

Lecture 16: Passives. For-Infinitives.

Andrei Antonenko

LIN 311: Syntax

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Outline

- ① Passives
 - Properties
 - Movement Analysis
 - Burzio's Generalization
- ② For-Infinitives

Passives

Passive constructions

Passives in English

(1) Active vs. Passive

- a. Chaucer wrote the Canterbury Tales in 1387. Active
- b. The Canterbury Tales **were written** in 1387 (by Chaucer).
Passive

Properties of passives

- ① Auxiliary *to be* is used.
- ② AGENT θ -role disappears.
- ③ Passive verbs don't assign accusative case:

- (2) a. *The Canterbury Tales were **written him**.
- b. *There were **written The Canterbury Tales** in 1387.

Passive constructions

Only nouns can be passivized

- (3)
- a. John put **the book** on the table.
 - b. **The book**_i was put ____i on the table.
 - c. ***On the table**_j was put the book ____j.

Lack of accusative case

- Only NPs can passivize; PPs cannot passivize.
- Why do NPs move in passives and PPs don't?

Hypothesis: NPs in passive constructions move for **Case**, because passive verbs don't assign accusative case.

- This is also the reason why PPs don't move and why (3-c) is ungrammatical.

Argument for movement: idioms

Idiomatic expressions

- (4)
- They are **making** some **headway** on a solution.
 - They will **give** little **heed** to her proposal.
 - The government **keeps** close **tabs** on his operations.

Idiom chunks: licensing

- Objects in idioms must be selected by a **particular verb** only:
- (5)
- We **like** your progress/***headway** in solving this problem.
 - She is always trying to **attract** my attention/***heed**.

Argument for movement: idioms

Idiom chunks as subjects

- These idiom NPs are also **bad as subjects**:

- (6)
- a. Progress/***Headway** is slower than one expects.
 - b. Attention/***Heed** facilitates learning.

Idiom chunks in passives

- **But**: they can be **subjects in passive constructions**, as long as the verb is right:

- (7)
- a. Some **headway** in being **made** on this solution.
 - b. Little **heed** was **paid** to her proposal.

Since **idiom chunks** must be **licensed locally**, we can conclude that they start as complements of their licensing verbs, and **move**.

Argument for movement: resultatives

Resultatives: state of the object

- (8)
- We painted the table red.
 - Sue hammered the metal flat.
 - The cop shot the criminal dead.

- Resultative phrase indicates the final state of the object.

Not the state of the subject

- Resultatives never describe the state of the subject:

- (9)
- *We painted the table sweaty. (≠ we are happy)
 - *Sue hammered the metal tired. (≠ Sue is tired)
 - *The cop shot the criminal happy. (≠ the cop is happy)

Argument for movement: resultatives

Objects that are not complements

- Objects modified by the resultatives don't even have to be "real" objects:

- (10) a. We laughed **him** of the stage.
 b. I shouted **myself** hoarse.
 c. He read **the children** to sleep.
- (11) a. *We laughed **him**.
 b. *I shouted **myself**.
 c. *He read **the children**.

- These verbs don't even allow complements without resultatives!

Argument for movement: resultatives

Objects that are not complements

- Objects modified by the resultatives don't even have to be “real” objects, even though they still have to be directly after verbs (and not separated by an adverb):

- (10) a. We laughed (*raucously) him of the stage.
 b. I shouted (*loudly) myself hoarse.
 c. He read (*soothingly) the children to sleep.
- (11) a. *We laughed him.
 b. *I shouted myself.
 c. *He read the children.

- These verbs don't even allow complements without resultatives!

Argument for movement: resultatives

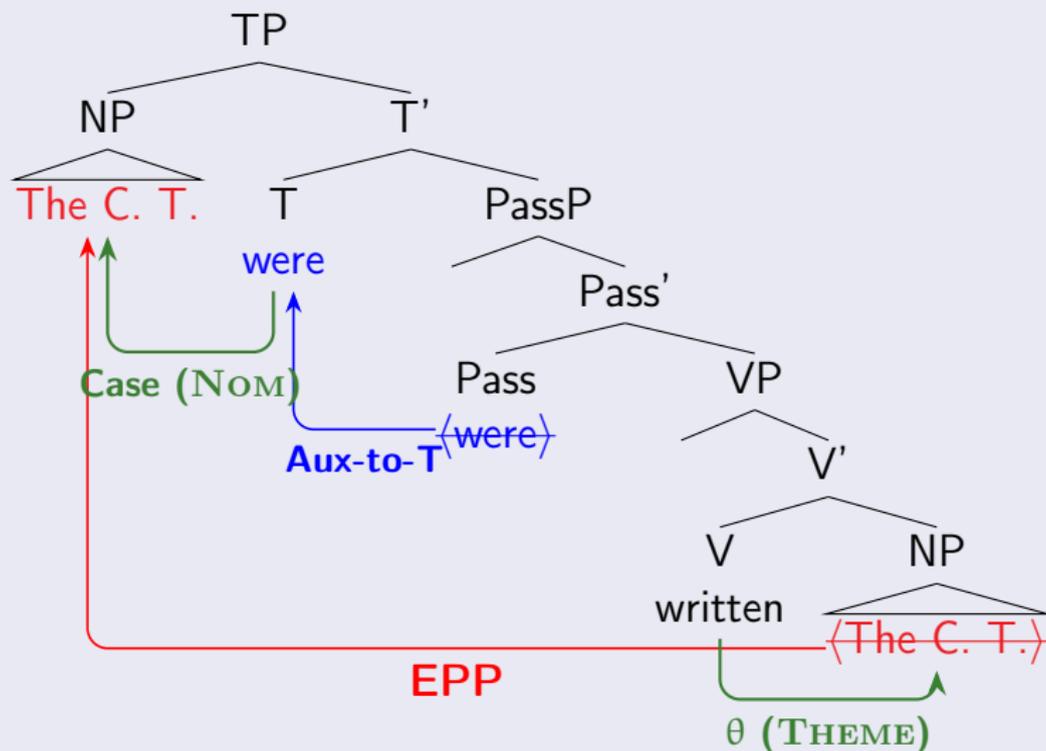
Resultatives in passives

- Even though resultatives must modify something **directly preceding them**, they are also **ok with subjects of passives**:

- (12)
- a. **The table** was painted **red**.
 - b. **The metal** was hammered **tired**.
 - c. **The criminal** was shot **dead**.

Since **resultatives** modify **local NPs**, we can conclude that objects start next to resultatives, as complements of V, and **move**.

(13) The Canterbury Tales were written.



Burzio's Generalization

In passive constructions:

- No **external θ -role** (AGENT);
- No **accusative case**.

In active (transitive) constructions:

- There is an **external θ -role** (AGENT);
- There is an **accusative case**.

Burzio's Generalization

Burzio's Generalization: If a predicate has no external θ -role, it cannot assign accusative case.

- **Only one way implication:** intransitive predicated have external θ -role and no accusative case!

Raising vs. Passive

- In both raising and passive constructions, NP raises to **get Case**:
 - In **Raising** construction, it raises from the non-finite clause subject position, since non-finite T doesn't assign nominative.
 - In **Passive** constructions, it raises from the verb complement position, since passive verbs don't assign accusative.
- In both of these constructions, this NP movement also **satisfies the EPP**.
- In both cases, moved NP gets a nominative case from the matrix T.

For-Infinitives

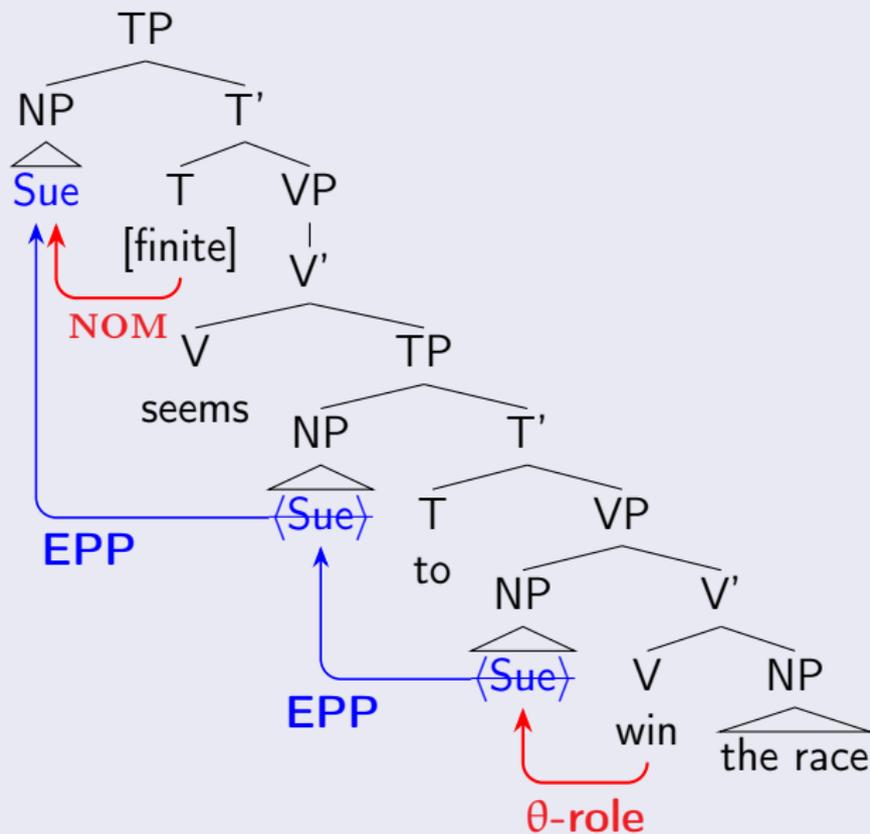
Non-finite clauses: Raising

Reminder

(14) Sue_i seems to ____i win the race

- **Raising predicates** is the first construction we saw with non-finite embedded clause. In such constructions:
 - Subject receives θ -role in the embedded non-finite clause;
 - Subject raises to the matrix clause to get Case and to satisfy the subject condition (EPP).
- Typical raising predicates: **to seem**, **to appear**, **to be likely**, etc.

(15) Sue_i seems to ____i win the race.



for-Infinitives

We have seen before that **for** can occur with non-finite clauses:

- (16) a. I want **for** Sally to get the job.
 b. I would be happy **for** him to win the game.

for as a complementizer

- We already saw that **for** is not the head of PP with embedded subject as **for**'s complement (movement test fails as shown below), but a **complementizer**:

- (17) a. ***For** Sally, I want ___ to get the job.
 b. ***For** him, I would be happy ___ to win the game.

θ -theory

θ -theory

(18) John arranged [for Sally to win the game].

- The matrix verb **arranged** assigns two θ -roles:
 - AGENT to its external argument (**John**);
 - THEME to the embedded clause (**[for Sally to win the game]**).
- The embedded verb **win** assigns two θ -roles:
 - AGENT to its external argument (**Sally**);
 - THEME to its internal argument (**the game**).

θ-theory

Case theory

(19) John arranged [for Sally to win the game].

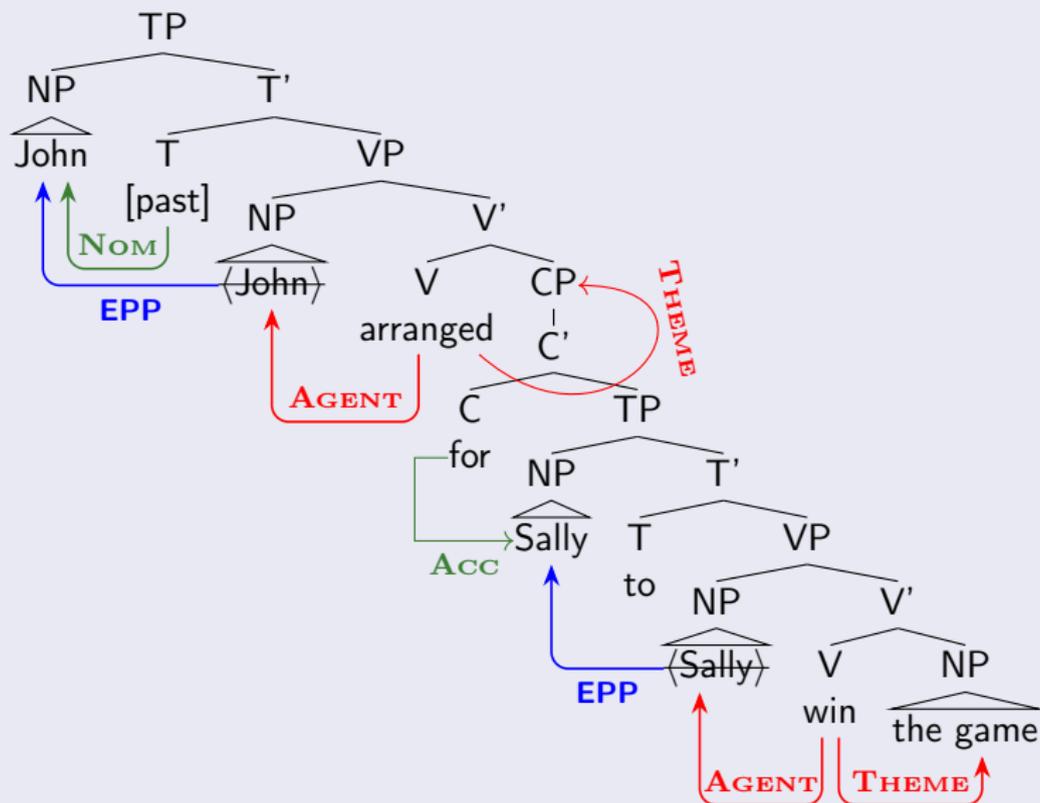
- How does Sally get case?
 - to is non-finite and does not assign Case.
 - Accusative Case must come from for!

Adjacency

- Accusative case is assigned to the adjacent phrase. This is indeed the case if we assume that for assigns accusative case:
 - Adverb tomorrow can usually occur between the complementizer and the subject of the finite clause, as in (20-b).
 - But it is impossible with complementizer for, (20-a).

- (20) a. *John arranged [for tomorrow Sally to win the game].
 b. John thinks [that tomorrow Sally will win the game].

(21) John arranged [for Sally to win the game].



for-Infinitives: Summary

In **for**-infinitives:

- There is a limited class of verbs that allow **for**-complements: *arrange*, *want*, etc.
- All **θ-roles** are assigned locally.
- Complementizer **for** assigns (**Accusative**) **Case** to the embedded subject under adjacency.
 - Usually, complementizers don't assign case.
 - Accusative case is usually assigned only by Vs and Ps to their complements.
 - For some reason, **for** does. Probably its prepositional nature shows somehow. . .

for-Infinitives: Summary

