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RESEARCHES ON ACTANCY

Summary

1. Program and methodology.

1.1. Factual information.

The purpose of the program called RIVALC ('Recherche interlinguistique sur les variations d'actance et leur corrélats') is to investigate, in languages as different as possible, actancy variations, i.e. variations of the grammatical relations linking the verbal predicate and the main noun phrases (the actants) and to detect the relevant factors correlating with these variations, the final aim being, if possible, to reach presumably universal invariants.

This program follows up studies conducted for more than ten years in my seminary at the Ecole Pratique des Hautes Etudes ((Sorbonne), where with a varying audience of specialists I had made a survey of actancy structures in a number of different languages (cf. *Ecole Pratique des Hautes Etudes, IVe section, Annuaire* 1973/1974 and foll.). It is also a continuation of the several year activity of an informal group on predicate-actant relations initiated by Catherine Paris, who organized two symposia (may 1977, may 1978) and edited a collective publication (Paris, ed., 1979).

The RIVALC group was founded in 1984 as a 'recherche coopérative sur programme' (subsequently a 'groupement de recherches') supported by the 'Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique' (CNRS). It is composed of some twenty scholars, all of whom belong either to the CNRS or to one of the Paris universities or to another advanced studies institution. Each one is a specialist of a particular linguistic domain; his/her work on this domain is his/her main activity and, having an interest in typology and universal research, he/she contributes to the RIVALC activity to the extent of his/her possibility.

The group meets regularly and publishes working papers (usually in French), by the title of *Actances*. Six volumes of *Actances* have been brought out (1985, 1986, 1987, 1989, 1991). Besides, some articles in connection with the RIVALC theme have

been published in linguistic journals by individual members of the group.

1.2. Basic notions and choices.

1.2.1. General.

In an academic conference about anthropology C.Lévi-Strauss (1979: 605-6) said: 'Ce problème de la culture, donc de la condition humaine, consiste à découvrir des lois d'ordre sous-jacentes à la diversité observable des croyances et des institutions, [...] invariantes à travers les époques et les cultures; ces lois seules pourront permettre de surmonter l'antinomie apparente entre l'unicité de la condition humaine et la pluralité apparemment inépuisable des formes sous lesquelles nous l'appréhendons'.

This statement in particular applies to linguistics: there is an antinomy between the unicity of human language (*le langage*) and the apparently boundless diversity of languages (*les langues*). No linguist probably can help feeling that all languages, in spite of their seemingly infinite diversity, have much in common. The difficulty is to change this feeling into knowledge, to go beyond it in order to reach scientific conclusions. As a matter of fact, while this feeling is an inducement to the search of universal invariants, it is also an insidious obstacle in its way, because it incites the linguist to rely on a kind of lax intuitive 'natural' logic, whose terms are ill-defined or hardly adapted to the object of the investigation. E.Benveniste (1950: 167), among the main impediments that stood in the way of this sort of research, mentioned '1) la référence, explicite ou non, à la logique, 2) le recours à des notions subjectives au nom de l'"évidence".' The problem is to use only notions and methods relevant to the domain of language.

In order to achieve this aim, we believe that the safest way is to take one's stand upon the fundamental saussurian distinction between signified and signifier, or, in hjelmslevian terms, the plane of content and the plane of expression, and to

proceed, as far as possible, from expression to content, from form to meaning.

Of course, in the present state of the linguistic science, a certain amount of intuition is inevitable, at least at the outset. Our field is actancy, i.e. the domain of grammatical relationships between the predicate and the main noun phrases in verbal sentences (nominal sentences, for the time being, are left outside the scope of our work). This implies a/ that we know what is a sentence and what is a predicate, b/ that we know also what is a verb and what is a noun, and c/ that all languages make a distinction between verb and noun and, consequently, between verbal sentence and nominal sentence . Such notions can usually be defined with not too much difficulty in individual languages, but they are not so easy to define in general linguistics. However they are generally accepted. As to the presumed universal distinction between verb and noun, it seems that hitherto no language in the world has been reported that assuredly lacks a difference between word classes more or less similar to what is called verb and noun in other languages [1] .

1.2.2. Actancy.

What we call actancy belongs exclusively to the morpho-syntactic level. The meaning of the sentence and its components has no part in our definition of the actancy construction, except to the extent that it must be possible to decide whether two sentences have the same meaning and/or the same pragmatic value or not. Such notions as agent, patient, experiencer, etc., which belong to the notional level, have no relevance here.

The actants of a sentence are the NPs (and/or clitics or affixes) which have somehow privileged relationships with the verbal predicate: for instance, they are (cross-)referenced in the verbal form by some kind of agreement, or they are marked by specific morphological markers, or they take some specific place in the sentence, or they are obligatorily present, or they admit of certain particular transformations, etc. These properties characterize them in contradistinction to other NPs (the

circumstants). Naturally the actants are defined in each individual language. There is no a priori reason why different languages should have the same set of actants; usually they have different sets of actants, differently defined

Among actants some have more specific links with the verb than others, so that it is generally possible to distinguish between more central and more peripheric actants. In many languages two or three actants may be considered the most central ones, namely those ordinarily called 'subject', '(direct) object', and possibly 'indirect object'. In fact, it is often possible, in an individual language, to define a subject and an object by means of such criteria as agreement, case markers, etc. But it is equally true that there is no consensus among linguists on a universal definition, valid for all languages, of the notions of subject and object, nor even on the theoretical possibility of a such a definition.

This being so, except when speaking of an individual language where subject and object may be given accurate definitions, it would be better not to make use of these notions, which, in cross-linguistic use, are preconceived and intuitive. However, for the sake of convenience, in order to avoid cumbersome circumlocutions, I will in the following use the words 'subject' and 'object' (with quotation marks) in a non-technical and rather vague sense: they will designate the NPs that in other languages are the translation equivalents of the subject and object of simple basic sentences in West European languages [2] .

1.2.3. Actancy variation.

As actancy construction we recognize any combination 'subject' + verb (+ 'object') (for the sake of simplicity, I will not here consider triactant sentences), with its morphological and syntactic markers, including nominal markers, such as case suffixes or prefixes, prepositions or postpositions, etc., verbal markers of person, number, etc., agreement with 'subject' and/or 'object', and word order (strictly compulsory or more or less preferential). If in a language, as is usually the

case, different actancy constructions are in use, the choice between them depending either on the lexical items chosen as the verb and/or the actants or on tense/aspect/mood or any other factor whatever, we call this actancy variation.

Thus the notion of actancy variation is rather general: it includes any change, minute or large, in actancy construction, i.e. in the formal grammatical relations between the actant(s) and the verb. The variation, for instance, may consist of as little as the addition or suppression of a preposition or postposition or the substitution of a case marker by another one, or it may involve a complete rearrangement of the whole construction.

Most types of what is often called split ergativity are examples of such extensive rearrangements. Diathesis transformations, e.g. passivization and, in languages where the ergative construction prevails, antipassivization, are also examples of extensive actancy variation; certain languages (eskimo, maya) have both passive and antipassive constructions.

Among more minute variations one may mention what Bossong (1985a) has called 'differential object marking' (cf. infra § 2.1). Another type of actancy variation is between the independent position of an actant and its incorporation into the verb form. As a matter of fact what is usually called incorporation may assume rather different shapes: the noun may be actually merged in the verb (this is what is properly implied by the word 'incorporation'); it may also be only compelled to precede (or follow) the verb immediately, excluding any intervening element; in the latter case it may take a specific contact form or not. For this reason instead of incorporation we prefer to speak of coalescence for the whole range of these phenomena, including some facts (lexical verbal phrases) which often are not considered in the same light, and to reserve the name of incorporation for the extreme cases, where the noun is inserted between the elements of the verb form.

As a concrete example of the notion of actancy variation I would like to mention the Drehu language, a Melanesian language

with a whole series of different variations concerning: order of the components, presence obligatory or not of the actants, form of the actants, form of the verb, coalescence of the "object" (the verb never agrees with any of the actants) (Moyse-Faurie, 1983).

In that language, on the one hand there are variations in connexion with tense/aspect/mood. In the present tense, i.e. with a specific particle marking present time, the construction is accusative, the 'subject' is obligatorily expressed, and it precedes the verb (formula [1]).

[1] $X_o\ V_o\ Y_o$

$Z_o\ V_o$

With other tense/aspect/mood particles, the verb is at the beginning of the sentence and both actants may be lacking; the 'transitive subject' is usually marked by a specific preposition, so that the construction is ergative; the 'intransitive subject' is unmarked (formula [2]).

[2] $V_o\ (Y_o)\ (X_a)$ (a = actancial preposition)

$V_o\ (Z_o)$

With the past particle, we have the same construction, but the 'intransitive subject' too is more often than not marked by the actancial preposition (formula [3]).

[3] $V_o\ (Y_o)\ (X_a)$

$V_o\ (Z_a)$

On the other hand variations in connexion with categories of the 'object' combine with the above-mentioned ones. If the 'object' is a noun with the article, i.e. having a referential meaning, it is not coalescent with the verb. If it is non-referential, it must immediately follow the verb and the verb assumes a special form (V'); the group V'Y behaves exactly like an intransitive (= uniactant) verb. Finally, if the 'object' is a proper name or a personal pronoun, there is another kind of coalescence: the verb has a form V^2, which may or may not coincide with V' (it depends on the verbal lexeme); the 'object' must follow it immediately, but the group V^2Y does not possess all the properties of an intransitive verb [3].

1.2.4. Correlations.

Are actancy variations only fortuitous outcomes of language evolution? It may be the case occasionally. But in most cases the variations are not fortuitous: they correlate with differences of meaning or divergences in communicative intent. As mentioned above, actancy variations in Drehu correlate on the one hand with tense/aspect/mood, on the other hand with categories of the "object". Both kinds of correlation are not specific of that language. Comparative investigation of variations in a number of languages show that they often correlate with such factors That means that these variations are not (or not entirely) conditioned by factors specific of a particular language, but they result from certain general conditions of the functioning of language (*le langage*) that transcend particular languages.

Some of those general conditions are obvious and trivial. If practically everywhere verbs meaning "to make" and "to give" are bivalent and trivalent respectively, that is due to the very nature of these processes: the action of making implies a maker and a thing made; the action of giving implies three participants, a giver, a thing given and a receiver. The difference of construction of these two verbs, which is found in so many languages, does not seem to teach us much about the functioning of language.

But other cases are quite different and their semantic or pragmatic correlates are far from being intuitively obvious. Let us for example consider the phenomenon of split ergativity, in particular in languages that have the accusative construction in the present or imperfective and the ergative construction in the past or perfective. Many linguists have been puzzled by it, and it was some time regarded as a bizarre and useless complication, which has arisen from fortuitous circumstances of evolution and is doomed to be eliminated. However it appeared too wide-spread and too persistent to be considered a mere accident, so that linguists felt compelled to look for some kind of explanation. This new approach resulted in interesting considerations and

opened new prospects (e.g. Regamey, 1954; Bechert, 1977; DeLancey 1981).

There are many other correlations the investigation of which may be fruitful. I mentioned above correlations of actancy variations with tense/aspect/mood and with categories of the object. Correlations of diathesis variations and of verb classes are also highly interesting. Some examples bearing on these topics are developed below in § 2.

Thus our procedure is as follows. As the basis of the investigation we take actancy constructions as defined above, i.e. as arrangements of signifiers. Considering a certain variation between two (or more) actancy constructions in a certain individual language, we try to find out what difference of meaning or communicative intent correlates with this variation. In other words we analyse each individual case by means of commutation in order to discern the relevant semantic or pragmatic distinction.

Then we have to compare these correlates with those that in the same way have been discovered in other individual languages and appear to be of a similar nature (although generally not exactly identical), and, if possible, to build a model that includes and orders the whole of the observed correlations pertaining to the investigated area. We hope to be able in this way to build cross-linguistic invariants, probably in the shape of scales or continuums of notions and correlative actancy constructions.

At this point we have not yet reached the level of explanation. Of course it would be desirable to be in a position to propose an explanation, psychological or structural or other, for such and such an invariant which would have been induced from the comparative study of linguistic data. But even if such an aim cannot be reached and must be left for future research, the very construction of an invariant showing how actancy phenomena are determined by certain set of notions will be a non-negligible scientific attainment.

1.3. Forms and correlates of actancy variations.

1.3.1. The correlates.

Experience suggests that the correlates of actancy variation, although assuming many forms in the detail, may be on the whole classified under a few headings:

1) Semantic content of the verb and the actants, i.e. nature of the process and roles of the participants [4]. The trivial distinction between uniactant and biactant (and triactant) verbs, called 'intransitive' and 'transitive' (and 'ditransitive'), is an expression of differences in the nature of processes. Furthermore frequently verbs denoting processes of different nature, even though having the same valency (the same number of actants), have different constructions. For example, in Avar, the 'subject' is in the instrumental with action verbs, in a locative case with perception verbs, and in the dative with the verb meaning 'to love' (Charachidzé, 1981: 159-61). In Finnish, the verb 'to love' and a few others have their 'object' in the partitive, not in the accusative like most other verbs. In Trumai (Brazil) there are four classes of biactant verbs with four different constructions (Monod-Becquelin, 1976). In Australian languages, Tsunoda (1981, 1985) classified verbs of action, perception, feeling, 'pursuit', etc., into different classes according to their constructions.

On the other hand, it happens, the process remaining the same, that the roles of the participants vary to a certain extent and the construction varies correlatively. There are degrees in the agentivity of the participant represented by the 'subject': it may be direct or indirect, volitional or not, and these differences may be reflected in the construction. DeLancey (1984) gave examples of such differences in an Amerindian and a Tibeto-Burmese language. In Bengali the construction of certain verbs varies according to whether the action is volitional or not (Klaiman 1980). This distinction may appear also in the treatment of the 'object': in Japanese with causative verbs, it is in the

dative (postposition ni) or the accusative (postposition o) according to whether the causee is agreeing or not (Matsubara, 1984).

2) Categorization of the actants. In many languages the actancy construction varies in correlation with the position of the 'object' on scales of definiteness and humanness/animacy [5] (Lazard, 1984). Categories of the 'subject' may also play a role: in Tsakhur it is in different cases according to whether it is human or not (Deeters, 1963: 56). The category of person too is a very important factor: in some Australian languages (e.g. Dyirbal, Dixon, 1972: 59-60; wargamay, Dixon, 1981: 60; watjarri, Douglas, 1881: 237-8), the construction is accusative with 1st and 2nd person actants, ergative with 3rd person pronouns and nouns (split ergativity according to person). Sometimes the relevant factor is the comparative places of the 'subject' and the 'object' on categorial scales: if the 'object' is higher than the 'subject', the sentence must be in the antipassive in Yukulta (Keen, 1983: 236). Categorization of the actants may influence their construction also when, in derived diatheses, they become oblique NPs: in Yidiñ the 'object' is in the dative when it is higher on the scale of humanness/animacy, in the instrumental when it is lower (Dixon, 1977: 110-12). There might be a similar rule in Vogul, where in the passive the agent is either in the lative or the instrumental (Sauvageot, 1984: 117-18).

3°) Tense/aspect/mood. It is well known that in a number of languages, Caucasian, Iranian, Indian, Tibeto-Burmese, Maya, the actancy construction is accusative in the present or imperfective and ergative in the past or perfective. While in those languages the categories of tense/aspect/mood determine the whole sentence construction, in other languages they more particularly affect the relations between the verb and the 'object', e.g. in Finnish, Maghrib Arabic, Berber, Palau (cf. infra, § 2.1.3).

4) Communicative intent. The discourse structure of the sentence, i.e. the distribution of the thematic and rhematic parts of it, is a major factor of actancy variation. In Archi, it has been stated that the verb agrees with 'subject' and 'object'

when the rhematic part is the group 'object' + verb, and it agrees only with the 'object' when only the 'object' is rhematic (in which case the verb is part of the theme), as shown by the form of the question, explicit or implicit, which the sentence answers (Kibrik, 1979: 69). Similar (but not identical) facts have been observed in Nenets Samoyed (Sauvageot, 1971: 354) and in Chukchee (Comrie, 1979: 228-29). Elsewhere it is the marking of the 'object' that varies according to the communicative intent: in Persian, a thematic 'object', even when non-referential, is marked, which is otherwise impossible with a non-referential object (Lazard, 1982: 189-90; cf. infra, § 2.1.1). Another kind of variation is found in Cushitic languages, where the incorporation of an actant (which may be the 'object' or the intransitive or transitive 'subject') is fundamentally determined by the communicative intent (Sasse 1984).

5) Other factors, which may be called 'intra-syntactic', must also be taken into account. It often happens that the building of complex sentences, with coordinate or subordinate clauses, makes necessary to change the actancy construction. For example, in Tagalog, for an NP to be determined by a relative clause it must be in this clause the NP 'in focus' (i.e. in the zero case), which often necessitates a change of diathesis (Schachter-Otanes, 1972: 117 ff.). Similarly in Dyirbal, if an actant is common to two verbs in the same (complex) sentence, it must be in the same case, which often entails the use of the antipassive for one of the verbs (Dixon, 1972: 73-74). In such cases the actancy variation is brought about by purely syntactic requirements.

Another internal factor also seems to correlate with actancy variations, namely the relative weight of the different NPs, i.e. their length. In Persian, other things being equal, if the 'object' is formed of a lengthy NP and/or if the verb group is a lengthy one, the 'object' is more freely marked than if these groups are short (cf. infra § 2.1.1). Besides, in languages where word order is not strictly rigid, its variations are partly ruled by the relative length of the different sequences.

1.3.2. Non-isomorphism of forms and correlates.

Thus the correlates of actancy variations appear to be able to be grouped in a few clusters of factors, which have relevance in many languages. On the other hand the actancy variations that they induce display a large variety of different forms, as shown by the examples I have mentioned. Moreover there is no necessary link between the form of the variation and the nature of the correlate.

One and the same form may have different correlates. There is a clear example of this in 'differential object marking' (infra § 2.1). The marking of the 'object' by a preposition may be triggered by the fact that it is more or less human and/or definite (e.g., in Hebrew, Spanish, etc.). But it may also be induced by the imperfective aspect, as in Palau, Berber and Maghrib Arabic. In both cases the preposition is opposed to zero. However, these two variations are not only different, but they are, in a sense, contrary to each other. This is clearly showed by a comparison with Finnish, which happens to use the same case (the partitive, as opposed to the accusative) in both correlations (cf. infra, § 2.1.3). In the first one (categories of the "object") the partitive corresponds to the absence of the preposition in Hebrew and Spanish; in the second one (aspect) it corresponds to the presence of the preposition in Berber and Arabic; the relationships are represented in Table 1.

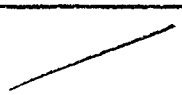
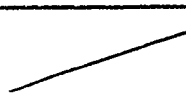
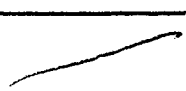
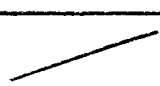
	"Object" more individuated	Perfective aspect	"Object" less individuated	Imperfective aspect
Finnish	Accusative	Accusativ	Partitive	Partitive
Hebrew, Spanish	Preposition		Ø	
Berber, Arabic		Ø		Preposition

Table 1

Conversely one and the same factor may trigger different forms of actancy variations. Such are variations correlating with categories of the 'object' (cf. infra § 2.1.). Let us only mention a striking example of a similar function expressed by different means in two widely different types of language. In Eskimo, while with a definite (or thematic) 'object' the construction is ergative and the verb agrees with both the 'subject' and the 'object', an indefinite 'object' is put in the instrumental (or 'relative') case with the verb agreeing only with the 'subject' (antipassive construction) (Kalmár, 1979; Mennecier, 1986). In Fijian, while a non-generic 'object' is free, a generic or non referential 'object' is coalescent with the verb (Milner, 1956: 25). In both languages the second construction (exemplified by [4a] and [5a]) concerns an 'object' that is low on the scale of definiteness, and in both language the same construction applies also in the case of an adverbial (ex. [4b] and [5b]); in other words the indefinite or generic 'object' is treated exactly like an adverbial.

[4a] Esk. inuk qimmir-mik taku-v-uq
X Y-INSTR see-INDIC-x
"The man saw a dog"

[4b] inuk angiju-mik sinik-p-uq
Z big-INSTR sleep-INDIC-z
"The man slept long"

[5a] Fij. e-ratou gunu yaqona
ASP-x V Y
"They drink kava"

[5b] e-ratou moce balavu
ASP-z V long
"They sleep long"

Thus, within the frame of very different grammatical structures, Eskimo and Fijian exhibit the same relationships: this convergence is significant.

These considerations show the usefulness of the notion of actancy variation taken in a very extensive sense. It is

possible, for instance, to investigate the function(s) of the antipassive without paying attention to 'differential object marking' or, conversely, to study the conditions of 'differential object marking' without considering the antipassive: these studies may assuredly be interesting and fruitful, but they cannot manage to perceive what the functions of the antipassive and 'differential object marking' have in common. If both these phenomena (and other phenomena as well) are subsumed under the notion of actancy variation, provided that, in the wide field that is delimited by this notion, the linguist's intuition has guided him towards a fertile ground, he will have some chance of discovering common factors and be in a position to understand how, on some specific points, languages of different types finally comply with similar necessities (cf. § 2 and 3.1).

1.3.3. Interplay of factors.

Actancy phenomena are often complicated by the interplay of factors: either they converge or they substitute for each other or perhaps sometimes they operate opposite to each other. I will give two examples.

The first one is 'differential object marking' in Persian (Lazard 1982 and infra § 2.1.1). The main factor is definiteness: when the 'object' is definite, it is always marked by the postposition *râ*. When it is indefinite, *râ* may or may not be present. Its presence is more probable if the 'object' is human: thus definiteness is substituted by humanness (and other factors as well, in particular the semantic relationship between the verb and the 'object'). When the 'object' is generic, *râ* is not used, except (this point is important) if it is thematic: in this case, it may be considered either that the relevant factor is now the communicative intent and no longer the category of definiteness, or that the two factors (indefiniteness and thematicity) play opposite to each other and thematicity wins. This complexity is not a specific property of the Persian language: it is found also in the case of the postposition *ko* in Hindi, the preposition *a* in Spanish, etc.

Incorporation/coalescence is the second example. Practically in all cases it correlates with several factors at the same time:

a) the function of coalescent NP: most often it is the 'object', sometimes the 'intransitive subject' or another noun, rarely the 'transitive subject';

b) the degree of definiteness of this noun: usually, but not always, it is generic or non referential;

c) the semantic relationship between this noun and the verb: often, but not always nor everywhere, the group verb + noun denotes a usual, 'institutionalized' (as put by Mithun 1984) activity;

d) last, but not least, the communicative intent: the verb and the noun together form the rheme, or at least they both belong to the same part of the discours structure.

On all these points Sasse (1984), dealing with oriental Cushitic languages, is especially enlightening. Those languages represent a rather extreme type (incorporation of 'intransitive subjects', of definite nouns, etc.), but on the whole the same factors are found in other languages as well. In different languages they combine differently and incorporation/coalescence is more or less free or on the contrary lexicalized.

These examples are no exception. It is very often that several factors interplay in actancy construction. The linguist must in each case try to appreciate what is the part of each one of them and how they interplay.

1.4. Theoretical considerations.

1.4.1. Contingency of linguistic units.

This research is founded upon the conviction that there is no such thing as universal grammar, but there are universal conditions of the functioning of language.

There is no universal category. Let us, for instance, take the category of passive (cf. infra, § 2.2.1): not only many languages lack a passive, but, in languages that have one, it may occur in very different forms and with different functions, so

that the very notion of passive is rather elusive [6] . This notion was created by scholars studying the grammar of Classical Greek (Andersen, 1989a), and subsequently the name of passive was given to what in other languages was more or less similar to the Greek passive, then to what in still other languages was more or less similar to what was called passive in the former languages, and so on. Nowadays linguists ask the question: what is passive? and many papers and books have been written on this topic. Actually, the forms of passive in different languages do resemble each other to a certain extent, and they fulfill functions that partly coincide with each other. But each language presents a unique combination of forms and functions.

For example, what is called passive in a language may express not only 'passive' meanings', but also 'reflexive' and 'middle' meanings [7] in a language, while in another language 'passive' meanings are expressed by passive forms and both 'reflexive' and 'middle' meanings by middle forms, and a third one has passive and reflexive forms and renders 'middle' meanings by means of the uniactant construction of 'reversible' verbs (cf. § 2.3.2), as represented in Table 2.

		Meanings		
		"passive"	"reflexive"	"middle"
Forms	L1	Passive verbs		
	L2	Passive verbs	Middle verbs	
	L3	Passive verbs	Reflexive verbs	Reversible verbs

Table 2

In L1, as the meanings 'passive', 'reflexive' and 'middle' are not distinguished on the expression plane, it is impossible to draw sharp lines between them: one goes by a gradual transition from passive to reflexive proper to other shades of meaning. The distinction between 'passive', 'reflexive' and 'middle' meanings

has no linguistic relevance. Similarly, in L2, the difference between 'reflexive' and 'middle' meanings is not relevant [8] .

In this respect grammatical categories are not fundamentally different from lexical words. Both are linguistic signs and, as such, contingent , i.e. their content (their 'signified'), as well as their form (their 'signifier'), are specific of the individual language to which they belong. It is well known that no word has exact translation equivalent in another language (except perhaps scientific terms), because it conveys a variety of senses which never exactly coincide with the variety of senses of its (approximate) equivalent.

As Saussure said, 'La langue est une forme, non une substance', or, in other words, 'Dans la langue, il n'y a que des différences'. This means that a signified, i.e. the content correlating with a certain segment on the expression plane (a signifier), may extend over any set of (somehow related) meanings. It occupies as much room in the semantic space as is not occupied by other signifieds. It can be approximately described in terms of substance, but it has no accurate definition but differential: it is defined in contradistinction to other, neighbouring signifieds, i.e. by its boundaries. As it exists only by its correlation with its signifier, it is distinguished from other signifieds exactly to the extent that its signifier is different from other signifiers: therefore a meaning is linguistically relevant only as far as it correlates with differences on the expression plane. As soon as 90 years ago, this principle of relevance was explicitly laid down by Meillet (1902: 5), who said that, in his description of Old Church Slavonic, 'aucune catégorie sémantique n'a été admise qui ne répondît à un moyen d'expression distinct dans la langue même. Il a paru tout à fait vain de préciser arbitrairement des nuances de sens plus ou moins subtiles là où la langue n'a point institué de signes propres; nul criterium ne permet de fixer où l'on doit s'arrêter dans ces distinctions'. Any difference of meaning which has no correlate in the expression is irrelevant.

1.4.2. The universal.

However, linguistic signs are not entirely contingent and language specific: they also include a part of universal. Language is a produce of human mind and body: therefore all languages must reflect something of the unity of humanity. All must also comply with the necessities of communication. In addition, there is a common part in the experience the different human groups have of the world: all human beings have a body, a family, a social life, work, sleep, etc., and consequently there must be semantic universals. Actually, the semantic content of a word is often a combination of some reference to the common human experience of the world with language (and culture) specific peculiarities: this is what makes translation possible.

The same analysis can be applied to grammatical categories. Each language has its own choice of grammaticized notions and its own specific way of arranging these notions into a grammatical system. But there are similarities between grammatical systems. It is a fact that all languages, as it seems, have grammaticized, e.g., notions pertaining to the field of what is called tense/aspect/mood, even though probably not two languages exhibit the same tense/aspect/mood system. Similarly all languages seem to distinguish in some way between two word classes which may be called noun and verb respectively; all have nominal phrases; all have means of arranging nominal phrases and verbal predicate in such a way that a whole range of hierarchized relations can be expressed; etc. It is reasonable to assume that such common features arose from both the common human capacities and experience and the needs of communication. It is the very existence of these general common features that makes possible to engage in comparative investigations bearing on only parts of languages (such as actancy) and to try to build partial typologies [9].

Now, there is a long way from these very general observations and hypotheses to the infinite intricacies of individual languages with which the universal part of language is mingled and through which it manifests itself. The question is how to

grasp that universal part and to perceive by which ways it manages to shape the structures of individual languages.

I said above that the semantic content of a word is defined by its boundaries. One may wonder to what extent the boundary between the contents of two neighbouring words is language specific and to what extent it is conditioned by universal features of human mind and human experience. If, in a given semantic field, a number of languages having no common origin and no historical contact place boundaries approximately at the same points, there is a reasonable probability that those are points where there is a 'natural' propensity to establish a distinction. In this way it is possible to catch a glimpse of a universal logic [10] independent of individual languages and to perceive links which may be far from being suggested by intuition. With this method I have been able, for instance, to show that, in the semantics of time/aspect/mood relationships, habitual past and counterfactual hypothesis are closely related (Lazard, 1975) [11] .

In the case of actancy constructions things are more complicated than with lexemes and morphemes, because first they are in correlation not only with semantic contents, but also with the pragmatic organization of discourse, and, second, often several factors, both semantic and pragmatic, interplay with each other, as seen above (§ 1.3.3). Moreover this interplay itself is variable: for example, 'differential object marking' correlates with several factors differently in different languages (cf. § 2.1).

However actancy constructions can be investigated with basically the same method as lexemes and morphemes. Their functions, either semantic or pragmatic or other (cf. § 1.3.1), are defined in contradistinction to other actancy constructions with which they commutate: which means that the research for them should be made by analysing actancy variations. And, if, from comparison of a number of unrelated languages it turns out that approximately the same factor or cluster of factors correlate with an actancy variation, that must reflect something of universal prelinguistic conditions. Thus on the basis of an

accurate analysis of actancy variations in individual languages and comparison of the mechanisms observed in different languages, it is possible to perceive some general necessities (invariants) which rule those mechanisms and their variations.

These invariants are not grammatical or logical categories. They consist of relationships. They are best conceived of as gradients along which actancy variations and their correlates, and consequently actancy constructions and their functions, are distributed (cf., e.g., infra § 3.1 a tentative 'transitivity gradient'). Most likely the order in which they occur is not fortuitous, but ruled by necessities in connection with the functioning of language as a reflection of man's capacities and experience of the world and as a means of communication.

Thus linguistic phenomena are children of chance and necessity. Each language is a unique set of combinations of forms and functions issued from a unique history, where chance, i.e. a very large number of unconnected events, plays a major part. But it is within the limits set out by general necessities that chance produces the practically infinite variety of linguistic structures.

1.4.3. Typology.

An invariant is a frame consisting of relationships between possible linguistic structures; the structures exhibited by individual languages are choices among these possibilities. The invariant does not command any of these choices, but it excludes some.

Let us suppose, for instance, that, on the basis of the comparison of a number of languages, we have established a presumably invariant scale along which four verb classes, A, B, C, D are distributed, as figured in [6] (cf. § 2.3). A might be, e.g., action verbs, B perception verbs, C location verbs, D possession verbs ('to have, to lose, etc.').

[6] <--|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-->

A B C D

There may be languages (L1) with no difference of construction at all, other languages (L2) where A and B have the same construction, C and D another one, still other languages (L3) with the same construction for A, B and C and a different one for D, even languages (L4) with different constructions for the four classes. There are other possibilities as well. But in principle, if this scale really is an invariant, there cannot be languages (*L5) where A and D would be grouped together against B and C:

[7] L1: A = B = C = D
L2: A = B ≠ C = D
L3: A = B = C ≠ D
L4: A ≠ B ≠ C ≠ D
*L5: A = D ≠ B = C

On the basis of such invariants it is possible to build a typology. Types are different choices within the universal frame: languages which make the same choice belong to the same type.

In the field of actancy variations one may conceive of two types of types, according to the criterion chosen:

a/ languages that exhibit the same forms of variations, e.g. languages having differential object marking, or having diathesis variations, etc.

b/ languages whose actancy variations correlate with the same kind of factors , e.g. languages having variations correlating with categories of the object, or with the semantic content of the verb (in [7], L2, L3, L4 are subtypes of such a type, L1 being a border-line case or another type), etc.

These two typologies can probably be refined and somehow combined together. Empirical research will show how far it is possible to go in this direction. It will also presumably bring to light favourite types, i.e. structures found in a larger number of languages. The existence of such major types would in itself reflect something of the universal conditions of the functioning of language. Universal research and typology are inseparable.

1.5. - Terminology.

Terminological problems are serious impediments in linguistic studies. In principle at least two major distinctions should be made:

1) Between the plane of signifieds/content and the plane of signifiers/expression. Different terms should be used for respective units of each plane. It is indeed most confusing to say, e.g., that 'reflexive' verbs may express not only 'reflexive' meanings, but also 'passive' meanings in concurrence with 'passive' verbs: as what is called 'reflexive' (or 'passive') form and what is called 'reflexive' (or 'passive') meaning do not coincide in their extension, there should be two different words..

2) Between the grammatical categories of a given individual language and cross-linguistic notions (in whatever way they are defined). For instance, the notion of 'adjective' or the function of 'subject' may be perfectly well defined in a given language, but such notions as 'adjective' or 'subject' in general linguistics are extremely vague. In this field each linguistic school has to build its own conceptual apparatus and to define its own terminology: ideally it is desirable that, as far as possible, it should choose designations clearly differentiated from those used for individual languages.

We have been able to comply only partially with this twofold requirement. 'Actancy', in our terminology, belongs to the expression plane. The units on this plane are the 'verbal predicate' (or short the 'verb', although 'verb' is properly the name of a word class, not a syntactic unit, but there is no risk of confusion) and the 'actants'. The actants have been defined above (§ 1.2.2) as having particular grammatical links with the verb, whereby they are distinguished from the 'circumstants', which do not have such links. On the content plane, the units corresponding to the verb and the actants are the 'process' and its 'participants' respectively; as process we conventionally

designate any notion expressed by a verb, be it an action, an event, a change of state or even a state.

The names of the actants are something of a problem. I have said above (§ 1.2.2) how we use the terms 'subject' and 'object'. Transitivity is also a litigious notion. We use the term 'transitivity' when in an individual language there is a neat distinction between transitive and intransitive verbs. Another possible, wider, cross-linguistic sense is defined below (§ 3.1).

THe notions of 'actancy construction' and 'actancy variation' have been defined above (§ 1.2.3). A 'diathesis' transformation is a kind of actancy variation; it seems convenient to define it as a grammaticized variation in which the form of the verb changes and at least one actant either undergoes a change or is dropped. Thus diathesis is a purely syntactic notion. On the other hand 'voice' is a morphological one: it denotes a form of the verbal paradigm [12] .

On the terms 'coalescence' and 'incorporation', cf. supra, § 1.2.3.

'Theme' and 'rheme' are the two poles of an utterance considered as a communication unit; all utterances have a rhematic part, most have also a thematic part. We speak of 'thematization' and 'rhematization' when the theme or the rheme respectively is emphasized by some means, be it stress, word order, specific particles, or syntactic procedures such as left or right dislocation, cleft sentences, etc. Thus sentences with thematization or rhematization are marked, in contradistinction to unmarked sentences, i.e. with no emphasis on either the theme or the rheme.

2. Some topics.

In this section, I will give some summary information on a few topics we have been tackling during the last few years: 'differential object marking' and related subjects, diatheses,

verb classification. Our work has not yet advanced very far and the following views are only tentative.

2.1. Differential object marking and related variations.

2.1.1. Differential object marking.

The relevant factors of 'differential object marking' (henceforth: DOM) are conveniently exemplified by the Persian language, where the 'object' is either marked by the postposition râ or unmarked (cf. Lazard, 1982; also Bossong, 1985a). They are the following:

1) Definiteness: a definite 'object' is always marked; an indefinite one may be marked or unmarked according to its being specific or not and to other factors as well (ex. [8].

[8a] ketâb-râ xând-am 'I read the book'
book read/PRET-1SG

[8b] ketâb xând-am 'I read a book/books'

2) Humanness/animacy: other things being equal, 'objects' designating human or animate beings are more often marked than those designating things.

3) Semantic relationship with the verb: other things being equal, the more akin to each other are the meanings of the 'object' and the verb, the less frequently the 'object' is marked.

4) Communicative intent: a thematic 'object' is marked, be it specific or non specific or even generic (ex. [9]).

[9] ketâb-râ mi-xân-and (with appropriate intonation:
book DUR-read-3PL two stresses and a pause)
'Books are for reading' (lit. book they read)

5) Word order and comparative length of the 'object' group and the verb group: if the 'object' is comparatively distant from the verb, it is more readily marked.

On the whole the dominant factors in Persian are definiteness and thematicity.

DOM occurs in a number of languages (cf. Bossong, 1985a: 177). Everywhere it is in correlation with the same factors or

some of them. In Turkish approximately the same conditions rule the use of the accusative case as in Persian the use of rā (Nilsson, 1979). In contemporary Hebrew the definite 'object' is marked by the preposition *'et*, but it seems that word order and the comparative length of groups too play a role (Gil, 1982). In Badaga, the object is in the accusative if it is specific, in the nominative (zero case) if it is non specific (Pilot-Raichoor, forthcoming). On the other hand, in Hindi humanness/animacy prevails, but in interplay with other factors. Similarly, in Guarani, a human 'object' is marked by the postposition *-pe*, but definiteness and thematicity may also be operative (Bossong, 1985b). In Burmese, the use of the postposition *ko* correlates not with definiteness, but with semantic factors, including animacy, and thematicity and word order (Kölver, 1985; Bernot, 1985).

To these languages we may add Japanese, though it is not usually mentioned in this connection. In Japanese, with potential and desiderative verbs, the 'object' may be marked either by *o* ('accusative') or by *ga* ('nominative'), the relevant factors being: meaning of the verb, - degree of reality of the process, - degree of affectedness of the 'object', - humanness, - definiteness, - concreteness vs. abstractness, - 1st person vs. 3rd person, - aspect, - thematicity of the 'object' (Fujimora, 1989). I cannot here specify these points: suffice it to say that these factors are very similar to those which are operative in Persian and they operate in the same way, *o* and *ga* being used on the whole where Persian uses *rā* and zero respectively.

In all those languages the relevant factors play in the same direction, namely: when the 'object' is more definite and/or more human and/or has less semantic affinity with the verb and/or is more thematic and/or more distant from the verb, etc., it tends to be marked by an case morpheme or a pre- or postposition; when it has the converse properties it tends to be unmarked. In the first case, it is more autonomous; in the second one, it is more dependent on the verb; often, when non specific, it is more or less coalescent with the verb and the group 'object' + verb (Y +

V) forms a syntactic unit and often a semantic and lexical unit as well. I proposed (Lazard, 1982) to express this opposition in terms of 'polarity': in the first case the 'object' is (or tends to be) a pole of the sentence on a par with the 'subject' and the verb ([10a]); in the second case the 'object' and the verb form (or tend to form) a single pole together ([10b]).

[10a] X - Y - V

[10b] X - YV

2.1.2. Related variations.

Interestingly the same factors (or some of them) are found correlating with other forms of actance variation. The variation may be located in the verb: in Hungarian the form of conjugation changes according to whether the 'object' is definite or indefinite; in Bantu languages the finite 'object' is cross-referenced in the verb, while the indefinite one is not. Like Hungarian, other Uralian languages too have 'objective' and 'subjective' conjugations, but the rules are more subtle: in Eastern Ostiak (Vach dialect) the 'objective' conjugation is used only when the 'object' is definite, but a definite 'object' does not always entail this conjugation: thematicity and word order too seem to have relevance (Perrot, 1989).

In other languages, more extensive variations, implying both the verb and the construction of the 'object' or even the structure of the whole sentence appear to correlate with similar or identical factors. The ba-construction in Mandarin Chinese (X ba Y V in contradistinction to X V Y) is comparable to the 'object' marking construction in languages like Persian: it is described as implying that the 'object' is definite or at least referential or generic and/or thematic; moreover there are semantic conditions involving the verb and the 'object' and their relationship (Li & Yip, 1979; Li & Thompson, 1981: 463-91).

Eskimo and many Austronesian languages use different diatheses according to whether the'object' is definite or not or thematic or not. In Eskimo the construction is ergative when it is definite or thematic, antipassive when it is not. In Tagalog

the 'patient-focus' construction implies a definite (thematic?) 'object'/patient.

2.1.3. Other correlations.

The category of definiteness is not a yes-or-no notion, but a scale of values from fully definite to specific indefinite to non-referential; indefinite member of a definite set and partitive also belong to that scale. Therefore it does not seem unjustified to look in the same light at the following variations. In Finnish the 'object' is in the partitive case either when it is an indefinite mass noun or an indefinite plural or when the verb has an imperfective meaning or is negative or when it belongs to a certain semantic area ('to love', etc.). The connection between the imperfective aspect and the partitive 'object' is obvious: when the action is still in progress, the patient is not yet completely affected. Therefore it is no surprise that the same actance variation is in correlation with both partitive and imperfective, i.e. with both the category of (in)definiteness and the category of aspect. This is also why in some Arabic and Berber dialects of North Africa the progressive aspect is expressed by using the imperfective verb form and a (partitive) preposition with the 'object' (Galand 1985, ex. [11], Algiers Arabic).

[11] râ-ni nâkul fi čina
PCL-1SG eat/1SG in orange
'I am eating an orange' (lit. here-I-am I-eat in orange)

In Palau a variation involving both the construction of the 'object' and the form of the verb is triggered by aspect: in the perfective, the 'object' has no preposition and is cross-referenced in the verb form; in the imperfective, the 'object' is not cross-referenced and it is introduced by a preposition (which is used also for circumstants), with the additional condition that it is human and/or specific and singular; if it is non-human and non-referential or plural , there is no preposition (Hagège, 1986: 108-111). The past construction probably is a kind of coalescence. Thus the variation correlates with both a verbal

category (aspect) and nominal ones (humanness and definiteness), and it involves three constructions (symbolized by [12a, 12, 12c]): in the first one (perfective aspect) the 'object' is 'polarized', in the second (imperfective, 'object' human and/or specific) it is marginalized, in the third (imperfective, 'object' non-human non-referential) it is more or less coalescent [3].

[12a] $V_{\times\vee}$ Y_o X_o

[12b] $V_\times$ Y_a X_o (a = preposition)

[12c] $V_\times$ Y_o X_o

2.1.4. Conclusion.

Thus, in a whole series of languages, we have found:

a/ different forms of actancy variation which may consist of a change of the construction of the 'object' or of the verb form or of both or of the whole sentence structure;

b/ a series of factors, either semantic or pragmatic or purely syntactic, correlating with those variations.

Each language has its own 'choice' of variations and a specific combination of correlates, so that there is probably no pair of languages that have exactly the same set of variations and correlates. The languages considered are all different in this respect.

However they are united in a common network of relationships:

1) There is a cluster or 'constellation' of factors correlating with the actancy variations: definiteness, humanness/animacy, semantic content of the 'object' and its relationship with the verb, thematicity, comparative weight of word groups, etc., which interplay with one another. This means that there is some sort of link between them.

2) More important, in all the languages where they are relevant they act in the same way . Suppose we build a two column table where we put in the left side-column the constructions (of all concerned languages) involving an 'object' more definite and/or more human and/or semantically more distant from the verb and/or more thematic and/or lengthier word groups and/or more

perfective aspect, and in the right-side column the constructions involving the opposite properties. Then we find that in the left-side constructions the 'object' is either marked by a specific 'object marker' (in Persian, Turkish, Hebrew, Hindi, Badaga, Spanish, Guarani, Burmese, Chinese, etc.) or cross-referenced in the verb form (in Hungarian, Ostiak, Eskimo, Bantu, Palau): it is a 'pole' of the sentence on a par with the subject. In the right-side constructions the 'object' is either unmarked and more or less coalescent with the verb, or else it is marked by an oblique case (Finnish) or a circumstancial preposition (Berber, Arabic, Palau), which makes it a marginal part of the sentence.

3) Furthermore, if we compare those constructions with uniactant constructions, we observe that in each language the right-side construction is more similar to the uniactant one and the left-side one is more remoted from it. Where the 'object' is coalescent with the verb, the sentence has only two 'poles' like the uniactant one; where it is treated like an oblique NP, it is more of a circumstant than an actant and the sentence is or tends to be a uniactant one:

[13]	Left side construction		X - Y - V
	Right side construction	'object' coalescent	X - YV
		'object' oblique	X - V (- Y)
	Uniactant construction		Z - V

The left-side construction is a full biactant one. In the right-side ones the 'object' is or tends to be no longer an actant: it is or tends to be only a qualifier of the verbal predicate. The right-side constructions are close to uniactant ones: they are biactant only to the extent that they include the 'object', i.e. the NP which in left-side constructions is an actant. These relationships may be represented as a scale:

[14] Biactant three-pole construction	Biactant two-pole construction	Uniactant construction
X - Y - V	X - YV	Z - V
	X - V (- Y)	

These conditions, as far as we can see, obtain everywhere there are actancy variations in correlation with the above-mentioned factors. Accordingly we seem to be entitled to formulate this prediction: if a language has an actancy variation (in biactant sentences) correlating with some of those factors, the form of the construction involving a less definite and/or less human, etc., 'object' and/or an imperfective aspect, will be such that it somehow takes an intermediate position between the other biactant construction and the uniactant one.

This scale may be considered as a scale of transitivity, since at one end of it we have the uniactant construction and at the other end the 'full' biactant one (cf. § 3.1). In this view the biactant two-pole construction is a construction of reduced transitivity.

As we have seen, the choice of the bi-actant three-pole construction is in connection with:

a/ semantic factors: definiteness and humanness of the 'object', which both can be subsumed under a category of individuation; perfectivity of the verb, which means completeness of the process; lack of propensity of the group verb + 'object' to form a semantic and lexical unit, which also entails individuation of the 'object';

b/ pragmatic factor: thematicity of the 'object' (while the verb is rhematic);

c/ syntactic factor: material bulkiness of the 'object' group and/or the verb group.

If the above scale is accepted as a gradient of transitivity, the relationships may be summarized by saying that grammatical transitivity is in correlation with individuation of the 'object', completeness of the process, thematicity of the 'object' and consistance of the syntactic phrases.

2.2. Diatheses [14].

2.2.1. Passive: forms.

The passive, in cross-linguistic use, is not a well-defined notion with clear-cut boundaries. What is or may be called passive may assume a number of different shapes, e.g. the following [15]:

- V changes to V^P (passive voice), Y becomes 'subject', X drops or becomes X_n (n = oblique marker): this is the 'canonical' passive as found in West European languages;

- V changes to V^P, Y remains unchanged, X drops or becomes X_n: this the 'impersonal passive', as, for example, in French;

- V changes to V^P, X and Y remain unchanged (Jinghpaw, DeLancey 1982);

- V changes to V^r (reflexive), Y becomes 'subject', X drops or becomes X_n (Russian);

- V changes to V^r, Y remains unchanged, X drops: 'impersonal' (Spanish);

- V remains unchanged, Y becomes 'subject', X drops or becomes X_n (Chinese).

To this list must be added: 'impersonal passives' derived from uniactant sentences (with V^P or V^r), -- passives whose subject is the 'indirect object' or another oblique NP of the basic sentence (English, Ancient Greek, Japanese), -- sentences with V in the active and undetermined 'subject' (French <u>on</u>-sentences, Finnish, Algonquian), -- and a number of different periphrases such as English *get*-passive, French *voir*-passive (*je me suis vu refuser l'entrée* 'I was denied admission'), etc.

Besides there is a variety of formations of the passive 'voice': it may be a special inflexion (Latin) or a suffix (Turkish) or a rather heavy periphrase; it may consist of a complete paradigm or be limited to certain tenses (Basque); it may be distinct from the reflexive or partly merged with it (Russian). Moreover it may take a different place in the grammatical system of the language, being either a fully grammaticized category or a type of derivation among others.

2.2.2. Passive: functions.

The passive, whatever its form, may fulfill different functions, which are conveniently classified under three headings, although they often overlap:

1) Syntactic functions. The passive is used when the speaker cannot or will not mention the agent or whatever participant would be represented by the 'subject' of the active sentence (the X-participant). It is often useful also for building complex sentences ('promotional passive', cf. Van Valin, 1980).

2) Pragmatic functions. It is common knowledge that the passive is often chosen when what would be the 'object' in the active sentence (Y) is thematic and/or what would the 'subject' (X) is rhematic.

3) Semantic functions.

a/ The passive correlates with referential and notional categories of the actants, definiteness, number, humanness /animacy, person: it is used or tends to be used when Y is more individuated than X.

b/ It seems to correlate also with the role of the X-participant in the process: it occurs when this participant is a patient rather than an agent or as much as an agent, for instance in sentences expressing its incapacity of completing the action. This is also why the passive may convey a 'reflexive' meaning and, conversely, the reflexive a 'passive' meaning.

c/ It may be connected with stylistic choice: it is often used in ceremonial or polite speech and in official and administrative language, in order to make the person of the X-participant appear modest and unimportant or, on the contrary, mysterious and dignified.

On the whole the semantic functions of the passive may be summarized *grosso modo* by saying that its effect is to reduce or shade off the agent's agentivity.

Each language has its own form(s) of passive or no passive at all, and in each language each form of passive has its own range of functions, so that there is a multiplicity of possible combinations: there are probably not two languages with the same

combination of forms and functions. On the other hand the languages that have no passive do not however ignore the above functions; only those functions are fulfilled by other means. Paris (1987) convincingly showed that practically all the functions that have been recognized for the passive are fulfilled by various constructions in Circassian, a language with no passive. Since the passive is not a necessary part of the grammar of any language and on the other hand the functions it may fulfill are presumably present in all languages, it seems clear that those functions are in connexion with the requirements of human communication and what is called passive is only a possible means, among others, of complying with these requirements.

2.2.3. Antipassive.

Similar conditions obtain in the case of the antipassive. This diathesis, which has been identified in ergative languages, occurs also in different forms, for example:

- V changes to V^{a} (antipassive voice), X (ergative in the basic sentence) becomes X_{o} (i.e. absolutive), Y (absolutive in the basic sentence) drops or becomes Y_{n}: this is the 'canonical' antipassive;

- V changes to V^{a}, X becomes X_{o}, Y remains unchanged (Mam, England, 1983: 219) and is probably to be considered coalescent with V;

- V changes to V^{a}, X and Y remain unchanged (Yidiñ, Dixon, 1977: 275);

- V changes to V^{a} , X becomes X_{o}, Y is incorporated into V (Chukchee);

- V changes to V^{a}, Z (actant of uniactant sentence) remains unchanged (Yidiñ, Dixon, 1977: 275).

As to the functions of antipassive, they can be classified under the same three headings as those of the passive:

1) Syntactic functions. The antipassive is used when, for some reason, the 'object' is not mentioned. It is used also, obligatorily or optionally, as the case may be, in the

construction of complex sentences (coordination or subordination).

2) Pragmatic functions. They are not so clear as those of the passive seem to be. The antipassive is used when Y is rhematic (Basque, Rebuschi, 1986: 182-183) or 'new' (Eskimo, Kalmár, 1979: 91), when X is thematic (Chamorro, Cooreman, 1983: 459 ff., and 1990), but also when X is rhematic (Mam, England, 1983: 214-215, 218). Anyway there is no doubt that it does have pragmatic functions.

3) Semantic functions.

a/ The antipassive correlates with various aspectual meanings which may all be subsumed under the label 'imperfective' (habitual, iterative, continuous, conative) in Australian and other languages.

b/ It is triggered by negation in Nyamal (Tsunoda, 1988: 628).

c/ It is in connexion with the nature of the process: it is used when the action is non-volitional (Yidiñ, Dixon, 1977: 275) and when it is reflexive (Yidiñ, ibid.); it may even convey a passive meaning (Diyari, Austin, 1981: 154-155).

d/ It correlates also with Y indefinite or non-referential (Warrungu, Mam, possibly Eskimo, cf. Cooreman, 1990).

e/ In Yukulta it is used when Y is higher than X in terms of Silverstein's (1976) person hierarchy (Keen, 1983: 136).

All these semantic functions (except the last one) have in common that they imply some uncompleteness of the process: an action in progress or habitual, etc., or bearing on a non-referential object, is not completed, nor is a fortiori a non-existent action; even a non-volitional and a reflexive action may be considered untypical, if a prototypical action proceeds from a volitional being and is directed towards an external goal (cf. § 3.1).

As in the case of passive, each language which has an antipassive is characterized by a particular combination of forms and functions. On the other hand the above-mentioned functions are not specific of the antipassive. In non-ergative languages

they are fulfilled by other means. In particular the semantic functions we have listed for the antipassive are nearly the same as those we have found for DOM and other actancy variations (supra § 2.1): these variations are the functional equivalent, in accusative languages, of the antipassive in ergative languages (cf. Lazard 1989).

2.2.4. Relationships of passive and antipassive.

Passive and antipassive, in their 'canonical' forms, are mirror images of one another. [15] and [16] represent the relationships in Latin, an accusative language, and Yidiñ, an ergative language, respectively [16] : the only difference is that in Yidiñ there is no verbal agreement (word order is grammatically irrelevant in both languages).

[15]	Active:	$X_0\ Y_a\ V_x$	(0 = nominative, a = accusative)
	Passive:	$Y_0\ X_n\ V^p{}_y$	(n = oblique)
[16]	Ergative:	$X_b\ Y_0\ V_0$	(b = ergative)
	Antipassive:	$X_0\ Y_n\ V^a{}_0$	

Passive and antipassive are symmetrical too in their syntactic functions, and, partly, in their pragmatic ones.

As to their semantic functions, there is both symmetry and asymmetry. Passivization bears on the relationship between the X-participant and the process, antipassivization on the relationship between the process and the Y-participant. Since the process is oriented, the passive is more concerned with agentivity, i.e. the role of the X-participant, and the antipassive with the completeness of the action, i.e. not so much with the role of the Y-participant as with a characteristic of the process.

However both have the effect of either eliminating or grammatically marginalizing one of the actants. When it is eliminated, the resultant sentence is a uniactant one: the only trace of biactancy is the possibly recognizable passive or antipassive form of the verb. When it is only marginalized as an oblique NP (X_n, Y_n), the sentence is a two-pole biactant one and

takes an intermediate position between the basic (accusative or ergative) three-pole biactant sentence and the uniactant one ([17]).

[17]	Basic sentence accusative or ergative	Passive and antipassive	Uniactant construction
	X - Y - V	Y - V (-X) X - V (-Y)	Z - V

We end up with pratically the same scale as in § 2.1 , which deals with DOM and related actancy variations. This is no wonder, since, as we have seen, the semantic correlates of the antipassive are more or less identical with the correlates of those variations.

It is reasonable to consider this scale as a gradient of transitivity (cf. § 3.1). Passive and antipassive take place at the same point of it: they are both constructions of reduced transitivity. This is why they can overlap. Both can convey 'reflexive' meaning, e.g. the passive in Latin and the antipassive in Yidiñ. The antipassive, as we have seen, sometimes even expresses 'passive' meaning (Diyari). Conversely, the passive, in Georgian, can be used with 'antipassive' meaning, e.g. 'this dog bites' with a passive form (Vogt 1936: 177), cf. also Russian verbs like *kusat'* 'to bite' (transitive) and *kusat'sja*, a formally reflexive verb meaning 'to bite' (intransitive). Thus the functions of the passive, and similarly the functions of the antipassive, extend over a variable part of the domain of reduced transitivity: in some languages the functions of either the passive or the antipassive tend to cover the whole of it.

2.3. Verb classes.

2.3.1. General classifications.

In the domain of verb classes our aim is to discover cross-linguistic correlations between certain morpho-syntactic classes

and certain semantic properties. The syntactic classification of verbs in a language implies first that the actants have been defined, then that the actancy constructions have been surveyed as completely as possible. A verb can be classified after the maximum number of actants it admits (valency), but this is only a broad classification. A more elaborate one must take into account on the one hand the possible omission of some actants and on the other hand the possible multiplicity of constructions of one and the same verb. The classification can be still more finely elaborated by considering the categorization of the actants: in particular, the category of humanness/animacy is often relevant. The difficulty is that, if the classification is too subtle, it results in too many subclasses to be usable in cross-linguistic comparison, and, if it is too broad, it may be of doubtful relevance. One has to choose the criteria according to the aim in each case.

An interesting attempt of classifying the verbs of a language according to the different constructions they admit was made by Moyse-Faurie (1989) on the basis of a limited number of verbs in xârâcùù, a Melanesian language of New Caledonia: she ends up with 12 classes with 1 to 3 constructions each. Another one, by Mennecier (1989), is based on 1000 primary, i.e. non-derived, verbs of the Eskimo language of Angmassalik. It is a very broad classification, consisting of four classes only, but they seem to be able to approximately correlate with semantic characteristics:

a/ uniactant verbs: qualities, states, changes of state, motions, etc.;

b/ uniactant/biactant verbs where the uniactant 'subject' is identical with the agent of the biactant construction (Z ≡ X): activity of body or mind bearing on an object or not, e.g. 'to hunt, to hear';

c/ uniactant/biactant verbs, where the uniactant 'subject' is identical with the patient of the biactant construction (Z ≡ Y): spontaneous or instigated processes, e.g. 'to melt, to tear';

d/ biactant verbs: pregnant action.

Such a classification may be rather general. Anyway it seems to be in reasonable agreement with the one which comes out from Guentcheva's study of Bulgarian reflexive verbs (1989): the classes of basic verbs whose reflexive formes have 'middle', 'medio-passive' and 'true reflexive' (or 'passive') meaning roughly coincide with Eskimo b/, c/ and d/ classes respectively.

Banda-Linda, a Centrafrican language thoroughly investigated by Cloarec-Heiss (1985, 1986), has also uniactant/biactant verbs (both Z ≡ X and Z ≡ Y). It is characterized by a remarkably small number of simple verbs, which are remarkably polysemic, so that the linguist is often faced with problems of identification. For instance, the same (?) verb (li) has the following meanings:

- if uniactant, with Z animate: 'to be able';
- " " " Z inanimate: 'to be sufficient, convenient, similar';
- if biactant, with X animate, Y inanimate: 'to measure';
- " " " " " Y locative: 'to enter'.

This difficulty is especially acute in this language, but it is a general one, which may occur elsewhere.

2.3.2. Reversible verbs.

We have been interested by two verb classes in particular. The first one is the class of verbs that are currently used in uniactant and biactant constructions, with Z ≡ Y: they are sometimes called 'reversible' verbs, because, in accusative languages, the 'subject' in uniactant constructions becomes the 'object' in biactant ones, ex. 'to sell' (cf. [18]).

[18a] That book sells well.

[18b] The bookshop round the corner sells that book.

In ergative languages, like Eskimo, on the contrary, the corresponding verbs have the same NP in the absolutive in uniactant and biactant constructions.

Verbs of this kind occur in many languages. In some of them they are comparatively few. In other languages their number is considerably larger. In Badaga (Dravidian) most verbs are 'reversible' (Pilot-Raichoor forthcoming). Possibly the extension

of this verb class is in connection with the non-existence of a 'middle' diathesis, but this hypothesis needs confirmation.

Galand (1987: 141-148) paid some measure of attention to 'reversible' verbs in Berber languages. These verbs are comparatively many. Different facts suggest that the biactant use has priority over the uniactant and the latter is derived from the former. Berber has a passive, which excludes any mention of the agent, but implies that there is an agent. In contradistinction to the passive, the uniactant use of 'reversible' verbs does not seem to contain such an implication. 'Reversible' verbs belong to various semantic fields, but all appear to convey the notion of processes that actually affect their 'object' and whose result is somehow culturally important: it is significant that they often occur in the perfective ('completed') aspect. In this connection I think useful to mention the hypothesis of Forest (1988) that the uniactant use of 'reversible' verbs (in French) descriptively expresses the actualization of a virtuality (he says *entéléchie*) of the 'object': to all appearances this virtuality is culturally defined.

2.3.3. Anti-impersonal verbs.

The other class is more special. It is found in languages with ergative construction. The verbs of that class construct in such a way that X is in the ergative and Y is referenced in the verb form by an absolutive marker, but cannot be represented by an NP: it is a dummy. For instance, in Pashto, a language with ergative construction in past tenses, there are sentences like [19].

[19] sar-i xand-əl X_a V_y (a = oblique case)
man-OBL laugh-3PL
'The man laughed'

The verb contains a marker of 3rd person plural which refers to nothing (in other languages, it is usually a marker of 3rd person singular). This construction is the mirror image of that of sentences such as [20] in Latin.

[20] me pude-t Y_a V_x (a = accusative)
me/ACC shame-3SG
'I am ashamed'

[20] has a void 'subject', [19] a void 'object'. As the construction of [20] is traditionally called impersonal, I proposed the name 'anti-impersonal' for the construction of [19] (Lazard 1985a).

This construction occurs in different Indo-Aryan and Iranian languages, e.g. Hindi, Pashto, Kurdish, also in Avar, Georgian, Basque, some Australian languages, and probably elsewhere. In Basque grammars the verbs that enter in this construction are named 'deponents'; in Georgian they have been described under the name of 'medial verbs' (cf. Holisky 1981). In both languages they are fairly numerous.

The form of this construction is clearly ergative, like the biactant one; but it includes only one actual actant, like the uniactant one. Thus it takes an intermediate position between the full biactant (ergative) construction and the uniactant one, as does also the impersonal one. This may be represented as a scale:

[21]	biactant construction	anti-impersonal construction	uniactant construction

This is again a scale of transitivity, since it extends from the biactant to the uniactant construction (cf. § 3.1): therefore anti-impersonal verbs, as also impersonal verbs, may be characterized as semi-transitive.

If we now look at their meaning, the processes they express belong to semantic fields that are roughly the same in the different languages, namely: animal cries ('to bark, to neigh'), human physiological manifestations ('to sneeze, to laugh'), physical attitudes and motions ('to look, to run, to dance'), processes implying standing fast for some length of time ('to last, to hold'), some natural phenomena ('to shine, to boil'). Some anti-impersonal verbs are described as expressive. All of them seem to point to some perceivable effect, something that can

be seen, heard, felt. Actually those processes have no other object than their own manifestation. This is perhaps how the peculiar construction of those verbs is to be explained: they have an implicit cognate 'object'.

Whether this explanation is correct or not, the correlation between the anti-impersonal construction and certain semantic fields seems to hold good, so that we can formulate this prediction with reasonable safeness: if in a language verbs expressing notions which belong to the above-mentioned fields form a particular morpho-syntactic class, their construction will be such as to take place in an intermediate position between the full biactant construction and the uniactant one.

3. Hypotheses and prospects.

3.1. Scales of transitivity.

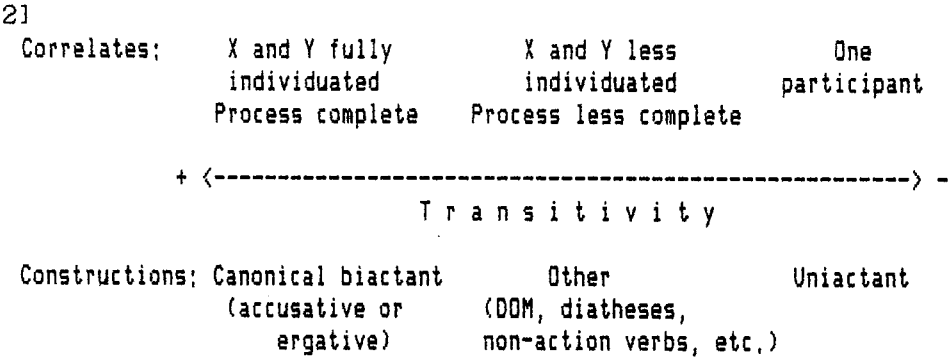
In § 2, I presented three invariant scales, the first one in connection with DOM (§ 2.1.4), the second one with diathesis variations (§ 2.2.4), the third one with verb classification (§ 2.3.3). They are representations of how actancy constructions are to be classified in relation to each other. They were laid out exclusively on the basis of the formal, morpho-syntactical properties of these constructions; then they were summarily interpreted as gradients of transitivity. I think it is necessary now to better justify this interpretation and to give a fuller account of that cross-linguistic notion of transitivity and of the hypotheses upon which it is built.

It implies the notion of prototypical action. We assume that prototypical actions (with two participants) are volitional, fully controlled, real, complete actions, accomplished by an agent high on the scales of definiteness and humanness/animacy, i.e. strongly individuated, and really affecting a patient high on the scales of definiteness and humanness/animacy, i.e. also strongly individuated. Actions of this kind are intuitively regarded as in accordance with what may be called semantic

transitivity, since they consist of something actually moving from an individuated source to an individuated goal. Constructions expressing prototypical actions are therefore entitled to be considered most transitive.

Now, processes which are expressed by the constructions placed at the left end of our scales obviously possess the properties of prototypical actions: they are characterized in the DOM scale by a more definite and more human 'object', in the diathesis scale by the presence in the foreground of an agent and a patient (in contradistinction to the passive and the antipassive respectively), in the verb class scale by the existence of a second participant (in contradistinction to the processes conveyed by impersonal and anti-impersonal verbs). They can therefore rightly be considered most transitive semantically, and the constructions that express them can be considered most transitive grammatically. At the other end of the scales uniactant constructions are of course the least transitive ones. In-between constructions on the three scales are less transitive than the left-side ones and more transitive than the right-side ones. They are therefore expected to correlate with less individuated actants and/or less complete action, which is actually the case [17] . These relationships are represented by [22].

[22]



This scale is more general than the three above particular scales and it includes them. However it is only a small part of a hypothetic overall transitivity gradient which would be able to

include all actancy variations. It can be widely enriched and enlarged. On the one hand it is possible to subdivide it considerably by taking into account other variations, either with one and the same verb (diatheses and other variations) or with different verbs (many 'semi-transitive' verb classes). On the other hand it could probably be protracted at both ends. On the right side, Ø-actant and impersonal uniactant constructions should be considered most intransitive. On the left side, tri-actant constructions should take place. In addition, certain languages seem to possess 'hyper-transitive' constructions: in Indonesian, besides an active and a passive, there is a diathesis called 'ergative', whose characteristics, as described by Cartier (1985), suggest that it is to be placed further left than the active, because it correlates with factors higher on the relevant scales; and in Samoan, as argued by Mosel (1985), if a certain suffix is added to the verb, the transitivity of the sentence increases (cf. Lazard 1989: 325-327).

3.2. Future work.

Thus our field of research is the domain of transitivity. Its aim is hopefully to contribute to a better understanding of the relationships between, on the one hand, the processes in the real world as reflected by human mind (semantics) and the constraints of communication (pragmatics) and, on the other hand, the functioning of language with its own internal dialectics, its relative inertia and the unequal plasticity of its different components.

The best way to approach such a large complex of problems with any chance of discovering some non-trivial regularities is to apply oneself to critical points, i.e. issues whose investigation seems able to provide useful insights. Such are constructions of questionable transitivity, i.e. where one may intuitively wonder whether they are transitive or not. This is why we chose to tackle the above-mentioned topics: DOM (why two constructions with the same actants?), passive and antipassive

diatheses (why two constructions for the same notional content?) and certain litigious verb classes ('reversible': why used in both bi- and uniactant constructions? anti-impersonal: why ergatively constructed with only one actant?).

Here is a tentative short survey of such ticklish, hence presumably fruitful issues, among which we have to select the subjects of our future work (the choice is of course conditioned by the proficiency of the members of the group and by the data at our disposal). Most of them are about constructions which seem eligible for some place, on our transitivity scale, in the medial part, between the maximum and the minimum, i.e. constructions whose degree of transitivity is to be ascertained.

1) Verb classes: verbs able to be used with two actants or only one, non-reversible and reversible (Z ≡ X and Z ≡ Y); -- verbs with a 'dummy' actant, impersonal and anti-impersonal; -- non-action verbs (perception, location, possession, etc.).

2) Diatheses: passive, antipassive, reflexive, middle, and other, especially 'hypertransitive'; also variations of type 'to plant onions in the garden/the garden with onions' (there is no clear-cut boundary between the domain of diathesis and that of verb classes, neither between diathesis and other syntactic variations).

3) 'Non-canonical' actancy constructions, where the traditional notions of subject and object are especially inadequate, for instance: coalescence/incorporation of 'object', 'intransitive subject', etc.; -- cognate 'object'; -- constructions with two 'objects' (e.g. in Latin, English, Bantu, Semitic, Tibeto-Burmese); -- constructions with two 'subjects' (e.g. in East-Asian languages); -- accusative constructions with marked 'subject' and unmarked 'object' (called 'extended ergative' by Dixon, 1979: 97); -- constructions where one may wonder whether an actant is 'subject', 'object' or other (e.g. French *il pleut des cordes* 'it is pouring", lit. there rain ropes).

4) Morphological connections between main actants and other NPs: instrumental for ergative 'subject' and instrument; --

accusative for 'object' and adverbials (e.g. in Ancient Greek, Latin, Semitic, Quechua); -- locative cases for 'subject' or 'object' (Finno-Ugrish, Tibeto-Burmese).

5) Behaviour of pronouns (and, in Austronesian languages, proper names): frequently coalescent with verb form and peculiar in other respects (though high on the scales of definiteness and humanness and typically thematic, they often behave differently from definite, human, thematic nouns).

3.3. Prospects.

I will finish this paper with a few remarks on possible distant prospects. I said above (§ 1.4.2) that language is a produce of human mind and experience. It is believable that its categories ultimately derive from the representation of the real world in human mind and syntactic structures are ultimately rooted in both experience of the world and conditions of the speech act, combined with the capacities of human memory and other mental faculties. Grammatical notions and rules result from the reinterpretation and extension of such 'primary' conceptions.

For example, the distinction between noun and verb admittedly reflects differences, in the world, between stable things and transient qualities or processes. This distinction takes place in language because it is important for man's life and action. But it extends widely beyond the mere reflection of those differences (e.g., processes can be expressed by nomina actionis), because language uses it for its own purposes and thereby acquires an incomparably greater degree of flexibility.

The notions of 'subject' and predicate are derived from the quasi-necessary two poles of any linguistic message, theme and rheme, themselves issued from the conditions of the speech act, as clearly demonstrated by Gardiner (1951: 264 ff.) [18] . But, as we know, in actual speech it often happens that theme and rheme do not coincide with 'subject' and predicate respectively. Here again language has taken hold of primary notions and grammaticized them for a much wider use.

In the field of actancy, sentence constructions ultimately reflect processes of the real world (as perceived by human mind). In particular, very likely, canonical bi-actant constructions are primarily expressions of human action. Accordingly, in their primary use, the verb is an action verb, one of the participants (represented by the 'subject') is a volitional controlling agent and the other one (represented by the 'object') is a being or a thing really affected by the agent's action. But in many (most? all?) languages this construction is more or less widely extended beyond this use.

In this respect languages differ largely from one another. In not a few of them the 'subject' of action verbs is obligatorily an agent or a human or animate being; and for processes other than action, other constructions are used. On the contrary, in such languages as the modern West European ones, the canonical bi-actant construction is used to express practically any kind of process implying two participants: in this regard they are representative of a rather extreme type. Similar considerations could be applied to other aspects of the field of actancy as well.

Thus, primary, 'realistic', notions, through a complex and never ended process of reinterpretation and elaboration, develop into grammatical, 'metaphoric', categories. Their relationship is one of affinity, which means both positive correlation and divergence. This divergence is a variable: in a specific domain, such as the domain of actancy, it may be larger in some languages, smaller in other languages. This consideration might provide a basis for an interesting typology of far-reaching significance.

Notes

1. It has been claimed that some North-West Caucasian and Salish languages do not have that distinction, but the question remains open to discussion: anyway those languages are but a small minority among the languages of the world. -- What is here said about noun and verb is not inconsistent with § 1.4.1, cf. § 1.4.2.

2. For the same purpose I also make use of a system of symbols (cf. Lazard, 1978, 1984, 1985b), which proves useful for the representation of complicated constructions: in biactant sentences X and Y represent the 'subject' and the 'object' respectively; Z is the actant in uniactant sentences; V is the verb; x, y, z are verbal markers cross-referencing X, Y, Z respectively; a, b... are case markers of the actants; o indicates that there is no marker.

3. Examples of the different constructions in Drehu (Moyse-Faurie, 1983: 145-7 and 43):

angeic a lep la kuli he ASP V ART dog 'He beats the dog'	$X_o\ V_o\ Y_o$
angeic a traqa V 'He arrives'	$Z_o\ V_o$
troa xen la koko hnen la nakönatr ASP V yam PREP child 'The child is going to eat the yam'	$V_o\ Y_o\ X_a$
troa traqa la nakönatr 'The child is going to arrive'	$V_o\ Z_o$
hna lep la kuli hnei angeic ASP V PREP 'He beat the dog'	$V_o\ Y_o\ X_a$
hna traqa hne-ng PREP-me 'I arrived'	$V_o\ Z_a$
eni a humuth la joxu I ASP V ART chief 'I kill the chief'	(humuth = V)
eni a humu puaka pig 'I kill pig(s)'	(humu = V^1)
eni a humuthi angaatr them 'I kill them'	(humuthi = V^2)

4. On terminology, cf. § 1.5.

5. These categories are continua with a whole series of degrees (cf. § 2.1.3), and they have affinities with each other. They have been convincingly subordinated to an overall category of 'individuation' by Timberlake (cf. Hopper & Thompson, 1980: 253, 279).

6 . Several linguists who made a cross-linguistic investigation of passive in recent years reached the conclusion that it is very difficult to work out a satisfactory definition of this notion, cf., for instance, Andersen (1989b, 1990).

7. On the terminological difficulties, cf. § 1.5.

8. Perhaps L1, L2 and L3 might be roughly represented by Latin, French and English respectively.

9. These common areas of the structure of all languages, as far as I can see, are more or less identical with what Seiler calls 'dimensions'. Generally speaking, our approach seems to be closely akin to the UNITYP approach.

10. A linguistic or prelinguistic logic, not the logic of logicians.

11. Cf. also Lazard (1981), where a 'topography' of durative past is sketched. A similar method has been used by Anderson (1982), exploring the field of the perfect, and by Kemmer (1988), investigating the 'middle' voice.

12. As far as I can see, the Leningrad group working on diathesis and related subjects makes the same use as we do of the terms 'actant', 'participant', 'diathesis" and 'voice'(cf. Knott, 1988).

13. Examples (Hagège, 1986: 108-9):

ak-lil?ɔs-i: a babier	$V_{x<y}$ Y_o
x-V-y PCL letter	
'I wrote the letter'	
ak-millu?ɔs r a babier	V_{x} Y_a
x-V PREP	
'I was writing the letter'	
ŋ-mɔlu?ɔs a babier a sensei	V_{x} Y_o X_o
x-V X	
'The professor is writing a letter/(the) letters'.	

14. This section is a summary of Lazard (1986) and part of Lazard (1989), with additional remarks. It is inspired for the passive from Shibatani (1985), and for the antipassive from Tsunoda (1988); now cf. also Cooreman (1990).

15. Although these variations are here listed under the heading 'diathesis', they do not all conform to the definition of diathesis I have given above (§ 1.5).

16. Examples:

Latin

vir-Ø mulier-em verbera-t	$X_o\ Y_a\ V_x$ (a = accusative)
X-NOM Y-ACC V-3SG	
'The man beats the woman'	
mulier-Ø a vir-o verbera-tur	$Y_o\ X_n\ V^P{}_y$
Y-NOM PREP X-ABL V-PASS/3SG	
'The woman is beaten by the man'	

Yidiñ (Dixon 1977: 274)

wagud'aŋgu buña giba:l	$X_b\ Y_o\ V_o$ (b = ergative)
X/ERG Y/ABS V/PAST	
'The man scratched the woman'	
wagu:d'a giba:d'iñu buña:nda	$X_o\ Y_n\ V^a{}_o$
X/ABS V/ANT/PAST Y/DAT	
'Id.'	

17. This conception of transitivity is close to that developed by Hopper & Thompson (1980), although it was arrived at by a different approach and the components of transitivity are differently ordered. I cannot say whether it is pure convergence or I have been influenced to some extent by H. & T.'s article: probably both.

18. Gardiner, whose book was first published in 1932, does not use the terms 'theme' and 'rheme': he says 'logical subject' and 'logical predicate', but the notions are the same.

Abbreviations

ABL	ablative
ABS	absolutive
ACC	accusative
ANT	antipassive
ART	article
ASP	aspect
DAT	dative
DUR	durative
ERG	ergative
INDIC	indicative
INSTR	instrumental
NOM	nominative
OBL	oblique case
PAST	past
PCL	particle
PL	plural
PREP	preposition
PRET	preterite
SG	singular
1, 2, ...	1st, 2nd,... person

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