Unaccusativity and East Asian Languages: Issues and Prospects*

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1. Introduction

It is well-known that an intransitive verb like 死 sī ‘die’ in Chinese occurs with a postverbal NP, as in 死了一頭牛 Sī-le yī tóu niú (die-perf one CL cow, ‘A cow died’). The word order here is somewhat unexpected, given that Chinese is basically an SVO language. For this and other reasons, this construction has been a topic of much discussion in traditional Chinese linguistics1), and some important descriptive generalizations have been made concerning the membership of the class of verbs entering this construction and the nature of the NPs which are permitted to occur postverbally in this construction.

Huang (1987) analyzes this phenomenon from the perspective of the Unaccusative Hypothesis, suggesting that verbs entering the construction above (his
Type II Existential Sentences) are all **unaccusative** verbs (see also Travis (1984) and Sybesma (1999)). Examples include 来 lái ‘come’, 發生 fāshēng ‘happen’ and 到 dào ‘arrive’, which have to do with “coming into existence,” or those like 死 sǐ ‘die’, 跑 páo ‘escape’ and 去 qù ‘go’, which have to do with “going out of existence” (Huang (1987: 227)). On the other hand, **unergative** verbs like 哭 kū ‘cry’ are not permitted to occur in this construction, so contrasts of the following sort obtain in Chinese (Huang (1987: 241/232)).

(1) a. 來了兩個人。  
Lái-le liàngge rén.  
**come-PERF two men**

b. * 哭了一個人。  
* Kū-le yīge rén.  
**cry-PERF a man**

As will be discussed in the next section, an unaccusative verb is assumed to have no external argument (or logical subject), its unique argument being an internal argument (or logical object), which is therefore linked to the syntactic position of Direct Object. With this independent assumption about unaccusativity, Huang suggests that (1a) simply reflects its initial syntactic structure, involving no such process as “subject-inversion” (Huang (1987: 232)).

Huang’s analysis, crucially relying on the universal notion of unaccusativity, no longer views a paradigm like (1) as a phenomenon specific to Chinese: rather, it is now regarded as just one of those unaccusativity-related phenomena which are widely observed in human languages.

As a particularly clear case demonstrating that (1) is indeed an instance of a more general phenomenon, let us consider the following French facts. (2a) and (2b) represent intransitive clauses based on unaccusatives and unergatives, respectively.

(2) a. Trois filles sont arrivées/venues.  
‘Three girls arrived/came.’

b. Trois garçons ont dormi/pleuré.  
‘Three boys slept/cried.’
These examples share the ordinary surface order NP-V (ignoring the perfect auxiliaries, to which we will return below). (2a) and (2b) behave differently, however, as to whether they allow the alternative order V-NP. (2a) allows it, but (2b) does not. Observe the following contrast (see Kayne (1975) for a highly informative discussion of this construction; see also Burzio (1986)).

(3) a. Il est arrivé/venu trois filles.
   ‘There arrived/came three girls.’

   b. * Il a dormi/pleuré trois garçons.
   ‘There slept/cried three boys.’

The similarities between this contrast and that observed in the Chinese examples cited in (1) above are obvious enough, but there is a further point of similarity here. (3a) represents a phenomenon known as “Extraposition of Indefinite NP” — so called because the postverbal NP in this construction must be indefinite, as can be observed from (4).

(4) * Il est arrivé/venu le garçon hier soir.
   ‘There arrived/came THE boy last night.’

This, of course, reminds us of the fact that the V-NP construction in Chinese also displays a similar effect. The following example is from Huang (1987: 241).

(5) * 来了那個人。
   Lái-le nàge rén.
   come-PERF THAT man

Given these similarities between French and Chinese, the traditionally observed properties of the Chinese V-NP construction can be taken as raising important issues in Universal Grammar above and beyond the specific interests of Chinese grammar.

2. **The Unaccusative Hypothesis**

The Unaccusative Hypothesis, originally suggested by Perlmutter (1978) within the framework of Relational Grammar, has been interpreted and implemented in various ways (cf. Levin and Rappaport Hovav (1995, 2005)). The
following is a possible implementation of the central idea underlying the hypothesis.

(6) a. Transitive: \((x\ (y))\)  BREAK, KICK, KISS, SHOOT, etc.
b. Unergative: \((x\ (\ ))\)  WORK, LAUGH, DANCE, CRY, etc.
c. Unaccusative: \((\ (y))\)  FALL, GROW, RISE, ARRIVE, etc.

As shown here, the traditional class of intransitive verbs is divided into the two classes of unergative and unaccusative verbs, with distinct formal properties at the level of argument structure ((6b) vs. (6c)), which would be reflected in their syntactic structures: the subject of a simple unergative clause, like the subject of a simple transitive clause, originates as the "subject," i.e., in the position to which the external argument \(x\) is linked, whereas the subject of a simple unaccusative clause would be a derived subject, originating in the direct object position, to which the internal argument \(y\) is linked.

Consider verbs meaning ARRIVE and GROW in languages like German, which have the properties that they select BE as the perfect auxiliary (cf. (7)), they are not passivizable (cf. (8)), and they can be used attributively (cf. (9)).

(7) Auxiliary Selection:
   a. Die Gäste sind angekommen.
      the guests are arrived
   b. Das Kind ist gewachsen.
      the child is grown

(8) Passivization:
   a. * Es wurde angekommen.
      it became arrived
   b. * Es wird (von den Kindern) schnell gewachsen.
      it becomes (by the children) quickly grown

(9) Attributive Use of Past Participle:
   a. die angekommenen Gäste
      the arrived guests
   b. das gewachsene Kind
      the grown child
The pattern observed here has often been cited in the literature as being characteristic of unaccusative verbs. Unergative verbs such as those meaning work and dance are crucially different in this respect, displaying the properties that they select have as the perfect auxiliary (cf. (10)), they are passivizable (cf. (11)), and they cannot be used attributively (cf. (12)).

(10) Auxiliary Selection:
   a. Die Gäste haben gearbeitet.
      the guests have worked
   b. Das Kind hat getanzt.
      the child has danced

(11) Passivization:
   a. Es wurde gearbeitet.
      it becomes worked
   b. Es wird hier (von den Kindern) oft getanzt.
      it becomes here (by the children) often danced

(12) Attributive Use of Past Participle:
   a. * die gearbeiteten Gäste
      the worked guests
   b. * das getanzte Kind
      the danced child

Like unergative verbs, transitive verbs select have and are potentially passivizable.

(13) Das Mädchen hat den Studenten geküsst.
    the girl has the student kissed

(14) Der Student wurde vom Mädchen geküsst.
    the student was by the girl kissed

Transitive verbs also successfully enter the attributive construction. As stressed by Grewendorf (1989: 15), however, the head noun of the attributive construction based on a transitive verb must be interpreted as the direct internal argument of the verb (as in (15-i)), and not as its external argument (as in (15-ii)).
The impossibility of the "subject interpretation" shown in (15-ii) is parallel to the ill-formedness of *THE DANCED CHILD, etc. Given that the "object interpretation" shown in (15-i) is possible, the fact that unaccusative verbs can be used in the attributive construction makes sense since they are assumed to have a direct internal argument, exactly like transitive verbs. To capture these observations, something like the following generalization is typically assumed in the literature where "participle II" in the quote refers to the past participle.

(16) ... the attributive participle II is predicated of an underlying direct object. (Grewendorf (1989: 19))

Similarly, the Unaccusative Hypothesis provides a way to state interesting generalizations on the non-passivizability of unaccusative verbs and the distributions of perfect auxiliaries HAVE and BE in Germanic and Romance. Given that an unaccusative clause involves an advancement of direct object to subject exactly as in a passive clause, the fact that unaccusatives resist passivization follows from the 1-Advancement Exclusiveness Law (1AEX), which states, informally, that "the set of advancements to 1 (= "subject") in a single clause contains at most one member," i.e., there may only be one advancement to subject per clause (cf. Perlmutter and Postal (1984: 84) and Marantz (1984: 144)). In the framework of Chomsky (1981), where the defining property of a passive morpheme is assumed to be the suppression of the external Θ-role of a base verb, the 1AEX generalization can be viewed as resulting from the impossibility of suppressing an external Θ-role when no such role is available. This is essentially the suggestion made in Marantz (1984) and Jaeggli (1986)\(^2\).

As for the perfect auxiliaries in Germanic and Romance, the core pattern of HAVE/BE selection can be summarized as follows.

(17) a. Transitive and unergative verbs/clauses require HAVE.

b. Unaccusative verbs/clauses require (or are compatible with) BE.
The simple generalization, made possible by the Unaccusative Hypothesis, seems to be that a predicate with an external argument selects HAVE whereas a predicate with no external argument selects, or are compatible with, BE3. As far as the core cases are concerned, this generalization is largely valid for languages like Italian and German, though even these languages display certain complex phenomena that go beyond the simplistic picture given in (17). For example, languages and dialects differ with respect to the range of verbs for which BE is used, and within a single language or dialect, there are verbs for which either HAVE or BE may be used. For various generalizations and analyses, see Perlmutter (1983), Hoekstra (1984), Rosen (1984), Burzio (1986), Grewendorf (1989), Legendre (1989), Labelle (1990), van Valin (1990), Shannon (1992), Kayne (1993), Kaufmann (1995), Wunderlich (1997), Ackema (1999), Sorace (2000). See also Sankoff and Thibault (1977).

The generalization "transitive verbs never select HAVE" is widely assumed in the literature to have no real exception to it in the HAVE/BE languages, but even this has been challenged on empirical grounds: see Lieber and Baayen (1997) and Washio (2004). The latter work discusses some of the complexities associated with auxiliary choice with data from Old Japanese, which will be briefly summarized below.

3. Possible Manifestations of Unaccusativity in Japanese and Korean4)

3.1. Auxiliary Selection in Old Japanese

Old Japanese has two perfect auxiliaries, -tu and -nu, which have been known to be selective of the verbs they combine with5. The oldest generalization suggested in Japanese linguistics for the distribution of these auxiliaries was that -tu attaches to a transitive verb and -nu to an intransitive verb, a generalization which can be observed most clearly in examples of the following sort, where the verbs nasi- 'do, make' and nari- 'become' form a transitive-intransitive (or "causative") pair6.

(18) a. ohokimi-ha ... tawi-wo miyako-to nasi-tu. [M, 4260]
   emperor-TOP country-ACC capital-AS make-PERF.III
   'The emperor ... has turned the country into the (capital) city.'
b. Kase-no yama ... miyako-to nari-nu. [M, 929]

Kase-GEN mountain capital-AS become-PERF.III

'Mt. Kase ... has become the (capital) city.'

As far as causative pairs like nasi-nari are concerned, the transitivity-based generalization mentioned above holds true without exception\(^7\). Beyond this, however, the generalization is clearly insufficient. For instance, intransitive verbs do not behave uniformly with respect to the choice of auxiliaries: some, like sirake- ‘become white’, pattern with nari- ‘become’ in selecting -nu as in (19), but others, like asobi- ‘play’, are found only with -tu as in (20).

(19) ... kami-mo sirake-nu ... [M, 1740]

hair-TOO whiten-PERF.III

‘... my hair has also become white ...’

(20) ... taki-ni asobi-turu. [M, 1104]

fall-LOC play-PERF.IV

‘... (we) have played in/beside the fall.’

Observations like these lead many scholars to suggest possible alternatives to the transitivity-based classification of verbs, some of which resemble the modern classification of verbs based on the unergative-unaccusative distinction. Thus, the following is a possible restatement, in modern terms, of the generalization that has come down from the nineteenth century.

(21) Transitives and unergatives select -tu (parallel to HAVE-selection).

(22) Unaccusatives select -nu (parallel to BE-selection).

Given in (23) are some selected examples of Old Japanese verbs attested in the perfect form.

(23) a. Verbs selecting -tu (transitives):


b. Verbs selecting -tu (unergatives):

asobi- ‘play’, ukehi- ‘swear, pray’, nageki- ‘sigh, lament’, sane-
‘sleep’, *wemi*- ‘laugh, smile’, *nenaki*- ‘weep, cry, sob’, etc.

c. Verbs selecting -nu (unaccusatives):

*are*- ‘be ruined’, *hi*- ‘dry, drain, ebb’, *huri*- ‘become old, desolate’, *ide*- ‘come out, go out’, *keuse*- ‘vanish’, *siwami*- ‘wrinkle’, *miyakobi*- ‘be urbanized’, *moe*- ‘burn’, etc.

For a more exhaustive listing, see Washio (2004) which is a large-scale comparison of -*tu/-*nu selection in Old Japanese and HAVE/BE selection in European languages, with particular focus on the hebben/zijn selection in Dutch. As shown there, the Dutch verbs semantically corresponding to those listed in (23a, b) select hebben ‘have’ whereas those falling under the category (23c) select zijn ‘be’. For example, *schieten* ‘shoot’, *drinken* ‘drink’ and other transitive verbs, like unergative verbs such as *spelen* ‘play’ and *huilen* ‘weep’, select hebben whereas *rimpelen* ‘wrinkle’, *urbaniseren* ‘urbanize’ and other unaccusative verbs select zijn.

The similarity between Dutch and Old Japanese goes beyond these core cases, however. Unlike languages such as German, French and Italian, Dutch has a small class of transitive verbs which strongly favor zijn as the perfect auxiliary. Old Japanese also has a small class of transitive verbs which strongly favor -nu. What is surprising is the fact that the classes of such exceptional transitives in the two languages overlap each other to a significant extent, and where they do not, some reasonable independent explanations can be offered for why they do not.

For Dutch, Lieber and Baayen (1997: 811) list verbs like *passeren* ‘pass’, *vergeten* ‘forget’, *naderen* ‘approach’ and *volgen* ‘follow’ as exceptional transitives8). The Old Japanese equivalents of the first three of these verbs, *sugi*- ‘pass’, *wasure*- ‘forget’ and *tikaduki*- ‘approach’, also select -nu, as in the following examples.

(24) ... kono matubara-wo kehu-ka sugi-na-mu. [M, 1674]

this pine grove-ACC today-PCL pass-PERF.I-INFER

‘... would (he) pass this pine grove today?’
Of all the transitive verbs listed in the lexicon, then, both Old Japanese and Modern Dutch pick up verbs like forget and pass, and treat them in a special manner. Since this is thought not likely to be accidental, one is led to conclude that -tu/-nu selection and hebben/zijn selection are essentially the same phenomenon, and it is by the very nature of this phenomenon that verbs like forget and pass are favored as exceptions over many other transitive verbs.

Auxiliary selection is therefore a phenomenon not confined to European languages. Some implications of this observation, both descriptive and theoretical, are discussed in Washio (2004).

### 3.2. Do/Become Selection in Korean

Japanese and Korean share a large number of words of Chinese origin. Nouns in Chinese enter Japanese and Korean directly as nouns (e.g., 宗教 zōngjiào ‘religion’, shuukyoo (J), congkyo (K)). When verbs in Chinese enter Japanese and Korean, as a rule they are received as nouns, and then turned into verbs by the “N-DO” strategy. For example, 暗殺 ànshā is a verb in Chinese meaning “to assassinate” (cf. (27)), but its counterparts in Japanese (ansatu) and Korean (amsal) are nouns meaning “assassination,” which are turned into verbs with the help of su- ‘do’ and ha- ‘do’, respectively (ansatu-su-, amsal-ha-), as in (28a, b)⁹).

(27) 職業殺手暗殺了總統。
    Zhiyé shāshǒu ànshā-le zōngtǒng.
    professional killer assassinate-PERF president
    ‘A professional killer assassinated the President.’

(28) a. Sogekihan-ga daitooryoo-o ansatu-si-ta. (J)
    sniper-NOM president-ACC assassination-DO-PAST
b. Cekyekpem-i taythonglyeng-ul amsal-hay-ss-ta. (K)
    sniper-NOM president-ACC assassination-DO-PAST-DEC

The “N-DO” constructions in Japanese and Korean are similar in many respects, which therefore raise similar theoretical issues, the status of the morphemes su- and ha- being one of them. I referred to them above as “DO” since they mean precisely that when they are used as independent verbs, as in the following examples.

(29) a. Nidoto su-ru-na. (J)
    twice DO-PRES-NEG.IMP
    ‘Don’t do (it) again.’

b. Twupen tasi ha-ci mala. (K)
    twice again DO-CI NEG.IMP
    ‘Don’t do (it) again.’

In many instances of the N-DO construction, however, su- and ha- clearly lack the meaning of DO. For example, both Japanese and Korean use the word of Chinese origin 失神 shīshēn ‘relax one’s guard’ with the sense “faint, passing out” (sissin (J), silsin (K)). These nouns are verbalized in Japanese and Korean in exactly the same way as 暗殺 ànshā ‘assassination’, i.e., with the help of su-/ha-, forming the complex verbs sissin-su-/silsin-ha- ‘to faint’. Given the meaning of “Faint” (lack of agentivity, etc.), it must be the case that the DO in the verbal complex FAINT-DO lacks the meaning it has as an independent verb. It is a “light” verb in the sense of Grimshaw and Mester (1988). As such, it makes no substantial contribution to the overall meaning of the complex “N-DO.” In particular, it is the N, not the formal head of the construction, DO, that determines the number of arguments and their roles.

In addition to the N-ha- construction, Korean has another construction based on the verb, toy-, which as an independent verb expresses the sense of “become.” Consider the word 傳染 (chuánrǎn (C), densen (J), cenyem (K)). In Chinese, it is a verb meaning “(for a disease) to transmit, to spread, to be infectious,” which is used in a sentence like “這種病不傳染。” Zhè zhòng bìng bù chuánrǎn (this-kind-disease-NEG-transmit ‘This disease does not transmit/is not
infectious.’). In the Japanese and Korean equivalents of this sentence given in (30a, b), 傳染 (densen, cenyem), being a noun, appears as a part of a complex verb.

   this disease-TOP (human-from human-to) transmission-DO-NEG
   ‘This disease does not transmit (from human to human).’

b. I pyeng-un (salam-eykeyse salam-eykey) cenyem-toy-ci
   this disease-TOP (human-from human-to) transmission-BECOME-CI
   anh-nun-ta.
   NEG-PRES-DEC
   ‘This disease does not transmit (from human to human).’

In the Japanese example (30a), the head of the complex verb is su- ‘do’, the same one that is used with nouns like 暗殺 ansatu ‘assassination’. In the Korean example (30b), we see toy- ‘become’, not ha- ‘do’, the latter being the one used with nouns like 暗殺 amsal ‘assassination’. Thus, Korean has two constructions, N-DO and N-BECOME, which are both rendered by a single construction, N-DO, in Japanese.

In the N-DO/-BECOME constructions in Korean, the N is either transitive or intransitive. 暗殺 amsal ‘assassination’ is an example of transitive Ns whereas 失神 silsin ‘faint’ and 傳染 cenyem ‘transmit, be infectious’ are intransitive Ns. When the N is transitive and is of an appropriate kind, it may combine with toy- ‘become’, deriving a passive construction. Given in (31) is a passive of (28b).

(31) Taythonglyeng-i cekyekpem-eykey amsal-toy-ess-ta.
    president-NOM sniper-BY assassination-BECOME-PAST-DEC
    ‘The President was assassinated by a sniper.’

The Japanese equivalent of (31) is given in (32), where the complex verb N-DO is passivized by the passive morpheme -(r)are.

(32) Daitooryoo-ga sogekihan-ni ansatu-s-are-ta.
    president-NOM sniper-BY assassination-DO-PASS-PAST
The Chinese equivalent of (31) is also a regular passive (‘總統被軍事殺手暗
As mentioned above, intransitive Ns in Korean are verbalized with the help of DO or BECOME. For many Ns, DO is the only possibility (as in (33) where N is 痛哭 thongkok 'wail, weep bitterly'), but there are also quite a few Ns (such as 到着 tochak 'arrival') given in (34), for which DO and BECOME are both possible.

(33) a. Salamtul-i thongkok-hay-ss-ta.
    people-NOM wail-DO-PAST-DEC
    ‘People wailed.’

    people-NOM wail-BECOME-PAST-DEC
    ‘People wailed.’

(34) a. Yelcha-ka tochak-hay-ss-ta.
    train-NOM arrival-DO-PAST-DEC
    ‘A train arrived.’

    train-NOM arrival-BECOME-PAST-DEC
    ‘A train arrived.’

There is a sense in which the N-BECOME construction in Korean bears a similarity to the past participle constructions in European languages. Consider the attributive use of the past participle, which generally displays the pattern schematically shown in (35) (see section two above).

(35) a. ASSASSINATED PERSON

b. * WAILED PERSON

c. ARRIVED TRAIN

Compare this with the following Korean examples, where the morpheme -n is the past tense form of an attributively used verb.

(36) a. amsal-toy-n salam (= (35a))
    assassination-BECOME-PAST person

b. * thongkok-toy-n salam (= (35b))
    wail-BECOME-PAST person
Like (35a), the modified noun in (36a) can only be interpreted as a person who was assassinated, corresponding to the internal argument of the predicate, and there is a contrast between (36b) and (36c), which is parallel to the contrast between (35b) and (35c).

As already discussed, the HAVE/BE selection in Germanic and Romance has also been widely believed to be sensitive to the unergative/unaccusative distinction, which generally displays the pattern schematically shown in (37), where "PP" stands for Past Participle, and the linear order of $V_{pp}$ and O is not relevant (it would be O-$V_{pp}$ in Germanic).

\[
\begin{align*}
(37) & \\
& a. \quad S \ \text{HAVE} \ V_{pp} \ O \quad (V = \text{transitive, e.g., assassinate}) \\
& b. \quad S \ \text{HAVE} \ V_{pp} \quad (V = \text{unergative, e.g., wail}) \\
& c. \quad S \ \text{BE} \ V_{pp} \quad (V = \text{unaccusative, e.g., arrive})
\end{align*}
\]

As summarized here, the compound tenses of transitive and unergative verbs are formed with HAVE whereas BE is generally used with unaccusative verbs\(^{11}\). Compare this with the distribution of light verbs DO and BECOME in Sino-Korean verbs summarized in (38): transitive and unergative nouns in Korean are verbalized with the help of DO (as opposed to BECOME) whereas BECOME is a possible choice for (at least a subset of) unaccusative nouns.

\[
\begin{align*}
(38) & \\
& a. \quad S \ O \ N-D\text{O} \quad (N = \text{transitive, e.g., assassination}) \\
& b. \quad S \ N-D\text{O} \quad (N = \text{unergative, e.g., wail}) \\
& c. \quad S \ N-B\text{ECOME} \quad (N = \text{unaccusative, e.g., arrival})
\end{align*}
\]

The overall pattern of DO/BECOME selection in Korean may be regarded as an instance of a more general, unaccusativity-related phenomenon which is widely observed across languages\(^{12}\).

3.3. 1AEX Effect in Japanese

Given in (39) is a familiar type of "direct" passive in Japanese which more or less corresponds to the English passive sentence.

\[
\begin{align*}
(39) & \\
& \text{John-ga Mary-ni ker-are-ta.} \\
& \text{J.-NOM M.-BY kick-PASS-PAST}
\end{align*}
\]
'John was kicked by Mary.'
Unlike direct passives, "indirect" passives such as (40) and (41) do not have any direct English counterparts.

(40) John-ga Mary-ni kami-o kir-are-ta.
   J.-NOM M.-BY hair-ACC cut-PASS-PAST
   'John was affected by Mary's cutting (his/her own) hair.'

(41) John-ga Mary-ni nak-are-ta.
   J.-NOM M.-BY cry-PASS-PAST
   'John was affected by Mary's crying.'

Although indirect passives share certain significant properties with direct passives, such as the presence of the passive morpheme (rare) and the BY-marking (i.e., -ni) on the external argument of the input verb, they also differ from them in that (i) the internal argument of the input verb is realized not as the derived subject as in (39), but as the accusative direct object (when the input verb is transitive as in (40)), and that (ii) there is an extra noun phrase bearing the nominative case which is not a semantic argument of the input verb. Property (i) suggests that the input verb retains the accusative-assigning ability in indirect passives despite the presence of the passive morpheme. Property (ii) seems to suggest that the passive morpheme has an argument of its own (often called the AFFECTEE role), which licenses the appearance of the "extra noun phrase" functioning as the subject of the entire construction. These observations are interpreted to mean in many previous analyses that the passive morpheme rare is essentially a transitive verb determining some such Θ-roles as (AFFECTEE, EVENT), which would then be realized as a complement clause structure of the following sort, where "CLS" stands for some clausal constituent:

(42) \[ \text{CLS}_1 \text{NP}_1 \ [\text{CLS}_2 \text{NP}_2 \ [\text{vp} \text{NP}_3 \ V_2]] \ [v_1 \text{rare}] \]

Because this is a regular complement clause structure, semantic roles determined by the complement verb are distributed within the domain of \text{CLS}_2 in a completely regular manner, exactly as in a simple transitive clause. Since there is nothing in this analysis that prevents an intransitive verb from heading the complement clause as in (43), it also explains the existence of intransitive pas-

sives in a perfectly natural manner.

(43)  \[ {\text{CLS}_1} \text{NP}_1 \ [ {\text{CLS}_2} \text{NP}_2 \ [ {\text{VP}} \ V_2 \ ]] \ [ {v_1 \ rare}] \]  
As for the fact that the subject of the complement clause in (42) or (43) is ultimately marked with -ni (rather than -ga, the nominative case typically reserved for the subject), traditional analyses regard it as a matter of "surface" case-marking, i.e., as reflecting some independent formal regularity in the language that governs the proper assignments of case particles (-ga, -ni, -o) to the surface occurrences of noun phrases. One may assume, for example, that (42) becomes mono-clausal due to the "tree-pruning" effect caused by the raising of \(V_1\) to the matrix clause, so that case-marking is done in this case exactly as in the case of a simple di-transitive clause.

Notice that traditional analyses of this sort have no recourse to notions comparable to "thematic suppression" and "case absorption," which makes it look as if indirect passives in Japanese have no theoretical properties in common with the type of passives frequently discussed in the literature on English and other languages. In the theoretical context of "universal characterizations" of passives, therefore, it is not even clear whether they can be characterized as "passives" at all, despite the fact that they do carry some clearly "passive" sense.

Against a background like the above, I suggested in Washio (1989-1990) that "thematic suppression" does in fact take place in indirect passives in Japanese, which is supported by the observation that a 1AEX effect can be detected in the case of indirect passives based on intransitives. Consider first the following examples.

(44)  a.  boku-wa taiya-ni pankus-are-ta.  
I-TOP tire-BY blow out-PASS-PAST  
'The tire blew out, which affected me.'

b.  boku-wa tokei-ni tomar-are-ta.  
I-TOP clock-BY stop-PASS-PAST  
'My watch stopped, which affected me.'
As observed in Shibatani (1978), indirect passives in Japanese are generally subject to the animateness restriction (i.e., the BY-marked NP in indirect passives must be animate) so that the examples above are all unnatural.

The following examples also violate the animateness restriction, and they are also unnatural.

   I-TOP window-By suddenly break-INTRANSITIVE-PASS-PAST
   ‘The window suddenly broke, which affected me.’

   I-TOP shoe-OF lace-By untie-INTRANSITIVE-PASS-PAST
   ‘My shoelace untied, which affected me.’

   c. * boku-wa doa-no totte-ni tor-e-rare-ta.
   I-TOP door-OF knob-By take away-INTRANSITIVE-PASS-PAST
   ‘The doorknob came off, which affected me.’

   I-TOP squid-By tear-INTRANSITIVE-PASS-PAST
   ‘The squid tore itself, which affected me.’

However, many speakers of Japanese, including myself, find a contrast between (44) and (45), judging the latter as much more unnatural than the former, which suggests that something more than animateness is involved in (45). The most conspicuous difference between these two classes is that the verbs in (44) are "simple" intransitives whereas those in (45) are in fact derived from transitives by the intransitivizing suffix -e. For instance, the intransitive verb ware- ‘(for something) to break’ in (45a) consists of the transitive root war- ‘(for someone) to break something’ and the suffix -e. If we assume that this intransitivization
involves a deletion of the external argument of the transitive base, then (45) naturally falls under the 1AEX generalization, since there would be no external argument for \textit{rare} to suppress.

4. Some Issues in 1AEX and Related Phenomena

4.1. A Note on Passives and Unaccusatives in Chinese

In the first section, we briefly mentioned the suggestion (cf. Travis (1984), Huang (1987) and Sybesma (1999)) that verbs admitting the \textit{V-S} construction are formally unaccusative, their unique argument being represented in the argument structure as an internal argument. In this section, I would like to return to Chinese and consider the question as to what kind of relations hold between unaccusativity and passivizability in Chinese.

It has often been pointed out in Chinese linguistics (cf. Wang (1955) and subsequent work) that there is a strong correlation between the \textit{bei}-passive construction and the so-called \textit{ba}-construction, the latter also known as the "disposal" construction. In general, if a given verb is permitted to appear in the \textit{ba}-construction, then it is also permitted to appear in the \textit{bei}-construction, and if a verb fails to enter the \textit{bei}-passive construction, it also fails to enter the \textit{ba}-construction. In Chao's (1968: 705) words, the verbs admitting the \textit{ba}-construction are those "expressing disposal of something in some way." While this notion of "disposal" is notoriously vague and even misleading, what is interesting in the present context is that Chao (1968) specifically characterizes the verbs entering the "inverted subject" construction (i.e., the \textit{V-S} construction) as "non-disposal." Since non-disposal verbs are claimed to be non-passivizable, this means that the verbs admitting the \textit{V-S} construction ("\textit{VS}-verbs" hereafter) should systematically resist passivization. This, together with the modern characterization of \textit{VS}-verbs as unaccusative verbs, would lead to the generalization that unaccusative verbs in Chinese cannot be passivized.

When Chao (1968) mentioned the non-passivizability of \textit{VS}-verbs, he had in mind examples like 下雨 \textit{Xìà yǔ} (fall-rain) and the corresponding passive form *雨被下了 \textit{Yǔ bèi xìà-le} (rain-BEI-fall-PERF). More directly relevant to the
The present discussion is the fact that verbs in this class also fail to constitute the indirect passive construction, in which the matrix subject is affected by the event described in the complement clause, i.e., the type represented by the following example (cf. Shibatani et al. (1990)).

(46) * 我被雨下了。
     * Wǒ bèi yǔ xià-le.
     I BEI rain fall-PERF
     'I was affected because it rained.'

As is well-known, the Japanese counterpart of (46) is perfectly grammatical.

(47) Boku-wa ame-ni hur-are-ta.
     I-TOP rain-BY fall-PASS-PAST
     'I was affected because it rained.'

It is not that Chinese never allows this kind of loose affectedness relation to be encoded by the bei-passive construction14). For instance, passives like the following are found in the literature ((48) is from Shibatani et al. (1990); (49) and (50) are both from Huang (1999)).

(48) 我被孩子哭了一個晚上。
     Wǒ bèi háizi kū-le yīge wānshang.
     I BEI child cry-PERF one night

(49) 我又被他自摸了。
     Wǒ yòu bèi tā zi-mō le.
     I again BEI he self-touch-PERF
     'I again had him 'self-draw' [on me].'16)

(50) 李四又被王五擊出了一支全壘打。
     Lǐ sì yòu bèi Wángwǔ jīchū-le yī zhī quánlěidǎ.
     Lisi again BEI Wangwu hit-PERF one CL home-run
     'Lisi again had Wangwu hit a home run [on him].'

The predicates in examples like these all seem to be non-unaccusatives (i.e., unergatives or transitives) whereas those predicates which are identified as unaccusative by the V-S test almost never admit passivization — in accordance with Chao's (1968) generalization just mentioned. For example, 死 sǐ ‘to die’ is a VS-verb (cf. (51a)), and it is not passivable (cf. (51b)).
a. 文学系死了三个教授。
Wénxuéxi sì-le sān ge jiàoshòu.
literature department die-PERF three CL professors
‘Lit.: In the literature department died three professors.’

b. * 我们被张教授死了。
* Wǒmen bèi Zhāng jiàoshòu sì-le.
we BEI Zhang professor die-PERF
‘We were affected because Prof. Zhang died.’

The only exception to Chao’s generalization seems to be the verb 跑 pāo ‘to run away, escape’, which appears in the V-S construction as in (52a) but is nevertheless passivizable, as can be observed from (52b).

(52) a. 那个监狱跑了一个犯人。
Nàge jiān yǔ pāo-le yī ge fānrén.
that jail run away-PERF one prisoner

b. 看守被犯人跑了。
Kānshǒu bèi fānrén pāo-le.
jailer BEI prisoner run away-PERF

(52b) is a celebrated example cited in Hashimoto (1988). Although this may not be a perfectly natural sentence, it seems that native speakers can imagine various contexts in which it is good enough to be called acceptable(17).

However, verbs displaying the V-S order other than 跑 pāo are not so easily passivizable even assuming some appropriate contexts that should make them natural. Consider (53a) for instance, which is a V-S construction based on the verb 发生 fāshēng ‘to happen, occur’. As (53b) shows, this verb resists passivization.

(53) a. 昨天突然发生了一起案件。
Zuótiān tūrán fāshēng-le yī qǐ ànjìàn.
yesterday suddenly occur-PERF one CL case
‘There suddenly occurred a criminal case yesterday.’

b. * 刑警突然被案件发生了。
Xíngjīng tūrán bèi ànjìàn fāshēng-le.
detective suddenly BEI case happen-PERF
‘The police detective was affected by the criminal case which suddenly occurred.’

Note, though, that the event reported in (53a) can easily affect a person if, for example, he is a police detective with his vacation only a day away: he is likely to have his vacation ruined by this case. However, even this kind of natural context does not improve (53b) in any significant way (‘istar từ明天开始放假了，可是刑警突然被案件發生了。’). Similarly, the following examples show that verbs like 倒 dào ‘to collapse, close down’ and 爆發 bào fá ‘to break out’ appear in the V-S construction ((54a) is cited in Jaxontov (1957) and (54b) is from Liu, Pan and Gu (1983)).

(54) a. 南市倒了一家錢莊。
    Nánshì dào-le yì jiā qián zhuàng.
south city collapse-PERF one CL exchange house
    ‘An exchange house went bankrupt in the south of the city.’

b. 公元前209年，中國歷史上爆發了第一次農民大起義。
    Gōngyuán qián 209 nián, Zhōngguó lìshǐ shàng bào fá-le
    B.C. 209 year Chinese history-on break out-PERF
    diyīcì nóngmín dài qí yì.
    first peasant riot
    ‘In 209B.C., there occurred a first large-scale peasant uprising in Chinese history.’

Again, we can imagine people being adversely affected by the events described in these examples, but such affectedness relations cannot be expressed by the passive construction. Observe:

(55) a. * 我們被那個錢莊倒了。
    * Wǒmen bèi nà ge qián zhuàng dào-le.
    we BEI that exchange house collapse-PERF

b. * 領導人被農民大起義爆發了。
    * Lǐngdǎorén bèi nóngmín dài qí yì bào fá-le.
    leader BEI peasant riot break out-PERF

The same applies to other verbs found in the V-S constructions (including 到
Considerations like these seem to suggest that the pattern observed in (52), repeated here, represents a highly exceptional case.

(56) a. 那個監獄跑了一個犯人。
    Nâge jiànyù pāo-le yīge fânrén.
    that jail run away-PERF one prisoner

b. 看守被犯人跑了。
    Kānshǒu bèi fânrén pāo-le.
    jailer BEI prisoner run away-PERF

The verb 跑 pāo is almost unique among the verbs which are allowed to appear in the V-S construction.

It is not particularly surprising, however, that 跑 pāo ‘to run away, escape’ should behave exceptionally in the above respect. Notice that what it expresses is a volitional act. It is an agentive verb in addition to being a verb of disappearance, and verbs like this in other languages also tend to display irregular behavior in phenomena related to unaccusativity. This may be illustrated, for instance, with the verb ontsnappen ‘to escape’, a Dutch verb semantically similar to 跑 pāo.

As we saw in section two above, the unergative-unaccusative distinction in languages like Dutch and German manifests itself in such phenomena as the following.

First, in the perfect construction, unergatives select HAVE (cf. (57a)) whereas unaccusatives select BE (cf. (57b)).

(57) a. De kinderen hebben {gespeeld/gelachen/gedanst}.
    the children have {played/laughed/danced}

b. De kinderen zijn {gevallen/gearriveerd/gegroeid}.
    the children are {fallen/arrived/grown}

Second, unergatives cannot be used attributively (cf. (58a)) whereas unacc-
cusatives can (cf. (58b)).

(58) a. * de {gespeelde/gelachen/gedanste} kinderen
    the {played/laughed/danced} children
b. de {gefallen/gearriveerde/gegroeide} kinderen
    the {fallen/arrived/grown} children

Third, unergatives can be passivized (cf. (59a)) whereas unaccusatives cannot (cf. (59b)).

(59) a. Er werd door de kinderen {gespeeld/gelachen/gedanst}.
    it became by the children {played/laughed/danced}
b. * Er werd door de kinderen {gefallen/gearriveerd/gegroeid}.
    it became by the children {fallen/arrived/grown}

Let us now turn to ontsnappen ‘to escape’. In contrast to the regular pattern represented by (57)-(59), this verb displays the following pattern.

First, (60) shows that it takes BE in the perfect construction.

(60) De gevangenen {zijn/*hebben} uit deze gevangenis ontsnapt.
    the prisoners {BE/HAVE} from this prison escaped

Second, its past participle can be used attributively, as can be observed from (61).

(61) de ontsnapte gevangenen
    the escaped prisoners

So far, ontsnappen ‘to escape’ behaves like an unaccusative verb, but it actually admits passivization. Given in (62) is an impersonal passive based on this verb, which is definitely grammatical though slightly unnatural.

(62) ?Uit deze gevangenis wordt gestadig ontsnapt.
    from this prison becomes constantly escaped

I constructed this Dutch example on the model of its German equivalent Wunderlich (1997: 18) discusses, which is cited here.

(63) Aus diesem Gefängnis wird ständig {ausgebrochen/?entflohen}.
    from this prison is constantly {broken out/escaped}

With entfliehen ‘to escape’, this sentence is slightly degraded, but Wunderlich’s judgment is that it is grammatical. Like its Dutch counterpart cited above,
entfliehen selects \textit{BE} and admits the attributive use of the past participle.

So the verbs meaning "\textit{ESCAPE}" in Dutch and German behave like unaccusatives with respect to the auxiliary choice and the attributive use of the past participle, but they are nevertheless passivizable. The behavior of these verbs is almost identical to that of the Chinese verb 跑 p\textit{à}o: it also behaves like an unaccusative verb with respect to the V-S construction, but it is nevertheless passivizable. The verb 跑 p\textit{à}o, like ontsnappen and entfliehen, therefore seems to require separate treatment — the kind of treatment which would go beyond an idiosyncratic statement in the grammar of Chinese.

Putting 跑 p\textit{à}o aside, then, we can now return to Chao's generalization mentioned above: namely, \textit{VS-verbs are not passivizable}. The effect of this generalization is almost identical to that of the 1AEX generalization, but it is not entirely clear whether the non-passivizability of VS-verbs in Chinese can be theoretically characterized as a 1AEX effect. Consider again the example given in (51b), repeated here as (64a). An additional example is given in (64b).

\begin{align*}
\text{(64) a.} & \quad \ast \text{我們被張教授死了。} \\
& \ast \text{Wömen bei Zhang jiàoshòu sǐ-le.} \\
& \quad \text{we bei Zhang professor die-PERF} \\
& \quad \text{‘We were affected because Prof. Zhang died.’} \\
\text{b.} & \quad \ast \text{我被收音机壞了。} \\
& \ast \text{Wǒ bei shōuyīnjī huài-le.} \\
& \quad \text{I bei radio break-PERF} \\
& \quad \text{‘I was affected because the radio broke.’}
\end{align*}

The unacceptability of examples like these would be characterized as a 1AEX effect only if we assume that the bei-passive construction involves thematic suppression. This assumption, however, is not adopted in major theories of Chinese passives, including the theory suggested in Huang (1999), which is supported by extensive cross-linguistic and cross-dialectal considerations.

Huang’s (1999) theory is designed to generate various types of passives in Chinese dialects as well as in other languages, including the so-called indirect passives such as the following (Huang (1999: 483)).
(65) 張三被土匪打死了爸爸。
Zhāngsān bèi tūfēi dāsī-le bāba.
‘Zhangsan had his father killed by the bandits.’

This sentence receives the following analysis (Huang (1999: 483)).

(66) [NP1 Zhāngsān] [bei [IP OPi [NP2 tūfēi] [NP3 tǐ] dāsī-le [NP4 Proi bāba]] ...

The intuitive content of this analysis may be informally represented as follows.

(67) a. Zhangsan is such that
b. he was affected
c. because the bandits “father-killed” him.

The subject of the entire construction, Zhāngsān, is coindexed with the null operator (OP) which is generated in the NP3 position as an “outer object” and undergoes A'-movement. The outer object receives the AFFECTEE role from the complex predicate “father-kill” (V' in the above structure). Whether or not an outer object is licensed in this kind of structure depends upon the nature of the predicate: in order to license an outer object, the predicate must denote an event which naturally affects someone. As just mentioned, KILL ONE’S FATHER is such a predicate (one is naturally affected by one’s father being killed) whereas ASK ONE’S FATHER (A QUESTION) is not, so that the following is not an acceptable indirect passive (Huang (1999: 484)).

(68) ?? 張三被我問了爸爸了。
?? Zhāngsān bèi wǒ wèn-le bāba le.

‘Zhangsan had his father asked (a question) by me.’

Conversely, even though a predicate expresses a “self-complete” act which in principle requires no other party, it may still successfully enter the passive construction if the event it describes can be construed as naturally affecting someone. Examples like those cited in (48)-(50) are the case in point.

As should be clear from this illustration, in Huang’s theory (and indeed in various other theories adopting the so-called “complementation analysis” — cf. [note on Huang’s theory].


Tang (2001)), it is assumed that Chinese bei-passives involve no process of thematic suppression. This means that, as far as the ban on double suppression is concerned, there would be no direct correlation in principle between formal unaccusativity and passivizability in Chinese. For instance, the unacceptability of (64a) would not be directly related to the fact that 死 si ‘to die’ is formally unaccusative. How would it be possible, then, to distinguish (64) from (48), (49), (50) and other similar cases? (48) is repeated here as (69) for convenience.

(69) 我被孩子哭了一個晚上。
    Wǒ bèi háizi kū-le yīge wǎnshang.

I BEI child cry-PERF one night

This sentence is based on the unergative verb 哭 kū ‘to cry’. In the analysis of Chinese passives being considered here, unergative-based passives like (69) would receive something like the following representation.

(70) NP₁ [bei [NP₂ AFFECTEE₁ [v, V

NP₁ is the matrix subject, coindexed with an outer object (represented here as AFFECTEE). V is an unergative verb with the argument structure (x ( )). NP₂ is the bearer of the external Θ-role determined by the verb. On the other hand, unaccusative-based passives such as (64a) would receive something like the following representation.

(71) NP₁ [bei [NP₂ AFFECTEE₁ [v, V t₂

Being unaccusative, the verb has the argument structure ( (y)). NP₂ originates in the position of t₂, receiving the internal Θ-role, and then moves to its surface position.

Now, given the non-suppression theory of bei-passives, is there any independently motivated principle guaranteeing that (71) inevitably leads to unacceptible passives in Chinese? If such a principle is available, the non-passivizability of VS-verbs in Chinese would follow from it. By assumption, however, it would be a principle different from the ban on double suppression. We would therefore be in a situation where the class of verbs identified as unaccusative in Germanic and the class of verbs identified as unaccusative in Chinese resist
passivization for different theoretical reasons. Should we simply accept this consequence and seek for a Chinese-internal reason for the non-passivizability of unaccusatives, or should we inquire into the possibility that the indirect passive construction in Chinese involves a process of thematic suppression?

It is also possible that VS-verbs do not constitute a special class of non-passivizable verbs: rather, they may simply belong to a larger class of verbs which do not admit passivization in Chinese. After all, indirect passives are more severely restricted in Chinese than in Japanese, and there are many unergatives and transitives that do not form good indirect passives in Chinese. Even the verb 哭 kū ‘to cry’ does not always admit passivization, as Shibatani et al. (1990) observe, citing the following example.

(72) * 我被孩子哭了。
    * Wǒ bèi háizi kū-le.
    I BEI child cry-PERF

But then, is (72) ungrammatical for the same reason as (73)?

(73) * 我被孩子死了。
    * Wǒ bèi háizi sǐ-le.
    I BEI child die-PERF

Also, there are many change of state verbs which, like 死 sǐ, resist passivization, but which, unlike 哭 kū, do not appear in the V-S construction. For example:

(74) a. * 我們被張教授變老了。
    * Wǒmen bèi Zhāng jiàoshòu biànlǎo-le.
    we BEI Zhang professor age-PERF

b. * 文學系變老了三個教授。
    * Wénxuéxi biànlǎo-le săngē jiàoshòu.
    literature department age-PERF three professors

The fact that 变老 biànlǎo ‘to age, grow old’ is not a VS-verb does not necessarily mean that it is not unaccusative: having the unaccusative argument structure can just be a necessary condition for being a VS-verb.

In any case, if (72), (73) and (74a) are excluded by the same principle,
that means that the unergative-unaccusative distinction is irrelevant to the grammaticality of Chinese passives\(^8\). The question would remain, however, as to why (72), but neither (73) nor (74a), can be improved significantly by adding some appropriate materials to it. If we suppose that (73)/(74a) on the one hand and (72) on the other have different theoretical status after all, then we are brought back to the initial question: why is it that a similar distinction is observed in Germanic? Recall that verbs like D**IE*/A**GE** in Germanic cannot be passivized whereas verbs like C**R**Y can. Do we need to theoretically relate these generalizations in Germanic and Chinese, and if so, how?

These are just a few of the many questions I have no answer for, some of which I cannot even formulate properly at present, largely because of the empirical difficulty we face when trying to delimit the class of possible passives in Chinese (variations in speakers’ judgments, etc.). Rather than explore possible answers to them here, I would like to turn now to languages like Japanese where verbs like D**IE** and A**GE** are in fact passivizable.

4.2. Passivizable Unaccusatives in Japanese and Middle Mongolian

Verbs like a**ltern** ‘to age, grow old’ cannot be passivized in German despite the general passivizability of intransitive verbs in the language. We thus observe a sharp contrast between (75a) and (75b).

(75) a. * Es wird gealtert.
   ‘Lit.: It is aged.’

   b. Es wird getanzt.
   ‘Lit.: It is danced.’

As mentioned in the previous section, (75) falls under the widely assumed generalization that intransitive verbs are either unaccusative (a**ltern**) or unergative (t**anzen**), and unaccusatives resist passivization due to the nature of their shared semantic structure (consisting of a single internal argument with no external argument).

The Mongolian counterpart to a**ltern** is o**töl**- ‘to age, grow old’, which also resists passivization — but for an entirely different reason: namely, intransitive verbs are never passivizable in Modern Mongolian irrespective of unaccusativ-
ity. The same verb ötöl- was passivizable, however, when the language still had intransitive passives. It appears in the passive form in a Middle Mongolian text (called “Yüan-ch’ao Pi-shi,” abbreviated as YCPS hereafter)\(^9\).

(76) qayiran kökse’ü-sabraq-a ötöl-de-kü (§194)

Alas! Kökse’ü-sabraq-BY age-PASS-AOR
‘Lit.: (We are) aged by Kökse’ü Sabraq.’

Syntactically, this is a passive clause in that the verb ötöl- is suffixed with the passive morpheme (-de) and Kökse’ü-sabraq, the semantic argument of ötöl- is marked with the dative particle (-a), which generally serves in YCPS as the marker of the “logical subject” in passive clauses. Semantically, the context in which (76) appears makes it clear that it is an expression of adversity. Thus, what it says is something like this: “To our regret, Kökse’ü Sabraq (the best fighter of the Naiman) has become too old.” (76) is therefore an intransitive passive expressing an affectedness relation such that a person (the speaker in this case) is adversely affected by an event. Although the “affectee” is not syntactically expressed in (76), it is possible to include it in intransitive passives in the form of a nominative noun phrase. Notice that these characteristics of intransitive passives in Middle Mongolian hold true of the well-known “adversity passives” in Japanese. It is therefore possible to translate (76) directly into Japanese, using the same intransitive passive construction, which is in fact the practice followed by the translators ever since Naka (1907) adopted it in the following translation.

(77) aa, osikekumo kokuseu saburaku-ni oi-rare-tari.

Oh to our regret Kökse’ü-sabraq-BY age-PASS-PERF

This is something that one cannot do in German, however, since the verb altern is unaccusative (hence non-passivizable). This being the case, the following translation by Hänisch (1941) is probably the best we can hope for, which is a simple active clause “Kökse’ü-sabraq became too old,” the sense of adversity being expressed by wie schade and perhaps also by the dative uns.

(78) Ach, wie schade, daß Kökse’ü Sabraq uns zu alt geworden ist!

Oh what a pity that Kökse’ü-sabraq us too old become is
As will be further discussed below, Middle Mongolian quite generally permits unaccusatives to be passivized. This is also true of Modern Japanese. For instance, consider (44c), repeated here.

(44) c. boku-wa inku-ni kawak-are-ta.

I-TOP ink-BY dry out-PASS-PAST

'The ink dried, which affected me.'

The verb kawak- in this example corresponds to the intransitive verb dry in English. It is a change of state verb, and verbs of change of state constitute a major subclass of unaccusative verbs. The German equivalent of kawak-, trocken- 'to dry', shows signs of being unaccusative: it is an inchoative member of the causative-inchoative pair, it selects the auxiliary sein20), and it is not passivizable. The fact that intransitive kawak- 'to dry' is passivizable demonstrates that "semantic" unaccusativity21) and non-passivizability do not directly correlate with each other, at least in languages like Japanese and Middle Mongolian.

On the other hand, we have already observed that something very much like the 1AEX effect shows itself in Japanese, as in the following example.

(45) c. * boku-wa doa-no totte-ni tor-e-rare-ta.

I-TOP door-OF knob-BY take away-INTRANSITIVE-PASS-PAST

'The doorknob came off, which affected me.'

Let us continue to assume that rare must suppress the external argument of the base verb, and that derived intransitives of the form \([vi \ V_T-e]\) are not passivizable because the transitive root \(V_T\) has its external argument already deleted by the suffix \(-e\), making it unavailable to rare. This is informally shown in the following schema (where \(\Theta_E\) and \(\Theta_I\) stand for external and internal \(\Theta\)-roles, respectively).

(79) \(V_T \rightarrow [vi \ V_T-e] \rightarrow *[cls \ldots[vi \ V_T-e]] [rare] \)

\((\Theta_E, \Theta_I) \quad (o, \Theta_I)\)

(Deletion of \(\Theta_E\) by \(-e\)) (Suppression of \(\Theta_E\) by \(rare\) unsuccessful)

Given this assumption, the fact that a non-derived intransitive verb like kawak- 'to dry' is passivizable in Japanese can only mean one thing: namely, there is a
$\Theta_E$ in the argument structure of $kawak$- so that $\text{rare}$ can suppress it, as shown in (80).

$$\begin{align*}
    [vi\ kawak-] & \rightarrow [\text{CLS} \ldots [vi\ kawak-]] [\text{rare}] \\
    (\Theta_E) & \rightarrow (\Theta_E^*) \\
\end{align*}$$

(Suppression of $\Theta_E$ by $\text{rare}$ successful)

This suggests the possibility that the semantically defined class of unaccusative verbs ("change of state" verbs) are divided into two classes in a language like Japanese, one class consisting of "non-derived" or "basic" unaccusatives and the other of "derived" unaccusatives, and that only the latter displays the 1AEX effect.

4.3. Complexities: the Case of BECOME

The generalization stated in the last paragraph is not quite accurate. Consider the "pure" verb of becoming in German, namely the verb $werden$ ‘to become’ as typically used in such examples as (81). $Werden$ simply cannot be passivized in languages like German, as observed in (82).

$$\begin{align*}
    \text{(81) a. } & \text{Er wird alt.} \\
    & \text{he becomes old} \\
    \text{b. } & \text{Er ist alt geworden.} \\
    & \text{he has old become} \\
\end{align*}$$

$$\begin{align*}
    \text{(82) a. } & \text{* Es wird alt geworden.} \\
    & \text{it becomes old become} \\
    & \text{‘Lit.: It is become old.’} \\
    \text{b. } & \text{* Es ist alt geworden worden.} \\
    & \text{it has old become become} \\
    & \text{‘Lit.: It has been become old.’} \\
\end{align*}$$

Even cases like these are allowed in Middle Mongolian. The pure verb of becoming in Mongolian is $bol$- ‘become’, which appears in such examples as the following.

$$\begin{align*}
    \text{(83) a. } & \text{... oro ho[q]torqu bol-ba. (§105)} \\
    & \text{bed empty become-TENSE} \\
    & \text{‘The bed became empty.’} \\
\end{align*}$$
b. ... dobun-mergen ügei bol-ba. (§17)
Dobun Mergen NOT become-TENSE
'Dobun Mergen became not (i.e., non-existent).'

This pure verb of becoming appears in the passive form bol-da- ‘become-PASS’ in the following examples.

(84) a. qoyitu tede haran baru’an bol-da-ju ...(§91)
behind those people dark become-PASS-ING
‘Lit.: Those people behind, being become dark ...’ (i.e., being lost in the darkness ...)

b. cinggis-qahan ... ügei bol-da-ju ... (§161)
Cinggis Qahan NOT become-PASS-ING
‘Lit.: Cinggis Qahan, being become non-existent [by Ong Qan]’ (i.e., suffering from the fact that Ong Qan was no longer there ...)

In (84a), “become dark” is passivized, expressing the idea that the subject “those people behind” suffered from the fact that it became dark. (84b), where “become non-existent” is passivized, appears in the context in which Cinggis Qahan looked at the station of Ong Qan and found out that he was no longer there: Cinggis was left in the lurch. Since the German verb werden ‘become’ is impossible to passivize, no direct translation of (84) based on the passive construction is possible here. In Japanese, however, their direct translations are possible, as we can observe from the following, (85a) and (85b) corresponding to (84a) and (84b), respectively.

(85) a. usiro-no hito-tati-wa kuraku nar-are-te ...
behind-GEN people-PL-TOP dark become-PASS-ING

b. Cinggis Qahan-wa Ong Qan-ni inaku nar-are-te
CQ-TOP OQ-BY be-NOT become-PASS-ING

These examples show that Japanese, like Middle Mongolian, allows the pure verb of becoming nar- ‘become’ to be passivized. Similar examples can be constructed rather freely in Modern Japanese. Let us consider the following simple example.
The string inaku consists of the verbal root i- ‘be’ and an inflected form of the negative morpheme na- ‘not’. So the XP in (86) might be a clausal constituent with a PRO in the subject position. It is less clear whether the same analysis should be adopted in cases like the following where the head of the XP is nominal.

    Mary-NOM candidate become-PAST

‘Mary became a candidate.’

If the complement XP of nar- is also clausal here, something like (88a) is appropriate for (87), but the XP could simply be a predicate nominal as in (88b).


But regardless of the internal structure of the XP, the pure verb of becoming nar- has a potential target of suppression, viz., the external argument Θ_e, so that (87) is passivizable as in (89), where the ultimate bearer of Θ_e (Mary) appears as a BY-phrase.

    John-NOM Mary-BY candidate become-PASS-PAST

‘Lit.: John was become a candidate by Mary’ (i.e., affected by the fact that Mary became a candidate).

The pure verb of becoming nar- is not always passivizable, however. When its complement (XP) is fully clausal as in (90), it seems impossible to have it passivized as in (91).

    M.-NOM run for election that-DAT become-PAST

‘Lit.: It became [i.e., turned out] that Mary would run for election.’
(91) *John-ga [\text{XP} [\text{CLS} \text{Mary-ga/-ni rikkoohosu-ru]} \text{koto-ni}] \text{nar-are-ta}.
J.-NOM M.-NOM/-BY run for election that-DAT become-PASS-PAST
‘Lit.: John was become that Mary would run for election.’

I take (90) as an impersonal construction, the verb \text{nar-} being “truly” unaccusative in this case in that it has just one internal event argument (\varepsilon) realized as the clausal complement XP. Notice that transitive verbs selecting such a complement can be freely passivized as in (93), which is a passive of (92).

(92) Minna-ga \text{[XP} [\text{CLS} \text{Mary-ga rikkoohosu-ru]} \text{koto-ni}] \text{gooisi-ta}.
everyone-NOM M.-NOM run for election that-DAT agree-PAST
‘Everyone agreed on Mary’s running for election.’

(93) John-ga minna-ni \text{[XP} [\text{CLS} \text{Mary-ga rikkoohosu-ru]} \text{koto-ni}]
J.-NOM everyone-BY M.-NOM run for election that-DAT
\text{gooois-are-ta}.
agree-PASS-PAST
‘Lit.: John was agreed by everyone on Mary’s running for election.’

This is in sharp contrast with the intransitive verbs such as \text{kimar-} ‘to be decided’ (cf. (94)), which is impossible to passivize as we can observe from (95).

(94) Kaigi-de \text{[XP} [\text{CLS} \text{Mary-ga rikkoohosu-ru]} \text{koto-ni}] \text{kimar-ta}.
meeting-AT M.-NOM run for election that-DAT BE DECIDED-PAST
‘It was decided in the meeting that Mary run for election.’

(95) * John-ga kaigi-de \text{[XP} [\text{CLS} \text{Mary-ga rikkoohosu-ru]} \text{koto-ni}]
J.-NOM meeting-AT M.-NOM run for election that-DAT
\text{kimar-are-ta}.
BE DECIDED-PASS-PAST
‘Lit.: John was decidedINTRANS at the meeting that Mary run for election.’

This is exactly parallel to the case of \text{nar-} ‘to become’ observed in (90)/(91).

From the perspective of the present discussion, a possible hypothesis on the difference in passivizability between (86) and (91) would be that the verb of becoming \text{nar-} has no external argument when its complement (XP) is fully
clausal, as schematically shown in (96a), but when the XP is not fully clausal, it has both external and internal arguments as shown in (96b), so that only the former would display the 1AEX effect.

(96) a. \( \_ \text{BECOME } \varepsilon \) (where \( \varepsilon \) is an event).

b. \( \tau \text{BECOME } \sigma \) (where \( \tau \) is a thing, and \( \sigma \) a state).

Notice that, in either case, \textit{nar-} ‘to become’ is a very natural candidate for an unaccusative verb. (96a) is parallel, in relevant respects, to the standard analysis of verbs like \textit{seem}, and (96b) is an analysis of prototypical change of state verbs in Japanese. The implications are, therefore, that the notion “\textit{CHANGE OF STATE},” which plays a central role in the characterization of unaccusativity, does not necessarily imply the absence of an external argument, and that it is independent of passivizability. Only a proper subset of change of state verbs are formally represented as “unaccusative” by their lack of external arguments (e.g., derived intransitives like those cited in (45) and intransitives like \textit{nar-} ‘to become’ and \textit{kimar-} ‘to be decided’ when they take a clausal event argument), and only these display the 1AEX effect.

4.4. Different Lexical Semantics for German and Japanese “Equivalents”? 

In the previous section, we reached the conclusion that many verbs of \textit{CHANGE OF STATE} in languages like Japanese and Middle Mongolian such as \textit{nar-}/\textit{bol-} ‘to become’ and \textit{oi-/lötöl-} ‘to age’ do have an external \( \Theta \)-role, exactly like unergative verbs. They are therefore potentially passivizable in these languages.

How would it be possible, then, to explain the general non-passivizability of similar verbs in languages like German and Dutch?

Two possibilities come to mind, and they both seem to be worth pursuing. The first possibility is that change of state verbs in languages like German have no external argument after all. This would mean that verbs such as \textit{werden} ‘to become’ and \textit{altern} ‘to age’ and their Japanese counterparts are not in fact equivalent in terms of the “meanings” they express. Recall that, even internally to Japanese, we need to postulate the two distinct semantic structures given in (96a) and (96b) for the verb \textit{nar-} ‘to become’, depending on whether its complement is fully clausal or not. It may not be impossible then that \textit{werden} ‘to
become', *altern* 'to age' and other change of state verbs in German are systematically of the type shown in (96a), lacking an external argument, unlike their Japanese "equivalents" such as *nar-* 'to become' and *oi-* or *huke-* 'to age'.

As far as pure verbs of becoming (*werden* and *nar-* ) are concerned, it would not be surprising if the analysis just considered turned out to be correct. While these verbs can be regarded as translation equivalents in many cases (cf. (97) and (98)), they also seem to be subject to different semantic restrictions.

(97) a. Er wurde krank.
   he became ill
b. Kare-wa byooki-ni nar-ta.
   he-TOP ill become-PAST

(98) a. Die Tage werden länger.
   the days become longer
b. Hi-ga nagaku nar-u.
   day-NOM long become-PRES

In particular, Härtl (2004) shows that the adjectival complement of *werden* must denote a "non-controlled" property, so that examples of the following sort are not allowed in German.

(99) * Peter wurde nackt.
   Peter became naked

As can be observed from the following and many other examples, Japanese *nar-* is free from such a restriction.

(100) Kare-wa hadaka-ni nar-ta.
   he-TOP naked become-PAST

Thus, it would not be unnatural if this difference between *werden* and *nar-* was a reflection of their different argument structures.

It is much less obvious, however, whether other "ordinary" change of state verbs in German and Japanese are also systematically different with respect to the absence or presence of an external argument in their argument structures. Compare (101a) and (101b), for instance.
As already mentioned, (101a) cannot be passivized whereas (101b) potentially can. Aside from this difference, which is what we need to explain, is there any independent "semantic" difference between altern 'to age' and huke- 'to age' that can reasonably be related to the absence and presence, respectively, of an external argument in the argument structures of these verbs? I leave this question open here, since it can be answered only after some large-scale comparative semantics of German and Japanese is conducted.

4.5. Residue of 1AEX?

Another possible approach to the difference between German and Japanese mentioned above is the following. Suppose that change of state verbs in German and their Japanese counterparts are semantically close enough. Given the Universal Alignment Hypothesis, verbs like altern 'to age' and huke- 'to age' would then share essentially the same argument structure. Since huke- 'to age' is potentially passivizable in Japanese, it must have an external argument (given 1AEX), and its German equivalent, altern 'to age', must also have an external argument. The non-passivizability of the latter must then be derived from something other than the ban on double suppression (or 1AEX). This is of course possible.

It has repeatedly been observed for many languages that passive constructions are subject to certain semantic constraints, from which active sentences are free. For German, features like [+volitional] (Fagan (1992)) or [+control] (Wunderlich (1997)) have been suggested as the crucial factor. The following often-cited example (Curme (1960: 388)/Fagan (1992: 124)) demonstrates that change of state verbs like bluten 'to bleed' and sterben 'to die' can be passivized if volitionality/controllability is assumed.

(102) Für den lieben König und Herrn wird alles getan, wird treulich gekämpft, wird willig geblutet, wird freudig in den Tod gegangen, für ihn wird mehr als gestorben ...
Everything is done for the beloved king and lord, battle is loyally fought, blood is willingly shed, death is entered happily, more is done for him than simply die ...

These observations highlight a significant difference between German impersonal passives and Japanese intransitive passives: notions like volitionality or controllability basically play no role in the formation of intransitive passives in Japanese, which is why even weather expressions can be passivized as in (103a), and passives like (103b), based on the verb sin- 'to die', require no context foregrounding the volitionality or controllability of the agent.

(103) a. Karera-wa ame-ni/yuki-ni hur-are-ta.
   they-TOP rain-BY/snow-BY fall-PASS-PAST
   'It rained/snowed, which affected them.'

b. Kare-wa musuko-ni sin-are-te simat-ta.
   he-TOP son-BY die-PASS end up-PAST
   'He had his son die on him.'

Passives like *Es wurde geregnet/geschneit 'It was rained/snowed' are impossible in German (cf. Shannon (1992)), and *Es wurde gestorben 'It was died' is also unacceptable without a context like (102).

The difference in passivizability between altern 'to age' and huke- 'to age' that we have been discussing would therefore follow from the independent difference between German impersonal passives and Japanese intransitive passives, even on the assumption that altern and huke- both have an external argument in their argument structures.

Recall, however, that something like the 1AEX effect is also observed in Japanese passives, as demonstrated by the examples given in (45). The following is another example.

   I-TOP valuable plate-BY break-PASS shock-ACC receive-PAST
   'I was shocked because the valuable plate broke.'

The passivized verb is war-e- '(for something) to break', an intransitive verb which is derived from the transitive root war- 'to break (something)'. Since
this process of intransitivization involves a deletion of the external argument of the transitive root, the derived intransitive war-e- is formally unaccusative, its only argument being an internal argument, which would therefore display a 1AEX effect under passivization.

Consider now the German verb zerbrechen ‘to break’, which can be either transitive or intransitive as in (105).

(105)  a. Das Kind hat den Teller zerbrochen.
       ‘The child broke the plate.’
  b. Der Teller ist zerbrochen.
       ‘The plate broke.’

As expected, (105a) produces a normal passive, but (105b) does not. Observe:

(106)  a. Der Teller wurde (vom Kind) zerbrochen.
       ‘The plate was broken (by the child).’
  b. *Es wurde (vom Teller) zerbrochen
     ‘Lit.: It was broken (by the plate).’

Suppose that zerbrechen is like its English equivalent break in that it is basically transitive, its intransitive alternant being derived by intransitivization or “anti-causativization” (Levin and Rappaport Hovav (1995)). (106b) then naturally falls under 1AEX, exactly like the Japanese example given in (104). This would mean, however, that derived intransitives like zerbrechen and non-derived ones like altern ‘to age’ and wachsen ‘to grow’ resist passivization for different reasons. On the assumption that intransitive verbs of the latter type have an external argument, examples like (107b) are excluded by the volitionality/controllability restriction on German passives.

(107)  a. Die Kinder wachsen schnell.
       ‘The children grow quickly.’
  b. *Es wird (von den Kindern) schnell gewachsen.
     ‘Lit.: It is grown quickly (by the children).’

(106b) violates the same restriction, but it also violates the ban on double suppression, displaying a 1AEX effect. This is very much like the situation we noted for Japanese (cf. the contrast between (44) and (45)). These observations
can be summarized as follows.

(108) *Passives of Intransitives in German and Japanese*

| (a) | DANCE, CRY, etc. | (x ( )) | OK | OK |
| (b) | AGE, GROW, etc. | (x ( )) | * | OK |
| (c) | BREAK, TEAR, etc. | (Ø (y)) | * | → 1AEX? |

Previous analyses of languages like German regard (108b) and (108c) as constituting a single phenomenon, but from our comparison of German with Japanese, the possibility arises that there may be two distinct phenomena involved in the non-passivizability of change of state verbs. Non-derived intransitives like AGE and GROW may or may not be passivized depending on the properties of the passive construction in a given language (e.g., whether or not it is sensitive to the controllability factor), but those intransitives which are derived from transitives by anti-causativization would universally resist passivization. If this is a valid generalization, it shows that the formal notion of unaccusativity is still necessary, though much of what it has been believed to cover can and should be explained in different terms. In view of the fact that viable alternatives to the Unaccusative Hypothesis have been suggested in the literature231, however, we should not rule out the possibility that (108c) may ultimately be given a natural non-formal explanation.

<Notes>

* The present paper is based on the talk entitled “Some Issues in Unaccusativity” given at the 55th Annual Meeting of the Chinese Linguistic Society of Japan (October 29, 2005, University of Tsukuba). The talk was intended as an informal introduction to unaccusativity in East Asian languages, with suggestions for some research topics in this area. For comments, discussions and other invaluable help, I wish to express my gratitude to Jim Huang, Hideki Kimura, Toshiyuki Sadanobu, Masaru Inoue, Yiwen Chen, Li Ren, and Michiyo Saiki. I would also like to thank the Chinese Linguistic Society of Japan, especially Hirofumi Sugimura and Yoshihito Sasaki, for their support from the beginning all the way to the publication of this paper in the Society’s journal. Special thanks go to Michiyo Saiki for hours of discussion and invaluable suggestions. The research reported here has been supported in part by Grants-in-Aid for Scientific
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2) “Suppression” is used here, as throughout, as a completely intuitive notion, which can been interpreted and formalized in various ways. See Baker (1988), Baker, Johnson and Roberts (1989), Grimshaw (1990) and Ackema (1999), among many other works.

3) Theoretically deriving this effect is not an easy task, however. For instance, consider the following generalization, which is an informal restatement of what Perlmutter (1983) and Burzio (1986) suggest for Italian.

   (i) If the surface subject of a clause corresponds to its deep object, then the clause requires the perfect auxiliary BE. Otherwise it requires HAVE.

   Assuming syntactic unaccusativity, the particular configurational property mentioned here correctly distinguishes between transitive and unergative clauses on the one hand, and unaccusative, passive and (clitic-based) reflexive clauses on the other. Given the way (i) is stated, however, there seems to be no reason why the distributions of HAVE and BE cannot be reversed here. In this respect, (i) remains a stipulation. Issues like these are raised in previous works such as Hoekstra (1984), Grewendorf (1989) and Ackema (1999) where attempts are made to derive the distribution of HAVE and BE from some independent properties of these auxiliaries and the past participle. See also Kayne (1993) for a highly original treatment of HAVE/BE selection in European languages and dialects.

4) I chose to discuss three particular phenomena in Japanese and Korean in this section because they bear strong similarities to the three European phenomena discussed in the previous section. There is a wealth of literature that discusses various other phenomena in Japanese and Korean from the perspective of unaccusativity. Readers are referred to Miyagawa (1989), Tsujimura (1991), Takezawa (1991), Kageyama (1993), Matsumoto (1998) and Kishimoto (2005) among many other works.

5) This fact has been known for more than two hundred years. One of the earliest references to this phenomenon is found in Motoori (1792). A relevant passage from the latter work is given in Washio (2004) in English translation.

6) These examples are from *Man’yoshu*, a large collection of poems from the period of Old Japanese. The examples cited here and below can be located in any edition of *Man’yoshu* by referring to the serial number given in square brackets. For the conjugations of auxiliary verbs, I use the following abbreviations: I for *Mizen-kei* (Indefinite
Form), II for Renyoo-kei (Conjunctional Form), III for Shuusi-kei (Final Form), IV for Rentai-kei (Attributive Form), V for Izen-kei (Concessive Form), and VI for Meirei-kei (Imperative Form).

7) See Washio (2004) for a complete list of causative pairs attested in the perfect form in Old Japanese.

8) The Old Japanese verb which is semantically closest to volgen ‘follow’ seems to be tuki- ‘follow (someone)’. This is not attested in the perfect form in Old Japanese, but it is attested with -mu in a text from a later period of Classical Japanese. Lieber and Baayen (1997) also cite verliezen ‘lose’ as a transitive verb compatible with zijn. The Japanese equivalent of this is usinahi- ‘lose’, which takes -tu. Lieber and Baayen’s (1997) treatment of verbs like passeren ‘pass’ and vergeten ‘forget’ are critically examined by Ackema (1999) and Hoekstra (1999). See Washio (2004) for discussion.

9) The verb su- ‘do’ displays an irregular pattern of inflection: it appears as si- when it is followed by the past tense morpheme -ta. Similarly, ha- ‘do’ is an irregular verb in Korean: it appears as hay- when it is followed by the past tense morpheme -(e)ss.

10) Æ is a Korean/Japanese equivalent of Chinese Æ daoda.

11) As mentioned in section two, this is a highly simplified picture.

12) What I called the DO/BECOME selection in Korean is in fact an extremely complex phenomenon. In the discussion above, I abstracted away from many of the complexities associated with this phenomenon. For detail, see Ogoshi (1982, 2002), Washio (1998, 2002) and the references cited there.


14) See Saiki (2006) for a thoughtful discussion of “affectedness” and related notions from a cross-linguistic perspective.

15) It seems that passives like these are also rather severely restricted in Chinese. The point here, however, is that sporadic instances of passives like this all seem to be based on non-unaccusative verbs, with a possible single exception to be discussed below.

16) Huang (1999: 462) comments on this sentence as follows: “Said of a Mahjong game where one wins by drawing the last matching tile by oneself, rather than converting on an opponent’s discarded tile.”
17) For example, a possible context would be: “Did you get him?” “Well, almost, but he got away after all” where the italicized part might be expressed by the passive sentence (“怎麼樣? 抓住了嗎?” “差點兒就抓住了。可是還是被他跑了。” ) though in the colloquial speech, the use of 讓 ràng or 叫 jiào instead of 被 bèi is more natural, a general tendency frequently noted in Chinese grammar (see Liu, Pan and Gu (1983) among many other grammar books). I would like to thank Yiwen Chen for the above example as well as for some valuable information on the Chinese examples discussed in this paper.

18) We would then need to rely on some semantic and/or pragmatic conditions on the bei-passive construction. Huang’s (1999) distinction between natural and unnatural “transitive complex predicates” would play a crucial role in delimiting the class of grammatical passives in Chinese. Also important would be the “construction meanings” associated with the passive construction. For discussion, see Kimura (1981, 1992) and Sugimura (2004) among other works.

Comparing resultatives and causatives in Chinese and English, Huang (2005) makes highly interesting observations on the parametric difference between these languages which is related to the nature of the unergative-unaccusative distinction. Specifically, Huang claims that the distinction between the unergative and unaccusative classes “is not strictly maintained in Chinese” contrasting with English, and this property of Chinese is ultimately reduced to his characterization of Chinese as a language of high analyticity. Since the parameter Huang suggests has to do with some peculiarities of the unaccusative-unergative distinction in Chinese, it is worth reexamining the properties of the Chinese passives and their relation to 1AEX from the perspective of this new parameter Huang argues for.

19) The discussion of passives in Mongolian and Japanese in this section is based on Washio (2000), which in turn draws on the data given in Washio (1995). Classic works on the passive constructions in Middle Mongolian (available in English) include Poppe (1965) and Street (1957). For further reference, see Washio (1995).

20) In many dictionaries, the other auxiliary haben is also listed as a possible choice.

21) As opposed to the “formal” notion of unaccusativity, characterized by the lack of an external argument. Passivizability of semantic unaccusatives in Japanese has been stressed also by Matsumoto (1998: 44).

22) Meaning “he passed away,” in this case. This expression (ügei bol-) can carry a more literal sense, in which case it would simply mean “disappear.”

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