

A (New) Look at Symmetric and Asymmetric Passives

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Background: Double object constructions are well-known to fall into two groups: symmetric ones, in which both objects behave alike with respect to diagnostics such as passivizability, and asymmetric ones, in which only one does (Marantz 1993, Woolford 1993, Baker 1988, among others), as shown by the following contrast between Norwegian (1a), which allows both the direct object (DO) and the indirect object (IO) to passivize, and Danish (1b), which can only passivize IO.

Previous Accounts: Most previous accounts of this difference link symmetric passives to the ability of DO to shift around the IO (Ura 1996, Anagnostopoulou 2003, Doggett 2004). While this seems plausible for languages like British English, which indeed allows symmetric passives and both IO and IO orders (as shown in (3-4)), it fails to extend to Bantu languages. In Chaga, for example, only IO DO order is possible, but either object can passivize, as shown in (5-6) (Marantz 1993). In Swahili, by contrast, both orders are possible but only IO can passivize (see Woolford 1993 and Vitale 1981 for data). Other accounts link symmetric passives to the availability of high applicatives, which establish a relationship between IO and VP containing DO. A high applicative is a phase head, which allows it to attract DO to its outer specifier, the position from which it is closer to T than the IO (7a). A low applicative head (which establishes a direct relationship between IO and DO), by contrast, is not a phase head and thus lacks such an escape hatch. Movement of DO over IO in (7b) would violate locality (McGinnis 2002).

Issues: In this talk, I point out three problems for the correlation between the availability of high applicatives and symmetric passives. First, there are languages, such as British English, which allow symmetric passives but nevertheless lack high applicatives, according to Pytkkanen's (2002, 2008) diagnostics: compatibility with unergatives, stative verbs, and object depictives (as shown by the ungrammaticality of (8a-c)). Second, there are languages, such as Slavic languages, which have high applicatives (Dyakonova 2007, Markman 2008), but which nevertheless lack symmetric passives. For example, in Polish the equivalents of (8a-c) are all grammatical. However, only DOs may be passivized (as shown in 9a-b). And third, if the availability of an extra specifier of ApplH head were the only factor responsible for the ability to passivize DO, we would expect a correlation between the ability to passivize, wh-move, and quantifier raise a given object. Evidence against this correlation comes from languages as distinct as American English and Swahili, which allow passivization only of IO but wh-movement of DO, as shown in (10-11) for AmEnglish and (12-13) for Swahili (Marantz 1993, Emonds and Whitney 2006, Ngonyani 1996, among others). Slavic languages, such as Polish or Russian, can only passivize DO, but allow either DO or IO to wh-move, and assign IO wide scope over DO in the unmarked case. Bruening (2001) attributes frozen scope in double object constructions to superiority. Both DO and IO undergo QR; since IO is higher, it moves first, and DO tucks in beneath it. This gives IO scope over DO. However, it also predicts that languages that allow superiority violations in wh-questions should also allow them in QR, giving rise to scope ambiguities. This is not the case in Serbo-Croatian type Slavic languages, which can violate superiority in wh-questions but exhibit only surface scope in double object constructions.

Alternative: The data considered here show that passive movement has to be dissociated from the availability of movement of IO over DO, either through the extra spec of high Appl or base-generation of two alternative orders. Such accounts predict that wh-movement and QR should be subject to the same restrictions, contrary to fact. The account I develop relies on the following standard ingredients (i) passive morphology absorbs Acc case feature (Jaegli 1986, Baker, Johnson and Roberts 1989, McGinnis 1998), (ii) there are two sources of case in applicative constructions: Appl head values uCase feature on DO and v head values uCase feature on IO, (iii) in symmetric languages, Acc case of either Appl or v head can be absorbed, (iv) in asymmetric languages of AmE type, only v 's Acc feature can be absorbed, (v) T values case on the closest argument with uCase feature. If the case feature of v is absorbed (indicated by strikethrough in (15), T values Nom case on IO (15a). If the case feature of Appl head is absorbed, T values Nom case on DO. IO with its case feature valued via Agree with v does not intervene for Agree between T and DO.

Consequences: This account extends naturally to asymmetric languages like German or Russian, in which IO is Dative, and only DO can passivize. In such languages, passive morphology also absorbs v 's

case feature. IO, bearing inherent Dative case (which means it enters the derivation valued), does not intervene for Agree between T and DO, which makes DO closest to T for passive movement.

Data:

- 1) **a.** Jon ble gitt boken. **b.** Boken ble gitt Jon. Norwegian
 John was given the-book the-book was given John
 ‘John was given the book.’ ‘The book was given John.’ (Holmberg and Platzack 1995:215)
- 2) **a.** Han blev tilbudt en stilling. **b.*** En stilling blev tilbudt han. Danish
 he was offered a job a job was offered him
 ‘He was offered a job.’ ‘A job was offered John.’ (McGinnis 1998:73)
- 3) **a.** John was given a book. **b.** A book was given John. British English
- 4) **a.** She gave it him. **b.** She gave him it. (Hughes and Trudgill 1979:21)
- 5) **a.** N-a-i-lyi-i-a m-ka k-elya **b.*** N-a-i-lyi-i-a k-elya m-ka Chaga
 foc-sp-prs.eat-appl-fv wife food foc-sp-prs.eat-appl-fv food wife
 ‘He is eating food for his wife.’ ‘He is eating food for his wife.’ (Marantz 1993:121)
- 6) **a.** M-ka n-a-i-lyi-i-o k-elya. **b.** K-elya k-i-lyi-o m-ka.
 wife foc-sp-prs.eat-appl-pass food food sp-prs.eat-appl-pass wife
 ‘The wife is being affected by someone eating the food.’ ‘The food is being eaten for the wife.’
- 7) **a.** [TP T [AppIHP DO_i [AppIHP IO [AppIH’ Appl_{H[EPP]} [VP V t_i]]]]] high applicative
b. [TP T [VP V [AppILP IO [AppIL’ Appl_L DO]]]] low applicative
- 8) **a.*** I ran him. **b.*** I held Mary her book. **c.*** I gave Mary_i the book hungry_i.
- 9) **a.** Paczka została wysłana (Ewie) przez Janka **b.*** Ewa była wysłana paczkę przez Janka.
 package_{.nom} was_{.3f} sent Eve_{.dat} by John Eve_{.nom} was sent package_{.acc} by John
 ‘The package was sent (to Eve) by John.’ ‘Eve was sent a package by John.’ (Dziwirek 1994)
- 10) **a.** John was given a book. **b.*** A book was given John.
- 11) **a.** What shall we give John? **b.*** Who shall we give a present?
- 12) **a.** M-toto a-li-nunul-i-w-a ki-tabu **b.*** Ki-tabu ki-li-nunul-i-w-a m-toto Swahili
 1-child 1SA-PST-1OA-bring-APPL-PASS-FV 7-book 7-book 7SA-PST-buy-APPL-PASS-FV 2-boy
 ‘The child had a book bought for him.’ ‘The book was bought for the child.’
- 13) **a.*** M-toto amba-ye wa-li-nunul-i-a zawadi **b.** Zawadi amba-zo wa-li-nunul-i-a wa-too
 1-child rel-1 2sa-pst-buy-appl-fv 9-present 10-present rel-10 2sa-pst-buy-appl-fv 2-child
 ‘The child whom they bought a present for.’ ‘The presents which they bought for children.’
- 14) The teacher assigned one student every problem. (*every > one) (Larson 1990:604)
- 15) **a.** [TP T [Nom] [VP v_[Acc] [VP V [AppILP IO_{uCase:Nom} [AppIL’ Appl_[Acc] DO_{uCase:Acc}]]]]] passive of IO
b. [TP T [Nom] [VP v_[Acc] [VP V [AppILP IO_{uCase:Acc} [AppIL’ Appl_[Acc] DO_{uCase:Nom}]]]]] passive of DO

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