On Verbal/Adjectival Properties of the Passive Voice*

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1. Introduction

It seems there are two main directions which may be followed when studying the passive voice. One is study on the sentential level, and the other is that on the inter-sentential level. The former might be called a centripetal method of study, and the latter a centrifugal one. Both kinds of studies should be complementary to each other. A combination of the two ways must surely give quite a clear picture of the passive voice. To show the significance of inter-sentential study, let us consider the next passage:

(1) Despite the usual preference for the West, the periodic swing back of the pendulum toward traditional values in Japan *has been accompanied* each time by a rise of <u>pan-Asian feelings</u>. Around the turn of the century Okakura, the philosopher-art historian, declared sententiously and quite inaccurately that "Asia is one." In the 1930s the militarists claimed to be liberating Asia from Western corruption and exploitation. The upsurge in the 1970s of the *Nihonjin-ron*, the search for Japaneseness, *was accompanied* by much talk about Asian roots and cultural solidarity. Actually <u>these pan-Asian sentiments</u> *were* never *supported* by much substance. The pan-Asian sentiments of the Japanese themselves *were felt* largely for Chinese and *applied* little to other Asians.

(E. O. Reischauer, *The Japanese*)

This is a typical example of an *informative* style,[1] where passive constructions are used very effectively. It should be noted that how and why particular passive constructions are chosen cannot be reasoned out except by means of an inter-sentential point of view. We are reminded that it has long been a controversial problem which is more prominent, a passive subject or a by-agent. Take the example of the sentence *He was killed by John.*

Traditional grammarians, like Poutsma (1926: XLVll, 9), claim that *He* and *John* both can receive prominence. In the course of the development of modern linguistics, however, it has become clear that *He* is a theme or given information and *John* is a focus or new information. Therefore, the weight of *He* and of *John* is quite different in kind. And what is new information at this point can assume the role of given information in the next sentence, or a few sentences later. Such consecutive sentences as *She was killed by John. He was a cruel person.* are very common. Then let us look at the passage (1) again, where the phrase *pan-Asian feelings* is first introduced in the form of a by-agent, as new information, and it continues to be the focus of the following sentences and finally emerges in the subject position as the theme of the sentence. I would like to call this phenomenon *shift of empathy.*[2] It would be an interesting and fruitful study to try to elucidate the rules applicable to this phenomenon, and it might also be useful for the linguistic analysis of literary texts, which is sure to be one of my targets in the near future.[3]

Indeed that inter-sentential study is a very interesting area is glimpsed above, but in this article I would like to focus upon problems with passive constructions on thesentential level, where a great deal of ambiguity still remains unsolved. As the title shows, our purpose is to approach the verbal and adjectival properties of the passive voice. *His bills were already paid* and *His bills were paid regularly* have the same passive verb-form, but the former is *statal* and the latter *actional*. This is the very beginning of ambivalence between adjectival and verbal properties of passive forms.

Firstly I will examine the *passive scale* [Quirk *et al. (op. cit.)*], and further discuss its relationship with the traditional *actional/statal* distinction. In the meantime, ambiguities in the distinctions between *agentless passives* and *non-agentive passives* as made by Quirk *et al.* will be pointed out. Secondly, a comparison of past participles with pure adjectives will be made with reference to some linguists' remarks. It will be shown that I am reluctant to accept the trend towards dealing with passives on the same level as pure adjectives. As I see it, many of the past participles semantically imply some action —— direct or indirect, however similar they may be to pure adjectives in their syntactic func-tions. Thirdly I will investigate get-passives and become + past participles. *Get* and *become* are sometimes called *marked passive auxiliaries* by contrast with *be*. On the other hand, since they are used as pure *copulas* in *He got ready to go* and *It became warm*, they are generally thought of as a tester of the adjectival properties of past participles used in passive sentences. However, it is wrong to treat *get* and *become* on the same level. *Become* has too many restrictions to be called a passive auxiliary. Only *get* deserves the name.

Lastly I will discuss *transitivity* and some features of verbal units. Throughout the article, the present situation of transformational grammar will be referred to if necessary.

2. The Passive Scale

Quirk *et al.* (*ibid.*: 12. 14) postulate the passive scale as follows:

(2) This violin was made by my father.

(3) This conclusion is hardly justified by the results.

(4) Coal has been replaced by oil.

(5) This difficulty can be avoided in several ways.

(6) We are encouraged to go on with the subject.

(7) John was interested in linguistics.

(8) The modern world becomes more highly industrialized and mechanized.

(2) and (3) are *agentive passives* with the agent indicated explicitly. (4) and (5) are also *agentive passives*, though in (4) *by oil* is a *Janus agent*[4] and in (5) the agent is not expressed. The reason why (5) is called an agentive passive is that the missing agent can be recovered in some ways, for example, with *by us* or *by them*. For this reason, (5) is named *an agentless agentive passive*.[5] This type of passive is most widely used of all the agentive type passives. (6) and (7) are called *quasi-passives*.[6] And the last one on the scale, (8), is called a *non-agentive passive* or an *intensive active complement construction*. Here it should be noted that this scale seems to correspond well enough to the degree of verbal/adjectival properties of the passive voice, at least as far as (2)–(8) are concerned. That is to say, (2) is the highest in the degree of verbal properties, since an animate agent is used. And (8) is the lowest in that degree, but the highest in the degree of adjectival properties, since *become* is used instead of *be*.

Then let us consider the distinction between (5), and on the other hand (6) and (7). In all three cases, it is possible to recover some agent. Nevertheless, (5) falls into a different category from (6) and (7). Apparently this is ambiguous, but it will be made clear if we examine the extent of adjectival properties in each of the three. For that purpose, *very*-insertion and *seem*-insertion are applicable.[7]

(9) *This difficulty can be *very* avoided in several ways.

(10)　We are *very* encouraged to go on with the subject.

(11)　John was *very* interested in linguistics.

(12)　*This difficulty *can seem* (or *seems*) avoided in several ways.

(13)　We *seem* encouraged to go on with the subject.

(14)　John *seemed* interested in linguistics.

Through this examination, it has become clear that (6) and (7) have adjectival properties, while (5) does not.　Next let us consider what the criterion is for distinguishing between *quasi-passives* (6), (7) and *non-agentive passives* (8).

(15)　He was encouraged in linguistics.

(16)　He was encouraged in linguistics by her letter.

(17)　He was interested in linguistics.

(18)　He was interested by the psychology of juries.

(16) and (18) show that agent extension is possible with *be encouraged* and *be interested*. Nonetheless, with (8) it is impossible. Besides the past participles *industrialized* and *mechanized* are very similar in meaning to the pure adjectives *industrial* and *mechanical*. The use of *become* also proves that sentence (8) may be called an *intensive active complement construction*.

3.　Actional/Statal Passives

The distinction between *actional* and *statal* corresponds to that between *verbal* and *adjectival* properties. *Actional/statal* is the traditional terminology used by Curme (1931: 47). Jespersen (1909–49: IV § 8.1 (2)) uses *passive of becoming* for the former and *passive of being* for the latter. Here I would like to deal mainly with *statal passives*.　First, let us cite typical examples:

(19)　His bills *are paid* regularly every month. (actional)

(20)　His bills are paid, so he owes nothing now. (statal)

Pay is a verb which should be included among the *conclusive verbs* of Jespersen (1933: 24.1). According to him, *conclusive verbs* assume a *perfective aspect* and, when used in

passives, express two kinds of aspects as in (19) and (20). On the other hand, *non-conclusive verbs* like *admire* and *believe*, etc. become timeless when turned into past participles, and so they express the statal, and hence adjectival aspect.

Incidentally what is most noticeable is that *statal passives* in the present tense have no active counterparts:

(21) The house *is* already *sold*.

(22) *(The agent) already sells the house.

The active counterpart of (21) would be

(23) (The agent) has already sold the house.

What has occurred is an aspectual shift. F. R. Palmer (*op. cit.* pp. 88–89) claims that verbal properties can be attached to *statal passives* in the present tense by changing them into the present perfect tense:
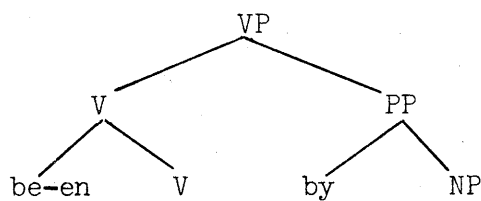
(24) a. The glass is broken. (adjectival)
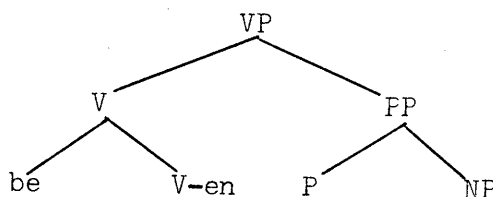
      b. The glass has been broken. (verbal)

(25) a. My bags are packed. (adjectival)

      b. My bags have been packed. (verbal)

Next let us consider transformationalist approaches to *actional/statal passives*. The VP-node of each passive can be illustrated as follows:[3]

Actional Passives
(figure 1)

Statal Passives
(figure 2)

In figure 2, V-en in the V-node is interchangeable with an adjective.

Some linguists, especially transformationalists, seem to consider only *agentive passives*

as real passives. Imai (1975: p. 225) asserts that in the sentence

(26) I was surprised *at* that.

*surprised* is a pure adjective, since it accepts *very, quite*-insertion, but that the sentence

(27) I was surprised *by* that.

is a passive construction because of the existence of the by-agent. He thinks that (26) has no active counterpart and that the subject *I* should be given in the subject position of the underlying structure. On the contrary (27) has its active counterpart and the subject *I* is the object in the underlying structure and *that* is the underlying subject. He adds such interesting examples:

(28) I was surprised *at myself*.
(29) *I was surprised *by myself*.

(28) doesn't violate Postal's (1971) *crossover principle* but (29) does. It is obvious that Imai takes the existence of by-agents as a decisive factor in identifying passive constructions. The next illustration is the underlying structure of passives shown in Culicover (*op. cit.*: pp. 161–162), where a by-agent is introduced from the first.
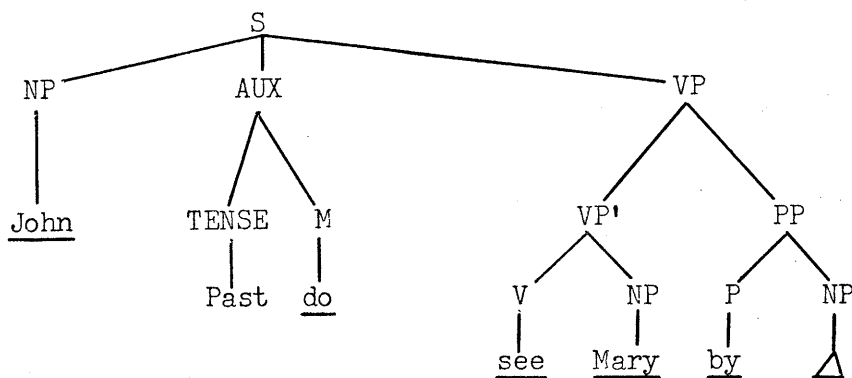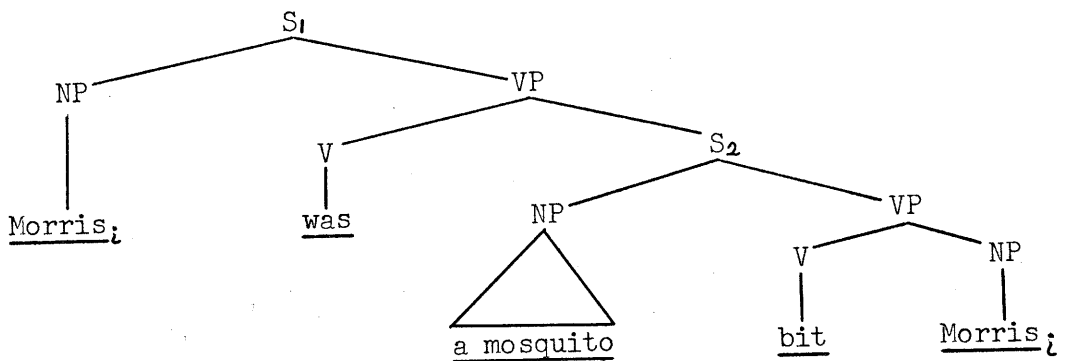

(figure 3)

The order of transformation is 1. Agent Postposing. 2. NP Preposing 3. Do Replacement

4. Affix Hopping and finally the sentence *Mary was seen by John* is generated.[9] Since a by-agent is already given in the underlying structure, such kinds of *quasi-passives* with *quasi-agents* as *be worried about, be surprised at, be interested in, be known to, be bothered with,* cannot be generated, hence they seem to be excluded from the scope of this transformation. Let us examine a little more closely the present situation concerning the transformational treatment of passives. Two completely different kinds of underlying structures of passives are illustrated in Soames & Perlmutter (1979: pp. 202-203). This time *by* is not given from the first, but in the process of derivation it is obligatorily [or optionally] inserted. *Morris was bitten by a mosquito* is derived from either of the following structures:
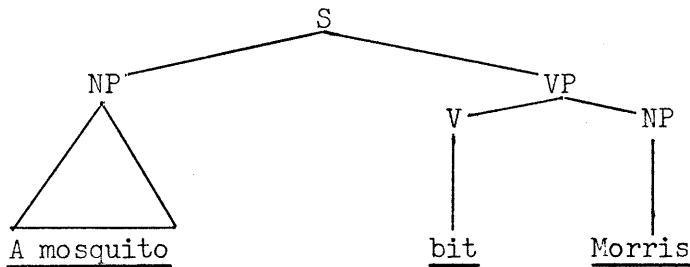
(figure 4)

(figure 5)

The most conspicuous difference between the two figures is that the underlying subject is *A mosquito* in figure 5, while *Morris* is in figure 6.[10] Whichever structure is adopted, there is the possibility of inserting quasi-agents in the process of transformation.

To turn back to the passive scale of Quirk *et al., quasi-passives* are defined as a 'mixed' class whose members have both verbal and adjectival properties. Their adjectival

properties have already been examined in (10), (11), (13) and (14). And their verbal properties are demonstrated by the fact that (15)–(18) have active counterparts. I have so far adopted Quirk *et al.*'s concept of *quasi-passives*, which is well enough defined as seen above. But Mihailovič (1967) uses the term *pseudo-passives* in a different manner. Now let us examine his concept. His *pseudo-passives* are the passives which have no active counterparts, whether they are adjectival or verbal in weight.

(30) He *was drowned* last night in the Willow Brook.

(31) There wasn't a soul in the church when we *were married* except the pew-opener and the curate.

Surely neither has an active counterpart. He criticizes Jespersen who includes them into the passive group in his (1909-49: IV8. 2(5), 8. 4(1)). Furthermore, Mihailovič's next examples have no active counterparts, despite the fact that the lexical exponents in the verbal group preserve their verbal properties and actional force well enough. He maintains that only an adverbial modifier in each sentence blocks the active transform. Thus that group should be enrolled in *pseudo-passives* according to his criteria.

(32) Generations of odours of baking and basting, stewing and skimming *had been absorbed* into the limewashed walls, ...

(33) . . . . my eyes caught sight of the green bicycle, and in an instant it *was photographed* on my mind.

(34) . . . . the sun *was reflected* back from the hoarfrost so that the ground glittered . . . .

From my point of view, the existence of an adverbial modifier in each sentence might play some part in blocking an active transform, but more than that, the action expressed here is wrapped up with some psychological force and transferred into, so to speak, *indirect action*, which seems to make it unnecessary to think of by-agents. This concept of mine, *indirect action*, has some relationship with *get-passives* in section 5, and will also be referred to in section 6.

To summarize what is discussed above, let us consider the relationships between the traditional, aspectual concept *statal* and the syntactic concepts *non-agentive passives* and *quasi-passives.*

(figure 6)

non-agentive (A+B)
statal (B+C+D)
quasi (D+E)
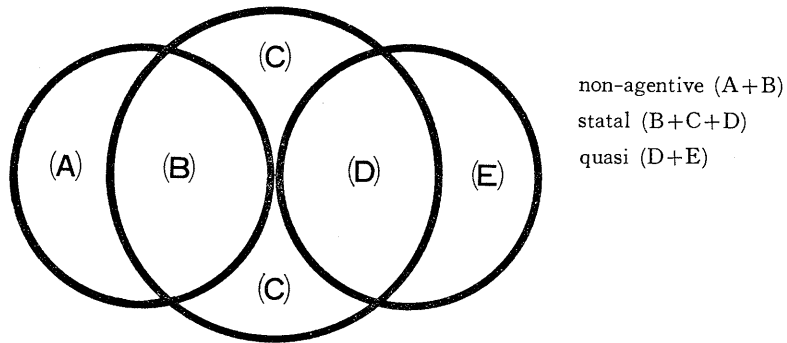
(A) contains such sentences as (32)–(34), and in addition

(35) They have been divorced recently.

(36) They were married last year.

They all preserve their actional force, but it is impossible to identify the agent, hence they are *non-agentive, non-statal passives*. (B) contains

(37) The door was already shut when I went by.

(38) The country was already modernized in those days.

(C), *agentive, statal passives*, contains

(39) Hirohito's current European swing is viewed by most Japanese as symbolic rather than political.

(40) The girls indulged unrestrained in their grief. The gloom–stricken old father was still more borne down by his fate and sorrow.

(40) is a borderline case between *statal* and *actional*. (D) includes

(41) I was surprised at that. (=26)

(42) John was interested in linguistics. (=7)

(41) and (42) are *quasi, statal passives*. And lastly (E) includes such sentences as *He was being annoyed by hecklers during the last half of his speech*, or *At that moment she was*

greatly encouraged by his behaviour. These can be called *quasi, actional passives*, but it might be better to say that they belong to *agentive passives* rather than to *quasi-passives*.

It should be noted that the distinction between *non-agentive passives* and *quasi-passives* and that between traditional *statal* and *actional passives* are subtly different from each other.

4. A Comparison of Past Participles with Adjectives

As is evident so far, past participles possess a scale of *verbal/adjectival properties* as their features. Some linguists (*cf.* Freidin (*op. cit.*)) claim that passive constructions should be treated in the same manner as pure adjective constructions. But should past participles be completely similar to pure adjectives in all cases? Their similarities and differences must be examined.

SIMILARITIES

    (43) John hit Sid.

    (44) Sid was hit.

    (45) Sid was handsome.

In the active sentence (43), the object *Sid* is indispensable. However, in its passive counterpart (44), the by-agent is generally omissible,[11] hence the structure is $NP - be - V\text{-}en$, which is similar to $NP - Copula - Adj$. Even so, it should be noted that verbal properties are retained in (44), while not at all in (45).

    (46) a. The *open* letter lay on the table.

          b. The *opened* letter lay on the table.[12]

    (47) a. The door *open* at 5:00 was closed at 6:00.

          b. The door *opened* by Jim was closed by Paul.

    (48) a. The door was *open* at 5:00.

          b. The door was *opened* by Jack.

These are structural similarities again. However, on the semantic level, a. and b. in each pair have a slight difference. Namely, if *opened* is used, *the letter* and *the door* are *affected entities*. Moreover, Freidin (*ibid.*) claims that the next pair has structural similarities:

(49) a. The turtle *was given an ear* of corn.

b. This *is* too *difficult a problem* to give to a beginner.

Nevertheless, this view completely ignores the semantic difference of the two. Therefore, this should be considered as a chance similarity. Consider the following examples:

(50) a. The bottle *was being emptied* when I arrived.

b. He *is being foolish* to get attention.

Despite Freidin's insistence, (50)b. is a very special, limited transform of *He is foolish* with regard to *aspect*. On the other hand (50)a. is a very common, free transformation from the original *actional passive*. As Freidin himself admits, *the bottle was empty* cannot be turned into a *progressive*.

DIFFERENCES

Culicover (*op. cit.*: p. 166) shows the examples of *Though attraction* and *To be deletion*:

(51) a. Polite though Mary is, nobody will admit it.

b. *Arrested though Jill was by the police, she wasn't upset.

(52) a. John considers Mary [to be] very intelligent.

b. John considers Mary to be offended by everything.

This is a syntactic difference to show the unique feature of past participles. To recapitulate the above discussion, past participles and pure adjectives have close similarities in their syntactic functions. However, the inherent verbal properties still remain in most past participles. And this is the very source of every controversial problem with passive constructions, at least on the level of sentential grammar. This problem might be called the dilemma of the passive voice between *verbal/adjectival properties*. Curme (*op. cit.*: 47b) states:

> In *be* the idea of state so overshadows that of ingression or action that its establishment as an auxiliary in the actional passive is a great misfortune for our language. This lack of an adequate form in the literary language to express action has led in colloquial speech to the use of a more expressive actional form, namely, *get* with ingressive force, like *become*, hence fitted for the expression of action.... If this expressive, actional, passive form with the auxiliary *get*, already quite common

colloquially, ever becomes established in literary English, it will be a decided gain to the language.

5. Get-Passives

Get in passive constructions is recorded by *O. E. D.* from the middle of the seventeenth century. Its primary role is to express actional force of the passive voice more clearly, as is shown in Curme's remark above. But at the same time, the use of *get* seems to be considered to prove the higher degree of the adjectival properties of past participles, shown in the following statements:

Svartvik (*op. cit.*: p. 136) states that lexically marked auxiliaries (=*get, become, grow,* etc.) emphasize *the decreased voice relationship*. Furthermore, Poutsma (*op. cit.*: XLVll. 7) maintains that past participles in *get, become, grow* + past participle constructions are *not so entirely devoid of adjectival characteristics* as in *be*-passives.

    (53) He *got ready* to go.

    (54) He *got soaked* to the skin.

    (55) *The letter *got written* by the poet.

In (53)–(55), the higher extent of the adjectival properties of past participles in get-passives seems to be verified. Moreover, the next examples seem to consolidate this.

    (56) Did you ever *get fed up?*

    (57) I couldn't *get very interested.*

    (58) It keeps me from *getting bored* or something.

    (59) I was wondering where the ducks went when the lagoon *got* all icy and *frozen over.*

    (60) They *got* all *excited* and asked Marty if she'd seen him and all.

    (61) . . . . she's such a lousy dancer the best thing to do is stay at the table and just *get drunk* with her.

    (62) 'Oh, you *get used* to anything,' I said annoyed with myself.

All are very colloquial Americanisms. The past participles of (56)–(62) accept *very* or *quite*-insertion, and the agent-extension is impossible or nearly impossible. Some past participles in get-passives, however, preserve stronger verbal properties. And in such cases get-passives go far beyond the mere tester of the adjectival properties of past participles. This

is very important, as seen in the following examples:

(63) Our house *got painted* last year.

(64) If they make such criticisms they will *get treated* with the contempt they deserve.

(65) This story *got translated* into English.

(66) His bills *got paid* regularly.

(67) The work *got finished*.

(68) He *got knocked* on the head many times.

(69) She *got named* Mary.

(70) The handle *got turned*.

(71) The form *got filled out*.

(72) The window *got broken*.

(63)–(72) can be classified into Quirk *et al.*'s passive scale (5), namely, *agentive, agentless passives*, which retain stronger verbal properties. Agent–extension in (63)–(72) is obviously possible. Poutsma (*op. cit.*: XLVll. 8) points out that *get*, when connected with a past participle, has lost almost entirely its power of indicating incipient action. In short, the marked passive auxiliary *get* can perform much the same role as the unmarked passive auxiliary *be*. Certainly *get* is *the only serious contender* to *be*, as Svartvik (*op. cit.*: p. 149) says.

Svartvik (*ibid.*: pp. 148-149), Quirk *et al.* (*op. cit.*: 12. 3) and Leech & Svartvik (1975: p. 259) claim that get-passives rarely co–occur with by-agents. Nevertheless, in an investigation through the native speakers, that is very doubtful,[13] because it is possible to add a by-agent to each case in (63)–(72), as has already been mentioned before. Note the following:

(73) Our relations got broken off *by the accident*.

(74) He got looked down on *by the girl*.

(75) The expenses got cut down *by the man*.

(76) Our conversation got broken in on *by the man*.

(77) He got seen off *by the girl*.

(78) The post got applied for *by many people*.

(79) The child got cared for *by his mother*.

Poutsma (*op. cit.*: XLV. 9) remarks that get-passives imply *some secondary notion* besides that of passivity. To examine this secondary notion, if any, R. Lakoff (*op. cit.*) offers a viewpoint that seems worth exploring.

EMOTIONAL ASPECT

(80) a. How *was* this window opened? (objective)

b. How did this window *get* opened? (emotional)

The get-passive asks about the responsibility of the agent of *open*.

SPEAKER'S CLOSE INVOLVEMENT IN SURFACE SUBJECTS

(81) a. A cache of marijuana *was* found by Fido, the police dog. (objective)

b. My cache of marijuana *got* found by Fido, the police dog. (speaker's involvement)

(81)b. implies the speaker's involvement in the action and his *unhappiness* with it. Here the concept of *unhappiness* seems significant. It might well be called the concept of *detriment*.[14] The next examples show clearly the speaker's involvement in the surface subject of get-passives by inserting a *modal* and an *adverbial* respectively:

(82) a. Radicals *must be arrested* if we are to keep the Commies from overrunning the U. S.

b. Radicals *must get arrested* to prove their machismo.

(83) a. Mary was shot *on purpose*.

b. Mary got shot *on purpose*.

The subject of *must* in (82)a. is the underlying subject, here *we*, while it is the surface subject *Radicals* in (82)b. In (83)a., *on purpose* indicates the intention of the underlying subject, while in (83)b. the intention of Mary. This distinction directly leads R. Lakoff to conclude that the underlying structures of be-passives and get-passives are different.[15] Her view seems quite valid.

'EFFORT' SENSE

(84) After a lot of pushing in commercials, the claim of Zotz, the miracle detergent, *finally got believed*.

(85) The motor *got started* [at last].

(86) The work *got completed* [at last].

As shown above, get-passives often assume some emotional force. In other words, the hypothesis may be made that they can express *subjective* (or *emotional*), *personal*, *imaginative*, *dynamic* stylistic features. That might be one of the reasons why get-passives are preferred in colloquial speech and are often used in vulgar speech or children's speech. On the other hand, the stylistic features of be-passives can be considered as *objective*, *impersonal*, *informative*, *static*, etc. Some further examples of such get-passives:

(87) This bed *has got slept in.*

(88) The cup plate *has* just *got sat on.*

These two may imply *unexpected*, *unwelcomed*, *unpleasant* events unlike objective be-passives.

The extensive use of get-passives for both *non-agentive* and *agentive* passives has been noted, but there still remain some restrictions on its use. Those restrictions are too difficult to explain by a general principle. For example:

(89) *The lesson got read by the choirboy.

(90) *The letter got written by the poet. (=55)

(91) *The club got begun two years ago.

(92) *The girl got pleased.

(93) *Smoking didn't get allowed there.

(94) *The shock got got over.

(95) *You got wanted on the phone a few minutes ago.

(96) *He got seen to go out.

F. R. Palmer (*op. cit.*: p. 89) points out that get-passives cannot be used unless any change happens in the passive subject. (*cf.* (89) and (90)) According to him, get-passives imply that the passive subject is *in the state of having been killed, punished, lost, etc. after the event.* Thus *The ball got lost* implies two kinds of passives at a time, namely, *The ball was lost* (actional passive) and *The ball was lost* (statal passive). This is a noteworthy view which expresses quite well the mixed character of get-passives. To enlarge his view of *some change*

in the subject, I believe that something must be existent from the first in order to be affected or suffer some change. This is best applied to (90) since *the letter* was not existent before it was written. This has a close relationship with R. Lakoff's (*op. cit.*) view that get-passives do not co-occur with verbs of creation. However, it is contradicted by my examples in note 15). Therefore, this cannot be a general rule. (91)–(95) seem to be a matter of idiomatic usage. Instead of (91), *The club got started two years ago* can be stated. *The girl got surprised* is thoroughly acceptable, while (92) is a non-idiomatic doubtful sentence. Moreover, *He got seen going out* is quite acceptable, whereas (96) is not. In this case, the problem seems to lie in the aspectual difference between *to go* and *going*. It would take much more time to find a general principle for such restrictions.

In an examination of *become + past participle constructions*, *become* has far more restrictions on its use in the passive constructions. Thus, it should not be called a passive auxiliary but a mere copula.[16]

(97) *His bills became paid regularly.

(98) *He became taken in easily.

(99) *I became called every morning at six.

(100) *She became dressed.

(101) *The door became shut.

(102) *The novel became completed.

(103) *The motor became started.

(104) *He became elected president.

(105) *She became named Mary.

(106) *He became knocked on the head many times.

(107) *The flag became raised.

(108) *His behaviour became watched carefully.

(109) *He became told the truth.

(110) *The form became filled out.

(111) *The post became applied for by many people.

(97)–(111) show that *become* seems to clash against the *outside, physical, direct action* which implies strong verbal properties. On the contrary, be-passives and get-passives can be used in all these cases; some of the acceptable cases to follow:

(112) He became tired gradually.

(113) Foreign names easily become forgotten.

(114) They became engaged last year.

(115) The wax became melted easily.

(116) He became surprised.

(117) The window became broken.

(118) The handle became turned.

(119) His action became approved of by his friends.

All these cases allow the interpretation of *gradual change*, which is the inherent semantic feature of *become*.[17] If the action is *inside*, *abstract*, or *indirect*, *become* is easy to combine with it. This is very important and best applied to (112), (113), (115), (116) and (119). As for the past participles here, they all imply *the resulting state*.

6. Verbal Unit & Transitivity

So far I have mainly discussed the contrastive properties, verbal/adjectival, of the passive voice. In this section I wish to consider the concept of *verbal unit*. The most essential qualification for passivization is *transitivity*. For example:

(120) The church has been demolished by the last tornado. (destruction)

(121) Our plans were changed after we had heard about the accident. (change)

(122) The telephone was invented by Bill. (appearance)

These are only part of the semantic varieties of *transitivity*. Moreover, the relationships of *transitivity* with the possibility of passivization are various in kind. For example, the following sentences cannot be passivized despite their similarity in the structure to transitive verb constructions.

(123) He slept a sound sleep.

(124) He lived a happy life.

(125) He died a sad death.

(126) He dreamed a horrible dream.

These are cases of so-called *cognate objects*. Each object explains only extensively the

quality of the action expressed by the verb. Thus the action is an *indirect one*, no object affected directly. The next examples show this point more clearly——the impossibility of passivization:

(127) The book cost ten dollars.

(128) The package weighs a pound.

(129) The boy grew six inches.

(130) This color suits her.

These involve no *direct action*, no *transitivity*. Some of these verbs, however, can be passivized if the verb expresses a *direct action*:

(131) The plums were weighed by the greengrocer.

(132) The beans were grown by the gardener.

Therefore, passivization is used as a tester to prove *transitivity*. The following (133)-(136) are examples of *Intransitive Verb + Prep.* unit, and (137)-(141) are *Transitive Verb + NP + Prep.* unit.

(133) The engineers went very carefully into the tunnel.

(134) The engineers went very carefully into the problem.

(133) cannot be passivized, since *into the tunnel* is adverbial, whereas (134) can. In (134) *go into* is combined into one verbal unit, the meaning of which is identical with *examine*.

(135) John slept in peace.

(136) John slept in this bed.

In (136) *slept in* is regarded as one verbal unit, perhaps, by analogy with *laughed at*, hence passivized, while *slept in* in (135) is not.[18]

(137) John *took advantage of* Bill's exhaustion.

(138) The directors *kept tabs on* Mary's progress.

(139) Susan *took note of* the arguments.

The italicized parts are considered to be established as one verbal unit, hence passivized

by preposing the prepositional object into the subject. What is significant here is that NP in the italicized part (=direct object) should be *non-referential* in order to form a verbal unit. Ziv & Sheintuch (1981) claim that the following passives should be marginally acceptable by analogy with (137)–(139):

(140) ??This hall has been signed peace treaties in before.

(141) ??This oven hasn't been baked chocolate cakes in yet.

Nonetheless, an investigation through the native speakers shows that these examples are extremely doubtful or unacceptable. That is mainly because there exists some clash between the subject and the direct object, as Ziv & Sheintuch (*ibid.*) themselves illustrate:

S + be + V-en + D.O.
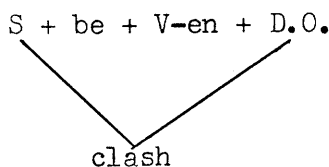
clash

(figure 7)

In English, only ditransitive verbs can be passivized, comparatively free from the clash shown in figure 7:

(142) She was bought a doll.

but it cannot always be questionless:

(143) ??The room was bought some furniture.

Adding articles or modifiers to the direct object will make (140) and (141) far lower in acceptability. For example, *They have signed a certain mysterious treaty in this hall last week* can never be passivized with *the hall* as the subject. In short, *take advantage of* is one verbal unit, but *sign peace treaties in* is very low in the extent of a verbal unit. Furthermore, *sign a certain mysterious treaty in* has far less possibility in becoming a verbal unit.

7. Conclusion

In the introduction I have shown two directions of studying voice, that is, sentential and inter-sentential studies, and have suggested a promising future for inter-sentential study. In this article I have limited my framework to the sentential level. This is intended to consolidate the various problems on that level. In section 2, I examined Quirk *et al.*'s passive scale and have scrutinized how it is constructed. In section 3, a comparison of the traditional *actional/statal* distinction with *non-agentive passives* and *quasi-passives* has been made and it has become clear to me that the traditional concept is an aspectual one and that Quirk *et al.*'s distinction is set up as a syntactic, functional one. In section 4, I suggested it is not appropriate to treat passive constructions in the same way as pure adjective constructions, however similar they may be in some of their functions. In section 5, I investigated get-passives. *Get* is extensively used for every scale of the passive voice, whereas *become* is used mainly for *non-agentive passives* and *quasi-passives*. Moreover, the unique features of get-passives, *emotional, detrimental, 'effort' sense*, were examined. However, there remain some restrictions on its use, and it is difficult to explain them by a general rule. It seems there are not a few dialectal and idiolectal diversities in the use of *get*, while *become* does not seem to have such a problem. Some people regard some of the get-passives as an uneducated, vulgar way of expression, but others do not. Despite such diversities, get-passives seem to have acquired higher prestige even in standard English. In section 6, the problem of *verbal unit* and passivization was dealt with. By setting passivization as a tester of *transitivity* of the verbal unit, I feel strongly that there are some scales of coherence as a unit. Thus, the conclusion follows that for passivization there should be a verbal unit with some transitivity in a given sentence, the unit required to be a tightly connected one, but that on the contrary, once passivization is done, the forms *be + past participle* start to assume a double property, namely, verbal/adjectival.

The aims to pursue in my future study will be further investigations of (a) transitivity, (b) *aspect* and *tense* of verbs in regard to passives, (c) the transformationalist or case grammarian treatment of passives, (d) passives as a form of predication, especially a comparison with other forms of predication, and (e) passives in discourse.

NOTES

1) Quirk *et al.* (1972: 12. 13) set up two categories of *informative* style and *imaginative* style and state that passive constructions are a suitable device for the former. According to them, this distinction should be predominant over the difference of subject matter or of spoken and written English.

2) Kuno (1978: p. 132) uses the concept *empathy* and attempts an inter-sentential study, namely, discourse analysis. Kuno's *empathy* seems close to so-called *theme* or *topic*. Kuno considers *John hit Mary* as an empathy-free neutral sentence. On the other hand, as for *John was hit by Mary*, the empathy is always kept on *John*, a by-agent most difficult to fix empathy on.

3) On this problem, Takami (1980) has made a promising challenge. He uses the concepts *horizontal connection* and *vertical connection* in order to analyze multiple consecutive sentences. He hypothesizes on three consecutive sentences that in *horizontal connection* S_1 or S_2 dominates the empathy of S_3, and that in *vertical connection* S_0 dominates the empathy of both S_2 and S_3. S_0 is a higher level sentence to S_2 and S_3 which constitute S_1.

4) *cf.* Svartvik (1966: pp. 104-105). If *by oil* is an agent, then the active is *Oil has replaced coal*. But if it is interpreted as instrumental adjunct, the active is *They have replaced coal by oil*.

5) For such passives as contain no expressed agent, the traditional way of explanation has been *ellipsis analysis.* Culicover (1976: p. 170) criticizes a traditional one-rule analysis, which leads to *ellipsis analysis.* and states that the passive transform of *Mary was ignored* is not *Mary was ignored by someone*, but *Mary was ignored by everyone*. Freidin (1975) gives the same criticism. However, Quirk *et al.* (*op. cit.*) do not think much of the problem whether it is possible to recover only one unique agent or not.

6) F. R. Palmer (1974: pp. 92-93) uses the term *pseudo-passives* for so-called *activo-passives*, for example, *These shirts wash well.* But this term had better be used to indicate (6), (7) type of passives to lessen meaningless confusion.

7) See Freidin (*op. cit.*) and Quirk *et al.* (12. 16)

8) See Nakajima (1980: Vol. 2, pp. 6-8)

9) In this transformation, an agentless passive (or so-called *truncated passives*) like *Mary was arrested* is generated by the same procedure with the input structure like *NP* [△] *Past do arrest Mary*,

and this time Agent Postposing need not apply.

10) Figure 6 was first introduced by Hasegawa (1968) to analyze passive constructions in general. R. Lakoff (1971) suggests that this analysis better applies to get-passive constructions than to be-passives because there the surface subject *Morris* is given as the underlying subject from the first. (*cf.* Section 5)

11) But sometimes all the significant points of the sentence will be lost without the by-agent. In the following examples, the by-agent must not be omitted.

      a) He was frequently met in the lanes *by pedestrians and others* without his seeing them. (poutsma, XLVII. 9)

      b) These deep resentments, however, are paralleled *by unspoken admiration.* (E. O. Reischauer, *The Japanese*)

      c) Her excitement is equalled *by my own.* (T. Capote, *A Christmas Memory*)

12) Freidin (*op. cit.*) cites such combinations as **the chased criminal, *the yelled at boy, *the owned mansion, *the told story, *the killed man, *the followed speech, *the preceded event.* Indeed, we have *predicative adjectives* such as *alive, afraid, ashamed, awake, aware, content, well, worth,* but this restriction on premodification seems stronger on the part of past participles. This problem still cannot be solved by transformationalists.

13) See R. Lakoff. She cites several examples of get-passives with a by-agent. Also see F. R. Palmer (p. 89).

14) *Detrimental* sense of get-passives is interesting when we consider the Japanese language. According to Kuno (p. 137), Japanese has two kinds of passive constructions. One is *neutral* (or *direct*) passives. The other is *detrimental* (or *indirect*) passives.

      a) Hanako wa Taro ni Nagurareta. (The former)
      b) Hanako wa Sensei ni Musuko o Shikarareta. (The latter)

b) type has no active counterpart. Generally speaking, Japanese passives, whether the type is a) or b), very often imply some emotional connotation which concerns *interests* or *loss and gain.* This is true especially of colloquial Japanese. Of course, for the informative style of TV news, newspapers, or academic articles, *colorless passives* (my terms) can be used in Japanese exactly like English be-passives.

15) R. Lakoff points out that get-passives normally do not co-occur with verbs of creation. In my investigation, however, the next sentences, which might contain some emotional implications, are quite possible.

    a) The play *got produced* in a month.

    b) The house *got built* in half a month.

    c) The present situation *got created* through their efforts.

16) Quirk *et al.* (12. 32) distinguish copulas into two groups.

'Current' copulas	'Resulting' copulas
appear	become
feel	come
lie	get
look	go
remain	grow
rest	fall
seem	run
smell	turn
sound	
stand	
taste	

Though grouped in the same division, *get* is far more dominant as a passive auxiliary than *become*.

17) According to Svartvik (p. 149), *become* usually has the specific aspectual function of indicating *gradual change*, which is often enhanced by modification with *more and more*, *increasingly*, and suffixation with *-ize* (*conventionalize, industrialize, mechanize, organize*).

18) Soames & Perlmutter (pp. 536-537) state that with the transformational device to passivize (136), such an unacceptable sentence as **Niigata was lived in by John* cannot be blocked. This is one of the unsolved problems.

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