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Guerrero, Lilián

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Yaqui contributions to Role and Reference Grammar

Lilián Guerrero
Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México

1. Introduction

Yaqui belongs to the Southern branch of the Uto-Aztecan language family, one of the largest and most widespread language families in the Americas, with representative languages spoken from the western United States all the way to southern Mexico. There are fewer than 1,000 Yaqui speakers in Arizona, USA, and approximately 19,376 speakers in Sonora, Mexico. I began documenting and studying the Sonora Yaqui language in 1996, while I also discovered and adopted Role and Reference Grammar [RRG]. Since then, I have explored aspects of simple and complex sentences in Yaqui based on this framework. The goal of this paper is to revisit some Yaqui studies dealing with three distinctive features of RRG (Foley and Van Valin 1984, Van Valin and LaPolla 1997, Van Valin 2005, 2023): double-object constructions and the actor-undergoer hierarchy (§2.1), complex constructions and the theory of clause linkage (§2.2), and passive voice and the notion of privileged syntactic argument (§2.3).

2. RRG studies on Yaqui

Yaqui is an agglutinating, dependent-marking, head-final, primary object language (Dedrick and Casad 1999, Guerrero 2006, 2019, 2022). Yaqui distinguishes between direct and oblique core arguments. The single argument of syntactically intransitive verbs and the first argument of transitive verbs (A) are flagged by nominative (unmarked -Ø) case, while the second argument of most transitive verbs (P) is flagged by accusative case -*ta* when the NP is singular; when the NP is plural, they are flagged by the plural suffix -*(i)m*. The P argument of some transitive verbs is flagged by oblique (postpositional) case, e.g., -*u* 'to', -*t* 'at'. In Yaqui, only direct core arguments receive macroroles. Following the Actor-Undergoer Hierarchy (AUH), the leftmost argument (A) in the logical structure of canonical transitive predicates (S, A) corresponds to the actor, and rightmost argument (P) to the undergoer. Oblique core arguments are non-macrorole.

2.1. Double-object constructions

One of the key features of RRG is its effort to account for the universal properties of clauses without imposing categories onto languages where there is no evidence for them, e.g., grammatical relations. The so-called 'double-object' constructions are a good example of this variation, because there are two non-actor core arguments competing to be selected as the undergoer. Yaqui is especially interesting since it was considered a primary object language (Rude 1996) but it shows multiple double-object constructions with different undergoer selection patterns (Guerrero and Van Valin 2004). Yaqui has three types of underived ditransitive verbs. Type A verbs (1) take two accusative core arguments, the theme (T) and the recipient (R). These verbs follow the primary object pattern, such as the second highest argument of the AUH is selected as the undergoer: the R argument. In passive constructions, R serves as the passive subject, e.g., 'Lupe was

given the hen' for (1a).[1]

(1) a. *Aurelia-Ø* *Lupe-ta* *toto'i-ta* *miika-k.*
Aurelia-NOM Lupe-ACC hen-ACC give-PFV
'Aurelia gave Lupe the hen'.
a'. [**do'** (*Aurelia*, Ø)] CAUSE [BECOME **have'** (*Lupe*, *toto'i*)]
b. *Aurelia-Ø* *Lupe-ta* *u-ka* *ili* *usi-ta* *bittua-k.*
Aurelia-NOM Lupe-ACC DET-ACC little child-ACC show-PFV
'Aurelia showed Lupe the child.'
b'. [**do'** (*Aurelia*, Ø)] CAUSE [BECOME **see'** (*Lupe*, *usi*)]

Type B verbs (2) take one direct core argument (P) and one oblique core argument (R) flagged by *-u* 'to'. These verbs follow the secondary object pattern, such as the lowest argument of the AUH is selected as the undergoer: the T argument. In passive constructions, T serves as the passive subject, e.g., 'The hen was sold to Lupe' for (2a).

(2) a. *Aurelia-Ø* *Lupe-ta-u* *toto'i-ta* *nenka-k.*
Aurelia-NOM Lupe-ACC-DIR hen-ACC sell-PFV
'Aurelia sold the hen to Lupe'.
a'. [**do'** (*Aurelia*, Ø)] CAUSE [BECOME **have'** (*Lupe*, *toto'i*)]

Type C verbs (3) take one direct core argument (P) and one oblique core argument (R), but T and R can alternate the coding. In (3a) T is flagged accusative, and R oblique (locative), whereas in (3b) T is flagged oblique (instrumental) and R accusative. Consequently, these verbs also alternate the undergoer selection: the accusative R or T. The passive version for (3a) would be 'The coffee was sprinkled on the table', and for (3b) would be 'The table was sprinkled with the coffee'.

(3) a. *Aurelia-Ø* *kafe-ta* *mesa-po* *chijakta-k.*
Aurelia-NOM coffee-ACC table-LOC sprinkle-PFV
'Aurelia sprinkled the coffee on the table'.
b. *Aurelia-Ø* *kafe-ae* *mesa-ta* *chijakta-k.*
Aurelia-NOM coffee-INST table-ACC sprinkle-PFV
'Aurelia sprinkled the table with the coffee.'
c. [**do'** (*Aurelia*, [sprinkle' (*Aurelia, kafe*)])] CAUSE [BECOME **be-on'** (*mesa*, *kafe*)]

Van Valin and LaPolla (1997: 387) provided the following explanation: the undergoer does not correspond to the lowest (second) argument of **have'** (y, z) but to the *y* (first) argument **have'** (y, z), and then, double-object constructions like those in (1) show a "marked" undergoer selection. Two factors may also play a role: case marking (in some languages, only direct core arguments are macroroles), and the animacy principle (if there is an animate (human) argument as a potential undergoer, then it must be the undergoer). Yaqui data has important implications for the AUH since the undergoer selection patterns

[1] The morphological glossing follows the Leipzig Glossing Rules, except for the following additions: CLM = clause linkage marker; DIR = directional, POT = potential, PURP: purpose.

cannot be explained solely in terms of case marking or animacy –there are two humans in (1b)–, and consequently, the markedness pattern is not valid universally (Guerrero and Van Valin 2004, Van Valin 2005, 2023: 140-145). This cross-linguistic variation required a reformulation of the undergoer selection principles in the AUH (Figure 1). There are two principles: some languages may follow principle A –with T serving as the undergoer– and others may choose R; in some languages (like in Yaqui), both principles are operative since some lexical verbs or clauses may take one principle, but others the other.

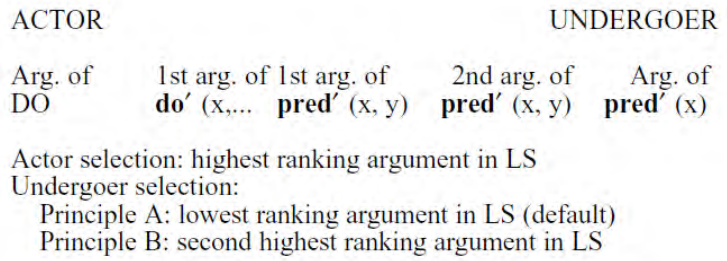


Figure 1. The Actor-Undergoer Hierarchy revised (Van Valin 2005: 126)

2.2. Complex constructions

A second distinctive feature of RRG is the theory of clause linkage which highlights the syntactic-semantic correlation between the linked units in complex constructions. This theory is grounded in the layered representation of the clause structure. Since the syntactic linkages are language-independent (abstract) constructions, it is possible to account for both cross-linguistic variation and variation within the same language. The Interclausal Relations Hierarchy (IRH) involves two sub-hierarchies. The Syntactic Relations Hierarchy includes the theory of juncture (nucleus, core, clause, sentence) and the theory of nexus (coordination, subordination, and cosubordination); the syntactic combinations are ranked in terms of the strength of the syntactic bond between the two units. The Semantic Relations Hierarchy lists several semantic relations ranked in terms of the semantic cohesion between the propositional units. There is a basic iconic principle linking the two sub-hierarchies: the tightest syntactic linkage type in a language will instantiate the closest semantic relationship.

Complement-taking predicates in Yaqui present interesting challenges to the basic iconic principle that underlines the IRH because there is a lot of syntactic variation (Guerrero 2006). On one hand, the tighter syntactic structure (V-V) that is assumed to express closer semantic relations at the top end of the hierarchy has been extended down to express looser relations. The main predicate may be bound to the dependent verb in direct causation (4a), phase (4b), psych-action (4c), jussive (4d), direct perception (4e), cognition (4f), and even indirect discourse constructions (4g).

(4) a. *Ivan-Ø* *Flor-ta* *tubukti-**tua**-k.*
Ivan-NOM Flor-ACC jump-cause-PFV
'Ivan made / let Flor jump.'

b. U-*Ø* *kape-Ø* *sebe-**taite**-Ø.*
DET-NOM coffee-NOM be_cold-begin-PRS
'The coffee begins to become cold.'

c. *Empo* *Joan-ta* *et-po* *ania-**roka**-n.*
2SG.NOM John-ACC sown_field-LOC help-promise-IPFV
'You promised to help Juan in the sown field.'

d. *Nepo* *Goyo-ta* *toto'i-ta* *jinu-ne-**sae**-Ø.*
1SG.NOM Goyo-ACC hen-ACC buy-POT-order-PRE
'I will order Goyo to kill the hen.'

e. *Aurelia-Ø* *enchi* *laaben-ta* *pona-**jikka**-k.*
Aurelia-NOM 2SG.ACC violin-ACC play-hear-PFV
'Aurelia heard you playing the violin.'

f. *Ne* *Peo-ta* *kaba'i-ta* *jinu-ka-t-**'ea**-n.*
1SG.NOM Peter-ACC horse-ACC buy-PFV-CLM-think-IPFV
'I thought Pedro bought a horse.'

g. *Peo-Ø* *Goyo-ta* *tuuka* *kaba'i-ta* *etbwa-k-**tia**-Ø.*
Peter-NOM Goyo-ACC yesterday horse-ACC steal-PFV-say-PRS
'Peter says Goyo stole the horse yesterday.'

On the other hand, at the middle portion of the scale, most complement-taking predicates show alternative syntactic linkages, one grammatical structure being syntactically tighter than the others. The examples in (5-7) show different syntactic linkages of psych-action predicates, direct and indirect perception, respectively.

(5) Psych-action predicates (actor control)

a. Nuclear cosubordination
Ne *kaa* *yi'i-**bae**-Ø.*
1SG.NOM NEG dance-want-PRS
'I don't want to dance.'

b. Core cosubordination
Empo *Joan-ta* *et-po* *ania-**roka**-n.*
2SG.NOM John-ACC sown field-LOC help-promise-IPFV
'You promised to help Juan in the sown field.'

c. Core cosubordination
Tuuka_beako *Lupe-Ø* ***teenku**-k* *[Peo-ta* *kuna-kai].*
yesterday_night Lupe-NOM dream-PFV Peter-ACC marry-CLM
'Last night, Lupe dreamed (of herself) marrying Pedro.'

d. Core subordination
Nepo *[Peo-ta* *enchi* *kuna-ka-m-ta]* ***teenku**-k.*
1SG.NOM Peter-ACC 2SG.ACC marry-PFV-NMLZ-ACC dream-PFV
'I dreamed of Pedro marrying you!'

(6) Direct perception

a. Core cosubordination
Aurelia-Ø *enchi* *laaben-ta* *pona-**jikka**-k*
Aurelia-NOM 2SG.ACC violin-ACC play-hear-PFV
'Aurelia heard you playing the violin.'

b. Core subordination
Aurelia-Ø *[enchi* *laaben-ta* *pona-ka-m-ta]* ***jikka**-k.*
Aurelia-NOM 2SG.ACC violin-ACC play-PFV-CLM-ACC hear-PFV
'Aurelia heard you play the violin.'

(7) Indirect perception
   a. Core subordination
      Maria-Ø [enchi kaba'i-m jinu-ka-'u] ***bicha****-k*
      Maria-NOM 2SG.ACC horse-PL buy-PFV-CLM see-PFV
      'Maria saw that you bought the horses.'
   b. Clausal subordination
      Aurelia-Ø a_i ***bicha****-k [enchi laaben-ta pona-kan-'u]*$_i$
      Aurelia-NOM 3SG.ACC see-PFV 2SG.ACC violin-ACC play-IPFV-CLM
      'Aurelia saw it, that you played the violin.'
   c. Sentential subordination
      Aurelia-Ø enchi ***bicha****-k [enchi laaben-ta pona-kan-'u]*
      Aurelia-NOM 2SG.ACC see-PFV 2SG.ACC violin-ACC play-IPFV-CLM
      'Aurelia saw you, that you played the violin.'

RRG recognizes that some complement-taking predicates may have different basic senses and choose different syntactic linkages, e.g., *persuade.* In Yaqui, the syntactic alterations are also observed in some adverbial constructions. Purpose clauses are a good example of this. In purpose relations, one action is done with the intent of realizing another state of affairs. Syntactically, a purpose relation can be coded in different adverbial linkage types with different degrees of integration. Languages usually use different syntactic structures to encode "same subject" vs. "different subject" purpose clauses. Semantically, purpose clauses share certain meanings with other adverbial sentences such as consequence (reason/cause clauses), and future-oriented (sequential clauses), but they also share the notion of intention with some complement sentences (modal clauses). It has been argued that purpose clauses do not logically entail the participants of the dependent unit, and that the performer (actor) of the main event may but not necessarily controls the realization of the dependent event (Cristofaro 2003: 157), although "typical purposive situations are bound to their matrix event via subject-binding" (Schmidtke-Bode 2009: 50).

In Yaqui, there are four syntactic non-subordinate clause linkages to express "same subject" clauses (Guerrero 2017, 2023). Hence, Yaqui is consistent with the typological pattern that favors "same-subject" purpose clauses since they are overwhelmingly more frequent (and tightly integrated) than "different subject" clauses. However, having different "subjects" does not mean a lack of coreference. In fact, Yaqui purpose clauses demand coreferential arguments, and obligatory shared arguments make use of special lexical coding, i.e., referential control (Jones 1991, Stiebels 2007). When the controller is the actor, there is structural control, meaning that the controllee must be covert. See the examples in (8).

(8) a. Motion-*cum*-purpose
      Peo-Ø$_i$ *totoi-ta* _$_i$ *jinu-se-k.*
      Peter-NOM hen-ACC buy-move.PURP.SG-PFV
      'Peter went to buy a hen.'
   b. Purpose of motion
      Peo-Ø$_i$ *a'abo=yepsa-k [totoi-ta* _$_i$ *jinu-se-kai].*
      Peter-NOM here=arrive.SG-PFV hen-ACC buy-move.PURP.SG-CLM
      'Peter came here to buy a hen (lit. moving to buy).'

c. Purpose of intention
Peo-Ø$_i$ totoi-ta$_j$ jinu-k [a$_j$ _$_i$ bwa-bae-kai].
Peter-NOM hen-ACC buy-PFV 3SG.ACC eat-want-CLM
'Peter bought a hen to eat (lit. wanting to eat it).'

d. Finality
Peo-Ø$_i$ totoi-ta$_j$ jinu-k [a$_j$ _$_i$ bwa-ne-betchi'ibo].
Peter-NOM hen-ACC buy-PFV 3SG.ACC eat-want-CLM
'Peter bought a hen to eat.'

When the controller is the undergoer, there is inherent control, that is, the controllee is overt and coded by a co-indexed pronoun. Note that it is possible to have two control relations. In addition to actor control, there is undergoer control in (8c-d) and (9a-b). In (9c), the main undergoer controls the reference of the linked actor.

(9) a. Purpose of intention
Peo-Ø$_i$ totoi-ta$_j$ jinu-k [a$_j$ _$_i$ bwa-bae-kai].
Peter-NOM hen-ACC buy-PFV 3SG.ACC eat-want-CLM
'Peter bought a hen to eat (lit. wanting to eat it).'

b. Finality
Peo-Ø$_i$ totoi-ta$_j$ jinu-k [a$_j$ _$_i$ bwa-ne-betchi'ibo].
Peter-NOM hen-ACC buy-PFV 3SG.ACC eat-want-CLM
'Peter bought a hen to eat.'

c. *Peo-Ø$_i$ enchi$_j$ a'abo=bittua-k [enchi$_j$ tekipanoa-ne-betchi'ibo].*
Peter-NOM 2SG.ACC here=send-PFV 2SG.ACC work-POT-CLM
'Peter sent you here in order for you to work.'

In an elicitation context, when asking for a purposive situation without shared argument, my consultants provide a structurally different clause (10a), but not a typical purpose clause. As a matter of fact, the special lexical coding of the controllee is the same in purpose clauses and constructions taking control verbs. In Yaqui, actor control verbs (phase, modal, and desiderative verbs) demand a covert controllee (10b), while undergoer control verbs (causative, jussive verbs) take overt controllee (10c).

(10) a. *Inepo lus-ta tu'ucha-k*
1SG.NOM light-ACC turn.off-PFV
[bweituk/pake ili uusi-Ø kot-ne].
CLM/CLM little child-NOM sleep-POT
'I turned the lights off in order to/since/so that the child would sleep.'

b. *Empo$_i$ Joan-ta$_j$ et-po _$_i$ (*enchi/*empo) ania-roka-n.*
2SG.NOM Joan-ACC field-LOC 2SG.NOM/2SG.ACC help-promise-IPFV
'You promised to help John in the field.'

c. *Maala-Ø u-ka o'ou-ta$_i$ sawe-k*
mother-NOM DET-ACC man-ACC order-PFV
[teopo-ta a$_i$=tu'ute-ne-'u].
church-ACC 3SG.ACC=fix-POT-CLM
'The mother ordered that the man clean the church.'

RRG proposes that the semantic bond between the linked units is motivated by the interaction of some semantic subhierarchies. To explain the different juncture-nexus types in Yaqui involving psych-action perception, propositional attitude, cognitive and saying verbs, on one hand, and purposive clauses, on the other, it was necessary to revise the semantic subhierarchies proposed in Van Valin (2005): first, the participant's mental disposition subhierarchy was updated to capture the nature of complement-taking verbs (11c), and then, a new sub-hierarchy dealing with control constructions was added (11e).

(11) Revised semantic sub-hierarchies (Guerrero 2006, 2009, 2013, 2023):
   a. Temporal hierarchy:
      phases of a single event > simultaneous events > sequential events > unspecified
   b. Causal hierarchy:
      physical > verbal > underspecified$_{[non\text{-}defeasible]}$ > inferred$_{[defeasible]}$
   c. Participant's mental disposition:
      Intention > internal/direct experience > mental experience: commitment > mental experience: reasoning > non-mental experience: report
   d. Necessarily shared participant hierarchy:
      Yes > No
   e. Referential control hierarchy:
      main actor > main undergoer > another main core argument > there is no control relation

2.3. Voice constructions

A third defining feature of RRG is the notion of privileged syntactic argument (PSA) and the treatment of voice constructions. It is well known that grammatical voice is a complex phenomenon that denotes a particular semantic-syntactic relationship of clauses which may be pragmatically motivated. Voice relates the notions of transitivity, valency, and diathesis, as they contrast a basic (non-changed) clause with an alternative (changed) clause, e.g. passive, impersonal, antipassive, causative, applicative. Passive voice has been a prominent topic of multiples syntactic theories and typological studies because the syntactic functions of the semantic core arguments are shifted from the active counterpart. The grammatical subject of the passive clause (S_p) corresponds to the patient (P) of the active clause –it triggers verb-agreement in (12b), whereas the agent (A) of the active clause corresponds to an oblique phrase in the passive. Notably, the agent can be easily omitted (12c). In terms of RRG, the PSA changes from the A argument in the active voice, to the P argument in the passive voice.

(12) English
   a. John broke the pots.
   b. The pots were broken by John.
   c. The pots were broken.

Some languages may have more than one passive-like clause. Spanish is a good example. In the periphrastic passive in (13b), there is an explicit passive subject, and the agent is optionally coded as an oblique NP. In the *se*-passive (13c) there is also a passive-PSA but the agent must be omitted; in (13d), there is no passive-PSA –the P argument does not

trigger verb agreement; finally, in (13e) the active verb agrees with an unexpressed third-person plural participant, while P maintains its status of object.

(13) Spanish
a. *Juan quebró la-s olla-s.*
John break.3SG.PFV DET-PL pot-PL
'John broke the pots.'
b. *La-s olla-s fueron quebradas (por Juan).*
DET-PL pot-PL be.3PL.PFV break.PTCP by John
'The pots were broken (by John).'
c. *Se quebraron la-s olla-s (*por Juan).*
PASS break.3PL.PFV DET-PL pot-PL by John
'The pots have been broken (*by John).'
d. *Se quebró la-s olla-s (*por Juan).*
PASS break.3SG.PFV DET-PL pot-PL by John
'The pots have been broken (*by John).' (lit. Was broken the pots)
e. *Quebraron la-s olla-s.*
break.3SG.PFV DET-PL pot-PL
'(Someone) broke the pots.'

Previous works on voice constructions have proposed different passive-like clauses depending on the functions of the P argument. (i) Personal passives: P serves as the passive-S_p (it triggers verb-agreement); A is coded as an oblique/adjunct or it is omitted, and there is special voice marking. This is the case of (12b), (13b-c). (ii) Impersonal passives: P does not act as the grammatical subject (it does not trigger verb-agreement), but instead it remains as the object, and there is special voice marking. This is the case of (13d). (iii) Simple impersonal: P remains as the object, but there is no A. This is the case of (13e). Clauses in which P serves as a passive-PSA are considered canonical passive constructions, while clauses without passive-PSA are non-canonical passives.

Yaqui has personal passives, impersonal passives and simple impersonals, which demand covert agents (A-demotion), e.g., agentless clauses. Each of these agentless constructions has their own morphosyntactic properties (optional P-promotion), and they are used in different discourse contexts depending on the referentiality of the human, but unexpressed agent (Guerrero and Belloro 2024, Guerrero in press). Voice clauses in (14b-d) involve obligatorily A-demotion: the agent must be omitted. Passive clauses are marked by the suffix *-wa*, and *wa*-clauses can be personal or impersonal depending on the functions of the P argument: in (14b) P serves as the passive-PSA, but in (14c) there is no passive-PSA, but P remains accusative. In the unmarked voice clause in (14d), A is omitted, and P remains accusative. Unlike the implicit coding of S/A continuous topic in oral texts, the missing A argument within simple impersonal clauses is unknown (non-identified, so it cannot be coded by a co-indexed pronoun).

(14) a. Active clause
Empo u-ka soto'i-ta jamta-k.
2SG.NOM DET-ACC pot-ACC break.TR-PFV
'You broke the pot.'

b. *Wa*-personal passive (with S_p)
U-Ø *soto'i -Ø* *jamta-wa-k.*
DET-NOM pot-NOM break.TR-PASS-PFV
'The pot was broken.' (Sp. *La olla se quebró*)
c. *Wa*-impersonal passive (without S_p)
U-ka *soto'i-ta* *jamta-wa-k.*
DET-ACC pot-ACC break.TR-PASS-PFV
'The pots were broken.' (Sp. *Se quebró la olla*)
d. Simple impersonal (without A)
Ø u-ka *soto'i-ta* *jamta-k.*
DET-ACC pot-ACC break.TR-PFV
'(Someone) broke the pot.' (Sp. *Quebraron la olla*)

Table 1 shows the distribution of agentless clauses in Yaqui oral texts. Note that passive and impersonal *wa*-clauses are almost twice as frequent as unmarked clauses. Previous cross-linguistic studies have mentioned that personal passives (with P-promotion) are more frequent than impersonal passives (without P-promotion) (Kittilä and Zúñiga 2019), but not in Yaqui. Table 2 shows that non-promotional clauses, both passives and simple impersonals, are more prominent in Yaqui texts compared to promotional passives.

	#clauses in texts	*wa-clauses* personal/impersonal		unmarked clauses simple impersonal	
Personal stories	1964	208	10.6%	26	1.3%
Fables	1617	55	3.4%	12	0.74%
Formulaic	370	43	11.6%	130	35%
Conversations	277	12	4.3%	11	3.9%
	4,228	318	7.5%	179	4.2%

Table 1. Agentless clauses in Yaqui oral texts

	wa-clauses personal/impersonal			unmarked clauses simple impersonal	
	P-promotional	No P-promotional	#	No P-promotional	#
Personal stories	71	128	208	26	26
Fables	20	35	55	12	12
Formulaic	15	27	43	130	130
Conversations	3	9	12	11	11
	121	197	318	179	179

Table 2. Yaqui agentless clauses as not necessarily P-promotional

Therefore, Yaqui prefers non-canonical passive clauses: they may but not necessarily promote the P argument, but they must demote the A (obligatory omission). Accordingly, passive and impersonal clauses are not about the P argument, but the A participant. Most studies on passive/impersonal voice constructions focus on the P argument, while the status of A is less consistent: it must be covert (Shibatani 1985, Keenan and Dryer 2007), it must be overt (Kulikov 2011), it can be omitted but there is always the option of including it (Haspelmath 1990, Siewierska 2013), if present, A usually takes locative, instrumental, or genitive oblique/ adpositional marking (Keenan and Dryer 2007).

In an ongoing study, I examine voice-changed construction in which the agent performing the action is not selected as the PSA but is instead coded in the periphery or left unexpressed. In 23 different languages spoken in north, central and south America, I have observed a strong preference to omit the agent (A-demotion) over passive subject (P-promotion). In other words, even when the presence and nature of the agent allow the distinction between passives from impersonal and other voice constructions (Siewierska and Bakker 2012), languages prefer to omit the agent. i.e., agentless voice constructions (Guerrero, in press).

The fact that voice constructions in RRG are defined in terms of macroroles and PSA selection (instead of "subject" and "object"), allows the analysis of languages/constructions with different alignments and morphosyntactic features. The RRG description of an English active-passive pair goes as follows. The two-place predicate *eat* takes two semantic participants: the agent *Chris*, the 1st argument of the active predicate **do'** in the logical structure (15a), and the patient *bagel* is the 2nd argument of **eat'** (x, y) and single argument of **consumed'** (x). According to the AUH, *Chris* is selected as the actor, and *the bagel* as the undergoer. In the syntax, the two participants are coded as direct core arguments in the active voice (15b), and the actor is the default choice for PSA, while the undergoer remains as a direct core argument. In the passive (15c), the undergoer is the marked choice for passive-PSA (S_p or derived-S in RRG's terms), whereas the actor is a semantic argument of the passive verb but occurs as an adjunct in the periphery.

(15) a. **do'** (Chris, [**eat'** (Chris, bagel)]) & INGR **consumed'** (bagel)
b. Chris ate the bagel.
c. The bagel was eaten by Chris.

It is then assumed that passive voice constructions usually (but not always) involve two steps: the marked choice of the PSA (16a), and the demotion of the actor (16b).

(16) General characterization of basic voice constructions (Van Valin 2005: 116)
a. PSA modulation voice: permits an argument other than the default argument in terms of Privileged Syntactic Hierarchy to function as the PSA.
Active: default choice is the actor
Passive: marked choice is the undergoer
b. Argument modulation voice: gives non-canonical realization to a macrorole argument
Active: the actor is coded as a direct core argument (e.g., NOM or ERG)
Passive: the actor is omitted or is coded as an oblique phrase in the periphery

The general characterization of voice constructions (16) has changed very little since its original formulation (Van Valin 1980, 1993, 2005, 2023, Foley and Van Valin 1984, Van Valin and LaPolla 1997). As is, the general characterization of voice constructions neatly capture canonical personal passives since it seems to favor P-promotion (the marked choice of PSA) over A-demotion. This characterization says nothing about other strategies to demote the agent (argument modulation). Nevertheless, Yaqui and several other Amerindian languages make use of different morphosyntactic strategies to demote A, while P can remain a direct core argument (no-PSA). Therefore, I propose to consider

argument modulation voice as the primary effect of passives and impersonals, and PSA modulation voice as a secondary (and optional) effect. I also suggest indicating the different mechanisms languages use to demote the agent.

(17) General characterization of passive/impersonal voice constructions (revised):
  a. Argument modulation voice: gives non-canonical realization to the actor argument.
    i. it is omitted, or
    ii. it is coded as a peripheral adjunct (e.g., adposicional phrase), or
    iii. it is coded as an indefinite (generic) NP (e.g., *one, you, someone*)
  b. PSA modulation voice: permits an argument other than the default argument in terms of PSA hierarchy to function as the privileged syntactic argument [PSA].
    i. no arguments are selected as the PSA (e.g., passive impersonal, simple impersonal)
    ii. a non-actor argument is selected as the PSA (e.g., personal passive)

This description highlights the fact that argument modulation is the primary syntactic and pragmatic function of canonical and non-canonical passive/impersonal clauses cross-linguistically. Whether or not the undergoer (or other core argument) is selected as the PSA is a language-specific property that can be defined in a constructional schema (if needed).

3. Final comments

The syntactic, semantic, and pragmatic study of the Yaqui language has been made possible thanks to the principles that characterize Role and Reference Grammar and to its recognition that individual languages may privilege different arguments depending on their coding and behavioral properties, and that the same semantic relationship can be expressed through different syntactic structures for specific pragmatic purposes.

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