Voice and v
Julie Anne Legate

Voice and v investigates the syntactic structure of voice, using Acehnese as the empirical starting point. A central claim is that voice is encoded in a functional projection, VoiceP, which is distinct from, and higher than, vP. The book further claims that VoiceP may be associated with phi-features that semantically restrict the external argument position but do not saturate it. Through minor variations in the properties of VoiceP, a wide range of non-canonical voice constructions are explained, including: agent-agreeing passives, grammatical object passives, impersonals, object voice constructions, and applicative voice in causatives. The analysis draws on data from a typologically diverse set of languages, not only Malayo-Polynesian, but also Celtic, Scandinavian, and Slavic. Voice and v provides a detailed investigation into the syntactic structure of an understudied Malayo-Polynesian language, and thereby reveals important insights for the theoretical analysis of voice and the verb phrase. Moreover, the work applies and broadens these insights to a range of related passive-like constructions crosslinguistically. Voice and v thus joins a handful of model volumes that enlist typological depth and breadth to further our development of modern linguistic theory.

A Cline of Passives
Julie Anne Legate

This chapter extends the analysis of restrictive phi-features to explain the properties of grammatical object passives in Icelandic, Ukrainian, and Irish. Grammatical object passives are notable in exhibiting
accusative objects, like actives, while allowing by-phrases, like passives. The restrictive phi-features occupy the specifier of VoiceP, allowing accusative case to be assigned in satisfaction of Burzio’s Generalization, while leaving the initiator position unsaturated. The analysis explains the close relationship between grammatical object passives and impersonals, whereby cognates pattern differently in closely related languages and dialects. Grammatical object passives contain a PhiP in the specifier of VoiceP, which restricts the external argument position; impersonals add a DP layer above PhiP, yielding a DP that saturates the external argument position. Taken together, the passive voice, grammatical object passive, object voice, and impersonal, demonstrate how slight differences in the syntactic structure of VoiceP can yield a variety of constructions with behaviors that differ from the canonical active voice.

Datives, Defective Intervention, and Case Discrimination

Omer Preminger

in Agreement and Its Failures

Published in print: 2014 Published Online: January 2015
Publisher: The MIT Press DOI: 10.7551/mitpress/9780262027403.003.0008
Item type: chapter

This chapter addresses the phenomenon of intervention by dative nominals (also known as “defective intervention”). The chapter begins with an illustration of the endemic inability of dative nominals to value the phi-features on an agreement probe. Next, several existing accounts of dative intervention are surveyed. These include: the Activity Condition (Chomsky 2001); a functional-shells approach (Rezac 2008, inter alia); and finally, Bobaljik's (2008) case-based approach. The author argues that these accounts all leave something to be desired; instead, he proposes an account that builds on Bobaljik’s case-based approach in crucial ways, but takes dative intervention to result in the outright failure of agreement. This, it is shown, yields a superior account of dative intervention, one that predicts when it is that intervention will result in the appearance of a morphological ‘default’, and when it will yield outright ungrammaticality. The chapter concludes by showing how the same results militate against an account of agreement in terms of violable constraints (as in Optimality Theory; McCarthy & Prince 1995, Prince & Smolensky 1993). When combined with the results of previous chapters, this means that the only remaining viable account of agreement is one based on obligatory operations.
Modern German shares many similarities with Modern Icelandic in terms of Case marking. This chapter discusses some differences in the two languages with respect to control and raising-to-object constructions, using Dative-Nominative verbs as the test case. Whereas German favors the argument in the Nominative as the syntactic pivot, Icelandic favors the highest argument. The chapter shows how the classical notion of subject fails to deal with the data and proposes a lexical case in the framework of Optimality Theory.

Building and Interpreting HAVE Sentences
Neil Myler

This chapter extends the analysis to HAVE sentences, arguing that HAVE is the form that BE takes when it is combined with a transitive Voice head. This approach correctly predicts the various readings exhibited by have in English and by HAVE verbs in other languages, including non-possessive uses such as causer HAVE, experiencer HAVE, and engineer HAVE. Cross-linguistic variation in the availability of such readings is discussed in terms of variation in how BE is spelled out. The analysis successfully extends to languages with more than one transitive HAVE verb, as is shown by a case study from Icelandic (based on Myler, Sigurðsson, and Wood 2014).

Extending the Typology II: The WITH-Possessive
Neil Myler
This chapter sketches an analysis of WITH-Possessives. It is argued that the analysis of Levinson (2011) is correct in its essentials, and that Levinson’s approach can be broadened to account for other subtypes of possession structure beyond temporary possession. A comparison of the Icelandic WITH-Possessive with similar constructions in Bantu languages reveals an interesting difference. While the Icelandic WITH-Possessive is semanticallyrestricted in a way that suggests that Icelandic með ‘with’ retains its comitative semantics in possessive contexts, Bantu WITH-Possessives are not restricted in this way. I analyse the Bantu situation as a case of grammaticalization, understood as a subtype of reanalysis along the lines of Roberts and Rousseau (2003).

Head Movement
Norvin Richards

in Contiguity Theory

The theory developed so far is applied to head-movement; along with the existing requirements of Generalized Contiguity and Affix Support, the chapter adds a requirement that affixes be attached to hosts, which happens in the default case via an operation of lowering that applies in the prosodic tree (and which can therefore be disrupted by the Contiguity relations in which affixes find themselves). The resulting account yields the placement of verbs in tensed non-V2 clauses in English, French, Danish, Icelandic, Spanish, Italian, Irish, and Malagasy. English do-support is a language-specific measure for dealing with cases in which lowering of affixes is impossible; other languages are shown to perform head-movement in such cases. Bjorkman’s account of the distribution of auxiliaries is crucial.