

Negator selection in Attic Greek: (non)veridicality and (non)assertion

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Proto-Indo-European makes a distinction between two negators, **ne* vs **me*: (Joseph 2002, Fortson 2010). Greek is among the very few Indo-European languages that preserve such a contrast in all its stages from Homeric, *u:(k)* vs *me*: to Modern Greek, *dhe(n)* vs *mi(n)* (exs 1, 2). This study provides a novel explanation on the distribution of the two negators in Attic Greek (AG, 5th-4th century BC), based on a compatibility requirement between the negator and its context in terms of the semantic property of (non)veridicality. For this study we use the *Thesaurus Linguae Graecae* database with all surviving texts from the 5th and 4th centuries.

The complementary environments in which each AG negator appears exceed those identified in recent literature (Philippaki-Warbuton & Spyropoulos 2004, Willmott 2008). We argue that previous analyses on negator selection in AG that use epistemic vs deontic modality (Philippaki-Warbuton & Spyropoulos 2004) or require a very elaborate four-level expansion of the MoodP (Willmott 2008) can only partially account for the data attested. Furthermore, the traditional distinction between ‘specific’ and ‘final’ infinitive, relates to the semantics of the selecting form, something that previous analyses do not capture. The specific infinitive, appearing after verbs of saying, belief, and the like takes *u:(k)*, but the final infinitive, appearing after volitional, directive and modal verbs (strong intensional, Giannakidou 1998) takes *me*: (see exs 3, 4).

Crucially, as has been observed in previous literature, *me*: negates also the conditional protasis (ex. 5) –an unexpected fact for the common assumption that *me*: is associated with directive verbs, modality or prohibition. The conditional protasis, however, as opposed to the apodosis, is a nonveridical environment (Giannakidou 1998), which licenses NPIs. We claim that the distribution of the two negators in AG is immediately explained through the notion of (non)veridicality (Giannakidou 1994 et seq., Zwarts 1995), defined in (6). The AG *me*: negator – as opposed to *u:(k)* – is a polarity sensitive negator triggered in nonveridical environments, among which are: 1) conditional antecedents (and participles), e. g. *εἰ/ ἔαν μὴ* [...] 2) purpose clauses (and participles), e. g. *ἵνα μὴ* [...] 3) imperatives and 4) in the scope of volitionals, commissives, negative and modals (including deontic and epistemic modals).

Though there appears to be a co-relation between negation and non-indicative (subjunctive, optative) morphological mood in AG, the correlation is only partial, a result of the fact that both *me*: and most instances of non-indicatives are sensitive to (non)veridicality (cf also Lightfoot 1975, who distinguishes indicative and non-indicative in terms of the availability of an existential presupposition). Importantly, the future tense—also nonveridical, *FUT p* does not entail *p* —is negated by *u:(k)*, not *me*:, a fact that we take to suggest that negation selection is further constrained by assertiveness: *u:(k)* is the negator of assertions, and an assertive context such as the future, will not accept *me*:. The emerging picture, then, is one where negation selection is sensitive to both semantic properties of the higher environment (nonveridicality), as well as speech act type. And this in turn suggests, that speech act must be grammaticalized in a language whose negation is sensitive to such distinctions. We propose an account of negator selection based on the interaction of (non)veridicality and (non)assertion. Our analysis readily

