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Masayoshi Shibatani

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PASSIVES AND RELATED CONSTRUCTIONS: A PROTOTYPE ANALYSIS

MASAYOSHI SHIBATANI

Kobe University

It is well known that, in languages of the world, the passive expression is related to constructions such as reflexives and reciprocals. This paper pays special attention to the less familiar correlations of passives to spontaneous, potential, honorific, and plural formations; and it is argued that presently available characterizations of the passive are unable to offer explanations for these correlations. A satisfactory characterization must include a framework in which one can determine the nature of 'pseudo-passives', 'impersonal passives' etc. To achieve these goals, a prototype approach is adopted, and the passive prototype is defined. It is also shown that current controversies over whether passives should be analysed as promotional or demotional phenomena find a natural answer when a wider range of passive-related phenomena is examined.*

1. Increasing awareness in recent years that linguistic structures are not isolated, but rather tend to show partial resemblances among themselves, has prompted certain linguists to adopt a non-discrete view of grammar. Research progress in the framework of prototype theory is one such manifestation.¹ In this paper, I shall examine the correlations of passives with other constructions. These have two dimensions: in one, passives are correlated with constructions such as the reflexive, reciprocal, spontaneous, potential, and honorific, as well as with plural formation. In the other, passives form a continuum with active sentences.

While transformational studies have been most successful in explicating syntactic relationships among several constructions, the kinds of correlations among construction types examined here are beyond the scope of the transformational framework, which is too narrow in its perspectives. The same is true with other, more recent, formal approaches to syntax, such as Relational Grammar.

In what follows, I argue that a correct understanding of the correlations of the passive with other constructions in a large number of languages requires a broad perspective, and that the characterizations of passives currently proposed (including those adopting a functional approach) are either misguided or too restricted. Another point to be drawn from the following discussion is that

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¹ For prototype approaches to grammar, cf. Lakoff 1977, Hopper & Thompson 1980, Coleman & Kay 1981—and especially Langacker & Munro 1975, who also apply this approach to passives.

the familiar controversy (cf. Jain 1981) over whether a given construction should be considered a passive is pointless; rather, a description must be offered in terms of how such a construction is similar to or different from the prototypical passive. This view requires a definition of a passive prototype against which a questionable construction can be measured. Further, this view of grammar considers that various constructions exist along a continuum; certain ones are prototypical, others are similar to the prototype to a limited degree, and still others share no similarities with the prototype. It is demonstrated below that such an approach not only is essential in understanding the relationships among various constructions within a single language, but also is capable of providing a useful framework for cross-linguistic research.

2. Chomsky's early approach to syntax, based largely on structural properties such as linearity and dominance, has been criticized by Relational Grammarians, who emphasize the importance of taking grammatical relations into consideration. Thus Perlmutter & Postal 1977 (revised, 1983) argue that a universal characterization of passives can be best arrived at not in terms of word order, case, or morphology, but rather in terms of a change in grammatical relations. Specifically, they argue that the passive should be characterized in terms of a relational network in which a nominal which is the direct object in a transitive stratum bears the subject relation in the immediately following stratum. Stated informally, passive is a 'promotional' phenomenon, whereby a direct object nominal at one level is a subject nominal at a later level. In this approach, no independent mechanism is provided for the removal of the original subject relation (i.e. the active subject), since this is said to be achieved by a general principle, effected by a newly created subject. As a consequence, a passive sentence is characterized as intransitive (cf. Perlmutter & Postal 1983:9, Keenan 1976:340).

The Perlmutter-Postal approach has already been criticized—e.g. by Comrie 1977, who points out that so-called impersonal passives do not involve promotion of a direct object, despite the fact that subject demotion occurs. Comrie thus proposes a mechanism of spontaneous demotion of a subject nominal. His proposal is in line with Keenan's formulation of passive phenomena (1976), which includes mechanisms for both object promotion and subject demotion; the latter may operate independently of the former.

As I shall show below, the formal approach advocated by Relational Grammar is too restricted to account for the patterns of distribution which a passive morphology exhibits. Indeed, concepts such as (syntactic) promotion or demotion are too narrow; a much broader pragmatic notion is required in order to account for the use of a passive morphology in a variety of constructions. Thus, the Japanese morpheme *-(r)are* is used in four types of constructions—passive, potential, honorific, and spontaneous:

- (1) a. *Taroo wa sikar-are-ta.*
 T. TOP SCOLD-PASS-PAST
 'Taro was scolded.'

- b. *Boku wa nemur-are-nakat-ta.*
 I TOP sleep-POTEN-NEG-PAST
 'I could not sleep.'
- c. *Sensei ga waraw-are-ta.*
 teacher NOM laugh-HON-PAST
 'The teacher laughed (hon.)'
- d. *Mukasi ga sinob-are-ru.*
 old.time NOM think.about-SPON-PRES
 'An old time comes (spontaneously) to mind.'

These correlations pose a serious problem for an analysis that seeks formal explanations to the exclusion of pragmatic factors. What is it that is formally shared by passives, on the one hand, and potentials, honorifics etc. on the other? The type of passive discussed here is based on a transitive clause; but the other constructions can be built upon intransitives—which, by definition, have no object available for promotion.

A language like Ainu poses yet another kind of problem for the current analyses of passives; in addition to the use of passive morphology in several constructions, the Ainu passive itself presents a problem for a discrete model of grammar.

The colloquial Ainu 1pl. inclusive affixes *-an* and *a-* correspond to the 1st person sg./pl. affixes of Classical Ainu (the language of the Yūkara, the Ainu epics). The development seems to be as follows. Classical Ainu had no number distinction in the 1st person, though the 2nd and 3rd persons had distinct singular and plural forms. Colloquial Ainu has developed both sg./pl. and exclusive/inclusive distinctions. While new affixes have been developed for the 1sg. and the 1pl. exclusive categories, the old 1st person sg./pl. affixes have been adopted for the 1pl. inclusive category.²

The 1st person inclusive affixes have a number of grammatical functions, the most notable being subject-marking in verbs: *-an* in intransitives, and *a-* in transitives (in a transitive clause, both subject and object are marked in the verb, the subject affix preceding the object affix as in 2b below):

- (2) a. *Itak-an* 'We speak.'
 speak-1pl.
- b. *Tampe a-e-kore* 'We give you this.'
 this 1pl.-2sg.-give

The other functions of these affixes seem to have developed from the indefinite person-marking function:

- (3) a. *Tepeka paye-an yak Sat ta paye-an.*
 here go-INDEF if S. to go-INDEF
 'If one goes here, one goes to Saru.'
- b. *Tan chep anakne a-satke wa a-eiwanke-p un.*
 this fish TOP INDEF-dry and INDEF-use-thing is
 'This fish is a thing that we dry and use.'

² A comprehensive treatment of Ainu grammar in English is presented in Shibatani & Sohn 1985.

First, the 1st person inclusive affixes are used as 2nd person honorific affixes, as seen in 4b, which is theoretically ambiguous between the reading as glossed and the reading 'We give me (something)':

- (4) a. *A-e-kore*.
 1pl.-2sg.-give
 'We (incl.) give you (something).'
- b. *A-en-kore*.
 2.HON-1sg.-give
 'You (hon.) give me (something).'

Second, the transitive *a-* is also used as a marker for the spontaneous construction, called 'middle passive' by Kindaichi 1931. Here the prefix has the morphological function of deriving intransitive verbs from their transitive counterparts:

- (5) a. *Chip a-nukar*.
 ship SPON-see
 'A ship is visible/seen.'
- b. *Pirka hawe a-nu*.
 beautiful voice SPON-hear
 'A beautiful voice is heard/audible.'

Finally, the affixes in question are used in passive sentences like these:

- (6) a. *Kamui umma raike*.
 bear horse kill
 'A bear killed a horse.'
- b. *Umma kamui orowa a-raike*.
 horse bear from PASS-kill
 'A horse was killed by a bear.'

Natural examples of passives from actual texts are given below. Ex. 7a is from the famous Yūkara, *Itadorimaru*, and 7b is a colloquial form from the Ishikari dialect, in which *an-* corresponds to the *a-* prefix of the standard dialect:

- (7) a. *Kamui kat chasi upshororke a-i-o-reshu*.
 god build castle inside PASS-1sg.-in-raise
 'I was raised in a god-built mountain castle.' (Kindaichi, 239)
- b. *E-kor hampe eper orowa an-rayke*.
 2sg.-have father bear from PASS-kill
 'Your father was killed by a bear.' (Sunasawa 1983:48)

The question posed by the construction in 6–7 is whether it should be considered an instance of the passive. To be sure, the agent is 'demoted' to an oblique *orowa* 'from' phrase (7b), or is not expressed at all (7a). However, the status of the patient is not entirely clear; I have been unable to identify subject properties other than the positional, which is satisfied in examples like 6b and 7b. Thus there is a piece of positive evidence that the patient has been turned into the subject. Again, to the extent that a sentence like 7a is, in terms of valence, complete as it stands, these clauses are intransitive. However, the problem is the verb-marking. Despite the intransitive nature of the clauses in

question, the verb morphology is distinctly transitive: the transitive subject forms of the indefinite affixes are used, and the patients are marked as objects in the verbs. (In the Classical Ainu example 7a, *i-* is the 1st person OBJECT prefix, and the 3rd person object prefix is \emptyset in 7b.)

Presently available accounts of the passive do not provide a proper perspective in which the Ainu type of construction can be understood. Furthermore, we need to explain the distribution of what appear to be the same or related morphemes in the domains of the 1pl. marking, the indefinite person marking, the honorifics, the spontaneous, and the passive. Is this kind of correlation entirely fortuitous? The answer seems to be no, both language-internally and cross-linguistically.

It is admittedly no easy task to ascertain that the morphemes used in different constructions (and even glossed differently) are indeed the same or related morphemes. However, in Japanese, historical evidence indicates that the different uses of the suffix *-(r)are* arose from the common suffix; and even today, certain expressions seem ambiguous as regards the spontaneous vs. potential senses. (Note the ambiguity of the English passive morphology in an expression like *The vase was broken*.)

In Ainu, we can adduce a fact from dialectal variations: in those dialects where the 1pl. inclusive is different from the standard, the same dialectal form is used for the other functions as well. If the affixes in question were unrelated and disparate, we would not expect such parallel distributions in dialects.

Related to the above discussion is the handling of glosses for these related morphemes. What are assumed to be related morphemes are glossed differently when their functions are correlated with sufficiently divergent semantic notions; thus the Japanese *-(r)are* used in an honorific sentence (e.g. 1c) has no semantic relationship to its occurrence in a passive sentence. Likewise, the Ainu prefix *a-* used in a spontaneous sentence (e.g. 5a) has no direct connection with the notion of 1pl. inclusive, since the sentence can be uttered by a lone observer of a spontaneous event/state. Again, the prefix *a-* or the dialectal form *an-*, used in passive expressions (e.g. 7), has no semantic relation to the notion of indefinite person, since the agents are clearly known. In 7a, the preceding context makes it clear that the ones who raised the hero were his older step-brother and stepsister; and in 7b the agent is the bear, which is explicitly mentioned. In other words, the correlations being discussed here are neither strictly (synchronically) semantic nor syntactic in nature. Indeed, the point of this paper is that various constructions can be related, not simply in morphosyntactic or semantic terms, but also in terms of common pragmatic functions.

Cross-linguistic evidence that passives are often related to other constructions is overwhelming. In fact, it is far more deep-rooted and widespread than has been indicated by casual observations found in many descriptive materials. Let me bring this point home before beginning my main discussion.

3. In several Indo-European and American Indian languages, the passive/reflexive/reciprocal correlation is well known. In the following examples, the same morphology is employed for all three constructions, or for a passive and

one other construction:

- (8) Spanish (Givón 1979:194)
- a. *Se curó a los brujos.*
REFL cured.3sg. DAT the sorcerers
'The sorcerers were cured.'
 - b. *Se curaron los brujos.*
REFL cured.3pl. the sorcerers
'The sorcerers cured themselves.'
 - c. *Juan y María se vieron en la calle.*
J. and M. REFL saw.3pl. in the street
'John and Mary saw each other in the street.'
- (9) Russian (Channon 1974:72)
- a. *Okno moetsja rabočim.*
window wash.REFL workman.INST
'The window is being washed by the workman.'
 - b. *Ivan moetsja mylom.*
I. wash.REFL soap.INST
'Ivan is washing himself with soap.'
 - c. *My s nim bilis'.*
we with him hit.PL.REFL
'He and I hit each other.'
- (10) Quechua (Bills et al. 1969:73, 150, 220)
- a. *Ropas t'aqsa-ku-n mayu-pi.*
clothes wash-REFL-3sg. river-in
'Clothes are washed in the river.'
 - b. *Maqa-ku-nqa.*
hit-REFL-3sg.FUT
'He will hit himself.'
 - c. *Alqu atuw-wan rik'u-na-ku-nku.*
dog fox-with look-RECIP-REFL-3pl.
'The dog and the fox looked at each other.'
- (11) Yavapai (Kendall 1976: 127-9):
- a. *hlo-v-c si:l-v-kñ.*
rabbit-DEM-SUB fry-REFL-COMPL
'The rabbit was fried.'
 - b. *hmañ-c kwe-wiv-v-i.*
child-SUB thing-clothes-REFL-TNS
'The child dressed himself.'
 - c. *?ña-c pa:hmi-m hwak-k cckyat-v-c-kñ.*
1-SUB man-ASSOC two-EGO cut-REFL-PL-COMPL
'That man and I cut each other.'
- (12) Tetelcingo Nahuatl (Tuggy 1979:23-4):
- a. *mo-hto-a.*
REFL-say-PRES
'It is said.'

b. *šo-mo-hta-kɔ kwali nemehwa mismo-s.*
 IMP-REFL-see-PL good you.PL same-PL
 'Take a good look at yourselves.'

c. *mo-lwi-a.*
 REFL-tell-PRES
 'They tell each other.'

(13) Turkish (Lewis 1967:150):

Çocuk yıka-n-dı.
 child wash-PASS-PAST
 'The child was washed; The child washed himself.'

In Bolivian Quechua, the reciprocal suffix is *-na*, but it 'almost invariably occurs with the reflexive *-ku*' (Bills et al., 150). My own work with a speaker of Cochabamba Quechua includes a form like *Nuqanchiq riksinachi-ku-nchiq* 'We introduced ourselves to each other', in which the reflexive *-ku* is used alone in a reciprocal. In Imbabura Quechua (Cole 1982), the suffix *-ri* is used in reflexives, reciprocals, and pseudo-passives (see below). Turkish has another passive suffix *-Il*; but after *l* or a vowel, the passive and the reflexive are identically formed with *-In*. The anticipated ambiguity is resolved by adding the other suffix to the *-In* form, or by explicitly including the reflexive pronoun *kendi-* (Lewis, 149–50).

Most so-called middle (medio-) passives or pseudo-passives are better understood as constructions which express SPONTANEOUS occurrence—an event that automatically occurs, or a state that spontaneously obtains without the intervention of an agent. Many languages are well known for expressing spontaneous events and states by the use of reflexive pronouns:

(14) Spanish (Deguchi 1982:307, 314)

- a. *Se abrió la puerta.*
 REFL open.3sg. the door
 'The door opened.'
- b. *Se ven las montañas.*
 REFL see.3pl. the mountains
 'The mountains are visible.'

(15) French

- a. *Jean s'est tué.*
 J. REFL-is killed
 'John killed himself.'
- b. *La porte s'est ouverte.*
 the door REFL-is opened
 'The door opened.'

(16) Russian (Channon, 75)

Lekcija načalas'.
 lecture began.REFL
 'The lecture began.'

- (17) Quechua (Imbabura; Cole, 91–2)
- a. *Ispiju-pi riku-ri-rka-ni.*
mirror-in see-REFL-PAST-1
'I saw myself in the mirror.'
- b. *Wambra-kuna riku-ri-rka.*
child-PL see-REFL-PAST.3
'Children saw each other.'
- c. *Pungu-kuna-ka paska-ri-rka.*
door-PL-TOP open-REFL-PAST.3
'The doors opened.'
- (18) Quechua (Cochabamba)
- Runtu-kuna p'aki-ku-san.*
egg-PL break-REFL-PROG
'Eggs are breaking.'

The above data parallel the connections between spontaneous and passives observed in Japanese (see ex. 1) and Ainu (see 5–7). The Spanish, Russian, and Cochabamba Quechua data contrast with those in 8–10.

Closely related to the notion of spontaneous event/state is the POTENTIAL construction, and this connection was observed in Japanese (ex. 1). Again, many other languages have the same form for passives and potential constructions, as can be seen from comparing the following with the corresponding passive sentences given above (regarding Hindi, cf. example 35c below):

- (19) Hindi (Jain, 221)
- larke se cal-aa nahī ga-yaa.*
boy INST walk-PPLE not PASS-PAST
'The boy was not able to walk.'
- (20) Turkish (Underhill 1976, from Davison 1980:60)
- Çevap yaz-mak için kâğıt-la kalem kullan-il-ir.*
answer write-INF for paper-and pen use-PASS-PRES
'Paper and pencil may be used to write the answer.'
- (21) Russian (Unbegaun 1957, from Davison, 59, fn. 7)
- Detjam ne spitsja.*
children.DAT not sleep.REFL
'The children can't sleep.'
- (22) Spanish (Deguchi, 314)
- ¿Se va por aquí a la estación?*
REFL go via here to the station
'Can one go to the station from here?'
- (23) Tetelcingo Nahuatl (Tuggy, 24)
- kwali mo-kwɔ-s.*
good REFL-eat-FUT
'It can be eaten.'

In many languages, the potential reading of the passive/reflexive is restricted to, or more commonly found in, negative sentences (e.g. Hindi). The same is observed in the early development of the Japanese potential—though in modern Japanese, positive contexts also allow the potential form.

Finally, we come to the passive/honorific correlation, observed earlier in Japanese and Ainu. This correlation is often further related to plurality; and indeed, many languages show a correlation between passive/plural and plural/honorific. Thus, in Chamorro, Topping (1979:257) believes that the 3rd person pronoun *ma* is related to the passive prefix *ma-*:

- (24) a. *Ma lalalatde i famagu'on.*
 they scold ART children
 'They are scolding the children.'
 b. *Man-ma-lalalatde i famagu'on.*
 PL-PASS-scold ART children
 'The children are being scolded.'

In Mojave, Munro (1976:224, 241.) believes that passive *-ch* is related to the verbal suffix *-ch* which expresses plurality of subject, object, or action:

- (25) a. *uwoh* 'to bark': *uwoh-ch* 'to bark many times'
 bark-PL
 b. *tunay tapuy-ch-pch.*
 yesterday kill-PASS-TNS
 'He was killed yesterday.'

In Tetelcingo Nahuatl (Tuggy, 94), the same prefix *mo-* occurs in passives, reflexives, and reciprocals (12a–c, above), as well as in honorifics:

- (26) *To-mo-ciwi-lu-a.*
 YOU-REFL-DO-APPLIC-PRES
 'You (hon.) do it.'

Note also the following examples:

- (27) Ainu
kor-pa 'to have many; he has (hon.)'
 have-PL
- (28) Guarijío (Uto-Aztecan; Miller 1980:197)
 a. *muké-ru remé ku'irabi?*
 you.carry-PAST.PASS we short.while
 'Did you carry it on your shoulder a while?'
 b. *Ka'í = reme muké-Ø-reme.*
 no = we carry-PAST.ACT-WE
 'No, I didn't carry it.'
- (29) Quechua (Bills et al., 71)
Hamuy-ri-y wasiy-man.
 come-REFL-IMPER house-to
 'Do come (hon.) to my house.'
- (30) Indonesian (Sakiyama 1974:54, 56)
 a. *Tun Ali itu di-bunuh oleh Tun Isap.*
 T. A. DEF PASS-kill by T. I.
 'Tun Ali was killed by Tun Isap.'
 b. *Telah cukup, ibu. Silakan di-minum.*
 already good mother please HON-drink
 'It should be all right now, mother. Please drink it.'

A connection between plurality and honorifics is widely observed among the pronominal systems of European languages (see §6 below); yet, as shown in the above data, the correlation is not restricted to them. In Aino, the 1pl. inclusive, used as an indefinite person-marker, is also employed as the 2nd person honorific prefix (cf. 4, above). In addition, Aino has a verbal suffix which indicates plurality of an object noun, and verb forms with this suffix are also used as honorific expressions.

According to Miller, the honorific speech style in Guarijío is obtained by replacing 1st and 2nd person pronouns by appropriate case forms of the 1pl. pronouns. The verb form is also replaced by the appropriate plural form. Furthermore, if the underlying subject is in the 2nd person, the verb takes the appropriate passive suffix, which permits disambiguation of person in honorific speech.

The suffix *-ri* in Bolivian Quechua is inceptive, and corresponds to the Imbabura reflexive/reciprocal/passive *-ri* (cf. 17). The Indonesian prefix *di-* is related to the 3rd person pronoun *dia*. This prefix is also used as an indefinite person-marker, in addition to its honorific and passive uses. I will discuss this situation further in what follows.

4. In unraveling the mystery behind all these correlations of the passive with other constructions, we must first ascertain the pragmatic function of the passive construction. The need for pragmatic and/or functional considerations in understanding the occurrences of the passive construction was noticed by Jespersen (1924:167–8), who identified the following five reasons for the use of the English passive:

- a. 'The active subject is unknown or cannot easily be stated.'
- b. 'The active subject is self-evident from the context.'
- c. 'There may be a special reason (tact or delicacy of sentiment) for not mentioning the active subject.'
- d. 'Even if the active subject is indicated ("converted subject") the passive turn is preferred if one takes naturally a greater interest in the passive than in the active subject.'
- e. 'The passive turn may facilitate the connection of one sentence with another.'

Jespersen's observations can be summarized in terms of three major functions: (i) passives involve no mention of agent for contextual reasons; (ii) passives bring a topical non-agentive element into subject position; and (iii) passives create a syntactic pivot (cf. Dixon 1979), so that coreferential deletion such as Coordinate Subject Deletion and Equi-NP Deletion can apply.

It is undeniable that all three functions motivate passive clauses, depending on specific circumstances; however, I want to claim that the primary function is that of 'agent defocusing', which is suggested by (i) above and by the following quote from Meillet (1948:196): 'Le vrai rôle du passif est d'exprimer le procès là où l'agent n'est pas considéré.' My position thus differs from other recent functional approaches to passives, in which the topicalization aspect has been emphasized. Thus Givón (1979:186) defines the passive as follows:

'Passivization is the process by which a non-agent is promoted into the role of a main topic of the sentence. And to the extent that the language possesses coding properties which identify main topics as subjects and distinguish them from topics, then this promotion may also involve subjectivalization.'

Along a similar line, Okutsu (1983:70) remarks:

'But isn't it uneconomical to have two sentence patterns [i.e. active and passive] that express the same meaning? As discussed below, it has to do with the difference of whether the speaker imposes his own viewpoint on the agent or on the patient. There lies the meaning of the existence of the passive. If the speaker looks at the event from the agent's point of view, an active sentence is obtained; and if he looks at it from the patient's point of view, a passive sentence is chosen.'

It is rather surprising that the functionalists Givón and Okutsu paid so little attention to the agent-defocusing function of passives, which directly relates to the well-known fact that passives generally do not express agents overtly.³ Numerous languages prohibit or generally avoid an expression of an agent in a passive (e.g. Finnish, Cheremis, Turkish); and even in those languages which permit overt expression of an agent, agentless passives are far more numerous in actual data than those with overt agents. As Jespersen (168) noted: 'Statistical investigations made by some of my pupils showed me many years ago that between 70 and 94 percent of passive sentences in various English writers contained no mention of the active subject.' Svartvik 1966 corroborates this observation; 80% of the passives in his written corpus were agentless. Highly analogous data are observed in Japanese. Yamamoto 1984 reports that, in journalistic texts, 70–80% of passives are agentless; for novels, the rate is slightly lower, some 60–70% being agentless. In this connection, the nature of the non-overt agents of passives is worth considering. Yamamoto indicates that, in journalistic texts, unexpressed agents are typically obscure or unknown, or refer to indefinite persons; but in novels, unexpressed agents are quite obvious from the context.⁴ All this means that passives are used when the singling out of an agent is either impossible or unimportant—because of its being unknown, obvious, or irrelevant. Of course, this is what is stated by Jespersen's first two points.

In other words, passives center around agents, and their fundamental function has to do with the defocusing of agents. This is also observed from the fact that passivization does not generally apply to non-agentive intransitives, even in those languages where it applies to agentive intransitives (see below). Even in transitive sentences, passives often fail to apply if the subject is not an agent. An interesting contrast is seen in English, where clauses with the same verbs may or may not undergo passivization depending on the nature of the subject. Clauses with agents permit passives, while those with non-agents do not:

(31) a. John bought this house for \$250,000 in 1980.

³ In fairness, I should point out that Givón 1981 includes impersonalization as one of the functions of passives: 'The identity of the subject/agent of the active is suppressed, by whatever means.'

⁴ The favorite passive subject in journalistic texts of both English and Japanese is a definite inanimate object. This indicates that the subject selection of passives operates along a different hierarchy from that of topicality (Hawkinson & Hyman 1974, Wierzbicka 1981), which casts doubt on the claim that passivization is a topicalization mechanism. In the novel, we need to distinguish types of narration: in 1st person narration, the 1st person is the favorite subject of both passives and non-passives; and in 3rd person narration, it is the 3rd person. It is perhaps in this genre of writings that Okutsu's characterizations (and possibly Givón's) find some supporting evidence.

- a'. This house was bought by John for \$250,000 in 1980.
 b. \$250,000 won't buy this kind of house any more.
 b'. *This kind of house won't be bought by \$250,000 any more.
- (32) a. John built this house for \$250,000 in 1980.
 a'. This house was built by John for \$250,000 in 1980.
 b. \$250,000 won't build this kind of house any more.
 b'. *This kind of house won't be built by \$250,000 any more.

This shows that, while the applicability of English passives has been extended even to clauses with an experiencer in place of an agent (*Mary is loved by John*), the notion of agent is still crucial. A clause without an agent—or something close to it, like an experiencer—does not permit a passive, since there is no agent to defocus. The impossibility of passivizing a sentence like *John resembles Bill* results from the same restriction.

Since I will build my arguments on the notion of agent defocusing, and since the term 'focus' is used by many linguists in different senses, it is necessary at this point to clarify its definition. To avoid confusion, it would be desirable to use a different term. However, terms like 'agent demotion', 'agent suppression', and 'agent backgrounding' are too restricted—since I want to cover, under one rubric, phenomena like absence of mention of an agent, mention of an agent in a non-prominent syntactic slot, blurring of the identity of an agent by the use of plural forms, and indirect reference to an agent by the use of an oblique case. Unfortunately, no term other than 'agent defocusing' covers all these phenomena which, I claim, are functionally related.

All entities which correspond to the elements of a semantic frame or valence can be considered as focused to some extent. That is, they are singled out as essential elements, requiring the listener's attention in decoding the message; they are highlighted against the background of all other entities which may be in the consciousness of the speech-act participants, but are not semantically coded. These semantically coded entities are correlated with different degrees of importance; certain elements are more prominent than others, since they are most salient in the speaker's mind, and call for more attention on the part of the listener. Less attention is required by other elements because they are relatively unimportant or unidentifiable, or because singling them out is inappropriate. Now, language provides various morphosyntactic means of distributing, among the semantically coded elements, the focus strength correlated with the amount of attention required. An element which requires the least amount of attention is subjected to a defocusing strategy, and the most obvious means of defocusing an element is not to encode it syntactically. The passive which omits an agent nominal represents such a defocusing strategy.

Syntactically encoded elements have varying degrees of focus; the one encoded as subject has the highest degree. Focus decreases along the hierarchy of grammatical relations: subject > direct object > indirect object > oblique objects. The strength of focus is correlated with syntactic and morphological properties of subject, object etc. Thus subject has primacy in syntactic role over other nominals, and it is normally in the nominative—the unmarked case.

In accusative-type languages—where passives are most commonly found—

an agent, because of its saliency, is preferably chosen as a locus of viewpoint; it is thus assigned to the strongest focus position, namely subject. This is the active voice. The passive voice, by contrast, avoids the focusing of an agent. The passive which does not syntactically encode an agent defocuses it to the full extent; that which encodes an agent in an oblique case defocuses it to the degree assigned to the oblique position, i.e. the lowest degree of focus among the syntactically encoded elements.

An entity can also be defocused along dimensions other than those of grammatical relations. For example, even among those placed in the subject slot, there are degrees of focus strength. A prototypical transitive clause, in the sense of Hopper & Thompson, involves a typical agent—one which is high in potency, and acts volitionally. But less prototypical transitive clauses involve atypical 'agents', e.g. experiencers of psychological states, or possessors of objects. The weakness of focus on these elements is often reflected in morphology. Thus 'defective' candidates for subject status are marked by cases other than the nominative—most typically by the dative—in many languages of the world:⁵

- (33) a. Spanish: *Me gusta la cerveza.*
 I.DAT like the beer
 'I like beer.'
- b. Russian: *Mne nravitsja kniga.*
 I.DAT like book
 'I like the book.'
- c. Turkish: *Ban-a para lâzım.*
 I-DAT money need
 'I need money.'
- d. Japanese: *Boku ni eigo ga wakaru.*
 I DAT English NOM understand
 'I understand English.'
- e. Bengali: *aamaar tomaake caai.*
 I.GEN you need
 'I need you.'

Thus weak focus or defocusing can be indicated by the choice of case-marking; the nominative expresses stronger focus than the dative or other oblique cases.

Furthermore, an entity that is clearly delineated from others is focused more strongly. Again, there are different morphological means for this. Defocusing can be achieved by using the indefinite rather than the definite, or the plural rather than the singular—and also by using a person form that does not agree with the intended referent (e.g. the 3rd person form in reference to the 2nd person). These will be illustrated in subsequent discussion.

Having defined the notions of focusing and defocusing, I now repeat my claim regarding the function of passives: the defocusing of an agent in the passive is not merely a consequence of an object promotion or of topicalization,

⁵ The actual subject status of these dative nominals varies from one language to another: see Shibatani 1977 and Perlmutter 1984 for relevant discussion.

but rather is the basic and primary function of the passive construction. This view accounts for the occurrences of passives in many non-typical circumstances. First, many languages allow passives of intransitive clauses, as well as passives without object promotion:

- (34) a. Latin: *Pugnabatur* 'It was fought; There was some fighting.'
 b. German: *Hier wurde ganzen Abend getanzt* 'There was dancing here all night.'
 c. Welsh: *Dannswyd gan y plant.*
 danced by the children
 'There was dancing by the children.' (Perlmutter & Postal 1984:144)
- (35) a. Mojave: *ny-tapi[?]ipay-ch-m.*
 me-save-PASS-TNS
 'I was saved.' (Munro, 241)
 b. Ute: *typúyci tíráabi-ta-xa.*
 rock.OBJ throw-PASS-PAST
 'The rock was thrown.' (Givón 1979:192)
 c. Hindi: *mazduurō ko bhojan di-yaa ga-yaa.*
 workers DAT food give-PPLE PASS-PAST
 'The workers were given the food.' (Jain, 217)

Recall the earlier claim that passivization is an agent-centered phenomenon. This is further supported by the fact that, even in languages which have passives of intransitive clauses, passives of non-agentive intransitives are generally not permitted. Compare Welsh example 34c with the following ungrammatical form (cf. also 31–32):

- (36) Welsh: **Tyfwyd gan y plant yn sydyn.*
 grown by the children suddenly
 'There was growing by the children suddenly.' (Perlmutter & Postal 1984:145)

These data show no conflict with the claim that agent defocusing is the primary function of passivization; however, they cannot be easily explained in other approaches. As briefly noted in §2, the passives of intransitives and passives without object promotion pose a serious problem for the promotional approach advocated by Relational Grammar (cf. Comrie 1977, Perlmutter 1978, Timberlake 1982). The same problem is faced in Okutsu's characterization of passives, which considers the imposition of the speaker's point of view upon the patient to be the function of passivization. In the passivization of intransitives, no object or patient is available to function as the locus of the speaker's view; and in the case of passive without promotion, it is far from clear whether the non-promoted objects have the speaker's view. Another, potentially more serious problem with Okutsu's and Givón's characterizations has to do with the fact that even focus-system and ergative languages may exhibit passive constructions.

The focus-system languages of the Philippines do not, in general, have a

passive construction distinct from the focus mechanism.⁶ The related Chamorro is thus interesting in that it has both a focus mechanism, as in Philippine languages, and a passive construction. In 37a, the infix *-in-* is a goal-focus marker by which *famagu'on* 'children' is topicalized, i.e. 'made a "theme" of the utterance' (Topping, 243). However, Chamorro also has the passive construction illustrated in 37b. If passivization were simply a mechanism of topicalizing a non-agent, we would not expect Chamorro to have developed a distinct passive construction apart from the focus-system:

- (37) a. *Man-l-in-alamatde i famagu'on ni ma'estron-niha.*
 PL-RED-GF-scold ART children ART teachers-their
 'The children were the ones that were scolded by their teachers.'
- b. *Man-ma-lalatde i famagu'on gi eskuela.*
 PL-PASS-scold ART children at school
 'The children were scolded at school.' (Topping, 257)

In the face of the Chamorro data, it is clear that to describe the Philippine-type topic construction as passive (as Givón 1979 does) is to cloud the issue. It is not uncommon for a language to have two or more types of passives, but it is doubtful that they have the same distribution and function. The same applies here. What needs to be developed is a clear concept of passives that can distinguish the two constructions illustrated above. Indeed, many languages (e.g. Japanese and Chinese) have both passives and topicalization, and the same distinction is called for here. My position conflicts in no way with the facts about the occurrences of passives in focus-system languages. Whereas the primary function of passivization is defocusing of an agent, such is not true of topicalization; its function is precisely that of creating a topic or theme of a sentence.

Indeed, Chamorro makes this functional distinction rather clearly with regard to the two constructions in question. As Topping says (257): 'the infix *-in-* is used in goal-focus constructions WHEN THERE IS AN AGENT and when the focus is on the goal of the action, i.e. when the patient is topicalized. The passive voice is another construction which uses the prefix *ma-* and which CONTAINS NO AGENT' (emphasis supplied).

The functional difference between passivization and Philippine-type topicalization is reflected in some statistics. Thus Hopper & Thompson report that Matthew Dryer's text-count for Cebuano shows 57 occurrences of the expressed actors in 67 occurrences of the goal-focus construction. As they also say, this is in sharp contrast with other languages, where only some 20–25% of passives contain agentive NP's. Thus it is erroneous for Cooreman 1982 to refer to the Chamorro goal-focus construction as passive, along with the true

⁶ Following Schachter & Otnes (1972:69), the term 'focus-system' is used here to refer to 'the feature of a verbal predicate that determines the semantic relationship between a predicate verb and its topic.' Note that it does not mark a 'focus' in the sense of an element correlating with new information. On the contrary, it points to a TOPICAL nominal, marked by a particle such as Tagalog *ang*. In the present paper, the term 'focus' is never used in the sense relating to the 'topic-focus' contrast of functional sentence perspective.

passive. In fact, her own text-count shows the functional difference between the two: the passive construction typically occurs without an agent (85%), but the goal-focus construction normally occurs with an agent (80%).

I have tried to highlight the difference between the passive and Philippine-type topicalization. However, these two should not be thought of as entirely distinct. In fact, Philippine-type topicalization shares at least two important characteristics with a prototypical passive: (i) it creates a subject(-like) nominal out of a patient and other oblique nominals,⁷ and (ii) it involves a morphological marking in the verb that indicates the basic semantic role of the topic. This perhaps accounts for the general lack of true passives in Philippine languages. However, passive and topicalization show a greater difference in languages like Japanese and Chinese; the latter involves neither creation of a grammatical subject nor verb-marking. These differences and similarities between related constructions can be clearly delineated in terms of the properties of a prototype construction.

The case of passives in ergative languages is more complex because of the enormous heterogeneity of such languages. Among those languages which do not have passives are Dyrbal (Dixon 1972) and Lezgian (Mel'čuk 1983), which freely omit agents of transitive clauses and permit clauses of the intransitive type. Typical ergative languages with passives are those in which an agent is an integral element of a transitive clause—which perforce cannot be freely omitted; a special device is thus needed to eliminate the agent. Such languages often have agent-marking in the verb of a transitive clause:

(38) Greenlandic Eskimo (Woodbury 1977:323–4)

- a. *aŋut-ip arnaq-∅ taku-vaa.*
man-ERG woman-ABS see-IND.3sg.3sg.
'The man saw the woman.'
- b. *arnaq-∅ (aŋuti-mit) taku-tau-pug.*
woman-ABS man-ABL.SG see-PASS-IND.3sg.
'The woman was seen (by the man).'

(39) Mam (Mayan; England 1983:201)

- a. *Ma ∅-jaw t-tx'ee7man-n Cheep tzee7.*
REC.PAST 3sg.ABS-DIR 3sg.ERG-CUT-DIR José tree
'José cut the tree.'
- b. *Ma ∅-tx'eem-at tzee7 t-u7n Cheep.*
3sg.ABS-cut-PASS tree 3sg.-REL José
'The tree was cut by José.'

In ergative languages too, passives are used primarily to get rid of an agent. However, a language like Mam poses serious problems for other approaches to the passive. Mam is a syntactically ergative language, in the sense of Dixon 1979. Focusing, negation, question etc. operate on absolutes, which also control equi-type deletion (see England, Chaps. 7–8). In other words, the absolute patient of a Mam transitive clause is 'already' a subject/topic. In a

⁷ On the status of the topic nominal as a subject in Philippine languages, see Schachter 1976, Bell 1983.

theory which characterizes passivization as creating a subject out of an object, or as topicalization of an object, Mam passivization must be characterized as at best a vacuous process. In the present framework, however, the Mam passive receives a natural interpretation: it is an agent-defocusing device, contrasting with the antipassive construction—in which an agent is in the absolutive, and the defocused patient is not encoded.

5. I have argued above that agent defocusing is the main pragmatic function of passives. To facilitate further discussion, I now propose a characterization of the passive prototype. In attempting a formulation of a prototype of any construction, it is always a problem to determine which properties to include. In the following formulation, I have tried—by consulting general surveys of passives in a large number of languages (e.g. Keenan 1981)—to account for as wide a range of data as possible in terms of the minimum number of properties. The characterization in 40 applies to prototypical passives like English *Many soldiers were killed*, or its Japanese equivalent *Takusan no heitai ga koros-are-ta*. There are also a large number of passive(-like) sentences, which are not prototypical, but whose passiveness can be characterized against the background of the prototype:

- (40) Characterization of the passive prototype.
- a. Primary pragmatic function: Defocusing of agent.
 - b. Semantic properties:
 - (i) Semantic valence: Predicate (agent, patient).
 - (ii) Subject is affected.
 - c. Syntactic properties:
 - (i) Syntactic encoding: agent $\rightarrow \emptyset$ (not encoded).
patient \rightarrow subject.
 - (ii) Valence of P[redicate]: Active = P/n;
Passive = P/n - 1.
 - d. Morphological property:

Active = P;
Passive = P[+ passive].

6. My discussion of the grammatical properties of the passive prototype will pave the way for the task of explicating the underlying unity of passives with the related constructions discussed above. First, since defocusing of an agent is taken to be the primary pragmatic function of the passive prototype, it follows that passives of intransitives, passives without promotion, and the like are passives TO THE EXTENT THAT they share this function. Among these, the so-called 'middle passives' differ from the prototype in an important way; however, since this relates to the semantic aspect, I will postpone the discussion.

The notion of agent defocusing supplies a key to the task of unraveling the passive connections of honorifics, potentials, and spontaneous constructions. Among these, honorifics are most easily associated with the notion of agent defocusing. A universal characteristic of honorific speech lies in its indirectness; and one of the clear manifestations of this is avoidance of the singling out of an agent which refers to the addressee, the speaker, or the person men-

tioned in the sentence.⁸ Defocusing of an agent in some way is thus an integral component of the honorific mechanism. One frequent method of agent defocusing is the use of plural forms, even in reference to a singular agent. The development of the use of plural pronouns (e.g. French *vous* and German *Sie*) as honorific forms in European languages is a reflection of the choice of this method for agent defocusing (see R. Brown & Gilman 1960, Comrie 1975). Tagalog *kayo* 'you (pl.)' and *sila* 'they' are honorific forms for *ikaw* 'you (sg.)' The same strategy was shown above for Ainu and Guarijío. The use of plural verb forms is analogous; thus, the Turkish use of plural verb forms for the 2nd or 3rd person singular is a mark of respect.⁹ Ainu also employs this method (cf. ex. 27).

Another possibility often utilized for defocusing is the use of indefinite forms. The Ainu and Indonesian cases observed above illustrate this method. (Note that all these have the opposite effect from individuation, i.e. the singling out of an entity; cf. Timberlake 1977.) Japanese exhibits another method of agent defocusing—namely, changing case particles from the nominative to the dative when the subject refers to an individual worthy of respect. However, this is used in Modern Japanese only in formal letter-writing, or in a very formal address.

Thus our understanding of a passive as an agent defocusing mechanism provides a natural explanation of the passive/honorific/plural connection. Furthermore, the use of an indefinite form for the passive, as in Ainu and Indonesian, or of an impersonal marking—e.g. 3sg. in Latin and Quechua, or 3pl. in Hungarian and Mordvin (Koizumi 1971)—is also easily understandable in my framework.

Defocusing of an agent is highly germane to spontaneous events and states. An event predicated of an agent is basically causative; i.e., an event is brought about by an agent. But an event dissociated from an agent is one occurring spontaneously. Thus a sentence with a defocused agent may be utilized to describe a spontaneous event. If a language provides intransitive verbs that take patients as their theme (as in English *These wine glasses break easily, so be careful with them*), these will normally be used for the description of spontaneous events. But if there is no such intransitive verb, then agent-defocusing forms will be used (*These boys are/get discouraged easily, so be careful with them.*) In certain languages, combinations with the agent-defocusing affix become lexicalized, and begin to function as independent intransitive verbs. Thus Japanese transitive verbs like *tur-u* 'to fish' and *war-u* 'to break' have the spontaneous intransitive counterparts *tur-e-ru* and *war-e-ru*, which have lexicalized an earlier agent-defocusing suffix *-(r)ar*; thus *Sakana ga tur-e-ta* 'A fish was caught', *Kabin ga war-e-ta* 'The vase broke.' Needless to say, these forms

⁸ For a general framework and related discussions of the pragmatics of honorific speech, see P. Brown & Levinson 1978.

⁹ Turkish is interesting in that plurals are used more widely as a defocusing mechanism. Place and time adverbs can be pluralized with the regular plural suffix *-ler*, for blurred specification; e.g. *bura-da* 'here', *bura-lar-da* 'around here'; *saat beş su-in-da* 'at five o'clock', *saat beş su-lar-in-da* 'around five o'clock'.

do not take the modern agent-defocusing suffix *-(r)are* for the purpose of deriving spontaneous forms.

Many other languages use passive forms as a means of deriving intransitives. Such forms, illustrated by the Ainu of 5 and the Quechua of 18, are generally called 'middle passive', and are often associated with the notion of detransitivization. These constructions, despite their sharing of the basic pragmatic function, differ crucially from the prototypical passive; i.e., the extent to which the agent is defocused is different. In the prototypical passive, an agent is part of the semantic valency; i.e., it is conceptualized, and is defocused only at the level of syntactic encoding. Detransitivization, however, involves a decrease in semantic valency, to the extent that no agent is posited. As pointed out by Isaac Kozinsky (p.c.), true passives are SEMANTICALLY 'transitive' in having both agent and patient in the semantic frame; but syntactically, they are typically intransitive. By contrast, detransitivized forms and regular intransitives are both semantically and syntactically intransitive; thus a contrast is evident in the relationships between the pairs *kill vs. be killed* and *kill vs. die*. This difference is exploited by a mischievous boy who tells his mother *The dish broke!*, rather than apologizing with *Sorry, I broke the dish*, or *Sorry, the dish was broken by mistake*.

Note that the defocusing involved in passives differs from the phenomenon of 'PRO-dropping', e.g. in Japanese or the Romance languages, where pronouns are omitted at the surface level because of their recoverability from the context. Here, I want to claim that, in a transitive clause, an agent is present in the semantic valency, and is also syntactically encoded (normally as a subject). PRO-dropping, then, is defocusing, as it were, at a rather superficial level. Furthermore, PRO-dropping occurs only when the omitted form is recoverable from the context; but in passives, non-encoded agents may not be known at all.

Languages that correlate reflexives with spontaneous forms seem to show a somewhat different situation. Here the power of the reflexive to express occurrence of an event without the involvement of an external agent appears to be the factor which leads to a spontaneous reading of the reflexive form. English has explicit spontaneous expressions, e.g. *The rock rolled all by itself* or *The rock rolled on its own*, which overtly negate the existence of an external agent.

It is only one small step from the spontaneous to the potential. An event that occurs spontaneously has a strong propensity to happen. If this automatic happening is negated, then a reading of impotentiality is implied. Recall that the potential reading of passives is more frequently seen in the negative context, e.g. in Hindi. A generalization of the spontaneous/potential correlation leads to the positive potential reading of an agent-defocusing form, as in Japanese.

Thus the correlation of the passive with honorifics, spontaneous, and potentials results from the common pragmatic function of agent defocusing—with the consequent semantic implication that an event is happening, or has the potential to happen, with regard to the referent of a subject nominal. As mentioned above, however, the reflexive/spontaneous correlation seems to result

from the non-existence of an external agent. This interpretation causes a slight problem in understanding the reflexive/passive correlation: the reflexive implies the non-existence of an external agent, but the passive implies the existence of such an agent. Despite this apparent disparity, these two constructions have much in common, which will emerge in the discussion of other semantic properties of the passive prototype.

7. I claim that the passive/reflexive/reciprocal correlation arises largely from a semantic property of these constructions: in all of them, surface subjects are affected. In the passive, the subject is affected by an external agent; in the reflexive, by itself; in the reciprocal, by the partner. Thus, if any of the following is true—*John was killed; John killed himself; John and Bill killed each other*—then the referent of *John* is dead.

According to Slobin 1982, children acquiring Hebrew make productive errors in morphology which indicate that active, transitive, and causative events are opposed to passive, intransitive, reflexive/reciprocal, and inchoative ones. The opposition formed by the children is in terms of the nature of the subject; affected subjects are opposed to subjects which affect others. In fact, this distinction appears to be the most crucial factor that ties the passive to the reflexive. The passive reading is imputed to the reflexive sentence precisely because it expresses a situation where the subject is affecting itself, rather than others. Such a reading is, of course, easier to obtain when the reflexive form has no volitional reading, as in the following reflexive example from Warrungu (Tasaku Tsunoda, p.c.)—which, like other Australian ergative languages, lacks a distinct passive construction:

- (41) a. *pama-ngku yuri-∅ watyn-n.*
 man-ERG kangaroo-ABS COOK-PAST/PRES
 'The man cooks/cooked the kangaroo.'
 b. *yuri-∅ watyn-li-n.*
 kangaroo-ABS COOK-REFL-PAST/PRES
 'The kangaroo is/was cooked.'

The notion of the affected subject, which is an integral semantic property of the prototypical passive, makes some scholars apply the term 'passive' to a transitive sentence like *John suffered an injury*. In the present framework, such a sentence is passive to the extent that it shares the semantic property under discussion. Needless to say, it differs considerably from the prototypical passive in other respects.

Though I am not here concerned with the passive/causative correlation, this familiar correlation, as in *John had/got his car stolen* and *John had/got his car washed*, results from the fact that causatives often involve the subject's making others do something that affects the subject himself. Thus a causative expression like *John had Taro teach him Japanese* shares a semantic similarity with the 'middle-voice' expression (cf. Classical Greek) *John taught himself Japanese*, and with the passive sentence *John was taught Japanese (by Taro)*.¹⁰

¹⁰ For an excellent account of the similarities and differences between passives, middle passives, reflexives, and reciprocals in Indo-European languages, see Barber 1975.

Finally, the well-known correlation of the passive with the stative, the resultative, and the perfect results from the inactive nature of the passive subject and the fact that the patient is placed in the subject position. This has the effect of shifting the perspective from the agent's side to the patient's, and accordingly from the beginning to the end of the event.

Despite the similarities and correlations of passives with reflexives and reciprocals, they are different: the passive subject is not an agent, but the subjects of the other two constructions are agents. As discussed above, all these constructions differ from the spontaneous and the potential in that they have either an overt or implied agent.

The affectedness of the passive subject derives basically from the fact that it is a patient. In many languages (e.g. Japanese), the affectedness of the patient subject in a passive is more pronounced than the patient object of an active sentence. This is presumably because of the difference in the degree of focus between subject and object. Subject position, being the highest focus position, has the effect of highlighting the semantic aspect of the affectedness inherent in the patient.

The affected nature of the passive subject, when strongly felt, may lead to the use of passive morphology/syntax in a situation where the subject is indirectly affected by an event. Thus in Korean, Vietnamese, Chinese, and Japanese, the possessor of a body part or an article that is directly affected can stand in subject position in a passive expression:

(42) Korean

- a. *Totwuk-i kyengchal-hanthey cap-hi-ess-ta.*
 thief-NOM police-by capture-PASS-PAST-IND
 'The thief was captured by the police.' (direct)
- b. *Na-nun nwukwunka-eykey pal-ul palp-hi-ess-ta.*
 I-TOP someone-by foot-ACC step.on-PASS-PAST-IND
 'I had my foot stepped on by someone.' (indirect)

(43) Vietnamese (Le 1976:441)

- a. *Nam bị đánh.*
 N. PASS beat
 'Nam was beaten.' (direct)
- b. *Nam bị cảnh sát tịch thu ra dõ.*
 N. PASS police confiscate radio
 'Nam got (his) radio confiscated by the police.' (indirect)

(44) Chinese

- a. *Wǒ bèi tā dǎ le.*
 I by he hit ASP
 'I was hit by him.' (direct)
- b. *Wǒ bèi tā cǎi le jiǎo.*
 I by he step.on ASP foot
 'I had my foot stepped on by him.' (indirect)

(45) Japanese

- a. *Boku wa Taroo ni nagur-are-ta.*
 I TOP T. by hit-PASS-PAST
 'I was hit by Taro.' (direct)

- b. *Boku wa Taroo ni zitensya o nusum-are-ta.*
 I TOP T. by bicycle ACC steal-PASS-PAST
 'I had my bicycle stolen by Taro.' (indirect)

When the indirectness of affectedness is extended one further step, even an intransitively expressed event can be predicated of an indirectly affected subject. The so-called adversative passive of Japanese illustrates this extended use of passive morphology:¹¹

- (46) a. *Boku wa ame ni hur-are-ta.*
 I TOP rain by fall-PASS-PAST
 'I was affected (adversely) by rain's falling.'
 b. *Keisatu wa yoogisya ni nige-rare-ta.*
 police TOP suspect by escape-PASS-PAST
 'The police had the suspect run away.'

These passives differ from the prototypical passive in that they involve an increase of syntactic valency. In 46, the passive predicates of the intransitive bases occur with two arguments; in 45, the passive predicates based on the transitive verbs occur with three arguments.¹²

8. The passive/reflexive/reciprocal correlation is motivated in yet another respect: in certain languages, all these constructions entail that the number of arguments in a clause is reduced by one. In the passive, the predicate requires one less argument than the corresponding active predicate. Thus, when we passivize a sentence with three arguments, like *John gave Mary a book*, we obtain a two-argument sentence: *Mary was given a book*. When a two-argument sentence, e.g. *John hit Bill*, is passivized, a one-argument sentence results: *Bill was hit*. And when a one-argument sentence is passivized, as in Latin (see ex. 37), a zero-argument sentence results.

As pointed out in §2, the passive has been characterized by some as an intransitive clause. However, such a characterization is not fully accurate. It is true that an intransitive sentence results when a transitive sentence is passivized. But when a ditransitive sentence is passivized, it is far from clear that the result is intransitive. For example, on what basis do we claim that a sentence like *Mary was given a book* is intransitive? This sentence certainly requires two arguments; *Mary was given*, in the intended reading, is as incomplete as *John hit*. By the same token, the Japanese sentence *Marii wa hon o atae-rare-ta* 'Mary was given a book' contains an accusatively-marked direct object, just like any true transitive sentence. Furthermore, passives of intransitive sentences require a syntactic conception different from that of detransitivation. Just

¹¹ My hypothesis that the so-called indirect/adversative passive in Japanese originated from a direct passive, as a consequence of an extended use of the latter, was formulated while discussing the relevant issues with Takashi Masuoka.

¹² Even though the agents can be defocused and not encoded in indirect passives made from a transitive clause, the corresponding arguments in the intransitive-based passives must be encoded. Thus *Boku wa densya no naka de asi o hum-are-ta* 'I had my foot stepped on in the train' is non-elliptical, but *Boku wa hitoban-zyuu nak-are-ta* 'I had (someone) cry all night' is elliptical with regard to the agent of crying. This was brought to my attention by Charles De Wolf (p.c.)

as causativization is more than transitivization (since it also causativizes transitive verbs), passivization is not identical with detransitivization, even though they share the property of valence decrease (cf. §7, above).

In many languages, reflexives and reciprocals are marked in the verb (cf. ex. 17). In such languages, reflexives and reciprocals have the effect of pronoun incorporation, which reduces by one the number of arguments of the non-reflexive and non-reciprocal counterparts. Just as in the passive, the reflexive/reciprocal of a three-place predicate contains two arguments; that of a two-place predicate, just one argument:

- (47) Reflexives (Imbabura Quechua)
- a. *Juan Marya-man kwintu-ta yupa-rka.*
 J. M.-DAT story-ACC tell-PAST.3
 'Juan told Maria a story.' (3 arg.)
- b. *Juan kwintu-ta yupa-ri-rka.*
 J. story-ACC tell-REFL-PAST.3
 'Juan told himself a story.' (2 arg.)
- (48) a. *Juan Marya-ta riku-rka.*
 J. M.-ACC see-PAST.3
 'Juan saw María.' (2 arg.)
- b. *Juan riku-ri-rka.*
 J. see-REFL-PAST.3
 'Juan saw himself.' (1 arg.)
- (49) Reciprocals (Japanese)¹³
- a. *Kodomotati wa sensei ni purezento o okut-ta.*
 children TOP teacher DAT present ACC send-PAST
 'The children sent a present to the teacher.' (3 arg.)
- b. *Kodomotati wa purezento o okuri-at-ta.*
 children TOP present ACC send-RECIP-PAST
 'The children sent presents to each other.' (2 arg.)
- (50) a. *Kodomotati wa tomodati o hagemasi-ta.*
 children TOP friend ACC encourage-PAST
 'The children encouraged the friend.' (2 arg.)
- b. *Kodomotati wa hagemasi-at-ta.*
 children TOP encourage-RECIP-PAST
 'The children encouraged each other.' (1 arg.)

Thus we find both semantic and syntactic similarities among passives, reflexives, and reciprocals. For some languages, these similarities are sufficient to permit one form to perform the functions of the others.

I have defined the passive prototype in such a way that it does not involve

¹³ There is one instance where Japanese reciprocals do not involve valency reduction, namely in those involving the reduction of possessor nominals. Thus *Kodomotati wa atama o naguri-at-ta* 'The children hit each other on the head' reduces the possessor nominal, but the two basic arguments of the transitive clause are retained. Incidentally, Japanese also allows the pronoun *otagai* 'each other' to appear; in this case, the pronoun remains in place of the full noun, and valency reduction does not take place. Thus we find *Kodomotati wa otagai o hagemasi-at-ta* 'The children encouraged each other'; cf. 50b.

an overt agent. Certainly, this applies only to the prototypical passives; and many languages permit a passive agent in an oblique phrase. I see these forms as involving incomplete defocusing of an agent; they differ in this regard from the prototype, which applies defocusing of an agent to the full extent.

The prototypical passive also involves making a subject out of a patient. Again, many languages permit passive subjects whose semantic roles are other than patients, e.g. recipients (Japanese) and locatives (Bantu). I assume that the applicability of passivization has been extended in these languages.

9. Finally, the passive is differentiated from typical topicalization by virtue of its morphological marking in the VP, whether as an auxiliary verb (e.g. English) or as an affix (e.g. Japanese). In this morphological respect, the focus mechanism of the Philippine languages is more like the passive than topicalization. However, as discussed in §4, the focus mechanism is functionally much closer to topicalization. In addition, the focus system and topicalization also topicalize agents.

Because of the connection between the passive and the resultative, typical morphological markings for passives involve the verb 'be' (e.g. English) or the verb 'become' (e.g. German *werden*). It has been hypothesized that the Japanese passive suffix *-(r)are*, whose older form was *-rar-*, is related to the Old Japanese verb *ar-* 'be'. In some languages, the affected nature of the subject of a passive clause is expressed more clearly by an auxiliary derived from the verb referring to suffering (e.g. Chinese *bèi*).

10. We have seen that many related forms are passives to the extent that they share properties of the passive prototype. This kind of continuum is also seen between active and passive sentences. In fact, a proper understanding of forms such as the Ainu examples above hinges on such a conception of grammatical structure. That is, an Ainu form like 7 lies on the active/passive continuum—perhaps slightly toward the passive side. The facts that the agents are defocused and that the patients are placed in subject position indicate the form's passive nature, while the verb morphology retains a transitive characteristic.

Situations like this are not at all rare. Timberlake (1976:550–51) shows that North Russian contains passives of varying degrees of passiveness. In certain forms, e.g. 51a, the patient retains its accusative marking; in 51b, the patient takes on the nominative case form, but without agreement in the verb; in 51c, the patient is in the nominative case, and the verb agrees with it. Note that, in all these forms, the agents are defocused by virtue of their being demoted to an oblique *u* phrase:¹⁴

- (51) a. *U menja bylo telenka zarezano.*
 at me AUX.N.SG calf.ACC slaughtered.PART.N.SG
 'By me there's been slaughtered a calf.'

¹⁴ Isaac Kozinsky has pointed out to me that since, in North Russian, the nominative form may replace the accusative in direct object function, the first two sentences may not differ substantially; i.e., the nominative form in 51b may not have been turned into a subject.

- b. *Pereexano bylo doroga tut.*
crossed.PART.N.SG AUX.N.SG road.NOM.F.SG there
'There's been crossing the road there.'
- c. *U rybaka byl sxvačen medvežij*
at fisherman AUX.M.SG caught.PART.M.SG bear'S.NOM.M.SG
jazyk.
tongue
'By the fisherman was caught a bear's tongue.'

Quechua passives are similar to ex. 51b, in that the patient is in the nominative case, but verb agreement is not triggered by it. The verb is marked for a 3sg. argument:

- (52) a. *Nuqa runtu-kuna-ta caya-ci-sa-ni.*
I egg-PL-ACC COOK-CAUS-CONT-1
'I am cooking eggs.'
- b. *Runtu-kuna caya-ku-sa-n.*
egg-PL.NOM COOK-REFL-CONT-3sg.
'Eggs are being cooked; Eggs are cooking.'

A form quite analogous to the Ainu passive is reported for Kimbundu (Bantu) by Givón (1979:211). The form in 53 is passive to the extent that the agent is defocused, and the patient is placed in subject position. But the verb morphology is transitive, just as in the comparable Ainu form:

- (53) *Nzua a-mu-mono (kwa mame).*
John they-him-saw by me
'John was seen (by me).'

Givón (1979:189) assumes that a re-analysis has taken place here; i.e., the original 3pl. subject-marker *a-* is re-analysed as a passive marker, and the former object marker *mu-* has become a new passive subject marker. A parallel phenomenon is reported for the Trukic group of the Micronesian sub-branch of Austronesian by Jacobs (1976:121). Just as above, ex. 54 shows a re-analysis of the person prefix as a passive prefix. Note that, in both Kimbundu and Trukic, it is the 3pl. prefix, a good candidate for a defocused agent, that has been re-analysed:

- (54) *Waan re-liila-∅ ree-i.*
John they-kill-him by-me
'John was killed by me.'

A similar development is currently taking place in Indonesian: the 3rd person prefix *di-*, which is also used as an indefinite marker, is in the process of being extended and used in the passive form with agents other than 3rd person. E.g.,

- (55) a. *Adik-ku bisa di-ajak (oleh saudara).*
brother-my can PASS-ask by you
'My brother can be asked by you.' (Dardjowidjojo
(1978:153)

- b. *Mobil itu dapat di-perbaiki (oleh) kita.*
 car the can PASS-repair by us
 'The car can be repaired by us.' (Chung 1976:61)

The *di*-prefix, which is related to the 3rd person pronoun *dia*, is affixed to the verb with a 3rd person subject. A passive expression (as in 30a) was formerly permitted only when a 3rd person agent was involved, i.e. when the *oleh* phrase contained a 3sg. NP. But in recent years, at least in colloquial forms, the *di*-form is used with a 1st or 2nd person agent (as in 55).¹⁵

As discussed earlier (§2), the Ainu indefinite marker *a-* is clearly divorced from the notion of indefinite person when it occurs in passive expressions. Very often the identity of an agent is clear from the context, or is even specified by the demoted agent in the oblique case. Thus, even in Ainu, we can assume that a re-analysis of the indefinite prefix as a passive marker is under way. In Indonesian, we should be able to witness the completion of this re-analysis; but it will not be possible for Ainu, which is now on the verge of extinction. At any rate, it is clear that a discrete analysis of grammatical structure does not allow us to capture the change in progress which these forms exhibit.

11. Since the description of passives is one of the major concerns of linguists today, the foregoing discussion has placed them in the center of the analysis. This should by no means be taken to mean that all those related constructions have sprung from the passive. On the contrary, it is historically more likely that passive interpretations and their grammaticization arose from other constructions. In Japanese, it is generally held that, among the four functions of the suffix *-(r)are*, the original use was mainly in spontaneous expressions, and that the other uses developed later, taking advantage of the agent-defocusing effect of the suffix (cf. Hashimoto 1969). In European languages, where reflexives, reciprocals, and passives show very strong correlations, the origin of these forms is said to be the middle voice, used for expressions in which the subject is affected by its own action (cf. Barber). The present discussion, while primarily concerned with synchronic facts, provides explanations for these diachronic developments.

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¹⁵ See Sakiyama for the controversy over the passive analysis of the Indonesian *di*-form. Dardjowidjojo, Chung, and some other Indonesian grammarians feel that the re-analysis has already taken place; however, Sakiyama (186) believes that such an assumption is premature, for 'there is no expression of the type [represented by the forms in 55] in the written language, and even in the colloquial language such a form is extremely rare, except for a quite unusual circumstance.'

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