

Unspecified Object Deletion (UOD) in Italian as Antipassive

1. Transitivity alternations: Italian like many other Romance varieties has morphological syncretism between unergative verbs and transitive de-transitivized verbs by means of *unspecified object deletion (UOD)*: (1) *Gianni cucina la pasta => Gianni cucina* (“G. cooks pasta/Ø”); (2) *Gianni canta una canzone => Gianni canta* (“G. sings a song/Ø”). On the surface it seems that unergatives are different from these de-transitivizable transitives, which appear at first sight to behave randomly in different ways. Unexpected differences in their behaviour produce their effects higher up in the (cartographic-conceived) structure: if we put those verbs in virtually the same context of *embedding in* and *argument sharing with* another predicate, we see that they tend to pattern differently, i.e. on two opposite sides: (3)a. *Gli faccio cucinare* VS b. **Gli faccio cantare*. (“I make (someone) cook/*sing (something) for him”). These differences can be accounted for if these verbs are conceived of as belonging to two different verbal classes: the first ones among those verbs are *antipassivizable* (Baker 1988), they are also deeply transitive, share the same morphology (in whichever flecional class) with unergative intransitives when undergo *UOD*, that proves to be the same as antipassive, and may never have cognate objects, because of lacking a prototypical object among the DO-selectable nouns; the other ones are *denominal* (Arad 2003), within the same flecional class *-a-*, via Noun Incorporation, are deeply transitive and can have cognate objects.

2. Voice: This property could be seen as a particular case of voice gap, given that accusative languages do not seem to need a dedicated morphology for antipassivization, and therefore can have syncretism with unergatives. In this sense we have to face the problem of either: (i) not consider antipassive an instance of voice, which seems plausible given that it can be explained by movements that occur under the V° head; or (ii) to accept that voice gaps could arise also with unergatives: not as for auxiliary selection, but in terms of acceptability of the antipassive construction in given contexts.

3. My proposal: I propose that de-transitivization phenomena in Italian, that indeed are an instance of antipassive, are not conceivable of as voice gaps, and therefore antipassivization is no Voice phenomenon at all. This would confirm (i) and disconfirm (ii) above. I give a new criterion to classify predicates in Romance, according to their *de-transitivizability*. Diagnostics: *applicativity* and *causativity*. Thus any pair transitive/intransitive of Romance, instead of being conceived as homophonous and listed in the lexicon, is amenable to a locally-constrained explanation *within syntax*.

3.1. Causative construction, with a beneficiary: it shows us the presence of a dedicated realization of applicatives. Grammaticality judgements seem to pattern coherently on opposites of the ‘*conceptual field*’: we group the ‘polar’ verbs according to their similarities in the de-transitivization. **High Applicative head:** (Pylkkänen 2000: “a relation between an event and an individual”) corresponds to the bene-/male-factive interpretation. The beneficiary in Italian can be expressed, for the 3rd person singular, by the dative clitic *gli*. It shows the position for the head $HIAppl^{\circ}$ and the relative scope: *gli* occupies the $Spec, HIApplP$, and in this position it can only get the benefactive interpretation of the causative: it specifies the person *for whom the action is being made*.

4. Antipassive: Noun Incorporation (Baker 1988) The deep object can undergo deletion and be interpreted as not specified. The theta-role is assigned to the antipassive morpheme. Italian example: (4) *I ragazzi vedono [t]*. “The boys see (something)”. I account for *UOD* in Romance in terms of antipassive (MOURE 1995). I propose that the antipassive is but a bound morpheme: (i) it obeys phonological rules that are different from the ones incorporated nominal roots do; (ii) it often appears in a different position than ‘true’ nominal roots; (iii) it belongs to a closed class. It licenses the incorporation of a special type of nominal, a

classifier (Kayne 2003), into a lexically existing verb.

4.1. Empty roots: the theory allows us to predict the existence of a noun incorporation with a *closed set of light verbs* (devoid of semantic meaning) to which nominal roots can incorporate; they can be language-specifically realized as \emptyset .

5. The case of Antipassivizable verbs: Noun Incorporation: *example (1)*; an abstract noun incorporates to the verb: no phonetically realizable word identifies in Italian the prototypical object of the verb *cucinare*. In many languages the function of the noun that means *prototypical objects of a transitive verb in a non-fixed quantity* is accomplished by the antipassive morpheme. In absence of a ‘true’ noun listed in the lexicon, this empty category incorporates from the place \mathbf{APass}° up to the verb. The verb is a ‘true’ lexical verb, it obeys normal movement rules, like any other verb that be a landing site for **Noun Incorporation**.

5.1. Main hypothesis: If a language has listed in its lexicon a root that can be used to produce a phonetically realized noun whose semantic content is *always* selectable as the *prototypical* object of a certain verb, then UG allows either: **(i)** to use the root, or **(ii)** to use the noun, in order to derive *that* verb, *in syntax*. \mathbf{APass}° is probably a unique lexical entry, but *its content up to it in the derivation* cannot be the same for different verbs. I argue \mathbf{APass}° stays over a functional field that has many classifiers, and its position is a landing site for one of them, according to *which* null object can be accepted by the verb. Result: *Gli faccio cucinare*.

6. ‘True’ denominals: If a word-creating head *n* is *filled* with an incorporated root, and a verb is derived from the noun itself, then that noun is the prototypical object, and the verb “*entail[s]* the existence of the corresponding noun” (ARAD 2003). The noun that incorporates to the light verb is a ‘true’ lexical noun. The new verb obeys particular constraints, not as a word pertaining to the lexicon. It is the projection of an abstract/empty head *e*; having to be properly governed in its governing category, it may not incorporate in LF (reanalyze) to the \mathbf{HIAppI}° head and at the same time respect GTC; the assigning of Case by \mathbf{Caus}° is undergoing a sort of “opaque” process, DO is no longer recoverable, and the **UOD** of a transitive verb cannot realize. Crashing of the abstract incorporation of $V=e$ to \mathbf{CAUS} : **Gli faccio cantare*: here the coindexing between the causative head and the $V=e$ head would be the only formalization that ensures us that the abstract or distance incorporation in LF (reanalysis) has taken place:

* $[\text{CP}[\text{AgrSP}[\text{AgrS}[\text{SpecHAppIP}[\text{gli}_i][\text{HAppI}^\circ\text{faccio}]]][\text{HighAppIP}[\text{t}_i][\text{t}_j][\text{CausP}[\text{Caus}t_j][\text{InfP}[\text{Inf}[\text{V}[\text{Ncant}_m]e_k]\text{are}]]][\text{VP}[\text{t}_k][\text{t}_m]]]]]]]$

This coindexing is therefore not licensed, because the empty category cannot be properly governed by t_j . t_j stays in the original position of the moved causative head, and $\mathbf{HIAppIP}$ is a barrier. We would yield the sentence **Gli faccio cantare* “I make (somebody) sing (something) for him”, which is ungrammatical, as predicted. Other nouns=>verbs that behave like that are: *ballo=>ballare*, *danza=>danzare*, *annuncio=>annunciare*, *centro=>centrare*, *disegno=>disegnare*, *domanda=>domandare*, *sogno=>sognare*, *ricordo=>ricordare*.

7. CONCLUSIONS: **(i)** some phenomena correlated with **UOD** can be diagnostics to show the existence in Italian of a head \mathbf{HIAppI}° ; **(ii)** **UOD** in Romance can be accounted for as an antipassive construction, due to the head \mathbf{aPass}° ; **(iii)** we classify two classes of predicates that are also visible by the property of having a zero-related nominal pair, *together* with the morphology of the 1st conjugation, *VS* no zero-related nominal pair, *together* with whichever Italian conjugation. The 1st class is formed by nominal incorporation, the 2nd one is a ‘genuine’ Italian verbal class. The two are deeply *transitive*.

ARAD [2003]. “Locality Constraints on the Interpretation of Roots: The Case of Hebrew Denominal Verbs”. *NLLT*, 21, 737-778. **GUASTI [1996].** “Semantic Restrictions in Romance Causatives and the Incorporation Approach”. *LI*, 27, 294-313.

KAYNE [2003] “Silent Years, Silent Hours”. Ms. **MOURE [1995].** “Gradaciones tipológicas: Evidencia de la ergatividad en lenguas acusativas”. *Verba*, 22, 397-428.