

Variable “mood selection” with communication verbs in Greek: Bi-eventive modal anchoring

Despina Oikonomou

Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin

Current puzzle#1 This work is concerned with a special case of variable mood selection in Greek which to our knowledge has not been discussed before. In particular, **communication predicates traditionally classified as subjunctive selecting** (e.g. in Giannakidou 2015: *simvulevo* ‘advise’, *ipohreono* ‘require’, *zitao* ‘request’, *diatazo* ‘order’, *parotrino* ‘urge’, hence *ADVISE*-verbs) can combine with **indicative as long as they embed a bouletic/deontic (henceforth prioritizing, PRT)** modal operator (e.g. *prepi* ‘must’, *kalitera* ‘better’ in (1a)). Crucially, this variability is not licensed with non-communication verbs such as *thelo* ‘want’, *skopevo* ‘intend’, *shediazo* ‘plan’ (hence, *INTEND*-verbs) which always require a subjunctive complement (1b). We argue that *ADVISE*-verbs tolerate the indicative due to their bi-eventive character (Martin & Schäfer 2012, 2013, 2015). Building on a decompositional analysis of attitude predicates (Portner 1997, Kratzer 2006, Moulton 2009, Grano 2018, Portner & Rubinstein 2018) and Hacquard’s (2009, 2010) event relativity, we argue that *ADVISE*-verbs, being bi-eventive, can determine the modal flavor of two distinct operators (i.e. the emdedded *PRT-modal* and the indicative operator in (1a)) in different ways. On the contrary, this is not possible with the mono-eventive *INTEND*-verbs.

- (1) a. i giatri ton simvulepsan (oti prepi/kalitera) na kopsi to tsigaro *Indic + PRT-modal*
the doctors him advised that must/better SUBJ quit.3SG the cigarette.
‘The doctors advised him to quit smoking.’
ADVISE-VERBS: ADVISE, ORDER, URGE, REQUEST, MOTIVATE: √ Subjunctive / √ Indic + PRT-modal
- b. Thelo/skopevo/shediazo (*oti prepi/kalitera) na kopso to tsigaro
want/prefer/plan.1SG that must/better SUBJ quit the cigarette
‘He wants/prefers/plans to quit smoking.’
*INTEND-VERBS: WANT, PLAN, INTEND, PREFER: √ Subjunctive / *Indic + PRT-modal*

Broader puzzle#2 The dual pattern of *ADVISE*-verbs which tolerate an *indicative+PRT-modal* complement, in place of the default subjunctive complement (1a), associates with a well discussed dual mood pattern for a larger set of communication verbs (e.g. *tell, write, announce, whisper, shout, text, convince, suggest, persuade, warn, inform*, hence *TELL*-verbs) which can combine with either subjunctive or indicative (Giannakidou 2015, Giannakidou & Mari 2020). The subjunctive complement in (2a) gives rise to a prioritizing interpretation whereas the indicative in (2b) yields an epistemic interpretation (see Giannakidou & Mari 2020, for English Bhatt 1999, Grano 2018). In this case, the indicative does not necessarily come with a *PRT-modal*. When there is a *PRT-modal* as in (2c), it doesn’t necessarily invoke a prioritizing attitude on the goal argument, i.e. (2c) can be uttered either to Marina’s guardian as advice or to a third person as a report that Marina must exercise. The pure reportative reading is not possible with *ADVISE*-verbs which always preserve their prioritizing character.

- (2) a. Tu ipa na askite i Marina.
Him.DAT told.1SG SUBJ exercise.IMP.3SG the Marina.
‘I told him that Marina should exercise.’
- b. Tu ipa oti askite i Marina.
Him.DAT told.1SG that exercise.IMP.3SG the Marina.
‘I told him that Marina exercises.’
- c. Tu ipa oti prepi na askite i Marina.
Him.DAT told.1SG that must SUBJ exercise.IMP.3SG the Marina.
‘I told him that Marina must exercise.’

Background assumptions The dual pattern of *ADVISE*-verbs, as illustrated in (1a), is best explained within a decomposition analysis of attitude verbs under which the quantificational force is located in the embedded proposition (Portner 1997, Kratzer 2006, 2013, Moulton 2009, Grano 2018, Portner & Rubinstein 2018). Under this view, attitude verbs denote predicates of situations and can combine with their complements via predicate modification (Moulton 2009). Portner & Rubinstein (2018) argue that the subjunctive is a modal

operator which requires a dual background (i.e. a modal base and an ordering source) provided by predicates with a prioritizing content (e.g. *want*, *order*) (see also Roussou 2000). Indicative, on the other hand, requires a single background (i.e. no ordering source) which can be an epistemic, doxastic or reported common ground provided by predicates like *know*, *believe*, *claim* respectively. The modal background is provided by the matrix event by binding the event variable of mood (event/situation relativity, Hacquard 2006, 2010).

Puzzle#1: With these basic ingredients in place, we can understand why *ADVISE*-verbs can substitute the subjunctive with an *indicative+PRT-modal* whereas other priority attitudes cannot. *ADVISE*-verbs are all communication verbs which have been argued independently to be bi-eventive (Martin & Schäfer 2012, 2015 a.o.). In particular, communication verbs can be decomposed into a causing event and a certain attitude state (Martin & Schäfer 2012, 2015, Grano 2018). The causing event always provides a *reported common ground (RPG)* in P&R's terms, since it involves a reporting event. The attitude state subevent can provide either an epistemic/doxastic (i.e. in the case of *confirm*) or a prioritizing content (i.e. in the case of *advise*) combining with indicative (5a) and subjunctive (5b) respectively.

- (3) a. *cause*_{<RPG>} to be in an attitude state_{<DOX>} → *INDICATIVE*
 b. *cause*_{<RPG>} to be in an attitude state_{<PRT>} → *SUBJUNCTIVE*

In the case of *advise* the content of the situation is prioritizing thus licensing a subjunctive. However, under the current decompositional analysis and given its bieventive character, an alternative possibility arises: The attitude state subevent of the matrix predicate can provide its prioritizing content to an embedded modal (cf. Hacquard's (2006) *true deontics, located higher than tense*). In this case, indicative is licensed because the *cause* subevent provides a single background (i.e. reported common ground). This means that the two subevents of the matrix predicate can bind separately into two different positions. If an attitude predicate is monoeventive, as is the case for *INTEND*-verbs, it cannot license the indicative separately and therefore the subjunctive cannot be replaced by an indicative embedding a *PRT-modal*.

Broader puzzle#2 The analysis of *ADVISE*-verbs suggests that *TELL*-verbs which alternate between indicative and subjunctive are not underspecified (cf. Grano 2019). According to Grano (2019), a predicate like *persuade* has a core meaning '*cause to have a rational attitude*' and the prioritizing or epistemic flavor comes from the infinitival or the *that*-complement respectively. In support of this, he discusses the data in (4a,b) in which the infinitival and the *that*-clause can be coordinated without generating an awkward result.

- (4) a. I persuaded John [that the city is in danger and PRO to evacuate immediately].
 b. I persuaded John [PRO to evacuate immediately and that the safest place to be is by the sea].

However, in Greek the conjunction of a subjunctive and an indicative has an awkward effect (5a) unless, the indicative embeds a *PRT-modal* as in (5b).

- (5) a. #?Episa ton Niko na episkefti ena giatro ke oti ta simpliomata ine epikindina.
 Convinced.1SG the Nick SUBJ visit.3SG a doctor and that the supplements are dangerous
 'I convinced Nick to visit a doctor and that the supplements are dangerous.
 b. Episa ton Niko na episkefti enan giatro ke oti prepi na stamatisi ta simpliomata.
 Convinced.1SG the Nick SUBJ visit.3SG a doctor and that must SUBJ stop the supplements
 'I convinced Nick to visit a doctor and that he must stop (getting) food-supplements.

This observation suggests that *TELL*-verbs, as in (2), in addition to their core meaning carry a content specification as to whether the caused attitude is epistemic/doxastic or prioritizing. Unlike *TELL*-verbs, in *advise*-predicates the attitude is always prioritizing and that's why they can combine with indicative only if there is an embedded prioritizing operator.

In closing, the grammaticality of *indicative+PRT-modal* with *ADVISE*-verbs in Greek, foregrounds a decompositional analysis of attitude predicates and a contentful analysis of mood. The data in (1a) are difficult to be explained under a non-contentful approach to mood (cf. Giannakidou & Mari 2020), since we cannot detect a meaning difference for *advise* that would explain indicative selection. Crucially, however, as it has been argued for the English infinitive, it may be that in other environment *na*-clauses make a different contribution (Roussou 1994, 2009, Giannakidou 2015).

Selected references: **Hacquard, V.** 2010. On the event relativity of modal auxiliaries. *NALS 18*. • **Martin F. & F. Schäfer.** 2013. On the Argument Structure of Verbs with Bi- and Mono-eventive Uses. *NELS 42*. • **Moulton, K.** 2009. Clausal complementation and the *wager*-class. *NELS38*. • **Portner P. & A. Rubinstein.** 2018. Contextual commitment and semantic composition: Mood selection with desire predicates. *Ms.* • **Roussou, A.** 2009. Selecting complementizers. *Lingua*