

Topic and Focus in Seediq

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In describing Philippine-type Focus system the term "focus" is used, but in a sense different from the notion of focus in studies of information structure in general. As a general description of focus, Krifka (2006: 6) notes "Focus indicates the presence of alternatives that are relevant for the interpretation of linguistic expressions", for example. In Philippine-type system, focus is said to highlight one of the entities relevant to the discourse, or to be the most salient entity relevant to the discourse, but as can be seen, its definition is quite vague.

In this paper, I will show how the "focus" in Seediq, an Austronesian language spoken in Taiwan, and of course with Philippine-type "Focus" system, is like in respect to the information structure. It will be shown that the "focus" in this language does not necessarily indicate the presence of alternatives. I would rather call it "subject", instead of "focus". Rather, non-subject NPs can be "focus".

I will also look at how the left-dislocated NP, which is often considered as Topic, behaves. It is roughly considered as frame setters; I will see its function more precisely, with respect to the information structure.