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PROCEEDINGS OF THE ICGL12
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Thanasis Georgakopoulos, Theodossia-Soula Pavlidou, Miltos Pechlivanos, Artemis Alexiadou, Jannis Androutsopoulos, Alexis Kalokairinos, Stavros Skopeteas, Katerina Stathi (Eds.)

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και την αγάπη τους για την ελληνική γλώσσα

ΣΗΜΕΙΩΜΑ ΕΚΔΟΤΩΝ

Το 12ο Διεθνές Συνέδριο Ελληνικής Γλωσσολογίας (International Conference on Greek Linguistics/ICGL12) πραγματοποιήθηκε στο Κέντρο Νέου Ελληνισμού του Ελεύθερου Πανεπιστημίου του Βερολίνου (Centrum Modernes Griechenland, Freie Universität Berlin) στις 16-19 Σεπτεμβρίου 2015 με τη συμμετοχή περίπου τετρακοσίων συνέδρων απ᾽ όλον τον κόσμο.

Την Επιστημονική Επιτροπή του ICGL12 στελέχωσαν οι Θανάσης Γεωργακόπουλος, Θεοδοσία-Σούλα Παυλίδου, Μίλτος Πεχλιβάνος, Άρτεμις Αλεξιάδου, Δώρα Αλεξοπούλου, Γιάννης Ανδρουτσόπουλος, Αμαλία Αρβανίτη, Σταύρος Ασημακόπουλος, Αλεξάνδρα Γεωργακοπούλου, Κλεάνθης Γκρώμαν, Σαβίνα Ιατρίδου, Mark Janse, Brian Joseph, Αλέξης Καλοκαιρινός, Ναπολέων Κάτσος, Ευαγγελία Κορδώνη, Αμαλία Μόζερ, Ελένη Μπουτουλούση, Κική Νικηφορίδου, Αγγελική Ράλλη, Άννα Ρούσσου, Αθηνά Σιούπη, Σταύρος Σκοπετέας, Κατερίνα Στάθη, Μελίτα Σταύρου, Αρχόντω Τερζή, Νίνα Τοπιντζή, Ιάνθη Τσιμπλή και Σταυρούλα Τσιπλάκου.

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Οι δύο τόμοι των πρακτικών του συνεδρίου είναι προϊόν της εργασίας της Εκδοτικής Επιτροπής στην οποία συμμετείχαν οι Θανάσης Γεωργακόπουλος, Θεοδοσία-Σούλα Παυλίδου, Μίλτος Πεχλιβάνος, Άρτεμις Αλεξιάδου, Γιάννης Ανδρουτσόπουλος, Αλέξης Καλοκαιρινός, Σταύρος Σκοπετέας και Κατερίνα Στάθη.

Παρότι στο συνέδριο οι ανακοινώσεις είχαν ταξινομηθεί σύμφωνα με θεματικούς άξονες, τα κείμενα των ανακοινώσεων παρατίθενται σε αλφαβητική σειρά, σύμφωνα με το λατινικό αλφάβητο· εξαίρεση αποτελούν οι εναρκτήριες ομιλίες, οι οποίες βρίσκονται στην αρχή του πρώτου τόμου.

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THE PRAGMATICS OF FUTURE TENSE IN GREEK

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Περίληψη

Στην εργασία αυτή θα υποστηριχτεί ότι η ερμηνεία που προκύπτει από τη χρήση του μελλοντικού τύπου θα+[+συνοπτικό], [-αόριστο] και η οποία περιγράφει μελλοντικά γεγονότα ως βεβαιότητες (εφεξής προσδοκώμενη ερμηνεία/prospective reading) δεν αποτελεί μέρος της προτασιακής σημασίας αλλά προκύπτει ως συνομιλιακό υπονόημα, με βάση την αρχή της πληροφοριακότητας (I-principle) του Levinson (2000), το οποίο αποτελεί συναγωγή προς την καλύτερη δυνατή ερμηνεία.

Keywords: Greek, future tense, modality, pragmatics, implicature

1. Introduction

Future events always come with an inherent degree of uncertainty and therefore they exist in the realm of probabilities rather than of actualities. Nevertheless, when communicating, speakers can refer to future events as if they are certainties by the use of the future tense (henceforth FUT). FUT is not a mere expression of futurity or probability but it is an actual ‚measurement', an evaluation of how the future will turn out to be based on the state of consciousness of the speaker at the time of the utterance. I shall refer to these readings as 'prospective readings'.

Current research (see Giannakidou 2013, 2014 Giannakidou & Mari 2013, 2014) has

shown that FUT constructions are semantically non-veridical assertions conveying partitioned, non-homogenous epistemic states which allow for at least two alternative updates, namely, p and ~p. In other words, at the level of sentence meaning, FUT has the semantics of inquisitive assertions and conveys epistemic possibility (*p*/~*p*). Nevertheless, at the level of the speaker meaning, this epistemic possibility interpretation is not intended and indeed it is not conveyed. What is actually communicated is not the probability but the certainty of an event (epistemic necessity, *p* only), i.e. a pure prospective reading.

In this paper I would like to address the issue of how a non-homogenous modal interpretation (epistemic possibility) at the level of sentence meaning turns out as a prospective reading (epistemic necessity) at the level of what is communicated. I argue that the preferred prospective reading is not compositional but it arises as an informativeness implicature, in the spirit of Levinson (2000), triggered by virtue of background assumptions about language use, interacting closely with the form of what has been said. Evidence will be presented according to which the 'prospective' reading evaporates when FUT is used along with other modal expressions.

At first, this paper intends to make a theoretical point, which could be the basis for further research, by putting forth the idea that future tense (at least in the case of Greek) is achieved at the level of communication and it is subject to a body of knowledge and practice related with the use of language, semantic information and the availability of alternate expressions. An equally important aim is to add up to the arguments in support of the theorising that future tense is subsumed under modality.

2. Setting the scene

2.1. Future in Greek

Modern Greek forms a periphrastic future tense by employing the particle θα (tha), usually referred to as the future marker (see Philippaki-Warburton 1994, Rivero 1994 among others) followed by the [+/-perfective], [-past] verb forms (henceforth PNP and INP). The combination of θα (tha) with PNP is used to "express an action which will take place and be completed at a future point in time" (Holton et al. 1997: 227). This type of future is dubbed in traditional terms as the 'simple future'. Alternatively, when θα (tha) is combined with the INP "it describes an action which will be taking place in the future

either as a habitual event, or as a continuous, progressive one" (Holton et al. 1997: 226). However, unless future-time reference is marked in the context, combinations of θα (tha) with INP are preferably interpreted as epistemic present (Giannakidou 2012), expressing a highly strong possibility and an inference about the state of affairs at the utterance time based on the evidence the speaker has. In these contexts, θα (tha) constructions do not have the force of a future tense but they can be glossed like 'most probably/possibly' making reference to the utterance time. Giannakidou (2012) and Giannakidou & Mari (2012) also argue that when combined with INP θα (tha) exhibits evidential behaviour and it is very similar to the evidential modal 'prepi' (must). In this sense, θα (tha) with INP is co-operatively used when the speaker lacks direct evidence about the situation in case. In fact, a closer look at the data suggests that only the combination of θα (tha) and the PNP gives the 'pure' future interpretation while all other θα (tha) constructions systematically convey epistemic non-future modal readings.[1]

It is therefore safe to argue that θα (tha) is neither a necessary nor a sufficient condition of future-time reference. Θα (tha) sentences systematically receive a range of typically modal interpretations and can equally refer to events before or during the utterance time. As a result, it seems natural to argue that identifying θα (tha) with a purely temporal operator, i.e. a future tense marker, would not account for the facts (see also Giannakidou & Mari 2012, 2013, 2014, Roussou & Tsangalidis 2010). Future-time reference is available in a wide range of expressions and it is the result of the division of labour between tense, aspect, and lexical semantics. By contrast, future prospective readings are restricted to the combination of θα (tha) followed by the perfective non-past (PNP) and they are context-free, i.e. they are assigned neither by the semantics of the construction nor by the linguistic context.

2.2. Future tense and futurity

It is critical for the discussion that follows to make a fundamental distinction between future tense and futurity in general. As Escandell-Vidal (2014: 219) notes, "futurity can be expressed not only by the grammatically marked future tense, but also by other, competing expressions". Modern Greek is not an exception here since futurity can be

1 In fact most of θα (tha) constructions are used to encode a variety of non-future interpretations, namely, such as epistemic past modality (tha+pp), epistemic present modality and evidentiality (tha+inp), counter-factuality (tha+ip).

conveyed by a range of expressions apart from the future tense i.e. the combination of θα (tha) and the PNP. All expressions that encode futurity place an event *e* at a time *te* which follows the time of the utterance *tu* so that {te > tu}. By contrast, it will be presumed that future tense apart from futurity also expresses what I shall name future prospective readings. A future prospective reading can be glossed in the following way: a proposition p expressed at *tu* will be true at *te*, that is, when the event described in p will actually happen. More accurately, given a set of possible worlds in the future, p will be identified with those possible worlds that will become actual worlds in the future. For instance, consider sentences (a) and (b):

(a) John might go to school

(b) John will go to school

In both (a) and (b) we get a future-time interpretation in the sense that the event e described in the proposition p will take place after the utterance time (e > Ut). This is equally communicated by the modal sentence in (a) and the future tense in (b). The crucial difference here is that while sentence (a) is open for both p and ¬p (i.e. it also allows for those possible worlds in the future in which John's going to school will not take place), sentence (b) communicates that John's going to school will be actually true in the future and it is not just a possibility (i.e. p only). For the purposes of our analysis readings like that in (b) will be termed 'future prospective readings' and they will be distinguished from expressions encoding mere futurity. In this sense, future prospective readings will include predictions, commissives (promises and threats), and directives (suggestions and commands), (see Escandell-Vidal 2014 for a similar distinction) and they will be identified with future tense which, in the case of Modern Greek, is associated with the use of θα (tha) with PNP.

2.3. A short literature review

In current literature (see Giannakidou 2009, 2012, 2014 Giannakidou & Mari 2012, 2013, 2014 and Tsangalidis 1999), it has been argued that the particle θα (tha) is not a typical future tense marker. In contrast to Tsangalidis (1999) who suggests that θα (tha) does not qualify as a modal either, Giannakidou (2012) and Giannakidou & Mari (2012, 2013 and 2014) argue that θα (tha) is an epistemic modal operator which is temporally anchored at the utterance time.

More precisely, Giannakidou & Mari (2014) claim that the assessment made by the speaker contains a truth conditional component that carves out metaphysical branches into reasonable and non-reasonable ones, with the reasonable ones being such that p is true there (Mari 2013). Since epistemically, future is unknown, hence non-veridical, as Giannakidou & Mari (2014: 3) note "the speaker's epistemic state at the present time allows for p and not p". This analysis therefore, treats future sentences like inquisitive assertions. Nevertheless, speakers use their knowledge in order to determine the metaphysical alternatives in the future restricting thus the domain of possibilities. In other words, speakers can calculate what would count as a course of events such that p will be true. Following Giannakidou & Mari (2014), this is a 'positive bias' towards p and it is exactly this bias that is responsible for the strength that predictions typically have. It is made clear though that "a bias towards p for the future does not imply commitment of the speaker to p, as is the case of veridical (past, present) assertions" (Giannakidou & Mari 2014: 3).

Finally, Staraki (2014) argues that future morphemes like θα (tha) or will convey a wider range of modal uses ranging from epistemic to deontic necessity and, that temporal reference is an epiphenomenon. According to her analysis direct or indirect evidence plays a key role in determining the interpretation communicated.

3. Neo-Gricean Pragmatic theory

Levinson (1987, 1991, 2000) proposes that the classical Gricean maxims of conversation be reduced to three pragmatic principles. Namely, the Q- (Quantity), I- (Informativeness), and M- (Manner) principles. Each of the three principles consists of a speaker's maxim, which specifies what the principle enjoins the speaker to say and a recipient's corollary, which dictates what it allows the addressee to infer. The I-Principle, which is relevant to our discussion, is given below:

Speaker's Maxim: The Maxim of Minimization.

'Say as little as necessary', i.e. produce the minimal linguistic information sufficient to achieve your communicational ends (bearing the Q-principle in mind).

Recipient's corollary: The enrichment rule.

Amplify the informational content of the speaker's utterance, by finding the most specific interpretation, up to what you judge to be the speaker's m-intended point.

Specifically:

(a) Assume that stereotypical relations obtain between referents or events, unless (i) this is inconsistent with what is taken for granted; (ii) the speaker has broken the Maxim of Minimization by choosing a prolix expression.

(b) Assume the existence of actuality of what a sentence is 'about' if that is consistent with what is taken for granted.

(c) Avoid interpretations that multiply entities referred to (assume referential parsimony); specifically, prefer co-referential readings of reduced NP's (pronouns or zero).

The central tenet of the I-principle is that the use of a semantically general expression I-implicates a semantically specific interpretation. More accurately, the implicature engendered by the I-principle is one that accords best with the most stereotypical and explanatory expectation given our knowledge about how language is used.

I-inferences are inferences to more specific interpretations and they are positive in nature. As Levisnon (2000: 119) notes, "the extension of what is implicated is a proper subset of the extension of what is said, the extension being restricted positively". In addition, I-inferences do not refer to something that could have been said but was not said as it is the case with the other neo-Gricean implicatures which are based on scales. The default readings given by the I-principle are inferences from structure and meaning to further presumptive meanings. As Levinson (2000: 22) notes, they are "based not on direct computations about speaker-intention but rather on general expectations about how language is normally used".

4. Future prospective readings: a pragmatic account

Based on the neo-Gricean theorising that was presented in the previous paragraph, I would like to propose a pragmatic account for the interpretation of future prospective readings in Modern Greek. Let us begin by considering the following example.

(1) Η Ελένη θα πάει στο Cambridge
the Helen will go to the Cambridge
'Helen will go to Cambridge'

What we have seen so far (Giannakidou 2013, 2014 Giannakidou & Mari 2013, 2014) is that FUT constructions are semantically non-veridical assertions conveying partitioned, non-homogenous epistemic states which allow for at least two alternative updates, namely, p and ~p. This means that our modal base includes all the sets of possible worlds and therefore, what is coded in (1) is spelled out in (2):

In other words, sentence meaning allows for both *p* and *~p* worlds directly reflecting the fact that the future is inherently unknown and as a result a future event can actually be in all possible states. At this level of meaning, let's name it level 1, the proposition is at the space of probabilities, namely, anything is possible.

However, at the level of the speaker meaning, when FUT is used this non-homogenous epistemic interpretation is not intended and indeed it is not conveyed. What is intended and is actually communicated is the future prospective reading which universally quantifies over a particular value (a subset) of the modal base, namely, *p* only. In contrast to the coded content of (1) the proposition communicated is spelled out in (3):

(2) Helen will go to Cambridge … Helen will probably go to Cambridge …

Helen will not go to Cambridge

(3) Helen is in Cambridge at a time later than the utterance time

So, the speaker by using FUT intends to convey her certainty that all future worlds will be *p* worlds and hence there will be an event, not merely the probability of an event. Let's call this level 2 meaning.

Here is how to explain how we get from level 1 to level 2 meaning. What I am suggesting is that we cannot derive level 2 meaning compositionally since there is nothing in the semantics neither of θα (tha) nor of the PNP that functions as a future tense marker and also since the semantics of tha+PNP is a non-veridical modal space allowing for both (*p*/*~p*). By contrast, level 2 meaning can be derived pragmatically by an upper bounding pragmatic heuristic such as the I-principle. The speaker by uttering (1) produces a semantically general modal expression (2), sufficient to achieve her communicational ends. In turn, the addressee enriches the informational content of the speaker's utterance, by finding the most specific interpretation, up to what she judges to be the speaker's communicative point, i.e. (3). By sharing background assumptions about language use and assuming co-operativeness the addressee cannot assume that the speaker communicative intention is a proposition like the one in (2). It would not

be very informative in any way to let one know that an event in the future might or might not happen (*p*/~*p*). Consequently, the addressee will look for the most specific interpretation associated with (1) and this is the one in (3). The positive bias towards *p* worlds arises as a default, lower-bounding implicature forcing the most informative reading of sentence (1) where only *p* worlds will be actual worlds in the future.

This approach also reflects a systematic tendency in language of a Zipfian sort which can be subsumed under the least effort principle. The assumption seems to be that there is no reason to make a stronger statement (say more) if the extra information can be contributed by implicature. In particular the speaker will not say what would be obvious anyway (i.e. more than the sentence meaning) while the addressee implicates that some particular stronger or more informative meaning is intended (i.e. the prospective reading).

The proposed analysis makes two crucial predictions which are borne out from the data. First, the future prospective reading is context independent. By way of illustration consider (4) and (5):

(4) Η Ελένη θα πάει στο Cambridge
the Helen will go to the Cambridge

(5) Η Ελένη θα πάει στο Cambridge αύριο
the Helen will go to the Cambridge tomorrow

A sentence like (4) evokes the same sense of futurity with (5) and they both give rise to the same I-implicated future prospective interpretation. In other words, the prospective reading is not a one off interpretation based on a particular context. Secondly, the future prospective reading, being a pragmatic inference, will be prone to cancellations when inconsistent with the context or with competing inferences.

(6) Ο Νίκος μάλλον θα πετάξει για το Λονδίνο
the Nikos probably will fly for the London
'Nikos will probably fly to London'

(7) Λένε ότι θα έρθει ο Νίκος
say-3-pl that will come the Nick
'They say that Nick will come'

(8) Δεν ξέρω αν θα έρθει ο Νίκος
not know if will come the Nick

'I don't know if Nick will come'

The future prospective reading is cancelled with probability modal adverbs like *mallon* (probably), or *isos* (maybe) as in (6), in logophoric contexts like (7) or when embedded in conditionals as in (8). In the above cases, the upper bounding pragmatic heuristic which conveys the prospective reading evaporates and as a result, the sentence meaning which allows for both p and ~p worlds will go through.

The prospective reading is parasitic on and additional to semantic information. It does not just entail what is said but it introduces semantic relations absent from what is said, and in that sense reshapes the proposition expressed. Finally, the prospective reading is the strongest reading and it is a positive one since the implicated proposition does not refer to something that could have been said but was not said.

5. Conclusion and further implications

In this paper, I have considered a pragmatic analysis of the interpretation of future tense in Modern Greek. I argued that the prospective reading is not part of the coded (sentence) meaning of θα (tha) with PNP sentences. By contrast, θα (tha) with PNP sentences are entangled with a strong conversational principle inducing strengthening implicata (I-implicature type). More specifically, the prospective reading arises as an upper bounding implicature and it is more specific and more informative than what is coded.

This proposal has two major implications for current thinking on future-time reference. In the first place, what is actually proposed is that, at least for Modern Greek, future tense is considered to be a special case of modality and that the future reading arises since it is more informative than the epistemic modal one. Secondly, it appears that the interpretation of future tense is regulated by the division of labour between semantics and pragmatics. The coded content of the traditionally called 'future tense' is non-past, epistemic and it makes reference to possible worlds, leaving also open the possibility of a future reading. Nevertheless, what is actually communicated is a non-past, non-present meaning, which is a subset of the meaning of the semantic base.

The future interpretation arises then as a more specific, temporal interpretation based on the semantic content of what is coded and it is consistent with what the speaker intends to communicate.

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