Processes that Change Grammatical Relations

Tallerman, chapter 7: pp. 188-204

Syntactic Processes

- Syntactic processes that change grammatical relations:
  - Passive construction
  - Antipassive construction
  - Applicative construction
- Syntactic processes affect constituents, subjects, direct objects, and indirect or oblique objects.

Passives

- **The passive construction and transitive verbs.**
    - The doctor has examined Bill.
      Bill has been examined (by the doctor).
    - We stole three Ming vases yesterday.
      Three Ming vases were stolen (by us) yesterday.
    - This rare and lovely weather phenomenon is called a fogbow.
      [*Parade*, 4/6/03, p. 26]
  - Passive sentences are intransitive
    - Subject of the active sentence > demoted to a *by*-phrase or deleted.
    - Object of the active sentence > promoted to subject of the passive.
    - Passive contains auxiliary *be* + past participle of the main verb.

- Evidence that the preverbal noun-phrases in the passive sentences are subjects:
  - Subject-verb agreement
  - Nominative case pronouns.
- Passives are very common crosslinguistically
  - Applies to a transitive clause and forms an intransitive clause.
  - Core arguments of a verb change their grammatical relations.
    - Former object becomes subject.
    - Former subject becomes oblique or is deleted.
  - The verb changes form.

– Some languages have an auxiliary-plus-main verb passive like English:

- German

  – Der   Frost verdarb   den   Apfel.
  the:NOM frost   spoil:PAST the:ACC apple
  'The frost spoiled the apple.'

  – Der   Apfel **wurde**   vom   Frost verdorben.
  the:NOM apple became by:the:DATIVE frost spoil:PAST-PARTICIPLE
  'The apple was spoiled by the frost.'

- Welsh

  – Eglur-odd   y darllenydd y   sefyllfa.
  explain-PAST the lecturer   the situation
  'The lecturer explained the situation.'

  – **Cafodd**   y   sefyllfa ei egluro (gan y   darllenydd).
  get:PAST the situation its explain by   the lecturer
  'The situation was explained (by the lecturer).'
  (Lit., The situation got its explaining by the lecturer.)

– The most common auxiliaries are verbs like 'be', 'become', 'get' and 'receive.'

– Many languages have a specifically passive form of the main verb: a **morphological passive**.

- Chamorro
    – Si Juan ha   dulalak si Jose.
      PN   3SG:SU follow   PN
      'Juan followed Jose.'
    – D-**in**-ilalak   si Jose as Juan.
      -PASSIVE-follow PN   by
      'Jose was followed by Juan.'

- Japanese
    – Sensei   wa   Taroo o   sikatta.
      Teacher TOPIC   ACC scold:PAST
      'The teacher scolded Taro.'
    – Taroo wa   sensei ni   sikar-**are**-ta.
            TOPIC teacher DATIVE scold-PASSIVE-PAST
      'Taro was scolded by the teacher.'

- Gilbertese
    – E kamate-a te naeta   te moa.
      It kill-it   the snake the chicken
      'The chicken killed the snake.'
    – E kamate-**aki**   te   naeta (iroun te moa).
      It kill-PASSIVE the snake   by   the chicken
      'The snake was killed (by the chicken).'

– Passive constructions occur most often in languages that are syntactically and morphologically accusative, but some ergative languages do have passives:

- Greenlandic Eskimo
  - Angut-ip arnaq-Ø taku-vaa
    man-ERG woman-ABS see-3SG:3SG
    'The man(A) saw the woman(O).'
  - Arnaq-Ø (anguti-mit) taku-tau-puk
    woman-ABS man-by see-PASSIVE-3SG
    'The woman(S) was seen (by the man).'

- Ka1chikel
  - rioj x-Ø -qa-ch'aj ri-ts'ieq
    we CPL-3SG:ABS-1PL:ERG wash the-clothes
    'We(A) washed the clothes(O).'
  - ri-ts'ieq x-Ø - ch'a:j
    the-clothes CPL-3SG:ABS-wash:PASSIVE
    'the clothes(S) were washed.'
  - x-Ø-ch'aja-taj ri-ts'ieq
    CPL-3SG:ABS-wash-TAX.PASSIVE the-clothes
    'the clothes(S) (all) got washed.'

- **The passive construction and intransitive verbs**
  - Some languages have "impersonal passives", where the subject of an intransitive verb is demoted, and the passive verb has no subject or has a dummy subject.
    - Welsh
      - Can-odd   y   côr neithiwr.
        Sing-PAST the choir last.night
        'The choir sang last night.'
      - Can-wyd   (gan y côr)   neithiwr.
        Sing-PAST:PASSIVE by   the choir last.night
        'There was singing (by the choir) last night.'
        (Lit., 'Was sung by the choir last night.')
    - German
      - Die Kinder schliefen
        the children sleep:PAST
        'The children slept.'
      - Es wurde (von den Kindern) geschlafen.
        It became by the children   sleep:PAST.PARTICIPLE
        'There was sleeping (by the children).'
        (Lit., It was slept by the children.')

– Even transitive sentences can appear as impersonal passives:

- Irish:
    - Thug siad Siobhán abhaile inniu
      brought they Joan   home   today
      'They brought Joan home today.'
    - Tugadh   Siobhán abhaile inniu
      brought.IMPERS Joan   home   today
      'Joan was brought home today.'

- The object is not promoted in the Irish sentence, but the subject is demoted.

Antipassives

- A second construction changing grammatical relations is the antipassive, found exclusively in ergative languages.
  - Applies to a transitive clause (the active clause) and forms an intransitive clause.
  - A argument (ergative) promoted > S argument (absolutive)
  - O argument demoted > oblique, or is deleted.
  - Changes in the morphology of the verb signal antipassivization.

- The meaning of the antipassive sentence reflects demotion of the object in many cases.

- Promotion of A argument to S is sometimes needed for syntactic constructions that target S/O arguments.

- – Demotion of O argument.
    - • Greenlandic Eskimo
        - – arna-p   niqi-Ø   niri-vaa
          woman-ERG meat-ABS eat-3SG:3SG
          'The woman(A) ate the meat(O).'
        - – arnaq-Ø   niqi-mik   niri-**NNig**-puq
          woman-ABS meat-with eat-ANTIPASSIVE-3SG
          'The woman(S) ate some of the meat.'
    - – Chukchee
        - – ∂tl∂g-e   keyng- ∂n penr∂-nen
          father-ERG bear-ABS attach-3SG:3SG:PAST
          Father(A) attacked the bear(O)'
        - – ∂tl∂g-∂n   penr∂-**tko**-g?e   keyng-et∂
          father-ABS attack-ANTIPASSIVE-3SG:PAST bear-DATIVE
          'Father(S) ran at the bear.'
    - • Kaqchikel
        - – rioj x-e-qa-ch'ak   rie
          we   CPL-3PL:ABS-1PL:ERG-beat them
          'We(A) beat them(O).'
        - – rioj   x-oj-ch'ak-**on**
          we   CPL-1PL:ABS-beat-ANTIPASSIVE
          'We(S) won.'

- In both accusative systems and ergative systems, S is the unmarked argument.

- Primary grammatical relations
  - Syntactically accusative systems:
    - S+A = Subject NPs

  - Syntactically ergative systems:
    - S + O = Absolutive NPs

– Promotion of A argument in Dyrbal:

English: S/A (Subject) Pivot

Use Passive to promote O to S
- [Mother$_i$ saw Father$_j$] and [Ø$_{i,}$ returned]
- [Father$_j$ was seen by Mother$_i$] and [Ø$_j$ returned.]

Dyrbal: S/O (Absolutive) Pivot

Use Antipassive to promote A to S
- [nguma$_j$ yabu-nggu$_i$ bura-n] [Ø$_j$ banaga-n^{y}u]
  father:ABS mother-ERG see-PAST   return-PAST
  'Mother(A) saw Father(O) and [he] (S) returned.'
- Yabu$_i$ bural-nga-n^{y}u   nguma-gu$_j$]   [Ø$_i$ banaga-n^{y}u]
  mother:ABS see-ANTIPASSIVE-PAST father-DATIVE   return-PAST
  'Mother(S) saw Father and [she](S) returned.'

Applicatives

- Oblique NP or indirect object > promoted to direct object ("applied object").
- Former direct object > demoted to second object or oblique.
- Changes may occur in the morphology of the verb.

- <u>English</u>:   Dative Shift for Recipient or Beneficiary
  – My brother sold his bike to Sue.
  – My brother sold Sue his bike.
  – I baked a cake for Kim.
  – I baked Kim a cake.

- Indonesian
  - Mereke mem-bawa   [daging itu] [kepada dia]
    they   TRANS-bring   meat the   to   him
    'They brought the meat to him.'

  - Mereka mem-bawa-**kan**   [dia] [daging itu]
    they   TRANS-bring-APPLIC him   meat the
    'They brought him the meat.'

- Chichewa
  - Mbidzi zi-na-perek-a   [msampha] [kwa nkhandwe]
    zebras   SU-PAST-hand-ASPECT trap   to   fox
    'The zebras handed the trap to the fox.'

  - Mbidzi zi-na-perek-**er**-a   [nkhandwe] [msampha]
    Zebras SU-PAST-hand-APPLIC-ASPECT   fox   trap
    'The zebras handed the fox the trap.'

- **Applicatives Can Occur in Ergative Languages:**
  - <u>Dyirbal</u>
    - Yabu   nguma-nggu balga-n yugu-nggu
      mother:ABS father-ERG   hit PAST stick-INSTRUMENTAL
      'Father hit mother with a stick.'
    - Yugu   nguma-nggu balgal-**ma**-n   yabu-gu
      stick:ABS father-ERG hit-APPLIC-PAST mother-DATIVE
      'Father used a stick to hit mother.'

- Recipients, locatives, beneficiaries, goals, and instruments can all be promoted to applied (direct) object in different languages

- **English**
  - Indirect object can be promoted to direct object through dative shift, and then can be promoted again to subject through passivization:
    - John gave a book to Mary
    - <u>Dative shift</u>: John gave Mary a book.
    - <u>Passive</u>: Mary was given a book by John.

  - Note that indirect objects cannot in general be promoted to subject directly:
    - *Mary was given a book to by John.

– <u>Chichewa</u>
  • Only the applied object functions as a direct object with regard to then being promotable in the passive:
    – Kalulu a-na-gul-ir-a   mbidzi nsapato
      hare   SU-PAST-buy-APPLIC-ASPECT zebras shoes'
      'The hare bought the zebras shoes.'
    – Mbidzi zi-na-gul-ir-idw-a   nsapato ndi kalulu
      zebras   SU-PAST-buy-APPLIC-PASSIVE-ASPECT shoes   by hare
      'The zebras were bought shoes by the hare
    – *Nsapato zi-na-gul-ir-idw-a   mbidzi   ndi kalulu
      shoes SU-PAST-buy-APPLIC-PASSITVE-ASPECT zebras by hare
      '*Shoes were bought the zebras by the hare.'

- **French**
  - No applicative construction or dative shift, so recipient can never be the subject of passive.
    - Marie   a   donné   un cadeau à Pierre.
      Marie has give:PAST.PARTICIPLE a present to Pierre
      'Marie has given a present to Pierre.'
    - *Marie a   donné   Pierre un cadeau.
      Marie has give:PAST.PARTICIPLE Pierre a present
      (Marie has given Pierre a present)
    - Un cadeau a éte donné   à Pierre par Marie
      a present has been give:PAST.PARTICIPLE to Pierre by Marie
      'A present has been given to Pierre by Marie.'
    - *Pierre a été   donné   un cadeau par Marie.
      Pierre has been give:PAST.PARTICIPLE a present by Marie.
      ('Pierre has been given a present by Marie.')