

Object clitics in the Modern Greek dialects of Asia Minor: diachronic and dialectal variation in the encoding of argument structure

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1. Introduction

The pronominal object clitics of Greek, Ancient and Modern, have long been of interest to syntacticians and historians of the language.⁷¹ Janse (2008) provides a useful collection of data but the theoretical dichotomy which he reports (Janse 2008:166; for discussion of his view of clitics as ‘a category *sui generis*’ see Janse 1998a, 1998b) has in fact been superseded. It is no longer necessary to choose between the two positions exemplified for him on the one hand by Irene Philippaki-Warburton (1977, 1987; Philippaki-Warburton and Spyropoulos 1999; Philippaki-Warburton et al 2004) and on the other by Brian Joseph (2001, 2002a, 2002b, 2002c) with regard to Modern Greek, namely, that a) clitics are words and themselves arguments of the verb, with their associated NPs categorized as adjuncts (the Philippaki-Warburton position), or that b) clitics are affixes and consequently mere agreement markers, with the argument category filled by the associated NP (Joseph’s position). Kenneth Hale (2003) and Marianne Mithun (2003), independently, have shown, with data from Navajo and Yup’ik, that pronominal *affixes* can themselves function as core arguments of the verb. Janse (2008:166) observes that ‘the status of clitic pronouns is not the same for all the dialects and stages of the Greek language’. It is indeed an observational fact that in the history of Greek the placement and the obligatoriness of object clitics has varied but whether the actual function of clitic pronouns has changed is still a matter for investigation. It is here suggested that the diachronic and dialectal variations in clitic placement and obligatoriness from Ancient to Modern Greek have no bearing on the *status* of clitic pronouns, that is, the function of object clitics in the argument structure of the language. The investigation will start with subject reference in the Indo-European verbal morphology.

2. Subject reference

Notwithstanding its well-known genetic anomalies, Anatolian of the second millennium BC shows the typical Indo-European distribution of double marking for subjects of a clause, both on the verb and optionally on independent nominal or pronominal items, e.g.:

- (1)
a. *ta=âmaâ œurtiya[l]lan par]Ω Ēpmi DUMU.É.GAL âuppi wΩtar parΩ epzi [LUGAL]-i*
SAL.LUGAL=ya StBoT 8, I 13-15
‘I hold out to them a dish, a **palace attendant** holds out pure water, to the king and queen.’

⁷¹ Recent studies include Alexiadou & Anagnostopoulou 2000, Anagnostopoulou 1999, Condoravdi & Kiparsky 2001, Janse 1994, 1998a, 1998b, 2008, Joseph 1988, Kallulli 2000, Pappas 2004, Philippaki-Warburton 1977, Philippaki-Warburton & Spyropoulos 1999, Philippaki-Warburton et al. 2004, Revithiadou & Spyropoulos 2008, Taylor 1996, cf. Holton, Mackridge & Philippaki-Warburton 1997, Siewierska 1999, Zwicky 1977; on Asia Minor Greek see Janse 1994, 1998a, 1998b, 2002, 2004, 2008; and see further references in the following text.

b. „**k=wa** LUGAL-*uâ=âmiâ kiâæa*
'I will become your king'

c. **zik=wa** UR.BAR.RA-*aâ kiâtat*
'you have become a wolf.'

Hittite is by far the most copiously attested of the Anatolian languages (and consequently the best understood) and like other early Indo-European languages (and some modern ones such as Spanish), Hittite has been classified within the framework of mainstream generative syntactic theory as a null subject language, with the person markers on the verb interpreted as agreement morphology co-referencing an independent subject which functions as the argument of the verb and which may be overt (a lexical nominal or an independent pronoun) or, optionally, null. In other frameworks, outside the mainstream of current syntactic theory, verbal subject markers of the Indo-European type are interpreted as incorporated pronouns (originating in independent pronouns first postcliticized to the verb and eventually fully incorporated) and functioning as core arguments of the verb. (IE verbal markers originate in pronominal forms: Szemerényi 1996, Bomhard 1988, Sihler 1995; for pronominal affixes as arguments see Hale 2003 and Mithun 2003 – which implicitly answers the objections of Bresnan & Mchombo 1987 to Jelinek 1984; cf. Evans 1999; for Hittite see Hoffner and Melchert 2008.)

Since the Indo-European verb marks only subject reference, direct objects in Hittite (and across Indo-European), appearing optionally as lexical nominals or as full or clitic pronouns (pragmatically conditioned), the latter view would categorize Hittite (and Indo-European generally) as a ‘mixed’ type of language in the sense of Jelinek (1987).

English in mainstream syntactic theory is considered to have an obligatorily overt subject with finite verbs (with the exception of the imperative), although colloquial English abounds with ‘subject-less’ clauses, e.g.: ‘Beats me’, ‘Don’t know’, ‘Told you so’, ‘Been there, done that’, ‘Ran’, ‘Finished?’, ‘Cheats’. The circumstance in which a language such as English that admits verbs without an overt subject is considered to be *obligatorily* marked with an overt subject while at the same time a language such as Hittite that *never* admits finite verbs that are *not* overtly marked for subject is considered to be a null subject language might, one would think, prompt theorists of this persuasion to reconsider their theoretical categories with regard to subject marking. And object marking as well, which we will return to, but first some data from Greek.

Ancient Greek – from the Core Indo-European group (excluding Anatolian and Tocharian) – Ancient Greek of all periods, from Mycenaean to the Koine, admits structures which have (or appear to have) a lexical nominal or an independent pronoun in the subject position, in addition to the person marking in the verbal morphology. Here is an example with an embarrassment of riches in the ‘subject’ category; we will see it again later:

(2)
 αὐτὰρ ὁ βοὸν ἱέρευσευ ἄναξ ἀνδρῶν Ἀγαμέμνων II. 2.402
 but he ox he-sacrificed lord of men Agamemnon.

But Greek of all periods also permits a finite verb standing alone as a clause, with no overt, independent ‘subject’ designated by a nominal or pronominal separate from the verb, e.g., *eijmiv, fhsiv*; cf. Latin *venio, cogito*. Hittite likewise, e.g.: *Ēâmi* ‘I am’, *aršanieš* ‘you were envious’, *memiškeš* ‘you were saying’ *šipanti* ‘he libates, offers’, *waâtai* ‘he sins’, *adanzi* ‘they eat’.

As the great French Indo-Europeanist Antoine Meillet observed well over a century ago, the syntactic system of the archaic Indo-European languages is based on the principle that he articulated as “the autonomy of the word” — a function of semantics and of the inflectional morphology:

La phrase indo-européenne se composait de mots autonomes, dont chacun suffisait à exprimer un sens complet et la fonction remplie. ... Outre le sens exprimé par le thème, la flexion marque le rôle joué par chaque mot dans la phrase; le mot est donc autonome et suffit par lui-même à indiquer son sens et son rôle dans le discours (Meillet 1903 [1937]:439, 356)

Apart from the verbal morphology, Core Indo-European had only nominals or full pronominals as independent 'subjects' (that is, 'subjects' on a traditional analysis – and on a mainstream analysis today); it had no pronominal subject clitics. Here Anatolian has innovated in the creation of a third-person definite referential clitic pronoun, marked for gender, common and neuter, but restricted to a particular class of (predominantly stative) intransitive verbs, the so-called 'unaccusatives' (Garrett 1990a, 1990b, 1996). This clitic pronoun is in complementary distribution with both the full (emphatic) demonstrative pronoun used for third-person reference

and lexical 'subjects'; and while 'clitic doubling' has been claimed for Anatolian, e.g. Luwian (Melchert 2003:201):

(3) *tŌñ-ti(y)-ata malli aiyaru tapŌruwa hŕr,ta tatarriyamna*
'Let them, the *t*, oaths and curses, become oil (and) honey' (KUB 9.6+ ii 12-13),

support is growing for the view that 'right-dislocation' and 'clitic doubling' are not in fact to be seen in such structures (Melchert 2010:2, with reference to Bauer forthcoming): 'right dislocated NP appears to be mere apposition to anaphoric pronoun. Thus no true "right dislocation" separate from extraposition, merely extraposition of epexegetic NP that is apposition to pronoun, *which is the real argument*.'

On the basis of the evidence we have, it would seem preferable – indeed inescapable – to classify Indo-European with respect to the 'subject' (or primary argument – and not separating out here 'agent' from 'subject') as (in generative terms) 'head-marking' as opposed to 'dependent-marking' (terms I prefer to avoid since they entail the full theoretical model, but will use for the moment), with optional lexical or pronominal adjuncts (or co-referents) to the subject reference that is fully marked in the verbal morphology. Indo-European would then be classed (by those who accept this type) as a pronominal argument language, at least insofar as the 'subject' is concerned.

3. Direct object reference

Given that IE marks subject reference on every finite verb, what then of the direct object? Of course many languages that mark subject reference on the verb or in an obligatory (second-position) clitic string mark object reference as well (often indirect as well as direct), e.g.:

(4) Mohawk:
leksa:'a raksa:'a wahonwa:ienhte'
girl boy she-hit-him
'The girl hit the boy.'

leksa:'a raksa:'a wahshako:ienhte'
girl boy he-hit-her
'The boy hit the girl.'

(5) Classical Arabic (Lambrecht 2001):
[Halidun], qabaltuhu l-yawma
Halid.NOM met.1SG.3SG.ACC the-day.ACC
'Halid, I met him TODAY.'

(6) Navajo (Hale 2003: see discussion below):

ni-sh-hozh.
2SG-1SG-tickle
'I tickle you.'

It is worth quoting at length from Kenneth Hale's article 'On the significance of Eloise Jelinek's Pronominal Argument Hypothesis' (Hale 2003:12-13;cf. Jelinek 1984, 1987, 2006):

In a language belonging to the PA type, the person-number morphology internal to a verb word represents the direct arguments of the verb. These elements are not agreement morphology. Instead they *are* the arguments, pure and simple. In the Navajo verb word (or rather, somewhat more accurately, "verb sentence") cited in (1) below, the prefixes *ni-* and *sh-* are, respectively the object and subject of the clause:

(1) *ni-sh-hozh.*
2SG-1sg-tickle
"I tickle you."

There are no "small pro" elements in this sentence, and if an independent pronoun appeared, as in (2), it would not be an argument but rather it would be a contrastive adjunct:

(2) *Ni ni-sh-hozh.*
"I tickle YOU."

The independent pronoun *ni* 'you' is, to be sure, *linked* to the verb-internal object *ni-*, but it is not an argument of the verb, any more than the first *you* is an argument of *tickle* in the English *as for* construction in (3):

(3) As for you, I'm tickling you.

In short, the Navajo independent pronoun *ni* 'you' in (2) is not related to the prefix *ni-* in the way an argument is related to agreement morphology. It is the prefix, not the independent pronoun, that represents — alone and fully — the object argument of the verb. The same can be said of a nominal expression, like 'awéé' 'baby' in (4):

(4) 'Awéé' bi-'nii-sh-hóósh.
baby 3INCH-1SG-tickle
"I start to tickle the baby."

This is an inchoative verb form, with the direct object of the verb appearing as *bi-* directly before the inchoative morphology *-'nii-* (glossed INCH)-. Here again, the true arguments are represented by the verb-internal person-number morphology, i.e., the third person object pronoun *bi-* and the first person singular subject pronoun *sh-*. The nominal 'awéé' 'baby' is an adjunct, not an argument of the verb. Its structural relation to the sentence can be compared to that of the English left-dislocated nominal *the baby* in (5), where the true object argument is the resumptive pronoun *him*:

(5) The baby, I will start to tickle him/her.

The idea, then, is that Navajo is a language in which all of the arguments of a verb are pronouns and, further, the pronouns in question are morphologically dependent (i.e., they are affixes, inflection). The verb word is in reality a complete sentence — a "verb sentence" (VS), although the more conventional (albeit less accurate) expression "verb word" will be occasionally used throughout this discussion.'

Hale's analysis is echoed by Mithuen (2003):

In Navajo as in Yup'ik, obligatory pronominal affixes on every verb identify the core arguments of the clause. (258)

...in languages with pronominal affixes, each verb constitutes a complete minimal clause in itself, the skeleton or nucleus of the clause. (274)

Agreement is of course not the primary function of pronominal affixes; their role is to evoke referents. (276)

Compare Abkhaz on the one hand and French on the other:

(7) Lambrecht 2001:(49)

Abkhaz

[a-xàc'a]_i [a-ph^oðs]_j

ART-man ART-woman

[a-s^oq^o'ð]_k ø_k-lð_j-y_i-te-yt'

ART-book it-to.her-he-gave-TNS

'The man gave the book to the woman.'

(Lambrecht 2001:1061)

Lambrecht notes that 'it is revealing to compare (49) with its (slightly modified) spoken French equivalent in (49)'; to emphasize the formal similarity with (49), the morphologically bound status of the pronouns in the French verb complex is indicated by hyphens:

(8) Lambrecht 2001:(49')

[L'homme]_i [cette femme-là]_j

the man that woman-there

[mon livre]_k il_i-le_klui_j-a-donné

my book he-it-to.her-has-given

'The man he GAVE my book to that woman.'

Though perhaps pragmatically unusual, (49') is nevertheless a grammatically well-formed spoken French sentence. The striking structural similarity between (49) and (49') confirms the observation, made early on by Vendryès (1914), that modern spoken French is typologically close to certain polysynthetic languages (Vendryès compares French to the Amerindian language Chinook) (Lambrecht 2001: 1061).

Of course in Navajo and Yup'ik, as in Abkhaz (and evidently in French), the object is morphologically marked on the verb, whereas early Indo-European uses for direct object reference (whether core or adjunct is the issue here) lexical nominals and independent pronouns, which may be separated from the verb, as well as clitic pronouns and null instantiation of pronominals.

Ancient Greek has optional instantiation of object reference in a clitic pronoun, on occasion combined with extraposed lexical reference in adjunct position, e.g.:

(9)

δὴ γὰρ μιν ἔφαντ' ἐπιδήμιον εἶναι,

indeed for him they-said among-people to-be,

so;n patevr j

your father

'For indeed they said that he was among his people, /

your father'

Homer *Odyssey* 1.194-195

This is a structure seen already in Mycenaean Greek in the second millennium BC:

(10)

PY Ep 704.5

δα-μο-δε-μι πα-σι • ο-να-το ε-κε-ε

δ³μοσ δε μιν π¹σι • ον²τον εκ¹εηεν

'but the δ³μοσ says that she holds the lease'

(cf. Ruijgh 1967:30, Ventris & Chadwick 1973: 254, Janse 2008:173 mistakes the syntactic structure: the infinitive *ek^hehen* depends on the object clitic pronoun *min*, not the other way around.)

The Mycenaean clitic is in Wackernagel's position, forming a 'word' with *dōmos* and *de*.

The second-millennium Anatolian languages have lengthy sentence-initial 'chains' of enclitic particles and anaphoric pronouns, with up to six places in Hittite:

- 1) connectives (e.g. adversative =*ma*, adds new information)
- 2) quotative particle (=wa(*r*))
- 3) 3rd person object (of transitive, e.g. =*an*) or subject (of 'unaccusative' intransitive)
- 4) 3rd person dative, 1st/2nd person (e.g. =*āi*)
- 5) reflexive particle (=za)
- 6) local (/aspectual) particles (e.g. =*kan*)

The Luwian clitic chain shows a slight variation from the Hittite but is equally fixed:

- 1) conjunction -*ha* or -*pa*
- 2) quotative particle -*wa*-,
- 3) dative or reflexive pronoun
- 4) nominative or accusative pronoun
- 5) local particle

The Greek clitic pronoun *min* has anaphoric reference and is sometimes associated with a lexical NP in adjunct position either to its left or to its right. In one case it is used with *αὐτόν*~ with reflexive force:

(11)

Od. 4.244

αὐτόν μιν πληγῆσιν ἀεικελίησι δαμάσσᾱ

Helen of Odysseus: 'disfiguring himself with grievous blows'

(12)

Anaphoric reference:

a. *Od.* 10.210-12

εὔρον δ' ἐν βήσσησι τετυγμένα δώματα Κίρκῃ

ξεστοῖσιν λάεσσι, περισκέπτω ἐνὶ χώρῳ·

ἀμφὶ δέ μιν λύκοι ἦσαν ὀρέστεροι ἢ δὲ λέοντέ

'They found in the glades the built halls of Circe,

with polished stones, in an open clearing;

and around it there were mountain wolves and lions.'

(anaphoric reference to the neuter plural *dōmata* 'halls' in the previous clause)

b. *Od.* 1.194-5

νῦν δ' ἦλθον· δὴ γάρ μιν ἔφαντ' ἐπιδήμιον εἶαι,

σὸν πατέρ'

Athena in disguise as Mentès to Telemachus, who has asked about Mentès' relation to his father, Odysseus; Athena/Mentès replies with a statement of his identity and his relationship to Odysseus and continues: 'And now I have come, for they said that he was among his people, your father.'

(13)

Il. 1.100

τότε κέν μιν ἰλασσάμενοι πεπίθοιμεν.

Calchas to the Achaeans regarding Apollo's anger: the cause is Agamenmon's dishonouring the priest Chryses and refusing to accept the ransom for his daughter; the god will not relent until we return the girl freely and sacrifice a hecatomb to him at Chryse: 'then, appeasing him, perhaps we might persuade him.'

(anaphoric reference of the clitic pronoun, referring to *e]khbovlo~* in line 96 (and all the subsequent anaphoric references encoded in the ensuing verbal morphology))

In addition to independent and clitic pronouns, Greek also allows null instantiation of object pronouns, as do many languages both within and outside the Indo-European family; for Navajo see Mithun (2003:258). The following examples illustrate the situation in Homeric and Classical Greek, in poetry and prose:

(14)

a. Φοίνικε δ' ἄγον ἄνδρῃ.

'Phoenician men brought [it]. '

Homer *Iliad* 23.744

b. οὐκ ἐκεῖνδ' ἄλλ' ἐκείνη κείνον ἐνθάδ' ἤγαγεν.

'He did not bring [her] here, but she brought him.'

Euripides *Orestes*

742

c. ὁ δὲ ἐμπιμπλᾷ ἀπάντων τὴν γνώμην ἀπέπεμπε.

'Having satisfied the minds of all he dismissed [them].'

Xenophon *Anabasis* 1.7.8

d. ἀράττω.

'I assail [him].'

Aristophanes *Clouds* 1373

In languages outside the Indo-European family, Turkish, among others, shows null instantiation of object pronouns, e.g.:

(15)

a. *Adam tas^ -i oglan-a at-ti*

man stone-ACC boy-DAT throw-PAST

'The man threw the STONE at the BOY.'

b. *Adam ~oglan-a at-ti [tas^-i]i*

man boy-DAT throw-PAST stone-ACC

'The man threw it at the BOY, THE STONE.'

c. *Adam tas^-i ~at-ti [oglan-a]i*

man stone-ACC throw-PAST boy-DAT

'The man threw the STONE at the BOY.'

('The man threw the STONE at him, the BOY.)

(Lambrecht 2001:1056).

A question arises at this point: when a language permits null instantiation of objects, the semantics of the verb nevertheless make it clear that an object is to be understood and typically the discourse context makes it more or less clear what that object is – ideally, inescapably clear, but in every instance at least reasonably clear. If an object is to be understood from the semantics of the verb (one doesn't just *hit*, one hits *something*), and if, moreover, what that object is is on the whole clear from the discourse context, then we must consider whether the null phonological representation is to be understood as the default or core structure. If so, the overt expression of the object, whether (in ascending order of emphasis and specification) by a clitic pronominal, a full independent pronoun, or a lexical nominal, would in every case constitute an adjunct to the null pronominal

reference. The object, being inherent in the verb, would be viewed as marked on the verb, in a null phonological representation. On such a model Indo-European would be classed as a full pronominal argument language.

We are then brought back to our earlier example, from Homeric Greek:

(16) αυjta;r oj bou`n ijevreusen a[nax ajndrw`n jAgamevmnwn Il.
2.402

where the nuclear clause is now seen to be ijevreusen ‘he-sacrificed-it’, with all lexical items, and the pronoun oj as well, in adjunct position.

4. Asia Minor Greek

And we arrive at last at the Greek of Asia Minor. R.M. Dawkins, who recorded the dialects *in situ* before the ‘exchange of populations’ in the 1920s, gives us our most reliable view of the Asia Minor dialects before their natural development was disrupted and their speakers dispersed (Dawkins 1916, 1931, 1937, 1940; for Pontic cf. Drettas 1997). He is particularly eloquent on the trajectory to be seen in the position of pronominal objects across the Greek dialects:

The fact seems to be that the position of the pronominal object forms a chain right across the Greek world. In Italy and on the mainland the object always precedes; in Crete and all the islands as far as Cyprus it may follow, but only in positive main clauses; in Cappadocia it must follow the verb in positive, but never in negative or dependent clauses; at Pharasa in the Taurus the object follows even in negative sentences, and lastly and finally in Pontos it always follows even in dependent clauses and one finds for example that *I want to say it* appears as qevlw na; levgw to, a word order absolutely unheard of and impossible anywhere else in the whole Greek world’ (Dawkins 1940:22-23).

(17) Pontic Greek

a. *egó séna dilévo=se*

I you I-feed=you

‘I will feed you’

(Dawkins 1916:314; cf. Janse 1998:538)

The ‘quasi-Pontic dialect’ of Pharasa (Dawkins 1940:5)

b. *to=mávro dekanínken=da to=pózi*

the=grey he-bit=it the=black

‘the grey one was biting the black one’

(Dawkins 1916:558; cf. Janse 1998:540)

Pontic had by this point developed obligatory object markers on the verb to parallel the subject markers Greek inherited millennia earlier from Indo-European. This is a structure that was optional at all periods of Greek (with variation in placement) and is widely used in Standard Modern Greek but it was evidently made obligatory in all contexts only in Pontic and the closely related dialects of Asia Minor Greek.

Devine and Stephens (2000:158) note that above all the schema Alcmánicum attests to the status of early Greek as a pronominal argument language, e.g.:

(18) ἦχι ροᾶ Σιμόεϊ συμβάλλετον ἠδὲ Σκάμανδρῶ Il. 5.774
where their streams Simoeis they-two-merge and Skamandros
‘where the Simoeis and the Scamander merge their streams’.

Greek developed configurational syntactic structures already in the ancient period. But in its argument structure it has evidently retained its early typology. And the modern Greek dialects of eastern Asia Minor, Pontic above all, simply made overt the argument structure inherent in the language from its earliest attestation.

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