

Role and reference of detachment constructions : a typological approach

Category : oral (or poster)

Starting from an overview of Information Structuring (IS) between typology and universals, this paper revisits the questions of potential topic and focus domains in relation with referent accessibility and shared knowledge in discourse (Erteschik-Shir 2007, Van Valin 2007). Using a method which relies on twice 3 elements – 3 levels (pragmatic, morphosyntactic, semantic) and 3 pragmatic constituents (Theme/Topic – Rheme/Focus – Mneme/Antitopic), the analysis concentrates on the form and function of two detached constructions : 1/ the binary strategy 1 (Theme – Rheme), with a 1st element frequently detached (Initial Detachment, ID) ; 2/ the binary strategy 2 (Rheme – Mneme), with a 2nd element detached (Final Detachment, FD), a typical construction for impromptu speech (Fernandez-Vest 2004, Bernini & Schwartz (eds.) 2006, Apotéloz & Neveu (éds.) 2008). Evidence is taken mainly from Indo-European and Finno-Ugric languages : excerpts from conversations and life stories completed by the translations of fiction dialogues (novels and theater plays), samples from the TYPROCO Archives (CNRS). This typological approach highlights the roles of IDs for argumenting in rigid word order languages (ex. (1)) and FDs for the chaining of multiple answers in orally transmitted languages (ex. (2)), and focuses on the combined role of IDs and FDs for organizing the (circular) cohesion of different text types (e.g. narratives and jokes, ex. (3), (4)), and for text linking in morphologically rich languages and their language contact variants (ex. (5), (6)).

On the basis of these comparisons, a re-evaluation of some previously proposed correlations, such as « semantical motivation = universality » vs. « pragmatically driven syntax = cross-linguistic variation » (Hyman 2005, Fernandez-Vest & Comrie 2007) is finally presented.

References : Apotéloz D. & Neveu F. (éds.), 2008, *Les linguistiques du détachement*, Peter Lang. • Bernini G. & Schwartz Marcia L. (eds.), 2006, *Pragmatic organization in languages of Europe*, Mouton de Gruyter, Eurotyp 20-8. • Erteschik-Shir N., 2007, *Information structure. The syntax-discourse interface*, Oxford University Press. • Fernandez-Vest M.M.J., 2004, « Mnémème, Antitopic : Le post-Rhème, de l'énoncé au texte », in M.M.J. Fernandez-Vest & Sh. Carter-Thomas (éds.), *Structure Informationnelle et Particules Enonciatives – essai de typologie*, L'Harmattan • Fernandez-Vest M.M.J. & Comrie B., 2007, « Information Structuring : syntax or pragmatics ? », Introduction to the Workshop « Is Information Structure a universal, or a typological category ? », *ALT 7 Biennial meeting*, Paris, september 2007. • Hyman L., 2005, « Focus marking in Aghem : syntax or semantics ? », *Conference on Focus in African languages*, Berlin, octobre 2005. • *Typologie Revisitée de l'Ordre des Constituants (TYPROCO)* : « Structure Informationnelle et constructions à détachement dans les langues et les discours », programme Fédération Typologie et Universaux Linguistiques (FR 2559) du CNRS. • Van Valin R.D., 2007 [2005], *Exploring the syntax-semantics interface*, Cambridge University Press.

→ Examples

(1) Standard French [A discussion, raised by medias, about the majority of seniors voting for Sarkozy in the French President election]

– *C'est pas vrai pour tous les plus de 65 ans ! Les vieux de l'immeuble (ID) / eh ben (DIP) / ils ont pas voté Sarkozy ! Y en a même un / il m'a dit / « Le Sarko (ID-Th1) / son ouverture (ID-Th2) / ses réformes (ID-Th3) / c'est du bidon. »*

It is not true of all over 65s ! The old folks in our building (ID) / you know (DIP) / they haven't voted for Sarkozy ! Even one / he told me : « Sarko (ID-Th1) / his opening up (ID-Th2) / his reforms (ID-Th3) / that's codswallop !

(2) Northern Sami [– And your parents' house was made of... ?]

– *Hirsa.... Hirsavisti =>> Guđa duma aso (Rh) dat hirssat (Mn)*

« Log.... A log-hut = >> Six thumbs thick (Rh) the logs (Mn) »

(3) (South-Western) French [– Didn't you tell me a story of stepladder ?]

– *OUI ! Alors il est tombé / un jour il a voulu monter sur un escabeau (Rh) / et pis il avait pas vu que l'escabeau (DI) il avait pas la corde ! Tu sais / on met une ficelle (– Ah !) pour pas que ça s'ouvre / l'escabeau (DF) !*

« YES ! You see he fell / one day he wanted to climb on a stepladder (Rh) / and then he had not seen that the stepladder (ID) it did not have the rope ! You know they put a string (– Oh !) for that it doesn't open / the stepladder (FD) ! »

(4) Northern Sami [The whims of our snow mobile]

– *Maid dat gal go rovkui čákkjá (Th1) / dat lea hui čáhcejuhkalaš (Rh1) min vuoján (Mn1) / dat lávii nu dávja (Th2) finadit ain (Rh2) roavkkus (Mn2)*

« What for sure when it falls into the icedrift (Th1) / it is very thirsty of water (Rh1) our vehicle (Mn1) / it used to often pay a visit again (Rh2) to the icedrift (Mn2). »

(5) Standard Finnish [The Finnish presidents]

– (...) *niin ketään ei kyl ole ollu Suomen kansan lähellä / niin paljon kun on tää Kekkonen [Rh]. (...) (U3) Nin se / se se on jotenkin niin / ku se olis ihan meidän kaikkien Urkki ja / se oli myöskin ku se oli Nivalasta tullu se ... Ky .. Kallio =>> (+ U4) niin / nin / se [Th] oli jotenkin se oli kans semmone KANSANOMANE. (U5) Mutta nää kaikki [Th] niinku RYTII oli semmone sulkeutunu ja / ja / ja PAASIKIVI oli taas semmone möree ja taas toi oli semmonen aristokraattinen toi / Mannerheim [Mn] ja + / nää muut [Th] ni että ne ei oo kyl semmosia ollu ku tää ... meidän kaikkie Urkki [Mn].*

« (...) well no one has been close to the Finnish people / so much as this Kekkonen [Rh]. (...) (U3) You know he / he he is like well / as he would be a Urkki for all of us and / he was also as he from Nivala had come he ... this Ky .. Kallio [Mn] =>> (+ U4) well / well / he [Th] was like he was also kind of FOLKSY. (U5) But all these [Th] like RYTII was kind of withdrawn and / and / and PAASIKIVI was again kind of grumbler/ and again that one was kind of aristocratic that one / Mannerheim [Mn] and + / these others [Th] well (that) they haven't ye-e kind of been like this one. a Urkki for all of us [Mn]. »

(6) Californian Finnish [– When did your parents come to America?]

Hän aina sanoit / että minä olen nationalist.
« He always said / that I am a nationalist. » (Rh)

Mutta minä en ollut / nationalist.
« But I was not / a nationalist. » (Mn)

Mä oon enempi internationalist. [they laugh] kun .. kun nationalist.
« I am more internationalist (Rh) [they laugh] than .. than nationalist. » (Mn)

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