

LONG-DISTANCE PIVOT MOVEMENT MEASURES PHASE UNLOCKING: MALAGASY VS. DINKA

• **Synopsis:** Based on fieldwork, I make two novel claims wrt. Austronesian Malagasy's pivot system: (i) while clause-internal promotion to pivot (PTP) involves A-movement to a Case A/A'-position, long-distance PTP involves overt A'-movement, not base-generation, to a non-case-assigning A'-position, alongside a distinct option of prolepsis; (ii) embedded CP complements that either become the matrix pivot, or allow their own pivot to be subextracted, must first undergo (covert) A-movement to the matrix left-periphery pivot position. As both properties set Malagasy apart from its otherwise cognate Nilotic Dinka, they are linked to its higher structural locus of Phase Unlocking, which is in turn tied to its different alignment and the nominalized nature of its embedded CPs. The account has ramifications for the CP-DP parallelism (Szabolcsi 1989; Siloni 1995) and the conditions on splitting composite probes.

• **Background:** Malagasy is a Philippine-type Malayo-Polynesian language that exhibits the well-known Austronesian *voice* system: any core argument may be promoted to a prominent structural and discourse status by occupying a higher position, exclusively privileged for further A'-extraction. The thematic identity of this *pivot* argument co-varies with a change of affixal morphology on the verb, making a three-way *voice*-marking: AV=Agent Voice; TV=Theme Voice; CV=Circumstantial Voice (for obliques). Malagasy pivots appear in a distinct unmarked form that has been viewed as nominative case (Voskuil 1993), and their rigid clause-final position, arguably derived via remnant TP-fronting (Pensalfini 1997; Pearson 1998), is diagnosed by the precedence of elements such as the yes/no-question particle *ve*.

• **Clause-internal pivot/voice derivation:** Clausebound PTP in Malagasy fixes underlying Condition C violations and ameliorates weak crossover (WCO) (Travis 1998; Paul 2002; Pearson 2005). I therefore assume that pivots A-move to a case-assigning mixed A/A'-position, attracted by a composite probe at the (low) left periphery: A-movement feeds variable binding, while the availability of Case at the landing site permits Wholesale Late Merge to bleed Condition C (Takahashi & Hulsey 2009). Furthermore, I assume that voice marking is determined at *v*, and involves, in non-AV contexts, an intermediate step at its edge, triggered by a bundled composite probe that re-arranges argument structure and posits the to-be pivot internal argument above the thematic agent (cf. Aldridge 2008; Brodtkin 2022).

• **Long-distance dependencies:** The A'-part of the composite probe manifests in the discourse profile of the pivot, which must be formally definite and semantically specific, but also, I claim, in its capacity of crossing a finite clausal boundary. Descriptively, a matrix pivot may be thematically linked to a declarative (1), control or purpose clausal complement, with a gap in the embedded pivot site. This long-distance dependency (LDD) requires i) the embedded CP's voice to render its thematic gap as the pivot; and ii) matrix *v* to agree with the entire CP complement, as if the CP were the matrix pivot, before the CP's own pivot may fill the matrix pivot position. Notably, all three types of CPs can themselves function as matrix pivots, triggering the corresponding voice morphology on the embedding verb (TV/CV).

- (1) *Heverin-dRabe* [fa andidian' ny vehivavy ny mofo e_i] ve ny antsy_i?
 TV.think-Rabe.GEN COMP CV.cut DET woman DET bread EC Q DET knife
 'The knife, does Rabe think that the woman is cutting the bread (with it)?'

• **Movement vs. prolepsis:** Pearson (2005) extends his high base-generation analysis of pivots to LDDs, while Davies (2005) treats similar constructions in Indonesian Madurese as prolepsis. I rather suggest that genuine LDDs in Malagasy involve movement of the embedded DP pivot to the matrix pivot position. As evidence, variable-binding reconstruction in the embedded CP is possible (2) but island-sensitive (3).

- (2) *Nantenain-dRabe* [fa hovangian' ny ankizy tsirairay_i e_i] ve ny rai=ny_i?
 PST.TV.hope-Rabe.GEN COMP FUT.TV.visit DET child each EC Q DET father=3POSS
 'His_i father, did Rabe hope that every child_i will visit (him)?'

- (3) *Nalahelovan-dRabe_j* [satria tsy novangian' ny ankizy tsirairay_i e_i] ve ny rai=ny_{*i/j/k}?
 PST.TV.sad-Rabe.GEN because NEG PST.TV.visit DET child each EC Q DET father=3POSS
 'His_{*i/j/k} father, was Rabe_j sad because each child_i did not visit (him)?'

In fact, I show that prolepsis *is* possible, albeit restricted, and when unambiguously identified, differs from overt LD movement in a way that speaks for base-generation: (i) it is not island-sensitive; (ii) the pivot-only extraction restriction, reflected in voice morphology, holds neither for the matrix nor the embedded clause; (iii) reconstruction for variable binding, even across no island, is unavailable.

• **Differ where:** So far, Malagasy resembles Nilotic Dinka Bor in its voice system and the distribution of A/A'-properties, as per van Urk (2015). Where the two languages diverge is in long-distance pivot movement: while in Dinka it retains its A-properties, feeding both anaphor and variable binding, in

Malagasy I show it features a fully A'-profile: once a CP boundary is crossed, it induces WCO (4) and obligatorily reconstructs for Condition C (5) relative to arguments in the embedding clause. These empirical observations serve as indirect evidence in favor of overt cross-clausal movement: given the A-properties of clausebound pivot movement, if the thematic embedded pivot were base-generated directly at the matrix clause and only moved within it, it should obviate both WCO and Condition C there too.

- (4) **Nantenain' ny rai=ny_i [fa handalo Ambositra t_i] [ve] ny mpianatra tsirairay_i?*
 PST.TV.hope DET father=3POSS COMP FUT.AV.hope Ambositra t Q DET student each
 Int.: 'Each student_i, did their_i father hope that (they) will visit Ambositra tomorrow?'
- (5) **Heveri=ny_i [fa tonga omaly t_i] [ve] ny rain-dRakoto_i?*
 TV.think=3.GEN COMP PST.arrive yesterday t Q DET father-Rakoto.GEN
 Int.: 'Rakoto_i's father, does he_i think that (he) arrived yesterday?'

- **CP covert movement** The exact structural height of an embedded clause under matrix TV/CV, whether the CP is the pivot itself or allows for subextraction of its own pivot, is not surface-apparent. In both cases, though, I demonstrate that the embedded clause *does* move, like regular DPs, albeit possibly covertly, to the higher matrix pivot position. Evidence comes from two sources: (i) Malagasy NPIs must be in the scope of a negative operator (Paul 2005; Potsdam 2022); thus, the non-licensing of NPIs within a pivot CP (6), or a CP under LDD, both triggering matrix TV, indicates that the clause is structurally higher than (and not c-commanded by) matrix negation; (ii) a Quantifier Phrase (QP) within a non-pivot embedded CP cannot outscope a matrix QP; yet, once the CP complement becomes the matrix pivot or allows for subextraction of its own pivot (7), the embedded QP may outscope the thematic matrix QP.

- (6) [*Tsy*] *mihevitra aho/ *heveri=ko [fa nandroso vary tamin' n'iza-n'iza Rabe]*
 NEG AV.think 1SG.NOM/ TV.think=1SG.GEN COMP PST.AV.serve rice PST.P anyone Rabe
 'I don't think that Rabe served rice to anyone.'
- (7) *Nolazain' ny mpampianatra tsirairay [fa namaky ny boky roa] [ve] ny mpianatra?*
 PST.TV.say DET teacher each COMP PST.AV.read DET book two Q DET students
 'The students, did each teacher say that (they) read two books?' (each > 2, 2 > each)

- **Differ how** Since LDD requires an embedding voice marking as if the entire CP were the matrix pivot, I adopt a Phase Unlocking (PU) account (Rackowski & Richards 2005): the probe that subextracts the embedded pivot must first agree with the CP phase itself. However, I diverge from Rackowski & Richards (2005) and van Urk & Richards (2015), who posit PU at the *v* probing cycle for Tagalog and Dinka respectively: in Dinka, the CP is agreed with and raises up to the edge of *v*, which then additionally subextracts the embedded pivot to a higher Spec_vP, making it further accessible. I rather suggest that, in Malagasy, the *v* probe only agrees with and attracts the CP complement. It is then the higher composite probe that splits: its A-part agrees with (and case-licenses) the embedded CP at Spec_vP, moving it to a(n inner) Spec of the pivot position, and its A'-part subsequently subextracts the embedded pivot to an outer Spec. As LDD is A'-movement, WCO is induced, and as the embedded pivot has already been case-licensed within the CP, with no matrix source of case available, Condition C connectivity obtains.

- **Differ why** The difference between Malagasy and Dinka in the height of PU stems from: (i) the nominalized nature of embedded CPs in Malagasy, rendering them eligible recipients of Case, a claim justified with reflexes of m-case and overt nominalization in the complementizer system; (ii) their different alignment -ACC for Dinka (cf. van Urk 2015), split-ERG for Malagasy (Paul & Travis 2006)-, contingent on the order between Merge and Agree at *v*P (Müller 2009), with m-case a configurational epiphenomenon. Locality considerations force *v* in Dinka to reprobe within the unlocked CP, but terminate *v*'s probing in Malagasy once the CP has been agreed with, so that PU is undertaken by the pivot composite probe.

- **Composite-probe split** The pivot site hosts an independent composite probe that optimally matches with one and the same goal for economy reasons (cf. Scott 2021); it only splits: (i) under PU, for LDD and possessor extraction (Keenan & Ralalaoherivony 1998), where the A- and A'-part are *contingent*, as the goal of the sequentially first (A-)probe (i.e., the unlocked CP/DP phase) defines the probing domain of the second (A'-)probe (i.e., the subextracted embedded pivot or possessor) (cf. Branen 2022); (ii) when PTP, restricted to core arguments, co-occurs with pure topic-/focus-fronting of an adjunct (see Paul 2000), or when pivot-fronting piggy-backs on adjunct clefting (Keenan 1976). As adjuncts of both DP and PP category behave alike, while non-pivot arguments are inaccessible to any overt fronting, I maintain that A-Agree/movement tracks the argument-adjunct, rather than the DP-nonDP distinction.