Applicatives and the parameters of promotion

Applicative constructions involve the addition of a non-core argument introduced by a syntactic head along the extended projection of the verb (Marantz 1993, McGinnis 1998, Pylkkänen 2008). While applied arguments can alternate with PPs, they often display properties of objects (Baker 1988). For instance, the goal applicative in North American English double object constructions (DOCs) may be passivised (1a). Moreover, themes can be passivised over PP goals but not applicative goals (1b), suggesting that the applied argument competes with the theme for A-movement. Applicative constructions therefore often involve not only introduction but also promotion (in the Relational Grammar sense) of the applied argument to object status.

- (1) North American English DOC
 - a. The children were sent several packages.
 - b. Several packages were sent *(to) the children.

Promotion of the applied argument is obligatory in constructions and languages with overt applicative morphology. In Chaga, applied arguments must be introduced by an applicative-marked verb and have no PP or case-marked equivalents (Bresnan & Moshi 1990). Applied arguments, which can appear adjacent to the verb (2a), are always promoted above themes, which cannot be verb adjacent (2b). Constructions and languages without overt applicative marking, however, may or may not promote the applied argument. German DOCs allow theme-passives (3a) but not goal-passives with the auxiliary *werden* 'become' (3b); goals remain unpromoted. This shows that introduction and promotion of applied arguments must be distinct components in the syntax of applicatives.

(2) Chaga benefactive/malefactive

- a. N-a-i-lyi-i-a m-ka k-elya. FOC-1SM-PRES-eat-APPL-FV 1-wife 7-food 'He is eating food for/on his wife.'
- b. *N-a-i-lyi-i-a k-elya m-ka. FOC-1SM-PRES-eat-APPL-FV 7-food 1-wife

'He is eating food for/on his wife.'

(Bresnan & Moshi 1990)

(3) German DOC

- a. Ein alter Test wurde den Studenten ausgeteilt. an.NOM old.NOM test.NOM become.PASS the.DAT students.DAT distributed 'An old test was distributed to the students.'
- b. *Die Studenten wurden einen alten Test ausgeteilt.
 the.NOM students.NOM become.PASS.PL an.ACC old.ACC test.ACC distributed
 'The students were distributed an old test.' (Georgala 2012)

Promotion can be modelled in Minimalism as movement of an applied argument from a thematic position (specifier of a high or low applicative) to a higher, non-thematic position. This higher position allows the applied argument to undergo object agreement with the verb or be further promoted to subject, e.g. in passives. Given that applicative constructions with overt applicative morphology always promote the applied argument while constructions without overt marking need not, overt applicative marking may actually be associated with the higher non-thematic projection rather than the thematic applicative head. That is, applicative marking may be promotion marking.

Tagalog provides morphological evidence for this perspective. Tagalog verbs undergo 'voice' alternations which allow various arguments to be promoted as the discourse-prominent pivot, marked with nominative case; each verb can only be associated with a single pivot. Object pivots, for example, require Object Voice (OV) marking on the verb (4a). Applicative promotion is obligatory in Tagalog; all applied arguments must be promoted to pivot and require Benefactive Voice (BV) or Locative Voice (LV) marking on the verb. In Tagalog LV external possession constructions, the pivot is interpreted as the possessor of the theme (4b) (Nie 2018); this suggests that the possessor must be base-generated in a position local to the theme (Kayne 1975, Szabolcsi 1984) but moves to a higher projection where it is promoted to pivot. Since LV is associated with a range of applied arguments (e.g. goal, location), it likely spells out this higher promotion head.

(4) Tagalog external possession

- a. B<in>asag-Ø [ko] [ang plorera ng bata] kahapon. <PERF>shatter-OV 1SG.GEN NOM vase NOM child yesterday 'I shattered a child's vase yesterday.'
- b. B<in>asag-an [ko] [ng plorera] kahapon [ang bata]. <PERF>shatter-LV 1SG.GEN GEN vase yesterday NOM child 'I shattered the child's vase yesterday.'

Tagalog instruments may be introduced as an adjunct, as in the Agent Voice (AV) construction in (5a), or as an applied argument in the BV construction in (5b). Some instrumental pivots co-occur with both BV and an instrumental affix paN- on the verb (5b), suggesting that the applied argument is introduced by paN- but promoted to pivot by BV. Thus Tagalog provides overt morphological evidence for both the thematic and the promotion projections needed for applicative pivots.

(5) Tagalog instrumentals

- a. Nag-punas [ako] [ng silya] [gamit ang trapo].
 AV.PERF.PAG-wipe 1SG.NOM GEN chair use NOM rag
 'I wiped a chair with the rag.'
- b. I-p<in>am-punas [ko] [ng silya] [ang trapo].
 BV-<PERF>INSTR-wipe 1SG.GEN GEN chair NOM rag
 'I wiped a chair with the rag.'

In sum, applicative constructions may (i) promote applied arguments to object, feeding processes like object agreement and passivisation; (ii) promote them to pivot, for discourse prominence; or (iii) not promote them at all. The resulting typology of applicatives is given in (6).

(6) Typology of applicatives

| 71 07 11 | | | |
|-----------------------|--------------|---------------------|--------------------|
| | No promotion | Promotion to object | Promotion to pivot |
| Overt applicative | | Chaga benefactive | Tagalog BV, LV |
| Non-overt applicative | German DOC | NAm English DOC | |

Note the empty cells in (6). There appear to be no languages that (i) have overt applicative marking but do not promote the applied argument to object or pivot, or (ii) have obligatory promotion of the applied argument to pivot but no overt applicative marking. Thus what has been called applicative morphology may actually be promotion morphology. The table furthermore points to an overtness distinction between high applicatives (overt) and low applicatives (non-overt) (Marantz 1993). The relationship between overtness and applicatives poses an interesting question for future research.