

Configurational Case Assignment is Needed to Explain Promotion to Subject in Uzbek Passives

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Introduction: This paper shows that both causees and objects can in principle be promoted to subject in the passive of a causativized transitive verb in Uzbek, and that the choice between the two correlates with the morphological case they bear in the corresponding active sentence. It is argued that the ability of an NP to be promoted in the personal passive cannot be explained by theories based on (i) the withdrawal of abstract Case, or (ii) only the EPP. Rather, agreement with the verb in the personal passive should be understood as fed by the process of configurational case assignment (Bobaljik 2008). The evidence presented here is stronger than the evidence presented in Baker & Vinokurova (2010, sect. 3.3) (B&V), since it relies on the unambiguously configurational case assignment patterns that are provoked by causativization, rather than the case assignment patterns found with lexically ditransitive verbs, which plausibly involve lexical/inherent case, as noted by Baker (2015, p. 13).

Causativization and Case: In Uzbek, the subject of a verb is both unmarked for case morphologically and agrees with the verb in person and number. Most objects of transitive verbs take the ACC(usative) case suffix *-ni* (1), but some verbs lexically/inherently mark their objects with DAT(ive) case, *-ga* (2).

- (1) Otaona-lar bola-ni o'p-ish-ti. (2) Otaona-lar bola-ga qara-sh-ti.
parent-PL child-ACC kiss-PL-PST.3 parent-PL child-DAT look-PL-PST.3
'The parents kissed the child.' 'The parents looked at the child.'

When transitive verbs are suffixed with the causative morpheme *-t(ir)*, the NP that is introduced by causativization, the causer, acts as the subject of the causativized sentence and is interpreted as the external argument of a coercive/permissive causing event that scopes over the event denoted by the transitive verb. If a transitive verb takes an object that bears ACC case, the object retains its case under causativization and the external argument of the transitive verb, the causee, bears DAT case (3).

- (3) Buvi otaona-lar-ga bola-ni o'p-tir-di.
grandma parent-PL-DAT child-ACC kiss-CAUSE-PST.3.SG
'The grandma made/let the parents kiss the child.'

When a transitive verb that takes a lexically/inherently marked DAT object is causativized, the object retains its case and the external argument of the transitive verb, the causee, bears ACC case (4) (for similar data from Turkish see Aissen 1979).

- (4) Buvi otaona-lar-ni bola-ga qara-t-ti.
grandma parent-PL-ACC child-DAT look-CAUSE-PST.3.SG
'The grandma made/let the parents look at the child.'

I assign the same structure to Uzbek causatives as the one given in B&V to the Sakha causatives they discuss.

- (5) [CP ... [vP Causer [vP [CauseP Causee [CauseP [vP Obj V] CAUSE]] v]] C]

This structure accounts for the fact that Uzbek causatives, like the Sakha causatives discussed in B&V and Turkish causatives (Aissen 1979), behave like a single clause with respect to binding of pronouns and reflexives (data not shown). It also provides the appropriate structure for an account of configurational case assignment using the ordered rules given below, which are inspired by those given in B&V.¹ I follow Bobaljik (2008) in assuming that only NPs that are unvalued for case can agree with the verb, remaining agnostic on the question of whether or not a relativized version of the EPP is also required as in the configurational theories of B&V and Preminger (2011).

- (6) a. If there are two distinct argument NPs that have not been valued for case, such that NP1 c-commands NP2, and NP1 and NP2 occur within the complement of v, assign NP1 DAT.
b. If there are two distinct argument NPs that have not been valued for case, such that NP1 c-commands NP2, and NP1 and NP2 occur within the complement of C, assign NP2 ACC.

¹In B&V's rules, objects must move out of the VP to receive ACC case. This is supposed to explain the pseudo-incorporation of objects in Sakha by allowing pseudo-incorporated objects to remain in situ. However, Uzbek, like Turkish (Özürk 2005), allows the external arguments of transitive verbs to pseudo-incorporate (data not shown). The rules presented here eliminate this aspect of B&V's system because pseudo-incorporation cannot be explained generally as the failure of the object to move out of VP.

In (3), (6a) applies first, to the complement of *v*, where both the causee and the object are unvalued for case, assigning DAT to the causee. Thus, when (6b) applies, the only two NPs in the complement of *C* that are not valued for case are the causer and the object, and the object receives ACC case. The causer is left unvalued for case, allowing it to agree with the verb. In (4), (6a) does not apply, since the object has already been valued for case through its selectional relationship with the verb. (6b) then applies, assigning ACC to the lower of the two remaining NPs, the causee. The causer is left unvalued for case, allowing it to agree with the verb.

Causativization and Passivization: Before examining the interaction between causativization and passivization, it is important to note that, although theories of abstract Case are ill-suited to account for the patterns of case marking observed in (3) and (4), and the EPP has nothing to do with them, this does not mean that these theories will not be able to account for promotion to subject in the passive. In a withdrawal of abstract Case theory, passivization removes the ability of a particular head *X* to assign case to an NP that stands in a particular structural relation to *X*, driving that NP to move to specTP. Since objects and causees occupy different structural positions, it is predicted that either the object position or the causee position will be the one that fails to receive Case, but not both. In an EPP-only theory, the highest NP whose ϕ -features are visible (i.e. non-lexical/inherent case NP) will move to subject and agree with the verb. Since causees are higher than objects and they are not lexically/inherently marked, as shown by the alternation between (3) and (4), causees are predicted to raise to subject and agree with the verb.

Passivization, marked by *-il*, removes the highest argument from the syntax, here the causer, by existentially quantifying over the semantic role it bears, as in Bruening (2013). When a sentence like (3), in which the object bears ACC and the causee DAT, is passivized, only the object can be promoted to subject, as shown by lack of case marking and agreement with the verb.

- (7) a. *Otaona-lar bola-ni o'p-tir-il-ish-ti.
parent-PL child-ACC kiss-CAUSE-PASS-PL-PST.3
'The parents were made/let to kiss the child.'
- b. Bola otaona-lar-ga o'p-tir-il-di.
child parent-PL-DAT kiss-CAUSE-PASS-PST.3.SG
'The child was made/let to be kissed by parents.'

When a sentence like (4), in which the object bears DAT and the causee ACC, is passivized, only the causee can be promoted to subject, as shown by lack of case marking and agreement with the verb.

- (8) a. Otaona-lar bola-ga qara-t-il-ish-ti.
parent-PL child-DAT look-CAUSE-PASS-PL-PST.3
'The parents were made/let to look at the child.'
- b. *Bola otaona-lar-ni qara-t-il-di.
child parent-PL-ACC look-CAUSE-PASS-PST.3.SG
'The child was made/let to be looked at by the parents.'

The correct generalization for the data in (7) and (8) is that only NPs that bear the morphological ACC case in the corresponding active sentence can be promoted to subject in the passive. Neither a withdrawal of abstract Case theory, nor an EPP-only theory can account for this generalization, since morphological case in Uzbek is determined configurationally, while both of these theories rely on structural position, either in an absolute sense (abstract Case) or a relative one (EPP-only), and are blind to morphological case assignment. In contrast, the theory of agreement and configurational case marking outlined above captures this generalization neatly. Since the external argument, here the causer, is absent in the passive, the rule that assigns ACC case (6b) will never apply, leaving whichever NP that would have been assigned ACC case unvalued for case and free to agree with the verb in situ (Bobaljik 2008), or by raising to specTP (B&V; Preminger 2011).

Conclusion: This paper introduces new and improved evidence in support of the claim that configurational case assignment is required to understand subject-verb agreement (Bobaljik 2008). It argues that neither a withdrawal of abstract Case theory, nor an EPP-only theory can account for the interaction between causativization and passivization in Uzbek, which reveals that promotion to subject in passive sentences is governed by the same configurational rules that govern morphological case assignment in active sentences.