

Featural Composition of Voice

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Θ-assignment in the passive

(Chomsky 1981)

Passives have no external Θ-role.

Burzio’s Generalization (Burzio 1986)

A verb assigns an external role, iff it has the property of assigning accusative case.

(Chomsky 1995)

Transitive *v* projects the external argument and assigns the accusative, whereas unaccusative/passive *v* lacks a specifier and the case-assigning ability

(Jaeggli 1986), (Baker, Johnson & Roberts 1989)

The passive morpheme -en is an argument, which functions as a bearer of Case and an external Θ-role.

(Collins 2005)

In the active and passive voices an external argument is merged in the same way.



Views on voice derivation

i) The active is structurally simpler than the passive, GB-approach, (Chomsky 1981)

The passive suffix -en absorbs accusative Case.

The passive suffix -en absorbs the external h-role.

ii) The passive is structurally simpler than the active, for example, (Kratzer 1996)

“The heads that introduce external arguments are inflectional elements that assign accusative case.”

iii) No strict derivational relation between passives and actives, (Alexiadou & Doron 2012)

A language may rely only on the passive / middle or passive and middle heads to derive passive, middle and anticausative semantics. In some languages different voices may pattern, as active-middle in English or middle-passive in Greek. In other languages actives, middles and passives are differentiated.



In this paper:

- ❖ a typology of theta and case assigning properties in Turkic and Slavic
- ❖ all possible combinations of case and Θ-roles attested
- ❖ passive and middle voices are not derived from the active
- ❖ different voice morphology is due to realization rules

United Voice approach:

☐ Different voices are formed by the features [+/-Θ], [+/-acc] on *v*.

☐ Spellout rules define realization of these features in different languages.

Burzio verbs:

Thus light *v* contains two different features, [Θ] and [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 [-Θ], [-acc] feature combination:

(1) The city was destroyed. English

→ “Anti-Burzio” phenomena are a rarely attested but not excluded feature configurations.

Turkic passives and middles:

Passive morphology in Turkic yields passive (2a) or anticausative (2b) readings:

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

a) (Somebody) opened the door.

b) The door opened.

	features	spellout
a)	[+Θ], [-acc]	-l-
b)	[-Θ], [-acc]	-l-

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, [-acc]. Based on the contrast between (2a) and (2b) we propose that the anticausative instance of the passive bears an agent demoting feature, [-Θ], in addition. At the same time implicit agent in passive reading corresponds to the value [+Θ] of little *v*, so [-acc] and [-Θ] should not necessarily come together.

Turkic dispositional middles:

Turkic passive morphology may apply to intransitive (unaccusative) verbs to derive dispositional middles:

(3) alma çyr-y-l-yj Tatar
apple rot-ST-PASS-PRS

Apples rot easily.

	features	spellout
(3)	[-Θ], [-acc]	-l-

The grammaticality of (3) can be understood under the proposed analysis of the anticausative *v* as bearing [-Θ], [-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, [-acc] is not dependent on [-Θ].

Turkic causatives:

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 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 features spellout
I Marat-ACC swim-CAUS-PST-1SG
I made Marat swim. [+Θ], [+acc] -dyr-

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

(5) Marat alsu-dan išek-ne aç-tyr-dy Tatar features spellout
Marat Alsu-ABL door-ACC open-CAUS-PAST
Marat made Alsu open the door. [+Θ], [-acc] -dyr-

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 impersonal:

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 features spellout
Raft carried.away (by.wave) (Lavine 2014) [+Θ], [+acc] -∅-

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 -*sj*a affix).

Russian nominalizations:

Russian nominalizations with process readings can project the external argument (7) and allow for agent-oriented adverbials (8) but never assign accusative to their internal argument (9), see also (Alexiadou, Anagnostopoulou & Schafer 2007)

(7) upravlenije rabočix fabrikov 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 / knigi Russian
reading children.GEN book.ACC / book.GEN

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.

Feature composition:

(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)	

Spell-out rules:

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

United Voice analyses:

Advantages: → unified, non-derivational approach to different voices
 For future research: → need to explain the typological disproportion of "Burzio passives" and case / Θ-assigning passives
 Genetic / areal explanation: → probably, Burzio’s generalization fits best the European “be + participle” constructions and inherited from the proto-state

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