

“P-less ‘to’ source — Preposition drop after manner-of-motion verbs,
with specific reference to Greek”

Many Greek manner-of-motion verbs (including ‘go, come, exit, return, export, jump, throw, turn, run, leave’) that take a directional PP-complement headed *σε* ‘to’, allow this P (plus the definite article of the noun phrase in its complement, which amalgamates with *σε*) to go missing, showing a regular alternation between [V P Det NP] and [V NP]. Thus, sentences like *πάω στη δουλειά* ‘go to-the work’ alternate with *πάω δουλειά* ‘go work’. P-drop under manner-of-motion verbs seems to follow certain restrictions: (i) only a subset of verbs participates in the phenomenon (notably, particle verbs do not), and (ii) P-dropped sentences follow syntactic constraints on movement (particularly on A-bar extraction). These restrictions of P-drop phenomena will be investigated in order to provide evidence for the systematic presence of a PP complement to directional manner-of-motion verbs even in the cases that its head is empty.

A priori, P-drop under manner-of-motion verbs could be approached from at least four perspectives: (1) telegraphic speech/‘headlines’, (2) ellipsis in the PF-component, (3) radical absence of PP-structure in the syntax, and (4) a null-headed PP.

The third hypothesis has the potential to represent the structures ‘go home/work/beach’ as parallel to a transitive VP, with the NP in the complement position. By doing so one would have to posit a new transitive feature for unaccusative verbs under consideration here. That would force the introduction of an external theta-role and a Case-feature for the NP-complement of an unaccusative verb (in a non-causative construction). Thus, constructions according to hypothesis (3), raise fundamental syntactic objections to the behavior of ‘go home/work/beach’-type sentences.

Greek allows *σε* ‘to’ to be pied-piped under A-bar movement but does not allow it to be stranded. Thus, *η παραλία στην οποία πήγα* ‘the beach to-the which I went’ is grammatical, but **η παραλία οποία πήγα σε* ‘the beach which I went to’ is not — nor is **η παραλία οποία πήγα* ‘the beach which I went’, with P-drop. The ungrammaticality of P-drop in A-bar movement contexts is unexpected from the point of view of hypothesis (3): NP-complements readily allow A-bar extraction. Hypothesis (4), however, which postulates a null P-head in the structure of P-drop sentences, can accommodate the ban on A-bar extraction with an appeal to the licensing restrictions on null P: on the assumption that null P can be licensed only in the complement of the lexical verb, A-bar extraction of the null-headed PP maneuvers it into a position in which the null P cannot be licensed. Since stranding the null P in the verb’s complement is ruled out in Greek, there is no grammatical way of performing A-bar movement on the verb’s complement in P-drop constructions. Hypotheses (1), (2) and (3) have nothing to say about the restrictions on A-bar extraction.

Hypotheses (1)-(3) also fail to explain why a certain set of manner-of-motion verbs; notably, particle verbs, e.g., *αναδύομαι* ‘emerge’, *καταρρέω* ‘collapse’, *εξασπλώνομαι* ‘spread’ (a few highly common exceptions aside, e.g., *ανεβαίνω* ‘ascend’, *επιστρέφω* ‘return’), do not allow the head of their directional PP-complements to go missing in conversational Greek. For hypothesis (1) (the telegraphic speech/‘headlines’ approach), this is particularly problematic: in news headlines, in contradistinction to non-telegraphic speech, particle verbs do sanction P-omission, which suggests that ‘headlines’ employs a different mechanism than does the spoken vernacular when it comes to the distribution of P-omission. Hypothesis (4) allows us to understand the ban on P-drop in the complement of particle verbs in terms of licensing of null P: assuming, as before, that null P can be licensed only in the complement of V, and assuming that

particles originate as heads between V and the directional PP (as in [V [Prt [SC NP [PP P NP]]]]) and are themselves incapable of licensing null P (cf. den Dikken 1995 for arguments to this effect), the presence of the particle interferes with the licensing of the null head of the directional PP.

A syntactic representation of P-drop constructions including a null P-head that takes the Goal NP as its complement (as in (4)) also sheds light on the fact that this Goal NP cannot be an elliptical noun phrase of the type *της Μαρίας* ‘Maria’s [PLACE]’: while *πάω στις Μαρίας* ‘go to-the Maria’s [PLACE]’ is grammatical, **πάω Μαρίας* is ill-formed. Assuming that the syntax of *της Μαρίας* ‘Maria’s [PLACE]’ involves a null-headed NP (*à la* Kayne) that needs to be licensed by a lexical head, P must be overt whenever it takes a null-headed NP as its complement.

Conclusion

This paper presents three syntactic arguments for a representation of Greek directional P-drop under manner-of-motion verbs in terms of a null-headed PP (i.e., hypothesis (4)). This hypothesis is the only one of the four logically possible approaches that accommodates all of the facts discussed. It provides common structures for both overt-P and P-dropped sentences respecting at the same time the unaccusativity of the V, taking a resultative small-clause complement with a PP predicate, and retaining the lexical representation of the verb in both possible utterances ‘go to home/work/beach’ and ‘go home/work/beach’. Having established hypothesis (4) on the basis of the arguments outlined above, the paper will go on to address the restrictions on the null P’s noun (phrase) complement in Greek P-drop constructions (in particular, the fact that it is “bare”, article-less, non-specific, and unable to serve as an anchor for anaphora). Finally it will broaden the scope of the discussion by extending it to English P-drop constructions of the type *go home*, *go places*, (along with the interrogative construction *where did you go (to)?*) and *jump (over) the fence*, for which a syntactic analysis in terms of a null-headed PP will be motivated as well.