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Malagasy clefts from a Western Malayo-Polynesian perspective: comments on the paper by Hans-Martin Gärtner

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Gärtner (this volume) presents a critical evaluation of two competing analyses for the "Focusing *no*-construction" (FNC) in Malagasy, illustrated in (1) (data from Paul, 2001). For convenience, I will refer to this construction as a "cleft", even though the term seems to presuppose a particular analysis.*

- (1) a. I.Sahondra no nanapaka ity hazo ity.
Sahondra DET PST.AT.cut this tree this
'It was Sahondra who cut this tree.'
- b. Ity hazo ity no notapahin'i.Sahondra.
this tree this DET PST.TT.cut.GEN.Sahondra
'It was this tree that was cut by Sahondra.'
- c. Tamin'ny antsy no nanapahan'i.Sahondra ity hazo ity.
PST.P.GEN.DET knife DET PST.CT.cut.GEN.Sahondra this tree this
'It was with the knife that Sahondra cut this tree.'
- d. Tamin'ny antsy no nanapaka ity hazo ity i.Sahondra.
PST.P.GEN.DET knife DET PST.AT.cut this tree this Sahondra
'It was with the knife that Sahondra cut this tree.'
- e. Tamin'ny antsy no notapahin'i.Sahondra ity hazo ity.
PST.P.GEN.DET knife DET PST.TT.cut.GEN.Sahondra this tree this
'It was with the knife that this tree was cut by Sahondra.'

The analysis which is the primary focus of Gärtner's discussion is the "clause combining approach" (CCA) proposed by Pearson (2006). This analysis starts with the observation that the particle *no* can be used as a subordinating conjunction to introduce an adverbial clause (usually temporal, occasionally conditional in full clausal usage). In a focusing *no*-construction like (1a), the material following *no* is analyzed as an adverbial clause with pro-dropped subject, while the phrase that precedes *no* is analyzed as the visible portion of the main clause. More precisely, the initial NP (i.e., the focused element) is analyzed as the predicate of an equative clause with null copula and expletive dummy subject. Thus sentence (1a) would have a structure analogous to the literal translation in (2); note that the relative order of the two clauses is reversed in the English translation:

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(2) Structure of (1a) under “clause combining” analysis:

[*if/when (he) cut this tree*] _{ADJUNCT CLAUSE} [(*he was*) *Sahondra*] _{MAIN CLAUSE}.

The second analysis that Gärtner discusses is the “pseudo-cleft” analysis of Paul (2001) and Potsdam (2006a; 2006b). Under this analysis, sentences like (1a–c) have the basic structure of an equative clause with a null copula, i.e., a sequence of two NPs. The first NP (the focused element) is analyzed as the predicate, while the second NP (the headless relative clause) is analyzed as the subject. The proposed structure for sentence (1a) is analogous to the translation in (3), aside from the relative order of the subject and predicate phrases, which are shown here in English order.

(3) Structure of (1a) under “pseudo-cleft” analysis:

[*the one that cut this tree*] _{SUBJ} [(*was*) *Sahondra*] _{PRED}.

As Gärtner points out, Pearson’s CCA proposal was intended to overcome two specific problems with the pseudo-cleft analysis. First, the particle *no* is not otherwise known to function as an NP marker in Malagasy, nor is it found in relative clauses (whether headed or headless) in other contexts. Second, examples like (1d–e) involve the “clefting” of an adjunct phrase, potentially a violation of the restriction that only subjects can be extracted in Malagasy. Gärtner goes on to argue that neither the CCA nor the pseudo-cleft analysis provide structures that can lead to an adequate semantic analysis.

In this article I will examine some of the issues that Gärtner raises in light of evidence from other Western Malayo-Polynesian languages. As both Paul (2001) and Pearson (2006) note, there seems to be good reason to adopt the pseudo-cleft analysis for languages like Malay/Indonesian and Tagalog. I will argue that at least some of Gärtner’s arguments against the pseudo-cleft analysis for Malagasy make incorrect predictions when we apply them to these other languages.

The remainder of this paper is organized as follows: in section 2 I present evidence which supports a pseudo-cleft analysis for clefts in Malay/Indonesian, Tagalog, and Kimaragang Dusun. I claim (echoing the claims of other authors) that this evidence is sufficiently strong that the analysis can be regarded as established for these languages.

In section 3 I review some of the challenges that Gärtner raises to the pseudo-cleft analysis for subject clefts in Malagasy. I show that at least one of the problematic properties of Malagasy clefts, namely the possibility of strong quantifiers appearing within the putative predicate phrase, is found in Malay as well. If the pseudo-cleft analysis is, nevertheless, the best analysis for Malay, as argued in section 2, then the distribution of strong quantifiers is not a fatal objection to the pseudo-cleft analysis for Malagasy. I go on to discuss the variable semantic/pragmatic force of the cleft. I endorse Gärtner’s skepticism about “one-to-one relationships between grammatical constructions and information structure”, but argue that the interpretational flexibility which he illustrates in Malagasy clefts is not as much of a problem for the pseudo-cleft analysis as he suggests. This is because the necessary relationship between the structure of the pseudo-cleft and its most common interpretation, which is argued for by Paul (2001) and assumed by Gärtner, is based on assumptions about the semantics of headless relative clauses that are called into question by data from Tagalog.

In section 4 I compare adjunct clefts (ex. 1d–e above) in Malagasy with “focus fronting” in Tagalog and Malay. As Gärtner demonstrates, adjunct “clefts” are a problem for the pseudo-cleft analysis. One might be tempted to suggest that the structure of adjunct clefts is different from that of subject clefts, but it turns out that both are subject to the same

constraint on verbal morphology in long-distance “extraction”. We will see that in Tagalog, this same constraint also applies to both focus fronting and true clefting, which are two very different constructions. The conclusion I will propose is that the long-distance facts in Malagasy do not require a uniform analysis for subject clefts and adjunct clefts. It is at least logically possible that one might reject the pseudo-cleft analysis for “clefts” involving a focused adjunct without rejecting this analysis for subject clefts.

2. Pseudo-clefts in Western Malayo-Polynesian

2.1 Malay/Indonesian

The main features of Indonesian cleft sentences are illustrated in (4):

- (4) a. Orang itu(=lah) yang mencuri dompet saya.
 person that=FOC REL steal wallet my
 ‘It was that person who stole my wallet.’ [Sneddon 1996:292]
- b. Wayang.kulit(=lah) yang paling kami Ø-gemari.
 shadow.puppet=FOC REL most 1pl(EXCL) PASS-admire
 ‘It is the shadow puppets that we most admire/enjoy.’ [Sneddon 1996:292]

Paul (2001) summarizes arguments by Cole et al. (to appear), some of which are based on the work of Mashudi (1981), in support of the pseudo-cleft analysis for such sentences. One important observation is that *yang* is the normal relativizer for Malay relative clauses, both headed and headless. This is consistent with the hypothesis that the structure of the sentences in (4) is simply NP-NP, with the second NP being a headless relative clause. No other complementizer can replace *yang* in this construction, as might be the case if the material following *yang* were some other type of subordinate clause.

Basic word order in Malay is SVO, unlike Malagasy which is verb- (or predicate-) initial. However, Cole et al. argue that the first NP in (4a–b) is actually the predicate of the equative clause. Some evidence for this comes from the optional presence of the focus particle =*lah*. As Mashudi shows, subjects in Malay cannot be focused, either with =*lah* (5a) or with the interrogative focus particle =*kah* (5b); see also Dik et al. (1981:56–57), Alsagoff (1991). These particles must occur within the predicate, most often on the first word of the predicate as in (5c) (Sneddon 1996:261–2). When the predicate is marked for focus, the subject often shifts to post-verbal position as illustrated in (5d–e). The initial position of the predicate NP in clefts is consistent with this pattern.

- (5) a. *Abu=lah minum air itu tadi.
 Abu=FOC drink water that just.now
 (intended: ‘It was Abu who just drank that water.’) [Mashudi 1981:51]
- b. *Abu=kah minum air itu tadi?
 Abu=Q drink water that just.now
 (intended: ‘Was it Abu who just drank that water?’) [Mashudi 1981:50]

- c. Hubungan Indonesia dan Amerika sangat=lah dekat.
relations Indonesia and America very=FOC close
'Relations between Indonesia and America are very close.' [Sneddon 1996:261]
- d. Tertipu=lah kamu!
cheated=FOC you
'You have been cheated!'
- e. Di.sini hati saya hancur.
here liver 1sg break
Menangis=lah saya dengan sangat sedih.
weep=FOC 1sg with very sad
'Here my heart broke. I cried very sadly.'

In order for subjects to be marked for focus, they must be clefted as illustrated in (6). In this construction they may take focus particles because they have become predicates of the matrix clause.

- (6) a. Abu=lah yang minum air itu tadi.
Abu=FOC REL drink water that just.now
'It was Abu who just drank that water.'
- b. Abu=kah yang minum air itu tadi?
Abu=Q REL drink water that just.now
'Was it Abu who just drank that water?'

Further evidence that the clefted NP is the predicate of an equative clause comes from negation patterns. There are two markers of clausal negation in Malay. Verbal and adjectival predicates (V or AP) must be negated by *tidak* (7a), while NP predicates can only be negated by *bukan* (7b).¹ The negator occurs before the first word of the predicate, regardless of the position of the subject (7c). When *bukan* is used in a verbal clause, it negates the proposition as a whole (7d).

- (7) a. Mereka tidak menolong kami.
3pl not help 1pl.excl
'They didn't help us.'
- b. Dia bukan/*tidak guru.
3sg not teacher
'She isn't a teacher.'
- c. Bukan guru dia.
not teacher 3sg
'She isn't a *teacher*.' (with focal stress on 'teacher')

¹ PP predicates are normally negated by *tidak*, but certain prepositions allow either negator (Sneddon 1996:195).

- d. Mereka bukan menolong kami, melainkan ...
 3pl not help 1pl.excl on.the.contrary
 'It is not the case that they helped us; on the contrary ...'

Only *bukan* can be used to negate clefts, as illustrated in (8), showing that the cleft is an equative clause, i.e., its predicate is an NP. In order to negate the equative clause, the negator must occur before the initial NP, showing that this initial NP is the predicate of the clause.

- (8) a. Bukan/*tidak dia yang ku cinta...
 not 3sg REL 1sg love
 'It is not him/her that I love ...'
 [www.lyricsandsongs.com/song/678398.html]
- b. Dia=lah yang tidak/*bukan ku cinta...
 3sg=FOC REL not 1sg love
 'It is him/her that I do not love ...'
- c. Bukan/*tidak kau yang patut minta maaf.
 not 2sg REL should request forgiveness
 Aku yang patut minta maaf.
 1sg REL should request forgiveness
 'It is not you who should apologize. I am the one who should apologize.'
 [www.esasterawan.net/esasterawan/1_weblogg.asp?uid=113&bid=4951]
- d. Sang.Kula merasa amat sedih kerana
 (name) feel very sad because
 bukan/*tidak itu=lah yang ingin di-lihat=nya.
 not that=FOC REL want PASS-see=3sg
 'Sang Kula felt very sad, because that was not the thing which he wished to see.'
 [www.jayzul.blogspot.com]

2.2 Tagalog

Tagalog, like Malagasy, is a predicate-initial language with no overt copula. In equative clauses, both NPs may be marked for nominative case as in (9a). If the predicate NP is indefinite, it appears without case marking (9b).

- (9) a. [Si=Rosa] [ang=paborito ko=ng kaklase].
 NOM=Rosa NOM=favorite my=LNK classmate
 'Rosa is my favorite classmate.' [S&O 1972:94]
- b. [Nobela] [ang=libro=ng nasa mesa].
 novel NOM=book=LNK on table
 'The book on the table is a novel.' [S&O 1972:117]

Evidence that the first NP is the predicate comes from the grammaticalized topic marker *ay*. Subjects and adverbial elements can be fronted to a position immediately preceding the minimal clause boundary; an example with topicalized subject is shown in (10b). Schachter and Otnes (1972) refer to this construction as *ay*-inversion. As ex. (11a) and (12b) illustrate,

subjects of equative clauses can occur in this position, but predicate NPs cannot (11b) (see also Mercado, 2004).

- (10) a. Binili ko ito=ng damit.
 OV-buy 1sg.GEN this(NOM)=LNK dress
 ‘I bought this dress.’
- b. Ito=ng damit ay binili ko.
 this(NOM)=LNK dress TOP OV-buy 1sg.GEN
 ‘I bought this dress.’

- (11) a. Ang=libro=ng nasa mesa ay nobela.
 NOM=book=LNK on table TOP novel
 ‘The book on the table is a novel.’

- b. *Nobela ay ang=libro=ng nasa mesa.
 novel TOP NOM=book=LNK on table

- (12) a. [Matangkad at malusog na bata] [ang babae=ng iyon].
 tall and healthy LNK child NOM girl=LNK that
 ‘That girl is a tall and healthy child.’ [Mercado, 2004]

- b. [Ang babae=ng iyon] ay [matangkad at malusog na bata].
 NOM girl=LNK that TOP tall and healthy LNK child
 ‘That girl is a tall and healthy child.’ [Mercado, 2004]

Clefts in Tagalog (13–14) are clearly marked as equative clauses. Both constituents are unambiguously NPs, being introduced by nominative case markers which may optionally be followed by the plural NP clitic *mga* (14a–b). This clitic appears only within NPs; in particular, it cannot be used to pluralize verbal clauses, as demonstrated in (14c).

- (13) a. [Ito=ng damit] ang binili ko.
 this(NOM)=LNK dress NOM OV-buy 1sg.GEN
 ‘What I bought was this dress.’
- b. [Si=Bing] ang gumawa ng=sapatos na iyon.
 NOM=Bing NOM AV-make GEN=shoe LNK that
 ‘The one who made those shoes is Bing.’
- c. [Bata] ang lumangoy sa=Bulakan.
 child NOM AV-swim DAT=Bulacan
 ‘The one who swam in Bulacan is a child.’ [Kaufman 2005:178]
- d. [Dagat] ang nilalangyan ni=Juan.
 sea NOM LV-swim GEN=Juan
 ‘It is in the sea that Juan is swimming.’ [Kaufman 2005:194]

- (14) a. [Mga pinggan] ang huhugasan ni=Rosa.
 PL plate NOM DV-wash GEN=Rosa
 ‘What Rosa will wash is some dishes.’ [S&O 1972:154]
- b. [Iyon] ang mga binili ko.
 that(NOM) NOM PL OV-buy 1sg.GEN
 ‘Those (things) are what I bought.’ [S&O 1972:151]
- c. *Mga binili ko iyon.
 PL OV-buy 1sg.GEN that(NOM)
 (intended: ‘I bought those (things).’ [S&O 1972:151])

Notice that no relativizer or other overt marker of relativization occurs in headless relative clauses in Tagalog;² they are marked only with a case marker and (optionally) the plural clitic. The same pattern is observed in the subject NP of the cleft construction.

Evidence for identifying the first NP as the predicate of the cleft is seen in the fact that the first NP can be indefinite, and so unmarked for case, as in (13c-d); this is impossible for the second NP (i.e., the subject).³ Additional evidence comes again from *ay*-inversion: only the subject, and not the predicate NP, can be topicalized:

- (15) a. [Si=Juan] [ang pumunta sa=Boracay].
 NOM=Juan NOM AV-go DAT=Boracay
 ‘It was Juan who went to Boracay.’ [Mercado, 2004]
- b. [Ang pumunta sa=Boracay] ay [si=Juan].
 NOM AV-go DAT=Boracay TOP NOM=Juan
 ‘It was Juan who went to Boracay.’ [Mercado, 2004]

2.3 *Kimaragang Dusun*

Kimaragang Dusun (NE Borneo) is very similar to Tagalog in its morphology and syntax (Kroeger, 2005). In Kimaragang equative clauses, as in Tagalog, the predicate NP appears in nominative case if it is definite (16a-b), and is unmarked for case if it is indefinite (16c). The subject NP always takes nominative case.

- (16) a. I Pawai no ot orang.tua siti.
 NOM Pawai FOC NOM head.man here
 ‘Pawai is the head man here (i.e., of this village).’
 or: ‘It is Pawai who is the head man here.’
- b. Ikaw gaam ot tanak gulu?
 2sg.NOM Q NOM child eldest
 ‘Are you the eldest child?’

² Headed relative clauses in Tagalog take the relativizer *na ~ =ng*.

³ Kroeger (1993:148) assumes that the headless relative is the predicate, and not the subject, of a Tagalog cleft. I hereby recant.

- c. Kusay ot tanak
man NOM child
'The baby was a boy.'

In Kimaragang, as in Malay, there are two distinct markers of clausal negation: *amu* for verbal and adjectival predicates (17a-b), and *okon(ko')* for NP predicates (equative clauses), as in (17c).

- (17) a. *Amu oku po mangakan ...*
NEG 1sg.NOM PRCL AV:TR:eat
'I am not going to eat yet, ...'
- b. *Amu alanji ilot baju dilo' ong amu goruda'an.*
NEG pretty that(NOM) dress that if NEG embroider:DV
'That dress will not be pretty if you do not embroider it.'
- c. *Kada maa-tagur, okon.ko'/*amu tidi ku ika.*
don't CONT-scold not mother 1sg.GEN 2sg.NOM
'Don't keep scolding me, you are not my mother.'

Kimaragang clefts are very similar to the Tagalog pattern discussed above. They consist of two NPs, with the second NP (the subject) being a headless relative clause. Both NPs are marked for nominative case, unless the predicate NP is indefinite. There are three different forms of the nominative case marker in Kimaragang: *i(t)* 'definite', *o(t)* 'indefinite/generic', *a(t)* 'unique referent' (in context). As illustrated in (18), the headless relative clause in a cleft normally bears the indefinite/generic form.

- (18) a. *I Jim no⁴ ot mininakaw dit karabaw ku.*
NOM Jim FOC NOM AV.PAST.steal ACC buffalo 1sg.GEN
'It was Jim who stole my water buffalo.'
- b. *Korikot it koturu taddaw,*
arrive NOM seventh day
i Sompuun diri ot mongoy mongomot.
NOM Sompuun ANAPH NOM AV:go AV:TR:harvest
'When the seventh day came, it was Sompuun who went out to harvest.'

An indefinite predicate NP may be unmarked for case, as in other equative clauses. (This is not possible for the subject NP; thus example (19c), in which the bare NP occurs second, can only be interpreted as a topicalized version of (19b).) In (19a) the bare noun in predicate position gets a generic interpretation, while in (19b) the unmarked NP is a specific indefinite.⁵

⁴ The particle *no* has both aspectual and focus-marking functions. It is cognate with Tagalog completive *na*. I do not know whether it could be cognate with the mysterious Malagasy particle *no*; aside from cleft constructions, the range of uses in the two languages seems to be quite different.

⁵ Sentence (19a) carries the "exhaustive listing" sense that is widely assumed to be characteristic of clefts; but this may be due primarily to the presence of the focus particle, as discussed below. Sentence (19b) does not carry any exhaustive listing or contrastive interpretation. Because of this, one might question whether it is appropriate to call it a "cleft", even though it is structurally identical to the other clefts discussed here and the

- (19) a. Kanas no ot kokogop dot logop ot niyuw.
 wild pig FOC NOM NVOL.AV.bite ACC old/dry NOM coconut
 ‘It is (only) wild pigs that can crunch a dry coconut (with their teeth).’
- b. Tulun topurak ot negitan dit tanak ku.
 person white NOM NVOL.PAST.DV.engage GEN child 1sg.GEN
 ‘The person my son got engaged to is a white person (European).’
- c. It negitan dit tanak ku(,) tulun topurak.
 NOM NVOL.PAST.DV.engage GEN child 1sg.GEN person white
 ‘The person my son got engaged to, she is a white person (European).’

The equative nature of the cleft is confirmed by the choice of negator: only *okon* can be used to negate a cleft, as illustrated in (20).

- (20) a. *Okon.ko’/*amu* ikaw ot loowon.
 NEG 2sg.NOM NOM OV.call
 ‘It isn’t you that is being called.’
- b. Mutas-utas mâantad i kayu diri,
 IMPERF-cut.through already NOM tree ANAPH
okon.ko’ yoku po ot minanagad.
 NEG 1sg.NOM FOC NOM AV.PAST.chop.down
 ‘The tree was already chopped completely through, it wasn’t me who cut it down.’

In Kimaragang, as in Malay, the predicate NP of the cleft may optionally contain a focus particle.⁶ The interpretation of the cleft as a whole is partly determined by the choice of focus particle. The most commonly occurring particle in this position is *no*, which provides the exhaustive listing interpretation, as seen in examples (18a) and (19a): among those under discussion, the referent of the clefted NP is the only one of whom the proposition is true. The use of *po*, on the other hand, creates a sentence meaning that the referent of the clefted NP is among those of whom the proposition is true, but not necessarily the only one, as illustrated in (21a–b). In terms of the taxonomy of focus types proposed by Dik et al. (1981), this seems to correlate with the contrast between SELECTIVE vs. COMPLETIVE focus.

- (21) a. Ikaw po kawo ot momiralan,
 2sg.NOM FOC PRTCL NOM AV.coax
 kalu.ong miboboyo do.yika.
 perhaps AV.obey 2sg.ACC.EMPH
 ‘(Now) you be the one to coax him, maybe he will be persuaded by you.’
 (implies that speaker has been trying without success, e.g. to persuade a child to stop crying.)

material contained in the headless relative is clearly presupposed. The interpretation of clefts is a complex issue, which we shall return in the next section.

⁶ Kroeger (2007) describes six classes of clitic particles. The third of these classes, which immediately follows the clitic pronouns, is a set of half a dozen or so aspectual particles, all of which also have a focus-marking function. These are the particles that may occur in the cleft construction.

- b. Ikaw po o mamayuk diti tanak.
 2sg.NOM FOC NOM AV.baby.swing this child
 ‘(Now) you be the one to rock/swing the baby.’
 (i.e., ‘It is your turn to rock/swing the baby.’)

The contrast between *no* and *po* is seen more clearly when the cleft is negated. Example (22a) says that it is not the case that among those under discussion, Jim is the only one who stole your buffaloes. In other words, it does not deny that Jim may have been involved, but it does deny that he was the only one who stole. In contrast, example (22b) says that it is not the case that Jim is among those who stole buffaloes. In other words, it denies that Jim stole any buffalo. Both sentences equally presuppose that buffaloes were actually stolen, as demonstrated in (22c).

- (22) a. Okon i Jim *no* o minanakaw di karabaw nu.
 NEG NOM Jim FOC NOM AV.PAST.steal ACC buffalo 2sg.GEN
 ‘It wasn’t only Jim who stole your buffalo(es).’
 [Jim did steal, but he wasn’t alone]
- b. Okon i Jim *po* o minanakaw di karabaw nu.
 NEG NOM Jim FOC NOM AV.PAST.steal ACC buffalo 2sg.GEN
 ‘It wasn’t Jim who stole your buffalo(es).’
 [Jim did not steal, it was someone else]
- c. *Okon.ko i Jim *po/no* o minanakaw di karabaw nu,
 NEG NOM Jim FOC NOM AV.PAST.steal ACC buffalo 2sg.GEN
 amu=i’ natakaw.
 NEG=FOC NVOL.OV.PAST.steal
 #‘It wasn’t (only) Jim who stole your buffaloes; they weren’t even stolen.’

Some examples of clefts involving other focus particles are presented in (23). The specific semantic variations associated with these particles have not yet been investigated in any detail.

- (23) a. Sobito’ nopo dogon, yoku=i’ ot palapos.
 IMPER.OV.sickle only 1sg.ACC 1sg.NOM.EMPH=FOC NOM AV.beat/whip
 ‘You just cut the rice stalks for me (with a sickle), I will be the one to thresh them (by beating).’
- b. Pogidu sino tu’ milom ikaw *nogi* ot otimpaduk
 IMPER.AV.flee there because suddenly 2sg.NOM FOC NOM NVOL.OV.hurl
 ko’ ilot tasu.
 or that.NOM dog
 ‘Get out of there or you will be the one that gets speared instead of the dog.’
- c. Ikaw *noono* *pogi* ot mongolugu dino togilai,
 2sg.NOM FOC FOC NOM AV.roast that corn/maize

milom aawus ilo' ong a tanak.
 suddenly NVOL.burnt that.NOM if NOM child
 'You yourself must be the one to roast the corn, they will get burnt if the children
 (roast it).'

3. Semantic/pragmatic properties of pseudo-clefts

Gärtner, building on work by Paul Law (2005, 2007), points out several additional problems for the pseudo-cleft analysis, in addition to those cited by Pearson. Some of these have to do with the form of the initial NP, i.e., the putative predicate.⁷ For example, Gärtner notes that "strong quantifiers can occur in pre-*no* position while being excluded from *bona fide* predicate position."

Law (2005:) states, "Quite generally, strong quantifiers like *all* and *most* cannot be the predicate (cf. Keenan 1987):"

- (24) a. Most students are boys.
 b. *Students are most boys.

- (25) a. All the students are boys.
 b. *Students are all the boys.

"The same is true of Malagasy. Strong quantifiers like *akabetsahan* 'most' and *rehetra* 'all' do not occur in predicate position."

- (26) a. Zazalahy [ny mpianatra rehetra]
 boy the student all
 'All the students are boys.'
 b. *[(Ny) zazalahy rehetra] ny mpianatra.
 the boy all the student
 'The students are all the boys.'

In light of this fact, the acceptability of the quantifier in the initial NP of sentences like Gärtner's example (6a) raises questions as to whether this NP can really be the predicate of the clause, as required under the pseudo-cleft analysis. Interestingly, some strong quantifiers can occur in this position in Malay/Indonesian clefts, as illustrated in (27).

- (27) a. ... kita semua=lah yang menentukan nasib bumi ini.
 1pl.incl all=FOC REL determine luck earth this
 'It is all of us who will determine the fate of the earth.'
 [http://ichoez.multiply.com/journal/item/54]

⁷ Another issue is the occurrence of the determiner *ny* on the initial NP, even though it normally cannot occur on the predicate NP of a basic equative clause. This somewhat surprising restriction on equative clauses has no parallel in the other languages under discussion here. Paul (in press a, b) argues persuasively that the restriction is grammatical and not semantic, a peculiarity in the syntax of *ny*. She also shows that under some circumstances *ny* can in fact occur in equative predicates.

- b. hal itu *semua*=lah yang telah memusnahkan berbagai kaum terdahulu.
 matter that all=FOC REL past destroy various race earlier
 ‘It was all these matters that destroyed various races/peoples in the past.’
 [www.blogger.com/feeds/8529832707342378845/posts/default/6347951911566981367]
- c. bukan saya yang harus menilai,
 NEG 1sg REL should evaluate
 anda *semua*=lah yang lebih berhak.
 2.FORMAL all=FOC REL more entitled
 ‘It is not me who should evaluate (this question), it is all of you that have a greater
 right (to do so).’ [rizaprimadi.blogspot.com]

Given the very strong evidence cited above for the claim that the initial NP in a Malay cleft is the predicate, the existence of such examples in Malay shows that the parallel examples in Malagasy are not a sufficient basis for rejecting the pseudo-cleft analysis. On the other hand, if strong quantifiers are blocked from occurring in predicates on general semantic principles, one might wonder how examples like (27) could be possible. It turns out that in Malay/Indonesian these same quantifiers can appear inside the predicate NP of a non-cleft equative clause in at least one fairly restricted context: definitions (28a–b). (The predicate NPs in the following examples are introduced by the optional copula *adalah*.) In addition, some speakers seem to allow these quantifiers in predicate NPs more generally, as illustrated in (28c).

- (28) a. Perangkat keras komputer (‘hardware’) adalah
 equipment hard computer COPULA
semua bagian fisik komputer.
 all part physical computer
 ‘Hardware is all the physical parts of the computer.’
 [http://forum.nihomune.net/]
- b. Masyarakat, dalam arti lebih luas, adalah *semua* pihak yang
 society in meaning more wide COPULA all party REL
 kepentingan=nya terlibat dalam proses bekerja=nya sumber.daya pesisir
 interest=3sg involved in process work resource coast
 sebagai suatu sistem.
 as single system
 ‘Society, in the broadest sense, is all parties whose interests are involved in the
 process of working with coastal resources as a single system.’
 [http://www.cbcrmllearning.org/pdf/april2003.pdf]
- c. makanan favorit saya adalah *semua* makanan yang bisa di-makan.
 food favorite 1sg COPULA all foods REL can PASS-eat
 ‘My favorite food is all foods that can be eaten.’
 [renghamsyong.blogspot.com/feeds/posts/default]

The use of strong quantifiers within definitional predicates seems to be possible even in English, as suggested by the translations of (28a–b). I do not know whether this is possible in

Malagasy as well. In any case, the Indonesian examples in (27) suggest that clefted predicates may be subject to somewhat different semantic constraints than other predicate NPs.

Gärtner makes a very important point by showing that the pragmatic properties of clefts are less rigid than has been commonly assumed, not just in Malagasy but also in English and French. This seems to be a serious problem for the pseudo-cleft analysis, because Paul (2001) derives the interpretation of the cleft directly from the structure she proposes for it. She states: “Turning to the semantics of cleft constructions, it has long been noted that they are associated with a certain interpretation: existential presupposition and exhaustivity.” She then shows how these properties can be derived under the assumption that the subject NP is a headless relative clause. Clefts which do not have the expected interpretation, like those in Gärtner’s examples (35–36), thus seem to provide evidence against the pseudo-cleft analysis.

However, both Paul’s analysis and Gärtner’s critique of it are based on strong assumptions about the semantics of headless relative clauses. Paul (2001:725) states:

Headless relatives are definite descriptions and therefore have the same presuppositions as definite descriptions. These are precisely the same presuppositions as those exhibited by clefts... It is well known that definite descriptions presuppose the existence of the individual described. Moreover, definite descriptions presuppose (or entail) that there is exactly one referent as described (Strawson, 1950). These aspects of the interpretation of definite descriptions align neatly with the interpretation of clefts.

In Tagalog, at least, headless relative clauses are not necessarily definite descriptions.⁸ When a headless relative is marked for nominative case, it gets a definite interpretation because of the semantic requirements of the case marker itself, *ang*. But a headless relative with some other case marking can have an indefinite interpretation, as illustrated in (29). The topicalized dative headless relative in (29a) can have a generic interpretation, but this is not the case in (29b–e). Moreover, the headless relatives in (29c–e) do not have any existential presupposition; e.g., (29d) could be used even in a town where there are no smugglers, and (29e) could be used even about someone whom no one is willing to marry.

- (29) a. [Sa=nagaaral], ang=sipag ay kailangan.
 DAT=AV.IMPERF.study NOM=diligence TOP needed
 ‘To [one studying], diligence is necessary.’ [Aspillera 1969:87]
- b. Kumuha siya [ng=maglilinis ng=bahay].
 AV.PERF.get 3sg.NOM GEN=AV.FUT.clean GEN=house
 ‘He got [someone who will clean the house].’ [Aspillera 1969:88]
- c. Humahanap siya [ng=maglilinis ng=bahay].⁹
 AV.IMPERF.seek 3sg.NOM GEN=AV.FUT.clean GEN=house
 ‘He is looking for [someone who will clean the house].’
- d. Ibig ng=pulis na manghuli
 want GEN=police COMP AV.INF.catch

⁸ I believe that Kimaragang is very similar to Tagalog in this respect.

⁹ Examples (29c–e) were provided by Roger Stone and Cecille Van Zante (p.c.).

[ng=nagbebenta ng=ipinagbabawal na gamot].
 GEN=AV.IMPERF.sell GEN=prohibited LNK drug
 ‘The police want to arrest [someone who is selling prohibited drugs].’

- e. Humahanap siya [ng=mapapangasawa niya].
 AV.IMPERF.seek 3sg.NOM GEN=OV.NVOL.FUT.marry 3sg.GEN
 ‘S/he is looking for [someone to marry].’

Since the subject NP in a Tagalog cleft is always marked for nominative case, it generally gets a definite interpretation; but this seems to be due to the choice of case marker, rather than the properties of the headless relative itself. Moreover, the Kimaragang examples in (21) show that clefts in that language, which seem to be structurally identical to those in Tagalog, do not always get the exhaustive listing interpretation. The interpretation depends in part on the choice of focus particle.

As Gärtner points out, clefts have a variety of functions even in English. The Indonesian example in (30b) illustrates a cleft in which the “presupposition” actually contains information which is new to the hearer/reader, presented in chronological order as part of the historical narrative. Prince (1978) refers to this type as an INFORMATIVE-PRESUPPOSITION cleft.

- (30) a. Di bulan September, Napoleon menggerakkan seluruh pasukannya yang berada di timur Rhine.
 ‘In September, Napoleon moved all of his forces that were in the east Rhine region.’
- b. Napoleon sendiri=lah yang mengalahkan tentara Prusia di Jena
 Napoleon self=FOC REL defeat force Prussian in J.
 pada tanggal 14 Oktober 1806,
 at date
 ‘It was Napoleon himself that defeated the Prussian forces at Jena on 14 October 1806.’
- c. dan marsekal Davout mengalahkan lainnya di Auerstädt pada hari yang sama.
 ‘and Marshall Davout defeated the rest of them at Auerstädt on the same day.’
[\[http://id.wikipedia.org/wiki/Perang_Napoleon\]](http://id.wikipedia.org/wiki/Perang_Napoleon)

The Indonesian example in (31b) illustrates a cleft which does not allow an exhaustive listing reading; the clefted argument is explicitly stated to be “among those” for whom the proposition is true, but not the only such individual.

- (31) a. Media Belanda sering menunjuk pada keinginan Soekarno untuk berkunjung ke negara penjajah.
 ‘The Dutch media always refer to Soekarno’s desire to visit the colonizing country.’
- b. Dari generasi nasionalis pertama,
 from generation nationalist first

Soekarno=lah yang termasuk belum pernah bertandang ke Belanda.
 Soekarno=FOC REL included not.yet ever visit to Holland
 ‘Of the first generation of nationalists, it was Soekarno that was among those who had never visited Holland.’

[http://rumahkiri.net/index2.php?option=com_content&do_pdf=1&id=167]

Such examples illustrate the fact that the pragmatic functions of a cleft can be quite variable, even in languages for which the pseudo-cleft analysis is clearly correct.

4. Focusing non-subjects

Law (2005:201–2), citing Gärtner, points out that the occurrence of adjuncts in the focus position of examples like (1d–e) and (32a) poses a major challenge to the pseudo-cleft analysis, especially because of long-distance examples like (32b).¹⁰ Gärtner (this volume) makes the crucial point that the “passive” or “patient-trigger” form of the matrix verb is obligatory in examples like (32b) (and his example (21)). This is a characteristic feature of long-distance extraction in Malagasy. However, in examples like (1d–e) and (32a) there appears to be no gap, and treating the clause introduced by *no* in these sentences as a headless relative clause leads to semantic difficulties.

(32) a. Amin’-ny antsy [no manapaka bozaka i.Bakoly]
 with.the knife FOC ACT.cut grass
 ‘It is with a knife that Bakoly is cutting grass.’

b. Amin’-ny antsy no nolazain-dRasoa [fa manapaka bozaka i.Bakoly.
 with-the knife FOC said.PASS that cut.ACT grass
 ‘It’s with a knife that Rasoa said that Bakoly is cutting grass.’

At first glance there does not seem to be much relevant comparative evidence. Non-subject clefts appear to be impossible in Tagalog and standard Indonesian.¹¹ There is a cleft-like structure in Tagalog which looks superficially like the Malagasy examples in (1d–e) and (32a); but the verb in this construction must appear as a bare root, which Schachter and Otnes (1972) identify as a nominalized form. This is quite different from the true clefts presented in section 2.2, which contain normal, fully inflected verb forms. The (a) examples in (33–35) illustrate this nominalized equative pattern (data adapted from Schachter and Otnes 1972:165–6).

(33) a. Dito ang dating ng tren. [“cleft”?]
 ‘It’s here that the train arrives.’

b. Dito dumarating ng tren. [focus fronting]
 ‘The train arrives *here*.’

(34) a. Sa Lunes ang alis sa Maynila. [“cleft”?]
 ‘It’s next Monday that she leaves for Manila.’

¹⁰ Example 32 is taken from Law (2005) and preserves his glosses.

¹¹ Kimaragang does allow adjunct clefts, primarily involving adjuncts of time and place, which look quite similar to the Malagasy pattern. However, such examples are rare and their structure is not yet understood.

b. Sa Lunes siya umaalis sa Maynila.
 ‘She leaves for Manila *next Monday*.’ [focus fronting]

(35) a. Kung Pasko ang=kain ng=litson ng=kaibigan ko.
 if Christmas NOM=eat GEN=roast.pork GEN=friend 1sg.GEN
 ‘It is at Christmas time that my friend eats lechon.’ [“cleft”?]

b. Kung Pasko kumakain ng=litson ang=kaibigan ko.
 if Christmas AV.FUT.eat GEN=roast.pork NOM=friend 1sg.GEN
 ‘My friend eats lechon *at Christmas time*.’ [focus fronting]

However, both Tagalog and Indonesian have a different construction, sometimes referred to as FOCUS FRONTING, which allows focused adjuncts to appear in clause initial position. The (b) examples in (33–35) illustrate this pattern. Focus fronting is distinguishable from clefts in Tagalog by a number of readily observable features. First, as illustrated in section 2, the presupposed material in a cleft is introduced by the nominative case marker *ang*; no such case marker occurs before the verb in the focus fronting construction. Next, second-position clitics occur in preverbal position in focus fronting, whereas they follow the verb in a cleft. One example was seen in (34b); further examples are provided in (36), with the second-position clitics italicized.

(36) a. [Para kay=Pedro] *ko* binili ang=laruan.
 for DAT=Pedro 1sg.GEN buy-OV NOM=toy
 ‘For Pedro I bought the toy.’ [adapted from Schachter and Otnes 1972:497]

b. [Dahil sa=iyo] *ako* nahuli.
 because.of DAT=you 1sg.NOM late
 ‘Because of you I was late.’ [adapted from Schachter and Otnes 1972:497]

c. Kanino *mo* ibingay ang=pera?
 to.whom 2sg.GEN IV-give NOM=money
 ‘To whom did you give the money?’ [Schachter and Otnes 1972:512]

d. Sa=Lunes *ko* *na* makukuha ang akin=ng uniporme.
 DAT=Monday 1sg.GEN already able.to.get NOM 1sg.DAT=LNK uniform
 ‘Next Monday I will already be able to get my uniform.’
 [stratus03.blogspot.com/2005/06/qc.html]

e. Kailan *mo* *na* *nga* *ba* *pala* *ako* ulit sinagot?
 when 2sg.GEN already really Q MIR 1sg.NOM repeat answer-OV
 ‘When did you reply to me again??’
 [www.timog.com/forum/showthread.php?t=19392&page=41]

Third, the focused constituent in a cleft must be the subject NP, while the focused constituent in focus fronting must be an adjunct or oblique argument; subjects and objects cannot occur in this position (Kroeger 1993, 1998; Richards 1998). Because of this, only one voice form is possible for the verb in a cleft, whereas no restrictions are placed on the voice marking of the verb in focus fronting. Finally, the presupposed material within a cleft is a headless relative

clause and contains a gap in its subject position, whereas focus fronting clauses contain an overt subject NP *in situ*.¹²

A somewhat similar construction exists in Indonesian, in which an adjunct or oblique argument may be fronted to pre-subject position, as illustrated in (37). The fronted adjunct or oblique phrase gets pragmatic focus, and can bear a focus particle (= *lah* or = *kah*) as illustrated in (38). However, it does not necessarily receive an exhaustive listing reading; this is especially clear in example (38a).

(37) (adapted from Verhaar 1984, p. 36)

- a. Ali menyembelih ayam besar ini untuk saya.
 Ali ACT-slaughter chicken big this for me
 ‘Ali slaughtered this big chicken for me.’
- b. Untuk saya Ali menyembelih ayam besar ini.
 for me Ali ACT-slaughter chicken big this
 ‘Ali slaughtered this big chicken for me.’
- c. *Ayam besar ini Ali menyembelih untuk saya.
 chicken big this Ali ACT-slaughter for me

(38) a. *Di.sana=lah* kami menghadapi imperialisme
 there=FOC we(EXCL) AV-face imperialism
 dan kekuatan bersenjata dari imperialisme.
 and strength have.weapon from imperialism
 ‘There we faced imperialism and the armed force of imperialism.’
 [Macdonald 1976:106]

- b. [*Sejak tahun itu*]=lah Indonesia secara.resmi menjadi jajahan Belanda
 since year that=FOC Indonesia officially become colony Dutch
 ‘From that year Indonesia officially became a Dutch colony.’
 (or: ‘It was from that year that ...’) [Sneddon 1996:263]

- c. *Di.mana=kah* kau berada kini?
 where=FOC.Q you be.at now
 ‘Where are you now?’
 [song lyrics; <http://lyricz.net/G/Gigi/120420/>]

Although focus fronting is clearly different from clefting in both of these languages, the focus fronting construction in Tagalog seems to have some features in common with Malagasy adjunct clefts. In particular, long distance focus fronting is possible in Tagalog. Rackowski and Richards (2005) show that when long distance focus fronting takes place, the matrix verb must appear in the appropriate voice to select its complement clause as subject (39).¹³ This is especially interesting because when focus fronting takes place within a single

¹² See Kroeger (1993, 1998), Richards 1998) and Mercado (2004) for a variety of proposals concerning the structure of the Tagalog focus fronting construction.

¹³ Kroeger (1993:219–20) states that this is not true, i.e., that long distance focus fronting in Tagalog does not impose any constraint on the voice of the matrix verb. The apparent discrepancy in speaker judgements remains

clause, there is no restriction on the voice of the verb (40). (All of these examples are taken from Rackowski and Richards, 2005; glosses have been adapted to match examples above).

- (39) a. Kailan [pinaniwalaan ng=sundalo [na uuwi ang=Pangulo]]?
 when DV.PAST.believe GEN=soldier that AV.FUT.return NOM=President
 ‘When did the soldier believe that the President would go home?’
- b. *Kailan [naniwala ng=sundalo [na uuwi ang=Pangulo]]?
 when AV.PAST.believe GEN=soldier that AV.FUT.return NOM=President
 ‘When did the soldier believe that the President would go home?’
- (40) a. Kailan binigyan ng=lalaki ng=bulaklak ang=kalabaw?
 when DV.PAST.give GEN=man GEN=flower GEN=water.buffalo
 ‘When did the man give a flower to the water buffalo?’
- b. Kailan ibinigay ng=lalaki ang=bulaklak sa=kalabaw?
 when IV.PAST.give GEN=man NOM=flower DAT=water.buffalo
 ‘When did the man give the flower to the water buffalo?’
- c. Kailan nagbigay ang=lalaki ng=bulaklak sa=kalabaw?
 when IV.PAST.give NOM=man GEN=flower DAT=water.buffalo
 ‘When did the man give a flower to the water buffalo?’

The constraint illustrated in (39) is identical to that described above for adjunct “clefts” in Malagasy. The same constraint also applies to long-distance extraction of subjects in both Malagasy and Tagalog, in particular to long-distance relativization. We have clearly shown that focus fronting in Tagalog is very different in structure from true clefting; the latter involves relativization (to form the headless relative), while the former does not. But in long-distance contexts, both constructions are subject to the same morphological constraint on the matrix verb. Thus the operation of this constraint in Malagasy adjunct “clefts”, noted by Gärtner and Law, does not prove that these have the same structure as Malagasy subject clefts. Notice that the two most obvious features which distinguish pseudo-clefts from focus fronting in Tagalog, namely the case marker *ang* and the behavior of second-position clitics, are not available in Malagasy. So it would not be too surprising if the surface similarity between subject clefts and adjunct “clefts” masked a significant difference in underlying structure.

In summary, there may be good reasons to reject the pseudo-cleft analysis for Malagasy adjunct “clefts”; I will not try to evaluate Gärtner’s arguments on this point. But even if this is true, it would not imply that we must also reject the pseudo-cleft analysis for Malagasy subject clefts.

Conclusion

We have summarized a variety of evidence that strongly supports the pseudo-cleft analysis for Malay/Indonesian, Tagalog, and Kimaragang Dusun. Nevertheless, clefts in these languages exhibit some of the features which have been cited as problems for the pseudo-

to be investigated, but I have no reason to doubt that the facts described by Rackowski and Richards are true for at least some Tagalog speakers, and it is this variety that forms the basis for my conclusions in this section.

cleft analysis of Malagasy, e.g. the possibility of strong quantifiers within the clefted NP, the potential for the “presupposition” to contain information which is in fact new to the hearer, and possible non-exhaustive interpretations.

The narrow conclusion from these observations is that the evidence against the pseudo-cleft analysis for Malagasy is not conclusive, at least in the case of subject clefts. The facts about long-distance focus fronting in Tagalog, cited by Rackowski and Richards (see ex. 39 above), support the hypothesis that the structure of adjunct clefts in Malagasy could actually be very different from that of subject clefts, even though they look superficially very similar.

More broadly, the evidence presented here raises the question of whether, or to what degree, the semantic properties of cleft sentences can be viewed as strictly compositional. Gärtner’s discussion assumes that the best analysis is one that supports a compositional semantic analysis; and Paul (2001) states that two of the core semantic properties of cleft sentences, existential presupposition and exhaustivity, follow from the structure that she proposes for Malagasy. If (as we have argued) Indonesian, Tagalog, and Kimaragang Dusun clefts do have this structure, but do not necessarily exhibit these semantic features, then the assumption of compositionality may need to be re-examined.

Lambrecht (1994:32–35) argues for a Construction Grammar approach to information structure, which allows for specific syntactic patterns to be idiosyncratically associated with specific semantic and pragmatic content. However, one need not totally reject the goal of a compositional semantics in order to account for the kinds of semantic variability discussed above. It may turn out that the interpretation of clefts deviates from what is expected only in certain definable ways. For example, Horn’s (1981) discussion of English *it*-clefts argues that existence is entailed but exhaustivity is only a generalized conversational implicature, and thus cancellable. Prince (1978) suggests that “informative-presupposition clefts” are made possible by a kind of pragmatic accommodation on the part of the hearer. The conventional function of the cleft, i.e., marking presupposed material as known to the hearer, presents the speaker with a “strong rhetorical temptation” (1978:898), namely, to use the same structure for information which is known in general, although probably not to the hearer. The hearer is expected to acquiesce in treating this information as part of the common ground. It remains to be seen whether a similar explanation can be found for the occurrence of strong quantifiers within clefted NPs, even though they cannot normally function as predicates in other contexts.

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