Passives, Antipassives and Grammatical Relations

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Passive

We were annoying him.

He was being annoyed (by us).
Kinyarwanda

Kinyarwanda (Bantoid; Kimenyi 1980, 1988)

a. abagóre ba-a-ri bâ-teet-se ibíshyíimbo
   women(2) 2-PST-be 2-cook-ASP beans(8)
   ‘The women were cooking beans.’

‘passivization’

b. ibíshyíimbo by-aa-ri bî-teet-s-w-e n’âbagóre
   beans(8) 8-PST-be 8-cook-ASP-PASS-ASP women(2)
   ‘The beans were being cooked by the women.’

‘object-subject reversal’

c. ibíshyíimbo by-aa-ri bî-teet-se abagóre
   beans(8) 8-PST-be 8-cook-ASP women(2)
   ‘The beans were being cooked by the women.’
Kinyarwanda

‘Kimenyi translates the second [sentence] as if it were passive, rather than as ‘The beans, the women cooked’, but it is better treated as a topicalization device rather than a passive, not only because Kinyarwanda has a quite different passive, but, more importantly, because there is, again, no passive marker on the verb. [...] 

Although agreement marking of topicalized arguments is typologically unusual, these sentences in Kinyarwanda are better treated as examples of topicalization than of passivization. Alternatively, perhaps, an absolute distinction between passivization and topicalization should not be drawn; these constructions of Kinyarwanda have one of the marks of the passive, but lack the more crucial passive marking on the verb.’

(Palmer 1998)
‘... I do not believe that it is possible, or at least useful, to attempt to establish a set of necessary-and-sufficient conditions to identify passives. However, one can come up with a set of criteria that define, in my assessment, a canonical passive - constructions that in a particular language come close to this will generally be considered passives by linguists of all or most persuasion; ...’

(Comrie 2007: 16)
Criteria for the identification of a passive:

1. Markedness
   1.1. **Formal markedness** (= more morphological material)
   1.2. Direction of derivation (derivation from less marked to more marked)
   1.3. Frequency in natural discourse

2. **P-orientation vs A-orientation** (one of the arguments is permitted to trigger a range of syntactic constructions)

3. Absence vs. presence of **lexico-semantic restrictions**
Other potential factors

1. Multiple passives
2. “Functional passive”
3. Impersonal passive
Farrell 2005

‘The prototypical passive paraphrase is intransitive, with the patient in the S function, the agent omitted or in an oblique function, and some overt morphosyntactic marking of the voice difference. [...] It is unclear, however, which, if any of the prototypical properties of the passive construction should be made criterial for taxonomic purposes, and whether any of the theoretical significance hinges on the choice.’

(Farrell 2005:65)

Active voice

Verb$_X$ $<$A$_{AGENT}$ O$_{PATIENT}$>

Passive voice

Verb$_X$-Pass $<$S$_{PATIENT}$ (Obl$_{AGENT}$)>
Passives

GR = Rel (argument, construction) / conditions

(Bickel in press)

For our purposes: include any construction that selects a subset of arguments no matter how it is traditionally called.

A defining variable for passives/antipassives is Argument treatment: foregrounding/backgrounding
English
Passive in English

We were annoying him.
He was being annoyed (by us).

The librarian gave him a book.
He was given a book (by the librarian).
The book was given him (by the librarian).

• Foregrounding: \{O, T, G\} > \{S, A_{tr}\}
• Backgrounding: \{A_{tr}, A_{ditr}\} > \{Adjunct / \emptyset\}

We\(_i\) were shouting and \(\emptyset_i\) annoying him.
He\(_i\) was crying and \(\emptyset_i\) being annoyed (by us).

We asked him\(_i\) [ \(\emptyset_i\) to leave ].
We asked him\(_i\) [ \(\emptyset_i\) not to be annoyed (by us) ].
Passive in English

Agreement:

Controller & controllee of conj. reduction:

Controllee of control constr.:

Foregrounding passive:
Passive in English

### Argument selector: foregrounding passive

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Argument</th>
<th>Value</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Arg_treatment</td>
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<td>n.a.</td>
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### Selected arguments:

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Role</th>
<th>Derived by</th>
<th>Referential form class</th>
<th>Predicate class</th>
<th>Semantic</th>
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Passive in English

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Argument selector:</th>
<th>Tradit_terms</th>
<th>Grammar markers</th>
<th>Morph_type</th>
<th>Position</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>backgrounding</td>
<td>be + PST.PTCP</td>
<td>1989 PASS</td>
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<th>Clause linkage</th>
<th>Tense_marking</th>
<th>Interprop_semantics</th>
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<td>Aₐ</td>
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<td>13 &lt;default&gt;</td>
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</table>

**Selected arguments:**

74 English Indo-European Germanic West Germanic

Seri
Seri (Hockan, Mexico; Farrell et al. 1991)

a. \textit{mi-naiɬ} kom \textit{m-∅-po-kiːxk} x, 2POSS-skin the 2sSUBJ-3sO-IRR-wet AUX

\textit{ʔataːp ko-mi-si-aː} \textit{ʔa=ʔa}.
mucus 3OBL-2sSUBJ-IRR-be AUX=DECL

‘If you wet your skin, you will be with mucus.’ (i.e. get a cold)

b. \textit{∅-ʔim-t-kašni} \textit{ma} \textit{ʔp-yo-oːʔa} 3sSUBJ-1sOBJ-REAL-bite DS 1sSUBJ-DISTAL.REAL-cry

‘Since it bit me, I cried.’

- Controller of switch reference \{S, A_{tr}, ?A_{ditr}\}
- Controller of switch reference \{S, A_{tr}, ?A_{ditr}\}
Passive:

c. \textit{i}p-yo-p-ašt

\textbf{1sSUBJ-MOOD-PASS}-tattoo

‘I was tattooed.’

Foregrounding \{O\} > \{S\}:
Backgrounding \{A\} > Ø:
d. $\text{?a:t ki? p-a?:?-ka: x,}$
limberbush the IRR-PASS-seek AUX

$\text{?e:po$ kí? mos si-a?:?-ka: ?a=?a.}$
ratany the also IRR-PASS-seek AUX=DECL
‘If limberbush is looked for, white ratany should be looked for also.’

e. $\text{m-yo-a?:-ka$šni, koka$šni šo m-t-a?o ma.}$
2sSUBJ-DIST-PASS-bite snake a 2sSUBJ-REAL-see DS
‘You were bitten, after you had seen a snake.’

Bickel in press: switch-reference GR {nonderived-S, A, demoted-A}
Passives in Seri

switch-reference GR \{nonderived-S, A, demoted-A\}

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<th>Agreement:</th>
<th>Controller of switch reference:</th>
<th>Controller of switch reference:</th>
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<td>S</td>
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<tr>
<td>O</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Foregrounding \{O\} > \{S\}:

Backgrounding \{A\} > \emptyset:

\(S_d\) \emptyset (demoted A)
Passives in Seri

switch-reference GR \{\text{nonderived-S, A, demoted-A}\}

Agreement: \[ A \quad S \quad O \]

Controller of switch reference:

Controller of switch reference:

Foregrounding \{O\} > \{S\}: 
Backgrounding \{A\} > \emptyset:

\[ S_d \quad \emptyset \text{ (demoted A)} \]

OR: there has not been any promotion/demotion with respect to switch-reference GR 
> switch-reference GR \{S, A\}
A split in Udihe
Udihe (Tungusic, Nikolaeva & Tolskaya 2001)

a. bi ise:-mi ta:ti mo:-wo
   1SG.NOM see.PST-1SG that tree-ACC
   ‘I have seen that tree.’

b. j’eu dieze-tige gaisi:-ni nime-wo?
   what depth-LAT call-3SG me-ACC
   ‘Why is he calling me in the depth?’

Non-NOM ‘subjectoids’ (e.g. DAT experiencer and the ACC NP that corresponds to the causee argument of the causative constructions) also participate in certain (control) processes that are typical of the subject.
Udihe (Tungusic, Nikolaeva & Tolskaya 2001)

c. si  min-du  gida-si-u-zenje-i
    you.NOM  I-DAT  spear-V-PASS-FUT-2s
    'You will be killed by me.'

d. Petro-wa  Iwana-du  koŋko-wo:-ni
    Peter-ACC  Ivan-DAT  beat-PASS.PST-3SG
    'Peter was beaten by Ivan.'

foregrounding \{A_{tr}, A_{ditr}\}

backgrounding \{O-Pro, T-Pro\}

• The unpromoted undergoer does not show any subject properties (NOM case marking, agreement, control of switch reference, etc.) (> “subjectless construction”).
• Apparently independent of non-NOM marking (cf. ‘subjectoids’).
**Udihe** (Tungusic, Nikolaeva & Tolskaya 2001)

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| Grammatical markers | 1987 | PASS | -u; other forms | | |
| Morph_type | formative | | Position | post | |
| Clause linkage | | | Tense_marking | | |
| Juncture | | | Interprop_semantics | | |
| Form class | | | Matrix predicate | | |

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<td>4 (A_{cfr})</td>
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Udihe (Tungusic, Nikolaeva & Tolskaya 2001)
Two passives in Yucatec Maya
Yucatec (Mayan, Verhoeven 2007)

a. \(in=k’\text{á}a\text{t} ~ bin ~ \text{Cancun.}\)
   1sA-wish go C.
   ‘I want to go to Cancun.’

b. \(in=k\text{a}\text{á}a\text{t} ~ \text{bis-}a’l ~ \text{Cancuntumen} ~ in=tàatah.\)
   1sA=wish carry-PASS.IPFV C. by 1sPOSS=father

\[ \text{controllee of the control constr.: \{nonderived-S, gerundial-passive-S\}} \]
Yucatec (Mayan, Verhoeven 2007)

Not any foregrounding, only the one with syn_pattern ID 1323
Two antipassives in Puma
Puma (Kiranti, Bickel et al. 2007)

a. ŋa-a  yon̂ni(-lai)  tup-u-ŋ.

 1s-ERG  friend(-DAT)  meet-3sP-1sA

‘I met a/the/my friend.’

b. ŋa-a  yon̂ni-lai  chetkuma(*-lai)  itd-u-ŋ.

 1s-ERG  friend-DAT  clan.sister(*-DAT)  give-3sP-1sA

‘I gave a/my celi to a/my friend (in marriage).’
Puma (Kiranti, Bickel et al. 2007, p.c.)

Ø-dettransitives

a. ŋa-a  khim(-lai)  copp-u-ŋ.
   1s-ERG  house-DAT  look.NPST-3sP-1sA
   ‘I look at the/a house.’

b. ŋa  khyaŋ  khim(*-lai)  cop-ŋa.
   1s.NOM  big  house(-DAT)  look-1sS.NPST
   ‘I see houses.’ or ‘I do house-seeing.’

foregrounding \{A_tr, A_ditr\}
backgrounding \{O, T\}
Puma (Kiranti, Bickel et al. 2007)

Ø-detransitives

Similar to “classical” incorporation:
- the undergoer argument obligatorily appears in the NOM case, the DAT is ungrammatical
- the undergoer argument is obligatory

Unsimilar to incorporation:
- the undergoer argument need not be adjacent to the verb;
- the undergoer argument can be freely expanded by adjectival modifiers
- it is possible to relativize upon this detranzitivized undergoer argument
**Puma** (Kiranti, Bickel et al. 2007)

**kha-antipassive**

c. ถน-a  kho-lai  enn-u-ถน
   1s-ERG  3s-DAT  hear.NPST-3P-1sA
   ‘I hear him/her.’

d. ถน (*kho(lai) / tokku(lai) /mʌnna(lai))  kha-en-ถน
   1s  3s-DAT /
   ANTIP-hear-1sS [NPST]
   ‘I hear someone/people.’
**Puma** (Kiranti, Bickel et al. 2007)

**kha-antipassive**

a. *yoŋni-lai* cetkum *itd-u-u-ŋ.*
   friend-DAT clan.sister give-PST-3P-1sA
   ‘I gave my celi to a friend (in marriage).’

b. cetkum *kha-İtd-oŋ.* (Goal is demoted; Theme stays)
   clan.sister ANTIP-give-1sS.PST
   ‘I gave away my celi (to someone/people).’

c. *yoŋni(-lai) kha-İtd-oŋ.* (Theme is demoted; Goal stays)
   friend(-DAT) ANTIP-give-1sS.PST
   Intended: ‘I gave someone/people to a friend.’
Puma (Kiranti, Bickel et al. 2007)

**kha-antipassive**

*Foregrounding antipassive* \{Atr, Aditr\}
*Backgrounding antipassive* \{O, G\}

- The undergoer/goal must be human (condition on antipassive, ≠Udihe?)
- The undergoer cannot be expressed as an object
- The undergoer is not a possible target of relativization
Yucatec (Mayan, Verhoeven 2007)

Not any foregrounding, only the one with syn_pattern ID 1323
Puma

*kha-antipassive*

a. \( \eta a-a \) yo\ñni-lai cetkuma itd-u-u-\( \eta \).
1s-ERG friend-DAT clan.sister give-PST-3P-1sA

\( A_{tr} \quad G \quad T \)

‘I gave my *celi* to a friend (in marriage).’

b. \( \eta a \) cetkuma *kha-itd-o\( \eta \).* (Goal is demoted; Theme stays)
1s.NOM clan.sister ANTIP-give-1sS.PST

\( S_{der} \quad T \)
\( > \quad foreA_{tr} \quad T \)

‘I gave away my *celi* (to someone/people).’
References


Verhoeven, Elisabeth. 2007. Experiential constructions in Yucatec Maya, a typologically based analysis of a functional domain in a Mayan language.