Processes that change grammatical relation

- Grammatical relations between a verb and its arguments can be changed via the processes of promotion and demotion.

Main topics

- Passive construction
- Antipassive construction
- Applicative construction
- Causative construction

Passive

Pat ate the apples.  
The apples were eaten (by Pat).

- The active sentence has a transitive verb, while the verb in the passive sentence has become intransitive.
- Subject is demoted to a by-phrase or deleted.
- Object is promoted to subject.
- The verb form is changed (auxiliary be + past participle).

Subject of a passive sentence

The apples were eaten (by Pat).

- Subject/verb agreement
- Pronominal case
- Why do we passivize?
  - Remove focus from the agent
Basic passive constructions

- Transitive → intransitive
- The core arguments of a transitive verb (subject and object) change in their grammatical relations.
  - Subject is demoted (oblique argument or deleted).
  - Object is promoted.
- Changes in the morphology of the verb to signal passivization

Changes in verb morphology

- Combinations of existing forms
- Morphological passive
  - The main verb has a specific passive form.

Classical Greek
Epauthe-n.
‘I was stopped.’

Antipassive

- Occurs in ergative languages
- Similarities to passive
  - Transitive verb → intransitive
  - Promotion and demotion of NPs
  - Changes in verb form
- Differences
  - Ergative NP → Absolutive
  - Absolutive NP → Oblique or deleted
  - Focus removed from the original absolutive NP (object)

Antipassive

Greenlandic Eskimo

ama-p  niqi-ø  niri-vaa
woman-ERG meat-ABS eat-3SG:3SG
‘The woman (A) ate the meat (O).’

ama-ø  niqi-mik  niri-NNig-puq
woman-ABS meat-with eat-ANTIP-3SG
‘The woman (S) ate some of the meat.’

- Former O has a partitive reading.
Antipassive

Gjarrda
cikse ja níkRa ka zaci kiksei yá níkra ka zakji
eat-IMPERF. the-(ANIM.) mouse-ERG. the-(INANIM.) cheese
‘The mouse is eating the cheese.’
cikvis ja ník kikvis yá ník
eat-ANTIPASS.-IMPERF. the mouse-(ABS.)
‘The mouse is eating.’
cikvis ka zacie ja ník kikvis ka zakji’ëi yá ník
eat-ANTIPASS.-IMPERF. the cheese-GEN. the mouse-(ABS.)
‘The mouse is eating the cheese.’

Passive and antipassive

• Create a new S argument
  – Passive: O → S
  – Antipassive: A → S

• S is a primary grammatical relation. It is unmarked formally and functionally.
• So, passive and antipassive create a primary NP.

Antipassive

• Former object is in some way less affected by the action of the verb.
  – O in oblique case
  – Delete O

Antipassive

• Ellipsis in co-ordination
  Chris disturbed Lee and øi complained bitterly.
  Chrisi woke up and øi complained bitterly.

  Subject pivot: S and A
  • S and A can be omitted and can control the omitted subject in the 2nd clause.

  Leei was disturbed (by Chris) and øi complained bitterly.
**Antipassive**

- Ellipsis in co-ordination
  
  **Object pivot:** S and O
  
  • S and O can be omitted and can control the omitted subject in the 2nd clause.

  *Dyirbal*
  
  [ngumai yabu-nggu bura-n] [ø banaga-nyu]
  
  father:ABS(O) mother-ERG(A) see-PAST ø(S) return-PAST
  
  ‘Mother (A) saw father (O) and [he](S) returned.’

  Mother saw father and [she] returned.

- **Applicative**

  I gave an apple to Mary.
  I gave Mary an apple. **Dative movement**

  • Oblique NP or indirect object → object
  
  • Object → oblique or second object
  
  • Changes may occur in the morphology of the verb.

**Antipassive**

[ yabui bural-nga-nyu nguma-gu] [ø banaga-nyu]

Mother:ABS(S) see-ANTIP-PAST father-DATIVE ø(S) return-PAST

‘Mother (S) saw father and [she](S) returned.’

• The absolutive NP can control the omitted subject of the 2nd clause.

• Antipassive makes ellipsis possible.

**Applicative**

• English: recipient, goal
  
  I gave an apple to Mary.
  Sam kicked a ball to Pat.

• Other languages: locative and instrumental, too
Applicative

- An object that has been promoted by the applicative construction can undergo another promotion by the passive construction.
  - I gave an apple to Mary.
  - I gave Mary an apple.
  - Mary was given an apple (by me).
  *Mary was given an apple to.

- Kinyarwanda: both direct object and second object can be promoted by the passive construction.

Causative

The students left.
We made/let the students leave. causative

- Ø → subject (introduce a new subject)
- Subject → object
- Verb adding causation
- Simple sentence → complex sentence

Causative

- ‘cause’ verb + ‘effect’ verb
- Morphological causative
- Lexical causative
  - I broke the bottle.
  - ฉันหักกิจไม้

Causative

- Ø → subject (introduce a new subject)
- Subject → object, oblique argument, deleted
- ‘cause’ verb, causative morphology