

# DISCOURSE FUNCTIONS AND PLACEMENT: AN ANALYSIS OF DISLOCATION IN ENGLISH

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## Dislocation:

- placement of NP in extra-clausal position (left or right)
- presence of coreferential resumptive in host

**Examples:** (Quirk, Greenbaum, Leech, & Svartvik, 1985, p. 1310)

- (1) a. **That play<sub>i</sub>, it<sub>i</sub>** was terrible.  
b. **He<sub>i</sub>'s a complete idiot, that brother of yours<sub>i</sub>.**

## Earlier accounts:

- often discussed in terms of Topic-marking (i.a. Gregory & Michaelis, 2001; Lambrecht, 1994, 2001; Ziv, 1994; Ziv & Grosz, 1994)
  - LD establishes/announces new Topic
  - RD continues/maintains already active Topic
- Topic-marking function rejected by Prince (1997)
  - no grammatical reflex in English (see also Mackenzie & Keizer, 1991)
  - no clear definition of aboutness Topic

Topic cannot explain the placement of the dislocated phrase in either the left or right periphery!

- RQ1: Which discourse-pragmatic features determine the placement of a dislocated element to the left or right of the main clause?
- RQ2: What is the prosodic realisation of left- and right-dislocation in spoken British English?
- RQ3: What is the interaction between the prosodic realisation of the dislocated element, its discourse-pragmatic features and the position relative to the matrix clause?

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**ICE-GB:** (Nelson, Wallis, & Aarts, 2002)

- covers a wide variety of genres (private conversations, interviews, etc.)
- includes audio files

**Data collection:**

- search for appositive NPs
- manual review of results to identify dislocations
- 64 dislocations found in total
  - 30 left dislocations
  - 34 right dislocations

## Data analysis:

- distinction made between discourse- and host-oriented functions
  - discourse-orientation: relation of dislocated phrase to discourse context
  - host-orientation: relation of dislocated phrase to host clause
- dislocated phrase is taken to stand in a functional relation to both the context and the host

Table 1: Discourse- and host-oriented functions

	Discourse-oriented	Host-oriented	
<b>Left Dislocation</b>	Introductory	Narrowing	Preparing
	Forefronting	Summarising	
	Amnesty	Anchoring	
<b>Right Dislocation</b>	Continuation Maintenance	Repair	
	Continuation Reactivation	Disambiguation	
	Afterthought	Specification	
	Phatic	Clarification	
	Interaction		

## Discourse-oriented functions:

- Introductory: dislocated phrase introduces new referent into discourse
- Forefronting: dislocated phrase brings referent to foreground
- Amnesty: repair mechanism to avoid ungrammatical topicalisation

(cf. Prince, 1997; Tizón-Couto, 2012)

## Host-oriented functions:

- Preparation: fall-back; prepares topic for the host
- Narrowing: based on part-whole relationship between initial NP and resumptive
- Summarising: several (dislocated) NPs summarised by resumptive in host
- Anchoring: initial NP functions as referential anchor for resumptive

(cf. Mann & Thompson, 1988; Tizón-Couto, 2012)

## Discourse-oriented functions:

- Continuation Maintenance: maintains already active Topic
- Continuation Reactivation: reactivates Topic that has receded into background
- Afterthought: by definition corrective; speaker realises error and repairs it
- Phatic: used to build rapport between speaker and addressee
- Interactional: expresses counterexpectancy in the host

(cf. Aijmer, 1989; Lambrecht, 2001; Ziv, 1994)

## Host-oriented functions:

- Clarification: fall-back; clarifies the referent of the resumptive in the host
- Repair: repairs host utterance in cases where there is no potential referent in the context
- Disambiguation: identifies the referent of the host in cases where there are several potential referents in the context
- Specification: variable - value relation between host and dislocated phrase

## Introductory:

- (2) We will go to a cash and carry place and get try and get a lot of the ingredients  
COS [My friend Karen<sub>i</sub>]<sub>ANCHOR</sub>, her<sub>i</sub> father has got a cash and carry card  
(S1A-023 #322)

## Forefronting:

- (3) The nature of the work that we do is no different from any other creative arts  
group. [The way we work<sub>i</sub>, the way we experiment<sub>i</sub>, the way we design  
choreography<sub>i</sub>]<sub>SUMMARY</sub>, uh all those things<sub>i</sub> I think are similar to other dance  
groups  
(S1A-004 #124)

**Reactivation:** (cf. Lambrecht, 2001)

- (4) Well you see Barry has an endpoint which is very very critical He says you wizz it until it balls round the knife [...] and the one before it you know it went from not looking as though it was balling at all to completely balling So **it<sub>i</sub>** seems to exce exceedingly critical [**that endpoint<sub>i</sub>**]<sub>DISAMBIG</sub> (S1A-057 #192)

**Afterthought:** (cf. Aijmer, 1989; Lambrecht, 2001; Ziv & Grosz, 1994)

- (5) B: She's quite sexy in it. Basically she 's not trying actually. He's the chap from Soap isn't he  
A: That's exactly. Not Soap. Yes. It is but. No  
B: It looks like **him<sub>i</sub>**; you know [**the father<sub>i</sub>**]<sub>REPAIR</sub> (S1A-041 #030)

## Interaction:

- (6) C: [...] there's all these numbers that you can dial for all, all the different sexual pleasures that you want. [...]
- D: Mm, they're just <unclear> Are **they**<sub>i</sub> are they classified [**the sexual pleasures**<sub>i</sub>]<sub>SPEC</sub>
- (S1A-027 #181)

## Linguistic marking:

- Prosodic detachment
  - Left dislocations
  - Afterthoughts
- Prosodic integration (+ deaccentuation)
  - Right dislocations

Is there a unifying factor that determines the linguistic marking?

## Principle of Task urgency (TUG): (Givon, 1988, p. 252)

(7) Attend first to the more urgent task

- if information is least predictable, it is most urgent to express
- has repercussions for word order in languages
  - less predictable information is ordered before predictable information

## Left and right dislocations:

- (8) a. A: Yeah. So you got involved through her, did you?  
B: No I she got involved through me. **My ex-boyfriend Phil<sub>i</sub>, he<sub>i</sub>** got me interested. (S1A-081 #125)
- b. I mean the the way Mr Griffiths fastens on his heroines and the camera from that moment on exploits women in a particular way right the way through the whole of cinema up to this day Very rarely has that been uh as it were subverted [. . .] uh **It<sub>i</sub>'s** very hierarchical **the cinema<sub>i</sub>**; (S1B-045 #086)
- LD communicatively important → pre-clausal position and prosodically prominent
  - RD fully predictable → post-clausal position and prosodically integrated/deaccented

## Afterthoughts:

(9) They are just wonderful, but there's no male dancer like that. There's there's a group called Coimbre Flamenco who I saw at Sadler's Wells. And **it<sub>i</sub>** is popular again now **flamenco dancing and music<sub>i</sub>**. (S1A-044 #370)

- position result of production process
- information in final phrase not predictable based on the host
- may be related to Focus structure, i.e. AT probably in Focus

## General characterisation:

- "form-oriented function-to-form approach" (Hengeveld & Mackenzie, 2008, pp. 38–39)
  - form-oriented: only systematically coded functional elements represented
  - function-to-form: functions used to explain the form
- hierarchical top-down organisation (i.e. directional)
- four levels of analysis
  - Interpersonal Level (discourse & pragmatics)
  - Representational Level (semantics)
  - Morphosyntactic Level (morphosyntax)
  - Phonological levels (phonology)

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## Left- and right dislocation in FDG: (Hengeveld & Mackenzie, 2008)

- dislocated item treated as subsidiary Discourse Act ( $A_1$ ) at the IL
- assigned the rhetorical functions **PRELUDE** (LD) and **AFTERTHOUGHT** (RD), respectively (but note that the framework is currently being updated)

(10) **That** play<sub>i</sub>, it<sub>i</sub> was terrible.

(M<sub>I</sub>: [(A<sub>I</sub>: –that play–)**PRELUDE** (A<sub>J</sub>: –it was terrible–)] (M<sub>I</sub>))

### Issue:

- Discourse Act status depends on prosodic detachment
- currently, no way of representing prosodically integrated right dislocations

## LD and AT: (subsidiary) Discourse Acts

- (11) a. My ex-boyfriend Phil, he got me interested.

IL: (M<sub>I</sub>: [(A<sub>I</sub> –your ex-boyfriend– (A<sub>I</sub>))<sub>PRELUDE</sub> (A<sub>J</sub>: –he got me interested– (A<sub>J</sub>))] (M<sub>I</sub>))

- b. And it is popular again now flamenco dancing and music.

IL: (M<sub>I</sub>: [(A<sub>I</sub> –it is popular again now– (A<sub>I</sub>)) (A<sub>J</sub>: –flamenco dancing and music– (A<sub>J</sub>))<sub>AFTERTHOUGHT</sub>] (M<sub>I</sub>))

- position assigned by rhetorical functions PRELUDE and AFTERTHOUGHT
- detachment reflex of Discourse Act status

## Prosodically integrated RDs: (referential) Subact (R<sub>J</sub>)

(12) It's very HIERARCHICAL, the cinema.

IL: (A<sub>I</sub>: [(F<sub>i</sub>: DECL) (P<sub>1</sub>)<sub>S</sub> (P<sub>2</sub>)<sub>A</sub> (C<sub>I</sub>: [(R<sub>I</sub>) (R<sub>J</sub>)<sub>BCKGR</sub> (C<sub>mI</sub>: [(T<sub>I</sub>)] (C<sub>mI</sub>))<sub>FOC</sub>]  
(C<sub>I</sub>))] (A<sub>I</sub>))

- position assigned by pragmatic function Background (Bckgr)
- integration and deaccentuation reflex of this function

- functional analysis of 30 LDs and 34 RDs conducted
  - distinction between discourse- and host-oriented functions
- Task urgency (TUG) (see Givon, 1988)
  - most urgent (least predictable) information expressed first (LD and RD)
  - Afterthoughts → position result of production process; prosody result of TUG
- FDG analysis
  - LD and AT represented as subsidiary Discourse Acts with rhetorical function (PRELUDE and AFTERTHOUGHT)
  - RD represented as referential Subact with Background function

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## Introductory LD:

- (13) A: Yeah, but you haven't been in the past in hospitals for anything.  
B: No.  
A: No. Now **your parents<sub>i</sub>**, are **they<sub>i</sub>** alive and well?

(S1A-051 #305)

## Forefronting LD:

- (14) And the cost is that a number of these infants [= pre-term infants] come through with disabilities of some form. **These disabilities; some of them;** are major and obvious such as uh quadriplegia.

(S2A-046 #114)

## Maintaining RD:

- (15) I mean the the way Mr Griffiths fastens on his heroines and the camera from that moment on exploits women in a particular way right the way through the whole of cinema up to this day Very rarely has that been uh as it were subverted [. . . ] uh **It<sub>i</sub>**'s very hierarchical [**the cinema<sub>i</sub>**]<sub>CLAR</sub> (S1B-045 #086)