

# Lithuanian Passive-like Impersonals and Regular Passives

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## 1 Introduction

This paper contrasts two Lithuanian constructions: the passive-like *-ma/-ta* construction with an accusative theme argument (1a) and the canonical passive with a nominative theme argument (1b). I will call (1a)<sup>1</sup> the impersonal and (1b) the non-agreeing passive. Both constructions differ in their behavior despite their identical morphology, a *-ma/-ta* participle. This study demonstrates that the accusative theme of an impersonal bears properties of a grammatical object of transitive construction, while the nominative theme in a passive behaves like a grammatical subject.

The *-ma/-ta* construction (1a) is cognate with the Polish (2) and Ukrainian (3) *-no/-to* construction with an accusative theme. The Polish construction is an impersonal active, whereas the Ukrainian construction is a passive with an accusative grammatical object (Maling and Sigurjónsdóttir 2002; Lavine 2005, 2013; Legate 2014, *inter alia*). Although the Lithuanian construction patterns with the Ukrainian one in allowing an auxiliary, it patterns with the Polish in exhibiting a PRO subject demonstrating that these two properties are dissociable (*contra* Lavine 2005). To encode the difference between the impersonal and the passive, I argue for the presence of a functional head VoiceP originating above a *v*P. The impersonal has a PRO subject in VoiceP, while the passive lacks a thematic subject. This study is extended to passives with a causative morphology showing that VoiceP and *v*P are independent of each other: the former introduces an external argument and the latter causative semantics (Pylkkänen 2008, Harley 2013, Legate 2014).

- (1) a. (Yra) rašo-m-a laišką. *Lithuanian Impersonal*  
be.PRS.3 write.PPRP-[-AGR] letter.ACC  
'One is writing a letter.'
- b. Laiškas (yra) rašo-m-a (tėvo). *Non-Agreeing Passive*  
Letter.NOM.M.SG be.PRS.3 write.PPRP-[-AGR] father.GEN  
'A letter is being written (by the father).'
- (2) Znaleo-no niemowlę w koszu. *Polish*  
found.[-AGR] baby.ACC in basket  
'They found a baby in the basket.'
- (3) Nemovlja bulo znajde-no u koшыku. *Ukrainian*  
baby.ACC AUX found.[-AGR] in basket  
'A baby was found in the basket.'
- (Lavine 2005:76)

This paper is organized as follows. In Section 2, I will flesh out the typological framework of Lithuanian passives, which will be crucial for evaluating the differences between the impersonal and the non-agreeing passive. In Section 3, I will compare the impersonals with the passives and introduce the main difference between the two showing that the impersonals, unlike passives, do not involve promotion of a theme argument to a subject position. Section 4 provides analysis for the two constructions and touches upon passives with causative morphology giving evidence for the separation of two functional heads, VoiceP and *v*-cause. Section 5 concludes.

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\*I thank Julie Legate for comments and the audience at PLC40. Many thanks to Einar Sigurðsson, Ava Irani, Rob Wilder and my consultants Kazimieras Tiknius, Raminta Šereikienė and Laimutis Grigonis.

<sup>1</sup>The impersonals like (1a) are translated as active sentences with an indefinite human reading in Geniušienė 2006; Spraunienė, Razonavaitė and Jasionytė 2016 or as passives in Ambrazas et al. 1997:661. Our findings show that the impersonal bears an arbitrary PRO interpretation supporting the former line of work.

## 2 Basic Facts

In order to compare the impersonals and non-agreeing passives, I will first review the main properties of so-called regular ‘canonical’ passives which received some attention in the literature (Timberlake 1982, Geniušienė 2006, Lavine 2006, Wiemer 2006, Šereikaitė 2012, *inter alia*). Canonical passives are sentential patterns like (4b). The theme grammatical object becomes a nominative surface subject and agrees with an auxiliary in person and with a passive *-m/-t* participle in number, gender and case. The auxiliary is optional in the present tense, but obligatory in the past tense. An optional *by*-phrase introducing agent argument is expressed by a DP with a genitive case. A position where the optional agent phrase typically emerges is either at the end of the clause or between the auxiliary and the participle. Geniušienė (2006) also suggests that it is possible for the genitive DP to occur clause-initially, but then emphasis is placed on the object.

- (4) a. Tėvas                      rašo              laišką.  
          father.NOM.SG.M      write.PRS.3      letter.ACC.SG.M  
          ‘The father is writing the letter.’  
      b. Laiškas                      (yra)              rašo-m-as                      (tėvo).  
          letter.NOM.SG.M      be.PRS.3      write.PRP-NOM.SG.M      father.GEN  
          ‘The letter is being written (by the father).’ *Agreeing Passive*

Ambrazas et al. (1997:661) point out that it is possible to have non-agreeing passive constructions, the focus of this study, as in (5) with a non-agreeing *-ma/-ta* participle, although these constructions are falling into disuse in Modern Lithuanian. The non-agreeing passive (5) just like the agreeing passive (4b) allows a *by*-phrase and the theme argument appears in nominative.

- (5) Laiškas                      (yra)              rašo-m-a                      (tėvo). *Non-Agreeing Passive*  
          letter.NOM.M.SG      be.PRS.3      write.PRP-[-AGR]      father.GEN  
          ‘A letter is being written (by the father).’

The impersonal constructions also have the neuter *-ma/-ta* participle,<sup>2</sup> but unlike agreeing (4b) and non-agreeing passives (5), their theme argument is accusative and the *by*-phrase is ungrammatical (6). As mentioned by Geniušienė (2006), the agent in these constructions is interpreted as non-specific, indefinite human. These constructions in the literature are presented without an auxiliary (Geniušienė 2006, Ambrazas et al. 1997). However, Spraunienė, Razanovaitė and Jasionytė’s (2016) study demonstrates that the auxiliary is in fact possible. Indeed, our consultants do not judge the impersonal in (6) as ungrammatical. While the impersonal with an accusative theme is rather rare, those with unergatives (7) and unaccusative (8) verbs are much more productive.

- (6) (Yra)              rašo-m-a                      laišką              \*tėvo. *Impersonal*  
          be.PRS.3      write.PRP-[-AGR]      letter.ACC      father.GEN  
          ‘One is writing a letter.’  
      (7) Jeigu (yra)      dirbama                      legaliai, tada      atsiranda      gamitybė      atgauti      mokesčius.  
          if be.PRS.3      work.PRP-[-AGR]      legally, then      appear      opportunity      receive-INF taxes  
          ‘If one works legally, then one also has an opportunity to get back one’s taxes.’  
          (www.laae-lssa.lt/node/10)  
      (8) Džniausiai (yra)      miršta-m-a                      nuo      širdies      ligų.  
          mostly      be.PST.3      die.PRP-[-AGR]      from      heart      diseases  
          ‘One mostly dies from heart diseases.’  
          (<http://www.delfi.lt/sveikata/sveikatos-naujienos>)

<sup>2</sup>Observe that this construction mostly occurs with *-ma* participle rather than *-ta*.

Lastly, it is also important to spell out the main characteristics of the agreeing *-m/-t* passive participle and its neuter non-agreeing *-ma/-ta* form. An agreeing passive participle is formed by adjoining agreement morpheme to *-m*, *-t* suffix attached to a stem. The *-ma/-ta* participle is structured by combining the non-agreeing ending *-a* with the verb and the *-m/-t* suffix. The participle with the *-m* suffix is imperfective, often called ‘present participle’, denotes an ongoing action. The participle with the *-t* suffix is perfective, often termed ‘past participle’, and refers to a state or a completed action.

While the agreeing passive participles are found in passives, the non-agreeing *-ma/-ta* participles can also be found in evidential constructions like (9) which are often compared to passives. I leave aside these constructions, but an important thing to keep in mind is that evidentials with the *-ma/-ta* participle as in (9) are not passives. They contain a genitive DP, a quirky subject, which is followed by the neuter participle and a nominative theme argument. The genitive subject in (9) always occupies a clause-initial position and is obligatory, unlike the genitive *by*-phrase, which is optional and not restricted to a sentence-initial position.<sup>3</sup>

- (9) Ingos            nuramin-t-a                          vaikas.  
Inga.GEN   calm.down.PPRP-[-AGR]   child.NOM  
'Inga must have calmed the child down.'  
(Ambrasas et al. 1997:207)

### 3 Impersonals vs. Passives

This section demonstrates that despite the apparent morphological similarity the impersonal and the non-agreeing passive exhibit divergent properties.<sup>4</sup> I show that the impersonal construction lacks characteristics of passives and its theme argument patterns like a grammatical object of an active construction. In other words, the Lithuanian impersonal is not an instance of an ‘exotic’ passive, e.g., a grammatical object passive attested in Ukrainian (Lavine 2005), which violates Burzio’s generalization stating that only a verb that assigns theta-role to the subject can assign the accusative case (Burzio 1986:178). Rather, the impersonal construction is an instance of an active transitive construction with an arbitrary PRO subject.

The first piece of evidence for treating the theme object of the impersonal as an active object comes from negation. In general, when a clause is negated<sup>5</sup> like (10), the accusative object becomes genitive. The theme argument of impersonals also takes the genitive and the accusative case is ungrammatical (11). In contrast, the surface subject of non-agreeing passives is not overwritten by the genitive under the negation (12) and instead it remains nominative, just like a grammatical subject of a transitive clause.

<sup>3</sup>For the differences between passives and inferential evidentials see Štreikaitė (2013:77–80), and an explicit discussion on inferential evidentials see Lavine (1999, 2006, 2010, 2013).

<sup>4</sup>To illustrate the difference between the impersonal and passive, this section will use various tests taken from Lavine (2005, 2013), Legate (2014), Maling and Sigurjónsdóttir (2002).

<sup>5</sup>The genitive of negation test is used as an unaccusativity test in Russian since, in negated sentences, the underlying object of unaccusative takes the genitive, while the underlying subject of unergative does not (Pesetsky 1982). Observe that this is not the case in Lithuanian. Neither the surface subject of passives (14), nor that of unaccusatives (i-a) or unergatives (i-b) licenses the genitive case. The negation affects only the grammatical object of transitive that bears a structural accusative case.

- (i) a. Jonas/\*Jono                      ne-dirba                      naujoje įmonėje.  
Jonas.NOM/Jonas.GEN    NEG-work.PRS.3    new    company.  
'Jonas is not working at the new company.'
- b. Traukinys/\*Traukinio    ne-atvažuoja.  
train.NOM/\*train.GEN    NEG-arrive.PRS.3  
'The train is not arriving.'

- (10) Tėvas            ne-rašo            laiško/\*laišką.  
 father.NOM    NEG-write.PRS.3    letter.GEN/letter.ACC  
 ‘The father is not writing the letter.’
- (11) Nė-ra            rašo-m-a            laiško/\*laišką.  
 NEG-be.PRS.3    write.PRP-[-AGR]    letter.GEN/letter.ACC  
 ‘One is not writing a letter.’
- (12) Laiškas/\*laiško            nė-ra            rašo-m-a            (tėvo).  
 Letter.NOM/letter.GEN    NEG-be.PRS.3    write.PRP-[-AGR]    father.GEN  
 ‘The letter is not being written (by the father).’

The second piece of evidence is agreement. The theme argument of impersonals (13) does not show agreement on the lexical verb, which is a typical property of a grammatical object of transitives. However, the theme argument of passives can trigger agreement (14).

- (13) (Yra)            rašo-m-a/\*rašo-m-as/\*rašo-m-ą            laišką.  
 be.PRS.3    write.PRP-[-AGR]/PPRP-NOM.SG.M/PPRP-ACC.SG.M            letter.ACC  
 ‘One is writing a letter.’
- (14) Laiškas            (yra)            rašo-m-a/rašo-m-as            (tėvo).  
 letter.NOM.M.SG    be.PRS.3    write.NEUT/write.PRP-NOM.SG.M            father.GEN  
 ‘A letter is being written (by the father).’

The third argument comes from binding. In an active transitive clause, a structural subject like *Domantas* can be a controller of the reflexive possessive *savo* ‘one’s own’, but it cannot bind the non-reflexive pronoun *jo* ‘his’ (15a). On the other hand, the grammatical object must bind the non-reflexive form and it cannot be an antecedent of the reflexive *savo* (15b).

- (15) a. Domantas<sub>i</sub>            rūšiavo tarnautojus            pagal            \*jo<sub>i</sub>/savo<sub>i</sub>            įsitikinimus  
 Domantas.NOM    divided employees.ACC    according    his.GEN/own.GEN    beliefs  
 ‘Domantas divided employees according to his own beliefs.’
- b. Domantas            rūšiavo tarnautojus<sub>i</sub>            pagal            jų<sub>i</sub>/\*savo<sub>i</sub>            įsitikinimus  
 Domantas    divided employees.ACC    according    their.GEN/own.GEN    beliefs  
 ‘Domantas divided employees according to their beliefs.’ (Timberlake 1982:515–516)

In impersonals (16), just like in transitives (15b), the accusative theme also binds only the non-reflexive pronoun. Additionally, the understood indefinite subject behaves like a surface subject in (15a) and controls only the reflexive form (16). Hence, the binding facts also give additional support for a syntactic presence of a PRO subject in the impersonals. The theme argument of passives, on the other hand, binds both pronouns, the reflexive and non-reflexive (17).

- (16) Kasmet    PRO<sub>i</sub> (yra)            rūšiuoja-m-a            darbininkus<sub>j</sub>            pagal  
 every.year    be.PRS.3    divide.PRP-[-AGR]    employees.ACC    according  
 savo<sub>i</sub>/\*jū<sub>j</sub>/\*jo<sub>i</sub>            įsitikinimus.  
 self.GEN/their.GEN/his.GEN    beliefs  
 (i) ‘Every year one divides employees<sub>i</sub> according to their<sub>i</sub> beliefs.’  
 (ii) ‘Every year one<sub>i</sub> divides employees according to one’s<sub>i</sub> own beliefs.’
- (17) Tarnautojai<sub>i</sub>            (yra)            rūšiuoja-m-a            Domanto            pagal  
 employees.M.PL.NOM    be.PRS.3    divide.PRP-[-AGR]    Domantas.GEN    according  
 savo<sub>i</sub>/jū<sub>i</sub>            įsitikinimus.  
 self.GEN/their.GEN    beliefs  
 ‘The employees<sub>i</sub> are divided by Domantas according to their<sub>i</sub> beliefs.’

Having illustrated parallels between the theme argument of impersonals and that of the active

transitive construction, I now turn to the general properties of impersonals and show how they diverge from those of passives. As has been already mentioned in Section 2, impersonals, unlike passives, do not allow the optional *by*-phrase which introduces a demoted agent (cf. 18–19). The unavailability of the *by*-phrase in impersonals indicates that the theta role of external argument in this instance is not suppressed, which is not the case in passives.

- (18) (Yra) rašo-m-a laišką \*tėvo.  
 be.PRS.3 write.PRP-[-AGR] letter.ACC father.GEN  
 ‘One is writing a letter.’
- (19) Laiškas (yra) rašo-m-a (tėvo).  
 letter.NOM.M.SG be.PRS.3 write.PRP-[-AGR] father.GEN  
 ‘A letter is being written (by the father).’

The impersonals have an arbitrary PRO<sup>6</sup> reading. Recall from (16) that PRO of the impersonal binds the reflexive pronoun behaving like a surface subject of a transitive clause. This understood subject is restricted to human entities. The initiator in the impersonal cannot be the animate nonhuman (21). This restriction does not apply to passives, the suppressed agent of passives can in fact be a non-human referent (21).

- (20) \*Kieme loja-m-a/bliauna-m-a  
 yard barking.PRP-[-AGR]/bleating.PRP-[-AGR]  
 Lit. ‘There is barking/bleating in the yard.’ (Wiemer 2006:300)
- (21) Vaikai buvo sugel-t-a (bičių).  
 children.NOM be.PST.3 sting.PRP-[-AGR] bees.GEN  
 ‘Children were stung (by bees).’

Impersonals are possible with verbs lacking an external argument such as unaccusatives (22a) and inchoatives (23a). If impersonals were passives, these constructions would be impossible because in general these predicates do not permit passives (22b–23b).

- (22) a. Nuo gripo (yra) miršta-m-a kievkieniais metais. *Impersonal*  
 from flu be.PRS.3 die.PRP-[-AGR] every year  
 ‘One dies from flu every year.’
- b. \*Nuo gripo (yra) miršta-m-a žmonių kiekvienais metais. *Passive*  
 from flu be.PRS.3 die.PRP-[-AGR] people.GEN every year  
 Intended: ‘It is died by people every year.’
- (23) a. Plaukia-m-a įvairiais stiliais, o skęsta-m-a tik vienu. *Impersonal*  
 swim.PRP-[-AGR] various styles, but sink.PRP-[-AGR] only one.INST  
 ‘People swim in various styles, but sink in only one.’ (<http://www.kamajugimnazija.lt/>)
- b. \*Skęsta-m-a žmonių kiekvienais metais. *Passive*  
 sink.PRP-[-AGR] people.GEN every year.  
 Intended: ‘It is sunk by people every year.’

<sup>6</sup>I have presented the understood subject of impersonals as an arbitrary PRO. Observe that the Lithuanian impersonal, just like Polish (Lavine 2005), licenses an understood subject which must be human and the referent is interpreted as arbitrary. The Polish impersonal is argued to lack agreement, which for Lavine (2005) is an argument for selecting a big PRO over a small *pro*. The small *pro* is typically considered to occur in finite clauses with a lexical verb showing agreement. The difference between the Lithuanian and Polish impersonal, as will be explicitly discussed in Section 4, is that the former allows an auxiliary, while the latter does not. The auxiliary in the Lithuanian impersonal shows agreement for person and tense, hence the possibility of *pro* is not completely ruled out.

To sum up, Table 1 provides a summary of diagnostics used in this section and compares them with facts from Polish and Ukrainian (data summary from Lavine 2005). The Lithuanian impersonal, just like the Polish impersonal and unlike the Ukrainian passive, does not allow a *by*-phrase, occurs with non-passivizable verbs and have an arbitrary PRO subject which is restricted to human referents. Just like a grammatical object of a transitive, the accusative theme argument of the impersonal allows the genitive of negation and binds the non-reflexive pronoun. The Lithuanian non-agreeing passive bears typical properties of canonical passives showing that its external argument is demoted and the theme argument surfaces like a grammatical subject.

	Lithuanian		Polish	Ukrainian
	Non-agreeing Passive	Impersonal	Impersonal	Grammatical Object Passive
<i>by</i> -phrase	✓	*	*	✓
Genitive of negation	*	✓	✓	*
Occurs with unaccusatives	*	✓	✓	*
Arbitrary PRO reading	*	✓	✓	*

Table 1: Summary of diagnostics and comparison with Polish and Ukrainian.

#### 4 Towards an Analysis

To account for the differences between the impersonal and the passive, the location of the *-ma/-ta* participle with regards to other functional/lexical heads is discussed and evidence for two functional heads VoiceP and *v*-cause is provided. Having motivated the syntactic presence of VoiceP, it will be argued that the variations within VoiceP encode different types of voice constructions (at least two), the passive voice and the active voice.

A crucial property of the impersonals that helps to identify the location of the *-ma/-ta* is the presence of an auxiliary. The *-ma/-ta* participle and the auxiliary are not in complementary distribution as in (24). Thus, in this respect the impersonal patterns with the Ukrainian grammatical object passive which exhibits the same property (25). In contrast, the Polish impersonal (26) does not allow the auxiliary. For Polish, Lavine (2005) proposes the Auxiliary Hypothesis arguing that *-no/-to* is an auxiliary element, which raises to T. The Lithuanian data reject this hypothesis and, on the other hand, show that *-ma/-ta* is located lower than T.

- (24) (Yra) rašo-m-a laišką \*tėvo. Lithuanian  
 be.PRS.3 write.PRP-[-AGR] letter.ACC father.GEN  
 ‘One is writing a letter.’

- (25) Nemovlja bulo znajde-no u košyku. Ukrainian  
 baby.ACC AUX found.-[-AGR] in basket  
 ‘A baby was found in the basket.’

- (26) Znaleo-no niemowlę w koszu. Polish  
 found.-[-AGR] baby.ACC in basket  
 ‘They found a baby in the basket.’ (Lavine 2005:76)

Instead of arguing for *-ma/-ta* being an auxiliary, the central claim of this paper is that *-ma/-ta* participle is a voice head located in VoiceP above a *v*P. VoiceP introduces an external argument, whereas *v*P introduces causative semantics. There is a wealth of literature arguing that *v*P performs a number of functions such as the introduction of an external argument (Chomsky 1995, Harley 1995), assignment of accusative case (Chomsky 1995, Kratzer 1996), representation of causative

semantics (Harley 1995, 2008). However, some studies show that the projections introducing causative semantics and external argument are separate (Pylkkänen 2008, Schäfer 2008, Harley 2013, Legate 2014). The Lithuanian impersonals and passives with causative morphology provide additional evidence for this separation.

Lithuanian has a suffix *-in* which causativizes non-causative inchoative verbs as exemplified in (27).<sup>7</sup> In both impersonals (28) and passives (29), the causative morpheme and the *-ma/-ta* participle occur simultaneously which suggests that *v*-cause and VoiceP are two separate heads.

- (27) a. Jie                    aug-in-o                    rožes.                    *Causative*  
           they.NOM   grow-CAUSE-PST.3   roses.ACC  
           ‘They were growing roses.’  
       b. Rožės                    augo.                    *Inchoative*  
           roses.NOM   grow-PST.3  
           ‘Roses were growing.’
- (28) Rožės            dažniausiai (yra)            aug-\*(in)-am-a                    saulėtoje, nuo  
       roses.ACC   most.often   be.PRS.3   grow-CAUSE-PPRP-[-AGR]   sunny,   from  
       vėjo   apsaugotoje   vietoje.  
       wind   safe   place  
       ‘People often grow roses in a sunny and windproof place.’
- (29) Rožės                    (yra)            aug-\*(in)-a-m-a                    (tėvo).  
       roses.NOM.PL.F   be.PRS.3   grow-CAUSE-PPRP-[-AGR]   father.GEN  
       ‘Roses are being grown (by the father).’

VoiceP is independent of *v*-cause. The presence of VoiceP and the absence of *v*-cause are visible in cases whether the cause, a change of state, is missing but the Voice morphology is present. Hence, non-causative transitive verb like *laikyti* ‘keep’ can form both the passive (30b) and the impersonal (31) with voice morphology, and there is no change-of-state involved. While there is no *v*-cause, the external argument is still present in the active transitive like (30a), meaning that the introduction of an external argument should be disassociated from *v*-cause.

- (30) a. Žmonės                    laiko            laiškų            namuose.  
           people.NOM   keep.PRS.3   letters.ACC   home  
           ‘People keep letters at home.’  
       b. Laiškai            (yra)            laiko-m-a                    (žmonių)            namuose.  
           letters.NOM   be.PRS.3   keep.PRP-[-AGR]   people.GEN   home  
           ‘Letters are being kept (by people) at home.’
- (31) Dažnai (yra)            laiko-m-a            laikų            namuose.  
       often   be.PRS.3   keep.PRPT-[-AGR]   letters.ACC   home  
       ‘Often one keeps letters at home.’

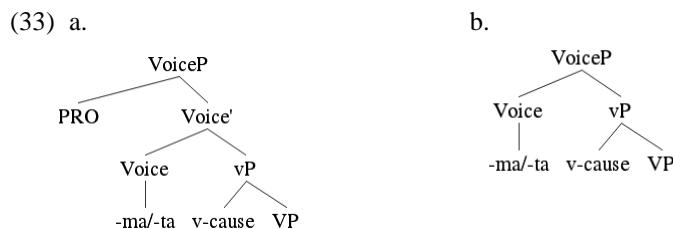
The independence of *v*-cause from VoiceP can be seen in long passives. Lithuanian long passives are constructions like (32a) where the theme argument of a complement appears as the nominative surface subject in the matrix clause. Šereikaitė (2016) argues that these passives involves restructuring (Wurmbrand 2015). The long passive has an embedded *v*P complement with *v*-cause (32a), but lacks VoiceP (32b).

- (32) a. Rožės<sub>i</sub>                    yra            bando-m-os                    Petro            [iš-aug-\*(in)-ti            t<sub>i</sub>]  
       roses.NOM.PL.F   be.PRS.3   try.PRP-NOM.PL.F   Petras.GEN   [PRF-grow-CAUSE-INF   ]

<sup>7</sup>Note that causative/inchoative alternation can also be encoded by a suffix *-y*, e.g., *smilkti* ‘to fume’, *smilkyti* ‘to fumigate’ (for more see Ambrazas et al. 1997:225). Some of these alternations are a subject to phonological modifications within a root: e.g., *laužyti* ‘to break’ (transitive) vs. *lūžti* ‘to break’ (intransitive).

- ‘Roses are being tried to grow by Petras.’
- b. \*Rožės<sub>i</sub>                      yra                      bando-m-os                      Petro  
 roses.NOM.PL.F              be.PRS.3              try.PRP-NOM.PL.F              Petras.GEN  
 [būti              iš-aug-in-am-os/iš-aug-in-m-a    t<sub>i</sub>]  
 [be-INF              PRF-grow-CAUSE-PPRP-NOM.PL.F/PRF-grow-CAUSE-PPRP.[-AGR]                      ]  
 Intended: ‘Roses are being tried to be grown by Petras.’

If the reasoning above holds true and VoiceP is an independent head of *v*-cause that introduces an external argument, then the variations within VoiceP can explain the difference between the passive and the impersonal. Recall that the impersonal has an arbitrary PRO reading and a grammatical object. To encode these properties, I propose that the impersonal has PRO subject in VoiceP as in (33a) which is sufficient for the accusative case assignment. The Voice head then assigns accusative case to the theme argument, which explains why the theme argument behaves like a grammatical object. In contrast, the passives lack an external argument in SpecVoiceP as in (33b), thus the Voice head fails to assign accusative case and instead the theme argument receives a nominative case from T.



The last piece of the derivation left to explain is a word order. The main word order in the impersonals is the theme argument appearing post-verbally (34a).<sup>8</sup> When the theme is fronted the word order becomes marked and the theme is interpreted as topicalized as in (34b). The neutral word order in passives, on the other hand, is a theme argument emerging sentence-initially (35).

- (34) a. (Yra)                      rašo-m-a                      laišką.                      *Unmarked Word Order*  
    be.PRS.3                      write.PRP[-AGR]                      letter.ACC  
    ‘One is writing a letter.’
- b. Laišką                      (yra)                      rašo-m-a.                      *Marked Word Order*  
    letter.ACC                      be.PRS.3                      write.PRP[-AGR]
- (35) Laiškas                      (yra)                      rašo-m-a                      (tėvo).                      *Unmarked Word Order*  
    letter.NOM.M.SG                      be.PRS.3                      write.PRP[-AGR]                      father.GEN  
    ‘A letter is being written (by the father).’

The binding facts show that the fronted accusative object in the impersonal like (34b) undergoes A-bar movement, while the sentence-initial nominative theme argument in passives undergoes A-movement (35). In general, A-movement creates new binding relations, whereas A-bar movement does not. Recall from Section 3 that the theme argument of the impersonal, just like a grammatical object of a transitive verb, can only bind the non-reflexive form (36a). If the theme of the impersonal is fronted, the binding relations do not change (36b), meaning that it has undergone A-bar movement to a higher projection above a TP. In contrast, the fronted theme argument of passives binds both the reflexive and the non-reflexive form, showing that new binding relations have been established (37). This suggests that the theme argument in passives moved to SpecTP position via A-movement.

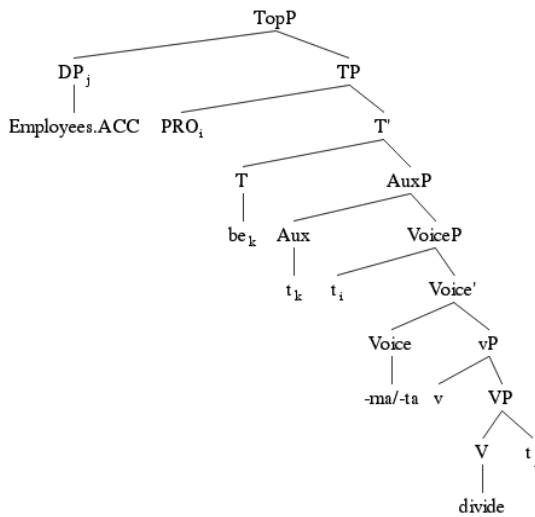
<sup>8</sup>In this respect Lithuanian again patterns with the Polish impersonal with an accusative theme argument appearing post-verbally under neutral discourse (Lavine 2005).



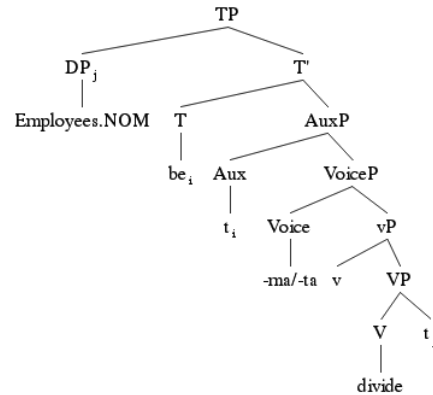
- (36) a. Kasmet PRO (yra) rūšiuoja-m-a darbininkus<sub>i</sub> pagal  
 every.year be.PRS.3 divide.PPRP-[-AGR] employees.ACC according  
 \*savo<sub>i</sub>/ jų<sub>i</sub> įsitikinimus.  
 self.GEN/their.GEN beliefs  
 'Every year one divides employees<sub>i</sub> according to their<sub>i</sub> beliefs.'
- b. Kasmet darbininkus<sub>i</sub> PRO (yra) rūšiuoja-m-a pagal  
 every.year employees.ACC be.PRS.3 divide.PPRP-[-AGR] according  
 \*savo<sub>i</sub>/ jų<sub>i</sub> įsitikinimus.  
 self.GEN/their.GEN beliefs  
 'Every year one divides employees<sub>i</sub> according to their<sub>i</sub> beliefs.'
- (37) Tarnautojai<sub>i</sub> (yra) rūšiuoja-m-a Domanto pagal  
 employees.M.PL.NOM be.PRS.3 divide.PPRP-[-AGR] Domantas.GEN according  
 savo<sub>i</sub>/ jų<sub>i</sub> įsitikinimus.  
 self.GEN/their.GEN beliefs  
 'The employees are divided by Domantas according to their beliefs.'

I assume that T in Lithuanian has an EPP feature. Hence, in the impersonal with the fronted theme argument like in (36b), the EPP feature is satisfied by PRO subject raising to SpecTP, and the theme argument undergoes A-bar movement to TopP in (38a). In passives, the EPP feature is satisfied by raising the nominative theme argument to SpecTP as in (38b).

(38) a. Impersonal



b. Passive



## 5 Conclusion

This study has demonstrated that VoiceP and *v*-cause are two separate heads: the former introduces an external argument and assigns accusative case, the latter is purely responsible for causative semantics. I followed Legate (2014) and proposed that variations within VoiceP allow explaining different configurations of voice, specifically the active and the passive. To support this claim, this paper analyzed the passive and the impersonal showing that the impersonal has a PRO subject in SpecVoiceP, whereas the passive lacks it. The Lithuanian impersonal exhibits properties of an active clause with an accusative grammatical subject and in this way patterns with the Polish impersonal active.

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