This paper proposes an analysis of Austronesian cleft structure which is parallel to basic word order derivation in VOS Austronesian languages. In basic VOS word order, the subject or absolutive DP moves to a low topic position in the left periphery, and the remnant TP moves to a higher focus position. In a cleft, it is the presupposed relative clause which functions as the absolutive and moves to the topic position, while the focused constituent is pied-piped within the remnant TP to the focus position. Accordingly, this analysis is in agreement with the tradition in Austronesian syntax of analyzing the clause-initial focused constituent as either forming the matrix predicate or being contained within that predicate. This paper further agrees with the mainstream approach in proposing that this derivation is parallel to the derivation of VOS basic word order. The traditional analysis of Austronesian clefts marks a departure, however, from cross-linguistic approaches to cleft structures in which the focused constituent is analyzed as the matrix subject. This discrepancy is accounted for in the present paper by showing that the movements involved in the derivation target the CP layer, specifically the focus and topic positions in the left periphery where the moving constituents receive their respective interpretations. Consequently, neither the focus nor the headless relative clause resides in a subject A-position. Rather, both are located in A’-positions.

1. **Introduction**

This paper proposes an analysis of the structure of clefts in Austronesian languages. Cleft constructions have been addressed rather frequently in the literature, particularly because of the fact that wh-questions are formed on clefts in a great number of Austronesian languages (Georgopoulos 1991; Paul 2001; Pearson 2001; Massam 2003; Aldridge 2002, 2004; Potsdam 2006, 2007, 2009; among others). In the following Tagalog examples, (1a) shows basic VSO order in a declarative clause. (1b) shows a wh-question in which the direct object is the wh-phrase. This constituent appears in clause-initial position, but it does not reach this position through movement to [Spec, CP]. Rather, the wh-word acts as the matrix predicate in a cleft construction. The remainder of the clause is packaged as a headless relative clause preceded by the absolutive case-marker. This structure is parallel to the specificational pseudocleft shown in (1c).

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* I am indebted to Thess Savella and Raph Mercado for invaluable native speaker input on many of the Tagalog sentences. I also thank the participants and organizers of the AFLA 17 meeting for comments on the oral presentation of this paper.
The fact that DP wh-phrases do not move to [Spec, CP] but must rather be embedded in a higher predicate is generally attributed to the predicate-initial nature of basic word order in these languages. Paul’s (2001) seminal analysis of Malagasy clefts proposes that they are parallel to the derivation of VOS basic word order in the language. Paul bases her analysis on Guilfoyle et al.’s (1992) analysis of Malagasy word order in which the subject moves to a rightward [Spec, IP], leaving Infl and the VP predicate in clause-initial position. In a cleft, the focused constituent is located inside the predicate.

Infl has a [Pred] feature and not a [D] feature.

What this means for wh-questions is that these languages have no feature to attract a DP to clause-initial position. The focused DP must instead be pied-piped to clause-initial position with the predicate.

Niuean

(4) a. \[ IP \ [ VP Tagafaga ika] \ [ I' tumau ni a ia] \].
   "He is always fishing."
   (Massam 2001: 157)

b. \[ IP \ [ VP Ko hai] \ [ DP \ [CP OP \ [C' ne \ [ IP lalaga \ t_{OP} e kato e:\]]]]? \]
   "Who wove this basket?"
   (Massam 2003: 97)

c.

\[
\begin{array}{c}
\text{IP} \\
\text{VP} \\
V \ NP \\
I' \\
I_{[Pred]} \\
vP \\
DP \\
v \ t_{VP}
\end{array}
\]

A variation on the predicate-fronting approach is proposed by Pearson (2001, 205) and Aldridge (2004). On this alternative, it is not the VP or predicate which fronts but rather a larger constituent. The subject (or absolutive) DP first raises to a topic position in the left periphery. Subsequently, the remnant clause fronts to a position above the absolutive. In a cleft, it is the headless relative which is topicalized. The focused constituent is contained in the fronted TP.

Seediq

(5) a. \[ TP wada burig-un na Ape t_{Abs} ] ka patis. \]
   "Ape bought the book."

b. \[ TP t_{Abs} maanu][DP ka [CP OP [TP wada=na burig-un t_{OP }]]]. \]
   "What did he/she buy?"
A common thread running through all of the analyses sketched above is that DP wh-questions assume a pseudo-cleft structure in which the focused constituent is (or is contained in) the matrix predicate, while the rest of the clause forms a headless relative clause functioning as the matrix subject.

However, quite a different structure has been put forth for pseudoclefts in other languages (Heggie 1988, den Dikken 2006, among many others), notably English. Specifically, the focused constituent is argued to be the subject, while the clause is treated as the predicate.

My goal in this paper is two-fold. First, I argue that the traditional approach to Austronesian clefts is on the right track in that the focused constituent is indeed contained within the predicate or a larger constituent which itself contains the predicate. To account for the obvious discrepancy between Austronesian and other other languages, I next argue for an analysis of the type shown in (5c), in which the movements involved in the derivation target the CP layer. Consequently, neither the focus nor the clause resides in a subject A'-position. Rather, both are located in A'-positions, i.e. the focus and topic positions in the left periphery where they receive their respective interpretations.

2. Austronesian: Focus as Predicate

It has been argued convincingly for several Austronesian languages that the focused constituent is (or is located within) the predicate – and is not the subject – in Austronesian clefts. For example, Paul (2000) shows that the focused part of a cleft can contain other elements typically found with predicates and not with subjects. (6) shows that focused constituent in Malagasy can be negated.

Malagasy (Paul 2000:170)

(6) [Tsy Rasoa] no nanoroka an-dRakoto.
Neg Rasoa Foc Past.AT.kiss Acc-Rakoto
‘It’s not Rasoa who kissed Rakoto.’

(7) shows similar facts for Tagalog. (7a&b) show that the negator precedes the predicate but cannot be used to negate just the subject. (7c) shows that the negator can negate the focused constituent in a cleft. If the pre-verbal absolutive DP were analyzed as the subject, we would expect (7c) to pattern with (7b). Instead, (7c) patterns with (7a), suggesting that the pre-verbal focused constituent resides in the predicate and is not in subject position.
Tagalog

(7) a. **Hindi** p<um>unta sa Maynila si Maria.
    Neg <Intr.Perf>go to Manila Abs Maria
    ‘Maria didn’t go to Manila.’
b. *P<um>unta sa Maynila hindi si Maria.
    <Intr.Perf>go to Manila Neg Abs Maria
    ‘Not Maria went to Manila (but ...).’
c. [**Hindi** si Maria] ang p<um>unta sa Maynila.
    Neg Abs Maria Abs <Intr.Perf>go to Manila
    ‘It wasn’t Maria who went to Manila.’

A similar point is made by examining post-predicate particles. The Indonesian focus particle *kah*
attaches to or within the predicate, as shown in (8a). But this particle cannot attach to a DP in
subject position, as in (8b).

Indonesian (Cole et al. to appear)

(8) a. Fatima kata [Siti [membeli buku itu-*kah* semalam]]?
    Fatima say Siti bought book this-Q yesterday
    ‘Did Fatimah say that Siti bought *that book* yesterday?’
b. *Fatima kata [Siti-*kah* [membeli buku itu semalam]]?
    Fatima say Siti-Q bought book this yesterday
    ‘Did Fatimah say that *Siti* bought *that book* yesterday?’

In a cleft, *kah* can attach to the focused constituent. In (9a), this constituent happens to
correspond to the subject of the headless relative clause. This contrasts clearly with
ungrammatical (9b), in which *kah* attaches to a subject which is in subject position in a verbal
clause.

Indonesian (Kroeger 2009:820; Mashudi 1981:50)

(9) a. *Abu=kah [yang e₁ minum air itu tadi]?
    Abu=Q Rel drink water that just.now
    ‘Was it Abu who just drank that water?’
b. *Abu=kah minum air itu tadi?
    Abu=Q drink water that just.now
    ‘Was it Abu who just drank that water?’

Potsdam (2009) makes a similar case for the particle *tale* in Fijian. Like Indonesian *kah, tale*
attaches to predicates but not subjects.

Fijian (Potsdam 2009:765)

(10) a. [e na lagasere] **tale** o Pita
    3.Sg.Subj Fut sing again D Peter
    ‘Peter will sing again.’
b. *[e na lagasere] o Pita tale
3.Sg.Subj Fut sing D Peter again
‘Peter will sing again.’

In a cleft, *tale* can attach to the predicate in the embedded clause or to the focused constituent. Note the change in interpretation between (11a) and (11b), indicating the different scopes for *tale*.

Fijian (Potsdam 2009:765)

(11) a. [o cei] *[e na lagasere] tale]*
D who 3.Sg.Subj Fut sing again
‘Who will sing again?’
b. [o cei] *tale] e na lagasere
D who again 3.Sg.Subj Fut sing
‘Who else will sing?’

Finally, Massam (2003) shows that the *yes/no* question particle follows the fronted VP in a verbal clause, while it follows the focused constituent in a cleft.

Niuean (Massam 2003)

(12) a. [[Kua kai] nakai] e Moka e apala (p. 94)
Perf eat Q Erg Moka Abs apple
‘Did Moka eat the apple?’
b. [[Ko Lemani] nakai] ne moto a koe
Pred Lemani Q Nfut punch Abs you
‘Was it Lemani who punched you?’

The parallel between verbal predicates and clefted constituents is further illustrated by auxiliary verbs. Potsdam (2006) also shows that verbal auxiliaries like modals can appear before the clefted constituent in Malagasy. (13a) shows the modal with a verbal predicate; (13b) shows the same modal preceding the focused constituent in a cleft.

Malagasy (Potsdam 2006)

(13) a. tokony hamangy an-dRabe Rasoa (p. 2165)
should visit Acc-Rabe Rasoa
‘Rasoa should visit Rabe.’
b. [tokony Rasoa] no hamangy an-dRabe (p. 2170)
should Rasoa Part visit Acc-dRabe
‘It should be Rasoa who visits Rabe?’

Palauan verbal predicates show agreement with their subjects in the form of pre-verbal clitics (Georgopoulos 1991). (14a) and (14b) show the contrast in between 1st and 3rd person singular clitic agreement forms.
Palauan (Georgopoulos 1991:26-7)

(14) a. ak-mo er a katsudo
   R.1.Sg-go P movies
   ‘I am going to the movies.’

b. ng-mo er a ngebard er a klukuk
   R.3.Sg-go P west P tomorrow
   ‘She is going to America tomorrow.’

Georgopoulos further shows that the same 3rd person agreement marker appears before the focused constituent in a cleft. This again suggests that the focused constituent resides in the predicate, since it hosts the agreement with the subject nominalized clause.

Palauan (Georgopoulos 1991:66)

(15) a. [ng-Basilia] a mengaus er tia el tet
    Cleft-Basilia N R.weave P Dem Lk bag
    ‘It is Basilia who is weaving this bag.’

b. [ng-'obokuk] a mla merng-ii a se’elik
    Cleft-brother.1s N R.Aux R.Perf-hit friend.1.Sg
    ‘It is my brother who has hit my friend.’

Finally, absolutive case markers in Seediq must appear between the predicate and the rest of the clause. Unsurprisingly, this case-marker must follow (and can never precede) the focused constituent in a cleft.

Seediq

    Past buy-Tr Erg Ape Abs book
    ‘Ape bought the book.’

b. [(*ka) patis] ka wada burig-un na Ape
    Abs book Abs Past buy-Tr Erg Ape
    ‘What bought bought was a book.’

I thus conclude in agreement with the traditional analysis of cleft constructions in Austronesian languages, which places the focused constituent in the position for the matrix predicate.

3. Approaches to Pseudocleft Structure

The conclusion of the previous section is surprising if we consider recent work on pseudocleft structure in other languages. Heggie (1988), Moro (1997), den Dikken (2006), and others argue that the focused constituent in specificational copula constructions, including specificational pseudocLEFTs, occupies subject position at some point in the derivation. In this section, I summarize some well-known analyses of cleft and pseudocleft constructions in English and
introduce diagnostics for determining respective subject and predicate status of the focused and presupposed portions of the clause.

3.1. *Wh*-clause as Subject

Early work on cleft structures in English actually more closely resembles current proposal for Austronesian clefts. Akmajian (1970) proposes that clefts and pseudoclefts are derived from a common underlying structure in which the *wh*-clause is the subject and the focused constituent the predicate. See also Gundel (1977) for a similar approach.

(17) a. The one who Nixon chose was Agnew.

```
  S
 / 
NP be NP
  |
 it S
    |
   it
   S
     |
    who Nixon chose
```

The cleft is derived from the pseudocleft by extraposing clause.

(18) a. It was Agnew who Nixon chose.

```
  S
 / 
NP be NP S
  |
 it Agnew
    S
     |
      who Nixon chose
```

3.2. Focus as Subject

More recent approaches also assume a common underlying structure for clefts and pseudoclefts. However, the structural positions of the *wh*-clause and the focus are reversed. Heggie (1988) embeds these under the matrix copula in a structure in which the focus is predicated of the *wh*-clause, which is a headless relative clause containing a gap. To derive the cleft, an expletive is inserted in the [Spec, IP] subject position.

(19) a. It’s Bill’s tie that Mary hates.
In the pseudocleft, the focus moves to [Spec, IP].

(20)  a. Bill’s tie is what Mary hates.

b.  

\[
\begin{array}{c}
\text{IP} \\
\text{it} & \text{I'} \\
\text{I} & \text{VP} \\
\text{be} & \text{CP2} \\
\text{DP} & \text{CP1} \\
\text{Bill’s tie} & \text{OP} & \text{C'} \\
\text{that} & \text{IP} \\
\text{Mary hates}
\end{array}
\]

An interesting characteristic of English pseudoclefts is that they are reversible. The order of the focus and wh-clause can be switched without significantly affecting the information structure. Heggie (1988) derives the inverse pseudocleft from the pseudocleft by moving the wh-clause to [Spec, CP].

(21)  a. Bill’s tie is what Mary hates.  (Pseudocleft)

b.  What Mary hates is Bill’s tie.  (Inverse)
Moro (1997) and Den Dikken (2006) propose an analysis of pseudoclefts which is very similar to Heggie (1988). The focus and wh-clause are base merged as subject and predicate, respectively, of a small clause embedded under the copula. In the pseudocleft, the focus moves to surface subject position in [Spec, IP].

(22) a. A picture of the wall was what caused the riot.

b. A picture of the wall was what caused the riot.

The derivation of the inverse pseudocleft differs from Heggie (1988) in that the wh-clause in embedded predicate position, moves to become the subject in [Spec, IP]. Thus, for Moro and den Dikken, inverse pseudoclefts are derived through A-movement, while for Heggie this is A’-movement.

(23) a. A picture of the wall was what caused the riot. (Pseudocleft)

   b. What caused the riot was a picture of the wall. (Inverse)
Arguments that the focus is the subject of the embedded small clause comes from facts like the following. If a specificational pseudocleft is itself embedded in a small clause, the focus must precede the clause. Given that the small clause has no functional layers supporting subject movement, the constituents must be assumed to reside in their base positions.

\[\text{Small clause (Den Dikken 2006:347)}\]

\[
\begin{align*}
(24) & \quad \text{a. } & \text{I consider [important to himself what John is]} \\
& & \text{b. } * \text{I consider [what John is important to himself]} \\
\end{align*}
\]

The focused constituent can also undergo raising to subject position in a higher clause, while the \(wh\)-clause cannot.

\[\text{Raising (Den Dikken 2006:349)}\]

\[
\begin{align*}
(25) & \quad \text{a. } & \text{Important to himself seems to be what John is.} \\
& & \text{b. } * \text{What John is seems to be important to himself.} \\
\end{align*}
\]

To summarize the discussion in this section, English pseudoclefs have been argued convincingly to involve an underlying small clause structure in which the focused constituent is the subject and the \(wh\)-clause the predicate.

4. **Distinguishing Characteristics of Tagalog Clefts**

In this section, I examine clefts in Tagalog and argue that they differ significantly from their English counterparts. Principally, they are not reversible. The focused constituent always resides in clause-initial position. To account for this fact, I propose that Austronesian clefts are derived through A’-movement, since that movement can serve to place the clause-initial constituent in a focus position in the left periphery. The diagnostics for subjecthood applied to English clefts likewise do not apply in Tagalog, again suggesting that the Tagalog constituents in question do not reside in A-positions.

As seen in the previous section, English specificational pseudoclefts are reversible. In contrast to this, Tagalog clefts not reversible. The order of the major constituents in (26a) can be
switched, but the clause-initial constituent is always focused, suggesting that this constituent resides in the position where it receives its interpretation, i.e. a focus position in the left periphery of the clause. This is easily accounted for if Tagalog cleft derivation involves A’-movement to the left periphery.

**(26)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tagalog</th>
<th>English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>[Ang <em>lalaki</em>] ang na-kita ng babae.</td>
<td>‘It is the man that the woman saw.’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abs man Abs Perf-see Erg woman</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>[Ang na-kita ng babae]</em> ang lalaki.</td>
<td>‘It the one that the woman saw which is the man.’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abs Perf-see Erg woman Abs man</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Applying the tests used for English to determine the subjecthood of either the focus or the wh-clause, we see that neither the small clause test nor the raising test can be applied in Tagalog. Recall from (24) that the focused constituent must precede the clause if an English specificalional pseudocleft is embedded in a small clause. It is possible to form small clauses in Tagalog, but they are predicational and not specificalional. The subject and predicate can appear in either order.

**(27)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tagalog</th>
<th>English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I-t&lt;in&gt;uturing=ko [si <em>Maria</em>-ng mabuti-ng kaibigan].</td>
<td>‘I consider Maria a good friend.’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>App&lt;Tr.Perf&gt;treat=1s.Erg Abs Maria-Lk good-Lk friend</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>[I-t&lt;in&gt;u-turing=nila ang mga babae-ng ang mata(ta)lino]</em>.</td>
<td>‘They consider the women the intelligent ones.’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>App-&lt;Tr&gt;Prog-treat=3.Pl.ErgAbs Pl woman-Lk Abs intelligent(.Pl)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From the above discussion, it should be clear that small clauses do not contribute to the debate regarding whether the focus or the clause is the subject. On the other hand, the small clause facts are consistent with the current proposal that clefts are derived through A’-movement to the left periphery. The reason that specificalional clefts cannot be embedded in small clauses is simply
due to the fact that small clauses do not project A’-positions which could serve as landing sites for these movements.

Turning to raising, it has been claimed that raising is possible in Tagalog (Kroeger 1993; Maclachlan 1996; Maclachlan and Nakamura 1997; De Guzman 1988, 2000; Nakamura 2000; and others). In (29b), the absolutive DP has been raised from the embedded to the matrix clause.

Tagalog (Kroeger 1993:173)

(29) a. In-asah-an=ko-ng [awit-in ni Linda
Tr.Perf-expect-App=1.Sg.Erg-Lk sing-Tr Erg Linda
ang pambansang awit].
Abs national song
‘I expected for Linda to sing the national anthem.’

b. In-asah-an=ko ang pambansang awit na [awit-in
Tr.Perf-expect-App=1.Sg.Erg Abs national song Lk sing-Tr
ni Linda]
Erg Linda.
‘I expected the national anthem to be sung by Linda.’

However, raising is not possible from a specificational pseudocleft. (30a) shows that it is possible for the cleft to appear in the embedded clause. However, raising from the embedded clause is not possible.

Tagalog

(30) a. In-asah-an=ko-ng [ang pambansang awit
Tr.Perf-expect-App=1.Sg.Erg-Lk Abs national song
ang a-awit-in ni Linda]
Abs Fut-sing-Tr Erg Linda.
‘I expected the national anthem to be sung by Linda.’

b. *In-asah-an=ko ang pambansang awit na
Tr.Perf-expect-App=1.Sg.Erg Abs national song Lk
[ang a-awit-in ni Linda]
Abs Fut-sing-Tr Erg Linda.
‘I expected the national anthem to be sung by Linda.’

There are several possible reasons for the inability of raising to take place in (30b). One possibility is suggested by the analysis of clefts proposed in this paper. The cleft in the embedded clause in (30a) is derived through A’-movement. Raising would move a constituent in a A’-position into an A-position, which is an instance of improper movement in the sense of Chomsky (1981) (cf. also Chomsky 1973). Hence, the lack of raising also provides indirect evidence for the proposal put forth in this paper.
5. Analysis of Tagalog Clefts

In this section, I show how the A’-movement approach to VOS word order accounts for the characteristics of Tagalog clefts we have seen in the preceding section. The crucial characteristic is that Tagalog clefts are not reversible. We can account for the Tagalog facts under an approach in which predicate fronting targets the CP layer, and there is in fact no A-position for the subject or absolutive in the TP layer. This is the analysis I propose here.

According to Pearson (2001, 2005) and Aldridge (2004), VOS basic word order in languages like Malagasy and Seediq are derived by moving the absolutive DP out of vP and TP into the left periphery, specifically into a low topic position in an expanded CP layer (in the sense of Rizzi 1997). Following this, the remnant TP fronts further to the left into a focus position.

(31) a. \[TP \ tCP \ wada \burig-un \ na \ Ape \ tAbs \] ka \ patis.  
   Past \ buy-Tr \ Erg \ Ape \ Abs \ book
   ‘Ape bought the book.’

b. FocP=CP
   TP
   Foc’
   Foc
   TopP
   DP
   Top’
   Top[D*] \ <TP> \ ...tDP...

The derivation of clefts is parallel to this. The clause and focus are base-merged as the subject and predicate, respectively, inside TP. The clause, which is presupposed, moves to the low topic position, and the remnant TP, which contains the focused constituent, moves to a focus position above the topicalized clause.

(32) a. \[TP \ tCP \ patis\] \[DP \ ka \[CP \ wada=na \ burig-un\]]. \ (Seediq)
   book \ Abs \ Past=3.Sg.Erg \ buy-Tr
   ‘What he/she bought is a book.’

b. \[TP \ tCP \ ang \ lalaki\] \[DP \ ang \ [CP \ na-kita \ ng babae\]]. \ (Tagalog)
   Abs \ man \ Abs \ Perf-see \ Erg \ woman
   ‘It is the man that the woman saw.’
The lack of reversibility observed for Tagalog clefts in the preceding section is due to the fact that the derivation places the clause and focus in the positions where they are interpreted. This means that the higher of the two constituents in the left periphery will always receive a focus interpretation.

Tagalog (33) \[ \text{FocP} \][TP \text{Ang na-kita ng babae}][\text{TopP} \text{ang lalaki}][\text{tTP}]\]

‘It the one that the woman saw which is the man.’

Further evidence for the lack of reversibility can be found in Seediq. In VOS languages in general, it has been shown (cf. Pearson 2001, 2005 and Sabel 2003 for Malagasy) that *wh*-phrases are excluded from subject/absolutive position in VOS languages. This is naturally accounted for since absolutes move to a topic position, which is incompatible with a focus interpretation.

Seediq (Chang 1997: 146) (34) a. \text{Ima (ka)} \[\text{CP Op} \text{[TP s<m>ebut t_{Op} laqi]}\]

‘Who hits a child?’

b. *S<m>ebut laqi ka \text{ima}?

‘Who hits a child?’
The parallel derivation shown in (31) and (32) does not, however, force us to conclude that the Austronesian-style clefting strategy occurs only in predicate-fronting VOS languages, as suggested by Potsdam (2009). In contrast to Seediq, Tagalog is a VSO language, whose basic word order is the result of verb movement to a tense of aspect projection above vP (Richards 2000, Rackowski 2002, Aldridge 2004, 2005, 2008, and Rackowski and Richards 2005).

Evidence that the CP layer is not accessed in basic word order derivation comes from the fact that wh-phrases and other focused constituents can move to preverbal position. This suggests that the focus position in the CP layer is still available as a landing site and is not filled by TP.

---

**Tagalog**

(35)  
a. B<in>i ili ng babae ang isda.  
<Tr.Perf>buy Erg woman Abs fish  
‘The woman bought the fish.’

b.  

---

**Tagalog**

(36)  
a. Bi-bili si Maria ng bahay sa Maynila.  
Fut-buy Abs Maria Obl house in Manila  
‘Maria will buy a house in Manila.’

b. Sa Maynila bi-bili si Maria ng bahay.  
in Manila Fut-buy Abs Maria Obl house  
‘Maria will buy a house in Manila.’
Hermon (2009) further points out that the SVO language Indonesian also employs the cleft strategy but is not otherwise a predicate-fronting language. Therefore, a more accurate generalization seems to be that the Austronesian cleft derivation requires movements into the left periphery, and these movements are parallel to the derivation of basic word order in VOS Austronesian languages. But in languages whose basic word order is not VOS, these movements will not take place in unmarked declarative clauses.

This conclusion encounters an obstacle in Massam’s (2000, 2001, 2003) analysis of Niuean, since this analysis claims that both VOS word order and clefts are derived through movement to [Spec, IP], which is presumably A-movement. There is evidence, however, that predicate-fronting in Niuean also accesses the left periphery. (37a) shows that the fronted predicate precedes the yes/no question particle. (37b) shows that an adjunct wh-phrase is pied-piped along with the fronted predicate, presumably to the position where a [wh] can be checked. Note that (37b) is not simply a case of wh-in-situ, since a non-interrogative locative phrase cannot be pied-piped with the fronted predicate, as shown in (37c).

Niuean

(37) a. [Manako manu] nakai a koe?
   like animal Q Abs you
   ‘Do you like animals?’ (Massam 2001:180)

b. [Totou he mena fe:] e Mele e pepa?
   Read Loc thing which Erg Mele Abs paper
   ‘Where did Mary read the book?’ (Massam 2003)

c. *[Totou he peito] e Mele e pepa?
   Read Loc kitchen Erg Mele Abs paper
   ‘Mary read the book in the kitchen’ (Massam 2003)

This data suggests that Niuean word order derivation might also be subsumed in an analysis along the lines of Pearson (2001, 2005) and Aldridge (2004), but I leave this question to future research.

6. Conclusion

In this paper, I have argued that Austronesian pseudoclefts are derived through A’-movements into the left periphery. This accounts for key characteristics distinguishing Austronesian clefts from their counterparts in English. In Austronesian clefts, the focused constituent always appears in clause-initial position, accounting for the lack of reversibility of clefts in these languages. Furthermore, neither the focused constituent nor the clause functions as the subject of the construction as a whole. These facts are accounted for in an analysis in which both of these constituents occupy A’-positions where they are interpreted as focus and topic, respectively.
References


