BOOK REVIEWS

Elena Anagnostopoulou. *The Syntax of Ditransitives: Evidence from Clitics*. Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter, 2003. 379 pages. ISBN 3110170280. \$114.40 (Hb).

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1. Description

This monograph by Elena Anagnostopoulou (hereafter EA) probes ditransitive constructions with her focus being double object constructions (e.g. *John passed Mary the ring*) crosslinguistically, rather than ditransitives involving PPs (e.g. *John passed the ring to Mary*) — although the latter also enter into the discussion. EA's main claims, adapting her own summary, are the following (p.190):

- (1) EA's proposal
 - a. *Locality*: Movement is blocked by intervening features; in A-movement these are EPP (roughly equivalent to 'strong' categorial) features and gender/animacy features.
 - b. *Minimal Domains*: The above is relativised to Minimal Domains. Furthermore, Locality might be obviated in the event of clitic doubling because in this way the relevant Minimal Domain is extended.
 - c. *vAPPL*: In the double object construction, the Goal argument is introduced as the specifier of a *vAPPL*, an applicative light verb.
 - d. *Dative Case*: The Case for which a Goal argument is marked is not necessarily a tell-tale sign that it is introduced by *vAPPL* — in other words, a dative argument might behave as a PP (hence the equivalent of *to Mary* in the English examples cited above).¹

To condense, double object constructions involve an applicative head *vAPPL*, with all ordering and cooccurrence restrictions between arguments being reducible to Locality. Locality can be obviated via clitic doubling, as illustrated by the following Greek examples — EA's examples (31) and (33) respectively:

- (2)?* *To vivlio χ aristike tis Marias apo ton Petro.*
 the book.NOM award.NON-ACTIVE the Maria.DAT from the Petros
 ?* “The book was awarded Mary by Peter.”
- (3) *To vivlio tis χ aristike (tis Marias).*
 the book.NOM CL.DAT award.NON-ACTIVE the Maria.DAT
 “The book was awarded to Mary.”

Chapter 1 succinctly introduces the data and the problem, as well as the claims to be made in the book. Chapter 2 offers an overview of the relevant data (focusing on Greek): accusative–dative and accusative–PP combinations as well as clitic doubling of dative arguments. Dative arguments in passives, unaccusatives, and with the verb *fenete* (“seem”) are also reviewed in detail. The last section of this chapter reviews the related issues in a number of languages ranging from English to Bantu. Chapter 3 is the core of the monograph; after an overview of previous accounts, EA moves on to offer an analysis of double objects along the following lines: First, morphological case may or may not be the manifestation of structural Case; the dative argument may be merged low and effectively behave like a PP or it may be merged high, in the specifier of an applicative head, essentially acting as an ‘active’ argument. Second, whether it bears structural or inherent Case, the argument closest to the attractor (typically T or ν) will move (first), along Minimality lines; but, third, pace Minimal Domains: if both arguments are in the same Minimal Domain, then they are equidistant from the attractor. The above analysis is expounded by drawing from a rich inventory of Romance and Germanic languages, from Japanese, and, of course, from Greek. A discussion of finite complements of raising verbs with reference to *fenete* (“seem”) concludes the chapter.

Chapter 4 is dedicated to the obviating effect of clitic doubling, illustrated in (3) above. A clitic, being the spelling out of raised formal features of the doubled DP, extends the Minimal Domain to which it belongs, rendering it equidistant with potential interveners also targeting T or ν . The discussion is extended to the obviating effect of scrambling in Dutch, while A’ movement in Romance and Greek is explained as counter-cyclic but in concord with Chomskyan phases. A look into clitic doubling in Spanish, where the operation applies differently from Greek, and an excursus into comparing clitic doubling with expletive-associate chains conclude the chapter. Chapter 5 offers a unified account for the Person–Case constraint, illustrated in (4) — EA’s example (342), and the Icelandic prohibition against agreeing with 1st and 2nd person nominative objects, exemplified in (5) — EA’s example (353).

- (4) **þa tu me stílune.*

FUT CL.3SG.DAT.NEUT/MASC CL.ACC.1SG send.3PL

"They will send me to him."

- (5) **henni leiddumst við*

she.DAT was.bored.by.1PL us.NOM

"She was bored by us."

Both restrictions are taken to result from the following procedure: in order to receive Case, both arguments must check all their ϕ -features against v (in the Person–Case variety of the constraint) or T (in the Icelandic nominative objects variety thereof). In both (4) and (5), the dative bears an active person feature and, being introduced by a higher applicative head, moves/agrees first in order to check its feature against T/ v , thus eliminating T/ v 's person feature. Hence, if the *other* argument, the Theme, also bears a person feature, it will be unable to check it. An overview of the differences between the Person–Case constraint and the Icelandic prohibition against agreeing 1st and 2nd person nominative objects as well as extensions of the account conclude the chapter and the book.

2. Discussion–Evaluation

In this painstakingly researched and carefully argued book, the author surveys a topic of enormous scope (double object constructions and a host of related matters) while achieving at the same time a focus on particular issues and a (partial) unifying of seemingly idiosyncratic phenomena in individual languages (including Japanese, Greek, Dutch, German, Icelandic, French, and Spanish). This is no easy task to undertake, but EA carries it out with remarkable success. A crucial advantage of her analysis is that it works in two ways: it uses a number of established grammatical mechanisms to explain the facts, and at the same time, it underlines the necessity of most, if not all, such mechanisms. Thus, *The Syntax of Ditransitives* emerges as a valuable work both for those interested in aspects of Universal Grammar and for those interested in the syntax of Greek.

Let us first see what there is in this work for those mainly interested in Universal Grammar. Looking at the proposal, as outlined in (1) above, we realise that the claims in clauses (a) and (b) are fairly uncontroversial and already amply substantiated. Clause (c) is a proposal originally made by Marantz (1993) and has the added virtue of unifying double object constructions

with prototypical applicative constructions, e.g. in Bantu languages (cf. a brief survey of Bantu on pp. 34–38), although this issue is not adequately stressed by EA. Finally, clause (d) is the result of the bulk of empirical data discussed throughout the monograph. Hence, the proposal is simple and straightforward, without burdening Syntax with a number of outlandish mechanisms. Actually, EA proposes just one parameter on page 236, to distinguish between symmetric and asymmetric double object languages. Consequently, her methodological parsimony and theoretical discipline are to be praised, especially in the face of very diverse empirical data, which she succeeds in drawing together and interpreting in a compelling account.

A second virtue of the monograph, in this context, is the extensive empirical support provided for theoretical concepts such as the Minimal Domain, multiple specifiers, and even ‘tuck-in’ (viz. the ability of Move to violate the Extension Condition). As debates over theoretical viewpoints, such as the existence of multiple specifiers, are ongoing and notoriously hard to resolve, the merit of the book in this respect as well should be evident. To make a long story short here, EA’s results are extremely difficult to replicate if one replaces multiple specifiers of light verbs (*vAPPL* and the more familiar transitive *v*) with single specifiers of placeholder heads, because Minimal Domain effects are then either lost or virtually impossible to capture.

Let us now turn to what the monograph has to offer the Greek syntax enthusiast: nothing less than a convincing and descriptively adequate account of double object constructions — in the sense that no special assumptions about the syntax of Greek need be made. EA looks at the environments where dative objects show up in the language (transitive, passive, unaccusative, raising) and either sheds ample light on or actually discovers ordering restrictions resulting from:

- a. the fact that Greek dative Goal arguments are always merged higher than Themes in Greek;
- b. Locality; and
- c. ways these can (not) be obviated — cf. the discussion above and examples (2) and (3).

The behaviour of dative Goals differs from that of PP Goals — example (2) becomes perfect if *tis Marias* is replaced by *sti Maria* (“to Mary”) — because PPs are not merged as specifiers of *vAPPL*, but inside VP, hence in the same Minimal Domain as the theme *to vivlio* (“the book”), which can now be attracted by T without violating Locality. In the meantime, Superiority is furtively but

solidly demonstrated to actually exist in Greek, although it is violable when the *wh*-elements are D-linked (pp. 139–140 and endnotes 51 and 52).

I now turn to examining three serious issues that arise from the work. The first is a problem of empirical character, the second has to do with the scope of the analysis in a particular point of the monograph, and the last stems from a more general problem concerning the nature of grammar.

2.1 Gender/animacy features as interveners

The most serious problem in EA's book involves data in her examples (287) to (291) and their interpretation. This is rather paradoxical, given the generally meticulous stance of the author towards disputable empirical evidence, where native intuitions may diverge significantly. A token of this stance is recorded in endnotes 51 and 52, regarding Superiority in Greek, where she discusses precise contexts where D-linking can lead to Superiority violations, as spontaneously produced during an informal survey. A similar hedge regarding Weak Crossover is raised in endnote 49. Generally speaking, EA is careful to report any divergent intuitions mentioned in the literature or via personal communications for all the languages she studies extensively (cf. for instance the careful discussion of Icelandic data on pp. 255–259).

Sadly, no such caveats can be found in the last part of Section 2 in Chapter 4 (pp. 199–204). The author probes clitic constructions with an accusative clitic and a full dative DP, trying to establish that an animacy/gender feature on the dative DP prevents animate accusative clitics from crossing over them. As expected, this is obviated if the dative object is also cliticised. In example (287) the hypothetical contrast is illustrated using the verb *sistino* ("introduce, recommend") which allegedly "enforces an animate interpretation of the [accusative] clitic" (p. 202). The first problem is that *sistino*, apart from "introduce", also means "recommend", hence hardly enforcing an animate interpretation:

- (6) *mu sistisan ton yatro / ton militi*
 CL.DAT.1SG recommended the doctor the cider
 "They introduced/recommended the doctor to me."
 "They recommended the cider to me."

Nevertheless, even with an intended interpretation where the accusative clitic is animate, an intervention effect hardly obtains; observe the crucial examples below, EA's (287b) and (288b) respectively:

- (7) *tin sistisa tu ađelfu mu*
CL.ACC.FEM introduced.1SG the brother.DAT my
- (8) *θa ton stilo tis Marias yia tis diakopes*
FUT CL.ACC.MASC send.1SG the Mary.DAT for the vacations.ACC
“I will send him to Mary for the vacations.”

Two points must be made here: First, both examples are given a “*?” in the book, contrasting them with examples featuring neuter inanimate accusative clitics, such as (289c) which the author marks as “?”. Nevertheless, no such contrast obtains. Actually, only some of the native speakers I consulted detected a slight markedness of examples with either animate — as in (7) and (8) — or inanimate accusative clitics. Thus, no animate–inanimate contrast is detectable, as both classes of examples have the status of “?”, at worst. Second, and in order not to give the impression that I intend to engage in a dispute on minutiae here, any perceptible markedness of (7) and (8) is not potent enough so as to warrant a treatment along the lines of an intervention effect by an alleged ‘animacy/gender feature’. To be sure, the native speakers among the readers are invited to compare the status of (7) and (8) with the sharp ungrammaticality of (2): in the latter case, a categorial feature intervenes, violating Locality; in the former, probably nothing does and any markedness must be captured otherwise.

The discussion in the passage becomes even more problematic because of the utter grammaticality/acceptability of some of the data EA disputes the grammaticality of. Example (290) on p. 202, repeated below as (9), is the most striking case.

- (9) a. *o Petros eyrapse mia karta ke*
the Peter wrote a card.ACC.FEM and
- b. *tin estile tis Marias*
CL.ACC.FEM sent.3SG the Maria.DAT.FEM
“Peter wrote a card and he sent it to Mary.”
- c. *tin estile tu Kosta*
CL.ACC.FEM sent.3SG the Kostas.DAT.MASC
“... he sent it to Costas.”

Extremely surprisingly, (9b) as a continuation of (9a) is deemed to “greatly improve” over the likes of (9c), which is given a “??” due to a sort of illicit “gender matching”. Nevertheless, *absolutely no* contrast was detected by a number of native speakers and no “gender matching” effect can be motivated.

Briefly, the role of animacy/gender features as interveners in transitives, has been quite exaggerated, if not absolutely misjudged. The data certainly

provides no serious evidence whatsoever for it and the whole relevant section is certainly out of kilter with the rest of the monograph, both in terms of methodological rigour and reliability of data.

2.2 Binding and reconstruction

Turning to a different issue, I wish to focus on issues of binding discussed on pp.208–210. The author surveys cases of backward binding and moves on to suggest that:

subject reconstruction is sometimes obligatory, a conclusion which is supported by the behavior of derived subjects with respect to [Binding] Principle C. In the transitive constructions in (297) [= (10)], reconstruction is optional ... [O]n the other hand reconstruction is obligatory ... with experiencer predicates [and] a disjoint reference effect arises [as in (298) = (11) below]. (p.209)

- (10) [*i mitera tu Petru_i*] *tu_i efere fajito*
 the mother the Peter.GEN CL.DAT brought food
 “Peter’s mother brought him food.”

- (11) * [*o filos tis Marias_i*] *tis_i aresi poli*
 the friend the Maria.GEN CL.DAT please.3SG a.lot
 “Mary’s boyfriend appeals to her a lot.”

The contrast between (10) and (11) is indeed a sharp and interesting one. Nevertheless, the author effectively glosses over research that attempts to put backward binding in Greek and other null subject languages in a wider context by also considering Clitic-V-S orders such as in (12) and (13), where coreference is absolutely impossible, and by comparing them with the likes of (10):

- (12) * *tu_i milise [*i mitera tu Petru_i*]*
 CL.DAT talked the mother the Peter.GEN
 “Peter’s mother talked to him.”

- (13) * *tin_i fonakse [*i mitera tis Sofias_i*]*
 CL.ACC called the mother the Sophia.GEN
 “Sophia’s mother called her.”

Such works include Cecchetto (1999), Tsiplakou (1998: 65–70, 170–178, 1999) and Cardinaletti (2001). A number of solutions is offered in these works and more options are opened up if one considers the matter in a crosslinguistic perspective (as in Panagiotidis & Tsiplakou 2005). The above works should be consulted before any further research on the problem that could lead to some

more concrete answers, although the author herself already makes some interesting conjectures in endnote 70.

2.3 The Person–Case constraint and the nature of feature checking

I turn finally to Chapter 5 of the book where the Person–Case constraint and the Icelandic prohibition against agreeing with 1st and 2nd person nominative objects are described, unified, and explained. The analysis here, backed by a wealth of empirical data, is also Locality-based and carries out the task in an exciting and successful fashion, while catering to those cases where the two restrictions do not show up (cf. the investigation of Swiss German). Nevertheless, a matter of theoretical concern arises here.

Concentrating here on the Person–Case constraint, Anagnostopoulou's account involves dative clitics moving first, as they are merged in the specifier of *vAPPL*, higher than Themes. Dative clitics bear a Person feature, even when they are marked as '3rd person' (pp. 267–272), hence invariably checking the uninterpretable Person feature on *v*. When it is the turn of the accusative clitic to move to *v*, tucking in below the dative one, this must not be marked for (1st or 2nd) Person, as the relevant feature on *v* has already been checked by the dative clitic and there are no Person features to match those of the accusative clitic. The author clarifies:

[1st and 2nd person] arguments entering Move/Agree must check their P[erson] features In other words, accusative, absolutive and nominative arguments must check the complete set of their ϕ -features. ... Complete checking of ϕ -features of DPs is required in order for structural Case checking to take place as a result of Move or Agree (in line with Chomsky 2000, 2001). (p. 274)

Although the account does get the facts right and relies on the mechanism for Case independently developed by Chomsky, I am rather unhappy with one of its key assumptions, namely that ϕ -features of DPs need checking. As is obvious, ϕ -features on DPs must be interpretable, especially Person and Number features, given that they provide crucial information for their LF interpretation: speech event participation and individuation respectively (for elucidation, see Halle 1997 and Harley & Ritter 2002, among many others). That much is the consensus of the overwhelming majority of the literature. The question then poses itself: why should *interpretable* ϕ -features on DPs, or anywhere, require checking? Even though the conceptually elegant model of Case checking

in Chomsky (2000, 2001) — followed by EA — does provide an answer to this, it is nevertheless an ad-hoc answer.

In fact, given that checking was originally proposed by Chomsky (1995) as a means for a derivation to eliminate (or, later, value — actually, maybe *both*) uninterpretable features, the proposed checking of interpretable features voids the notion and, ultimately, defeats the purpose of checking as a grammatical mechanism. True, maybe the complete set of interpretable ϕ -features of each DP argument does actually need to match (uninterpretable) ϕ -features of T, v , and so on for the purposes of Case assignment. What must not be lost in theorising, though, is that this matching process *cannot* be reduced to checking. Whether a novel mechanism that relates syntactic features ('matching') needs to be postulated, whether Agree needs to be refined and redefined, or whether EA's whole analysis needs to be abandoned (certainly the least desirable option, given its elegance and explanatory achievements, compared for instance with the morphological account in Bonet 1991) is beyond the scope of this review.

3. Conclusion

The monograph stands out as a remarkable achievement. It is truly minimalist in spirit, in exactly every aspect that is good about minimalism: a greater explanatory power of a falsifiable theory coupled with methodological thriftiness. Although dense in style and argumentation, I believe it will serve as a reference work for future research into Locality and ditransitives, as should be evident from my remarks.

References

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Note

1. I use the term 'dative' throughout to denote the inherent/quirky/structural Case that Goals bear, instead of 'genitive'. Using the term 'genitive', as often done in the context of Modern Greek syntax, may confuse those not familiar with the language and its historical accidents (in southern Greek varieties dative has been replaced by the morphological genitive, but in northern Greek varieties by the morphological accusative). I wish to thank Arhonto Terzi for raising this point with me.

David Holton, Peter Mackridge & Irene Philippaki-Warbuton.
Greek: An Essential Grammar of the Modern Language. (= *Essential Grammars*.) London: Routledge, 2004. 279, xiii pages. ISBN
 0415232104. \$25.95.

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The same team of people that produced *Greek: A Comprehensive Grammar of the Modern Language* (Routledge 1997, reprinted 1999) now brings us a distilled version of that work, whose intended goal is to serve as a reference guide for students of Greek who are still in the beginning stages of learning the language. The authors are well aware of the restricted scope of their new work and