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PREFACE

Although the Austronesian Formal Linguistics Association (AFLA) has been holding annual meetings since 1994, until now it has had no consistent approach to the publication of its Proceedings. Papers from AFLA 2 and AFLA 14 were published as edited volumes; in other years the local organizers published the Proceedings in their Department’s Working Papers series; in still other years no Proceedings was published. The 16th annual meeting of AFLA was held May 1-3, 2009, at the University of California, Santa Cruz. During the business meeting, the idea was floated that the Proceedings henceforth be published electronically, in a consistent format, at the AFLA website (http://ling.uwo.ca/afla/), which is generously hosted by the University of Western Ontario. The initial result is this volume, which has emerged very quickly indeed—less than six months after AFLA 16 was held. Our hope is that on-line publication of this and future volumes of the Proceedings of AFLA will enable research on the formal linguistics of Austronesian languages to reach as wide a readership as possible.

We want to thank UCSC’s Linguistics Department and its Linguistics Research Center for hosting AFLA 16, the authors for submitting their papers so efficiently, and the University of Western Ontario for hosting the website at which this volume is posted. We also wish to acknowledge the precedent set by the Proceedings of AFLA 12, which was published on-line as UCLA Working Papers in Linguistics No. 12, and whose stylesheet heavily influenced the stylesheet we constructed for the Proceedings of AFLA.

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ANOTHER LOOK AT NO:
PSEUDO-CLEFTS AND TEMPORAL CLAUSES IN MALAGASY*

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Although there is strong evidence for analyzing the Malagasy focus construction as a pseudo-cleft, the focus particle no, which introduces the presupposed remnant, does not appear to be a determiner or relativizer, unlike its counterparts in other Austronesian languages. However, no can be used to introduce temporal (‘when’) clauses. Here I discuss the temporal no construction, arguing that it shares properties with adjunct focus sentences in Malagasy, but does not have the structure of a pseudo-cleft.

1. Introduction

In Malagasy, a Western Malayo-Polynesian language of the Philippine type, clauses generally consist of a predicate phrase, followed by a syntactically prominent DP called the trigger, which is interpreted as the argument of clause-level predication and agrees in voice with the verb. Examples are given in (1) (note that the trigger is separated from the predicate phrase by second-position particles such as the yes/no question marker ve, shown in parentheses). Simplifying somewhat, the actor-trigger (AT) voice is used when the external argument is the trigger (1a), the theme-trigger (TT) voice is used when the trigger is an internal argument (1b), and the circumstantial-trigger (CT) voice is used when the trigger bears an oblique relation such as benefactee, instrument, or location (1c):

(1) a. Nividy ny lamba (ve) ny vehivavy
    Pst.AT.buy Det cloth Det woman
    ‘The woman bought the cloth’

---

* Thanks to audiences at AFLA XVI, the 2006 UCSD Workshop on Comparative Syntax, and the 2008 University of Washington linguistics colloquium series, for comments on earlier versions of this work. I am indebted to the following speakers for providing the bulk of my Malagasy data: Noro Ramahatafandany, Dina Rakoto Ramambason, Hantavololona Rakotoarivony, Francine Razafimbahoaka, Raharisoa Ramanarivo, Aina Randria, Lova Rasanimana, Clarisse Razanarisoa, Rija Raherimandimby, Eliana Ranaivoson, and Hasiniaina Randriamihamina. Thanks also to Eric Potsdam and Ileana Paul for additional data. I am solely responsible for any errors of fact and interpretation.

1 The following abbreviations are used in the glosses: 1ex = 1st plural exclusive, 1s = 1st singular, 3 = 3rd singular/plural, Acc = accusative, AT = actor-trigger, CT = circumstantial-trigger, Det = determiner, Irr = irrealis/future, Neg = negative particle, Nom = nominative, Obl = oblique marker, Pst = past, Qu = question particle, Redup = reduplicated stem, Rel = relative clause marker, TT = theme-trigger.
b. Novidin’ ny vehivavy (ve) ny lamba
   Pst.TT.buy Det woman Det cloth
   ‘The woman bought the cloth’ or ‘The cloth was bought by the woman’

c. Nividianan’ ny vehivavy ny lamba (ve) ny zanany
   Pst.CT.buy Det woman Det cloth Det child.3
   ‘The woman bought the cloth for her child’
   or ‘Her child was bought the cloth by the woman’

Focused constituents are typically fronted and separated from the rest of the clause by the particle no (2) (in yes/no questions, the particle ve appears between the focus and no). I will refer to (2) as the focus construction (FC), and the fronted constituent as the focus. Paul (2001) presents evidence to suggest that no forms a constituent with what follows it, which I will refer to as the no-phrase. Notice that the syntactic role of the focus determines that voice of the verb within the no-phrase (a fact which has received a good deal of attention since Keenan 1976): AT voice is required when the external argument is focused (2a), TT voice when the internal argument is focused (2b), and CT voice is used when an oblique nominal is focused (2c).2

(2) a. Ny vehivavy (ve) no nividy ny lamba
   Det woman NO Pst.AT.buy Det cloth
   ‘It’s the woman who bought the cloth’

   b. Ny lamba (ve) no novidin’ ny vehivavy
   Det cloth NO Pst.TT.buy Det woman
   ‘It’s the cloth that the woman bought’

   c. Ny zanany (ve) no nividianan’ ny vehivavy ny lamba
   Det child.3 NO Pst.CT.buy Det woman Det cloth
   ‘It’s her child that the woman bought the cloth for’

This type of construction is typical for languages of the Philippine type. In Tagalog, for example, focused constituents are fronted and separated from the verb by the particle ang (3). Kroeger (1993) and Richards (1998) argue that the Tagalog FC is a kind of a (pseudo-)cleft: the focus is the main predicate, while ang introduces a headless relative acting as the trigger. This analysis is plausible insofar as Tagalog is a null-copula language, and ang is the usual determiner for marking triggers. Moreover, headless relatives of this sort occur productively outside the FC.

(3) Babae ang bumili ng tela
    woman ANG AT.bought Det cloth
    ‘It’s the woman who bought the cloth’

---

2 This voice restriction applies only in the case of argument focus (that is, when the focus is a DP). I discuss adjunct focus constructions in section 3.1 below, where the focus is a PP or adverbial.
Likewise, Dahl (1986), Pearson (2001), Paul (1999, 2001), and Potsdam (2006a,b) have argued for a pseudo-cleft analysis of the Malagasy FC: the focus is the main predicate of the clause, while the no-phrase is a headless relative functioning as the trigger (4a). According to this approach, FCs have the same basic structure as predicate nominal clauses (4b) (Malagasy, like Tagalog, is a null-copula language).

\[(4)\]
\[
a. \text{\{PRED} Mpianatra\text{\{TRIGGER} no nanoratra ny taratasy \} \\
\text{student } \text{NO } \text{Pst.AT.write} \text{Det letter} \\
\text{‘The one who wrote the letter (is) a student’}
\]

\[
b. \text{\{PRED} Mpianatra\text{\{TRIGGER} ny rahalahiko \} \\
\text{student } \text{Det} \text{brother.1s} \\
\text{‘My brother (is) a student’}
\]

The voice restriction illustrated in (2) is typical of A’-dependencies in Philippine-type languages. Descriptively speaking, the no-phrase contains a ‘gap’ which controls the voice morphology on the verb, making it mutually exclusive with an overt trigger. Normally the trigger is analyzed as the subject of the clause, and the voice restriction on focus is characterized as a language-specific constraint such that only subjects are accessible for A’-extraction (see McLaughlin 1995, Nakamura 1996, Paul 2002, and Sabel 2002 for different versions of this approach). In Pearson (2005), I argue that the Malagasy trigger is instead a topic occupying an A’-position. Voice morphology is treated as a kind of generalized wh-agreement (Chung 1998), which marks the Case role of the A’-chain headed by the trigger, or by a wh-operator. In accordance with the pseudo-cleft analysis, I assume that in FC clauses the no-phrase contains a null wh-operator Op (cf. Paul 1999), and that the verb agrees with it in Case. The no-phrase inherits its index from this operator, and is in turn coindexed with the focus under predication, creating an indirect dependency between the focus and the gap. The structure is shown informally in (5) (I remain agnostic on the exact position of the operator and its trace within the no-phrase):

\[(5)\]
\[
\text{Mpianatra, \{no Op, nanoratra ny taratasy t\}, (wh-agreement)} \\
\text{student } \text{NO} \text{Pst.AT.write} \text{Det letter} \\
\text{‘The one who wrote the letter (is) a student’}
\]

Evidence for the pseudo-cleft analysis comes from a variety of tests showing that the focus patterns as the matrix predicate. For example, focused constituents—but not, say, non-focused arguments—can combine with sentential negation, modal particles, and raising predicates like toa ‘seem’ (see Paul 1999, 2001, and Potsdam 2006a,b for examples and discussion). However, the status of the no-phrase is less clear: whereas Tagalog ang is transparently a determiner introducing a headless relative, the same does not hold of the particle no. As Law (2005) points out, no never seems to function as a determiner or relativizer outside the FC. The usual determiner in Malagasy is ny (6a), and it is this element which introduces headless relatives when they function as arguments of verbal predicates (6b). In headed relatives, the relative clause is optionally introduced by the operator izay (6a), which is also used to form free relatives (6c). Crucially, no may not occur in place of ny or izay in any of the sentences in (6).
Although there is no independent evidence for analyzing no as a determiner or a relativizer, it does occur outside FC contexts in what I will call the temporal no construction (TC), illustrated in (7). Here no is preceded by a full clause rather than a focused phrase, and appears to introduce a temporal (‘when’) clause expressing a backgrounded event. (As far as I know, Tagalog ang and its equivalents in other languages cannot be used as temporal clause markers.)

The TC has received very little attention in the Malagasy literature. Since temporal clauses take the form of free relatives in some languages (such as Hungarian; Kiss 2002), it is worth considering if and how the FC and TC might be related, and whether the fact that no-phrases have this dual function sheds any light on the identity of no, and on how the Malagasy FC differs from its Tagalog counterpart. This paper offers some preliminary discussion of these questions. In section 2 I give additional examples of the TC, together with some informal observations on the semantics of this construction. Section 3 lays the groundwork for a formal analysis of temporal no. I show that the TC is not itself a type of pseudo-cleft, and suggest instead that no introduces an extrapolated (‘topicalized’) clause modifying the spatio-temporal argument of the main clause. Ang-phrases lack this function—which, I suggest, accounts not only for the absence of a Tagalog counterpart to the TC, but also for the absence of an adjunct focus construction.

2. The Interpretation of TC Clauses

No is one of several morphemes (with varying distributions) used to form ‘when’ clauses in Malagasy. Others include rehefa (8a), as well as the preposition amin’ ‘with/to/at’ (tamin’ in the past tense), which can select an event-denoting complement clause with trigger-initial order (8b):
The no-phrase in TC sentences denotes a presupposed event—that is, it is treated as part of the shared knowledge of the discourse participants (perhaps through pragmatic accommodation). In this respect, temporal no--phrases are like focus no-phrases. The FC in (9a), for example, presupposes that somebody came to America, and asserts that it was Rasoa; while the TC in (9b) presupposes that Rasoa came to America, and asserts that she was still young at the time.

In both the FC and the TC, the no-phrase is interpreted outside the semantic scope of negation. For instance, (10a) entails (or at least strongly implicates) that somebody wrote the letter, and asserts that that individual was not Rasoa. Likewise, (10b) entails (or strongly implicates) that Rakoto left, but denies that the speaker was asleep at the time. Consequently the continuation given in parentheses, which denies the entailment, sounds odd.

Likewise, speakers report that (11b) is a felicitous answer to the question in (11a), where (11a) presupposes that the pencil broke (notice that the question takes the form of a FC):

(8) a. Nody Rakoto [ rehefa nisakafo izahay ]
    Pst.AT.come.home Rakoto when Pst.AT.dine 1exNom
    ‘Rakoto came home when/while we were eating dinner’

b. Faly Rabe [ tamin’ izy mbola nipetraka tany Antsirabe ]
    happy Rabe at 3Nom still Pst.AT.live there Antsirabe
    ‘Rabe was happy when he was still living in Antsirabe’

The no-phrase in TC sentences denotes a presupposed event—that is, it is treated as part of the shared knowledge of the discourse participants (perhaps through pragmatic accommodation). In this respect, temporal no-phrases are like focus no-phrases. The FC in (9a), for example, presupposes that somebody came to America, and asserts that it was Rasoa; while the TC in (9b) presupposes that Rasoa came to America, and asserts that she was still young at the time.

(9) a. Rasoa [ no tonga tany Amerika ]
    Rasoa NO arrived there America
    ‘Rasoa is the one who came to America’

b. Mbola tanora Rasoa [ no tonga tany Amerika ]
    still young Rasoa NO arrived there America
    ‘Rasoa was still young when (she) came to America’

In both the FC and the TC, the no-phrase is interpreted outside the semantic scope of negation. For instance, (10a) entails (or at least strongly implicates) that somebody wrote the letter, and asserts that that individual was not Rasoa. Likewise, (10b) entails (or strongly implicates) that Rakoto left, but denies that the speaker was asleep at the time. Consequently the continuation given in parentheses, which denies the entailment, sounds odd.

(10) a. Tsy Rasoa [ no nanoratra ilay taratasy ]
    Neg Rasoa NO Pst.AT.write that letter
    ‘It’s not Rasoa who wrote that letter’

b. Tsy natory aho [ no lasa Rakoto ] ( # … satria tsy lasa izy )
    Neg Pst.AT.sleep 1sNom NO left Rakoto because Neg left 3Nom
    ‘I wasn’t sleeping when Rakoto left (… because he didn’t leave)’

Likewise, speakers report that (11b) is a felicitous answer to the question in (11a), where (11a) presupposes that the pencil broke (notice that the question takes the form of a FC):

(11) a. Oviana [ no tapaka ny pensilihazo ]?
    when NO broken Det pencil
    ‘When did the pencil break?’
b. Nanoratra ilay taratasy Rabe [no tapaka ny pensilihazo]
Pst.AT.write that letter Rabe NO broken Det pencil
‘Rabe was writing the letter when the pencil broke’

By contrast, (11b) would not be an appropriate answer to a question like Inona no nahazo ny pensilihazo? ‘What happened to the pencil?’ (in this respect, (11b) contrasts with the English sentence, where the when clause need not be presuppositional).

Clauses introduced by no identify an event for which the preceding clause asserts a temporal frame. If we use $S_1$ to represent the state of affairs denoted by the clause preceding no, and $S_2$ for the state of affairs denoted by the clause headed by no, then the following generalizations apply: $S_2$ is a (relatively) punctual event, while $S_1$ is either a punctual event or a durative event/state. If $S_1$ is durative, then $S_1$ is understood to be on-going at the time of $S_2$, and perhaps interrupted by $S_2$, as in (12a). If $S_1$ is punctual, then $S_1$ properly precedes $S_2$, as in (12b) (from Rahajarinazy 1960). Alternatively, perhaps $S_1$ in (12b) is not the event itself, but a state resulting from that event (suggested by the presence of efa ‘already’). If so, then no uniformly indicates that $S_2$ occurs during the temporal span of $S_1$, where $S_1$ is either an activity or a result state.

(12) a. Nijery fahitavitra Rakoto [no naneno ny telefaonina]
Pst.AT.look.at television Rakoto NO Pst.AT.ring Det telephone
‘Rakoto was watching television when the phone rang’

b. Efa nanomboka ny dinika [no tonga Rangahy]
already Pst.AT.begin Det discussion NO arrive Monsieur
‘The meeting had already begun when the gentleman arrived’

Compare also the examples below. In (13a), natory is understood as durative: the leaving event is properly contained within the time frame established by the sleeping event. (13b) switches the order of the clauses, reversing the framing relationship between the two events. Here natory is interpreted as punctual, and taken to refer to the beginning point of the sleeping event (‘went to sleep’). The leaving event—or, perhaps, the state of having left—provides the temporal frame for the beginning point of the sleeping event. (Quite generally in Malagasy, durative verbs in the AT voice can be interpreted as inceptives when context forces a punctual reading.)

(13) a. Natory aho [no lasa ny vadiko]
Pst.AT.sleep 1sNom NO left Det spouse.1s
‘I was sleeping when my husband left’

b. Lasa ny vadiko [no natory aho]
left Det spouse.1s NO Pst.AT.sleep 1sNom
‘My husband had (already) left when I went (back) to sleep’

Interestingly, there is often a strong preference for the first clause to occur in the AT voice rather than the TT voice. In some cases the TT form was flat-out rejected by my consultants. Compare:
I suggest that this is a consequence of the aspectual constraints on S₁ and S₂ mentioned above. In Pearson (2001) I show that, under certain conditions, the voice of the verb affects the aspectual interpretation of the clause. All else being equal, TT clauses are interpreted as more punctual and perfective (more transitive, in the sense of Hopper and Thompson 1980) than their AT counterparts. Compare (16a), which favors a durative/atelic reading, with (16b), which favors a punctual/telic reading. In other cases, the choice of AT voice seems to place aspectual focus (in the sense of Erteschik-Shir and Rapoport 1999) on the inception or activity component of the event (17a), while TT voice places aspectual focus on the event as a whole, or its endpoint (17b).

(14) a. Nandoko ny trano aho [ no nandalo ny namako ]
   Pst.AT.paint Det house 1sNom NO Pst.AT.pass Det friend.1s
   ‘I was painting the house when my friend passed by’

   b.?* Nolokoiko ny trano [ no nandalo ny namako ]
   Pst.TT.paint.1s Det house NO Pst.AT.pass Det friend.1s
   ‘I was painting the house when my friend passed by’

(15) a. Nitady ny kiraroko aho [ no naneno ny telefaonina ]
   Pst.AT.look.for Det shoe.1s 1sNom NO Pst.AT.ring Det telephone
   ‘I was looking for my shoes when the phone rang’

   b.?* Notadiaviko ny kiraroko [ no naneno ny telefaonina ]
   Pst.TT.look.for.1s Det shoe.1s NO Pst.AT.ring Det telephone
   ‘I was looking for my shoes when the phone rang’

This suggests that (14b) and (15b) were rejected for pragmatic reasons. If TT voice favors a (relatively) punctual/perfective reading of the clause, this would make it less natural than AT voice.
for asserting a temporal frame. Note that when speakers judge AT and TT voice equally acceptable, the AT variant yields the reading where S₁ is interrupted by S₂, while the TT variant gives the reading where S₁ precedes S₂ (or defines a result state which overlaps with S₂):

(18) a. Nijery fahitalavitra Rakoto [no naneno ny telefaonina]  
Pst.AT.look.at television Rakoto NO Pst.AT.ring Det telephone  
‘Rakoto was watching television when the phone rang’

b. Nojeren-dRakoto ny fahitalavitra [no naneno ny telefaonina]  
Pst.TT.look.at-Rakoto Det television NO Pst.AT.ring Det telephone  
‘Rakoto had (already) watched television when the phone rang’

(19) a. Nijinja vary ilay mpamboly [no avy ny orana]  
Pst.AT.harvest rice that farmer NO came Det rain  
‘That farmer was harvesting rice when it began to rain’

b. Nojinjain’ ilay mpamboly ny vary [no avy ny orana]  
Pst.TT.harvest that farmer Det rice NO came Det rain  
‘That farmer had (already) harvested the rice when it began to rain’

3. The Structure of TC Sentences

I now turn to the structure of TC clauses. I begin by considering the possibility that the TC is a type of pseudo-cleft, with the no-phrase acting as the trigger of the clause. After rejecting this analysis, I show that the temporal no-phrase instead occupies an extraposed position.

3.1. The TC as a Pseudo-Cleft

According to the pseudo-cleft analysis of the FC, the focus is the main predicate of the clause, while no introduces a headless relative functioning as the trigger (cf. (4a) above). Given that the TC has a similar information structure, with the no-phrase presupposed, perhaps TC clauses are also pseudo-clefts, where the focus is not a DP, but an adjunct clause containing a covert complementizer (meaning roughly ‘while’), as in (20). The plausibility of this is suggested by the fact that speakers occasionally provided clefts as spontaneous translations TC sentences, where the clefted constituent is a temporal clause, as in (21):

(20) [PRED [CP Natory Rakoto ] ] [TRIGGER no naneno ny telefaonina ]  
Pst.AT.sleep Rakoto NO Pst.AT.ring Det telephone  
lit. ‘The (time when) the phone rang (is while) Rakoto slept’

The latter reading is expected to be unavailable in the case of (15b), since ‘look for my shoes’, being atelic, cannot define a result state. However, it is unclear why (14b) cannot mean ‘I had (already) painted the house when my friends passed by’. Clearly more work needs to be done on the relationship between voice and verbal aspect.
(21) a. Lasa ny vadiko [ no natory aho ]
left Det spouse.1s NO Pst.AT.sleep 1sNom
‘C’est quand mon mari est parti que je me suis rendormi’
(‘It’s when my husband left that I went back to sleep’)

b. Nitsangatsangana aho [ no hitako ny bokiko very ]
Pst.AT.walk.Redup 1sNom NO found.1s Det book.1s lost
‘C’est pendant que je me suis promené que j’ai retrouvé mon livre perdu’
(‘It’s while I was taking a walk that I found my lost book’)

Interestingly, the initial clause in TC sentences may not itself contain a focus. Speakers reject
(22) as having “too many no’s” (to express the intended meaning, the temporal no-phrase must
be replaced by, e.g., tamin’ ny telefaonina naneno ‘at [the time of] the phone ringing’).

(22) * Rakoto no nijery fahitalavitra [ no naneno ny telefaonina ]
    Rakoto NO Pst.AT.look.at television NO Pst.AT.ring Det telephone
‘It’s Rakoto who was watching television when the phone rang’

A possible objection to the pseudo-cleft analysis comes from the fact that the no-phrase in TC
sentences does not seem to contain a gap, but looks instead like a full clause, denoting a proposition
and containing an overt trigger which determines the voice of the verb.

Note, though, that these features are shared with a subtype of the Malagasy FC discussed
by Paul (1999) and others, where the focus position is occupied by a PP adjunct or ‘high’ adver-
bial rather than a DP, as in (23). Despite appearances, however, I assume that the no-phrase in
adjunct focus clauses does include a null operator, just as in nominal focus clauses. Here, though,
the operator lacks a Case feature, and hence fails to trigger wh-agreement on the verb, which
instead agrees with an overt trigger (24). (Significantly, the Tagalog FC, where the ang-phrase is
transparently a headless relative, cannot be used to focus adjuncts. Instead, focused adjuncts
undergo fronting to preverbal position: see Kroeger 1993, Richards 1998 for discussion.)

(23) a. Tamin’ ny antsy [ no Op, nanapaka bozaka Rakoto t, ] (wh-agreement)
    with Det knife NO Pst.AT.cut grass Rakoto
‘It’s with the knife that Rakoto cut the grass’

b. Omaly [ no Op, nanapaka bozaka Rakoto t, ]
yesterday NO Pst.AT.cut grass Rakoto
‘It was yesterday that Rakoto cut the grass’

Where does this operator originate and what is its grammatical function? Following Kratzer
(1995) and others, I assume that individual-level predicates include a spatio-temporal event ar-
gument (e). Although e is a null element, its referent can be restricted by one or more overt modi-

---

4 Focused adjuncts can occur with a no-phrase containing a gapped trigger, in which case the verb appears in the CT
voice. For reasons of space I will not consider this construction here, (see Paul 1999 for examples and discussion).
fiers, including PP adjuncts and adverbials (cf. Demirdache and Uribe-Etxebarria 2004). I further assume that e may appear outside the predicate phrase (perhaps merging as a second specifier of the functional head which licenses the trigger; cf. Pearson 2001). This is supported by the fact that PP adjuncts and ‘high’ adverbs frequently appear extraposed to the right of the trigger. I suggest that omaly in (24) is modifying a dislocated e argument:

(24) Nanoratra taratasy (ve) ny mpianatra omaly
     Pst.AT.write letter Det student yesterday
     ‘The student was writing a letter yesterday’

Right-peripheral adjuncts in Malagasy are presuppositional. In (25), for example, where the PP tany an-tokotany is extraposed to the right of the trigger, it is presupposed that the student did something in the garden (if the location were new information, part of what is being asserted, tany an-tokotany would precede the trigger):

(25) Nanoratra taratasy (ve) ny mpianatra [ tany an-tokotany ]
     Pst.AT.write letter Det student there Obl-garden
     ‘The student was writing a letter in the garden’

I suggest that Op in (23) bears the e role (by assumption, e lacks a Case feature, and hence cannot trigger wh-agreement). The no-phrase is thus a headless relative meaning roughly ‘the event [such that] Rakoto cut grass’, and the focused PP or adverb is predicated, in neo-Davidsonian fashion, of this event-denoting no-phrase.

If this analysis is on the right track for no-phrases in adjunct focus contexts, perhaps the same structure can be extended to temporal no-phrases, making the TC a type of adjunct FC:

(26) Natory Rakoto [ no Op_i naneno ny telefaonina t_i ]
     Pst.AT.sleep Rakoto NO Pst.AT.ring Det telephone
     ‘(The event such that) the telephone rang was (while) Rakoto slept’

While it seems plausible that the temporal no-phrase contains an empty operator denoting a spatio-temporal argument, there is good evidence to show that it is not the matrix trigger, predicated of a ‘covert’ temporal clause, as in (20). For example, the initial clause in TC sentences does not look like an embedded clause, in that it lacks a complementizer (adding a complementizer, such as fa ‘that’, renders the sentence ungrammatical: e.g., *Fa natory Rakoto no naneno ny telefaonina). In addition, Paul (1999) shows that embedded clause adjuncts, such as purpose and reason clauses, cannot undergo adjunct focus (27). If purpose and reason clauses cannot appear in the adjunct FC, it is unclear why ‘covert’ temporal clauses would be allowed to.

(27) a. * Mba hahazo karama be [ no mianatra mafy aho ]
     in.order.to Irr.AT.earn salary big NO AT.study hard 1sNom
     ‘It’s in order to earn a big salary that I am studying hard’
b. * Noho izy mbola kely taona loatra [no tsy afaka handeha any because 3Nom still small year too NO Neg able Irr.AT.go there
Ambositra i Koto ]
Ambositra Det Koto
‘It’s because he’s still too young that Koto cannot go to Ambositra’

Note also that in the adjunct FC, the overt trigger inside the no-phrase optionally—and frequently—appears in front of no (28). This is the famous bodyguard construction, discussed by Keenan (1976) and Paul (1999, 2001). (Paul 1999 gives evidence from coordination that the bodyguard is inside the no-phrase, hence the bracketing.) According to speakers I consulted, the trigger may not occupy the bodyguard position in temporal no-phrases (29) (izy must follow lasa for the sentence to be grammatical). If the TC is merely a sub-case of the adjunct FC, it is unclear why the latter but not the former would license a bodyguard.

(28) Tamin’ ny pensilihazo [ Rasoa no nanoratra ilay taratasy ]
with Det pencil Rasoa NO Pst.AT.write that letter
‘It’s with a pencil that Rasoa wrote the letter’

(29) * Natory ny vadin-dRakoto [ izy no lasa ]
Pst.AT.sleep Det spouse-Rakoto 3Nom NO left
‘It was while Rakoto’s wife was sleeping that he left’

4.2. The Temporal No-Phrase as an Extraposed Clause

Rather than acting as a ‘covert’ CP adjunct which has been clefted, as in (20), there is evidence to suggest the initial clause in TC sentences pattern as the main clause, within which the no-phrase is embedded. The DP preceding no is the matrix trigger, while the no-phrase itself is extraposed to the right of the trigger. This is schematized in (30). Note that adjunct and complement clauses are typically extraposed in Malagasy (31).

(30) [PRED Natory ] [TRIGGER Rakoto ] [CP? no naneno ny telefaonina ]
Pst.AT.sleep Rakoto NO Pst.AT.ring Det telefaonina
‘Rakoto was sleeping when the phone rang’

(31) Manantena ny vehivavy [CP fa hamono ny akoho aho ]
AT.hope Det woman that Irr.AT.kill Det chicken 1sNom
‘The woman hopes that I will kill the chicken’

Evidence for the structure in (30) comes from particle placement. The yes/no question marker ve is confined to root contexts: it appears at the right edge of the matrix predicate (when the latter is clause-initial), immediately preceding the matrix trigger, and cannot follow an embedded predicate. (Indirect yes/no questions are formed with the complementizer raha ‘if/whether’.) This is illustrated in (32). In TC sentences, ve appears at the right edge of the first predicate, and may not follow no (33). This shows that Rasoa, rather than the no-phrase, is the matrix trigger in (33).
(32) Manantena <ve> ny vehivavy [ fa hamono ny akoho <*ve> aho ]?
AT.hope Qu Det woman that Irr.AT.kill Det chicken Qu IsNom
‘Does the woman hope that I will kill the chicken?’

(33) Mbola tanora <ve > Rasoa [ no tonga tany Amerika <*ve > ]?
still young Qu Rasoa NO arrived there America Qu
‘Was Rasoa still young when she came to America?’

Supporting evidence comes from embedded topic drop. In sentences where the matrix trigger
corefers with an embedded argument, the latter generally takes the form of a null trigger. According
<insert data="to Keenan (1976), the missing trigger Ø in (34) must corefer with Rabe, whereas the overt
pronominal trigger izy is generally taken to refer to someone other than Rabe. TC sentences
appear to show the same pattern: while the no-phrase can contain an overt trigger, the trigger is
normally omitted when it has the same referent as the trigger of the preceding clause (35). I take
this as further evidence that Rasoa is the matrix trigger in (35).5

(34) Mihevitra Rabei [ fa tadiavin-dRasoa { Ø / izy } ]
AT.think Rabe that TT.look.for-Rasoa 3Nom
‘Rabe thinks that Rasoa is looking for him’

(35) Mbola tanora Rasoa [ no tonga tany Amerika Ø ]
still young Rasoa NO arrived there America
‘Rasoa, was still young when (she) came to America’

If temporal no-phrases are extraposed constituents, what position do they occupy? Recall that
presuppositional (‘scene-setting’) adjuncts like omaly typically follow the trigger (36a). Perhaps
the no-phrase in (36b) occupies the same position, and plays essentially the same function—i.e.,
modifying the null spatio-temporal argument e. Much as omaly provides a deictic anchor for e,
the no-phrase temporally anchors e by identifying a (presupposed) event which co-occurs with e.

(36) a. Nijery fahitalavitra Rabe omaly
Pst.AT.watch television Rabe yesterday
‘Rabe was watching television yesterday’

b. Nijery fahitalavitra Rabe [ no naneno ny telefaonina ]
Pst.AT.watch television Rabe NO Pst.AT.ring Det telephone
‘Rabe was watching television when the phone rang’

Under this analysis, temporal no-phrases are treated essentially like event-denoting adjunct free
relatives. One problem with this approach, however, is that temporal no-phrases do not have a
distribution typical of adjuncts. For example, besides appearing in post-trigger position (36a),

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5 Note that the empty category Ø in (35) is distinct from the ‘gap’ in no-phrases discussed earlier: The gap is a trace
of wh-operator movement, while Ø is presumably a null pronominal.
adverbials like *omaly* can be topic-fronted (37). Temporal *no*-phrases, however, must be clause-final, and may not undergo topic-fronting (38a). As (38b) shows, *no*-phrases contrast in this respect with other kinds of ‘when’ clauses, such as those formed with *rehefa*, which readily undergo fronting (in fact, *rehefa* clauses are normally fronted in Malagasy texts).

(37) **Omaly dia nijery fahitalavitra Rabe**
    yesterday Top Pst.AT.watch television Rabe
    ‘Yesterday, Rabe was watching television’

(38) a. *[ No naneno ny telefaonina ] dia nijery fahitalavitra Rabe
    NO Pst.AT.ring Det telephone Top Pst.AT.watch television Rabe
    ‘When the phone rang, Rabe was watching television’

    b. *[ Rehefa nisakafo izahay ] dia tonga Rabe
    when Pst.AT.dine 1exNom Top arrive Rabe
    ‘While we were having dinner, Rabe arrived’

This inability to undergo topic-fronting is apparently shared with *no*-phrases in the FC, as can be seen by comparing (39a-b). Headless relatives *can* be fronted in a pseudo-cleft-like structure, but they must be introduced by a regular determiner instead of *no* (39c) (Paul, to appear).

(39) a. *Ity peratra ity [ no nomeko azy ]
    this ring this NO Pst.TT.give.1s 3Acc
    ‘It’s this ring that I gave to her’

    b. *[ No nomeko azy ] dia ity peratra ity
    NO Pst.TT.give.1s 3Acc Top this ring this
    ‘What I gave to her is this ring’

    c. *[ Ny nomeko azy ] dia ity peratra ity
    Det Pst.TT.give.1s 3Acc Top this ring this
    ‘What I gave to her is this ring’

In fact, this inability to undergo topic-fronting makes temporal *no*-phrases look more like complement clauses than adjunct clauses (cf. Law 2005, who analyzes the *no*-phrase in the FC as the complement of a null copula BE, with the focus merging as the specifier of BE). I intend to pursue this possibility in future research.

4. **Conclusion: Where Do Things Stand?**

Paul (1999, 2001), Potsdam (2006a,b), and others have presented good evidence for treating the Malagasy FC as a type of pseudo-cleft, where the focus behaves as the main predicate, while the *no*-phrase patterns as a headless relative containing a null wh-operator chain. In this respect, the Malagasy FC closely resembles its counterpart in Tagalog. However, there are some important
differences between the two constructions: [i] Unlike the Tagalog focus marker *ang*, *no* does not show the distribution of a determiner or (the usual) relative clause marker. [ii] Unlike *ang*, *no* can introduce the presupposition in adjunct focus sentences, where it heads (what appears to be) a covert headless relative denoting an event. [iii] Finally, unlike *ang*, *no* can introduce an extraposed constituent in non-focus contexts (the TC), where it functions much like a temporal (‘when’) clause. As in adjunct focus contexts, the *no*-phrase in TC contexts identifies an event as part of the presupposition (though with additional semantic restrictions: e.g., the event must be construed as punctual/perfective relative to the main predicate).

It is my hunch that the properties in [i]-[iii] are related. This suggests that additional exploration of the temporal *no* construction—particularly in relation to the adjunct focus construction—has the potential to shed new light not only on the identity of *no*, but on the parametric differences among Austronesian languages regarding the use of (pseudo-)clefting to mark focus.

References


