

# Word Order Alternations in Modern Greek: Subject Positions

The paper focuses on the following issues with respect to Modern Greek (MG): i) it discusses the word order alternations (SVO, VSO and VOS, where in VOS, the subject is focused).

- (1) a. O Petros agorase to aftokinito  
       'Peter-NOM bought-3S the-car-ACC'
- b. Agorase o Petros to aftokinito
- c. Agorase to aftokinito o Petros

and ii) it examines the location of the subject. The paper will argue that in MG, a null subject language with rich Agr, lexical subjects never raise to Spec, AgrSP and all preverbal subjects are in a left dislocated position, i.e. in the specifier of a TopicP (following Kayne 1993 I assume that specifiers are adjuncts and that there is only one adjunction per maximal projection) whereas postverbal subjects remain in the VP. VOS is better analysed not as involving right adjunction of the S, but rather as involving a short distance scrambling of the Object over the Subject. In all cases an empty category *pro* occupies the Specifier position of AgrSP. *pro* is referential in the SVO order, whereas it is an expletive in the other orders. The paper will also discuss aspectual restrictions which hold for postverbal subjects. The claims here are also valid for other Null Subject languages (NSL) (cf. Barbosa 1994, Ouhalla 1994).

1. If all cases of preverbal subjects involve dislocated DPs, we should expect that they behave like Topics and not as Subjects. Topics cannot be referentially weak. In Romance and MG, we observe that:

i) only D-linked or referential elements are possible preverbal subjects or CLLD elements. An indefinite preverbal subject is interpreted as referential and the existential reading is impossible to obtain (cf. Philippaki-Warbuton 1985). Additionally, no bare NP appears in preverbal position:

- (2) a. Enas andras irthe  
       a man came
- b. \*Brohi pefti  
       rain falls
- c. \*Ligus fitites tus kalesa  
       few students them invited-1S

ii) Preverbal existential or proportional quantifiers never have narrow scope w.r.t another quantifier inside their clause:

- (3) a. kapjos jatros frontizi olus tus asthenis  
       some doctor-NOM takes care all the patients-ACC
- b. kapjon astheni ton frontizun oli i jatri  
       some patient him take-care all the-doctors-NOM

iii) wh-extraction over an overt but not covert 'subject' is blocked. This can be accounted for if the subject is in a Topic position, but not if it is in Spec, AgrSP.

- (3) a. \*Pjon o Petros ide;



- who-ACC Peter-NOM saw-3S
- b. Pjon ide;  
Who-ACC saw-3S
- c. Pjon ide o Petros;

- iv) only post verbal subjects/non-dislocated can be bound. Preverbal strong pronouns are not able to be bound variables, and this is linked to their position (cf. Solà 1992):

- (4) a. \*Oli i fitites<sub>i</sub> nomizun oti afti<sub>i</sub> tha perasun  
all the students think-3PL that they FUT-pass-3PL
- b. ?oli i fitites<sub>i</sub> nomizun oti tha perasun afti<sub>i</sub>
- c. oli i fitites<sub>i</sub> nomizun oti pro<sub>i</sub> tha perasun

vi) Copular Sentences: In NSL like Italian or MG the copula always agrees with the subject, in (b) the preverbal DP cannot be in Spec,IP (cf. Moro 1993) *pro* occupies this position,

- (5) a. [I fitites tu protu eksaminu] imastan [i aitia tis apohis]  
the students the first semester-GEN were-1PL the cause the-abstinence-GEN  
'The cause of the abstinence was the students of the first semester'
- b. [I aitia tis apohis] imastan [i fitites tu protu eksaminu]

Note that in languages where there is a distinction between expletive and referential Agr (cf. Barbosa 1994, Brandi & Cordin 1989), preverbal subjects appear with referential agreement whereas, whereas wh-constructions appear with Agr typical for inversion.

2. VOS and Scrambling: O has moved to a higher Spec position leaving the S behind. This explains the Pronominal Binding and Quantifier Scope asymmetries in (6). (6a) fails to meet the c-command requirement on the pronominal binding of the possessive and in (c) O-raising favors wide scope. S is marked [+F], thus it must find itself in the position where it is the most embedded constituent in the sentence otherwise there will be a crash at PF, thus O-movement is necessary.

- (6) a. \*se pjon parusiase i mitera tu<sub>i</sub> [to kathe agori]<sub>i</sub>;  
to whom introduced the mother-NOM his the each boy
- b. se pjon parusiase [to kathe agori]<sub>i</sub> i mitera tu<sub>i</sub>;
- c. sinodepsan kathe pedi 3 anthropi sto sholio  
accompanied each child 3 persons to school  
= each child was such that 3 persons accompanied it to school
- d. sinodepsan 3 anthropi kathe pedi sto sholio  
accompanied 3 persons each child at school

3. Referential *pro*: data from copular constructions, quantifier float and C-to-I° contexts in Romance (cf. Barbosa 1994) which show that referential *pro* has to raise overtly will be presented.

4. Finally, Aspectual Restrictions with respect to word order will be discussed: in MG but also in other NSLs (cf. Calabrese 1990, Bonet 1990) individual level predicates appear in SVO order only, or in other orders only when a CLLD element is present. These lack the event argument. They always need a 'topic'.