Case theory and Passivization*

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In this talk we present an analysis of passivization within GB framework (cf. Chomsky (1981, 1986a, b), Stowell (1981)).

We make an assumption that the passive morpheme EN functions as an argument, which is assigned an external θ-role. It requires Case, given the θ-criterion (1) under the visibility condition (2).

(1)   A CHAIN has at most one θ-position; a θ-position is visible in its maximal CHAIN

(2)   A CHAIN is Case-marked if it contains exactly one Case-marked position; a position in a Case-marked CHAIN is visible for θ-marking

(Chomsky (1986a))

We further assume that EN steals an assigned and realized Case under government at LF to satisfy the θ-criterion, which derives the effect of what has been called Case-absorption.

Under this approach we can explain some interesting properties of pseudo-passives, which are shown by the following examples:

(3)a.   That claim was insisted (*strongly) on.

b. *Mary was sung (beautifully) with.

(4)a.   John was taken advantage of.

b. *John was taken pictures of.

In all of the ungrammaical constructions above their ungrammaticality is reduced to the impossibility of Case-stealing, given some auxiliary assumptions. As a result, we can eliminate the rule of reanalysis entirely from the grammar.

The Case-stealing analysis can also deal with clausal passives such as the following:

> (5)a.   It was insisted (on) that Mary was innocent.
>   b.   That Mary was innocent was insisted *(on).

Following Chomsky (1986a), we introduce the structural/inherent distinction into the Case-marking mechanism, although our decisions are differnt from his concerning what Case is marked by what category at what level. For instance, <u>insist</u> assigns and realizes inherent (genitive) Case at S-structure, whereas <u>on</u> assigns and realizes structural (objective) Case at S-structure. To account for (5) we further need the Case-realization principle (6):

> (6)A.   Structural Case is not realized on a category with
>   a feature assigning structural Case.
>   B.   Inherent Case is not realized on a category without
>   a feature assigning structural Case.
>
>   (Oka (1986b))

For motivation of (6), see Oka (1986b).

In the case where <u>on</u> is present in (5a), the CP complement is VP-adjoined and EN steals the objective Case which <u>on</u> assigns to the trace of the CP and realizes on it. If <u>on</u> is absent, EN steals the genitive Case which <u>insist</u> assigns to the CP and realizes on it. If <u>on</u> is present in (5b), then Case-stealing applies to the trace of the CP which is marked with objective Case by <u>on</u>. In the ungrammatical case in (5b), where <u>on</u> is absent, there is no realized Case subject to Case-stealing, leading to a θ-criterion violation. For the genitive Case assigned to the trace of the CP by <u>insist</u> cannot be realized under the Case-realization principle (6b), assuming that a trace has no feature, specifically no feature assigning structural Case. A theoretical advantage of our explanation is that we

need neither any categorial restriction on the subject position nor any specification about the categorial selection of the verb. (The main purpose of Oka (1986a,b) is to eliminate the notion of categorial selection entirely from the grammar.)

We proposes two parameters in the Case theory: whether a lanuage maintains (6B) or not, and whether a language applies inherent Case-marking at D-structure or S-structure. Thus, we have four possibility. We make the following speculations: English and French maintain (6B) whereas Japanese and German do not, and English and Japanes apply inherent Case-marking at S-structure whereas French and German apply it at D-structure. What makes us distinguish Japanese from German is the fact that the former can passivize an object which is marked with inherent Case in the active construction, while the latter cannot. For detailed discussion, see Oka (1986b).

* This talk was based on the arguments presented in Oka (1986a), where we dealt with many other constructions than passives. In Oka (1986b) I extended and revised the the theory proposed in Oka (1986a) and discussed further empirical consequences.

Selected References

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