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# Reduced structure in Malagasy headlines

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# REDUCED STRUCTURE IN MALAGASY HEADLINES\*

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This paper examines the register associated with headlines in Malagasy. While in many languages headlines appear to have reduced structure as evidenced by the absence of certain grammatical markers (determiners, copulas, tense), Malagasy headlines show a change in word order from VOS to SVO. It is argued that like English, Malagasy headlines involve a truncated syntactic structure and that the absence of certain functional projections accounts for the change in word order.

Keywords: Malagasy; Headlines; Register variation; Truncation; Word order

## **1 Introduction**

It is a well-known observation that headlines in languages such as French and English appear to be reduced in structure.

- (1) a. Céline Dion malade.
- b. Risque d'avalanche maximal ce weekend.
- c. Young inmate punished after game.
- d. Hazardous waste site to open near I-94.

In particular, looking at (1), we see examples of missing copulas (a,b,c), determiners (b, c, d), and tense (d). The absence of these grammatical markers is often given as the defining characteristic of “headlines” or “reduced written register” (Stowell 1991, Weir 2013, and many others).<sup>1</sup> In this paper, I consider data from Malagasy such as in (2) and I show that headlines in

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\* I would like to thank my Malagasy consultant, Vololona Rasolofson, for her help with the Malagasy data. The headlines cited in this paper are from *l'Express de Madagascar* <http://www.lexpressmada.com/>, with additional examples supplied by native speakers. Many thanks to two anonymous reviewers, Eric Potsdam, and the audience at the Canadian Linguistic Association for their helpful suggestions. Any errors and omissions remain my own. This research was partially funded by the Canada Research Chair program and by SSHRC grant 410-2005-1758.

<sup>1</sup> As noted in Chow, Kharytonava, Kliashchuk & Paul (2008), the nature of this “reduction” can differ widely across languages.

this language have all the usual tense markings, but they have special word order (SVO instead of VOS) where subjects obligatorily lack determiners.

- (2)   Lehilahy   nangalatra    bisikileta  
      man        PST.AT.steal   bicycle  
      ‘Man stole bicycle.’ (08-01-2007)

Moreover, the SVO word order in headlines does not share properties with SVO found in other contexts or even in other dialects of Malagasy. My goal is to argue that despite the presence of tense, Malagasy headlines do have reduced structure.

The organization of the paper is as follows: I begin with a brief discussion of headlines in general and some background on Malagasy clause structure. In section 3, I provide examples of Malagasy headlines and in section 4, I argue that headlines lack the extended CP layer. Section 5 provides an overview of some alternative analyses and section 6 looks more closely at SVO in other contexts. Section 7 concludes.

## **2 Background**

### **2.1 Headlines**

Stowell (1991) shows that English headlines lack grammatical markers such as determiners, tense, and copulas. Based on these data and examples from French and other languages, Vinet (1993) and Paesani (2006) argue that headlines are root small clauses, thus accounting for the absence of copulas and tense. For Vinet, the small clause is AgrP, while for Paesani any lexical projection can be a small clause. To account for the absence of determiners in headlines, Weir (2013) proposes that headlines are full TP structures, but lack certain higher functional projections. Thus for these researchers reduced syntactic structure gives rise to the key properties of headlines mentioned earlier.

## 2.2 Malagasy clause structure

Turning now to Malagasy, the data in (3) show that there are no copular verbs and that the language lacks infinitives. (3)a illustrates the use of adjectival and nominal predicates without a copula. In (3)b, I provide a standard paradigm of tense marking (on an active verb) and in (3)c, we see that even in contexts where we might expect an infinitive (the complement of a control verb), the embedded verb is marked for tense.<sup>2</sup>

- (3) a. Marary/lehilahy Rabe.  
sick/man Rabe  
'Rabe is sick/a man.'
- b. Mihira/nihira/hihira Rabe.  
AT.sing/PST.AT.sing/FUT.AT.sing Rabe  
'Rabe is/was/will be singing.'
- c. Nanomboka nivovò ny alika.  
PST.AT.start PST.AT.bark DET dog  
'The dog began to bark.' [Randriamasimanana 1986: 346]  
(lit.) 'The dog began barked.'

Like many other Western Austronesian languages, Malagasy has a rich voice system. Consider the following examples adapted from Keenan (1976), where the verbal morphology indicates (simplifying somewhat) the semantic role of the subject. With Actor Topic, the agent is the

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<sup>2</sup> Abbreviations used in this paper:

AT – actor topic	CAUS – causative	CT – circumstantial topic	DET – determiner
FOC – focus particle	FUT – future	NEG – negation	NOM – nominative
P – preposition	PST – past	REL – relativizer	TOP – topic particle
TT – theme topic	Q – question particle		

subject (4)a. With Theme Topic, the theme or goal is the subject (4)b,c.<sup>3</sup> Finally, the example in (4)d illustrates Circumstantial Topic, where some other role (here an instrument) is the subject.

(4) a. Manolotra ny vary ny vahiny aho.  
AT.offer DET rice DET guest 1SG  
'I offer the rice to the guests.'

b. Atoloko ny vahiny ny vary.  
TT.offer.1SG DET guest DET rice  
'The rice is offered by me to the guests.'

c. Tolorako ny vary ny vahiny.  
TT.offer.1SG DET rice DET guest  
'The guests are offered the rice by me.'

d. Anolorako vary ny vahiny ny lovia.  
CT.offer.1SG rice DET guest DET dish  
'The dishes are used by me to offer rice to the guests.'

Two other aspects of Malagasy syntax are important in this paper. First, subjects must be (formally) definite (e.g. a proper name or headed by a determiner) (Keenan 1976, Law 2006, Paul 2009). This restriction is illustrated by the ungrammaticality of (5).

(5) \* Nivovò alika.  
PST.AT.bark dog  
'A dog barked.'

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<sup>3</sup> There are several "passive-like" voices in Malagasy that involve very different morphology and have different semantics. For the purposes of this paper, I will gloss them all as TT, for Theme Topic. Note that there is much debate in the literature over the label "subject" for the clause-final NP. For the purposes of this paper, I will continue to use "subject", simply as a useful and familiar term.

Second, the unmarked word order is VOS, as can be seen in all the examples above. Matrix SVO is possible in the following contexts (Rajemisa-Raolison 1966:30): if the subject is topicalized (6)a or focused (6)b, or if two parallel clauses are juxtaposed (6)c.

- (6) a. Ny mpianatra izao dia mamaky teny.  
 DET student now TOP AT.read word  
 ‘The students are now reading.’
- b. Ny mpianatra izao no mamaky teny.  
 DET student now FOC AT.read word  
 ‘It is the students who are now reading.’
- c. Ny mpianatra mamaky teny, ny mpampianatra mihaino.  
 DET student AT.read word DET teacher AT.listen  
 ‘The students are reading, the teacher is listening.’

Note that there is an overt marker of topicalization and focus (*dia* and *no*). Unmarked SVO is also possible in certain kinds of subordinate clauses, as will be discussed in section 6.1.

### 3 *Headlines in Malagasy*

Let us now consider headlines in Malagasy. It should be noted that most newspapers in Madagascar are in French, with certain articles in Malagasy. The data in this paper come from *L'Express de Madagascar*, but similar examples can also be found in *Midi Madagasikara*. Looking at a range of headlines over several months (2007, 2008 and 2014), I have found many examples of SVO – I do not have the precise numbers, but it appears to be that on any given day, two of four headlines will be SVO and the others VOS. There are other headline structures, too, including noun phrases and direct quotes, but these occur less frequently. For the purposes of this

paper, I will be focusing on SVO headlines, for reasons to be made clear shortly. I have also modified or invented headlines to test for certain properties. These have been judged by native speakers as to whether or not they would be appropriate as headlines.

Although headlines in Malagasy can be SVO, they otherwise have all of the verbal morphology typically found in non-headlines. In particular, in all examples the verbs are fully inflected for tense, aspect and voice.<sup>4</sup> The examples in (7)a,b,c are active, (7)d is passive and the verb in (7)e is marked for the circumstantial voice.

- |     |    |   |         |
|-----|----|---|---------|
| (7) | a. | Lehilahy nangalatra bisikileta<br>man PST.AT.steal bicycle<br>'Man stole bicycle.' (08-01-2007)                               | ✓HL/*SM |
|     | b. | Aretin-kibo mamefy olona maro<br>sickness stomach AT.hit person many<br>'Stomach illnesses strike many people.' (18-02-2014)  | ✓HL/*SM |
|     | c. | Mpampianatra FRAM hanao fihaonam-be<br>teacher FRAM FUT.AT.do meeting big<br>'FRAM teachers to hold big meeting' (07-06-2014) | ✓HL/*SM |
|     | d. | Lehilahy voatifitra teo amin' ny feny<br>man TT.shoot there P DET thigh.3<br>'Man shot in thigh.' (10-01-2007)                | ✓HL/*SM |

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<sup>4</sup> For the remainder of this paper, I indicate whether each example is a possible headline (HL) or a possible sentence in standard Malagasy (SM), as judged by native speakers. I also indicate the date of the particular headline. If no date appears, this is a headline that I have invented.

- e. Fiara mpitatitra nianjeran' ny hazo ✓HL/\*SM  
 car transporter PST.CT.fall DET tree  
 'Bus fallen on by tree.' (22-03-2007)

The above examples also illustrate the presence of tense: (7)a,e are marked for past tense, while (7)b is present tense and (7)c is future. Passive forms, such as (7)d, have a different tense paradigm where the absence of overt marking indicates non-future (past or present). It should be noted that tense in Malagasy headlines retains its typical interpretation. Thus while example (7)b is a plausible headline in present or past tense (people are getting sick now or they were in the past), other examples such as (7)a and (7)e are not possible in the present tense. This differs strikingly from English, where *Man steals bicycle* is a possible headline, although it clearly refers to an event in the past.

A second salient property of headlines, and one that also distinguishes them from normal sentences, is that the subject must be formally indefinite. As a result, definite descriptions and names cannot be in the subject position of a headline with SVO word order.

- (8) a. \* Ny lehilahy nangalatra bisikileta. \*HL/\*SM  
 DET man PST.AT.steal bicycle  
 'The man stole bicycle.'
- b. \* Ravalomanana nangalatra bisikileta \*HL/\*SM  
 Ravalomanana PST.AT.steal bicycle  
 'Ravalomanana stole bicycle.'

Thus we see that headlines have a special word order and impose a definiteness restriction on the subject position.

Before continuing, I remind the reader that VOS is also found in headlines, as seen in (9).



- (9) Voaheloka efa-taona ny jeneraly randrianafidisoa. ✓HL/✓SM  
 PASS.condemn 4-year DET general randrianafidisoa  
 ‘General Randrianafidisoa was condemned to four years.’ (03-01-2007)

But unlike what we saw with SVO headlines, here the subject must be formally definite (just as in (5)).

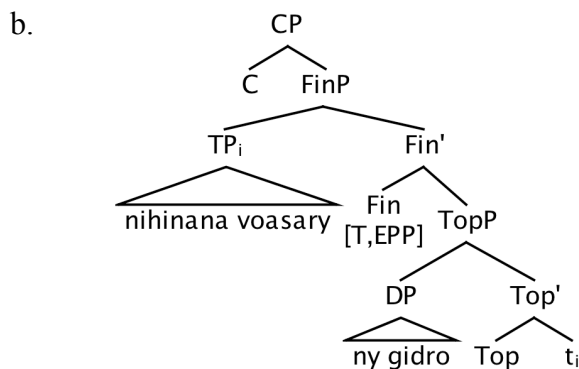
- (10) \*Voaheloka efa-taona lehilahy. \*HL/\*SM  
 TT.condemn 4-year man  
 ‘A man was condemned to four years.’

In other words, VOS headlines appear to have the same structure as normal sentences in Malagasy and I set them aside here.

#### 4 Analysis

I base my analysis on the clause structure proposed for Malagasy by Pearson (2001, 2005) and I adapt the analysis of Tagalog voice morphology by Rackowski and Richards (2005). In particular, Pearson argues that the clause-final subject is in an A-bar position in the left periphery, [Spec,TopP]. According to Pearson, voice morphology is A-bar agreement with the DP in the topic position. Further, VOS order is derived by fronting the remnant TP to a functional projection, FinP, above TopP. The structure is illustrated below.

- (11) a. Nihinana voasary ny gidro.  
 PST.AT.eat lemon DET lemur  
 ‘The lemur ate a lemon.’



While I adopt this clause structure, I do not adopt the A-bar analysis of agreement. Instead, I assume that voice morphology is in fact an overt signal of an EPP feature on *v*, as proposed by Rackowski and Richards (2005) for Tagalog.<sup>5</sup> Theme Topic, for example, indicates that an accusative argument (direct object) has moved to the edge of *vP*. From this position, the direct object moves to a higher functional head, TopP in Pearson's analysis.

With these two formal assumptions in place, we can now turn to the derivation of SVO in headlines. In order to generate SVO, predicate fronting is somehow blocked.<sup>6</sup> Here I assume that CP, FinP, and TopP in headlines are completely absent. Thus like Weir (2013), I argue for a truncated root clause (see also Haegeman 2013 on the diary register). As we will see in section 6.1, this is (almost) the same structure that Pearson (2012) proposes for perception verb complements in Malagasy.

Let us now consider the structure of headlines in more detail. As shown in the bracketed structure below, the subject moves to [Spec, TP].

- (12) a.    Lehilahy    nangalatra    bisikileta                    ✓HL/\*SM  
          man        PST.AT.steal    bicycle  
          'Man stole bicycle.' (08-01-2007)
- b.       [TP lehilahy<sub>i</sub> [T' T [vP t<sub>i</sub> nangalatra [VP bisikileta ]]]]

I suggest here that the absence of TopP accounts for the indefiniteness of the subject, following Weir (2013), who argues that the determiner on the subject is dependent on higher functional structure. If the determiner is licensed by Top, then the absence of this head in headlines results in the subject being obligatorily bare.

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<sup>5</sup> Although the analysis proposed in Pearson (2005) and Rackowski and Richards (2005) differ in many respects, both treat voice morphology as indicating the case of the "subject" rather than its semantic role.

<sup>6</sup> As a second option, the subject could undergo further movement to the left of the fronted predicate. For the purposes of this paper, I set aside this alternative derivation. Headlines appear reduced and therefore adding more structure strikes me as uneconomical. I recognize, however, that this is a viable analysis that would need to be excluded by more careful argumentation.

Looking more closely at the position of the subject, data from the placement of pre-predicate elements show that the subject has moved out of *vP*. As illustrated in (13), the subject precedes pre-predicate elements (e.g. *toa* ‘seem’ and *tokony* ‘should’).<sup>7</sup>

- (13) a.   Lehilahy toa    nangalatra    bisikileta                   ✓HL/\*SM  
           man        seem   PST.AT.steal    bicycle  
           ‘A man seems to have stolen a bicycle.’
- b,    Vehivavy tokony hahazo    ny    loka    voalohany    ✓HL/\*SM  
           woman    should FUT.AT.get DET    prize    first  
           ‘A woman should get the first prize.’

Whether *toa* and *tokony* are particles that adjoin to *vP* or higher predicates, the above data indicate that the subject has moved to a higher projection. The precise nature of this position is less easy to determine. Here I suggest the subject moves to [Spec, TP] and not to [Spec, TopP] in order to account for the indefiniteness of the subject. This assumption requires me to reject Pearson’s analysis of voice morphology as A-bar agreement.

Before concluding this section, I would like to briefly discuss the predicates found in headlines. It is often said that headlines are not possible with individual level predicates and at first blush this is true in Malagasy.<sup>8</sup>

- (14) a.   \* L’actrice Sophia Loren belle           [Vinet 1991: (7c)]

<sup>7</sup> In all of the examples I collected, there are no instances of *toa* ‘seem’ or *tokony* ‘should’. Native speakers judge examples such as (13) to be possible headlines, so I take this absence to be an accidental gap, perhaps due to independent considerations in headlines. No headlines were found with modals, for examples.

<sup>8</sup> In (14)b, I have used a VOS example because indefinite subjects are generally unacceptable with individual level predicates.

- b. Lehilahy Ravalomanana #HL/✓SM  
 man Ravalomanana  
 ‘Ravalomanana is a man.’

If we add a modifier to make a stage level predicate, the headlines improve.

- (15) a. L’actrice Sophia Loren toujours belle. [Vinet 1991: (9c)]

- b. Tena lehilahy Ravalomanana. ✓HL/✓SM  
 indeed man Ravalomanana  
 ‘Ravalomanana is really a man.’

It seems more likely, however, that what is important is “newsworthiness”. Thus the following was judged to be an acceptable headline, despite the individual-level predicate, given that bandits are not expected to know French.

- (16) Jiolahy dimy mahay miteny frantsay ✓HL/\*SM  
 bandit five AT.know-how AT.speak French  
 ‘Five bandits speak French well.’

My analysis therefore does not attempt to account for any restrictions on the predicate, as these are connected to the use of headlines and not their structure.

In sum, I account for the presence of tense and voice morphology, as well as the position of the subject with respect to certain particles, by positing a truncated root clause that includes a functional projection, T, higher than vP. I also suggest that the indefiniteness of the subject and the subject-initial word order found in headlines is a result of the absence of higher functional projections.

## 5 *Alternative accounts*

In the following sub-sections, I explore and reject three alternative structural accounts of Malagasy headlines: clefts, relative clauses and existentials.

### 5.1 Clefts

As a first alternative analysis, consider clefts. As we saw in section 2.2, clefts are another instance of (apparent) SVO with indefinite subjects. In (16a), I provide an example of a real headline that has been modified to be a cleft (by adding the focus particle *no*) and in (16b), I show a naturally occurring example.

- (17) a.   Lehilahy no nangalatra   bisikileta                   ✓HL/✓SM  
          man           FOC PST.AT.steal   bicycle  
          ‘It was a man who stole a bicycle.’ (08-01-2007, modified)
- b.   Lehilahy no maro voan’ ny sida                   ✓HL/✓SM  
          man           FOC many struck   DET AIDS  
          ‘It is men who mostly get AIDS.’ (15-01-2014)

Given that the examples in (17) are possible headlines, one could treat headlines as a kind of reduced cleft (lacking the cleft particle *no*). This analysis, however, cannot adequately account for the differences between clefts and headlines. First, the interpretation of a cleft differs from its unclefted counterpart. Consider the example below, which is identical to (17)b, but the *no* is omitted.

- (18)   Lehilahy maro voan’ ny sida                   ✓HL/\*SM  
          man           many struck   DET AIDS  
          ‘Many men get AIDS.’ (15-01-2014, modified)

In (17)b, the set of men is being contrasted with women. The example in (18), however, simply makes a statement about many men getting AIDS. Second, in a cleft, the initial element (*lehilahy* ‘man’ in (17)a) acts like a predicate (Paul 2001). For example, it can be preceded by the elements *toa* ‘seem’ and *tokony* ‘should’ (as we saw in section 4, these items typically occur pre-verbally).

(19) Toa lehilahy no nangalatra bisikileta. ✓HL/✓SM  
 seem man FOC PST.AT.steal bicycle  
 ‘It seems to have been a man who stole a bicycle.’

(20) Tokony vehivavy no hahazo ny loka voalohany. ✓HL/✓SM  
 should woman FOC FUT.AT.get DET prize first  
 ‘It should be a woman who gets the first prize.’

In headlines without *no*, however, these elements cannot precede the subject.

(21) a. \* Toa lehilahy nangalatra bisikileta. \*HL/\*SM  
 seem man PST.AT.steal bicycle  
 ‘A man seems to have stolen a bicycle.’

b. \* Tokony vehivavy hahazo ny loka voalohany. \*HL/\*SM  
 should woman FUT.AT.get DET prize first  
 ‘A woman should get the first prize.’

Instead, as we saw in (13) *toa* and *tokony* occur between the subject and the verb (i.e. in their typical pre-verbal position). Note that these particles are permitted with VOS headlines, but again are strictly pre-verbal.

- (22) Tokony hanampy ny miaramila Ravalomanana. ✓HL/✓SM  
 should FUT.AT.help DET soldier Ravalomanana  
 ‘Ravalomanana should help the soldiers.’

The data thus show that the clause-initial subject in SVO headlines is not a predicate and we can conclude that headlines should not be assimilated to clefts.

## 5.2 Relative clauses

As a second possible structure for headlines, I turn to relative clauses. In other words, perhaps headlines are really DPs modified by a relative clause, not propositions. The structure is given below (note that relative clauses follow the head in Malagasy, so this structure is plausible).

- (23) [DP mpangalatra bisikileta [Rel cl naiditra am-ponja]]  
 thief bicycle PST.TT.enter to-prison  
 ‘Bicycle thief put in prison.’ (02-02-2007)

As a first consideration, note that relative clauses are optionally marked with *izay*.

- (24) ny vehivavy (izay) manasa lamba  
 DET woman REL AT.wash cloth  
 ‘the woman who is washing clothes’ [Keenan 1972: (3)]

If we add *izay* to (23) to force the relative clause structure, the result is still a possible headline, but the interpretation changes.

- (25) [DP Mpangalatra bisikileta [Rel cl izay naiditra am-ponja]]  
 thief bicycle REL PST.TT.enter to-prison  
 ‘a bicycle thief who was put in prison’

Whereas (23) sounds more like a “normal” headline, announcing a story about the event described, (25) suggests that the article will talk about the thief. Moreover, I have found no instances of overt *izay* in my headline corpus. Finally, the distribution of the floated quantifier *daholo* also provides evidence against a nominal analysis. As seen below, in VOS sentences this quantifier appears at the right edge of the verb phrase, immediately before the subject.

- (26) Nihinana vary daholo ve ny vahiny?  
 PST.AT.eat rice all Q DET guest  
 ‘Did the guests all eat rice?’

Crucially, *daholo* is not possible within a relative clause, as illustrated in (27)a. Potsdam (2006:2165) suggests in passing that the null relative operator cannot license the quantifier.

- (27) a. \* Mainty ny omby (izay) mihinana bozaka daholo.  
 black DET cow REL AT.eat grass all  
 (‘The cows that are all eating grass are black.’)

- b. Jiolahy dimy voasambotra daholo ✓HL/\*SM  
 bandit five TT.stop all  
 ‘Five bandits were all arrested.’

As seen in (27)b, however, *daholo* is grammatical in a headline. Given the interpretational differences and the distribution of *daholo*, I reject the relative clause analysis of headlines.



### 5.3 Existentials

Given their indefinite subjects, headlines resemble existential sentences. An analysis that takes this resemblance seriously could posit a null existential verb in headlines. In other words, a headline is simply an existential sentence but the existential verb is not pronounced.

- (28) (Misy) zaza roa maty nianjeran' ny trano. ✓HL/(✓)SM  
exist child two dead PST.CT.fall DET house  
'(There were) two children killed, crushed by a house.'  
(05-02-2007, modified)

The presence of the existential verb would (partially) account for the definiteness effect found in headlines (compare (29) with (8)).

- (29) \*Misy Ravalomanana maty nianjeran' ny trano.  
exist Ravalomanana dead PST.CT.fall DET house  
'There was Ravalomanana killed, crushed by a house.'

There are however, some problems with this analysis. Law (2011) argues that the existential verb in Malagasy can take either DP or IP as a complement. Given that I have argued above that headlines do not have the internal structure of a complex DP, we can assume that headlines cannot be assimilated to DP existentials. Turning now to IP, this approach initially appears to fit with the data, but there is one important difference: extraction of PPs is possible out of IP existentials (30)a, but such extraction is ungrammatical in headlines (30)b.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> The ungrammaticality of (30)b is somewhat mysterious given that PP clefts are typically grammatical and that clefts are found in headlines (see section 5.1). I have found, moreover, that *wh*-questions, also formed by clefts, and yes-no questions are not possible in headlines. Given that headlines can be what appear to be complete sentences, these restrictions are unexpected. I set these issues aside for future research.

- (30) a. Ho an' ny zaza no misy mividy boky ny mpampianatra.  
 for P DET child FOC exist AT.buy book DET teacher  
 'It's for the children that there are teachers buying books.' [Law 2011:1605]
- b. \* Tany Antsirabe no trano iray narodan' ny orana \*HL/\*SM  
 there Antsirabe FOC house one PST.TT.topple' DET rain  
 'In Antsirabe one house was toppled by the rain.'

Thus although existentials and headlines bear some resemblances, there are enough structural differences to treat them differently.

Summing up, headlines differ structurally from other apparent instances of SVO: clefts, relative clauses, and existentials. It is therefore impossible to assimilate the analysis of headlines to these structures. I now turn to two other types of SVO clauses in Malagasy.

## 6 SVO

As has been noted earlier, Malagasy allows SVO in certain contexts other than headlines. In this section, I look at two instances of SVO, perception verb complements and SVO in a dialect spoken in the north, and contrast them with headlines.

### 6.1 Embedded SVO

As mentioned in section 2, Vinet (1993) and Paesani (2006) both argue for a small clause analysis of headlines in English and French: AgrP for Vinet and any lexical projection for Paesani. Is it possible to extend this analysis to Malagasy? A small clause structure for headlines is initially plausible because other possible small clauses in Malagasy exhibit subject-initial word order, as illustrated below:

- (31) a. Mijery [ ny namany miady] i Sahondra.  
 AT.watch DET friend.3 AT.fight DET Sahondra  
 ‘Sahondra is watching her friends fight.’  
 [Paul and Ranaivoson 1998: (21a)]
- b. Nahatonga [ ny orana tsy ho avy] ny rivotra.  
 PST.CAUS.arrive DET rain NEG FUT come DET wind  
 ‘The wind caused the rain not to come.’  
 [Andrianierenana 1996: (6a)]
- c. Tsy miasa androany Rabe satria [ny vadiny marary].  
 NEG AT.work today Rabe because DET spouse.3 sick  
 ‘Rabe isn’t working today because his wife is sick.’  
 [Pearson 2001: (163a)]

The main drawback of the small clause analysis for Malagasy is that headlines and the embedded SVO structures illustrated above don’t look “small” – we find the full range of tense, aspect, and voice marking. The presence of these grammatical elements suggests the presence of rich functional structure, such as T°. Moreover, we saw in (13) that the subject appears to raise out of the vP, appearing to the left of adverbs. Some (e.g. Law 2011) have therefore suggested that Malagasy lacks small clauses altogether. Nevertheless, the comparison between headlines and the examples in (31) merits further discussion. For present purposes, I focus on perception verb complements, such as (31)a.

Pearson (2012) looks at perception verb complements and argues that they are instances of TopP. In other words, these complements are slightly smaller than regular clauses in that they do not project CP and FinP. Lacking FinP, perception verb complements do not allow for predicate fronting and as a result have SVO word order. As mentioned in section 4, my analysis of headlines in Malagasy adopts much of Pearson’s analysis with one important difference: I claim

that headlines lack the TopP projection and are instances of TP – thus they are structurally more reduced than perception verb complements. As I pointed out, determining the precise position of the pre-verbal subject is difficult, in the absence of other assumptions. I therefore maintain the difference between headlines and perception verb complements, noting that the subject of the perception verb complements can be definite (see (31)a), unlike the subject in headlines. If Weir (2013) is correct that the determiner must be licensed by functional heads, then the absence of TopP can account for the indefiniteness of subjects in headlines, while its presence in perception verb complements allows for the overt realization of the determiner. Whether further evidence can be marshaled in favour of this structural difference remains to be determined.

## **6.2 SVO in Antakarana**

As mentioned in section 2.2, the basic word order in Malagasy is VOS. This is true for what is called Official Malagasy, the language taught in schools. Other varieties, however, also allow SVO as a possible word order. One such dialect is Antakarana, spoken in the north of Madagascar, in and around Antsiranana. An example is given in (32).

- (32) Amboa jiaby manana vity êfatra.  
dog all AT.have leg four  
'All dogs have four legs.'

Although a complete analysis of Antakarana word order has yet to be proposed, SVO is freely available and is possible with a variety of predicates and noun phrase subjects. Crucially, however, it has been shown that the pre-verbal elements we saw in Official Malagasy can precede the clause-initial subject in Antakarana (examples adapted from Polinsky & Potsdam 2014).

- (33) a. Tokony i Jao hamangy Rabe.  
 should DET Jao FUT.AT.visit Rabe  
 ‘Jao should visit Rabe.’
- b. Tseky i Jao hipendra traño.  
 almost DET Jao FUT.AT.paint house  
 ‘Jao intends to paint the house.’

Recall from section 5.1 that this word order is not allowed in headlines, as repeated in the examples below.

- (34) a. \* Toa lehilahy nangalatra bisikileta. \*HL/\*SM  
 seem man PST.AT.steal bicycle  
 ‘A man seems to have stolen a bicycle.’
- b. \* Tokony vehivavy hahazo ny loka voalohany. \*HL/\*SM  
 should woman FUT.AT.get DET prize first  
 ‘A woman should get the first prize.’

Thus whatever the analysis of SVO in Antakarana, it must be distinct from SVO in headlines. The difference underlines the fact that the same word order can arise as a result of different syntactic means.

## 7 Conclusion

Data from Malagasy headlines show that this register differs from other utterances in two ways: SVO word order and indefinite subjects. I have argued that these two distinctive properties are signals of missing structure, in particular that headlines lack a TopP projection. As such, headlines in Malagasy are reduced, just as in other languages such as English and French, despite

the different properties of headlines in these languages. Reduced structure in some languages leads to the absence of tense and copulas, while in Malagasy all tense is retained. Instead, predicate fronting is blocked, giving rise to SVO word order. As a point of similarity, however, the absence of certain functional projections leads to the absence of determiners in both Malagasy and English.

Looking beyond headlines, this paper raises the question of how to identify small clauses in a language with obligatory tense marking. If Pearson (2012) and I are right, the smallest clause possible in Malagasy is TP (TopP for Pearson). More research on other “small clauses” in this language is necessary to determine the accuracy of this prediction. The proposed analysis also raises issues about what is a register and how the grammar of a particular register interacts with the rest of the grammar. For example, although headlines in Malagasy are often SVO, the structure of headlines is clearly distinct from other instances of SVO. Why does this register not simply co-opt existing structures in the language?

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