

## **NP-Movement in Tiv**

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### **Abstract**

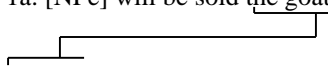
The nature of Transformational Generative Grammar as characterized in syntactic structures is to account for superficial structures by proposing an underlying D-structure which maps unto S-structure. This is observed in such syntactic operations like NP-movement which serves as platform for accounting for phenomena such as Passivization and Raising. NP-movement operations and its properties in Tiv have not been fully examined. This work therefore focuses on NP-movement in Tiv, with the aim to project a formal linguistic account of this language phenomenon. The objective is to account for the diagnostics for this movement, as well as the effect of such movement on the S-derivation of structures. Data for the work is elicited from the conversations of competent Native Tiv speakers in normal conversational settings. And for analysis, the work relies on the syntactic theory of move- $\alpha$  (a unified single movement rule), of Chomsky (1977, 1981), to account for movement transformations of the type under study. The study finds NP-movement as an instance of Passivization and also an instance of the trigger behavior in the raising verb. The study also establishes that Passivization movement is clause internal, involves role reversal between object and subject, which is an instance of 'voice' change. For complex predicates, the study finds that the internal arguments are filled by NPs and PPs. The movement involves both complements and adjuncts, normally for focus effect. The verb is the trigger element in NP-raising, and the movement is from a lower clause in the matrix to a higher clause in the structure. This movement leaves a pronominal co-indexed copy trace in the vacated site.

*Keywords: Tiv, NP-movement, Passivization, Raising, Surface Ordering, TGG.*

### **Introduction**

Much of the concerns in the examination of syntactic structures, focuses on discerning the processes in the realization of surface orderings in structures and this is most particular in Passivization and raising constructions, where the assumption is that there is an underlying D-structure that accounts for the mapping of S-structures through the syntactic operation move- $\alpha$ . Languages adopt various strategies through which they characterize passive and raising structures. On this basis, research in generative syntax has come to characterize NP-movement at three levels: in passive structures, in ergative structures and in raising verbs. These three types of movement are all instances of A-movement. Lasnik and Uriagereka (1988:20) refer to A-movement as movement of a category 'from a position that is potentially a recipient of  $\theta$ -role to another such position (for example, from object position to subject position, or from embedded subject position to higher subject position). This parallels to  $\bar{A}$ -movement, in which movement is from a  $\theta$ -role assigned position to a position in which neither case nor  $\theta$ -role is assigned (Ndimele, 2004). Against this background, this work examines the diagnostics of Movement in Tiv to determine surface derivation of structures, by paying attention to: which constituent is moved in the structure, what triggers the movement, where the moved constituent lands, and above all, what happens to the vacated site.

Ndimele (2004:104-107) provides instances of both passive and raising in the examples (1 and 2)

- 1a. [NP<sub>e</sub>] will be sold the goat  
  
 b. The goat<sub>*t<sub>i</sub>*</sub> will be sold *t<sub>i</sub>*
- 2a. [e ] seems James to love Mary  
 b. James<sub>*t<sub>i</sub>*</sub> seems *t<sub>i</sub>* to love Mary

For ease of analysis, the work relies on the syntactic theory of move- $\alpha$ , which is a reduction of permutation operations into a unified single rule. The single rule: move- $\alpha$  is favored in the analysis because of the universal appeal of its subjacency condition and the general consensus that constructions involving unbounded left-ward movement etc. can be accounted for, using the rule move- $\alpha$  (Chomsky, 1977, 1986 and Ndimele, 2004). More so, move- $\alpha$  construct bifurcates into NP- and WH- movements, and is perceived to be the uniting factor between underlying representation and surface ordering. The work contributes to knowledge by presenting a formal linguistic account of movement theory in Tiv, with a view to make known the universal appeal of those linguistic principles, and how languages parameterize these principles in their surface orderings, thus providing a basis for comparative syntax studies. Moreover, for a language like Tiv which is largely unexplored, when compared to most other languages, such work serves as incentives for further studies.

### Review of Literature

The literature on movement transformation has an early history in generative syntax (Chomsky, 1964) and is generally concerned with an assessment of the full range of items that get moved and the general outcome of such movement, as well as the constraints on movement transformations (Ross, 1967). Akmajian and Heny (1975), citing English language, avail that, most of the well-known movement transformations in English are characterized by movement of constituents from one part of a tree to another; giving instances of such movement to be a consequence of passive, question, negative placement, dative and affix hopping constructions. Cross-linguistic studies have been carried out to determine the effect of movement vis-a-vis: the spaces left after movement and the possible constraints on the range of the moved constituents.

On NP-movement, Chomsky (1962, 1973) has made assertions concerning the involvement of NP-movement in middle constructions and went ahead to propose both ‘passive’ and ‘raising’ as reflexes of a single NP-movement. There is a general agreement among scholars, at least in the case of English that NP-movement is crucial to the formation of passive structure, implying that considerations should be given to the passive formation as a process that is hosted in the D-structure in which the object NP occurring after the verb is moved to the subject position (Richter and Beukema, 1988; Van Riemsdijk and Williams, 1986; Radford, 1988 and Cook, 1988). Emonds (1976), draws empirical basis in support of passive formation in English from the sub-categorization frame of verbs of more than one-place-argument frames; saying that those verbs entertain gaps in the position vacated by moved NP-objects.

Sheikh (2013) traces the trigger element for NP-movement in Kashmiri to be passive verbs, the raising verbs and the raising adjective, the last being a parameter ordering for Kashmiri paralleled to English which has a weak verbal morphology in this

regard, and those other languages that utilize in their morphology, only verbs that bear two predicate arguments Sheikh (2013) further argues that this is achieved with the aid of the auxiliary verb which takes over the functions of the main verb, and allows it to maintain only its semantic content, and concludes that verb raising in Kashmiri is for case checking purposes.

Iloene (2007), in the context of Igbo, contributes that, passives and middle constructions are characteristic of complement movement, attesting further that both the passive and middle constructions defocus or demote the subject but promote the complement; using the complement as an embracing term that includes object NPs, concluding that Igbo does not possess passive morphology (Ogbulogo, 1995). On raising, Ogbulogo (1995:70), avers that Igbo, like English, achieves raising through the use of raising verbs, most of which he says in Igbo belong to the intransitive class. He provides insights that in Igbo, both PRO and a resumptive pronoun occurring as a trace (t) exist. This is found in the example:

3. *Ọ òkà kà anwu ọọ na-èti*  
 It is that sun it PRO is shining ‘it seems the sun is shining’

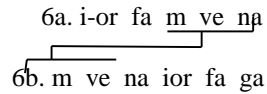
This parallels the situation in English, where the obligatory PRO appears in subject position and blocks the trace. Whereas adjectives trigger raising movement in languages like Kashmiri (Sheikh, 2013:22), Igbo on the other hand lack predicative adjectives that can trigger movement (Ogbulogo, 1995:71).

### Passivization and NP Movement Transformations

Passivization is a consequence of transformation, brought about by NP-movement, and accounted for through the syntactic operation of move- $\alpha$  (Chomsky, 1981). Passivization transformations are traditionally associated with role reversal between two NP constituents in a structure. The reversal involves subject and object and the element that regulates this reversal is ‘voice’. Passives are thus derived from voice change; which change involves movement (Trask, 1993). Consider an instance of the passive in (4b and 5b), paralleled to the active in (4a and 5a) respectively:

- 4a. *í-or rùmùn á kwágh-òron lá*  
 PL-people agree-PST with thing-telling that-DEM.DIST  
 ‘People accepted with that speech’
- b. *kwágh-òron<sub>t</sub> lá í-or rùmùn á mí<sub>t</sub>*  
 thing-telling that-DEM.DIST PL-people agree-PST with pro<sub>t</sub>  
 ‘That speech was accepted by the people’
- 5a. *í-or fá m vè ná*  
 PL-people know-PST 1SG come pro-REFL  
 ‘People knew of his coming’
- b. *M vè ná í-or fá gá*  
 1SG come-PRST pro.REFL PL-people know-PST NEG-not  
 ‘His coming was not known by the people’

Examples (4b and 5b) are instances of passive transformation, whereas (4a and 5a) are characteristic of the active voice. (4b and 5b) are exemplified instances where the object NP assumes the function of subject by moving from its base generated object position to the position of logical subject of the sentence. This is illustrated by the following schema:



Also, the movement is clause internal, where the passive and active in (6b and 6a) share logical equivalence, just like the passive in (4b) share logical equivalence with the active in (4a). The difference however, between the passive and the active, in both examples is in the viewpoint of presentation. Whereas the active voice characterizes a neutral order with regards to the Agent, or Patient’s point of view, the passive shows bias with respect to the patient. This shows that Passivization in Tiv could be partially accounted for as an instance of focus marking, where the object is marked for focus by moving it from its base generated position as object to the position earlier occupied by the subject. The implication is that Passivization for the purpose of object promotion, or focus is possible within verbs that assign at least two theta roles in Tiv . On the other hand, it also implies that non-argument NPs after the active voice is irrelevant for passive, especially if we are to consider passive as a consequence of object promotion. In the example (4a), the passive voice is *rùmùn* ‘agree’, while in (5a), the passive is *fá* ‘know’. So, in (4a), the subject NP of the passive: *kwágh-ôron lá* ‘that speech’ moves from its object position in the active to become a subject in the passive, and to show trace of this movement, a pronominal element *mi* ‘it’ is left in the vacated site.

It is argued for (4a) that *kwágh-ôron lá* ‘that speech’ is assigned the internal theta role of patient by the verb. This satisfies the stipulation that internal theta role must be ‘assigned directly under the government of the head, in syntactic representation’ (Haegeman, 1996:304). In example (5a), the NP *m-vè ná* ‘his coming’ is moved from the object position and is assigned Nominative case by the verb *ve-* ‘come’. We consider further, example of passive in (7):

7. *í* ná-jíghjígh èr [Msèn vihi yáv]  
 pro-INDF give-faith that N. spoil stomach  
 ‘it is believed that Msèn aborted pregnancy’

In (7), the subject position of the main clause is occupied by an expletive *í* ‘it’, which is expressed using the indefinite pronoun *í*. The expletive is not assigned a theta role, and the sentential complement *Msèn víhí yáv* ‘Msèn aborted pregnancy’ is the internal argument of the passive verb, *ná-jíghjígh* ‘believe’. Within the sub-ordinate clause, the verb assigns an internal theta role of NP-object to *yáv* ‘stomach’ and the NP-subject to *Msèn*. The verb, *ná-jíghjígh* ‘believe’ thus takes as its internal argument, a clause complement. Again, the surface subject of the main clause, *Msèn* has a thematic relation of Agent with the predicate *víhí* ‘abort’, in the lower infinitival clause, but has no thematic relationship with *ná-jíghjígh* ‘believe’. This makes it obvious that *Msèn* is a derived subject, assigned the external theta role of Agent of the lower verb *víhí* ‘abort’. At the deep structure level therefore, *Msèn* will be base generated as the subject of the subordinate clause.

### Passivization and Complex Predicates

The passive movement instantiates syntactic focus movement in Tiv, which is interpreted to be for focus purposes. This enables for semantic account whereby the subject argument is deemphasized by moving the object argument into the position of the subject. Complex predicates exemplify this condition. In the example that follows, the passives (8b and 8c) are derived from (8a):

- 8a. Tèrsoo ôô            án-ywá íyol shá cáhùl  
 N.            bath-PST DIM-dog body with soap  
 ‘Tersoo bathed the little dog with soap’
- b. ká    án-ywá<sub>i</sub>    í            èè            ùn<sub>i</sub> íyol yè  
 FOC DIM-dog pro-INDF bath-HAB him body  
 ‘it is the little dog that is bathed’
- c. ká    shá cáhùl í            èè            án-ywá íyol yè  
 FOC with soap pro-INDF bath-HAB DIM-dog body  
 ‘it is with soap that the little dog is bathed’

In examples (8b and 8c) can be observed that complex predicates involve verbs that subcategorize for argument frames. Furthermore, these arguments are internally assigned. A typical Passivization strategy is that which involves focusing constructions that utilize the focus marker *ká-yè*. In (8b and 8c), the FOC-M *ká*, loosely equivalent to the English ‘it’ is introduced in sentence initial position, and precedes the NP constituent that is moved for focus. *Yè*, found in sentence final positions when a constituent is focused, co-occurs with *ká*, and is semantically empty. Thus, (8b) which is a paraphrase of (8a), involves complement movement whereby the NP-object *án-ywá* ‘little dog’, undergoes movement from its base generated position to become the passive subject, and in its place is a copy pronoun *un* ‘it’ in the vacated site, which is co-indexed with the moved NP-object *án-ywá* ‘little dog’. This demotes the subject and promotes the object. This is achieved through complement movement operation (Yusuf, 1997), the movement is meant to achieve the semantic effect of focusing. Similarly, (8c) has the PP adjunct moved from its adjunct position, where it served as adjunct of instrument, to sentence initial position. This instantiates adjunct movement. Also, one observes that the movement characterizes instance of head movement operation, and in (8c), the head is a preposition. This fulfills the notion that in Tiv as opposed to other languages, the internal argument of predicates is normally filled by NPs and PPs.

Two basic assumptions can be made about movement involving complex predicates; that: the movement operation involving complex predicates is an instance of identification focus, involving the focused element being moved from the base generated position to the subject position. The other assumption is that one consequence of this movement is exhaustiveness; which in this instance entails extracting the necessary heads for focusing, clause internally, till they are exhausted.

Another example is considered for further analysis and labeled (9); where (9b) is the passive form of (9a):

- 9a. lám á Msùr shá kwágh ná  
 speak to N.    about thing his ‘speak to Msur about him’

b. lám                      shá      kwágh ná      á      Msùr  
 speak-PRST    about    thing      his      with    N. ‘Speak concerning him to N.’

In the example (9a), the passive verb, *lám* ‘speak’, bears two internal argument frames, both filled by PPs. The first is a prepositional complement, while the second is an adjunct. As a consequence of movement however, the adjunct moves from its base position to the position of complement which is immediately on the right of the verb. This movement downgrades the addressee, and instead, bears focus on the entity on whose behalf the address is being made. Both complement and adjunct extraction can be explained away that these complements are not islands; therefore, subjacency condition is not violated. This is because both movements involve just one cyclic node, thus not crossing any barrier (see Rizzi, 1990).

### NP-movement and Raising Verbs

Another instance of NP-movement is seen through verb raising. Just like passive verbs characterize movement, so do raising verbs. NP raising is said to take place when the subject of the lower clause is raised out of the lower clause and moved into a higher clause. Correspondingly, verbs which induce raising are called raising verbs. Take the example of the raising verb; *ngù-èr* ‘be-like’, in the structure (10):

10a. Msèn<sub>i</sub>      ngù-èr      á<sub>i</sub>      víhí      yáv  
 N.              be-like      pro<sub>t</sub>      spoil      stomach ‘Msen seems to have aborted pregnancy’

The example of (10a), correspondingly, would have a structure of the type (10b):

10b. [e [ngù-èr [Msèn víhí yáv]]]

In the discourse situation, a speaker may exercise discretion and leave the subject in the lower clause, or raise it to the higher clause. Taken that NP-movement is not merely for Passivization purposes alone, it can be argued that the movement of the NP from the lower clause to the higher clause is for case marking. This goes under the assumption that if the NP-subject is left in the lower clause at the S-level, it would not be case marked. So to enable the NP-subject *Msèn*, pass the case filter test, it has to be moved from the subject position of the lower clause to the subject position of the higher clause. As a diagnostic of movement, there is an empty gap as landing site for a moved constituent, before movement can take place. Also, there is a corresponding co-indexed gap after the movement, which in the case of Tiv, is filled by a copy pronoun trace, as exemplified in (10c):

10c. [msèn<sub>i</sub> [ngù-èr [á<sub>i</sub> víhí yáv]]]

The consequence of the structure in (10a-c) is the presupposition of a bi-clausal structure in the analysis, and in our example, involves the subject *Msèn*, in this case, in the embedded clause, is raised from the lower clause to the higher clause. There are however, instances where the lexical subject remains in the lower clause. This is exemplified using the example labeled (11):

11a. í                      tôô      èr      Sèèfán fá      tákèrádá  
 Pro-INDF    carry    that    N.      know book ‘it is taken that Seefan is intelligent’

The example (11a) will have a corresponding structure of the form (11b):

11b. [í tôô [èr [Sèèfán fá tákèrádá]]]

The difference between (11a) and (10c) lies in the fact that in (10c), the lexical subject *Msèn* is raised from the lower clause to the higher clause to pass the case filter test, while in (11b), the indefinite pronoun, which is semantically empty, serves as expletive and fills up the subject position in the main clause. This satisfies the extended projection principle EPP condition that every sentence must have a subject. The expletive is however not theta marked by the verb, hence the verb does not assign any semantic case to it.

### Conclusion

The study is carried out with the aim to present a formal linguistic account of NP-movement in Tiv, owing to the paucity of such scholarly accounts on the language. On the other hand, an avenue is provided whereby certain linguistic principles are tested against data to see how different natural languages parameterize for the principle. In the presentation, the study has examined NP-movement in Tiv, and has focused on movement triggered by Passivization and movement triggered by the raising verb. The study finds that movement for Passivization involves a reversal of roles between the subject and object of the predicate, this re-arrangement, borne through movement, affects the structural order of the sentence by mapping out a different S-structure from the D-structure. This has attendant semantic and grammatical effect on the structure as shown in the analysis. Such movement in Tiv is for focusing, often involving complements and adjuncts as constituents for movement. Also, the movement is clause internal. The study has again, examined data on raising verbs, which serve as movement trigger for the NP. The NP-raising movement as a consequence involves movement from a lower clause to a higher clause. The movement is often occasioned by the need to fulfill the case filter test and case marking. As a diagnostic of movement, the NP-movement entails an empty landing site and a co-indexed trace at the vacated site, which in Tiv, is filled by a copy pronoun trace, co-indexed with the moved noun. The NP-movement in Tiv is also characteristic of A-movement since the movement involves potential  $\theta$ -role vacated and recipient sites.

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