentence type(s), as a means of expression of the Speaker's intention.

We define grammatical Mood as the category 'said to comprise all grammatical elements operating on a situation/ proposition, that are not directly concerned with situating an event in the actual world, as conceived by the speaker' (Hengeveld 2004), while we see a basic illocution as 'a coincidence of grammatical structure and conventional conversational use' (Sadock & Zwicky 1985). Basic illocutions are expressed by the speaker in various forms, using syntactic, morphological and phonological means. We are interested in distinctions which from part of the language system. Intonation as a means of differentiating functions is very important for this work, and although not covered in this paper is based on GRToBI (as presented by Arvaniti and Baltazani 2005).

We explore basic illocutions by dividing them into propositional and behavioural uses, following Hengeveld's et al. 2007 approach. Propositional uses are, thus, associated with assertive and questioning illocutions. Assertive subtypes consist of declarative and mirative uses, whilst questioning subtypes consist of polar and content interrogatives. Behavioural uses involve speech acts that intend to influence or affect the behaviour of the Addressee and/or others. Behavioural (positive and negative) uses include imperative subtypes (orders), hortative subtypes (exhortations), admonitive subtypes (warnings) and supplicative subtypes (requests for permission)

2 The indicative *θα*

Although a lot can be said about the nature of this particle, especially from a semantics point of view (see also Tsangalidis and Roussou in this volume), we treat it as an Indicative particle, given that the typical indicative negation *δεν*

applies in utterances introduced by *θα*. Below we present propositional and behavioural uses of *θα*, as well as uses related to additional segmental marking.

2.1 Propositional uses of *θα*

2.1.1 Assertive uses

In example (1) we consider a typical assertion introduced by *θα*, while in example (2) we include an example of a negative assertion, introduced by the typical indicative negation *δεν*.

(1) Θα   πας   στο   γιατρό αύριο.
    FUT   go-2.SG.PRF   to-the   doctor tomorrow
    'You will go to the doctor tomorrow.'

(2) Δεν   θα   πας   στο   γιατρό αύριο.
    NEG   FUT   go-2.SG.PRF   to-the   doctor tomorrow
    'You will not go to the doctor tomorrow.'

In (3) we notice a typical example of an emphatic assertion, indicating the complex interaction between the overall prosodic contour and the emphasis (focus) a speaker might place to a specific constituent in an assertion. Although there is a lack of a specific grammatical strategy, speakers might emphasize an assertions through lexical means (e.g. *οπωσδήποτε* 'definitely') or through narrow focus on specific clause constituents. Such focal points might be verbal as in (3), nominal, or adverbial.

(3) **Θα   πας**   στο   γιατρό αύριο.
    FUT   go-2SG.PRF   to-the   doctor tomorrow
    '**You will go** to the doctor tomorrow.'

2.1.2 Mirative uses

When a speaker expresses his/her admiration, surprise or delight through an utterance, effectively they share some information with their addressee. In this type, it is not so much the content of the utterance itself that is being transmitted, but rather the emotional reaction of the speaker with respect to this content. (Hengeveld et al. 2007). Utterances in this category demonstrate a mixture of declarative and interrogative properties, as in (4).

(4) Τι   ωραίο   φόρεμα θα   φορέσει   το κορίτσι   μου!
    What   beautiful   dress   FUT   wear-3.SG.PRF   the girl   my
    'What a beautiful dress my girl will wear!'

2.1.3 Assertions in disguise (rhetorical questions and contrastive statements)

This category includes declarative uses of the indicative disguised as questions; both the speaker, as well as the addressee are fully aware of the potential 'answer', so the question-like intonation is used in order to achieve a special effect. Declarative assertions in disguise often are formulaic in nature, as in example (5); they are some times used to criticise the addressee's behaviour, as in example (6).

(5) Πόσες   φορές θα   σου πω...;
    how many times   FUT   you tell-1.SG.PRF
    'How many times will I tell you…'

(6) Πόσον   καιρό ακόμα θα   σιδερώνω   τα ρούχα σου;
    how much time   still   FUT   iron-1SG.IPF the clothes your
    '(For) how much longer will I iron your clothes?'

2.1.3 Interrogative uses

2.1.4.1 Polar interrogatives

Intonation is the only feature that differentiates an assertion from a question in Modern Greek, as in example (10). Word order is defined by the topic/focus of a clause. A 'yes' (*ναι*), 'no' (*όχι*) , maybe (*ίσως*) or 'possibly' (*πιθανόν*) answer is expected from the addressee, but not an answer indicating consent, such as 'OK' (*εντάξει*). We claim that answers denoting consent refer to behavioural uses, rather than interrogative uses where the speaker intends to confirm the propositional content of the utterance.

(7) Θα   έρθεις   αύριο;
    FUT come-2.SG.PRF   tomorrow
    'Will you come tomorrow?'

2.1.4.2 Content interrogatives

Content interrogatives require the use of question words. The speaker intends to elicit information specifically related to the slot in the sentence currently filled by the question word, questioning the agent, the goal, the time, the manner etc., as in (8), where the agent is questioned.

(8) Ποιός θα   τηλεφωνήσει στον Κώστα;
    who FUT   call-3.SG.PRF to the   Kosta?
    'Who will call Kostas?'

2.1.4.3   Other interrogative uses

In example (9), a typical example of a request for confirmation, the speaker requests a confirmation of the propositional content through the use of a tag; tags might take various forms (e.g. by negating the main verb of the clause, or by adding an 'isn't it' equivalent).

(9) Θα   έρθεις   αύριο,   έτσι   δεν   είναι;
    FUT come-2SG.PRF   tomorrow, like that   NEG   is
    'You will come tomorrow, won't you?'

In (10) the segmental marker *μήπως* is used in order to mitigate the force of the interrogative (mitigated question- proffer).

(10)   Μήπως   θα   θέλατε   βοήθεια;
    PRT   FUT   need-2PL.PS.IPF help
    'Perhaps you would want (accept) some help?'

Example (11) introduced by the segmental marker *άραγε* is a typical example of a wondering use of the indicative *θα*.

(11)   Αραγε θα   βρέξει;
    WON FUT   rain-3.SG.PRF
    'I wonder' will it rain?'

3 The Subjunctive *να*

When exploring *να* in main clauses only, we notice that it is often associated with behavioural uses; it is explicitly used to mitigate the illocutionary force of an utterance and introduces mitigated directives, mitigated prohibitives and requests for permission. However, we also observe propositional uses of *να*, expressing wishes, wondering, disapproval, as well as estimating. Additional segmental marking involves wishes, curses, expression of uncertainty and wondering uses.

3.1 Propositional uses of the Subjunctive *να*: wishes, wondering, disapproval and estimating

Example (12), a wish, expresses the speaker's desire for a particular state of affairs (which might or might not already be the case). This category of utterances might include formulaic expressions, as in (13). .

(12)   Να   τον   βλέπαμε   συχνότερα!
    SUBJ him   see-1.PL.PS.IPF. more often
    'May we were seeing him more often!'

(13) Να   συγχωρεθούν   τα πεθαμένα σας!
     SUBJ forgive.3PL.PRF.PASS   the dead   your
     'May the dead members of your family be forgiven!'

In example (14) we observe an expression of wondering, indicating Subjunctive's built-in uncertainty and wondering element, in a self-directed question form, while in example (15) we see a deliberative question.

(14) Να   έφτασε   ο Γιάννης   στην ώρα   του;
     SUBJ arrive.3SG.PS.PRF. the Yannis   to the hour his
     'Did Yannis arrive on time (I wonder)?'

(15) Τι   να   κάνουμε;
     What SUBJ   do.2PL.IPF
     'What shall we/can we do?'

Mirative utterances in subjunctive, as in example (16), usually express the speaker's disapproval (negative surprise) towards the addressee's taste, choice etc. Approval (positive surprise) is usually expressed in indicative; disapproval in the indicative would usually be denoted through lexical means e.g. 'What an *ugly* dress is this!'.

(16) Να   φορέσεις   σορτς στο   γάμο! (Πού   ακούστηκε!)
     SUBJ wear.2SG.PRF. shorts to the wedding (Where was heard!)
     'To wear shorts at the wedding! (This is unheard of!)'

In (17) the Speaker is guessing/estimating a value (often related to price, weight, size, age etc.). The use of an arithmetic usually forms part of such an utterance, whilst expressions such as *το λιγότερο* ('at least'), *το πολύ* ('at most') might also be used, to provide a floor or a ceiling for the (gues)stimating action.

(17) Να   είναι   το πολύ είκοσι χρόνων.
     SUBJ be-3SG   the much twenty years
     'He might be 20 years old at most.'

3.2 Behavioural uses of the Subjunctive *va*: mitigated uses

The Subjunctive *va*, often coupled with a question-like intonation, is often used as the means of lessening the impact of an utterance, such as a directive, a prohibitive or a request, as well as a vehicle to encourage the addressee to perform an action, giving him/her the impression that they can chose not to cooperate and thus to 'save face'.

Mitigated orders (directive uses) are among the typical uses of Modern Greek Subjunctive. We take the view that the speaker opts for subjunctive (rather than imperative) to lessen the strength of the order. When in imperfective form, the speaker provides general advice, as in (18), whilst in perfective form the act needs to be fulfilled in the immediate future.

(18) Να   σιδερώνεις   τα ρούχα   σου.
      SUBJ iron-2SG.IPF the clothes   your
      'You should be ironing your clothes.'

In mitigated prohibitions, as in example (19) the situation is rather complex. *Μη(ν)* is Subjunctive's negation, always proceeded by the typical subjunctive particle *να*. As we claim in section 4 below, when used independently of the subjunctive particle it functions as the Modern Greek prohibitive marker. By opting to chose a structure where *να* proceeds *μη(ν)*, the speaker makes a choice of an utterance with a reduced impact, a mitigated prohibition. The presence of the particle *να* is absolutely necessary for a prohibition to be mitigated. 2nd person singular or plural applies.

(19) Να   μη   μιλάς   όταν δεν σε   ρωτάνε.
      SUBJ PRH speak-2SG.IPF. when NEG you   ask-2PL.IPF
      'You shouldn't speak when you are not asked.'

Mitigated requests (or requests for permission) in Modern Greek Subjunctive often have an interrogative like intonation, but not an interrogative function. It is clear here that the speaker does not seek for a truth value true or false to be assigned to the propositional content of the 'question'. In a way, the process of a question is reversed. Example (20) reminds us of the use of modal 'may' in English. Such utterances are expressed in the 1st person singular or plural.

(20) Να   πλύνω   τα πιάτα;
      SUBJ wash-1SG.PRF.   the dishes
      'May I wash the dishes?'

In encouragement uses, as in (21), the question like intonation gives the addressee the opportunity to 'save face', although the Speaker is seeking a positive response and the addressee is aware of that. Such uses might also be expressed in first person plural (seemingly including the speaker to the action), feature which differentiates them from a mitigated directive and brings them closer to the mitigated requests, as in (22).

(21) Να   βγάλεις   το παλτό σου;
      SUBJ remove-2SG.PRF the coat   your
      'Should you take your coat off?'

(22) Να   κάνουμε   την ορθογραφία   τώρα;
     SUB   do-1PL.IPF   the spelling   now
     'Shall we do the spelling exercises now?'

3.3 Additional segmental marking in Subjunctive *να*

Additional segmental marking in Subjunctive *να* utterances includes wishes introduced by *μακάρι*, as in example (23).

(23) Μακάρι   να   γίνει   καλά.
     WISH   SUBJ   become-3SG.PRF well
     'I wish he/she gets well.'

In addition, we come across curses, or unfulfilled wishes, which might be marked by *που να* (a temporal value indicator, adding immediacy), as in example (24).

(24) Που   να   μη   σε είχα   συναντήσει   ποτέ.
     UN_WISH SUBJ NEG   you have-1SG.PS met   never
     'I wish I had never met you.'

Reinforcement of uncertainty is achieved through the use of *ίσως* followed by Subjunctive, as in example (25), while wondering with enhanced uncertainty is achieved through the use of the segmental marker *άραγε* followed by Subjunctive, as in (26), with a question-like intonation.

(25) Ισως   να   έφυγε.
     UNC   SUBJ   leave-3SG.PS.IPF.
     'Maybe he left.'

(26) Αραγε να βρέχει;
     WOND SUBJ rain-3SG.IPF.
     'I wonder, is it raining?'

4 The prohibitive *μη(ν)*

Negative imperatives function as expressions of prohibition. Many languages exhibit specific constructions to express prohibitions, through identifiable prohibitive markers. In Modern Greek, the combination of imperative verb forms with negative markers (i.e. the indicative *δεν* and the subjunctive *μην*) is not permitted. It is often mentioned in literature that imperative 'borrows' its negation from Subjunctive (forming a surrogate imperative). We observe that speakers of Modern Greek have the option to utter a prohibition with *μη(ν)* proceeded by να, or with *μη(ν)* used independently. We claim that a formal difference distinguishes these two options: we suggest that *μη(ν)*, when not preceded by the subjunctive particle *να* is of equal status with *να*, rather than simply acting as the

Subjunctive's negation. In our view, Modern Greek prohibitives are introduced by the prohibitive marker *μη(ν)*, when used independently of other markers. We are making a case for mitigated prohibitives, which is consistent with other mitigated uses of the subjunctive (e.g. requests; see also section 3.2 above).

It is interesting to consider Modern Greek Grammatical moods (as well as their respective negation marker) following a diachronical approach, in order to better understand the nature of *μη(ν)*. In Classical Greek, grammatical verb moods were clearly defined based on morpho-syntactic characteristics. Since such distinctions ceased existing, approaches were syntax-focused (e.g. Philipakki-Warburton and Spyropoulos 2004 among others) or semantics-based (e.g. Tsangalidis 1999 among others).

There is an ongoing dialogue among researchers regarding the similarities and differences of particles *θα*, *να* and ας, to which we would like to include *μη(ν)*.

The non-imperative perfective might be considered being the subjunctive (although some researchers, like Tsangalidis, prefer the semantic distinction between realis, related to free forms, and irrealis, related to non-free, perfective forms.

We also considered whether the optional nature of the final 'n' in *μη(ν)* indicated that we were dealing effectively with two different words, an n-less μη and an n-optional *μη(ν)* (see also Joseph and Janda 1999). However, the final 'v' usually occurs before vowels and unvoiced stops, and occasionally before fricatives. This also applies to *δε(ν)*, as well as masculine and feminine accusative definite articles, among others. In our view, geographical as well as idiolect based differences affect the use/choice/frequency of the n-less *μη* (rather than its semantic/pragmatic function).

Non-mitigated prohibitive uses include preventives, negative warnings and emphatic prohibitions. Aspect differentiates preventives from negative warnings: preventives are usually expressed in 2ⁿᵈ person perfective, as in example (27), while negative warnings are expressed using imperfective aspect, as in example (28). A positive warning would have been an imperative.

(27) Μην   έρθεις   αύριο.
     PRH   come-2SG.PR.PRF   tomorrow
     'Don't come tomorrow.'

(28) Μην   αναβαθμίζετε   στην   έκδοση 1.0.6.
     PRH   upgrade-2PL.PR.IPF   to the version 1.0.6
     'Don't upgrade to version 1.0.6.'

Emphatic prohibitions might be introduced by *ποτέ*, followed by an imperfective verb form, as in (29).

(29) Ποτέ   μη   μιλάς   σε αγνώστους.
     never   PRH   talk-2SG.IPF   to unknown

'Never talk to people you don't know.'

4   The Hortative *ας*

Hortative in Modern Greek is mainly introduced by the particle *ας*, which can only be associated with main clauses. *Aς* combines with present and past perfective forms. We note imperfect concessive uses, which do not form part of this research. Its illocution is related to wishes (propositional use) and indifference (behavioural use), whereas *να* is related to a variety of behavioural uses (including requests). We cannot consider *ας* in interchangeable use with *να*, as they behave differently both from a syntactic point of view (as the subjunctive *να* introduces both main as well as subordinate clauses) as well as from a pragmatic point of view (with the exception of wishes no other subjunctive related illocutions can be accomplished by the hortative *ας*).

Wishes introduced by *ας*, as in example (30), are expressed in the 1st person, singular or plural. Tense and aspect determine whether a wish is fulfillable or unfulfillable. Their un-fulfillability does not form part of the illocution.

(30) Aς   μιλήσουν   τα τραγούδια.
        HOR   speak-3PL.PRF   the songs
        'Let the songs speak.'

Hortatives expressing indifference, as in (31) are potentially accompanied by para-linguistic phenomena including hand gestures, shrugging of the shoulders etc.

(31) Aς   βρέχει.
        HOR   rain-3SG.PR.IPF
        'Let it rain.'

5   Conclusion

In this paper we discussed the propositional and behavioural pragmatic functions associated with the particles *θα*, *να*, μην and *ας*. A question we had to explore (which particularly applied to *να*, *ας* and *μην*, traditionally associated with Subjunctive) was related to the relationship between functions (illocution) and form (verb moods). We indicated that a series of pragmatic functions point towards distinct grammatical moods for Hortative and Prohibitive, as we demonstrated that *μην* and *ας* are of similar status to *θα* and *να* i.e. they act as markers of distinct moods. We believe that it would be useful to further explore whether Indicative, Subjunctive, Prohibitive and Hortative, together with Imperative, form part of the Modern Greek verb mood system as distinct verb moods.

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