

OBJECTS IN THE PSEUDOPASSIVE: the syntax and semantics of bare-NP complements

Although pseudopassives like (1a) are common English constructions, the variant in (1b-c) with a direct object, accepted by a small subset of speakers, raises a new question: how are these objects licensed as complements to *passive* verbs?

- (1) a. This house was lived in by Pearl Heart herself!
b. Take this cutting-board, it was only chopped ginger on.
c. These pants just aren't meant to be tucked a white shirt into.

In this paper, I argue that the direct objects in (1b-d) are not full DPs, but rather bare-NPs. As such, they combine semantically with the predicate as properties, they lack the necessary D-features to satisfy the EPP, and do not raise for Case (Cagri 2007). The pseudopassive-object's necessarily narrow scope, as well as its unavailability for topicalization or wh-movement from its base position also support this account.

NP not DP: We observe several indications that the pseudopassive-object is an NP, not a DP: definite determiners, and strongly interpreted indefinite ones are not licensed (Chierchia 1998, Partee 1989), shown in (2a) and (2b). Possessors, in (2c), are also impossible.

- (2) a. *Take this cutting-board, it was only chopped *the/that* ginger on.
b. This knife was chopped *a potato* with, #that one that was in the fridge.
c. *These pants aren't meant to be tucked *Johnny's/my shirts* into.

When modified by certain adjectives known to be ambiguous prenominaly, only one interpretation is possible. For example, *visible* in 'visible planets' can usually be understood as a stage-level or individual-level property (Bolinger 1967). The pseudopassive-object in (3) has only the individual-level meaning, consistent with an NP that lacks a DP layer for stage-level adjectives to modify (Larson 1999):

- (3) These binoculars are to be identified visible planets with, #unless there aren't any.

Lastly, movement of the object is not possible; topicalization in (4a) is impossible (unusual if the object were a full DP, and see Cagri 2007), and the singular indefinite object in (4b) cannot outscope a universal quantifier in subject position (arguably by movement at LF):

- (4) a. *It was *ginger* that this cutting-board was chopped *t* on.
b. All vegans have been fed an animal product to...

... by accident at some point or other.

$\forall > \exists$

...*gelatin was snuck into all water supplies!

* $\exists > \forall$

By these criteria, we conclude that the direct object of the pseudopassive is an NP and not a DP, which is crucial to its syntactic behaviour, and semantic interpretation.

Semantics of bare-NP objects: By the analysis I put forward, the NPs of pseudo-incorporation structures are interpreted as properties and combine with the verb by the Restrict operation of Chung&Ladusaw (2004). This operation interprets the NP property *p* as a restrictive modifier of the predicate, yielding the original function (defined by the predicate) with its domain restricted to the subdomain of elements that have the property *p* (Chung&Ladusaw 2004:5). As properties, these NPs are semantically incomplete and inaccessible to movement operations that target individuals, not properties. Existential closure above the V-NP structure yields the weak indefinite interpretation observed.

The novel data above tenders an English contribution to recent literature on a construction known as *pseudo-incorporation* for Niuean and Hindi (Massam 2001, Dayal 2006), *adcorporation* for Chol (Coon 2006), and *semantic incorporation* for Inuit (Bittner 1984, van Geenhoven 1998). In conclusion, I discuss how the pseudopassive facts bear on these theories, and why only some English speakers can license objects in their pseudopassives.

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