

## Left-Dislocation in Indonesian

### Pelepasan Ke Kiri Dalam Bahasa Indonesia

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#### Abstract

This paper aims to identify the constructions of Left-dislocation (=LD) in Indonesian in the scope of pragmatic-syntax. The research data are collected from various written and spoken Indonesian. The collected data were analyzed descriptively with discourse analytic approaches in qualitative perspectives. The LD constructions in Indonesian have the form of *-nya* as the resumption of dislocated constituent. This study found that the LD construction in Indonesian allows a higher degree of Topic-prominent than in other Subject-prominent languages. The Indonesian LD construction has stronger connectivity between the dislocated constituent and its resumption than the traditional LD construction. This feature of LD structures involves in topic-prominence of Indonesian syntax. This study suggests tentatively that Indonesian is classified as both Subject-prominent and Topic-prominent language. The architecture of LD and topicalization is revisited syntactically in this article: topicalization needs to be identified as Zero-type LD and merged within the notion of LD.

**Keywords:** *Indonesian, left-dislocation, syntax, topicalization, typology*

#### Introduction

This article describes the phenomena of Left Dislocation (=LD) in Indonesian. LD constructions have two obligatory constituents: one is the noun phrase (=NP) which is dislocated from a clause, and the other is the pronoun or NP which is anaphorically related within the clause. According to Ross (1967), the LD is strictly differentiated from topicalization. Topicalization is an articulation within a clause, yet LD construction separates the focused NP from the initial clause. The examples of (1) ~ (3) indicate how the canonical declarative sentence as (1) can be derived as LD and topicalized construction as (2) and (3) respectively.

- (1) *Sepatu anak itu merah.* (Canonical)  
shoes child that red  
'That child's shoes are red.'
- (2) *Anak itu sepatunya merah.* (LD)  
child that shoes-his/her red  
'That child, his/her shoes are red.'
- (3) *Anak itu sepatu merah.* (topicalization)  
child that shoes red  
'That child, shoes are red.'

Li and Thomson (1976) introduced the typological foundation based on the grammatical relations of subject-predicate and topic-comment. To explain structural phenomena of a language based on grammatical relations, they classified languages as Subject-prominent languages (=Sp languages); Topic-prominent languages (=Tp languages); Subject-prominent and Topic-prominent language; and Neither Subject-prominent nor Topic-prominent languages. Indonesian is classified as an Sp-language in which the grammatical relation of subject-predicate plays a major role.

Subject-predicate relation has been the foundation of the analysis of the Indonesian syntax. Kridalaksana et. al. (1985:151) described a clause as the grammatical unit which consists of a subject and a predicate. Keraf (1990:106) examined that the functions of subject and object are changed when their places are shifted. Verhaar (1980) suggested that the Indonesian verbs have two passive forms, and the verb systems enables the variations in subjectivity.

On the other hand, Verhaar (1980:52) admits that Indonesian is not an example of a "pure type" of subject-prominent language. He argues against the claim that Indonesian is the subject-prominent language: first, the subject is often unnecessary in the discourse structure; second, Indonesian verbs are not marked to match the subject; and third, the frequency of topicalization by using relative clause is rather high (1980: 53). Likewise, Kaswanti specified the topic-comment structure in Indonesian along with the inversion of the subject-predicate pattern (Kaswanti, 1989; Wagiaty et al., 2013). Kaswanti (1982: 33) mentioned that the analysis of Indonesian grammar was "colored in tradition for a long time although the tradition was already transformed". Melyanda, Jufrizal, and Yusdi (2019) found that the focused phrase maintains the front position in Indonesian while the structure shift including subject omission often occurs in natural Indonesian.

The basic word-order in Indonesian and its practical transformation are involved in the discussion for LD construction and topicalization. According to Ross (1967), the dislocated constituent is syntactically separated from the initial clause in the LD construction, whereas the front-moved constituent is still the part of the initial clause in the topicalization. Both in LD and topicalized constructions, it is overt that the frontmost constituent is a topic. Therefore, it is problematic to follow the Ross (1967)'s assumption that the leftmost constituent is out of topic-comment structure. This is because the referential resumption that takes its place in the clause is not always identical with the dislocated NP in both grammatical and semantic way (see Ross, 1976; Greenberg 1984).

This paper has its significance in the necessity of reinvestigation for the Indonesian LD constructions on the basis of the new approach to LD and topicalization. This paper will answer three questions. First, which attributes does the Indonesian LD construction have? Second, considering the properties of the Indonesian LD structure, does the Indonesian syntax have the topic prominence? Lastly, how can the relation between LD and topicalization be reconstructed in terms of syntax?

To answer these questions, this study will proceed with three parts. The first part entails an analysis of the syntactic and semantic attributes of the Indonesian LD construction. The second part will aim to present the prototypical topic-comment structures in Indonesian. The third part will focus on the scalability of the attributes of LD and present the new notions for describing syntactically topicalization and LD. This research is the approach to align Indonesian LD constructions with the existing language typology theories. Furthermore, it is hoped that this research proposes the new theoretical point of view for the other Austronesian studies.

## Method

This research used the observation method (Sudaryanto, 2016) with note-taking techniques. The Indonesian sentences were taken from various written and oral sources, including novels, academic writings as well as several other sources written and spoken by native Indonesian speakers. Synchronic in nature, this study uses descriptive methods to analyze data and phenomena systematically and factually. This paper used insertion, change, and expansion techniques on the basis of distribution method (Mastoyo, 2007:54, 60) to determine the uniformity from separated linguistic units.

## Result and Discussion

### *Syntactico-Semantic Features*

The prototypical LD schema is comprised of four attributes (Lambrecht, 2001: 1050, Westbury, 2016: 23).

- a. A referential constituent both precedes and is dislocated from a core clause with which it is associated.
- b. An alternative position for the dislocated constituent exists within the associated core clause.
- c. The alternative position is filled by an anaphoric co-referential resumptive element in the form of a regular or clitic pronominal or an epithet.
- d. The dislocated constituent is accompanied by a separate intonation contour.

Consider the example (4) of LD structure in Indonesian to be identified under these four attributes.

- (4) *Orang itu anaknya lima.*  
person that children-his/herfive  
'That person has five children.' (Kridalaksana, 1985:161)

First, the dislocated constituent in (4) is *Orang itu*. This NP precedes its core clause. Second, an alternative position for the dislocated constituent exists within the associated core clause. The dislocated constituent has its reference in (4) in the form of

*-nya* in the core clause. The third attribute requires two distinct considerations: a) whether the filler form is a pronominal or an epithet; and b) whether the filler is a resumptive element or not. Consider the example (5) to examine these requirements.

- (5) *Anak itu ibu-nja membeli sepatu.*  
 child that mother-his/her buy shoes  
 ‘That child, his/her mother buys shoes.’ (Li and Thompson, 1976:470)

In (5), the filler is *-nja* (the old word of *-nya* in Indonesian) as a pronoun copy. Both the sentence (4) and (5), as well as other sentences that have LD construction, contain *-nya* as an interclausal element.

The LD structure has two heuristic structural categories, commonly referred to as H-Type LD (=HTLD, Hanging Topic LD) and C-Type LD (=CTLD, Clitic LD) (Westbury, 2016:24). HTLD and CTLD are distinguished by the prototypical form of the co-referential resumptive in each construction. The resumptive in HTLD construction is a strong or weak pronoun, an agreement morpheme, or even an epithet. On the other hand, in the CTLD constructions, the resumptive is obligatorily a clitic pronoun or an agreement morpheme.

The form of the resumptive is indicative of the connection between dislocated constituent and the core clause. In particular, the strong pronouns and epithets of HTLD constructions imply weaker connectivity with the core clause, while the clitic resumptive in CTLD constructions evinces stronger connectivity in this respect.

LD constructions in Indonesian have the clitic *-nya* filler, which refers to the constituent for CTLD. They are considered to be connected with the core clauses in a tight, strong, and grammatical way. Considering how the prototypical topicalization is characterized, the LD constructions in Indonesian are regarded to have distinctive property of topicalization.

Another consideration for the third attribute of LD is whether the filler is a resumptive element or not. The term ‘resumptive’ is reserved only for the referents that are in a total identity relation (*i.e.*, coreferential). Notwithstanding the generative tradition, it is found that there are other LD constructions which have the non-coreferential resumptive.

Observing the sentence (5), the resumption of the dislocated NP *Anak itu is ibu-nja (ibu-nya)*, not merely *-nja(-nya)*. It is because *-nja(-nya)* is semantically still incomplete until it is detached to *ibu*. It implies that the dislocated constituent and its resumption are linked metonymically, not coreferentially. A metonymic relation refers in which the referent stands in either a hypernymic relation (e.g. while/part) or hyponymic relation (e.g. part/whole) with another referent. Therefore, the LD constructions in Indonesian refers to a non-coreferential resumptive LD. It is remarkable that the non-coreferential resumptive LD constructions show higher connectivity regarding semantic completion.

Lastly, the dislocated constituent is accompanied by a separate intonation contour.

- (6) *Anak saya itu // tidak mau makan ikan.*  
 child my that not want eat fish  
 ‘My child doesn’t want to eat fish.’ (Verhaar, 1980:49)

- (7) *Sekolah itu // halamannya luas.*  
school that ground-its large  
'That school has large ground.' (Verhaar, 1980:50)

The example (6) does not show LD construction. Verhaar (1980) states that the subject immediately floats on the surface when the pause after *Anak saya itu* is finished. Then, the NP *anak saya itu* becomes the subject. Meanwhile, in (7) which has the LD construction, the pause is not positioned after the subject, but only after the constituent that has been dislocated.

In brief, the Indonesian LD structure syntactically corresponds to CTLD and semantically corresponds to non-coreferential resumptive LD. The Indonesian LD demonstrates a higher grammaticalization compared with the traditional HTLD. It also occupies stronger semantic connection between the dislocated NP and the resumption in the initial clause. These attributes are generally observed in the prototypical topicalization, which provides the clue for topic-prominence in Indonesian.

### **Typological Features**

In light of the syntactic and semantic profile of the Indonesian LD structure, the discussion turns to the typological approach to examine the topic-comment structure of this language. The topic-comment structure is not reserved only the Tp-languages classified by Li and Thompson (1976). Every language can form a topic-comment construction whether the language is the Tp-language or not (cf. Li and Thompson, 1976: 459; Verhaar 1980: 54). However, there are exclusive properties observed only in the Tp languages. The prominence of subject or topic in Indonesian is examined in accordance with the main arguments reserved for Tp-languages by Li and Thompson (1976).

First, the double subject sentences are prototypical topic-comment sentences.

- (8) *Nèike shù yèzi dà.*  
that tree leaves big  
'That tree (topic), the leaves are big.' (Mandarin) (Li and Thompson, 1976: 468)

- (9) *Mie itu rasanya enak.*  
noodle that taste-its good  
'That noodle (topic) tastes good.'

The sentence (8) has two subjects, namely double subject, *Nèike*, and *shù*. The first one, *Nèike* is the topic, and *shù* functions as the subject. Descriptions of languages often involve the order with topicalization where an element occurs at the beginning of a sentence (Dryer, 2007: 77). For topicalization, the speaker is forced to find other means such as dislocation, to satisfy the communicative order or the topic-comment order.

Given that the dislocated constituents in CTLD constructions occupy as strong connectivity with core clauses as topicalization, sentence (9) has a topic-comment structure identical to the double subject constructions of (8).

The dislocated constituent *mie itu* and its resumption *rasanya* are metonymically linked. Constructions of this type are commonly referred to as "Chinese-style Topic

Construction” (cf. Chafe 1976, Le and Thompson 1976, Lambrecht 2001, *inter alia*). This Chinese-style Topic Construction supports the correspondence between (8) and (9).

Secondly, in Tp-language, it is usually the topic, not the subject, that controls the deletion of coreferential elements within the clause.

(10) *Nèike shù yèzi dà, suǒyi wǒ bu xǐhuān ( ).*  
 That tree leaves big so I not like ( ).  
 ‘That tree (topic), the leaves are big, so I don’t like it.’

(11) *Mie itu rasa-nya enak, tapi aku tidak makan-nya.*  
 noodle that taste-its good but I not eat-it  
 ‘That noodle (topic), it tastes good, but I don’t eat it.’

Considering the example (10) that the coreferential element with the topic is deleted as ( ) in the clause. The object in the second clause can be understood as referring to the topic *the tree*, not the subject *leaves*. Likewise, clitic *-nya* in (11) refers to the topic *Mie itu*, not to the subject *rasanya*. The clitic *-nya* is a weak pronoun that does not varyate itself. The automatic attachment implies that the constant formation of *-nya* as an object converges to the deletion of an object.

Lastly, Tp-languages have fewer constraints in terms of what can serve as the topic constituent.

Li and Thompson (1976) provide example sentences in Indonesian to witness the high constraints on the topic constituents in Sp-languages. They claim that Indonesian do not allow the object NP as the topic, and this is one of the arguments to support the classification of Indonesian in Sp-languages.

Consider the sentence (12) which is presented in Li and Thompson (1976: 471).

(12) \**Sepatu itu, ibu anak itu membeli.*  
 shoe that mother child that buy  
 ‘The shoes (topic), the child’s mother buys them.’

(12) is mentioned as an ungrammatical example to claim that Indonesian have constraints on object NP to be topicalized. However, an object is topicalized in Indonesian as the example (13) and (14).

(13) *Surat itu sudah aku baca.*  
 letter that already I read  
 ‘I already read the letter.’

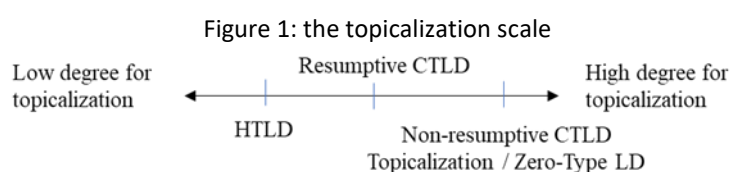
(14) *Penyusunan laporan itu saya dibantu oleh dosen.*  
 draft report that I was-helped by professor  
 ‘I was assisted by the lecturers in drafting the report.’

The example (13) and (14) are the topic-comment structures in which the object NP serves as the topic. Aside of the discussion for the efficiency of the sentences, these object topicalized constructions are frequently observed in natural Indonesian.

In conclusion, Indonesian can be classified in both Sp-language and Tp-language by criteria proposed by Li and Thompson (1976).

### **Merging Topicalization as Zero-Type LD**

Indonesian LD constructions occupy the attributes of the non-resumptive CTLD structure. Despite the lack of a coreferential resumptive, the referent of the dislocated constituent is related to another referent, either semantically or pragmatically. Furthermore, the degree of resumption has relevance to the topicalization: as the referents of non-coreferential resumptive become less linked, the contexts of use as occurs with topicalization becomes wider as figure 1.



Similarly, the CTLD constructions evince that the grammatical category of resumption is also scalar notions: the higher syntactic constraints in forming the anaphoric element, the stronger connectivity between the dislocated constituents and the core clause.

Lastly, this paper proposes the notion of Zero-Type LD to replace topicalization. As the constituents of LD grammaticalized stronger, they get closer to the prototypical topicalization. It means that the CTLD constituents also can function as topicalization. The current notion of topicalization lacks descriptivity. It misleads as if it is the only way to presume its element as a topic. Furthermore, the dislocated constituent is largely assumed to be inserted directly rather than having been derived through movement operation. Therefore, the notions around these phenomena need to be amended by naming topicalization as Zero-Type LD and merging it in the boundary of LD.

### **Conclusion**

The Indonesian LD structure corresponds to the non-coreferential resumptive CTLD. The non-coreferential resumptive CTLD demonstrates a high stage of grammaticalization and strong connectivity with the core clause. These features allow Indonesian to occupy topic-comment structures. First, the CTLD structure in Indonesian is structurally identical to the double subject of Tp-language. Second, the clitic *-nya* is controlled by the dislocated constituent as the topic, not by the subject. Third, the P-S structure of Indonesian enables any constituents to be a topic. Therefore, the LD constructions in Indonesian represent topic-prominence features to re-classify Indonesian as both Sp-and Tp-language. To reflect these findings to the notions, the phenomenon of topicalization is proposed to be renamed as Zero-type Left Dislocation and merged within the boundary of LD.

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