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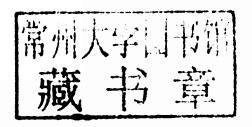
Edited by Alain Rouveret

Resumptive Pronouns
at the Interfaces

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John Benjamins Publishing Company
Amsterdam / Philadelphia

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Volume 5

Resumptive Pronouns at the Interfaces
Edited by Alain Rouveret

Foreword

This volume is based on a round table on resumptive pronouns which was held at the UFR de Linguistique, Université Paris-Diderot, on June 21 and 22, 2007, and organized by Hamida Demirdache (Université de Nantes) and myself. Throughout the workshop, all the participants were struck by the consistently high level of the presentations, by the originality of the proposals, by the stimulating discussions that followed. This resulted in the project to bring out a book that would put together recent developments of the research on resumption, discussing both its syntactic and semantic aspects, drawing evidence from unrelated languages and illustrating different theoretical perspectives. It is with great pleasure that I present this volume today. There is no doubt for me that the pioneering articles it contains and the original insights they develop make important and even decisive contributions not only to our understanding of resumption, but also to the development of current syntactic and semantic theories, against which this complex phenomenon raises difficult challenges.

The volume puts together contributions by David Adger, Ash Asudeh, Valentina Bianchi, Hamida Demirdache and Orin Percus, Nicolas Guilliot and Nouman Malkawi, and Milan Rezac, which originated as presentations at the round table. At a later stage during the preparation of the volume, David Willis, Naama Friedmann and João Costa kindly accepted my invitation to contribute a paper completing the contributions deriving from the 2007 round table. Let them be thanked for agreeing to join the project in the making. Last and least, the volume contains a survey of the early and recent work carried out on resumption, embracing both its syntactic and semantic dimensions. Following a suggestion by Pierre Pica, I have also included two articles, which have deeply influenced linguistic thinking about resumption and to which almost all contributions refer: James McCloskey's 1990 paper, originally published in the 23rd volume of the *Syntax and Semantics* series entitled *The Syntax of the Modern Celtic Languages*, edited by Randall Hendrick, and Edit Doron's 1982 *On the syntax and semantics of resumptive pronouns*, which originally appeared in *Texas Linguistic Forum* 19. I am grateful to Emerald and the University of Texas for granting permission to reprint these articles.

I am deeply indebted to Kleanthes Grohmann and Pierre Pica, for proposing to include the book in the series they are editing, *Language Faculty and Beyond*, at John Benjamins Publishing Company and for much editorial assistance, and to Rose-Marie Déchaine for her extended review of the first chapter. I also wish to express my gratitude to the authors who, due to various circumstances familiar to all those that have embarked on that kind of enterprise, had to wait a lot to see their article published.

Alain Rouveret
Paris, September 10, 2010

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Some issues in the theory of resumption

A perspective on early and recent research

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This article broaches the issues raised by resumptive pronouns and resumptive dependencies across typologically unrelated languages and discusses some of the analytic proposals that have been advanced in a period going from Ross's (1967) dissertation to the present. Up to the early 1990's, research on resumption has endeavored to discover the principles responsible for the divide between gap constructions and resumptive constructions, confronting the latter with the standard diagnostic properties of movement. It soon appeared however that the syntactic behavior and interpretive characteristics of resumptives pronouns considerably differ from one language to the other and that only in a restricted subset can the syntactic relation between a resumptive pronoun and its peripheral binder be said to be substantially analogous to the relation between a trace and its *wh*-antecedent. On the other hand, the pronominal character of resumptive pronouns clearly manifests itself in some languages (see the Highest Subject Restriction). The advent of the Minimalist Program marks a radical change of perspective. With the incorporation of the Agree operation and the notion of phase into the theory, it becomes possible to look at the connection between the resumptive and the periphery from a new perspective and to define chains whose links are connected by Agree, rather than by Move. But the Agree-based accounts of resumption meet with serious difficulties. New movement analyses of resumption have also been proposed. Whichever choice is correct, additional assumptions are required to account for the reconstruction properties and interpretive characteristics of resumptive constructions. The claim that resumptive pronouns have the semantic properties expected from pronouns rather than gaps cannot be maintained in its strong form. First, different classes of pronouns show different reconstruction behaviors and react differently to quantifier binding. A promising approach consists in assigning to weak and strong pronouns different statuses and in assigning to weak pronouns the internal structure of definite descriptions. Second, the semantic properties of resumptive pronouns in the contexts where they are optional show that their interpretation also depends on whether they are in competition with a gap or with another pronominal form for the realization of a variable in a given position.

1.   Resumptive pronouns: Where they are found and why

The label "resumptive pronoun" usually refers to the overt pronominal elements found in some languages in the variable position of unbounded Ā-dependency constructions – the latter include relative clauses, constituent questions, comparative clauses, dislocation and focus constructions. Since the 1970's, research on resumption has concentrated on two major questions: (i) the origin of resumptive pronouns, that is, the structural and syntactic factors that condition their occurrence, (ii) the interpretation of resumptive pronouns. The aim of this section and of Section 2 is to present early work dealing with (i).

1.1   Resumption, islands and proper government

In English and other languages, resumptive pronouns are exclusively used as a saving device to redeem derivations and structures that would otherwise violate a fundamental principle of grammar, most notably those where the variable site ends up separated from the operator by one or several island boundaries. Such pronouns have first been discussed by Ross (1967), who gives the examples in (1).[1]

ENGLISH   (Ross 1967)

(1)   a.   I just saw a girl who Long John's claim that *she* was a Venusian made
              all the headlines.

       b.   The only kind of car which I can never seem to get *its* carburetor adjusted
              right is them Stanley Steamers.

Neither in (1a), nor in (1b) is it possible to substitute a gap for the italicized pronoun. Conversely, in English, resumption is not available in the structures where Subjacency is not violated ((2)).

ENGLISH

(2)   a.   *I saw the boy that Mary loves *him*

       b.   I saw the boy that Mary loves __

The contributions in this book, however, mainly deal with languages that make a productive use of resumptive pronouns, that is, languages where pronouns occur in positions where a gap should be legitimate. For example, in modern Hebrew, standard Arabic and the various Arabic dialects, in Irish and in some Austronesian languages

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1.   Throughout, the resumptive element in the target language is indicated in italics and boldface and the gap is marked by __. In the English glosses, both the resumptive element and the gap are put in square brackets.

like Palauan, the direct object position of clauses not included in a strong island either requires (Lebanese Arabic) or permits (Hebrew, Irish) the occurrence of a resumptive pronoun. It is clear that in the following examples, the insertion of the resumptive pronoun doesn't redeem a potential violation of Subjacency.

LEBANESE ARABIC   (Aoun & Choueiri 2000)

(3) a. S-Sabe   yalli raħ təʃħaT-*o*   Zeena mən
         the-boy   that   FUT-kick-3FSG-[him]   Zeena from

         l-madrase   harab
         the-school   ran-away-3MS

         "The boy that Zeena will kick out of school ran away."

     b. *S-Sabe   yalli raħ təʃħaT   __   Zeena mən
         the-boy   that   FUT-kick-3FSG [__]   Zeena from

         l-madrase   harab
         the-school   ran-away-3MSG

HEBREW   (Borer 1984)

(4) a. raiti   et   ha-yeled še   rina ohevet *oto*
         saw-I   ACC   the-boy   that Rina loves   [him]
         "I saw the boy that Rina loves."

     b. raiti   et   ha-yeled še   rina ohevet __
         saw-I   ACC   the-boy   that Rina loves [__]
         "I saw the boy that Rina loves."

IRISH[2]   (McCloskey 1979)

(5) a. an   scríbhneoir a molann na   mic léinn *é*
         the writer   C praise the students   [him]
         "the writer that the students praise"

     b. an   scríbhneoir a mholann na   mic léinn __
         the writer   C praise   the students [__]
         "the writer that the students praise"

The same observation holds for multiple-embedding constructions. In the English sentence (6), only a gap is legitimate in the object position of the most embedded clause. In the corresponding Hebrew sentence (7), a resumptive pronoun can be found in this position, along with a gap.

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2. Contrary to appearances, the resumptive structure in (5a) and the gap structure in (5b) involve distinct complementizers. See Section 2.2 for discussion.

ENGLISH

(6) a. *The man that Xavier said that David believes that Ken met
         him is a doctor

     b. The man that Xavier said that David believes that Ken met __ is a doctor

HEBREW   (Borer 1984)

(7) a. ha–iš   še   xana amra še   dalya maʔamina
         the-man that Xana said that Dalya believes

         še   kobi pagaš *oto*   hu rofe
         that Kobi met   [him] is doctor

         "The man that Xana said that Dalya believes that Kobi met is a doctor."

     b. ha-iš   še   xana amra še   dalya maʔamina
         the-man that Xana said that Dalya believes

         še   kobi pagaš [__] hu rofe
         that Kobi met   ___   is doctor

         "The man that Xana said that Dalya believes that Kobi met is a doctor."

It should not come as a surprise that the languages with productive resumption also quite generally resort to pronouns as a saving device, as English does (cf. (1)), and insert them in positions where the presence of a gap would violate a locality constraint. This is the case in the following Hebrew example, instantiating a Complex NP structure:

HEBREW   (Borer 1984)

(8) a. raiti   et   ha-yeled še   dalya makira et   ha-iša   še
         saw-I   ACC the-boy that Dalya knows ACC the woman   that

         ohevet *oto*
         loves   [him]

         "I saw the boy that Dalya know the woman that loves him."

     b. *raiti et   ha-yeled še   dalya makira et   ha-iša
         saw-I   ACC the-boy that Dalya knows ACC the woman

         še   ohevet ___
         that loves [__]

         "I saw the boy that Dalya knows the woman that loves him."

Besides island domains, there is a second set of contexts that systematically forces the use of resumptive pronouns. In the languages that lack both the preposition stranding option and the PP-fronting option, relatives (and interrogatives) formed on the object of a preposition generally display a resumptive element in the relativization (or interrogation) site. Similarly, in the languages where the pied-piping of the nominal head is not an option, the extraction of the possessor from a genitive construction gives rise to a resumptive structure. Many productive resumptive languages illutrate both

situations. In the relevant constructions, the resumptive element is the only choice, it cannot be replaced by a gap.

WELSH   (Rouveret 1994)

(9)   a.   Prepositional object

         (i)   y   dyn   y   soniais   amdano
              the   man   that   I-talked   about-[agr]
              "the man I talked about"

         (ii)   *y   dyn   y   soniais   am __
              the   man   that   I-talked   about [__]

     b.   Prepositional object

         (i)   y   dyn   y   siaradasoch   chwi   ag   *ef*
              the   man   that   spoke   you   with   [him]
              "the man that you spoke with"

         (ii)   *y   dyn   y   siaradasoch   chwi   ag __
              the   man   that   spoke   you   with [__]

     c.   Possessor

         (i)   y   dyn   yr   oedd   *ei*   fam   gartref
              the   man   that   was   [his]   mother   at home
              "the man whose mother was at home"

         (ii)   *y   dyn   yr   oedd __   mam   gartref
              the   man   that   was [__]   mother   at home

HAUSA   (Tuller 1986)

(10)   a.   Prepositional object

         (i)   Waa   ka   yi   maganaa   da   *shii*
              who   2SGM   do   talk   with   [him]
              "Who did you talk with?"

         (ii)   *Waa   ka   yi   maganaa   da __
              who   2SGM   do   talk   with [__]

     b.   Possessor

         (i)   Waa   ka   karanta   littaafi*nsa*
              who   2SGM   read   book-of-his
              "Whose book did you read?"

         (ii)   *Waa   ka   karanta   littaafi
              who   2SGM   read   book [__]

Similar examples are found in Hebrew, Arabic, Irish. Resumption in prepositional and genitive constructions overcomes the potential violation of a universal principe which, in the Principles and Parameters framework, was known as the *Empty Category Principle* (ECP), requiring that a non-pronominal null element be "properly governed", that

is, minimally c-commanded by a lexical head with the relevant properties. Neither N, nor P belong to the set of proper governors, contrary to V. When the proper government requirement is not satisfied – which is the case when a prepositional object or a possessor is extracted – inserting a pronominal element into the variable site is one of the strategies avoiding the ECP violation. By definition, overt pronominal elements do not fall under the purview of the ECP.

1.2   Is there a resumptive pronoun parameter?

The data reviewed so far, when put into proper perspective, appear to support a distinction between two types of resumptive pronouns: those which exclusively function as a saving device, avoiding the violation of a general principle, a locality constraint, as proposed by Ross (1967), or the ECP, and those which represent a productive strategy to form unbounded Ā-dependencies. To refer to the former, Sells (1984) uses the label "intrusive pronouns". The latter can be characterized as "true" or "grammatical" resumptives.

The question that arises is whether these data can be used in support of a distinction between two types of languages: those which illustrate intrusive resumption and those which display grammatical resumption. Should this partition be endorsed by a macro-parameter?[3] There are two reasons why the answer is negative. First, as mentioned in Section 1, languages belonging to the productive class generally also resort to intrusive resumption. The correct distinction would thus be between the languages that exclusively use intrusive pronouns and those that also have grammatical resumptives at their disposal.

Second, careful examination reveals that the variation between the languages of the productive class is by no means insignificant, an observation which challenges the macro-parametric approach. In Vata (Koopman 1983 and Asudeh, this volume), interrogative, relative and focus constructions containing a resumptive pronoun display the characteristic properties of movement-derived structures. Resumptive pronouns are excluded from non-subject positions, but required in subject positions, where gaps are not allowed to occur because, in Vata, they are not licensed by the adjacent complementizer and hence don't satisfy the ECP requirement. At the same time, resumption is not available in contexts where movement would be blocked by a locality constraint, notably in islands. In other words, where they are allowed to appear, Vata resumptive pronouns have exactly the distribution of *wh*-traces. Indeed, in the languages that display them, these pronouns are often characterized as being phonologically spelled out traces. This situation is in sharp contrast with that observed

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3.   This possibility is discussed and finally rejected in Sells (1984), which is one of the few works tackling resumption in a comparative perspective.

in Irish, where resumptive pronouns are in free variation with gaps in all positions from which movement is legitimate. The only restriction is that they cannot occur in the Highest Subject position, that is, the position adjacent to the relative complementizer (cf. McCloskey 1990).[4]

Unfortunately, Irish and Vata cannot be considered to represent a simple binary opposition. Many other distributional patterns can be found across languages, which coincide neither with the Irish situation, nor with the Vata one. For example, Swedish is like Vata in that resumptive pronouns are uniformly disallowed in non-subject positions. But it differs from Vata in that no island effects are observed with subject resumptive pronouns, which precludes their analysis as spelled out traces (cf. Engdahl 1985). Welsh differs from Irish in that there is no context where resumptive pronouns and gaps are in free variation. In Irish, as shown in (5), both strategies are available in relatives formed on the "local" direct object. In Welsh, in the same environment, only the gap strategy is available, cf. (11).

WELSH   (Rouveret 1994)

(11) a. y   llong   a   werthodd y   dyn __
          the boat   REL sold   the man [__]
          "the boat that the man sold"

      b. *y   llong   y   gwerthodd y   dyn   *hi*
          the boat   that sold   the man [her]

It is fair to conclude that micro-variation seems to be the rule in the realm of resumption. This casts doubt on the plausibility of a macro-parametric approach, which would distinguish only two major linguistic types. Rather, several factors must be taken into account to decide whether a resumptive pronoun is obligatory, optional or excluded in a given position. Crosslinguistic variation in the use of resumption and the question of identifying its scope in each language are among the many challenges raised by the phenomenon.

2. Resumption: Anaphora or movement?

A second major challenge raised by resumption is, as McCloskey 2005 puts it, the "Janus-like nature" of resumptive pronouns, "one face towards the domain of pronouns and anaphoric elements, the other towards the theory of movement." More precisely:

> "Since resumptive pronouns are pronouns ..., a series of questions can be asked about where they fit in the context of the general theory of pronominal anaphora

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4. Resumption is of course the only option in the structures where the variable position is internal to an island, a prepositional phrase or a genitive construction.

> ... But since they simultaneously appear in positions which are canonically associated with the appearance of gaps, one can also ask a series of questions about how resumptive elements interact with the processes which create gaps."
>
> [McCloskey 2005: 96]

McCloskey's (2005) characterization echoes insights expressed by Doron (1982), Sharvit (1999) and also McCloskey 1990). Doron argues that resumptive pronouns are interpreted like "regular" pronouns, even though, syntactically, they seem to function more like traces, in that they need be Ā-bound. Sharvit's statement of the resumptive pronoun puzzle is particularly enlightening:

> "Resumptive pronouns have a dual nature. In some ways they are like traces, in others like "regular" pronouns. Like *wh*-traces, they need to be bound from an Ā-position ... Unlike traces, they are not subject to Bounding constraints ... In addition, like traces (and A-bound pronouns), resumptive pronouns are interpreted as bound variables (bound by the *wh*-phrase in *wh*-questions and by the relative operator in relative clauses). But in some sense, they have less freedom of interpretation, compared to traces."   [Sharvit 1999: 591]

These considerations allow us to sharpen the characterization of "resumptive pronoun." Dealing with the Swedish data (cf. Section 1.3), Zaenen, Engdahl and Maling (1981) explicitly argue that "the binding relation between a *wh*-element and a resumptive pronoun is, at least in some languages, of the same nature as the binding relation between a *wh*-element and a trace" and they call this relation "syntactic binding". Moreover, in the languages that make a productive use of resumptive pronouns, such as Hebrew or Irish, no difference of interpretation can be detected between gaps and resumptive pronouns.[5] Resumptive pronouns are thus pronominal variables. By definition, variables are syntactically bound by an element in an Ā-position, which functions as an operator with respect to the variable it binds. Resumptive pronouns are thus operator bound pronouns. I will tentatively adopt this characterization in what follows.

Given the dual status of resumption, which appears to fall both in the province of anaphora and in that of movement, it is not surprising that the accounts that have been proposed differ according to whether they claim that resumption and movement are related and, if they are, as to how this relation is captured. Three major lines of analysis can be identified: those that claim that resumption does not involve movement (Section 2.1); those that view resumption as a "last resort" strategy, occurring exclusively when movement is blocked (Section 2.2); those that take resumption as a special form of movement (Section 2.3). I consider each in turn.

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5.   In Hebrew, this holds only in the structures where no free choice exists between gaps and resumption. See Section 4.2. for discussion.