

**Unpacking the connections of modality with counterfactuality:  
evidence from a contrastive study of classical and modern greek**

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The domain of counterfactuality is notoriously hard to pin down theoretically as well as descriptively (Kuteva et al. 2019; Klein 2021b; 2021a; la Roi 2024). Like modality, the study of counterfactuality has its origins in the field of philosophical logic (e.g. Chisholm 1946; Lewis 1973). Both also are deemed to have an intimate connection with factuality, since modality has been defined as “a linguistic category referring to the factual status of a proposition” which marks a proposition for “being undetermined with respect to its factual status, i.e. is neither positively nor negatively factual” (Narrog 2012, 6). Finally, counterfactuals are cross-linguistically often marked by combinations of a modal and a past or aspectual marker (Lazard 1998; Van linden and Verstraete 2008) yet not exclusively (la Roi 2024).

In this talk, I investigate three connections that modality has with counterfactuality within counterfactual conditionals in Classical (VI – IV BCE) and Modern Greek: (i) modality as a synchronic ingredient of counterfactual patterns, (ii) modality as the source for pragmatic values, and (iii) modal markers in the diachrony of counterfactual conditionals. The basis for this contrastive examination is the data collected by previous corpus studies (la Roi 2022a; 2022b; 2024) and an analysis of counterfactual conditionals in grammars (e.g. Holton et al. 2012) and Sketch Engine corpora (esp. elTenTen2019). Among other things, I suggest that (i) different types of modalities occur in counterfactual conditionals (e.g. epistemic and deontic), (ii) counterfactual conditionals are not pragmatically uniform due to different connections with polarity, evidentiality and intersubjectivity and, (iii) the modal elements in counterfactual conditionals are the result of different developmental paths. I conclude by discussing potential implications of the results for the study of the domain of modality.

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