A Malagasy (Northern Betsimisaraka) Text with Grammatical Notes*

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A transcription of a story told in the Northern Betsimisaraka dialect of Malagasy (as spoken in Fkontany Vavatenina) is provided with some preliminary notes on its phonological system and grammar.

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Keywords: Malagasy, Betsimisaraka, Ambodimolaina village, text, folktale

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1. Introduction

Malagasy is an Austronesian language that is considered to belong to the East Barito group of the Western Malayo-Polynesian language family (Dahl 1991, Adelaar 1989). In addition to Standard Malagasy, which is based on the Merina or Plateau dialect and is one of the two official languages in Madagascar, there are a number of regional dialects. These dialects are commonly referred to in association with ethnic groups, such as Sakalava, Vezo, Bara, Betsileo, Tànała, Tandroy, Betsimisaraka, Tsimihety, etc. The details of the distribution of these dialects and the varieties that exist in each area are yet to be fully described.

The story, the transcription of which appears in this paper, is in the variety spoken in the area called Northern Betsimisaraka. It was recorded in the village of Ambodimolaina, as Monsieur Sinoa Bruno (originally from Fenerivo-Est, another area in the Northern Betsimisaraka region) told it to local school children on October 23, 2003. It was transcribed by the author with the assistance of Madame Bé Ernestine, who was born and raised in Ambodimolaina and was then 23 years old. It should be noted that even within Northern Betsimisaraka, there are a number of regional varieties, and some differences exist between the pronunciation in the recording and that of Madame Bé. For example, the word transcribed as zanajañahtary ‘son of the god’ is consistently pronounced as zanijañahtary by the story teller. Similarly, in word final position, the story teller commonly pronounced /ɔ/ as [a]. The transcription in this paper represents the pronunciation provided by the language assistant.

In Betsimisaraka, as in other areas in Madagascar, there are various genre of oral tradition. The story transcribed here belongs to the genre called angano ‘folktale’, and explains how the rice plant was first introduced to the human world.

2. Notes on Phonetic and Phonological Systems

2.1. Local Orthography and the Phonemic System

The phonemic system of Northern Betsimisaraka is shown in Tables 1 and 2, along with the Malagasy orthography system which is typically used by native speakers when they write their language. In Table 2, IPA phonetic values are indicated in square brackets when they

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1) The Ethnologue (Gordon 2005) lists ten Malagasy languages spoken in Madagascar, namely Antankarana, Bara, Masikoro, Northern Betsimisaraka, Plateau, Sakalava, Southern Betsimisaraka, Tandroy-Mahafaly, Tanosy, and Tsimihety.

2) The correspondence between ɔ (Ambodimolaina) and a (Fenerivo-Est) occurs in positions where the Standard Malagasy equivalent is /ao/.

differ from the symbols used in the local orthography. Notes on the orthography and the pronunciation observed in Northern Betsimisaraka are provided in the sections following each of the Tables.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LOCAL ORTHOGRAPHY</th>
<th>PRONUNCIATION</th>
<th>PHONEMIC VALUE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ə</td>
<td>[a]</td>
<td>/u/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>i, y</td>
<td>[i]</td>
<td>/i/ (stressed)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[ui] ~ Ø</td>
<td>/i/ (unstressed)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e, (ai)</td>
<td>[e] ~ [e]</td>
<td>/e/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o</td>
<td>[u]</td>
<td>/u/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ō</td>
<td>[o]</td>
<td>/o/</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2.1.1. The phoneme /i/ For this phoneme, the letter y is used at the end of a word and the letter i is used elsewhere, following the Standard Malagasy orthography. It is pronounced as [i] when stressed, and [ui] otherwise. See 2.4.1 for additional comments.

2.1.2. The phoneme /e/ When /e/ corresponds to the sequence ai in Standard Malagasy, local speakers often follow the Standard Malagasy spelling to represent the sound with ai. However, in the transcription presented here, the sound is consistently written as e.

In this dialect, three front vowels, [i], [e], and [e], are observed. However, the phonological status of the vowel [e] is yet to be confirmed. A contrast between [e] and [e] appears to occur only when the vowel is stressed. It should be noted that /e/ and /e/ are not distinguished in Standard Malagasy and therefore, are not distinguished in the spelling system learned by the local speakers. 4) Thus, it is often observed that what occurs as [e] in natural speech and is written with the letter e is repeated as [e] in deliberate speech. For example, lakole [laku’le] ‘a key’ (< French la clef) is pronounced in deliberate speech as [laku’le]. There are some examples which imply that the sound [e] in this dialect may correspond to (or may have earlier corresponded to) /e/ and likewise, [e] to /ai/ in Standard Malagasy. The following pronunciation was observed in a speaker who was visiting from the Village of Ambarifotsy, which is about a one day walk farther away from the main town in the region (and thus, potentially less affected by other dialects). It was observed that, with the word sombe, the language assistant from the local village checked with this particular speaker asking her whether the final vowel was /i/ or /e/, before repeating the word for me.5)

4) The existence of three front vowels is also noted for some other dialects. For example, according to Thomas-Fattier (1982:48), the phoneme /e/ is realized as [e] in Sakalava under the following conditions: a) in the sequence /e/ + /i/; b) when the vowel in the following syllable is /a/. Beaujard (1998:10) mentions that in Tañala, the letter e in the writing system indicates either [e] or [e], and that the word endings -a and -y are often pronounced as devoiced [e].

5) According to Razafiarivony (pers. comm.), the letter é may be used to indicate [e], while è indicates stressed [e].
CLAIMED FORM | PRONOUNCED AS | MEANING
---|---|---
/sômbe/ | [so’mbe] | ‘k.o. Alocasia taro’  
< soa bé ‘big taro’
/mañeikitra/ | [ma’ñekitra] | ‘to bite, to sting’  
MO. manaikitra ‘to bite’

Another environment where [e] can occur is in forms in which the Standard Malagasy pronunciation is /eo/.

2.1.3. The phonemes /u/ and /o/ Unlike Standard Malagasy, /u/ and /o/ contrast and are sometimes distinguished by local speakers in their writing system as /o/ and /ô/ respectively.6)

| Table 2: The Orthography and Phonemic System (Consonants) |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Nasal | Prenasalized stop | Voiced stop | Spirant | Voiceless stop | Spirant |
| Labial | | | | |
| m | mb /’b/ | b | ʃ [ʃ] | p | f [f] |
| Dent-alveolar | | | | |
| nd /’d/ | d | t | |
| Alveolar | n | nj /’dz~’dz/ | j [dz~dz] | z | ts [ts] | s |
| Alveolar Retroflex/Trill | ndr /’r/ | dr [dr] | r [r] | tr [t] |
| Velar | ñ [ŋ] | ng /’ɡ/ | g | k | h |

2.1.4. The phoneme /ndr/ In Betsimisaraka, /ndr/ is typically pronounced as a prenasalized trilled r /’r/. In deliberate speech, it is sometimes pronounced as /’dr/ (prenasalized [d] followed by trilled [r]). In the text, in accordance with local orthographic conventions, this sound is written as ndr.

2.1.5. The velar stops The velar stops, namely /ɡ/, /k/ and /ŋ/, are palatalized when the vowel in the preceding syllable is either /i/ or /e/ (suggesting that the latter may have developed from the sequence /ai/. See notes on the pronunciation of /e/ in 2.1.2.). Some examples occurring in the text are shown in (1) (the numbers in parentheses are the sentence numbers in the text where the forms are found).

(1) raika | [raik’a ~ ’reik’a ~ ’rek’a] | ‘one’ (002)
namelon-teña | [namelu’teŋa] | ‘made a living’ (007)
niboika | [nibu’ik’a] | ‘swelled up’ (017)

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6) Fanony (2001a, 2001b) claims that three back vowels are contrasted in the Northern Betsimisaraka dialect, using the letters o, ô, and ñ to distinguish them. However, the phonetic values of these sounds are not described and yet to be verified. In the variety spoken in the village of Ambodimolaina, in addition to [u] and [o], the pronunciation [ɔu] ~ [ɔ:] was sometimes observed for what is written by the local speakers as ao. However, its occurrence does not regularly correspond to any one of Fanony’s three back vowels.
2.1.6. The phoneme /h/ This phoneme is often not pronounced, and there are some cases where the use of /h/ appears to result from the influence of the Standard Malagasy writing system.

2.2. Consonant Alternation
As in Standard and other forms of Malagasy, when either a voiced stop or a voiced spirant is preceded by /n/ (commonly indicating genitive or locative), the sequence is realized as its corresponding prenasalized stop. For example, the sequence /n/ + /r/ (labial voiced spirant) is realized as ['n]:b. The orthographic convention is to place a hyphen between the letter n (or m) indicating the prenasalized sound and that describing the following voiced stop, as in m-b for ['m]:b. Examples of consonant alternation are given in (2).

(2) 
\[
\begin{array}{l}
\text{l}^{/\text{d}} \text{ an-}:\text{nitra} \quad \text{‘in the sky’ (003)} > \text{an ‘locative’ + } \text{l}:\text{nitra ‘sky’} \\
\text{v}^{/\text{b}} \text{ tra}:\text{nom-}:\text{ariny} \quad \text{‘chicken’s)crop’ (021)} > \text{tra}:\text{n} ‘house’ + n ‘genitive’ + \text{vari ‘rice’ + n ‘its’}
\end{array}
\]
\[
\begin{array}{l}
\text{z}^{/\text{j}} \text{ tamin-jani} \quad \text{‘there’ (022)} > \text{tamin- ‘locative, past’ + zani ‘that’}
\end{array}
\]

In some compounds, the stop is no longer pronounced nasalized, as in (3).

(3) 
\[
\begin{array}{l}
\text{z}^{/\text{nj}} \text{ zana}:\text{ja}:\text{naha} ‘son of god’ (001) > (\text{zana-}:\text{janahari}) > \text{zana ‘child’ + n ‘genitive’ + za}:\text{nahari ‘god’}
\end{array}
\]

2.3. Stress
Although stress commonly falls on the penultimate syllable, it may also occur on the antepenult and ultimate syllable, sometimes creating phonemic contrast. In the text presented in 6.1., primary stress (') is marked on the stressed syllable in the phonemic transcription line.

2.4. Natural Speech Pronunciation
Some typically observed characteristics of natural speech pronunciation are described in this section.

2.4.1. Vowel Devoicing and Vowel Deletion
1) An unstressed word final vowel is often either devoiced or completely deleted in natural speech, as in (4).

(4) 
\[
\begin{array}{l}
\text{a} \rightarrow [\text{a}] \sim \text{Ø / _ #} \\
i \rightarrow [\text{i}] \sim \text{Ø / _ #} \\
\text{Ex. } \text{ini} \rightarrow [\text{i} \text{n}] \quad \text{(005)}
\end{array}
\]

2) Unstressed /i/ is pronounced as either [u] (unrounded back vowel) or not pronounced at all, thus, /i/ (-stress) [u] ~ Ø, as in (5).
(5) taminy [tamûni ~ tamni ~ tamn] ‘with, to’

The phoneme /i/ is typically not pronounced following a nasal consonant, yielding either a prenasalized stop or a geminate nasal.

(6) annô ‘yours’ (cf. Standard Malagasy aninao)

This phenomenon occurs in initial syllables and also across morpheme boundaries. For example, nitaria ‘talked about’ (018) may be pronounced as ["taria], niôwani=ny ‘he ate’ as [niu"anni] (021).

When the phoneme /i/ occurring between two identical consonants is not pronounced, the consonants are geminated as a result. Thus,

(7) pilila ~ pilla ‘a battery’ (< French pile)

3) When a sequence of two vowels occurs across the boundary between two words, only the second vowel is commonly pronounced, thus $V_1#V_2 \rightarrow V_2$, as illustrated in (8).

(8) lasaña eza → lasañêza ‘where did (he) leave for?’
ande iâlaka → andiâlaka ‘go to bring back’
vâdiko, e? → vâdiê? ‘... isn’t it, Dear?’

2.4.2. Glides y and w When a high vowel is directly followed by a stressed /a/, a glide occurs between the two vowels.

(9) ia /i’a/ [i’a]
oa /u’a/ [u’â]

2.4.3. Word final ña Word final ña is often not pronounced. For example, the word indicating ‘name’, the citation form of which is añaña (Standard Malagasy anara), is pronounced as either â ñaraña, a’ñarañ, or a’ñarâ. Likewise, the word sahôna ‘kind of frog’ (Standard Malagasy sahona) is pronounced as either sahôña, sahôñ, or sahô. This rule affects not only nouns but also verbs, as in the variant forms in (10).

(10) ipi trahaña ~ ipi traha ‘to live, reside’
iôwaniña ~ iôwany ‘to eat’  (002), (003), (010)

2.5. Additional Remarks on Local Orthographic Conventions

In the local orthography, the locative preposition taminy is written as such before common nouns, but it is written as tamin’i before personal nouns. In the phonemic transcription, both appear as tamini, matching the actual pronunciation of these forms.
3. Notes on Some Grammatical Aspects

Some basic grammatical facts about the Betsimisaraka dialect are summarized in this section.

3.1. Basic Sentence Structures

Betsimisaraka, as other dialects of Malagasy, is a predicate initial language. The predicate may be a verb as in (11) and (12), or a noun as in (13) (the predicate of each example sentence is underlined).

(11) Nɔkatra i zanajahary. ‘The son of the god ascended.’
    p. ascend det son.of.god

(12) Tsara zany. ‘That (thing) is good.’
    be. good that

(13) Viary vadi=ny. ‘His wife was a (human) woman.’
    woman spouse=3sg.gen

As in a typical right branching language, noun phrases and prepositional phrases that constitute a clause follow the predicate verb as in (14) (with the predicate underlined), and modifiers of the noun (except for determiners) follow the noun as in (15)–(16) (modifying elements are indicated in square brackets).

(14) Nitaritra zanajahary tamin'i babany.
    p.tell son.of.God dat=dat father=3sg.gen

    ‘The son of the god told his father (that...).’

(15) biby [jiaby a'natiala]
    animal all wild

    ‘[all the wild] animals’

(16) raha [fovaninjareo tany]
    thing eat=3pl.gen p.there

    ‘things [that they eat over there]’

A phrase may be topicalized to occur in clause-initial position, as in (17) and (18).

(17) Any ... tiako ipitraha.
    there like=1sg. gen live

    ‘That’s the place where I would like to live.’

(18) Izyni to, ambolintsika.
    3sg.ind this plant=1pl.in.gen

    ‘As for this (thing), we should plant it.’
3.2. Some Comments on Verbs and Verbal Clauses

Different tenses are marked by the initial consonant, n ‘past’ and m ‘present’; ‘future’ tense is unmarked, as in (19) and (20).

(19) andeha  ‘will go (somewhere)’
     nandeha  ‘went (somewhere)’
(20) mivariña  ‘come down’
     nivariña  ‘came down’

When the main verb is in the past tense, locational words (locative prepositions and locational nouns) within the same clause often carry the form t, agreeing with the tense of the verb as in (21) and (22). However, the occurrence of the form t is optional in certain environments. For example, in (23), the verb carries the past tense marker n-, and the prepositional form appears in the recording is amin’, which could be replaced with the form tamin’.

(21) Nandeha takeza?
     P.went. to P.where
     ‘Where have you been?’ (cf. akeza ‘where’)

(22) Niteny zanajalahary tamin’i babany.
     P.tell son.of.god P.DAT=DET father.his
     ‘The son of the god told his father.’

(23) Nitaria amin’i babany.
     P.talk DAT=DET father=3SG.GEN
     ‘(He) talked to his father.’

Verbs in Betsimisaraka undergo certain derivational processes involving their transitivity as well as other features, as in (24).

(24) ande  AUX  ‘to go to do…’
     andeha  VI  ‘to go to (some place)’
     andehaana=ko8) VT ‘I will go (to a particular place/for a particular reason), =ko 1SG.GEN’

Some unaccusative verbs carry the ending -ña (which is frequently omitted in actual speech, see 2.4.3.), and in such cases, the ending -ña sometimes alternates with a genitive clitic pronoun to derive a corresponding transitive verb. For example, the word aheri(ña) means ‘be put back’ while aheri=ntsika, with the first person plural inclusive genitive clitic pronoun, means ‘(we) put it back’. Likewise, an intransitive verb nambole(ña) ‘was planted’ corresponds

7) Whether these should be analyzed as verbs carrying past tense, or prepositions and nouns agreeing with the verb requires detailed examination.
8) This form corresponds to what is often referred to as “voix circonstancielle (or, voix relative)” (Beaujard 1998, Keenan and Polinsky 1998, and others). See also footnote 9.
to a transitive verb *nambole* =ky 'I planted (something)'.

Some verbs, such as auxiliaries, require a following verb. Such verbs may be either transitive (25) or intransitive (26).

(25) *Tiako* ipitraha(ṇa).
like=1sg.gen live.in

(26) *Ande* iālaka raha
go.to bring-back thing

'I would like to live (there).'</n(003)>'(He) went to bring back things that are...'</n(013)

3.3. Some Comments on Nouns and Noun Phrases

Pronominal forms in Northern Betsimisaraka are listed in Table 3.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Independent</th>
<th>Genitive</th>
<th>Patient</th>
<th>an- (Loc1)</th>
<th>ami- (Loc2)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1sg</td>
<td>zā(h)o-zā</td>
<td>=ko, =ky</td>
<td>zā(h)o-zā</td>
<td>anāhy</td>
<td>aminā(h)y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>=ana(h)y*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2sg</td>
<td>anō (-anāo)</td>
<td>=nō</td>
<td>anō</td>
<td>annō</td>
<td>aminō</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3sg</td>
<td>izy</td>
<td>=ny</td>
<td>anānjy</td>
<td>anānjy</td>
<td>aminānjy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>=anānjy*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1pl.</td>
<td>zehé</td>
<td>=nē</td>
<td>nē</td>
<td>annē</td>
<td>aminē</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1pln</td>
<td>atsik'a</td>
<td>=tsik'a</td>
<td>ntsik'a</td>
<td>antisik'a</td>
<td>ami(n)tsik'a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2pl</td>
<td>anaré</td>
<td>=naré</td>
<td>naré</td>
<td>annaré</td>
<td>aminaré</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3pl</td>
<td>zaré</td>
<td>=njaré</td>
<td>njaré</td>
<td>anjaré</td>
<td>aminjaré</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(The genitive forms marked with * occur only on nouns. See the description of the usage of genitive pronouns below.)

The first person genitive clitic pronoun =ko has alternate pronunciations [ku] and [ki]. The form =ky [ki] optionally occurs when the final syllable of the preceding verb contains either /i/ or /e/, as in (27).

9) What are referred to as “transitive verbs” here have traditionally been referred to as “voix passif,” or “passive voice” in the literature on Malagasy (Beaujard 1998, Keenan and Polinsky 1998, and others). However, it is often pointed out that such terminology is inaccurate in that the so-called “passive” verbs do not correspond semantically to what would be referred to as “passive voice” in English, and as Rasolison (2001:16) points out, “the usual translation into English [of such sentences]... is the active sentence.” A part of the problem of such analyses is that the transitive status of the two forms (the form without a genitive clitic pronoun and the form with a genitive clitic pronoun) is not distinguished, probably because of the similarity of the form of the verbs, despite the difference in their syntactic behaviors. Analyses that are more in line with the one presented here are found in Keenan and Manorohanta (2001) and Pearson (2001).
(27) ke=ky ~ ke=ko
     ientu=ky
[kə:kı ~ kə:ku]  ‘I approve (s.t.)’ (003)
[iɛntiki]        ‘I will take (it)’ (014)

The form =ky [ki] is probably the result of the palatalization of the velar consonant k following a front vowel (as described in section 2.1.5.), followed by loss of a devoiced final vowel (see 2.4.1), as in (28).

(28) =k'ı > =k'ı > =k̥

Genitive pronouns occur either on a noun expressing the possessor (29), or on a verb expressing the agent (30).

(29) vadi=ky, e?  ‘isn’t it, my wife?’ (024)
     spouse=1SG.GEN TAG

(30) ientu=ky
     ‘I bring (something)’ (014)
     bring=1SG.GEN

In the first person and the third person, the possessor of the noun (but not the agent of the transitive verb) can also be expressed by the forms anahy and ananjy respectively, as in (31).

(31) akolahy anahy    ‘my rooster’ (014)
     rooster 1SG.PAT

4. List of Abbreviations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AUX</th>
<th>auxiliary verb</th>
<th>PAT</th>
<th>patient</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>DAT</td>
<td>dative</td>
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<td>intransitive verb</td>
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<td>future tense</td>
<td>VOC</td>
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<tr>
<td>GEN</td>
<td>genitive</td>
<td>VT</td>
<td>transitive verb</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IND</td>
<td>independent pronoun</td>
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<td>first person plural (exclusive)</td>
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<tr>
<td>LOC</td>
<td>locative</td>
<td>IPLIN</td>
<td>first person plural (inclusive)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MO</td>
<td>Standard Malagasy (= malgache)</td>
<td>1SG</td>
<td>first person singular</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>officielle</td>
<td>2SG</td>
<td>second person singular</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P</td>
<td>past tense</td>
<td>3SG</td>
<td>third person singular</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5. References

6. Angano Nahatönga Añaraña Vary ‘A folk tale about the origin of the word vary (rice)’

The text is presented in either three or four lines.

Line 1  Local orthography

Line 2  Phonemic transcription (reflecting local pronunciation)

Line 3  (when necessary): Analyzed forms in phonemic transcription, references to the notes

Line 4  Word-for-word glosses

The first line presents a sentence written in the local orthography. Forms that are said to be optional by the speaker, such as the word ending -ña (see 2.4.3.), are indicated in parentheses.\(^{10}\) The second line provides the phonemic transcription, but includes some phonetic details in order to highlight the distinctive pronunciation of this dialect. For example, palatalization is indicated in the phonemic line of the transcription with the superscript symbol "^" although this is a non-phonemic feature. Sounds (especially vowels) that usually are not pronounced in natural speech are indicated in parentheses in this line. In the third line, the morphologically analyzed forms of certain words are provided. This line appears only when Line 4 provides glosses for such morphemes.

As we transcribed the text, some words were replaced by the language assistant either for clarification or to change a Standard Malagasy word to the corresponding local one. Such words are noted in footnotes. The whole text and a free translation in English are provided in 6.2. and 6.3., respectively.

\(^{10}\) Note, however, when a form such as -ña is not indicated between parentheses, this does not necessarily mean that it is obligatory.
6.1. Text Transcription and Analysis

(001)

Angano nahatònga añaña añaña vary.
aŋ'ganu na(h)año ga aŋ'na aŋ'na aŋ'na Bari
naha-toño ga
text.kake p.arrive name "vary"

'A story (that is) about the origin of the word vary 'rice'. '

(002)

Andro reika ony, nisy ony zañañahary.
'ar'u reik'a uni nisi uni zañañahari
nisi
day one RPRT p.exist RPRT god	nis.

Nisy zañañahary. Nitony zañañahary tamin' i bàhany.
'ensi zañañahary hari ni tani zañañahary hari tam(i)ni babani
nisi
n isi
n tani
p.exist son.of.god
p.tell son.of.god
p dat father=3SG.GEN

"A Baba, zaho ande ipétraka aŋy, ambony tany aŋy.
a baba zaha a de ipetaka aŋi a'mbuni tani aŋi
voc father 1sg.ind f.go.to f.stay there np.loc.on earth there

'Any tiako ipétraha(na)."
'ani ti'aku ipi'aha(ŋa)
tia=ku
there like=1sg.gen f.live.on

Once upon a time, they say, there was a god. The god had a son. The son of the god said to his father, "Father, I'm going to live over there on the earth. It's over there (where) I want to live."

(003)

"Ino ndreka ialanò? An-dàniitra tsara bè to."
inu "rek'a i'ala no a'ndañita 'sara be 'to
ila=na an=lañita
what emp f.leave=2sg.gen loc=sky good big here

11) Razafiarivony (pers. comm.) suggests that the form zañañahari derives from za-nahary, the form ahary meaning "to create" and thus the whole word means "creator".
“Aïny, a Baba, tiako ipitraha(ňa).”
\[\text{there} \quad \text{VOC} \quad \text{father} \quad \text{like}=1\text{SG.} \quad \text{GEN} \quad \text{f.live.on} \]

“Tsy keko andeha akaňy anô.”
\[\text{NEG} \quad \text{approve}=1\text{SG.} \quad \text{go.to} \quad \text{there} \quad 2\text{SG.IND} \]

“Why are you leaving? It is very nice here in the sky.” “Over there, Father, I want to live there.” “I don’t approve of you going there.”

\[(004)\]
\[\text{Raha} \quad \text{niala} \quad \text{hely} \quad \text{take} \quad \text{i} \quad \text{bàbany,} \]
\[\text{raha} \quad \text{niala} \quad \text{heli} \quad \text{take} \quad \text{i} \quad \text{babanî} \]
\[\text{niala} \quad \text{t.ake} \quad \text{baba}=\text{ni} \]
\[\text{when} \quad \text{p.leave} \quad \text{little} \quad \text{p.here} \quad \text{DET} \quad \text{father}=3\text{SG.} \quad \text{GEN} \]

\[\text{niroroňa} \quad \text{i} \quad \text{zanajaňahary} \quad \text{tônga} \quad \text{tao} \quad \text{ambony} \quad \text{tany.} \]
\[\text{ni’roruňa} \quad \text{i} \quad \text{zanadjaňa}’\text{hari} \quad \text{tônga} \quad \text{t.au} \quad \text{a”buni} \quad \text{tani} \]
\[\text{p.descend} \quad \text{DET} \quad \text{son.of.god} \quad \text{arrive} \quad \text{p.here} \quad \text{on} \quad \text{earth} \]

‘When his father left the place for a little while, the son of the god descended and arrived on the earth.’

\[(005)\]
\[\text{Maňany} \quad \text{i} \quad \text{zaňahary.} \]
\[\text{maňani} \quad \text{i} \quad \text{zaňa}’\text{hari} \]
\[\text{be.surprised} \quad \text{DET} \quad \text{god} \]

“Lâsâna eza ndreka zala hely. Lâsâna izy ke iňy.
\[\text{leave} \quad \text{where} \quad \text{EMP} \quad \text{child} \quad \text{small} \quad \text{leave} \quad 3\text{SG.IND} \quad \text{here} \quad \text{that} \]

\[\text{12) The form keky / keki/ could also be used.} \]
\[\text{13) When a sequence of vowels occurs between two words, the first vowel often is not pronounced (see 3) in 2.4.1.1. In the phonemic transcription, such a sequence is indicated by a linking symbol (”-”) with the first vowel shown in parentheses.} \]
Tsy manjary. Maditra.
lsi ma"njaari ma'diita
NEG be.possible be.naughty

‘The god was surprised. “Where did that small child leave for? He just left. This is impossible. He is too naughty.”’

(006)

Niroroña zanajañahary, tônga tambony tany.
ni roruña zanajana hari 'to'ga ta'mbuni 'tani
n.ironuña ta'mbuni
r. descend son.of.god arrive r.on earth

Nalaka vady, viavy vädiny.
'nalaka βadi βiaβi βadini
n.alaka βadi=ni
r.take spouse woman spouse=3sg.gen

‘The god’s child descended, arrived on the earth. He got married, and his wife was a (human) woman.’

(007)

Tônga tambony tany, zareo namelon-teña. Niasa.
'to'ga ta'mbuni 'tani za'reu namelu'n-teña ni'asa
 t.a'mbuni n.amelu-n-teña n.isa
arrive r.on earth 3pl.ind r.made.living r.isa

‘He arrived on the earth, and they made a living (there). (They) worked.’

(008)

Sairaiña i zanajañahary sy zareny vädiny.
sa"iraña i zanajana hari si za' reni βadini
βadini=ni
be.worried det son.of.god and they.with spouse=3sg.gen

Tsy naita haniña ioaininy.14
lsi naita 'hi'aniŋ'a i"wanini
n.aita i.uanini
NEG r.be.seen food r.be.eaten

14) ioainini is also possible (< n'a ~ ni, see 2.1.5.).
'The son of the god and his wife were worried. They didn’t see any food for eating.'

(009) "Andro reka," ni teny i zanajahary tamin'i vadiny. a'ru rek'a ni teni i zanaqaja'na hari tam(i)ni badini n.iteni t.amin'i badim=n'i day one DET son.of.god DET spouse=3SG.GEN

"Zaho, ro' ieriña amin'i baba any fô. zahu ro'eriń'a am(i)ni baba ańi fô 1SG.IND VOC DET father there then

Anke i'alaka raha (f)oninaye any zè, oe? and(e)i alaka raha (f)u'an(i)nei ańi ze u f.uan=i=nei F.go.to bring.back thing F.eat=2PL.GEN there that TAG

Zany tsara." zani tsara that good

"One of these days," said the son of the god to his wife, "I shall, Dear, return to Father’s (place) over there. (I will) go to bring back things that we (exclusive) eat over there. There, (the food is) good."

(010) "Ino eky raha foaninaré any zany, e?" inu eki raha fu'an(i)na're ańi zani e f.uan=i=nare what EMP thing F.eat=2PL.GEN there over.there TAG

"Aleky ațô zè kô tônga ațô, tsara zany." aleki ațo ze ko lo'ga ațo tsara zani ale=ku take=1SG.GEN here that when arrive here good that

"Ary andeha ațô, atsika boka tsiy ra(h)a ioany(na), e." ari a'ndeha a'lo a'sika boka 'siy ra(h)a iu'any(na) e and go.to get.LIMP 1PL.IN.IND because not.exist thing F.eat TAG
"Iyà, andeha zaho amaren(a)."
"I'm hungry."
yes 1SG.IND tomorrow

"What kind of things do you eat there?" "I'll bring them here when I come back. They are good!" "Then please go ahead, because we don't have anything to eat." "Okay, I'll go tomorrow."

(011)

Nakatra i zanajañahary. Nakatra tan-danitra.
Nakatra son.of.god tan-sky

Tonga tañy. Nañontsafà i babany.
arrive 3SG.GEN babani

"Anò, marò, nandeha takeza?"
and 3SG.GEN takeza

"oa, izaho koa nandeha niñoroña tañy tambony tany, a Baba."
well 2SG.IND also p.go on earth voc father

'The son of the god ascended. (He) ascended to the sky. (He) arrived there. His father asked (him), "You, Son, where have you been?" "Well, I went down to the earth, Father."'

(012)

"Ary nañino anò mbola niheriña?"
and 2SG.IND still return

ari nañiu a no impola n'herin'ia
n'arino n'herin'ia
“E, zaho jerijery anô.”
e zahu ʧeři’djeři a’no
djeři’djeři ano
ah 1SG.IND miss 2SG.PAT

“Nàñino vò jerijery?”
na’niñu ʧō djeři’djeři
n.aniñu
p.why recently miss

“Anô babako, zaho jerijery.”
a’no babaku zahu ʧeři’djeři
baba=ku
2SG.IND father=1SG.GEN 1SG.IND miss

“Anô mbola iēriña.”
a’no =mbola i’eriŋ’a
2SG.IND still f.return

“Iyà, zaho mbola iēriña,” aozy zanajañahary.
i’ya ’za(h)u =mbola i’eriŋ’a a’uzi zanadaŋa’ha hari
yes 1SG.IND still f.return says.he son.of.god

“And why did you come back again?” “Ah, (because) I miss you.” “Why (are you) suddenly missing (me)?” “You are the one, Father, that I miss.” “And you are going back again.” “Yes, I’m still going back,” said the son of the god.”

(013)
Elahela. Arti diany zanajañahary,
ela(h)ela ʧari ʧiani zanadaŋa’ha hari
dia=ni
a.while and ntend=3SG.GEN son.of.god

ande ālaka raha haninianjare 15) taŋy, tan-dànitra taŋy.
a’dē ālaka raha haninj’a’dja’re taŋi ta”danjita taŋi
haninj’a=dja’re taŋi t.an-latjita taŋi
f.go.to bring things food=3PL.GEN p.there p.LOC-sky p.there

15) This form can be replaced with fouaninjarea.
‘After a while, the son of the god was leaving to bring (back) things that they ate over there in the sky.’

(014)
Nitaria zanařahahíry tamìni babánys.
nitařia zanađaŋa hari tam(i)ni babani
n.itaria t.aminì baba=ni
p.tell son.of.god p.DAT father=3SG.GEN

‘Zaŋho, a Baba, akolahy anahy iëntìky, aminey anì.’
za(h)u a baba akulahi a'nahi i'ë²tiki am(i)nei aŋi
i'ë²ti=ku
1SG.IND VOC father rooster 1SG.GEN F.bring=1SG.GEN DAT.1PLEX there

‘The son of the god said to his father. “As for me, Father, my rooster, I will bring (it) back to our place over there.”’

(015)
i'ya an'no moki'zi i'ë²ti'no tsì au'aku
i'ë²ti=no aua=ku
yes 2SG.POS EMP bring.back=2SG.GEN NEG care=1SG.GEN

Zany foaŋa iëntìno akany ndè. Tsìsiy raha ambony zany.”
zani fuŋa i'ë²ti'no a'kanji i'n de tsisi raha a'm'uni zani
i'ë²ti=no
that only F.bring=2SG.GEN there then not.exist thing more.than that

‘“Okay, it’s yours, take it, you take it back (with you). I don’t care. (But) that is the only thing you can take back. Nothing more than that.”’

(016)
‘Ehe, iëntìky akolahy anahy.”
e'he i'entiki akulahi a'nahi
ienti=ku akulahi anahi
no bring=1SG.GEN rooster 1SG.GEN

Ka alohany izy itondra akolahiny, namiany i zanařahahíry io
ka alohany izi ito'rə akulahini nami'ani i zanađaŋa hari jo
akulahi=ni n.amia=ni
and before 3SG.IND f.carry rooster=3SG.GEN F.give=3SG.GEN DET son.of.god this
"No, I'll bring back my rooster," and before he carried his rooster, the son of the god made this rooster eat the things for eating there. His father wasn't around again.'

(O17)
Namiany, namiany, voky i akoho io.
naminyani naminyani Buky i a'kohu io
namia=ni namia=ni
pgive=3sg.gen pgive=3sg.gen be.full det chicken this

Efa niboika tendany.
|efa niboika te'dani
n. ibu'ika te'da=ni
already p.swell.up neck=3sg.gen

"Ó, voky aminje i akoho to," aozy. Aozy zanaavanahary.
o Buky ami'dje i a'kohu to (a)uzi a'uzi zanaavanahary
oh full with.3pl det chicken this says.he says.he son.of.god

'He made it eat, made it eat and the rooster was filled up. Finally, the throat of the rooster swelled up. "O, this rooster is filled up with food now," said he.'

(O18)
"Andeha aminje izaho."
a'deha am(1)ndje izahu
f.go loc.there 1sg.ind

Ze izy vo, nitaria amin'i babany.
|ze izi Bô nita'ria am(1)ni babani
n.itaria baba=ni
then 3sg.ind then p.tell dat father=3sg.gen

aⁿ.do  'za(h)u tsi maⁿ.hora aⁿ.no ko aⁿ.deha aⁿ.do
go.ahead 1SG.IND NEG mind 2SG.IND then go go.ahead

'The son of the god said, "I'm leaving (to go) then." Then he said to his father, "Father, I'm saying farewell to you. Good bye. (I am) going back to our place down there." "Go ahead. I don't care whatever you do. You just go... go!"

(019)

"Ehè, zaho môka andeha fo, aňy tiako, e?"
e'he  'zahu moka aⁿ.deha fo ańi ti'aku e
tia=ku

no 1SG.IND EMP F.go then there like=1SG.GEN TAG

Nirôroña aminjè i zanajñahary nitôndra akolahy.
ni'oruna am(i)ⁿdjè i zanajñaha hari ni'toⁿra aku.lahi
n.ioruna n.itôⁿra
p.descent there DET son.of.god p.carry rooster

Tônga tambony tany. Nañeno akolahy, "Kôrke-ki-kô!"
'loⁿga taⁿ''buni tani naⁿjenu aku.lahi korke-ki-ko
t.aⁿ'buni n.najenu
arrive p.on earth cry rooster cock-a-doodle-do

"Well, I'm going then, I like it there, okay?" The son of the god descended then carrying the rooster. (He) arrived on the earth. The rooster cried, "Cock-a-doodle-do!"

(020)

Zevô. Niditra tao an-drañô'ni vûdiny.
ze'bo  'nidiña 'tau aⁿ'rañuni ƀadini
n. idíña t.au an-ťanu=ni ƀadi=ni
then p.enter p.there LOC.house.of spouse=3SG.GEN
“E, tônga anô?”
e 'toʊ̰ɡa a'no
ah arrive 2SG.IND

“Hyà, tônga.”
i'ya 'toʊ̰ɡa
yes arrive

“Ary ɛza raha nalenô?”
ar[i]ezə 'raha nale no
n.ale=no
and where thing p.talk.about=2SG.GEN

Anô karaha tsisy rahanientiñ amboniny akolahy.”
a'nô ka'raha 'tsisi rahani e"tiŋ a'mbunini aku lahî
raha=n=ie"tiŋ a'mbonini
2SG.IND like not.exist thing.of.baggage beyond rooster

“E, zaho mahè nanjy.”
e 'zahu məˈhe 'na''dji
ah 1SG.IND know 3SG.PAT

‘Then, (he) entered the house where his wife was. “Ah, you are back.” “Yes, I’m back.” “And where are the things that you talked about? Looks like you aren’t carrying anything other than a rooster?” “Well, I know (what to do with) him.”’

(021)

Tônga téo, nivotrance p. there 3PL.GEN throat=GEN chicken this
'toʊ̰ɡa t'eu niβtuai'dʒar'e te'dani a'kohu iu
arrive p. there p.cut=3PL.GEN throat=GEN chicken this

mbola tanațiiny tranombariny takô zany,\(^{16}\)
l'mbola tanațiini t'aŋuˌmbarini ta'ko zani
tanațiini t'aŋuˌmbari=ni tako
still p.inside.of throat=3SG.GEN p.this there

\(^{16}\) takô zany ‘this particular thing’ indicates akohô ‘the chicken’.
i raha niowàtiny i akolahy.
i'raha niu"anini i aku'lahi
n.uani=ni
DET thing p.took=3SG GEN DET rooster

‘After [the son of the god] arrived there, they cut the throat of the rooster, things that were still inside of this thing there (i.e., the rooster), the things that the rooster swallowed.’

(022)
Azonjaré zany, raha noànin'i akolahy[17] iny.
azu"dʒa're zani 'raha nu"anini aku'lahi 'ịni
azu=°dʒare n.uani=ni
get=3PL.GEN then thing p.eat=3SG GEN rooster this

tsiapola 'reñi a'ńaráña 'izi tam(i)n°dʒani
tami=°dʒani
not.yet hear name 3SG.IND P.DAT=that

Tsiapola reñy ańaráña izy tamin-jäny, tsiapola mbóla nisy ańarány.
tsiapola 'reñi a'ńaráña 'izi tam(i)n°dʒani tsiapola ignment nisi ańaráni
tami=°dʒani n isi ańaráni=ni
not.yet hear name 3SG.IND P.DAT=that not yet p.exist name=3SG GEN

‘They got then this thing that the rooster had swallowed. They hadn’t yet heard its name. They hadn’t yet heard its name, it didn’t yet have a name.’

(023)
“Izy to,” aozzy zanajańahary, “Ambolintsika.”
'izi to (a)uzi zanadʒińahari a'mbūlə'n°tsika
an-βoli=°tsika
3SG.IND this says.he son.of.god p.plant.it=1PL GEN

Nde nandeha izareo, nandeha namboly i raha
"de na"deha izareu na"deha na"mbuli i 'raha
n.a"deha n.a"deha n.an-βuli
then p.go 3PL.IND p.go p.plant DET thing

17) akolahy, akóho ‘chicken’ in the original text.
18) ańarány izy. = anaran'ny sakafa [ańarany sa'kafa ~ ańara’nsa'kafa] ‘the name of the food’.
"This one," said the son of the god, "We should plant it." Then they went, (they) went to plant the thing, that was the thing that his father ate, (they planted it) in the forest. (They) planted it.

(024)

Lásaña dimy vólaña. Natóy.

Lásaña dimi Bolaña na’tui n.attui

leave five months p.grow

Zevô. Izy natóy, nisangórín-jarê ro.

zebo ʻizi na’tu niisagorî=djâr’e ʻru:
then 3sg.ind p.grow p.take=3pl.gen two

"E, ʻizi tò, tsiapola manjary ovániña, a vâdiky, e?

e ʻizi to tsiapola ma”djari u’aniñ’a a badike

ah 3sg.ind this not.yet possible p.eat voc spouse=1sg.gen=tag

Fô, pôla aherintsika19, 20 amboly koa."

fo pola aheri”tsika a”buli kua
aheri”tsika an-βuli
then yet p.put.back=1pl.gen p.plant.it again

‘Five months passed. (The plant) matured. And then, they took this grown plant. "Ah, this one is not yet ready to eat, my Dear. We still have to plant it again."

(025)

Naheriña namboleña21 koa zany, i raha nambolinjare.

na’heriñ’a na”bulen’ña koa zani i raha na”buli’djâ’re
n.aheriña n.a”boleña n.a”boli=djare
p.be.put.back p.be.planted again then det thing p.plant=3pl.gen

19) aherintsika. Originally, iriśniintsika.
20) aherintsika amboli, also possible to say aheríni a mboli koa.
21) naheriña namboleña. Originally, iriśniamboly.
They replanted it. Then they got a lot (of it). The thing that they planted produced a lot, all the animals in the forest saw (it). Birds got together. Civet cats got together. Wild boars got together. And they all ate it.'


‘The wife of the son of the god went there, went to check the rice, went to check the field.’

‘Zaho naita biby jiaby ndré nihinaña nanjy. Uala.
'zahu na'ita 'bibi 'djiabi 'n're ni'hinaña na'oshi u"ala
1sg.ind see that animal all p.eat 3sg.pat wow
I biby jiaby ndrè, mivarina teò, 
i 'bibi ḍjì'abi "re miβariŋ'a teu
mi-βariŋa t.eu
det animal all all eat.together p.this

hômaŋa raha namboleky22) tò.
|homaŋa raha nambule=ki to
n.ambule=ku
eat thing p.planted=1sg.gen this

Ehè, tsisy izy tò, e?
e'he 'tsisi 'izi to e
no notexist 3sg.ind this tag

"I saw that all the animals were eating it. Wow. All the animals, (they) were together eating
it there. All of them were eating the thing. Isn’t it something new here?"

(028)

 likeness tamin'i vadinì'ya tany i viazy.
ni'herîŋ'a tam(i)ni βadini tani i βiaβi
n.iherîŋa t.amini βaδi=ni t.αŋi
p.return p.com spouse=3sg.gen p.there det woman

"I raha ambolintsìka akò ndrè tsisy, e?
i raha am'buli'ntsi ka akò 're tsisi e
aŋbuli=′tsìkə

DET thing plant.it=1pl.in.gen here all.together not.exist tag

Biby jiaby ndrè mivarina kò, hômaŋ(a).”
'bibi ḍjì'abi "re miβariŋ'a ko homaŋ(a).”
m.iβariŋa

animal all all.together come.down also eat

"The woman returned to her husband. “The thing we planted did not exist (before), right? All
the animals are together eating it. (They are) eating (it).”"

22) namboleky. Originally jiabi ‘all’ in the recording.
"Zany," aozy zanajañahary. "Iyà, iyà, andehà zahà mó."

\{'zani a'uzi zanajàna hari i'ya i'ya a"deha za'ha mo\}
\{that says.he son.of.god yes yes go see.IMP polite\}

Nandehà zany zanajañahary, nandehà mbô namangy tavy tañy.
na"deha \{'zani zanajàna hari na"deha \{mo na ma'gi taji \{tañi\}
\{n.a"deha n. a"deha n.amañgi t.añi\}
p.go this son.of.god p.go p.check field there

"Are they?" said the son of the god. "Yes, yes, go and see it for yourself!" So, the son of the god went, went to see the field there.'

Naità biby jiaby nivarìña tò. "E, mariña e."
na'ita \{'bibi dji'abi ni\{\betaariña to e \{mariña\{a\}e\n\{n.ai\{ta n.\betaariña\}
p.see animal all p.come.down this ah p.true=TAG

ni l''a'bu ni \{'\betaoruña dji'abi ''dre mi\{\betaariña to ni'hi\{na\n\{mi\{\betaariña n.ihina\}
\{DET pig DET bird all all.together come.down this p.eat\}

He, màñana zareo ro, e.
he \{'mañana za'reu \{ru: e\n\{ha be.surprised 3PL.IND two TAG\}

'(He) saw that all the animals were eating it. "It's true, isn't it?" Wild boars. All the birds. They were all together eating it, eating. Well, these two were surprised.'

Biby jiaby ndrè nivarìña akô.
bibi dji'abi \{re ni\{\betaariña a'ko
\{n.\betaariña\}
\{animal all together p.come.down here\}

Biby jiaby ndrè nivarìña tò, nihina(\{u\}
\{bibi dji'abi \{re ni\{\betaariña to ni'hi
\{n.\betaariña n.ihina(\{a\}
\{animal all together p.come.down this p.eat\}
Farany, na'to o vari na a' narany raha nambolinjareo.
farani na'tou 'barin'a a' narani raha na buli dja'reu
n.atou ajar=ni n.a'buli=djareu
finally p.achieve "vari na" name of thing p.plant. it=3PL. GEN

'All the animals got together to eat there. All the animals got together, and ate. Finally, the name vary became the word for the thing that they had planted.'

(032)

Zany nahatónga io a narany raha nambolinjareo io, vary.
'zani na(h)a'to'ga iu a' narani raha na'buli'ga're iu 'bari
n.aha=to'ga ajar=ni n.a'buli=djare
this p.arrival this name=GEN thing p.plant.it=3PL. GEN this rice

Satria nivari na tó daholo zany,23
sa'tia ni'bari a to da(h)olu 'zani
n.ijari na because p.come.down this all this

ny bibi jabi nihina na anany, ka na(ha)tónga oe, vary.
ni 'bibi djabi ni'hina(a)'na'dzi ka na'to'ga u'ej 'bari
n.ihina na n.aha-to'ga
DET animal all P.eat 3SG and p.arrive EMP "vary"

'That was the beginning of the name of the thing they planted, the word vary. Because all the (animals) got together, all the animals ate it and the word vary arrived.'

(033)

Zany na(ha)tónga ny vary. I vary io,
zani na(ha)'to'ga ni 'bari i 'bari iu
n.aha-to'ga
this p.arrival of rice DET rice this

23) zany. The language assistant commented that the word izireo 'these' would be better in this position because the preceding word, daholo 'all', implies plural. The word daholo itself is a Standard Malagasy word replacing the Betsimisaraka word jabi, and there is a possibility that this statement is a result of school education where students learn how to write Standard Malagasy. The assistant herself used the phrase biby jabi zany (Lit. animals all this) 'all these animals' when she explaining the reference of the word zany.
"That was how rice arrived. This rice is the thing that was the food of the son of the god who arrived on the earth, and so everyone ate together here."

(034)

Zany no, na(ha)tônga ny vary, fotota sakafon'i Malagasy, 'zani nu na(ha)to'ga ni 'bari, 'futu'a sa'kafu=ni mala'gasi
this EMP p.arrival of rice principle food=3SG.GEN Madagascar

aňarany24) oe, vary.
a'ňarana u'e 'bari
name EMP "vary"

'This was the arrival of rice, the staple food of Madagascar, whose name is 'vary'."

6.2. Malagasy Text

"A Baba, zaho ande ipêtraka aňy, ambony tany aňy. Aňy, tiako ipitraha."
"Ino ndreka ialanô? An-dânitra tsara bê tô."
"Aňy, a Baba, tiako ipitraha."
"Tsy keko andehe akaňy anô."
Raha niâla hely takê i bâbany, nirôroňa i zanajañahary tônga tao ambony tany. Mânany i zaňahary.
"Lâsaňa eza ndreka zala hely. Lâsaňa izy kê iňy. Tsy manjary. Maditra."

24) Originally, aňarâňa.

“Ino eky raha foaninaré aňy zany, e?”
“Aleky atô, zê kô tônga atô, tsara zany.”
“Ary andeha alô, atsika bôka tsisy raa ioân, e.”
“Iyâ, andeha zaho amarêñ(a).”

“Anô, marô, nandeha takeza?”
“Oa, izaho koa nandeha nirôroña tañy tambony tany, a Baba.”
“Ary nañino anô mbôla nihêriña?”
“E, zaho jerijery anô.”
“Nañino vô jerijery?”
“Anô babako, zaho jerijery.”
“Anô mbôla iêriña.”
“Iyâ, zaho mbôla iêriña,” aozî zanajañahary.

“Zaho, a Baba, akolahy anahy iêntiky, aminey aňy.”
“Ehê, iêntiky akolahy anahy.”

Ka alôhany izy itôndra akolahiny, namiany i zanajañahari io i raha foanjare zany i akôho io. Bâbany koa tsy takê. Namiany, namiany, voky i akôho io. Efa niboika têndany.
Ze izy vô, nitaria amin’i bâbany.
“A Baba, zaho irasavôlaña e? Aňano veloma. Iêriña aminey aňy.”
“Ehê, zaho môka andeha fô, aňy tiako, e?”
Nirôroña aminjê i zanajañahary nitôndra akolahy. Tônga tambony tany. Nañeno akolahy, “kôrke-ki-kô!”

Zevô. Niditra tao an-drâñon’i vâtîny.
“E, tônga anô?”
"İyà, tônga."
"Ary ṇæra raha nalenô? Anô karaha tsisy rahamiantiň amboniny akolahy."
"E, zaho mahê nanjy."

Tônga teo, nivotrainjărê têndan'i akôho io, mbôla tañatiny trañom-bäriny takô zany, i raha niowâni i akolahy. Azonjărê zany, raha noânin'i akolahy iñy. Tsâpôla reňy aňâraña izy tamin-jâny. Tsâpôla reňy aňâraña izy tamin-jâny, tsia mbôla nisy aňârany.
"İzy tô, aozy zanajaňahary, “ambolintsika.”

"E, izy tô, tsâpôla manjary owânîña, a wâdíky, e? Fô, pôla aherintsika amboly koa."

Nandeha zany i vadin’i zanajaňahary, nandeha namangy vary, nandeha namangy tavy.
"Zaho naita biby jiaby ndrê nihînaña nanjy. Uala. I biby jiaby ndrê, mivâriña teô, hômaña raha namboléky tô. Ehê, tsisy izy tô, e?"

Nihêriña tamin’i wâdîny tañy i viavy.
"I raha ambolintsika akô ndrê tsisy, e? Biby jiaby ndrê mivâriña kô, hómañ(a)."
"Zany,” aozy zanajaňahary.
"İyà, iyà, andeha zahà mó.”
Nandeha zany zanajaňahary, nandeha mbô namangy tavy tañy. Naita biby jiaby nivâriña tô.
"E, mariña e.”


Zany nahatônga ny vary. I vary io, haninjaňahary tañy tambonytañy ka tônga tambony tany, nde nivâriña(a) takeo zany ny biby jiaby nihînaña ananjy. Zany no, na(ha)tônga ny vary, fôto-tra sakafon’i Malagasy, aňarany oe, vary.

(Told by Monsieur Sinoa Bruno in Ambodimolaina, on 23 October, 2003. Transcribed with the assistance of Madame Bé Ernestine.)

6.3. English Translation
This is a story about how the word vary came to mean ‘rice’ in Malagasy.
Once upon a time, there was a god, and the god had a son. One day, the son of the god said to his father,
“Father, I’m going to live over there on the earth. It’s there where I want to live.”
“Why are you leaving us? It is very nice here in the sky.”
“Over there, Father, that’s where I want to live.”
“I don’t allow you to go.”
But when the god left the place for a little while, the son of the god descended and arrived on earth. The god was amazed.
“Where did that small child go? He left the sky just like that. This is unbelievable. Too naughty.”

The son of the god descended and arrived on earth. He got married there with a human woman. They had to make a living and worked hard. But the son of the god and his wife were worried, because they didn’t see any thing for eating.

“One of these days,” said the son of the god to his wife, “I shall, Dear, return to father’s place. I’m going to bring back things that are eaten there. Food is good there.”
“What kind of things do you eat over there?”
“You will see when I bring them here when I come back. They are really good!”
“Then please go right away, because we don’t have any more things to eat.”
“Okay, I’ll leave tomorrow.”

The son of the god ascended. He ascended and arrived in the sky. His father said to him,
“You, Son, where have you been?”
“Well, I went down to the earth, Father.”
“And why did you come back?”
“Ah, because I missed you.”
“Why are you suddenly missing me?”
“You, my dear Father, I miss you.”
“And you are going back to the earth again.”
“Yes, I’m still going back.”

After a while, because the reason of his visit was to bring back to earth things that they ate over there in the sky, the son of the god said to his father,
“Father, when I go back, that rooster of mine, I would like to take it back with me to our place down there.”
“Okay. It’s yours, take it, take it back with you. I don’t care. But that is the only thing you can take back with you. Nothing more than that.”
“No, no, I’ll only take my rooster with me.”

Before he carried his rooster, the son of the god made his rooster swallow things eaten in the
sky. His father was not around again to see this. The son of the god fed the rooster, fed it and fed it, and the rooster was filled up, until its throat swelled up.

"O, this one is filled up with food now," said the son of the god. "I'm leaving now then."

So, he said to his father,

"Father, I'm saying farewell to you. Good bye. I am going back to our place down there."

"Go ahead. I don't care whatever you do. You just go... Go!"

"Well, I'm going then, I like it down there, you see?"

The son of the god descended carrying his rooster and arrived back on the earth. The rooster cried, "Cock-a-doodle-do!"

He entered the house where his wife was.

"Ah, you are back?"

"Yes, I'm here."

"And where are all the things that you talked about? It looks like you aren't carrying anything other than a rooster."

"Well, I know what to do with him."

When they cut the throat of the rooster, all the things that were still inside of this rooster, the things that the rooster had swallowed came out. There was something among the things the rooster had swallowed that had never been seen before. There was no name for it either.

"This thing," said the son of the god to his wife, "we should plant it."

They went to plant the thing that came from the sky. It was planted in the forest. Five months passed. The plant matured and the son of the god and his wife harvested it.

"Ah, this is not enough to eat yet, my Dear. We have to plant it again."

So, they planted it again. Then when the plant matured this time, the amount of grain that was produced was a lot. All the animals in the forest saw it and came down. Birds came down. Civet cats came down. Wild boars came down. And they all ate it.

The wife of the son of the god went to check the plants, to check the field.

"I see that all the animals are eating it. Wow. All the animals came down here to eat the thing that I planted. This is something that we didn't have before, isn't it?"

She went back to see her husband.

"The thing we planted, it's something that we didn't have before, right? All the animals come down to eat it."

"Is that so?" said the son of the god.

"Yes, yes, go and see it for yourself!"

So, the son of the god went there, went to check the field, and he also saw that all the animals were eating it.

"It's true, isn't it?"
Wild boars. All the birds. They all came down to eat it. The son of the god and his wife were amazed. All the animals came down to eat it. And because of this, the word *vary* “to come down” became the name of this thing that they planted. This was the beginning of the name of the thing they planted, *vary*. Because all the animals came down to eat it, the word *vary* became the name for rice.

This was the beginning of the word *vary* for rice. Rice was originally the food of the god in the sky, which was brought down to the earth and all the animals came down to start eating it. This is the end of the story about the arrival of rice, the staple food of Madagascar, which we call today *vary*.

(Told by Monsieur Sinoa Bruno in Ambodimolaina, on 23 October, 2003. Transcribed with the assistance of Madame Bé Ernestine.)