

## Passives and Unaccusatives

24.951, Fall 2003, Oct 3

**Due Date: Oct 10**

- (1) Consider the following set of Italian data:

First, the "impersonal" construction with the third-singular clitic *si*:

- a. Si mangiano biscotti in questa pasticceria  
SI eat.3pl cookies in this pastry-shop  
'One eats cookies in this pastry shop'

[NB: Pay more attention to the gloss than to the translation; the latter is only approximate].

Second, object cliticization: Italian, like (e.g.) French and Spanish, has preverbal object clitics, which here can be assumed to be derived via movement of the pronoun with Accusative Case from the object [NP,V'] position into some inflectional head:

- b. (loro) mangiano biscotti in questa pasticceria  
(they) eat.3pl cookies in this pastry shop  
'They eat cookies in this pastry shop'
- c. (loro) li mangiano in questa pasticceria  
(they) 3pl eat.3pl in this pastry shop  
'They eat them in this pastry shop'

[NB: Recall that Italian is pro-drop, so the overt subject *loro* can be omitted].

Third, the impossibility of object cliticization in Italian "impersonal" constructions:

- d. \* Li si mangiano in questa pasticceria.  
3pl SI eat.3pl in this pastry-shop  
'One eats them in this pastry shop'
- e. \* Si li mangiano in questa pasticceria.

Using Baker, Johnson & Roberts' (1989) account of the English passive as an inspiration, give an account for the ungrammaticality of (d)/(e) in Italian. Make this account as explicit as possible, using all available insights from class discussion and handout, from the BJR paper and from your Italian colleagues' judgments (yes, do some mini field work!).

(2) BJR assume that in the English passive the NP object moves in one fell swoop from [NP,V'] up to Spec(IP). In class, we sketched some evidence that this may not be the whole story. Recall the French passive and unaccusative data in (49) and (50a) in the class handout dated 9/24/03, repeated below:

- a. Les portes ont été repeintes par les ouvriers.  
The doors (Fem.PI) have been repainted (Fem.PI) by the workers (Masc.PI)
- b. Les ouvrières sont parties.  
the workers (Fem.PI) are left (Fem.PI)  
'The female workers have left'

Here the surface subjects of the passive and the unaccusative (namely, *les portes* and *les ouvrières*, both feminine plural) enter into participle agreement with the corresponding past participles (*repeintes* and *parties*, both with feminine plural ending). These data are to be compared with the French object-cliticization data discussed earlier in class, in the context of Kayne's Antisymmetry Hypothesis:

- c. Jean a repeint les tables  
John has repainted the tables (Fem.PI)
- d. Jean les a repeintes  
John them (Fem.PI) has repainted (Fem.PI)

In (d), like in (a)-(b), we have overt past-participle agreement. Since Kayne's influential proposal in the late 1980s, it has often been assumed that participle agreement in (d) is triggered by the object (e.g., *les*) moving into the Spec of some functional head associated with the participle. Call this head "Agr<sub>O</sub>" for now. In Spec(Agr<sub>O</sub>), the object is in the checking domain of the participle (e.g., *repeintes* in (d)), which itself would have moved to Agr<sub>O</sub>. To keep the story simple, let's say

that the morphological agreement in (a)-(b) and (d) is a reflex of Spec-Head agreement in Agr<sub>0</sub>P.

Discuss the implication of the above for the path of movement in the passives and unaccusatives, as in (a)-(b).

Note that it has also been assumed that Agr<sub>0</sub>P is the projection where Accusative Case is checked (recall, e.g., Lasnik's proposal for Raising-to-Object sketched in class). How do the data in (a)-(b) bear on such proposals? Sketch the implications of these observations for the (minimal) functional architecture of the clauses in (a)-(b) and (d).

(3) Verbs like *present*, *provide*, *entrust*, *award*, *deposit* etc. participate in the following alternation in English:

- a. She presented the document to him.
- b. She presented him with the document.

Your task is to determine whether the *to-with* alternation is of the dative type, or of the locative type. To establish this, you'll need to run Baker's tests on such examples. Indicate any unexpected mixes, e.g., the construction has both derived and underived properties, and propose solutions if you can think of any. You are encouraged to test this alternation in your own native language (the morphological markers will probably be different). Whatever the language you choose is, be sure to ground your conclusions on native speaker judgments.

(4) Many object experiencer verbs in English can subjects bearing different thematic roles, allow resultative phrases, but don't have inchoative counterparts.

- a. The monster frightened Bill (sick) with its gurgle.
- b. The gurgle frightened Bill (sick).
- c. Mary deliberately frightened Bill (sick).
- d. \* Bill frightened.  
(on the reading "Bill got frightened")

- i) How do these facts bear on Levin & Rappaport's (1995) constraint mentioned in the class handout ("Unaccusativity...", (34))?
  - ii) How these facts bear on Baker's (1997, p. 110-113) analysis of psych verbs? Can he explain all of them?
  - iii) Many languages, in fact, have the analogue of (d); see Hebrew & French below. These are inchoative subject experiencer verbs, which are not stative (like *love/fear*). Crucially, however, the verbs in (f) and (h) exhibit unergative, not unaccusative syntax (take this as a fact; ignore Aux selection). What are the implications for Baker's proposal (in particular, his thematic analysis of psych verbs)?
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- e. ha-seret hirgiz et Gil.  
the-movie annoyed ACC. Gil  
'The movie annoyed Gil'
  
  - f. Gil hitragez.  
Gil got-annoyed  
'Gil got annoyed'
  
  - g. Ce film a ennuyé Jean.  
this movie has annoyed John  
'This movie annoyed John'
  
  - h. Jean s'est ennuyé.  
John SE-is annoyed  
'John got annoyed'