

**The Clause Structure of Malagasy:
A Minimalist Approach**

by

Matthew Pearson

UCLA Department of Linguistics
405 Hilgard Avenue
Los Angeles, California 90095-1543

pearson@humnet.ucla.edu

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ABSTRACT

This thesis explores the clause structure and word order of Malagasy within the framework of Chomsky's (1995) Minimalist Program and Kayne's (1994) Antisymmetry Theory. In particular, I focus on the status of the clause-final *external argument* (EA), conventionally analyzed as a nominative case-marked *subject*. I consider two major questions about this constituent: What hierarchical position does the EA occupy in the clause structure, and why does it surface in a right-peripheral linear position, following the predicate?

With regard to its syntactic status, I argue that the EA is not a *subject*, but a *topic*, similar in its distribution to clause-initial topics in verb-second languages like Icelandic. I propose that EAs undergo A-movement to the specifier of a TopP (*topic phrase*) projection, located above tense and below the position of the complementizer. Concerning word order, I show that the right-peripheral position of the EA can be derived via leftward movement of the predicate phrase over the EA in SpecTopP, in a manner consistent with Kayne's Linear Correspondence Axiom. I suggest that predicate-fronting is triggered by the same lexical requirements responsible for T-to-C raising in Icelandic and other languages. The difference is that in Malagasy, unlike in Icelandic, T^0 does not constitute an independent morphological word, and so it cannot be moved without causing the derivation to crash at PF. Since T^0 -movement is unavailable, TP-movement is employed instead. Malagasy may thus be regarded as the phrasal-movement analogue of a verb-second language.

The manuscript is divided into four chapters. In chapter 1 I summarize my analysis and discuss my theoretical assumptions. In chapter 2 I give an overview of Malagasy word order, clause structure, and morphology. I also offer a tentative treatment of the Malagasy voicing system, which I equate with wh-agreement in Chamorro and other languages. In chapter 3 I present evidence from reconstruction and locality effects to show that the EA position behaves as an A-position rather than a case position, strongly suggesting that the EA is a topic-like element rather than a subject. I also provide an alternative analysis of the well-known wh-extraction restriction in Malagasy. Finally in chapter 4 I discuss my XP-movement analysis of EA-final word order. I cite evidence in favor of this analysis from two domains, speech-act particle placement and word order in embedded clauses.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Abstract	ii
Preface	vi
List of abbreviations	viii

Chapter 1. *Introduction*

1.0. The proposal	1
1.1. Preliminary theoretical assumptions	4
1.1.1. Features and derivations	4
1.1.2. Phrase-structure building, movement, and syntactic relations	6
1.1.3. C-command and the Linear Correspondence Axiom	8
1.2. Outline of the thesis	13

Chapter 2. *Predicate-argument structure and verbal morphology*

2.0. Introduction	16
2.1. An overview of Malagasy clause structure	17
2.2. An overview of verb morphology	23
2.2.1. The Malagasy voicing system	23
2.2.2. A note on terminology	26
2.2.3. The distribution of the voice forms	28
2.2.4. Voice and extraction restrictions	34
2.2.5. Additional verb morphology	38
2.3. Morphological case and the structure of the predicate phrase	39
2.3.1. Nominal morphology	40
2.3.2. The agent phrase as a structural subject	47
2.3.3. The predicate phrase as a VSO structure	51
2.4. Voice morphology up close	55
2.4.1. The structure of root predicates	57
2.4.2. Verbal prefixes and VP-shells	59

2.4.3. Accusative- and nominative-pivot morphology	62
2.4.4. Applicative formation and the dative- and circumstantial-pivot	66
2.4.5. Voice-marking and wh-agreement: Malagasy versus Chamorro	76
2.5. Summary of chapter 2	79

Chapter 3. *Externalization as A-movement*

3.0. Introduction	80
3.1. Externalization and the structure of the left-periphery	83
3.1.1. The external argument: Subject or topic?	84
3.1.2. External arguments and V2 topics compared	87
3.1.3. Externalization as movement to SpecTopP	91
3.2. Externalization, reconstruction, and binding	98
3.2.1. The obligatory reconstruction of external arguments	99
3.2.2. Against an A-movement account of binding phenomena	102
3.2.3. The absence of weak crossover	104
3.3. Externalization out of embedded clauses	112
3.3.1. Long-distance externalization and voicing restrictions	113
3.3.2. Long-distance externalization as clausal pied-piping	120
3.4. Voicing restrictions reconsidered	127
3.4.1. Operator movement blocks externalization: Relative clauses	128
3.4.2. Constituent focus as clefting	133
3.4.3. Topic-fronting	139
3.4.4. Topicalization/clefting of non-DPs and the absence of blocking	141
3.5. The subject-like properties of EAs reconsidered	149
3.5.1. Case-marking on pronouns	149
3.5.2. Raising-to-object	150
3.6. Summary of chapter 3	160

Chapter 4. *Word order and clause structure*

4.0. Introduction	162
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4.1. Previous accounts of Malagasy clause structure	165
4.2. An XP-movement analysis of Malagasy word order	171
4.2.1. Deriving EA-final order through phrasal movement	172
4.2.2. The position of clause-final adverbials	179
4.2.3. The position of extraposed clauses	182
4.3. Predicate-initial order and verb-second order	186
4.3.1. The structure of verb-second clauses	188
4.3.2. Malagasy order as the XP-movement analogue of V2	196
4.3.3. Raising into the C-domain as feature inheritance	198
4.3.4. Generalized pied-piping and X^0 - versus XP-adjunction	203
4.4. Evidence for predicate raising	208
4.4.1. The question particle as a second-position element	209
4.4.2. Inverted order in embedded clauses	224
4.5. Summary of chapter 4	242
<i>Bibliography</i>	244

PREFACE

This manuscript is a revised version of my Ph.D. dissertation, completed in December of 2000. Numerous changes, both major and minor, have been made to the organization and analysis. An expanded version is planned for later this year, which will include further refinements to the analysis of the Malagasy voicing system given in chapter 2, as well as an additional chapter covering the derivation of word order within the predicate phrase.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

1ex	first person plural exclusive	Foc	focus particle
1in	first person plural inclusive	FS	free state
1s	first person singular	Fut	future tense particle
2p	second person plural	Imp	imperative
2s	second person singular	Incpl	incompletive
3	third person (singular or plural)	Inf	infinitive
3p	third person plural	Irr	irrealis tense/mood
3s	third person singular	Lnk	linking morpheme
Acc	accusative case	M	masculine
AccP	accusative-pivot voice	Neg	negative marker
Ag	agent phrase	Nom	nominative case
Appl	applicative morpheme	NomP	nominative-pivot voice
Aux	auxiliary	Obj	object, objective case
Comp	complementizer	Obl	oblique prefix
Cpl	completive	Perf	perfective aspect
CrcP	circumstantial-pivot voice	Pres	present tense
CS	construct state	Pst	past tense
Dat	dative case	Qu	yes/no question particle
DatP	dative-pivot voice	Recip	reciprocal prefix
Det	determiner	Redup	reduplicated stem
Emph	emphatic particle	Rel	relativizer
Encl	enclitic	Subj	subject
Erg	ergative case	Top	topic particle
Excl	exclamatory particle	TrnP	translative-pivot voice
F	feminine	Wh	wh-expletive/operator