

Antipassive: Intransitivizing and Argument-Introducing Types

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Introduction: This paper presents a novel analysis of the antipassive construction by proposing that there are at least two types: an intransitivizing type, which prevents an internal argument from appearing in the syntax, and an argument-introducing type, in which the antipassive morpheme adds an internal argument into the syntax, albeit in a distinct syntactic position from that of the direct object of a transitive clause.

I orient the reader to the surface properties of the antipassive using the following example from South Baffin Inuktitut (Spreng 2012), an example of the argument-introducing type.

- (1) a. Piita-up naalautiq surak-taa
Peter-ERG radio.ABS break-PART.3SG/3SG
Peter broke the radio.
- b. Piita surak-**si**-juq (naalauti-mik)
Peter.ABS break-AP-PART.3SG (radio-MIK)
Peter is breaking the radio/(something).

This antipassive (1b) has special morphology on the verb (the affix *-si*) and shows surface intransitive morphosyntax, in contrast to the transitive in (1a). The internal object appears in an oblique case, with the subject appearing in the absolutive case rather than the ergative. The transitive clause shows object agreement, unlike the antipassive, which shows subject agreement only. Consistent with its surface morphosyntax, the internal argument need not appear.

Contrasting phenomena: There is a curious cross-linguistic asymmetry with respect to the interaction between antipassivization and applicativization. In some languages, antipassivization feeds applicativization; in others, it bleeds it. For example, in Tzotzil (Aissen 1983, Baker 1988) antipassivization blocks the applicative (2). The antipassive suffix is *-van* and the applied suffix is *-be*.

- (2) a. č-i-ʔak'-van.
asp-A1-give-ap
I am giving [someone]. (i.e. my daughter, in marriage)
- b. *taš-Ø-k-ak'-van-be li Šune.
asp-A3-E1-give-ap-to the Šun
I am giving [someone] to Šun. (my daughter, in marriage)

But in Inuktitut, West Greenlandic and Central Alaskan Yupik (CAY), the clause is antipassivized before applicativization (Bittner 1994, Fortescue 1984, Miyaoka 2012). Fortescue (1984:91) notes that in West Greenlandic, the applicative affix *-ssuti* (a morphophonemic variant of *-uti*) “is more or less productive today (in the benefactive sense); ...and it is now especially common following half-transitivizing [antipassive] affixes – eg. *tuqutsissupaa* ‘he killed something for him’ (italics mine).

Two Types of Antipassive: Tzotzil shows the strict intransitivizing type of antipassive. Here, there is no internal argument in the syntax. The interpretation that there is a second, patient participant is given pragmatically, in conjunction with the lexical conceptual semantics of the verb (it encodes an event that typically has two participants). Eskimo-Aleut (EA) languages like those mentioned above show the argument-introducing type, in which the antipassive affix adds the internal (undergoer) argument. In this view, I propose that even the internal argument, at least for some verbs, is ‘severed’ from the verb itself.

Support: Note that there is contrast with respect to the syntactic appearance of an overt oblique argument. As seen in (1), in the EA languages, the internal argument can appear overtly with oblique case. But in Tzotzil, as Aissen (1983: 291) states, “verbs suffixed with *-van* have a reading like ‘to do x to y or with respect to y’ where y must be human, either a nonspecific human or a discourse referent. In either case, *verbs suffixed with -van never occur with an overt object*” [italics mine].

- (3) a. ... š-k'-ot sibtas-van-uk-Ø.
...asp-come frighten-van-uk-a3
he came to frighten [people].

Given Pyllkänen’s (2008) description of a ‘low applicative’ as involving a relation between two noun phrases-- the applied argument and the internal argument of the verb--we immediately explain why

antipassivization bleeds the applicative in Tzotzil: there is no internal argument to create the relation. However, since EA languages introduce an internal argument in the antipassive, even a phonologically null one, then a low applicative structure is possible. The interpretation of the missing argument is also different. Tzotzil shows a human nonspecific or discourse referent reading, while EA allows an existential reading not limited to humans or discourse referents.

Analysis: At least for some verbs, the internal argument, like the external argument in Kratzer's (1996) analysis, is 'severed' from the verb. Unlike the external argument, though, I argue that there are two positions for the internal argument. In one, it is introduced outside the VP, in a v projection headed by an undergoer thematic role predicate $\lambda x \lambda e[\text{und}(e, x)]$ that takes the VP as a complement. In the other, the antipassive morpheme denotes the undergoer relation $\lambda x \lambda e[\text{und}(e, x)]$ and adjoins to the verb, with the internal argument appearing within VP. The former structure gives the basic transitive clause. The undergoer predicate and its argument are semantically integrated through Kratzer's *event identification*.

(4) transitive V/VP: $\lambda e[\text{break}(e)]$, transitive v' [und]: $\lambda x \lambda e[\text{break}(e) \ \& \ \text{und}(e, x)]$

(5) antipassive V: $\lambda x \lambda e[\text{break}(e) \ \& \ \text{und}(e, x)]$

(6) a. transitive $[_{VP} \text{NP}_{abs} [_{v'} \text{und} [_{VP} \text{V}]]]$

b. argument-introducing antipassive $[_{VP} [_{v} \text{V-ap}] \text{NP}_{obl}/\text{PRO}]]$

The noun phrase within $vP[\text{und}]$ undergoes absolutive case checking and phi-feature checking with T (Legate 2008, Aldridge 2012). When the internal argument appears within VP, it receives case from the antipassive morpheme itself (Bok Bennema 1991), leaving the external argument to undergo absolutive case and phi feature checking with T. With those languages that are intransitivizing, the antipassive morpheme occupies v but introduces no thematic role predicate and thus no argument appears.

(7) intransitivizing antipassive $[_{VP} \text{ap} [_{VP} \text{V}]]]$

For the applicative, I adopt a different syntax from that in Pyllkänen (2008) and consider that the applicative morpheme must combine with a (possibly complex) verbal head that has an unsaturated internal argument. The possessee argument introduced by the applicative morpheme is identified with the undergoer argument introduced by the verb through *argument identification*, an extension of *event identification*. The internal argument noun phrase then merges with the applicativized verb and saturates both arguments. If a verb does not introduce an internal argument, it is antipassivized first, introducing an undergoer argument that identifies with the possessee argument of the applicative morpheme.

(8) low applicative $[_{VP} \text{NP}_{appl} [_{v'} [_{v} [_{v} \text{V-ap}]-\text{appl}] \text{NP}_{obl}/\text{PRO}]]]$

Extension: Some verbs in EA show no morphology in the antipassive construction. Importantly, these verbs come from Levin's (1999) class of non-core transitive verbs. Core transitive verbs such as 'break', which denote an externally caused change of state verb, always show antipassive morphology. I propose that non-core transitive verbs can introduce their argument and thus do not need an *ap* morpheme.

(9) kenir-tuq kenir: $\lambda x \lambda e[\text{cook}(e, x)]$ CAY (Miyaoaka 2012)

cook-ind.3sg

She is cooking something.

As expected, these verbs do not show an antipassive morpheme in the applicative.

(10) keni-ut-aa neq-mek angun

cook-appl-ind.3sg.3sg fish.abm.sg man.abs.sg

She cooked fish for the man.

Conclusion: Ever since Kratzer (1996), building on Marantz (1984) and Parsons (1990), proposed to 'sever' the external argument, a lingering question has been whether or not verbs introduce any of their arguments. An alternative is that all arguments are introduced syntactically (Borer 2005; Ramchand 2008; Bowers 2010; Lohndahl 2014; Alexiadou 2014; Acedo-Mattelán and Mateu 2015). This study argues that core transitive verbs such as 'break' do not introduce their internal argument, but noncore transitive verbs such as 'cook' can. By upending the standard notion that antipassivization always involves argument elimination or demotion, but can also involve argument addition, this study accounts for not only the distribution of null and marked antipassives, but also a seemingly contradictory cross-linguistic relationship between antipassivization and applicativization.