Passive Applicatives

Julie Anne Legate
(University of Pennsylvania)

In this talk, I present an analysis of the passive whereby demotion of the thematic subject is accomplished in VoiceP itself, not through a generalized head/process that demotes arguments. A PP adjunct may be merged with VoiceP, semantically taking VoiceP as its argument and saturating the initiator theta-role; *or* existential closure may apply on the Voice head at LF to bind the initiator theta-role. A novel prediction of this approach is that a passive-like alternation could apply to to the Appl head that introduces the applicative object, but without passive morphology. I present evidence demonstrating that this prediction is borne out in several Austronesian applicatives, including Acehnese causatives and Indonesian benefactives.