Morphologization of synthetic prepositions in English and Modern Greek

Elizabeth Mela-Athanasopoulou
Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, Greece

Abstract

Major lexical items, such as verbs or nouns may undergo, through time, morphophonological and semantic changes to the extent that they become fully reanalyzed and recategorized word forms. The main aim of this study is to show the degree of reanalysis and morphologization of verbals and nominals into prepositions in both English and Modern Greek. It will be shown how deverbal or denominal prepositions have developed from participles or oblique cases of verbs and nouns, respectively, into purely lexicalized lexemes with their own idiosyncratic meanings. We propose that the existence of the so-called synthetic prepositions is due to coalescence and morphologization as a result of the semantic bleaching and categorial reclassification of the verbs or nouns they derive from. Moreover, their morphophonological structure together with their distribution and semantics will be discussed thoroughly.

Keywords: synthetic compositions, recategorization, reanalysis, non-compositional meaning, grammaticalization

1. Introduction

The present study aims at the categorical reanalysis of the verb as preposition in Modern Greek and English. The development of deverbal and, to some extent, denominal prepositions on the basis of data from Modern Greek and English, (e.g. ἰδιομένοι ὧτι ‘given that; granted that’, πρόκειται τοι ‘provided that; rather than’, συμφωνά με ‘according to’, ῥα συναφές ‘regarding’, συμπεριλήμβανον (Menis, -menou) ‘including’, etc. will be thoroughly investigated. We
will show that minor lexical categories, such as deverbal prepositions, though not involved in word formation, still play a significant syntactico-semantic role in Modern Greek and English. First, their historical development from participles in the so-called katharevousa (the once high-style variety of Modern Greek) into purely lexicalized lexemes with their own idiosyncratic meanings will be extensively described. Moreover, their morphophonological structure together with their distribution and semantics will be discussed. For instance, we will show that they may occur in pronominal position either in subject-free absolute constructions such as osonafora ‘regarding’ (e.g. osonafora tis plirones ‘regarding the payments’) or, though rarely, in subject-controlled absolute genitive constructions such as symperiamvanomenou (-menis, -menou) (e.g. symperiamvanomenou tou forou ‘tax included’). Finally, we propose that the development of deverbal prepositions is due not only to the loss of the syntactic features of the verb they derive from (i.e. the loss of verbal properties, such as the loss of agreement with the subject, the loss of the ability to be marked for tense and aspect), but also to the loss of its semantic and morphophonological features (e.g. Gr. prokimenou < *prokime, prokite, and E. during < *dure, pending < *pend).

What is typical of Indo-European languages is that almost all word classes have contributed to the creation and constant development of new prepositions. Therefore, prepositions and in particular, synthetic prepositions, though marginally productive, are no longer a closed set, but rather an open category of the word major classes. And the main word class they derive from is the verb and to some extent the noun, especially in Modern Greek.

Before starting our analysis of synthetic prepositions, it is instructive to point out that even one-syllable prepositions, the so-called central prepositions (Quirk et al. 1985: 658) (e.g. at, on, in, by, from, etc.) are claimed to have derived from other word / classes, such as adverbs and adjectives (cf. English near, like, worth, etc. and Modern Greek piso ‘back’ in: i piso porta ‘the back door’ vs. i porta ine piso ‘the door is at the back’). Aronoff (1976: 20) attributes this change to lexical drift, in saying that “grammatical categories are not closed. They may acquire new members, but by a sort of drift. So it has often been noted that a word like near is an adjective on its way to becoming a preposition. In other languages, prepositions can sometimes be traced back to nominal forms”. This is exactly what has happened to the Modern Greek nominal dative and genitive case of the once high-style variety, the so-called katharevousa, e.g. βάσει /vazi/ ‘on the basis of’, φύσει /fisi/ ‘by nature’, δεδομένου του γεγονότος ότι ιδέα με- nou τω γεγο’notos ‘oti’ ‘given the fact that’, etc. These are now used only as denominal or deverbal synthetic compositions.
What is a synthetic preposition? Clearly, it is a derived one, primarily either deverbial or denominal, as the result of grammaticalization and reanalysis, as we shall see further in this study. It can be either one word or a periphrastic one combined with other central prepositions. Thus, it falls under two categories illustrated below (under the headings 2 and 3).

2. One word synthetic prepositions in English and Greek

Table 1. One word synthetic prepositions in English

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>(1a) -ing derived nominal preceding an NP</th>
<th>(1b) -ing derived nominal following an NP. Subject controlled nominative absolute construction.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>concerning</td>
<td>weather permitting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>regarding</td>
<td>summer being away</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>considering</td>
<td>Roger acting as a tutor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>including</td>
<td>pending the exams</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>excepting</td>
<td>pending the exams</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pending</td>
<td>pending the exams</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Consider the Modern Greek counterparts in Table 2:

Table 2. One word synthetic prepositions in MG

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>(2a) -ontas deverbial prepositions preceding an NP</th>
<th>(2b) -ontas_{MSC/SG} -menou_{MSC/SG} preceding an NP. Subject controlled absolute genitive constructions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>θεοροντας</td>
<td>archiyu parontos (lit. the chief's being present)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>akrivoloyontas</td>
<td>keru epitrepontos weather permitting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lamvanontas ipopsi</td>
<td>δεβομενις tis katalis striymis given the appropriate moment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ontas (plusios, makria, etc.)</td>
<td>δεβομενον ton efkerion given the chances</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ekto &lt; ektatus apo</td>
<td>tirumenon ton analogion 'mutatis mutandis' (lit. the proportions being preserved)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(Holton, Mackridge &amp; Philippaki-Warburton 1997: 274)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>simperilanvanomenon -menou_{MSC} (-is(1)) tu foru tax included</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Being an inflecting language, Modern Greek presents a different picture. The deverbal or deadjectival preposition is an active or passive present participle, always in the Genitive case with the subject agreeing with it in gender, number and case (e.g., διακομαίνοντας του πολέμου > κατα τι διακομαίνοντας του πολέμου ‘during the war’, εκκεννίστις τῆς περίπτωσις > σε εκκεννίστις τῆς περίπτωσις ‘the case is pending’, συμπεριλαμβανομένης ολίσ τις άλλυ ‘including the whole material’). On the other hand, the active present participle is rarely used in Modern Greek (cf. as a relic from katharevousa with the endings -on, -osa/usa, -on, e.g., to kávernon koma ‘the governing party’), etc. (Holton, Mackridge and Philippaki-Warburton 1997: 235). Instead, it has lost both its gender and inflectional suffixation (e.g. number and case), thus occurring only as a deverbal form (gerund) ending in -ontas or -ontas and functioning either as an active present participle or as a preposition of manner, time or cause (Κλαίρης και Μπαμπάκης 1999: 158), as in θεορόντας, κρίνοντας, λαμβανόντας ιπόπτης, etc., all roughly meaning ‘considering’.

Under this meaning, however, the periphrastic deadjectival or denominal preposition is preferable, e.g., θεορόντας > σχετικά με > σε σχέσεις με > σιην αφορά > σιηαφορά. Clearly, all these forms have undergone recategorization and function only as prepositions.

Now, the first two examples of 2b are purely lexicalized, stereotyped forms, relics of katharevousa, constituting the genitive absolute construction, whereby the NP usually precedes the participle and agrees with it in number, gender and case. On the other hand, τιρεμένον τον αναλγόν, δεδομένης τις καταλλης στίγμης and δεδομένον τον εφερέον are still absolute constructions in the passive with the noun phrase following them and agreeing with them in gender, number and case.

| Table 3. Passive participles in English and Modern Greek recategorized into prepositions |
|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| (3a) -en derived passive participle suffix preceding or following an NP | (3b) -menou, -is' /entos, /thesis suffix preceding an NP |
| this done | δεδομένης τις σοβαρής καταστάσεως |
|                      | ‘the serious situation being given’ |
| given/granted/provided the chance | δεδομένης τις εκφυκές |
|                      | ‘the chance having been given’ |
| given/granted/provided (that; the fact that) | all things considered |

All the data exhibited so far constitute the so-called ‘unattached’ free adjuncts (Quirk and Greenbaum 1996: 329) i.e. constructions which are not
controlled by the matrix subject. Consider in 4a-b and 5a-c, for example, the participle analyzable into a subordinate clause and the participle recategorized into a preposition.

(4a) Given the chance, he might pass the exam
[If he were given the chance, he ...] PARTICIPLE

(4b) Given that, I think he might pass the exam
 [If one takes into account that, ...] PREPOSITION

(5a) Δοθήσις tis efkerias, tha boruse na perasi tis eksetasis
     (archaic, only in katharevousa)
     'If the chance was given [to him], he might...'

(5b) Δεδομένου (tu γεγονότος) oti θα το δοθεί i efkeria, ...
     'Given the fact that the chance will be given to him, ...'

Δεδομένου oti ...

(5c) Prokimenou na fiyi sto eksoteriko, apofasise na mini edo
     'Rather than go abroad, he decided to stay here'
     Prokimenou na klei, kalitera na tu paris to pechndi
     'If he is going to cry, you'd better buy the toy for him'
     Prokimenou για to perivalon, prepi na kanume kati γι' afto
     'As far as the environment is concerned we must do something about it'

Now, concerning the Greek data, only 5a is a subject controlled participle analyzable into a clause. On the other hand, 5b and 5c are clear cases of deverbal prepositions.

3. Phrasal denominal/deadjectival/deadverbal prepositions

In both English and Modern Greek, such prepositions fall into two or three word sequences (Quirk et al. 1985: 669), as is shown in their distribution and the data below.

6. Denominal preposition < adv. / adj. + simple preposition

(6a) apart from
     away from
     ahead of
     back of
     outside of
     because of
     contrary to
     irrespective of

(6b) ksexora apo
     makria apo
     brosta apo
     piso apo
     ekso apo
     eksetias tu
     antiθeta me
     aneksartita apo
due to eksetias tu [ofilete se]
absent (a scholarship) apusia (ipotrofias)

In three word sequences the simple preposition acts as a circumfix to a noun or derived nominal as is shown in 7.

7. Simple prep. + noun + simple prep.

(7a) in aid of (7b) se voifia tu
    in view of en opsi, enopsi
    in place of sti thesi tu
    in search of se anazitisi tu
    in case of se periptosi pu
    in respect of se schesi me
    in favour of gia chari tu
    in the light of ipo to fos tu > kato apo to fos tu
    in accordance with se symphonia me
    in comparison with se synkrisi me
    in compliance with se symorphosi me
    on account of eks etias tu / eksetias tu
    in relation to se schesi me
    with / in reference to se schesi me

In all the formations of 6a-b and 7a-b for both languages, the denominal synthetic preposition is actually a composite of two or three word categories, e.g. in 6a-b, adjective/adverb + simple preposition and 7a-b, simple preposition + noun + simple preposition, recategorized into one category, i.e. the synthetic preposition. Moreover, this new synthetic preposition constitutes a new semantic whole, morphologically isolated in the sense of Marchand 1969 (cf. exocentric compounds) with its own integrity and non-compositional meaning. Besides, no constituent of, say, a three-word synthetic preposition is substitutable for any other word form. Therefore, the synthetic preposition is indivisible both syntactically and semantically. Quirk et al. (1985: 671) exhibit nine indicators of syntactic separateness, due to lack of space, will not be exposed here.

Now there is a category of denominal prepositions in Modern Greek, relics of the dative case of nouns of katharevousa (Κλαίρης και Μπαμπινώης 1999: 52). This is the only instance where the dative is used in Modern Greek, i.e. as a purely lexicalized, petrified and finally recategorized word form. It may also appear combined with a simple archaic preposition normally governing dative case. With some of them the preposition has been assimilated and has lost its initial meaning. Syntactic and semantic loss has also occurred with other archaic
prepositions such as meta + gen, mete + acc, and δια + gen, δια + acc, etc. (cf. Θεοφανοπούλου-Κοντού 1995: 240).

(8a) fisí
    vasi
    meso
    lóvo
    elipsí
    parusía
    kali tì pisti
    metritis

    by nature
    on the basis of
    by means of; via
    by reason of
    in the absence of
    in the presence of
    in good faith
    in cash; at face value

(8b) en merí
    en psychro
    en enerγia
    en apostratíα
    en anankí
    en taksi > entaksi
    en tutís > entutís
    en to metaksi > entometaksi >
    sto metaksi
    en opsi > enopsi
    en chrísi > enchrísi
    sin to chrono > sintohrono
    en pasi periptosi> enpasi periptosi
    in part
    in cold
    on the active
    in retirement
    if need be
    alright
    nevertheless
    in the meanwhile
    in view of
    in use
    in time
    anyway

From all the above data on both languages what can be extracted is that deverbal and denominal prepositions have undergone a certain degree of reanalysis, as is shown in figure 1 below:

![Figure 1. The degree of reanalysis of verbals / nominals into prepositions](image-url)
Table 4. Complete and partial integration of verbals and nominals into prepositions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Complete integration</th>
<th>Partial integration</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ago</td>
<td>owing to</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>past</td>
<td>according to</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>during</td>
<td>notwithstanding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>para</td>
<td>considering</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pending</td>
<td>following</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>depending on</td>
<td>concerning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ektos/ekson</td>
<td>regarding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>entaksi (adv.)</td>
<td>eksetias</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>symphona me</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>parolus-es,-a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>theorontas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>en sinechia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>osonafora</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>schetika me</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The degree of integration into the class of prepositions has been at least roughly estimated according to the morphophonemic and semantic changes the original verb or noun has undergone before becoming a preposition. Thus, for example, *ago* or *past* and the Greek *ektos*, *entaksi* show the highest degree of integration as their origin is opaque.

(9) ago < ago e.g. three years ago today (Kortmann and Koening 1992: 678)
    past < passed < pass<sub>v</sub>
    ektos < ektatos < ektinome<sub>vmiddle</sub> < ektinov<sub>active</sub> archaic ‘extend; stretch out’
    entaksi < en taksi<sub>ν</sub> Dat. SG < en + taksi [lit. in order]

Others, such as *during* and *pending*, though morphologically transparent, e.g. *dure* + *ing*, *pend* + *ing*, their underlying verbs have fallen out of use (*dure*, *pend*). The equivalent Modern Greek, on the other hand, *dierkuntos* and *ekremuntos*, though thriving thirty years ago, when katharevousa was still in use, have turned into prepositional phrases *kata ti dierkia* ‘during’ and *se ekremotita* ‘pending’ while the verbal origin is normally in use (*dierkhiō ‘last’, ekrēmei, -ouv (only in 3<sup>rd</sup> p. SG/PL) ‘it is pending’). All the other forms, e.g. *considering*, *concerning*, *including (the tax)*, *given (the chance)*, etc. and the Modern Greek counterparts ending in *-ontas*, *theorontas*, *symerilamvanomenou* (*tou forou*), *δεδομενισ* (*tis ekerias*), can be partially recategorized as prepositions, depending on their use (i.e. either as prepositions or participles), as they can also be used as participles.

Let us now return to forms such as *ago* and *ektos*. These are clear cases of re-analysis and grammaticalization due to their morphophonological reduction and ‘semantic bleaching’ (i.e. the loss of semantic content) (Hopper and Closs-
Traugott 1993: 68). And as these forms become increasingly morphologized, they cease over time to carry semantic or pragmatic meaning. To quote Heine and Reh (1984: 15), grammaticalization is “an evolution whereby linguistic units lose in semantic complexity, pragmatic significance, syntactic freedom, and phonetic substance”. This can most clearly be seen when former lexical items change into syntactic elements which eventually fuse together morphologically as stem and affix. Thus, according to Hopper and Closs-Traugott, we may have the following picture:

(10) lexical items used in a particular context > more syntactic > morphologized more grammatical

Consider, for example, Meillet’s description of the Modern Greek θα “Future” as descendant of the Classical Greek context θελω ινα ‘I wish that’. The stages of change are as follows: θελω ινα > θελω να > θενα > θα (Meillet 1958: 145).

4. The causes of grammaticalization

According to Meillet, quoted in Hopper and Closs-Traugott (1993: 20), the cause of grammaticalization is a certain amount of loss of expressivity in words and expressions which are frequently used and thus have undergone phonological reduction and attrition: “as relaxed pronunciations bring about sound changes that wear down words, distinctions become blurred”, and in Gabelentz’s rather pessimistic metaphor, a quote in Hopper and Closs-Traugott again, “...word forms may die and become ‘mummified’, lingering on without life as preserved corpses” (ibid: 242). A classical example here would be the Modern Greek collocations of (11):

(11) en taks > entaksi alright
    en pasi periptosi > enpasi periptosi anyway
    en to metaks > entometaksi meanwhile
    en tutis > entutis nevertheless
    oson a fora > osanafora regarding
    par ola a fora > parolafta in spite of

In the first four examples, the periphrastic forms on the left consist of the dative case assigning archaic preposition en plus the noun in the dative case, occasionally accompanied with a definite article (en to metaksi) or a pronoun (en pasi periptosi), agreeing with it in gender, number and case. These constructions have coalesced over time and become morphological as is shown in the configuration of 12.
(12) lexical item(s) → more syntactic → more morphological
more grammatical
taksis N/Nom/SG/archaic en simple Prep taksi N/Dat/SG entaksi

This tendency towards unidirectionality and coalescence is the so-called process of reanalysis (Hopper and Closs-Traugott 1993: 32) i.e. the fusion of two or more word forms into a compacted one. English compounding would also fit as a typical example here (e.g. crybaby, drawbridge, etc. (Marchand 1969: 57)). From this respect then, Givon (1979) would not exaggerate in his description of morphology as the result of the morphologization of more productive syntactic phenomena (the trash compactor theory of morphology!) (Aronoff and Sridhar 1988: 189). “Syntactic structure in time erodes, via processes of morphologization and lexicalization ... and the principles motivating the erosion of syntax are not necessarily identical to those which motivate its rise” (Givon 1979: 209).

Other instances of compacting are the phenomena of cliticization across languages. Consider the clitics, for example, in 13 in both English and Modern Greek.

(13a) [He] would have [come] → [He]d’v [come]
(13b) tu ta ipa → tu tapa
to him these/them said (I) ‘I told him (about) these’

Sometimes morphophonological reduction can reach down to the level of an affix. To put it differently, the fusing of independent elements can be so strong that they might be converted into a single affix. Thus we might have the following picture:

(14) independent lexical item(s) → grammatical item(s) → affix

In other words, an affix then may have its origin in a lexical item. To quote Marchand, “the so-called native prefixes have developed out of independent words” (1969: 129), and further on, “the suffix was once an independent word” (ibid: 210).

Let us now return to the definitory venue of grammaticalization. As has already been pointed out, grammaticalization is a process that is done gradually, over time. During this transition from lexical to grammatical and then to morphological and functional (i.e. a transition from content words to function words, a certain amount of meaning is weakened or even lost (“semantic bleaching”, Hopper and Closs-Traugott 1993: 87). Moreover, Abraham (2001: 15) admits that “the switch of categorical classification is always accompanied by semantic bleaching down to near-complete semantic depletion”. Nevertheless, he also supports that grammaticalization may not terminate in functional
categories, as is shown in his description of the modal particles (in German and Dutch), which are not "bleached enough semantically to become pure auxiliaries" (ibid: 56).

Consider now pure cases of semantic bleaching in 15a-b.

(15a) concerning < concern
regarding < regard
notwithstanding < notwithstand
during < *dure
provided (that) < provide

(15b) διαδι (Adv)
that is to say < διόν δι
ipo tin εγια τυ < obvious very → too obvious
under the auspices of [aeς 'goat'] Classical Greek
sponsored by

Nevertheless, in both 15a and 15b there are still some traces of the original lexical meaning in each of the items, i.e. the original meaning is not completely lost.

Now in what follows we will discuss briefly the syntactico-semantic changes lexical items undergo (in our case verbs, nouns or prepositional phrases), before they become grammaticalized. In Kortmann and Koenig (1992) an attempt is made for a categorical reanalysis of deverbal prepositions and conjunctions on data drawn from English, French, German and other European languages. In this study, particular attention will be paid on the comparison of deverbal prepositions in Modern Greek and English in the light of the process of grammaticalization and reanalysis of the lexical resources (i.e. verbs and nouns).

Normally, prepositions introduce complements which are nominals (Quirk et al. 1985), e.g. upon arrival, on arriving, before his arrival, etc. Similarly, in both English and Modern Greek the deverbal proposition precedes its complement noun, pronoun or nominal and governs its case as is shown in 16a-b.

(16a) regarding the offer
concerning them
during the war
owing to renovations

(16b) θεοροντας τιν προσφορα
λαμβανοντας τις αποστοι
διαρκουτος > κατα τι διαρκια του πολεμου
[lit. ofilontas stis anakenisis] λογο τον
anakeniseon

In (16a) the direct object of the underlying verb is reanalyzed as an internal argument of the deverbal preposition. According to Jespersen (1975: 88-89),
...the close correspondence between the object of the transitive verb and that of a ‘preposition’ is seen in those cases in which a preposition is nothing but a verbal form in a special use, as for example concerning ... and past in “he walked past the door at half-past one”, which is simply the participle passed written in a different way; in “he walked past”, it has no complement.

Whereas in (17c) (genitive absolute) and further down in (19a-d), the subject of the underlying verb is reanalyzed as internal argument of the deverbal preposition and is obligatorily case marked (i.e. it agrees with it in gender, number, and case).

Formally, we have the following configurations for the 16a-b constructions illustrated in 17a-c.

(17a) STEM<sub>V</sub> + ing<sub>Pr.Part.</sub> + Nominal<sub>Acc</sub>
    during + the war
    owing to + renovations

(17b) STEM<sub>V</sub> + onta<sub>Gerund/Pr. Part</sub> + Nominal<sub>Acc</sub>/Nominal<sub>Gen</sub>
    lamvanontas ipopsi + aitia

(17c) STEM<sub>V</sub> + menou<sub>GenSgMs/Ntr</sub> / menis<sub>GenSgF</sub>/menon<sub>GenPlMsF/Ntr</sub> + Nominal<sub>Gen</sub>
    simperilamvanomenou tu foru ‘including tax’
    δεδομενης tis katalilis stiymis ‘given the right moment’
    STEM<sub>V</sub> + menou<sub>GenSgMs/Ntr*</sub> + oti<sub>Conjunction</sub>
    δεδομένου oti ‘given that’

In all the configurations of (17a-c) the deverbal preposition precedes its complement which is either in the accusative case in English (17a) or in both the accusative and the genitive case in Modern Greek (17b-c). Here reanalysis has modified the syntactic underlying representation of the verbal, i.e. the gerund and its complement. Normally, V-ing forms follow their subjects in absolute constructions, at least. Consider (18a-f) with the Modern Greek equivalents.

(18a) weather permitting (18b) kerou epitrepontos
(18c) all things considered, we (18d) ?olon ton praymaton
    θεόρουΜΕΝΟΝ<sub>PrGen</sub>
(18e) this given (18f) *aftou δεδομενου

Now, because of their pronominal position deverbal prepositions have lost their inflectional endings “through which they manifest agreement with their subject”
(Kortmann and Koenig 1992: 675) and this loss created a further favourable condition for reanalysis.

(19a) simperilamvanomenon ton isforon $\text{Fem/Gen/Pl}$ ‘including the charges’
(19b) simperilamvanomenis tis isforas $\text{Fem/Gen/Sg}$ ‘including the charge’
(19c) $\delta$e$\delta$omenis tis katalilis stiymis $\text{Fem/Gen/Sg}$ ‘given the right moment’
(19d) $\delta$e$\delta$omenou tu parontos ka$\delta$$\delta$estotos $\text{Ntr/Gen/Sg}$ ‘given the present regime’

However, in Modern Greek the inflectional endings still remain and agree with the noun phrase, the deverbal prepositions refer to in gender, number and case. Whereas resistance to inflection has not occurred yet in Modern Greek, it has in French: to quote examples from Kortmann and Koenig (ibid: 676), we have complete absence of inflection with the invariable forms $vu$ and $attendu$.

(20a) Vu sa charge énorme, ...
(20b) Attendu la situation interantionale, ...

Now with regard to the argument structure of the items of (16a), we can say that they are not controlled by the matrix subject. Actually, there is no need for them to be controlled by “any other nominal constituent of the superordinate clause” (Kortmann and Koenig 1992: 679). This is due, of course, to their reanalysis from participles as prepositions. On the other hand, all the items of (18c) are subject controlled. The inflectional morpheme -men- (is) of $\delta$e$\delta$omenis tis efkerias controls the external argument. Now the two forms $\delta$e$\delta$omenou oti ‘given that’ and prokimenou na ‘rather than’ have also been analyzed as conjunctions. For Jespersen (1975), both prepositions and conjunctions have been reanalyzed as conjunctions. According to Jespersen (1975: 89), both prepositions and conjunctions are alike.

The only difference is, that the complement in one case is a substantive, and in the other a sentence (or a clause). The so-called conjunction is really, therefore, a sentence preposition: the difference between the two uses of the same word consists in the nature of the complement and in nothing else.

5. Conclusion

So far, we have seen how the process of recategorization of verbs as prepositions has interacted with grammatical and syntactic changes (e.g. in the unattached V-ing constructions for English and the -ontias formations for Modern Greek, the underlying verb has lost its properties, i.e. tense, aspect, modality as well as person/number agreement (loss of V+ features)). Moreover, syntacti-
cally, it has also lost subject control. Concerning the Modern Greek data, those subject-controlled absolute constructions occur only in the genitive case, singular or plural. Likewise, the recategorization of nouns or adjectives as prepositions is also associated with morphophonological changes, especially in Modern Greek where the noun loses completely its identifying properties (i.e. gender, number and case). Admittedly, however, denominal prepositions in Modern Greek derive from only oblique cases, dative or genitive, usually in the singular in certain stereotyped, lexicalized but frequently used nouns which, in Classical Greek, were governed by oblique case prepositions such as en and epi (e.g. enopsi, epitelous

In its process of reanalysis as a preposition the verb (or noun) has also undergone morphophonological and semantic changes (e.g. English ago, during, barring, beside, etc. and Modern Greek ektoς, theorontas, osanafora, enopsi, meso, etc.) to the extent that it becomes morphologically and semantically opaque, e.g. pending < *pend. Thus the new meaning the denominal preposition carries is only metaphorically associated with the meaning of the source verb. To put it another way, the prepositional meaning can be viewed as the result of one particular meaning (metonyme), the more common, the more useful one, of the source verb. This new meaning, of course, depends on the purpose the new preposition is to be used for. And because deverbal prepositions are to serve more specialized, more communicative and more discourse-structuring functions, they follow the path from propositional to textual and then to expressive meanings formulated for the development of grammatical morphemes.

References


