

Consonant clusters in SLA acquisition: articulatory constraints and coarticulation effects for Russian learners of Greek as a second language

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This study reports on consonant clusters as a source of pronunciation difficulty among the Russian learners of Greek as a second language. We test whether phonetic and psycholinguistic evidence is in favour of a better management of similarity and difficulty in learning to pronounce complex Greek consonant clusters.

In order to determine if and how native language (L1) influences second language production accuracy, we recorded and analysed spontaneous speech of 10 Russian intermediate learners of Greek as a second language elicited by means of a) structured interview and b) word and non-word repetition tests. It should be noted that all learners are secondary/high school pupils who live in Greece; therefore they handle adequately speech production being aware of a large percentage of Greek vocabulary and Greek grammatical structure. However, they are not equally competent with Greek pronunciation.

Multi-gesture coordination is tested by focusing on consonant clusters that exhibit different place and manner of articulation, sonority sequencing, position in the word and frequency.

Data analysis proves that:

1. Russian learners of Greek as a second language perceive and produce the consonant clusters that are also present in their language more successfully than those that are absent (**mother tongue transfer**)
2. back-to-front consonant sequences are characterised by perceptual salience and recoverability of the coordinated gestures; therefore, they are more stable in production (**place** of articulation)
3. clusters that are characterised by frication threaten perceptual recoverability and are more defective in production (**manner** of articulation)
4. sequences of consonant gestures exhibit less temporal overlap in a syllable/word onset than in a coda or across syllables, favouring perceptual recoverability word/utterance initially (see Hardcastle: 1985) (**word position**)
5. syllable nuclei (i.e. vowels in Greek) affect ease/difficulty in pronunciation of complex onset syllables (**articulatory constraint**) and
6. syllable onsets that do not violate sonority sequencing exhibit an obvious ease at production, attributed to gestural recoverability requirements (see Barlow: 2005). (**sonority sequencing**).

The experimental results provide explicit teaching with specific principles that may lead to successful pronunciation. They may also be a useful guide for the writing of pronunciation learning methods/handbooks or for the integration of pronunciation chapters in books of Greek as a second language.

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An error analysis based teaching approach: the case of Greek grammatical gender

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The present study suggests a different approach in teaching grammatical gender by a) making use of the gender agreement theory and b) taking into account the results from classroom research conducted in order to find the grammatical gender errors made by learners of Greek as a second language.

Error analysis was based on written language data collected from students who participated in language courses in the frame of the European project 'Inclusion of expatriot and foreign students in Greek Secondary School'. This data is exploited in order to illustrate how *learner corpus-based error analysis* can contribute into effective second language teaching. To be precise, a corpus was compiled including a sample of written work collected from 77 Greek second language learners (school years 2006-07 and 2007-08) who differ in their first language, the level of acquisition of Greek and the period of their stay in Greece. Grammatical gender errors have been detected, registered and analysed by means of qualitative and quantitative tools.

Analysis revealed erroneous use of gender in cases of agreement:

ex. το σχολείο μου είναι πολύ όμορφη

(the school_{sng/neu} my is very beautiful_{sng/fem}) 'my school is very beautiful'

η αυλή ... είναι μεγάλο

(the school yard_{sng/fem} ... is big_{sng/neu}) 'the school yard is big'

τα θρανία είναι γραμμένες

(the desks_{plu/neu} are scribbled_{fem}) 'the desks are scribbled'

The textbooks used for Greek either as a first or as a second language do not make explicit use of gender agreement in teaching grammatical gender. Therefore, we suggest exercises and communicative tasks as helping tools for the successful acquisition and the proper use of gender agreement in Greek.

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Greek Polydefinites: The Interpretive Properties of the R-index Mechanism

Abstract and references for the
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The main aim of this talk is to provide an analysis of the interpretation of polydefinite DPs in Greek, the main characteristic of which is the multiple occurrence of the definite determiner within the same DP, as exemplified below:

- (1) a. to pseftiko to chrisso to roloi
 the fake the golden the watch
 b. to roloi to pseftiko to chrisso
 the watch the fake the golden

After a short description of the polydefinite construction, I will briefly present a syntactic account, in terms of close apposition, along the lines of Lekakou & Szendrői's (2007) proposal. Based on this syntactic analysis, I deal with the question of how the proposed appositive structure relates to semantic interpretation. I introduce an interpretive mechanism that reflects adequately the syntactic peculiarity of polydefinites (the fact that a bare adjective is not allowed to partake in the construction). This mechanism contains two different processes of modification: a) one external (between DPs, via R-index identification) and b) one internal (inside each sub-part DP, via θ -identification, or any other available mechanism). In this way, I demonstrate how the proposed mechanism captures the obligatory restrictive reading of polydefinites (see Kolliakou, 2004). I conclude by discussing how the restrictive reading is correlated with intersective modification, which is treated more loosely in my account, than in standard adjectival semantics.

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Notes on Genitives and Datives in Modern Greek – Consequences for Possessor Raising

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The dative/genitive syncretism is a well-known fact of Modern Greek. A fine-grained investigation however, reveals some important differences between genitives and datives, which have received little attention in traditional grammars. I demonstrate that the differences between genitives and datives involve two dimensions. First of all, datives are subject to an animacy restriction; genitives are not. Secondly, datives are subject to a *number restriction* in Standard Modern Greek in the sense that they usually surface as singular (édosa *tu fitití* éna vivlíο vs. ??édosa *ton fititón* éna vivlíο) genitives are devoid of such restrictions (Kupula 2008). The purpose of this talk is to illustrate that the semantic and morphosyntactic differences between genitives and datives shed important light to the so-called “external possessive construction” or the “possessor raising construction” (Shibatani 1994, Haspelmath 1999, Landau 1999, Pylkkänen 2002 and related literature) and, crucially, reveal that possessors undergo movement also in Modern Greek (*contra* e.g. Pancheva 2004).

Possessor raising constructions are characterized by three properties: (i) the possessor appears externally to the possessee, (ii) the possessor surfaces as dative (at least in Indo-European languages; Haspelmath 1999) and (iii) the possessor is animate (and affected). I argue that precisely the same properties are associated with possessive DPs in Greek, when the possessor precedes the possessee (as in *to megálo [mou aftokínito]*) (cf. Alexiadou & Stavrou (2000) and Kupula (2008) where I argue that possessive DPs with pre-nominal possessors are nominal counterparts to double object constructions).

Crucially, I argue that possessive pronouns have different Case-theoretical status depending on whether they precede or follow the possessee. Pre-nominal possessors, as in *to megálo [mu aftokínito]* are datives. Post-nominal possessors, as in *to (megalo) [aftokínitó mu]*, are genitives. The discussion thus reveals that Pancheva’s (2004) claim that Greek possessive pronouns are uniformly genitives is only true for post-nominal possessors. Because pre-nominal possessors are datives, they pattern typologically with typical Indo-European raised possessors. Due to the lack of semantic or morphosyntactic differences between raised possessors and pre-nominal possessors in possessive DPs, a derivational analysis for the Greek possessor raising construction is directly applicable and essentially proceeds along the lines proposed by Landau (1999). I round off the discussion by illustrating that Landau’s (1999) analysis is basically identical to a more recent alternative, namely Pylkkänen’s (2002) low applicative approach, because possessive DPs with pre-nominal possessors, too, project a low applicative phrase structure (topped with a DP-layer) (Kupula 2008).

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Greek *demonstratives* and linguistic theory. A parametric analysis

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Summary. This paper will propose an interpretation of the syntactic behavior of *demonstrative* elements within the nominal domain (DP) in Greek, in a parametric perspective. I will analyze the empirical evidence coming from a number of ancient and contemporary Greek varieties (and collected on purpose), suggesting minimal comparisons with other Indo-European and non Indo-European languages.

Background. Starting from the universal DP-structure sketched within the ‘DP hypothesis’ (see, among the others, Bernstein 2001, Longobardi 2001, Longobardi and Guardiano 2008), I will illustrate how the (sometimes controversially interpreted) Greek data can be in fact explained on the basis of the settings of four syntactic parameters that govern the syntax of demonstratives crosslinguistically, described in Guardiano (2008). There, I suggest that the two basic features traditionally associated with the demonstrative elements and belonging to the ‘definiteness sphere’, i.e. *deixis* (the referent is available or deducible from the extralinguistic context) and *locality* (the referent has been already mentioned or is deducible from the linguistic context), are both checked in the ‘D-area’; moreover, on the basis of the exploration of crosslinguistic evidence and of the existent literature, I propose that demonstratives (henceforth *Dem*) are universally generated in a ‘low area’ of the DP (*D Gen1 Adjs Dem Gen2 NP*). Then, the different positions where they are found crosslinguistically happen to be the consequence of different types of movement: *a)* *Dem* moves to the ‘D-area’ (presumably in Spec DP), in order to check overtly either *deixis* (Parameter 1: *Strong deixis*) or both *deixis* and *locality* (Parameter 2: *Strong locality*); *b)* *Dem* doesn’t move, and it is crossed over by the noun (that moves across the DP for independent reasons): when this happens, *Dem* surfaces to the right of the noun; *c)* *Dem* moves to the ‘D-area’, and then it is systematically crossed over by the whole DP, that moves to its ‘left periphery’, again for independent reasons (Parameter 3: *DP over Dem*): when this happens, *Dem* surfaces on the rightmost part of the DP. Finally, languages that have the ‘definite’ article display a further distinction: *Dem* doesn’t, must or can (under specific conditions) co-occur with the article. I suggest that this depends on the fact that *Dem*, when surfaces in the D area, can either license the *person* feature in D (i.e. no definite article, that acts as the *default person*-operator - Longobardi, 2008 - is needed), or not: in the first case *Dem* and the article never co-occur in the ‘D-area’ (Parameter 4: *D(person)-licensing Dem*), but can co-occur when *Dem* is in its basic position.

Demonstratives in homeland (Ancient and present-day) Greek. *Dem* doesn’t move from its basic position when the DP refers to an entity that has already been mentioned or is available in the linguistic context (Parameter 2: - *Strong locality*), but moves to the ‘D area’ when it is deictic (Parameter 1: + *Strong deixis*; see also Manolessou and Panagiotidis, 1999). When it is in the ‘D area’, it is not systematically crossed over by the rest of the DP (Parameter 3: - *DP over Dem*). *Dem* always co-occurs with the definite article, i.e. it doesn’t have the property of licensing *person* (Parameter 4: - *D(person)-licensing Dem*). The (apparent) exceptions will be described as the (predictable) consequences of the interaction with other peculiar properties of the Greek DP-syntax.

Diachronic changes. The syntax of demonstratives has not changed throughout the history of homeland Greek (at least since the Classical period, see Guardiano 2003), that is, the significant changes in the form-meaning relations attested across the diachronic development of the language (see Manolessou 2001) have not affected their syntactic properties/behavior.

The picture is different in other contemporary varieties of the Mediterranean area. For instance, evidence from the Greek dialects of Southern Italy (i.e. Griko) shows that the settings of the four parameters are today identical to those of the local Romance varieties, and significantly different from those of homeland Greek. Needless to say, this is a consequence of the pervasive contact relations with the local Romance varieties across time, but it is not an isolated phenomenon: a more extensive analysis of other DP-elements shows that a distinct cluster of properties has changed in the same direction, that is that the corresponding parameters have been reset as a consequence of contact, while, on the other side, other properties (i.e. other parameters) have evolved in the same direction as in homeland Greek (and opposite to Romance): this could be, very tentatively, interpreted as a first sign that certain parameters are more sensible to contact (i.e. are more ‘areal’), while others happen to be more ‘historically rooted’ (i.e. ‘genealogical’ in the more traditional sense).

Moving Left: Towards a Minimal Syntax

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A common locus in the generative theory is that dislocation configurations—especially those in which the CP domain (i.e. left-periphery) is involved, such as Wh-movement, Focus-movement, Topicalisation and CLLD—are not all due to the same syntactic operation. By and large, the idea that there are distinct syntactic mechanisms involved in such configurations is based upon surface asymmetries concerning the variable vs. clitic strategy of binding, the presence vs. absence of weak crossover effects, and the ability vs. inability for parasitic gaps to be licensed. (Anagnostopoulou 1994, Tsimpli 1995, Iatridou 1995, Alexopoulou 1999 for Greek)

In this piece of work, building primarily on the paradoxical behaviour of CLLD (Cinque 1990, Iatridou 1995, Anagnostopoulou 1997) and on “abnormal” wh- and focus-constructions (Androulakis 1998, Alexopoulou 2008) we will argue, instead

(a) that all the above-mentioned configurations are invariably due to a single syntactic mechanism, namely unbounded A-bar movement—which accounts for the fact that they invariably show island sensitivity and strong reconstruction/connectivity effects

(b) that A-bar movement comes into two semantic variants, one with [+Quantificational] properties and one with [- (or reduced) Quantificational] properties. The observed surface differences, namely the clitic vs. variable strategy, presence vs. absence of WCO effects, and the ability vs. inability for p-gaps to be licensed cannot distinguish between different syntactic mechanisms (contra Cinque 1990); rather, they merely reflect differences with respect to quantificational properties (in line with Dobrovie-Sorin 1990). As far as quantification is concerned, we will argue that it is a semantic-cognitive notion related to accessibility and referential activation (Lambrecht 1994).

(c) that when an A-bar moved XP is doubled by a clitic, such movement occurs out of a clitic-doubled post-verbal position, in which both the clitic and the doubled XP are generated. (Uriagereka 1995, Cecchetto 2000, Papangeli 2000). As far as CLLD is concerned, we thus propose that CLLD and Clitic Doubling are truly the two sides of the same coin.

In sum, we will show that there is good evidence to believe that dislocations to the left-periphery are due to a single syntactic operation, namely A-bar movement, and that surface differences that may arise merely reflect differences at interface level(s) other than syntax per se.

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Stochastic Constraints in Modern Greek Phonology

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Keywords: Modern Greek phonology, distinctive features, natural classes, phonological similarity, phonotactic constraints

Abstract

My paper is quantitative approach on inherently gradient phonotactic constraints in Modern Greek. Focus will be on constraints that are motivated by the Obligatory Contour Principle (Leben 1973; McCarthy 1988).

My paper will be divided into two sections. In the first section, a tentative set of monovalent distinctive features is proposed for Modern Greek phonemes. Based on this feature set, a structured specification (originally proposed by Broe (1993)) representing Modern Greek vowel and consonant segments is postulated. The structured specification has been shown to be empirically and computationally superior to underspecification models (e.g. Archangeli 1984). Based on structured specification hierarchies, the similarity of Modern Greek phonemes is quantified using a shared natural classes model developed and applied by Frisch (1996) to English and Arabic.

The second section of my paper combines the results of the similarity metric, the phonotactic constraints themselves, and corpus frequencies by means of a stochastic constraint model (Frisch, Broe & Pierrehumbert 1995). The stochastic constraint model is a probabilistic fuzzy logic model that assumes that the most acceptable forms occur most frequently, whereas forms having low acceptability are rare.

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Dorsal fricative assimilation in Modern Greek (with evidence from German)

Abstract:

The Modern Greek consonantal phoneme inventory provides a voiceless dorsal fricative with a velar and a palatal allophonic variant as can be seen in the following examples:

| | | | | |
|-----|-----|--------|----------|----------|
| (1) | /i/ | όχι | [óçi] | `no' |
| | /e/ | χέρι | [çéri] | `hand' |
| | /u/ | χουέρι | [xunéri] | `fiasco' |
| | /o/ | χορός | [xorós] | `dance' |
| | /a/ | χάος | [xáos] | `chaos' |

The velar fricative variant can also be found in consonant clusters involving (coronal) sonorants and plosives as in χρόνος [xrónos] `time' and χτες [xtes] `yesterday'. These examples suggest that in Modern Greek dorsal fricatives are regressively assimilated to the tautosyllabically following front or non-front segment.

But what happens if the dorsal fricative appears in syllable-final position? Assuming the following syllabification to be correct for Modern Greek, the following examples illustrate the phenomenon:

| | | | |
|-----|-----------|----------------|----------------------------|
| (2) | νύχτα | [.níç.ta.] | `night' |
| | φλύκταινα | [.flíç.te.na.] | `blister' |
| | οχτώ | [.ox.tó.] | `eight' |
| | άχτι | [.áx.ti.] | `vengeful feeling, grudge' |

In these examples tautosyllabic regressive assimilation is inapplicable. It seems that a mirrored rule has been applied instead – a tautosyllabic progressive assimilation.

In this talk I will discuss rule-based and Optimality Theory based approaches to account for this phenomenon. Although the analyses seem to be straightforward to describe these assimilation phenomena in Modern Greek, an in-depth account for this problem seems to be more complicated. Evidence will be given from German, in which a similar (but reversed) phenomenon can be witnessed. In German, the phonological process additionally interacts with the morphology of the language, which suggests that this phenomenon heavily relies on the feature geometric structure of the succeeding elements involved. First results of still ongoing research will be presented.

Temporal anchoring in the DP: the case of *na*

The purpose of this paper is to provide an account of the *na*-clauses in Greek by emphasizing the cases where the marker *na* is obligatorily dropped although expected by the semantics of the predicate following the marker. All accounts proposed so far (Agouraki 1991; Giannakidou 2007 to appear; Philippaki-Warbuton 1992, 1998; Rivero 1994; Roussou 2000, 2007 to appear; Terzi 1992; Tsimpli 1990, Tsoulas 1993;) neglect a crucial fact; marker *na* is not always obligatorily present in the structure.

In this paper, I examine Free Relative (FR) constructions where marker *na* is obligatorily dropped. Normally, we would expect either modality or temporality to be lost when the marker is dropped. For example, the sequence *na* + perfective non past (PNP) is called ‘verbal dependent’. This means that the PNP-marked verb cannot stand alone. However, I will show that this is not a general tendency. Instead, we have fully grammatical sentences specified for tense, aspect and mood without the presence of *na*:

1. Plain Free Relative construction

- (a) Opjos milisi θa fiji
Whoever speak.3sg.PNP fut go.3sg.PNP
Whoever speaks will go out
- (b) *Opjos *na* milisi θa fiji
Whoever Subj¹ speak.3sg.PNP fut go.3sg.PNP
Whoever speaks will go out

In the analysis I offer the DP domain of the plain FR can also provide the temporal anchoring of the PNP dependent verb form. In contrast to the previous theories, I contend that the CP domain is not the only one in the structure that provides the temporal anchoring or the modality reading of the PNP. Furthermore, I show a syntactic analysis of the plain FR constructions and the DP internal structure which introduces the utterance time *n* (or, Now-Tense, in terms of Giannakidou; 2007). Finally, I present a cross-linguistic comparison of Greek and French FRs supporting the claim that a predicate can be bound in the DP domain. Our analysis offers new insights on what is a possible binding domain for a dependent and not embedded predicate.

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¹ Subj = marker of subjunctive

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Doubling the double object clitic cluster: a Northwestern Greek Dialect

Clitics in Standard Modern Greek have been extensively discussed in the literature, both in both mono transitive and di-transitive constructions (Anagnostopoulou 1994, Philippaki-Warbuton and Spyropoulos 1998, Joseph 1988, Alexiadou and Anagnostopoulou 2000, Philippaki-Warbuton, et al 2004, and references therein). In ditransitive cases, clitics precede the finite verb in the order dative-accusative only.

- (1) a. Tis to ipa.
Her-cl it-cl told-1SG.Pst
I told her
b. *To tis ipa.
It-cl her-cl told-1SG.PST
I told her

Terzi (1999) investigated double object clitics in imperatives in Standard Modern Greek and Cypriot Greek. In such constructions, clitics follow imperatives in either the dative-accusative or the reverse order.

- (2) a. Pite to mu
Say-2PL it-cl me-cl
Say it to me
b. Pite mu to
Say-2PL me-cl it-cl
Say it to me

In this paper we describe certain patterns of multiple clitic occurrence in imperatives in northwestern Greek dialects. The basic pattern consists of the repetition of one of the two clitics, in a way as to end up with a sequence of three clitics, either in the accusative-dative-accusative order or in the dative-accusative-dative one.

- (3) a. Pite to mu to
Say-2PL it-cl me-cl it-cl
Say it to me
b. Pite mu to mu
Say-2PL me-cl it-cl me-cl
Say it to me

The analysis suggested here takes this pattern of *multiple occurrence* of clitics to be an argument in favour of the existence of copies in the syntactic derivation. We argue that cliticisation involves movement of the clitic and adjunction to the IP level (we assume a *bare phrase structure* model whereby clitics are characterised as both maximal and minimal projections. Crucially though we argue that in these dialects more than one copy may be spelled out. This explains the fact that the order of clitics cannot be disturbed but raises important theoretical issues regarding linearisation and spell out. We propose an analysis along the lines of Nunes (2004) observing that the duplication is only possible only with enclisis. We suggest that the complex V+CL undergoes morphological restructuring and as a result the lowest copies are exempted from deletion (non pronunciation). the paper concludes with a consideration of the consequences of this approach for linearisation.