

Left and right dislocation across varieties of English

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Prototypical dislocation constructions consist of a noun phrase in a peripheral position which is co-referential with a pronoun in the core of the clause. The noun phrase can be placed at the left or right periphery of the clause proper, yielding left dislocation (LD) (*This cat she's fourteen*) and right dislocation (RD) (*He's brilliant your dad*). Dislocation constructions are well suited to the needs of spoken interaction as they facilitate the online production and processing of an utterance by breaking it down into smaller chunks. Studies on the constructions' discourse functions have found that LDs mainly serve a topic-promotion or reference-establishing function (e.g. Geluykens 1992, Biber 1999), while RDs often contain an emotive dimension and serve to establish a bond with the interlocutor (e.g. Aijmer 1989, Timmis 2010).

In recent years attention has also been given to the construction's sociopragmatic and cross-varietal behaviour. Lange (2012), for example, finds that LDs are very frequent in Indian English, while RDs occur only rarely. High frequencies of LDs have also been attested for the 'Celtic Englishes' (e.g. Filppula 2009).

The present study adds to these analyses and provides a broader view on dislocation by systematically comparing data from several first- and second-language varieties of English. The data has been culled from the 'private dialogues' sections in the relevant components of the International Corpus of English (ICE). I expect to find quantitative and qualitative differences, which can be accounted for by various interacting forces (e.g. substrate influence).

My investigations show that LDs are by far most frequent in Indian English. Contrary to expectation, the construction is not that widely used in Irish English. Yet, for this variety of English a number of qualitative idiosyncratic features can be identified, which are probably due to influence from Gaelic Irish. For example, LDs are co-referential not only with subject and object pronouns but also with possessive pronouns (*Tommy his Granda died*). Furthermore, there is a type of RD which is only rarely found in the other varieties: the dislocated element is introduced by *so* followed by a pronoun and an operator (*He's driving a bus now so he is*).

Examining various ICE corpora, the present study provides deeper insights into the use of dislocation constructions across varieties of English and adds to the discussion on language contact.

References

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