

The syntax-phonology interface:
Theoretical issues on linearization and empirical justification

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Any linguistic theory that aspires at achieving descriptive and explanatory adequacy must provide with a theory about the flow and the processing of the information between the different components of the Grammar. Within the *Minimalist Program* (MP; Chomsky 1993, 1995, 2000 et seq.) such intermodular relations are taken for granted and a rich agenda has been set about the way syntax communicates with phonology. To be more specific, the MP adopts the so-called ‘strong minimalist thesis’, which maintains that language is an optimal solution to interface conditions that the Faculty of Language must satisfy. Syntax is viewed simply as a derivational procedure which constructs objects (i.e., structures) which the two interfaces (i.e., with the Sensory-Motor and the Conceptual-Intentional components) process and evaluate by means of their own conditions and procedures. According to this approach the syntax-phonology interface is the locus where syntactic structures are prepared so as to be processed by the Sensory-Motor component. This preparation involves (a) the linearization of the syntactic structure and (b) the mapping of the syntactic objects onto phonological objects. Linearization concerns the translation of the hierarchically organized syntactic structure into the relevant linear order (see Chomsky 1995 on Kayne’s *Linear Correspondence Axiom*, Richards 2010). On the other hand, the mapping procedure deals with the organization of the elements of this structure into prosodic constituents, within and/or across which phonological operations takes place.

Leaving aside the mapping procedure, on which there is a growing literature which mainly aims at relating syntactic domains (*phases*, Chomsky 2000 et seq.; *c-command domains/cascades*, Uriagereka 1999; *prolific domains*, Grohmann 2003; etc.) with higher order prosodic structure (Revithiadou & Spyropoulos 2008, Ishihara 2007, Kahnemuyipour 2004, Adger 2007, Kratzer & Selkirk 2007, etc.), we will concentrate on the linearization procedure by addressing issues regarding the so-called *linearization of chains*, i.e., the decision upon which copy in a given movement operation will be pronounced or not. The *Copy Theory of Movement* (Chomsky 1993, Nunes 2004, Nunes & Corver 2007) allows for the possibility that other copies than the higher one may be pronounced – a possibility empirically justified by a wide range of data (Nunes 2004) – and that this decision is taken at the syntax-phonology interface (Bobaljik 2002). Early research on this topic has revealed that issues pertaining to the linearization of chains concern the blocking of the pronunciation of a copy because its pronunciation would violate certain prosodic conditions and/or the promotion of a certain copy because its pronunciation is the most optimal choice for the prosodic make-up of the construction (Franks 2000, Bošković 2001, Rice & Svenonius 1998, Revithiadou 2006; see also Pesetsky 1998). In this paper we will address these issues, by reviewing the results from two studies from Greek, which show how both the blocking of the pronunciation of a copy and the promotion of a certain copy for optimality reasons determine copy realization and subsequently word order. These studies examine (a) the typology of clitic placement in Greek dialects both from a synchronic and a diachronic point of view and (b) the realization of ‘subject’ in preverbal and postverbal positions.