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No and Ny In Official Malagasy and Bezanozano

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1. Introduction

The goal of this paper is to describe four uses of the particle no in Official Malagasy (OM) and then to compare these realizations to those in Bezanozano (Bz), a Malagasy dialect spoken in the area of Moramanga.1 We will show that three of the functions of no in OM have the same realization in Bz, but that the fourth use takes a different form. Importantly, this form is identical to the determiner in this dialect, making the construction quite similar to related languages in the Philippines such as Tagalog, and unrelated languages such as Kaqchikel, a Mayan language spoken in Guatemala. We will show, however, that the Bezanozano construction falls between the pattern of OM and the pattern of Tagalog/Kaqchikel. The particle used is in form is quite similar to the determiner but in function quite different.

2. Four Uses for no in Official Malagasy

The particle no in Official Malagasy has several uses that are described briefly below.2 No attempt is made to collapse any of these though see Pearson (2009) for a proposal that links the temporal and cleft uses.3

2.1 Temporal no

An example of the TEMPORAL use of no in OM is given in (1) below (taken from Pearson (2009)).4

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1 The first two authors are speakers of this dialect.

2 No is also used to realize past tense on certain verb forms but we are assuming that this is simple homophony.

3 Given the split in form in these two uses in Bezanozano, it is not clear how they can be collapsed at least in this dialect.

4 Abbreviations used in the paper: A – Absolutive (agreement); ACC – Accusative; AT – Actor Topic; CL – clitic; CT – Circumstantial Topic; CMP – Completive aspect; DET – Determiner; E – Ergative (agreement); EXCL – Exclusive; GEN – Genitive; NEG – Negative; NFUT – Non-future; NOM – Nom-
(1) Natory Rakoto no naneno ny telefoanina
PST.AT.sleep Rakoto NO PST.AT.ring DET telephone
'Rakoto was sleeping when the phone rang.' OM

The event described in the second clause occurs during the event described by the first clause.5

2.2 Cause no

Two examples of the CAUSE use of no in OM are given in (2) below.6

(2) Cause no in OM
a. Ny akoho no lehibe, ny volony
   DET chicken NO big, DET feather.3SG.GEN
   ‘The chicken is big because of its feathers.’

b. Ny akoho no tsy nanidina, tsy nahandry ny andro
   DET chicken NO NEG PST.AT.fly NEG PST.AT.able.wait DET day
   zoma
   Friday
   ‘If the chicken didn’t fly, it’s because it didn’t know to wait until Fri-
   day.’

c. Ny anarako no Baholy, avy amin-drenibe
   DET name.1SG.GEN NO Baholy from PREP-mother.big.1SG.GEN
   ‘If my name is Baholy, it is because it is from my grandmother.’

The first part of the construction in (2) is formed from the simple VOS sentence in (3).7

(3) Lehibe ny akoho
   big DET chicken
   ‘The chicken is big.’ OM

The word order is changed from VOS to SVO, the particle no is added to this sentence, licensing a cause which appears at the end of the construction. In Rajaona’s (1972) terms, by fronting the subject and adding no, an independent clause becomes a dependent clause. The general pattern is given in (4).

(4) [ Subject NO Pred], Cause

The sentence final cause can either be a DP (as in (2a)) or a predicate (as in (2b)).8

5 Pearson also gives examples where the first verb is punctual giving a meaning where the two events are sequential, but the first two authors of this paper do not find the construction acceptable with punctual verbs in the first clause. See Rajaona (1972:233-236) for a discussion of this use of no and how it interacts with punctual and durative events.

6 The example in (2b) is a proverb which advises against being impatient.

7 See Rajaona 1972:63-64 for a discussion of this use of the particle no.

8 It may be that the true generalization is DP or TP. It is possible to say ‘Ny akoho no tsy nanidina, tsy nahandry ny andro zoma izy’ where there is a coindexed subject in the second conjunct, but this subject is felt to be redundant.
2.3 Conjunction *no*

Two examples of *no* as a conjunction in OM are given in (5) below.

(5) Conjunction *no* in OM

   a. Sady miteny no manoratra Rabe
       also PRES.AT.talk NO PRES.AT.write Rabe
       ‘Rabe talks and writes at the same time.’
       OM

   b. Sady hendry Rabe no mahay no mpivavaka
       also wise Rabe NO intelligent NO devout
       ‘Rabe is at the same time wise, intelligent, and devout.’
       OM

Here *sady* appears in front of the predicate, and other predicates are added introduced by *no*. While more work needs to be done on this construction, it seems that only predicates can be conjoined in this way. For example, the following where PPs are conjoined in a similar fashion is ungrammatical.

(6) *Mipetraka sady any no aty aho
     PRES.AT.live also there NO here 1SG.NOM
     Intended meaning: ‘I live at the same time there and here.’

2.4 Cleft *no*

We can see in (7) below that *no* in OM is also used to form a cleft. This is the most well-known use of the *no* in the generative literature and is discussed at length in Keenan (1976), Law (2007), Paul (2001), and Potsdam (2006)).

(7) Cleft construction in OM

   a. Rakoto no manasa ny lambanay
       Rakoto NO PRES.AT.wash DET clothes.1PL.EXCL
       ‘It is Rakoto who is washing our clothes.’

   b. Rakoto no eto
       Rakoto NO here
       ‘It is Rakoto who is here.’

Generally it is the subject that appears before the *no*, the rest of the clause follows the *no*, and the meaning is similar to the English cleft. The non-clefted counterparts are given below.

(8) a. Manasa ny lambanay Rakoto
     PRES.AT.wash DET clothes.1PL.EXCL Rakoto
     ‘Rakoto is washing our clothes.’
     OM

   b. Eto Rakoto
       here Rakoto
       ‘Rakoto is here.’
       OM

As we see below, the subject may have a role other than Agent. In (9a) we see Theme, in (9b) Benefactive, in (9c) Instrument, and in (9d) Location.9

9 See Rajemisa-Raolison (1971:113) for a discussion of the different types of elements that can be
In the examples above, the clefting of a non-agent coincides a change in the verb form that marks the clefted argument as the subject. With adjuncts, however, a cleft may be formed without changing the form of the verb. Examples (10a) – (10c), taken from Paul 1999:103, show that the AT form of the verb can be used with an adjunct. The example in (10d), taken from Rajaona 1972:65), shows that the TT form of the verb can also be used with an adjunct.

In the next section, we turn to data from Bezanozano and compare the use of no in this dialect with the use of no in Official Malagasy.

### 3. Comparison to Bezanozano

In this section we will see that the first three uses of no in OM – temporal, cause, and conjunction – appear in a similar fashion in Bz. Cleft constructions are formed differently, however, and appear to be syntactically closer to other Austronesian languages such as Tagalog, and similar to unrelated languages, such as Kaqchikel, a Mayan language.

#### 3.1 Temporal, Cause, and Conjunction no

fronted in this construction.
Below we see a temporal use, a cause use, and a conjoined use of the particle no in Bezanozano.

(11) Temporal construction in Bz
    a. Za mbola nianatra no efa mpampianatra izy
       1SG still PST.AT.study NO already NOM.teach 3SG
       ‘I was still studying when he was already a professor.’

(12) Cause construction in Bz
    a. N’eko no lebay i volony
       DET.chicken NO big DET.feather.3SG.GEN
       ‘The chicken is big because of its feathers.’

    b. N’eko no tsy nañemboña tsy nahadiány ny
       DET.chicken NO NEG PST.AT.fly NEG PST.AT.able.wait DET
       andro azoma
day Friday
       ‘If the chicken didn’t fly, it’s because it didn’t know to wait until Friday.’

    c. N’enarako no Baholy, avy amin-drenibaiko
       DET.name.1 SG GEN NO Baholy from PREP-mother.big 1 SG GEN
       ‘If my name is Baholy, it is because it is from my grandmother.’

(13) Conjunction construction in Bz
    a. Sady nandova no nihary vola Rabe
       also PST.AT.INHERIT NO PST.AT.ACQUIRE money Rabe
       ‘Rabe not only inherited but also acquired money.’

While there are clearly other differences between the dialects (we will come back to the variation in the form of the determiner), the use of no in these three constructions appears to be the same.

3.2 Cleft no

Here we see that the cleft construction in Bz is different from that of OM. We start with two examples in OM (repeated from (7)) and then compare them with parallel examples from Bz. In (15a) we see that instead of using no, a different form is used – one that looks like the determiner that appears later in the construction. In (15b), however, we see only an /n/ that has been attached to the verb.

(14) Cleft construction in OM
    a. Rakoto no manasa ny lambanay
       Rakoto NO PRES.AT.wash DET.clothes.1PL.EXCL
       ‘It is Rakoto who is washing our clothes.’

    b. Rakoto no eto
       Rakoto NO here
       ‘It is Rakoto who is here.’
(15) Cleft construction in Bz
   a. Rakoto i manasa i lambanay
       Rakoto DET PRES.AT.wash DET clothes.1PL.EXCL
       'It is Rakoto who is washing our clothes.'
   b. Rakoto n’eto
       Rakoto N.here
       'It is Rakoto who is here.'

If we look back at earlier examples of Bz (e.g. (12a)), we see that the definite determiner takes different forms depending on the phonological environment. Therefore, in order to understand the realization of clefts, we need to understand the realization of determiners in Bz.

3.3 Definite Determiner in Bezanozano

In Bz, the form of the determiner changes depending on whether it is followed by a word beginning in a consonant or a vowel. We will see that the same is true for the particle in the cleft construction providing an argument that the form used in the cleft construction is, indeed, the determiner.

Below we compare a sentences in OM with a sentences in Bz. In (16) we see the determiner appearing before a form that starts with a vowel. In OM, the determiner appears as ny (pronounced [ni]). In Bz, the final vowel drops.

(16) a. Mafy ny entin’ny vehivavy miteza
       hard DET TT.carry.GEN woman PRES.AT.raise
       OM
   b. Mafy n’entin’i vevavy miteza
       hard DET TT.carry.GEN woman PRES.AT.raise
       Bz
       'The burden of a woman raising (children) is difficult.'

When the determiner is followed by a consonant, however, the determiner in Bz loses the initial /n/.

(17) a. Mangidy ny kamboty
       bitter DET orphan
       OM
   b. Mangidy i kambôty
       bitter DET orphan
       Bz
       '(To be) an orphan is difficult.'

We can now explain the appearance of /n/ in (15b). It is the form of the determiner that appears when the following word begins with a vowel.

3.4 Summary

We have seen that one of the four uses of no in OM is replaced with the determiner in Bz. We will present two observations in the next section. One is that using a nominal element to form a cleft is not unusual. Both Tagalog, a related language, and Kaqchikel, an unrelated language, form clefts by using a nominal functional category to nominalize a clause. The second observation points to a distinction

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10 The situation is a bit more complicated than this. If the word initial vowel is a stressed /a/, the /i/ of the determiner remains (e.g. ny avy: [ni avi] ‘those who come’). If the initial vowel is an unstressed /a/, the /i/ of the determiner coalesces with the /i/ producing [e] (e.g. ny anarako: /ni anaráku/ [n’énaráku] ‘my name’ as in (12c) above).
between Bz on one hand and Tagalog and Kaqchikel on the other hand. When adjuncts are clefted in Kaqchikel and Tagalog, the nominal form cannot be used while in Bz the determiner still appears. In this sense, Bz behaves more like OM which still uses the particle no in adjunct clefts. At this point, we simply describe the facts, leaving an analysis for future work.

4. Bezanzano Clefts Compared to Tagalog and Kaqchikel

Using the determiner in cleft constructions makes Bz different from OM but more like its Austronesian cousins. We can see below in (18a) that Tagalog, a Philippine language, has markers that realize case.11 Like other languages such as Japanese, Tagalog does not have separate definite determiners so these case markers indicate that the following material behaves as a nominal. The marker ang is a nominative marker.12 In (18b) we see that this nominative marker appears in the position in which the particle no would appear in OM, forming a cleft construction.

(18) Tagalog
a. Bumili ng bigas ang babae
   AT.buy ACC rice NOM woman
   ‘The woman bought the rice.’

b. Ang babae ang bumili ng bigas
   NOM woman NOM AT.BUY ACC rice
   ‘It is the woman who bought the rice.’

This method for forming clefts is used in other genetically unrelated languages, such as Kaqchikel, a Mayan language.13 We can see in the simple sentence in (19a) that the determiner is ri. In the cleft construction in (19b), we see that this determiner may appear between the focused element and the rest of the clause in a manner similar to Bz and Tagalog.

(19) Kaqchikel
a. X-e-ki-tz’et ri tijoxel-a’ ri tijonel-a’
   CMP-A3P-E3P-see DET student-PL DET teacher-PL
   ‘The teachers saw the students.’

b. Ja ri tijoxel-a’ (ri) x-e-ki-tz’et ri tijonel-a’
   FOC DET student-PL (DET) CMP-A3P-E3P-see DET teacher-PL
   ‘It’s the students who the teachers saw.’

5. Remaining Puzzle

While we have seen that Bz behaves in a similar fashion to Tagalog and Kaqchikel with respect to forming clefts on subjects, they differ when other elements are clefted. As we saw above in (10), OM can cleft adjuncts using the particle no.

11 We thank Maayan Adar for the Tagalog data.
12 There are debates in the analysis of Tagalog as to whether the ang marked DP is a subject, a topic, or an absolutive, and the gloss of ang changes accordingly. These differences, however, have no impact on what is being investigated here.
13 Note that Kaqchikel is also a predicate initial language, raising the question as to whether the similarity in the cleft construction is related to other shared characteristics. We thank Robert Henderson for the Kaqchikel data.
As we see below, Bz can also cleft adjuncts, and instead of the particle *no*, the determiner (*n)i is used (compare with (10c) above).

(20) Amin’i penin-janako aho
with.GEN.DET pen-child.1SG.GEN.DET.PRES.AT.write 1SG.NOM
‘It’s with my child’s pen that I am writing.’

Bz

In one sense this is not surprising since in other instances of clefts in Bz, the particle *no* is replaced by the determiner (*n)i. There are two reasons, however, why use of the determiner might be unexpected in this context. One reason is simply observational and the other has to do with a possible analysis. These two reasons are discussed in turn below.

5.1 Clefted Adjuncts in Tagalog and Kaqchikel

In both Tagalog and Kaqchikel, when adjuncts are clefted, the nominal element (the case marker *ang* in Tagalog and the determiner *ri* in Kaqchikel) cannot be present.

(21) Sa palengke (*ang*) ako bumili ng bigas
PREP market (NOM) 1S.GEN.AT.PERF.buy ACC rice
‘It was at the market that I bought rice.’

Tagalog

(22) Pa k’ayb’al (*ri*) n-o-in-lōq’ wi ri arox
in market (DET) ASP-A3S-E1S-buy CL DET rice
‘It’s in the market that I buy the rice’.

Kaqchikel

Therefore, simply from an observational standpoint, Bz behaves differently from both Tagalog and Kaqchikel in this respect, even though, like these two languages and unlike OM, Bz uses a nominal element to form a DP cleft construction.

5.2 Headless Relatives in Tagalog and Kaqchikel

There is a also a theory internal reason why it is surprising that Bz uses a determiner in the adjunct cleft construction. The use of the determiner in Kaqchikel and the case-marker in Tagalog reflects a type of nominalization process in both languages. When these functional elements are attached to a verbal projection, a nominal is formed designating the missing nominative (Tagalog) or absolutive (Kaqchikel) argument.

(23) ang bumili ng bigas
NOM AT.BUY ACC rice
‘the one who bought the rice’

Tagalog

(24) ri x-e-ki-tz’ët ri tijonel-a’
DET CMP-A3P-E3P-see DET teacher-PL
‘the ones who the teachers saw.’

Kaqchikel

This correlation has led researchers to posit a pseudo-cleft analysis of these constructions, where the material following the nominal element (case-marker or determiner) is a headless relative and the subject of the sentence (e.g. Paul 2001, Potsdam 2006). The more representative translations for (18b) and (19b) are given in the repeated examples in (25) and (26) below. The material in bold is assumed to be the subject while the remaining material at the beginning of the sentence is
the predicate (with a non-realized copula verb).

(25) Ang babae ang bumili ng bigas
    NOM woman NOM AT.BUY ACC rice
    ‘The one who bought the rice is the woman.’ Tagalog

(26) Ja ri tijoxel-a’ (ri) x-e-ki-tz’et ri tijonel-a’
    FOC DET student-PL (DET) CMP-A3P-E3P-see DET teacher-PL
    ‘The ones that the teachers saw are the students.’ Kaqchikel

The parallel breaks down, however, with the Bz adjunct clefts. The first thing to note is that the material following the determiner in the non-adjunct clefts in Bz also forms headless relatives suggesting that the analysis proposed above for Tagalog and Kaqchikel can be extended to Bz.

(27) Cleft construction in Bz
    a. i manasa i lambanay
       DET PRES.AT.wash DET clothes.1PL.EXCL
       ‘the one who is washing our clothes’

    b. n’eto
       DET. here
       ‘the one who is here’

However, in the case of the adjunct cleft, the material following the determiner does not form the appropriate headless relative (compare with (20)).

(28) i manorotra aho
    DET PRES.AT.write 1SG.NOM
    NO MEANING

Another way of testing this is to reverse the order of the constituents, replacing the no with ny and placing the particle dia between them instead of no.\textsuperscript{14} We see this first in OM example below.

(29) a. ny manasa ny lambanay dia Rakoto
    DET PRES.AT.wash DET clothes.1PL.EXCL.GEN DIA Rakoto
    ‘The one who washed the clothes was Rakoto.’

    b. ny eto dia Rakoto
    DET here DIA Rakoto
    ‘The one who is here is Rakoto.’

In Bz, the comparison is even clearer since there is no no only ny.

(30) a. i manasa i lambanay dia Rakoto
    DET PRES.AT.wash DET clothes.1PL.EXCL.GEN DIA Rakoto
    ‘The one who washed the clothes was Rakoto.’

    b. n’eto dia Rakoto
    DET’here DIA Rakoto
    ‘The one who is here is Rakoto.’

But transforming the cleft into the dia construction is only possible when it is

the subject that has been clefted. When an adjunct is clefted, this reversal is not possible in OM.

(31) ny manorotra aho dia amin’ipenin-janako
DET PRES.AT.WRITE 1SG.NOM DIA with.GEN.DET pen-child.1SG
OM

This is not surprising since what follows the particle NO is not a possible nominal phrase in OM. But one might expect that in Bz this would be possible since the sentential material follows a determiner, yet, again, this is not possible.

(32) i manorotra aho dia amin’ipenin-janako
DET PRES.AT.WRITE 1SG.NOM DIA with.GEN.DET pen-child.1SG
Bz

Therefore it seems that the pseudo-cleft analysis outlined above cannot be used, at least in the case of clefted adjuncts. In other words, the material in the sentence initial position cannot be predicated of the material following the determiner.

Interestingly, this places Bz between Tagalog and OM within the Austronesian language family. Like Tagalog and unlike OM, in Bz a nominal element is used (in Tagalog a case-marker, in Bz a determiner). Like OM and unlike Tagalog, the same element is used in Bz whether it is an argument or an adjunct being clefted.

6. Conclusion

This paper has described the use of the particle no in two Malagasy dialects – Official Malagasy and Bezanozano. While both use no in three similar contexts, there is one construction where they differ. OM uses no to form clefts, while Bz uses the determiner in cleft constructions. In this way Bz behaves more similarly to its relatives in the Western Malayo-Polynesian language family, as well as to an unrelated language Kaqchikel.

There is, nevertheless, one way in which Bz differs from both Tagalog and Kaqchikel and patterns closer to OM. When an adjunct is clefted, both Bz and OM still use the same form of the construction, employing the particle no in OM and the determiner (n)i in Bz. Tagalog and Kaqchikel, however, obligatorily drop their nominalizing element in the adjunct cleft constructions, the case-marker ang in Tagalog, and the determiner ri in Kaqchikel.

The data we have seen, therefore, places Bz in the Austronesian spectrum somewhere between Tagalog and OM. The fact that Bz behaves more like Tagalog (and other Western Malayo-Polynesian languages) than OM suggests that it is more conservative. Bradt (2008) writes of the Bezanozano: “They were probably one of the first tribes to become established in Madagascar.” Further, Serval et al. (2011), using data derived through Swadesh word lists of 200 items across 23 Malagasy dialects and phylogenetic algorithms, propose that the first landing in Madagascar by colonizers (from Borneo) was on the southeast coast. They argue that the more conservative dialects are found in this region. It might not be surprising then that Bezanozano, positioned just east of the capital, Antananarivo, contains more conservative constructions than Official Malagasy (largely based on Merina, the dialect spoken in Antananarivo).

This paper has shown that microvariation can both lead to finer detail in descriptive data as well as pose problems for existing analyses. One might have
supposed that the lack of the case-marker/determiner in Tagalog and Kaqchikel follows from the impossibility of nominalizing a full clause. The data from Bz raises questions about such an explanation. We leave such questions for future research.

References