

Featural Composition of Voice¹

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The paper argues against the commonly assumed connection between the two properties of the clause: availability of the structural accusative and the presence of the external argument. Known as Burzio's generalization, this idea has been a source of many theoretical insights. In particular, it has been proposed that these properties characterize one of the two "flavours" of the light v head: transitive v projects the external argument and assigns the accusative, whereas inchoative/passive v lacks a specifier and the case-assigning ability (Chomsky 1995). Recently, a number of proposals has been made that somehow loosen this strongest variant of light v taxonomy. Alexiadou & Doron (2012) put forward the detailed typology of passives and middles, arguing that a language may rely only on the passive or middle (head) or on both of them. Collins (2005) proposed a creative smuggling approach to passives that enables both active and passive voice heads to merge an external argument. In this paper, we introduce the feature geometry of v head that accounts for syntax and spellout of passives, anticausatives, middles, causatives and transitive impersonals, as well as nominalizations in Turkic and Russian. We propose that light v contains two different features, $[\Theta]$ and $[\text{acc}]$. The first one is responsible for the merge of external arguments, whereas the second one – for case assignment. "Burzio" passives (1) are examples of $[-\Theta]$, $[-\text{acc}]$ feature combination:

(1) *The city was destroyed.*

We rely "anti-Burzio" phenomena on the rarely attested but not excluded feature configurations. We borrow from (Alexiadou & Doron 2012) the idea that a language may choose whether to use its passive morphology to derive passive, anticausative or both. Contra (Alexiadou & Doron 2012), we propose that (at least in some languages) both passive and anticausative may be analyzed as instances of the same light v with different feature values. We also adopt Collins' idea that passives as well as actives may introduce external Θ -roles.

Turkic and Russian provide us with a number of constructions exemplifying different combination of features of the light v . Thus, applying passive morphology to a transitive verb in Turkic yields passive (2a) and anticausative (2b) readings:

(2) išek aç-y-l-dy Tatar
door open-ST-PASS-PST

a) *(Somebody) opened the door.*

b) *The door opened.*

Both (2a) and (2b) differ from the active clause in that they have the underlying internal argument promoted to the subject position. We argue that the passive marker *-l-* spells out the feature that disallows accusative marking, $[-\text{acc}]$. Based on the contrast between (2a) and (2b) we propose that the anticausative instance of the passive bears an agent demoting feature, $[-\Theta]$, in addition. At the same time implicit agent in passive reading corresponds to the value $[\Theta]$ of little v , so $[-\text{acc}]$ and $[-\Theta]$ should not necessarily come together.

Turkic passives may apply to intransitive (unaccusative) verbs to derive middle interpretation:

(3) alma çyr-y-l-dy Tatar
apple rot-ST-PASS-PST

Apples rot easily.

The grammaticality of (3) can be understood under the proposed analysis of the anticausative v as bearing $[-\Theta]$, $[-\text{acc}]$ features. Middle formation from unaccusatives serves as an evidence that the internal argument can be promoted in the absence of the external argument, in other words, $[-\text{acc}]$ is not dependent on $[-\Theta]$.

The independence of the positive values of the two features is evidenced by the causative formation in Tatar. In (4), the causative morphology creates a transitive verb from an

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intransitive: it adds a causer (agent) and assigns the accusative to the causee, ex-subject of an intransitive. So the causative morpheme does the same job for intransitives as the light *v* does for transitives: it adds an external Θ -role and assigns accusative; i.e. it is [+ Θ], [+acc].

- (4) min marat-ny jyz-dyr-dy-m Tatar
I Marat-ACC swim-CAUS-PST-1SG

I made Marat swim.

The causative morpheme can also apply to a transitive verb, this time not affecting (accusative) case assignment:

- (5) Marat alsu-dan išek-ne aç-dyr-dy Tatar
Marat Alsu-ABL door-ACC open-CAUS-PAST

Marat made Alsu open the door.

So the featural composition of the causative *v* in (5) is [+ Θ], [-acc]. Therefore we can conclude that the causative morpheme in Tatar spells out the [+ Θ] *v* head.

Russian “transitive unaccusatives” provide us with one more combination of [Θ] and [acc] specification. A direct object in (6) is marked accusative in the absence of an agent / causer:

- (6) Plot uneslo (volnoj). Russian
Raft carried.away (by.wave) (Lavine 2014)

The raft was carried away (by waves).

We analyze transitive impersonal examples like (6) along the lines of (Lavine 2014): the accusative can be licensed “in the absence of external agency”. The absence of an explicit morphological marking in this construction can be subsumed under the generalization that in Russian, only [-acc] light *vs* receive a special spellout (i.e. the *-sja* affix).

Finally, let’s consider Russian nominalizations with process readings. Their puzzling property is that they can project the external argument (7) and allow for agent-oriented adverbials (8) but never assign accusative to their internal argument (9).

- (7) upravlenije rabočix fabrikoj Russian
governing workers.GEN factory.INSTR

the workers’ governing (of) the factory

- (8) zatopenije korablja čtoby polučit’ straxovku Russian
sinking ship.GEN COMP receive.INF insurance.ACC

sinking the ship in order to get the insurance

- (9) *čtenije detej knigu Russian
reading children.GEN book.ACC

int.: *children’s reading (of) the book*

This peculiar construal can be easily subsumed under the proposed analysis: Russian nominalizations select for a [+ Θ], [-acc] light *v*P.

Thus, we propose the following voice system:

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|-------------------------|---------------------|-----------------------|-------------|
| (10) active, causative: | +Agent, +Accusative | [+ Θ], [+acc] | (4,5) |
| passive: | +Agent, -Accusative | [+ Θ], [-acc] | (2a), (7,8) |
| anticausative, middle: | -Agent, -Accusative | [- Θ], [-acc] | (2b) |
| transitive impersonal: | -Agent, +Accusative | [- Θ], [+acc] | (6) |

The spell-out rules define how particular feature combination is realized in a language:

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|----------------------------|---------------|---------------------------------|-------|
| (11) [- Θ], [-acc] | → -ed | “Burzio passive” | (1) |
| [-acc] | → -l- | Tatar passive and anticausative | (2) |
| [+ Θ] | → -tyr- | Tatar causative | (4,5) |
| [- Θ], [+acc] | → \emptyset | Russian transitive impersonal | (6) |

References: Alexiadou, A. & E. Doron 2012. The syntactic construction of two non-active Voices: passive and middle. Burzio, L. 1986. Italian Syntax. Collins, Chris. 2005. A Smuggling Approach to Raising in English. Chomsky, N. 1995. The Minimalist Program. Lavine, James. 2010. Case and Events in Transitive Impersonals.