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Right dislocation in Northern England: frequency and use — perception meets reality*

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The process of right dislocation has long been recognized in English as a primarily vernacular feature available to speakers of all varieties, but concrete sociolinguistic discussion about its frequency of occurrence and which factors constrain its use are rare. Moreover, English has variants which repeat the operator either before or after the dislocated NP or pronominal particle, e.g. *She's got a very good degree has Julie*, which makes it unlike most of the languages with comparable right dislocation forms. These variants are either ignored completely in right dislocation literature or considered on their own. The present analysis aims, therefore, to provide a holistic view of right dislocation strategies. Starting with a classification of the various right dislocation strategies used in the North of England, where this variant is most often reported to be found, this paper will present a quantitative analysis of right dislocation in a corpus of York speech. The analysis will demonstrate that, while right dislocation forms are used by York speakers (young and old, male and female), with respect to overall frequency right dislocation is in fact far more rare than reports make

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it out to be, and that its social distribution is rather unexpected in some respects.

Keywords: right dislocation, Yorkshire English, gender, variation, age

1. Introduction

Among the strategies which allow speakers to foreground sections of discourse in English, be it through phonological processes such as stress or through syntactic word order rearrangements, right dislocation, as in (1), is one about which paradoxically much and very little is known.

(1) They keep good time *the cows*. (087)¹

A wealth of studies exist on the syntax of right dislocation and its place within the grammar (Jespersen 1949: 67; Lambrecht 2001; Poutsma 1928: 172; Quirk *et al.* 1984: 1417; Visser 1963: 55; Ward and Birner 1996; Wright 1905: 270; Ziv 1994), as do a number on its pragmatic and discourse functions (Aijmer 1989; Grosz and Ziv 1996; Ward and Birner 1996; Ziv 1994). Research into how it should be taught to non-native speakers (or at least how they should be made aware of the form) is considerable as well (Carter and McCarthy 1995; Carter, Hughes and McCarthy 1998; Cullen and Cuo 2007; Ruehleemann 2006). Numerous also are the studies which examine particular right dislocation forms in specific (mostly Northern English) dialects (either at length: Durham 2007; Melchers 1983; Shorrocks 1984; Timmis 2009, or in passing, among discussions of other dialectal features: Cowling 1915; Hedevid 1967; Petyt 1985; Tidholm 1979). These studies are augmented by a considerable body of work on right dislocation in other languages, particularly French (Ashby 1994; De Cat 2002, 2007; Lambrecht 1981).

Our understanding of right dislocations is nevertheless still limited, in the sense that there is a dearth of research on two fronts. First of all, little is known about the sociolinguistic distribution and overall frequency of use of right dislocations, and secondly the functions and use of the various variants of right dislocation which are available to English speakers have not been fully investigated.

¹ Examples which provide a speaker number, (087) here, come from the York corpus (Tagliamonte 1998). Sentences with no specific mention of corpus / source were created for illustration.

It is well known that the use of pragmatic markers is often tied to age, gender and social class (Andersen 2001; Dailey-O’Cain 2000; Schiffrin 1988), so examining the patterns of use of right dislocations may provide further insight into this field of sociolinguistic research. In terms of frequency of use, it can be very difficult to gauge exactly how frequent “frequent” actually is across studies. This is because some of the right dislocation forms are particularly salient (see Kerswill and Williams 2002 for a discussion of salience) to speakers who do not have those forms in their repertoire. Timmis (2009: 331) signals that across various corpora the frequency ranges between two and 16 right dislocations per 10 000 words, which hardly appears to be very “frequent”.

Another gap in the literature on right dislocation is the disconnect between syntactic and pragmatic analyses of the feature, which generally focus on a single type of right dislocation, and the more dialectological studies, which aim more to present the variants of right dislocation but which do not generally focus on the more formal aspects of the feature. The focus of the former on a single type of right dislocation is noteworthy, because, as will be dealt with below, there are two variants which are possible in all English dialects, as well as a third variant which is said to be primarily geographically restricted to Northern England (although this is far from being completely accurate as will be demonstrated in Sec. 3). It may be that in some dialects, the variants other than the canonical one (as in example 1 above) are simply too infrequent to merit mention, but without a framework to assess what is “normal” with respect to occurrence, it is impossible to assess this properly.

This paper attempts to redress these issues, in that, as well as presenting an in-depth discussion of the three variants of right dislocation in English, it provides an analysis of right dislocations found in the York Corpus of English particularly examining what social factors might affect their use and frequency. Section 2 presents right dislocations, focusing on the variants, while Section 3 focuses on what is known of their historical use. Section 4 introduces the corpus studied. Section 5 presents the results of the analysis of right dislocation tokens and Section 6 provides a discussion and conclusion.

2. Right dislocation forms

Under certain circumstances, sentences such as in (2) can be modified in such a way that the subject NP is moved to the right of the clause and a co-referential pronoun is used in its place within the clause, as in (1) — repeated as (3) below.

This type of structure is called a right dislocation (RD; Lambrecht 2001; Ziv 1994).

- (2) *The cows* keep good time.
- (3) They keep good time *the cows*. (087)

As mentioned previously, right dislocation forms of the type in (1) are attested in a large proportion of the world's languages, and Lambrecht (2001: 1051) notes that "dislocation constructions can be identified in most, if not all, languages of the world, independently of language type and genetic affiliation".

In addition to this, right dislocations should not be considered to be mere instances of sentence repair or afterthoughts as has been suggested in a few cases (Geluykens 1987; Melchers 1983: 62) but rather the assumption that they serve a specific purpose in discourse is crucial to a full understanding of them. Due to their structure and specific intonation patterns (i.e. they "form a single intonation contour with the preceding clause: they are unaccented and not preceded by a pause" [Lambrecht 2001: 1076]), they are clearly differentiated from cases of sentence repair (Lambrecht 2001; Ward and Birner 1996), although, in some instances, their pragmatic function may be to provide "disambiguation" (Aijmer 1989: 148).

Rather, right dislocations "serve to secure the continued attention of an addressee, i.e. to maintain a given relation between a referent and a proposition" (Lambrecht 2001: 1076). They appear in clauses where the element to be dislocated is an "already ratified topic of conversation, given its pragmatic salience in the discourse setting" (Lambrecht 2001: 1073). Ward and Birner (1996: 477) underline the organizational function of right dislocations, noting that "the dislocated NP of right-dislocation is constrained to constitute familiar, discourse-old information in context".

Aijmer (1989: 150), who examined right dislocations in the London-Lund Corpus, found that as well as being used in situations where the information is both hearer and discourse old, right dislocations are "used as a grammaticalized device for creating an affective bond with the hearer". She adds (1989: 153) that

"the speaker uses it in situations in which there is already some common ground. As a result the Tail [i.e. right dislocation] is not used only or mainly to identify a discourse referent, but the speaker uses it with a secondary social function to create intimacy and affection between the participants in the communication situation".²

² An anonymous reviewer pointed out that right dislocations are, of course, not always used with this "common ground" function, particularly in high frequency users of the

The phatic function of right dislocation might have consequences in its distribution across gender, as will be discussed below.

Note that Aijmer (1989) uses the term *tail* where the present study uses *right dislocation*. This synonymy of designations for the construction is the standard in the literature. Right dislocation is referred to by a multitude of other names, both in dialectological and syntactic literature. Quirk *et al.* (1985) use the term *amplificatory tags*, Petyt (1985) examines *emphatic tags*, Melchers (1983) deals with *tag statements*, Wright (1909) and Visser (1963) classify it as *subject repetition*. Finally, in the field of literature on focus, they are sometimes called *tails* (see Aijmer 1989; Timmis 2009). The numerous names given to this construction of course complicate attempts to compare studies to one another.

Alongside the issues of multiple names being given to the structure is the fact that, rather differently from other languages, most varieties of English have an expanded form alongside the “canonical” right dislocation form above, whereby the operator of the clause is also reiterated as in (4) and (5) (Quirk *et al.* 1985: 1417; Timmis 2009: 334).

- (4) Oh he stayed with this other woman John did (003).
- (5) They’re the real country people they are. (054)

Furthermore, some varieties of English have another expanded form, in which the operator of the clause is repeated, but occurs before the NP in the right dislocation rather than after it, as in (6) and (7) (Quirk *et al.*, 1985: 1417; Timmis 2009: 334).

- (6) She was an Irish lady was my grandma. (048)
- (7) We like our walking do me and Dave. (089)

In English, right dislocation forms are said to be “restricted to informal spoken contexts where [they are] very common” (Quirk *et al.* 1985: 1310). Research on the type of right dislocation presented in (6) and (7) suggests that, currently, it is restricted to Northern British dialects (Quirk *et al.* 1985: 1417), particularly to Yorkshire and Lancashire (Hedevind 1967; Melchers 1983; Petyt 1985; Shorrocks 1984; Timmis 2009; Wright 1905). This is despite the fact that this variant is also abundantly found in the work of 19th century authors from areas outside of the North (e.g. Dickens, Eliot, *etc.*), as in (8) and (9) and also occasionally in contemporary authors with no ties to Northern England such as Margaret Atwood and William Boyd (examples 10 and 11).

feature (e.g. Geoff Boycott, a cricket commentator, whose use of right dislocations is a noted feature of his speech)

- (8) And yet he had a sense of injury upon him, too, had Bitherstone. (Charles Dickens, *Dombey and Son*, p. 220)
- (9) He speaks uncommonly well, does Casaubon (George Eliot, *Middlemarch*, p. 62)
- (10) She was quite stuck-up about it, was Helen (Margaret Atwood, *The Penelopiad*, p. 20)
- (11) He always went out with pretty girls, did Ivo (William Boyd, *Ordinary Thunderstorms*, p. 88)³

These three types of right dislocation tend to be grouped under one term, making it more difficult to fully establish what their distribution may be in various studies. Durham (2007) and Timmis (2009), however, separate them and this is done in the present analysis as well. Because this paper considers the feature as right dislocation, it will follow the taxonomy used in Durham (2007), whereby the variants were categorized as standard right dislocation (SRD), as in (12), expanded right dislocation (ERD), as in (13), and reverse right dislocation (RRD), as in (14), respectively. Timmis (2009: 332), who uses the term *tails* throughout, classifies these three variants as noun phrase tails, simple operator tails and inverted operator tails.

- (12) I was a little angel *me* (025)
- (13) He stayed with this other woman *John did* (003)
- (14) She got a great bargain *did her Mum* (034)

3. History and use of right dislocation

A full understanding of the forms' history and appearance in English may also help us explain the distribution of the three variants across space and time. The first attested variant is the standard right dislocation form; this is not unexpected, as it is the variant which is found in all languages that have right dislocation (Lambrecht 2001). Visser (1963: 54) traces its use back to Old English (15).⁴

³ While most of the examples of this right dislocation form in literature are in direct speech, some form part of the narration.

⁴ Note however that Visser found no attestations of this form from 1450 until the end of the eighteenth century (Visser 1963: 54).

(15) He cwaeth Alexander (i.e. *Alexander said*).

In addition to designating it as *subject repetition*, Visser (1963: 54) adds that in this type of sentence “the two subjects are separated by a finite verb form”. He notes, furthermore, that “in Pres[ent] D[ay] English the construction often has an emotional connotation, especially when the second subject is preceded by *that*” (Visser 1963: 54), as in (16) from the York data. We will return to the possible socio-pragmatic functions of right dislocation at the end of this section.

(16) He’s a strange bloke *that man*. (005)

The other two forms appear much later in English; Visser’s (1963: 54) first attestations date from 1837 in Dickens’ *Pickwick Letters*. He notes that “this type [of repeated subject] differs from [the first form] by the additional repetition of the verbal form (mostly *was* or *is*; occasionally *would*, *could*, *did* and other auxiliaries)”, as in (17) to (19).

(17) It’s really so majestic *is York Minster* (042)

(18) She used to have a joke *did my mother* (062)

(19) He’ll do anything for anybody *will Rich*. (035)

He makes no real distinction between the expanded and reverse forms, however, considering them under the same heading of “repeated subject”, merely stating that in the former the “repeated verb is placed in final position” (Visser 1963: 55). Poutsma (1928: 172) and Jespersen (1949: 67) also find a number of cases of ERD and RRD in literature dating from the second half of the 19th century, but again, none earlier than that. All three scholars present the reverse form as the main variant of the two forms with operators, noting that the expanded form is “less common” (Jespersen 1949: 67).

The examples provided by Visser, Poutsma and Jespersen of ERD and RRD come from Victorian authors not only from the North of England but also from the South. Most of these examples are found in the speech of the characters in novels, but there are some examples in narrative and poetry as well. This underlines the generally oral and colloquial use of right dislocation forms.

The fact that RRD is not viewed as particularly regionally restricted from a historical perspective is noteworthy. Visser (1963: 55) points out that the use of the expanded form “is now dialectal or colloquial”, however. Although he does not specify which dialects it is still used in, the association of the RRD with Northern varieties of English was noted by Wright at the start of the 20th century. In his *English Dialect Grammar*, Wright (1905: 270) observes that “in Sc[otland]

and northern dialects a pronoun is often used to introduce a statement, the specific subject being added later, as *it runs well does that horse*".

Furthermore, most of the Yorkshire dialect dictionaries and grammars from that period onwards (Cowling 1915; Hedevind 1967; Tidholm 1979) also consider RRD to be idiosyncratic to the dialect being considered, suggesting that it was no longer seen to belong to mainstream English. Melchers (1983), Petyt (1985), Shorrocks (1984) and Timmis (2009) similarly present the feature as having a restricted geographical distribution; this view of RRD being Northern, particularly found in Yorkshire and Lancashire is also shared by researchers who are examining English features more generally; Quirk *et al.* (1985: 1417) and McArthur (1992: 1020) present it as a Northern feature as well. RRD, although occasionally used elsewhere, is seen predominantly as a Northern English feature in linguistic literature.

In terms of the use of right dislocation forms in general, Edwards and Weltens (1985: 119) find that the "repetition of subject and operator" (i.e. ERD) is found in Yorkshire and Cockney, while the "repetition of operator and subject" (i.e. RRD) is restricted to Yorkshire and Lancashire and finally that the repetition of the "subject in its objective pronominal form" (some forms of the standard right dislocation, e.g. *He's nice him*) is found in Manchester.

It is clear that these dialect dictionaries and grammars are very useful in assessing the longevity and geographical distribution of RRD in Northern England, but they do not provide us with a clear manner of determining whether this form is selected more often than the other two variants and how frequently it is used. For this reason, it is important to consider all three variants together, in order to establish their relative distribution and what the situation is across generations. Unlike the mainly perfunctory mentions of the form and its "frequency" discussed above, Melchers (1983) and Shorrocks (1984) look at the form in slightly more detail, however. In both, the various verbal collocations as well as some of its functions are discussed, but neither compares the distribution of this form with the other two forms. In addition, no attempts are made to assess exactly how frequent the use of these forms is. Timmis (2009) is a notable exception in this respect as it provides the number of right dislocations per 10 000 words; the overall distribution of the variants is only partly discussed however (Timmis 2009: 333).

4. Data and extraction

The data used for the present analysis come from a corpus of interviews collected in the city of York in 1996 (see Tagliamonte 1996-1998 and 1998 for a full discussion of the corpus and project). The 91 interviews of York natives are part of a research project which was set up as “a sociolinguistic investigation of English spoken in York in Northeast England” (Tagliamonte 1998: 158). The interviews were stratified by gender and by age as shown in Table 1 below:

Table 1. Speakers in York corpus

	15 - 35	36 - 69	70+	Total
Men	11	16	12	39
Women	12	24	16	52
Total	23	40	28	91

All the interviews were read in their entirety and every instance of right dislocation of all three types was extracted from the data. These tokens were then tested for a number of possible external and internal conditioning factors presented in detail below. The distribution in terms of age and gender will enable us to examine whether these factors affect the selection of the variants.

We might expect there to be differences in use of right dislocations in general and in the distribution of right dislocations used for both age and gender. In terms of age, it is possible that the more geographically restricted form may be disappearing in favour of the more supralocal forms. This kind of leveling is something which has increasingly been found in English dialects in research conducted over the past ten years (Britain 2009; Foulkes and Docherty 1999).

In terms of gender there are two venues which might provide insight. First of all, if we accept that the primary function of right dislocations is phatic (as suggested by Aijmer 1989) then we might find it used more frequently by women who have generally been found to use more politeness strategies (Holmes 1995). At the same time, it is possible that any shift from the regional variant to the more widespread ones could also be tied to gender as well, as women are also generally found to use more prestigious forms than men. Neither age nor gender have been examined in previous studies of right dislocation however.

Social class is not considered in this study, as the interviews in the York corpus were not collected in such a way to make it easy to disentangle social class effects. However, this has not been an issue for other features studied with this corpus (Tagliamonte 1998).

In addition to the external factors of age and gender, a number of internal factors were considered in order to establish what role they played in the selection of the variants. The form of the subject in the dislocation was examined — whether it was a proper noun, as in (20), a noun phrase, as in (21), a personal pronoun, as in (22) or a demonstrative pronoun, as in (23). This is something which had also been investigated in Melchers (1984), Grosz and Ziv (1996), and in Ashby (1988) for French.

(20) He gets on with anybody does Nick (027)

(21) She was an Irish lady was my grandma (048)

(22) It was lovely, it was (035)

(23) Well that's not for me isn't that (091)

The verb type was also investigated, looking at *be*, as in (22), *have*, as in (25), modal verbs, as in (26) and other verbs, as in (27).⁵ Melchers (1984) examined this as well, but as most other studies only focused on the standard right dislocation form, where the operator is not present, this was not relevant to them.

(24) He's a nice lad is Leon (002)

(25) He had a good milk business had Taylor (092)

(26) He'll do anything for anybody will Rich. (035)

(27) They came over in eighteen-forty-two did my ancestors (001)

A number of tokens were excluded from the analysis: although the examples given thus far have been cases where the subject is dislocated, it is also possible for the object of a clause to be right dislocated, as in (28) from Shorrocks (1984). These were excluded from the present analysis as only the standard right dislocation variant was possible in these cases. Grosz and Ziv (1996: 6) found that object right dislocation was generally less frequent than subject right dislocation (in their corpus “over 80% [of right dislocations] had pronouns in subject position”).

⁵ Note that other verbs had the operator *do* in the dislocated section of the clause.

(28) well eventually they closed it, the beaming side (of a cotton mill)

Clauses where the subject and the verb had been deleted in the main clause and appeared only in the right dislocation section, as in (29), were also excluded. Although it seems likely that sentences such as these contain an ellipsis of the subject pronoun and verb (Lambrecht 2001, for example, does consider similar forms to be right dislocation), this analysis does not consider them, as their distribution may be different from other RD forms and they may in fact be cases of inversion (Quirk *et al.* 1984: 1382).

(29) Bit of an educated woman was his wife (092)

Moreover, constructions where the main clause provided more specific information than the dislocated / repeated form, as in (30), were not included in the dataset, as they were not in fact cases of right dislocation, but rather of repetition.

(30) George is good, he is.

Overall, the decision was made that in order for a right dislocation to be included in the extraction, the main clause had to provide either no new information or the same amount as the dislocated form. In (30), the main clause is more specific (*George*) than the repeated particle (*he*). A sentence such as *He's good George is* would have been included in the analysis, however, as would a variation on (12) such as *I was a little angel I was*.

Forms in which the main clause and the dislocated elements provided the same amount of information were included in the analysis. Most of these were cases where a pronoun was repeated, as in (31) but there are also instances of *that* and NPs being repeated (examples 32 and 33). Unlike the constructions in (30), all three forms of right dislocation were possible with this type of repetition.

(31) I didn't do any revision me. (060)

(32) That was good that. (066)

(33) Ken was the church-warden was Ken. (035)

The discussion thus far has focused on the three variants of right dislocation, but there is, of course, another variant: clauses with no right dislocation. The instances of right dislocation in the corpus could have occurred without dislocation and conversely many of the clauses without right dislocation could have conceivably have been “dislocated”. So the clause from speaker (029) *My husband had just come in* could have occurred as *He had just come in, had my*

husband, although it did not. The fact that nearly every utterance could have potentially been subject to right dislocation makes it difficult to fully follow the principle of accountability (Labov 1994). So to deal with this as much as possible and still focus on the instances where right dislocation was present, rates of occurrence of right dislocation were calculated per 10 000 words, which allows us to gain a rough idea of which groups and speakers use it most frequently.

5. Results

The extraction provided a total of 294 tokens. This might seem rather low considering that the right dislocation forms are mentioned as occurring “frequently” in most of the literature and that the data consists of 91 hour-long (or more) interviews. This comes out to an overall total of 4.22 right dislocations per 10 000 words of speech.⁶ However, given that few studies have examined right dislocations quantitatively, it is difficult to say whether this figure is lower than might have been expected. According to the calculations made by Timmis (2009) based on the information provided in other articles and his data, a rate of 4.22 per 10 000 words is higher than the average. His own corpus has a normalized frequency of 16 per 10 000 words, but the type of data is somewhat different than most of the other studies (first of all by virtue of its being recorded in the 1930s, and secondly due to its being partly surreptitiously recorded). Table 2 below shows the distribution in terms of the three variants.

Table 2. Overall distribution of right dislocation forms in York corpus

% of reverse RD (N)	% of expanded RD (N)	% of Standard RD (N)	Total N
61 (178)	13 (39)	26 (77)	294

The RRD variant is the one most frequently used in York and accounts for 61% of right dislocation forms. The dialect grammars were clearly accurate in claiming that the reverse right dislocation form is used in Yorkshire.

⁶ The total number of words used here is restricted to the speech of the interviewees and does not include the utterances of the interviewers and other participants in the interviews

The numerous claims with respect to its “frequency” and “commonness”, however, may have been somewhat misguided. Overall, RRD forms appear at a rate of 2.1 per 10 000 words, ERD occurs at a rate of 0.57 per 10 000 words, and SRD at a rate of 1.1 per 10 000 words. It is impossible to establish whether RRD is being used in York in situations where SRD would appear in other dialects or whether right dislocation is simply used more frequently in Yorkshire, because right dislocation has not been considered in this way in other studies.

Having gotten a glimpse of its overall use, we turn now to the distribution for gender and age, followed by a consideration of its use across individuals.

5.1 Gender

Men and women in York do not significantly differ in their selection of the right dislocation forms (chi square: 2.02, $p > 0.05$). The reverse right dislocation form is the variant most frequently selected (at rates of 57% and 62% respectively), followed by the standard right dislocation form (33% and 27%). The expanded right dislocation form is least favoured and is used only 12% by men and 15% women (Fig. 1).

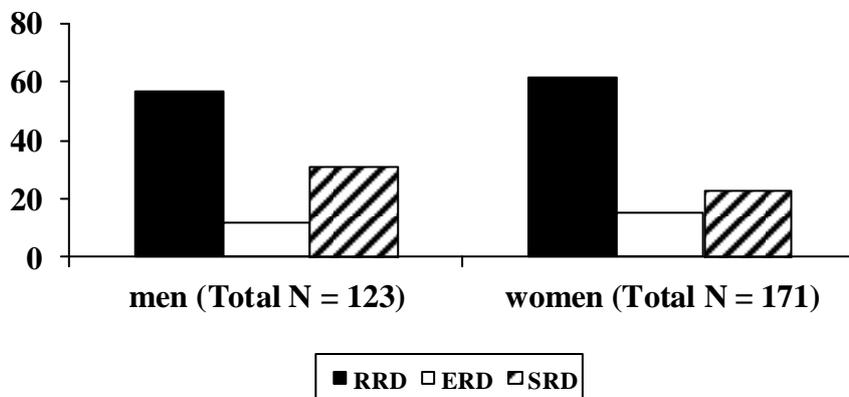


Figure 1. Distribution of right dislocation forms by gender

As well as showing a similar distribution in terms of variants, the results suggest that men and women use right dislocation forms at similar rates. The total number of tokens is evenly distributed with respect to the gender ratio (58% of the tokens come from women [171 out of 294] and women represent 62% of the corpus). In terms of overall rates, women have 3.94 right dislocations per 10 000

words and men have 4.56 per 10 000. This difference is not statistically significant, however (a t-test comparing the women's rates to the men's results in a p value of 0.32).

5.2 Age

The three age groups show no significant difference in distribution (chi square 6.80, $p > 0.05$). The reverse right dislocation is the most frequent form (50% for the 15-35 year olds, 69% for the 36-69 year olds, 58% for the over 70 year olds), followed by the standard right dislocation form (30%, 23% and 28% respectively) and then the expanded right dislocation form (20%, 8% and 14%; see Fig. 2).

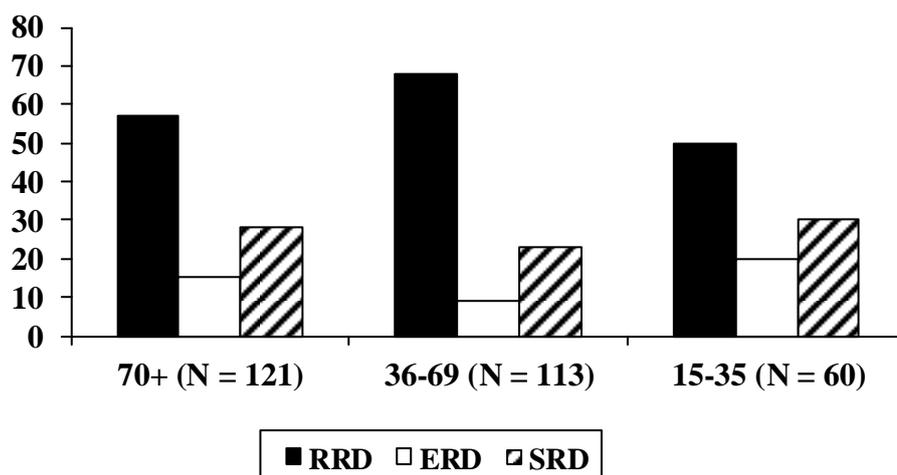


Figure 2. Distribution of right dislocation forms by age

In terms of overall use of right dislocation, the results suggest that there are some differences between the groups. Although the oldest speaker group represents 28% of the York sample (calculated by overall word counts), they contribute 41% of the tokens of right dislocation. The rates by 10 000 words underline this, young speakers use 3.13 right dislocations, middle-aged speakers 3.62, whilst the old speakers 6.10. A chi square test reveals this difference to be statistically

significant (chi square: 24.87, $p < 0.001$)⁷. Although the distribution of the variants is not changing, right dislocation, as such, is used less by the younger age groups.

5.3 Age and Gender

An examination of age and gender together reveals a far more complicated pattern. While there were no significant differences in terms of gender when looking at all three age groups at once, when they are considered separately (as in Fig. 3 below) a number of points emerge.

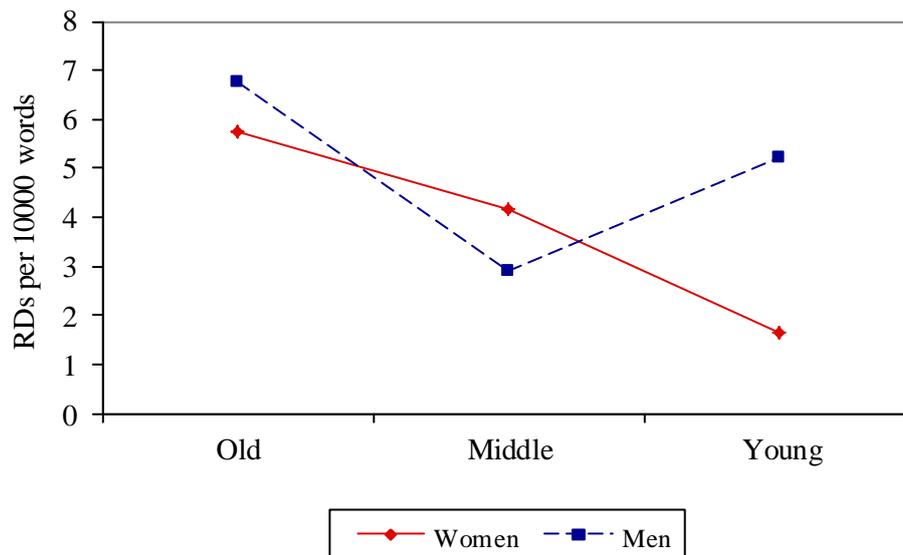


Figure 3. Frequency of right dislocation by age and gender

While the number of right dislocations used decrease in the younger generations of women, this pattern does not hold in the men. Although there is a decrease in right dislocations from old to middle-aged speakers, the fall is sharper than in the women and is accompanied by an increase in right dislocation use in the young

⁷ This was calculated using the total number of right dislocations and the total number of words for each category.

men. While the gender difference is not statistically significant in chi square tests considering the older and middle age groups, it is for the young speakers (chi square = 18.98, $p < 0.01$). This “dip” instead of the expected downward slope is rather surprising and needs to be examined further.

Although such a pattern could have been due to a reorganization of the right dislocation variants, Figures 4 (which presents the variants in the women) and 5 (which deals with the men) reveal that this is not the case.

Right Dislocation - Women

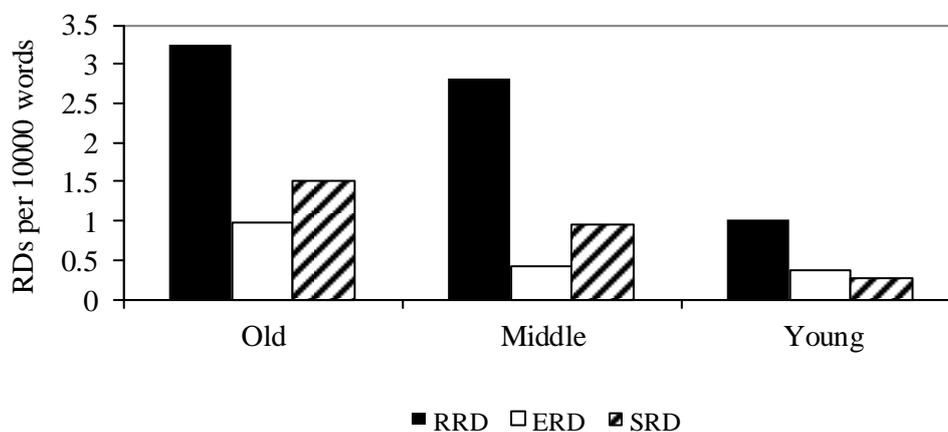


Figure 4. Right dislocation variants by age (women only)

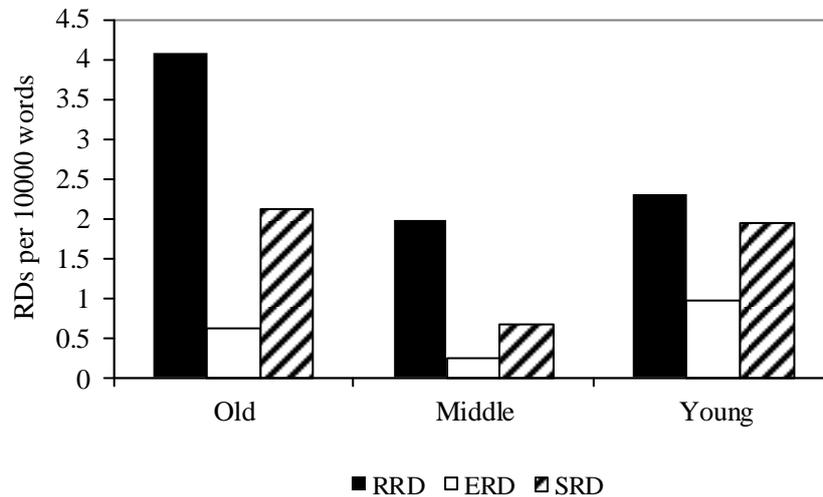


Figure 5. Right dislocation variant by age (men only)

In both genders across ages, there is not a considerable change in the proportion of right dislocation forms. For the women, Figure 4 reveals that the youngest generation uses slightly more ERD forms than standard ones, but the overall low frequency makes it difficult to establish if this is significant. For the men, while the hierarchy remains the same, going from RRD to SRD to ERD, it appears that the young men use slightly more ERD than the older age groups. The young male speakers have reversed the direction of the trend and are using right dislocations more than the middle aged group, although the proportions of the variants are the same throughout.

The analysis thus far has not dealt with differences between individual speakers and this can help us understand the general distribution better. Within the corpus there are a number of speakers who have no tokens of right dislocation in their interviews; 5/13 of the young women (so 38%), 5/23 of the middle aged women (22%), 1/16 of the older women (6%), 2/11 of the young men (18%), 3/16 of the middle aged men (19%) and 1/12 of the older men (8%).⁸ As a whole, women are more likely not to have any right dislocations than men.

⁸ Given the relative infrequency it is difficult to assess whether the speakers who have no right dislocations never use it or simply did not produce enough speech to have any tokens.

In terms of individual speakers who do have right dislocation, the difference in rates of usage across speakers is also of interest. As Figure 6 demonstrates, while the bulk of speakers are between zero and five right dislocations per 10 000 words (the mean is 2.11 and the standard deviation is 4.65), a number of them have far higher rates, with one speaker having a rate of 31.3 (one of the older women).

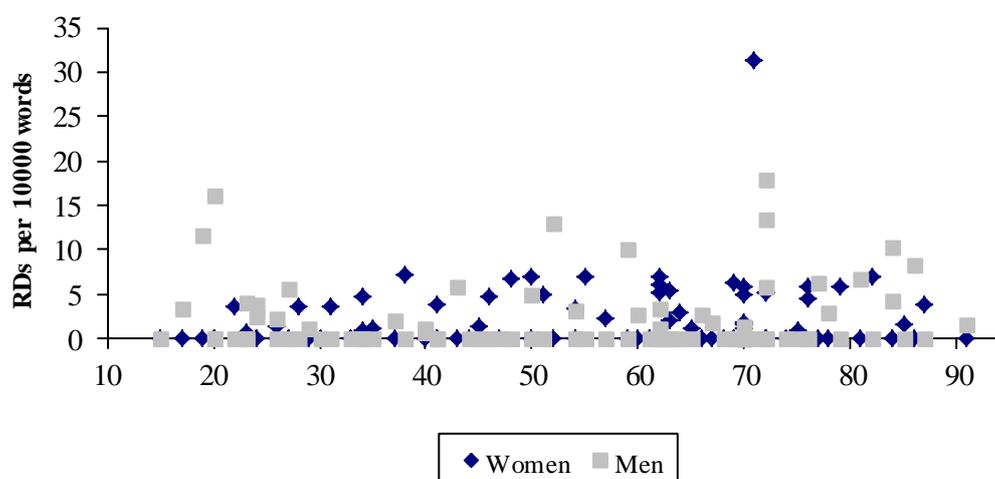


Figure 6. Individual rates of right dislocation by age and gender

Of the eight speakers who could be considered to be “high hitters” (i.e. speakers with more than ten right dislocation forms per 10 000 words) seven are male, two in the youngest age group, two in the middle group and three in the oldest group. A comparison of rates across age and gender of the data with the high hitters removed, as in Figure 7, reveals that the gender effect is maintained and that there is still a dip and then an increase between middle and young male speakers.

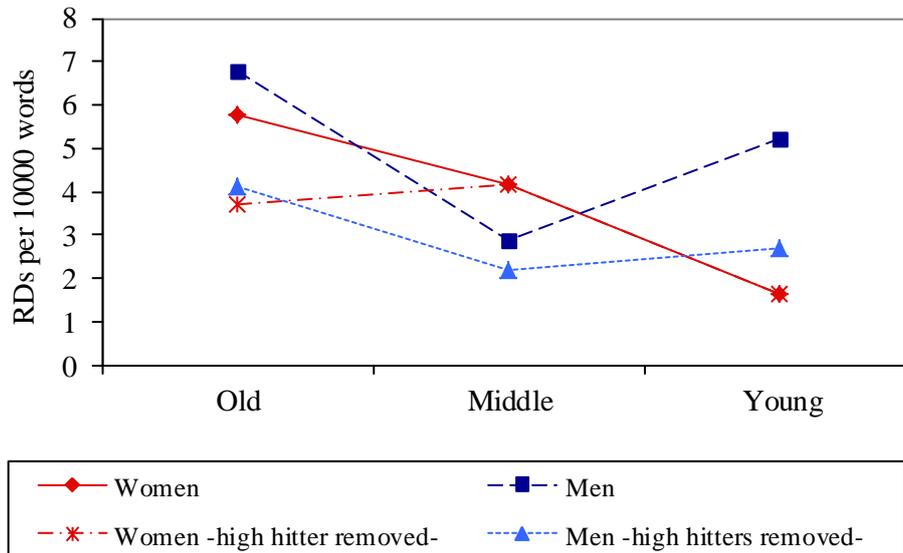


Figure 7. Frequency of right dislocation by age and gender (full data set and data without high hitters compared)

Although the pattern for the women is different with the one older female speaker with 31 right dislocations per 10 000 words removed, this is to be expected as this speaker uses a substantially higher rate of RD than the other women in her age group. The high hitters share the proportion of right dislocation forms with other speakers and will not be removed from the subsequent analysis, as they were deemed to use the right dislocation forms in a similar way to the other speakers, albeit at a higher rate.

Pearson's tests considering whether a correlation between 1) individual overall word counts and the number of right dislocations per 10 000 words (to test whether individuals who spoke more were likely to have a higher rate of right dislocations) and 2) the average sentence length by speaker and the number of right dislocations per 10 000 words (to test whether longer or shorter sentences might affect right dislocation use) were conducted, but neither were statistically significant ($r = 0.074$ and $df = 89$, $p > 0.05$ for the former and $r = 0.08$ and $df = 89$, $p > 0.05$ for the latter). T-tests comparing the women to the men for both overall word count and sentence length do not come out as

significant either, so it is clear that these factors cannot account for the differences found in gender and age.

Aijmer (1989) claimed that right dislocations had a phatic purpose within discourse and served, in part, to “create an affective bond”, so could the lower rates found in the middle-aged men be tied to this? As mentioned, women tend to use more phatic elements in their discourse. This is a possibility; however, it does not explain the higher rates of the young and older men or generally lower rates found for the younger women. In the case of the younger women, it may be that a strategy other than right dislocation is used for phatic purposes. A very rapid survey of the use of discourse marker *you know* in the York corpus⁹ partly confirms this (see Fig. 8), as the young York women have the highest rates of *you know*. However, if the decrease in right dislocations for the young women were due to a shift towards *you know*, then it would appear that the discourse marker does not have the same function for the men as the line is relatively flat for them, so it still does not fully explain the data with respect to age and gender.

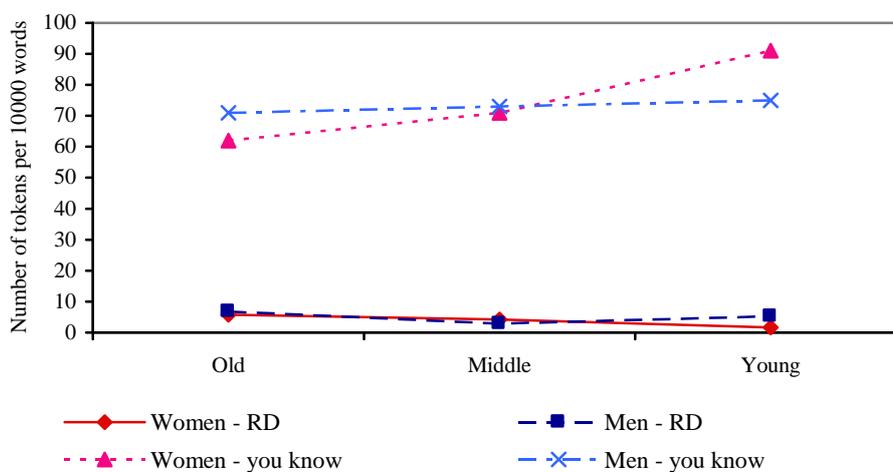


Figure 8. Rates of *you know* and right dislocation by gender and age

While there is no straightforward explanation for the pattern found in the male speakers in terms of the data itself, generational patterns such as this one are not

⁹ Discourse marker *you know* was transcribed in the York corpus as *you-know* so all tokens of it were extracted and coded for speaker, age and gender.

unknown. In fact, the dip in the middle aged speakers is very similar to what Tagliamonte and Roeder (2009) found for definite article reduction in the same corpus. While they divided into four rather than three age groups, it was the 51 to 74 year olds who used the lowest rates of definite article reduction. This effect was found in both men and women and because the young men were found to be “outstripping even the oldest speakers’ use of the non-standard variants” (Tagliamonte and Roeder 2009: 449), they suggested that the effect was due to a type of age-grading and might also be tied to the fact that “the regional varieties in England are gaining prestige, particularly in the North” (Tagliamonte and Roeder 2009: 462). Because RRD is, as has been demonstrated, considered a primarily northern British feature and because it is the most frequently occurring of the variants, it is reasonable to suggest that its high use by the young men of York is another case of a Northern feature being used to signal local identity.

The pattern whereby traditionally local features regaining ground in the youngest generation (particularly young men) is also found in Cajun English (Dubois and Horvath 2000: 298), where it is considered to be a form of “recycling”: “What we have is a change by men in the direction of the former stigmatized and stereotyped Cajun variants; we have called this recycling ... Young men recycle, but women give no evidence of following them”. The “curvilinear or v-shaped age pattern” that Dubois and Horvath (2000: 287) found in the men, but not in the women, is explained primarily through the view that young women “have fewer reasons than do young men to associate themselves linguistically with the current understanding of Cajun identity, which is largely masculine” (Dubois and Horvath 2000: 307). The use of right dislocation forms in York may be following a similar trajectory, with the young men using it, and definite article reduction as found by Tagliamonte and Roeder (2009), to assert their Northernness. The lack of comparable studies of right dislocation forms in other dialects makes it difficult to assess to what extent this is accurate, however; but it is certainly a venue which merits further analysis.

The internal factors will not be able to offer further insight into the potential recycling of right dislocation by the young men, as they consider differences in the three variants and not their overall rates, but it is still worthwhile to examine them for a better understanding of right dislocation strategies in general.

5.4 Subject Type

The internal factors show greater differences than the external ones in terms of the variants favoured. Similarly to previous studies, the most frequently repeated

subjects in right dislocation are NPs (including proper nouns), representing 63% of the tokens (see Tab. 3). Demonstrative pronouns represent 22% of the overall tokens and other pronouns 15%. The distribution of the subject types by variants is noteworthy, however; while RRD is favoured with proper nouns, noun phrases and demonstratives, it is very rarely used with pronouns. With pronouns, ERD, which represents only 13% of right dislocation forms, is selected at a rate of 67%.

Table 3. Overall distribution of right dislocation forms by subject type

	% of RRD	% of ERD	% of SRD	Total N
Proper Noun	74	2	24	89
Noun phrase	71	2	27	96
Demonstrative	60	6	34	64
Pronoun	13	67	20	44

There are a number of ways to explain this high proportion of ERD with pronouns. First of all, we need to consider that, for the most part, right dislocations with pronouns are somewhat different from those with other subjects, as the dislocated element does not tend to provide any additional information. Recall that in cases such as these, the pronoun of the main clause is repeated in the dislocated segment, as in (34). This may be one factor in the anomalous distribution of variants.

(34) He's weird he is. (061)

Secondly, SRD and RRD are affected by pronouns in another way; the tokens suggest that these two variants tend to be used in the oblique case with pronouns. Six out of the 15 tokens of SRD and RRD with pronouns are clearly in the oblique (examples 35 and 36), two are of *you* where the oblique and nominative are not distinguished and finally five are conjoined noun phrases which tend to function rather differently than other subjects (examples 37 and 38; see Angermeyer and Singler 2003). ERD with pronouns, on the other hand, were all in the nominative case.

(35) Oh aye he was right fool him. (071)

(36) They actually were double seats, was them in the er- Grand. (001)

(37) But we had a great time, actually Mum and I. (062)

(38) We like our walking do me and Graham. (054)

A third explanation is that when the subject repeated is a pronoun, RRD could be confused with some types of tag questions, as their surface structure is very similar (examples 39 and 40), albeit prosodically different.

(39) I think he was sat just sulking in his living room was he. (036)

(40) He was sat just sulking in his living room, was he?

In such cases, ERD is overwhelmingly selected instead. In York, ERD appears to be used almost exclusively with pronouns; 80% of the tokens of ERD occur with pronouns. ERD forms are used a mere 3% in other contexts, with RRD being used 69%.

5.5 Verb type

In terms of verb type, recall that Visser (1963: 54) had noted that most RRD and ERD forms occurred with *be* but were occasionally found with other auxiliaries as well. Melchers (1983) found a similar distribution in her data as well. She found that 66% of her tokens were with *be* as a main verb, 12% with a modal or auxiliary and 22% with a main verb in the main clause. Table 4 examines whether this is accurate for York and reveals that the verb *to be* accounts for 66% of the data. Moreover, the pattern whereby the reverse right dislocation form is the most favoured variant is found for all verb types but modal verbs, where the expanded right dislocation form is used 42%.

Table 4. Distribution of right dislocation form by verb type

	% of RRD	% of ERD	% of SRD	Total N
Be	60	12	28	194
Have	66	15	19	26
Modal	33	42	25	12
Other	64	10	26	62

It is difficult to draw conclusions from the results for modal verbs, however, as there are only twelve tokens of them with right dislocation forms in the corpus. Moreover, six of these were with pronouns, which as we have seen before, are more likely to occur with ERD. In this case five out of six are ERD forms.

6. Discussion, conclusion and avenues for further study

The results demonstrate that, as had been predicted by research on Northern English dialects, the reverse right dislocation form can be found in York. Further to that, a finding that was not predicted by previous research is that it is the most frequently used form. This is the case for both genders and all age groups, so it does not appear that is particularly stigmatized. Although the overall rate of right dislocation has decreased in the younger generations, all the variants are decreasing and the local variant remains the most frequent of the three, so it is not merely a case of a supralocal variant gaining ground over the local one.

The analysis has also established that right dislocations in which the pronoun is repeated rather than being replaced with a noun phrase or demonstrative pronoun function rather differently than other right dislocation forms. First of all, they are more likely to occur with an oblique form with the RRD and SRD variants, but secondly, they are used predominantly with ERD variants. It may be that, for York speakers at least, when the reverse right dislocation form is not acceptable (i.e. with pronouns), then it is the expanded form that is used in its place.

Age and gender, jointly, play a role in the use of right dislocations as well. Although it is used equally frequently by both sexes in the oldest generation, there are considerable differences in the middle and young groups. The middle-aged men use far fewer right dislocations than the older and younger men and than the middle aged women. The young women also are low right dislocation users, while the young men are still using it robustly. While the young women's decrease might be explained through the increase of another phatic discourse marker, *you know*, this does not explain the middle-aged men's use. The "recycling" of the form by the youngest group of men is similar to what was found by Dubois and Horvath (2000) in Cajun English and to the use of definite article reduction in York as examined by Tagliamonte and Roeder (2009). This may signal that right dislocation forms in general, and RRD in particular, are associated with Northern identity for the young men in York and their increased use is tied to that. While the present study was only able to briefly touch upon

this possibility, it is clear that it is an aspect which warrants further research, particularly with respect to how it is used by young men. Is it used more frequently with specific topics — particularly those tied to their feelings about their identity and Yorkshire?

Because right dislocation forms have not been studied in this way before, we do not, however, know how York compares to other varieties of English, either in terms of other varieties which have all three right dislocation forms or of varieties which only have two available. We cannot then determine whether York speakers use right dislocation forms more frequently than speakers of other varieties. Moreover, without studies of other varieties, we do not know whether the RRD form is being used in place of the ERD or the SRD dislocation, or whether it is being used in addition to them. Although, intuitively, it may be the case that right dislocation forms in general are more frequent in some dialects than in others, only a study of other dialects, both standard and non-standard, will be able to determine this conclusively.

Furthermore, in order to fully understand how right dislocation forms are used, they should be considered alongside other focusing strategies, such as left dislocation, inversion, fronting and the use of existentials. An in-depth analysis of the pragmatic functions of right dislocation and how they are distributed in the present data is the next venue for further research. While the three right dislocation forms are rather different on the surface, this paper has made the assumption that their pragmatic functions are the same. It seems quite likely, however, that they are used in slightly different ways, but as only the standard right dislocation form has been examined pragmatically, it is difficult to establish this until all three variants are examined under such an angle.

A final prospect for further research lies in the origins of the reverse right dislocation form. As discussed, the first attestations of the reverse right dislocation form date from the 19th century. This raises two related questions: where did it (and the expanded right dislocation form) originate and was it once possibly more widespread despite being a feature of Northern varieties of English? It is likely that its usage predates the first attestations and it may be that it was originally a Northern (mainly Yorkshire and Lancashire) feature that gained mainstream currency for a time before retreating to its original dialect areas, but it is possible, though somewhat more unlikely, that it is a 19th century innovation which was only adopted in Northern dialects. Understanding the history and spread of this feature may help us better understand wider processes of language change and diffusion, but also of pragmatics.

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