Konstantinos Sampanis. *A diachronic and typological approach to the Modern Greek subjunctive complementation.* University of Salzburg, 2011.
[konstantinos.sampanis@yahoo.com]

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1. Introduction

The Modern Greek (MG) subjunctive (or ‘subjunctive’ for certain scholars¹) complement clauses do not constitute a terra incognita, as the linguistic research dealing with this topic is extensive, as is the list of books and essays on it.² Nevertheless, there are two major problems concerning the phenomenon: the first is that the scholars have not reached a degree of consensus about the exact semantic and the syntactic features of this structure, while the second is associated with the fact that the various treatments of the issue shed light only on a certain aspect thereof without taking into consideration other approaches. For instance, syntactic approaches may ignore semantic ones or synchronic analyses may fail to account for diachronic phenomena involving change in the subjunctive. In addition, it is still not entirely clear what the means are by which the loss of nonfinite complementation occurred in the history of the Greek language and what effects that loss had on the subjunctive.³

One of the main objectives of my dissertation is to provide a “holistic” view of the MG subjunctive complement clauses. My use of the term *holistic* is meant to imply that the intention of this thesis is to examine a single syntactic phenomenon, MG subjunctive complementation, from various linguistic points of view, namely with respect to the synchronic, diachronic and typological aspects involved,⁴ so that it thereby is thoroughly understood.

¹ On a descriptive account that totally rejects the existence of a subjunctive in MG cf. Hesse 2003²: 12 and 70 ff. Cf. also the discussion in Roussou 2009: 1813 ff.

² Cf., e.g., Roberts and Roussou 2003 with numerous further references, though mainly focusing on the syntactic properties of the MG subjunctive.

³ Regarding the loss of the non-finite complementation in the history of Greek, Joseph 1983 is a keystone within this research field. Still, a more systematic investigation, analogous to the one of Markopoulos 2009 on the category Future in Greek, remains a need.

⁴ Cf. also Miller 2002: xv concerning his method in his study on non-finite structures: “The approach, to borrow a term from Phil Baldi, is holistic. It combines theory and structure with functional, typological, and historical considerations. The rationale for the study is that no theory to date accounts for the crosslinguistic diversity of nonfinite data.”

2. Basic Claims and Results

A principal suggestion of my dissertation is that the configuration consisting of the preverbal “mood particle” *na* + verbal form constitutes a genuine mood category within the verbal system of MG. It is argued that there are certain reasons that indicate that MG has an *analytical* subjunctive mood at its disposal, in contrast to other European languages in which the subjunctive mood is *synthetic*, instantiated by a verbal paradigm with distinct subjunctive suffixes. Along with particular arguments which are often put forth in favour of a mood analysis of this MG structure, such as the occurrence of perfective verbal forms only in certain environments, preponderantly after the subjunctive marker *na* and the adhortative *as*, and the use of two different “mood-sensitive” negators (cf. Veloudis and Philippaki-Warbuton 1984)—arguments which I re-examine, not only synchronically but also in thorough comparison to other languages of the Balkan Sprachbund and in conjunction with findings of Indo-European linguistics—I also make two additional suggestions: a) the particle *na* is not merely a “mood” particle⁵ (according to Zwicky 1985: 290, the term *particle* is “an ubiquitous notion in syntax”) but an affix-like element⁶ and thus part of MG verbal inflection; b. the subjunctive bears a bundle of distinctive semantic features *–assertion*, *–realis* (while the present indicative is valued with the features *+assertion*, *+realis* and the future indicative with the features *+assertion*, *–realis*). This analysis, based on the componential tradition of lexical semantics, has the advantage of utilizing some lucid traditional semantic distinctions that are still used in the relevant literature⁷ but in a more articulated way. What is more, it captures not only the semantic differentiation between the indicative and the subjunctive (*+/-assertion* respectively) but also the affinity between the future tense and the subjunctive mood (both *–realis* as opposed to the *+realis* feature of the present indicative) and thus it can account for phenomena such as the future reading of the subjunctive mood in Homeric Greek⁸ and the modal origin of the future tense in English.

On the basis of this analysis, I propose that the particle *na* is the head of a Mood Phrase to which the finite verbal form is adjoined after moving out from the head of the Verb Phrase. This obligatory movement explains the formation

⁵) Cf. Quer 2006 on different types of subjunctive. In my dissertation and in Sampanis 2012 I argued against the existence of a subjunctive mood in Russian, since the mood particle *by* does not belong to the verbal paradigm of this language and therefore it differs from the MG case.

⁶) Cf. also Joseph 2003.

⁷) Cf. for example Palmer 2001.

⁸) Cf. Goodwin 1889: 97 ff.

of the cluster between the particle *na* and the verbal form. Inspired by insights found in Wurmbrand 2001 and Alboiu 2004 with regard to Obligatory Control, I postulate that the MG control complements are CP-less, while the arguments are shared and merge within the VP of the embedded subjunctive clause. I also give equal attention to the structure of the object control and the non-control clauses.

Diachronically, the distribution of MG subjunctive complements is extensively presented in systematic contrast to Ancient Greek (AG) complementation. In order to apply a comparative criterion, MG complementation structures are examined with their AG counterparts in terms of semantically and onomasiologically similar predicates.⁹ For example, the complements of modal or volitional verbs are set side by side, so that it is possible to trace what the MG subjunctive has replaced. As a matter of fact, the MG subjunctive has taken over functions of the AG infinitive, participle and subjunctive and, therefore, it does not suffice to claim that the MG subjunctive has replaced the AG final infinitive since this is only partially correct. My suggestion is that the syntactic change is semantically conditioned in the sense that one syntactic structure can replace another in the course of time when both structures have similar semantic function and content. In order to investigate the gradual loss of the AG nonfinite complementation I presented a number of examples while a statistical approach concerning the frequency of occurrence of finite complementation in the New Testament, with respect to the register of each author, yielded the result that there are indications that the finite complementation was more favoured in low-register texts. Given that the latter probably reflected the colloquial Greek language of that time, it is reasonable to suppose that the demise of nonfinite complementation was an ongoing phenomenon.

Typologically, MG subjunctive complementation has been contrasted with languages of the Balkan Sprachbund, with which MG is areally correlated, as well as with other languages that exhibit phenomena of finite complementation. In the former case, I underlined the fact that the Balkan Sprachbund languages organize the same phenomenon, the finite/subjunctive complementation, in a different way in accordance with the particular morphological and syntactic properties of each language. The point of this approach was to show that syntactic affinity on the surface of the languages does not mean that the underlying syntactic architecture should be identical and therefore we should be fairly meticulous when we make generalizations about the finite complementation phenomenon, when e.g. we assume that the structural analysis for

⁹) Cf. Cristofaro 2003: 95 ff.

a given Balkan language could necessarily be applied in another language as well.¹⁰ In the latter case, MG has been contrasted with some well-examined languages (Portuguese and Hungarian) but also with languages that are not often examined along with MG, such as Armenian or Persian. This contrastive typological research shows interesting parallelisms to the Greek case. For instance, a situation similar to Koiné Greek can be found in Armenian, in which the infinitive may be replaced by finite subjunctive clauses in colloquial registers; in Persian the subjunctive-mood marker precedes the verbal mood, as is the case with the particle *na*. Finally, I tentatively propose that the *pro*-drop property may be a prerequisite for the development of finite complementation phenomena.

3. Conclusion

This dissertation addresses a number of issues concerning the MG *na*-clauses. A major claim of the thesis is that the *na*+verbal form configuration is a genuine mood. The particle *na* is an affix-like inflectional element and the host of the semantic features *–assertion/–realis*. In consequence, any analysis in terms of derivational syntax should take into account the morphological and semantic properties of the MG subjunctive, hence the “particle” *na* should not be considered a complementiser. These suggestions are corroborated by diachronic and typological data as well. All in all, the “holistic” examination of the MG subjunctive enables us to gain deeper insights into this linguistic phenomenon.

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¹⁰ Cf. also Joseph 2001.

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