

Transitivity, and beyond...

We've been talking for a while about *transitive* and *intransitive* verbs:

The children **jumped**

The ants **ate** the cookies

We've been talking for a while about *transitive* and *intransitive* verbs:

The children **jumped**

The ants **ate** the cookies

...but it's very common for a given verb to be able to be either transitive or intransitive:

The children **jumped** the fence.

The ants **ate**.

Some languages have morphology on the verb marking transitivity:

<i>Tagalog</i>	<i>Passamaquoddy</i>	<i>Japanese</i>	
mag- bukas	't- apqote -htun	ak -eru	open (trans)
b -um- ukas	apqote -sson	ak -u	open (intrans)
mag- hinto	'- cone -htun	tom -eru	stop (trans)
h -um- into	cone -sson	tom -aru	stop (intrans)
mag- akyat	't- ewep -ehtun	ag -eru	raise (trans)
um- akyat	ewep -iye	ag -aru	rise (intrans)
mag- balik	wesuwe -nomon	modo -su	return (trans)
b -um- alik	wesuwe -ssu	modo -ru	return (intrans)
s -um- unog	'- pokkik -somon	yak -u	burn (trans)
ma- sunog	pkik -te	yak -eru	burn (intrans)

Even in languages that don't have that, it's common to have ways of increasing or decreasing the transitivity of verbs. We'll talk about four of these:

- causatives
- passives
- antipassives
- applicatives

Causatives

Japanese morphological causatives:

Ziro-wa Hanako-o ik-ase-ta
Z-TOP Hanako-ACC go-CAUSE-PAST
'Ziro made Hanako go'

Hanako-wa Ziro-ni heya-dai-o haraw-ase-ta
H-TOP Z-DAT room-rent-ACC pay-CAUSE-PAST
'Hanako made Ziro pay room rent'

Passive

Consider alternations like:

He is **burning** the leaves

The leaves are **being burned** (by him)

(and compare: The leaves are **burning**)

Passive

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He is **burning** the leaves

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In the *passive*, the phrase that would be the object of the transitive becomes the subject, and the phrase that would be the subject isn't (obligatorily) present.

Antipassive

ʔaaček-a kimitʔ-ən ne-nʔetet-ən (*Chukchi*)

youth-ERG load-ABS 3PL.SUBJ-carry-3SG.OBJ

‘(The) young men carried away the load’

ʔaaček-ət **ine**-nʔetet-γʔet kimitʔ-e

youth-ABS.PL **ANTIPASSIVE**-carry-3PL.SUBJ load-INSTR

‘(The) young men carried away a load’

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'(The) young men carried away a load'

like passive in that the verb becomes intransitive,
but it's the *object* that becomes an oblique.

Antipassive

Some ergative languages prevent wh-movement of ergatives.

Max wayi naq winaq. [*Q'anjob'al*]

ASP sleep the man

'The man slept'

Max y-ila' naq winaq ix ix

ASP **3**ERG-see the man the woman

'The man saw the woman'

Antipassive

Some ergative languages prevent wh-movement of ergatives.

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ASP sleep the man
'The man slept'

Max y-ila' naq winaq ix ix
ASP 3ERG-see the man the woman
'The man saw the woman'

Maktxel max wayi?
who ASP sleep
'Who slept?'

Maktxel max y-ila' naq winaq?
who ASP 3ERG-see the man
'Who did the man see?'

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Max wayi naq winaq. [Q'anjob'al]
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ASP 3ERG-see the man the woman
'The man saw the woman'

Maktxel max wayi?
who ASP sleep
'Who slept?'

Maktxel max y-ila' naq winaq?
who ASP 3ERG-see the man
'Who did the man see?'

Maktxel max il-oni ix ix?
who ASP see-ANTIPASSIVE the woman
'Who saw the woman?'

Applicative

Morphology on the verb that can ‘add an argument’:

Umwaana yataaye igititabo mu maazi (*Kinyarwanda*)
child threw book in water

‘The child has thrown the book into the water’

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child threw book in water

‘The child has thrown the book into the water’

Umwaana yataaye-**mo** amaazi igitabo
child threw-**APPLICATIVE** water book

‘The child has thrown the book into the water’

Applicative

Morphology on the verb that can ‘add an argument’:

‘Kisaqosomoniya masqositol [*Passamaquoddy*]

they.cooked.them beans

‘They cooked beans’

‘Kisaqosomuwaniya masqositol muhsumsuwal.

they.cooked.them.**for.him** beans their.grandfather

‘The cooked beans for their grandfather’

Applicative

Morphology on the verb that can ‘add an argument’:

Nailyi-**i**-a mka kelya [Chaga]
he.eats-**APPL** wife food
‘He is eating food for his wife’

Naizric-**i**-a mbuya
he.runs-**APPL** friend
‘He is running for a friend’

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24.917 ConLangs: How to Construct a Language Fall 2018

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