A BRIEF COMMENT ON PERIPHRASTIC EXPRESSIONS OF OBJECTIVE MODALITY IN ENGLISH AND MODERN GREEK: A COMPARISON

by

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The aim of this paper is to comment on one of the ways of expressing objective modality in English and Modern Greek, that is, through the use of participial expressions. Reference will also be made to expressions incorporating verbally-derived adjectives and nominals. It will be attempted to point out similarities and demonstrate, as well as explain, the differences between English and Modern Greek. It is an area which has not been studied as extensively as modal auxiliaries in English. Owing to this, evidence from English has been mostly based on the work of H. Perkins (1983) Modal Expressions in English. Due to complete lack of studies in Greek, though, I was compelled to run informant tests, to check my intuitions as a native speaker of Greek and my analysis of Greek expressions. These informant tests provided an objective test of my intuitive judgements, as well as the evidence, from Modern Greek, on which my present analysis has been based. Before proceeding with the description and comparison of periphrastic expressions in the two languages, I would like to draw your attention to the fact that all conclusions have been drawn with the reserve that the expressions used as examples, which demonstrate different points in this work, have all been taken, and dealt with, in isolation to contextual factors whose significance in determining meaning cannot be denied.
and/or ignored. Context has not been taken into consideration, though, mainly for two reasons. The first reason is that the particular area of study is, as mentioned above, totally unexplored in Greek and rather new to English research, so there are no sources on the interaction of contextual factors and participial expressions or periphrastic expressions of deontic modality in general. Any existing works on Modal Verbs and Context can only be considered as the starting point of an investigation of the relations between contextual factors and participial expressions. The second reason is that the analysis of such an interaction is itself, in my opinion, quite a serious task to undertake and cannot just be fitted into this present work as only a comment of secondary importance; it deserves a fuller treatment.
Now let us start with a description of English, first, and then, continue with a description of Greek expressions. Investigation of the relations of the two languages, and conclusions, will be discussed in the end.

In English, there are three categories of deontic past participles derived from modal lexical verbs. First, there are those which are followed by the preposition 'to'; this is the category with the most members. To give a few examples:

1a. All officers are bidden to stay there till midnight.
1b. She is authorised to act for the manager while he is away.
1c. Has she been called on to help?
1d. He will be compelled to confess.
1e. We were constrained to do what he told us.
1f. I am entitled to have a rest.
1g. You are obliged to obey.
1h. We were forced to act against our will.

Some of the participles which belong to this category could also take a 'that'-clause when the structure is impersonal, like:

1i. You are advised to leave the country.
1j. It is advised that you leave the country.
1k. Students are required to take three papers in English literature.
1l. It is required that students take three papers in English literature.

The second category contains participles which are followed by the preposition 'from'. Like, for example:

2a. Tourist-class passengers are prohibited from using the promenade deck.
2b. The water was prevented from flooding the house.

The third category is the one with the fewest members. It contains participles which are followed only by a 'that'-clause. To give an example:

3a. It is demanded that John (should) go there at once.
According to Perkins (1983), the preposition 'to' is inherently deontic, since it relates a state or event to a future point in time that this state is to be attained or that the event is to be realized (a sense that has developed from its original sense of 'motion directed towards and reaching'). On the other hand, 'that' is not as closely related to non-factivity as 'to' and, therefore, appears more rarely than 'to' in deontic structures, while 'from' follows deontic expressions that convey a negative lexical meaning. All the above expressions incorporate the verb 'be' in their structure. According to Lyons (1977), all modal expressions which incorporate the verb 'be' express objective modality, inherently; the verb 'be' asserts that the obligation or necessity exists independently of the speaker.

It is important to note that most participial expressions are derived from verbs that have both a personal and an impersonal structure in the passive voice. For instance, consider the following participial expressions:

4a. They don't permit people to smoke in the lecture hall. 
   (active)
4b. People are not permitted to smoke in the lecture hall.
4c. It is not permitted to smoke in the lecture hall. 
   (4b and 4c are both in the passive)

The fact that they are in the passive, which could be either verbal or adjectival, points out that the realization of the meaning of the participle precedes in time the realization of the act or the attainment of the state of the directive meaning of the utterance.

As far as tenses are concerned, paraphrastic expressions in English are used in far more tenses than the modal auxiliaries, due to the verb 'be'. It is easy to see this if we consider the following sentences:

5a. We are obliged to stay up late (present).
5b. We were obliged to stay up late (past).
5c. We have been obliged to stay up late (present perfect).
5d. We had been obliged to stay up late (past perfect).
5e. We will be obliged to stay up late (future).
5f. We must stay up late.

'Must', like the other deontic modals in English, refers to the present as well as to the future, in the sense that the obligation is set in the present but is to be realised at some future point. 'Must' is a defective verb which is aided by 'have to', (to which it is, semantically, very closely related) in the formation of the other tenses. Other modal auxiliaries, though, which are also defective, like 'should' and 'ought', form no future tense and no past and/or present in the perceptive.

It is also worth pointing out that periphrastic expressions, in general, modify the meaning of the sentence more widely than modal auxiliaries because they specify the nature of the speech act (Perkins, 1983). The utterance "'You must be there by six o'clock', he said" taken out of context could correspond to any one of the following participial expressions:

6a. I was asked to be there by six.
6b. It was demanded that I (should) be there by six.
6c. I was compelled to be there by six.
6d. I was constrained to be there by six.
6e. I was instructed to be there by six.
6f. I was invited to be there by six.
6g. I was ordered to be there by six.
6h. I was obliged to be there by six.

To proceed further, adjectival expressions modify the sentence more widely than participial, and nominal more widely than adjectival. To take an example, sentence 6a could correspond to any one of the following adjectival expressions:

6i. It was necessary for me to be there by six.
6j. It was compulsory for me to be there by six.
6k. It was obligatory for me to be there by six.
6l. It was imperative for me to be there by six.

According to Perkins, M. (1983), adjectival and nominal expressions have the same formal characteristics with participial expressions. That is, they are objective, versatile with tenses, refer to a
specific act or state and modify the meaning of the sentence more widely than modal auxiliaries; nominal expressions are even stronger modifiers than adjectival expressions, since nouns are stronger modifiers than adjectives, and adjectives, in their turn, are stronger modifiers than verbs. The verb 'be' is incorporated in the frame for both adjectival and nominal expressions. In adjectival expressions, the verb 'be' is followed by the preposition 'to' and the infinitive, or, by a 'that'-clause. In nominal expressions, we have the structure 'there is a ... to/that'. Some examples of adjectival, and nominal periphrastic expressions are the following:

ADJECTIVAL

7a. Is it necessary for you to work so hard?
7b. In Greece, it is compulsory to serve the army.
7c. It is obligatory on hotel owners to take precautions against fire.
7d. It is not permissible to bring food in the library.

NOMINAL

8a. There is no order to evacuate the area.
8b. Is there an instruction to use the back exit this evening?
8c. There was a command to attack the city.

In all cases, as far as negation is concerned, we can have either negation of the modality or negation of the event (act or state) that follows, just like with modal auxiliaries. If it is negation of the modality, 'not' goes to the participle, or to the adjective, or to the noun, correspondingly. On the other hand, if it is negation of the event, 'not' goes to the infinitival clause, or to the 'that'-clause, which follows.

To take just a few examples for each case:

Negation of the modality

9a. You are not allowed to smoke in the music hall.
9b. I was not asked to help him.
9c. The bank had not been instructed to cash the cheque.
9d. It is not obligatory to come in after ten.
9e. There is no obligation to answer the letter.
Negation of the event

9f. You are allowed not to smoke in the music hall.
9g. I was asked not to help him.
9h. The bank had been instructed not to cash the cheque.
9i. It is obligatory not to come in after ten.
9j. There is an obligation not to answer the letter.

Of course, depending on what is negated, the modality or the event, the meaning is effected as well. This is made clear if we have a look at 9b and 9g. In the first case, there was no obligation set or necessity for the speaker (if it is considered to be an utterance uttered in a particular situation) to help the other person referred to as 'him'. In the second case, things are different, though; there was an obligation set or a necessity for the speaker not to help the other person (again referred to as 'him'). In 9b it was on the speaker to decide whether he would finally offer his help or not, while in 9g it is clear that such a decision was made by some other source of authority (this utterance, then, functions as a request not to do something, or as a prohibition).

So far, the focus has been on English periphrastic expressions of objective modality. Now let us turn to a discussion of participial expressions in Modern Greek. In Greek, all deontic participial expressions incorporate the verb 'έλμα', which has, inherently, the same meaning as the English verb 'be'; 'έλμαι', in other words, asserts the expression of deontic modality (which, according to Lyons, 1977, is objective). Moreover, all Modern Greek participial periphrastic expressions are followed by the particle 'να' and the Subjunctive. For example, let us take a look at the following sentences:

10a. Έλμασε αναγκασμένος να δουλεύουμε σκληρά.
10b. Έλμαι υποχρεωμένος να πει την αλήθεια.
10c. Έλμαι εξουσιοδοτημένος να τον αντιπροσωπεύω στο δικαστήριο.

An exception, to what seems to be the rule, is the expression 'έλμαται απαιτημένος' that is followed by the preposition 'από' (which adds to the negative lexical meaning of the participle) and a noun or a nominalized phrase. Consider, for example, these sentences:
11a. Εἶναι απαθλαμένη ἀπὸ τὸ νὰ τρέχει ὅλη μέρα γιὰ τοὺς καθέ- 
φέους τῶν ἄλλων ὑπαλλήλων.
11b. Ἡπαθικὴ απαθλαμένη απὸ κάθε κατηγορία.

As we can see, 9b contains a noun phrase, while 9a contains a nominalized phrase (in Greek you can nominalize a verb phrase with the addition of the article 'το' in front of the verb, when the verb is in the subjunctive).

It is worth mentioning that very few participial expressions (like 'εἶναι ἐπιμελημένον') and adjectival expressions (like 'εἶναι ἐπιτρεπτό') are derived from verbs which are impersonal in the passive voice, like 'ἀπαγορεύεται', 'ἐπιτρέπεται', 'ἐπιβάλλεται', 'χρείάζεται', 'ἀπαιτεῖται', just to mention a few.

To take an example:

Passive Voice:

12a. Ἀπαγορεύεται οἱ φοιτητὲς νὰ χρησιμοποιοῦν λεξικά στὶς ἐ-
ΞΕΤΑΣΕΙΣ.
12b. Εἶναι ἀπαγορευμένο στοὺς φοιτητὲς νὰ χρησιμοποιοῦν λεξικά στὶς ἐΞΕΤΑΣΕΙΣ.

Active Voice:

12c. Ἀπαγορεύουν στοὺς φοιτητὲς νὰ χρησιμοποιοῦν λεξικά στὶς ἐΞΕΤΑΣΕΙΣ.

On the other hand, we have:

13a. Ἡ κατάσταση απαιτεῖ απόλυτη έχεμύθεια (active)
13b. Απαιτεῖται απόλυτη έχεμύθεια (passive)
while we cannot have:

13c. Εἶναι ἀπαιτούμενο/-η η απόλυτη έχεμύθεια (passive)

At this point it is also important to note that it is perfectly acceptable in Greek to say both:

12d. Ἀπαγορεύεται η χρήση λεξικών στὶς ἐΞΕΤΑΣΕΙΣ and 12e. Η χρήση λεξικών στὶς ἐΞΕΤΑΣΕΙΣ εἶναι ἀπαγορευμένη.

while, on the other hand, it is unacceptable to say:

13d. (Ἡ) Ἀπόλυτη έχεμύθεια εἶναι ἀπαιτούμενη
but acceptable to say:

13e. Απαιτείται απόλυτη εχεμόθεσια.

It is true that periphrastic objective expressions in modern Greek cannot form many tenses; all of them form the Ευκοτώς (Present tense) as well as the Παρατατικός/Αόριστος (Past tense), while the Μέλλοντας (Future tense) tends to present a marginal case, though it is more often used with participial expressions rather than with adjectival expressions; there is also a tendency to drop the future with the nominal expression 'έλναι ανάγκη', while it seems to be used quite often with the other nominal expressions. Thus we have:

14a. Έλναι αναγκασµένος να ανέχεται τις ανοησίες του καθενός.
14b. Ἡταν αναγκασµένος να ανέχεται τις ανοησίες του καθενός.
14c. Αν ἐπαιρνε τη δούλειά, θα ἦταν αναγκασµένος να ανέχεται τις ανοησίες του καθενός.
14d. Ἀπὸ δῆ καὶ πέρα θα είλαι αναγκασµένος να ανέχεται τις ανοησίες του καθενός.

As we can see from these last two examples, the future tends to be used with conditional structure or with time phrases, such as 'Ἀπὸ δῆ καὶ πέρα', 'Γει ἐνα χρόνο', 'Μέχρι να...', etc. On the contrary, in most cases, it would sound awkward to say 'Θα είλαι ανάγκη', even in conditional structure. This is made clear if you consider the following sentence:

14e. Αν θα είλαι ανάγκη, θα μεταφερθεί στο νοσοκομείο.

The above sentence is ungrammatical in Greek. The correct sentence would be either:

14f. Αν παρατείνεις ανάγκη, θα μεταφερθεί στο νοσοκομείο.

(which is rather formal, though)
or

14g. Αν χρειάσετες, θα μεταφερθεί στο νοσοκομείο.

The fact that the Subjunctive is incorporated in the structure of all periphrastic expressions of objective modality in Greek plays an important role in the definition of their meaning. In other words, with the help of the Subjunctive, the expression could either refer to a continuous time in the future, like in 14c, or a specific time (or period of time) in the future, like in:
14e. Έναν αναγκασμένονα ανακτεί τις ανοπλοίες του καθενός.

Adjectival and nominal expressions are objective like participial expressions. Also, they refer to a specific act or state. Adjectival expressions are followed by the verb 'έαμα' in an impersonal structure, and the Subjunctive. As far as objective nominal expressions are concerned, it appears that they all incorporate the verb 'έχω' in their structure, with the exception of the nominal 'έλαια ανάγκη', which incorporates the verb 'έλαμα', instead. Thus, we have:

15a. Καλεί υποχρεωτικά να παρακολουθήσω τα μαθήματα.
15b. Ήταν απαραίτητο να έρθει μάζ' μου.
15c. Έλαια αναγκαστικά να ξεσεκυμάνουμε κάπου-κάπου από το άγχος της πόλης.
15d. Έλαια ανάγκη να τελειώσουν αλλές σου τις δουλειές ομέρα;
15e. 'Έχει υποχρέωση να φροντίσει τον άρρωστο πατέρα του.

As far as negation is concerned, in all cases, when the modality is negated, the negative particle 'δεν' is placed in front of the verbs 'έχω' and 'έλαμα'. On the contrary, if it is the event that is negated, the negation goes to the Subjunctive; in this second case, the negative particle 'μη' is placed after 'να'. It is easy to see this if we take a look at these examples:

Negation of the modality

16a. Δεν έχει (καμιά) υποχρέωση να σου στέλνει λεφτά.
16b. Δεν είναι απαραίτητο να τηλεφωνήσεις.
16c. Δεν είμαι υποχρεωμένοι να πούμε τι συνέβη.

Negation of the event

16d. 'Έχει υποχρέωση να μη σου στέλνει λεφτά.
16e. Έναν απαραίτητο να μην τηλεφωνήσεις.
16f. Έμαθαν υποχρεωμένοι να μην πούμε τι συνέβη.

So far, we have discussed periphrastic expressions of objective modality separately, first in English, then, in Greek. What remains now is to draw some conclusions about the similarities and the differences between the two languages, and try to explain these differences.
To start with the differences, participial, adjectival, and nominal expressions in English, are much more versatile with tenses than modal auxiliaries, while this does not hold true for Greek periphrastic expressions. A possible explanation for this could be the fact that the verbs 'ελμαί' and 'ἔχω', which are used for the formation of Greek periphrastic expressions, are defective verbs themselves, like the modals 'πρέπει' and 'οφελεί' (which form most of the tenses with the aid of the verbs 'αναγκάζομαι' and 'υποχρεόνομαι').

To proceed further, participial expressions in English can, quite often be both personal and impersonal in structure. On the other hand, participial expressions in Greek tend to reject an impersonal structure. It appears that the main reason for this is that many English periphrastic expressions of objective modality are derived from verbs that take both a personal and an impersonal structure, while, in Greek, the expressions we are concerned with are derived from verbs that do not accept impersonal structure, like, for example, 'αναγκάζομαι', 'υποχρεώνομαι', 'απαλλάσσομαι', 'εξουσιοδοτούμαι'.

It should be noted that many of the participial expressions in English, most of the adjectival, and almost all the nominal expressions, have no corresponding, in terms of structure, Greek ones. That could be explained by the fact that not all modal lexical verbs which are performative in Greek form a past participle and have a corresponding verb-derived adjective and/or nominal. This is proved by the following cases:

ENGLISH EXPRESSIONS

17a. Candidates are required to have their identity cards with them.
17b. We were exhorted to work harder.
17c. I am enabled by the new law to claim my property back.

GREEK CORRESPONDING EXPRESSIONS

17a'. Οι διαγωνιζόμενοι υποχρεούνται/είναι υποχρεωμένοι να έχουν μαζί τους την ταυτότητά τους.
17b'. Μας παράτρυνε/-αν (ή, παρακλήσε/-αν) να δουλέψουμε/-έυ- ουμε περισσότερα (ή, ακληρότερα).
17c'. Με τον καλύτερο νόμο, μου δόθηκε το δικαίωμα/η δυνατότητα να διεκδικήσω την ανάκτηση της περιουσίας μου.

Only transitive verbs have passive voice in Greek, in contrast to English in which we can passivise intransitive verbs as well if we add a preposition. In Greek, usually verbs in Ποθητική Διάθεση (which denotes the existence of an agent) can also form Ποθητική Φωνή; some verbs in Οπότετερη Διάθεση can be used both in the active and the passive voice (like, for example, the verbs: 'αιωθάνομαι', 'δικαλούμαι', 'οδηγούμαι', 'σέβομαι', etc, as well as 'χρειάζεται', which expresses objective modality in impersonal structure). So lots of participial, mainly, as well as other periphrastic expressions in English correspond to (or are translated into) a verbal expression in Greek.

To conclude with the similitudes, then, between Greek and English, periphrastic expressions in both languages refer to a state or an act, and modify the sentence more widely than modal auxiliaries do. Also, in Greek, as well as in English, we can have negation of the modality and/or negation of the event. The verb 'be' in English, and the verb 'είμαι' in Greek play the same important role in the formation of the expressions and in their meaning as well. Also the same parallel relation in grammatical and semantic function holds between the English prepositions 'to/that' and the Greek particle 'να', as well as between the English preposition 'from' and the Greek preposition 'από' which are incorporated in the structure of deontic expressions in the languages under discussion.

The aim of this paper was to create an awareness of the close affinities in the expression of objective modality periphrastically in the two languages, and try to point out and analyse any existing differences. It does not claim to have been a full account but, as its title suggested, only a brief comment, in the hope that even as brief as it may have been, it has contributed to the study of language in general, as a step forward towards a better understanding of English and Modern Greek.
REFERENCES


