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Resumptive pronouns in Mauritian: examining the nature of specificity effects^{*}

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Abstract

This study looks at Discourse-linking effects in Mauritian Creole relative clauses where the use of a resumptive pronoun triggers a reading whereby one or more individuals is selected from a contextually-defined subset of individuals. Mauritian Creole resumptives confirm Erteschik-Shir's (1992) hypothesis concerning the 'restrictive focus' reading. Resumption is also incompatible with Sells' (1984) 'concept' reading. Furthermore, I look at the interaction between determiners and resumptive pronouns: it is observed that bare nouns and indefinite noun phrases cannot be the antecedent of a resumptive. As a consequence, it is not possible to observe the purportedly obligatory wide-scope reading of resumptives in Mauritian.

1 Introduction

One of the issues surrounding resumption is whether there exists an interpretive difference between gaps and resumptive pronouns (henceforth, RP). A quick look at available descriptions shows that languages vary with respect to the licensing of RPs and that within one language, RPs are licensed in some contexts but not in others. This paper attempts to bring a partial answer to the issue of interpretation by looking at non-embedded restrictive clauses in Mauritian Creole (henceforth MC) and, in particular, at those few instances where both an RP and a gap are available.

I will not examine contexts where RPs and gaps are in complementary distribution on the assumption that such cases are constrained by syntactic rules. A number of proposals have been made on this matter and while it is outside of the scope of this paper to evaluate each of them, I will briefly mention a few. The Highest Subject Constraint proposed by McCloskey (1990) accounts for a ban on RPs in subject position in unembedded relative clauses by a prohibition on local binding. The 'last resort' approach advocated by Shlonsky (1992) assumes that RPs are inserted to allow extraction in contexts such as islands where extraction is otherwise banned. It has also been observed that the greater the distance between an RP and its antecedent, the more acceptable it becomes for speakers: in analyses by Erteschik-Shir (1992) and Alexopoulou and Keller (2007), distance is measured in terms of layers of embedding (that is, number of CP nodes).

The main point of this paper will be the existence of a specificity effect triggered by an RP and how best to characterise it. Such effects have been shown to exist in Hebrew relative clauses (Doron 1982). Erteschik-Shir (1992) studied the contexts which permit resumption and proposed that, in non-embedded direct object relatives, the use of an RP expresses restrictive focus, that is an individual is picked out from a contextually-defined set.

Syntactic analyses make a distinction between 'true' and 'intrusive' resumption. 'True resumptive' is the term used by Asudeh (2007) to describe those RPs that may occur in all the

^{*} I am indebted to Laurent Roussarie for providing the formulae, to Fabiola Henri and Noam Faust for their intuitions and to Anne Zribi-Hertz and the audience at LangUE for fruitful discussion.

positions where a gap might be expected. A well-known example of a language with ‘true’ resumptives (another label might be ‘generalised resumptives’) is Irish, where as McCloskey (1990) shows, all types of WH-constructions allow for RPs: in addition, for all of these constructions, RPs may appear in all positions inside the clause. The following segment illustrates a case of restrictive relativisation where the RP *é* occurs in object position in place of a gap.

- (1) an fear [S’ ar bhuail tù (é)]
 the man COMPstruck you him
 ‘the man that you struck (him)’ (McCloskey 1990: 206)

‘Intrusive’ pronouns or ‘last resort’ (Shlonsky 1992) pronouns intervene to prevent the violation of a rule of grammar (Asudeh 2007; Sharvit 1999). Observing that RPs and gaps are in complementary distribution in Palestinian Arabic, Shlonsky proposes that when an RP is compulsory, its role is to prevent the violation of a rule of grammar. McCloskey also observes that RPs or gaps are freely chosen in Irish but that RPs become the only option whenever an independent principle of grammar (such as subjacency or the Empty Category Principle) applies. For instance, the pied-piping or the stranding of a preposition is allowed neither in Hebrew (illustrated here) nor in Palestinian Arabic, a constraint which forces the use of an RP in-situ.

- (2) ha-?iš še- xašavti al- *(av)
 the man that (I) thought about (him)
 ‘the man that I thought about’ (Shlonsky 1992: 445)

It is worth noting that there is a debate over the ‘last resort’ strategy: Alexopoulou & Keller (2007) argue on the basis of experimental data that resumptives inside islands do not make extraction out of islands acceptable, yet they acknowledge that RPs are acceptable if they are deeply embedded. Islandhood and embedding will not be tested in this paper: the best way to test the authors’ claim, I believe, is to reproduce their experiment with a number of different speakers. The fact that the present study is limited to my own intuitions as a native speaker of MC does not represent a problem in my view since I believe that different speakers are liable to have different grammars with respect to resumption (see Napoli 1977, for instance).

Alexopoulou and Keller’s experiments also show evidence for the ‘processing’ view of resumption: the further away RPs are from their antecedent by embedding, the more they are preferred. Since this generalisation is uncontroversial and seems to be supported by a number of languages, such cases will be left out of the present study.

The paper is organised as follows: Section 2 contains an overview of different explanations of specificity effects that have been proposed in the literature. Next, I provide a short description of the syntax of restrictive relative clauses which includes the position of determiners. In section 4, I look in detail at NP and PP resumption, the contexts where RPs are obligatory or forbidden and those where they may appear. I will then test whether the claims about constraints and interpretive effects apply to MC. Finally, possible constraints on the ability of various NP types to be antecedents of resumptives will be examined.

2 Background

Although resumptive pronouns represent a challenge for syntactic analysis (Adger 2005 ; Boeckx 2001 ; McCloskey 1990 ; Shlonsky 1992), I do not attempt to provide an analysis of their syntactic status here. I focus instead on the interpretive effects that they bring about. Characterising the interpretive effect of an RP depends a lot on what one's view of specificity is: this section is a brief outline of some proposals that have been made on this topic. Some authors view specificity in terms of scopal relations, but it is argued by (Enç 1991) among others that specificity is the relation between the denotation of a noun phrase and the domain of discourse: in this view, to determine the referent of a noun phrase, it is crucial to take the extralinguistic context into consideration.

One approach to resumption is the distinction between the *de re* and *de dicto* readings of the noun phrase. In Hebrew, where RPs are optional, it has been observed that an RP blocks the *de dicto* interpretation. The following Hebrew examples are taken from Bianchi (2007).

- (3)a. Dani yimca et ha-iša še hu mexapes _ . ^{ok}de dicto _ ^{ok}de re
Dani will find the woman that he seeks.
b. Dani yimca et ha-iša še hu mexapes **ota**. *de dicto _ ^{ok}de re
Dani will find the woman that he seeks her. (Doron 1982; Sells 1984)

In (3a), the sentence containing the RP can mean that Dani will find a woman who will have the properties that he looks for in the ideal woman, whereas (3b) can only mean that there is a specific woman that Dani is looking for (say, Linda) and that he will find her. The *de dicto* reading is termed the *CONCEPT* reading by Sells.

An alternative analysis would be in terms of relative scope. It has been observed that antecedents of RPs have wide scope over all quantifiers in the sentence, in contrast to antecedents of gaps (e.g. Doron, cited by Suñer 1998). The following Hebrew examples exhibit a contrast in terms of scope:

- (4)a. kol gever yimca et ha-iša se hu mexapes ___
every man will-find the woman that he is looking for ___
b. kol gever yimca et ha-iša se hu mexapes **OTA**
every man will-find the woman that he is looking for **HER**
(Erteschik-Shir 1992: 96-97)

Sentence (4a) may have three readings:

[1] There is one woman (say, Beth) such that every man will find her.

[2] For every man, there is a woman such that he will find her.

[3] Each man is looking for a woman with certain properties, but he does not know who that woman might be.

The discussion concerns the available interpretation(s) for (4b), the alternative containing the RP. Erteschik-Shir claims that contrary to what is thought, interpretation [3] is available with a resumptive under a certain context: she proposes that in a TV show with 5 men and 5 women, the show moderator can utter (4) with a resumptive. Furthermore, she adds that interpretation [2] requires that two distinct sets, one of men and one of women, be construed in order to be felicitous. These effects are described by her as a case of a restrictive focus, a proposal along the lines of Enç (1991) for whom specificity is related to a 'partitive' reading. The fact that more interpretations are available than has been thought leads her to discard an analysis in terms of scope in favour of one based on pragmatic factors. Her

claim is that restrictive focus assignment prevents the Avoid Pronoun Principle from applying: restrictive should here be understood in the sense of selecting a limited number of referents out of many.

It has been noticed that it is impossible for an RP to give rise to a bound variable reading (Suñer 1998):

- (5)a. kol exad yikne et ha me'il ha xadaš še hu carix _ . (non-specific)
 Every person will-buy the coat new that he needs
 b. ?* kol exad yikne et ha me'il ha xadaš še hu carix **oto**.
 Every person will-buy the coat new that he needs it (Sells 1984:400)

(5a) means that each person needs and will buy a different coat according to his individual needs. This reading is excluded in (5b) with the RP for Sells, but not for Erteschik-Shir who provides the following context: if the amateur actors in a play each need a special kind of coat for a play, say each one has been assigned a different colour, then (5b) becomes an acceptable sentence for the stage manager to utter (1992:98).

Another claim made in the literature is that negatively quantified antecedents cannot have an RP in their extraction position in Hebrew (Shlonsky 1992), but Suñer (1998) argues that it is not so in Spanish. The Hebrew example presented below is apparently ruled out whereas the Spanish sentence is acceptable:

- (6)a. *Rina lo ʔahava af balšan_i še-Dalya hikira ʔet ha-ʔiša še-hu_i pagaš.
 Rina not loved no linguist that-Dalya knew ACC the woman that-he met
 'Rina did not love any linguist_i that-Dalya knew the woman that he_i met.'
 (Shlonsky 1992:448, n.3)
 b. No conozco a ningún lingüista que sus artículos hayan sido aceptados todos por esa revista.
 'I don't know any linguist that HIS articles have all been accepted by that journal.'
 (Suñer 1998: 356)

According to Erteschik-Shir, RPs that are coreferent with Prepositional Phrases have to be accounted for by another constraint than specificity or restrictive focus. Assuming the Avoid Pronoun Principle, PP resumptives cannot be deleted in Hebrew because they are cliticized onto the preposition and the APP cannot apply to them.

- (7)a. Dibarti im haiš šenitkalt BO beyerušalayim. (in-situ PP)
 'I spoke with the man that you bumped into him in Jerusalem.'
 b. Dibarti im haiš BO nitkalt beyerušalayim. (fronted PP)
 'I spoke with the man into him you bumped in Jerusalem.' (Erteschik-Shir 1992:100)

Erteschik-Shir concludes that PP resumptives in unembedded relatives do not need a restrictive interpretation to be licensed on the basis that they do not alternate with gaps. Such facts suggest that when RPs are the only option specificity effects are weakened (Bianchi 2007).

The pragmatic function associated with Hebrew RPs seems to be absent from Spanish. Suñer notes that « the resumptive alternative is favoured by indefinite antecedents, at least in Spanish, Yiddish and English » and that its function is anaphoric: an indefinite NP is used to introduce a new referent and is subsequently referred to by a pronoun.

- (8) hay una cosa que llaman infraestructura turística que él no tomó
 there.is a thing that call.3PL infrastructure touristic that he not took
 en cuenta ESO para nada
 into account THAT at all
 'there is something called touristic infrastructure that he did not take into account at
 all'. (Suñer 1998:359)

Spanish data also contradict Doron's claim that resumptives always have wide scope: a narrow scope reading is available according to Suñer. In both of the following sentences, the preferred reading is the one where the *los tres estudiantes* 'the three students' means the same three students for each professor, in other words, the wide scope reading. But the distributive interpretation, in which each professor assigns homework to different groups of three students, cannot be excluded in either case: so the antecedent of an RP may have a narrow scope reading.

- (9)a. los tres estudiantes a los que cada profesor debe dar tarea extra
 the three students to whom every professor must give homework extra
 b. los tres estudiantes que cada profesor LES debe dar tarea extra
 the three students that every professor TO.THEM must give homework extra
 'the three students whom every professor must give extra homework to'
 (Suñer 1998:358)

Abstracting away from semantic or pragmatic uses of resumption, Suñer proposes a syntactic analysis in terms of movement of the pronoun (or of an operator) to Spec,CP depending on the strong or weak pronominal feature of the complementizer.

- (10)a. una mujer que Luis LA llamó
 a woman that Luis HER called
 'a woman that Luis called her'
 b. la mujer a quien Luis llamó
 the woman A whom Luis called
 (Suñer 1998:347)

COMP has a weak feature in (10a) and cannot attract the pronoun to its Specifier, whereas it has a strong feature in (10b) that makes fronting the relative pronoun obligatory.

3 Some descriptive facts about relative clause formation and determination in MC

Relative clause formation -

Let us consider some facts about relative clause formation in MC. It is still an open question whether in realis subordinate clauses (object clauses and relative clauses), a non-overt complementizer can be represented as a null complementizer. I will assume that it is so for the purposes of this paper and will therefore suppose that two forms show up in MC relative clauses: KI 'that, which' or a null complementizer, \emptyset . KI can also act as relative pronoun, as illustrated in the following:

- (11)a. Mala pu suj vit ar sifon.
 M. MOD wipe window with rag
 'Mala will wipe the window pane(s) with a rag.'

- b. Mala bizin enn sifon [_{PP} ar ki]_i pu suj vit t_i.
 M. need one rag with KI MOD wipe window
 ‘Mala needs a rag with which to wipe the window panes.’

The issue of whether KI is a relative pronoun or in the complementizer is still unresolved: for the sake of neutrality, it will be glossed as KI. It has been proposed for French that the difference between *que* (complementizer and relative pronoun) and *qui* (relative pronoun) is not one of category but one of position. Both occupy a position inside the CP projection: *que* is the C head while *qui*, the required form when the subject is relativised, is in Spec, CP (see Kayne (1975:128)).

- (12)a. Le colloque [_{CP} [C *que*]] j’ai raté. ‘The conference that I missed’
 b. Le colloque [_{CP} *qui* [C \emptyset]] a lieu demain. ‘The conference that takes place tomorrow’

The distribution of KI vs. null-C is the subject of current research: Alleesaib and Henri (to appear) study KI-omission in subject relativisation contexts: they find that it is maintained to avoid structural ambiguity and that its use is related to determiner choice. While KI is optional with a noun phrase which is definite and demonstrative, it is preferred whenever the noun phrase is indefinite and a restrictive reading is intended.

- (13) Bann zenes ^{??}(ki) ena kas roul bel loto.
 PL youth KI have money drive big car
 (i) ‘(Those) youths who are rich drive big cars.’
 (ii) ‘(The/those) youths, who are rich, drive big cars.’

The authors do not study resumption, yet we might assume for the purposes of this paper that KI is obligatory when an RP is used (more speaker judgements are required to confirm this intuition):

- (14)a. [_{DP} Sa tifi * \emptyset /ki Zan inn avoj li
 DEM girl C Z. PERF send 3SG
 Lit. ‘The girl that John sent (her)'
 b. [_{DP} Sa tifi \emptyset /ki Zan inn avoj t_i
 DEM girl C Z. PERF send
 Lit. ‘The girl (that) John sent
 enn letdamur la] pu gagn problem.
 one loveletter DET MOD get problem
 a love-letter will get into trouble.’

Determiners and noun phrases –

Since it has been suggested by Suñer that RPs are more common in Spanish for indefinites than for definites, it might be worthwhile to look at the use of RPs with different types of noun phrases in MC. Bare nouns are found in argument position and, according to the context, trigger different interpretations; otherwise, regular indefinite noun phrases are also found.

- (15) Mari pe manz letsi.
 M. PROG eat litchi
 ‘Mary is eating litchi(s).’

MC has a determiner LA, described as a ‘proximal suffix’ by Baker (1976) and as a definite determiner by Déprez (2001, 2006) whose position is strictly postnominal as shown in (16):

(16)pye la
 tree DET
 ‘the tree (that you know)’

A demonstrative determiner also exists in MC: it is made up of the prenominal demonstrative element SA that obligatorily selects LA.

(17)sa pye la
 DEM tree DET
 ‘that tree’

These two determiners are important in that LA occurs at the right of the relativised DP. LA and SA ... LA determine the whole DP *zānfān ki pe dormi* ‘child that is sleeping’ in the next examples.

(18)Lev [DP zānfān ki pe dormi la].
 wake child C PROG sleep DET
 ‘Wake up the child that’s sleeping.’
 (19)Lev [DP sa zānfān ki pe dormi la].
 wake DEM child C PROG sleep DET
 ‘Wake up that child who is sleeping.’

4 NP and PP resumption in MC relative clauses

This section aims at illustrating the specific interpretation linked to resumption, which, as mentioned above, is analysed by Erteschik-Shir (1992) a restrictive focus interpretation. A difference in interpretation, she argues, means that RPs cannot be conceived as a purely surface phenomenon, as illustrated by Shlonsky’s (1992) ‘last resort’ view. In the rest of this study, the term ‘specificity effect’ will be used as shorthand for this particular type of interpretation.

This study does not include the use of ‘processor’ or ‘intrusive’ pronouns, which are pronouns inserted to counteract island or embedding effects. It has been suggested that extraction out of islands cannot be saved by the insertion of an RP (Alexopoulou & Keller 2007): resolving this issue is out of the scope of this paper. The following table, based on the Noun Accessibility Hierarchy (Keenan & Comrie 1977), summarises the positions where gaps and RPs may occur in non-embedded relatives:

Position	Gap	RP
Subject	+	*
Direct object	+	*/%+
Recipient object	+	+
Prepositional Phrases	+	+
Genitive	*	+
Object of comparison	*	+

Table 1: The distribution of gaps and resumptive pronouns in relative clauses

Table 1 shows that RPs are obligatory when genitive and objects of comparison are relativised. On the other hand, RPs are banned from subject position and for a certain number of speakers, from the object position too. Prepositional phrases are either pied-piped or are used with a resumptive, as we will see below. Specificity effects are claimed to arise when both a gap and an RP are possible, in which case they contrast in terms of semantic interpretation. Here is a brief recapitulation of the different proposals that have been made about specificity and resumption.

- RPs are felicitous when an individual is selected out a contextually given group (restrictive interpretation).
- RPs block the concept interpretation
- RPs are obligatorily linked to wide scope reading of the antecedent
- Specificity effects cannot be observed for PPs (in Hebrew)

In the rest of this section, I examine three of these claims and I shall leave ‘wide scope’ effects for the next section.

I hope to show that the ‘restrictive focus’ interpretation is triggered by the use of an RP. The first construction I examine is direct object relativisation where both a gap and an RP are available.

- (20)a. Avi inn resi zwenn [_{DP} sa minis (ki) li ti pe rode t_i la].
 A. PFV succeed meet DEM minister KI 3SG PST PROG search DET
 ‘Avi could meet the Minister (that) he was looking for’ (no reference is made to other Ministers)
 [Among the Ministers of the Cabinet,]
- b. Avi inn resi zwenn
 A. PFV succeed meet
 [_{DP} sa minis ki li ti pe rod li_i la].
 DEM minister KI 3SG PST PROG search 3SG DET
 ‘Avi could meet the Minister (that) he was looking for him’ (among other ministers)

In the context that Avi met the Minister of Agriculture, the relative containing the RP implies that Avi was looking to meet just him. The relative with a gap does not say anything about the other ministers: information about whether he had been looking for other ministers is not available. This contrast provides support for the ‘restrictive focus’ view of specificity.

Recipient object relativisation is the next context: MC has double object constructions, and the expected order consists of the recipient NP occurring before the direct object as illustrated in (21).

- (21)a. Avi inn donn enn misje sigaret.
 A. PFV give one man cigarette
 ‘Avi gave a man a cigarette/ cigarettes.’

Both a gap and an RP are possible strategies in the relativisation of a recipient object.

(22) Recipient object relativisation

- a. Li mem [DP sa misje_i ki Avi inn donn t_i sigaret la].
 3SG self DEM man C A. PFV give 3SG cigarette DET
 Lit. ‘This is the man that Avi gave a cigarette.’ (presence of other men not implied)
 [In the context of more than one man]
- b. Li mem [DP sa misje_i ki Avi inn donn li_i sigaret la].
 3SG self DEM man C A. PFV give 3SG cigarette DET
 Lit. ‘This is the man that Avi gave him a cigarette.’ (the others are excluded)

As for object relativisation, we find that use of an RP presupposes that a set of individuals is given, out of which one is selected and contrasted with the others: (22b) has to be interpreted such that the cigarette was given to that one individual and not to the others.

A second claim that has been made is that a resumptive blocks the ‘concept’ reading, a claim rejected by Erteschik-Shir for Hebrew on the basis that certain contexts might legitimate this reading (see (4) above). As shown in (23), resumption in MC blocks the concept reading, contrasting in this respect with Hebrew:

- (23) Sak boug pou trov fam ki li pe rod li la.
 Each man IRR find woman KI 3SG PROG look 3SG DET
 (i) ‘Each man will find the (specific) woman that he is looking for her.’
 (ii) * a woman with certain properties

Resumption seems to be tied to a strictly specific interpretation and to be restricted to existentially quantified noun phrases.

I now turn to specificity in cases of PP relativisation: recall that the obligatoriness of PP resumptives in Hebrew (see 7) is an argument for saying that specificity effects are weakened in cases of obligatory resumption (Bianchi 2007). Relativisation of PPs is done in a number of ways in MC: some prepositions only admit one strategy, some two and some three. I start by illustrating the fact that PP relativisation involves more than one strategy: in some cases, an in-situ PP containing a resumptive may alternate with a pied-piped PP. When a PP whose head is *lor* ‘on’ is relativised, for instance, it can be either pied-piped or remain in-situ with an RP.

- (24)a. [DP Sa size_i **lor** *(ki) Minta pe travaj t_i la] pe fatig li.
 DEM topic on KI M. PROG work DET PROG tire 3SG
 ‘The topic on which Minta is working wearies her.’
- b. [DP Sa size_i (ki) Minta pe travaj **lor** la_i la] pe fatig li.
 DEM topic KI M. PROG tire on LA DET PROG tire 3SG
 Lit. ‘Among the topics, the one that Minta is working on it wearies her.’

In (24a), KI functions as a relative pronoun and cannot be deleted. (24b) involves a proform with a locative meaning (LA) which occurs in the extraction position of the antecedent. The above examples contrast with respect to the restrictive focus meaning, since the interpretation of (24b) presupposes a given set of topics but not (24a), a result that is consistent with what has been observed for DP relativisation. Other prepositions, such as

kuma ‘like’ exemplified here, cannot undergo pied-piping, but instead must occur with an RP (25a). This is the type of context where one can test whether specificity effects are weakened.

- (25)a. [_{DP} Sa aktris_i (ki) Devi abij parej kuma *(**li**_i) la] apel Malika.
 DEM actress KI D. dress same like 3SG DET name M.
 Lit. ‘The actress that Devi dresses like her is named Malika.’
- b. * [_{DP} Sa aktris_i kuma ki Devi abij parej la] apel Malika.
 DEM actress like KI D. dress same DET name M.
 ‘The actress like whom Devi dresses is named Malika.’

Indeed, the interpretation of (25a) does not require that a set of actresses be given out of which a particular one is selected. The generalisation whereby specificity effects in instances of obligatory resumption are weakened holds in MC too.

5 Types of noun phrases and resumption

One of the crucial points made by Suñer is the availability of resumptives for indefinite antecedents in Spanish, thereby raising the question of noun phrase determination and its effect(s) on resumption. I first examine resumption possibilities with cardinal noun phrases, bare nouns, quantified noun phrases and then turn to DPs determined by specific LA.

One of the issues concerning resumption is the availability of a narrow scope reading for resumptives: recall that Suñer (1998) has argued against Doron (1984) that such a reading is available for Spanish RPs. I test this claim for MC resumptives with cardinal DPs, which in non-resumptive contexts, can have either reading.

- (26)a. *Amenn [_{DP} de diskur ki sak profeser bizin fer **zot**_i].
 Bring two speech KI each professor must make 3PL
 Lit. Bring two speeches that each professor must make them.’
- b. Amenn [_{DP} de diskur ki sak profeser bizin fer **t**_i].
 ‘Bring two speeches that each professor must make.’

The gap relative in (26b) can have a reading where each professor makes any two speeches or one where the same two speeches are made by each professor, but the resumptive alternative is not available. This is a constraint against resumptives in relative clauses that are not separated from the antecedent by a subordinate clause.

- (27) Donn mwaenn gato ki Mama inn kwi { \emptyset /***li**}.
 Give me a cake that Mother PERF cook 3SG
 ‘Give me a cake that Mother has made.’

MC patterns differently from Spanish in disallowing RPs for cardinal DPs.

In MC, determinerless or bare nouns in object position are only allowed a narrow scope reading; they are also number-neutral (or number-deficient). While a bare noun can be relativised, it cannot be replaced by an RP in the extracted position, just like for cardinal DPs.

- (28)a. Misie Binda bizin koriz devwar_i ki li inn ramase t_i.
 Mister B. need mark homework KI 3SG PERF collect

- b. *Misie Binda bizin koriz devwar_i ki li inn ramas zot_i.
 MisterB. need mark homework KI 3SG PERF collect 3PL
 ‘Mister Binda has to mark (the) homework he has collected.’

In (28a), the bare noun is interpreted as ‘an unspecified quantity of homework’. Either because of the deficiency in number, or the narrow-scope reading, the RP cannot be used in the extraction position (28b).

Next, I look at quantified noun phrases: while it is claimed that such noun phrases are open to a bound variable reading with their RP in Spanish, they do not admit a resumptive in MC.

- (29)a. *[_{DP} Sak sofer (ki) mo inn donn li_i enn laman] inn rod lager.
 each driver C 1SG PERF give 3SG one fine PERF search fight
 Lit. ‘Among all the drivers, each driver that I gave him a fine wanted to pick a fight.’
 b. [_{DP} Sak sofer (ki) mo inn donn t_i enn laman] inn rod lager.
 Lit. ‘Each driver that I gave him a fine wanted to pick a fight.’

It had been claimed that negatively quantified antecedents could not have an RP in their extraction position in Hebrew (Shlonsky, 1992) but could do so in Spanish (Suñer 1998: 357). In the following, we can see that MC does not admit resumption in such contexts.

- (30)a. *Pa ena [_{DP} personn_i (ki) to kav fer li_i konfjans].
 NEG have nobody KI 2SG can do 3SG trust
 b. Pa ena [_{DP} personn_i (ki) to kav fer t_i konfjans].
 Lit. ‘There is nobody you can trust.’

It seems evident that a distinction should be made between Spanish resumptives on the one hand, and MC ones on the other. In the former, RPs may have narrow scope reading and their antecedent may be negatively quantified. In contrast, MC resumptives may not have indefinite antecedents, and, in addition, when they occur, they trigger a restrictive focus interpretation. Their different status in each case argues against a single analysis of resumptives. Suñer’s description of Spanish facts supports a syntactic account of resumptives, but the constraints that have been identified for MC point to a pragmatic account¹.

In the investigation about noun phrase type and resumption, a legitimate question is the interaction between the interpretive effect of resumptives and ‘definite’ determiner LA, an issue that has not been investigated in the studies of LA.

Recall that LA occurs to the right of all the elements inside the noun phrase, including the relative clause. In the following sentences, I look at the different interpretations obtained when LA and an RP are used for an object noun phrase, separately and when combined. An informal semantic representation is provided for ease of exposition.

- (31)a. Sak garson pu truv [_{DP} tifi (ki) li pe rode t_i].
 each boy IRR find girl KI 3SG PROG search
 ‘Each boy will find whatever girl(s) he is looking for.’
 a’. $\forall(x) [\text{boy}(x) \rightarrow \exists y [\text{girl}(y) \wedge \text{search}(x,y) \wedge \text{find}(x,y)]]$

¹ Hebrew allows indefinite antecedents for RPs, but possible differences in interpretation is not treated by Erteschik-Shir whose examples are always definite.

- b. *Sak garson pu trov [DP tifi_i (ki) li pe rod li_i].
 ‘Each boy will find the girl he is looking for her.’
- c. Sak garson pu trov [DP tifi (ki) li pe rode t_i la].
 each boy IRR find girl C 3SG PROG search DET
 ‘Each boy will find the one girl he is looking for.’
- c'. $\forall(x)$ [boy (x) \rightarrow find (x, ty [girl(y) \wedge look (x,y)])]
- d. *Sak garson pu trov [DP tifi (ki) li pe rod li_i la].
 ‘Each boy will find the girl he is looking for her.’(specific only)
- e. Raj inn trov [DP tifi_i li ti pe rod li_i la].
 Raj PERF find girl 3SG PAST PROG search 3SG DET
 ‘Raj has found the girl that he was looking for.’
- e'. $\exists T$ [T \subset girl \rightarrow find (r, ty [T(y) \wedge search (r,y)])]

In (31a), *tifi* is non-specific (in the absence of LA) and, like other bare nouns in MC, it is number neutral. For all boys, if x is a boy, there is at least one girl such that he is looking for her and that he will find her. Sentence (31b) is ungrammatical: it may be explained by the constraint prohibiting resumption for bare nouns. In (31c), we have a gap and Det LA: LA produces a singular interpretation, represented here by the ‘iota’ operator. For all boys, if x is a boy, he will find the one girl that he is looking for. With LA, it is understood in (31c) that he is looking for one girl. Notice that the existential quantifier does not have wide scope over the universal quantifier in this sentence. Sentence (31d) has both LA and the RP combined and is unacceptable, but contrasts with grammatical (31e) which has the following interpretation: there exists a set of girls T which is a subset of all the girls in the world such that Raj has found that one girl (y) and that girl is part of the set of girls (T) and Raj was looking for her. Note that any modifying the TMA marking of either verb does not make (31d) acceptable: combining an RP and a determiner gives a noun phrase that is interpreted existentially, and as such, is no longer indefinite such that it can no longer be interpreted with respect to a quantified noun phrase.

In this section, we have seen that resumptives in MC cannot have indefinite antecedents in contrast to Spanish and possibly Hebrew. This has been tested for cardinal DPs, quantified noun phrases and bare nouns. Moreover, combining the ‘definite’ determiner and a resumptive is possible and that the resulting interpretation is obligatorily definite. If that is so, one has to explain why the presence of LA does not trigger a definite interpretation on its own: LA although linked to definiteness does not prevent the gap from having a variable interpretation.

7 Summary and conclusions

I have explored the idea that the gap vs. resumptive alternation in a certain number of contexts is due to a difference in interpretation possibilities. While it is often admitted that the referent is interpreted as being specific, it is still not clear what causes this particular interpretation. Some approaches to this problem are semantic, others are more pragmatically oriented: in semantic terms, the alternation may be viewed in terms of the *de re* and *de dicto* interpretation, RPs being banned from having a *de dicto* interpretation. That RP antecedents have an obligatory wide scope reading has also been proposed. Other constraints that have been pointed out that are related to the semantic properties of resumption are a prohibition against a bound variable reading for RPs and a ban against negatively quantified antecedents.

Evaluating these claims has not been possible in MC because RPs are not allowed to have indefinite antecedents (in which I include bare nouns). A pragmatic approach which views specificity as the selection of one (or more) referents among a given set, the so-called 'restrictive focus' reading provides a plausible characterisation of the type of interpretation triggered by MC resumptives. This study finally deals with the interaction between resumptives and the definite determiner *la*: while a more detailed study is needed in order to tease apart the different nuances of meaning that each contributes, it can already be seen that LA contributes towards definiteness and that the RP is linked to specificity.

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