Nominal Ellipsis and Gender in Greek
Yasutada Sudo (UCL) & Giorgos Spathas (Universität Stuttgart)

Summary
Greek has three classes of masculine-feminine (M-F) noun pairs that differ in whether nominal ellipsis with a gender mismatch is possible (Merchant 2014). Building on the observation that different classes of gendered nouns show different behavior in certain focus constructions, we claim that some genders are presuppositional in nature, while others are both presuppositional and asserted, and develop an analysis of nominal ellipsis with gender mismatches in Greek.

1 Three Classes of Gendered Nouns

Three classes of (Masculine)-Feminine noun pairs in Greek with respect to nominal ellipsis with gender mismatches (Merchant 2014; see Bobaljik & Zocca 2011 for other languages).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class</th>
<th>adhēforos-grātos (brother-sister)</th>
<th>adhēforos-grātos (doctor)</th>
<th>dhaskalo-dhaskalo (teacher)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Class I</td>
<td>only masculine nouns are elided</td>
<td>only masculine nouns are elided</td>
<td>only masculine nouns are elided</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class II</td>
<td>only feminine nouns are elided</td>
<td>only masculine nouns are elided</td>
<td>only masculine nouns are elided</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class III</td>
<td>only feminine nouns are elided</td>
<td>only feminine nouns are elided</td>
<td>only feminine nouns are elided</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(1) a. O Petros episkelthere enan aderforo to sti Veria, ke mia (aderfori) stin Katerini. The petros the petros one.m brother in.the Veria, and one.f sister in.the Katerini (intended) Petros a brother of his in Veria, and a (sister) in Katerini.1
b. O Petros episkelthere mia aderfori tu sti Veria, ke enan (aderfori) stin Katerini. Petros one.m a brother of his in Veria, and one.f a sister in Katerini.

(2) a. O Petros episkelthere enan jatros sti Veria, ke mia (jatros) stin Katerini. The petros the petros one.m a doctor in the Veria, and one.f a doctor in the Katerini. Petros a doctor of his in Veria, and a doctor in Katerini.1
b. O Petros episkelthere mia jatros sti Veria, ke enan (jatros) stin Katerini. Petros one.m a doctor in the Veria, and one.f a doctor in the Katerini. Petros a female doctor of his in Veria, and a doctor in Katerini.

(3) a. O Petros episkelthere enan dhaskalo sti Veria, ke mia (dhaskalo) stin Katerini. The petros the petros one.m a teacher in the Veria, and one.f a teacher in the Katerini. Petros a teacher of his in Veria, and a teacher in Katerini. (intended) Petros a female teacher of his in Veria, and a male teacher in Katerini.1
b. O Petros episkelthere mia dhaskalo sti Veria, ke enan (dhaskalo) stin Katerini. Petros one.m a teacher in the Veria, and one.f a teacher in the Katerini. Petros a teacher of his in Veria, and a female teacher in Katerini.

(4) a. [adhēforos] = λυτη μεχα (x) * siblix (x)
b. [aderfori] = λυτη μεχα (f) * siblix (f)

(5) [jatros] = λυτη μεχα (x) * siblix (x)

(6) a. [dhaskalo] = λυτη μεχα (x) * siblix (x)
b. [dhaskalo] = λυτη μεχα (f) * siblix (f)

Class II nouns and Class III masculine nouns don't have any gender specification. This is independently motivated by the unmarkedness of these noun relative to their feminine counterparts:

- Masculine plural nouns in Class II and III can refer to mixed gender groups.
- Negative existentials with Class II and III masculine nouns include both genders.

(7) a. Mono o Petros ine aderforo tu Jani. only the petros is. brother in Jani the gen Jani,gen 'Only Petros is a brother of Jani.'
b. Mono o Maria ine aderfi tu Jani. only the maria is. sister in Jani,gen 'Only Maria is a sister of Jani.'

(8) a. Mono o Petros ine jatros tu Jani. only the petros is. doctor in Jani,gen 'Only Petros is a good doctor.'
b. Mono o Maria ine kalos jatros. only the maria is. good.m doctor 'Only Maria is a good doctor.'

(9) a. Mono o Petros ine dhaskalo. only the petros is. teacher.m 'Only Petros is a teacher.'
b. Mono o Maria ine dhaskalo. only the maria is. teacher.f 'Only Maria is a teacher.'

3 Maximize Presupposition and Ellipsis

Our semantics (5) and (6) do not account for:

(12) 'Maria ine kalos jatros. the maria is. good.m doctor'
(13) 'Maria ine dhaskalo. the maria is. teacher.m'

Following previous literature, we analyse these data as violating the pragmatic principle Maximum Presupposition (MP), which forces the use of the feminine form whenever possible (Percus 2006, Sauerland 2008, a.o.; cf. Heim 1991).

We claim that (3) is accounted for by assuming that MP only targets overt material.

(14) Maximum Presupposition (MP):
S is infelicitous in (local) context if it is such that:
- The presuppositions triggered by overt items in S are stronger than the presuppositions triggered by overt items in S;
- The presuppositions of S are satisfied in c.

We analyse the elided noun in (3) is actually identical to the antecedent, and hence involves a gender mismatch, as in (15). The non-elliptical version of (15a) is ruled out by MP.

(15) a. O Petros episkelthere enan dhaskalo sti Veria, ke mia (dhaskalo) stin Katerini. Petros the petros one.m a teacher in the Veria, and one.f a teacher in the Katerini. Petros a teacher of his in Veria, and a teacher in Katerini.1
b. O Petros episkelthere mia dhaskalo sti Veria, ke enan (dhaskalo) stin Katerini. Petros one.m a teacher in the Veria, and one.f a teacher in the Katerini. Petros a female teacher of his in Veria, and a male teacher in Katerini.

A nice prediction of this account is that when nominal ellipsis occurs in a focus construction, the unmarkedness of the elided masculine noun shows up.

(16) I persistori apoi emas den enun dhaskalo stin Katerini... the more from us not to have teacher.m in the Katerini:
- The rest don’t have male or female teacher.
- The rest don’t have male or female teacher.

2 Gendered Nouns in Focus Constructions

- (7)–(9) suggest that presuppositions are ignored in focus alternatives, but assertions are not (Spathas 2010, Jacobson 2012), giving independent support for our semantics. (Similar observations are made with superlatives)
- It is furthermore known that presuppositions are ignored under ellipsis, but not assertions (Fiengo & May 1994).
- Then, the lexical entries (4)–(5) account for the behaviour of Class I nouns and Class II nouns under nominal ellipsis, (1)–(2).
- So, the problem is the asymmetric nature of Class III nouns, (3), because ellipsis is usually not licensed under asymmetric entailment.

4 Natural vs. Grammatical Gender

Our analysis relies on the assumption that gender mismatches within a DP are tolerated. However, grammatical gender behaves differently in this regard, as in (17).

(17) 'Meni ine ena kalos kotorati, ali a Meni ine mia kaxa (kortis), the eleni a.m a good.m girl.n, but the Meni a.f a bad.f girl (intended) Eleni is a good girl, but Maria is a bad one.'

The ungrammaticality of this example does not follow from our account so far. Our tentative hypothesis is that syntax forces DP-internal agreement with grammatical gender. This presupposes that grammatical and natural gender have different status in syntax (cf. Alexiadou 2004, Kramer 2014).

Selected References:

Acknowledgments:
We would like to thank Maria Barouni, Stergios Chatzikyriakidis, Stella Gryllia, Petros Karatsareas, Dimitris Lazaridou-Chatzigoga, Marika Lekakou, Dimitris Micheloudakis for judgments, and Artemis Alexiadou, Patrick D. Elliott, and Dimitris Lazaridou-Chatzigoga, for helpful discussion and useful comments.

Contact: y.sudo@ucl.ac.uk

June 15, 2015

Agreement Across Borders
University of Zadar
June 15, 2015