Word Order in Gilaki (Lahijan) and its Relationship with Information Structure: A Typological, Syntactic-Pragmatics Analysis

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One of the parameters that is widely used in Typology is basic word order. And information structure is as one of the mechanisms of pragmatics. In this thesis, word order and information structure are investigated in Gilaki Language (Lahijani dialect) on the base of Whaley (1997) and Erteschik-Shir (2007). The objective of this study is to know what the word order is in this dialect and how it interacts with information structure. To gather the data, native speakers' conversations have been recorded. Data analysis shows that Lahijani is a verb final language (with a high frequency of SOV order) with a free word order (as unmarked form); that is, it is a non-configurational language. Four types of topics have been determined, such as; stage, permanently and temporarily, null (topic-drop), and multiple topics. In Lahijani, every sentences must have at least one topic to be interpreted. According to the data, not all initial elements are necessarily topics. Topic as a given information tends to appear both clause initially and finally. Moreover, two types of foci (focus) as new information are determined; contrastive and restrictive focus. In restrictive one, the ed element is not contrasted with the other elements but in contrastive one, it is contrasted with the other element and is determined by strong stress and more loudness than the other elements and there are two assertions or new information in contrastive focus as well. Therefore, Lahijani has both flexible word order and flexible information structure notions (as marked forms) in which both syntactic elements and information structures can be moved freely by speakers' pragmatic intention. Thus, the main factor for this flexibility is the speakers' pragmatic intention rather than symmetrical interaction between word order and information structure.

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