
Short Passives in Japanese Dialects*

HIDEYA TAKAHASHI AND KENSUKE EMURA

Iwate Prefectural University

1 Introduction

The syntax of Japanese passives has been the topic of numerous previous studies in generative approaches, virtually all of which assume that *(r)are* is taken as a single morpheme. Conversely, such theoretical literature has overlooked the fact that dialects of the Tohoku region and others employ the 'short' form *(r)ar* with *e* omitted as the predicate of direct passives:¹

- (1) a. Hata-ga *ag-e-rar-da*.
flag-NOM go up-CAUS-PASS-PAST
'The flag was raised.'
- b. Harigane-ga *mag-e-rar-da*.
wire-NOM bend-CAUS-PASS-PAST
'The wire was bent.'

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¹ Unless otherwise indicated, the data presented here are taken from the Morioka dialect, which is spoken in Iwate Prefecture.

In Standard Japanese, on the other hand, passive predicates are formed through attaching *(r)are* to preceding verbal stems, and *(r)ar* is exclusively found as part of inchoative predicates such as $\surd ag-ar$ 'to go up' in (2a), which is paired with the transitive counterpart $\surd ag-e$ 'to raise' in (2b).

- (2) a. Hata-ga *ag-ar-ta*.
 wire-NOM go up-INCH-PAST
 'The flag went up.'
- b. Taro-ga hata-wo *ag-e-ta*.
 T-NOM flag-ACC rise-CAUS-PAST
 'Taro raised the flag.'

The purpose of this short paper is to briefly present a structural analysis of the syncretic morphology of *(r)ar* in dialectal direct passives and inchoatives in Standard Japanese. Specifically, adopting the basic framework of Distributed Morphology (Marantz 1997, 2001), we argue (i) that *(r)ar* is an exponent of $v_{[GO]}$, which is a functional head associated with a class of 'change of state' verbs and (ii) that the distinct behaviors between passive *(r)ar* and inchoative *(r)ar* come from structural differences concerning the presence/absence of Voice and $v_{[CAUS]}$.

2 Direct Passives and Inchoatives in Tohoku Dialects

While short passive with *(r)ar* is not observed in Standard Japanese but is possible only as a dialectal variation in the Tohoku region, there are no obvious differences in the morphology of inchoatives: the expressions of (2a, b) are totally felicitous as inchoatives uniformly in Tohoku dialects as well as in Standard Japanese. One might argue that what we are calling the short passive here is not substantially different from or even to be treated in the same manner as inchoatives in Standard Japanese, accordingly. At this point, we need to mention Kageyama's (1996) conception of causative/inchoative alternation, in which a lexical operation of de-causativization is assumed to trigger the suppression or deletion of an external argument to derive *(r)ar* inchoatives prior to the syntax component. At first glance, Kageyama's lexical approach is plausible for *(r)ar* passives at first glance, as is evident from the parallelism between (3a) and (3b):

- (3) a. Hata-ga (**Taro-niyotte*) *ag-e-rar-da*.
 flag-NOM (**by T*) go up-CAUS-PASS-PAST
 'The flag was raised (**by Taro*).'
- b. Hata-ga (**Taro-niyotte*) *ag-ar-da*.
 flag-NOM (*by T*) go up-INCH-PAST

'The flag went up (by Taro).'

The overt realization of AGENT as an adjunct *by*-phrase is not allowed in both kinds of (*r*)*ar* predicates, as correctly predicted from the de-causativization analysis. However, licensing of control clauses, which is another well-established diagnosis of the syntactic presence of AGENT, points to the opposite result. Let us look at the following.

- (4) a. Harigane-ga (*bo-wo tabane-ru tame-ni*) *mag-e-rar*-da.
 wire-NOM (stick-ACC bundle in-order-to) bend-CAUS-PASS-PAST
 'A wire was bent (to bundle sticks).'
- b. Harigane-ga (**bo-wo tabane-ru tame-ni*) *mag-ar*-da.
 wire-NOM (stick-ACC bundle in-order-to) bend-INCH-PAST
 'A wire was bent (to bundle sticks).'

The contrast between passive (*r*)*ar* and inchoative (*r*)*ar* in (4) shows that the former (but not the latter) is compatible with a control clause, with its subject PRO construed with AGENT of the main verb. Given that the syntactic presence of AGENT of the matrix verb is responsible for licensing of PRO in control clauses, facts from (3) and (4) will lead us to the conclusion that AGENT of the underlying verb is only suppressed but is still syntactically active in the passive predicate with (*r*)*ar*, in contrast to (*r*)*ar* inchoatives, in which AGENT is implied only semantically, and hence Kageyama's (1996) lexical approach is not applicable to the short passive with (*r*)*ar* in Tohoku dialects.²

In fact, (*r*)*ar* direct passives and (*r*)*ar* inchoatives differ from each other in the type of verbs that they can select. As passive (*r*)*ar* always entails the involvement of AGENT/CAUSER, which brings about a causation in the eventuality, denoting the emergence/occurrence of 'change of state' for THEME, it follows that passive (*r*)*ar* can be attached only to the 'change of state/location' class of transitives, as exemplified in (5).

- (5) *ag-e-rar* (*ag* 'to open'), *har-ar* (*har* 'to put up'), *hos-ar* (*hos* 'to hang'), *kag-ar* (*kag* 'to write'), *kagom-ar* (*kagom* 'to surround'), *kawag-as-ar* (*kawag-as* 'to dry'), *mag-e-rar* (*mag-e* 'to bend'), *og-*

² This is reminiscent of Stroik's (2002) argument for the syntactic status of demoted/suppressed AGENT in English middles. Not surprisingly, some (*r*)*ar* inchoatives derived from the five-grade conjugation class of verbs, such as *kag-ar* from *kag* 'to write' or *og-ar* 'to put', are currently conventionalized as property-denoting predicates like middle verbs in Tohoku dialects.

ar (*og* 'to place'), *tad-ar* (*taz* 'to stand'), *tog-as-ar* (*tog-as* 'to melt'), *war-ar* (*war* 'to break'), *yag-ar* (*yag* 'to burn')

(*R*)*ar* inchoatives, on the other hand, are subject to no such selectional restrictions, or rather they allow an interpretation that the event denoted by the verb is made possible to happen spontaneously, as in the contrasts in (6) and (7a).

- (6) Kaze-ga *sizum-ar-da*/**sizum-e-rar-da*.
 wind-NOM calm-INCH-PAST/calm-CAUS-PASS-PAST
 'The wind dropped.'
- (7) a. Taro-sa cyumoku-ga *atsum-ar-da*/**atsum-e-rar-da*.
 T-DAT attention-NOM gather-INCH-PAST/gather-CAUS-PASS-PAST
 'Taro got attention.'
- b. Gakusei-ga takusan *atsum-ar-da/atsum-e-rar-da*.
 Student-NOM many gather-INCH-PAST/gather-CAUS-PASS-PAST
 'Many students gathered.'

At the same time, the acceptable status of (7b) shows that inchoative (*r*)*ar* is felicitous also in volitional readings with the agentive subject, while passive (*r*)*ar* imposes requirements on its subject to be THEME of the underlying verb.

3 Indirect Passives in Tohoku Dialects

Now let us turn our eyes to peculiar properties of indirect passives in Tohoku dialects, which are not observed in the cases of dialectal direct passives or inchoatives we have seen in the previous section. The relevant data are the following:

- (8) Tohoku Dialects:
- a. Taro-ga tonari-no heya-**gara** *sawag-are-da*/**sawag-ar-da*
 T-NOM next-GEN tenant-from make a noise-PASS-PAST
 'Taro was annoyed at his neighbor being noisy.'
- b. *pro*_(I) osanai-toki haha-**gara** *sin-are*/**ar-da*.
 (I) very young-when mother-from die-PASS-PAST
 'I suffered my mother's death when I was very young.'
- (9) Standard Japanese
- a. Taro-ga tonari-no heya-**ni** *sawag-are-ta*
 T-NOM next-GEN tenant-by make a noise-PASS-PAST

- 'Taro was annoyed at his neighbor being noisy.'
- b. *pro*_(I) osanai-toki haha-**ni** *sin-are*-da.
 (I) very young-when mother-by die-PASS-PAST
 'I suffered my mother's death when I was very young.'

First, as seen in the parallelism to the case from Standard Japanese in (9), the predicate of indirect passives is not formed from short (*r*)*ar* but through the attachment of its full-fledged counterpart (*r*)*are* even in Tohoku dialects. Next, while inanimate as well as animate THEME DP can surface as the subject in dialectal direct passives and inchoatives with (*r*)*ar*, the subject of indirect passives always needs to be animate.

In addition, in indirect passives with (*r*)*are* in Tohoku dialects, AGENT of the base event is typically realized as SOURCE marked with *gara* 'from' even in cases where *ni* 'by' would be chosen in Standard Japanese.³ Again, the facts from this correlation between the passive morphology, the animacy of the subject, and the lexical choice of the demoted AGENT will be totally mysterious as long as we continue to take (*r*)*are* as a unique passive predicate. It is worth mentioning here is that passivized verbs of giving in Tohoku dialects can be used in place of verbs of receiving in benefactive contexts, in which *gara*-phrases occur as the SOURCE argument. The relevant data is the following.

- (10) a. Tohoku Dialects
*pro*_(I) haha-**gara** sen-yen *moraw/ker-are*-da.
 (I) mother-from 1000-yen receive/give-PASS-PAST
 'I got 1000 yen from my mother.'
- b. Standard Japanese
*pro*_(I) haha-**kara** sen-yen *moraw/*age-are*-ta.
 (I) mother-from 1000-yen receive/give-PASS-PAST
 'I got 1000 yen from my mother.'

With this in mind, let us further look at the following.

- (11) a. Tohoku Dialects

³ In Tohoku dialects, *gara*-phrases can also be used in Kuroda's (1979) *ni-yotte* passives:

- (i) Kaikai-ga syacyo **ni***(*yotte*) *sengen-s-are*-ta. (Standard Japanese)
 opening-Nom president by declaration-do-Pass-Past
 'Opening remarks were made by the president.'
- (ii) Kaikai-ga syacyo **gara** *sengen-s-are*-da. (Tohoku Dialects)
 opening-Nom president by declaration-do-Pass-Past
 'Opening remarks were made by the president.'

- Taro-ga Hanako-gara hatarak-*te-* *moraw/ker-are*-da.
 T-NOM H-from work-INFL receive/give-PASS-PAST
 'Taro had Hanako work for him.'
- b. Standard Japanese
 Taro-ga Hanako-ni hatarak-*te-* *moraw/*ag-e-rare*-ta.
 T-NOM H-DAT work-INFL receive/give-PASS-PAST
 'Taro had Hanako work for him.'

As with the case of (10), a passivized verb of giving *ker-are* 'to be given' in Tohoku Dialects is equivalent to *moraw* 'to receive' in its auxiliary use (11a), which is in clear contrast with the ungrammatical status of *age-rare* 'to be given' in (11b) from Standard Japanese.

Lastly but importantly, the fact that a passive predicate *ke-rare* is felicitous in the benefactive context indicates that the animate subject of indirect passive (*r)are* in Tohoku dialects is considered to be licensed as BENEFICIARY, AFFECTEE, or EXPERIENCER on a par with the subject of *moraw* 'to receive'.

4 An Analysis

We adopt the basic framework of Distributed Morphology (DM; Marantz 1997, 2001) and the decompositional approach to passives developed in Nakajima (2014, 2019) and Takahashi and Nakajima (2019) to assume that the structure of VP in the traditional sense is basically four-layered in which (i) Root is acategorial before it is merged with the first category-determining functional head but may introduce a Theme argument, (ii) *v* forms the complement of Voice and hosts (in)transitivizing suffixes (Pykkänen 2002, 2008) to mark the type of the eventuality (e.g. BE, DO, GO, etc.), (iii) Voice introduces Agent of the verb and is also responsible for licensing Accusative Case (Kratzer 1996, a.o.), and (iv) the top of the VP-layer is GET whose Spec is occupied by an EXPERIENCER/BENEFICIARY/MALFACTIVE argument with [+m(ental)], in the sense of Reinhart (2002). The configuration of VP proposed here is schematically shown below.

- (12) [_{GetP} EXPERIENCER [_{VoiceP} AGENT [_{VP} [_{VP} THEME $\sqrt{\text{Root}}$] *v*] Voice] Get]

Our main proposal is that while both direct dialectal short passives and inchoatives share $vP_{[GO]}$ which is overtly realized as (*r)ar*, the derivation of

the former alone projects further into VoiceP_[PASS]. Let us look at the following structures.⁴

(13) a. Short Passive *mag-e-rar*:

[VoiceP ~~AGENT~~ [vP[GO] [vP[CAUS] [vP THEME √*mag*] *e*] (*r*)*ar*]
Voice_[PASS]]

b. Inchoative *mag-ar*:

[v[GO] [vP THEME √*mag*] *ar*]

(*R*)*ar* occurs as *v* to denote the occurrence of the base event in the passive clause, which is structurally embedded under √P (or vP-√P) as its complement. Concerning the origin of (*r*)*ar*, we assume that it comes from the grammaticalization of *ar* 'to be', a verb of appearance/existence. The main verb *ar* in (14) denotes an event that the volcanic eruption happened, and accordingly it takes an event nominal *hunka* 'an eruption' as an internal argument which surfaces as the subject of the clause.

(14) Kazan-no hunka-ga *ar*-ta.
volcano-GEN eruption-NOM be-PAST
'There occurred a volcanic eruption.'

As for the structure of short passives in (13a), the layered structure involving Voice, *v*_[GO], and *v*_[CAUS] entails a 'change' brought about by the presence of AGENT/CAUSER in its eventuality. Second, the presence of Voice_[PASS] for passives in (13a) can accommodate the fact that the morpheme is only attached to transitives. It also follows immediately that the suppressed external argument at [Spec, Voice_[PASS]] may license PRO in the control clause as seen in (4a) above. Next, the structure (13a), in which (*r*)*ar* at *v*_[GO] selects for a vP_[CAUSE], correctly predicts that a lexical causative suffix (*e* or *as* at *v*_[CAUSE]) may precede passive (*r*)*ar*, as in *mag-e-(r)ar*, *kawag-as-ar*, or others from the list of (5). In addition, the lack of the Get layer in (13a) easily accounts for the fact that no animate subject with the role of EXPERIENCER, BENEFICIARY, or MALFACTIVE, which otherwise would be licensed in the domain of Get in cases of indirect passives, is introduced.

On the other hand, assuming that inchoative (*r*)*ar* is directly merged with the root, we can predict that a wider range of verbs, including statives, form change-of-state predicates construed as purely spontaneous with no

⁴ We assume that the insertion of /r/ is needed to avoid the sequence of two vowels in Japanese.

involvement of AGENT/CAUSER, as seen in the case of *sizum-ar* ('to calm down') in (6) above:

- (15) a. Kaze-ga *sizum-ar*-da.
 wind-NOM calm-INCH-PAST
 'The wind dropped.'
 b. [_{VP}GO] [_{VP} *kaze*_(THEME) √*sizum*] *ar*]

In connection with this, let us observe the distribution of an inchoative verb *ag-ar* in (16a), which is lexically related to another simple intransitive *ag* 'to open' in (17).

- (16) a. Kono tobira-wa kantan-ni *ag-anai*.
 this door-TOP easily open-NEG-PRES
 'This door doesn't open easily.'
 b. Kono tobira-wa kantan-ni *ag-ar-anak-ar-da*.
 this door-TOP easily open-INCH-NEG-COP-PRES
 'The door wasn't opened easily.'
- (17) Hakubutsukan-wa jyuu-ji-ni *ag-u*/**ag-ar-u*.
 museum-TOP ten o'clock-DAT open-PRES/open-INCH-PRES
 'The museum opens at ten o'clock.'

The interpretive difference between (16a) and (16b), coupled with the ungrammatical status of *ag-ar* in (17), shows that *ag-ar* can be used only if the involvement of some causing event is implied, which, in our terms, is obtained when the notion of change-of-state attested in the event of a door's opening is derived from an unmarked and simple intransitive *ag*, as in (18). As predicted, *ag-e-rar* as a short passive is derived by attaching (*r*)*ar* to a transitive *ag-e* as well.

- (18) √*ag-e* (vt) → √*ag-e-rar* (Pass)
 √*ag* (vi) → √*ag-ar* (Inch)

Moreover, the entailment of change-of-state for (*r*)*ar* predicates can give a natural answer to the fact that there are indeed speakers of Tohoku dialects who prefer (*r*)*ar* to be always accompanied by a progressive suffix *-te-i-ru* to express the continuation of the resultant state of the event (e.g. *Ji-ga kag-ar-te-i-ru* 'A word is written.').

Let us next return to cases of indirect passives in Japanese. The partial structure proposed for (8a) is the following.

- (19) Indirect Passive *sawag-ar-e*:
 [GetP *Taro tonari-no heya-i-gara* [VoiceP PRO_i [_{VP} [_{VP} *√sawag*] *ar*] Voice] *e*]

Assuming that the morpheme *e* in passive (*r*)*are* is the grammaticalized verb *e* 'to get', the occurrence of the demoted AGENT as a *gara*-phrase is straightforward because the SOURCE argument of the main verb *e* as a verb of receiving is typically marked with *gara* 'from'.⁵

- (20) Taro-ga *haha-gara* kozukai-wo *e*-da.
 T-NOM mother-from pocket money get-PAST

Given that a BENEFACTIVE/MALFACTIVE argument is assigned the feature [+m(ental)] in the sense of Reinhart (2002), we claim that the animacy restriction on the subject of passive (*r*)*are* can be reduced to requirements on licensing of an animate DP at [Spec, Get], and hence the animate passive subjects in (8) and (9), *Taro* and 1st-person empty pronoun, are all legitimate, and hence the affectedness effect on the passive subject will follow.

In fact, this line of argument may be compatible with the conception of Higher Applicative in the sense of Aoyagi (2010): a position higher than Voice is available in Japanese to license an argument with the feature [+MENTAL, +BENEFACTIVE/+MALFACTIVE], and its PF exponent is *moraw* or *rare*. If the functional category Get on the top of the VP structure shares properties with Higher Applicative, the presence or absence of the animacy condition on the passive subject could be reduced to the availability of the feature [+MENTAL] at Get, although the correspondence between Get and Higher Applicative requires consideration in light of much broader empirical data.

Before closing this section, we would like to point out facts concerning interpretive differences between (*r*)*ar* passives with inanimate subject and (*r*)*are* indirect passives. The data concerned here is a pair of sentences like the following.

- (21) a. Kichou-na syasin-ga *yabur-ar*-da.
 valuable picture-NOM tear-PASS-PAST
 'A valuable picture was torn to pieces (by someone).'

⁵ Although we believe that our reasoning for the occurrence of *gara*-phrases is on the right track, we need to be careful in treating cases of Standard Japanese because the demoted Agent is well known to be realized as *ni(yotte)* 'by', which would be a potential problem for our proposed analysis and thus awaits further inspection.

- b. *Taro-ga*_(dareka-ni) kichou-nasyasin-wo *yabur-ar-e*-da. ⁶
 T-NOM (someone-DAT) valuable picture-ACC tear-PASS-PAST
 'Taro felt sad that someone tore the valuable picture into pieces.'

(21b) is an indirect passive apparently formed from (21a) by adding *Taro* as the overt subject of *(r)are*. To begin with, (21a) is a simple statement about the picture being torn. In (21b), on the other hand, the clause as a whole denotes the occurrence of the event of someone tearing a picture in front of *Taro*, i.e. it is not a simple statement about the picture itself but rather a statement which reads "it is *Taro* who is affected by the result of the event of someone tearing his beloved picture". As a result, the relevant contrast between the two types of passives can also be captured if the *e* part of *(r)are* in (21b) is assumed to be an exponent of Get, by which *Taro* is licensed as the passive subject. Interestingly enough, even if the animate passive subject is phonetically empty due to the *pro*-drop property of the Japanese language and the surface realization of argument *syasin* 'picture' along with its Case particle is the same as (21a) accordingly, *(r)are* is chosen and the affectedness on the empty subject is obtained indeed, as seen in (22).⁷

- (22) *pro*_(I) (dareka-ni) kichou-na syasin-ga *yabur-ar-e*/**ar*-ta.
 (I) valuable picture-NOM tear-PASS-PAST
 'Taro felt sad that someone tore his beloved picture into pieces.'

Under our proposed analysis for indirect passives, the empty subject is introduced at the Spec of Get, followed by its movement to the surface subject or further into TOPIC position, while the internal argument *syasin* 'picture' is assigned THEME in its place and receives the Nominative particle *ga* according to the Case system available in the course of derivation.

- (23) [_{TP} *pro*_(Taro)_i [_{GetP} \bar{t}_i [_{VoiceP} [_{vP} [_{√P} *syasin-ga* \sqrt{yabur}] (*r)ar*] Voice] *e*]
 T]

⁶ Let us compare (21b) in the text with the following (i), in which the internal argument of the verb *syasin* 'picture' is marked as Nominative with the particle *ga* in its end.

(i) ??*Taro-ga* kichou-na *syasin-ga* *yabur-are*-ta.

In my intuition, (i) is much worse than (15b), which in turn would be considerably improved in acceptability if the Case particle *ga* on *Taro* were replaced by the topic marker *wa*, as in (ii).

(ii) *Taro-wa* kichou-na *syasin-ga* *yabur-are*-ta.

⁷ The affectedness effect on empty pronominal subject in passive has been traditionally understood under the notion of Implicit Affectee.

From the discussion so far, we can conclude that, as for *(r)ar* short passive with inanimate subject, no affectedness effect on a par with cases of *(r)are* passive with animate subject arises because of the lack of the domain of Get, which is responsible for licensing the AFFECTEE argument at its Spec.

5 Conclusion

In Tohoku dialects, two types of passives employ different forms: one is what we call the ‘short’ passive, in which *(r)ar* but not full-fledged *(r)are* can appear as the passive predicate; on the other hand, in indirect passives, the animacy restriction on the subject is observed and the passive predicate must be realized as *(r)are*, as in the case of Standard Japanese. We have also shown that *(r)ar* can be used as an inchoative marker in Tohoku dialects as well as in Standard Japanese, aiming at a structural analysis of the syncretic morphology of *(r)ar* in the two languages. In the latter half of this paper, we have pursued a unified analysis of two kinds of dialectal passives, on the one hand, and the syncretic morphology of *rar* in short passives and inchoatives, on the other, under the basic framework of DM and the four-layered VP structure. Our specific proposals are (i) that *(r)ar* is an exponent of $v_{[GO]}$, which is a functional head associated with a class of ‘change-of-state’ verbs and (ii) that the distinct behaviors between passive *(r)ar* passives and inchoative *(r)ar* come from structural differences concerning the presence/absence of Voice and $v_{[CAUS]}$.

If our proposed analysis is on the right track, passive *(r)ar* in Tohoku dialects would be counted as a piece of empirical evidence in favor of a decompositional approach to *(r)are*. Significantly, from the historical point of view, the relevant animacy restriction on indirect passives could be regarded as a remnant of passives in older Japanese: short passive with *(r)ar* was diachronically followed by *(r)are* passive with the animate subject, a situation our proposed hierarchical VP structure can predict on the assumption that the development of functional morphemes in Japanese is brought about by the upward expansion of VP structure and multiple suffixation on verbal heads.

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