DIAGNOSING NON-PROMOTIONAL “PASSIVES” IN ALEUT

Edwin Ko • 43rd Berkeley Linguistics Society • February 5th 2017
BACKGROUND
Promotional passive:
Skápurinn var opnaður.
the.cupboard.M.SG.NOM was opened.M.SG.NOM
‘The cupboard was opened.’
(Icelandic; Thráinsson 2007:10, Ex.1.22b)
Non-promotional passives are constructions in which the underlying subjects become suppressed (or demoted) whereas objects remain in-situ.
New Impersonal Construction:

Það var lamið stúlkuna í klessa.

‘People badly beat the girl.’

(Icelandic; Maling & Sigurjónsdóttir 2002:98, Ex. 2a, henceforth M&S)
Disagreement among Icelandic scholars...


*It’s an active-passive!* Sigurðsson 2011.
New Impersonal Construction:

\( \text{Það var lamið stúlkuna í klessa.} \)

\( \text{it was hit.NEUT.SG the.girl.F.SG.ACC in a.mess} \)

‘People badly beat the girl.’

(Icelandic; M&S 2002:98,Ex.2a)

The debate:

Is it a passive? \( [ \emptyset [\text{VP V NP}] ] \)

Is it an active? \( [ \text{pro [VP V NP]} ] \)
In O’Connor & Maling (2014) and Maling & O’Connor (2015), they point out that this debate is not just in Icelandic...

Irish autonomous constructions:

\[
\text{Cuirfear \ é \ sa \ reilg \ áitiúil.}
\]

bury.FUT.AUT him.ACC in-the graveyard local

‘He will be buried in the local graveyard.’

(McCloskey 2007:827, Ex.3a)


*It’s an active!* McCloskey 2007.
In O’Connor & Maling (2014) and Maling & O’Connor (2015), they point out that this debate is not just in Icelandic...

**Northern Pomo -ya construction:**

*mo:wal*  *chaxa:-ya*

him.ACC  cut-IMP

‘(They) cut him.’

(O’Connor 1992:121, Ex.62, adapted)

*It’s a passive!* O’Connor 1992.

*It’s an active!* O’Connor & Maling 2014.
In order to distinguish between a non-promotional passive and an unspecified subject construction, M&S (2002) propose four syntactic tests.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SYNTACTIC PROPERTY</th>
<th>ACTIVE</th>
<th>PASSIVE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>IS AGENTIVE BY-PHRASE POSSIBLE?</td>
<td>✗</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CAN SUBJECT-ORIENTED ADJUNCTS BE CONTROLLED?</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✗</td>
</tr>
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<td>CAN ANAPHORS BE BOUND?</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✗</td>
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<tr>
<td>CAN UNACCUSATIVE VERBS UNDERGO PASSIVIZATION?</td>
<td>✓</td>
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M&S (2002) DIAGNOSTICS
First, M&S apply these tests on the non-promotional constructions in Polish and Ukrainian...
Polish:

Jana obrabowa-no (*przez nich).
John.ACC robbed-IMP (*by them)
‘They robbed John (*by them)’
(M&S 2002:104, Ex.10a)

Ukrainian:

Mojim mylym mene zradže-no.
my.INSTR beloved.INSTR me.ACC betrayed-PASS
‘I was betrayed by my beloved.’
(Shevelov 1963:144, Ex.12a, as cited in M&S 2002:105, Ex.12a)
Polish:

Jana obrabowa-no po pijanemu.
John.ACC robbed-IMP while drunk

‘They robbed John while (they were) drunk’
(M&S 2002:104, Ex.10c)

Ukrainian:

*Povernuvšys’ domo, hroši bulo znajde-no.
returning home money was found-PASS

Intended: Having returned home, the money was found.
(Lavine 2000:90, Ex.5b, as cited in M&S 2002:105, Ex.12c)
Polish:

Zamknię-**to** się **w fabryce**
lock-IMP **REFL** in factory
‘They lock themselves in the factory’
(M&S 2002:104, Ex.10b.i)

Ukrainian:

*Svoju žinku **bulo obmane-no**
self’s wife.ACC was deceived-PASS

Intended: Someone deceived his own wife.
(Lavine 2000:144, Ex.61a, as cited in M&S 2002:105, Ex.12b, adapted)
Polish:

*Dawniej umerian-no młodo.*
before died-IMP young
‘In the old days, people died at a young age.’
(M&S 2002:104, Ex.10d.ii)

Ukrainian:

*Umer-to*  
*died-PASS*  
(M&S 2002:105, Ex.12d)

*Zaxvori-to*  
*got.sick-PASS*  

*Prijixa-to*  
*arrived-PASS*
<table>
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<th>SYNTACTIC PROPERTY</th>
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<th>POLISH (=ACTIVE)</th>
<th>UKRAINIAN (=PASSIVE)</th>
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These tests have also been applied to Icelandic and Irish...
### SYNTACTIC TESTS: ICELANDIC (M&S 2002, etc.), IRISH (McCloskey 2007)

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<td>Is agentive by-phrase possible?</td>
<td>✗</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>Yes, but dispreferred.</td>
<td>✗</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Can subject-oriented adjuncts be controlled?</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✗</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Can anaphors be bound?</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✗</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
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<tr>
<td>Can unaccusative verbs undergo passivization?</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✗</td>
<td>Depends on type of verb.</td>
<td>✓</td>
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In this talk, I continue this exploration by bringing in data of a similar construction from a language in an unrelated language family, namely Aleut (Eskimo-Aleut).

Non-promotional constructions in Aleut have been traditionally described as passives (e.g. Bergsland 1997). My empirical claim is that they are in fact actives.
SOURCES OF DATA

Data based on existing documentation collected by other fieldworkers:

• Atkan Aleut School Grammar (Bergsland & Dirks 1981)
• Portions of the Aleut Dictionary (Bergsland 1994)
• Aleut Grammar (Bergsland 1997)
• Literature on Aleut (e.g. Berge 2010a, 2010b, 2011, to appear)
• Handouts at CoLang 2016 Aleut practicum (Berge & Dirks 2016)

Around 184 occurrences of non-promotional constructions.
Active construction:

**Asxinu-s**  
**hla-Ĥ**  
**kidu-ku-s.**

girl-ABS.PL  
boy-ABS.SG  
help-IND-3PL

‘The girls are helping the boy.’  
(Atkan; Bergsland & Dirks 1981:9)

Anaphoric marking (or Aleut Effect, e.g. Sadock 2000, Boyle 2000):

**Asxinu-s**

girl-REL.PL

**kidu-ku-u.**

help-IND-AN.3SG

‘The girls are helping him.’  
(Atkan; Bergsland & Dirks 1981:10)
## PASSIVES: SUBJECT DEMOTION STRATEGIES

<table>
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<tr>
<th>PASSIVE MARKER</th>
<th>DESCRIPTION</th>
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<tr>
<td>-lga- / -sxa-</td>
<td>passive of all sorts of verbs, including intransitive ones</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-ğa-</td>
<td>passive of -(x)ta- ‘continuous state’, ‘to have as’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-ula</td>
<td>passive of -usa- ‘applicative’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-(a)ği-</td>
<td>‘to be V-ed, to be in state of having V-ed’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-naği-</td>
<td>‘to be V-ed’ (have a V-er)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-qa-</td>
<td>anaphoric participial verb mood</td>
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(Berge & Dirks 2016, adapted)
### Active:

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<th>kidu-ku-ŷ.</th>
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<td>boy-ABS.PL</td>
<td>help-IND-3SG</td>
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‘The girl are helping the boys.’  
(Atkan; Bergsland & Dirks 1981:8)

### Promotional passive:

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<th>kidu-lga-qa-s.</th>
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<td>boy-ABS.PL</td>
<td>help-PASS-PART-3PL</td>
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</table>

‘The boys were helped.’  
(Atkan; Berge & Dirks 2016)
Promotional passive:

\[ \text{Hla-s} \quad \text{kidu-\textit{Iga}-qa-s}. \]

boy-ABS.PL help-PASS-PART-3PL

‘The boys were helped.’  

(Atkan; Berge & Dirks 2016)

Non-promotional “passive” (Bergsland 1997, Berge 2013):

\[ \text{Hla-s} \quad \text{kidu-\textit{Iga}-qa-\text{\^{x}}}. \]

boy-ABS.PL help-PASS-PART-3SG

‘Someone/we helped the boys.’  

(Atkan; Berge & Dirks 2016)
INHERENT STRUCTURAL AMBIGUITY

\[ Hla-\hat{x} \quad \text{kidu-}Ig\hat{a}-qa-\hat{x}. \]

boy-ABS.SG help-PASS-PART-3SG

Reading #1: ‘The boy was helped.’

Reading #2: ‘Someone/we helped the boy.’

(Atkan; Berge & Dirks 2016)

Is it a promotional passive?

Is it a non-promotional passive?

Is it an unspecified subject construction?

Who knows?! It’s AMBIGUOUS!
Promotional passive:

\[ Hlα-\hat{x} \quad kidu-lga-qa-\hat{x}. \]

boy-ABS.SG help-PASS-PART-3SG

‘The boy was helped.’

(Atkan; Berge & Dirks 2016)

Non-promotional construction:

\[ Hlα-\hat{x} \quad kidu-lga-qa-\hat{x}. \]

boy-ABS.SG help-PASS-PART-3SG

‘Someone/we helped the boy.’

(Atkan; Berge & Dirks 2016)
PASSIVE OR ACTIVE?

Non-promotional PASSIVE:

∅  Hla-\(\hat{x}\)  kidu-lga-qa-\(\hat{x}\).
boy-ABS.SG  help-PASS-PART-3SG

‘Someone/we helped the boy.’

(Unspecified subject construction (ACTIVE):

pro\textsubscript{arb}  Hla-\(\hat{x}\)  kidu-lga-qa-\(\hat{x}\).
boy-ABS.SG  help-PASS-PART-3SG

‘Someone/we helped the boy.’

(Atkan; Berge & Dirks 2016)
SYNTACTIC TESTS
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<td>✗</td>
<td>✔</td>
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In Aleut, the agent may be re-introduced into the passive construction via *ilaan* in Eastern Aleut or *hadagaan* in the Atkan dialect (Bergsland 1997).

We find them in promotional passives...
Promotional passive example with by-phrase:

Amaligan Amaya [...] quga-m ilaän ungaya-lga-qä-ẑ
there He devil-REL.SG by tempt-PASS-PART-3SG
‘There He was tempted by the devil [...]’

(Eastern; Bergsland 1997:167, adapted)

In my sample, I did not find any non-promotional constructions with a by-phrase.
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What are subject-oriented adjuncts in Aleut?
Intentional clauses are clauses of intent or purpose (e.g. ‘in order to’) that are formed with the intentional mood marker.

As a subordinate clause, the intentional clause functions as either ① object clause, or ② adverbial clause (Berge, to appear).
**INTENTIONAL CLAUSES AS ADVERBIAL CLAUSES**

**imyaŋ-iiŋan  ayuxtə-na-ŷ**  
fish-INTEN.3SG  go.out-PART-3SG  
‘he went out (in his boat) in order to fish’

(Atkan 1977; Bergsland 1997:238)

**angsuti-ingan  anqa-l  angali-q**  
pick.berries-INTEN.1SG  depart-CONJ  do.same.day-1SG  
‘I went out to pick berries’

(Atkan; Berge & Dirks 2016)
INTENTIONAL MOOD: SAME SUBJECT

In his 1997 grammar alone, Bergsland notes multiple times that the subject of the intentional clause is *coreferential* with the subject of the main clause:

- “When the subject is the same as that of the following verb the intentional is used” (idib:92)
- “having the same subject as the following verb, the intentional...” (idib:93)
- “...the intentional (same subject)” (idib:214)
- “The subject of the intentional is in general coreferential with the following verb” (idib:238)
- “...subject of an active verb in the intentional is coreferential with the subject of a following active verb” (idib:238)
- “The intentional has the same subject...” (idib:310)
- And many other occurrences...
[ PRO imyaği-iğan ] ayuxta-na-ŷ
fish-INTEN.3SG go.out-PART-3SG
‘he went out (in his boat) in order to fish’

(Atkan 1977; Bergsland 1997:238)

[ PRO angsuti-ingan ] anqa-l angali-q
pick.berries-INTEN.1SG depart-CONJ do.same.day-1SG
‘I went out to pick berries’

(Atkan; Berge & Dirks 2016)
HYPOTHESES

Hypothesis #1: It’s a passive!
Control is not possible; there is no subject in the non-promotional matrix clause because it is a true passive.
* [ ∅ [ PRO V-INTEN.3SG] NP V-PASS-3SG]

Hypothesis #2: It’s an active!
Control is possible; the non-promotional matrix clause has a thematic pro because it is actually an active.
[ proₐ [ PROₐ V-INTEN.3SG] NP V-IMP-3SG]
NON-PROMOTIONAL CONSTRUCTIONS WITH INTENTIONAL CLAUSES

\[ \text{pro}_i [ \text{PRO}_i \text{ ngaan tuman kano\mathring{a}(t)-sxa-a\check{g}an-aan } ] \text{ waa\check{g}a-lga-ku-\check{x}} \]
\[ \text{DAT.3SG REFL.1PL bow-PASS-INTEN.3SG=ENCL come-PASS-IND-3SG} \]
\[ \text{‘we came to worship (lit. bow ourselves to) Him’} \]

(Eastern 1870; Bergsland 1997:241)

\[ \text{pro}_i [ \text{PRO}_i \text{ aniqdu-\check{x} iqi\text{-}a\check{g}an-aan } ] \text{ waa\check{g}a-lga-qa-\check{x}} \]
\[ \text{child-ABS.SG cut-PASS-INTEN.3SG=ENCL come-PASS-PART-3SG} \]
\[ \text{‘one came to circumcise the child’} \]

(Eastern 1870; Bergsland 1997:241)
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txin aygaxti - ‘to walk off’

\textit{txin aygaxti-ku-}^\hat{x}
REFL.3SG walk.off-IND-3SG
‘he walked off’

(Bergsland 1997:101)

\textit{txin uqla}^\hat{x} - ‘to wash, bathe’

\textit{aaliiisi-m ilaan ting uqla}^\hat{g}-na-qing
harbor-REL.SG ABL.3SG REFL.1SG wash-PART-1SG
‘I washed myself in the harbor’

(Eastern 1983; Bergsland 1994:449)
Importantly, Aleut does not have non-reflexive third person pronouns (Leer 1991, Bergsland 1997).

Transitive verb - achixa- ‘to teach’ :

\texttt{txin achixa-ku-}\texttt{\textasciitilde}{\textasciitilde}  
\texttt{REFL.3SG teach-IND-3SG}  
‘he/she is teaching himself/herself’ (Bergsland 1997:139)

To indicate a non-reflexive third person, anaphoric marking would be used.
• Cross-linguistically, reflexive verbs tend not to passivize (Schäfer 2012).

• Reflexive verbs behave syntactically like intransitive verbs (Sells et al. 1987).

• Aleut: “A reflexive verb behaves much like an intransitive one” Bergsland (1997:156).
Non-promotional constructions with reflexive verbs display variation in terms of their syntactic behaviors:

• In an impersonal reading, reflexive pronouns are lost.
• In a ‘we’ reading, reflexive pronouns are retained.
In the impersonal reading of the non-promotional construction, the reflexive pronoun is lost.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Active:</th>
<th>txidix haaĝani-ku-s</th>
<th>REF.3PL stop-IND-3PL</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>‘they stopped’</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<th>Non-promotional:</th>
<th>il(an) chugi-lga-lakan haaĝani-lga-ku-ñana inside not.silent-PASS-CONJ.NEG stop-PASS-IND-3SG</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>‘when they were (lit. one was) silent in there and stopped’</td>
<td>(Atkan 1909; Bersgland 1997:173)</td>
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</table>
“...passive with the sense of ‘we’ has the object pronoun tuman ‘us’.”
(Bergsland 1997:173)
Active: ngaan txin iq(y)aŋiti-ku-u
DAT.3SG REFL.3SG paddle-IND-AN.3SG
‘he paddles to it’

ilaan txin ukudigati-ku-u
ABL.3SG REFL.3SG become.safe-IND-AN.3SG
‘he gets safe(ly away) from it’

(Eastern 1910; Bergsland 1997:173)
BINDING TEST: ‘WE’ SENSE NON-PROMOTIONAL

Non-promotional:  

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{ngaan} & \quad \text{tuman} & \quad \text{iqaqi-sx\-a-li\-x} & \ldots \\
\text{DAT.3SG} & \quad \text{REFL.1PL} & \quad \text{paddle-PASS-CONJ} & \\
\text{‘we paddle to it…’} & \\
\text{ilaan} & \quad \text{tuman} & \quad \text{ukudiga-sx\-a-da-\textasciitilde{}} & \\
\text{ABL.3SG} & \quad \text{REFL.1PL} & \quad \text{become.safe-PASS-HAB-3SG} & \\
\text{‘get safely from it’} & \\
\end{align*}
\]

(Eastern 1910; Bergsland 1997:173)
Proposal: Like in Irish, Aleut reflexive pronouns require an antecedent with matching person and number features.
Aleut non-promotional constructions

• *Impersonal*: lacks the necessary number and/or person feature to bind onto reflexives.
  ...reflexives prohibited.

• *Personal ‘we’*: contains the necessary number and person feature to bind onto reflexives.
  ...reflexives permitted.
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In general, unaccusative verbs do not form passives (Perlmutter 1978).

Citing Golovko (2007), Kiparsky (2013) says: “Aleut reportedly allows both impersonal or personal passives of all intransitives and transitives”.

“...passive of all sorts of verbs including intransitive ones” (Bergsland 1997: 117)
Canonically unaccusative verbs in the passive:

[...] as läqa qa gan
  die-PASS-PART-INTEN.3SG
‘...people had (previously) died’
(Eastern 1909; Bergsland 1997:295, adapted)

[...] il an a gä lga aka qa ĭ ulux
  inside arrive-PASS-able.to-PART-3SG=NEG
‘...one could not get [to]’
(Eastern 1909; Bergsland 1997: 168, adapted)
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CONCLUSION
CONCLUDING REMARKS

• Non-promotional “passives” in Aleut are actives and not passives as have been traditionally described.
• Maling & O’Connor (2014) claim that constructional ambiguity in some cases lead to syntactic change via reanalysis.
  • Bergsland (1997:170, emphasis mine): “the personal passive seems to have developed in Eastern Aleut from the non-promotional use by analogy of the anaphoric type and have spread from there to later Atkan”.
CONCLUDING REMARKS

• One of the challenges in working with these languages that are not easily accessible or/and have few remaining speakers, and attempting to solve grammatical problems is understanding how best to use existing documentation to test hypotheses.
  • Greater awareness of the areas of the language that require more attention.

• Future fieldwork, and comparative and historical investigations on the nature of these non-promotional constructions.
  • E.g. Non-promotional constructions, to my knowledge, not present in any of the Eskimo languages, but appears in the geographically proximate language Eyak (Krauss 2015) and are prevalent to some degree in several Athabaskan languages (Rice 2000).
TXIN QAĞAASAKUQING!
(THANK YOU!)
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