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ANTIPASSIVIZATION: A FUNCTIONAL TYPOLOGY

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0. General

Antipassivization (ANTI) is a transformation by which TO (transitive object) is deleted or demoted to a minor case while TS (transitive subject) becomes surface IS (intransitive subject). The term was suggested by Michael Silverstein, but the transformation has also been discussed under different names by Kurylowicz, William Jacobsen, R.M.W. Dixon, and others.

My point is that ANTI can have vastly different functions in different languages and even within one language. We may minimally distinguish the following types: INDEFINITE, which deletes or demotes an indefinite, obvious, or insignificant TO; PROMOTIONAL, by which TS becomes IS in order to participate in a later transformation which applies to IS but not TS; COREFERENTIAL, which directly indicates that the TS is coreferential to a NP in another clause; COMPOUNDING, where the TO noun stem is incorporated into the verb, which is then inflected intransitively; CATEGORY-LINKED (e.g., tense-linked), which applies only in given tense, aspect, and/or modal categories; HIERARCHY-LINKED, triggered by a particular TS-TO relationship with reference to a hierarchy of features such as person and animacy; and NONSYNTACTIC, which involves "transformational" rearrangement of bound-pronominal complexes but does not affect the status or case-marking of independent substantives nor the operation of other transformations.

These labels are not mutually exclusive; Basque ANTI is category-linked, hierarchy-linked, and nonsyntactic. An ANTI rule may have different functions in different environments (e.g., promotional in subordinated clauses, indefinite in main clauses). Some languages (e.g., Dyirbal) have two or more ANTI rules, fulfilling partly or entirely different functions.

An adequate characterization of a given ANTI rule should include a labelling according to this typology or a refinement thereof. This should include specification of functional variability in different contexts. It is also necessary to indicate whether the underlying TO is permitted to occur on the surface in a minor case. A general indication of the productivity of the rule, including mention of restrictions on the set of verb stems affected, is desirable. The following sections present brief descriptions of ANTI in several languages; readers should consult the primary sources for further details and to correct errors in my interpretation.

1. English

Indefinite-object deletion in the type He drinks can be considered an ANTI rule. Here the TO ("liquor") is deleted because it is obvious in context, rather than because of indefiniteness. On the other hand, in the type Speed kills the deleted TO is indefinite rather than obvious. Since English ANTI is expressed solely by the deletion of the TO, it is of course impossible for the TO to remain on the surface in any form.

English ANTI is used somewhat sparingly, but if a suitable context is found almost any transitive verb can undergo it. For example, since break can be used intransitively in mediopassive sense (It broke), and in a sort of metaphorical mediopassive sense (The suspect is about to break under questioning), one would expect that transitive break could not be antipassivized. However, it can be in the right context; Minnesota Fats is about to break (i.e., is about to make the first shot in a game of pool).

English ANTI is functionally indefinite (in a broad sense) rather than, say, promotional. It is triggered by clause-internal factors rather than by the syntactic relationship of the clause to other clauses. Since TS and IS are already syntactically equivalent in most respects, the conversion of TS into IS has no important syntactic consequences. Note also that since English has accusative morphology, ANTI results in less severe restructuring than in ergative languages, because the TS remains in nominative case as surface IS.

2. Uto-Aztecan (UA)

These languages have accusative case morphology, and in all important respects IS and TS are syntactically equivalent. Several UA languages have an "indefinite-object" verb form with prefix *ti- (Langacker ms.). For example, note Shoshoni ti-koltsol-muh "washed something" (Miller ms.). I consider most such forms to have been antipassivized ("washed, did the washing"), since it appears that no independent NP representing the TO is permitted. As in English, UA ANTI is indefinite rather than promotional.

3. Dyirbal

There are two ANTI rules in Dyirbal. ṅay-ANTI, the most important, is coreferential in function. In the first of several (potentially) linked clauses in a "topic chain" this transformation optionally applies to indicate that the TS but not TO is coreferential to a NP (TS, TO, or IS) in the following clause. Thus "The man saw the woman, the man went" can be expressed by the surface structure man(IS) saw-ṅay woman(Dative), went. The TO ("woman") is demoted to dative or instrumental

(indistinguishable from ergative) case, and is usually not deleted. The coreferential NP ("man") in the second clause is deleted by a later EQUI transformation. The ANTI suffix -nay is added to the verb of the clause which is antipassivized.

This "anticipatory" nay-ANTI in the first clause of a topic chain is optional. This is because the speaker may have to utter the first clause before he has formulated the structure of the following clause. If, when the speaker comes to the second clause, he discovers that the two-clause sequence is a structure such that nay-ANTI should have applied in the first clause, he can add the suffix -nura to the verb of the second clause. This indicates that a NP in the second clause which is about to be deleted by EQUI is coreferential to the TS (not TO) of the preceding clause.

In the second and all subsequent clauses in a topic chain, nay-ANTI is "retrospective" rather than anticipatory. That is, it indicates that the TS but not the TO is coreferential to a NP (IS, TS, or TO) in the preceding (not following) clause. It is obligatory when its structural description is met. Thus "The man went, the man saw the woman" becomes man(IS) went, saw-nay woman (Dative). The second clause has been reshaped by retrospective nay-ANTI, with its TS ("man") becoming surface IS. Then this IS is deleted by EQUI under coreferentiality with "man" (also IS) in the preceding clause.

nay-ANTI is normally not applicable to a clause in isolation. It is not triggered by clause-internal factors, rather by the referential relationships of its NP's to NP's in juxtaposed clauses.

Dyirbal Relative-Clause Formation permits relativization only of IS, TS, or TO (not, e.g., dative) in the lower clause. If the lower clause is transitive, then nay-ANTI applies to indicate that the coreferential (relativized) NP is the TS rather than the TO. Thus "the man who speared the kangaroo" is man(X) spear-nay-Rel(X) kangaroo(Dative). Here X is whatever case "man" happens to be in in the higher clause, and a copy of this case-marker is added to the relativized verb (which can be considered a surface adjective).

If we think of Relative-Clause Formation as requiring an IS or TO (not TS) as lower-clause coreferential NP, then this use of nay-ANTI can be taken as promotional, converting TS into IS so it can be relativized. On the other hand, if we take Relative-Clause Formation as directly relativizing IS, TO, and TS, then this use of nay-ANTI is coreferential in function. The latter view agrees better with the functions of nay-ANTI elsewhere.

ṅay-ANTI also has interesting uses in habitual participles with suffix -muna. In theory, any major NP (IS, TS, TO) can be relativized with such a participle, but in practice the great majority of verbs do not allow TO to be relativized in such forms for semantic reasons. IS is relativized in ḡanay-muna "(always) standing." TS is relativized in balgal-ṅay-muna "(habitual) murderer." Note that balgal- "to kill" has been ṅay-antipassivized before the addition of -muna. This emphasizes that the relativized NP (i.e., the NP coreferential to the covert head) is the underlying TS, not TO. However, since this verb, like most others, does not allow relativization of the TO with -muna, ṅay-ANTI here is redundant and hence functionally inert. Consequently, it may be dispensed with, resulting in surface forms like balgal-muna which in strict theory ought to mean "one habitually murdered" but which in fact are synonyms of forms like balgal-ṅay-muna "(habitual) murderer." Functional inertness has led to sporadic applicability.

The second ANTI rule in Dyirbal is the "false reflexive" construction. The suffix -riy and its allomorphs are semantically reflexive in many instances, but in others indicate ANTI. Dixon suggests that false reflexive forms like wagay-mari-nu "be spearing" are syntactically like ṅay-antipassivized forms, and differ chiefly in that false reflexives suggest potential activity while ṅay-forms suggest actualized activity. While this difference is undoubtedly found in some contrasting forms, I am inclined to take it as a secondary one. The main difference seems to be that ṅay-ANTI is strictly coreferential in function, whereas the false reflexive is primarily indefinite and thus triggered mainly by clause-internal factors. Textual examples show that the false reflexive can occur in isolated sentences, while ṅay-ANTI applies only within topic chains. Although the false reflexive form allows the underlying TO to occur on the surface in dative or instrumental case, as does ṅay-ANTI, textual examples suggest that preservation of the TO is less frequent with the false reflexive than with ṅay-ANTI. Although the false reflexive may occasionally have coreferential function, this seems to be secondary.

Anyone seriously interested in morphosyntactic case theory should read and reread Dixon (1972), especially Chapters 4 and 5, and should also look at the texts. The Dyirbal data are of fundamental importance to this theory and there has been some controversy about its interpretation. My own reanalysis, criticizing the view that the language has "ergative syntax," will be presented elsewhere in more detail.

4. Warndarang, Nunggubuyu, Ngandi (Australia)

In Warndarang, most "verbs" are uninflected roots followed by an AUX which takes pronominal prefixes and inflectional suffixes. "They sang it" is (1) war ara-ga-ñi, with war "sing", prefix (g)ara- (3Pl → 3Sg), transitive AUX -ga-, and suffix -ñi. Similarly, "They picked it up" is (2) warj gar-ira-yi, with the same prefix (g)ara- and a different transitive AUX -ira-.

There are two ANTI processes. One is to simply use an intransitive AUX instead of an expected transitive one, as in (3) warj gala-mi-Ø "They picked up" with 3Pl prefix (g)ala-. In theory any transitive verb can be antipassivized in this fashion, but in practice this ANTI is rare. A handful of verbs have a false reflexive ANTI similar to that of Dyirbal. Adding reflexive -i- to ex. 1, we get (4) war ala-g-i-ma "They sang."

Nunggubuyu verbs are directly inflected. The only ANTI process is the false reflexive type with the same suffix -i-. It occurs with only two or three stems. An example is -maga- "to tell" (nanu-maga-ñ "I told him"), false reflexive ANTI form -mag-i- (na-mag-i:-ni "I told, I spoke"). Other stems take -i- in reflexive sense.

Warndarang and Nunggubuyu are morphologically neither accusative nor ergative since Nominative -Ø is used with IS, TS, and TO and since word-order is free. There are no important syntactic rules based on the categories IS or TS (or TO), so ANTI has no promotional functions. It is strictly indefinite, and the TO is always deleted.

Ngandi, an adjoining language, has similar syntax but shows ergative morphology for independent substantives. There are two or three examples of the false reflexive with -i-. However, the usual ANTI process consists of deletion of the TO and of the object-marker in the verb. Thus contrast (5) naya-tu nagu-doni "I(erg.) chopped it" with (6) naya-Ø na-doni "I(nom.) chopped." The pronoun is naya-, the verb -doni. Ex. 6 resembles Warndarang ex. 3 above, but the Ngandi process is more productive.

Ngandi and Nunggubuyu have productive rules incorporating noun stems, including some representing TO, into the verb complex. In Nunggubuyu we get forms like nawu-lal-nani "I saw the country(-lal-)." Literally this is "I country-saw it" and the surface form is transitive. One can even say nawu-lal-nani ana-lal "I country-saw it, the country." In Ngandi, some compounds are of this type, but in several cases a surface intransitive results, as in na-nal-geykdi "I spit" ("1Sg-saliva-threw"), not transitive *nagu-nal-geykdi with prefix nagu- (1Sg → 3Sg). Ngandi, but not Nunggubuyu, has compounding ANTI.

Grammars of these languages will be published soon in Australia.

5. Eskimo

This section is based on Woodbury's excellent study (1975). The principal ANTI process involves adding the ANTI suffix -si-, -i-, -nig-, etc. to the verb, which is then inflectionally intransitive and has only a subject-marker. The TS (ergative) becomes surface IS (nominative, "absolutive" in Eskimological parlance), while the TO is deleted or demoted to instrumental, as in (7) arnag-Ø niqi-mik niri-nig-puq "The woman ate meat." This is literally "woman-Nom meat-Instr eat-ANTI-3Sg." In main clauses ANTI is functionally indefinite.

In certain subordinated clauses ANTI can be promotional. This is not the case in gerundial-type adjuncts like the so-called "infinitive" since here IS and TS are already syntactically equivalent. However, in relative-like clauses (including some participles) and in causative clause-union ANTI can be promotional.

The "active participle" (AP) is essentially an agentive nominal. Unlike agentives in many languages, this form affects only underlying TS, not IS. The nominal is itself nonfinite, but a possessor can be added to mark the TO. Verbs with final vowel and some others are directly nominalized, as in ajuqirsur-ta-a "his teacher" ("teach-AP-his"). Others, including all ending in t, must first be antipassivized, as in tuqut-si-sa-a "his killer" ("kill-ANTI-AP-his"). Because the AP form can only relativize underlying TS, ANTI has no disambiguating function here, accounting for its sporadicity.

The "locative relative" (LOCREL) participle ("place where...") can only be formed from intransitive clauses, so if the clause is transitive it must first be reflexivized or antipassivized, as in nirli-i-vvi-a "place where he feeds" ("feed-ANTI-LOCREL-his"). Here the surface possessor represents the underlying TS.

The usual causative of transitive "The woman ate the meat" would be man(Erg.) meat(Nom.) eat-Caus-3Sg → 3Sg, with "woman" deleted or demoted to a minor case. Note that "meat," TO of the lower clause, is surface TO of the causativized verb. The underlying TS "woman" can become surface TO if the lower clause is antipassivized, as in anut-ip arnag-Ø niri-ni-tip-paa ("man(Erg.) woman (Nom.) eat-ANTI-Caus-3Sg → 3Sg"), with optional expression of "meat" as an instrumental NP.

In such examples it is difficult to determine whether ANTI is triggered by clause-internal factors and merely happens to influence the operation of later transformations, or is explicitly designed with these transformations in mind. Most causative and LOCREL instances of ANTI can be interpreted as primarily indefinite and "accidentally" promotional. However, in the AP examples ANTI (though redundant) is promotional; that it is not indefinite is

shown by the frequent occurrence of the underlying TO as surface possessor.

English He drinks (vs. He drinks it) is paralleled by Eskimo agiar-puq "He rubs" vs. agiar-paa "He rubs it." The only formal difference is that -puq is an intransitive 3Sg ending while -paa is transitive 3Sg → 3Sg. Woodbury calls such ambivalent stems "nominative verbs," and takes the intransitive form as basic (the transitive is derived by advancing an oblique NP into TO position). However, in many instances it seems equally possible to take the transitive form as basic, in which case the intransitive form is derived by another ANTI rule. Since passives and reflexives for other transitive stems are formed in the same way as agiar-puq (i.e., by using intransitive endings like 3Sg -puq), we can view agiar-puq as analogous to false reflexives in Dyirbal, etc.

6. Basque

Basque independent substantives, and pronominal affixes in the verb which cross-reference them, are marked as nominative (IS or TO), ergative (TS), dative, etc. In the example (8) ni-k gizon-a-∅ hil d-u-t "I have killed the man" we have ni-k "I-Erg.," gizon-a-∅ "man-Def-Nom.," and verb complex with hil "to kill" followed by AUX -u- with 3Sg Nom. prefix d- and 1Sg Erg. suffix -t. The same prefix occurs in intransitive ethorri d-a "He has come." Inflected verbs (including AUX's) in what may be called the "nonpast system" (including d-u-t and d-a) clearly distinguish nominative prefixes for IS and TO from ergative suffixes for TS.

However, consider what happens in the "past system" example (9) ni-k gizon-a-∅ hil n-u-en "I killed the man." The inflected AUX -u- has been antipassivized, with 3Sg Nom. d- being deleted, whereby the 1Sg Erg. suffix -t becomes 1Sg Nom. prefix n- to fill the obligatory Nom. prefix slot. This ANTI applies in the past system when the TS is first or second person and the TO is third person (it can also be thought of as applying, vacuously, to 3 → 3 combinations, but this is unnecessary). It thus is category-linked (basically, tense-linked), and since it depends on a hierarchical TS-TO imbalance it is also hierarchy-linked. Note also that the independent pronoun ni-k remains Erg. and the noun gizon-a-∅ is still Nom. in ex. (9) as in ex. (8), so ANTI here is nonsyntactic (it affects only the bound pronominal affixes in the verb). Finally, note that the "antipassivized" AUX n-u-en is still the transitive AUX -u-, not an intransitive AUX like -iza- or -edi-.

I expect to deal more fully with Basque ANTI and related problems in another paper.

7. Chinook

My source is Silverstein (in press). The verb has up to three pronominals specified as ergative, nominative (IS), accusative, and dative. Nom. and acc. are merged for most pronominal categories. The dat. is identical with the acc. (except for 3Pl) but is always followed by a "postposition."

A transitive main clause is antipassivized by dropping the TO and its pronominal, adding ANTI morpheme -kʔi- to the verb, and converting the erg. pronominal into dat. (not nom.!). Thus gal-i-kʔi-tina-x "He customarily killed" has 3Sg dat. -i-, with -kʔi- acting as a sort of postposition, and stem -tina- (we may disregard gal- and -x). ANTI here is indefinite, and indicates customary activity.

ANTI is also involved in a (customary) agentive nominal, characterized by dropping adverbial prefixes like gal-. Underlying IS or TS becomes surface genitive, which is much like a dative with postposition -a-. A transitive verb undergoes ANTI, perhaps to get the TS pronominal into dat. case where it can be easily converted into genitive.

All nouns must have a prefix marking their gender and number (and person), and this applies to agentives as well. Intransitive agentives simply use 3Sg prefix i- as a dummy morpheme in this slot, even in forms like i-i-a-ga-lal "they who fly about" (3Pl genitive -i-a-). However, transitive agentives use the prefix to indicate the underlying TO: t-i-a-kʔi-dina-x "he who kills them" (3Pl acc. t-, 3Sg gen. -i-a-).

This obligatory indication of the TO shows that this application of ANTI is not indefinite. Its main function is to "promote" an erg. pronominal into dat. case, where it can be easily genitivized (since the dat. and gen. are very similar). Also, the occurrence of -kʔi- with an acc. pronominal is a (partially redundant) indicator that an agentive nominal is at hand.

Independent NP's have no case-marking; their case is determined by associating them with a pronominal in the verb. There are no transformations (outside of rearrangements of elements in the verb complex) which involve categories like IS and TS, so except in agentives ANTI has no promotional functions and has little effect on inter-clause syntax.

8. Georgian

Georgian has case-marking both for independent substantives and for cross-referencing pronominals in the verb. I will deal here only with the former; a full discussion would also deal with the latter.

Georgian transitive verbs have an erg.-nom. (TS-TO) case-frame in the aorist (punctual) system. The present (durative) system has nom. TS and dat. TO (there is no distinct acc. case). The perfect (resultative) system puts TS in the dat. and TO in the nom. If we take the aorist system as basic, the present system shows category-linked ANTI with obligatory retention of the TO, while the perfect system shows category-linked Passivization with obligatory retention of the TS. (There are also other Passivization processes.) I know of no transformations involving IS or TS which are affected by these category-linked changes.

Note that Georgian ANTI occurs in the durative system, just as Chinook ANTI indicates customary action. For Georgian data see Vogt (1971, p. 17ff.).

9. Conclusions

What follow are miscellaneous conclusions, hypotheses, speculations, and musings about ANTI.

1) As indicated at the beginning of the paper, ANTI can have vastly different functions in different languages. It is absurd to think, for example, that there is much in common between Dyrbal and Basque ANTI.

2) ANTI, especially the indefinite type, can occur in languages with accusative morphology as well as those with ergative morphology, though it is more common in the latter. ANTI need not have any promotional functions, and of course cannot if TS and IS are syntactically equivalent.

3) Often an ANTI process is functionally indefinite in main clauses, but promotional (or partly indefinite, partly promotional) in subordinated clauses. Chinook shows a sharp polarity between ANTI in main clauses and ANTI in agentive nominals; Eskimo shows some polarity but not to the same extent.

4) Promotional and indefinite ANTI are radically different from coreferential ANTI and cannot be combined with it. Coreferential ANTI is automatically triggered by a particular cross-clause coreferential relationship, and cannot have any secondary functions or constant ambiguity would result. Coreferential ANTI, which indicates coreferentiality of TS with a NP in another clause (normally the preceding one), cannot of course indicate anything about the reference of the IS of an intransitive clause, and thus presupposes the existence of another mechanism (e.g., EQUI) to indicate referential relationships of IS. In fact, hay-ANTI in Dyrbal can only function efficiently in the context of an elaborate transformational apparatus, including nura-Insertion as well as EQUI, where each process complements the others

functionally.

5) Category- and hierarchy-linked ANTI never have promotional function. Basque ANTI is nonsyntactic and does not affect independent NP's; Georgian ANTI affects their case-marking but not their syntactic privileges.

6) Retention of TO on the surface is uncommon or impossible with indefinite ANTI. Retention is often possible and may be obligatory (Chinook agentives) with promotional ANTI. Retention is regular or obligatory in coreferential ANTI (Dyirbal) and normally in category- and hierarchy-linked ANTI. Basque deletes the TO pronominal but can retain an independent NP as TO, so it is not a counterexample. Compounding ANTI deletes independent TO's but has a TO noun stem in the verb.

7) Indefinite ANTI is often restricted to, or particularly common with, a small set of stems (English, Nungsubuyu, etc.). It may thus be possible to collapse ANTI formally with another intransitivization, usually the reflexive (hence false reflexives). If only a few stems allow the ANTI sense, there may be no ambiguity, but if both senses are productive it may be necessary to have an optional disambiguating mechanism; Dyirbal and Eskimo both have a way of marking an independent IS as specifically reflexive IS. Promotional, coreferential, and category- and hierarchy-linked ANTI show no restrictions on the set of verb stems affected.

8) A highly restricted indefinite ANTI rule could be substituted for by lexical means, e.g. Choctaw -apa- "to eat(trans.)" vs. -i:pa- "to eat(intr.)". We might call this PRELEXICAL ANTI.

9) Promotional ANTI is redundant in agentive nominalizations, since only TS or only TS and IS can be relativized. Hence ANTI may be sporadic or irregular here (Dyirbal, Eskimo).

10) ANTI is often considered the "mirror image" of passivization. This is misleading, since there is only partial functional parallelism. Passivization is almost always indefinite or hierarchy-linked (English has both functions), rarely or never systematically promotional or coreferential.

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