1. **Introduction: “Voice”**

- Two uses of the term Voice:
  
  i) Voice as a specific realization of (or a specific operation on) the *argument structure of a verb*.
  
  ii) Voice as a *morphological/inflectional property of a verb*.

- Relation between i) and ii): The morphology is typically taken to reflect an operation on the verb’s argument structure.

- However, we see mismatches (not always is there a 1-to-1 relationship between form and interpretation).

- What can we say about these mismatches?

2. **The prototypical Voice Alternation: *active vs. passive***

(1) a. Hans las das Buch  
     John read the book  
     (German)  
     b. Das Buch wurde (von Hans) gelesen  
        the book was read (by John)

(2) a. O Jianis anikse tin porta  
     John opened the door  
     (Greek)  
     b. I porta anixtike (apo ton Jianis)  
        the door open.NACT (by the John)

→ Voice operations on the verb’s argument structure are typically marked by morphological devices. In case of the active/passive alternation this seems to be a strict rule. Haspelmath (1990) claims that no language marks the active and the passive alike.
- German forms *analytic/periphrastic passives* with the help of the *passive auxiliary* ‘werden’ and the *passive participle* ‘prefix/ge-V-ten’. English is similar.

- Greek forms *synthetic passives* with a *verbal suffix* (tik in the above example).

### 3. Voice Syncretisms

- If we look beyond the active/passive opposition, we find it very often that a specific morpho-syntactic device is used in more than one semantic context. That is, the two aspects of Voice in i) and ii) do not always coincide.

#### 3.1 Syncretisms with the analytic/periphrastic passive

- Periphrastic passives are built by the combination [copula + participle].

- *Syncretism 1:* We find the same morphological form of the participle also in the perfect (in German and English).

(3) *unprefixed verbs:*

a. Das Buch wurde **gelesen** (The book was *read*)

b. Er hat das Buch **gelesen** (He has *read* the book)

(4) *non-separable prefix:*

a. Das Buch wurde **verkauft** (The book was *sold*)

b. Er hat das Buch **verkauft** (He has *sold* the book)

(5) *separable prefix:*

a. Der Text wurde **ab-geschrieben** (The text was *copied*)

b. Er hat den Text **ab-geschrieben** (He has *copied* the text)

(6) *separable prefix:*

a. Das Buch wurde **weg-gelegt** (The book was *put* aside)

b. Er hat das Buch **weg-gelegt** (He has *put* the book aside)
• **Side remark**: also the perfect of unaccusatives is formed with such a participle; most of these verbs do not form passives.

(7) a. Der Mann ist gestern *angekommen* (The man has arrived yesterday)
b. *Es wurde gestern angekommen* (*It was arrived yesterday*)

(8) a. Das Gebäude ist ein-*gekracht* (The building collapsed)
b. *Es wurde plötzlich ein-*gekracht* (*It was collapsed*)

(9) a. Er ist an-*gereist* (He has 'at-travelled')
b. (?)*Es wurde vormittags an-*gereist* (It was at-travelled a.m.)

• **The participle 2**: we find the same morphological form also in the adjectival passive.

(10) a. Das Buch ist verkauft (The book is sold)
b. Der Text ist abgeschrieben (The text is copied)
c. Die Partei ist aufgelöst (The book is put aside)

- There are arguments that the adjectival passive participle in English is not identical with the verbal passive participle. These are semantic and morphological (Embick 2004).

• **The participle 3**: We find the same morphological form also in the so-called "bekommen/kriegen passive" which advances a dative DP to the nominative and keeps accusative case (if present).

(11) a. weil Maria dem Hans ein Buch *geschenkt* hat
   Because Mary.NOM the.DAT John a.ACC book donated has
b. weil dem Hans ein Buch *geschenkt* wurde
   bec. the.DAT Hans a.NOM book donated was
c. weil der Hans ein Buch *geschenkt* bekam
   because the.NOM a.ACC book donated got
(12) a. Ihm wurde geholfen
   He.DAT was helped
b. Er bekam geholfen
   He.NOM got helped

- The English *get-passive* is similar, but not identical to the German *bekommen-passive*. It leads to similar question about the English participle.

**General question:**

- Why do we find the same morphological form in different semantico-syntactic contexts?

**Two options:**

**Option A:** It is always the same participle involved.

**Option B**  We have a case of homonymy and (some of) the participles differ.

- **Option A:**
  - What is the common syntactic and semantic part that the verbal passives, the adjectival passives, the kriegen-passives and the perfect share so that it can be expressed by one and the same participle?
  - If the participles are identical, where do the syntactic and semantics differences of the constructions originate? (Probably in the different auxiliaries.) How combine the two parts syntactically and semantically?

- **Option B:**
  - How do the participles of these constructions differ? Are they globally different or do they share some but not all syntactic/semantic properties (*subset-relation*)?
  - Why are the differences between the participles not morphologically reflected, i.e contrary from what *isomorphism/iconicity* suggests?

- Depending on whether option A or option B turns out to be correct, we can think of the following possible answer to the very first question
a. illusion (under closer inspection we see that the two participles are not always morphologically identical).

b. accident

c. historically related but synchronically different (a common source developed into different ways).

d. they share substructures which lead to identical morphology
   (for English verbal vs. adjectival passive, see Embick 2004)
   (for English get-passive, see Alexiadou 2007)

e. they are identical in all respects

- Depending on the answer, further questions arise. Let’s concentrate on the two most interesting answers d) and e):

  - Where/How do the different semantic and syntactic properties of the constructions under consideration arise?

→ To answer these questions we need to develop criteria to tease syntactic and semantic differences and parallels apart.

3.2 Syncretisms involving the synthetic passives

- The same ‘non-active’ (Nact) morphology that marks passives in Greek is used to form other semantic constructions (cf. Alexiadou & Doron 2008).

  - anticausatives (i.e. spontaneous events like break, open)

(13) a. o Janis ekapse ti supa (Causative)
    the John-nom burnt-Act the soup-acc
    'John burnt the soup'

b. i supa kaike (Anticausative)
   the soup-nom burnt-Nact
   'The soup burnt'
**Note:** Anticausatives can be distinguished from passives on the basis of different test (Alexiadou et al. 2006). For example, only passives but not anticausatives are compatible with the phrase expressing *ton eftos to ‘by itself’.

- **Inherent/lexical reflexives verbs** (which are mostly limited to verbs of body care (*wash, comb*) and naturally reciprocal events (*meet, kiss*))

(14) a. I Maia htenizi tamalia tu koritsiu
    the Mary.NOM combs.Act the hair.ACC the girl.GEN
    ‘Mary combs the girl’s hair’
b. i Maria htenizete (lexical reflexive)
    the Mary-nom combs-Nact
    ‘Mary combs herself’

- **dispositional middles** (This book sells well):

(15) a. O Janis diavase to vivlio
    the-John-nom read-Act the book-acc
    ‘John read the book’
b. Afto to vivlio diavazete efkola
    This the book-nom reads-Nact easily
    ‘This book reads easily’

3.3 **Syncretisms involving reflexive morphology**

- Many Germanic, Romance and Slavic languages use *reflexive morphology* as a marker of Voice related phenomena. They use either a reflexive verbal ending (Slavic), a reflexive clitic (Romance), or a full-fledged reflexive pronoun (German/Dutch).

- The languages differ in how many constructions are involved in the syncretism
3.3.1 German

- Anticausatives:
  (16) a. Der Mann öffnet die Tür (John opens the door)
  b. Die Tür öffnet sich (The door opens)

- (Inherent/lexical) reflexive verbs
  (17) a. Der Mann wundert sich/die Maria (The man wonders)
  b. Der Perter ärgert sich/die Maria (John is annoyed/annoys Mary)
  c. Der Mann wäscht sich/sein Auto (The man washes (his car))

- Dispositional middles
  (18) a. Das Buch liest sich angenehm (The book reads easily)

3.3.2 Romance and Slavic languages

- In addition to anticausatives, inherent reflexives and generic middles, Romance and Slavic languages also have a passive formed with reflexive morphology; it differs from middles because it has an episodic reading which is not possible with middles in e.g. German, Greek or English which are always dispositional, i.e. stative.

- (In addition, many Romance languages have an impersonal construction formed with a reflexive clitic; we leave this complication aside)

(19) a. Pis’мо пишет-sja (Russian)
   the.letter write-Refl
   ‘The letter is being written’

   b. Seno косит-sja
   the.hay move-Refl
   ‘The hay is being moved’

(20) Il s’est traduit trois romans. (French)
    the.refl has translated three novels
    ‘Three novels were translated’
3.3.4 Dutch middles

- Dutch is similar to German in that it forms some anticausatives as well as reflexive verbs with a reflexive pronoun, but it leaves its generic middles unmarked.

(51) a. Dit vlees heft (*zich) altijd gemakkelijk gesneden.  
This meat has (RefI) always easily cut  
b. Dit sort boeken has (*zich) always well sold  
this sort books heft (*REFL) altijd goed verkocht.

3.4 Syncretisms involving active verbs, i.e. zero marking:

- English does not have Non-active morphology nor does it have the kind of reflexive pronoun seen so far (SE-reflexives in the terminology of Reinhart & Reuland (1993)).

  - In English, only the passive is morphologically marked:

(22) The window was broken by John (passive)

  - we can say that the English syncretism is established by the absence of morphology in all the following constructions.

(23) a. The window broke (anticausatives)  
b. The children kissed (inherent reflexives)  
c. This book sells well (dispositional middle)
4. Overview

- Syncretisms form subsets across languages:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language</th>
<th>active</th>
<th>analytic</th>
<th>synthetic</th>
<th>dispositional</th>
<th>anticausative</th>
<th>inherent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Greek</td>
<td>act</td>
<td>∅</td>
<td>Nact</td>
<td>Nact</td>
<td>Nact</td>
<td>Nact</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Romance/Slavic</td>
<td>act</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>Refl</td>
<td>Refl</td>
<td>Refl</td>
<td>Refl</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>German</td>
<td>act</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>∅</td>
<td>Refl</td>
<td>Refl</td>
<td>Refl</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dutch</td>
<td>act</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>∅</td>
<td>act</td>
<td>Refl</td>
<td>Refl</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English</td>
<td>act</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>∅</td>
<td>act</td>
<td>act</td>
<td>act</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5 Conclusion and Questions

- We find verbal constructions (and pairs of alternations) which clearly differ in their interpretation but which are marked with the same morphological device.

  - What is the relation between the different interpretations and the morphology?
    Is there one underspecified piece used in all constructions?
    Are there many different specified pieces which are homonymous?

  We hypothesize that the first solution is basically correct. We need to answer then:

- Do the constructions involve identical subparts? Are these subparts semantically or syntactically defined? Can we define the syntactic and/or semantic properties shared by all these constructions that the morphology is sensitive for?

- What can we say about the cut-off point of syncretism? Why do not all languages pick out the same set of Voices to mark them identical? Are different cut-off points related to...
the morphological device (its morpho-syntactic properties/feature set-up) available in a language?

- If we add more languages and a finer grained scale of constructions, can we identify and explain the patterns?

6. **The relation to the project “Argument realization / encoding in the noun phrase”**

- Voice alternations go along in changes in argument encoding (passive, antipassive, middle, …)

- Crosslinguistically, the argument encoding in nominalizations differs from the argument encoding in active verbal constructions (but see Nominalized Infinitives which have often verbal encoding mechanisms).

**Observation 1:** In both areas, arguments become implicit or optional; optional arguments can sometimes be introduced by prepositions or instrumental case.

**Observation 2:** Default case marking differs (Nom<->Gen). Sometimes ACC stays in presence of Genitive.

**Observation 3:** Both, nominalizations as well as passive/middle/antipassive Voices are characterized by a shift in case marking.

**Theoretical hypothesis:** Many researchers formulated the hypothesis that nominalization involve as specific Voice-alternation (passive like/middle like/Nominal Voice) or a specific case system (ergative-absolutive like).

→ We need to investigate the semantico-syntactic and morpho-syntactic parallels between specific verbal Voices and nominal Voices.

→ Specifically, we can investigate parallels and differences in the two domains concerning:

i) implicit/covert/optional arguments

ii) case marking (default case, dependent case)

iii) prepositions as licensers of optional arguments