

A Syntactic Construction Motived by Discourse : Repetitive Right Dislocation

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1. Introduction. Right dislocation (RD) is a syntactic construction where a phrase that canonically appears sentence initially or medially is dislocated to the right edge of the sentence. It is a frequently observed phenomena in verb-final languages such as Turkish, Japanese and Korean. The construction comes in three different flavors: (i) the dislocated phrase (i.e. *the appendix*) has a corresponding gap inside the clause (i.e. host clause) in which it canonically appears, called *gapped* right dislocation, (ii) the appendix has an identical overt correspondent in the host clause, called *repetitive* right dislocation, and (iii) the appendix has a different (and typically semantically more specific) overt correspondent in the host clause, called *specificational* right dislocation (Ko, 2016). The emphasis of this work is on the repetitive version as exemplified in (1) for Turkish.

- (1) Ece kedi-yi gor-du kedi-yi.
Ece cat-Acc see-Past cat-Acc
'Ece saw the cat, the cat.' Turkish

Repetitive RD has been previous accounted for from a purely syntactic point of view. Both in Korean and Japanese, it is taken to involve a bi-clausal structure in which the construction involves two identical clauses where the host clause constitutes the first clause and the appendix appears as a remnant of a clausal ellipsis in the second clause (Tanaka 2010; Ko, 2016). Evidence for this analysis comes from a variety of syntactic measures such as island effects, scope interpretations, focus etc.

2. Main Claim. While I acknowledge that repetitive RD has syntactic consequences on the sentence structure, I argue in this work that the construction is motivated by discourse considerations, specifically by a communicative principle that regulate the optimality of information update between discourse participants. The idea is that within the discourse, the speaker may have a communicative need to strongly emphasize a part of the information conveyed by the sentence. One reason for this preference is the rejection of the previous information update (i.e. downdate) that has not yet been settled in the common ground. In such cases, the speaker may resort to alternative, marked constructions to satisfy this communicative need. These constructions therefore are to be handled outside the domains of narrow syntax, as an interface phenomenon between the propositional level of sentence structure and the utterance level. Previous works acknowledge the need for such interface level for various linguistic phenomena (McCready, 2006; Davis, 2009; Miyagawa, 2012; Corr, 2022) and this study contributes to this body of knowledge by analyzing repetitive dislocation as an operation that applies at this level. This can be accomplished by a functional projection above the CP, called cP, SpeechAct Phrase, Discourse Phrase, Utterance Phrase etc. of which the latest term adopted here in this work following Corr's terminology. UtP marks the outer edge of an utterance and hosts a variety of linguistic phenomena that operate above the propositional level sentence structure and regulate an optimal way of information update in terms of speaker-addressee relations. Such phenomena are typically restricted to root clause, hence are not observed within embedded clauses. The structure of a sentence with a repetitive appendix is illustrated below:

- (2) $[[[\text{Proposition}_{\text{IP}}] + \text{Information Structure} + \text{Force}_{\text{CP}}]_{\text{UtP}}] + \text{The appendix}_{\text{UtP}}$
Recursive

Repetitive RD has three important properties that reflect its communicative status: (i) It is strictly a root phenomenon, i.e. the appendix cannot appear to the right of the embedded verb within the embedded clause (3), (ii) it is optional, i.e. there is no right dislocated sentence where it is allowed at the same time its non-dislocated canonical correspondent is not allowed, (iii) is almost exclusively found in spoken language. It is rare to find this construction in written material.

(3) * Veli [Ece'nin kedi-yi sahiplen-mesi-nden kedi-yi_{CP}] pisman ol-du.

Veli Ece-Gen cat-Acc adopt-poss.3sg-abl cat-Acc regret be-Past

(Intended) 'Veli regretted that Ece adopted the cat, the cat.' Turkish

The analysis of gapless RD as a communicative phenomenon together with the structure in (2) provides a straightforward account of these properties. Gapless RD cannot appear in embedded clauses because embedded clauses, even though they are propositional, are not complete utterances, hence they cannot project the functional phrase UtTP. Since repetitive RD appendix targets UtTP, it cannot appear somewhere within the embedded clause. The optionality and oral nature of gapless RD follows from its communicative nature. If the speaker determines a communicative need to downgrade the previous information update by the hearer, they employ a repetitive RD to indicate it. If no such need arises, a repetitive RD is not needed as well. And since the communicative need is attributed to an information update exchange between the speaker and the hearer, it is most natural that the repetitive RD is exclusively observed in oral communication.

3. Syntactic Structure. The detailed syntactic structure offered for repetitive RD is shown in (4) for the sentence in (1). I propose that repetitive RD involves base-adjunction of the appendix to UtTP in a mono-clausal sentence structure.

(4) [[Ece kedi-yi gor-du_{CP}] kedi-yi_{UtTP}]

Ece cat-Acc see-Past cat-Acc

'Ece saw the cat, the cat.' Turkish

Two pieces of evidence support the proposal: (i) the appendix appears to the right of linguistic elements that usually appear at the edge of clause periphery such as discourse particles (Davis, 2009) and question tags (Krifka, 2015). This shows that the appendix targets a position that is even higher than these clause-edge elements. This position is provided by UtTP that embeds the rest of the clause. (ii) Repetitive RD (unlike gapped and specificational RD) does not show island sensitivity. The appendix can be associated with a correspondent that is inside a syntactic island. In other versions of right dislocation, this is taken as primary evidence for a movement-based account. The absence of such island effects in repetitive RD suggests that the appendix is better analyzed as base-generated at the UtTP. I argue that the same extended clausal spine involving UtTP cannot be extended to the previously argued bi-clausal analyses both on syntactic grounds and in terms of the meaning contribution of such sentences. Such bi-clausal structure with a juxtaposition of two UtTPs would predict the sentence as consisting of two separate propositions, which is against the intuitions of Japanese and Turkish speakers. It also predicts a prosodic break akin to a one that is typically observed between two sentences, which is again not the case in these languages. And finally, such a structure would expect island sensitivity of repetitive RD (due to a syntactic movement in the second clause), which is not observed either in Japanese or Turkish.

Selected References. (1) Ko, H. (2016). Gapless right-dislocation: The role of overt correlates.

Language Research 52:3–32. (2) Abe, J. (2015). Two types of Japanese right dislocation under the bi-clausal analysis. In 11th Workshop on Altaic Formal Linguistics, University of York. June, volume 4.