FWF
Der Wissenschaftsfonds.

Implicit control, impersonal construals, and the role of PIMPs

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An implicit control generalisation

Iff a type of passive can be construed as **impersonal passive with unergative verbs**, then it also allows (syntactic) **implicit control**.

[building on Pitteroff & Schäfer 2019]

(1) Type A: Dutch (German, Croatian *se*, Romanian *se*)

a. *Er werd gedanst.*
there was danced
'People/someone danced.' [after P&S: (48a)]

b. *Er werd geprobeerd (om) de analyse te begrijpen.*
there was tried (for) the analysis to understand
'People/someone tried to understand the analysis.' [P&S: (35b)]

(2) Type B: English (Croatian, Romanian)

a. **There/it was danced.* [P&S: (71b)]

b. **It was tried to understand the analysis.* [P&S: (17a)]

	Type A GE, NL, CR-SE, RO-SE	Type B EN, CR, RO
Impersonal construal	✓	✗
Syntactic implicit control	✓	✗

Iff a type of passive can be construed as impersonal passive, then it also allows implicit control.

Deriving the split:

- A source of ϕ-**features** for T. [Pitteroff & Schäfer 2019]
- Featural makeup of the **passive implicit argument (PIMP)**.
  - $\rightsquigarrow$ Presence (Type A) vs. absence (Type B) of ϕ-features.

    [cf. Landau 2010, Legate 2014, Bhatt & Pancheva 2017, Akkuş 2021, Michelioudakis 2021]
  - $\rightsquigarrow$ In some contexts, PIMP has to agree with T. [Van Urk 2013, Wurmbrand 2021]

The generalisation

Starting point: Pitteroff & Schäfer (2019)

- Impersonal passive with unergative verbs $\leftrightarrow$ implicit control with **nonattitude** verbs (*try*, *forget*).

(3) ✓ NL *Er werd gedanst.*
it was danced
✗ EN 'It was danced.'

(4) ✓ NL *Er werd geprobeerd (om) de analyse te begrijpen.*
there was tried (for) the analysis to understand
✗ EN 'It was tried to understand the analysis.'

- Implicit control with **attitude** verbs (*decide*, *promise*): always possible.

(5) ✓ NL *Er werd besloten (om) het land te verlaten.*
there was decided (for) the country to leave
✓ EN 'It was decided to leave the country.' [P&S: (36d), (79a)]

P&S: Iff a language allows impersonal passives of unergative verbs, then it also allows implicit control with nonattitude verbs.

$\rightsquigarrow$ In need of a two-way refinement.

1) Granularity: languages $\rightsquigarrow$ types of passive
2) Generality: implicit control with nonattitude verbs $\rightsquigarrow$ in general

Revised implicit control generalisation

Iff a type of passive can be construed as impersonal passive with unergative verbs, then it also allows implicit control.

Granularity: Types of passive (Croatian)

- Two types of passive [Belaj 2004, Belaj & Tanacković Faletar 2017] ⇝ two-way split
  - The *se*-configuration is a passive ⇝ Appendix.

(6) Canonical passive (Type B): ✗ impersonal passive, ✗ implicit control

a. **Plesano je cijelu noć.*
dance.PTCP.PASS.N was whole night
int.: 'They/someone danced the whole night long.'

b. **Jučer je pokušano riješiti tu tešku zagonetku.*
yesterday was try.PTCP.PASS.N solve.INF that difficult riddle
int.: 'They/someone tried to solve that difficult riddle yesterday.'

(7) *Se*-passive (Type A): ✓ impersonal passive, ✓ implicit control

a. *Plesalo se cijelu noć.*
dance.PTCP.ACT.N SE whole night

b. *Jučer se pokušalo riješiti tu tešku zagonetku.*
yesterday SE try.PTCP.ACT.N solve that difficult riddle

- Similarly in Romanian [cf. Giurgea & Cotfas 2021], Spanish [L.M. Toquero-Pérez, p.c.].

Languages ⇝ types of passive.

Generality: Implicit control in general (*Wh*-extraction)

- Implicit control with attitude verbs: appears to be possible in both Type A and Type B passives. [Pitteroff & Schäfer 2019]

(8) Type B (EN, CR): no *Wh*-extraction.

a. *It was decided to meet the dean.*
b. **Who was it decided to meet?* English [J.D. Bobaljik, p.c.]

- The embedded clause is an island for *Wh*-extraction.
  ⇝ Not a complement: implicit control is only apparent.

(9) Type A (GE, NL, CR-SE, RO-SE): *Wh*-extraction possible.

Wen wurde beschlossen zu treffen?
who was decided to meet
'Who did they decide to meet?' German [A. Ludwig, p.c.]

- Romanian: no implicit control with attitude verbs. [Giurgea & Cotfas 2021]

Implicit control with nonattitude verbs ⇝ in general.

Implicit control: The full picture

	Type A GE, NL, CR-SE, RO-SE	Type B EN, CR	Type B′ RO
Impersonal construal	✓	✗	✗
Implicit control (nonattitudes)	✓	✗	✗
Implicit control (attitudes)	✓	apparent	✗
Wh-extraction (attitudes)	✓	✗	N/A

Iff a type of passive can be construed as impersonal passive, then it also allows (syntactic) implicit control.

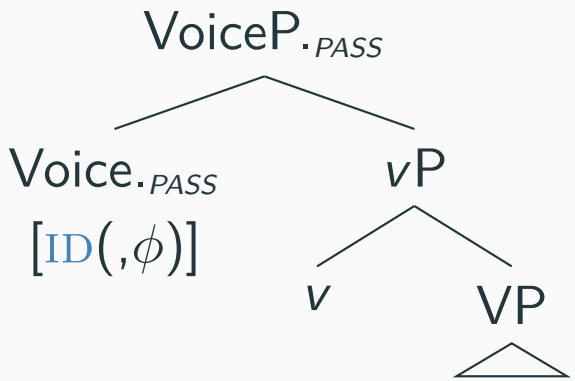
Deriving the generalisation

Iff a type of passive can be construed as impersonal passive,
then it also allows (syntactic) implicit control.

- Type A passives allow impersonal construals with unergative verbs and implicit control, Type B passives do not.
- (Un-)availability of a source of ϕ-features for T. [Pitteroff & Schäfer 2019]
  - P&S: ϕ-complete expletive or a rule of default valuation.
    ... language-specific properties: how about Croatian, Romanian, ... ?
- Proposal: presence (Type A) vs. absence (Type B) of ϕ-features on PIMP.
  - A single language may have different implicit arguments. [e.g. Akkuş 2021]

Passive: Decomposed Voice domain

- External argument: introduced by Voice. [Kratzer 1996]
- A passive Voice head encodes the implicit agent.
  - ⇝ Minimally a numerical index feature [cf. Kratzer 2009], which functions as an individual variable and gets existentially closed.



[cf. Embick 2004, Schäfer 2008, Bruening 2013, Legate 2014, Alexiadou et al. 2015, Pietraszko 2021]

- Type A: ϕ-features vs. Type B: no ϕ-features.
  ⇝ see Appendix for a typology of passive.

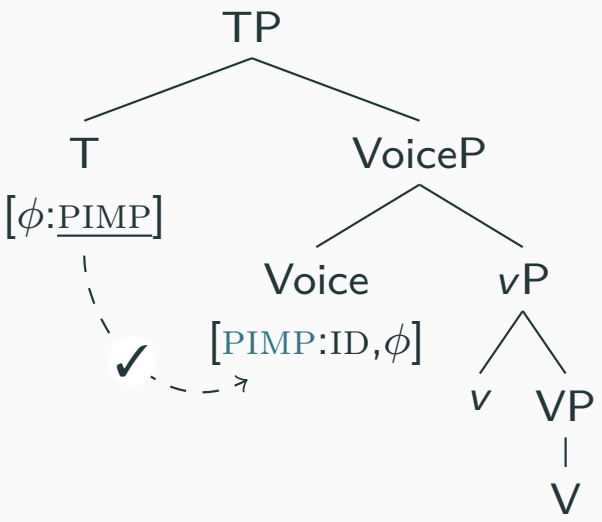
Impersonal construal

(10) ✓ Type A (NL) vs. ✗ Type B (EN)

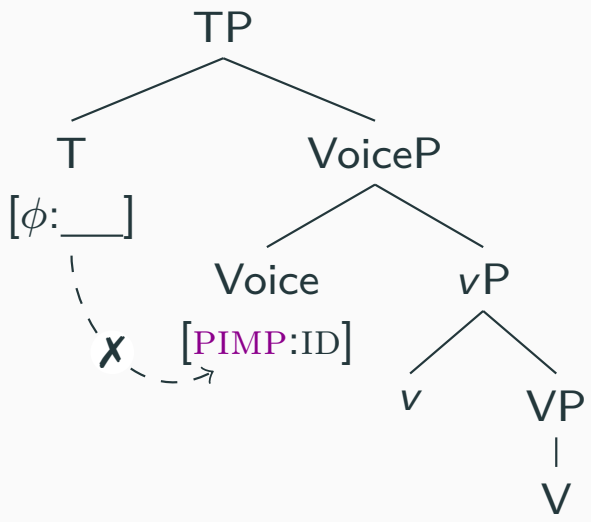
a. *Er werd gedanst.*
there was danced

b. **There/it was danced.*

(11) a. ✓ Type A



b. ✗ Type B



- No default agreement in Type B: interaction is obligatory. [Deal 2015]

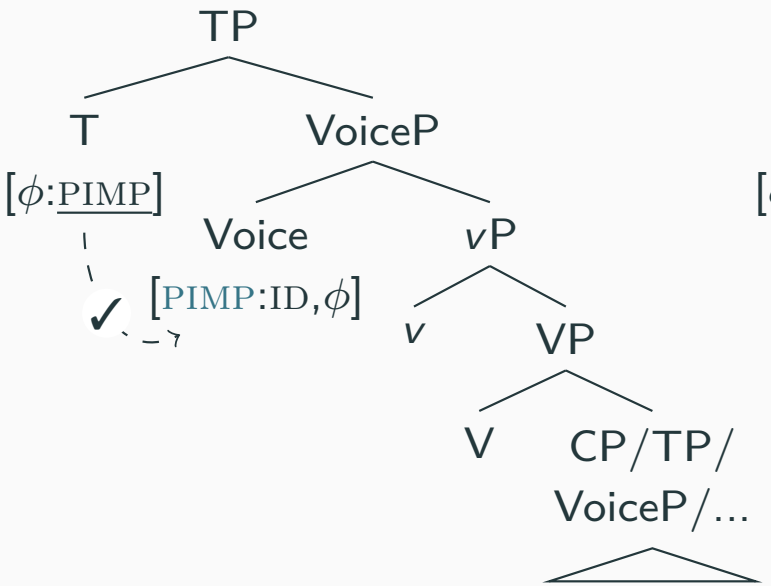
Implicit control

(12) ✓ Type A (NL) vs. ✗ Type B (EN)

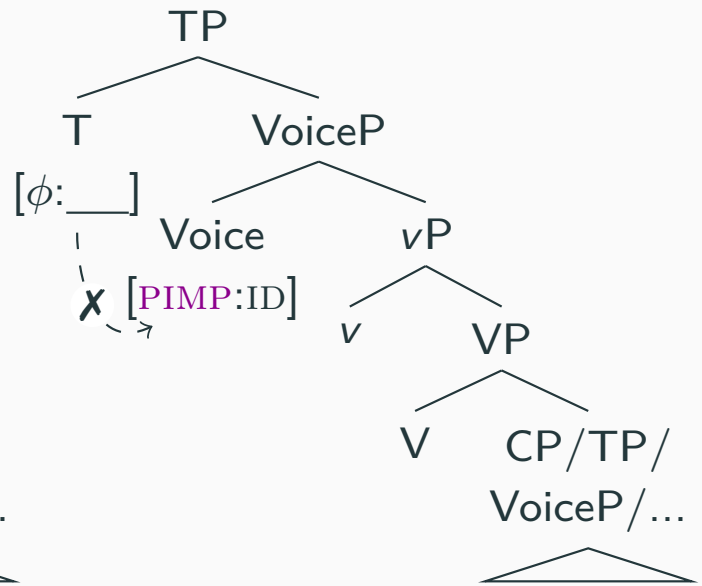
a. *Er werd geprobeerd (om) de analyse te begrijpen.*
there was tried (for) the analysis to understand

b. **It was tried to understand the analysis.*

(13) a. ✓ Type A

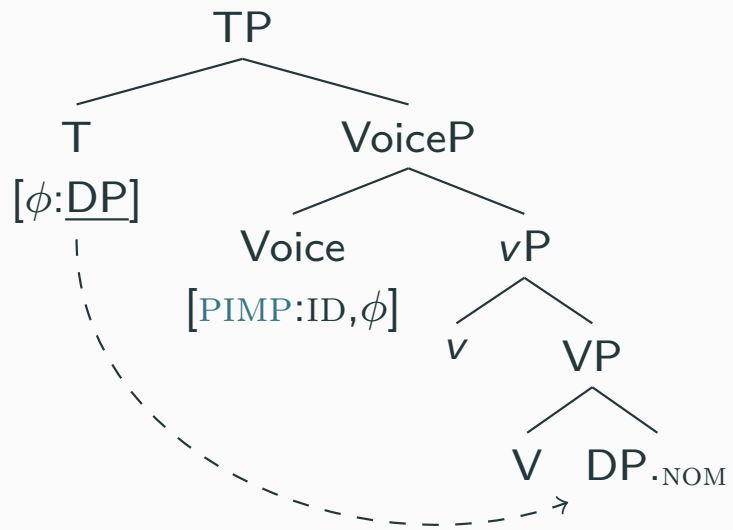


b. ✗ Type B



Simple Type A passives?

(14) *Der Fall wurde gelöst.*
the.NOM case was solved
'The case was solved.'



- Assumption: DPs are more suitable goals for T than PIMP.
  - PIMPs are underspecified ϕ-feature-wise/connected to a D layer.
- T agrees with PIMP only if no (other) DP is present in the structure $\rightsquigarrow$ impersonal construal with unergatives, implicit control.
- Interaction vs. satisfaction [Deal 2015], alternatively: Best Match [Coon & Bale 2014].
  - Type B: T cannot interact with PIMP $\rightsquigarrow$ no impersonal construal with unergatives, no implicit control.

Interim summary

- Implicit control and impersonal construals with unergative verbs fail/succeed for the very same reason:
  - Neither configuration includes an argument DP (other than PIMP) in the agreement domain of T.
  - Type A: PIMP has ϕ features and is a viable goal for T $\rightsquigarrow$ T can still receive ϕ-feature values.
  - Type B: PIMP has only an ID feature $\rightsquigarrow$ ungrammatical outcome.

  $\rightsquigarrow$ support from long passive (Appendix).

... but all of this happens in the matrix clause.

- How about the control relation itself?
- Apparent implicit control with attitude verbs in Type B passives?

Agreement and implicit control

Type A | Revised Visser's generalisation: Van Urk (2013)

- Implicit control is impossible if an overt DP agrees with T.

(15) Dutch (Type A)

a. *Er werd besloten dat huis te renoveren.*
there was decided that house to renovate
'It was decided to renovate that house.' [G.T. Schoenmakers, p.c.]

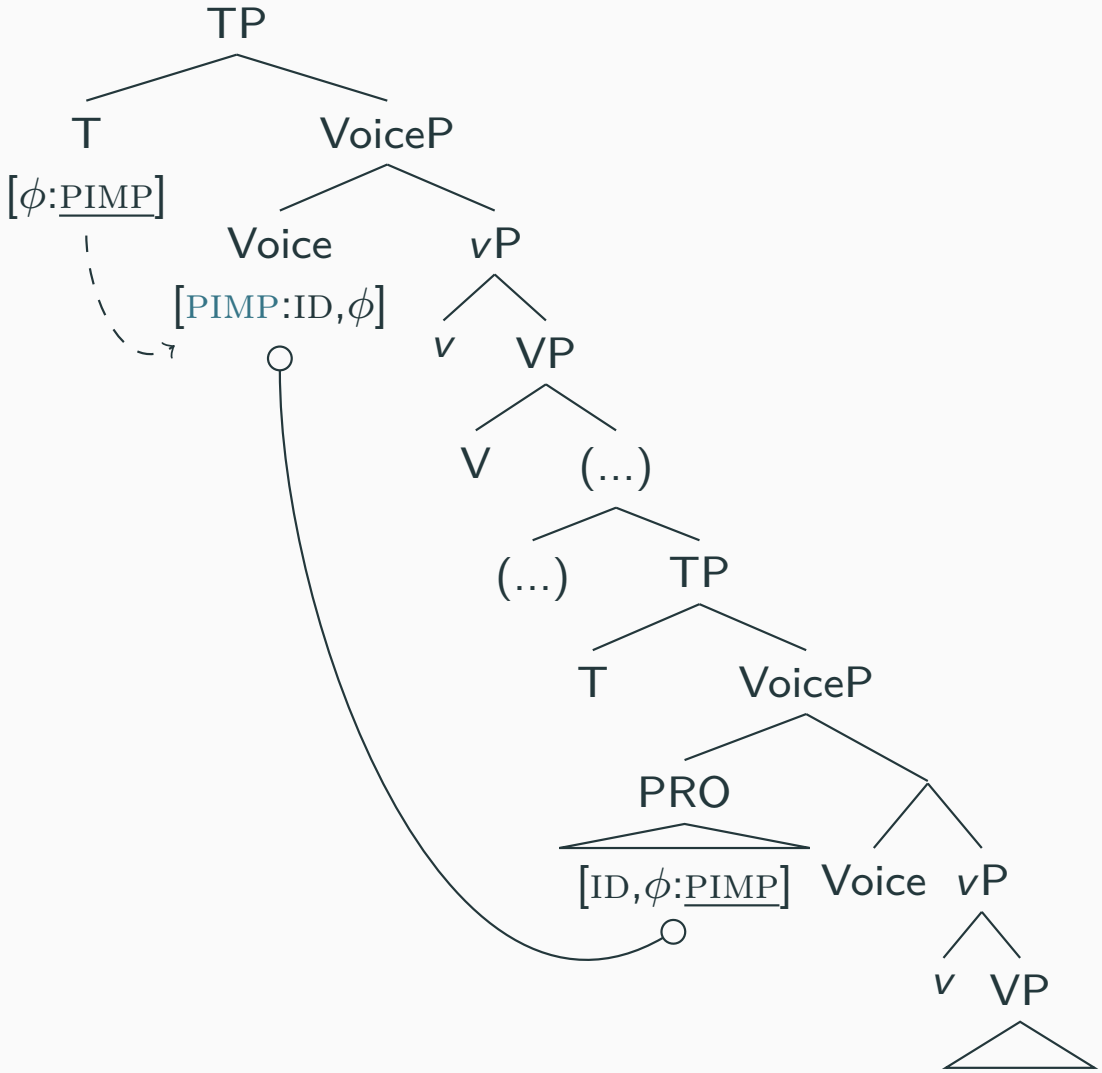
b. **De leraren$_i$ werden overtuigd om ze$_i$ te mogen kietelen.*
the teachers$_i$ were.PL convinced for them$_i$ to may tickle
lit. 'The teachers were convinced to be allowed to tickle them.'
[Van Urk 2013: (10a)]

c. *Er werd mij beloofd om me op de hoogte te houden.*
there was me.DAT promised for me on the height to keep
'It was promised to me to keep me informed.' [Van Urk 2013: (8)]

- PIMP can control PRO iff it agrees with T. [Van Urk 2013, Wurmbrand 2021]

- PIMP can control PRO iff it agrees with T.
  - ⇝ Anchoring to the context.

    [Wurmbrand 2021]
- Blocked by agreeing DPs: more suitable goals for T than PIMP.
  - ⇝ Interaction/satisfaction [Deal 2015]; Best Match [Coon & Bale 2014].
- Datives: cross-linguistically invisible for Agree.



- Agreement plays a role in (implicit) control.

Type B | Attitude verbs and *Wh*-extraction

- Type B passives: no impersonal construal, no implicit control.
  - PIMP has no ϕ-features $\rightsquigarrow$ T remains unvalued.
- Apparent implicit control with attitude verbs possible.

(16) English (Type B): ✗ *Wh*-extraction [J.D. Bobaljik, p.c.]

a. *It was decided to meet the dean.*

b. **Who was it decided to meet?*

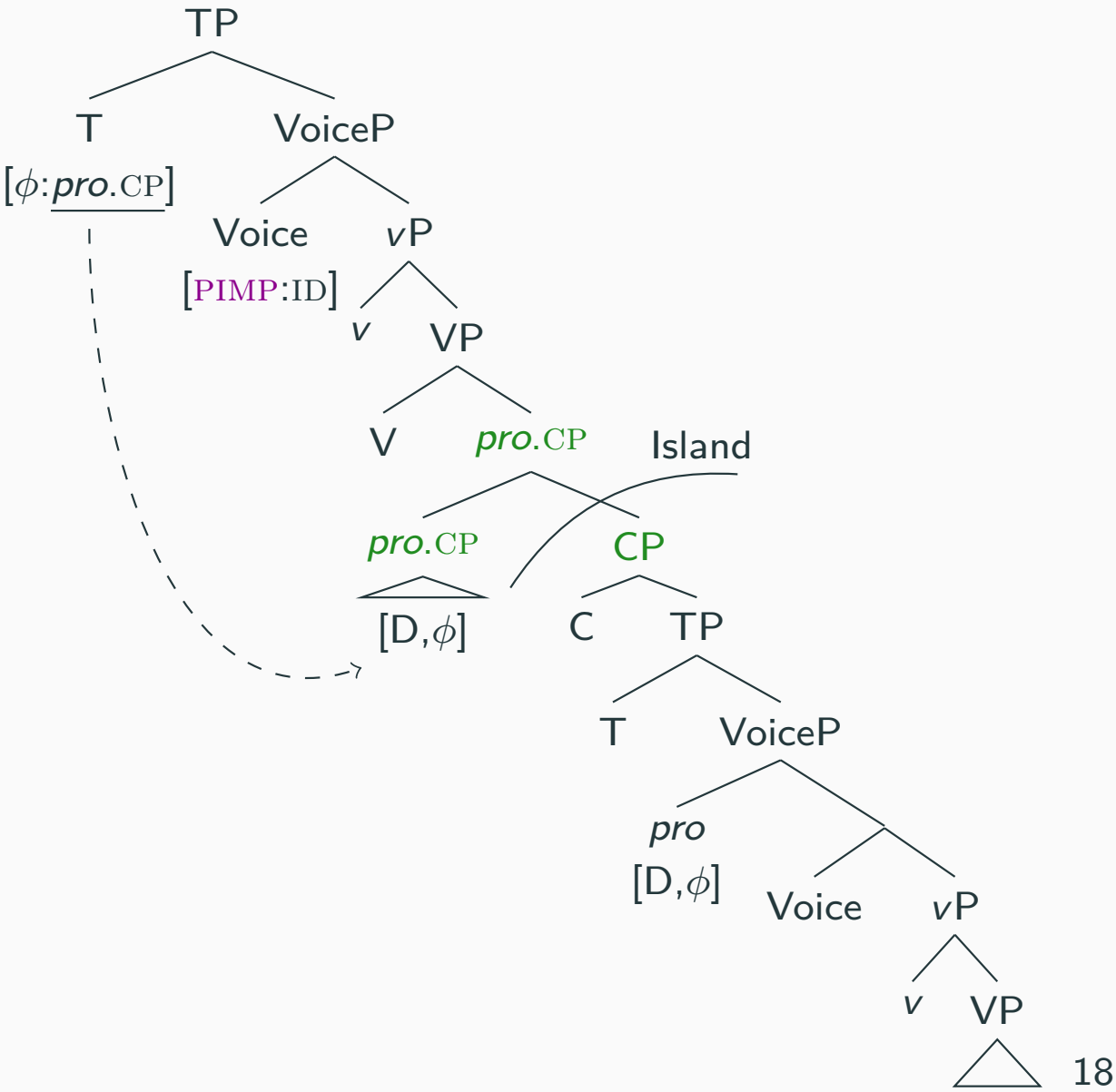
- Where does T get its ϕ-features from?
- Why is *Wh*-extraction blocked?

The placeholder strategy

- Attitude verbs: placeholder pronoun. [Pitteroff & Schäfer 2019]
- Only with proposition-denoting complements; impossible with nonattitude (property-denoting) ones.

  [see Landau 2015]
- The clausal associate is an island for *Wh*-extraction.
- Control is established pragmatically. [Reed 2020]
- Not available in Romanian.

  [Giurgea & Cotfas 2021]



A prediction

- This strategy is possible in Type A passives as well. [Pitteroff & Schäfer 2019]
  ⇝ *Wh*-extraction should be blocked.
- German (no clause-internal expletives ⇝ *es* is a placeholder pronoun):

(17) a. *Mehrmals schon wurde (es) beschlossen, den Roman zu lesen.*
multiple.times already was (it) decided the novel to read
'It has been decided to read the novel already multiple times.' [after P&S: (89)]

b. *Was wurde (*es) mehrmals schon beschlossen, zu lesen?*
what was (*it) multiple.times already decided to read
'What did people decide to read already multiple times?' [A. Ludwig, p.c.]

- The same pattern with Dutch *het* 'it'. [cf. Bennis 1986]
  ⇝ The prediction is borne out.

However ...

- Russian: Type B, but *Wh*-extraction allowed ⇝ Appendix.

Conclusion

Implicit control generalisation: Iff a type of passive can be construed as impersonal passive, then it also allows (syntactic) implicit control.

	Type A GE, NL, CR-SE, RO-SE	Type B EN, CR	Type B′ RO
Impersonal construals	✓	✗	✗
Implicit control (nonattitude)	✓	✗	✗
PIMP	[ID,ϕ]	[ID]	[ID]
Implicit control (attitude)	✓	apparent	✗
Wh-extraction (attitude)	✓	✗	N/A
Configuration	PRO-control by PIMP (+T)	*pro*.CP	**pro*.CP

- Featural makeup of PIMP: presence (Type A) vs. absence (Type B) of ϕ-features $\rightsquigarrow$ repercussions for its ability to value T.
- Attitude verbs: placeholder pronoun strategy $\rightsquigarrow$ no *Wh*-extraction.

- Passives and their PIMPs come in different forms and sizes.
- Agreement is a crucial component of (implicit) control.

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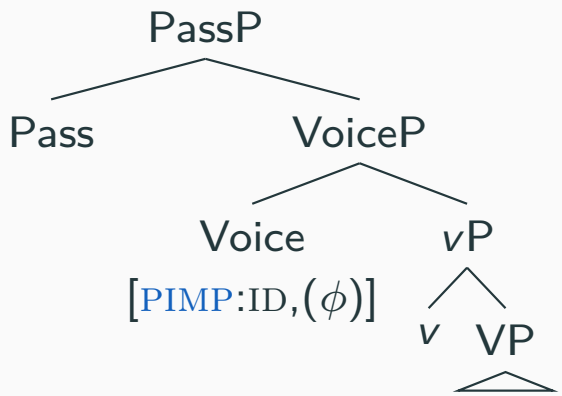
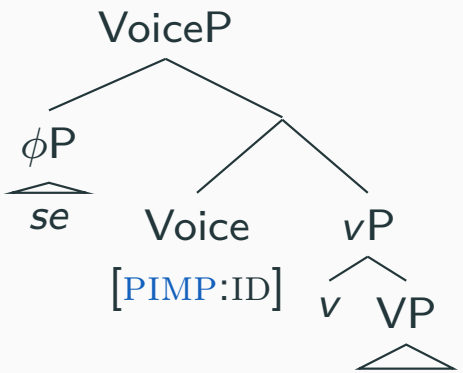
Appendix A: Passives

A typology of passive

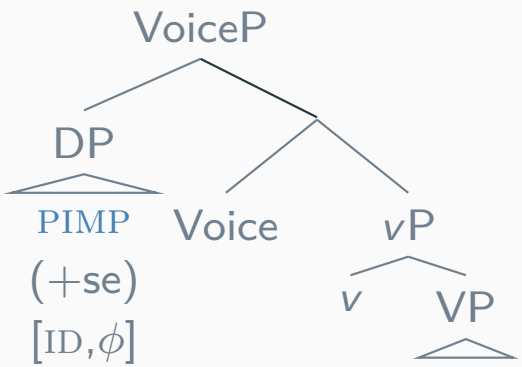
Canonical passive
CR, EN [ID]; NL, GE [ID,ϕ]



Impersonal passive
CR-SE (nominative)



Impersonal
CR-SE (accusative)



[Legate 2014; cf. Schäfer 2008, Bruening 2013, Alexiadou et al. 2015, Legate et al. 2020]

The Croatian configurations

- canonical passive: passive morphology, nominative, agreement

(18) *Zadatci su riješen-i u sedam minuta.*
task.NOM.PL AUX.3PL solved.PTCP.[PASS]-M.PL in seven minutes
'The tasks have been solved in seven minutes.'

- *se*-passive: no passive morphology, nominative, agreement

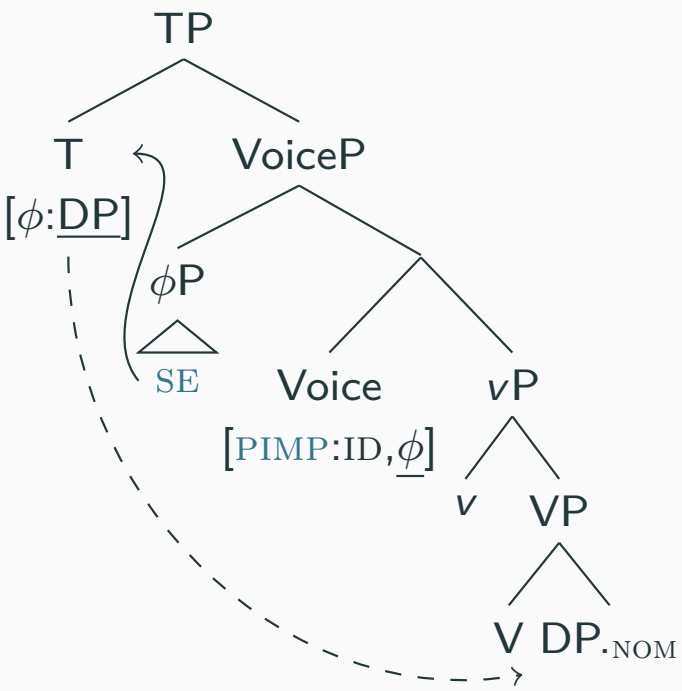
(19) *Zadatci su se riješi-li u sedam minuta.*
task.NOM.PL AUX.3PL SE solve.PTCP.[ACT]-M.PL in seven minutes
'The tasks have been solved in seven minutes.'

- *se*-impersonal: no passive morphology, accusative, default agreement

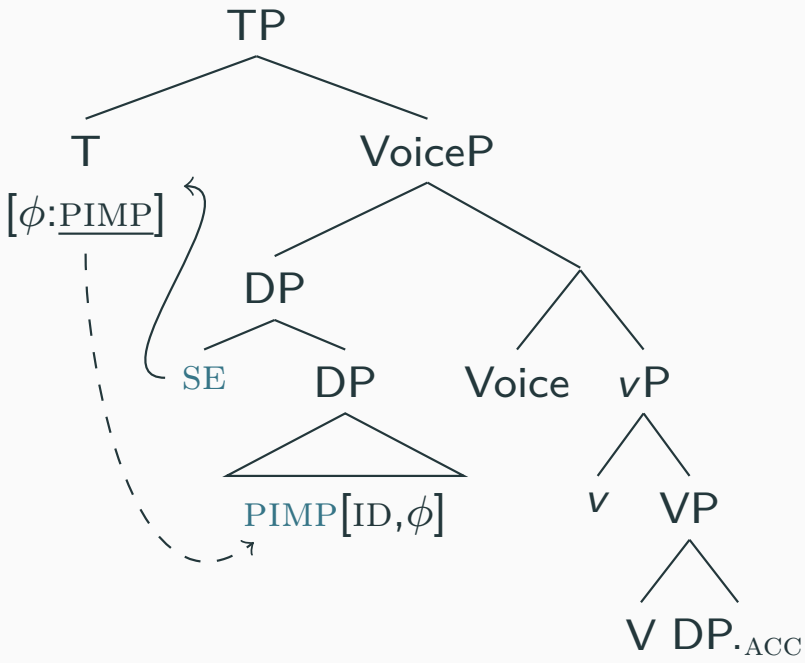
  ⇝ Active-like configuration.

(20) *Zadatke se riješi-lo u sedam minuta.*
tasks.ACC SE solve.PTCP.[ACT]-N.SG in seven minutes
'The tasks have been solved in seven minutes.'

se-passive



se-impersonal



Appendix B: Long passive

Type A vs. Type B passives

- Long passive impossible in Type B, possible in some (but not necessarily all) Type A passives.

(21) Type B: CR, EN

a. **Taj stari traktor je više puta pokušan popraviti.*
that old tractor AUX more times try.PTCP.PASS.M.SG repair.INF

b. **This old tractor was tried to repair several times.*

(22) Type A: CR-*se* (also GE), %NL

a. *Ta računala su se pokušala popraviti.*
those computers AUX.PL SE try.PTCP.ACT.N.PL repair.INF

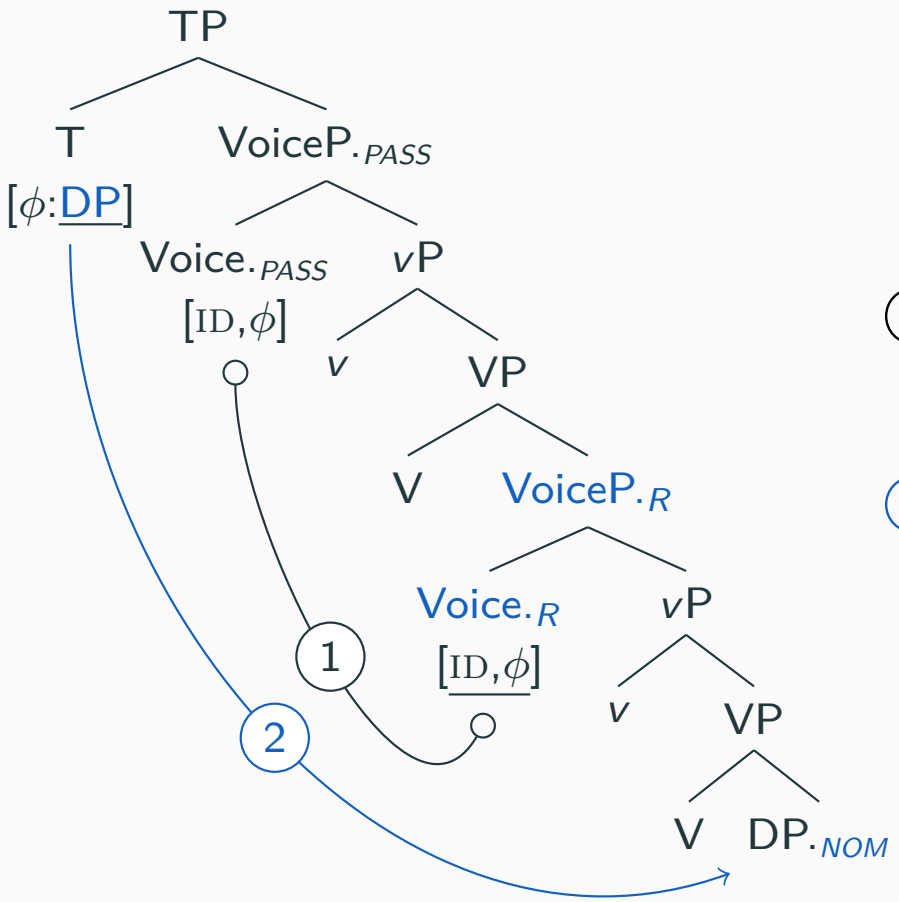
b. %*De computers werden geprobeerd te repareren.*
the computers were tried to repair
lit. 'The computers were tried to repair.'

[see Kovač & Schoenmakers 2022]

Long passive as Voice restructuring

- The head of the complement is an underspecified Voice.$_R$ head.

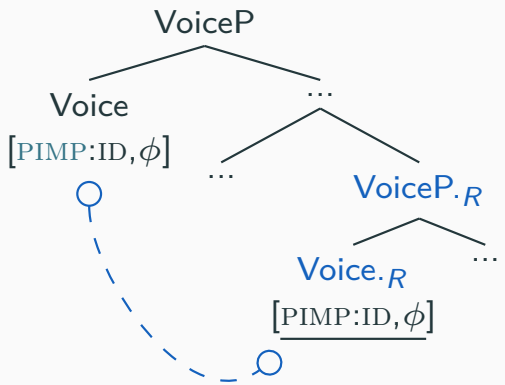
[Wurmbrand & Shimamura 2017; cf. Pietraszko 2021]



1. Agree with matrix Voice (ID,ϕ) $\rightsquigarrow$ semantic argument sharing.
2. Agreement between matrix T and the embedded object $\rightsquigarrow$ long object promotion.

- Possibly a one-way generalisation: if a type of passive allows Voice Restructuring/long passive, then it also allows implicit control.

  $\rightsquigarrow$ ϕ-features on PIMP: *necessary*, but *not sufficient* for long passive.



- Accounted for if Voice.$_R$ needs ϕ-features. [Wurmbrand & Shimamura 2017]

  Type B: PIMP has [ID] $\rightarrow$ ✗ VR (missing ϕ-features)

  Type A: PIMP has [ID,ϕ] $\rightarrow$ ✓ VR (GE, CR-SE$_{pass}$, %NL), unless...

  A) PIMP is a DP in Spec,VoiceP and intervenes (CR-SE$_{imp}$, ?RO-SE) or
  B) Voice.$_R$ is not available (%NL, ?RO-SE).

Appendix C: A challenge

Russian

- Type B (✗ impersonal construals, ✗ nonattitude implicit control) ...

  ... but *Wh*-extraction is allowed, at least in the absence of a by-phrase.

(23) a. *(?Direktorom) bylo rešeno vstretit' Petju.*
director.INST was decided meet.INF Petja.ACC
'It was decided (?by the director) to meet Petja.'

b. *Kogo (??direktorom) bylo rešeno vstretit'?*
who.ACC director.INST was decided meet.INF
lit. 'Who was it decided (??by the director) to meet?' [I. Burukina, p.c.]

- Different base-position of the placeholder and the clause? [cf. Pitteroff & Schäfer 2019]
- Testing whether control is syntactic: does agreement play a role?

  ⇝ Doesn't seem to in English.

(24) a. **Mary was promised by John to be on time.* [Bresnan 1982: (87b)]

b. **It was promised to Mary to be on time.* [Bresnan 1982: (92b)]