

Auxiliaires en malgache

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Rajaona (1972) describes a class of pre-predicate elements in Malagasy, referring to them as auxiliaries. For Rajaona, this class is defined distributionally (they must appear in the pre-predicate position and cannot be the main predicate) and morphologically (they are invariant in form, unlike verbs). I show, however, that auxiliaries can be divided into two sub-groups: those that allow VP ellipsis and those that don't. The overall goal of this talk is thus to provide a first attempt at classifying these auxiliaries with respect to their syntactic properties.

Malagasy is a strictly predicate-initial language. Auxiliaries, as defined by Rajaona, are elements that appear before the main predicate (e.g. *tokony* 'should' and *saika* 'almost' in (1)).

- (1) a. Tokony hilalao aho. b. Saika niteny aho.
 should FUT-AT-play 1SG(NOM) almost PST-AT-speak 1SG(NOM)
 'I should play.' 'I almost spoke.'

These elements do not host voice morphology, unlike verbs (as shown in (2)).

- (2) a. *tokoninao b. *saikako c. ateniko
 TT-should-2SG TT-almost-1SG TT-speak-1SG ('spoken by me')

Some auxiliaries (modals) allow VP ellipsis in embedded or coordinated CPs.

- (3) a. Te hilalao i Koto nefa mino i Soa...
 want FUT-AT-play Koto Q PRS-AT-believe Soa
 'Koto wants to play but Soa thinks...'
 b. fa tsy tokony ~~hilalao~~ izy
 COMP NEG should ~~FUT-AT-play~~ 3
 '...that he shouldn't.'

Other auxiliaries (e.g. *saika* 'almost', *efa* 'already') do not license VP ellipsis in any context. Travis (2005) argues that Malagasy has verb-stranding VP ellipsis (Goldberg 2005). I therefore claim that the "auxiliaries" that do not allow for ellipsis are in fact adverbs.

Initial evidence from ordering restrictions suggests that adverbs are merged higher than auxiliaries. As shown by Rackowski and Travis (2000), there are two pre-verbal positions for negation in Malagasy. Adverbs must precede negation, but true auxiliaries can precede or follow.

- (4) a. Saika tsy niteny izy. b. *Tsy saika niteny izy
 almost NEG PST-AT-speak 3 NEG almost PST-AT-speak 3
 'She almost didn't speak.'
 (5) a. Tokony tsy hiteny izy. b. Tsy tokony hiteny izy
 already NEG FUT-AT-speak 3 NEG should FUT-AT-speak 3
 'She should not speak.' 'She should not speak.'

I also consider ordering restrictions between auxiliaries. This talk sheds new light on this class of elements and also on the problem of how to derive verb-stranding VP ellipsis.

References

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