Sharing Light Verbs between Passive and Active Transitive Verbs

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1. Introduction

Main question

• Active transitive clauses are assumed to involve a light verb (to be represented as \( v \)) that makes available to the verbal root: (i) accusative Case and (ii) external argument position.

• Do we need to posit other types of verbal heads to account for the behaviors of various types of passives, unaccusatives and so on?

• Yes: Hasegawa (2001, 2004), Hoshi (1999, 2011), i.a. assume several types of the passive morpheme \( r \) consisting of the binary features pertaining to (i) and (ii).

• No: I will argue that \( r \) is non-distinct from \( s(uru) \) and its phonetically null counterpart with respect to (i) and (ii).

My claim: an extension of the approach by Jaeggli (1986) and Baker, Johnson and Roberts (1989)

• The 'absorption' of Case and external \( \theta \)-role is due to a designated nominal element available in each language. Specifically, it is the past participial ending (to be represented as \(-EN\)) in English and an empty pronominal (\( pro \)) in Japanese.

2. Transitives with a Non-thematic Subject (Tr-NS)

• If \( r \) and \( s(uru) \) share properties (i) and (ii), why do they typically constitute distinct constructions?

• Specifically, \( r \) always has a non-thematic subject, while \( s(uru) \) and its phonetically null counterpart typically have a thematic subject. BUT a non-thematic subject is also possible with the latter under certain conditions.

• (1a) and (2a) are typical transitive sentences with a thematic/agentive subject, while (1b) and (2b) are normally interpreted as: someone/something other than the subject undertook the action (Inoue 1976, Oehrle and Nishio 1981, Miyagawa 1989, Kageyama 1993).

(1) a. John-ga Mary-no komaku-o yabu(k)-i-ta. [agentive transitive]
   NOM eardrum-ACC rupture-TR-PAST
   'John ruptured Mary’s eardrum.'

b. John-ga komaku-o yabu(k)-i-ta. [Tr-NS]
   eardrum-ACC rupture-TR-PAST
   'John had his eardrum ruptured.'

(2) a. Isha-ga kanzya-no keccho-o tekishutu-si-ta. [agentive transitive]
   doctor-NOM patient-GEN colon-ACC removal-DO-PAST
   'The doctor removed the patient’s colon.'

b. Kanzya-ga keccho-o tekishutu-si-ta. [Tr-NS]
   patient-NOM colon-ACC removal-DO-PAST
   'The patient had his colon removed.'
• In the Tr-NS construction, the subject needs to be ‘included’ in the event expressed by the verb, typically being the (inalienable) possessor of the object: John’s eardrum in (1b) and the patient’s colon in (2b).
• The verbal root is native Japanese yabuk in (1b) and (4a), and Sino-Japanese tekishutu in (2b).
• If the root is native Japanese, the Tr-NS construction is possible if it allows the transitivity alternation as shown in (3) and (4b).

(3) John-no komaku-ga yabuk-e-ta. [intransitive]
    GEN eardrum-NOM rupture-INTR-PAST    ‘John’s eardrum ruptured.’

(4) a. John-ga ie-o yat(k)-i-ta. [Tr-NS]
    NOM house-ACC burn-TR-PAST        ‘John had his house burnt down.’

b. John-no ie-ga yak-e-ta. [intransitive]
    GEN house-NOM burn-INTR-PAST       ‘John’s house burnt down.’
• Pure transitives like hum (step-on) cannot form a Tr-NS construction as in (5c); the subject is interpreted as agentive irrespective of the presence of the possessor as shown in (5a,b).

    NOM GEN foot-ACC step-on-past       ‘John stepped on Mary foot.’

    NOM GEN foot-ACC step-on-PAST       ‘John stepped on his own foot.’

c. *John-no asi-ga hum-da. [no intransitive counterpart]
    GEN foot-NOM step-on-past

• The Sino-Japanese roots in the Tr-NS constructions in (2b) and (7a) lack the intransitive counterparts as in (6a) and (7c) (Tsujimura 1990). Instead, they can form ‘passive’ nominals without overt passive morphology as in (6b) and (7b) (cf. Ono 1997).

(6) a. *Kanzya-no keccho-ga tekishutu-si-ta. [no intransitive counterpart]
    patient-GEN colon-NOM removal-DO-PAST  ‘The patient’s colon removed.’

b. Isya niyoru keccho-no tekishutu [passive nominal]
    doctor by colon-GEN removal       ‘removal of a colon by a doctor’

(7) a. Isya-ga John-no ha-o chiryo-si-ta. [agentive transitive]
    doctor-NOM GEN tooth-ACC treatment-DO-PAST   ‘The doctor treated John’s tooth.’

b. John-ga ha-o chiryo-si-ta. [Tr-NS]
    NOM tooth-ACC treatment-DO-PAST        ‘John had his tooth treated.’

c. *John-no ha-ga chiryo-sita. [no intransitive counterpart]
    GEN tooth-NOM treatment-DO-PAST       ‘*John’s tooth treated.’

d. Isya niyoru ha-no chiryo [passive nominal]
    doctor by tooth-GEN treatment         ‘treatment of a tooth by a doctor.’

• Descriptive Generalization on Tr-NS
The Tr-NS construction is possible with those verbal roots that need not syntactically realize an external argument: native Japanese verbs forming transitive/intransitive pairs and Sino-Japanese roots allowing the ‘passive’ interpretation.
3. Transitives and Indirect Passives

- The existence of Tr-NS shows that the subject of a transitive predicate headed by $s(uru)$ and its phonetically null counterpart can be non-thematic just like the subject of a passive.
- Another similarity is that rare in indirect passives exhibits properties (i) accusative Case and (ii) external argument.

(8) a. Otoko-ga kodomo-no kao-o tata(k)i-ta. [transitive]
   man-NOM child-GEN face-ACC slap-PAST
   ‘The man slapped the child’s face.’

b. Hanako-ga otoko-ni kodomo-no kao-o tatak-(r)are-ta [Indirect passive]
   Hanako-NOM man-DAT child-GEN face-ACC slap-PAST
   ‘Hanako had her/the child’s face slapped by the man’

- In (8a,b), the root $\sqrt{\text{TATAK}}$, being categorized as verbal by $\nu$ and incorporated into it, licenses [acc] on the internal argument DP$_{\text{int}}$.
- DP$_{\text{ext}}$ in (8a) is $\theta$-marked in Spec,$\nu$P but Case-licensed in Spec,TP.
- It is a standard assumption in Japanese generative grammar (Inoue 1976, McCawley 1972, Kuno 1973, Kuroda 1979, i.a.) that $[\nu$ rare] by its intrinsic property can license [dat] optionally. In (8b) $[\nu$ rare] licenses [dat] on the external argument DP$_{\text{ext}}$. Given the absence of overt expletive elements in Japanese, Spec,TP hosts an argument DP that is not $\theta$-related to the root $\sqrt{\text{TATAK}}$.
- The extra DP in Spec,TP of indirect passive is interpreted as being indirectly affected by the event expressed by $\nu$P. Similarly, a non-thematic subject in Spec,TP of Tr-NS is interpreted as being responsible for the event expressed by $\nu$P (Inoue 1976:61). Unlike direct passives and transitives, indirect passives and Tr-NSs are marked in that they require these extra semantic interpretations.

4. Direct and Possessor Passives

- All languages have direct passives. Indirect/exclusive passives are cross-linguistically rarer than possessor passives, the latter being attested in Mandarin, Cantonese, Taiwanese and Korean (Shibatani 1990: 328-329, Huang 1999, Washio 1993, 1995).
- Possessor passives are like direct passives and unlike indirect passives (Shibatani 1990:326-328, Hasegawa 2007, Kubo 1990) in that:
  - the adversative meaning is absent
  - an agent $ni$-phrase is not necessary and interchangeable with $niyotte$: (9a), (10a), (11a)
  - an agent $ni$-phrase cannot be the antecedent of $zibun$: (9b), (10b), (11b)
(9) a. John-ga (Mary-ni/niyotte) hidoku tatak-(r)are-ta.
   'John was slapped violently by Mary.'
   [Direct passive]
   b. Johni-ga Mary j-ni zibun i/*j-no heya-de tatak-(r)are-ta.
   'Johni was slapped by Mary in his/*herj room.'

(10) a. Johni-ga *(Mary-ni/niyotte) Tom-o tatak-(r)are-ta.
   'John had Tom slapped by Mary.'
   [Indirect passive]
   b. Johni-ga Mary-ni zibun i/*j-no heya-de Tom-o tatak-(r)are-ta.
   'Johni had Tom slapped by Mary in his/*herj house.'

(11) a. Johni-ga (Mary-ni/niyotte) kao-o tatak-(r)are-ta.
   'John was slapped in the face by Mary.'
   [Possessor passive]
   b. Johni-ga Mary-ni zibun i/*j-no heya-de kao-o tatak-(r)are-ta.
   'John was slapped in the face by Mary in his/*herj room.'

• Following Jaeggli (1986) and Baker, Johnson, and Roberts (1989), I claim that unmarked passives (i.e., direct and possessor passives) involve $v$ with properties (i) accusative Case and (ii) external argument position, and one designated nominal that functions to cancel out (i) and (ii): the past participle ending $\text{-EN}$ in English and empty pronominal $pro$ in Japanese.

• An important question has been why the designated nominal 'absorbs' accusative Case and external $\theta$-role, which are canonically assigned to distinct elements (Bowers 2010, Collins 2005).

• $v$ canonically selects a verbal root phrase ($\sqrt{P}$) by 1st Merge and $\text{DP}_{\text{ext}}$ by 2nd Merge.

• $\text{-EN}$ needs to merge with $v$ as early as or prior to its introduction into syntax due to its morphologically bound nature. Since it is nominal rather than verbal, it counts as $v$'s external argument even if it merges with $v$ before the verbal root ($\sqrt{P}$).

• $\text{-EN}$, being part of the verbal amalgam, is syntactically invisible, allowing $\text{DP}_{\text{int}}$ to move into Spec,TP via the edge of $\sqrt{P}$ (cf. m(orphological)-merger in Matushansky 2006): $\sqrt{P}$ of English passive is a weak phase.

• Since $\text{-EN}$ is an external argument, a by-phrase should be an adjunct: the so-called $\theta$-transmission between $\text{-EN}$ and a by-phrase is on a par with clitic doubling (c.f. Anagnostopoulou 2006 and references cited therein).

(12) John was hit by Mary.

[Direct Passive in English]
(9a) John-ga Mary-ni/niyotte hidoku tatak-(r)are-ta.
   \[\text{Direct Passive in Japanese}\]

\[
\begin{array}{c}
\text{NOM} \\
\text{by} \\
\text{violently slap-PASS-PAST} \\
\text{vP} \\
\end{array}
\]

[\[\text{v rare}\] pro]

\[
\begin{array}{c}
\text{DP_{int}} \\
\langle\sqrt{\text{TATAK}}\rangle \\
\end{array}
\]

\[
\begin{array}{c}
\text{John} \\
\end{array}
\]

- DP_{int} in (9a) is \(\theta\)-marked within vP but Case-licensed in Spec,TP.
- The accusative and external \(\theta\)-role of the root-\(v\) amalgam are assigned to (or absorbed by) pro.
- Since pro is the external argument in (9a), the ni/niyotte phrase is an adjunct, being optional and unable to antecede the reflexive zibun.
- Like –EN, pro is m-merged with rare and syntactically invisible, allowing DP_{int} to move into Spec,TP; vP of Japanese direct passive is a weak phase.

(11a) John-ga (Mary-ni/niyotte) kao-o tatak-(r)are-ta.
   \[\text{Possessor Passive in Japanese}\]

\[
\begin{array}{c}
\text{NOM} \\
\text{by} \\
\text{face-ACC hit-PASS-PAST} \\
\text{vP} \\
\end{array}
\]

[\[\text{v rare}\] pro]

\[
\begin{array}{c}
\text{DP_{int}} \\
\langle\sqrt{\text{TATAK}}\rangle \\
\end{array}
\]

\[
\begin{array}{c}
\text{John} \\
\end{array}
\]

- The amalgam of the root and rare can license [acc] and [dat]. Pro 'absorbs' [acc] in the direct passive (9a), and [dat] in the possessor passive (11a).
- In (11a), the head of DP_{int} bears [acc], and the non-head moves into Spec,TP for Case/EPP reasons.

5. Transitives with a Non-thematic Subject (Tr-NSs) and Passives

- Tr-NSs like (13) are quite close in meaning to possessor passives like (14), but are different in disallowing an agent-phrase.
- Tr-NSs resemble indirect passives like (15) in the extra semantic interpretations on Spec, TP.

(13) John-ga (*Mary-ni/niyotte) komaku-o yabu(k)-i-ta.
   \[\text{Tr-NS}\] = (1b)
   \[\text{NOM} \text{ by } \text{eardrum-ACC rupture-TR-PAST} \text{ 'Johni had his i eardrum raptured.'}\]

(14) John-ga (Mary-ni/niyotte) komaku-o yabuk-(r)are-ta.
   \[\text{Possessor Passive}\]
   \[\text{NOM} \text{ by } \text{eardrum-ACC rupture-PASS-PAST} \text{ 'Johni had his i eardrum raptured by Mary.'}\]

(15) John-ga Mary-ni Tom-no komaku-o yabuk-(r)are-ta.
   \[\text{Indirect Passive}\]
   \[\text{NOM} \text{ DAT } \text{GEN eardrum-ACC rupture-PASS-PAST} \text{ 'John had Tom's i eardrum raptured by Mary.'}\]
• The head of DP\textsubscript{int} in (13) is Case-licensed by the root-\(v\) amalgam. Since the root itself does not require an external argument (Descriptive Generalization on Tr-NS on page 1), the non-head of DP\textsubscript{int}(DP\textsuperscript{*}) can move into Spec,\(v\)P, where it picks up a non-thematic interpretation ascribable to the functional head \(v\). The non-head ends up in Spec,TP for Case/EPP reasons.

• In (14), the head and non-head of DP\textsubscript{int} are Case-checked in the same manner. Since the external \(\theta\)-role is 'absorbed by pro, the non-head does not pick up any semantic role within \(v\)P other than the possessor of the head of DP\textsubscript{int}.

• In (15), both the internal and external \(\theta\)-roles are discharged within \(v\)P, and an extra DP that will fill Spec,TP (DP\textsuperscript{*}) picks up a non-thematic interpretation ascribable to rare.

• DP\textsuperscript{*s} in (13) and (15) are interpreted as being responsible for and affected by the event expressed by \(v\)P, respectively.

(13) [Tr-NS]

\begin{dependency}
    \node (vP) {$v\text{P}$};
    \node (v) {$v'$};
    \node (vP) [below left=1.5cm and -1.5cm of v] {$v\text{P}$};
    \node (YABUK-v) [below right=1.5cm and -1.5cm of v] {$\sqrt{YABUK-v}$ [\text{aee}]};
    \node (DP\textsubscript{int}) [below=2cm of YABUK-v] {	ext{DP}\textsubscript{int} <\sqrt{YABUK}>};
    \node (John) [below left=2cm of DP\textsubscript{int}] {John};
    \node (komaku-o) [below right=2cm of DP\textsubscript{int}] {komaku-o [\text{aee}]};
    \edge {vP} {v} {vP} {YABUK-v} {DP\textsubscript{int}} {komaku-o} {John};
\end{dependency}

(14) [Possessor Passive]

\begin{dependency}
    \node (vP) {$v\text{P}$};
    \node (v) {$v'$};
    \node (vP) [below left=1.5cm and -1.5cm of v] {$v\text{P}$};
    \node (YABUK-v) [below right=1.5cm and -1.5cm of v] {$\sqrt{YABUK-v}$ [\text{aee}]};
    \node (DP\textsubscript{int}) [below=2cm of YABUK-v] {	ext{DP}\textsubscript{int} <\sqrt{YABUK}>};
    \node (John) [below right=2cm of DP\textsubscript{int}] {John};
    \node (komaku-o) [below left=2cm of DP\textsubscript{int}] {komaku-o [\text{aee}]};
    \node (YABUK-pro) [above=2cm of YABUK-v] {$\sqrt{YABUK-[v\text{ rare}]-pro}$ [\text{aee}]/[\text{dat}]/A\textsubscript{ext}];
    \node (DP\textsubscript{ext}) [below=1cm of YABUK-pro] {	ext{DP}\textsubscript{ext} <\sqrt{YABUK}>};
    \node (Mary-ni) [left=2cm of DP\textsubscript{ext}] {Mary-ni \(\sqrt{P}\)};
    \node (Tom-no komaku-o) [below=2cm of DP\textsubscript{ext}] {Tom-no komaku-o [\text{aee}]};
    \edge {John} {komaku-o} {John} {komaku-o} {John};
\end{dependency}

6. Concluding Remarks

• The passive morpheme rare and the transitive light verbs in Japanese constitute parallel constructions under certain conditions since they share properties (i) and (ii) stated in Introduction.

• They constitute distinct constructions since rare in its unmarked usages (i.e., direct and possessor passives) involves the designated nominal pro, which is on a par with –EN in English passives.

• The marked usages of the passive morpheme rare (i.e., indirect passive) and of the transitive light verbs (i.e.,Tr-NS) require a non-thematic interpretation ascribable to them.

• It is predicted that Germanic and Romance languages, which use past participles for passives, allow unmarked passives but disallow marked passives since their passives necessarily involve the nominal –EN.
References


