

Newly introduced NPs, continuous topics, and contrastive topics in Bantik discourse

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This paper aims to shed a light on information structure of the Bantik language, which is one of the Philippine-type languages spoken in North Sulawesi, Indonesia.

First, basic facts about information structure in the Bantik language will be presented. Newly introduced NPs are often found in existential sentence while continuous topic NPs appear as pronouns or do not appear at all. Contrastive topic NPs are often left-dislocated.

Second, I will present fifty-minutes natural discourse data to show how NPs with the above mentioned information status actually behave.

Basic word order of Bantik is SVO (or Actor - Verb - Patient) in both Actor Voice and Undergoer Voice sentences, but VOS (or Patient - Verb - Agent) word order is also frequently found in Undergoer Voice sentences. In natural conversation, VS (verb - Subject) and VSO (Verb- Agent - Patient) word orders are also found in Actor Voice sentences. Those word orders often have newly introduced NPs. On the other hand, already given NPs, which behave as continuous topics or contrastive topics, are likely to appear in SVO word order if the sentence is in Actor Voice. This tendency seems to follow cross-linguistically common observation that newly introduced entities occupy non-initial position while given information come earlier in the structure. Many examples from natural discourse will be presented to support the above view.