CHAPTER 8

Right Peripheral Domains, Deixis and Information Structure in Southern Quechua*

Liliana Sánchez

1 Introduction

In many languages, the linguistic expression of information structure (new, old, shared information and the current topic of discourse in a sentence) may be grammaticalized at the phonology/syntax interface (Donati and Nespor 2003, Nespor and Vogel 1986, Pereltsvaig 2004, Selkirk 1984, Zubizarreta 1998), at the syntax component (Horvath 1986, Vallduvi 1995), or at the syntax/morphology interface (Cinque 1999, Sánchez 2010, Speas 2004). In Southern Quechua varieties spoken in Peru, there are overt morphological markers that indicate whether a constituent is a main topic in discourse, new information (focus) and/or provides the hearer with the source of information (direct evidence or hearsay), a grammatical characteristic also known as evidentiality. These markers appear mostly on constituents at the left edge of sentences (Cerrón Palomino 1987, Muysken 1995, Sánchez 2010) and very rarely on constituents at the right edge of sentences (Sánchez 2010). In this paper, I analyze the information status and syntactic status of right margin or right dislocated constituents (RDCs) in Southern Quechua, a verb final language characterized by a canonical Subject Object Verb (SOV) word order. I also analyze the deictic nature of RDCs in discourse.

The following examples illustrate two types of sentences in Southern Quechua: (1) a sentence with canonical SOV word order and (2) one with a left margin, morphologically marked constituent and an RDC.1

Canonical SOV sentence:

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*I use the term Southern Quechua to refer to the Quechua varieties spoken in the Southern Andes of Peru that belong to the Quechua II subgroup (Torero 1964).

1 Following Sánchez (2010) I use pst.rep and pst.att for the reportative past and the attested past respectively to indicate that these are tenses that express syncretism in tense and evidentiality values.
In sentence (1), no constituent is morphologically marked as a topic, as focus or as having hearsay or direct evidentiality values. In sentence (2), the constituent chay-si ‘that way’ at the left margin of the sentence, namely outside the SOV domain, is marked with the suffix -si that has a focus and a second hand or reportative information interpretation. The constituent pichinkuchata ‘the birdy’ appears in a postverbal position at the right margin of the sentence and also outside the SOV domain. Notice that it is not morphologically marked to indicate its information status as the topic of discourse or as new information.

In Sánchez (2010), the issue of the discourse role of these RDCs was raised and the hypothesis was put forth that, while left margin constituents are morphologically marked because in Quechua there is a high degree of grammaticalization of discourse and speaker-oriented aspects of the sentence such as topic, focus and evidentiality, right margin constituents are not morphologically marked because they do not fulfill those specific grammaticalized discourse functions. Instead, they serve the functions of disambiguating between potentially competing topics or referring to a previously mentioned element that is not the main topic of discourse. In order to find further evidence for that initial proposal and to develop a better understanding of the types of RDCs found in Quechua, in this paper I explore the following research questions:

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2 The spelling in this chapter follows the standardization efforts proposed in Cerrón-Palomino (1994). Cerrón-Palomino proposes a more conservative approach to Quechua spelling using the form -chka in writing for the progressive suffix, which is pronounced differently across Southern varieties.

3 Throughout the paper, right dislocated constituents will appear bracketed.