

Use of the Glottal Stop in the Tandroy Dialect of Malagasy

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This presentation analyses the conditions of the appearance of glottal stops in the Tandroy dialect of Malagasy from phonological and morphological perspectives on the basis of my own primary data¹. The Tandroy dialect of Malagasy is one of the less-documented languages that belongs to the Austronesian family and is spoken in the southern part of Malagasy. The Tandroy dialect is unique among Malagasy dialects in that it has a glottal stop in the phonemic inventory. My data analysis revealed that glottal stops may appear in the following four situations or cases. The orthography used in this paper follows standard-Malagasy conventions. Note that *o* is pronounced [u].

Case 1 Morphologically, glottal stops appear in determiners, namely personal and demonstrative pronouns, as is exemplified in example (1).

(1) vali-/e ‘his spouse, her spouse’	raha-/o ‘your thing’	ala-/e ‘he/she takes’
spouse-3sg	thing-2sg	take-3sg

Case 2 We can find a special lexicon that has affixed determiners; hence, the lexicon always appears with a glottal stop, not as a morpheme but as a part of complete word. In some lexical classes, especially in the categories of plants (vegetation), locative nouns, and certain numerals, it is the 3rd person singular pronoun ‘-/e’ mentioned above that is combined with the word, as is exemplified in (2), (3), and (4).

(2)Plants	heta/e ‘branch’	rantsa/e ‘stem’	sampa/e ‘branch’	foto/e ‘trunk’
	rave/e ‘leaf’	voa/e ‘fruit’		
(3) Locative nouns	ampo/e ‘inside’	añate/e ‘inside’	ivela/e ‘outside’	loha/e ‘apex’
(4) Numerals	antsasa/e ‘half’	ilaila/e ‘some’	fara/e ‘last, final’	voaloha/e ‘first’

Case 3 A glottal stop appears in the variation of the personal article ‘i’, which modifies a personal name in terms of respect and can be translated as ‘Mr./Ms.’ in English. The following is an example wherein the personal article ‘i’ functions as genitive marker, as is exemplified in (5a). Generally, the personal article ‘i’ is employed as a personal article without a glottal stop, as can be seen in (5b).

(5a) ty	rene	/i	Koto	‘Koto’s mother’	(Rajaona 2003)
the mother	Mr.		personal name		
(5b) Ajaja	i	Koto	‘Koto is a child.’		
child	Mr	personal name			

Case 4 Glottal stop insertion for the purpose of avoiding hiatuses (vowel-vowel sequences) can be observed in reduplication, as shown in (6), although the number of available examples is limited.

(6) ala ‘tree’ + ala ‘tree’ > ala/ala ‘grove, woods’

This paper discussed the conditions in which a glottal stop appears and the phonetic environment characterized by its appearance. The glottal stop in this language is mostly observed in determiners such as personal pronouns and articles. Although glottal stops are still an everyday part of Tandroy-speaking areas, their usage tends to be gradually fading as a result of the linguistic influences of other Malagasy dialects on the Tandroy dialect coupled with urbanization and diffusion of standard-Malagasy education.

¹ The data analyzed in this study were obtained from nine months of intermittent field research in Madagascar from 2006 to 2008 and again in October 2010.