

Does Greek have VVPE?

Yes, but it's easy to overlook

Jason Merchant, University of Chicago

5 May 2016

1 Distinguishing among the missing

- Greek has verb-stranding predicate ellipsis (known in the literature as 'verb-stranding verb phrase ellipsis' (VVPE), but it can be tough to see, because...
- Greek also has argument drop (null indefinite arguments, *pro*-drop)

2 Predicate ellipses

- (1) a. O Petros ine ikanos, ala o Alexandros dhen ine Δ.
the Petros is capable.m.sg but the Alexander not is
 'Petros is capable, but Alexander isn't.'
- b. O Petros ine kalos adherfos, ala o Kostas dhen ine Δ.
the Petros is good.masc brother.masc but the Kostas not is
 'Petros is a good brother, but Kostas isn't (a good brother).'
- c. I Maria ine sto dhomatio, ala i Anna dhen ine Δ.
the Maria is in.the room but the Anna not is
 'Maria is in the room, but Anna isn't.'
- (2) a. *I Maria exi teliosi tin ergasia tis, ke i Anna exi Δ, episis.
the Maria has finished the homework her and the Anna has too
 ('Maria has finished her homework, and Anna has, too.')
- b. *O Petros ine ikanos, ala o Alexandros dhen Δ.
the Petros is capable.m.sg but the Alexander not
 ('Petros is capable, but Alexander isn't.')
- (3) I Anna pire tis fetes jati boruse/ eprepe/ ithele/ xriazotane ...
the Anna took the slices because she.could/ it.was.necessary/ she.wanted/ it.was.needed
- a. na tis pari.
 SUBJ *them take.3s*
- b. *na.
- c. Δ.
 'Anna took the slices because she could/she had to/she needed to.'

(Other kinds of ellipses: nominal-internal, stripping, gapping, sluicing, null complement anaphora.)

3 VVPE

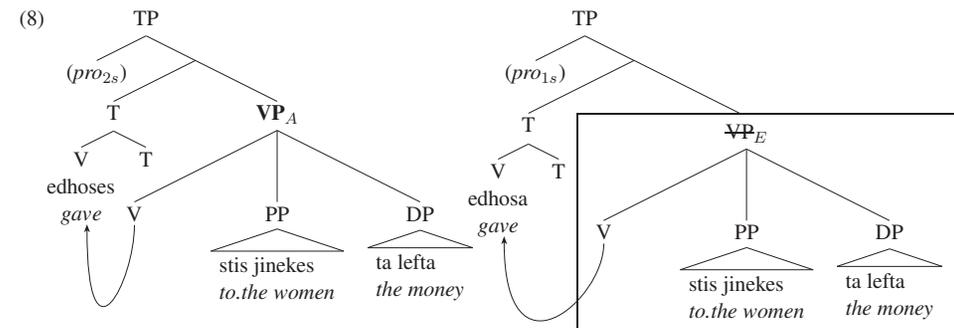
At issue: Does the response in (4) involve argument drop (as Giannakidou and Merchant 1997 claimed) or VVPE (McCloskey 1991, Bennett et al. 2015, Gribanova 2013; cf. Holmberg 2016)?

- (4) Q: Irthan deka/kapji/meriki fitites?
came.3pl then/some/several students
 'Did ten/some/several students come?'
- A: Ne, irthan.
yes came.pl
 'Yes, {ten/some/several} students came.' or 'Yes, they came.'

- (5) A: Edhoses stis jinekes ta lefta?
gave.2s to.the women.FEM.PL the money.NEUT.PL
 'Did you give the women the money?'

- (6) a. Ne, edhosa.
yes gave.I
 'Yes, I did.'
- b. Ne, tus ta edhosa.
yes them.FEM.PL them.NEUT.PL gave.I
 'Yes, I gave it to them.'
- c. Ne, edhosa stis jinekes ta lefta.
yes gave.I to.the women the money
 'Yes, I gave the women the money.'

- (7) a. Oxi, dhen edhosa.
no, not gave.I
 'No, I didn't.'
- b. Oxi, tus ta estila (me ton jo mu).
no them.FEM.PL them.NEUT.PL sent.I with the son my
 'No, I sent it to them (with my son).'
- c. Oxi, tus ta afisa (pano sti dulapa).
no them.FEM.PL them.NEUT.PL left.I on.top to.the dresser
 'No, I left it for them (on top of the dresser).'
- d. *Oxi, estila.
no sent.Is
 ('No, I sent it to them.')
- e. *Oxi, afisa.
no left.Is
 ('No, I left it for them.')



4 Argument drop

- (9) A: Agorases zaxari?

bought.2s sugar 'Did you buy sugar?'

B: Oxi, dhen ixē. Dhen boresa na paro.
no not had.3s not could.1sg to get.1sg

'No, there wasn't (any). I couldn't get (any).'

- (10) A: Pare ke ta afta!

take also the those 'Take those, too!'

B: Idhi perno!

already take.1s 'I'm already taking something! (My hands are full.)'

Giannakidou and Merchant 1997, Philippaki-Warburton 1990
Subjects? Objects of prepositions?

- (11) Ta pedhia piran apo ena vivlio, epidhi i gonis plirosan apo *(ena).
the children got from one book because the parents paid.for from one
'The children each got a book because the parents each paid for (one).'

5 Making sure it's not just argument drop

5.1 Nonveridical, disjunctive, generic, or idiom chunk arguments

- (12) Dhen vrikes kanena meros ja na parkaris to amaksi?
not found.you any spot for SUBJ park.2s the car
'Didn't you find any spot to park the car?'

- (13) a. Ne, vrika.
yes found.I
'Yes, I did (find a spot to park the car).'

b. Oxi, dhen vrika.
no not found.I
'No, I didn't (find any spot to park the car).'

- (14) a. #Ne, to vrika.
yes it found.I
'Yes, I found it.'

b. #Oxi, dhen to vrika.
no not found.I
'No, I didn't find it.'

- (15) a. Paratirises i kena i lathi sto xirografo?
observed.2s either gaps or errors in.the manuscript
'Did you observe either lacunae or errors in the manuscript?'

b. Oxi, dhen (#ta) paratirisa.
no not them observed.1s
'No, I did not.'

- (16) a. Foras kaskol?
wear.2s scarf
'Are you wearing a scarf?' or 'Do you wear scarves?'

b. Ne, forao.
yes wear.1s
'Yes, I am.' or 'Yes, I do.'

- (17) To pedhi tha fai ksilo, ke o Kostas episis tha fai ki aftos!
the kid FUT eats wood and the Kostas also FUT eats and he
'The kid will get hit, and Kostas will, too!'

- (18) To pedhi tha fai ksilo, ala o Kostas dhen tha fai.
the kid FUT eats wood but the Kostas not FUT eats
'The kid will get hit, but Kostas won't.'

Low participial movement:

- (19) To agori exi fai ksilo; to koritsi dhen exi fai.
the boy has eaten wood the girl not has eaten
'The boy got smacked; the girl didn't.'

- (20) a. Tin exo grameni sta palia mu ta paputsia.
her I.have written on.the old my the shoes
'I won't have anything to do with her.'

b. Ki ego tin exo!
and I her have
'I won't either!'

- (21) a. Dhen idhroni to afti tis Marias.
not sweats the ear of Maria
'Maria isn't interested in my advice.'

b. Ute tis Elenis idhroni.
neither of Eleni sweats
'Eleni isn't either.'

- (22) a. O Petros efige ke erikse mavri petra piso tu.
the Petros left and threw black stone behind him
'Petros left and will never return.'

b. Ke i Maria erikse.
and the Maria threw
'And Maria also will never go back.'

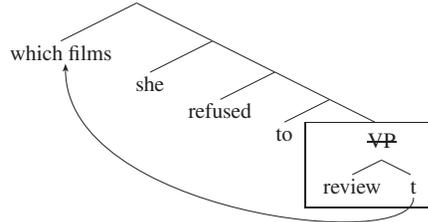
- (23) I Elines politiki tazun lagus me petraxilia, ala i Amerikani politiki pote
the Greek politicians vow rabbits with priests' habits but the American politicians never
dhen tazun.
not vow
'Greek politicians promise the moon, but American politicians never do.'

5.2 Extraction

(24) VP-ellipsis:

- a. We need to know which films Anna refused to review, and which ones she agreed to.
 b. We need to know which films Anna agreed to review, and which ones she refused to.

(25)



(26) Null Complement Anaphora:

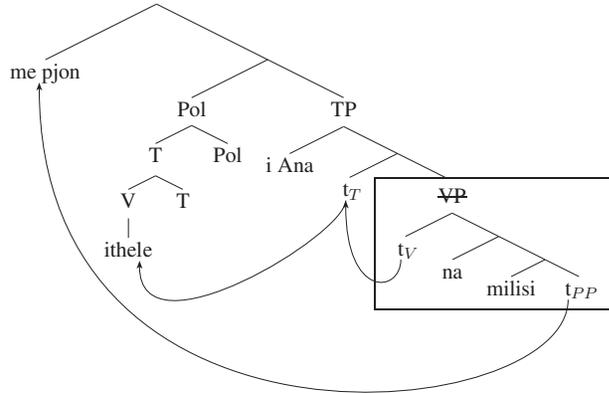
We asked Anna to review these five films, and she agreed. (*sc.* to review them)

(27) *We need to know which films Anna refused to review, and which ones she agreed.

Conclusion: There is active syntactic structure (licensing extraction, agreement, and other syntactically mediated dependencies) inside ellipsis sites. There is no evidence for such structure inside the understood argument in Null Complement Anaphora.

(28) Me pjon ithele i Maria na milisi, ke me pjon ithele i Ana? <na milisi t>
with whom wanted the Maria SUBJ speaks and with whom wanted the Ana SUBJ speaks
 ‘With whom did Maria want to speak, and with whom did Anna?’ <want to speak>

(29)



(30) Ja pjes tenies simfonise i Ana na grapsi kritiki, ke ja pjes simfonise i Maria?
for which films agreed the Ana SUBJ writes review and for which agreed the Maria
 ‘Of which films did Anna agree to write a review, and of which ones did Maria?’ <agree to write a review>

(31) Aftes ine i tenies stis opies simfonise i Ana na kani kritiki ke aftes ine i
These are the films to.the which agreed the Anna SUBJ make review and those are the
tenies stis opies simfonise i Maria (na kani).
films to.the which agreed the Maria to make

‘These are the films of which Anna agreed to write reviews, and those are the films of which Maria did.’ <agreed to write reviews>

(32) Ton Pavlo, simfonise i Ana na antikathistisi. Ton Petro, simfonise i Maria.
the Pavlos.ACC agreed the Ana SUBJ replaces.3s the Petros.ACC agreed the Maria.
 ‘Pavlos, Anna agreed to replace; Petros, Maria agreed to.’

(33) Apo ta pafsipona diegnose o jatros eksartisi; apo tin iroini de diegnose ...
from the painkillers diagnosed the doctor addiction from the heroin not diagnosed
 ‘To painkillers, the doctor diagnosed an addiction; to heroin, he didn’t’

- a. Δ.
 b. katholu ekartisi.
at.all addiction
 ‘any addiction.’
 c. *kamia
no(ne)
 d. *katholu
at.all

6 A morphological puzzle reanalyzed as a syn/sem one

Potsdam 1997 (building on Warner 1985 and Lasnik 1995; cf. Harwood 2015)

- (34) a. Emily **played** beautifully at the recital and her sister will, too. <**play** beautifully at the recital>
 b. Emily **took** a break from her studies, and her sister will, too. <**take** a break from her studies>
 c. Emily **sang** the song the way she wanted to. <**sing** the song>
 d. Emily **went** to the library because she wanted to. <**go** to the library>

Under ellipsis, *be*, for example, shows a different, more restrictive, pattern:

- (35) a. Maria will **be** at the party, and her sister will, too. <**be** at the party>
 b. *Maria **was** at the party and her sister will, too. <**be** at the party>
 c. Maria **was** at the party, and her sister will **be**, too. <at the party>
 d. Maria **was** at the party, and her sister **was**, too. <at the party>

Beware the fetishization of attestation:

- (36) *Your mother wasn’t there for your *quincañera*, the way she said she would. (Paolo Bacigalupi, *The Water Knife*, 2015, Vintage Books: NY, p. 42.)
 (37) *I’m America, and so can you! (Stephen Colbert, 2007, Grand Central Publishing)
 (38) “I’m not there right now,” Mr. Ryan said. *‘‘And I hope to, though, and I want to.’’ Jennifer Steinhauer and Alexander Burnsmay, ‘‘Paul Ryan Says He Is ‘Not Ready’ to Endorse Donald Trump’’, New York Times, May 5, 2016
 (39) Forms of auxiliary verbs in English must be identical under ellipsis to their antecedents if those antecedents are finite.

Merchant 2015: Code-switching ellipsis with Greek antecedent:

- (40) a. I Maria tha agapai to spiti, and her sister will, too.
the Maria FUT love.IMPERF.NONPAST.3s the house
 ‘Maria will love the house...’
 b. I Maria agapai to spiti, and her sister will, too.
the Maria love.IMPERF.NONPAST.3s the house
 ‘Maria loves the house...’
 c. I Maria agapuse to spiti, and her sister will, too.
the Maria love.IMPERF.PAST.3s the house
 ‘Maria loved the house...’

Behold the mind-blower: ‘morphological’ identity effects are found in code-switching ellipsis contexts as well:

- (41) a. I Maria tha ine sto parti, and her sister will (be), too.
the Maria FUT be.NONPAST.3s at.the party
 ‘Maria will be at the party...’
 b. I Maria ine sto parti, and her sister will *(be), too.
the Maria be.NONPAST.3s at.the party
 ‘Maria is at the party...’
 c. I Maria itan sto parti, and her sister will *(be), too.
the Maria be.PAST.3s at.the party
 ‘Maria was at the party...’
 (42) a. She studies Greek, which/as she wanted to.
 b. She visited Rhodes, which/as she wanted to.
 c. She is at the party, which/as she wanted to *(be).
 d. She was at the party, which/as she wanted to *(be).
 e. She will be at the party, which/as she wanted to (be).

6.1 A semantic solution

Dahl’s Puzzle: Parallelism constraints on binding relations (Fiengo and May 1994, Merchant 2001, Takahashi and Fox 2006). Slogan: From the bottom-up, once you go sloppy, you stay sloppy.

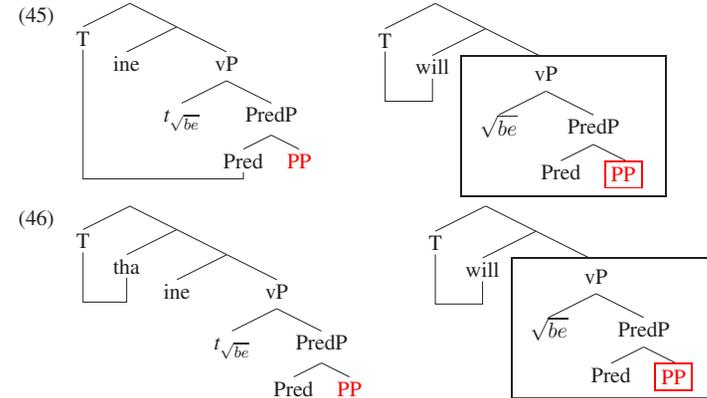
- (43) John said he loved his mom, and Bill did, too.
 a. ... and Bill said Bill loved Bill’s mom.
 b. ... and Bill said Bill loved John’s mom.
 c. ... and Bill said John loved John’s mom.
 d. ... *and Bill said John loved Bill’s mom.

Two ingredients to the solution:

1. Verbal vs. nonverbal predication (\sqrt{be} is not a real tense bindee: the head of the nonverbal predicate is)

2. Head movement changes the position of the bindee: it makes the binding relation more local (feeds higher binding)

- (44) a. T λt agapai(t) [_{vP} t \sqrt{love} to spiti]
 b. T λt will(t) [_{vP} \sqrt{love} to spiti]



References

- Bennett, Ryan, Emily Elfner, and James McCloskey. 2015. Prosody, focus, and ellipsis in Irish. Ms., Yale, University of British Columbia, and University of California, Santa Cruz.
 Fiengo, Robert, and Robert May. 1994. *Indices and identity*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press.
 Giannakidou, Anastasia, and Jason Merchant. 1997. On the interpretation of null indefinite objects in Greek. *Studies in Greek Linguistics* 18:141–154.
 Gribanova, Vera. 2013. Verb-stranding verb phrase ellipsis and the structure of the Russian verbal complex. *Natural Language and Linguistic Theory* 31:91–136.
 Harwood, Will. 2015. Being progressive is just a phase: celebrating the uniqueness of progressive aspect under a phase-based analysis. *Natural Language and Linguistic Theory* 33:523–573.
 Holmberg, Anders. 2016. *The syntax of yes and no*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
 Lasnik, Howard. 1995. Verbal morphology: Syntactic structures meets the minimalist program. In *Evolution and revolution in linguistic theory*, ed. Hector Campos and Paula Kempchinsky. Georgetown: Georgetown University Press.
 McCloskey, James. 1991. Clause structure, ellipsis and proper government in Irish. *Lingua* 85:259–302.
 Merchant, Jason. 2001. *The syntax of silence: Sluicing, islands, and the theory of ellipsis*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
 Merchant, Jason. 2015. On ineffable predicates: Bilingual Greek-English code-switching under ellipsis. *Lingua* 166:199–213.
 Philippaki-Warbuton, Irene. 1990. Subjects in English and in Greek. In *Proceedings of the 3rd Symposium on the description and/or comparison of English and Greek*, 12–32. Aristotle University of Thessaloniki.
 Potsdam, Eric. 1997. English verbal morphology and VP ellipsis. In *Meeting of the North Eastern Linguistic Society*. GLSA.
 Takahashi, Shoichi, and Danny Fox. 2006. MaxElide and the re-binding problem. In *Proceedings of Semantics and Linguistic Theory*.
 Warner, Anthony. 1985. *The structure of English auxiliaries: A phrase structure grammar*. Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Linguistics Club.