Special Issue "New Glances at the Morphosyntax of Greek"

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Special Issue Information

Dear Colleagues,

We are planning to edit a Special Issue (SI) of the journal “Languages” on Greek morphosyntax under the (working) title: “New glances at the morphosyntax of Greek”.

Recent years have witnessed a revival of interest in the relation and/or division of labor between morphology and syntax and their interaction (interface). The term morphosyntax refers to phenomena which are, in principle, subject to both or either a morphological or a syntactic approach. In Greek, case on the subject of a sentence is always morphologically marked but syntactically determined by the relation between the noun and the verb (“agree”, Alexiadou and Anagnostopoulou 1998). Similarly, the adjective bears morphological markings of gender, number and case which are determined by the corresponding features of the noun (“concord” in terms of Giusti 2011). “Agree” and “concord” are processes on which linguists agree to a large extent. In contrast, certain derivational processes (e.g., nominalization) which were traditionally (but also in the generative framework until the late eighties/early nineties) considered morphological (lexical) par excellence have been recently re-surfaced as syntactic. For instance, adjectives coming from nouns were traditionally categories derived by morphological rules, though more recently ethnic adjectives have been treated syntactically (see the discussion in Alexiadou and Stavrou 2011, also, Alexiadou 2020).

The study of argument structure over the past three decades addresses questions including how languages (Greek) morphologically mark argument structure (AS) alternations, as well as how the term Voice is used in the literature, i.e., as AS alternations, as a morphosyntactic category of the verb, or as a syntactic head (Kratzer 1996, Alexiadou 2015). Cases like the intransitive variants of these alternations that are formed with non-active morphology (NACT), i.e., passives (to spiti htihtizete “the house buildNACT”), anticausatives (to plio vithizete “the ship sinks NACT”) and middles (to vivlio dhiavazete efkola “the book readsNACT easily”) do not behave syntactically and semantically uniformly, although they share the same morphological marking (Condoravdi 1989, Tsimpili 1989, Embick 1998, 2004, Manney 2000, Sioupi 1998, Zombolou 1999b, Lekakou 2005, Alexiadou, Anagnostopoulou and Schäfer 2006, 2015, Spas, Alexiadou and Schäfer 2015, among others). Research in Greek is also related to grammatical categories encoded by verbs, such as tense, aspect, and mood (TAM) (Mozer 1993, 1994, 2003, Xydpoulos 1996, Tsangalidis 1999, 2002b, Iatridou 2000, 2009, Iatridou, Anagnostopoulou and Pancheva 2003, Giannakidou 2003, 2009, among others). Greek marks tense on the verbal stem, while all verb forms are marked morphologically either as imperfective or as perfective in all tenses (with exceptions) i.e., when a verb selects a form
marked for one aspect, the other form is excluded (for discussion on grammatical (viewpoint) aspect see Holton et al. 1997, Horrocks and Stavrou 2003, 2007, Kitis and Tsangalidis 2005, Sioupi 2014b, Andreou and Tsimpli 2017 for the acquisition of aspeutal distinctions by bilingual children in Greek, among others)). The imperfective-perfective distinction is known to interact with lexical aspect (Aktionsarten) and with temporal adverbs of different sorts. We address approaches that relate to the interpretation of tense, grammatical, lexical aspect, and mood. Other questions that can be addressed in the SI are: how do the morphosyntactic properties of AS alternations relate to their semantics? What is the behavior of AS alternations? Are passives in Greek lexical (Smyrniotopoulos 1992)?

Pronominal clitics are a notorious grey zone between morphology and syntax; they have been variously analyzed as weak pronouns, affixes-functional heads, bundles of features or “special” words (Anagnostopoulou 1994, Mavrogiorgos 2010, among many others).

Although many phenomena have been intensely studied, there are other phenomena still in need of attention. Many of them belong to what is traditionally perceived as morphology proper, but nowadays the consensus is that the syntactic approach (Borer 1984, 2005, Alexiadou 2001, Alexiadou and Borer 2020) is both theoretically more desirable and empirically more justified. Take, as an example, nominalizations - i.e., nouns emerging from verbs/verbal roots (katastrof-i, “disaster”). The debate on whether they belong to the realm of syntax or to the realm of morphology goes back to the sixties. Nowadays the syntactic approach seems to be gaining ground. Nonetheless, one cannot overlook (maybe new) problems that arise; e.g., in Greek a large subset of deverbal nouns, in particular action and result nouns ending in -(s)i, are feminine nouns. A legitimate question is where exactly the gender feature resides and what determines it; is it the affix/ending? Is it the root? Similar questions arise with regard to other classes of deverbal nouns but also of derived adjectives (probably also of other categories) (see Alexiadou and Stavrou, op.cit. for the fact that in ethnic adjectives the -ik-suffix loses its argumental force which is otherwise strong in the “base” (original) noun). In short, assuming the correctness of the syntactic analysis, facts concerning the idiosyncratic properties of derivational morphemes must be captured in a systematic and consistent way.

We invite you to contribute to our SI with submissions on any of the topics mentioned above, or any other topic related to the morphosyntax of Greek (Standard or varieties of it). Although the theoretical perspective will be central to the volume, experimental, as well as contributions on second language morphosyntax, agrammatic morphosyntactic aphasia or diachronic and comparative perspectives are also welcome. Submissions should be anonymous and follow the guidelines for authors.

We request that, prior to submitting a manuscript, interested authors initially submit a proposed title and an abstract of 400-600 words summarizing their intended contribution. The proposal should be submitted via email to the guest editors (staurou@lit.auth.gr) or to the Languages editorial office (languages@mdpi.com). Abstracts will be reviewed by the guest editors for the purposes of ensuring proper fit within the scope of the Special Issue. Upon acceptance of a paper proposal, guidelines for preparing final papers will be provided.

Papers must reflect original work, present novel facts and propose an analysis for them which will complement or revise older analyses. Full manuscripts will undergo double-blind peer-review.
Tentative completion schedule:

- Abstract submission deadline: April 15, 2021
- Notification of abstract acceptance: May 15, 2021
- Full manuscript deadline: December 31, 2021

References


Prof. Emerita Melita Stavrou
Prof. Athina Sioupi
*Guest Editors*

Contact Info:
Ms. Janelle Yang
Assistant Editor
Email: janelle.yang@mdpi.com

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Contact Email: janelle.yang@mdpi.com

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