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THE IMPERSONAL PASSIVE IN LITHUANIAN

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1. Introduction.* A central concern of modern syntactic theories is the rule of Passive. With respect to nominal arguments of the predicate, there are evidently two processes involved: advancement of the object to subject, and demotion of the (former) subject. Theories differ in how they account for these two components of the Passive. In this paper I will examine impersonal passives in Lithuanian and their significance for the account of Passive in the theory of Relational Grammar in particular.¹

Relational Grammar (RG) characterizes Passive universally as an advancement; RG claims that there are no cases in which Passive spontaneously demotes the subject without also advancing an object. The claim follows from a more general principle of RG called Motivated Chomage, according to which there can be no demotion of a nominal to a chomeur relation unless another nominal assumes its former relation. To account for impersonal passives of intransitive predicates, in which it appears that the (former) subject is demoted without any corresponding advancement, RG claims that a dummy nominal is inserted as object, and the dummy is advanced by the rule of Passive.

As suggested by Perlmutter in his 1978 BLS paper, the Motivated Chomage Law can be combined with two other principles of RG to make a specific empirical prediction about the types of predicates that may undergo Passive.

The first of these is the 1 Advancement Exclusiveness Law or, for short, the 1-AEX. This law claims that within a single clause there can be at most one advancement to subject (in RG terminology, '1' is the name for the subject relation).

The second principle is the so-called Unaccusative Hypothesis, which is in effect a typology of basic clause types. In addition to transitive clauses, which have a subject and an object, intransitive clauses bifurcate into two classes with different syntactic characterizations. On the one hand, unergative clauses — roughly the class of intransitives with a semantically agentive participant — are characterized as having an initial subject but no object. On the other hand, unaccusative predicates — roughly the class of intransitives with a semantically nonagentive participant — are characterized as having an initial object but no initial subject. This analysis further requires a rule, called Unaccusative Advancement, that advances the initial object of unaccusative predicates to subject.

These three principles, plus the device of dummy nominals, combine to make a prediction about the types of predicates that could undergo Passive. In the Passive of a transitive predicate, the object advances to subject, making the former subject a chomeur. In the Passive of an unergative intransitive, a dummy is inserted as object then the dummy advances to subject, forcing the former subject to become a

chomeur. In order to form the Passive of an unaccusative intransitive, it would first be necessary to advance the initial object to subject, by Unaccusative Advancement. By the Motivated Chomage Law, this subject cannot simply be demoted. To form a passive, it would be necessary to insert a dummy as object and then advance the dummy by Passive. But this last step would amount to a second advancement to subject within a single clause, a step that is precluded by the 1-AEX. Thus, the combination of these three principles (and dummy nominals) predicts that it should not be possible to form impersonal passives of unaccusative predicates.

Because this concrete prediction rests on the combined effect of three different assumptions, there is some difficulty in interpreting a potential counterexample. If it turns out that there are languages that form impersonal passives from unaccusative predicates, this does not necessarily invalidate the Motivated Chomage Law, and with it the advancement analysis of Passive. Instead, it could be taken as evidence against one of the two related assumptions.

To deal with this eventuality, I adopt the following strategy here. First I will exhibit impersonal passives of a number of intransitive predicates, some of which can, on semantic grounds, reasonably be suspected of being unaccusative. Second, I will argue that these are in fact instances of Passive. Then I will argue that both the related assumptions — the 1-AEX and the Unaccusative Hypothesis — have some motivation internal to Lithuanian; hence it must be the Motivated Chomage Law, and its corollary the advancement analysis of Passive, that is faulty.

- 2. Lithuanian Passives. Let us look then at some passives in Lithuanian and, at the same time, at the surface morphosyntactic properties that give evidence about final grammatical relations. In Lithuanian, the subject is nominative, the direct object typically accusative, and the subject controls agreement in the predicate; note (1-2):
- (1) Aš pirkau krištolinį sietyną. I buy chandelier (nom)(1sg) (acc)

'I bought the chandelier'

(2) Mane apėmė snaudulys.

me overcome drowsiness
(acc) (3) (nom)

'Drowsiness overcame me'

Nominative case and control of predicate agreement are properties of final subjects, as can be seen in the personal passives in (3-4):

(3) Krištolinis sietynas buvo mano pirktas.

chandelier be me bought

(nom/m/sg) (3) (gen) (nom/m/sg)

'The chandelier was bought by me'

(4) Aš buvau apimtas snaudulio. I be overcome drowsiness (nom) (1sg) (m/sg) (gen)

'I was overcome by drowsiness'

In (3-4) the initial object is evidently the final subject, since it is nominative and controls agreement for person and number in the copular auxiliary, and controls agreement for gender, number, and case in the passive participle. Conversely, the agent phrase, expressed in the genitive, does not control agreement.²

Lithuanian also forms passive constructions with a wide range of intransitive predicates.³ In texts these passives usually function to signal epistemological uncertainty – inferentiality, supposition, evidentiality, dubitativity, or the like – so it is reasonable to translate them as English active sentences with an additional evidential adverb. Observe, for example, the impersonal passives in (5-6) with unergative predicates:

(5) Jo čia per griovį šokta.

him here over ditch jumped

(gen/m/sg) (nom/n/sg)

'(Evidently) he jumped over a ditch here' (='here it was jumped by him') (Jablonskis 1957:310)

(6) Kas turi tiesę taip pasakyti, iš kur grįžtama?

who has right thus say from where returned

(nom/n/sg)

'Who has the right to say from where one can return?' (= 'from where it gets returned')
(A. Bieliauskas, Mes dar susitiksim, Vilma!)

In addition to these unergative verbs, other intransitives can form impersonal passives, including some that are probable but not certain unaccusatives on semantic grounds:

(7) Girių čia snausta.

forests here drowsed

(gen/f/sg) (nom/n/sg)

'(One can observe that) forests used to drowse here' (Jablonskis 1957:588)

(8) Ir pamiršom visi, kur mūs gimta, kur augta.

forget all where us born where grown

(gen) (nom/n/sg) (nom/n/sg)

'And we have all forgotten, where we were born and where we grew up' (Geniušienė 1976:150)

Some intransitives that are unaccusatives on semantic grounds:

(9) Vaiko sergama.child be-sick

(gen) (n/sg)

'(Evidently) the child is sick' (Jakaitienė 1976:120)

(10) ... atžalyno šiurenta.
saplings rustled
(gen) (n/sg)

'... saplings must have rustled here' (Jakaitienė 1976:46)

(11) Ko čia degta/dužta/plyšta?
what here burnt/shattered/burst
(gen/n/sg) (nom/n/sg)

'What was it that burned/shattered/burst here?' (Jablonskis 1957:310)

Some but not all phenomenological predicates (Geniušienė 1974:212, Jakaitienė 1976:124):

(12) Naktį gerokai palyta.

night good rained

(nom/n/sg)

'Last night it (evidently) rained a bit'

(13) Atsikėlęs pamačiau, kad jau pasnigta.
stand see that already snowed
(nom/n/sg)

'When I got up I saw that it had already snowed'

Final intransitives derived from basic transitives with reflexive morphology, such that the intransitive subject corresponds to the transitive object:

(14) Liaudies švietimu nebuvo rūpinamasi.
folk education not-be concerned
(instr) (nom/n/sg/rfl)

'With the education of the masses one was (evidently) not concerned' (Geniušienė 1976:142)

(15) Nemažai tada buvo jaudintasi.
not-small then be upset
(nom/n/sg/rfl)

'At that time one (presumably) got more than little upset' (Geniušienė 1976:142)

And even the verb 'to be' in its existential sense. Examples are cited in somewhat fuller form to show the evidential function of the impersonal passive:

(16) Ar būta tenai langinių? Dėl langinių jis suabejojo.

Q been there shutters about shutters he doubt

(nom/n/sg) (gen/f/pl)

'And were there really shutters there? He began to have his doubts about shutters' (V. Sirjos Gira, Štai ir viskas)

(17) Aš net stengiuosi atspėti, ar esama Kunduštoj žuvų.

I even try guess Q been fish
(nom/n/sg) (gen/f/pl)

'I even tried to guess whether there are fish in Kunduz' (A. Bieliauskas, Mes dar susitiksim, Vilma!)

(18) Tik dūmai priminė, kad šiuose, regis, apmirusiuose only smoke remind that these apparently dead

nameliuose esama žmonių. houses been people (n/sg) (gen/m/pl)

'Only smoke reminded one that in these apparently dead houses there were people' (A. Bieliauskas, Mes dar susitiksim, Vilma!)

I would assume that existential 'be' is the ultimate unaccusative verb, and in fact there is good syntactic evidence for the unaccusativity of this verb.

Note that in these impersonal passives, the initial subject is expressed in the genitive case (or omitted), and does not control agreement in the passive participle, which is invariably nominative neuter singular. Hence the agent in this construction is not the final subject.

3. Final Nonsubjecthood: Adverbial Participles. A second argument for the final nonsubjecthood of the agent of impersonal passives is provided by the choice between agreeing and nonagreeing forms of participles used for reduced adverbial clauses; this choice is diagnostic for final grammatical relations (Geniušienė 1974:203-4, Jakaitienė 1976:194-5). In the examples below, control of adverbial participles is marked by Greek letter subscripts on the controller in the matrix clause and on the agreeing and nonagreeing forms of the adverbial participle.

A final subject selects a form that agrees with it in gender, number, and case — that is, nominative. Observe (19):

(19) $\operatorname{Griždama}_{\alpha}/^*\operatorname{Grižtant}_{\alpha}$ iš miesto, motina_{α} persišaldė. returning from city mother catch cold $(\operatorname{nom}/f/\operatorname{sg})/(-)$ $(\operatorname{nom}/f/\operatorname{sg})$

'Returning $_{\alpha}$ from the city , mother $_{\alpha}$ caught cold'

The alternative form is the nonagreeing form, which cannot be selected by a final subject.

Final *non*subjects, on the other hand, strongly prefer this invariant nonagreeing form, although the agreeing form in the appropriate case is marginally acceptable. Thus, in (20), the controller is a genitive possessor; in (21), an indirect object; and in (22), a direct object. In all cases the invariant form is strongly preferred.

(20) ?Keliančio_{β}/Keliant_{β} sąsiuvinį, jo_{β} rankos drebėjo. Lifting folder his hands tremble (gen/m/sg)/(-) (gen/m/sg)

'Lifting $_{\beta}$ the folder, his $_{\beta}$ hands trembled'

(21) Kai buvau mažas, mama man_β sekdavo pasaką, prieš ?užmingančiam_β/užmingant_β. when be small mama me tell story before falling asleep $\frac{(\text{dat/m/sg})}{(\text{dat/m/sg})}$

'When I was little, mama used to tell me_{β} a story before falling asleep'

(22) $J_{i\beta}$ apėmė snaudulys, $?artėjant_{i\beta}/artėjant_{i\beta}$ prie langelio. him overcome drowsiness approaching near window (acc/m/sg) (acc/m/sg)/(-)

'Drowsiness overcame \lim_{β} approaching $_{\beta}$ the window'

(23) Jis $_{\alpha}$ buvo apimtas snaudulio, artėdamas $_{\alpha}$ /*artėjant $_{\alpha}$ prie langelio. he be overcome drowsiness approaching near window (nom/m/sg) (nom/m/sg) (nom/m/sg)/(-)

'He $_{\alpha}$ was overcome by drowsiness approaching $_{\alpha}$ the window'

In (23), the passive of (22), the initial object has been promoted to subject, and it now controls the agreeing form of the participle. This shows that the choice between agreeing form and invariant form is a test for final subjecthood.

Agents of impersonal passives of intransitives control the invariant rather than the agreeing form, as in (24-25), showing that the agent is not the final subject of its clause. (24-25) contain the unaccusative predicate existential 'be'.

(24) Čia Jono $_{\omega}$ būta, prieš ?išeinančio $_{\omega}$ /išeinant $_{\omega}$ here been before going out (gen/m/sg) (gen/m/sg)/(-)

'Jonas $_{\omega}$ was (apparently) here before going $_{\omega}$, out'

(25) $\operatorname{Mamos}_{\omega}$ jau esama kaime, lyg ?būgstančios $_{\omega}$ /būgstant $_{\omega}$ bombardavimų. mama already been village as if fearing bombings $(\operatorname{gen}/f/\operatorname{sg})$ $(\operatorname{gen}/f/\operatorname{sg})/(-)$

'Mama was (presumably) already in the village, as if fearing, the bombings'

4. Former Subjecthood: Reflexivization. Thus, we have three properties - case, control of predicate agreement, and control of adverbial participles - that show that the agent of an impersonal passive is not the final subject.

In order to show that it has been demoted, we must show that it once was a subject. A test for subjecthood at any level — not exclusively the final level — is provided by the control of the reflexive pronoun in Lithuanian (as suggested originally by Klenin 1974 for Russian). In the examples, control of pronouns is specified by Greek letter subscripts on the controller and on the personal and reflexive pronouns.

(26) shows that control of reflexive pronouns is limited to subjects. If coreference is intended between the direct object 'employees' and the holders of beliefs — the β reference in (26a) — the nonreflexive form must be used.

(26a) Domantas rūšiavo tarnautojus_{\beta} pagal jų_{\beta}/*savo_{\beta} įsitikinimus. divide employees by their/own beliefs

(pro)/(rfl)

'Domantas divided employees $_{oldsymbol{eta}}$ according to their $_{oldsymbol{eta}}$ beliefs'

(26b) Domantas $_{\alpha}$ rūšiavo tarnautojus pagal *jo $_{\alpha}$ /savo $_{\alpha}$ įsitikinimus. divide employees by his/own beliefs (nom) (pro)/(rfl)

'Domantas $_{\alpha}$ divided employees according to his $_{\alpha}$ beliefs'

If, on the other hand, coreference is intended between the subject 'Domantas' and the holder(s) of beliefs – the α reference in (26b) – then the reflexive form must be used. In the corresponding personal passive of (26a), 'employees' is now the subject, and obligatorily controls the reflexive pronoun, if that coreference is intended (specified α in (27a)). Interestingly, the agent also controls the reflexive form, if that is the coreference that is intended (specified ω in (27b)).

(27a) Tarnautojai $_{\alpha}$ rūšiuomi Domanto pagal *j $_{\alpha}$ /savo $_{\alpha}$ įsitikinimus. employees divided by their/own beliefs (nom/m/pl) (nom/m/pl) (pro)/(rfl)

The employees α are divided by Domantas according to their α beliefs'

(27b) Tarnautojai rūšiuomi Domanto $_{\omega}$ pagal * $jo_{\omega}/savo_{\omega}$ įsitikinimus. employees divided by his / own beliefs (gen) (pro)/(rfl)

'The employees are divided by Domantas $_{\omega}$ according to his $_{\omega}$ beliefs'

Thus, in order to control the reflexive pronoun, it is sufficient that the intended controller be a subject at some level, although not necessarily at the final level.

In impersonal passives, including impersonal passives of unaccusative predicates, the agent controls the reflexive pronoun. Note (28), (29), with the passive of existential 'be', and (30), with the passive of a reflexive-intransitive verb:

(28) Jos_{ω} pykta ant * jos_{ω} pačios/pačios savęs $_{\omega}$. her angered at her Emph/Emph self

'(Apparently) she $_\omega$ has gotten angry at $\mathit{herself}_\omega$ '

(29) $\operatorname{Mamos}_{\omega}$ jau esama *jos $_{\omega}$ /savo $_{\omega}$ kaime. mom already been her /own village (gen) (nom/n/sg)

'Mother $_{\omega}$ is (presumably) already in her $_{\omega}$ village'

(30) Ir čia j μ_{ω} būta, savim $_{\omega}$ rūpintasi.

and here them been self concerned

(gen) (n/sg) (rfl) (n/sg)

'(Evidently) they ω have been here, worried about themselves ω ' (Jablonskis 1957:301)

Thus, on the assumption that control of reflexive pronouns is limited to nominals that are subjects at some level of structure, these facts argue that the agent of an impersonal passive is a subject at some level. Together with the observation that this agent is not the final subject, we conclude that the agent nominal of an impersonal passive is a former subject that is demoted to nonsubject at the final level. This completes the argument that there is demotion in impersonal passives, including impersonal passives of unaccusative predicates.

5. Impersonal Passives of Personal Passives of Transitives. Before providing evidence for the 1-AEX and the Unaccusative Hypothesis in Lithuanian, let me look briefly at one further subtype of impersonal passive that is categorically prohibited by the assumptions of RG. If one starts with an active transitive verb, as in (31), and promotes the object, the personal passive in (32) results.

(31) Vėjas nupūtė tą lapelį.

wind blow that leaf

(nom) (acc)

'The wind blew down that leaf'

(32) Tas lapelis vėjo nupūstas. that leaf wind blown (nom/m/sg) (gen) (nom/m/sg)

'That leaf was blown down by the wind'

In order to form an impersonal passive of (32), it would be necessary to insert dummy as object, and then promote it, in violation of the 1-AEX. Thus, the combined assumptions of RG predict that it should be impossible to form the impersonal passive of a personal passive of a transitive clause, just as it should be impossible to form an impersonal passive of an unaccusative.

Observe, however, that the impersonal passive of (32), cited from Jablonskis's syntax of Lithuanian (1957:530, 588), is fully grammatical:

(33) To lapelio būta vėjo nupūsto.
that leaf been wind blown (gen/m/sg) (nom/n/sg) (gen) (gen/m/sg)

'That leaf was (presumably) blown down by the wind'

(33) is impersonal, as shown by the neuter singular passive participle of the copula $b\bar{u}ta$. The subject is now in the genitive and controls case agreement in the passive participle $nup\bar{u}sto$, of which it is the former (although not initial) subject. The maintenance of case agreement provides good evidence that (33) is in fact derived from (32).

Lest one suggest that (32) itself is not syntactically derived from (31) (a proposal that in any case would run counter to the descriptive practice of RG), we now exhibit a construction in which the personal passive that serves as the source for the impersonal passive must itself be syntactically derived. Given the active, subject-controlled equi structure in (34), it is possible to promote the object of the infinitive directly to subject of the matrix clause by what might be called Biclausal Passive (Geniušienė 1974:219). The textual example in (35) illustrates this.

(34) Aš numačiau pirkti laikrodį iš honoraro.

I intend buy watch from honorarium
(nom) (1sg) (acc)

'I intend to buy a watch from my honorarium'

(35) Laikrodis buvo numatytas pirkti iš honoraro.

watch was intended buy from honorarium

(nom/m/sg) (3) (nom/m/sg)

'A watch was intended-to-be-bought from my honorarium' (A. Bieliauskas, Mes dar susitiksim, Vilma!)

Since the final matrix subject of (35) is the initial embedded object of (34), (35) is presumably a derived structure. (35) can now serve as the source for the impersonal passive in (36), countering the objection raised above.

(36) Laikrodžio būta numatyto pirkti iš honoraro.

watch been intended buy from honorarium

(gen/m/sg) (nom/n/sg) (gen/m/sg)

'A watch had (evidently) been intended-to-be-bought from the honorarium'

The formation of impersonal passives from personal passives, which is fully grammatical in Lithuanian, clearly violates the advancement analysis of passives in RG.

6. Motivation for the 1-AEX. To confirm that it is specifically the Motivated Chomage Law and the RG account of impersonal passives that is counterexemplified by the above facts, let us now look for some evidence within Lithuanian in support of the two related assumptions of RG, starting with the 1-AEX. To test the 1-AEX, we need to find a construction in which there are two potential targets for advancement by Passive. Here the biclausal application of Passive shown immediately above comes in handy.

Observe first the active, biclausal object-controlled equi structure in (37). The usual passive is (38), in which the matrix direct object is advanced to subject.

(37) Jos vyras paprašė jį parašyti tą laišką.

her man ask him write that letter

(nom) (acc) (acc)

'Her husband asked him to write that letter'

(38) Jis (jos vyro) paprašytas ta laiška parašyti.

he her man asked that letter write

(nom/m/sg) (gen) (nom/m/sg) (acc)

'He was asked (by her husband) to write that letter'

But if the matrix object is syntactically missing — for example, if it is unspecified or discourse-deleted — then it is possible to reach down into the infinitive clause and advance the embedded direct object to subject of the matrix clause. This is shown in (39):

'That letter was asked-to-be-written (by her husband)'

kas (40)Jis paaiškino tai, laiške prašoma padaryti. he explained that what letter asked do (nom/n/sg) (instr) (nom/n/sg)

'He explained what it was that had been asked to do with the letter' (J. Grušas, Karjeristai)

Observe also (40), a textual example of Biclausal Passive that differs from (39) in transparent ways.

Turning our attention back to example (38) above, we note that the direct object of the matrix clause has been advanced so the path is in principle clear for the direct object of the infinitive to be advanced by Biclausal Passive. If the 1-AEX holds in Lithuanian, then it should be impossible to advance the embedded object, since that would amount to the second advancement to subject within the matrix clause. Further, given the possibility of forming impersonal passives of personal passives, one might expect to be able to form an impersonal passive from (38). If, conversely, the 1-AEX does not hold in Lithuanian, then — given that the matrix object is out of the way — it should be possible to advance the object of the infinitive by Biclausal Passive. In fact, the attempt to advance the object of the infinitive, which is given in (41), is characterized as ungrammatical and incomprehensible in the most virulent terms by native speakers.

(41) **Tas laiškas jo būtas paprašyto (jos vyro) parašyti.
(nom/m/sg) (gen/m/sg) (nom/m/sg) (gen/m/sg) (gen)

(42) J_0 būta (jos vyro) paprašyto laišką parašyti. tą him been her man asked that letter write (gen/m/sg) (nom/n/sg) (gen) (gen/m/sg) (acc)

'(Evidently) he was asked to write that letter (by her husband)'

On the other hand, the impersonal passive of (38), which is given in (42), is considered grammatical if stylistically awkward. The contrast between (41) and (42) is that which is predicted if the 1-AEX holds for Lithuanian.

- 7. Motivation for the Unaccusative Hypothesis. Given this support for the 1-AEX, let us now look for evidence for the Unaccusative Hypothesis. A natural candidate is the genitive of negation rule. As shown by (43), subjects of transitive verbs can never go into the genitive, while objects of transitives must.
- (43) Niekas / *Nieko nematė *linksmus delfinus/linksmų delfinų.

 no one not-see merry dolphins

 (nom) / (gen) (acc) /(gen)

'No one saw the/any merry dolphins'

(44) Linksmi delfinai/*Linksmų delfinų nešokinėjo paskui laivą.

merry dolphins not-jump after ship
(nom) / (gen)

'(No) merry dolphins jumped along behind the ship'

(45) Traukinyje nėra *lietuviai/lietuvių.
train not-be Lithuanians
(loc) (nom) /(gen)

'There are no Lithuanians on the train'

As shown in (44), subjects of unergative verbs, also cannot go into the genitive, but subjects of unaccusative predicates can, as shown in (45) by existential 'be' (Senn 1966:393-395, Jakaitienė 1976:45).

To be accurate, the genitive of negation does not apply to the subject of all predicates that might be classified as unaccusative on semantic grounds. Further, the rule applies under all conditions to transitive objects, but primarily to nonreferential unaccusative subjects. Despite these reservations, however, it is still true that the genitive of negation identifies the subjects of certain intransitives with the objects of transitives. In the argumentation of RG, this is evidence that the final subjects of

certain intransitives should be considered initial objects. That is, it is evidence for the unaccusativity of some intransitives.

The evidence is clearest for 'be' in its existential sense. Recall that this verb was used consistently above as the primary example of an unaccusative predicate that forms an impersonal passive. Note the striking textual example in (46), in which adjacent clauses have an impersonal passive and then genitive of negation for existential 'be':

(46) Kas sako, kad pasauly esama ko nors skanesnio už duoną? Nieko who says that world been anything delicious than bread anything

nėra už ją skanesnio. not-be than it delicious

'Who says there is anything in this world more delicious than bread? There is nothing more delicious than it.'

8. Conclusion. To review the argument, a combination of three assumptions in RG leads to the prediction that it should be impossible to form passives of unaccusative predicates and of personal passives. This prediction is falsified by Lithuanian. Since two of the assumptions are independently motivated in Lithuanian, it follows that it is specifically the Motivated Chomage Law that is incorrect, and its corollary, the advancement analysis of Passive.⁴

Once the advancement analysis is rejected for impersonal passives of unaccusatives, there is of course no reason to resort to the advancement of a dummy object to maintain the analysis for impersonal passives of unergatives, especially in light of the fact that there was never any positive evidence for the promotion of a dummy object in the first place (Comrie 1977, Nerbonne 1982). There may, however, still be reasons for viewing personal passives as involving primarily advancement. If so, then we are in an awkward position with respect to a universal definition of Passive. It may be that advancement and demotion are not the right concepts, or it may be that there is no universal rule of Passive.

As noted above, the facts of Lithuanian undermine not only the advancement analysis of Passive but also the principle of Motivated Chomage. The notion of the chomeur is one of the central notions of RG, a notion for which it claims originality over other syntactic theories (Gibson 1982). Although it would take some space to discuss the status of this concept, we can note briefly that it is supposed to be constrained by two principles: Motivated Chomage, the principle that a nominal can become a chomeur only if another nominal assumes its grammatical relation; and the Chomeur Law, the principle that a nominal must become a chomeur when another nominal assumes its relation. The Chomeur Law has been challenged in other work (Seiter 1979, Dryer, this volume). If the argument against Motivated Chomage given here stands, then it appears that there are no significant constraints left on the notion of chomeur.

Notes

- * I would like to thank Mykolas Drunga, Jūratė Izokaitytė, Tomas Venclova, and Livija Lipaitė for their help as native consultants. In a short paper like this, I have imposed some simplifications, but there was unanimous agreement on the acceptability of the impersonal passives cited here. I would also like to thank Sandra Chung for her encouragement and technical advice on this paper.
- 1. The discussion of Relational Grammar is based on Perlmutter and Postal (1977, ms a, ms b, ms c) and Perlmutter 1978. I will use generally accessible names for grammatical relations (subject, direct object, indirect object). 'Agent' is used here as a purely descriptive label for the nominal in a passive that corresponds to the final subject of an active. The argument below will in part consist of showing that this agent is a demoted subject or, equivalently, that it is a subject-chomeur in the sense of Relational Grammar. For the uninitiated, 'an x-chomeur' (where x is a grammatical relation) is the relation of a nominal that has been demoted from the x relation if and only if another nominal assumes the x relation.
- 2. Abbreviations for morphosyntactic categories of gender, case, number, and person should be transparent. Two minor points of Lithuanian grammar: verbs do not distinguish number in the third person, and certain pronouns 1st sg, 2d sg, and reflexive distinguish two genitive forms, one used to express possession (for example, 1st sg mano), the other for verbal and prepositional complements (1st sg manes); it is the possessive genitive that is used to express the agent of a passive.
- 3. Examples of impersonal passives, usually including an occasional impersonal passive of a presumed unaccusative predicate, are cited regularly in works on Lithuanian syntax and morphology as well as in a few specialized studies. See Ambrazas (1970:11), Geniušienė (1974, 1976), Jablonskis (1957:308ff, 528ff, 587f), Jakaitienė (1976:120-124), LKG (51-53), Matthews 1955, Senn (1966:377). Nerbonne 1982 cites examples of impersonal passives of unaccusatives from Lithuanian and other languages, and explicitly challenges the RG account of impersonal passives. On the evidential and epistemological function of impersonal passives, see Jablonskis, Ambrazas, Geniušienė (1974, 1976). I will not consider here dialectal impersonal passives of transitive verbs with final accusative or nominative objects (Senn 1966:376, Timberlake 1974, Matthews 1955).
- 4. One can anticipate two possible modifications of RG that might allow it to maintain Motivated Chomage and/or the advancement analysis of Passive.

First, one might suggest that impersonal passives of all intransitives are derived by the insertion of a dummy nominal directly as subject, which would make the subject a chomeur. Demotion by dummy insertion is conceivable, given that it is already used for direct objects. On the assumption that demotion by dummy insertion is motivated, this would superficially allow the principle of Motivated Chomage to be maintained, at the expense of giving up the advancement analysis of Passive.

Second, both the advancement analysis and Motivated Chomage could be saved by weakening the 1-AEX. Note that the evidence for this law in Lithuanian comes from an attempt to advance two overt nominals. One could suggest that the 1-AEX holds only for overt nominals, not for dummies. (Some weakening of the 1-AEX is already prefigured in the RG treatment of passives with reflexive morphology representing an unspecified argument. These are exempted from the 1-AEX because the two advances are multiattached (Perlmutter and Postal ms a: fn. 22).) Under this weakening of the 1-AEX, impersonal passives of unaccusatives could be derived directly as sketched above in the introduction: unaccusative advancement of the initial object of an unaccusative predicate, insertion of dummy as object, and advancement of dummy to subject. The last step would no longer be a violation of the 1-AEX if that law is reformulated so as not to apply to dummies. Impersonal passives of personal passives could be derived in an analogous way.

At this point one can ask whether anything would be gained by such modifications. They amount to the creation of two separate subsystems of grammar, one for overt nominals and another, virtually unconstrained subsystem for dummies. Under either modification (as well as under the original RG account of impersonal passives of unergative verbs), dummies serve the function of demoting an overt nominal that would otherwise become a chomeur spontaneously. If dummies are not constrained like ordinary nominals, then there is no content to the claim that demotion to chomeur is motivated.

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