ON THE SEMANTIC NATURE OF BARE SINGULAR NPs IN GREEK[*]

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Στην εργασία αυτή επιχειρείται μία επέκταση του Μοντέλου του
[1]'Nominal Mapping Parameter' («Gennaro Chierchia 1998»).
Προτείνεται ότι η ελληνική γλώσσα, όπως και οι ρωμανικές γλώσσες,
ανήκει στην κατηγορία γλωσσών ΟΦ[-όρισμα, +κατηγόρημα] με την
εξής διαφορά: επιτρέπει όχι μόνο άναρθρους πληθυντικούς σε θέση
αντικειμένου, αλλά και άναρθρους ενικούς.

0. Introduction

In this talk I investigate the semantics of bare nominal arguments (i.e.,
determinerless NPs occurring in canonical argumental positions),
based on the Nominal Mapping Parameter of Chierchia's (1998)
typology. The goal of the paper is to make an extention of Chierchia's
Nominal Mapping Parameter (1998). I propose that Greek is a
language of the type NP[-arg, +pred], like Romance, with the
difference that it allows not only bare plurals but also bare singulars[2]
[3]in object positions (see also «Athina Sioupi 2001α» and «Sioupi
[4]2001b» to appear).

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[1]Gennaro Chierchia, 1998, Reference to Kinds Across Languages,
Natural Language Semantics 6, Kluwer Academic Publishers, p. 339-
405.
[2] In this paper I will investigate only bare singulars count nouns. Mass
nouns as well as bare plurals do not fall into the domain of this talk.
[3]Athina Sioupi, 2001a, The distribution of object bare singulars,
Proceedings of the 4th International Conference on Greek Linguistics,

1. The Data. General Description
In Greek bare singulars are allowed only in object positions and only
with specific verb classes (see "Sioupi 2001a, 2001b").

(1) a. *Pedi pezi sto dromo
    ChildNOM plays in theACC street
    ,A child is playing in the street'.

  b. O Jannis pini   nero
    The Jannis drinks3-SG waterACC
    'Jannis is drinking water'.

  c. O Jannis   xtizi   spiti
    The JannisNOM builds3-SG houseACC
    'Jannis is building a house'.

  d. O Jannis   grafi   gramma
    The JannisNOM writes3-SG letterACC
    'Jannis is writing a letter'.

1. 1 Chierchia's Nominal Mapping Parameter
According to Chierchia (1998) nouns appear to play a double role:
(a) as restrictors of quantifiers (as in *every man*), and in predicate
position (as in *John and Bill are doctors*) they must be predicates
(type <e,t>), (b) as arguments (names of kinds) (type <e>). These
options are available in some form or other in every language. [+/-
arg], [+/-pred] are features contstraining the way in which the
syntactic category N (and its phrasal projection NP) is mapped into its
interpretations. A language permits its NPs to denote (a) only kinds
([+arg, -pred]), (b) only predicates ([-arg, +pred]) or (c) either
arguments or predicates ([+arg, +pred]).

   Let's start with (a) an NP[+arg, -pred] language. NP[+arg, -
pred] tells us, that members of the categorie N (and their phrasal
projections) can be mapped into arguments (for common nouns,
kinds), but not in predicates. In such a language nouns and their
maximal projections refer to kinds and every NP is of type <e> (or of

the argumental type arg). A property of such a language is that since NPs are argumental, bare nouns will be allowed to occur freely as arguments. In this language one ought to be able to say things like *Girl saw boy*. This means that all nouns are going to be mass, plural marking being absent. Example of such a language is Chinese and Japanese. (b) In type 2 NP[-arg, +pred] language every noun is a predicate. Since predicates cannot occur in argumental positions, such a language should disallow bare nominal arguments. The mass/count distinction is valid, as does the plural marking. Such a language is French, which disallows bare arguments. In a language of this sort we expect that an NP cannot be made into an argument without projecting D. This language has a phonologically null D. French evidently doesn't. Other languages, such as Italian, Spanish or Greek, as I will show, have this null D°.

In Italian bare plurals cannot occur in preverbal position, as we see in (2). They are acceptable only in object position , as illustrated in (3):

(2)   *Bambini sono venuti da noi*
        Kids came by us.

(3)   *Ho preso biscotti con il mio latte*
        (I) had cookies with my milk.   (Chierchia   1998:356)

© The last type is the type of NP[+arg, +pred] language. In this sort of language NPs are either predicates or arguments. They can denote kinds or predicates. They manifest the mass/count distinction. If a noun chooses to be of type pred <e,t> it will be count. So, plural marking will be able to apply to such a noun. Since count nouns are predicates they won't be able to occur bare as arguments. We won't be able to say thinks like *table is on the corner*. Plural nouns will be able to occur bare in argument position, like *dogs bark*. If a noun is of type arg, it will be mass and it will be able to occur as a bare argument; we will say things like *water is dripping on the floor*. Germanic belongs to this category.

Chierchia's Mapping Parameter does not offer a solution to the presence of bare singulars in argument position, in languages such as Greek. Let's turn now to Greek.

2. Greek does (not) fit the typology

Greek seems to pattern as an NP[-arg, +pred] language; it has the mass/count distinction as well as plural morphology. Bare plurals cannot occur in preverbal subject position, as shown in the example 4a, whereas they are acceptable as objects in post verbal positions as

illustrated in the examples 4b, as well as in 1b, c, d, as in Italian (see ex. 3):

(4)   a.   *Pedia   efagan   to psari
           KidsNOM   atePERF   the fishACC[5]
      b.   Egrafe   grammata   o Jannis[6]
           wroteIMP   lettersACC   the Jannis.

The difference between Greek and Romance is that in Greek bare singulars count nouns are acceptable in object position (see ex. 1c, d). In Sioupi 2001a, 2001b I have provided arguments for the existence of [7]a null D° for singularities in object position in Greek (see also "Anna Roussou & Ianthi M. Tsimpli 1993" about null D°). I have shown that Greek, has a phonological null D°, not only for pluralities, as Chierchia (1998) proposed for Italian, but also for singularities. Semantically null D° functions like a type-shifter, shifting the semantic type of the NP to that of an argument. I have also argued that bare singulars are kind-denoting too, as Chierchia (1998) has proposed for bare plurals in Italian ("Sioupi 2001a, 2001b").

3. Conclusions

In this talk I proposed an Extention of Chierchia's Nominal Mapping Parameter. I have shown that Greek, like Romance, is an NP[-arg, +pred] language. The difference is that in Greek there is a null D° not only for pluralities, as Chierchia suggests for Romance, but also for singularities. This null D° is projected in order for the bare NP to become an argument, and is acting as a type shifter to the kind interpretation.

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[5] See Artemis Alexiadou & Elena Anagnostopoulou 1999, Tests for Unaccusativity in a Language without Tests for Unaccusativity, *Proceedings of the 3rd International Conference on Greek Linguistics*, A. Mozer (ed.), Ellinika Grammata, p. 23-32.

[6] See Artemis, Alexiadou 1997, *Adverb Placement: A Case Study in Antisymmetric Syntax*, J. Benjamins, Amsterdam.

[7] Anna, Rousou & Ianthi M. Tsimpli, 1993, On the Interaction of Case and Definiteness, *Current Issues in Linguistic Theory* 117, *Themes in Greek Linguistics*, Philippaki-Warburton, K. Nicolaidis & M. Sifianou (eds.), J. Benjamins, p. 69-76.