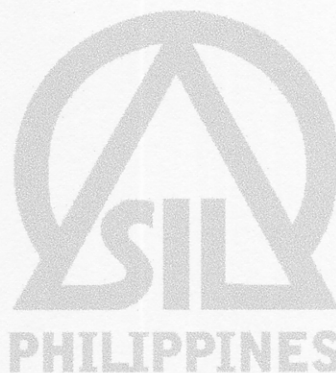


STUDIES IN PHILIPPINE LINGUISTICS

Volume 1 Number 1 1977

Casilda Edrial-Luzares and Austin Hale, series eds.

Austin Hale and C.R. Gieser. "Approaches to an
explanatory discourse in Guinaang Kalinga" 133–147



ISSN: 0119-6456

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Sample Citation Format

Ma. Lourdes S. Bautista. 1977. "The noun phrase in Tagalog—English code switching". *Studies in Philippine Linguistics* 1:1, 1–16. Online. URL: http://www.sil.org/asia/philippines/book_store.html#culture [etc.] + access date.

APPROACHES TO AN EXPLANATORY DISCOURSE IN GUINAANG KALINGA

Austin Hale
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Some twenty years ago at Gieser's request Juan Baluga, a former school teacher, leader, and councilor in the village of Guinaang, Pasil, Kalinga-Apayao, wrote a brief description of how his Kalinga forefathers obtained their food. Upon more recent examination we were impressed with Baluga's skill in achieving significance in an explanatory discourse of such brief compass. Yielding to the temptation to explore this text, we decided to see how much such a text could reveal of the structure of explanatory discourse in Guinaang Kalinga.

Our discussion of this text consists of four parts: 1) a discussion of the general nature of the speech act and the discourse type, 2) a presentation of the various charts and displays we found helpful in looking at the text, 3) a discussion of what these approaches suggested to us regarding the aspects of naturalness in Kalinga explanatory discourse, and 4) a discussion of the means by which significance was achieved.

1. Speech Act and Discourse Type.

Crucial at the outset of any discourse study is the question, "What was the speaker (or the writer, as in this case) trying to achieve with his words--what was he doing?" The answer to this question is a description of the speech act. What Baluga appears to be doing in the text under consideration is drawing an extended implicit contrast between the way his forefathers obtained their food and the way his contemporaries obtained it. It could be looked upon as a descriptive discourse except for the fact that it not only describes, but it also provides an explanation for the facts it describes. Baluga was explaining the differences to which he pointed in his extended contrast.

To say that the intent of the speech act was to provide an explanatory account of described differences between the bread-winning behavior of Baluga's peers and his ancestors, however, is not necessarily the same thing as saying that he delivered an explanatory discourse. A discourse type is a formal strategy for the performance of speech acts, but no unique one-to-one relationship between speech acts and discourse types can easily be supported. It is obvious, for example, that narrative discourse frequently serves as a vehicle for a hortatory speech act. The speech act can be identified to a large extent through a clear understanding of what the speaker or writer is doing with his audience. The discourse type, by contrast, is identified primarily through a formal, or at least semi-formal, investigation of the internal structure of the discourse. We can observe, for example, that this text is probably not an example of narrative discourse because it is not built around a chronological series of events. It is also quite unlikely that this text will turn out to be a procedural discourse, since it is not built around a chronological sequence of steps culminating

in a completed process or product. It is probably not an example of hortatory discourse, since it is not built around a series of hortatory points. Since the structure of this text appears to be distinct from these well-known types, and since it appears to represent a fairly straight forward example of description and explanation we have chosen tentatively to refer to it as an example of explanatory discourse.

2. Ways of Looking at the Text.

Discourse displays of various kinds are often useful when one is looking for high level patterns in discourse, provided that one starts with clearly state hypotheses, and provided that one constructs his displays in a way that facilitates the checking of these hypotheses. One of the purposes of this article is to suggest and exemplify several kinds of display that were used to check various hypotheses that looked promising.

A. The Basic Text.

The following is the basic text together with interlinear and free translations.

sit man=ala=-an dat apu=mi si an=on=da
Det,Foc,Sg SF=get=nml Det,Poss,Pl forefather=our Det,NFoc,Sg eat=OF=they

How Our Forefathers Got What They Ate

(Written by Mr. Juan Baluga of Guinaang, Pasil, Kalinga-Apayao)

1. dat umm=una on tagu man=sigab
Det,Foc,Pl SF,Cpt=precede Attrib person SF=pain

dit biyag=da ta abus dit uma
Det,Foc,Sg life=their for only Det,Foc,Sg swidden

on iyatagu=da ta naid pon payaw
Attrib DN,livelihood=their for Neg Exst AP rice

sit awi ta piya=on dat
terrace Det,Temp olden times for good=OF,Ncpt Det,

umm=una on tagu=t
NFoc,Pl SF,Cpt=precede Attrib person=Dent,Foc,Sg

uma sit bib=bilig tot ila=n=da
swidden Det,Loc Pl=mountain so that see=OF,NCpt=they

dat kabusul=da no um=adani tot
Det,Foc,Pl enemy=their when SF,NCpt=near so that

1. The people who went before, their lives were hard for their livelihood was only swiddens since there were no rice terraces in olden times because the people who went before preferred swiddens in the mountains, so that they could see their enemies when they drew near so as not to be taken unawares.

issa=da ma=lmun=an.

Neg=they St,NCpt=be taken unawares=RF

2. ad-adda on piya=on=da dit
even more Attrib good=OF,NCpt=they Det,Foc,Sg

uma maigapu sit kankanayun on
swidden on account of of constant Attrib

b=in=usul tot ulay
customary behavior of enemies so that even though

tayn=an=da dit uma=da
leave=RF,NCpt=they Det,Foc,Sg swidden=their

mang=wa=da=bos sit ili on
SF,NCpt=make=they=again Det,Loc,Sg village Attrib

um=awid=an=da.

SF,NCpt=fleeing=nml=their

3. abus dit sin-akkit on pagoy
only Det,Foc,Sg a little of each Attrib rice

gassilan ubi aba balatong antak katila
corn ubi root gabi mongo peas cow peas camote

on i=mula=da on pasalay issa
Attrib IF,NCpt=plant=they Attrib oftentimes Neg

pon um=anay.

AP SF,NCpt=sufficiency

4. dat umm=una adu dit
Det,Foc,Pl SF,Cpt=precede much Det,Foc,Sg

i=sida=da ta mang=anop=da
IF,NCpt=meat to accompany rice=they for SF,NCpt=hunt

ta adu dat babuy ya
(with dogs)=they for many Det,Foc,Pl wild pig and

ugsa sit naid pon payyan od paltug.
deer Det,Temp Neg Exst AP yet EC gun

2. They preferred swiddens even more on account of the constant feuding so that even though they left their swiddens they would make (them) again in the village to which they fled.

3. They planted a little of each of (the following:) rice, corn, ubi root, gabi, mongo peas, cow peas, camote, and oftentimes it was not sufficient.

4. The ones who went before, they had much to eat with their rice for they hunted since there were many wild pigs and deer in the time before there were guns.

<u>Prenuclear</u>	<u>Nuclear</u>	<u>Postnuclear</u>
1. The people who went before	their lives were hard	for their livelihood was only swiddens since there were no rice terraces in olden times because the people who went before preferred swiddens in the mountains, so that they could see their enemies when they drew near so as not to be taken unawares.
2.	They preferred swiddens even more	on account of the constant feuding so that even though they left their swiddens they would make (them) again in the village to which they fled.
3.	They planted a little of each of (the following:) rice, corn, ubi root, gabi, mongo peas, cow peas, camote, and oftentimes it was not sufficient.	
4. The ones who went before	they had much to eat with their rice	for they hunted since there were many wild pigs and deer in the times before there were guns.
5. When they harvested	they had many people help them	so that they could finish quickly on account of their fear of their enemies.

Figure 1. The position of clauses within sentences.

The representation of the text given in Figure 1 seems to support two kinds of observations: 1) the types of clauses that are found in nuclear position conform closely to what one would expect in descriptive or explanatory discourse, and 2) the functions performed by each of the three positions seem to be fairly distinct and definable.

As for the types of clauses found in nuclear position, Sentences 1, 3, 4, and 5 have clauses which are descriptive, and Sentence 2, though it does have a nuclear clause with a verbal form, the clause itself relates to a habitual situation rather than to an event.

As for the functions performed by each of the three positions, the prenuclear position may be characterized as highlighting the central group of participants, the nuclear position may be characterized as stating the main points, and the postnuclear position may be characterized as supporting these points, explaining them, and making them plausible in the light of a fuller account of the times. Furthermore, it is the relationship between clauses of the nuclear position and the postnuclear position that is crucial for the status of this text as an example of explanatory discourse.

We have observed that the prenuclear position highlights the central group of participants. The tendency for this position to have functions that relate to the whole of a discourse is certainly not restricted to Guinaang Kalinga or even to Philippine languages. What is found in prenuclear position within a sentence is very often involved in linking sections together, marking boundaries between major groupings, setting themes, and holding key participants in prominence.³

There are three instances of clauses or phrases in prenuclear position in this discourse. In Sentence 1 a noun phrase with an embedded clause, "The people who went before", occupies the prenuclear position. This phrase serves to introduce the central participants for the discourse and in so doing draws attention to an implicit contrast between the forefathers and the present-day inhabitants of Guinaang. In Sentence 4 the prenuclear phrase serves to reinforce the identification of the main group of participants. In Sentence 5 the prenuclear clause defines a time-activity frame for the final paragraph: "When they harvested". Again the same group of participants is highlighted, and the time-activity frame introduces the topic of the final paragraph.

The function of clauses in sentence-nuclear position is somewhat different from that of phrases and clauses in prenuclear position. Where the prenuclear position highlights the central group of participants, implicitly contrasting them with the present-day inhabitants of Guinaang, and, in one instance, introducing a paragraph topic, the nuclear position serves to state the main points of the discourse. It spells out the key contrasts between the way food was obtained in the former days and the way in which it is obtained now. These key points can easily be read off the center column in Figure 1.

It is interesting to note how these central points are also given special prominence by means of other devices as well. Except for Sentence 3, where there is no postnuclear material, each of these main points is supported by postnuclear clauses. The nuclear clause in Sentence 1 states the central theme of the discourse, "their lives were hard". The nuclear clause in Sentence 2 is a restatement of a postnuclear clause in Sentence 1 and thus is given prominence through repetition. The nuclear clauses of Sentences 3 and 4 are highlighted by the contrast relationship in which they stand to one another.

On the one hand, they planted a little of each of a number of crops, but on the other hand, since there was much game and they hunted, they had much meat to eat with their rice.

It is also interesting to note that every nuclear clause contains evaluative or quantitative material which forms the crux of the contrast between the lives of the forefathers and those of present-day Guinaang.

The function of clauses in postnuclear position is different again from that of clauses and phrases in the other two sentence positions. While pre-nuclear position is characterized as highlighting the central group of participants, and nuclear position is characterized as stating the main points, the postnuclear position serves to support these points, account for them, and make them plausible in the light of a fuller account of the times. The nature of this support is more fully explored below in the section dealing with the nature of relations between propositions. It will be interesting to look at further examples of explanatory and descriptive discourse in Guinaang Kalinga to see how well this set of correlations between position within the sentence and discourse function holds up for a wider corpus of materials.

C. Focus Patterns.

A second starting hypothesis was that focus patterns can have the following kinds of functions in discourse: 1) they provide internal coherence to sections of nonconflict text by keeping a single participant grouping in focus throughout the section, 2) they provide clues to grouping by a shift of the predominant focus from one participant group to another, and 3) they provide evidence for the identification of the climax and of conflict passages whenever a nonshifting pattern, one which consistently focuses upon a single participant grouping is replaced by a shifting pattern in which the focus oscillates among or between conflicting groups of participants on a crowded stage. In texts in which the discourse type does not call for a climax, the shifting pattern may reinforce tension in a way that contributes to the focal content structure of the discourse.

Figure 2 charts the focus patterns of this text.

Participant Groupings

	Forefathers	Helpers	Props & The Hard Life	Enemies
1.	(their)----- (their)----- they	----- -----	life swidden rice terraces swidden	 ----- enemies
2.	they		swidden	
3.			only a little of each	
4.	they		what they ate with their rice wild pigs and deer	
5.	they	persons who help		

Figure 2. Focus patterns.

One major question that is encountered in any analysis of focus patterns is the question as to what constitutes a participant grouping. One reasonable way of answering such a question is to examine the staging devices employed in the text.⁵ From what point of view is the text presented? The order in which the various participants are brought on stage, and the devices used in introducing these participants can often provide important clues in answering such a question. In this case it is the forefathers who are introduced first. The writer seems to be quite consistent in relating the text from their point of view. The second group of focused elements that are brought on stage consists of items relating to the hard life. The grammatical device employed in relating these items as new information back to old information already introduced is that of the possessive pronoun.⁶ That is, the life referred to was their life. Similarly, the next group of focused participants is first referred to as their enemies. Finally, when the last

focused group of participants is brought on, they are also presented in a quasi possessed role: they (the forefathers) had many people help them. Thus it can be seen that each new set of participants or focused items is brought on stage with explicit reference to their relatedness to the primary set of participants, namely, the forefathers. This particular strategy for relating new information to old serves to preserve a consistent staging or point of view throughout the text.

This text is an example of explanatory discourse and as such does not have a climax structure of the sort usually associated with narrative discourse. It does, however, have a structure that serves some of the same purposes so far as gaining an audience and releasing them having impressed them with the significance of what was said. To do this the speaker or writer generally needs to make a claim, introduce a complication, or portray an unsatisfactory situation. In doing so the writer creates a certain tension that serves to hold the audience and impress them with the significance of what is communicated. Once the tension is released, the skillful writer or speaker will quickly conclude his discourse.

The initial claim that Baluga makes in this text is that the life of his forefathers was hard. The main clause quantifiers and intensifiers serve to maintain the tension in making good on that claim. Another source of tension is found in the postnuclear explanatory material, namely, the existence of enemies.

The major groupings of focused items within this text appears to be the following:

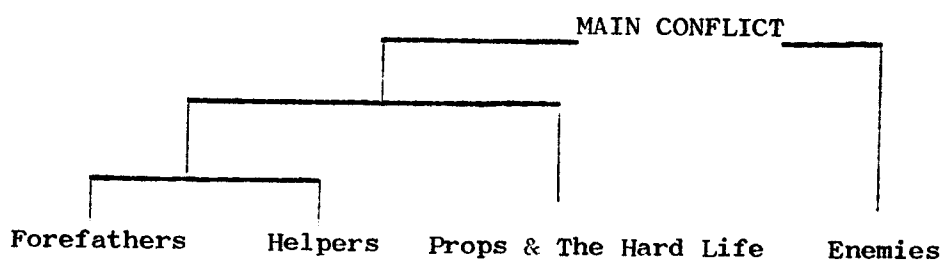


Figure 3. Participant groupings and conflict relations in focused items.

From this point of view, then, the most significant focus shift as far as a conflict focus pattern is concerned is the shift from the series of in-focus items relating to the hard life in Sentence 1 to a focus upon the enemies. This shift formally marks the basic conflict that provides the basic explanation for the hard life of the forefathers. By contrast, the shift in Sentence 5 from focus upon the forefathers to focus upon the helpers is of very minor significance, and could be considered almost a case of non-shifting focus since the helpers would certainly be included within the forefather group introduced in Sentence 1.

In summary, then, a shift of focus that spans the greatest distance possible within the participant grouping as defined by considerations of staging and tension between groups appears to correlate with a conflict situation even in non-narrative discourse. In this example the tension thereby created serves as the most important single explanatory principle and provides a plausible basis for the initial claim that the life of the forefathers was hard.

D. Relations Between Propositions.

A third starting hypothesis was that there would be important correlations between the kinds of relationships existing between propositions, on the one hand, and discourse type, on the other, that would have something to say about the kind of information in discourse that serves as the backbone for an explanatory discourse. In other words, it might begin to answer the question as to what kinds of columns might be most useful in a Thurman chart of an explanatory discourse.

The most general overall relationship that can be stated for the text as a whole is probably that which holds between the theme or discourse topic and the development or support of that theme.

Theme	Development
The life of our forefathers was hard	for/since/because/on account of _____

That this most general relationship should be one that holds between a proposition and the reasons for that proposition fits quite naturally with the view that this is an example of explanatory discourse. Looking at the text somewhat more in detail, the relations between the propositions can be charted as in Figure 4.

1. The people who went before, their lives were hard.

ta Reason
== =====

for their livelihood was only swiddens

ta Reason
== =====

since there were no rice terraces in olden times

ta Reason
== =====

because the people who went before preferred
(to locate) swiddens in the mountains

tot Purpose / Intended Result
== =====

so that they could see their enemies when they
drew near

tot Purpose / Intended Result
== =====

so as not to be taken
unawares

Asyndeton = Restatement and Elaboration
=====

2. They preferred (to use) swiddens even more

maigapu Reason
=====

on account of the constant feuding

tot Purpose / Intended Result
== =====

so that even though they left their swiddens,
they would make them again in the village to
which they fled.

Figure 4. (Part 1) Relations between major propositions.

3. They planted a little of each of (the following:) rice, corn, ...

on Conjoined Evaluation / Result

and oftentimes it was not sufficient

Asyndeton = Contrast

4. The ones who went before, they had much to eat with their rice

ta Reason

for they hunted

ta Reason

since there were many wild pigs and deer in the
time before there were guns.

5. When they harvested they had many people to help them

tot Purpose / Intended Result

so that they could finish quickly

maigapu Reason

on account of their fear of their enemies.

Figure 4. (Part 2) Relations between major propositions.

The major hypothesis that this charting of relations between propositions would seem to support is that the primary backbone relationships within an explanatory discourse are result-reason and means-purpose. It is in terms of these relationships that each point is developed. It is probably not possible to claim at this point, however, that result-reason and means-purpose relations are to explanatory discourse what event-sequence is to narrative discourse. Result-reason and means-purpose develop main points, but they do not seem to be the major relation governing progress along the theme line. It is undoubtedly still too early to propose a candidate relation for that function.

3. Summary.

What we have attempted in this paper is to illustrate the use of three charting techniques in the study of a Guinaang Kalinga explanatory text. We have done this within an approach to discourse that places analytic priority upon the nature of the speech act and upon conditions of effectiveness in discourse. Support has been given to the following hypotheses: 1) that the position of a clause within a sentence partially defines the role of that clause in discourse, 2) that shifting focus patterns tend to mark points of tension and conflict in discourse, and 3) that discourse type correlates to a considerable extent with the selection of major relations between propositions in discourse.

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FOOTNOTES

¹For an example of hortatory structure see Brichoux and Hale, Some Characteristics of Hortatory Strategy in Subanun, elsewhere in this volume.

²Longacre, Robert E. and Stephen Levinsohn, no date, Field Analysis of discourse, mimeographed.

³This tendency can be supported for languages as diverse as koine Greek (Grimes, 1975), Ilianen Manobo (Wrigglesworth, forthcoming), English (Halliday, 1970), and Sunwar (Bieri, Schulze, and Hale, 1973).

⁴The term, focal content, follows the usage of Hale, 1973.

⁵The term, staging, follows the usage of Grimes, 1974.

⁶It is interesting to note, just as a matter of fact that the enemies are brought on stage in focus. That is, the first reference to the enemies has the enemies in focus. We are not arguing here that new information is normally introduced by means of a focused complement of a clause, but only that the participant groupings of items that occur as focused items in this text are brought on stage in a certain sequence and that they are tied together in certain kinds of grammatical relationships. These relationships serve to tie new information back into old information in a way that is intimately involved in the staging for the discourse as a whole and is by no means arbitrary.

This does, however, raise an interesting question about the matter of the eligibility of an item for focus complementation. In some languages it would appear that major participants cannot be focused upon except when they occur as old information.

⁷The notion, kinds of information in discourse, follows Grimes, 1971.

⁸For an exposition of Thurman charts, see Grimes, 1974.