Book Review


Reviewed by Jozina Vander Klok [jozīna vaːndəʊ klo̝k], Department of Linguistics and Scandinavian Studies, University of Oslo, Postboks 1102, Blindern, 0317 Oslo, Norway, E-mail: j.v.klok@iln.uio.no

https://doi.org/10.1515/lingty-2021-2073

1 Introduction: an overview

Perspectives on information structure in Austronesian languages is the first volume of its kind. Previous studies on this topic comprise individual articles here and there (Alsagoff 1992; Bril 2016; Frascarelli 2010; Law 2007; Palmer 2009; Poedjosoedarmo 1977; Schneider 2009; Soemarmo 1970; among others). Other related volumes are narrower in their theoretical scope, for instance focusing on the interplay of information structure with the grammatical subject, but wider in their language inclusion, such as Subject and Topic, edited by Charles N. Li (1976). This book is thus extremely valuable in its empirical breadth and depth of Austronesian languages, with contributions of authors who are also language experts, and in bringing to light new data to bear on current issues on information structure.

The book is divided into three main parts, which investigate the interaction of information structure with NP-marking and reference tracking devices in Part I with four chapters; its interaction with syntactic constructions in Part II with six chapters; and its interaction with prosody in Part III with three chapters. Taken together, the book not only includes studies that investigate the role of information structure within the sentence-level, but also includes expansions to its role across sentences, i.e., at the discourse-level (the focus of Part I), and to its role in other subdomains of linguistics beyond syntax-pragmatics, in particular, with interactions with prosody (the focus of Part III). Moreover, this book presents new data from a broad range of Austronesian languages, primarily from those that are better-studied such as Indonesian and Tagalog, but also including relatively understudied languages such as Vera’a (Oceanic), Sumbawa (Malayo-Sumbawan), and Bunun (Formosan).
2 The role of information structure

At the outset, the book does not present a unified view of how information structural concepts are defined across the papers. Rather, the author(s) of each chapter introduce the definitions of information structural concepts that are used in their study, assuming definitions as based on previous scholarship and/or building on these definitions to create their own. On the one hand, this open-ended inclusion of perspectives could be argued to be necessary to invite contributions of scholarship from various frameworks. On the other hand, the compilation of various frameworks and perspectives on the role of information structure is harder to see as a significant contribution to the theory of information structure. In my view, the main contribution of this book is in bringing grammatical phenomena characteristic of Austronesian languages, such as the different voices, clause types or the use of demonstratives, to bear on current theoretical accounts treating information structure.

The different theoretical frameworks and methodological tools are relevant to the main themes of each part. The focus of Part I is on referential information structure, which relates a linguistic expression with a referent in the speaker/hearer’s mind (Gundel and Fretheim 2004), and how this intersects with types of NP marking. Chapter 1 focuses on referential cohesion across NP types within Systemic-Functional Grammar (e.g., Halliday 1994; Halliday and Hasan 1976). Chapters 2 and 3 relate how nominal expressions may coordinate or manipulate the joint attention of the interlocutors (either the speaker, addressee, or both) (Diessel 2006). Chapter 2 also employs Du Bois’ (2007) notion of stance which offers a different perspective on the relation between the interlocutors and the (linguistic) object. Chapter 4 investigates definiteness from the perspective of Hawkins (2015), distinguishing four types: anaphoric, immediate situational, larger situational, and associative anaphoric uses. The first two types have ‘direct reference’ in which the antecedent has been mentioned in the previous discourse, whereas the latter two types have ‘indirect reference’.

In Part II, the common theoretical notion across each chapter concerns relational information structure, which reflects how linguistic expressions are partitioned and the information status associated, e.g. topic-focus structure (Gundel and Fretheim 2004; Krifka 2008; Lambrecht 1994). Some chapters focus on how relational information structure interacts within and across different syntactic constructions, such as with voice choice (Chapter 6), predication or clefts (Chapter 7), or alternative word order (Chapters 5 and 10). Other chapters focus on how these relational pragmatic concepts are integrated into a theory. In Chapter 5, Arka and Sedeng propose a new set of features to distinguish types of information structural
concepts that are integrated into LFG (Lexical-Functional Grammar). Chapters 8 and 9 are couched within the QUD (Question Under Discussion) framework, noted to be the first application to Austronesian languages. This framework treats assertions akin to answers to implicit questions where the focus is the answer to the QUD and the background is the content of the QUD (e.g., Roberts 2012).

Part III, on information structure and prosody, also concerns relational information structure, but from the perspective of syntax-prosody mapping. The first contribution is a positional paper (Chapter 11) which offers a way to study prosody through traditional ToBi annotation (Tone and Break Indices; Beckman et al. 2005) within autosegmental-metrical frameworks (e.g., Ladd 2008), but without necessarily making assumptions about the role or existence of stress in the language under study. Chapter 12 is a production study on syntactic constructions of focus using measurements of prosodic correlates, and Chapter 13 is a perception study using Rapid Prosody Transcription (Cole et al. 2010). Paradoxically, the theme of Part III, prosody, seems to have very little interaction with information structure—at least in the languages under study—with null results in both chapters 12 and 13.

3 The articles

3.1 Part I. Information status and NP marking

Rik De Busser (‘Referential cohesion in Bunun: A comparison of two genres’) presents a small-scale investigation of how referential cohesion—“the set of cohesive relations that create referring relationships between linguistic forms and referents” (p. 14)—might differ between a traditional oral narrative and a written biblical (translated) narrative in Bunun. It is hypothesized that (i) an oral narrative will have more cohesive structures present than a written one because there are fewer visual clues (but this reasoning is not explained), and (ii) that the type of cohesive relationships will vary (such as phorocity, e.g., anaphoric, cataphoric, or exophoric). Both points return null results, but as De Busser notes, this may be due to dialectal differences, since the biblical narrative is heavily based on the Isbukun variety, while the oral narratives are from the Takivatan variety. De Busser’s chapter, couched within Systemic-Functional Grammar (Halliday 1994; Halliday and Hasan 1976), is the only one to take the perspective on the role of information structure as establishing semantic connections at the discourse level. For those interested in the finer details, De Busser helpfully includes each text and the raw compilations of data as appendices. However, the way in which cohesive relations relate to types of NP-marking is not explicitly addressed. While this information may be gleaned from the results on ‘word classes’ in Table 5 (p. 18), the partitioning
includes various subclasses divided by semantic type (‘time word’, ‘manner word’), by part-of-speech (‘noun’, ‘verb’), as well as NP-type (‘article’, ‘demonstrative pronoun’). As such, the ‘word class’ divisions do not lend themselves to bear on the issue of information status and NP-marking. Further, ellipsis or zero anaphora is not included as a type of referential cohesion on the grounds that it could not be unambiguously identified as having a referential function (p. 15). I would add that zero marking could have revealed genre differences. Within Chapters 4–6 on Manado Malay, Balinese, and Indonesian, zero marking is often used in referent tracking, and in fact seems to be a default strategy for indicating topic persistence. Since De Busser writes that this study is intended as a pilot, looking at these factors in future studies may reveal genre differences.

František Kratochvíl, Nur Izdihar Binte Ismail and Biyana Hamzah (‘Stance, categorisation, and information structure in Malay’) assess how the type of referent categorisation (i.e. types of NP-marking) positions a speaker’s epistemic stance in elicited narratives in Singapore Malay. They draw from a rich parallel corpus across ‘Getting the Story Straight’ (San Roque et al. 2012), ‘Pear Story’ (Chafe 1980), ‘Frog Story’ (Mayer 1969), and ‘Jackal and Crow’ (Carroll et al. 2011). The results on stance seem to largely confirm findings in the literature: Stronger epistemic stance simplifies the expression of referents and their tracking (but also allows the speaker to create different perspectives through, e.g., possession expressions; Stivers et al. 2007), while neutral epistemic stance generally requires different types of nominal expressions. However, as in Chapter 1, zero anaphora is not included. Perhaps zero anaphora was not prevalent because of the elicited narrative method compared to spontaneous conversation, but this would itself be an interesting result (e.g., Klamer and Moro 2020). Further, the conclusion that “inanimate referents are rarely subject of strong epistemic stance” (p. 41) is unsurprising given the types of elicited narration analyzed: it would only be possible if inanimate referents in the stories were realized as sentient referents. Overall, while epistemic stance is argued to be “more fundamental than information structure notions of new, old, or given” (p. 41), epistemic stance is not related to Ariel’s (1988) foundational work on Referential Accessibility which already makes similar divisions of referential expressions (e.g., where proper names and definites are more accessible than pronouns).

The second part focuses on the nominal expressions in relation to joint attention, building on Du Bois (2007) and Diessel (2006). In addition to indicating a neutral epistemic stance, the authors propose that adnominal markers (demonstratives and particles) in Singapore Malay also coordinate joint attention of the interlocutors and manipulate the attention of solely the hearer. However, these are based on only a few examples and, in my view, the evidence is not fully substantiated. Their examples provide much food for thought as to their semantic
and pragmatic contribution, and how they might be more formally understood with respect to joint attention.

**Stefan Schnell** (‘Attention focus and information packaging in Vera’a demonstratives’) provides an in-depth study of the use of demonstratives in Vera’a (Oceanic), based on a corpus that includes both audio and visual recordings of narratives, public speeches, and casual conversation compiled by the author. Schnell’s main claim is that the core meaning of Vera’a demonstratives is related to joint attention focus (cf. Diessel 2006) for both endophoric and exophoric uses. That is, rather than localisation, the demonstratives mark a three-way distinction: speaker-oriented (excluding the addressee), used to draw the addressee’s attention to an entity; addressee-oriented (including the speaker), used to maintain attention to an entity; and distal (excluding both the speaker and the addressee), used to delay attention to an entity. These distinctions are richly illustrated with Vera’a examples. Schnell relates these results to information structural concepts in terms of their endophoric use: speaker-oriented demonstratives are used to introduce new information, and distal forms are used to keep track of background information. Addressee-oriented forms are compatible with both topic and focus (Krifka 2008); in particular, for focus, these forms are found in focus syntactic constructions (where the pronoun is left-dislocated and marked with the emphatic marker *sa*). These intersections will be most interesting to follow-up from the perspective of relational information structure. Schnell’s conclusion is that the core meaning of the Vera’a demonstratives is their joint attention focus relation which can also intersect with relational information structure in a predictable manner.

**Asako Shiohara and Anthony Jukes** (‘Two definite markers in Manado Malay’) bring to light new data from Manado Malay on the reference of articles (*ni* and *tu*) and the possessive (*depe*) as based on the narration of a recipe video by four speakers. Although each speaker had a different preferred strategy (preference to use an article; preference to use the possessive *depe*; use of both strategies, or neither), it can be observed that all used zero marking (p. 128). Despite the interspeaker variation, the authors show that the definite markers indicate two different semantic dimensions across Hawkins’ (2015) four types of definiteness: the articles *ni* and *tu* are used for direct situational and anaphoric reference, while the possessive *depe* marks the referent as identifiable through association with the larger situation as shared between the interlocutors in cases where there is no clear antecedent. Further evidence for these different functions, they argue, is the possible co-occurrence of the two types of definite markers within one NP in a prenominal position indicating that their semantics are not mutually exclusive. The authors conclude that while the current findings are similar to Cirebon Javanese
Manado Malay may move towards the use of only one definite marker as it is rapidly obtaining speakers.

3.2 Part II. Information structure and syntactic constructions

I Wayan Arka and I Nyoman Sedeng (‘Information structure in Sembiran Balinese’) examine how topic and focus are expressed in Sembiran Balinese, a conservative mountain dialect, as based on a corpus of spoken conversation and life story narratives as well as elicited examples. They show that in alternative word orders beyond default SVO, Balinese follows the cross-linguistic pattern whereby topic and focus can be in the left periphery, and furthermore, if they co-occur, topic must precede focus. Arka and Sedeng’s main theoretical contribution is a new proposal for distinguishing different types of topic and focus that are decomposed into semantic-discourse/pragmatic features of [+− salient], [+− given], and [+− contrast], which can be integrated into LFG as linking to other layers of structure. These features distinguish primary topic, secondary topic, contrastive topic vs. focus, and new topic vs. focus, and integrate the typological notion of prominence with the feature [+− salient], which “reflects the speaker’s subjective choice of highlighting one element and making it stand out for communicative purposes” (p. 146). They discuss how these different features can be reflective of a gradient nature of prominence, wherein the contrastive topic/frame setter is the most prominent category since all features are [+], while the new/completive focus is the least prominent, where all features are set to [−]—but this is only found in the conclusion. One outcome of integrating the linking of these features to separate layers of structure is that possible alternative orders of topic > focus can be accounted for. That is, the authors argue that focus can precede topic in the case when the focus is linked to the pivot (voice-selected argument); in this case, “grammatical prominence outweighs information structure prominence, at least in (Sembiran) Balinese” (p. 171). This case is only exemplified in one example with question focus preceding the topicalized object (p. 166). One wonders whether other types of focus are compatible with this unexpected order. As this novel approach is primarily descriptively introduced through the rich examples, future studies building on the predictions of these features will be important.

Dwi Noverini Djenar (‘Constituent order and information structure in Indonesian discourse’) investigates how clause types are used to encode events in fictional narratives and television reports in standard Indonesian, comparing their use with Cumming (1991). The three clause types investigated are agentive clauses, [meN-V]; passive clauses, prefixed with di- and which can optionally include a third person enclitic ([di-V(-nya)]); and objective clauses, which have a bare verb
form and encode the patient as a proclitic, restricted in this study to third person [ia V]. Djenar finds that Indonesian has undergone two new developments since Cumming’s (1991) results. First, passive clauses are not necessarily used for climactic events (the highest point of tension in a narrative); agentive clauses can also be used. More generally, all three clause types can be used to encode eventiveness. Second, the preference for agentive clauses seems to have become stronger. When there is a switch in clause type, Djenar argues that this switch reflects the role of information structure as well as the use of stylistic device of repetition. Thus, a switch from [meN-] agentive clauses to [di-V-nya] passive clause signals a shift to a new focus; namely, presentational focus (pp. 190–192). Similarly, a switch from [ia meN-] agentive clauses to [ia V] objective clauses signals a shift of focus, but in addition, creates an impression of structural similarity as in both cases, the third person agent is in a pre-predicate position (pp. 197–201). As for constituent order, the pre-predicate position of the patient in objective clauses was found to correspond with topic continuity, replicating the results in Cumming (1991). Importantly, Djenar also includes the use of zero coding in the coding for NP referents, which is often used. Djenar presents a number of ways in which her study can be extended further, such as the observation that di-V passive clauses with a pre-predicate patient may primarily serve to indicate the topic continuity of the patient, while di-V-nya passive clauses may primarily serve to emphasize an event the agent is performing. It is hoped that these observations will be analyzed in follow-up studies.

Daniel Kaufman (‘Austronesian predication and the emergence of biclausal clefts in Indonesian languages’) investigates how different typological language groupings within Austronesian differ in their predication possibilities, and argues that biclausal clefts in Indonesian-type languages have developed from monoclusal predication in Philippine-type languages. Counter to the widespread assumption that apparent clefts are biclausal in Philippine-type languages (including in Chapter 8, p. 275 and Chapter 12, p. 376), Kaufman proposes that they have a monoclausal structure. Thus, the Tagalog participle can either be the predicate or the subject, in which case it is akin to thematic nominalization. Kaufman argues that this stems from the historical point that the Austronesian voice markers were developed from nominalizations. In general, Philippine-type languages follow the canonical referential mapping, where the less referential element is mapped to the clause-initial predicate position in languages like Tagalog. However, in cases where both parts of the predication are referential or definite, the more referential element is located in the predicate position. Kaufman argues that this follows from an independent definite/animacy hierarchy (Aissen 1999, 2003; Silverstein 1976), which demands linear precedence of those elements higher on the scale (p. 236).
By contrast, Indonesian-type languages, whose verbs do not have the nominal properties of Philippine-type verbs, have developed true biclausal clefts. Kaufman presents evidence from various Indonesian-type languages that illustrate one or more overt pieces of a syntactically complex relativizer. For instance, Indonesian yang is argued to be decomposable into DP and CP elements (a person marking determiner i, a nominal head a, plus a velar nasal linker ŋ as a type of complementizer). A particularly interesting example of a language straddling properties of both Philippine- and Indonesian-type languages is Balantak. The Balantak situation suggests how the change to biclausal clefts happened, where the loss of case-marking simultaneously occurs with the rise of relativizers. Lastly, Kaufman’s proposal predicts that Indonesian-type languages—because of their SVO word order—will not have the unexpected linking as found with Philippine-type languages in copular constructions whereby the more referential element is mapped to the predicate position. This will be an important prediction to test.

Anja Latrouite and Arndt Riester (‘The role of information structure for morphosyntactic choices in Tagalog’) test which voice type (focusing on Actor Voice vs. Theme Voice) occurs when the actor or theme argument is associated with non-default types of topic or focus, as based on translated contexts by four speakers. Latrouite and Riester analyze the translated contexts using the QUD framework, which takes ‘focus’ to be the answer to the current question under discussion. They find that in cases where both the actor and the theme have non-default associations, it seems that the focality of the actor has a greater morphosyntactic effect, leading to the choice of Actor Voice. An interesting split in ay-inversion was also found: when the ay-inverted actor is associated with narrow focus, Theme Voice is chosen; while when the ay-inverted actor is the contrastive topic, Actor Voice is chosen (regardless of the focus on verb, undergoer, or voice).

The authors sum up their work nicely, in that while the methodology did not necessarily produce the intended results of the specific pragmatic relations of the target sentences, the QUD framework provided a precise tool with which to effectively analyze and interpret the data. The focus on the voice choice in Tagalog in their hypotheses, however, seemed to mask the purpose of the syntactic inversions available in Tagalog. Further work on other types of inversion will be fruitful to elucidate the role of information structure in deriving alternate word orders (whether in interaction with or independent from voice choice). Overall, the results show that information structure independently plays a role in voice choice and interacts with syntactic constructions like inversion, and furthermore, can override referentiality or event-type prominence (cf. Latrouite 2011).

Arndt Riester and Asako Shiohara (‘Information structure in Sumbawa: A QUD analysis’) employ the QUD (Question Under Discussion) framework to conversational data in Sumbawa to better understand the choice of constituent
order. Descriptively, Sumbawa allows for either any type of pre-predicate argument or a subject proclitic (except for the third person proclitic on intransitives), but not both. Post-predicate arguments, however, display an ergative pattern: S, the subject of an intransitive, and P, the object of a transitive, occur adjacent to the verb, while A, the subject of a transitive, must be introduced by a prepositional phrase (pp. 288–289). The question the authors explored is whether the choice of S, A or P in pre- vs. post-predicate positions is governed by information structure. While the challenge in using this framework on spoken discourse is to reconstruct the QUDs, the generalization found was that “in all cases, pre-predicate P arguments either correspond to the focused constituent (argument focus) […], or to the contrastive topic”, whereas the post-predicate P argument seemed to be the elsewhere case (p. 305). In the conclusion it is revealed that these two types are distinguished prosodically: the pre-predicate NP with focus occurs with a falling intonation, while the contrastive topic occurs with a rising intonation (p. 307); examples of their pitch track would also be helpful. While no post-predicate A arguments introduced by a preposition was found in the corpus, this was attributed to a genre difference; this construction was found in narratives to disambiguate the agent (p. 304). Finally, it was found that Sumbawa exhibited zero marked arguments, including for proclitics, whenever the argument had a salient antecedent (p. 303).

Naomi Tsukida (‘Preposed NPs in Seediq’) provides an in-depth examination of the properties and functions of preposed NPs, which allow for NPs in a sentence-initial position followed by the particle ‘u and a non-final pause, departing from the basic word order of VXS in Seediq. Based on a written Seediq text, Tsukida argues that the main function of this construction is to indicate a topic. More precisely, when the preposed NP is a subject, non-subject actor, or possessor, they serve as an ‘aboutness topic’; and with a preposed NP indicating a time or an alternative, they serve as a ‘framesetter topic’, following Krifka (2008). The preposed subject NP tended to be proper names, and rarely a pronoun. Tsukida also finds that in cases where the preposed subject NP was a proper name modified by a demonstrative, most had been mentioned already in the discourse. This result seems to indicate the anaphoric function of the demonstrative in preposed position, which was also found to be similar with matrix subjects in their basic word order. Furthermore, the preposed subject NP can optionally have a resumptive pronoun in the main clause. Despite the conclusion that preposed NPs indicate a ‘topic’, no difference was found in topic persistence between preposed subjects and matrix subjects. Further work on the ‘multifunctionality’ of the particle may reveal further characteristics of this construction; for instance, Tsukida mentions that clauses can also be preposed resulting in a conditional construction (p. 316).
3.3 Part III. Information structure and prosody

Nikolaus Himmelmann (‘Some preliminary observations on prosody and information structure in Austronesian languages of Indonesia and East Timor’) presents a positional paper on whether prosody plays a role in reflecting information structure in Austronesian languages. This paper primarily draws from data from Totoli, spoken in Central Sulawesi, and Waima’a, spoken in East Timor, from the author’s database, but also relays prosodic data on Manado Malay from work by Stoel (2007). Himmelmann argues that the prosodic systems of Austronesian languages of Indonesia seem to be fundamentally different from stress-based prosodic systems, and therefore future work should take a different approach than current prosody theory. Instead of lexical stress, an important feature in these languages appears to be reference to prosodic boundaries, both at the IP (Internal Phrase) level and smaller ip (intermediate phrase) levels; although much less is known about the latter. Because of this fundamental difference, Himmelmann suggests that information structural factors such as focus are unlikely to be the source of how prosodic phrasing is organized.

Naonori Nagaya and Hyun Kyung Hwang (‘Focus and prosody in Tagalog’) test the hypothesis that prosody may distinguish the same canonical sentence structure (VSO) that is associated with different focus in Tagalog. That is, VSO word order can felicitously answer a question whose focus targets the whole sentence (‘What happened?’), the predicate (‘What did X do?’), or the object (‘What did X buy?’). However, VSO order cannot be used to answer a subject focus question. The question posed is whether acoustic correlates to prosody (pitch (F0), intensity or duration) differentiate the types of focus when syntax does not (e.g. pseudoclefts). Five male Tagalog speakers participated in a production experiment where they were recorded answering a set of thirteen questions (four target plus nine filler question-answer pairs). They then repeated this ten times. The targets consisted of one sentence focus, one predicate focus, one object focus, and one ‘all-old information’, which was a yes-no question paired with an affirmative answer repeating the whole clause in the question. The discussion could have been made more robust by elucidating possible fatigue or priming effects of this method, especially since four of the fillers contained the same predicate (‘buy’) as the targets, and even one infelicitous answer, a VSO word order answer for a subject question (see (24) in the appendix). The authors report null results: no prosodic difference was found to distinguish types of focus with VSO word order. Instead, the results revealed high inter-speaker variation that did not seem to be related to a dialectal variety. Furthermore, the ‘all-old information’ answer had consistently lower pitch and intensity compared to the focus answers, which may be attributable to the
information status. Another unexplored option is that it could be due to the question-answer type (wh-focus vs. ‘yes-no’ question).

Sonja Riesberg, Janina Kalbertodt, Stefan Baumann and Nikolaus Himmelmann (‘On the perception of prosodic prominences and boundaries in Papuan Malay’) conducted two perceptive studies on Papuan Malay, one on perceived prominence and one on the perceived last word of a prosodic unit, using the Rapid Prosody Transcription (RPT) method (e.g., Cole et al. 2010). Previously, Papuan Malay has been argued to have regular penultimate stress (Kluge 2014), while recent research argues that Malayic languages do not have lexical stress (cf. Goedemans and van Zanten 2007; Maskikit-Essed and Gussenhoven 2016). Their results show that across the 22 participants, inter-rater agreement was much lower for the prominence experiment compared to the boundary one. The two most influential factors for both prominence and boundary ratings were pause and word duration/mean syllable duration. In other words, prosodic factors are more important cues compared to pitch factors for Papuan Malay. These results together suggest that prosodic prominence may not be a relevant category: Papuan Malay lacks stress. While the experiment and results are laid out in a very clear, accessible manner, the experiment does not add much to the theme of this book. There is no reference to how these results relate to information structure or not, despite the fact that the experimental stimuli do presumably include constructions concerning relational information structure. The stimuli included 56 excerpts of audio recordings from narrations of the Pear Movie (Chafe 1980) and playing the Tangram Task, in which two speakers negotiate whether their pictures are the same or not. Especially concerning the latter dialogues, the audio recordings would likely include focus constructions, but these details are not given in the chapter. However, since the overall conclusion is that Papuan Malay lacks stress, it may be the case that prosody does not play a major role in reflecting information structure.

4 Food for thought

This book presents much food for thought in terms of the rich empirical data brought to the forefront on information structure in Austronesian languages. As each chapter outlines further ways forward in investigating deeper into these issues, it is hoped that this book will serve as a launchpad for future research in this domain, such as applying the QUD framework to understand morphosyntactic choices in other Austronesian languages.

I see this book as being useful for Linguistic Typology readers in at least three ways. First, Himmelmann’s chapter in Part III calls for more novel approaches to studying prosody (and its possible role in reflecting information structure) in
Austronesian languages. It will be exciting to see how the field—including Linguistic Typology readers—responds to this call.

Second, prominence has become a recent hot topic; both in relation to linking to cognitive or perceptual domains such as with joint attention focus (Diessel 2006) as well as within linguistic domains, such as separating prominence to different levels including information-structure, event-based, or referential-based (Latrouite 2011). Although the word ‘prominence’ is not always used, each chapter in this volume has much to offer, from testing the predictions of the prominence feature set (within LFG) that Arka and Sedeng propose (Chapter 5), to examining voice choice in Tagalog as based on the information structural level in competition or as opposed to other levels which prominence is relevant to (Chapter 8).

Third, while Part I focused on NP-marking related to referential information structure and Part II focused on relational information structure related to morphosyntactic constructions, there was no study that focused on the possible connection between these two themes. For example, while Tsukida’s study on preposed NPs in Seediq (Chapter 10) found no difference in topic persistence between subjects and preposed subjects (despite the fact that preposed NPs are argued to be topics), she did find a difference in NP-type, with proper names being more common in the preposed position. Demonstratives were found in both positions, but these were not related to possible ‘joint attention focus’ manipulations as in Diessel (2006). On the flip side, in Schnell’s chapter on demonstratives in Vera’a, which argues that the core meaning is types of attention-focusing, he also shows that some of the (addressee-oriented) demonstratives are also compatible in syntactic constructions in which a NP plus demonstrative is left-dislocated and also marked with a particle. Further work on these constructions and which demonstratives are possible would be interesting to relate the two themes in this book.

References


Carroll, Alice, Barbara Kelly & Lauren Gawne. 2011. The jackal and crow picture task. A collaboration of The Australian National University, Griffith University, University of Melbourne, and the Max Planck Institute for Psycholinguistics.


