No Smoke without Fire : Invisible Agent Constructions in South Asian Languages

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1. INTRODUCTION

One of the contributions of the Japanese linguistic tradition to the field of linguistics is the notion of the contrast between *SURU* (DO) type expressions versus *NARU* (BECOME) type expressions [Alfonso (1966), Kunihiro (1974), Teramura (1976/1993), Monane & Rogers (1977), Ikegami (1981, 1991), Hinds (1986), *inter alia*]. *SURU* (DO)-expressions (such as those involving verbs like *kimeru* "to decide", *mitukeru* "to find out", *tateru* "to build", *tukamaeru* "to catch", *tutaeru* "to convey", *todokeru* "to deliver", *tasukeru* "to help/to save", *tukuru* "to prepare", etc.) can overtly encode an agent while *NARU* (BECOME)-expressions (such as those involving verbs like *kimaru* "to be decided", *mitukaru* "to be found", *tatu* "to be built", *tukamaru* "to be caught", *tutawaru* "to be conveyed", *todoku* "to be delivered", *tasukaru* "to be helped/saved", *dekiru* "to be ready" etc.) cannot despite the fact that the event in question could not have been realized without the involvement of an agent. In this sense, *NARU* (BECOME)-expressions are "invisible agent" construction. *SURU* (DO)-expressions are said to focus on the "action" of the agent while *NARU* (BECOME)-expressions focus on the "result" of the agent's action. While both types express semantically transitive situations featuring two participants, the former are syntactically transitive (two-place predicates) while the latter are syntactically intransitive (one-place predicates).

 In this paper, I will focus on the *NARU* (BECOME)-expressions or invisible agent constructions in four South Asian languages and demonstrate that the *SURU* (DO) versus *NARU* (BECOME) contrast is also a characteristic feature of South Asian languages. Further, I will argue that *NARU* (BECOME)-expressions constitute a kind of quasi-passive construction with the highest degree of agent-defocusing (cf. Shibatani 1985) and that while *NARU* (BECOME)-expressions show semantic affinity with the canonical passive constructions both differ from each other morphosyntactically. I will also argue for maintaining a distinction between the *NARU* (BECOME)-expressions which imply external agency and the so-called spontaneous expressions which are typically void of agency.

The organization of the paper is as follows. In section 2, I will offer a brief summary of past research on the *SURU* (DO) versus *NARU* (BECOME) dichotomy. Against this

backdrop, I will describe the *NARU* (BECOME)-constructions in South Asian languages (Section 3). In section 4, I will argue that *NARU* (BECOME)-constructions are in fact a kind of passive construction and contrast them with canonical passive constructions. Further, I will draw a contrast between *NARU* (BECOME)-constructions and the so-called spontaneous constructions and argue for distinguishing them. Finally, in section 5, I will summarize my findings and present conclusions.

2. PREVIOUS STUDIES ON THE *SURU* (DO) VS. *NARU* (BECOME) CONTRAST

The *SURU* (DO)-expressions versus *NARU* (BECOME)-expressions dichotomy has been initially proposed in the context of contrastive studies of Japanese and English. In his well-known reference grammar of Japanese entitled *Japanese Language Patterns* Alfonso (1966/1974/1980: 884-86) makes the following observation on the contrast between the use of a transitive versus intransitive verb in Japanese and English.

In SPONTANEOUS expressions, an INTRANSITIVE verb is used when the speaker's thought is focused on THE OBJECTIVE FACT, a TRANSITIVE verb is used when the speaker's thought is focused on the AGENT OR THE AGENT'S ACTIVITY.

> *This is one case in which English speakers and Japanese speakers differ in their habitual approach to situations. In English, for example, it does not make much difference whether a person chooses to say:*

"They DECIDED that…"	*or*	*"IT WAS DECIDED that..."*
"We SAW him there."	*or*	*"HE WAS SEEN there."*
"They ELECTED him…"	*or*	*"HE WAS ELECTED…"*
"He BROKE the window."	*or*	*"The window WAS BROKEN by him."*

We do not mean to say that the English speaker does not see any difference in meaning between the expressions in the left-hand column above and their respective passive expressions in the right-hand column. Surely, there is a difference in meaning. But the English speaker does not have any constitutional preference for one form over the other, no ingrained inclination towards the use of one form rather than the other.

> *The Japanese speaker, however, DOES have a preference, and DOES tend to [use] one form rather than the other.*

> *This fact appears most clearly in situations which involve some sudden cognizance of a fact and the spontaneous reaction to it. In such situations there is always some person, thing, or fact—let us call it an OUTSTANDING FEATURE—which bursts in upon the subject's consciousness and draws from him some exclamation. And for different conscious subjects there may be different OUTSTANDING FEATURES even from one and the same situation, especially if the subjects have inherited their mental make-ups from widely differing backgrounds and cultures.*

> *Now consider the following situation. An American and a Japanese are observing some gentlemen who are fishing off a dock, and as they watch, one of the men starts reeling in excitedly. The American says "He's got one!" or "He's caught one!"—he thinks of what the MAN has done. The Japanese reacts with AA TSURETA or A*

KAKATTA—he thinks of the FISH'S BEING CAUGHT. Suppose, though, that the Japanese comments on the great number of fish already caught by the fisherman, he might say: YOKU TORIMASU NE or YOKU TSURIMASU NE—then the outstanding feature is the fisherman's activity, not the action itself. The American will most likely also say something like: "He's is doing pretty well", so that the point of difference in viewpoint and reaction is reached in the moment of spontaneous expression: an American will tend to use a transitive verb, a Japanese will tend to use an intransitive verb. For the American, the situation was a change from not-catching to catching; for the Japanese, the situation was a change from not-being-caught to being-caught. […………].

It can safely be said, then, that the viewpoints and reactions, and consequently the type of verbs used to express situations of the kind described, differ for English speakers and Japanese speakers. [………]

What we said here of TRANSITIVE and INTRANSITIVE verbs can be said in more general terms of DYNAMIC and NON-DYNAMIC verbs. When one desires for one reason or another to call attention to the AGENT or to the fact that an ACTIVITY took place one will use a DYNAMIC verb (transitive or otherwise). When one desires to describe that SOMETHING IS DONE, objectively leaving out any consideration of who did it, one would use a NON-DYNAMIC verb (intransitive or otherwise). The objective non-dynamic way of speaking is, of course, more impersonal, more tactful in certain situations, and used in polite speech quite often.

From the foregoing quote, it is clear that, Alfonso has not made a distinction between morphologically underived (lexical) intransitive verbs (for example, *kimaru* "be decided") and syntactic (morphologically derived) intransitive verbs (passive form such as *kime-rare-ru* "be decided").

This contrast between DYNAMIC vs. NON-DYNAMIC ways of expression has been pursued and refined in great details in the subsequent research. Kunihiro (1974), Monane & Rogers (1977) and Hinds (1986) refer to it as PERSON-focus versus SITUATION-focus contrast while Teramura (1976/1993) calls it as *SURU* (DO) vs. *NARU* (BECOME) expression contrast. Ikegami (1981, 1991) provides an extensive explication of this contrast and proposes a *SURU* (DO) vs. *NARU* (BECOME) typology of languages. Ikegami (1991: 290) sums up the contrast between *SURU* (DO) vs. *NARU* (BECOME) languages as follows:

There is a contrast between (1) a language which focuses on "the human being (especially, one acting as agent)" and tends to give linguistic prominence to the notion and (2) a language which tends to suppress the notion of "the human being (especially, one acting as agent)," even if such a being is involved in the event.

More recently, Jacobsen (1992: 106-108) in discussing the difference between Japanese and English cites the following examples. The "preferred" English versions are given in (a) while the "preferred" Japanese versions are given in (b):[1]

(1) a.   *Have you found an apartment yet?*

    b.   *apaato*   *wa*   *moo*   *mitukarimasita*   *ka?*
        apartment   TOP   yet   be-found-POL-PAST   Q
        "Has an apartment been found yet?"

(2) a.   *Did someone by any chance turn in a lady's watch?*

    b.   *hyotte shite*   *huzinyoo* *no*   *tokei*   *ga*   *todoite-iru*   *desyoo*   *ka?*
        by any chance lady's   GEN   watch NOM   arrive-PERF   perhaps Q
        "Has a lady's watch by any chance been turned in (to you)?"

(3) a.   (Watching someone fishing) *Oh! He caught one!*

    b.   *a!*   *tureta*   (Alfonso, 1974)
        EXC   be-caught-PAST
        "Oh! (One) was caught!"

Jacobsen (1992: 106) remarks on this difference as follows:

Japanese exhibits a "constitutional" preference for result-oriented expression, and it is common to encounter situations where a transitive expression would be preferred in English, but the corresponding expression in Japanese involves an intransitive construction which, at least in its English translation, is passive in meaning. … .Although not passive in their morphology, the Japanese versions bear a semantic affinity to passives because the presence of an agent giving rise to the result is in each case clear from contextual and common sense factors. There are, however, equally many non-agentive intransitive constructions where a passive treatment is clearly inappropriate.

Jacobsen discusses the non-agentive intransitive construction which lacks a passive interpretation (or implication of agent) citing the following examples.

(4) *kinoo*   *gakkoo* *de*   *tyotto* *omosiroi* <u>*ziken*</u>   *ga*   *okotta.*
     yesterday   school LOC   quite   interesting incident NOM be-PAST
     "Quite an interesting <u>incident</u> occurred at school yesterday."

(5) <u>*sora*</u> *ga*   *harete-iru*   *to*   <u>*huzisan*</u> *ga*   *mieru*
     sky NOM   clear-up-PERF COND Mt. Fuji NOM   be-visible

"When the <u>sky</u> is clear, <u>Mt. Fuji</u> is visible."

(6) *syoowa*   *tennoo*   *no*   *si*   *to*   *tomo*   *ni*   *atarasii*   <u>*zidai*</u>   *ga*
     Showa   emperor   GEN   death   COM   with   DAT   new   era   NOM

hazimatta.
begin-PAST

"A new <u>era</u> began with the death of Emperor Showa."

The underlined noun phrases in (4)-(6) are subjects of the intransitive verbs in question and semantically they function as objects of corresponding transitive verbs. Jacobsen refers to these noun phrases as "semantic objects". In examples (1)-(6) a semantic object is placed in the role of syntactic subject to convey the meaning that an event has come about apart from the intentional involvement on the part of the subject. According to Jacobsen, examples such as these are neutral as to the question of whether an entity independent from the subject is responsible for bringing about the event in question, although such an interpretation (passive interpretation) may be imposed by certain contextual or common sense factors. Pointing out that there is no suitable term in Western grammar to refer to the general class of such constructions Jacobsen adopts the term *zihatu* "spontaneous" from traditional Japanese grammar. By doing this, Jacobsen essentially clubs agent-implying intransitive construction in (1)-(3) together with the non-agent implying intransitive constructions given in (4)-(6) on the basis of their shared similarity of placing a semantic object in the role of syntactic subject.

In this paper I will focus on agent-implying intransitive constructions [invisible agent constructions like those in (1)-(3)] as well as non-agent implying intransitive constructions [agent-less constructions such as those in (4)-(6)] in four South Asian languages, viz. Marathi and Hindi (Indo-Aryan) and Telugu and Tamil (Dravidian). Drawing a contrast between agent-implying passive constructions and agent-implying intransitive constructions, I will argue that the latter should be treated as quasi-passive terming them as "BECOME passive" constructions. Further, contra Jacobsen, I will argue that a distinction should be made between the agent-implying intransitive constructions (BECOME passives in my proposal) and non-agent implying intransitive constructions (for which I will reserve the term "spontaneous construction").

3. INVISIBLE AGENT INTRANSITIVE CONSTRUCTIONS IN SOUTH ASIAN LANGUAGES

In South Asian languages agent-implying intransitive constructions (aka invisible agent intransitive constructions) are widely used. Such constructions involve morphologically simplex intransitive verbs as well as morphologically complex intransitive verbs comprising {Action Noun/Predicative Adjective implying agency + light verb}. In most cases the light verb is "BECOME" but in some cases other light verbs (such as "stay", "come", etc.) are used. The verb BECOME is used as a cover term for the verbs occupying the light verb slot. Morphologically simplex agent-implying intransitive

verbs are few in number while morphologically complex agent-implying intransitive verbs form a substantial class. Typical examples in Marathi of both types are illustrated below.

(7) Morphologically simplex agent-implying intransitive verbs in Marathi
   TharNe (be decide), *pohotsaNe* (be delivered/reach), *saapaDNe* (be found), etc.

(8) Morphologically complex agent-implying intransitive verbs in Marathi
   - {*aTak/shikshaa/karvaai/hakaalpaTTi/nilambit*}+*hoNe*
     {arrest/punishment/action/expulsion/sacked}+BECOME
   - {*stuti/nindaa/apmaan/Tikaa/satkaar*}+*hoNe*
     {praise/criticism/insult/criticism/felicitation}+BECOME
   - {*niwaD/nemNuk/badli/padaanvati/pramoshan*}+*hoNe*
     {selection/appointment/transfer/demotion/promotion}+BECOME
   - {*radda/raakhiv/nirNay/Tharaav/badal/suTkaa*}+*hoNe*
     {cancelled/reserved/decision/change/release}+BECOME
   - *ubhy{aa/i/e} hoNe/rahaaNe* (lit. upright become/stay, "be built, have come up")

A few representative full sentence examples of the verbs in (7) and (8) are given below.

(9) *shukravaari   sandhyaakaaLi   5   waadztaa   nighaaytse   Tharale*
     friday   evening   5   O'clock   leave.of   got decided
     "It was decided to leave at 5 O'clock on Friday."
     (my3m.blogspot.com/2005_08_01_archive.html)

(10) *bomb-sphoT   khaTalyaat   sanjay   datta-laa   sahaa   warshaa-chi   sakta-madzuri-ci*
      bomb-blast   case.in   Sanjay   Dutt-to   six   years-of.F   hard-labour-of.F
      shikshaa   dzhaali
      punishment.F   become.F
      "In the bombing case Sanjay Dutt was given a punishment of 6 years of hard labour."
       (Source: mr.upakram.org/node/621)

(11) *varaLi si phes   yethe   saanDapaaNi   samudraat   soDaNaaryaa   gaTaaraacyaa*
      Warali Sea Face   here   waste water   sea.in   leaving   drainage.GEN.Obl
      mukhaa-war-tsa   don   Tolejanga   imarati   ubhyaa   raahikyaa
      face-on-EMPH   two   sky scraper buildings   stand   stayed
      aahet
      be.PRES.PL
      "At Worli Sea Face, two skyscraper buildings have come up right in front of a drainage which pours waste water into the sea."

(Source: www.esakal.com/esakal/06042007/Mumbai07A8674C47.htm)

Similar expressions are widely attested in other South Asian languages as well. Due to space limitations I will confine myself to two Indo-Aryan languages (Marathi and Hindi) and two Dravidian languages (Telugu and Tamil) and show parallels across these languages in their use of a particular morphologically complex agent-implying intransitive expression {arrest+BECOME}. This expression has a transitive counterpart {arrest+DO} as well as a passive counterpart {arrest+DO+PASSIVE MARKER}. I will present examples of all three of these related expressions from Hindi, Marathi, Telugu and Tamil. In each set the first example is a transitive, the second one is a passive, and the third one is an agent-implying intransitive (BECOME-type) expression.

Hindi

(12)

amit,	*anil-ko*	*budhwaar-ko*	*bhaanDup-ke*	*mangatdaas*	*peTrol*
Amit	Anil-to	Wednesday-on	Bhandup-of	Mangatdas	petrol
pamp-ke	*paas-se*	*siiniar inspecTar*	*nitiin alaknure*	*satiish*	*mayakar*
pump-of	near-from	senior inspector	Nitin Alaknure	Satish	Mayakar
aur	*sudhiir*	*dalawii*	*kii Tiim-ne*	*girafTaar*	*kiyaa*
and	Sudhir	Dalwi	of team-ERG	arrest.M.SG.	do.M.SG
thaa					
was.M.Sg					

"A team of senior inspectors comprised of Nitin Alaknure, Satish Mayakar, and Sudhir Dalwi had arrested Amit and Anil on Wednesday near the Mangatdas petrol pump in Bhandup."
(http://navbharattimes.indiatimes.com/articleshow/2454534.cms)

(13)

sudhiir dalawii	*ke anusaar*	*amit bhogale*	*ko*	*2003-mE*	*ek*	*marDar*
Sudhir Dalwi	according to	Amit Bhogle	to	2003-in	one	murder
kes-mE	*giraftaar*	*kiyaa*	*gayaa*	*thaa*		
case-in	arrest.M.SG.	do.M.SG	go.M.SG.PST	was.M.Sg		

"According to Sudhir Dalwi, Amit Bhogle was arrested in a murder case in 2003."
(http://navbharattimes.indiatimes.com/articleshow/2454534.cms)

(14)

sanyog-se	*2007 kii shuruwaata-mE*	*amit*	*maaraamaari*	*ke*	*ek*
accident-by	2007 of beginning-in	Amit	fighting	of	One
maamale-mE	*phir*		*giraftaar*	*huaa*	
incident-in	once again		arrest.M.SG	became.M.SG	

"Accidently, in the beginning of 2007, in one of the fighting incidents, once again Amit got arrested." (http://navbharattimes.indiatimes.com/articleshow/2454534.cms)

Marathi

(15) *polis-aan-ni*   *sahaa-dzaNaan-cyaa*   *ToLi-laa*   *aTak*   *keli*
     police-PL-ERG   six-people-Gen.M   gang.M-ACC   arrest.F   did.F.Sg
     "The police arrested a gang of six people."

(16) *polis-aan-kaDun*   *sahaa-dzaNaan-cyaa*   *ToLi-laa*   *aTak*   *keli*   *geli*
     police-PL-by   six-people-Gen.M   gang.M-ACC   arrest.F   did.F.Sg   went.F.Sg.
     "A gang of six people was arrested by the police."

(17) *sahaa-dzaNaan-cyaa*   *ToLi-laa*   *aTak*   *dzhaali*
     six-people-Gen.M   gang.M-ACC   arrest.F   becsme.F.SG.
     "A gang of six people was arrested."

Telugu

(18) *poliselu*   *anil-ni*   *arresT*   *chesaaru*
     police.PL   Anil-to   arrest   did.PL
     "Police arrested Anil."

(19) *anil*   *poliselu-che*   *arresT*   *cheyabaDDaDu*
     Anil   police.PL-by   arrest   did.PASS.PL
     "Anil was arrested by police."

(20) *anil*   *arresT*   *ayyaDu*
     Anil   arrest   became.SG
     "Anil was arrested."

Tamil

(21) *polisaar*   *anil-ai*   *kaithu*   *seithnaar*
     police   Anil-to   arrest   did
     "Police arrested Anil."

(22) *anil*   *polisaar-aal*   *kaithu*   *seiyappaTTaar*
     Anil   police-by   arrest   did.PASS
     "Anil was arrested by police."

(23) *anil   kaithu   aanaar*

     Anil.M   arrest   became

     "Anil was arrested."

Having looked at the scope of the agent-implying BECOME-type intransitive expressions (aka invisible agent intransitive constructions) in Hindi, Marathi, Telugu and Tamil, I will compare them with canonical passive constructions and drawing on data from Marathi I will point out the similarities as well as differences between the two types. Based on the similarities they share with the passive construction, I will argue that agent-implying BECOME-type intransitive constructions should be treated as a quasi-passive and should be christened the "BECOME passive". Further, I will contrast these invisible agent intransitive constructions (or in my terms "BECOME passive" constructions) with the non-agent implying intransitive constructions (the so-called canonical spontaneous constructions) and pace Jacobsen (op. cit.) I will argue for making a distinction between the two and reserving the term "spontaneous" construction for only the non-agent implying intransitive constructions.

4. INVISIBLE AGENT INTRANSITIVE CONSTRUCTION VS. CANONICAL PASSIVE CONSTRUCTION

In many language of the world the passive construction is formed by using an auxiliary verb and many of them use more than one auxiliary verb as a marker of the passive [for example, German, Dutch, Swedish, Finnish, Latvian, Polish, among others, use BE and BECOME, English recruits BE and GET, while Bengali uses GO and BECOME as passive marker auxiliaries (cf. Siewierska 1984: 126 for more details)]. Marathi also is a case in point and uses both GO and COME as passive marker auxiliaries. These two passives differ in meaning but these differences are not the issue at hand, hence I will not go into the details here (for discussion see Pardeshi 2000a, 2000b, and forthcoming). I will use GO passive as a representative of Marathi passive and contrast it with the BECOME-type invisible agent intransitive construction. Consider the following pairs of Marathi examples where the (a) versions are BECOME-type invisible agent intransitive expressions and the (b) versions are GO passives.

(24) a. *pantapradhaanaan-ci*   *hatyaa*   *dzhaali*

        prime minister-GEN.F   assassination.F   become.PF.F

        Lit. "Prime Minister's murder became."

        "The Prime Minister was murdered."

    b. *(atirekyaa-kaDun)* *pantapradhaanaan-ci*   *hatyaa*   *keli*   *geli*

        extremist-by   prime minister-GEN.F   assassination.F   do.PstPart.F   go.PF.F

        "The Prime Minister was murdered by the extremist."

(25) a.   *raam-ci   pakshaa-tun   hakaalpaTTi   dzhaali*
          Ram-GEN.F   party-from   expulsion.F   become-PF-F
          Lit. "Ram's expulsion from the party became."
          "Ram was expelled from the party."

     b.   *(pakShashresThin-kaDun)   raam-ci   pakshaa-tun   hakaalpaTTi   keli*
          Party high command-by   Ram-GEN.F   party-from   expulsion.F   do.PstPart.F
          geli
          go.PF.F
          "Ram was expelled from the party by the party high command."

(26) a.   *raam-ci   badli   dzhaali*
          Ram-GEN.F   transfer.F   become.PF.F
          Lit. Ram's transfer became.
          "Ram was transferred."

     b.   *(variShTha   adhikaaryaa-kaDun)   raam-ci   badli   keli   geli*
          senior   officer-by   Ram-GEN.F   transfer.F   do.PstPrt.F   go.PF.F
          "Ram was transferred by the senior officer."

(27) a.   *ek   mahin-yaat   caukashi-tsaa   ahawaal   tayaar   dzhaalaa*
          one   months-in   investigation-of   report.M   ready   become.PF.M
          Lit. "The investigative report became ready in one month."

     b.   *ek   mahin-yaat   caukashi-tsaa   ahawaal   tayaar   kelaa   gelaa*
          one   months-in   investigation-of   report.M   ready   do.PstPart.M   go.PF.M
          "The investigative report was made ready in one month."

The pairs of sentences in (24) through (27) are semantically alike in that both contain a "non-agent" subject. They differ from each other, however, in terms of overt encoding of the agent: BECOME-type invisible agent intransitive construction do not permit the presence of an agent while GO passive constructions are felicitous in the presence of the agent (albeit oblique) as shown in example (28) below.

(28) a.   *(*shaasanaa-kaDun)   simenT   udyog-aat   yaa   purwi   jaahiir*
          government-by   cement   industry-in   this   before   announce
          dzhaalelyaa   kshamataa   weLe-war   ubhyaa   dzhaalyaa
          become.Pst.Prt.F.PL   capacities.F.PL   time-on   upright   become.PF.F.PL

"The (production) capacities announced before have come up (*by the government)."
(http://www.esakal.com/esakal/11122007/Arthvishwa2518B2ED03.htm)

b. *(shaasanaa-kaDun)*   *simenT*   *udyog-aat*   *yaa*   *purwi*   *jaahiir*
    government-by   cement   industry-in   this   before   announce

    dzhaalelyaa   *kshamataa*   *weLe-war*   *ubhyaa*   *kelyaa*
    become.Pst.Prt.F.PL   capacities.F.PL   time-on   upright   do.PstPart.F.PL

    gelyaa
    go.PF.M.PL

    "The (production) capacities announced before have been built by the government."

The transitive active counterpart corresponding to (28b) is given in (29) below wherein the agent appears as an obligatory argument (subject) which cannot be omitted.

(29) *shaasanaa-ne*   *simenT*   *udyog-aat*   *yaa*   *purwi*   *jaahiir*
      government-ERG   cement   industry-in   this   before   announce

      dzhaalelyaa   *kshamataa*   *weLe-war*   *ubhyaa*   *kelyaa*
      become.Pst.Prt.F.PL capacities.F.PL   time-on   upright   do.PstPart.F.PL

      "The government built the (production) capacities announced before."

On comparing the BECOME-type invisible agent intransitive construction in (28a) with the active transitive construction in (29) it is clear that: (i) functionally, (28a) defocuses the agent noun phrase; (ii) semantically, the valency of the situation expressed by the verb in (28a) is two which is the same as for its active counterpart in (29); (iii) syntactically, the valency of the verb in (28a) as compared to its active counterpart in (29) is less by one; and (iv) morphologically, the predicate in (28a) is distinct from its corresponding active counterpart in (29). From these facts it is clear that the BECOME-type invisible agent intransitive construction in (28a) satisfies all the criteria given below for defining the passive prototype as proposed by Shibatani:

(30) The Passive Prototype: Shibatani (1985: 837)
    a.   Primary function: Defocusing of agent.
    b.   Semantic properties:
        (i) Semantic Valence: Predicate (agent, patient)
        (ii) Subject is affected.
    c.   Syntactic properties:
        (i) Syntactic encoding: agent = Ø (not encoded), patient = subject
        (ii) Valence of P[redicate]: Active = P/n, Passive = P/n-1
    d.   Morphological property: Active = P, Passive = P [+passive]

In view of this correspondence I regard the BECOME-type invisible agent intransitive construction as a bona fide quasi-passive construction and call it the BECOME passive.

A passive analysis for the BECOME-type invisible agent intransitive construction has been proposed by Sridhar (1990:215) in his grammar of Kannada (Dravidian). Sridhar treats the BECOME-type invisible agent intransitive construction as an "impersonal passive" (in my terms the BECOME passive) and contrasts it with the active sentence citing the following examples. Example (31) is an active clause and (32) is an impersonal passive.

(31) *ya:ro: i: nirNayavannu   khaNDisidaru*

someone   this   resolution-acc   denounce-pst-3pl-hum

Someone denounced this resolution.

(32) *i: nirNayavannu   khaNDisala:yitu*

this   resolution-acc   reprove-inf-become-3sn

This resolution was reproved.

As for the "impersonal passive" in (32) Sridhar (1990: 214) remarks as follows:

The impersonal passive can never have an overt subject constituent. It has a direct object, marked by the accusative. (Note that the accusative ending, though optional elsewhere with non-human objects, occurs fairly regularly in this construction, undoubtedly to ensure that the first noun phrase is not interpreted as the subject.) The verb appears in the infinitive form (with the –al ending), followed by the auxiliary (or the stative copula) –ag:u 'become'. The auxiliary is inflected for the tense and aspect, but carries the invariable agreement feature of third singular neuter, apparently the "unmarked" agreement form. This construction though still "literary" or "formal" and almost never used in (informal) spoken styles, is used much more frequently than the personal passive.

It should be added that there is difference of opinion between Sridhar and me in the interpretation of the term "subject" in the case of impersonal passive. Sridhar argues that the first noun phrase in the impersonal passive construction (underlying object of the corresponding active counterpart) is not a subject but an object since it retains (sometimes) its accusative marking and does not agree with the verb. Additional examples provided by Sridhar (op. cit.: 215-216) show that the accusative case retention in the case of impersonal passive is optional and that the verb agreement in the case of personal as well as impersonal passive is identical.

(33) *mane   kaTTalpaDuttide*

house   build-inf-pass-prog-n.pst-3sn

The house is being built.

(34) *mane (yannu)   kaTTala:guttide*

     house (acc)   build-inf-become-prog-n.pst-3sn

     The house is being built.

(35) *raste   agala   ma:DalpaTTide*

     road   wide   make-inf-pass-pf-n.pst-3sn

     The road has been widened.

(36) *raste   agala   ma:Dala:gide*

     road   wide   make-inf-become-pf-n.pst-3sn

     The road has been widened.

I treat the underlying "objects" of the corresponding active counterparts appearing in the impersonal passive construction (BECOME passive in my analysis) as "subject" in that it is the sole argument of which the predication is made. Unlike Kannada, these noun phrases control the verb agreement in Marathi.

Intuitively speaking, in Marathi also, the usage frequency of BECOME passives seems to be higher than the GO passive. To draw a more definitive conclusion an empirical investigation is needed.

There are expressions which at a first glance appear to be the counterexamples to my claim that BECOME passive do not permit the overt presence of an agent phrase. Note the following examples.[2]

(37) *tyaacyaa-kaDun   apekshit   kaamgiri   dzhaaleli   naahi*

     he-by   expected   performance.F   become.PstPrt.F   NEG

     Lit. Expected performance has not been achieved by him.

     He has not performed up to the expected level.

     (origin.maharashtratimes.indiatimes.com/articleshow/2462179.cms)

(38) *erwii   ase   sharthi-tse   prayatna   tyaacyaa-kaDun   dzhaale   naahit*

     other times   like   die hard-of   efforts.M   him-by   become.PF.M   NEG

     Other times such die hard efforts have not been done by him.

     (www.esakal.com/esakal/05312007/SportsB2C9E2EA69.htm)

A closer look reveals however that the expressions in (37) and (38) differ from the BECOME passive in that they obligatorily contain an agent. Recall that, BECOME passives (invisible agent intransitive construction) do not permit presence of an agent (cf. (28a)). I treat the constructions in (37) and (38) as "potential construction" wherein the agent's (in)ability is depicted and as such the presence of the agent is obligatory. In

this respect, the potential construction differs from the passive, wherein the presence of an agent is optional (see Pardeshi 2000b for more details).

To sum up, semantically, BECOME passive [*NARU* (BECOME)-expressions/ invisible agent intransitive constructions] as well as the canonical passive expressions perform agent-defocusing: BECOME passive defocus (or erase) the agent altogether while canonical passive expressions defocus the agent partially. Syntactically, BECOME passive differ from canonical passive expressions in that BECOME passive do not permit the overt presence of an agent while canonical passives permit (at least optionally) the overt expression of an agent. Furthermore, BECOME passive are morphologically simple (unmarked) while passive expressions are morphologically complex (marked).

Having demonstrated the similarities and differences between the BECOME passive and the canonical GO passive, I will now move on to the issue of how to differentiate the agent-implying BECOME passive (BECOME-type invisible agent intransitive construction) from the agent-less "spontaneous" construction. Recall that Jacobsen (1992) does not make a distinction between these two and refers to both of them collectively as the "spontaneous" construction.

In South Asian languages the BECOME passives are isomorphic with the {Spontaneous Process Noun / Predicative Adjective void of agency + BECOME} construction which conveys the spontaneous emergence of a state of affairs. Due to space constraints I will discuss only one example here in order to demonstrate the difference between the agent implying BECOME passive and the agent-less "spontaneous" construction.

(39) *pantapradhaanaan-ci*   *hatyaa*   *dzhaali*

prime minister-GEN.F   murder.F   become.PF.F

Lit. Prime Minister's murder became.

The Prime Minister was murdered.

(40) *pantapradhaanaan-tsa* *nidhan*   *dzhaala*

prime minister-GEN.N   death.N   become.PF.N

Lit. Prime Minister's death became.

The Prime Minister died.

Both (39) and (40) describe the death of the Prime Minister and they show a formal resemblance. However, semantically they differ crucially in that while the former typically involves an external agent, the latter is devoid of agency. Owing to this, the BECOME-type invisible agent intransitive construction or {Action Noun / Predicative Adjective implying agency + BECOME} construction in (39) possess an active transitive counterpart, namely, {Action Noun / Predicative Adjective implying agency + DO} construction while the {Spontaneous Process Noun/Predicative Adjective void of agency + BECOME} construction in (40) lacks it. The following examples attest to this fact.

(41) *(atirekyaa-ne)*   *pantapradhaanaan-ci*   *hatyaa*   *keli*

      extremist-ERG   prime minister-GEN.F   assassination.F   do.PF.F

      The extremist assassinated the Prime Minister.

(42) *(*atirekyaa-ne)*   *pantapradhaanaan-tsa*   *nidhan*   *kela*

      extremist-ERG   prime minister-GEN.N   death.N   do.PF.N

      The extremist killed the Prime Minister.

The BECOME-type invisible agent intransitive construction or {Action Noun /
Predicative Adjective implying agency + BECOME} construction is a "passive"
construction (BECOME passive) while the {Spontaneous Process Noun / Predicative
Adjective devoid of agency + BECOME} is an agent-less "spontaneous" construction.
To reiterate, the former possesses a transitive active counterpart while the latter lacks it.
Although they formally look alike, they should be distinguished in the face of the
foregoing differences.

5. SUMMARY & CONCLUSIONS

In this paper I demonstrate that the *SURU* (DO) versus *NARU* (BECOME) contrast is
one of the characteristic features of South Asian languages. Further, drawing on data
from Hindi, Marathi, Kannada, Telugu, and Tamil, I argue that the invisible agent
construction or *NARU* (BECOME)-expressions constitute a kind of quasi-passive
construction with a high degree of agent-defocusing and that semantically as well as
syntactically they contrast with canonical passive constructions. I christen the *NARU*
(BECOME)- expressions as the BECOME passive and demonstrate that while they
show a close affinity to canonical passive expressions in terms of agent-defocusing the
two differ from each other syntactically in that the BECOME passive does not permit
the overt presence of an agent while canonical passives do (albeit as an oblique
argument). Further, morphologically, *NARU* (BECOME)-expressions are unmarked
while passive expressions are marked. Finally, *pace* Jacobsen (1992), I argue for
making a distinction between the BECOME passive or {Action Noun/Predicative
Adjective implying agency + BECOME} construction and the {Spontaneous Process
Noun/Predicative Adjective devoid of agency + BECOME} construction or
"spontaneous" construction. The robust presence of *NARU* (BECOME)-type
constructions in the South Asian languages under discussion suggests that South Asian
languages lean more towards the *NARU* (BECOME) end of the *SURU* (DO) versus
NARU (BECOME)-expression preference continuum.

NOTES

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1. The abbreviation used in the glosses are as follows:

ACC	accusative	LOC	locative	PAST/Pst/pst	past
COM	commutative	M/m	masculine	PRES	present
DAT	dative	N/n	neuter	prog	progressive
ERG	ergative	NEG	negative	PstPerf	past perfect
EMPH	emphatic particle	Obl	oblique	TOP	topic
F/f	feminine	PASS	passive	Q	question particle
GEN	genitive	PF	perfect	1	first person
hum	human	PL/pl	plural	2	second person
inf	infinitve	POL	polite	3	third person

2. I would like to thank Peter Hook for bringing these examples to my attention.

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