

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION

1 Overview

The contributions of this dissertation lie in two areas: new empirical research on left dislocation constructions in Czech and the establishment of a close link between the formal syntax and the pragmatic interpretation of left peripheral positions. The empirical contribution furthers an understanding of Czech in particular and provides a framework within which to examine left dislocation constructions in other Slavic languages, an empirical domain that has not yet been examined. The formal contribution adds to the understanding of not only the syntactic motivation, but also the pragmatic motivation, for an otherwise mysterious two-step leftward movement (to [Spec, IP] and to [Spec, TopP]) in CLD. Approaching syntax from a pragmatic perspective increases the explanatory power of a syntactic account.

This understanding of the left periphery can also be extended to other languages with similar left dislocation constructions. As discussed in chapters 3 and 5, Germanic languages such as Dutch and German also have CLD constructions with a contrastive interpretation (for an early analysis, see van Riemsdijk and Zwarts

1974/1997 for Dutch). Linking the syntactic analyses to their pragmatic function is a promising avenue for future research.

In the dissertation, I first provide an overview of Czech clausal syntax. It is not necessary to posit an exploded CP domain to account for the elements that are found at the left edge of the clause. Instead, in most cases, all left peripheral XP's appear within the inflectional domain. The pivotal A-bar position, [Spec, IP], contains contrastive topics, topics, foci, as well as wh-expressions. In positions dominating that domain, we find left dislocated elements and, under certain circumstances, wh-phrases.

In the second strand of syntactic research, I develop an analysis of three distinct left dislocation constructions: CLD and HTLD I, II. These constructions are similar in some ways (a left dislocated element binds a clause-internal pronominal element), but are considerably different when considered closely. I explored the syntactic, pragmatic and prosodic differences between these constructions.

2 The Syntax and Pragmatics of Left Dislocation in Czech

The three left dislocation constructions in Czech, CLD and HTLD I, II, differ both syntactically and pragmatically. In CLD, the left dislocate moves from a clause-internal position to a position at the left periphery, while in HTLD I and II the left dislocate is base generated in a left peripheral position. These syntactic differences correlate with distinct pragmatic interpretations. I evaluated attested textual examples

and determined that CLD has a contrastive topic interpretation, and HTLD I, II serve to promote the discourse referent of the left dislocate to topic status in the following discourse.

2.1 Movement vs. non-movement derivations

There is substantial evidence in support of movement of the left dislocate from a clause-internal position to a position in the left periphery in CLD and a parallel lack of evidence of such movement in HTLD. First, CLD'ed left dislocates are interpreted in their base positions for purposes of Conditions A and C. For instance, reflexive pronouns can appear in CLD'ed constituents. Since there is no potential binder for the reflexive in its surface position, reconstruction of the left dislocate to a clause-internal position is required. The appearance of reflexives is strictly ungrammatical in HTLD I and quite degraded in HTLD II. This suggests an alternate syntactic structure for these constructions. Under a base-generation account, reflexive pronouns are predicted to be ungrammatical within hanging topics because they are not grammatically bound by a clause-internal antecedent. These surface differences between CLD and HTLD I, II are accounted for by the movement/non-movement nature of their syntactic derivations.

2.2 The pragmatics of left dislocation

There is considerable evidence that points to a contrastive topic interpretation of CLD and a topic promotion function of HTLD I, II. From a corpus of approximately 100

attested textual examples of left dislocation constructions in Czech, using case matching as a diagnostic, I identified 23 unambiguously CLD examples and 18 examples of HTLD I.

Through a phonetic experiment on intonation of CLD constructions, I determined that the resumptive element in [Spec, IP] carries the intonational rise associated with the contrastive topic interpretation. This, along with the context in which these constructions appear in textual examples, points to a contrastive topic interpretation of these constructions.

HTLD I, on the other hand, lacks the prosodic rise associated with a contrastive topic interpretation. Additionally, the contexts in which these examples appear strongly suggest a topic promotion analysis of this construction. One convincing piece of evidence supporting a topic promotion function of this construction is that the discourse referent of the left dislocate continues to be discussed in the following clauses in 67% of attested examples. This contrasts with CLD. In those cases, the discourse referent of the left dislocate perseverates in the discourse only 13% of the time.

3 The Syntax of Resumption

The analysis of movement in CLD is very closely linked to the pragmatics of the construction: the formal features motivating movement are pragmatically motivated, unlike in recent movement analyses of this type of construction (Grohmann 2003).

The first movement of the left dislocate to [Spec, IP] is motivated by contrastive topic operator features, and the second movement by a topic feature.

The appearance of the resumptive in movement left dislocation constructions has been a long-standing puzzle in the literature on left dislocation and my approach is unique in that I link the appearance of the resumptive to the prosody of the construction. Since left dislocation in CLD involves movement, the resumptive element is in the position of a movement copy of the left dislocate and should, under the Copy and Delete Theory of movement, remain unpronounced at PF. This element, however, is in a position associated with a prosodic rise. In order to realize this rise, an overt element must appear in this position or the derivation will crash at PF. I follow the formalization provided in Landau 2005 to motivate spell out of the movement copy in [Spec, IP]. What spells out, though, is a pronominal element and not the full copy. I assume that this is due to economy constraints in the PF component of the grammar. Minimal spell out, up to the satisfaction of PF constraints, occurs.

4 Conclusion

This dissertation addressed the goals set out in the introduction. I described previously undocumented left dislocation constructions in Czech (CLD and HTLD I, II) and provided new insight into formal concerns that have been considered in the literature on left dislocation since Ross 1967. Does the left dislocate move to the left

periphery of the clause? What mechanism requires spell out of the resumptive element in left dislocation? The answer to the first question was two-fold. Certain Czech left dislocation constructions involve movement, others do not. To address the second question, I established a formal link between the syntax, pragmatics and prosody of CLD which provided functional motivation for spelling out an otherwise unpronounced movement chain link as a resumptive pronoun.