



kansas
working
papers
in
linguistics

volume 10
number 1
1985

edited by

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Partial funding for this journal is provided by the
Graduate Student Council from the Student Activity Fee.

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University of Kansas, 1985

Kansas Working Papers in Linguistics

Volume 10, number 1, 1985

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FOREWORD

With this volume the *Kansas Working Papers in Linguistics* marks its first decade of publication. The editors are bringing out Volume 10 in two numbers, the first of which is devoted to theoretical issues, general linguistics, and old-world-language topics. Volume 10, number 2 is the fourth in the *Studies in Native American Languages* series.

Volume 10, number 1 is comprised of papers on topics as diverse as the theory of the sign, the comparison of language-specific entailment systems, and motherese in modern Greek. Much of the work represented here is quite original, and has seen little discussion before (Greek motherese, Igbo proverb and Idiom).

The editors wish to thank all the contributors, both those whose papers appear in Volume 10, number 1, and those whose papers we did not include. We wish also to thank the faculty of the Linguistics Department of the University of Kansas for their support and encouragement for the *KWPL* throughout the year.

RWL

GREEK MISMATCHES
OR
WHY THE SUBJECT DOES NOT ALWAYS ACCORD WITH THE VERB

Cornelia Pareskevas-Shepard

In Modern Greek, most of the time, the verb agrees with its subject in person and number. There are a number of cases, however, where this does not hold due to syntactic or pragmatic reasons; we can have a verb in the plural with a subject in the singular, or a verb in the singular with a subject in the plural. The aim of this paper is to examine these cases, where there is lack of agreement between the subject and the verb, and to offer an explanation for such phenomena.

The first case where a lack of agreement can be observed is when the subject of the verb is a derived subject instead of an underlying subject:

- (1) Oi kopeles fenetai na fevgoun.
The-pl.-fem. girls it-seems to they-leave

'The girls seem to be leaving.'

- (2) Ta agoria borei na erthoun
The-pl.-n. boys it-may to they-come

stis ennia.
at-the nine

'The boys may come at nine o'clock.'

An argument in support of a Raising transformation which would make the NP's oi kopeles and ta agoria the surface subjects of the sentences comes from what Postal calls a 'semantic clause:' "...semantically, such sentences are understood in such a way that the main clause subject NP and the infinitival complement represent jointly a single semantic clause...." Sentences (1) and (2), then, would have the following logical structure according to Postal's definition of a semantic clause:

(1') fenetai (i kopeles fevgoun)

(2') borei (ta agoria tha erthoun stis ennia)

A stronger argument in support of a Raising transformation comes from applying one of the syntactic tests used to determine whether there is Raising or equi-NP deletion; namely the use of idiom chunks:

- (3) Ta ksaderfia mou fenetai
 The-pl.-n. cousins mine it-seems
 na tis trone taktika.
 to them they-eat regularly
 'My cousins seem to be spanked regularly.'

- (4) Ta polla taksidia borei
 The-pl.-n. many-pl. trips it-may
 na tou ti dinoun.
 to to-him her they-give
 'A lot of trips may upset him.'

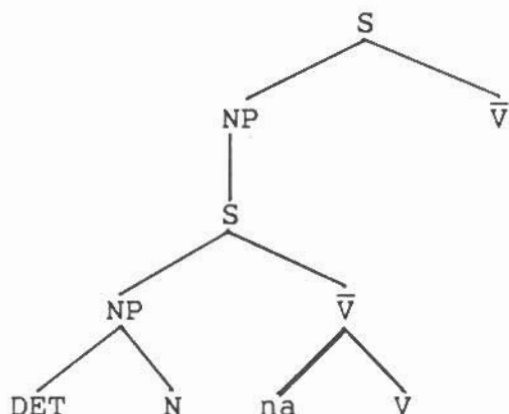
In sentences (3) and (4), if the form of the underlined main verb is changed from singular to plural, so that it agrees with the plural subject, the resulting sentence becomes ungrammatical:

- (3') *Ta ksaderfia mou fenondai
 The-pl.-n. cousins mine they-seem
 na tis trone taktika.
 to them they-eat regularly
 'My cousins seem to be spanked regularly.'

- (4') *Ta polla taksidia boroun
 The-pl.-n. many-pl. trips they-may
 na tou ti dinoun.
 to to-him her they-give
 'A lot of trips may upset him.'

What appears, then, to be the the subject of the whole sentence is not, in fact, the subject of the sentence in the underlying representation; rather, this is the subject of the complement clause and it becomes the surface subject of the whole sentence through a

Raising transformation. The underlying representation is as follows:



(N and V in the complement clause agree in number)

In terms of tense sequence, whenever borei or fenetai (both are third person singular) is used as the matrix sentence verb, the embedded clause can optionally contain a verb in the past tense; however, if fenondai or boroun (both are third person plural) is used, the embedded clause has to be in the same tense as the main verb, namely present:

- (5) Oi filoi mou {borei, *boroun }
 The-pl.-m. friends mine {it-may, *they-may}

na irthan prin tis 12.
 to they-came before the-pl. 12

'My friends may have come before 12 o'clock.'

- (6) Oi kleftes {fenetai, *fenondai }
 The pl.-m. thieves {it-seems, *they-seem}

na piran ola ta asimika mas.
 to they-took all the-pl. silver-pl. ours

'The thieves seem to have taken all our silver (objects)'

I believe that the verbs used in the grammatical versions of (5) and (6) permit a past-tense verb in their embedded clause because they are unmarked for tense, whereas the (*)verbs are clearly marked for tense

for tense by virtue of their endings, and they do not permit a past-tense verb in their embedded clause.

Thus, tenseless verbs such as fenetai and borei trigger Raising To Subject; furthermore, this raised subject does not agree with the main verb in number or person; this is the first case where there is lack of agreement between subject and main verb, and it is a result of syntactic processes.

The following sentence exhibits yet another instance of lack of agreement between the main verb and the subject; this 'mismatch,' however, is not due to syntactic, but rather to pragmatic reasons:

- (7) Irthan o Giorgos.
They-came the-masc.sg. George

'George (they) came.'

The subject of the sentence is in the singular, but the verb is in the plural. By saying 'Giorgos,' I do not commit myself to the statement: 'Only George came;' by using a plural verb together with Giorgos I am indicating that Giorgos and his family came; thus 'Giorgos' is used as a cover term for the whole family of which he is the head. Of course,, for me to be able to infer that George and his family came, it is necessary that I know that Giorgos has a family; it is part of the knowledge shared by me (the speaker) and the hearer(s). Therefore, this lack of agreement is on account of pragmatic factors.

The last case of lack of agreement between subject and verb is generalized by Kazazis and Pentheroudakis as follows:

- (8) V_{sg} NP₁ kai and NP₂

- (9) NP₁ me and NP₂ V_{pl}

In an explicit statement of the above generalizations, we find:

...if a conjoined subject (either NP₁ kai NP₂ or NP₁ me NP₂) precedes the verb, the verb is in the plural; if, on the other hand, such a conjoined subject follows the verb, the verb will be either in the singular or in the

plural. The choice between singular and plural will depend crucially on at least one variable, namely the number of the first noun phrase (NP₁) in the conjunct....

However, there seem to be exceptions to these generalizations; consider the sentence:

- (10) Menoun mazi o Kostas
 They-live together the-masc. Kostas
- {kai i, me tin } Maria.
 {and the-f., with the-f.} Maria

'Kostas and Maria live together.'

According to the above generalization, if the conjoined subject follows the verb, the verb will be either in the singular or in the plural, depending on the number of the first NP in the conjunct. In sentence (10), the number of the first NP is singular, but the verb is in the plural form; this would seem to contradict Kazazis' and Pentheroudakis' generalizations, especially since a sentence where the verb agrees in number with the first NP is ungrammatical:

- (11) *Menei mazi o Kostas
 He-lives together the-m. Kostas
- {kai i, me tin } Maria.
 {and the-f., with the-f.} Maria

'Kostas lives together with Maria.'

This, however, does not contradict Kazazis and Pentheroudakis (who, at the end of their paper, say that there may be semantic constraints on the verbs...); since 'togetherness' is explicit by virtue of the lexical item *mazi*, the verb can only be in the plural form; thus, an extension of the generalization would be: "if the conjoined subject follows the verb, the verb will be either in the singular or in the plural, depending on the number of the first NP; if, however, in the sentence there is explicit reference to 'togetherness' then the verb will obligatorily be in the plural form, else the resulting sentence is ungrammatical."

Another generalization we find in the same article is the following:

(12) NP₁ me_{with} NP₂ V_{sg}

(13) NP₁ me_{and} NP₂ V_{pl}

In the following pair of sentences, the verb is in the plural form but the resulting sentence is ungrammatical:

(14) To kreas me tis patates
The-n. meat with the-pl. potatoes

thelai prosohi sto psisimo.
wants attention in-the cooking

'The meat and the potatoes need attention while baking.'

(15) *To kreas me tis patates
The-n. meat with the-pl. potatoes

theloun prohosi sto psisimo.
they-want attention in-the cooking

'The meat and the potatoes need attention while baking.'

On the other hand, when we use kai (and) as a conjunction, we get the following pair of sentences:

(16) To kreas kai oi patates
The-n. meat and the-pl. potatoes

theloun prohosi sto psisimo.
they-want attention in-the baking

'The meat and the potatoes need attention while baking.'

- (17) *To kreas kai oi patates
 The-n. meat and the-pl. potatoes
 thelei prohosi sto psisimo.
 it-wants attention in-the cooking
 'The meat and the potatoes need attention
 while baking.'

In the pairs of sentences where me is used as a conjunction (14 and 15), only the sentence with the verb in the singular is grammatical; this is due to the fact that there is an 'inclusion' relation between the meat and the potatoes; that is, the potatoes are being cooked together with the meat in the same container, and to kreas is the primary NP. In sentences (16) and (17), however, the sentence containing the verb in the plural form (16) is the grammatical one, whereas the one with the verb in the singular (17) is ungrammatical; the NP's here have 'independent' status, therefore the verb must be in the plural form.

The same inclusion relation can be seen in the following pair of sentences which do not differ in terms of grammaticality, but differ in terms of the 'extra meaning' conveyed. Thus we have:

- (18) O Kostas me tin Anna
 The-masc. Kostas with the-fem. Anna
 pigan stin Ekali.
 they-went to-the-f. Ekali
 'Kostas and/with Anna went to Ekali.'

- (19) O Kostas me tin Anna
 The-m. Kostas with the-f. Anna
 pige stin Ekali.
 he-went to-the-f. Ekali
 'Kostas went to Ekali with Anna.'

The 'extra meaning' conveyed in sentence (19) is that Anna was almost 'dragged' to go there, or, in the case she is a child, 'held by the hand;' in sentence (18), however, both Kostas and Anna are viewed as equals. This distinction between 'inclusion' and 'equals' is

applicable to certain verbs only, depending on their semantic content. Thus, for example, we cannot have:

(20) *O Kostas me tin Anna
 The-m. Kostas with the-f. Anna

efage spiti mas hthes.
 he-ate home ours yesterday

'Kostas with Anna (he) ate at our house
 yesterday.'

Since, normally, both people eat when invited someplace, the verb in the singular form creates an ungrammatical sentence. Thus, depending on the type of verb we are using, the form of the verb (singular or plural) will be determined.

In conclusion, then, there are three major cases where there is lack of agreement between the subject and the verb: when the subject in the surface structure is derived through Raising (syntactic reasons), when the subject is used as a cover term, and finally, depending on the extra meanings to be conveyed, such as inclusion or equality relations (pragmatic reasons).

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