

On Greek Left Dislocation*

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Περίληψη

Η παρούσα εργασία μελετά τη συντακτική δομή της Θεματοποίησης (*Topicalization*) στην Κοινή Νεοελληνική, συγκρίνοντάς την με τη δομή Αριστερής Εκτόπισης με κλιτικό (*Clitic Left Dislocation - CLLD*). Με βάση νέα εμπειρικά δεδομένα, υποστηρίζεται ότι τα δύο είδη μετατόπισης δεν έχουν κοινή συντακτική δομή, σε αντίθεση με τις αναλύσεις που έχουν προταθεί σε προηγούμενες μελέτες. Συγκεκριμένα, η εξέταση των συντακτικών ιδιοτήτων της Θεματοποίησης οδηγεί στο συμπέρασμα ότι σε αυτές τις δομές η φράση-θέμα εκτοπίζεται μέσω *A'*-μετακίνησης στην αριστερή περιφέρεια.

Λέξεις-κλειδιά: θεματοποίηση, αριστερή εκτόπιση με κλιτικό, *A'*-μετακίνηση, αριστερή περιφέρεια

1 Introduction

The present paper compares two topicalization constructions in Greek, namely *CLitic Left Dislocation* (CLLD) and *Topicalization*, both of which are associated with the dislocation of a topic phrase to the left periphery.¹ What differentiates them on the surface is the presence of a coindexed clitic (e.g. *το*) in the former (1) but not in the latter (2).

(1) Το παλτόι *(τ_{01})αγόρασε ο Κώστας
the coat-acc it=bought the Kostas.nom
'As for the coat, Kostas bought it'

(2) Παλτόι (* τ_{01})αγόρασε ο Κώστας
Coat.acc it=bought the Kostas.nom
'As for a coat, Kostas bought one'

(Panagiotidis 2002:76)

Although sentences like (1) have been extensively investigated (Tsimplici 1990, Anagnostopoulou 1994, Iatridou 1995, Grohmann 2003, Angelopoulos and Sportiche to appear a.o.), those in (2) have not received much attention, with few exceptions (Dimitriadis 1994, Panagiotidis 2002, Alexopoulou and Kolliakou 2002, Alexopoulou

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¹ The terms *topicalization*, a discourse function, and *Topicalization*, the syntactic construction under examination, should be kept apart.

and Folli 2019). The general line of analysis of Topicalization proposed in these studies is shown to be incompatible with the findings of the present paper.

In this paper I argue that Topicalization in Greek is syntactically realized as a run-of-the-mill A'-movement, alongside wh-/focus-fronting. The paper is organized as follows: the second section provides a brief presentation of CLLD and Topicalization in Greek. Section 3 focuses on the syntactic properties of the two structures at hand. In section 4, I provide an account for the structural behavior of Topicalization in Greek. Section 5 concludes the paper.

2 Background

It has been argued that the two topic-marking constructions in Greek, CLLD and Topicalization, exhibit a complementary distribution, depending on the referential properties of the left-dislocated DP (Dimitriadis 1994, Alexopoulou and Folli 2019). As Alexopoulou and Folli (2019) put it, the dislocation of *referential* topic-DPs (or *strong DPs*, including the 'strong NPs' and the 'weak NPs with strong reading', in the sense of Milsark 1977) requires CLLD, whereas the dislocation of a *non-referential* topic-DP (or a *weak DP* i.e. weak indefinites, bare DPs) involves a Topicalization construction.

Therefore, a CLLD configuration arises with dislocated definite DPs (1) or 'specific' indefinite nominals, as in (3).

(3) a. Μια κόκκινη φούστα₁, την₁=ψάχνω εδώ και μέρες . . .
'A red skirt, I 've been looking for it for a few days . . .

b. . . και δεν μπορώ να θυμηθώ που την έχω βάλει.
. . . but I cannot remember where I put it.'

(Alexopoulou and Folli 2019: 440-1)

In (3a), the presence of a clitic pronoun forces the 'specific' reading of the indefinite 'a red skirt' in the sense that the speaker refers to a specific skirt they have in mind (see the possible continuation (3b)).

CLLD, as shown in (3a), involves a dislocated topic phrase at the left periphery 'Μια κόκκινη φούστα₁' and a coindexed resumptive clitic 'την₁' associated with (or occupying) an A-position related to the topic phrase (Cinque 1990, see Iatridou 1995, Anagnostopoulou 1994 a.o., for more information on CLLD in Greek).² The type of the chain linking the topic phrase with the corresponding A-position is still a matter of debate (see Angelopoulos and Sportiche to appear and the references therein).

On the other hand, Topicalization in Greek is associated with the left dislocation of a bare noun, as in (2), or a 'non-specific' indefinite DP, as in (4).³

² The decision whether clitics in Greek function as arguments themselves or as mediating elements in the dependency between the dislocated topic and a pro/copy (see Philippaki-Warbuton et al. 2004, for a review on this topic) is not crucial for the current purposes. Here, I follow the first option providing clitics with a referential index, for expository reasons.

³ For space reasons I have ignored the cases of CP topicalization (see Dimitriadis 1994).

(4) a. Μια κόκκινη μπλούζα₁, Ø₁=ψάχνω εδώ και ένα μήνα . . .
 'A red blouse, I 've been looking for for a month now . . .

b. . . και δε μπορώ να βρω πουθενά καμιά που να μου αρέσει.
 . . and I cannot find one that I like anywhere'

(Alexopoulou and Folli 2019: 441)

In Topicalization sentences, as in (4), no overt coreferential clitic is involved, unlike CLLD. However, prior research (Dimitriadis 1994, Panagiotidis 2002, Alexopoulou and Folli 2019) emphasized that despite appearances, both constructions have the same syntactic structure. For instance, Dimitriadis (1994) and Panagiotidis (2002) assume the presence of a 'null indefinite clitic', indicated as 'Ø' in (4). In this way, CLLD and Topicalization are kept as PF-variants of the same syntactic configuration. The following section provides evidence against this hypothesis.

Note that in both CLLD and Topicalization the dislocated phrase is a *topic*. Following Rizzi (1997), I assume that topic-marking is syntactically encoded through a functional projection Top(ic)P at the left periphery. Since both CLLD and Topicalization are topic strategies, we are forced to conclude that the same Topic projection is involved in these two constructions. The claim that both CLLD and Topicalization are topic-marking strategies, if not self-evident, is supported by the fact that a number of properties traditionally related to topic-marking are found in these constructions. For instance the dislocated phrase is compatible with old information and is separated by a comma intonation from the rest of the sentence where new information is expressed (= Comment).

To summarize, the two topic-strategies in Greek show a complementary distribution: CLLD involves a referential/specific topic while Topicalization a non-referential topic. However, this descriptive generalization seems to leave room for some (probably only apparent) exceptions. For instance, there exist some 'idiosyncratic' cases of CLLDed non-referential topics when a modal reading is at stake as in (5) (cf. Kazazis and Pentheroudakis 1976, Anagnostopoulou 1994: fn.4):⁴

(5) Ένα ουζάκι θα το₁=έπινα
 An ouzo.acc would it=drink.1.sg
 'An ouzo, I would have one'

Conversely, Topicalization of referential nominals is typical in the formal/news register (from Alexopoulou and Kolliakou 2002: 196, see also their discussion on p. 228):

(6) Την παράσταση Ø₁=σκηνοθέτησε ο Κάρολος Κουν
 The performance.acc Ø=directed the Karolos Kun.nom
 'As for the performance, Karolos Koun directed it.'

⁴ A modal reading is not the only licensing condition for these exceptional CLLD cases (Anna Roussou, p.c.), as the following example retrieved from the internet shows:

(i) Μια μπυρίτσα₁, τη_{ν1}=ήπια.
 'As for a beer, I had one.'

As both ‘exceptional’ dislocation cases are tied with specific contexts, poorly studied and understood, I will keep the descriptive generalization as stated above.

3 Data

This section examines the syntactic properties of Topicalization, in contradistinction to CLLD. Firstly, I test the ‘null indefinite clitic hypothesis’ which has been put forth in support of the thesis that CLLD and Topicalization share the same syntactic structure.⁵ I show that even if we assumed null clitics, they would be significantly different from the overt ones. In addition, I provide syntactic evidence that CLLD and Topicalization involve different syntactic structures, thus the assumption for null clitics is not motivated anymore. According to the movement analysis I am proposing for Topicalization, the gap in the A-position is filled with a trace/copy rather than with a null clitic. Following the practice of previous studies, I concentrate on direct object topicalization.

Let us start with a distributional difference. In Greek, dislocated elements of a syntactic category other than a DP (and CP) are never resumed by overt clitics, thus Topicalization is the only option in these cases (see 7-9). In other words, ‘null clitics’ can resume PPs/AdjPs/AdvPs, while overt clitics cannot.

- (7) Στην Αθήνα₁, Ø₁=πάω αύριο
to-the Athens.acc go.1.sg tomorrow
‘To Athens I will go tomorrow.’
(Alexopoulou and Folli 2019:472)
- (8) Μπλε₁, ποτέ δεν Ø₁=έβαψα τα μαλλιά μου
Blue never not dyed the hair.acc my
‘Blue, I have never dyed my hair.’
- (9) Γρήγορα₁, Ø₁=οδηγεί η Μαρία
Fast drive the Mary.nom
‘Mary drives fast.’

Secondly, it is well known that overt clitics in Greek can be associated with a ‘hanging topic’ in a sentence-initial position (see Anagnostopoulou 1997: 154ff, for a thorough comparison between CLLD and Hanging Topic Left Dislocation (HTLD)). Quite characteristically, HTLD allows for a case mismatch between the clitic pronoun and the dislocated element, as (10b) shows.

- (10a) Τον Γάλλο₁, η Μαρία τον₁=συμπαθεί πολύ
The French.acc the Mary.nom cl-acc=like much
- (10b) Ο Γάλλος₁, η Μαρία τον₁=συμπαθεί πολύ
the French.nom the Mary.nom cl-acc=like much
‘The French man, Mary likes him a lot.’

⁵ I will not discuss the theoretical problems of the ‘null clitic’ hypothesis.

On the other hand, (11b) shows that a hanging topic cannot be associated with a so-assumed ‘null clitic’.

- (11a) Έναν Γάλλο₁, θέλει να Ø₁=παντρευτεί η Μαρία
 a French.acc want to Ø=marry the Mary.nom
- (11b) *Ένας Γάλλος₁, θέλει να Ø₁=παντρευτεί η Μαρία
 the French.nom want to Ø=marry the Mary.nom
 ‘A French man, Mary wants to marry.’

The above data show that the overt clitics and the alleged null ones exhibit different distributional properties. Next, I turn to the syntactic differences between CLLD and Topicalization.

What follows concerns the availability of parasitic gaps. As Iatridou (1995) shows, the foot of the CLLD dependency in Greek cannot license a parasitic gap (p.g.):

- (12) *Τους χορευτές₁, τους₁=προσέλαβε ο παραγωγός χωρίς καν να εξετάσει p.g.₁.
 ‘The producer hired the dancers, without even assessing them.’

According to Alexopoulou and Kolliakou (2002), Topicalization seems to align with focus-fronting in allowing parasitic gaps ((13) and (14) respectively).^{6,7} This property is generally related to A’-movement dependencies (see Culicover and Postal 2001).

- (13) Χορευτές₁, Ø₁=προσέλαβε ο παραγωγός χωρίς καν να εξετάσει p.g.₁.
 ‘The producer hired dancers, without even assessing them.’
- (14) ΤΟΥΣ ΧΟΡΕΥΤΕΣ προσέλαβε ο παραγωγός χωρίς καν να εξετάσει p.g.₁.
 ‘The producer hired THE DANCERS, without even assessing them.’

CLLD and Topicalization also differ from each other with respect to weak crossover (WCO) effects (Lasnik and Stowell 1991): roughly, a phrase cannot move across a DP-embedded coreferential pronoun. Consider the triplet in (15a-c).

- (15) a. Κάποιον/Έναν φοιτητή₁, τον₁=προσέλαβε [ο πατέρας του_{1/2}].
 b. ΚΑΠΟΙΟΝ/ΕΝΑΝ ΦΟΙΤΗΤΗ₁ προσέλαβε [ο πατέρας του_{?*1/2}].
 c. Κάποιον/Έναν φοιτητή₁, Ø₁=προσέλαβε [ο πατέρας του_{?*1/2}].
 ‘Some/A student, his father hired.’

(15a) shows that CLLD does not give rise to WCO. Focus-fronting in (15b), on the other hand, does. This contrast has been explained through the derivational properties (i.e.

⁶ Alexopoulou and Kolliakou (2002) do not provide examples of parasitic gaps in Greek Topicalization. Note also that the authors, in their fn.11, attribute this difference between CLLD and Topicalization to a special lexical rule for ‘clitic-based dependencies’.

⁷ Some speakers mentioned that in the topicalization example (13), a pitch accent is needed on the preadjunct element (‘παραγωγός’) for the parasitic gap licensing. Note, however, that this pitch accent cannot repair CLLD sentences with parasitic gaps (12). Therefore the parasitic gap difference between CLLD and Topicalization is still at issue.

movement vs. base-generation) of the two structures (cf. Iatridou 1995, Safir 1996).⁸ What about Topicalization? In (15c) the DP-embedded pronominal ‘του’ cannot be coreferential with the indefinite ‘κάποιον/έναν φοιτητή’ as the ungrammatical result shows. The same effects are obtained with the so-called ‘secondary WCO effects’ (see Safir 1996).

(16) [Τους συγγενείς του Κώστα₁]₂ τους₂=κάλεσε [το αφεντικό του_{1/3}].
 ‘The relatives of Kostas₁, his₁ boss invited.’

(17) [ΤΟΥΣ ΣΥΓΓΕΝΕΙΣ ΤΟΥ ΚΩΣΤΑ₁]₂ κάλεσε [το αφεντικό του*_{2/1/3}].
 ‘It is the relatives of Kostas₁, who his₁ boss himself invited.’

(18) [Συγγενείς του Κώστα₁]₂ \emptyset ₂=κάλεσε [το αφεντικό του_{2/1/3}].
 ‘Relatives of Kostas₁, his₁ boss himself invited.’

Thus, I conclude that Topicalization triggers (secondary) WCO effects in contrast to CLLD (contra Alexopoulou and Kolliakou 2002:204).

CLLD and Topicalization dependencies also show different locality effects. More precisely, Topicalization is sensitive to strong-islands (20, 22), while CLLD is not (19, 21). Admittedly, it has been a standard assumption that Greek CLLD too is sensitive to strong islands (Anagnostopoulou 1994, Iatridou 1995 a.o.). However, it is shown below that this is not the case (cf. Angelopoulos 2018). Two words of clarification are in order. We have already referred to the HTLD construction which is morphologically similar to CLLD. As Anagnostopoulou (1997: 155) observes, HTLD is island immune. Thus, we need to make sure that the following examples involve true CLLDs and not undercover HTLDs. Here, two strategies for the exclusion of hanging topics are used: embedding and pronominal QP-binding (see Anagnostopoulou 1997: 154-5). (19) and (20) illustrate topic ‘extraction’ out of an adjunct island, which seems to be successful only in the presence of an overt clitic.

(19) Λένε ότι τις καθαρίστριες₁ ο υπουργός παραιτήθηκε αφού τις₁=προσέλαβε.
 ‘They say that as for the cleaners, the minister resigned after he had hired them.’

(20) *Λένε ότι καθαρίστριες₁ ο υπουργός παραιτήθηκε αφού \emptyset ₁=προσέλαβε.
 ‘They say that as for cleaners, the minister resigned after he had hired some.’

The next pair illustrates cases of topic ‘extraction’ out of a relative clause, a strong island. CLLD in (21) may freely cross a strong island boundary. In contrast, Topicalization (as Focus-fronting, see Tsimpli 1990) may not violate a strong island. Traditionally, islands

⁸ Following Ruys (2004), it could be argued that in (15a) the specific indefinite does not really bind the embedded pronoun; rather coreference here arises ‘accidentally’. However note that in Greek, clitic-resumed phrases in general never show WCO effects. This is also true for clitic-resumed wh-phrases for which ‘accidental coreference’ cannot be assumed (Alexopoulou and Kolliakou 2002:204).

(i) Pion₁ ton₁=aghapai i pethera tu₁
 Who.acc him=love the mother-in-law.nom of-his
 ‘Who does his own mother in law love?’

are perceived as constraints on movement. Therefore, the results suggest that Topicalization is a movement dependency.

(21) [Τις κριτικές για τα βιβλία του₂] σέβομαι [κάθε συγγραφέα]₂ που τις₁=λαμβάνει υπόψη.
 ‘I respect every author who takes the reviews about his books into consideration.’

(22) *?[Κριτικές για τα βιβλία του₂] σέβομαι [κάθε συγγραφέα]₂ που \emptyset_1 =λαμβάνει υπόψη.
 ‘I respect every author who takes the reviews about his books into consideration.’

Table 1 summarizes the findings of this section. The overall picture we get is that when it comes to syntax, Topicalization diverges from CLLD, showing syntactic properties associated with focus-fronting.

	CLLD	Topicalization	Focus-fronting
Weak-crossover	NO	YES	YES
Parasitic gaps	NO	YES	YES
Strong Island sensitivity	NO	YES	YES

Table 1 | Syntactic properties of CLLD, Topicalization and Focus-fronting in Greek

This is a key finding in the understanding of the syntactic structure of Topicalization in Greek. First of all, the hypothesis for an identical syntactic structure between CLLD and Topicalization is seriously weakened. Further, if we take the resemblance between Topicalization and Focus-fronting seriously, we are led to an A'-movement analysis for Topicalization in Greek.

4 Analysis and Discussion

Based on the data presented in section 3, I argue for an A'-movement analysis of Topicalization in Greek. Before exploring the details of the analysis, let us briefly look at its (conceptually at least) minimal pair, CLLD.

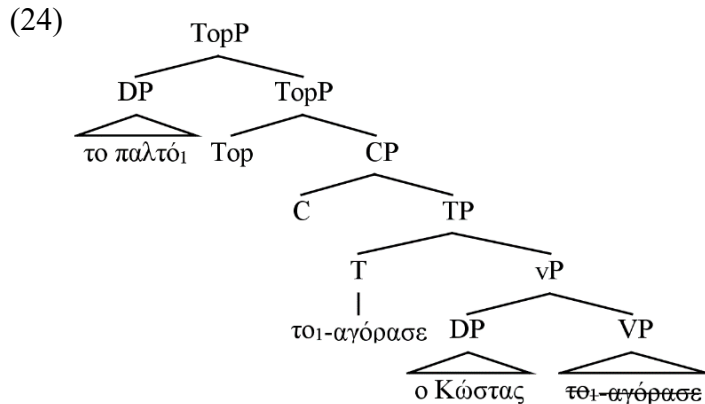
Considering the syntactic properties of CLLD and especially its immunity to strong islands, I argue that it involves base-generation of the dislocated element in the left periphery in line with Cinque 1990, Anagnostopoulou 1994, Iatridou 1995.^{9,10} In (1), repeated as (23) and (24), the left-dislocated topic (το παλτό₁) is externally merged in the

⁹ Sportiche (2018) proposes a mixed-chain analysis, i.e. a chain consisting of a movement and a binding step (as last resort), for dependencies that cross strong islands.

¹⁰ This approach is challenged by the ‘reconstruction’ properties of CLLD, which are generally assumed to be a diagnostic for movement (see Grohmann 2003, Angelopoulos and Sportiche to appear).

spec,TopP, binding the pronominal clitic.¹¹ Since the present study focuses on Topicalization, a detailed presentation of CLLD must wait for some future occasion.

- (23) Το παλτόι *(το₁)=αγόρασε ο Κώστας
 The coat it=bought the Kostas



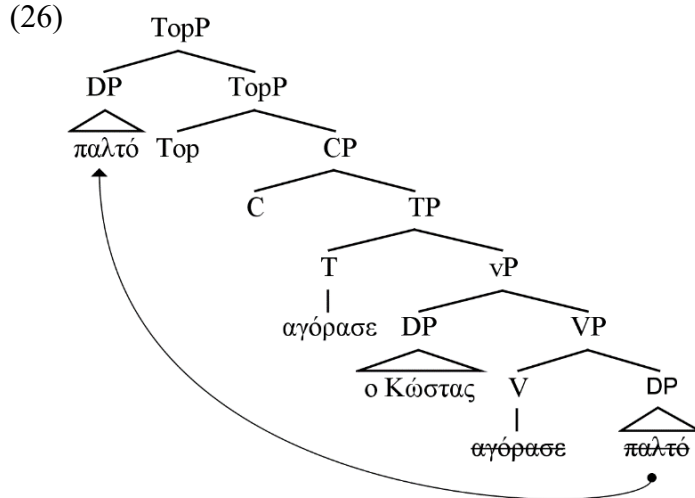
Returning to Topicalization, firstly, I have argued that the left-dislocated phrase must be in the spec,TopP, the syntactic position in which a phrase receives its topic status (cf. Panagiotidis 2002).

The next point concerns the syntactic differences between CLLD and Topicalization (islands, parasitic gaps, WCO). Based on this evidence, I concluded that the hypothesis according to which a common syntactic structure underlies both CLLD and Topicalization, and more specifically the assumption of ‘a null indefinite clitic’ (\emptyset) in Topicalization must be abandoned.

In section 3 it was noted that Topicalization and focus-fronting in Greek show a parallel syntactic behavior. This key observation will lead the way to the syntactic analysis of Topicalization. Since Topicalization observes the standard diagnostics of A'-movement I argue for the following derivation regarding Topicalization (see (2), repeated below as (25)):

- (25) Παλτόι αγόρασε ο Κώστας
 Coat bought the Kostas

¹¹ For a Minimalism-friendly (i.e. AGREE via feature checking) analysis of the binding dependency I am assuming here, see Adger and Ramchand (2005).



Under the movement (internal merge) analysis of Topicalization, the island and WCO sensitivity as well as the p.g. licensing in Greek Topicalization follow immediately; all these properties are associated with A'-movement dependencies.

As for the semantics of (25), the following standard assumptions about the weak DPs seem to be necessary. For instance, Heim (1982) proposes that an indefinite DP introduces a free variable which subsequently gets bound by an existential quantifier, a case of an existential closure operation. Without going into detail, the existential closure analysis of indefinites can be extended to bare nominals as well (cf. Diesing 1992, Alexopoulou and Folli 2019). As illustrated in (27), the bare DP 'παλτό' (coat) is a property-denoting expression which needs to be existentially closed at the sentence level:

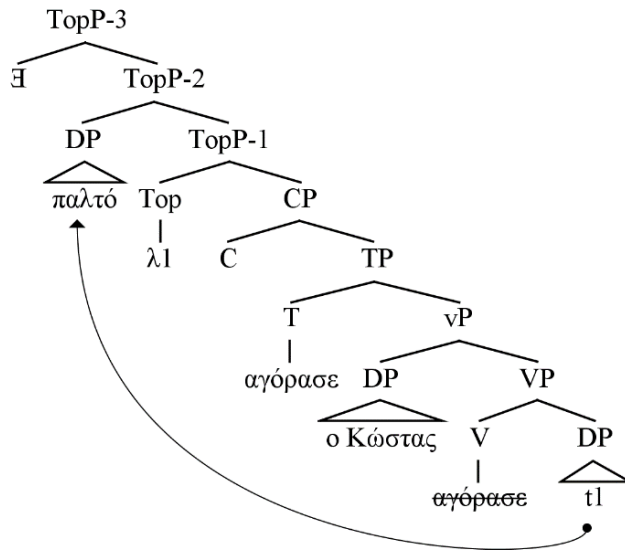
$$(27) \llbracket \text{παλτό} \rrbracket = \lambda x. \text{παλτό}(x) \rightarrow \exists x[\dots \text{παλτό}(x) \dots]$$

The following tree for the sentence in (25) provides the relevant semantic information necessary for the interpretation of Topicalization sentences:¹²

¹² We have both theoretical and empirical reasons to believe that the dislocated phrase in Greek Topicalization is interpreted (reconstructs) in its base position, in contrast to what is shown in (28a). This paper does not concern itself with the reconstruction properties of Topicalization, so this issue is not crucial for the current discussion.

(28)

a.



b. $\llbracket \text{TopP-1} \rrbracket = \lambda x. \text{Kostas bought } x$ (by predicate-abstraction)

c. $\llbracket \text{TopP-2} \rrbracket = \lambda x. x$ is a coat and Kostas bought x (by predicate modification)

d. $\llbracket \text{TopP-3} \rrbracket = \exists x. x$ is a coat and Kostas bought x (by existential closure)

In (28), the derived predicate TopP-1, after the topic movement, is intersected via predicate modification with the predicate denoted by the bare noun DP. What we end up with in TopP-2 is a set of entities which ‘are coats and were bought by Kostas’. Further, this predicate is ‘closed’ by an existential quantifier at the top of the derivation, yielding the interpretation for TopP-3 as illustrated in (29).

(29) There is some x such that x is a coat and Kostas bought x .

Note that the logical representation in (29) is relevant to the distribution of CLLD and Topicalization in Greek. Topicalization involves non-referential DPs (bare/non-specific indefinite DPs), thus Topicalization is strongly connected to the existential closure operation as described above. On the other hand, CLLDed strong DPs are not compatible with such an operation (cf. Alexopoulou and Folli 2019).

In this paper, the comparison of Topicalization with other A’-dependencies of Greek revealed its ‘hybrid’ nature: From an *information structure* standpoint, Topicalization and CLLD behave alike. Both, being topic-marking strategies, show the standard topicalization properties (see section 2). *Syntactically*, Greek Topicalization, deviates from CLLD and aligns with the A’-movement dependencies like focus fronting, with respect to a number of syntactic tests (islands, WCO, parasitic gaps). This can be attributed to the fact that the foot of the Topicalization chain is an A’-copy. In CLLD on the other hand, the dislocated phrase A’-binds a resumptive pronoun.

This conclusion leads to the following working hypothesis (to be further examined): the CLLD – Topicalization distinction reflects a deeper distinction in Greek A’-

dependencies. In particular, the distinction between dependencies which involve a resumptive pronoun (like CLLD) and those which are derived by movement (like Topicalization). This hypothesis predicts that resumptive dependencies show a ‘CLLD behavior’ with respect to the A’-diagnostics presented above, while gap dependencies behave like Topicalization. To be more specific, we predict for relative clauses for instance, that a resumptive restrictive relative clause is island and WCO insensitive and it does not license parasitic gaps. On the other hand a gap relative clause is island constrained, and it gives rise to WCO effects and parasitic gaps. I leave this issue for future research.

5 Conclusion

Concluding, the proposed analysis of Topicalization captures its main structural properties, illustrated through a number of syntactic tests. The A’-movement of the topic phrase to the spec,TopP is constrained by strong islands, is WCO-sensitive and licenses parasitic gaps. Obviously, the syntactic differences between CLLD and Topicalization cannot be explained under the hypothesis that these two topic-constructions share an identical syntactic structure. On the other hand, the structural similarities between Topicalization and focus-fronting in Greek are predicted by the proposed analysis.

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