BOOK REVIEWS

Anastasios Tsangalidis, *Will and Tha: A Comparative Study of the Category Future*. 1999. Thessaloniki: University Studio Press.

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Even though the verbal marker *tha* is one of the most discussed topics of Greek grammar, Tsangalidis's book, which in essence is the English version of his dissertation, is a welcome addition to the existing literature. It does not merely address the formal characteristics of *tha* as many have done before. Instead, the main goal of this very interesting book is to conduct a comparison of both the formal and conceptual characteristics of the constructions that employ *will* in English and *tha* in Greek, and, through this comparison, to reveal the language-specific and language-universal features of constructions that may be broadly termed 'future'. The author's ultimate goal is to demonstrate that 'future' deserves to be studied as a distinct category and must be described independently of Tense and Modality.

In Chapter One, the author reviews several relevant theories of Tense, Aspect, and Modality, devoting most of his attention to Hornstein's (1990) theory of Tense, Smith's (1991) theory of Aspect, and Bybee et al.'s (1994) theory of Modality. However, these three supercategories are deemed insufficient for the cross-linguistic study of *will* and *tha*. Instead, the author follows Bybee and Dahl (1989) and treats them as language-specific instantiations of the grammatical type future ('future grams' in the Bybee et al. terminology). This is a universal category, which is characterized by the 'marked' status of its particular instantiations, since they fluctuate between Tense and Modality (as seen, for example, in the debate about whether *will* is a future or not). The author exploits this indeterminacy in order to bolster his argument that Tense, Aspect and Modality are not sufficient for reaching a true understanding on the nature of forms such as *will* and *tha* and that a different approach is needed.

In Chapter Two, Tsangalidis gives a detailed account of the various uses of *will* and *tha*. Given the interests of the readers of this journal I focus on the discussion of *tha* only. The author gives a thorough and well organized compilation of the extensive research that has been done on these forms. Six constructions are recognized: *tha* [-past] [-perf] (*tha yrafi*), *tha* [-past] [+perf] (*tha yrapsi*), *tha* [+past] [-perf] (*tha eyrafe*), *tha* [+past] [+perf] (*tha eyrapse*), *tha* +

Perfect (θa exi $\gamma rapsi$), and θa + Pluperfect (θa ixē $\gamma rapsi$). The use of ‘perf’ for ‘perfective’ is unfortunate because it causes some confusion with ‘Perfect’, and it also invites a misleading connection between perfective aspect and perfect system forms. An abbreviation such as ‘perfve’ would have been a better choice. Despite this inconsistency of notation, the author demonstrates an excellent sense for the subtle differences of meaning that are available in this constellation of forms, especially in the non-future usages of the constructions. One of the most interesting facts that emerges is the multitude of constructions that can carry an epistemic meaning: θa [–past] [–perf] (θa tu milai), θa + Perfect (θa tu exi milisi), θa [+past], [+perf] (θa tu milise) (which does not have a future tense use), θa + Pluperfect (θa tu ixē milisi).

In Chapter Three, the author reviews the basic notions of the theory of grammaticalization, and seeks to establish the validity of the theory’s claims by testing them against the facts from the development of *will* and θa . Considerable energy is expended in establishing the limits of the *form-meaning co-variation* hypothesis (semantic and phonetic reduction of forms on the grammaticalization path must go hand in hand), especially in demonstrating that the developments occur gradually and not in distinct steps. The author also proposes a path of development that proceeds from volition to future, from future to habitual/generic/gnomic prediction, or from future to imperative or epistemic, and finally from prediction to predictability. Given the importance that the author places on the notion of volition as the starting point of θa constructions it is surprising that he does not mention that this is actually a controversial point for researchers who have examined the formal side of the development of θa . For even though a large number of the existing proposals maintain that the θa future owes its existence ultimately to θelo , there are also those (Jannaris 1897 and Horrocks 1997 at least) who believe that the ultimate source of the θa future is the subjunctive (cf. Horrocks 1997:230 ff.; Pappas and Joseph 2002 present a full analysis of arguments on both sides). Furthermore, it is disappointing that Tsangalidis only gives a perfunctory nod to the competition that θelo future constructions faced in the early stages of the development and does not look into the variation in more detail. The complications of variation and the eventual “survival” of θa would be a better ground for testing the validity of the “theory of grammaticalization” than the development of θa alone.

The final two chapters of the book contain the synthesis of Tsangalidis’ arguments. In the fourth chapter, the author demonstrates that aspectual information is essential to the interpretation of θa constructions. T begins by

showing that Greek aspectual distinctions are based on the difference between a Perfective and an Imperfective “viewpoint” (cf. Smith 1991) especially when one takes into account the possible interaction between the latter and situation types (states, activities, accomplishments, semelfactives and achievements). For example, T explains the lack of perfective stems for prototypical stative verbs like *ime* as the product of the incongruity between the lack of endpoints that is inherent in stative verbs and the presence of endpoints that characterizes perfectivity. Then the author demonstrates the advantage of such an analysis by applying it to the controversial set of forms exemplified by *yrapso* which have been traditionally analyzed as subjunctives. T proposes that the identification of such forms as perfective non-past has several advantages: it accounts for the formal similarity between forms like *yrapso* and *eyrapsa* (perfective non-past vs. perfective past), while at the same time allows for the difference in the two forms with respect to definiteness (*yrapso* is indefinite because its two features [+perfective] and [–past] are somewhat contradictory); and it provides a principled answer as to why there is no perfective counterpart to the present. T’s point is that there is indeed a morphological perfective present, but semantic considerations restrict its use only in situations in which the time reference is other than true present. The argument is very persuasive. Returning to the main issue, the author proceeds to explain the epistemic uses of *θa* constructions by employing the two-component theory of Aspect. Two significant conclusions are reached. First, there is no need to postulate an epistemic *θa* alongside future *θa* to explain the epistemic readings of constructs such as *θa kimate* and *θa exi milisi*. These follow if the semantic contribution of *θa* is seen as that of ‘prediction’, which when followed by imperfectives, statives or progressives and the appropriate contextual factors may lead to modal or epistemic readings. Second, the epistemic reading of forms such as *θa eyrapse* is the only one available because the boundedness of past perfective forms does not allow for alternative future in the past, or open conditional readings.

In the last chapter, T explores the remaining modal readings of *θa*, together with the question of whether the various readings are best accounted for by postulating separate forms of *θa* (homonymy), one *θa* that is polysemous, or a mono-semantic *θa* that receives separate interpretations according to context. T sides with the polysemic account, which according to him fits well with the view that holds *θa* as a future gram, but the whole argument is not presented with the same in-depth analysis and persuasive power that characterized chapter four.

Overall, Tsangalidis offers an examination of the much discussed *θa* constructions from a perspective that has been overlooked. For this reason his input is informative and thought-provoking. The book does suffer from some organizational problems that are common in works that are too closely based on dissertation theses. For example, after the very good presentation of the usages of *θa* and *will* in chapter two, the author reviews a list of disconnected topics (e.g., the treatment of *θa* in GB, or futurity without *θa*) that are never brought to bear on the main argument. Similarly in the final chapter, the treatment of the modal usages of *θa* (and *will*) is obscured by the question of homonymy vs. polysemy, leaving one with the distinct notion that everything important was really discussed in chapter four. Despite these weaknesses, this remains a book worth reading and I believe that readers interested in Greek syntactic, semantic and diachronic issues will find much valuable information and insightful analysis here.

References

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