Continuing right-dislocation and polarity in Catalan

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1 Introduction

- **Goal:** Determine the pragmatic felicity conditions of right-dislocations (RDs) in Catalan, by looking at the referent of the dislocate and the role of polarity.

- **Questions:**
  1. What kind of referents appear in right-dislocations?
  2. What’s the discourse role of continuing RD?
     Since the role of the dislocate is (apparently) null and simple pronominalization should be enough to retrieve the indented antecedent, why isn’t it omitted?

(1)  
\[ \text{a. I} \quad \text{gosaries? Contra el teu amo?} \]
\[ \text{and dare.would.2SG against the your master} \]
\[ \text{“What – to the master?”} \]
\[ \text{b. Ja no m’ho és, l’amo: ni mai que ho} \]
\[ \text{already not to.me-it is the-master neither never that it} \]
\[ \text{hagués sigut. had.would.3SG been} \]
\[ \text{“He ain’t my master, and I wish he never had been.” [Guimerà: p. 181]} \]
1.1 Previous work

- Ziv (1994), Grosz and Ziv (1998): RDs must be distinguished from afterthoughts in that they have an organizational function in discourse (and not just a repair function; contra Geluykens (1987); see Villalba (2000, 2009) for Catalan).

- According to them, the RD is felicitous in English when referring (i) to an entity present in the discourse situation but not mentioned (2) or (ii) to entities textually evoked only when (a) they have been mentioned in discourse, but not recently (3-b) or (b) the NP adds some attributive meaning (as in (4-b)).

(2) Il est beau, ce tableau!
“It is beautiful, this painting!” (Lambrecht 1981, ex. 123)

(3) a. A: Did you see Jack yesterday?
   B: #Yes. He is going to Europe, Jack.
   b. A: I asked you to read this book for today.
   B: I know. I tried to very hard, but I was quite busy. Incidentally, it is much too difficult for me, this book.

(4) I took my dog to the vet yesterday.
   a. #He is getting unaffordable, my dog.
   b. He is getting unaffordable, the old beast.

- RDs in Catalan are felicitous in broader contexts, as shown by (1),


(5) a. $S = \{\text{focus, ground}\}$
   b. $\text{ground} = \{\text{link, tail}\}$

(6) a. “Focus: what the hearer is instructed to enter into her/his knowledge store; the information carried by a given sentence, $I_{S}$.”
   b. “Ground: Elements that indicate where and how to enter $I_{S}$. The link points to a specific file card for the entry of $I_{S}$. The tail further specifies how $I_{S}$ fits on a given file card.”
   c. Tail: “What the presence of the tail does in a given packaging instruction is alter the nature of $\Phi$ [the focus operator], turning it from a ‘retrieve-add’ to ‘retrieve-substitute’.”
(7) a. I gosaries? Contra el teu amo?
   “What – to the master?”
   181]
   “He ain’t my master, and I wish he never had been.”

(8)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Xeixa</th>
<th>Xeixa</th>
<th>Xeixa</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>master(sebastia, xeixa)</td>
<td>⇒</td>
<td>¬master(sebastia, xeixa)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>?dare(xeixa, y, against sebastia)</td>
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</table>

1.2 Claims

- Most RDs are tails, although the notion of tail needs be redefined: it is not just a matter of substitution, but also the addition of very specific information, mostly relative to polarity, but also aspect, tense or degree.

- Particularly, we will show that a significant amount of continuing RD (like (1)), involve the reversal of the polarity of the previous utterance, which results in the negation of a presupposition, and/or the contradiction of part of the interlocutor common knowledge. We will also show that certain temporal and aspectual adverbs can obtain this effect as well.

- Some RDs are not tails, but serve to activate a previously introduced referent or a referent inferable from the context.

2 Data and methods

2.1 The corpus

Corpus instances of RD were collected from three sources:

- Àngel Guimerà’s theatre play *Terra Baixa* (In Àngel Guimerà, *Teatre. MOLC* 26, Barcelona: Ed. 62 and “la Caixa”. 1998; 23th edition; première 1897) [cited as Guimerà],

- Josep Maria de Sagarra’s novel ‘Vida privada’ (Barcelona, Cercle de Lectors, 2007) [cited as Sagarra], and

2.2 Variables

Discourse function

• **activation RD**: the dislocate recovers referents which are either physically present in the context of utterance or have been introduced previously in the discourse, and makes them salient enough to be activated as discourse topics (see Lambrecht (1981), Ziv (1994) for discussion, and Grosz and Ziv (1998) for a formalization in the context of Centering Theory)

\[ (9) \text{XEIXA garbellant blat. Després PEPA i ANTÒNIA. XEIXA: Tant se me’n dóna que quedí net o brut, aquest blat. [Guimerà: p.163]} \]
“XEIXA is discovered sifting wheat. XEIXA: What does it matter whether the wheat’s clean or whether it ain’t clean?”

\[ (10) \]
\[ a. \text{Els mobles són seus?} \]
   “You own the furniture, don’t you?”
\[ b. \text{Sí.} \]
   “Right.”
\[ c. \text{Qui és aquesta Alberta Wright? –va deixar anar tot d’un plegat el jueu.} \]
   “Who is this woman, Alberta Wright?” the Jew threw in suddenly.
\[ d. \text{Ellà? és la meva dona –va dir Rufus sense parpellejar.} \]
   “Her? She’s my wife,” Rufus said, without batting an eye.
\[ e. \text{Per què no continuava solter? –es queixà el jueu–. És millor.} \]
   “Why didn’t you stick to being a bachelor?” the Jew complained. “That was safer.”
\[ f. \text{Doncs miri, mestre, aquest cop és diferent –va dir Rufus–. Els haig de vendre pel compte d’ella, els meus mobles. [Himes: p. 20-1]} \]
   “Well, you see, daddy-O, this time it’s different,” Rufus said. “This time it’s on her account that I got to sell my furniture.”

• **continuation RD**: the referent is already maximally active, but it is expressed by means of RD (see Mayol (2006, 2007) for Catalan, and Brunetti (2009) for Italian):
(11) a. **ANTÒNIA** (cridant): Marta! Marta! **PEPA** (cridant): Marta Marta PEPA screaming

Som les Perdigones. Surt!
are.1PL the Perdigones come.out.2SG
“ANTONIA [calling out]. Here we are! Come out, woman!”

b. **XEIXA:** No sortirà **pas,** la Marta. […]
not come.out.will.3SG not the Marta
“XEIXA: I don’t think she’ll come. . . .” [Guimerà: p. 163-4]

Distance

See Talmy Givón’s work on topic continuity (Givón 1983).

- **LOCAL ANTECEDENT:** explicit antecedent in the same or previous utterance (the antecedent appears in italics)

(12) a. **NANDO:** Doncs afigureu’s-e si ho és, de rucàs, que amb prou feines ha vist quatre persones en sa vida, i encara mascles, que de dones… potser ni la ferum n’ha sentit, de les dones. [Guimerà: p. 167-8]

“NANDO: He’s a brute, an animal! He’s never seen anything in his life but goats hardly ever a man and a woman Why, he’s never laid eyes on one, . . . ”

b. **XEIXA:** No hi vaig jo, a casament. [Guimerà: p. 180]

“XEIXA [sullenly]. Because I’m not goin’.”

- **NONLOCAL ANTECEDENT:** explicit antecedent two or more utterances away (the antecedent appears in italics)

(13) a. **SEBASTIÀ:** Au, Xeixa, a casament.

“SEBASTIÀ: Come on, Xeixa, to the ceremony.” [XV]

b. **XEIXA:** No hi vaig jo, a casament. [Guimerà: p. 180]

“XEIXA [sullenly]. Because I’m not goin’.”

(14) a. –**Resistència a l’autoritat** –continua el gras–. Per què ho has fet, si no tenies culpa? La policia és amiga teva.

“Resisting arrest,” the big cop went on. “Why did you do that if you’re not guilty? The police are your friends.”

b. El públic acollí aquesta sortida amb una riallada totalment justificada, però tant ella com el poli s’ho agafaven de valent.

This got a well-deserved laugh from the appreciative audience, but both she and the cop were in dead earnest.

c. –**Que ho sabia jo, que eren polis?** –féu ella–. Amb aquest estrèpit em pensava que havia arribat el dia del judici final.
Algú m’ha enxampat per la cama. Em creia que era el dimoni. Vostè també n’hi oposaria, de resistència, si el dimoni li estirés la cama el dia del judici final. [Himes: p. 42]

“How did I know you was the cops?” she said. “I heard the noise and thought the judgment day was here; and somebody grabbed me by the legs. I thought it were the devil. You’d resist, too, if the devil had you by the legs on judgment day.”

- **INFERABLE ANTECEDENT**: the antecedent forms part of the physical environment or of the common ground

(15) XEIXA garbellant blat. Després PEPA i ANTÒNIA. XEIXA: Tant se me’n dóna que quedi net o brut, aquest blat. [Guimerà: p. 163]

“How does it matter whether the wheat’s clean or whether it ain’t clean?”

(16) –Escolta Frederic. Tinc trenta-un anys, saps? Vull dir que ja sóc prou gran i no t’has de ficar per a res en els meus negocis. Jo no t’ho pregunto, el que fas, ni què menges, ni si perds o guanyes jugant, ni si vas a demanar diners a la teva sogra… [Sagarra: p. 126]

“Listen, Frederic. I am thirty-one, ok? I mean, I am old enough, so you don’t have to poke your nose into my business. I don’t ask you what you do, what you eat, whether you lose or win at gambling, whether you ask your mother-in-law for money…”

**Polarity**

- **positive**

  - unmarked (17)

(17) Plora, la Maria.

‘Mary is crying.’
– marked (18)

(18) MANELIC: Bon mosso. Si vol dir tirar dret amb la fona i botre com els isards cingles avall i cingles amunt, i dur la Marta a coll-i-bé, saltant les passeres de Riublanc quan les neus se fonen, oïda, sí que en sóc, de bon mosso. [Guimerà: p. 176]

“MANELICH. Well, there’s nothin’ to laugh at. If to be a fine fellow means to throw farther with the sling than anybody, to leap from cliff to cliff like the goats, to carry Marta on my shoulder through the deep places in the river when the snow comes down, then I am a fine fellow!”

• negative

– unmarked (17)

(19) no plora, la Maria.
not cries, the.FEM Mary
'Mary is not crying.'

– marked (20)-(21)

(20) a. ANTÒNIA (cridant): Marta! Marta! PEPA (cridant):
Som les Perdigones. Surt!
“ANTONIA [calling out]. Here we are! Come out, woman!”

b. XEIXA: No sortirà pas, la Marta. […] [Guimerà: p. 163–4]
“XEIXA: I don’t think she’ll come…”

(21) MARTA: […] (Pausa.) Si no sóc ningú, jo, ningú; […] [Guimerà: p. 169]
“MARTA: […] [Pause.] I’m nobody! […]”
3 Results

257 occurrences of declarative RD, distributed in the following way:

- discourse function:
  - activation RD = 51% (131 occurrences)
  - continuation RD = 49% (126 occurrences)

- distance:
  - local antecedents: 49% (126 occurrences)
  - inferable: 32% (82 occurrences)
  - non-local antecedents: 19% (49 occurrences)

- polarity:
  - positive: 57%
  - negative: 43%

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>positive</th>
<th>negative</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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<td>%</td>
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<td>unmarked</td>
<td>103</td>
<td>71</td>
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<td>marked</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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Table 1: Polarity.

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<tr>
<td>total</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2: Discourse function regarding polarity.
4 Discussion

- Catalan RD is to a higher extent an extremely local process (contra Grosz and Ziv (1998)).

- The presumed optionality of continuing RD is dubious, given the almost equal frequency regarding activation RD.

- Most RDs are tails: i.e. they indicate a “special addition” of focal information.

4.1 Information substitution

- Expression of negative polarity is the main correlate of a tailful instruction.

- “Negative assertions are used in language in contexts where the corresponding affirmative has been mentioned, deemed likely, or where the speaker assumes that the hearer –erroneously– holds to a belief in the truth of that affirmative.” Givon (1978).

- Tail à la Vallduví

(22) a. I gosaries? Contra el teu amo?
     “What – to the master?”

    b. Ja no m’ho és, l’amo: ni mai que ho hagués sigut. [Guimerà: p. 181]
       “He ain’t my master, and I wish he never had been.”

\[
\begin{array}{c|c}
Xeixa & \Rightarrow \\
\hline
\text{master(sebastia, xeixa)} & \neg\text{master(sebastia, xeixa)} \\
?\text{dare(xeixa, y, against sebastia)} & \\
\end{array}
\]

(23)

(24) a. Som les Perdigones. Surt!
     “Here we are! Come out, woman!”

    b. No sortirà pas, la Marta. [...] [Guimerà: p. 163-4]
       “I don’t think she’ll come….”

\[
\begin{array}{c|c}
Marta & \Rightarrow \\
\hline
\blacksquare \text{come out(marta)} & \neg\text{come out(marta)} \\
\end{array}
\]

(24)
a. Doncs pensava en fer-te una samarra en acabant aquesta. No de color d’esca, no; de blauet, i amb un vions vermells que t’escauran més!... “I was thinkin’ I would make you a jacket, when I finish this one, but not this color; it must be blue and pink; you’ll look so nice in it!”

b. No me la facis la samarra, Nuri. [Guimerà: p. 187] “No, don’t make me the jacket, Nuri.”

c. Nuri

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>think(nuri, make(nuri, jacket, for manelic))</th>
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</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Jacket</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>blue(jacket)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>stripped(jacket)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

d. Nuri

| ¬ make(nuri, jacket) |

4.2 Information addition

(26) I del dia que t’hi vas casar que em té una malícia!... Jo no n’hi tinc pas de malícia an ella. [Guimerà: p. 187] “Since she married you, she hates me!... I don’t hate her.”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Marta</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>hate(marta, nuri)</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nuri</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>¬ hate(nuri, marta)</td>
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</tbody>
</table>


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>x</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>isMarried(x)</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>y</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>¬ isMarried(y)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
(28) Mal home! I prou que es veia que ho eres! I ara ho ets més, aturmentant-me, un mal home! [Guimerà: p. 185]

“Wicked man! I could you see you were a wicked man and now you are tormenting me!”

\[
\begin{array}{|c|c|}
\hline
\text{Sebastia} & \Rightarrow & \text{Sebastia} \\
\text{wicked(sebastia)} & \Rightarrow & \text{wicked(sebastia, degree(x))} \\
\hline
\end{array}
\]

(29) [. . .] com a home i com a fera, que ho sóc i que ho vull ser sempre home i fera . . . [Guimerà: p. 204]

“I am a man and a beast, and I will always be . . .”

\[
\begin{array}{|c|c|}
\hline
\text{Manelic} & \Rightarrow & \text{Manelic} \\
\text{man(manelic)} & \Rightarrow & \text{want(manelic, man, always)} \\
\text{beast(manelic)} & \Rightarrow & \text{want(manelic, beast, always)} \\
\hline
\end{array}
\]

4.3 Activation RD

(30) a. L’ermità, a l’anar ahir cap a les Punxales, s’aturà a beure al mas Perruca, i tot satisfet ho va contar a l’hereu Perruca, i el Perruca an a mi. Oh! I que ho va contant a tothom d’aquestos volts! I que aquí no s’ho pensen, i es trobaran que vindrà una gentada al casament.

“When Tomás was on his way to the mountain, he stopped at Peluca’s house to take a drink, and told him all about it: Peluca has told everybody; and when they least expect it, they’ll find the whole town at the wedding.”

b. I quin paper més lleig que fa, l’ermità! Ecs!

“Tomàs is in fine business!”

c. És que el Tomàs [=ermità] no ho sap, tot això del Sebastià i de la Marta . . . [Guimerà: p. 168]

“Yes! The old man don’t know anything about Sebastian and Marta; . . .”
(31)  
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tomas</th>
<th>Perruca</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>go(Tomas, mountain)</td>
<td>explain(Perruca, y, speaker)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>stop(Tomas, Perruca’s house)</td>
<td>explain(Perruca, y, everyone)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>explain(Tomas, y, Perruca)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>rude(Tomas)</td>
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</table>

(32) a. Els mobles són seus?  
“You own the furniture, don’t you?”

b. Sí.  
“Right.”

c. Qui és aquesta Alberta Wright? –va deixar anar tot d’un plegat el jueu.  
“Who is this woman, Alberta Wright?” the Jew threw in suddenly.

“Her? She’s my wife,” Rufus said, without batting an eye.

e. Per què no continuava solter? –es queixà el jueu–. és millor.  
“Why didn’t you stick to being a bachelor?” the Jew complained. “That was safer.”

f. Doncs miri, mestre, aquest cop és diferent –va dir Rufus–. Els haig de vendre pel compte d’ella, els meus mobles. [Himes: p. 20-1]  
“Well, you see, daddy-O, this time it’s different,” Rufus said. “This time it’s on her account that I got to sell my furniture.”
5 Conclusions

- RD in Catalan is a highly local phenomenon (contra Ziv (1994), Grosz and Ziv (1998)), favoring local and inferable antecedents,

- Most RDs are tails, although the notion of tail needs be redefined: it is not just a matter of substitution, but also the negation of a presupposition, or the contradiction of part of the interlocutor common knowledge or addition of information regarding polarity, tense, aspect or degree,

- Some RDs are not tails, but serve to activate a previously introduced referent or a referent inferable from the context.

References


