

Malagasy *no* constructions and new observations

Background: Many papers have been written on the Malagasy *no* construction since Keenan's (1976) seminal paper (e.g. Law 2005, Paul 2001, Pearson 2006, Potsdam 2004), but the exact nature of the construction is still being debated. For example, Pearson (2006) relates the focus type of DP *no* construction (1) to a use of *no* that links two full clauses (2).

(1) Rasoa *no* manasa lamba amin'ity savony ity Keenan (1976)
Rasoa *NO* PRES.AT.wash clothes with'this soap this
'It's Rasoa that washes clothes with this soap.'

(2) Mbola tanora izy **no** tonga tany Amerika Pearson (2006)
still young 3NOM *NO* arrived PST.there America
'He was still young when (he) came to America'

The issue: Much of the controversy has centred around three issues. (i) the nature of the [*no* XP] (clause or DP), (ii) the nature of *no* (Det, Focus head, or Comp), and (iii) the relation between the pre-*no* constituent and the following material (movement, predication, or something else). In this paper I revisit these issues and bring new data into the discussion.

The data: In the canonical *no* constructions as shown above, *no* is followed by what appears to be a clause (with or without a gap). Various researchers, however, have analyzed the *no* XP constituent as a headless relative (e.g. Paul 2001, Potsdam 2004). In this context it is interesting that the following strings are possible where the *no* is (optionally) followed by a nominal.

(3) Izaio *no* fotoana ifohazan'i Myanmar (from the web)
now *NO* time PRES.CT.wake-UP'DET Myanmar
'The time for Myanmar to wake up is now.'

These *no* XP constructions can be related to 'whatever' clauses described in Keenan (1976) where again the nominal following the particle (in this case *izay*) is optional.

(4) izay (zazavavy) manasa lamba 'whoever/whichever girl washes clothes'
IZAY (girl) AT.PRES.wash clothes

I will argue that these new data suggest that (i) the [*no* XP] is nominal, (ii) *no* is in Det, and (iii) the pre-*no* constituent has not moved from the [*no* XP].

References

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