

German right dislocation and afterthought in discourse

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I show that German right dislocation subsumes two distinct constructions, which I label *right dislocation proper* and *afterthought*. These differ in a number of prosodic, syntactic and semantic characteristics and also have different discourse-functional properties. Right dislocation marks a discourse referent as especially salient on the current stage of the discourse. This requires the fulfilment of certain anaphoric constraints on the following discourse. Afterthought is a local reference clarification strategy and has no impact on the global discourse structure.

1. Introduction

German right dislocation is a construction which consists of an NP at the end of the clause and a coreferent proform inside the clause, as in (1). It is generally assumed that right dislocation is a strategy of spoken German, which enables the speaker to resolve a (pro)nominal reference that might be unclear to the hearer (Altmann 1981; Auer 1991; Selting 1994; Uhmann 1993, 1997; Zifonun/Hoffmann/Stecker 1997):

- (1) a. Ich mag *sie_i* nicht, (ich meine) *die Serena_i*.
I like *her_i* not, (I mean) the *Serena_i*
b. Und dann passierte *das Unglück_i*, (ich meine) *dieser*
And then happened the unfortunate-thing_i, (I mean) this
schreckliche Autounfall_i.
terrible car-accident_i

Resolution of an unclear reference is in fact the function of the right-peripheral NP in (1). There are, however, cases, where it is not plausible to assume that right dislocation

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has the function of resolving a vague reference, because the reference is unambiguously clear, like in (2):

- (2) a. ("Der Taifun!" rief Lukas dem Kapitän zu. "Da ist er!")
 ("The typhoon!" called Lukas the captain to. "There is it!")
 Ja, da war er_i der Taifun_i.
 Yes, there was it_i the typhoon_i
 [Ende, M.: *Jim Knopf und die Wilde* 13]
- b. (Den Tag, den vergess' ich nicht,) der_i war viel zu
 (The day, D-PRON forget I not,) D-PRON_i was much too
 schön, der Tag_i.
wonderful, the day_i
 [Altmann (1981:129)]

Instead, as I show in the following, the right dislocation in (2) has the function of marking the discourse referent (in the standard dynamic semantics sense, e.g., Karttunen 1976) that is going to be especially salient for the following discourse segment.² In (2a), what follows is a description of the typhoon (terrible wind, dark waves, and so on). In (2b) one expects the speaker to supply more information about the unforgettable day. In the following, I will argue that 'reference clarification' and 'salience marking' are not two different functions of one construction, but that there are actually two different constructions that have been subsumed under the label of German right dislocation. I name the salience-marking construction like in (2) *right dislocation proper* (in the following: right dislocation, RD) and the reference-clarifying one like in (1) *afterthought* (AT).³ I will show that these constructions differ not only with respect to their discourse functions, but also in their prosodic, syntactic and semantic features.

The paper is organized as follows: in section 2 the prosodic, syntactic and semantic differences between RD and AT are briefly introduced. I show that RD is prosodically and syntactically part of its host sentence, whereas AT is an 'orphan' that gets integrated into its host sentence only at the level of the discourse. In section 3 I address the integration of AT in terms of SDRT (Asher/Lascarides 2003) and introduce discourse

2. By discourse segment I understand intuitively a relatively small, thematically contiguous part of a discourse; roughly, a discourse segment is minimally an utterance, or, as is more often the case, several interrelated utterances. In written discourse, a discourse segment corresponds rather often to a paragraph, cf. Goutsos (1997).

3. I use the term *afterthought* for this construction for two reasons: firstly, as it is traditionally used in the literature exactly to denote the reference-clarifying NP additions to the right of the clause (cf. e.g., Ward/Birner 1996: 470, Fretheim 1995: 31). Secondly, by using this term I assume that reference-clarifying additions are actually a subtype of the rather heterogeneous group of syntactically free additions coming after the sentence and supplying additional information about some referent in the sentence (in this broader sense the term *afterthought* is used e.g. in Cann/Kempson/Otsuka 2002: 20).

relation *Afterthought* which is responsible for this integration. Section 4 discusses in more detail the discourse function of RD, i.e., the marking of a discourse referent as being especially salient for the following discourse segment. Interesting parallels and differences between the discourse functions of the right and the left sentence periphery are dwelt upon in this context. Then I show how RD takes part in the subdivision of a discourse segment into its main story line and background. Finally, in section 5 the results are summed up and conclusions are drawn.

2. Right dislocation vs. afterthought: formal differences

As stated above, RD and AT differ crucially in their prosody and syntax. In the following I will introduce and illustrate these differences.

First to the prosody. RD is prosodically integrated into its host sentence (3a), i.e., it continues the tone movement of the host sentence and thus does not build a prosodic unit of its own,⁴ whereas AT builds a prosodic unit (optionally divided by a pause from the clause) with a tone movement and a clause-like accent of its own, (3b):

- (3) a. [Ich MAG sie_i nicht, die Brigitte_i]. RD
 b. [Ich MAG sie_i nicht], | [die BriGITTe_i]. AT
 I like her_i not, the Brigitte_i
 ([: pause; [:]: prosodic unit; CAPITALS: main accent)

Prosodic differences go along with syntactic differences: RD is syntactically and prosodically part of its host sentence, whereas AT is an independent unit. The differences are listed below. Firstly, for RD, morphological agreement between the clause-internal proform and the NP on the right is obligatory (4) (cf. also Altmann 1981). For AT, on the other hand, it is only optional, at least as far as gender agreement is concerned, as examples in (5) show.

- (4) a. ("Der Taifun!" rief Lukas dem Kapitän zu. "Da ist er!")
 ("The typhoon!" Lukas called to the captain. "Here it comes!")
 Ja, da war er_i der Taifun_i / *das
 Yes, there was it_{NOM_MASK} the typhoon_{NOM_MASK} / *the
 Unwetter_i RD
 storm_{NOM_NEUTR}

4. Altmann (1981) observes two prosodic patterns for what he calls German right dislocation, the integrated and the non-integrated one. However, as he does not differentiate between RD and AT, he does not explain his observation. Fretheim (1995) takes the prosodic criterion to be crucial for the distinction between RD and AT in Norwegian: he shows that prosodically integrated structures are RDs, and prosodically non-integrated ones ATs.

- b. Ich mag ihn nicht, den Peter / *der Peter / diesen
I like him_{AKK} not the Peter_{AKK} / *the Peter_{NOM} / [this
unmöglichen Volltrottel / *dieser unmögliche Volltrottel.⁵ RD
impossible idiot]_{AKK} / *[this impossible idiot]_{NOM}
- (5) a. Und dann passierte das Unglück,_i (ich meine)
And then happened [the unfortunate-thing]_{NEUTR} (I mean)
dieser schreckliche Autounfall,_i
[this terrible car-accident]_{MASK} AT
b. Ich habe ihn_i vorhin gesehen, das Kleine_i von der
I have him_{MASK} before seen, the little-one_{NEUTR} of the
Nachbarn. AT
neighbours

Secondly, optional additions like *ich meine* ('I mean') or *also* ('that is') are possible in the case of AT (6a), where some of them serve to enhance the reference clarifying function (cf. Altmann 1981). On the other hand, additions are bad with RD (6b).

- (6) a. (Anna und Brigitte kommen morgen.) Ich mag sie_i nicht,
Anna and Brigitte are coming tomorrow.) I like her_i / them_i not,
ich meine / also / tatsächlich, die Brigitte,_i AT
I mean / that-is / really the Brigitte,_i
b. ("Der Taifun!" rief Lukas dem Kapitän zu. "Da ist er!") Ja, da
("The typhoon!" Lukas called to the captain. "Here it comes!") Yes, there
war er_p, *ich meine / *also / *tatsächlich der Taifun_i. RD
was it_p, *I mean / *that-is / *really the typhoon_i

Thirdly, AT is not restricted to the position at the right periphery, but can occupy a variable position in its host sentence, cf. (7): the afterthought *I mean Peter* can come at the very end of the sentence (7a), immediately after the coreferent pronoun (7b) or between the temporal adverbial *yesterday* and the adverbial *with effort* (7c). RD, on the contrary, is only possible at the right periphery, so that (8a), but not (8b) is well-formed.⁶

5. The relative weight of the NP seems to play a role, improving the cases without congruence with AT. Still, even heavy NPs like the second variant *this impossible idiot* in (4b) do not allow incongruence with RD.

6. Here, and in the following, I use the prosodic structure as a diagnostics to distinguish between RD and AT. This means that for cases marked as RD I assume prosodic integration. So, (8b) is bad with the RD prosody, while it is well-formed when the NP builds a prosodic unit of its own as an AT construction.

- (7) a. Ich habe ihn_i gestern nur mit Mühe wiedererkannt, | ich
I have him yesterday only with effort recognized, I
meine den Peter_i. AT
mean the Peter
b. Ich habe ihn_p, | ich meine den Peter_p, | gestern nur mit
I have him, I mean the Peter, yesterday only with
Mühe wiedererkannt.
effort recognized
c. Ich habe ihn_i gestern, | ich meine den Peter_p, | nur mit
I have him yesterday, I mean the Peter, only with
Mühe wiedererkannt.
effort recognized
(I hardly recognized him yesterday, Peter.)
- (8) a. Ich kann ihn_i nicht leiden, den Peter_i. RD
I can him not suffer, the Peter
b. *Ich kann ihn_p, den Peter_p, nicht leiden.
I can him the Peter not suffer
(I don't like him at all, Peter)

Fourthly, subordinate clauses are not allowed between the clause-internal pronoun and the NP in a RD (9a), cf. Altmann (1981), while they are not at all problematic for AT (10):

- (9) ("Der Taifun!" rief Lukas dem Kapitän zu. "Da ist er!")
("The typhoon!" Lukas called to the captain. "Here it comes!")
*Ja, da war er_p, den sie alle befürchtet haben, der Taifun_i.⁷ RD
*Yes, there was it_p, whom they all were-afraid-of, the typhoon_i
- (10) Ich mag die Frau_i nicht, die gestern hier war, | (ich meine)
I like the woman_i not, who yesterday here was, (I mean)
die Anna_i. AT
the Anna_i

Summarizing the findings in (3)–(10), one can see that there is ample evidence that RD belongs prosodically and syntactically in a much more straightforward way to its host sentence. Prosodically, RD is a part of its host sentence's tone contour. Considered syntactically, RD is much more restricted in allowing insertions between

7. The utterance is well-formed, if the subordinate clause does not intervene between the proform and the NP:

- (a) Ja, da war er_p, der Taifun_p, den sie alle befürchtet haben.
Yes, there was it_p, the typhoon_p, whom they all were-afraid-of

the host sentence and the RD-NP than is AT: RD does not allow subordinate clause insertion ((9)–(10))⁸ nor optional additions of any kind (6). Besides, RD occupies a fixed position in the host sentence (at its right periphery). Moreover, as shown in (4), the right-peripheral NP has to agree morphologically with the clause-internal pro-form, which also suggests that NP is part of the clause, because morphological agreement is not expected to function across sentence boundaries.⁹ That leads to the assumption that RD is, syntactically seen, part of its host sentence, presumably the right adjunct to the IP.¹⁰ An ultimate syntactic analysis of the right dislocation would, however, exceed the limits of this paper.

AT, on the contrary, can vary its position in its host sentence (see (7)). Furthermore, AT does not strictly require morphological agreement between the NP and the clause-internal pronoun, and it allows various insertions between the host sentence and AT-NP, e.g., additions like *I mean* etc. or subordinate clauses. All in all, AT appears to be syntactically fairly free. The prosodic and syntactic independence of AT leads to its analysis as an *orphan* (in terms of Haegeman 1991, Shaer 2003). An orphan is a phrase that is syntactically autonomous and gets integrated into its host sentence only at the level of discourse via some discourse relation.¹¹

RD and AT differ also semantically in a crucial way. RD is much more restricted than AT as far as the semantic status of the NP is concerned. The RD-NP can only

8. The inability to insert a clause between the clause-internal coreferent proform and the NP has been analysed in the generative framework as the 'right roof constraint' (Ross 1967) or 'upward boundedness' (cf. e.g., Müller 1995). That means that the NP is analysed as being moved out of its host sentence, where a 'pronominal copy' (Altmann 1981) is left. Analysed like this, (9) gives strong evidence that right dislocation is syntactically part of its host sentence.

9. As Consten (2004: 90) notes, gender congruence of anaphora and its antecedent in general is easily violated, but only across sentence boundaries. Sentence-internally, gender agreement is expected.

10. I assume with Müller (1995) that the standard position for right adjunction is the IP adjunction.

11. This proposal has consequences for locating AT with respect to its host sentence. Obviously, it cannot be a right peripheral construction in the proper sense of the word, as the right periphery is a sentence-bound concept, and AT is not a part of its host sentence. Actually, in spoken and even in written language, AT often comes explicitly after a sentence boundary, marked e.g. by an intervention of another speaker, or, in the case of written language, graphically with an appropriate punctuation mark, e.g., a full stop in (a):

(a) (Der Koch war schon an Bord, der Matrose ebenfalls.) Er aß die Fliegen.
(The cook was already on board, and the sailor too.) He_i ate the flies.
Der Koch, nicht der Matrose.
The cook_p, not the sailor.
[from: Yann, Martel: *Schiffbruch mit Tiger*: 364; I owe this example to Konstanze Marx].

refer to a definite specific individual (11a), whereas neither indefinite specific NPs (11b) nor any kind of quantificational NPs (11c) are possible.¹²

- (11) a. Da kommt er_i schon wieder, der Peter_i / der blonde Mann_i /
There comes he_i already again, the Peter_i / the blond man_i /
dieser blonde Mann_i.
that blond man_i
- b. Da kommt er_i schon wieder, *so ein Typ_i aus dem
There comes he_i already again, such a guy from the
Tanzkurs.¹³
dancing-class_i
- c. Alle blonden Frauen sind für ihn wunderschön. Peter liebt sie_p.
All blonde women are for him beautiful. Peter loves them_p.
*alle blonden Frauen_p.¹⁴
all blonde women_i

12. The requirement of specific individual reference for the RD-NP might be the reason why operator binding like in (a) is only marginally available for RD, even if considered syntactically nothing would prevent it: *seine Frau* ('his wife') here does not refer to a specific individual but to an ordered set (of women in relation to men), and this is against the restrictions on the RD-NP:

- (a) ??Jeder Mann_i liebt sie, seine_i Frau.
??Every man_i loves her, his_i wife

13. Note that (11b) and (11c) would be well-formed as ATs, cf. (a) and (b):

- (a) Da kommt er schon wieder, | ich meine so ein Typ aus dem
There comes he already again, I mean so a guy from the
TANZKURS.
dancing-class
- (b) Peter liebt sie, | ich meine ALLE blonden Frauen.
Peter loves them, I mean all blonde women

14. The discourse in (11c) would be perfectly well-formed without right dislocation, cf. (a):

- (a) Alle blonden Frauen sind für ihn wunderschön. Peter liebt alle blonden
All blonde women are for him beautiful. Peter loves all blonde
Frauen.
women

Grosz/Ziv (1994) state that in English, right dislocation cannot be used to refer to entities that were mentioned in the sentence immediately preceding the one with the right dislocation (Grosz/Ziv (1994: 190); see, however, objections in Ward/Birner (1996)). In German this is possible, cf. (b), so that this cannot be the cause of the ill-formedness of (11c):

- (b) Verena ist für ihn die schönste. Peter liebt sie, die Verena.
Verena is for him the prettiest. Peter loves her, the Verena

Besides, it is required that the referent of the RD-NP is discourse-old (in terms of Prince 1992), so that (12) with a discourse-new referent is bad. Discourse-old is understood here to include situationally evoked information (in terms of Prince 1981), as in (13):¹⁵

- (12) A: Und wie geht die Festvorbereitung?
 B: Ich weiß nicht was ich noch versuchen soll. Ich kann einfach keine Jazz-Band für den Abend aufreiben.
 A: How are the festival preparations coming along?
 B: I don't know what I should try next: I haven't been able to get a jazz band for the evening.
 A: #Du könntest ihn_i fragen, diesen Chorleiter_i. Bestimmt kennt
 A: You could him_i ask, that choirmaster_i. Certainly knows er jemanden.
 he somebody
- (13) Der_i spinnt doch, der Typ_i / dieser Schröder_i.
 He_i is-crazy sure, the guy_i / that Schröder_i
 (*context*: A and B are talking about linguistics. A sees a newspaper B has on his table with a picture of the German federal chancellor on the front page, points to it and comments on it)

AT, on the contrary, allows nearly all kinds of NPs, definite and indefinite, specific and non-specific, as well as quantificational ones (14):

- (14) a. Sie_i kommt heute zum Abendessen, | ich meine PAULA_i / eine
 She_i comes today to dinner, I mean Paula_i / a
 Frau_i aus meinem TANZkurs.
 woman from my dancing-class_i
- b. Hast Du eins_p, | ich meine ein Euro-Stück_i?
 Have you one_p, I mean a euro piece_i
 (*context*: standing near a locker in a library)
- c. Sie_i sind Fleischfresser, | ich meine ALLE Löwen_i.
 They_i are carnivorous I mean all lions_i

Also discourse-new information is possible with AT, so that (15), contrary to (12), is well-formed:

- (15) A: How are the festival preparations coming along? B: I don't know what I should try next: I haven't been able to get a jazz band for the evening.

15. Situationally evoked entities behave also like discourse-old with respect to other linguistic diagnostics: e.g., situationally evoked information, as well as discourse-old in the proper sense of the word, can be proposed in inversion, as Betty Birner pointed out to me.

- A: Du könntest diesen Typen_i fragen, | na, diesen Chorleiter_i.
 A: You could that guy_i ask, INTERJ this choirmaster_i
 (Bestimmt kennt er jemanden.)
 (Sure he knows somebody.)

The only condition for an AT-NP is that its reference should be clear enough to enable the AT to fulfil its function of reference repair, i.e., the referent should be easily identifiable by the particular NP expression. So, NPs with a vague or too general reference are dispreferred (cf. 16).

- (16) Ich habe Äpfel und Pflaumen gekauft. (I've bought apples and plums.)
 Die_i schmecken aber leider nicht, | (ich meine) die Äpfel_i /
 They_i taste but unfortunately not, (I mean) the apples_i /
 #die FRÜCHTE_i / #dieses KERNObst_i.
 the fruits_i / those pip-fruit_i¹⁶

A brief summary of prosodic, syntactic and semantic properties of RD and AT so far: RD is prosodically and syntactically part of its host sentence. Its discourse function is to mark a discourse-old referent having a definite specific individual reference as being especially salient for the following discourse. In section 4 I will focus on the discourse function of the RD.

AT, on the contrary, is a prosodically and syntactically independent unit, i.e., an orphan. Its discourse function is to repair an unclear pronominal reference. Being an orphan, AT only gets integrated into its host sentence at the level of discourse (cf. Shaer/Frey 2004). In the following section I will develop a discourse relation *Afterthought* that attaches AT to its host sentence.

3. The discourse relation *Afterthought*

I argue that there is a special discourse relation for attaching AT to its host sentence, which I call *Afterthought*. The following analysis is done in terms of Segmented Discourse Representation Theory (SDRT), Asher/Lascarides (2003). For SDRT, a crucial assumption is that contents of utterances building up a discourse are related to each other via discourse relations. Asher/Lascarides (2003) propose a number of such discourse relations, e.g., *Narration*, a coordinating discourse relation that combines two utterances whose eventualities occur in the sequence in which they are described, as in *Max came in. He sat down*. Discourse relations can be coordinating, as in the case of

16. The latter remains a bad repair even if one assumes that the information that apples are pip fruit and plums are not is known to the hearer. Still, such repair requires too much effort from the recipient and is for this reason dispreferred.

Narration, where two eventualities described are at the same level of detail, or subordinating, when the second constituent provides more details about the eventuality of the first one without bringing the flow of narration any further. An example of subordinating discourse relation is *Elaboration* as in *Max had a great meal. He ate salmon.*, where the second utterance provides more details about the eventuality of the first utterance (cf. Asher and Lascarides (2003), ch. 4.). Discourse relations hold between informational units, most often contents of utterances, but also contents of bigger chunks of discourse might participate in a discourse relation.¹⁷

In the following I argue that AT requires a special discourse relation *Afterthought* that attaches AT to its host sentence. As shown above, AT repairs an insufficient (pro) nominal reference. In other words, it provides a characteristic of a discourse referent, which helps to identify the referent in question in the discourse model, as in (17):

- (17) a. Er hat angerufen, | (ich meine) Dein CHEF! Es klappt!
 He_i has phoned, (I mean) your boss!_i It works-out
 (context: A to B just after having laid down the receiver)
- b. A: (Serena und Teresa kommen auch mit.) B: Ich mag sie nicht, |
 A: Serena and Teresa are coming too.) B: I like her_i / them_i not,
 (ich meine) SERENA.
 (I mean) Serena_i

In most cases, anaphoric pronouns like *er* ('he') or *sie* ('her') in (17) are used when the resolution of the anaphor is unproblematic. In some cases, however, as in (17), there is either none immediately apparent (17a) or more than one equally plausible candidate antecedent for the anaphoric expression (17b). That is why the speaker decides to resolve the unclarity explicitly by supplying what he believes to be an unambiguous identification for the referent, e.g., the mentioning of the unique relation to the hearer (17a) or of the proper name of the referent (17b). Reflecting this function of the right-peripheral NPs in (17), the discourse relation *Afterthought* is informally described in (18):

- (18) *Afterthought* holds whenever the second constituent provides additional information about some discourse referent in the first constituent, in such a way that the information helps to identify this discourse referent.

17. A well-known example from Asher/Lascarides (2003) is (a), where utterances 2–5, as a whole, elaborate on the utterance 1, giving details of the great evening (the inner relations between the utterances 2–5 are neglected for the moment).

- (a) 1. John had a great evening last night. *Elaboration* (α, β), where α : 1, β : 2–5
 2. He had a great meal.
 3. He ate salmon.
 4. He devoured lots of cheese.
 5. He then won a dancing competition.

Important is, that AT cannot be subsumed under any other discourse relation; at the first glance, *Elaboration* might seem suitable here. However, *Afterthought* differs crucially from *Elaboration* in its impact on the truth conditions of the whole sentence: AT first makes the establishing of the truth conditions for an utterance possible; due to the reference unclarity, it is not possible before the adding of the AT takes place.¹⁸

To be able to define the properties of *Afterthought*, it is necessary to find out whether it is a subordinating or coordinating relation. This can be tested with the help of the tests for subordination and coordination, proposed by Asher and Vieu (2005) (cf. also Vieu/Prévot 2004). These tests prove that *Afterthought* is a subordinating relation.¹⁹

The second important point is that *Afterthought*, unlike *Elaboration*, is a cognitive-level discourse relation²⁰ in the terms of Asher / Lascarides (2003), which means that not only the contents of the clauses that are related are important, but also the

18. Asher and Lascarides (2003) define that "R is a distinct discourse relation only if there is evidence that it affects the truth conditions of the elements it connects, and these effects cannot be explained by other means" (Asher/Lascarides 2003: 145). That leads to the assumption of the *Afterthought* as a separate discourse relation.

19. To illustrate the claim exemplarily for one of the tests:

1. *Attachment Test*: given are two constituents, α and β , a relation R (α, β), and a possible extension with a constituent γ ; the nature of R is to be tested. If it is possible to attach γ to α , then R is subordinating; if attachment is possible only to β , then R is coordinating. (cf. Asher/Vieu 2005: 600)

- (1) a. Dann ist sie weggelaufen, (α)
 b. (ich meine) die Serena. (β) *Explanation* (α, γ)
 c. Das macht sie immer wenn sie wütend ist. (γ)

'Then she ran away, (I mean) Serena. That's what she always does when she is angry.'

The *Attachment Test* shows that *Afterthought* is subordinating. The remaining *Continuation Test* and *Anaphora Test* achieve the same result, that is why I present only one of the tests here.

20. Asher and Lascarides (2003) distinguish between content-level discourse relations and cognitive-level discourse relations. For the former, it is only the content of the utterances building up a discourse that matters, as e.g., with *Narration* or *Elaboration*. For the latter not only the content of the utterances, but also the intentions of the speaker and the hearer are important for defining their semantics. So, e.g., for a discourse in (a) it is assumed that the discourse relation *NEI* (*Not Enough Information*) connects two utterances, and the semantics of this relation is defined in the following way: *NEI* holds if the speaker of 2 has an intention of making clear with his utterance that he does not know the answer to 1, and thus cannot help the speaker of 1 to achieve his speech act related goal (SARG); in the case of (a) the goal being to learn who is coming to the party:

- (a) 1: Who is coming to the party? 2: I don't know.

Nearly all discourse relations for dialogue are cognitive-level.

intentions of the participants. Crucial for producing an afterthought is the intention of the speaker to repair a reference he believes to be unclear for the hearer.²¹

With all this in mind, (18) can be made more precise in (19):

- (19) *Afterthought* (α, β) is a cognitive-level, subordinating discourse relation, which holds whenever the speaker of α and β supplies β with the speech act related goal²² of clearing the reference of a discourse referent x that has been introduced in α by establishing a relation $x=z$, where z is a discourse referent introduced in β , and the reference of z in the discourse representation is assumed to be unambiguous.²³

[α : the host sentence; β : the afterthought; x, z : discourse referents]

That means that AT refers back to an element of its host sentence, whose reference it resolves. Note that the reference resolution is purely local, in that it does not affect the structure of the discourse as a whole. For example, in (20) the discourse segment is about a certain play with an actress playing the role of a nun, and the AT occurs in the utterance claiming that the actress was much more beautiful than the actual nun. The theme of the discourse segment is the play, and the AT *I mean the nun* does not change this; it does not affect the global structure of the discourse segment:

- (20) ([...] und das ist es auch [...] was das Stück will, was man um so deutlicher sieht, als die Bethmann wirklich eine sehr hübsche Frau ist oder doch zum wenigsten viel hübscher.)
 ([...] and this is also [...] what is the point of the play, and one sees it even clearer, because the Bethmann is really beautiful, or at least much more beautiful)
 als sie_i wirklich war ich meine die Nonne_i, (was aber nichts schadet [...])
 than she_i really was, I mean the nun_i (but it is not so bad [...])
 [Newspaper Corpus of Bonn BZK: 2014916]

21. In some cases, the hearer might make his inability to establish the reference explicit, and thus directly trigger the intention of the speaker (see also footnote 11).

22. Speech act related goal (SARG) is a goal that is either conventionally associated with a particular type of utterance (that is e.g., the case with AT, where an extrasentential NP is required) or is recoverable from the discourse context. E.g., the SARG of a question is to learn the answer to this question (cf. Asher/Lascarides (2003: ch. 7)).

23. According to the analysis presented here, corrections like (a) are a subtype of ATs (cf. 'alien-initiated repair' in the terms of Uhmman 1993):

- (a) (A: Ann went to London. B: No, she didn't, I just met her.) A: I meant Ann Smith.

Besides, it is possible that *Afterthought* is also used to attach other kinds of optional additions, as certain kinds of appositions or non-restrictive relative clauses. However, this issue needs further investigation.

This means, that AT is a backward-looking local repair strategy that does not influence the global discourse structure. Below I will show that for RD quite the opposite is true: it has influence on the global structure of its discourse segment.

4. The discourse function of right dislocation

It has been stated above that the function of RD is to mark the discourse referent that is going to be especially salient for the following discourse. In the following, I call this referent *discourse topic referent*. I assume that for any given coherent discourse segment there exists such a discourse topic referent with which this discourse segment is concerned.

Using the term *discourse topic referent* I assume the local concept of the discourse topic.²⁴ The notion of discourse topic referent corresponds to the *entity-based* approach to discourse topic, which is advocated for in Oberlander (2004).²⁵ According to Oberlander, the only sort of discourse topic needed in addition to discourse relations for establishing coherence is an entity the discourse segment is 'about'.²⁶ The concept of 'an entity the discourse segment is about' matches the intuitive understanding one has about discourse. When questioned about the subject of the discourse (in the pretheoretical sense), e.g., "What were you talking / reading etc. about?", spontaneous answers refer to entities (or, more precisely, to nominal discourse referents). So, some of the possible answers could be "We were talking about *Woody Allen's last movie* / *Anna's wedding* / *my new colleague* / *our holiday plans* / *German right dislocation* etc."

24. In choosing this concept of discourse topic, I do not attempt a theoretical solution to the problem of the status of discourse topic, which has been extensively discussed in literature. See e.g., Keenan & Schieffelin (1976), Brown & Yule (1983/2004), Goutsos (1997) and, more recently, Büring (2003), Asher (2004), Kehler (2004), Oberlander (2004), Stede (2004) and Zeevat (2004), to name a few, for the questions of what a discourse topic is (some answers are: a proposition, a question the discourse answers, an entity etc.) and whether modeling of the discourse needs this concept in the first place.

25. The existence of some kind of entity that is most salient at a given stage of the discourse and that is relevant for establishing coherence seems to be the common point of the papers in the recent issue of *Theoretical Linguistics* dedicated to discourse topics (cf. "recurring sentence topic" in Oberlander (2004), "local topics within discourse segments" in Kehler (2004), "protagonist" in Zeevat (2004) and "Discourse topic 1" in Stede (2004)).

26. That corresponds at the level of the discourse to the notion of *aboutness* proposed by Reinhart (1981) at the sentence level for sentence topics.

In line with this intuitive understanding of the discourse topic, RD serves to mark some discourse referent as the discourse topic referent for the following discourse segment. Take, for example, (21) as an illustration:

- (21) (Und als der König seine Frau verloren hatte, bedauerte ihn die Dutitre: "Ach ja, für Ihnen is et ooch nich so leicht [...].")
 (And when the king lost his wife, Dutitre pitied him: "Dear me, I should say, for you things aren't that easy either [...].")
Sie_i war ein Original, die Madame Dutitre_i.
 she_i was an original the Madame Dutitre_i
 (Sie verstand nie, warum man über ihre Aussprüche lachte. Sie war eben echt und lebte, wie alle wirklich originalen Menschen, aus dem Unbewussten. Kein falscher Ton kam deshalb bei ihr auf.)
 (She never understood why everybody always laughed at her remarks. She was genuine and lived unconsciously, as all unique people do. She never came across as being artificial.)

[Fischer-Fabian, S., *Berlin-Evergreen*, Berlin: Knauer. 125]

Segment (21) is about a certain Madame Dutitre. Madame Dutitre is available (and most salient) as the referent for the pronoun *sie* ('she') in the second sentence of (21) containing a RD. What RD does here is to mark that the following is about Madame Dutitre. Madame Dutitre is thus explicitly set as the discourse topic referent for the (sub)segment following the right dislocation.²⁷ Importantly, in (21) no topic shift takes place, as Madame Dutitre is also the discourse topic of the preceding (sub)segment.

Here it is instructive to have a look at the left peripheral constructions in German and to compare their discourse functions to that of RD. Frey (2004) shows that a left-peripheral construction called hanging topic is used in a similar way to mark the discourse topic referent for the following segment. That is why in the following I briefly introduce two German left-peripheral constructions, *hanging topic* and *left dislocation*, and show how they relate to RD.

27. The difference between using a RD or a sentence without RD like (a) in the same context is that although Madame Dutitre is in both cases the discourse topic referent, RD marks this fact explicitly, whereas in (a) this remains implicit:

- (a) Madame Dutitre war ein Original.
 Madame Dutitre was an original.
 (Sie verstand nie, warum man über ihre Aussprüche lachte.)
 (She never understood why everybody always laughed at her remarks.)

4.1 To the left and to the right: left dislocation, right dislocation and hanging topic

Since Altmann (1981), two forms of left-peripheral NPs with a coreferent proform inside the clause are distinguished in German: *left dislocation* (LD) and *hanging topic* (HT) ('free theme' in terms of Altmann 1981), cf. (22a) vs. (22b):

- (22) a. Den Otto_i→, den_i mag jEder. LD
 The Otto_i, D-PRON_i likes everybody
 b. Orto_i↓, | jEder mag ihn_i. HT
 Otto_i, everybody likes him_i

[Frey (2005: 20)]

(→: progradient tone; ↓: falling tone; |: pause; CAPITALS: main accent)

The common assumption (again, since Altmann 1981) is that the main formal difference between LD and HT is the clause-internal pro-form: LD only allows so-called 'weak d-pronouns' *der*, *die*, *das* as coreferent clause-internal pro-forms, whereas for HT different resumptive forms are possible (e.g., personal pronoun *ihn* ('him') in (22b)).

As Frey (2004), (2005) and Shaer/Frey (2004) show, there are more important formal and functional differences between these two constructions. They amount to the following (cf. Frey 2004):

On the one hand, LD is prosodically and syntactically part of its host sentence (cf. also Altmann 1981). Its function in the discourse is to mark the clause-internal pronoun as the sentence topic.

HT, on the other hand, is an orphan. Its discourse function is to mark the introduction of a new discourse topic,²⁸ so that the NP refers to that discourse topic. In (23), the discourse topic changes from Hans to the Berlin underground, and HT signals this change:

- (23) (Hans ist ein richtiger Fan der Berliner U-Bahn. Deshalb reist er oft nach
 (Hans is a real fan of the Berlin underground. That's why he rather often goes to
 Berlin.)
 Berlin.)
 Die Berliner U-Bahn_i, sie_i nahm 1902 ihren Betrieb auf. [...]
 the berlin underground_i it_i took 1902 its service on
 (Now, the Berlin underground, it started in 1902.)

[Frey 2004, ex. (57)]

This means that RD and HT have in common that they both mark the discourse topic referent for the following discourse segment. The difference is twofold: firstly, in

28. Frey's understanding of discourse topic as the "main theme of a Section of a text" (Frey 2004: 217) corresponds roughly to what I call the *discourse topic referent* in this paper.

the case of hanging topic the discourse topic referent in question is bound to change from the preceding segment, while RD does not have this additional requirement, as one can see in (21), where the discourse topic referent does not change.²⁹ Secondly, the following segment includes the host sentence in the case of HT, and excludes it in the case of RD.

It is important that although there are formal similarities between left and right dislocation in German – both are prosodically and syntactically integrated into their host sentence, while HT is not –, functionally it is HT that RD corresponds to. Evidence for this claim comes from the option of interchanging the constructions in the same context: RD can be replaced by HT, but not by LD,³⁰ as in (24):

- (24) (Und als der König seine Frau verloren hatte, bedauerte ihn die Dutitre: “Ach ja, für Ihnen is et ooch nich so leicht [. . .].”)
 Sie_i war ein Original, die Madame Dutitre_i. RD
 she_i was an original the Madame Dutitre_i
 (Sie verstand nie, warum man über ihre Aussprüche lachte. Sie war eben echt und lebte, wie alle wirklich originalen Menschen, aus dem Unbewussten. Kein falscher Ton kam deshalb bei ihr auf.)
 And when the king lost his wife, Dutitre pitied him: “Dear me, for you, things really aren’t that easy either [. . .]. She was unique, DET Madame Dutitre. She never understood why everybody always laughed at her remarks. She was genuine and lived unconsciously, as all unique people do. She never came across as being artificial.
 a. Madame DUTITRE_i↓, | sie_i war ein Original. HT
 Madame Dutitre_i she_i was an original
 b. #Die Madame Dutitre_i→, die_i war ein Original. LD
 the Madame Dutitre_i D-PRON_i was an original

As shown above, RD in (24) marks that the referent of the NP in question is the discourse topic referent for the following segment. A hanging topic NP refers to the discourse topic referent for the following segment too, and that is why (24a) is equally

29. The difference between RD and HT is expected, according to Lambrecht (2001). Lambrecht shows that, cross-linguistically, left dislocation constructions (i.e., HT in the case of German, cf. Frey 2004) are used for the announcement or establishment of a new topic relation between a referent and a predication, while right dislocation constructions serve the continuation or maintenance of an already established relation. However, in the case of German the data show that for RD, the discourse topic referent is neither bound to be new nor necessarily old; that issue is left completely open.

30. Frascarelli/Hinterhölzl (2007) propose for Italian, that left and right dislocation might both date from the same deep structure. They state, however, that this analysis is not applicable to German. (24) supplies discourse-functional evidence against assuming one deep structure for left and right dislocation, in spite of some formal similarities between them.

possible here.³¹ Left dislocation (24b), however, is not suitable here: it can only locally mark the sentence topic, and that does not capture the suggestion that the whole segment, and not only this one sentence, is ‘about’ Madame Dutitre.³²

To sum up: in spite of their formal similarities, left and right dislocation differ in a crucial way as far as their discourse function is concerned. LD is a local (i.e., sentence-internal) aboutness marker, whereas RD is a global one, in that it marks the discourse topic referent for the following discourse segment. In this sense RD parallels HT: both mark the discourse topic referent for the following segment. However, there is one important difference between RD and HT: RD does not issue any conditions with respect to the discourse topic referent in the preceding segment, while HT requires a change of the discourse topic referent.

In the next section I will discuss in more detail what consequences the marking of a discourse topic referent by RD has for the structure of the following discourse.

4.2 Right dislocation and the ‘foreground’ vs. ‘background’ distinction

In order to understand the role of RD in the discourse some preliminaries are required: the distinction between *foreground* and *background* in a discourse segment, and the discourse relation *Background* (cf. Asher/Lascarides 2003, Vieu/Prévot 2004) that accounts for this distinction. I will now briefly introduce these.

Background (in terms of SDRT) is a discourse relation that is responsible for subdividing a discourse into the foreground (main story line) and background (less

31. The difference between (24a) and (24b) is whether the author wishes to mark a change of discourse topic or not. It depends on whether Madame Dutitre is understood to be the discourse topic referent for the preceding segment. The preceding segment goes as follows:

- (a) Und als der König seine Frau verloren hatte, die beim Volke so beliebte Königin Luise, bedauerte ihn die Dutitre: “Ach ja, für Ihnen is et ooch nich so leicht, wer nimmt heute schon’n ollen Witwer mit sieben kleine Kinder?”
 And when the king lost his wife, the very popular queen Louise, Dutitre pitied him: “Dear me, for you, really, things aren’t that easy either, who would nowadays be willing to marry an old widower with seven little children?”

It is likely to consider Madame Dutitre as the discourse topic referent of the preceding segment also; that would explain the choice of the RD. However, if the author intends the first segment as being about the king, then the hanging topic construction in (24b) would be preferred.

32. Altmann (1981:88) states that certain kinds of HT may be best “paraphrased” as right dislocation; in this case the right dislocation also has the function that is otherwise ascribed to HT, i.e., “continuation of a previously introduced theme”, and not “disambiguation of a pronominal reference” that is according to Altmann (1981) typical for right dislocation. However, Altmann does not pursue this idea, and even generally considers HT (introducing a NP with a clear reference) and right dislocation (disambiguating an unclear reference) as being functionally complementary (Altmann 1981: 107).

important information about the state of affairs relating to the time interval of the main story line) (cf. Asher/Lascarides (2003: 460) for the exact definition). An example of *Background* is (25):

- (25) 1. A burglar broke into Mary's apartment.
2. Mary was asleep.
3. He stole the silver.

[Asher and Lascarides (2003: 166)]

In (25), the information of utterance 2, that Mary was sleeping, serves as a background for the main story line (a burglary in Mary's apartment).³³ It is important that *Background*, being a subordinating relation (cf. Vieu/Prévoit 2004) ensures that the discourse referents in the foreground are always available for anaphoric reference.

It has been claimed above that RD influences the structure of the following discourse segment. This happens in the following way: RD assists the division of a discourse segment into a *main story line* and *background*. More specifically, this means that, firstly, the sentence with the RD always belongs to the main story line; secondly, the RD signals that this main story line is not exhausted, but is going to be resumed in the following. This is expected, as RD marks the discourse topic referent for the following segment. What follows, is that the utterances between the RD and the resuming of the main story line are understood as supplying background information, and thus coherence is maintained (see also Averintseva-Klisch 2007).

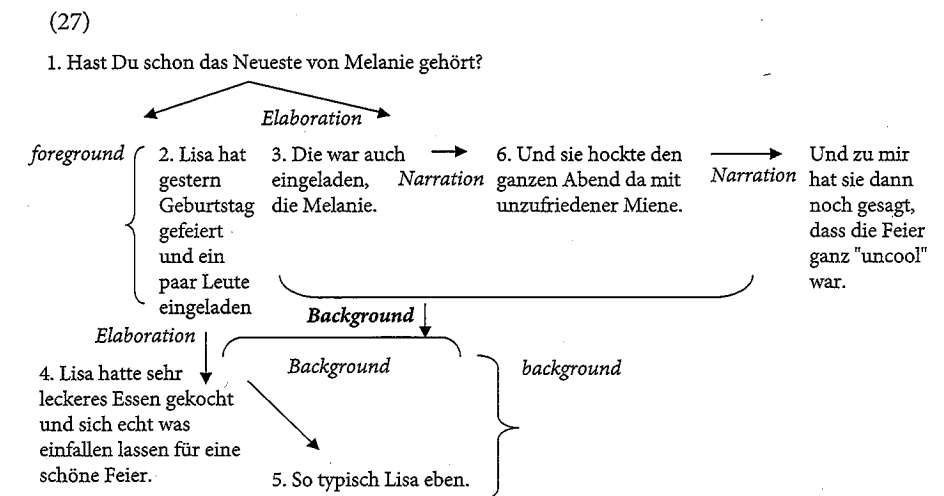
Evidence for this claim comes from some peculiarities concerning anaphoric resumption, as in (26):

- (26) 1. Hast Du schon das Neueste von *Melanie_m* gehört?
Have you already the newest about *Melanie_m* heard
2. *Lisa₁* hat gestern Geburtstag gefeiert und ein paar Leute
Lisa₁ has yesterday birthday celebrated and a couple people
eingeladen.
invited
3. *Die_m* war auch eingeladen, *die Melanie_m*.
She_m was also invited the *Melanie_m*

33. The distinction of foreground vs. background corresponds roughly to the distinction between *main structure* and *side structure* in the discourse made by von Stutterheim/Klein (2002). According to von Stutterheim & Klein, the main structure is built of partial answers to the *Quaestio*, a (mostly) implicit question the discourse as a whole is answering; in other words, it is the main story line of a discourse (segment). Side structures include sentences that supply information that is not immediately relevant as a partial answer to the *Quaestio*. One function that *Background* might have is to attach a special subtype of side structure. This is the function of *Background* that is relevant for this paper. *Background* also has other functions; so, an important function of *Background* is to attach presuppositions (cf. Asher / Lascarides 2003: 239).

4. *Lisa₁* hatte sehr leckeres Essen gekocht und *sich₁* echt was
Lisa₁ had very tasty meal cooked and REFL really something
einfallen lassen für eine schöne Feier.
came-up-with for a wonderful party
5. So typisch *Lisa₁* eben.
So typically *Lisa₁* just
6. Und sie hockte den ganzen Abend da mit unzufriedener Miene.
And she_m crouched the whole evening there with unsatisfied face
7. Und zu mir hat sie dann noch gesagt, dass die Feier ganz
And to me has she_m then yet said that the party totally
"uncool" war.
uncool was
1. Have you heard the latest about Melanie? 2. It was Lisa's birthday
yesterday, and she threw a little party. 3. She was also invited – Melanie.
4. Lisa cooked a delicious meal and arranged everything wonderfully.
5. It was Lisa at her best. 6. And she sat the whole evening in a corner and
sulked. 7. And to me she said that the party was stupid.

What is important here is that for the anaphor *sie* ('she') in 6 (and 7) the reference to Melanie is not only possible, but even preferred to the reference to Lisa, although the NP *Lisa* is in linear terms nearer and thus (being also morphosyntactically suitable) should be preferred. This follows, however, from the structure of the discourse segment. The discourse structure inferred here is illustrated in (27). The main story line is about Melanie (and her bad manners at the party), and the utterances about Lisa are interpreted as the background of the main story line:



The anaphoric resumption occurs only at the foreground level, and the pronoun in 6 resumes the current discourse topic referent, which has been explicitly marked with a RD in 3, i.e., Melanie.

There are two constraints on *Background* in the SDRT analysis: firstly, the background utterance must denote a state. Secondly, the background state and the foreground event or state must overlap. Clause 5 fulfils both of these constraints. It refers to a (not explicitly specified) property of Lisa, which is a state and overlaps with the time interval of the main story line, the main story line being Melanie exhibiting bad manners at Lisa's birthday party. Nevertheless, one might argue that there is a problem with clause 4. It describes the cooking of a delicious meal that (as we infer from our knowledge of the world) was before the party, and which is not a state but an activity. However, the tense form used here, past perfect, denotes not the action of cooking a delicious meal itself but its *resultant state*, i.e., the result of Lisa's activities which contributed to a wonderful party. This resultant state overlaps with the time of the main story line. Thus, both constraints on *Background* are fulfilled.

To sum up: RD interplays in a special way with the foreground-background-subdivision of a discourse segment. The RD itself and sentences resuming the discourse topic referent belong to the foreground, which enables the discourse topic referent to remain available for anaphoric resumption throughout the background part. The function of RD is thus twofold: from the point of view of production, RD assists in subdividing the discourse segment into a main story line and background. From the recipient's point of view, RD helps to keep the track of the main story line and to resolve anaphors in a way compatible with the intentions of the author.

5. Summary and conclusions

In this paper, I considered the construction traditionally called German right dislocation. I argued that there are actually two different constructions, right dislocation proper and afterthought, which are both subsumed under this label. Evidence for the distinction between right dislocation and afterthought comes from prosody, syntax and semantics, as well as from the discourse functions they have.

Right dislocation is prosodically and syntactically seen as part of its host sentence, i.e., a right IP adjunct (presumably as a result of a movement). Its function in discourse is to mark some discourse-old referent as the discourse topic referent for the following discourse segment (in the sense of the referent the following segment is about). This leads to the preference for definite specific NPs referring to individuals for RD. RD marking of the discourse topic referent has consequences for anaphoric resumption in the following segment and for the structure of the following segment as a whole. In other words, RD is a 'forward-looking' discourse device, issuing certain constraints on the subsequent discourse segment.

Afterthought is prosodically and syntactically independent of its host sentence and is integrated into the sentence at the level of discourse. In order to account for this kind of integration, I proposed a subordinating cognitive-level discourse relation *Afterthought*. Functionally, AT is a local repairing strategy, which is directed towards the host sentence, and which does not have any impact on the global discourse structure. In this sense, it is a 'backward-looking' discourse device.

To conclude: In this paper, I showed that certain semantic constraints on the RD-NP seem to follow from its referring to the discourse topic referent. Observations of this kind might allow insights into the nature of the otherwise elusive pragmatic category of the discourse topic. Discourse topic is crucially important for the structure of the discourse model. In this sense RD in its function of marking the discourse topic referent is an explicit means revealing how the discourse model is built up.

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