On passive in Malagasy

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This paper examines two different passive formations in Malagasy. Although one passive appears to promote certain types of adjuncts, it is shown that these adjuncts can appear in an NP argument position. Passive in Malagasy is thus argued to uniquely promote NP arguments to subject position.

Like many Austronesian languages, Malagasy has a complex voice system, as illustrated in (1). The subject of each sentence appears in boldface.

1. a. Manasa lovia telo amin'ny savony Rakoto.
   AT-wash dishes three P-GEN-DET soap Rakoto
   ‘Rakoto washes three dishes with the soap.’

b. Sasan-dRakoto amin'ny savony ny lovia telo.
   TT-wash-GEN-Rakoto P-GEN-DET soap DET dishes three
   ‘The three dishes are washed by Rakoto with the soap.’

c. Anasan-dRakoto lovia telo ny savony.
   CT-wash-GEN-Rakoto dishes three DET soap
   ‘The soap is used by Rakoto to wash three dishes.’

The active (AT) and passive (TT) resemble in many respects the English counterparts. In the active, the agent is the subject and in the passive the theme is the subject. In the circumstantial (CT), however, an adjunct surfaces in the subject position. In (1c), the subject is an instrument; other CT clauses promote benefactive, locative and temporal elements to subject. The distinction between TT and CT thus appears to be stem from the argument-adjunct distinction. In this paper, I will discuss different types of passive in Malagasy and explain some overlap with CT. The main goal will be to show that certain elements, including a well-defined class of adjuncts, can surface in a derived object position and thus trigger TT.

1.0 Passive

The preceding introduction to voice in Malagasy presented a simplified version of the range of data. Each “voice” requires separate discussion and explication. Since I will be addressing passive, I must first answer the question: what is passive? For the purposes of this paper, I will characterize passive as a clause where an internal argument of a two (or more) argument verb appears as the grammatical subject. The

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external argument is either not present or surfaces in some non-subject, non-object position.\footnote{1} Importantly, in Malagasy the external argument is not realized as an oblique, unlike English. In other words, the passive agent remains syntactically "active". The lack of demotion to chômeur of passive agents in Austronesian has long been recognized as one of the distinguishing properties of voice alternations in these languages. See Schachter (1976) for a discussion of Tagalog "subjects".

I begin with a brief description of passive formation and then examine two different passive types in detail. I will argue that passive exclusively targets argument NPs. At first blush, this may not appear to be an interesting claim as English passives are typically limited to arguments. However, it seems that some adjuncts (e.g. instruments) can passivize to subject. I will therefore provide evidence that in these cases, the instrument has been generated in the direct object position. Hence passive is always from an argument position.

1.1 Passives in Malagasy

There are essentially four types of passive in Malagasy. For reasons that will become clear, this paper focusses on two types. First, most roots take the -\textit{ina} or -\textit{ana} suffix to form the passive. Since the choice between -\textit{ina} and -\textit{ana} is lexicalized, I will refer to the two as -\textit{Vna}.\footnote{2} In general, the theme is promoted to subject.

2. \begin{enumerate}
\item a. laza + \textit{ina} = lazaina  \quad \text{‘said’} \\
\item b. sasa + \textit{ana} = susana  \quad \text{‘washed’}
\end{enumerate}

-\textit{Vna} is the most commonly occurring passive affix in texts (Manorohanta (1998)). Second, there is the \textit{a}-prefix, which also attaches directly to roots.

3. \begin{enumerate}
\item a. a-tha  \quad \text{‘made’} \\
\item b. a-dky  \quad \text{‘cut’}
\end{enumerate}

Both the \textit{a}-passive and the -\textit{Vna} passive are eventive rather than stative in nature and will be the focus of the discussion of passives in Malagasy. In what follows, I will characterize the syntactic conditions under which the -\textit{Vna} suffix alternates with the \textit{a}-passive.

\footnote{1} In fact, the genitive agent in Malagasy (and other Austronesian languages) bears some resemblance to (indirect) objects: it surfaces right-adjacent to the verb and no elements can intervene between the verb and the NP. However, in Malagasy at least, genitive agents and accusative objects have very different phonological properties. For example, genitive involves nasalization not present in bare NP accusative.

\footnote{2} Some roots make take both -\textit{ina} and -\textit{ana}, with a slight difference in meaning. These roots are very rare, however, and the distinction is meaning is disappearing. My consultant either rejects one form or considers the two to be synonymous.

\footnote{3} In many cases, an "openthetic" consonant is inserted between the root and the suffix. See Erwin (1996) for arguments that this consonant is present in the underlying representation of the root and not in the suffix. Note also that the final syllable is often dropped when genitive is added (Paul 1996).
1.2 a- passive vs. -Vna passive: basic distribution

Verbs fall into two main classes with respect to passive affixes: those that have only one passive and those that have both. Thus certain verbs take the a- prefix to promote a theme to subject. Some examples are illustrated in (4).

4. a. Ataoko ny naharaha.
   A-do-1SG(GEN) DET work
   ‘I'm working.’ (lit. ‘The work is done by me.’)

b. Haveriny ny boky.
   FUT-A-return-3(GEN) DET book
   ‘She will return the book.’

These verbs have only one passive form and thus lack a -Vna variant.

Similarly, there are verbs that have only the -Vna passive, as in (5).

5. a. Vakin-dRaso ilay boky.
   read-VNA-GEN-Rasoa DET book
   ‘Raso is reading that book.’

b. Hajuin-dRaso Bakoly.
   respect-VNA-GEN-Rasoa Bakoly
   ‘Raso respects Bakoly.’

I now turn to three instances where there is an alternation between the two passive forms.

The verbs that allow both passives can be subdivided into three groups. In the first group, the verb takes the a-passive to promote an instrument to subject. The instrumental use of the a- passive is quite wide-spread.

6. Case I
   a. mando ny ‘cut’
   b. manehy ‘tie’
   c. manefy ‘fence in’
   d. mandrokatra ‘cover’

The examples in (7) illustrate that in these cases, the a- passive promotes an instrument, while the -Vna passive is used for the theme. (7a) illustrates the basic active clause and (7b,c) are the passive counterparts. (7d) gives a CT clause for comparison.

7. a. Nandidy ny hena tamin’ny antsy Raso.
   PST-AT-cut DET meat PST-P-GEN-DET knife Raso
   ‘Raso cut the meat with the knife.’

b. Adidy ny hena ny antsy.
   A-cut DET meat DET knife
   ‘The knife is used to cut the meat.’
c. Didiana amin’ny antsy ny hena.
   cut-VNA P-GEN-DET knife DET meat
   'The meat is cut with the knife.'

d. Andidiana ny hena ny antsy.
   CT-cut DET meat DET knife
   'The knife is used to cut the meat.'

Hence the verbs in (6) take both types of affix, each used for different arguments: instruments (a-) or themes (-Vna). As illustrated in (7d), CT is also possible for instruments. The alternation between CT and passive will be discussed below.

Parallel to Case I, there are verbs that take a material theme and a goal that allow for the a-/Vna alternation.

8. Case II

   a. manatrata 'stuff'
   b. mandafika 'pad'
   c. mandaraka 'scatter'
   d. manototra 'fill'

(9a) provides the standard active clause for Case II verbs, with the passives given in (9b,c) and circumstantial in (9d).

   PST-AT-stuff DET basket PST-P-GEN-DET rice Bakoly
   'Bakoly stuffed the basket with rice.'

   b. Nafatratra ny harona ny vary.
   PST-A-stuff DET basket DET rice
   'The rice was stuffed into the basket.'

   c. Nofarrarana vary ny harona.
   PST-stuff-VNA rice DET basket
   'The basket was stuffed with rice.'

   d. Namatrarana ny harona ny vary.
   PST-CT-stuff DET basket DET rice
   'The rice was stuffed into the basket.'

For the verbs in (8), the a- passive promotes the material theme, while the -Vna passive promotes the goal. The material theme (but not the goal) may also appear in the subject position of a CT clause, as in (9d).

As a first attempt to simplify the data, it is possible to conflate instruments and material themes (Case I and II verbs). These elements share the following properties, which will be discussed in detail in section 3: they may appear either adjacent to the verb or in a PP; they are promoted to subject with either the a-passive or CT; they are (usually) optional in an active clause. I am not claiming that instruments and material themes are identical in all respects. However, the voice system of Malagasy treats them on a par.

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4 In English, both use the preposition with.
Interestingly, there is another large class of verbs that allows an alternation between -Vna and a-. In these cases, the -Vna indicates a goal, while a- marks the theme.

10. Case III
   a. manedefa ‘send’
   b. mandros ‘serve’
   c. manolotra ‘offer’
   d. manoro ‘point out’

(11) illustrates the voice alternations for a typical dative verb.

11. a. Manolotra sary anao aho.
    AT-offer picture 2SG(ACC) 1SG(NOM)
    ‘I offer you a picture.’
    b. Tolorana sary ianao.
       offer-VNA picture 2SG(NOM)
       ‘You are offered a picture.’
    c. Atolotra anao ny sary.
       A-offer 2SG(ACC) DET picture
       ‘The picture is offered to you.’
    d. Anolorana sary ianao.
       CT-offer picture 2SG(NOM)
       ‘You are offered a picture.’

Comparing (11b) and (11d), we see that in this case, the -Vna passive alternates with CT.

1.3 Summary

At this point, a confusing pattern emerges. Both -Vna and a- form passives from roots. Some roots allow both affixes. In certain cases, -Vna is used for themes. In some cases, a- is used for themes. Both affixes can be used for different and distinct thematic relations, however, such as goals (-Vna) and instruments or material themes(a-). The table below summarizes the distribution of voice morphology across theta-roles.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Voice</th>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Goal/locative</th>
<th>Instr/mat</th>
<th>Theme</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>-Vna</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a-</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CT</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Clearly, it is not possible to map directly from theta-roles to particular voice forms. It is also odd that instruments, normally treated as adjuncts, can passivize. Finally, CT, typically related to adjuncts, overlaps with passive, which deserves some
explanation. Based on the above facts, in his grammar of Malagasy Rajaona (1972) concludes that there are two a- prefixes: a1 for objects and a2 for instruments. More recently, however, Pearson (1998) proposes an analysis of a- passive that draws on parallels in event structure between the various cases we have seen. Following Pearson, I will argue that in spite of the variation in the different passives, there is one unified passive phenomenon. In all instances the targeted NPs are internal arguments of the verbs in question.

2. A unified analysis of passive

Much evidence has been brought forth to argue for an object position between the two VPs in a VP-shell structure (Travis 1991; Koizumi 1993; and others). Following Travis, I will label this projection AspectP.

12. 

\[
\begin{array}{c}
\text{NP} \quad \text{V'} \\
\phantom{\text{NP}} \quad \text{Asp'}
\end{array}
\]

\[
\begin{array}{c}
\text{NP} \quad \text{Asp} \\
\phantom{\text{NP}} \quad \text{VP}
\end{array}
\]

\[
\begin{array}{c}
\text{NP} \quad \text{V''} \\
\phantom{\text{NP}} \quad \text{V} \\
\phantom{\text{NP}} \quad \text{NP} \\
\phantom{\text{NP}} \quad \text{<Goal>}
\end{array}
\]

I suggest that instruments, material themes and the themes of dative verbs may be generated in the specifier position of this projection.

Passive results from the loss of accusative Case. For transitive verbs, the internal argument then moves to Spec, IP for nominative case. In cases where there is no alternation between the a- and -Vna passive, the choice between the two affixes is lexically determined (but see below for discussion). On the other hand, if a verb has two "internal" arguments, then two passive forms will generally be available. For these ditransitives, potentially either argument can raise to subject. The argument in Spec, AspP will be promoted to subject with the a- passive form (i.e. instruments, material themes, themes of dative verbs). In other words, with the a-passive, no accusative Case is available in Spec, AspP: The argument in the lower VP will take the -Vna passive. -Vna passive therefore signals the lack of Case within VP.

To account for the overlap between CT and passive, I suggest that instruments, material themes and goals may all be generated within a PP. In that case, they are

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5 To account for the overlap between passive and CT, Rabenilaina (1991) distinguishes between voice (the verbal morphology) and diathesis (the role of the element appearing in subject position).
promoted to subject with circumstantial topic rather than with passive. In other words, as PPs they trigger CT, as NPs they trigger passive.

Note finally that there is some semantic regularity to affix selection: the verbs that select the \( a \)-passive all take a displaced theme as their sole argument. I suggest that this selection occurs in the lexicon and that the difference between themes and displaced themes is not reflected in the phrase structure. Thus I agree with Pearson’s (1998) identification of change of location being the relevant notion for the \( a \)-passive. I differ in how I treat the interactions between the semantics and the syntax. In other words, there is no direct mapping from the semantics to the syntactic structure, unlike under Pearson’s account.

3.0 Discussion

In this section, I provide evidence in favour of the above analysis. First I discuss Case I and II verbs, then I turn to Case III.

3.1 Locative alternation and instrumental advancement

As mentioned above, material themes and instruments pattern together. In this subsection, I will explore the syntactic behavior of these elements. Crucially, I will show that both are arguments of the verbs in question. This may appear to be an unjustified claim for instruments, which are standardly treated as adjuncts. I will show, however, that certain instruments may appear in an argument position.\(^6\) Only those instruments that appear overtly in the direct object position, right-adjacent to the verb, can passivize to subject. I conclude that the \( a \)-passive targets this derived object position rather than the adjunct instrument position. Thus although NPs with different thematic roles appear in the subject position of these different passive clauses, the NPs are arguments, not adjuncts. Moreover, the elements targeted by both types of passive surface as NPs, not PPs. Therefore, these verbs are all “passive” in some general sense of the term and contrast with circumstantial topic, which is limited to objects of prepositions. I now turn to evidence in favour of this position.

3.1.1 Word order

Case I and Case II verbs exhibit alternations in the word order of their arguments. Case II constructions resemble the locative alternation verbs in English (sometimes referred to as the sprayload class). Case I verbs are unusual from the perspective of English, but also allow the internal arguments to appear in different positions in the clause, as we will see below. Like English, there is no morphological marking on the verb to signal the different possible orderings of the arguments. For Case II verbs, either element can appear in the canonical direct object position, adjacent to the verb, as shown in (13). In (13a) the material theme is within a PP that follows the goal, while in (13b), it is an NP that precedes the goal.

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\(^6\) See Baker (1988) for discussion of the argument-like properties of instruments. He points out that noun incorporation of instruments is fairly common. As will be discussed below, instruments are among the class of adjuncts that pattern in some respects with arguments.
13. **Case II**: locative alternation
   a. goalNP > material themenp
      Namasy tany tamin'ny voa Rasoa.
      PST-AT-sow land PST-P-GEN-DET seed Rasoa
      'Rasoa sowed the land with seeds.'
   b. material themenp > goalNP
      Namasy voa ny tany Rasoa.
      PST-AT-sow seed DET land Rasoa
      'Rasoa sowed seeds in the land.'

Interestingly, even instruments, as shown in (14b), can appear right-adjacent to the verb in the direct object position. Following Seiter (1979), I will call this process "instrumental advancement", although I do not posit any movement. As illustrated below, Case I verbs pattern with Case II in allowing alternative word orders between a theme and another element. The instrumental is realized as a PP in (14a) and as an NP in (14b) with a subsequent change in word order.

14. **Case I**: instrumental advancement
   a. themenp > instrumentenp
      Nandidy ny hena tamin'ny antsy Rasoa.
      PST-AT-cut DET meat PST-P-GEN-DET knife Rasoa
      'Rasoa cut the meat with the knife.'
   b. instrumentenp > themenp
      Nandidy antsy ny hena Rasoa.
      PST-AT-cut knife DET meat Rasoa
      'Rasoa cut the meat with the knife.'

At first glance, instruments would appear to resist a standard analysis of passive; they tend to pattern with adjuncts in most languages. The data in (14), however, indicate that in Malagasy, instruments can appear in an argument position.

As with "normal" direct objects (i.e. non-alternating), an adverb cannot intervene between the verb and an indefinite NP instrumental or material theme. (15) illustrates adverb ordering for a verb and object.

15. a. Manasa lamba tsara Rakoto.
    AT-wash clothes good Rakoto
    'Rakoto washes clothes well.'
   b. Manasa tsara lamba Rakoto
      AT-wash good clothes Rakoto

(16) shows that this same ordering restriction applies to advanced instruments.

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7 In this way, Malagasy resembles Niasan, where instrumental advancement is only possible if the verb has a direct object. See Seiter (1979) for discussion. Baker (1988) provides an analysis for this "transitivity" effect in applicatives in general.

8 Instruments are obligatorily indefinite in this "object" position. For Case II and III verbs, however, the appearance of the determiner is less restricted. In fact, the overall distribution of the determiner for objects is complex and not fully understood.
16. a. Mandidy antsy tsara ny hena Rasoa.
   AT-cut knife good DET meat Rasoa
   ‘Rasoa cuts the meat well with the knife.’

b. *Mandidy tsara antsy ny hena Rasoa.
   AT-cut good knife DET meat Rasoa

The above data indicate that when instruments and material themes appear next to the verb they pattern with themes with respect to adverb placement. I conclude that these instruments and material themes are arguments (not adjuncts) and hence can passivize to subject.

Note that the movement to object position illustrated above is not a form of noun incorporation. Although the adverb data indicate a relatively strict adjacency between the verb and the derived object, in non-active voices a genitive agent can surface between the two.

17. Didian'i Bozy anstsy ny hena.
   cut-VNA-GEN-Bozy knife DET meat
   ‘The meat is cut by Bozy with the knife.’

Moreover it is possible to coordinate the material theme and the goal to the exclusion of the verb.

18. a. Nandrakotra bodofotsy ny fandriana sy lamba ny lytabatra i Sahondra.
   PST-AT-cover blanket DET bed and cloth DET table Sahondra
   ‘Sahondra covered the bed with a blanket and the table with a cloth.’

b. Nanindrona antsy ny trondro sy lefona ny omby i Sahondra.
   PST-AT-pierce knife DET fish and spear DET bull Sahondra
   ‘Sahondra pierced the fish with a knife and the bull with a spear.’

Consider (18a). Although bodofotsy ‘blanket’ could potentially have incorporated into the verb nandrakotra ‘cover’, there is no host for incorporation of lamba ‘cloth’. (18b) illustrates the same coordination with instruments. If incorporation occurs with these verbs, it must therefore be optional.

3.1.2 Clefts

In Malagasy, clefts are formed by fronting the focussed element, which is followed by the focus particle no. In general, only subjects and adjuncts can cleft directly. To cleft an object, it must first be promoted to subject via passive, as shown in (19a,b). (19c) shows that an adjunct can cleft freely.

   DET cloth FOC AT-wash Rakoto
   ‘It is the clothes that Rakoto washes.’

b. Ny lamba no sasany-Rakoto.
   DET cloth FOC TT-wash-GEN,Rakoto
   ‘It is the clothes that are washed by Rakoto.’
Clefs therefore provide a test to distinguish arguments and adjuncts. As NPs, neither the material theme nor the instrument may be cleft in an active clause.\(^9\)

20. a. *Ny rano no nameno ny tavoahangy i Sahondra.
   DET water FOC PST-AT-fill DET bottle Sahondra
   'It’s water that Sahondra filled into the bottle.'

   b. *Ny antsy no nandidy hena i Bakoly.
   DET knife FOC PST-AT-cut meat Bakoly
   'It’s a knife that Bakoly cut meat with.'

The ungrammaticality of (20) indicates that in their NP positions, both the material theme and the instrument are arguments of the verb.

As PPs, however, these same elements exhibit different characteristics. Clefs parallel to (20) are in fact grammatical.

21. a. Tamin’ny rano no nameno ny tavoahangy i Sahondra.
   PST-P-GEN-DET water FOC PST-AT-fill DET bottle Sahondra
   'It’s with water that Sahondra filled the bottle.'

   b. Tamin’ny antsy no nandidy hena i Bakoly.
   PST-P-GEN-DET knife FOC PST-AT-cut meat Bakoly
   'It’s with a knife that Bakoly cut meat.'

Note it is the presence of the preposition that distinguishes (20) from (21). I suggest that clefting of material themes and instruments is grammatical from the PP adjunct position. On the other hand, if these elements are direct NP arguments, clefting is impossible.

Note that it is not simply the case that any PP may cleft freely. True PP arguments, such as the goal of dative verbs, cannot cleft.

22. *Hoan’ny zaza no nandroso vary Rakoto.
   for-GEN-DET child FOC PST-AT-serve rice Rakoto
   'It’s to the child that Rakoto served rice.'

The ungrammaticality of (22) is further evidence that the clefting of material themes and instruments occurs from an adjunct position.

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\(^9\) (20a,b) are also ungrammatical without the determiner. Clefs of bare NPs are in principle possible. Hence both (19b) and (i) are grammatical.

(i) Lamba no sasan-dRakoto.
   cloth FOC wash-VNA-GEN-Rakoto
   'It’s clothes that are washed by Rakoto.'
3.1.3 Prepositions
As has been exemplified in the above data, material themes and instruments commonly surface as the object of a preposition, *amin‘*. This preposition can be overtly present in a construction with circumstantial topic.

23. a. *Andidiana ny hena ny antsy.*
   CT-cut DET meat DET knife
   ‘The knife is used to cut the meat.’

   b. *Amin‘ny antsy no andidiana ny hena.*
   P-GEN-DET knife FOC CT-cut DET meat
   ‘It is the knife that is used to cut the meat.’

It is quite common (and sometimes obligatory) for the preposition to be present in a cleft, as in (23b). The preposition, however, is prohibited from surfacing in a cleft of an instrument with the *a*- passive. This is shown in (24b).

24. a. *Ny antsny no adidy ny hena.*
   DET knife foc A-cut DET meat
   ‘It is the knife that is used to cut the meat.’

   b. *Amin‘ny antsny no adidy ny hena.*
   P-GEN-DET knife FOC A-cut DET meat

The ungrammaticality of (24b) suggests that the *a*- passive involves promotion from a direct object position, not from the object of the preposition.

The fact that material themes and instruments can be promoted to subject via either passive or CT is indicative of their dual status. They can be arguments, in which case there is no preposition and passive applies. They can equally be adjuncts, be selected by a preposition and trigger CT when subject.

3.1.4 A prediction
The analysis of instrumental advancement feeding passive makes a clear prediction: if an instrument cannot be generated as an argument, the *a*- passive should be impossible. In fact, not all verbs allow an instrument to appear in the object position. In these cases, there is no *a*- passive form of the verb. (25a) shows like *mandidy* ‘cut’, *mihinana* ‘eat’ may take an NP theme and a PP instrument.

   PST-AT-eat meat PST-P-GEN-DET knife Rasoa
   ‘Rasoa ate meat with the knife.’

   b. *Nihinana antsny hena Rasoa.*
   PST-AT-eat knife DET meat Rasoa
   c. *Nahinin-dRasoa ny hena ny antsny.*
   A-eat-GEN-Rasoa DET meat DET knife

Unlike with *mandidy* ‘to cut’, however, the instrument may not appear right-adjacent to the verb, as shown by the ungrammaticality of (25b). Moreover, *mihinana* has no *a*- passive, as in (25c). The proposed dependency between
advancement and passive remains to be verified against a large number of verbs, but initial investigation suggests that the former feeds the latter.

### 3.2 Cross-linguistic evidence

Instrumental advancement occurs in other Austronesian languages (e.g. Niuean (Seiter (1979)) and Madurese (William Davies, p.c.)), usually accompanied by changes in verb morphology. In Niuean, an ergative VSO language, the preposition *aki* appears cliticized onto the verb.

26. a. Kua hele tuai e Sione e falaao [aki [e titipi haana]].
   \[PERF\] cut \[PERF\] ERG Sione ABS bread with ABS knife his
   ‘Sione has cut the bread with his knife.’

   b. Kua hele aki tuai e Sione [e titipi haana] e falaao.
   \[PERF\] cut with \[PERF\] ERG Sione ABS knife his ABS bread
   ‘Sione has cut the bread with his knife.’

The former object of the preposition appears between the ergative agent and the absolutive theme. Madurese, SVO, uses a general-purpose valency-extending affix, -*agh* (also for benefactives and causes). In (27a), the instrument appears in a PP.

In (27b), the instrument surfaces in the object position and the verb bears extra morphology.

27. a. Ali notop cendela biq korten.
   Ali AV-close window with curtain
   ‘Ali covered the window with a curtain.’

   b. Ali notop-agh korten daq cendela.
   Ali AV-close-AGHI curtain to window
   ‘Ali covered the window with a curtain.’

In contrast to Niuean and Madurese, the form of the verb in Malagasy remains constant in these alternations.

Instruments may also be promoted to subject. In these cases, the verb morphology indicates that the instrument has first been promoted to object and then to subject. In other words, the verb bears both the instrumental advancement suffix and the passive prefix.

   curtain DET OV-close-AGHI Ali to window
   ‘Ali covered the window with a curtain.’

Outside of Austronesian, there are languages which exhibit a similar manipulation of internal arguments. More specifically, the Bantu languages are well-known for the so-called applicative construction. Applicatives involve the promotion of the object of a preposition to direct object, accompanied by morphological marking on the verb. See Baker (1988) for discussion.

Summing up, Malagasy is not unusual in allowing certain PP adjuncts to appear as NP arguments. What distinguishes Malagasy from the languages
mentioned in this section is that Malagasy does not mark these alternations morphologically. In this way, Malagasy resembles English, where the locative alternation is not associated with any particular morphology.

3.3 Dative verbs

We now turn to the third class of verbs, datives. In many ways, these resemble their English counterparts, the most well-known being ‘give’. (manome ‘give’ does not allow the \( a\)-\( -Vna \) alternation, however, and will therefore not be discussed.) Recall that themes take the \( a\)- passive while goals take \(-Vna\). As illustrated in (29), there are three basic word order possibilities with these verbs.

29. Case III: dative shift
   a. Nandroso vary hoan’ny zaza i Bakoly.
      PST-AT-serve rice for-GEN-DET child Bakoly
      ‘Bakoly served rice to the child.’
   b. Nandroso vary ny zaza i Bakoly.
      PST-AT-serve rice DET child Bakoly
      ‘Bakoly served rice to the child.’
   c. Nandroso ny zaza ny vary i Bakoly.
      PST-AT-serve DET child DET rice Bakoly
      ‘Bakoly served the child the rice.’

In (29a), the theme is realized as an NP and the goal as a PP. The preposition may be omitted, as in (29b). (29b) is a double object construction that maintains the theme-goal word order. This order may be reversed as in (29c).

Dative shift appears puzzling when compared to the Case I and II verbs discussed above. Does (29c) involve “advancement” of the goal to object along the line of instrumental advancement? I suggest that this is in fact not the case. The shifted goal in (29c) does not pattern with instrumentals or material themes. For example, the goal (\( ny zaza \) ‘the child’) must be definite.

30. *Nandroso zaza (ny) vary i Bakoly.
    PST-AT-serve child DET rice Bakoly
    ‘Bakoly served a child rice.’

Furthermore, the goal passivizes with the \(-Vna\) suffix, as shown in the examples in (11). I assume that the theme of dative shift verbs surfaces in the same position as “advanced” instruments and material themes and hence passivizes with the \( a\)- passive. The goal on the other hand, is in a “lower” position syntactically (sister to the lower V) and may be realized either as a PP or an NP, as in (29a,b). For (29c), I assume that the shifted goal does not surface in the same position as NP instruments and material themes. In English, for example, the theme but not the goal argument of dative verbs affects telicity. This difference between the two suggests that they appear in distinct positions. I tentatively propose that in (29c), VP raising of the verb and the goal has obtained, à la Larson (1988). See Pearson (to appear) for more detailed discussion of dative shift in Malagasy. Finally, note that since a goal may surface as either an NP or a PP, both passive and CT are possible.
4. Conclusion

The above analysis draws on a classical GB view of passive: unavailability of Case forces NP movement. In all the passive constructions discussed above, I have shown that NP arguments move to subject position for nominative. Apparent counterexamples, such as the passives of instrumentals, were shown to involve the base generation of the adjunct in an argument position.

References


