

# Illocutionary Force of Passives in Present Tense Dialogues<sup>\*</sup>

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## 1. Introduction

The generation of passive sentences has been a topic of debate in formal linguistics for decades. Most of the earlier studies analyze passives at the sentence level from the lexicon through LF. Pointing out the similarities between passives and exclamatives, Matsuya (2015) explores how passives with the scalar implications of the speaker's emotion from negative to positive are produced by derivation by phase (Chomsky (2001)), checking theta roles (Hornstein (2000) and Matsuya (2004)) at the syntax proper, Factivity and Widening (Zanuttini and Portner (2003)) at the syntax/pragmatics interface and updating the Common Ground in pragmatics (Castroviejo (2008)). The author will carry out a thorough investigation on the illocutionary force of passive sentences in discourse. Section 2 will briefly review the previous research on passives. Section 3 will basically present how to generate and interpret passives with the speaker's emotion at the syntax/pragmatic interface. Section 4 will explore English and Japanese passives from the viewpoints of speech act theory and intersubjectivity. Section 5 will state concluding remarks.

## 2. Previous Studies

Under the principle and parameter theory, in other words GB syntax, some previous studies try to explain the derivation of passives with A-chain formation motivated by Case absorption of a passive morpheme (Chomsky (1981, 1986a, 1986b), Chomsky and Lasnik (1977), and Kuno (1973)): an object NP, which receives the internal theta role but not accusative Case, must raise to the subject position, which is

a Case-marked but non theta role position. Other previous research has examined the production of Japanese passives with the non-NP movement approach (Kuroda (1965, 1979)). Under the Minimalist Program (Chomsky (1995, 2000, 2001), Hoshi (1994) suggests that the subject NP of a Japanese passive, which is base-generated at the Spec of the higher VP shell, moves to the Spec of IP, for Case checking. In Boeckx (1998), Japanese *ni* direct passives are considered a form of Tough-constructions without Case-absorption. Chomsky (2000, 2001) states that a defective *v*, which does have a complete set of  $\Phi$  features, makes it impossible to delete an uninterpretable Case feature under agreement, which motivates the internal argument to occupy the subject position. Regardless of the frameworks and methodologies, it has been said that English passives such as (1a) are semantically neutral while Japanese passives, for example, (1b) from Hoshi (1994:35), express the subject's affectedness.

- (1) a. Mary was kissed by John.  
 b. Mary-ga sensee-ni home-rare-ta.  
 Mary-Nom teacher-by praise-Passive-Past  
 'Mary was affected by the teacher's praising her.'

### 3. Speaker-oriented and Neutral Interpretations in English and Japanese Passives

Tokunaga (1998) points out that a Japanese passive (2a) can contain three interpretations: The subject NP is negatively affected as in (2a') while positively affected in (2a''). (2a''') shows the neutral interpretation describing the fact like English passives (examples (2a) - (2a''') from Tokunaga (1998:460-461)). These three types of interpretation are possible, depending on the context. Let us consider Japanese passives at the discourse level. Notice that once the particles *yo* is added to a Japanese passive (see (2b)), it will present the speakers' emotional attitude, as observed in (2b') and (2b''). (2b''') represents the neutral interpretation.



in the salient discourse, and FACTIVITY, which makes any additional propositions possible through WIDENING: the domain of quantification, D1, is changed to a new domain, D2 for  $R_{\text{widening}}$ , the syntactic element functioning on domain expansion in pragmatics. Passives might behave similarly to exclamatives in both English and Japanese, depending on their prosodic patterns and contexts. Matsuya (2015) attempts to account for the two interpretations with the speaker's emotions and the neutral interpretation of English and Japanese passives. For example, the primary pitch is placed on *Mary* in (3a'), which is a negative emotive case, while it is on *Johnny* in (3a''), which is a positive emotive one. In order to check the prosodic feature at the syntax-pragmatics interface, the NPs with the primary pitch move to the Spec of the higher CP above the CP, where a factive operator (FACTIVE) is located, on the computation along phase by phase at the interface. In this way, additional propositions, which violate the speaker's expectation/prediction, become possible via WIDENING under the new domain. Thus, the range of speakers' emotional attitudes in passives can be accounted for straightforwardly by not only syntactic principles but also semantic and pragmatic conditions.<sup>1</sup> In addition, the details of speakers' emotional attitudes, which range from positive emotive (delighted) to negative emotive (annoyed), are expressed by updating the Common Ground, which is proposed in Castroviejo (2008) at the pragmatic level. In (3''') without any primary pitch, NP movement to the Spec of the higher CP does not take place, thereby bringing forth the neutral interpretation.

#### 4. Illocutionary Force and Intersubjectivity of Sentence Passives

The previous section introduced the application of the domain widening proposed by Zanuttini and Portner (2003) and the analysis of the updated Common Ground proposed by Castroviejo (2008) to passives. It is advanced that the expansion of sets of true proposition by the domain widening and the updated Common Ground affect the interaction between addresser and addressee in the discourse.

Rett (2011) distinguishes between exclamations and exclamatives: sentence exclamations such as lamentations are expressive, which manifest a rising pattern of intonation and emphasis as well as interjection or discourse marker.<sup>2</sup> Moreover, she states that in the utterance (4a), which is treated as an assertion, the denoted proposition P violates the speaker's expectation: the speaker expected  $\neg P$  in other words, an assertion with a non scalar interpretation of the speaker's expectation. The proposition P of the sentence exclamation can be confirmed or denied by the interlocutor as (4b) and these features of the sentence exclamation produce perlocution in an independent speech act.

- (4) a. (Wow), John won the race!  
 b. No, he didn't, he lost it at the last moment.

Rett (2011:414)

According to Rett (2011), unlike (4), a *wh*-exclamative is not denied as in (5b) because it has a scalar interpretation of the speaker's expectation, which is equal to degree properties, and is regarded as an expression not an assertion.<sup>3</sup>

- (5) a. (My,) What delicious desserts John bakes!  
 b. ?No (he doesn't), these are store-bought. John's actually a terrible cook.

Rett (2011:414)

Let us consider *wh*-exclamatives, which are treated on a par with passives in the previous section. Rett (2011) claims that a proposition bears an unbound variable under the context with a degree property. The proposition, *D* (*d'*), which works as the input to E-Force (the illocutionary force of exclamation) (7) and then the unbound variable is bound at the end of the discourse by the operation of an existential closure as in (6c). The *wh*-exclamative in (6) contributes to the discourse, conveying a

degree  $d'$  indicating the addresser's surprise/unexpected reaction that John would be  $d$ -tall.<sup>4</sup>

(6) How tall John is!

- a.  $\lambda d$ .tall (john,  $d$ )
- b. tall (john,  $d'$ )
- c. E-Force ( $p$ ) counts as an expression that  $\exists d'$  such that  $s_c$  had not expected that  $D(d')$ .

Rett (2011:431)

(7) E-Force ( $p$ ), uttered by  $s_c$ , is appropriate in a context  $C$  if  $p$  is salient and true in  $w_c$ . When appropriate, E-Force ( $p$ ) counts as an expression that  $s_c$  had not expected that  $p$ .

Rett (2011:429)

It is not necessarily the case that exclamatives just function as representations of the information about the speaker's expectations with the degree property in discourse. Let us consider two types of discourse: the first is the case where both the addresser and the addressee share the updated Common Ground. The second is where only the addresser believes the updated Common Ground at the time of the utterance. As (8) illustrates, both interlocutors share the updated Common Ground that *Jimmy* became much taller while *Hillary* did not see him for a long period. *Hillary* expresses her surprise to the fact that he grew up beyond her expectation. To her utterance, *Robert* assents to her surprise. Thus, the exclamative contributes to the discourse, bringing forth intersubjectivity.<sup>5</sup> However, notice that this interaction takes place with respect to the speaker's emotion rather than the degree property of *Jimmy*'s growth.

(8) Context:

Robert and Hillary, two neighbors, are standing talking in front of Robert's house. Then Robert's son Jimmy, who is wearing short pants and flip flops, is arriving back at home. Hillary sees Jimmy, who is a freshman at the university and as tall as a basketball player, after a long time of not seeing him. Looking at Jimmy, she says the following to Robert.

Hillary: How very tall Jimmy is!

Robert: You must be surprised to see him.

In (9), *Robert* believes the updated Common Ground because he actually sees his dressed up daughter. But *Hillary* hears his words via the phone and does not know how cute she is. That is, only the addresser has the updated Common Ground. *Hillary* replies to the *wh*-exclamative uttered by *Robert*. In this context, *Hillary* does not understand the degree property from the words. Therefore, it is assumed that *Hillary's* response is due to *Robert's* positive emotion, delight. Like (8), intersubjectivity is also induced in the case that only the addresser has the updated Common Ground at the beginning of the utterance time.

(9) Context:

Robert and Hillary, who are brother and sister but live away from each other, are talking by the phone. Then Robert's daughter, Emily, who usually does not take great care in her appearance, arrives home from a party. She is extremely well dressed with a lovely hair style and cosmetic make up. Looking at Emily, Robert says the following to Emily, holding a receiver.

Robert: How beautiful you are!

On the other end of the line, Hillary says the following.

Hillary: I really look forward to seeing your pretty daughter next month.

The fact that intersubjectivity is observed in exclamatives persuades us to observe that passives will provoke intersubjectivity in discourse. Let us now turn to passives in English as below. In this case, both interlocutors, *Judy* and *Caroline*, share and believe the updated Common Ground from the beginning of the utterance. To *Judy*'s utterance, *Caroline* expresses her sympathy to *Mary*.

(10) Context:

Judy and Caroline are tellers in a local bank. One day, Caroline asks Judy why *Mary*, another co-worker, looks disgusted today. Judy knows *Johnny*, who is working in the trust company next to their bank. He is serious and shy but has many girlfriends all over town, and Judy is annoyed by his asking *Mary* out. Judy gives the following reason for *Mary*'s disgusted looks to *Caroline*.

Judy: *Mary* was asked out by *Johnny*.

Lit. The speaker, *Judy*, is annoyed by *Johnny*'s asking *Mary* out.

*Caroline* also knows *Johnny*, who has many girlfriends despite his appearance, asked *Mary* out. *Caroline* responds to *Judy* as follows:

*Caroline*: I knew it. I feel sorry for her.

In (11), only the addresser, *Judy*, believes the updated Common Ground and the addressee, *Caroline*, did not know what happened to *Mary* until *Judy* uttered it. Nevertheless, *Caroline* responds to *Judy*, expressing her feeling, which shows the trigger of the intersubjectivity between the interlocutors.

(11) Context:

Judy and Caroline are tellers in a local bank. One day, Caroline asks Judy why Mary, another co-worker, looks disgusted today. Judy knows Johnny, who is working in the trust company next to their bank. He is serious and shy but has many girlfriends all over town, and Judy is annoyed by his asking Mary out. Judy gives the following reason for Mary's disgusted looks to Caroline.

Judy: Mary was asked out by Johnny.

Lit. The speaker, Judy, is annoyed by John's asking Mary out.

Caroline doesn't know that Johnny, who has many girlfriends despite his appearance, asked Mary out.

Caroline: Oh really, I didn't know that at all.

Let us move on to Japanese passives. In (12), both addresser and addressee, *Yoshiko* and *Taro*, share and believe the updated Common Ground that *Hanako*, who should be the last student to be praised, was admired by the teacher.

(12) Context:

Yoshiko, Taro, Hanako are classmates. Hanako always behaves dishonestly. All of her classmates know that. Tanaka-sensee is their teacher. One day, Yoshiko says the following to Taro, seeing that Hanako looks very happy.

Yoshiko: Hanako-ga sensee-ni home-rare-ta-yo.

-Nom -by praise-Passive-Past-Particle.

'Lit. The speaker is annoyed by the teacher's having praised Hanako.'

Taro: Un, sono koto shite-ru.

Yes, the fact know-Present

‘Yes, I know the fact.’

Demo dooshite home-rare-ta-no?

But for what praise-Passive-Past-Particle

‘But for what she was praised?’

In (13), only the addresser, *Yoshiko*, believes the updated Common Ground at the beginning of the discourse. The addressee, *Taro*, who does not share it, responds to *Yoshiko*, expressing his psychological state.

(13) Context:

Yoshiko, Taro, Hanako are classmates. Hanako always behaves dishonestly. All of her classmates know that. Tanaka-sensee is their teacher. One day, Yoshiko says the following to Taro, seeing that Hanako looks very happy.

Yoshiko: Hanako-ga sensee-ni home-rare-ta-yo.

-Nom -by praise-Passive-Past-Particle.

‘Lit. The speaker is annoyed by the teacher’s having praised Hanako.’

Taro: Usoh, boku sono koto sir-anakat-ta.

really I-Nom the fact know-Neg-Past

‘Really, I didn’t know it.’

Shinji-rare-nai.

believe-can-Neg-Present

‘I can’t believe that.’

Like the English cases, when the updated Common Ground is conveyed, intersubjectivity between interlocutors could be triggered in Japanese passives: when the addresser shares Common Ground with the addressee, the latter could sympathize with the former’s feeling. Even if they do not share the Common Ground, the addressee could feel uncomfortable.<sup>6</sup>

## 5. Concluding Remarks

In sum, when the speaker utters the updated Common Ground, intersubjectivity could be induced in both English and Japanese passives with emotional expressions. In this respect, passives are emotive to the addresser and conative to the addressee. Likewise, exclamatives expresses the speaker's psychological state and trigger intersubjectivity regardless of whether or not there is a sharing the updated Common Ground between the interlocutors. These characteristics of passives not only inform linguistic theory but may be helpful in the acquisition of English passives in second language study.

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- 1 As for the details of phase in the Minimalist Program, see Chomsky (1995, 2000, 2001).
- 2 Rett (2011) mentions that contrary to the exclamation, the exclamative present a falling intonation pattern.
- 3 Referring to six types of illocutionary act such as (i) request, (ii) assert, state (that), affirm, (iii) question, (iv) thank (for), (v) advise, and (vi) warn, proposed in Searl (1969), Rett (2011) discerns between exclamations and exclamatives. Searl (1976) proposes the revised classification of illocutionary acts: (i) representatives, (ii) directives, (iii) commissives, (iv) declarations, and (v) expressives. As Hashiuchi (1999) points out, *wh*-exclamatives belong to expressives, which express the psychological state of the speaker. Zanuttini and Portner (2003) also mention that exclamatives express the speaker's emotion such as surprise and interest.
- 4 Rett (2011:431) presumes that utterances of exclamatives do not contribute to discourse because they can't be denied or affirmed as seen in (5).
- 5 As the details of intersubjectivity, see Traugott (1985, 1995).
- 6 According to Shirakawa (1993), the final particle, *yo*, can make the hearer pay attention to what the speaker says as well as can explore the hearer's reaction.

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