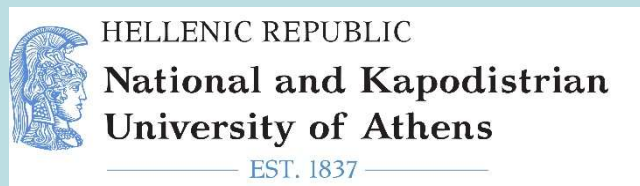


The category of Contrast in information structure in Greek – a comparative perspective

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Introduction

- We examine the category of **Contrast** in relation to the basic notions of Information Structure, namely **focus** and **topic**.
- Information structure and especially **Contrast** as one of its main components has not been studied in great detail in **Greek**. This study aims at presenting the properties of this category and investigating the behaviour of Greek with respect to the various types of Contrast in comparison with other languages (**Finnish, Hungarian, Italian, Spanish, German, English**).
- We observe that languages are parameterized as far as the realization of Contrast is concerned, both on a **syntactic** level (existence of a Contrast position, obligatoriness of movement of the contrastive phrase, relation to the verb position), and on a **phonological** level with respect to intonation.

The road ahead...

We briefly refer to the relation of **Contrast** with focus and topic, and distinguish two types, **contrastive topic** and **contrastive focus**.

We draw our attention to:

(a) the environments where **contrastive topic** appears and its realization by comparing topicalisation structures with left dislocation ones and taking into account the role of intonation and its coexistence with focus;

(b) the syntactic realization of **contrastive focus**, its position, its types as well as the mechanisms involved in its derivation.

We discuss the existence of the **KONTRAST projection** in the extended left periphery of the clause, which has been put forward by Molnár (2001, 2006) for specific languages (e.g. Finnish), and examine the respective data from Greek.

Contrast

The notion of **Contrast** within Information Structure is highly interrelated with **focus** (see Molnár 2001).

On the one hand, this is because on a **syntagmatic** level it is associated with the characteristic of highlighting via stressing.

On the other, on a **paradigmatic** level, it is argued (see Bolinger 1961) that a constituent becomes focused in contrast with a set of existing alternatives.

Molnár's (2001) diagnostic criteria

Molnár (2001) refers to a number of diagnostic criteria for Contrast, which are related both to the phonological and the semantic – pragmatic properties of the constituents.

- a) highlighting (through intonation)
- b) dominant contrast
- c) membership in a set
- d) limited set of candidates
- e) explicit (or implicit) mentioning of alternatives.

Contrastive Topic

In the distinction between Topic – Comment, the definitions provided for **Topic** refer to ‘old/known/given’ information or reference to sth (*aboutness*) (see Reinhart 1982, Vallduví 1992) and **do not include the notion of Contrast.**

However, in modern literature, structures are presented which include a **contrastive topic.**

Contrastive Topic – English

Syntactic level: Topicalization and Left Dislocation

- (1) A: You see every Woody Allen movie as soon as it comes out.
B: No, *Annie Hall* I saw (only) yesterday.

Prince (1984: 218)

- (2) “Everybody has their little bundle, believe me. I’ll bet she had *a nervous breakdown*. That’s not a good thing.
Gallstones, you have them out and they’re out. But *a nervous breakdown*, it’s very bad...”

Prince (1984: 221)

Contrastive Topic – English

Context

(3) JOHN bought chicken and PETER (bought) veal.

(4) A: Where do your siblings live?

B: ANNA lives here.

Repp (2010: 1333-1345)

(5) A: What do your siblings do?

B: [My [SISTER]_{Focus}]_{Topic} [studies MEDICINE]_{Focus}, and
[my [BROTHER]_{Focus}]_{Topic} is [working on a FREIGHT ship]_{Focus}.

Krifka (2008)

Contrastive Topic – German

(6) A: Was trugen die Popstars?

B: Die **WEIBLICHEN** Popmusiker trugen **Kaftane**.

Krifka (2007)

(7) A: Wie geht es deinen Geschwistern?

B: Meine **SCHWESTER** studiert **Medizin**, aber
mein **BRUDER** lungert nur herum.

Krifka (2007)

Contrastive Topic – Greek

- (8) Ποιος έφαγε τα γλυκά;
[Την ΤΟΥΡΤΑ], την έφαγε ο Γιάννης. (O-clV-S) CLLD
The CAKE, it-clitic John ate.
- (9) # Την έφαγε ο Γιάννης [την ΤΟΥΡΤΑ]. (clV-S-O) Clitic doubling
- (10) Ο ΓΙΑΝΝΗΣ έφερε την τούρτα και η ΜΑΡΙΑ τα ποτά στο πάρτι.
'JOHN brought the cake and MARIA the drinks at the party.'
- (11) Τι σπουδάζουν τ' αδέρφια σου;
α. Η ΑΔΕΡΦΗ μου σπουδάζει Ιατρική.
β. Η ΜΑΡΙΑ σπουδάζει Ιατρική και ο ΓΙΑΝΝΗΣ Βιολογία.
'MARIA studies Medicine and JOHN Biology.'

Contrastive Topic

In the examples from the three languages we observe that the Contrastive Topic has the following properties:

- **phonological** (it carries stress)
- **semantic** (it is a member of a set or presupposes a set of (explicit/implicit) alternatives)
- **syntactic** (it appears at the left periphery of the sentence)
- **pragmatic** (it is linked with context and bears a [+given] feature).

Contrastive focus – English

a) By stressing the constituent *in situ* for the subject (12a) and the object (12b):

(12) a. **JOHN** bought the book, not Peter. (S-V-O)

b. John bought **a BOOK**, not a magazine. (S-V-O)

b) Marginally, English allows fronting of the DO (SpecCP), where it takes emphatic stress (13) (Birner & Ward 1998); otherwise, it is interpreted as a topic (14):

(13) **RED** wine I prefer, not white. / **COFFEE** I drink / **NATURE** I like.

(14) Red wine, I like. / That kind of thing, I don't think I'd ever do.

c) Alternatively, it is realised as an it-cleft sentence:

(15) It was **JOHN** that brought the cake.

It was the **CAKE** that John brought.

Contrastive focus – German

a) By stressing *in situ*:

(16) a. **HANS** hat den Chef getroffen, nicht Peter. (S-V-O)

b. Hans hat **den CHEF** getroffen, nicht den Koch. (S-V-O)

b) By fronting the focused constituent to SpecCP and the Verb to C:

(17) **Den CHEF** hat Hans getroffen. (O-V-S)

c) By topicalizing or scrambling other constituents:

(18) Karl hat den Gästen die Wahrheit gesagt.

Nein, die Wahrheit hat den Gästen (wohl) **HANS** gesagt.

(DO-V-IO-S)

d) Also by paraphrasing:

(19) Es war **HANS**, der dem Lehrer das Buch gegeben hat.

Contrastive focus – Spanish

a) Movement to a fronted position, possibly to SpecFocusP, for both the subject (20) (Zagona 2002), and the object (21) (Domínguez 2004):

(20) **MARÍA** compró esos tomates en el mercado, no José. (**S-V-O**)

(21) **LA MESA** ha roto Javi. (**O-V-S**)

b) As for contrastive focus *in situ* V-**O**, Domínguez (2004) proposes that it involves covert movement at LF:

(22) Ha roto **LA MESA**. (V-**O**)

Contrastive focus (a) – Italian

Generally assumed, it involves movement.

a) preverbal and postverbal subjects must necessarily move to FocusP, i.e. they fill the clause external focus position (see Belletti 1999, 2001, 2004):

(23) **GIANNI** ha capito il problema (non tutta la classe). **S-V-O** (**S** in FocP)

A low contrastive focus (Belletti 1999, 2001, 2004) involves overt movement of the subject to the Spec of the high FocusP, and subsequent remnant movement of the IP to the Spec of a higher TopP, which makes the subject postverbal:

(24) Ha capito il problema **GIANNI** (non tutta la classe). **V-O-S** (**S** in FocP)

Contrastive focus (b) – Italian

b) The same operation holds also for the object (Belletti 2004, Bocci 2013):

(25) a. A: Mi hanno detto che hai incontrato Lucia Domenica.
Come l'hai trovata?

b. B: VERONICA ho incontrato Domenica (NON Lucia)!

O-V (O in FocP)

Alternatively (see Bocci 2013), a direct object can undergo a purely prosodic focalization strategy, i.e. it can be contrastively stressed *in situ*:

(26) Ho incontrato VERONICA Domenica (NON Lucia)!

V-O (O in situ)

Contrastive focus – Greek

Tsimplici (1998), two mechanisms:

a) *in situ* focusing:

(27) Ο ΓΙΑΝΝΗΣ έφαγε την τούρτα (όχι ο Νίκος). **S-V-O**

(28) Ο Γιάννης έφαγε την ΤΟΥΡΤΑ (όχι τον μπακλαβά). **S-V-O**

b) overt focus raising to FocP (Tsimplici 1990, 1995; Roussou 2000; Georgiagitis 2004):

(29) Την ΤΟΥΡΤΑ έφαγε ο Γιάννης (όχι τον μπακλαβά). **O-V-S**

Movement to SpecFocP and subsequent remnant movement of the IP to the Spec of a higher TopP is involved in the V-O-S order, where the subject appears clause-final.

(30) Έλυσε την άσκηση ο ΓΙΑΝΝΗΣ (κανείς άλλος). **V-O-S**

KontrastP

The **KONTRAST**-projection in the articulated CP-domain has been proposed by Molnár (2001, 2006) as a distinct category for specific languages (e.g. Finnish).

- **The K-feature...**

... guarantees the so called “discourse connection” (Haegeman & Guéron 1999: 536) and requires:

- the absolutely leftmost position
- the explicit mentioning of relevant excluded alternatives within a closed set
- or alternatively, in case of Contrastive Topic, that the discourse connection be warranted by the givenness or high degree of ‘identifiability’ of this constituent.

Finnish

In Finnish, apart from intonation, the syntactic position of constituents plays a crucial role. The leftmost position of the sentence is responsible for the expression of contrastiveness:

(31) A: Pekka lensi Tukholmaan.

‘Pekka flew to Stockholm.’

B: [_{KONTRAST} **Reykjavikiin**] Pekka lensi.

‘To Reykjavik, Pekka flew.’

Molnár (2001: 104)

Hungarian

In Hungarian the focus operator must be adjacent to the finite verb in surface structure:

(32) A: Hova repült Péter?

Where flew Peter

‘Where did Peter fly?’

B1: Péter [_{FOCUS} **Reykjavikba**] repült.

Peter to Reykjavik flew

‘Peter flew to Reykjavik.’

B2: * [_{FOCUS} **Reykjavikba**] Péter repült.

Molnár (2001: 104)

Greek

The contrastively focused constituent is at the left periphery and refers to alternatives in a contextually limited set. It does not require adjacency to the verb.

(33) Την ΤΟΥΡΤΑ ο Γιάννης έφαγε (όχι τον ΜΠΑΚΛΑΒΑ).

O **S** **V**

‘John ate the CAKE (not the baklava)’.

KONTRAST-Position

- The **KONTRAST**-position is found at the left periphery and differs from the sentence peripheral CONTRAST-position of other languages (e.g. Italian, Russian) as it can apparently host not only a **contrastive focus** but also a **contrastive topic**.
- The topic position can be **iterated**, while the KONTRAST position is **unique**.

Molnár (2001)

Contrastive patterns – Finnish

- **Pattern:** CONTRASTIVE FOCUS + TOPIC

(34) ANNALLE Mikko antoi kukkia / kukkia antoi.
'It's to Anna that Mikko gave flowers.'

- **Pattern:** CONTRASTIVE TOPIC + INFORMATION FOCUS

(35) ANNALLE Mikko antoi kukkia.
'To Anna, Mikko gave flowers.'

Vilkuna (1995: 249) and Molnár (2001: 110-111)

Contrastive patterns – Greek

- **Pattern:** CONTRASTIVE FOCUS + TOPIC

(36) Τα ΒΙΒΛΙΑ ο Γιάννης έδωσε στη Μαρία (όχι τους δίσκους).

DO S V IO

‘It’s the books that John gave to Mary (not the records).’

- **Pattern:** CONTRASTIVE TOPIC + INFORMATION FOCUS

(37) Τα ΒΙΒΛΙΑ στη Μαρία τα έδωσε ο Γιάννης.

DO IO cl V S

‘It’s the books that John gave to Mary.’

Split CP model – Rizzi (1997)

Molnár (2001) assumes that an additional functional projection, namely **KONTRAST-P**, is required above the TOPIC- and FOCUS-projections, in the articulated CP-domain:

ForceP **KontrP** TopP* FocP TopP* FinP

Exclamation particles in Greek

(38) ΜΠΑ-particle

A: Έφεραν όλοι γλυκά στο πάρτι τελικά.

B1: **ΜΠΑ**, ο **ΓΙΑΝΝΗΣ** δεν έφερε τίποτε.

B2: */# **Ο ΓΙΑΝΝΗΣ** δεν έφερε τίποτε, **ΜΠΑ**.

'Particle, **John** brought nothing.'

(39) ΠΩΣ-particle

A: Δεν έφαγαν τα παιδιά όλα τα γλυκά.

B1: **ΠΩΣ**, **την ΤΟΥΡΤΑ** την έφαγαν τα παιδιά.

B2: */# **Την ΤΟΥΡΤΑ** την έφαγαν τα παιδιά, **ΠΩΣ**.

'Particle, the kids ate the **CAKE**.'

Contrastive Focus – Greek

‘Low’ position

(40) a. Ο Γιάννης έφαγε **την ΤΟΥΡΤΑ** (όχι τον μπακλαβά). S-V-**O**

‘High’ position

(40) b. **Την ΤΟΥΡΤΑ** έφαγε ο Γιάννης (όχι τον μπακλαβά). **O**-V-S

‘Medial’ position

(40) c. Ο Γιάννης **την ΤΟΥΡΤΑ** έφαγε (όχι τον μπακλαβά). S-**O**-V

‘John ate the **CAKE** (not the baklava)’.

Types of contrastive focus

- (Merely) contrastive focus
- Corrective focus
- Confirmative focus
- Mirative focus

Types of contrastive focus – Italian

- Mere contrast

(41) A: Vi saluto, devo tornare a casa.

‘Good bye, I have to go back home.’

B: A quest’ora, ti conviene prendere il **taxi**, non la **metro**.

‘At this time of day, you’d better take a taxi, not the underground’.

Bianchi (2013: 205)

(42) [Said by A to B while preparing to lift together a fragile object:]

A: Bisogna sollevarlo **piano**, non con **forza**.

‘One must lift it gently, not violently.’

Bianchi (2013: 205)

Types of contrastive focus – Italian

- Corrective focus

- (43) A: Hanno invitato Marina.
'They invited Marina.'
- B: **Giulia** hanno invitato (, non Marina).
- B': Hanno invitato **Giulia** (, non Marina).
'They invited Julie (, not Marina)

Bianchi *et al* (2015)

- Mirative focus

- (44) [CONTEXT: Anna tells about a customer who complained for nothing]
- B: Pensa te! **Col direttore** voleva parlare!
- B': Pensa te! Voleva parlare **col direttore**!
- 'Guess what! He wanted to speak with the manager!'

Bianchi *et al* (2015)

Types of contrastive focus – Greek

- **Mere contrast**

(45) A: Χθες η αστυνομία απέκλεισε την Πανεπιστημιούπολη.

B: Την ΠΥΛΗ απέκλεισε η αστυνομία. O-V-S

B': Η αστυνομία απέκλεισε την ΠΥΛΗ. S-V-O

B'': Η αστυνομία την ΠΥΛΗ απέκλεισε. S-O-V

- **Corrective focus**

(46) A: Η αστυνομία έστειλε την Δία στο Πανεπιστήμιο.

B: Τα MAT έστειλε η αστυνομία, όχι τη Δία. O-V-S

B': Η αστυνομία έστειλε τα MAT, όχι τη Δία. S-V-O

B'': Η αστυνομία τα MAT έστειλε, όχι τη Δία. S-O-V

Types of contrastive focus – Greek

- **Confirmative focus**

(47) A: Τι άκουσα; Η αστυνομία επιστράτευσε και την ΟΠΚΕ;

B: Ναι, **την ΟΠΚΕ** επιστράτευσε η αστυνομία. O-V-S

B': Ναι, η αστυνομία επιστράτευσε **την ΟΠΚΕ**. S-V-O

B'': Ναι, η αστυνομία **την ΟΠΚΕ** επιστράτευσε. S-O-V

- **Mirative focus**

(48) A: Σήμερα τα πράγματα ησύχασαν στην Πανεπιστημιούπολη.

B: Τι λες; **τρεις ΚΛΟΥΒΕΣ** έφερε η αστυνομία στην κάτω πύλη! O-V-S

B': Τι λες; Η αστυνομία έφερε στην κάτω πύλη **τρεις ΚΛΟΥΒΕΣ**! S-V-O

B'': Τι λες; Η αστυνομία **τρεις ΚΛΟΥΒΕΣ** έφερε στην κάτω πύλη! S-O-V

Concluding remarks

From a crosslinguistic perspective, contrastiveness does not only characterize **focusing**, but also **topicalization**.

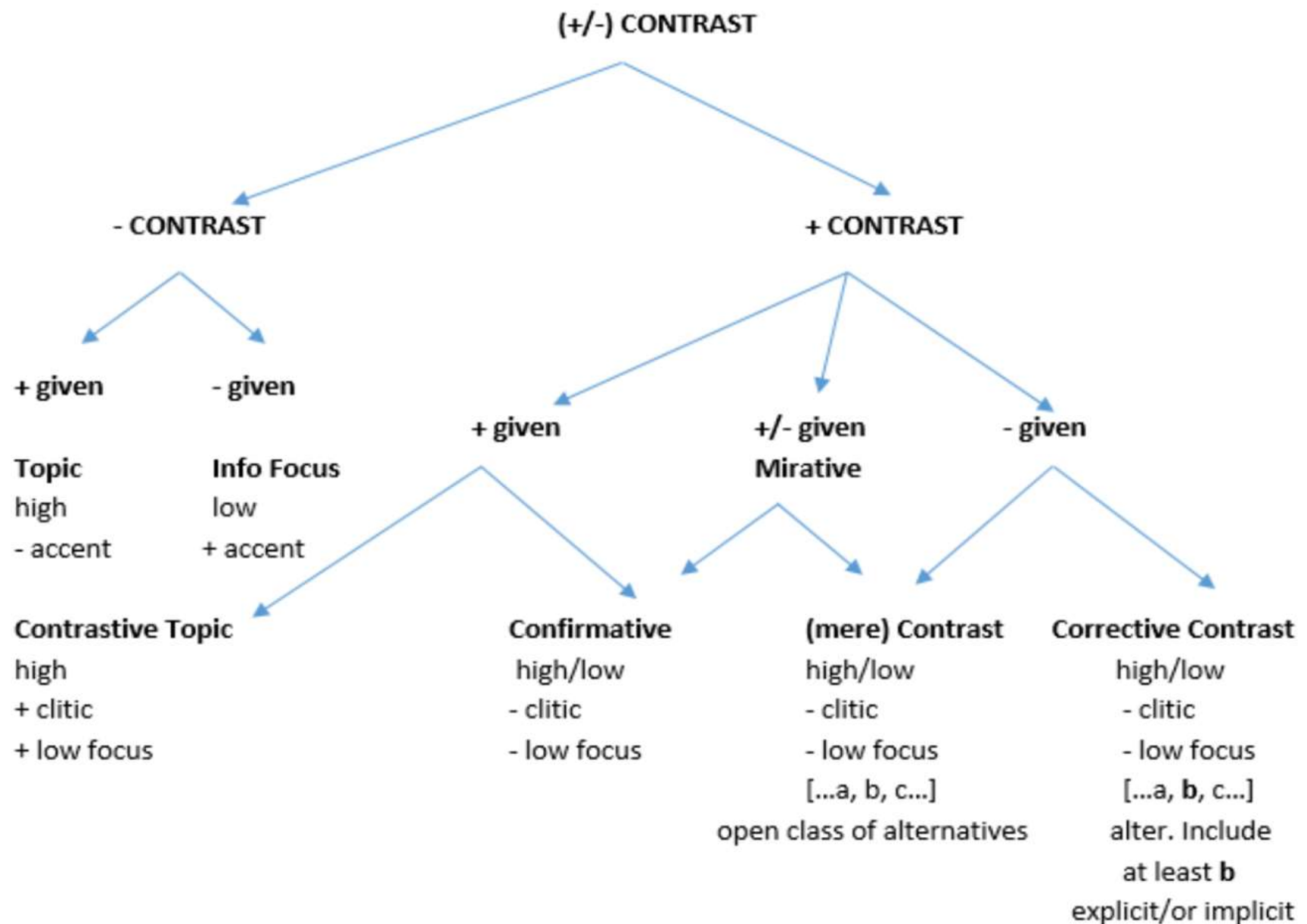
The contrastively focused constituent bears a **[+contrast]** feature and has the following characteristics:

- **phonological** (it is stressed)
- **semantic** (it is selected out of a set of alternatives)
- **pragmatic** (it is explicitly/implicitly linked with a context)
- **syntactic** (it is associated with the position and the movement of the contrastive phrase).

Concluding remarks

- As far as syntax is concerned, there is crosslinguistic and intralinguistic parameterization in the realization of contrastive structures.
- With respect to the **KONTRAST**-projection in the leftmost / 'highest' position of the articulated CP-domain, which has been put forward by Molnár (2001, 2006) for certain languages (e.g. **Finnish**), data from **Greek** could support its existence for the **contrastive topic** case, while **contrastive focus** appears to behave differently.

Categorization of Contrast in Greek



The category of Contrast in information structure in Greek – a comparative perspective

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