ABSTRACT STRUCTURES FOR MOODS IN GREEK

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[preprint version]

1. [p 1] Introduction
2. [p 3] The Structure "DISJUNCTIVE"
3. [p 9] Abstract Structures: The basic structure "DISJUNCTIVE"
4. [p 12] The basic Structure "SUBJUNCTIVE"
6. [p 16] Historical Considerations

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1. Introduction

The inquiries of most Indo-European linguistics into the problems of modal expressions have concentrated on the modal forms of the verbal inflectional paradigm: the in­

junctive, the optative, the subjunctive, the indicative, the imperative. This limitation has its reason in the very structure of the ancient IE languages: the wealth of forms within the verbal paradigm called for an explanation; and quite obviously a subset of these inflectional forms, the modal ones, were involved in the expression of moods. An idealistic representation of moods in IE, still found in many writings on the subject, would hold that the expression of the semantic properties called mood was co-extensive with the modal verb forms. On the other hand, some of these same Indo-Europeanists, speculating about the origin of the modal verb forms, have advanced the hypothesis that these would all ultimately be traceable to indicative forms with some elements --particles, or even verbs, like the verb 'go', as one hypothesis holds-- added to the indicative and eventually coalesced with it into a single form. I am interested in the assumptions underlying these hypo­

theses, viz., that it must be possible for a language to function perfectly well by expressing moods without special verb forms such as an optative or a subjunctive. It seems to me that such assumptions are very reasonable but that they are in conflict with the idealistic representation mentioned first.

This conflict, it seems, has been carried over into descriptive studies of the expressions of mood in the Ancient IE languages. Difficulties arose when these ex­

pressions were to be described within the framework of the verbal category of mood, while it was obvious, as e.g. in Greek, that other categories, like a special type of
negation and a modal particle, and the person of the verb, and many other factors concurred in the expression of mood. Semantic properties were then ascribed to the verb alone instead of to a whole array of formants. The results were often felt to be unsatisfactory by the authors themselves. One modal verb form turned out to have different meanings that were hard to reconcile.

In this view both the optative and the subjunctive, as far as we can trace them back, had always two basic and irreducible meanings, volitional (volitive) and prospective. Of course, we might say with Ed. Schwyzer in his Greek Grammar (p. 310) that volition was historically first and prospectivity developed later; or that it might just as well have been the other way round. But the arbitrariness of such assertions is only too obvious. The problem of will and wish in modal expressions will never be solved as long as one takes these notions as unanalyzed primitives. I may not be able to offer a final solution to this problem; but one thing seems clear to me: In the semantics of "will" we must ask who is the person who wants something; from whom does he want it; what is it that he wants. And to find this out, we must go far beyond the category of the verb.

It was in the United States that theories as well as methodological tools were developed to cope with the problem of describing syntactic and semantic structures of high complexity, which could never be properly understood when limiting one's focus to one particular morphological category. I should mention here the stimulating work on the cases, but also the recent attempts to describe various types of complemnt sentences.

It is my intention to make two major points in this paper:

1. The first has to do with finding a frame within which the modal expressions of one particular Ancient IE language --I have chosen Classical Greek-- can be best described. I shall try to point out that the regularities which we
find in these expressions must depend on an underlying principle, represented by abstract structures. These structures are semanto-syntactic, which means that the semantic properties or bundles of properties are arranged not in a linear order but in a hierarchical order, analogous to a bracketing in a PS structure. The abstract structures we propose have, of course, a very tentative character. They can only be accepted as far as evidence for them can be furnished.

2. My second point has to do with the modal verb forms that were the object of the studies of most Indo-Europeanists. If in the innermost bracket of a semanto-syntactic structure two semantic properties or bundles of properties can be exchanged without any further change in the total structure, and if this change is correlated with a change in verbal mood forms and nothing else, then I think we are faced with a case where these forms can be said to have a meaning of their own. I shall also try to show how these meanings are to be understood as bundles of features rather than as unanalyzed terms.

In my final remarks I shall try to outline the bearing these views have on comparative IE linguistics.

2. The Structure "DISJUNCTIVE"

In traditional grammars of Greek, including some historical ones, it is customary to class conditional sentences along with all the other embedding sentence types into one major class representing the hypotactic sentence structures. However, I believe that conditional sentences have a basic structure --I propose to call it "DISJUNCTIVE"-- which differs vastly from other complex sentence structures. Let us examine some conditional sentences in Greek.
(1) Eur. B. 947 ἃν εἰ δοῦναι

'Should it be that you wished to, you could do it'

We distinguish between the two major parts of this complex sentence: (1) the protasis or if-clause represented here by the conjunction-particle ei 'if' plus an optative verb form 2nd person singular; (2) the apodosis, which here precedes the protasis and is represented by an optative verb form 2nd person singular and the modal particle ἀν. I use the term "conditional sentence" to cover the entire complex sentence consisting of a protasis and an apodosis.

From school grammar we learn that if either the protasis or the apodosis or both are negated, they have to take different forms of negation. One, ou(κ), is usually described as negating statements of fact. The other, μη, is commonly referred to as "prohibitive". The latter seems to imply at least three semantic elements: 1) speaker addressing interlocutor in a command; 2) negation; 3) a consequence. It could be paraphrased as: 'Don't you let it happen (or be) that ...'. The protasis requires the prohibitive, rather than the factual negation; in the apodosis the constraints are reversed.

(2) Οὐκ ἃν δοῦναι εἰ μὴ δοῦλοιο

'Were it to be the case that you were not willing, then one could hardly imagine your being able to'

A further constraint limits the occurrence of the modal particle to the apodosis, excludes it from the protasis.

If one looks at a number of conditional sentences of this type, it seems odd that the protasis should invariably be negated by means of the prohibitive negation. The problem has remained a puzzle for Hellenists and comparativists; and it will remain a puzzle as long as one is inclined to think that the prohibition refers to the propositional content -- i.e. mainly, the verb -- of the protasis. What the speaker wants to exclude is not, or not necessarily, the propositional content of the protasis; he wants to
prevent the protasis from being stated in a positive form. To illustrate this with an example from English:

Don't come to work tomorrow, and I won't pay you. When saying this it is not that I don't want him to come to work; quite on the contrary. But I want to prevent the protasis from being stated in a positive form. The positive imperative is used to indicate that the speaker wishes to state the protasis in a positive form:

Come to work tomorrow and I'll pay you.
Let me hear that again and I'll hit you.

Summing up our description so far: in a conditional sentence things behave as if there were a higher verb, not phonetically expressed but quite clearly traceable, which must have a volitive connotation and which therefore calls for a prohibitive negation. It must be a performative verb, the action which it denotes consisting in uttering it. Let us assume this higher verb to be I CLAIM; we shall see later that we need such a verb on quite independent grounds.

The type of conditional sentences studied so far shows further peculiarities which reveal to us more about their underlying semanto-syntactic structure. Consider

(3) A. Th. 260 aitouménōi moi koúphon ei doíēs télos

'Were you only willing to grant me, who request it, an easy end'

This is a complete utterance which shows all the structural properties of a protasis of a conditional sentence: it does not admit the modal particle; when it is negated, the prohibitive negation has to appear:

(3') ... ei mè doíēs télos

'Were you only not willing to ...'

But a major semantic change can be seen in these independent protasis-like expressions when compared with the conditional sentences: in expressions like (3') the volitive semantic element--and this includes the negative counterpart, the prohibition--does not relate to a
particular form of stating the protasis; instead, it directly relates to the verb, i.e. to the propositional content of the protasis. 'I want (don't want) this to happen'. We still have not covered all the semantic properties that can be detected in sentences like (3'). To say it very roughly, they presuppose the existence of a corresponding apodosis, not phonetically expressed and semantically unspecified, but nevertheless present. The "intuition of a native speaker of Classical Greek", in the presence of 'if only'-clauses, clearly perceives an unspecified 'then such-and-such' to be present as well.

We also find apodosis-like sentences presupposing an unspecified protasis:

(4) Ar. Nub. 747 takhú g'ân dûnaio manthanein peri rhutmôn

'(Then of course) you could quickly learn about the patterns.'

Again we have a complete utterance showing all the structural properties of an apodosis in a conditional sentence. The modal particle is normal here; if negated, the factual ou is obligatory. The presupposed, unspecified protasis could be filled by such phrases as "if such-and-such be the case, then ...".

From the examples given so far, one may gather that the optative verb form is typically connected with this kind of conditional sentences, protaseis and apodoseis. This, however, does not mean that an optative must necessarily appear in these sentences; nor that the optative may not appear in very differently structured modal expressions — as we shall see later on.

We shall now look at a new set of modal expressions, structurally quite parallel to the preceding ones, with one semantic difference. Verb forms of the indicative preterit (mostly imperfect) are used here instead of the optatives:
This is a proverb and does not refer to any specific time. But even apart from their use in proverbs, these preterits have not temporal reference whatsoever. If we are to assume that preterit verb forms have a meaning of their own --and we want to make this assumption, and we even want to justify it-- then we will have to recognize the fact that reference to the past cannot be one of the distinctive properties of its meaning. P. Kiparsky (FL 4/1968) has shown evidence for the hypothesis that in Ancient IE languages, past tense is systematically related to an underlying adverb denoting anteriority.

The semantic difference between conditional sentences containing optatives and otherwise identically structured sentences containing preterits can be described as prospectivity vs. factivity. 'Should it be that you wanted to, you could do it' refers to something which may happen at any time from now on. 'If taking did not exist, nobody would be bad' does not convey the idea of such a prospect. On the other hand, sentences with preterits like (5) have a clear contrary-to-fact connotation: 'If taking didn't exist - but it does exist ...'. We note that the presence vs. absence of prospectivity is correlated with the change between an optative and a preterit verb form - and nothing else. There is no surface structure element participating in this change, and no other abstract semantic element intervening. It is precisely this fact which we have in mind when we say that we attribute a semantic property [+prospective] to the optative verb form and the absence of such a feature to the preterit verb form.

That otherwise the structure of the modal expression in (5) is quite parallel to the one in (1) can be seen from a glance at (6) - (7):
This is a protasis-like expression with an apodosis unexpressed but nevertheless presupposed. The negated version must show the prohibitive negation

(6') eîthe mè ëstha dunatòs ...
'Were you only not willing to ...'

and the volition relates directly to the verb whereas in (5), exactly like in (1), it must relate to a verb outside the conditional sentence. An apodosis-like sentence is shown in

(7) Êlegon ân ...
'Perhaps it were better if I said ...'

(7') Ouk ìn ëlegon
'I would not say ...'

Some protasis like "if things were such-and-such" or "given such a situation" etc. is presupposed.

The parallelism is thus complete with the one exception of prospectivity and of the two modal verb forms. Note that mixed types of modal expressions occur, with a preterit in the protasis, as in (1) - or reversed. But note that the semantic property of contrary-to-fact is correlated with the protasis only, not with the apodosis. Therefore, counterfactualness cannot be attributed as a semantic feature to the preterit, but must rather be related to the total structure of the modal expression.

Let us finally consider a very different type of conditional sentences:
We find indicatives of the present both in the protasis and in the apodosis. The negation in the protasis has to be prohibitive, in the apodosis factual. But no modal particle is present. And the protasis by itself used as a complete utterance does not occur. Moreover, although the apodosis could occur independently, 'they aren't gods', it does not, as the other apodoseis did, presuppose a protasis. To make the first part of (8) an acceptable independent protasis, we would have to change the indicative present into either an optative or an indicative preterit. In this instance we see that the disjunctive structure of independent protaseis is directly correlated with either the optative or the preterit - and with nothing else. On these grounds we would say that both the optative and the preterit verb form themselves must carry in their meaning some feature which we might call [+dissociative] and which is absent from the indicative present as well as from the subjunctive.

3. Abstract Structures: The basic structure "DISJUNCTIVE"

NOT EV₁ OR

A. I CLAIM YOU ((LET HAPPEN EV₁) AND (LET HAPPEN EV₂))
   a. I CLAIM NOT YOU ((...));

B. I CLAIM YOU ((LET BE EV₁) AND (LET BE EV₂))

C. I CLAIM EV₁ AND EV₂
Structure A. would represent example (1) and a. example (2). B. represents (5), C. (8). The other examples are derivable from these structures by such processes as deletion. The first thing to keep in mind about these proposals is their extremely tentative character. If they can be accepted, it is only inasmuch as they reflect and directly account for the regularities which we have been pointing out before or which we might still discover.

The second important thing is the bracketing. It indicates that the various semantic factors concurring in a modal expression show a hierarchy analogous to the one in a phrase structure. This allows for entities inside a bracket being changed without affecting the remainder of the structure; on the contrary, things outside the brackets being changed while the content of the brackets remains untouched. It is assumed that only the modalities of sentences are being represented here; for the remainder which is sometimes being referred to as the propositional content, I have deliberately chosen the vague label of Event (EV).

The NOT EV, OR which precedes all disjunctive structures was chosen in various grounds. First, it has been suggested that the 'if - then' structure must be traceable to some more basic semantic structure while the anaphoric pronominal element 'then' points to something derived. Second, and more specifically, every conditional sentence seems to make allowance for the opposite of the protasis being true. In the usage of Greek this is reflected in many ways: often, a positive conditional sentence is followed by one with a negative protasis: 'if - then; if not - then'. A frequent characteristic feature consists in the omission of the first apodosis, where the translator often supplies a 'then o.k.:

\[(9) \text{A 135-7 all'} \text{ 'ei mên dósousi géras megáthúmōi} \]
\[\text{Akhaioí... ei dé ke mè dōōsin, ego dé ken autós hálōmai} \]

'If the Achaeans want to present me with the gift ('then o.k.); if not, I shall take it myself'
The third reason is represented by the fact that NOT EV assumes truth value and the protasis becomes contrary-to-fact just in case the abstract element BE appears (structure B.). It seems plausible that counterfactiveness to become a semantic factor requires an element like BE referring to something that exists and is incompatible with an element like HAPPEN referring to the future.

HAPPEN and BE and absence of either one (in C.) are introduced to account for this difference, but also to account for the difference which we found between prospective and factive.

I CLAIM: if it is true that every conditional sentence potentially links a protasis with its opposite, then somebody must do the linking; the somebody is the speaker; and the linking is brought about by a performative verb. But we said before that we also need a performative verb to account for the way in which the speaker wants the protasis to be stated, positive or not positive. The verb, we said, must have a volitive connotation. Hence my proposal of I CLAIM.

AND is to account for the fact that in a conditional sentence the protasis presupposes the existence of an apodosis and reverse. An independent protasis 'If only ...' could be derived from the complete structure by deleting the content of the second bracket. The AND remains. The strongest evidence for the reality of the abstract AND comes from the fact that this AND does appear as 'and' (kaí) on the surface under certain definite conditions. Consider

(10) S. Ai. 550

Ö paí, génocio patròs eutukhèsteros, tà d'áll' homoíos· kaí génoi' àn ou kakòs

'O son, may you become luckier than your father, in other respects equal, then (literally: and) you will not be bad'

The conditions are as follows: the LET of the protasis is not represented by ei 'if', and the AND is not represented by any anaphoric pronominal element like tòte 'then'. We
thus find that the surface structure constructions of the 'if A then B' type are in complementarity with constructions of an 'Imperative A and B' type. Thus they both must go back to the same underlying structure.

YOU is the addressee of I CLAIM. In independent protaseis, when the content of the second bracket is being deleted, we could get rid of one pair of brackets. But I have not been able so far to find a device that would place the YOU in the immediate neighborhood of LET, which would then account for the fact that volition in this instance directly relates to the content of the protasis. I also do not understand why in such exclamations 'if only ...!' the addressee may not be the interlocutor but an imaginary person.

LET is to account for the contrast between volition and nonvolition in modal expressions. This is the most difficult aspect of all. We reserve treatment until we have seen the behavior of LET in the other structures.

4. The basic structure "SUBJUNCTIVE"

The term here refers not to the modal verb form (although it is true that subjunctives occur quite typically, but not necessarily, in these structures); it refers to a special type of modal expressions. Here we give the structures first and then illustrate them with examples:

D. I Performative? (X LET HAPPEN EV)
   a. X = I

   (11) Ἄ 262 οὐ γὰρ ποτὶ τοίοις ἠδον ἠμάρας οὐδὲ ἰδομαι
       'I have never seen such men nor do I expect to see any'
We are interested in the conjoined sentence 'and not do I expect to see' showing a subjunctive verb form and the non-prohibitive negation. We perceive an element 'prospective' in the expression.

b. $X = \text{YOU}$

(12) A 26 mē se, gerōn, ... kikheĩō

'Let me not catch you, old man!'

We find a prohibitive negation, a subjunctive, and a clear volitional connotation.

(13) ἀφεῖς μάθει

'Let me learn!'

More literally something like 'let that I learn!' A governing verb in the imperative and a dependent subjunctive form. Again a volitional connotation.

c. $X = \text{3rd person (he,it)}; \text{it} = \text{EV}_1 : \text{EV}_1 \text{ LET HAPPEN EV}_2$

(14) Hdt. 2.161 The Egyptians thought that Aprias had deliberately sent them into a seemingly bad spot, hina dē spheĩn phthorē gēnētai (subjunctive), autōs dē tôn loipōn Aigyptiōn asphalesteron ērkhoi (optative)

'so that they would perish and he could more safely dominate the remaining Egyptians'

Only the subordinate clause is given here in the Greek original. It shows a connotation of intent, thus of volition, which is clearly correlated with the expression 'deliberately sent' which precedes.

We may now be in a better position to dispel some of the darkness around the notion of volition. Suppose we started --as suggested in some writings on the subject-- from an abstract verb with volitive meaning, thus from an underlying $X \text{ WANTS HAPPEN EV}$. In (14) this would not do the trick, since
the portion WANTS HAPPEN EV does not depend on an X = he, but on an X = EV ('deliberately sent'); thus the formula would read EV₁ WANTS HAPPEN EV₂, which is semantically bizarre. What is more: (14) is one of the numerous types of subordinated sentences; they often show, with very little or no change in structure, a fluctuation between such relations as volition, cause and consequence. It seems, from looking at (14) and many other examples, that the connotation of will becomes predictable from the matrix sentence.

Our strategy consists in looking for a device that would account for all instances of volition in a similar way, for the examples (11) - (13) as well as for (14). We thus chose an abstract verb which does not itself contain volition. It would simply have to link the preceding semantic elements from which volition can be predicted with the following entities where volition appears in the surface.

In English, LET would be such a verb. If the 2nd person precedes, as in (12), it automatically becomes an imperative and what follows is volitional. If the 1st person precedes, as in (11), it cannot be an imperative, and the whole expression is non-volitional. If a matrix sentence precedes which contains an element of intent, which would have to be marked in the underlying structure, the constituent sentence becomes volitional. But the strongest support for the existence of an abstract LET comes from Greek itself, where, as (13) shows, the higher verb is no longer abstract but assumes phonetic shape and is the imperative 'let'. This is found in Attic. In the development towards Modern Greek, this imperative has become an inflexible particle, as, and is now an integrating part of the subjunctive verb form. In Modern Greek, the higher verb would have to be abstract again.

One final remark about the modal verb forms in (14): subjunctive and optative occur in otherwise parallel structures but with a significant change in meaning: the subjunctive indicates an immediate prospectivity emanating from the agent of the matrix sentence ("The Egyptians thought ... that they might perish"). The optative indicates a
dissociated prospectivity linked with or emanating from someone else than the agent of the matrix sentence.

5. The Semantic Structure of Some Verbal Mood Forms

We found certain definite places within the bracketed semantic structure of modal expressions where a semantic property is related to a particular modal verb form and to nothing else. This, then, is the ground on which we would ascribe semantic properties to these verbal forms. The properties may be tabulated as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>prospective</th>
<th>dissociative</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Optative</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preterit</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subjunctive</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indicative</td>
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<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

We note that these properties have certain affinities with the semantic structures of the modal expressions in which the forms are preponderantly used: the feature "dissociative" common to both Preterit and Optative is obviously related to the disjunctive structure of conditioned sentences where a distinction between a protasis and an apodosis is always made. However, these features of the verbal forms would evidently not suffice to explain the overall structures of the modal expressions in which they occur. The preterit, for one, occurs in non-disjunctive structures as well, and here, the feature "dissociative" is related to the distance in time between present and past.
6. Historical Considerations

The semantic analysis of the verbal moods which we have outlined very briefly may help us to understand some of the changes which took place within the paradigm of modal forms. We begin to get an insight into the nature of the close association between the optative and the preterit which has led to mergers in many languages and different periods of IE. The Latin imperfects in -ba- (amabam) owe their origin to a periphrasis with the verb 'to be' in the optative mood, the modal element -ä- being identical with the ä of the so-called subjunctives (dicat) and being the regular representation of the optative in thematic present tense forms in Italic and Celtic.

The further fate of the modal verb forms in Greek offers an interesting test case. We know that the optative began to fade in the Hellenistic period, and it has almost disappeared in the New Testament. The subjunctive form has survived until this day. Thus, one could say that either the optative and the subjunctive, or the optative and the preterit, have merged. A priori, both developments show some plausibility because, as we see from the chart, each of the pairs has one feature in common, differs only by one other feature. We cannot deduce from the chart, i.e. from the semantic analysis of the verb forms alone, which forms actually merged. And, what is more, we cannot explain on the basis of the chart why the optative should have disappeared and why not the subjunctive. In fact, when considering just the modal forms and not the total modal expressions, we would rather have expected the optative to have survived. In the development of Greek from Homer onwards, the optative first made substantial gains in territory, as can be seen from an inspection of Attic. In the Germanic languages the inherited optative proved to be the survivor, and the so-called subjunctive forms in Latin are at least in part inherited optatives.
An explanation of all these changes in different directions can only be sought within the larger frame of modal expressions, and this means for us: within the frame of their underlying structures. As for later Greek we note that within the structure "Disjunctive" of the prospective subtype, preterit (imperfect) forms of certain verbs with a futuric connotation in their lexical meaning came to be used in lieu of older optatives. In the New Testament we find the imperfect of the verb 'want, wish': ἐθυλώμεν 'I should like to' instead of Attic ἐμοιέωμεν ἂν. Still later, in Modern Greek, we find forms consisting of a future particle θά (θέλω ἢνα) plus an imperfect used in this position. Since we have seen in our descriptive part that this was precisely one of the crucial positions for the optative, where it could be shown to have a meaning of its own, we now understand why the replacement by future-preterits in this very position must have made the old optative forms superfluous. This presents a case where the abstract structure remains unchanged.

But we also find evidence for diachronic change in the abstract structures. The rule that all conditional sentences show the prohibitive negation (mé) in the protasis is a peculiarity of Greek; we can even see that it must have developed only gradually within Greek, since Homer still shows instances of if-clauses with factual negation. We can also see that this peculiarity of Attic again disappeared in the later development of the language: Modern Greek shows only the factual, not the prohibitive negation in if-clauses. We would then have to set up different abstract structures for these different stages of the language; specifically, the element NOT, which we placed outside the brackets for Attic, would have to be moved inside for Homer and for Modern Greek.

With these admittedly sketchy remarks I wanted to make it clear, nevertheless, that I consider these abstract structures to be language-specific. Of course, certain parts may be universal. But I cannot decide definitely
which parts are universals and which other parts are language-specific. All I can tell is that the parts that change cannot be universal.

The task of IE syntax, as I see it ahead of us, consists in passing beyond the stage of a one-sided morphological approach. It seems a feasible task to describe the underlying principles of modal expressions in the older IE languages and to formulate them in terms of abstract structures. From there we can move on to observing historical change.

One major obstacle in this kind of research I see in the currently wide-spread belief that only native speakers can do adequate descriptions of their languages. The belief is unwarranted and has a pernicious effect on the further development of IE linguistics in particular and of linguistics altogether. I hope that some linguists will give up this belief; or, if this should prove too difficult, that by some miracle they may turn into fluent speakers of some of the ancient Indo-European languages.

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