

States, abilities and accidents

Lisa deMena Travis
McGill University
31 May 2005

Canadian Linguistics Association
University of Western Ontario

1 Introduction

- Present four types of passive in Malagasy
- Compare with three types of participle/(resulting) states in English
- Suggest a syntax
- Turn to a semantic problem
 - **QUESTION:** Why does same morpheme/process produce different readings with different roots?
 - **ANSWER:** ‘Meaning’ is extra information that isn’t already encoded by the stem

2 States

1.1 FOUR TYPES OF PASSIVE IN MALAGASY

1.1.1 Suffixed passive ($\sqrt{V+na}$)

- (1) a. Sitranana ny aretinao $\sqrt{\text{SITRANA}+i+na}$
cure-TT DET illness-2SG
‘Your illness was cured (by someone).’
- b. Tapahina ny tady $\sqrt{\text{TAPAKA}+i+na}$
cut-TT DET cord
‘The cord was cut (by someone).’

1.1.2 *Voa* passive ($voa+\sqrt{V}$)

- (2) a. Voatapaka ny tady $voa+\sqrt{\text{TAPAKA}}$
VOA-cut DET cord
‘The cord was cut (by someone).’
- b. Voatsangana ny sari-vongona $voa-\sqrt{\text{TSANGANA}}$
VOA-stand DET statue
‘The statue was stood up (by someone).’

1.1.3 Tafa passive (tafa+√)

- (3) a. Tafatsangana ny ankizy tafa-√TSANGANA
 TAFa-stand DET child
 ‘The child stood up.’
- b. Tafalentika lalina tamin’ny tongotro ny tsilo tafa-√LENTIKA
 TAFa-go.in deep PST.AMIN’DET foot.1SG DET thorn
 ‘The thorn went deep into my foot.’ (R-R 1971: 96)

1.1.4 Root passive (√)

- (4) a. Tapaka ny tady √TAPAKA
 √cut DET cord
 ‘The cord is cut.’
- b. Sitrana ny aretina maro √SITRANA
 √cured DET illness many
 ‘Many illnesses are cured.’ (R-R 1971:95)

1.2 ENGLISH PARTICIPLES AND STATES

(e.g. Embick 2004)

1.2.1 The data

- (5) a. The door was opened.
- EVENTIVE (Someone opened the door)
 - RESULTATIVE (The door was in the state of having become open)
- b. The door was open.
- STATIVE (The door was in the state of being open)

(6) Examples: RESULTATIVE and EVENTIVE passive – same morphology

Root	Stative	Resultative	Eventive passive
√BLESS	bless-èd	bless-ed	bless-ed
√AGE	ag-èd	ag-ed	ag-ed
√ROT	rott-en	rott-ed	rott-ed
√SINK	sunk-en	sunk-0	sunk-0
√SHAVE	(clean)-shav-en	shav-ed	shav-ed
√OPEN	open-0	open-ed	open-ed
√EMPTY	empty-0	empti-ed	empti-ed
√DRY	dry-0	dri-ed	dri-ed

1.2.2 Some tests to distinguish

- **English**

EVENTIVE vs. RESULTATIVE

- (7) a. The package was opened by the child.
 b. * The package remained opened by the child. (*remain* shows adjectival status)

RESULTATIVE vs. STATE

- (8) a. The package remained carefully opened.
 b. * The package remained carefully open.

- (9) Bird's eye view: English

e.g. Wasow (1977)

EVENTIVE	verbal	change of state
RESULTATIVE	adjectival	
STATE		state

- **Malagasy**

- (10) SUFFIX vs. others

	SUFFIX	VOA	TAFa	ROOT
Present	0-	0	0	0
Past	no-	0	0	0
Future	ho-	ho	ho	ho

- like **adjectives**, the *voa*, *tafa*, root passives have only a future/non-future distinction
- like **verbs**, the suffixed passives have a three-way tense distinction

- (11) Others vs. ROOT

	SUFFIX	VOA	TAFa	ROOT
<i>Tsy ela</i>	Yes	Yes	Yes	No

- (12) a. Notapahina tsy ela ny tady
 PST.cut.TT NEG long.ago DET cord
 'The cord was cut not long ago.' (RH: 10/04)

- b. Voatapaka tsy ela ny tady
 VOA.cut NEG long.ago DET cord
 'The cord was cut not long ago.' (RH: 10/04)

c. Tafapetraka tsy ela ny sari-vongona
 TAFAP-stand NEG long.ago DET statue
 'The statue was stood up not long ago.' (RH: 11/04)

d. *Tapaka tsy ela ny tady
 cut NEG long.ago DET cord
 'The cord was cut not long ago.' (RH: 10/04)

(13) Bird's eye view: Malagasy

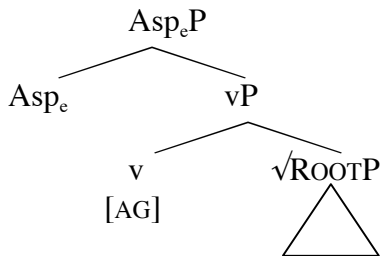
SUFFIX VOA TAFAP STATE	Tense realization		<i>Tsy ela</i> 'not long ago'
	verbal	change of state	
	adjectival	state	

➤ save distinction between VOA and TAFAP till later....

1.3 STRUCTURES

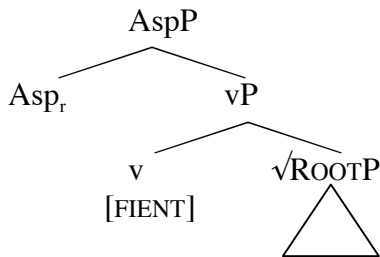
1.3.1 English (from Embick)

(14) a. VERBAL PASSIVE



- Asp_E always takes a complement headed by v[AG]
- v[AG] licenses *by* phrase and gives EVENTIVE reading

(15) a. RESULTATIVE

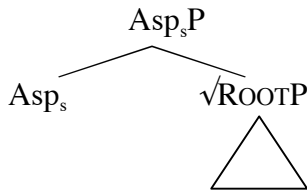


- Asp_R always takes a complement headed by v[FIENT]
- v[FIENT] always takes a stative complement
- v[FIENT] licenses manner adverb and gives change of state interpretation

can see FIENTIVE (inchoative) head in the morphology:

flat - en - ed
 ROOT – FIENT – Asp

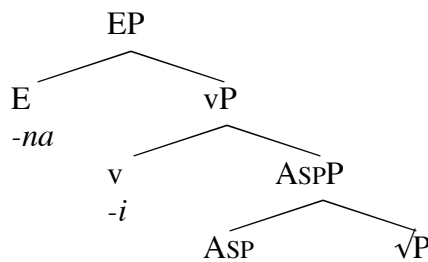
(16) STATIVE



- Asp_s always takes a ROOT complement

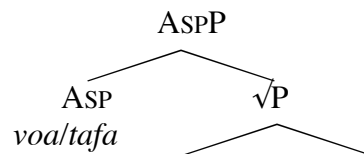
1.3.2 Malagasy

(17) SUFFIX (√+V+na)

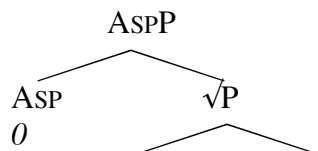


higher than others → different tense realization

(18) VOA (voa+√): TAFA (tafa+√)



(19) ROOT (√)



zero morpheme in Asp → no change of state

- Still missing
 - *voalafa* distinction
 - other meaning differences

1.4 THE IMPORTANCE OF ‘RESULT’

1.4.1 Malagasy is ‘atelic’ language

(20) Transitive active/unergative (from Phillips 2000: 22)

- | | |
|--|---|
| <p>a. nisambotra ny alika ny zaza
 PST./I.captive DET dog DET child
 ‘The child caught the dog.’</p> | <p>b. ... nefa faingana loatra ilay alika
 but quick too that dog
 ‘... but the dog was too quick.’</p> |
|--|---|

(21) Suffix passive

- | | |
|--|---|
| <p>a. Nosamborin'ny zaza ny alika
 PST.captive.GEN DET child DET dog
 ‘The dog was caught by the child.’</p> | <p>b. ... nefa faingana loatra ilay alika
 ‘... but the dog was too quick.’</p> |
|--|---|

(22) Unaccusative

- | | |
|--|---|
| <p>a. Nivory ny olona
 PST./I.meet DET people
 ‘The people met.’</p> | <p>b. ? nefa tsy nanana fotoana izy
 ‘.... but they didn't have time.’</p> |
|--|---|

1.4.2 Telicity marked by special morphemes

(23) Telicity marking

	ATELIC	TELIC
TRANSITIVE ACTIVE/UNERG	<i>an-/i-√</i>	<i>aha-√</i>
SUFFIX PASSIVE	<i>√-V-na</i>	<i>voa-√</i>
UNACCUSATIVE	<i>i-√</i>	<i>tafa-√</i>

➤ Now can see distinction between *VOA-* and *Tafa-* passives: +/-implicit argument¹

- | | |
|--|------------------------------|
| <p>(24) a. Voatsangana ny sari-vongona
 <i>VOA</i>-stand DET statue
 ‘The statue was stood up (by someone).’</p> | <p><i>VOA-√TSANGANA</i></p> |
| <p>b. Tafatsangana ny ankizy
 <i>Tafa</i>-stand DET child
 ‘The child stood up.’</p> | <p><i>Tafa-√TSANGANA</i></p> |

¹ Because of additional way that Malagasy has to license external arguments, this isn’t as clear-cut as in English (see e.g. example (12c)) but the difference can be teased out.

1.4.3 Telicity brings with it other meanings

- *Able to*

(25) a. Mahateny Rabe Phillips 1996:32
PRES-*a-ha*-speak Rabe
'Rabe can talk.'

b. Tsy voabatako ity entana ity R-R 1971:95
NEG *VOA*-lift this suitcase this
'I cannot lift this suitcase.'

c. Tafiditra tao an-tanana ny fahavalo R-R 1971:96
*TAF*A-enter PST-in *an*-city DET enemy
'The enemy was able to enter the city.'

- *Accidentally/Suddenly*

(26) a. Tafapetraka aho nahare ilay vaovao R-R 1971:96
*TAF*A-sit I PST-*a-ha*-hear that news
'I sat in spite of myself on hearing the news'

*TAF*A- often forces additional 'flavours' of effort, accidental or sudden occurrence

2 Abilities

2.1 ABLE IS ACTUALITY (BHATT 1999)

- (27) a. Yesterday, John was able to eat five apples in an hour. PAST EPISODIC
b. In those days, John was able to eat five apples in an hour. PAST GENERIC

(28) Ability Attribution: ABILITY (\mathcal{P})(x)
Actuality Implication: (\mathcal{P})(x)

BUT ... "the actuality implication is all there is" → "actuality entailment is all there is"

Point 1:

"... an actuality implication does not have an ability component to its meaning"
(Bhatt 1999:177)

- (29) a. Yesterday, Brown hit three bulls-eyes in a row. Before he hit three bulls-eyes, her fired 600 rounds, without coming close to the bulls-eye: and his subsequent tries were equally wild.

- b. Brown was able to hit three bulls-eyes in a row.
- c. Brown had the ability to hit three bulls-eyes in a row.

Can conclude (b) but not (c): “Brown could have hit the target three times in a row by **pure chance** ...” (Bhatt 1999:180 emphasis mine)

Point 2:

“ ... do not just mean that an event ... took place” (Bhatt 1999:177)

(30) #A woman in Watertown was able to win 3 million dollars in the lottery yesterday.

➤ Need non-minimal effort (via conversational implicature)

(31) After buying lottery tickets regularly for several years, a woman in Watertown was finally able to win 3 million dollars in the lottery yesterday.

Conclusion: “Actuality implication constitutes the assertion”

2.2 ABILITY IS ADDITIONAL GENERIC OPERATOR

(32) (*Gen (ABLE (P))(x)*)

2.2.1 Imperfective vs. perfective: e.g. Greek

and Hindi, Bulgarian, Catalan, French,

(33) Modern Greek (Bhatt 1999: 175)

a. Borusa na sikoso afto to trapezi ala □en to sikosa
 CAN.impfv.1s NA lift.non-pst-pfv.1s this the table but NEG it lift.impfv
 ‘(In those days), I could lift this table but I didn’t lift it.’

b. Boresa na tu miliso (#ala □en tu milisa)
 can.pst-pfv.1s NA him talk.non-pst-pfv.1s but NEG him talk.pst-pfv
 ‘I was able to talk to John (but I did not talk to him).’

2.2.2 No change of state vs. change of state: Chichewa

(34) Passive vs. Stative Passive (Dubinsky and Simango 1996)

a. Nyemba zi-na-phik-**idwa** b. Nyemba zi-na-phik-**ika**
 beans AGR-PAST-cook-PASS beans AGR-PAST-cook-STAT
 ‘The beans were cooked.’ ‘The beans were cooked.’

(35) Stative passive only possible with change of state verbs

	STATIVE	PASSIVE
CHANGE OF STATE	<i>swa</i> ‘break’	<i>sw-edwa</i>
NON-CHANGE OF STATE	<i>luma</i> ‘bite’	* <i>lum-ika</i> <i>lum-idwa</i>

BUT ... Dubinsky and Simango 1996: fn. 7

the stative morpheme can attach to both classes with **abilitative** meaning (*lumika* ‘biteable’ — the **abilitative** is the only option for the non-change of state verb

2.2.3 Atelic vs. telic: St’at’imcets

(36) Out of Control (OOC) constructions (Davis and Demirdache 2000)

[ka-sék’w-s-as-a [ti nk’wan’ústen-a] [ti swáycw-a]
 OOC-broken-CAU-ERG-OOC DET window-DET DET man-DET
 ‘The man accidentally broke the window.’

BUT ... when attached to an atelic event, get **abilitative**

(3) telic: sék’w-s ‘break’ *ka- sék’w-s-a* ‘to accidentally break’
 atelic: sék-cal ‘to hit (people/things) *ka-sék-cal-a* ‘to be **able** to hit ...’

2.2.4 Summary

	-BOUNDED	+BOUNDED
Greek, etc.	IMPERFECTIVE	PERFECTIVE
	<i>ability</i>	<i>result</i>
Chichewa	NO CHANGE OF STATE	CHANGE OF STATE
	<i>ability</i>	<i>state</i>
St’at’imcets	A TELIC	TELIC
	<i>ability</i>	<i>accidental</i>
Malagasy	A TELIC	TELIC
	<i>ability</i>	<i>result/accidental/effort?</i>

3 Accidents

*TAF*A- in Malagasy often brings in other meanings...

- unlike English, ALL four passives **can** have external arguments which remain within the VP.
- This gives near minimal pairs with unaccusative/lexical causative

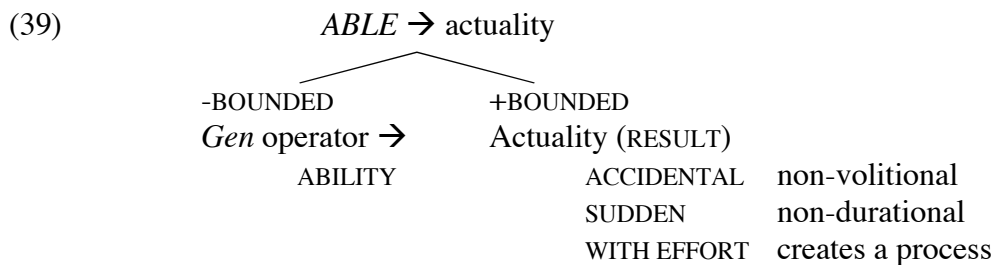
(37) a. Voatsangana ny sari-vongona VOA-√TSANGANA
 VOA-stand DET statue
 ‘The statue was stood up (by someone).’

b. Tafatsangana ny ankizy TAF^A-√TSANGANA
 TAF^A-stand DET child
 ‘The child stood up.’

(38) a. Voatsangan-dRakoto ny sari-vongona VOA-√TSANGANA
 VOA-stand-Rakoto DET statue
 ‘The statue was stood up by Rakoto.’

b. Tafatsangan-dRakoto ny sari-vongona TAF^A-√TSANGANA
 TAF^A-stand -Rakoto DET statue
 ‘The statue was stood up by Rakoto.’
 ... suddenly/out of the blue/in spite of it being difficult

.... adding telicity to unaccusative is near redundant, what becomes evident are the conventional implicatures



Remaining question:

Relation between INNER ASPECT (predicate class: telic vs. atelic)
 and OUTER ASPECT (perfective vs. imperfective)

can see ‘stacking’ in St’at’imcets: lose boundedness with progressive

(40) a. OOC with unaccusative: ACCIDENTAL
 [ka-kwís-a] [ti k’ét’h-a]
 OOC-fallen-OCC DET rock-DET
 ‘The rock accidentally fell’

b. with progressive, return to ABILITY meaning
 wa7 [ka-kwís-a] [ti k’ét’h-a]
 PROG OOC-fallen-OCC DET rock-DET
 ‘The rock can fall’
 ‘*The rock is accidentally falling’

4 Conclusions

- Results in Malagasy are like participles/states in English with something extra
- Extra is *ABLE* which in fact is ACTUALITY
- *ABLE* means ACTUALITY
- with *Gen* operator, *ABLE* becomes ABILITY
- in bounded contexts, *ABLE* means ACTUALITY but with implicatures
 - ACCIDENTAL
 - SUDDEN
 - EFFORTFUL

References

- Bhatt, Rajesh. 1999. Covert Modality in Non-finite contexts, Linguistics, University of Pennsylvania: Doctoral Dissertation.
- Davis, Henry, and Hamida Demirdache. 2000. On Lexical Verb Meanings: Evidence from Salish. In *Events as Grammatical Objects: the Converging Perspectives of Lexical Semantics and Syntax*, eds. James Pustejovsky and Carol Tenny, 97-142. Stanford, CA: CSLI, Stanford University Press.
- Dubinsky, Stanley, and Sylvester Ron Simango. 1996. Passive and stative in Chichewa: evidence for modular distinctions in grammar. *Language* 72:749-781.
- Embick, David. 2004. On the structure of resultative participles in English. *Linguistic Inquiry* 35:355-392.
- Phillips, Vivianne. 1996. Up-rooting the prefix *maha-* in Malagasy, McGill University: MA thesis.
- Phillips, Vivianne. 2000. The interactions between prefix and root: the case of *maha-* in Malagasy. In *Formal issues in Austronesian linguistics*, ed. Vivianne Phillips Ileana Paul, Lisa Travis, 85-104. Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers.
- Rajemisa-Raolison, Régis. 1971. *Grammaire Malgache*. Fianarantsoa: Centre de Formation Pédagogique.
- Wasow, Thomas. 1977. Transformations and the Lexicon. In *Formal Syntax*, eds. Peter Culicover, Thomas Wasow and Adrian Akmajian. New York: Academic Press.

Comments welcome: lisa.travis@mcgill.ca