STRUCTURAL PECULIARITIES OF MIDDLE AND ERGATIVE CONSTRUCTIONS IN ENGLISH

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The article analyzes syntactic peculiarities of English middle and ergative constructions from the point of view of generative grammar. It claims that middle and ergative verbs generate from the same verb class. The main syntactic differences of these constructions are ergative verb marking of implicit subject with causer teta-role, and middle verb generation of position for two subjects.

Key words: Middle and Ergative Construction, Implicit subject, Position of Specificator, Teta-Role.

Modern trends in linguistics point out to the increasing interest towards the investigation of integrative processes of morphology, syntax, semantics, and pragmatics. The category of voice is one of the most conceptually complex categories in the verb system. Regardless numerous researches, it still remains the subject of constant linguistic debates, which is explained by the peculiarities of voice semantics, means of voicemeaningexpression, as well as by different interpretations of the term "voice". When analyzing category of voice linguistsadvert to its dual nature: formally, the category of voice is a morphological category (as it is expressed with the help of a specific grammatical marker, i.e. it involves the change of the verb form), while semantically, voice is a syntactic-semantic category, it indicates certain relations among parts of the sentence and their referents. The majority of linguists who investigate the English language do not doubt active and passive voice existence. However, the existence of reflexive, reciprocal, middle voices, and the category of ergativity is a controversial matter. Our **research goal** is to investigate common and differential features of English ergative and middle constructions applying the methodology of generative grammar. The **object** of the investigation is English ergative and middle constructions. The **subject** of the paper is the generative peculiarities of these constructions, the analysis of their common and differential syntactic peculiarities.

The generative grammar emergence marked a new era in linguistic investigations. The linguistic theory started to be understood as the investigation of the process of interrelation of thought and language. The object of generative grammar research is syntax, conventionally defined as a creative part of grammar. Syntactic structure of a sentence is a system of rules and principles, that enable the speaker, on the one hand, to form correct sentences and, on the other, to evaluate them from the point of correctness or incorrectness of grammatical structure. With the help of these rules the speaker with his limited possibilities is able to generate infinite amount of sentences. Moreover, the semantic component of grammar is not neglected either, it is considered to be the integral part of grammar [2, 175].
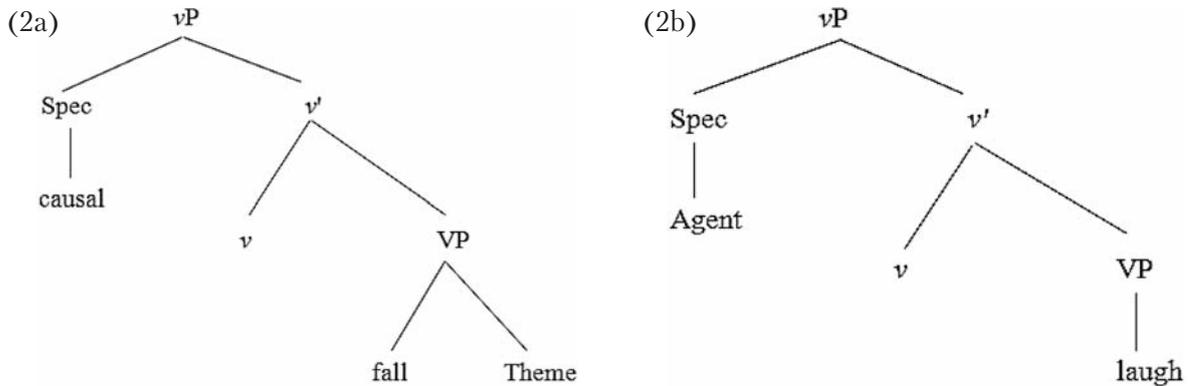
The main peculiarity of passive construction is the absence of external argument of the verb and the failure to mark the internal argument with an accusative case (Scheme 1.) That's why the internal argument — NP (noun phrase) *question* moves to the position specifier TP to check the feature of EPP (Extended Projection Principle), which is formulated as the obligatory subject presence in the structure of the sentence. The emergence of auxiliary verb *to be* in the passive construction is explained by the presence of functional projection Pass P (Passive Phrase) in its structure [3; 5].

(1)
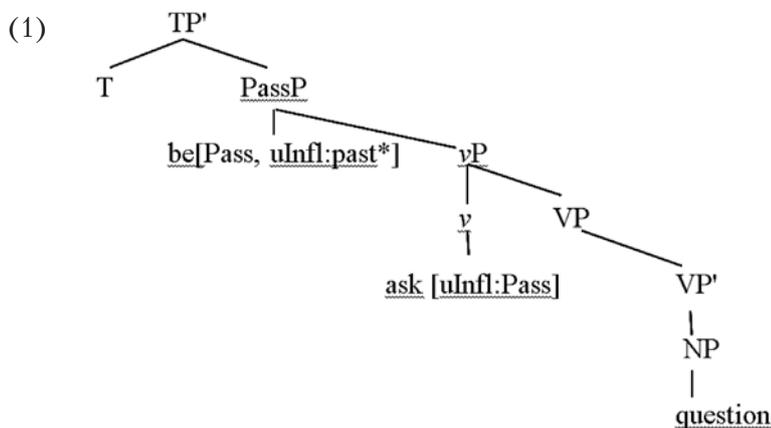
Scheme 1. The generation of passive construction *question was asked*

The main criteria to distinguish the class of ergative verbs in English (typologically a nominative language) is transitivity/intransitivity of the verb. The intransitive one-argument verbs depending on the position of the argument are divided into unaccusatives (ergatives) and unergatives [6, 35].

The scheme of generation of ergative and unergative verb phrases are presented in examples (2a) and (2b) correspondingly:

(2a)

```
              vP
           /      \
        Spec       v'
         |        /  \
       causal    v    VP
                     /   \
                   fall  Theme
```

(2b)

```
              vP
           /      \
        Spec       v'
         |        /  \
       Agent     v    VP
                       |
                     laugh
```

Ergative verbs lack external argument, the grammatical subject in the position of internal argument, receives Theme Theta-role but is not marked with accusative case (hence, the second name of ergative verbs — unaccusatives). After moving to the position of specifier TP, NP receives nominative case. In comparison to unaccusatives, unergatives lack internal argument.

The peculiarity of the ergative verb lies in the fact that meaning juxtaposition (active or passive) takes place in one voice form, that is in the active voice form [1, 63]. According to this, the verb is classified ergative if the internal argument of its transitive realization and the external argument of its intransitive realization are expressed by the same word form that has a "patient" theta-role:
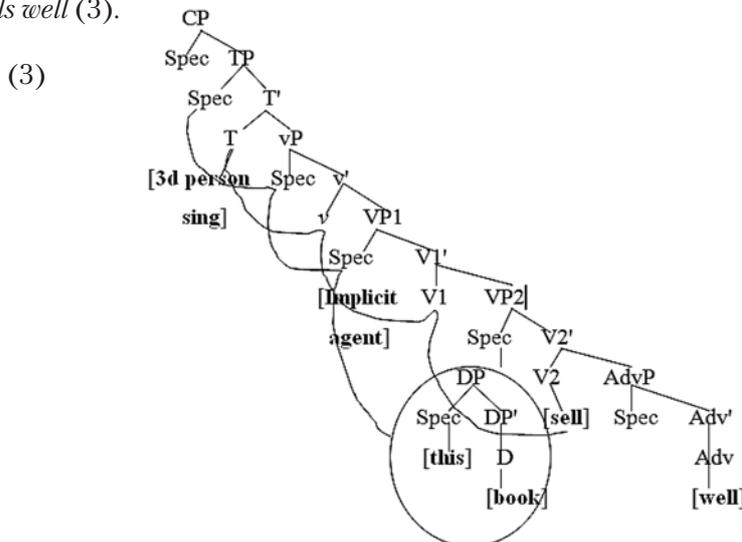
An explosion **shook** *the room* (transitive verb).

The whole room **shook** (ergative construction).

Another example of non-agent construction is middle construction, which is determined as one-argument construction, formed with the help of a transitive verb, though having the intransitive meaning. This reminds of the ergative construction definition.

Syntactically, the difference between middle and ergative verbs lies in the fact that despite the fact that these verbs generate from the same verb class with the help of anti-causation process, ergatives mark the internal argument (if any) with theta-role of causation, meanwhile the middle verb has implicit external argument, which has theta-role of agent. This argument is generated in the position of specifier V1, which is introduced into the structure of the sentence to account for middle verb implicit external argument generation. The peculiar feature of this analysis is that the positions for two grammatical subjects are distinguished in middle constructions, that is, the position for external argument (agent) — position Spec V2, and the position for implicit subject (causator) — position Spec V1. The verb in middle construction moves into functional projection *v*P (verbalizer phrase) to check the middle voice features (to receive abstract middle morpheme).

Let us consider the structure of the simple unextended sentence with middle construction *This book sells well* (3).

(3)

```
CP
 Spec   TP
      Spec    T'
           T    vP
     [3d person  Spec   v'
        sing]       v    VP1
                    Spec    V1'
              [Implicit   V1    VP2
                agent]       Spec    V2'
                          DP      V2    AdvP
                     Spec  DP'  [sell]  Spec   Adv'
                    [this]  D                Adv
                          [book]           [well]
```
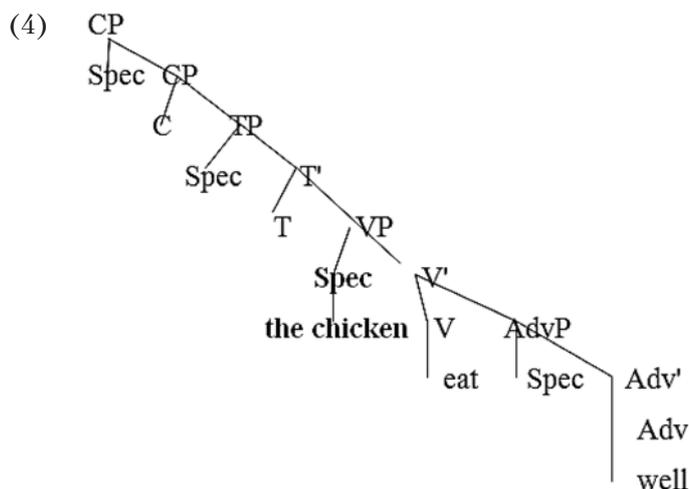
The verb *sell* is generated in the structure of VP2 with DP in the position of external argument. The DP has a demonstrative pronoun in the position of specifier and a noun *book* as a head. To be verbalized lexeme *sing* moves, through the position of *v*P, into the position of the head TP, to get the marker of present third person singular. The implicit agent is generated in the position of specifierVP1.
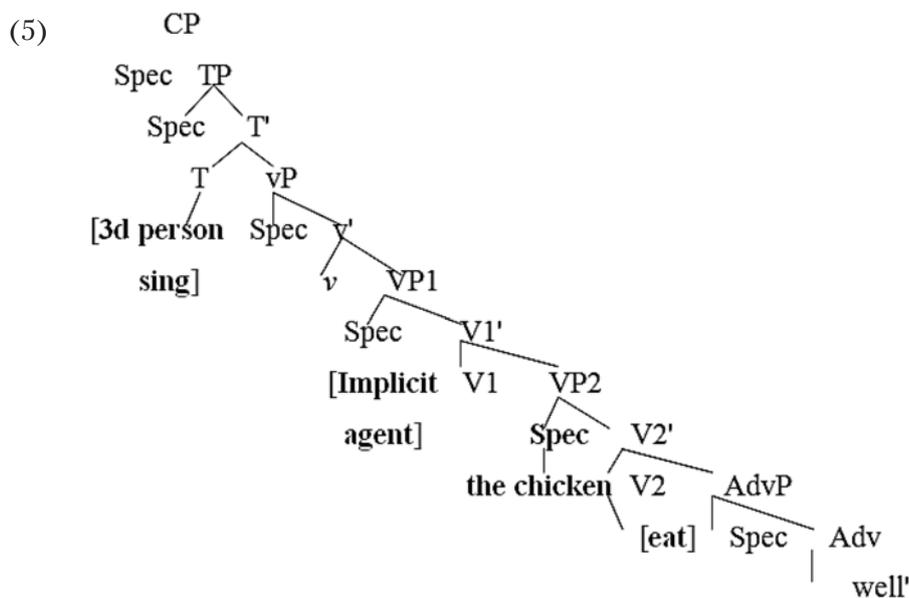
Linguistically interesting in this respect is a trait example *"The chicken eats well"*, a sentence that is often used to exemplify the transposition processes within voice system of modern English verb.

According to the structural analysis of the sentence *"The chicken eats well"*, the ambiguity of syntactic construction isnot caused by the coincidence of active / passive semantics, but that of active and middle.

In the active meaning the position of external argument (specifer VP) of the verb is occupied by the noun phrase, which has a theta-role of agent, in this case the structure of the sentence can be represented as follows:

(4)
```
CP
Spec CP
     C  TP
       Spec T'
            T  VP
              Spec V'
              the chicken  V   AdvP
                          eat  Spec  Adv'
                                     Adv
                                     well
```

In the middle meaning the structure generates an additional projection to generate implicit agent in it, and the noun phrase *the chicken* receives a theta-role of patient. The structure of the sentence with middle construction can be represented as follows:

(5)
```
CP
Spec  TP
     Spec  T'
          T      vP
     [3d person  Spec  v'
      sing]            v    VP1
                          Spec    V1'
                       [Implicit  V1    VP2
                        agent]        Spec   V2'
                                the chicken  V2    AdvP
                                            [eat]  Spec  Adv
                                                        well'
```

The middle realization of the verb presupposes the generation of two verb phrases in the structure of the sentence *"The chicken eats well"*. They open the positions for the generation of two subjects. The implicit subject is generated as the part of VP1, the patient noun phrase is generated in the structure of VP2.

Thus, besides syntactic restrictions on the language items functioning in middle and ergative constructions, there also exist certain semantic restrictions. The field for further investigation lies in the analysis of semantic restrictions on the usage of predicate, subject and adverb in middle and ergative constructions as well as in the analysis of semantically correspondent to medial constructions *able*-adjectives.

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У статті аналізуються синтаксичні особливості медіальних та ергативних конструкцій в англійській мові з позиції генеративної граматики. Встановлено, що медіальні та ергативні дієслова походять з одного класу дієслів. Головною синтаксичною відмінністю цих конструкцій є маркування ергативним дієсловом імпліцитного підмета тета-роллю каузатора і генерування медіальним дієсловом позицій для породження двох підметів.

Ключові слова: медіальна та ергативна конструкції, імпліцитний підмет, позиція специфікатора, тета-роль.

В статье анализируются синтаксические особенности порождения медиальных и эргативных конструкций в английском языке с позиций генеративной грамматики. Установлено, что медиальные и эргативные глаголы происходят из одного класса глаголов. Главной синтаксической разницей этих конструкций является маркировка эргативным глаголом имплицитного подлежащего тета-ролью каузатора и генерация медиальным глаголом позиций для порождения двух подлежащих.

Ключевые слова: медиальная и эргативная конструкции, имплицитное подлежащее, позиция спецификатора, тета-роль.

REFLEXIVITY IN PRESENT-DAY ENGLISH

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The paper deals with the morphological and syntactic aspect of English reflexive pronouns in the [Vtrns + Pronoun reflexive] structure. It is argued that there is no reflexive voice category in English. Instead, reflexivity is purely lexico-semantical category, and the reflexive pronouns either perform the function of a direct or a prepositional complement in a sentence or are lexicalized with the preceding verb.

Key words: analytical form of the verb, direct object, grammaticalization, lexicalization, reflexive pronoun, reflexive voice.

The verbal category of voice is considered to relate the action to its doer. Present-day English grammatical theory usually claims the active and passive voices [15, 159]. However, there are controversial viewpoints on reflexivity, which is the **subject matter** of our study, namely the means of its implementation — [V + reflexive Pronoun] or / and the possibility to define it on grammatical principles, which is **the scope** of our study.

The active voice is considered to expresses the relation where the subject of the sentence and the semantic agent (or the source of an action) coincide, whereas the passive voice expresses the relation where the subject of the sentence does not coincide with the semantics of the doer of the action [6, 277].

Note that to study reflexivity means to refer to the majority of related linguistic aspects: morphology, syntax, semantics, word formation, lexicology, and phraseology. It all determines the **relevance** of the research. The study is also relevant due to the lack of linguistic insights into issues devoted to the reflexive pronouns and structures in which they are used.