

Left dislocation: towards a new horizon

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1. Introduction

This volume has examined the LD construction in several genetically and areally diverse languages with the overarching aim of contributing to a more coherent and crosslinguistically justifiable profile of the LD category. Towards this end, each article has focused on describing one or more particular features of LD (e.g. syntactic form, pragmatic function, translation, diachronic processes, *inter alia*) in a given language with the results showcasing the rich tapestry of diverse attributes exhibited by LD across languages.

The multiplicity of LD features reflected in this volume, not to mention their asymmetrical distribution, renders it impossible to define the LD category according to a set of necessary and sufficient conditions (e.g. resumption). Rather, we have advocated for an alternative perspective in which category membership is formulated in multivalent terms of gradual compliance or similarity, where no single attribute is necessary for membership and the category boundary is fuzzy and ill-defined. In other words, constructions belong to the LD category to a greater or lesser extent. Moreover, the degree to which a construction belongs to the category is largely dependent on its family resemblance (e.g. shared formal and functional attributes) to a prototypical constructional schema. This results in an LD category that consists of a radial network of overlapping construction types, where constructions exhibit varying degrees of prototypicality.

Furthermore, as Bybee et al. avers, "[d]emonstrating that a given form or construction has a certain function does not constitute an explanation for the existence of the form or construction; it must also be shown how that form or construction came to have that function" (1994: 3). In other words, synchronic variation must be explained through diachronic processes. Therefore, a few articles in this volume have argued that the variation in form and function of LD across languages—resulting in the radial and gradient configuration of the constructional category—is best motivated and explained by a dynamic view of language, where synchrony and diachrony are understood as an integrated whole, and where grammars are always emergent and never completely established. In this view, the LD construction, like other constructions, develops, or

grammaticalizes, within particular languages along cognitively motivated and crosslinguistically attested paths. More specifically, competing cognitive, grammatical, and pragmatic constraints motivate the use of an optimally tailored bifurcated form which economically accomplishes the intended function: the (re)activation of an entity with a low degree of accessibility. The frequent use of this form-function correlation engenders a salient discourse pattern that eventually grammaticalizes into a conventionalized constructional schema (Westbury 2014: 331). Moreover, as the construction becomes more schematic and *ipso facto* entrenched in the grammatical system, the contextual conditions under which an appropriate use of the construction is licensed also increases. In other words, grammaticalization leads to an increase in the construction's functional productivity, resulting in a textured radial category consisting of overlapping construction types that exhibit varying degrees of prototypicality.

2. Some Unsolved Problems

The research and findings presented in this volume represent a significant advancement towards the goal of providing a coherent and typologically justifiable profile of the LD category. Nevertheless, further investigation is required to achieve this goal. In particular, although several articles have briefly outlined a theoretically and empirically grounded developmental model of the LD construction, additional crosslinguistic research is needed to determine the details of this model. For instance, what additional motivating constraints—be they language internal or external, language specific or universal—might contribute to the initial formulation and conventionalization of LD, as well as its increased productivity (i.e. innovative form-function correlations) across languages?

Furthermore, what is the range of possible non-prototypical functions achieved by the use of LD across languages. In other words, further research is needed to determine if the use of LD is constrained to merely a handful of functions (as described in this volume), or if it exhibits a broader functional potential. This is related to the narrower questions pertaining to the extent of the correlation between particular syntactic LD types and particular pragmatic functions. Given that a particular form can exhibit multiple functions, and vice versa, what conventionalized form-function pairings manifest across languages?

Lastly, what is the precise formal and functional relationship between LD and other, typologically attested, constructional categories that share various formal and functional attributes with LD (e.g. fronting, rhetorical questions, etc.). For instance, the syntactic structure of LD—vis-à-vis the extra-clausal status of the dislocated constituent—resembles certain vocative constructions, where the vocative is in a clause-initial position (cf. Lambrecht 1996, 2001). Given that, like prototypical dislocates, initial vocative expressions typically do not partake in the semantic and syntactic dependency relations between the clausal predicate and its arguments, it can be argued that the vocative construction is a type of dislocation, however non-prototypical it may be.

3. The Broader Issue of Word Order Variation

The issue of LD – as well as that of fronting – is inseparable from the question of constituent order. Two problems are especially crucial. First, what do the notions of unmarked and marked word order actually imply? Is there any unmarked word order in a language, or are all word order variants marked, albeit for specific purposes? Second – and what specifically concerns

LD and fronting – are different word order types results of movement? Is it correct, as claimed by generative syntax, that one of the differences between LD and fronting is that the former is base-generated while the latter results from movement?

In various approaches—especially of a structuralist and generative tradition—it is argued that a language usually exhibits one type of unmarked word order and a set of marked word order variants. In some languages, for instance in Biblical Hebrew, the problem becomes hotly debated as scholars disagree which word order is unmarked and which one is marked. In line with the cognitive understanding of language, we would suggest an entirely different solution to this problem, both in Biblical Hebrew and crosslinguistically. In our view, the whole question of unmarked word order and its contrast with marked variants is inadequate and irrelevant. As many superficially problematic issues, it stems from the tendency to perceive languages and their grammar through the lenses of binarism and stasis.

In cognitive linguistics, the function of constructions is fully analogous to lexical meaning. This implies that different constructions construe reality differently, each one of them having its own functional load, formulated both in qualitative and quantitative terms. Word order is a phenomenon characterized by a high degree of schematicity. Accordingly, different word order types, like different lexemes or periphrastic tenses, construe reality in a different manner profiling its different aspects. Moreover, in accordance with the behavior exhibited by lexemes or constructions, they have their own ranges of functionality, being used to convey more than one function. Some functions are prototypical of that word order, while others are non-prototypical. To sum up, in different situations, a different word order type is activated, and one and the same word order type can be used in more than one context, although with different degrees of prototypicality.

Importantly, even the so-called unmarked word order is “marked” as it is confined to certain uses. It has a specific functional range—a determined qualitative and quantitative profile. It performs functions that “marked” types of word order usually cannot do. Inversely, in determined contexts, one of the so-called “marked” word order structures, becomes unmarked as it is the most common instantiation of word order in that syntactic, pragmatic or stylistic (related to genre or text type) environment. This generally implies that the labels such as marked and unmarked are relative. The “unmarked” word order (be it default, most common, most natural, etc.) order in discourse or dialogue may be different than the “unmarked” word order in narrative. The same may concern, affirmative versus negative, statement versus question, prose versus poetry, predicate focus versus constituent focus, present-tense clauses versus past-tense clauses, etc. Therefore, we would argue that there is no universal and all-purpose unmarked word order in a language – there is a variety of different word order types that are activated in and necessitated for different purposes. Each word order type is marked for something.

The generative notion of movement presupposes a basic, default, deep, or unmarked word order from which items are moved to various locations within the sentence structure. However, if, as we suggest, the notion of basic/unmarked word order is not presupposed, and instead, various word order types are understood as different construction types which possess a high degree of schematicity—then there is no longer a need to understand word order variation in terms of highly complex movement operations. As the words *foolish* or *Polish* are not derived from *fool* and *Pole* by adding the suffix *-ish* each time they are used in contemporary English—the lexemes

being immediately and entirely accessible to native speakers as part of their lexicon—so it is with word order variation. A particular word order type is not derived from another structure each time a sentence is constructed. A word order type is simply an entrenched and highly grammaticalized schema that is available to speakers in its totality. Speakers do not re-build the structure of a sentence from atomic parts each time they speak. As with other grammaticalized constructions, word order types are available to speakers as *prêt-à-porter* garments that need not be stitched together each time they are used.

Therefore, fronting of a structure x -C (where x is the fronted constituent and C is a clause) should be understood as a different construction type rather than a structure derived by movement from a non-fronted construction (or a set of constructions) of the type C- x . As no word order is actually unmarked, such derivation does not take place—various constructions being rather accessible immediately as means of conveying determined functions. In other words, when entrenched and grammaticalized, word order constructions are given directly as molds characterized by its functional potential, each mold being distinguished from the others by a range of functions specific to it. Therefore, the distinction between LD and fronting does not concern base-generation or movement. Both LD and fronting are given from the top as fully ready-to-be-used constructions.

All such problematic concepts of basic word order, unmarkedness, and movement are an unfortunate inheritance of the pre-cognitive “ultra modernistic” linguistic theories, including structuralism and generative grammar. These theories build on the assumption that each particular usage (either a meaning/function or a construction) is elaborated *on-line* and *from scratch*, be it through composition, modulation, derivation or movement. However, grammatical objects – be they functions or forms – are not created from scratch and manufactured on-line each time we speak. If entrenched and grammaticalized, they are given holistically as constructions i.e. as radial networks of possibilities (compare for a similar view Janda 2015). In any case, sentences are not universally constructed from the bottom. Rather, most of them are available from the top as fully formed patterns. In general, such a bottom-up compositional idea of language and its grammar seems to be inconsistent with how meaning works both psychologically and neurologically.

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