


A Unified Account of Passives and Causatives: The Case of Mongolian and Japanese

CORE PROPOSALS This paper aims to justify the following proposals. **First**, passives and causatives are subject to a unified analysis. **Second**, Mongolian is a low-passive language and Japanese is a high-passive one. **Third**, introduction of arguments as potential subjects (predicate-internal subjects), notated as *sbj*, through voice heads is mirrored by affixation of voice morphemes. **Fourth**, there are at least three different heights of *sbj*s and corresponding voice suffixes. **Fifth**, a last-merged *sbj* is promoted to SBJ, instantiating Relativized Minimality. **Sixth**, there is only one type of argument-introducer, namely Voice.

(1)  [TP SBJ [VoiceP3 *sbj*3 [VoiceP2 *sbj*2 [VoiceP1 *sbj*1 [VP AF₁] AF₂] AF₃]]

SYNTAX-MORPHOLOGY MIRRORING Passive-causative interactions in Mongolian and Japanese are subjected to Mirror Principle. A passive affix (PS) either precedes or follows a causative affix (CS), instantiating either a causative-of-passive or a passive-of-causative structure. According to their syntactic and semantic properties, PS and CS are classified into lexical and syntactic suffixes, represented by PS/CS_{lex} and PS/CS_{syn}. Combining their ordering and height yields four patterns as in (2). Mongolian has the structures in (2a), (2b) and (2c), lacking (2d), and Japanese has (2b), (2c), (2d), lacking (2a).

- (2) a. [VoiceP3 [VoiceP2 [VoiceP1 [VP] -PS_{lex}] -CS_{syn}]] (M: *neme-gd-uul*)
 b. [VoiceP3 [VoiceP2 [VoiceP1 [VP] -CS_{lex}] -PS_{syn}]] (M: *šat-aa-gd*; J: *ot-os-are*)
 c. [VoiceP3 [VoiceP2 [VoiceP1 [VP]] -PS_{syn}] -CS_{syn}] (M: *tani-gd-uul*; J: *sikar-are-sase*)
 d. [VoiceP3 [VoiceP2 [VoiceP1 [VP]] -CS_{syn}] -PS_{syn}] (J: *tabe-sase-rare*)

PS_{lex}-CS_{syn} is exemplified by *neme-gd-uul* (3), where *-gd* does not function to passivize but to detransitivize *neme* ‘add’. A dative agent is disallowed (Bai 2023). *Neme-gd* means “increase (intr)”, not “be added”, and *neme-gd-uul* means “increase (tr)”. PS_{lex} is thus a fake passive marker. CS_{lex}-PS_{syn}, PS_{syn}-CS_{syn} and CS_{syn}-PS_{syn} in (2b-d) are exemplified in (4-6), respectively.

- (3) Bi hūč-ee neme-gd-uul-v. [Mongolian]
 1st-NOM strength-ACC-RX add-PS-CS-PST
 ‘I increased my strength.’ (‘Lit. I caused my strength to be added.’)
 (4) a. *šat-aa-gd* [Mongolian] b. *ot-os-are* [Japanese]
 burn-CS-PS ‘be burned’ fall-CS-PS ‘be dropped’
 (5) a. *Dorž-ig tani-gd-uul* [Mongolian] b. *Hanako-o/ni sikar-are-sase* [Japanese]
 Dorž-ACC recognize-PS-CS Hanako-DAT scold-PS-CS
 ‘cause D to be recognized’ (Umetani 2006) ‘cause H to be scolded’ (Tsujimura 1999: 259)
 (6) *tabe-sase-rare* [Japanese]
 eat-CS-PS ‘be made to eat’ (Aoyagi 2021: 88)

CS_{lex}-CS_{syn} is attested in both languages. CS_{syn}-CS_{syn} is attested in Mongolian but not in Japanese.

- (7) a. [VoiceP3 [VoiceP2 [VoiceP1 [VP] -CS_{lex}] -CS_{syn}]] (M: *šat-aa-lg*; J: *or-os-ase*)
 b. [VoiceP3 [VoiceP2 [VoiceP1 [VP]] -CS_{syn}] -CS_{syn}] (M: *uu-lg-uul*)
 (8) a. *šat-aa-lg* [Mongolian] b. *or-os-ase* [Japanese]
 burn(intr)-CS-CS ‘to cause to burn(tr)’ drop(intr)-CS-CS ‘to cause to drop(tr)’
 (9) Bi Dorž-oor hūü-d-ee em-ig-ni uu-lg-uul-la. [Mongolian]
 1st-NOM Dorž-INS son-DAT-RX medicine-ACC-RX drink-CS-CS-PST
 ‘With Dorž’s help, I made my son drink the medicine.’ (Kullman and Tserenpil 2015: 119)

Notably, the height of voice suffixes is mirrored by their compactness and variety.

		AF ₁ (Voice1)	AF ₂ (Voice2)	AF ₃ (Voice3)
Mongolian	PS	<i>-gd, -d, -t</i>	<i>-gd</i>	<i>-uul</i>
	CS	<i>-aa, -uul, -lg</i>	<i>-uul, -lg</i>	
Japanese	PS	<i>-e, -s, -as, -ase, ...</i>	<i>-are, -rare</i>	<i>-rare</i>
	CS		<i>-ase, -sase</i>	<i>-sase</i>

Vowel-sensitive allophonic variants, if any, of each suffix are left out in the table.

THEORETICAL ISSUES In explaining the above observations, we first need to justify that PS (*-gd* and *-(r)are*) is a bivalent functional head (Nie 2020b: 25ff), which introduces the embedded passive subject and a clausal complement; that is, the passive subject is licensed below T but outside VP. This leads to the fact that passivization does not necessarily involve SBJ. When involving SBJ, passivization is successive-cyclic (O→sbj→SBJ). Successive-cyclicality is also evidenced by the reconstruction effect in English passives (Legate 2003). In addition, ACC-to-DAT raising (Japanese) and ACC-to-ACC raising (Mongolian and Japanese) in causative-of-passives (5) already represents passivization. Building the structure up to [VoiceP2 sbj2_i [VoiceP1 sbj1 [VP t_i]]] for (5), if no DP is introduced as sbj3, sbj2 will be promoted to SBJ in Spec of TP, instantiating successive-cyclic passivization. If a DP is introduced as sbj3, sbj2 fails promotion, as a Relativized Minimality effect, and remains non-nominative (see also Poole 2016 for discussion on RM of subjecthood observed in other languages). Moreover, given that in passives the agentive DP is syntactically projected as an implicit argument, labelled KP (Collins 2024), Spec of vP (VoiceP1 here) cannot be open for the passive subject, as predicted by Kratzer's (1996: 132) Realization Principle and Legate's (2012: 234) statement that internal merge must target every new label. This necessitates Voice2-over-Voice1. For Voice3-over-Voice2, the common syntactic properties of causatives and passives as interconnected voice constructions serves to be sound reasoning. Additional support is found in Nie (2020a), who argues that the Voice-over-Voice configuration assigns causative semantics.

Following Wood and Marantz (2017), an argument-introducer has a selectional feature [S:D], which is satisfied by selecting a DP as an argument. However, contra Wood and Marantz (2017), who argue that the argument-introducer (their *i**) is an independent head that can mediate between a DP and a bare head that is unable to introduce an argument on its own right, this paper argues that Voice, being a truly autonomous syntactic head, is the very argument-introducer with [S:D] and EPP. [S:D] and EPP on Voice are satisfied by introducing a DP, which therefore acquires subjecthood but is not necessarily a bearer of the external role. The theta-role a DP bears is not relevant with the nature of a head as an argument-introducer. Voice is thus a sbj-introducer, not simply an external-argument-introducer.

HOW MONGOLIAN AND JAPANESE DIFFER First, only Mongolian allows PS_{lex}-CS_{syn}, where PS_{lex} is a fake passive marker. *Neme* 'add' and *neme-gd* 'increase (intr)' in (3) are distinct lexemes. They are stored independently in the lexicon. That is, the complex R/V+Voice1 is assigned the morpheme *neme* by the Vocabulary Insertion rule when Voice1 introduces a DP as sbj1 via *external* merge, and *neme-gd* is inserted into the complex if Voice1 (re)introduces a DP as sbj1 via *internal* merge. In the first case, sbj1 is assigned the agent role and in the second case, it is already assigned a patient role when it is base-generated within VP. (10) a. [VoiceP1 DP2(=sbj) ∅ [VP DP1]]. b. [VoiceP1 DP1(=sbj) -gd [VP t_{DP1}]] (fake passive).

That is, fake passives such as *neme-gd* instantiate an alternative structure building, which is based on a different lexical item, in the pattern discussed by Legate et al. (2020). Second, only Japanese allows CS_{syn}-PS_{syn}. This connects to the property of Japanese as an indirect-passive language. Notice that Japanese features gapless adversivity passives, whose subject has often been assumed to be introduced by a high applicative head (Pylkkänen 2008). Such a head, however, may be subsumed under Voice as a unified argument-introducer and replaced by Voice3. Thus, passivization is "higher" in Japanese than in Mongolian. Third, only Mongolian allows CS_{syn}-CS_{syn}, which maximally involves four arguments. Interestingly, the second causee must bear a dative case, but not an instrumental or an accusative case, which is a dedicated case for the causee in Mongolian canonical causatives. The lack of such a differential case-marking mechanism in Japanese leads to the absence of CS_{syn}-CS_{syn} from the language, which obligatorily assigns a dedicated accusative or dative case to the causee.

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