

Referential cohesion and textual variation in Bunun

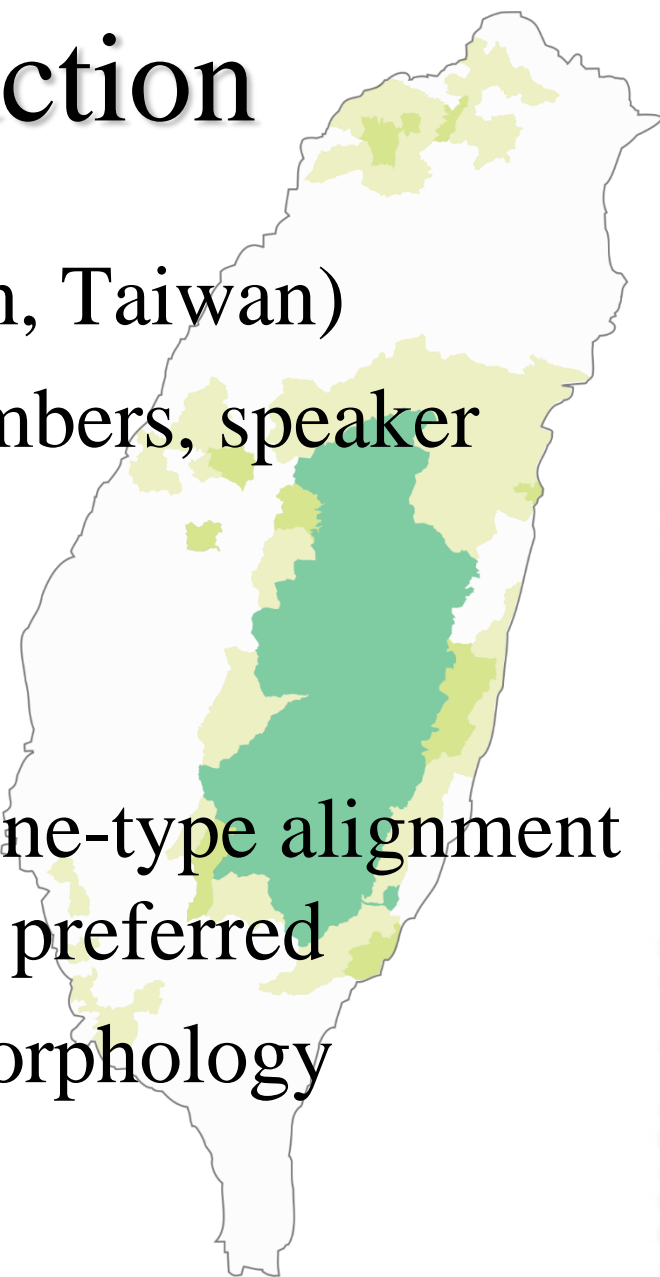
The Third International Workshop on information
structure in Austronesian languages
(ICLAA, TUFS, 18-21 February 2016)

Rik De Busser
rdbusser@nccu.edu.tw



Introduction

- Bunun (Austronesian, Taiwan)
- $\pm 50,000$ ethnic members, speaker numbers dwindling
- Takivatan dialect
- Verb-initial, Philippine-type alignment system, Actor Voice preferred
- Productive verbal morphology



Introduction

- Two aspects of research
 - Christianity and the Bunun language
 - Christian texts as innovated genres
 - ← *International Workshop on “Special Genres” in and around Indonesia*, ILCAA, 2013 (see De Busser 2013)
 - Information structure in Austronesian languages
 - ← *International Workshop on Information Structure in Austronesian Languages*, ILCAA, 2015-2016 (see De Busser 2015)

Cohesion

- “relations of meaning that exist within the text , and that define it as text” (Halliday & Hasan 1976: 4)
- “the set of resources for constructing relations in discourse which transcend grammatical structure” (Martin 2001: 35)
- “a property of a language segment that *assists* language users in interpreting this segment as a semantically and pragmatically coherent unit, in other words, as a TEXT” (De Busser, under review)

Cohesion

- More specifically:
 - Lexico-grammatical resources
 - Expressing relationships between text elements
 - Indicator of textual integrity
 - Transcending clause and sentence structure
 - Interacting with, but not identical to comprehensibility / coherence

ES.: Estragon
VL.: Vladimir

ES.: [...] Nothing to be done.

VL.: [...] I'm beginning to come round to **that opinion**. All my life I've tried to put **it** from me, saying Vladimir, be reasonable, you haven't yet tried everything. And I resumed **the struggle**. [...] So there **you** are again.

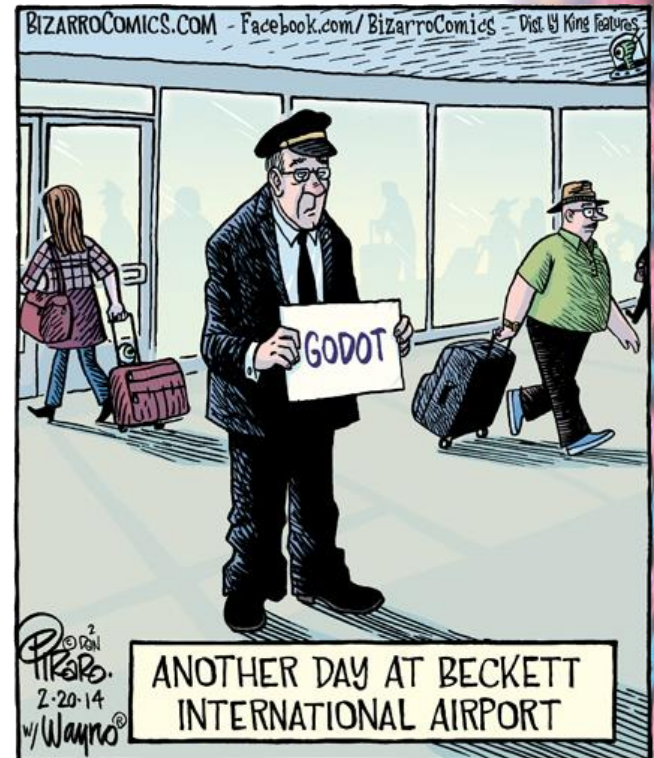
ES.: Am **I**?

VL.: I'm glad to see **you** back. I thought **you** were gone forever.

ES.: **Me** too.

VL.: Together again at last! **We**'ll have to celebrate **this**. But how? [...] Get up till **I** embrace **you**.

ES.: [...] Not now, not now.



(Samuel Beckett, 1953,
Waiting for Godot: Tragicomedy in 2 acts)

Cohesion

- Grammatical cohesion
 - Reference
 - Substitution
 - Ellipsis
 - Conjunction
- Lexical cohesion
 - Reiteration
 - Repetition
 - Synonymy
 - ...
 - Collocation

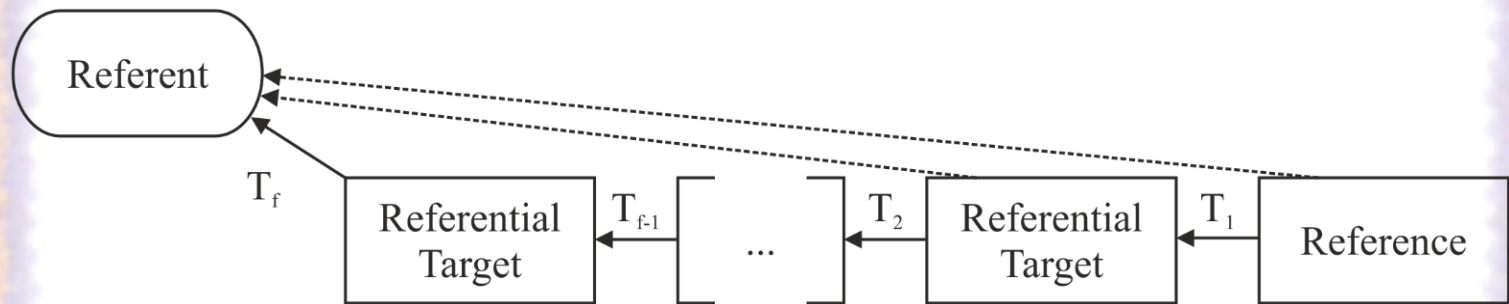
(Halliday & Hasan 1976)

Cohesion and text variation

- Cohesion is said to be an indicator of text type / style / genre / ...
- What does this mean?
 - Differences in referential elements?
 - Differences in cohesive complexity?
 - Differences in chain length?
 - Which text types / styles / genres?
 - Cross-linguistic variation?

Referential cohesion

- Referential relations under identity
 - Pronominal and deictic reference
 - Reiteration
 - Metaphor and metonymy under identity
 - Meronymy, holonymy, hyponymy, hyperonymy
- Cohesive chain:



Marking scheme

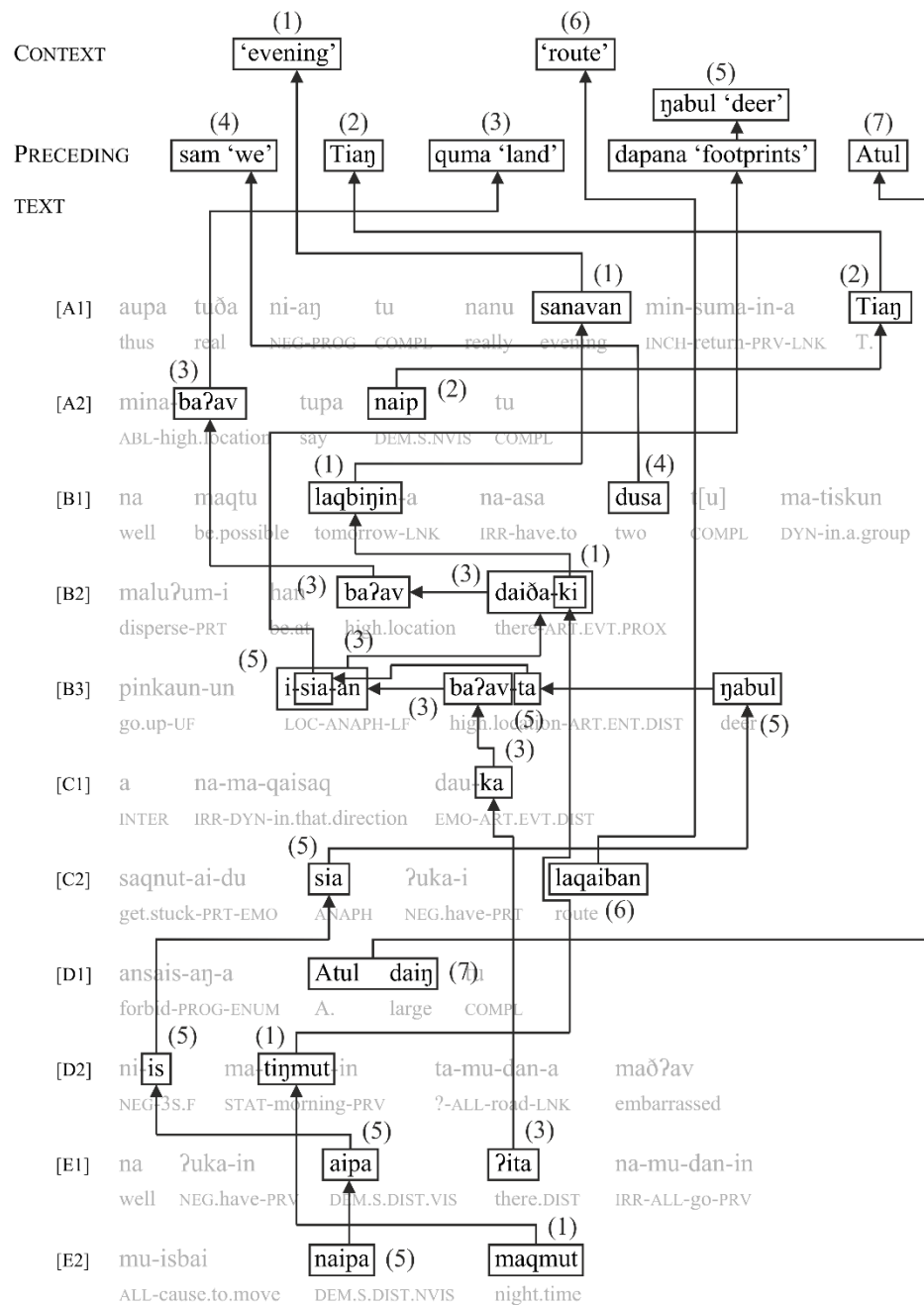
- Reference (Rc) + Location
- Target (Ta) + Location
- Referent (Rt)

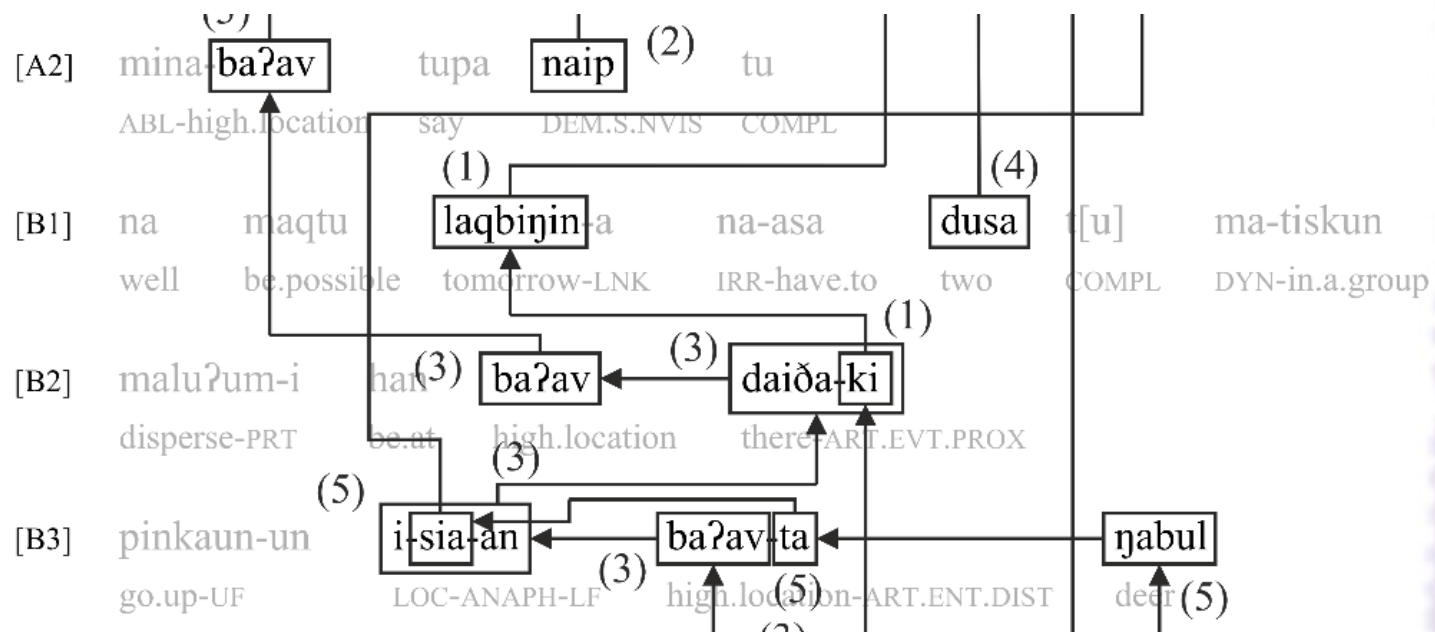
Phoric function	Set/subset relationship Rc→Ta	Semantic function of deixis	Type of referential target	Distance Rc-Ta
Exophoric Anaphoric Cataphoric Homophoric Underspecified Ambiguous	Identity Hyponym Hyperonym Part-whole Antonym Metaphor Metonymy Symbolic	Situational Textual	Entity Event Text	# words

Analysis: oral narrative

[A] But, when it wasn't really evening yet, Tiang had returned, he had come back from the mountain and told us: [B] "Well, tomorrow is possible, two of us will have to go together, and disperse when we get to this place, and we will climb upwards to the deer that is in that place above. [C] A, if he will go in that direction, he will get stuck there, without a way out." [D] But Big Atul forbade us: "no, when it has become morning, it will have left, it will have been frightened. [E] Well, it will not be there anymore, it will be gone, it will have run away during the night."

(TVN-008-002:130-134)



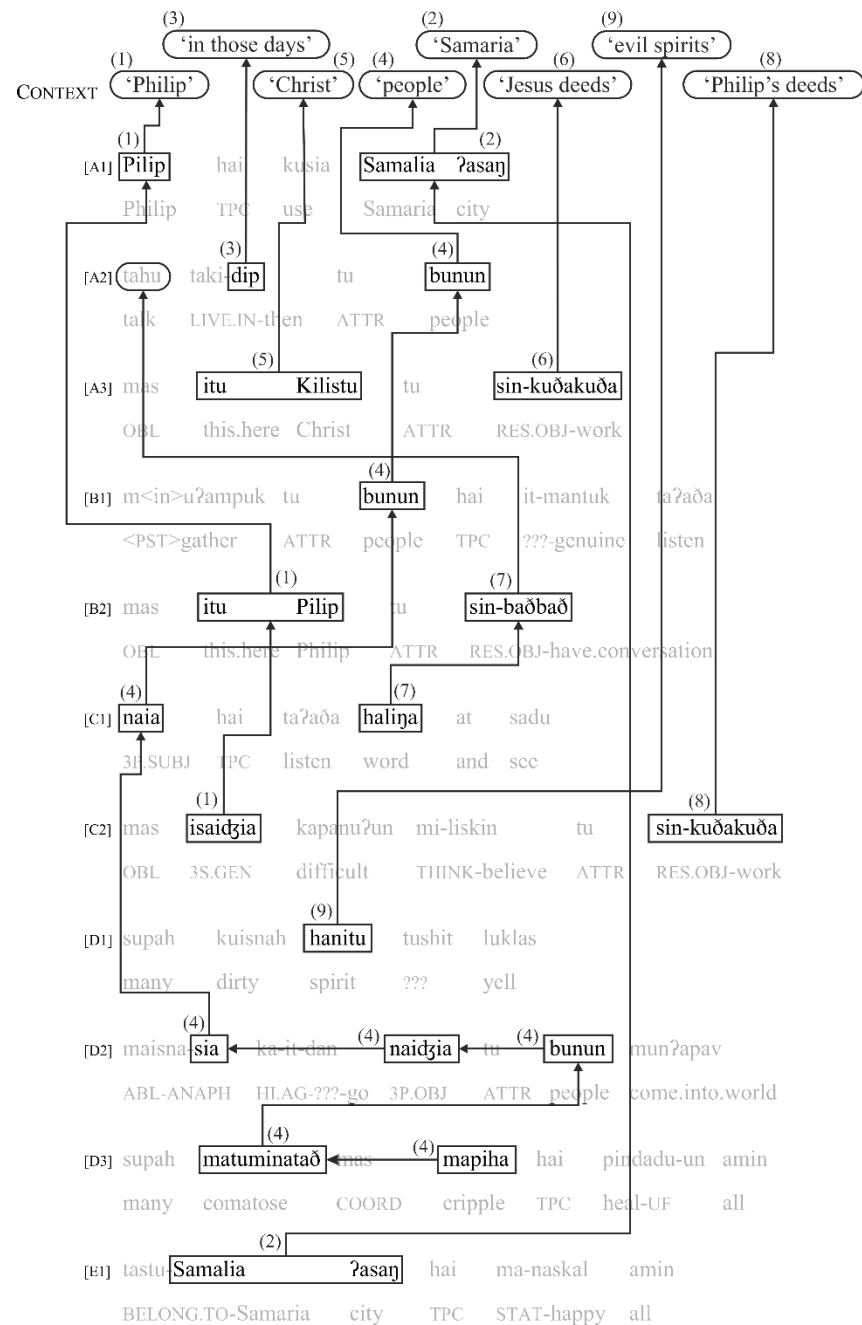


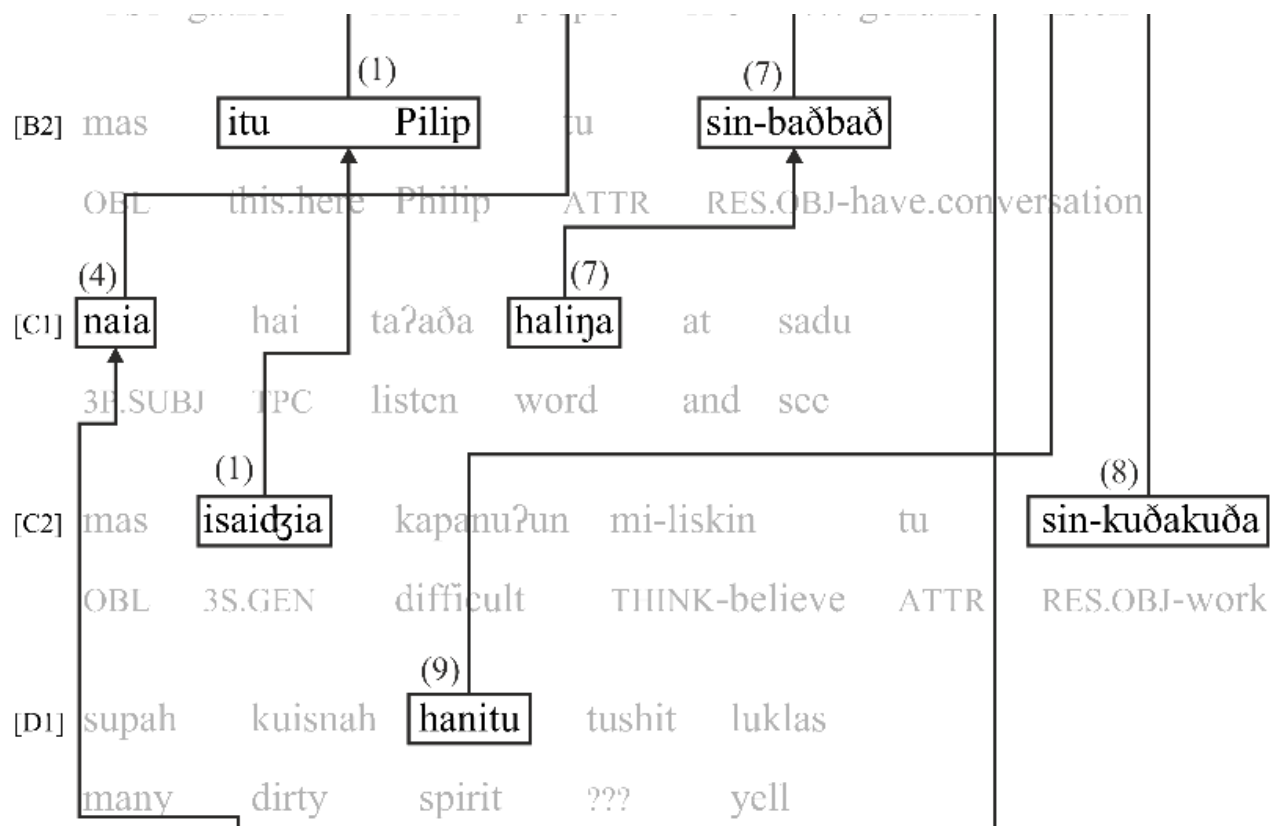
Analysis: Bible text

[A] Philip went down to the city of Samaria, and he talked to the people living there in those days about the life of Christ. [B] The people that had gathered there listened carefully to what Philip said. [C] They listened to his words and saw his works that were difficult to believe. [D] Many filthy spirits yelled and came out from these people into the world; many who were comatose or crippled were healed. [E] Everybody that belonged to the city of Samaria was happy.

(BIB-BUB-NT-ACT-007:38.2-38.6 /

Acts 8:5-8)





Comparison

	Oral narrative (TVN-008-002)	Bible translation (BIB-BUB-NT-ACT-007)
No. of words	51	62
References	24	20
Ref. / # words	.4706	.3226
No. of chains	7	9
Avr. chain length	3.4286	2.2222
Med. chain length	2	1

Comparison

Word class of the Reference	Oral narrative (TVN-008-002)	Bible translation (BIB-BUB-NT-ACT-007)
anaphoric marker	3	0
demonstrative article	3	0
demonstrative pron.	3	0
place word	3	0
manner word	0	0
noun	4	10
numeral	1	0
personal pronoun	1	3
time word	4	0
verb	1	7

Comparison

Functional role of the Target	Oral narrative (TVN-008-002)	Bible translation (BIB-BUB-NT-ACT-007)
Entity	11	9
Event	1	2
Location / Time	10	1
Text	0	0

Comparison

Relationship Reference → Target	Oral narrative (TVN-008-002)	Bible translation (BIB-BUB-NT-ACT-007)
Identity	17	8
Subset	2	3
Superset	0	1
Part	0	0
Whole	1	0
Antonym	0	0
Metaphor	0	0
Metonym	2	0
Symbolic	0	0

Comparison

Phoricity	Oral narrative (TVN-008-002)	Bible translation (BIB-BUB-NT-ACT-007)
Exophoric	1	8
Anaphoric	21	12
Cataphoric	0	0
Homophoric	0	0
Underspecified	2	0
Ambiguous	0	0

Conclusion

- Differences in text type:
 - Word class selection
 - This is a dialect-related factor
 - Spatio-temporal reference (oral > bibl.)
 - Exophoric reference (oral < bibl.)
- Preliminary research

Conclusion

- What has cohesion to do with information structure?
 - H&H: semantics ← not really
 - Pragmatics ← not really
 - Martin: discourse structure ← yes, but
 - Information structure ← seems about right
- Cohesion as referent tracking++
 - Cohesion ~ coherence?
 - Cohesion ~ topic continuity?

Bibliography

De Busser, Rik. Under review. Spatial deixis, textual cohesion and functional differentiation: The case of Takivatan Bunun. *Oceanic Linguistics*.

De Busser, Rik. 2015. The role of Bunun deixis in information structure: An initial assessment. *Proceedings of the Second International Workshop on Information Structure of Austronesian Languages*, 127–140. Tokyo: ILCAA, Tokyo University of Foreign Studies.

De Busser, Rik. 2013. The influence of Christianity on the Bunun language: A preliminary overview. *Proceedings of the International Workshop on “Special Genres” in and around Indonesia*, 59–76. Tokyo: ILCAA, Tokyo University of Foreign Studies.

Halliday, M. A. K. & Ruqaiya Hasan. 1976. *Cohesion in English*. London: Longman.

Martin, James R. 2001. Cohesion and texture. In Deborah Schiffrin, Deborah Tannen & Heidi E. Hamilton (eds.), *The Handbook of Discourse Analysis*, 35–53. Malden: Blackwell.



Thank you for
your attention

