

# Disregard your alternatives: V-doubling unconditionals in Greek

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Marika Lekakou (University of Ioannina) &  
Josep Quer (ICREA & Universitat Pompeu Fabra)

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# Introduction

- Several classes of *concessive conditional* clauses (König 1986, 1988), also known as *unconditionals* (Zaefferer 1991) or *irrelevance conditionals* (König 1985):
  - Universal/Constituent
  - Scalar/Polar
  - Alternative

# Concessive conditional clauses

- Universal/Constituent

- (1) a. However much advice you give him, he does exactly what he wants.
- b. Whatever I say, he doesn't listen to me
- c. Opjon ke na kalesis, tha imaste poli liji.  
whoever and subj call-pnp.2sg fut be-prs.1sg very few  
'Whoever you invite, there will be too few of us.'

# Concessive conditional clauses

- Scalar/Polar

- (2)
- a. Even if you drink only a little, your boss will fire you.
  - b. Even if I try very hard, I won't manage.
  - c. (Akoma) ki an tu to eksijisis kala, dhe tha  
even and if him it explain-pnp.2sg not fut  
alaksi gnomi.  
change-pnp.3sg opinion  
'Even if you explain it to him well, he won't change his mind.'

# Concessive conditional clauses

- **Alternative**

- (3) a. Whether he is right or not, we must support him.
- b. Whether or not he finds a job, he is getting married.

- Make-up: the affirmative and negative counterpart of the same clause.
- Reading: irrespective of  $p$  or not- $p$  holding,  $q$  holds.
- We focus on the Greek structures realizing this type.

# Alternative concessive conditional clauses in Greek

- Greek displays two different realizations of this structure:
  - i. duplication of the verbal complex in affirmative form, followed by the negated counterpart (4);
  - ii. duplication of the verbal complex in affirmative and negative forms framed by the correlative disjunction *ite...ite* (εἴτε...εἴτε) (5).

(4) Ta dhosi dhen ta dhosi ta xrimata,

them give-pnp.3sg them give-pnp.3sg the money

emis tha to parume.

we fut it buy-pnp.1pl

‘Whether s/he gives the money or not, we’ll buy it.’

(5) Ite ta dhosi ite dhen ta dhosi ta xrimata/

either or

Ite ta dhosi ta xrimata ite oxi/

either or not

emis tha to parume.

# Goals of today's talk

- Empirical characterization of alternative concessive conditionals (unconditionals) in Greek within the domain of subordination.
  - 'Bare V reduplication' structure
  - Structure with distributive/correlative disjunction
- Crosslinguistic comparison with English.

# Properties / 1

- Episodic tenses in the main clause make the structure ungrammatical; presence of a **modal operator in the consequent** as crucial ingredient of the structure:

(6)\* (Ite) ta dosi (ite) dhen ta dosi ta

disj them.acc give-PNP.3sg disj neg them.acc give-PNP.3sg the  
xrimata piso, ton apelisan xtes/ton apoliun afti ti stigmi.  
money back him fire-**pst**.3pl yesterday/him fire-**prs**.3pl this the moment

(7) (Ite) ta dosi (ite) dhen ta dosi ta

disj them.acc give-pnp.3sg disj neg them.acc give-pnp.3sg the  
xrimata piso, tha ton apolisun.

money back **fut** him fire-pnp.3pl

‘Whether he gives the money back or not, they will fire him.’

# Properties/2

- The unconditional clause itself may feature **any tense form**.

(8) Erxotan dhen erxotan, emis tu ixame to krevati stromeno.

come-impf.3sg neg come-impf.3sg we him-gen the bed prepared

‘Whether he would come or not, we had his bed ready.’

(9) Irthe den irthe o ximonas, emis tha kripsume ta kalokerina.

come-pst.3sg neg come-pst.3sg the winter we fut store-pnp.1pl the winter-clothes

‘Whether the winter has arrived or not, we’ll store the summer clothes.’

# Properties/2

(10) Exis den exis fai to vradi,

have-prs.2sg neg have-prs.2sg eat-nonfin the evening

tin pita tis jajas prepi na tin fas.

the pita the-gen granny-gen must na it-acc eat-pnp.2sg

‘Whether you have eaten or not in the evening, you must eat granny’s pita.’

# Properties / 3

- Like conditionals, unconditionals license **donkey-anaphora** readings:

(11) Pulisi dhen pulisi enas xoriatis<sub>k</sub> to ghaidharo<sub>i</sub> tu,

buy-pnp.3sg not buy-pnp-3sg a peasant the donkey his

e<sub>k</sub> panda to<sub>i</sub> thimate.

always it remember-prs.3sg

‘Whether a peasant sells his donkey or not, he always remembers it.’

(12) *Ite* pulisi *ite* dhen pulisi enas xoriatis to ghaidharo<sub>i</sub> tu,  
panda to<sub>i</sub> thimate.

# Properties/4

- Unconditionals display the **full paradigm of conditional clauses** (factual, present and past counterfactual)

(13) a. Erxosoun den erxosun, tha pijename.

come-impf.2sg neg come-impf.2sg fut go-impf-1pl

‘Whether you came or not, we would go.’

b. Ixes den ixes erthi, tha ixame pai.

have-impf.2sg neg have-impf.2sg come-nonfin fut have-impf.1pl go-nonfin

‘We would have gone regardless of you coming or not.’

# Properties / 5

- Unlike plain concessives, **unconditionals cannot be faithfully paraphrased with an adversative** structure:

(14) a. (Akoma) ki an dhen to theli, emis tha tu to parume.

even and if not it want-prs.3sg we fut him it buy-pnp.1pl

b. (Akoma) ke na min to theli, emis tha tu to parume.

even and subj not it want-prs.3sg we fut him it buy-pnp.1pl

‘Even if he doesn’t want it, we’ll buy it for him.’

=/=

(15) Tha tu to parume, ala dhen to theli.

we fut him it buy-pnp.1pl but not it want-prs.3sg

‘We’ll buy it for him, but he doesn’t want it, .’

# External syntax

- Syntactically, unconditionals behave as *peripheral adverbial clauses*: “A peripheral adverbial clause introduces a privileged contextual assumption against which the proposition expressed in the associated clause is processed” (Endo & Haegeman 2019).
- Typically echoic.
- They can have non-declaratives as main clause.

# External syntax

(16) Ta dhosi dhen ta dhosi ta xrimata piso,

them give-pnp.3sg them give-pnp.3sg the money back

ksexna ta!

forget-imp.sg it

‘Whether s/he gives the money back or not, forget about it!’

(17) Ta dhosi dhen ta dhosi ta xrimata piso,

them give-pnp.3sg them give-pnp.3sg the money back

jati ton prostatevun?

why him protect-prs.3pl

‘Whether s/he gives the money back or not, why do they protect him?’

# External syntax

- Relatively integrated in the matrix CP.

(18) Tin katalili stigmi, s'aresi dhen s'aresi, tha to po.

the right moment you-like-pnp.3sg not you-like-pnp.3sg not fut it  
say

'At the right moment, whether you like it or not, I'll  
say it.'

(19) Afto, erthun dhen erthun, tha to petakso.

this come-pnp.3pl not come-pnp.3pl not fut it throw-pnp.1sg

'This, whether they come or not, I'll throw it away.'

# External syntax

- It can be embedded together with its matrix:

(20) Apofasisa oti afto, erthun dhen erthun, tha to petakso.

decide-pst-1sg that this come-pnp.3pl not come-pnp.3pl not fut it throw-pnp-1sg

‘I decided that, whether they come or not, I’ll throw this away.’

- It cannot be associated with a focus particle:

(21) (\*Mono) ta dhosi dhen ta dhosi ta xrimata,

only them give-pnp.3sg them give-pnp.3sg the money

emis tha to parume.

we fut it buy-pnp.1pl

# Interpretation

- In discourse, unconditionals are echoic. They do not modify the event of the matrix clause, but they contextualize an associated proposition that must be relevant in the discourse.

(22) A: Alfonso is good at his job.

B: Whether or not he's good at his job, we have to transfer him. (Rawlins 2008: 585)

# Interpretation

- The unconditional clause is not equivalent to a plain disjunction of conditional antecedents:

(23) #An erthi i an dhen erthi, tha fighume.

if s/he come-pnp.3sg or come-pnp.3sg fut leave-pnp-1pl

‘If s/he comes or doesn’t come, we’ll leave.’

(24) #An erthi i oxi, tha fighume.

if s/he come-pnp.3sg or not leave-pnp-1pl

‘If s/he comes or doesn’t come, we’ll leave.’

# Interpretation

- Unconditionals convey an additional layer of indifference.
- “Irrespective of”, “independently of” (“headed” unconditionals in Rawlins 2008) can be made explicit:

(25) *Asxeta apo* to an erthi i dhen erthi, tha fighume.

(26) *Asxeta apo* to an erthi i oxi, tha fighume.

(27) *Aneksartita apo* to an erthi i dhen erthi, tha fighume.

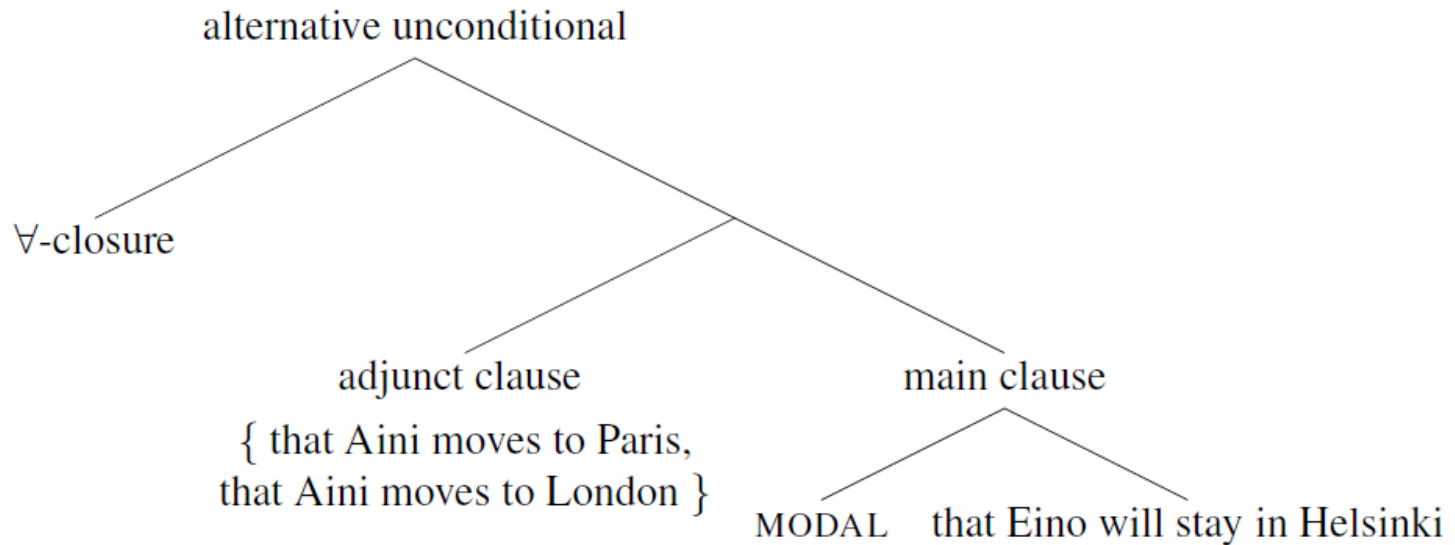
(28) *Aneksartita apo* to an erthi i oxi, tha fighume.

# Interpretation

- Unconditionals are a type of conditional clause.
- Like conditionals, unconditionals serve to restrict the domains of operators in their scope.
  - Recall the requirement for a modal operator in the consequent.
- They differ from conditionals in entailing their consequent, and in conveying “indifference” (Rawlins 2008).
- Unlike conditionals, however, unconditionals denote **sets of alternatives**: they have question semantics (Rawlins 2008, 2013) or Alternative Semantics (Lohiniva 2020).

# Interpretation

[*adjunct* Whether Aini moves to Paris or London ], Eino will stay in Helsinki



Lohiniva 2020 on Rawlin's  
account

# Interpretation

- *Indifference implication* (Rawlins 2008: 596-7):
  - “The indifference implication of an unconditional, on this analysis, amounts to the claim that for any possible way of restricting the domain, the main clause proposition comes out true. That is, **it follows from nontrivial, exhaustive, domain restriction.**”

# Interpretation

- *Entailment of the consequent* (Rawlins 2008: 597):
  - “For exactly the same reasons, the fact that the consequent of an unconditional is entailed follows; in aggregate over the entire set of alternatives, we consider every part of the modal space, and find that **the consequent proposition is true in all of them.**”

# Interpretation

- Rawlins has evidence for the interpretation of unconditionals as alternative questions *in English*:
  - Disjunction is necessary
  - Interrogative morphology (**whether**)
  - Same form as embedded yes/no question
- Alternative interrogatives allow for negative stripping (TP ellipsis following a high Neg) (Merchant 2003):

(29) Alfonso wondered whether the party was canceled *or not*.

(30) Alfonso wondered whether *or not* the party was canceled.

# Interpretation

- Greek does **not** offer evidence for the identification with alternative questions:
  - Plain standard disjunction is out
  - No overt interrogative morphology
  - Different form from embedded alternative questions

(31)\*Anarotieme (an) irthe dhen ithe/ite irthe ite oxi  
wonder-prs.1sg if come-pnp.3sg not come-pnp.3sg/either come-pnp.3sg  
or not

- We assume the Alternative Semantics account in Lohiniva (2020), with a high existential closure.

# Structure

- The type of ellipsis involved in the second *ite*-disjunct cannot be negative stripping: **non-standard disjunction, different negation (*oxi*) and different distribution than in English.**

(32) Whether *or not* the party is canceled, we should go out tonight.

- *Oxi* is in a fixed position and it's always *oxi* (*\*dhen*, *\*min*).
- *Oxi* needs an overt C head licensing it; it is not licensed after bare V form (even in the presence of *ή*):

(33) ... pos/oti/an/i/ke/ala/**ite** oxi.

(34) \*erthi oxi/ \*erthi i oxi

# Structure: a puzzle

- Unconditionals can feature the dependent (PNP) form, which is otherwise only licensed by specific heads, e.g. with *na*, *as*, *tha*, *prin* etc.
- How is the PNP licit in the bare V unconditional structure?
- Our claim: bare V duplication structures derive from correlative disjunction structures with a covert C (correlative) element:

(35)  $\emptyset$  ta dhosi  $\emptyset$  dhen ta dhosi ta xrimata, ...

# Structure: a puzzle

- Alternative questions do not license PNP, while future oriented regular conditionals do.
- Correlative disjunction of main clauses does not license PNP either.

(36) Dio pragmata borun na simvun: ite \*(tha) vrekxi ite den \*(tha) vrekxi.

two things can-prs.3pl subj happen-pnp.3pl disj fut rain-pnp.3sg disj neg  
fut rain-pnp.3sg

‘Two things may happen: either it will rain or it will not rain.’

(37) I \*(tha) mu to pis i \*(tha) figo.

disj fut me-gen it.acc tell-pnp.2sg disj fut leave-pnp-1sg

‘Either you tell me or I’ll leave.’

# Structure

- Given that the alternatives are propositional, they must be realized by a CP; unconditionals are necessarily clausal, i.e. larger than simply  $vP$  or TP constituents.
- V-to-C movement attested in conditional protases (Iatridou & Embick 1994) is discarded because, unlike other V-to-C derivations (e.g. imperatives), bare unconditionals robustly display proclisis and not enclisis.
- However, the dependent CPs exhibit some degree of “truncation” of peripheral positions, as they do not allow for focus preposing.

# Structure

(42) \*TO VIVLIO, dhiavasis dhen dhiavasis,  
the book.acc read-pnp.2sg neg read-pnp.2sg  
tha perasis stis eksetasis.  
fut pass-pnp.2sg in-the exams

- Left dislocated topic is possible.

(43) To vivlio, to dhiavasis den to dhiavasis, tha perasis stis eksetasis.  
the book.acc it-acc read-pnp.2sg neg it-acc fut pass-pnp.2sg in.the exams  
'Whether you read the book or not, you'll pass the exams.'

# Summary

- Alternative unconditionals of two types in Greek, which are arguably structurally related to each other.
- External syntax & semantics: peripheral conditional adjunct.
- Internal syntax & semantics: disjunction of alternatives (alternative semantics)
- Crosslinguistic variation in the make-up of alternative unconditionals (Greek vs, English, but also Catalan, Spanish, Finnish, Hebrew, Yucatec Mayam)

# THANK YOU!

[josep.quer@upf.edu](mailto:josep.quer@upf.edu)

[mlekakou@uoi.gr](mailto:mlekakou@uoi.gr)

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