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Crosslinguistic comparison and second language acquisition: an approach to Topic and Left-detachment constructions from the perspective of spoken language

ESTRATTO DA

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1. Introduction

This paper will discuss a perspective of research on Topicalisations and Left-Dislocations (henceforward TNs and LDs, respectively)¹, which brings together results from different domains. These structures, in fact, have been extensively and separately studied in various areas of linguistics, such as analysis of individual spoken languages – or spoken language *tout court* – typology and language acquisition. The approach presented here will possibly show the bias of research interests in spontaneous spoken language, which over time have been reoriented towards cross-linguistic analysis and therefore towards typology. This partiality is perhaps inevitable, but may turn out to be not entirely misleading.

The position endorsed here is that the integration of the three domains is highly desirable, although it may prove controversial. One of the major difficulties in interdisciplinary work is the comparison of unrelated frameworks, which requires singling out and translating similarities and dissimilarities in assumptions, analytic tools and objectives. For example, in the framework of the research group on “the structure of learner language”, TNs and LDs have been considered as a particular aspect of “referential movement”, a choice betraying a number of theoretical assumptions that are not without implications on the results obtained and their use in other domains. However, in general the results gathered in this area of research display interest-

ing convergence with those achieved in the area of spontaneous spoken language.

The structures in question pose a number of descriptive and interpretative problems, the more so in that there is no unitary theoretical and methodological framework underlying their investigation. Here the discussion will concern:

- (a) the typology of constructions with TN or LD;
- (b) a critical assessment of three functional models that have been widely used for their study, i.e. Li and Thompson's, Chafe's and Lambrecht's;
- (c) some possible implications of points (a) and (b) for the acquisition of L2.

2. The typology of TN and LD structures

TN and LD structures will be examined here from three angles: (1) their formal properties, (2) their cross-linguistic occurrence in typologically different languages, (3) their pragmatic properties.

2.1. Formal properties of TN and LD structures

A major problem in the study of formal properties of TN and LD structures is the determination of a cross-linguistic grid balancing two diverging prerequisites: on the one hand such grid should include sufficient constraints to avoid that patterns with a loose similarity can be grouped together, on the other hand it should have sufficient flexibility to accommodate the diverse patterns from various languages into a unitary frame. This, in fact, is a general difficulty in typological research, obviously with an important theoretical dimension. Of special interest, for example, seems the setting of the cut-off point for structural diversity. But there are empirical dimensions as well. Not only does the determination of a suitable grid of formal properties set criteria for class inclusion, it also provides a tool for

further description of empirical phenomena that have been never observed before.

A few considerations concerning the structural analysis of TNs and LDs can help clarifying these points. Both types of constructions show a very general property in typologically different languages, which may be described in terms of a given constituent that happens to be outside the proper sentence domain, in what has been defined in generative literature "the leftmost sentence periphery/edge". This is hardly a theory-"neutral" account, if there may be any. First of all, the expression "happens to be" has been used here to dodge the old thorny theoretical question of whether the topicalised/left-dislocated constituent is in situ and consequently whether it implies movement from another sentence position. Whatever the treatment of TNs and LDs in recent generative works, this problem has fuelled controversies for years and one might agree that the dispute has an interesting theoretical content, which goes beyond the more technical aspects of the generative models (see here § 3; cf. also Sornicola 2001). In this paper the "happen-to be" and the "leftmost sentence periphery" formulations will be used in their most intuitive contents of – respectively – a constituent being in a certain position and the sentence space beyond that determined by the Subject - Predicate relationship. Accordingly, the terms "detachment/detached" instead of "dislocation/dislocated" will be used. These formulations are broad enough to accommodate the diversity of typological data presented here.

Languages differ as to the categorial nature and the number of constituents that can occur in the leftmost sentence periphery. They also differ in the morphological markings of constituents in that position. Finally, languages vary as to the degree of grammaticalisation of TN/LD structures.

Although the constructions taken into account as candidates to represent TN/LD structures show a certain amount of micro-structural diversity, they share at least two properties, of formal and pragmatic nature, respectively, which can be defined as follows:

Formal property

A given constituent finds itself isolated/confined to the leftmost periphery of the sentence.

Pragmatic property

In both TN/LD constructions the constituent in the above mentioned position is a centre of attention, i.e. it conveys an highlighting function.

Thus the set of constructions that will be examined ranges from "hanging topic" to LDs of various kinds. Sentences such as (1) and (2) will not be included in this analysis, in that they have a constituent in P1 position that is still part of the proper sentence domain; in both cases this constituent occupies a non-canonical position in an anterior area of the sentence proper domain; moreover in both cases the constituent in P1 is a focus of contrast, not a highlighted element.

- (1) *Das habe ich nicht gesagt*
'THAT isn't what I said'
- (2) *Tuo fratello ho incontrato, non tua madre*
your brother I have met not your mother
'I met YOUR BROTHER, not YOUR MOTHER'

Although TNs and LDs differ in their structures, they share the property of having a constituent outside the sentence proper domain. This seems to be correlated to an interesting macro-structural (textual) property, which is reflected in a large number of different languages: TNs/LDs mark the sentence orientation towards the left context (as well as RD structures mark the sentence orientation towards the right context). Possibly, this is an iconic property, as are prosodic properties with a wide distribution across languages, like the occurrence of a pause and/or a change in the intonational contour to mark the fact that the topicalised/detached constituent belongs to the leftmost sentence periphery. One could think, in fact, that these prosodic devices

are spontaneous "natural" tools for delimiting different sentence areas.

However, the languages investigated here differ in their micro-structural formal properties, that is in the syntactic means they exploit to code the relationship between the topicalised/detached constituent and the sentence proper domain. These means offer an appropriate case for identifying typological differences.

2.2. TNs and L/RDs in the languages of the world

TNs and LDs occur in Indo-European languages in all diachronic stages for which we have documentation. TNs conform to the structure in (3):

- (3) X // YWZ

where X is the constituent isolated in the leftmost sentence periphery, YWZ is an unspecified string of constituents defining the sentence proper domain. Note that in current descriptions no anaphoric relation between X and any of the constituents YWZ is envisaged (for an attempt to recognise here special coreferential relations, of a "part-whole" type, see Sornicola 1984). However, between X and at least one of the constituents of the string YWZ (which represents the sentence proper domain) a relation of semantic contiguity holds (for example a part-whole relation) or one of "sloppy identity co-reference" (cf. Sornicola 1984). The semantic role of X may be that of a "peripheral" element, carrying the semantic role of a Locative or Cause/Instrument (cf. (4a), (4b), respectively). However, often no exact relation between X and any of the constituents in the sentence proper domain can be determined:

- (4) a. *La scuola // hanno fatto delle palazzine*
the school they-have made some buildings
nuove
new

- 'At school, they have made some new buildings'
- b. *La benzina // è scoppiato un incendio*
 the petrol is broken out a fire
 'The petrol, a fire has broken out'

In modern Indo-European languages, type (3) seems confined to informal/unplanned styles of spoken languages or to written texts of poorly educated speakers.

LDs can be represented by a structure like (5):

- (5) X // Y Pro Z

where X and Pro are coreferential, Y and Z stand for any string of constituents. This structure has been widely investigated for both Romance and Slavonic languages, especially in their contemporary synchronic stages, where it is characteristic of – though not uniquely confined to – spoken registers:

- (6) a. *Cet élève // je l'aime bien*
 'This pupil, I love him very much'
- b. *Mio marito // lo amo molto*
 my husband him I.love much
 'My husband, I love him much'
- (7) a. *A Lena // ona skoro pridet*
 But Lena she soon will arrive:3SG
 'But Lena, she soon will arrive'
- b. *Miša // emu vse ravno*
 Miša to.him all equal
 'It is all one to Miša' (Zemskaja 1973: 239)

The structure (5) is also documented in spoken registers of contemporary Germanic languages:

- (8) a. *Den Kerl, den habe ich zu oft gesehen*
 'That guy, I have seen him too often now'
 (Scherpenisse 1986: 45)
- b. *Q: What are the people like to work with, the drivers and that*
A: The driver, he is really friendly (Miller and Weinert 1998: 238)
- c. *John, I haven't met him recently*

LDs also occur in Indo-European languages with VSO basic order, though under special conditions: for example, in Irish sentences with the structural representation (5) appear only when the X constituent has a heavy structure with an embedded relative sentence; on the other hand, in Welsh they do not seem to be constrained by this restriction; they are, however, rather rare:

- (9) *Fy stumog i mae hi*
 my stomach Aux. Pro is Pro 3SGF
fel crempog
 like pancake
 'My stomach, it's like a pancake' (Watkins 1991: 334)

Among VSO languages type (5) is in no way confined to Celtic languages. Thus the evidence from Arabic shows that (5) is not only frequent, but also plays a fundamental role in determining the well-known SV(O) pattern which is concurrent to VS(O), as in (10a):

- (10) a. *Bini h'lāl, rḥal[at] sab^c isnīn*
 Bani Hilāl travelled.3MSG[3FSG] seven years
 'The Bani Hilāl, [they] wandered for seven years'
- b. *il-'ḥilim, a^cād[-ah] 'ala ux-ūh*
 the-dream related.3MSG[-it] to brother-his
 'The dream, he related it to his brother' (Ingham 1991: 723-724)

Type (3) may be found in various Arabic dialects:

- (10) c. *iḥma, ykūn al-ʿiris ib-šatt*
 we must.be.3MSG the-wedding at-Shatt
iz-zaḥāmi
 al-Zahāmi
 'We, the wedding should be at Shatt al Zahāmi' =
 'Our wedding should be...' (Ingham 1991: 726)

It has been argued that in languages with V-initial structures as basic/dominant orders, TNs/LDs are crucial for the determination of concurring S/O-initial orders. As is well known, such concurring orders are fairly normal in V-initial languages (cf. Greenberg 1963). A further confirmation is provided by Iaai, a Melanesian language spoken in Ouvéa, one of the Loyalty islands (New Caledonia). In Iaai V-initial orders are dominant, but structures with a NP in the leftmost sentence periphery also frequently occur, with NP resumed by a pronoun in the sentence proper domain, which carries S-function:²

- (11) *wanakat // a me walak*
 child he AspM play
 'The child, he is playing' (Ozanne-Rivierre 1976: 132)

The pattern in (11) conveys a PF of highlighting, while (12a) is the unmarked sentence:

- (12) a. *a me walak wanakat*
 'The child is playing' (Ozanne-Rivierre 1976: 132)

Type (5) is not confined to inflectional languages, as is clear from its occurrence not only in Iaai, but also in many African languages. In Zarma (according to Greenberg's classification, a Nilo-Saharan language) the syntactic type in (12b) has the function of highlighting a given constituent:

- (12) b. *wándió bé:ròó à nèè*
 girl big she say-PERF
 'The big girl, she said' (Tersis 1972: 195)

Similar structures exist in Banda-Linda (an Ubanguian language, belonging – in Greenberg's classification – to the Adamawa-Eastern sub-group of the Niger-Congo family). Differences may occur as to the GF carried by the anaphoric pronoun. In Zarma detachment structures are found only when the GF of the resumptive pronoun is S, while in Banda-Linda any GF can be involved in the anaphoric chain.³

- (13) a. *cè nje cè wis n wi*
 he too he PERF.know it NEG.know
né
 EMPptc
 'He too doesn't know at all'
 b. *m bàle m i*
 I alone I IMPERF.resist
 'I alone, I resist' (Cloarec-Heiss 1986: 255)

The wide occurrence of structure (5) in morphologically and syntactically different language types could make one think that it is almost universal. But this may prove to be a premature conclusion. The functionalist literature of the Seventies called attention on the fact that Chinese and Japanese lack structure (5) and only have structure (3), as in examples (14) and (15), respectively:⁴

- (14) *Nel-xie shùmu shù-shēn dà*
 those tree tree-trunk big
 'Those trees, the trunks are big' (Li and Thompson 1976: 462)
 (15) *Gakkoo-wa buku-ga isogasi-kat-ta*
 school-TM I-SM busy-PST
 'School, I was busy' (Li and Thompson 1976: 462)

The typological situation of these and other Far-Eastern languages, however, may be more complicated. Topic "Chinese-style" was defined by Chafe (1976: 50) as the sentence element that "sets a spatial,

temporal, or individual framework within which the main predication holds". Chafe also observes that "Chinese seems to express the information in these cases [i.e. cases like (14)] in a way that does not coincide with anything available in English" (1976: 50). This definition has influenced recent grammatical descriptions of other Far-eastern languages like Japanese and Korean. As to Japanese, Hinds (1986: 161) notes that "it is difficult to argue that dislocation in the sense of Ross 1967 [i.e. dislocation as a movement phenomenon, where the moved constituent leaves a trace behind it] actually exists in Japanese. Many examples of what appears to be dislocation may be adduced, but it is quite possible that these are merely stutter starts or other types of disfluency". He quotes the following example, posing the problem of whether the NP *kono shashin* can be really considered a "moved element" and *kore wa* its "trace":

- (16) *kono shashin, aa, kore wa saki hodo*
 this picture uh this TM before extent
no shinkansen no, konoo, okuri no
 LK train LK uh send-off LK
tsuzuki mitai desu kedo ne
 continuation seems COP but EM
 'This picture, ah this one looks like it's a continuation of that send-off picture (we saw) before, doesn't it' (Hinds 1986: 162)

Examples like (16) show the difficulty that has to be faced when one takes into account the intermediate levels between competence and performance, which are crucial for the study of spontaneous spoken language. In fact, in such cases a clear-cut dividing line between "false start" and full grammaticalisation of a given construction may not always be traced.

Korean, like Chinese and Japanese, has TN-constructions of type (3), i.e. constructions without anaphoric relations between X and any constituent in the proper sentence domain. Such structures are often characterised by a relation of semantic contiguity, as is clear in (17):

- (17) *Yongho-ka kho-ka khu-ta*
 Yongho-NM nose-NM big-DC
 'As for Yongho, his nose is big' (Sohn 1994: 193)

More generally, the T-element establishes the set of predication:

- (18) *Minca, æ Minca-ka kyothong-sako*
 Minca ah Minca-NM traffic-accident
na-ss-eyo
 occur-PST-POL
 'Minca, ah, Minca had a traffic accident!' (Sohn 1994: 188)

(Note that in addition to its case-marking value, the *-ka* marker may be a topic-marker, like in (17) or a focus-marker, like in (18) [cf. Sohn 1994: 193].)

The following examples show once again the difference between TN- and LD-types of structure: whatever the semantic role of X, this constituent has no anaphoric resumption in the subsequent part of the sentence:

- (19) *Ku totwuk-un nay-ka cap-ass-ta*
 The thief-TC I-NM catch-PST-DC
 'As for that thief, I caught him' (Sohn 1994: 192)
- (20) *mikwuk-ulo-pwuthe-nun manh-un sangphwum-i*
 America-DIR-from-TC much-MD commodity-NM
swuip-toy-ess-ta
 import-become-PST-DC
 'From America, many commodities were imported' (Sohn 1994: 192)

However, an example like (21) shows that structures may be found with an anaphorical relation defined between X and one of the constituents in the proper sentence domain. Such structures resemble the LD type. What is involved in this case is not a pronominal anaphor, but a repetition (copy) of the whole NP; this therefore appears twice,

in the leftmost periphery with a T-marker and in one of the positions of the sentence proper domain with an accusative marker:

- (21) *I sacin-un, nay-ka caknyen-ey i sacin-ul*
 This photo-TC I-NM last-year-at this photo-AC
ccik-ess-eyo
 take-PST-POL
 'As for this picture, I took it last year' (Sohn 1994: 195)

As in the case of the Japanese example, however, the degree of grammaticalisation of this type is not clear. It is perhaps not entirely implausible to consider that anaphorical relations are a secondary property of detached constructions, in that they are possibly related to specific different pronominalisation strategies of languages, rather than to TN or LD processes as such.

2.3. Pragmatic properties of TN and LD structures: some critical considerations

In 2.1. for both TNs and LDs the pragmatic property was defined whereby the constituent in the leftmost sentence periphery is a centre of attention, i.e. conveys a highlighting function. This generalisation, however, is far from being self-evident, as comparability of PFs is even more controversial than that of GFs. The first difficulty is that – in order to be ascertained – functions like 'highlighting' require a macro-structural analysis. But crosslinguistic comparison of macro-structures is not an obvious operation, for various reasons. A second difficulty is that we do not know to what extent the structural coding of PFs is a purely natural strategy: it is reasonable to think that – at least partially – this is determined by "cultural" factors, like rhetorical or stylistic normativisation. Finally, the coding of PFs is highly variable across speakers of the same language (cf. 4.2.1.). For all these reasons the generalisation about the highlighting value of TNs and LDs should be considered tentative.

3. Three models for the explanation of TN and LD structures

In this section three functional models will be reviewed that have tried a new departure from the traditional conception of the sentence as a structure with the basic grammatical relations of Subject, Predicate and Object. Although sharing a number of general assumptions and a more or less pronounced interest in typology, they have offered different "explanations" of TNs and LDs.

The rationale for confining the discussion to functional models is that these have tried to integrate the various levels of syntax, semantics and pragmatics into a broader analysis, instead of assuming an autonomous level of syntax as the main locus for the study of grammatical relations. This multi-level perspective, in fact, seems more fruitful for the interdisciplinary approach proposed here.

A review of the three models does not seem an unmotivated digression, as it will allow us to single out some theoretical problems that have some implications not only for the study of TNs and LDs but also for the study of the syntax-pragmatics interface in research on typology, spoken language and second language acquisition.

3.1. Li and Thompson's model

Li and Thompson (1976) proposed a main typological partition of languages in "Subject-prominent" and "Topic-prominent" (henceforward referred to as SPL and TPL, respectively). They identified a set of grammatical characters implied by the two properties and differentiating the two groups of languages:

- (i) Surface Coding: TPLs have surface coding for T, but not necessarily for S;
- (ii) Incidence of Passive Construction: in TPLs PCs do not occur or are marginal, while they are common among SPLs;
- (iii) Dummy Subjects can be found in SPLs, but not in TPLs;
- (iv) Pervasive Double Subjects (i.e. structures x, y) only occur in TPLs;

- (v) Control of co-reference in TPLs is triggered by T, not by S;
- (vi) V-final feature is more typical of TPLs;
- (vii) Constraints on Topic constituent: in SPLs there are severe constraints on the accessibility of a constituent to T-function, while these lack in TPLs;
- (viii) Basicness of Topic - Comment sentences: in Li and Thompson's words, "Perhaps the most striking difference between a TPL and a non-TPL is the extent to which the Topic - Comment sentence can be considered to be part of the repertoire of basic sentence types in the former but not in the latter" (1976: 471).

These properties have different logical status. (i), (v) and (vii) are statements about structural properties, while all the remaining characters concern frequency. Some properties can be inferred from others: (vii) is perhaps presupposed by (viii) and (iv) is presupposed by (vii). We have already observed here that the so-called "double-subject" construction can be frequent (though perhaps not pervasive) in spontaneous spoken registers of languages considered to be S-prominent. This not only disproves (iv), but also weakens the validity of (vii) and (viii).

More generally, properties (i)-(viii) can be questioned as criteria for typological identification of SPLs and TPLs. A first problem concerns their empirical adequacy: they were possibly selected – at least in part – on the evidence of simplified data from idealised written styles. This obviously infirms typological modelling. As a consequence, the actual classification shows areas of inconsistency, which makes it necessary to resort to the use of "S-prominency" and "T-prominency" as features with a [+/-] specification. Thus Filipino languages are reported to be neither SP nor TP, Korean and Japanese both TP and SP. But such ad-hoc solution trivialises the dichotomy itself. A second problem concerns the nature of the implicational relation between properties (i)-(viii) and the features of S-prominency and T-prominency. It is possible to ask to what extent the occurrence of passive constructions and dummy subjects is correlated to S-prominency in a significant way, i.e. to what extent this correlation

has an explicative import or is a mere coincidence. For example, the fact that Chinese does not have anaphoric chains, which is supposed to be true in SPLs, may be due to specific strategies of pronominalisation without any systematic correlation with the TP feature:⁶

- (23) *xià chē yǐhòu, Ø xiān dào Dàhuá Fàndiàn,*
 descend vehicle after first arrive Dahua hotel
xiūxi yíhuǐ, Ø chī le wǔ fàn,
 rest a while eat PRF afternoon food
jiù Ø qù kāi huì, sǎn le huì, Ø
 then go open meeting adjourn PRF meeting
méi shì le, Ø kěyǐ dào hú biān kàn
 not matter PRF can to lake side see
 'After (we) get off the train, (we)'ll go to the Dahua Hotel first and rest a while. After we eat lunch, (we)'ll attend the meeting. When the meeting ends, (we) have nothing to do, so (we) can go to the lake' (Li and Thompson 1981: 660)

The same question could be posed for the V-final property in T-prominent languages. Statement (v) is a mere observation about frequency of V in final position in TPLs, but V-finality cannot be considered a diagnostic tool for class inclusion, as there are many SOV languages that definitely do not meet the other conditions envisaged for T-prominency. In Kannada, a Dravidian language with SOV basic order, both types (3) and (5) are documented: see examples (24) and (25)-(26), respectively.⁷

- (24) *Nimma manege baralikke: no iSTa*
 you-POS home-DAT come-INF-DAT-TOP liking
 'As for coming to your house, (I / we) certainly like it' (cf. Sridhar 1990: 144)
- (25) *naTara:juna: ? avanu ella: tinnuttane*
 Nataraju-QCI he all eat-PST-3SG
 'As for Nataraju, he eats everything' (Sridhar 1990: 144)

- (26) *S'aṅkara avanige sa:la koTTavaru ya:ru*
 Shankara he-DAT loan give-PST-they who-INC
iduvaregu: va:pas paDedilla
 so far-INC back get-PST-NEG
 'Shankara, no one who has lent him (money) has got it back yet' (Sridhar 1990: 145)

The picture is made more complicate by the possibility of structures like (27), where X is anaphorically resumed by a copy of NP:

- (27) *eLeni:ru andare tipaTu:rina eLeni:re,*
 tender-coconut TM Tipatur-GEN coconut-EMP
swami
 sir
 'As for tender coconut, Sir, (there is) only the Tipatur one' (Sridhar 1990: 143)

Types like (26) and (27) may be due to spontaneous universal processes like the one exemplified in the French sentence (28):

- (28) *Cette tête là // je pense que j'ai déjà vu cette grande blonde, là quelque part* (Hirschbühler 1975, quoted from Altman 1981: 26)

It is true that observations like those presented so far only falsify the truth of possible statements like: "If a language is SOV it must be T-prominent" and not of statements like "If a language is T-prominent, it must have SOV order". However, Li and Thompson's model was built on a too restricted corpus of languages to allow the latter implicational generalisation.

3.2. Chafe's model

In addition to defining Topic "Chinese style", Chafe (1976: 51-53) also introduced the notion of Ts as "premature subjects", with exam-

ples from a *corpus* of narrative texts in Caddo, an American Indian language spoken in Oklahoma. The fundamental idea is that "a topic would be – or might have originated as – a subject which is chosen too soon and not as smoothly integrated into the following sentences" (1976: 52). What is presented here is a *genetic* or *dynamic* model of TN processes, which is built on hypotheses about how speakers organise "chunks of knowledge" into a sentence.

According to Chafe, the speaker would first divide the global mental content in sentence-seized pieces and would then proceed to build up the sentence, choosing the case frame of the sentence and the noun included in the case frame as the subject of the sentence. Chafe's hypothesis is that these two options are implemented more or less simultaneously. The assumption that they are interdependent seems a delicate point: "the choice of a case frame provides candidates for subject status, while conversely the choice of a subject constrains the possible case frames". Therefore it is claimed that "a speaker is able to think simultaneously of the most effective framework of cases to express what he has in mind and the most effective way to package it in terms of subject" (1976: 51). However, Chafe admits that "it is not unusual... for speakers to depart from this simultaneity by choosing – and in fact uttering – the subject before the case frame has been chosen" (1976: 51). He then reports a few instances of what he considers "premature subjects". These exhibit various degrees of integration of the noun into the case frame, ranging from a premature subject which is later inserted in the sentence case frame, to the complete non-integration of the subject in the following sentence. In terms of our discussion the examples conform to either structure (5) or (3).

Chafe's concluding remarks are especially interesting in a perspective of research that tries to combine theoretical and applied aspects of TN and LD constructions:

One might think of calling such prematurely chosen subjects topics, or even speculating that the origin of topics as distinct from subjects lies in this kind of aberration in the timing of the processes of sentence construction... Some languages seem to allow their speakers to do quite easily what was illus-

trated for Caddo above. Caddo speakers seem to put sentences together in this fashion quite frequently, and not to be disconcerted by it. On this basis Caddo might be regarded as at least one kind of "topic-prominent" language, but in a quite different sense from Chinese (Chafe 1976: 52-53).

Chafe's model – like Li and Thompson's – is built on the syntactic notion of 'sentence'. TNs and LDs, however, can be studied from the vantage point of the pragmatic notion of 'utterance', as this has an inherent linear and dynamic dimension that is absent in the syntactic notion of sentence. As is well known, one of the differences between "utterance" and "sentence" is that the first is closer to the level of processual arrangement of speech, i.e. to actual speech production, while the latter deals with the abstract and static levels of grammatical relations and with their mapping onto constituent structure. The two notions therefore imply different conceptions of linearity, in that "utterance" involves the more empirically oriented representation of constituents occurring one-after-the-other, while "sentence" concerns the representation of abstract templates or patterns of order. The processual dimension of linearity, in fact, plays an important role in the formation of TDs and LDs and thus can contribute to a better understanding of these structures.

The functional models under examination collapsed the utterance vs sentence distinction as they projected the static representation of the sentence role frame onto utterance arrangement. As a consequence, structures like (3) and (5) are considered "aberrations" instead of the results of phenomena interesting per se and with their own specific reasons. There are other problematic consequences, however. One concerns the adequacy of the structural description: the constituent isolated in the leftmost periphery is necessarily assigned a canonical GF, like S, O etc., as it should necessarily have one of these relations if it were integrated into the proper sentence domain. Yet such an assignment can be only based on a (disputable) conceptual equivalence between two different structures.

The typological implications of the model require further remarks. The fact that structures like (3) and (5) are considered "aberrations" confined to particular languages – like Caddo or others – does not

help the recognition that they are widely diffused in spontaneous spoken registers of many typologically different languages, i.e. that they cross typological groupings. Apart from this general observation, two additional objections could be raised. Phenomena like those described for Caddo are seen as a peculiar potentiality of some languages, but it is not clear whether this potentiality is determined by internal (i.e. structural) or external (i.e. cultural) factors. Moreover, the postulation of a different kind of T-prominency from that of Chinese makes a global understanding of the general property of T-prominency more problematic.

The perspective adopted here is that (a) TNs and LDs are not the results of language-specific potentialities; (b) there are not different forms of T-prominency; (c) cultural factors play a fundamental role in the way universal strategies of spontaneous spoken languages are grammaticalised.

3.3. Lambrecht's model

Though apparently presenting a radically alternative perspective, Lambrecht's model has hidden similarities with Chafe's. The starting point of the discussion is that

against what seems to be a widespread assumption, ... the grammatical topic-marking construction referred to as NP "detachment" or "dislocation" is not some kind of structural anomaly which tends to develop under the pressure of historical change and which grammars strive to eliminate by absorbing it into the canonical sentence model in which all semantic arguments of a predicate appear as syntactic arguments in a clause (1994: 192).

This observation is to welcome, as it is fully consistent with the logic of spoken languages. Lambrecht is aware that "languages with an apparently well-established SVO or other canonical constituent pattern have a strong tendency to violate this pattern under specific pragmatic conditions by placing lexical topic NPs, especially potential subjects, outside the clause... In certain languages, including spo-

ken French, this tendency is so strong that the canonical pattern is hardly ever used in spontaneous speech" (1994: 195). Accordingly, he quotes several examples from SVO languages; of particular interest is the discussion of English data from spontaneous spoken corpora, like the following English ones:

- (29) *That isn't the typical family anymore. The typical family today, the husband and the wife both work* (from a TV interview; Lambrecht 1994: 193)
- (30) *Tulips, you have to plant new bulbs every year?* (Lambrecht 1994: 193)
- (31) *Other languages, you don't just have straight tones like that* (from a lecture in an introductory course; Lambrecht 1994: 193)

These examples provide further evidence to the idea that TNs and LDs can be found across different language types.

However, Lambrecht's assumption that "it is the reinterpretation of detached NPs as "regular" subjects that constitutes the anomaly" seems too extreme. This view is related to the basic hypothesis that TNs and LDs conform to the "Principle of the Separation of Role and Reference", according to which "the lexical representation of a topic referent takes place separately from the designation of the referent's role as an argument in a proposition...The communicative motivation of this principle can be captured in the form of a simple pragmatic maxim: "Do not introduce a referent and talk about it in the same clause" " (1994: 185).

Two distinct but interrelated justifications of the maxim are provided. The first is speaker-oriented and presents the psycholinguistic tenet that it is easier to build a complex sentence if the referential coding of a topic is independent from the syntactic coding of the proposition. The second justification is hearer-oriented and is based on the conjecture that the understanding of a message is easier if the identification of the topic is performed independently from the task

to interpret the proposition about the topic (1994: 185). Thus Lambrecht comes to the conclusion that the reinterpretation of detached NPs as "regular" subjects and its generalisation across languages "would contradict the functional motivation for the detachment construction, which is precisely to keep lexical topic constituents outside the clauses in which their referents play the semantic and syntactic role of argument" (1994: 192).

Although different at a first sight, paradoxically Lambrecht's model presents the same problems discussed here for Chafe's. However, Lambrecht goes to the other extreme in considering that the canonical sentence is an anomaly. His functional principle of the Separation of Role and Reference poses several difficulties. It is too rigid and cannot account for a process that seems to have a more intricate origin in spoken language production and in which the role of the listener's understanding seems irrelevant. Its pragmatic justification, which relies on the greater ease of construction for the speaker and of understanding for the listener, seems a speculation unsupported so far by psycholinguistic evidence. Its typological and historical domains of application are equally unsubstantiated by significant statistical evidence. Furthermore, this model is also so general and abstract to be vacuous: it cannot explain, for example, why – although occurring across many different languages – TNs and LDs are more frequent in some languages than in others. This problem can hardly be tackled without dealing with sociolinguistic and individual differences among speakers of a given language, as well as with historical factors like the impact of traditions of written language (which are supported by schools, academies, etc.), ideologies, and so on. Lambrecht's principle pushes the potentialities of spoken language too far and without distinctions. It is matter for reflection, for example, that research on spoken languages like French and Italian has independently pointed to a sensible amount of cross-speaker variability. The perspective endorsed here is that the analysis of such variability is a better starting point to try to understand the nature and origin of TNs and LDs than extremely general functional principles (cf. 4.2.2. and 4.2.3.).

A further problem with Lambrecht's model is that the structural description of TNs and LDs is underspecified. The author denies the status of constituent to the detached NP, at least in some languages:

in some languages at least, the detached topic NP cannot be a constituent – whether argument or adjunct – of the clause with which it is pragmatically associated. Rather it must be analyzed as a syntactically autonomous, extra-clausal element, whose relationship with the clause is not the grammatical relation of subject or object but the pragmatic relation of aboutness and relevance (Lambrecht 1994: 192-193).

Thus no structural relation at all is assigned to detached NPs, which are only endowed with the semantic property of aboutness. This seems an opposite choice to that of forcing GFs into detached NPs, as in Chafe's model. But the claim of syntactic autonomy of detached NPs, at least in some languages, is unconvincing: syntactic connectedness is not exclusively related to closely integrated GFs. Rather, it seems that connectedness of a special kind is at work here, which is most frequently coded by "part-whole" relations (cf. Sornicola 1984).

4. TN and LD structures in the studies of acquisition of L2

4.1. Some results emerged in the studies of acquisition of L2

Although research on TNs and LDs in the acquisition of L2 is not abundant, it raises issues which come across some theoretical and methodological aspects of the study of spoken language. Therefore it seems opportune to summarise its results, as they emerge in the works by Trévisé 1986, Perdue, Deulofeu, Trévisé 1992, Hendriks 2000.

In the studies mentioned above there is a consensus on the idea that TNs – and in particular LDs – develop at a stage beyond the acquisition of Basic Variety (but note that "topicalisation" here covers a broader class of syntactic phenomena than the term which has been

used in this paper; it has in fact primarily a pragmatic and functional meaning).

In Trévisé's words, "to study the potential influence of the devices used to structure utterances in spoken French on the acquisition/learning of a second language, it is necessary to look at the spontaneous speech of fairly advanced speakers who have gone beyond the pragmatic mode and who master enough of L2 syntactic structures to be able to alter the neutral SVO linear ordering" (1986: 193). Trévisé also observes that "in the spontaneous acquisition of French as an L2... acquirers use subject topic + anaphoric subject pronoun from very early on, a device frequently used in French native input" (1986: 201; on this problem cf. also Perdue, Deulofeu and Trévisé 1992: 297). However, the general trend emerged may require further evidence, as in three cases out of four the studies mentioned consider French as L2 and the range of L1 languages – though greater – is limited to Chinese, Spanish, English and Arabic.

The speakers investigated do not show a great amount of transfer phenomena from their L1 structures. Hendriks (2000: 384-387) observes that "learners of French tend not to use those constructions typical of a topic-prominent language"; moreover "transfers of clearly Chinese constructions are very rare in French L2". Trévisé has more general considerations on this point: "transfer can never be a clear-cut explanation for a given morphosyntactic feature, but only one of the possible factors at play for some learners and some languages" (1986: 186). This view is attuned to the broader conclusions elaborated by Klein and Perdue, who maintain that "the interaction between intrinsic and contrastive (Source Language-Target Language) factors is then that the latter facilitate acquisition more or less, but structures are not acquired *simply* because the SL and TL are close in some respect: SL-TL comparisons will only get you some of the way – they are mediated by other factors, such as meaning and context" (1992: 335). These conclusions differ from Meisel's (1981: 47), according to whom L2 acquirers "are using the underlying canonical WO of L1 as a starting point in L2 acquisition and speech processing in the second language".

Trévisé's work opens a stimulating scenario:

The hypothesis would then be that French learners of a foreign language will typically not transfer everyday spoken French dislocations, but will rather resort to more 'neutral' topicalisation devices such as locative/existential or identificational constructions with the 'feeling' that there is a hierarchy in the transferability of various devices, in terms of L1-specificity or 'neutrality' (1986: 192).

Therefore for Trévisé,

Word order... seems to have a special status as far as language acquisition or loss are concerned, as if there were a L1 'hard core' more difficult to acquire in L2 and more readily lost... In short, it may be that informal pragmatic word order is not easily transferred, perhaps because it is not felt to be transferable (1986: 196-197 *passim*).

This hypothesis is fascinating but should be worked up in its various parts: it is not clear, for example, what it means that dislocations are a L1 "hard core". Moreover such hypothesis is at variance with some results of research in spontaneous spoken language, where it has emerged that: (a) TNs and LDs occur in *impromptu* speech, especially in argumentative textual progressions; (b) TNs and LDs have conspicuous cross-individual variability (cf. Sornicola 1981; Milano (forthcoming)), a point that has also been unsystematically noticed in the works on TNs and LDs in the acquisition of L2. In short, Trévisé's hypothesis quoted above may have been influenced by two biases: the exclusive use of a narrative type of text and the limited number of speakers analyzed.

The three studies also agree in evidencing – though with different findings and solutions – that in the development of LDs in L2 a major problem is the form / function relationship. A methodological point that brings these works very close to the problems of research on spoken language is the choice to analyze the function/form relationship in parallel in groups of adult learners of L2 and of children learners of L1, as well as in groups of adult speakers of L1.

As far as function is concerned, according to Perdue, Deulofeu e Trévisé (1992: 297) "pronoun-copy variants are a development, mo-

tivated by the need to make salient the NP in topic: re-introducing an entity in topic, and disambiguating entities from a preceding utterance who are potential subsequent topics" (this assumption is shared by Hendriks 2000).

Hendriks identifies two main functions of TNs and LDs in the three groups of speakers investigated (native speakers of French, native speakers of Chinese and Chinese speakers of French): (a) the reintroduction of an old referent and (b) making old a new referent. Although Hendriks observes that "the adult learners have no trouble understanding the discourse pragmatic rules that govern the use of dislocations in French", she finds a few cases of TNs and LDs structures with the function of introducing new entities in the group of the adult Chinese learners of French, a fact that is not expected in her model: "Chinese learners of French should not use these structures with introductions at all, assuming they understand the conditions of use of dislocation as a topic marker upon acquiring it" (Hendriks 2000: 388). Her conclusion is that "the combination of functions for which dislocations are used by adult learners is more complex, even though the main overall function is the same as in the target language. Dislocations are used when reference is less presupposed" (Hendriks 2000: 389). The author also maintains that the behaviour of the Chinese learners of French "functionally speaking... results in a usage pattern conform to the target language pattern right from the start. The pattern of acquisition and usage in L2 differs from the pattern in L1 child learners of French in that we find a more extensive use of dislocations in this task for marking contrast than in L1 child data" (Hendriks 2000: 390).

As to form, Hendriks (2000: 393) observes that "in contrast to functions, forms used by adult learners of French do not all coincide with the target language dislocated forms". She finds a few instances of a presentational structure (like *le chat qui grimpe*) in a different context than that which is considered appropriate in French, where it is supposed to require a preceding locative-existential structure (most typically, *il y a*). Hendriks's conclusion is that "the most likely hypothesis is... that the learner acquires this construction without necessarily knowing about or paying attention to these limitations... In

sum, the cluster of functionally related forms is readily identified by Chinese L2 learners of French, but the number of constructions in the cluster and their formal similarity result in a situation in which the target language linguistic means is not a stable element in the learner language" (Hendriks 2000: 391).

The impact of spoken and written language is another factor believed important in spontaneous learning of topicalisations in L2 (Trévisé 1986: 192, 197; Hendriks 2000: 387). Comparing a group of English students learning French at school and a group of French students learning English in a non-guided context, Trévisé observes that in the first group TNs do not occur and that this would be due to "teaching reasons"; the second group, on the other hand, has no transfer of these structures from their L1. "maybe because of the image they have of normative constructions". The author thinks that

one possible conclusion at this point could be that, word order being a central and functional feature of French, the reason why French students do not transfer it directly lies in their more or less conscious feeling for the French written standard they were (intensively) taught at school. They may have the feeling that this type of canonical word order... is more 'neutral' and thus more transferable than pragmatic non-morphosyntactical dislocations, which they may feel as specific to the spoken norm and thus more language-specific as well as forbidden in an institutional setting (Trévisé 1986: 197).

These considerations are interesting, but they put too much emphasis on the role of the speaker's awareness of the written standard as an explanation for the lack of various kinds of TNs at the stages of acquisition of L2 investigated. Moreover the conclusions presented can hardly be generalised, as they are centred on the historical and sociolinguistic situation of French, where two factors have played a special role: (a) the influence on written standards of an old and prestigious grammatical tradition; (b) the high frequency of TNs and LDs in spoken registers. Both factors may induce higher levels of awareness of what is typical of written or of spoken language. But studies on other languages show a different situation: as far as Italian

is concerned, for example, not even educated speakers seem to be aware to perform utterances with TNs, LDs or – more in general – other kinds of "cleft" structures (note that here "cleft" is used in a non-technical sense).

4.2. Some considerations on the theoretical and methodological assumptions of the studies on the acquisition of TNs and LDs in L2

The results discussed so far stimulate further considerations on some aspects of the theoretical and methodological backgrounds in which they have been achieved.

4.2.1. The notions of 'Topic', 'Focus' and 'Referential Movement'

The studies examined in 4.1. give a central role to the notion of 'referential movement', a notion which is clearly semantically and pragmatically oriented. The centrality given to semantics and pragmatics is also clear from the definitions of Topic and Focus which have been adopted. On the basis of the *quaestio* model, Focus is defined as "that part of the statement which specifies the appropriate candidate of an alternative raised by the question", and Topic as "the remainder of the answer" (Klein and Perdue 1992: 51-52). Thus the procedure of analysis goes from function to form.

Another aspect worth mentioning is the interest in universal pragmatic principles. Although Klein and Perdue prudently warn against an easy adoption of universal pragmatic principles – like "from known to unknown" – they obviously consider them of central importance (cf. Klein and Perdue 1992: 17, "we think that universals of this sort indeed play an important role in the organisation of learner varieties") and more fruitful for research in second language acquisition than conditions on Universal Grammar and statistical universals of typology (cf. Klein and Perdue 1992: 17). Therefore universal pragmatic principles have largely been resorted to in framing initial hypotheses as well as in getting conclusions (cf. Trévisé

1986: 186, who postulates "invariant cognitive features"; Hendriks 2000: 370-71 and 377-79).

This approach, which has been very popular in various routes of functionalism (cf. Sornicola 1994), poses several problems. The first is that notions like Given/New, Known/Unknown, Topic/Focus are far from being uncontroversial and therefore their status as tools for systematic linguistic comparison is disputable. In fact, from how these notions are defined different results can be obtained.

Secondly, it is controversial to what extent the codification of PFs is universal or is typologically differentiated. An answer to this question may prove to be out of range for the present. Generalisations about the universality of distribution of Given and New, or of Topic and Focus seem premature.

A third problem concerns to what extent macro-structures are determined by natural or cultural factors. Macro-structural organisations of texts are heavily influenced by extra-linguistic factors like grammatical and rhetorical traditions, which are especially active on written language, the impact of different educational systems, no less than by psycholinguistic and sociolinguistic differences among speakers. If this is true, research on referential movement in second language learning should not concentrate almost exclusively on internal factors.

A fourth problem stems from a combination of the previous ones: is it really possible to compare informational macro-structures of different languages? If yes, how? This is a tricky problem, for more than one reason: (a) macro-structures differ from micro-structures in both internal organisation and processes of formation; (b) the investigation of how macro-structures are formed in synchrony and diachrony is still in its infancy. The old debate raised by text linguistics in the Sixties and the Seventies could be reopened: to what extent text grammars of individual languages can be built up? This question could be reformulated today in a comparative key: to what extent languages can be compared in their textual grammars? The perspective endorsed here is that of a temperate skepticism: for the time being, we simply do not know.

These difficulties seem to support the point of view that considers preferable in the description of data to identify form first and then to assign function to each form that has been singled out. As is well known, the analysis of spoken data often presents preliminary technical problems in the identification of forms, and the more so the analysis of spoken data of learners of L2. In this case – because of the multiple and unstable paths of structural development – the reduction to form of a given stretch of text cannot rule out the possibility of alternative interpretations. For example, in the studies mentioned above LDs have often been identified as structures with NP + a pronoun copy of NP (like, for example *la fille il plor beaucoup*). Yet, in corpora of spoken data of learners of L2 the occurrence of this syntactic configuration does not necessarily imply a LD structure, but it may conceal a more "local" phenomenon like the fossilisation of the pronoun agglutinated to the verb, i.e. an imperfect learning of a morphological structure, whereby a sequence Pro + V has been reanalyzed as V. This possibility is especially suggested by the data quoted in Trévisé 1986.

4.2.2. On the notion 'learning/acquisition of topicalisations'

A further question that emerges from the literature concerns the notion of 'learning/acquisition of topicalisations'. It has been assumed that such processes can be learned/acquired like any other structure of a given L2. Yet this assumption is controversial. Whatever the reasons that induced Trévisé to claim that TN structures in L2 cannot be easily transferred, her opinion is to welcome in that it criticises the idea that syntactic structures have all the same status and thus an equal potentiality to be learned/acquired. Hendriks comes close to this problem when she observes that the capability to control topical and focal information – though believed universal – "is not always a very explicitly marked function in language, and might therefore not stand out to all speakers equally" (Hendriks 2000: 379). Neither Trévisé nor Hendriks, however, push their observations to a more general discussion of the psychological status of TNs.

The crucial point in this discussion seems the determination of the speakers's level of awareness in the production of TNs and LDs. Research on spontaneous spoken language of Italian and English has pointed out that TNs LDs are typical of unplanned text production (cf. Sornicola 1981; Miller and Weinert 1998). Thus TNs and LDs can be described as processes of impromptu speech, to which a semantic and pragmatic value of bringing a referent to a centre of attention is often (though perhaps not always) associated. It is highly disputable, however, whether this description can tell us the reason why speakers produce such processes. To make this claim, one should assume that in unplanned spoken language these phenomena reach a high level of crystallisation, which often corresponds to high levels of speakers's awareness of what they perform. But such claim can hardly be made. To understand this point, it is useful to compare the properties of LDs in spontaneous spoken language to their properties in literary or journalistic styles. Studies on Italian written texts of this kind show that in this case the phenomena in question (a) occur in a limited and fixed number of shapes, i.e. they are fully structured and (b) are planned for special stylistic reasons of *mise en relief*.

A plausible conclusion is that – under the pragmatic and sociolinguistic conditions described – TNs and LDs occurring in spontaneous spoken language do not fit traditional form – function models. As to form, they have a low degree of grammaticalisation and thus a range a variant syntactic configuration; as to function, they are not necessarily motivated by the speaker's intention to establish a "centre of attention" nor by the speaker's will to signal such a "centre of attention" to the listener. The literature on the acquisition of TNs and LDs in L2 has overgeneralised the importance of the listener for the speaker, as well as the assumption that the speaker controls "mutual knowledge" in mature stages of production of these structures. In fact, there is evidence that – even in the development of the communicative competence of L1 – speakers tend to differ in this respect: the acquisition of the competence of monitoring "mutual knowledge" and producing appropriate referential expressions depends on factors like social class, education and – above all – the kind of socialisation

processes experienced by the speakers, especially within primary groups like family and school (cf. Sornicola 1978 for an analysis of the phenomenon of "egocentric reference"). Furthermore, the ability to plan referential structures seems variable across the life span of many speakers of a given L1, as it is very sensitive to psychological factors, like emotional states, etc.

On the basis of the previous considerations, the problem of learning/acquiring how to topicalise in L2 may reveal some pitfalls. In many cases learning/acquiring both formal and functional properties of LDs is a target that can only be related to the learning of written language. It cannot be related to the acquisition of spontaneous spoken language, simply because in spontaneous spoken registers of many languages it is no stable and consistent target even for L1 speakers, who produce TNs and LDs automatically and unconsciously in the course of their utterance planning.

4.2.3. The variability of spoken language

The problem discussed in 4.2.2. is related to another issue, which deals with methodological aspects of research on spoken language. The works by Trévisé 1986, Perdue, Deulofeu, Trévisé 1992, Hendriks 2000 take into account data on spoken languages that are the input to L2 and/or the L1 background of the groups of speakers examined. These data are too homogeneous: they do not reflect the massive variability and irregularity of spoken languages with respect to sociolinguistic and psycholinguistic factors, pragmatic and contextual factors and text genres (they are restricted to narrative text types).

An example of the difficulties that may result from this limited range of data is given by Hendriks's account of the function of presentative structures produced by Chinese speakers acquiring French. In 4.1.3. it has been mentioned that Hendriks elicited presentative structures in a different context from that assumed to be "normal" in spoken French, where an existential-locative structure preceding is expected. Hendriks incidentally observes that "in colloquial French it

is claimed to be possible to have the exact same construction without a presentational clause [= existential-locative] in the immediate context" (Hendriks 2000: 391), but she does not elaborate on this point. The possibility of a presentative structure of the kind elicited by Hendriks is confirmed for other spoken Romance languages, where it seems to be unsystematic and oscillating across types of texts and types of speakers.

4.2.4. Typological models in studies of acquisition of TNs in L2

The typological conceptions underlying the works examined so far unproblematically adopts the model of Topic vs Subject-prominency (cf. Trévisé 1986: 190, 201; Hendriks 2000: 384, 389). Yet the results that have been obtained provide interesting counterexamples to this model: (a) in Chinese texts produced by Chinese children and adults Topic-prominent structures are found to be very infrequent; (b) in Chinese texts produced by Chinese children an unexpected instance of LD is elicited, which confirms a cross-linguistic distribution of this syntactic type hardly accountable in terms of the dichotomic typological model assumed.

5. Conclusions

The issues which have been discussed in this paper seem to have some consequences not only for the description and functional interpretation of TN and LD structures, but also for the more general problem of language learning.

A fundamental issue debated in the literature on the acquisition of L2 has been why adults do not attain the end-state of primary language acquisition. This question, which has been substantially influenced by the theory of Universal Grammar, has been reversed by Klein and Perdue (1992: 334) in "Why do adults attain the state that they do?". The two scholars observe that "the homogeneous 'end-state' hypothesised by some researchers for first language acquisition

(represented for our purposes by the grammar of the TL) is not necessarily the best starting point for adult acquisition studies". Their conclusion is that it is possible to recognise a communicative logic in adult language acquisition, which induces the learners to acquire linguistic tools to perform minimal linguistic tasks. These conclusions show a remarkable harmony with some findings that emerge from the research on spontaneous spoken language. As has been observed in 4.2.2. it seems problematic to postulate – for both L1 and L2 – the existence of "targets" related to the development of TNs and LDs. It is perhaps an optical illusion to relate the highly variable and dynamic acquisition processes to an end-state of "complete" maturation of abilities. What emerges for native speakers is that there is no end state, no complete process of maturation. In particular, as far as text planning is concerned, linguistic abilities may attain different levels: they may fossilise at an initial level or they may progress and/or revert over the whole life span of speakers. If linguistic abilities are not conceived as "levels of knowledge", but as "aptitudes to do", it is not surprising that native speakers may reveal non-linear paths of linguistic development. Therefore the notion of 'reaching the target' seems unmotivated as a conceptual background for the study of the acquisition of TNs and LDs, no less than for the study of the emergence of these structures in L1. Independent evidence for this assumption is provided by the high individual variability, which has often been detected in spontaneous spoken language.

Another possible conclusion deals with the use of the notion of 'function' in the study of TNs and LDs. These are most often the results of processes of text planning, which are automatic and below the threshold of awareness. It has been claimed here that such processes cannot be assigned function in the sense of functional models like Lambrecht's. Yet they exist and pose a challenge to our efforts to draw functional models. One of the implications of this perspective is that the often noticed lack of TNs and LDs in Basic Varieties might be due to the fact that at these stages speakers learning a L2 lack those levels of spontaneity and automatisisation which are an important condition for these structures to occur. If this hypothesis is plausible, a further step of research should be to try to better under-

stand the relationship between the development of automatic and unaware production of texts in L2 and the emergence of TNs and LDs. The typological evidence provided in 2. seems to give clues to answer the interesting question raised by Trévisé:

Are such dislocations, especially those with no anaphora, still part of a pragmatic mode which is crosslinguistically attested in the first stages of spontaneous second language acquisition, or are they already due to the informal French input the subjects are in daily contact with? (Trévisé 1986: 202).

In fact, the crosslinguistic comparison seems to show that TNs and LDs are universal spontaneous processes that are not confined to specific language types. It has been argued, however, that the fact that they have not been found in Basic Varieties may be due to different levels of awareness of speakers in L1 and in L2.

Trévisé's question is an instance of a kind of linguistic problem that cannot be approached without an integrated perspective from the fields of second language acquisition, spoken language and typology. This integration is not obvious. What makes the task difficult is that no single perspective should surrender to the others. This perhaps will require new strategies of integrated research. But the three fields have too much to contribute one to the others to give up this effort.

Notes

1. In this paper the following additional abbreviations have been used:
GF = Grammatical Function;
PF = Pragmatic Function;
RD = Right Dislocation.
2. AspM = Aspectual Marker.
3. PERF = Perfective;
NEG = Negative;
EMP = Emphatic;
EMPtc = Emphatic particle;
PST = Past;
IMPERF = Imperfective.

4. TM = Topic Marker;
SM = Subject Marker;
LK = Linking particle;
COP = Copula.
5. NM = Nominative particle;
DC = Declarative Sentence-type suffix;
POL = Polite Speech suffix or particle;
DIR = Directional particle;
MD = Pre-nominal modifier suffix.
6. The symbol "Ø" denotes a null pronoun.
7. DAT = Dative;
INF = Infinitive;
QCI = Question Clitic;
INC = Inclusive Clitic;
GEN = Genitive;
POS = Possessive.

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