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Abstract

This study provides evidence for microvariations in VoiceP (Legate 2014) by contrasting two Lithuanian constructions, the passive-like *-ma/-ta* construction with an accusative theme grammatical object and the canonical passive with a nominative theme grammatical subject. The *-ma/-ta* construction is cognate with the Polish and Ukrainian *-no/-to* construction. The Polish construction is an impersonal active, whereas the Ukrainian construction is a passive with an accusative object (Lavine 2005, 2013; Legate 2014). Although the Lithuanian construction patterns with the Ukrainian one in allowing an auxiliary, it patterns with the Polish in exhibiting a PRO subject and 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 vP. The impersonal has a PRO subject in VoiceP, while the passive lacks the thematic subject. This study is extended to passives with causative morphology showing that VoiceP and vP are independent of each other: the former introduces external argument and the latter causative semantics (Pylkkänen 2008, Harley 2013, Legate 2014).

Lithuanian Passive-like Impersonals and Regular Passives

Milena Šereikaitė*

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)¹ 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.PRP-[-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.PRP-[-AGR] father.GEN
'A letter is being written (by the father).' (Ambrasas et al. 1997:661)
- (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 košyku. *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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¹The 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 Ambrasas 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,² 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, Spraukienė, 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 gamilybė 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)

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

- (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_i rūšiavo tarnautojus pagal *jo_i/savo_i įsitikinimus
 Domantas.NOM divided employees.ACC according his.GEN/own.GEN beliefs
 ‘Domantas divided employees according to his own beliefs.’
- b. Domantas rūšiavo tarnautojus_i pagal jų_i/*savo_i 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_i (yra) rūšiuoja-m-a darbininkus_i pagal
 every.year be.PRS.3 divide.PRP-[-AGR] employees.ACC according
 savo_i/*jū_i/*jo_i įsitikinimus.
 self.GEN/their.GEN/his.GEN beliefs
 (i) ‘Every year one divides employees_i according to their_i beliefs.’
 (ii) ‘Every year one_i divides employees according to one’s_i own beliefs.’
- (17) Tarnautojai_i (yra) rūšiuoja-m-a Domanto pagal
 employees.M.PL.NOM be.PRS.3 divide.PRP-[-AGR] Domantas.GEN according
 savo_i/jū_i įsitikinimus.
 self.GEN/their.GEN beliefs
 ‘The employees_i are divided by Domantas according to their_i 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.PPRP-[-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.PPRP-[-AGR] father.GEN
 ‘A letter is being written (by the father).’

The impersonals have an arbitrary PRO⁶ 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.PPRP-[-AGR]/bleating.PPRP-[-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.PPRP-[-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 kievkienais metais. *Impersonal*
 from flu be.PRS.3 die.PPRP-[-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.PPRP-[-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.PPRP-[-AGR] various styles, but sink.PPRP-[-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.PPRP-[-AGR] people.GEN every year.
 Intended: ‘It is sunk by people every year.’

⁶I 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.PPRP-[-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.’

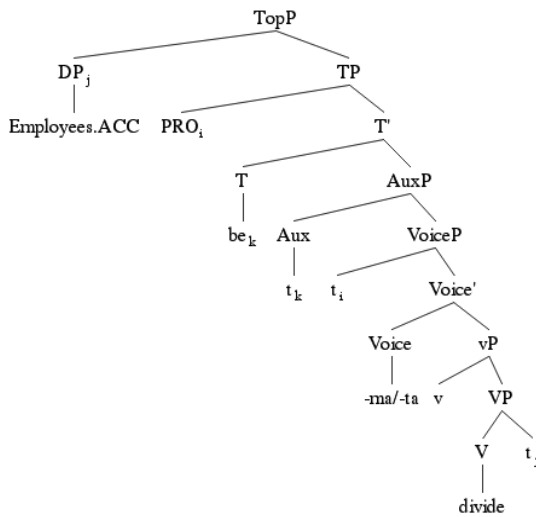
(26) Znaleo-no niemowlę w koszu. *Polish*
 found.-[-AGR] baby.ACC in basket
 ‘They found a baby in the basket.’ (Lavine 2005:76)

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

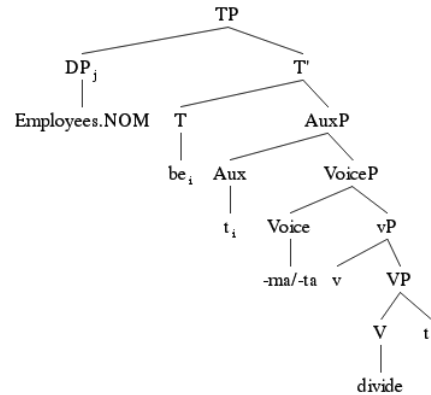
- (36) a. Kasmēt PRO (yra) rūšiuoja-m-a darbininkus_i pagal
 every.year be.PRS.3 divide.PRP-[-AGR] employees.ACC according
 *savoi/ jū_i įsitikinimus.
 self.GEN/their.GEN beliefs
 ‘Every year one divides employees_i according to their_i beliefs.’
- b. Kasmēt darbininkus_i PRO (yra) rūšiuoja-m-a pagal
 every.year employees.ACC be.PRS.3 divide.PRP-[-AGR] according
 *savoi/ jū_i įsitikinimus.
 self.GEN/their.GEN beliefs
 ‘Every year one divides employees_i according to their_i beliefs.’
- (37) Tarnautojai_i (yra) rūšiuoja-m-a Domanto pagal
 employees.M.PL.NOM be.PRS.3 divide.PRP-[-AGR] Domantas.GEN according
 savoi/ jū_i 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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