

# FUNCTIONS OF LEFT DISLOCATION IN PETJOH

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This paper is a preliminary discussion of the function of left-dislocation in Petjoh. Petjoh is a mixed language of low socioeconomic status spoken in the former Dutch East Indies (presently the Republic of Indonesia). It contains mainly elements of Dutch, Malay/Indonesian, and Javanese.

A specific form of left-dislocation consisting of a Noun Phrase (NP) and a Resumptive Pronoun (RP) is found in high frequency in Petjoh. My explanation for its presence is based on discourse function. I propose that the RP enhances and increases the topicality of the NP. I will discuss some of the sentences with this NP + RP construction and the four environments in which it is found.

## 1.0 Indies Dutch and Petjoh

The analysed mixed language is called *Petjoh* by some people, (I will use this name). It is also called *Javindo*, *Bad Dutch*, or *Djedar djedur*. The Dutch language in the East Indies or Indies Dutch was a continuum of which Petjoh and Javindo are intermediates. On the one side, this continuum had the Dutch as spoken by recently arrived Dutch immigrants. On the other side was the Dutch spoken by the Eurasian child of a non-Dutch speaking Indonesian mother, whose first language was therefore not Dutch, but Javanese, Sundanese, or any of the more than 250 languages spoken in the Indies.

Before 1850, Dutch was hardly used by Eurasians in the East Indies. Even in 1900, a survey of 1,500 first class students, most of them Eurasians, showed that 40 percent of them did not understand any Dutch, and 29 percent understood only a few words. But by 1920, the situation had changed completely. Middle and upper class Eurasians as well as recently arrived Dutch children spoke grammatically correct Dutch. There were, of course, dialectal differences in phonetics, intonation, and accent. Away from school, most children spoke a dialect from anywhere on the continuum of Indies Dutch.

A continuum also existed in socioeconomic status of the speakers. This status was narrowly tied in with a knowledge of grammatically correct Dutch. The socioeconomic continuum ranged from Eurasians of high status, such as doctors, lawyers, generals, teachers, etc., who lived in big houses with many servants, to Eurasians of low status with low income, who lived at the edge of

the kampong (native village). The Indies Dutch language continuum ran parallel to the socioeconomic status of its speakers and ranged from a supercorrect Dutch for high social status, to dialects such as Petjoh with very low status.

There were primarily two kinds of Petjoh speakers. One kind could not speak grammatically correct Dutch. They regarded Petjoh as bad Dutch, a socially low status language, and a reflection on their own status. The other Petjoh speaker could also speak grammatically correct Dutch, which became his/her main language. Petjoh is dying out. No new speakers are born or made because there is no longer a language continuum with Dutch at one end. Some original speakers have moved. After World War II, in the late 1950s, some 100,000 Eurasians were repatriated to the Netherlands. Decreolizing of the Petjoh takes place because of continuous contact of the speakers with standard Dutch. Other original speakers simply grow old and die off.

Eurasians who opted to become Indonesian citizens and stayed in Indonesia after Indonesia's Independence at the end of 1949 did not speak Dutch anymore. For them, decreolizing took place because of continuous contact with Indonesian, Javanese, Sundanese, and many of the other languages. In Indonesia, there is still an older generation of native Indonesians who learned Dutch at school. Occasionally they speak Dutch, but this is generally grammatically correct Dutch, not Petjoh.

From the mid-1980s on, an increased interest in every aspect of past colonial life is noticeable in the Netherlands. It resulted in several ongoing academic studies. Not much has been published on Indies Dutch.

## **2.0 Functions of Left Dislocation**

Many grammatical constructions can be explained by their function in discourse. Best known are the use of passive and antipassive, dative shift, and the topic of this paper, left- dislocation (LD).

Several studies (Foley and Van Valin, Duranti and Ochs, and Givón) have indicated that the primary function of LD is the introduction of a new referent or the reintroduction of a previously mentioned referent.

Duranti and Ochs report that LD in Italian is not found in spoken or written Italian discourse, but only in conversations. They find LD not only in Subject position but also in direct object and in indirect object positions.

In Petjoh, LD has the form of a noun-phrase (often proper noun) in the grammatical subject slot, which is followed by a

pronoun. I will refer to this referential pronoun as a resumptive pronoun, RP.

An intransitive clause in Petjoh:

- (1) En toen SI SJAANTJE loop weg.  
*And then Si Sjaantje walks away.*  
 'And then Si Sjaantje walks away'.

A clause with RP:

- (2) Maar DJOEFRIE **hij** maf.  
*But Djoefrie he snoozes.*  
 'But Djoefrie snoozes'.

### 3.0 Methodology

#### 3.1 Data base

The analyzed data was taken from *Ik en Bentiet* written by Vincent Mahieu under the pseudonym Tjalie Robinson. *Ik en Bentiet* is one of the very few accounts in Petjoh or similar dialects. There is *Het Javindo, de verboden taal* written by V.E. de Gruiter who, with some friends, recreated the dialect spoken in Semarang and Central Java, a dialect based on Javanese. There is *Si Dogol and Si Tolol* written by Felix Mathéron. His short stories recount events of repatriated Eurasians in Holland. *Je-lâh-je-rot* and *Je-lâh-je-kripoet* are anthologies with the best stories and jokes from *Tong Tong*, a bi-weekly magazine. Few of these stories and jokes are written in Petjoh, but all of the above mentioned books and booklets have stories containing LDs.

*Ik en Bentiet* is a series of short stories that describe the adventures of Tjalie, 'Lie', and his friend Si Bentiet. Tjalie and Bentiet are both in their early teens, ten to twelve years old. Many of their adventures take place in the afternoon, the hottest time of the day. It is siesta time, that period of the day when their parents and other adults are resting in their bedrooms. The world is open to be explored by adventurers. Tjalie and Bentiet are the Huck Finns in the world of Jakarta, or better, the world of Batavia in the 1930s. The stories carry a nostalgic longing for a world that ended with the beginning of World War II.

In those days, Batavia was the seat of the Dutch colonial government. The language of status was Dutch, although the Dutch were a numerical minority. Many languages were spoken in Batavia which was situated in West Java where the native population speaks Sundanese. Javanese was also a prominent language because of the many Javanese that had come to live in the Capitol. The Lingua

Franca was Malay which was used between mainly native and non-native speakers of Dutch. Melayu Betawi was a specific Malay dialect spoken there also, mainly by 'Anak Betawi' (Children of Batavia), longtime inhabitants of Batavia. The Petjoh spoken (or written) by Tjalie Robinson is influenced by all these neighboring languages.

### 3.2 Type of sentences

The first five chapters of *Ik en Bentiet* were analyzed. Some of the clauses do not contain a subject and/or a verb. Some consist of a single word, an interjection, a verb, or an adverb. Some clauses are in Malay, other clauses in Dutch. I counted complete clauses, clauses of the form **S/AVP**, because LD constructions were found in the subject slot. I left out SQ (subject + quotative verb) clauses, which consisted of the pronouns *ik*, *hij*, or *zij*, 'I, he, or she', and the verb *seht*, *seh* 'say, says'. Including these clauses obfuscates the relative frequency of RPs. The following table sums up the results.

<b>Table I</b>		
%	S/A V (P)	S/A <b>RP</b> V (P)
	88	12

## 4.0 Discussion

### 4.1 Frequency and use of RP

The table of syntactic constructions shows a relatively large number of clauses containing a resumptive pronoun (RP). A total of 23 constructions with RP were found in this sample of 197 clauses, or 12 %.

The explanation for the use of the resumptive pronoun was sought in discourse function. In Petjoh, these RPs could be found in the following four different environments:

1. introducing a new referent
2. reintroducing an old referent
3. alternating actor/speaker in consecutive clauses
4. revealing the unexpected

### 4.2 Introducing a new referent: seven cases

A construction with an RP is used when a new referent is introduced, as in the following example: