

# Clitics in Greek

A minimalist account  
of proclisis and enclisis

Marios Mavrogiorgos

John Benjamins Publishing Company

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## Clitics in Greek

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### **Volume 160**

Clitics in Greek. A minimalist account of proclisis and enclisis  
by Marios Mavrogiorgos

## Preface

This book is based upon an original version finalized in 2009 (Mavrogiorgos 2009). Several changes have been made. Chapter 3 has been added from scratch, while minor revisions have been made in Chapters 2, 4, 5 and 6. This book aims at providing a principled analysis for two interrelated phenomena in the morpho-syntax of Greek clitic pronouns: proclisis (1) and enclisis (2), respectively:

- (1) When the verb is in the indicative or the subjunctive, the clitic pronoun precedes the verb, and nothing may intervene between it and the verb.
  - a. *To* katharisa. (indicative)  
It.cl cleaned.1sg  
'I cleaned it.'
  - b. Thelo na *to* kathariso. (subjunctive)  
Want.1sg subj. it.cl clean.1sg  
'I want to clean it.'
- (2) When the verb is in the imperative or the gerund, the clitic pronoun follows the verb, and nothing may intervene between it and the verb.
  - a. Katharise *to*! (imperative)  
Clean.2sg.imp it.cl  
'Clean it!'
  - b. Katharizondas *to* katalava oti... (gerund/absolutive)  
Cleaning it.cl understood.1sg that  
'While I was cleaning it, I realized that...'

It is argued that clitic pronouns are topicalizers, namely optional determiner heads that are merged in the left periphery of the (direct or indirect) object DP of the clause. They encode familiarity/prominence/topicality, as opposed to the lower/internal determiner which encodes definiteness (see Alexiadou, Haegeman & Stavrou 2007 on the internal and external determiner). In doubling structures the two determiners appear together in the numeration, while in non-doubling structures only the lower D-head appears. By being at the edge of a minimal phase, the external D-head is probed by  $v^*$ -transitive, to which it moves and incorporates, giving rise to a proclitic doubling structure. Given that the clitic acts as a scope marker, movement of the clitic to  $v^*$  equals to movement of the whole DP to the periphery of  $v^*$ . Accordingly, the clitic pronoun is analyzed as the highest/external D-head that may merge within the DP, which marks the DP as

familiar, and which connects it with the outside world both semantically/pragmatically and syntactically. As far as the semantic restrictions on doubling are concerned, I assume that these follow from the interaction of the two D-heads.

I further argue that syntactic cliticization follows from syntactic agreement between the clitic pronoun and a phase head. For Greek and for other languages with adverbial clitics which are sensitive to finiteness with respect to the proclisis/enclisis alternation I propose that the relevant phase head is  $v^*$ -transitive and not Tense (T) (contrary to Kayne 1991, Philippaki-Warbuton 1995, Terzi 1999a, among many others). The derivation proceeds as follows: following Kayne's (1975) movement hypothesis, I take the clitic to be merged as/within a DP/D in the complement position, its phi-features being visible to appropriate probes higher up in the clause. V (or some higher  $v$  head), being a phase head by inheritance, attracts the clitic to its (external) specifier, building an A-chain. At the same time, an optional EPP feature on  $v^*$ , which is linked to a familiarity/-focus/old information D feature, probes the clitic forming a parallel A'-chain. The clitic moves as an XP/X to the left edge of  $v^*$ , where it incorporates, yielding proclisis. The incorporated clitic moves along with the  $v^*$ -V complex to T.  $v^*$  in this case is a minimal morpho-syntactic phase which is transparent at the edge. In this sense it allows non-phases (such as clitics for example) to incorporate into it under certain conditions (e.g. sisterhood and proper subset-hood in terms of features). Incorporation is allowed for two interrelated reasons. On the one hand, the clitic contains only a subset of features of those contained by  $v^*$ . This allows incorporation, according to an incorporation law which claims that incorporation is allowed only if the features of the incorporee are not different from that of the incorporator (Roberts 2009). On the other hand, incorporation into  $v^*$  is allowed, even though  $v^*$  is a minimal phase, because its edge is still accessible, due to the fact that  $v^*$  has not checked all its features as yet.

In enclisis the generalization is that person agreement on T is restricted/ defective, while the verb must check verbal inflection on the higher Complementizer Modal head (CM). The clitic pronoun targets the  $v^*$  head, as in proclisis, however it does not incorporate into it, because CM is the new phase head by being the highest inflectional verbal head in a chain of verbal heads (phase sliding). The verb moves to CM and the clitic merges with it from the lower specifier of  $vP/TP$ . In this way we get the generalization that enclisis obtains when the verb moves across the cliticization site to a V-related site, i.e. to a site where a verbal inflectional head is found. This allows us to differentiate between imperatives which have V-to-C movement and take enclitics, from interrogatives, which in some languages have V-to-C movement, but take proclitics.

The advantage of this analysis is that it can be generalized across constructions and across languages without great difficulty, since it is based on the general principles of (i) subset of features, and (ii) edge availability/accessibility. Moreover, by linking cliticization to agreement with phase heads, and given Chomsky's theory on phase heads, it is flexible enough to be able to account for a plethora of distinct clitic constructions both within a single language and cross-linguistically, which is something previous theories lacked.

# Table of contents

Preface	IX
CHAPTER 1	
Introduction	1
CHAPTER 2	
The properties of Greek clitics and their structural analysis	5
2.1 Introduction	5
2.2 Greek personal pronouns: Clitics vs. strong pronouns	5
2.2.1 Some basic properties of Greek personal pronouns	5
2.2.2 Strong vs. clitic/weak pronouns: The issue of deficiency	12
2.2.2.1 The partition of pronouns into types: Kayne (1975), Cardinaletti & Starke (1999)	12
2.2.2.2 Partition criteria applied to Greek	13
2.2.3 The morpho-syntactic status of clitics: affixes or words?	41
2.3 A dynamic approach to the structure of personal pronouns	52
2.4 Conclusions	55
CHAPTER 3	
Internal structure of clitics and cliticization	57
3.1 Introduction	57
3.2 Analyses proposed for personal pronouns	57
3.3 Type A: DPs	58
3.3.1 Sub-type (a): Pronouns as intransitive D <sup>0</sup> -heads projecting a DP	58
3.3.2 Sub-type (b): Pronouns as transitive/complex DPs	63
3.3.2.1 Uriagereka (1995): Pronouns as transitive – DPs which differ in their internal structure	63
3.3.2.2 Panagiotidis 2002 a uniform transitive D <sup>0</sup> approach.	76
3.3.3 Sub-type C: Pronouns as heads in the extended verbal projection	91
3.3.4 Sportiche's account	102
3.4 Type B: Pronouns as transitive XPs	103
3.4.1 Cardinaletti & Starke (1999)	104
3.4.2 Déchaine & Wiltschko (2002)	107
3.5 Summary	111



## CHAPTER 4

### **Derivation of proclisis** 113

- 4.1 Introduction 113
- 4.2 Properties of clitics 113
  - 4.2.1 Clitics: Movement vs. base generation 113
  - 4.2.2 XP vs.  $X^0$  118
  - 4.2.3 Clitic placement: Adjunction or incorporation? 119
- 4.3 Clitics as non-phases 127
  - 4.3.1 Derivation of proclisis 127
  - 4.3.2 The Syntax-Morphology mapping: Words as m-phases and clitics 131
  - 4.3.3 The effect on the outcome: LF and PF saturation of clitics 134
    - 4.3.3.1 PF valuation 134
    - 4.3.3.2 LF valuation 134
- 4.4. Have – constructions 134
  - 4.4.1 Other clitic climbing constructions 137
- 4.5. Indirect object constructions 137
- 4.6 Clitic doubling 138
- 4.7 Conclusions 143

## CHAPTER 5

### **Patterns of proclisis/enclisis and the role of V-movement** 145

- 5.1 Introduction 145
- 5.2 De-limiting the phenomenon 145
- 5.3 Different types of enclisis: Syntax vs. PF 146
- 5.4 Finiteness: A rather problematic notion 157
- 5.5 V-movement 168
- 5.6 Conclusions 191

## CHAPTER 6

### **Enclisis in Greek: The role of CM in deriving enclisis** 193

- 6.1 Introduction 193
- 6.2 The finiteness gradation: From indicatives to gerunds/absolutives 193
  - 6.2.1 Some preliminary remarks on verbal marking in Greek 194
  - 6.2.2 Mood types and their finiteness properties 195
    - 6.2.2.1 Indicative forms 195
    - 6.2.2.2 Subjunctive clauses 203
    - 6.2.2.3 Imperatives 206
      - 6.2.2.3.1 Positive imperatives 207
      - 6.2.2.3.2 Negative imperatives 217
    - 6.2.2.4 Gerunds/Active participles as absolutives/free adjuncts 220
  - 6.2.3 Summary of empirical points 224
- 6.3 EPP and head movement: Extending the V domain 225

6.3.1	Preliminary remarks	225
6.3.2	The analysis	231
6.3.2.1	Assumptions	231
6.3.2.2	CM and enclisis	236
6.3.3	Further instances of the proclisis-enclisis alternation in Greek	250
6.3.3.1	Negated imperatives/gerunds in Greek	250
6.3.3.2	Surrogate imperatives	254
6.3.3.3	Clitic switch	255
6.4	Conclusions	266
CHAPTER 7		
	<b>Concluding remarks</b>	<b>269</b>
	References	271
	Index	287

## CHAPTER 1

# Introduction

16 years ago Luigi Rizzi (see Rizzi 1993) claimed that the study of Romance cliticization must, at least, deal with the following four questions:

- (1) a. What is the categorial status of clitics?
- b. What makes clitics move?
- c. What is the landing site of cliticization?
- d. What determines encliticization and procliticization?

Since then, but even before (see e.g. Kayne 1975), these questions have been challenging the minds of linguists investigating the different aspects of the syntax of clitic pronouns, not only in Romance but also in other languages. The aim of this monograph is to try to give an answer to each one of these questions for Standard Modern Greek (henceforth, Greek), and even to a few more. But before we go into what this monograph is all about, let me briefly point out what it is not about. This book does not contain a literature review of different theories of cliticization, clitic structure and the proclisis-enclisis alternation. Readers are referred to van Riemsdijk's (1999a) Eurotyp edition, and to the (2006) *Blackwell Companion to Syntax* (see especially vol. I) (but see also Chapter 3). Moreover, I have not included a detailed comparison between Romance and Greek, as such a comparison was not among my aims. Rather, I mainly focused on Greek, and used Romance for comparison only in minor cases. Finally, I assume that the reader is acquainted with Chomsky's papers from 2000 onwards (Chomsky 2000, 2001a,b, 2005, 2006), and I therefore introduce his theoretical notions with little if any explanation.

Having discussed what this monograph is not about, let us move to what it is about. This monograph aims at providing a principled and novel analysis for two inter-related phenomena in the morpho-syntax of Greek clitic pronouns, namely proclisis (2) and enclisis (3) respectively, and as a result, at providing an answer to the 'what', 'why', 'where' and 'how' questions asked by Rizzi in (1) above:

- (2) Proclisis: when the verb is in the indicative or the subjunctive, the clitic pronoun precedes the verb, and nothing may intervene between it and the verb.
- (3) Enclisis: when the verb is in the imperative or the gerund, the clitic pronoun follows the verb, and nothing may intervene between it and the verb.

Starting with proclisis, it is argued that the clitic pronoun is a topicalizer, namely a definite head that is optionally merged in the left periphery of the (direct or indirect) object DP of the clause rendering it a topic.  $v^*/T$  (that is  $v^*$  in  $T$ , following Gallego's

2006 analysis of phase sliding in Null Subject Languages) probes into the  $v^*/TP$  phase and finds the clitic pronoun with which it agrees in  $\phi$ -features. The clitic moves to  $v^*/T$  due to an EPP feature that comes along with it. When the clitic moves to the left edge of  $v^*/T$ , it incorporates into it, yielding proclisis. This happens for two interrelated reasons. On the one hand, the clitic contains only a subset of features of those contained by  $v^*/T$ . This allows incorporation, according to an incorporation law which claims that incorporation is allowed only if the features of the incorporee are not different from that of the incorporator (Roberts 2009). On the other hand, incorporation into  $v^*/T$  is allowed, even though  $v^*/T$  is a minimal phase, because its edge is still accessible, due to the fact that  $v^*/T$  has not checked all its features as yet. A minimal phase is defined as a minimal lexical category that is a lexical phase (i.e.  $v$ ,  $n$ ,  $a$ , etc.) or that contains one. Being a phase, it also has an edge which remains accessible until all its features have been checked off. Then, it can be sent to Spell-Out.

In enclisis the generalization is that restricted person agreement on  $T$  is associated with [+ imperative]/[+ gerund] paradigm and an inflectional/ $V$ -related CM(odal) head. This means that in enclitic environments the verb must target the higher CM head in order to check the special verbal morphology. The clitic pronoun targets the  $v^*/T$  head, as in proclisis, however it does not incorporate into  $v^*/T$ , because the edge of the phase is not accessible; the phase in this case includes the CM head, given that the latter is inflectional/verbal, part of the INFL domain of the clause. As a result, the edge will be transferred to the CM head, and that is where the clitic will be able to incorporate from the specifier of  $v^*/T$ , yielding enclisis.

The advantage of this analysis is that it can be generalized across constructions and across languages without great difficulty, since it is based on the general principles of (i) subset of features, and (ii) edge availability/ accessibility. This means that the host/edge and the features involved may be different allowing us in this way to capture clitic structures from a number of different languages, as well as different structures from within one and the same language.

The structure of the remaining chapters is as follows:

In Chapter 2 I present the main properties of Greek personal pronouns, following the criteria and the observations made by Kayne (1975) and Cardinaletti & Starke (1999). Their criteria are applied to the Greek pronouns, and it is shown that full/tonic pronouns are strong pronouns while weak/atonic pronouns are clitic pronouns. The morpho-syntactic status of clitics is also discussed and it is argued that Greek clitics are words. Finally, the status of Greek clitics as determiners/definite heads is argued for.

In Chapter 3 I present a number of distinct proposals that have been put forward in the literature with regard to the internal structure of clitics and its relation to cliticization. I show that most of these analyses are inadequate on both empirical and theoretical grounds, a fact which further supports my proposal that Greek clitics are DPs/Ds that move from the object position, incorporating into their host.

In Chapter 4 the derivation of proclisis is discussed. It is argued that clitics A-move as XPs/Xs to the specifier of  $v^*/T$  into which they incorporate because on the one hand

the edge is accessible while on the other they are minimal non-phases, i.e. they only have a subset of the features contained within the phase head. Incorporation has an effect on the outcome, because it satisfies the LF and PF properties of the clitics. It satisfies their PF properties by providing them with a PWD into which they can incorporate. It also satisfies their LF properties by providing them with a familiarity/topic interpretation. Periphrastic constructions with the auxiliary *echo* (“have”) are also discussed where it is argued that *echo* basically copies the v-features of the  $v^*$  on the participle, which results in the clitic incorporating into *echo*. Indirect object constructions are also discussed, where I follow the analysis proposed by Anagnostopoulou (2003a), as well as doubling constructions, in which it is argued that the doubling clitic is an external determiner on the doubled DP that is probed by  $v^*/T$ ’s phi features and the EPP feature.

In Chapter 5 I discuss the proclisis-enclisis alternation, as it appears in Greek and other languages that follow the so-called ‘(non-)finiteness’ pattern. I attempt to define the level of finiteness which appears to be relevant to the alternation. Also, the V-movement theory is discussed (see Kayne 1991), and it is shown that movement across the cliticization site is neither a necessary nor a sufficient condition for enclisis. Instead, I claim that movement to the cliticization site along with resolution of proclisis-enclisis on the basis of finiteness at the clitic incorporation site are necessary conditions for the derivation of proclisis or enclisis.

In Chapter 6 I discuss the role of finiteness, and in particular, of CM (which corresponds to Rizzi’s 1997 CFin) in the proclisis-enclisis alternation. More specifically, I investigate the finiteness properties of a series of mood structures in Greek, and I formulate the following two generalizations:

Generalization A: Absence of a syntactically active (i.e. unvalued) person feature on the T/Agr head (i.e. restriction on person agreement) correlates with enclisis, + imperative mood and V-to-CM movement (obligatory). Presence of full agreement on the T/Agr head correlates with proclisis, – imperative mood and V-to-T movement (obligatory).

Generalization B: Proclisis correlates with non-restricted/full person agreement on T, while enclisis correlates with restricted person agreement on T. Non-restricted agreement is associated with the [– imperative] paradigm and a non-inflectional CM head (and, thus, with non-obligatory movement to C), while restricted agreement is associated with the [+ imperative] paradigm and an inflectional CM head (and, thus, with obligatory movement to C).

In other words, for enclisis to obtain, the verb must move to CM, a V-related site, across the initial cliticization site (in this case  $v^*/T$ ), while the clitic moves to the edge of CM, the new cliticization site. At the end of the chapter I also discuss negated imperatives, which I claim are impossible in Greek due to the fact that the negation morpheme is merged in CM. I also discuss surrogate imperatives which I claim may have an imperative syntax since they realize a subset of the features of a true imperative form. Finally, I discuss free clitic ordering in enclisis in Greek, where I claim that in accusative genitive orders, the genitive pronoun is a weak pronoun rather than a clitic.

Finally, Chapter 7 contains the conclusions of this monograph.



## CHAPTER 2

# The properties of Greek clitics and their structural analysis

### 2.1 Introduction

In this chapter I will present the main properties of Greek personal pronouns, following the criteria and the observations made in Kayne (1975) and Cardinaletti & Starke (1999). I will apply their criteria to the Greek pronouns and I will show that full/tonic pronouns are strong pronouns while weak pronouns are clitic pronouns. I will also discuss the morpho-syntactic status of clitics as words, as well as their categorial and functional status as DPs.

### 2.2 Greek personal pronouns: Clitics vs. strong pronouns

#### 2.2.1 Some basic properties of Greek personal pronouns

Standard Modern Greek<sup>1</sup> (henceforth, Greek) has two series of overt personal pronouns, namely strong and weak pronouns (also known as tonic vs. atonic or non-clitic vs. clitic pronouns; see Holton, Mackridge & Philippaki-Warbuton 1997).<sup>2</sup> As the names themselves suggest, one of the main (and also mostly widely known) differences between these two pronominal sets is that strong, although not weak, pronouns carry inherent lexical stress. According to traditional grammar weak pronouns, as opposed to strong ones, cannot stand alone in the sentence, but need to attach/cliticize to a phonological host in order to be felicitously pronounced (hence the name *clitic*).

Greek is surely not the only European language that makes such a distinction in the personal pronoun paradigm, as similar parallel pronominal series are found in Romance, Germanic and Slavic languages (as well as in Semitic languages, or even in Chichewa) (see Cardinaletti & Starke 1999, van Riemsdijk 1999b and references therein for European languages, Ritter 1995 for Hebrew, and Bresnan & Mchombo 1987 for Chichewa). Nevertheless, it also differs from them in that, for example, it does not employ any other types of clitic category, such as auxiliary and complementizer clitics

---

1. Standard Modern Greek refers to the official form of the language that is spoken in Athens and a big part of Southern Mainland Greece (e.g. the Peloponnese) and which is taught in school.

2. Besides strong and clitic pronouns Greek also has *pro* subject pronouns. I am going to discuss their properties in relation to the strong and weak series later on in this chapter.

found in Slavic languages, or pro-PP clitics of the *en/y* and *ne* type, which are found in French, Italian, Barcelona among others (see Vos & Veselovská 1999 for details).<sup>3</sup>

Both strong and weak personal pronouns are fully marked for nominal inflectional features such as number (*singular/plural*), person (*1st, 2nd, 3rd*) and gender (*masculine, feminine* and *neuter*, but only in the third person), as well as for case (*nominative, accusative* and *dative*, which surfaces as genitive<sup>4</sup>). The forms of the third person singular and plural are in essence demonstrative forms (which are declined as adjectival forms ending in *-os, -i, -o*) (similar to what we find e.g. in Romance languages like Spanish or French). These (main) properties are illustrated in the following table, which contains the two pronominal series<sup>5</sup> (cf. Drachman 1997: 221. See also Vos & Veselovská 1999: 915 and Holton, Mackridge and Philippaki-Warbuton 1997):

(1) Table 1: Paradigm of the two series (strong vs. weak) of the personal pronoun in Greek

CASE	STRONG/ FULL PRONOUNS									
nom	ego	esi	aftos	afti	afto	emis	esis	afti	aftes	afta
gen	emena	esena	aftu	afti	aftu	emas	esas	afton	afton	afton
	(ne)	(ne)	(nu)	(ni)s	(nu)			(on)	(on)	(on)
acc	emena	esena	afton	aftin	afto	emas	esas	aftus	aftes	afta
	(ne)	(ne)	(e)	(e)						
	WEAK/ SHORT PRONOUNS									
nom	–	–	tos	ti	to	–	–	ti	tes	ta
gen	mu	su	tu	tis	tu	mas	sas	tus	tus	tus
acc	me	se	ton(e) <sup>6</sup>	ti(n)(e)	to	mas	sas	tus	tis/ (tes)	ta
PER	1 sg	2 sg	3 sg	3 sg	3 sg	1 pl	2 pl	3 pl	3 pl	3 pl
NUM			masc	fem	neut			masc	fem	neut
GEND										

3. Note that Greek also has so-called PF clitics, such as the definite determiner *o, i, to*, or the preverbal particles like *tha, na, as, dhen, min*. For more information see Holton, Mackridge & Philippaki – Warbuton (1997).

4. In Standard Greek, the genitive form has taken over the uses of the old dative, as opposed to Northern Greek dialects, in which accusative has taken over this role.

5. Horrocks (1997) actually claims that third person clitics are historically descendant from the ancient Greek deictic pronouns (cf. *a(u)tos*).

6. The alternative forms with a final (e) are used in every day, non-careful speech, both with enclitics as well as with proclitics (in the latter case certain morpho-phonological conditions must be met).



A few things should be noted here. First of all, as the highlighted parts within the cells<sup>7</sup> illustrate, strong and weak/clitic pronouns are morphologically related, in the sense that the weak forms are morphologically reduced in relation to the strong ones. Typically, and putting aside the additional endings within the parentheses which are added for metrical reasons only (see Drachman & Malikouti-Drachman 1999), strong pronouns are (at least) bisyllabic, as opposed to weak ones which are in most cases monosyllabic.

Second, the nominative clitic pronouns, which are only possible in the third person singular and plural, are extremely rare, used with the demonstrative forms *pu(n)* (meaning ‘where is?’; *pu* < *pu* + ‘n < *pu ine* (literally, ‘where is’) and *na* (meaning ‘there/here’, depending on person) (see Holton, Mackridge & Philippaki-Warbuton 1997, Joseph 1994 for both, and Christides 1990 for deictic *na*):

- |        |                           |       |
|--------|---------------------------|-------|
| (2) a. | na    -tos!               | Greek |
|        | There-he.nom              |       |
|        | ‘There he is’             |       |
| b.     | pun    -ta <sup>8</sup> ? | Greek |
|        | Where-them.nom.neut.      |       |
|        | ‘Where are they?’         |       |

*Pun* and *na* may also take accusative clitics, nominative full Noun Phrases (NPs) (i.e. pronouns and NPs accompanied by the definite article), as well as nominative clitics doubling full NPs<sup>9</sup>:

- |        |                      |       |
|--------|----------------------|-------|
| (3) a. | Pun- <i>tin(a)</i> ? | Greek |
|        | Where- her.cl.acc    |       |
|        | ‘Where is she?’      |       |
| b.     | Na- <i>me</i> !      | Greek |
|        | Here-me.cl.acc       |       |
|        | ‘Here am I!’         |       |

7. Cells here refer to cells of a paradigm (that of personal pronouns). Note, however, that no theoretical implications with regard to the notion of paradigm are intended by this discussion: paradigms are used only for informal expository reasons.

8. Optionally, the initial /t/ of the clitic may be voiced with or without subsequent assimilation of the final /n/ of *pun*, so that the whole [wh-word-clitic] cluster would be pronounced as: *pu<sup>(n)</sup> da?*. Here, I will abstract away from such optional morpho-phonological processes (but see main text below for some discussion, and Revithiadou 2006 for sandhi (and other morpho-phonological) operations taking place within the host-clitic cluster).

9. Although not all combinations are possible (cf. for example the ungrammaticality of \**na-mas*/\**na-sas*, or *pu(n)-mas*/\* *pu(n)-sas*, as against to the grammatical ones *na-maste* (‘here we-are’) or *pu-saste* (‘where you-are’)).