

This work investigates utterances that can be understood as full propositions, but which lack any verbal element. These constructions are sometimes described as root small clauses (RSCs) and include the following types:

- ‘Mad Magazine’ utterances: ‘What? Me worry?’ (Akmajian 1984, Lambrecht 1990, Progovac 2006, 2007)
- Reduced participials in Italian (Cecchetto & Donati 2022)
  - Paziente guarito  
patient.M.SG heal.PPRT.M.SG ‘The patient recovered’

Are RSCs elliptical or more minimal—that is, constructed from fewer elements than usual for a full clause? How exactly are such utterances constructed and what is responsible for their distinct syntax?

I expand the empirical realm of this discussion by examining RSCs in Greek where I will argue that an allocutive head is at the core of their syntax.

**The Data:**

- (1) **Dropi sou!** [Predicate: DP ]  
shame you.gen.cl ‘Shame on you.’
- (2) a. **Oreas** [DP oi ntomates ] [Predicate: ADJP]  
beautiful.pl.f/m.nom the.pl.f/m.nom tomatoes.pl.f.nom  
‘The tomatoes are beautiful (delicious-looking).’ (empathetic statement)
- b. **Aionia** [DP i mnimi tis miteras sas] [Predicate: ADJP]  
eternal.f.nom the.f.nom memory.f the.f.gen mother.gen yours.pl.gen  
‘May your mother’s memory be eternal.’
- (3) **Kalos –tin** / **kalos** [DP ta paidia] /\*kalos-se [Predicate: ADVP]  
well - 3f.acc.cl well the.pl.n kids well –2s.acc.cl  
‘Welcome/Welcome you all!’ *Literally*: well-her /well to you kids! / \*well you!
- (4) **Brosta** [DP ta paidhia ], **piso** [DP oi meghaloi ] [Predicate:PREPP/ADVP]  
front the.pl.n.nom kids, behind the.pl.nom grownups  
‘the kids should go/be in the front, and the grownups in the back.’
- (5) **Aghios** [DP o Theos ]! [Predicate: ADJP]  
holy.m.nom the.m.nom God.nom  
‘God is holy!’

Note that RSCs lack verbs and consist of a non-verbal predicate followed by a subject (obligatory predicate+subject word order). Non-verbal predications in Greek typically have a verbal copula (*einai* ‘is/are’) and the word order is flexible. So RSCs have syntactic properties that are distinct from typical non-verbal predications in Greek.

RSCs cannot be analyzed as elliptical sentences—they sometimes have different meanings or syntactic properties distinct from the apparently corresponding sentences with verbs. Thus, full(er) sentences cannot serve as sources for putative ellipsis. In (6a&b), for example, two possible full clause sources of the RSC ‘welcome X’ would have the welcomee in either nominative or accusative case and second person. In the related RSC (7), the welcomee is accusative and may not be second person.

- (6) a. **Kalos-irthis!** b. (se-) **kalos-orizo**  
well arrived.2sg you.acc well-set  
*Literally*: ‘You came well.’ (i.e. ‘Welcome!’) ‘I welcome you.’

- (7) **Kalos –tin** / **Kalos tin** **Amerikana** /\***Kalos-se**  
well - cl.3f.acc well the.fs.acc American.fs well –cl.2s.acc  
‘Welcome!’ *Literally*: well-her /well the American! / \*well you!

With an overt copula, regardless of word order, the subject of predication can have a generic interpretation (8a,b), but in RSCs (9) a generic reading of the subject is not possible:

- (8) a. oi petres einai varies b. varies einai oi petres  
the.f.pl stones are heavy.f.pl heavy.f.pl are the.f.pl stones  
‘the stones are heavy.’/‘stones are heavy (contrastive focus).’ (generic interpretation possible)

- (9) **varies** [oi petres]  
heavy.pl the.pl.nom stones  
‘The stones are heavy.’/ \*‘stones are heavy.’ (generic reading not possible)

Moreover, the sentences with an overt copula (8) are statements of fact. But the RSC in (9) is not simply a statement of fact. It expresses or elicits empathy: I am noticing that maybe I should help with the stones! or pity me a bit—these are heavy stones that I am dealing with! That is, with the RSC in (9), in contrast to the overt copula sentence in (8), an interlocutor is necessarily involved. I conclude then RSCs are not elliptical constructions.

A closer look at the meanings expressed by RSCs indicates that they systematically involve addressees, and often interlocutor-addressees:

- *Other-directed wishes*—*blessings, curses* (1a, 2b, 3)
- *Empathetic observations*—*elicits empathy with addressee* (2a, 9)
- *Suggestions, demands*—*imperatives* (4)
- *Proclamations*—(5)

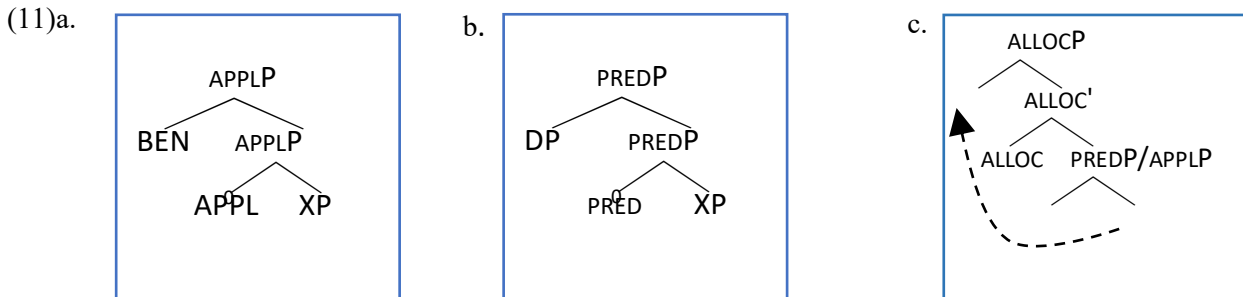
I capture the addressee orientation of RSCs by positing the presence of an allocutive head in these constructions. In support of this proposal, I note that RSCs are indeed restricted to root clauses (independently observed in Progovac 2007 for mad magazine sentences, with quite different conclusions).

(10) **RSC barred from adjunct clause:**

\*Kourástika yiati **varies oi petres** (ok: ...yiati oi petres einai varies)  
 got.tired.1s because heavy the stones because the stones are heavy  
*intended:* ‘I got tired because the stones are heavy.’

This is a distribution also demonstrated by imperatives and allocutive constructions (in many languages—McFadden 2020, Miyagawa 2017 for allocutivity): they are restricted to root environments.

I propose that obligatory predicate inversion with the absence of a verbal copula in RSCs is due to the licensing needs of the allocutive head: here the allocutive head has selected a predication such as an AppliedPhrase (11a) or PredPhrase (11b), and the predicate moves out of that phrase to the specifier of the allocutive phrase (11c). Just as definiteness can be accomplished without a definite morpheme, but instead by word order variation—a phrase moves to the specifier of an empty head to license the DP projection (Cheng, Heycock, & RZamparelli 2017), so too, I argue, can an allocutive phrase (AllocP) be licensed without overt morphology, via movement of an XP (the predicate) to the specifier position of AllocP (11c):



CONCLUSION: Minor sentences can be constructed out of smaller parts than usual for sentences.

- These are reduced sentences—i.e., not elliptical, rather made out of smaller parts
- Illocutionary force does not require  $\phi$ -phrase/TP; allocutive phrase can license a variety of smaller structures
- Contra Progovac, lack of embedding of minor sentence types does not argue for a different mode of simple sentence creation (other than merge alone); rather shows richness of syntax of speaker/addressee interactions

**selected references:** Akmajian 1984; Antonov 2015; Cecchetto & Donati 2022; Cheng, L. L.-S., C. Heycock, and R. Zamparelli (2017); Hill 2007; Lambrecht 1990; Miyagawa 2017; McFadden 2020; Progovac 2006, 2007; Portner, Pak, & Zanuttini 2019