



snippets

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4.

Mikko Kupula – University of Stockholm *A visible trace of movement?*

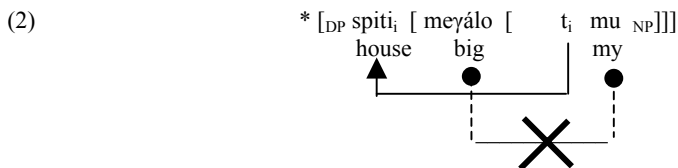
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In Modern Greek, adnominal possessors are realized either as genitive DPs, as in *to fustáni tis Mariás* ‘the dress Mary.GEN’ or as possessive pronouns, as in *to fustáni tis* ‘the dress her.CI’. The possessive pronouns are enclitic and, accordingly, usually post-nominal. However, the possessive pronouns can also surface pre-nominally when the possessum is modified by an adjective. In these cases the possessive pronoun is sandwiched in a pre-nominal position between the adjective and the noun where it takes the preceding adjective as its phonological host.

Now, given that also adjectives can occur either pre- or post-nominally in Greek, the co-occurrence of possessive clitics and adjectives potentially gives rise to the possibilities in (1). Observe the ungrammaticality of (1d). Given that this construction in fact becomes well-formed when the possessive clitic is absent (as in *éna spíti meýálo* ‘a big house’), the ungrammaticality of (1d) seems to be linked to the presence of this clitic.

- | | | | |
|--------|----------------------|---------|--|
| (1) a. | éna meýálo spíti mu | (1') a. | éna [meýálo [spíti mu _{NP}]] |
| | a big house my | | |
| b. | éna meýálo mu spíti | b. | éna [meýálo mu _i [spíti t _i NP]] |
| | a big my house | | |
| c. | éna spíti mu meýálo | c. | éna [[spíti mu _{NP}] _i meýálo t _i] |
| | a house my | | |
| d. | *éna spíti meýálo mu | d. | *éna [spíti _i meýálo [t _i mu _{NP}]] |
| | a house big my | | |

I assume for the purposes of this snippet that possessors in Greek are complements to the possessum (Horrocks and Stavrou 1987) -- or alternatively complements to a functional relator projecting a Small Clause structure between the possessor and the possessum (cf. den Dikken 1998, 2006). As the structures I give in (1') make clear, (1d) is arguably the only case where an extraction site precedes the possessive clitic. I thus propose the following hypothesis: (1d) is ungrammatical because the possessive clitic fails to be properly licensed due to N-movement (the landing site of which is possibly D). Movement of the noun *spíti* ‘house’ leaves behind a trace that blocks the enclitic *mu* ‘my’ from cliticizing to the adjective *meýálo* ‘big’ in the post-movement configuration:



If my proposal is on the right track, ill-formed constructions like (1d)/(2) should be remedied with an XP-level possessor. After all, XPs are phonologically independent and therefore do not require a phonological host. The trace produced by N-movement as in (2) should therefore not be an offending one; in fact, as illustrated in (3), this prediction is borne out:

- (3) a. éna [spíti_i [meγálo [t_i tu proθipuryú_{NP}]]]
 a house big Prime Minister.GEN
 b. *éna [spíti_i [meγálo [t_i tu_{NP}]]]
 a house big his.CL

In sum, the facts presented above are compatible with the following assumptions: (i) DP-internal N-movement occurs in Greek and, in particular, the N>A sequence can be derived by movement, contrary to some recent proposals (Alexiadou 2001, 2003); (ii) traces have phonetic content (cf. Lightfoot 1976 and Jaeggli 1980) for wanna-contraction in English).

References

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