

DISLOCATION AND WORD ORDER IN DALABON

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Australian Aboriginal languages are renowned for their having pragmatically-motivated word order, as opposed to syntactically-motivated word order. Two pragmatically prominent positions have been identified in Aboriginal discourse (Mushin 2005; Baker and Mushin 2008; Simpson and Mushin 2008), often described as ‘first position’, ‘topic’, ‘focus’ or ‘left-dislocated’; and ‘afterthought’, ‘antitopic’ or ‘right-dislocated’ respectively. There are several inter-related issues involved in the identification and classification of dislocated constituents. One issue in particular is the question of how to judge their dislocation: by prosodic, syntactic or discourse-functional criteria? Often, these ideally-distinct analytical layers are only understood in relation to one another, which can lead to circular arguments.

In this paper I tease out these analytical layers and argue that for the Dalabon language of south-western Arnhem Land (Gunwinyguan, non-Pama-Nyungan, Australian) there are two pre-verbal and three post-verbal positions. The pre-verbal positions are left-dislocated and core pre-verbal. The post-verbal positions are antitopic, right-dislocation and independent constituent. Genuine ‘afterthought NPs’ can occur in the independent constituent position. This is a more complex word-order/discourse-functional schema than has previously been presented for Aboriginal languages. This is possibly a product of other authors having included overlapping features in single categories. An example of this being avoided here is the division of post-verbal constituents into three distinct functional positions – particularly the distinction between right-dislocated and independent constituents.

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- Mushin, Ilana. 2005. Word Order Pragmatics and Narrative Functions in Garwa. *Australian Journal of Linguistics* 25 (1):253-274.
- Simpson, Jane, and Ilana Mushin. 2008. Clause-initial position in four Australian Languages. In *Discourse and Grammar in Australian Languages*, edited by Ilana Mushin and Brett Baker. Amsterdam, Philadelphia: John Benjamins.

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