The role of Spec,vP in clitic doubling
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This presentation highlights the relevance of the presence/absence of external arguments for the morphological makeup of verbs, with particular emphasis on Modern Greek data. I demonstrate that applicative morphemes (APPL) are not uniformly zero morphemes in Greek (as traditionally assumed for familiar European languages; Baker 1988, Marantz 1993), but that they can undergo selective Spell-Out at phase boundary. There is good evidence suggesting that the Spell-Out of these morphemes is sensitive for the presence of external arguments and it furthermore reveals an incremental Spell-Out pattern for morphologically complex verbs. Following Demonte (1995), Pylkkänen (2002), Cuervo (2003) and others, I assume that Greek APPL is “low” and when spelled out, it surfaces as a dative clitic. A discourse-insensitive form of dative cliticization systematically emerges in passives (1-2), dyadic unaccusatives (3a-b), raising (4a-b) and Belletti & Rizzi’s (1988) Class III psych constructions, (5). APPL is thus arguably spelled out in the absence of external arguments:

(1) to vivlío (tis) dóthike tis Marias
the book CL was-given the Mary.DAT
'the book was given Mary'
(2) tis Mariás (tis) dóthike ena vivlío
the Mary.DAT CL was-given a book.NOM
'Mary was given the book'

(3) a. to grámma (tis) irthe tis Mariás grígora
the letter CL came the Maria.DAT fast
'the letter came to Mary fast'
b. tis Mariás (tis) irthe éna gramma grígora
the Maria.DAT CL.DAT came a letter fast
'the letter came to Mary fast'

(4) a. o Jannis (tis) fénete tis Marías éksipnos
the Jannis CL.DAT seems the Maria.DAT clever
b. tis Marías (tis) fénete éksipnos o Jannis
the Mary.DAT CL.DAT seem clever the Jannis
'Jannis seems clever to Maria'

(5) a. tis Mariás (tis) arési to krasí
the Mary CL.DAT please the wine.NOM
'Mary likes the wine'
b. to krasí (tis) arési tis Marías
the wine CL.DAT please the Mary.DAT
'the wine pleases Mary'

A purely MLC-based explanation for the cliticization patterns (as in Anagnostopoulou 2003) is suboptimal, because the cliticization also recurs in local movement, when the dative DP occurs preverbally. Such movement should cancel intervention effects, because movement of the dative DP also pied-pipes the intervening formal features. Also, the linguistic data turns out to be too probabilistic to convincingly indicate an MLC/Case checking violation.

A simple alternative explanation can be provided with a generalized Doubly Filled Comp Filter (Sportiche 1992, Koopman 2000, Koopman & Szabolcsi 2000, Pearson 2005) which forces Spell-Out of a head in the absence of Specifiers. APPL moves to √v and subsequently to v where APPL undergoes Spell-Out due to absence of Specifiers (external arguments). Following Chomsky (1995) and Embick (1998), I assume that external arguments merge to Spec,vP in Greek. This way of reasoning provides immediate explanation for the presence of the dative clitic in (1-5) and also accounts for the fact that the omission of the clitic would not produce sharp ungrammaticality: the dative clitic is a reduplicative agreement marker (the scenario is generally known and well-documented typologically). The DFCF-approach will be shown to capture a significant amount of cross-linguistic variation, if languages can choose to merge external arguments either to Voice or v (these heads being separate). I assume that languages like Spanish, where dative cliticization systematically occurs also in the active voice merge the external argument to Spec,Voice. Therefore, vP remains configurationally similar to Greek passive/unaccusative vP. Adverb placement tests support this conclusion.

The discussion has important repercussions for the current understanding of clitics and clitic doubling, because the Greek data makes it clear that clitics are not the same items in the active and passive voice. They might be D-items in the active voice (Uriagereka 1995), but a species of agreement markers in passives. Any “unified” approach to cliticization will therefore necessarily involve the interplay of at least two strategies. (word count: 634)