Argument structure and case assignment in Greek -m- nominals

Elena Lentza Siamani

University of Leipzig
IGRA

Master class with Artemis Alexiadou
March 19, 2019
Aims of the talk

- To revisit the status of VoiceP in (some) Greek -m-nominals. I will claim that VoiceP in some nominals can be non-passive.
- The test of passivisation shows that we have case alternation between genitive and prepositional dative.
- I will discuss some advantages/disadvantages of a dependent case system in the nominal domain.
What are -m- nouns?

There are two ways to create a deverbal noun in Greek (Alexiadou 2009):

- One is to attach the class/number marking affix to the verbal stem/root, which might undergo vowel gradation.

(1)  

| a. vih-o | vih-as |
| cough-verb | cough-noun |

| b. katastrefo | katastrof-i |
| destroy-verb | destruction |

Alexiadou (2009)
What are -m- nouns?

Another way to create a deverbal noun is to attach a special affix to a verbal stem. One of the most common affixes are -m- and -sim- illustrated in (2). -m- and -sim- are taken to be allomorphic realisations of the same affix depending on the number of syllables of the stem: -sim- attaches to stems with one syllable and -m- is the elsewhere form (Malikouti 1995). Moreover, I follow Alexiadou (2001) in that I consider -s- in the affix -sim- to be part of the suffix and not of the stem.

(2)  a. kathariz-o kathariz-ma
    clean            cleaning

    b. plen-o pli-sim-o
    wash             washing
-m- is a nominalizer

- I refer to the nouns which take the affix -m- or -sim- in order to be deverbalized as -m- nouns.
- In the spirit of DM, in all cases of nominals where a special affix is included, this realizes the n head contained in the nominal structure.
- Thus, -m- is the exponence of the head of nP (Alexiadou 2009).
The -m- nominals I intend to focus on are *xtipima* (=hit or knocking) and *vlema* (=look), derived from the verbs *xtipo* (=to hit or to knock) and *vlepo* (=to see) respectively.
Competition of External Argument (EA) and Internal Argument (IA)

(3)  a. *no competition, no EA*

\[
\text{to xtipima } \underline{\text{tis Marias}} \quad (= \text{theme}) \\
\text{the hit the-\text{GEN} Mary-\text{GEN}}
\]

the hit of Mary

‘Mary was hit’ (nominalized)

b. *competition, EA gets genitive*

\[
\text{to xtipima } \underline{\text{tu Jani}} \quad (=\text{agent}) \text{ sti Maria} \\
\text{the hit the-\text{GEN} John-\text{GEN} to.the Mary} \\
\]

(=theme)

John’s hit of Mary

‘John hit Mary’ (nominalized)
Nominalizations are not always passive

- Nominalization is not always ‘akin to passivization’ (Alexiadou 2001).
- VoiceP in nominals can be non passive, so there is another position for external arguments, namely Spec, VoiceP.
- The external argument is not only realized with by-phrases but also with post-nominal genitives.
Alexiadou (2001) and Alexiadou, Anagnostopoulou & Schäfer (2009) argue that two structures are available for derived nominals:

(4)  a. n ... [Voice [v... ]
    b. n ... [v ... ]
Structure [n ... [Voice [v...]]] is a passive nominalization and its existence is diagnosed via the licensing of agent PPs, such as the by-phrase. Pattern [n ... [v ...]] is the one best represented via verbs that never take an Agent external argument (5b):

(5) a. to adiasma tu kutiu apo tin katharistria
    the emptying the box by the cleaner

b. to sapisma ton filon apo tin igrasia/*apo ton kipuro
    the rotting the leaves-gen from the humidity/by the gardener

(examples from Alexiadou (2011))
Introduction of external argument: Projection of Voice P

VoiceP is responsible for the introduction of external arguments (overt or covert) and the licensing of a particular set of adverbs as well as agentive PPs (Kratzer (1994)). Tests in order to check whether a VoiceP is projected (Alexiadou 2009, 2011).

- by-phrases

- VoiceP related (agent-oriented) adjectives (e.g. polite): Normally, the tests involve agent-oriented adverbs, but I assume that adverbs are for verbs what adjectives are for nouns.
External argument: vlema

There is no licensing of a by-phrase, but the external argument of the noun vlema is realized as a Genitive and not with a by-phrase. This shows that we have a projection of VoiceP but not a passive one. It should be noted though that vlepo is a non-passivizable verb.

(6) By-phrases

a. Passive structure
   *to vlema tis Marias apo to Jani.
   the look of.the Mary by the John

b. non-passive structure
   to vlema tu Jani sti Maria
   the look of.the John to.the Mary
(7) **Agent-oriented modifiers**

a. to adiaforo vlema tu  ḥe  sti
the indifferent look  the-
John-
Maria
Mary

‘The indifferent look of John to Mary.’
External argument: xtipima

In the two following sentences we have projection of a VoiceP. However, there is one noteworthy difference. (8a) is a passive structure, since it licenses a by-phrase, whereas (8b) is an active structure, so the external argument is merged in Spec, VoiceP.

(8) By-phrases

a. passive structure
   
   to xtipima tis Marias apo to Jani
   the hit of.the Mary by the John
   ‘Mary was hit by John’ (nominalized)

b. non-passive structure
   
   to xtipima tu Jani (=agent) sti Maria
   the hit of.the John to.the Mary
The following examples clearly show three different flavors of VoiceP in the nominal domain.

(9) **Agent-oriented Modifiers**

a. *non-passive structure*

   to skopimo xtipima tu Jani sti Maria
   the intentional hit of.the John to.the Mary

b. *passive structure*

   *to skopimo xtipima tis Marias apo to Jani
   the intentional hit of Mary by the John

c. *anticausative structure*

   *to skopimo xtipima tis portas
   the intentional hit of.the door
More examples

(10)  a. to xtipima tis miras
      the hit the-GEN fate-GEN

      the hit of the fate
      ‘Fate hit/stroke sb/sth’ (nominalized) (*Fate was hit)

b. to xtipima tu Egeladu
      the hit the-GEN Enceladus-GEN

      the hit of Enceladus (earthquake)
      ‘Earthquake stroke an area’ (*Earthquake was hit)
Another test for diagnosing external arguments is reflexives.

\[(11) \quad \begin{align*}
\text{a.} & \quad \text{to } \text{xtipima ston eaforto tis} \\
& \quad \text{the hit to.the self her} \\
& \quad \text{the hit to herself} \\
\text{b.} & \quad \text{to } \text{vlema ston eaforto tis} \\
& \quad \text{the look to.the self her} \\
& \quad \text{the look at herself}
\end{align*} \]
(12)  

a. *to xtipima apo to eafto tis the hit by the self her

b. *to vlema apo ton eafto tis the look by the self her
Reflexives: Ditransitives

(13) a. to dosimo tu eaftu tis sti musici the giving the-[GEN] self-[GEN] her to.the music Dedicating herself to music.
(14)

\[ \text{nP} \]

\[ \text{n -sim-} \]

\[ \text{nP} \]

\[ \text{VoiceP} \]

\[ \text{?} \]

\[ \text{Voice'} \]

\[ \text{Voice} \]

\[ \text{vP} \]

\[ \text{v'} \]

\[ \text{v} \]

\[ \sqrt{\text{DIN/DO}} \]

\[ \text{tu eaftu tis.GEN} \]

\[ \text{PP} \]

\[ \text{sti musici} \]
Reflexives: Ditransitives

(15) a. i afierosi xronu ston eаfto su
the dedication the-\textit{Gen} time-\textit{Gen} to.the self your
the dedication of time to yourself/dedicating time
to yourself.
Derivation

(16)
VoiceP is not always projected: xtipo as an anticausative

To complete the picture the verb xtipo can also behave as an anticausative.

(17) a. kapjos xtipise tin porta
    someone knocked.on the door

b. i porta xtipise
    the door knocked
    the door was knocked on

c. kapjos xtipise to kuduni
    someone rang   the bell

d. to kuduni xtipise
    the bell   rang
xtipo as an anticausative

Consequently, I conclude that there in no VoiceP projection in the nominalizations that follow:

(18)  a. to xtipima tis portas  the knocking the-GEN door-GEN
b. to xtipima tu kudunju  the ringing the-GEN bell-GEN
c. anticausative structure
   *to skopimo xtipima tis Marias  the intentional hit of Mary
So far I have run three tests which show that that ‘to xtipima tu Jani sti Maria’ or ‘to vlema tu Jani sti Maria’ are non-passive structures.

- By phrases are not allowed. The external argument is not realized as a by-phrase but as a postnominal genitive.
- Agent oriented modifiers are allowed (unlike in passive structures).
- Reflexives are allowed.
Types of VoiceP in xtipima and vlema

(19)  a. vlema
  ■ non-passive Voice P

b. xtipima
  ■ non-passive VoiceP
  ■ passive VoiceP
  ■ no VoiceP at all (anticausative version)
No VoiceP: xtipo as an anticausative

(20) to xtipima tis Marias

\[
\begin{array}{c}
\text{nP} \\
\text{n} \\
-\text{m-} \\
\text{vP} \\
\text{v} \\
\text{v} \sqrt{\text{XTIP}} \\
\text{DP} \\
\text{tis Marias.GEN} \\
\text{the-GEN Marias-GEN}
\end{array}
\]
(21) to xtipima tis Marias apo to Jani
Non-passive VoiceP

(22) to xtipima tu Jani sti Maria

```
  nP
    n
      -m-
      tu Jani.GEN
    VoiceP
    Voice'
    Voice
      vP
        v
        √XTIP
        v
        sti Maria
    PP
```
Genitive-Dative enter case alternations in the nominal domain

- We can now use the passivisation test.
- Genitive and prepositional se-dative seem to enter case alternations. Thus, they qualify for structural cases.

(23)  a. to xtipima tis Marias (=theme)  
      the hit the-gen Mary-gen  

   ‘Mary-NOM was hit’ (nominalized)  

   passive

  b. to xtipima tu Jani sti Maria  
      the hit the-gen John-gen to.the Mary  

   (=theme)

   ‘John-NOM hit Mary-ACC’ (nominalized)  

   non-passive
(24) Passive structure

(25) Non-passive structure
But is this possible? Can a PP be a structural case?

I assume that *sti Maria* (internal argument) is a dative-*se*-argument bearing inherent case.

Inherent (theta-related, lexical) case is normally preserved in case alternations.
There are phenomena which cross the line between structural and inherent cases (see inherent uses of typically structural cases, like inherent accusatives in German and Icelandic) (McFadden 2014).

I argue that prepositional-se-dative in the nominal domain is an inherent case with structural properties.
Thus far I have argued that Genitive and prepositional datives are ‘structural cases’.

The prepositional dative is ‘structural’ because it enters case alternations. In the passive we would expect it to stay as it is and not to become genitive. On the other hand, it is ‘inherent’ in that it is dependent on theta-marking (although it can be used with adjuncts).

Genitive is a structural case, because it is not associated with a particular theta-role. It can be an external argument, a theme or an adjunct.
I assume a dependent case framework. I will claim that se-dative is an inherent case and genitive is the elsewhere.

A widespread view is that genitive is the elsewhere case or the unmarked case in the nominal domain (Marantz 2001).

The pattern I have presented is easily explained if prepositional dative is an inherent case and genitive is the elsewhere.
Question

But: If it is the unmarked case, why can’t we have two genitives in the same domain?

(26) to xtipima ton tromokraton tis endekatis septemvriu
the hit of terrorists of 9/11
Another problem

- The internal argument is either a DP merged with the stem/root or a PP merged with the stem/root.
- I personally prefer Merchant’s view (2018) according to which it is the categories which have selectional properties not the roots (‘Roots don’t select, categorial heads do’).
- If the v selects a PP, it violates the selectional properties of both verbs xtipo and vlepo.
- What we need to say is that the nominalizer makes this merge licit.

(27) a. *xtipo sti Maria
    hit.verb to.the Mary

b. *vlepo sti Maria
    see.verb to.the Mary
Even if we assume a feature based system for case assignment in the nominal domain and claim that the DP, NumP or AspP (see Alexiadou 2009) are potential probes for assigning genitive, we still need to assume that genitive is assigned in a nominal environment.

This creates a look-ahead problem. Something higher in the structure imposes restrictions on something lower.

Adopting McFadden’s solution according to which case-assignment is post-syntactic, is a way to overcome this look-ahead problem.
Spell-out

- Although I have claimed that VoiceP in the nominal domain is non-passive, we still do not want VoiceP to be a phase. If that happens accusative will be assigned to the theme and PPs merged with verbal stem will be deemed ungrammatical.

- Spell-out happens after nP is projected. At this point there happens some kind of evaluation of the structure: merging a PP with a verbal stem is ruled out or not and genitive is assigned.

- Even if we assume a feature-based approach to case assignment, we still need to have evaluation of the structure after nP is projected.

- A dependent case system can also explain the non-assignment of accusative. It happens post syntactically after the nominalizer has been merged.
Why dependent case?

- We need two things to happen postsyntactically:
  - First, the evaluation of merging a v with a PP.
  - Second, the assignment of genitive after the nominalizer has been merged.
- These problems are solved if Agree happens postsyntactically (It is also solved if you assume that Agree is a postsyntactic operation (Bobaljik 2006))
Thank you!!!