THE CLAUSE STRUCTURE OF
THE SHIMAORE DIALECT OF COMORIAN (BANTU)

BY

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DISSERTATION

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ABSTRACT

This dissertation examines the clause structure of the Shimaore dialect of Comorian, an under-described Bantu language spoken on the island of Mayotte. One important contribution of the dissertation is a description of Shimaore that includes data of interest to linguists that have never been described for Shimaore.

In my dissertation, I argue that lexical subjects in Shimaore are actually in topic position, and that subject and object markers are markers of agreement, rather than being pronominal in nature. I argue for the relational nature of this agreement, not relying on an agreement phrase in the clause structure of the language, and using an approach to agreement similar to that of Henderson (2006).

In addressing the order of functional projections in Shimaore, I draw on work by Cinque (1999) and Julien (2002), among others. In addition to the affixation that is the focus of these two authors, Shimaore also has two functional projections that are represented by vowel harmony between the vowel in the verb stem and the "final vowel". I demonstrate that when this vowel harmony is blocked, it is because the verb is no longer in a local relation with the head of the projection in question (namely, a retrospective aspect phrase and a habitual phrase), due to the raising of the verb and formation of a complex head that distances the verb from the head involving vowel harmony.
To Stéphane, Paul and Marc