

Modern Greek MWEs, The Free Genitive and the Free Dative Genitives

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Drawing on a collection of ~1200 Modern Greek (MG) MWEs (Samaridi, 2014), we studied ~150 MG Verb MWEs containing free full genitive NPs or possessive pronouns or a Dative Genitive (DG). A comprehensive analysis of the DG in MG is yet to be provided. This study is confined to DGs within MWEs and attempts a detailed classification of MWE patterns containing free genitives aiming at facilitating MWE encoding and parsing.

1. The Genitives of Modern Greek

Modern Greek allows for genitives dependent on nominal heads that may be instantiated either by a full NP or a possessive pronoun (1) or a preverbal genitive (2) that is always a resumptive pronoun, the so-called Dative Genitive (morphologically it is a genitive that has the functions of the dative used in a similar way in older versions of Greek) [Tzartzanos, 1941]. These two types of genitive are not freely interchangeable (1), (2). Only one DG is allowed per verb predicate (3):

(1) Θέλω τα λεφτά μου /*μου θέλω τα λεφτά
want-1.SG the money POSS.1ST /*DG.1ST want-1.SG the money
“I want my money.”

(2) Χειρούργησαν το πόδι του / του χειρούργησαν το πόδι
operate-3.PL the leg-ACC poss.3RD /DG.3RD operate-3.PL the leg-ACC
“They operated on his leg.”

(3) *σου του έδωσα το βιβλίο
DG.2ND DG.3RD give-1.SG the book-ACC
“For you I gave him the book.”

The DG is thought to introduce an additional participant to an event [Tzartzanos, 1941]; this participant is not among the core arguments of the verb denoting the event (2), (4) and denotes an animate who is directly affected in a positive, or more often in a negative way.

(4) Μου ντύθηκες σαν μανεκέν
DG.1ST dress-2.SG like model

“I am pleased that /I scorn you that / in order to impress me...you dressed like a model.”

Typically, DGs are also used to indicate a human/animate participant in transfer events (give-take verbs) (9), even in the broader sense (speech verbs). In a way, the DG is reminiscent of English Dative Shift but it is not identical to it (Markantonatou, 1994).

2. Free Genitives in MWEs

Free (not fixed) genitives may occur in three distinct forms in MWEs:

1. *Full genitive NP dependent on a nominal (38 in our dataset)*

(5) Έφαγαν την σκόνη του Διαμαντίδη /*του έφαγαν τη σκόνη
ate-3.PL the dust-ACC the Diamantidis-GEN /DG.3RD ate-3.PL the dust-ACC
“They lagged behind Diamantidis.”

2. *Possessive pronoun controlled by the subject (6) or the object (7) (42 in our dataset)*

(6) Η Ελένη_j τρώει τα νύχια της_j
the Helen-NOM eat-3.PL the nails-ACC POSS.3RD
“Helen is worried.”

(7) Βάζω τον Γιώργο_j στη θέση του_j
put-1.SG the George-ACC to-the position POSS.3RD
“I straighten up George.”

3. *Dative Genitive (DG) (9 in our dataset)*

(8) Του έκοψε τα πόδια ο Γιώργος
DG.3RD cut-3.SG the legs-ACC the George-NOM
“George terrified/disheartened him.”

3. Free Dative Genitives in MWEs

A classification of the MWEs that license a free DG follows:

1. *MWEs with a free σε (to)-PP (9)/από (from)-PP (indicating human/animate)(60 in our dataset)*

(9) Η Ελένη έριξε χυλόπιτα στον Γιώργο / του έριξε χυλόπιτα η Ελένη
the Eleni-NOM threw noodles-ACC to-the George /DG.3RD threw noodles-ACC the Eleni
“George got the mitten from Eleni.”

2. *MWEs with a free DG as part of the fixed MWE syntax (8) (9 in our dataset)*

The DG constitutes an integral part of MG MWE structure. Compare (8) with (10) that admits a free genitive NP but can only take a compositional meaning:

(10) ο Γιώργος έκοψε τα πόδια του Γιάννη
the George-NOM cut-3.SG the legs-ACC the Giannis-GEN
“George amputated Giannis’ legs.”

3. *MWEs with a free DG alternating with a free genitive NP (11)*

(11) η αγωνία τρώει τα σωθικά της Ελένης /η αγωνία της τρώει τα σωθικά
the agony-NOM eats the guts-ACC the Helen-GEN / the agony-NOM DG.3RD eats the guts
“Agony eats at Eleni/Agony eats at her.”

A free DG may replace a free genitive NP iff:

A. *There are no binding phenomena* (compare (12) with (6) and (13) with (7) and all of them with (2)). The phenomenon seems to be due to more general properties of MG resumptive pronouns that can not be bound by a co-argument.

(12) *της_j η Ελένη_j τρώει τα νύχια

(13) *του_j βάζω τον Γιώργο_j στη θέση

B. *The NP denotes a person directly affected in the situation denoted by the MWE.* Compare (11), where the free genitive NP denotes the person affected by the situation denoted by the MWE, with (5) where it does not.

References

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