A case for Voice

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Overview

We propose that the cross-linguistic similarities and differences illustrated in (1)-(5) are best captured in an approach that combines aspects of Sailor & Ahn's (2010) analysis of passives with ergative-like case marking and case-driven DP-movement.

(1) [This cake] was cut **by** *me*.
(2) [kue ini] dipotong **oleh** *saya*. (Indonesian *di*-passive)
(3) [zhe he dangao] **bei** *wo* qie le. (Chinese passive)
(4) [kono keeki-ga] *watashi*-**niyotte** kirareta. (Japanese direct passive)
(5) [kue ini] *saya* potong. (Indonesian inverse)

Following Sailor & Ahn, we assume that external arguments are merged in SpecVoiceP, due to a [*u*DP*] feature on Voice. The voice marker is merged in Voice, but moves to the head of a higher functional projection in (1)-(3). To account for the position of the verb, we assume with Sailor & Ahn that Voice also has a [*uv*P] feature, which attracts *v*P to the Spec of the higher functional projection when it is strong, and thus moves the verb across the external argument (1)-(2). In (3)-(5), this feature is weak and the *v*P remains in final position. In order to account for the movement of the internal argument to initial position regardless of whether the *v*P moves (1)-(2) or not (3)-(5), we follow Béjar & Rezac (2009:68) in assuming that the EPP (=*u*DP*) feature on T is linked to the operation Agree, more specifically, the checking and valuing of φ- and case-features. We propose that passivisation not only suppresses the structural [acc] case on Voice, but also endows Voice with the ability to assign an oblique inherent case to the external argument in its specifier (cf. Woolford 2006). This means that T will Agree with the internal argument, and as a result the EPP feature on T, which is strong in all four languages, will attract the internal argument to SpecTP.

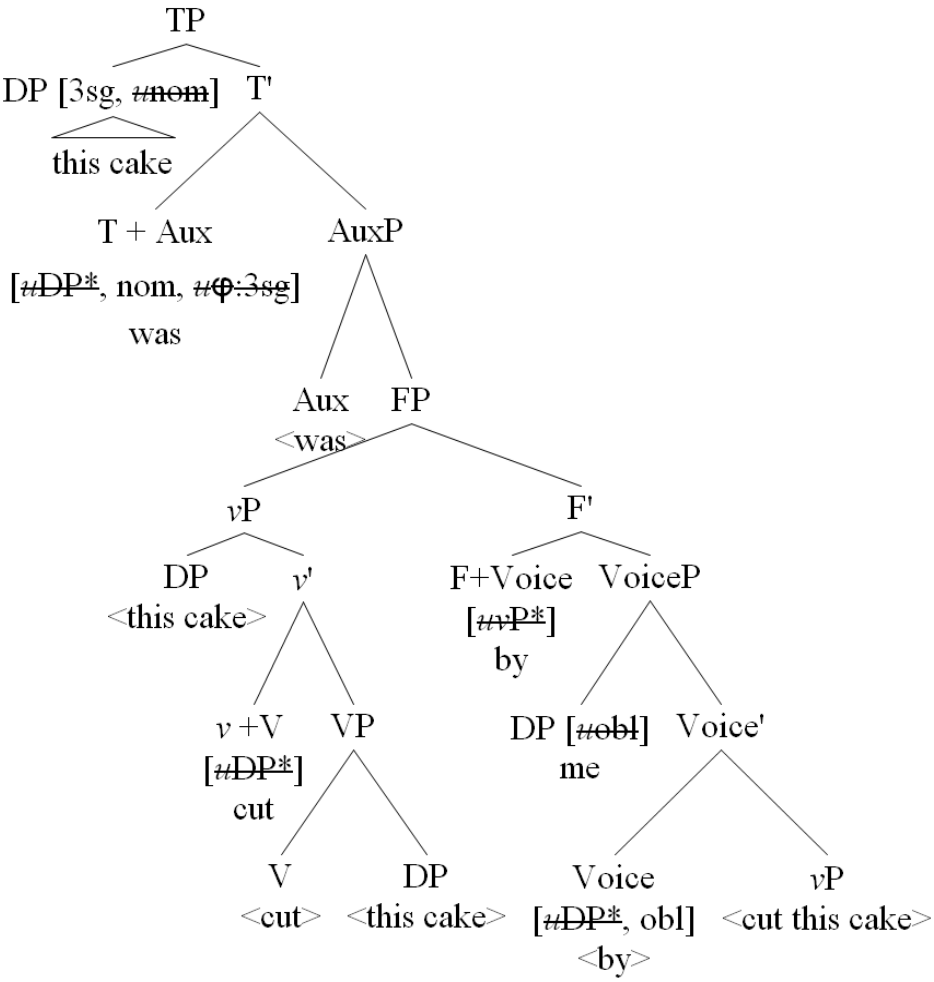
References

Béjar, Susana and Milan Rezac. 2009. Cyclic Agree. *Linguistic Inquiry* 40. 35-73.

Sailor, Craig and Byron Ahn. 2010. The voices in our heads: morphological voice and its grammatical interfaces. Ms, UCLA Department of Linguistics. (http://byron.bol.ucla.edu/papers/SailorAhn-VoiceP.pdf)

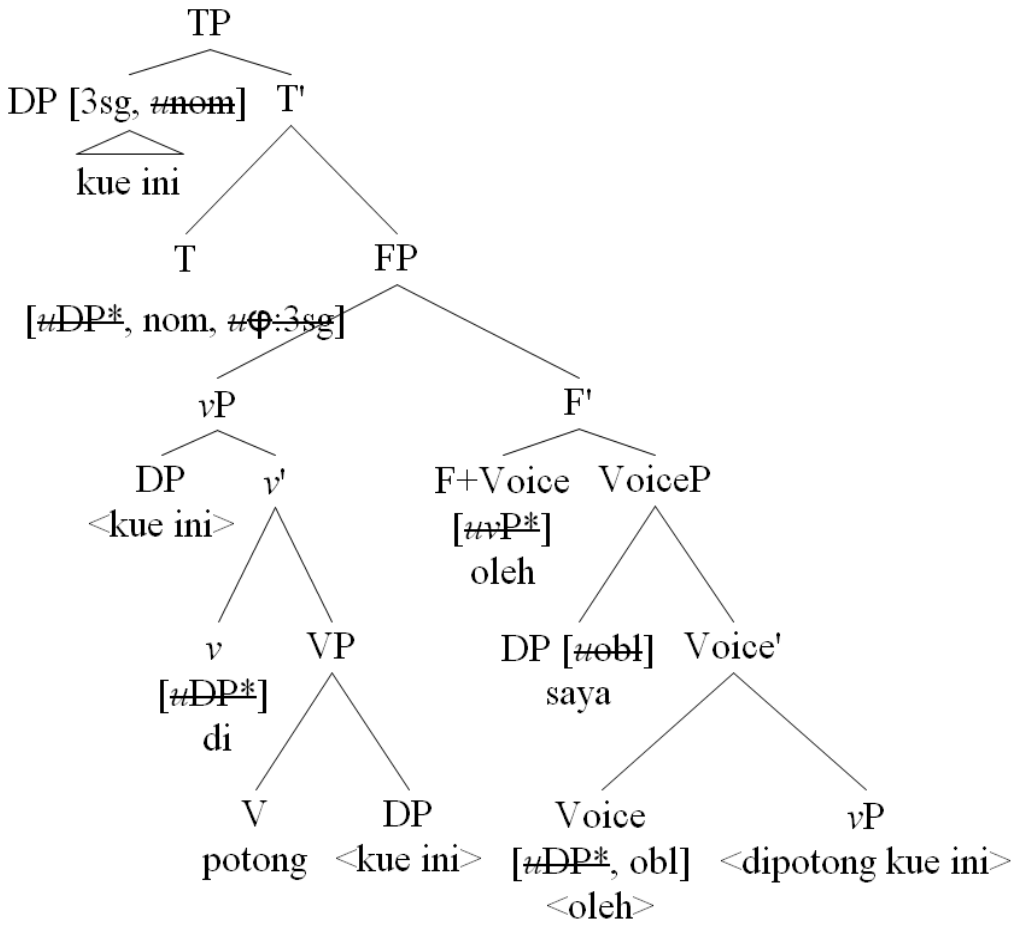
Woolford, Ellen. 2006. Lexical case, inherent case, and argument structure. *Linguistic Inquiry* 37. 111-130.

Tree 1: English passive



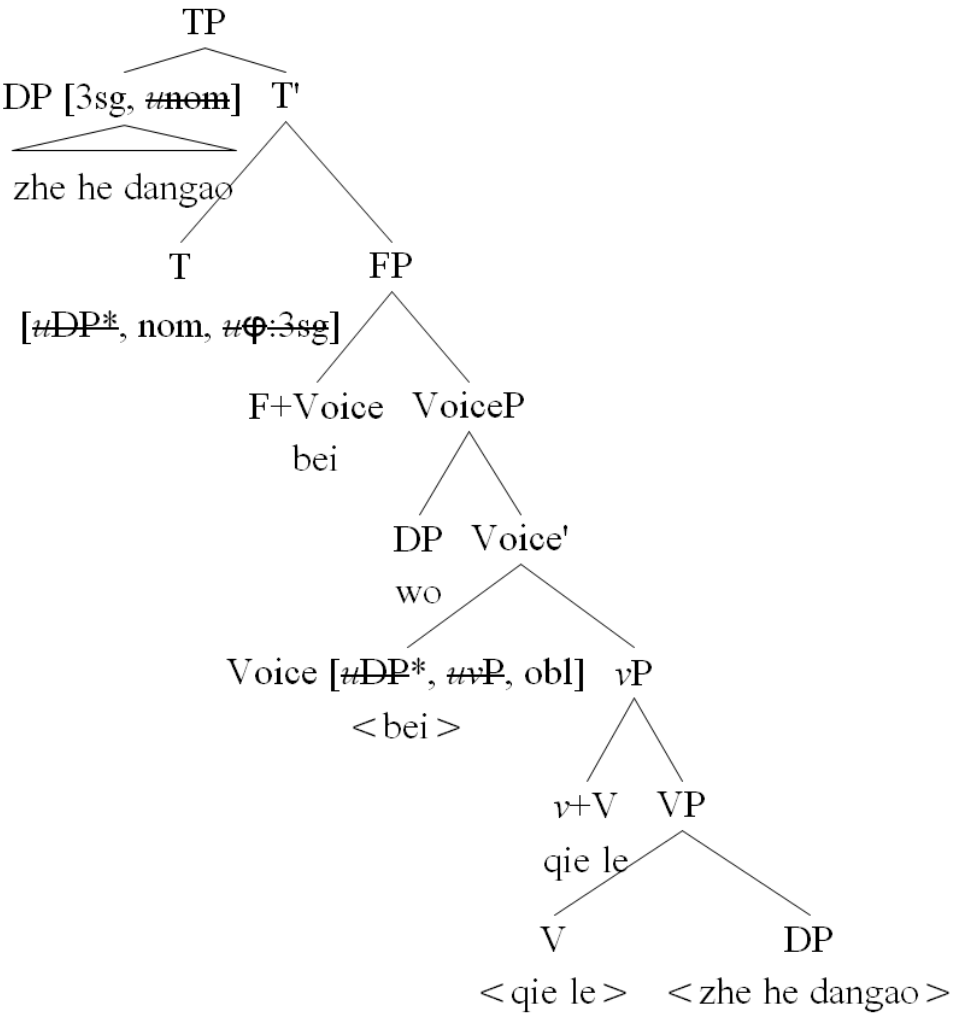
- The agent *me* is merged in SpecVoiceP in passives, because of the strong [uDP*] feature on Voice.
- The passive marker *by* is generated in Voice and raises up to the head of a higher functional projection (FP), so that it precedes the agent.
- The [*uv*P] feature on Voice is strong, so *v*P moves to SpecFP, smuggling the verb across the agent.
- We assume that a passive participle feature in *v* endows it with a [*u*DP*] feature that attracts the internal argument *this cake* to Spec*v*P.
- The agent *me* is inherently oblique case-marked by Voice. Therefore, T Agrees with the internal argument *this cake*.
- The EPP (*u*DP*) feature on T is strong and because it is linked to Agree, it causes the internal argument *this cake* to raise to SpecTP from Spec*v*P.

Tree 2: Indonesian *di*-passive



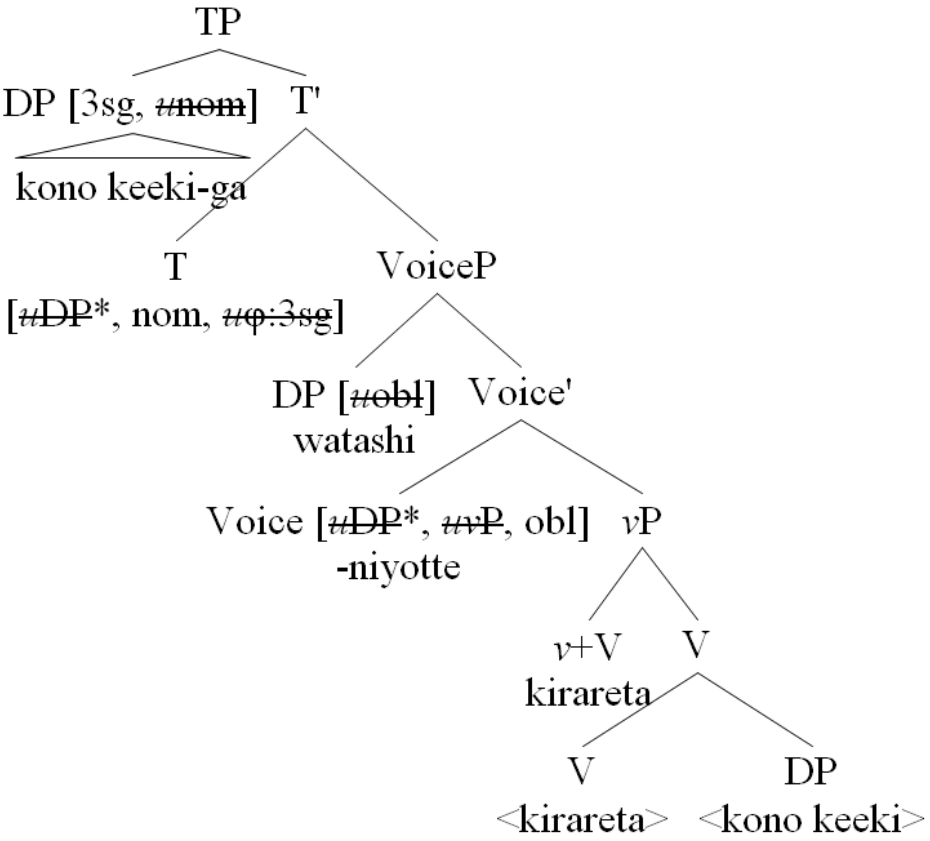
- The agent *saya* is merged in SpecVoiceP in passives, because of the strong [uDP*] feature on Voice.
- The passive marker *oleh* is generated in Voice and raises up to the head of a higher functional projection (FP), so that it precedes the agent.
- The [*uv*P] feature on Voice is strong, so *v*P moves to SpecFP, smuggling the verb across the agent.
- We assume that the marker *di* in *v* endows it with a [*u*DP*] feature that attracts the internal argument *kue ini* to Spec*v*P.
- The agent *saya* is inherently oblique case-marked by Voice. Therefore, T Agrees with the internal argument *kue ini*.
- The EPP (*u*DP*) feature on T is strong and because it is linked to Agree, it causes the internal argument *kue ini* to raise to SpecTP from Spec*v*P.

Tree 3: Chinese passive



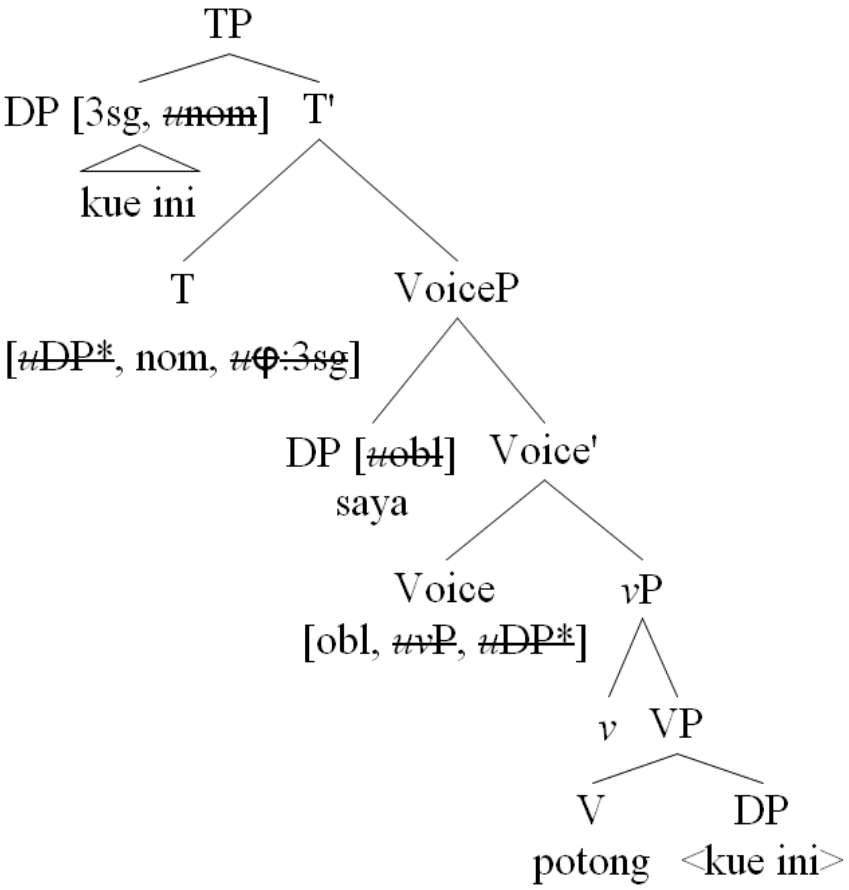
- The agent *wo* is merged in SpecVoiceP in passives, because of the strong [uDP*] feature on Voice.
- The passive marker *bei* is generated in Voice and raises up to the head of a higher functional projection (FP), so that it precedes the agent.
- The [*uv*P] feature on Voice is weak, so *v*P stays in its base position and the verb is sentence-final.
- The agent *wo* is inherently oblique case-marked by Voice. Therefore, T Agrees with the internal argument *zhe he dangao*.
- The EPP (*u*DP*) feature on T is strong and because it is linked to Agree, it causes the internal argument *zhe he dangao* to raise to SpecTP.

Tree 4: Japanese passive



- The agent *watashi* is merged in SpecVoiceP in passives, because of the strong [uDP*] feature on Voice.
- The passive marker -*niyotte* is generated in Voice and just stays there.
- In the case of Japanese, FP is not necessary, because we don't have to smuggle the verb across the agent and the passive marker follows the agent.
- The [*uv*P] feature on Voice is weak, so *v*P stays in its base position and the verb is sentence-final.
- The agent *watashi* is inherently oblique case-marked by Voice. Therefore, T Agrees with the internal argument *kono keeki*.
- The EPP (*u*DP*) feature on T is strong and because it is linked to Agree, it causes the internal argument *kono keeki* to raise to SpecTP.

Tree 5: Indonesian inverse



- The agent *saya* is merged in SpecVoiceP in passives, because of the strong [uDP*] feature on Voice.
- There is no overt marker in Voice.
- FP is not necessary, because we don't have to smuggle the verb across the agent, and there is no evidence for any movement of the Voice head.
- The [*uv*P] feature on Voice is weak, so *v*P stays in its base position and the verb is sentence-final.
- The agent *saya* is inherently oblique case-marked by Voice. Therefore, T Agrees with the internal argument *kue ini*.
- The EPP (*u*DP*) feature on T is strong and because it is linked to Agree, it causes the internal argument *kue ini* to raise to SpecTP.