0 Outline

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1 Background: distinguishing between weakly equivalent mechanisms

- Argument ellipsis (AE) and Verb-Stranding Ellipsis (VSE) are generally capable of deriving the same surface outcome.
- How do we distinguish between them?\textsuperscript{1}

(1) **Verb-stranding ellipsis** (VSE)

(2) **Argument ellipsis**

\textsuperscript{1}For AE, see Oku (1998), Kim (1999), Takahashi (2008), Şener and Takahashi (2010),
Today:

- Empirical focus: Indefinite Object Drop (IOD) in Greek.
  - Generalization: indefinite objects can be dropped; definite ones cannot.
- The definiteness restriction follows from the interaction of ellipsis and cliticization.
- IOD is the outcome of argument ellipsis, not VSE.
- The lack of VSE in Greek may follow:
  - From the lack of VP ellipsis altogether.
  - From a bleeding interaction between VP ellipsis and verb-raising.

2 Data: IOD in Greek

2.1 The core pattern

Basic observations:

- Only indefinite objects can be dropped.
  - Object gaps and clitics are in complementary distribution.

(3) Q: Efere o Nikos vivlia?
   bring.pst.pfv.3sg the.m.nom.sg Nick.nom.sg book.acc.pl
   ‘Did Nikos bring books?’
A: Ne, (*ta) efere.
   yes them bring.pst.pfv.3sg
   ‘Yes, he brought.’
   = Yes, he brought books.

(4) Q: Efere o Nikos ta
   bring.pst.pfv.3sg the.m.nom.sg Nick.nom.sg the.n.acc.pl
   vivlia?
   book.acc.pl
   ‘Did Nikos bring the books?’
A: Ne, (*ta) efere.
   yes them bring.pst.pfv.3sg
   ‘Yes, he brought them.’

- This asymmetry holds regardless of how (in)definiteness is marked lexically.

(5) Q: Efere o Nikos { merika / kapça / liya / deka / tulaçiston deka / parapano apo some / a.few / ten / at.least ten / more than deka / tipota } vivlia?
   ten / any } book.acc.pl
   ‘Did Nikos bring {several / some / a.few / ten / at.least ten / more than ten / any } books?’
A: Ne, (*ta) efere.
   yes them bring.pst.pfv.3sg
   ‘Yes, he brought.’
   = He brought {several / some / a.few / ten / at.least ten / more than ten/ any } books.

(6) Q: Efere o Nikos { ola ta / ke ta dio / ta perisotera } vivlia?
   both / most } book.acc.pl
   ‘Did Nikos bring {all the / both / most } books?’
A: Ne, *(ta) efere.
   yes   them bring.pst.pfv.3sg
   ‘Yes, he brought them.’

* IOD is not restricted to plural objects.

  ▶ Singular indefinites, both count (7) and mass (8), can be dropped.

(7) Q: Aɣorases efimeriða?
   buy.pst.pfv.2sg newspaper.acc.sg
   ‘Did you buy a newspaper?’

   A: Oçi, ņen boresa na vro __.
      no    neg can.pst.pfv.1sg subj find.pfv.1sg
      ‘No, I couldn’t find [a newspaper].’

(8) Q: Aɣorases zaxari?
   buy.pst.pfv.2sg sugar.acc.sg
   ‘Did you buy sugar?’

   A: Oçi, ņen boresa na vro __.
      no    neg can.pst.pfv.1sg subj find.pfv.1sg
      ‘No, I couldn’t find [sugar].’

   (adapted from Merchant 2018: 235)

* IOD is also not restricted to question-answer contexts:

(9) O Nikos mazepse
    them.nom.sg Nick.nom.sg picked.pst.pfv.3sg
    fraules     ke o Kostas
    strawberry.acc.pl and them.nom.sg Kostas.nom.sg
    pulse     __.
    sell.pst.pfv.3sg
    ‘Nick picked strawberries and Kostas sold [strawberries].’

2.2 Stranded numerals and weak quantifiers

When the antecedent contains a weak quantifier or numeral, this element may be stranded before the gap:

(10) Q: Eferes liya vivlia?
   bring.pst.pfv.2sg a.few.acc.pl book.acc.pl
   ‘Did you bring a few books?’

   A: Efera (liya) __.
      bring.pst.pfv.1sg some.acc.pl
      ‘Yes, I brought (some) [books].’

(11) O the m
    the.m.nom.sg Nikos.nom.sg buy.pst.pfv.3sg two shirt.acc.pl
    O Kostas omos ņen aɣorase
    the.m.nom.sg Nikos.nom.sg however neg buy.pst.pfv.3sg
    (ðio) __.
    two
    ‘Nikos bought two shirts. Kostas, however, did not buy (two)
    [shirts].’

2.3 Obligatory antecedents

Antecedents are obligatory:

(12) # O Nikos efere __.
    the.m.nom.sg Nick.nom.sg bring.pst.pfv.3sg

  • Antecedentless null objects of this kind are bad even with an arbitrary
    interpretation (unlike in Italian).

(13) a. Questo esercizio mantiene __ sani.
    this exercise keep.prs.3sg healthy.pl
b. * Afti  
this.F.NOM.SG the.F.NOM.SG exercise.NOM.SG  
keep.PRS.3SG  
________ 
healthy.(-PL)  
This exercise keeps one healthy.  
(Panagiotidis 2002: 71)

• Greek separately allows verbs to surface with suppressed internal arguments in the absence of an antecedent.

▶ These are lexically restricted; Merchant (2018: 237-242) derives them from a valency reduction operation in the lexicon.

(14) I  
Ariadne  {majirepse  
the.NOM.SG.F Ariadne.NOM.SG cook.PST.PFV.3SG  
efaje  / διαvase  / palexpe  /  
eat.PST.PFV.3SG  read.PST.PFV.3SG  fight.PST.PFV.3SG  
flertare).  
‘Ariadne {cooked / ate / read / fought / flirted}.

(merchant 2018: 239)

3 Ellipsis, not deep anaphora

IOD cannot be reduced to deep anaphora: it does not involve pro or topic-bound variables.

3.1 Not a null pronoun

• (Subject) pro is typically definite.

• In languages where it can be indefinite, it receives a generic/arbitrary interpretation. As seen in (13), this is not a possibility in Greek.

3.2 Not variables

IOD does not show A’ properties. To see this, compare IOD to null objects in European Portuguese (EP), which have traditionally been analysed as variables (Raposo 1986).

(15) Complex NPs

Q: Does Manel have guns?

i. * Eu informei la policia da posibilitade de o 
I informed the police of the possibility that the 
Manel ter __ no cofre. 
Manel has in safe

ii. Pliroforisa tin astinomia ja 
inform.PST.PFV.3SG the.ACC.SG.F police.ACC.SG about 
to enðexomeno na eçi __ 
the.N.ACC.SG possibility.ACC.SG subj have.SUBJ.3SG 
o Manel sto 
the.M.NOM.SG Manel.NOM in.the.M.ACC.SG

xrimatokivotio. 
safe.ACC.SG

‘I told the police about the possibility that Manel has [guns] in the safe.’

In a nutshell:

• Indefinite objects can be dropped.

• Definite ones cannot.

• Antecedents are obligatory.

• Weak quantifiers and numerals may be stranded before the ellipsis site.
(16) **Sentential subjects**

a. I knew that IBM sells computers, but...

b. * que venda __ a particulares supreende me.  
that sells ___ to individuals surprises me

c. to oti pulai __ se iōiotes  
the.NOM.SG that sell.PRS.3SG to individual.ACC.PL.M me ekplisi.  
me.ACC.SG surprise.PRS.3SG

'I knew that IBM sells computers, but that it sells [computers] to individuals surprises me.'

(17) **Adjuncts**

a. The pirate arrived at his lair carrying gold.

b. * Partiu depois de ter guardado __ no cofre.  
left after that have kept in the safe  
Intended: 'He left after he kept [it] in the safe'

Q: Did you go shopping for sugar?

A: ðen piya sta maɣazia jati  
NEG go.PST.PVF.3SG to.the.N.ACC.PL shop.ACC.PL because  
içes filaksi __ esi.  
have.PST.IMPF.3SG kept.PTCP ___ you  
'I didn't go to the shops because you had kept [sugar].'

(18) **Wh-islands**

Q: Is there any paracetamol?

i. * eu sei [em qual gaveta], Manel guardou __ t__i.  
I know in which drawer Manel keeps  
i know which drawer Manel keeps

ii. ksero [se pio sirtari]_i  
know.PRS.1SG in which.ACC.SG.N drawer.ACC.SG keep.PRS.3SG the.M.NOM.SG Manel.nom  
'I know which drawer Manel keeps [paracetamol] in.'

(19) **Parasitic gaps**

Q Did you find any movies from your childhood?

i. Vi __ na TV sem reconhecer.  
saw on TV without recognising  

ii. * Iða __ stin tileorasi xoris  
see.PST.PVF.1SG on.the.F.ACC.SG TV.ACC.SG without  
to recognise.SUBJ.1SG  
'I saw [movies from my childhood] on TV without recognising [them].'

(All examples adapted from Panagiotidis 2002: 72-73)

3.3 Ellipsis diagnostics in IOD

Extraction:

(20) [yia ti mama tu], o for the.ACC.SG.F mom.ACC.SG 3SG.POSS the.NOM.SG.M  
Markos eftiakse turta. [yia to  
Markos.NOM make.PST.PVF.3SG cake.ACC.SG for the.ACC.SG.M  
baba tu], ðen eftiakse __.  
dad.ACC.SG 3SG.POSS NEG make.PST.PVF.3SG  
'Markos made a cake. For his mom, Markos made a cake. For his dad, he didn't make [a cake].'

(adapted from Merchant 2018: 264: (121) )
Agreement:

(21) Q: Efere o Nikos bring.pst.pfv.3sg the.m.nom.sg merika vivlia? some.acc.pl.n book.acc.pl.
'Did Nick bring some books?'
A1: Ne, efere merika ___. yes bring.pst.pfv.3sg some.acc.pl.n
'Yes, he brought some.'
A2: * Ne, efere merikus ___. yes bring.pst.pfv.3sg some.acc.pl.m
A2: * Ne, efere merikes ___. yes bring.pst.pfv.3sg some.acc.pl.f

Sloppy readings, sometimes used as a diagnostic for ellipsis, can also be found in IOD:

(22) Q: Efere o Nikos merika bring.pst.pfv.3sg the.m.nom.sg merika book.acc.pl.
apo ta vivlia tu? some of the.n.acc.pl book.acc.pl his
'Did Nikos, bring some of his books?'
A: Oçi, o Kostas efere ___.
No the.m.nom.sg Kostas.nom.sg bring.pst.pfv.3sg
'No, Kostas, brought [some of his] books.'

However, sloppy readings may not be a foolproof diagnostic: these readings can arise in the absence of ellipsis (Merchant 2013), and may in fact characterize deaccenting in general (Tancredi 1992).

4 Why no definite null objects?

- Greek clitics are D heads (Drachman 1997; Anagnostopoulou 1999; Tsimpi and Stavrakaki 1999; Alexiadou 2001; Mavrogiorgos 2010)
- They are base-generated in object position, cliticizing by head movement (cf. Uriagereka 1995; Roberts 2010)

(23) Cliticization and VSE

(24) Cliticization and AE

Prediction: when the definite article is found in a context where it is not able to cliticize, it should undergo ellipsis.

- This prediction is borne out.

▶ The preposition se appears autonomously except when followed by the definite article:

(25) a. se + bare indefinite

Mu aresi na pijeno se polis tu
my likes subj go to cities of the
eksoteriku.
abroad
'I like going to cities in other countries.'
b. * se + indefinite article

\[ \text{Vreθikame} \quad \text{ticea} \quad \text{se mia} \]

meet.NONACT.PST.PFV.1PL accidentally to a

paralia.

'Ve bumped into each other by chance on a beach.'

c. se + definite article

i. * Molis bika se to sinema.

just enter.PST.PFV.1SG to the cinema

ii. Molis bika sto sinema.

just enter.PST.PFV.1SG to the cinema

'I've just entered the cinema.'

Crucially, the prepositional determiner *st- inflects for case, gender and number:

(26) a. Pao stu Petru.

go.1SG to.the.GEN.SG.M Peter.GEN

'I'm going to Peter's (house).'

b. Pao stis Marias.

go.1SG to.the.GEN.SG.M Mary.GEN

'I'm going to Mary's (house).'

c. Mi fonazis stus pezus!

don't shout.2SG to.the.ACC.PL.M pedestrians

'Don't shout at pedestrians!'

Contrary to the normal pattern, a definite object *may* be dropped when it is introduced by *st-:

(27) a. I Maria vrike to ipojio, ala o Petros

the Mary found the basement but the Peter

\( \text{den} \) (*to) vrike.

NEG the found

'Mary found the basement, but Peter didn't.'
5 IOD is not VSE: three arguments

We will repeatedly refer back to Merchant (2018), who argues for a VSE-based analysis of IOD.

5.1 Argument 1: Weak quantifier/numeral stranding

Recall that weak quantifiers and numerals may be stranded in IOD:

(30) Q: Efere o Nikos dio bring.pst.pfv.3sg the.m.nom.sg Nick.nom.sg two vivlia?

book.acc.pl.

‘Did Nikos bring books?’

A: Ne, efere (dio) ___.

yes bring.pst.pfv.3sg two

‘Yes, he brought (two) [books].’

(31) Q: Eferes merika vivlia?

bring.pst.pfv.2sg a.few.acc.pl book.acc.pl

‘Did you bring a few books?’

A: Efera (merika) ___.

brings.pst.pfv.1sg some.acc.pl.

‘Yes, I brought (some) [books].’

• If IOD is VSE, these elements should not appear overtly: they are embedded within the VP.

▶ NB they don’t cliticize.

5.2 Argument 2: recovery of adverbials under ellipsis

VSE involves deletion of a verbal constituent; hence it must also delete adverbials contained within that constituent. These adverbs must then be interpretable at the ellipsis site (Park 1997; Oku 1998).
This is the case with English VP ellipsis, and with high verbal ellipsis in Greek, where manner adverbs are VP-internal (Alexiadou 1997: 130-143).

(32) John cleaned the vase carefully, but Mary didn’t ___.

= Mary didn’t clean the vase carefully.

(33) O Nikos aɣorase aperiskepta the.NOM.SG Nikos Nom.SG buy.PST.3SG recklessly metoços ke o Kostas epsis ___.

stock.Acc.pl and the.M.NOM.SG. Kostas Nom.SG also 'Nikos bought stocks recklessly, and Kostas also.'

= Kostas also bought stocks recklessly.

But in IOD, agent-oriented adverbs are never recoverable at the ellipsis site.

(34) O Nikos aɣorase aperiskepta the.NOM.SG Nikos Nom.SG buy.PST.3SG recklessly metoços. O Kostas oços othen neg aɣorase ___.

buy.PST.3SG 'Nikos bought stocks recklessly. Kostas, however, did not.'

= Kostas did not buy stocks.

≠ Kostas did not buy stocks recklessly.

Merchant (2018): These facts are indeed a problem.

5.3 Argument 3: missing antecedents

Merchant (2018: 263) adapts a Hebrew example from Landau (2018) into Greek. This example involves the missing antecedent test of Grinder and Postal (1971).

(35a) a. O Petros efiakse turta the.NOM.SG.M Petros Nom make.PST.PFV.3SG cake.Acc.SG akoluθondas ti sindaji. Itan following the.Acc.SG.F recipe.Acc.SG be.PST.3SG nostimi. delicious.NOM.SG.F

'Petros made a cake by following the recipe. It was delicious.'

i. O Markos othen neg efiakse ___.

the.NOM.SG.M Markos Nom neg make.PST.PFV.3SG #Itan aḯdiastiki. be.PST.3SG disgusting.NOM.SG.F

'Markos didn’t make [one]. #It was disgusting.'

ii. O Markos oçi. Itan the.NOM.SG.M Markos Nom no be.PST.3SG aḯdiastiki. disgusting.NOM.SG.F

'Not Markos. It was disgusting.'

iii. O Markos othen neg efiakse the.NOM.SG.M Markos Nom neg make.PST.PFV.3SG turta akoluθondas ti sindaji. cake.Acc.SG following the.Acc.SG.F recipe.Acc.SG Itan aḯdiastiki. be.PST.3SG disgusting.NOM.SG.F

'Markos didn’t make a cake by following the recipe. It was disgusting.'

(Merchant 2018: 263)

(35a-i), (35a-ii) and (35a-iii) are three different possible continuations of (35a).

Let’s focus on (35a-i). The essence of this test: a VSE analysis predicts that the chunk it was disgusting of (35a-i) should be felicitous, contrary to fact.
A VSE analysis would assume that the null object in (35a-i) results from ellipsis of a whole VP, specifically of a VP like that in the antecedent clause, one which contains the VP adjunct *by following the recipe*.

If this adjunct is present in the structure of (35a-i), and has been elided, then it must be in the scope of the negative particle δεν.

As such, the ellipsis site in (35a-i) should mean ‘Markos did not make a cake *by following the recipe*’. Hence, a continuation like ‘It was disgusting’ should be perfectly licit.

**But** (35a-i) cannot mean that Markos did not make a cake *by following the recipe*; it can only mean that Markos did not make a cake at all.

This is why the follow-up ‘It was disgusting’ is infelicitous: there is no antecedent for ‘it’, since no cake was made.

In other words, (35a-i) must be the elided version not of (35a-iii), repeated here as (36a), but rather of (36b).

(36)  

a. O Markos δεν έφταξε
   the.nom.sg.m Markos.nom neg make.pst.pfv.3sg
   τυτα τη μεταποθέτει τη σινδαχον
   cake.acc.sg following the.acc.sg.f recipe.acc.sg
   #Itan aidiastiki.
   be.pst.3sg disgusting.nom.sg.f

   ‘Markos didn’t make a cake by following the recipe. It was disgusting.’

b. O Markos δεν έφταξε
   the.nom.sg.m Markos.nom neg make.pst.pfv.3sg
   τυτα. #Itan aidiastiki.
   cake.acc.sg be.pst.3sg disgusting.nom.sg.f

   ‘Markos didn’t make a cake. #It was disgusting.’

**The bottom line:** similarly to the adverb test, the missing antecedent test shows that material contained within VP is not elided in the case of Greek null objects like (35a-i); hence, these null objects cannot be the outcome of VSE.

5.3.1 Merchant’s (2018) response and its problems

Merchant (2018): the facts of the missing antecedent test can be made compatible with VP ellipsis.

- The infelicity of the continuation in (35a-i) follows not from the lack of an antecedent for the pronoun, but from independent facts concerning the prosodic properties of the sentence.

Merchant begins by noting that focus-sensitive operators such as English *only* require that their associate receive a pitch accent. If their associate is elided, this prosodic requirement is not met, resulting in ungrammaticality.

(37)  

a. Abby will only play [the flute] at the recital, not the piano.
   i. Ben also will only play [the flute] at the recital.
   ii. * Ben also will only play [the flute] at the recital.

   (Merchant 2018: 264)

Merchant assumes that Greek δεν is like English *only*: it is a focus-sensitive operator. In this view, its associate in (35a-iii) is the verbal adjunct. That is, (35a-iii) is parallel to (37a-i):

(38)  

O Markos δεν έφταξε τυτα
   the.nom.sg.m Markos.nom neg make.pst.pfv.3sg cake.acc.sg
   [τη μεταποθέτει τη σινδαχον]F
   following the.acc.sg.f recipe.acc.sg
   ‘Markos didn’t make a cake [by following the recipe].’ (He made it in some other way, not according to the recipe)

   (Merchant 2018: 264)

- If (35a-iii) is parallel to (37a-i), then (35a-i) is bad for the same reason that (37a-ii) is: the associate of the focus operator has gone missing.
In this view, the infelicity of (35a-i) arises from an independent factor, namely, the properties of focus-sensitive operators, and not from the lack of an antecedent for the pronoun.

Hence, the ungrammaticality of (35a-i) is not a problem for a VSE analysis of Greek null objects.

Furthermore, Merchant argues, this focus-based approach can help us understand the difference between the ungrammatical (35a-i) and the minimally different but grammatical (35a-ii).

(35a-ii) contains the negative particle oçi ‘no’. Unlike the verbal negator ðen, oçi never appears preverbally, and can be used as a stand-alone answer to yes/no questions, just like English no.

oçi, Merchant stipulates, is not a focus-sensitive operator, so, unlike ðen, it does not have an associate that must be overt. Hence, (35a-ii) is grammatical.

Problems with this response:

> Independent evidence that ðen is focus-sensitive is not given. (The parallelism with English only is not convincing by itself: there is no reason a priori to expect Greek ðen and English only to behave alike.)

> NB the account may be salvaged by assuming that all negators are focus-sensitive operators; but then we lack an explanation for why one negator should be focus-sensitive, but not the other.

> It does not seem to explain what it is intended to explain.

> It predicts that the first sentence of (35a-i) is ungrammatical, contrary to fact. It is in fact the continuation iðan aðiastiki that’s bad, but the focus-based approach does not bear on this sentence.

But if we do away with Merchant’s focus approach, do we lose the explanation of the difference between (35a-i) and (35a-ii)?

No: (35a-ii) does not involve ellipsis in the first place.

Hence, the focus-based approach not actually explain the difference between them.

An ellipsis-less approach to oçi does explain the difference, regardless of whether oçi is focus-sensitive: even if it is, no ellipsis of its associate has taken place in (35a-ii).

There are two pieces of evidence suggesting that (35a-ii) does not involve ellipsis.

Ellipsis is generally optional: if it is possible to elide structure, it is also possible to have it be overt. For example, (35a-i) is the elided counterpart of (35a-iii). But consider what would happen if we attempted to derive (35a-ii) with the supposedly elided VP surfacing overtly:

(39) O Markos oçi eftiakse the.NOM.SG.M Markos.NOM no make.PST.PV.3SG turta (akoluðontas ti cake.ACC.SG following the.ACC.SG.F sinday)i).

recipe.ACC.SG

Intended: ‘Markos didn’t make a cake (by following the recipe).’

Secondly, while extraction is perfectly grammatical with ðen, as in (40a), extracting from an oçi-introduced clause is impossible, as in (40b).\(^2\)

It must be noted that there is a further puzzle here: (40b) is grammatical without an overt subject.

(i) Gia to baba tu, o Markos eftiakse turta. Gia ti mama tu oçi.

for the dad his the Markos made cake for the mom his no

‘For his dad, Markos made a cake. For his mom, he didn’t.’

The intonational break shown by the comma in (40b) is not necessary in (i).
(40)  a. Gia to baba tu, o Markos eftiakse turta.
    for the dad his the Markos made cake
    Gia ti mama tu, o Markos øen eftiakse.
    for the mom his the Markos NEG made

b. *Gia to baba tu, o Markos eftiakse turta.
    for the dad his the Markos made cake
    Gia ti mama tu, o Markos oçi.
    for the mom his the Markos no

    'For his dad, Markos made a cake. For his mom,
    he didn’t.'

For all these reasons, a VSE approach to IOD, articulated even as carefully
as that of Merchant’s, seems inappropriate for IOD.

6 IOD as argument ellipsis

6.1 The basic idea

Giannakidou and Merchant (1997) and Panagiotidis (2002): IOD involves
DP-internal null anaphora, and the realization of D is what derives the
complementarity between null objects and clitics.

(41)  a. \[ DP D_{clitic} [\text{NumP} \emptyset [\text{NP} e]] \]
    b. \[ DP \emptyset [\text{NumP} \emptyset [\text{NP} e]] \]

    (Panagiotidis 2002: 74)

Our task here: elaborate on the schema in (41b).

6.2 What gets elided?

If weak quantifiers and numerals are relatively low in the extended nomi-
nal projection (Zamparelli 2000), then their apparent optionality can be explained as the simultaneous availability of different ellipsis heights within DP:

(42)  [VP DP NumP ellipsis [NP ellipsis]]

(43)  [VP DP NumP ellipsis [NP ellipsis]]

• A ‘null object’, then, is (in some sense) epiphenomenal: it arises from
the interaction between argument ellipsis, which silences a portion of
the DP, and the realization of D, which is null in Greek.

  ▶ (NB this structure has been proposed by Tomioka (2003) as the
representation of radical pro-drop in East Asian languages...)

6.3 Implications

• Argument ellipsis cannot be an areal feature of East Asian languages

  ▶ Hebrew (Landau 2018), Persian (Sato and Karimi 2016) and
now Greek all show the process.

• Greek lacks all of the putative correlates of argument ellipsis, but still
has the process itself.
Greeks does not lack agreement (Saito 2007) or D (Cheng 2013), and it does not have scrambling (Oku 1998) or radical pro-drop (Sakamoto 2017).

Why no VSE?

A deeper question: why does Greek lack VSE?

- VSE is a composite process: it relies on the presence of verb-raising and of VP ellipsis.
- Greek has verb raising.

\[\text{Itan safes oti to peði ekapse epitiðes ti supa.} \]

\[\text{‘It was clear that the child burned the soup intentionally’} \]

(44) Itan safes oti to peði ekapse epitiðes ti supa.

- The absence of VSE may then be due to:
  - Either the absence of VP ellipsis
  - Or the derivational timing of VP ellipsis relative to verb-raising.

Does Greek have VP ellipsis?

Scenario 1: Greek has VP ellipsis

- No ellipsis after the perfective auxiliary have or after negation:

\[\text{a. } \ast \text{ I Maria eçi teliosi tin erγasia tis ke i the Maria has finished the homework her and the Ana eçi __ episis.} \]

\[\text{Ana has also} \]

\[\text{Intended: ‘Maria has finished her homework and Anna has, too’} \]

\[\text{b. } \ast \text{ O Petros ine ikanos, ala o Aleksanðros ðen the Petros is capable but the Alexander NEG __.} \]

\[\text{Intended: ‘Petros is capable, but Alexander isn’t.’} \]

(Merchant 2018: 229-230)

- But we do find ellipsis of non-verbal predicates following the copula:

\[\text{a. I Maria ðen ine ikani, ala i Aleksanðra ine the Maria is NEG capable but the Alexandra is __.} \]

\[\text{‘Maria isn’t capable, but Alexandra is.’} \]

\[\text{b. I Maria ine sto spiti, ala i Aleksanðra the Mary is NEG at the home but the ðen ine __.} \]

\[\text{Alexandra NEG is} \]

\[\text{‘Maria is at home, but Alexandra isn’t.’} \]

\[\text{c. I Maria ine kali maθitria, ala i Aleksanðra the Maria is good student but the Alexandra ðen ine __.} \]

\[\text{NEG is} \]

\[\text{‘Maria is a good student, but Alexandra isn’t.’} \]

- Merchant (2018): this is ellipsis of PredP, which he takes to be equivalent to vP.

Puzzle

If it is true that Greek has VP ellipsis, we are seemingly led to a paradox. Schematically:
• Greek does not have VSE.
• Greek does raise the main verb beyond the verbal shell.
• Greek does have a form of ‘VP ellipsis’.
• Hence, Greek has both verb-raising and VP ellipsis, but not the combination of the two (=VSE).

The problem: How is it possible that Greek has both verbal ellipsis and movement of the finite verb out of VP, but not the combination of the two operations?

7.1.2 A solution

Greek is not alone in exhibiting this puzzle.


➤ Sailor notes that, although the Mainland Scandinavian languages have both verbal ellipsis and verb-raising (to C; V2), they do not show the VSE pattern.

➤ Illustrating with Danish (all data from Sailor 2018: 5-7):

(47) Danish has VP ellipsis

Mona og Jasper havde vask-et bilen, eller
Mona and Jasper have.PST wash.PTCP car.DEF or
rettere Mona havde ___.
rather Mona have.PST

‘Mona and Jasper had washed the car, or rather Mona had.’

(48) Danish has V2

a. Peter har ofte drukket kaffe om morgenen.
   Peter has often drunk coffee in the.morning
   ‘Peter has often drunk coffee in the morning.’

b. Peter drikker ofte kaffe om morgenen.
   Peter drinks often coffee in the.morning
   ‘Peter often drinks coffee in the morning.’

c. Om morgenen har Peter ofte drukket kaffe.
   in the.morning has Peter often drunk coffee
   ‘Peter has often drunk coffee in the morning.’

d. Om morgenen drikker Peter ofte kaffe.
   in the.morning drinks Peter often coffee
   ‘Peter often drinks coffee in the morning.’

(49) Danish does not have VSE

*Mona og Jasper vaskede bilen, eller rettere
Mona and Jasper wash.PST car.DEF or rather
Mona vaskede ___.
Mona wash.PST

Intended: ‘Mona and Jasper washed the car, or rather
Mona did.’

Sailor (2018: 12) accounts for these facts as follows:

[L]anguages such as those in the Mainland Scandinavian sub-family have the correct ingredients to generate the V-stranding VPE pattern, yet the order in which those ingredients are added to the derivational recipe results in a bleeding configuration instead.
His account in brief:

- **Assumptions:**
  - VPE is triggered by the presence of the [E] feature on T (for this feature, see Merchant 2001)
  - V2 is movement of the main verb to C triggered by a strong [V*] feature on that head

- **The essence:**
  - When T is merged, VPE makes the verb inaccessible for later operations. C is merged too late for the [V*] feature to be able to probe inside VP.

\[(50)\]

\[
\begin{array}{c}
\text{C}_{[V^*]} \\
\longrightarrow \\
\text{TP} \\
\text{T'} \\
\downarrow \\
\text{T}_{[E]} \\
\uparrow \\
\text{VP ellipsis} \\
\end{array}
\]

Greek may be parallel to Mainland Scandinavian in this sense.

- **Where exactly does the Greek verb move to?**
  - We saw it lands above *intentionally*; it also lands below *finally*:

\[(51)\]

\[
\text{Prospha} \ 	ext{na to apofiyo, ala telika try.PST.PFV.1SG subj it avoid.PFV.1SG but finally ekapsa ti supa. burn.PST.PFV.1SG the.ACC.SG_F soup.ACC.SG 'I tried to avoid it, but I ended up burning the soup.'}
\]

Then Greek is just like Mainland Scandinavian, but at a more fine-grained level:

\[(52)\]

7.1.3 **Implications**

- As noted by Sailor, we cannot capture these facts in a theory where
  - Head movement is not in the narrow syntax, or
  - Ellipsis is not triggered syntactically.

- Adding to these points:
  - Ellipsis and phases
    - Ellipsis cannot happen all at once (i.e. after the derivation has been completed).
    - But ellipsis also cannot coincide with cyclic spell-out. If it did, then in our case the verb should be able to escape the VP just as it does in a normal derivation by phase.
    - In other words, ellipsis must take place immediately (in our case, before spell-out of the VP is triggered).
  - Granularity
    - Unlike the Scandinavian case, it’s clear that we need more than one head in the general “T” domain in order to get the Greek facts.
In fact, under a C-T-V-ν view of the clausal spine, both [V∗] and [E] would be on T/Asp, and would be satisfied in parallel, hence we would predict the existence of VSE in Greek.

We need to be able to dissociate the feature triggering verb movement from the feature triggering ellipsis; in the Greek case, this is possible only with at least some granularity in the clausal spine.

This approach makes strict predictions as to the availability of VSE: this operation should only be possible if VP ellipsis and verb-raising are carried out by features of the same head.

Broader point: a derivational syntax seems to allow (and in fact predict) the possibility that syntactic operations are ordered, with interesting implications not just for locality.

7.2 Scenario 2: Greek does not have VP ellipsis

Let’s revisit the examples that Merchant (2018) takes to be derived by PredP/νP ellipsis.

(53) I Maria ine kali maθitria, ala i Aleksanðra ñen ine __.
    the Maria is good student but the Alexandra neg is
    ‘Maria is a good student, but Alexandra isn’t.’

• How do we know this is ellipsis of PredP?

• It could just as well be ellipsis of the complement of Pred.

(54)

• If post-copular gaps are derived by argument ellipsis, there is no evidence that Greek has VP ellipsis; hence VSE should be impossible.

8 Conclusion

• The restriction of object drop to indefinite DPs follows from the interaction of ellipsis with cliticization.

• Weak equivalence problem resolved: IOD gaps are derived by argument ellipsis, not VSE.

• Why does Greek lack VSE?

  ▶ Because, even though it has VP ellipsis, this operation bleeds head movement

  ▶ Or because it lacks VP ellipsis altogether.
References


Takahashi, Daiko. 2014. “Argument ellipsis, anti-agreement and scrambling.” In 


