The Urdu Active Impersonal

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1   Introduction

There is a cross-linguistically robust generalisation that accusative is generally found in transitive contexts, i.e. in the presence of an external argument (EA).

(1)   Burzio's Generalisation (BG): Only verbs that assign an external theta-role may assign accusative case (Burzio, 1986).

A classic example of BG are unaccusatives. Under a raising analysis of unaccusatives (Perlmutter, 1978), the subject originates as an internal argument. It is not assigned ACC in its base position due to the lack of an external theta-role. It raises to subject position where it is assigned NOM.

(2)   a.   **He/*him** fell.

b.   ***Vo***   /   ****us=ko***   *gira.*
      3.SG.NOM / *3.SG.OBL=ACC fell.PFV.M.SG

      'He fell.'

Another classic example of BG are passives. In old Government and Binding approaches, the external theta-role is "absorbed" by passive morphology preventing ACC case assignment. The object moves to the empty subject position and is assigned NOM (Baker et al., 1989; Chomsky, 1981).

(3)   **He/*him** was caught.

(Hindi-)Urdu is often given as an exception to BG because of the accusative-preserving passive construction shown in (4).

(4)   ***Vo***   /   ***Us=ko***   *pakRa*   *gya.*
      He.NOM / He.OBL=ACC caught.PFV.M.SG PASS.M.SG

      'He was caught.'

I will argue that Urdu is not an exception to BG. The accusative-preserving "passive" construction in Urdu is an impersonal construction with active syntax and a *pro* subject - similar to Polish (Maling, 1993) and Icelandic (Maling and Sigurjónsdóttir, 2002, 2015). So the presence of ACC is unsurprising and in fact expected. Therefore, the Urdu passive is not an exception to BG and the correlation between the presence of ACC and the EA holds in the language.

Structure:

1. Background on accusative case, subject tests and passives in Urdu

2. The passive *is* a passive

3. The accusative-preserving structure is *not* a passive

4. Conclusion and open questions

1.1 Voice and v:

I adopt a framework in which Voice and v are two distinct functional heads. Voice introduces the EA and encodes the active/passive voice distinction. Little v is the locus of causative semantics (Alexiadou et al., 2006; Harley, 2009, 2017; Legate, 2014; Pylkkänen, 2002).

ACC is assigned by active Voice. The fact that passive Voice can introduce an EA but not assign ACC is not a problem in BG terms as the correlation is one way. Attributing ACC to an EA-introducing functional head (active Voice) derives BG.

(5)   BG modified: ACC is only found where there is an EA introduced by active Voice.

This is of course is pure stipulation without the appropriate evidence. My goal in this presentation, however, is not to explain BG but simply show that it holds in Urdu.

2 Background

2.1 Accusative case

ACC is found on direct objects (DOs) with both ERG and NOM subjects. It alternates with NOM due to differential object marking (DOM).

(6)   *Omar=ne*   **seb**   / **seb=ko**   *khaya.*
      Omar=ERG apple.NOM / apple=ACC eat.PFV.M.SG

      'Omar ate an/the apple.'

DOM in Urdu is conditioned by animacy and definiteness/specificity (Aissen, 2003; Butt and King, 2004; Mohanan, 1994).

Animacy: (Figure 1)

- Marking is obligatory on humans (7a).

- Marking is optional on non-human animates (7b) and inanimates (7c).

$$\underbrace{human}_{always\ marked} > \underbrace{animate > inanimate}_{sometimes\ marked}$$

Figure 1: Animacy scale and DOM in Urdu

(7)   a.   *Sana=ne*   **Omar=ko** / ***Omar***   *dekha.*
           Sana=ERG Omar=ACC / *Omar.NOM see.PFV.M.SG

           'Sana saw Omar.'

      b.   *Sana=ne*   **kuthe=ko**   / **kutha**   *dekha.*
           Sana=ERG dog.OBL=ACC / dog.NOM see.PFV.M.SG

           'Sana saw a/the dog.'

      c.   *Sana=ne*   **ghar=ko**   / **ghar**   *dekha.*
           Sana=ERG house=ACC / house.NOM see.PFV.M.SG

           'Sana saw a/the house.'

Definiteness/specificity: (Figure 2)

- Pronouns (8a) and proper names (7a) are always marked.

- Definite (8b) and indefinite specific objects (7b, c) are sometimes marked.

- Non-specific objects are never marked (9).

$$\underbrace{pronoun > proper\ name}_{always\ marked} > \underbrace{definite > specific}_{sometimes\ marked} > \underbrace{non-specific}_{never\ marked}$$

Figure 2: Definiteness scale and DOM in Urdu

(8) a. *Sana=ne* **tumhein** / ***tum** *dekha.*
     Sana=ERG you.ACC / *you.NOM see.PFV.M.SG

     'Sana saw you.'

    b. *Sana=ne* **us** **ghar=ko** / **vo** **ghar** *dekha.*
     Sana=ERG that.OBL house=ACC / that house.NOM see.PFV.M.SG

     'Sana saw that house.'

(9) Context: Adnan wanted chicken for tonight's curry.

    a. *Us=ke* *khaansaame=ne bazaar=se* **murghi** *kharidi.*
     3.SG.OBL=GEN.OBL cook.OBL=ERG market.LOC=INS chicken.NOM buy.PFV.F.SG

     'His cook bought a chicken from the market.'

    b.# *Us=ke* *khaansaame=ne bazaar=se* **murghi=ko** *kharidi.*
     3.SG.OBL=GEN.OBL cook.OBL=ERG market.LOC=INS chicken=ACC buy.PFV.F.SG

     'His cook bought a (specific) chicken from the market.'   (Butt, 1993:97)

2.2 Subject tests

There are three subject tests used in Urdu.

- Anaphor binding

    (10) *Sana$_i$=ne* *Omar$_j$=ko* *apni$_{i/*j}$* *kitaab* *bheji.*
       Sana$_i$=ERG Omar$_j$=DAT REFL.F.SG.OBL$_{i/*j}$ book.NOM send.PFV.F.SG

       'Sana$_i$ sent Omar$_j$ her$_i$/*his$_j$ book.'

- Inability to bind pronouns

    (11) *Sana$_i$=ne* *Omar$_j$=ko* *us$_{*i/j/k}$=ki* *kitaab* *bheji.*
       Sana$_i$=ERG Omar$_j$=DAT 3.SG.OBL$_{*i/j/k}$=GEN.F.SG book.NOM send.PFV.F.SG

       'Sana$_i$ sent Omar$_j$ her/his$_{*i/j/k}$ book.'

- Control into participial clauses

    (12) a. *Sana$_i$=ne* *Omar$_j$=ko* *[PRO$_{i/*j}$ hansthe* *hue]* *maara.*
        Sana$_i$=ERG Omar$_j$=ACC [PRO$_{i/*j}$ laugh.IPFV happen.PFV.OBL] hit.PFV.M.SG

        'Sana hit Omar while [she/*he was] laughing.'

      b. *Sana$_i$=ne* *Omar$_j$=ko* *[PRO$_{i/*j}$ kamre=mein* *jaa kar]* *maara.*
        Sana$_i$=ERG Omar$_j$=ACC [PRO$_{i/*j}$ room.OBL=LOC go do] hit.PFV.M.SG

        'Sana went to the room and hit Omar.'
        ≠ 'Sana hit Omar when he went to the room.'

However, these tests don't seem to be associated with a single subject position, SpecTP. Instead, they seem to be associated with "prominent" DPs (e.g. highest structural argument, highest logical argument/agent) (Mohanan, 1994), and indicate *relative positioning* rather than a specific position.

2.3   Passives

Urdu has analytic passives formed by using the morpheme, *jaa*. This passive morpheme is inflected for tense/aspect and the main verb is in perfective form. The agent is optional and has instrumental case when overt.

(13)   a.   *Sana=ne   Omar=ko   pakRa.*   (active)
             Sana=ERG Omar=ACC catch.PFV.M.SG

             'Sana caught Omar.'

       b.   *Omar   (Sana=se)   pakRa   **gya.**   (passive)
             Omar.NOM (Sana=INS) catch.PFV.M.SG PASS.M.SG

             'Omar was caught (by Sana).'

As in many other languages, the *jaa* morpheme is not unique to passives. It is also used as a main verb 'go' and light verb (LV).

(14)   a.   *Sana   **jaa**-rahi   he.*   (main verb)
             Sana.NOM go-PROG.F.SG be.PRES.3.SG

             'Sana is going.'

       b.   *Sana   uth   **gaii.**   (LV)
             Sana.NOM wake go.PFV.F.SG

             'Sana woke up.'

       c.   *Sana   seb   kha **gaii.**   (LV)
             Sana.NOM apple.NOM eat go.PFV.F.SG

             'Sana ate up an/the apple.'

Moreover, the surface structure used for passives is itself not unique to passives. The same surface structure is used in (in)abilitative constructions and a similar structure is used for necessity/prohibition readings. There are differences in the deep structure but I won't go into those here.

(15)   a.   *Sana=se   Omar   (nahi) pakRa   gya.*   (abilitative)
             Sana=INS Omar.NOM (not)   catch.PFV.M.SG go.PFV.M.SG

             'Sana was (not) able to catch Omar.'

       b.   *BaRon=se   is   tarah zor=se   nahi bola   jaa-ta.*   (prohibition)
             Elders.OBL=INS this.OBL way   force=INS not   talk.PFV.M.SG go-IPFV.M.SG

             'One does not talk loudly with elders like this.'   (Davison, 1982:159)

Passives can be formed with both transitives and intransitives (unergatives but not unaccusatives) in Urdu (Bhatt, 2003; Davison, 1982; Mahajan, 1995).

(16)   a.   *Kal   naacha   gya.*   (unergative)
             Yesterday dance.PFV.M.SG PASS.M.SG

             Yesterday [it] was danced.'

       b. * *Kal   gira   gya.*   (unaccusative)
             Yesterday fall.PFV.M.SG PASS.M.SG

             Yesterday [it] was fallen.'

We can identify that this is not a LV use of *jaa* because the main verb is in perfective form, *naacha*, rather than bare stem form, *naach*, as intransitive verbs generally are with LVs. We can also see that some kind of modifier is needed at the beginning of the sentence when passivising unergatives, similar to the need for modifiers in English-type middles.

Finally, Urdu does not allow passives of passives (Bhatt, 2003).

(17) a. *Party=mein khub kebab   khaey   jaaein-ge.*   (passive)
          Party=LOC lots kebab.NOM eat.PFV.M.PL PASS.M.PL-FUT.M.PL

          'Lots of kebabs will be eaten at the party.'

      b. **Party=mein khaey   jaaey   jaaein-ge.*   (double passive)
          Party=LOC eat.PFV.M.PL PASS.M.PL PASS.M.PL-FUT.M.PL

                                                                          (Bhatt, 2003:5)

3 Passives *are* passives

Mahajan (1995): ACTIVE passives

- The agent in Urdu passives is not demoted.

- The object in Urdu passives is not promoted.

- Therefore, these are not actual passives.

- The differences between ACTIVE passives and actives are INS vs ERG/NOM on the agent and the presence of the *jaa* morpheme.

I will show that in a canonical passive, the agent is a low subject and that the object is promoted to SpecTP. So Urdu does have real passives.

3.1 Object promotion

Mahajan (1995) notes that objects in passives seem to have the same case options as objects in active clauses (ex.4 repeated).

(4)   ***Vo*   / *Us=ko***   *pakRa   gya.*
      He.NOM / He.OBL=ACC caught.PFV.M.SG PASS.M.SG

      'He was caught.'

However, this is not entirely correct. Objects which are obligatorily marked (e.g. human proper names) in active clauses (ex.7a repeated) can be bare in passives (ex.13b repeated).

(7a) *Sana=ne*   ***Omar=ko* / ****Omar***   *dekha.*   (active)
      Sana=ERG Omar=ACC / *Omar.NOM see.PFV.M.SG

      'Sana saw Omar.'

(13b) ***Omar***   *(Sana=se) pakRa   gya.*   (passive)
      Omar.NOM (Sana=INS) catch.PFV.M.SG PASS.M.SG

      'Omar was caught (by Sana).'

Objects in passives cannot control into object control constructions (cf. Mahajan, 1995).

(18) a. $Ram_i=ne$ $Mohan_j=ko$ $[PRO_{*i/j}$ ghar   jaa-ne]   =ko   kaha.
          Ram_i=ERG $Mohan_j$=ACC $[PRO_{*i/j}$ home.LOC go-INF.OBL] =ACC say.PFV.M.SG

          'Ram_i told $Mohan_j$ to go home.'
          ≠ 'Ram told Mohan that he[Ram] was going home.'

      b. *$Ram_i=se$ $Mohan_j$ $[PRO_{*i/*j}$ ghar   jaa-ne]   =ko   kaha   gya.
          Ram_i=INS $Mohan_j$.NOM $[PRO_{*i/*j}$ home.LOC go-INF.OBL] =ACC say.PFV.M.SG PASS.M.SG

          ≠ 'Mohan was told to go home by Ram.'
                                                          (adapted from Mahajan, 1995:294-295)

Furthermore, objects in passives can pass prominence tests (anaphor binding and control into participial clauses). Objects in active clauses cannot, as we saw in section 2.2.

(19)   a.   *Omar$_i$*   *apne$_i$*   *ghar=mein* *pakRa*   *gya.*
             Omar$_i$.NOM REFL.F.SG.OBL$_i$ house=LOC catch.PFV.M.SG PASS.M.SG

             'Omar$_i$ was caught in his$_i$ house.'

       b.   *Omar$_i$*   *[PRO$_i$ ghar*   *ja kar]* *pakRa*   *gya.*
             Omar$_i$.NOM [PRO$_i$ house.LOC go do] catch.PFV.M.SG PASS.M.SG

             'Omar$_i$ was caught when he$_i$ went home.'

The above tells us that objects in passives are in a higher position than objects in actives. We can pinpoint that this position is SpecTP by looking at non-finite passive clauses.

(20)   *[Rina=ka*   /   ***Rina***   *bazaar=mein* *dekha*   *jaa-na]*   *sharam=ki*   *baat*
        [Rina=GEN.M.SG / *Rina.NOM market=LOC see.PFV.M.SG PASS-INF] shame=GEN.F.SG talk
             he.
             be.PRES.3.SG

       'For Rina to be seen in the market is a matter of shame.'

                                                                     (adapted from Bhatt, 2007:9)

- Let's take a DP that is always marked in object position, e.g. human proper name. For this DP to be grammatical when unmarked, it cannot be in object position.

- This is crucial because bare/NOM objects are grammatical in non-finite clauses in Urdu, in contrast to NOM subjects (Bhatt, 2007; Mahajan, 2017; McFadden and Sundaresan, 2011).

- DPs that are obligatorily marked in actives are ungrammatical as bare objects in non-finite passive clauses.

- This shows that the position of bare objects in passives depends on finite T for licensing → SpecTP.

3.2   Agent demotion

Mahajan (1995) shows that INS agents behave like arguments and not adjuncts. Based on this he concludes that they are not demoted.

- They incur weak island violations when extracted out of rightward moved clauses. Adjuncts incur strong island violations.

(21)   a.   *Salma*   *yeh* *sochthi*   *thi*   *[keh* *Mohan=ne*   *Ram=ko*
             Salma.NOM it   think.IPFV.F.SG be.PST.F.SG [that Mohan=ERG Ram=ACC
             maara.]
             hit.PFV.M.SG]

             Literally: 'Salma thinks it that Mohan hit Ram.'

       b.?? *Mohan=ne$_1$*   *Salma*   *yeh* *sochthi*   *thi*   *[keh* *t$_1$* *Ram=ko*
             Mohan=ERG$_1$ Salma.NOM it   think.IPFV.F.SG be.PST.F.SG [that t$_1$ Ram=ACC
             maara.]
             hit.PFV.M.SG]

             Literally: 'Mohan, Salma thinks it that (he) hit Ram.'

(22)   a.   *Salma*   *yeh* *sochthi*   *thi*   *[keh* *Mohan=ne*   *Ram=ko*
             Salma.NOM it   think.IPFV.F.SG be.PST.F.SG [that Mohan=ERG Ram=ACC
             ghar=mein *maara.]*
             house=LOC hit.PFV.M.SG]

             Literally: 'Salma thinks it that Mohan hit Ram at home.'

b. * *Ghar=mein₁   Salma   yeh sochthi   thi*
   House=LOC₁   Salma.NOM   it   think.IPFV.F.SG   be.PST.F.SG [that Mohan=ERG t₁

   Ram=ko   maara.]
   Ram=ACC   hit.PFV.M.SG]

Literally: 'At home, Salma thinks it that Mohan hit Ram.'

(Mohanan, 1994:291-292)

(23) a. *Salma   yeh sochthi   thi   [keh   Mohan=se   Ram*
      Salma.NOM   it   think.IPFV.F.SG   be.PST.F.SG [that Mohan=INS   Ram.NOM

      maara   gya.]
      hit.PFV.M.SG PASS.M.SG]

Literally: 'Salma thinks it that Ram was hit by Mohan.'

b.?? *Mohan=se₁   Salma   yeh sochthi   thi   [keh   t₁ Ram*
   Mohan=INS₁   Salma.NOM   it   think.IPFV.F.SG   be.PST.F.SG [that t₁ Ram.NOM

   maara   gya.]
   hit.PFV.M.SG PASS.M.SG]

Literally: 'By Mohan, Salma thinks it that Ram was hit.'

(adapted from Mohanan, 1994:293)

- They pass prominence tests (anaphor binding and control into participial clauses). Adjuncts never pass these tests.

(24) a. *Sanaᵢ=se Omarⱼ   apneᵢ/ⱼ   ghar=mein pakRa   gya.*
      Sanaᵢ=INS Omarⱼ.NOM REFL.M.SG.OBLᵢ/ⱼ house=LOC catch.PFV.M.SG PASS.M.SG

   'Sana caught Omar in hisⱼ/herᵢ house.'

b. *Omarᵢ   Sanaⱼ=se [PROᵢ/ⱼ ghar   ja kar] pakRa   gya.*
   Omarᵢ.NOM Sanaⱼ=INS [PROᵢ/ⱼ house.LOC go do]   catch.PFV.M.SG PASS.M.SG

   'Omarᵢ was caught by Sanaⱼ when heᵢ/sheⱼ went home.'

Let's compare INS agents to known lower subjects, DAT subjects. Like ERG/NOM subjects, DAT subjects can bind reflexive anaphors and control into participial clauses. However, they can also bind pronouns which ERG/NOM subjects cannot do.

(25) a. *Sanaᵢ=ko   apnaᵢ=ka   bhai   pasand he.*
      Sanaᵢ=DAT REFL.M.SGᵢ=GEN.M.SG brother.NOM like   be.PRES.3.SG

   'Sanaᵢ likes herᵢ brother.'

b. *Sanaᵢ=ko   [PROᵢ Cambridge   jaa kar] Ramᵢ   pasand aaya.*
   Sanaᵢ=DAT [PROᵢ Cambridge.LOC go do]   Ramᵢ.NOM like   come.PFV.M.SG

   'Sanaᵢ liked Ramᵢ when sheᵢ went to Cambridge.'

c. *Sanaᵢ=ko   usᵢ/ⱼ=ka   bhai   pasand he.*
   Sanaᵢ=DAT 3.SGᵢ/ⱼ=GEN.M.SG brother.NOM like   be.PRES.3.SG

   'Sanaᵢ likes herᵢ/ⱼ brother.'

We have already seen that INS agents can bind anaphors and control into participial clauses. They also bind pronouns. So they behave like low subjects.

(26) $Omar_i$ $Sana_j=se$ $us_{?i/j/k}=ke$ *ghar*   *bheja*   *gya.*
      Omar$_i$.NOM Sana$_j$=INS 3.SG$_{?i/j/k}$=GEN.M.SG.OBL house.LOC send.PFV.M.SG PASS.M.SG

      'Omar$_i$ was sent to his/her$_{?i/j/k}$ house by Sana$_j$.

Moreover, the object can bind reflexives in the *by*-phrase illustrating that it c-commands the INS agent in passives.

(27) $Omar_i$ $apni_i$ *behen=se* *pakRa*   *gya.*
      Omar$_i$.NOM REFL.F.SG.OBL$_i$ sister=INS catch.PFV.M.SG PASS.M.SG

      'Omar$_i$ was caught by his$_i$ sister.'

So INS agents are arguments, and they behave like low subjects (similarity to DAT subjects, pronoun binding, c-commanded by object). We can assume that they are in SpecVoice$_{[-ACT]}$P where they are assigned the external/agent theta-role.

4 Impersonals are *not* passives

I will show that the ACC-preserving "passive" construction has active syntax:

- The object is not promoted.

- There is a syntactic subject in the same position as active subjects.

4.1 No object promotion

Marked objects are grammatical in non-finite passive clauses (ex.20 repeated). This shows they are not in SpecTP.

(20) *[Rina=ka*   / **Rina*   / **Rina=ko** *bazaar=mein* *dekha*   *jaa-na]*
      [Rina=GEN.M.SG / *Rina.NOM   / Rina=ACC market=LOC   see.PFV.M.SG PASS-INF]
      sharam=ki   *baat he.*
      shame=GEN.F.SG talk be.PRES.3.SG

      'For Rina to be seen in the market is a matter of shame.'

                                                                        (adapted from Bhatt, 2007:9)

Marked objects cannot control into participial clauses.[1] This shows they are not in a higher position than objects in actives.

(28) $Sana_i=ko$ *[PRO$_{*i/j}$ darthe*   *hue]*   *pakRa*   *gya.*
      Sana$_i$=ACC [PRO$_{*i/j}$ scare.IPFV.OBL happen.PFV.OBL] catch.PFV.M.SG PASS.M.SG

      'Sana was caught while the catcher was scared.'
      ≠ 'Sana was caught while she was scared.'

Marked objects can control into object control constructions (ex.18 repeated). This shows they are in the same position as objects in actives.

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[1]Marked objects can bind reflexive anaphors. This is probably because the silent argument is not prominent enough to bind anaphors. Anaphor binding requires an overt antecedent (Schäfer, 2012). Implicit *by*-phrases in passives cannot bind reflexive anaphors either. It seems that anaphor binding has stricter conditions on what is "prominent enough" than control into participial clauses.

(18)   a.   *Ram$_i$=ne*   *Mohan$_j$=ko*   *[PRO$_{*i/j}$ ghar   jaa-ne]*   *=ko*   *kaha.*
            Ram$_i$=ERG Mohan$_j$=ACC [PRO$_{*i/j}$ home.LOC go-INF.OBL] =ACC say.PFV.M.SG

            'Ram$_i$ told Mohan$_j$ to go to his$_{*i/j}$ house.'

       b. * *Ram$_i$=se*   *Mohan$_j$*   *[PRO$_{*i/*j}$ ghar   jaa-ne]*   *=ko*   *kaha*   *gya.*
            Ram$_i$=ERG Mohan$_j$.NOM [PRO$_{*i/*j}$ home.LOC go-INF.OBL] =ACC say.PFV.M.SG PASS.M.SG

            ≠ 'Mohan was told by Ram to go to his house.'

       c.   *Mohan$_i$=ko*   *[PRO$_i$ ghar   jaa-ne]*   *=ko*   *kaha*   *gya.*
            Mohan$_i$=ACC [PRO$_i$ home.LOC go-INF.OBL] =ACC say.PFV.M.SG PASS.M.SG

            'Mohan$_i$ was told to go to his$_i$ house.'   (adapted from Mahajan, 1995:294-295)

All the data Mahajan (1995) gives to show lack of object promotion in passives contains marked objects.

4.2   Syntactic subject

The INS agent is ungrammatical when the object is marked. Maling (1993) gives the availbility of a *by*-phrase as a diagnostic for active syntax.

(29)   a.   *Omar*   *(Sana=se)*   *pakRa*   *gya.*
            Omar.NOM (Sana=INS) catch.PFV.M.SG PASS.M.SG

            'Omar was caught (by Sana).'

       b.   *Omar=ko*   *(*Sana=se)*   *pakRa*   *gya.*
            Omar=ACC (*Sana=INS) catch.PFV.M.SG PASS.M.SG

            'Omar was caught (*by Sana).'

Yet, there is a syntactic subject present because it can control into participial clauses (ex.28 repeated).[2]

(28)   *Sana$_i$=ko*   *[PRO$_{*i/j}$ darthe   hue]*   *pakRa*   *gya.*
       Sana$_i$=ACC [PRO$_{*i/j}$ scare.IPFV.OBL happen.PFV.OBL] catch.PFV.M.SG PASS.M.SG

       'Sana was caught while the catcher was scared.'
       ≠ 'Sana was caught while she was scared.'

Moreover, this syntactic subject is in the same position as ERG/NOM subjects, i.e. SpecTP, because it cannot bind pronouns.

(30)   *Sana$_i$=ko*   *us$_{i/j}$=ke*   *ghar=mein*   *pakRa*   *gya.*
       Sana$_i$=ACC 3.SG$_{i/j}$=GEN.M.SG.OBL house=LOC   catch.PFV.M.SG PASS.M.SG

       'Sana$_i$ was caught in his/her$_{i/j}$ house.
       ≠ 'Sana was caught in the catcher's house.'

5   Conclusion

Urdu has two constructions:

1. Canonical passive: bare object; object promotion; optional *by*-phrase; subject in lower position than in actives

2. Active impersonal: marked objects; no object promotion; silent *pro* in high subject position like active subjects

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[2]Anaphor binding cannot be used as a test since it requires an overt antecedent (see footnote 1).

So ACC is not found in passives in Urdu. It is only found when an EA has been introduced by active Voice. Urdu is not an exception to BG.

Previous analyses of Urdu passives have noted the differences between marked and unmarked objects, and proposed that there is optional object promotion (Bhatt, 2003; Davison, 1982; Mohanan, 1994). However, they have not commented when promotion is possible and when it is not. We can now say that it is the presence of active or passive syntax that is responsible for the difference in promotion of marked and unmarked objects.

The same DOM conditions apply to objects in active impersonals as to objects in other actives. Although there is a strong tendency to use the canonical passive structure where possible, i.e. wherever there is a bare object, we do find bare objects when we force an active impersonal structure.

(31) a. *Kavon=ko*   *[PRO uRaa-ne]*   *=ka*   *socha*   *gya.*
          Crows.OBL=ACC   [PRO cause-to-fly-INF.OBL] =GEN.M.SG think.PFV.M.SG PASS.M.SG

          'It was thought to shoo away the crows.'

      b. *Kavey*   *[PRO uRaa-ne]*   *=ka*   *socha*   *gya.*
          Crows.NOM   [PRO cause-to-fly-INF.OBL] =GEN.M.SG think.PFV.M.SG PASS.M.SG

          'It was thought to shoo away (the) crows.'

The Urdu active impersonal is similar to the Icelandic new impersonal: same morphology as passives, no object promotion, ACC on object (Maling and Sigurjónsdóttir, 2002, 2015). One key difference is the possibility of an overt expletive in place of *pro* in Icelandic versus its complete absence in Urdu. This is presumably because Urdu does not have an overt expletive or impersonal pronoun.

There is one test used for diagnosing active syntax in Icelandic which I have not used is the availability of unaccusatives in the construction in question. The prediction is that unaccusative verbs should be allowed in active impersonals as they are in other actives. However, it is difficult to apply this test as ACC, the biggest surface indicator of the construction, is unavailable with unaccusatives.

5.1   Open questions

⇒ **Why can the INS agent bind pronominals in promoted objects, i.e. why can the INS agent sometimes c-command the promoted object?**

(27) $Omar_i$ $apni_i$ *behen=se* *pakRa*   *gya.*
      $Omar_i$.NOM REFL.F.SG.OBL$_i$ sister=INS catch.PFV.M.SG PASS.M.SG

      'Omar$_i$ was caught by his$_i$ sister.'

(32) $Sana_i=se$ $apna_i$ *bhai*   *pakRa*   *gya.*
      $Sana_i$=INS REFL.M.SG$_i$ brother.NOM catch.PFV.M.SG PASS.M.SG

      Literally: 'Her$_i$ own brother was caught by Sana$_i$.'

This is similar to the interaction between DAT subjects and their NOM objects. DAT subjects can bind anaphors in their objects, showing that they c-command the object (ex.25a repeated). But when inverted, NOM objects can bind anaphors in DAT subjects.

(25a) $Sana_i=ko$ $apna_i=ka$ *bhai*   *pasand he.*
       $Sana_i$=DAT REFL.M.SG$_i$=GEN.M.SG brother.NOM like   be.PRES.3.SG

       'Sana$_i$ likes her$_i$ brother.'

(33) $Omar_i$ sirf $apni_i$ behen=ko   pasand he.
      $Omar_i$.NOM only REFL.F.SG$_i$ sister=DAT like   be.PRES.3SG

      'Only his$_i$ sister likes Omar$_i$.'

The interaction between DAT subjects and NOM objects has been explained through optional movement of either argument to SpecTP (Davison, 2004). So is promotion in passives optional after all?

When the INS agent c-commands the bare object and binds a reflexive anaphor in it, the object can no longer control into participial clauses. When the object is c-commanded by the INS agent, it no longer passes prominence tests.

(34) $Sana_i$=se $apna_i$ $bhai_j$ [PRO$_{i/*j}$ ghar   jaa kar] pakRa   gya.
      $Sana_i$=INS REFL.M.SG$_i$ brother.NOM [PRO$_{i/*j}$ home.LOC go do] catch.PFV.M.SG PASS.M.SG

      Literally: 'Her$_i$ own brother$_j$ was caught by Sana$_i$ when she$_i$/*he$_j$ went home.'

We have only discussed the (un)availability of ACC in passives. What about the NOM found on objects? If it is available in passives, does it play a role in making promotion optional?

⇒ **What is *jaa* in this construction?**

This is not problematic in itself, as we have already seen that the *jaa* morpheme and structure are not unique to passives (3), but we do want some explanation of where it comes from.

If it is a LV, then we expect it to interact with other LVs, i.e. restrictions on the number of LVs, restrictions on ordering of multiple LVs. If it is similar to the passive morpheme, then we expect more flexibility, i.e. no effect on number of LVs.

There is no comprehensive work on the exact position and ordering of the different LVs in Urdu yet.

⇒ **How do the different constructions with *jaa* get different interpretations?**

⇒ **How does the active impersonal fit in with other Voice phenomena in Urdu?**

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