

# PERIPHERAL FRAGMENTS: DISLOCATION AS ELLIPSIS

DENNIS OTT  
UNIVERSITY OF GRONINGEN

## 1. INTRODUCTION

In this paper, I argue for a unified analysis of Contrastive Left-dislocation (CLD) and Right-dislocation (RD) in Germanic. Examples of the two constructions are given below:

(1) *Contrastive Left-dislocation*

- a. Den Peter, den kenne ich. (GE)  
*the.ACC Peter him.ACC know I*
- b. Gisteren, toen heeft Jan dat boek terug gebracht. (DU)  
*yesterday then has John that book back brought*

(2) *Right-dislocation*

- a. Den kenne ich, den Peter. (GE)  
*him know I the Peter*
- b. Tasman heeft ze gezien, die Maoris. (DU)  
*Tasman has them seen those Maoris*

I will henceforth refer to the dislocated XP, printed boldface above, as the *dXP*, to the clause it precedes or follows as the *host clause*, and to the correlative element inside the host clause (underlined above) as the *anchor*.

Schematically and pre-theoretically, the two constructions can be summarized as follows:

$$(3) \quad (dXP_i) \overbrace{[CP \dots \text{anchor}_i \dots]}^{\text{host clause}} (dXP_i)$$

CLD has been extensively studied in the literature (see the references in Alexiadou 2006), while comparatively little attention has been devoted to RD.<sup>1</sup> In what follows, I will first present the theoretical problem posed by CLD and RD and then provide a principled solution based on the idea that the *dXP* in either case is the surface remnant of clausal ellipsis.

## 2. THEORETICAL CHALLENGES

The main theoretical problem posed by both CLD and RD is the Janus-faced nature of the *dXP* in both constructions:

- On the one hand, the *dXP* has certain properties that strongly suggest that it is not within the sentential domain of the host clause.
- On the other hand, the *dXP* shows *connectivity* into the host clause, indicating that it *is* an integral part of that sentential domain.

---

For questions, comments, and suggestions I thank Werner Frey, Erich Groat, Jason Merchant, Hubert Truckenbrodt, Mark de Vries, and Jan-Wouter Zwart. For details of the approach sketched here, see Ott 2011, 2012. Abbreviations used: DU = Dutch, GE = German, IC = Icelandic, NO = Norwegian.

<sup>1</sup>But see, for instance, Altmann 1981, Zwart 2001, Averintseva-Klisch 2008, de Vries 2009, and Truckenbrodt forthcoming; the latter work converges in several respects with the present approach.

Let us first consider evidence in favor of the idea that the *dXP* derivationally originates inside the host clause. First, we note that *dXP* and anchor obligatorily agree in case:

- (4) a. Þessum hring, honum hefur Ólafur lofað Maríu. (IC)  
*this.DAT ring it.DAT has Olaf promised Marí*  
 b. Ég þekki hana ekkert, dóttur hans.  
*I know her.ACC nothing daughter.ACC his*

Furthermore, the *dXP* reconstructs. As shown below, an element of the *dXP* can be bound by material inside the host clause:

- (5) a. Seinen<sub>i</sub> besten Freund, den sollte jeder<sub>i</sub> gut behandeln. (GE)  
*his best friend him should everyone well treat*  
 b. \*Anneke<sub>i</sub> d'r broer, die geloof ik dat ze<sub>i</sub> wel aardig vindt. (DU)  
*Anneke's brother him believe I that she sort of nice finds*  
 (6) a. Jan<sub>i</sub> zag iemand in de spiegel: zichzelf<sub>i</sub>. (DU)  
*Jan saw someone in the mirror himself*  
 b. \*Sie<sub>i</sub> hat ihn mit einer Anderen gesehen, Marias<sub>i</sub> Freund. (GE)  
*she has him with a.FEM different seen Maria's boyfriend*

Facts like these have motivated movement analyses of CLD, dating back to Vat 1981.

At the same time, however, it is straightforward to establish that the *dXP* is not an integral part of the host clause. The latter is always syntactically complete on its own; in the case of CLD this yields an apparent verb-third pattern. Within standard models of clause structure and  $\theta$ -roles, there is simply 'no room' for the *dXP* in either CLD and RD.

There is further evidence for the externality of the *dXP*. First, interjections/particles can intervene between *dXP* and host clause:

- (7) a. Zijn<sub>i</sub> moeder, god, die haat iedere puber<sub>i</sub>. (DU)  
*his mother God her hates every teenager*  
 b. Ich habe heute jemanden getroffen, ja, (nämlich) den Peter. (GE)  
*I have today someone.ACC met yes namely the.ACC Peter*

Second, the category of the *dXP* need not match that of a host-internal trace (where present), as witnessed in cases of P-stranding under R-pronoun movement in the host clause:

- (8) a. Mit seiner<sub>i</sub> Versetzung, da hatte keiner der Lehrer<sub>i</sub> mit gerechnet. (GE)  
*with his relocation there had none of the teachers with reckoned*  
 b. Da hatte keiner der Lehrer<sub>i</sub> mit gerechnet, mit seiner<sub>i</sub> Versetzung. (GE)  
*there had none of the teachers with reckoned with his relocation*

We have arrived at a dilemma: the *dXP* appears to be simultaneously external and internal to the host clause. I now present an analysis that resolves the apparent paradox.

### 3. DISLOCATION SUBDUED

I propose that both CLD and RD involve underlyingly biclausal structures, in which two parallel clauses are juxtaposed. Parallelism of the two clauses enables ellipsis in either one,<sup>2</sup> phonetically reducing one of the two clauses to an XP that has moved to its edge (= the *dXP*); I follow Merchant 2001 and others in taking this reduction to be PF-deletion.

<sup>2</sup>I cannot go into details of the theory of ellipsis parallelism here for reasons of space; the reader is referred to Merchant 2001 for discussion.

Turning first to RD, I propose to analyze an example like (2-a) as follows:

- (9) a.  $[\text{CP}_1 \text{ den kenne ich } ] [\text{CP}_2 \text{ den Peter}_i [ \text{kenne ich } t_i ] ] \rightarrow \text{PF-deletion}$   
 b.  $[\text{CP}_1 \text{ den kenne ich } ] [\text{CP}_2 \text{ den Peter}_i [ \text{kenne ich } t_i ] ]$  (= (2-a))

The  $d\text{XP}$  has undergone  $\bar{A}$ -movement to the edge of  $\text{CP}_1$ ; clausal ellipsis at PF reduces the redundant  $\text{CP}_2$  up to the  $d\text{XP}$ . Importantly, this type of ellipsis (typically taken to be deletion of IP, but see Ott in progress) is independently attested in a wide range of constructions, such as sluicing (Merchant 2001), fragment answers (Merchant 2004), split questions (Arregi 2010), and others.

Conversely, CLD is derived by clausal juxtaposition and backward ellipsis in  $\text{CP}_1$ :

- (10) a.  $[\text{CP}_1 \text{ den Peter}_i [ \text{kenne ich } t_i ] ] [\text{CP}_2 \text{ den kenne ich } ] \rightarrow \text{PF-deletion}$   
 b.  $[\text{CP}_1 \text{ den Peter}_i [ \text{kenne ich } t_i ] ] [\text{CP}_2 \text{ den kenne ich } ]$  (= (1-a))

Such backward ellipsis is independently attested, for instance in backward sluicing (*I don't know what  $\Delta$ , but John will have something*). Notice that unlike both movement and base-generation approaches to CLD, the analysis in (10) avoids a syntactic verb-third structure: V3 arises only at the surface, as a result of PF-deletion.

The ellipsis analysis enables us to cut the Gordian knot: the  $d\text{XP}$  is now *both* external *and* internal to the host clause. It is external in that it is the surface remnant of a separate CP; this allows for intervening material as in (7) above, and for the categorial ‘mismatch’ witnessed in (8):

- (11)  $[\text{CP}_1 [\text{PP mit seiner Versetzung}]_i \text{ hatte keiner der Lehrer } t_i \text{ gerechnet } ]$   
 $[\text{CP}_2 \text{ da}_k \text{ hatte keiner der Lehrer mit } t_k \text{ gerechnet } ]$  (= (8-a))

At the same time, the analysis predicts connectivity effects. Since the reduced clause is necessarily parallel to the host clause, both will contain identical case-assigners, and hence  $d\text{XP}$  and anchor are case-marked ‘in parallel’ (compare Merchant’s 2001; 2004 reasoning for sluicing/fragment answers).

Leftward  $\bar{A}$ -movement internally to the reduced clause will induce reconstruction effects of the usual kind, yielding the net effect of reconstruction into the host clause—really, reconstruction internally to the elliptical clause:

- (12) a.  $[\text{CP}_1 [\text{seinen}_i \text{ besten Freund}]_k [ \text{solte jeder}_i t_k \text{ gut behandeln } ] ]$  (= (5-a))  
 b.  $*[\text{CP}_2 [\text{Marias}_i \text{ Freund}]_k [ \text{hat sie}_i t_k \text{ mit einer Anderen gesehen } ] ]$  (= (6-b))

Reconstruction to trace position yields the observed binding/Condition C effects. No special assumptions are necessary; the  $d\text{XP}$  reconstructs in a perfectly ordinary fashion.

There is further evidence for the movement-*cum*-deletion approach. Just like in sluicing (Merchant’s 2001 second *Form-identity Generalization*), the  $d\text{XP}$  in dislocation reflects the (im-)possibility of P-stranding in a given language. Consider first CLD:

- (13)  $\{*(\text{Mit})\}$  meiner Schwester, mit der habe ich mich oft gestritten. (GE)  
*with my sister with her have I REFL often quarreled*
- (14) a. (??Med) søstera mi, ho krangla jeg ofte med. (NO)  
*with sister my her quarreled I often with*  
 b. (??Um) mömmu sína<sub>i</sub>, hana talar hver einasti unglíngur<sub>i</sub> illa um. (IC)  
*about mother his.ACC her.ACC talks each single youngster badly about*

This discrepancy is expected on the present analysis: being a P-stranding language, the preposition is stranded inside the ellipsis site in NO/IC:

- (15)  $[\text{CP} [\text{søstera mi}]_i [ \text{krangla jeg ofte med } t_i ] ]$  (= (14-a))

Since GE does not permit P-stranding in the relevant contexts, no such stranding is possible, and consequently the preposition is retained. As expected, the exact same contrast is found in RD:

- (16) Ich habe den ganzen Tag auf ihn gewartet, \*(auf) den Peter. (GE)  
*I have the whole day for him waited for the Peter*
- (17) a. Har du snakka med døm ennå, (<sup>??</sup>med) ungene? (NO)  
*have you spoken with them yet with kids.DEF*
- b. Jón talaði við hana, (<sup>??</sup>við) gömul konuna. (IC)  
*Jon talked to her to old lady.DEF*

The analysis thus provides an elegant way out of the dilemma we arrived at in section 2, and makes welcome predictions wrt. P-stranding. See Ott 2011, 2012 for many further arguments corroborating the ellipsis analysis of dislocation.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

Dislocation constructions reduce to juxtaposition of clauses and sluicing-type clausal ellipsis in either one, as schematically summarized below:

- (18) a. CLD:  $\underbrace{[dXP \langle [CP \dots t \dots] \rangle]}_{\text{elliptical clause}} \overbrace{[CP \dots \text{anchor} \dots]}^{\text{host clause}}$  ( $\langle \dots \rangle$  = PF-deletion)
- b. RD:  $\underbrace{[CP \dots \text{anchor} \dots]}_{\text{host clause}} \overbrace{[dXP \langle [CP \dots t \dots] \rangle]}^{\text{elliptical clause}}$

This approach reconciles properties of the *dXP* indicating that it is part of the sentential domain of the host clause (by placing it within the sentential domain of a *parallel* clause) with those betraying its externality to the host clause. No special mechanisms are required to derive the ‘dislocation’ surface pattern, and constructional residue is eliminated from the theory of UG.

#### REFERENCES

- Alexiadou, Artemis. 2006. Left-dislocation (including CLLD). In *The Blackwell companion to syntax*, ed. Martin Everaert and Henk van Riemsdijk, 668–699. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Altmann, Hans. 1981. *Formen der ‘Herausstellung’ im Deutschen: Rechtsversetzung, Linksversetzung, Freies Thema und verwandte Konstruktionen*, volume 106 of *Linguistische Arbeiten*. Tübingen: Niemeyer.
- Arregi, Karlos. 2010. Ellipsis in split questions. *Natural Language & Linguistic Theory* 28:539–592.
- Averintseva-Klisch, Maria. 2008. Rechte Satzperipherie im Diskurs: Die NP-Rechtsversetzung im Deutschen. Doctoral Dissertation, University of Tübingen.
- Merchant, Jason. 2001. *The syntax of silence. Sluicing, islands, and the theory of ellipsis*, volume 1 of *Oxford Studies in Theoretical Linguistics*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Merchant, Jason. 2004. Fragments and ellipsis. *Linguistics & Philosophy* 27:661–738.
- Ott, Dennis. 2011. An ellipsis approach to Contrastive Left-dislocation. Ms., University of Groningen (lingBuzz/001415).
- Ott, Dennis. 2012. Right-dislocation as deletion. Ms., University of Groningen.
- Ott, Dennis. in progress. Generalized sluicing. Ms., University of Groningen.
- Truckenbrodt, Hubert. forthcoming. On the prosody and syntax of right dislocation, adjunct postposing, and sentential pro-forms in German. In *Inner-sentential propositional pro-forms* (working title), ed. Werner Frey, André Meinunger, and Kerstin Schwabe. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.
- Vat, Jan. 1981. Left dislocation, connectedness, and reconstruction. *Groninger Arbeiten zur germanistischen Linguistik* 20:80–103.
- de Vries, Mark. 2009. The left and right periphery in Dutch. *The Linguistic Review* 26:291–327.
- Zwart, Jan-Wouter. 2001. Backgrounding (‘right-dislocation’) in Dutch. Ms., University of Groningen (available at <http://www.let.rug.nl/~zwart/docs/backgr.pdf>).