

Passivization: as Syntactic Argument Decreasing Parameter in Boro

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Abstract : Boro employs verbs hooked up with morphemes which lead verbs to adjust with their arguments and hence, affecting the whole of sentence structures. This paper is based on few such syntactic parameters which are usually considered as argument decreasing parameters in linguistic works. Passivizing of few transitive clauses which are usually construed from the verbs occurring with certain morphemes and representation in middle constructions are few of such strategies which lead to conceptualizing of decreasing of syntactic arguments from a sentence. This paper focuses on the mentioned linguistic strategies and attempts to describe the linguistic processes as for how these parameters work in languages especially by concentrating on a particular Tibeto-Burman language i.e. Boro. Boro is a Tibeto-Burman language widely spoken in parts of the north-eastern regions of India. It has an agglutinative nature in forming words as well as clauses. There is a morpheme 'za' which means 'to happen, become' in Boro whose appearances with verb roots denotes an idea of the subject being passivized. Passivization, usually has notions that it is a reversed representation of its active sentence forms in the terms of argument placements. (However, it is not accountably true as passives and actives have some distinct features of their own and independent of one and the other.) This particular work will concentrate on the semantics of passivization at the same time along with its syntactic reality. The verb *khao* meaning 'to steal' offers a sense of passivization with the appearance of the morpheme *za* which means 'to happen, become' (e.g. *Zunu-α lama-αo phuisa khao-za-bai*; *Junu-NOM road-LOC money steal-PASS-PRES: Junu got her money stolen on the road*). The focus, here, is more on the argument placed at the subject position (i.e. *Zunu*) and the event taken place. The semantics of such construction asks for the agent because without an agent the event could not have taken place. However, the syntactic elements fill the slots of relegated or temporarily deleted agent which, infact, is the actual subject cum agent in its active representation. Due to the event marker 'za' in this presentation it affords to reduce one participant from such a situation which in actual is made up of three participants. Hence, the structure of di-transitive construction here reduces to mono-transitive structure. Unlike passivization, middle construction does not allow relegation of the agents. It permanently deletes agents. However, it also focuses on the fore-grounded subject and highlighting on the changed states on the subjects which happens to be the underlying objects of their respective transitive structures (with agents). This work intends to describe how these two parameters which are different at their semantic realization can meet together at a syntactic level in order to create a linguistic parameter that decreases participants from their actual structures which are with more than one participant.

Keywords : argument-decrease, middle-construction, passivization, transitivity-intransitivity

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