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THE DISCOURSE FUNCTIONS OF PRO-DROP
AND SUBJECT POSTPOSITION IN CATALAN

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Catalan, like Hebrew, Italian, Russian, Spanish, etc., is a pro-drop language: pronouns in subject position are variably deleted. These languages may have a phonologically realized subject and show a number of syntactic properties that are commonly associated with the pro-drop parameter, as van Riemsdijk and Williams (1986) point out, following Chomsky and Rizzi:

1. a non-overt subject
[e] va trucar
'[e] called'
- b free inversion of the subject
la Joana va trucar
va trucar la Joana
'J called'
- c apparent violation of the that-trace filter
qui creus que [e] trucarà
'who do you believe that [e] will call'
- d long move-wh of subject
la dona que no sé quan [e] trucarà
'the woman that I don't know when [e] will call'

This paper focuses on the usage of both 1a and 1b: the use of null-subject constructions and of sentences with a postposed subject along with sentences with an overt subject. Its aim is to find out whether there are any special discourse functions that allow us to distinguish these different constructions at the level of pragmatics.

The combination of both 1a and 1b shows the paradigm displayed in 2. We have two kinds of NPs: lexical NPs and pronouns,

2a NPlex VP	:	el Jaume ha vingut	'J has come'
b VP NPlex	:	ha vingut el Jaume	"
c NPpro VP	:	ell ha vingut	'he has come'
d VP NPpro	:	ha vingut ell	"
e e VP	:	ha vingut	's/he/it has come'

The analysis presented here focuses on constructions 2c, 2d, and 2e, i.e., preverbal subject NPpro vs. postverbal subject NPpro vs. null subject. All our tokens have referential subjects which

constitute given information. The alternation between full NPs, pronouns and non-overt subjects is also worth looking at. Some work has been done on French (Karmiloff-Smith 1981) and Persian (Haeri 1984), among others, but I will leave this aspect of the Catalan paradigm to be analyzed in a future occasion.

Most of the data is drawn from two different sources: a) taped conversations of a group of friends over dinner and other situations. The dialogues show both interaction among the people there gathered and addresses to the person to which the tapes were supposed to be mailed. Obviously, they were aware that the conversation was being recorded. The recording was made in November 1985. The speakers are high-school graduates and between 22 and 25 years of age; and b) scenes I-IX in act I of a play by Angel Guimerà, *La filla del mar*, written in 1900. Guimerà was chosen because of his alignment with the Realist movement. This play is a rural drama, and the speech of its characters tries to be as close as possible to reality.

One further restriction on the corpus applies. Catalan, like Spanish, does not allow pronominalization of [-human] NPs (Lunn 1979), as shown by comparison of 3 and 4

3 a	el Jordi no té cap	'J has no head'
b	ell no té cap	'he has no head'
c	no té cap	'(he) has no head'
4 a	el departament no té cap	'the dept. has no head'
b	*ell no té cap	'it has no head'
c	no té cap	'(it) has no head'

On the other hand, [+generic] NPs cannot be pronominalized either. Therefore, only [+human][-generic] NPs can be taken into account when counting tokens with non-overt subjects, since [-human] or [+generic] subjects would never have a pronominalized correlate.

The distribution of the different available constructions shows the following pattern, for both the recorded conversation (R) and the written data (D):

Table I: NPpro vs. [e] in declarative sentences

	Recorded Data		Play	
[e] VP	143	88.8%	252	79.2%
pro VP	12	8.1%	49	15.4%
VP pro	4	3.1%	17	5.4%
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N	159	100%	318	100%

As we can see, the frequency of occurrence of non-overt subjects

is overwhelmingly higher than the frequency of occurrence of subject pronouns. On the other hand, postverbal pronominal subjects seem not to be a very common construction, although their availability is obvious. Due to this distribution and the non-existence of [-human] or [+generic] subject pronouns, I will assume that the null-subject construction is the unmarked one in Catalan and that, therefore, both available choices with NPpro subjects are marked and have to have specific functions attached.

Let us consider, first of all, the choice NPpro VP. According to Chafe (1976:37), overt subjects in pro-drop languages indicate contrastiveness: "in some languages, where the role of given nouns is captured primarily through agreement in the verb, independent pronouns appear to be used mainly to express a focus of contrast". The speaker assumes that the hearer is possibly thinking of several candidates for some particular role, and indicates with the focus of contrast that a particular alternative is the right choice. Chafe's proposal seems to be applicable to Catalan as well. Examples 5 to 7 show how Chafe's account would explain the apparently redundant overt pronoun in subject position.

5(R) p avui si estic de sort anirem a sopar un altre dia al
today if [e] I-am lucky [e] 1pl-will-go to dinner again
Florida
to the Florida
q i jo me'n vaig a sopar a Cerdanyola
and I 1s-go to dinner to Cerdanyola

6(D) ci és que no és veritat això que em dieu (...)
it-is that no it-is true this that [e] me 2pl-say
'what you are telling me is not true'
cadoncs sí que és veritat, sí, que nosaltres ho hem sentit
so yes that it-is true yes that we it 1pl-have heard
'but it is true; we have heard it'

7(R) q li van fotre una hòstia als morros i ja està
him [e] 3pl-gave a blow on-the snout and already it-is
'they punched him in the nose and that's it'
n sí pero ell se pensava que l'hi havia fotut un tio que
yes but he 3s-thought that it-him 3s-had given a dude
en realitat era el que els separava
that in reality [e] 3s-was who them 3s-separated
'yes but he thought that a dude that was really breaking
up the fight had punched him'

The situation in 5 is as follows: p likes that particular restaurant -Florida- (there's even a joke about his mania) and he announces that the gang is going to go there that night. We see how q contrasts himself with the other people in the room. After p says that they are going to the restaurant to have

dinner, q states what could be paraphrased as: 'you guys may be going to that restaurant for dinner, but I am going to Cerdanyola myself; I won't have to go through that painful experience'. That he is going to Cerdanyola is a well-known fact among the people in the room and, in fact, it has even been mentioned previously. This is clearly a contrastive function. In 6, which is from the play, a group of people have heard two lovers flirt. Later, they tell the girl's father, ci, but he does not believe it. Ca's reply, with nosaltres says: 'it is us who heard that thing, not you; therefore, we know it is true, you don't'. In 7 the conversation is about a fight in a disco. p was hit on the face and gave back a blow, but to the wrong person. He was actually a little tipsy and mistook the person who was breaking up the fight for the agressor. ell tells us that it was that referred male entity who thought what he thought rather than somebody else. In fact, the other people knew that the other guy was only trying to help. Notice that in the above cases, the pronoun is semantically superfluous, since the agreement of the verb inflection provides us with all the information necessary (only in 7 the feature [+male] is added).

The entities referred to by these overt subjects are always contrasted with sets of alternatives that are present in the previous discourse or, otherwise, salient at the moment. Contrastiveness is also expressed by placement of higher pitch and stronger stress on the focus of contrast. Therefore, the overt pronominal subjects of Catalan should show these characteristics. And, in fact, the examples we have seen must have stronger stress and they also show a pitch maximum within their clause. Otherwise, the pronoun is dropped.

When first approaching this topic, I assumed that there was only one kind of verbal postposition; hence the title. However, an examination of the data made it clear that there are two different phenomena: something that looks like a verb-subject inversion - a real postposition- and something else that looks like an extraposition of the subject to the right, i.e., a right-dislocation. Both constructions can be differentiated through intonation, and, in fact, a comma is normally used in writing to identify the latter. See 8:

8 a t'ha trucat el Pep 'Pep has called you'

b t'ha trucat, el Pep

While 8a shows a steady, slightly rising tone, 8b's intonation rises to a target (trucat) and then falls. In sentences like 8b we can also observe other properties that show that the NP is definitely extraposed: it goes to the end of all complements, clause-final particles, and so on.

Let us have a look at this right-dislocating phenomenon with pronominal subjects. Chafe (1976:53) mentions that a given speaker may feel the need to express something after the frame for the sentence has already been determined. This something is what he calls 'antitopic'. The speaker starts with an unmarked structure: a non-overt subject construction. But, suddenly, in the middle of the utterance s/he feels the need to express contrastiveness. Pro-drop languages do that using an overt subject, but it is too late for that. A self-repair could enter the picture and the sentence could be re-started. However, another way of dealing with the problem is to adjoin the pronominal subject at the end of the clause. The data seems to suit this model in quite a straightforward fashion. I believe that examples 9 and 10 support this view.

9(R) estic fregant, jo, xiquet. Aquests nois aquí de juerga
 [e] I-am cleaning I boy. These young-men here in spree
 i jo fregant
 and I cleaning
 'I am cleaning, man. These guys here having fun and I am cleaning'

10(R) i així que t'has tornat fumeta, tu, mecagundena. Quan
 and so 2s-have-turned-into a-dope-smoker you damn-it when
 aquí tot déu s'ha deixat de fumar canuts, ara tu vas i..
 here all god has quit of to-smoke joints now you go and
 'so you've turned into a dope-smoker, damn you. When here
 everybody has quit smoking dope, now you go and...'

The person that uttered 9 was working in the kitchen. The other people, gathered in the living room, call her so that she says something to be recorded. And she complains about her being working while the others are doing nothing. There is no previous environment suitable for contrastiveness, but it is rather the sentence following that allows contrast, i.e., contrastiveness is made obvious through the statement that follows the extraposed subject: 'I am the one who is doing the cleaning, not these guys here'. Similarly, with 10: the speaker here thought of the contrast too late to use the overt-subject device in its original preverbal position. The contrast is expressed by what follows tu.

Remember that in 5, 6 and 7 contrastiveness was made obvious by the discourse previous to the tokens in question. And, significantly, examples 9 and 10 show overt subjects in preverbal position after the contrastive environment has been expressed: i jo fregant (9) and ara tu vas i ... (10).

Of course, not all of the tokens show such revealing environments with regard to contrastiveness, but none of them shows evidence against considering these pronouns foci of contrast that have been 'antitopicalized'.

It is worth mentioning that right-dislocation seems to be a common construction in Catalan. NPs, AdjPs, PPs can be extracted and put in that position. There is only one condition: their subjecthood. They have to be the subject of the utterance, i.e., what the speaker is talking about. In a sentence like 11a (11b being the canonical order)

11a en tinc, de cervesa
 PART 1s-have of beer
 beer, I have
 b tinc cervesa
 1s-have beer

the speaker assumes that the beer is salient for the hearer, in other words, that it is the theme (Halliday 1967). The non-extrapolated components are the comment, that provides, generally, new information about the subject. If no beer is around or it has not been mentioned in the discourse, 11a is awkward. That pronouns can be right-dislocated is then not surprising, since they are by nature given information.

Only one construction remains to be accounted for: the parallel to 8a, i.e., the actual postposition. Let us see 12

12 a veritat que m'estima el Pere M. més que tot lo del món
 true that me 3s-love P.M. more than all of the world
 'Isn't it true that P.M. loves me more than any other
 thing in the world?'
 m si t'ho diu ell serà veritat
 if you-it 3s-say he 3s-will-be true
 'if he told you so, it must be true'

ell in 12 is postposed, not right-dislocated. Contrastiveness might still play a role here, but something else is going on. It is not possible to account for this particular structure looking at the pronominal subjects alone. In fact, no tokens of this kind showed up in the recorded data and 12 is the only token in the written data that can be unambiguously assigned to this class. A second one seemed to belong here as well, but the limitations of the written data did not allow me to distinguish, in this particular case, between postposition and extraposition. One or two tokens, however, are not a lot.

Subject postposition in Catalan is apparently an extremely complex phenomenon that seems to obey semantic, syntactic and pragmatic constraints. The so-called 'free inversion of the subject' appears to be somewhat restricted. Presumably, postposition may involve pragmatic considerations like givenness/newness (defined by Clark & Havilland 1977 and refined by Prince 1981) or empathy (Kuno, several works). Yet many other elements enter the picture. Although full NPs fall out of the scope of this study, let us consider the

examples in 13:

- 13 a el Pep va trucar
the-Pep called
b va trucar el Pep
c *va trucar el Pep ahir
yesterday
d ahir va trucar el Pep

13a and 13b constitute a neat case of free-inversion of the subject. However, postposition in 13c is not possible, apparently, due to the presence of another constituent in the sentence, namely, an adverbial phrase. In 13d the subject can be postposed again, since the AdvP is in the front.

Furthermore, inversion seems to be allowed within relative clauses. 13d is definitely allowed if found within a relative, despite the fact that we incur into ambiguity, since el Pep could be both object and subject:

- 14 la dona que va trucar el Pep ahir és una mica lletja
the woman that Pep called yesterday is a little ugly
the woman that called Pep yesterday is a little ugly

As stated above, this topic is far too large for the extent of this paper. The facts presented in 13 and 14 deserve further examination. However, in this study we have seen that Chafe's notion of contrastiveness provides us with an explanation for the appearance of pronominal subjects in Catalan, and, along with other processing factors, for right dislocation as well. The scope of this paper was relatively narrow if we bear in mind the range of combinations that the introduction of lexical NPs in the data would bring. Presumably, many other pragmatic considerations would play a role in the classification. I leave the question open until further analysis can be undertaken.

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