

The parallel between nominal and clausal demonstratives in Abui

This paper discusses the usage of demonstratives in both the nominal and the clausal domain in Abui, a Trans-New Guinea (Papuan) language spoken on Alor Island in Eastern Indonesia. In both domains, the position of the demonstrative is co-related with its interpretation. Demonstratives preceding NP/VP are deictic, indicating spatial location; demonstratives following NP/VP are anaphoric, indicating temporal location.

Data: In the nominal domain, the deictic *do* precedes the NP, pointing to an object located in space, as in (1a); the anaphoric *do* follows it, pointing to an object in the discourse, mentioned before the speech time, as in (1b).

- (1) a. *do* *fala*
 PRX house
 'this house (near me)'
- b. *fala* *do*
 house PRX
 'this house (I talked about)'

Only deictic elements like demonstratives and possessors precede the NP, other adnominal modifiers follow, see (2a) and (2b).

- (2) a. *do* *Simon* *he-sepeda*
 PRX Simon 3II.AL-bike
 'this Simon's bike'
- b. *sepeda* *tifa* *do*
 bike be.new PRX
 'this new bike (I talked about)'

In the clausal domain, the pre-VP *do* is interpreted deictically, locating an event in space. The post-VP *do* is interpreted anaphorically, locating an event in time.

- (3) a. *a* *kul* *do* *mi-a!*
 2SG must PRX be.in-DUR
 'you must be here!'
- b. *a* *fala* *mi-a* *do*
 2SG house be.in-DUR PRX
 'you have just been in the house'

In both the nominal and the clausal domain, the deictic/spatial and the anaphoric/temporal demonstrative can co-occur, as shown below:

- (4) a. *do* *fala* *foka* *do*
 PRX house be.big PRX
 'this big house here'
- b. [*do*,]_{NP} *do* *na-rik* *bai* *do*
 PRX PRX 1SG.PAT-hurt as.well PRX
 'this here really hurts me now'

The higher and the lower demonstrative can differ:

- (5) a. *oro* *fala* *yo*
 DST house MD.AD
 'the house (that you know about) over there'
- b. *ò* *e-feela* *do*
 MD.L 2SG.AL-friend PRX
 'the friend of yours below'
- c. *ama* *loku* *oro* *nala* *nee-i* *do*
 person PL DST what eat-PFV PRX
 'the people have just eaten over there'

Analysis: The data show (i) there is a parallel between the nominal domain and the clausal domain in terms of spatial and temporal reference; (ii) deictic/spatial elements are located higher than anaphoric/temporal elements in a phrase. Panagiotidis (2000) observes similar co-relation between position and deictic/anaphoric alternation of the demonstratives in Modern Greek nominals. She relates the two occurrences of the demonstratives via movements. We argue that the possibility of having two different demonstratives in Abui in the same phrase shows that the movement account is inadequate.

References:

Kratochvíl, F. (to appear). A grammar of Abui, a Papuan language of Alor. LOT, Utrecht.

Panagiotidis, P. (2000). Demonstrative determiners and operators: The case of Greek. *Lingua* 110, pp. 717-742.