

His poison-breath was tried in vain to disguise with peppermint

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19 January 2022
v-NYI CogFest

FWF

Der Wissenschaftsfonds.

...was tried to *what*?

- Dutch, not English:

- (1) *Zijn adem rook naar gif dat vergeefs was
geprobeerd te verhullen met pepermint.*
his breath smelled after poison that in.vain was
tried to disguise with peppermint
lit. 'His breath smelled of poison that was tried in vain to
disguise with peppermint.'
'His breath smelled of poison, which they/one tried in vain
to disguise with peppermint.'

[R. Riordan: *Magnus Chase*, transl. by Marce Noordenbos]

Long Passive

- Also known as Long object promotion (LOP) or Voice Restructuring (Wurmbrand 2001, 2002, 2014, Wurmbrand and Shimamura 2017).
- Two ingredients: implicit control ...

(2) *Er werd geprobeerd de computers te repareren.*
EXPL AUX.SG tried the computers to repair
lit. 'It was tried to repair the computers.'
'They/someone tried to repair the computers.' [implicit control]

... and promotion of the **embedded object** to matrix subject.

~ passive across two verbs.

(3) *De computers_i werd-en geprobeerd t_i te repareren.*
the computers_i AUX-PL tried t_i to repair
lit. 'The computers were tried to repair.' [LOP]

The distribution of Long Passive/LOP

- Not possible in English.
- Possible in German (Germanic), Czech, Croatian (Slavic), European Portuguese, Italian (Romance), Japanese (Japonic), Acehnese, Takibakha Bunun (Austronesian), Kannada (Dravidian), ... (Wurmbrand 2014).
- **Dutch:** unclear.
 - Prevailing view: ungrammatical (e.g., Broekhuis 1992) ...
... but challenged by more recent claims about speaker variation (Tavenier 2020) and numerous internet examples.

↪ Calls for an experimental approach.

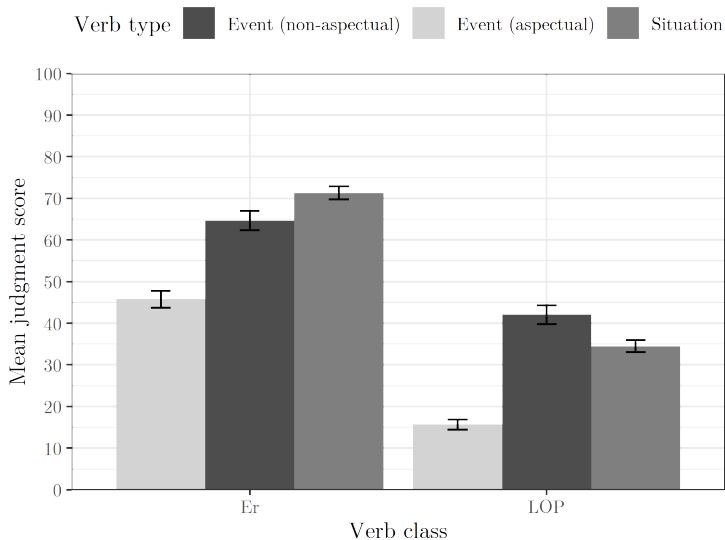
The hypotheses

1. **Regular implicit control** is better than LOP. \rightsquigarrow ✓
2. LOP is better with **Event verbs** (*try, forget*) than with Situation verbs (*decide, promise*). \rightsquigarrow ✗
[Wurmbrand 2001, 2014; verb classes after Wurmbrand and Lohninger 2019]
3. LOP within the Event class is better with **non-aspectuals** than with aspectuals (*begin, stop*). \rightsquigarrow ✓
[cf. Pitteroff and Schäfer 2019 for implicit control].

Experimental design

- 53 participants (preliminary results)
 - Mean age: 18.9; 44 female
- 24 experimental items, 48 fillers
 - *Construction type* (implicit control vs. LOP)
 - ↪ Hypothesis 1: implicit control > LOP
 - *Verb type* (Event_{non-aspectual}, Event_{aspectual}, Situation)
 - ↪ Hypothesis 2: Events > Situations
 - ↪ Hypothesis 3: non-aspectuals > aspectuals

Experimental results



Experimental results

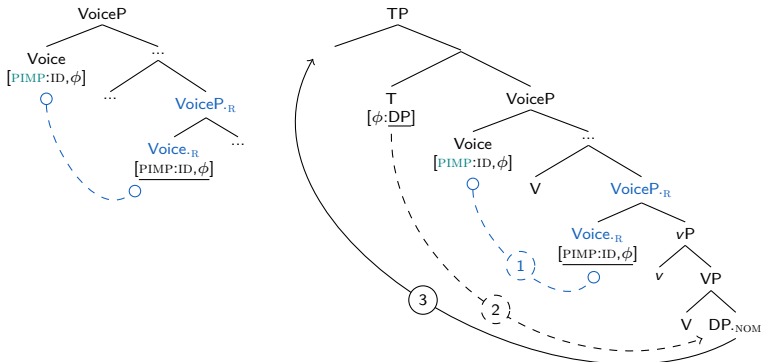
- Not a very natural construction, worse than implicit control (*)
 ↪ **Hypothesis 1** (no LOP > LOP): ✓
- Reduced judgment scores for implicit control as well
 ↪ marginal phenomenon starting to establish itself

- Clear disadvantage for **aspectual** Event verbs (*)
 ↪ **Hypothesis 3** (non-aspectuals > aspectuals): ✓

- Event verbs are worse than Situation verbs overall (*)
 - Within LOP, non-aspectual Events are better than Situations, but the difference is not significant. ↪ **Hypothesis 2** (Events > Situations): ✗

Long Passive as Voice Restructuring

- Embedded underspecified **Voice_R** head agrees with matrix Voice \rightsquigarrow control-like relation (Wurmbrand and Shimamura 2017, Pietraszko 2021).
- Agreement between matrix T and the embedded object \rightsquigarrow LOP.



- Important: **reduced/deficient embedded clause (VoiceP_R)**.

Hypothesis 1: no LOP > LOP ✓

- Possibly Dutch has a preference for non-reduced complements and control via PRO.
- Voice._R is marked and, for some speakers, unavailable.

Hypothesis 2: Events > Situations ~~X~~

- Situations (4): futurate interpretation vs. Events (5): simultaneous interpretation.

(4) *(At the summer v-NYI,) Gert-Jan and Iva **decided** to investigate Long Passive in Dutch (the following year).* \rightsquigarrow future-oriented

(5) *(During winter v-NYI,) Iva and Gert-Jan **tried** to investigate Long Passive in Dutch (*in February).* \rightsquigarrow simultaneous

- Situation complements involve more structure than Event complements (e.g., a TP-layer; Wurmbrand and Lohninger 2019) \rightarrow LOP should not be possible across a TP (locality), and Voice._R should be too small for a Situation complement.
- The Situation verbs might have got coerced into a simultaneous interpretation (see also Wurmbrand 2001).

Hypothesis 3: non-aspectuals > aspectuals ✓

- Both with and without LOP (Pitteroff and Schäfer 2019).
- Possibly due to a preference for the **raising/unaccusative** use of aspectual verbs, rather than as control predicates (cf. *It began to rain vs. John began to draw names from his hat*).
- Unaccusatives **do not passivize** (1-Advancement Exclusiveness Law/1-AEX; Perlmutter and Postal 1984).

Conclusion

- Hypotheses (preliminary results): borne out and/or can be accounted for.
 - There are contrasts with respect to verb classes.
 - With non-aspectual Event verbs (*try, forget*) and Situation verbs (*decide, promise*), the judgements are not comparable with the ungrammatical fillers.
- Conclusion: LOP is a marginal phenomenon in Dutch, but it exists
↪ starting to establish itself.

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