

ABSTRACT

THE SYNTAX AND PRAGMATICS OF CONTRASTIVE TOPIC IN CZECH
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This dissertation concerns the syntax, pragmatics and prosody of two types of left dislocation constructions in Czech: Contrastive Left Dislocation (CLD) and Hanging Topic Left Dislocation (HTLD). In both constructions, a left dislocated constituent appears separated from the main clause by an intonational break. This constituent binds both a resumptive pronoun at the left edge of the main clause and a clause-internal gap. Though these constructions share certain characteristics, they also display several differences. In CLD, there is evidence of a syntactic connection between the left dislocate and the clause-internal gap. This evidence is systematically absent in HTLD.

Chapter 2 develops an account of Czech clause structure to support the analysis of left dislocation proposed here. A key assumption is that [Spec, IP] is an A-bar position in Czech, and hosts topics, contrastive topics, and foci. To account for the syntactic differences between CLD and HTLD, I propose that CLD'ed elements move from a clause-internal position through [Spec, IP] to a position at the left periphery. Connectivity effects of several types support this analysis. Since connectivity effects are absent in HTLD, I propose that hanging topics are base-generated in a left-peripheral position and are related to the resumptive through coreference.

CLD and HTLD also differ pragmatically: HTLD promotes the discourse referent of the left dislocate to topic status, while CLD marks the left dislocate as a contrastive topic. These conclusions are based on the analysis of approximately 100 attested examples identified from the Czech National Corpus and through Google searches.

A long-standing question in the literature on left dislocation is the appearance of the resumptive. In HTLD, the resumptive is independent of the hanging topic. It moves from its base position and is related to the hanging topic through coreference. In CLD, the resumptive is not independent, but appears in a position through which the contrastive topic moves. To account for the resumptive in CLD, I adopt the Copy and Delete theory of movement (Chomsky 1995) and propose that the intermediate movement copy spells out in order to satisfy prosodic conditions associated with contrastive topics in Czech.