

STATIVE PASSIVES ARE NOT PASSIVES: EVIDENCE FROM THEMATIC REVERSALS

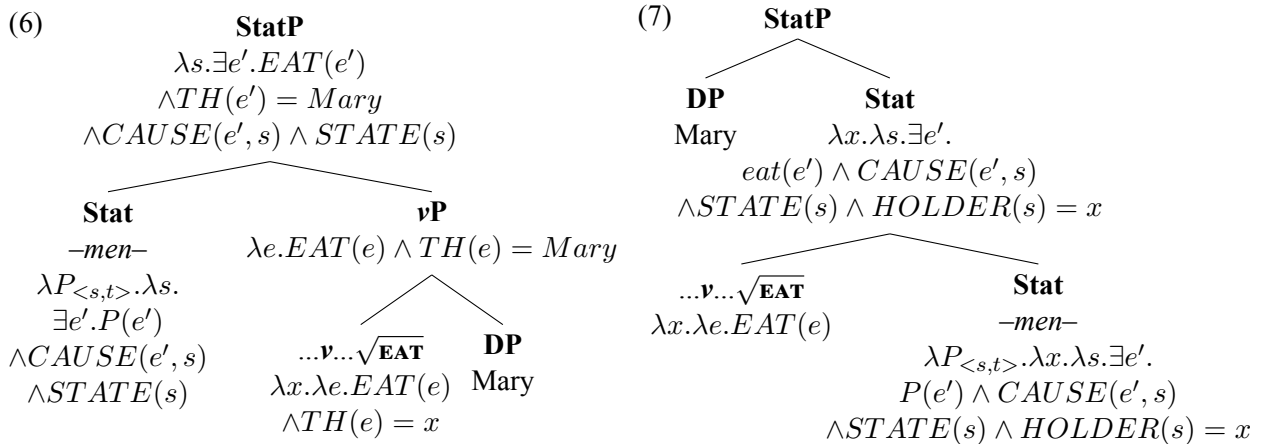
We show that (some) stative passives must be analyzed as cases of fully external adjectival predication. The crucial generalizations are novel and come from a new window into the structural position and thematic properties of the sole argument of stative passives, provided by what we term *thematic reversals*.

PATTERN 1: INGESTIVES Verbs of ingestion under stative passivization display a striking effect that is extremely understudied though prevalent cross-linguistically (see e.g. Anagnostopoulou 2001; Arad 1998; Haspelmath 1994); we illustrate here with Greek. Normally, the single argument of stative passives is read as the theme of the stativized event (1); it thus seems on a par with the surface subject of eventive passives, which originates *vP*-internally (2). Ingestives raise questions for this parallelism: whereas a stative passive of a Root like $\sqrt{\text{EAT}}$ furnishes the expected theme interpretation of the sole argument (3), it also allows a second, exceptional interpretation whereby the argument is ostensibly read as the (affected) *agent* of the stativized event (5a), such that stative passives of ingestives can be discourse-equivalent to actives (5b). We call the effect in (5a) a *thematic reversal*. It obtains also with other ingestive Roots (in Greek, $\sqrt{\text{DRINK}}$, $\sqrt{\text{STUDY}}$ and $\sqrt{\text{LEARN}}$) (cp. Krejci 2012; Saksena 1980; Bhatt and Embick 2017); cf. English *drunk*, *well-read*, *learnéd*.

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| <p>(1) I porta ine kliðo-meni.
 the.NOM door.NOM be.3SG lock-PTCP.F.NOM
 ‘The door is locked.’</p> <p>(3) [The human-eating plant consumes Mary.]
 I Maria ine faço-meni.
 the.NOM Mary.NOM be.3SG eat-PTCP.F.NOM
 ‘Mary is eaten.’</p> <p>(4) I Maria eçi façoði.
 the.NOM Mary.NOM have.3SG eat.PASS.PFV
 ‘Mary has been eaten.’ / *‘Mary has eaten.’</p> | <p>(2) I porta eçi kliðo-ði.
 the.NOM door.NOM have.3SG lock-PASS.PFV
 ‘The door has been locked.’</p> <p>(5) Q: I’m setting the table – is Mary joining us?
 a. Oçi, i Maria ine faço-meni.
 no the Mary.NOM be.3SG eat-PTCP.F.NOM
 ‘No – Mary is eaten.’
 b. Oçi, i Maria eçi fai.
 no the.NOM Mary.NOM have.3SG eat.PFV
 ‘No – Mary has eaten.’</p> |
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A new observation helps elucidate the syntax of (5a): the thematic reversal *never* occurs in the eventive passive. Thus, (4) is only ever acceptable in a context like (3), and intensely infelicitous in a context like (5).

BASIC ANALYSIS This eventive/stative asymmetry is unexpected on an analysis like (6), where the sole argument of the stative passive has the same structural position and thematic properties as the surface subject of the eventive passive. That the thematic reversal is relativized to the stative passive suggests that we must ‘know’ that the structure is stative before introducing the argument that is ostensibly read as an agent; if it originates low, (6), there is no way to derive this relativization. Instead, we propose (7), whereby the argument bears no structural relation to the *vP* (cf. e.g. Levin and Rappaport 1986; McIntyre 2013 and to some extent Bruening 2014), and no thematic relation to the event (*contra* the above but with e.g. Fruehwald and Myler 2015; Biggs 2021). The argument is integrated thematically only in the stative eventuality, the holder role being neutral as to its involvement in the entailed event (see Kratzer 1996). The meaning postulates in (8)–(9) in turn state the conditions under which the holder of an event-entailing state is read derivatively as a theme (cf. Levin and Rappaport 1986), or, optionally with ingestives, as an agent.



(8) $\forall x \forall e \forall s [\text{event}(e) \wedge \text{CAUSE}(e, s) \wedge \text{STATE}(s) \wedge \text{HOLDER}(s) = x] \rightarrow [\text{THEME}(e) = x]$

(9) **OR** $\forall x \forall e \forall s [event(e) \wedge CAUSE(e, s) \wedge STATE(s) \wedge HOLDER(s) = x] \rightarrow [AGENT(e) = x]$
in the context of $\{ \sqrt{EAT}, \sqrt{LEARN}, \dots \}$

(7) is superior to an alternative in Anagnostopoulou (2001) that explains thematic reversals by proposing that, with verbs like \sqrt{EAT} , the eater is merged in a position intermediate between themes and canonical agents. This proposal cannot make sense of the absence of the thematic reversal in the eventive passive (4). It is also counterexemplified by the behavior of deponent (10) and experiencer (11) verbs in stative passives. These verbs do have an argument merged below canonical agents but higher than themes (see esp. Grestenberger 2018; Zombolou and Alexiadou 2014), but nonetheless do not license thematic reversals, (10)-(11).

(10)I Maria ine katarameni. (11)#O efevretis ine skarfizmenos.
the.NOM Mary.NOM be.3SG curse.PTCP the.NOM inventor.NOM be.3SG devise.PTCP
‘Mary is cursed / *has cursed (someone).’ Intend.: ‘The inventor has devised (something).’

IDIOMS independently support the argument relations in (7): in (12)–(14) and (15)–(17), verb-object idioms in the active survive in the eventive passive but not the stative passive, suggesting that the verb and the argument form a constituent in the former but not the latter.

(12)I θ orivi mu exun kopsi ta ipata. (13)Mu exun kopi ta ipata apo tus θ orivus.
the noises 1SG.GEN have cut.PFV the livers 1SG.GEN have cut.PASS.PFV the livers from the noises
‘The noises have scared me to death.’ ‘I have been scared to death by the noises.’

(14)#Mu ine komena ta ipata (apo tus θ orivus). (15)Mu epsise to psari sta xili.
1SG.GEN are cut.PTCP the livers from the noises 1SG.GEN roast.PST.3SG the fish on.the lips
Intended: ‘I am scared to death (by the noises).’ ‘Sh/e tormented me’

(16)Mu exi psi θ i to psari sta xili. (17)#Mu ine psi- meno to psari sta xili.
1SG.GEN has roast.PASS.PFV the fish on.the lips 1SG be.3SG \sqrt{ROAST} PTCP the fish on.the lips
‘I have been tormented.’ Intended: ‘I am in a tormented state.’

PATTERN 2: ENGLISH OUT A parallel, apparently unstudied kind of thematic reversal obtains in English, where the inclusion of the particle *out* makes it possible to seemingly interpret the sole argument of the stative passive of an activity as an agent (18) (e.g. (18a) seems to mean ‘I’ve partied to completion’). Once again, the effect is specific to the stative; the examples in (19) lack eventive interpretations on the thematic reversal reading. This parallel effect, too, is explicable if the argument of the stative is interpreted as a state holder, and is thus be linked to the event only derivatively, à la (8)–(9).

(18)a. I’m (all) partied #(out). (19)a. I was (all) partied out. \checkmark stative \times eventive
b. I’m (all) danced #(out). b. I was (all) danced out. \checkmark stative \times eventive

out is a resultative creating good target states for Roots that normally lack such states, such as activities, by adding a new eventuality, cf. (20) (see e.g. Kratzer 2001; Williams 2015; Biggs 2021). Evidence for the resultative nature of *out* comes from degree modification, (21)-(22).

(20)I sang my throat #(hoarse). (21)The metal is hammered (all (22)I’m partied (all the way) out.
the way) flat.

PATTERN 3: THE COMPLETION EFFECT Thematically reversed statives entail that the stativized event has run to completion. Thus, modifying the reversed ingestive stative by *half* is infelicitous (23), cp. the Perfect (24). Additionally, explicitly denying the full culmination of the event results in infelicity (25), compare again the Perfect (26); effectively, *fayomenos* means ‘full’, not just ‘having eaten’ (cf. *drunk* etc.). (7) readily accommodates this observation: since the argument of the stative passive is directly identified only as the holder of a state in which an event has culminated, the argument must have undergone the event to completion. This is in contrast to (6), which merely states that the argument took part in the event but makes no commitments as to it holding a state, and thus requires additional assumptions to capture (23)-(24).

(23)I Maria ine (#miso)- fayomeni. (25)Ime fayomenos, #ala δ en exo xortasi.
the. Mary. be.3SG half eat.PTCP be.1SG eat.PTCP but NEG have.1SG satiate.PFV
‘Mary is (half)-eaten’ ‘I’m eaten, but I’m not full.’

(24)I Maria e χ i (miso-) fai. (26)Exo fai, ala δ en exo xortasi.
the. Mary. have.3SG half eat.PFV have.1SG eat.PFV but NEG have.1SG satiate.PFV
‘Mary has (half)-eaten.’ ‘I’ve eaten, but I’m not full.’

CONSEQUENCES The results provide new support for the complex head approach to stative passives (Embick 2023) and other mixed projections (Wood 2023). Lacking an argument, the verbal projection in (7) is not unambiguously phrasal in the sense of Chomsky (1995); this state of affairs complements the independently observable absence of phrasal *vP* modification in Greek (Paparounas 2023, *pace* e.g. Alexiadou et al. 2015).