

Non-Deponency in Greek Deponent Verbs

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Unlike English or German, Greek requires no auxiliary verb and no past participle in order to form the passive voice. It requires merely a suffix attached to the verb. In the passive voice, the verb replaces the active voice suffix with the passive voice suffix (PA-morphology), as can be seen in (1). Exactly the same verbal suffix can be found in many verbs in Greek (over 600 verbs), in which its function is clearly not the passive voice function, see examples in (2-3).

- (1) Το κείμενο μεταφρά- **στηκε** από τον Κώστα. (passive voice)
to kimeno metafrastike apo ton Kosta
'The text was translated by Kostas.'
- (2) Ο Κώστας αγωνί- **στηκε** για τη δημοκρατία. (deponent verb)
o Kostas agonistike gia ti dimokratia
'Kostas fought for the democracy.'
- (3) Ο Κώστας φτερνί- **στηκε**. (deponent verb)
o Kostas fternistike
'Kostas sneezed.'

The definition of deponents within the traditional grammar can be summarized in three points, as shown in (4). However, nothing is said about when and why deponent verbs are supposed to have laid aside their AA-morphology. It is speculated that discarding of their AA-morphology has occurred at some point in time for unknown reasons - perhaps because such phenomena are often unexplainable in the natural development of languages.

- (4) (a) Deponents had an AA-morphology with an X-meaning at some point in time.
(b) Deponents have laid aside their AA-morphology, and taken the PA-morphology, but they have kept the X-meaning of their AA-structure.
(c) Deponents have an active meaning despite their PA-morphology.

This paper disputes all these three points and shows clearly that:

- (I) Novel deponent verbs have appeared throughout the history of the Greek language, and they are still appearing in modern Greek: (a) Deponents appearing in the ancient Greek period, e.g. *efchome* 'wish', *enantionome* 'oppose, be against', (b) Deponents appearing in the medieval period, e.g. *astievome* 'joke', *echtrevome* 'be at enmity', and (c) Deponents appearing in the modern Greek

period, e.g. *androkratume* 'be dominated, ruled by men', *ekmistirevome* 'confide in'. This fact lies in opposition to the assumption of the traditional grammar that deponents lost their AA-morphology at some point in time. Rather, the fact that novel deponent verbs have repeatedly appeared in the three main periods of the Greek language suggests a systematic production of these verbs.

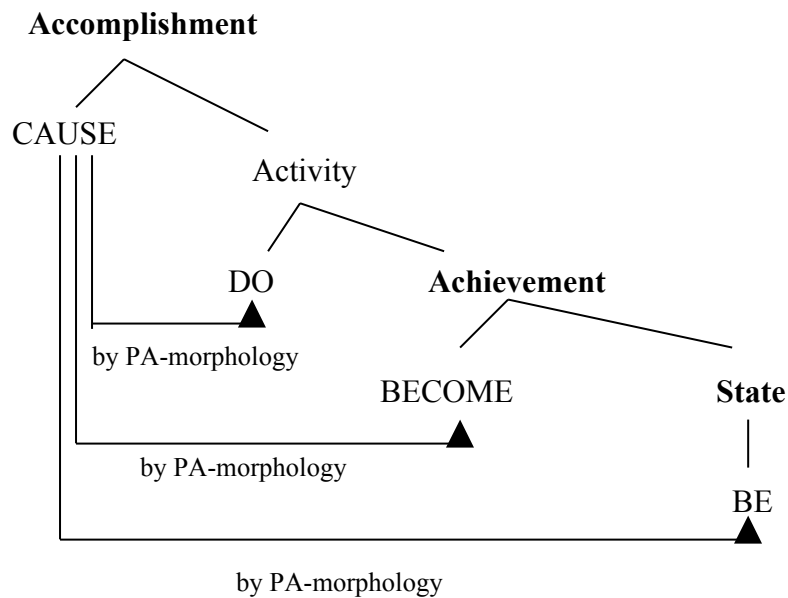
- (II) The examination of eight dictionaries indicates that many verbs which are reported as deponents in the modern Greek period, are reported to have together with their PA-structure an AA-structure as well, either in Ancient Greek or in medieval period. For example, while the verbs *agalome* 'exult, rejoice' and *aminome* 'defend' are in modern Greek deponent verbs, they were no deponents in ancient or medieval Greek period. We conclude that today's deponents are in fact verbs which had both AA- and PA-structures in an earlier period of the Greek language. Furthermore, we found out that each of these structures was associated with a different meaning to each other. We are thus entitled to assume that what was discarded was not only the AA-morphology of the deponents but also the meaning associated with this AA-morphology. Therefore, we conclude that there must have been a reason why one of the once two possible meanings was discarded, and why a specific meaning, i.e. the one expressed by the PA-morphology, has survived.
- (III) The assumption that deponents have an AA-structure can be supported not only by historical evidence, but also by evidence from the synchrony. Three different dictionaries and one monograph disagree on whether many verbs of modern Greek are deponents. For example, while the dictionary of Iordanidou lists the verbs *aneksartopioume* 'become independent' and *apagkistranome* 'become unhooked, escape' under the deponent verbs (i.e. no active counterpart is given for these verbs), the dictionary of Triantafyllidi reports an active voice counterpart for these verbs. Again, the AA-structure is reported by a different meaning from this reported for the PA-structure.
- (IV) The assumption of the traditional grammar that deponents have an active meaning despite their passive morphology is not correct either. There are many different meanings representing the deponent verbs, even a passive meaning: (a) active meaning, e.g. *agonizome* 'fight', *aminome* 'defend', (b) experiencer meaning, e.g. *fofame* 'be afraid', *sichenome* 'abhor, be disgusted', (c) spontaneous event meaning, e.g. *ginome* 'be born, become, happen', *enilikionome* 'become an adult', (d) stative meaning, e.g. *paravriskome* 'be at', *ime* 'be', (e) passive like meaning, e.g. *ipositizome* 'be underfed', *androkratume* 'be dominated by men', (f) reflexive/ reciprocal meaning, e.g. *sinagonizome* 'compete', *sinennoume* 'come to an understanding'.

It should be clear by now that many deponents verbs had some time or still have a counterpart with the AA-morphology but its meaning is not used anymore or it is not accepted by all speakers of our days. If we now compare these forms to each other, i.e. the meaning of the PA-morphology with the meaning of the PA-morphology, we come to a very interesting conclusion: the meaning associated with the PA-morphology can be analyzed as a STATE or an ACTIVITY or an ACHIEVEMENT verb but never as an ACCOMPLISHMENT verb (the verbal categorization in *states*, *activities*, *achievements* and *accomplishments* is according to Vendler 1967 and Dowty 1979). Furthermore, the meaning associated with the AA-morphology is always an ACCOMPLISHMENT, but never an ACHIEVEMENT or an ACTIVITY or a STATE, as can be seen in the following examples:

- (5) (a) **AA-structure:** ektrachilizo 'make sb. run riot, wild'
 [x CAUSE (BECOME (BE_{riot/wild} (y)))]
 (b) **PA-structure:** ektrachilizome 'run riot, wild'
 [x BECOME (BE_{riot/wild})]
- (6) (a) **AA-structure:** epofelo 'make sb. have profit from sth., help'
 [x CAUSE (BECOME (BE poss_{profit} (y)))]
 (b) **PA-structure:** epofeloume 'profit'
 [x BECOME (BE poss z_{profit})]
- (8) (a) **AA-structure:** aresko 'make good, please sb.'
 [x CAUSE (BECOME (BE_{pleased} (y)))]
 (b) **PA-structure:** areskome 'be pleased'
 [x BE_{pleased}]
- (9) (a) **AA-structure:** diamartiro 'testify, depose as witness'
 [(x DO_{acting as witness})e CAUSE (BECOME (BE (y_{speech} ^y is evidence)))]
 (b) **PA-structure:** diamartirome 'protest'
 [x DO_{acting as witness}]

This examination has shown that the two structures underlie a systematic relationship: whatever the meaning of the PA-structure is (certainly not a causative meaning), the corresponding AA-structure has always a causative meaning. Furthermore, the two structures, AA- and PA-structure, are not only structurally but also semantically related to each other. The AA-structure is not only structurally a more complex structure than the PA-structure (since it is always a causative structure) but it also semantically embeds the same semantic component with the PA-structure. Therefore, we conclude that the function of the PA-morphology in these AA/PA alternations (i.e. the deponent verbs and their active voice counterparts) is to select a (sub)event out of a more complex event structure. This can be paraphrased in that the PA-morphology in deponent verbs has a decausativisation function. More specifically, the PA-morphology can reduce the lexical aspect of a

causative accomplishment verb to either an achievement or an activity or a state verb. The following figure illustrates this analysis:



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