‘No Facting Way’: Modern Greek Anti-Factive Exclamatories


NICK NICHOLAS
Dept. of Linguistics & Applied Linguistics, University of Melbourne
n.nicholas@linguistics.unimelb.edu.au

1. The Protagonists

(a)  να
Irrealis particle (incl. equivalent of infinitive marker)

(1a) Θέλω να φύγω
θελо να φιγο
I want IRR I.leave
I want to leave

(1b) Να φύγω
na φιγο
IRR I.leave
May I leave!/ Let me leave!/ I should leave

(b)  που
Factive particle (relativiser, complementiser, factive connective)

(2a) Ο άνθρωπος που έφυγε
ο ανθρωπος pu efiye
the person REL left
The person who left

(2b) Χαίρομαι/#Νομίζω που έφυγε
xerome/#nomizo pu efiye
I.am.glad/I.think COMP left
I am glad/#think that he left

(2c) Νευρίασε τόσο πολύ, που έφυγε
nevriase toso poli, pu efiye
he.became.angered so much RES left
He got so angry, that he left

(2d) Ti κέρδισε που έφυγε;
ti kerdisi pu efiye?
what he.gained CAUS left
What did he gain by leaving?
Future/Conditional particle

(3a) $\theta \alpha$ $\phi'\gamma\omega$
$\theta a$ fiyo
FUT I.leave (Perfective Present)
I will leave

(3b) $\theta \alpha$ $\dot{\epsilon}\phi\varepsilon\nu\gamma\alpha$
$\theta a$ efenvya
FUT I.was.leaving (Imperfective Past)
I would leave

Hortative particle

(4a) 'Ante!
ade!
HORT
Go on!
(i: Start moving!; ii: Begin an action!; iii: Exclamation of incredulity)

(4b) 'Ante $\nu\alpha$ $\kappa\omicron\mu\nu\theta\epsilon\varsigma$
ade na kimiðiðis
HORT IRR you.sleep
Get to bed!

2. ade na

Literal Meaning

(5a) Ante twra $na$ ka0ariseis kana kilo fasolakia gia na kaneis kai tipota xrhsimo shmera.
ade tora na kaðarisis kana kilo fasolakia yia na kanis ke tipota xrisimo simera.
Now go and peel a kilo of beans, just so you can at least do something use-
ful today! (Periklës Konstantinides: Apanthssh ston pfk (me mikra grammata fusika ); Hellas-L 1995–06–14)

Ironic Meaning

(5b) Gia tis pio polles alitheies ute kan ftiaknoume thwría giati apla ðen yparxei tyxi sto na alopopoíissoume to montelo. Gia paradeigma, "o Vassalos xtes efaðe mpritzola kai proxtes mpourizotino". Ante twra $na$ ftiakseis thwría gia to ti trwei o Vassalos. Den ginetai.
yia tis pio poles alithies ute kan ftiaknume ðeòria yiai apla ðen iparxi tixi sto na alopoiisume to modelo. yia paraðiìma, “o vasalos xtes efaðe bridzola ke proxtes burito” ade tora na ftiaksis ðeòria yia to ti troi o vasalos. ðen ginete.
For most truths we do not even construct a theory, because there is simply no chance of simplifying the model. For example, “Vassalos ate steak yesterday and a burrito the day before.” Now just try and construct a theory on what Vassalos eats. It’s not possible. (Yiannis Koutalos (originally from...
Quasi-Minimal Pair: Literal Meaning

(5c) [Author cites the lyrics of a popular song]

\texttt{Ante twra na paw na diabasw...}
\texttt{ade tora na pao na diavaso...}
\texttt{HORT now IRR l.go IRR l.read}
\texttt{...perisseye ka8olou ouzo h krasj?}
\texttt{...perisepse ka8olu uzo i krasj?}
\texttt{Well, I'm off to study now...}
\texttt{...Any ouzo or wine left? (Angelos Lazoudis: Re: Kanena Asma h Penia?; Hellas-L 1995-12-10)}

Quasi-Minimal Pair: Ironic Meaning

(5d) [Author enthuses over a posted scatological parody]

\texttt{Einai ka-ta-plh-kti-ko! Oyte ta gamotragoyda toy Seferi...;-)} \texttt{Ante twra na doyleceis...}
\texttt{ine katapliktiko! ute ta yamotrayuda tu seferi... ade tora na dulepsis...}
\texttt{It was amazing! Not even Seferis' bonking-songs [were this good]! ;-) Now one (=I) can just try and get back to work... (Lambrini Thoma: Re: TO EPOS!! Rapswdies tou kw1ou!; Hellas-L 1996-02-15)}

Ironic example cited in literature

(5e) \texttt{'Ante twra na} μπούν αυτοί [οι Τούρκοι] στο πνεύμα το αρχαίο το ελληνικό!
\texttt{ade tora na bun afti sto pnevma to arxeo to eliniko!}
\texttt{I'd like to see them [the Turks] entering into the ancient Greek spirit!}
\texttt{(Mackridge 1985:289)}

• Selection between literal and ironic meaning is entirely a matter of conversational implicature. If the na-clause is an impossibility, then the ironic meaning must be intended.

• Ironic ade na-clauses express “contemptuous disbelief in the possibility that an occurrence could happen in the future” (Mackridge 1985:289). They also have a connotation of futility, particularly in first or second person (5b, 5d). The following chain of implicature should account for this:

“Go and do X!”
But X is impossible.
The speaker must know that X is impossible.
So “Go and do X!” cannot have been literally meant.
The speaker must have wished to draw my attention to the fact that “Go and do X!” is impossible.
To pick the specific linguistic form “Go and do X!”,
the speaker must have wished to exploit the entailments resulting from it.
“Go and do X!” entails that an attempt is to be made to do X.
So the speaker must be implying, not only that X is impossible (which is known),
but also that X should not be attempted.
Ergo, X is futile.
3. ade pu θα

- **pu** is in complementary distribution with **na** throughout Greek grammar.

- **pu** is consistently realis and factive (give or take some complications in complementation).

One of the adjunct functions of **pu** is to introduce circumstance clauses justifying the illocution of some exclamation:

(6a) — ‘Άγιε Πελάγιε! Με τους αφορισμούς οι στόλοι δεν καταστρέφονται. Θέλουνε και μάχη.
—Να χαθήτε **pou** δεν πιστεύετε στην παντοδυναμία του Κυρίου ήμών.
—άγιε πελαγιέ! me tus aforismus i stoli den katastrefode. thelune ke maxi.
—na xathite pu den pistevete stin padoqinamia tu kiri imon.
[‘May you become lost that you don’t believe...’]
“Saint Pelagius! Fleets are not destroyed by excommunication. They need battle, too.”
“Get lost, for not believing in the omnipotence of Our Lord!” (TsifC 275)

- Unlike many other instances, **pu** is not paradigmatically related to **na** in introducing a complement of hortative **ade**. An action encouraged to be done with **ade** must still be unrealised, whereas **pu** entails that the action is already realised:

(6b) ??'Αντε **pou** κοιμάται
??ade pu kimase
HORT you.sleep (Imperfective Present)
??Go and be already sleeping!

- But **ade pu** clauses do exist in Greek. In these cases, **pu** introduces adjuncts rather than complements. Here **ade** is more an interjection of disbelief of discontent than a hortative, and belongs to the same paradigm as other such interjections, like as **sto διαλόκο ‘go to hell’ and a paene ‘get lost’**.

Consider first those clauses where **pu** contains the future particle **θα**:

(7a) [Context: ‘Abdullah the Butcher’ refutes Kosmetatos’ arguments by referring to particulars of the US Air Force in World War II]
Ante re xasapi **pou tha** mas pouliseis kai mouri gia WWII :-). ade re xasapi pu θα mas pulisis (Perfective Present) ke muri yia [World War Two] [smiley].
[‘Go on, hey Butcher, that you will sell us face, too, about WWII’]
Oh, go on, ‘Butcher’—Show off about World War II, would you? (Paul Kosmetatos (response to ‘Abdullah the Butcher’): Re: Xwrika Ydata: TURKEY/GREECE; Hellas-L 1995-06-06)

The speaker expresses some discontent or reproof (mild in this case), triggered by the content of the **pu θα**-clause. This is reminiscent of (6a), where the exclamation is triggered by the **pu**-clause.
Oddity 1: the \( \text{pu} \ \theta a \)-clause is in Future tense. Yet its referent is not in the future, but the past.

- Furthermore, as the gloss ‘would you’ shows, the Conditional would make more sense for this clause: ‘You would show off? Go on!’ However, \( \theta a \) is Volitive in origin; perhaps the actual import of the \( \text{pu} \ \theta a \)-clause is ‘you want to talk about WWII’—it is Abdullah’s will which the speaker holds in contempt.

Oddity 2: In (7a), the content of the \( \text{pu} \ \theta a \)-clause is held in contempt, but it is not denied. For some such clauses, however, the \( \text{pu} \ \theta a \)-clause is denied—despite there being no overt signals of either negation or irrealis mood (other than the future tense marker \( \theta a \)):

(7b)  
O Κονράδος του Μοντφέρα ξύνισε τα μούτρα.
—Τι ζητείτε, περικαλώ;  
—Την Τύρο, απάντησε ο Γκυ. […]
O Κονράδος σηκώθηκε απόνα.
—Α πάγαινε ρε, λέει, που \( \theta a \) σου δώσω την Τύρο. Εγώ πολέμησα ρε κοκονιόρκο να την κρατήσω και \( \theta a \) στην δώσω εσένα του κιοτή; Α πάγαινε.
ο κονράδος τι momfera ksinise ta mutra.
“ti zitite, perikalo?”
“tin tiro,” apadise o gi. […]
o konrados sikotheke apano.
“a payene re,” lei, “pu \( \theta a \) su doso tin tiro. egeo polemisa re kokonioriko na tin krateiso ke \( \theta a \) stin doso esena tu kioti? a payene.”
[“Be going, you,” he says, “that I will give you Tyre.”]
Conrad of Montferrat scowled.
“And what would you be after?”
“Tyre”, Guy replied. […]
Conrad got up.
“Get lost!” he said. “As if I’m going to hand Tyre over to you! I fought to hold on to it, you great big girl’s blouse, and you want me to give it to you now, you coward? Get lost.” (TsifC 228)

In (7a), Kosmetatos does not deny that Abdullah has ‘shown off’ about World War II. In (7b), however, Conrad does deny that he will hand over Tyre to Guy.

The difference between (7a) and (7b) is that the \( \text{pu} \ \theta a \)-clause lies within the power of the speaker in the former, but not the latter. This seems to be once more a matter of conversational implicature:

I. The speaker is unhappy about the content of the \( \text{pu} \ \theta a \)-clause.  
The \( \text{pu} \ \theta a \)-clause is a situation outside the speaker’s remedy.  
Therefore, the speaker can do nothing about the situation,  
but can belittle it or hold it in contempt.

II. The speaker is unhappy about the content of the \( \text{pu} \ \theta a \)-clause.  
The \( \text{pu} \ \theta a \)-clause is a situation within the speaker’s remedy.  
As a maxim of behaviour,  
people do not perform actions they don’t like to perform.  
Since the speaker can do something about the situation,
the speaker is presumed to have indeed done something about it. So the pu θa-clause content will not take place.

So there are two pu θa-clause types: Uncontrolled, as in (7a), and Controlled, as in (7b).

- Control is a pragmatic matter, and is independent of grammatical coding. In (7c), although the addressee is the subject of the pu θa-clause, the speakers are still in control of the situation (Coron and Modon are theirs to allow to be gobbled up or not); so the pu θa-clause is Controlled:

(7c) [Context: the French own the forts of Coron and Modon. They are visited by a representative of Venice.]
—Περικαλῶ κάντε πέρα καθόσο περὶ τα Κορονομεθόνη ενδιαφέρεται ο μπαμπλάζ [δόγης της Βενετίας].
—Α πάσανε ρε, έκαναν οι Φράγκοι, θα μας φας τον τόπο.
“perikalo kante pera kathoso peri ta koronomeboi endiaferete o babas.”
“a paene re,” ekanan i fragi, “pu tha mas fas ton topo.”
[“Be going, you,” said the Franks, “that you will devour the land from us.”]
“Do kindly step aside, as Daddy [the doge of Venice] is interested in Coron and Modon.”
“Get lost!” the French said. “As if you’re going to gobble up our land from under us!” (TsiffU 35)

- The Uncontrolled reading of pu θa is factive: it presupposes (or asserts) the truth of its complement, and is thus consistent with all other usage of pu. But the Controlled reading is anti-factive: it presupposes (or asserts) the falsity of its complement. This is without precedent in Greek.

- Although the choice between factive and anti-factive readings of ade pu θa is still a matter of conversational implicature, the denial consequence of the negative reading is conventionalised. Under no circumstances can an ade pu θa-clause communicate grudging acquiescence. If the pu θa-clause is preventable by the speaker, the pu θa-construction signifies that it will in fact be prevented:

(7d) Άει στο διάβλο, (θα παρακαλείχα μας) θα σου δώσω την Τύρο!
ai sto diaolo, (θa parakalai*ma) tha su doxo tin tiro!
To hell with it, I’ll hand Tyre over to you!

This requirement of prevention—that a Controlled pu θa-clause is necessarily false—does not follow from conversational implicature. So it represents a conventional implicature—the first step towards the lexicalisation of this anti-factive sense.

4. ade pu

There are analogous ade pu-clauses in which θa is absent. The controllability parameter does not apply here: ade pu-clauses are anti-factive, whether or not the pu-clause lies within the power of the speaker. So in (8a), the speaker is
clearly not in control of the addressee’s beliefs; nonetheless, the speaker does attempt to deny the truth of the pu-clause:

(8a) «Καὶ μόλις πέθανε, ἀνοιξε τὴν ψευδοθήκη τῆς καὶ τὴν ἐφάγαν οἱ ψεύτες.»—«Ἀντε, βρε κυρά-Εκάβη, τῆς λέω, «ποὺ πιστεύεις σὲ τέτοιες προλήψεις!»—«Καὶ βέβαια πιστεύω...».

“κε μολίς πεθανε, ανικσε i πσιροκικα tis ke tin efayan i psires.” “ade, vre kira ekavi,” tis leo, “pu pistevis se teties prolipis!” “ke vevea pistevo...”.

[“‘Go on, hey Mrs Hecuba,” I tell her, “that you believe in such superstiti-ions!”’]

“And as soon as she died, her louse-case opened up and the lice ate her away.” “Oh come on, Mrs Hecuba,” I told her, “As if you believe in such supersitions!” “Of course I do...”. (Tah 261)

• A second difference from ade pu θ is that the content of ade pu-clauses are not actions, but facts. As a result, copula clauses can be the argument of ade pu, but not ade pu θ:

(8b) ἀντε να χαθῆτε ὑπὲρ μεμάλων, ποὺ εἰσώστε σὲ τἀ γα προκοπῆ ἀδε να χαθῆτε ὑπὲρ ρεμαλία, ποὺ ἵσαστε σὶς για προκοπὶ ἱορτ αἰτωτ hey scum that you are you for progress Get lost you scum! As if any good will ever come of you! (TsifC 247)

• With ade pu, the lexicalisation of anti-factivity appears to be complete. There is no context under which pu retains its factivity.

But there is a factive exclamatory counterpart to ade pu. With ade pu, the pu-clause is semantically subordinate, and represents a trigger or justification for the matrix exclamation. There is a factive exclamatory construction, in which the pu-clause introduces a second exclamation, in parallel with the matrix, and factive though denigrated:

(9) «Ποὺ καὶ να χαθῆς!» τῆς φονύζω εξαλλη. «Ποὺ μας παριστάνεις καὶ τὴν οσία!»

“ftw su na xathis!” tis fonazo eksali. “pu mas paristanis ke tin osia!”

“Get the hell out of here!” I yelled at her in a fury. “And you pretend to us to be a saint!” (Tah 194)

In (9), the referent Erasmia is Pharisaically Christian—she has indeed been ‘pretending to be a saint’. So the pu-clause is affirmed, not denied.

The difference between this class of pu (Bare pu exclamatories) and ade pu-constructions is that bare pu forms its own independent intonation unit, whereas ade pu is still preceded by a non-final intonation break. This is consistently indicated in punctuation: bare pu exclamatories are preceded by an exclamation point, while the pu-clause in ade pu- and ade pu θa-constructions are preceded by commas.

Were these two classes of construction to be variants of the same pheno-menon—as was the case with ade pu θa—there would need to be an identifiable semantic or morphological factor conditioning between the two, which in all other respects should be the same. This seems not to be the case.
In summary:

*ade na*  
Affirmative or Negative—conditioned by plausibility of complement

*ade pu θa*  
Affirmative or Negative—conditioned by speaker control over complement

*ade pu*  
Negative—unconditioned, and fully conventionalised

**Corpus**


**References**