Resumptive Pronouns, p. 1

In a resumptive pronoun construction, the "gap" position is not a gap; instead, it is filled by a pronoun.

(1)   עברית

a.   זה הספר שהספרנית שמה (<u>אותו</u>) על המדף.
b.   זה הספר שנהניתי מ<u>מנו</u>.
c.   זה הספר שקניתי ושדיווחתי על<u>יו</u>.
d.   זה הספר שרעיינתי את האישה שכתבה <u>אותו</u>.

(2)   **Irish**

a.   an ghirseach a-   r   ghoid na síogaí <u>í</u>
       the girl   COMP- PAST stole the fairies her
       'the girl that the fairies stole away'

b.   Céacu ceann a   bhfuil dúil agat   <u>ann</u>?
       which one   COMP is   liking at.you in.it
       'Which one do you like?'

c.   Is   tú   a   bhfuil an deallramh maith <u>ort</u>.
       COP.PRES you COMP is   the appearance good on.2SG
       'It is you that looks well.'

(3)   **Swedish**

a.   Vilket konto   vet   inte varje investerare om <u>det</u> ger bra   ränta?
       which account knows not every investor   if   it gives good interest
       'Which account does every investor not remember if (it) gives good interest?'

b.   Det var den fången   som läkarna   inte kunde avgöra om <u>han</u>
       it was that prisoner that doctors.DEF not could decide if he
       verkligen var sjuk
       really   was ill
       'This is the prisoner that the doctors couldn't determine if (he) really was ill.'

Resumptive pronouns are most commonly found in relative clauses (although not only; as shown above for Irish and Swedish), and typological studies recognize the use of resumptive pronouns as one possible "relativization strategy." From the perspective of LFG as well, resumptive pronouns are not a problem. One can either associate with them a mechanism for establishing multifunctionality (as proposed by Falk 2002) or allow multifunctionality to be expressed at the semantic/referential level of representation as an alternative to f-structure (Asudeh 2004).

For a displacement view of *wh* constructions, on the other hand, resumptive pronouns are problematic. If the *wh* element has been "displaced" from its "underlying" position, what is a pronoun doing there?

Resumptive Pronouns, p. 2

It wouldn't do to analyze the resumptive pronoun as a "pronounced gap": it has referential properties of pronouns. Note the ambiguity of (2a) and the lack of ambiguity of (2b), and compare it with (3a) and (3b).

(2) a.   דן לא ימצא את האישה שהוא מחפש.
    b.   דן לא ימצא את האישה שהוא מחפש אותה.

(3) a.   דן מחפש אישה.
    b.   דן מחפש אישה. גם רם מחפש אותה.

Also note the following contrast (# means "grammatical for some speakers"):

(4) a.   עם מי נפגשת?
    b.   *מי נפגשת איתו?
    c.   #איזה סטודנט נפגשת איתו?

Another problem with treating resumptive pronouns as pronounced gaps is that can occur in islands.

(5) a.   ראיתי את הילד שדליה מכירה את האישה שאוהבת <u>אותו</u>.
    b.   ראיתי את הילד שרינה אוהבת <u>אותו</u> ואת החברה שלו.

In fact, even in languages like English which do not really have a resumptive pronoun construction, pronouns can be used to rescue sentences which would otherwise be ungrammatical because of an island violation. (This phenomenon is sometimes referred to as involving an "intrusive pronoun".)

(6)   a.   *This is the student that I wonder if is planning to write a seminar paper.
       b.   ??This is the student that I wonder if she is planning to write a seminar paper.

Resumptive pronoun constructions show that syntactic theory has to accept the possibility of placing elements in fronted positions without displacing them from somewhere else. In this way, they undermine the conceptual basis of the displacement analysis of *wh* constructions.

LFG references on resumptive pronouns

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