

Dispatch place: United States of America, Madagascar

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1 Research topic

This research aims to provide a holistic picture of the Tandroy language on the basis of primary data such as basic vocabulary, natural conversations, and recordings of traditional oral material gathered through field research. Compiling my findings from five years of research, I submitted my Ph.D. dissertation to the graduate school in December 2010.

2 Content of research abroad

2.1 United States of America: Conference participation

I gave a presentation at the CUNY Conference on the Phonology of Endangered Languages held in New York from January 12 to 14, 2011. The talk covered the phonological aspects of the Tandroy dialect of Malagasy. I also received valuable advice from researchers and students from the U.S. and many other countries, including those who specialize in the description of endangered or minority languages. Additionally, the conference enabled me to meet specialists on Austronesian linguistics, who shared many interesting viewpoints with me and now serve as a valuable contact network for my future studies.

2.2 Madagascar: Field research

I conducted field research in Madagascar from February 16 to March 16, 2011. In response to a comment received at the public hearing of my Ph.D. dissertation, I sought to compensate for the limited amount of data. To this end, I focused on verbal categories and gathered the

Photo 1 Sale of *raketa* (cactus) in Ambovombe marketplace



three forms of 70 verbs and phrases with the help of a native speaker living in Toliara.

Conventional research on Malagasy linguistics, especially on the Merina dialect, regards Form I (in Table 1) as active voice and Form II (in Table 1) as passive voice. The morphological difference between Forms I and II is that Form I follows the independent form of the personal pronouns (*raho* ‘I’ in Table 1) whereas Form II follows the clitic form of the personal pronouns (*-ko* ‘I’ in Table 1). In my Ph.D. dissertation, following previous research trends in Malagasy linguistics, but particularly those of the Merina dialect, I divided the Malagasy verbs into active verbs (Form I in Table 1) and non-active verbs (Forms II and III in Table 1) and subdivided the latter into passive and circumstantial verbs. However, as this classification still does not account for the various aspects of verb forms, I temporarily classified the three forms of verbs as Forms I, II, and III, as shown in Table 3, in order to analyze their semantic and syntactic properties.

[Table 1] Three forms of verbs and nominalization forms

Root	Form I	Form II	Form III	Nominalization form
álake ‘action to take’	málake ‘to take’ (malake raho ‘I take’)	aláe ‘to take’ (alae-ko ‘I take’)	iála ‘to take’ (iala-ko ‘I take’)	fiála (items to be taken, such as a pincette)
Imperative form	mangalá ‘Take!’	aláo ‘Take!’	ialáo ‘Take!’	
Root	Form I	Form II	Form III	Nominalization form
sókake ‘action to open’	manókake (manokake raho ‘I open something.’) misókake (‘something is open’)	sokáfañe (sokafe-ko ‘I open’)	anokáfañe (anokafe-ko ‘I open’)	fanokáfañe ‘place to be opened, items to be opened’
Imperative form	manokáfa ‘Open!’	sokáfo ‘Open!’	anokáfo ‘Open!’	
Root	Form I	Form II	Form III	Nominalization form
álake ‘action to take’	málake ‘to take’ (malake raho ‘I take’)	aláe ‘to take’ (alae-ko ‘I take’)	iála ‘to take’ (iala-ko ‘I take’)	fiála (materials to take, such as pincette)
Imperative	mangalá	aláo	ialáo	

form	‘Take!’	‘Take!’	‘Take!’	
Root	Form I	Form II	Form III	Nominalization form
sókake ‘action to open’	manókake (manokake raho ‘I open something.’ misókake (‘something is open’	sokáfañe (sokafe-ko ‘I open’)	anokáfañe (anokafe-ko ‘I open’	fanokáfañe ‘place to open, materials to open’
Imperative form	manokáfa ‘Open!’	sokáfo ‘Open!’	anokáfo ‘Open!’	

My study of the Tandroy dialect revealed that Form II does not match the general definition of “passive” that is used in the grammatical analysis of voice, that is, when the grammatical subject is the recipient of the action denoted by the verb. I thus collected data on the use of these verb forms with approximately 70 sample verbs in the field research. The data show that one difference between verbs of Forms I and II pertains to the temporal aspect.

For instance, in example (a) in Form II, the speaker has already decided to act, but he has not yet actually taken the action, while in example (b) in Form I, the action is already in progress or has been completed.

- a. Alae-ko ty hatae tia. I take the tree there.
to.take-I the tree there
- b. Mangalake ty hatae tia raho. I take the tree there.
to.take the tree there I

With regard to the use and function of verb forms II and III, many points remain unclear and require further data and discussion. Nominalization forms do not simply indicate the nominal form of verbs but fluidly change a meaning depending on the context, such as indicating materials, means, place, etc.

From now on, with the 70 data items of Forms I, II, and III; nominalization forms; and example phrases that contain them, I continue the detailed analysis of Tandroy verbal categories. In Ambovombe, the Tandroy settlement, I asked the village chief to narrate Tandroy traditional oral history and recorded some oral folktales as linguistic data. At the same time, while I stayed in Fort Dauphin, I carried out a pilot research on the Tanosy dialect, the neighboring dialect of Tandroy, for future comparative Malagasy dialectology.

3. Impressive experience in overseas dispatch

3.1 United States of America

The New York conference was a stimulating experience for me in that I could become acquainted with many scholars who conducted field research worldwide. Attending the conference was a good opportunity to exchange academic opinions and ideas that deepened my understanding of my research topic. In particular, I was struck by the fact that field research is not necessarily conducted in the areas of native speakers' origins; one researcher described endangered languages of the world in New York by taking advantage of the geopolitical background, namely, the multilingual society with large numbers of immigrants (See Photo 2).

Photo 2 Conference in New York



3.2 Madagascar

Whenever I visit Madagascar, I am impressed by the country's diverse food culture. For the Japanese, it is easy to become accustomed to the Malagasy diet, namely, eating rice as a staple food and seafood. In addition to a wide variety of fruits such as rambutan, lychee, pomegranate, watermelon, mango, papaya, and pineapple, I could enjoy delicious meals such as fresh lobsters, raw oysters, sea urchins, and other types of seafood, as well as beef, pork, chicken, and wild boar meat prepared by the local people (See Photo 3).

I have conducted field research in Madagascar intermittently since 2006, and every time I visit the country, I am surprised by the fast pace of urban development. This year, I was able to connect to wireless LAN in an isolated rural hostel and restaurant. It is not rare for a person in Madagascar to have one or two mobile phones; even schoolchildren have mobile phones so that their parents can contact them from the

Photo 3 A research collaborator family at Fort Dauphin



workplace.

In Toliara city, there is a new type of rickshaw, the “cyclo-pousse” (See Photo 4), which is drawn by a bicycle. Traditionally, the Tandroy people earn a living as rickshaw operators in the coastal areas of Madagascar, but now, the Vezo people, who are fishermen living in Toliara, build and pull the cyclo-pousse, and they want to gradually spread the use of the *cyclo-pousse* in the city. As of today, there are four cyclo-pousses in operation in Toliara.

Photo 4 A cyclo-pousse in Toliara



4. Work achievements and evaluation

The specific problems encountered in developing countries, such as health problems, including hygiene, prevented me from devoting my entire stay to research.

This year again, I suffered a viral infection due to poor food hygiene and my being unaccustomed to the climate. Nevertheless, thanks to the help and dedication of the linguistic informant and other Malagasy people, I was able to improve my Ph.D. dissertation by verifying the data on Tandroy time expressions and collecting additional data on verbal categories, which was the main objective of my field research.

5 The challenge and goals of the dispatch

As of FY2011, I am willing to expand my research areas to the Pacific islands so as to develop my study and understand Malagasy from the viewpoint of comparative Austronesian linguistics. I am also planning to undertake a joint study on Malagasy language and cultural studies with researchers at Institut National des Langues et Civilisations Orientales (INALCO) in France, from December 2011, where I will serve as a visiting researcher. My future challenges and tasks are (i) to describe and analyze sociocultural issues by focusing on the number concept and (ii) to analyze what kind of historical process established today’s Malagasy dialects and Indonesian languages by engaging in a long-term comparative study of Austronesian languages. Additionally, I aim to incorporate the data gathered from the above two studies and reveal how traditional science, history, human behavior, and coexistence with nature are interrelated in each society where I conduct field research.