Interpreting particles in dead and living languages : a construction grammar approach to the semantics of Dutch ergens and Ancient Greek pou

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CHAPTER 8

Introduction to the comparative study of Ancient Greek που

Just like *ergens*, Ancient Greek που had multiple standard interpretations of which one is an indefinite locative interpretation and another an interpretation as a modal particle. In this part on που, we will basically use the same techniques as we used in our corpus study of *ergens*. As we have seen in the previous chapters, it was possible to show for *ergens* that there are correlations between specific linguistic features of the context (e.g. first person pronouns, mental state predicates) and specific interpretations. However, in the case of *ergens*, we had access to the interpretations of native speakers which we could link to specific features in the context, whereas Ancient Greek is a dead language. This means that the approach needs to be adjusted at some points.

Based on the assumption that the basic communicative strategies and cognitive abilities of humans are, independently of place and time, the same, we would expect that the way in which speakers of Dutch and Ancient Greek determine which of the possible interpretations is used in a particular situation, is comparable.[1] Therefore, it is plausible that, just as in the case of *ergens*, there are also links between (linguistic) properties of the context and interpretations of που. This means we expect to find frequently recurring patterns in the linguistic context (i.e. constructions) which can be linked to specific interpretations as well as types of situational context in which που is frequently used.

[1] This can be compared to the principles of Charity and Humanity respectively of Davidson (1973) and Grandy (1973). However, Rutten (2006) criticized the use of these principles in historical linguistics, stressing that there are also many things that may be different over time and place, which is one of the things a scholar must keep in mind.

In the following chapters, I will try to connect regularities in the context of που to translations of the particle in three different languages: English, French and German.[2] On the one hand, I will use the translations to find regularities in interpretations and on the other hand I will use patterns in the context to find the triggers of translations and possibly conventional uses of που. This way, we may learn more about the knowledge a speaker of Greek may have had of the context in which (modal) που was used.

In addition, we will study the diachronic development of modal που in chapter 10. Chapter 11 will compare *ergens* and που and to what extent they are found in comparable contexts both synchronically and over time. The results of this part will be summarized in chapter 12.

However, we will start with a more general discussion of the reasons one would want to compare forms in different languages (section 8.1) and in a dead and a living language in particular (section 8.2), after which we will turn to a short overview of the descriptions that have been given of που in the secondary literature. At the end of this part, after the analysis of the contextual features of που, we will come back to the descriptions in the secondary literature to see how they fit in the overall picture that has arisen of που.

8.1 Comparing languages

The first question that arises when thinking of a comparison of Dutch *ergens* and Ancient Greek που, is what we can learn from comparing two languages. A large part of the answer to this question is determined by one's view on language. This has become clear from the extensive discussion following the article *The myth of language universals* by Evans and Levinson (2009). In this article, the authors argue that languages show diversity on every level and have very few true universals. This has implications for the way we study language. Evans and Levinson phrase this as follows:

> Although there are significant recurrent patterns in organization [of languages *EK*], these are better explained as stable engineering solutions satisfying multiple design constraints, reflecting both cultural-historical factors and the constraints of human cognition.

This article generated an extensive discussion over several special issues of several journals. From this discussion, it has become clear that what is supposed to be gained from comparing languages is dependent on whether one believes that the basic structure of language is innate or that languages are comparable because they have evolved by means of the same general cognitive principles. The latter implies that generalizations over non-related languages can only be of a general cognitive nature, the former suggests that we may learn more about this innate language structure by comparing specific grammatical features of different languages.

[2] For a more elaborate discussion of the status of translations in this project see page 175.

In this dissertation, I will use the assumptions that are generally held within cognitive linguistics. That is, it is assumed that unrelated languages show similarities mainly because they have arisen by means of the same cognitive processes and communicative needs. Related languages are similar because of their common source, but if a feature is not traceable to that common source, the explanations of similarities are basically the same as with unrelated languages. What may still be of influence though, are the comparable structure and constructions that are inherited from their common source, which makes it more likely that related languages will develop in a comparable direction.

In the case of *ergens* and που there is a historical relation between the words (*ergens* < pgm. *io-hwar-gin in which *gin* < PIE $k^we\text{-}ne^3$, which is the same root as που < k^we/k^wo + ?). However, the development of a modal function was not a shared development and probably took place when the languages had already become quite distantly related. Therefore, the development of the modal uses can be seen as an independent development, which may be somewhat influenced by the general relatedness of the two languages.

I will give an example of the effect of a similar structure on the development of languages. The Romance languages all developed articles although their common source language, Latin, did not have articles. Some Romance languages use forms based on Latin *ipse* 'self' instead of the form that was more commonly recruited for the function of article *ille* 'this/that' (Carlier and Mulder, 2010).[4] This suggests that at least some of the languages developed an article on their own, following the same type of development as the other Romance languages, but with a different lexical item. The reason that all these languages developed an article is probably found in the structure of the vulgar Latin language, but their actual development may have been somewhat different for each individual language as is shown by the choice for a different lexical item for the function of article in, for instance, Sardinian.

This brings us to processes of language change as the main explanatory factor for a synchronic situation. The rise of new interpretations of a form or construction is commonly explained by cognitive processes like metaphor, metonymy, analogy, reanalysis and invited inferencing (cf. Hopper and Traugott, [1993] 2003; Traugott and Dasher, 2002) , which were discussed in chapter 6. However, these processes are often not applied to all instances of a form, but only to a particular group of cases as we can see from the fact that other instances of the same form retain their original interpretation. This is why it is common in studies on semantic and grammatical change to say that changes in interpretation start locally or in specific constructions. Since the original interpretation remains in some constructions, a poly-interpretable form has arisen. From a synchronic perspective, this may be described as one form playing a role in more than one construction.[5]

The question of how forms become poly-interpretable therefore has two answers on different levels, one on the level of the specific language and the linguistic

[3] This information was taken over from Philippa et al. (2003).

[4] Perhaps this process may have started in vulgar Latin already with the use of *hic*.

[5] The role of the context in language change from a construction grammar perspective is discussed more elaborately in for instance Bergs and Diewald (2008) and Bergs and Diewald (2009a).

and social conventions in the language community, the other on the level of general cognitive processes. Let us go back for a moment to Dutch *ergens*. The use of *ergens* in explicitly metaphorical contexts may have become a trend among (certain) speakers of Dutch. Although the phenomenon of metaphor itself is a general cognitive process, the actual metaphorical use of *ergens* may have been triggered by the properties of Dutch and trends in the use of the Dutch language. The next step, the use of metaphorical *ergens* without mentioning the actual metaphoric location, can be accounted for by a general cognitive process: attributing features of the context to specific uses of a form (hypoanalysis (Croft, 2000)). The reason a change comes about in a specific language at a specific moment in time and the exact way in which this happens, may be due to social and linguistic factors within the language community, but the mechanisms that play a role in these changes may be very general cognitive principles. Therefore, the properties of an individual language (community) may be an explanation for the fact that changes in languages seldom follow the exact same pattern, but the general cognitive principles behind them explain why we still find certain cross-linguistic tendencies in language change.

Another issue is to what extent the application of pragmatic inferences is language specific. When looking at one language only, it is sometimes hard to decide whether a phenomenon is due to some pragmatic principle only or whether it is also founded on the knowledge of a speaker about his language. As was already argued above, in some cases the interpretation of *ergens* as temporal seems to be dependent on universal pragmatic principles of relevance only. However, if we use an indefinite marker of place in a temporal context in a closely a related language like Italian, we see that speakers do not accept a temporal use of a locative indefinite. This means that a universal pragmatic explanation cannot account for the temporal use of *ergens* in Dutch. In order to find that out, comparison with other languages was useful as was also argued by Croft (1998, 159).

In the comparison between *ergens* and που, I would like to see whether the same type of contextual cues found for *ergens* can also be found in the case of που. In addition, it would be interesting to see whether comparable metaphorical processes may have played a role. Although there are several European languages in which a metaphorical extension of the indefinite locative to a temporal marker seems to have taken place, the extension to a modal interpretation may be less common. Especially since dictionaries are not always reliable in this respect, it is hard to be sure, but it seems that only French and Albanian allow for a(n) (implicitly metaphorical) modal use of their locative indefinite. Examples are given in (1), (2) and (3).

(1) Je terminerai mon contrat plus tôt que prévu, fin janvier. Quelque part fatigué, mais heureux.
I will end my contract earlier than foreseen, end of January. *Somewhere* tired, but happy.[6]

(2) Je savais que l'envie ne reviendrait pas en décembre ou en janvier. Quelque part, je suis soulagé.

[6] From: feed://lagazettetropicale.blogspot.com/feeds/posts/default.

I knew that the good mood would not come back in December or in January. *Somewhere*, I am relieved.[7]

(3)

e	ndjeja	diku	se	e	kisha	gabim
	feel	somewhere	that		have	mistake
CL.ACC	1SG.PST.IPFV	ADV	REL	CL.ACC	1SG.PST.IPFV	SG

I felt *somewhere* that I made a mistake[8]

Although the comparison of two languages may be useful, the comparison of a living language with a dead language raises its own problems, since the types of information that can be used for the two languages are not the same. In the following section, I will explain why it seems useful to make this comparison anyway and how this may be done.

8.2 Comparing a dead language with a living language

Ancient Greek is a dead language and the available corpus of texts is limited. This same corpus, with some additions found on papyrus in Egypt or in inscriptions, has been studied for several centuries. Nevertheless, scholars continue to learn new things about the language and the culture of the Ancient Greeks. This is possible because new insights from other disciplines such as discourse analysis and linguistics are adopted to refine our knowledge of Greek. Earlier researchers sometimes intuitively reached comparable conclusions, but the systematic application of these theories in combination with the older close reading techniques made it possible to see larger patterns in, for instance, narrative techniques and discourse particles.

Still, the study of Ancient Greek semantics is different from the study of the semantics of living languages. There are no native speaker intuitions, surveys or other ways of verifying hypotheses, except for the texts themselves and some comments by ancient writers, who are mainly from several hundreds of years later and not always linguistically accurate. This implies that we, as scholars, are second language learners with a very skewed input of written texts and grammars, which are predominantly written by other non-native speakers.

Second language learners generally have a hard time learning to understand the use of modal particles when learning a new living language (e.g. van Balen e.a. (2010) and Caspers & Van der Wouden (2010)). Although scholars studying a dead language are of course a very special type of second language learners, it is clear that modern scholars making descriptions of Ancient Greek particles are facing a very difficult task.

One way to gain additional information about the use of a particle is to compare Greek particles with other particles in living languages. The contextual characteristics of a particle from a living language can provide insights into the comparability of this particle with a Greek particle. This can be seen as hypothesis testing. If we

[7] http://breizh-swimmers.over-blog.com/45-index.html
[8] Source: several native speakers of Albanian, p.c.

think on the basis of close reading that a particle may have had interpretations that are comparable to interpretations of a particle in a living language, we would expect their contextual properties to be comparable as well. If the contextual characteristics are different, the particle may have had extra interpretations that were not yet taken into account or it may have had a (slightly) different function from the particle in the living language.

Now, we turn to the secondary literature on Ancient Greek που.

8.3 Introduction to Ancient Greek που

In this section, we will discuss the descriptions of and the literature on the particle που. I will present the views that are given on που in the literature, in order to have an idea of the views on που that have been around and that may have played a role in the choice of translations. In chapter 13, at the end of this part on που, I will discuss how the often important observations in the literature fit the picture of που which has evolved in this study.

The standard Ancient Greek-English dictionary (Liddell et al., 1940) (LSJ) gives in its lemma for που the following information:

> I. *anywhere, somewhere*; freq. with other Advs. of Place, οὐχ ἑκάς π. *somewhere* not far off, πέλας π. (anap.); μηδαμοῦ . . π. (dub.l.); "π. πέραν τοῦ ποταμοῦ"; "ἄλλοθί π."; "τῇδέ π." c. gen., ἀλλά π. αὐτοῦ ἀγρῶν in *some part* there of the fields; ἐμβαλεῖν π. (fort. ποι) τῆς χώρας *some part* of the country; "εἴ π. τῆς χώρας ταὐτὸ τοῦτο πάθος συνέβη".
>
> II. without reference to Place, *in some degree*, "καί πού τι": freq. to qualify an expression, *perhaps, I suppose,* Hom., etc.; added to introductory Particles, "οὕτω π . . ."; "Ζεὺς μέν π. τό γε οἶδε"; "ὡς ὅτε π."; ἤν π., εἰ μή π.: strengthd., "τάχ' ἄν π."; "ἴσως π.": attached to single words to limit their significance, "πάντως κ."; τί π. δράσεις; what *in the world*?; "οὐδείς π."; with numerals, ἔτεα τρία καὶ δέκα κ. μάλιστα *about* thirteen years, Hdt.1.119, cf. 209,7.22, etc.: οὔ τί που denies with indignation or wonder, *surely it cannot be . . .*, "οὔ τί π. οὗτος Ἀπόλλων"; οὐ δήπου adds a shade of suspicion, "οὐ δήπου Στράτων;": for δήπου, ἦπου, v. sub vocc.—In late writers ποῦ, που take the place of ποῖ, ποι, with Verbs of motion, as in Engl. *where* for *whither*? This idiom (condemned by Phryn.30, ποῦ ἄπει . . ἁμάρτημα) is found occasionally in early authors, "ποῦ τοι ἀπειλαὶ οἴχονται;"; "ἐξελθών που"; "ἰόντα που"; but in pure Att. only as f.l. for ποῖ, ποι.

Morphologically, που is related to ποῦ 'where?' since in Ancient Greek most question words have an unaccented version, which expresses the indefinite meaning of the question word, in this case 'anywhere'.

Several of these translations would also work for some uses of *ergens*, like *anywhere, in some degree,* with numerals *about*. The modal descriptions do not seem to

completely cover the uses of modal *ergens* as it was described above. In section 5.2, for instance, we discussed the differences between *ergens* and *misschien* 'perhaps'. From this comparison, it became clear that the mental space building properties of *ergens* were different from the epistemic modal adverb *misschien* 'perhaps'. Also, *ergens* can generally not be translated by *I suppose*. Still, the resemblance of the two particles makes it interesting to see to what extent these particles developed in a parallel way and whether the contexts that speakers used to disambiguate the various uses of που may have been comparable to the contexts that are used for this purpose in Dutch.

The largest work on Ancient Greek particles written by Denniston (1950, 490-1) states the following[9]:

> 'From που meaning 'somewhere' is developed the sense 'I suppose', 'I think', the particle conveying a feeling of uncertainty in the speaker. Hence, further, που is used ironically, with assumed diffidence, by a speaker who is quite sure of his ground.'

According to Denniston the main function of (modal) που is for the speaker to convey a feeling of uncertainty. Supposedly, the effect of such a particle is that the addressee is warned that the statement may not be true or that the speaker is not completely committing himself to the truth of the proposition. This view is even strengthened by Wakker (1994, 362) , who states that 'by using που the speaker indicates his (real or feigned) doubt about the truth of the proposition'

The irony in the description of Denniston, which is also mentioned by Bodin and Mazon (1919 [1902], 358-359) and Hartung (1832) has been called into question by Verdenius (1956, 251ff), who does agree that in some cases που is used 'by a speaker who is quite sure of his ground', but claims that this has nothing to do with irony. According to Verdenius, που may be used both to strengthen and to weaken, depending on the context.

Another description of που, is by Wackernagel (1885, 21-25). This description is supported by Bolling (1929).

> 'Schon bei Homer dient που bekanntlich nicht bloss im lokalen sinne, sondern auch und noch häufiger im sinne von „gewiss", „doch wohl" in behauptungen deren richtigkeit man überzeugt ist, die man aber nicht beweisen kann.'

> Already in Homer που is used, as is well known, not only with a locative meaning, but also and even more frequently with the meaning "certainly","surely". It is used in statements of whose truth one is convinced, yet one cannot prove. [Transl. EK]

Wackernagel thinks that by using που the speaker presents his statement as true, although the speaker does not have any evidence for it. In other words, the addressee is pressed to believe the speaker, even though there is no direct evidence.

[9]Denniston seems to follow Stephens (1837), who says that που is used when the speaker is in doubt and when he does not possess adequate information.

A third translation, which gives yet another dimension to που, comes from one of the standard grammars on Ancient Greek. In addition to translations like *doch wohl, gewiss, vermutlich, wohl*[10] (Schwyzer and Debrunner, 1966, 579), Schwyzer and Debrunner (1966, 157 nt 3) translate που with *irgendwie* 'somehow' which has in German apart from its manner adverbial interpretation also a particle-like function.[11] The particle *irgendwie* expresses that the speaker is not very precise in his formulation or does not know much of the way in which something happened or the reason that it happened.

A comparable translation is given by Slater (1969) in his lexicon on Pindar. The only translation of που in this dictionary is 'somehow' and according to Scolnicov (2003) we should also see *somehow* as the only interpretation of που. A hint of this interpretation is also given by Italie (1955) in his dictionary on Aeschylus with the translation *aliquo modo*.

A last description of που is given by Sicking (1993, 59), who is followed by Cuypers (2005) and Caspers (2010). Sicking actually has two sections on που, one in which he describes the distribution of που in historiography and another describing modal που. For που in historiography Sicking (1993, 57-59) distinguishes the following interpretations:

1) a local use, 2) *expressing an acknowledgement of the lack of further specification*, 3) 'approximately'. The description *expressing an acknowledgement of the lack of further specification* looks very much like the translation 'irgendwie' we saw above, although Sicking's description seems less modal in the sense that *irgendwie* can be used as a way to express that the reason or background of a situation or feeling is not important, thus providing an attitude towards a situation. This possibility does not really seem to be there in Sicking's description. The modal use of που Sicking (1993, 59) describes as follows :

> 'a speaker presents his statement as a surmise whose accuracy he does not vouch for (cf. LSJ s.v. "perhaps, I suppose") so that disputing it need not impair the basis for an understanding between the two partners in the conversation.'

In the context of δή που Sicking (1993, 63) describes the value of που as 'only surmised and might be called in doubt'. Somewhat further in his description of που, Sicking makes the following comment: 'In Plato που very often serves to introduce in a casual way what is obvious or even trivial, so as to avoid any impression of smugness or pedantry' (Sicking, 1993, 57-59). This use is also noted by Bodin and Mazon (1919 [1902], 359) for δήπου , about which they say:

[10] These German particles all point in the direction of certainty, adding interpersonal information like *contrary to expectation, contrary to what you may think*. *Vermutlich* may be translated with 'probably', *gewiss* can be rendered by 'certainly'

[11] This can be seen from the fact that speakers of German say that it has no meaning (pc. 4 native speakers of German). It probably expresses that the reason for a statement is not clear or that the content is not very precisely formulated as in the following example. *Er hat irgendwie gesagt, dass ich die www-dinge in die httpdocs reinmachen muss*. What is important here is that the statement in which *irgendwie* is found is not to be doubted, but that there is some information about which one is (deliberately) vague. (http://community.games4mac.de/index.php?showtopic=14273&mode=threaded&pid=186936)

> "Il [i.e. δήπου] marque l'*affirmation polie* et souvent aussi ironique d'un fait tellement *évident* qu'on ne veut pas supposer qu'il ait pu échapper à l'interlocuteur. On l'emploie comme pour s'excuser de répéter un *truisme* [...] Aristophane s'est servi très heureusement de δήπου pour faire ressortir le bon sens un peu court de Chrémyle. Ce brave homme voit partout des *évidences* et la Pauvreté qui lui répond, affecte, elle aussi, de n'avancer que des affirmations *incontestables*."[emphasis original *EK*]

As is clear from the description of Sicking and example (4) below, obvious or trivial contexts (i.e. truisms) do not seem to be confined to δήπου sentences, but are also characteristic for many που-clauses, which is, as will be argued in the following chapters, an important characteristic of many modal που contexts.

Modal particles often have functions in more than one domain. In the descriptions above we also find references to domains that are different from the purely epistemic modal domain (i.e. concerning the truth of the proposition). The authors describing που introduce several domains in which που may have a function. An overview of the domains mentioned is given below. In brackets I have added the authors who addressed this domain in their description of που.

1. the epistemic domain of (un)certainty (Denniston, Stephens, Wakker, Sicking, Wackernagel/Bolling, Schwyzer-Debrunner)
2. the evidential domain (i.e. proof) (Wackernagel)
3. the irony domain (Denniston, Bodin & Mazon, Hartung)
4. the domain of interpersonal relations between speaker and addressee (Sicking, Bodin & Mazon)
5. the accessibility of the content of the proposition for the addressee (obviousness/triviality) (Sicking, Bodin & Mazon)
6. the amount of specification/detail provided (*irgendwie*) (Schwyzer-Debrunner, Sicking, Slater, Italie, Scolnicov)

What all these descriptions have in common is that they seem to manage the expectations of the addressee with respect to the certainty of the proposition, the expected evidence, etcetera. However, που cannot function in all these domains at the same time. If we take, for instance, Sicking's observation that in Plato που is frequently found in statements that are obvious or even trivial, we may assume that although some politeness effects may be present, the speaker does not indicate that he wants the addressee to think that he seriously doubts the truth of something that is obvious or trivial. It is possible that the speaker wants to downplay his own endorsement of the statement, but he still directs the speaker towards accepting the proposition as true. If that were not the case, it would be impossible to continue the conversation, because the speaker would then have to explain why he doubts something so obvious.

For instance in example (4), a definition is given of a circle. If a speaker would really suggest that he doubts whether this definition is true, the addressee would ask why he thought this was not the case. The speaker may ask for a confirmation, but this context requires the expectation of the speaker that the addressee will confirm what he said.

(4) Στρογγύλον γέ πού ἐστι τοῦτο οὗ ἂν τὰ
round ptcl που is this of which ptcl the
NOM.SG FOC.PTCL που 3SG.PRS NOM.SG REL.GEN.SG PTCL NOM.PL

ἔσχατα πανταχῇ ἀπὸ τοῦ μέσου ἴσον ἀπέχῃ.
extremes everywhere from the middle equally be away from.
NOM.PL ADV PREP ART.GEN.SG GEN.SG ADV 3SG.PRS.SUBJ.

Ναί.
"The round, of course, is that of which the extremes are everywhere equally distant from the center." "Yes."

Pl. *Prm.* 137e.[12]

As is clear from examples like (4) above, που seems to fulfill a different function from adverbs like ἴσως and τάχα that have their main function solidly in the epistemic modal domain (cf. Koier, 2007). Since που is found almost only in direct speech, it may be that που also has a more interactional component.

In addition, we may want to make a distinction between the direction of the interpretative effect (positive (true) versus negative (not true)) and the strength of that effect (directs strongly in that direction or does so less strongly). This distinction is made by Verhagen (2005) who calls it the difference between argumentative orientation and argumentative strength. We will now discuss this distinction more elaborately.

In Verhagen (2005) it is argued that we should see the expectations that are raised by a form as part of its meaning. In other words, some expressions in the domain of polarity, such as negations and expressions like *barely* and *almost* not only tell us something about the state of affairs in the depicted world, but also about the conclusions the speaker wants us to draw from this information. Examples given by Verhagen include the following. The setting is a situation in which a seriously ill person is discussing with a doctor whether he wants to undergo an operation. The following sentences may be uttered by the doctor in such a situation.

(5) There is a chance that the operation will be successful

(6) There is little chance that the operation will be successful

(7) There is a small chance that the operation will be successful

[12] In order to keep the glosses as readable as possible, it is only indicated if a verb is not indicative and active/middle voice. Also it is not indicated whether a form is a (personal) (pro)noun. The abbreviations follow the list provided by the *Framework for Descriptive Grammars*-project (Bernard Comrie, William Croft, Christian Lehmann, Dietmar Zaefferer). The English translations are taken from the editions on the Perseus website (http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/) unless indicated otherwise.

(8) There is no chance that the operation will be successful

If we want to draw conclusions from the statements above about whether or not the doctor thinks it is a good idea to do the operation, we find that the formulation of the sentences above is directing the patient to either a positive or a negative answer.

(9) There is a chance that the operation will be successful.
   a. So let's give it a try.
   b. ?So let's not take the risk.

(10) There is little chance that the operation will be successful.
   a. ?So let's give it a try.
   b. So let's not take the risk.

(11) There is a small chance that the operation will be successful.
   a. So let's give it a try.
   b. ?So let's not take the risk.

(12) There is no chance that the operation will be successful.
   a. ?So let's give it a try.
   b. So let's not take the risk.

This shows that the strength of a form is not the only factor involved ('small' and 'little' have about the same strength), but that argumentative orientation, or expectation management plays an important role in likelihood estimations. In a table it looks as follows:

	Orientation	Strength
a chance	+	High
a small chance	+	Low
no chance	-	High
little chance	-	Low

Table 8.1: Argumentative orientation and strength of x-chance (Verhagen, 2005, 45)

What we can see from these English examples is that if we describe a form, we need to pay attention to the expectations raised by that form. If we do not take this into consideration, 'a small chance' and 'little chance' may look like synonyms, although they have a completely different communicative effect. In other words, the communicative effect or argumentative orientation needs to be part of a description of a form or construction.

As we have seen above, it may be that we do not need to be concerned so much with whether the speaker himself thinks the που-sentence is true, but whether he wants the addressee to believe what he has said, that is, with the argumentative orientation of που. This will be discussed further in section 9.3.2.

In the coming sections, we will find many short references to the domains mentioned in the literature. However, for the sake of clarity, I have decided to provide a

discussion of each domain that was mentioned in the literature in the last chapter, together with a discussion of the frequently cited examples in the literature. Now, we will turn to the actual corpus studies of που, starting with an overview of the corpora used.

8.4 Synchronic and diachronic corpora

For the synchronic collocation analysis of που the following corpus was used:

- Plato (428-347 BC): a random selection[13] of his works: Cratylus, Hipparchus, Sophist, Symposium, Parmenides.
- Xenophon (about 430-354 BC) dialogic works: Symposium, Apology, Hiero, Economics, Memorabilia
- Thucydides (460-about 399 BC): Historiae
- Xenophon (about 430-354 BC) historiographical works: Anabasis, Hellenica
- Lysias (about 458-380 BC): all works except fragments
- Isocrates (436-338 BC): all works except fragments

In order to make this corpus diverse in genre and to avoid idiosyncratic properties of specific authors, three genres were taken into the corpus. Each genre is represented by (at least) two different authors: socratic dialogue, historiography and oratory. All texts are from what is called the classical period (480-323 BC). I have chosen to incorporate only Attic prose since the meter may influence collocational behavior and other dialects may have differences in meaning and constructions[14]. This corpus contains 617,107 words and 381 instances of που.

The collocation analysis below was made by searching the Thesaurus Linguae Graecae (TLG) for the lemmata που and δήπου in context. The collocations were

[13] In order not to steer the selection of the corpus too much and to make my statistical analyses of the collocations as reliable as possible, I chose a random selection of the works of Plato. This was done as follows. All works of Plato were numbered. A random generator chose five of these numbers from the list. These works were taken into the corpus. At this point I had to decide whether I would use the works with disputed authorship (such as the Hipparchus) and if I would exclude them, I needed to choose which works belong to this category, which, if applied rigorously to all works that have been said to be disputed in recent times, would mean that the total number of works of which the corpus could be drawn, would be quite a bit smaller. I decided to use the disputed works anyway for the following reasons. Although a disputed work may be written somewhat later, it is an example of the genre and it provides an opportunity to avoid idiosyncrasies of Plato and Xenophon, because it would add more variety in the authors. In addition, if a disputed work was part of the random selection, I could check whether the results with respect to these works seemed different from the undisputed works and decide to take another sample if necessary. For the Hipparchus, of which the authorship is generally disputed, this proved not to be the case. In addition, the Hipparchus contains only 7 instances of που, so if there were differences that escaped my notice, it would not have a major influence on our analysis if a possibly later origin affected the use of που a bit. Therefore, the presence of the Hipparchus in the corpus did not seem to be a problem.

[14] In fact, in Herodotus there seems to be a collocation that is not found elsewhere in the classical period, only in late Ionic authors: μάλιστα που + quantifier 'about'.

noted manually. One of the problems with doing the collocation analysis mechanically, is that Ancient Greek is a language with a very rich morphological system. This means that if we want to determine whether a word occurs regularly in the environment of που, we need to make a morphological analysis of that word. This was done by means of a computer program that did a check for every possible collocation in the Greek morphology file made available by the Perseus project[15]. However, this program is not perfect yet and is often not able to distinguish homomorphic forms that may come from different lemmata. Therefore, manual additions and correction continue to be needed.

In chapter 10, I have used the works from the following authors[16]:

- Homer (around 750 BC)
- Hesiod (around 700 BC)
- Aeschylus (524-456 BC)
- Sophocles (496-406 BC)
- Euripides (485-406 BC)
- Aristophanes (450-385 BC)

The texts in this corpus are all poetic texts, but they cover several genres: epics, tragedy and comedy. This corpus contains 355 instances of που.

8.5 Methods and choices

In the introduction to this dissertation, I described some of the issues that arose while trying to describe a modal particle in a dead language. The most important problem is the risk of circularity. That is, as a scholar you think you know what a particle does and you start looking in the (social) context for indications that this is indeed the case. Often it is possible to find such indications in the context. However, it would also be possible to find indications in the context for other interpretations of the particle. In short, up to a certain extent it is possible to read into a modal particle whatever attitude you want and the (social) context will provide arguments for that attitude.

In example (13), for instance, we see that one English translator chooses the translation *perhaps*, indicating that the speaker presents his argument as a (conjectural or uncertain) possibility[17] which suggests that he has reasons to think that what he says might not be completely true (i.e. he cannot guarantee its correctness). The other English translator, however, chooses *doubtless*, which according to the Oxford English dictionary has as its weakest sense: *implying that the speaker sees no reason to*

[15] http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/

[16] The texts of which we only have fragments were excluded.

[17] According to the OED *perhaps* expresses a hypothetical, contingent, conjectural, or uncertain possibility: *it may be (that); maybe, possibly.*

doubt the truth of an opinion or presumption uttered. The German translator has chosen to translate που with *wohl*, which expresses, according to the Duden online dictionary, a reinforcement or strengthening. The French translation takes again a different approach, taking που as a scalar adverb.

(13) (τῇ τε γὰρ παρασκευῇ ἐνδεὴς ἐγένετο, ὥσπερ ἴστε, καὶ οὐχὶ ἐς ναυμαχίαν μᾶλλον ἢ ἐπὶ στρατείαν ἐπλέομεν· ξυνέβη δὲ καὶ τὰ ἀπὸ τῆς τύχης οὐκ ὀλίγα ἐναντιωθῆναι,)

καί	πού τι	καὶ	ἡ	ἀπειρία	πρῶτον	ναυμαχοῦντας
and	που somehow	also	the	inexperience	first	fighting on sea
CONJ	που ADV	PTCL	NOM.SG	NOM.SG	ADV	PTC.PRS.ACC.PL

ἔσφηλεν.
cause to fall.
3SG.AOR.

English1: (Preparation for it, as you know, there was little enough; and the object of our voyage was not so much to fight at sea as an expedition by land. Besides this, the chances of war were largely against us;) and perhaps also inexperience had something to do with our failure in our first naval action.
English2: (For our preparation was deficient, as you know, and the object of our voyage was not so much to fight at sea as operations on land; and it happened, furthermore, that not a few of the chances of war were against us) and doubtless also our inexperience had something to do with our failure at our fist sea-fight.
French: (Les préparatifs, vous le savez, ont alors laissé à désirer, et nous étions moins en mer pour un combat que pour un campagne; à cela s'est ajoutée l'intervention du hasard, qui, à bien des égards, a été contre nous,) et, dans une certaine mesure, l'inexpérience, en ce premier combat naval, a contribué à l'échec.
German: (Sie war mangelhaft vorbereitet, wie ihr wißt, da wir gar nicht zur Seeschlacht ausfuhren, sondern zu einem Feldzug; dazu kam eine Reihe von Zufällen, die gegen uns waren,) und etwas trug wohl auch die mangelnde Erfahrung bei zu diesem Mißerfolg unserer ersten Seeschlacht.

Th. 2.87.2[18] [19]

In order to defend the translation of the first English translator we might argue that the speaker does not want to offend the army by saying too strongly that they were too inexperienced to fight a good battle. The argument in favor of the other English translation may be that by stating strongly that the army was too inexperienced the speaker provides a reason for the defeat that lies out of the control of the soldiers and outside of the realm of cowardice, suggesting that they should not feel

[18] Trans.: English 1: Crawley (1910), English 2: (Loeb translation, instead of Perseus translation) Forster Smith (1919), French: Romilly et al. (1953), German: Landmann (1960).

[19] Marchant and Wiedemann (1993) say about the use of που: καὶ πού τι καὶ—the expression barely does more than suggest the possibility of what was certain.

that it was their personal cowardice that led to the defeat. Both translations and the arguments brought forward to defend them are plausible. However, there is no reason to believe that both interpretations were possible for the Ancient Greeks. This shows that although both lines of reasoning are valid, they advocate two opposite interpretations: hedging versus strengthening. Only knowledge of the conventions and common usage of που will allow us to decide on which interpretation probably was chosen by the Greeks.

Although the difference between a locative interpretation and a modal interpretation is much larger than the differences in interpretation found in the previous example, we encounter the same difficulties in the choice between locative and modal που. In example (14), for instance, the English and French translators interpret που as modal, whereas the German translation chooses a locative interpretation. An argument in favor of a modal interpretation is the presence of δή, but the locative dative Ὁμήρῳ 'in Homer' is an argument in favor of a locative interpretation.

(14) ἔστι μὲν γὰρ δήπου καὶ Ὁμήρῳ
is ptcl for δήπου ptcl in Homer
3SG.PRS PTCL PTCL δήπου PTCL DAT.SG
(γάνυται δέ τ' ἀκούων.)
English: Homer, you remember, has the words,("He joys to hear;")
French: On lit en effet, vous le savez, dans Homère:
German: Denn es steht irgendwo bei Homer.

X. *Smp.*8.30.3[20]

These examples show that we need to be as objective as possible to avoid circular arguments. Therefore, I have chosen to approach the question of the function of που from two angles. On the one hand, I will try to find linguistic regularities in the context of που and see whether they may shed more light on the function of που, just like, for instance, the use of first person pronouns and mental state predicates showed that a *feelings* interpretation of *ergens* was strongly connected to someone's mental space. On the other hand, I will try to use the translations as interpretations of expert readers which may show us tendencies that are less visible on the level of each individual example. By using these two indicators I will try to avoid circularity as much as possible.

However, translations are not the same as interpretations or even meanings. Languages do not use the same means to express things and sometimes people speaking one language just do not express the same things in the same situations as people speaking another language. In addition, particles often have interactional functions that cannot be expressed in the same implicit way in another language. For that reason, it is common in the literature on particles to describe particles by means of paraphrases. These paraphrases often make the implications of a particle too foregrounded to be used as a translation. This means that to speakers of the language in which the paraphrase is given, the use of the paraphrase often sounds awkward and out of place. This is inherent to the fact that the conventions of their language

[20]Transl. English: Todd (1922), French: Ollier (1961), German: Bux (1956).

do not use that type of marker in that situation. However, this also implies that not translating a particle may be the best translation in some cases. In other cases, a good translation of the particle would imply a (completely) different type of construction or the conventions of the target language require another form to be added, which is not present in the original. Since translators of classical texts in bilingual editions are often hesitant to move too far away from the original texts, in general they either choose something that fits the context well and is acceptable in the target language or they choose a non-translation.

Summarizing, we may say that it is very difficult to assess the interpretations of a modal particle in a dead language because of the risk of circular arguments. In the following chapters, I have tried to reduce that risk to a minimum by studying the patterns in the linguistic context of που as well as the patterns in the translations of the particle in three different modern languages. The use of three languages makes us less dependent on the peculiarities of the modern languages involved, which may give us more insight into the interpretations of the translators.