The quest for syntactic dependency. Sentential complementation in Sign Language of the Netherlands
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The previous adventure surely was a good start. As expected we have not yet reached the goal of our quest, but the findings hint that we are on the right track. This gives us fresh courage for the next adventure. Will it confirm the evidence that we have already found? And will we find new clues that will bring us closer to our goal?

4.1 Introduction
As discussed in chapter 2, in the literature on complex sentences in ASL, the occurrence of pronominal right dislocation is proposed as a means to distinguish between subordinate and coordinate clausal relationships (Liddell 1980, Padden 1988). This phenomenon is also called (subject) pronoun copy in the literature. In chapter 2 I questioned the diagnostic suitability of pronominal right dislocation with regard to syntactic dependency between clauses. Nevertheless, I investigated this phenomenon in NGT complement constructions to see whether these reservations are justified, and to find out if, and how, NGT might differ in this respect from ASL.

4.2 The distribution of pronominal right dislocation
For ASL, Liddell (1980) and Padden (1988) showed that in complex sentences a pronoun copy of the main clause subject can be right dislocated at the end of the complex sentence. Thus, if the complex sentence consists of a main clause followed by a subordinate clause, the copy appears after the embedded clause (see the pronoun copy in boldface in (1a)), and not at the end of the main clause, that is between the main and embedded clause. If the complex sentence
contains a succession of main clauses, the copy of an argument of the first main clause appears at the end of that clause, thus between the main clauses (see the copy in boldface in (1b); here the original subject INDEX normally occurring in preverbal position has been dropped).

(1) a. INDEX DECIDE, INDEX SHOULD, DRIVE, SEE CHILDREN, INDEX.
   'I decided he ought to drive over to see his children, I did.'

b. HIT, INDEX, INDEX TATTLE MOTHER, INDEX.
   'I hit him, I did and he told his mother, he did.'
   (ASL; Padden 1988:88, exx.19 and 17; boldface is mine)

Not much is known about pronominal right dislocation in complex sentences in NGT. Bos (1995) only briefly discusses pronominal right dislocation in complex sentences with embedded clauses. She concludes that the copy of the main clause subject appears between the clauses of the complex sentence (see her example (16), repeated here as (2)). However, embroidering on the discussion in chapter 2, it was not at all clear at the time that Bos wrote her article whether the syntactic relation between the clauses in her example is one of subordination.

\[
\text{SEE INDEX}_1 \text{ PU}_2 \text{ NOT-YET: REMEMBER}[^+] \text{ INDEX}_2 \text{ PU}
\]
\['I see that you still don't remember (how the computer works).'
\]
\[(NGT; Bos 1995:132, ex.16; boldface is mine)\]

In the previous chapter it has been established that acquisition of knowledge predicates like to see in (2) take a syntactic complement clause (the predicate to see in example (2) is used in the sense of indirect perception, that is, something is inferred from information that is perceived through the senses, cf. Dik & Hengeveld 1991). Bos's statement that in NGT complex sentences with an embedded clause the pronominal right dislocation occurs at the end of the matrix clause can now be judged at its true value.

Indeed, my data confirm Bos's statement that pronominal right dislocated elements that are coreferential with an element in the main clause appear
directly after that main clause, as can be seen in (3); the pronoun copies are in boldface. There is an example with a complement-taking predicate from all investigated classes. The examples (3a'-i') show that, if this right dislocated element appears at the end of the embedded, or second clause, the sentence is ungrammatical. For example, in (3a) the subject copy POINT_right appears directly after the main clause, here after the verb to want. In (3a') the subject copy POINT_left occurs after the embedded clause HOUSE signer GO TO neutral space and the sentence is considered ungrammatical. The data also corroborate the assumption that pronominal right dislocation is not a useful tool in NGT to discriminate between syntactic subordination and coordination, because it will always occur at the end of the clause in which its coreferential argument is found, irrespective of whether a subordinated or coordinated clause follows.\(^2\)\(^3\)

\[
(3) \ a. \\
\text{\textbf{INGE} \ \text{POINT\_right} \ \text{WANT} \ \text{POINT\_right}} \\
\text{\textbf{MAN} \ \text{POINT\_left} \ \text{PRESENT} \ \text{PLACEGIVE\_PRESENT\_right}}
\]

'Inge wants the man to give her a present.'

\(^1\) Note that for the complement-taking predicates to ask and to tell it is not yet clear whether their semantic complement clause is syntactically embedded (see chapter 3, section 3.3.9).

\(^2\) I came across three sentences in NGT in which the copied pronoun of the main clause subject is positioned after the second clause (see (i); only the glosses are given and the pronoun copies are in bold). Although these three sentences are not considered fully grammatical by the informants, they are not judged as fully ungrammatical either. I have no explanation for these constructions at the moment.

\[
(\ i \ ) \ a. \ ?\text{POINT\_right INGE LIKE POINT\_addresssee PRESENT addressseeGIVE\_PRESENT\_left} \\
\text{POINT\_right} \\
'\text{Inge likes you to give her (=Inge) a present.'} \\
b. \ ?\text{GIRL POINT\_right KNOW ORANGES HEALTHY} \text{POINT\_right} \\
'\text{The girl knows that oranges are healthy.'} \\
c. \ ?\text{POINT\_right INGE BELIEVE GOBLINS EXIST} \text{POINT\_right} \\
'\text{Inge believes that goblins exist.'}
\]

\(^3\) In (3f) and (3g) the signer localises the subject to his right by gazing to that location during the expression of this sign (and the following ones). In (3h') the subject is localised to the signer's left by the subject agreement of the verb to ask that is made at this location.
a.

*POINT \text{left} \quad \text{WANT} \quad \text{HOUSE} \quad \text{signer GO TO neutral space} \quad \text{POINT \text{left}}

He wants to go home.

b.

\underline{\text{neg}}

POINT \text{right} \quad \text{signer SEE neutral space} \quad \text{POINT \text{right}}

She does not see that he is not going home.

b.'

*\text{INGE} \quad \text{POINT \text{right}} \quad \text{signer SEE \text{left}} \quad \text{BOY} \quad \text{POINT \text{left}}

Inge sees the boy dancing.
c. *INGE  \*LIKE  \*POINT\_right

\*POINT\_left  \*PRESENT  \*leftGIVE.PRESENT\_right

'Inge likes (the fact) that he gives her, a present.'

c.'

*INGE \*LIKE  *POINT\_right

\*MAN  \*leftVISIT\_signer  \*POINT\_right

'Inge likes (the fact) that the man visits me.'

d.4

JOHAN  ILL  THE.TWO.OF.US  PRETEND  THE.TWO.OF.US

'As for Johan being ill, the two of us pretend this.'

d.'

*THE.TWO.OF.US  PRETEND  JOHAN  ILL  THE.TWO.OF.US

'The two of us pretend that Johan is ill.'

\*In this sentence, the potential subordinated clause is topicalised.
e. 

```
\[ \begin{array}{c}
\text{MARIJKE} \\
\text{POINT}_\text{right} \\
\text{KNOW} \\
\text{POINT}_\text{right}
\end{array} \]
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**POINT**\_signer ITALY \_signer-GO-TO \_neutral space

'Inge knows that I am going to Italy.'

e.'

```
\[ \begin{array}{c}
\text{MARIJKE} \\
\text{POINT}_\text{right} \\
\text{KNOW} \\
\text{POINT}_\text{right}
\end{array} \]
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\[ \begin{array}{c}
\text{INGE} \\
\text{POINT}_\text{left} \\
\text{left-COME}\_\text{signer} \\
\text{POINT}_\text{right}
\end{array} \]

'Marijke knows that Inge comes to me.'

f. 

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\[ \begin{array}{c}
\text{POINT}_\text{right} \\
\text{INGE} \\
\text{BELIEVE} \\
\text{POINT}_\text{right}
\end{array} \]
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**POINT**\_signer signer-VISIT left

'Inge believes that I visit him.'
f. ‘Inge believes that goblins exist.’

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Inge believes that goblins exist.
'Inge asks me if the two of us going home.'

'Inge asks me if he two of us going home.'

'The girl, says that her, grandmother is having her, birthday.'

'Inge tells the woman that the cat is gone.'
As Bos (1995) already suggested, arguments from the embedded clause can also be right dislocated. Examples of this for all investigated classes of complement-taking predicates are given in (4); again, the pronoun copies are in boldface. For example, in (4a) the pronoun copy $\text{POINT}_{\text{right}}$ of the embedded clause subject $\text{MAN}$ $\text{POINT}_{\text{right}}$ is right dislocated at the end of the embedded clause of *to want*.

(4)  

(a)  

\[ \text{INGE} \quad \text{POINT}_{\text{left}} \quad \text{WANT} \quad \text{MAN} \quad \text{POINT}_{\text{right}} \]  

$\text{PRESENT} \quad \text{rightGIVE.PRESENT}_{\text{left}} \quad \text{POINT}_{\text{right}}$  

'Inge wants the man to give her a present.'

(b)  

\[ \text{THE.TWO.OF.US} \quad \text{see}_{\text{left}} \quad \text{MAN} \quad \text{POINT}_{\text{left}} \]  

\[ \text{BOOK} \quad \text{STEAL} \quad \text{POINT}_{\text{left}} \]  

'The two of us see the man stealing a book.'
c. INGE \hspace{0.5cm} \text{point right} \hspace{0.5cm} \text{like} \hspace{0.5cm} \text{point left} \hspace{0.5cm} \text{present}

\text{left give, present right} \hspace{0.5cm} \text{point left}

"Inge, likes (the fact) that he gives her, a present."

d. \text{point signer} \hspace{0.5cm} \text{pretend} \hspace{0.5cm} | \hspace{0.5cm} \text{point signer} \hspace{0.5cm} \text{man} \hspace{0.5cm} \text{person signer}

\text{point signer}

"I pretend that I am a man."

e. GIRL \hspace{0.5cm} \text{point right} \hspace{0.5cm} \text{know} \hspace{0.5cm} \text{oranges} \hspace{0.5cm} \text{point left}

\text{healthy} \hspace{0.5cm} \text{point left}

"The girl knows that oranges are healthy."
f. WOMAN → BELIEVE

[ POINT_right → PREGNANT → POINT_right ]

'The woman believes that she is pregnant.'

g. POINT_signer → DOUBT → POINT_opposite_of_signer → APPOINTMENT

RIGHT → POINT_opposite_of_signer

'I doubt whether the appointment is right.'

h. INGE → POINT_right → right:ASK_signer → THE.TWO.OF.US

signer.GO.HOME_neutered_space → THE.TWO.OF.US

'Inge asks me if the two of us are going home.'
The combination of a right dislocation of a main clause argument at the end of the matrix clause and a right dislocation of an embedded or second clause argument after the embedded or second clause are possible too in one sentence, as shown in (5); the pronoun copies are again in boldface. For example, in sentence (5a), with the complement-taking predicate *to like*, the pronoun \textit{POINT\_right} immediately after the matrix clause is a copy of the main clause subject \textit{INGE POINT\_right}, and the embedded clause subject \textit{POINT\_left} is copied and right dislocated after the embedded clause.

(5) a.  

\textit{'Inge, likes (the fact) that he gives her, a present.'}
Right dislocation in spoken languages is considered colloquial speech by most users (Askedal 1987:93, Bos 1995:123). This also seems to be the case for pronominal right dislocation in NGT. A nice illustration that this is probably so is that most of the sentences in (3)-(5) come from tests other than the test in which complex sentences with pronominal right dislocations had to be judged. In this latter test sentences with pronominal right dislocation equivalent to the sentences in (3) were often considered highly informal or even ungrammatical. Nonetheless, comparable complex sentences with pronominal right dislocations were used by the signers quite often in other tests, when they were apparently not aware of this. It is worth noting that there is considerable variation among the signers with respect to the frequency in using this construction. Some signers use pronominal right dislocation quite often, others far less frequently.
In this light it may be interesting to say a few words on the function of pronominal right dislocation. It is not entirely clear at this moment under what (pragmatic) circumstances (pronominal) right dislocation can be used in NGT. This holds too for right dislocation in spoken languages. Most signed language studies state that the function of right dislocation is emphatic (Padden 1988, Wilbur 1994, Bos 1995:fn.11). According to Bos this is not the case for NGT. Her arguments are the following. In the first place, Bos observes that the pronoun copy is produced in such a way that there is no indication of stress, that is there is no intonational break between the sentence and the right dislocated pronoun, and this pronoun is articulated like other pronouns in other positions in the sentence. However, Wilbur (1994) had already argued that it is precisely the doubling that creates the stress, but this argument does not hold in sentences as (1b) and (2) above where the subject itself is non-overt. It is more likely that the non-canonical sentence- or clause-final position itself might induce emphasis (cf. Petronio 1991 and (implicitly) Neidle et al. 2000).

In the second place, Bos states that there is nothing in the pragmatics and semantics of the sentences with pronominal right dislocation that would justify an emphatic function. However, Bos’s data come from tests in which the informants participated in pairs (Bos 1995:124) and had (elicited) conversations with each other. It might well be the case that the emphasis is meant to help the addressee characterise the most important argument of the proposition. If this is so, the test situation Bos used forms the right context for pronominal right dislocation. Thus, not the structure of the sentences but the pragmatic situation in which the sentences were expressed might induce the emphatic function. This function could also explain the informal character of right dislocation. However, since in the present study most sentences were offered and judged in isolation, more research needs to be done before anything conclusive can be said about the function of pronominal right dislocation.

In the third place, Bos remarks that pronominal right dislocation occurs too often in her corpus to be explained as emphasis. Given Bos’s test situation, the suggestion made above that the emphasis of right dislocation might facilitate the identification of the important argument of a proposition, might
be an answer to Bos’s objection here as well. In other words, the appearance of pronominal right dislocation in such conversational contexts is to be expected.

In the fourth place, Bos argues that, if the function of pronominal right dislocation is emphatic, right dislocation of objects would also be expected to occur. This is not possible in NGT, according to her. By making this statement Bos simply ignores the 29 cases presented in her table 2 (Bos 1995:125) in which the object is doubly expressed. That pronominal right dislocation of objects is possible, too, is demonstrated in (6). In (6a) the indirect object POINT_left of the embedded clause is copied and right dislocated. In sentences (6b-c), it is the direct object that is copied and right dislocated, POINT_right and POINT_left, respectively.

(6) a.

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{INGE} & & \text{POINT}_\text{left} & & \text{WANT} & & \text{FRIEND} & & \text{POINT}_\text{right} \\
\begin{array}{c}
\text{PRESENT} \\
\text{left GIVE PRESENT} \text{right}
\end{array} & & \text{POINT}_\text{right} \\
\end{align*}
\]

‘Inge wants to give the friend a present.’

b.

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{POINT}_\text{signer} & & \text{POINT}_\text{right} & & \text{WANT} & & \text{POINT}_\text{right} \\
\end{align*}
\]

‘I want that.’
However, it is true that pronominal right dislocation of objects does not occur as often as pronominal right dislocation of subjects.\(^5\)\(^6\) Although I have no precise figures, such a tendency can be detected in my corpus as well. If the function of pronominal right dislocation is emphatic, the opposite picture would be expected, that is that objects from which it is generally thought that they provide new information appear in right dislocated position more often than subjects that tend to provide old information. Therefore, Bos has a point here in rejecting the emphatic function of pronominal right dislocation in signed languages. Nonetheless, the function that she proposes (see below) is probably not the right one either.

Bos observes that in her corpus pronominal right dislocation appears more often in the context of non-agreement verbs than in the context of agreement verbs. On this observation Bos bases the conclusion that the function of pronominal right dislocation is to identify the subject of a clause. She supports this conclusion with figures (ibid. 137, table 8): pronominal right dislocation of the subject occurs in 25% of the cases in which there is no subject agreement on the verb, whereas subject pronominal right dislocation occurs in only 12% of the cases in which the verb does have subject agreement. Firstly, it is not at all clear from Bos’s data whether this difference is statistically significant.

\(^5\) Askedal (1987:96) observes this for Norwegian too.
\(^6\) It is very difficult to derive the exact figures on pronominal right dislocation from Bos’s tables, since these are quite opaque. But her corpus contains 3041 main clauses (Bos 1995:125) of which 358 clauses contain a double expression of the subject and 29 clauses a double expression of an object (ibid. table 2).
Moreover, the fact that in Bos’s corpus in 25% of the cases in which there is no subject agreement there is subject pronominal right dislocation, still leaves us with a majority of the cases (75%) in which there is no subject agreement and also no subject pronominal right dislocation.

I think there is reason to question the emphatic function of pronominal right dislocation in signed languages, because of the far higher frequency of subject pronominal right dislocation as opposed to object pronominal right dislocation. But at the same time, Bos did not give conclusive evidence to justify her proposal for the function of pronominal right dislocation. Therefore, more research needs to be done to find out what the function of pronominal right dislocation is, which unfortunately goes beyond the reaches of this study.

To return to the subject of this section, the distribution of pronominal right dislocation in NGT complement constructions, the data showed that it differs considerably from the same phenomenon in ASL in that the right dislocated copy in NGT occurs directly after the clause it belongs to, whether this clause is a main or an embedded clause. For this reason pronominal right dislocation cannot be used as a diagnostic to distinguish subordinate and coordinate clausal relationships in complex sentences in NGT.

4.3 Analyses of right dislocation

Before moving on to another test in the next chapter, I would like to go briefly into two proposed analyses of right dislocation, since these remain, in my view, problematic for pronominal right dislocation in NGT. Neidle et al. (2000:172, fn.9) state that in pronominal right dislocation in ASL the pronoun copy is right-adjointed to (the highest) CP. In (7) this is depicted for Padden’s example from ASL that was already mentioned in (1) above.

(7) [\text{CP} [\text{CP} [\text{INDEX DECIDE} \cdots \text{INDEX SHOULD} \cdots \text{DRIVE} \cdots \text{SEE CHILDREN} \cdots]]]

‘I decided he ought to drive over to see his children, I did.’

(ASL; Padden 1988:88, ex.19; boldface and bracketing is mine)
Such an analysis is not possible for NGT. If the right dislocated pronoun in NGT is right-adjointed to the highest CP, then it is not clear why the NGT sentences in (3a'-i'), with a pronoun copy of the main clause subject after the second clause, are ungrammatical, whereas sentences (3a-i), with the pronoun copy directly after the main clause, are not.

Moreover, in NGT main and (potential) complement clauses the non-manual negation marker can stretch out over the right dislocated pronoun. This is shown in (8) for a main and embedded clause. In (8a) the non-manual negation marker stretches out over the copy POINT_right of the main clause subject INGE POINT_right. In (8b) the negation marker spreads over the pronoun copy POINT_left of the embedded clause subject BOY POINT_left. This means that the right dislocated pronoun is in the e-command domain of the negation of that clause (see chapter 5, section 5.4 for the assumed analysis of negation in complex sentences in this study) and not right-adjointed to the highest CP, where it is certainly outside of this e-command domain.

(8) a.  

\[ \text{INGE} \quad \text{POINT}_{\text{right}} \quad \text{LIKE} \quad \text{POINT}_{\text{right}} \quad \text{POINT}_{\text{left}} \]

\[ \text{PRESENT} \quad \text{GIVE}\_\text{PRESENT}_{\text{right}} \]

'Inge, does not like (the fact) that he gives her, a present.'
Kayne (1994) develops an analysis in which he analyses the "right dislocated" phrase as a complement of the verb in Romance languages, due to his antisymmetry theory in which rightwards movement and rightward adjunction are impossible (see Kayne 1994:78ff. for the details of his analysis). Analysing the "right dislocated" phrase in Romance languages as a complement is possible because the clause contains a coreferential clitic. In NGT, however, the copied element is not a clitic but a referential expression in a canonical argument position. Therefore, it does not seem the right analysis to consider the right dislocated pronoun in NGT as a complement. Unfortunately, it goes beyond the bounds of the present study to explore how pronominal right dislocation in NGT could be analysed. I leave this for future research.